CHAPTER 1

Basic Rules of Education and Their Interrelationships

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This report is to be divided into three parts: Part 1 introduces the rule of the external relationship of education (hereafter referred to as “external rule” for short); Part 2 deals with the rule of the internal relationship of education (hereafter referred to as “internal rule” for short); Part 3 is concerned with the relationship between the external rule and the internal rule. The purpose of studying these rules is to further develop the present education reform.

The first basic rule of education is the rule of the external relationship of education, namely, the rule of the relationship between education and society. There is an inevitable relationship between education and society. Seen from the entire social system, this relationship exists within the social system; while seen from the education system, it refers to the relationship between education and other subsystems of society. This rule can be explained in one sentence: “Education must accommodate social development.” In my view, the word “accommodate” covers two aspects. On the one hand, education is “restrained” by social development; on the other hand, it “serves” social development. Therefore, this rule can be extended and restated as follows: “Education is bound to be restrained by the economy, politics and culture of a certain society, and serve the economic, political and social development of the society.” Now I will share more thoughts on these two aspects.

What social factors will restrain the development of education? In summary, there are mainly three factors. The first factor is the development level of productivity as well as that of science and technology. The development of productivity is the driving force behind social development. Because of this, the development of productivity is the most fundamental factor that restrains education development. Then why do I add the development level of science and technology in addition to the enhancement of the productivity development level and count them both as the first factor of restraint? Productivity is not the same thing as science and technology. So the development level of productivity is not equal to the development level of science and technology.

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In fact, the development level of modern productivity mainly depends on the development level of science and technology. Despite this, it cannot be simply said that a certain level of science and technology will result in an equivalent level of productivity, because other factors also play a role in determining the development level of productivity. A case in point is capital; without capital, it is impossible to raise the level of productivity. Another example is management; if the management level is substandard, it will also be impossible to raise productivity. Moreover, the development level of productivity, especially the development level of modern productivity, is mainly determined by the development level of science and technology. This is why we say that productivity is the driving force for social development, whereas science and technology is the key. Thus, these two can be combined and seen as one factor of restraint.

The most basic rule of education development is that it is bound to suffer restraint as a result of the development level of productivity as well as that of science and technology. For example, the scale and speed of education development, the cultivation objective, and the cultivation specification of schools at different levels, especially the major design, curriculum, and textbooks, are all restrained by the development level of productivity as well as that of science and technology. Let me give you an example of how the school education system is restrained by the development level of productivity. Whether in China or in Europe, in ancient times, there was no difference between university, middle school, and primary school, nor was there any distinction between vocational school and general school. Whether it was called national school, ancient school, the School of the Four Gates of the Capital, or state school, district school, and county school, they were all schools in the general sense. The same was true with schools in Europe, such as the rhetoric school and philosophy school in Greece and even the university in Athens. In China, if classifications had to be made, then schools were classified into different levels according to the position of students’ elder generation instead of the education level. Only when it came to the gestation period of capitalism did school education system start to expand upward, downward, and laterally. The result of upward expansion was the emergence of modern university. The outcome of downward expansion was the emergence of primary school and national education, which were aimed at cultivating workers with the ability to read, write, and calculate. The result of lateral expansion was the emergence of the vocational education system. Why did expansion happen in all these directions? The reason was the influence of productivity. The productivity of capitalism called for the diversification of schools. Up until now, due to greater development of science and technology as well as productivity, the school education one