
Will the Leadership of Chinese Education Follow the Footsteps of American Education?

A Brief Historical and Socio-Political Analysis

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Introduction

For thousands of years China has kept itself a closed, isolated, and mysterious country with respect to its culture, education, and economy. The world knew nothing more than a vague impression of its traditional imperial system and notorious communist dictatorial structure. After Deng Xiaoping's 1978 reformation, China started to open its doors to Western influence and American ideas. The economic and cultural export from Western countries together with a willingness of citizens to reform the Chinese government has resulted in the current economic expansion and prosperity of China. China has become, without dispute, one of the economic super-powers based upon its population, geographic size, and gross domestic product (GDP). The 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing attests to China's ever increasing openness, economic expansion, and national pride. Increasingly, China makes its presence known on the stage of international affairs for its own benefit. It is clear at this point that the Chinese economic system has changed to a mixed social-market economy instead of purely a command economy; yet at the same time the Chinese government is still a communist dictatorial government.

In this mixed or hybrid economic-political system, where does Chinese education stand? How do we predict the direction of the Chinese education system? Will national education fix itself within a Chinese traditional education agenda; move toward a Western or principally

US culturally-influenced system; or remain under the communist government's umbrella of control and surveillance?

This article analyzes both past and contemporary Chinese education, walks us through the Chinese education pathway, and tries to determine and anticipate the direction of the current Chinese education system. Our logic and argument are derived from historical aspects of Chinese education, the contemporary political atmosphere, educational philosophy, and curricular and leadership studies in education. Leadership, as we define it here, is "everything that consciously seeks to accomplish educational projects" and their varied ends, either aesthetically, economically or ideologically (Hodgkinson, 1991, p. 17). The questions we seek to answer are: Will the leadership of Chinese education follow in the footsteps of Western countries, and particularly America (U.S.), in purpose, organization, policy and practice? What can or should be done to assist in this matter?

Chinese Education of the Distant and Recent Past

Confucius' Impact on Chinese Education

In Chinese traditional values, "Wan ban jie Xia pin, Wei you du shu gao" means that educated people are above every other human being in social standing. In the Song Dynasty of China, the Emperor Zheng Zong wrote a famous poem called "The Exhortation of Study" in order to encourage Chinese people to achieve self-actualization through studying hard. The poem mentions, "There are golden houses in books; there are pretty girls in books; there are myriads of grain in books; and there are crowds of horses and carriages in books." Therefore, in ancient China, even the poor could appreciate the value of education. For thousands of years, education was almost the only way in which people could climb to the elite classes.

What is Traditional Chinese Education and Why Is It Influential?

China has a long history of being an emperor-run country. Before the first unification of the entire country in BC 221, China was in an era of warring states that fought for power over each other—it was a time of great chaos. Among the different philosophers who flourished during this era, Confucius (551-479 BC) was the most influential. One of his codes was "Jun Jun, Chen Chen, fu fu, zi zi." Actually, this was his societal organization code meaning: "the ruler rules as he should; the minister manages as he should; the father acts as he should; and the son behaves as he should" (Waley, 1996, p. 59). According to Fairbank & Goldman (2006), Confucius thought "if everyone performs his

own role, then the social order would be sustained” (p. 51). Confucius’ other code was about proper behavior and a moral standard—“li” for acceptable conduct for a superior class to rule the country, “yi” for loyalty from subordinates, “lian” for no corruption, and “chi” for awareness of shame. His philosophy and thought is mostly regarding how to rule, how to keep order, and how to behave in order to be a moral person.

Confucius’ teaching supported a class hierarchy and made clear distinctions between members of society. Therefore, his philosophy and thought was regarded as the doctrine for the ruling class for thousands of years. Only scholars or educated people who subscribed to Confucius’ philosophy and standards could serve as the ruling class or civil officials. Although Confucius put his priorities in the order of proper ritual first, humaneness second, and learning third; he and Mencius (370-290 BC)—another Confucius-like philosopher—claimed that all human beings are born with a good nature and all can be led to the right path through education, especially if they worked hard enough.

As an education master, Confucius practiced learning and teaching as a way to knowledge, a constructive strategy which he described as: “a student, who studies but does not think, is lost; a student, who thinks but does not study, is in great danger” (Waley, *The Analects*, p. 19). This maxim emphasized that there was a deep interaction between study and thinking. In Confucius’ view, study involves active thinking rather than the passive acceptance of knowledge; and in turn, positive thinking is a beneficial way to improve a student’s study. It is said that Confucius had three thousands students, and his philosophy was carried on by his devoted disciples generation after generation.

Since the Han dynasty, Confucianism had been acclaimed by emperors and scholars as a secular religion. In the Tang dynasty, the kingdom’s founders established a civil service examination system (keju) based on Confucius’ philosophy. Regardless of social status (rich or poor), only scholars or educated people who passed official examinations could serve for the ruling class as civil officials. However, only a minority of scholars were able to pass the examination the first time they took it. Innumerable scholars and educated people devoted their lives to pursuing the civil service examination. The examination system produced a scholar-official class in China. The traditional Chinese elite level consisted of scholar-officials. The Scholar-officials dominated traditional Chinese politics and culture for thousands of years. “The examination was thus an organic component of a total social system, serving a multiplicity of interests, including many shared by the state and the [cultural] elite” (Thomas, 2005, p.75).

In addition, the examination system enforced the Chinese tradi-

tion of private schools that Confucius created. In order to deal with the examination, a large number of private schools (si shu) and academic schools (shu yuan) existed in Chinese rural areas and cities. Based on Confucius' philosophy that "I instruct regardless of kind" (Palmer, 2001, p.2), most scholars who desired to pass the examination were taught by classic tutors in private academic schools. The Confucius-Mencius idea that human beings are born with a good nature and that all can be educated made the ordinary people and even the poor have a dream for a better life based on the values of these philosophical teachings. This is a traditional Chinese education based on a traditional Chinese culture.

