

Analysis on the Historical Experience of Philosophy and Social Science When Dealing With Emergent Events: A Study of the 2008 Wenchuan Earthquake

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Abstract

China is in the key period of social transformation and economic development at present. In this period, various emergent events have happened, which brings out an important realistic problem about improving the ability of social service of philosophy and social science. This paper, based on the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake, analyzes the historical experience of social service that philosophy and social science workers have done, drawing conclusion that philosophy and social science must focus on the important realistic problems in stages, develop a social-service community with natural science and provide intellectual to support the masses when dealing with emergent events. It is of great significance for strengthening the function of social service of philosophy and social science, and the prospective study of emergent events.

Key words: Philosophy and social science; Emergent events; 2008 Wenchuan earthquake; Historical experience

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INTRODUCTION

In the period of social transformation and economic development, Chinese modern civilization order system is still in the process of exploration and development, when a variety of natural and social contradiction is obvious. Since the 1990s, China has entered into a high frequency period of the occurrence of emergent events, bringing out a serious threat to the safety of the masses' lives and property. China attaches great importance to the emergent events. *The Emergency Response Law of the People's Republic of China* which was effective on November 1st, 2007, has defined the concept of emergent events clearly. (The law prescribes that emergent events includes natural disasters, accidents disasters, public health and social security events. Emergent events usually happened suddenly, cause or may cause serious social harm, and need to take emergency measures to deal with. The rage of emergent events usually can be divided into special major, major, larger and general level according to the harm degree, influence factors and so on.) (National Public Emergency Contingency Plans.) China has carried out emergent events management since the outbreak of SARS in 2003. Although the time is not long, China has gotten outstanding achievement. Especially in 2008, Wenchuan earthquake has showed that China's response to sudden natural disasters and public emergency management has begun to take effect. All kinds of emergent events in recent years, not only put forward the major theoretical and practical proposition for a better social service of philosophy and science, but also make philosophy social science workers deep understand that philosophy and science is a primary weapon of dealing with the structural contradiction in the social transition, so they should ensure a full role in social service of philosophy and social science by in-depth research and theoretical innovation, to find out the crux of the problem, to suit the remedy to the case, to formulate effective reform measures.

This paper based on the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake, analyzes the historical experience of social service that philosophy and social science workers have done, and then draw a conclusion that philosophy social science has played an important role in this disaster and get some important enlightenment. It is of a great significance for strengthening the function of social service of philosophy and social science, and the prospective study of emergent events.

1. A BRIEF REVIEW OF 2008 WENCHUAN EARTHQUAKE

It suddenly took 8 earthquake in Wenchuan county, Aba Tibetan and Qiang autonomous prefecture in Sichuan province of China, at 2:28 p.m. on May 12, 2008. Experts appraisal that Wenchuan earthquake whose strength and intensity is much higher than the 1976 Tangshan earthquake is one of the biggest and most destructive earthquakes since the founding of new China. It hits the earth of about 50 square kilometers in China, including extremely damage area around 10,882 square kilometers (Lu, 2008).

1.1 Heavy Losses in 2008 Wenchuan Earthquake

The earthquake has caused an enormous destructive. First, there were high casualties. According to the ministry of civil affairs reports, it had confirmed that 69,227 people were killed and 374,643 people were injured and 17,923 people were missing by September 25th, 2008. (The Information Department...) Second, there was a serious economic loss. The national bureau of statistics data showed that 2008 Wenchuan earthquake had caused the direct economic loss of RMB845.2 billion as of September 4, 2008. Schools, hospitals and other non-residential housing losses accounted for 20.4% of total, while infrastructure, roads, bridges and other urban infrastructure was 21.9%. (The State Council Information Office...) Third, secondary disasters aggravated the disaster losses. Tang Jiaba Lake formed by the river blocking after a landslide was the biggest lake and most at risk in Beichuan disaster areas. In Qingchuan, here had formed a lake more than 1,200 cubic meters of water, which was identified as a high risk, threatening tens of thousands of downstream people's safety.

