Changes In Higher Education For Women In Japan, 1946–48
By Lulu H. Holmes, Ph.D.


My appointment as Adviser on Higher Education to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers in Tokyo, became effective in July, 1946, although it was a month before I actually arrived in Tokyo for work. I presume the fact that my entire professional background is in the field of Higher Education for Women, with a Master’s degree and a Ph.D. in Student Personnel Administration from Teachers College, Columbia University, and fifteen years of teaching experience in universities and high schools in the United States, made me an attractive choice to Dr. George Stoddard, then President of the University of Illinois. Stoddard, had four children, the two who were most concerned with higher education for women were Virginia Gilderleise and Mildred McAlenroe Bordeaux. Of course they were given every assistance in making this a success, in person and in letters, and to study the considerable body of information which the military staff had been collecting. At the end of their stay they presented a very full report to the Supreme Commander of Japanese education during occupation. The three which are most pertinent to this article are: 1) “Higher education must become the opportunity of the many, not of the few”; 2) the school system should be so organized that general college education would become more available, and there should be freedom of access guaranteed for members of all levels of higher education; 3) there should be a basic plan established for an increase in the number of universities in the country.

Parallel to this American committee, in August of 1946 the Prime Minister of Japan appointed a Japan Education Reform Council consisting of prominent educators of their country. The chairman of this Council was Dr. Yoshihiko Abe; the vice chairman was Dr. Shigeru Nambara, the President of Tokyo Imperial University. At their first meeting, which I attended, there were only two women present, both Japanese educators, Miss Michi Kawai and Miss Ai Hoshino. A committee of representatives from Japan Education Reform Council, including important Japanese educators. At my first staff meeting with them there developed the feeling that there were certain inadequacies which any new plan must meet; for instance, the present system provided only six years of free and compulsory education. This was entirely inadequate for mastery of the very difficult Japanese language. The Council recommended the adoption of the Chinese ideographic to phonetic symbols, and to express in terms of Western letters. More than six years were essential to meet this prerequisite. A system of language education had been largely predicated on the European system. After ten or eleven years of elementary and lower middle school education, the students were forced to select whether they were to meet the requirements of the university on all, which were highly differentiated. That choice sealed forever the opportunity of a student to go on to college or to terminate his education with some vocational training. This resulted in the number of specialized semmon gakko, very little of general education was available. On the other hand, there was a series of koto gakko which would correspond to the European lyceum or gymnasium or the British public schools. The only avenue to the university level, which began at the 12th or 13th year of the student’s education, these koto gakko were highly selective in their admission practices, they were costly, and they admitted no women, so they constituted a real block to university education for women.

In fact, all the way through the school system the girls were given a distinctly second-class education, largely an expansion of the old Oosha Gakko, that contained boarding schools for boys and coeducational gakko wase and mothers. The girls were separated from the boys at the end of the third year of school, they were given a different curriculum, different textbooks, different teachers; and they were not well prepared, and were housed in the older school building where there were two buildings available. There were exceptions to these conditions in some private schools, and especially in the Christian schools, but by and large this reflected the second class citizen ship of the Japanese women.

The projected plan for the Japanese educational system, which was in the process of discussion by the Council of Ministers, provided for the establishment of a new higher education system, which was to be integrated with the existing system, and which was to be managed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The new system was to be divided into three levels: 1) the primary level, which would be extended to include all sections of the population; 2) the secondary level, which would be extended to include all sections of the population; and 3) the higher level, which would be extended to include all sections of the population.

I pointed out that the Japanese educational system was one of the most backward in the world, and that it was not ready for university work. It was thoroughly understood that these various agencies worked on the new plans, and that there would be no new schools for girls and boys, but that the existing schools would be improved. The new plans were designed to meet the needs of the country, and to prepare the young people for a life of service to their country.

We in the United States have a number of girls who are not ready for university work. Fifty-one out of 324 had been accepted, but most of them discovered that they had never had the opportunity of being accepted to a college or university. They were not ready for university work. It was thoroughly understood that these various agencies worked on the new plans, and that there would be no new schools for girls and boys, but that the existing schools would be improved. The new plans were designed to meet the needs of the country, and to prepare the young people for a life of service to their country.

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repetition of Article 51 in any new school law. I sought out Mr. D. H. Hidaka, Chief of the Bureau of Education of the Mombusho, for a conference on the subject of segregating education for girls. Suffice it to say that when the new school law was passed in March of 1937, there was an immediate outburst from all quarters against the "principle of coeducation" was stated to be acceptable.

