

Addams points out how misunderstanding inevitably occurs when middle-class women in their charity efforts encounter members of the underpaid and overworked laboring class. Not recognizing that they are seeing and judging the world from their own Protestant, feminine, and middle-class standards, they cannot understand the attitudes of their largely Catholic, ethnically diverse, poor clients and are often perplexed and offended by them, especially when the objects of their charity resent their own unconsciously superior attitudes. Such perplexity can be severe enough to cause some of the young women charity workers to quit in reaction to what they perceive as the obduracy and ingratitude of the lower classes. But others take their perplexity as an indication that hidden barriers exist in their efforts to communicate, and they persist and seek to examine their own attitudes and beliefs as well as those of the recipients of their charity. Only in this way will genuine communication become possible and lead to further insights and more successful ways of addressing the ills they encounter.

Addams paraphrases the insights of educational theorist Mary Parker Follett (1868–1933) to explain how the disorienting effects of diverse ways of understanding the world can either enhance or undermine communication, depending on whether one side seeks to subordinate the other or both sides merely compromise their positions, rather than seeking together for genuinely new possibilities (Addams, 1930, p. 202, citing Follett, 1924). Addams says that such possibilities occur, according to Follett, “in the sphere of activities, of desires, of interests, not in that of mere ideas or of verbal symbols” (1930, p. 202). Conversations, to be efficacious, must not get bogged down in verbal jousting, but seek out mutual interests as a prelude to cooperative actions. Addams envisioned such cooperative actions as extending from local to national to global issues. Starting from a wholehearted belief in the solidarity of the human race, she worked hard to help people understand that “without the advance and improvement of the whole, no[one] can hope for any lasting improvement in [his or her] own moral or material individual condition” (Addams, 1912/1981, p. 100).



Tao Xingzhi and the Emergence of Public Education in China

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TAO XINGZHI (1891–1946), one of the most influential educators in modern China, devoted his whole life to the struggle for democratization of China’s education and political life. The ideas of Tao Xingzhi—the forerunner and advocate of democracy and democratic education—regarding education have been very significant in his native land. Particularly influential is his theory of integrating education with life, whereby “life is education,” “society is school,” and there is a “union of teaching, learning, and doing.” Just as his Chinese name, Xingzhi, which means “doing then knowing,” would suggest, Tao’s educational ideas emphasize the need for theory to be based on practice and then put *into* practice.

Tao’s legacy is closely connected to the movement to modernize China through mass education or, as one would say in the United States, through *public education*. But in order to understand the impact of his work in this area, we must first understand the context of China during Tao Xingzhi’s youth. Tao was born into a chaotic age, when China felt humiliated by a series of defeats in the two Opium Wars (1840–1842 and 1856–1860), the war between China and France (1883–1885), the war between China and Japan (1894–1895), and the defeat in the Boxer Rebellion by the Eight-Nation Alliance Expeditionary Force (1900).¹ Against the backdrop of successive military frustrations and deteriorating national power, a few liberal-minded officials began to recognize the advantages of Western technology represented by Western weapons. Some young intellectuals also started to feel dissatisfied with traditional Chinese education, which only focused on liberal arts.

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As a result, the pragmatic theories of John Dewey became very popular in China, as Dewey's philosophy was rooted in broader ideas of science, democracy, and industrialism. His ideas, conveyed in such statements as "[Democracy is] a mode of associated living" (MW9, p. 239), resonated with Tao Xingzhi's aspirations for a modern China.

JOHN DEWEY'S INFLUENCE ON TAO XINGZHI

The famous historian John King Fairbank² once said that Dr. John Dewey's most creative student was Tao Xingzhi (Zhou, 1991, p. 397). Indeed, Tao was such an excellent student that, in the manner of all good students, he moved beyond his teacher, and he eventually created a unique approach to education in China.

Born in Xixian, a rural part of Anhui Province, in 1891, Tao received a traditional education in old-style private schools during his childhood. These kinds of schools focused on the teachings of Confucius (551–479 B.C.E.), with the textbooks of Five Books and Four Classics.³ Students like Tao were supposed to become government officials by passing through different levels of civil examinations. At the age of 15, he entered Chongyi School, which was run by China Inland Mission, and began to receive a new-style education with a more diversified curriculum that included mathematics, medicine, physics, and English.

