The Internationalization of Japan's
Junior High School English Textbooks:
Defining Japanese Identity in an Age of Globalization

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A note on Japanese names

Japanese names appear in Japanese order: surname first, given name second. The only exception to this is in the case that a person is published in English using English conventions.

A note on the Ministry of Education, the National Council for Education Reform, and Education for International Understanding

In 2001 the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and Science (commonly referred to as *Monbusho* in Japanese) was merged with the Science and Technology Agency, forming the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, which is now referred to as *Monbukagakusho* or more commonly as MEXT, for short, (based on the pronunciation of MECSST). For the sake of continuity the ministry is referred to as the Ministry of Education throughout the dissertation.

Similarly, different sources refer to *rinji kyouiku shingikai* (1984-87) as the Ad-Hoc Council on Education, the Provisional Council on Education Reform (PCER), or most commonly, the National Council on Education Reform (NCER). This dissertation uses the latter name.

Introduction

> (A)n outsider can hardly understand any nation's major stakes in life without studying the way children are brought up there (Benedict, 1946, 251).

While the Japan that Ruth Benedict describes in her seminal work *the Chrysanthemum and the Rose* is in many ways unrecognizable today, her idea, that looking at how children are brought up is key to understanding a society's core values, still holds. This is because education is now, as it was then, all about the future. By studying a nation's education system we are able to get a very honest look at the values that those in power wish to propagate.

Japan's education system is said to play such an integral role in the socialization of its young that it has been both praised for the nation's highest highs and blamed for its lowest lows. Japan's education system, along with those of other nations, has drawn attention for its role in fostering militarism in the 20th century (Nelson, 2002). Before World War II H.G. Wells (2005) warned:

> …that the salvaging of civilization was a race between education and

catastrophe. But education has not even started yet. There is no race. It looks like a walkover for catastrophe.

In the schools of Britain, America, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, today, the schoolteachers are still casting minds into the old forms of national conceit and patriotic hatred. They are doing the fundamental work of mental armament.

On the other hand, according to Edwin Reischauer (2005, 186), "Nothing…has been more central in the success of modern Japan than its educational system." Stuart D.B. Picken (1986, 59) echoes him, attributing Japan's success in modernizing to its "social investment in education" (1986, 59). Indeed, Japan's post-war education system has been much envied around the world (*About Japan*, 1995, 48; Cave, 2001, 173; Bjork & Tsuneyoshi, 2005).

As a nation's education system can have such a massive impact on society, understanding what strategies Japan is using to prepare its youth to interact with a world that is becoming increasingly interconnected and interdependent, is vital to understanding both contemporary Japanese values and the choices the country may make in the future.

Stemming from my experience working as an assistant English teacher (AET) in Japanese elementary and junior high schools, this dissertation explores the politicization of education in Japan. More specifically, the

dissertation looks at the use of textbooks to advance or maintain certain ideological or political positions.

As much has already been written on the subject of Japanese history textbooks, owing to the controversy surrounding them, the dissertation focuses on another of Japan's social texts: the less closely examined English textbooks. This study looks at junior high school English texts in light of Japan's internationalization policies in education from the period shortly after the Pacific War to the present.

By examining the internationalization of the education system we gain insight into whether Japan is focusing on interacting with the world outside, or on re-enforcing traditional conservative Japanese values. Therefore the survey of the texts largely focuses on the portrayal of Japanese identity, particularly as it relates to the rest of the world. This study examines the relationships of Japanese and foreign characters, the representation of Japanese and foreign cultures, and the inclusion of morals and global social issues such as environmentalism and international aid work.

This dissertation posits that far from being merely apolitical language primers, the texts are highly political in their focus and content. However

they do not merely represent a single, narrow political objective such as re-militarization. Instead, the texts reflect the influence of the nation's changing international ambitions, the goals of a variety of organizations from both the left and the right, and several pendulum swings between the embrace of nationalism and internationalism. The survey examines how the texts and their political messages have changed, particular noting their role in helping to "internationalize" Japan.

The format of the dissertation is as follows:

Chapter one begins by locating the subject in the larger picture of globalization and international relations and how these forces impact upon education and vice versa. The chapter introduces the key term, internationalization (*kokusaika*). It discusses the elusive nature of this term and notes its particular usage in Japan, which is somewhat different from how it is used in English.

Chapter two is a cursory look at past education reforms and internationalization in education from the Meiji era through to the beginning of the post-war period. Then the chapter turns to the reforms of the post-war era particularly as they relate to internationalization, which is in keeping

with the time period of the texts surveyed in chapter six.

Chapter three narrows in on English as a key component of the internationalization of Japan's education system. This chapter draws an outline of English as a subject in the public school system and examines the Ministry of Education's current goals for the subject both from an academic standpoint and as an important component of internationalization.

Chapter four is divided into two parts: First is a survey of contemporary literature on internationalization / *kokusaika* in Japanese education. Broadly speaking, critics of the government's education for internationalization tend to fall into two camps: Those who wish to see it used to nationalistic ends and those who want to see it used to promote global social issues such as world peace and environmental protection. Their arguments are explored here.

Second is a discussion of English as the de facto international language. This includes a look at the political nature of English as a subject and the debate surrounding English in Japanese public schools.

Chapter five further narrows the focus to the level of the textbook. It discusses the importance of textbooks in general as one of the primary

educational resources, and touches on their importance in transmitting the Ministry of Education's goals.

Chapter six comprises the core study of the dissertation. It is a close reading of publisher Kairyudo's junior high school English textbooks from 1948 to the present. The survey examines how their texts have changed with regard to six main areas: the presentation of foreign culture, Japanese identity, awareness of cultural differences, morals and social issues, the Internet, and the discussion of English as a subject.

Chapter seven is an analysis of the texts in light of the historical background covered in chapter two; the Ministry of Education's goals as stated in chapter three, and the debate on internationalization examined in chapter four. The chapter answers the questions: How have the texts changed over the last six decades? How closely do the texts reflect the current policies of internationalization expressed by the Ministry of Education? Which political views do the texts most closely match? and Why are contemporary texts the way they are?

Chapter eight, the conclusion, concisely sums up the findings, indicates their significance particularly relating to the wider political context,

discusses the limitations of the study, and suggests further questions for

future consideration.

Chapter one

Background: Internationalization and Japan

1.1. The relationship between international relations and education

In 2005 a series of cartoons portraying the prophet Muhammad, published in Denmark, caught the attention and ire of Muslims in Denmark and abroad. They accused Denmark of becoming "an increasingly Islamaphobic country" (Bunting, 2006). Consequently, several Muslim nations including Saudi Arabia and Sudan called for boycotts of Danish goods (Bilefsky, 2006). Protesters in Lebanon and Syria attacked the Danish embassies there, setting them on fire (the Associated Press, 2006). What had begun as a few pages in a local Danish paper, over the course of several months, blew up into an international incident. The incident shook some Danes' "sense of identity as (a) tolerant and egalitarian" society (Bunting). Yet to most citizens there, the incident was much to do about nothing, "a storm in a teacup" (Bunting).

This incident has very little do with Japan of course, but its similarity to the Japanese textbook incidents of 1982 and 2005 is striking. In both years the Japanese Ministry of Education authorized junior high school history textbooks, which critics have claimed do not sufficiently consider

neighbouring countries' points of view. For example, in 1982 the Ministry of Education authorized the substitution, "invaded" (*shinryaku*) China for "advanced into" (*shinshutsu*), when speaking of the Imperial Japanese Army's movements there during the Pacific War (Hein & Selden, 2000, 10). Then, in 2005 the Ministry of Education certified a nationalist junior high school history textbook, published by the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform (*atarashii rekishi kyōkasho o tsukuru kai*), that, for example, downplays the Nanking Massacre (Society for History Textbook Reform, 2005). The authorization of this series of textbooks in turn led to official protests by the Chinese and South Korean governments; protesters throwing rocks and bottles at the Japanese embassy in Beijing (Buckley, 2005), and demonstrators calling for the boycott of Japanese goods (*BusinessWeek Online*, 2005). As unlikely as it may have seemed, textbooks intended for school children had sparked an international incident.

Like the Danes, many Japanese appear puzzled why they should be the target of such venom, particularly over what appears to some as merely semantics. After all, in most respects Japan is the ideal neighbour: It is the world's second-leading aid donor (OECD, 2005), the second largest financial

contributor to the United Nations (*PBS*, 2005), moreover it has been governed for six decades under its so-called Peace Constitution which states in article 9 that "the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes" (*the Constitution of Japan*, 1946).

Despite these facts, there remains a latent distrust of Japan throughout much of Asia. China, a permanent member of the UN Security Council has moved to block Japanese aspirations to a permanent seat of its own (*BusinessWeek Online*; Srivastava, 2004).

Even with all the aid that Japan gives, some believe Japan has not done enough in the post-war period, particularly when compared with Germany, to repair its damaged relationships with its neighbours (Hein & Selden, 2000, 15). Instead, they say, that following the war, Japan first concentrated on its own recovery. Once that had been accomplished it let the sleeping dogs of foreign relations lie, and moved on to its economic goals of catching up with the Western nations.

After several decades of pursuing a "missing the boat" approach to international relations, whereby it deliberately avoided conflicts in order to

remain free from foreign entanglements so as to pursue international trade (Pyle, 1982), Japan now appears determined to take a more active role on the world stage. We can already witness the deployment of its Self-Defence Forces (SDF) (*jieitai*) abroad in UN-led peacekeeping missions and the US-led war in Iraq, and the aforementioned push for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2005). Japan has also been aggressively pursuing territorial claims in disputes with its neighbours (Clark, 2005; *Japan Focus*, 2005); and policing its territorial waters, even sinking a ship of North Korean origin in 2001 (Warren, 2001). Recently, lawmakers have even floated the idea of making pre-emptive military strikes constitutional (Faiola, 2006).

