

Japan: Human Rights Education in Schools

YOSHIRO NABESHIMA, MARIKO AKUZAWA,
SHINICHI HAYASHI, AND KOONAE PARK

The preamble of the 1946 Constitution of Japan states: “We, the Japanese people, desire peace for all time and are deeply conscious of the high ideals controlling human relationships,” and “We, the Japanese people, pledge our national honor to accomplish these high ideals and purposes with all our resources.” Respect for human rights is thus a major principle of Japanese society.

National Policies on Human Rights Education

Laws and Policies Regulating Education in Schools

In 1947, the Fundamental Law of Education was enacted because “the realization of this ideal [in the Constitution] depend[s] fundamentally on the power of education.” It states that people should acquire “the political knowledge necessary for intelligent citizenship” through all kinds of education. It also adopts the principles of equal educational opportunity and co-education.

In accordance with this law, the Ministry of Education (MOE) issued in 1947 the Course of Study for primary and secondary education. The Course of Study was initially a sample curriculum for schools. It became the national standard school curriculum in 1958 and was revised once during its first 10 years. The latest revision, announced in school year 1998-1999, will be implemented in 2002.

Human rights issues are integrated into social studies at several year levels. But systematic human rights education programs are not designated either as a subject or course or extracurricular subject. Issues such as independence, equality, human dignity, tolerance, and world peace are covered in moral education, but not human rights and freedom.

However, MOE funds and supervises local boards of education in promoting human rights education as “Dowa education” since the Law on Special Measures for Dowa Projects of 1969 was enacted. The major concern of Dowa education according to this law is to eliminate discrimination against *Burakumin* children.

The implementation of human rights education programs is left to local governments, schools, or teachers. But their limited power and resources have resulted in few human rights education programs. Most of the few high-quality human rights education programs are implemented only in schools where *Burakumin* children are enrolled.

In 1997, the government announced its National Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education. It requires all primary and secondary schools to incorporate comprehensive human rights education programs into their curriculums. But the plan is silent on when and how they should do so, what support the government will provide, or what resources are available.

The National Plan of Action lists the topics that should be tackled in human rights education, including problems of the *Burakumin*, women, children, the elderly, the disabled, *Ainu* (indigenous people), foreigners, people with HIV, and former prisoners. Human rights edu-

cation is minority oriented, emphasizing empathy toward discriminated-against minority groups more than universal concepts of human rights. It is also notable that a number of local governments have also adopted their own action plans, most of which simply follow the National Plan of Action.

Established in 1997, the National Council for Human Rights Policy announced in 1999 its first policy recommendation, which was expected to address the minority orientation of the National Plan of Action. However, it did not, and it is criticized by many people for pointing out the importance of human rights education without providing for supporting legislation or structures. It is also criticized for defining human rights education as “a mean[s] to promote mutual understanding among the Japanese nationals,” neglecting to mention the relationship between the government and the citizens, and regarding human rights education only as a means of making people sensitive to other people’s feelings.

Human Rights Education in School Curriculums, Materials, and Textbooks

The school system provides for six years of free and compulsory primary education (ages 6-11) and three years of free and compulsory junior high school education (ages 12-14), and three years of optional senior high school education (ages 15-17). The enrollment rate at senior high schools is approximately 95%.

MOE formulates primary and secondary school curriculums and screens textbooks. But municipal boards of education may choose textbooks for primary and junior high schools. Senior high schools choose textbooks themselves.

The local boards of education and the schools may, on their own initiative, provide free additional and extracurricular materials, including those for human rights education. Human rights education policies adopted by the prefectural boards of education are listed in the Table.

In addition to the Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a few provisions of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the International Bill of Human Rights, the following instruments are used in several social studies textbooks and human rights readers and materials at the primary and secondary school levels:

- Charter of the United Nations;
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- (National) Law on Equal Employment Opportunity for Men and Women;
- Declaration of the Seitousha (the women’s liberation organization established in 1911);
- Declaration of the Suiheisha (the Burakumin liberation organization established in 1922);
- Universal Suffrage Law of 1925 (which gave the poor the right to vote);
- The Election Law of 1945 (which gave women the right to vote); and
- The Report of the National Council for Dowa Special Measures of 1965 (commonly known as the Do-Taishin-Toshin).

Extracurricular Human Rights Education Programs

Some local boards of education provide the following:

- poster/motto/essay competitions, speech contests on human rights; and
- supplementary education program for minority children (including Burakumin).

