

# The Inaugural Meeting of the Russell Study Society (1920)<sup>2</sup>

The preparatory meeting of the Russell Study Society (*Luosu xueshuo yanjiuhui* 羅素學說研究會, “Society for Study of Russell’s Teaching”) took place at the Western Returned Scholars Association (*Ou-Mei tongxuehui* 歐美同學會) on November 28<sup>th</sup>. (See this newspaper.) Yesterday (Tuesday) at 7 o’clock in the evening, an inaugural discussion was conducted by the Chinese language section of the society. The author of this report was also present at the symposium, sitting in the back rows of the auditorium. The report presents a summary of the entire discussion. The author of this report hopes that the recordings will be appreciated by all those who take great delight in hearing news from the world of science.

1. The number of participants: The symposium was attended by altogether 23 members of the society, including Fu Peiqing (傅佩青) and Zhao Yuanren (趙元任).
2. The time of the discussion: From 7 to 9.30 PM.
3. The method of the discussion: (A) First, someone would express his/her own opinions about a book by Russell he or she had already read in the form of an essay, whose content would be read at the meeting. After

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2 “Luosu xueshuo yanjiuhui kaihui 羅素學說研究會開會.” *Minguo ribao* 民國日報, December 4 1920, 2.

that, everyone would engage in an open discussion. (B) Another member of the society would then point out a specific question, about which he would also compose an essay. This essay would, in turn, be handed to another member of the society, who would then summarize its conclusions. This summary would then be revised and summarized for the second time. The final summary would then be subjected to common discussion. (C) Subsequently, a question would be formed, which would be studied by all members. Each member would express his/her own views in the form of an essay, which would be handed out to another member for review. In turn, this would then serve as a topic of the next symposium. (D) The English manuscripts of Russell's works "Analysis of Mind" and "Bolshevism and World Politics" are to be put into printing. Five hundred copies of the provisional text will be created, so that each member will be able to get one and use it as a reference material for the lectures.

4. Discussed questions: (A) "What is truth?" This question contains two different meanings, on which any discussion of this question ought to be based. (a) What is the meaning of truth? (b) How do we know the truth? In other words, the first one is a qualitative, ontological and logical question, whereas the second one is a normative, epistemological and psychological question. This question was set by Wang Mou (王某). In the course of the meeting, both Fu and Zhao delivered their ample expositions of this problem and, in addition, also pointed out the literature on this topic which ought to be consulted by the discussants. The most important works of reference, pointed out by Fu and Zhao, included Russell's *Philosophical Essays*, Bradley's *Truth and Reality*, Zhaoqin's [趙琴] *The Meaning of Thought*, Schiller's *Studies in Humanism*, and Russell's *Problems of Philosophy* etc. (B) Marriage and the Population Question. The main reference material is the sixth chapter of Russell's book *Principles of Social Reconstruction*. On these two questions, each member should submit his/her essay at Fu Peiqing's home before the next Monday, so that these may be discussed at the next meeting. (i) In the case that the members of the society themselves will not be able to resolve these questions, the society will ask Russell to come and explain these questions at one of its future meetings. (ii) Dora Black shall also be invited to give a lecture.

Because this society is open to the public, anyone who would like to wholeheartedly study Russell's teachings can join the society at any time. In addition to that, if any of the non-members would like to study

any of the questions discussed at the society's meetings, he or she is invited to submit his/her article to the society. If one would desire to join the society, this can be arranged with Zhang Tingqian (章廷謙) at the first courtyard of Peking University. Here concludes the summary of the discussions conducted by the society on the aforementioned evening.

*(Translated by Jan Vrhovski)*