

## CONFUCIAN IDEALISM AND DEWEY'S PRAGMATISM IN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Educational theories are generated partly because of the many real problems encountered by various educational systems. When these problems emerge, many practical solutions are proposed. The solutions always have strong theoretical background. In other words, behind the proposed programs or curricula suggested as an improvement over the present educational situation, there are always one or more than one coherent educational theories. Two educational theories which serve as theoretical backgrounds for solving present educational problems will be discussed in this paper.

What are some of the problems encountered by educational systems today? When solutions are proposed, what are their theoretical bases? In this paper, some of the actual problems caused by defects in the present educational system will be enumerated. Then some solutions proposed by many educators will be discussed. Two different theories will be described. Essentially both theories are similar at least in their origins. Finally it will be demonstrated that either theory in its original form can be advanced to solve educational problems. The two theories in educational philosophy are Confucian idealism and Dewey's pragmatism.

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A young man from New York who thought he had reached almost every "goal" in life found out that in spite of his success he still felt lost. John Sawhill, president of New York University, said it was "a lack of purpose, a misconception that material affluence equals happiness," which caused the feeling of being lost in the young man's mind. Sawhill says there are many people like our young man, whose education provided the means for financial rewards, but failed to give him personal depth.<sup>1</sup> Our educational system seems to forget that its students are human beings. Students come to school to learn certain skills but they also want to be able to define their goals in life. Universities today resemble factories that produce what the market wants. Students learn from school the techniques for acquiring material or social positions. Thus modern education does not consider students as human beings. After a B.A. or B.S. students have not learned the meaning of life nor have they acquired a value system. They are like ships without rudders. Many college graduates today are ill-equipped in terms of the understanding of their own cultural heritage, common sense, and adequate human relationships. "They remain shortchanged in the humanities—history, literature, philosophy, and the ideals and practices of the past that have shaped the society they enter."<sup>2</sup> Those young people are not being properly educated. Here, there is a question of the meaning of being educated.

Today, to be educated means to obtain the necessary skills for certain material gains in a person's life. And it also means learning only those subjects which please an individual. The former should be categorized as skillful training, which can happen in any master and apprentice relationship. This is one of the functions of education. However, it misses the most important element that is a lifelong process of growth in

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<sup>1</sup> "Liberal Arts Education Is Needed Today," *Southern Illinoisan*, November 7, 1978, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> "To Reclaim a Legacy": Text of Report on Humanities in Education," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 28, 1984, p. 16.

respect to the development of personality and the gaining of knowledge and understanding along with solid foundation of studies of history, literature, philosophy and other humanistic fields. In Dean Rosovsky's words, "Education does not end with a degree but is a lifetime process."<sup>3</sup> Educational institutions exist not only to develop the skills of individuals but, what is more important, to provide the opportunity and material for students to widen their experience and deepen their thoughts. Eventually, this work leads students to know themselves and to decide what they really want in their lives. "Education gives you a better understanding of yourself and the world. You are not necessarily better at driving a car or doing your income tax. But the hope is that education will allow you by understanding to enjoy life more, because understanding life contributes to its meaning."<sup>4</sup> Being educated should mean not only to firmly hold the specific knowledge of certain trades or the empirical technique of some fields, but also to have cultivated a strong liberal arts background which would be reflected in understanding humanities and defining and realizing personal goals in life.

Most of today's academic programs are intended to please the customers who, in this case, are students. Schools are supplying the demands of students who are consumers. Students thus decide what they want to learn. When students have their freedom in deciding the subjects they like to study, some necessary subjects which can strengthen students' basic abilities to think, reason and experience have been neglected. Students are interested in those subjects which can promise them the quick result of economic gain. The courses that help develop their goal of life do not appeal to students. The result can be summed up in the words of the president of Boston University, John Silber:

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<sup>3</sup> "Dean Henry Rosovsky Leads the Harvard Revolt against 'Chinese Menu' Education," *People*, 10, No. 13 (Sept. 25, 1978), p. 44.

<sup>4</sup> "Dean Henry Rosovsky," p. 46.

The Ph. D. is no longer a guarantee that its holder is truly educated. Everyone has seen the consequences of this: How frequently we now meet Ph. D.'s who are incapable of writing correctly or speaking effectively; who are so narrow in their interests that the civilizing effect of the humanities appears to have been entirely lost upon them; who are so jejune in their research interests as to call into question the entire scholarly enterprise.<sup>5</sup>

The long-term life goal of being educated appears not to have much significance in educational system today, although no educator denies the value of the concept.

The above problematic educational situations have been serious for a long time. To ease the seriousness of these situations many alternative plans in terms of educational administration have been proposed and tried. For instance, with Harvard University in the forefront, a "back to basics" plan of curriculum has been initiated. The emphasis is on academic standards with rigid requirements and shared intellectual experience. There is an attempt to insure in the student a feeling that one is educated and humanity restored.

Dean Henry Rosovsky of Harvard University said in reviewing the current curriculum of general education:

When our students graduate at commencement, we welcome them to the company of educated men and women. Hearing it year after year started to bother me. I felt many of our students weren't getting a true, well-balanced education. Instead they were being quickly thrown into career and hobby education. There seemed to be an important missing ingredient without which people aren't truly educated.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, there needs to be a reconsideration of the general studies curriculum in our universities. "A curriculum of distinction" has been created and has been in place in Harvard since 1973.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> "To Reclaim a Legacy," p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> "Dean Henry Rosovsky," p. 43.

<sup>7</sup> Jerry G. Gaff, *General Education Today* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1983), p. 53.

Another proposal is for university education to emphasize the study of human culture, arts, literature, the classics and history. In other words to make our cultural heritage the center of our learning process. The latter provides the material for realizing positive social and human values, for formulating one's own philosophy of life. The more contact there is with other people's experiences and cultural heritage, the greater the variety of views one will assimilate; the realization of multiple life styles leads to a wider field of vision. It also gives a person the change to understand the world and to set up one's own goal. This type of general liberal arts education advocated by Hutchins and Adler has been neglected by most of educators. The main reason for this is that a liberal arts education cannot guarantee financial and material reward in a person's everyday living. It is practical to put material fulfillment as the immediate goal, but this should not be the ultimate goal in human life as it seems to be at present. Spiritual fulfillment, a high regard for humanity, happiness and enjoyment in life, ultimately a tranquil mind and transcendent mood should be the ultimate goal in one's life. It is the responsibility of our educational system to provide the conditions which can help individuals move in the direction of that goal. Some definite values and behavioral disciplines should be learned and developed under direction and guidance. They can be learned by a careful study of the classics, according to R. M. Hutchins, M. Adler and other idealistic educators. It helps to realize positive personal values instead of measuring everything according to an individual's material gains.

Changes in curriculum to core requirements, establishing a new curriculum emphasizing on liberal arts study, or other programs designed for aiding students' learning experiences and knowledge in the humanities, all of these proposals are based on the conviction that besides learning a trade the student should develop worthwhile philosophy of life.

In Chinese philosophy, the first humanistic movement began with Confucius.

## 28 *Confucian Idealism and Dewey's Pragmatism*

Confucius was, on the one hand, a reformer, a pioneer in universal education for all those who cared to come and for people of all classes. He was, on the other hand, a conformist, a man who "believed in and loved the ancients," a man who attempted to uphold the culture of Chou of which the worship of Heaven and ancestors was an integral part.<sup>8</sup>

As a reformer, as well as a conformist, Confucius had advocated an appropriate educational theory for present day educational systems in terms of providing positive value and ultimate ideal.

