

## The Emergence of the New Four-Year University System in Postwar Japan

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THIS ARTICLE DISCUSSES THE ORIGINS and implications of the four-year university system in Japan, tracing its roots in the decision-making process on both the Japanese and American sides during the early Occupation period. The postwar 6-3-3-4 school system was authorized by the School Education Law, which was passed by the Diet on 29 March 1947, under the American Occupation. The law specified six years of schooling at the elementary level, three in junior high schools, three in senior high schools, and four at the university level. Much has been said and written to the effect that the 6-3-3-4 school system was forced upon the Japanese by the American Occupation. However, its origins are more complex than this would imply.

Joseph C. Trainor—Deputy Chief of the Education Division, Civil Information and Education Section, Supreme Commander for Allied Powers—wrote that “the 6-3-3-4 scheme was strongly urged to the United States Education Mission by the Japanese Education Committee [made up of Japanese] as the most desirable pattern for the reorganization of the Japanese education.”<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Kennoki Toshihiro, ex-Minister of Education, claimed that “the Mission’s visit was, I think, a clever ploy of the American Occupation policy. They organized a plan by which education matters were dealt with by a mission of educators and not by military officers, and arranged for the Japanese Education Committee to cooperate with them in order to produce a report that would be voluntarily accepted by the Japanese side.”<sup>2</sup>

The Report of the U.S. Education Mission to Japan (USEMJ), issued in March 1946, did recommend a 6-3-3 system, but not a four-year university system. If this report was the origin of Japan’s postwar education reforms, it is puzzling how the university system emerged. Research has yet to address this question.

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The chapter on higher education in the Report, in contrast to the many recommendations made regarding elementary and secondary education, makes hardly any specific recommendations for the reform of the prewar university system, which at the time consisted of a hierarchy with the imperial universities at its apex, followed in descending order by government, public, and private universities; *koto gakko* (boys' higher schools) as preparatory educational institutions for the imperial universities; *senmon gakko* (colleges for special training); and normal schools. The Report does not mention, for example, whether *koto gakko* and *senmon gakko* should be continued, how many years should be required for the new university course, or how the postgraduate school system should be organized. Interestingly, and contrary to popular belief, these were issues debated by the Japanese Education Committee (JEC) established as a Japanese advisory committee to the American USEM. The Mission, however, hardly touched upon these matters, recommending only (in Chapter IV of the Report, "Teaching and Education of Teachers") that university education for teachers' training should be for a period of four years.

Thus, the Report does not propose concrete measures for restructuring the system, though it suggests the introduction of general education.<sup>3</sup> What the Report does set out is "ideals" for the democratization of higher education. It is on this point that it is most obviously at variance with the suggestions made by its counterpart, the U.S. Education Mission to Germany, in August 1946.<sup>4</sup> The suggested "ideals" for the democratization of the Japanese university system remained theoretical only, and they have remained a controversial point in any discussion of the emergence of the four-year university system in Japan, organized along the lines of the American-style single-track school system.<sup>5</sup>

It is evident from SCAP documents that General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, Civil Information and Education Section (hereafter, GHQ, SCAP, and CI&E, respectively), Education Division, referred to the four-year university as though it had been a recommendation of the Mission. It also is clear that the JEC had produced its own plan for a four-year university in order to suggest it to the Education Division, as well as to the Mission.

In this paper, I trace the input and influence of a number of actors on both the U.S. and the Japanese sides. In particular, I focus on the activities of Nambara Shigeru, then president of Tokyo Imperial University, who had a strong influence on the reform of higher education, first as chairman of the JEC and then as vice-chairman of the Japan Education Reform Council. The dissertation written by Mark T. Orr, former chief of the Education Division of the CI&E, entitled "Education Reform Policy in Occupied Japan,"<sup>6</sup> and interviews with him suggest that the Mission's Report proposed the 6-3-3 system by direct statement and the four-year university system by implication.<sup>7</sup> Referring to the *Trainor Papers*, the minutes of the Japan Education Reform Council, and the testimony based on the interviews with Orr, the present article examines how the JEC, the Japan Education Reform Council, the Ministry of Education, and the Education Divi-

sion of the CI&E participated in the emergence of the new four-year university system.

### **The Prewar and Postwar Higher Education Reform Plan**

The Japanese Education Committee debate was not the first attempt to deal with higher education. A remarkable prewar reform plan was presented in 1937 by the Kyoiku Kaikaku Doshikai (Education Reform Fraternity) after several years of study, with Konoe Fumimaro, twice prime minister in the late 1930s, as the leading figure. This reform plan proposed three stages in the school structure—elementary schools, secondary schools, and universities—and suggested the abolition of *koto gakko*. It also suggested that the existing universities and *senmon gakko* be reorganized in order to establish a new university system.

The JEC recommended that “after the three years of higher secondary school, a four- or five-year university be provided.” In “The School System Section” of the recommendations they suggested abolishing the old system of *koto gakko* and *senmon gakko*, and also changing the number of years required for university study from three years to four or five years.

It should also be noted that in February 1946, prior to the Mission’s arrival, a Research Committee on the Education System at Tokyo Imperial University was formed by president Nambara independent of the JEC. They started to discuss the school system in March. This committee also discussed the issue of the mandatory period required for university courses, and finally produced a “Report on the School System and Years Required for Graduation” (15 April 1946), stating: “the universities admit graduates from high schools . . . and provide four years education.” Thus, it clearly set forth a single and uniform four-year university track. The report of this research committee is important in determining Nambara’s influence on the Mission and the Education Division. It also shows that educators were discussing “academic freedom” in relation to the drafting of the new Japanese Constitution under the Occupation.<sup>8</sup>

Those within the JEC who supported Nambara, in order to push forward the unification of a four-year university within higher education institutions, were Toda Teizo, Sano Toshikata, and Oshima Masanori. All of them had formed the Kyoiku Kaikaku Doshikai and were affiliated with Tokyo Imperial University.<sup>9</sup>

### **GHQ/CI&E and Higher Education Reform**

#### **THE CI&E PLAN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM**

During the early part of the Occupation, the CI&E had no specific policy for the reform of the postwar Japanese education system; they invited the USEMJ in order to seek its advice. The Report of the Mission and Recommendations of the

JEC became important guidelines for the CI&E in implementing education reforms in Japan. However, the reform of education, including the school system, was not discussed from a long-term viewpoint as it was considered that Japanese education was in a state of flux.

