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Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping: A Comparison of Educational Thought

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that although Mao Zedong (1893-1976) and Deng Xiaoping (1904-current) grew up in the same culture and adopted the same ideological doctrine--Marxism, they held different political agenda, as well as different ideas in their educational thought. Differences in Mao's and Deng's political and educational thought were rooted in their families as well as personal and life experiences, which may result, to certain degree in their respective interpretations of Marxism and in their estimations of the principal contradiction in Chinese society after 1949. Because of these differences, they viewed the function of education in a different way, resulting in sharp contrast in educational practices between the period of 1966-1976 and the period of 1976-present.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 almost half a century passed. In retrospect, there exists a sharp difference in educational practices between the period of 1949-1976, especially during the Cultural Revolution, and the period after 1976. In an analysis of the development of education in China, these two periods were dominated by the ideas of two men: Mao Zedong, and Deng Xiaoping. During the Cultural Revolution, schools had to meet Mao's political agenda in terms of cultivating thousands of revolutionary successors. In the post-Cultural Revolution era, schools were reconfigured to train qualified personnel for Deng's economic development program. Why were there differences in their educational thought, as well as in their educational practices? This article explores these divergences. An analysis of their respective lives and their philosophical and ideological basis explicates the differences in their educational thought. By knowing the differences of educational thought between Mao and Deng, readers will have a better understanding of the development of Chinese education.

MAO ZEDONG

Mao Zedong was born in Shao Shan village, Xiang Tang county, Hunan province on December 26, 1893. He was the eldest of four children. His

mother, a thrifty and illiterate peasant woman, instructed her children in the principles of Buddhism. Her example taught Mao to help the poor. Mao's father, Mao Jen-sheng, a peasant with little formal schooling, was a strict and formidable man. He hated to see his son idle and expected Mao to help him with manual labour in the field and to remain in the village for the continuity of the family, while Mao had loftier aspirations. Father and son often clashed. Regarding these conflicts, Mao later said: "The war ended, and from it I learned that when I defended my rights by open rebellion my father relented, but when I remained meek and submissive he only cursed and beat me the more (Snow, 1968, p. 133)." He also related: "My father's severity was the first cause of rebellious tendencies other people noticed in me before I was aware of them myself." (Hastie, 1961, p. 43)

SOCIAL INFLUENCE:

During Mao's formative years, China was in constant conflict with Western countries and Japan and Chinese society was in chaos. The chaos that was Chinese society undermined his belief in the secular monarchy and his faith in Buddhism (Chu, 1980, p. 6). Further development of Mao's intellectual and social thought were deeply and intricately related to social events during his attendance at First Normal School (1912-1918) and Beijing University (1918-1919). Witnessing the resignation of Dr. Sun, the first President of the Republic, and Japan occupying Tsingtao in Shandong Province, Mao's inclination toward benevolent action developed into patriotism. He wanted to save China from partition, a state to which Western powers and Japan seemingly conspired. During his residence in Beijing, a crucial period in the formation of his ideology, Mao searched for an ideology to guide his future. At Beijing University, he exposed himself to Western social theories and came into contact with scholars such as Hu Shih, Chen Duxiu and Li Dachao. During the winter of 1918-1919, he developed a special interest in Marxism, due to the influence of Li Dachao, who advocated the need for a "Chinese peasant-proletarian revolution." By the summer of 1920, he had become a Marxist (Snow, 1968, p. 155-157).

PHILOSOPHICAL SOURCES:

Mao's philosophical sources were complex. Influenced by traditional Chinese culture in terms of Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism, he

was influenced also by the Western philosophies of Kant, Hegel, Marx and Engels, Green, Huxley and Dewey. Finally, Mao adopted Marxism-Leninism and adapted it with the concrete situation in China as the basis of his ideology, later known as Maoism. Kant (1724-1804) was one among the most significant influences for Mao, who was exposed to Kantian ideas through Yang Changji, his teacher at the First Normal School (Yang, 1991, p. 94). Yang, who studied Kant in Germany, selected as a text a Chinese version of *A System of Ethics* by Kant's disciple, Friedrich Paulsen. Mao spent two years on this course and made extensive, marginal commentaries on Paulsen's book (Womack, 1982, p. 8). Inspired to write an essay "The Power of the Mind," Mao "like Kant . . . divided the universe into two existing worlds to support his dualism" (Li, 1989, p. 61). In 1964, Mao recalled that "at that time, I believed Kantian dualism and particularly in idealism" (Vladimirov, 1981, p. 46-47).

Mao also studied Hegel (1770-1831). When Edgar Snow revisited China in 1964, Mao informed Snow that before 1937 he "had read Hegel" (Li, 1989, p. 27), especially *A System of Ethics*, *Western Ethics* and the *Outline of Philosophy*. Hegel's influence was so obvious that Mao believed, "as did Hegel, that knowledge must not aim to seize a static truth: truth is constantly made up by gradually approaching it" (Wilson 1977, p. 161). Li (1989) observed, "Mao never gave up the study of Hegelian philosophy" (p. 28). In his ethical class, Yang Changji also introduced T. H. Green's (1836-1882) concept of self-fulfilment. From Yang Changji, Mao Zedong encountered, and accepted, Green's view that society is the necessary prerequisite of self-fulfilment. Mao asserted that "the utmost purpose of human beings is self-fulfilment. The method to reach self-fulfilment is to combine human beings with the society" (Li, 1989, p. 151). Mao's emphasis on self-study and society as a classroom are indicators of Green's influence on Mao's thought.

