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Ethnic Education Should Undertake the Major Historic Task of Ethnic Unity and the Possibility of and Explorations into the Localization of Diversified Education

Abstract: *This article argues that the choice of cultures by ethnic education was determined by a given form of elitist ideology and a power agency. After the conversion of China's society from a planned economy to a market economy, this elitist ideology and power agency has become diversified and includes the elitist ideology of statism. Empowerment has resulted in the emergence of the elitist ideologies of localism and individualism and their participation in the games of cultural selection. This outcome does not conform to the reality of the multiethnic unity of China's society. Ethnic education concerns not only the members of ethnic groups but also the state. This overall view is necessary, although its premise is, of course, the existence of diverse individuals (multiculture). In this connection, we have examined the idea of, and research in, multicultural education, posited the possibility of localizing multicultural education, and explored ways of shifting from ideology to ecology—a broader and achievable concept of education.*

The most important function of ethnic education, as was determined by a nation of multiethnic unity, is fostering the awareness of ethnic unity in minors and the corresponding cultural capabilities, which include the capabilities of making cultural contacts, of communicating and comprehending, of living together and coexisting in harmony, and of cohering and uniting with all ethnic groups. These functions specifically manifested the commonalities of ethnic education and the overall national education as well as the particularities of ethnic education in terms of passing on and developing the culture of each ethnic group. Looking back at the road traversed by ethnic education, we see that the particularities and commonalities of ethnic education have been highly integrated despite experiencing periods of great complexity and even difficulty.[1]

In China's [current] period of social transformation, the processes of reform and opening up have disrupted many of the erstwhile balances, and new balances have yet to be formed or are in the course of being formed. Ethnic education is no exception. Although in the current period ethnic education has historically registered unprecedented development, the individuality of ethnic education has gradually faded away. As to the reasons for this, we believe analyses should first be conducted from education's choice of cultures. Choice of cultures is a subjective process governed by values and it involves different elitist ideologies as well as independent power quarters, and it also constitutes a process of the objective determining the subjective. For example, historical advances, social development, cultural changes, new ways of life, natural changes, and changes in material conditions—all may affect man's subjective nature. Hence, in this article we first start with subjectively oriented elitist ideologies, and then conduct an analysis of the cultural selections of the objectively existing power agencies. On this basis, we will explore and comment on the possibilities and limitations of localizing multicultural education. And finally, we will endeavor to posit some views and ideas with regard to shifting the orientation of ethnic education from ideologies to awareness ecologies.

Elitist Ideology and Cultural Selection

The relationship between education and culture is one of mutual dependence and mutual promotion. The multiculture is undoubtedly the main source of ethnic education, and ethnic education is an important carrier for the retention and sustained development of the multiculture as well as the discharging and development of its functions. However, ethnic education is selective in terms of cultures, and such selections have always been influenced by the elitist ideologies[2] of given societies. In the planned economy period, one of ethnic education's strongest functions was that of political integration, and in consequence the state's ideology was dominant. After the transformation of society from the planned economy to a market economy, the economic and social functions of ethnic education became increasingly salient and its cultural selections also became increasingly rational. Multiple elitist ideologies emerged: the elitist ideologies of statism, localism, and individualism. The

corresponding cultural resources of each of these elitist ideologies were of two categories: mainstream culture and multiculture.[3]

From the perspective of the historical development of culture, the history of the People's Republic of China is a cultural situation of "pluralism within unity" (*duoyuan yiti*), in which multicultural and mainstream culture coexist within one social entity. Hence, ethnic education should manifest the concept and practice of a "pluralism within unity education." The original intent of state pluralism within unity education was that members of an ethnic minority should, after undergoing ethnic education, possess the cultural elements of their own ethnic group and be able to merge into the mainstream culture to obtain more opportunities for social development and participation. However, one of today's realities is that more ethnic minority members are being exposed to mainstream culture in the course of school education, and the cultural elements of their own ethnic groups are vanishing or have already vanished from the renovated generation.

