

her efforts to employ the principles of “Makiguchian Pedagogy” in a middle school science classroom of a private school in New York. Her findings, which have much to offer to middle school science teachers, suggest that a Makiguchian approach to learning can enhance socially situated learning while also sustaining adequate mastery of science content. Principal Marita Bombardieri was able to transform a problem-ridden vocational high school in Como, Italy, into a center of peace and dialogue in a community beset with the task of integrating a large influx of immigrants (Marrazzi, 2001). Projects such as these test the principles of Makiguchi’s thoughts in various global settings. An online quarterly, *Newsletter of International Soka Educators* (www.eddiv.homestead.com/newsletter.htm), highlights the work of practitioners throughout the world as they attempt to apply the principles of Soka education. In fact, the effort made by Soka educators to share their practices through Web sites, conferences, and correspondence is one of its most promising characteristics.

CONCLUSION

In a conflict-ridden world full of philosophical and political strife, Makiguchi’s notion of value creation is a call to educators and individuals to pursue both pragmatic and radicalist action through a unified theory of education. Rather than succumb to the confusion and paralysis of the educational system today, Makiguchi would urge educators to find ways to create value to improve rather than dismantle the system. As an ordinary citizen living in a perilous time, Makiguchi provided an example of a contributive life as he walked courageously along treacherous paths, seeking always to find a way out of chaos through value creation. The legacy of his struggle is seen in the great number of people who are now working with excitement and ardor throughout the world to realize his vision. By insisting that value creation is a path to human fulfillment regardless of oppressive forces, internal or external, Makiguchi defines the aims of education and speaks to our own time in a clear and compelling voice.



Learning from Experience: Jane Addams’s Education in Democracy as a Way of Life

Charlene Haddock Seigfried

JANE ADDAMS (1860–1935) was among the first generations of women in the United States to receive a college education. Unlike educators who believe that the mass of humankind could not have worthwhile experiences and that all valuable ideas have to come from outside the neighborhood, “and almost exclusively in the form of books” (Addams, 1902/2002a, p. 194), Addams believed that education was a lifelong endeavor because it was grounded in experience. Eager to make a difference in a world that offered women few opportunities, she and Ellen Gates Starr founded Hull House (1889), one of the first American settlement houses, in a poor, ethnically diverse, immigrant working-class district of Chicago during the tumultuous years of the Industrial Revolution. The settlement attracted an extraordinary group of women, who made major contributions to reforming social and civic institutions.¹ They founded the first kindergartens and public playgrounds in Chicago and the first juvenile court, they worked tirelessly to undermine the horrors of sweatshops and child labor, they lobbied for shorter working hours for women who were doing back-breaking labor both at home and outside it, and they supported workers’ rights to organize and protest inhumane working conditions. Besides being a center of social experimentation and reform that predated the opening of a department of sociology at the University of Chicago, Hull House offered classes in art, music, drama, sculpture, philosophy, and literature to its immigrant neighbors.

Addams was both the dynamic force that held the settlement together and its spokesperson to the outside world. Her philosophy and social theory

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were developed through many lectures and books on such issues as social ethics, pacifism, juvenile delinquency, the settlement movement, social democracy, and feminism. She was a founding member or early supporter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the National American Woman Suffrage Association, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. In polls she was voted the most respected woman of her time, until she was vilified for her steadfast pacifism during World War I and became a victim of the Red scare for supporting radical causes. Eventually, common sense prevailed, and she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931.

WHY EXPERIENCE MATTERS

All of us are involved in transactions with the natural and social worlds of which we are a part. When such involvements cease to be merely customary and repetitive and instead become matters of care and concern, then learning can take place. For pragmatists like Addams, learning requires intelligent engagement with the world, which means approaching experience experimentally.² Such engagement is optimized through sympathetic understanding, an attitude that both opens the inquirer to new perspectives and encourages receptive responses. Education is an ongoing process transforming both those engaged in it and the situations in which it takes place. Knowledge is not a passive affair or the accumulation of facts, but the outcome of inquiries into problematic situations with a view to alleviating their negative aspects and producing better outcomes. Unless such inquiry is care-ful and concerned that the outcomes of investigations be just as well as successful, they are more likely to favor the few rather than the many and to be socially destructive rather than constructive.