Mao favoured T. H. Huxley's (1825-1895) *Evolution and Ethics* (translated by Yen Fu), which introduced Social Darwinism (Yang 1991, p. 92). In Mao's view, Darwinian evolutionary theory could be used to bring changes in Chinese feudal society (Yang, 1991, p. 93). Yang Changji, a close friend of John Dewey's (1859-1952) representative in China, Hu Shih, taught pragmatism to Mao. Introduced to Hu Shih in 1918 at Beijing University, Mao attended his lectures on traditional Chinese philosophy and pragmatism, and came to accept Dewey's viewpoint ardently (Li, 1989, p. 37). When Mao went to Beijing for the second time in 1919, he attended Dewey's guest lecture on

"Three Contemporary Philosophers" (William James, Heri Bergson, and Bertrand Russell). Mao was enthralled by Dewey's ideas and resolved to study Western philosophy by using "Three Contemporary Philosophers" as a textbook (Li, 1989, p. 26). Mao believed that pragmatism constituted an effective weapon to fight feudalism. Dewey's philosophical influences can be seen in Mao's emphasis on student-centred teaching and learning from practice.

To save China from colonial and feudal oppression, Mao embraced Marxism-Leninism, believing that the Chinese revolution should take the road of Russia's "October Revolution," that is, to use violence to acquire national power. Mao integrated Marxist principles with his assessment of the concrete situation of Chinese society to form his own thought, including both the theory of new-democratic revolution, which deals with the analysis of the anti-colonial and anti-feudal revolution in China before 1949, and the theory of class struggle in socialist society (or the theory of continuous revolution), which deals with the mode of socialist development in China after 1949.

Mao believed that the Chinese revolution needed to be targeted to fight both imperialism and feudalism, which in fact became the explicit goals of the Chinese revolution. According to Marxist theory, China lacked the requisite economic conditions upon which to found a proletarian revolution, in as much as the peasantry formed the majority in China. The only way to seize political power, therefore, was by armed force, building rural area bases first, which were then employed to take over the cities. This constituted the method of the Chinese revolution (Pan, 1975, p. 17). Following his victory of 1949, Mao continued to promote a "class struggle [that was] by no means over. The class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the class struggle between different political forces and the class struggle in the ideological field between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie will continue to be long and tortuous and at times will even become very acute" (Fraser, 1967, p. 17-18). To strengthen the proletarian national governance, it was imperative, Mao argued, to continue fighting the bourgeoisie, which is the theory of "continuous revolution" or "permanent revolution."

EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT AND PRACTICE:

Following the tradition of Chinese culture and influenced by contemporary philosophical currents, Mao emphasized the importance of education in creating a new social order. After embracing Marxism-

Leninism, Mao regarded education as a powerful weapon to reach his political goals, asserting that "To overthrow a political power, it is always necessary, first of all, to create public opinion, to do work in the ideological sphere" (*Peking Review*, Nov 15, 1974, p. 19). In 1957 Mao wrote: "There is the struggle between the socialist road and the capitalist road We must heighten our vigilance. We must conduct socialist education" (Mao, 1971, p. 350-87). Based on Marxist-Leninist thought that education is part of the super-structure of society, Mao formulated his definition of educational programs as outgrowths of economic and political systems, and knowledge as an instrument for problem solving. Education became the fundamental vehicle teaching and disseminating political ideas and the "state highway" to transform China into a new Sinocized communist society (Chu, 1980, p. 65). Convinced of the political necessity to create and maintain a socialist society, Mao portrayed that the supreme aim of education as serving proletarian politics through winning national governance before 1949, and training millions of successors to carry on the cause of proletarian revolution after 1949. In his legendary speech on February 27, 1957, Mao (1971) asserted: "Our educational policy must enable everyone who receives an education to develop morally, intellectually and physically and become a worker with both socialist conscientiousness and culture" (p. 459). According to Mao, the preeminent principle in education is to "put politics in command," meaning that proletarian ideology is central to Chinese life. Mao proposed that ideology be always the "commander-in-chief" of all other work. Proletarian politics must be the basis of all educational works, and each educational institution and process must be permeated with political thought. Moreover, Mao believed that if the proletarian revolution was to be successful, it had to educate and re-educate people to new ways of thinking and acting in the world.

However, "politics in command" is not enough to bring up proletarian successors. Mao opposed traditional modes of instruction, arguing that Chinese education had failed due to the separation of schooling and productive labour. As early as 1916, he recognized that "Chinese education is not related to real life. What students learned in school can not be used in society. As a result, students don't know the real problems in society, and society does not welcome those students" (Li, 1989, p. 268). He suggested that one "abandon the parts of old education which are not related to real life and production" (p. 269). Continuing this theme in 1957, Mao confirmed that "the book learning of the intelligentsia, if it is not combined with practice, remains incomplete, even grossly inadequate" (Vladimirov, 1981, p. 153). In

Mao's view, education must be connected with real life and cultivate people who can use their skills to serve the society rather than being bookworms.

Mao saw the spirit of serving others as the epitome of morality. "Our point of departure is to serve the people whole-heartedly and never for a moment divorce ourselves from the masses, to proceed in all cases from the interests of the people and not from one's self interests or from the interests of a small group . . ." (Mao 1965, p. 1096). Thus, moral education is important because no matter how intelligent and how healthy one is, if one is not willing to serve the people, all is in vain. But being "red" (or loyal) in terms of willingness to serve the people and the country was not enough. Proletarian successors should master certain knowledge to do the assigned job, which is related to intellectual education. In his Opening Address at the Eighth National Congress of the CCP in 1956, Mao said: "In transforming a backward agricultural China into an advanced industrialized country, . . . we must be good at learning" (Fraser, 1967, p. 304). In order to engage in national construction, science and technology were needed. The "poor and blank" aspects of China's economy and culture had to be thoroughly transformed by means of modern science. Thus, "students have to study not only liberal arts, but also engineering, agriculture-- science" (Mao, 1965, p. 817-818). Moreover, Mao promoted a progressive ideology of a strong mind in a strong body as the first condition for the whole development of people. In his 1917 article, "A Study of Physical Education," Mao maintained that "When the body is strong, then one can advance speedily in knowledge and morality and reap far-reaching advantages. . . . Physical education not only enhances knowledge, it also harmonizes the sentiments. . . . Exercise over a long period of time can produce great results and give rise to a feeling of personal value" (Li, 1989, p. 276-277).

