

pupils engage, this function is to prepare children for the secondary school (*Mittelschule*), despite the fact that this type of school enrolls only five percent of all children between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. The dedication of the elementary school program to the *Mittelschule* is suggestive of the traditional college preparatory program of U. S. high schools, which has only in the last ten years been modified on a wide scale to make it a better preparation for life.

The methods of instruction in elementary schools conform to the philosophy of their function. The concept of mental discipline, the emphasis upon memorization, and the assumption that

mental development at the expense of physical and emotional growth is justifiable give the background for a rigorous and somewhat formal methodology. The impressive results in terms of factual learning are the pride of teacher and parent alike.

We Can Trade Ideas

It is obvious that a fuller understanding on the part of Austrian and U. S. educators of mutual problems and practices opens the way for the continued improvement of education in both nations. This understanding is growing with an increasing exchange of information, students, and teachers.

The New Education in Japan _____

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The educational task in Japan today is not one of rebuilding so much as one of change. In this article we see some of the factors contributing to the present situation in education and the long-standing blockades to learning; but, most encouraging, the progress already made in changing attitudes and structures in the educational program. The author, Helen Heffernan, is in charge of elementary education in the State Department of Education, Sacramento, California.

ACTIVITIES UNPRECEDENTED in the history of the world are in progress in Japan. For the first time an army of occupation has come into an overwhelmingly defeated country, not in the spirit of the conqueror but rather to free the people from the oppression of militarism and dictatorship. The Army of Occupation is the agency of all the freedom-loving peoples of the world in removing "all obstacles to the

revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people." These liberators came to work with the Japanese to the end that "freedom of speech, of religion and thought, as well as respect for fundamental human rights" will be established throughout Japan. The slow process by which the potential for freedom and growth in every human being can be realized is now in progress.



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The Mark of Early Culture

To understand fully the difficulties in the way of attaining this goal one must know something of Japanese history and culture. The early Chinese influence on Japanese culture is widely known. Before 1868 the civilization of Japan came wholly from China. The Japanese copied Chinese religion, art, writing, ethics, and philosophy—modifying them to their peculiar needs. Japan's golden age of education reached its height around 800 A.D. A half century later decadence had set in. The energies of the aristocracy were diverted into two widely separated channels. In court circles interest centered in poetry, drama, music, and etiquette. Sound educational standards gave way to a superficial pursuit of the arts and to the methods of court intrigue. Outside the court powerful provincial lords engaged in long feudal wars for the satisfaction of personal ambition. For 500 years Japanese history records these two elements against a background of unceasing contention and

strife. As in Europe these centuries were the Dark Ages for education. Between the dilettante and the warrior, genuine education was obliterated. But as in Europe, again, learning was preserved, although it cannot be said to have flourished, in retirement. The Buddhist priests kept unbroken the slender thread of learning in much the same way that literary culture was preserved in the monasteries of Europe.

Here the parallelism between Japan and Europe ends. The Dark Ages ended in Europe with the Renaissance and the Reformation. In Japan, feudalism with its emphasis on the superficial aspects of the arts and on military prowess lasted more than 300 years longer. Not until 1867 did the last of the feudal lords, Keiki Tokugawa, surrender to the Emperor the powers his family had enjoyed through fifteen Shoguns of his family line. This Emperor, a boy at the time, became the famous Emperor Meiji. The word Meiji in Japanese means enlightened government—and Meiji proved to be an enlightened

monarch with profound interest in education.

The Age of a New Education

Education had fallen to such a low estate that no program of gradual improvement would suffice. A complete and comprehensive reorganization of education was undertaken. In 1870 all the schools throughout Japan were closed while the new education was being organized. In 1871 schools were reorganized with all power vested in the Ministry of Education. Control of education at all levels, public and private, was completely centralized. As far back as 1871 the first step toward complete dictatorship was taken in this centralization of all education in one authority.

In 1890 the Emperor Meiji promulgated the Imperial Rescript on Education. The Rescript repeated the Confucian virtues but it undeniably laid the foundation for militarism and ultranationalism. The Rescript became the basic tenets of Japanese education. From entrance into school until the completion of his education, every Japanese listened to the reading of the Rescript, a part of which stated:

. . . Always respect the Constitution and observe the laws; should any emergency arise offer yourself courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of our Imperial throne, coeval with heaven and earth. . . .

The Curriculum and Propaganda

The document inaugurated a process of indoctrinating a people to a social and political philosophy in which the seeds of tragedy were deeply planted. In 1925 the Imperial Government

strengthened its position by the issuance of an ordinance providing for the appointment of a military officer on active duty to give military instruction in all high schools, normal schools, technical schools, and colleges. Certain educators protested vigorously, but dissension was quelled by methods characteristic of dictatorship and gradually the military emphasis was accepted as an integral part of education.

Imperial ordinances followed in rapid succession to emphasize military nationalism in all the schools of Japan. By 1941 the task of making education one of the chief instrumentalities of propaganda was complete. The schools taught total unquestioning subservience of the individual to the State and that the greatest glory for Japanese youth was to die for the Emperor. The schools indoctrinated with consciousness of the divine mission of Japan in Asia and throughout the world. The military officers in the schools focused a major portion of the curriculum on admiration of and proficiency in military arts.