Idealistic educational theory initiated by Confucius in its original doctrine is concerned with ultimate excellence as the highest ideal of learning and study, with flexible and individual learning according to the individual's intellectual ability, and with student-oriented study programs. This doctrine not only provides the highest ideals for study but also provides a standard of behavior that keeps the student acquire a meaningful philosophy. The function and the effectiveness of education were taken into consideration by Confucius too. This original theory of education which Confucius advocated should be applied to the educational system today. But Confucius' followers, especially Mencius (372-289 B.C.) and his followers, put their emphasis only on one side of the doctrine, and neglected the practical part of it. They neglected the flexibility and the student-oriented qualities of teaching, and set up the norms for human behaviors with conformity and conventional authority. They did not pay enough attention to the factors of individuality and social change. The realistic essence or the practical quality of Confucius' doctrine was lost after Mencius' distortion and his practice. Thus, idealism in education was led into the defects of conformity and conventional authority. These defects have been transferred through the Chinese educational history, with a stiff, inflexible and non practical

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<sup>8</sup> Wing-Tsit Chan, "The Story of Chinese Philosophy," in Charles A. Moore, ed., *The Chinese Mind* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1977), p. 32.

curriculum. If we trace this theory back to the original meaning and principle cited by Confucius and apply it to the present educational system, these defects can be eliminated.

The progressive theory of education based on Dewey's background of idealism could easily be identified with his own words in "Democracy and Education":

And the idea of perfecting an "inner" personality is a sure sign of social divisions. What is called inner is simply that which does not connect with other—which is not capable of free and full communication. What is termed spiritual culture has usually been futile, with something rotten about it, just because it has been conceived as a thing which a man might have internally—one is as associated with others, in a free give and take of intercourse.<sup>9</sup>

So far, we realize that the problems of education today are twofold: one is the lack of basic training in recognizing the history and life of a human being. Tentative solutions such as the "back to basics" movement and liberal arts education are proposed. Behind these and other solutions there should be a strong and coherent philosophy of education as their foundation. Thus, a careful survey of an attainable educational theory is necessary.

This study attempts to look for the philosophy of education which should be behind all the reconstruction movements in education today. Without it, those reconstruction movements will be unsuccessful. It is a personal hope that liberal arts educational philosophy will be the most adequate for solving today's educational problems. Two theories in educational philosophy can be mentioned to strengthen this belief.

Confucius' doctrine in education has been applied to the Chinese educational system for more than two thousand years. It has lost its originality and most of its substance. The vitality and creativity which are embedded in Confucius' original

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<sup>9</sup> John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1961), p. 143.

thought diminished over long period of time. His doctrine has become one of the excuses for conformism, rigid regulations, and totalitarianism in knowledge. If we can go back and disclose the original doctrine advocated by Confucius in his teaching, despite their different starting points in philosophy, we would find many similarities between his idealism and Dewey's pragmatism in educational thoughts.

Although Dewey has been criticized by R. S. Peters as providing a middle road between the radicals and the traditionalists, Dewey's "shared experiences" are still pertinent.<sup>10</sup> Thus, by studying and inquiring the above two educational theories, a strong theoretical background for advocating a liberal arts education can be established. A humanistic foundation of education will be constructed. They would also justify the restoration of the humanities to the curricula of our schools.

Three questions are asked of the above two philosophies of education in terms of analysis and comparison. First, what is the definition of education? A closely related question, What is the aim or final goal of education? If education is the process of every individual's perfecting oneself, each other, the nation, and the world, the second question is: What is to be taught? What dispositions are to be cultivated and what subjects are to be taught? The third question is: How and by what methods are those subjects and dispositions taught?

In the next part and the third part of this paper, the above three questions are treated separately in respect to Confucian idealism in education and John Dewey's pragmatism in education. And the last part will look into these two views in education comparatively. On the whole, besides the differences in historical and geographical backgrounds and philosophical presuppositions, the basic ideals of education do not have substantial differences. This hypothesis will be tested in the last chapter. I will conclude that it is possible to resolve those

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<sup>10</sup> R. S. Peters, "John Dewey's Philosophy of Education", in R. S. Peters, ed., *John Dewey Reconsidered* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 104.



differences into a better educational system which will be the main principle in constructing an educational system today.

## II. CONFUCIAN IDEALISM IN EDUCATION

### Definition of Education

Neither Confucius nor Mencius gives a clear definition of education. However, the functions and necessity of an effective educational system were discussed in their dialogues with their disciples and followers. There is a proper route to experience and to recognize things. Mencius said:

When the five kinds of grain were brought to maturity, the people all obtained a subsistence. But men possess a moral nature; and if they are well fed, warmly clad, and comfortably lodged, without being taught at the same time, they become almost like the beasts.<sup>11</sup>

He also said:

Establish hsiang, hsu, hsio, and hside,—all those educational institutions,—for the instruction of the people. The name hsiang indicates nourishing as its object; hside indicates teaching; and hsu indicates archery. . . . The object of them all is to illustrate the human relations.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, a Confucian definition of education can be given as follows: Education is the process of changing the animal nature of human beings into human nature; this is bounded by the proper human relationships, by virtuous personalities, and by the cooperation of all the members in a community. The final goal of education is to promote a coherent and

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<sup>11</sup> *The Works of Mencius*, in *The Four Books*, trans. James Legge (Oxford: Printed for Kim Chuan Book Co., 1892), p. 251. The works included in this volume are: *Confucian Analects*, *The Great Learning*, *The Doctrine of the Mean*, and *The Works of Mencius*. Hereafter, reference will be to certain portions of this collection.

<sup>12</sup> *The Works of Mencius*, p. 242.

progressive society.

Since there is no choice to being a human being or not being one, there is no escape for a human being to live outside of a group. Cooperative activities provide bases for constituting the social values and the behavioral restraints. Human relationships start at the beginning of our lives and are continuously expanding through all our years. This relationship begins with the simple relationship between the baby and its parents and with other members of the family. It goes on to involve other members of the community, society, country, and the world. It grows from the simple relationship of parent and child to a very complex multi-relationship directly and indirectly with other members of a society and with peoples in other countries. If such a person were illiterate and without guidance and values, the world might be in more chaos than it is right now. The necessity of education is obvious. Reasoning in this way, Confucius concluded that the importance of education was realistic and primary.

Education is the process of improving human character. There is a development from oneself to one's country to the whole universe; there are stages to be achieved gradually. Thus, education is a life-long learning process. Even when walking with other persons, one can learn something. Confucius said: "When I walk along with two others, they may serve me as my teachers. I will select their good qualities and follow them, their bad qualities and avoid them."<sup>13</sup>

A sound educational system can provide the opportunity of maturing and improving each person's human character. Specifically, what will be the ends or objectives of a sound educational system?

The objectives of education, according to *The Great Learning of The Four Books* which are the basic textbooks of education in the primary stage, are threefold. It says: "What the Great Learning teaches is—to illustrate illustrious virtues; to

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<sup>13</sup> *Confucian Analects*, p. 356.

renovate the people; and to rest in the highest excellence."<sup>14</sup> This is the Way (Tao) of the Great Learning. If one can grasp the beginning and the end of any event and the first form and last perception of things, then one is reaching the essence of the Great Learning. It is the final or highest excellence. "The highest excellence" is not only the concept which emerges as the ultimate reality, but also the last stage that human ability can reach in the attainment of knowledge. The highest excellence is not one extreme end of three values. i.e., the positive values in terms of knowledge, virtue, and esthetics—truth, good, and beauty. It is the harmonious principle of mean.

Being without inclination to either side is called Chung; admitting of change is called Yung. By Chung is denoted the correct course to be pursued by all under heaven; by Yung is denoted the fixed principle regulating all under heaven.<sup>15</sup>

It is an excellence to possess the value of truth, good, and beauty, but this is not the highest excellence yet. The proper development of human intelligence and adjustability leads one to acknowledge existence as a coherent and harmonious universe. As far as the highest excellence is concerned, it implies that the cumulation of human experience and a reasonable interpretation of natural phenomena produce excellence or wisdom. Based on this simple premise, it is the responsibility of human beings to know the world, to learn the phenomena of the universe; also it is the judgments human beings make which change the course of history, alter the order of natural environment, and have influence on the future of the world. With this comprehension, human beings become the central forces to accomplish the highest excellence.

