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Post-World War II Education Reform in Japan

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ABSTRACT

The rise of Japan after the defeat in World War II became the center of world admiration, including us in Indonesia. Human resources development through education has become the main key to the success of Japan. This certainly can be a reference for us in formulating human resources development policies in the future. We often feel amazed at the seriousness of the Japanese government in dealing with education problems. However, we also tend to ignore various facts related to it. For example, after the defeat of the war, Japanese academics and bureaucrats immediately conducted introspection and research to find out the cause of the defeat. From the results of this research, it was concluded that there were fatal errors in education policies and philosophies so far; departing from this understanding, a significant revision of the education law was immediately carried out. In other words, the Japanese government not only pays attention to education but they also completely overhaul educational policies. Japan lost the war against the United States. Consequently, for the following 7 years, 1945-1952, Japan was occupied by the United States of America, who had ordered Japan to change all policies, including educational policies. In this paper, we will look at what changes in the philosophical foundation and policy changes, as well as how the discussion process until the formulation and enactment of several new education laws, and what criticisms and expectations are implied in the education law.

Keywords: Post-war introspection, Education advisory team from the United States, Education law reform, Nanbara Shigeru, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Citizenship and social responsibility.

1. The Academics' Reaction to the Defeat of War

On August 15, 1945, Emperor Hirohito on the radio announced that the Japanese government officially accepted the Allied demands contained in the Potsdam Declaration. The Potsdam Declaration is a joint declaration issued on July 26, 1945, in Potsdam, Germany, by the Allied leaders: President Harry S. Truman (United States), Prime Minister Winston Churchill (United Kingdom) and President Chiang Kai-Shek (Republic of China), which calls for Japan to surrender and relinquish all her colonies. Japan's acceptance of the terms in Potsdam Declaration meant that Japan officially surrendered to the Allied Forces¹.

The next day, August 16th, the cabinet under the leadership of the navy admiral resigned. On the 17th, a new cabinet under the leadership of the civil prime minister was installed.

¹According to the Japanese constitution which prevailed until 1945, the emperor was authorized to declare the start and end of the war. On December 8, 1941, soon after the Japanese military invaded Pearl Harbor, the American military base in the Pacific Ocean, Emperor Hirohito officially announced that Japan had begun war with the American, British, Chinese, and Dutch coalition camps.

Although the defeat had been predicted by many parties, still the radio broadcast made many parties astonished. The bureaucrats and academics immediately began to form working groups to discuss the causes of the defeat of the war and concluded that Japan lost to America because Japanese education failed so that the quality of Japanese human resources was worse than American human resources.

On September 15, 1945, which is exactly one month after the announcement of the defeat of the war, the Japanese government through the minister of education issued the 'Education Policy Guidelines for the Development of New Japan,' which contained 11 work guidelines:

1. Education aims to broaden insights and knowledge, improve the ability to think scientifically, foster a spirit of peace-loving, and improve people's morality.
2. Erasing all subjects related to the military; all teaching and research must be focused on peaceful purposes.
3. Revised the textbooks so that the contents are in accordance with the new education policy.
4. The Ministry of Education organized a re-education program for teachers, to understand the new education policy.
5. Giving special learning opportunities for students who had been deployed to the battlefield or to the factory, which forced them to drop out of school.
6. Scientific education aimed to train the ability to think scientifically and not just to pursue temporary interests.
7. To foster high morality and broad-minded people, it was necessary to increase education outside of school for adults and workers, through public facilities such as public libraries and museums, as well as utilizing media such as painting exhibitions, theater shows, publishing popular science books, etc.
8. Facilitating the formation of local youth groups, as a forum for communication and fostering social solidarity.
9. Sought interfaith cooperation to foster friendship and world peace.

10. Facilitating sports competition events to improve physical and spiritual health, as well as fostering the spirit of fair play and friendship among the nation's children and between the people of Japan and other citizens.
11. Restructuring the ministry of education to form the directorate of sports and directorate of scientific education. (「新日本建設ノ教育方針（昭和二十年九月十五日）」)

It is necessary to know that the Allied's occupation of Japan (SCAP: Supreme Command of Allied Powers) officially began on September 12. After that, on October 22, SCAP issued instructions to the Japanese government regarding the revision of the education system (Dower, 1999). In other words, the Guidelines issued by the Japanese government on September 15 were purely the result of discussions and agreements by bureaucrats and academics on education issues in Japan.

