THE OVERNIGHT EDUCATION REFORM IN POSTWAR JAPAN: CONTROVERSIES BEHIND THE ADOPTION OF A NEW EDUCATIONAL LADDR SYSTEM AND SOCIAL STUDIES

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The Overnight Education Reform in Postwar Japan: Controversies Behind the Adoption of a New Educational Ladder System and Social Studies

“The Meiji period is often said to be the most dramatic in Japanese history,” wrote Japanese historian Irokawa Daikichi in the 1970s. After the arrival of the American Commodore Mathew Perry in 1853, Japan went through a rapid transformation. In less than four decades, people studied the West and produced the Meiji Constitution, and the once isolated, “backward” nation joined the advanced nations of the western hemisphere. We often see the Meiji period and its transformation as the most unusual era of Japan and forget about another dramatic change, which started with the arrival of the USS Missouri on September 2, 1945.

On that very day, Japan, which had never been a colony, was put under American pressure for the second time, but this time under the name of occupation. The goal of the occupation was set high: the democratization of the nation. Education, which had played a crucial role in constructing ultra-nationalism and militarizing the entire nation since the prewar period, was to be reformed systematically and ideologically as quickly as possible so that the pupils would soon be able to contribute to the establishment of a democratic and peaceful Japan. From September 1945 to April 1947, within less than two years, the Japanese under the guidance of the American-led forces established the foundation of a new education system, which has lasted until today.

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The new education system was to help democratize Japan by reeducating the citizens in schools where the teaching of ultra-nationalism and militarism was abolished while the concept of democracy became the basis of education. Although democratization of the nation was one of the main goals of the occupation, democracy may not be a product of the occupation, as Japan already had democratic elements since the Meiji period. Yet, under the new education system developed since the time of the occupation, democracy has been fundamentally replanted in Japan’s soil.

If the Meiji period was a miraculous transformation that westernized and modernized Japan over several decades, the first years of the occupation period could be a mystery, leaving us questions concerning how and why the Allies and the Japanese conducted the educational reform in such a short period of time. The following words by a top Ministry of Education administrator, Kennoki Toshihiro, give us a picture of the time when a group of American educators known as the United States Education Mission (USEM) arrived in Japan to help conduct the educational reform in March 1946:

It is true that [USEM] was composed of first-class US educators, but the idea that a group of people who came to Japan…could—in just 24 days in the country—get a grasp on how the [education] system really works and propose a set of reforms is simply unbelievable.

This set of reforms was outlined in the so-called Report of the United Education Mission to Japan. The Report was written and submitted by USEM to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) and became a guide of the reform for both the American-led Education Division and the Japanese Education Committee. By the spring of 1947, Japan had a new Fundamental Law of Education (FLE) and other policies ready

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to be put into action. Because it took only about two years, the process of establishing new educational regulations and systems may seem to have gone smoothly; yet this does not mean there were no struggles when the former imperial country was reforming one of the fundamental parts of its society—the educational system.

Since the end of the occupation in 1952, studies on the postwar education reform have been done by scholars from both the United States and Japan. They have written a great number of scholarly works on educational reform, and the studies are still ongoing. The debate over one reform or another has continued to emerge as new ‘realities’ have been revealed by never-published original documents or old memos that had been kept by the education reformers of the time and that recently have been discovered. For instance, the existence of “Minority Report” written by USEM was announced by Gordon T. Bowles, a member of USEM, at the International Conference regarding Occupied Japan in August 1980. New ‘realities’ such as this always catch scholars’ attention, thus the postwar education reform in Japan has remained a hot topic over the decades. The fact that some of the books focus only on one or two reforms, such as the adoption of a new curriculum, the implementation of an educational ladder system, or the language reform, shows the complexity and importance of each reform that was conducted during the occupation period.

The importance of studying a country’s educational reform cannot be overemphasized. School is one of the dominant social institutions to which most people are exposed in order to construct their character as a person and a citizen of the nation. From early childhood, children learn not only academic materials, but also how to live as

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8 Ibid.
a citizen of the country with certain morals, ethics, and social values. Education that we receive reflects the dominant ideology of the nation and guides our doings on a daily basis. Thus, studying the principle of education becomes crucial because it shows the direction of the education system and the way in which the national leaders want the younger generations to be. It also shows the generalized characteristics of the people under the specific education system.

During the prewar and wartime periods, Japan’s education was centered in militarism and ultra-nationalism. As a result, Japan was militarized and led into imperialism under which people felt destined to save their nation from foreign imperial forces. The content of such an education under militarism and imperialism is discussed later in this paper. However, the focus of this paper is the postwar system: specifically what the discourse on Japan’s postwar educational reform can tell us about the nation as a whole. As an education is perceived as one of the influential elements in society, we should not overlook any moment when the education system itself is being reformed. Under an educational reform, people will be changed and so will be the nation. Such a reform takes place when the change is needed. This was especially the case for postwar Japan, which accepted unconditional surrender in the summer of 1945 and had no option but to change the old education system with a strong demand from within the nation itself and the Allied Powers.

It would be ideal to look at all aspects of the educational reform during the occupation period in Japan. However, since this is a massive topic, and there is not enough space to illustrate everything, this paper examines the process through which the educational reform was carried out by the Occupation and the Japanese between 1945
and 1947. In doing so, I have chosen two of the educational reforms: the implementation of a new educational ladder system, known as the 6-3-3-4 system, or the single-track system,\(^9\) which required six years of elementary school followed by three years of junior high school, and so on, and the adoption of a new social studies curriculum. I have chosen these two reforms not only because the length of time taken to implement them was the same, but also because their two natures differed on the surface. In April 1947, nine years of compulsory education under the name of the 6-3 system began along with the new curriculum.\(^10\) Although both the reforms were implemented under the same aims—the democratization of education as well as the nation—during the development of the two reforms from the fall of 1945 to the spring of 1947, the implementation of a new educational ladder system produced socio-economic issues, whereas the adoption of a new curriculum raised ideological and cultural questions.

In order to examine the story behind the development of the reforms or conflicts at the micro level, I have primarily used books which have been written by either Japan’s postwar education reform specialists or Japan specialists such as Harry Wray, Gary Hoichi Tsuchimochi, Leonard Schoppa, and Inoue Kyoko. Over the last two to three decades, Wray has published a number of articles relating to the postwar education reform in Japan. Fortunately, I had opportunities to acquire his latest opinions on the reform through our exchanged emails. Although he wrote he has “become less critical of the Education Division’s works as a result of the passage of several years,”\(^11\) I have still chosen to use articles on the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 educational ladder system and

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\(^9\) A chart that presents the difference between the single-track system and the multi-track system is available in the appendix.


\(^11\) Harry Wray, Interviewed through email by author, (January 25, 2007).
the adoption of social studies, which he claimed were “the most critical essays [he] wrote.” Despite Wray’s change in position, his criticisms and reasons of why the reforms could be seen as failures help me see the issues from different perspectives. His analysis is holistic, as he uses both cultural and economic reasoning, and this allows me to see the nature of the two reforms and the controversy which each reform had at that time.