In pre-revolutionary China, a majority of people had no chance to learn how to become literate and numerate. Mao felt that by teaching them how to read and compute they would understand why they had suffered, and would therefore support the Revolution. In this sense, education was transformed into mass education for the majority of people. The doing-knowing-doing system, reflecting the influence of Dewey's pragmatism, is important in Mao's educational thought. He viewed all human knowledge as deriving first through the senses, and perceptions thus gained evolve into rational knowledge; these two types of knowledge form an integral whole, and though seemingly diverse, are interdependent. Continuing with Dewey's philosophical pragmatism,

Mao believed that education is a lifelong process and that all activities and total working experiences can be educational. Education was far more than the schools. Society was portrayed as a big school with villages, cities, and each of the farms and factory plants considered as education "labs." Based on this notion, Mao suggested a diversified pattern of education. He wrote: "In our education we must have not only regular primary and secondary schools but also scattered, irregular village schools, newspaper-reading groups and literacy classes. We should not only have the new school but also utilize the old village tutor system and reconstruct it" (Chu, 1980, p. 80).

Self-study is another important component of Mao's educational thought. Considering himself as a self-educated person, he only attended the lectures he was interested in and had spent most of his time reading his own books (Vladimirov, 1981, p. 152), Mao incorporated into his educational thought self-education practices. As early as in 1922, Mao built up the Hunan Self-Education College to "recruit and train cadres for the Communist Party." In this college, there were no formal classes, but many debates and seminars, with emphasis on current problems. During the anti-Japanese War, Mao was deeply involved in establishing Chinese People's Anti-Japanese Military and Political College (Kangda) to train military and political cadres. Mao, as chairman of the Education Committee, set up Kangda's educational policy as "with firm and correct political orientation, simple and modest working style, and flexible and adaptive military strategy." Kangda's students were selected from two sources. Two-third were soldiers and cadres in the CCP areas, and one-third were intellectuals or youth from the Guomindang or Japanese occupied areas. The length of study was normally one year but it could be extended or shortened according to the concrete situation. The contents of study were politics, literacy, history, and military strategies and differed from class to class, and year to year. The principle methodology included "less yet essential" and "combining theory with practice, military with politics." Teaching and learning activities were conducted in lectures, group discussion, individual study and peer collaboration. In addition to regular classes, Kangda students participated actively in productive activities and military engagement outside school. As part of their school requirements, they built their own dormitories, farmed their own food, and wove materials to make their own clothes. They joined in the real battles on the front. Mao's educational practices in Kangda reflected his ideas that education should serve proletarian politics and that the learning should be

combined with practice. Through Kangda, Mao realized his ambition to extend the educational setting from the regular classroom to the whole social environment, and extend the contents of education from books and theories to the first-hand experiences in administration, productive and military activities.

Mao's support of Jiangxi Communist Labour University in 1950s extended the practical approach of implementing educational thought in practiced. In 1958, Mao encouraged schools to "establish factories, factories establish schools; students and teachers manage farms; peasants manage schools; students undertake 'work and study, half-work and half-study'." Implementing Mao's instruction, Jiangxi Communist Labour University (Gongda), founded in August 1958, aimed to train the socialist labourers, especially agricultural experts and agro-technicians, with political consciousness and practical knowledge. Gongda's students were mainly high school graduates in Jiangxi Province and middle-aged village cadres. The university, which did not receive any funding, ran on a self-reliant policy. Students spent half day in classes, studying agriculture, forestry, and livestock husbandry and the other half day they applied what they had learned on the farm. All courses and experiments focused on the local needs and real life problem solving. On the university's third anniversary, Mao praised highly Gongda's achievement, encouraging other provinces to establish similar institutions (A Letter to Jianxi Communist Labour University, 1961).

Mao's educational practice reached its apex during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). In a letter to Defense Minister Lin Biao, he restated his opinion that students should be engaged in practical as well as theoretical activity.

While the students' main task is to study, they should also learn other things, that is to say, they should not only learn book knowledge, they should also learn industrial production, agricultural production and military affairs. They should also criticize and repudiate the bourgeoisie. The length of schooling should be shortened, education should be revolutionized, and the domination of our schools and colleges by bourgeois intellectuals should not be tolerated any longer. (People's Daily, May 16, 1966)

