

Structuring Students' Knowledge Base of the World: The Effects of Internationalization on the Japanese School Curriculum

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In Japan, as in many other parts of Asia, internationalization is an issue that has been the focus of great interest and debate throughout the nineties. This is as true in education as in other spheres of social life. It is natural that school curricula respond to and shape the progress of movements such as internationalization. In this interaction between educational curricula and the social, political and economic contexts in which they exist, the knowledge base being taught and learned in schools gradually changes.

In 1989, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (Monbusho) published a set of reforms, which began to take effect in elementary schools from April 1992, junior high schools from April 1993 and senior high schools between April 1994 and 1996. One of the points stressed in these reforms was the need to develop and promote internationalization throughout the education system, in all areas of the curriculum.

This paper will examine how internationalization is interpreted and promoted by Monbusho through the school curriculum. Throughout the paper, the focus is on Japan, but examples from other education systems are also used to provide a comparative element. In the first part of the paper, data from Monbusho documents and school textbooks (which have to be approved for use by Monbusho) will be used to explore the knowledge base of the world which is being presented to Japanese students

at elementary and junior high school. This knowledge base, insofar as it provides the foundations for the construction of students' ways of seeing and thinking about the world, is an important key to the understanding of internationalization in Japanese education. In the second part of the paper, four issues relating to internationalization in the school curriculum — the timing of world knowledge, foreign language education, academic rationalism and citizenship education — will be highlighted and examined.

Introduction

As we approach the 21st century, the rapidly changing and developing society in which we live demands that its young people embrace a vast amount of knowledge and construct a new knowledge base upon which to build lives and careers. This is equally true whether the young person happens to be brought up in Hong Kong, Japan, Vietnam, Germany, Russia or any other location in the world. A phenomenon that is affecting young people and education systems all over the world is internationalization. Although internationalization is a trans-national phenomenon, it can be (and is) interpreted in different ways by different nations and by different groups and individuals within a nation. For example, in response to this phenomenon in the USA, the report of the Study Commission on Global Education recommended greater emphasis in the curriculum on world history, an understanding of cultures other than American culture, and an analytical view of the world as an interrelated series of systems (Kerr, 1990, p. 16). This type of response to internationalization could be labeled "global internationalization." "Global internationalization" may or may not include the promotion of identity as a member of the world, or as a global citizen. In many countries in Europe, there is a similar emphasis on international knowledge and intercultural understanding, but the emphasis is on Europe, rather than the globe, as a sphere of action. As part of this particular interpretation of internationalization, education systems are perceived to have a responsibility in developing a European identity (Adelman & Macaro, 1995). This could be labeled "regional internationalization." In other cases, particularly in Asia, internationalization is equated with Westernization, and may be seen as a threat to national and cultural identity (Robertson & Khondker, 1998, p. 31). The response is to adopt measures to strengthen the development of national and cultural identities through education. In other cases, such as in North Korea (Garland Reed 1997, p. 170) and China (Bray & Lee, 1997, p. 10),

internationalization may be interpreted as the promotion and dissemination of national ideas to other countries. In both cases, internationalization is used to strengthen national identity, and could be labeled "national internationalization." Bearing in mind these various interpretations of internationalization, I would like to focus in this paper on one example and discuss how the Japanese Ministry of Education (hereafter referred to by its Japanese name, Monbusho) interprets internationalization and how these interpretations are transferred into the Japanese school curriculum, creating a knowledge base of the world for young people in Japan.

In Japan, Monbusho, which has tight control over the curriculum and authorizes textbooks, has adopted a policy of internationalization, which is also evident in other spheres of social activity. In the last set of education reforms, published in 1989 and introduced in schools between 1992 and 1996, one of the four major areas of reform was entitled, "the respect of culture and traditions and the promotion of international understanding." The aim is this:

As well as attaching importance to the nurturing of an attitude of respect for our country's culture and traditions, to deepen understanding of the world's cultures and history, and to cultivate the qualities of a Japanese person living in an international society.

As internationalization progresses, in order to bring up the next generation of Japanese people, it is necessary from now on for school education to attach importance to the nurturing of an attitude of respect and understanding for the way of life and culture of people from various foreign countries, and also an attitude of considering our country's culture and traditions important. (Monbusho, 1989b, p. 7; 1989c, p. 6)

This policy looks set to continue into the next decade, with preliminary proposals for the next education reforms stating that one of the four main principles underlying the reforms will be "to develop self-awareness as a Japanese person living in international society with rich humanity and sociality" (Kyouiku katei shingikai, 1998, p. 5).

In the rest of this paper, I would like to examine in detail exactly how Monbusho has structured the knowledge base of education in Japanese schools with respect to knowledge about the world. I will divide this examination into two parts. In the first part, I will analyze Monbusho curriculum guidelines and a range of textbooks to provide a description of content related to the international sphere, or the knowledge base of the world being offered to students in elementary school and in junior high

school. The vast majority of Japanese children also attend senior high school, but I have chosen to concentrate on the nine years of compulsory education. The second part will comprise discussion of various themes and issues arising from the analysis of guidelines and textbooks reported in the first part. Four themes concerning Monbusho's structuring of students' knowledge of the world are highlighted and critically considered. The themes I have selected from a multitude of themes available for discussion are the timing of provision of knowledge about the world, foreign language education, the emphasis on theoretical knowledge and the issue of citizenship. Perhaps the selection of these particular themes will lead to an unfairly negative portrayal of Monbusho policy on internationalization. However, the highlighted issues are undeniably central to the development of students' knowledge of the world and it is for that reason that they have been selected, not as grist for the mill to criticize Monbusho education policy.