The 11 points above also reflected the concerns of academics and bureaucrats about the Japanese social conditions towards the end of the war: people tend to be apathetic, selfish, stupid, involved in criminal activities, and refrained, so they do not try to improve the quality of life. The momentum of the end of the war was used as a starting point to change the lifestyle and mentality of the community through education.

2. The United States Education Mission to Japan, 1946

On August 6 and 9, 1945, the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed by the US military. On the 10th, the Japanese government telegraphed to the US government, declaring that they were willing to accept the appeal in the Potsdam Declaration. On the 11th, US foreign minister James F. Byrnes, on behalf of the governments of the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, and the Republic of China, sent a telegram to the Japanese government, stating that if Japan surrendered unconditionally as appeals to the Potsdam Declaration, the Allied will give the Japanese people the power to determine the form of government in the future. Responding to the statement from the Allied, the Japanese leaders compiled the text of the declaration of war ended; The text was compiled on the 14th and was announced by Emperor Hirohito to all the people of Japan (appeal to lay down weapons) through radio broadcasts.

With the official announcement of the defeat of the war, all pro-war civilian and military officials resigned, replaced by anti-war leaders. They worked with SCAP civil officials to make significant changes to several policies in Japan, including education policies.

Anticipating the start of the Allied occupation in Japan, on August 26, the Japanese government established the Central Liaison Office (in Japanese: Shuusen Renraku Chuuo Jimukyoku), as a coordinating body to accommodate instructions from SCAP and forward them to the Japanese executives.

On September 2, aboard the Missouri warship anchored in Tokyo Bay, Japan's foreign minister, Shigemitsu Mamoru, on behalf of the Japanese government signed a document declaring Japan's defeat. On the 12th, the Allied occupation (SCAP) under the leadership of General MacArthur officially began, with the main agenda being the demilitarization and democratization of Japan.

SCAP considered that Japan started the Asia Pacific War because the military was supported by the people. Popular support for the military is the result of educating people to blindly obey their leaders, without logical reasoning. In other words, Japanese militarism is characterized by fanatics and radicals. In this case, fanatics because they believed that Japan is the most superior nation in the world (ultra-nationalistic), and radical because they were determined to commit suicide. Therefore, demilitarization (=deradicalisation) was started with a total overhaul of education systems and materials.

On October 22, through the Central Liaison Office, SCAP delivered instructions regarding the Japanese education system:

1. Prohibiting the spread of ideology and military education and ultra-nationalism.
2. Instilling understanding of peace and human rights, such as freedom of association and opinion.
3. Evaluated all teachers and officials in educational institutions based on the above principles. Then, they decided which personnel that had to be retained, fired, returned to their original positions (for personnel who have previously been fired), appointed, re-educated, or transferred.

4. Encouraging students, teachers, and officials in educational institutions to logically criticize teaching materials, as well as discussing topics of political, social, and religious freedom.
5. Disseminating information about the role of military leaders who have started wars and afflicted the lives of many people.
6. Immediately published new textbooks and new teaching manuals for teachers, aimed at educating peaceful and socially responsible aspiring citizens (「連合軍の教育改革指令 日本教育制度ニ対スル管理政策」 (SCAP Education Reform Directives Policies on Japan's Educational System).

Furthermore, on the 30th, SCAP reissued instructions implicitly addressed to the Japanese Ministry of Education, to accelerate the evaluation and execution of teachers and officials of educational institutions.

On December 31, SCAP issued instructions relating to the termination of moral education, Japanese history, and Japanese geography. Because, in Japan during the war era, moral education subjects taught that the people must obey, even they must be willing to die for the emperor; historical subjects contained the myth that Japan is a land of gods; geography subjects contained propaganda material that Japan is the leader of Asia, so it is legal for Japan to rule over the entire Asian region.

In the early 1946, one of the directorates under SCAP, namely the CIE (Civil Information and Education Section) considered it necessary to formulate an integrated education policy for Japan (土持ゲーリー). For this reason, in March, the CIE brought in an American education advisory team. For the American team to work effectively, the education minister had previously appointed and formed the Japan Board of Education Experts, who would act as partners for their American counterparts.

