

A postwar history of extracurricular sport activities in Japan (2):
focusing on the transition of discourse and the relations between the actual situation,
policy and discourse

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The aim of this study is to describe the postwar history of extracurricular sport activities in Japan by focusing on the transition of discourse and the relations between the actual situation, policy and discourse. The latter part of this study focuses on discourse and its relationship with the actual situation and policy.

This study divides the postwar history of extracurricular sport activities in Japan into the following five stages:

1. Establishing a democracy (1945-1953). After World War II, a set of educational reforms resulted in a shift from a militaristic mindset to a democratic one in Japanese schools. Thereafter, sport was seen to have democratic value, and was regarded as a symbol of freedom and self-government. That is why extracurricular sport activities were created as part of postwar school education.

2. The elitist period of meritocracy (1954-1964). The Tokyo Olympics, the first Olympics in Asia, were held in 1964. Prior to the Tokyo Olympics, sport policy was characterised by elitism, and the discourse revolved around the question of "How should we train elite athletes?" Extracurricular sport activities, which had once been for all students, were now mainly focused on those students with high levels of sporting ability. However, the elitist direction was desirable from the perspective of meritocracy because it was thought that students should improve their abilities as much as possible in a meritocratic society.

3. Period of equality (1965-1978). After the Olympics, people reacted against such elitism and a popularization of extracurricular sport activities ensued. As a result of this popularization, teachers shouldered the heavy burden of coaching these sports. However, they were not remunerated for this extra work. At a later stage there was an attempt to shift extracurricular sport activities from the school to the community. However, this attempt was not always successful because of insurance reasons.

4. Period of discipline (1979-1994). Against a backdrop of expansion of schooling, schools and teachers began using extracurricular sport activities to eliminate problems with students' misbehavior. Schools and teachers used sport as a means of student guidance. Therefore, extracurricular sport activities were seen to be of practical use and significantly expanded at this time.

5. Reconstruction period in line with neo-liberalism and participatory democracy (1995-). Teachers continued to shoulder a heavy burden as neoliberal educational reforms aimed at downsizing school education were put in place. Moreover, the participatory democratic discourse urged parents and community residents to restructure extracurricular sport activities. Hence, at present there is once more an attempt to shift extracurricular sport activities from the school to the community.

In short, the system of extracurricular sport activities has been established and expanded in Japan

because Japanese schools have seen sport as necessary for democracy, equality and discipline at various periods in postwar history. This study shows that Japanese schools have needed sport for educational purposes.