

Citizenship Challenges for Japanese Education for the 21st Century: “Pure” or “Multicultural”?

Multicultural Citizenship Education in Japan

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With the so-called Third Opening (or internationalisation) of Japan, the rush of globalisation, and a concern for the direction of national cultural identity in the Japanese nation, courses for citizenship have recently been promoted in schools with titles such as ‘Education for International Understanding’ and ‘Global Education,’ among others. Twin surges, one of an awareness of a diverse, multicultural Japanese society, and the other of an apparent neo-nationalism, have been noted in the mass media. Both have been introduced into school contexts, resulting in considerable tension and dissonance. Concern has been raised about the dilution of Japanese identity, manifesting itself in enforced singing in schools of the national anthem, required national flag-raising at ceremonies, and the contents of school textbooks. This paper explores dilemmas and directions for citizenship education in Japan, indicating possible future directions for educational institutions in the transmission of values for the Japanese (multi-) cultural identity.

Multicultural Education, Diversity, Citizenship Education, Nationalism, Identity

CONCEPTIONS OF CITIZENSHIP: JAPAN AND THE GLOBAL STAGE

With the so-called Third Opening of Japan, the rush of globalisation, and a concern for what national cultural identity means and how to promote it in Japanese society, courses for citizenship have recently been promoted in Japanese schools with titles such as *Education for International Understanding (Kokusai Rikai Kyoiku)*, *Ethnic Education (Minzoku Kyoiku)*, *Education for Newcomers (Newcaama no Kyoiku)*, and *Global Education (Gurobaru Kyoiku)*, among others. Courses which have long been in the schools such as *Civics (Komin*, or “public personhood,” a word made up by the Ministry of Education to teach this subject), *Values Education (Dotoku Kyoiku*, sometimes called *Morals Education)*, *Human Rights Education (Dowa Kyoiku*, *Dowa* being the Burakumin “untouchable” community), and *Returnees’ Education (Kikokushijo Kyoiku)* could also be considered as belonging to the realm of citizenship education in Japan.¹

¹ Japanese scholars who have recently written on these issues include Nakagawa, K. (Ed.) (1997). *Chikyu shimin o hagukumu kyoiku*. [Global teacher, global learner.] Tokyo: Akashi Shoten; Nishioka, N. (1996). *Kaihatsu kyoiku no susume*. [Development education.] Tokyo: Kamogawa; Uozumi, T. (1995). *Guro-baru kyoiku: Chikyu shimin o sodateru*. [Global education: developing world citizens]. Tokyo: Reimei Shobo; Otsu, K. (1992). *Kokusai rikai kyoiku*. [Education for international understanding.] Tokyo: Kokudoshia; and Minoura, Y. (1997), *Chikyu shimin o sodateru kyoiku* [Education for raising world citizens]. Tokyo: Iwanami.

What distinguishes all of these courses from those concerned with citizenship education in other countries, however, is their marginalisation. Sited on the peripheries of the Japanese curriculum, almost as an after-thought it seems rather than at its core, these courses have targeted specific constituencies other than “main-stream” Japanese.

This is now about to change as serious political and demographic challenges involving immigration and gender equality face Japan. There will most certainly be a major change with regard to the ‘Other’ in Japan. Immigration will begin on a large scale and women will play increasingly important roles in the society. The greying of the population and subsequent massive retirements mean a serious loss in the numbers of people in the labour force. In order to maintain the present standard of living, new workers will have to be brought into the labour force. In 1999 the UN and the Japanese government estimated a shortfall of 600,000 workers a year beginning in the early 21st century. The only viable way to address this need is more immigrants, what the UN calls replacement migration, and more women in the work force.² The implications for education, especially citizenship education, are serious and far-reaching.

Debates on curriculum, which have been focused around global competition and national identity, are increasingly being impinged upon by race, language, and ethnicity. The model of assimilation is being seriously questioned and multiculturalism, with its twin needs of respect and inclusion, has appeared throughout Japan in various forms.

Two surges, one of an awareness of a diverse, multicultural Japanese society, and the other of an apparent neo-nationalism, have at the same time been noted in the mass media. The first speaks for a compelling drive for more openness in Japan and is outward looking, democratic, and inclusive in its conceptualisation of citizenship. The second is exclusive, inward looking, and based on images of a homogeneous canon for Japanese culture. Both have been introduced into school contexts, resulting in considerable tension and dissonance.

Concern has been raised about the dilution of Japanese identity, manifesting itself in enforced singing in schools of the national anthem and required national flag-raising at ceremonies, not to mention on-going controversies about the contents of school textbooks. Dilemmas for citizenship education abound in Japan, indicating possible future directions for the roles of educational institutions in this key component in the transmission of values for the Japanese cultural identity.

