

# THE COURSE AND PROBLEMS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

—from the Meiji Period to the Present Day—

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## I. TWO MEANINGS OF MODERNIZATION

It can be said that on the subject of the meaning of the modernization of Japan the following point of view is fairly widely supported in the Japanese academic world.

That is, if by modernization we mean the build-up of a capitalist economy with mechanized big industry and mechanized systems of transportation and communications, a single and independent national state, well-trained armed forces equipped with powerful weapons, science and technology for the development of the economy and armaments, a system of school education for all the people, and a system of laws and institutions for an efficient administration of the state—aspects of civilization established in the modernization of the West—then Japan is the only country in the non-Western world that has succeeded in modernization within the several decades from the latter half of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century. However, should the most fundamental aspect of modernization be considered to consist not in these aspects, but in the liquidation of the feudal mode of production, in the liberation of the people from absolutism, in the establishment of the sovereignty of the people, and civil and political freedom for the people, in the liberation of individuals from the Patriarchal family system and social consciousness produced by it, in the institutional and ideological establishment of individual dignity, then, the modernization of Japan up to the time of the reforms carried out after the end of World War II was quite superficial. If, for terminological convenience, the former is denoted industrialization and the latter the establishment of human dignity, it follows that the industrialization of Japan made progress but human dignity has yet to be established.

I basically agree with this point of view. In my opinion this can definitely be said on the basis of what education is in Japan, and how it developed and its internal contradictions. This subject will be taken up first.

## II. THREE DECLARATIONS ON EDUCATION SINCE THE MEIJI PERIOD

Since the Meiji period (beginning in 1867), Japan has made three educational declarations. The first was the "Government Announcement for the Promotion of Learning" issued in 1872, the second the "Imperial Rescript on Education" in 1890, and the third the "Fundamental Law of Education" in 1947 after World War II. Comparison of these three educational declarations will quite clearly show that education did not advance in a straight line in Japan.

The "Government Announcement" in 1872 was an explanation of the purpose of the "Government Order of Education" promulgated in the same year. The "Government Order" created the first Western style school system in Japan and a magnificent educational programme, which will be dealt with later somewhat in detail. Here examination will be given to the ideas in the "Government Announcement." Its thought, in a word, was a very obvious utilitarianism. "To rise in the world, make one's fortune and successfully manage business," one must pursue learning. For everything that men do, from daily reading, writing, and arithmetic, to agriculture, commerce, industry, law, politics, astronomy, and medicine, there is a body of knowledge. Men must therefore pursue learning. It can be said that the "learning is the capital with which one rises in the world." He who does not learn can become nothing but a social failure. And the nature of the learning must be of actual use. To be particular only about wording and sentences, playing with "empty theories," is of no use.

The "Announcement" stressed, on the other hand, the universality of education, that every person must pursue learning irrespective of differences in social status, and the "Announcement" also took a stand for individualism, that the aim of pursuing learning is exclusively for oneself. On this point it stated that the hitherto believed view that learning was necessary only for *samurai* (warriors) and people of high standing, but not for farmers, artisans, tradesmen, and women, was a very erroneous view. The opinion that learning was to serve the cause of the state was also considered erroneous. Learning is for men to rise in the world. It was exactly for this reason that the Ministry of Education promulgated the "Government Order of Education," and henceforth people of all social statuses were to go to school in order that "there be no family in the village and no person in any family who does not study." Parents who do not send their children, both male and female, to school would be punished. As learning is for the person who learns, expenses for

learning must be covered by the person himself and he must go to school, "willingly putting aside everything else."

Within the contents of the "Government Announcement" lies a simple realism, the ambitious idea of universal education, and true individualism. It can be said to be an expression of a healthy and positive spirit advancing Japan forward to "civilization and enlightenment" and cutting off three hundred years of seclusionism. However, it only weakly expressed the humanist view that education is for building up human dignity; the individualism expressed in it is connected with "rising in the world, making one's fortune and successfully managing business"—with actual success, which is very utilitarian.

With the "Imperial Rescript on Education," promulgated in 1890, we were confronted with thought quite foreign to the "Government Announcement." Although some explanation will be given later as to why this change took place, the first thing to be noticed in this is that the "Imperial Rescript on Education" took the form of being written by the Emperor, whereas the "Government Announcement" was an official decree. By this time, the emperor state system under the Emperor had already been established under the Constitution that the "Emperor bestowed on the people," and the sacred Emperor was wielder of the highest political power and at the same time was the highest moral authority.

What are the contents of the "Imperial Rescript"? It begins with the confirmation of the fundamental character of 'the national polity.'<sup>1</sup> It reads in part: "Our Imperial Ancestors have founded Our Empire on a basis broad and everlasting and have deeply and firmly implanted virtue; Our subjects ever united in loyalty and filial piety have from generation to generation illustrated the beauty thereof. This is the glory of the fundamental character of 'Our Empire,'<sup>1</sup> and herein also lies the source of Our education."