John Dewey's Impact on Chinese Education

The curriculum of ancient or traditional Chinese education was mostly based in the liberal arts focusing on Confucius' philosophy and thought in addition to some poetry and literature. Mathematics, science, physical arts, and technical skills were either not considered as legitimate curricular topics for formal education, an outside or different activity from strictly defined formal education, or forbidden from consideration as a valid part of formal education. Students studied and learned about Confucius or neo-Confucian teachings, wrote compositions with rigid style, and took the civil service examination only for the purpose of securing positions as government officials. Science and technology were never formally studied or encouraged. Confucian and neo-Confucian (li xue) teachings became rigid doctrines so that everyone proceeding afterward had to follow and obey. No one could surpass this rigidity.

Buddhism within the Sui-Tang Dynasties, and Christianity in later stages of imperial China, were, once in a while, imported to China, but these teachings never became dominant. After the Tang Dynasty, China no longer had the flourishing or diversity of philosophy and expanded liberal studies. China's focus became more and more inward. A strong imperial country gradually declined. More significantly, Chinese culture and tradition isolated the Chinese nation from the outside world so that China became increasingly narrow-minded and self-centered. The Chinese Empire lagged behind the Western world in ideology, creativity, and international perspective. For instance, in 1644, the Manchurian troops took over all of China; while simultaneously the British were struggling to confine the monarchy's power and to establish capitalism. In 1764, James Hargreaves's "Spinning Jenny" revolutionized the textile industry. By contrast, Chinese under the Manchuria Qing Dynasty were blindly drunk with traditional Chinese culture and the physical/geographic boundaries of the country. Finally, in 1842, the Qing Dynasty was defeated by British troops in the First Opium War. This

encounter provides evidence that China was slow to develop compared to the industrial countries of Europe.

The ending of the imperial era was accompanied by Chinese education reform. For a long period of time Chinese education had served the purpose of stabilizing the ruling power, not for the advancement of humanity in general and not for a democratic citizen's well-being. This elitist concept of stabilizing the ruling power began to be challenged. Since 1842, when the Qing Dynasty was defeated by the British troops, China was forced to open its door to the outside world. Therefore, the establishment of treaty ports in China was accompanied by an inflow of Western culture and technology. The dominance of Confucius' philosophy in China was undermined by Western invasions and domestic rebellions. The Scholar-official class was not capable of responding to international conflicts and China's internal unrest. In 1905, the civil service examination was abolished. Chinese scholars were sent to America or Europe. Western civilization was gradually imported to an isolated country, and arguably the most important impact on Chinese education thought during this period came from John Dewey.

In 1919, Dewey and his wife visited China in response to an invitation from some of his former Chinese students at Columbia University. When Dewey went north to Beijing, he accidentally witnessed the outbreak of a student demonstration called the May Fourth movement marking an upsurge of Chinese nationalism and a reevaluation of Chinese cultural institutions, such as Confucianism. Dewey realized that China was in a period of great transition. He was immediately fascinated by China and the idea of establishing the first republic government in Chinese history. Thus, he extended his brief visit to a year and afterwards he accepted a visiting professorship at National Peking University. He lectured in China for more than two years and made trips throughout the country. Dewey's lectures covered education, democracy, and political thought. His pragmatism and experimental methods emphasized the importance of a modern scientific understanding of human and social interaction (Keenan, 1977). The main competitors to Dewey's reform ideas were the early Marxist proposals for change in China. Dewey argued against Marxism. His lectures, given in English, were translated simultaneously by Hu Shih into Chinese while he was speaking. Five book editions of his different lecture series soon appeared in Chinese. One book had ten printings before Dewey left China at the end of his visiting professorship (Keenan, 1977).

In the early twentieth century there was an influx of Chinese students to the United States. One school in particular, Columbia University where Dewey worked as a professor, had admitted hundreds of Chinese

students. Some of them were advised by Dewey during their Ph.D. studies. Many Chinese students in the United States pursued the majors of education, political science, or other liberal arts disciplines. These graduate students returned to China and took important positions in education and other sectors of society. Together with Hu Shih, Dewey's prominent Chinese disciple, these young intellectuals followed Dewey's thought and made tremendous contributions in Chinese education reform.

During Dewey's visit, China was in a state of political instability and economic sluggishness. By contrast, both culturally and intellectually, Chinese scholars, especially a group of returnees from the West, were creative and full of passion. They desired to apply Dewey's pragmatism to Chinese educational and cultural reformation. Since Dewey's departure, a series of educational reforms had been launched by Dewey's Chinese followers. In terms of educational philosophy, they thought that education should follow the changes occurring in Chinese society. New China needed a citizenry able to think independently, express themselves, and assume public responsibilities rather than a traditional scholar-official class. Thus, it was believed, Chinese education should be separate from politics. In terms of curriculum, the study of Confucian ideology was gradually replaced with modern science, western liberal arts, medicine, and vocational skills. For example, "in 1919, Beijing University, considered the leading Chinese university and a model for other schools, contained fifteen different departments specializing in subjects such as physics, chemistry, mathematics, geology, political science, economics, law, commerce, civil engineering, mining, and metallurgy" (Thomas, 2005, p.328).

Some educators, such as Hu Shih and Tao Xingzhi, applied Dewey's pragmatism to the reformation of schools. As a self-proclaimed disciple of Dewey, Dr. Hu Shih believed that "the great advantage of experimentalism (pragmatism) was its universality" (Grieder, 1999, p. 47). In his view, pragmatism "as a scientific methodology... transcended Western culture and was thus potentially as useful in China as it was proving itself to be in the West as a means of translating the attitudes of the scientific intellect into terms that would lend themselves to the analysis of social and political phenomena" (Grieder, 1999, p. 47). When Hu Shih served as the president of China National Institute in Shanghai, Hu pushed for educational (curricular) reform, such as merging the school system of liberal arts and sciences into one.