In 1909, he enrolled in the preparatory school of Huiwen College in Nanjing,⁴ which was run by a local Protestant church. Two years later, he became an undergraduate majoring in liberal arts at the University of Nanjing. It was during this period that Tao received a systematic Western higher education; he was able to expand his knowledge and develop new ways of thinking, and eventually, he formulated his belief in democracy. His experience in Protestant schools such as Chongyi, Huiwen, and the University of Nanjing helped broaden Tao's vision. From then on, he paid more attention to the relationship between Western education and Chinese traditional education.

In 1914, Tao Xingzhi went to the United States, where he received an MA in political science from the University of Illinois. He then transferred to Columbia Teachers College in September 1915 and applied for a PhD in education. This is where he met John Dewey. Although he stayed at Columbia for only 2 years, Tao was able to establish a lasting friendship with Dewey, who was at the height of his influence. The time at Columbia and the opportunity to know Dewey deeply affected Tao's thought and practice. As his awareness and knowledge deepened politically, educationally, and philosophically, he began to see the possibilities of educational reform. He wrote in one of his letters:

My sole purpose in this life is to create a democracy by education and not by military revolution. After seeing the serious defects of the sudden birth of our Republic, I was convinced that no genuine republic could exist without a genuine public education. (document dated 1916; reproduced in Tao Xingzhi, 1991, vol. 6, p. 451)

And it was at Columbia under Dewey's tutelage that Tao adopted the philosophy of pragmatism, a philosophy that emphasizes the organic relation between theory and practice and that takes lived experience as the starting point for all social inquiry and reform. As he developed his ideas regarding education, Tao benefited from his interactions with Dewey. It is instructive to explore this influence as we seek to understand Tao Xingzhi's own philosophy.

When Tao came back from the United States in 1917, he was deeply concerned about the backward state of Chinese education. As he said in one of his speeches, "When I returned from abroad, I noticed that our school teachers were concerned only with lecturing, and students were concerned only with receiving what was taught; so I was convinced of the need for reform" (document dated 1927; reproduced in Tao Xingzhi, 1991, vol. 1, p. 125). According to Tao, the traditional Chinese teaching method of teachers' "pouring" knowledge into students and students' learning passively needed to be reformed, and the relationship between teachers and students needed to be one of mutual learning.

This could explain why Tao began to adapt Dewey's theories of education to the realities of modern China, where massive illiteracy was prevalent: about 200 million Chinese, or 50% of the population, never had any formal schooling. As soon as Tao returned, he published an article in the *Educational Weekly of the China Times* titled "An Introduction to Dewey's Educational Theories," in which he stated, "[Dewey] always advocates that the educational targets should be democracy, and the educational methods should be experimentation" (document dated 1919; reproduced in Tao Xingzhi, 1991, vol. 1, p. 300). However, Tao's theories would not be mere reflections of Dewey's thought. During the period when Tao ran the Xiaozhuang Experimental Village Normal School (1927–1930), which we will discuss below, he formed his own, distinctive educational theory.

TAO XINGZHI'S THEORY OF EDUCATION

The educational theory of Tao Xingzhi can be expressed in three principles: *life is education*; *society is school*; and there is a *union of teaching, learning, and doing*. *Life is education* conveys Tao's view that learning occurs everywhere and throughout life. His claim that *society is school* builds on this idea

as it looks outside the classroom to the wider world where, he believes, children learn constantly from many people. Finally, Tao's concept of the *union of teaching, learning, and doing* further reinforces his fundamental understanding of education as something that involves all aspects of experience.

Life Is Education

"Education is life," a statement articulating one of the most important educational philosophies of Dewey, was revised by Tao Xingzhi to "Life is education." Dewey believed that genuine education was not a preparation for life, but had its own integrity as a part of life. In his words, "Education is a process of living and not a preparation for future living; education is life itself" (EW5, p. 88). According to Tao, life and education are the same thing. Tao once said, "Life and education are two names for one phenomenon, just as a person's nickname and official name refer to a single individual" (document dated 1931; reproduced in Tao Xingzhi, 1991, vol. 2, p. 649).⁵ He went on to explain that life education means "an education of life, by life, and for life." (document dated 1934; reproduced in Tao Xingzhi, 1991, vol. 2, p. 633). Tao does not mean that everything a person undergoes is educative. Rather, he highlights the fact that education can only derive from actual lived experience, whether in the school or elsewhere. Education cannot be merely passive, any more than life is merely "existence." Tao argued that the claim that "life is education" could help to broaden the scope of education from books to real life. For this reason, he does a "half somersault" with Dewey's philosophy when he develops the view that "life is education." According to Tao, only when we consider life itself as the source of education can education manifest its power.