What is a citizen? What is citizenship? These two questions are not so easily answered in the Japanese context. The words themselves, those words ostensibly used to describe citizens and the concepts of duties, rights, and responsibilities associated with individuals, are fraught with divisiveness, oppression, and considerable historical baggage (much of which has been

² See Junji Nishihata, *Japan must leave backward ways behind: Survival in IT requires equal footing for women, foreigners: panelist*, The Japan Times Online, October 26, 2001. Scenarios call for between 10-30% of the Japanese population to be composed of immigrants by the year 2050. For the UN Report see the Japan report on this website: United Nations, Population Division, Replacement migration: is it a solution to declining and ageing populations? 28 September 2001, <http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/migration/japan.pdf> Also, K. Koshiro (1998). *Does Japan Need Immigrants?*, in M. Weiner and T. Hanami (Eds.) *Temporary Workers or Future Citizens: Japanese and U.S. Migration Policies*. New York: New York University Press, pp. 151-176; T. Kajita (1998), *The Challenge of Incorporating Foreigners in Japan*, in M. Weiner & T. Hanami (Eds.) *Temporary Workers or Future Citizens: Japanese and U.S. Migration Policies*. New York: New York University Press pp. 120-147; and Mike Douglass and Glenda Roberts, eds. *Japan and Global Migration*. London: Routledge, 2000.

conveniently forgotten, in an impressive amnesia). Those western ideas so dear to the concept of democracy have simply fallen on fallow ground, at least if we expect to see them being enacted in ways similar to those of Europeans or North Americans. What is needed is a careful analysis of the historical antecedents, of the compelling concepts, and to determine which concepts resonate and why in the Japanese context.

We need a new look at the radical challenges to the Japanese educational and political system. Especially with the advent of neo-nationalists adored by at least some of the masses, like the Mayor of Tokyo, Shintaro Ishihara, who has warned of the dangers of foreigners in the midst of Japanese society. It is a new culture in Japan, but one not nearly so simple as the mass media portray it.³ Like many nations and societies in the world today, Japan is depicted as grappling with a wrenching transition, either to a new/old national system or to a global system of dissolved cultures and vanished traditions. The reality will likely be far more complex, as we shall see.

At the outset, too, I would like to note my position as a scholar of cultural studies (especially educational/cultural anthropology), my central concerns for education, and my status as a permanent resident of Japan (though American), and the father of two Japanese children schooled through primary and middle school in the Japanese public school system. Since my children are Japanese citizens, too, and because I, also, could easily become a Japanese citizen if I so chose, I am not a disinterested party to this discussion.

THE OTHER VOICE IN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Japan is a country the size of the American state of Montana. Five-sixths of this country is mountains too steep to be used. On the remaining one-sixth of this land are 130 million people, living, working, farming, producing, studying. It is a nation which is resource-poor yet has achieved spectacular economic success and is now the second most powerful economy on earth.

Japan astonishingly transformed itself from traditional feudal state to modern powerhouse in a generation. Reduced to ashes by a devastating war of its own making, Japan rapidly rebuilt, transforming itself to economic superpower and a society which is by far the most peaceful and orderly of all rich, developed nations. A society which has put education first, which has emphasised again and again the importance of the power of what it sees as its greatest natural resource: its people.

Japan is the 'Other' for Western conceptualisations of citizenship and citizenship education. It is *not white, not Anglo, and not Western*. Historically the source of powerful civic transformations throughout history, Japan is the source of numerous paradoxes, problems, and possibilities in the study and practice of citizenship education. Clearly, Japan has much to teach us about citizenship and citizenship education.

On the one hand Japan provides us with powerful alternative suggestions for looking at citizenship and citizenship practices. On the other hand there are here in Japan also strongly suggestive examples of how *not* to approach citizenship, areas where Japan must change, particularly regarding issues of diversity. As the largest economy on earth after the United States, as a nation of enormous influence and prestige, as a society of great harmony, order, stability, and prosperity, Japan *is* the other voice in citizenship education in multicultural societies.

³ Ishihara has been called Japan's Le Pen. See *Japan's Le Pen is bad news for foreigners*, <http://www.iht.com/articles/56132.htm>

We should also note that Japan gives us a fresh look at concepts of the citizen and citizenship education. There is a special transformative power that Japan has brought to bear on critical social issues. This transformative power of the Japanese example has been most effective in the context of educating citizens by providing Japanese people with cultural, national, and global identifications which have generated, facilitated, and smoothed difficult social and economic transitions.

Japan is full of paradoxes, especially for those of us who are multicultural educators. A nation of seemingly great homogeneity, Japan's treatment of issues of diversity and pluralism can hardly be called admirable. Yet on the world stage, where Japan is a minority (non-white, non-Western, non-Christian), the power of Japan's voice and example has been undeniable. The brutal discrimination against Japanese immigrants to the United States and elsewhere and the devastation of atomic warfare come to mind. Within Japan there has sometimes been another story, one of rigid demarcation of inside and outside, of purity and pollution, of bully and victim.

In multicultural societies like the United States there are many complex issues involved in educating highly diverse student populations for both academic excellence and active participation as citizens. In Japan diversity is less visible, less obvious, and has traditionally been downplayed. This is now changing, as the Japanese realise the great need that they have for individualism and individual values, as traditional gender roles (undoubtedly the most rigid in the developed world) are breaking down. Diversity in Japan is coming from within, from the assertion of individuality and especially from the surfacing of once-taboo issues of gender roles.

Japan is *not* highly diverse, not at least from traditional perceptions of diversity as ethnicity and/or class. Japan *is* highly diverse in terms of severe gender role differentiation. In the past 15 years there has been growing acknowledgment of diversity in schools, first with Japanese returnees from abroad and the challenges they presented to a traditionally homogeneous school system, and more recently as large numbers of Brazilian-Japanese students enter the school system.⁴ More particularly, traditionally taboo issues of diverse populations in Japan (Koreans, Chinese, Untouchables) are now being more openly discussed. Koreans (600,000), Burakumin (3 million), mixed children (large indeterminate numbers, especially of Japanese/ Korean background), returnees, and others are some of these communities.