In early March 1946, the United States Education Mission to Japan team arrived in Japan. The team consists of 27 people, led by George D. Stoddard, director of the education directorate of New York (Baltz, 1965). While their partners in Japan, the Board of Education Experts, consisted of 29 people, chaired by Nanbara Shigeru, rector of the University of Tokyo (regarding Nanbara's educational philosophy, will be discussed in the following section).

For 1 month, the American Education Mission team visited educational institutions in Japan and held discussions with the Japan Board of Education Experts. At the end of March, the American Education Mission team submitted a report recommending Japan's education policy reforms, to SCAP.

The report first concluded that SCAP was expected not to be too enthusiastic about eradicating militarism and radicalism in Japanese education; let the Japanese themselves rebuild their education system with elements of local culture; it was enough for SCAP to just support Japanese efforts.

Furthermore, the report contained several recommendations related to the revision of the education system:

1. The Japanese education system was too centralized and dictated by the central bureaucrats so that teachers could not develop teaching materials according to local conditions and needs, and consequently, the teaching and learning process became less effective. Therefore, it was necessary to decentralize the education system, so that regional governments and teachers could innovate in improving the effectiveness of learning.
2. Involving local communities in the discussion of the education curriculum.
3. The subject of moral education, which previously contained material to teach absolute obedience to the authorities, had to be changed into content that taught social attitudes that reflected equality, a spirit of cooperation based on democratic principles, and a spirit of upholding science and skills in life daily.
4. For the subjects of Japanese history, facts and myths would be distinguished; for geography subjects, the material would be added about the geography of each region.
5. The need to build facilities for sports, health, and entertainment in schools and universities.
6. Providing professional training to all schools.
7. Transformed the education system that prioritizes memorization of death, uniformity of teaching materials and the imposition of compliance; provided training so that

students were able to think and make their own decisions, understand their rights and obligations as citizens in a democratic country.

8. For this reason, a re-education program should be held for teachers, to have broad insights and in-depth knowledge.
9. An immediate need to socialize the meaning of democracy and awareness of the rights and obligations as citizens; and for that, it was necessary to improve education outside the school through public libraries, museums, and the implementation of public lectures for the community. Science and information should no longer be the monopoly of a handful of elites but must be disseminated to all levels of society (米国教育使節団報告書 (要旨) (昭和二十一年三月三十一日)).

If we compare the recommendations of the American team (March 1946) with the Guidelines announced by the Japanese ministry on 15 September 1945, there is a common perception of the direction of education policy reform. This shows the similarity of perception between the Japanese government after the defeat of the war with the United States government, namely that the war occurred because the Japanese people have been misled by the wrong educational system and material. Therefore, to avoid the war in the future, the education systems and materials must be changed in such a way. Hence, people will become knowledgeable and able to think critically.

3. Post-War Reconstruction Begins with The New Education Law

After the team returned to the US at the end of March 1946, the Board of Education Specialists was dissolved. In August, the Japanese education ministry formed the Education Reform Council (Kyouiku Sasshin Iinkai; hereinafter abbreviated as ERC), which was tasked with drafting education-related laws, based on recommendations from the American Educational Mission team. Former Education Board Expert members were again asked to join the ERC. The position of chairperson of the ERC was held by the minister of education, while the deputy chairperson was held by Nanbara Shigeru (金井徹, 2011)

Once established, the ERC immediately worked to formulate recommendations for the drafting of the education law. 3 months later, in November 1946, the ERC submitted a recommendation I to the government, regarding future educational goals, as well as the need to publish the Basic Education Law (the Act that became the basis for other education laws).

In recommendation I, it was mentioned that:

1. The purpose of education is to develop student personality; building democratic and peace-loving citizenship, upholding truth and justice, respecting the dignity of others, upholding a diligent attitude of work and tolerance; and fostering healthy citizens both physically and spiritually.
2. Education should not only be limited by time and space (educational institutions and study periods). Therefore, every citizen must be directed, so they can learn on their initiative, anytime, and anywhere. The purpose of education is to develop individuals who continue to learn and work together, so they can create and develop new cultures.
3. In the Education Law, the following must be stated:

That education in Japan has been far from adequate because it emphasizes formality and imposes uniformity.

