

Nationalistic Tendencies and Tensions within the Japanese Educational System

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Abstract

This paper will document the tensions existing within Japan, and the resultant effect beyond its borders, arising from nationalist tendencies arguably promoted by the Ministry of Education.¹ The Meiji Restoration initiated an 'opening out' of Japan and an engagement with the wider world. The Meiji Restoration also gave rise to radical changes in the Japanese education system, steered by the Ministry of Education, which sought to instill patriotic pride and loyalty to the nation state. The slogan *fukoku kyōhei* ("enrich the country, strengthen the army") popular during the early stages of the Meiji period (see Lincicome, 1993, p. 146) was a portent to ultra-nationalism and militarist ideology that culminated in the hostile action of the Imperial Japanese Forces throughout Asia in the 1930s and 1940s. Following the unconditional surrender of Japan in August 1945 in Tokyo Bay, the occupation forces sought to redress this ideology, which in turn was initially challenged in the 1950s, and gathered force in the 1980s with the Nakasone Government (1983-1987) and its dichotomous *Kokusaika* (internationalism) program.² This paper will address the above issues, beginning with an explication of the formation of the Ministry of Education and detailing its course through the 20th century and into the early 21st century. The Ministry's early machinations embraced and inducted a polity that positioned the Emperor as spiritual centre of the nation state, surrounded by a religious and political ideology that promoted a nationalist and patriotic tendency. Nationalistic tensions continue to be felt in Japan and these tensions, still driven in part by the

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1. Referred to hereafter as also the MOE, Mombushō or MEXT. MEXT is an acronym for Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MECSST). The Ministry of Education, Science Sports and Culture combined with the Science and Technology Agency in January 2001.

2. *Kokusaika* is seen here as a metaphor where "inclusion is subjugated to exclusion" (see Whitsed and Volet, 2010, p. 17).

education system in Japan, are a continuing problematic for peace and peace education.

Key Words: nationalism, ministry of education, internationalization

The Meiji Restoration: A Nationalist Positioning

The Meiji Restoration of 1868 was the beginning of nationalism and the construction of a national identity within Japan (Parmenter, 1999, p. 454). In the years precluding the Meiji Restoration, which placed the Emperor as the symbolic core of Japan's polity, (*kokutai*) several figures feature prominently in the development of nationalist tendencies within Japan. Barry Steben (2005) identifies Rai Sanyō (1781-1832) as a key figure in the ascent of Emperor-centered nationalism towards the end of the Tokugawa period (p. 575). Yamaji Aizan, a prominent Meiji historian, writes Steben, observed that through Sanyō the Japanese "came to know why it is that the country of Japan is superior to all other countries" (ibid., 576). A further thinker, notes Steben, was Satō Nobuhiro (1769-1850) who dismissed the interests of a single domain, tending to think of the nation as a whole. In his later years he became extremely influenced by the extreme nationalist and neo-Shinto leader Astutane Hirata (1776-1843). Asutane was prominent in popularizing Shinto nativism with his assertion of the "singular supremacy" of Japanese culture and people (Nosco, 2005, p. 509).

The importance of education was very close to Satō Nobuhiro who viewed education as the basic function of the state. He therefore devised a department of education that would consist of a minister of education, together with a state university holding the right to choose the curriculum, select teachers, and "perform other duties without outside intervention" (Seben, 2005, p. 603). It was Satō's interest in Western subjects like Math, geography, history, astronomy, artillery and navigation, through the medium of the Dutch language, that founded his writings on the reorganization of the military and navy and to develop his ideas of an imperialist plan for world union (ibid., 602).

In the formulation of the Japan's polity, or 'Way', Notehelfer (2005) states that the 1868 Charter Oath, taken by the Meiji Emperor on his enthronement, sought to seek knowledge throughout the world, the first leanings towards *kokusiaka* (internationalisation, see Mannari and Befu [1981]) and strengthen the

structures of imperial rule (point 5 of the Charter Oath). The pursuit of knowledge, which in terms of driving modernization was identified as primarily western-dominant, led to the Iwakura Mission (1871-1873) a significant factor in shaping the ideologies of the Restoration leaders (Notehelfer, 2005, p. 678). For two years a leadership group, which included Kido Takayoshi, a drafter of the Charter Oath, travelled to the United States and Europe, collecting information that was to modernize Japan. Britain was chosen for the study of machinery, steel making, architecture, shipbuilding, geology and mining, commerce and poor relief. France offered botany and zoology, astronomy, mathematics, chemistry, physics, international relations, and the promotion of public relations. Germany provided mineralogy, medicine, pharmacology, political science and economic instruction. Holland had information useful for irrigation, architecture, economics and poor relief while the USA was a source for cattle farming, communications, commercial and industrial law and agriculture (Nakayama, 1989, p. 34).

It was Kido who professed that unless a great deal of attention was paid to the children of Japan, there would be a failure to preserve the future of the country (Notehelfer, 2005, p. 678). He also stressed the organization of a national foundation, which depended entirely on the people. This foundation, Kido asserted, was underpinned by the premise of “education and education alone”, noting that the Japanese were no different from Europeans or Americans but it was all a matter of education or the lack of it (ibid.). Japan encouraged the use of three different European languages, English, French and German, depending on the language used by visiting foreign professors, or the predominant scientific work in the particular discipline, but in 1872, following the establishment of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry abolished German and French instruction and concentrated on English in preparatory schooling (Nakayama, 1989, p. 35).³

The mission of the Ministry of Education established in 1872 was to formulate a national education system according to Parmenter (1999) who notes that during the first decade of the Meiji Emperor nationalist tendencies were subdued. However the 1879 and 1890 Education Orders, giving greater educational control to national and prefectural systems, initiated a strengthening

3. This might be viewed as an earlier precursor to Nakasone's Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program in 1987. The JET program was a means to promote Nakasone's notion of *kokusaika*, bringing in young, foreign and largely inexperienced (in teaching) graduates (813 in 1987) to teach English and inculcate a thin 'cultural' exchange. (See Aspinall, 2006)

of nationalist sentiment. Parmenter sees the 1880s as the period when moral guidance became central to the Japanese educational curriculum. Beginning in 1881 the Department of Education standardized the national curriculum throughout Japan by issuing guidelines for the course of study within elementary schools (Parmenter, 1999, p. 454). Following on, the Department of Education took the step of banning textbooks, containing what they deemed inappropriate ethical content. Policy control over textbook content by the Ministry of Education would be a contentious issue between Japan and its neighbours, Korea and China, after the Second World War (see below).