Tsuchimochi’s *Rokusansei no tanjō—sengo kyōiku no genten* (The Birth of the 6-3 Educational System: the Origin of Postwar Education) is another useful book. Since the end of occupation, there have been debates on whether or not the postwar education reform was imposed by the Occupation upon the Japanese. While many people tend to believe in the dominant power of the Occupation, Tsuchimochi gives counter-arguments. The book provides a fair amount of evidence showing that the reform was not imposed on the Japanese, but was conducted with effort by both Americans and Japanese. It also presents the process of submission of the *Report* by USEM, to what degree Japanese ideas were included, and how the *Report* functioned as a guide for the Occupation and the Japanese to conduct the educational reform. The book has a number of rich sources including direct quotations by the participants in the reform, such as George D. Stoddard, the Chairman of USEM, Pearl A. Wanamaker and Mildred McAfee Horton who were members of USEM, as well as Naito Takazaburō and Amano Teiyu who were members of the Ministry of Education at the height of the reform. The testimonies by those participants in the reform present the relationship between the American and Japanese

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12 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
education reform committees. It is important to be familiar with these testimonies if one is to show the process of the reform as objectively as possible.

A primary source that has become crucial to this research is a memoir by Joseph C. Trainor, who was a Deputy Chief at the Education Division and the Civil Information and Education Section (CIE) during the occupation period. Trainor’s memoir provides not only retrospective views of the education reform, but also the process in detail, which only those who had a direct involvement in the reform would be able to tell. Although the book was written from his personal experience, the description of each reform is less personal and shows reliability of the materials it provides. Such a memoir as this provides rich sources including the ideas that the Americans had, but could not openly reveal at the time of the reform. Furthermore, this book confirms Tsuchimochi’s argument about the position of the Occupation. Trainor’s memoir as well as Tsuchimochi’s book proves the complexity of the reform while showing there was more than one side imposing an education reform upon a defeated nation. There are also a number of articles that were published during the post-occupation period by both American and Japanese scholars, some of whom were the participants of the reform. The contributions from such articles are analyzed in this paper.

The motive to conduct this study was initially derived from my curiosity to know what is beneath the surface of discourses on Japan’s postwar educational reform. We are often given opportunities only to scratch the surface of the education reform and understand the event in a bigger picture. However, it is crucial to study the event in depth in order to understand the complexity of the issues, so that we would not be tempted to over-generalize the issues produced during and after the occupation period.

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15 Trainor, *Educational Reform in Occupied Japan: Trainor’s Memoir*. 
Also if the Japanese were to take an ownership of the postwar education system, they have to see it was not merely imposed by the Americans as the result of the struggles discussed later in this paper. With sources written by both Japanese and American scholars as well as by participants in the reform, I am hoping to provide views that are as objective as possible.

Overall this paper will demonstrate two major points. First, there were struggles and controversies during and after the development of the new education system, such as the 6-3-3-4 system and a social studies curriculum, involving both the cultural and socio-economic issues. Second, educational reform was not merely an American process; there were interactions between the Americans and the Japanese, both of whom were willing to transform Japan into a new democratic nation in one way or the other.

**The Beginning of Occupation and Education Reform**

Among the survivors of World War II, August 15 of 1945 is often remembered as the most unforgettable moment. On that very day, the Showa Emperor broadcasted Japan’s surrender in World War II through the public radio:

> After pondering deeply the general trends of the world and the actual conditions obtaining in our Empire today, we have decided to effect a settlement of the present situation by resorting to an extraordinary measure….the enemy has begun to employ a new and most cruel bomb, the power of which to do damage is, indeed, incalculable, taking the toll of many innocent lives. Should we continue to fight, it would not only result in an ultimate collapse and obliteration of the Japanese nation, but also it would lead to the total extinction of human civilization…Such being the case, how are we to save the millions of our subjects, or to atone ourselves before the hallowed spirits of our Imperial
Ancestors? This is the reason why we have ordered the acceptance of the provisions of the joint declaration of the powers.\textsuperscript{16}

People were stunned not only to hear the Emperor’s voice for the first time,\textsuperscript{17} but also to know the Empire of Japan could no longer fight for the sake of the state due to the lack of resources and power. Japan was devastated; by the end of the war, the nation “had ‘lost one-third of its total wealth and from one-third to one-half of its total potential income.’”\textsuperscript{18} At the time of Japan’s surrender, “close to 9 million people were homeless”\textsuperscript{19} and later that year, the People’s Association for a Policy Against Starvation “announced that as many as six individuals a day were dying of malnutrition.”\textsuperscript{20} Under this condition, only 19 days after the Emperor’s broadcast, the USS Missouri arrived in Japan and the occupation began.

With the aim to change the Japanese’s ideology and attitudes of mind and to help Japan become “a peaceful and democratic” nation,\textsuperscript{21} the educational reform began. Plans for the reform were thought out by the Americans as well as by the Japanese before Japan’s formal surrender, and they were ready to carry out the reform from the very beginning of the occupation. From September 1945 to April 1947, the Ministry of Education, which functioned with the U.S. Education Division and CIE as a center of the reform, formed educational reform committees and groups, each of which would specialize in a particular reform according to Japanese needs. The groups included the

\textsuperscript{17} John Dower, Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II, (New York: N.N. Norton & Company, 1999), 33-34.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, 45.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, 47.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid, 93.
Japanese Education Committees, the Japanese Education Reform Council (JERC), and Curriculum Committee, and as much as the Ministry of Education was forming new committees, the Americans were bringing professional educators and scholars from the United States who could contribute to the reform.

USEM, which arrived in Japan on March 5, 1946 and spent 24 days to study the current situation of Japan’s education system also contributed to the reform through their report. After the group left, JERC succeeded USEM and made more detailed plans with the Ministry of Education, the Japanese Education Committees, the Education Division, and ICE, and in just over half a decade, the wartime Japanese education system was remodeled from its foundation.

**The Establishment of the 6-3-3-4 System**

When the 6-3-3-4 system was enacted in April 1947, the main purpose of the new system was to give everyone an equal educational opportunity, as the system guaranteed nine years of compulsory education and higher school education regardless of one’s “race, creed, sex, social status, economic position, or family origin.” On the surface, the new system seemed to serve the purpose of the educational reform as a whole, which was to democratize education as well as the nation. Since America had the 6-3-3-4 system, that plan seemed to fit an ideal system for a democratic country as well. However, it is important to recall that Japan’s prewar education system already had democratic elements; compulsory education was adopted in 1873 and six years of elementary school education

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22 Trainor, 101-114.
had been granted for every child by the 1900s. Then what was special about adopting the 6-3-3-4 system in postwar Japanese schools? Thus, this section examines the development of the 6-3-3-4 system as a contributor to the democratization of the nation that is unique to postwar Japan.