Knowledge of the World in Elementary School

The general policy of internationalization quoted above begins at elementary school. In this section, I will examine the aims and content of the Monbusho guidelines for elementary school, as well as the content of relevant textbooks, in order to determine how the policy of internationalization is being realized in the elementary school curriculum. From the beginning of elementary school, the curriculum is divided into clearly defined subjects, and cross-curricular issues such as internationalization have to be adapted to fit into existing subject boundaries. The first step to defining the knowledge base of the world being presented to children is, therefore, to analyze Monbusho's aims for each individual subject.

The first conclusion from such an analysis is that most subjects contain no reference at all to internationalization in their aims. Perhaps this is not surprising in subjects such as math, science and P.E., subjects which usually have no explicit international perspective but which, paradoxically, are probably the most "trans-national" subjects in terms of aims and content. There may be differences in teaching methods, but elementary school children in Japan, the UK, France and Singapore all study addition, subtraction and times tables, and would all understand the meaning of $3 \times 4 = ?$. However, there is also a virtual absence of acknowledgement to the international sphere in the aims of other subjects in the Japanese curriculum: music, art, home economics, special activities and life studies (a

combination of social studies and science studied in the 1st and 2nd years). Language is not considered to be an arena for internationalization either. The aims for Japanese contain no reference to internationalization, although recommendations for materials do specify that materials which increase understanding of world culture and cultivate a spirit of international co-operation should be chosen (Monbusho, 1989a, p. 23), and textbooks include translations of works by foreign authors and stories about well-known people of other countries. In contrast to many other countries in Asia, foreign languages are not taught at elementary school. At present, the teaching of a foreign language (English) in elementary school is being piloted, and is due to be introduced as an option from the year 2002.

The two subjects that do include an international perspective in their aims and content are social studies and moral education. The aim of social studies is the following:

Aiming for understanding of how to live in society, to develop understanding and love of our national territory and history, and to cultivate the basic citizenship qualities necessary to be someone who builds a democratic, peaceful nation and society while living in international society. (Monbusho, 1989a, p. 28)

Although pupils begin to learn social studies in their 3rd year, there is no international perspective in either the Monbusho content guidelines or the textbooks for that year. It is not until the 4th year, when students are 9 or 10 years old, that they first encounter the world in their social studies curriculum. It is interesting to juxtapose this with the National Curriculum of England and Wales, where the program of study for geography at Key Stage 1 (age 5–7) stipulates that children should “become aware that the world extends beyond their own locality, both within and outside the United Kingdom, and that the places they study exist within this broader geographical context”. (Department for Education [DfE], 1995, p. 86). Even in the 4th year of the Japanese elementary school curriculum, knowledge about the world is limited. The Monbusho content guidelines state briefly that 4th year students should realize that there are connections between life in their prefecture and foreign countries, and that they should also have an attitude of respect for national flags. The textbook follows these guidelines, introducing the world to the students through a mixture of positive and negative images. In one series of textbooks (Mitsumura Tosho, 1996a–e), there are five references to the international sphere in the

4th year textbook. Two of these brief references describe territorial issues (the disputed islands north of Hokkaido and the American presence in Okinawa), asserting the Japanese position. Two other references describe the annual "Asia festival" held in Fukuoka city and international exchange between Okinawa and China. The final reference is a map of East Asia, which shows the limits of Japan's territorial waters, next to a picture of the flags of Japan, Russia, China, North Korea and South Korea. The text explains that Japan is in East Asia, and lists other countries in East Asia. The caption to the picture of flags states that people are proud of their national flag and consider it to be important (Mitsumura Toshio, 1996a, p. 84).

The Monbusho content guidelines for the 5th year curriculum state that students should acquire an understanding of foreign trade (Monbusho, 1989a, p. 32) and, accordingly, this is the main theme of the textbook. Students study imports and exports using a variety of case studies. For example, the car industry is the focus of one chapter. The source of various raw materials needed to make cars is discussed, and the destination of the manufactured cars is shown. Related issues are also tackled in an international context. For example, there is a simple explanation of international trade friction, stating that Japan was criticized when its export of cars rose sharply. In response, the textbook explains, Japanese car factories have been established in other countries, and most of the workers in these factories are people of that country.

Overall, the world that is being structured by Monbusho and the textbook publishers in this year is an interdependent world, where interaction and co-operation with other countries are essential for Japan's survival and prosperity. A recurring theme is that Japan cannot manage to function in isolation, and that international co-operation is necessary both for national well-being and for global survival. The last point is illustrated by a section on the causes and effects of acid rain. Repeating a sentence used earlier in reference to the international trade problem (Mitsumura Toshio, 1996c, p. 22), the textbook emphasizes that such problems cannot be solved by a single country, but require worldwide co-operation. At the same time, this world is still presented purely in terms of its relation to Japan. The only specific information given about other countries is what they export to and import from Japan. The culture, customs and people of those countries are completely ignored.