This is a Japan that talks tougher and is ruffling feathers. As such, in referring to Japan's failure to hold summit talks with South Korea and China under Prime Minister Koizumi, Foreign Affairs Minister Aso Taro, cautioned that Japanese should "not expect too much that neighbors should always be on good terms" (*Japan Times*, 2006a).

Japan's more assertive actions have set off alarm bells for some; but for others, these actions are nothing more than necessary steps, and baby steps

at that, for Japan to become a so-called 'normal' nation. Former U.S. Deputy

Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, for one, has praised Japan for

supporting the war in Iraq with boots on the ground:

> I believe that Prime Minister Koizumi has set a new
> benchmark, not just in the dispatch of Japanese Self Defense
> forces to Iraq, but also in redefining Japan's role in the world,
> as well as finding a way forward for this country (US
> Department of State, 2004).

In some ways Japan's actions may be seen as shaking up the hornets'

nest. On the other hand, one may argue that the awakening of long dormant

Japanese nationalism is overdue. As Barry Buzan (1988, 560) writes:

> Until Japan's nationalism is accepted as equal in status to that
> of other countries, it follows that the Japanese will be unable to
> play a full political role in the international community.
> Because Japan has now become such a huge economic presence
> in the international system, its inability to take up a
> commensurate political role is a problem of global significance.

As Japan becomes more and more involved on the international stage in

ways unthinkable during the Cold War, it is going to find itself having to

question what it means to be Japanese in the international community.

Problematically though, Japan is a country…

> …divided and confused about what its national self-image should be and about how it should project its national image into the international system. At one extreme of Japanese society are those who want to conduct an anti-militarist, neutralist foreign policy echoing neutralist elements in the Japanese constitution, and at the other end are those who see full rearmament and the resumption of a traditional great-power role as the only way to restore the nation's sovereignty (Buzan, 560).

Amidst this internal confusion, it is not surprising that Japan is having difficulty getting itself understood abroad.

These questions of identity and learning how to explain a Japanese point of view to the rest of the world are problems the education system can address. In so doing however, the education system is politicized, particularly to the extent that the Ministry of Education prescribes what official government policy or culture is.

As the government has acted tougher internationally, the Ministry of Education has correspondingly acted tougher domestically. The mandatory re-introduction of the *Hinomaru* (Japan's national flag) and *Kimigayo* (Japan's national anthem) which some see as Imperial Japanese war era

symbols, into public school ceremonies has met with some resistance. The government's aggressive prosecution of a teacher for interrupting a graduation ceremony by protesting the inclusion of these symbols demonstrates the government's determination to rehabilitate the flag and anthem and to quell opposition (*Asahi Shimbun*, 2004).

At the beginning of this chapter reference was made to the Danish cartoon controversy. The parallels between it and the Japanese textbook controversy are instructive: Even though the two incidents occurred thousands of kilometers apart with completely different actors, in both cases something meant only for domestic consumption and written off as insignificant by the majority of the population, found an unintended global audience, creating an international incident.

Unlike Denmark's controversial cartoons though, Japan's textbooks have come under particular scrutiny not so much for what they have to say about others, but for how they portray Japan itself. The depiction of Japan's colonization of its Asian neighbours, its role in the Pacific War, and its moves to reintroduce a patriotic element into the school curriculum are especially difficult topics.

Critics remain on guard for signs of Japanese re-militarization in Japanese education, pouncing on seemingly minor changes, fearing they may the thin edge of the wedge. The Japanese government, for its part, has tended to downplay the changes, claiming the texts are written freely by private publishers. They have further tried to deflect criticism by criticizing their critics. One Japanese official, Nakagawa Shoichi, called China a "scary country" following the 2005 protests against Japan (*CNN*, 2006).

Further, some Japanese have claimed that the criticism of their education system constitutes interference with their sovereignty (*BBC News,* 2005; Reischauer, 2004, 314). Despite these protests of external meddling in their internal affairs, Japan cannot address these questions of identity with only a mind to a Japanese audience. As the world continues to become more globalized there are fewer and fewer truly purely domestic issues. What a politician says to his constituents will be heard and debated in neighbouring countries when it concerns them. This equally applies to education. What the Ministry of Education authorizes in its textbooks will be scrutinized abroad.

Therefore questions of identity, while they may be developed within the workings of the education system, cannot be addressed only with a mind to a

Japanese audience. The question of how legitimate Japanese nationalism can be expressed is…

> both a domestic one, for the Japanese themselves, and an international one, for all those peoples affected now and in the past by Japanese power (Buzan, 1988, 562).

To ensure positive relations with other nations Japan must reconcile its self-image with how it is viewed abroad. As such, some form of 'internationalization' would seem to be inevitable. But what is actually meant by internationalization? And what meaning does it have for education?

1.2 What is internationalization (*kokusaika*)?

In order to understand educators' internationalization goals, it is first important to clearly understand what is meant by the word "internationalization" (*kokusaika* in Japanese). The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1990) tells us that the verb "internationalize" means to: 1. make

international, and 2. bring under the protection or control of two or more nations. When speaking of education, assuming the Ministry of Education's intent is not to relinquish control of its education system, the second definition does not apply.

If we follow up the first definition, and look to the meaning of "international" we find the semi-passive meaning, "existing, involving, or carried on between two or more nations" and the more active, "agreed on or used by all or many nations." To be international then, greatly ranges in it how deliberate an action or state of being it is. Internationalization is used to describe such disparate things as the opening of Toyota factories abroad, eating a breakfast of bacon and eggs, ubiquitous English language conversation schools, the sending of the SDF to Iraq, and the participation of Japanese actors in Hollywood films.

In its vagueness internationalization is sometimes lumped together with other "–ization"-words, such as globalization, modernization, Westernization and Americanization. But where these words often have a negative connotation (Stone, 2006), the Japanese public has come to see internationalization as a vaguely positive thing (Roesgaard, 1998, 202).

Owing to this wide-ranging meaning, it has been possible to use internationalization as the banner for all sorts of interests, much like the slogan "Time for a change" is used in election campaigns. *Kokusaika* "has come to mean all things to all men" (Kato 1992, 310) and "has been perceived by a wide range of Japanese leaders as the panacea for all kinds of imbalances to come to the fore in recent years" (Ogata, 1992, 64).

To be international though, has in some cases come to mean not much more than to be of high quality, or "world class." Kato Shuichi (1992, 310) gives us the example of the popular…

> '*Kokusai* Taxi' (International Taxi-Cab Company) (which) seems to imply just 'nice' taxi-cabs, which has nothing to do with the driver's linguistic ability.

As a result of this lack of clear meaning in public discourse, internationalization has not been objected to per se. Rather, its use as a buzzword has ebbed and flowed in connection with economic conditions and national confidence. Enthusiasm for *kokusaika* "reached a crescendo by the mid-70s", later fell in the in the 1980s with the rise and rise of the speculative "bubble economy", and then emerged again with the bursting of the bubble in

the early 1990s (De Mente, 2004, 160).

Many writers have commented on this lack of a clear definition. Adding to this difficulty is the fact that discussion of internationalization in Japan has "tended to center on activities," such as learning English or studying abroad, "rather than ends" (Roesgaard, 1998, 202).

Internationalization has been seen as more of a process than a goal. Sugiyama Yasushi (1992, 92) defines it as "a process towards expanding interdependence and co-operation among nations and peoples"; Ogata Sadako (1992, 63) describes it as "a process that ensues when a given society pursues a course of adjusting to, and accepting changes brought about by, increasing interdependence" between nations. And Ehara Takekazu (1992, 272) sees it as "a process of becoming accepted by the rest of the world."

Therefore, as a process whereby the nation's standards are adjusted in order to come into alignment with the standards of others, the goals of internationalization are bound to change over time, and largely depend on the actions of the select few nations who set those standards. Because for Japan, until recently internationalization has largely meant a one-way adoption or adjustment to Western standards, the Japanese conception of the

word *kokusaika* differs from the English usage of the word, internationalization. Noting this semantic difference Ehara (273) suggests that "the Japanese concept of 'internationalization' of education may be more accessible to people who live in less politically dominant countries such as Belgium, and the Netherlands," than the United States.

The differences in the interpretation of internationalization / *kokusaika* and "international minded person" / *kokusaijin*, are illustrated by a 1999 survey (Yoneoka, 2000). University student participants in Japan, Germany, India and the United States were asked to rate the importance of different characteristics for one to be considered an internationally minded person or *kokusaijin*. The Japanese answers were generally quite different from those of the other three nations. The Japanese belief that knowledge of a foreign language was vital particularly stood out. About 40 per cent of the Japanese stated that knowledge of foreign language was important, compared to only 1.2% of the Germans, 5% of the Indians, and 8% of the Americans. On the other hand, "broadmindedness" and an "interest in peace, human rights and environment," rated far lower amongst Japanese than the other three nations.

These differences may be rooted in the international experiences a country has had. For example, in the United States where the de facto international language, English, is predominant, the need for learning a second language in order to communicate with foreigners is not as pressing as in Japan. In the case of India, where there are several official languages, knowledge of a second language is much more common than in Japan. Such knowledge may be taken as a prerequisite for an internationally minded person in India, diminishing its relative importance in actually becoming one. Conversely, in Japan where English is not widely spoken, but is widely studied, its importance in becoming internationally minded increases. In short, concepts of internationalization reflect a country's needs and norms.