Some schools provide the following:

- community activities such as visiting handicapped people or discriminated-against communities;
- lectures on human rights by activists, lawyers, and community workers;
- domestic and international exchanges among schools;

TABLE 1. HRE Policies of the Prefectures¹ (continuation)

	Existence of the UN Decade Action Plan for following body																				
	HRE policies of the local BOEs								Designation of following issues as BOE concern												
Prefectures	1. Survey response	2. HRE incorporation policy	3. HRE manual for teacher	4. HRE sample module books	5. Publication on HRE for children	6. HRE section in BOE office	7. HRE institute	8. HRE teacher training program	9. Education for handicapped	10. Gender-free education	11. Dowa Education	12. Education for foreigners	13. Education for Ainu children	14. Convention on the rights of the children	15. Bully prevention	16. Education for international understanding	17. Peace education	18. Environment education	19. HIV education	20. Local government	21. Local BOE
Fukuoka	a			1	1	1	1	1			1	1			1					1	
Saga	a							1			1									1	
Nagasaki	a		1		1						1									1	
Kumamoto	a		1		1			1			1									1	
Oita	a					1					1									1	
Miyazaki	a		1		1	1					1										
Kagoshima	n.a.																				
Okinawa	n.a.																				
Total	30	8	11	13	7	8	5	17	4	3	26	6	1	3	10	3	0	6	3	21	2
Total no. of answers (%)	103	26.7	36.7	43.3	23.3	26.7	16.7	56.7	13.3	10.0	86.7	20.0	3.3	10.0	33.3	10.0	0.0	20.0	10.0	70.0	6.7
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21

Notes

1. This table is based on a survey conducted by the Osaka City University and HURIGHTS OSAKA in October 1999.
2. BOE stands for Board of Education.
3. Ordinance-designated cities are not included in the list.
4. Prefectures which sent back filled-up survey forms are indicated with letter a, and those which have not sent back the forms are indicated with letters n.a.

- class discussions and school gatherings on human rights issues;
- plays, songs, and presentations on human rights issues performed by children at school and community festivals;
- movies and plays on human rights issues;
- study tours for senior high school students;
- human rights festivals open to the community;
- club activities concerning human rights issues; and
- programs to raise ethnic consciousness for Korean children. (Some schools hire specialists for their programs.)

Training of Teachers and Other Education Personnel

There is no national program or legislation for human rights education teacher training. The Teacher's License Law prescribes preservice training but does not require universities or colleges to have a human rights education teacher training program. Some universities and colleges, however, have their own Dowa education or human rights education program in the teacher education course in response to the petitions of the Buraku liberation movement and other human-rights-related social movements.

The local boards of education are responsible for the training of primary and secondary

public school teachers under the Local Government Employees Law and the Special Law for Local Teachers. The special law gives the local education boards the responsibility for planning and providing training, and gives teachers the right to receive training during their working hours. The content of the training programs is left to the local board's discretion.

Many local education boards require teachers to attend human rights training classes periodically. The classes are required for newly hired teachers, and then every five years. Classes, which are normally 2-4 hours long, are mostly lectures by researchers or board of education officers.

Many classes use participatory methods. Some local education boards fund voluntary teacher study groups (such as the Dowa Educators Association) for human rights education development. So far no specific teacher training programs or courses on human rights education have been developed.

Seminars and workshops are also organized by many local education boards. These activities provide information and teaching materials on human rights.

Opportunities and Obstacles

Since the government announced its National Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, many local governments have been drawing up their own action plans to accelerate the incorporation of human rights education in schools (Table). In many cases, policies for both local governments and boards of education are prescribed in the local government action plan. Few local boards of education have their own action plans. The depth of commitment by each local government varies from place to place depending on the influence of social movements, especially the Buraku liberation movement.

The national course of study to be implemented in 2002 includes a new educational field called synthetic learning (*sogo-gakushu*). Synthetic learning aims to develop children's ability to engage in independent task finding, learning, thinking, decision-making and problem solving through activities the children themselves find interesting. Classroom teachers are fully responsible for designing curriculum and developing materials for synthetic learning. MOE allotted approximately 10% of total school hours to exploring this new area, which will benefit human rights education and decongest the curriculum.

The key obstacle to human rights education in the school system is the emphasis on school entrance examinations. Schools that incorporate human rights education into their curriculums usually face a strong reaction from parents who claim that the subject distracts students from their other academic work.