In the 6th year, the international sphere becomes an important part of the social studies curriculum. Monbusho guidelines state that students

should understand something of the countries which have strong relationships with Japan, and should understand the role of Japan in international society, as well as have self-awareness as a Japanese person in the world (Monbusho, 1989a, p. 33). This is also the year in which students cover 30,000 years of Japanese history in approximately six months, and so a historical dimension to world knowledge is introduced for the first time. For example, they learn about the introduction of culture, politics and Buddhism from China and Korea from the 6th century (Mitsumura Toshio, 1996d, p. 21), about encounters with the West and Christianity in the 16th century (p. 56), about Japan's opening to the world in the mid-19th century (p. 76), about the war in Asia (p. 94) and about post-war international involvement (pp. 106-). For the first time, students study something about life and people in other countries. The three countries selected for study are chosen because of their close ties with Japan; the USA because of its importance for trade, Saudi Arabia because it provides most of Japan's oil and China because of its historical links. After studying these three countries, the textbook describes the work of Japanese volunteers abroad. The second part of this section is concerned with world peace and Japan's role in achieving it. Students are introduced to the work of the United Nations and international peacekeeping operations, and Japan's stance on nuclear weapons is explained in the context of Hiroshima. Next, the textbook looks at foreigners living in Japan, and then introduces an idea that does not actually appear in the Monbusho guidelines, namely, the idea of world citizenship. While Monbusho encourages the development of "Japanese people in the world," this section repeatedly uses phrases such as "the same world person" and "fellow of the same world." While the former stresses national citizenship, the latter stresses world citizenship, and the two involve very different ways of thinking about and seeing the world and the self in the world.

A similar balance of national and international themes pervades the aims for moral education:

The aim of moral education, based on the basic spirit of education laid down in the Fundamental Law of Education and the School Education Law, is to cultivate the morality which serves as the foundation for a spirit of respect for humans and awe of life realized concretely in the life of the family, school and society, to strive for the creation of a culture of individual richness and the development of a democratic society, and to bring up Japanese people who can independently and willingly contribute to a peaceful international society. (Monbusho, 1989a, p. 105)

There is no reference to the international sphere in the first four years of elementary school. When internationalization finally appears in the Monbusho content guidelines in the 5th year, it is in the following form:

To consider foreign people's culture to be important and, with self-awareness as a Japanese person, to strive for friendship with people of the world. (Monbusho, 1989a, p. 108)

Not only is internationalization limited to the last two years of elementary school, but it is also allocated only one or two sections in the textbook per year, making a total coverage time of 90–180 minutes in the six years of elementary school. Of course, depending on the teacher, more time, both in and out of moral education lessons, may be spent on this area, but this is not guaranteed.

So what kind of world is presented to elementary school students in this limited time? In one series of textbooks (Tokyo Shoseki, 1998a, 1998b), there are a total of four passages devoted to this theme in the 5th and 6th year textbooks. In the 5th year, the two passages deal respectively with the experiences of a Ugandan man living in Japan and the experiences of a Japanese volunteer nurse in Paraguay. The questions at the end of the passages ask students to discuss what they can do to be friends with people all over the world and to talk about anyone they know who is working for the world's people (Tokyo Shoseki, 1998a). In the 6th year, the first passage describes the history and work of UNICEF, reminds students that their parents' generation were helped by UNICEF and that they should repay the debt, and asks students to discuss what they can do to help children who are suffering in the world. The second passage recounts the story of a famous photo of a barefooted girl carrying a white flag in Okinawa in the war. The story, written by the girl in the photo, describes the author's meeting 43 years later with the American photographer who took the picture. The question for discussion at the end of the passage states that it is often said that the world is one, and asks students to discuss whether they have ever felt this, and under what circumstances (Tokyo Shoseki, 1998b).

To summarize, the knowledge of the world gained by students in elementary school in Japan is mainly presented through social studies and moral education. In both subjects, little world knowledge is introduced before the 5th year. In the 5th year, students probably gain more knowledge about the ways of living and the culture of other countries from moral education than from social studies, as the latter is so Japan-centered.

In both subjects, predictably, the knowledge presented is heavily and explicitly value-laden, and is intended to shape students' attitudes to and ways of thinking about other countries and about Japan. This situation is not unique to Japan, of course. The social studies curriculum in most countries is an effective and well-used means of strengthening national identity and the ideas of the majority national group.

Knowledge of the World in Junior High School

Monbusho's general policy of internationalization takes the same form in junior high school as in elementary school. As in elementary school, teaching is clearly bounded into subject areas, and the areas most concerned with internationalization are social studies and moral education, whose general aims are virtually identical to those of elementary school (Monbusho, 1989d, pp. 17, 117). In addition, foreign language education, which is introduced at junior high school, features internationalization in its general aim, but none of the other subjects taught in these three years — Japanese, math, science, music, art, P.E. and Health, Home Economics and Industrial Arts or Special Activities — do (Monbusho, 1989d, pp. 7, 37, 46, 63, 70, 76, 85, 121).