Dr. Tao, who studied under John Dewey at Columbia University, realized that peasants' education was the foundation of Chinese civil education. He left his position at the National Nan King Teacher College and went to a Chinese rural area to promote civil education by running an experimental school known as Xiao Zhuang Teachers School. Xiao

Zhuang School emphasized learning by doing, exemplifying Dewey's influence on Tao's philosophy. A professional-like structure of mass education began to emerge and was gradually embedded within the ever developing institutional features of universities as complex organizations where "decisions [were] made by those who [possessed] the knowledge and expertise to make them" (Hoy, 2005, p. 99).

Since the 1920s, particularly after 1927, when Kuo Ming Tang (Nationalist Party) reunited China, Chinese education carefully followed a Western formulation regardless of theory and practice. The establishment of a professional structure in many universities resulted in a tendency toward professional guidance in education—university-based professional schools for educators. Scholars were trained as capable practitioners in order to direct educational affairs. A second aspect of this framework for education was a remarkable transition from old style, traditional Chinese education to America-orientated educational leadership (Chang-Tu Hu, 1962). The National College Institution (da xueyuan), the top unit of educational administration and academic research in China, was established in 1927. American-trained educators became the core members of the National College Association for the Improvement of Chinese Education. The number of American-trained returnees exceeded more than one third of all educators of the National College Association (Xie Chang Fa, 2001).

Chinese Education after 1949 and the Cultural Revolution

Dewey's influence on Chinese educational practice was important and lasting. When China succumbed to Communism in 1949, Dewey's ideas on education had dominated China for 30 years (Rippa, 1997). After Dewey left and before 1949, Chinese education had been following the influence of the West. Dewey lived long enough to see the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, and to watch his disciples become refugees in Taiwan and the United States. Mao Zedong strongly condemned Dewey's intellectual followers and the cultural influence of the United States on China. "For a very long period, U.S. imperialism laid greater stress than other imperialist countries on activities [within China] in the sphere of spiritual aggression, extending from religious to 'philanthropic' and cultural undertakings" (Keenan, 1977, p.3). In the eyes of Mao Zedong and other Communists, Dewey's pragmatism was fundamentally incompatible with the need for socialism. Dewey's democratic ideas did not accentuate class differences and class struggle. Therefore, in the 1950s, The People's Republic of China carried out an intellectual campaign. Dewey's educational impact and political ideas were

spitefully denounced, together with his disciple, Hu Shih. Finally, Marxism triumphed over Dewey's pragmatism in China.

The reason why Dewey's philosophy failed in China was because, for the most part, Chinese modern intellectuals constituted only a fraction of the Chinese populace. The place where modern intellectuals gathered was large cities. Therefore, Dewey's philosophy did not influence the numerous peasants living in the countryside. Conversely, Communism strategically dominated the masses in rural areas thereby making Dewey's teachings impotent.

Accompanied by the attack on pragmatism and liberalism, the China Communist Party (CCP) launched a mass movement called the reformation of colleges and universities. After 1949 the CCP began a vigorous imitation of the soviet model of education. The party dismantled the liberal arts programs inherited from the Christian colleges and national universities. For example, Yanjing University, the famous Christian college established in Peking (Beijing) by American educator, John Leighton Stuart, in 1919, was forced to dismantle in 1952. The Tsinghua, a well-known comprehensive university, was transformed into a technological university in the same year. Chinese schools maintained a curriculum for scientific and professional studies; however, communist ideology replaced any focus on the liberal arts with an emphasis on Marxist politics, economics, government and history. Education was not for a citizen's well-being, but rather was for ensuring loyalty to the Communist Party and Chairman Mao.

The school system, from the earliest years to advanced university study, and from administration to curriculum, started to mimic a style similar to the Soviet Union. Russian became a popular foreign language in the Chinese education curriculum. In addition, the highly trained Western-returned students, who were now professors, had to accept thought reform under communism. A professional structure was replaced with an authoritarian structure in the Chinese school system. After the reformation of universities, the Chinese school system was changed from professor-run to party-run (from a professional structure to an authoritarian structure). A large number of uneducated party members from the peasant and working class were assigned to the school system as presidents or secretaries of local party branches throughout the country.

From 1966-1976, China experienced its darkest historical era. Chairman Mao started, ironically, an appalling power struggle within the Communist Party, the very party built by him. He malignantly expanded his power, indirectly sacrificing one hundred million peoples' lives over the course of several decades. For example, the president of the state Liu Shaoqi, who opposed Mao's economic policy, was perse-

cuted to death. Numerous people were tortured to terrible extremes, both physically and mentally, for a variety of political reasons. In Mao's view, the scholars who were educated abroad and served the Nationalist government were unfaithful to the CCP. He realized that most of them had opposing thoughts about Communism. Therefore, way beyond the cruelty of "burn the books and bury the intellectuals" in the Qin Dynasty, Chairman Mao brought about a catastrophe for Chinese intellectuals and correspondingly for the entire country as well (Ding, 2004).

All schools turned their priority to fighting counter-revolutionists. During the first several years of the Cultural Revolution school systems were not in operation. Later on, all the students around the age of 15 to 16 years old, from junior school to secondary school, were sent to rural areas to settle down under the slogan of "educated by rural proletariat" in order to clear the chaos of amassed students in the cities. The daily life of students who were left in school involved the worship of Chairman Mao. The only curriculum students learned in school was Chairman Mao's articles, quotes, or communist propaganda. Scientific content and math were subjects only slightly touched; however when covered in the curriculum, each item had to be described with communist-like words. For instance, in the medical textbooks of Mao's time the editors often fabricated stories, such as patients who never accepted any treatment and recovered just because of their belief in Mao Ze Dong's doctrine.

Colleges and universities were closed for admission for the first several years of the Cultural Revolution. In 1971, the first year for new college students, the government gave learners the special name of "worker-peasant-soldier student." They were students, but they were also the masters of the school, because the lectures, and especially the professors who delivered them, were treated as an enemy or "stinking ninth" (a Chinese dysphemism for intellectuals during the Revolution—especially Confucian scholars). Students did not need a high school education to study in college. The evaluation of the applicants was based on the quality of their political status. The total time for college study was three years instead of four to six.