Society Is School

Dewey also believed that "school is society," affirming the close relationship between education and society. He held that a school should set up certain recognized social patterns, and he proposed that the environment of the schools might function as a small society, with a lot of substantive interaction between all its inhabitants. Tao Xingzhi, by contrast, likened the school to a small birdcage. He believed that the birds (students) should be put in the air (society), where they would soar freely. That is, he wanted experiences in the classroom to be extended outward into the more spacious social realm because the outside world could also instruct: "The first step to being a human being is to be close to the masses; the first step to learning nature is to be close to the nature itself" (document dated 1929; reproduced in Tao Xingzhi, 1991, vol. 2, p. 443). Consequently, he called for the utilization of all available resources for the uplifting of the people, such as in employing

temples, teahouses, and every possible vacant place for reading circles and discussion groups.

In the context of early 20th-century China, this approach was very unusual. With it, Tao strove to combine the idea of *society is school* with the scientific and democratic tradition of the May Fourth Movement of 1919, which we will discuss below.

Union of Teaching, Learning, and Doing

Learning by doing is another cornerstone of Dewey's educational philosophy. Dewey believed that all learning was the byproduct of inquiry, which was a kind of action. As a result, he encouraged teaching methods based on action and performance as well as on the direct and concrete experience of students. Tao agreed with this idea, emphasizing that one could only learn how to plant crops if one was in the field or how to swim by being in the water. In addition, inspired by Zhang Boling, president of Nankai University, who advocated the "union of learning and action," Tao developed the idea of the "union of teaching, learning, and doing." He believed that only by striking this balance could the two propositions of *life is education* and *society is school* be transformed into reality.

Meanwhile, Tao also emphasized that the union of teaching, learning, and doing is not only a method, but also a description of a three-pronged relationship that is crucial to learning. Things must be done, individuals must learn, and those in relation to individuals must become teachers. Expressed somewhat differently, education is not only about teaching students to learn, but also about teaching them to engage actively in life through various physical labors (document dated 1930; reproduced in Tao Xingzhi, 1991, vol. 2, p. 557; Zhang & Tang, 1992, pp. 209–212). As we will see, these ideas informed the foundation of Xiaozhuang Experimental Village Normal School (1927–1930), where Tao sought to realize his three fundamental educational principles.

THE RISE OF THE MASS EDUCATION MOVEMENT

During World War I (1914–1918), the Chinese joined the Allied side, which included Britain, France, and later the United States. A mass demonstration of about 3,000 students in Tiananmen Square was sparked on May 4, 1919, following the news that the Treaty of Versailles⁶ had recognized Japanese claims to the Shandong Province, a former German territory, rather than returning it to China. Soon a nationwide student movement erupted. With "Science and Democracy" as their rallying cry, the leaders of what came to be called the May Fourth Movement had begun to advocate for mass education and carry

out some experiments in education, which they believed would alleviate poverty and bring China into the modern world. These ideas were on the minds of the people when John Dewey arrived in Shanghai in 1919 and began his lecture tour. His first lecture was titled "Democracy and Education." In this discourse, he claimed that the solution to social problems was the dissemination of education to the masses (Zhang Baogui, 2001, p. 71). In the second lecture, titled "The Real Meaning of Education in a Democracy," he further described the educational model of a true republic (Zhang Baogui, 2001, p. 74). The goal, or "real meaning," according to Dewey, was to offer everyone the opportunity to receive an education while respecting individuality (document dated 1919; reproduced in Tao Xingzhi, 1991, vol. 1, pp. 27–34). These lectures aroused the attention of people from all walks of life and encouraged them to see education in a new way. Just as Tao said, "Since the May Fourth Movement, students came forward to carry out social services, to educate people, to set up mass schools everywhere" (document dated 1924; reproduced in Tao Xingzhi, 1991, vol. 1, p. 671).