As a result of her years of living and working in the midst of an immigrant community whose members were considered by the established population to be inferior because of their foreign origins and languages, their Catholicism or Judaism, and their differing customs and food, Addams was acutely sensitive to the multiplicity of outlooks and values that characterize our complex, modern world.³ She soon recognized the tendency of all levels of society to privilege their own perspectives, deeply rooted as they are in class, race or ethnicity, religion, and gender. Native-born citizens, especially those better off financially and educationally, were in the habit of making righteous or one-sided appeals to the obvious truths and unquestioned values as they saw them in order to justify their sense of superiority to the immigrant laboring population. These attitudes served to solidify entrenched views and provided no means for getting beyond limited perspectives to more equitable and justifiable beliefs and actions.

To counter such unrecognized prejudices that fueled class animosities, Addams advocated the development of a sympathetic understanding that includes recognizing the difficulty of overcoming the biases that inform who we are and grasping the necessity of listening to others differently situated. These efforts to take seriously what are initially alien practices and puzzling points of view have the potential to expand our horizons and can contribute to the resources required for overcoming complex social and political problems. Sympathetic understanding motivates the need for working with others as equal partners, a motivation sustained by a profound belief that each human being has a right to develop to his or her utmost capacity (Addams, 1930, p. 199). Addams believed that cooperative rather than top-down solutions were more likely to satisfactorily resolve such widespread problems of the time as political corruption, exploitation of workers, poverty, overwork, sickness, crime, domestic violence, and child neglect.

Addams makes the startling claim that we are responsible for choosing our experiences. This is because our moral judgments are filtered through our experiences. To the extent that our experiences are one-sided and limited, so too will be our moral judgments. It is therefore incumbent on us to actively seek out those experiences that will enlarge the depth and scope of our moral understanding. Unless we reach out beyond our comfort zone, we will not be able to take account of others differently situated, nor accurately grasp the motivations for their actions, and thus we will inevitably misjudge them and act with insufficient evidence.

LEARNING AS TRANSFORMATIVE

Schools and universities often fail to recognize that for learning to take place, students' attention must be engaged and they must be challenged to participate in transforming for the better situations of mutual concern. Instead, institutions tend to treat knowledge as merely a collection of detached bits of data in one subject area after another or as rote learning suitable for machine testing. Addams indicted the technocratic model of education that has only become more entrenched in our own times. She insightfully remarked:

As the college changed from teaching theology to teaching secular knowledge the test of its success should have shifted from the power to save men's souls to the power to adjust them in healthful relations to nature and their fellow men. But the college failed to do this, and made the test of its success the mere collecting and disseminating of knowledge, elevating the means into an end and falling in love with its own achievement. (1930, p. 199)

She complained that already in her day "the habit of research and the desire to say the latest word on any subject" overcome "any sympathetic

understanding” of the audience addressed (1930, p. 199). She illustrated her claim by recalling an invitation she made to an anthropologist to help bewildered night school teachers of new Greek, Armenian, Bohemian, and Italian immigrants to better understand their students and to help rid them of their bias that equated lack of English proficiency with ignorance. The professor was initially willing, but then admitted that he did not have the information necessary for such a talk. Instead, he later sent three of his students to her at three different times to get help in identifying people in the neighborhood who had six toes or whose relative had! No wonder Addams thinks that “the best trained scientists are inclined to give themselves over to an idle thirst for knowledge which lacks any relation to human life, and to leave to the charlatans the task of teaching those things which deeply concern the welfare of mankind” (pp. 196–197).

EXPERIENCE AS EXPERIMENTAL

Experience becomes the basis for knowledge and intelligent action to the extent that it is experimental. In her autobiographical account of the Hull House settlement, *Twenty Years at Hull-House*, Addams (1912/1981) presents Hull House as a sustained demonstration of the value of a cooperative experimental approach to social problems. The value of cooperative experimentation was impressed on her from navigating the dire economic, social, and cultural straits of the immigrant population in Chicago from the end of the 19th century until after World War II. Concerned persons and organizations sought various ways of aiding the victims of unbridled laissez-faire capitalism by changing the conditions under which they lived and worked. Addams’s approach was to ask of any perplexing situation: “Has the experience any value?” (1902/2002a, p. 63).