The next chapter looks at how the Japanese conception of internationalization (*kokusaika*) has changed as the country's needs and norms have changed. It also explores what this has meant for the internationalization of education.

Chapter two

Background: Internationalization in education

2.1 The beginnings of education for international understanding and English education

Chapter one showed how internationalization in Japan has largely been viewed as a process of catching up with the West. While "internationalization" has been a recent buzzword in Japan, the planned internationalization of Japan's education system is not an entirely new effort.

Japan is well known for its isolationist policies (*sakoku*) over the period 1641-1853, whereby no one was permitted to enter or leave the country. Yet even during this period Japan systematically took in knowledge from abroad via the Dutch at the one trading outpost permitted in Nagasaki harbour, Dejima (*Encyclopedia Britannica,* 2006).

Traditionally Japanese study of foreign knowledge has had a practical impetus. Stuart D. Picken (1986, 60) explains that, "the interest in foreign cultures has traditionally been instrumental rather than intrinsic, pragmatic rather than purist". Therefore the Japanese government designed the education system to introduce only those foreign elements that were

necessary "to achieve the goals at hand" (Picken, 1986, 60).

For example, defense was the original spur for the Japanese to learn English (Reischauer, 2005, 388). In 1808 the British frigate the HMS *Phaeton* attacked the Dutch stationed at Nagasaki harbour. The Japanese were unable to successfully repel the ship and were forced to meet its demands for fresh supplies. After this incident the Japanese government required its interpreters to learn English. The 1852 arrival of the American "Black Ships," the frigates under the command of Commodore Matthew Perry, and the subsequent opening of Japan to American trade, provided another such impetus to learn English (Seki, 2004, 19).

Rising British and American influence in world politics and trade caused the Japanese to shift their focus further from Dutch learning (*rangaku*), which had been prominent during the isolationist period owing to the exclusive trading relationship the Dutch enjoyed with the Japanese, to British and American studies. As Anglo-studies eclipsed Dutch studies, the focus on the English language over Dutch also increased. Fukuzawa Yukichi, who founded Keio University in 1858, began his Western studies through Dutch; but he, for one, became an early proponent of English language

education (Buruma, 2004, 48).

It was in the fourth year of the Meiji government, 1871, that Japan set up its first national education system and Ministry of Education (Reischauer, 2005, 187). They were based on a non-aristocratic, secular, French model. The Japanese perceived that there were significant gaps between themselves and the West in a variety of fields, including military, scientific, socio-political and economic studies. From the start, by virtue of desiring to catch up with the West and avoid the Western colonization that had occurred in China, Japan's formal education system has therefore been international (Hughes, 2005, 29).

The idea of the early Meiji era was to learn from the West the techniques that made them military powers, while retaining the spirit of Japanese traditional culture. This idea became known as *wakon-yousai* which in English means Japanese spirit combined with Western techniques (Hughes, 2005, xxvii). The education system was designed to serve two main goals, as the popular slogan of the time, *fukoku kyohei,* indicates, of "enriching the country" and "strengthening the army" (Lincicome, 1993, 148).

However, the education system came to extend beyond just Western techniques, and included Western content as well. In contrast to the

seclusionist policies of the previous two centuries, the Meiji government initially actively promoted cultural exchange. Indeed, a third of the education budget for 1873 went towards scholarships for sending students to study in the West; and towards, in a sort of a pre-cursor to today's JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) Program, bringing over foreign scholars to lecture in Japan (Seki, 2004, 21).

The Japanese took great pride in these internationalization programs in education. However conservatives within the ruling class became increasingly alarmed by the growing public enthusiasm for Western things. By the 1890s they felt that the pendulum had swung too far. They began to fear that Western thinking would erode their traditional systems of control. So, to counter this enthusiasm for foreign things, they made calls for more patriotic lessons to be taught in the school system (Shishin, 2002).

Scholars often cite the issuance of the Imperial Rescript on Education (*kyouiku chokugo)* in 1890, as providing the roots for Japan's militarism in the early 20th century (Hardacre, 121, 1989). The Rescript was a document that was sent to all public elementary and junior high schools where every student was required to commit it to memory. Its influence "pervaded the

entire school atmosphere" (Luhmer, 1990).

It was built upon Confucian ethics, State Shinto, and modern political and social ethics (Luhmer, 1990). On its own it does not sound particularly aggressive. It advises students to:

> …be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers and sisters; as husbands and wives be harmonious, as friends true; bear yourselves in modesty and moderation; extend your benevolence to all; pursue learning and cultivate arts, and thereby develop intellectual faculties and perfect moral powers; furthermore advance public good and promote common interests…

But it does promote the "glory of the Empire" and extols the subjects to be ready to offer up their lives in sacrifice to the state:

> …should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth.

Nationalists manipulated this latter section of the Imperial Rescript as a tool to promote the expansion of the Empire and the deification of the Emperor. The Rescript came to take on religious connotations and was revered as though it were a sacred document (Hardacre, 1989, 121). Those

who voiced opposition to it were looked upon as unpatriotic.

By the 1890s the focus of the education system began to move in a more inward looking, nationalistic direction (Lincicome, 1999, 340). Along with the promulgation of the Imperial Rescript, conservatives within the Ministry of Education promoted stronger moral education, military style P.E. exercises, and the re-introduction of Confucian ethics (Lincicome, 1999, 338).

Japanese disillusionment with the West added to this nationalist reaction. The Japanese felt they had worked to join the Western world order, but, despite their adoption of Western-style institutions and their military achievements, such as their victory over Russia in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, they felt they had been denied their rightful place (Buruma, 2003, 47). The novelist, Natsume Soseki (1867-1916), himself a scholar of Western learning, felt that Japan had swallowed too much Western culture all at once (Buruma, 2003, 60). Not surprisingly a backlash of resentment towards the West followed.

It should be noted that amidst this backlash supporters of internationalization did not completely disappear. In the 1890s Minister of Education, Saionji Kinmonchi, who later became prime minister, was wary of

the rising nationalistic sentiment. He cautioned against inculcating the students with a one-sided vision of the 'national essence' (*kokutai*) (Lincicome, 1999, 343). Saionji even advocated making English a compulsory subject and eliminating Japanese literature (*kokugo*) from the curriculum (Lincicome, 1999, 343).

In the first years of the 1900s the Ministry of Education tried to restrain the "chauvinistic nationalism" that had developed in grade-school textbooks over the previous decade and deal with the inferiority complex related to the West (Wray, 1973, 74). Harold Wray (75) reports that the Ministry of Education assumed authorship of grade-school texts in 1903 and the texts they produced included passages aimed at encouraging young Japanese to work even harder at gaining equality with the West. For example:

> When we compare our condition with the various countries of Europe and America, there are still many fields in which we do not equal them. We must think about this and work to undertake the completion of national power.

The pendulum did eventually swing back in the direction of the internationalists. During the so-called Taisho Democracy (1912-1926) there

was a brief resurgence in Education for International Understanding (*kokusai rikai kyouiku*). Along with positive relations with Westerners, the study of English was readily encouraged. After a visit to Japan to teach English in the late 1920s, Lionel Crocker noted the Japanese enthusiasm for English: "No American has ever been to Japan without noticing how eager the schoolboys are to try their English" (Crocker, 1928, 289).

Another sign of the times was when it was without any controversy that Prince Chichibu, the second son of the Emperor Taisho, sent his congratulations on the birth of a Japanese royal child from England, where he was studying, in English (Crocker, 1928, 288).

However, the pendulum swung back yet again in a nationalistic direction in the lead up to war. The resulting grade-school textbooks of the early 1940s removed the previous praise of the West and in its place included criticism of the West for its colonial practices, racism, and encroachment upon Japan (Wray, 1973). Illustrating this strong reversal, the city of Tokorozawa where I am employed, burned all but one of the many dolls that they had received in a 1927 friendship exchange with the United States. The one doll was spared only because someone had stashed it away (Mikajima

Elementary School).

With the outbreak of the war with the Allies, nationalists denounced the teaching of English as the language of enemy countries (Seki, 2004, 26). As nationalist sentiment spread around the country, English as a school subject became controversial, leading some local school boards to remove it from the curriculum. Illustrating the sentiments of the time, by 1940 Japan even went to the extent of 'Japanicising' baseball terminology (e.g. *besuboru* became *yakyuu*) in order to strip the popular sport of its American roots (Zoss and Bowman, 2004, 413).

2.2 Post-war internationalization

The dramatic failure of the Pacific War though, called into question the validity of the education system to that point. "The nation faced an ideological void" which after total defeat it was in no position to decide how to fill on its own (Luhmer, 1990). With the Potsdam Declaration, the United States declared that Japan had to be "re-educated in the spirit of democracy" (Luhmer, 1990). Upon Japan's surrender in 1945, under orders from the

Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP), General Douglas MacArthur, the school system and the Ministry of Education were re-organized. All traces of militarism were removed from the curriculum, which meant that the textbooks had to be completely revised (Reischauer, 2004, 196). Foreign language study, which meant in effect English, was also re-introduced. The American occupation also re-introduced a practical need for some Japanese to know English (Seki, 2004, 26).

Much to the chagrin of Japanese conservatives, the Americans had the Imperial Rescript revoked and in 1947 introduced the Fundamental Law of Education which instead emphasized "the full development (of a student's) personality…imbued with the independent spirit, as builders of the peaceful state and society" (Luhmer, 1990).

In the 1950s internationalization re-emerged as a focus in the Japanese education system. When Japan became a member of UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) in 1951, it began another program of Education for International Understanding (*kokusai rikai kyouiku*) (The National Federation, 2005). The UN set up UNESCO in 1945 following World War II with the hopes of realizing world peace through

"a good understanding of other cultures" (Ozaki, 2003, 6). UNESCO hoped

that participating nations would work towards this goal by teaching their

students about the UN, human rights, and other countries (Ozaki, 6).

