# SÖMÜRGE SONRASI DÖNEMDE İNGİLİZ SEKÜLER ANLAYIŞI VE JAPON YANSIMALARI

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## Özet

Bu bildiri "din", "seküler" ve "eğitim" üçlemesi içinde Japonya ve Britanya'daki durumu irdelemektedir. Devlet destekli okullardaki din- sekülerizm ilişkisine odaklanan bildiriye göre, modern ülkelerde insanların toplum olarak sosyalleştiği öncelikli araç olarak okulları görmektedir.

Japonya'da 1890- 1945 yıllarında temel değerleri Şinto inancı belirlerken 1945 sonrasında Amerikan modeli esas alındı ve eğitimde dini referans alma eylemi terkedildi. Birleşik Krallık'ta Hıristiyanlık 19 ve 20 sırlarda hakim unsur idi ve kitabı mukaddes tarih olarak okutulmaktaydı. 1980den sonra ise Hıristiyanlık yerine çok kültürlülük esası getirildi. Gene de her iki ülkede her hangi bir cemaate bağlı olmayan din öğretimi vardır. sayın Bocking buna okul dini adını vermektedir.

Okul dini, baskın değer sistemi olup etkilerinden birisi, dindarlığı sekülerleştirmesi ve dini bireysel veya aile alanına bağlamasıdır. Bunun yanında bireylerin hakları, görüşleri ve tercihleri çağdaş cemiyet içinde değişimin ana sürükleyicileri olmaktadır. Britanya okullarındaki çocuklar, çok dinli bir öğretim sistemindeyken Japon çocuklarda bu durum gözükmez.

Birleşik krallık yerine İngiltere'deki durum ele alındı. İki ülke arasındaki mukayese hem öğretici özellikte hem de yanlış yönlendirmeye yol açabilecek karakterdedir. Burada kabaca bir oryantalist yaklaşım modeli ile söylersek Japonya doğuyu, İngiltere ise batıyı temsil ediyor. Yine mukayese açısından her iki ülke de din dahil meselelerde zıt kutuplar demektir. İki ülkenin tam olarak benzer olduğunu söylemek zordur. Ancak benzerlikler sayılamayacak kadar çoktur. Her iki ülke 19-20 asırlarda hızlı bir sosyal, politik ve ekonomik değişim yaşamıştır.

Japonya ve Britanya'nın farklı etnik ve tarihlerini bir kenara bırakırsak din her iki ülkede de önemli ve sorunlu bir mesele olarak temayüz etti. Din meselesi, her ülke örneğinde de hem küresel hem de mahalli seviyede var oldu hem de kişisel seviye de varlığını sürdürdü. Ulusal seviyede her ülkenin din ile devlet ilişkisi meselesi farklı ama tamamen de benzeşmeyen bir tarza sahip değildir.

Bu iki ülkedeki her hangi bir mezhebe ait olmayan din örneklerinden ne dersler çıkarabiliriz? Sonuçta hiçbir mezhebe ait olmayan dini kim ister? Hem Britanya'da hem de Japonya'da öğretmenlerin dinî fikirleri öğretmelerine mani olmak üzere hiçbir mezhebin bağlayıcılığında olmamasına dair kesin istekler, açık niyetler olarak dillendirilmiştir. Doğaldır ki bir cemiyetin temel karakteri ister totaliter olsun ister demokratik olsun burada tamamen uygun olur. 1945'ten sonra Japonya'da hiçbir mezhebe ait olmayan İmparator kültü istisnasız olarak tüm çocuklara öğretilmişken İngiltere'de Anglikan olmayan ebeveynler sonuçta din eğitimi

derslerinden ve okul ibadet saatlerinden çocuklarını muaf tutma hakkına sahiptiler. Hukuk meşruluğu ile hukuk istihkakı farklı şeylerdir. 19. asırda İngiltere tek bir sınıfın olduğu bir okulda din derslerinin nasıl muaf tutulacağı konusunda derin tartışmalar yaşandı. Daha geçenlerde devlet destekli bir Anglikan okulu öğrencilerinin yüzde doksanı Müslüman veya diğer dinlere mensup olduğunda din derslerinden ve ibadet saatlerinde öğrenciler çekilince için sorun hemen hiçbir mezhebe ait olmayan dinin alternatif bir Müslüman tarzı nasıl vucuda getirilebilir? Şekline dönüştü.