Then it enumerates all the virtues that should be observed. It reads in part: "Ye, Our subjects, be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers and sisters; as husbands and wives be harmonious, as friends true; bear yourselves in modesty and moderation; extend your benevolence to all; pursue learning and cultivate arts, and thereby develop intellectual faculties and perfect moral powers; furthermore advance the public good and promote common interests; always respect the Constitution and observe the laws...."

<sup>1</sup> 'Kokutai 國體' in the Japanese. This is difficult to define in English. Translated here both as "national polity" and "Our Empire."

Then in the conclusion it instructs a resolution to conclude all these. It reads in part: "should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth. So shall ye not only be Our good and faithful subjects, but render illustrious the best traditions of your forefathers.

"The Way here set forth is indeed the teaching bequeathed by Our Imperial Ancestors, to be observed alike by Their Descendants and subjects, infallible for all ages and true in all places. It is Our wish to lay it to heart in all reverence, in common with you, Our subjects, that we may all thus attain to the same virtue."

These are the contents of the "Imperial Rescript on Education." Needless to say, it includes elements of morality that are good in any society and in any age. But what is important is that all these virtues are ultimately focussed on the Emperor in the sense that they teach one to save the destiny of the Imperial family at one's own sacrifice. Here is no thought of individual dignity. Even the individualism that was seen in the "Government Announcement" is not in sight here.

The "Imperial Rescript on Education" had long been—up to the end of World War II—the highest guiding principle of education in Japan. In the meantime education in Japan spread to a considerable extent. Science and technology advanced, industry developed, armaments expanded, and modernization in the sense of industrialization mentioned in the beginning had made remarkable progress. In this respect, it seemed that the modernization of Japan had almost reached the level of the so-called advanced countries in Europe and America. On the other hand, the morality of the "Imperial Rescript on Education" was enforced and every measure was taken to diffuse it, and any deviation from it was regarded as unforgivable treason. The ideology of individual dignity and human rights was suppressed and the consciousness of these ideals was plucked off before it could grow.

The "Fundamental Law of Education" of 1947 stipulates the support of individual dignity for the first time. Its preamble reads: "We shall esteem individual dignity and endeavour to bring up the people who love truth and peace, while education which aims at the creation of culture universal and rich in individuality shall be spread far and wide." Article I (Aims of Education) also reads: "Education shall aim at the full development of personality, striving for the rearing of the people, sound in mind and body, who shall love truth and justice, esteem individual value, respect labour and have a deep sense of responsibility, and be

imbued with the independent spirit, as builders of the peaceful state and society.”

The “Fundamental Law of Education” is a law closely related to the new post-war Constitution. This law was established with the intent that the realization of the ideal of the Constitution should essentially rely on the strength of education. The new Constitution declares that the sovereignty rests with the people and that no war potential shall be maintained, and stipulates fundamental human rights including freedom of thought, conscience, learning, speech, religion, assembly and association, and the right to maintain a healthy and cultural life, etc. In other words, the new Constitution not only stipulates human rights in the aspect of civic liberties in detail but also in the aspect of social and living rights. In effect, the new Constitution and the “Fundamental Law of Education” definitely put forward for the first time the thought of individual dignity and human rights.

This writer supports the theory that post-Meiji Japan was modernized only in the aspects of technology, industry, and institutions, but up to the end of World War II had not modernized in the aspect of human liberation and the establishment of individual dignity, because in his opinion, the theory’s correctness is clearly confirmed by a comparison of the three educational declarations promulgated after the Meiji era, as seen in the above explanation.

### III. REFORMS OF THE MEIJI RESTORATION AND THE ADOPTION OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

Here we will trace the development of education in Japan and its contradictions on the basis of the historical facts.

It was first necessary for the Meiji Restoration Government to break up the “Shogunate-*han* system” (Baku-*han* Taisei 幕藩體制) and build up a unified state. This was accomplished by unifying the state around the Imperial Family and raising its authority. The Emperor was believed to have an unbroken family line ever since the legendary ancient days and in this sense was also believed to be a sacred being, although he had long been deprived of the real political power. Immediately after the Restoration the Emperor proclaimed the Five Articles of the Imperial Oath and made clear the spirit of the new nation’s administration. The Imperial Oath included respect for public opinion by opening various assemblies, promotion of positive measures with people of all social standings in unison, assurance that all government officials, military

personnel, and ordinary citizens be able thereafter to attain their aims, breaking through of evil customs and conforming to reason, the search for knowledge throughout the world and the arousing of the forces of the empire. Thus, the Imperial Oath called for a radical change in national consciousness, a spiritual reformation.

