

Dewey's Trip to China: A Rejuvenation of his Democratic Spirit¹

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Dewey and his wife Alice decided to visit the Far East in 1919 to recover from the political frustrations they had with the “defeat” of President Wilson’s proposed League of Nations after the end of World War I as well as their personal grief upon the death of their son from the trip in Europe. Although visiting the Far East had flitted through their minds before, it was more or less a spontaneous trip in terms that the couple did not have a detailed plan of where or how long they were going to stay. They were teaching at the University of California in Berkeley in late 1918 and in Dewey’s words, we “may never again get as near Japan as we are now and that as the years are passing, it is now or never with us” (John Dewey 2008, 185). The expected short respite from the US, however, turned out to be a three months stay in Japan and a two year extended stay in China. What intrigued Dewey to stay so long in China?

When Dewey’s former Columbia student, Hu Shih, learned Dewey was in Japan in early 1919, he invited the couple to visit China. They joyfully accepted the invitation but were not certain how long they were going to stay. Even though Columbia had granted him a year of sabbatical leave three weeks before their visit to China, Dewey still kept open the plan of returning to the US in the summer of 1919. On the one hand, staying in China for a year was an appealing plan for Dewey as he “could begin to learn something of the East” (quote of Dewey in Wang 2008, 3). On the other hand, many people warned him about making contact with the Chinese (J. C.-S. Wang 2008). However, once Dewey arrived in China, he not only spent a full year sabbatical, but also extended the sabbatical into two years. Coincident with the May Fourth Movement, he became a fad in China. As a figure of democracy and liberalism, Dewey received a “warm, enthusiastic welcome and was hailed as the philosopher of democracy” (Westbrook 1991, 240). He was invited to different places throughout the country giving countless lectures. Such a welcome recharged his political energies as “the change from the United States to an environment of the oldest culture in the world struggling to adjust itself to new conditions was so great as to act as a rebirth of intellectual enthusiasms” (p. 241). He addressed China as “the country nearest his heart after his own” (Jane Dewey 1939, 42) and returned to the US with a changed political propositions and philosophy, which he brought forth in his book, *The public and its problems* (John Dewey 1927). What attracted Dewey to stay in China for two years? What elements in China recharged his political energies and nourished his philosophical ideas? And what made China “the country nearest his heart after his own”? Many scholars have suggested the coincidence of his arriving with the May Fourth Student Movement as the reason Dewey stayed so long (Hoyt 2006; J. C.-S. Wang 2008; Westbrook 1991). However, I would like to depict a comprehensive picture by locating Dewey in the historical context to re-analyze his extended staying. Therefore, this paper examines 1. The political frustrations he felt before his trip to the Far East; 2. How his time in Japan influenced his ideas about the May Fourth Movement which was triggered by the conflicts between Japan and China; 3. How the May Fourth



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Movement and Dewey's engagements with Chinese students, intellectuals, government officials, soldiers, and merchants in China shaped his views upon the East as well as the West; 4. How Dewey's encounters with Chinese history and traditional philosophies promoted his philosophical ideas. Although I arbitrarily divide Dewey's Far East journey into four aspects, the four aspects are all interrelated. Please consider the four aspects as four dimensions of one whole entity covering the length (time) as well as depth (social and intellectual) of how the experience in China shaped Dewey's political and philosophical ideas. I offer my reflections upon how Dewey's trip to China shed lights on the internationalization of curriculum studies (Pinar 2011) today to conclude this essay.