Genel olarak kurucusu olan dinler, hiçbir mezhebe ait olmayan din fikrini desteklemede karmaşık kayıtlara sahiptirler. bu dinlere bir şans verildiğinde bunun yerine onlar hemen kendi mezhepsel gündemlerini devreye sokarlar. Bundan dolayı modern çağda daha geniş dindar insanlığın lehine çalışan ekümenik hareketler, dinlerarası inisiyatifler ve mezhepsel bağları ve tarihleri aşmak isteyen yeni dinî hareketler, gelecekte sadece okullarda değil üniversitede, siyasette ve bütün dünyada hiçbir mezhebe ait olmayan din fikrine yer açmak isteyenler için gittikçe artan önemde temel kaynaklar olacaktır.

# TRACING THE NON-DENOMINATIONAL IN JAPAN AND THE UK

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**Summary**

The paper will attempt to clarify some of the issues involved in the relations between ideas such as 'state', 'religion' 'secular' and 'education', using examples from Japan and the UK. The focus will be on religion in state-provided education, since school education has remained the primary means by which modern citizens are socialised en masse. In Japan, from 1890 to 1945, the ultimate values taught in state schools were 'Shinto' in character but after 1945 all reference to religion in schools was abandoned, following the USA model. In the UK, Christianity was dominant throughout the 19th and 20th centuries and the Christian Bible was taught as history. Since the 1980's, the Christian agenda has largely given way to an ideal of benevolent religious multiculturalism. Yet in both Japan and the UK, 'religious' ideas taught in schools were always regarded by the state as 'non-denominational' (Jap: hishukyo) – i.e. intentionally distinct from any actual religious sect or denomination. 'School religion' was in both countries a superordinate value-system, one of whose effects was to secularise 'real' religious adherence, relegating it to the sphere of the individual or family. However, the rights, views and choices of individuals are increasingly the drivers of change in contemporary society. Does it matter that UK children now study multiple religions in school, while Japanese (or American) children study none?

In this paper I intend to draw some comparisons between Japan and the UK, nation-states known to themselves in the late 19th century as 'Great Britain' and 'Great Japan'. Strictly speaking, by the 'the UK' here I mean England; one country within the UK, rather than Wales, Northern Ireland or Scotland. I want in particular to focus on religion-related developments in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Why look at the UK and Japan? Comparisons can be instructive, but also of course misleading. It would be easy to adopt an orientalist paradigm in which Japan is taken to represent the 'East' and England the 'West', and where the purpose of the comparison is to demonstrate that each is the polar opposite of the other in matters including religion. It is rather more difficult, but tempting for my argument, to present England and Japan as in all important respects similar; but similarities there have been, in abundance. Both were, in the 19th-20th centuries, immersed in rapid social, political and economic change. Local loyalties, traditional agriculture, crafts and small-scale industries were yielding to rapid industrialisation, economic rationalisation, the increasing centralisation of state power and the 'disciplining' of a disparate and localised populace through mass education, policing and the promulgation of a personal and social ethic. This ethic was founded, in the main, on the notion of service to a divine (in the case of Japan) or divinely guided (in the case of Britain) national entity.

Leaving aside their different ethnicity and different history, Japan in the late 19th/early 20th centuries bore many similarities to Britain and other industrialising Western countries. This is no accident, for Japan, after opening itself to international trade after 250 years of relative seclusion, modernised itself at a great pace after the 'Meiji restoration' of 1868. It achieved this rapid modernistaion by borrowing, testing and adapting many of the processes and institutions of Western societies. The armed forces, banking system, technology, clothing, fine arts, education system, military, constitution and laws of late 19th century Japan all owed much to foreign originals, and this without Japan having been a European colony[1]. As we might expect, religion emerged as an important and problematic issue in both countries. In both cases, the 'problem' of religion existed at an international ('global') level, at a local/national ('glocal'[2]) level, and at a personal/family or 'individual' level. At the national level, the question of the relation of religion and state presented itself in different but not entirely dissimilar ways in Britain and Japan.