The Consolidation of Polity

The Meiji Restoration formed the foundations of Imperial rule and the establishment of a polity, which locked emperor, his people and Imperial or State Shinto together. State Shinto was a very different religious construction to what was identified as 'natural' Shinto (an animist form of religion). The prescript of Imperial Shinto was defined during the Yamato period (c.4–6 AD) and justified the Emperor's (*tennō*) dominance over other tribes, who worshipped their own, different gods (Fujiwara, 2007, p. 50). Imperial Shinto says Fujiwara was unlike anything that could be seen as 'natural' . Instead it was highly politicized and was forced upon conquered tribes (*ibid.*).

State Shinto was established by the Constitution of 1889 and the Imperial Rescript on Education (1890) both of which “enshrined the chief traditional elements of an emerging educational ideology” (Fridell, 1970, p. 823). The Education Rescript called for an “exalted filial piety” and loyalty to the emperor, holding the people party at any time to serve the throne (*ibid.*). Fridell identifies the chief contribution of the constitution as that of declaring the emperor “sacred and inviolable (Chapter 1, Article 111) and to reserve for him the rights of sovereignty by virtue of his descent from the glorious ‘Ancestors’ going back to the highest Shinto *kami* (Preamble)” (*ibid.*). The emperor now received a religious sanction that enabled him to command through his people’s loyalty and obedience (*ibid.*).

Education, Education, Education

The Imperial Rescript of Education or *Kyōiku-chokugo* (1890) was drafted during the time of Mori Arinori (1847-1889) who became the First Minister of Education in 1885. This gave great moral force to the educational system and promoted the rise of militarism and ultra-militarism (Munakata, 1966; Gluck, 1985; Horio, 1989, Parmenter, 1999; Okada, 2002).

The First Minister of Education was, according to Rubinger, an ardent nationalist, although ironically, Mori's support for modernization and links to the West, led to his death by a radical nationalist in February 11 1889, the day the Meiji Constitution was promulgated. Mori set in place educational ordinances to consolidate schools under national control, which were to define and continue the basic edicts of Japanese education from 1886 right up to 1945 (Rubinger, 2005, p. 775). Mori redirected elementary schools to instill patriotic loyalty and proper character (*ibid.*, 693) and set up a school system, (the *Gakusei*) also termed the Fundamental Code of Education.

The Fundamental Code of Education was the first comprehensive form of national education following the Meiji Restoration (*ibid.*, 764). Shimahara Nobuo saw the system as a move by intellectuals to advance the ideology of enlightenment from above (that is the state) and in 1880 with the overhaul of Japan's modern school system, the influence of Confucius replaced the Western orientation seen in the early Meiji era (Shimahara, 1995, p. 157). Confucian ideals reinforced loyalty to the state along with moral ideals of filial piety within education. The teacher's role was defined as promoting *sonno aikoku*, that is, reverence for the emperor and patriotism by means of moral education (Rubinger, 2005, p. 158)

Following Mori's death his successor, Inoue Kowanishi (1844-1895) promoted education later seen as serving ultranationalist ends. Inoue claimed that nothing but the *kokutai* [the 'national substance'] was to be the keynote of education (Rubinger, 2005, p. 779). In a speech he drafted for Yamagata Aritomo, the former War Minister and subsequently Prime Minister, Inoue contended that unless the people were imbued with patriotism the nation could not be strong, regardless of how many laws were issued. Patriotism could only be instilled through education (*ibid.*). It was in the Imperial Rescript on Education that the nationalistic spirit

was truly imbued claiming, “since there are those that swallow countries with impunity we must consider the whole world our enemy” (ibid., 781).

An official government ethics textbook appeared beginning in 1903 in order to exercise control over school texts, which were of differing quality and content. This was produced under Katō Hiroyuki, who as chairman of a committee in the Ministry of Education oversaw the compilation of this text. By 1903 his committee had written all the books for elementary schools and from that time until the culmination of the Pacific War all educational materials for moral and ethical education were tightly observed and controlled by the state (Fridell, 1970, p. 825).

Of particular note was the 1910 textbook that inculcated the family-state ideology, containing phrases like “subjects are particles which together comprise the whole nation. The prosperity of the subjects is tied to the prosperity of the state. Subjects and states are one body” (ibid., 830). Further passages like: “The whole country is one great family and the Imperial House is the Head Family. It is with the feeling of filial love and respect for parents that we Japanese people express our reverence toward the Throne of unbroken imperial line” promoted loyalty to the State, personified by the emperor as ‘Godhead’ (ibid., 831). Finally, stated Fridell, it was belief in Shinto, which “infuses emperor-loyalty and patriotism with a quality of sacred absoluteness,” (ibid.).

The 1910 texts resound with Shinto doctrine: lessons on Ise Shrine and the Yasukuni shrine relate how the emperor visited these great Shinto shrines, and in the case of Yasukuni, honored the spirits of those who died for the country in military service. Of note is how the textbooks present Shinto as historical fact, with great stress on Amaterasu (the founding goddess of Japan) and her commission of her grandson Ninigi-no-Mikoto to govern the land.

Arguably, nationalist positioning reached its zenith in Japan in the 1930s however, where the text ‘Fundamentals of our National Polity’ (*kokutai no hongī*, 1937) promoted by the Ministry of Education enjoyed huge sales. Its opening reads:

The unbroken line of Emperors, receiving the Oracle of the Founder of the Nation, reign eternally over the Japanese Empire. This is our eternal and immutable national identity. Thus, founded on this great principle, all the people, united as one great family nation in heart and obeying the Imperial

Will, enhance indeed the beautiful virtues of loyalty and filial piety. This is the glory of our national entity. (Suzuki, 2001, p. 255)

Suzuki contends that this document was a move by Japan for a cosmopolitan mission to combat the deadlock of Western individualism, where the mission of the Imperial Forces was to “spread moral superiority over the world”. Suzuki further notes that Japan saw territorial aggrandizement as “the only way” to accomplish such a cosmopolitan mission. Therefore the “spirit of harmony” was “elaborately transformed into the justification for Japan’s war effort” (ibid., 261). The text illustrates how the Japanese Constitution of the Meiji Restoration differed from ‘foreign’ social contracts in terms of ‘harmony’ between Japan’s people and their ruler where class struggles and movements were viewed as social evil.

