

*A proposed Command Letter.  
This was given to Headquarters  
Eighth Army informally. Ed.*

**GENERAL HEADQUARTERS  
SUPREME COMMANDER FOR THE ALLIED POWERS**

AG 000.3 (9 Sep 49) CIE

SUBJECT: Relation of Religion to Public Education

TO: Commanding General  
Eighth Army  
APO 343

1. References:

a. Memorandum for the Japanese Government, file AG 000.3 (15 Dec 45) CIE, SCAPIN 448, 15 December 1945, subject: Abolition of Governmental Sponsorship, Support, Perpetuation, Control and Dissemination of State Shinto (Kokka Shinto, Jinja Shinto).

b. Memorandum for the Japanese Government, file AG 000.3 ( ) CIE, SCAPIN \_\_\_\_ , subject: Relation of Religion to Public Education.

2. Reference memorandum b, "Relation of Religion to Public Education," is intended to supplement reference memorandum a, by relaxing and interpreting those parts which have been unduly restrictive of a well-rounded education.

3. The fundamental purpose of reference memorandum a remains unchanged; public school indoctrination in imperial household (or Emperor-centric) Shinto with its latent dangers of ultranationalism is prohibited; separation of state and religion continues inviolate as a basic principle.

4. The original purpose of paragraph of reference memorandum has been extended by interpretation to a general prohibition of any reference in teaching materials to Shinto and to a general prohibition of school-sponsored visits to Shinto shrines for any purpose as well as a general proscription of visits by student groups to Buddhist temples and Christian and Shinto churches. Though expedient during the initial stages of the Occupation, this strict construction subsequently has caused needless irritation among the Japanese by preventing inclusion of factual information regarding religious groups, including Shinto, in teaching materials and by preventing public school students from visiting many historical sites, national treasures and formerly frequented picnic grounds. As broadly interpreted, these proscriptions have outlived their usefulness.

5. Paragraph 2, a, of reference memorandum b makes possible inclusion of facts regarding the various religions, including Shinto. Objective treatment of such data would provide an understanding of religion as an expression of man's historic and contemporary experience and thus contribute to a well-rounded education. Paragraph 2, a, of reference memorandum a "puts all religions, faiths and creeds upon exactly the same basis, entitled to the same opportunities and protection." Proscription of any consideration of facts regarding Shinto would be contrary to the intent of this provision. Furthermore, Paragraph 2, a, of reference memorandum b provides a basis upon which Japanese educators and textbook writers may select and use data regarding religious groups, a basis which is greatly needed as the new curriculum materials are developed.

6. Paragraph 2, b, of reference memorandum b makes possible the encouragement of the religious growth of students and faculty on a voluntary basis and as private citizens without the public school espousing a particular religious sect. Such encouragement is in accord with the Occupation objective of developing democratic experience and encouraging the religious life among Japanese. It is, furthermore, in accord with the best experience in other democratic nations.

7. Paragraph 3 of reference memorandum b makes possible school sponsored student visits of a voluntary nature, and not conducted for religious purposes, to shrines, temples and churches.

8. It is recognized that surveillance by Civil Affairs over compliance by the Japanese and enforcement by the Japanese Government of the restrictions imposed is hardly possible. It is desired, however, that the general effects of the new policy be observed and that reports of teaching materials used and of visits made indicating evidence of intent to indoctrinate students in Shinto or any other particular religion be investigated and remedial action be taken where needed.

9. In order to assist Civil Affairs in dealing with questions which may be raised regarding the intent of reference memorandum b, the following statement of application is forwarded for the guidance of Civil Affairs. Japanese educators, textbook writers and religious leaders often are not accustomed to the policy of objective and non-discriminatory treatment of religion which underlies the statement of application. In interpreting the statement of application, care should be exercised that it is not construed as an order. In accordance with present Occupation policy and in the last analysis the Japanese must assume responsibility for production and use of teaching materials consonant with the democratic ideal and in keeping with the provisions of the Japanese Constitution, the Funda-

mental Law of Education, and the Local Autonomy Law.