**BRITAIN**

In Britain, violent denominational schisms within Christianity, and the separation of the English Anglican church from the Roman Catholic church following the Europe-wide Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, had evolved by the mid-19th century into an unwritten constitutional freedom of religious thought and practice built on a wary acceptance of denominational diversity. By the latter part of the nineteenth century, Anglicans, Protestant nonconformists or 'dissenters', Catholics and a sizeable community of Jews coexisted in large English industrial conurbations such as London and Manchester. English new religious movements of the period (such as the Salvation Army, founded 1865) attracted violent public opposition before they became recognised as Christian denominations, and Catholic-Protestant tensions persisted in various forms. However, at the level of the nation-state the 'religious question' (what is the religious denomination of the state itself, and should its citizens should also belong to this form of religion) seemed by the mid-19th century to have been resolved in favour of a form of 'religious secularism', in which a particular religion (Anglicanism; the Church of England) was intertwined with the state but the state recognised the right of citizens at most levels of society to adhere to other religions or none. This degree of 'religious secularisation' was possible because although the state hierarchy was very clearly religious in character and very clearly Anglican (the English monarch being also the head of the Anglican church), Anglicanism saw itself as an inclusive institution. It was, and remains, a 'broad church'; virtually Roman Catholic in its forms of worship at one extreme, Puritan and nonconformist at the other, with many shades of social attitude, ritual and belief in between. Moreover, representatives of the numerous 'dissenting' traditions of Christianity in England were politically and economically influential and they could successfully demand, with Catholics, the right to practise their faith without state interference. Since the Anglican church was by the late 19th century unchallenged in its privileged role within the British polity it no longer felt the need to suppress alternative forms of Christianity. In this sense, late 19th century Anglicanism could claim with some justice

[1] The 'borrowing' was not all one-way; Japanese art exerted a tremedous influence on the West, and the modern crematorium was copiedfrom Japan, etc.

[2] 'Glocal' meaning 'global-local' refers here to the phenomenon of a local community which is nevertheless vulnerable or open to larger 'global' influences.

to represent 'Christianity' in general rather than a particular sect, church or denomination of Christianity, although Anglicanism's patrician view of itself as somehow supra-denominational has seldom been shared by non-Anglicans.

The overwhelming majority of British people at the turn of the 20th century subscribed, as indeed they were taught in school and church to do, to the idea of Britain as a 'Christian' nation; a nation guided by God through its monarch and government. Consequently, it was possible for the Anglican state to act as a secular authority might do, adopting a posture of tolerance towards diverse manifestations of religion. These religions were, after all, overwhelmingly forms of its own 'Christianity'. However, the 'problem' of the relation between religion and state never really goes away, as I am sure this conference will testify. In Britain the spread of mass education, a necessary accompaniment to urbanisation and modernisation, generated in 1870 a legislative crisis over the role of religion in schools, a crisis which involved key questions of the relation between religion and state. The background was the desire of the British government to provide universal (mass) primary education for all of its citizens, in order to mobilise the populace in support of the state's twin preoccupations; industry and empire. As I have pointed out elsewhere, what differentiates modern mass education from traditional forms of education, such as the education provided in pre-industrial Britain by religious institutions, is that it is (a) compulsory and (b) free, or at least affordable by all. These two go together; education has to be free, or nearly free, in order to be compulsory.

To achieve its educational aims, the British government began in the mid-19th century a programme of capacity-building in the field of education. Many new elementary schools were built with government funding in order to serve local catchment areas. Typically these new 'Board' schools were located in emerging industrial centres where no school had previously existed. In addition, thousands of existing church-supported village or local schools were given additional government aid to increase the number of teachers and places available. In return, these expanded government-aided religious schools would, like the new Board schools, educate every child within their local catchment area, regardless of religion. The vast majority of the religious schools were (and still are) sponsored by a particular Christian denomination. Most were Anglican schools, with a substantial minority Catholic; some were run by nonconformist or dissenting denominations and in a very few cases by Jews.[3] The government secured the cooperation of these religiously-based schools by allowing them (eventually) to continue as religious educational institutions

