

Philosophy of Education in Japan.

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The Constitution of Japan was established in 1946 and then the Fundamental Law of Education was enacted in 1947. The new-born Japan desired permanent peace of mankind, put confidence in justice and faith of all nations, and determined to contribute to the realization of the world peace. So the fundamental principle of education of Japan was in the perfection of personality as a human being, in which she aimed at realizing the education that would establish right human relations and create a cultural nation.

In contrast with old education in Japan, new education emphasizes these points; respect for a human being, social training, and efficiency in practical life. The fundamental idea of the education of the new Japan is the liberation of humanity from all sorts of restrictions, and its free development.

The doctorines themselves were perfect, but the realization was very difficult. At the time when the Fundamental Law of Education was enacted the respect of humanity was generally understood in the sense of the satisfaction of both our personal desires and our daily needs. And the Fundamental Law of Education was crippled. Crimes increased all over Japan, and in the mechanized life people became dry and lost mutual trust.

The deplorable state the Japanese people brought into was soon realized and "moral education" was strongly advocated by men of intelligence. There have been some who are against the plan, as the Japan Teachers' Union, but majority of the people supports the plan. What Japan desires earnestly today is to make her people a nation full of love of humanity and truly reliable.

Japan is making rapid progress in the field of science and manufacturing industry. The social life is progressing to rationalization. And she wishes she could contribute to the advancement of civilization of the world through her science and peacetime industry. To realize truly civilized society, it is, as is keenly felt in Japan, essential to keep the balance between rationalization of life and human soul. The solution of the problem is the ultimate aim of the Japanese education and they are making effort for it. Today almost all the Japanese are conscious of it.

It seems to me this great mission is realized in the unity of scientificity (Wissenschaftlichkeit) or rationality and spirituality or morality. I have the conviction that education should advance towards the mission. For many years I have maintained the conviction in my lectures, in magazines and books. There are various thoughts about education in Japan, and the stand-points are different from one another, and they would not come to perfect agreement substantially, but in the present situation of the world and of Japan, education of Japan should take the course of fulfilment of the mission in the future.

It is too simple to suppose this purpose is achieved by any single ideas, one sided views, or any single reality. Science, history, economics, law, politics, literature, fine arts, moral, religion, and so on, all cultures at home and abroad, should be studied widely, broadly and deeply in their relations and unity, and we shall find there the foundation of education; this is the way of thinking of education by men of intelligence in the field of education.

Educational philosophy should be comprehensive and must include not merely moral science and psychology, but educational sociology, anthropology and other sciences. From this point of view philosophy of education is getting on prosperous in Japan.

This is the present situation of philosophy of education in Japan.

As stated above the greatest problem of Japan is the unity of scientificity and spirituality. Scientificity means both rationality and positivity. As you know, in 17th century modern natural science in Europe was born in the union of these 'ities'. Now we are in [the scientific-technological period, in the atomic age. At present we are called upon to cultivate our mind, and we are keenly aware of its urgency.

The unbalance between them (scientificity and spirituality) is the primary source of the evil of present age, and it is the feeling of the Japanese. To overcome this unbalance, in the philosophy of education, the rational and positive study on educational facts and all matters concerning education must be studied and the eternal spirit of human being which is the source of humanity must be sought for. In Japan they think that for that purpose science and technology should be used for the progress of mankind.

When a certain dogma is fixed, then there is no progress and creation. In order to realize it, we have to listen to the wisdom of the ancient philosophers, such as Christ, Buddha, Confucius, Socrates and so on. Although there are periodical limits in their thoughts, in them there are included eternal truths. We must do our best to be of the soul that shows an ideal of the future mankind, through mutual exchange of our thoughts and communication of our mind. I call such spirit the absolute love.

We say, true human being is existence. In Japan, young students and teachers are thinking about the educational problems from the standpoint of existence.

I have spoken our subject in a general and abstract way, but I am happy, if this lecture pointed out some essential tendencies of philosophy of education in present Japan.

Note;

This paper is about the substance of the part I. of my lecture, held at Boston University in the U.S.A. on Oct. 2, 1963.