UNESCO's Education for International Understanding had a strong

initial impact on the Japanese education system, but its influence quickly

declined. This decline occurred for two reasons: First, in response to changing

US security goals for the region, the Americans began a "Reverse Course" of

the liberal education reforms it had initiated at the beginning of the

occupation. Patriotism was encouraged again to counter the perceived

threats of communism (Nelson, 2002). Second, as Japan regained full control

of its education system from the occupation authorities it began to

re-populate the Ministry of Education with conservatives. During the

occupation years (1945-1952) Ministry of Education officials were selected

from the academic world. However with the departure of the Americans, the

ruling Liberal Democratic Party (*jiyuminshu-to*) chose a banker as the

Minister of Education (Duke, 1963, 213). The Ministry of Education

subsequently shifted its focus from reforming the education system to

developing one that helped stimulate economic recovery.

The Ministry of Education developed a more homegrown Education for International Understanding program than the one promoted by UNESCO in the 1960s (Ishii, 2001). Japan set its internationalization goals as 1. catching up with the West economically and 2. developing a greater understanding of the United States (Duke, 1963; Ishii, 2001).

In the 1970s UNESCO began to promote development education programs as a "strategy for addressing problems of developing countries" (Ishii, 2001, 330). Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands and Canada were amongst the first to adopt development education programs in their school systems, while countries such as Britain, France and the United States were initially less enthusiastic to do so (Ishii, 2001, 331). Ishii attributes this difference to the nations' differing international status. She explains that the former nations, as middle-powers, were more likely to be interested in enhancing their standing abroad through so-call soft-power, rather than through the use of hard-power (e.g. military force).

With its pacifist constitution and reliance upon the American military for protection, Japan was not considered a military super-power in the decades following the Pacific War. However, its economy had greatly

rebounded. In theory Japan was prime candidate for adopting such development education into its education curriculum. Yet Japan's foreign relations were more focused on maintaining strong relations with the United States, who as mentioned, was not particularly interested in development education at that time. Domestically, Japan was focused on further enhancing its economy. As a result Japan continued to pursue its own Education for International Understanding program.

2.3 Recent education reforms

As Japan's economy grew Japan's Education for International Understanding programs of the 1970s and 80s changed to emphasize Japanese traditions, communication skills, and returnees (i.e. how to re-absorb students who had lived abroad for an extended time usually due to their parents' work. There was some concern that returnees would lose some of their 'Japanese-ness') (Ishii, 2001, 338).

The 1974 Central Council on Education (*chuo kyuko shingikai*) sought to institute the 3rd great wave of education reforms in Japan (after the Meiji

Restoration, and the Occupation Era Reforms.) The Council's attempts at reform were unsuccessful but did serve to inspire the National Council on Education Reform (NCER) in 1984 (Lincicome, 1993, 149).

By 1984 the Japanese education system was much admired around the world, and talk of reforming it brought some bewilderment abroad (*About Japan*, 1995, 48). Yet in Japan there was a sense that while the system had been undoubtedly successful in helping Japan modernize and recover from the war, there was something missing.

Talk of education reform was at first fueled by public perception of higher levels of juvenile delinquency. Some believed that children were not receiving enough moral guidance in their education, and that this was the root of the rise in youth related crimes and societal problems.

This sense of an educational crisis quickly transformed into a much larger issue of national identity. Nationalists wished to re-habilitate not only Japan's delinquent youth but also the nation's tarnished war era symbols (i.e. the flag and the national anthem). They used the internationalization movement in education in particular to argue for greater education about Japan and its traditions. They argued that in order to understand other

countries, Japan first had to understand itself.

Seizing this sense of crisis in education as an opportunity, Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro set up the National Council on Education Reform (NCER) (*rinji kyouiku shingikai*) in 1984. The NCER was an ad hoc advisory organ directly attached to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), comprised of 45 members, mostly from outside of academia (Takukura, 1993, 15) (*About Japan*, 1995, 47). While the NCER's recommendations were non-binding, the NCER was highly prestigious and influential owing to its attachment to the PMO. Their recommendations were largely taken up for implementation by the Ministry of Education (Takukura, 1993, 15).

Richard Tanter (2006) describes Nakasone's interest in education reform as a means of "settling post-war accounts with America which had hamstrung Japan for too long." One of Nakasone's main concerns was the promotion of a "healthy nationalism," meaning in his view, a way of thinking about the nation which "reconcile(s) nationalism and internationalism" so that people have a better understanding of their identity (Hood, 1999, 6-7).

The NCER made internationalization one of the key areas it dealt with in examining education reforms. They emphasized in their reports that a new

approach to internationalization was necessary:

> We have put behind us the catch-up type of modernization we have
> been pursuing vis-à-vis the West during the century since the Meiji
> Restoration. We are on the verge of a great cultural turning point
> (*About Japan*, 1995, 48).

They approached this cultural turning point with some trepidation.   Some

saw internationalization as something that threatened to overwhelm the

country. Reflecting this, the NCER referred to their recommendations

regarding internationalization as steps required for "coping with

internationalization" (Lincicome, 1992, 125).

According to Roesgaard (1998, 205) there were three motivating factors

behind the implementation of an internationalization component in to the

curriculum:

1. a fear of losing identity
2. securing Japan's economic position
3. defining a global role for Japan in the global context

The NCER was not particularly interested in radically transforming

Japanese cultural norms. Rather, it appeared to reflect business interests in

the way it promoted internationalization as a means of smoothing economic friction (Roesgaard, 1998, 203). An example of this was the new recommendations on how to deal with returnees (*kikokushijo*). Previously they had been regarded as a problem for Japanese society. They were considered difficult to re-integrate and a potential source of cultural contamination. Now though, they were viewed as assets, valued for their ability to advance Japan's interests abroad (Lincicome, 1993, 137).

The NCER concluded in 1987 after having produced its four annual reports. After this the government continued to pursue education reforms. Following a spate of high profile crimes; the bursting of the bubble economy; and the tragedies of the Aum sarin gas attacks and the Kobe earthquake, the Ministry of Education asked the Central Council for Education to "search for ways to foster a new 'education for the heart'" (Ban & Cummings, 1999, 65). According to Ishii, in the 1990s Japan's Education for International Understanding finally moved closer to the objectives of UNESCO.

This embrace of UNESCO objectives did not overturn the strong focus on Japan and skill based learning that the NCER had promoted in the 1980s though. The Central Council on Education's recommendations for 1996

included the following points:

1. A good understanding of Japanese culture and traditions.
2. An emphasis on attitudes and skills as well as knowledge.
3. A better understanding of Asia and Oceania.

Recently, Prime Minister Abe Shinzo has taken up the conservative agenda for education. He has declared the promotion of patriotism and discipline in the public school system as one of the central goals of his new administration (Tran, 2006). Using the slogan "A Beautiful Country, Japan", he has pushed for the mandatory teaching of patriotism in the curriculum. Reminiscent of Nakasone's day, this desire to change the education system has been brought on by a perception that there is a crisis in today's education system, precipitated by a "downturn in (students') morals" (Abe, 2006).

2.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has looked at a brief history of internationalization in education in Japan. Internationalization has long been a part of Japanese education and it has undergone many changes since the establishment of the

first Ministry of Education in the Meiji era.

Japan began a conscious system of internationalization through Dutch learning, but later through English as well. In the beginning, at least, internationalization was intended to be a very practical realm of study. However enthusiasm has sometimes exceeded the original goals. All-out enthusiasm for internationalization and English has often been met with counter swings to nationalism, or at least to national introspection. Even when internationalization has been embraced, there have been two main and seemingly opposing visions: the practical and the ideal.

The practical goals of internationalization and learning English have shifted as Japan's national interests with regards to the world abroad have changed. Initially, some of the motivation for learning from the West was defensive (i.e. to close the military gap between themselves and encroaching Western powers). As the Japanese achieved their initial goals, their motivations for learning from the West changed. The Japanese became more interested in developing Western institutions (e.g. government bodies, legal system, education system, etc).

With the creation of comparable institutions and with the requirement

of re-building a devastated infrastructure after the Pacific war, Japan's goal became catching up with the West, particularly the United States, economically. With the achievement of economic success, the goals have shifted once more to catching up with the West politically. Added to these internationalization goals are domestic goals of dealing with a perceived crisis in education and public morals.

In Ozaki Shigeru's (2003, 13) opinion, all these waves of changes have left Japan with an internationalization for education program that is vague and "ambiguous" in its objectives. It seems that the difficulty in defining internationalization as discussed in chapter one is a problem that also affects the education system. It is reasonable to suspect that the rising and falling emphasis on internationalization and English would have some affect on English as a school subject. How coherent and compelling a vision of internationalization this produces, is a question taken up later in the dissertation. Before that however, the following chapter looks into how and why English is taught in Japan.

Chapter three

English as a component of Japan's internationalization

3.1　How and why do Japanese learn English?

Chapters one and two discussed how education in Japan has been politicized and internationalized. Chapter three now turns to look at English in order to draw a brief outline of it as a school subject and examine some of the Ministry of Education's goals for it.

As noted in the previous chapter, internationalization has seen a rising and falling emphasis in Japan. A corresponding rise and fall was also noted in Japan's promotion of English, ranging from its outright removal from the school curriculum to consideration of it as an official national language.

So, perhaps it is not surprising that the reason why English is studied or how it should best be taught is much debated. With her book *Nande Eigo*

Yaru No?, author Nakatsu Ryoko, poses the question to her Japanese readers, "Why do you study English?" (*Daily Yomiuri*, 2006a). While a similar work asking, "Why do you study French?" is unlikely to be found for learners of French in Canada, for example, the question remains the topic of much debate and soul-searching in Japan.