Japan can thus offer new dimensions, disturbing secrets, and surprising advances in the study of citizenship education in multicultural societies. Japan's society has been the envy of the world for many years. *Japan*: the premier example of a country and a society which has offered the Other view, which has defied the West and the power and hegemony of white Western culture. *Japan*: long known, both inside and outside, as a society of solid homogeneity, of a singular language, and of a singular consciousness. And, indeed, of great insularity. *Japan*: land of "purity," Land of the Gods.⁵

Will a "citizenship" based on this mythical purity (and the implicit citizenship education associated with it) now move towards one formed from a society of great diversity and difference? Will Japan move from a "pure" to a "multicultural" concept of citizenry and citizenship education?

⁴ The work of Haruo Ota concerning newcomers is instructive here: *Nuukamaa no kodomo to Nihon no Gakko (Newcomer Children and Japan's Schools)* (Tokyo: Kokusai Shoin, 2000). The activities of Kobe Sho-Gakko, Kobe Elementary School, particularly the Global Educator Kumiko Hattori, a teacher in the school who has been instrumental in pushing for recognition of the needs of newcomers, founding a nation-wide society for global education, and for promoting an education for global, international understanding for children, should also be recognised.

⁵ The Japanese emphasis on purity (and its obverse, pollution) also has great echoes of the discourse of caste distinctions and discrimination in the South Asian context.

CITIZENSHIP IN JAPAN: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Historically, Japanese people were *shinmin* (subjects), not *shimin* (citizens). There was no thought given, certainly not critically, towards the concept of the independent and responsible citizen. You were loyal to your country as a member of the *kokumin* (nation-people), a term still frequently used, in a larger, abstract way,⁶ but your real loyalties and sense of self and place were associated with your *mura* (village), the community that protected and nurtured you and your family. Except for those who lived in a small number of pre-modern cities like Edo (Tokyo), Kyoto, and Naniwa (Osaka), Japanese people have traditionally been *mura no hito-bito* (people of the village). Citizen as *person of the city* was almost an unknown concept for the Japanese.

Citizenship education is thus a moot point until the end of World War II and should more likely be termed ‘subject education.’ We do find, however, many of the basic components for what is thought to be a good citizen in the discourse of what it is to be ‘a good person,’ much of which is tied to traditional Confucian values. The Japanese value of loyalty is an important addendum to this, though commitment might be a more appropriate English word. The zeal for this commitment entered a mind-numbing madness in the era just before and during World War II (the dark ravine, as the Japanese refer to these years). Militarism and martial samurai values held everyone in terror and, let us be frank, civic commitment.

The MacArthur Constitution of 1946 had as one of its focus points a democratic and peace-oriented school system. The Americans abolished one of the main courses in the pre-war curriculum, *Shushin*, moral/patriotic/imperial education. In its place courses in Civic Education (*Komin*, literally ‘public person education’ in Japanese) were introduced at the end of the compulsory educational system (the American Grade 9) and Moral Education (*Dotoku Kyoiku*) in the earlier years.

The first, *Komin*, aimed at the study of the new constitution (Article 9 of which explicitly bans war as an instrument of state policy thus making this the so-called ‘Peace Constitution’), the structure/function of government, political participation by ‘citizens,’ and study of the nation’s economy. As Rohlen noted in his classic study of Japan’s high schools (1983), this ‘civic education’ never quite caught on with the public or educators, and the contemplated shift from educating subjects to educating citizens slowly faded from the public imagination. Despite opposition from the Japan Teachers’ Union, by the late 1950s moral education was reintroduced by the Ministry of Education as a subject area, with homilies and stories of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ behaviour for ‘discussion’ in classes. Civic education was then relegated to the higher reaches of elective courses at the end of high school. Rohlen found that teachers’ attitudes towards citizenship was not about teaching it directly but by example, guidance, discipline, and self-control.

Dotoku Kyoiku (moral education, literally, the way of virtue) is the other course of study whose contents cover areas we might think of as connected with citizenship. *Dotoku* is now taught one period a week in all schools in all required grades (1-9). The Ministry of Education recommends values that should be taught, but in practice local teachers exercise autonomy in how these lessons are enacted. Far more important are those local arrangements of duties and expectations for students.

⁶ *Kokutai* (the national polity or national essence), an even more abstract term that implies imperial and divine blessing, was a common term for the citizenry before and during World War II. It has since fallen out of favour, except for right-wing politicians, who frequently have seemingly intentional slips of the tongue along these lines describing the people of Japan. Former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori caused a considerable furor during his term by often using the expression.

Every class has an assignment board at the front of the class naming small groups of students who are in charge as a responsible group of such duties as *kyoshoku toban* (a group which dons masks and collects and then serves lunches from the common kitchen area to the class), *shoji toban* (a group which cleans the classroom), and other groups in charge of the class garden or the class animals, arrangements for sports and music days, and so on. Sudden cancellation of classes in order to hold a *gakkyu-kai* (special class meeting) add drama, concern, and excitement to the regular schedule. These meetings are usually held when there are special problems such as bullying.