To carry out Mao's directives, the Red Guard smashed the Ministry of Education; all the examination were abolished; "key-point" schools no

longer existed; and workers' and People's Liberation Army propaganda teams took over leadership of the schools. Workers and peasants were invited to give lectures. The system was shortened to 5+4+3 from primary level to tertiary level. Text books were simplified. To cultivate their revolutionary fervour, students spent some time going to factories or countryside to take part in physical labour. The most radical educational innovations occurred at the tertiary level and focused on the administration of colleges and universities, and redefined who was eligible for higher education. Mao clarified these issues when he proclaimed that colleges and universities should "take the road of the Shanghai Machine Tools Plant in training technicians from among the workers. Students should be selected from among the workers and peasants with practical experience, and they should return to production after a few years' study." (*People's Daily*, July 22, 1958) Short-term training classes and "July 21" workers' colleges quickly spread across the country. These short-term training classes were organized by the tertiary institutions in cooperation with factories, communes and enterprises in the fields of natural science, engineering, teacher education, medical education and agriculture. By 1974, short-term training classes, integrated into the plans for all tertiary institutions, were officially presented as a "socialist new-born thing," a term used by the Left during the cultural revolution. "July 21" workers' colleges were run by factories. By the end of 1975 there had been over 5,160 "July 21" workers' colleges. The number of colleges at that time was said to be 15,000, as against 1,200 in the first half of 1975, with an enrollment had increased from 90,000 to 780,000. Following Mao's July 21 directives, entrance based on the political criteria replaced national college entrance examinations. Eligible applicants sorted into four categories: 1) the best elements among workers and peasants, who had come to prominence in the three great revolutionary movements, possessed three years or more of practical experience, were at least twenty years of age, and had reached a cultural level equivalent to that of lower or higher middle school; 2) intellectual youth who had taken part in productive labour in the countryside; 3) members of People's Liberation Army; and 4) young cadres. Old workers and peasants were not subjected to the entrance restriction of age and cultural level (*Guangming Daily*, July 22, 1970).

Mao's educational practices reflected his educational thought and education became an instrument to serve his political agenda. He emphasized that education should be combined with productive labour. Thus, the structure of educational system and the way of learning

changed. Schools were run by factories, and on the self-reliant basis. People were expected to learn from practice and society became the classroom. In Mao's view, people were no longer required to attend school on full-time basis. On the contrary, they would learn anywhere and anytime in their lives. Education became a life-long process and for the masses.

DENG XIAOPING

Deng Xiaoping, born in Paifang Village, Guang'an County, Sichuan, on August 22, 1904, was the first of the four sons and the second of eight children. His mother, the second wife of his father came from a well-to-do peasant family in the same county. She was always ready to help the others. Deng's father, Deng Wenming, a member of the local elite, came from a family with a tradition of scholarship and his education was half traditional and half western-style. Economically he was a wealthy landlord and entrepreneur; socially, the chief of the local Elderly Brother Society; politically, the village head and later supervisor of the county security force; and spiritually, the leader of the "Religion of Five Sons" cult (Yang, 1993, p. 444). He arranged for Deng to finish primary and secondary school in Guang'an, and to attend senior middle school in Chongqing. Unlike Mao's father, Deng's father did not need him to assist with manual labour and household chores. He wanted his son to pursue a loftier career and continue the family tradition of scholarship..

SOCIAL INFLUENCE:

Deng's intellectual and social thought developed in a significantly different manner than did Mao's. In 1918, Deng travelled to Chongqing for high school education but ended up enrolling in the Preparatory School for Work-Study in France shortly after his sixteenth birthday. Among the participants in the "work-study" program in France were other famous Chinese communists, Cai Hesen, Zhao Shiyan, Zhou Enlai and Li Lisan. Deng, although too young to participate in political activities at the beginning, "worked diligently and studied thriftily," until he found it financially impossible and became an unskilled factory labourer. This experience resulted in two things: the preparation for communism and a deep impression of large industry. Deng became increasingly involved in Communist activities, working for *Red Light*, the organ of the Communist Youth League, with Zhou Enlai

as its founder and editor-in-chief. Following the revolutionary trend, Deng studied at Sun Yat-sen University, Moscow, in 1925 and, in 1926, was formally accepted as a Communist party member. But he and his peers were more concerned with practicalities of fomenting revolution in China than with theoretical studies (Yang, 1993, p. 446). Yang (1993) argued that Deng "joined the Communist revolution when it became a popular trend, and he converted to Communism more for personal than ideological reasons" (p. 456). Invited by Feng Yuxian's daughter, a classmate, Deng came back to China and joined Feng Yuxian's army in 1927. From then on, he was busy with different revolutionary activities. By 1933, Deng established a close relationship with Mao in Jianxi and worked diligently under his leadership to win national governance. After 1949, Deng was promoted by Mao to the central government in charge of daily national affairs.

PHILOSOPHICAL SOURCES:

The intellectual sources of Deng's philosophy are more difficult to assess. Firstly, unlike Mao, none of Deng's works dealt with philosophy directly (Yuan, 1988, p. 6) and never revealed what his philosophical sources were, either in his works or in his speeches. Secondly, he was more committed to practical work than arguing theoretical or ideological issues, a tendency that reflected his personal experience. Consequently, we must infer his philosophical sources from his personal experiences and behaviour. Deng's philosophical sources are threefold: (i) by the traditional Chinese culture, (ii) by communist doctrine learned in France and Moscow, and (iii) instruction from and influence of Mao, Deng's patron, on how to integrate Marxism-Leninism theory with Chinese situation.