Nearly all Japanese encounter some formal English instruction in their life. Yet the average Japanese person does not require English in his or her daily life (Aspinall, 2003, 106). Even when going abroad there are extensive networks such as travel agencies and tour groups, so that travel from Hawaii to Rome, can be quite comfortably completed in Japanese. Not only is English not needed in daily life, an argument could be made that one of the languages of the neighbouring nations, such as Chinese or Korean, would be of more use.

Nevertheless, proponents of the subject consider it essential to Japan's internationalization and even to the well being of the nation. Ronald Dore (1979-80, 603) says that "(c)orrecting the sad state of Japanese (foreign) affairs is essentially what all the talk of 'internationalization' is all about." He goes on to stress the importance of English in achieving those

internationalization goals noting that compared to Japan, countries which are proficient in English and have a greater understanding of Western ways, have produced far more effective communicators on the world stage (608).

Interestingly, this need for effective communicators who are able to promote Japan's interests abroad is nearly identical to the need for them during the Meiji Period. Mark Lincicome (1999, 344) writes that in the Meiji era,

> Japan's sudden emergence on the world stage created demands for a new generation of talented cosmopolitans, whose knowledge of foreign languages and cultures could be employed to advance Japan's diplomatic and economic interests in the international arena, in an era marked by increasing global competition.

Rather than having anything to do with becoming a cosmopolitan operating in the international arena, for most Japanese the answer to the question, "Why do you study English?" is, at least initially, because they have to. School attendance in Japan is compulsory until age 15. At the compulsory level there is virtually 100% enrollment. In 1994 94.3% of Japanese students attended public (i.e. state run) junior high schools (*About Japan*, 1995, 28).

The Ministry of Education sets the course of study (*gakushu shido*

yoryo) for the public school system (*About Japan*, 19, 1995). Currently, most students receive six years of formal English instruction: three years in both junior high school and high school. At the junior high school level English is a required subject and makes up three classes (of 45 to 50 minutes each) per week. English is sometimes offered as an additional elective course as well.

While English instruction does not formally begin until the first year of junior high school, many elementary schools include some English education under the banner of 'comprehensive studies' (*sougo gakushu*). The amount of exposure to English elementary school students receive ranges widely from school to school, school board to school board. Some schools have weekly English classes and some have yearly visits by foreign assistant English teachers (often referred to as AETs, or as assistant language teachers: ALTs).

As public school teachers must be Japanese nationals, all public junior high school English teachers are Japanese. However, through the government sponsored Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program or AET programs, more and more, English is being 'team-taught' with native speakers (Fouser, 2001). Although team-teaching styles vary greatly, typically, the Japanese teacher teaches the grammar and vocabulary, and

ensures students have covered the textbook and are prepared for exams; the AET prepares 'fun' activities using English, models pronunciation, and offers insights into the culture of English-speaking countries.

The Japanese English teacher teaches new grammar and vocabulary in Japanese following the order they appear in the textbooks. Students refer frequently to the textbook, which acts as storybook, exercise book, and dictionary, all in one. They practice in class what they have learned with flashcards, question and answer practice, listen and repeat activities, copying out new vocabulary and model sentences, short translation questions, short written assignments, fill in the blank type activities, short CD listening activities, short companion videos to the textbook, model conversations and games (e.g. bingo). There is frequent testing. Despite the presence of a native English-speaker in the classroom, there is very little room for the students to actively or creatively use the language.

In addition to the time spent at school, many students take additional English lessons in the evening and on weekends at cram schools (*juku*) and high school and university preparation schools (*yobiko*), as well as English conversation schools known as *eikaiwa* (Baskin, 1996, 82).

3.2 Japan's poor results in English

Despite the considerable time, effort and money spent on English, generally the results in Japan have not been good. Much has been made of Japan's low scores on international English proficiency tests such as TOIEC and TOEFL (Seki, 2004, 5). When it comes to the TOEFL test for example, Japan ranks second last in Asia, with only North Korea performing worse (*Economic and Social Data Ranking*, 2003).

In Japan's defence, English is a relatively difficult language for Japanese speakers to learn, owing to the dissimilarity between the two languages (Reischauer, 2005, 388). These poor results can also be explained away by the sheer number of Japanese test takers dragging down the average. In countries where TOIEC and TOEFL scores are less important as credentials, only a select few actually take the test, presumably those who are interested in and / or good at English. Therefore those countries average scores appear higher.

However, Seki (2004, 5-6) notes that even if the numbers are adjusted to

take in account Japan's large number of test takers, Japan still performs poorly when compared to neighbours China and Taiwan. Further, Japan scores well in other subjects internationally, such as math and science, regardless of the large number of text takers (*About Japan*, 1995, 31). By some accounts, compared to a century ago, there even appears to be a regression in English ability in Japan (Reischauer, 2005, 388).

Critics have also placed much of the blame on Japan's lack of English ability on the strong focus on the grammar translation method (Aspinall, 2003, 106). While the Ministry of Education has taken steps to make students' learning more applicable, for example, through the use of JETs and AETs, steps like these continue to be counter-acted by the over-riding academic importance of the high school entrance examinations, which are mark sheet tests not requiring much communicative ability (Dore, 1979-80, 611; Fouser, 2000; Reischauer, 2005, 393).

Further, English is not conceived of as simply being a foreign language class. Rather, along with history and comprehensive studies classes (*sougou gakushu)*, English is an important component of Japan's Education for International Understanding (*kokusai rikai kyouiku)*. Therefore English is

taught, not as a foreign language, but as an international language (Ozaki, 2003, 1 and 12-13).

The assumptions behind that perspective determine how it is presented to the students. A foreign language is taught as a skill for communicating with people in a usually specific place. If one were to study Swedish for example, the assumption would be that one would be speaking with Swedes, likely in Sweden, and therefore some knowledge of Swedish culture would be beneficial to understanding the language. Similarly, even studying a more international language such as French as a second language, one might study it with a mind to the opportunities of speaking it within France, Quebec, or another French-speaking nation. English however, as an international language is de-nationalized. And as Sandra Lee McKay notes, "the purpose of an international language is to describe one's own culture and concern to others" (McKay, 2004).

A certain amount of cultural awareness in understanding is needed so the speaker can communicate without unintended problems (e.g. how to be polite, how to tell a joke, how to introduce yourself, etc.). Just how much culture (in terms of things like history, geography, pop culture, food, etc.)

must go along with learning a de-nationalized English is debatable.

Therefore what impact Japan's cultural focus in studying English is having

on the subject is unclear. In any event, what is clear is that the Ministry of

Education's goals for English cover far more than just becoming proficient in

the language or learning about English-speaking countries.

3.3   The Ministry of Education's goals for English education

When the Ministry of Education announced its first mandatory general

curriculum, 1958's 'Course of Study', it spelled out three objectives for foreign

language education at the junior high school level:

1. to develop students' basic abilities to listen to and speak a foreign
    language by familiarizing them with its sounds;
2. to develop students' basic abilities to read and write a foreign
    language by familiarizing them with its basic usage;
3. to develop students' basic abilities to understand the daily life,
    customs, and way of thinking of target language society.

As Seki (2004, 50) points out, while English at that time was not formally

named as the mandatory foreign language, thereby nominally leaving room

for other foreign languages, English was the de facto mandatory foreign language, owing to it being one of the major subjects on high school and university entrance examinations.

When the Ministry of Education revised the Course of Study in 1989 English was made officially compulsory. The three major objectives for English language education at that time were:

1. to develop students' basic abilities to understand a foreign language and express themselves in it.
2. to foster a positive attitude toward communicating in it.
3. to deepen interest in language and culture, cultivating basic international understanding.

Besides making English mandatory in name as well as in practice, Seki notes the major change between 1958 and 1989 was the inclusion of the word "international" in the objectives.

The Ministry of Education is currently aiming to graduate junior high school students who "can conduct basic communication". While the Ministry is not aiming for native level abilities, they are ultimately striving for the ambitious goal of an "entire public (who) can conduct daily conversation and exchange information in English" (Ministry of Education, 2003a).

Former Minister of Education, Toyama Atsuko lists the motivating

factors behind these goals:

-increased interdependence among nations
-global competition
-a move to an information society
-the necessity to resolve global issues (i.e. environmental issues)
(Ministry of Education, 2003b)

She claims that these factors go beyond just business interests or the

interests of the elite. This is an era in which "anyone" can become "active on a

world level."

Reflecting the Ministry of Education's emphasis on internationalization,

she accepts English's role as the common international language, but makes

no note of its usefulness as the language of the world's largest economy, the

United States, nor mention of its widespread use by native speakers in

countries such as Australia, Britain, Canada, etc. Rather she chooses to

describe it as the language that links people who have a different mother

tongue, thereby internationalizing the language, or in a sense,

de-nationalizing it.

Further, the benefits Japan stands to gain, in her view, are not a better

understanding of the world, so much as a way for Japan to be able to better communicate itself thereby "obtaining the world's understanding and trust," for the purpose of "enhancing our (Japan's) international presence." The explicit concern is that Japan is not currently being "evaluated" properly." There is no mention of whether Japan is evaluating the rest of the world properly or not.

In order to accomplish these goals, the Ministry of Education lays out several "actions" it either is implementing or plans to. They list a variety of proposals from publishing teaching handbooks to creating web pages in English. The most striking part of the Ministry of Education's plan is the inclusion of the promotion of Japanese language skills under the heading of improving English language skills:

> The acquisition of English is greatly related to students' abilities in their mother tongue, Japanese. It is necessary to foster in students the ability to express appropriately and understand accurately the Japanese language and to enhance communication abilities in Japanese in order to cultivate communication abilities in English.