This outcome is obviously inconsistent with the original intent of ethnic education, and after analyzing the reasons, we believe that in terms of the policies for state ethnic minority education, in ethnic education emphasis is still being placed on individualized development, and in terms of implementation, emphasis is also being placed on the integration of particularity and commonality of pluralism within unity. However, specific implementation may be influenced by some highly complex factors: external factors, such as the modern trend toward mobility and globalization, which are eliminating local characteristics; and the internal factors, which are the need for change brought about by people's social mobility and expanded living spaces, and the capital and opportunities for entering a modern society.[4] Behind these complex factors, we see games among different elitist ideological groups, and rational selections by individuals: some are for upholding national unity and ethnic solidarity, others emphasize protection of ethnic cultures and coexistence with the mainstream culture, and still others proceed from considerations of personal development and career designing. For this reason, different paradigms have taken shape for cultural selections by ethnic education, as shown in Table 1.

Elitist Ideology of Statism

The elitist ideology of statism evinces a strong national awareness and maintains that ethnic education is a component part of national education; thus mainstream culture constitutes the main source of selection for ethnic education, ethnic education should be included in the unified educational system and standardized system of knowledge, and the ultimate function of ethnic education is to foster citizens for the state. In this way, ethnic education is a unified entity in terms of the educational system, standardized in terms of curriculum, equal in terms of education opportunities, fair and competitive in terms of screenings through examinations, and guaranteed in terms of the law. This, in a nutshell, is the "model of state overall standardized education."

Table 1

Elitist Ideologies and Cultural Forms

	Cultural forms	
Elitist ideology	Mainstream culture	Ethnic minority culture
Statism	State overall standardized education	Multicultural integrated education
Localism	Pluralism within unity education	Native (ethnic) cultural education
Individualism	State overall standardized education	Multicultural transitional education

The attitude of the elitist ideology of statism with regard to ethnic minority cultures is that the latter are plural, isolated, limited in applicability, and that their cultural content is of an excessively legendary, traditional, and fragmentary nature and short of scientific and modern characteristics. Hence, members of ethnic minority groups should study mainly the mainstream culture, and school education should exercise the educational function of "integrating multicultures." This, in fact, means turning people of different cultural backgrounds into citizens of a modern society who possess modern awareness and qualities.

The Elitist Ideology of Localism

Localist elitist groups have a strong "awareness of self-culture" and of merging into the mainstream culture, emphasize respect and equality among cultures, and acknowledge the important role of the mainstream culture in the development of modern society, ethnic groups, and individuals. They intensely desire that talent with dual cultures be turned out by ethnic education that can effectively serve their own ethnic regions as well as obtain resources and opportunities in mainstream society to develop themselves and benefit the locality. Hence, they posit the educational concept of "pluralism within unity." This educational model places equal emphasis on pluralism and unity, or may regard pluralism as a supplement to unity.

The current educational system and institution is based on mainstream culture and is characterized by modernity.[5] In ethnic education, ethnic minority culture is excluded in both open and hidden curricula. To preserve ethnic minority culture, it is necessary to set up a "system of native cultural education" that runs parallel to the overall standardized education of the state. Native teaching materials and school-based (*xiao ben*) curricula need to be energetically developed, and native cultural education should be implemented throughout the entire processes of household education, community education, and school education. Vigorous efforts are required to train local ethnic talent that loves the locality, is content with staying in the locality, and serves the locality. Thanks to promotion by local elites, the construction of local teaching

materials and the development of ethnic minority-based curricula have assumed initial proportions and have begun to manifest themselves in ethnic education.

The Elitist Ideology of Individualism

Modernity is a rational as well as an expanding process, and many ethnic minority regions are also experiencing this process. Thus, people's social actions are tending more and more toward the rationality. When confronted with choices of educational system and culture, it may be that things are better explained by using the perspective of institutionalism with rational choice to analyze the elitist ideology of individualism.[6] In terms of theory or in actual research, one finds that the elitist ideology of individualism and the elitist ideology of statism are highly consistent, because by choosing the mainstream culture individuals are more likely to increase their cultural capital, social adaptability, and opportunities for upward social mobility.[7] Specifically, the contents of mainstream culture are used in school education for secondary school and college entrance exams and as many of the standards in society for measuring students' educational achievement. Scholastically successful students naturally become individualist elites, and their choices have a guiding and symbolic effect.