As experiments in mass education were carried out in different places, Tao kept a particularly close eye on the work of another educator who also advocated mass education. Yan Yangchu (James Yan, 1893–1990) was born in Sichuang Province and raised a Christian, graduating from Yale University in 1912. Sponsored by the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), he went to France to set up night schools in Paris for Chinese laborers during World War I. In 1920, he returned to China. Again sponsored by the YMCA, he went to the large cities of Changsha, Yantai, and Jiaxing to continue his efforts in developing mass education. Unlike the previous teaching method in China, with teachers reading and students imitating and reciting, Yan used slides to present characters, pictures, and texts to the students. Thus, with limited faculties and few faculty members, he was able to teach a large number of students. Furthermore, his method of visual presentation often made it easier for the students to learn and remember their lessons (Zhang & Tang, 1992, p. 164).

From the beginning, Yan Yangchu and Tao lost no time in collaborating. In 1923, they established the action committee of the national Association for the Promotion of Mass Education, or Pingmin Jiaoyu Cujin hui (APME), in Shanghai. With Tao in charge of the project, they decided to start from Nanjing and Beijing, and then spread out to the other provinces. Supported by the committee, Tao began to compile textbooks for mass education. On June 20, 1923, the Nanjing APME was established. It soon raised 15,000 yuan and set up three laboratory schools with 50 students per school. At the same time, four other laboratory schools were set up in Beijing (Zhang & Tang, 1992, p. 164).

Proposals for a mass-education movement received a warm response from all levels of society, and in August 1923, the General Association for

the Promotion of Mass Education, or Pinmin Jiaoyu Cujin hui Zonghui (GAPME), was established in Beijing, with Yan Yangchu as the director. Tao was in charge of daily affairs as the executive secretary of the board of directors. Under the GAPME, there were provincial, municipal, town, and village branches, which helped to promote mass education. Committees of Mass Education were also set up in the streets of the cities and villages in the countryside. A mass-education network was thus established nationwide.

For Tao Xingzhi, the purpose of extending education to the masses is very clear. China had been a military state since the 1911 revolution had failed to achieve unification, and the country was ruled by the warlords who governed territories beyond the control of the powerless republican central government in Beijing. Even so, Tao saw the opportunity for modernization in China through the education of the civilian population. In a letter to a family member, he explained what he meant by *modernization*:

I want to use a vigorous, openly disseminated education to create a vigorous, openly communicating society. My career these years, such as setting up summer schools, preaching mutual aid between faculty and students, and advocating coeducation [for women and men], are all for this purpose. However, the large-scale performance focused only on mass education. I do believe that through mass education, a vigorous, openly communicating society will appear very soon. (document dated 1923; reproduced in Tao Xingzhi, 1983–1985, vol. 3, p. 41)

This "vigorous, openly communicating society" signified a modernized society. Tao explained this idea more explicitly in the "Declaration of the General Association for the Promotion of Mass Education," a document he assisted in drafting:

Whether the foundation of a republic is solid or not, it is totally dependant upon citizens' knowledge. If the citizens have received a comparatively high education, and are able to collaborate together with one heart and are responsible for the nation, the foundation will be solid for sure. Otherwise, it is only a facade, without any use. (document dated 1923; reproduced in Tao Xingzhi, 1991, vol. 3, p. 665)

To this end, GAPME initiated a complex program. First, it invited experts to study various problems of mass education, including distribution methods; the organization of schools; and the administration of teachers, facilities, and textbooks. Second, it started various experiments of mass education, such as setting up night classes and organizing summer sessions. They initially experimented with the program in Beijing and Nanjing, cultivating personnel to help in future experiments. They also established schools in remote provinces and districts, including Mongolia and Tibet, and in places

where Chinese populations lived overseas, such as in Southeast Asia. The GAPME also collaborated with people from different regions and different walks of life to help carry out the mass-education movement. This work included setting up the Chinese National Association for the Advancement of Education, or Zhonghua Jiaoyu Gaijin she (CNAAE), and distributing promotional material for the movement. Further, in China at that time, there were 100 million illiterate people between the age of 12 and 25, leading GAPME to draw up a feasible plan whereby a 4-month basic course was developed, to teach willing participants 1,000 Chinese characters. With estimated costs of only 0.6 yuan per person, it was expected that this plan would be carried out within 5 to 10 years. After the first period of study, which took 4 months, the second stage would focus on professional education (document dated 1923; reproduced in Tao Xingzhi, 1983–1985, vol. 3, pp. 666, 668–669).