> Also, in order to foster Japanese people rich in humanity with an awareness of society, who will live as members of an international society, it is important to enhance students' thinking ability, foster students' strength of expression and sense of language, deepen their

interest in the Japanese language, and nurture an attitude of respect for the Japanese language.

The logic behind of the first paragraph, that good Japanese language skills are beneficial to the learner of the English language, is understandable. However, the emphasis on promoting an interest and respect for the Japanese language within the goals for English is curious. The inclusion of goals for the Japanese language within the context of English language goals, begs the question of how uneasy the Ministry of Education is about the influence of English on Japanese language acquisition and Japanese identity.

The following chapter takes up this question with its examination of the debate surrounding internationalization and the role of English in the education system.

Chapter four

Criticism of internationalization and English

4.1 The internationalization debate

Having traced the development of internationalization since the Meiji period and discussed the teaching of English in Japan, this chapter comes to examine the debate around the internationalization of education and the direction various parties wish English education to take.

Japan's perception of internationalization in fields such as international relations, business, and education has long been perceived as a process of "adjusting to others," especially to the United States (Ippei, 1992, 119). However Japan has changed dramatically since the end of the Pacific War; Its economy is now the world's third largest (CIA, 2006a). Belying Japan's economic strength is its relative dwarf status in the world of international diplomacy. Japan is, for example, the second largest donor to the operation of the United Nations (UN) but is not a member of its permanent security council (*PBS*, 2005). This disconnect between economic power and political

power, combined with unresolved issues from the Pacific War, has caused confusion in Japan about what Japan's proper "national self-image should be and how it should project its national identity into the international system" (Buzan, 1988, 561).

As Koichi Kato puts it:

> The endeavour today is to find the genuine identity of this country. For decades now we thought this lay in economic achievement in catching up to America. But we've done that now. We're affluent. So for the past 20 years we've been soul-searching for something we should aspire to next (Smith, 2006).

It was with these aspirations in mind that Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro set up the National Council for Education Reform (NCER) in 1984, which initiated the most sweeping education reforms since the occupation era.

Internationalization was a key component of the NCER's recommended reforms. The NCER's vision of internationalization has come in for harsh criticism from both the left and the right however. Criticism from both directions has tended to be more ideological or political than pedagogical (Roesgaard, 1998, 145).

4.1.1 Left-wing criticism

The harshest criticism of the government's education reforms relating to internationalization has not come from extreme nationalists as might be expected. Rather it comes from left-leaning groups such at the Japan Teachers' Union (JTU) (*nikkyouso*) and the All Japan Teachers' Union (*zenkyou*). Common charges from the left include that the establishment's version of internationalization is only intended to promote Japan's economic status and revive the militarism of the past.

The left did agree with the NCER that Japan was dependent on the workings of a stable international order. However, each side's conceptions of the purpose of that order and what was required for its foundations have vastly different ideological underpinnings (Roesgaard, 1998, 204). The left would like to see internationalization in education emphasize global social issues such as peace and environmental issues, but felt that the conservative establishment was only using internationalization to further an agenda of big business and re-militarization.

Morita Toshio, a left-wing educator, claimed that the NCER's proposals

were really aimed at forming a *Pax Japonica* in Asia (Lincicome, 1993, 128).

Other critics from the left alarmingly claimed that NCER's motives were "a

new but no less dangerous form of imperialism than that which led to Japan's

militaristic adventurism of the 1930s and 1940s" (Lincicome, 1993, 130). One

ATU representative punned in Japanese that the NCER's version of

kokusaika (internationalization) was really *kokusaika* ("ultra nationalism")

(Roesgaard, 1998, 202).

Such claims have found a chorus of support abroad particularly in China

and South Korea, victims of Japan's aggression in Asia in the early 20th

century. China's *People's Daily Online* in talking about the Japanese

Ministry of Education's authorization of "right-wing" textbooks, claims that

"the Japanese government's international sense conception" seems to have

become very different than before." South Korea's *The Dong A-Ilbo* agrees,

pondering the ramifications of Japan's seeming disregard for the concerns of

its neighbours: "It's rash for Japan to try to play a leading role in

international society" (as reported by *BBC News*, 2005).

It is hard to know how sincere such comments are and how much they

are borne of a desire to block Japan's moves to gain a permanent seat on the

UN Security Council. Such criticism has met with a mixed reception in Japan.

The Sankei Shimbun urged for balance in education, while *the Daily Yomiuri* dismissed the Chinese and Korean pressure as foreign interference: "No foreign country should be allowed to exert pressure on the Japanese system" (as reported by *BBC News*, 2005).

Former Japanese ambassador to Saudi Arabia and Thailand, Okazaki Hisako (2006) has blasted the domestic "leftist forces" for using educational issues and the media to stir up international problems:

> Leftist forces in Japan obtained copies of confidential drafts of school textbooks prior to their government authorization, when they were in the screening process…they had the sensitive parts of the drafts run in newspapers and aggressively invited criticism from authorities and the media in China and South Korea.

Despite the press attention, domestic left-wing criticism has largely been ineffectual in directly influencing the government or the Ministry of Education. Despite their condemning words or perhaps because of them, left-wing criticism has largely been written off as the product of the highly polarized field of Japanese education. In other words, left-wing critics have been judged to over-react to "marginal" or even merely "provisional" changes

fearing they are the thin edge of the wedge in a return to militarism (Cave, 2001, 183).

Okazaki laments that the Japanese media cannot be silenced. However, the teachers unions have sometimes effectively been barred from important decision-making processes regarding education. For example, during the 1980s the NCER and the Ministry of Education were not obliged to discuss their propositions with the JTU (Roesgaard, 1998, 225).

In addition to being shut out by the government, the teachers unions have faced internal splits that have prevented them from presenting a strong unified opposition. Richard Tanter (2006) condemns the left's failure, saying that the left-wing's greatest fault has been its inability to articulate "a sustainable alternative to the present system inherited and imposed by the United States."

4.1.2 Right-wing criticism

By comparison, the right-wing has formed a much more cohesive front and has gained considerable access within the establishment (Roesgaard,

1998, 145). Like Nakasone, right-wingers have long wanted to re-habilitate Japan's identity and its national symbols, such as the national anthem ("*Kimigayo*") and the national flag ("*Hinomaru*"). However, where Nakasone wished to walk a middle course, returning Japan to so-called "normal country" status, the nationalists' approach has been much more radical (Hood, 1999, 8).

Gavan McCormack characterizes the extreme right-wingers by how they approach questions of Japanese identity with "sentiments of resentment, a victim complex and a longing of purity" (McCormack, 2000, 67). Fujioka Nobukatsu is one such resurgent nationalist. He is one of the key forces behind the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform, which argues that Japanese education has long been held captive to a "masochistic vision of history" (Nathan, 2004, 139). In order to restore what they see as the balance, organizations such as Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform have created education materials that emphasize only the nation's accomplishments. This had lead some critics to accuse them of white-washing history, especially those sections related to Japan's actions during the colonial period in Asia and the Pacific war.

Writers such as Nakamura Masanori and Gavan McCormack see the issues raised by the right as being not just in response to a gap left by the war; they also "represent a post-bubble, post-Aum phenomenon" of "eccentric, egocentric, nationalism....A nationalism that is curiously deformed" (McCormack, 2000, 67). Like the embrace of internationalization this egocentric nationalism is not an entirely new phenomenon either. It is part of the "oscillation throughout modern history between nationalism and internationalism, Westernization and chauvinism," (McCormack, 2000, 67) that chapter two examined.

Conservatives have come in turn to blame American occupation era reforms for current social ills. For example, at a training centre in Tokyo conservative instructors instruct young, new teachers to "re-learn the virtues of pre-war Japan"; to consider "what might have been lost during the 60 years of Japan's post-war education" (*New York Times,* 2006). This amounts to a not very veiled attack on the Fundamental Law of Education.

Western perceptions of what the Japanese have been doing with their education system have run the gamut. Writing in *the Japan Times*, Rachael Walker (2005) claims that Japanese internationalization is actually a process

of "other-izing" foreigners in order to shore up a unique and unified Japanese identity.

Despite the government's conservative tendencies, Roesgaard does not accuse the government of this sort of militant nationalism. Rather, in her judgment, the government has made a "mistake of balance" (Roesgaard, 1998, 24). She is sympathetic of their need to confront internationalism, but questions their emphasis:

> Certainly Japan needs to define itself in relation to the international community but the problem is, rather than defining Japan in relation to other countries, the effect of NCER's reports and the government's policies has been to define Japan in contrast to other countries (224).

Peter Cave (2001, 182) on the other hand believes that in criticizing government reforms "critics have just tended to focus on those measures which they see as embodying an incipient right-wing agenda" and that the government's reforms have all in all been quite balanced.

Considering all the different visions of internationalization, it is no wonder that "the Japanese people hold an ambivalent view of the problem of international understanding" (Goodman et al, 1983, p.4). As the next section

demonstrates, the Japanese hold equally ambivalent views about the English

language and how it ought to be taught, if at all.

4.2   Attitudes towards English

Despite English's international prominence, its use as the international

language is not without problems. To some, particularly those in nations that

are former colonies of the British Empire, it is a language of colonialism with

connotations of oppression. Prominent Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o, for

example, has called English, "a culture bomb"; "probably the most racist of

human languages" (Kachru, 1996).

One would not expect these sort of objections to be raised in Japan, as

Japan has never been a colony of Britain or the United States per se, as, for

example, India, Hong Kong, the Philippines and Ngugi's native Kenya have.

