

# Research on Hu Shi's Academic Thoughts

-- Taking the study of Chang Shi Ji as an example

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**Abstract.** Hu Shi's position as a poet in the history of China literature, Chang Shi Ji's pivotal role in the history of modern literature in China and Hu Shi's powerful political meaning in the new culture movement all have unique and important positions in their respective fields. Hu Shi, an academic celebrity and educator, was influenced by his family and school education, and gradually formed a set of his own academic thoughts since childhood. He believes that the spirit of doubt, criticism, freedom, self-denial and science must be cultivated and persisted in the process of academic research, and at the same time, scientific academic research methods should be applied. First, we should correctly choose the starting point of study, and choose disciplines and majors according to our learning interests and personal endowments. It is very beneficial to the research of modern literature to correctly apply the Marxist viewpoint, analyze and evaluate it historically and concretely, and affirm the progressive role played by Chang Shi Ji in the May 4th New Literature Movement. Taking Chang Shi Ji as an example, this paper discusses the research of Hu Shi's academic thought.

**Keywords:** Hu Shi; Chang Shi Ji; Modern literature; Academic ideas.

## 1. Introduction

Hu Shi is an important figure in the history of modern culture in China, and there has been a debate on the evaluation of his cultural and academic thoughts for 70 years since the May 4th Movement [1]. Hu Shi was mainly active in the academic and educational circles all his life. His academic thoughts undoubtedly set off waves in the academic circles at that time, and guided and trained a large number of students. As the enlightenment master of China's ideological and cultural circles since the May 4th Movement, Mr. Hu Shi is a controversial figure in the history of modern literature, but his academic achievements have been affirmed by most scholars at home and abroad [2]. The study of China's intellectual history is the most important part of his academic career, and it is also an attempt to solve a series of problems raised by the society at that time. Hu Shi is an advocate of the new culture movement and a leader of new vernacular poetry. His "Chang Shi Ji" is the opening work of modern vernacular poetry in China, representing the beginning of a new style, which is of great significance [3]. It is very beneficial to the research of modern literature to correctly apply Marxist viewpoint, analyze and evaluate it historically and concretely, and affirm the progressive role played by Chang Shi Ji in the May 4th New Literature Movement.

How to construct a new ideological and theoretical model, and apply this new theory and method that not only surpasses the tradition but does not deviate from it to the transformation of China culture, so that it can become the theoretical and cultural resources of the new era, and enable China to keep its identity with the national culture in the process of going global, is the task of China academic circles in this period and for a long time to come [4]. As a political symbol, Hu Shi promoted the status and important role of Chang Shi Ji, which, as the first vernacular poetry collection, also promoted Hu Shi's cultural status and important role. Finally, Hu Shi's cultural status in turn promoted its greater political appeal [5]. And this tension relationship arises from the strange combination of Hu Shi and Chang Shi Ji and their political meanings [6]. If Hu Shi and Chang Shi Ji are regarded as two cultural symbols, there is an internal tension between them [7]. And this tension relationship is an important reason why Hu Shi and Chang Shi Ji both achieved great fame. There is also a very important intermediary factor at work in the middle, that is, the political meaning of Hu Shi himself, that is, the advocate of new culture or the initiator of cultural revolution.

## 2. Image of Hu Shi's Chang Shi Ji

When Hu Shi studied the history of China's thoughts, he had a unique content, that is, he made a systematic study of the evolution ideas of the pre-Qin philosophers. Therefore, Hu Shizhi is interested in the perception of evolution, and regards the temporal theory of pre-Qin philosophers as one of the contents of his study of China's thought, which is largely restricted by his subjective thought. While studying in America, Hu Shi was deeply influenced by western democracy and freedom, and attached great importance to scientific knowledge and achievements. In this situation, Hu Shi's knowledge structure must contain a large number of factors related to science, democracy and free thought. Hu Shi advocated the attitude of "delaying the judgment" in the study of ancient history, and advocated not jumping to conclusions without sufficient materials. He once said that his view of ancient history is to shorten the ancient history first, start from the time of the Book of Songs, and wait until epigraphy and archaeology are developed in the future, and then slowly lengthen the history before the Eastern Zhou Dynasty with archaeological materials. As for the spirit and content of science, it is what Hu Shi wants to focus on from the history of China's thoughts. He tried his best to find the scientific spirit and method in China's history and thought history. History of Famous Scholars in Pre-Qin Dynasty is his work to study the development of ancient logical methods in China, which can be said to be his attempt to study the "scientific" methods in ancient China.