Turning from general aims to Monbusho content guidelines and textbooks, however, some of the subjects that do not include an international perspective in their general aims do include a certain amount of international content. For example, in Japanese, Monbusho recommends materials which deepen international understanding from a wide perspective and which cultivate a spirit of international co-operation. Reflecting this recommendation, textbooks often include extracts translated from works of foreign authors as well as pieces written by Japanese authors but with internationally related content (Mitsumura Tosho, 1996f, 1996g, 1996h). In art, too, the Monbusho content guidelines state that students should have interest in and respect for world art, and that they should realize the role of art in international understanding and friendship (Monbusho, 1989d, p. 73). Likewise, in music, Monbusho specifies that materials for performance and appreciation should include pieces from around the world. An interesting note in these guidelines is the recommendation that music selected in the 1st year should be Asian music, while the 2nd and 3rd year pieces should be selected from the wider world (Monbusho, 1989d, p. 69). This note is significant as one of the rare references to Japan's Asian context.

As at elementary school, however, most world knowledge is gained through social studies. The social studies curriculum at junior high school is divided into three areas; geography, history and citizenship or civic education. World knowledge forms an important part of each of these three areas. Monbusho aims for both geography and history state that students should acquire an understanding of Japanese geography/ history within its world context, and that they should also study the relationship between Japan and other countries (Monbusho, 1989d, pp. 17, 23). In citizenship education, the emphasis is on mutual respect and co-operation between countries and on world peace (Monbusho, 1989d, p. 30).

In geography, a substantial amount of the curriculum is devoted to acquiring knowledge of the world. Monbusho content guidelines specify three themes of study, two of which — “the world and its regions” and “Japan in an international society” — are directly related to the international arena (Monbusho, 1989d, p. 18). In the first of these themes, students are supposed to study the countries of the world and people’s ways of life and environments in various countries. In one textbook, almost half the pages are devoted to this theme (Tokyo Shoseki, 1996a, p. 8–128). Students learn the names, locations and features of many countries, and then focus on the ways of life (food, housing and clothing) of various countries. They then go on to study various regions of the world: namely, the EU, Russia and neighboring countries, the USA, West Africa, South East Asia and China. In contrast to elementary school, these countries are not presented purely in terms of their relation to Japan, but also in their own right and in some depth. Topics that are covered within the study of these regions include physical geography, industry, political issues and the relationship of the region to the world. After completing this section and the next section on Japanese geography, students move on to Monbusho’s final theme of “Japan in an international society.” In this part of the textbook (Tokyo Shoseki, 1996a, pp. 260–285), students first study trade links between Japan and the world. They then go on to case studies of relations between Japan and Korea, Japan and Brazil and Japan and Australia. Finally, they study Japan’s economic aid to developing countries and global environmental problems.

In history, too, students are exposed to a significant amount of world knowledge. Monbusho content guidelines (Monbusho, 1989d, p. 24) emphasize Japanese history and this is reflected in the textbook, with only 18% of pages devoted to world history (Tokyo Shoseki, 1996b). However, the sections on Japanese history also cover Japan’s historical links with

other countries, as recommended by Monbusho (Monbusho, 1989d, p. 24) and the final chapter of the textbook is dedicated to Japan and the world in the post-war era, looking at issues such as the Cold War, the Korean War, the work of the United Nations, the Vietnam War, perestroika and so on.

In the geography and history curriculum, what is being presented is largely factual, objective knowledge of the world (as far as any knowledge can be factual and objective). The civic or citizenship section (the Japanese term *koumin* can be translated as both) is more explicitly value-led, although it too includes a great deal of factual knowledge to be memorized by students for high school entrance exams. Monbusho content guidelines cite international understanding and co-operation, and the promotion of world peace, as primary aims and content of the course (Monbusho, 1989d, pp. 31–32). In the final chapter of one textbook, (Tokyo Shoseki, 1996c), entitled, "Global Society and Us", students study the world economy, the environment and natural resources, and mutual co-operation and peace. Echoing the idea of world citizenship which was introduced at elementary school but which does not feature in Monbusho guidelines, the introduction to this chapter includes the following passage:

in order to solve problems in the future, we will have to have self-awareness as a member of this world, to think of ourselves as "world citizens," and to aim for the improvement of life for all people. Today, we have entered the era where the world's politics and economics take place from the perspective of world citizenship. It is necessary for Japan, too, to become a country which is more open to overseas, and which contributes actively to the peace and prosperity of the world. For these purposes, we have to increase our efforts still further to promote "internationalization." (Tokyo Shoseki, 1996c, p. 191)

Civic education is not the only arena of value-laden world knowledge in the Japanese junior high school. Moral education also has a prominent role in providing knowledge about other countries, and this knowledge is explicitly rich in certain values and attitudes. The Monbusho content guidelines are a continuation of the policy laid down for the 5th and 6th year of elementary school, and they read as follows:

To have self-awareness as a Japanese person in the world, and to strive to contribute to world peace and the well-being of mankind with an international outlook. (Monbusho, 1989d, p. 118)