[3] "Until 1870 the development of a national system of education was left entirely to voluntary initiative, with the churches as main providers. When the Church of England's National Society was formed in 1811, educational opportunity for the majority of the population was strictly limited. Existing schools were for the wealthy ('public schools') or for the poor, on a charitable and local basis. The intention of the National Society was to provide a national system of a school in every parish, run by a trained teacher. Sites were mainly given by local benefactors, under the 1841 School Sites Act, with the vicar and churchwardens as trustees. Trust deeds usually refer to education 'for the poor of the parish'.
The Education Act of 1870 was designed to make good the gaps in the church system by providing Board schools where church schools did not already exist. By the time of the 1902 Education Act which created the LEAs, the dual system of educational provision was firmly established both as a principle and in reality. That Act made LEAs financially responsible for both voluntary and Board schools, except for voluntary school buildings, which the governors had to maintain." John D. Gay, Jan Greenough *The Geographical Distribution of Church Schools in England*, Culham Institute, 2000-2003 available at http://www.culham.ac.uk/CS_stud/cs_maps/background.html

following their own denominational ethos, while allowing pupils not of that religion to withdraw from any classes in religious instruction.[4]

In the case of the so-called 'Board Schools', however (that is, new schools built and run entirely by central or local government), the government ran into a problem which to this day has never been resolved in the UK. Few people at the time questioned, in a country which saw itself as an imperial beacon of Christian culture, the assumption that these new schools, funded by the taxpayer, should provide *some* kind of religious (i.e. Christian) instruction and indeed daily worship for their pupils. Initially, the government assumed that this religious instruction, being funded by the government, should reflect the state's own Anglican form of Christianity. But the schools were built to accommodate *all* of the children from a particular geographical area and many taxpayers throughout the country belonged to Christian denominations other than Anglicanism. Dissenters refused to subsidise the forced teaching of Anglicanism to their children as part of an otherwise secular education. An extensive and passionate parliamentary debate culminated in the Education Act of 1870 which prohibited the teaching of any particular catechism or denominational creed in government-funded schools, and allowed pupils to withdraw from religious instruction in religiously-based schools aided by taxpayers money. Pupils could be taught *about* Christian beliefs and could study the Bible as a text even in Board schools, but they could not be forced to receive, in any British school, instruction in the teachings of a particular sect or church, nor could they be forced to participate in daily acts of school worship.[5] Thus, as a result of a parliamentary compromise between different religious factions, a 'non-denominational' form of schools religious education (and of schools worship) became the state's ideal.[6]

The question arose, what is 'non-[or un-] denominational' religion (or more specifically, 'non-denominational' Christianity)? Answers were various but in general non-denominational meant the study of the Bible as history 'without note or comment', to use an American (and British-Irish) phrase of the time.[7] Non-denominational worship meant praise of God and Jesus etc. and general moral or spiritual uplift, but without reference to any specific denominational creed.[8] This made for an extremely uninspiring type of religious education, and some nebulous forms of worship. Throughout most of the next century, RE in many schools meant a tedious and often repetitive study of sections of the Bible, often presented as the basis of personal and public

[4] This was the eventual outcome in 1902 of a process which had started with attempts to control the provision of religious education in any school aided by the taxpayer. Refs on conscience clause.

[5] This 1870 approach was modified in the 1902 Act which allowed Church-controlled schools to teach their own religion while insisting on 'non-denominational' teaching about religion in schools controlled by the state. See my 'Fundamental Rites? for a more detailed discussion of these issues. Much of the history of the parliamentary debate is summarised, with supporting documents, by Lois Louden in *The Conscience Clause in Religious Education and Collective Worship*. Oxford, The Culham Institute, 2003 available online at http://www.culham.ac.uk/Res_conf/conscience_clause.pdf

[6] In the later 1944 Education Act, which established universal secondary education in Britain, such 'undenominational' schools worship became compulsory, as part of an attempt to restore Christianity to a central position in national life, though most schools disregarded the requirement to provide either religious instruction or worship. In the 1988 Education Act this provision was strengthened, with a far stronger emphasis on the 'broadly Christian' character of schools worship and on the Christian focus of Religious Education.

[7] ['without note or comment' -references]

[8] My mother, who was among other things a primary school teacher, had a favourite 'undenominational' child's hymn which was often sung in 'assembly' (the required daily act of worship in schools) in the 1960's: 'I saw a bird, on the top of a tree. This is the song, he was singing to me. God made the world, in a wonderful way, be happy, be happy, today.')

morality. This approach endowed generations of British pupils up to the 1960s[9] with a shared Biblical vocabulary and understanding of Christian scriptural allusions and a belief that religion was mainly about doing good in the world, but it provided little understanding of the nature, power, challenges and diversity of 'real' religions, or of denominations within the same world religion. For example, no British schoolchild would be likely to study the differences between Catholic and Protestant forms of Christianity, though many became familiar with one or the other through their primary school's religious ethos.