Hu Shi was born in philosophy, and the academic category he devoted his life to was also philosophy. His attainments in philosophy should be beyond literature. However, "Chang Shi Ji" is remembered not because it has unprecedented verses and gloomy and profound thoughts, but more because it is a special symbol of the new poetry and even the new culture movement advocated by Hu Shi [8]. Poetry is the induction nerve of the times, and the information conveyed by each poem beats the notes of the thoughts of the times. Therefore, starting from the consciousness of the new century, this paper takes Chang Shi Ji, the first new poetry collection created by Hu Shixin, as the blueprint, and reconsiders Hu Shi's poetry creation. The formation of Hu Shi's academic thought is related to his family education. Hu Shi's father, Hu Chuan, only taught him a few hundred Chinese characters during his lifetime, but his scholarly spirit had an enlightening influence on Hu Shi. Fig. 1 shows the cover of Chang Shi Ji.

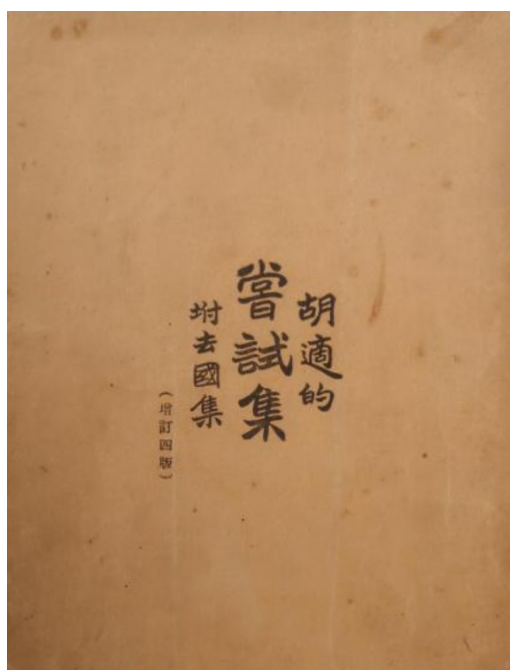


Figure 1. Cover of Chang Shi Ji

"Chang Shi Ji" itself represents the trace of this movement, which is a new culture movement. It can also be summarized as the process that the backward and beaten China people get rid of the

backward, decadent and old China step by step. This can be seen from the chapter arrangement of *Chang Shi Ji* itself. The maturity of Hu Shi's academic thought is attributed to his own understanding in the process of school education and school education, especially the influence and inspiration of several teachers and figures during his study in the United States. Hu Shi was in the era of great social changes in China, and had the same concern for society, government and current situation as the intellectuals in China at that time. Although Hu Shi regarded Confucianism as a virtue, he made contributions to himself by Taoism. Unlike those famous scholars, Hu Shi took a posture of governing the country and leveling the world, and built the ultimate goal of benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom. Although Taoism regards people's life as indifferent, it is full of melancholy for the world. For example, when he goes to school, he doesn't talk about success or failure with a diploma, but aims to learn new knowledge freely, thus turning passive learning from death into active learning.

### 3. Connotation of Hu Shi's academic thought

The connotation of Hu Shi's academic thought lies in the comprehensive application of scholarship spirit and scholarship method, taking the right choice of study future and major as the appropriate entry point for scholarship, and inheriting and conserving the basic scholarship spirit. Hu Shi highly agrees with the importance of freedom of thought, and believes that without freedom of thought, there is no real thought, or without freedom of thought, only destructive thoughts can be produced: flattering thoughts or complaining thoughts. The construction of society depends on academic progress, and academic progress requires the atmosphere of freedom of thought to make scholars hold individual thoughts [9]. There is always a standard for the quality of poetry, which is nothing more than sentences and emotions. Compared with other styles of poetry, poetry pays more attention to a kind of artistic conception and implicit beauty. Some people say it's *Chang Shi Ji* by Hu Shi, and many people say it's *Goddess* by Guo Moruo. Most of those who support the latter are because those poems in Hu Shi's *Chang Shi Ji* are too unlike poems. If young people want to have their own thoughts and promote their ideological progress, the first thing to do is to maintain their own freedom of thought and independence of personality, and to recognize and tolerate the thoughts and personalities of others, so that everyone is equal before knowledge. The picture shows Hu Shi in his youth.