During the immediate prewar period, Japan adopted the so-called 6-5 system, which increased the number of compulsory education years for both boys and girls by providing them with six years of elementary school and five years of secondary school education. This 6-5 system was, however, reformed in 1943 under the name of “the Secondary School Ordinance,” and the five years of secondary education was reduced to four years. Yet, just before the arrival of USEM in Japan in March 1946, the four-year secondary education was again changed to five years by the Ministry of Education which now preferred the prewar 6-5 system. Why did they change the system so frequently? How much would the reduction or addition of one year of secondary education make a difference in schools? Considering the two questions, the process of the establishment of the 6-3 system from 1946 to 1947, though it took only several months, was more complex than it may seem on the surface.

Kaigo Tokiomi, a leading Japanese scholar and also a participant of the education reform, once claimed if the implementation of the 6-3 system had merely been for the sake of democratization of the nation, Japan would not necessarily have adopted the 6-3

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26 My sources are silent in reason why the five years of secondary school was reduced to four years. However, it seems safe to conclude this was due to the exercises of war.
When the American mission came to Japan in the spring of 1946, one of the agendas they stressed was the replacement of the prewar multi-track system with a single-track system, which was often referred as the 6-3-3-4 system (For explanation, see appendix). Naito Takazaburō, a member of the Ministry of Education at the time of the occupation, remembers how the Americans explained the natures of multi-track system and single-track system and the importance of adopting the latter. The Americans said that “the multi-track system is to educate elites. But because the elites had let the country commit a big error, then we should avoid the same mistake [by changing the school system].” Wray also argues that even the Japanese citizens were led to believe “the new single-track blow to elitism and sexism was certain to bring about the instant democratization of Japan.” While such accounts show that one of the reasons to adopt the 6-3-3-4 system was to ensure that all students would take the same track for a full sixteen years, thus democratize schools and the country by granting students opportunities to continue studying according to their will, the question of why they divided school years into 6,3,3, and 4 years still remains. There should be more than one reason why this particular 6-3-3-4 system was chosen during the occupation period.

Many scholars as well as the participants of the reform agree that the 6-3-3 system was introduced by USEM to Japan, while they also stress that the system was not imposed by USEM upon the Japanese. On the other hand, scholars such as Schoppa

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28 Tsuchimochi, Rokusansansei no tanjō—sengo kyōiku no genten (The Birth of the 6-3 Educational System: the Origin of Postwar Education), 137.
29 Ibid, 87. (Translated by author).
31 Tsuchimochi, Rokusansansei no tanjō—sengo kyōiku no genten (The Birth of the 6-3 Educational System: the Origin of Postwar Education), 80 and Trainor 113-114.
argue that the system was modeled after the U.S. educational system,\textsuperscript{32} and that there was no choice on the Japanese side to not adopt the system under the pressure from the Occupation.\textsuperscript{33} Before getting into the discussion on the power relation between the Occupation and the Japanese and in what degree one side had influence over the other while developing the new system, however, it is crucial to examine who was involved in this reform.

On the American side, there were the Education Division and CIE that were directly involved in this reform. They functioned under the guidance of SCAP. Then there were three major groups on the Japanese side that were directly involved in the development of a new school system: the Ministry of Education, the Japanese Education Committee, and the Japanese Education Reform Council (JERC). The Ministry of Education was the oldest organization among the three established during the Meiji period, while the latter organizations were formed during the occupation period. Prior to the arrival of USEM, GHQ suggested that the Japanese Education Committee be formed to work with the visiting American group of educators. In the fall of 1946, JERC was established to succeed USEM.\textsuperscript{34} Interestingly enough, when JERC was formed, “it was agreed by all parties” that JERC “would function independently, with full autonomy to investigate, evaluate and recommend regarding desirable educational reform patterns for Japanese schools.”\textsuperscript{35}

When USEM came to Japan in March 1946, it is often believed that USEM worked independently from the Japanese, and the report submitted by USEM became the

\textsuperscript{32} Schoppa, 33.
\textsuperscript{33} Carol Gluck, in \textit{Education Reform in Postwar Japan: the 1946 U.S. Education Mission} by Tsuchimochi, ix.
\textsuperscript{34} Trainor, 101.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid, 106.
basis of the education reform that was heavily American-influenced. However, members of USEM such as Mildred MacAfee Horton and Gordon T. Bowles as well as Joseph Trainor claim that this was not necessarily the case. They stated that the Japanese side already had a desire to adopt a new school system before anyone else questioned the old system and that the ideas of the Japanese side on the education reform largely influenced USEM as they wrote the Report.\textsuperscript{36} Tsuchimochi also shows there is evidence concerning the development of the idea of the 6-3 system by the Japanese during the Meiji period. In \textit{Kaiso Junen} (10 Years in Retrospect), Yoshida Shigeru clearly states “the 6-3 system was not the Americans’ patent.”\textsuperscript{37}

Likewise, Trainor claims that it was the Japanese who stressed the necessity of the 6-3 system. His testimony reads, “the United States Education Mission, in recommending the 6-3-3-4 pattern … was greatly influenced by the strong argument put to it by Japanese educators that this particular ladder would constitute for Japan the most desirable pattern.”\textsuperscript{38} The retrospective views present an interaction between the American and Japanese sides: the Americans were willing to take in the ideas of the Japanese, who had prepared to work with the Americans. If such accounts of those American participants were accurate, the reform should have been carried out smoothly. However, the situation was more complicated than this. There was a long way until both the American and Japanese sides agreed on the 6-3 system to be adopted.

Recalling the fact that the 6-5 system was resurrected by the Ministry of Education right before the arrival of USEM, we should question why then the Japanese

\textsuperscript{36} Tsuchimochi, \textit{Rokusansansei no tanjō—sengo kyōiku no genten} (The Birth of the 6-3 Educational System: the Origin of Postwar Education), 133.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid, 83.

\textsuperscript{38} Trainor, 113-4.
decided not to maintain the already-existing system—the 6-5 system—during the time of the USEM visit to Japan. Ironically, many years after the occupation, a report written by a section of USEM, Committee III—“Primary and Secondary School Administration”—was discovered. In the report, it is indicated that Committee III first recommended that “the 6-5 system… be continued.”\textsuperscript{39} The report by Committee III was completed on March 23, 1946—only a week before the submission of the completed report by USEM to SCAP on March 30. This report, however, recommended the 6-3 system.\textsuperscript{40} This shows that even if Committee III and the Ministry of Education preferred the 6-5 system to the 6-3 system, the 6-3 system was adopted at the end. There must have been much debate over which system to adopt among not only the Ministry of Education and Committee III of USEM but also other education reform committees, including the Japanese Education Committee and JERC.