Religious education and worship has never been uniform across all English state-funded schools, and probably never will be.[10] When after WWII universal secondary education became the norm, thousands of new government-funded Secondary schools simply left religion out of the curriculum, regardless of the law which required it. In most British schools religion was for many years in the late 20th century not taught at all, or taught badly. Teaching a subject such as the Bible 'without note or comment' was, after all, not an inspiring prospect for teacher or pupils. Religious Education (as it came to be called) did, however, experience something of a renaissance from the 1970's onwards when the interest of a 'post-Christian' generation in non-Christian religions began to emerge. This is not the place for a modern history of Religious Education and Religious Studies in the UK; suffice it to say that the synergy of Religious Studies at university level, increasing representation of 'non-Christian' religions among pupils of immigrants especially in urban schools, and some manifestations of the 'counter-culture' (including an interest in 'Eastern' religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Sufism, etc.) produced by the 1980's many examples of creative, cross-cultural teaching of religions in British schools. Even so, the new 'multireligious' approach, which incorporated teaching on Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism and Islam etc., still adhered to the ideal of 'non-denominational' religious education. The notion of teaching 'without note or comment' meshed rather easily with the late 20th century vogue for a 'value neutral', 'scientific' or 'phenomenological' approach to the study of religions, an approach which characterises the subject in many contexts and even at university level, up to the present day.

To summarise; in Britain, 'non-denominational' religion began as the expression, and inculcation in children, of a spirit of compromise among historically divided Christian religious factions. It presupposed by its presence in the school curriculum the truth and ultimate value of a vaguely defined, superordinate 'Christianity'. This was a notion which could be appropriated by almost any Christian sect for its own purposes and was appropriated by Anglicans also for purposes of state. In this way, 'non-denominational religion' delivered through teachers and schools, played a significant role in preserving the coherence of British society in the twentieth century.

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[9] Steve Bruce has charted the relatively recent disappearance of this shared vocabulary in the British population and linked it to his thesis on secularisation and the decline of Christianity.

[10] In recent years the trend has been towards a national curriculum in Religious Education (rather than separate curricula determined by each local education authority through its SACRE (Standing Council on Religious Education) which includes 'representatives' of local faith communities. However, recent government encouragement and funding of 'faith schools', designed to accommodate the interests of different religious interests in a multicultural society appears to be leading in the opposite direction, towards forms of RE which may be explicitly confessional and differ quite radically from school to school.

## JAPAN

Japan's modern history may conveniently be divided into three periods of approximately fifty years each. Between 1850 and 1900 Japan transformed itself from a feudal 'closed country' into one of the major 19th/20th century imperial powers, competing for ascendancy in the Far East with Russia, China, Britain and other Western nations. By 1945, Japan had won and lost an empire in East and South-East Asia, and by the end of the 20th century Japan had recovered from devastating defeat in WWII to become one of the world's wealthiest and most sophisticated democratic societies with an ever-increasing influence, economic and cultural rather than military, in global affairs. Other East and South-East Asian nations have looked to Japan as a model for their own modernisation in a world already dominated by 'Western' economic and military power. Here, however, I will look only at one aspect of the process by which Japan transformed itself from an inward-looking feudal agricultural society into a modern, industrialised nation-state; that is, the creation of a national, non-denominational religion, taught in schools.[11]

