

An Analysis of the Idea, System and Strategy of Moral Education in American Colleges and Universities

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ABSTRACT. *Since the 1970s, the thought and practice of moral education in American colleges and universities have made great progress, adhering to the idea that moral education is the unshirkable social responsibility of universities and that moral development is one of the indicators of student development, a moral education system with integrity as the basic principle of moral education in colleges and universities, teaching students to get along with others as the basic goal, and cultivating civic responsibility and cooperative spirit as the core goal have been formed, and the goal of moral education has been achieved by giving full play to the role of elders and peers, encouraging students to participate in community experiences and cultivating students' moral judgment ability. Generally speaking, the concept, system and strategy of moral education in American colleges and universities provide strong reference significance for moral education in contemporary Chinese colleges and universities.*

KEYWORDS: *American colleges and universities; moral education; idea; system; strategy*

American has the world's top higher education institutions, in addition to the first-class scientific research level and excellent teaching quality, its moral education strategy is also worth learning and reference. Although there are many colleges and universities in American, opinions on which moral education should be advocated are different, and the contents and strategies of moral education in various colleges and universities are different, but the basic ideas and principles are similar: that is, moral education is the unshirkable social responsibility of universities; integrity, especially academic integrity, is the basic principle of moral education in colleges and universities; cultivating civic responsibility and cooperative spirit is the core goal of moral education in American colleges and universities; improving individual morality by setting up moral conflict judgment ability is the first choice strategy of moral education in colleges and universities. Based on the moral education thought and practice of American colleges and universities since 1970s, this paper mainly discusses the concept, system and strategy of moral education in American colleges

and universities, in order to provide new ideas for moral education in higher education in China under the background of "double first class".

1. The Idea of the Moral Education in American

1.1 Moral education is the unshirkable social responsibility of universities

Moral education is an important issue that cannot be avoided in any university. In the 1970s, in the course of opposing the wave of Vietnam war and democratization, the attention of the American public focused on many public moral issues, such as racial equality, male and female equal rights, etc. At the same time, the courses on moral issues began to appear in the teaching of many colleges and universities, the discussion on moral education in universities began to become a new round of academic research, and "moral education" became one of the important goals of higher education.

After World War II, American began the process of popularization of higher education, and higher education has played a more and more important role in the development of American. Many professions, such as doctors, lawyers, civil servants, engineers, and so on, need to go through the corresponding university education. With the acceleration of the process of popularization of higher education in American, almost half of the people have to enter the places of higher education. Therefore, universities have an unshirkable responsibility for moral education. Derek Burke, famous president of Harvard University believes that moral education is an important embodiment of the university's social responsibility, and points out that universities should help American revitalize through moral education. "if a university is not willing to take moral issues seriously, it violates its basic responsibility to society."^[1] A number of survey data also show that American colleges and universities pay more and more attention to moral education, a survey of 13 colleges and universities in American by Anne Colby et al., in 2003 and a follow-up survey conducted by B.Magolda at the University of Miami in 2004, both put forward that in the process of the maturity of the values of young students, higher education should take students' moral education and civic education as one of the important tasks. Since the beginning of the new century, almost all colleges and universities in American believe that attaching importance to moral development and civic education will help young students to better handle all kinds of interpersonal relationships and better assume social responsibility, in contrast, more than 300 ethics centers have been set up throughout American.

1.2 Moral Development is one of the indexes of students' development

Moral development including moral judgment ability and moral behavior, emphasize that students should learn and apply knowledge under the guidance of core values and morality, and practice moral norms in real life. In the 1960s, the theory of student development emphasized the importance of moral development,

and the famous educational scholar, Astin (1991), set the students' values, attitude and citizen consciousness as an important index of the emotional level in the construction of the concept of college students' achievement. George Kuhn also points out that the student's successful presentation of the multi-dimensional structure not only includes students' mastery of writing, speech, quantitative analysis, critical thinking and scientific literacy, but also has a high degree of self-awareness, moral values, social responsibility and a sense of mission. *National Association of State University and Land-Grant Colleges, 1997*, also clearly stressed that "The values of college students need to be paid special attention to, and this responsibility of society cannot be ignored. Sometimes students will be required to have unconditional conduct and virtues such as patience, politeness, independence and social responsibility."^[2], "We believe that faith and moral quality are indeed essential in people's lives. Therefore, we should pay equal attention to it on campus. " said the Report of Wingspread Group,^[3]emphasizing the "spiritual development" and "moral development" in the development of students. Influenced by the theory of student development, the American higher education circles basically agree that the moral development with moral judgment ability as the core is one of the indexes of college students' development.

