

Movement for educational system reform by *Kyouiku-kagaku-kenkyukai* (*Kyoukaken*, society for the scientific study of education) in the 1930s and early 1940s

This paper explains *Kyoukaken's* educational movement in the 1930s and the first half of the 1940s. *Kyoukaken's* educational activism covered a variety of fields, but this paper focuses on its theory of educational reform.

In the 1930s, raising the age of the end of compulsory education from 6th grade to 8th grade became a practical possibility, and relevant details were enthusiastically debated. This paper focuses on the reform objective of securing education for ordinary young people that occurred within that debate.

The development of modern industry created the potential, in the school system reform, for practical education (vocational education) to be substituted for other compulsory education. Under the "Total War System" national political ideology of the 1930s, this kind of thinking brought the *jitsugyo-hoshu-gakkou* (vocational supplementary schools) [starting from the mid-1930s, the *seinen-gakkou* (youth schools)] under the compulsory education umbrella, and gave rise to a school system theory aimed at the cultivation of a strong labor force.

This was the background against which *Kyoukaken's* education movement emerged, and it engaged in research activities based on a theory that differed from the mainstream school system reform debate of the time. To clarify the nature of *Kyoukaken's* relevant theory, and the nature of the problem perception that formed that theory, this paper takes the following shape.

In Chapter 1, the necessity of vocational education, or "the actualization of education," as part of compulsory education, is discussed, as presented in the school system reform debate in the 1930s. To confirm these trends, educational council debates and various reform proposals published in the 1930s are examined. The development of modern industry and the formation of the Total War System are shown to be factors behind the decision to improve the provision of vocational education, and the nature of the criticism for these trends leveled by *Kyoukaken* is demonstrated.

Chapter 2 discusses the kind of problem perception that underpinned *Kyoukaken's* establishment of research issues as part of its educational activism. After the publication of the journal *Kyouiku* (Education) in 1933, the announcement of the establishment of *Kyoukaken* in 1937 is explained, as is the background of the determination of the minimum essential amount of education that should be given to each citizen, which is a joint research theme. *Kyoukaken's* education-for-life theory emerged from these processes.

Chapter 3 explains the theory of *Kyōkaken*, which was part of the *Kokusaku-kenkyū (dōshi) kai* (Research Institute of National Policy) and the *Kyōiku-kaikaku-dōshikai* (educational reform association); these were policy research bodies. At both of these organizations, problems with the educational administration structure were mostly indicated, and research into the establishment of institutions to strengthen teachers' authority was carried out. As part of an investigation into the relationship between this reform theory and the 1942 reorganization of the Education Ministry, the role of *Kyōkaken* and the policy research body *Kyōiku-kaikaku-dōshikai* was discussed. The nature of the development of the theory of educational bureaucracy reform alongside *Kyōkaken's* education-for-life theory was shown.

In Chapter 4, the content of the educational reform proposal published in the *Kyōiku* journal in 1937, and its characteristics, are shown. This proposal suggested a school system comprised of “elementary school – secondary school – university – graduate school,” with the aim of abolishing all privilege associated with graduation from school, and with the secondary schools representing an entirely new concept that had not existed in the school system. The first two years were a time of mentoring in which guidance about moving on to the next educational institution or career guidance was carried out, and the significance of that stage is discussed herein. To clarify the characteristics of *Kyōkaken's* reform theory, it is compared with a reform proposal by *Kyōiku-kaikaku-dōshikai*.

Chapter 5 reviews the significance of extending the length of compulsory education and of keeping young people in school. *Kyōkaken* stressed the fact that extending the length of compulsory education did not just involve education in schools, but must also be expanded to include investigation of the home environment and working conditions in which young workers were placed. Furthermore, the illogicality of making the *seinen-gakkō* compulsory without an understanding of this kind of issue was suggested by the results of Shunichi Suzuki's investigation. In this chapter, the education-for-life theory is explained, including the significance of initiatives to keep young people in education developed by *Kyōkaken* that was based on this kind of criticism.

In Chapter 6, to demonstrate *Kyōkaken's* concept for *seinen-gakkō*, the focus is on the *Kyōiku-kaikaku-dōshikai* reform proposals. The background of *seinen-gakkō* no longer being attended just by those moving on to employment, but also incorporating educational content intended to prepare students for further education, is explained. The exact nature of this educational content is also discussed. Content relating to consumption education is examined, and its significance is considered.

Chapter 7 explains the significance of the minimum essential amount of education that should be given to each citizen, as well as the fact that “curriculum” is an indicator of this agenda. The

curriculum should incorporate skills that are indispensable to life in society, including cultural life. Even as the War went increasingly badly and labor force preservation became a pressing problem, there was an emphasis on the fact that it was essential for young workers to have enough leisure time to enjoy a cultural life, that improvement in life was necessary, and that school education should include guidance on how to pursue a full cultural life. This concept was announced via the *Kyouiku-kaikaku-doushikai* education system reform proposal in 1940, and the characteristics of *Kyokaken's* education-for-life theory, shown within this paper, are explained.

Having clarified the above, there was an attempt to position the education movement of *Kyokaken*, which was a private-sector education research body.