Then the Meiji Government rapidly carried out basic reforms in the following few years. The abolition of the social statuses of warriors, farmers, artisans, and tradesmen, that had been firmly maintained under the Tokugawa feudal system should be indication of a course towards the modernization of social relations. Attempts were made to establish the army on a national basis by introducing universal conscription and by the revision of the land-tax system to modernizing the tax system. These promoted the spread of a money economy into the rural communities. And as part of these reforms, the idea of a universal education system was worked out.

All these events were similar to what had happened in the Western societies. But in Japan they were realized only incompletely. In spite of the abolition of the social status system, for instance, distinctions between the Imperial Family, the peerage, the gentry, and the commoners were newly established. As various reforms were carried out under the Emperor who was believed to have succeeded to a mysterious authority and often at the initiative of the Emperor himself, there could not be a thoroughgoing abolition of the social status system. Accordingly, it was impossible to wipe out the patriarchal family system. More correctly, the rulers had no intention of wiping it out, and the state, on the contrary, was established on the basis of the preservation of that social status system. There was a limitation to the reforms which came from the status of the reformers, as the promoters of the Meiji Restoration came mainly from among lower warriors of several feudal clan (*han*) 藩 of the Tokugawa era. The influence of several feudal factions which had helped in carrying out the Restoration had for long taken root in the ruling structure of Japan and prevented political modernization—the development of parliamentary politics.

The Meiji Government broke off the seclusion that had lasted for some 300 years and opened commercial and diplomatic relations with the Western countries. In those days, however, aggression in Asia by the Western powers was under way. To counter the external pressure, the Meiji Government was forced to adopt measures for “enriching the country and strengthening its arms” as its basic policy. Education had to play a part in this policy. “Enrich the country and strengthen its

arms" meant building up a capitalist state under the loud colours of militarism. For this reason, the Government expected by means of education, on the one hand, to absorb Western civilization, especially its science and technology, and, on the other hand, to diffuse into the people the ideology of Emperor-centred state supremacy.

Suddenly brought into contact with the Western civilization, Japan was impressed with the West's development of science and technology and keenly felt the urgent need to adopt and absorb them. Even before the Meiji era, efforts to absorb them had already been launched, mainly through the Dutch, and the mastering of medicine and military technology had particularly been aimed at. In the Meiji era the influence of Western civilization spread all over, in every aspect of life, but its influence in various fields of culture took on a different colouring. As seen in the following, in some fields both the Government and the people willingly tried to adopt Western elements, in other fields the Government adopted Western elements by selection or modification, and in still others, Western influence was unavoidable although the Government and the leaders did not like it.

Absorption of science and technology was regarded as a necessity and was promoted enthusiastically both by the Government and the people. The force to resist this absorption, by religion for instance, was not strong enough to check it in Japan. The predecessor of the University of Tokyo had already been established by 1869. There the absorption of the basic sciences, technology, and medical sciences of the West was undertaken assiduously. The University of Tokyo became a Western-style university with 4 faculties, law, literature, science, and medicine, in 1878.

On the other hand, in the education of the common people also, the learning of the Western sciences was aimed at from the beginning. The first systematic educational system and educational programme was embodied, as mentioned earlier, in the "Government Order of Education" in 1873, and in this it was laid down that mathematics, physics, chemistry, zoology, and botany, geography, physiology, hygienics, etc., should be taught in the elementary schools. Naturally conditions were not right for this regulation to be implemented at once, but it represented the pressing desire of the Meiji Government to adopt Western science and technology. Simple and obvious utilitarianism and a positive ideal of learning by all the people as seen in the "Government Announcement" which was the explanation of the purpose of the "Government Order of Education" showed the expectations of the reformers of education.

Science and technology constituted important educational subjects in Japanese schools from this time on. In other words, the task of the schools was to become a window for absorbing Western science. Learning science requires the mastering of foreign languages. In secondary and higher education, foreign languages (mainly English, and, although in much smaller numbers, German and French, too) were required subjects on which many hours were spent. Reading works in the original was a requisite in higher education.

It should be said that the consistent efforts since the Meiji era to absorb Western science and technology have been successful to a considerable extent. These efforts promoted the development of industry and contributed to increasing national strength. Inventions and discoveries were made sometimes. But there were shortcomings too. The Government and the people were so impatient to absorb the results of Western science and technology that it was neglected to acquire the essential methods of scientific thinking. As a result, even today Japan's own technological improvements are relatively few, depending more on the introduction of foreign technology.

In the field of moral thought, Western thought met with strong resistance. Both Confucianism since the Tokugawa era and Shintoism as the ideology that achieved the Imperial Restoration resisted Western religion and morality. A theory of the "Man of Japanese Spirit and Western Learning" was advocated, and it was maintained that science and technology should be adopted from the West but Japan's own morality should be observed. Emperor-centred nationalistic morality was contrived, and it dominated thought for a long time, preventing the Western thought of individualism or of human rights from striking root.

