

Art Education for Peace

— John Dewey’s view of intercultural experience after his visit to Japan in 1919 —

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Abstract: This study attempts to reframe art education for international democracy by examining Dewey’s thoughts on international education, developed after his encounter with Eastern culture. First, Dewey’s intercultural experiences during his stay in Japan in 1919 are investigated in the context of education, culture, and art. Second, the new line of thought on international education that emerged from his visit to Japan is discussed. Third, his view of the educative nature of intercultural experience articulated in *Art as Experience* is reviewed in relation to his thoughts on international democracy. Finally, a new dimension of art education contributive to the building of peace is discussed from a Deweyan perspective.

Key words: art education, international democracy, Dewey, peace education

John Dewey first visited Japan from February 9 to April 28 in 1919 while on a sabbatical from Columbia University, and he revisited briefly on his way back home in 1921 after a more than two-year-long stay in China. On the afternoon of February 9, Dewey and his wife alighted at Yokohama port from the Japanese liner *Shunyo Maru*. The next day, the *Asahi Shimbun*, one of Japan’s top newspapers, reported his arrival with the headline, “The Arrival of Dr. Dewey, U.S. Authority on Philosophy and Advocate for Abolishment of Racial Discrimination Following the Establishment of the League of Nations.” Dewey’s speech was included in this report: “...On board I became friends with a group of elementary school teachers. I was so delighted to see that they are planning to incorporate some of the strengths of American education to make up for deficiencies in Japanese education by comparing the two systems. ...I hope to hear opinions about recent issues on the League of Nations, etc., from Japanese intellectuals. I believe that one of the first things that the League of Nations should do is to eliminate racial discrimination and prejudices, such as discriminative treatment depending on race. However, there are various other realities to be tackled first and such obnoxious mindsets will be amended gradually after the establishment of the League of Nations.”¹

Although nearly a hundred years have passed since Dewey’s journey, the question on international education raised by Dewey is still highly relevant, even crucial, to our times. Through the intercultural experiences he gained in the East, Dewey addressed how contact with another nation may become “a real means of education.”² While contact among nations increased in Dewey’s time due to worldwide wars, in our time it has been accelerated by technological forces such as the Internet. Intercultural social space has constantly been on the rise even at a local level, influencing all aspects of life, from the physical to the spiritual. To cope with this rapid environmental change, there is an urgent demand to reconstruct education as well. The UNESCO, for example, hosted the first World

Conference on Arts Education in 2006, where a road map for arts education in the twenty-first century was discussed.³ Thereafter, in 2014, the organization also provided a new paradigm framework for Global Citizenship Education (GCE) to forge more just, peaceful, tolerant, and inclusive societies on the global scale.⁴

The focus of this paper is on art education. I will attempt to reframe art education in the current context of globalization by examining Dewey's thoughts on international education, as developed after his experience in Japan in 1919. I will begin by reviewing his experiences and activities in relation to the climate of the time, when the nature of Japanese society was changing owing to the emergence of the Taishō Democracy. There are three highly informative historical studies regarding the subject: Kobayashi's "John Dewey in Japanese Educational Thought" (1964),⁵ Feuer's "John Dewey's Sojourn in Japan" (1969),⁶ and Dykhuizen's "The Far East, 1919-1921" in *The Life and Mind of John Dewey* (1973).⁷ These studies provide authentic information about Dewey's time in Japan as they rely on sources such as Japanese scholars and those who directly witnessed Dewey's visit and activities in Japan.

My paper will concentrate on Dewey's direct interactions with Japanese scholars and culture that might have led him to form a new line of thought. First, I will investigate his intercultural experiences in the context of education, culture, and art. Second, I will discuss the main arguments of Dewey's concept of international education as formed through interacting with Eastern culture. Third, I will examine his idea of the educative nature of a foreign art discussed in *Art as Experience*, written later in his life and published in 1934. Finally, I will suggest a new dimension for art education that may prove effective in the building of peace from a Deweyan perspective.