1.2 Facing Danger Fearlessly

The Party Central Committee led the relief of the whole nation general mobilization in a coordinating and fearless way. By May 15th, 2008, The People's Liberation Army and armed police forces had called out 95,553 soldiers to join this battle, and had flied close to 300 sorties. Anything else, the Army Health System had sent several medical teams, 72 epidemic prevention teams, 2,160 Medical workers and health supplies valued more than RMB37 million to the disaster areas (Zhang, 2010).

The Red Cross Society of China and China Charity Federation had called on the whole society to help the people in the stricken area after the earthquake. By June 1st, 2008, the central finance allocating funds had reached RMB18.298 billion, and social donation was more than RMB 40 billion.

1.3 Eminent Post-Disaster Reconstruction Work

Under the leadership of the CPC (Communist Party of China) and the support of the national masses, 2008 Wenchuan earthquake reconstruction work had been completed. By the end of May 2012, 29,692 projects included the overall plan for national post-disaster recovery and reconstruction had been completed 99% of all, and general estimate of investment valued RMB865.8 billion had been completed 99.5%. Now, the disaster areas not only achieve the dream that every family has a house to live in, but also mostly achieve that every family has employment and everyone has a security. Now in the disaster areas, the production system operates orderly, the post-disaster life is exuberant, urban and rural areas as a whole progress steady, economic growth mode transforms rapidly, industrial layout has become more reasonable, public infrastructure has become completed, and the service system of urban and rural public cultural has been basically completed.

2. THE ANALYSIS ON THE HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE OF SOCIAL SERVICE

The great achievement got in the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake relief and reconstruction has fully proved that philosophy and social science has an irreplaceable role as well as natural science when dealing with emergent events and it plays an important role of pushing forward the theories innovation system construction of philosophy and social science.

2.1 Philosophy and Social Science Is the Methodology of Searching for Truth and Cognizing Rules

As Jiang Zemin pointed out "philosophy and social science shoulders the duties that knowing the world, inheriting civilization, theory system's innovation and serving the society" (Jiang, 2002). Namely, philosophy and social science is aimed at helping people set up a correct outlook on life, the world and values. It also raises people's theoretical level, and set up a scientific thinking, so that we can understand the law of society and social development better. Therefore, a certain sense, philosophy and social science play a role of improving, inspiring and promoting people in spirit. During the relief, philosophy and social science workers gave full play to the leading role of philosophy and social science. They integrated disciplines about post—disaster relief in a timely and efficient manner by interdisciplinary cooperation and

multi-angle analyses. Zhang Peizhen, who worked in the Institute of Geology, China Seismological Bureau, immediately explained the cause of 2008 Wenchuan earthquake to the members of NPC (the National People's Congress), made clear why the animals had behaved so abnormally, and warned people to cognitive disasters with a scientific thinking. Philosophy social science workers printed a large number of non-profit publications in time so that they were able to send these journals to the disaster areas at the first time (Li, 2012). By this way, Philosophy social science workers helped the masses expand the scope of disasters prevention and deepen them cognition, which had stopped the spread of rumors, and had prevented the panic mood effectively. Therefore, the masses eliminated the misunderstanding of the earthquake disaster (Zhu, 2003).

2.2 Philosophy and Social Science Is the Edge Tool to Solidify the Core Value of Patriotism, Courtesy, Honesty, Solidarity, Friendship, Devotion and Contribution