Before going to the Far East

Dewey endeavored to end World War I on American terms, which was an opportunity to "turn the war to democratic ends" (Westbrook 1991, 232). He embodied his idea into Woodrow Wilson's proposal for a League of Nations which should be "a world federation, a concert of nations, a supreme tribunal, a league of nations to enforce peace..." (John Dewey 2008, 70-71). He predicted two consequences of forging an international league of nations "We shall have either a world federation in the sense of a genuine concert of nations, or a few large imperialistic organizations, standing in chronic hostility to one another" (128). In order to promote his visions, Dewey published a large number of articles in the political magazine *Dial* as well as endorsing the work of the League of Free Nations Association (LFNA) which advocated security and equality of economic opportunity for all the nations of the world. The equal opportunity required a "mutual exchange with its resulting economic interdependence" (Westbrook 1991, 235). Such statements were condemned by conservatives as a Marxist critique of capitalistic imperialism. In fact, Dewey's vision of international equity was more radical than the LFNA. He proposed a more regulated free trade which would take a nation's power inequity into account. A democratically controlled international body should be created in order to eliminate imperialism and provide opportunities for less powerful counties in their economy development. In other words, wealthy nations needed to give up their power and bargaining advantages in international trading. The "equality of trade conditions means equalization of conditions" (John Dewey 2008, 142). Obviously, such proposals were opposed by the nation's ruling class who intended to protect their interests. In the fall of 1918, Wilson and LFNA's diplomacy as well as Dewey's more radical version of free trade were threatened by a powerful movement stating that Dewey and others were "American enemies of democracy who are allied with imperialistic and unreconstructed" (John Dewey 2008, 109). Such fears were confirmed by the news from Paris. Wilson secured the League of Nations but sacrificed "self-determination, freedom of the seas, disarmament, racial equality, anti-colonialism, and equality of economic opportunities among nations." (Westbrook 1991, 238). Dewey's enthusiasm for his political ideals were depleted by Wilson's hypocritical "victory" at Versailles. This event frustrated Dewey and forced him to grow politically and to rethink his commitment to the war---a commitment which split Dewey from his pacifist friends. His frustration with Wilson, himself a noted university scholar prior to his US Presidency, extinguished Dewey's fire in politics. On the other hand, it also planted seeds for a more mature political vision in his mind. Later on, when Wilson and the other peacemakers made secret treaties to grant Shandong province, a German territorial holding in China, to Japan, such a blatant contract ignited the May Fourth Movement in China and also nurtured the political seeds in Dewey.



Trip to Japan

Dewey and his wife Alice's trip to Japan started in January 1919 when he was teaching at the University of California in Berkeley. The geographic vicinity encouraged the couple to visit Japan. Two Japanese business men learned about Dewey's trip and funded him to give lectures at Tokyo Imperial University.

The couple were at first impressed by the polite treatments from almost everybody in Japan as well as the exotic settings of shops and hotels. "Politeness is so universal here that when we get back we shall either be so civil that you won't know us, or else we shall be so irritated that nobody is sufficiently civil that you won't know us either" (John Dewey and Alice Chipman Dewey 1920, 31). Later, they reported several cases of gender division in Japanese society in the letters to their daughter. For example, Dewey was granted a first class ticket in a Japanese train by a Japanese official. The first class cabin, however, did not allow woman to be on board so that Alice could not stay in the same cabin with him. In addition, Dewey's lectures seemed not very successful in Japan: "his boring delivery made for a dwindling audience, and his unflinching allegiance to democracy made him unwelcome to the authorities" (Ryan 1995, 205). The room for liberal democracy was little even though he reported a few signs of democratic activity in Japan. As he says:

All Japan is talking democracy now, which is to be taken in the sense of representative government rather than in the sense of tearing down the present form of government. The representation in elections here now does not seem to extend much further, if any, than to include these large taxpayers who would under any system be a force in forming policy. (38)

Interestingly, the expected "tearing down the present form of government" actually happened, not in Japan but in China. The May Fourth Movement greatly shattered the Chinese government. In Japan, though, Dewey's liberal democracy was distasteful to Japan's feudal militarism which was deeply embedded in the traditional values of Bushido. Dewey's pragmatism seemed not appealing to most Japanese audiences as Japanese society was "marked by deep class divisions, held together by the mythology of the emperor cult and the repression of a military state" (Westbrook 1991, 241). Before Dewey came to Japan, he was under the impression that Japan was allied with the US because of their common enemy, German. When he arrived to Japan, he found such impression was totally misguided. To quote Dewey:

For I found that intellectually, morally, and politically an active German propaganda had been carried on during the war by Japanese officials. I learned that in the army the conscript recruits had been systematically got together and taught the superiority of German institutions to those of the Allies, and especially the superiority of German militarism and the fact that it could not be defeated. (John Dewey 2007, 151)

Although Japan and Germany were foes in the War, the two countries were more intimated in terms of ideologies and political beliefs (and later allies in WWII). The defeat of Germany only brought a superficial changes to Japan---Japanese liberals talked more explicitly about democracy. However, deep down, militarism and bureaucracy were still rooted in Japan. The distance created by imperialism and the strict social hierarchy made Dewey realize that his ideas were not in fertile soil. To quote Dewey:



There is a great anti-American drive on now; seems to be largely confined to newspapers, but also stimulated artificially somewhat, presumably by the militaristic faction, which has lost more prestige in the last few months than in years, with a corresponding gain in liberal sentiment. ... Criticism of the United States is the easiest way to arrest the spread of liberal sentiments and strengthen the arguments for a big militaristic party. (John Dewey and Alice Chipman Dewey 1920, 74)

After spending four months in Japan, the couple left for China. The engagements with Japanese intellectuals, military officers, school teachers and students, government officials, merchants, and even hotel maids blended and formed Dewey's interpretations of Japanese history, culture and society. Such interpretations, later, impacted his views on the conflicts between Japan and China upon the Shandong problem.

People and Events

Three days after Dewey arrived in China, he made comparisons between Chinese people and Japanese people:

The Chinese are noisy, not to say boisterous, easy-going and dirty-and quite human in general effect. ...The Japanese impressions are gradually sinking into perspective with distance, and it is easy to see that the same qualities that make them [the Japanese] admirable are also the ones that irritate you. ...there seems to be a rule for everything, and admiring their artistic effects one also sees how near art and the artificial are together. So it is something of a relaxation to get among the easy-going [Chinese] once more. Their slouchiness, however, will in the end get on one's nerves quite as much as the "eternal" attention of the Japanese. (John Dewey and Alice Chipman Dewey 1920, 156–157)

It seems that, for Dewey, he never really got to know Japanese people, the human underneath the politeness, the thoughts without any rules and articulations. Interestingly, such impressions of two countries' ordinary people accidentally echoed the encounters with their leaders. Dewey saw the Japanese Emperor on the street when the Emperor was heading for a university commencement. Dewey, along with other Japanese people on the street, standing on both sides of the street, watched and saluted as the Emperor passed by with reverence. The Emperor was up on a horse carriage, sitting in the middle with "perfect breeding". On the other hand, the meeting with Ex-President Sun Yat-sen was at dinner where they discussed the weakness of Chinese people as well as China's current condition under the international backdrop. In addition, Dewey heard from the meeting that a secret treaty has been made in Paris to turn over Shandong province from Germany's possessions to Japan as concessions, which he completely opposed to. For one thing, it was made secretly. For another, he still believed the League of Nation was the only salvation of the Eastern situation. Otherwise China would be either under Japanese-militarized or under Russian bolshevikized (John Dewey and Alice Chipman Dewey 1920). The secret treaty, as mentioned before, triggered the May Fourth Movement. With great compassion to China and his political ideal of the League of Nation, Dewey actively embraced the Movement with students and criticized Japanese militarism. On the other hand, Chinese students and patriots were eager to see an international figure who was along their side and with theoretical and philosophical support.



The May Fourth Movement

The May Fourth Movement was an anti-imperialism, cultural, and political movement that initiated by students in Beijing on May 4th, 1919. The movement was to protest current Chinese government's weak response to the Shandong problem in the Treaty of Versailles. As one of the victorious countries, China was hoping that Shandong province, a Germany concession during WWI, would be returned to China. However, the Western Allies dominated the meeting and the Chinese representative's voice was neglected. As a result, Shandong province was turned over to Japan. The treaty over the Shandong problem provoked the anger of the Chinese people and triggered the May Fourth Movement.