Compared to elementary school, there is generally more international content, although this varies considerably according to the textbook used

and according to the teacher. Some textbooks (e.g. Gakken, 1993, Kyouiku Shuppan, 1993a, 1993b) allot one section a year to the international understanding section, and place the section at the very end of the book, where it is likely to vanish amid exams and preparation for graduation ceremony and other end-of-year events. In other textbooks, the international understanding section is allotted 3 or 4 sections throughout the year (e.g. Tokyo Shoseki, 1998c, 1998d, 1998e). As in elementary school, the content deals with themes such as Japanese volunteers working in developing countries, the experiences of foreigners living in Japan, internationally famous people such as Mother Teresa, wartime experiences and their subsequent effects, and the nature of internationalization. To give just one example, a passage in a 3rd year textbook (Kyouiku Shuppan, 1993b, pp. 39, 87), written by an American, is entitled, "How to Become an International Japanese Person". The author stresses the importance of national and cultural identity (deep knowledge of and respect for Japanese culture, literature, history, arts, manners, etc.) in being international. This is a point further stressed in the teacher's manual, where it is written that students do not yet have enough awareness of the particular characteristics or ways of being Japanese. There is an assumption that this deep knowledge of Japanese culture and the particular characteristics of Japanese people will somehow lead to development as an international person. The reasoning behind this assumption is not clearly explained, but the passage conforms exactly to the Monbusho guidelines of developing "self-awareness as a Japanese person in the world," with the emphasis on "as a Japanese person." Not all the passages that deal with international understanding are so Japan-centered, but I have described this one in some detail as it reflects the Monbusho stance on internationalization so faithfully.

A new subject with an international perspective is foreign language. At the present time, foreign language education in Japan is synonymous with the learning of English, and the general aim reads as follows:

To understand the foreign language, to nurture the basic ability to express oneself in the foreign language, to develop the attitude of enthusiastically trying to communicate in the foreign language, to deepen interest in language and culture and to cultivate the foundations of international understanding. (Monbusho, 1989d, p. 96)

Although this general aim includes the phrase "to cultivate the foundations of international understanding" (Monbusho, 1989e, p. 6), the English teacher who turns to the Monbusho content guidelines to find out how to

do this will be faced with a void. The content guidelines are divided into sections on listening, speaking, reading and writing, and mention nothing about foreign countries, people, culture or international understanding. They are followed by sections detailing the vocabulary, grammatical structures and so on to be taught. Here, too, the international perspective is completely eliminated. A contrasting example is provided by the program of study for foreign languages in the National Curriculum of England and Wales, which devotes an entire section to "cultural awareness." The kind of aims which come under this section — working with authentic materials, contact with native speakers, consideration of one's own and other cultures, identification with experiences and perspectives of people from other cultures and study of cultural attitudes — are conspicuously absent from the Monbusho guidelines. In its notes on how to interpret the guidelines (Monbusho, 1989e, pp. 84–98) Monbusho does include recommendations to use materials which deepen international understanding and raise students' self-awareness as Japanese people in the world. The vagueness of these recommendations is striking when compared to the minute detail of guidance on grammatical structures and vocabulary, and the task of incorporating an element of international understanding into the curriculum is entrusted largely to the textbook publishers. Textbooks generally do include some amount of cultural information. For example, one first year textbook is based on conversations between a group of characters which includes Japanese, Brazilian, Canadian and American people. Basic, and very superficial, information is included about world time zones, the Canadian flag, the official languages of Brazil and Canada and so on (Tokyo Shoseki, 1997a). The second year textbook contains passages on Singapore, the Channel Tunnel, a program fostering children in Africa and a chapter entitled, "Our Neighbors" — China and Korea. The teacher's notes for this chapter remark that young Japanese people tend not to think of themselves as "a member of Asia," but rather as "a member of the developed world." However, links with the West have a history of 150 years, whereas links with China have a history of 2,000 years (Tokyo Shoseki, 1997b). The third year textbook focuses more on using English to explain Japanese culture and history to foreigners. However, it also includes a discussion of foreign language education in Japan and a passage about the work of a Japanese volunteer in Bangladesh (Tokyo Shoseki, 1997c). Overall, then, this particular series of English textbooks contains a substantial amount of information about the world, and not only the English-speaking world. World knowledge from the textbook is

supplemented by teachers from English-speaking countries who now visit almost all junior high schools in Japan, under a program run by the Japanese government. Nevertheless, the central objective of foreign language education in Japan, as is clear from the Monbusho content guidelines, is not international understanding or world knowledge, but the mastery of linguistic forms and vocabulary necessary to pass the high school entrance exams.

Continuing the pattern set at elementary school, then, the structuring of world knowledge at junior high school is the responsibility mainly of the social studies and moral education curriculum. Foreign language education also plays a role, but the amount and type of world knowledge transmitted through foreign language classes, unlike social studies and moral education, is entirely at the discretion of the textbook publishers and teachers. In junior high school, there is less emphasis on making all world knowledge relate to Japan, but in terms of values, Monbusho advocates the filtering of world knowledge and attitudes through the perspective of "a Japanese person in international society."

Having analyzed the world knowledge that is presented to students through the Monbusho guidelines and a range of textbooks, I would like to turn now to some of the issues which arise from such an analysis. I have already touched upon some of these issues, but I would like to draw together and summarize the various points that are significant in the structuring of the knowledge base of the world through the Japanese school curriculum.