Another obstacle is teachers' low motivation to promote human rights education, as the curriculum is overloaded, teaching efforts are not evaluated, and payment is based on seniority. Teachers become bureaucratic and hesitate to take on additional tasks such as human rights education, which is not even fully authorized.

Backlash against human rights education is becoming a major obstacle. Several politicians, scholars, and journalists have recently claimed that moral education is more important than human rights education, as too much knowledge of human rights makes children forget their duties to society and their identity as Japanese. Beneath this argument lies a misunderstanding of human rights and individualism, and a culture of collectivism and ethnocentric nationalism.

Key Partners in Human Rights Education

Governmental departments

The Management and Coordination Agency (MCA) supports the development of human

rights education and enlightenment activities of the public sector.

Local branches of the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) conduct counseling on human rights violations. They also develop and conduct human rights consciousness-raising programs for their officials.

National human rights centers

MOE, MCA, and MOJ established the Center for Human Rights in 1997 in Tokyo. The center publishes books and other materials, publicizes information through the internet, and develops and conducts programs for national and local officials.

Academic institutions

Universities and colleges

Osaka University is the only university in Japan offering a graduate course in human rights education. Several universities in Osaka and Kyoto have research institutes for human rights or human rights education. They do surveys and researches, and usually publish the results in their journals. The School of International Human Rights (an independent graduate school) will soon be established in Osaka.

Local-government-supported institutes

Some local governments run institutes for human rights policy and education development. By October 1999, the Osaka, Nara, Tottori, Kochi, and Fukuoka prefectural governments were running such institutes (Table).

Others

The Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute, founded in 1972 in Osaka, promotes research on Buraku and human rights issues. Many books have been published based on its research results. The Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center, founded in 1994 in Osaka, collects and publicizes information on human rights. Many other local in-

stitutes do research on Buraku and human rights issues.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other groups

Dowa Educators' Associations exist in every city, town, and prefecture. Teachers at primary and junior high schools, senior high schools, and public and private schools have their own associations. The National Federation of Dowa Educators' Associations (Zenkokyo) holds a yearly national assembly.

The National Residential Korean/Foreigners Education Study Conference (Zenchokyo) plays a similar role to Zenkokyo in the area of ethnic minority education.

Other groups—the Buraku Liberation League and National Association of Disabled People, for example—play a role similar to that of the above organizations in relation to other minority education issues.

Many NGOs concerned with international affairs, official development assistance for developing countries, and related issues have been active in out-of-school human rights education. They can potentially raise the quality of human rights education through their influence on school education and their collaboration with school teachers.

The National Federation of Dowa Educator's Associations

Discrimination against people from Dowa districts is one of the most serious human rights violations in Japan. The Dowa education movement plays a leading role in establishing human rights education in schools by protecting the rights of children from Dowa districts, as well as by upholding human rights ideals. This chapter discusses the role of Dowa education by reviewing the history and policy changes of the National Federation of Dowa Educator's Associations.

Founded in 1953, the federation leads the Dowa education movement. For the past 20 years since its ninth assembly, it has held an annual assembly, with 20,000-30,000 teachers and other education personnel participating each time. It is one of the largest assemblies of teachers in Japan, with 34 affiliates.

The federation plays an important role in developing and spreading human rights education, including Dowa education. It holds regular, intensive discussions of its own policies and of Dowa education in order to respond to and influence educational policies.

The history of the Dowa education movement may be divided into three periods: (i) 1945-1965, (ii) 1966-1985, and (iii) 1986 to the present.

Development of Postwar Dowa Education (1945-1965)

Pre-federation

Shortly after World War II, many teachers who sought to make education more democratic were deeply impressed by the Buraku liberation movement. They started to conduct human-rights-centered education in schools. In history classes, they discussed the origin of discrimination against the Buraku and the civil rights provision of the Constitution. But they soon noticed that teaching was not enough, as Buraku children had low academic achievement, poor attendance, and high dropout rates. In one prefecture in the mid-1950s, one third of third-grade junior high school Buraku students had very poor attendance, compared to only 5% of other students. Few *Buraku* students proceeded to higher education. After graduating from junior high school, 90% started working, compared to 50% of other students.

The beginnings of Dowa education

The federation held its fourth to sixth national assemblies in 1955. Dowa education

methods developed remarkably that year. Teachers adopted the following measures: (i) fieldwork and interviews with people in Dowa districts besides statistical surveys; (ii) study of history and culture of each Dowa district; and (iii) having students write about their lives.