The word for citizen in Japanese, *shimin*, directly translates into English as ‘person of the city.’ This word does not carry the larger nuances of duties and responsibilities for nation and community that the English word citizen has. In fact, *shimin* usually only has to do with those legal requirements one has as a resident of a city. There are similar words in use as well: *kenmin* or *tomin* (person of the prefecture) and *jumin* (resident, though whether of a locality or the nation is not clear). Most Japanese have a paradoxical approach to being citizens: disenchantment on the one hand with government and politics in general but a sense of following one’s duties as members of a group when there are local needs to be met. Low voter turnouts show widespread feelings of political alienation, but the society moves along in an efficient and reasonably stable manner.

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION, CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION, AND JAPAN

Japan, on the other hand, offers a challenge to multicultural educators. It is often the foil, the example used by those of the far and near right in countries like Australia, France, and America, of the dangers of multiculturalism. Japan, they say, has succeeded because the Japanese are all alike, because they do *not* have diversity. This chorus of the right has unfortunately received support from top Japanese politicians, prime ministers included, who have echoed these racist thoughts with racist aspersions against peoples of colour and the whole idea of diversity as benefit not deficit.

In 1986 Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone made explicit remarks about Blacks and Hispanics being responsible for dragging American educational standards down. The clear implication for Japanese was that their ‘purity’ and homogeneity were signal reasons for their success as a people, a nation and a society. It should be noted that these remarks were only intended for domestic consumption, having been uttered in the context of a political rally, and then picked up by international newsmen.

The study of citizenship education in Japan as a multicultural society is thus exceptionally complicated, yet it offers special deep insights into our collective future just as it is at the same time lagging far behind in certain basic human rights issues, particularly those of gender and nation, and more especially those of consciousness of the Other just as they are a prime example of the Other in the midst of our human community.

Not least because it is not Western, not Christian, not White, Japan challenges us to think in radically different ways about the meanings of citizenship, citizenship education, and multicultural societies. Japan is the Orient. How we in the West see Japan is the primary example of Orientalism. Japan is the antithesis of the West. In many ways Japan’s example challenges us to think in new ways about our values, our social practices, and ourselves.

The study of Citizenship Education has almost exclusively been a discourse of Western thought, values, and consciousness: the Greek and later the Renaissance ‘city-state’, the ‘Age of Enlightenment’, the ‘Age of Reason’; the Roman ideas of empire and ideology in service to a larger proto-nation collective. Canada, Australia, Israel, Britain, and Germany all share the same roots, the same wellsprings of citizen and society, of rights and responsibilities. Japan does not.

Steeped in the Western tradition and Western values myself, but having lived in Japan and India for nearly 25 years of my adult life, approaching the study of Citizenship Education in Japanese society is a delicate task. I began this study with the intention of understanding ‘citizen,’ ‘citizenship education,’ and ‘multicultural society’ from Japanese points of view. All of these are difficult concepts in the Japanese context. *Citizen* can be viewed in numerous ways in Japan, but none of the words or concepts used precisely capture the Western sense of the citizen. Citizenship Education exists as a class at the end of high school, as we have mentioned, but this is an elective class taken by few students and that focuses almost exclusively on economics and politics.

There really is no mainstream movement in the Japanese educational world similar to what is happening with regard to citizenship education as conceptualised in North America and Europe. When a group of fifteen eminent scholars of Japanese education were surveyed in the spring of 2001, their responses tended to be: *Citizenship Education? Not really much interest in this in Japan. Diversity and Multicultural Education? Yes, some interest, but scholars who are few and far between, mainly case studies of local, specific areas.*

If we see Citizenship Education as knowledge construction, in Japan at least there is not much interest in the topic. For the Japanese, what they are doing in the classroom is already seen as adequate as citizenship education. The society, at least until recently, has been seen as stable, and until now the graduates who come out contribute well to that society. What problems there are tend to be not very large in scale (with the possible exception of school refusals). So how to educate a citizen does not need to be formed and re-formed, from a Japanese perspective. The Japanese are thus, at least from a world perspective, behind the times.

There is thus no discourse on citizenship education as much of the rest of the world conceives of it. No one has really looked at citizenship education in Japan with a global view in mind, targeting mainstream Japanese society. There are few entries in books on Japanese education on citizenship education per se, though of course this subject overlaps with areas of concern in educating children to be members of the Japanese society. It is, so far, just not the same discourse as what we see in America, Europe, and other parts of the world.

What we do have that touches on issues of concern related to citizenship education are a number of specifically targeted programs for ethnic consciousness in schools. But these programs are small and have little impact on mainstream discourse. They include programs for:

- a) *Kokusai Rikai Kiyoiiku* – Education for International Understanding, a response to Japan’s potential isolation from the world scene. Related discourse is heavy in the society in general on *kokusaika* (internationalisation) and *kyosei shakai* (symbiotic, by implication international, society)
- b) *Jinken Kiyoiiku* – Education in Human Rights, usually about *Dowa*, the Japanese untouchables; or about *Zainichi Koreans* (“staying in Japan” Koreans brought during the colonial era). Both of these communities are basically Japanese culturally.

We have to keep in mind that difference does not loom large in Japanese minds. There is no large-scale immigration constantly swelling classrooms as in the USA and many European countries. Thus, citizenship education is not much of an issue either.

Citizenship in Japan is simply assumed: you are born with it *naturally* if you are Japanese. The word for this is *kokuseki*, the assumed right of citizenship, which translates as “duty to the country.” This is a more or less organic view, which means that educational interventions and other program creations are not seen as necessary. The Japanese see themselves as naturally born as

citizens. The *koseki tohon* or family register system, which is the basis for all citizen obligations and rights, is the basis and fountain from which all these ideas spring. To be rather blunt, the citizenship education concept is not an exciting one for Japanese scholars.