Here the perception was that Imperial historical notions derived from a divine source and everything was ascribed in Japan to “manifestation of *kokutai*” (ibid., 264). This proposal by the Ministry of Education clearly showed the attempt by the ruling state to place an indoctrinatory communiqué onto the Japanese people in the guise of ideology; one that placed religion above rationality one that said that “offering our lives for the sake of the emperor does not mean self-sacrifice, but the casting aside of our little selves to live under his august grace and the enhancing of the genuine life of the people of a state” (Jansen, 2005, p. 968). The document foreshadowed the deaths of many in the forthcoming war.

The Occupation and Educational Reform

Nakayama (1989) notes that up to and following the Meiji Restoration Japan had no experience of being colonized or dominated by any western power. No colonial authority had enforced a foreign model of education. This condition of course was to change after the surrender in 1945 and the advent of the occupation period of 1945-1952 (p. 32). As noted above, the Meiji Restoration had sought to adopt and adapt a western educational perspective, particularly in its universities. The Imperial University in Tokyo (founded 1877) had assimilated a German model of authoritarian and elitist bureaucracy according to Nakayama, which in turn informed the Japanese government as law graduates from the university entered its offices (p. 38).

The second wave of westernization, also known as the second period of educational reform, (see Horio, 1986, p. 32) came with the Occupation, which was determined to eradicate the ultra-nationalistic and militaristic ideology in Japan. Seeking to transform the indoctrination of pre-war Japan and the “national morality” of the Imperial Rescript to an ideal of democracy and pacifism (ibid.) the US forces instigated the 1947 Fundamental Law of Education (FLE, *Kyōiku kihonhō*). This defined the basic right of the people to receive education following the edict of the 1946 constitution (*Mainichi Shinbun* 9 September, 1999). The aim was to establish education as right rather than duty, freedom rather than control, individuality over conformism and egalitarianism replacing elitism (Horio, 1986, p. 32). Pre war Japan has only fewer than 7 percent of the population as college graduates (Nakayama, 1989, p. 40) and the US forces perceiving an element of elitism, particularly from the Imperial University of Tokyo, insisted that the Japanese expand their higher education sector to include a university in each prefecture (ibid).

Although the Americans had viewed prewar Japan as being too centralized, and initially held the idea of disbanding the Ministry of Education, the US nevertheless had to rely on a degree of Japanese bureaucracy postwar. This meant that they continued to maintain the prewar civilian elites to a large extent and in so doing perpetuated the existing bureaucracy to implement reform programs, a previous source of nationalistic tensions within Japan (Garon, 1984, p. 441).⁴ The relationship was therefore an ambivalent one, but the Civil Information and Education Section (CIE) under the guidance of the American Mission of Education held to their strategy of change and recommended the creation of the 6-3-3-4 coeducational system.⁵ Furthermore teacher training that was conducted at prewar ‘normal’ schools was replaced by university-based education with a stress on liberal arts education. An open certificate system was thus created where colleges and universities could engage in teacher education without direct

4. Maruyama Masao (1969) identified three types of political constructions “that constituted Japan’s fascist rule” (Johnson, 1975, p. 22). They were the Portable Shrine that represented authority, the Official that represented power and the Outlaw (or *rōnin*) that represented violence. Chalmers Johnson addressing this tripod notion suggests that (acknowledging Nagai Yonosuke) the portable shrine is now the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) faction leader, the new *rōnin* may very well be the press while the Official is Bureaucracy existing before the war and strengthened by SCAP during the occupation (Johnson, 1975 pp. 22-23)

5. The division of the school system into six years of elementary education, three years of junior high school, three years of senior high school and four years of higher education.

control from the Ministry of Education (Shimahara, 1998, p. 453).

Post Occupation Educational Moves

The withdrawal of the Occupation forces in 1952 signaled an attempt by the Ministry of Education to strengthen its control over higher education.⁶ Just as with the 1946 constitution however it was difficult to return to the model that had existed before the Second World War. A process of internalization, that is a domestication of the external American model therefore followed (Nakayama, 1989, p. 43). This was particularly so regarding the case of higher education, where the Japanese adapted the American model. The influence of the industrial community became visible at the beginning of the 1960s pressuring higher education to promote the needs of the nation in terms of scientific and technological expertise. After the occupation ended the Teachers' Union, which had supported the educational reforms initiated by the Americans, came into increasing conflict with the Ministry of Education. A trend of restoration by the elites sought to correct the process of "hyper-democratisation of social reform" (Horio, 1986, p. 32) instigated by the Occupation, and education became their central target of attack. Conservative governments and followers initiated this "reverse-course" (Okada, 2002, p. 428) – older generation MOE bureaucrats, *Zakai* (business powers) and the Central Council for Education (CCE) – to remove the Occupation reforms considered "excessive" from the conservative perspective (ibid., 429). Parmenter notes that the 1958 post-occupation reforms enabled the Ministry of Education to seize greater control over curriculum and course content as well as reintroducing moral education (1999, p. 455). The latter move says Parmenter, particularly angered the Teachers' Union but the reforms continued. By 1961 a system of teacher appraisal for teacher control had been established along with textbook screening, an achievement test to measure children's progress and the nomination as opposed to election of administrative staff for control of the local Boards of Education (Horio, 1986, p. 32). Moves to consolidate the values system were stymied in the 1970s due to the price of oil placing economic difficulties on Government policy. Educational spending was cut whilst the defence budget was increased. Japan was transforming to an economically and technologically advanced society but reform agendas in education, initiated during the occupation, were being reformulated (Schoppa, 1991).

6. The so-called 'reverse course', or the reassessment of Occupation policies (see Okada, 2002, p. 429; Ienaga, 1994, pp. 123-124).

The Nakasone Model: Internationalization or Nationalist Consolidation?

The move towards internationalization (*kokusaika*) in Japan meshed with other industrialized countries during the 1980s in a process that metabolized and was later to be recognized as Globalization. This “empirical phenomenon” (Papastephanou, 2005, p. 534) was a transformation of world economic systems affected by technological and communicational advances and brought great changes to the cultural, monetary and political spheres of the nation state (Giddens, 2001; Bauman, 1998; Hobsbawm, 1998 et al.).