Fieldwork and interviews helped teachers grasp the reality of Buraku discrimination and the hopes of the people in Dowa districts. It was a challenge to learn Japanese history from the viewpoint of the oppressed. Writing their life history helped students take pride in their parents and determine what action to take to improve their lives.

The Fifth National Assembly resolved that all students should study Dowa issues. Teachers were encouraged to discuss Dowa issues in order to protect not only their students' human rights but their own as well. The assembly also called for an end to teachers' authoritarianism.

The federation's role in formulating national educational policies

To improve students' level of academic achievement, MOE began to strengthen its control over local educational policies. In 1956, it changed the method of choosing the members of the boards of education, from election by citizens to appointment by the chairpersons of the respective boards. Chairpersons could not and still cannot be chosen without approval of the education minister. MOE also started to conduct national academic achievement tests and compelled the principals to conduct merit evaluation of teachers. These policies were contained in the Economic Council Report "Tasks and Measures to Develop Human Power for Economic Development," which recommended the introduction of the meritocracy system.

MOE also started to control the ideological content of education. It strengthened textbook censorship in 1958, and requested authors to discuss the significance of the Emperor and his family.

The federation was critical of these policies. The 11th to 13th assemblies discussed them intensively and declared that “Dowa education is the means to realize the educational dreams of the oppressed students and parents. This movement must protect the human rights of the people.”

Lessons from discrimination

At the 16th assembly, Dowa education methods were further clarified:

- Dowa education should be accompanied by better educational conditions and government policies.
- Education should be undertaken jointly by children, teachers, parents, and the community.
- Teachers should learn and teach the history, culture, and life of the community.
- Teachers should continue to develop their educational philosophy.

In the 1960s, educational problems worsened. In 1963, the suicide rate among teenagers was seven a day. Juvenile delinquency increased, and 28.1% of all crimes were committed by juveniles. Soon it became clear that the federation’s ideas and methods were the answer to these problems.

The Dowa Policy (1965-1985)

Impact of the Report of the National Council on the Dowa Policy

Since the report was submitted in 1965, the number of schools designated for Dowa education has doubled. Local governments support them financially. MOE founded a scholarship for Buraku senior high-school students in 1966 and began to subsidize half of local governments’ Dowa education budgets. The 10-year plan under The Law on Special Measures for Dowa Projects of 1969 increased the subsidy to two thirds. The government started

designating areas for promoting Dowa education, and allowed local governments to increase the number of teachers in schools where Dowa education was implemented. The number of teachers increased by 624 in 1969-1973, by 384 in 1979, and by 1,260 in 1980-1991.

Prohibition of ekkyo

Local governments also started to prohibit *ekkyo* (going beyond the designated school districts) in 1965 as students who did not want to go to schools attended by Buraku children were moving to other school districts. The prohibition against *ekkyo* was a result of protests from the Dowa Educators’ Associations and the Buraku liberation movement.

For equality in employment opportunity

The federation’s campaigns to eradicate discrimination in job recruitment and employment were effective. In 1971, teachers and employers in several Kansai prefectures agreed to use the Standard Application Form made by the Dowa Educator’s Associations. MOE officially advised all local governments to respect the form. The following items were excluded from the form:

- map of the applicant’s neighborhood;
- applicant’s house size, ownership;
- applicant’s religious and political beliefs; and
- occupation and income of parents.

For better education for minority children

The Dowa Educators’ Associations conducted various projects to help Buraku and other poor and minority children to improve their educational achievement. It played a major role in developing in-school and out-of-school supplementary instructions for these children. The gap in the senior high-school entrance rate between Burakumin and other students declined from 36.8% in 1964 to 12.2% in 1972,

and to 6.3% in 1987. The gap in the university entrance rate declined from 23.3% in 1980 to 18.8% in 1985, and to 11.4% in 1986.

For effective antidiscrimination education

Supplementary Dowa readers (human rights education readers, in fact) were disseminated beginning in 1970. Today, half of all prefectures disseminate them. The textbook editors come from boards of education or nonprofit organizations, but the content of the textbooks is developed in cooperation with local Dowa Educators' Associations.

MOE also developed the *Resource Guide for Dowa Education* in 1976. It is revised every year and disseminated to all prefectures and national schools.

