

JAPAN'S HOASHI RIICHIRO AND JOHN DEWEY

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NEW YEAR'S DAY IS JAPAN'S MOST FESTIVE HOLIDAY; BUT ON THAT DAY LAST YEAR, JAPAN QUIETLY LOST AN OUTSTANDING LIBERAL THINKER AND HUMANIST, HOASHI RIICHIRO.

A prolific writer, Hoashi was also a pioneer in introducing Dewey's philosophy to Japanese circles.

Born in 1881 on the island of Kyushu, he graduated from Tokyo Law School, and went for further studies in America in 1901. He studied first at the University of Southern California, where he graduated as a Phi Beta Kappa student.

According to Hoashi, Southern California's philosophy department was strongly Hegelian, and its pedagogy department Herbartian; when he went to the University of Chicago to work for his doctorate, he was surprised to find the entire philosophy department oriented towards Pragmatism.¹ Dewey had just left Chicago the year before Hoashi's arrival in Chicago, but Dewey's influence was still strong, and soon Hoashi found himself deeply interested in Deweyan philosophy. Hoashi studied under Addison Moore, who had been a student of Dewey. Hoashi thus somewhat jokingly considered himself "a disciple of Dewey's disciple."² Shortly after it was published in 1916, Moore discussed Dewey's *Democracy and Education* in his seminar in modern philosophy, and Hoashi had thoughts of translating it into Japanese.³

Hoashi received his doctorate from Chicago in 1918, and that summer visited New York with hopes of meeting Dewey, but was not able to find him on campus. But on February 9, 1919, when his ship docked into Yokohama, Hoashi received a telegram from a friend saying that Dewey would be visiting Japan in a few days.⁴ Hoashi had already finished a draft of the translation of *Democracy and Education*, and while Dewey was in Japan presenting his *Reconstruction in Philosophy* lectures at the Tokyo Imperial University, they discussed it and other topics such as Japan and its prospects for democracy, and philosophical currents in America.⁵

Hoashi and Dewey became fast friends and corresponded with each other until Dewey's death. Dewey wrote Hoashi in 1951, saying that he would see

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¹Hoashi, "Dyuii Sensei no Omoide," *Shunjū*, I, No. 5 (October 1959), p. 1.

²Hoashi, tr., *Minshushugi to Kyōiku* (Tokyo: Shunjū-sha, 1952), translator's introduction, p. 5.

³Hoashi, "Dyuii Sensei no Omoide," p. 1.

⁴Hoashi, "Dyuii Kyōju Homonki," *Waseda Bungaku*, No. 160 (March 1919), p. 86.

⁵*Ibid.* The entire article is on Hoashi's interview with Dewey, and Hoashi quotes Dewey at length.

him in Japan, but, becoming ill enroute, Dewey had to cancel the trip. When Dewey died in 1952, Hoashi wrote a tribute to Dewey, whom he called "not an American philosopher, but a great *World* philosopher," in *Asahi Shimbun*, one of Japan's most popular newspapers.⁶

As a professor at Waseda University, one of Japan's most respected private schools, Hoashi worked with scholars who formed what has been called the "Waseda School of Deweyan Thinkers." Since the time of Professor Tanaka Ōdō (1867-1932), who had studied under Dewey at the University of Chicago, and who had been one of Japan's earliest popularizers of Dewey, Waseda had bred Deweyan scholars such as Harada Minoru and Ueda Seiji.⁷

Hoashi was a critic of Japanese society and its educational system. He wrote a book, *Educational Reconstruction*, in 1929, in which he attempted to apply Deweyan principles in his criticism of Japanese education, along with his own original ideas, particularly on religion, a subject which fascinated him.⁸ The book is full of missionary zeal, and was evidently written for a wide audience with the intention of provoking demand for school reforms. The opening passages are worth quoting, for implicit in Hoashi's argument was the idea that the democratic reform of Japanese society was in the tradition of the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the event which marks Japan's attempt at modernization:

Economic crises! Intellectual crises! The nation still encounters different crises, both material and spiritual, and yet, after the Meiji Restoration, we continue to be instilled with enthusiasm for the necessity of social reform.

The feudal system of several hundred years fell in one sweep with the Restoration. It was such a brilliant achievement. Although the feudal system collapsed, however, feudalistic ways of thinking continue to persist in various forms, and exist even today.⁹

In the book, he criticized, on the one hand, the militaristic tendencies in Japanese society and, on the other, the tendencies for young intellectuals to be attracted by Marxism. Both militarism and Marxism were forms of feudalistic thought which masqueraded in modern dress. One of his main criticisms of Marxism was its view of religion as an "opium"; he felt that Marxism neglected the fact that contemporary religions, like modern Christianity, had been infused with the new scientific spirit. Both Marxism and militarism, which was based on the feudalistic "Way of the Warrior" tradition, did not offer any guidance for living in a real, day-to-day, world; religion, properly conceived, according to Hoashi, was progressive in that any profound social reform had to come about through the eventual change of the individual.¹⁰

⁶"Dyui no Shi," *Asahi Shimbun*, June 3, 1952, p. 16.

⁷Harada recently retired from Waseda, but continues to be active in educational research. He is presently vice president of The Society for International New Education, Japan branch. He is the translator of *Experience and Education* (Tokyo, 1950) and has written several books on Ellen Key, including a translation of her *Century of the Child*. Ueda is still at Waseda, and is active as a member of Japan's Association for the Study of American Philosophy. He was former editor of the intellectual journal, *Risō*, and has translated *The Quest for Certainty* (Tokyo, 1935) and *How We Think* (Tokyo, 1950), works by such persons as Sidney Hook. In recent years, he has been studying logical positivism.