For example, an interesting paper filed under "GHQ Documents" shows that the CI&E did not have any definite plans for higher education even as late as June 1946, after the Mission had recommended the 6-3-3 school system in its Report. In this document, four reform plans for the school system are illustrated by a chart: Plans 1 and 2, drawn up by the JEC, the Mission's plan, and a plan by the Ministry of Education ("staff plan").

Mark Orr, in an interview, confirmed that the CI&E had already decided to adopt the 6-3-3 school system in line with the Mission's recommendation. Therefore, the CI&E document with the four reform plans had been prepared as reference material for discussing the university system. The fourth plan, from the Ministry of Education, proposes a 6-3-4-3 school system (six years of elementary, three years of junior high school, four years of *koto gakko*, and three years of *daigaku*), a mix of the prewar and postwar school systems.<sup>10</sup> In an interview, Edwin F. Wigglesworth, second head of the Higher Education Branch of the Education Division, mentioned that the Japanese studied the Report more carefully than the CI&E.<sup>11</sup>

#### **CONTROVERSIAL POINTS CONCERNING HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM WITHIN GHQ AND THE CI&E**

The Education Division was directly responsible for matters regarding Japanese higher education under the Occupation. However, some other sections in GHQ were also deeply involved as well. Orr describes the organization of GHQ at that time in his dissertation:

There were numerous areas in which the responsibility assigned to the Division and to other Divisions and Sections of the General Headquarters overlapped. For example, the Economic and Scientific Section was interested in scientific research, most of which was carried on by universities and attached institutes; the Public Health and Welfare Section was interested in medical and public health education; the Natural Resources Section was concerned with education in the fields of forestry, agriculture, and fisheries.<sup>12</sup>

Murayama Matsuo, who was in charge of higher education in the Ministry of Education at that time, testified that suggestions from the American side concerning higher education were complicated: "The CI&E and the Ministry of Education could accept the reforms as far as the 6-3-3 school system, but in the case of higher education, other sections in GHQ made special demands based on

their own interests. The Public Health and Welfare Section was very demanding of the Ministry of Education for medical and dentistry education, and they made those demands directly, bypassing the CI&E."<sup>13</sup>

For example, in August 1947 the Economic and Scientific Section invited a U.S. Scientific Advisory Group to Japan. This group, chaired by Roger Adams, consisted of six eminent scientists, who made important recommendations for science education and also higher education.<sup>14</sup> The recommendations were basically in line with the Report of the USEMJ, except that they criticized the inclination towards pure scientific research within the old Japanese university system. They also emphasized the need for natural science and technological education in order to revive and reconstruct the Japanese economy.

On the basis of the Advisory Group's recommendations, the Economic and Science Section set forth plans for university reform in which the main emphasis was laid upon natural science in order to promote scientific research for economic reconstruction. Concurrently, the CI&E was stressing the humanities-based general education that had already been proposed by the Mission. It is said that this discrepancy within GHQ triggered controversy over how higher education reform should be carried out.<sup>15</sup> This divergence was compounded by divided opinions within the Education Division itself. According to Trainor, "Education Division reflected the variation of thought which characterized higher education at home, with staff members within the Higher Education Branch of the Division in disagreement with each other on many issues and with varied conceptions of desirable directions to which Japanese higher institutions could turn."<sup>16</sup>

In addition to the above confusion, the activities of Walter C. Eells, a junior college specialist who was well known for his anti-Communist speeches, should not be ignored.<sup>17</sup> Eells, the third coordinator of higher education in the Education Division, came to Japan on 1 April 1947 to relieve Edwin Wigglesworth. According to the *Trainor Papers*, 30 April 1947, he submitted a paper that criticized the policies on higher education set forth by the Division. He pointed out that the four-year university system was overemphasized in Japan; stating that the 6-3-3-4 system was not common in America, he suggested the need for two-year *senmon gakko* and junior colleges to provide greater flexibility in meeting local needs. These suggestions and criticisms confused the Education Division, which had been discussing the four-year university plan in a positive atmosphere;<sup>18</sup> they also confused the Japanese side, which had believed the 6-3-3-4 system was popular in the United States.

The *Trainor Papers* record that Eells insisted that the Japanese university system should be restored to its prewar state, on the grounds that its European structure was better than the American system.<sup>19</sup> This naturally confused the Japanese educators, such as Nambara Shigeru and the members of the JEC making the Committee's report, who believed that university reform was essential.

ALFRED CROFTS OF THE EDUCATION DIVISION'S HIGHER EDUCATION  
BRANCH, AND THE INFLUENCE OF KOREAN EDUCATION REFORM UNDER U.S.  
MILITARY GOVERNMENT

Alfred Crofts was the first officer in charge of the Higher Education Branch of the Education Division (followed by Wigglesworth and Eells).<sup>20</sup> Before he was posted to Japan, he had worked in Korea under U.S. Military Government, and there he had tried to wipe out any vestiges of Japanese colonization by instituting fundamental reforms based on democratic ideology.