Philosophy and social science workers rushed to the disaster areas in time. They helped people turn the spirit of high political enthusiasm, patriotic passion, subject consciousness, and dedication into the core value which plays an infection, incentive and inspiring role in the relief. The mainstream media and the vast majority of journalists acted extremely outstandingly in the earthquake relief, and played a guiding role in leading the social public opinion, forming the correct values, as well as dominating the discourse. For example, CCTV released the news to all over the world in the first time, grabbing the head-start to report the situation of this disaster event. What's more? CCTV lived main information in 24 hours by a special program named *Concerted Efforts, Earthquake Relief*, besides in the programs *Shock* and *Topics in Focus* showed the special reports (Li & Li, 2009). The People's Daily introduced 2008 Wenchuan earthquake in agenda setting, and themes were successively focused on the victims of resettlement, the disaster relief, the National Day of mourning, the post-disaster psychological intervention and reconstruction work, secondary disasters, and the interpretation of the relevant laws and regulations. Hence the journalists had set up a fast and unimpeded information bridge between the masses and the government (Guo). Through the perspective of media, journalists dug deep into the typical examples, actively advocated the spirit of earthquake relief, and presented several moving scenes to the whole society. Former Premier Wen Jiabao encouraged Beichuan Middle School students who survived the earthquake during his inspection of the temporary classrooms and set up in a tent, while Mr. Tan Qianqiu covered four students with their open arms but sacrificed himself. A pregnant nurse named Lin Xuerong whose husband was missing

still stuck to her post, while a 12-year-old boy named Du Ping, arming his seven-month-old brother, walked 8 hours on foot to escape from the dangerous area. According to these efforts by journalists, people were armed with advanced ideas, and encouraged by advanced cases. It not only shocked and inspired the masses' mind, but also met the masses' emotional appeals. By vigorously carrying forward the positive energy in the process of disaster relief, the nation had formed the positive social consciousness, and worked together to keep earthquake relief activity getting on smoothly.

2.3 Philosophy and Social Science Is the Thinking Tool of Social Management and Social Service

After 2008 Wenchuan earthquake, the changes in economic, society, interest groups and thought idea were so huge that the tasks of social construction and social management were so heavy. It required philosophy and social science workers to inspect reality with a new thinking and an objective perspective, and learn to serve the profound changes with the innovation theory of philosophy and social science. On the one hand, the Party central committee paid attention to three social functions (to know the world, to guide the value, and to serve the society) of philosophy and social science, adjusted the Party's style of leadership, decision making and management way. On the other hand, the Party respected human rights. It always regarded the cure and rescue as the most important task. Besides, the Party strengthened the subjective status of victims, gave full play to victims' creativity spirit, and encouraged victims to save each other, which had fully reflected the innovative thinking in social management and service of philosophy and social science. For example, in terms of post-disaster reconstruction, the Party and government adopted the newest achievement of academic innovation of philosophy and social science. They explored proper patterns of post-disaster reconstruction, and put forward the reconstruction of the fixed-point assistance mechanism, so formed a government-led aided reconstructions mode ultimately. Faced with the complex community reconstruction work, philosophy and social science workers were aimed at sustaining innovations. According to incomplete statistics, there were more than 300 institutions and more than 5,000 social workers taking participate in professional social service after 2008 Wenchuan earthquake (Dai, 2011). With all of their own professional advantage, workers addressed the volunteers rationally to help victims solve the problem of psychological mood, and rebuild the community life. They had launched a large number of social service projects, such as Alley Plan, Spiritual Home and One Plus Five Social Work Station. All of them played an excellent part in post-earthquake recovery and reconstruction (Bian, Lin, & Deng, 2012).

2.4 Only When Philosophy and Social Science and Natural Science Are Collaborated Can Scientist Promote the Social Civilization Progress