Dewey's Intercultural Experience in Japan

In 1919, the year that Dewey arrived in Japan, the country was at the peak of the Taishō Democracy, an era characterized by a pro-democratic social climate that began after the Russo-Japanese War.⁸ There was a growing movement calling for popular elections, founded on ideas such as Minponshugi, or a democratic interpretation of the Imperial system, proposed by Sakuzo Yoshino (1879-1933) of the Imperial University of Tokyo.⁹ Further, the labor movement was rising, calling for the rights and interests of working people, as was the movement for Buraku Liberation to ban discriminatory language and behavior against the Buraku minority.

Internationally, the Paris Peace Conference opened in January in 1919, producing the League of Nations in 1920 to foster international peace and put the idealistic goals of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson in action. Japan attended this conference and submitted a proposal for a clause for the abolition of racial discrimination in the Covenant of the League of Nations. During the period of Dewey's stay in Japan, this proposal was brought up at the meeting, although it was eventually turned down in the conference's final decision.¹⁰ Resistance movements against Japan, such as the March First Movement in Korea and the May Fourth Movement in China, also rose at this time. These were the main historical events that formed a background for Dewey's visit to Japan.

Regarding historic events in education in Japan, the New Education Movement (Taishō Shin Kyoiku Undou), advocating child-centered learning and children's self-directed activities and creativity against standardized education, began to grow based on new Western educational thoughts being imported since the late nineteenth century. Concurrently, school education was controlled under the Imperial system and was regulated by the Meiji-era Imperial Rescript of Education issued in 1890. This rescript specified the basics of national morality, as well as the integration of religion, politics, and education through State Shinto. It stated, "We consider that the Founder of Our Empire and the ancestors of Our Imperial House placed the foundation of the country on a grand and permanent basis, and established their authority on the principles of profound humanity and benevolence..."¹¹

As studies by education historians Umene and Nakano point out, the practice of New Education began to develop as early as in the beginning of the twentieth century.¹² Dewey's educational theory served as a driving force, among the ideas of others, including Pestalozzi, Frobel, Herbert, and F. W. Parker. By the time of Dewey's arrival, Japanese translations of his major books on education, *The School and Society* and *Democracy and Education*, were already available. One version of the former was published in 1901¹³ and another was issued by the Ministry of Education in 1905,¹⁴ while two versions of the latter were published in 1918 and 1919.¹⁵ Acquainted with new ideas in education, forward-thinking practitioners developed original curricula and experimented with them in classrooms. These pioneering educators who were particularly influenced by Dewey around the time of his visit included Heiji Oikawa (1875-1939),¹⁶ elementary school teacher at Akashi Women's Normal School, Hidekichi Okayama (1865-1933),¹⁷ professor of crafts education at Tokyo Higher Normal School, and Kanae Yamamoto (1882-1946),¹⁸ advocate for the Free Drawing Movement (1919-1929), the major force that transformed art education from copybook-centered to child-centered.

As apparent, the academic soil was fertile for the development of democratic education around the time that Dewey came to Japan. A description of some liberal, leading-age educational practices is recorded in Dewey's observation of activities in schools. The Deweys visited kindergartens, elementary schools, and boys' and girls' high schools in Tokyo and Kyoto. Dewey notes at one of the schools,

The work was all interesting, but the colored crayon drawings particularly. They have a great deal of freedom there, and instead of the children imitating and showing no individuality—which seems to be the proper thing to say—I never saw so much variety and so little similarity in drawings and other hand work—to say nothing of its quality being much better than the average of ours. The children were under no visible discipline, but were good as well as happy.¹⁹

While Dewey was delighted to see the modern educational practices in Japan, he also witnessed the reality of restrictions imposed by State Shinto under the Constitution of the Empire of Japan that prohibited liberal forces from working effectively. He criticized the educational system controlled by the Imperial Rescript on Education that taught history and ethics within a framework of the emperor-cult based on three myths: "complete racial homogeneity," "the unbroken continuity of the imperial dynasty for over twenty-five hundred years," and "the ownership of the original virtues of the divine founders."²⁰ Dewey regarded this regulation as the chief adversary to the development of democratic education.