A web search on the Ministry of Education's website using the word 'citizenship' turned up only one reference and that was to a G8 Summit of Educational Ministers. And it was not about citizenship education. The only mention of citizenship in the Fundamental Law of Education is...

Article 8

"The political knowledge necessary for intelligent citizenship shall be valued in education."

"The schools prescribed by law, shall refrain from political education or other political activities for or against any specific political party."

This would seem to support citizenship education, yet in the very same Article is a proscription from political participation. For most people concerned with citizenship education today this would indeed seem to be a contradiction, denying critical thinking and active participation. Fostering a narrow sense of citizenship as duty to the nation would seem to be the main lesson implied by this sole mention of citizenship by the Ministry of Education.

Japan as a multicultural society is the most interesting challenge of all to ideas about citizenship. By official definition Japan is 99% Japanese, the 1% of minorities being largely so-called 'living-in-Japan' Koreans whose ancestors were forcibly brought or who migrated to imperial Japan during the colonial era or New Immigrants who are not immigrants at all from a Japanese perspective but a combination of legal and illegal labour from Asian countries and overseas Japanese communities in Latin America needed for the 3 Ks industries (*kitanai, kusai, and kiken*: dirty, stinking, and dangerous) which Japanese do not want to do themselves.

Gender boundaries and gender distinction/discrimination are the most rigid in the world. It is a curious fact that most Japanese-English dictionaries translate the Japanese word for discrimination first as 'distinction', and then as 'discrimination' Age boundaries and discrimination exist in all aspects of Japanese society. And yet Japan is multicultural in surprising ways.

Recently a number of important works on Japan as a multicultural society have appeared. Like the 'pioneers' of America, Russia, and other expansionist national societies, Japan conquered, massacred, and largely assimilated indigenous First Nation populations, including the Ainu, Nivkh, and Ulita. Remnant populations of these First Nation peoples are now active in recovering their heritage and lands. It is a powerful mark of the influence of these First Nation peoples on the Japanese that the Japanese word for 'God' (*Kami*) is apparently derived from the Ainu root *Kamui*.

Caste distinctions rigidly observed in Japan for 1500 years (samurai, farmer, craftsman, merchant, and untouchable) were abolished but not completely ended with the Meiji Revolution and Japan's transition to a modern era. Japan's most significant social problem remains the large numbers of 'formerly' untouchable populations of Burakumin ('people of the hamlet'), who number about three million. Add to this those Japanese who are from mixed backgrounds, returnees, and the poor. One of the most striking groups of all for the Japanese are the so-called 'haafu' who are usually from a white/Japanese mix, many of whom have become entertainers and other media personalities, but in fact the largest numbers of mixed peoples are those of Asian/Japanese, especially Japanese/Korean mixed backgrounds.⁷

⁷ The work of Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu, whose essay also appears here, has been extensive and thoughtful on this subject.

Japan does not celebrate diversity. Far from it. But there is a move afoot to recognise individuality and that could be seen as celebrating diversity, particularly with regard to gender. Critical thinking has also become part of that agenda. There is nothing about challenging the status quo, which is a component of that critical thinking, however. Yet the approach to citizenship in Japan is if anything still in the nationalistic mode of civics education: for the society; for the nation.

One way that the changing times and the tide of globalisation has been broached is to “import diversity,” as David McConnell has so aptly put.⁸ A large-scale program for importing foreigners, many of whom are inexperienced at teaching, to the public schools as AETs or Assistant English Teachers (or JETs, Japan English Teachers, as they were originally called), has been carried out so that most high schools and junior high schools now have access to a foreign, usually native, speaker. These teachers are expected not only to teach English but to help promote international understanding and global education. Is this a new component of citizenship education in Japan, in this case for global citizenship?

Unfortunately, this may be an idealistic interpretation. The construction of boundaries and borders is sometimes done best through proxies. The official rhetoric of the 1980s and 1990s of internationalisation (*kokusaika*) was often a way to delineate and reinforce the boundaries of Japaneseness. It is not surprising that this same era saw a huge increase in the popularity of *Nihonjin-ron* (theories of Japaneseness). A more likely explanation for the official rationale for the JET/AET program is to help students prepare (as citizens of the nation) for the era of global economic competition. Know thy enemy, perhaps?

Much of what is done that results as citizenship education in Japan is implicit or as part of the “hidden curriculum.” There *is* awareness of the need to do citizenship education on the part of some scholars and teachers, but there is a great reluctance to participate in that discourse because it has been so co-opted by the Ministry of Education. Most scholars read civics education as the attempt by Monbusho (the Ministry of Education) to push top-down their version of national patriotism. This traditional conception of citizenship education as a top-down directive from the Ministry of Education is not very different from what existed before World War II, and there has been a running battle that continues even today between the Ministry and scholars of education.

We cannot underestimate the forces of the right, and of fascism really, that continue in power from the time of pre-war cliques who were never really dissolved by MacArthur and the US Occupation. So most scholars in Japan see the real need for their energies to be directed in confronting the Ministry of Education. The recent controversies about textbooks echo these concerns right into the early years of the 21st century.

Let us extend these arguments further now, into the realm of cultural processes that have a very direct impact on citizenship education.