My next experience with segregated education for girls occurred on my first field trip in a teachers college in Sendai. At a meeting with the faculty, who were then in a state of great excitement in regard to women's education, the question quickly emerged, "Was I going to bring coeducation to Japan?" My reply was, "What do you feel about it?" and the answer from the president of the college came without hesitation. "It might be possible for the girls to remain in the same college with the boys through the first year, but after that time the interiority of the female mind would become embarrassingly apparent." This, then, was the mind-set of Japanese male educators—a formidable obstacle to face.

However, the major problem in the area of higher education quite obviously was to get women into men’s universities and to gain recognition of the right of women to attend colleges which were not as such giving institutions. How was this done in other countries? In the United States accredited men’s universities set up their own standards and examined and approved any institution desiring degree giving status. In Japan, the men’s Mombusho alone and it would not be easy to wrest it from that body. However, there was a whole new frontier of social reform and society and to gain access to them than through the existing universities? Let them become an accreditation association for Japan!

Mr. Hidaka was requested to arrange for a meeting of all university presidents, where the subject could be placed before them. This meeting was called for October 29, 1946. It was a cold Saturday morning when Frank Kawamoto, my interpreter, and I set out from Radio Tokyo for the Education Ministry. Entering the building well filled with Japanese gentlemen, the atmosphere left more even more chilly and the task seemed even more formidable. None of the men knew me and this took a long time at interpreter. It was obvious that these university presidents were not interested, at least not in the presence of Mombusho officials. At the end of two hours the gentlemen were thanked for making the effort to come to Tokyo and told they would have time to think over the matter and the opportunity to make any suggestions which they might have corresponded with.

There had been one responsive gentleman sitting in the front row, however, who came up to introduce himself. The meeting was to be attended by Wada, President of Tokyo Technical Institute. In elegant English he told me that he understood what I had brought and would do his best to promote the idea for Japanese universities to undertake to set up their own standards. He said that he had a daughter who had graduated from Wellesley, whose husband had graduated from Harvard, and who knew something about university systems in a democratic society. I so appreciated his friendly interest that I invited him to come for a conference in my office the next week and he was kind enough to accept. That began a long and pleasant and fruitful association with one of the ablest educators in my experience in the world, Professor Wada. In the course of the next months Dr. Wada and one of his associates, Dr. S. Sasaki, laid the groundwork for the Japanese Kijin Kyoiku (Women’s Education Commission). At weekly meetings we drew in Major Tom Macgrail of the Education Division, a former faculty member from Dartmouth College. We then went on, other civilians specialized worked with us in all the various facets of responsibility for such an association: education, public relations, and educational and undergraduate studies, new professional courses, and on and on. It was a great day when on July 15, 1947, the representatives of all universities in Japan, which had been in existence for five years, and the Diagaki Kijin Kyoiku (Women’s Educational) Committee, was notified by Dr. Sasaki several years ago. His courageous leadership alone made it possible for Japan’s universities to become representatives of women’s identity and for their own progress. And certainly if Dr. Wada's daughter had not gone to Wellesley, Japan could not have its own women teaching the right to grade degrees. Both personally and professionally I consider Dr. Wada a truly great man.

My last meeting with Dr. Wada was in 1953. He was a letter in July of 1953 from Dr. Takashi Hashimoto, who was then president of the Association, asking if I was making an effort to aim at the betterment of the quality of member universit"u" was the purport of his message, and I hope this is the still objective of the organization.