On February 26, 1947, several weeks before the adoption of the 6-3-3-4 system, Takahashi Sei’ichirō, who was the Minister of Education at that time, gave five reasons why the system was chosen over others:

First, the new system was to guarantee everyone an equal opportunity in education…; second, the system was to eliminate the existing sexism…; third, the system would simplify the education system by adopting a single-track system while also dividing the school years into six, three, three, and four in order to provide education according to the cognitive development of students; fourth, the system was meant to help advance the academic abilities of the citizens by increasing the number of universities…; fifth, the system was justified since it matched the American school system as well as what was becoming the world’s standard education system.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid, 123.
\textsuperscript{40} Tsuchimochi, \textit{Rokusansansei no tanjō—sengo kyōiku no genten} (The Birth of the 6-3 Educational System: the Origin of Postwar Education), 102.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid, 156-7. Translated and simplified by author.
Although many Japanese as well as Americans claimed that the idea of adopting the 6-3-3-4 system was developed among the Japanese during the Meiji period, Takahashi’s statement shows American influence on the Japanese, whether deliberate or not. When a country is trying to develop a new education system, it is not unusual that the country examines systems of other nations and adopts a system that already exists and functions well in another nation. Even if the Japanese stressed the originality of the 6-3 system, thus, it must have been helpful for them to see how the very system worked in another democratic nation, the United States, before making a final decision.

Considering the number of scholarly works written particularly on this reform, the debate over the adoption of a new school system seems to have been one of the most focused agendas among the education reform groups; however, there are comments by members of Committee III of USEM that contradict the former statement. Recalling the time when USEM was in the process of writing the Report, Pearl A. Wanamaker, a member of Committee III, testified, “the matter of which system, either the 6-5 or the 6-3, to implement was not as important as other issues; we were focusing on how to democratize the content of education rather than the system itself.”

This is a crucial statement, which partially explains why the Americans were less hesitant to take in the ideas of the Japanese when they advocated the need of the 6-3 system.

**Ideal vs. Reality: Controversy at the Time of the Implementation of the 6-3-3-4 System**

In early 1947, when the 6-3-3-4 educational system was chosen for implementation, new problems emerged. Those problems must have already existed during the earlier discussion; yet, they had not appeared problematic enough them to keep

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42 Ibid, 100. (Translated by author)
the new system from proceeding. One of the major issues was the lack of finance. Although it was decided prior to the implementation of the system that only the seventh grade was to become compulsory in the spring of 1947 and that “the eighth and ninth grades were to be implemented in 1948 and 1949,” making the seventh grade compulsory was still a difficult task in postwar Japan, given the physical devastation of the country.

By the time the Americans arrived, not only were as many as 9 million people homeless and many foodless, but also inflation had begun, making it difficult for them to stay alive. The military had no budget remaining, and the government, while unable to fulfill basic needs of the people, was struggling to provide “housing and facilities for the conquerors … ensuring that these met American living standards.” In the beginning of January 1947, the Ministry of Education had an estimated budget of 7.5 billion yen for the general education and 6.5 billion yen for the preparation of classrooms, equipment, and the renovation of old school buildings necessary for the new 6-3 system to proceed. In reality, however, the Ministry of Education received 2.5 billion yen for the general education and 700 million yen for the construction of schools. It is, thus, hard to imagine how the educational reform was to be conducted when people barely had the means to maintain their lives.

In the eyes of those who were aware of Japan’s economic condition of that time, the adoption of the 6-3-3-4 system, though it may have been ideal, was by no means

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44 Dower, 115.
doable in reality.\textsuperscript{45} Harry Wray’s statistical data presents why the reform should not have been carried out as it was for it was almost impossible to prepare an adequate number of school buildings, books, texts, and teachers by the new school year of 1947. His study shows there was not only a lack of governmental budget as well as financial aid from other organizations, but also a lack of materials and human resources. For instance, when in fact “60,000,000 pounds of paper for textbooks were needed, the Ministry only had 7,000,000 pounds.”\textsuperscript{46} In addition, not only was there “a shortage of 25,000 teachers,”\textsuperscript{47} but also 52,887 classrooms were needed in 1947.\textsuperscript{48} Under such a condition, even though the number of new junior high school students reached over one million, the Ministry of Education was able to locate only 1.6 million students out of both conventional and new students into classrooms, while leaving the remaining 560,000 students without a classroom in which to study.\textsuperscript{49}

In some districts such as Sakura-shi in Chiba prefecture, train cars were used for classrooms, and they were called “6-3 trains.”\textsuperscript{50} In Suginami Junior High School in Tokyo, “there were 13 teachers for six classrooms and 291 pupils.”\textsuperscript{51} How inefficient would it be to have 48 to 49 students in one classroom? When Eileen Donovan, an Education Division secondary education and women’s education officer visited the school and asked the principal to show her the classrooms, at first she was refused

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\textsuperscript{45} Tsuchimochi, \textit{Rokusansansei no tanjō—sengo kyōiku no genten} (The Birth of the 6-3 Educational System: the Origin of Postwar Education), 88-9.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid, 6.
\textsuperscript{48} Nishimoto, 18.
\textsuperscript{49} Wray, “Tainichi senryokani okeru rokusansansei kyoiku seido no fukanzen dōnyū to jisshi(sono 2): rokusansansei no jisshi to sono kekka” (The Premature Introduction and Implementation of the 6-3-3 Educational Ladder System in Occupied Japan (II): the Implementation and Result of the 6-3-3 System),” \textit{Sengo Kyoikushi Kenkyu} 15, Trans. Yamamoto Reiko, (2001), 47.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid,51.
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because they were “so terrible.” Seeing their own children going to study in such a place, the parents must have questioned the meaning of the new system, which was not serving its purpose to the full extent.

Such a devastating situation was hard for anyone to accept. Morito Tatsuo, the Minister of Education in 1947, said at a press conference that he “felt full of tears” when he saw “students studying in dark temples and factories where rain enters and using boxes for desks.” In extreme cases, after the preparation of school buildings began to take place regionally, “several village headmen with a strong sense of responsibility committed suicide for being unable to raise the necessary funds.” The frustration of the Japanese leaders was beyond measure. One Ministry official expressed frustration over the Ministry’s inability to meet the need of students because of the lack of the budget, which had to be approved by SCAP’s Economic and Scientific Section (EES).

The conflict between the Ministry of Education and SCAP was considerable, and also made it difficult to maintain a good relationship between the Japanese sides and the Americans who were working under SCAP. Even if SCAP had given approval for the development of the new system for its purpose, providing materials and financial needs was another matter. Issues could easily emerge due to the lack of communications among those who were involved.

So far analysis has focused on the lack of finance as the biggest issue. As discussed earlier, however, there were alternative systems which the Japanese could have chosen over the 6-3-3-4 system to alleviate these problems. For instance, if the Ministry

52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
54 Nishimoto, 19.
of Education had decided to adopt the 8-3 system, lower budgets would have been needed; therefore, the situation could have been better, at least for the time being. This was because the 8-3 system did not require the construction of new school complexes; instead, they could have used the already existing kokumin gakkō (elementary schools) and old junior high school buildings. Yet, because the adoption of the 6-3-3-4 system was enacted, there was a need to construct new buildings for junior high schools where the students from seventh to ninth grades would be taught.