The Cultural Revolution, lasting ten years, not only eradicated residual Western-style education and the earlier emulated Soviet Union education model, but also wiped out any trace of Confucian education including the study and practice of its moral standards. The only thing left for people to learn was Communism and Chairman Mao's slogans and ideology. In this catastrophe, schools were treated as a political tool to accentuate and inculcate the philosophy of class-struggle. The foundation of modern education established by Chinese Western-oriented scholars before 1949 was brutally destroyed by Mao's Cultural

Revolution. Schooling lost its nobler functions and was subjected to tight political control.

Contemporary Chinese Education

The Current Social Market Economy of China

The long march of the Cultural Revolution under Chairman Mao almost destroyed the whole country—from its culture, to education, to industrial productivity, to agriculture. Housing became extremely difficult. Buying food and clothes required stamps that were issued by the government and strictly controlled in quantity. China became a very poor nation, just like current North Korea. To survive this disaster, Deng Xiaoping and his followers started a reformation after he assumed power and took over the Communist Party. Many major policies have been changed since then. The country's doors have opened to Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Western countries. Foreign investment has been encouraged. The nation's commerce has changed to a partially private economic system. Land has been assigned to individuals in order to farm in rural areas. Citizens can buy and run factories from the Chinese government or operate their own private business. A command economy has changed to a social market economy.

Thirty years after Chairman Mao, China is having an economic expansion, on average, of 9% a year in the last two decades. Currently, China has become the second largest economic country in the world, only behind the United States, in purchasing power parity (PPP) (Fairbank & Goldman, 2006).

Current Dictatorship of China

China has transformed itself from an isolated, poor, rural, and politically disturbed country to a relatively open, modernizing, urbanizing, and politically stable country (Fairbank & Goldman, 2006). However, China is still a dictatorship and run by the Communist Party. Although individuals can own industry, manufacture, or engage in business, the media, propaganda system, and schools are still controlled by the Communist Party. All administrative heads or important positions are taken by Communist Party members. The decisions and government policies for the whole country are made by the Communist Party. The People's Representative Committee (the Chinese Congress) is mostly an exhibition without function. Since the heads of the Communist Party make the decisions, their families and children form a chain of people that comprise an inner circle with access to information, power, and privilege in order to buy or own businesses for profit.

Therefore, most of the wealth in the country is in the hands of Communist Party officials. For ordinary people, if their desire is to get rich or have a better life, they had better become a Communist Party member. This route could lead to a government job—being a government official, for instance, where you can get rich through political positioning and corruption. For instance, Mu Shunxin, the mayor of a large provincial city, Shenyang, was arrested because of corruption and bribery in 2001. Investigators searching his two country houses found six million dollars worth of gold bars hidden in the walls, 150 Rolex watches, and computer files documenting years of corruption that infected almost every government department. A government report found that the mayor, his wife, daughter, lover, executive vice-mayor, the police, prosecutors, judges, customs officers, construction bureaus, private companies, bankers, and local legislators were all on the take (Becker, 2006).

A Culture Reflected in the Economy and Politics

As China's doors are opening and the economy is expanding, Western culture is being imported. Movies, music, art, novels, and other literature exhibit the way of life of the Western world and convey thoughts, ideas, dreams, and visions of a fuller humanity. The Chinese people have gradually, both consciously and subconsciously, taken the imported way of life and culture and adopted it as their life—a life that is getting better, at least in terms of a standard of living.

However, since the media and propaganda systems such as TV stations, publications, and schools are still controlled and monitored by the Communist Party, any news report, international affair, or political discussion that does not benefit the ruling class and their ideological point of view regarding democracy, freedom, and human rights is not allowed to be publicly visible. But since China's embrace in the mid-1990s of new communication technologies, the nation has facilitated greater access not only to the outside world and scientific and technological advances, but also to independent discourse and organization of political activities. By June 2005, China had 100 million Internet users, outnumbering by far its Communist Party members (Fairbank & Goldman, 2006). The sharp increase of Internet users continues to cause trouble for the CCP's tight control over Chinese thought and ideology. Although the government endeavors to prevent Chinese people from getting information via overseas websites, some Internet users can criticize the Communist Party as "cyber-dissidents" by the use of proxy servers in Hong Kong, the United States, and Europe. In fact, the growth of the Internet has indirectly provided Chinese citizens with more opportunities to express their ideas and to get more information from around the world.

Contemporary Structural Features of Chinese Education

The first thing Deng Xiaoping did with national education reform was to reestablish the old admission policy—students were once again admitted by academic quality judged by a college test score plus political quality instead of political status alone. Consequently, all the textbooks were updated and reedited. The total time for college study returned to four to six years depending on the major. Bachelor's degrees were offered to college graduates. Master's and doctoral programs were established. Professors regained their recognition. A promotion system for faculty was recovered. Scholars were once again sent to the U.S. or Western countries, and scientists from the U.S. and other Western countries were invited to China for academic activities.

Since the Deng Xiaoping reformation much work has been done with respect to education reform. All changes have been done under the umbrella of the Communist Party. Education in China was once defined as an instrument of political struggle, serving the communist totalitarian system after 1949. In fact, the Communist Party treated schools as a political organization and Chinese education was highly centralized during the time of Chairman Mao. The Ministry of Education in Beijing controlled the overall Chinese school system by formulating important national policies and coordinating educational development. Under the Ministry of Education, each of the 27 provinces and three municipalities have a bureau of education, with offices for primary, secondary, and higher education; for planning and finance; and for personnel and student affairs. In addition, each prefecture within a province has an office of education that runs a unit for education, planning, finance, and personnel. Under a prefecture, there are several counties, each of which has an office of education with responsibility for primary school, junior school, and secondary school (Jing Lin, 1993). These provincial educational bureaus were responsible to the Ministry of Education in Beijing and loyally carried out the Party's policies toward schools. The educational bureaus of prefectures and counties were responsible to provincial bureaus.