Dewey's lectures were delivered at the Imperial University of Tokyo from February 25 to March 21, twice a week in the afternoon in room 32 at the law school.²¹ His lecture series was arranged by Ono Eijiro (1864-1927), Dewey's friend from his days at the University of Michigan, Inazo Nitobe (1862-1933), the first president of Tokyo Woman's Christian University, and Masaharu Anezaki (1873-1949), professor of religion at the Imperial University. The title of the series course of eight lectures was "The Position of Philosophy at the Present: Problems of Philosophic Reconstruction."²² An article in *Asahi Shimbun* reported that Dewey's first lecture was impressive and enthusiastically received, with an audience of about 700, and that tickets for the rest of the lectures had already run out.²³ These lectures were later combined into a book, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, published in 1920.

Dewey was invited to speak at other liberal universities and schools.²⁴ His lectures included "Industry and Democracy" at Keio University on February 26, "Philosophical Foundation of Democracy" at Waseda University on March 1, "New Trends in Philosophy, Religion, and Education" at Tokyo Woman's Christian University on March 5, a lecture at a society of teachers for teaching elementary science on March 1, "Social Method of Education" at the Tokyo City School Principals' Meeting on March 26, and a lecture at a school teachers' meeting in Kyoto on April 19. An audience member who attended the lecture at Waseda University wrote, " ...What deeply moved me is his personality and his past projects. He is a scholar with double sides of philosopher and educator as well

as theorist and pragmatist, and he has distinguished records in all areas. I am struck by the professor's personality and projects in which both sides are well balanced and are peculiar to Americans. As for the current condition of our academic world, there is no contact between philosophy and education and theory and practice are completely separated; this made me feel much regret."²⁵ When Dewey gave a lecture at Keio University, Sumie Kobayashi (1886-1971), professor of literature, observed that "the professor's face is graceful and calm with depth and warmth,"²⁶ and he wrote in his essay that Dewey's lecture made him speculate on cultural democracy in addition to ethical and social democracy. While agreeing with the directions of cultural democracy, such as equal access to culture and the enjoyment and creation of culture, regardless of class, he questioned whether the depth of culture could be maintained when the mass spirit exercised its enormous influence over the noble spirit. He expressed his idea of cultural democracy, evoked by Dewey's lecture, arguing that the individual should possess an ideal vision as a kind of noble spirit, and this vision should not be made mediocre and should instead be kept alive.

Dewey also had opportunities to exchange ideas with Japanese scholars on the League of Nations and a way to build world peace. In 1918, before coming to Japan, Dewey had published a series of articles on the League of Nations, where he expressed his idea of the nature of the organization. He argued that it should stand for more effective human association and intercourse, signifying the social mind and association in common activities, instead of the formulations of the legal mind concerned with defense and litigation.²⁷

Riichiro Hoashi (1881-1963), professor of religion at Waseda University, visited Dewey at the Tokyo Imperial Hotel on the day after his arrival, to interview him about the nature of pragmatism and discuss the condition of democracy in Japan.²⁸ The discussion extended to the topic of the League of Nations. Hoashi viewed the league critically as an international aristocratic and oligarchic government and expressed the idea of "the world republic" beyond the deceptive supremacy of nations. In full agreement with Hoashi, Dewey responded, "The League of Nations is by no means ideal as we expect. But an ideal society is not built in a single step. All become improved evolutionarily little by little, and the League of Nations is one step towards the realization of the world republic."²⁹ Dewey also had a similar exchange with Osada Arata (1887-1961), professor of education at Hiroshima University. Dewey met him not in Japan but in New York in 1922, at a reception for the Japanese delegation to the U.S. Asked to make a speech at the party, Osada took into account discrimination against Japanese immigrants in the U.S. and dared to venture that the modern nations were power- and military-based states, and that those types of nations should be dissolved in order to unite the world into one to actualize the goal of world peace and the happiness of mankind. Reportedly, Dewey was so moved by this speech that he ran up to Osada and held his hand firmly.³⁰ Osada used Dewey's education books in his seminars at the university, while his colleague Yoshio Nagano played a chief role in the establishment of the John Dewey Society of Japan.