The Future of Dowa Education

In 1997, the Law on Specific Governmental Budgetary Measures Concerning Projects Designated for (Dowa) Area Improvement expired. As discrimination against the Burakumin weakened, the federation and its affiliates started to broaden their agenda from Dowa education to human rights education. But since discrimination against the Burakumin has not been completely eliminated, the challenges of Dowa education will continue.

The Experience of Resident Koreans

The government ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1979). It is also party to 10 international human rights instruments such as the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (1994) and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1995). MOE, however, has yet to take legal measures reflecting the substance of Article 27 of ICCPR and Article 30 of the International

Convention on the Rights of the Child, which support education for ethnic minorities.

Ethnic minorities, especially resident Koreans, have long been fighting for their right to their own culture and identity, and for opportunities for their children to learn about them. The arrival of more and more foreigners is causing social and cultural conflicts in schools and communities, and foreign children are facing difficulties in schools. So far, Japanese society and schools do not respect cultural differences or social diversity.

Foreigners in Japan

By the end of 1998, the number of registered foreigners in Japan was 1.51 million, the highest ever, accounting for 1.2% of the total population. For years after World War II, foreigners in Japan almost always meant Koreans, who arrived during the Japanese colonial occupation of their country. With the arrival of other nationalities, they made up 40% of the total foreign population by the end of 1998, but were still the most numerous. Of 640,000 Koreans, 520,000 are from the former colony, including their siblings and a considerable number of third- and fourth-generation Koreans.¹

Other foreign residents include the Chinese war orphans,² Indo-Chinese refugees, and women from other Asian countries married to Japanese. Especially during the economic boom in the 1980s, migrant workers were employed to meet the serious domestic labor shortage. However, Japan still maintains a closed-door policy toward foreign labor, granting work permits only for technical and professional jobs.³ Overstaying migrant workers number about 300,000 and work under wretched conditions.

Policy on Education of Foreigners

No department in MOE is formally responsible for the education of foreign residents. A

division of the Local Education Support Bureau oversees students returning from foreign countries. It is also responsible for Japanese language education of foreign children, but is not concerned with their cultural and identity problems.

The government has no educational programs to preserve the ethnic identity of minority children or to understand cultural diversity. However, extracurricular ethnic activities were allowed by the Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau after the Japan-Korean Foreign Ministerial Memorandum of 1991.

The Movement for Ethnic Education

Education to preserve the ethnic identity of minority children is largely a voluntary effort of some teachers and of minorities themselves in response to the movement calling for such education for resident Korean children. The movement helped develop the substance and practice of human rights education and persuaded some Boards of Education to draw up educational guidelines for resident Korean children (Table.) The earliest guidelines by the Osaka City Board of Education came out in 1970. Later, the guidelines were expanded to cover other foreign children. Like human rights education, education for foreign children is basically provided through local efforts.

Government Response to the Movement for Ethnic Education

After World War II, Koreans confronted the fact that Japan's assimilation policy had robbed them of their language and culture. They were now faced with the problem of educating their children. More than 500 voluntary schools were opened to teach Korean children. However, the government, following a General Headquarters directive, closed down the schools and suppressed Korean protesters.⁴ As a result, most Korean children had to transfer to Japanese schools, which did not offer ethnic education.

In 1965, Japan and Korea normalized ties and signed the Agreement on the Legal Status and Treatment of Korean Nationals. MOE issued an official notice to all schools to treat resident Korean children like Japanese children, in effect merely affirming the assimilation policy.

Voluntary Efforts of Concerned Teachers

Since the 1970s, the antidiscrimination activities of teachers encouraged resident Korean children to assert their identity. They used their Korean names in public instead of their Japanese-style names. They protested against discrimination in entrance examinations for higher education and in employment, and became involved in many activities to combat prejudice against Korea and Koreans. This movement was largely stimulated by Dowa education.

Many municipalities in Osaka prefecture, which has a large Dowa population and the largest population of resident Koreans, drew up guidelines on education for resident Korean children, starting in Osaka city in 1970.

Teachers established associations for the promotion of resident Korean education. In 1983, the National Resident Korean Education Study Conference⁵ (Zenchokyo) was established, with local affiliates.

Increasing Diversity in Classrooms

Since the 1980s, classrooms have become more multicultural owing to a sharp increase in the number of foreigners. In 1991, the number of non-Japanese-speaking children was approximately 5,000. In 1997, it increased to 22,000.

The government officially declared Japan a multi-ethnic society. It was what resident Koreans had waited for for so long.