⁸Hoashi acknowledges Dewey's influence in the writing of *Educational Reconstruction* (Kyōiku Kaizō Ron) in the translator's introduction, p. 2, of *Minshushugi to Kyōiku*, *op. cit.*

⁹Hoashi, *Kyōiku Kaizō Ron* (Tokyo: Shinseidō, 1929), p. 1 (preface).

¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 235-237.

Hoashi, however, was not content in letting democratic social reform remain a function of an individual's initiative in reforming his "inner self"—the general social order itself was in need of immediate change. In the spirit of Dewey, he felt that the educational system, in particular, needed drastic reforms, and in *Educational Reconstruction*, he offered specific suggestions as to what changes were needed. He discussed educational practices in different countries, including Kilpatrick's "Project Method," the "Dalton Plan," and the "Gary System" in America, which he recommended for Japanese schools. Schools in Japan, for Hoashi, were too preparatory-centered; the objective of each school was to prepare the child for the next step in the educational ladder. Schools, in short, were oriented towards preparation of youth for school entrance examinations and failed to consider each student's individual development.

But in a period when ultra-nationalism was on the rise, Hoashi's books were suppressed by the government.¹¹ His book on ethics was banned, for it made no mention of the Emperor.¹² As early as 1920, Hoashi was fined for his magazine article, "Administration, Rather Than Domination; Freedom, Rather Than Restriction." In that year also, he defended Morito Tatsuo in the famous incident in which Morito was jailed for publishing an article on Kropotkin.¹³

Hoashi was sentenced in 1920 to two-months imprisonment, but the sentence was suspended. Later, however, he was dismissed twice from his position at Waseda University.¹⁴

Hoashi's translation of *Democracy and Education* first appeared in 1919, and was the first complete translation in Japanese.¹⁵ The book appeared under the title, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education (Kyōiku Tetsugaku Gairon)*, which was the subtitle for the original English edition. According to Hoashi, the original title was not used, since there were scruples about using the word "democracy" at that time.¹⁶ Since the first edition, the translation has had a long printing history. It was reprinted in 1924 and 1929. After World War II, along with the "Dewey Boom" in Japan, there were at least seven printings. Hoashi revised the translation in the 1952 edition, which includes a summary by Hoashi of Dewey's philosophy, and a special preface in English by Dewey.

As holder of the legal rights to translations of Dewey's works in Japan, Hoashi in turn gave other Japanese scholars the opportunity to participate in translating Dewey's numerous works. Up to his death, he himself continued to introduce

¹¹Mori Akihiro, "Nihon ni okeru Dyūi Kyōikugaku Kenkyū," Part II, *Jinbungaku* (A Doshisha University journal), No. 45 (December 1959), p. 71.

¹²Lewis S. Feuer, "John Dewey's Sojourn in Japan" (unpublished MS, n.d.), p. 15. I am indebted to Prof. Feuer for permission to read this manuscript. Prof. Feuer interviewed Hoashi in Tokyo on October 24, 1960.

¹³Kamidera Hisao, "Nihon ni okeru Dyūi Kenkyū," in *Dyūi Kyōikugaku no Konpom Mondai*, ed. John Dewey Society of Japan (Tokyo: Toko Shoin, 1960), p. 246.

¹⁴Feuer, p. 15.

¹⁵A summarized translation appeared the year before by Tasei Sajū under the title, *Mimponshugi to Kyōiku* (Tokyo: Kōbunkan, 1918).

¹⁶Hoashi, "Dyūi Sensei no Omoide," p. 2.

Dewey to the Japanese public. In 1959, he translated *Experience and Nature*; and in 1962, a year before his death, he completed a translation of the revised edition of Dewey and James H. Tufts' *Ethics*.¹⁷

Hoashi's death, however, is not the end of Japanese inquiry into Dewey's thought. Old-time Dewey scholars such as Nagano Yoshio, president of the John Dewey Society of Japan, and Ueda Seiji, and young scholars, such as Koizumi Takashi of Keiō University, and Yonemori Yūji of Ryūkyū University, continue to add to the huge volume of post-war published work on Dewey which now exceeds 400 titles. The Japanese Dewey Society has a membership of about 140; and, according to a well-known intellectual historian in Japan, there is a professor with a special interest in Dewey in just about every major university in Japan.¹⁸

Some of Hoashi's criticisms of pre-war Japanese education continue to be relevant today. Schools continue to be geared towards preparing students for entrance examinations. The high incidence of suicides among young students during the months of February and March, the period of "Examination Hell," suggests the distorted emphasis on examinations.¹⁹ The problems faced by Hoashi continue to confront Dewey scholars as well as others who strive to encourage a scientific approach to human problems. A major problem is one which Japanese intellectuals have faced for centuries: Is building a new man based on foreign philosophic ideals destroying those qualities which have been the strong points of Japanese culture?

¹⁷*Keiken to Shizen (Experience and Nature)* (Tokyo: Shunjū-sha, 1959); *Rinrigaku (Ethics)* (Tokyo: Shunjū-sha, 1962).

¹⁸Interview with Kōsaka Masaaki, July 11, 1962.

¹⁹The Japanese dailies have reported in recent months cases of even parents committing suicide when their sons failed entrance examinations.