

# SCHOOL EDUCATION AND RELIGION IN JAPAN

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## **The problem**

There are very few modern countries that have no constitutional provisions for guaranteeing religious freedom as one of the fundamental human rights, and the majority of them adopt the principle of separation of Church and State. But not a few countries seem to have been involved in troubles with regard to the problem of the relationship between school education and religion. Even in America where the religious world is in a seemingly simpler condition than in Japan, a great many questions have been raised about religious freedom, the relationship between Church and State, and school education and religion. America is a country where the Bible is predominant although there are different denominations of Protestantism, Catholicism and Judaism. In Japan, on the contrary, there are many religions, heterogeneous by nature—Shinto, the indigenous religion of the country, Buddhism, a religion introduced from the Asiatic continent, which is originally even atheistic, Christianity or monotheism relatively recently introduced from the West.

These great religions respectively have various sects and sub-sects. Moreover, since the termination of World War II, many kinds of religions have come into existence taking advantage of

the release of State control over the religious world of this country, and not a few of them are now flourishing.

America, since the very beginning of her history, has always respected religious freedom. It may even be said that the spirit of seeking after religious freedom has founded America. Japan became able to enjoy religious freedom in its true sense only after World War II. Also in the field of education, as in many other fields, there is a great difference between America and Japan.

Nevertheless, there is one matter which attracts the common attention of the discerning eyes in both countries. It is the problem of the relationship between education and religion. Although social conditions are different, both countries are nearing the time when they must reconsider from the viewpoint of religious education whether or not the present school education should be left as it is. For, a reconsideration from the standpoint of humanism on the overdoing of a materialistic culture and the establishment of spiritual ideals to meet moral decay are the common social requirements in both countries.

The problem of religious education in school has been occasionally discussed among prudent men since the dawn of modern Japan and especially in these two postwar decades. But it cannot be said that people in general are taking a keen interest in this problem. They seem even not to understand satisfactorily what the problem is about.

When we take up the problem of religious education in school, we are inclined to think of how religious education should be carried on in the classroom. It is true that some institutions in Japan have religious education in their curriculum. But we

must remember that here lies a problem which should be solved prior to planning such curricula. The fundamental problem is, in a word, whether or not religious education should be allowed to be carried on in school, especially in public schools. The present education system of Japan does not unconditionally recognize religious education in school.

The Constitution of Japan flatly states:

The State and its organs shall refrain from religious education or any other religious activity (Article 20, Paragraph 3).

Therefore, it is necessary for us to consider in the first place the fundamental question why inclusion of religious education in school education involves so serious a problem.

### **Prohibition of religious education**

In the history of Japan, like in that of Europe and America, religion and education were in a close relation. Especially since the Nara Period (710—794 AD) the role Buddhism played in education was great. As the full name of Horyuji (founded in 607 AD), Horyu-Gakumon-ji (Horyu Academic Temple) shows, great Buddhist temples had an important function as educational institutions at that time. But it is undeniable that these temples served as schools mainly for priests and a few nobles but not for people in general. In the Edo Period (1603—1867), the Tokugawa shogunate treated Buddhism as a state religion and at the same time adopted Confucianism as the ideology for guiding national morality and for executing its cunning policy for taming the people. Concurrently, also the old Shinto was restored. Thus in this period the two major religions and the main stream of national ethics were coexistent. At that time, primary

education for common people was managed mostly by the local Buddhist temples. But the people experienced no sense of religious freedom because they did not know any conflicts between religion and education. Therefore, they met the Meiji Period (1868—1911) without any experience of awakening to the spirit of religious freedom. It was only after the Meiji Restoration that the relationship between religion and education was taken up as a problem in its modern sense.

The new Meiji Government attached most importance to the enhancement of the Imperial prestige based upon the ideal of the revival of the Imperial rule. Therefore, it adopted Shinto as an instrument for unifying the popular mind. Shinto has as its principal shrine the Grand Shrine of Ise since before the age when Buddhism was officially introduced to this country (538 AD). The Grand Shrine enshrines the Sun Goddess who is believed to be the ancestress of the Imperial family. Shinto includes many other shrines where the Imperial ancestors and persons meritorious especially to the Imperial family are enshrined. Therefore, it is the religion which is in the closest relationship with the Imperial family. The Meiji Government granted Shinto of this kind the status of a State religion in place of Buddhism. Such Shinto is called "State Shinto."