Curriculum Timing

The first point I would like to raise concerns the issue of the timing of the introduction of world knowledge to Japanese children in schools. Students learn nothing at all at school about the world until they are 10 years old, and very little until they are 11 or 12 years old. The argument would be that the social studies curriculum and its precursor, the life studies curriculum, are structured so that children gradually move from studying their immediate environment to studying their town, then their prefecture, then the nation and finally the world. The fundamental flaw in this argument is that it assumes that internationalization and world knowledge are "beyond" the prefecture and nation in terms of distance from the child. The real situation is that internationalization is now part of the child's immediate environment, in small mountain villages as well as in the big cities of

Tokyo and Osaka. The 1998-99 *Databook of Educational Statistics* states that, in 1997, 14.2% of Japanese elementary and junior high schools nationwide had at least one foreign child who needed Japanese language education enrolled in the school (Shimizu, 1998, pp. 4, 6, 274). In the two years from 1995, there had been a 50.2% rise in the number of such children in elementary schools and a 35.3% rise in junior high school (p. 274). Moreover, this figure does not include the considerable number of foreign or "half-foreign" (one parent Japanese, one parent foreign) children enrolled in Japanese schools who are not considered to be in need of Japanese language education. Neither does it include Japanese children who have lived abroad and returned to Japan and who may be bilingual and bicultural — on average, between 12,000 and 13,000 such children of school-age return to Japan each year (p. 298). Although Monbusho explicitly makes the assumption that all children in Japanese state schools are Japanese, and have been born and brought up in Japan (e.g. Monbusho, 1989f, p. 41), this is blatantly untrue. The Monbusho guidelines and, accordingly, the textbooks, do not seem to have recognized that internationalization and world knowledge are as necessary for the individual child living in the immediate school and neighborhood community as they are for national imports and exports. If this fact was recognized, it would probably have a significant impact on the social studies curriculum, as world knowledge could be incorporated into the curriculum from the earliest stages of study of the immediate environment.

Foreign Language Education

A point that relates to the previous issue of the late introduction of world knowledge is the fact that foreign languages are not taught in most elementary schools. This state of affairs stands in contrast to the situation in most other countries of Asia. Of course, it is difficult to compare Japan with places such as Singapore and Hong Kong in this respect, as the regions have very different histories. However, with foreign language education being introduced in all elementary schools in South Korea and in many schools in some cities of China, this is an issue which is attracting a great deal of attention in Japan. However, perhaps more significant in terms of the structuring of knowledge is the fact that there is no element of "language awareness" teaching in the Monbusho guidelines or textbooks for Japanese either. Nowhere in the elementary school curriculum are children exposed to awareness of other languages in the world. Neither is

any mention made by Monbusho of the provision of teaching of minority languages for children of the minority group, such as Korean in schools with a large Korean population. Moreover, there is no recognition of the fact that many such children of minority groups, foreign children and returnees bring more than one language to the classroom. The kind of statement which appears in the National Curriculum of England and Wales, stating that pupils, where appropriate, "should be encouraged to make use of their understanding and skills in other languages" (DfE, 1995, p. 2) is conspicuously absent from the Monbusho guidelines. Again, this is an indication of the false assumption Monbusho makes, or wants to make, that Japanese schools are full of "pure" Japanese children who, as yet, have little or no knowledge of the world outside Japan.

For most students, then, the first official introduction to a foreign language comes at the age of 12, when they enter junior high school. It should be noted in passing that many children actually do study English before the age of 12 at *juku* or language schools. Students only learn one foreign language at junior high school and this language is invariably English. Although Monbusho does provide brief guidelines for French and German as well as English, no textbooks are authorized by Monbusho for these languages at the junior high school level (Kizuka Masaki, 1995, p. 144). Although the teaching of other languages such as Chinese and Korean is not specifically prohibited, these languages are not even mentioned. As the languages of Japan's closest neighbors and largest foreign groups, it could be assumed that the study of Chinese and Korean would be more useful for international understanding than the study of French or German. Monbusho, however, retains its bias towards the West. This is an issue that has recently been the subject of some discussion in the literature in Japanese on foreign language education, and there have been moves to introduce other foreign languages at senior high schools. However, diversification is still extremely limited; in 1995, 3.5% of senior high schools in Japan offered courses in Chinese, while 2.7% of schools offered courses in French, and 1.3% in German or Korean. This means that the situation at the vast majority of senior high schools is still the same as at junior high schools — foreign language does equal English. Perhaps this partially accounts for a table that appears in a junior high school history textbook. This table shows that 80% of junior high school students felt close to America and thought America important, while only 42% of students felt close to China and even less thought China to be important (Tokyo Shoseki, 1996b, p. 318). Whatever the reason for these particular figures, it

does seem reasonable to argue that the restriction of foreign language teaching in Japan to English must encourage a tendency towards a rather narrow view of internationalization, foreign countries and limited world knowledge.

This narrow structuring of world knowledge through a single foreign language is further reinforced by the JET program, a scheme organized by the Japanese government to employ foreigners (overwhelmingly native-English-speaking foreigners) to teach in Japanese state schools. The number of posts on the program almost trebled from 2,146 in 1990 to over 5,600 in 1997. This means that almost every student in junior high school in Japan now comes into direct contact with a foreigner in the school environment. While the JET program has been expanding, another aspect of internationalization has been to increase the number of foreign students studying at Japanese universities and colleges. Numbers have risen rapidly from 10,428 in 1983 to over 50,000 in 1997 (Shimizu, 1998, p. 270). Both sets of statistics are frequently cited in government publications as examples of Japan's internationalization. More interesting than simple numbers, however, is the fact that, while the JET program participants are almost exclusively Westerners, the majority of foreign students are from other Asian countries, notably China and Korea (Kobayashi Tetsuya, 1995, p. 83). Although Asian foreigners far outnumber Westerners in Japan, it is only the Westerners (and almost entirely the English-speaking Westerners) who are allowed into Japanese state schools as representatives of internationalization. Internationalization may be popular, and may be progressing, but in practical terms, the knowledge of and attitudes towards the world that are being structured in schools are still very Western-biased.