*The Great Learning* also discloses the dispositions for reaching the highest excellence. They are "determination, calm unperturbedness, tranquil repose, careful deliberation."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *The Great Learning*, p. 356.

<sup>15</sup> *The Doctrine of the Mean*, p. 382.

<sup>16</sup> *The Great Learning*, p. 357.

These qualities are attained through the cultivation of general studies. These four dispositions have intimate hierarchical relations and a developing association. The first one is the means of the second one which also is the end-in-view for the first one. When the second disposition is possessed, it itself becomes a means to pursue the next higher stage of disposition. This pursuit impels human beings to reach higher and higher towards excellence and finally ends in the highest excellence.

To illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the universe requires excellence in statesmanship. This end is reached through and by the means of ordering the state, regulating the families, cultivating the personalities, rectifying the hearts, being sincere in thought, extending knowledge, and, first of all, investigating things. These seven conditions which express the struggle of human efforts to demonstrate virtue are disclosed by fulfilling the latter conditions first. From investigating things to the next step—extension of knowledge—is the beginning process of cultivating oneself. And the combination of the above three conditions as the root of establishing law and order in a society and state is the basic principle which should be greatly valued in an educational system.

Finally, the second objective stated in *The Great Learning* is the renovation of people. The sense of responsibility is initiated in this objective. From an individual's illustrious nature, it is his/her duty to proceed to bring about the same quality in every other human being. The sense of accomplishment for an individual means not only to illustrate one's own virtue but also to help others in illustrating their virtues by starting in daily events and expanding to the wider environment and the future generation. In *The Great Learning*, it says, "If you can one day renovate yourself, do so from day to day. Yea, let there be daily renovation."<sup>17</sup>

For each educational objective which has been interpreted so far, there have always been the graduating steps which are ends for the succeeding stages and the means for the next stages

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<sup>17</sup> *The Great Learning*, p. 361.

until the final disposition—the highest excellence. Even among these three objectives themselves, there is a hierarchy. To illustrate illustrious virtue is the means to renovate the people. And the latter is the end-in-view of the former. The efforts of both dispositions are the means to reach the final end of the educational process—the highest excellence.

Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy.<sup>18</sup>

As a matter of fact, the ideal of the highest excellence is far from realized. The harmonious universe seems nowhere in sight. We are still in the process of searching from one stage to another; in the transaction between ends and means. There is always another end-in-view in front of us which depends on the goal just reached as a means. In order to establish balanced human characters, all these hierarchical searches are necessary.

Investigation of the outside world and cultivation of personality (inner spirit) are basic, and the two means to attain the ends-in-view are gathering knowledge and reflective thinking. And then the knowledge gathering and reflective thinking will be the means for the second stage which is to attain next ends-in-view of improving the personal life and one's character. The interaction between means and ends goes on until good statesmanship is possessed. Externally, a firm government, law and order, and respect for authority can be envisioned. Internally, the statesman with the best characteristics is one who is a citizen scholar and a superior person. A superior man "in everything considers righteousness to be essential. He performs it according to the rules propriety. He brings it forth in

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<sup>18</sup> *The Great Learning*, p. 358.

humility. He completes it with sincerity."<sup>19</sup>

It is the firm belief of Confucius that human nature is similar in each one and that habits make human beings different. The habits consist of the consequences of learning, thinking, and contemplation. Only the people with high intelligence and people with mental capabilities can avoid the external influence and hold their wills stable. The differences in human character are chiefly owing to the habits each person develops throughout his/her life. Human beings are born alike in terms of moral constitution. But when they begin to associate with other people and the social elements which consist of traditions and customs, their behaviors and conduct follow their acceptance and reactions toward the previous social establishments. This shows the importance of external environment and its effect on an individual. The influence of social establishment on a personality can change one's view of things. Thus, education is a way to insure that the change is toward a positive direction. Through the process of a sound education, a pupil will learn something or recognize the positive value in one's situation after three years of learning. Confucius once said, "It is not easy to find a man who has learned for three years without coming to good."<sup>20</sup>

For every individual, the general educational ideals which are the hidden expectations include extensive experience and understanding in terms of gaining knowledge, and being a superior person by cultivating character. As an educator, one should realize these very obvious requirements in respect to the student's learning motivations and take the position of a helper in their learning process.

Learning happens in every area and every part of our lives. If one wants to be an expert in a certain trade or profession, there are experts to turn to. In learning to be a farmer it is better to learn from an experienced farmer. In learning to be a gardener it is better to learn from an experienced gardener.

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<sup>19</sup> *Confucian Analects*, p. 299.

<sup>20</sup> *Confucian Analects*, p. 212.

To be an expert in special trades, one needs to learn skills from the experienced experts. But all the special trainings or practices should be based on a fundamental personality theory. The general study which is helping the youth to cultivate their personalities needs to be completed before they can take on necessary training for specific professional fields. Being a superior person with rich common knowledge is the prime consideration in education. In this sense, every expert in his/her own field should be a superior person as well as having the special training in that profession. An upright person—one who has the qualities of being a superior person, holds positive values, and practices the principle of the mean—will not misuse the skill he/she has learned and endanger society.

Being a good statesman is the prior condition in governing a state. It requires a person who should be in possession of all knowledge about governing a state, and more importantly, an upright character. Being a statesman also means to be under more restraint on his/her life and with less freedom in his/her conduct. A statesman is the leader in a community, that is, the statesman is the manager of the whole community. He/She should consider every aspect and prospect of the society and be more careful in every step he/she takes. For instance, before you can govern or give orders to the people, it is necessary first to ask yourself if you yourself follow that law or not. "In the *Book of Poetry*, 'We should be apprehensive and cautious, as if on the brink of a deep gulf, as if treading on thin ice.'"<sup>21</sup> Or if you wish your friend to be honest with you, before this request is given to your friend, you should ask yourself if you yourself are honest with your friend. If one of our educational principles is based on this conviction, the students who will be the members of our society understand that it is important to be honest with yourself and with others before they ask other persons' honesty in return. If this becomes the behavior norm of every member in the com-

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<sup>21</sup> *Confucian Analects*, p. 209.

munity, the value of honesty will be highly valued and will exist in this society. There will be little doubt that this society will exist for a long time.

To sum up, there are two goals in the Confucian educational viewpoint. First is to cultivate good statesmanship. The starting point is self-discipline, then to influence others by way of practicing the positive social value oneself. From the correcting of one's intentions comes the means to cultivate the personality, which also becomes the means to regulate the family and then to govern the state. This is the process of great learning.

Second, that harmonious and peaceful world can be realized is based on Confucius' belief that everyone is capable of learning and is teachable. Education enables us to change human character and provides positive values. Intellectual awareness and reasoning awake the potentiality of learning and thinking in each student. On the one hand, with increasing experience of their own and achievement of knowledge about the world, students are capable of making correct judgment on moral issues and on intellectual matters. On the other hand, acceptance of social values means to act by the rules and regulations which are related to each situation and circumstance. The situations may vary from time to time and from place to place, but the principle of moral behavior is consistent and based on the belief that human nature is good originally. The root of doing good is "there" no matter how many external things may obscure it. Also the habits which were considered unchangeable are changeable, these habits grow from the uncritical acceptance of social values and customs. The existence of habitual actions is because either that they are taken for granted without any criticism or that they are traditional customs which are thought of as the real truth or are practiced for good reasons. It is the duty of the educators to clarify and modify the reasons for the habitual actions. Also, the educators should give guidance to the students to help them form their habits and increase their experiences.



