The Pioneer of Democratic Educational Thought: Tao Xingzhi

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Abstract

Tao Xingzhi is a great people's educator and the founder of the democratic education system in China. This paper aims to provide the essence of Tao Xingzhi's democratic education system for contemporary education through three parts: the formation of Tao Xingzhi's democratic education thought, the interpretation of its core, and its influence on contemporary society. Tao Xingzhi's system of democratic educational thought not only embodies the traditional Chinese national spirit, but also reflects the spirit of the times that is most needed in China's education. As a pioneer in the field of democratic education in China, Tao Xingzhi gave democratic education a profound connotation and presented it to the public through real-life practice. Therefore, a correct understanding and grasp of the core of democratic education is of great significance to the development of today's democratic society. It is worthwhile for the whole society to explore the specific strategies and ways to promote the construction of a democratic society through democratic education.

Keywords

Democratic education, Tao Xingzhi, democratic society

A democratic society is one of the goals that China has been insisting on building and trying to achieve since the founding of the country. The construction of a democratic society involves various influencing factors, and democratic education is one of the key ways to its success. Education for Democracy (Tao Xingzhi, 1999), as an ideal goal that many scholars in the field of education and outside of education have been striving for in the past and in the present, it must be the essential factors for building a democratic society. Tao Xingzhi's idea of education for life is deeply rooted in people's minds. Most scholars have taken his democratic education as one of the means to understand his life education idea, thus ignoring the core of democratic education itself. In his later years, Tao Xingzhi used the concept of democratic education to summarize his life's educational. This shows that Tao Xingzhi's concept of democratic education is much more than what we understand as a mere. Tao Xingzhi's concept of democratic education was much more than a mere means of education for life as we understand it.

1. The core of Tao Xingzhi's democratic education thought and its formation

1.1 The main core of Tao Xingzhi's democratic education thought

As an educator of the great democratic fighter, and one of the main leaders of the Democratic League, Tao Xingzhi devoted his life to education.

As a people's educator, a great democratic fighter and one of the main leaders of the Democratic League, Tao Xingzhi devoted his life to the cause of democratic education and founded the Education Association, and then actively participated in the anti-Japanese movement to save the country. In his graduation thesis, “The Essence of the Republic”,
he wrote: "The people are poor, and nothing but education can make them rich; the people are stupid, and nothing but education can make them wise; party views cannot be eliminated without education; and elite loyalty cannot be produced without education". From this, we can see that Tao Xingzhi attached special importance to the way of education for the development of the country, and at the same time Tao Xingzhi combined traditional education with Marxian principles to build a democratic education system unique to China according to the actual situation in China. He defined democratic education as people to fight for democracy and to develop democracy. First of all, in the era of insufficient democracy, the main task of democratic education is to teach people to fight for democracy; after politics has embarked on the road to democracy, the task of democratic education is to teach people to give full play to their individual and collective creativity in accordance with the principles of democracy, so as to create happiness for all people. In short, democratic education is for the people, and in essence, it is an education for the good of all the people. In his articles, "Outline for the Implementation of Democratic Education" and "Democratic Education", he also gave a profound and comprehensive interpretation of the topic of democratic education. First of all, democratic education is the education of the common people. Since Confucius put forward the idea of education for the common people, Tao Xingzhi’s idea of education for the common people to realize the world as a common people has its origin in the traditional Confucianism. It is one of the connotations of democratic education that Tao Xingzhi advocates to truly realize education for all across class, gender, age and status. Secondly, democratic education is the education of democracy, what is democracy? Tao Xingzhi pointed out that "democratic education is the process of combining people's life and learning. In the process of leading the people to break through tyranny and fight for democratic life, we learn the ways and means of fighting for democracy; in creating a democratic New China, we learn to create a democratic New China" so that everyone can have full self-development, and in the process of receiving education, we can have comprehensive physical and mental development. In the end, a forward-looking, positive and upward-looking education is formed.

1.2 The Formation of Tao Xingzhi’s Thought on Democratic Education

After Tao Xingzhi entered Jinling University, he was in the midst of the democratic boom brought about by Sun Yat-sen’s Three People’s Principles. After the founding of the Chinese edition of Jinling University's school newspaper, Jinling Guang, Tao Xingzhi published nearly 20 articles in Jinling Guang, all of them promoting democratic revolutionary ideas. During his studies at university, he followed the philosophy of the Ming philosopher Wang Yangming and was attracted by his philosophical ideas of "the unity of knowledge and action" and "knowledge is the beginning of action" (Zhou Hongyu, 1998). After that, he gradually realized Wang Yangming’s wrong tendency of idealism and began to view his educational philosophy from a dialectical point of view, and proposed "action is the beginning of knowledge and knowledge is the completion of action" in conjunction with dialectical thought. Therefore, in 1934, he changed his name to "Xing-zhi". He proposed that the state should transform the people into a wise people through education, which Tao Xingzhi firmly believed was democratic education. He pointed out that "democratic education is to teach people to be masters, to be their own masters, to be masters of the country, and to be masters of the world; it is education for the people, for the people, and for the people".