That the success of future Japanese development based on a new constitution² will depend on the direction of the new education policy.

4. In the Education Law, the following must be clearly stated:
 - All citizens have the same opportunity to obtain an education.
 - Compulsory education.
 - Education for girls
 - Non-formal education.
 - Political education.
 - Religious education.
 - Types of Schools.
 - Teacher rules.
 - Education Administration.

² After the defeat of the war, the Japanese constitution was declared null and void. The new constitution stated that the emperor is a symbol of the state and sovereignty is in the hands of the people. As a statement that the Japanese people love peace, Japan would not have an armed force and Japan would not engage in war with any country, ratified on November 3, 1946, and valid since May 3, 1947.

5. That the ministry of education will draw up the Education Law, which contains the above points (「教育刷新委員会建議（昭和 21 年 11 月 29 日第 13 回總會採択同年 12 月 27 日建議）」).

Furthermore, in a recommendation on December 27, 1946, proposals were submitted regarding education administration which had to be revised, namely:

1. It is necessary to change the educational administration system, because it is too bureaucratic, imposes uniformity, and prioritizes formality.
2. Schools need to respect reasonable proposals from the community regarding education.
3. Schools and teachers must be given the authority to carry out education following their respective conditions, and the decentralization of the education bureaucracy.
4. The need for closer communication and cooperation among teachers, school education practitioners, and non-formal education practitioners.
5. Research and surveys related to education must be improved.
6. The need for financial reform for education funding.

Based on the points of recommendations from the ERC, the ministry of education developed and ratified the Education Law (passed on March 31, 1947). Furthermore, based on the principles contained in this Act, the Law on Formal Education was ratified (passed on the same date) and the Law on Non-Formal Education (ratified on June 10, 1949).

In the Education Law, it was stated that ‘the purpose of education is to foster citizens who are physically and mentally healthy, and have a proper character as peaceful and democratic members of society and countries.’ To achieve these goals, students had to ‘expand knowledge and insight, train to always seek the truth, be sensitive and noble, and try to always be in good health; independent and creative, upholding the value of work; take responsibility and be fair, uphold gender equality, be able to work with others, be socially motivated, be proactive in contributing to society; respect all living things, contribute to environmental preservation; be patriotic people who want to respect other countries’ cultures, proactively contribute to world peace and progress.’

In the Formal Education Law, it was stated that the purpose of education is to equip students with the competence to live a social life and be independent in their daily lives, including work and economy.

Whereas in the Non-Formal Education Law, it was regulated that each regional government is obliged to form an Out-of-School Education Board, to build and manage public out-of-school education facilities, such as public libraries, museums, and youth centers, hold discussion events, public lectures, exhibitions and so on. The aim was to socialize popular knowledge, provide professional skills training to the local community, and organize music performances, painting exhibitions, and so on.

During the American occupation, the slogan “forced” by the Americans to the Japanese was “democracy”. However, in the articles of the Education Law that were passed during the American occupation, the emphasis was on “upholding the truth and scientific principles” and “hard-working”. In the following, we will see what the rationale is on the drafter of the Act, focusing on Nanbara Shigeru, the deputy chairman (and later chairman) of the ERC.

4. Nanbara Shigeru and The Education for National Character Formation

The most influential Japanese figure in the process of discussing and drafting the post-war Education Law, was Nanbara Shigeru, chancellor of the University of Tokyo who was also served as the chair of the Council of Educational Experts (as a partner for the American Educational Mission team) and the deputy chairman (since November 1947: the chairman) of ERC.

Nanbara was born in 1889 to a poor family in Kagawa, southern Japan (Barshay, 1988). Through hard working and financial support of his relatives, he managed to continue his studies at a high school in Tokyo, and then at the Faculty of Law at the Imperial University of Tokyo, the most prestigious educational institution in Japan at that time.