### **What Dispositions Should Be Cultivated?**

General studies are regarded as the principal field in every educational system. For Confucius there are four subjects required in general study. They are: literature, which consists of reading, writing, and communication means; moral principles, which are basic behavioral principles of life; devotion of soul, which is the proper manner to be cultivated; and truthfulness, which is the positive quality of personal character. As a matter of fact, the latter two subjects belong to the second one. Thus, there are only two main subjects to be taught, the general knowledge of the outer world (the courses of intellectual education) and the inner cultivation of one's personality (the courses of moral education). Besides these two subjects, Confucius advocated two other subjects that needed to be learned. They are archery and the driving of a chariot. Archery is physical education and driving is skill training. These two subjects and four other subjects—manners, music, writing, and mathematics—are called the six arts, which are the general dispositions to be mastered. Generally speaking, students are subject to behavior discipline first, then general studies; finally one is permitted to specialize in the subject one is interested in. Although Confucius did not construct a systematic curriculum for students, from his analects he had his own order of subjects which should be taught first. The curriculum varies according to the pupils' ages, merits, and intellectual abilities.

Character cultivation should start when the students are young; no action in their behavior is trivial or insignificant. For instance.

Tsze-yu said, 'The disciples and followers of Tsze-hsia, in sprinkling and sweeping the ground, in answering and replying, in advancing and receding, are sufficiently accomplished. But these are only the branches of learning, and they are left ignorant of what is essential—how can they be acknowledged as sufficiently taught?'

Tsze-hsia heard of the remark and said, 'Alas! Yen Yu is

wrong. According to the way of the superior man in teaching, what departments are there which he considers of prime importance, and delivers? What are there which he considers of secondary importance and allows himself to be idle about? But as in the cases of plants, which are assorted according to their classes, so he deals with his disciples. How can the way of a superior man be such as to make fools of any of them? Is it not the sage alone, who can unite in one the beginning and the consummation of learning?<sup>22</sup>

The general perception is that ordinary physical education, such as cleaning the environment, and athletic activities, such as archery, and skill training, such as driving a chariot, should be completed before 15 years of age. Even though they are thought of as small skilled tasks or external physical training, they are necessary qualities in perfecting one's total personality. They cannot be taken lightly. They can be viewed as part of self-discipline education. Its significance will show that a person is always judged by others in a human society. The respect that a person gets from other people usually depends on the quality he/she possesses in terms of profound knowledge and the sense of morality, as well as a proper manner or an adequate attitude. Confucius said, "See what a man does. Mark his motives. Examine in what things he rests. How can a man conceal his character? How can a man conceal his character?"<sup>23</sup> Thus, human behaviors always reflect the educational background one has had. It is obvious that in the Confucian point of view moral education has the priority in any educational system. The training in specific fields can come later. Even for Confucius, he wished he could study *The Book of Change*—metaphysics in Chinese philosophy—when he was fifty years old. He said, "If some years were added to my life, I would give fifty to the study of the Yi, and then I might come to be without great faults."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *Confucian Analects*, p. 343.

<sup>23</sup> *Confucian Analects*, p. 149.

<sup>24</sup> *Confucian Analects*, p. 200.

Mencius, the famous follower of Confucius, put even more emphasis on moral education. By reasoning, the ultimate goodness in human nature is disclosed. He observed that human beings have four essential and a priori feelings. They are "the feeling of commiseration, the feeling of shame and dislike, the feeling of modesty and complaisance and the feeling of approving and disapproving."<sup>25</sup> These four feelings initiate four principles. They are the principle of benevolence, the principle of righteousness, the principle of propriety, and the principle of knowledge. The responsibility of an educator is to help people to discover their innate human natures, to develop them and enhance them—first to influence the people who are near them, then to influence other members of the community.

To sum up, the dispositions to be cultivated are: moral, intellectual and physical. Mencius neglected physical education almost completely. He maintained four principles as the Golden Rules of human behavior on which all the courses should be based. And there was nowhere that Mencius mentioned physical training.

Second, to be more specific, Confucius mentioned four subjects in his teaching which can be condensed into only two main subjects. One is the study of poetry, literature, writing, and arithmetic. The other is the disciple's daily training of manners and behavioral discipline. Besides these two subjects, he did maintain at least minimum physical education in his teaching, namely, archery and driving a chariot. Because his disciples were mostly older students, the physical training, in terms of proper manner and daily exercise, should have been finished before they came to Confucius to learn other subjects. This is the reason that physical education did not show much significance in their discussions. Mencius was a disputatious person. Thus the rational discipline became important in his teaching. Only those who were able to use the dialectic technique were likely to be successful. And they were the

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<sup>25</sup> *The Works of Mencius*, pp. 202-03.

scholars who turned Confucius doctrine into a dogma.

### **The Method of Teaching**

Before answering the question of how to teach, two principles upon which the construction of the method is based should be discussed. These principles are connected with our learning and teaching attitudes. The first principle, the chance of getting educated is given to every member in the community without any partiality, as long as that person is willing to learn. There are two conditions postulated on this principle. One is that education should be given to every member in the society. Privilege or difference in personal abilities is disregarded. It means that everyone has the right to be educated. And educators should treat their disciples or pupils equally without any prejudice. Confucius said, "From the man bringing his bundle of dried flesh for my teaching upwards, I have never refused instruction to any one."<sup>26</sup> Every person is a unique individual and different from other individuals. But this cannot make any difference in terms of being educated. This is one of the main points of Confucius' democratic philosophy of education, which says, "With education there will be no classes!"<sup>27</sup>

The second condition for this principle is that the best results of education come while everyone has the will to learn and to carry something through to completion. Things being taught in school or classroom will increase one's knowledge and experience. These things mostly are not known before and need to be taught and explained by the person who had the experience. The person who is willing to share experience with others and in the meantime to increase one's own knowledge is the educator every community seeks. Learning as well as teaching needs the motivation, the interest, and the will. Rich knowledge and experience are the outcome of one's effort in

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<sup>26</sup> *Confucian Analects*, p. 197.

<sup>27</sup> Hu Shih, "The Scientific Spirit and Method in Chinese Philosophy," in Moore, *The Chinese Mind*, p. 111.

study. An individual's interest and efforts on the road to learning are very important and bring outstanding achievement. Confucius expressed this by saying:

I do not open up the truth to one who is not eager to get knowledge, nor help out any one who is not anxious to explain himself. When I have presented one corner of a subject to anyone, and he cannot from it learn the other three, I do not repeat my lesson.<sup>28</sup>

Besides equal opportunity being a necessary condition in education, students' motivations and efforts should be counted as another necessary condition in teaching and learning.

The second principle is for every educator to realize that the purpose of being a teacher is to help students in intellectual investigation, in modeling behaviors, and in expressing the proper evaluation. Teachers are not omniscient. They learned and experienced from the other knowers and by the way of trial and error. And this is the same way the students are going to learn something too. There are those who knew things before the students do. There are those who cultivated their behavior and conduct before the students do. They learned more than others did. They become educators. As an educator, one applies knowledge and the cultivated virtues in giving guidance and direction to younger learners. Confucius was regarded as the greatest teacher in Chinese history, but he did not want to claim this title. He said: "I am not one who [was] born in the possession of knowledge; I am one who is found of antiquity, and earnest in seeking it there."<sup>29</sup> He claimed to be just a transmitter. Also, he admitted that he was not a saint, nor a perfect man. He was only a human being. He made mistakes too. An instance shows this point.

The Master having come to Wu-Chang, heard there the sound of stringed instruments and singing.

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<sup>28</sup> *Confucian Analects*, p. 197

<sup>29</sup> *Confucian Analects*, p. 241.

Well pleased and smiling, he said, 'Why use an oxknife to kill a fowl?'

Tsze-yu replied, 'Formerly, Master, I heard you say,—When the man of high station is well instructed, he loves men; when the man of low station is well instructed, he is easily ruled.'

The Master said, 'My disciples, Yen's words are right. What I said was only in sport.'<sup>30</sup>

In some areas of knowledge, he could not compete with a farmer or a gardener. He could not even hold a political position.

