

“Patriotism” Doesn’t Match Education

English 3C

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The biggest concern in Japan, especially in Nagatacho (the seat of government), is whether the word “patriotism” should be put in the Fundamental Law of Education or not. The government party says that the law needs revision right away and it would like to put the word “patriotism” in the law, but I have some questions about the government’s statements. Precisely, does the law really need to be revised? For the three reasons below, the Fundamental Law of Education should not be revised.

When we look back Japanese history especially World War II, “patriotism” was used by the government (Kamata, 2003) . In those days, the military authorities and politicians used the word to raise people’s fighting spirit against the allied powers. After that terrible war, the Constitution of Japan was established and it was based on the reflection of the war. The Fundamental Law of Education was also done in 1947 and it showed new idea of education which rested on the constitution. I cannot help but think that the government wants to prepare laws for the “next” war. I hate war because they bring destruction and sadness. I want not only Japan but also all countries to avoid waging wars.

Next, are there any reasons the law needs revision “right away”? Of course, there are many problems in Japanese society now, for example, pension, the gap between rich and poor, and diplomacy. Moreover, the educational system has a lot of problem, such as bullying and escaping from compulsory subjects. However, I don’t think that patriotism is more important than any other problems. In addition, if teachers awake their students to patriotism, a new

problem will be caused, for teaching it in school will conflict with freedom of ideas and conscience (Nishihara, 2003).

Now I doubt that teaching patriotism will solve problems in recent education. It is said that administration of education really needs to reform right away. I agree with that opinion. In my high school, about half of the students in my class didn't come to school when entrance examinations for universities were approaching. Absent students thought that classes in high school wouldn't help them to pass the examinations. This phenomenon shows us one of the problems about high school and entrance examinations. I don't believe putting patriotism in the law can solve such practical issues.

The government party gave us some reasons the Fundamental Law of Education needs revision (Fujita, 2001). One of them is the law doesn't match recent society because it was established 60 years ago, but that sounds strange. I feel this law had ideas in advance of the times when it was enacted. The law doesn't need to be revised simply because it has become old. Another reason is it has no rule which provides fostering pride in children's hometown, country, and nationality. However, should pride really be taught and, if so, how can it be accomplished in school? Natural patriotism is good. We would like to cheer Japanese player when we watch the Olympic Games or Major League Baseball on TV. That is a sort of patriotism, but I have never been taught it in school. Patriotism should not be taught in school and there is no way to "teach" it, which is by nature in each person. The role of politics isn't

to revise the law but to carry out policies which have us feel that this country is really good naturally.

The government party doesn't explain why it wants to revise the Fundamental Law of Education enough, but the amendment forcibly passed the House of Representatives on November 16th. Education is basis of a country and the law is often called "the constitution of education." The word patriotism doesn't match the law and education itself. We have to watch arguments in the Diet carefully, but the overriding conclusion remains the same: the Fundamental Law of Education should not be revised.

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