Wray criticizes that this outcome of the new reform was caused by the Ministry of Education as well as of the Education Division’s “excessive optimism” and the lack of understanding of the financial situation at the height of the reform. But how did they not know the cost the reform would take? By the time of the implementation in the spring of 1947, it had become rather obvious that everything about the 6-3-3-4 system, from providing nine years of compulsory education without requiring tuition fees from students to “building the girls’ toilets…in the new coeducational junior high schools,” was expensive. Thus, they must have been aware of the financial issue, but they could not discontinue the reform. Under the reasons given by the Minister of Education, the Ministry of Education decided to take a risk by adopting the new system while anticipating the possible outcome. In fact, the Subordinate Minister of Education once...

56 The 8-3 system: This school system consisted of 8 years of elementary school and 3 years of junior high school. This system was once used in the United States, but the 6-3 system became uniformly used in the States by the end of the war. Naito Takazaburō recalled Americans said that they found eight years of elementary education too long and that the 6-3 system worked better. This is taken from Tsuchimochi’s Rokusansansei no tanjō—sengo kyōiku no genten (The Birth of the 6-3 Educational System: the Origin of Postwar Education), 87.

57 Tsuchimochi, Rokusansansei no tanjō—sengo kyōiku no genten (The Birth of the 6-3 Educational System: the Origin of Postwar Education), 87.


59 Ibid, 4.
said that the Ministry foresaw the financial issue in advance, but could not give up the 6-3-3 system in the middle because they feared that Japanese citizens would lose faith in the government.\textsuperscript{60} Once the system was to be adopted, there was no way to reconsider, no matter how difficult it became to proceed.

If they had waited several years until the nation recovered from the economic crisis, the system could have been carried out more smoothly without producing problems as it did. Without adequate teachers and school supplies, the same quality of education could not be granted for everyone, and “the new school system [could] hardly be called well-balanced from the stand-point of a democratic school system.”\textsuperscript{61} In other words, the reality contradicted the purpose of the 6-3-3-4 system, which, at the time of the implementation, was not granting everyone an equal opportunity in education in every possible way. Thus, the new system, which was meant to legally guarantee nine years of compulsory education for all children, remained controversial after it was put into action because Japan’s economic condition of the time was incapable of keeping up with the ideal.

The 6-3-3-4 system produced more problems immediately after it was chosen to be implemented than during the development of the system. Although the Americans and Japanese had much debate considering which system to adopt, the development itself went smoothly, notably because the Americans were willing to take Japanese ideas for this particular matter. However, the problem of finance prevented the Ministry of Education from adopting the system entirely as planned, and made it impossible to

\textsuperscript{60} Wray, “Tainichi senryokani okeru rokusansansei kyoikuseido no fukanzen dōnyū to jisshi(sono 2): rokusansansei no jisshi to sono kekka” (The Premature Introduction and Implementation of the 6-3-3 Educational Ladder System in Occupied Japan (II): the Implementation and Result of the 6-3-3 System),” 57.

\textsuperscript{61} Nishimoto, 19.
provide nine years of education in an environment satisfactory to every student. The financial problem also caused tension not only between the Americans and Japanese, but also between the Ministry of Education and local officials who were to follow the decisions primarily made by the Ministry of Education and the Americans. There were many struggles in national and local levels until the 6-3-3-4 system began to function as it does today.

Controversy behind the Implementation of Social Studies

The development of the new social studies curriculum officially began after the two directives were ordered by SCAP on October 22 and December 31, 1945. The directive of October 22 suggested that the Ministry of Education prepare “new curricula, textbooks, teaching manuals, and instructional materials designed to produce an educated, peaceful, and responsible citizenry… as rapidly as possible.” In the latter directive, titled “Suspension of Courses in Morals (Shushin), Japanese History, and Geography,” SCAP outlawed the teaching of the three courses, morals, national history, and geography, and suggested that the Ministry of Education submit a new plan for the replacement of the former three courses. The intention of SCAP was clear; they wanted to eliminate any militaristic and ultra-nationalistic elements that had dominated the Japanese education since the prewar period as soon as possible. This reform, however, became more complex than simply replacing the old curriculum with a new one.

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According to the Americans, the problem of Japan’s prewar and wartime education was that its system had justified the existence of “the authority and influence of those who [had] deceived and misled” the entire nation into a war.\(^{65}\) The dominant ideologies and moral lessons on which education was centered were derived from the Imperial Rescript on Education of 1890 and were further strengthened by *Kokutai no Hongi* (Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan) of 1937. Moral education became the driving force of the nation’s ultra-nationalism as it encouraged the students to sacrifice themselves for the Emperor at the height of the battle.\(^{66}\) The Japanese population was trapped in the ultra-militaristic and nationalistic ideas that had spread across the nation, and no one questioned or was able to openly question such dominant ideologies.

From 1890 to the end of the war, *shūshin* (morals) was taught at every level of education, including “primary, secondary, girls’, vocational, normal, *kōtōgakkō* (higher schools), and *semmongakkō* (technical schools or colleges),”\(^{67}\) and the concept of *shūshin* “permeated…the Japanese education system.”\(^{68}\) For instance, in Japanese history and geography courses, students often learned the divinity of the land of Japan,\(^{69}\) and such lessons further strengthened the students’ understanding and practice of the militarism and ultra-nationalism. However, as the Japanese began to see the outcome of the war in

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\(^{68}\) Ibid,119.

1945, many of them started to realize that the ideologies they had believed had not led them to victory in the war. They sensed it was time to change society, and the school curricula, which used to shape the mindset of people in Japan, inevitably became one of the targets of the reform. But the question was how to conduct the reform, which would help correct ideas and morals that the Japanese had held since the prewar period. Thus, this section examines the process of the establishment of a new curriculum, social studies, and controversies that emerged during the reform.

Most observers think that the curriculum reform began only after SCAP ordained the two directives at the end of 1945 as well as after the submission of USEM’s report in March 1946, which expressed Japan’s need of replacing the old school courses with a new curriculum.70 The reality was, however, that the Japanese side had already begun putting their effort into changing the old curricula before the directives by SCAP. By September of 1945, soon after Japan’s surrender, the Japanese had begun thinking about the possibility of replacing wartime moral education with an alternative course.71 On November 1, 1945, with a suggestion from Kubota Fujimaro, a Youth Section Chief in the People’s Education Bureau, the Civics Education Reform Committee (CERC) was formed. It consisted of “five prominent private scholars and eleven higher [Ministry] officials.”72 After having held ten meetings, they produced two papers: “Report on Civics Education, Number 1” and “The Fundamental Direction of Civics Education, Number 2,”73 which were ultimately calling for the revival of civics education.74

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70 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
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Before the Americans had more detailed plans for the curriculum reform, the process to change the old curriculum was taking place rather independently by the Japanese effort. When the Japanese submitted their ideas about reinstituting a course of civics education or kōmin, the Americans were not happy. The Americans reminded the Japanese that they were supposed to revise the old curricula and check with the Americans rather than coming up with new ideas on their own. The discussion over whether to take the Japanese ideas of reinstituting a civics education course continued until July of 1946. During the time—from the fall of 1945 to the mid-summer of 1946, the Americans had changed their position. By May 1946, they had approved the creation of new civics education textbooks and curricula; however, in July 1946, they became rather anti-civics education.