The Korean Educational Council had had a critical influence on education reform in Korea after its liberation from Japanese colonial rule. This council commenced its activities in November 1945, and discussed educational ideals, the system and its contents, and so on until March of the following year. Committee II of this council, which was assigned to discuss the school system, suggested the abolition of the multitrack education system, which had given encouragement to the ruling class during the colonial period.

Crofts participated in Committee VIII (higher education) of the Korean Educational Council as a staff member of the Educational Bureau. Accordingly, it should be considered that his experience in Korean higher education reform exerted some influence on the Education Division of the CI&E in Japan.<sup>21</sup> The Korean education system was drastically reformed, and the new system was instituted from September 1946.<sup>22</sup> The value of the introduction of compulsory education for the first time in Korean history was recognized, and a four-year university system corresponding to the American system was to be introduced. Crofts assumed his post as an officer in charge of higher education at the request of Robert K. Hall, in the Education Division. He became the officer responsible, on the Education Division side, for communicating with the Mission subcommittee on higher education. Hall was a close friend of Crofts, thanking him, in fact, in the preface of his book, "for reading and criticizing the outline."<sup>23</sup>

In Japan, according to the *Trainor Papers*, an organization calling itself the Association of Private Universities submitted a document to the Education Division on 12 March 1946, during the USEMJ visit, that sharply criticized the *kan-ritsu* (government) universities as training institutes for high governmental officials and the "*teidai* [imperial universities] as being responsible for the nurturing of bureaucrats and also for the outbreak of the present war, having 'conspired with the militarists'." It goes on to say that "in order to destroy militarism completely, it is therefore necessary to overthrow the '*teidaibatsu*' [the clique of the imperial universities]."<sup>24</sup> Crofts handed this document over to Wilson M. Compton, chairman of Committee IV of the Mission, as material for discussion. Crofts was thought to be opposed to the imperial universities. However, his criticism was not of the educational quality of the imperial universities, but of their monopolizing of the higher civil service.<sup>25</sup>

In fact, Crofts testified that he wanted Tokyo Imperial University to be evaluated as equal in status to Harvard University.<sup>26</sup> Orr states:

During the war, the Japanese army subtly manipulated schools by using the Ministry of Education in order to promote militarism and ultranationalism. That the Ministry of Education was only an instrument to their purpose is beyond argument. However, Nambara and the officials related to Tokyo Imperial University strongly rejected the instructions of the Ministry of Education, protesting that the Government was trying to use methods of thought-control. I am convinced that the other state universities followed the example of Tokyo Imperial University. In other words, despite the prevailing conditions, they maintained a critical spirit.<sup>27</sup>

Orr goes on to say: "It should not be overlooked that the Mission and the Education Division of the CI&E recognized that prewar Japanese universities, including Tokyo Imperial University, were rather independent from state power."<sup>28</sup>

These testimonies contradict the established theory that the Mission and the CI&E were critical of the imperial university structure, and that the new university system was a reform "forced" on Japanese by the Occupation in order to eliminate prewar educational elitism. As a matter of fact, Committee IV's draft version of the Mission's report proposed instead the necessity for maintaining and strengthening the leadership of Tokyo Imperial University.<sup>29</sup> However, the final report suggested the reorganization of the imperial university structure, proposing "a corrective to the preferential treatment given today to the graduates of imperial universities." This revision of imperial universities was influenced by the Japanese side, particularly the Association of Private Universities, which wished to promote its own private institutions.<sup>30</sup>

### **The Influence of Nambara Shigeru and Higher Education Reform**

#### **THE REPORT OF THE FIRST U.S. EDUCATION MISSION TO JAPAN (1946)**

On 21 March 1946 Nambara Shigeru, chairman of the JEC and president of Tokyo Imperial University, met secretly with the chairman of the Mission, George D. Stoddard. The transcript of the meeting is found in an 11-page typed report entitled "Special Report by Shigeru Nambara, President of Tokyo Imperial University and Chairman of the Japanese Education Committee to G. D. Stoddard, March 21, 1946."<sup>31</sup>

The Mission was in the process of preparing its final report, and thus it can be considered that this meeting influenced proposals for education reform. In this transcript, Nambara suggested to Stoddard that the recommendation on school reform be to "model the whole scheme after the American plan, building up elementary schools, high schools, colleges, and universities in a natural sequence with wide opportunities at all levels." At the same time, he mentioned that the Ministry of Education was in opposition to the introduction of an American-style single-track school system and had its own plan. In short, Nambara

suggested the possibilities of making a recommendation for an American-style single-track school system.

During this period, Committee III of the Mission drafted a recommendation for the extension of compulsory education and coeducation, based on the 6-5 school system, which the Ministry of Education had just restored. However, in the final Report of the Mission, after the above meeting between Nambara and Stoddard, this recommendation was changed from the 6-5 Japanese school system to the 6-3-3 American school system.

On 25 March, when the last round of discussions was held between the JEC and the Mission, Nambara and Takagi Yasaka, a member of the JEC, met with Hall of the Education Division and presented a report entitled "Education Reform—Official Version of the Japanese Education Committee." In this report, they officially suggested changing to the 6-3-3 school system, and also made proposals concerning higher education:

Because of the strangle hold that the *koto gakko* (boys' higher school) has on the education of Japan it is the real cause of the *gakubatsu* or educational clique. The fate of a boy is decided when he enters the *koto gakko*, they and only they can become the leaders of Japan. Hence he would abolish the *koto gakko* and provide a graded system of schools, all of which can lead either to a terminal course or to admission to a university level institution.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, the JEC saw the *koto gakko* as the origin of the *gakubatsu*, and wanted to abolish it by providing a single-track system leading up to university. Furthermore, the same committee advocated that

The differences between the *senmon gakko* (college of specialized training) and the *daigaku* (university of one or more faculties) should be eliminated, and all institutions at the higher level should have the same academic standing. . . . Post-graduate institutes should be established in all universities. . . . Normal schools as now organized in Japan should be abolished.

