

*QU Shiyong*

## Russell's Contribution to Us (1921)<sup>1</sup>

In his current visit, Russell has been in China for total period of eight or nine months, of which for two months he was struggling with an illness. After he recuperated, he was still unable to carry on lecturing. He only delivered one lecture in the final days before his departure. In the afternoon hours on July 15 Russell finally left China.

Now, how exactly have we benefited from Russell's visit here in China? This is a very important question. According to my personal opinion, we could have gained at least two different kinds of advantages, which, however, do not at all touch on his theories and teachings as such. As a matter of fact, any single person's theories, regardless of who that person is, can in no way be imposed upon all people in the world, making them agree with it. Thus, for example, I personally do not agree with the conclusions of Russell's philosophy – that is the philosophy of New Realism. Speaking more directly, I simply do not believe in the accuracy of answers to these few philosophical questions, neither do I agree with the spirit of guild socialism (*ji'erte shexhui zhuyi* 基爾特社會主義), which he advocates, and its major organizational principles, while, at the same time, I still believe that it is a feasible kind of political system. As

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1 Qu Shiyong 瞿世英 (1921). "Luosu dui women de gongxian 羅素對我們的貢獻 (Russell's Contribution to Us)." *Luosu yuekan* 羅素月刊, 1(4), 1-3.

far as I am concerned, there are also some parts of his theory I agree with, while there are some parts I am still rather sceptical about, and finally some parts I do not agree with at all. Of course, I cannot simply go on criticizing his theory by claiming that certain parts of it benefit us all, while other parts do not benefit us at all. The only correct way of answering this question is to do it on one's own behalf.

However, during his visit Russell did bestow upon us two exceptionally precious things. If these two things were really received by everyone of us and if everyone is also able to put them to use, then, irrespective of the matter we use them in or the problem we want to resolve with them, we will always be successful. These two treasures are:

1. His personality. When one is conversing with Russell, one gets the feeling that he is a person who really embodies a scholarly attitude. If one catches only a glimpse of him, one can already imagine what a solemn spirit must have surrounded him when he was put into prison. This kind of spirit to sacrifice himself for his ideology is what has influenced us to a great degree. This was his first contribution.
2. His method. In the last two days before his departure, I payed Russell a visit. During our conversation I asked the following question: "According to your own opinion, how did your visit here in China contribute to Chinese academic circles?" To which he responded by asking me the same question. I responded: "I believe that your greatest contribution to us has been your analytical method. If in your visit to China you were not able to shift Chinese thought in the direction of analysis, making the Chinese use your method, then wouldn't you consider this whole journey to have been for nothing?" In that moment, a very joyful expression took shape on his face, upon which he replied: "This is my opinion as well." Therefore, I believe that the second treasure he left behind was his analytical method.

Regardless of whether one is conducting research into a scientific question or handling different affairs, the analytical method is indispensable. And it does not matter what profession one is working in, if one does not possess the spirit of sacrificing oneself for one's convictions, one will never completely succeed. Russell possesses both of these things. If we will obtain these two precious treasures, then Russell will not consider his journey to have been entirely in vain.

*(Translated by Jan Vrhovski)*