From the present point of view, most of the American colleges and universities have associated the students' moral development with the goal of the development of the students, and it is thought that the higher education first needs to take the moral education as the premise, and the people with higher education must have a series of good qualities, including good faith, the sense of civic responsibility and commitment to social public welfare. Such as the Harvard College's goal of running a school, it is clearly stated that to train qualified citizens and citizens in the society, college provide each student with a profound experience of intellectual and social interaction, and provide leadership and responsibility for the preparation of a better life in the future.^[4] MIT, on the other hand, has always been based on student development, committed to cultivating smarter, more creative and more enthusiastic first-class talents for American and future society, and stressed the social responsibility of first-class people.^[5] Stanford University also attaches great importance to the civic responsibility and responsibility of students. With the idea of "promoting students' development and learning, cultivating students' community participation and promoting students' growth", Stanford University launched the strategic action of "the Future of Student Affairs" in the fall of 2017, dedicated to training students to become citizens who make meaningful contributions to the complex world.^[6] The basic idea of Yale University is to cultivate the spirit, service consciousness and responsibility of the students, and emphasizes the cultivation of world citizens and leaders who can contribute to the world.^[7]In view of this, the mission of higher education in American has gone beyond the acquisition of knowledge and skills, and it is more necessary to promote students' non-cognitive development represented by moral development through various ways.

2. The Basic System of the Moral Education in American

2.1 Integrity is the basic principle of moral education in American colleges and universities

Integrity, especially academic integrity, is one of the most important moral norms in American higher education. Chickering and Reisser (1993) believe that integrity is the seventh and final dimension of the personal development of college students, because they believe that moral integrity represents the highest moral achievement of students' personal development, integrity means not only the consistency of values and behavior, but also the sense of responsibility for oneself and others and the ability to consistently apply ethical principles. "A strong commitment of value or belief can determine the direction of an end.....Values form an important reference framework for deepening purpose and increasing the context of action. " ^[8] Many universities also regard honesty as a key factor linked to the reputation of colleges and universities, as Academic Committee of Princeton University clearly states that "Integrity is the core morality of the intellectual community (university).....All people, from freshmen to full professors, should abide by the morality of academic integrity and attribute academic achievements to the originators. " ^[9] Qi Li's research data shows that 98.3% of American universities have formulated the academic integrity policy, ^[10] and regards it as the basis of moral standards in colleges and universities. They think that dishonest college students can not study effectively, and their behavior will gradually destroy the integrity foundation of the whole academic community, so no university can tolerate academic fraud. Under the guidance of this idea, every university will inculcate academic integrity standards and codes of conduct in students through educational activities and normative policies, guide students to learn and practice " integrity" in their behavior, and the integrity here includes not only academic integrity, but also the personal integrity, the facts, the truth from the facts, the college students must study and practice this moral standard to complete the higher education.

Therefore, many colleges and universities in American attach great importance to the integrity education and management of college students. By combing the existing research on the integrity education of the American universities, it can be found that: First, the American colleges and universities will first express to the students the requirements of the "integrity" and the "academic integrity" directly and clearly through the formal normative documents and the guidance regulations, these specifications generally specify which acts are within the scope of the "integrity" and which acts fall within the scope of the "non-integrity". These norms are usually present in the school honor regulations or the student behavior regulations, which show students the basic requirements of good faith in school, students should abide by the principle of integrity in learning and academic activities. Second, the integrity education in American colleges and universities respects the participation of students very much. Some universities require students to sign the "Integrity Guarantee" before entering school. Generally speaking, the "Integrity Guarantee" is usually drawn up by students or at least with the participation of students. The content of the

"Integrity Guarantee" is mainly to stipulate which acts belong to academic corruption such as cheating, plagiarism, etc., and which acts are respectable. Such as Stanford University has an examination honor system, that is, there is no invigilator in the exam, students sign in the test paper to ensure that there is no cheating, and if there is a violation, expel immediately. Burke believes that the "Integrity Guarantee" does not make much sense in itself. It is important to form an atmosphere of mutual supervision among students, and let them learn to respect integrity and spurn any form of cheating ^{[11][108]}. Third, explain the rules of integrity to students in detail, strictly implement the system of integrity, and strive to deal with disciplinary violations impartially, so as to ensure a relatively fair environment of integrity. As Burke points out, when teachers, star runners or other "important people" in school make mistakes, it is a more serious mistake to shield them, for example, when dealing with cheating, we should deal with it impartially.