In July, 1872, a new school system modelled mainly after the system of France was enforced for the purpose of giving primary education to all children and higher education to volunteers. At the same time, the principle of separation of Church and State was for the first time formally established in Japan. State Shinto, however, was no longer to be treated as a religion in the field of State administration at least but became protected

by the State as a mere national cult transcending all religions. Here started the notorious religious policy of the Meiji Government which distinguished between the faith of Shinto and the national cult. This policy caused many troubles in the educational and religious circles in Japan. So far as State Shinto was concerned, it was openly treated as something superreligious in the field of school education. The principle of separation of religion and education was adopted on the surface, but religious education based upon Shintoism was practically carried on.

The reformation of the educational system made by the first Ito Cabinet in 1885 established the system of national education and attached the greatest importance to the moral lessons. This policy aimed at covering up the weakness which the hasty introduction of Western civilization had caused in the spiritual education in school. The normal schools or government training schools for teachers adhered to nationalism so strongly that they admitted no religion but State Shinto. In 1890, Emperor Meiji promulgated the Imperial Rescript on Education which urged all the people to observe the moral items listed in it. The Rescript was forced upon the people as the highest guiding principle of national education and moral life on the basis of the Emperor system so fanatically that all educators and students had to obey it as the most sacred and authoritative instruction for them. At every school event and other occasions a school master or a leader of a meeting recited the Rescript in the most solemn attitude, and all attendants had to stand erect and listen most attentively to it in a most respectful manner. Thus the Rescript strictly reigned the Japanese educational world for more than half a century till the end of World War II.

On the surface of the system, therefore, the separation of religion and education looked like established but the practical contents of education were thickly colored with the ideology of State Shinto which was inseparable from the Emperor system.

The same inclination can be found with regard to the provision of religious freedom stipulated in the Meiji Constitution of 1889. It is true that the Constitution, following the example of advanced nations, provided an article concerning the guarantee of religious freedom.

Article 28 states:

Japanese subjects shall, within limits not prejudicial to peace and order, and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects, enjoy freedom of religious faith.

Thus the old Constitution guaranteed freedom of religious faith, but this freedom was often violated by the officials because religious freedom was recognized only within limits "not prejudicial to peace and order" and "not antagonistic to their duties as subjects." But these terms were quite ambiguous in their meaning, and there remained much room for one-sided interpretations by the officials. When a case was judged as falling under these limitations, it was possible to be suppressed or restricted by means of a mere ordinance.

Moreover, the meaning of "their duties as subjects" was interpreted as including "to pay homage to the *kami* of State Shinto." If State Shinto was taken as a religion, as the majority of the people understood it despite the Government policy, it must be said that this provision did not perfectly guarantee the freedom of faith.

On the other hand, with the removal of the prohibition of

Christianity in the early Meiji Period, this foreign religion returned to Japan and Christian schools opened their doors here and there. Several Buddhist sects also founded schools of middle and higher grade. These schools, however, could not enjoy freedom to conduct their religious education for a long time because the Government took an attitude of indifference or even of antipathy toward religion. This was because with the issuance of the Imperial Rescript on Education, including as the core the idea of the Emperor as the absolute, spiritual education was compelled to be completely based upon this idea. Thus religions other than State Shinto were completely ignored and shut out from school education.

The following Instruction No. 12 of the Ministry of Education issued on 3 August, 1899, was the administrative disposition for protecting the idea of a national polity and morals in the Rescript from disturbance by religion—especially by permeation of Christian thought.

It states:

It is necessary from the standpoint of the school administration to make general education stand outside of religion. Therefore, the government and public schools, and the schools under the application of provisions of the laws and ordinances relating to the curriculum shall not be permitted to conduct religious education or to observe any religious ceremony even outside of the regular course.

This Instruction was quite radical. Any kind of religious education and performance of religious ceremony was prohibited even at private schools under the application of the School Ordinance, not to speak of public schools.

The Instruction was not necessarily wrong so far as it concerned any sectarian education. The educational world at that

time in Japan, however, under the strong influence of the State policy of wealth and military strength, ignored or rejected religion as superstitious or anti-nationalistic. The leading scholars and educators were engaged in animated discussions over the problem of opposition between the national education and Christianity. It was Christian schools that were mostly oppressed. They had to wipe out the Christian color from their principles of education in order to retain the privileges given to public schools of the same level.