It is obvious that any revision in women’s education in Japan at any level must incorporate a study of Home Economics. An old friend, Matsuyo Omori, who had graduated from Hamline College in 1908 and then gone on to New York for work with Good Housekeeping Institute, would be just the right person to undertake the study. Unfortunately, Army runners sent out to find her in bombed-out Tokyo failed to locate her. But on September 11, 1946, I was astonished to receive a note, a little bit, haggard Japanese woman coming to my desk. It was Matsuyo; she asked with regretful story of the changing times, and she was struggling to regain her health when she discovered that I was in Tokyo. She wanted to be my interpreter. I could hardly believe there was another important work for her to do and discussed with her the Home Economics curriculum at all levels of education for women in Japan. She was thrilled at the prospect of working on this problem. We wrote to a dozen State Offices of Education in America, who sent in their Home Economics curricula, and these Matsuyo studied eagerly. A position was obtained for her in the secondary schools of the Mombusho so that whatever work she did would have official status. Her recommendations so skillfully adapted new Home Economics courses and the needs of Japan that the Mombusho was delighted to accept them, and wherever Home Economics courses are taught in Japan at the primary and secondary schools today owe their content and methods of teaching to Matsuyo Omori Yamamoto. After this task was accomplished, the J.A.U.W. then asked Matsuyo to work for them in developing a system of Extension Education for adults throughout Japan. Operations from her prosperous painting, which she herself founded through contributions she had, Matsuyo is now directing a program involving specialists in the extension field, who in turn are supervising more than 2,400 home advisers. She also has instigated thorough research programs involving home economics, textile, furniture, textiles, cooking equipment, and course nutrition studies as well. She has been called to various national committees and has taken part in the establishment of Home Extension programs, and the year 1966 she spent as Consultant to the Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome.

One of the great needs in making changes in the education for women in Japan was to cultivate a public opinion of approval for those changes. The name problem had existed in the late nineteenth century in the United States and the American Association of University Women was the first group to meet it. Before the war there had been in Tokyo a branch of the American Association of University Women—graduates of American and Japanese women and American—and it had been essentially an American organization. Now it would seem better for it to become a national organization, to take over the publicizing and promotion of more higher education for more Japanese women. Mrs. Kozo Marunouchi, a graduate of Bryn Mawr, had been corresponding secretary of the Tokyo A.A.U.W. group. She kindly came to my office on August 26, 1946, to talk over with me the possible transition of this group to a Japanese organization, and through her efforts, on September 28, 1946, forty-Japanese women met with Miss Donovan and myself at the Columbia University Club in Tokyo. The transition was promptly made, and immediately its importance and before the afternoon was done an informal organization had been set up, with Takaji as chairman of the committee. Three subcommittees were appointed: one, on organization, one on crank initiative in the Home Economics department at graduate school and one to study the organization of the Japanese educational system. At a meeting of the executive committee, Miss Donovan was appointed chairman of the committee for approval of Japanese colleges whose graduates might become members. Punam Mahoney became executive director and a committee that on the next meeting at December
21, 1946, Tano Jofadi presented for approval, ques-
tions to be sent to colleges seeking recognition for their courses. The next meeting of the National Association of University Women. Eight colleges were immediately approved at that meeting. They were: Tokyo Women's College, Touda College, Nara Women's Higher Normal, Kobe Jogakura, Doshisha Women's College, Tokai Christian College, and Osaka Women's Prefectural College. It was agreed that any women graduates of colleges would be eligible for membership. Mrs. Amatsu's committee presented a resolution endorsing the 6-3-2-4 plan, improvement in teacher training, and the principle of coeducation. It was voted to send these resolu-
tions to some members of the Diet, to the Japan Education Expansion Committee, to the press, and to alumnae associations of women's seminaries gakko. The alumnas of the approved colleges were urged to visit their local branch headquarters and tell them the news. They ended with the good news that a group had already been set up in Kyoto.

On March 17, 1947 the Executive Committee sent a resolution to the Cabinet asking that the budget for education be raised to fifty billion yen. They also proposed the creation of new branches or Daigaku Fuyuin Kyoiku in Sapporo, Fukuoka, and Nagoya. Representatives from these new branches were asked to come to a meeting in Tokyo set for May 17 and 18.

In the meantime the Tokyo committee on organi-
zation drew up a national constitution to be proposed at the meeting in Tokyo.

On May 17 and 18, 1947, the first national meeting of the Japan Association of University Women occurred at Nippon Jogakura. Eighteen representatives from out-of-town branches plus eighty members from the Tokyo branch spent those two days in hard work. All the delegates were divided into working committees on: (1) the accreditation of member colleges; (2) a national constitution; (3) nomination of national officers. I had heard the Japanese high and say "democracy is such hard work," and I am sure those women felt that way during those two days. Many of them had to be in the position of achieving their goals. Before the meeting ended a new constitution was adopted and national officers were elected. Tahi Fujita became the first national president and she was ably supported by a fine set of officers.

The next months involved much work out of relationships between the national organization and the local branches, the procedures for approval of local branches, and how to live. Sometimes it was difficult, for reports from branches, means for program implementation, etc. News of the organization spread rapidly, and women's colleges were approved at branches of Daigaku Fuyuin Kyoiku in twenty-two cities of Japan. Members from the National Board traveled around the country to watch how things were going. As much of my work took me on trips the length and breadth of the Empire, I also took occasion to speak in behalf of the branches and to assist them in any possible way.