On the morning of May 4th, college student representatives from thirteen universities met in Beijing and on the afternoon, over 3000 students from Peking Universities along with other school protested in Tiananmen Square against the secret treaty and condemned the weakness of the Chinese government. They required to struggle for the external sovereignty and asked the government to be strong in international affairs. Domestically, they demanded the government to punish the traitors, i.e. the weak delegates who agreed to sign the Versailles treaty. Students hoped to draw the awareness of the public in China regarding the Shandong problem and called for a boycott of Japanese products.

The May Fourth Movement emerged from a larger context of the New Cultural Movement. The New Cultural Movement, simply put, was a movement in which a group of intellectuals advocated the idea that traditional Confucian values were responsible for the political weakness of the nation and China needed to selectively adopt Western ideals of science and democracy in order to strengthen the new nation (Spence 1981). Two points are worth mentioning: 1, Dewey's former student, Hu Shih, was one of the major intellectual leaders in the New Cultural Movement; 2, Science and Democracy were the two themes of the New Cultural Movement. The May Fourth Movement has shifted the New Cultural Movement from cultural activities towards political mobilization. Meanwhile, it also moved the New Cultural Movement from intellectual elites to a broader population.

Dewey's arrival, catered to several needs of the May Fourth Movement. As the Movement aimed to denunciate the traditional Confucius ideas and adopted modern Western ideas, Dewey was portrayed as a modern Sage representing Western thoughts. The Chancellor of Peking University addressed Dewey as a modern-day Confucius because both are "educators of the common people, shared the same faith in education as a vehicle for social change, and insisted on the unity of thought and action" (J. C.-S. Wang 2008, 14). In addition, Dewey's experimental theory of inquiry as well as his beliefs in democracy, equality, and creativity made him "Mr. Science" and "Mr. Democracy" in China. Hu Shih was a passionate proponent of abandoning traditional Confucius value and embracing Western Democracy. Dewey's arrival boosted Hu's zeal to pragmatism. He elaborately planned Dewey's receptions all over China and promoted Dewey's pragmatism among Chinese audiences.

Dewey held the political standing of liberalism and anti-imperialism which resonated with the May Fourth Movement sentiment. While in the Paris Peace Conference, neither Chinese representatives' demands were paid attention to, nor Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points and the ideals of self-determinations in the League of Nations were convincing enough to the Great Britain and France as well as the US Congress. Chinese intellectuals were advocates of Wilson's Fourteen Points and self-determinations proposal as such proposal would return Shandong province back to China from German sovereignty. Dewey, as a radical proponent of Wilson's proposal, thus drew supports from Chinese people. Moreover, his trip in Japan consolidated Dewey's anti-imperialism belief, which encouraged Dewey to not only show explicitly his sympathy of China over Shandong Problem in his lectures, but



also granted him deeper understanding over Shandong Problem from the Japanese perspectives:

...the Japanese liberals who wish to tell the truth about conditions in China --- and there are a good number of them---at the same time temporarily handicap the liberal cause because they seem to be identified with an unpatriotic and anti-nationalistic cause.

If the situation can develop in a reasonable normal way, there is no doubt as to where ultimate triumph will lie. It was European imperialism that taught Japan that the only way in which it could be respected was to be strong in military and naval force. Not its art nor the exquisite courtesy of its people nor its eager curiosity gave Japan the rank of one the Big Five at Paris. (John Dewey 2007, 153–154)

In addition, Dewey wrote reports for US journals in order to call for international attentions of the justice upon Shandong problem. In a report in *The New Republic*, he wrote:

And now Japan has, with the blessing of the great Powers at Paris, become also the heir of German concessions, intrigues and ambitions, with added concessions, wrung (or bought) from incompetent and corrupt officials by secret agreements when the world was busy with war. If all the great Powers are so afraid of Japan that they give way to her every wish, what is China that she can escape the prepared for her? That is the cry of helplessness going up all over China. (John Dewey 2007, 175)

Embodied Mr. Science, Mr. Democracy, modern figure of Western ideas, educator of common people and supporter of China over the Shandong Problem, Dewey instantly became a fad in the May Fourth Movement. Wherever he went his lectures attracted hundreds, if not thousands of audience. Many of the lectures were published by local newspapers. His educational beliefs were valued and admired. China's Educational Conference in 1922 was themed by Dewey's educational philosophies (Hoyt 2006). His books were translated in Chinese and published in the early 1920s (J. C.-S. Wang 2008).