Einstein once said: "The scientific knowledge and technology alone cannot make human towards happiness, or noble life." After a separation of natural science and philosophy and social science, the intersection degree of modern natural science and social science is deepening. Systematic and coordination of science are strengthening, which can build the cornerstone of human social development. In the study of natural science, the methodology of philosophy and social science cannot be ignored at all. Because philosophy and social science provides guidelines about methodology for researches and innovation of natural science, and it clears the development direction of natural science to promote social progress. In the process of relief, it is the perfect combination of natural science with philosophy and social science that created one after another miracle to benefit victims, and reduce the disaster losses. We can say that the post-disaster psychological intervention is a good model resulting from the combination of natural science and social science. After the happening of earthquake, psychological counseling workers rushed to the scene rapidly. They made full use of modern advanced methods to take intervention measure and assistance, relieving their pain and stress of the countless victims. By the end of March 2009, CAS's (Chinese Academy of Sciences) institute of psychology had organized more than 1000 workers in the disaster areas to carry out psychological assistance, and its accumulative workload total was 15,000 people, including more than 400 times large group intervention, more than 12,000 individual intervention. Psychological aid objects involved teachers and students from the primary and secondary school, cadres, officers, soldiers, urban and rural people, the elderly, women, disabled persons and other kinds of people. CAS not only provided 150 thousand books and manuals about psychological aid, but it also set up free counseling hotline covering more than 200 thousand people in the disaster areas. Psychological intervention had deepened government's understanding about social service, while met demands of the tens of thousands of victims. In *The Regulation of the Recovery and Reconstruction after Wenchuan Earthquake*, it is the first time to bring psychological assistance into the post-disaster reconstruction system. In addition, the specialized rescue teams, medical and health care teams, fire control teams, engineers and technicians had gave full play to their professional advantage, and had carried out comprehensive rescue to make the natural science and philosophy social science cooperate and support each other together. Whatever the advanced television, network equipment, or a variety of satellite models such as Feng Yun, Bei Dou, even the life-detector based on radar,

sonars and IR detectors, professional cutting machine (Wei, 2008), all of them had revealed the necessity and inevitability of the combination between philosophy social science and natural science.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the concrete practice of Wenchuan earthquake, philosophy and social science have achieved a great success in dealing with the emergent events, and left many precious wealth. We can get some important enlightenment from it.

3.1 Philosophy and Social Science Needs to Pay More Attention to Interdisciplinary Coordination

In this relief, philosophy and social science workers by an interdisciplinary cooperation way, integrated all kinds of complicated practical problems involving Medicine, Psychology, Ekistics, Sociology and so on. They effectively solved the ethical issues such as personal property rights, individual's esteem, medical ethics and scientific moral. Through mutual reference and absorption of interdisciplinary research methods, it had given rise to many interdisciplinary and emerging disciplines, and created some new theoretical points such as Disaster Psychology, Post -disaster Cultural Reconstruction. Through the accommodation between scientific spirit and humanistic spirit, it had realized a harmonious development among men, men and nature, men and society. What's more? In this relief, philosophy and social science workers achieved so many practice innovations, for example, the partner assistance model, social interventions, psychosocial intervention, diverse cultural restoration, folklore tourism exploitation, new rural construction and so on. All of them were resulted from science workers' wisdom in different phases of emergent events. We can learn a lot from the historical experience. In front of emergent events, it is almost impossible to get successful when deal with them only by one department, one single subject, or one single team. At present, the realistic and difficult problems of the scarcity of a variety of talent, the weak function of natural science, the limited integration between natural science and social science, the separation from science and humanisms, are in most urgent need to address. However, how to solve these problems? As far as I am concerned, not only need science workers to strengthen the internal discipline intersection in philosophy and social science itself, more need to strengthen the interdisciplinary cooperation between philosophy social science and natural science. To deal with emergent events better and more efficiently, science workers should refer to these historical experience and approaches from such SARS, 2008 Wenchuan earthquake. Therefore, it will form a high efficient cooperation linkage mechanism to put forward the solutions those specific to different emergent events.

3.2 Dealing With Emergent Events Must Hold on Important Practical Problems in Stages

Contradiction view is the essence and core of materialist dialectics. The law of unity of opposites arouses people to pay more attention to the principle contradiction of society and meanwhile remind people of considering and solving secondary contradiction. Only in this way can philosophy and social science produce good service effects. How the truth is to be applied in the practice of earthquake relief? At the beginning of the earthquake, the main contradiction was to save people's life. With the development of the rescue work, philosophy and social science worker began to deploy professional psychological intervention; on the other hand, they set up a good atmosphere building up the confidence and determination to win for victims to against the earthquake. For instance, department of press and publication focusing on realistic problems had made and rolled a large number of live shows. The presses published a large number of chapbooks about earthquake prevention, self-protection, public health and social security, and they sent them to the victims timely. When Wenchuan earthquake was into the stage of recovery, philosophy and social science workers shifted the focus to the theory summary that philosophy and social science workers should do to solve the practical problems in great catastrophe. In such a change, the capacity of dealing with emergent events of philosophy and social science was improved observably. Anyhow, if philosophy and social science wants to play a bigger role in emergent events, it must aim at the emphases based on reality in stages. Hence, scientists can formulate specific responses to meet the urgent need. Meanwhile, in order to deal with the next encounter more easily and actively, scientists should speed up to establish a systematized and complete disaster response mechanism including disaster warning, post-disaster relief and post-disaster reconstruction.