Nevertheless, there was not a little Western influence even in this field. A considerable number of people became Christians and Christian morality began to exert its influence on the relations between men and women and in family life. The Civil Law in 1890 moderated to a certain extent the excessive discrimination between men and women, and placed a certain limitation on the Patriarchal family system. This led a conservative leader to deplore that "loyalty and filial piety lapsed with the appearance of the civil law." Nevertheless, as stated earlier, morality based on the social status system with the Emperor in the highest position was strictly observed by the state power, and the feudal family system and the thought of predominance of man over woman remained and were retained as they were.

In the field of the arts, Western literature and painting exerted great



influence. Western literary works of a very wide range were translated and read. It can be said that they certainly exerted, in one way or another, an influence on the formation of spirit among the young generation. In the field of the fine arts, the Japanese original school and the Western-style school stood abreast, and were called "Japanese painting" and "Western painting" respectively. What was considered to be the most heterogeneous was music. It is difficult to put a chord to Japanese original music as it is of a pentatonic scale. In Japanese folk-song there is no song that is sung with the voices of men and women in harmony. They are quite different from the polyphonic music of the West that can be on a grand scale. In school education Western musical instruments are used and the Western septitonic scale taught. But there are lovers of Japanese music too, and up to now the two heterogeneous musics have coexisted together. Although there are some attempts at fusion or mixture of the two, it is not likely that these attempts will prove successful as the two musics are basically quite foreign to each other. There is an insurmountable distance between these two musics, which is farther than that between Japanese painting and Western painting.

In the field of politics, the influence of the concept of freedom and equality and of the natural rights of man, which was descended from the philosophers of the French Revolution, became strong from around 1877, and a political movement of radical bourgeois democracy, called the "Liberty and Popular Rights Movement," arose, and was suppressed by the Government. Yet, the Government had to adopt, though incompletely, the principle of separation of the three powers in the Constitution enacted in 1889. The school of thought that exerted a decisive influence on the enactment of this Constitution was that of German law. When leading Japanese politicians worked out a constitutional monarchy, they consciously chose the conception of German law. Although they superficially adopted the principle of the separation of the three powers, they put the hereditary Emperor on the top of all the system, ultimately laying the supreme power on the Emperor. It was stipulated that the "Emperor is sacred and inviolable," thus giving the Emperor the nature of a god appearing as a human being. The drafters of the Constitution had to undertake much hard work in joining the various institutions of a modern state with the type of Emperor described above.

In the field of economics, the Government took the initiative in introducing the factory system production method, and brought up capitalism under the strong protection of the state. In this respect too,

it followed the example of capitalist countries that started late, rather than that of the advanced countries in western Europe. The rural communities long remained at the bottom of the so-called dual economic structure, being used as a spring-board in the huge capital accumulation and in the development of modern big industry. Because Japan embarked on competition for markets as a backward capitalist country, she had to wage wars against foreign countries while her capitalism was still maturing. With every war waged, her capitalism developed further.

As seen briefly above, culture, society, politics, and economics were respectively influenced by the West. The influence of the West was overall. Both in the natural and social sciences, for instance, the overwhelming majority of academic concepts were born in the West. These academic concepts have been either translated into Japanese with various combinations of Chinese characters (*Kanji* 漢字) which are convenient in one sense, or used as they were, written phonetically in *Katakana*. Although Western influences have been seen in all fields, they have been stamped with a Japanese hallmark. Viewed as a whole, it can be said that they constitute a mixture of characteristics of modern Western societies and those of feudal societies, or it can also be said that the Emperor system of Japan has given unique characteristics to the development of capitalism in its own country.

#### IV. THE IDEOLOGY OF NATIONALISM CENTRING ON THE EMPEROR SYSTEM AND THE DEGENERATION OF NATIONALISM INTO EXPANSIONISM

We saw earlier that the explanation of the "Government Order of Education" in 1872 was based on utilitarianism. It was also connected with the idea of "civilization and enlightenment." Antagonistic to this was the Emperor-centred ultranationalistic conservatism or reactionism stand on Shintoism. In the early history of the University of Tokyo, there was a short period during which the so-called "Imperial way of learning" held predominant influence.

Extreme reactionism was defeated by the policy of enlightenment. But in an attempt to counter the thought of the natural rights of man advocated by the Liberty and Popular Rights Movement that arose since 1877 or so, the Government supported Emperor-centred nationalism.