CULTURAL TRANSMISSION AND CITIZENSHIP

The most important aspect of any education is, in fact, cultural transmission, the passing down of cultural values and cultural systems from one generation to the next. Some of this cultural transmission is about valued traditional ways, some of which are accepted without question for their resonance and utility, others clearly contested and in the process of transformation, be those from the outside or the inside. This new view allows us to see education and educational systems in

⁸ David McConnell, *Importing Diversity: Inside Japan's JET Program* (Berkeley: U of California P, 2000).

a somewhat different light, as one more inclined to expose larger processes at work and conceivably harder choices in process.

Japan, today, for example, has severe challenges facing its education system in terms of issues of... (not necessarily in order here)

- 1) Nation, Nationalism, National/Cultural Pride - a 'national socialist' renaissance?
- 2) Diversity – Difference and Confrontations with Traditional Hegemonies
- 3) Gender – which is rapidly changing the face of Japan
- 4) Identity
- 5) Curriculum – efficacy and appropriateness for the 21st century
- 6) Economy – intrusion of the dismal science on real-life concerns in classrooms
- 7) Literacy
- 8) Immigrants
- 9) Transnational Exchange
- 10) Critical Thinking
- 11) Creativity

Which direction will Japan take in addressing these challenges? Will this course be characterised by exclusion or inclusion? Will it be “Pure” or “Multicultural”?

Here I would like to take a somewhat different tack than simply addressing each of the issues above, describing them, and then documenting their course (or lack thereof).

What I would like to do first is to propose a shift of emphasis, a shift of gaze towards phenomena of connections, towards what can be called *Creolisation* or *Hybridity*. We will see here that even for a nation supposedly as homogeneous and exclusive as Japan there really is no other choice but that of embracing difference and diversity.

This *Hybridity/Creolisation* is in fact reflected historically and in multiple manifestations throughout Japanese society, traditionally thought to be a so-called homogeneous society.

On close inspection we realise that this perspective of sameness, of the group, of homogeneity, has been one of the strongest in the hegemonic catechism of ideas which Western social scientists, heavily steeped in the dogma of individualism, have brought with them when looking at Japan.

In the Japanese context any cultural transmission being enacted throughout the educational system has been predicated more or less on a pre-war structure, very much dominated by Confucian ideas (in practice if not name), with an overlay of modernistic rhetoric. Class sizes remain large, like the pre-war era. School rules are strict, more or less, for secondary students. Patterns of authority and obedience have shown little change. At the same time the outside world is now intruding into this closed and shuttered scene.

Globalisation, or 'internationalisation' (*kokusaika*) as it has often been called in Japan, has made many Japanese uneasy about the future, suggesting to them the limits to a national cultural autonomy and national culture rather narrowly defined as distinct, 'pure,' bounded entity. There is an increasing tension, fear, and worry concerning the potential 'loss' of Japanese culture, society, and identity, and an active discourse on these issues in the Japanese media. At the same time, the parameters of Japanese citizenship have been loosened, though when non-Japanese attempt to acquire citizenship this is often contested at the local level by bureaucrats carrying out policy directives in narrow ways. Still, what is or is not Japanese is no longer as clear-cut as it might once have been.

Culture in Japan is becoming an increasingly contested terrain as new hybrid forms and identities emerge which synthesise multiple, older, more traditional forms. Uncertainty and fear have given rise to neo-nationalist projects on the one hand and a resignation to what is seen as a culture-dissolving, amorphous globalisation on the other. We now need to shed light on the key problems and challenges facing this contested terrain of Japanese education and culture as they relate to the idea of who is a citizen and who can be considered Japanese.

NEW APPROACHES TO JAPANESE EDUCATION?

New globally informed images of educational socialisation are now in the landscapes of Japanese society. This series of new narratives of transnational/ transcultural interactions, transnational/transcultural contexts and transnational/transcultural processes that are institutional, societal, and cultural. These changes are taking place before our very eyes.⁹

They are not, as many have seen them, westernisation or Americanisation or some other form of global homogenising and assimilation.¹⁰ The context is one of *border thinking*. It emerges from the cracks between civilization and culture, between what the Creole philosopher Edouard Glissant has called globalisation and 'mondialisation', between global designs and local histories.¹¹

It is in these spaces that we find the intersections of Japan and the world, the networks and connections of what we might call *the JA-global crossroads*. Moreover, the communities in these spaces, and especially the individuals living and working there, tell us much about their nature as crossroads and how cultural exchange/interchange/production is enacted. We need more exploration of these borders and border crossings, of identity/identities in the context of where these two societies meet each other, where connections are established and maintained. It is, after all, on the subject of boundary construction where much of the world's contemporary discourse is red-hot, alive with the spectacular creation of new forms of human societies and human consciousness. Borders are not where something stops. Borders are where something begins.

Although Japan can be seen historically (not only in terms of relations with China and Korea, but in terms of Europe) as a society of active hybridity and borrowing, the primary emphasis in the academic literature in the modern era has actually been on *assimilation* or *syncretism*, which

⁹ Ulf Hannerz, Arjun Appadurai, and others have shown us that what is happening is actually strikingly different. Appadurai, *Ibid.*, Hannerz (1996), *Ibid.*, and Takeshi Matsuda, *Conference on "Exploring Emergent 'JAmerican Culture'"* (San Francisco: 2000). See also Sherry Ortner, ed. *The Fate of Culture - Geertz and Beyond*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1999; Ulf Hannerz, *Cultural Complexity* (New York: Columbia UP, 1992); Ulf Hannerz, *Transnational Connections* (London: Routledge, 1996); Ulf Hannerz, et al., *Considering Creolization. A Transnational Communities ESRC Programme of Oxford University, Fall 1999* <http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/wwwroot/mich99.htm>; Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996); Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalization as Hybridization*. In Featherstone, Mike, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson, eds. *Global Modernities* (London: Sage, 1995), 45-68; and Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity* (London: Routledge, 1994).