Local municipalities supported by MOE now provide Japanese language education programs for children who speak other languages.

However, classes on ethnic culture and identity are not yet on the government agenda. But many teachers are taking steps to promote an understanding of cultural diversity.

Education for International Understanding

Education for international understanding and development education, which were introduced from other countries, have played an important role in disseminating the idea of human rights in Japan. Reflecting on Japan's invasion of other Asian countries and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese people embraced UNESCO's ideal of building a peaceful world. They accepted UNESCO's Education for International Understanding in 1952. Many schools participated in the UNESCO Associated School Project, but few became involved in human rights education.

With the rapid economic growth of the 1960s, education for international understanding gradually shifted from the UNESCO's human-rights-centered approach to one designed "to train Japanese to adapt to international society," especially the business world. Many schools offered English language courses and cultural exchange programs with other countries.

In the 1980s, new educational movements such as development education, global education, education for global citizenship, among others, appeared. They made up for the Japanese-centered perspective of education for international understanding by introducing such concepts as globalization, interdependence, and human rights.

Education for International Understanding

UNESCO's Associated Schools Project

Of UNESCO's education projects, the Associated Schools Project is the best known. Many schools in various countries participated

in the project, which promoted three major topics on human rights education: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, women's rights, and understanding of other countries. The topics were later changed to human rights, understanding of other countries, and the United Nations.

Education for international understanding in Japan started in 1953. Six junior and senior high schools initially participated in the UNESCO project; more subsequently joined in. For the first decade, human rights were the most popular subject. An outstanding school was Tajima Junior High School in Kawasaki city. Focusing on discrimination against resident Koreans, it tried to foster tolerance among students. As the number of schools participating in the project increased, MOE issued a guideline in 1958 to require the teaching of education for international understanding in primary schools, and another guideline in 1960 to require its teaching in secondary schools.

Policy change in education for international understanding

During the period of rapid economic growth in the 1960s, however, MOE shifted to a policy that emphasized "[training the] Japanese to cope with international economic affairs." Schools were required to train students to be proficient in the English language and to give them the confidence to work in international society.

In 1966, the Central Committee of Education officially announced its reform policy for secondary education, which emphasized, among other things, "training Japanese nationals for international society." In 1974, the committee reaffirmed its desire to train "Japanese to be trusted and well respected in international society." Most curriculums began to stress foreign language education (mainly English) and cultural exchange activities.

Through the 1970s and 1980s, education for international understanding became a

means for fostering economic growth, in stark contrast with UNESCO's Recommendation on International Education in 1974, which focused on social problems and called for unity in solving them.

Educational problems of children returned from abroad

Japanese economic expansion had another consequence. In the late 1960s, many public schools took in an increasing number of children who returned from abroad, where their parents were working. There were few full-time Japanese schools abroad at that time, and most of these children went to local or international schools.

Upon their return to Japan, they faced difficulties due to the different culture and way of thinking in Japanese schools. In 1965, Oizumi Junior High School, attached to Tokyo Gakugei University, opened the first special class for these children. In 1967, MOE conducted surveys of children who returned from abroad.

The number of "newcomers" increased sharply in the 1980s. At first, most of the programs aimed to acclimatize and assimilate the children. The children's foreign cultural background was not something to be respected or maintained. Although education for international understanding aimed to develop persons "who can cope abroad," for the longest time it did not accept "internationalization from within" or values that promote respect for cultural diversity.

Reforms in education for international understanding

The Ad Hoc Council on Education, set up in 1984, heralded education reform. Its final report in 1987 raised several issues: (i) the principle of valuing an individual's personality; (ii) the transition toward lifelong education; and

(iii) response to social change (in particular, contributions to international society and responses to the "information society").

The Curriculum Council Report similarly called for the "development of persons for the 21st century." It placed importance on international understanding and respect for Japanese culture and tradition, which was reflected in the revised Course of Study (national standard curriculum) in 1989.

Many municipalities in Japan then adopted the objectives of education for international understanding and exchange. Since then, MOE has designated "research/study associate schools or research organizations" that stress experience-based learning and communication skills based on new learning theories. Synthetic learning, developed in 1996 by the Central Council for Education, and which will be implemented in schools in 2002, includes "international understanding" among its most important topics.

Introduction of new educational areas

The 1980s saw the introduction of new educational areas such as development, global citizenship, environment, and gender education, which are directed toward solving world problems. There are various interpretations of "global education," "global citizenship education," and "education for international understanding." "Global education" is the umbrella concept, but MOE uses the terms "international understanding" or "education for international understanding."

