JAPANESE HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH IN THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES

By Professor DUGALD C. JACKSON
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

It is now sixty-eight years since the Shogunate was overthrown in Japan (1868) and the Emperor Meiji came into direct relation to the nation. In prior days, the feudal organization and civil wars had held the masses of Japanese population in educational darkness and superstition. The emperor Meiji proved to be a man of such force and high character as warrants him a place among the great national fathers of the world. With the aid of commissions sent to study practices in the western countries, and commanded to recommend new processes of national finance and education for Japan, progress in these lines was made rapidly and a parliamentary government ultimately was established. By the year 1872 a unified plan for education in Japan was promulgated (following rather clearly the French standards), and by 1880 compulsory education became a feature of the Empire for children up to certain ages. The mass of population was rapidly changed from the illiteracy of a feudal period to a proud proportion of literacy which vies with the record of the most literate nations of the western world.

National university activities were given a suitable place in the original plan for national education, and the growing place of elementary and intermediate education in the affections of the people served as a foundation for equally effective development of university influences. The Japanese are a people of healthy, workmanlike, athletic thought, notwithstanding their reputation for sentimentalism.

At the present time in the Japanese empire there
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