The non-denominational religion I refer to is often called 'State Shinto' but this is a misnomer. Even the term 'Shinto' is hardly used in Japan. After 1945, 'State Shinto' was identified as the ideological basis for Japan's ultimately failed attempt to create by force of arms an empire in East and South-East Asia, but most scholars would now agree that a term such as 'the emperor cult' more accurately describes the creed and practice taught to generations of Japanese schoolchildren between 1890 and 1945. Like Britain, and at almost the same time, Japan introduced mass primary education to support its Western-style industrialisation and modernisation. Immediately after the Meiji restoration of 1868 feudal Buddhism was disestablished and a new religion, a kind of proto-Shinto called *Taikyo* ('The Great Teaching') was created which combined reverence for the emperor with injunctions to pay taxes and pursue education. Over the next twenty years several government-led initiatives to promote a centrally controlled form of emperor worshipping religion foundered under the weight of sectarian interests. Eventually shrine-based Shinto and the associated cult of veneration of the divine emperor came to be described as *hishukyo* ' or 'non-religious'. Shrine priests were forbidden to teach doctrine and the government's efforts to propagate a nationwide, uniform devotion to the emperor as a divinity shifted instead to the schools. 'Non-religious' meant in late 19th century Japan almost exactly what 'non-denominational' meant in English[12] when used to describe Schools religious worship and/or religous instruction; that is, a form of collective worship or ritual not distinctive of any sect or denomination, and deemed by the government to be appropriate and acceptable to the overwhelming majority of citizens, despite their sectarian religious affiliations.

1890 was the year in which a document known as 'The Imperial Rescript on Education' was distributed by the Japanese government to every school in the country. In moralising terms (the idiom was Confucian) it set out various 'proper relationships' that should obtain between the different sections of society. Children should be filial to parents; husbands and wives harmonious;

[11] I discuss this in more depth in my 'Fundamental Rites? Religion, State, Education and the Invention of Sacred Heritage in post-Christian Britain and pre-War Japan' *Religion* (1995), **25**, 227-247

[12] It seems very likely that there is a direct connection between the English term 'non-denominational' and the Japanese '*hishukyo*' but I have as yet no evidence for this.

Japanese subjects should pursue learning, cultivate arts, observe the laws, and 'should emergency [i.e. war] arise offer themselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the property of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth...'[13] Just a few weeks earlier, the first modern Japanese Constitution (the 'Meiji Constitution' of 1889) had been unveiled. Preparation of this Constitution had required 14 years of behind-the-scenes work and numerous drafts. The document benefitied from a detailed study of European constitutional provisions and their appropriateness to the Japanese context. In clause 28 'freedom of religion' was guaranteed but 'within limits not prejudicial to peace and order and not antagonistic to [the people's] duties as subject'. Since devotion to the emperor, as taught in schools and ritually enacted in all of the country's major shrines, was now defined as 'non-denominational', the emperor cult now constituted part of one's 'duties as subject' rather than a religious activity, and it was accordingly propagated by teachers, in schools, as part of the normal curriculum.

To summarise; in Japan, the 'non-denominational' was, until 1945, the expression and inculcation in children of a sacrosanct set of values and attitudes founded on the divinity of the emperor; values and attitudes which came eventually to be shared by all the denominational religious bodies. It presupposed, by its presence in the school curriculum, the truth and ultimate value of such ideas as the citizen's unrepayable debt to the emperor. Such ideas could be appropriated by almost any Japanese religious sect for its own purposes and were used by the government also for purposes of state. This 'non-denominational' form of religion in Japan, delivered through teachers and schools, played a significant role in establishing and maintaining the coherence of a rapidly modernising Japanese society in the first half of the twentieth century.

**Some conclusions**

In the foregoing, I have sketched out two examples of 19th-20th century 'nondenominaional' religion, one in Britain, the other in Japan. In both cases, the notion of a nondenominational form of religion proved exceedingly attractive to governments set on programmes of centrally-sponsored modernisation and the mobilisation of the populace. After WWII, Britain and Japan took divergent paths in respect of 'nondenominational' values and rituals. In Japan, a new postwar constitution founded on the American model radically separated religion and state, removing from publicly funded schools (the vast majority of schools in Japan) not only any trace of 'State Shinto' and emperor veneration but also any teaching *about* religion. This means that Japanese children, like American children, now hear nothing about religion – even 'nondenominational religion' - in school. In Britain, there was no comparable rupture between religion and state. Instead, 'nondenominational' has become 'multidenominational' or 'multireligious'. The space in the curriculum occupied by 'nondenominational' but broadly Christian religious instruction has been transformed over the last 30 years or so into a varied and often intellectually challenging curriculum of multi-religious RE.

[13] Imperial Rescript on Education.