On the one hand, Dewey met the cravings of Chinese people for an international figure who could stand behind their back to provide philosophical, theoretical, and political support to the May Fourth Movement, the New Cultural Movement as well as the Shandong Problem. On the other hand, the May Fourth Movement also created a platform for Dewey to realize his political ideals both in China and internationally, promote his philosophical beliefs, and apply his educational creeds.

Adopting Hu Shi's suggestion, Dewey started his series of lectures with social and political philosophy which was a topic of interest for most Chinese people (J. C.-S. Wang 2008). He attempted to "formulate a coherent statement of social and political philosophy based in pragmatism and sketch out some of implications for the reform of Chinese society" (Westbrook 1991, 244). He positioned himself a guide on the side rather than a sage on the stage. Instead of infuse his own or other western democratic ideas, he reminded Chinese people that democracy cannot be transplanted and every nation should develop her identical democracy based on the specific history, culture and traditions. He suggested pragmatic social theory and guild socialism as antidotes to the social issues in China: Chinese society needed "particular kinds of solutions by particular methods for particular problems which arise on particular occasions" (John Dewey 1973, 53). The social progression should be neither radical nor conservative. "It is cumulative, a step forward here, a bit of improvement there. It takes



place day by day, and results from the ways in which individual persons deal with particular situations” (62). Although Dewey had a distaste for state socialism and Marxism due to their narrow categorization of social economic status, he was very positive about guild socialism which emphasized community, and thus could avoid the entrepreneurial minority gaining control of the country's resources (Westbrook 1991). Dewey suggested the Chinese guild system should center on the welfare of the total society instead of individual or small group profits:

We must teach ourselves one inescapable fact: any real advantage to one group is shared by all groups; and when one group suffers disadvantage, all are hurt. Social groups are so intimately interrelated that what happens to one of them ultimately affects the well-being of all of them. (John Dewey 1973, 71)

Such proposition resonated with Dewey's beliefs in establishing a League of Nation which aimed to mediate the economic inequity internationally. His political beliefs of economic equity found a new land in which they could grow. In addition, his position which rejected both radical and conservative views came out of the reflections upon his war experience. He had witnessed how grand theories made people sacrifice their properties and lives in the war time because such theories offered people beliefs during crisis. And such beliefs were easily manipulated by politicians and militarism. Dewey hoped China could achieve equality by using its own social foundations and philosophical traditions (J. C.-S. Wang 2008). He passionately conveyed his message to his Chinese audience and thereby his political energies were recharged.

Dewey was invigorated by the students' deeds and achievements. With uncertainties and frustrations, he saw more hope in China from the movement of students who were young, motivating, patriotic, and longing for equality, democracy, and freedom. Dewey, not only read about or heard about the movement from newspapers and colleagues in China, he actually lived into this movement. He was in Beijing, the center of the movement from the beginning of the May Fourth Movement. He witnessed student's protests in Beijing. Students gave speeches about the Shandong problem and encouraged Chinese people to boycott Japanese goods. The protests spread like wildfire and almost every school and college was having a strike. At the same time, he also saw the corrupted and traitorous officials, weak and useless soldiers, and banditti like police. The rotten and the hope confronted between students and school administrators as well as with government officials.