Despite these recommendations, however, the Report does not contain any concrete proposals for higher education reform. This can be due to various factors. We can see from the above that the Mission initially upheld the existing 6-5 Japanese School system, putting emphasis on democratization within the school system and declining to impose its own reforms. Nevertheless, it finally recommended the 6-3-3 system in response to the suggestion of the Japanese side. This recommendation was decided on only at the final stage of drawing up the Report. In light of this, it is possible to conjecture that lack of time prevented discussion of the university system, and also that the Mission members felt that reform of the university system should be discussed after the 6-3-3 system was established.<sup>33</sup>

The reason that the USEMJ recommended the 6-3-3 school system and was



less specific regarding higher education reform in the Report was simply because it was requested by the Japanese side, particularly the JEC, whose members were mostly college and university professors. They were very helpful in supporting reforms in elementary and secondary education but not in their own universities. Trainor stated, in fact, that the Education Division was directly concerned with the problems of elementary and secondary education.<sup>34</sup> Thus, the Education Division was more prone to reform elementary and secondary education, paying particular attention to the fundamental and compulsory education system. Furthermore, there were disagreements over this issue among Education Division members. According to Trainor, there was some emotion preference in the Education Division for a four-year higher institution program.<sup>35</sup>

#### **THE REPORT OF THE SECOND U.S. EDUCATION MISSION TO JAPAN (1950)**

At the beginning of the chapter "Higher Education," the Report of the Second U.S. Education Mission states:

In making recommendations on higher education, the First United States Education Mission to Japan devoted most of its attention to desirable improvements within the framework of the existing institutions.

This statement resembles the beginning of a speech by Nambara, entitled "The Problem of Higher Learning," that he delivered at a conference with the Mission on 6 September 1950:

You made no particular recommendations in your last report of 1946, except on teacher training institutes. This, I believe, was due to the wise policy of your mission. That is, you seem to have considered it the responsibility of Japanese educators to think out a proper university system suited to our conditions.<sup>36</sup>

In regard to this point, however, Orr's understanding is that although the first Mission did not explicitly recommend a four-year university system in its Report, the contents of the recommendations were easily interpreted as suggestions for such. Orr clarifies the reasons by citing the summary of the first Report, which states that "to fulfill these purposes, higher education should become an opportunity for the many, not a privilege of the few"; and "in addition to providing more colleges, it is proposed that more universities be established according to a considered plan." He also states, in a letter dated 3 August 1992, that the Education Division planned not only four-year colleges, but also universities including graduate schools: "I suspect we just assumed the writers were thinking of U.S. models when they referred to colleges and universities. To us this meant four years of study for the 'college' classification and four years plus a graduate program for the 'university' classification."<sup>37</sup>

## THE MINUTES OF THE JAPAN EDUCATION REFORM COUNCIL

The Japanese Education Committee (JEC) merged with the Japan Education Reform Council (JERC) in August 1946, under the terms of SCAP's directive "Committee of Japanese Educators." The directive specified that "the committee, after the departure of the Education Mission, continue to study the problems set forth in [paragraph] 3 above and submit periodic reports on its findings and recommendations to the Ministry of Education and to the Education Division, Civil Information and Education Staff Section." Nineteen of the twenty-nine members of the JEC, including the chairman, were reappointed to the JERC, which was far more influential than the JEC because it was given power to formulate policy and was directly under the Cabinet, not under the Ministry of Education.

On 18 October 1946 the seventh general meeting of the JERC was held in the conference room of the Vice-Ministry of Education, on the fourth floor of the Ministry of Education. In his opening speech, chairman Abe Yoshishige, former Minister of Education, stated as follows:

The American Education Mission recommended the 6-3-3 system, as you already know. They intended it as advice and said that it was for the Japanese to take the initiative. This was their suggestion. However, at present, the Education Division on the American side regards the Mission's recommendations almost as though they were commands. In addition, when the Mission came to Japan, a committee on the Japanese side was organized to cooperate with them in solving educational problems. In this committee, the majority on the whole shared the American view [on the 6-3-3 system], although it was recorded in the report as a general opinion, not as a decision. I am not sure whether we are required to submit this record to the American side or not, but they obviously have read it, and found that we share the same view of the 6-3-3 system. As a result, they told the Ministry of Education to implement this system immediately. This is the present situation. If the 6-3-3 system is suitable for our situation, it is not wise to be over-cautious in discussing this matter. However, an issue like the school system will exert a powerful influence on any future situation. For example, it will affect budget-related education. Therefore, I think we, the Japan Education Reform Council, should take time to thoroughly discuss the matter in order to reach a decisive conclusion, regardless of the circumstances leading up to this point. The Education Division on the American side understands that this committee is controlled neither by them nor by the Ministry of Education. Therefore, they expect us to discuss the issue freely and thoroughly, before reaching any decisive conclusion.<sup>38</sup>

The above is his whole speech, which detailed the position of the Japanese at that time. It is obvious that they were disturbed by a change in the education policies of the Occupation, which had taken recommendations made by the

USEMJ and JEC in an advisory capacity and turned them into the education reform policy for Japan. It is also clear that the Occupation put “pressure” on the Ministry of Education to actualize the reform of the school system, citing the Mission’s report as support for its views.