The Nakasone government sought to establish internationalization as an ideological underpinning for education whilst also positioning it in a wider political, social and cultural realm. Internationalization slowly transformed into a multifaceted entity. Like globalization, *kokusaika* was a *multivocal* construct (see Goodman, 2007, p. 72), that is a symbolic formulation, capable of interpretation by different actors in multiple ways, but also potentially, a site of conflict. Here different interest groups seek to adopt the concept as their own, claiming theirs as the dominant interpretation.

Nakasone’s government saw *kokusaika* as a means to promote Japanese values abroad as well as a means for bringing “international understanding” to Japanese and non-Japanese (Lincicome, 1993, p. 124). In 1984 the Nakasone government created the National Council on Educational Reform (*Rinjin Kyōiku Shingikai*, called hereafter the NCER⁷) to redress and revise the 1947 FLE. Synching with similar neo-liberal and neo-conservative ideologies, both economic and philosophical, of the Reagan and Thatcher administrations of the 1980s, educational reforms followed these ideological constructs under Nakasone. The council comprised of economic strategists and conservative nationalist intellectuals who embraced neo-liberal thinking, all of which were appointed by Nakasone (Ōuchi, 2003).

Among the proposals put forward by the NCER in the four reports⁸ they

7. Also known as the Ad-Hoc Council on Education

8. Motani, 2005, notes that these four reports issued under the direction of Nakasone, were primarily related to producing more assertive and creative Japanese workers, that is, elite business people with practical English skills, aware of global issues, able to function in an increasingly competitive world economy, and raise the status of Japan in the international

issued in the period of 1984-1987 were *junanka* (flexibilization), or a multi-track education system to challenge the 6-3-3-4 structure, a re-establishing of attainment standards designed to emulate the national elite pre-war system, enrichment and diversification of elementary and secondary education, together with teacher-improvement schemes. The reports notes Takayama (2009, p. 133) showed a clear break with previous government policy regarding education. From their “dismal depiction” of youth in regard to conditions of suicide, bullying, absenteeism and delinquency, the council advocated a policy of *kosei* (a moralistic positioning of the individual reflecting a political rationale of neo-liberalism). Here the council were addressing the lack of freedom in education derived from rote learning and cramming for exams and redressing the individual in the clothes of neo-liberalism as one who could calculate their own responsibilities, employment and welfare (ibid., 134). The council, and especially the economic liberalist Kayama Kenichi, here came into conflict with the MOE and conservative LDP politicians who refused to adopt this policy, and instead strengthened the MOE's control over the curriculum, teachers and moral-based education (Schoppa, 1991). Takayama notes that the MOE adopted *kosei* to rearticulate public education concerns in support for the state withdrawing from education, and for ability-based education that prioritized educating elites over education for all (2009, p. 134).⁹

Moves against the Constitution

Okada (2002) identifies that the NCER's approach was also geared to Nakasone's polemicist quest to revise the Japanese Constitution, particularly Article 9.¹⁰ As Schoppa (1991) notes, the FLE, the 6-3-3-4 system, the Article 9

community. The vision of internationalization here remained limited to the requirements of economic and nationalistic needs, it was not a means to promote understanding among the Japanese about global problems such as poverty or environmental issues (p. 313).

9. The keyword *kosei* is enjoined with *yutori* (a state of relaxation, room for growth) related recently to what many scholars call the “third great educational reform” which began in April 2002. As an answer to the rigid exam structure, students in junior high school and high school are now encouraged, though integrated education, to “think for themselves” while from 2004 all 87 of Japan's national higher educational institutes became self-governing, autonomous units with respect to hiring, teaching and research (Goodman, 2007, pp. 74-75; see also Takayama's discussion of how these keywords have shifted in semantic discourse over a period of 30 years [2009, pp. 137-138]).

10. Horio (1988) interpreted their view of internationalization as “a new but no less dangerous” example of Japanese imperialism, which led to Japan's “militaristic adventurism” during the 1930s and 1940s (pp. 378-379).

peace clause and its encompassing occupation constitution are symbols of the emasculation of Japan after the war.¹¹ In other words the constitution and the FLE were created irrespective of Japan's traditional values, such as loyalty to the state, filial piety and family obligations, and in turn placed emphasis more on western values such as individuality or *kosei* (Okada, 2002, p. 429). Nakasone insisted that his interpretation of the Fundamental Law of Education was "that patriotism and filial piety must be taught as the goal of education" (Yamazumi, 1986, 90-113). Noting this, Horio suggests that the NCER were less interested in the actual situations of students and schools than in how to position Japan's advantage in the global economy (1986, p. 33) seeing their aim as the establishment of a "more competitive, merit-oriented and hierarchical system" informed by the theories of the American economist Milton Friedman (*ibid.*, 34).

Internationalization was therefore a way to restructure the education system toward realizing specific goals, such as common values, social practices and social relations and re-establishing Japan's national interests (Mouer & Sugimoto, 1983). Lincicome notes criticism of the NCER coming from writers like Morita Toshio, the former director of the Citizens Institute for Educational Research affiliated with the leftist Japanese Teacher's Union, who saw the NCER's proposals as intended to re-ignite Japanese militarism and imperialism. While kow-towing to imperialist hegemonic 'Pax America' leanings as a (then) member of the G5 group of Nations, Morita advocated that Japan was promoting its own 'Pax Japonica' hegemony over the Asian and Pacific Regions (Lincicome, 1993, p. 125). Morita maintained that the NCER moves to internationalize Japanese education come not as a desire to contribute to international society, but are pitched at expanding Japan's political and economic power in the global community that was becoming increasingly hostile to Japan's encroaching political and economic power (*ibid.*, 129). Lincicome suggests that in the final analysis of internationalization within Japanese education, the biggest problem stems from the highly competitive entrance exam.¹² This influences not only the

11. This has been reiterated on numerous occasions by LDP Diet members, among them Prime Minister Obuchi Keizō who held the view that the educational system was 'imposed' by the American Occupation authorities. Obuchi criticized the FLE for its failure to champion 'traditional' Japanese values (see Okada, 2002, p. 426).