A specific event reported in Dewey's letters is worth noting. The government ordered the soldiers to imprison students who gave speeches on the streets in Beijing. Peking University was turned into a temporary prison with military tents all around it for students who “disturb the peace by making speeches” (John Dewey and Alice Chipman Dewey 1920, 210). The government thought the arrests would frighten the students from making speeches. However, Dewey saw “a few hundred girls march away from the American Board Mission School to go to see the President to ask him to release the boy students who are in prison for making speeches on the street” (209). Later, more students were arrested, from two hundred at the beginning on June 1st to one thousand on June 5th 1919 and several university buildings were full as prisons with no food provided. Then the government realized that they should not intimidate the students because the merchants around China had joined the students to boycott Japanese goods and they feared that the soldiers might be compromised as well. As reported by Dewey:



I think this is the first time the merchants and guilds have really been actively stirred to try to improve industrial methods. And if so, it is a real awakening---that and the combination with the students. (John Dewey and Alice Chipman Dewey 1920, 262–3)

At the same time, there were twice as many students as before the arrest giving speeches in the streets. Two days later, students were released and some students refused to walk out of the prison because they required an apology as well as assurance of free speech from the government. Then, the government sent a formal apology and assured student's rights of making free speech. Dewey commented as:

There seems to be no country in the world where students are so unanimously and eagerly interested as in China in what is modern and new in thought, especially about social and economic matters, nor where the arguments which can be brought in favor of the established order and the status quo have so little weight---indeed, are so unuttered. (John Dewey 2007, 178)

Astonished and provoked by the student movement in China, Dewey's political passion was once again ignited as he not only saw how China suffered from the illiberal and militarism international politics, but he also envisioned that his beliefs in democracy, freedom, and equality would bring a promising future to China. To quote Dewey, "to say that life in China is exciting is to put it fairly. We are witnessing the birth of a nation, and birth always comes hard" (209). The process of breaking cocoon is certainly full of pain, the emerging of a new life always disperse the pain and create hope. Touched by both the suffering and the hope, Dewey was recharged and found there were lots of things he could do for China, for peace, for a better future of human beings, and for his own political ideals.

If it was the student's passion and rebellion that aroused Dewey's enthusiasm in politics, it was Dewey's sympathy to China and the Chinese people surged in up his engagement into international affairs. Over the Shandong problem, the Japanese government was trying to shift the anti-Japanese sentiment in China and made the Chinese believe that the Americans and English were responsible for China not getting Shandong back (John Dewey and Alice Chipman Dewey 1920). The suffering of China also consolidated, even pressed into Dewey's awareness of the importance and urgency of justice through a League of Nation, in other words, the realization of his political ideals. He was often asked by Chinese students during his lecture, "All of our hopes of permanent peace and internationalism having been disappointed at Paris, which has shown that might still makes right, and that the strong nations get what they want at the expense of the weak, should not China adopt militarism as part of her educational system? " (181). Therefore, on the one hand, Dewey delivered his lectures in China and discussed his beliefs of proper social reconstruction for China; on the other hand, he called for international attentions on the Shandong problem in his report to American Journals:

Japan has one mode of diplomacy for the East and another for the West, and that what is said in the West must be read in reverse in the East (John Dewey 2007, 171)...And Japanese propagandists take advantage of the situation, pointing to the action of the Peace Conference as proof that the Allies care nothing for China, and China must throw herself into the arms of Japan if she is to have any protection at all...If the economic straits of Japan are alluded to, it is only as a reason why Japan



has hurried her diplomatic coercion, her corrupt and secret bargainings with Chinese traitors and her industrial invasion. (175)

On June 29th, 1919, the Chinese delegates refused to sign the Paris Treaty. It was a temporary but huge triumph of the May Fourth Movement not only for the college students, intellectuals, merchants, and all patriots, but also for Dewey and his beliefs in liberalism, equality, and democracy. Dewey was overjoyed for China and in the letters to his daughters, he wrote:

You can't imagine what it means here for China not to have signed. The entire government has been for it--the President up to ten days before the signing said it was necessary. It was a victory for public opinion, and all set going by these little schoolboys and girls. Certainly the United States ought to be ashamed when China can do a thing of this sort. (John Dewey and Alice Chipman Dewey 1920, 266)

Having witnessed the passion, the struggle, the suffering, and the victory of May Fourth Movement led by a group of young people who had just reached their twenties, Dewey saw the rebirth of a nation as well as the hope for his political ideals. Even though frustrated by the Wilson administration before visiting the Far East, he found his political beliefs in a new land to grow and flourish. Never losing faith in democracy, liberal, equality, and public welfare, Dewey, a man with tremendous courage, morals, and creativity, picked up his beliefs in justice, human being, and the possibility for a world built upon ethics rather than economy.