¹⁰ Sklair's discussion of globalisation is useful here, delineating four approaches to its study: 1. *The world-systems approach*; 2. *The global culture approach*; 3. *The global society approach*; 4. *The global capitalism approach*. My approach, one of creolisation, actually touches on all of these but underlines the second, the approach towards a global culture, with a clear understanding that it is the fourth, the globalisation of transnational capital, which has set the stage. The role of the nation-state is reduced but not eliminated, as some have feared. Instead, a more sophisticated pattern of identity/ identities is suggested that allows people to maintain a national identity alongside other, more complex identities. See Leslie Sklair, *Competing Conceptions of Globalization*, in *Journal of World-Systems Research*, Volume 5, Number 2 (Spring 1999) <http://csf.colorado.edu/wsystems/jwsr.html>

¹¹ Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2000).

continue to privilege one side over the other. Defined on the planes of hierarchy/ hegemony and the dominance/subordination of values, of Japan's eclectic 'borrowing' for the reconstitution of an ever-purer Japan, which always resulted in a more powerful Japan (and which continued to fear the Other in her midst or around her perimeters), this form of hybridity is not creolisation, in the sense of more even-handed horizontal relations, of a levelling and a borrowing that is two-way and which establishes a new creation.¹²

The stranger and the strange in the Japanese context have, in Bauman's felicitous phrase, *served as borderlines for the advancing boundary of order-under-construction*.¹³ Here we get some clues as to the nature of citizenship in Japan. In the global cultural flow taking place in Japan (*ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financecapes, ideoscapes, and eduscapes*¹⁴) the defining of who is or is not a Japanese has been an important part of the discourse.

Reading the text of education (and the subtext of citizenship education) as Hybridity/Creolisation, I note how signally important it is for our understanding of human beings and the changes in cultural environments experiencing rapid social change. Moreover, hybridity deconstructs the notions of pure, singular cultures and their inevitable assumptions of superiority and their sanctioning of human rights violations. Through this concept we come to understand Japan and Japanese cultures, as well as Korean, European, South Asian, African, Latin American, and American cultures, in new, more powerful, and more provocative ways.

We can no longer view education and culture as having a meaning and form linked simply to territory or of the people of that land as necessarily linked to it culturally. What may be education or culture for locals (daily interaction anchored around one-on-one relationships in one place, without much moving around) is becoming less and less the norm in the world.

Yet the truly dynamic cultures are those that transcend space and place. The anchor of their cultural identity is not in a place but in social relationships and interactions. Those cultures which are territorially defined are literally 'losing ground' to those which have collective networks of meaning extending into space and across time. The globalisation of culture is not the same as its homogenisation, demonstrating that the shapes of cultures are less bounded, more fluid, and more of a daily challenge. This emphasises the importance of a key skill for a new world: *the flexible re-negotiation of mutual understandings and spatial arrangements*. In other words, being radically context-dependent.

Transformations we are seeing entail, at both the local and transnational levels, 1) reduced cultural homogeneity, 2) increased cultural disorder, and 3) the formation of true transnational cultures

¹² The "making and unmaking of strangers," as Zygmunt Bauman has noted, in coping with strangers and the strange, is the central focus of the issue at hand. There are three strategies (viz. Claude Lévi-Strauss): *anthropophagic*, annihilating the strangers by devouring them, a strategy of assimilation, or *anthropoemic*, vomiting the strangers by banishing them, a strategy of exclusion or ghettoisation. When neither of these works, *destroying* the strange and the stranger physically is the final option. What we are trying to do here is resist all three of these strategies by putting forth a new way of seeing the interaction of the strange and the familiar, by a focus on process and action as they are manifested by creolisation. Rather than seeing strangers and the strange as anomalies to be rectified or as temporary, we put them on equal footing as engaged participants in the making of new cultures together. See Zygmunt Bauman, *The making and unmaking of strangers*, in Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood. *Debating Cultural Hybridity* (London: Zed Books, 1997), 46-57.

¹³ Bauman, Op.cit., 54.

¹⁴ Arjun Appadurai, Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy, in *Public Culture*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Spring 1990. I have added eduscapes here.

(sometimes called third cultures). It is less and less likely that we will see cultures that are isolated pockets of relative homogeneity. Linkage is the key and with it the creation of increasingly diverse portraits of The Other. For the Japanese there are two paths, one that was followed before of exclusion, isolation, violence, and poverty, and the other of a powerfully conscious recognition of *the dynamism of Japanese as a creolised language, Japanese society as many creolised societies, and Japanese culture as an active world culture.*

We need to examine human resources, both as individuals and as networks, as Zachary has discussed recently.¹⁵ With the global movements of millions of people, their cultures, and identities immigration is rapidly emerging as a key theme of the 21st century. To be more precise this is a phenomenon of movement and mobility *both ways*, not one way. The word immigration itself, encumbered as it is with linear concepts of place and peoples, does not tell us as much as those sites of *créolité* appearing throughout the world landscape. Now numbering over 100 million people, these moving populations reinforce the idea of diasporic communities in our midst. These are different diaspora, however, from previous times.