Based on the above two principles, the educational environment in Confucius time was democratic and student-oriented. The teaching method advocated by Confucius is impartial, open-minded, and flexible. Intellectual investigation uses scientific method with observation as its major element. The judgment is recognized by presenting the evidence and proofs.

Confucius understood the significance of scientific investigation.

Tsze-chang asked whether the affairs often ages after could be known.

Confucius said, 'The Yin dynasty followed the regulations of the Hsia: wherein it took from or added to them may be known. The Chau dynasty has followed the regulations of the Yin: wherein it took from or added to them may be known. Some other may follow the Chau, but though it should be at the distance of a hundred ages, its affairs may be known.'<sup>31</sup>

On another occasion,

The Master said, 'I could describe the ceremonies of the Hsia dynasty, but Chi cannot sufficiently attest my words, I could describe the ceremonies of the Yin dynasty, but Sung cannot sufficiently attest my words. (They cannot do so) because of the insufficiency of their records and wise men. If those were

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<sup>30</sup> *Confucian Analects*, p. 31.

<sup>31</sup> *Confucian Analects*, p. 153.

sufficient, I could adduce them in support of my words.'<sup>32</sup>

Following Confucian indefinite procedure of teaching, in Mencius' opinion, the most effective method of teaching is to take advantage of various natural locations and different situations in teaching. Every event happens in a certain situation. To understand the whole event, situations surrounding it and its history need to be considered. To solve a problem the consideration of every aspect of the issue is needed. The same problem might have different answers which are suitable for certain or other situations. Thus, based on one standard measurement, relative situations may vary the answers. Mencius understood this point very well and used his ability of reasoning well to emphasize the need of considering the situations of any event under discussion. He said, "By weighing, we know what things are light, and what heavy. By measuring, we know what things are long, and what short. The relations of all things may be thus determined, and it is of the greatest importance to estimate the motions of the mind."<sup>33</sup> On another occasion,

Chan Tsin asked Mencius, saying, 'Formerly, when you were in Chi, the king sent you a present of 2,400 taels of fine silver, and you refused to accept it. When you were in Sung, 1,680 taels were sent to you, which you accepted; and when you were in Hsieh, 1,200 taels were sent, which you likewise accepted. If your declining to accept the gift in the first case was right, your accepting it in the latter cases was wrong. If your accepting it in the latter cases was right, your declining to do so in the first case was wrong. You must accept, Master, one of these alternatives.'

Mencius said, 'I did right in all the cases. When I was in Sung I was about to take a long journey. Travellers must be provided with what is necessary for their expenses. The prince's message was, "A present against travelling expenses." Why should I have declined the gift? When I was in Hsieh, I was ap-

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<sup>32</sup> *Confucian Analects*, p. 158.

<sup>33</sup> *The Works of Mencius*, p. 144.

prehansive for my safety, and taking measures for my protection. The message was, "I have heard that you are taking measures to protect yourself, and send this to help you in procuring arms." Why should I have declined the gift? But when I was in Chi, I had no occasion for money. To send a man a gift when he has no occasion for it, is to bribe him. How is it possible that a superior man should be taken with a bribe?'<sup>34</sup>

Lastly, every individual is unique and different from others. Each has merit and weakness. Someone in a class is very good at writing but not necessarily good in other subjects. Someone in a class may be anxious to know the answer and neglect the indispensable details. Others may be different in the ability to solve problems. In this sense, human beings can be classified into various types. For each type of individual the guidance or directions given by the teacher might be varied from one to the other. Confucius was accused of being a capitalist who divided or classified people into three hierarchical classes. He said,

Those who are born with the possession of knowledge are the highest class of men. Those who learn, and so, readily, get possession of knowledge, are the next. Those who are dull and stupid, and yet compass the learning, are another class next to these. As to those who are dull and stupid and yet do not learn;—they are the lowest of the people.<sup>35</sup>

From an educator's point of view this fits the principle of teaching by taking account of an individual's in-born merits and weaknesses, of the individual's intelligence and ability to achieve knowledge. This is where the educational process starts. One's personality, behavior, and manner of speaking, one's life is an open book, and thus can be evaluated publicly. One's merits and weaknesses become obvious and useful to a teacher who can then design an appropriate approach which one should take in the schedule of study. This instance in the

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<sup>34</sup> *The Works of Mencius*, pp. 215-16.

<sup>35</sup> *Confucian Analects*, p. 313.



"Confucian Analects" is a good example:

Tsze-lu asked whether he should immediately carry into practice what he heard. The Master said, 'There are your father and elder brothers to be consulted;—why should you act on that principle of immediately carrying to practice what you heard?' Zan-yu asked the same, whether he should immediately carry into practice what he heard, and the Master answered, 'Immediately carry into practice what you heard.' Kung-hsi Hwa said, 'Yu asked whether he should carry immediately into practice what he heard, and you said, "There are your father and elder brothers to be consulted." Chiu asked whether he should immediately carry into practice what he heard, and you said, "Carry it immediately into practice." I, Chih, am perplexed, and venture to ask you for an explanation.' The Master said, 'Chiu is retiring and slow; therefore, I urged him forward. Yu has more than his own share of energy; therefore I kept him back.'<sup>36</sup>

### III. DEWEY'S PRAGMATISM IN EDUCATION

#### Definition of Education

John Dewey gave a formal definition of education as follows: Education is "the process of remaking, or reconstituting experience, so as to give it a more socialized content, through the medium of increase of control of experience."<sup>37</sup> This definition includes three formal elements of education. They are: (1) remaking experiences; (2) adding socialized content to this experience, and (3) control of experience as the method. It is Dewey's belief that gross experience does not have meaning without interaction, signconnections, and symbols. There exist habitual thinking and behavior, and often their origins and functions are taken for granted without any doubt or reflection. The broad sense of one type of education can be detected in the master-apprentice relationship. An apprentice

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<sup>36</sup> *Confucian Analects*, pp. 244-45.

<sup>37</sup> Dewey, *Lectures in the Philosophy of Education: 1899*, ed. Reginald D. Archambault (New York: Random House, Inc., 1966), p. 113.

looks to the master's skill as the model of learning. A carpenter's apprentice learns to make a chair by practicing the skill which is systematically and orderly taught by the master. The disciple is undergoing an experience of his own. In this sense, the master-apprentice relation implies only two of the formal elements which Dewey cites in his definition of education. The second element, the socialized content of education, is the main ingredient of Dewey's philosophy of education. It is in school and society that the socialized content of the students' experiences is provided.

Cultivation of good citizenship, which includes reconstructed experiences and harmonious human relationships, is an ultimate goal in the educational process. This idea is expressed by Dewey as the process of "preparing the youth of the country for active, intelligent participation in the building and rebuilding and the eternal rebuilding—because it never can be done once for all—of a genuinely democratic society."<sup>38</sup> In order to realize this purpose the educational process starts from the basic stage which requires self-discipline and intellectual training in scientific inquiry. The ends-in-view of these activities are better human relationships and agreements on the positive social values. The latter becomes the means of improving community life. Harmonious community life, in turn, becomes the means for further ends-in-view. This process takes place in a school where a child can develop its intelligence properly and fully; where experimental social patterns and social environments are being designed for a child to have the first experience of dealing with other members of the community; where one can learn and construct the values of one's own and those of the society in which one lives. The ability of independent thinking and the sense of individuality are highly respected and cultivated with the help of others. The natural inclination is overcome and replaced by "habits acquired

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<sup>38</sup> Dewey, *Philosophy of Education* (Paterson, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1964), p. 17.

under external pressure"<sup>39</sup> and this condition is one of the primal challenges to the teacher. Education, for Dewey, is a long-range project.

Good citizenship is more than a political aspect of human relations. For a society, it means progress and improvement. Good citizenship should comprise "all of the relations which the individual sustains to all the other members of the community."<sup>40</sup> In terms of studying in school, the ideal is "to be considered as a means of bringing the child to realize the social scene of action."<sup>41</sup> Thus school is regarded as a society on a smaller scale. Also, according to Dewey, the school affords a process of preparing the youth to face the challenge of stepping into the outside community.