Education thus disregarding and neglecting religion, however, exposed its defect with the lapse of time. Doubts arose whether education excluding religion might not become a kind of formalism and fail to give students a beautiful ideal or a burning enthusiasm. A certain leading politician in the field of education said,

One of the reasons why school education is not successful in moral education lies in its neglect of religion. How much the difference of good and bad may be taught, moral education is of no use, if there is no support of a strong conviction indispensable for doing good and avoiding evil. For this reason, it is absolutely necessary for school education to foster religious sentiment. It is nothing but oppression of religion that religious education is prohibited even at private schools under the management of a religious organization. Because neither knowledge concerning religion is given nor religious sentiment fostered in school, the mass of the people lack the ability of selecting religions and thus indulge in superstitions or evil religions." (Statement of Seijun Ando made at his assuming the position of Parliamentary Councilor of the Ministry of Education, in 1927).

Moreover, in the latter part of the 1920's materialistic ideology became gradually rampant. This was a great menace to the Government and the necessity for adopting religion in school education was more and more keenly felt in various fields in order to check this thought.



## **Relaxation of restrictions on religious education**

In view of these conditions, the Ministry of Education in December, 1932, issued under the names of the Religions Bureau and Normal Educational Affairs Bureau a notification to Mie Prefecture, which states as follows:

The Instruction No. 12 Ministry of Education issued on 3 August, 1899, aims at prohibiting the schools concerned to teach a doctrine or to perform ceremonies of a certain specific denomination, sect, church etc., but it does not restrict the fostering of religious sentiment in general. Concerning this matter it was stated at the conference of the chiefs of the Educational Affairs Division (of prefectures) held in this Ministry in 1928 that it was necessary to contrive to foster religious faith or sentiment in order to expect perfect moral education in schools. Therefore, the interpretation of the Instruction should not be made too strictly unless a doctrine of a certain specific denomination, sect, church and others is taught or ceremonies thereof are performed.

Furthermore, the notification of the Vice Minister of Education dated 28 November, 1935, more positively points out the particulars to be regarded concerning fostering religious sentiment at schools.

(The preamble is omitted)

I. Religious education should be spontaneously conducted on the basis of religious faith at home and at the same time should depend upon the activity of religious organizations. School education should retain an attitude of neutrality and impartiality toward all the denominations, sects, churches etc.

II. Schools should retain the following attitude toward sectarian education at home and in the community:

1. It is necessary not to hurt the religious mind fostered at home and in the community, to pay attention to religious demands, revealed in the inner mind of a pupil and not to neglect or despise it in the least.
2. A right faith should be respected but at the same time superstitions which injure the public order and good manners should be destroyed by all means.

III. To conduct sectarian education at school shall not be permitted, but it is quite necessary to contrive to foster religious sentiment through school

education for the purpose of contributing to the formation of character. (However, as school education, needless to say, should be based upon the Imperial Rescript on Education, no religious sentiment shall be fostered that in quality and method is contradictory to the Rescript).

Special hints in school education in relation to fostering religious sentiment are roughly the following:

1. When teaching moral lessons and the civics course, more consideration should be given to the field of religion.
2. When teaching philosophy, more efforts should be made to deepen the understanding of religion and foster religious sentiment.
3. In the history of Japan attention should be paid to the religious influence exerted on the national culture, the religious inspiration great men received, biographies of great religious men and so forth.
4. In the other lessons, too, proper attention should be paid to the religious side in accordance with the quality of the teaching materials.
5. It would be very convenient to provide proper reference books relating to religions to contribute to pupils' cultivation.
6. In the event of a memorial service, a science-festival, an excursion or a trip, these chances should be utilized for fostering religious sentiment.
7. It would be a good method to let pupils listen to lectures on mental culture given by religious men of virtue and others at a proper chance unless they hinder school lessons.
8. Toward the organs of study concerning religion or mental culture of teachers and pupils in and out of the school, proper guidance should be given to let them retain a generous attitude.
9. Special attention should be paid not to be partial to a specified sect or denomination when practising the above-mentioned.

Religious sentiment education made its appearance in such a way, but the execution of it was accompanied by many difficulties contrary to expectation.