By sharing her determination to make the most of the new experiences she was having in Chicago, Addams sought to draw attention to the importance of consciously seeking what could be learned from our everyday lives. This included reassessing long-held values and reimagining what actions could be taken and what results would follow from taking one course of action rather than another. In her view, perplexities about situations that confound our expectations and yet do not suggest any viable course of action are often a signal that hidden biases are operating that are obscuring the facts of the situation. Such perplexities can either remain frustrations or they can become incentives for opening up new perspectives and values and thus lead to personal growth and more intelligent actions.⁴ In *How We Think* John Dewey introduces his chapter on the five stages of reflective thinking by echoing Addams’s insights, saying that when we find ourselves in a perplexing situa-

tion, we may dodge it and turn to something else, we may indulge ourselves in merely imaginative solutions, or we may face the situation. Only in the last case do we begin to reflect.⁵

The close connection between experience and experiment as the basis for theory is brought out by Addams’s consistent claim that it is dangerous to administer “any human situation upon theory uncorrected by constant experience” (Addams, 1935/2004, p. 50). She introduces this principle by an anecdote taken from the life of her fellow resident and good friend, Julia Lathrop. In an essay on the Cook County Charities, Lathrop describes the dire poverty and suffering in Chicago caused by the general economic depression of 1893, which included the castoffs attracted by the Chicago World’s Fair. The Cook County relief agencies, including the infirmary, the insane asylum (as it was then known), the hospital, the detention hospital, and the county agency, were institutions of last resort, and the poor dreaded ending up in any of them. Describing one of the hospital wards as a place “with beds crowded together, others laid upon the floor and filled with a melancholy company of feeble and bedridden men and idiot children,” Lathrop added that “it must haunt the memory of whoever has seen it” (Addams, 1935/2004, p. 50). But what really bothered Lathrop, Addams reports, was the regulation that separated patients by sex, regardless of their circumstances. Particularly affecting was the plight of an old couple who had spent every day of their long married life together and who could see each other only once a week in their institutionalized surroundings and then only for a half hour and through a screen of heavy netting. Addams and Lathrop thought it was absurd not to try to correct these practices in view of the human suffering they produced and that would have been obvious to anyone who experienced these results.

But they were also aware that experience is mediated through what has already been experienced and through preconceptions and learned beliefs. In giving other examples of practices and regulations that were blindly followed without regard to their dreadful consequences, Lathrop mentions that doctors were not allowed to bring their students into the wards for instruction, thus neither exposing them to the conditions there nor instructing them about how to respond. Yet, despite such ignorance, as soon as they received their medical degree, “the word of the newest and rawest medical graduate might reign supreme.” If such inexperienced young men were either following set practices or even setting the standards, then it was unlikely that they would have sufficient imagination or insight to realize that the results of their actions were not the only ones possible or desirable. Therefore, a corollary of the principle that it is dangerous to administer any human situation upon theory uncorrected by constant experience is that each person’s experience needs to be expanded and corrected by the experience of others differently situated. Those in authority often ignore or dismiss the experiences of those

under their authority, to their own detriment and also to that of those under them; to that of the institution in which both participate; and, ultimately, to the society that the institution represents.

The experimental method requires getting the facts straight through sharing perspectives and engaging in social inquiry and then taking practical steps to benefit from the insights gained. Instead, people too often fall back upon what they already know and take for granted, as they confidently and dogmatically assert opinions. Addams tried to encourage a more thoughtfully experimental approach in her dealings with people on all levels of the social ladder. As *Twenty Years at Hull-House* makes clear, this approach permeated the day-to-day life at the settlement. In her biography of Julia Lathrop, for example, Addams comments: "She is in no sense a propagandist but she is always determined to stand for getting the facts and to limit the application to the place where solid work can be done" (Addams, 1935/2004, p. 120).