Despite the anti-civics education sentiments on the American side, the difference between the content of civics education and that of social studies was not clearly stated at the beginning. While the civics education recommended by the Japanese was to include nine topics for the courses, such as “(a) human beings and society, [subdivided into] jinkaku [equivalent to American’s individual dignity], self-regulation, and communal life, (b) home life; (c) school life; (d) social life; (e) the state; (f) modern politics and government; (g) modern economy; (h) social issues; (i) international life; and (j) social ideals,” the only thing the Americans knew for sure about social studies was to include

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74 Inoue, 176. Kōmin or civics education, which was initially taught at boys’ middle school “as a course in government and economics during the prewar period, became a course that would cover the subject of shushin (morals) by the beginning of the war.
75 Ibid, 177.
76 Yoshizo Kubo, Tainichisenryo seisaku to sengo kyoikukaikaku (The Provision and Postwar Educational Reform in Occupied Japan), (Tokyo: Sanseido, 1984), 244.
78 Inoue, 177.
history and geography courses. Other detailed plans for a new curriculum were made later in 1946.79

From the readings, I have received the impression that the Americans, like the Japanese, were still trying to figure out the way to conduct this very reform, and when they finally knew what should be done, they started to direct the Japanese more specifically. They started to show their strong belief in the superiority of social studies to any other curriculum including civics education. The Americans believed that social studies would teach students every aspect of society from democratic perspectives, whereas civics education was limited in study of subjects related to politics.80 Although the goal of civics education thought out by the Japanese was set in the right direction, in terms of teaching students democracy, the Americans insisted on the adoption of social studies—the only curriculum from their perspectives that would combine a variety of courses, including history, geography, economics, sociology, anthropology, politics, and logic.81 They even suggested that the civics education be called social studies, and after numerous discussions, “the Japanese finally gave up the idea of [civics education] as a replacement for [morals].”82

Since the space is limited in this paper, I will not present every single detailed debate the Americans and Japanese had at the height of the reform. However, it is important to note the conflict between the two forces. Even if the time given to them was limited, they had intense discussions over this matter. As is in any other countries,

79 Kubo, 247-266.
81 Ibid.
82 Inoue, 176-7.
education that includes teachings of social structures and values is a key to establish the mindset of Japanese citizens. Thus, it was reasonable for the Japanese to have taken the initiative to reform the old school programs by themselves before the Americans. At the same time, however, the Americans felt a responsibility to guide the Japanese into a certain, 'right,' direction. By the spring of 1946, the Americans had recruited new staff members with “greater professional experience and specialization,” and they themselves began to have a clearer view of how they should interfere with the Japanese to establish a new democratic curriculum.83

According to Trainor who was an advisor to the Textbook and Curriculum Section of the Education Division at that time, there were two major sections that were directly involved in the school curriculum reform and that worked together, starting in the spring of 1946: the Ministry of Education and the Education Division.84 In July 1946, a Curriculum Committee was formed in the Japanese Ministry of Education. It consisted mostly of the two offices in the Ministry, the Bureau of School Education and the Bureau of Textbooks, and its main task was to plan new school curricula and textbooks by the school year of 1947.85 This meant the Curriculum Committee had only eight months to discuss and establish new school study programs. From the beginning, this very reform must have seemed impossible. Even if it had been put into effect as planned in the spring of 1947, one should remember the lack of time given to the Ministry of Education and the Education Division for carrying out the reform, as we further examine the process.

84 Trainor, 123.
85 Ibid, 124-125.
During the eight months, the Education Division regularly held meetings, often referred to as seminars, with a group of officials from the Ministry. The primary purpose of the seminar was to discuss the problems of the old curricula and come up with new programs. However, as they met at the first meeting, the Americans received an impression that the Japanese officials, though they may have been well-educated, had little to almost no knowledge of how they would establish a new educational ideology in order to bring democracy into society. In fact, Wray writes that some Americans present that the Japanese “expressed anxiety over how to write the courses of study for each subject and grade level.” Thus, at the second meeting on September 5, 1946, the Americans, including Kenneth Harkness, Monta Osborne, and Trainor, provided reference materials for the Japanese to study examples of a social study curriculum from the United States.

The reference materials prepared by the Americans were composed of three sets: a guide with “eight steps to follow in developing a social studies curriculum,” a list of “suggestions for [the Japanese] compilers that Harkness had…partially adapted from his native South Dakota’s course of study for social studies,” and a set of materials taken “from the Virginia courses of study for social studies.” While the Japanese were supposed to come up with a curriculum that would enhance students’ understanding of democracy and world peace in any possible way, the reality was, however, that the information and instructions they received either came directly from the American

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86 Wray, “Shuosen chokugo no Nihon ni okeru, ‘shakaika’ sosetsu no haikei” (The Background to the Establishment of Social Studies in Japan’s Immediate Postwar Period), 29.
88 Ibid.
89 Ibid.
supervisors or were borrowed from American schools. Without the full awareness of the
compilers, the purpose of the curriculum reform was gradually shifting. The matter was
not to establish a curriculum for a new democratic nation; instead, the focus of the reform
was shifted to “how to make the American material fit Japanese ethics and how to adjust
differences between Japanese and American children.”

The adoption of American school programs, however, was not appealing to many
Japanese for several reasons discussed mainly later in this section. Even if both countries
now shared the same ideology, it did not mean that the Japanese were ready to take in the
American curriculum. One thing might work well for certain people in a certain culture,
but it might not work the same in another culture where people have different value
systems and a different way of living. American-made school programs would not
produce the same type of democratic people as the United States in Japan. Hidaka
Daishiro, who was the Vice Minister of Education, said that even though the discourse
over the creation of social studies curriculum was worth discussing, whether it should be
adopted in Japanese schools was another matter. Although the Americans were putting
effort into this very reform, they were rather idealistic, while forgetting to ask an integral
question concerning what would work the best for the Japanese, instead of what would
ideally be good for them.