These global movements and processes and subsequent diasporas are a result of transnational capitalism, especially in an era that has moved from traditional Fordist to flexible modes of accumulation. Time-space compression has resulted in new ways of seeing and combining our worlds. Given its transnational scope, creolisations and diaspora today “directly challenge the long held correspondence among nation, culture, identity, and place.”

The uneasiness of the modern era, the dominant sentiment of the feeling of uncertainty about the future, the new world disorder, is no longer a temporary nuisance to be overcome or reduced. Uncertainty is now permanent and unmitigated. What we can do to understand this uncertainty is to view the locus of its action and its variations taking place in the many locales and stages of cultural interaction.

In the global space of the 21st century there are no longer any unbroken local traditions with their isolated stamps of authenticity. This is a particularly hard concept to grasp when we look at Japan and Japanese society, so used are we (both Japanese and non-Japanese) to the discourse of Japanese uniqueness, singularity, and exceptionalism. But what we thought was Japan has turned out on closer examination to be a realm of magnificent and profuse creolised encounters, some blatantly obvious, many hidden under the masks of these continuing wooden stereotypes. What we thought was ‘Japan’ we now find to be shifting under our feet as we speak. This is especially true for the concept of citizenship.

Ethnicity and citizenship can now be seen, at least in the Japanese context, in three ways as residents who are either *Natural Japanese*, *Naturalised Japanese*, or *Non-Japanese*. Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu, Takamichi Kajita, Takeshi Matsuda, and others have given explicit voice to this idea of a truly multicultural Japanese society, one which admittedly has encountered serious resistance from a portion of the *Natural Japanese* population, notably the political leadership. His exploration of these issues notes the rise of a movement from the grassroots, similar to what is happening in Europe and North America, for the rights of all *denizens*. Those people who live in a place are increasingly seen as all deserving the same sets of rights and responsibilities. One does

¹⁵ See Gregg Pascal Zachary, *Dualing multiculturalisms: the urgent need to reconceive cosmopolitanism*. Paper presented at the Conceiving Comopolitanism conference, University of Warwick 27-29 April 2000. April 20, 2001. <http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/working%20papers/zachary.pdf>; *The Global Me: New Cosmopolitans and the Competitive Edge: Picking Globalism's Winners and Losers* (Washington: Public Affairs, 2000); *A Global Triangle*. October 20, 2000, *The Globalist*. April 15, 2001.

not necessarily have to acquire nationality to have these rights (the responsibilities, such as taxes, have of course long been there).¹⁶

It is now change, not static cultural structures, which captures our attention and interest as researchers of Japanese education. Rather than seeing culture and its attendant processes of transmission through the educational system as an enormous, permanent, and complex social machine, we find the river a more apt metaphor. With its swirls and eddies, its sometimes swift change and at other times slow, ponderous course, the river presents a new view of culture, with its flows and changes, some predictable, some not. The river focuses us on processes that are liquid rather than structure that is unmovable. It is no longer the rules but the actions that are taking place in transforming human relations that reveal the importance of cultural activity. It is a view of the river, not from far-off as eternal and unchanging, but up close with change as an implicit aspect of culture.

Sometimes there is reaction and resistance from transient, fleeting Japanese cultural structures of supposed authenticity, but more often what we see is interaction and transformation. The concept of the flow of cultural complexity shows us that cultural meanings, and in many ways the definitions of cultural citizenship (which can be seen as even more basic than state citizenship), are formed through interaction.¹⁷ And it is cultural praxis, the action of making meaning, the practice of a transnational literacy, which we will likely see as an increasing mode of identification for issues of citizenship.¹⁸

We should begin to try to understand those many people in this global zing world whose cultures and homes are multiple. These people, who actually include far more of us than we might think, live in transnational public spaces. Their examples calls for a new vision of *flexible citizenship*.¹⁹ What is called for now, in Japan and elsewhere, is a new politics, a *cosmopolitics*.²⁰ Meanings are negotiated directly, and we can no longer describe change as a shift from one cultural system to another, to westernisation, Americanisation, or McDonaldisation. Culture is not a given but is always being negotiated. In the realm of citizenship education in all diverse societies this may be the real starting point for *an education for humanity, a citizenship education for all*.

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¹⁶ Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu, *Expanding the borders of the nation: ethnic diversity and citizenship in Japan*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2002. As another symbol of the changing times in Japan and the attention to new perspectives on Japanese society, the recent prolific work of Takamichi Kajita, symbolised by his edited volume *Kokusaika to Aidentiti (Internationalisation and Identity)* (Tokyo: Minerva Shuppan, 2001) should be noted. The most radical perspectives on difference and mixing, however, are those concerned with Creolisation in Japan: see Takeshi Matsuda, ed, *The Age of Creolization in the Pacific: In Search of Emerging Cultures and Shared Values in the Japan-America Borderlands*. Keisuisha: Hiroshima, 2001; and Imafuku Ryuta, *Cafe Creole*. April 15, 2001. <http://www.cafecreole.net>

¹⁷ Hannerz, Op.cit., 1992.

¹⁸ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Teaching for the times, in Jan Nederveen Pieterse and Bhikhu Parekh, eds. *The Decolonization of Imagination: Culture, Knowledge and Power* (London: Zed, 1995), 177-202.

¹⁹ Aiwha Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham: Duke UP, 1999).

²⁰ Pheah and Robbins, eds, *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1998.

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