2.2 Educating students to learn to live with others is the responsibility of moral education in colleges and universities

American colleges and universities believe that the basic goal of moral education in colleges and universities is to make students have the moral quality of independent self-improvement, mutual respect, mutual understanding and tolerance and humility. As college students, we should learn how to live in harmony with those who have differences in values, beliefs or lifestyles, how to strike a balance between personal beliefs and values, and respect the beliefs and values of others. When living in groups, we should respect others and should also have the ability to resolve contradictions. For example, in his book *University and the Future of the United States*, Burke makes it clear that the purpose of university moral education is to "build care for others." He said that "Moral and social responsibility cannot develop solely through rules and punishment, they must come from a true concern for others.....You can learn how to get along with others through cooperative or collective extracurricular activities..... Sports teams, drama clubs, orchestras, political societies and many other activities offer this opportunity.....Among all cooperative activities, community service projects are the most valuable activities (such as tutoring for the children of vulnerable groups or serving the homeless, etc.)" ^[12]. In *Return to University*, it is also clearly emphasized that "Universities can cultivate students' awareness of the interests and needs of others in a variety of ways---either reading masterpieces or caring for sick roommates.....Let the students practice thinking for others in all kinds of situations..... The most common way to train students to think of others is community service activities, which are aimed at making students aware of the suffering of vulnerable groups in reality. Students need to care about the homeless, provide education for poor children, visit the elderly and patients, etc." ^{[11][110]}. Similarly, in the study of the Sierra project, in the study of Reinkoff and Jennings (1982), the experience of co-working with people of different values and beliefs will change the value judgement. ^[13] Learning how to put forward different views from others without offending others' values and beliefs is an important way to distinguish and test their own values.

2.3 Helping students form a sense of civic responsibility is an important part of moral education

One of the important contents of the moral education in the contemporary American universities is to train the students to become qualified and responsible members of the society, namely, the citizens' education. Although civic education in American has begun in primary and secondary schools, the university also has the responsibility of civic education. Drake Burke believes that primary and secondary education in American is not enough to train competent citizens, so universities will play a pivotal role in this regard.....To train college students to be positive and enlightened citizens is the most important goal of civic education that American college students should pursue, because almost all students will fulfill their civic obligations, so all students need to understand the way the government operates and the common problems faced by modern democratic society. This is also confirmed by the study of Pascals and Tlenzi, "After four years of university education, students are more interested in social and political issues and are more likely to participate in political activities."^{[11][118-125]} Therefore, since the 1990s, the responsibility of civic education in American colleges and universities has been paid more and more attention. The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement has continuously issued the annual research report on civic education in colleges and universities since the beginning of the new century (2002-2018). By combing the existing data, it is found that most colleges and universities in American take various measures, such as expanding and promoting social service projects and offering civic education courses to cultivate the sense of civic participation of college students.

There are few colleges and universities specializing in civic education in American, and civic education is usually embodied in the core of moral education in general courses. The purpose of civic education courses in American colleges and universities includes: to teach the skills and knowledge of political participation, to improve the cognitive level of the students' political participation, to train the students' sense of responsibility in fulfilling their basic obligations and to participate in the life of the citizens, and to respect others and to obey the basic morality of the social interests. Burke suggests that four kinds of courses should be offered in the course of moral education in general education in colleges and universities: First, the course of American democracy profile, the content of which should go beyond the course of civic education in middle school. Second, the course of political philosophy, which should include social justice, civil liberties, social distribution and so on. Third, the important field of knowledge involves the basic principles of economics, such as unemployment, economic growth, inflation and trade, which are very important to sense of citizens responsibility, and fourth, the content of the United States in world affairs, and so on. In addition, he advocates the introduction of ethics courses in various professional colleges to help students solve ethical problems that may be encountered in the professional field in the future. But it is worth noting that the civic education curriculum in American colleges and universities is not ideal. As Burke points out, on the one hand, many college graduates, especially those in the field of natural science or professional education,

have not taken a course related to civic education in four years. According to statistics from American Department of Education, less than 1/3 of college students have taken an introduction to "American Government and Politics." and less than 1/10 of students have taken courses in "Political Philosophy" or "International Issues".

3. The Strategy Choice of American Higher Moral Education

3.1 Moral education by giving full play to the exemplary role of role models

Moral education in American colleges and universities attaches great importance to the role of role models, especially the cultural influence of peers. Peer culture means that any efforts made by students to promote moral and civic quality during college will, to some extent, be influenced by a strong peer culture, just as the influence of peers permeates all aspects of university life and has an extremely important impact on the moral education of universities. The study of Astin (1993) pointed out that the most important factor affecting the individual is the peer group. In other words, even if colleges and universities guide students to form correct values and moral norms during college, they are vulnerable to be influenced by their peers. Therefore, most colleges and universities will fully consider the interaction between peers in the process of student affairs management, and use various ways to promote the formation of peer relations between students.