As a result of never having been colonized, Japan has never had English

imposed upon it as a functional language. However, history, through such

events as the opening of Japan by Perry's "Black Ships"; the devastating loss

of Pacific War; and the subsequent American occupation and long military

presence, has coloured not only how Japanese view Anglo-culture, but also the English language.

Japanese hold mixed views about English. Owing to English's prominence in travel, trade, entertainment, medicine and technology, (e.g. about 70% of information on the Internet is estimated to be in English) (*TRN*, 2001), English is viewed as an attractive cosmopolitan language (Tolbert, 2001). On the other hand, it is also the language of an invader and of modernizing forces which some feel to be tearing at the fabric of society.

That the Japanese have strongly mixed feelings about the English language and international studies is perhaps best represented in the actions of two recent prime ministers. While in office in the late 1990s, one of the goals of the late Obuchi Keizo was the elevation of English to official language status in Japan. Obuchi, an English major himself, felt strongly that the only way to produce English speakers was to make it a functional language in Japan. Contrast this with Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro, who while a notable fan of Elvis Presley, in March, 2006, chided a member of the opposition for using English-derived terms in the Diet (*Japan Times*, 2006b). After Prime Minister Obuchi's passing, interest in pursuing English

as an official language has all but faded.

On one hand, the Japanese public embraces English loan words such as recent additions to the language: *akauntabiriti* (accountability), and *paburikku inborumento* (public involvement); while on the other hand, committees are set up to look into the protection of the national language from the overuse of English-derived words (Brooke, 2006). As noted in chapter two, such seemingly contradictory attitudes are not new in Japan.

The study of foreign languages and cultures is a key component of Japan's internationalization education, and where internationalization has largely meant playing catch up to the stronger Western powers, it is not surprising then that the study of English cuts to the quick of what it means to be Japanese. According to Edwin O. Reischauer, Japanese fascination and fear of English is "symptomatic of the contrasting Japanese desires to be unique and international" (Reischauer, 2005, 392).

Opposition to English study and use in Japan can be generally classified into three categories: Opposition on the grounds that it…

1. promotes unequal power relations with English speaking nations.

2. has a negative impact on Japanese language learning.
3. includes undesirable cultural or ideological content

4.2.1 Language inequality

Critics such as Suzuki Takao and Tsuda Yukio, whom Robert Aspinall (2003, 108) identifies as "nationalist scholars", believe that learning English to communicate with English speaking countries is part and parcel of an internationalization whereby Japan changes its ways to match the ways of more dominant societies. They see this as a relinquishment of status and an admission of inferiority to countries such as America. Suzuki gives as an example, that when Japan's Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi met with US President George Bush, he gave up his "linguistic sovereignty" by speaking English rather than his native tongue (Shishin, 2002).

Such nationalists resent English's position as the world language. According to Aspinall (2003, 111), Tsuda and Suzuki advocate resisting "the dominance of English as an international language" and argue that Japanese "should help defend the rights of other languages and work towards preserving 'language ecology.'"

Reiko Hatori (2005, 1) agrees, claiming that "the spread of English has produced serious problems for affected countries." She argues that the promotion of English around the world is actually a form of "linguistic imperialism" designed to promote the interests of the major English speaking nations, particularly America and Britain. Correspondingly this system sub-ordinates non-English speaking countries within a linguistic hierarchy of which Japan is near the bottom. In response to such a system, Hatori suggests Japan should "promote minority languages and discontinue obligatory English education."

The discontinuation of mandatory English education is unlikely to occur any time soon. In fact, the Ministry of Education is making tentative steps towards making it mandatory from elementary school. However, even the NCER was critical of the state of foreign language education: "They wished to see the promotion of other foreign languages and to move away from the traditional focus on America" (Roesgaard, 1998, 217).

Some have also commented on the dangers of relying too heavily on English too for gaining information about the rest of the world. This, they say, leads to Japan having to depend on foreign interpretation of other cultures

(Aspinall, 2003, 109-110).

Ronald Dore (1979-80, 607-609) even points out some of the advantages to Japan not having adopted English like former British colonies: Japanese have "kept a certain solidarity with their fellow citizens rather than people of their religion or profession." Presumably the Japanese language is one element that helps to keep them united as a people, and has acted as a barrier to the labour drain that occurs in countries that have an educated English speaking population, but not the opportunities that they may find in the West. Japan has largely been immune to this phenomenon. Interestingly, compared to other Asia nations Japan has a relatively small diaspora: Only 1.04 million Japanese have emigrated abroad since the beginning of the Meiji era in 1868 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2000).

Of course there are rebuttals to these arguments that English promotes unequal power relations (Dore, 1979-80; Shishin, 2002). Whichever view one supports, the fact that there is opposition to English learning in Japan on the these grounds is by itself significant.

4.2.2   The effect of English on the Japanese language

The Meiji generation has been praised for its English proficiency. At the same time it has also been dismissed as a role model for learning English. Opponents of English education claim that the Meiji generation was exceptional, in that it could know English well, only because it knew Japanese better than today's generation does. Therefore, the critics come to the conclusion that today's generation had better learn Japanese better first, before wasting time on English (Shishin, 2002).

The current Minister of Education, Ibuki Bunmei has voiced such an opinion about English education. When speaking about the planned mandatory introduction of English into the elementary school curriculum he commented:

> Teaching English may be necessary in the global community, but as a Japanese, one must first be able to speak proper Japanese (Makihara, 2006).

He frames English not just as another subject like art, music, math or science, but being in direct opposition to Japanese.

Indeed, the most common refrain amongst opponents to increased English language education is that it takes away from Japanese language acquisition. In talking about proposals that English should be made mandatory at primary school, Keio University professor Otsu Yukio, states "if primary schools add something new, they will have to cut something else" (Nakanishi, 2006). It is clear what he is afraid will be lost: "We can't hope to make the entire general public perfectly bilingual. It's crucial that children first establish a firm foundation in Japanese as their mother tongue and learn its structure."

There is a fear that English is damaging Japanese by taking away from study time and by introducing numerous English derived, non-kanji (Chinese character) based terms. Nakamura, for example, fears a "dumbing down" of Japanese (language)" (Shishin, 2002). Like Tsuda, Suzuki, and Hatori, he sees English as an invading force to be stopped.

In contrast to these concerns, public support for English instruction in public schools appears high. This support has been tempered though, by a notable downturn of late. The number of people who support English as a mandatory subject in primary school has decreased significantly since 2004:

In that year 87% supported such a proposal. However in 2006, upon the release of the Central Education Council report stating that English should be mandatory from the 5th grade, the number was only 72%. *The Yomiuri Shimbun* suggests "this result likely reflects agreement with the argument that priority should be placed on learning Japanese in primary school." While 59% of the people asked said that learning English at the primary level "was good because children could get used to English at an earlier stage," 36% replied that the priority should be on learning correct Japanese (*Daily Yomiuri*, May 29, 2006). Perhaps the survey questions were leading, but the results seem to indicate a growing belief or fear amongst the public that learning English is somehow in opposition to learning Japanese.

Chapter three noted the Ministry of Education's belief that being able to think and express oneself well in Japanese reinforces one's ability in English. This may well be a valid point. However the explicit inclusion of Japanese language education under the heading of English is suspect. It appears that as much as the Ministry of Education is willing to support English education it feels it has to simultaneously defend itself against it. Kumiko Makiko (2006) has a strong argument when she calls such thinking symptomatic of "a

stubborn insular mentality still prevalent among Japan's elite." This insular

mentality towards English is, as the statistics indicate, also present in the

general public, but as of yet, not prevalent.

4.2.3 Objectionable content

The introduction of Western values through English teaching material

has proved to be controversial in some countries. Some have viewed foreign

language teaching as potentially exposing children to undesirable cultural

values or cultural comparisons. As a result, in Chile, the Ministry of

Education has decided to focus on Chilean culture in their English textbooks,

entitled *Go For Chile*, rather than Western culture. Another example occurs

in Morocco, where educators have raised concerns that the inclusion of

Western culture in textbooks may cause students to become dissatisfied with

their own culture. Some teachers there have even expressed the opinion that

it is inappropriate to expose students to certain Western values, such as

non-traditional gender roles (McKay, 2004).

Like the fears of English overshadowing Japanese there are those who

fear that Western Culture is overshadowing Japanese culture too. Similar to how Chilean students study their own culture when learning English, critics Tsuda and Suzuki believe that Japanese students should only study Japan through English. They believe that when it comes to content "(t)he history and culture of foreign countries should be excluded from English language lessons. Subjects such as 'English for International Understanding' should also be excluded." Instead the focus should be on Japan and how Japanese can "express their ideas *to* foreigners" (Aspinall, 2003, 109).

Aspinall (2003, 108) explains that nationalist critics are scornful of the many Japanese who are 'over-eager' to learn English and absorb Western culture. They bemoan the fascination with English, likening it to a form of idol worship, figuring it stems from the aforementioned inferiority complex. Japanese women come in for particularly harsh criticism for their interest in English.

Beyond the objections to the politics of language and of Western culture, there are also questions regarding the ideological content of the texts. Terri Seddon (1987, 214) writes:

(There is a) common sense view of a non-political curriculum. This ideology of the 'non-political' rests upon an implicit separation of an education and political sphere of activity. In consequence the former and its constituent parts – education, teachers, curricula – appear 'non-political'…The nature of the Japanese history textbook dispute usefully challenges this implicit fragmentation and hence the ideology of the non-political.