Since 1985 the central government has assigned partial authority to local governments, for such responsibilities as elementary school management, financing, and specific daily work. Currently, the Communist Party controls the direction of education at the macro-level (Jing, 1993). Another example of the decentralization of Chinese education is the establishment of the Principal Responsibility System, which represents a limited change in educational leadership (Jing, 1993). During the era of Chairman Mao, leadership in Chinese schools was dominated by the Party Secretary and the Party Committee with branches extending into

all school departments. The Party Committee normally consists of the most powerful members of the Party organization. The Party Secretary is the head of the whole Party Committee and has the final right to make decisions. The Party had the most power and the Party Secretary within each school could overrule a principal's decision or the Branch Party Secretary could overrule a principal's decision. In fact, a principal could never make any decisions violating the Party Secretary's position including teaching, human resources, financing, housing, or any other school-related matter. This system guaranteed the school was under the control and following the dictates of the Communist Party.

Beginning in 1985 the responsibility of the Secretary and the principal has been redefined under the Principal Responsibility System. The principal is responsible for taking care of all daily administration and the school Party Secretary makes sure that the school follows the Party's wishes and ideology while admitting new members into the Party, both students and teachers, to strengthen the Party's influence. In theory, a teacher can make his or her own decision to join the Party. Indeed, some teachers prefer to pursue their career as non-Party members. But the Party organization never gives up absorbing more teacher members. The Party organization in schools often mobilizes the teachers that are already members of the Party to attract non-party members. The party organization in schools has several branches and every branch has the responsibility to develop party members over a certain period of time. Today, someone who becomes a principal has the authority for academic activity, financing, hiring, housing, and other issues of daily operation. However, regardless of the increased authority of the principal, the Party Secretary always has the last word in decision making.

Candidates for the position of principal are required to be loyal to the Party, or they are already party members. Principals, for the most part, who are assigned by the Communist party are members of the Party. As a Communist Party member, one has to follow the Communist Party's direction. Occasionally, the CCP has appointed non-party members to be principals, but their authority is restricted by the Party organization. In 2004, the Communist Party launched a campaign called: "keeping the purity of members of CCP." The students and teachers who were members of the Party were required to write down their thoughts in a notebook every week and submit their writings to the Party Committee for surveying. Each member has to expose his own faults in Party meetings. The Communist Party uses these kinds of sophisticated ways to control their members as well as others who resist membership.

Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum in Chinese Schools

In Chairman Mao's time, the principle of Chinese education was "Redness (faith to the Party) and Expertise" (Wang Tie Fan, 2004, p. 223). In 1975, a year before the Cultural Revolution was over, Deng Xiaoping put forward the slogan of "Four Modernizations: for agriculture, industry, science and technology, and defense" (Van Kemenade, 1998, p. 8). The political slogan has reappeared more and more in the post-Mao era and put into practice as a form of government guidance.

In contrast with Mao's era, there have been changes in elementary and secondary education. The Ministry of Education organized experts to reedit normal textbooks used by elementary, junior, and secondary schools. In elementary, junior, and secondary school education, class and class struggle are no longer at the core of all textbooks. Some content on extreme class struggles was modified or deleted. The propaganda of violent revolution has diminished in elementary, junior, and secondary school education. In Mao's time, students saw only commune members, workers and peasants, and soldiers in textbooks. After Mao's era, the content on scientists, artists, musicians, and business persons gradually increased in textbooks. According to the spirit of "Four Modernizations," students of elementary, junior, and secondary schools have received some scientific and technical education. For example, many elementary students are taught basic skills on how to use computers. Curriculum involving all related fields associated with the slogan were set up based upon the need of the "Four Modernizations."

At the college level, particularly in science and advanced technology classes, the textbooks were updated with the best knowledge teachers had available—up to the point where Chinese scholars could understand the content of foreign technical literature and books. Returning scholars from the U.S. and Western countries were important resources for new knowledge. Visiting scholars from the U.S. and Western countries were a direct resource for teaching. Cooperative projects such as the China-U.S. Fulbright Program, the U.S.-China Friendship Volunteers Program, and the China-Canada Scholar Exchange Program are all examples of international exchanges between China and developed countries that have improved and will improve the education of Chinese scholars and students. These initiatives are pursued without political monitoring.

It is worth noting that Chinese students are very keen to study the English language. Even elementary schools have English courses for students. In college English study has become the most important class for entering graduate school and future promotion in academic institutes. Even more important is to get a good score on the TOEFL and GRE tests for entering the U.S. in order to study. Russian has lost

its previously preeminent place in language study. Good students get good scores on the TOEFL and GRE and go to the U.S. in order to study at the postsecondary level and/or graduate school. Their majors are by and large in the physical and natural science fields. Some go into professional studies or business. It is rare that a Chinese student undertakes a liberal arts program of study (Ding, 2004).

Westernization, Except for Liberal Studies

Economic development requires scientific and advanced technology experts along with business cooperation. Therefore scientific and technological activities and the study of business are highly encouraged and supported in China's school system. The best places to learn are from U.S. universities and other Western countries. However, China is still a Communist country with a dictator. In a 1978 speech, Deng Xiaoping clearly outlined the four cardinal principals that frame China's reform effort: keeping to the socialist road, maintaining the dictatorship of the proletariat, securing the leadership of the Communist Party, and upholding the thoughts of Marx, Lenin, and Mao Zedong (Palmer, 1997). Adhering to the four cardinal principals, the Chinese-controlled media propaganda system, including mass schooling, is still in the control of the Communist Party. There are some exceptions to this general schooling phenomenon as indicated by Ross and Lin (2004). There are pockets of post-socialist schooling taking in place in China that provide a context "for deliberating the purposes, structures, and outcomes of schooling" (p. 132). "Good will schools" attempt to deconstruct nationalistic forces toward market vocabularies, consumptive worldviews, state corporatism, and restricted human liberties and are seen as a "catalyst for a new post-socialist moral politics" (p. 133). These educative ventures appear to be limited.