In addition to academic exchanges through those lectures and meetings, Dewey experienced Japanese art and culture, and his observations are recorded in the Deweys' letters and in Japanese articles. As Feuer aptly points out,³¹ the Deweys were immersed in Japanese life during their sojourn. They stayed in Nitobe's Japanese-style home in Tokyo, close to Ono's house, and became acquainted with the Japanese way of life through associating with their families. They visited several cities including Kamakura, Yokohama, Nagoya, Ise, and Kyoto. After about six weeks in Japan, Dewey wrote, "I think we have seen more Japanese under normal home conditions than most Americans in six months."³²

Both the Deweys were eager to learn about traditional Japanese art and culture. Interviewed for a *Yomiuri Shimbun* article, Alice Dewey expressed their interest. "As you know, the United States is a new country and we don't have age-old art and history, and that is something I envy. ...We went

to the Imperial Theater and Kabuki, and in addition to the contemporary play we are especially interested in the customs that we can't see in our country."³³ When they visited Tokyo Woman's Christian University in February, its weekly magazine wrote that they showed immense interest in Japanese manners, the naginata (long-handled sword), the tea ceremony, Ikebana, and the practice of playing the koto (Japanese harp).³⁴

The places of cultural heritage, museums, and art collections that the Deweys visited included Engaku-ji temple in Kamakura, the Imperial Museum, the Imperial Garden, Ise Shrine, the Hara art collection in Yokohama, the Yamada Shrine in Nagoya, the Horyu-ji temple in Nara, and the Kennin-ji temple in Kyoto.³⁵ They went to Yamanakas, a well-known art dealer also in the U.S. at the time, and Dewey purchased a few original Japanese prints.³⁶ They experienced Noh Drama played by Motoshige Kanze (1895-1939), and Kabuki by Ganjiro Nakamura (1902-1983), and they were both greatly fascinated by them. In a letter to his children, Dewey wrote, "You will never realize what the human hand and arm can do until you see this. He put on a number of masks and then acted or danced according to the type of mask he had on. He can do an animal's motions without any clawing—as graceful and lithe as a cat."³⁷ Although Dewey's stay in Japan was too short to become well-informed about Japanese art and culture, he caught the essence of it and his understanding is apparent in such accounts as: "As for the Japanese articles for daily use, artistic decoration is given even to simple commodities, and also Japanese art and crafts are the products of the spirit of a true workman who is devoted to techniques with a full soul."³⁸

Dewey's Thoughts on International Education

Dewey's intercultural experience in Japan prompted him to work on a theme of international education, and his ideas are expressed in a series of articles published in 1921 in the Japanese journal, *Kaizō* ("Reconstruction"), established in 1918 with the aim of promoting democracy in Japan. These articles include "Some Factors in Mutual National Understanding"³⁹ and "Racial Prejudice and Friction."⁴⁰

In the former article, Dewey poses critical questions on international education, "how contact with another nation may become a real means of education, a means of insight and understanding" and "how insight, understanding is to be furthered" for peace and progress in the world. This question was asked with the recognition of the importance of cultivating a way of understanding to ensure that any dispute in an international setting would be resolved through an amicable settlement. To illustrate the nature of constructive contact with a foreign culture from an educational standpoint, he contrasts two types of travelers. One type tends to judge foreign customs by the standards of his home country with a sense of superiority, while the other is open-minded with a positive interest in foreign customs. Dewey suggests that the latter type is more likely to make peace than the former.