That is to say, when the Liberty and Popular Rights Movement developed into an anti-government movement insisting on popular sovereignty and the right of resistance, the Government, which had hitherto

taken the initiative in disseminating enlightenment thought, turned its policy towards the oppression of this movement. With the external pressure put on Japan by the colonization of Asia by the Western powers, the Government came to emphasize national unity under the Emperor. That is to say, the Government, at the sacrifice of the people, especially the farmers, nurtured capitalism under the semi-feudal landlord system; and hastened to build up an absolutist régime with the Emperor at the top and equipped with strong armed forces.

The Government enacted regulations controlling newspapers and meetings, put restrictions on the freedom of thought and speech, and tried to oppress the movement for human rights. The Emperor himself, travelling himself in the countryside and inspecting schools, stated his opinion: "The education for civilization and enlightenment so far has put such a great stress on the Western thought and on knowledge and technology that it has neglected the aspect of morality, which should constitute the basis of education. This should rapidly be rectified to prevent the people from taking a radical attitude on liberal thought, and education in the future should clarify benevolence, justice, loyalty, and filial piety, with Confucius as the main source of moral thinking."

The Government adopted the policy of separating school teachers from politics, just as it did the military and police, and went so far as to prohibit their attendance at political meetings, much less their affiliation with political associations. The Ministry of Education published moral textbooks in an effort to foster Emperor worship among the youth. In the second decade of Meiji (1877 and on), however, there arose a controversy on moral education and a definite policy on moral education could not be taken. Some people in leading positions held the opinion that the Confucian way of thinking should be overcome by establishing a popular spirit of independence and self-respect; others maintained that moral education should be undertaken on the principle of the coexistence of subject and object; while still others were of the opinion that moral education should be based on religion and that Confucianism, Shintoism, Buddhism, or Christianity should be chosen by each pupil as the basis for his moral education.

Late in the first decade (just before 1877), under the Government leaders who had been strongly influenced by the German state system under the rule of Bismarck, overall reforms of educational system were carried out, and as a result, education took on a strong colour of nationalism. The "Imperial University Order" issued in 1886, for instance, stipulated the purpose of the Imperial Universities as follows: "The

Imperial Universities should teach sciences and arts which will meet the requirements of the state. . . .”

In 1890, a year after the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution, the “Imperial Rescript on Education” was promulgated with the idea that the Emperor teach what morality and education should be. This put an end to the controversy on moral education. The contents of this Imperial Rescript were mentioned earlier in this paper. Since then, the “Imperial Rescript on Education” used to be read solemnly by school principals on the occasion of school ceremonies, and every effort was made to impress the contents on the people on every possible occasion. As a result, this Imperial declaration came strongly to restrict the thought of the people, and exerted a decisive influence on their consciousness as a people. This state of affairs remained unchanged up to the end of World War II. Even today, this state of affairs still remains unchanged in the minds of older people and leads them to say that the corruption of morals at present day should be attributed to the abolition of the “Imperial Rescript.”

The fear of possible aggression by the Western imperialist powers gave the Meiji Government sufficient reason to emphasize nationalism in order to ensure national independence and to push forward measures to enrich the country and strengthen its arms. However, early in the second decade of Meiji (1887 and on), shortly after it established an absolutist Emperor system state, with the Constitution enacted as a political system, and with the “Imperial Rescript on Education” as ideology, the Government started a foreign war. Through the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), and World War I (1914–1919), Japan obtained foreign territories and expanded her influence on the Chinese continent. With the Sino-Japanese War as the turning-point, light industry was built up and with the Russo-Japanese War, heavy industry developed. No sooner had they learned from the West than the Japanese ruling power immediately used its new knowledge for aggression against and exploitation of the Asian peoples. This is a degeneration of nationalism into expansionism.

Japan took possession of Taiwan and Korea and ruled over these peoples. Japan obtained interests in Manchuria (the northeastern part of China), and later occupied it and established a puppet régime there. Within Japan education became coloured with militarism more and more, while in the colonies the rulers forced on the people Japanese language education in the name of education for creating subjects of Emperor Empire. This was done in a foolish attempt to diffuse the consciousness

of being subjects of this Empire and to deprive these peoples of their independent spirit.

The feeling and attitude of the Japanese people towards the peoples of China and other Asian countries was coloured with a superiority complex. The Government consciously planted the *élite* complex among the Japanese people. It was taught that Japan is the country of the gods and that the Japanese nation is destined to assume a mission to rule over others. Strangely enough, the more Western civilization penetrated Japan, the more it was dogmatically emphasized that "an unbroken line of Emperors" was peculiar to Japan and that Japan should be proud of this.

The Japanese people held a sense of awe and respect, or an inferiority complex, towards Western nations, while despising the Asian nations. Some people thought that "Asia is one" and that a "East Asia Community" should be formed to counter the Western powers, and this developed into the idea of "Great Asianism" with Japan as the leader. These ideas were incorporated in the theory of the "Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere" (Dai-Tōa Kyōei-Ken 大東亞共榮圈) which was used as a statement of Japan's political principles during the Pacific War, and this idea degenerated into demagoguery to justify aggression against the Asian peoples.