12. See also Motani's suggestion that the educational reform of 2002 and 'relaxed education' resulted in part from the MOE's recognition that Japanese children were suffering from excessive competition because of the "fierce" entrance examination system, accelerating over time as higher education "became more accessible" (Motani, 2005, p. 311).

course content of elementary, junior high and high school but also the attitudes of parents, students and teachers.

Following the NCER's disbanding in 1987, the MOE issued guidelines for high school study, which included six different subjects involving an international dimension. Lincicome notes the inclusion of the role of moral education in the guidelines however to encourage student awareness of themselves as members of state (*kokka*) and society (1993, p. 146). This paradigm of *kokusaika* promoted student consciousness that is rooted in respect for Japanese traditions and culture, precluding their development as internationalists (*ibid.*). Goodman comments on *kokusaika*, that on one level it could be seen as a dichotomy between pragmatists (such as business leaders) who approached nationalism as important for Japan's economic growth, and idealists (among them academics) who viewed internationalism as a means for genuine global interaction where "similarities were more important than differences" (2007, p. 73). The next section looks at further nationalist tensions in the historical narrative of the Second World War, the Occupation and the MOE's enforcement of textbook content.

Elites, Education, Patriotic Nationalism: The Textbook Controversy

Following the end of the Pacific War the 'MacArthur Constitution' controversially granted the emperor immunity from war crimes, so denoting that the Emperor was not to be indicted in the Tokyo War Trials, which placed a distinction between wartime leaders and ordinary citizens and "pursued only the national leaders, especially army officers" (Kasahara, 2002, p. 88). After the trials SCAP (*Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers*) initiated moves at education rehabilitation in order to attempt a resolution of the militarist movements of the 1920s and 1930s. SCAP's Civil Information and Education (CIE) Section directed the Ministry of Education to issue textbooks critical of militarism and ultra nationalism (see, Orr, 2002). Books like the popular *Kuni no ayumi*, (*Footsteps of the Nation*) inculcated ideas of democracy and peace. However the Cold War occupied the occupiers and the United States in time urged the allies not to pursue Japan's war responsibility and to renounce their claims to reparations.¹³ The Treaty of San

13. "...politicians and diplomats of the day... correctly judged that putting the ghost of war [such as that appearing in the *Awa maru* claims for compensation process] behind them was essential". The 'ghost of war' "had to be banished if they were to build peace and security in a Cold War world threatened by the specter of still more terrible conflict" (Dingman, 1997, p. 255). However as Dingman writes further on, "[t]he shapers of the *Awa maru* tragedy [torpedoed

Francisco in 1952 ended the post war settlement by the allied powers and “conservative forces, which inherited prewar politics... continued to hold power... as symbolized by the fact that released Class A war criminals and former military leaders served in the government cabinet” (Kasahara, 2002, p. 89).

The consolidation of the political elite saw the Democratic Party merging with the Liberal Party to become the Liberal Democratic Party, the LDP, in November 1955 and under this rule the Ministry of Education “strengthened its textbook screening” (ibid.). The Democratic Party had attacked social science textbooks earlier that year for proposing ideas of peace and democracy, which Kasahara identifies as the First Textbook Attack. In the following year local education boards were made appointive and given authority to chose textbooks (Orr, 2002, p. 72). This came into direct oppositional contact with the Japan Teachers Union (JTU) “which championed the UNESCO credo that education is the surest safeguard for peace” (ibid.). The Nanking Massacre, which had featured in textbooks after the war, disappeared and “in the same way the Japanese people after the war avoided confronting the issue of war and aggression, and the Nanking Massacre was removed from the national memory” (Kasahara, 2002, p. 89). From 1957 the Education Minister Ichirō Kiyose “brought examination and texts more directly under ministry control by adding and expanding ministerial representation in the evaluative and review stages of certification” (Orr, 2002, 73) followed by the 1963 Textbook law which brought publishers themselves under tighter control. Slowly the Ministry of Education consolidated its postwar power.

The Second World War thus only briefly paused elitist movements, leading to Hook and McCormack identifying 1945 as more interruption than rupture in the Japanese state (2001, p. 10). They quote Yokota on this point, “we can see evidence of a union between religion and the state everywhere” (ibid.). The ‘MacArthur Constitution’ was identified by Hook and McCormack as “non-negotiable demands imposed by the war’s victors” imposing its three central features, a symbolic emperor system, popular sovereignty and state pacifism onto the state of Japan. It also “involves a fourth issue, the declaration of state orientation (as pacifist or more precisely, antimilitarist) as stated in Article 9

while under ‘promised’ safe-passage] could never do that. They saw themselves as victims, first, last, and always” (ibid.). See also Saito (2006) for a discussion on Hiroshima as metaphor for Japan as victim.

(ibid., 4).¹⁴

The Ministry of Education unshackled from any bonds that may have restricted its prewar powers continued its grip of textbooks and nationalist ideology. In the early 80s the screening of textbooks (the “Second Textbook Attack”, Kasahara, 2002, p. 90) greatly angered Japan’s neighbors sparking off a counter from Japanese revisionists, one of which was Tanaka Akira the secretary of General Matsui, hung as a Class A Criminal for his role in the Nanking Massacre. Kasahara does acknowledge however that outside pressures against Japan do seem to be having some effect at redressing the balance of Japan’s contested wartime record. Kasahara himself, at great personal risk, has appeared as a witness to support Ienaga Saburo in Ienaga’s continuing trial against government censorship – the government’s intention being to remove record of Japanese wartime aggression from textbooks. The Ministry of Education continued its ideological ‘push’ into the 90s with the forcing of schools to place the *Hinomaru* flag and the singing of the *Kimigayo* anthem at the centre of school ceremonies.

“Kimigayo” and the “Hinomaru”: Ideological pushes & the MOE

Another controversial ruling, surfacing the specter of patriotic nationalism, has been the ordering of the singing of “Kimigayo”¹⁵ (the song referred to as Japan’s national anthem, “The Emperor’s Reign”) in front of the national flag, the “Hinomaru”, where “[s]ince 1989 every Board of Education in Japan has been instructed by the Ministry of Education (Mombushō) to enforce the flying of the *Hinomaru* and the singing of the *Kimigayo* at school entrance and graduation ceremonies” (Aspinall & Cave, 2001, p. 79). This move by the Ministry of Education and the political elite caused Hook and McCormack to comment that “in a country in which the people were constitutionally sovereign, such a law [the ‘flag and anthem’ law, 1999] if interpreted in the common sense meaning as establishing a hymn of praise to the emperor as national anthem” could well be

14. A constitution that nevertheless was based on “the principles of human rights, sovereignty of the people and peace”, see Otsu, 2000, p. 57.