After this explanation of what a better attitude is, Dewey demonstrates how the understanding of a foreign culture is formed, using this statement as an example: "Eastern civilization is spiritualistic and Western is materialistic." This statement was commonly accepted in Japan but was unfamiliar in his home country. Therefore, Dewey illustrates how mutual understanding between the East and the West may be difficult without common standards or measures for comparison. In the East, the spiritual signifies refined cultivation and enjoyment of leisure and relief from work activities, with an aesthetic element, including meditation upon the universal. On the other hand, in the West the ethical element is more emphasized than the aesthetic. Service for the welfare of others rather than personal refined enjoyment of leisure is considered spiritual. Therefore, it is not easy to pinpoint a single real meaning of the spiritual between the East and the West. Dewey does not prescribe any method for international understanding here, but he draws our attention to the importance of being responsive to the spirit of people's life, not just to external factors, such as clothes, houses, etc., and suggests cultivating genuine

sympathy for a foreign culture through education.

In the article "Racial Prejudice and Friction," Dewey suggests building "an international and interracial mind" to resolve racial problems in an international setting. During his stay in Japan, Dewey saw that an anti-American sentiment ran high as a reaction to racial discrimination against Japanese immigrants in the U.S., chiefly stimulated by the militaristic faction. On the other hand, Chinese and Korean immigrants were discriminated against by the Japanese. Face-to-face with such an acute international racial problem, Dewey felt compelled to work it out expanding his main line of thought on race as expressed by him as a committee member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909.⁴¹

Dewey held the view that there is neither an inferior nor a superior race, but only individual differences, depending on the environment and education. He condemned racial prejudice as "a deep-seated and widespread social disease."⁴² He supposed that this sentiment tended to arise based on an antipathy to that which was strange. The origin of this antipathy is in the self-protective tendencies of animal life, and therefore it is instinctive bias. Dewey points out two factors, political and economic, that transform this instinctive bias into race prejudices. Illustrating the political factor, Dewey takes the case of war. In the U.S., the strain and suspicion caused by war changed racist feelings toward immigrants into racial discrimination. Regarding the economic factor, Dewey considers racist sentiments against immigrants to stem from an antipathy against whatever threatens economic opportunity and trade.

Based on the analysis of these factors, Dewey suggests three ameliorative strategies. Politically, strong nationalism should give way to some degree of political internationalism. Economically, the standard of living needs to rise in the countries against which the prejudice is directed. Educationally, contact and intercourse between countries where assimilation would take place should be maintained from both sides, and the international and intercultural mind needs to be built up to control instinctive bias rationally.

Dewey's View of Foreign Art as a Means of Education

Dewey revisits the themes of the experience of foreign culture as a possible means of education and creation of an international and interracial mind to dissolve racial problems, in his later life, in *Art as Experience*, published in 1934. In Chapter 14, "Art and Civilization," foreign art is discussed as "the means for entering sympathetically into the deepest elements in the experience of remote and foreign civilizations,"⁴³ and he claims that such an experience helps go beyond the provincial and local view to deepen and broaden sympathies, imagination, and sense.

According to Dewey, art is a particular kind of language, different from languages in symbolic form such as German or French. What makes art unique as a language is that it is grounded in sense, feelings, and emotion, instead of the rational. Therefore, Dewey argues that insensible integration in the inner lives between different cultures is more likely to take place through the language of art and help align different worldviews.

A means of communication is critical to produce such effects. We must arrive at the inner lives expressed in a foreign art and integrate some elements into our worldview through imagination and the emotion it evokes. Dewey compares this way of communication to the building of friendship in daily life and writes,

All friendship is a solution of the problem. Friendship and intimate affection are not the result of information about another person even though knowledge may further their formation. But it does so only as it becomes an integral part of sympathy through the imagination. It is when the desires and aims, the interests and modes of response of another become an expansion of our own being that we understand him. We learn to see with his eyes, hear with his ears, and their results

give true instruction, for they are built into our own structure.⁴⁴

Dewey expects that when this kind of communication increases based on art, the effects of physical separation, such as prejudices and friction among different civilizations, would disappear. A higher level of civilization would emerge, where diverse cultures communicate and are united through sharing the spiritual values of life. Because of this function in breaking down barriers among non-communicating sects, races, nations, classes, and cliques, Dewey regards art as a universal mode of language that should be acquired via education.

