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**On the Free University**

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[142] I think that education, when received, does not refer merely to utilitarian benefits. Each one of us educates oneself, and by advancing step by step toward the autonomy of the personality [人格], one arrives at the direct end of education. To live does not mean that, as living beings, we prolong our life. To live means to live as a human being [人間]. It means to live *more* ideally [理想的]. However, the subject who seeks to live *more* ideally is none other than oneself—one is dominated by no one but oneself—and insofar as one is human, the supreme light shines there. The true task of this human being clearly becomes to live as a human being, that is, self-education [自己教育]. To self-educate means to live as a human being, and to live as a human being means to self-educate. [143]

To be educated by other educators must not signify the heteronomy of the personality. Even if someone is an educator, to educate others by force is a great crime against humanity. Even on the basis of receiving education from other educators, it must absolutely be a matter of self-education. This does not concern only the contents of education; self-education must originally refer also to organization and institution. One might say that organization and institutions are external forms and therefore indifferent, but in the forms of culture that manifest themselves in human societies there is nothing that is not an expression of our inner life; and, at the same time, through these external forms we subtly influence our interior. Therefore, in order to expound the complete meaning of education, we must fundamentally realize the principle of self-education, which ultimately allows for the autonomy of educational activity itself. Educational activity is an

autonomous domain like economic or political activity, and therefore must be autonomous in all its organizations and institutions.

“Bottom-up” [下より上へ] this is the social motto of our current era. All organizations begin with individual self-consciousness; from the union of many individuals into functional groups, these groups organize themselves in a more abstract manner. We depart from the autonomy of the individual. [144] The autonomy of the individual is what gives life to the ideal of our inner totality. Ultimately, these two mean the same thing. Our society, guided by the ideal of totality, bottom-up, forms the group strata of individuals. It is not a concept imposed absolutely top-down.

The meaning of education lies in self-education, but our creative activity is not achieved through the isolated individual; rather, organized in a society, individuals influence one another and through that means obtain the opportunity for reflection, the materials for their works, and while their creations flourish, the education that comes from the other becomes a necessary demand for self-education. We are all, at the same time, an educator and an educand of everyone. For this reason, since education is a lifelong task, this lifelong commitment is also demanded of educators. Today, if the name of school is given to the place where one is educated definitively and regularly, schools must one day also become a lifelong task. If this does not happen, individuals will not be able to fully realize themselves. Yet in our current society, school reaches a dead end at the university, where education concludes around the age of 30. The eyes with which society looks upon graduates of these schools are no different from the eyes with which one contemplates the manufacture of productive machinery. The manufacture of the machine has finished; now it is time to exhaust it. Today bank employees, etc., are a symbol of this. They are exhausted within this mechanism and have no time left for self-education. Even in the case of primary and middle school, it is thought that education ends there, [145] and what follows is considered merely supplementary or practical education. What was learned in primary and middle education is limited to the idea of being useful in real life or of reviewing it so as not to forget it. In any case, according to the current concept of education, formal education ends when one is around 30 years old.

However, my thinking is completely opposed to this, and I take the opposite position with regard to the period for learning. Today, the period of what is called higher education is the great hall of education, and school is nothing more than a preparation for it. Formal education is a lifelong task. Therefore, since without exception each one of us must devote oneself to productive work within a society, in our schools one must be able to study while working. Studying while working—this is the most ideal activity of human society. There lie our schools.

Democracy is another motto of all current societies. That all are considered equal does not mean that they are equalized in quantitative terms or in their external form. Where the ideal of totality shines equally in each activity of each human being, there is true democracy. In other words, in true democracy, each person can manifest each of their abilities to the highest degree and each person can satisfy each of their desires. That is, the individuality of each person is manifested without lack. [146] However, in order to achieve equality in that sense, a great quantity of resources for daily life is necessary, and our society, which cannot obtain them, must first use mechanical and external equality as a means. The demand for universal suffrage is an example of this. The things to which we must apply the principle of democracy in our society are too many, but if we want to make self-education the foundation of our activity, then we must first demand democracy in education. Democracy in property and in the right to political speech is nothing without democracy in *Bildung* [教養]. Thus, in our society the opportunity to participate in education is by no means granted equally. As stated before, our formal education, even when it reaches the university, is very unsatisfactory, and the access that leads to the university is not open to all human beings. To receive a university education, not only spiritual capacity becomes necessary, but also great financial capacity. Those persons who lack this capital cannot receive education, and for this reason, neither can they improve their position in society by themselves. All social equalities are decided by the inequalities of education as their causal root, and their consequences know no limits.

[147] For this reason, it is demanded that more people have the opportunity to receive education at its highest level. However, this education must be such that

it takes place in a school where one can study while working. We do not desire that this type of school be granted to us as charity from above. Our main objective lies ultimately in the spirit of the autonomous personality, and not in external results. For this very reason, we are not content with the paternalistic education of a broader university education. We must reckon with the autonomy of education. Ultimately, our school must be organized and maintained by ourselves. This is the lifelong school; one studies while working. This is the education that reaches the highest level. It is true that we have specific educators, but in the end, we are all also conscious of being educators and educands in some direction. It is not our principle to learn irrelevant things. In our school there is debate and dialogue. A school thus made independent possesses the form of an ideal association [syndicate]. This association positively forms an alliance of educational associations in all directions. [Organized] from below upward, this alliance of organizations forms a society of independent educational associations in the form of a pyramid. Henceforth we shall call the ideal [理念] of the totality of these schools the “Free University.”

The Free University of Shinano was probably the first attempt to realize this ideal [理念] in our country [148]. Without receiving external economic or spiritual support, the free university has continued to advance healthily to this day thanks to its members. Despite the difficulties, we have passed through two years of trials. Our third anniversary is now approaching. We believe this can be a cause of pride for the educational world of our country. The Free University of Shinano has pursued without compromise the ideal of the “Free University.” Its organization differs fundamentally from summer schools, itinerant courses, etc. In our free university all courses relate to one another in a comprehensive manner and connect with those of the following year. With regard to educational level, it is not ashamed to bear the name of “university.”

What we learned from the experience of these two years is that if the demand for education among the members is strong, the management of the free university is not difficult. However, we have not been able to realize all the points we set out in the past. What we have suffered from most, in particular, is the scarcity of economic resources. From now on we must devote all our efforts to

securing funds, gaining many members, and completing our facilities. This is something that pleases us and that will enrich the life of the region. Going forward we must spread the free university among our brothers and sisters. The foundations have already been laid. The first phase of our work has been completed; we have entered the second phase. The true activity of the free university begins now. [149] Our most sincere wish is that free universities with this spirit be established everywhere throughout the country, advancing and cooperating together.

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