Many people express their emotional needs by means of ethnic minority cultures, but when contradictions arise between emotions and realities, emotional behavior gives way to acts of instrumental rationality, because when one's own ethnic culture is unable to help the individual attain success in education and society as a sort of cultural capital, people will choose to relinquish it of their own accord. Many other persons hope to merge smoothly into the mainstream culture by means of bilingual education or transitional measures. Even so, the state and local authorities pay attention to the relationship between ethnic minority cultures and the mainstream culture when setting up and developing ethnic education. Recommendations for establishing bilingual education, developing teaching materials for local (ethnic) culture, and setting up ethnic schools and specialized college systems have all been realized in plans and actual implementation. However, rationality determines the sort of ideology that people prefer and possess. Various elitist ideologies form actual power agencies, and these power agencies turn ideologies into realities.

Power Agencies and Cultural Choices

Ethnic education is set up by the state especially for the purpose of providing members of ethnic minorities with the education they need. Hence the state is the power agency. The institutions, curricular structure, teaching objectives, contents, and form of ethnic education have been gradually established in unified state educational programs, policies for ethnic education have been formulated in each period, and ethnic education legislation was achieved. During the present social transformation, however, in terms of cultural selection alone, the power agency has evolved from the state as a single entity into three bodies: the state, the localities,

and individuals. The reason for this division is that the power to conduct cultural selection—formerly under unified state planning—has devolved to the localities, whereas the ultimate selection is decided by the individual. Such is the reality. There exists, in ethnic education, a power agency pedigree as well as institutional dispositions for culture made by various agencies (see Table 2).

Based on the State's Power

When planning and implementing education, the state always proceeds from the overall situation. Politically, it identifies with the county's unification and emphasizes solidarity, equality, and respect among all ethnic peoples; economically, it uses education to increase human capital to promote the economic development of the local society and national society; and in terms of education, it sets up a unified national educational system, implements nine-year compulsory education for all ethnic groups in a unified manner, promotes equal educational opportunities and equalizes the distribution of educational resources, and balances urban/rural and interregional development of education. It is evident that ethnic education institutions, the school system, the knowledge system, and campus culture are all built up on the basis of the mainstream culture. Hence, the mainstream culture is the source of the institutionalized knowledge of ethnic education.

As regards ethnic minority cultures, in consideration of the minority status, special nature, localized nature, isolated nature, and other such characteristics of ethnic minority cultures, these cultures could gradually be transitioned into the unified national education by means of bilingual education, and the best way to do so is by bringing about "multiculture integration education." Under this model, the native teaching materials and the school-based curricula that manifest ethnic minority culture would be set up as "the second classes" or "mobile curricula" and would in general exist and develop outside the institutional space. Also, in ethnic education, ethnic minority culture would in essence be a noninstitutionalized knowledge system.

Based on the Power of the Localities

Local power principals are subdivided into two categories. One of these consists of the local administrative elite, and the other, of the local intellectual elite. One can see from the historical development of ethnic education that, when the state exercises centralized power over education, the local administrative elites have the function of carrying out and supervising the state's ethnic education policies whereas the local intellectual elite have no rights of discourse or decision. But when the state devolves educational powers, the local administrative elite must give consideration to the domains of local administrative divisions and to local construction; they need to listen to opinions and suggestions from the local intellectual elite and must rationally plan ethnic education from the perspectives of the locality, the ethnic groups, and the individuals. Together, they realize that adjustments should

Table 2

Power Principals and Cultural Dispositions

	Cultural selection	
Power source	Mainstream culture	Ethnic minority culture
The state	Institutional knowledge	Noninstitutional knowledge
The locality	Institutional knowledge	Institutional knowledge
The individual	Institutional knowledge	Noninstitutional knowledge

be made to the overall trend of social development and ethnic development and that ethnic groups and individuals should comply with the mainstream culture in society. And so they acknowledge the overall social value of the mainstream culture and institutionalized knowledge and agree to members of ethnic minorities learning the mainstream culture, so that they may better come in contact with and merge into the mainstream culture.