Reframing Art Education for Peace Building

The League of Nations, which Dewey hoped would function for more effective international human association and intercourse, was officially dissolved in 1946, and the United Nations was established in 1945 with the objectives of maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations, and so forth. The constitution of the UNESCO, whose purpose is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science and culture, states, "That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed."⁴⁵ I believe that the construction of an international framework of art education, suggested by Dewey as discussed above, is worth pursuing when we are concerned with the development of a mind that can contribute to building peace in the global community. It is a mind that is international and interracial in character, and functions to create amicable relationships with a foreign culture as a member of the global community.

Since Dewey's lifetime, the field of art education has experienced two great reforms worldwide. One was led by the New Education movement from the late nineteenth to the middle of the twentieth century. This changed the role of art education in schools from helping students to merely master special skills and techniques, to developing children's aesthetic self-expression and creativity. Another was led by the Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE) curriculum reform movement from the late twentieth century to the present. Based on Dewey's curriculum theory, DBAE advocated that the nature of art inquiry should be reflected in the structure of the curriculum in such a way that the student's experience is aesthetically reconstructed.⁴⁶

After these reforms, the dimensions of the framework for art education that we need to better establish continue to be social and individual.⁴⁷ They are concerned with remaking an individual's instincts and disposition, concurrently with cultivating a way of communication to develop more peaceful, tolerant, and inclusive societies from an international perspective. Considering current global connectivity where contact between different cultures has accelerated, I propose the development of an "intercultural eye" as the foundation of the new framework. This kind of eye was something that Dewey himself acquired through his interaction with Eastern culture, and whose place in international education he highly regarded. This eye helps one control one's instinctive bias rationally, gain insight into the values of life in a foreign culture, make a spiritual connection with it, and create an ideal vision through one's own experience. It is developed through an educationally oriented intercourse between different cultures where assimilation occurs bilaterally. Experimental educational projects based on this idea include the IU-Hiroshima Global Art Exchange Program⁴⁸ and the art curricula of the Laboratory Schools at the University of Chicago for global citizenship through cross-cultural school partnerships. I believe art education can contribute to the advancement of peace more substantially when moving forward towards this objective with a Deweyan spirit of progressive education.

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of Dewey's visit to the East. I greatly appreciate Professor Walter Feinberg's comments on a draft of this paper.

Notes

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14. *Gakkoto Shakai* (学校と社会), commissioned by the Ministry of Education, trans. Baba Koreichiro (Tokyo: Nihon Shoseki, 1905).
15. *Minponshugi no Kyoiku* (民本主義の教育), trans. Sueshige Tasei (Tokyo: Kobunkan, 1918); *Kyoiku Tetsugaku Gairon* (教育哲学概論), trans. Hoashi Riichiro (Tokyo: Rakuyodo, 1919).
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18. Yamamoto discusses what freedom is in relation to social reconstruction based on Dewey's educational theory. Kanae Yamamoto, "On the glass (草の上)," *Arts Free Education* (芸術自由教育), (September 1921): 52.
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26. "Listening to Professor Dewey's Lecture, 11-14.
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35. Dewey to Dewey children, March 2, 10, and 26, April 12 and 15; Alice Dewey to Dewey children, April 2 and 15, in *Correspondence, Vol. 2*.
36. Dewey to Dewey children, April 15, 1919, in *Correspondence, Vol. 2*.
37. Dewey to Dewey children, April 4, 1919, in *Correspondence, Vol. 2*.
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39. Dewey, "Some Factors in Mutual National Understanding."
40. Dewey, "Racial Prejudice and Philosophical Interpretation (人種的偏見の哲学的解釈)," *Kaizō* (改造), (August 1921): 73-90. Also, "Racial Prejudice and Friction" in *Collected Works, Vol. 13*, 243-255.
41. Dewey, "Address to National Negro Conference" in *Collected Works, Vol. 4*, 157-158.
42. Dewey, "Racial Prejudice and Friction," 244.
43. Dewey, *Art as Experience in Collected Works, Vol. 10*, 336.
44. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 340.
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