**What might we learn from this brief comparison of 'non-denominational' religion in Britain and Japan?**

Firstly, 'non-denominational religion' is both a culture-specific and a cross-cultural phenomenon. It is no accident that 'non-denominational' forms of religion were developed in British and Japanese schools at about the same time. Both societies were engaged in a Western-style process of modernisation. However, whereas in Britain nondenominational religion has evolved in recent years into multireligious education, the imposition in Japan of a US-style constitution after 1945 meant that nondenominational religion disappeared entirely from the Japanese school curriculum. Had it remained, it might perhaps by now have evolved into something similar to the British model, and Japanese students might be better informed than they are about the role of religion in their own society and about the religions found in today's world.

Secondly, the notion of 'non-denominational' religion created a *space* for studying religious ideas and values within the school curriculum in both Britain and (until 1945) Japan. Although non-denominational religion in schools has always been artificial; quite unlike 'real' (denominational) religions in having no body of adherents, no clergy, no creed and no rituals, it has maintained a real relationship with the prevailing religious values and attitudes of the wider society. We may not believe, here in Ankara in 2007, that the Meiji emperor of Japan was divine, or that the British monarch was (or is) directly ordained by God to be the head of the Anglican church, but if these ideas and similar ones prevail in a particular society it seems reasonable that pupils should have the opportunity to study them with their teachers in school.

Thirdly, if learning about religious matters, even in a 'nondenominational' fashion, is prohibited in schools, then the consequences can seem bizarre. In the USA, for example, religious ideas which are very widely accepted in one form or another among the population – that the world is not just material, that there is a divinity of some kind and that this divinity is in some way responsible for the creation and preservation of the world and we humans in it -- cannot even be mentioned in a publicly funded school. On the other hand, if a religious doctrine such as the Biblical account of creation were to be accepted as 'scientific' rather than 'religious', then it could be taught in US schools – but in science classes; as scientific fact. As a result, a polarised (and to many outside America, incomprehensible) debate has emerged around the scientific evidence for Biblical creationism versus Darwinian evolution. In Britain, such debates about religion and science can already take place in the school classroom, because there has been for many years a 'nondenominational' space in the curriculum for addressing these and other religious issues in a nonsectarian way. It is worth pointing out also that where discussion of religion is prohibited in schools, children learn little or nothing during their formative years about religion and will emerge as adults 'religiously illiterate', with perhaps predictable consequences for the quality of domestic debate on religious matters and even for international relations.

Finally, who wants nondenominational religion? The requirement that learning about religious topics should be 'non-denominational' was clearly intended, in both Britain and Japan, to dissuade teachers from promoting sectarian and potentially divisive or unorthodox religious ideas. Of course, the character of the wider society – whether totalitarian or democratic – is relevant here. In Japan before 1945, the nondenominational emperor cult was taught to all schoolchildren

without exception, whereas in Britain dissenting parents have had, from the outset, the right to remove their children from religious education classes and schools worship.[14] Rights legislation and rights implementation are two different things, and there was much debate in 19th century Britain about how pupils might practicably be removed from religion classes when, for example, a school had only one classroom. In more recent times, when for example a state-supported Anglican school in Britain might draw more than 90% of its pupils from Moslem or other faith backgrounds, the question may instead be how to provide some kind of alternative 'nondenominational' Moslem teaching for the non-Christian majority, when virtually all the children in a school are withdrawn from 'normal' RE and school worship. The solutions available for such problems are many and creative, but in very recent times the notion of a 'nondenominational' form of religion in schools has come under signficant pressure as 'parent power' becomes an increasing factor in educational policy. The idea of 'nondenominational' religion relied, in both Britain and Japan, on a policy developed by central government and delivered through the Ministry of Education to individual schools. In future, if 'nondenominational' religion has any value and is to survive in modern societies, the impetus to retain it may have to come not from governments but from individuals, from families, from religions themselves, and from secular sources of 'ultimate' values (such as transreligious discourses on human rights and environmentalism).

In general, established religions have had a mixed record in supporting 'nondenominational' religion. Given the chance, they naturally push their own sectarian or denominational agenda instead. Hence, in the modern age, ecumenical movements, inter-faith initiatives and those new religious movements which manage to transcend sectarian allegiances and histories in favour of a broader 'human' form of religiosity may become increasingly important as resources for those who wish to maintain a 'nondenominaional' space for exploration of religious matters, not just in schools, but in universities, in politics and in the world at large.

[14] Loudon 'The Conscience Clause'.