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Effect of Recovery of Right of Education on Missionary School Physical Education

By *Kohsuke Sasajima**

The objective of the movement of recovery of the right of education was to recover the right of education which had been in the hands of foreigners to the hands of Chinese people, and in the background of this movement, there lay primary factors such as the Unequal Treaty, the opposition against the invasion of foreign countries into China, etc.

The recovery movement did not heap up as the sole movement, but the movement developed as a link of the chain of the nationalistic idea which was flared up by the 5•4 movement dominated across the country as a result of the dissatisfaction caused by the 1919 Versailles Treaty.

The movement began to become hot around 1919 and during 1922 and 1923, all educational bodies and organizations set themselves to develop this movement. During 1925, it, stimulated by the 5•30 Incident, became more and more heated. The Government also embarked itself in recovering the right of education in 1925.

The educational facilities for Chinese people managed by foreigners and subjected to recovery of the right of education were very small in number when missionary schools were excepted, therefore, the target of the movement was set on missionary schools. The missionary schools and others under management of foreigners were in an extraterritorial status, and the education had been given therein uniquely based on the managers' policies.

It was in 1839 that a missionary school was established for the first time in China. And after the doors of the country were opened to foreign countries in 1842, missionary schools were established one after another. Most of them were established in provinces in which ports were opened to foreigners. Schools of

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Protestant origin were far excelled those of Catholic origin in number. The missionary schools which numbered 3,687 in 1912 increased to 15,213 in 1919. Schools of primary school level overwhelmed in number, they had a small enrolment, and many of them were not equipped satisfactorily. The recovery movement started in 1917, and after 1919, it developed into an educational movement worthy of being paid attention to. On the part of the missionary schools, they began a movement against the educational movement.

The anti-church group made its movement furious by the activities through educational bodies and organizations.

The Governments set about recovering the right of education, too. The Peking Government in 1925 and the National Government in 1926 enacted laws in succession to recover the right of education. These laws could not have control because they were issued before the country was unified. Therefore, it seemed that not so great an effect was given to the missionary schools. The National Government that succeeded in the unification of the country after achieving its goal to conquer the northern region, issued the "Regulation for Private School" as on 29 August 1929. Contained in the regulation was that private schools should observe the then educational law, that schools managed by foreigners should appoint Chinese to the posts of master, that any religion should not be adopted as a compulsory course, and that approval should be cancelled or dissolution ordered when teaching was not given appropriately or the laws were not observed. These restrictions were naturally a severe blow upon missionary schools. During the period from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, the unification of the missionary education advanced, and with the China Christian Educational Association as controller of Christian educational administration, educational associations were organized on a provincial basis, such as the North China Educational Union, the West China Educational Union, the East China Educational Association, etc. These associations controlled education by prescribing standards for courses, teaching methods and the number of teaching hours. In the courses prescribed by missionary schools before the movement to recover the right of education got heated, no lesson was given for physical education with the exception of some associations. Also, the Chinese School Law had no provision pertaining to physical education.

One of the reasons why physical education was not adopted in missionary schools

might be that they had not sufficient facilities, tools and instructors, and that they had a small average number of schoolboys and girls. However, as there was no significant difference in the average number of school-children between missionary schools and ordinary schools, there may have been some other reasons.

As the movement to recover the right of education rose, the missionary school side was separated into a prudent group and a radical group. The prudent group might be said a moderate group or an adaptation group, which intended to continue the existence of the school by adopting some measure or other. While on the other hand, the radical group took a policy to close the school and the managers, teachers and other personnel would return to their countries.

Now that the survival of schools was impossible unless they were run by the school law which was enacted as a result of the recovery movement, it was clear that missionary schools had to begin physical education classes. In 1925 when the movement reached its peak and the Government launched itself in recovering the right of education, a course exclusive for physical education was established respectively at two missionary universities, Soochow University and Nanking Women's University. This may have been to cope with the movement. It was not true that all the missionary schools did not give physical education classes, at some missionary schools, there were physical education classes. In 1921, there was an increased number of missionary schools in which physical education classes were given. Many missionary schools may have devised measures to cope with the recovery movement, however, the fact that missionary schools were compelled without exception to give physical education with the issuance of the "Regulation for Private School" (1929) had a great effect not only upon missionary schools, but also upon the physical education at the Chinese schools.