Currently, the leadership of education in China must direct socialist development in the country by using Marxism and the thought of Mao Zedong to educate the youth of the nation, to resist bourgeoisie liberalization, anarchism, extreme individualism, worship of foreign achievement, and all sorts of corrupting ideas. Therefore, Western liberal arts curricula are not an option in China. The books chosen for general liberal arts studies focus on Marxist political economics, Marxist philosophy, the history of the Chinese Communist Party, and the ideas of Mao Zedong with some modifications, such as the function of the Kuo Ming Tang (Nationalist Party) and the anti-Japanese sentiments of World War II where it has been ascertained that Mao should no longer be treated as a savior in China. Traditional Chinese liberal arts, such as Confucian philosophy, are once again part of the curriculum and being taught in classrooms. These minor changes may

at least have some positive affects on the ruling class's political morality and corresponding behaviors.

Discussion

Returning to the question at the beginning of this article, in a mixed, partial market economic system guided by a Communist dictatorial political system, in what direction will Chinese education develop? Will Chinese education follow the footsteps of Western countries or the U.S.? What can or should be done to assist in this matter?

We suggest that Chinese education will not conform to a traditional agenda. When we examine Chinese educational history, we realize that the traditional education, represented by Confucius, was mostly designed for the purpose of stabilizing the ruling power in an imperial era. A traditional approach is clearly not designed for a modern society or for the promotion of a democratic citizen's full humanity and well-being. Traditional Chinese education was largely replaced by Westernized education. This was achieved in the People's Republic of China era in which Dewey had an important impact, but was subsequently dismantled during the Cultural Revolution. However, Confucius' philosophy and thought, as part of the liberal arts studies of Chinese history, continued to be studied. Confucius' philosophy has some positive aspects, especially its promotion of an attitude toward education that is welcoming. Teaching and education as esteemed enterprises have become an important aspect of Chinese culture. Confucian philosophy contains moral standards which have become the normative ethical perspective of people's lives, especially in Taiwan.

In order to establish a modern educational system in the next 15 years, the Chinese government will endeavor to implement a strategy of "reinvigorating the country through science and education and strengthening the nation through skilled manpower" (Xu, 2007, p. 8). The strategy mainly covers the following points: "Realize the Balanced Development among Different Regions," "Advance the Quality of Education in an All-around Way," "Build World-Class Universities," "Plan a Coordinated Development of Education of All Types and At All Levels," and "Deepen the Reform of the Educational System" (Xu, 2007, p. 8). These plans mostly serve the core governmental objective of "speeding up socialist modernization." In China, "socialist modernization" simply means a higher quality of life in economic terms, an increasing and advancing technology, and a strong national defense. China is eager to revive its international prestige destroyed by foreign invasion and internal conflicts since the 19th century. So "modernization" becomes the impetus

for strengthening the country. “Modernization” language is used to build nationalism and nationalistic sentiments. With respect to contemporary Chinese education, although emphasizing the scientific, technical, and business fields derived from a Westernized curriculum, the system as a whole, especially the structure, leadership, and liberal arts curriculum, is still under the Communist government’s close supervision.

The Chinese government’s strategy to build “World-Class” universities along with other “modernization” efforts as part of their national education project calls for large government investments, large numbers of talented experts, and the geospatial extension of campus size. These efforts will never produce the world-class status the nation desires. Rather, a true university and its supporting educational system must be free from dictatorial political control. The Chinese conception and characterization of “World-Class” universities typifies the flawed view of education in a mixed, partial market economic system guided by a dictatorial political system.

In fact, contemporary Chinese communist leaders still follow, in many ways, Chinese traditional thinking when dealing with Western culture. In late imperial times, an influential scholar-official, Zhang Zhidong, put forward his famous formula, “Chinese learning for the substance (the essential principle or *ti*) and Western learning for function (the practical applications or *yong*)” (Fairbank & Goldman, 2006, p. 258). In other words, China can adapt Western technology to achieve national strength while simultaneously neglecting to introduce Western philosophy and ideology that could change the political and governmental system. This imperial Chinese perspective was adopted by the communist leadership. Den Xiaoping, a former communist leader in China, was a very shrewd person! His program of reforms, called “socialism with Chinese characteristics,” encouraged his leadership and followers to use Western techniques and economic processes (*yong*) to strengthen and enrich China, and in turn support the dictatorship of the Communist Party (*ti*).

Today the Chinese Communist Party firmly dominates the whole nation-state politically and ideologically in spite of the sharp growth of capitalism in China. There is no alternative political power that could overthrow the leadership of the Communist Party. However, there are influences that can undermine a dictatorship. Although the surveillance and control by the Communist Party can block free media, there are other channels and means that continue to import Western ideology. Also, Western culture comes to China along with economic imports. There is no longer a savior-like figure such as Chairman Mao in contemporary China. Few people (except possibly a very small, central ruling minority) truly believe in the Communist Party or practice loyalty to it. For most

Communist Party leaders themselves, what matters to them is their ruling power and their wealth. Indeed, a terrible “value vacuum” and “belief crisis” exists in the party system. Furthermore, with the dramatic development of the economy, a serious simultaneous corruption grows within the Communist Party system.

Such a “value vacuum” and “belief crisis,” to a large extent, aggravates the corruption. As an example, in 1999 the central government cracked a smuggling case which involved more than 500 million RMB; more than 600 people were involved, including officials, cadres, and party members of Fujian province. The vice minister of the public security department was implicated, as well as children of senior members of the Communist Party leadership. In recent years corruption has extended to those leading the national education project. Some corruption is prevalent (normal) in the Chinese educational system:

- (1) cheating on exams, (2) power-and-education deals, and money-for-education deals, (3) indiscriminate fee-charging by schools, (4) corruption of academics, (5) fraud, deception, covert manipulations, and other breaches of discipline committed by schools in matters that concern their interests and reputation, such as appraisals and applications, (6) economic crimes such as embezzlement and acceptance of bribes (committed by a minority of school leading cadres and employees), and (7) non-normative and inequitable behavior in the course of school operations. (Yang, 2004, p. 93)

Among the aforementioned list, corruption of academics and economic crimes such as embezzlement and acceptance of bribes are the most serious.