Developing a textbook for the mass education of Chinese people was, perhaps, the most significant component of the movement's success. To this end, Tao and another educator, Zhu Jingnong, who had studied in the United States, compiled *Thousand Character Text*, publishing the first volume of this important series in August 1923 (Tao & Zhu, 1923). By November that year, the fourth and final volume was published. The complete textbook consisted of 96 texts and was designed for 1 hour's study a day for 96 days, or 16 weeks of use. The underlying purposes of this textbook were, among other things, to cultivate a democratic spirit and attitude among China's citizens; to train readers in practical matters, such as dealing with daily correspondence, accounts, and other material; and to give students the capacity and desire to read books and newspapers.

Starting in the autumn of 1923, Tao Xingzhi went to the provinces of Jiangsu, Anhui, Jiangxi, and Hubei, north and west of Shanghai in the Yangtze River basin, to promote his idea of mass education. In 1924, with the goal of spreading the movement all over the country, he began to pay attention to northern China. Wherever he went, he contacted individuals from diverse social circles and all levels of the workforce, emphasizing the importance of a grassroots mass-education movement to China's future.

His work met with a warm response. In the cities of Anqing and Hankou alone, 17,000 and 20,000 people, respectively, attended his assembly and the corresponding parade. This resulted in a great spectacle. After his painstaking efforts in 1923–1924, APME branches were established in 20 provinces, and 500,000 people were instructed in the *Thousand Character Text*, of which more than 3 million volumes had been published. The most successful region was Jiangsu Province, where the majority of its 60 counties set up APME branches. In Henan Province, 73 counties set up schools. In Hunan Province, 26 counties set up branch associations and 356 schools, while 140 public reading rooms were established (Zhang & Tang, 1992, pp. 168–169).

MATURING IDEAS AND PRACTICES

For Tao Xingzhi, his work of advocating mass education came to life with the establishment of the Xiaozhuang Experimental Village Normal School in a small village near Nanjing in 1927. By August the following year, there were 120 students in total. In terms of enrollment, the school was not significant. However, regarding its quality of instruction, that was another matter. The students were inspired by Tao's educational ideas and their aspiration was the improvement of rural education. Among them, there were students from Tsinghua and Jinan Universities, leaders of a publishing house, and even teachers from several colleges. They were Tao's admirers as well as his collaborators. The faculty of Xiaozhuang was also unusual. Besides employing some famous professors, such as Zhao Shuyu, Shao Zhongchun, and Chen Heqin, the school invited some farmers and laborers to teach. According to Tao, "Farmers, countrywomen, and axmen could also be the teachers of our school" (document dated 1927; reproduced in Tao Xingzhi, 1991, vol. 2, p. 344).

The Xiaozhuang School was divided into two sections: one for training teachers of elementary schools, the other for teachers of kindergarten. At the very beginning, there was not even a schoolhouse. Teachers and students either slept in tents in the open air or lived with the farmers. Eventually, they started to build houses by themselves, with teachers' and students' own assiduous efforts. According to Tao, the school "should help to promote the productivity and self-defense of the farmers and contribute to the liberation of the farmers all over the world" (document dated 1927; reproduced in Tao Xingzhi, 1991, vol. 8, p. 152). This school was based on the spirit of fraternity and liberty, ideas that seemed to have nothing to do with the political parties active in China at that time. Tao published an editorial in 1923 titled "The Starting Point of the Social Reform" in which he pointed out that for "a person at a certain time in a certain place to do a certain thing is the one and only way" (document dated 1923; reproduced in Tao Xingzhi, 1991, vol. 2, p. 591). He believed that any kind of reform began with minor changes, to concentrate one's attention on certain specific actions, and then moved on step by step. For him, the career he wanted to "devote his whole life to" was the "education movement."