SOCIAL METHODS AND ETHICS

The methods that the Hull House settlement developed over the years were an important part of its educational mission. These methods were social, since, according to Addams, "the educational effort of Hull House always has been held by the residents to be subordinate to its social life, and, as it were, a part of it" (1893/2002c, p. 36). She means by "social" method an approach of working with others "in a medium of fellowship and good will," rather than working for them or imposing knowledge and values on them (1935/2004, p. 294). The experiential and experimental basis of lifelong education was guided by a social ethics grounded in Addams's profound attachment to democracy as a way of life. She based her social ethics on the interdependency of persons, from the intimacy of the family to the relations among nations. Interdependency was both a fact of life and a goal to be achieved. Addams was an ardent pacifist who remained steadfast despite severe criticism and social ostracism during World War I. In *Newer Ideals of Peace*, she argues that the social point of view should be kept paramount. Although she believed that there was a growing cosmopolitan interest in human affairs that would lead to an increase in social sympathy, she also recognized that "the social sentiments are as blind as the egoistic sentiments and must be enlightened, disciplined and directed by the fullest knowledge."⁶

Addams illustrates what she means by a social method by recalling how Hull House workers, under the guidance of a physician, worked with Italian immigrant women to help them take better care of their underdeveloped children (Addams, 1899/1982, p. 198). The problem was not a lack of knowledge on the part of the settlement workers, as she admits it often was, but

how best to communicate known benefits to recent immigrants who were understandably reluctant to change traditional beliefs and patterns of conduct. It was useless to just distribute written information concerning recently collected scientific data about the relation of poor diet and unsanitary conditions in tenement houses to problems such as childhood malnutrition. The problem was not just one of illiteracy or not understanding English, but was of deep-seated cultural differences and suspicions. Rather than lecturing about nutrition or directly attacking superstitious beliefs about the evil eye causing disease, she invited a group of Italian women and their children to join the Hull House women in festive Sunday morning breakfasts and they were given access to public baths at the settlement house. Knowledge was gained in the process and Addams says that soon the intelligent care of children learned by this group was passed on to the women's friends and neighbors in the Italian community. To avoid misunderstanding, this example must be balanced with many others in *Twenty Years at Hull House* where Addams demonstrates how the knowledge of the better-educated settlement workers was really White, middle-class bias in disguise and needed to be corrected by their immigrant neighbors, who held different and often superior views and values.

EDUCATION BY CURRENT EVENTS

When Addams was nearly 70 years old, she described her theory of education at some length in "Education by the Current Event," the last chapter of *The Second Twenty Years at Hull-House*. Unlike research universities, the Hull House settlement in its early years saw its mission as bringing into the circle of knowledge men and women who would otherwise be left out, whether because of ignorance, or because their lives of hard work narrowed their interests, or because their curiosity was as yet unawakened and just needed friendly encouragement. The means for wider inclusiveness was the use of current events.

Addams also acknowledges, in retrospect, that Hull House and other settlements, such as the Chicago Commons, did engage in original research, and she even sets the record straight that they were the actual pioneers in field research, antedating the first sociological departments in the universities by 3 years. The earlier and later claims are not at odds, because the gradual development of the settlement creed rejected violent revolution in favor of gradual change in bettering social conditions. Knowledge consists not in mere accumulation of facts, but in intentionally gathering information for a worthwhile goal.

The goal Addams advocates is a full life for all persons in a society that recognizes the dignity of everyone and the right of all to participate fully in

establishing the conditions of their associated lives. Since the cooperation of as many persons as possible in resolving social, economic, cultural, and political problems is desired, education consists in developing a sympathetic understanding of the ways that issues affect all members of society, high and low, and providing those who have been left out with the means of fully and knowledgeably participating.⁷ According to Addams, in their various activities over the years, settlements were trying to “build up a technique, although with only a few scientific generalizations to go upon[,] in order to use the group itself for educational ends” (1930, p. 410). To that end, many cooperative efforts were undertaken, involving sociologists, psychiatrists, artists, economists, gymnasts, caseworkers, dramatists, musicians, and anthropologists. The tremendous increase in understanding and methods of inquiry and resolutions that multiple perspectives make possible reflects the complexity of life itself and ensures that no one group or set of values will dominate all others.

