

colleges, and higher schools and professional schools after being raised to the status of college. This is not by any means the final plan, but this seems the general plan contemplated for the reform of the present university system.

The essential point of the problem may be reduced to decentralization in the administration of university education. The first significance of the plan is to establish institutions of higher learning in each district as many as possible, thereby giving the people equal opportunity of university education. Up to the present, all institutions, state, public, and private, are unnecessarily concentrated to large cities. But now expenses have become prohibitive, and boarding houses for students have been reduced to practically nothing, so much so that the study in a large city is exceedingly a difficult matter. Under these circumstances the dispersion of higher institutions to the provinces is desirable. The second significance of the plan is to free the university education from the bureaucratic control by the Education Ministry, wherein lies the principal aim of decentralization. In the past we have seen conflicts in universities. For, institutions of higher learning were forced to serve the interest of feudalism and militarism through centralized control at the expense of their academic freedom, and freedom of learning. The tragedy of our universities was the outcome of such a system. Hence the program aimed at liberating them from the governmental bureaucracy is wholly welcome. As such the principle of dispersion of schools and authority is fundamentally sound.

A point still remains, however, to be remembered; that is, the peculiar characteristics of the Japanese university. Although the state institutions were on various occasions forced to serve the interest of the government, they also had merits which may be preserved. Formalistic unified plan may not be desirable which proposes to transfer all institutions except the ten state universities to the jurisdiction of regionally elected boards of education and regional finances. Unless certain exceptions are allowed, consequences are liable to be harmful and even destructive to good merits possessed by many colleges. For example,

such institutions as the Tokyo Institute of Technology, Tokyo College of Commerce, and Tokyo University of Literature and Science, and the Kobe College of Commerce represent the highest peak in academic standard and cherish their traditions of long standing. Students from all over the country have flocked to these schools and their educational functions have had no relations with their respective localities.

These academic characteristics and traditions are the treasures of the respective institutions from whence spring high and multi-colored cultures. It is these traditional academic characteristics that have won international respect for the Cambridge, Oxford, and London Universities of England, and Harvard, Columbia, Princeton, and Yale universities of the United States. These qualities are "cultural tradition" and "historical continuity" if quoted from the Report of the U.S. Education Mission to Japan.

It is a question of grave consequence whether such academic characteristics will be preserved in the event that the colleges are left to the administration of regional educational boards and regional finances. Destruction of academic merits and characteristics established after years of efforts will mean an irrevocable loss to the national culture. Therefore a way may be found to free the high educational institutions from the central government control while leaving the present systems intact.

DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY AND UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY

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There are many problems which require considerable thoughts in order to ascertain relations between a democratic society and institution of higher learning. And yet the interest on the part of the general public is not by any means large, and its manifestation is likewise not significant.

Since the Report of the United States Education Mission to Japan was made public, discussions concerning university problems have been aroused in some quarters. If we view this tendency as that originating from among Japanese themselves, the discussions are so far trivial and superficial compared to heated arguments on university after the Restoration (1868) up to around 1887. Before the present Tokyo University was founded in 1886, we had seen intense discussion on the side of government schools, and by such enlightened civil leaders as Yukichi Fukuzawa, Azusa Ono, Joh Niijima and others. For all that, we wonder why we fail to hear any serious discussions on education in Japan immediately after the democratic revolution.

The three main objectives for reform of institutions of higher education are (1) abolishment of centralized control of education, (2) propagation and advancement of college education, and (3) establishment of connection between people and school. The basic principle which supports this reform is "freedom of learning" provided in Article 23 of the Constitution. Concerning the first two objectives out of the three it is to be urgently pointed out that the University Chartering Committee, which is the deliberative body of the Education Minister, be cautious in its function, and that the methodical demarcation is not justified such as of drawing a dividing line between university and college in the decentralization plan applied to the government universities and regional colleges. On this matter we trust in unbiased standpoint of the Japanese University Accreditation Association.

What remains — which is also the most important problem —

is the third point which hinges on the relation between a democratic society and university. In a broad sense the problem centers on the relation between learning and society, and on the relation between university autonomy and social autonomy; it is essentially this problem which is concerned with the university problem at present and in future. This cannot be easily ignored since it is one of the fundamental public problems bound to arise together with the democratic revolution.

University problem touched on this phase is little at least among Japanese. The movement to establish a university at one's locality or to raise one's status up thereto is missing the basic question of educational institutions. In spite of this fact people seem inclined to think as if the whole problem of university education were reduced to the outward movement. Hence the government universities which have no interest in such a movement have not expressed any constructive opinion on this issue, and in particular, they have avoided the point how the university can be an integral part of a democratic society.

Before the democratic revolution in Japan the autonomy of institutions of higher learning had been subject to the bureaucratic and militaristic government, but academic freedom and progress have been more or less achieved. Since the surrounding atmosphere was then not progressive, the university autonomy separated from the social conditions appeared apparently progressive. And at the same time professors became conceited, lost dynamic attitude to its responsibility, and fostered undesirable academic cliques. Thus defects under such system must be admitted while respecting good points in the university autonomy separated from society.

If the problem is left in the hand of college professors, they will stress good points only and will be less concerned with reflections on themselves. So much so that arguments by professors will be little short of nonsense detached from the community. Lack of serious discussions which ought to spring from the general public indicates the present stage of people's mentality in the newly formed democratic country.

In a democratic society specific relation between society and university is indispensable although careful consideration is necessary for the formation of its connection. The university autonomy, self-contented and detached from the community, will find it difficult to exist from now on. This line of thought may be seen from the fact that the British Labor Cabinet has abolished certain special political privilege invested in the Oxford and Cambridge Universities. In the United States board of trustees elected from citizens has the power of authorization of university administration and appoints president of private as well as state institution.

Japan must not, however, superficially imitate examples of foreign countries as warned strongly by the Report of the U.S. Education Mission. It is true that everything must be considered in step of the present actual conditions of the country, but it is equally important that the university faculty consider means of connection with society, and that the general public take the viewpoint of higher institutions as its own people's university and as citizen's institutions.

We have merely indicated the extent of the problem which confronts us, but we are not in hurry to reach explicit conclusions. It is nevertheless evident that we have reached the stage when it is our duty to consider with proper perspective and with deeper insight the relation between university and community, and that between learning and society in the light of democratized society of Japan.