Dewey put his emphasis on the social aspect of an educational system. His philosophy of education is to remake experience, to obtain socialized content. This intention also shows the significance of his discussion of ultimate moral motives and forces in education which "are nothing more or less than social intelligence—the power of observing and comprehending social situation—and social power—trained capacities of control—at work in the service of social interest and aims."<sup>42</sup> Social intelligence, social power, and social interests are called the moral trinity of the school. These are the goals in terms of which restructuring of the school may represent the various aspects of life in a community; furthermore, scientific inquiry is the method of observing and comprehending; studies are closely connected with the interests and aims of a community.

To sum up, according to John Dewey, having the ex-

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<sup>39</sup> Dewey, *Experience and Education* (Rpt. New York: Collier Books, 1967), p. 17.

<sup>40</sup> Cho-Yee To, "John Dewey's Conception of the Relation of Education to the Democratic Ideal," Diss. Southern Illinois University, 1967, p. 80.

<sup>41</sup> Dewey, *Moral Principles in Education* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959), p. 31.

<sup>42</sup> Dewey, *Moral Principles in Education*, p. 43.

perience is the ultimate end of education, although the word 'experience' needs to be clarified. It is an experience which is meaningful in terms of promoting social value and interest. It is the experience which is obtained by way of scientific inquiry. And it is the experience which is restrained by individual social situations. With these qualities, it becomes a linkage in the transformation of historical eras. This transformation means to reflect intelligently on the past and make progress in the future.

From all John Dewey's books and talks on education, four educational ideals can be detected which illustrate his theory; then they can be compared with the Confucian philosophy of education. John Dewey expressed three of four educational ideals when he put forth his definition of education. These four ideals will be discussed in detail.

An educated experience, which is a transformational step of continuing the past and forwarding the future by way of reflecting upon the past and initiating a future is a continuous process. The intellectual ideal leads the student to perform scientific inquiry or reflective thinking, and this, in turn, helps the student to control his experience.<sup>43</sup> The existence of positive social values and the transformation of valuable information require the intellectual training which leads to testable results. Objective, observable, and experimental scientific inquiry is a means to obtain correct knowledge and also an end-in-view which will help the student develop his/her potentiality. With the experience of intellectual reflection as a means, the end-in-view of obtaining complete knowledge or excellence in knowledge is not far away. By having correct knowledge of the universe as a means, the intellectual ideal in education is being reached. "The moral ideal is the development of a certain quality of life, of a certain kind of moral self, a self in which impulses, habits, and activities have an operational unity."<sup>44</sup> This ideal is the purpose of individual

<sup>43</sup> S. Morris Eames, *Pragmatic Naturalism* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), p. 197.

<sup>44</sup> Eames, p. 199.

behavioral cultivation. What kind of quality is needed to be developed; what kind of moral self should there be; and how do impulses, habits, and activities work together as an operational unity?

According to John Dewey, "The development of character is the ultimate end of all school work."<sup>45</sup> The moral character of a human being is distinguished from other functions one has. And it is the moral quality of life that distinguishes one life from another. What is the nature of this character?

In general, character means power of social agency, organized capacity of social functioning. It means, . . . social insight or intelligence, social executive power and social interest or responsiveness. Stated in psychological terms, it means that there must be a training of the primary impulses and instincts, which become organized into habits as reliable means of action.<sup>46</sup>

In other words, this requires the cultivation of the qualities of character. First, education is creating the power of self-control. One of the sources of power is intelligence. With human intelligence as the foundation of reflective thinking, an individual is able to make intelligent judgments and harmonize impulses and instincts. This means internal self-control. Human beings are social animals, so every activity an individual undertakes concerns the other members in the community. Any action to be taken requires a moral point of view; it involves the individual's situation, other members of society, and the community. Every activity involves responsibility. When the impulsive life is guided by intelligence, habits are morally formed; that is, the individual is able to conduct his/her life with moral sensitivity. School is the best place to recreate the situations for training and sharpening the tools of an individual's reflective thinking, for understanding each

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<sup>45</sup> Dewey, *Education Essays*, ed. J. J. Findlay (London: Blackie and Son Limited, 1969), p. 63.

<sup>46</sup> Dewey, *Education Essays*, pp. 63-64.

situation in order to make a correct judgment, and for learning how to think about conduct. It is also necessary "to aim at making the methods of learning, of acquiring intellectual power, and of assimilating subject matter, such that they will render behavior more enlightened, morally consistent, more vigorous than it otherwise would be."<sup>47</sup>

What we need in education more than anything else is a genuine, not merely nominal faith in the existence of moral principles which are capable of effective application. . . . We need to translate the moral into the actual conditions and working forces of our community life, and into the impulses and habits which make up the doing of the individual.<sup>48</sup>

The third ideal in education is the social ideal. It means that "education should create an interest in all persons in furthering the general good, so that they will find their own happiness realized in what they can do to improve the conditions of other."<sup>49</sup> Throughout Dewey's philosophy, he never lost his respect for humanity, his deep faith in human nature and in the value of close relationships among human beings. He believed that human nature can be changed under given conditions and human life is possible to be reconstructed in more creative ways.<sup>50</sup> Any individual activity is related somehow or other to other members of society and the whole community. This ideal aims at the cultivation of personal character which has power to influence a judgment. But the scope of that ideal is rather narrow. It needs to be broadened. An individual is not only acquiring the moral meaning of one's own conduct, but also promoting the capacity of communication

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<sup>47</sup> Dewey, *Moral Principles in Education*, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> Dewey, *Educational Essays*, p. 71.

<sup>49</sup> Dewey, *Theory of the Moral Life*, ed. Arnald Isenberg (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p. 98.

<sup>50</sup> Dewey, *Philosophy of Education*, p. 192.

in a social situation. The most effective way to develop this capacity is in a school which is a miniature society. School can provide and recreate the similar social situations for children which they will encounter in the community at large. In school a student learns to communicate and to interact with other students and teachers. The proper way of conduct in terms of living in a group and transferring the correct meanings among members of the whole community is found in school.

The last ideal is the aesthetic ideal. The aesthetic is an aspect of experience which absorbs into itself memories of the past and anticipations of the future, "and when an experience has these qualities, it becomes an aesthetic ideal."<sup>51</sup> This last ideal involves the achievements of the other ideals—the intellectual, the moral, and the social. This ideal not only shows the consequences of learning and practicing but also expresses the enjoyment of learning and practicing. In terms of the present study, this ideal is the highest excellence in educational theory. A good citizen is created in this way. The education of early childhood needs general studies and character discipline. These provide the child with communication with other members in the community; this leads to an enjoyment in their lives that is aesthetic.

### **What Subjects Should be Taught?**

The basis for developing a curriculum in the school should be made clear first here. On the one hand, since every person is unique and the social situation is changing all the time, the subject matter should be flexible to suit the potentiality of each student. On the other hand, human experience is cumulative, and the more one experiences the more chance one has to reverse or revise the previous knowledge. This condition is vital to a student's growth. Any subject matter can be challenged and corrected. Thus,

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<sup>51</sup> Eames, p. 202.