15. Despite the postponement in February 2010 of the non-Japanese Suffrage Bill granting local voting rights to permanent foreign residents, ultra-rightist groups gathered at the Nippon Budokan arena in Chiyoda Ward singing *Kimigayo* in protest of this government action. According to the organizer, a total of 10,257 people attended the convention on April 17, 2010. The Democratic Party of Japan (the DPJ) had proposed this bill after they came to power in August 2009 (Alex Martin, *The Japan Times* Sunday, April 18, 2010).

viewed by some as unconstitutional (2001, pp. 10-11).

In their case study Aspinall and Cave highlight the position of one school that refused to carry out the Mombushō edict where, “the students objected that the controversial symbols and their wartime associations should not be imposed without their consent” (2001, p. 77). The instigation of the edict hearkens back to 1950, according to Aspinall and Cave, when then-serving minister of education Amano commented that the raising of the flag and the singing of the anthem would be “desirable” (*nozomashii*). Since then the MOE and many conservative politicians have seen these symbols as a move to reinstate Japanese ‘traditional’ values and instill patriotism into Japanese schools.

Patriotism runs deep in the MOE. In 1995 Shinamura Yoshinobu the minister of education argued that it was “simply a matter of perspective whether the [Second World] war was an act of aggression” (Middlesbrook, 2008, p. 92). Brian McVeigh, a noted sociocultural and educational critic of Japan, regards this process as “moral education” where “the content, goals, and methods of moral instruction are disputed and the postwar contention between the Ministry of Education and the Japan Teachers Union, *Nikkyōso*, over moral education reflects its highly contested nature” (1998, p. 160). Indeed McVeigh asserts that the Ministry of Education sees moral education, “as a humanistic endeavor designed to foster good citizens”, while the Japan Teacher’s Union has “often associated it with a return to prewar nationalistic indoctrination” (*ibid.*). Many teachers have subsequently refused to stand and sing the anthem. The move to reinstate Kimigayo and the Hinomaru as patriotic markers say Hook and McCormack, is redolent of moves by nationalists and neo-nationalists to restore “equilibrium”, moves that require “a return to the certainties of an earlier time in symbol rhetoric, and educational policy” (2001, p. 35).

In 2003, the Tokyo metropolitan government under its governor, Ishihara Shintaro, “arguably the best known and highest placed nationalist in Japanese politics today” (Middlebrooks, 2008, p. 91), ordered a directive where stricter punishments would be meted out to recalcitrants. In the following year around 200 teachers refused to follow this edict and did not stand when the anthem was played, according to Brasor writing in the Japan Times, and at Itabashi High School on March 11, 90 percent of the students there remained seated. Moreover on March 12 parents attending the entrance ceremony at Toyama High School in

Shinjuku “held aloft symbolic yellow cards when the announcement was made to stand. They understand that freedom of conscience is guaranteed by the Constitution” (Brasor, 2004).

Hongo also writing in the *Japan Times* on the same theme, three years later, comments that the Organization of Reprimanded Teachers for the Retraction of the Unjust Punishment Involving Hinomaru and Kimigayo, records 388 teachers reprimanded under the Tokyo directive since 2003. Most have filed lawsuits demanding that the metropolitan government retract the order (Hongo, 2007). This same metropolitan governor and former Liberal Democratic Party politician is a known historical revisionist. In a “notorious” interview undertaken with *Playboy* magazine Ishihara denied that the Nanking Massacre of 1937 had ever taken place. Citing “Chinese propaganda” he placed Nanking against Hiroshima and suggested Hiroshima was “many times worse” (Buruma, 2002, p. 4).

Ishihara shares his views of Nanking with Tanaka Masaaki’s 1984 *Nanking Gyakusatsu no Kyoko* (The fabrication of the Nanking Massacre). Tanaka “has a peculiar observation of Japanese swords not being up to the job of mass executions” according to Buruma, but he maintains an even “stranger argument” holding that “[u]nlike Westerners and Chinese... the Japanese have no history of planned massacres” (2002, pp. 3-4). Buruma sees revisionist arguments such as those allied with the *Nankin Ronso* (Nanking debate) as “political” and “obscured by political propaganda” (ibid., 5). The Nanking Massacre has become a badge of negative identity suggests Buruma, the symbolism and mythology of which has obscured the quest to uncover the “more mundane business of finding out what actually went on” (ibid., 9). Patriotic nationalism continues to be driven by elite figures within Japan like Ishihara and Tanaka and members within the Ministry of Education, a stance that infuriates Japan’s critics and a protagonist of discord to the peace climate in Japan. The sources of this patriotic nationalism are further discussed below.

Patriotic Nationalism and the Textbook Controversy

In 1995 Okuno Seisuke, a member of the House of Representatives who had also served as Minister of Education, commented that “it is America and Britain that carried out a war of aggression. It is America and Britain that we fought, not Asia” (Barnard, 2003, pp. 2-3). In the same year, the 50th anniversary of the

ending of the war, as a strictly token gesture the lower house of the Diet (the House of Representatives) introduced a “watered down” Resolution to Renew the Determination for Peace on the Basis of Lessons Learned from History (Barnard, 2003, pp. 4-5). Barnard here questions the use of the expression *hansei no sen* (remorse) and whether “remorse” was a suitable translation of the Japanese expression.

What is most important for these revisionists says Yoshida (cited in Barnard, p. 9) is not the fact of remembering the Chinese who were killed by Japanese soldiers, “but the issue of ‘Japan’ and ‘Japaneseness’. The revisionists have engaged in their activities to promote an idea of a Japanese national history for the Japanese people.” Barnard has carefully analyzed the Japanese text in textbooks to deconstruct the ideology contained within these books. Acknowledging Seddon, Barnard argues Japan has promoted four major post-war trends in its education. Again there has been as pre-war, a centralization of educational control, a stress on efficiency in school and teacher management, the reoccurring emphasis on patriotism and duty and a subordinating of education to economic policy (p. 9). He notes that during the 80s a nationalist agenda was introduced to promote the idea of ‘Japaneseness’ under the guise of internationalization (discussed above). This has also been the work of the *Tsukuru-kai* (An abbreviated term for the Japanese New History Education) to teach a history of pride and responsibility and to enforce nationalistic leanings through internationalization.