Maybe we should employ an aspect of Marx’s theory now—that the economic system decides the super-structure! “According to Marx’s dictum, when the substructure—the economic base—changes, the superstructure—the political structure—must also change. Today, China is integrating into the international capital market while still continuing to be ruled by the same Communist party” (Fairbank & Goldman, 2006). Many officials of the Communist Party are rich because of the integration into the capital market. They will want their property to be protected and they are not willing to share it with others. The middle-class is growing rapidly because of the sharp development of the Chinese economy. Therefore, for these leaders, the ideology of Communism no longer fits the economic realities of China. In March 2007, the Chinese congress passed an ownership property law in response to this emerging situation. Some critics pointed out the law would be a landmark event in Chinese history. Subsequently, the law will allow many restrictions to be loosened further. The whole political and governmental system could change in the near future because of market influences.

Nowadays, China is witnessing a large disconnect between socio-economic changes and its political structure. Deng Xiaoping's reform, on the one hand, improves people's quality of life, while on the other hand, it causes the Chinese Party to remain locked in an historical dilemma. As Palmer (1997) describes in *Comparative Politics*, Deng Xiaoping was an economic reformer, not a democratic reformer. The two processes, however, are difficult to disentangle.

Economic development requires an educated workforce, relatively free communications, foreign investment, entrepreneurial risk-taking, the existence of a reasonably free market, and the opportunity for individuals to acquire wealth. The same conditions, however, make political control difficult. It is difficult to train technicians without raising political aspirations, to facilitate economic communication without facilitating political communication, to allow people to accumulate wealth without tempting them to use that wealth for political ends, to permit decentralized economic decision making without undermining state planning, to invite economic risk-taking without inviting political risk-taking, or to invite foreign investment without opening the door to foreign values. (Palmer, 1997, p. 385)

The future of Chinese politics rests with the profound disconnect between the growth of the economy and the continuation of a soviet-style regime. China's further involvement in economic globalization will not only widen the gap between China's dynamic economic growth and the rigid party-state, but also lead to more Chinese citizens adopting different thoughts and ideologies that diverge from Communist Party ideology. In addition, Chinese economic reform has been producing growing geographic disparities, social inequality, labor unrest, mass protests, and appalling corruptions. These factors have begun to undermine the Party's authority. The New York-based nongovernmental organization, Human Rights in China, reported in September 2003, drawing on one internal Party document, that more than three million people took part in protests and demonstrations in just one month. In more than a hundred cases across China, the protests escalated into large and violent clashes between demonstrators and local police in which buildings were torched (Becker, 2006).

If the Communist Party regime resists political reform, its future will result in dismantling or radical change with a corresponding new name and ideology. The approval of the ownership property law might be a sign of a future transition in the Chinese government, one that is responsive to gradual political reform. Dahl (1989) points out in his book, *Democracy and its Critics*, that two factors play an important role in the establishment of polyarchy: (1) a modern, dynamic, and pluralist

society, and (2) a political culture and collective belief that support the institution of polyarchy in a nation-state, that is, governmental procedures that serve as necessary conditions for each person's interests in a political community to be given equal consideration. China is now becoming a modern, dynamic and pluralist country, but there is no political culture or collective belief that supports the democratic principles institutionalized within a polyarchy for China. The establishment of a healthy political culture and civic belief system is based on a rich and systematic liberal arts education.

The national Chinese education project, and guidance for that education project, must follow the footsteps of U.S. education and its rich Western cultural heritage, not just in science and business, but also in the liberal arts, leadership development, and the retooling of system and organizational structures. This transformation first occurred early in the twentieth century, the transformation continues now only partially, but the transformation will hopefully merge even more completely with Westernized cultural influences. The U.S. must keep exporting Western ideology and practices to China. This exchange will no doubt continue. But in the spirit of educational reforms launched by Dewey's Chinese followers many years ago, the current "socialist modernization" of China requires a good dose of citizenry able to think independently, express themselves, and assume public responsibilities rather than fall victim to Party authority and oppressive regime tactics. We believe the U.S. can assist in China's ideological transformation beyond "socialist modernization" to a hastened democratization of the country. Education is the tool.

What the Data Argue for

Depending on the data collection agency concerned with statistical breakdown of trends in international student representation in academic programs, there are approximately 295,000 international students with F1 visas currently attending U.S. colleges and universities (U.S. Department of State). This number dramatically increases when taking into account secondary schools, technical schools, and other institutions situated outside formal higher education (SEVIS, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement). Of that number, which can be disputed, depending on the data collection agency, but estimated at 565,000 (Institute of International Education), approximately 30,000 to 60,000 of these students are from mainland China. Mainland China remains consistently ranked in the top five of country of citizenship by active students in the U.S. Occupying a top five spot as a sending country means that mainland Chinese students studying in the U.S. represent approximately 10% or more of all international students within the U.S. at any given time.

According to the Institute of International Education, no data collection agency in recent years, including the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), has systematically gathered data pertaining to international student country of origin by field of study across various types of educational institutions. The last systematic data collected reflecting country of origin by field of study at a national level was in the 1995-1996 academic year (Institute of International Education). Individual institutions conduct their own tracking of international students who attend either a university, college, technical school, or other training organization. In the 1995-1996 academic year there were reported to be approximately 40,000 students from mainland China studying in the US. Of the 40,000, 20,000 are represented in an IIE survey of reporting institutions. Breakdown of the 20,000 students by field of study is reported in Table 1.

Table 1.
95-96 AY Mainland Chinese Students by Field of Study.