The influence of traditional Chinese culture is rooted in his family life and early education. Deng Xiaoping's family had a tradition of scholarship and public service dating back to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1628). Deng inherited from his father a traditional Chinese philosophy which blended Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism for the purpose of improving people's secular behaviours. According to his daughter, MaoMao (1995), Deng's early education in Si Shu, the old-style Chinese private school, exposed him to Sanzijing, a three-character-phrase textbook for children which introduces children to Chinese culture, and *Baijiaxing*, a book of Chinese clan names. At the lower primary school, Deng read the classics essential to understanding Chinese culture: *Sishu* (*The Great Learning, The Doctrine*

of the Mean, The Analects of Confucius, and Mencius), and Wujing (The Books of Songs, The Books of History, The Book of Changes, The Books of Rites, and The Spring and Autumn Annals). The predominate teaching method then was recitation and rote memorization. "However, what one recited in childhood was remember forever. Moreover, as far as Chinese was concerned, the more one learned by heart, the greater impact it would have on one's cultural traits." (Deng, 1995, p. 40) This early exposure to Chinese culture shaped Deng's political perspective and he remained committed to understanding Chinese classics, such as *Shi Ji* (Records of the Historian), the 11th century massive compilation, *Zi Zhi Tong Jian* (The General Mirror for the Aid of the Government), that detailed for the emperor how his predecessors had handled difficult questions (Shambaugh, 1993, p. 481, Salisbury, 1992, p. 9 and 325-26). During his Cultural Revolution exile in Jiangxi province, he studied *The Twenty-Four Histories*, which discussed how emperors governed China.

Marxism-Leninism is the second philosophical source for Deng Xiaoping. An "ardent Communist devoted to saving his country and his people" by eighteen (Deng, 1995, p. xv), Deng differed from other Communist leaders, who emphasized ideology. He "was socialized to be a true Leninist, namely, to believe that the supreme imperative was the preservation of the Party's organizational identity and hence its monopoly on power" (Pye, 1993, p. 452). The Tianamen massacre is an example. For Deng, the demonstration threatened the survival of the Communist Party and People's Republic of China. Therefore, "he took the decisive and drastic action" (Shambaugh, 1993, p. 488). Such ruthlessness is absolutely central to Deng's political philosophy and strategy. "For him, it is the basis of order at home which alone ensures that the economic policies of reform and openness can be carried out without undermining Communist Party rule through the spread of liberal influence" (Yahuda, 1993, p. 551).

The third philosophical source is Mao Zedong, Deng's principal patron (Shambaugh, 1993, p. 465). Mao was famous for his combining Marxism-Leninism theory with the concrete Chinese situation. Deng is known for his saying "integrate the universal truth of Marxism with the concrete realities of China, blaze a path of our own and build modernization with Chinese characteristics" (Deng, 1987, p. 5). Deng was pragmatic and effective in carrying out whatever policy was set by the central government and Mao Zedong (Naughton, 1993, p. 495). In other words, like Mao, Deng is an heir of Marxism-Leninism and particularly the Chinese variant of it.

The core of Deng Xiaoping's philosophical thought is the spirit of *shishi qiushi* (Deng 1989; Yuan 1989), or pragmatism. To Deng Xiaoping, pragmatism means the application of the general theory of Marxism to Chinese society in a comprehensive way, but not to follow the specific sayings of Marx. In other words, while adhering to the Four Cardinal Principles of the CCP, "it doesn't matter if a cat is black or white, so long as it catches mice." Deng's pragmatism primarily related to his economic policies because he argued that "true socialism could only be built on a highly developed economy" (Schram, 1993, p. 429). His interpretation of Marxism differed from that of Mao in that

Marxism attaches utmost importance to develop the productive forces. We advocate communism. . . . It means the principle of from each according to his ability and to each according to his needs, which calls for highly-developed productive force and overwhelming materials wealth. Therefore, the fundamental task for the socialist stage is to develop productive force. The superiority of the socialist system is demonstrated by faster and greater development of the productive forces that under the capitalist system. . . . Socialism means eliminating poverty. Pauperism is not socialism, still less communism (Deng, 1987, p. 54-55).

As late as 1992, he emphasized that the core of socialism was the emancipation and development of productivity; revolution was the emancipation and development of productivity; and reform was the emancipation and development of productivity. The ultimate safeguard of socialism is its higher productivity than that of capitalism.

For Deng, politics should command socialist development, an attitude that was reflected his strict response toward "Democracy Wall" in 1978, the campaign against "spiritual pollution" in 1983, and "bourgeois liberalization" in 1987. Revealing his position as a veteran communist, in response to the Tienanmen Square massacre, Deng said that "the biggest mistake we have made during these ten years is that we have loosened ideological work." His pragmatism applied only to economic policies. Yet, "even though Deng Xiaoping, like Mao, manifestly regard[ed] politics as central to socialist development, in his case it is politics guiding and shaping the economic basis, rather than politics and ideology taking precedence over everything and abrogating economic law" (Schram, 1993, p. 429). "On the one hand, he wanted to see China wealthy in a materialistic sense and strong

internationally, but on the other hand he also feared that China could be robbed its essence and contaminated by foreign influence" (Pye, 1993, p. 441). In addition to his interpretation of Marxism in which both class struggle and humanity's increasing mastery of nature are interwoven (Schram, 1993, p. 409), Deng's political philosophy is based on his understanding of Chinese culture. After 1949, and especially after 1957, Deng reconsidered the place of economic development as the major task for China. Witnessing the economic damages caused by the political struggle while exiled during the Cultural Revolution, Deng solidified his belief of economic development. When restored to political power after the Cultural Revolution, Deng found that China was still a poor and weak nation, which contradicted his belief that socialism would bring better life to people than capitalism. Therefore, Deng initiated the "Four Modernizations" as a means to make China. The development of the national economy became the major issue.

In the opening ceremony of Twelfth Congress of CCP, Deng focused on building "socialism with Chinese characteristics" and asked audience to strive for this goal. He emphasized that the major issue of socialist China was to develop economy and raise people's living standards. In March 1979, Deng argued that "the . . . obstacle for the development of China is that the low productive labour can not provide enough materials for the people and the country. How to solve this problem becomes our focus" (Deng, 1983, p. 168). By 1983, Deng further insisted that "a genuinely Marxist ruling party must devote itself to the development of the productive forces and, with this as the foundation, gradually raise the people's living standard. This means building a society with high material standards" (Deng, 1987, p. 17). Finally, in a conversation with an American reporter, he reiterated the theme: "We can neither have a poor communism nor poor socialism. The cardinal task of socialism is to increase productivity so that we can improve people's life and increase their materials on a continuous basis" (Hon, 1994, p. 441).

EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT AND PRACTICES:

Deng recognized the crucial significance of education in socialist China. When Deng Xiaoping reassumed his position in the central government, he informed the participants at a forum on work in science and education that he had "volunteered to take charge of the work in science and education," a proposal approved by the Central Committee. Deng declared that "China must catch up with the most advanced

countries of the world," and to accomplish this goal "we have to begin by tackling science and education." He concluded by saying: "we must foster a good style of learning and create a stimulating atmosphere in which science and education . . . can flourish" (*People's Daily*, Aug 10, 1977, p. 1). At the National Educational Work Conference in April, 1978, Deng emphasized that "science and technology are the keys . . . and education is the foundation" to the four modernizations. To realize his "Four Modernizations" and to build socialism with Chinese characteristics, Deng promoted as the supreme aim of education the provision of qualified personnel to meet the needs of socialist construction and economic development (Deng, 1987, p. 23). To fulfil China's economic ambitions, "it is very important to tap intellectual resources" (Deng, 1987, p. 15). Schools became "places for training competent personnel for socialist construction" (Speech at the National Conference on Education, April 22, 1978). To speed up the training of needed personnel, Deng advocated the restoration of "key" schools at all three levels. He specifically emphasized that "universities, especially key institutes, should play an important role in scientific research" (Deng 1983, p. 50). In his opinion, colleges and universities could accelerate the realization of four modernizations by combining their teaching and learning with scientific research, which reflected Deng's idea that science and technology were productivities. To meet the demands for qualified personnel, formal education and "key" institutes were not enough and Deng encouraged diverse ways to train qualified personnel, including "half-time and spare-time colleges and universities" (Deng, 1983, p. 51-52). At the secondary level, Deng recommended an increase in the proportion of agricultural middle schools, specialized middle schools and technical schools. He urged people to study in their spare-time and see education as a life-long process. He regarded fundamental education, vocational education at secondary level, higher education, and adult education as a whole system for people.

To help realize the four modernizations, the Chinese people must "respect knowledge." Intellectuals, especially the teachers, played key role in training qualified personnel. With nine million teachers, Deng said that "we must raise their political and social status . . . They should command respect not only of the students but also of society as a whole" (Speech at the National Conference on Education, April 22, 1978). Deng redesignated to intellectuals the status as mental labourers because they were "the key to China's modernization" (Goldman, 1993, p. 285). Students had the principal task of studying

and understanding science and culture. Examinations once again became an important method of evaluation of their studies and the efficacy of the teaching. He stressed the need for proper selection methods in order to enroll "only those who are outstanding." There were no contradictions between this principle and socialist egalitarian ideals: "A collective effort is the sum of individual efforts. There will be differences in individual efforts even in communist society" (Speech at the National Conference on Education, April 22, 1978).

To be geared to the outside world, Deng Xiaoping urged China to learn from other countries. Reflecting on the history of the national development, Deng said: "China's past backwardness was due to its closed-door policy. . . . [T]he closed-door policy . . . hinder[ed] construction and inhibit[ed] development. The development of China is closely related to the development of the world" (Deng, 1983, p. 37). Therefore, he urged China to "make use of the intellectual resource of other countries by inviting foreigners to participate in key construction projects in various fields and to assist in education and technical innovation" (Deng, 1987, p. 22) and strongly advocated two-way educational exchanges with outside world because "science and technology are common wealth of human beings" (Deng, 1983, p. 88). Thus, Deng encouraged sending students to study abroad and inviting foreign experts to teach in Chinese colleges and universities. To catch up the advanced countries, Deng pointed out that "The key is the curriculum. Curriculum should include advanced knowledge of modern technology and science and be suitable of Chinese concrete situation" (Deng, 1983, p. 52).

With a focus on the future, Deng saw the training of qualified personnel as essential (Speech on the National Educational Working Conference, May 1985). To train people for the future, "we must raise the quality of elementary education and secondary education because college students come from middle school, and students in middle school come from elementary school" (Deng, 1993, p. 51). He praised teachers in elementary schools because "their work is as important as that of college professors" (Deng, 1990, p. 29). While he believed that "Revolutionary idea and communist morality should be trained from childhood, which is the educational tradition of our Party" (Deng, 1983, p. 102-103), Deng also queried "How can we build socialism without spiritual civilization, or without communist idea or without communist morality?" (Deng, 1990, p. 122). Distinguishing between "red" and "expert," Deng said that "being expert is not equal to 'red'. But 'being red', you must be an expert. No matter in what specialty you

are, if you are not an expert and you don't have knowledge in that field, you will bring suffering of people's benefits and hinder the socialist construction" (Deng, 1990, p. 107). This interpretation of "red" and "expert" is different from that of Mao.

Since the first priority in Deng's era was not political struggle but economic development, it was imperative to provide qualified personnel. Only two months after the Eleventh National Congress of the CCP, it was announced that the national college entrance examination would be held in December 1977. A *New China News Agency* broadcast divided this process into five parts: 1) voluntary registration of applicants by late November, 2) examination in December, 3) preliminary selection in early February, 4) provincial assessment by mid-February, and 5) admission by institutions at the end of February and the beginning of March. The definition of who was eligible to take the national college entrance examination was crucial to the nature and direction of this intake. Enrollment categories for 1977 were: workers, peasants, rusticated youth, returned soldiers, cadres, higher middle graduates, youth from national minorities, compatriots from Taiwan, students from Hong Kong and Macao, and Overseas Chinese (*People's Daily*, Oct 21, 1977. p. 4-7). In general, all applicants had to satisfy three basic criteria: political reliability, a cultural level equivalent to higher middle graduation, and good health.