10. The specific applications which follow are based upon questions raised in various parts of Japan by Civil Affairs, missionaries and Japanese.

a. Selection and treatment of textbook and curriculum materials :

- (1) Facts relating to the founders, practices and institutions of the various religions may be included when necessary to accomplish the aims of a course.
- (2) Literary and language textbooks and readers may include reference to religious topics and extracts from religious writings provided the basis of selection is literary or linguistic merit.
- (3) In social studies, reference may be made, where relevant, to historical and institutional aspects of religious organizations, e.g., physical plant, welfare and education activities, factual data concerning events, etc. Religious events of historical significance may be dealt with in the study of history.
- (4) The meaning of religious freedom should be taught in the social studies. At the appropriate level the materials used should stress that :
  - (a) In accordance with the provisions of the constitution and laws of Japan, religion is free from control, financial support, interference and surveillance by government ; religious activity and membership in religious groups are of a purely voluntary nature ; and any government propaganda regarding religion is strictly prohibited.
- (5) In the teaching of music, art and architecture, works inspired by religion may be drawn upon. Pertinent information regarding the artists and composers and incidents or influences connected with such works may be given. Study of the influence of religion upon artistic

expression is permissible and desirable.

- (6) Public school curriculum materials on the elementary and secondary levels may not express approval or disapproval of religious doctrines, practices or experiences. Existence of a conflict between science and religion should not be assumed. This provision does not preclude attribution of natural phenomena to natural causes.
- (7) Objective study (comparative or specialized) of the doctrine, history, philosophy and psychology of different religions may be offered as elective courses on the upper secondary and university levels.
- (8) Libraries may include books and periodicals on religions for purposes of reference and study.

b. Voluntary religious activities :

- (1) Students and teachers are free to participate as private citizens in the religious observances or other activities of churches, shrines or temples outside of school hours.
- (2) At the secondary and university levels, the following policies are acceptable with respect to voluntary student religious activities which occur outside normal school hours.
  - (a) Students may form voluntary religious associations or clubs under such regulations as prevail for non-religious organizations. Prohibition of a particular voluntary student nonreligious organization which violates regulations is not necessarily to be construed as a prohibition of voluntary religious associations or clubs which conform to regulations.
  - (b) Leaders of religious organizations may work with students for the purpose of initiating and guiding such associations or clubs providing the authority of the school is not utilized either directly or indirectly to

influence students to join or participate in such organizations.

- (c) Privileges of using the school bulletin boards, student publications, etc., for the announcement of meetings or activities of religious organizations should be the same as those extended to nonreligious organizations.
- (d) Local school authorities shall have the power to decide whether or not lecture halls, classrooms, or other facilities shall be used outside school hours for the activities of student religious organizations mentioned in 10b (2) (a)-(c) above.
- (e) Student religious organizations may invite faculty members to participate unofficially in their activities, either as members or as advisors.
- (f) The privileges listed above must be equally available to any religious organization without discrimination or favor. It is not necessary, however, to await application from other organizations before granting the requests of those who are first in seeking such privileges. It should be made known that such privileges would be provided to all groups if so desired.

c. Status of religious leaders :

- (1) Religious leaders may be invited to speak at schools on subjects outside of the field of religion. They may not interpret doctrines or religious ceremonies. They shall be informed that the invitation is extended with the understanding that these regulations will be strictly respected.
- (2) Priests, clergymen and other members of religious orders who are employed as qualified teachers by boards of education, shall not appear in classrooms in religious garb. They may not give instruction in sectarian religion, nor shall they use their positions as teachers to

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advance any particular faith, nor attempt to win converts or encourage visitation or attendance at any shrine, temple or church for purpose of worship or participation in any rituals or ceremonies. They shall be subject to all regulations governing the conduct and duties of teachers.

d. In keeping with the principles of religious freedom expressly stated in the Japanese Constitution, no teacher or other leader of school-sponsored group visits to shrines or other religious institutions should issue a command for bowing or for participation in any religious ritual or ceremony.

e. Many questions have been raised regarding the use of public school buildings out of school hours by non-school community religious groups. Since local school authorities are now responsible for the administration of local school buildings, all such questions should be referred to the school authorities for decision.

11. Ultimately many of the questions referred to above, such as use of school buildings or employment of priests, clergymen or other members of religious orders, may be tested in the Japanese courts as to their legality under the Japanese Constitution and laws.

### FOR THE SUPREME COMMANDER :

**Note:** The principles stated in the above document were embodied in a notification (Bunsho 152) issued by the Vice Minister of Education on October 25, 1949.