Amano Teiyu, principal of Daiichi Koto Gakko and a member of the JERC, had the following to say on the same day:

I wonder if there are some misunderstandings among us in this committee, concerning the Recommendation of the Japanese Education Committee. As the chairman has explained, we never made any decisions. At the chairman’s suggestion, we simply held discussions in order to share our general views. We were particularly asked to thoroughly discuss the matter of the required years for each grade in the school system, like the 6-3-3. Therefore, I feel rather strange when I find that our general view was recorded as our decision. I think that Nambara, present vice-chairman of this Council and the then chairman of the Japanese Education Committee, should be well aware that we did not know that we were expected to present any conclusion (to the American side). When we were discussing whether we should report that the idea of the 6-3-3 system was supported by a large majority of our members at the general meeting, most of us thought it not wise to do so, in order to avoid being restricted by it. I don’t know how the record of the Committee was handed over to the American side. But the Committee never reached any resolution, particularly concerning the required years. This is my understanding of the matter.

In reply, Nambara explained:

The Committee for cooperating with the U.S. Mission was organized this spring. I was chairman of the Committee. As you explained just now, we had agreed on a certain direction after the discussions. I understand that this subject had been discussed in the subcommittee in the first place, and then brought into the general meeting, where it was finally resolved. As I explained at the meeting, we presented the report to the educational authority, in order to keep Mr. Abe, the Minister of Education, informed at that time. I don’t know how it reached GHQ. As far as I was told, GHQ obtained information about the existence of the recommendation through the Ministry of Education, and asked them to show it to them. I imagine that they obtained it through the Ministry of Education. As to the content, I don’t remember clearly the discussion relating to the numbers of years, such as 6-3-3, but there were also other varying opinions, such as 6-2-2. I believe that we have already discussed this point. At first the Committee was split between the two plans before we reached an agreement.

It was obvious that Nambara did not reply to Amano’s question directly. In spite of the understanding within the JEC, why was the existence of the

recommendation of the JEC leaked to the CI&E? The *Tokyo Shinbun* (English edition) dated 30 March 1946 reported under the headline "Reformation Plans of the Japanese Education Committee"<sup>39</sup> that the Committee "has decided to present to the Education Mission its opinions on the 3 important current problems of educational reform." As mentioned above, SCAP's directive specified that the Committee had to submit periodic reports to the Education Division, as well as to the Ministry of Education. However, the formulation and compilation of the Japanese opinions, without their having been reported to the Education Division, contravened this directive.

Eventually, Nambara expressed his regret for the Committee's negligence to the Education Division and told the Ministry of Education to make a copy of the recommendations. The Education Division officially received it around 5 June 1946.

However, when we examine the above records of the JERC, we see that there was a misunderstanding regarding the SCAP directive among the Japanese educators. They did not know that the directive specified the Committee would submit periodic reports to both the Ministry of Education and the Education Division of CI&E. In fact, the Japanese translation of the document supplied by the Central Liaison Office is different from the original SCAP directive as follows:

That the Committee, after the departure of the Education Mission, continue to study the problems set forth in paragraph 3 above and submit periodic reports on its findings and recommendations to the Ministry of Education and to the Education Division, Civil Information and Education Staff Section. [original SCAP directive]

That the Committee, after the departure of the Education Mission, continue to study the problems set forth in paragraph 3 above and *that the Ministry of Education* submit periodic reports on its findings and recommendations to the Education Division, Civil Information and Education Staff Section. [Japanese document, emphasis added]

We do not know if this shift in responsibility from the Committee to the Ministry of Education was the result of a deliberate mistranslation.

Consequently, the Education Division found that the recommendations for education reform supported the whole area covered by the Mission's own recommendations, which satisfied them.<sup>40</sup>

### **The Recommendations of the Japan Education Reform Council and Higher Education Reform**

It is clear that the JERC took part in reorganizing higher education. In his memoir, Trainor reviews the situation during those days as follows:

The recommendation of the Reform Council was in many respects an amazing thing. No clear-cut recommendation of this type had been made by the American Mission which seemed to assume that the existing types of institutions would be continued. While there was some emotional preference in the Education Division for a four-year higher institution program, the Reform Council had been insulated from Division thought. The powerful Imperial Universities, who might have been thought to influence the Council itself, stood to face a rather violent reorganization and the disruption of many time-honored patterns in shifting to a four-year program. . . .

Perhaps the most important factor which influenced the thinking of the Reform Council was the recognition by certain of its leaders that the reform of Japanese education which had been implied since the end of the war and about which so much had been said and written involved deep and serious changes of purpose, pattern and practice. . . . What was needed, in the view of the Reform Council, was a completely new concept of higher education, one based upon its function in a democratic society. As a consequence, it was conceived that a new type of institution, not much like any of those which existed at the end of the war, was needed for Japan. . . . In seeking for this new type of institution a number of considerations entered. With the elementary and secondary levels of the school system to be established on a twelve-year basis, the practicability of a basic four-year level for higher education became evident.<sup>41</sup>

In other words, he suggests that the actualization of the four-year university system was an inevitable consequence of the 6-3-3 system that had been adopted. Trainor goes on: "The four-year higher education institution involved an educational reform which Japan was not required to adopt. The Occupation did not demand it or press for it, nor would it have taken such a stand at any time."<sup>42</sup> In this manner, he emphasizes the initiative of the Japanese side. Moreover, he continues:

There were powerful forces in and out of Japanese education which would have preferred the perpetuation of many aspects of the old system. Despite these things the decision was made by Japanese educational leaders because of their conviction that deep-rooted changes were necessary and to them the shift which they recommended contained the best for bringing about those changes. . . . [ellipsis in original]

Then,

Had the former pattern of higher education continued, there would have been a strong possibility that sooner or later the pressures and demands from the higher level would have forced reversion of educational reform which took place at the elementary and secondary levels. . . .

Thus, Trainor describes how influential the recommendations of the JERC were

in terms of improving higher education and also retaining the elementary and secondary system with certain changes.