However, when it comes to the intergenerational influences and changes brought about by the mainstream culture to their own ethnic groups, preservation of their ethnic culture becomes a cultural concern for the local elite. How should they preserve their own ethnic culture? Why is it that bilingual education, local teaching materials, and school-based curricula are unable to have any real effect? The local elite begin to reconsider the rationalization and institutionalization of the knowledge structure and temporal and spatial dispositions of ethnic education. They emphasize that in all regions where ethnic minorities are concentrated, their own cultures should be included in the institutionalized curricular system, at least where nine-year compulsory education is concerned. Similarly, the cultures of all ethnic groups should be manifested in nine-year compulsory education nationwide, just like the mainstream culture. This is the activity for "bringing ethnic cultures into (elementary and secondary school) classes" that is currently taking place. In the future, when conditions are ripe, ethnic cultures may also be "brought into colleges and universities." In the future, when everyone gives consideration to the preservation of ethnic cultures and not merely members of the ethnic minorities, the reality of a unified multinational culture will constitute our society's mainstream culture.

Based on the Power of the Individual

We have here an interesting circumstance. Where cultural selection is concerned, the great majority of the members of ethnic minorities are at one with the state, in that they identify mainstream culture as "institutional knowledge" and ethnic minority cultures as "noninstitutional knowledge." The reason is quite simple: social adaptation and social mobility require a background of mainstream culture rather than a background of ethnic minority culture. Although they evince a deep attachment to

ethnic minority cultures, are familiar with these in everyday life, identify themselves with them, and acquire them with ease, most members of ethnic minority groups and especially the younger generation are willing to walk away from them, because learning *putonghua* (Mandarin) and English enables them to go further afield, and by acquiring scientific knowledge and skills they are more likely to find a job and be able to start their own business. Successful individual elites serve as role models in terms of school education, social mobility, and securing social opportunities and development. This further enhances their identification with and selection of the mainstream culture. They place less and less importance on their own ethnic culture—so little that few even inquire about it. It is only natural that they regard their own ethnic culture as noninstitutional knowledge in school education. Learning it is optional, because there are no institutional requirements for doing so. And so, multicultural education degenerates into a mere formality.

Ranging from ideologies to the effects of diversified power agencies on cultural selections and institutional dispositions, we have always sensed confusion and contradictions. The state has set up a unified system of school education in the interests of overall solidarity and development. This was necessary, and all countries have integrated state educational systems. Although individuals [in China] opt for the same educational selection as the state, they do not do so out of the same considerations as the state as a whole; theirs are rational choices based on personal interests. When the localities had no power to decide cultural selections for school education, they carried out the state's unified education strategies; but when the localities were granted the power to determine cultural selections, individuals have played rationality against sentiment and renounced the knowledge and cultures of a local nature.

In view of the above analyses of the vanishing individuality of ethnic education, we have reason to feel concerned. After all, ethnic minority regions, compact communities, groups, history, and culture are still in existence, as is the situation of "pluralism within unity," and the most urgent matter at this time is to have ethnic education exercise its function of promoting local social and economic development and preserve the cultures and histories of ethnic minority people. It is therefore most necessary to explore corresponding models for ethnic education.

The Possibility of Localizing Multicultural Education and Research Thereon

The foregoing was an analysis of the reasons for the weakening individuality of ethnic education. We believe that education should not only meet the needs of the development of society, groups of people, and individuals but also have the function of guiding the direction of advance, the quo vadimus, of society, groups of people, and individuals. The weakening individuality of ethnic education complies with the former need, whereas the latter function determines that ethnic education should fully preserve its individuality. The reasons are as follows: the Chinese nation has

had a situation of cultural diversity in past history, and that situation will remain unchanged for a long time to come. The existence of such cultural diversity has, in history, always been the wellspring of the Chinese nation's mainstream culture. Cultural diversity is not static; it is constantly changing and innovating along with advances in nature, society, and people. The reflection of local customs and practices in culture is a factor for the harmony and stability of ethnic regions. Frequent contacts between cultures in today's society will give people more perspectives for understanding the relationships among nature, society, and man. These reasons amply demonstrate the importance of having ethnic education transmit cultural diversity.