Figure 2. Hu Shi

The early crescent poets and the modernist poets with Modern magazine as their positions occupied their own sides, so they had a more obvious and profound influence on the development of China's poetry in later generations. These are all the things that China's poetry urgently needed when it broke new ground. However, "Chang Shi Ji" doesn't seem to have any of these, that is to say, it not only doesn't have a beautiful appearance, but also doesn't break through the traditional aesthetic category of poetry in its connotation. Therefore, it basically doesn't have a great demonstration effect on later poetry creation. On the general theory of basic methods and habits, Hu Shi thinks that although each discipline has its own research methods, it also has something in common, that is, a basic method, which Hu Shi calls a basic method habit. You must do it yourself. The so-called thought comes from practice. Only by applying what you have learned and practicing it repeatedly can you make rigorous and precise learning.

#### **4. The influence of Hu Shi's academic thought**

Hu Shi's academic thought has an important influence on his own cultivation, on the ideological and educational circles, and at the same time, it is rich in historical and epochal reference significance. First of all, for himself, he became a celebrity in modern China, and formed his own unique style in dealing with people. In Hu Shi's view, it is difficult to distinguish between the current situation and the trend of thought. They are mutually causal. It was the current situation that gave birth to that trend of thought. The current situation was influenced by the trend of thought, and there must be great changes. Therefore, the current situation gives birth to the trend of thought, the trend of thought gives birth to the current situation, and the current situation gives birth to a new trend of thought. Therefore, he paid special attention to the study of the current situation and social trend of thought, which is sometimes not completely reflected by philosophers. Therefore, he also paid attention to the study of some critical and satirical novel writers' thoughts, which is also a reflection of social trend of thought and current situation.

The history of philosophy is a delicate history of thought, a systematic and theoretical history of thought development. Therefore, in terms of time, it must be later, because human thought always develops from low level to high level, from irrational to rational. And the history of faith is even earlier, including the early religious beliefs and customs. No matter he is the leader of the new trend of thought, the advocate of vernacular literature in the literary revolution, or the president of Peking University in the educational field, he has made symbolic contributions to the guidance of the new trend of thought revolution, literary revolution and educational reform by using his own set of academic thoughts. His academic honor has been recognized and respected by the society, and he has shaped and improved his own academic theory with scientific spirit and scientific methods. The process of ideological development is divided into several stages, each stage has its content and characteristics, and each stage has its historical significance.

In the ideological and educational circles, Hu Shi's academic thought is of great significance. For the ideological circle, he advocated a new attitude towards the new trend of thought, that is, the attitude of judgment, which broke the ideological pattern of Chinese style and western style. The vernacular literature revolution advocated by him can be transformed into an objective and neutral part in Hu Shi's experimental scientific method under certain conditions. His academic spirit, that is, skeptical, critical, free, disagreeable and scientific spirit and scientific method, among which precision and academic vitality are the academic spirit that we should inherit and carry forward in today's academic research and youth study. No matter what the actual evaluation results are, we should look at the systematic theory explored and followed by this historical figure under the background of the times with a learning and reference view, and focus on understanding the historical facts, so as to modernize and apply the essence of his academic thoughts.

## 5. Conclusions

For scholars in China, their attitude towards life is not too much of Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, or the mixture of the three, but no matter which result, they will fall into different degrees of paranoia. Hu Shi's academic thought has important reference significance even today. His experimental scientific method can be transformed into an objective and neutral part under certain conditions. His academic spirit, that is, skeptical, critical, free, disagreeable and scientific spirit and scientific method, among which precision and academic vitality are the academic spirit that we should inherit and carry forward in today's academic circles and young people's study and research. Throughout Mr. Hu Shi's life, no matter whether he was studying or being an official, running a family or a country, or seeking fame, though there were many wonderful creations along the way, he did not become a great man in the history of civilization after all, which may be the inevitable result of his ideological evolution. Hu Shi, "Chang Shi Ji" and Hu Shi's political meaning as a symbol form a very interesting interlocking relationship. They are supplying blood to each other, so they become stronger as a whole.

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