. . . . abandon the notion of subject matter as something fixed and ready-made in itself, outside the child's experience; cease thinking of the child's experience as also something hard and fast; see it as something fluent, embryonic, vital; and we realize that the child and the curriculum are simply two limits which define a single process. . . . (Instruction) is continuous reconstruction, moving from the child's present experience out into that represented by the organized bodies of truth that we call studies.<sup>52</sup>

Based on this notion, what will be the first subject to be taught in school? When a child is born, the first experience encountered is family, home, surroundings. It is the most impressive situation in one's life, and is always remembered. But there is also interest in things related to this situation. One wants to obtain knowledge of things and facts near at hand and gradually expand to things far away from and long into the future. From simple relations with other members in a family to complex relations with a lot of members in a community; from understanding simple events in family to complex and diverse events of the community, one is gradually being involved in all of these relationships. These relations can be modified into two aspects of the human situation. These two aspects become two prime issues in the study schedule for a child. They are geography and history. Geography provides a child a sense of space, an understanding of the nature and the meaning of one's own situation and its surroundings, and comprehension of the relationship between human beings and nature, between human activities and natural positions. History provides a child a sense of time, a recognition of the continuity of natural events, and the realization of our responsibility of being a part of the historical process. Dewey stressed the significance of geography and history which are two primary subjects in school teaching. He said,

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<sup>52</sup> Dewey, *The Child and the Curriculum and the School and Society* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 11.



To 'learn geography' is to gain in power to perceive the spatial, the natural, connections of an ordinary act; to 'learn history' is essentially to gain in power to recognize its human connections. . . .

For what is called geography as a formulated study is simply the body of facts and principles which have been discovered in other men's experience about the natural medium in which we live, and in connection with which the particular acts of our life have an explanation. So history as a formulated study is but the body of known facts about the activities and sufferings of the social groups with which our own lives are continuous, and through reference to which our own customs and institutions are illuminated.<sup>53</sup>

Geography and history can broaden and deepen the personal experiences of children. They give meaning to a person's life. Most of these studies are self-motivated. Geography and history provide informational knowledge which is accepted, discovered, and chosen and recorded as it is or was. They are stored and memorized as factors without using the child's investigative talents and his/her reasoning. But geography and history need not be taught in a rote manner; they can enter into the inquiring activities of the student. Science is the subject matter which is organized by a method of inquiry and is tested by scientific methods. For Dewey, "By science is meant that knowledge which is the outcome of methods of observation, reflection, and testing which are deliberately adopted to secure a settled, assured subject matter."<sup>54</sup> Scientific inquiry and the study of method itself are subjects in our curriculum. They deal with the search for truth and therefore guarantee the information value of our knowledge.

### Method of Teaching

For an educator, method always goes with the alters subject matter. There is, however, what Dewey calls the "scien-

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<sup>53</sup> Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 210.

<sup>54</sup> Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 219.

tific attitudes." These are:

1. "Open-mindedness. This attitude may be defined as freedom from prejudice, partisanship, and such other habits as close the mind and make it unwilling to consider new problems and entertain new ideas."<sup>55</sup> This attitude involves looking at many sides of an issue.

2. "Whole-heartedness. When anyone is thoroughly interested in some subject and cause, he throws himself into it; he does so, as we say, 'heartily,' or with a whole heart."<sup>56</sup> This attitude requires the undivided interest, devotion, concentration in one subject, and our enthusiasm with sincerity in finding out the results of the investigation.

3. "Responsibility.

It is an attitude that is necessary to win the adequate support of desire for new points of view and new ideas and of enthusiasm for and capacity for absorption in subject matter. . . . To be intellectually responsible is to consider the consequences of a projected step; it means to be willing to adopt these consequences when they follow reasonably from any position already taken. Intellectual responsibility secures integrity; that is to say, consistency and harmony in belief.<sup>57</sup>

This attitude does not need any more explanation. "To carry something through to completion is the real meaning of thoroughness, and power to carry a thing through to its end or conclusion is dependent upon the existence of the attitude of intellectual responsibility."<sup>58</sup>

We believe that the potential ability to do things is hidden in every individual. With the help of holding the above attitudes in either study or teaching, the method does not seem very important. Learning can happen in any time and any place with the right material provided. But the most effective

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<sup>55</sup> Dewey, *How We Think*, (Boston: D.C. Heath and Co., 1933), p. 30.

<sup>56</sup> Dewey, *How We Think*, p. 30.

<sup>57</sup> Dewey, *How We Think*, p. 32.

<sup>58</sup> Dewey, *How We Think*, p. 33.

learning happens in school where systematic learning steps are set up and directions and guidance are given in every topic the students will study. A child is the prime subject or the center of his/her own world. An educator understands this and seeks to find out the weaknesses and strengths of a child. Then, an individual curriculum will be developed according to the merits of a child that should be strengthened and the weaknesses that should be changed and reformed. It is the growing process of a child which needs direction, control, and guidance, not that of the adults. A course set up to teach an individual should be considered from that person's point of view. The method in traditional education was trying to put children on the same intellectual and experiential level of adults or the educators. This was the wrong way to teach. Obviously it will lead a child to lose interest in the subject. And the responsibility will be too heavy for a child to bear.

Finally, the significance of the social situation in teaching a child is one notion of John Dewey's philosophy of education which has been mentioned many times. Sitting and studying in a classroom all day has a lot less effect than going to the actual environment to practice and experiment with what is learned. Dewey emphasized that the learning situation can be created and changed for more effective results. Let the students have the opportunities of practicing and experimenting or bring the students into the actual situation; these realities will increase the impression of the event in the students and create interest in learning. This approach will also create an attitude of whole-heartedness. Furthermore, it is imperative for an educator to know how to use or take advantage of the present situation intelligently.

To sum up, we quote Dewey:

Expressed in terms of the attitude of the individual the traits of good method are straight-forwardness, flexible intellectual interest or open-minded will to learn, integrity of purpose, and acceptance of responsibility for the consequences of one's

activity including thought.<sup>59</sup>

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In China, Confucius was the first educator who advocated that his philosophy be put into practice and also he was the first philosopher who devoted his life to putting his knowledge and beliefs into practice. Although his doctrine lacks systematic treatment and explicit theoretical structure as well as methodology, this does not mean that Confucius did not have coherent thought and philosophical principles. In education, he believed that every person is entitled to be educated and is educable. The intellectual understanding develops from an active and comprehensive mind. For the sake of satisfying human curiosity there are subjects which require endless investigation. General education should cultivate personal morality, better living conditions and enhance society. Confucius was the first one who realized the importance of the quality and effectiveness of self-discipline and of an active and student-oriented education. He also understood that academic freedom and objectivity and the main principles a scholar must have. Unfortunately, these ideas were neglected or taken lightly by Confucius' followers. They put the emphasis upon cultivating manners and respect for authority, and this led to the limitation and confinement of Chinese culture to the realm of tradition and doctrinairism. This started from the time of Mencius. Confucius' belief that bringing out the positive nature of human being became the sole responsibility of an educator and continued to be emphasized in educational practice through more than two thousand years of Chinese history. This dogmatic educational tradition which lost sight of the real Confucius existed for so long that it lost all originality, novelty, and sense of creativity. Education became a one-way street in that the teacher lectures and the students accept what is given without the opportunity to express their

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<sup>59</sup> Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 179.

opinions, criticisms, and evaluations. It is time to examine this tradition and get rid of conformity and domination of authority harmful for the development of our intellectual inquiry. For the new ideals of education we do not have to invent a new doctrine. The original philosophy of education that Confucius advocated is a doctrine worthy of maintaining.

In the history of American education, before John Dewey advocated his view on education and constructed his experimental school, the educational system emphasized the traditional way of teaching. Imposition of a standard which is irrelevant and selection of study areas which are not related to everyday life made the results of education remote and dull. In this context subject matter is static doctrine which does not help in solving actual social problems. Passive indoctrination in the traditional school destroyed the intellectual freedom which is needed to move toward the intellectual goal of human life. Guidance, and not indoctrination, is needed. And more concern with what education is doing to the students is one of the main jobs of an educator.

However, if an educational system is based solely on Dewey's pragmatism and democratic principles, then a confused situation is often encountered. There is often the feeling of the lack of a purpose in life. At present it seems that the reason for taking any study is to gain wealth. Realists now maintain that it is time to go back to basics. This movement did not emerge without reasons. But if we can trace Dewey's theory back to its strong idealistic educational thought and provide the students with high ideals and firm convictions, then the value of Dewey's democratic principles and his teaching method will be kept and sustained.