However, explorations into multicultural education must be linked with the political, cultural, and regional situations of multinational unity in China's society. The concept and model of multicultural education was brought in from Western society. Multicultural education is a product of the national renaissance movement in the Western countries in the 1960s and 1970s, that is, the civil rights movement that arose at the time in the United States. Under the impulsion of this movement, multicultural education in the United States gave reflection to education that powerfully challenged racism and various kinds of discrimination and, in particular, swept up a "black whirlwind" in the curricular reform movement.[8] Due to excessive emphasis on ethnic identity and exclusion of the Others, however, multicultural education failed to attain the goals of social equality and justice, but instead further isolated ethnic minority groups and prevented them from effectively melding into mainstream society. In terms of the concept itself, however, multicultural education is a way to realize multicultural equality, respect, and justice. When we bring in this model, we must by all means take a path with Chinese characteristics.

Academic quarters have recently been exploring the possibility of, and channels for, realizing multicultural education in China.[9] In 2002, Teng Xing edited and compiled the *Collection of Works on Educational Anthropology Research* (two series), Among them, Teng's work *Ethnic Groups, Culture and Education* assembles the main theses he published over the past two decades, including all his dissertations on multicultural education. Qian Minhui's *Research on the Relationship Between Multicultural and Modern Education: The Field of Vision of Educational Anthropology and Fieldwork* discusses the relationship between modern education and multicultural education against the temporal and discursive background of modernity, postmodernity, and globalism as well as the development of ethnic education and the direction this is taking. Moreover, he provides reference texts for continued studies on "the relationship between multicultural and modern education."

Zhang Shiya has edited and compiled the collection *Library of Multicultural and Ethnic Education*.[10] Most of the authors in this collection used, in the main, the field survey methods of anthropology to conduct mainly on-the-spot investigations. All the final conclusions pertain to the discursive background of multicultural education. Case-type references and advice of special significance are provided for the reform and development of ethnic education.

In 2006, Wan Minggang and Wang Jian edited and compiled the *Collection of*

Books on Research in Multiculture and Southwest Ethnic Education. Among the writings in it are reviews of Western theory, comparisons of experience in other countries, and practical research on current circumstances, countermeasures, and reforms of ethnic education in China itself.[11] On the whole, however, most of the research focuses on the basic education stage in compact ethnic communities in the northwest and involves macro, meso, and micro aspects.

The year 2007 saw the publication of the book *All Rivers Flow Apace: Collected Theses from International Forums on Multicultural Education Against the Background of Globalization,* edited by Zhang Shiya. It includes not a few research theses on the multicultural education domain in China. Among these are comprehensive descriptions and regional surveys that involve a wide range of specific topics but are all from the perspective of multicultural education.[12]

In 2008, the Chinese Taiwan scholars Tan Guangding, Liu Meihui, and You Meihui edited and wrote *Multicultural Education,* in which they explored cultural disparities among the many ethnic groups in Taiwanese society, discrepancies that are not only vestiges from history but exist more as vivid realities in today's life. The book states, "Taiwan is indeed a multiethnic society, but it appears that the multicultural concept has yet to be deeply implanted and to strike roots on this land, and various kinds of stereotyped impressions, biases, and distinctions (discriminations) are in universal evidence. However, while we are busy handling multiethnic topics within Taiwan itself, globalization trends that are flooding in have brought along multicultural environments and challenges of greater complexity."[13]

The globalization challenge that the island of Taiwan's multiculturalism has encountered is similar to the circumstances on the Chinese mainland. Judging from the cultural significance alone, integrated multicultural education is moving from the state level to a globalized level. This conforms to the statement by Professor Teng Xing, a disciple of the well-known Chinese anthropologist Lin Yaohua, that multiethnic societies are facing two major challenges: "conflicts and harmony between state integration and ethnic cultural pluralization" and "conflicts and harmony between global integration and ethnic cultural pluralization."[14] We believe that ethnic education should take on the historical mission of dealing with conflicts and establishing harmony. Conflicts are differences, harmony is common ground, and realizing a world of great harmony is what human society wants. Our views and considerations on ethnic education are posited on the basis of this real desire.

