



The Reform and Developmental Trend of Higher Education in China : An Analysis Centering on ‘the 211 Project’ and the Merger of Colleges and Universities

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Since 1990s, many reforms on higher education in China have been made, among which the implementation of ‘the 211 Project’ and the merger of colleges and universities bring important effect on China’s higher education. The thesis probes into the reform and developmental trend of higher education in China in recent decade focusing on the two aspects above.

I. The New Measure for Constructing the First-class University — ‘the 211 Project’

In 1993, the educational blueprint of China

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— The Program of the Reform and Development in China — Education was put forward. This program points out a new measure for the reform and development of higher education that is to carry out the plan of 'the 211 Project'. The plan means that the government spends ten years or more than ten years in constructing more than one hundred of key universities or key disciplines in order to improve the whole level of China's higher education in the 21st century. The implementation of 'the 211 Project' is an important act for promoting the development of higher education and the interaction between the higher education and the development of China's economic society.

1. The background of putting forward 'the 211 Project'

'The 211 Project' was put forward under the background of China's social transition. One of the original intentions of putting forward the plan is to cultivate the university spirits and ensure that some universities in China can reach the standard of the first class universities in the world, which can play a role of examples. In the process of establishing the system of Chinese socialism market-oriented economy, the educational resources are disposed in a way of the combination of the government's plan and the market adjustment, which demands that the university act on its own in face of the

market as well as under the macroscopic management of the government. However, some negative effects brought on higher education in the process of the reform, such as the paramountcy of market, reflect the lose of university spirits, which means the universities have been the servant of property instead of its status as principal part in the society. The situation goes against the role of higher education in the construction of socialism modernization and the goal of catching up with the higher educational level of worldwide developed countries. Therefore, the State Department and the Ministry of Education of China put forward 'the 211 Project' in order to protect some key universities and disciplines. In fact, 'the 211 Project' is substantial guarantee and institutional safeguard provided by our state for some key universities to maintain and develop the university spirits.

2. The implementation of 'the 211 Project'

Since the beginning of the implementation of 'the 211 Project' in 1995, 98 colleges and universities have been the part of 'the 211 Project', 602 key disciplines have been constructed, several common service system programs have been established, such as the Computer Net of Chinese Education and Science Research.

3. The achievement of 'the 211 Project'

The implementation of 'the 211 Project' makes higher education of China full of vital force, which promotes the reform of higher education institution and brings the change of idea of how to run universities. What's more, it optimizes discipline structure and accelerates the training of talented persons.

4. The future programming of 'the 211 Project'

The second period program of 'the 211 Project' is about to be carried out in 'the Tenth Fiveyear Plan'. The goal and the task are to construct some key disciplines, improve the conditions of teaching and researching in some key universities and accelerate the construction of some common service systems.

II. The New Development of the Reform on China's Higher Education — The Merger of Colleges and Universities

The implementation of 'the 211 Project' provides a good chance for the development of colleges and universities, which places a premium on another reform on China's higher education — the merger of colleges and universities.

1. The inevitability of the merger of colleges and universities

The inevitability of the merger of colleges and universities includes that the development of economy and society demands the merger of colleges and universities, the adjustment of higher education structure needs the merger of colleges and universities, and the optimization of higher education resources configuration demands the merger of colleges and universities.

2. The present situation and the characteristics of the merger of colleges and universities

The merger of colleges and universities begins with the establishment of Yangzhou University in 1992, and ends with the emergence of the new Wuhan University in 2000, which lasts 8 years and makes about 400 colleges and universities involved in. At present, many colleges and universities are in the process of gestation or implementation of the merger.

The merger of colleges and universities has formed such characteristics as follows : there are so many colleges and universities and persons involved in it ; the time span is so long as 8 years; the convulsion is so strong ; the merger is from top to bottom ; and appraisal varies.

3. Questions about the merger of colleges and universities

The merger of colleges and universities involves a lot of problems, such as the structure of disciplines, investment system, the tradition of running schools and personnel management, etc. Therefore, a lot of questions about the merger appear which mainly includes as follows : does the merger of colleges and universities mean a direct improve of benefit? Does the university after its merger mean the university in deed in significance? How to mix the ideas of universities with different features after the merger? Does China need such a lot of comprehensive universities?

III . The Future Development of China's Higher Education

In the practice of the merger of colleges and universities, there are many thought provoking problems. In order to solve these problems, we should think over and prove into the strategies as follows so as to benefit the future development of China's higher

education : desalt the relation of administrative subjection of colleges and universities and expand the decision making powers of colleges and universities ; the reform of higher education should be based on scientific argumentation and rational policy decision ; the basic content of the reform should be establishing the mechanism for equitable competition which can promote the development of higher education ; China's higher education should stride forward towards mass higher education. **대학교육**

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