The philosophical positions of Confucius and Dewey are based on two different branches of philosophy, Confucianism has been regarded as idealism which recognizes the existence of the highest value and ultimate ideal in the universe; and Dewey's philosophy has been regarded as a pragmatism which disregards whether there are ultimate ideals and absolute values. And, in terms of educational theory, for Confucius, the

purpose is to establish the stability of human values by way of education. For Dewey, the theory is to destroy the impractical quality in traditional education and replace it with "progressive education" which was defined by Dewey as the education of the quality of life. However, both Confucius and Dewey advocated their educational theories for practical reasons. Both insisted on the individual development of moral character. Both taught intellectual investigation. Both emphasized the principle of self-control and self-discipline. (This was the moral ideal in Dewey's philosophy of education which was elaborated in the preceding part.) Both Confucius and Dewey practiced student-oriented programs and both sought academic freedom. Freedom of inquiry, that is, freedom from external restraints in inquiry and freedom from tradition which stifles inquiry, was the ideal learning method for both Confucius and Dewey. Both strongly advocated an education which develops a good personality and makes one a good member of the community. Dewey called the social ideal one of good citizenship, and Confucius called it good statesmanship. And finally, Dewey's aesthetic ideal is an experience with the quality of absorbing into itself memories of the past and anticipations of the future. This ideal corresponds to the process of fulfilling an ultimate responsibility of human life which is maintained by Confucius. That is to continue the lost learning of ancient sages and to create a peaceful world for posterity. Every individual is inevitably participating in the continuous historical drama of human life. The sense of responsibility of carrying on the heritage so as to pave the way for future generations will provide a strong sense of purpose in human life.

Confucius and Dewey thus had similar ideals of education; the methods they preferred to use in educating young people are based upon similar principles. The ideas of impartial treatment of all students, of flexible material in teaching, and of student-oriented courses are all principles which both philosophers share.

There are some differences between the theory of Con-

fucius and that of Dewey's. One of these concerns the subjects which should be taught. To understand this difference we should realize one point. They were about three thousand years and one big ocean apart. Their social backgrounds were different. The subject matter in Confucius' teaching was different from that in John Dewey's experimental school. Another difference is that Confucius paid more attention to the education of adults who had had the training of manners, music appreciation, archery, driving, reading, writing, and mathematics. This meant that after studying and finishing these basic general courses, students would take a step forward and improve their personality and intelligence under the guidance of Confucius. Confucius did not explain in detail the process and the specific content of learning and study. With his well-organized philosophical mind, Dewey gave the details for educating children. For instance, Dewey thought children should study geography and history in order to achieve a view of space and time. Although Confucius sensed the importance of these two basic concepts in knowledge, he did not explicitly explain them. From the viewpoint of his ultimate goal in his educational philosophy, it is obvious that he sensed that human beings are always situated in a continuous historical drama. To understand historical events, their beginning and end, and their significance is one of the essential functions of any scholar.

The second difference between Confucius' theory and that of John Dewey's pragmatism is that Confucius paid more attention to the explanation of what the final goal is and what the quality and character of a superior person should be. Confucius spent a lot of his teaching on explaining the content of the highest excellence. By presenting the quality of the superior person, he asked every student to engage in reflection and thus observe the merits and defects of himself. Then it is the job of each person to correct the errors and improve his/her personality. It seems that Confucius gave a model of a superior person to his students and asked them to imitate it. An educator can be a model for the students to imitate and

look up to. In this sense, a teacher should be very careful in his/her behavior and attitude toward other people. And a teacher might not be as free as other people are in other professions. However, Confucius did not stress this point, since every person is unique and cannot be put into any special class. Also Confucius realized that teachers have their faults or shortcomings. They have only one advantage over their students. That is they knew a little more about the world, and human beings. They did a little more self-reflection on their behavior. They might be a little better human beings. Teachers can neither claim to be masters in every subject, nor be looked up to as the perfect models of human character. Different heritage and different environment always make people different from each other. Considering each student's merit, intelligence, and background, one can design the most effective curriculum for this student. Thus, there is no rigid curriculum in terms of subjects being taught and set disciplinary rules being enforced. This is the basic principle in Confucius' teaching.

John Dewey, on the other hand, emphasized the function of education from the beginning of a person's life. A sound educational system should be the one that is providing the best chance for the students to increase their experiences and that best keeps them to understand each situation and problem. A true education is one which helps youths face various challenges. The creation of good citizen is an ultimate goal.

Confucius used a different approach. The educator helps the youth overcome outside distraction, helps develop in the student a good sense of humanity, and finally helps the student attain the highest excellence which is good statesmanship. An educator should realize his or her responsibility and try to cultivate the moral character of his students. Otherwise the educational process will have lost its meaning and effectiveness. Both Confucius and Dewey understood that the educational process is life-long. Their approaches can complement each other.

I believe that this process is also a process of continuous



growth and a transcendent one. I mean by this that a person transcends material satisfaction and looks for a higher spiritual fulfillment. If a person has adopted these higher spiritual aspirations, then he will not feel the physical restraints and the mental distraction which material aspiration alone brings. In this sense, the individual is free. This sense of freedom is different from the common notion that freedom means lack of specific restraints. It means that the existence of many outside regulations will not limit the students' development. Confucius said,

At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning. At thirty, I stood firm. At forty, I had no doubts. At fifty, I knew the decrees of Heaven. At sixty, my ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth. At seventy, I could follow what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right.<sup>60</sup>

As far as I know there does not exist any written material on comparing Confucian idealism in education with Dewey's pragmatism in education. They were thought to be different philosophical doctrines. However, in spite of holding different philosophical positions, as practitioners in education, they have remarkable similar viewpoints as to what should be included in an effective educational system and how these subjects should be taught.

We can go back to the problems we mentioned in the first part of this paper. Our educational system is producing young people who are specialized in their own fields with the purpose of making a good livelihood when they go out from the schools. However our educational system do not provide humane principles on which a good relationship among human beings depends. Also our educational system cannot help students in looking for positive values and purpose in life. These problems would be solved if a liberal arts educational program could be offered within our formal educational systems. A solid argument for advocating it can be found not

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<sup>60</sup> *Confucian Analects*, pp. 146-47.

only in Confucius' teaching but also in John Dewey's original thought about education which has strong idealistic insight. Thus, liberal arts study or humanistic study is still an important factor when an educational system is being established. It does not make any difference whether you are a Chinese with Confucius' original thought on education in mind or you are an American with Dewey's educational ideals in mind.

## 教育哲學中孔子的觀念論 及杜威的實用主義

郭 實 渝

### 摘 要

教育理論之產生目的在解決教育問題。目前教育成果所造成的最大問題在於科技的提倡使得人文精神喪失。一位大學畢業生在擁有事業，名望及財富之後，仍感到迷失，缺少人生的目標。另一方面，科技的進步，使學生疏於基本思想能力的訓練。近三十年來，美國教育界曾提出並實施一些補救措施，如改變課程設計，及注重人文研究等。這些補救方法都有其教育哲學的理論背景。在中國教育系統中，原始儒家的觀念論，在美國，具觀念論色彩的杜威哲學看法是其基礎。

本文即探討原始儒家（孔子及孟子）的觀念論及杜威的看法在教育基的三個本問題上提出的答案。此三個問題是有關教育目的，教育內容及教育方法。

雖然孔子及杜威在哲學立場上分屬於二個不同的學派，前者屬觀念論，後者為實用主義，但在教育理論上，兩者均倡導教育是基於實際的理由，堅持道德性格的個人獨立發展，強調自我控制及自律，肯定學生中心的教法及學術自由的態度。兩者的理論雖仍有一些不同，但以他們對人文學術的倡導及對上述實際問題提出之解決方向上，他們在教育哲學中應佔同樣重要的地位。