The above analyses apprises us that people see the current ethnic education of pluralism within unity as a top-down statist education, in which case setting up multicultural education would naturally involve education of a local, folk, and ethnic nature. It is precisely this dichotomous view that defines multicultural education as an indigenous education (*xiangtu jiaoyu*), that develops local teaching materials and fosters local sentiments and social culture, and that the outcome of such education is to awaken and enhance local (ethnic) awareness. There is, intrinsically, nothing reprehensible about this sort of awareness. However, in today's circumstances of

globalization, this awareness may arouse conflicts generated by differences and cause people to be exceptionally sensitive and hard to deal with. The fact is that we are already situated in a world that is increasingly interdependent and in which contacts are increasingly frequent. Some people appropriately call it a "global village." Hence, multicultural education conducted within ethnic education should guide students toward learning, respecting and understanding other cultures and civilizations, and loving humanity and nature, and being broadminded and magnanimous. These goals of education are the main topics explored below.

Multicultural Education Should Shift from Ideology to Ecology

Exploration of social phenomena from the perspective of ecology focuses on mutual relationships and relationships between the individual and the whole. The advantage of this perspective is that it avoids looking at matters in isolation, as against past methods that attached importance solely to time and not to space and is therefore more in keeping with analyses of modern society. Looking back at other perspectives, we find that multicultural integrative education overemphasizes integration and neglects multiplicity and thereby triggers local anxieties about the protection of cultural diversity, whereas indigenous education overemphasizes the local culture and neglects other cultures, especially the relationship of different cultures with the mainstream culture, and ultimately is bound to retreat into a state of isolation and occlusion. Only when our awareness itself assumes an "ecological nature"—an awareness that is in a state of constant reflection and change due to its broader contacts—will it reveal the limitations of the life that we see as customary or that we envision, and thereby trigger latent abilities to reenvision new goals in life, attitudes, and aspirations.[15] Based on such considerations, we posit that the following aspects of multicultural education in China should be restructured.[16]

Multicultural Dialogue Education

Dialogue education is an ideal form of education. The two parties to a dialogue are equal and mutually respectful, and there is no compulsion or inculcation. The objective of dialogue is to clearly identify problems and achieve understanding of the Others. China's ethnic minorities took shape in the course of history, unlike the ethnic groups in the United States that were formed by waves of various immigrants. Hence, all ethnic minorities have their own rich cultural impedimenta and their unique world outlooks and values. In these circumstances, only by conducting dialogues can one hear "different voices" and "different expressions." In the process of dialogue, one learns to listen, differentiate, leave matters for future consideration, ask questions, express knowledge in different ways, and improve one's capabilities in these aspects. One also learns to respect, tolerate, accept, appreciate, exist in harmony with the Others, and improve one's "moral" and human qualities in these respects. Being able, through dialogue, to appreciate the good in

other people's cultures instead of only one's own culture—such is a quality and condition indispensable for ethnic solidarity and social harmony.

Imbued with such concepts, we no longer see matters from the dichotomy of statism and localism, nor do we construct curricula based on the imbalance between institutional knowledge and noninstitutional knowledge. Instead, we see these as being together and ecologically linked. In this way, we construct multicultural texts based on educational tiers and levels when making curricular dispositions. We may conduct dialogues with commonly understood language. Lower grades in elementary schools would first conduct dialogues in mother tongues and the standard Han language (accurate translations would be needed for the bilingual stage), higher grades would conduct dialogues in standard Han language, and college students could dialogue in the Han and English languages. One's own history and culture would be spread throughout society and to other countries, to serve and be enjoyed by humanity as a whole.

Multicultural Tong Da (Access and Comprehension) Education

The basis of dialogue education is the possession of a certain amount of multicultural knowledge. If one knows nothing about the knowledge or background of an ethnic minority, no true dialogue is possible. If one pays no attention at all to the existence and development of other ethnic minorities, one will not obtain any information or knowledge about them, and again, no true dialogue will be possible. And if one has not genuinely established an ecological awareness, one will remain with one's original ideology (of bias against disparities), will sense no motivation to learn about other people's cultures, and will similarly be unable to conduct true dialogues. Only by resolving these issues can one start to realize multicultural *tong da* (access and comprehension) education.