First of all, the abstractness and vagueness of the term, religious sentiment education, made the execution difficult. This term is generally interpreted as meaning "to educate a human being into one who lives with an attitude of a pious mind." Religious sentiment or deep reverence to the sacred should be produced generally when one is converted to a specific religion. Therefore, it was doubtful whether it was possible to implant

this kind of mental attitude by means of an education impartial to any religion. Even if this had been possible, there was the other question whether it was possible or not for teachers who scarcely had religious experience to handle it.

In this difficult situation of the religious sentiment education prior to the war, there were only many discussions which could never arrive at a conclusion.

Meanwhile, Japan was going to rush into World War II. Driven by the necessity of inflaming the spirit of nationalism, State Shinto was thoroughly implanted in the people's mind as a religious sentiment. This policy aimed at unifying the people's minds rather than at fostering religious sentiment. But anyway, an unexpected result was produced for the religious world as well as the educational world in Japan.

### **Revival of the problem of religious education in the postwar days**

The problem of religious sentiment education was taken up again in the postwar days because of the idea that a religious spirit should be adopted as support for a new spiritual education in place of the Imperial Rescript on Education which was supposed to be abolished in the near future (actually it was abolished in June, 1948, by the Diet) and to the reflection on the fact that the way of education disregarding religion since the Meiji Period was the remote cause of confusion of thought and moral degeneracy.

Immediately after the termination of hostilities, the first problem taken up concerning religious education concerned private schools. The Ministry of Education issued Instruction

No. 8 concerning the improvement of religious education at private schools (16 Oct. 1945).

It states:

A private school may hereafter conduct religious education and perform religious ceremonies outside the curriculum prescribed in the laws and ordinances in accordance with the following provisions, irrespective of Instruction of Ministry of Education No. 12 of 1899.

1. Measures shall be taken not to infringe on the freedom of faith of pupils.
2. The school regulations should express clearly that education is conducted and ceremonies are performed based upon a specified sect or denomination.
3. Attention should be paid not to impose too heavy burdens on the mind and body of pupils when practising the above-mentioned particulars.

This Instruction gave private schools liberty to conduct any kind of religious education. Therefore, the schools standing for a religion became able to conduct complete religious education depending upon their own faith instead of an ambiguous way of merely fostering religious sentiment. But the number of this kind of schools was very small in comparison with schools in general.

The promulgation of what is called "Shinto Directive" issued by the Occupation Forces on 15 December, 1945 (the full title of the directive: Abolition of Government Sponsorship, Support, Perpetuation, Control, and Dissemination of State Shinto: KOKKA SHINTO, JINJA SHINTO) changed all phases of school education with regard to the moral education which had been under the strong influence of State Shinto. The Shinto Directive mainly aimed at preventing the revival of militarism and ultranationalism which had utilized State Shinto as an instrument of indoctrination. The Directive, however, affected education in the contrary direction and caused public schools purposely to keep at a distance from religious problems. At the

general reformation of the educational system which was going on in the newly born Japan, the leaders of the education world could have no definite view concerning the religious problem. The teaching materials and guidance programs of religion were taken up in the civics course which was the core of the curriculum of the new school system but about the problem how to deal with religion, many questions and misunderstandings were raised.

### **Provisions of the Constitution and other important laws in connection with religious education**

The writer previously stated that the Constitution flatly prohibits religious education by quoting Article 20, Paragraph 3. Is this really the case?

The Constitution of Japan states:

Article 20. Freedom of religion is guaranteed to all. No religious organization shall receive any privileges from the State, nor exercise any political authority.

No person shall be compelled to take part in any religious act, celebration, rite or practice.

The State and its organs shall refrain from religious education or any other religious activity.

Article 89. No public money or other property shall be expended or appropriated for the use, benefit or maintenance of any religious institution or association, or for any charitable, educational or benevolent enterprises not under the control of public authority.

These articles are not, of course, applied only to Shinto but in view of the past influence Shinto exerted on the educational field and of the fact that Shinto used to receive many privileges from the State and that the people, especially officials and students, were compelled to take part in certain religious rites of Shinto, these articles are supposed to be immediately directed

against the past Shinto.

Article 20, Paragraph 3, however, is apt to be misunderstood in such a way that the State and its organs are prohibited to conduct any kind of religious education. If so, it would be a serious question for the future of this country. Because it may then be concluded that this country desires to secularize herself if not to be anti-religious. This must be said to be far from the ideal of the Constitution.

At the meeting of the committee on amendments of the Constitution during the 90th session of the Diet held in 1946, the then Minister of Education, Kotaro Tanaka, explained that the article concerned meant to prohibit education according to a certain specific religion but did not mean that the State denied the value of religion or took an anti-religious or non-religious attitude.