#### V. DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION AND CONTRADICTION

There is no doubt that both the Government and the people have made great efforts in the field of education. As has been stated above, "Government Order of Education" proclaimed in 1872 was a magnificent scheme. The American-style school system with respect to grades and curriculum and the French-style educational administrative system. According to the plan then worked out, 8 universities, 256 middle schools and 53,760 elementary schools were to have been established. Needless to say, it was hardly possible for this plan to be realized at this time. Moreover, the Government's impatience in instituting schools met with the resistance of the people who were forced to assume heavy burdens for the realization of this plan, and in the beginning there even took place riots to destroy school buildings. The people, however, gradually came to appreciate education, and after the middle of the Meiji era no opposition arose on the part of the people to the government programme of educational expansion.

With the "School Orders" issued in 1886, the educational system in

Japan was almost completely established. The term of compulsory education at this time was 4 years, with the percentage of school attendance at 46.3%. In 1907, the term of compulsory education was extended to 6 years, while the percentage of school attendance reached 97.4%. In 1941 that saw the outbreak of the Pacific War, there were 19 state universities, 66 state colleges, 2 public universities, and 26 private universities, with the percentage of school attendance in the compulsory education at 99.7%.

At present these figures stand at 100 state universities and colleges, 74 public, and 391 private universities. The sharp increase in the number of universities and colleges is partly due to the transformation of the post-war higher education system from the European style to the American style. The term of compulsory education has now been extended to 9 years and the percentage of school attendance is 99.8%.

In its book entitled "Japan's Growth and Education" (1963), the Ministry of Education traces the development of education in Japan, and in particular, has tried to clarify the role of education in relation to economic development. It is true that the degree of the spread of education is now very high. It is also an undisputed fact that this education has played a great role in economic development.

But when this Ministry of Education book proudly speaks about the development of education and its contribution to economic development, it strangely makes no mention of the wars Japan experienced after the Meiji era. We cannot help but suppose that the Ministry of Education intentionally does not refer to the wars. However, the history of Japan after Meiji can never be thought of without taking consideration of the wars it experienced. As mentioned earlier, it is clear that Japanese capitalism developed in steps advancing with each war. Likewise, Japanese education cannot be thought of without taking militarism into account. Here lies a basic contradiction in Japanese education. The development of education was planned and promoted for the development of Japanese imperialism, and was therefore connected with the aggression against the Asian countries and the exploitation of the Asian peoples. It is obvious that without deep reflection on this fact we cannot correctly find the path along which Japanese education should advance. It is inconceivable that the intentional omission of the wars in the book written by the Ministry of Education under the conservative party Government has resulted from deep reflection on the wars. A description of the history of education with the wars intentionally omitted is false and very dangerous.

Needless to say, military training had played a great role in the formation of militaristic thought among the people. In the early days of Meiji the conscription system was adopted and later it developed into an almost complete universal conscription system. In army life the people were indoctrinated with absolute loyalty to the Emperor, were deprived of their consciousness of human rights, and were made accustomed to dehumanization.

#### VI. DEMOCRATIZATION OF EDUCATION AFTER THE END OF WORLD WAR II AND THE DANGER OF A REVIVAL OF IMPERIALISM

The defeat of Japan in the Pacific War provided the people with an opportunity for reflection. A wide range of people criticized themselves for militarism and felt a responsibility to work for peace. The article renouncing war in the new Constitution promulgated in 1946 gives expression to this feeling cherished by a wide range of the people. The Constitution of Japan further maintains as its fundamental principle the sovereignty of the people and the establishment of fundamental human rights. And as mentioned earlier, the "Fundamental Law of Education" was enacted in accordance with the aim that the realization of the ideals expressed in the Constitution should rely on the strength of education, and as the third educational declaration since the Meiji era this Law for the first time definitely stipulates "individual dignity" as the principle and the aim of education. The Law also contains an article banning the Government from deciding and forcing the contents and the methods of education, which can be said to be natural in view of the stipulations of various freedoms in the Constitution.