The many ethnic minorities in China's society constitute a rich multicultural ecology. The significance of each of these cultures lies in comprehending the relationships between man, society, and nature, and the function of each culture is manifested in humanity's life, productive activities, leisure entertainment, and intellectual thoughts. Each culture is the product of a given time and space and is linked to an era, and it flourishes in time like life itself. All this furnishes us with the conditions for realizing multicultural *tong da* education. *Tong* (access) requires that we come in contact with diverse cultural and be able to identify them in different spaces, and *da* (comprehension) requires that we learn about diverse cultures and know what their existence in different spaces signifies and symbolizes. Combining *tong* and *da* is to say that we are able to know and comprehend the significances of different cultures and are capable of interpreting and explaining them.

Multicultural *tong da* education may be established in line with the levels of school education and the complexity of the culture. Elementary schools could employ, in the main, direct visual perception with increased audiovisual, graphic, and actual-object forms of teaching. Secondary schools could conduct teaching

that combines actual objects and the written word, and senior secondary schools and colleges could conduct teaching by means of the written word and forums. It is hoped that these considerations may provide references and lines of thinking for the current activities designed to "bring ethnic culture into the classroom." We believe that by implementing multicultural *tong da* education, we will in future certainly be able to foster the multicultural qualities of modern humanity and that people will proceed from appreciating the best of each other's cultures to the ideal state where everyone shares the best of each other's cultures.

Multicultural **Ronghui** *(Convergence) Education*

Mankind's state of great harmony (*da tong*) is a natural process not brought about by compulsion or compaction. And so, how will one naturally bring about the great harmony in human society? From the perspective of ecology, ice and snow melt to become drops of water, drops of water form streams, streams converge in big rivers, and big rivers flow into the ocean. All this is a natural process. Multicultural convergence education is a sort of awareness ecology (*yishi shengtai*) that from the small self gradually merges into a larger self—an education that, in its entire process, is not constantly permeated with the Others, biases, ranks, or discriminatory concepts. Here, people of different ethnicities are all principals of society, and all are personal participants in, and creators of, history.

Given this, how is multicultural convergence education to be conducted? This is, for us, a new topic, an endeavor to gain a thorough understanding of humanity's material and spiritual civilizations and manifest these in the tiers and levels of school education. We could, for example, extract the key common elements formed by different religious beliefs, such as our ancestors' concerns and explanations in their productive activities and in regard to natural phenomena. Such related education would enable us to avoid misunderstandings caused by differences in religions. These concepts should be retained in tiered education and in curricular construction, and we should begin right now to conduct such research. In a spatial sense, we should begin first with China's ethnic minority cultures, then go to the Han culture, which converged with multiculturalism, and finally end with the different civilizations the world over. In a life course sense, we need to build up the contexts and systems of multicultural convergence education for elementary schools, secondary schools, senior secondary schools, colleges and universities, and adult education. Only thus will ethnic education be better able to assume the historic mission of maintaining ethnic solidarity and promoting harmony in human society.

Notes

1. For details, see Pengfei Wei, ed., *A Study on Legislation for China's Ethnic Minority Education* (Beijing: Hongqi Press, 2004), 1–26.
2. The concept "elitist ideology" is derived from the definition by the American sociologist Charles Wright Mills, who maintains that an elite stratum shaped by power exists

in society. For details of his explanations, see Charles Wright Mills, *The Power Elite,* trans. Kun Wang and Rong Xu (Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 2004), 4. This concept is very frequently cited and discussed in anthropology of education, and references can be found in the book *The State Nobility* by the well-known French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (Oxford: Polity Press, 1996), as well as in the typology of ideology of Earl Hopper's "theoretical statement." This concept here refers to the authorities who are able to formulate and implement the policies and reforms of ethnic minority education.

3. Although there is still controversy in academic circles over this definition, where ethnic education is concerned, "mainstream culture" may be regarded as the symbol of a whole, unified, and commonly shared society; it makes it easier for people to establish mutual contacts, obtain new cultural elements, expand their living spaces, adapt to social developments, and enhance their mobility. "Multiculturalism" may refer to ethnic minority cultures, which are symbols of social localization, multiplicity, and uniqueness and in which people live and mix within given regions and spaces, possess their own long-standing customs and culture, and have little mobility.

4. What modern society is remains a topic of discussion in the academic field. In any case, the Inkeles modernization index system and evaluation standards constitute the most important references for evaluating whether a society has reached the level of modernization. See Lizhong Xie, *Toward Multiple Discourse Analysis: Sociological Implications of the Post-Modern Thoughts* (Beijing: Renmin University of China Press, 2009), 124–29.