The 90th session of the Diet made the following resolution on 15 August of the same year:

We who have resolved eternally to abandon war and to entrust all the safety and life of the people to the justice and faith of the world should develop a movement for the world's eternal peace with the conviction that "war is crime." For this purpose, we should popularize far and wide the ideas of universal brotherhood, love of our fellow men and social service based upon religious selfconsciousness, and at the same time let the people respect the cultivation of religious sentiment and expect enhancement of morality and elevation of culture.

In order to avoid a superficial interpretation of Article 20, Paragraph 3, of the Constitution and to manifest the spirit of the above-mentioned resolution, the Fundamental Law of Education (enforced 31 March, 1947) states:

Article 9 (Religious education)

(1) The attitude of religious tolerance and the position of religion in social

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life shall be valued in education.

- (2) The schools established by the state and local public corporations shall refrain from religious education or any other religious activity.

It is true that the spirit of the Constitution stipulates strict separation of the State and religious activity but it does not deny the role of religion in education although the strict interpretation given to the wording, "shall refrain from religious education or any other religious activity," gives the impression of excluding all religious factors from school education.

The policy of separation of Church and State originally aims at and has its basis on the principle of religious freedom. The separation of religion and education, however, has produced not only a trend that nothing about religion is taught in the schools but also a tendency that religion is ignored or even opposed by schools. In other words, secularization of school education is running to an extreme.

The inclination toward secularization is found in all fields of education, school education, home education and social education. The separation policy which had its origin in the spirit of respecting religion is now deviating from its proper spirit.

In view of these trends and tendencies the Educational Reform Committee composed of nearly fifty eminent men of learning and experience including the President of Tokyo University, made a recommendation along the lines of the Fundamental Law of Education to the Government.

Recommendation by the Educational Reform Committee concerning the relation between education and religion (adopted by the 71th general meeting, 2 July, 1948)

### I. Relationship between school education and religion

Fostering of pious sentiment based upon a religious mind is one of the

spiritual foundations indispensable to the establishment of a pacific, cultural, democratic country, and proper cultivation of religious desires, which is an important phase of human nature, especially accords with the original mission of education. Therefore, the relationship between education and religion is a grave problem which requires a careful consideration in view of the spirit of the new Constitution.

Generally speaking, the places where education concerning religion is practised could be divided into three, school, society and home. A certain specific religious education, needless to say, should be given through each faith, function, ceremony of the respective sects, and at the same time should depend upon religious activities of religious organizations. In school education also a proper attitude toward religion should be maintained.

Therefore, we, following the spirit of the new Constitution and the Fundamental Law of Education, have carefully deliberated on the problem how religion should be treated in school education in the first place, and finally arrived at the following conclusions.

1. Private schools which claim to stand for a certain specific sectarian education may strengthen and drive home their specific religious guidance without restraint during the whole curriculum.
2. In all the public and private schools other than the above-mentioned schools (hereafter, called merely schools) practice of a certain specific religious education should strictly be avoided and an attitude impartial to all denomiinaions, sects and churches should severely be followed. It is needless to say, however, that efforts should be made for giving correct knowledge and understanding about religious phenomena in society and it is desirable to respect religious influence on students at home and society and to pay attention to cultivate religious desire revealed in the students' inner mind.
3. When objective knowledge about religion is given, the particulars to which special attention should be paid in school education are roughly as follows:
  - (1) When teaching the civics course, sufficient understanding should be given about the role which religions play in the life of the individual and society.
  - (2) When teaching history, efforts should be made to call deep attention to the influence which religions exerted on the national culture and inspirations which religions gave to individuals.
  - (3) In other lessons and studies, too, appropriate attention should be paid to their relation to religion in accordance with the quality of teaching materials.
  - (4) It is desirable to provide reference books concerning religion, but in this case attention should be paid not to be partial to one sect or one denomiinaion.