The two-year stay in China offered Dewey rests physically, mentally, and intellectually that he had been longing for. The change of environment helped Dewey gather breath from the confrontations with his political opponents in America. The life in China is easy and comfortable (J. C.-S. Wang 2008). Preparing and delivering lectures in China motivated him to summarize and reflect upon his ideas and knowledge. He left China with a refreshing mind and ready to "begin anew" (Martin 2003, 327).

Encounter History/intellectual traditions of China

Several Dewey scholars have claimed that Dewey possessed more mature political and philosophical ideas after his two-year visit in the Far East (Rockefeller 1991; J. C.-S. Wang 2008; Westbrook 1991). Such shifts are partly attributed to his experience with the people and political events in China, and are partly gained from his engagements with traditional Chinese philosophies. Dewey was "quite impressed by the Confucian social system". Scholars have compared the similarities between Dewey's Democracy and Confucian beliefs and analyzed the possibilities to develop a Confucian democracy (Grange 2004; Hall and Ames 1999; Tan 2003). The Chancellor of Peking University addressed him as a modern-day Confucius. However, Dewey himself seemed to be more congenial to Taoism rather than Confucianism.

Although Dewey put a lot of work into developing his beliefs in economic equality among nations, he deemed that the difficulties between nations were not just economy. One needed to dig the deep-seated reasons of such difficulties, namely the origin in different philosophies of life. In the light of honest understanding of another nation's philosophy of life, Dewey learned from the seemingly weird reactions of the Chinese people to international situations and to the refusal of modern industry to be dominated in their lives. He pondered on these questions, "Is their attitude one of callous indifference, of stupid ignorance? Or is it a sign of faith in deep-seated realities that Western people neglect in their hurry to get results?"



(John Dewey 2007, 202). He then further asked “is her course stupid inertia, a dull obstinate clinging to the old just because it is old? Or does it show something more profound, a wise even if largely unconscious, aversion to admitting forces that are hostile to the whole spirit of her civilization?” (203). With these questions, Dewey examined the two philosophies of life, Taoism and Confucianism. Confucian school spread among elites and officials in China. It is a school of classic and authority. However, based on Dewey's observation, Taoism was the foundation of Chinese people's way of life and had greater influence than Confucianism. Dewey highly appreciated the doctrine of non-doing as well as the superiority of nature to man in Taoism. He commented, “it is a kind of rule of moral doing, a doctrine of active patience, endurance, persistence while nature has time to do her work. Conquering by yielding is its motto” (205). He further suggested to the West, to adopt the value of such philosophy because,

The result (of international diplomacy upon China) may easily be rash and inconsiderate action. An adoption of Chinese calm and patience, a willingness to take only the steps...[that] are immediately necessary, and to wait till time has adjusted the present troubled condition, would have a wonderfully healing effect...The philosophy of the East was never more needed by the West than in the present crisis. (210)

Originating in the West and now immersed in the East, Dewey, while in China, wrote a conception of the spiritual ideal that includes both the western ethical ideal of service and the eastern ideal of esthetic appreciation and meditation (Rockefeller 1991). The calm, quiet appreciation of the beauties of nature and a peaceful meditation and contemplation, to Dewey, are much needed by the hurried activism of the west. Although Dewey did not explicitly develop Taoism philosophy in his writing of natural piety, his mature idea of dependence on nature was consistent with Taoism (Rockefeller 1991).