3.3 The Main Focus of Philosophy and Social Science is to Provide Intellectual Support

Providing intellectual support is the sacred mission of social service of philosophy and social science. In this relief, scientists starting from their own areas of expertise, paid close attention to social class problems and public opinions caused by earthquake disaster. After making on-the-spot investigation and doing scientific estimates, they armed the fighting will with scientific theory and made recommendations actively, which fully embodied the function of social service of philosophy and social science. CAS's institute of psychology based on the on-the-spot investigations and scientific analyses presented more than 10 copies of policy recommendations to the Party and the state. It had made a great theoretical contribution for *Regulations on the Recovery and Reconstruction after Wenchuan Earthquake* which was enacted in 2008. Under the help of philosophy and social workers, The Party Central Committee and government solved the

problem of the Qiang cultural restoration, which has important significance and value orientation for the culture construction in the future to China. Based on the practice of Wenchuan earthquake, philosophy and social science workers had established Information and Intellectual Support System for all levels of government to understand the masses, reflect public opinion, concentrate intelligence, and cherish the resources of the masses. In the great practice, philosophy and social science workers had known that it was the starting point and foothold for scientists to serve the masses and socialistic modernization construction. Especially faced with the emergent events caused by social transformation and fragile natural environment, scientists should base on reality, care for the fate of their nation, and explore the truth by a multi-disciplinary, multi-level and multi-dimensional manner. Therefore, they can provide intellectual support for the Party and government to deal with varieties of emergent events.

3.4 Philosophy and Social Science Workers Should Regard Theoretical Service for the Masses as Their Own Duties

Objectively speaking, the masses are not only the main body of the affected but also the body of the reconstruction. On the one hand, emergent events usually are related to personal interest, life and property, on the other hand, the masses involved in the disaster have a limited education level so it is not very strange that some common truth is often ignored even conflicted. Hence, philosophy and social science workers should pay more attention to the main body involved in catastrophe and make the best use of the situation and guide full play the theoretical value. In this relief, there was a big difference in the situation of perception, response and adaptability of earthquake disasters among the masses. The researchers such as Sui Guiwu found that the comprehensive level of perception and response of the masses was limited, that how many the skills and knowledge about earthquake the masses holding on were directly related to the response behavior and attitude of victims in or after the earthquake. What had found by researchers not only provided an empirical support for the masses to recognize the inner regularity and disaster characteristic by a simple way, also made philosophy and social science workers put forward strategies and suggestions about strengthening the public perception and response to disasters much more authoritatively. In 2008 Wenchuan earthquake, philosophy and social science workers transformed the esoteric knowledge into the plain truth, provided philosophy and social science to the masses in a loved way, and made moralistic language become easy to understand. Through the efforts of the scientists, the masses had dispelled anger, returned to rational, faced to reality, and conducted lawfully, finally found the solution to solve problems. At the same time, philosophy and social science worker also received the baptism of the mind.

CONCLUSIONS

Philosophy and social science shoulders the duties of knowing the world, inheriting civilization, theory system's innovation and serving the society. The serious situation of the current China urgently needs to give full play to the function of social service of philosophical and social science. Hence, philosophy and social sciences should not only unveil and walk down the hall to join the masses, but also focus on the important realistic problem in stages, develop a social-service community with natural science and provide intellectual to support the masses when dealing with emergent events.

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