At the beginning of the war some sixteen million children and youth were enrolled in schools. Until 1932 more of the national budget was spent for education than for the combined support of the Army and Navy. The highly centralized authority made it possible for the Ministry of Education to introduce propaganda quickly and efficiently. All textbooks used in elementary and secondary schools were revised to include inflammatory, militaristic propaganda at the expense of authentic information. The schools were used as the most important means of securing acceptance of Shintoism, and so the power of religion was coupled with the

political and social theories of the militarists to inculcate complete submissiveness.

Introducing the New Philosophy

Into such an educational picture came the defeat of the Japanese armed forces and the unconditional surrender. The task of rebuilding could begin on the destruction and devastation of war. In May, 1947 the Japanese Government promulgated its New Constitution which commits the Japanese people to a democratic form of government and forever outlaws war as a means of settling international disputes. *The great task as far as education is concerned is to clarify a philosophy of education in a democracy.* Provision for buildings, books and instructional materials, adequately prepared teachers all loom large as specific problems, but the great problem is to secure acceptance on the part of some 400,000 teachers of a democratic educational philosophy and through them to the entire population of Japan.

In the war period the textbooks had been completely revised to present an exaggeratedly nationalistic point of view. The first task confronting the American educators called to assist in the reconstruction was to work with the best qualified Japanese to make new textbooks. This work was well on its way to completion for elementary and secondary schools by the beginning of 1948.

Heretofore, methods of instruction were highly standardized. Teachers were permitted no freedom in the selection of content or methods of teaching. They were required to follow the textbooks slavishly. The Ministry of Education issued outlines covering the specific

periods of time. Teachers were required to report the faithful fulfillment of the task. Rigid examinations served as a further check on the complete subservience of the teachers. Since all teacher placement was directly controlled by the central authority, any teacher who showed creativity or questioned the authority of his superiors could be readily removed to northern Hokkaido to consider his shortcomings through a long and dreary winter. The educational advisers recognized the importance of freeing teachers from the fear of official authority and to release each teacher to be and do his best in developing democratic education. New courses of study based on the best curriculum thinking of schools in the United States were developed, and conferences were held throughout Japan to introduce and interpret these new guides for teachers.

Integrating the Old and New

Meanwhile, other American educators were at work on remaking the legal structure in order to break the stranglehold of the Ministry of Education. The decentralization of education necessitated comprehensive studies of problems of school district organization and the financing of education. These were slow processes. The patterns of the cultural past were strong. The recommendations advanced by American educators were totally outside the experience of the Japanese. The American advisers, however, recognized their task of uprooting militarism, ultranationalism, and a dictatorship, but at the same time they were aware of the difficulties involved in a complete break with the cultural past.

Continued appraisal was carried on to

see how much would be saved of the old ways without jeopardizing the development of democratic education. The American educational advisers and an increasing number of the Japanese recognize the dangers to education in an entrenched bureaucracy. The power of the Ministry of Education is being reduced as rapidly as new leadership can be developed throughout the prefectures. Conferences have been held with administrators and supervisors throughout Japan, and intensive workshops carried on to help develop understanding of the new educational program and the function of leadership in unregimented schools. Handbooks on administration and supervision have been prepared by school executives and have been taken out to regional conferences for review, study, and critical evaluation. Every effort has been made to give school people a genuine part in determining basic policies.

Two Blocks to Progress

The education of teachers for democratic schools and the reeducation of teachers already in service constitute a task of gigantic magnitude. The normal schools were militant centers of nationalistic propaganda during the war, and sound professional education had become virtually nonexistent. The normal schools of Japan had never exercised any significant leadership in education. They were looked down on by the universities and were completely dominated by the Ministry. The long process of improving teacher education has begun by helping normal schools to set up programs for the reeducation of teachers during the summer, by nationwide studies of teacher education pro-

grams, and by drawing normal school instructors in to participate in the wide variety of educational activities necessitated by the thorough reconstruction of education.

Japanese education is confronted with tremendous problems of widely differing character. The problem of language reform is one of the greatest. Language is actually a barrier to communication. The great difficulty of the language necessitates spending most of the child's time in the elementary school in an effort to master its intricacies. Notable progress has been made in reducing the number of Chinese characters, *kanji*, that the child must master. Efforts to bring some form of *Romaji*, Japanese words using Roman alphabet phonetically, into use are meeting with success. But language reform is a discouraging area because of a tremendous unreasoning resistance to any major modification of the system of written communication.

Democratic Patterns Emerge

What of the future of Japan? In fourteen months of day-by-day contact with the people throughout the country no evidence of hostility or antagonism was noted. Hundreds of Japanese expressed the hope that the Americans would stay to help them develop a sound economy, a stable government, a modern democratic education.

The future of Japan depends upon the United States perhaps even more than on Japan itself. With continued guidance, encouragement, and humanitarian aid, Japan promises to emerge as a vigorous, democratic people and a tremendous bulwark for democratic ideology in the Orient.

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