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Create the Best of Special Education
Construct Soundless Temple of Knowledge

- Interview of Director Bao Guodong of Tianjin Technical College for the Deaf at Tianjing University of Technology

By Journalist Li Ying

People say being teachers is the most glorious career under the Sun. They are like the red candles burning themselves selflessly and delivering knowledge to students; they are like silkworms tenaciously devoting themselves to the career of education; they are more like a chalk, pure and honest, and remaining anonymous.

Today, I tell the story of how Director Bao of Tianjin Technical College for the Deaf (TTCD) at Tianjing University of Technology (TUT) and his teachers educate these disabled children with their kind-hearts, love and wisdom. As I'm talking with Director Bao, I can not help but feel that his seriousness and perseverance toward work. He is like a book, every time we read it we get something new and inspiring. His persistence and devotion also deeply affects his colleagues.

TTCD is the first postsecondary technical institute opened to deaf students in our country. In 1994, TUT set up a Special Education Department to enroll deaf students. In 1997 TTCD was officially established and started to enroll deaf students nationwide. It offers baccalaureate degree in Computer Science and Technology and Art and Design. An associate degree is also offered in Computer Applications and Fashion Design and Craft. Currently, there are 153 students coming from over 20 provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions. One-third of 18 permanent teaching staff and six joint appointment teaching staff are either associate professors or professors.

TTCD followed Chairman Jiang Zheming's thought: "Creativity is the eternal force for a nation's development." Instead of the traditional schooling where deaf students are in a self-contained environment, TTCD bravely experimented with new schooling model in which deaf students participate together with over 10,000 hearing students in all the after class activities on campus. Only academic teaching is delivered separately using special teaching methods that best facilitate deaf students' learning. This new schooling greatly boosted deaf students' confidence, self-independence, self-respect, and self-strengthening, and diminished barriers between deaf students and hearing students. TTCD's faculty cares about each and every one of these deaf students' life and learning as a result of teacher's noble commitment, devotion and love. For example, the test scores of deaf student Wang Jing from Hubei Province had reached the college enrollment standard. TTCD made a special decision to admit her in spite of the fact that she has another disability besides being deaf. Furthermore, TTCD also arranged to have her mother come and work as cleaning staff on campus which enormously relieved their financial burden.

The mother and daughter who were deeply touched reported TTCD's demeanor to Tianjin Daily. Tianjin Daily reported the news and received a positive reaction from members of our society. June 2002, after three years of hard work of both the faculty and the deaf students, the First TTCD Fashion Major Graduation Work was exhibited on campus. Deaf students' self-designed and self-modeled show won the praise of domestic and international experts.

After a few years at TTCD, deaf students' academic knowledge and hands-on ability are greatly increased. There are 16 students who became Party members and many students won prizes in various sports and recreational events. Right now there are over 300 deaf students working as teachers, technical advisors, webpage-makers, and self-employed business managers. Some have also become leaders in disabled organizations.

TTCD leaders use the "Three Representatives" as guiding principles. They are at the forefront of the special education field, exploring and working to narrow the gap between special education in China and international standards. Director Bao, who has been devoting his whole life to a career in education, not only has a strong desire to establish a new kind of schooling for deaf students, but also is putting that desire into action. TTCD emphasizes drawing upon international experiences and has established collaboration with NTID in USA and TUT in Japan, and has become a partner college of PEN-International which is funded by The Nippon Foundation of Japan. With the help of PEN-International, TTCD has established a multi-medial lab. 13 teachers were sent to America to receive training focusing on deaf education theories and education technology. This year another 10 faculty visited Japan and the US. TTCD also hosted 20 Japanese and American deaf students and faculty members, providing a special occasion when international deaf students were able to meet and communicate in person. Activities like these positively promoted China's deaf education and enlarged the scope of knowledge in China.

TTCD was nominated as a model university of the 9th Five-year Plan Period in 2000. In 2001, TTCD was honored as a model school by Tianjing Municipality, and its Party branch was also selected as an excellent Party branch. November 2001, TTCD's research product, "Create Technical College for the Deaf with its Special Characteristics" was given the first prize by the Tianjing Municipal Postsecondary Education Department. TTCD also won the second prize for best educational achievement at the national level. Director Bao was nominated as the "Outstanding Person in the Field of Disabled People's Work" by Tianjin Municipality in 2001. In the same year Director Bao was honored as the "Excellent Party Member" by the Tianjin Municipal Education Department. He was named "Individuals with Highest Teaching Morals" by the National Education Union. Chairman Deng Pufang of the National Federation for Disabled People visited TTCD three times and highly praised TTCD's accomplishment. He said that "TTCD is the star in the field of special education." On September 22, a day before Mid-Autumn Festival, Director Bao together with two deaf students visited the master of mathematics, Mr. Chen Shengshen. Deaf students' art works were highly praised by Mr. Chen. He signed "Boundless Future" for the students and donated 20,000 Yuan to set up the Chen Shengshen scholarship.

In a short period of five years, TTCD has become a model for China's education because of its new thinking, its courageousness for trying the unprecedented, and its creativity. TTCD is becoming the star of special education domestically and internationally.