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- (5) Toward a faith which obviously runs counter to the science and morals of the time and violates the public order and good manners, the welfare etc. of society, proper improving guidance should be given, but when dealing with the teaching materials etc. words and actions implying contempt or denial of a religious faith should be avoided.
4. Concerning the cultivation of a spontaneously religious mind, the particulars to which special attention should be paid in school education are roughly as follows:
  - (1) Through all the lessons and studies attention should be paid to fostering a general religious sentiment.
  - (2) The freedom of religious faith being respected, guidance should be given to hold a mutually generous attitude toward the believers of different sects.
  - (3) Concerning religious books, proper reading guidance being given, fine arts, musics, films, dramas etc. related to religion should equally be utilized.
  - (4) In order for religious sentiment to be spontaneously fostered, school facilities and other surroundings should be completely arranged to the possible extent.
  - (5) Teachers and students may positively hold meetings in connection with respective religions within the school and receive guidance of a religious man for the purpose of study, culture or seeking the truth, but the school authorities should keep a fair attitude toward them.
5. The curriculum of training organs for teachers should include science of religion to deepen the fundamental knowledge and general understanding of religion.

(The Educational Reform Committee also adopted a recommendation concerning the relationship of social education and religion, and of home education and religion at the general meeting on 27 August, 1948.)

As shown in the above-mentioned recommendation, the necessity of giving knowledge "about religion" in public schools began to be acknowledged in addition to the mere fostering of religious sentiment. Regardless of the standpoint that religion is positively or negatively acknowledged, since religions actually exist and are playing a great role in society, it must be called quite natural that objective knowledge of religion should be given

to students even in public schools. In reality, however, even fundamental knowledge about religion is hardly given in public schools. This problem must be seriously reconsidered by the religious world as well as the educational world.

The Shinto Directive, on the other hand, directly forbade group visits to Shinto shrines under the sponsorship of public schools, but this was extended to all religious institutions. Notification No. 101, issued on 9 July, 1948 by the Ministry of Education prohibits public schools to visit any religious institutions.

This was popularly called "Notification declaring shrines or temples off limits." The main contents of this Notification are a prohibition of public schools to let students visit shrines, temples, churches or men of religion as part of the curriculum of the school. Teachers must not teach subjects which cannot be fully studied without visiting such an institution or men of religion. The Notification also prohibits public schools to invite men of religion to speak on religious problems during school hours.

Nikko, Kyoto, Nara and other places used to be included in school excursions. If students could not see any religious institutions on such occasions, the excursions would become meaningless. Students would be deprived of a chance to study national treasures or other cultural properties now under the custody of shrines, temples, or churches.

This restriction was relaxed to some extent by the Notification issued by the Vice-Minister of Education, dated 25 October, 1949, after frequent petitions from the religious world.

The Ministry of Education put down in detail to all the offi-

cials concerned the particulars concerning religious education in schools by relaxing the order forbidding group visits to religious institutions. The whole Notification, except the preamble, is given below:

Concerning the civics course etc. and treatment of religion in primary and secondary education.

(The first part is omitted). After studying and conferring not only about the teaching of the civics course but also about matters concerning religion in primary and secondary education at large, we have reached the following conclusion. It is requested that this be carefully studied down to particulars and that attention is paid to make no mistakes.

1. Concerning visits to religious institutions, including Shinto shrines, Buddhist temples, churches etc., under the sponsorship of public schools.

Schools must not sponsor visits to shrines, temples, churches or other religious institutions for the purpose of participating in worship, religious ceremonies or festivals. The meaning of the sponsorship of a school is that a school plans to visit in a group or that an individual child or pupil is compelled by the school to visit shrines, temples, churches or other religious institutions.

The visits to shrines, temples, churches or other religious institutions under the sponsorship of a school for the purpose of studying national treasures or cultural properties, or for other cultural purposes are permitted under the following conditions:

- (a) Children and pupils must not be compelled.
  - (b) On a trip sponsored by a school, a group of children or pupils who visit a shrine, a temple, a church or other religious institution must not participate in a ceremony or festival of the religious institution concerned.
  - (c) When a school sponsors a visit to a shrine, a temple, a church or other religious institution, the teacher or a leader must not make the pupils salute or observe other ceremonies by order.
  - (d) A school may not sponsor visits to Yasukuni Shrine, a Gokoku Shrine (including shrines which used to be Gokoku Shrines or other shrines sacred to the spirits of the war dead) and shrines which worship mainly the war dead.
2. Concerning the selection and treatment of the teaching materials in connection with religion in public schools.
    - (a) According to the educational target, the facts concerning founders, usages, systems of various religions, physical establishments of religious organizations, activities of welfare and education, various

events of religious history and others may be included, if necessary. In these educational materials, no expression must be used such as that a doctrine, a usage, a system, an experience etc. of a certain specific religion is denied as valueless or that a certain specific one especially is highly estimated. Neither must be assumed that science and religion are inconsistent with each other. This does not preclude to ascribe natural phenomena to natural causes.