2. Education for democracy: Toward a democratic society through education

2.1 Democratic Education and Educational Democracy

As a form of general education, the purpose of democratic education is to cultivate the concept of equality in education and equality in life, and to root the spirit and belief of democracy in the minds of all educated people through education. Based on this theory, the key to the democratic education we advocate is that democratic education is an education for the masses that leads people to become free and equal human beings and ultimately to build a democratic society. Since a democratic society is a society of equality and harmony sought by the people, democratic education is an education that teaches the people to seek a good and harmonious life, that is, a democratic life. Education democracy refers to the specific democracy in the process of education, mainly the democracy of communication, the democracy of language, and the democracy of action arising from the specific activities of education. The purpose of education democracy is to enlighten Children’s subjective consciousness through democratic education methods and means, to refine their individual qualities and character, and to cultivate them into independent individuals who are full of democratic passion and actively participate in democratic life.

2.2 Education for democracy and building a democratic society

As one of the necessary tools for building a democratic society, we can propose effective measures for building a democratic society through the spiritual core of democratic education. Tao Xingzhi wanted to turn the whole society
into a school. In his view, education is not only a way to transmit knowledge and skills, but also a way to build a democratic society for human beings. Tao Xingzhi's idea of democratic education pioneered the idea of "educational justice" in China, and he proposed the grand idea of "education for the public", which is the same as the spirit of educational justice we propose today. Educational justice is not only the behavior of schools, but also the government should adjust its policies and improve various poverty alleviation programs so that students will not miss school due to family financial difficulties, thus further improving all aspects of democratic society. Tao Xingzhi proposed in "The Essence of the Republic" that "if the people are poor, no one can be rich without education; if the people are stupid, no one can be wise without education", so the solution to the problem of poverty should also start from education. Ignorance and poverty are synergetic. If you are ignorant and ignorant, you are bound to be poor and backward.

3. The contemporary significance of Tao Xingzhi's democratic education

3.1 Enriching and developing the concept of fair education and comprehensive development

Tao Xingzhi's democratic education idea not only inherits the educational equity theory of Marx and Engels, but also develops it further. Developing the concept of democratic education and comprehensive development Marx and Engels proposed that the democratic and equal right to education should be enjoyed by every citizen. On the basis of this, Tao Xingzhi further realized the importance of education for the public to the development of the country. Therefore, Tao Xingzhi proposed that if the public could not receive education, the country would not be able to get rid of poverty and become rich and strong. Therefore, Tao Xingzhi strongly promoted equal opportunity education for the common people. Therefore, Tao Xingzhi proposed that if the masses could not be educated, the country would not be able to get rid of poverty and become rich and strong. The essence of this idea is to promote educational equity. Educational equity is the cornerstone of social equity and the establishment of a democratic and harmonious society. Tao Xingzhi's emphasis on equal education

Tao Xingzhi, while emphasizing equal education, also emphasized the concept of comprehensive development education. He believed that democratic education is composed of "health, science, art, labor and democracy. He believed that democratic education was composed of "health, science, art, labor, and democracy" (Tao Xingzhi, 1991) and that the talents cultivated under democratic education should be physically healthy, mentally.

This educational idea is consistent with the Marxist doctrine of all-round development of human beings. In the process of life education practice, Tao Xingzhi constantly improved democratic education theory, enriched and developed the educational idea of free and comprehensive development in democratic education, and combined it. In the process of life education practice, Tao Xingzhi continuously improved the theory of democratic education, enriched and developed the educational thought of free and comprehensive development in democratic education, and combined it with the actual situation of Chinese education to plan a road of democratic education development with Chinese characteristics.

3.2 Providing theoretical basis for the reform and development of education in contemporary

Tao Xingzhi's democratic education method of "teaching and doing in unity" provides reference for the reform of contemporary education system. Tao Xingzhi's democratic education method opposes the disadvantages of traditional exam-oriented education, which is to confine students to textbooks and cause them to "ignore what is happening outside the window", and not to consider whether the knowledge they remember is scientific and practical. In this way, students become passive learning machines, which leads to the development of individuality and creativity. The development of individuality and creativity is seriously hindered. The teaching-doing method of education proposed by Tao Xingzhi effectively applies what children learn and think to life (Wei Bo, 2015).

The combination of labor and effort enables the educated to achieve true all-round development of the moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and physical. This is the core of the modern quality education, which is to grow up healthy and creative, and to combine the learning of knowledge with the practice of life. The content of the curriculum and teaching materials focus on the cultivation of both theoretical and practical abilities of the educated; Teachers should also improve their own quality and professional ability to help students develop in all aspects. Therefore, our school education should be reformed and adjusted with the idea of "teaching and doing together, labor on labor" (Li Xiaohong, 2005).

4. The democratic education idea of "cultivating creativity" has become the school philosophy of contemporary schools

Tao Xingzhi's concept of creative education raises the cultivation of creativity to the height of "education of the soul".
In his view, without creativity, there is no education and no development. His theory of creative education proposes that education should serve the society and the educated. His theory of creative education proposes that education should serve society and serve the educated, and promotes the unification of the two. The starting point of education should be to cultivate the creativity of each and every recipient. The purpose of education should be to liberate the individuality of the educated, and the core of education should be the free and comprehensive development of each and every educated person. Therefore, contemporary schools at all levels should emphasize the cultivation of individual students’ creativity. To build a new china of democracy, freedom and science, he boldly practiced and pioneered. Tao Xingzhi’s thought on democratic education is rich in content and far-reaching. It is hoped that it can serve the contemporary educational reform and social development, as well as the building of a harmonious society with democracy and law.

References