The post-war educational reforms were carried out under the leadership of the U. S. A. In the year following Japan's defeat, a U. S. Education mission visited Japan and worked out a report suggesting educational reforms. The reforms were carried out according to this report. It goes without saying that the keynote of this report was based on American democracy. As the result of these reforms, the school system was Americanized with the terms of elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, and university respectively fixed at 6, 3, 3, and 4 years; the term of compulsory education was extended 3 years, making 9 years in all; an American-style civic course was newly included in the curriculum; and an American-style school board, to be elected by the Community was set up as the local educational administration organ. In methods of teaching, the voluntary activities of pupils were

encouraged, and stress was put on learning by experience. Parent Teacher Associations were set up in all schools, policy of reflecting the demands of parents in school education. Although these reforms gave rise to considerable confusion as they were far removed from Japanese tradition, the idea of freeing pupils from oppression and of respecting their personalities was roughly realized, and both teachers and parents began to understand and appreciate the "new education." Here was born a possibility for the first time in Japanese education of carrying on the modernization in "another sense"—in the sense of establishing human dignity. And in fact, it is obvious that post-war education was more democratized than that of pre-war days, but it is doubtful whether both teachers and parents were deeply conscious of the need for establishing human dignity. And as the consciousness was not deep enough they could not stand steadily in the face of the reactionary tide that recurred.

Another great change in the educational world was the formation of teachers' unions as trade unions. It constituted an important link in the post-war democratization movements. Of the democratic movements in Japan, only the early Liberty and Popular Rights movement has been mentioned so far, but this does not mean that there were no other such movements in the pre-war days. Trade unions began to be formed after the Sino-Japanese War. In 1901, the first Socialist Party was formed (although it was banned on the same day). After World War I, partly because of the influence by the Russian Revolution, the socialist movement was joined together with the trade union movement. In 1922, the Japanese Communist Party was formed underground. During these periods, educational demands were expressed from the standpoint of the workers and there were also humble trials of educational practice from the workers' stand. In the subsequent days, both the socialist movements and the trade union movements had to continue their difficult struggles as they were subjected to suppression after suppression, and during World War II these movements were almost completely destroyed.

As the educational movement, the first teachers' union, a liberal organization, was formed in 1919. In about 1929, there was a move to form teachers' unions of a more radical nature. But this was destroyed by a radical suppression. After that, although different from the teachers' union movement, an educational movement against the Emperor-system education and for an education based on humanism and realism was organized, but it was also destroyed by the merciless suppression which took place during World War II.

With such a history the democratic movement soared up immediately



after Japan's defeat. During 1945, the Japanese Communist Party started functioning for the first time as a legal political party and the Socialist Party was also formed. The Trade Union Law was enacted for the first time, trade unions were formed one after another, and they were united into nationwide organizations. Teachers' unions were also formed during 1945 and they achieved a grand unity in the Japan Teachers' Union (Nikkyōso) in 1947.

These democratization movements immediately after Japan's defeat were encouraged in the beginning by the occupation policy of the U.S.A. that aimed at the annihilation of Japanese militarism. But there was a certain limitation in the democratization carried out by the U.S.A. In spite of the sovereignty of the people, the Emperor was retained as "the symbol of the unity of the people" as a result of the calculations of the U.S.A. In the face of increased antagonism between the two blocs, the U.S.A. changed its policy towards Japan. And especially after the liberation of China and the outbreak of the Korean War, the U.S.A. urged Japan's rearmament in an attempt to turn Japan into a barrier against Communism. Together with the conclusion of the San Francisco Peace Treaty (1951) the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty was concluded; and based on this treaty, the U.S.A. has continued to maintain hundreds of military bases on Japanese territory. Some of the war criminals of the Pacific War reappeared as Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers. Notwithstanding the war-renouncing article of the Constitution, Japan today maintains an army and air force which are equipped with weapons far more modern than those of the old Imperial armed forces.

By the special procurement boom during the Korean War, Japanese monopoly capitalism was restored. It fattened itself depending on American capitalism. Technical innovation was carried out by the introduction of techniques, and the economy continually showed a so-called high growth rate. Immediately after the revision of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty in 1960—movements of the people against this revision evolved on an unprecedented scale—the Government published a 10-year programme for income-doubling and a 10-year programme for science and technology. The latter included a talent-training programme, and is one of the plans in Japan's manpower policy. Education now is operated according to the demands of the monopoly capitalists.

The Government and the Conservative Party are intending to revise the Constitution. The intended revision is aimed at legalizing rearmament, raising the status of the Emperor, and restricting fundamental human rights. Educational control by the state is already powerfully

exercised at present. Should the Constitution be revised, it is clear that the control over learning, thought, and education will be strengthened to a greater extent. For this reason, defending the Constitution and the "Fundamental Law of Education" is one of the tasks in the educational field which the democratic forces today must undertake. It is necessary for the ruling party to obtain two-thirds of the seats in the Diet in order to propose revision of the Constitution, but up to the present, the opposition parties hold more than one-third of the Diet seats.