Major Field of Study	Percentage of Enrolled
Physical and Life Sciences	24.7
Engineering	22.4
Mathematics & Computer Science	13.6
Business	11.8
Social Sciences	5.6
Health Professions	4.8
Transdisciplinary Studies	4.0
Agriculture	3.7
Undeclared	3.0
Fine & Applied Arts	2.2
Education	2.0
Humanities	1.4
English Language Intensive	.8

In order to secure more current data, a Midwestern Research I University, not ranked as one of the nation's leading 25 institutions hosting international students, provided data from the fall 2007 academic year as reported in Table 2. Data from both tables appear to be consistent with our assertion that Chinese students neglect studies in the liberal arts and pursue those disciplines that support "socialist modernization."

Table 2.
07-08 AY Mainland Chinese Students by Field of Study.
(There were a total of 200 students enrolled in academic programs.)

Major Field of Study	Number Enrolled	Percentage Enrolled
Chemistry	33	16.5
All Physical Sciences	39	19.5
Electrical Engineering	25	12.5
All Engineering	42	21.0
General Studies/Dual Majors	25	12.5
Business & Accounting	15	7.5
Economics	13	6.5
Computer Science	11	5.5
Botany	8	4.0
All Life Sciences	22	11.0
Mathematics	6	3.0
Physics	4	2.0
Journalism	4	2.0
Architecture	3	1.5
All Architecture	4	2.0
Psychology	3	1.5
Telecommunications	2	1.0
Teacher Education	2	1.0
Geography	1	0.5
Political Science	1	
Art History	1	
Library Science	1	
Communications	1	
Fine Arts	1	
Music	1	
Interdisciplinary Studies	1	

Conclusion

Since Chinese economic reforms are opening the great nation state to the outside world (in ever increasing ways), more Chinese students have been given the opportunity to study abroad. In fact, the Chinese government wants students to study abroad and encourages students to obtain degrees from developed countries. In an official document issued in 2007, *The Outline of the Eleventh Five-Year Strategy of Chinese Educational Development*, the Communist Party of China announced that the regulation and management of Chinese international students dispatched and sponsored by the government would be further improved. In the meantime, the government stresses that the purpose of dispatching Chinese international students is to develop China's key scientific

and technological fields (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2007). The government desires science experts rather than students who have been educated in the Western liberal arts.

It is important to note that according to an official document, *The Temporary Policy on Official Sponsored Chinese International Students*, issued jointly by the Ministry of Education of China and the Ministry of Finance of China, Chinese government-sponsored international students are required to keep frequent contact with Chinese embassies. Simultaneously, the Chinese government also orders Chinese embassies around the world to regularly and systematically contact officially sponsored students. In addition, each year relevant Chinese embassies must report to the Chinese government on any deviation in students' ideology and their way of life so that the government can monitor them effectively (Ministry of Finance of the People's Republic of China, 2007). It is clear the Communist Party of China, in policy, seeks to curb any ideological influence on officially sponsored Chinese students studying abroad.

Statistics provided by the official *Chinese Education Yearbook* (2006) indicate the total number of Chinese international students reached 118,500 by the end of 2005. Among them, the total number of official government-sponsored students was 12,057. Non-sponsored students, the great majority, have been studying abroad (certainly not all in the U.S.) through financial support from their families and bank loans (*Chinese Education Yearbook*, 2006, p. 336). More interesting, regardless of whether a Chinese student is government sponsored or not, most of them study the scientific and technological disciplines that would advance their professional and economic standing while ignoring studies in the Western liberal arts.

Most Chinese students in the U.S. have been pursuing majors in the natural, physical, and applied sciences. Some of them pursue studies in professional schools or business. However, on rare occasions some students enter one of the fields of study considered to be, in general terms, a liberal arts discipline, such as political science, education, or law. Part of the reason why so few enter these fields of study is because of the difficulty learning the English language with precision and the differences between cultural and ideological background. We suggest that many Chinese graduates who return to China with degrees in science, engineering, business administration, and other technical fields from the U.S. and consequently serve the Chinese government, directly or indirectly, do not possess the critical thinking skills and expanded consciousness to compare and critique the political and governmental systems of China in relation to the U.S. One of the reasons for this phenomenon could well be that students who have studied in science,

technology, and business professions did not learn nearly enough about democracy, the human condition, collective civic life and responsibility, and the importance of rights and justice in their majors while attending U.S. colleges and universities, especially Chinese government-sponsored students. If this is the case, and again, we believe this to be the case, most of these Chinese students do not understand and internalize the values of Western democracy despite the fact they received their education in the U.S.

Some would argue that this state of affairs is not surprising since the vocational, utilitarian, and economic interests of U.S. higher education has resulted in dramatically diminished spaces for the realization of a truly liberal education in preparation for a substantive liberal political life (Roosevelt, 2006). We believe the liberal arts are “essential to civic life, for they alone can nurture the skills of critical thinking and objectivity necessary for judging the powerful commercial, [political, and institutional forces] that effect our lives” (Roosevelt, 2006, p. 1410); not only in this country, but in other countries of the world, from where aspiring students converge upon the intellectual and scholarly culture of U.S. academies. The Chinese people, as a collective polity that currently exists within institutionalized government structures controlled by Party elites, require the leadership of educated men and women who possess the required forms of knowledge, civic dispositions, and habits of conscience that are suited for free-minded engagement with the political life of their country as opposed to narrow knowledge forms and habits of mind required by “socialist modernization.” We agree with Ross and Lin (2004) who caution that the significant obstacle to educational reform in China is not necessarily technical but philosophical. A schooling “narrative of hope” (p. 144) can only be achieved by courageous leaders for curricular change at all levels of schooling.

Based on this observation, we believe institutions of higher education in the U.S. should support and provide more opportunities to Chinese liberal arts students and help them as they study toward their degrees. This is especially true for aspiring leaders in the field of education. When these students return to China, they will make efforts, both subtle and overt, to change China. At the very least these students, supported and encouraged by U.S. tertiary schooling, can help the Chinese people, who occupy all walks of life, develop a political culture and set of collective beliefs that support the ideology and institutions of democracy, particularly mass schooling and the leadership necessary to support such an endeavor.

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