Trainor's memoir is convincing as it is by a person involved in the proceedings at the time, although the memoir was published in 1983. However, it differs from the record of discussions held by the JERC. The following opinions are recorded in the minutes of Special Committee VI, which discussed the higher-level school system at its third meeting on 28 November 1946.

Citing the main points of discussion, I will examine these minutes with special reference to Trainor's memoir.<sup>43</sup>

No. 29 (Sano Toshikata):

Concerning alternatives for the 6-3-3 system, I think it a very good idea that three years [of high school] should be extended to five years, according to the circumstances, because there exists a strong desire to retain the virtues of, and respect for, *koto gakko*. And *koto gakko* themselves desire to remain as preparatory schools for universities. I also think it good to provide the proper course of three or four, or even five years [for high school], in correspondence with the three years [for high school] of the 6-3-3 system. In the case of a three- or five-year course [for high school], I feel that a three-year university will be fine. Therefore, I think it unnecessary to provide a four-year [university], where only a three-year is necessary. What does everyone think about this point?

No. 17 (Amano Teiyu):

At our last meeting, I think that we suggested that beyond the 6-3 system, either three or four or five years would be fine. And for the higher level, either three or four years would be acceptable. Do we proceed along the lines of this plan?

Chairman (Komiya Toyotaka):

We concluded so.

No. 33 (Kinoshita Kazuo):

Up until today, we have been considering that the 6-3-3-4 would do, and that the 6-3-4 or 6-3-5 would also be acceptable. And at the higher level, three or four or five also would do. I understand that we agreed in principle on this matter. Therefore, I think that we'd better carry it forward.

In other words, the JERC focussed on how to deal with the *koto gakko* of the old system. The JEC reported their decision to abolish it, due to its being "the cause of an educational clique," in a report entitled, "Education Reform—Official Version of the Japanese Education Committee," which was presented to Hall of the Education Division on 25 March 1946, while the Mission was still in Japan. It was obvious that Nambara was aggressive in promoting a 6-3-3-4 system back in March. He was the chairman of the JEC and worked with the chairman of the USEMJ.

Subsequently, on 27 December 1946, at the 17th general meeting of the

JERC, the Council members decided on the first proposals for the reform of the school system. They proposed that “the three-year high school (a tentative name) be provided, but that a four- or five-year system would also be acceptable.” And in connection with education institutions at the higher level, they suggested that “schools above high schools be four-year universities, in principle. However, universities should provide three- or five-year courses.” Thus, their proposals were flexible and adaptable.

It should also be noted, however, that by 27 December the Education Division had exerted enormous pressure on the Ministry of Education to create a new curriculum and textbooks that would conform to a 6-3-3-4 system. The JERC could not help being influenced by this knowledge.<sup>44</sup>

However, according to the *Trainor Papers*, the Education Division decided, on 21 October 1946, to “bring about a simplification of the present system and to align it with higher education levels in the American countries [sic] (the 6-3-3-4 plan).” They also mentioned the 6-3-3-4 system as one of their major objectives, and decided that Edwin F. Wigglesworth and John R. Nicols should be in charge of the implementation of that system as a matter of priority.<sup>45</sup> Here we can see a subtle discrepancy between the decision of the Education Division and the above discussion at the fifth special meeting of the JERC (28 November 1946).

### Conclusion

A draft bill of the School Education Law, which was drawn up by the Ministry of Education, had a great deal of its content revised in the process of discussions with the Education Division. After screening by the Legislation Department, it was accepted by a Cabinet meeting on 7 March 1947 and finally presented to the Imperial Diet on 15 March 1947. Takahashi Seiichiro, the Minister of Education, stated in the House of Representatives:

In regard to the simplification of the school system, the former complicated and diversified structure, consisting of *kokumin gakko* [primary school], youth school, middle school, girls' high school, *jitsugyo gakko* [vocational school], normal school, *senmon gakko*, *koto gakko*, and university, will be simplified according to the stages of the physical and psychological development of the students. In principle, the school system will be organized into primary school, secondary school, high school and university to form the 6-3-3-4 system.<sup>46</sup>

He went on:

The 6-3-3-4 system is not only an American system, but is also becoming universal. From the viewpoint of international cultural exchange, adopting this system will be significant.

Eventually, on 27 March 1947, it was passed as drafted; it was promulgated 31 March and came into force on 1 April 1947.<sup>47</sup>

In relation to the above passages, the *History of the Non-Military Activities of the Occupation of Japan*, by GHQ/SCAP, records:

Establishment of a standard 6-3-3 system meant the abolition of the youth school, elimination of the old differences in content between boys' and girls' schools and courses, and opened the way for transfer from one school to another having the same grade level, facilitating coeducation and eliminating the old "blind alleys" in educational progression.

Above the secondary schools, the law provided for new four-year universities of one or more faculties but ignored the Reform Council's companion recommendation that three- and five-year higher educational institutions also be authorized. Kindergartens for children 3 to 6 years old were provided. Prefectures were required to establish schools with accommodations sufficient to care for all blind, deaf or other physically or mentally handicapped children of school age.<sup>48</sup>

As can be seen from the above, the JERC suggested alternative recommendations, consisting of a four-year university in principle and including three- or five-year universities. According to the *Trainor Papers*, the Education Division strongly rejected the awarding of a Bachelor of Arts degree at a three-year university, but, at the same time, approved the "unit system" awarding a degree to whoever obtained the required units within three years at a four-year university.<sup>49</sup> The Education Division intended to provide the "unit system" in order to avoid standardization that might be created by uniformity between universities. Eventually, the School Education Law provided that a university require "four" years, and the "grade system" was adopted in practice.