This body released a textbook, which became heavily criticized for presenting a very distorted view of the Nanking Massacre and the issue of ‘comfort women’ and for promoting a very nationalistic and “emperor-centred” view of history (p. 17), which garnered official protests from South Korea and China. Indeed it is Barnard’s contention that Japanese textbooks present what is superficially a “commonsense” view of history but by studying the language closely the discourse presents itself as a particular ideology or even a set of ideologies “that serve group interests within Japan” (p. 22). Furthermore Barnard believes that because of “face protection” strategies, the Ministry of Education has not progressed from regarding Japanese citizens as it did in the Meiji Period “and is unwilling to reveal to citizens that the state or organs of the state were coerced in 1945” because to admit this would be a weakness (p. 170).

Professor Ienaga Saburo, as previously mentioned, has fought a long battle

with the Ministry of Education over textbook content and forcefully states how the MOE has shaped what the youth of Japan learn about Japan's militarist past (Ienaga, 1994, p. 117). Ienaga saw the postwar emphasis of the media's glorification of war and the government's internal security laws as restricting freedoms of thought and speech, and as a means of socializing the majority of Japanese to "support aggression enthusiastically" (ibid.). These moves, together with coercive laws and doctinated public education manipulated the people into engaging in a Pacific War (Barnard, 2003, pp. 164-165). Indeed even now eleven different publishers produce fifty-five history textbooks that all present a similar ideology "surrounded by an aura of veracity and authority" (p. 167). Ienaga recounts the textbooks of the 1920s glorifying past heroic events like the bombardment of Port Arthur and the battle of the Tsushima Strait during the Russo-Japanese war where the "brave, loyal officers and men" were determined to repay "His Majesty's benevolence with their lives" and launched attack after attack (Ienaga, 1994, p. 119). The signal from Admiral Togo's flagship *Mikasa* implored the military to "[b]e more courageous than ever before and do your best... it was the greatest naval victory of all time" (ibid.).

Ienaga recounts his own historical battles with the MOE. His 1981 textbook detailing the 1931-1945 Japanese 'advance' into China stated, "The Chinese... resisted Japanese aggression and desperately tried to regain their own sovereignty" (1994, p. 126). The MOE examiner questioned Ienaga's use of value-laden words within the text, and objected to the word "invasion". Regarding Ienaga's interpretation of the Rape of Nanking the examiner refused to accept any implication that the Japanese army sanctioned the rape, instead asking for the statement "During the confusion of the occupation of Nanking many Chinese soldiers and civilians were killed" to be inserted (ibid., 126). Ienaga's court battle with the MOE finally concluded after thirty-two years in 1997 where he lost his case, the Supreme Court ruling against his argument that textbook certification could be considered unconstitutional. However as the historian Roger B. Jeans comments, the struggle was not a simple one-sided matter; the court also ruled that the government could not distort Japan's documentation of the war, determining it illegal for the MOE to order an author to delete any descriptions of Japanese wartime atrocities (Jeans, 2005, p. 184). Jeans (who incidentally is a vociferous critic of Iris Chang's "gross generalizations" [ibid., 192] of the Rape of Nanking) records that in Summer 2001 local school districts in Japan rejected the MOE's proposed textbooks for 2002. Of 542 districts, 532 (around 98 percent)

refused to adopt the books (ibid.) thus countering Chang's assertion that the Japanese nation as a whole shows no contriteness for wartime atrocities.

The textbook controversy continues however. A week before the text's opponents celebrated their victory, five hundred ultra-nationalists filled a hall in Tokyo under a huge Hinomaru flag endorsing the governments "good move" in approving the textbook (Jeans, 2005, 192). Ishihara Shintaro backed the nationalist textbook and Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro later that summer visited the Yasukuni Shrine in an official capacity to pay tribute to the military war dead of Japan. A move that deeply angered Japan's Asian neighbours. The controversy of Japan's militarist history and its documentation in textbooks and national understanding remains both problematic and a contested site. Jeans, quoting a Japanese scholar, suggests that the rival groups in Japan, the pacifists and the militarists are in the minority in Japanese society. Each group it seems is fighting over the "ignorant majority" who remain indifferent to WWII issues and concerns. Nevertheless Jean's conclusion is that the children who are the object of instruction are the ones require a clear explanation of the disagreement. With the four-year cycle of new textbooks, the dispute continues (ibid., 195).

Contemporary Educational Challenges: Higher Institutional Proposals and Pressures

Many Japanese universities are currently attempting to deal with trends toward the increasing globalization of higher education. This trend is being fueled by the growing integration of the world economy and by the spread of information technology, and by the explosive growth of the Internet (Bollag 2000). Given that the international language of Globalization in trade and higher education is English, Japan, among many non-English speaking countries, is compelled to address this issue. While debate continues whether this language trend will (or should) continue, universities in Japan are finding themselves under increasing pressure to better prepare students for the competitive demands they will face after graduation in the global market. Japan is also faced with a declining population rate (Kinmouth, 2005), which has translated into declining enrollments across the entire university system. In the case of private universities, they have nonprofit status and are partly supported by national subsidies (around 10%) and almost all depend on tuition fees as their main source of income (Yonezawa et al., 2009, p. 126). Another structural problem arises from

the *Juken* system which was addressed in the previous chapter. Students are introduced to as early as elementary school - that is the preparation and testing system for university entrance. Testing is based on rote learning and a 'considerable amount of memorizing and training is needed to pass the examination' (Blumenthal, 1992, p. 456). Students 'cram' as many facts as possible and classes are teacher-centered and teacher-led where students are not encouraged or sought for any input into the class, indeed 'universities... test mainly the candidate's detailed knowledge of facts and speed of answering questions' (Ibid.). The result is a certain amount of institutionalization, which by the time the student enters university ensure classes that are often very quiet and non-interactive, students reliant on the teacher to offer answers and disseminate information with no responsibility on the student to contribute anything to the class.¹⁶ This often stems from the idea that entering university is extremely arduous but that 'once admitted, a student is virtually guaranteed a diploma' (Hayes, 1997:300) and 'in some courses, there are few if any requirements apart from class attendance' (Ibid., 301).