At first glance, the categories seemed rigid, but when read with additional provisions, they proved flexible enough to tap talent from diverse sources. For instance, students who were still in middle school but who had shown exceptional promise could register for the national college entrance examinations after undergoing strict tests administered by schools. Similarly, the age limit could be extended to thirty and the marital stipulation waived in the case of workers and peasants with rich practical experience who had shown special scientific aptitude. These later concessions were also applied to the 1966 and 1967 higher middle graduating classes, who had been denied further educational opportunity by the Cultural Revolution (Chen 1981, p. 181). The purpose of these concessions was to open admission to talented youth, to raise the quality of education, to train more proficient personnel and to make greater contributions at an early date so as to meet the urgent needs in national construction (*People's Daily*, Oct 21, 1977. p. 4-7).

A 1978 national conference on student recruitment expanded the eligibility of applicants to include those from "bad family, such as landlord and capitalist, in order to select the very best students."

Separately, in 1979 at Deng's suggestion, the CCP removed the "rightist" label which had given a bad-class status to 400,000 families (largely those of intellectuals who had been too outspoken in the 1957 Hundred Flowers movement). Thus, their children could be selected.

Actually after 1979, academic performance on the examination became the sole criterion. Kwong (1983) noted that promotion to the next higher level of education was based almost exclusively on examination performance. In principle, moral, physical and academic achievements were considered; but in practice, academic achievement was the most important criterion for selection.) Once again, entrance examinations counted most heavily in determining who would be admitted to universities; and in the search for academically competent applicants, a candidate's class background was down played to an extent not seen since the mid-1950s (Unger 1980, p. 43).

The restoration of the national college entrance examination influenced higher education as well as the whole educational system, and even the entire society. "Key" schools were revived at secondary and elementary levels to improve educational quality. "The system of standardized college entrance examinations," boasted a 1980 newspaper report, "spurred better teaching in the high school . . . and has motivated large numbers of young people to be 'student-activists'" (*Southern Daily*, May 11, 1980, p. 1). The value of a college education has been significantly enhanced since 1976. It has become one of the few secure routes to a well-paying job and a highly respected place in Chinese society (Pepper 1984, p. 41).

A conference on Key Middle Schools in 1980 concluded that it was strategically important to open a number of key middle schools first in order to quickly turn out more talented personnel. China was a populous country with a weak foundation in education, uneven development, a limited number of teachers, and limited funds and equipment. Therefore, education could not be developed properly if shared our resources equally among the country's more than 140,000 middle schools at the same time. Therefore, it was essential and necessary first to improve education for key middle schools by giving play to their relative advantages in various respects while giving appropriate attention to ordinary middle schools (Xin Hua Se, Aug 4, 1980).

COMPARING THE EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT OF MAO ZEDONG AND DENG XIAOPING:

The differences between Mao and Deng can be traced to their very different families. In Mao's family, there existed an explosive

tension between father and son, and later between husband and wife, while Deng's childhood was in a supportive family and his father encouraged his aspirations (Shambaugh, 1993, p. 481). From the conflict with his father, Mao learned to rebel and fight against authorities. His inclination to solve problems in violent ways may also be related to the conflict with his father. By contrast, Deng's methodological moderation may be accounted for by his family influence. "One cannot help but wonder whether their later divergent styles and behaviour can, in part, be accounted for by these contrasting childhood experiences. Whereas Mao emphasized struggle and contradiction, Deng placed greater emphasis on consensus and organizational solidarity; Mao seemed to dwell on past injustices and problems, while Deng seems to look to the future and not linger on past missteps and difficulties." (Deng, 1995, p. xiii)

Social influences cast Mao and Deng different routes of personality development. Mao had a "moratorium" period during his years in Changsha after 1911 Revolution and drifted without focus, indecisively dreaming about careers, and imagining himself at one moment as a great success and the next as a frightful failure. Even after the Changsha "moratorium," Mao had a prolonged phase of youthful confusion as he worked in Beijing University library. Ultimately, Mao and most of other Chinese revolutionaries were attracted to the ideological appeal of Communism. Deng's early years were so coherently structured and organized by others that he apparently never experienced a period of adolescent turmoil and angst. There was no phase of anxiety about who he was, what he should become, or what he should do with his life. For Deng, the only challenge was gaining the respect of those who made up his own personal world, and that world was a well-organized group.

Mao and Deng committed to Marxism in different ways. Mao searched a variety of ideologies, and found in Marxism an ideology that could save the country, while Deng came to politics in a pragmatic spirit of learning how to deal skilfully with immediate day-to-day problems of organizational life. For Deng, communism was organizational life, which in turn meant excelling in the eyes of associates and contributing to the group's well-being in an otherwise strange and impersonal environment. Lampton argues that "Deng was less committed to Communism as a sacred ideology than to the idea of an organized political party that held out the prospect of achieving wealth, power, and capacity for self-determination for Chinese nation. Deng was . . . more a practical Leninist and national patriot than an

ideologically committed utopian Marxist" (Deng, 1995, p. xii). In other words, "he developed the traits of a pragmatic Communist, traits that would guide his career and reformist philosophy" (Yang 1993, p. 467).