With these philosophical foundations, Jane Addams’s educational theories assert that in a democracy education is lifelong and involves transformative growth in personal understanding and ever-renewed care for ascertaining the particular factors influencing situations instead of decision making out of self-interest or a one-sided perspective.⁸ Addams sums up this approach as “education by the current event” and explains that from time to time some issue dominates the news and arouses intense passions and desires in the community. What before was one worn-out theme among others suddenly takes fire as a “newly moralized issue . . . lighting up human relationships and public duty with new meaning” (1930, p. 381). Such occasions are examples of intensely lived experience, that is, they fuse the experiences, knowledge, and affections of a society into a whole, and therefore concentrate attention and energy in a way conducive to education and reflection and concerted action. Among examples of such events, Addams cites the Scopes trial in Tennessee, over the issue of evolution and creation; the coming to power in England of the Labor Party, which provided a useful counterpoint to the way the United States envisioned the general welfare of labor in the ever more powerful industrial system; and the problem of race relations epitomized by the great urban migration from the South.

It is not hard to envision similar sources of debate that have rocked the public more recently, including controversies over teaching creationist as well as evolutionary accounts of development in school biology classes, the increasing loss of business-sponsored pensions and health care for workers, and clashing views on Mexican immigrant workers and illegal immigration. These recent phenomena, like the ones Addams develops, have the potential to arouse public interest in a way conducive to their finally being addressed carefully, thoughtfully, and effectively. Addams gives detailed and insightful analyses of her three examples as she elaborates them in view of achieving socially better resolutions reached by social methods. She uses them to

educate the public about the importance of cooperative solutions in which all can share and that recognize the mutual dependence of all sectors of society on the others, as well as the need to examine all sides of the issue and to develop a willingness to experiment and try new solutions instead of falling back on old patterns of action and prejudices.

What is different from the anecdotes of Hull House activities in the case of events that are significant enough to arouse whole communities is that Addams wants to extend to a larger public the attitudes and methods that settlement workers and other reformers have been evolving over decades of work. Her own interests had grown to international dimensions through her working to prevent war between nations and secure peaceful resolutions of disputes, and she was more convinced than ever that care and concern for the common welfare was not the business of only a small group of dedicated community activists. She concludes a book chapter by quoting John Dewey’s recently published (1927) book, *The Public and Its Problems*, to the effect that social intelligence requires involving the public in resolving the critical issues of the day, and she extends this insight by pointing out that the public stretches from the local neighborhood to the whole world (Addams, 1930, p. 413; Dewey, LW2, p. 372).

Despite Addams’s usual mix of astute analysis, description of background conditions, disclosure of judgments marred by unwitting bias, listing of the contributions of institutional resources, pleas for cooperative methods, and suggestions for improvements, she expresses some reservations about whether the public can actually be educated in the way she suggests. She recognizes that her enthusiastic expression of these charged moments made such opportunities for educating the public seem possible, but then adds, “And if the community had been able to command open discussion and a full expression of honest opinion the educational opportunity would have been incomparable” (1930, p. 381). Addams can point to stirring events as being of significant magnitude to become sources of education, but whether they would actually be depends on the public’s willingness to engage in open discussion and honest opinion and—most important—to learn from one another. Since such events where personal experiences blossom to comprehend a wider situation call for new adjustments, one must be prepared to have one’s protective cover of offhand and instinctive responses shattered. Such is the challenge thrown down by Addams to the public: Which will prevail, complacency and prejudice or sympathetic understanding and imaginative reforms?