In addition, the moral education of American colleges and universities also attaches great importance to the president and other administrative leaders, important figures and the role model of the university itself. Heath (1968) in a study of Harvard University found that students' values are deeply influenced by teachers who come into close contact with them, who are called moral role models.^[14] The study of Perry (1970) also found that the values of college students are directly influenced by educators. The open attitude of educators to values, doubts and personal responsibilities makes students have an intuitive understanding.^[15] In his book *Return to University*, Burke stressed "University authorities should lead by example in order to encourage and strengthen students' awareness of paying attention to moral behavior. To this end, university presidents, deans and other leaders should emphasize moral principles and the importance of caring for others, leading the way for the image of schools and students."^{[11][15]} For example, Harvard has not held any shares of any of its own professors; Harvard has also abandoned its \$30 million in tobacco, because the tobacco company's products are killing millions of people's lives.

3.2 To train the students' moral judgment ability to achieve the goal of moral education

In summing up years of research, Pascalera and Trenzani said, "We have found a common phenomenon--the level of moral reasoning of students is positively related

to the probability that they will be moral in all kinds of situations in reality." In the study of moral development psychology, Kohlberg(1984) points out that with the students' deep thinking and discussion of moral problems, students' moral judgment ability will be significantly improved.^[17] On the issue of strategic choice of moral education, American higher education circles are very worried that teachers will force "seemingly correct" values or moral concepts into students, and many scholars are also worried that teachers will use the discussion of controversial issues as a cover. Most American colleges and universities advocate that they cannot simply inculcate and teach, but they should guide students to draw correct value judgments, cultivate students' moral judgment ability, and let students seriously think about moral issues. The improvement of moral reasoning ability and the enhancement of moral consciousness can have some positive effects on students' behaviors. Therefore, students should be allowed to form correct moral concepts in the process of thinking about some moral problems, and put the correct moral concepts into practical action. The various moral courses at Harvard University will choose to have a moral conflict that allows students to participate in the thinking, debate and reasoning, so as to help promote moral development and force individuals to re-examine their values and beliefs. In addition, moral education or special moral courses in many other colleges and universities often set up moral discussion by setting up certain moral conflicts or selecting some cases from the real events of students' daily life, so that students can improve their rational judgment ability to moral problems or moral conflicts in reality through individual moral experience, analysis and discussion, so as to help students form more mature and stable. Pluralistic moral judgment and moral behavior.

3.3 Guide students to improve their sense of social responsibility through community experience

By providing community experience, young students are taught how to get along with others, so as to lay the foundation for cultivating civic responsibility and cooperative spirit. King (1994) points out that citizens in the past emphasize independence, self-motivation and personal achievement, while future citizens will depend on each other, help each other and have sympathy and respect for others. Students enter society by participating in community services, then they can understand the benefits of how they get along with others and work as team members, and their obligations as community members. This experience helps to promote the formation of college students' values. In the light of the development of higher education in American, most colleges and universities attach great importance to the experience of the community. For example, Harvard University promotes students to enter the community and experience cooperation and individual responsibility through the combination of the classroom teaching and community service project. Georgetown University stipulates that students can receive credit for more than one course after 40 hours of service to the community, and has set up a "volunteer and public service center" (VPS) to provide organizational support for the community experience of students in the whole school.

In the new era of rapid development, quality and efficiency improvement, and pursuit of higher quality of higher education, moral education, as an important part of higher education, contains important educational functions. The level of moral education is not only an important index to measure the development level of higher education, but also has an important impact on social development and national rejuvenation. Since the 1970s, great progress has been made in moral education in American, more than 300 ethics research centers have been set up in American, more and more moral courses have appeared in the curriculum of colleges and universities, and community service projects have also developed rapidly. More and more scientific research projects have proved that moral education in universities has an impact on the way students think about problems, and it also helps students cultivate a sense of responsibility to care about vulnerable groups. At present, there are still many problems in the specialization and effectiveness of moral education in Chinese colleges and universities. Therefore, it is necessary to systematically sort out and carefully identify the advantages of moral education in American colleges and universities, effectively absorb, draw lessons from the realistic strategies and practical experience of moral education in first-class colleges and universities in American, explore the establishment of moral education strategies with Chinese characteristics, and construct a pluralistic and three-dimensional moral education system, in order to promote the development of moral education in colleges and universities in China.

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