Conclusion

What Dewey brought to China was hope, a path to modernity, and democratic seeds. What China offered Dewey was a shelter in the War, a stage to revive his beliefs, and an unknown sphere to explore. Arriving with depleted passion in politics, Dewey's political energy was recharged by the passionate, courageous, but helpless students. Dewey saw hope from the rebirth of the nation and was moved by the crying of a nearly extinct China. To Chinese people, Dewey was the teacher. He was the Mr. Science and Mr. Democracy. He had the key to modernity and a strong China. To Dewey, he was a student. He learned from the people, the events, and the philosophies from the Far East. The war year left him some scares. And he also learned from it. Once again, to quote Rockefeller (1991),

When he sat down after the war to write his big books, he was a wiser man for having lived through those turbulent times. His vision of the interrelationship of the ideal and the actual was becoming more comprehensive, and he would in time endeavor to integrate into his philosophy of experimental intelligence a more sensitive and complete understanding of moral feeling and of aesthetic and religious experience. (355)

What are the significance of study Dewey's Far East trip to the internationalization of curriculum studies? Gough (2003) reminded us that “internationalizing curriculum inquiry



might best be understood as a process of creating transnational 'spaces'"(68). Dewey's trip created a transnational space where he deeply engaged with another country's people, politics, culture, social changes, history, and philosophies. At the same time, the trip allowed him to reflect upon his previous engagement in the US and in Japan from a geographical, social, and cultural distance. His experience echoes Hongyu Wang's (2010) argument of crossing and dwelling in cross-cultural and intercultural curriculum. Both crossing and dwelling are needed for the internationalization of curriculum studies. Newness emerges from tensionality of conjunction and disjuncture. Dewey's political beliefs were ignited and undermined when he was dwelling in the US context. The trip to China reinvigorated his political passion when he crossed geographic and cultural boundaries. The crossing and dwelling created an "inter-space" for Dewey to re-examine and transcend his political beliefs.

The notion of "distance" is important in creating the inter-space for cross-cultural engagement in curriculum studies. While cross-cultural engagement often brings excitement of novel experience, it also creates distance from one's previous assumptions and dispositions. Such distance, I argue, is the space to re-examine and re-discover one's own beliefs and the stepping stone for creativity and newness. Standing from a distance to examine one's intellectual history while exposing to novel situations in a different culture, the intertwining of distance from the past and intimacy with the present produces transcendence of naiveté and provincialism. The internationalization requires new languages and new publics which allow distinctive national culture to embed in (Pinar 2008). The new languages and publics can be created from critical examination of one's assumptions and engagement with different environment. I further argue that engagement in another distinctive national culture leverage the creation of new languages and publics.

Pinar (2011) proposed verticality and horizontality as the structure of disciplinarity in the internationalization of curriculum studies. Verticality refers to intellectual history of a discipline. Horizontality refers to not only the field's present intellectual circumstances but also the social and political milieu. I argue that the simultaneous presentation of both verticality and horizontality is a necessary condition for the advancement of disciplinarity in the internationalization of curriculum studies. Dewey's political ideals were marginalized in the US because the political circumstances represented the interests of nation's ruling class (lack of horizontality). His political beliefs did not grow in Japan because of the deep roots of militarism and imperialism (lack of verticality). However, people in China hailed Dewey as Mr. Science and Mr. Democracy. The intellectual history, present circumstances, and social and political milieu together generated welcoming soil for Dewey's beliefs. To China, Dewey left his invaluable legacy in Chinese history, politics, philosophy, and education (Zhang 2014; Hoyt 2006; J. C.-S. Wang 2008). To Dewey, China rejuvenated his democratic spirits and crafted his political stand. The trip to China allowed Dewey's ideas and beliefs to sink into perspectives. He reflected upon his political frustrations, philosophical beliefs, and educational creeds while dwelling in a different context. The similarities and differences in Chinese context informed the advancement of his intellectual development. Dewey's engagement with otherness might inspire curriculum scholars to further ponder the notions of distance, verticality and horizontality in the internationalization of curriculum studies.

Notes

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