The Global 30 Proposition

To address these global and domestic pressures, the Japanese government in 2007 furthered its promotion of internationalization within Japanese universities. Seeing the need to enhance global competitiveness the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy (CEFP) responded with an ambitious plan to bolster enrollments by increasing the number of foreign students studying in Japan from the current 100,000 to 300,000, (Yonezawa et al. 2009, p. 126). This plan, referred to colloquially as the 'Global 30', is the *Kokusaika Kyoten Seibi Jigyo* (literally, Kokusaika Hub Consolidation Project). Part of this initiative is to encourage Japanese universities to offer enough coursework in English to allow students to obtain their undergraduate degree completely in English. The CEFP (2008) also proposed that the Japanese government should select 30 key universities for this process of internationalization out of the 756 universities in Japan. In July 2009, 13 universities were chosen, six private and seven national, from 22 applicants to receive Global 30 funding over the next five years (Burgess, 2010).

16. Educational critics such as Amano Ikuo note a spread of passive resistance among students from the 1970s onwards, pouring their energies into extracurricular activities of the so-called clubs or circles. If they did attend class they did not listen to the lectures but spent their time chatting to their friends instead (2005, p. 692).

Introducing 30,000 foreign students into Japanese universities will entail a great deal of planning and pedagogical expertise especially given the fact that in many universities, faculty, “especially the more traditionally oriented faculty”, see programs like these “as a corruption of academic traditions and a drain on resources.” (Hayes, 1997, p. 303). Moreover commentators like Wright and Lander (2003) argue that universities are “deluding themselves” if they believe that the presence of international students on campuses will contribute to internationalisation of higher education (p. 250). Goodman (2007) suggests that *kokusaika* is not concerned with promoting an openness to international understanding, but rather confers status on institutions by bringing in substantial numbers of overseas students to internationalize research programs. In other words, *kokusaika* becomes a pragmatic means to increase fee-paying foreign students and guarantee economic survival (pp. 85-86).

Educational Concerns and Challenges in Japan

Citing Paolo Freire’s ‘banking-theory’ (students as receptacles for ‘banking’ or ‘depositing’ education) Barnard describes a very limited education trajectory for student-engagement in Japan. Students preparing for higher institutions must negotiate the *juken* system, which does not require any critical engagement by the student merely the regurgitation of “disconnected facts on demand” to pass the test (2003, p. 168). Any form of English as ‘international language teaching’ is rendered redundant. Hashimoto (2000) and McVeigh (2002, 2004) maintain that English teaching per se merely reconfirms a ‘Japanese identity’ by default, an ‘us and them’ syndrome, and reinforces “students’ nationalistic perceptions” (Whitsed and Volet, 2010, p. 7). MEXT still ensures the close control of the historical narrative in Japan’s textbooks; they all teach the same view, in the same order and are produced by publishers very aware of what the unwritten rules of content authorization are. The resultant effect is, according to Barnard, that there will never be a transformative change in Japan’s students, a generation growing up with none of them capable of developing any critical skills to question or challenge the content presented.

This is rather an essentialist viewpoint however. Jeans (2005) has demonstrated that many Japanese oppose any nationalist positioning inclined to stoke conditions similar to those that instigated prewar aggression of Japan in Asia. Some Japanese students may very well retain the apathy that Jeans identifies as the majority viewpoint noted above, that of being indifferent to wartime issues,

but nevertheless there are many Japanese students (and citizens) who wish to actively engage with these issues. *Kokusaiika* may have sought to impose an ideological neo-liberal construct of an intertwined economic and cultural dominant of 'Japaneseness' during the Nakasone 80s, but internationalization, subsumed within the multivocal forces of globalization, has meant many young Japanese are gaining a 'thicker' concept of their role in the world. Exchange programs between schools in other countries, wider, faster travel, and technological means that relay multiple-information access with a click of a cell phone or computer have all compressed space and time perceptions, creating and enabling a far more extensive understanding of the hybridity of culture and identity within nations. Japan is no exception. The economic miracle that promoted the *Nihon wa Saikō syndrome* ("Japan is best syndrome") in the 80s and 90s identified by Tsukushi Tetsuya (Goodman, 2007, p. 72) has matured with modernity. Japan is now a wealthy country but one challenged by a twenty-year recession (at the time of writing) and a rising China. The world is shifting, conditions continue to change, and just as education can be used as a means to indoctrinate, so education can in turn be employed as a challenge to these means. Peace education is one such proposal for open and critical analyses of the world, in that it actively challenges and encourages a critique of ideological practices that seek to impose a morally rigid standpoint of society; one that has been used in the past to instill ultra-militarism and a litany of violence and suffering.

Conclusion

The Meiji Revolution brought a modernizing change to Japan. Its constitution positioned the Emperor state-centre as 'Godhead', interlinking his people within a regimented society containing a patriotic-driven education system and a militarist-driven security system. Within these strictures a deep ideological structure was built, one that was arguably psychologically limiting for the people existing in it. A martial education produces a martial populace and given the rigid hierarchical structures (that still remain) in this system it is little wonder that conflict ensued; conflict that was racially driven and at the risk of paraphrasing Hobbes, ensured a life of continual fear for many and one that was "poor, nasty, brutish and short".

Japan's second Constitution was one imposed by the victors of the Pacific War, retaining the emperor but enforcing (rather unsuccessfully) a separation of religion and state and a liberal educational system determined to counter the

ultra-nationalist ideology that existed before the war. The historical narrative at the beginning of the 21st century still remains contested and continues to vex Japan's Asian neighbors, as does Japan's often revisionist local and diplomatic agenda. Ienaga notes the ascension of popular veneration for the emperor, an increase in authoritarianism (the Hinomaru/Kimigayo controversy) and the rise of state Shinto – the “erosion of the postwar legal principle of the separation of state and religion” (1994, p. 133).

Critics like Ienaga continue to raise concerns against elitist actions, moreover critics also suggest that the education system has changed very little since Meiji times, There remains for many of these voices no critical engagement with Japan's darker issues, or other issues for that matter, merely as the military historian Roger B Jeans records, an indifferent passive stance.

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