“Academic Rationalist” Internationalization

I would now like to turn to the way in which internationalization is being introduced to schools. In his book on the Hong Kong school curriculum, Paul Morris (1996, p. 13) outlines four main “images” of education, or sets of concepts and assumptions about what education should be doing. The “social and economic efficiency” image stresses the role of schools for preparing future citizens. An example related to internationalization is provided by the Singapore Ministry of Education, in a curriculum review entitled *Learning, Creating, Communicating*. In this report, globalization is identified as one of three major developments, and the authors of the report state that “for Singapore to remain competitive in the world economy of the

21st century, education must broaden its focus ... [to] produce creative and critical thinkers, who confidently display skills fit for tomorrow's workplace" (Singapore Ministry of Education, 1998, p. 1). The second of Morris' images, the "child-centered" image, centers on the needs and development of the child as an individual. As far as internationalization is concerned, this involves the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes and identities that will be necessary for individual development and fulfillment in an international world. An example of this model, as it relates to internationalization, is described in the context of foreign language learning for European identity by Byram (1992, p. 12). He argues that through foreign language education, young people should be given opportunities to realize that a wide range of identities are open to them, and that they can choose from the alternatives rather than being bound by a single defined national and/or cultural identity. Thirdly, the "social reconstructionism" image emphasizes the role of school education in improving society in the future. This category would include aspects of internationalization such as environmental education and peace education, where these topics have an international focus. Finally, the "academic rationalist" image stresses the development of pupils' intellect through established academic disciplines. This is probably the best-established image, and applied to internationalization it would incorporate traditional subject domains such as world geography, world history, foreign languages and so on.

Internationalization in Japan could, theoretically, fit into any of these images. Monbusho aims to stress the need to develop Japanese people who can live effectively in an international society, and textbooks emphasize the theme of being socially aware and responsible in society, all of which contribute to the "social and economic efficiency" image. Likewise, the constant echoing of the theme of working for world peace and the welfare of mankind by Monbusho and in the textbooks dovetails with the "social reconstructionism" image. The "child-centered" image is much less prominent. In spite of all these aims, though, it is still the "academic rationalist" image of education which prevails. Internationalization, although recognized as a cross-curricular educational policy, is chopped up into established subject compartments. Within these subject divisions internationalization becomes, above all, a body of knowledge which is determined by Monbusho, shaped by the textbook publishers, delivered by the teacher and memorized by the student for reproduction in tests. The spirit of international co-operation is not tested in high school entrance exams; the formation of the past tense in English and the structure and functions of

the United Nations are. In spite of the Monbusho aims and rhetoric, internationalization in Japanese junior high schools is far more concerned with the transmission of a body of world knowledge from teacher to pupil than with the development of pupils as members of an international world. The emphasis is on theory rather than practice, and this is evident from the omission of internationalization from practical subjects in the Monbusho guidelines. For example, the area of the curriculum that offers greatest potential for internationalization in practice is probably Special Activities. This area encompasses class activities, Student Council activities, club activities and school events. In fact, in one school I taught in, students did, as part of the Student Council activities, organize a school-wide campaign to send aid packages to children in Cambodia. However, such activities are not recommended or even mentioned in Monbusho's guidelines for Special Activities. In these guidelines, there is a single reference to internationalization, which is this:

Thinking of our country's present and future international position and role, Japanese people will have to become increasingly international. For that purpose, each national citizen must love Japan and have self-awareness as a Japanese person. (Monbusho, 1989g, p. 4)

Throughout the Monbusho guidelines, the emphasis is an "the spirit of international co-operation" (rather than the practice) and on the structuring of a body of knowledge about the world. This is where the greatest divergences begin to emerge between Monbusho and students' interpretations of internationalization — while Monbusho, firmly in the academic rationalist camp, sees internationalization primarily as world knowledge to be transmitted and learned within a context of abstract aims, students tend to personalize the whole issue, placing more emphasis on attitudes towards other countries, developing ways of thinking about the world and particularly on friendship with people of other nationalities (Parmenter, 1997). Although structuring students' knowledge base of the world is one aspect of internationalization in Japan, and the aspect most emphasized by Monbusho, there are other aspects too, which concern the values, attitudes, identities and relationships which may also have to be "restructured" in the process of internationalization. By emphasizing the transmission of knowledge over the individual development of pupils, Monbusho minimizes the threat of these other aspects. As Lo & Man (1996, p. xx) observe, this kind of transmission approach is intended to fit students into an established social and value system for the sake of maintenance.

Internationalization and Citizenship

A concept frequently repeated throughout this article is that structuring students' knowledge base of the world is not a value-free, objective process. Students' knowledge about the world provides the foundations for their values and identities in the world. These values and identities are the primary material of citizenship education. Monbusho, like its counterparts in many other countries, uses school education as a vehicle for developing citizens, but the question that then arises is, "citizens of what?"

