Speech Delivered in Tsinghua University
(Full Text)
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Dear professors and students,

Today, I came to visit the students at Tsinghua University! During my last visit to Tsinghua, some students asked me whether China's leaders could give speech at Chinese universities just as they did when they visit foreign universities. The students also invited me to give a talk here at Tsinghua University. Today, I am here to deliver on my promise.

While walking into the Tsinghua Garden, I was very pleased to see your vibrant smiles and your youthful spirit. Tsinghua University is the terra of education and academic; and Tsinghua Garden is a rich land fostering talents. For the last hundred years, many of China's greatest intellectuals have been educated in this place: Tsinghua is truly a galaxy of talent with its students all over the world. “The wood and water of the garden are as a beauty with bright eyes.” I can still recall clearly the calming and tranquil scene described by Mr. Ziqing Zhu in his essay *The Lotus Pool by Moonlight*. Tsinghua University is already 100 years old. To a person, being 100 years old could mean longevity; but to a university, being 100 years old means youth and vitality. I wish Tsinghua University to stay young forever!

While standing here, I recall firstly Mr. Qichao Liang who had been a Tsinghua Professor. The title of his first speech at Tsinghua in November 1914 was *The Gentleman*. He encouraged students to become “a man of strong principles and integrity” by quoting *The Book of Changes*, “as Heaven’s movement is ever vigorous, so must a gentleman ceaselessly strive along with self-discipline. As Earth is vast and grand, so a gentleman must embrace everything with virtue and tolerance.” I think that Mr. Liang’s speech has significantly shaped the excellent school spirit of Tsinghua. Since then, “Self-discipline and Social Commitment” has become Tsinghua’s motto.

In traditional Chinese culture, the belief in “Self-discipline and Social Commitment” has always been extremely important. “Ceaselessly strive along with self-discipline,” is our precedents’ wisdom and state. It is deeply rooted in every Chinese person’s conscience, making the individual robust, unyielding, independent, and unbiased. “As Heaven’s movement is ever vigorous, so must a gentleman ceaselessly strive along
with self-discipline” means that a true gentleman should not only follow the development of objects and function autonomously with his or her “robust” characteristic, but also know current climate and realize current fate. In this way, the true gentleman can follow the “natural law,” integrate the “self-discipline” spirit, and facilitate objects’ movement and development, achieving a state in which “man is an integral part of the nature.”

To have “virtue and tolerance” means to be extensive, comprehensive and tolerating everything as the earth is. This is a positive facet of the ancient Chinese self-cultivation. Confucius once said “lenience helps to win over people,” “a gentleman helps others to do what is pleasing, but never helps them to do evil,” “those who bore no grudges incur little ill will.” Mencius believed “the best virtue of a gentleman is to do good things for the benefit of others,” and “a gentleman should carry on what benefits others and stop what harms them.” Virtue means to reinforce moral education. The old school anthem of Tsinghua University says, “One’s moral cultivations shall precede his academic talents”, which means that one should learn “generosity and courage” before he learn “literature skills” when he goes to school for education. Here, generosity and courage generally refer to what kind of person you are going to be, and literature skills refer to academic achievements. One’s morality shall be more important than his academic abilities.

According to the philosopher Zhang Dainian, Chinese spirit is the embodiment of two ideologies: “as Heaven’s movement is ever vigorous, so must a gentleman ceaselessly strive along with self-discipline. As Earth is vast and grand, so a gentleman must embrace everything with virtue and tolerance.” The spirits of striving and tolerance have crucial influences over the forming of the Chinese national spirit. With a history of 5,000 years, our nation withstood various internal and external problems. The prosperity we have today was achieved through innumerable trials and tribulations. It’s the spirit of ceaseless self-improvement, social commitment that supports all these efforts.

During a century of vicissitudes, Tsinghua University shared weal and woe with China. The old generation of Tsinghua scholars embraced romanticism. They were remarkably talented, highly loyal to the nation, and unquestionably persistent in their careers. They were devoted to our country and our nation. As an old president of Tsinghua once said, “Tsinghua University and each member of it cannot exist without our country and our people. The destiny of Tsinghua, as well as the destiny of us are closely connected with the destiny of our nation.” During the war against Japan invasion, Tsinghua University moved to the southwest border of China. In spite of the ceaseless air bombs and extremely severe conditions, teachers and students of Tsinghua carried on the spirit of diligent scholarship and constant endeavor. Many scholars were cultivated under such environment, and many teachers achieved excellent achievements there. During the construction of the new China, scholars from Tsinghua made vows of “devoting myself to the country,” and involved in the research