A three-year university system was discussed by the JERC in relation to the *koto gakko* of the old system. Sano stated clearly at a special meeting of the JERC, on 28 November 1946, that "*koto gakko* of the old system should be given an opportunity to remain as four- or five-year high schools. In this case, a three-year university will do."<sup>50</sup> Accordingly, the university reform plan was based on retaining the *koto gakko*. However, the debate over a three-year university system was put to an end by the abolition of the *koto gakko* through establishing the 6-3-3 system.

Thus the idea of the new four-year university system originated from the Japanese plan. However, it took concrete form within the structure of the 6-3-3 system which was adopted by the Mission as its final proposal. The diversified system of a three-, four-, or five-year university, which was proposed by the Japanese side, was in reaction to the Occupation policy of equality of opportunity and popularization. Accordingly, a single and uniform four-year university track can be understood as a necessary consequence of the Occupation policy.

It is necessary to touch on the merits and demerits of the new university system. It cannot be denied that the Japanese side pushed energetically toward



reform of the school structure. The CI&E not only provided the momentum; it also exerted significant influence in directing the 6-3-3-4 system. However, this reform was a culmination of the school system reform plan that had been brought to maturity by the Japanese side prior to the war. The high ideals concerning higher education stated in the Report of the First U.S. Education Mission in 1946 were not reflected in the idea of the new university system. The new university system started in 1949 in accordance with the School Education Law of 1947, but it was affected by the 1950 outbreak of the Korean War, particularly in the area of higher education. As a result, the arrangement of the school system was unchanged, but the content was drastically modified to meet the demands of the American Far East policy, and the power of the Ministry of Education was restored.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Joseph C. Trainor, *Educational Reform in Occupied Japan: Trainor's Memoir* (Tokyo: Meisei University Press, 1983), p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> Gary H. Tsuchimochi, *Education Reform in Postwar Japan: The 1946 U.S. Education Mission* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1993), p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Kaigo Tokiomi and Terasaki Masao, *Sengo Nihon no kyoiku kaikaku 9—daigaku kyoiku* [Postwar Japanese education reform, vol. 9: University education] (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1976), pp. 70–71.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>5</sup> Ohsaki Hitoshi, "Sengo daigaku kaikaku saiho" [Review of postwar university reform] in *IDE gendai no koto kyoiku* (January–September 1994).

<sup>6</sup> Mark T. Orr, "Education Reform Policy in Occupied Japan" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1954). Concerning this matter, Monta L. Osborne, staff member of the Education Division, also states that the Mission recommended the 6-3-3-4 school system in his unpublished "Education in the New Japan" draft report.

<sup>7</sup> Interviews with Mark T. Orr were held at the University of South Florida, between 1 and 9 September 1994. The author wishes to thank Dr. Orr for his most generous assistance in this study. Errors of fact or interpretation are the author's responsibility.

<sup>8</sup> For the minutes of this committee, refer to Terasaki Masao, "Tokyo Daigaku kyoiku seido kenkyu iinkai kiroku" [Minutes of the Education System Research Committee at University of Tokyo], *Shiryō* [Materials], *Tokyo Daigaku shi kiyō dai 7 go* [Bulletin of History of Tokyo University, no. 7] (March 1989). Thus, during the most crucial period of postwar education reforms in 1946, Nambara's direct and indirect influence was very strong. However, there are various and subtly differing evaluations of his contribution, and one can only attribute these to political diplomacy.

<sup>9</sup> Ohsaki Hitoshi, "Sengo daigaku kaikaku saiho—Daigaku ichigenka no katei (sono 2)" [Review of postwar university reform: The process of the unification of the university (no. 2)], in *IDE gendai no koto kyoiku*, no. 353 (February 1994), p. 76.

<sup>10</sup> "Japanese Education Committee Report," GHQ/SCAP Records (RG 331 National Archives and Records Service, Box no. 5395). Up until this point, the author had thought that "staff plan" referred to the staff plan of the Education Division. However, as is

proved by Orr's testimony, "staff" in this case means officials of the Ministry of Education.

<sup>11</sup> Harry Wray, Interview of Edwin Wigglesworth (29 July 1983) at Litchfield, Conn. (held by Educational History of the Occupation Research Center, Meisei University), p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> Orr, "Education Reform Policy in Occupied Japan," p. 93.

<sup>13</sup> Murayama Matsuo, "Sengo koto kyoiku no kaiko to tenbo" [Review and prospects of postwar higher education], *21 Seiki Foramu Dai 3 kai, Nagai Michio Bukai Gijiroku* [The third of the 21st-century forums: Minutes of the group of Nagai Michio] (27 January 1994).

<sup>14</sup> Concerning the U.S. Scientific Advisory Group to Japan, refer to Tsuchimochi, *Education Reform in Postwar Japan*.

<sup>15</sup> Hata Takashi, "Sengo daigaku kaikaku no katei—sengo daigaku seisaku, seido, gyosei no tenkai" [The process of postwar university reform: Development of policy, system, and administration of the postwar university], *Bulletin of History of Aichi University* (March 1994): 43.

<sup>16</sup> Trainor, *Education Reform in Occupied Japan*, p. 222.

<sup>17</sup> Letter from Nambara Shigeru to Orr, dated 15 August 1949, *Orr Papers*.

<sup>18</sup> Hata, "Sengo daigaku kaikaku no katei," p. 40.

<sup>19</sup> "Problems of Higher Education Branch," from Deputy Chief, Education Division, to Chief, Education Division, 16 July 1947, *Orr Papers*.

<sup>20</sup> Crofts himself told the author, in an interview on 17 September 1986, that he assumed office as the first president of Keijo Imperial University. The 30th Annual Report of the University of Seoul, however, states that the first president was Harry B. Ansted.