While studying in high school, he was influenced by his school principal, Nitobe Inazo, a Christian figure and author of BUSHIDO, who was very well known at that time in Europe and America (阿久戸義愛, 2014). During college, Nanbara joined the Bible study club under the spiritual guidance of Uchimura Kanzo (深谷潤, 2014), and converted to Christianity. As a Uchimura follower, Nanbara always held to the principle that Japanese Christians must have faith as well as of patriotism.

After graduating in 1914, Nanbara worked for the ministry of interior. In 1921, he decided to return to campus; after the opportunity to study in England and Germany, he began teaching politics in his alma mater.

Since becoming an academic, Nanbara focused on researching the thinking of the German philosopher, Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814), who worked in the early 19th century, the glory of Napoleon and Germany³ was occupied (colonized) by France. Fichte had to face the fact that militarily, his country was occupied by French troops so that the people became apathetic and frustrated. In 1807-1808, Fichte gave a public lecture at an academy in Berlin, on ideas for rebuilding Germany. The material from 14 public lectures was then published under the title "Reden an die deutsche Nation" (Messages to the German Nation). The essence of the Fichte argument in the book is that Germany can rise from adversity (colonized and despicable conditions) only through appropriate education. They are:

1. Education must be egalitarian, not elitist, not feudal; not only for certain classes; national education must be available for all.
2. Education for male and female students must be the same, must not be distinguished.
3. Education must be compulsory, may not be left to the wishes of students.
4. To instill a spirit of nationalism, education must be given in German.
5. The teaching of science must be accompanied by skills training (Fichte, 1808)
6. Schools must be institutions where students are allowed to practice in society

Fichte criticized the German bourgeoisie who glorified democracy and civil liberties. He insisted that citizens should be obliged to learn and gain skills, work to earn a decent livelihood, and contribute to the progress of society and the country.

About 100 years later, in 1918, Germany again lost the war, this time in World War I. To encourage the German youth in despair after the defeat, Fichte's idea of education was revived in the postwar Germany.

³ The German state that we know today, was born in 1871 when 26 small German-speaking states declared to unite to form a German empire. At the time of the Napoleonic Wars in the early 19th century, there were around 300 small German-speaking countries.

Nanbara continued his studies in Germany in the 1920s, witnessed Germany's national revival after the devastating defeat, and realized the importance of 'national education' to instill a spirit of patriotism and uphold the value of work, as the nation's main effort to rise from adversity.

In the Education Law, the influence of Fichte is clear. This also proves that education reform in Japan after the defeat of the war carried out at the initiative of the Japanese themselves, and minimal interference from the American side. The dichotomy of 'democracy' or 'individual freedom' in American vs 'authoritarian system' or 'obedience' in Japanese style, does not apply. At Nanbara's initiative, the 'Spirit' for post-war education policy was taken from Fichte (Germany), due to the similarity of national conditions and agendas between Germany in 1808 and 1918 and Japan in 1945, namely the conditions of losing the war and the national reconstruction agenda.

5. Conclusion

Educational policy reform was a major factor in the success of Japan's reconstruction after the defeat of the war in 1945. This reform was based on the awareness that Japan lost the war because the quality of human resources was far worse than the United States of America, and the poor quality of Japanese human resources was due to erroneous education policies.

The poor quality of Japanese human resources marked by the lack of mastery of technology and the ability to think scientifically (=logical), as well as educational patterns that kill the initiative and a sense of social responsibility. Therefore, the education policy had to be changed, emphasizing the importance of educating students to be knowledgeable and broad-minded and to equip students with concrete skills.

The discussion and ratification of the new Education Law were carried out during the American occupation era. However, the contents of the Education Law reflected precisely the understanding and expectations of the Japanese government, which were to rebuild the country of Japan through education, to produce knowledgeable citizens with working skills so that they could live well; because social responsibility and nationalism can grow properly if the people live prosperously.

Besides, the Japanese government could formulate and pass the Education Law in a short time because they did not need to research from scratch, but rather took an example of

success in another country, namely Germany. This is in line with the principle of Japanese academics and bureaucrats, namely studying policies that have proven successful in other countries and implementing them in their own country, with revisions as needed. This method is far more efficient, compared to formulating itself from the beginning and then conducting trials, which may be a total failure and must be repeated from the beginning.

Advantages of followership, profits that have repeatedly been achieved by Japan.

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