5. For details, see Minhui Qian, *A Study on the Relationship Between Multiculturalism and Modern Education: The Vision of Anthropology of Education and Field Work* (Beijing: Minzu Publishing House, 2008), 12–28; also see Minhui Qian, *Xiandai xing ji xiandai xing zhuanxing zhi chuyi* [A Discussion on Modernity and the Transformation of Modernity], in *Problems in Modern China: Modernization or Modernity,* ed. Qin Xiao, 64–74 (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2009).

6. Rational choice institutionalism is individualistic in terms of methodology. It takes the individual as the basic unit of analysis and regards institutional dispositions as the main interpretative variable to explain and predict personal behavior and its combined results; the individual's predilection for maximization of effectiveness is exogenous to the institution; personal behavior is based on the calculation of "returns"; and the function of the institution lies in enhancing the effectiveness of the individual. Hence, people bring about changes in the institution by means of redesigning the institution. Xue Xiaoyuan and Chen Jiagang, eds., *Globalization and Neo-institutionalism* (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2004), 6–7.

7. The author's program "Multicultural Education and Modernity—Theory and Practice in China Proper" was a major program of the humanities and social sciences research base of the ministry of education in 2007. In this study, the author chose a number of communities in four regions inhabited by compact groups of ethnic minorities—Yunnan, Gansu, Inner Mongolia, and Yanbian—to conduct on-the-spot surveys and found this tendency both in questionnaire data and interview materials. The program report will be submitted at the end of 2010.

8. William. F. Pinar and William M. Reynolds, *Understanding Curriculum,* trans. Zhang Hua (Beijing: Educational Science Press, 2003), 329–33.

9. Peking University M.A. candidates Li Huichan, Zhou Huajie, and Lin Nan have assembled and compiled documentary information in this respect. For details, see Li Huichan, "Multi-culture and Education Status Quo: An Empirical Survey and Study in the Ewenki Autonomous Banner in Inner Mongolia" (M.A. thesis, Peking University, June 2009).

10. This collection includes *Walking into the Southwest: Surveys of Southwest Ethnic Education; Talking About the Southwest: Develop the West and Ethnic Education; Education amid Rituals: Anthropological Analysis of the Adulthood Rites Among the Mosuo; Field Surveys of Reproductive Culture and Analysis of Educational Content: An Anthropological*

Reading of Zhanyi Yanfang Miao Education; Tendencies in Changes: A Study of Transitional Period School Culture Ecology; Dislocations and Choices: On the Main Functions and Orientations of Rural School Education. All were published by the Southwest Normal University Press in 2003.

11. Included in this series are Wang Jian and Wan Minggang's *A Comparative Study of Multicultural Education;* Wan Minggang's *The Multicultural Field of Vision: A Study on Values and Ethnic Identity;* Li Dingren's *A Study of the Development of School-Based Curricula;* Lu Guoguang and Wang Jiayi's *A Study on the Current State of Development of Northwest Ethnic Minority Basic Education and Countermeasures;* and Yang Jun's *A Study on the Balanced Development of Basic Education in the Northwest Ethnic Minority Regions.* All were published by the Ethnic Publishing House in 2006.

12. Zhang Shiya, ed., *All Rivers Flow Apace: Collected Theses from International Forums on Multicultural Education Against the Background of Globalization* (Chongqing: Southwest Normal University Press, 2007).

13. Tan Guangding, Liu Meihui, and You Meihui, eds., *Multicultural Education* (Taiwan: Higher Education and Culture, 2008), 2.

14. See Teng Xing, *Cultural Change and Bilingual Education: Anthropological Fieldwork and Textual Compilation on Education in Liangshan Yi Communities.* Preface Lin Yaohua, 3 (Beijing: Educational Science Press), 2001.

15. David Jeffrey Smith, *Globalization and Postmodern Education,* trans. Guo Yangsheng (Beijing: Education Science Press, 2000), 297.

16. In terms of academics, this is a domain explored by scholars, it is possible to obtain a common understandings on theoretical explorations; whereas in terms of institutions and policies, this is determined by authoritative persons who decide and implement at three levels—the state, localities, and schools.