Development Education

What is development education?

Development education is a movement initiated mainly by young Americans and Europeans who lived and worked in Third World countries. It aims to encourage people to en-

gage in development-assistance activities and perceives developing nations to be dominated by developed countries.

After independence, former colonies continued to be underdeveloped due to long years of oppression and exploitation. UN organizations such as UNICEF and FAO, as well as European and American governments, churches, and NGOs, began to assist in the development of these countries. People involved in these activities informed their home countries of the situation in the Third World. Early development education tended to be emotional.

Development education in Japan

Development education was introduced in Japan in 1979. As their objective was to direct public attention to the disparity between North and South, and to encourage Japan and its citizens to become involved in eliminating this disparity, advocates of development education criticized education for international understanding as ethnocentric. Development education emphasized the importance of human rights in the global context, in the spirit of the UNESCO Recommendation of 1974.

Perceptions about development education vary, depending on who is promoting it. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and its affiliate organs consider it as mainly a public-relations activity for governmental cooperation and a source of information on local conditions in developing countries. NGOs see it as a reform movement that will eliminate poverty and starvation in these countries. MFA's final report on the Conference on ODA Reform for the 21st Century calls for vigorous promotion of development education at all levels. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has just completed an Action Plan for the Promotion of Development Education based on the MFA report.

Japanese schools and development education

Although development education is promoted by MFA, it has no official place in school education. Teachers who once promoted education for international understanding now teach development education, but on a voluntary basis.

Some organizations support these teachers through various programs. Veterans of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) advocate development education. JICA conducts overseas training for teachers of junior and senior high schools. It also sends JOVC veterans to schools as lecturers as part of the "salmon program," a reference to salmon's instinct to return to the river of their birth. JICA Centers in Tokyo, Osaka, Tokai/Hokuriku, Kanto, Chugoku, Fukushima, and Komagane respond to and coordinate schools' requests for lecturers.

The Association for Promotion of International Cooperation (APIC), another MFA affiliate, develops teaching materials and has set up the International Cooperation Plaza to provide information on development education. Recently, more junior high schools have included APIC and UNICEF offices on their itinerary during trips to Tokyo.

A few local International Exchange Associations also send lecturers to schools,⁶ develop teaching materials,⁷ and conduct teacher training.⁸ Internationalization policies of local governments used to focus on developing friendly relations with their counterparts in other countries. Recently, however, many have become involved in or given support to international cooperation activities. International Exchange Associations, which are subsidized by local governments, thus also function as resource centers for local development education or education for international understanding.

The National Committee of UNICEF maintains a close relationship with schools through school funds, and provides information and materials for development education.

The role of NGOs

Many NGOs were established after the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 to provide relief to Indo-Chinese refugees. They reported on local conditions and played an important role in calling for development assistance.

Many organizations made the best of their limited resources to provide seminars and lecturers and to develop their own teaching materials. For example, the Japan Sotoshu Relief Committee set up a “global citizenship division,” with a full-time expert on development education, to provide lecturers and to develop teaching materials on participatory activities and cooperation with other organizations.

In 1982, organizations and individuals concerned with development cooperation established the Development Education Association, which holds study meetings and provides information to teachers.

Many other NGOs were recently set up to promote learning activities in various fields, including development, the environment, gender issues, and human rights. Along with the YMCA and YWCA, the Education for International Understanding Center and the Center for Global Education focus on implement-

ing the new Course of Study and on developing a comprehensive curriculum. This trend in development work is expected to strengthen relations and cooperation between NGOs and schools.

Notes

1. The current Japanese Nationality Act is based on blood relationship with a Japanese parent(s). Japanese nationality is not, therefore, automatically conferred on a child by virtue of his or her birth in Japan alone.

2. Children born of Japanese parents who were left behind in China during the World War II. These children subsequently assumed Chinese nationality.

3. After the amendment of Immigration Control Act in 1990, the number of Japanese-Brazilians and Japanese-Peruvians increased sharply.

4. Official notification by the Director of School Education Bureau, 24 January 1948.

5. Renamed National Residential Korean/Foreigners Education Study Conference in 1999.

6. For example, Fukuoka International Association has a program that sends out former JOCV members as lecturers.

7. For example, the Tami-chan series by the Kanagawa International Association.

8. For example, the Kansai International Association.