<sup>21</sup> In this connection, Orr is negative, and he testified that the movement of the school system reform in Korea influenced the Japanese side, rather than the Education Division.

<sup>22</sup> Seki Eiko, "Bei gunseika ni okeru kankokujin no kyoiku saiken doryoku" [Koreans' efforts to rebuild education under the U.S. military government], *The Han*, no. 112 (1988): 24.

<sup>23</sup> Robert King Hall, *Education for a New Japan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949), vii.

<sup>24</sup> Tsuchimochi, *Education Reform in Postwar Japan*, p. 149. This association is not identified.

<sup>25</sup> "Listing of Priorities, Committee on Higher Education," *Trainor Papers*, microfilm no. 47.

<sup>26</sup> Harry Wray, "Record of Interview with Crofts" (16 July 1985) at Stanford University (held by Educational History of the Occupation Research Center, Meisei University).

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Orr, 1–8 September 1994. In a private letter to Orr, dated 15 August 1949, Nambara reports that freedom of speech was restricted by an anti-Communist policy, which resulted in a situation similar to prewar "thought-control," and he criticizes Walter C. Eells by name.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Orr, 1–9 September 1994.

<sup>29</sup> Tsuchimochi, *Education Reform in Postwar Japan*, p. 148.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* See also the interview with Orr, 1–9 September 1994, in which he testifies that Japanese staff members of private universities frequently petitioned for promotions and improvement of their conditions.

- <sup>31</sup> *Wanamaker Papers*, Box 36/17.
- <sup>32</sup> "Education Reform—Official Version of the Japanese Education Committee, March 25, 1946," *Trainor Papers*, Box 29. Trainor's English is as in the original.
- <sup>33</sup> Refer to Tsuchimochi, *Education Reform in Postwar Japan*.
- <sup>34</sup> Trainor, *Educational Reform in Occupied Japan*, p. 223.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.
- <sup>36</sup> Nambara Shigeru, chairman of the Japan Education Reform Council, "Problem of Higher Learning," Introductory Remarks at the Conference of 6 September 1950, in "Second (1950) U.S. Education Mission to Japan" (Draft Papers), *Wanamaker Papers*, Box 38/3. English as in original.
- <sup>37</sup> Letter from Orr to the author, dated 3 August 1992.
- <sup>38</sup> "Showa 21 nen 10 gatsu 18 nichi kyoiku sasshin iinkai dai 7 kai sokai sokkiroku (Sono 1-2)" [Stenographic records of the seventh general meeting of the Japan Education Reform Council, 18 October 1946 (nos. 1-2)]. These stenographic records of the Japan Education Reform Council are very important to the study of postwar education reforms; however, they were not opened to the public for many years. The author copied the records by hand at the Archives of the Ministry of Education on 20 October 1994.
- <sup>39</sup> Copied in *Trainor Papers*, microfilm no. 47.
- <sup>40</sup> Harry Wray, "Senryoki ni okeru kyoiku kaikaku" [Education reform during the Occupation period], in Ray Moore, ed., *Tennno ga baiburu wo yonda hi* [The day the Emperor read the Bible] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1982), p. 61.
- <sup>41</sup> Trainor, *Educational Reform in Occupied Japan*, pp. 226-27. Trainor's insistence that the JERC was "insulated from Division thought" needs to be severely qualified. See Wray, "Senryoki ni okeru kyoiku kaikaku."
- <sup>42</sup> Trainor, *Educational Reform in Occupied Japan*, p. 227.
- <sup>43</sup> "Showa 21 nen 11 gatsu 28 nichi kyoiku sasshin iinkai dai 5 kai tokubetsu iinkai gijiroku sokki dai 3 kai" [Stenographic minutes of the 5th meeting of the Special Committee of the Japan Education Reform Council, 28 November 1946].
- <sup>44</sup> See, Harry Wray, "The American Occupation of Japan and the Establishment of a 6-3-3-4 Educational System, Part I: American Pressure and Japanese Response," *Nanzan Review of American Studies* 20 (1998): 27-60.
- <sup>45</sup> "Higher Education Committee," 21 Oct. 1946, *Trainor Papers*, microfilm no. 26.
- <sup>46</sup> Ogata Hiroyasu, general editor, *Senryoka ni okeru wagakuni kyoiku kaikaku no kenkyu* [A Study of Japanese education reform under the Occupation] (Tokyo: Minshushugi Kenkyukai, 1963), p. 146.
- <sup>47</sup> For further particulars concerning the drafting process of the School Education Law, refer to *Gakko kyoikuho seiritsushi kankei shiryō* [Materials related to the history of legislation of the School Education Law], Faculty of Education, Nagoya University (March 1983), which is a collection of various drafts of bills for the School Education Law prepared by the Ministry of Education for the Cabinet between August 1946 and March 1947. Regarding the enacting process of the School Education Law, refer to Yasujima Hisashi, *Sengo kyoiku rippo oboegaki* [Memorandum of legislation of postwar education] (Tokyo: Daiichi Hoki, 1986).
- <sup>48</sup> GHQ/SCAP, *History of the Non-Military Activities of the Occupation of Japan*, vol. XI—Social, Part A, "Education" (1945–September 1949), p. 101.
- <sup>49</sup> "Basic Tenets of Policy Re: Higher Education," *Trainor Papers*, microfilm no. 27. Orr also states that a plan for a three-year university within the 6-3-4-3 system made by

the Ministry of Education was “typically Japanese,” in that it kept the *koto gakko* and *daigaku* of the prewar elite system and was inadequate for the Americans to approve from their side.

<sup>50</sup> Ohsaki, “Sengo daigaku kaikaku saiho” [Review of postwar university reform (no. 2)], p. 77.