- (b) In the civics course importance must be attached to clarifying what sort of a role religions have played in social life. In a proper grade, the significance of freedom of religious faith must be taught based upon the contents of the Constitution and other laws.
  - (c) Textbooks of literature and linguistics may include religious teaching materials so far as they are selected on the ground that they are of literary or linguistic value. However, when treating them attention must be paid not to run counter to the purpose for selecting the teaching materials concerned.
  - (d) In the guidance of music, fine arts and architecture, works made under religious influence may be used as teaching materials. It is desirable to study the religious influence exerted on artistic expressions.
  - (e) The school library may be provided with books and periodicals concerning religion for reference and study.
  - (f) Objective study (comparative study or special study) on the doctrine, history, philosophy and psychology of various religions may be provided as electives for senior high schools. However, it is necessary to pay attention not to let it serve as religious education for a certain specific religion.
3. Concerning the voluntary religious activities of children and pupils of public schools.
- (a) It is free for a child or a pupil to participate as a person in a religious ceremony, festival and other functions performed by a religious organization out of school hours. Teachers, too, may do this in the same way.
  - (b) Junior high school pupils may organize a voluntary religious group as an activity out of the regular school hours.
  - (c) To activities of this kind, schools must supply school facilities on the same basis as is done in the case of other organizations of pupils within the schools. Schools must supply facilities of this kind non-discriminately and impartially to any religious group of pupils. It is necessary to let them know beforehand about this. All school authorities should have the right to decide

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whether or not to let them use a lecture hall, a classroom or other facilities for an activity of an organization of pupils out of school hours.

- (d) A religious group of pupils may request a teacher to participate in the activity as an advisor or a member in a private capacity.
- 4. Concerning relationship between religious men and school education.
  - (a) Public schools may invite a priest or believer of a religious organization to give a lecture on subjects other than religion. In such a case, it is necessary to let them well understand beforehand that they must not give an interpretation of religious doctrines and ceremonies or try to disseminate them.
  - (b) Priests and believers of a religious organization who are engaged in teaching at public schools must not appear in the classroom wearing a religious robe. Needless to say, they must obey all the rules controlling the conduct and responsibility of teachers.
- 5. At public schools, school authorities have direct responsibility concerning the custody of school buildings. Therefore, when the school authorities let a religious organization other than a pupils' organization use a school building out of school hours, they should judge in accordance with the provisions of Article 85 of the School Education Law.
- 6. The above-mentioned particulars are not applied to private schools. Private schools have the liberty to decide their own educational policy or practices in connection with religious education and voluntary activities except that no militaristic or ultra-nationalistic dogma may be taught.

This Notification seems to have been informally suggested to the Ministry of Education by the authorities of the Occupation Forces, because we can find its contents in a Memorandum for the Chief of Staff dated 9 September, 1949. This had been prepared by the Religion and Cultural Resources Division of CI&E, GHQ, and although the Memorandum was not formally adopted by the Supreme Commander, it was brought to the cognition of the Japanese Government.

The Notification may be called a temporary conclusion of the confusion of views concerning religious education, which had been produced by the Shinto Directive. The excessive

regard for the Shinto Directive, which had been issued primarily for the purpose of preventing the revival of militarism and ultranationalism but not for abolishing Shinto itself, made objective teaching of the civics course practically impossible. The Notification tried to put an end to this situation.

After the issuance of the Notification in 1949, the civics course was revised three times. The last revision was published in 1958 and became effective in April, 1961. This revision provides special classes of moral education in the curriculum, in which the fostering of religious sentiment is to be dealt with.

Although it may be said that the situation of religious education in Japanese schools is far from being ideal, the fact that reprints of the prewar textbooks on moral education, which follow in everything the old Imperial Rescript on Education, are selling very well in all bookshops at the time of this writing (April 1970) shows a trend to be followed up in the future.

Note: The original form of this article was published in *Jimbun-kagaku-kenkyusho-nempo* No. 6, p. 100 ff., Rissho University, Tokyo.

The texts of the Constitution and the Fundamental Law follow the official translation. All other texts of instructions, notifications, recommendations etc. were translated by the author.