#### VII. PRESENT SITUATION OF EDUCATION AND ITS TASKS

Since World War II the economy has grown, although beset with various crises, and the economic life of the people has been improved, although disproportionately. Education has spread to a great extent and the percentage of entrance into senior high schools and universities remarkably increased. But in the meantime, there appear symptoms of cultural degeneration, and the mental condition of a lapse of purpose is seen among broad sections of the people. The remarkable tendency to delinquency among the youth is a proof of this. Commercialism is attempting to induce greater consumption through increasing stimuli. The mass communication media only curry favour with the masses. One is ashamed to say that even the children's magazines are terrible. Boys' magazines are full of stories glorifying war, while girls' magazines are full of sentimental stories with cover pictures of Western girls.

It must be pointed out that culture in general is in a state of colonial decadence. As mentioned earlier, among the Japanese people there had originally been a tendency to respect the Western countries and peoples. And it seems that after the war, under the American occupation, this tendency was further accelerated. On the other hand, solidarity with the Afro-Asian countries and peoples is weak. From public opinion polls it is clear that people favour the U.S.A. and are opposed to China. Of course, this is a product of education led by the Government and of government control of the mass communication media. However, the war in Viet-Nam is gradually leading many Japanese to have doubts regarding the aggressive nature of the U. S. A.

Under such cultural conditions, the educational policy pursued by the Government seems to attempt to deprive both teachers and pupils of their independence. The merit rating system of teachers that has been implemented since 1957 is unmatched in the world in its unscientific and inhuman nature. A school principal by himself rates the merit of

teachers, and teachers are not notified of the results of the evaluation; hence, they naturally have no right to appeal against the results of the rating. The items of the evaluation are such as to harm the human dignity of teachers. The promoters of the educational democratization in the post-war period were the teachers' unions. As the efficiency rating system was designed as a means of suppressing the teachers' unions by the Conservative Party which feared these unions, it is only natural that this system is unscientific and inhuman.

Since 1961 the Ministry of Education has carried on nationwide simultaneous achievement tests of the junior high school pupils, which is a foolish policy with its explanation of the purpose varying every year. It is obvious that these tests are resulting in the loss of spontaneity on the part of pupils. Since the achievements of schools would be evaluated by the results of the pupils' tests, the principals and teachers are interested only in raising the results of the tests, and they tend to stop making troublesome efforts to raise voluntary interest and foster the creative thinking of their pupils. It seems that the "new education" and the educational method that encourages voluntary activity which once predominated after the war has now been replaced by its complete counterpart, so much so that some teachers resort to unjust means to raise the results of tests, eventually harming the sense of justice of pupils.

In effect, the government policy on education during the last decade cannot be said to have aimed at the establishment of "individual dignity" as declared in the "Fundamental Law of Education." On the contrary, it seems to be intending to prevent pupils from establishing this consciousness. The present ruling forces seem to be afraid of modernization in the sense of establishing human dignity. In this respect, the following observation seems to be necessary. In the Government's policies on learning, thought, and education, modern rationalism and ancient mysticism coexist. This statement may produce a rather strange feeling in foreign readers but is directed to the following point.

This writer has already mentioned that the Government published a 10 year programme for science and technology in 1960, the year of the revision of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. Needless to say, this is a document based on modern rationalism. At about the same time, however, the then Prime Minister sent a written answer replying to a question raised by a member of Parliament, in which he affirmed the myth of the creation of the nation. That is to say, the Prime Minister officially confirmed in the Diet that the Imperial family is a direct descendant of Gods. We cannot help but call this an ancient mysticism.

This written answer was a great assistance to various movements to make the Emperor a divinity and revive national Shintoism—to make Shintoism the state religion. The movement to place the Grand Shrines of Ise (a Shinto Shrine dedicated to predecessor Gods of the Emperor family)—under the state management is gaining strength in violation of the clear-cut stipulation of the separation of politics from religion and of the freedom of religion in the Constitution.

Recently, the Central Educational Council, an advisory organ of the Minister of Education, tried, in a draft of a report, to map out an ideal image of a human being, the creation of which should be the aim of education to produce. This indicates the intention of the state to make value judgements for the people “from above.” This fact itself constitutes a problem, since it runs counter to freedom of thought, conscience, learning, and religion, as stipulated in the Japanese Constitution. The content of the draft is of course problematic. It says that “love of country leads to the love for the Emperor”; this eventually indicates the direction towards the Emperor-centred nationalistic morality, making us recollect the “Imperial Rescript on Education.”

Needless to say, modern rationalism and ancient mysticism are the two principles of quite different quality. The two sound discordant. Why then is the state intending to promote these two different principles in parallel? The answer to the above question may be that, should the state seek an agreement with the people concerning war, it would be necessary for it to resort to ultra-nationalistic patriotism based on ancient mysticism in order to arouse the enthusiasm of the people. But at any rate, as long as today’s educational policy is being taken, the way of modernization in the sense of establishing human dignity will by no means advance along a royal road.