As the reform went on, it became clear that what the Americans wanted for Japan
was different from what the Japanese thought they needed for themselves. For instance,
while the Americans such as Osborn, Harkness, and Trainor strongly recommended that
the three courses, morals, national history, and geography be integrated into one social

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90 Ibid, 28.
91 Kubo, 250.
92 Inoue, 187-190.
studies curriculum, many Japanese officials from the Ministry, including Nomura and Hidaka expressed objections toward the Americans’ idea, insisting they did not want to give up individual courses. Each course had its own purpose and the integration of three courses could mean to leave out things that can be otherwise taught in an individual course. For instance, separate attention given to nation’s history in individual course is impossible when all three courses are combined into one. The abolition of separate history, geography, and moral courses and the creation of social studies was indeed a big shift to the Japanese, and even under the pressure from the Americans, the Japanese could not merely let this reform be put into action without a further debate.

Particularly Hidaka claimed that instead of integrating the three courses, a history course should be taught independently and chronologically. To him, as well as to many Japanese, it was important to recognize the existence of a national history course,93 and their claim seemed reasonable. Without the knowledge of national history, students would not be able to build their identity as Japanese citizens. Losing one’s national identity, especially after losing a war, was an issue to the Japanese, whereas the Americans, who were afraid of the Japanese being ultra-nationalistic, would not care as much as the Japanese if the students were taught less about the history of their nation. The Americans did not want any of the prewar history and geography courses that were heavily Japanese as teachers often taught the divinity of Japan and how it came to be great. What the Americans wanted was to cultivate Japanese students to be “peace-loving, democratic and international-oriented citizens.”94

93 Kubo, 250.
94 Wray, “The Fall of Moral Education and the Rise and Decline of Civic Education and Social Studies in Occupied and Independent Japan,” 33. (Emphasis Wray’s)
Besides the conflict between the Ministry officials and the American officers, there was a friction between the Ministry of Education and Japanese school teachers, who had “feelings of guilt over their role in sending numerous students off to war”95 and who had hatred against the old education system controlled by the central government or the Ministry of Education in particular. With support from SCAP, Japanese teachers formed a Teachers’ Union, *Nikkyoso*,96 in 1947, and the role of the Ministry of Education shifted. As the Ministry of Education was ordered to give up the full authority to control education, the relationship between the Ministry of Education and teachers was no longer the same. The Ministry of Education could not merely ignore the voices of teachers who would actually teach. Otherwise, teachers would go on strikes.97 If teachers were unenthusiastic about the new curriculum, it would be difficult to carry out the reform successfully. The students would not be educated well under the new curriculum either. Thus, teachers’ voices became crucial, and the struggle between the two must have created another controversy during the reform.98

There were also splits among Japanese school teachers as well as among the members of the Ministry of Education that made it difficult for this curriculum reform to take place. By the height of the reform, there had been two forces: traditional or conservative educators and officials who preferred to adhere to the old, prewar education system; and progressive officials and educators who were up for anything that would help

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95 Schoppa, 31. 
96 *Nikkyoso* is an abbreviation of *nihon kyōsyokuin kumiai* (Japan Teachers’ Union). By 1960 there had been 500,000 teachers who had joined the Union. (The stat. provided from Ben C Duke.)
enhance Japan’s democratic characteristics.99 During the development of social studies, many conventional Japanese teachers expressed their opposition toward the adoption of social studies because they neither had knowledge of how to teach the new course nor liked the idea of combining the three courses together.100 They wanted to teach national history and geography, not ‘social studies’ that they did not know. To those who were rather ideologically conservative, the integrated course, even if it meant including the teaching of history and geography, “lacked academic substance,” and thus would “lower Japanese academic standards.”101 From these discussions, adoption of social studies had a long way to go: it required training for teachers with a new manual or the so-called Course of Study,102 and evidently not many teachers were ready for this change.

Although many educators and ministry officials regretted having taught some of the ultra-nationalistic subjects at school to lead the entire nation into a war, they were reluctant to wipe out entirely the old school curricula. For instance, among the Ministry of Education and educational reform committees, there were discussions over whether to completely discontinue or reinstitute the Imperial Rescript on Education,103 the very document which constituted the prewar and wartime moral education and drove Japan into imperialism while having made the people royal and filial to their country and to the Emperor. The Japanese conservatives in particular never desired to give up “the basic

100 Duke, 214.
102 Kaori Okano and Motonori Tsuchiya, Education in Contemporary Japan: Inequality and Diversity, (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 35. The Course of Study or Gakushū shidō yōrō in Japanese was first issued by the Ministry of Education in 1947. It became a guideline for the teachers with “the aims and a set of standards for the content that teachers were expected to cover.”
moral precepts” of the Rescript, “while recognizing the impossibility of maintaining the imperial aspect of [it].”\textsuperscript{104} Thus, despite the Americans’ stress on the elimination of a separate moral or ethics course,\textsuperscript{105} the Japanese could not easily give up the Rescript, nor did they want to follow the Americans’ idea of integrating several courses together to deemphasize materials in each course.

During the war, “shūshin [or moral education] and the principles it embodied were the center of the Japanese curriculum.”\textsuperscript{106} Thus, the total elimination of a moral course was striking to the Japanese,\textsuperscript{107} as they saw the absolute necessity to have a separate morals course “to the degree necessary for Japanese youth.”\textsuperscript{108} Dore claims that since the Japanese did not have any major source of moral lessons in public unlike in the United States where people could go to church or read Bibles to learn about ideal morals, the Japanese government in particular felt the need to adopt a system that would instruct the citizens.\textsuperscript{109} The formalization of moral education was important to the Japanese, who might or might not be exposed to Confucian texts, for instance. Again, while the Americans more likely feared the nationalistic aspects of moral education in Japanese schools, the Japanese leaders were concerned about the deterioration of ‘Japanese’ moral values, values which were needed to direct the reconstruction of society.

Despite the debate over the establishment of the new curriculum and issues that the Japanese claimed, the Americans were determined to be successful in introducing social studies to Japanese schools. They convinced the anti-social studies officials from

\textsuperscript{104} Schoppa, 30.
\textsuperscript{105} Dore, 147. In 1948, the Imperial Rescript on Education was rescinded.
\textsuperscript{106} Kerlinger, 119.
\textsuperscript{107} Schoppa, 36.
\textsuperscript{108} Duke, 214.
\textsuperscript{109} Dore, 148.
the Ministry, including Nomura and Hidaka, by showing how the Japanese needs would be fulfilled by the new curriculum.\textsuperscript{110} And finally after numerous discussions and with Americans’ persuasion, the Japanese agreed to put effort into the establishment of social studies. They decided that different social studies content should be created for students at different grade levels. For instance, from first to forth grade, general social studies would be taught, while national history would be included in social studies courses for fifth and sixth graders.\textsuperscript{111} As planned, in the school year of 1947, the new curriculum was adopted in schools for students from first to twelfth grades. However, the discussion over the adequacy or inadequacy of the curriculum never ceased for the next several decades.\textsuperscript{112}