There also existed different philosophical sources between Mao and Deng. Both influenced by traditional Chinese culture, Mao and Deng adopted different strategies for governing from Chinese history. Mao was inclined to use a radical and direct way for social reform, while Deng was called a "paramount political leader" (Shambaugh 1993). "He [Deng] is like a needle wrapped in cotton," remarked Mao (Salisbury, 1992). Each committed to Marxism, but they interpreted it in different ways. Mao adopted the idea of class struggle as his political philosophy, while Deng's philosophy was more closely related to the idea of humanity's mastery of nature in terms of developing productivity. Deng learned pragmatism from Mao, but he developed it to a higher level.

Because of the different personal experiences and different adaptation of Marxist philosophy, Mao and Deng had different views about the major contradictions in Chinese society after 1949. Mao asserted that communist governance could be maintained by continuous revolution. Class struggle and revolution were still needed. Deng countered that after the founding of the PRC, the fundamental contradiction in Chinese society was between highly-advanced social system and low economic productivity. Revolution no longer meant class struggle, but the liberation of productive labour. Socialism, he argued, should have higher economic productivity than that of capitalism. In his conversations with foreign visitors, Deng remarked that "Mao Zedong is a great leader, who has brought success to Chinese Revolution. But he made a big mistake -- his ignorance of the development of economic productivity" (Deng, 1987, p. 103).

Adhering to different political philosophies, Mao and Deng viewed the function of education differently as well. For Mao, the aims of education were closely related to his political agenda -- to serve proletarian politics, and to cultivate thousands of successors for the proletarian cause, which bears the feature of mass education. Deng's educational objectives focused on the training of experts for national economic development in terms of realization of four modernizations, which emphasized the quality of education. This tendency was reflected as early as in 1960s "when Mao was particularly upset with the '60 Articles on Promoting Higher Education, which Deng had taken charge of drafting but apparently had not shown to him.'" (Shambaugh, 1993, p. 467).

The overriding aim of education in the post-Mao era was to serve the needs of the modernization program. In terms of the dual objectives of revolution and development, the post-Mao leadership gave first priority to development and demanded an educational program that would speed up the 'four modernizations' by providing and fostering the personnel and knowledge needed for this development (Chen 1981, p. 153).

Their views on the function of school also varied. Mao persisted in his belief that the school should be a classroom of class struggle and workers-peasants-soldiers should take the leadership of the school, while Deng regarded schools, especially the "key" institutes, as places to train experts and schools should be run by experts. Mao emphasized the combination of education with productive labour from political perspective, whereas Deng stressed the combination of university scientific research with industry from economic perspective. Mao valued self-study, while Deng advocated continuous education in formal setting. Mao suggested the formula of doing-knowing-doing, whereas Deng emphasized book knowledge, which may reflect the different early experience. Their attitudes towards intellectuals differed as well. Mao moulded intellectuals, while Deng promoted intellectuals as equal to workers, peasants and soldiers, and emphasized to "respect knowledge and respect elites." Mao eliminated examinations during the Cultural Revolution and recommended that students' evaluation not be exclusively on their academic achievements, while Deng restored examinations, believing that the examination could select the best students and promoted the quality of instruction. This difference was typically reflected in the selection of college students during the Cultural Revolution and in the restoration of the college entrance examination after 1976. Mao desired to develop Chinese education independently, while Deng supported educational exchange and borrowing foreign intelligence to accelerate economic development. "Mao was suspicious of the West; Deng held certain envy of it. Deng was no less nationalist than Mao, as both were socialized with the similar view of need of a strong and dignified China, but Deng sought the West as an ally in this quest while Mao was more distrustful" (Shambaugh, 1993, p. 481).

There are also important similarities between Mao and Deng. Both wanted to see China rich and strong in an international arena and

committed to Marxism as a guiding ideology. Both were superb leaders and manipulators, with an instinctive grasp of motivation. "Both Mao and Deng strongly shared the common objectives of the socialist revolution in China and the belief in the superiority of socialism over capitalism. They both were devoted to making China a powerful industrial state" (Chang, 1984, p. 185). "Mao was able to act as pragmatically as Deng when he chose, and Deng was almost - but not quite - Mao's equal in terms of strategic cunning" (Naughton, 1993, p. 513). Both were influenced by traditional Chinese culture through education, and "apparently both men were devotees of the *Shi Ji (Records of the Historian)* and other classical Chinese writing" (Shambaugh, 1993, p. 481). Indeed there is an evidence that both Mao and Deng consulted regularly the 11th century compilation, *Zi Zhi Tong Jian* (Salisbury, 1992, p. 9 and 325-26).

According to Mao, there were two outstanding characteristics of his philosophy -- class nature and practicality. By practice Mao meant social practice in the form of class struggle. As Mao said: "it is useless to discuss the theory of knowledge apart from practice" (Mohanty, 1978, p. 141). Deng's philosophy also bore strong tendency of practice. His emphasis on practice could be read from "In carrying our modernization program we must proceed from Chinese realities" (Deng, 1987, p. 3). Both Mao and Deng recognized the significance of education in society. Both men emphasized that education should be closely related to society and that education should be suitable to the concrete situation of Chinese society though they estimated the major contradiction of Chinese society respectively and applied education differently. In moral education, both men wanted to imbue children with communist ideology. In intellectual education, they both urged children to learn skills to serve society, but Deng placed more emphasis on intellectual development. In physical education, both emphasized the importance of strong body though Mao advocated this more strongly. Mao's concept of total education, in particular, is strikingly similar to Deng's idea that education be continuous though in different educational settings. Although Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping came from the same culture and adopted the same political ideology, they interpreted differently Marxism and the major contradiction in Chinese society. Therefore, their different approaches to educational thought were reflected in their educational practices.

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