All through these months of organization I had kept in close touch with the headquarters office of the International Federation of University Women in London in order that we might plan this orga-
nization in close conformity to their standards, with the ultimate objective of being incorporated in the International Federation. The London office was very helpful and anxious to receive the Japanese Association in the International Federation. It took some years to accomplish this, partly because of the expense involved for the New Association, but it was finally accomplished and in 1946 the Japanese Association of University Women became a member in good standing of the International Federation of University Women. The accomplishment of this organization in the first place and the Association's standing and growth, were a credit to the women's leaders in Japan.

One other channel open for spreading the idea of more education for Japanese women and that was through women's student groups. It was easy to see that such organizations were gakko in and around Tokyo to send student repre-
sentatives and their advisers from their student organization, and I was able to find that most of the advisers were

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coeducation would be desirable, but beyond the fact that "the principle of coeducation would be accept-
able in New School," there was not much enthusiasm. In 1947, there had been no pressure from the Civil Information Section of SCAP to introduce coeducation in Japan. It was clear that impres- sion was very quickly. First, because so many school buildings had been legitimate targets of arson, if they were used part-time for small arms manufacture during the war years and had there- fore been bombarded, the necessity for building was tremendous and in most cases it would be impossible to achieve. Therefore, the boys and girls continued in this one building even after the third year, the graduates also had no trouble. When they realized that there would be fine women's colleges competing for these girls' attendance. And a more mass movement of the leaders of the men's universities, who had been actively helpful in the University Accreditation Association, also increased. He called me to his office late in March 1948 to tell me that on April 1, 1948, women would be admitted to Tokyo Imperial University. I thought that he was only joking at the moment, but he went on to say that twenty women would be admitted. Responsible administrators of the University of Tokyo Imperial University. When I asked how many men students there were, he said "Oh, about ten thousand," and he pointed out the picture. Nevertheless, when Tokyo Imperial University took such a step, the other Japanese universities fell quickly into line. The movement of coeducation advanced even up through the four-year daikyuu level very quickly.

Because statistics change so rapidly, it is not wise in such an account as this to quote figures on the numbers of women students now studying in four-year daikyuu in Japan. But my last visit there in 1963 convinced me that the thousands of young women had fully justified the courage and the resilience of the Japanese women educators who brought about the necessary changes in the Japanese educational system to achieve this proud status. Women just a few years ago were not only given new rights. In the national constitution of 1947, it was declared in the national constitution of 1947. The women's colleges were given the possibility of scholas-
tships for some of the Japanese women's students and I met with a very generous response. It was the time that the Japanese women would be free to travel, there would be scholarships for them at Bryn Mawr, at Smith, and at Teachers College, Columbia. The problem of travel money would be a serious one. Upon my return to the United States in June 1968, my visit to Japan shows that the future for education in Japan has brightened. The current situation is one of fifty to one hundred dollars to be used for scholarships for foreign women. A.A.U.W. was also very generous in contributing fellowship funds, and months of travel on the Northwest talking about the new hope for women's higher education in Japan, before A.A.U.W. branches and women's clubs and colleges and church groups often resulted in small sums of $10 to $25 contributed to the cause. The result was that by the second semester of 1949 it was possible for Tano Jofadi of Nippon Jogakura to come over for a semester at Smith College, for Tahi Fujita from Touda College to come to Bryn Mawr, and for Tanio Tambe of Kobe Jogakura to come to Wellesley. The Mission Board of Tokyo Woman's Christian College established a scholarship for Teruko Komoto from their faculty to go to Teachers College, Columbia University. These women not only went extraordinarily hard at their respective colleges but they also had the opportunity to visit many other colleges during that spring and summer, and when they came back to Japan their home colleges they were able to move ahead very rapidly with whatever changes they thought wise to bring about. They had a head start on the date and ready to meet the needs of Japanese women.

There has been much discussion in the United States regarding the principle of coeducation. The pressures brought upon Japan by SCAP and the Inter-Allied Council on Education were a matter of fact. Many of the Japanese were already convinced that
ILO百号条約の批准と働く婦人の地位

木村愛子

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支 部 報 告

この発表、以下扱うことにする。

(1) 会議の前

(2) 会議の内容

(3) 会議の結果