

Topic 3. Primary and Secondary Education

(1) Intervention of Government/State in Primary/Secondary Education

The Japanese Government (Ministry of Education) has used a peculiar system in school education, in that a strict upper limit is put on the curriculum/textbook contents. It has an advantage of producing people with a uniform level of knowledge or skill, but has drawbacks, too. Because even a bit of excess material is prohibited in textbook writing, there is no room of introducing recent advances in research, and this has made textbooks quite obsolete over decades. Worse, such a system tends to discourage forward-looking teachers. Each country is requested to present the situation of education control by government/state, to foster mutual understanding and to improve school chemical/science education.

(2) Popularization of Chemistry toward Pupils/Students

The CSJ headquarter and its branches have a long tradition, though the 'length' may not be enough as compared to other countries, of disseminating chemical knowledge to pupils/students by dispatching researchers to schools or the Natural Science Museum, to demonstrate experiments and/or present recent topics. In addition, roughly on a regular basis, major Chemistry Exhibitions are held in the summer vacation season. Hearing about the activities of other countries would strongly help improve this area of education.

(3) Training of Schoolteachers

The quality of the teacher is of utmost importance in education. In Japan the educational program for to-be teachers is not necessarily sufficient. The CSJ invites high (and junior high) schoolteachers regularly to seminars, discussion forums, and experimental sessions, but the number of registrants is generally not enough and the membership tends to lose fluidity. Each Society is requested to present its current status on these aspects of school education, to promote mutual understanding and to pave the way for the future.

(4) International Chemistry Olympiad (IChO)

Japan was the last among the developed countries to join the IChO in 2003. Hearing of how 'senior country' Societies are coping with the IChO is quite helpful for us.

(The CSJ personnel in charge: Prof. Tadashi Watanabe, University of Tokyo)