From the quotes already provided from Monbusho documents, it should be fairly obvious that Monbusho's primary concern is to develop citizens of the nation. This is probably partly the reason for the assumption of homogeneity in Japanese schools; if Monbusho recognized that an increasing proportion of its schools are multi-cultural and multi-national, it would be more difficult to promote education for Japanese citizenship in the way it does. In all its discussions of internationalization, Monbusho emphasizes that students should be self-aware as a "Japanese person living in international society" or as a "Japanese person in the world." Whereas students are encouraged to develop individual ways of seeing and thinking in the immediate context (Monbusho, 1989b, p. 5), the terms of reference change when it comes to the international sphere. Then, says Monbusho, the aim is:

to cultivate the basics of self-awareness, the ways of seeing and the ways of thinking of a Japanese person (Monbusho, 1989b, p. 7).

In the textbook, this identity as a Japanese person in the world is promoted through the presentation of world knowledge in terms of its relation to Japan, particularly in elementary school. In junior high school, too, whole chapters of social studies textbooks devoted to "Japan in the world" tend to lead to the structuring of a knowledge base which is passed through a Japanese filter of national attitudes, values and perspectives before it reaches the students. This is not true of all the international information presented in the curriculum. However, Monbusho's insistence on self-awareness as a Japanese person whenever the international sphere is mentioned, together with the more direct policy of encouraging the development of national identity (Monbusho, 1989b, p. 7), tends to suggest that the main purpose of the knowledge base of the world being presented to students is to reinforce their identity as Japanese citizens.

Moving further afield, the structuring of the knowledge base to encourage the development of identity as a citizen of Asia is notable more for its absence than for its presence. It would be interesting to compare the Japanese curriculum with the curricula of other Asian countries in this respect. Monbusho guidelines do include the study of historical links between Japan and East Asia, particularly between Japan and China. However, the only subject guidelines which contain any acknowledgment that contemporary Japan is still part of Asia are music, as quoted above. Foreign language education policy, discussed above, symbolizes Monbusho's disregard for Asia. Although Monbusho virtually ignores the idea that Japanese people are, can or should be citizens of Asia, the textbooks do touch upon the theme occasionally, particularly in junior high school. In general, though, identity as an Asian citizen does not seem to be an aim of Japanese school education, and the relevant knowledge base is not provided. This is in contrast to the situation in Europe, where the emphasis within internationalization is on developing this kind of "regional" or "continental" citizen.

Finally, there is the issue of world citizenship. This is not found in Monbusho guidelines, which always subordinate any idea of international or world citizenship to the notion of Japanese identity in the world. Monbusho denies the possibility of multiple citizenship, seeming to perceive international or world citizenship as a threat to national citizenship. It is impossible to find in Monbusho curriculum documents the idea which appears in, for example, the *Guidelines on Civic Education in Schools in Hong Kong* (Education Department, 1996). In the Hong Kong guidelines, there is a section related to world citizenship which states that, "the concept of global village illustrates the significance and inter-dependence of all the individuals as global citizens. As a global citizen, the civic learner should be aware of the basic human rights and responsibilities which form the grounds for respecting individuals and various social and ethnic groups." (p. 24) Monbusho curriculum guidelines also deal with human rights and respect for others but, in spite of its explicit policy of internationalization, these and other issues are all presented from the perspective of national, rather than global, citizenship. Interestingly, however, the idea of world citizenship does appear in at least two different series of social studies textbooks in Japan, in both elementary and junior high school, and so is available to students.

The knowledge base presented to students in school is an important influence on their development as citizens of the nation, the region and the

world. By filtering knowledge about the world through a national lens and by emphasizing the importance of approaching the world "as a Japanese person," Monbusho subordinates international and world citizenship to national citizenship. Through the structuring of world knowledge and the relative de-emphasis of knowledge related to Asia, Monbusho dissipates the idea of Asian citizenship amongst Japanese students. However, the textbooks do provide some balance, with their inclusion of relevant world information and explicit voicing of the idea that students are part of Asia and of the world.

Conclusions

Although Monbusho is actively promoting a policy of internationalization in education, it does not define what it means by the term "internationalization" itself. The purpose of this article has been to examine the knowledge base of the world being presented to Japanese children and to discuss related issues, in order to understand how Monbusho is interpreting and presenting internationalization in elementary and junior high school. I have described how, although Japanese students are exposed to a substantial body of knowledge about the world, particularly in junior high school, the way in which this knowledge base is presented reflects Monbusho's interpretation of internationalization. To return to the terms used in the introduction to this article, the prevailing view of internationalization, as it is presented by Monbusho and in textbooks, is one of "national internationalization." The concept of "global internationalization" is apparent in some textbooks, but is weak. The concept of "regional internationalization," or Japan's position in and relations with Asia, is virtually non-existent. In contrast, the concept of "national internationalization" is strong. It is apparent in the Japan-centered content of the knowledge base of the world offered to students, especially in elementary school. It is clear in the timing of the introduction of world knowledge and in the way in which international content is dealt with in the curriculum (with an emphasis on theory and facts, rather than on practice and attitudes). Finally, it is evident in Monbusho's insistence throughout the curriculum guidelines on the development of "a Japanese person in the world," rather than "an international person." Whether this policy of "national internationalization" is right or wrong, desirable or undesirable, is open to debate and is largely a matter of personal opinion. Without entering into that particular controversy, I would like to end by arguing that teachers and students,

being those most directly and deeply involved in the education process, are entitled to receive from Monbusho an unambiguous statement of how it defines internationalization, and why it is structuring students' knowledge base of the world in the way described in this article.

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