

PHILOSOPHY IS FOR EVERYBODY
by Professor Abdul
A Review of Four Essays on Philosophy by Mao Tse-Tung

An interesting contradiction about university life is that the acquisition of knowledge is turned into a commodity reserved for upper class elites. This means that knowledge is packaged into very obscure units (books, college courses, etc.), with lots of long hard to pronounce words, and sold to those who can pay a pretty high price tag (like \$3500 for college per year). That's why most young people in the USA --especially Blacks-- are more caught up in buying the latest styles in clothes or the latest record than the latest book with some new knowledge in it. This represents a basic anti-intellectualism that is a natural response to a society that creates so many hurdles for people to overcome to learn about something, and to know the usefulness of that learning. So we've to some real work to do in order to change things.

A good example of this is with the study of philosophy. There is a difference between one notion that has philosophy reserved for the intellectual "heavies", versus the notion of philosophy being a tool for use by common everyday people. The Four Essays On Philosophy by Mao Tse-Tung is a book that lays out the basic essence of philosophy in such a way that everybody can get into it and find a lot of useful information for improving one's everyday life. As they say, if it works for over 800,000,000 Chinese it will probably work for you.

Mao states: "Where do correct ideas come from?" Do they drop from the skies? No. ~~Are~~ they innate in the mind? No. They come from social practice, and from it alone. They come from three kinds of social practice, the struggle for production, the class struggle, and scientific experiment. It is man's social being that determines his thinking."

This is important because there are a lot of people who are caught up in the hoax of astrology, religion, and other mystical fantasies. Science is the only truth!

Mao also contrasts two views of reality, two world outlooks: (A) Meta-physical idealism holds that ideas are reality and they never change; and (B) Dialectical materialism holds that matter is reality and is always changing.

The essence of materialist dialectics is the theory of contradictions. There are opposites in all things (in a classroom: (a) ignorance versus knowledge, (b) students versus teachers, (c) those interested versus those bored, (d) men versus women, etc. But there is a principle contradiction more important than all the others, because it determines how the other contradictions operate (in the classroom interest versus boredom is principal, since if the students and teachers are interested, learning can occur, but if bored nothing productive will happen). The theory of contradictions is a universal methodology everyone should use in approaching all problems.

Mao ends with these words:

"It is therefore necessary to educate our comrades in the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge, so that they can orientate their thinking correctly, become good at investigation and study and at summing up experience, overcome difficulties, commit fewer mistakes, do their work better, and struggle hard so as to build China into a great and powerful socialist country and help the broad masses of the oppressed and exploited throughout the world in fulfilment of our great internationalist duty."

If you can, read this book.