Tao Xingzhi was so immersed in his educational experiment that he did not have time for politics. Unfortunately, politics knocked at his door. The turmoil of the warlords in the 1920s and 1930s severely hampered the development of the mass-education movement. In April 1930, Xiaozhuang Normal School was closed down by Nationalist troops, and Tao was listed as a wanted man, forcing him to escape to Japan. As he became increasingly aware of China's deepening national and social crisis, he began to reflect upon his life, his educational practice, and the mass-education movement itself.

In the summer of 1930, before he escaped to Japan, Tao had gathered together some of the faculty of Xiaozhuang School, in the concession of Shanghai,⁷ to discuss the work of the school. At this assembly, he lamented:

From now on, we cannot sit calmly in the reading room to draw up plans or ideas, and we cannot do our experiments from village to village step-by-step. Instead, we should unite more people to work on it. Our basic army is the peasants. A Chinese revolution won't succeed unless all the peasants unite together! (quoted in Dai, 1982, pp. 49–50)

He had recognized that without fundamental social reform, his attempt to save China through education could not be achieved. As a result, he came to understand education as a tool of fundamental social reform and to believe that these two elements—education and revolution—should be combined. After the beginning of the Japanese invasion, on September 18, 1931, Tao anxiously sought a new, more radical path for Chinese education.

In February 1932, Tao was permitted to come back to China from Japan after two years in exile. He launched several educational projects, including the Gong Xuetuan (Labor Science Union) Movement, which promoted three central ideals: labor to nourish life, science to understand life, and union to protect life. This was a new educational entity combining teaching, learning, and doing in the villages and cities. Tao also launched the Xiao Xiansheng (Little Teachers) Movement, which would organize primary school students in teaching Chinese characters to adults, and the Nantong (Refugee Children) Education Movement, to bring life education and defending the nation together in one project. In this way the mass-education movement permeated China's entire society. During the years of war with Japan (1937–1945), besides taking part in the anti-Japanese and patriotic movements, Tao still concentrated on his educational reform movement. It was at this time that he set up both the Society of Life Education and the Yucai School, a primary school in Beipei, Chongqing Province.

Both these projects were important in the fulfillment of Tao's philosophical ideas. The aim of the Society of Life Education was "to discuss the most reasonable and efficient new educational principles and methods in order to promote the enlightening of consciousness, to cultivate creativity, to spread education and to improve life" (document dated 1940; reproduced in Tao Xingzhi, 1991, vol. 4, p. 447). The main goals of the society included investigating life needs, designing educational blueprints, editing educational materials, studying specific problems, experimenting in various educational methods, spreading the achievements of these investigations, introducing the members to useful forms of service, promoting the mutual aid of the society, and guiding the members to further study (Zhang & Tang, 1992, pp. 392–393). Following the establishment of the Society of Life in 1938, branches

were set up in northeastern areas, including Sichuang, Zhejiang, Anhui, and Shanxi. Soon the number of registered members reached 2,400.

In July 1939, Yucai School was created in Beipei, Chongqing Province, in western China. This was a new style of special school for gifted refugee children. It was different in some ways from Xiaozhuang Village School, but seemed to inherit its spirit. After the students entered the school, they would first receive a general education following the Education Ministry standard, and then would be divided into different groups for special studies according to their own interests and aptitudes. For example, the curriculum of the natural science group included physics, chemistry, geometry, and calculus. The curriculum of the social science group included ethics, political economics, philosophy, and international relations. The literature group included literary criticism, world literature, rhetoric, and other similar subjects.

The aim of Yucai School was to train certain individuals of ability among the refugee children. The school emphasized that it was not seeking to merely train experts and specialists. Hence, besides the specialized training courses, rudimentary courses were also required to help the students acquire a broad, general knowledge. This was not an effort to train little aristocrats. The students of Yucai School came from the ordinary people and would go back to their communities to serve by putting to use what they had learned. Yucai was a program newly developed in his life education theory, and it continuously enriched and expanded upon the original plan of disseminating education (document dated 1940; reproduced in Tao Xingzhi, 1991, vol. 4, pp. 456–457).