THE ROLE OF CONVERSATION IN MEDIATING PERSPECTIVES

The social method and education by the current event come together in the lively practice of conversation as practiced in Addams’s life and in that of

the settlement life of Hull House.⁹ Dewey singled out the centrality of conversations to both Addams and Hull House when he said:

And we all know that the work of such an institution as Hull House has been primarily not that of conveying intellectual instruction, but of being a social clearing-house. It is not merely a place where ideas and beliefs may be exchanged, not merely in the arena of formal discussion—for argument alone breeds misunderstanding and fixes prejudice—but in ways where ideas are incarnated in human form and clothed with the winning grace of personal life. (MW2, p. 91)

Since they are easy to mistake, Dewey carefully differentiates conversation from argumentation, which can increase instead of lessen misunderstanding and can exacerbate rather than undermine prejudice. Where Plato had praised true knowledge as residing in an ideal realm of pure Forms, Dewey praises the way ideas are literally embodied in human form, and shine in the lives of the Hull House residents. He points out that the classes held at Hull House are exceptional precisely because they bring together people of many different ethnic backgrounds and across a whole range of social classes and enable them to communicate across seemingly unbridgeable boundaries. Communication becomes communion. Dewey thus elevates the art of conversation at Hull House to the level of genuine social reform and explains the important functions that conversations at their best can have.

Addams gave us a straightforward description of the importance of conversation in education. Conversations are for the most part spontaneous and free floating. But they can also be productively structured, as was the quaintly named Everyday Club, which Addams and her fellow Hull House residents Julia Lathrop and Ella Flagg Young belonged to. The Everyday Club “was a group of forty civic minded women who met at luncheon whenever called together by a committee of three to discuss current topics when in the opinion of the committee an interesting matter was before the public” (Addams, 1935/2004, pp. 118–119). This dependence on timely events for calling a meeting recalls Addams’s insight that education by current events is most efficacious. She also explained the nature of the conversations desired and their potential impact on the participants:

Julia Lathrop was at her best, perhaps, at such gatherings where her always keen mind was stimulated to its most alert expression. Such clear thinking on the part of one person has an enormous liberating power and taps new sources of energy in others. The result of a generous and fearless desire to see life as it is, irrespective of the confines and limitations which so needlessly divide it, can only be obtained at its best in a group of friends such as the Everyday Club became. (1935/2004, pp. 118–119)

Oddly enough, to see life as the height of clear-sighted subjectivity, a conviction upheld by such writers as Ralph Waldo Emerson, is understood by Addams as far more than a personal accomplishment—it requires the assistance of others. The confinements and limitations that divide us are not just external barriers; they are embodied in our own persons. We see life from a certain perspective, one that is determined by our past experiences and solidified by the beliefs and opinions we have learned or acquired. Such beliefs are dogmatic unless they are open to revision by changed circumstances, better reasons or explanations, and contrary facts.¹⁰ Our differing perspectives, therefore, both define our identity and divide us from others. Such divisions are harmful to the extent that they solidify into positions of privilege and subordination through the attitude of taking one’s own beliefs and opinions as obvious truths and those of others as questionable or false. Engaging in conversation that is open-minded and respectful is one of the best ways to sort through our various approaches and expand our horizons. We also liberate ourselves in liberating others from their preconceived notions and by responding in kind to their perspectives. The enthusiasm generated by such insights can be a source of energy enabling us to put them into practice. Since this whole process involves self-exposure, our willingness to take such a risk is bolstered by a secure environment such as the one provided by friends.

According to Dewey, “The only thing ruled out is the dogmatism and intolerance that would forbid discussion” (LW14, p. 234). In the same work, with deadpan humor, he points out that “communication is not announcing things, even if they are said with the emphasis of great sonority.” In *Art and Experience*, he reimagines communication as

the process of creating participation, of making common what had been isolated and singular; and part of the miracle it achieves is that, in being communicated, the conveyance of meaning gives body and definiteness to the experience of the one who utters as well as to that of those who listen. (LW10, pp. 248–249)

Addams explores in great depth and detail the ways that genuine communication, that is, communication that opens itself to the differing attitudes, values, and worldviews of others, profoundly changes the self-understanding, values, and experiences of those whose sense of moral superiority has habituated them to talking down to others. By implicating herself in this indictment, Addams slyly intimates that all of us are prone to fall into this sense of intellectual superiority and moral smugness without realizing it. In *Democracy and Social Ethics* she highlights this subjective aspect of the pragmatist method of inquiry through her emphasis on the perplexities inherent in it.¹¹

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).



CHAPTER SIX

Tao Xingzhi and the Emergence
of Public Education in China

Wang Weijia and Zhang Kaiyuan

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.