One of the criticisms over the adoption of social studies, which came several years after the reform, dealt with the discussion over the cultural needs of the Japanese as opposed to the focused nature of the reforms. In a letter to the American editor of \textit{Comparative Education Review}, which included an article on Japan’s moral education titled “Rebirth of Moral Education in Japan,” Oshiba Mamoru discusses to the editor how the curriculum reform should have been conducted. He says that although the new educational system introduced to Japan by the Americans “was a good system and contributed much to the democratization of Japanese society,” “…some consideration should have been given to the difference in cultural background as well as to natural conditions between the two countries, and some modifications should have been made to

\textsuperscript{110} Kubo, 250-251.
\textsuperscript{111} Wray, “Shusen chokugo no Nihon ni okeru, ‘shakaika’ sosetsu no haikei” (The Background to the Establishment of Social Studies in Japan’s Immediate Postwar Period), 32. For further information on how social studies was adopted in each grade, please read Kubo’s \textit{Tainichisenryo seisaku to sengo kyoikukaikaku} (The Provision and Postwar Educational Reform in Occupied Japan), 256-7.
\textsuperscript{112} The need for moral education, separate from social studies, continued to be discussed among the Ministry of Education, the Teachers’ Union, and the government after the occupation. In 1958, moral education was reintroduced as a revised course by the Ministry of Education (Duke, 214).
adapt the system to Japan’s needs.” There were indeed cultural differences that the Americans might have failed to understand while believing in the universality of ideology and the superiority of the education system they had established in their own nation.

Conclusion

“History tells us no nation can escape from more or less change in education after a war,” said Nishimoto Mitoji in 1952, and indeed Japan was no exception. As soon as the Americans arrived in September 1945, an educational reform was launched with the goals of demilitarization and democratization of Japan. However, what was dramatic about Japan’s postwar educational reform was the speed of the reform as well as the content and ideology of education, which were fundamentally changed within the time given, despite the physical and economic condition of the nation at that time. In less than two years—from September 1945 to April 1947—the Japanese, under American guidance, developed a new educational ladder system, the 6-3-3-4 system, and a new social studies curriculum, both of which were adopted in the same academic year, 1947.

As is evident in this paper, on the surface the adoption of the 6-3-3-4 system and social studies caused different types of issues, either socio-economical or cultural issues, and they were each controversial in their own ways. Yet, while the development of the 6-3-3-4 system required financial means and the debate was centered on the monetary problems, the system itself was not merely a system to change the Japanese education systematically and materially. It was ultimately calling for a change in people’s consciousness toward education and its system under the name of democracy.

114 Nishimoto, 16.
Meanwhile, the development of social studies necessitated as much time, effort, and cultural and ideological changes as the former. Although the discussion was centered on the ideological and cultural issues, the development of the new curriculum could not have taken place without confronting financial issues, as it involved the publication of new textbooks, employment of teachers, and production of teaching manuals. Even if the influence of the 6-3-3-4 system upon Japanese citizens’ ideology and social behavior could be estimated to be less than that of the new curriculum, both the reforms were considered highly significant and thus were controversial.

Despite the differences in the nature of the two reforms, they both were developed based on ideals of the Japanese and Americans rather than on the material condition of Japan during the time of the reform. In light of the terrible struggle most Japanese were experiencing in meeting basic daily needs, it was probably not the best timing to conduct a reform so removed from the immediate lives of the people. However, both countries considered this so important that more immediate needs could be overlooked; the educational reform was inevitable with a high demand to make a shift from the wartime Japan to a new state as soon as possible. The new educational system was to help cultivate people to be democratic and anti-war. For the Americans, changing the ideological state of Japanese citizens was as urgent as, or possibly more urgent than, improving the physical condition of the people and nation.

Scholars such as Tsuchimochi and Shibata Masako have compared Japan’s postwar educational reform with the educational reform in Germany, which took place at the same time. Interestingly, despite the fact that both countries were under the same

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kind of American guidance, the result of the educational reform in Germany turned out to be much different from that of Japan. With the combination of everything—specific types of people, physical environment and history of the nation, time, culture, spiritual essence of the people involved, as well as influences and pressures by the Americans—the Japanese came to establish an educational system that was suitable to a new democratic Japan after World War II. The scenario in Japan, particularly including the types of controversies and issues that emerged, was unique to Japan, and it was never the same in Germany where the U.S. education missions and reformers faced different issues distinctive to the nation.

The discussion of Japan’s postwar educational reform and study of its process are indeed not merely a matter of the power-relation between the two nations, Japan and the United States. Controversies that emerged during Japan’s postwar educational reform do not merely indicate the conflict between the two nations due to the different ideas and values they held. As was the case in the development of the 6-3-3-4 system, even when the reformers from the two nations had agreed to implement a system, problems could emerge one after another because there would often be obstacles at different stages as the new system was developed. Indeed, balancing between ideals and practicality was never an easy task, and perhaps we will never find a right balance between the two.

116 In the case of educational reform in postwar Germany, there was a strong sentiment against American involvement in the reform. To many German traditionalists in particular, education was “their inner sanctum, off-limits to foreigners,” therefore no foreigner was to be allowed to interfere (Tuschimochi, Education Reform in Postwar Japan, 203). Unlike the positive attitudes of the majority of education reform committees and ministry officials in Japan, the Germans were negative about carrying on an educational reform with the help of Americans from the beginning. Nor did they show their willingness and effort to accept the report submitted by the United States Education Mission to Germany. One of the reform that produced controversies was the adoption of the single-track system as a replacement for the traditional multi-track system, under which the Germans exercised elite education, granting the rich and poor different levels of education for a long time. American criticisms of the multi-track system were almost ignored by the Germans. This is taken from Tuschimochi, Rokusansensei no tanjō—sengo kyōiku no genten (The Birth of the 6-3 Educational System: the Origin of Postwar Education), 140-142, and Tuschimochi, Education Reform in Postwar Japan, 170-204.
Right after the adoption of the 6-3-3-4 system and social studies, the criticisms over the two began, and after the Americans left with the end of the occupation in 1952, several reforms have indeed taken place. Although the 6-3-3-4 system was maintained, the system went through a re-examination.\textsuperscript{117} From December 1952 to August 1954, the Ministry of Education had the first revision of the Course of Study, a teaching manual, produced with the Americans during the occupation,\textsuperscript{118} and in 1958 the Ministry of Education decided to reintroduce a revised moral education as a compulsory course in schools.\textsuperscript{119} With the textbook revision in 1972, civics education was readopted as a third-year course in junior high schools.\textsuperscript{120}

Although it has been over half a century since the postwar educational reform, it is still too early to decide whether each reform successfully fulfilled its purpose and met Japanese needs in the long run. It would be interesting to see studies and debates on this topic in 2047, a full century after the adoption of the educational ladder system and curriculum.

\textsuperscript{117} Hidaka, 148.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid, 149.
\textsuperscript{119} Duke, 214.
\textsuperscript{120} Inoue, 178.
Figure 121: Under the new single-track system, students were to follow the same educational path as long as they had desire to pursue education.
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