In spite of the differences in approach between Yucai and Xiaozhuang, the goal was the same for both: integrating education with life. They were created to develop the creativity of both children and the common people. In the summer of 1941, Tao Xingzhi proclaimed that June 20 to July 20 would be the "month of collective creation." He called for people to create "a healthy stronghold, good artistic circumstance, a garden of production, and a climate of learning" during this month (document dated 1941; reproduced in Tao Xingzhi, 1991, vol. 4, p. 490). In August, based on the successful conclusion of this month of creation, Tao called for the start of the "year of Yucai creation" (Zhang & Tang, 1992, pp. 430–431). That year's aims were to develop and cultivate the spirit and ability of individual creativity in the children, from classroom teaching to extracurricular activities, from campus culture to social practice. A year later, great accomplishments were achieved, especially in music, art, and drama; "stars" were born and numerous new works appeared. For example, the students had produced 4 dramas, 27 songs, more than 10 research reports, and more than 30 research facilities, all of which were highly praised by a wide range of people. Yucai became a well-known and highly respected model school in China.

In October 1943, Tao Xingzhi published his "Proclamation of Creativity," in which he emphasized that the educator should not only "create the

students whom he would venerate,” but also “create the educational theories and techniques that he would venerate” (reproduced in Tao Xingzhi, 1983–1985, vol. 3, pp. 482–483). The ultimate aim—achieved through the union of knowledge, feeling, and consciousness combined with the union of wisdom, benevolence, and courage—was to cultivate the person of truth, kindness, and beauty. This “new” person would possess the qualities of a wise heart, an earnest enthusiasm to understand both society and ordinary people, and a spirit of self-sacrifice for the benefit of society.

In order to cultivate such a person of truth, kindness, and beauty, teachers were expected to first realize and discover the strength that resides within children. In 1944, Tao published an article titled “Creative Children’s Education” in which he put forward the concept of “five liberations” as an important approach to learning. These are the liberation of children’s heads, hands, and mouths as well as the liberation of space and time (document dated; reproduced in Tao Xingzhi, 1991, vol. 4, pp. 540–542). Following this idea, teachers would enable children to make full use of their heads to explore and think; offer them the opportunity to use their hands; give them freedom to ask questions; and liberate them, as though they were birds eager to fly from the birdcage of school and its frequent examinations. In essence, Tao wanted to develop and set free the creativity of children, to allow them to grow up, strong and healthy, on their way to realizing truth, kindness, and beauty.

CONCLUSION: RENEWING TAO XINGZHI’S PHILOSOPHY TODAY

From mass education to creative education, from the dissemination of knowledge to the cultivation of the new person of truth, kindness, and beauty, Tao established an expansive theoretical system of life education. But this system was not merely theoretical; it came from practice and would return to practice. This, and his dream to reform the old China, were the ideals driving Tao Xingzhi throughout his life. As he said in one of his poems to a friend,

I use my hands and head to knock at the door of knowledge.
Only in the cold winter could the pine and cypress show their tenacity.
I admire the collective creation, which might end in a failure, but success
will come at last. (document dated 1943; reproduced in Tao Xingzhi,
1983–1985, vol. 4, p. 590)

Tao was devoted not only to mass education but also to the democratic movement, as necessary to a modern China, and he expected to promote the modernization of China by this two-pronged effort. Tragically, he broke down

from constant overwork and died suddenly on July 25, 1946. On that very day the famous Chinese writer Mao Dun wrote,

Tao Xingzhi is like a soldier who had been fighting for a long time, and finished his last drop of blood and lay down gloriously. . . . His death will bring an earth-shaking sound that will echo in the hearts of millions of people and be echoed in the farthest corner of the land. (Mao Dun, 1946/1984, p. 22)

Tao Xingzhi would not see the establishment of the new China. Unfortunately, the new China did not recognize the true value of this great educator until the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976 when more and more people of insight began to investigate the rich works of this remarkable educational pioneer. From 1983 to 1985, the Huazhong Normal University edited the collected edition of Tao Xingzhi’s works and soon established the Tao Xingzhi Research Center, where the first doctoral dissertation on Tao Xingzhi has since been completed (in 1992). Meanwhile, many other provinces and cities have set up Tao Xingzhi Research Associations and started experimental districts⁸ where his educational ideas have been put into practice. Learning and studying about Tao Xingzhi, as well as practicing and developing his educational ideas, has become a common practice nowadays in China. Indeed, Tao Xingzhi’s thoughts on education are still valid and relevant to contemporary educational reform.