The politicization of history books has been much commented upon (Apple, 1988; Hein & Selden, 2000; Loewen, 1996). Compared to history or moral education, most people would probably not consider English language to be a very political subject. However, English textbooks have also been politicized, although in more subtle ways. As a result of this subtly very little has been written on the subject.

Ostensibly the aim of foreign language classes is to acquire a certain degree of competency in a second language. What really occurs is more complex than that. Of course, it is hard for anyone to spin an agenda with sentences like, "This is a pen," whose sole meaning is to demonstrate a grammar point. But from the introduction of the first foreign character, English as a subject presents a certain worldview.

To be sure, the view that the English text presents is not as problematic as that of history texts. English texts are not bound to include any particular

facts or information beyond the required vocabulary and grammar. In this sense they are much freer. One cannot fault English texts for failing to mention contentious issues such as the Nanking Massacre.

English texts being less politically restrained have much more opportunity to be idealistic. Compared to the history texts the English texts tend to follow the "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all" rule. This does not mean, however, that the texts cannot suffer from stereotypes or that they cannot have an agenda.

The dissertation now turns to a discussion of the importance of school textbooks before moving on to the close reading of the English textbooks in the following chapter to examine what kind of worldview they do in fact present.

Chapter five

Textbooks as the main medium of instruction

5.1   Focus on the textbook

Before moving on to the comparison of the textbooks, it is important to

ask why such attention should be paid to textbooks. There are several

reasons. Textbooks play an invaluable role in education. Harriet Talmage

(1972, 22) enumerates their many positive attributes: They…

- are relatively inexpensive.
- avoid wasting time in evaluating numerous materials.
- avoid decisions on who should select materials.
- facilitate changes in staff.
- are designed for large groups
- allow the principal to keep track of progress.
- make clear what the curriculum is.
- ensure a systematic approach to the material.

They also ensure a level of standardization across a school district.

Textbooks become a vital part of a student's education, particularly in

Japan where their use is legally mandatory (*About Japan*, 1995, 19). In

public junior high schools the textbooks are supplied free of charge to the student (*About Japan*, 20). They are used regularly throughout the year and travel with the student back and forth between school and home. For this purpose, Japanese textbooks, in comparison to their gigantic North American counter-parts, are designed to be lightweight and portable. In some respects they resemble magazines more than the North American image of a textbook.

The great importance the education system places on the textbooks is ceremoniously communicated to the students on their first day of junior high school. As an AET I have witnessed several junior high school commencement ceremonies where a student representative receives a complete set of the first year textbooks bound with a red ribbon on behalf of all of the new students from the principal. The principal then instructs the students to use the textbooks with care ("*daiji ni tsukatte kudasai*") (Kataoka, 2006).

Textbooks are an important focus in studying education owing to the central position they occupy in a student's school life, and due to the fact that they "contain a philosophy of education" (Talmage, 22). As Hein and Selden (2000, 3) put it:

Schools and textbooks are important vehicles through which contemporary societies transmit ideas of citizenship and both the idealized past and the promised future of the community.

It is because of this importance that the texts have become politicized, and fought over. Seddon (1987, 216) says that,

Since the late 19th century state control of textbooks has been an important means of transmitting an hegemonic ideology to the people of Japan and has therefore been a critical focus for political struggle (1987, 216).

Japan's textbooks are particularly interesting as they have governmental approval. This has proven to be particularly controversial in the case of the history textbooks. Under Japan's Textbook Authorization system, the government selects the privately produced texts, which meets its detailed requirements for public school use. This puts an official stamp on the texts and by extension legitimizes their content and promotes their use.

This highly controversial system has been criticized for censorship. The government has argued in its defence that textbook screening is necessary to ensure quality. The government's stance that it does not create the texts, or

mandate their use, while at the same time giving its official stamp to them, has been at best confusing and at worst infuriating to critics at home and abroad (Hein & Selden, 2000, 8).

It is true that the government does not actually have the authority to dictate which texts are used in a given school. Local school boards make those decisions. However the gatekeeper position the Ministry occupies largely influences what kind of textbooks those school boards have to choose from (Nathan, 145).

The government has attempted to counter criticism of its textbooks with, for example, the creation of the International Society for Educational Information (ISEI), which happens to be an arm of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Hein & Selden, 45; Embassy of Japan). McKenna (1999) lists the three main functions of the ISEI:

1. to check the accuracy of education material about Japan
2. to publish educational material about Japan
3. to act as a consulting centre for educational material about Japan used abroad

The ISEI operates the Japan Textbook Research Center, located in Tokyo. It was established in 1976 by the Minister of Education for the

purposes of furthering the scholarship of education and promoting international understanding and is the largest of its kind in the world. It houses not only all the textbooks approved for classroom use by the Ministry of Education since 1949 but also texts from around the world that feature Japan (*Japan Textbook Research Center Homepage*, 2006).

It should be mentioned that the center has been essential in conducting this research. All the texts surveyed in the next chapter were accessed there.

Whether the criticism of the government's textbook authorization system is warranted is an important issue, but a separate one from the focus of this dissertation. What this brief chapter has set out to explain, is how important an understanding of the resulting textbooks is to understanding the nature of the Japanese education system. Having established the importance of textbooks in general, the next chapter moves to a close examination of the textbooks themselves.

Chapter six

A close reading of junior high school English textbooks

With its internationalization policies Japan has made systematic study of the world outside its shores an integral part of its education system. As conditions have changed domestically and internationally, so have internationalization policies and attitudes towards internationalization. As English is an integral part of Japan's Education for International Understanding, English, as a subject has also been affected by these changes.

The dissertation now comes to examine how these changes in policies and attitudes have been reflected in Japan's junior high school English texts over the period 1948-2006.

6.1   Why publisher Kairyudo was chosen for the study

Historian Ienaga Saburo once said quite critically, with regard to Japan's history textbooks, that "the certified textbooks are every last one very similar, with only slight differences in style – meaningless" (Ienaga & Minear, 2001, 155). The same could be said about its English texts. A comparison of contemporary texts produced by different publishers reveals very few substantive differences. By and large the format, tone, layout, and

teaching points, are identical. This is not very surprising, considering, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the Ministry of Education sets the curriculum and ultimately authorizes all public school textbooks. Much greater differences can be found in comparing the texts by generation than publisher. Therefore, considering the differences amongst the publishers to be moot, this dissertation examines the texts of one major publisher: Kairyudo.

Publisher Kairyudo's texts were chosen for this study for a number of reasons. One, Kairyudo has been publishing Ministry of Education approved English texts continuously since 1948, under several different titles: *Jack and Betty*, *Steps in English*, *New Prince*, *Hello Friends,* and *Sunshine English Course.* No other publisher in Japan has been publishing as long, continuously.

The second reason is the relative fame and importance of the early Kairyudo series, *Jack and Betty* which served as the primer for most Japanese students in the period following the Pacific War. As Cohen, Irwin and Hotelling (1999) explain:

The influence of the Jack and Betty books in Japan should not be underestimated. For a generation of students it served as the beginning of English language study. Just as important as teaching English, at an impressionable age it uniformly shaped a generation of young Japanese perceptions of life in the United States. Many middle-aged Japanese recall memories of these books during their school years.

The third reason is my own familiarity with the Kairyudo *Sunshine* series, which is the text in use in Tokorozawa, Saitama where I am employed as an assistant English teacher (AET).

6.2   Changes in Kairyudo's English textbooks (1948-2006)

The following texts form the basis of the survey:

1. *Jack and Betty* 1948
2. *Standard Jack and Betty* 1965
3. *Steps in English* 1965
4. *New Prince* 1965
5. *New Prince* 1971
6. *New Prince* 1974
7. *New Prince* 1977
8. *New Prince* 1980
9. *Sunshine English Course* 1987
10. *Sunshine English Course* 1990
11. *Sunshine English Course* 1996

12. *Sunshine English Course* 2001
13. *Sunshine English Course* 2006

Each year is comprised of three textbooks, one for each of the three grades of Japanese junior high school.

In order to explore changes in national identity and Japan's connections to the world, close attention is paid to six categories in particular:

1. Representation of foreign culture
   a. Native English speaking characters
   b. Characters who speak English as a foreign language
2. Japanese identity
3. Awareness of cultural differences
4. Morals and social issues
   a. Traditional moral values
   b. Global social issues
   c. International agencies
5. The Internet
6. Discussion of English within the texts

The textbooks have changed in many ways since 1948. The first things one notices when comparing them are the physical differences: Size, the quality of the paper, the colours, number of photographs, etc. The textbooks of the 1940s are pocket-book-sized (21x15cm), numbering about 80 pages (Image 1). They are completely in black and white except for a little bit of red

on the cover. The paper is of the same quality of that of a paperback novel.

Today's texts however, are magazine-sized (26x18cm), containing about 115

pages (Image 2). They have bright, glossy covers. They are printed on high

quality paper and feature full colour photographs.

Upon reading the texts, one sees that the changes in the content have

been dramatic as well. The dissertation will now compare and contrast the

textbooks within these categories over the past six decades.

6.2.1   Representation of foreign culture

To start, the way in which foreign culture is represented has completely

changed over the past 60 years. *Jack and Betty* (1948) which was written by

three Japanese scholars (Hagiwara Kyohei, Inamura Matsuo, and Takezawa

Keiichiro), under the direction of an American (Layton Horner), feels similar

to American texts of the day, such as the *Dick and Jane* readers (Cohen et al,

1999). As with *Dick and Jane*, it revolves around the two titular child

characters, who in this case are 12-year school children from Chicago in the

first grade text, and one year older in each of the following two texts.

The original *Jack and Betty* texts are so American-centric that Japan appears to be the foreign culture, not the United States. Because the texts are written from an American perspective, the United States is not presented to the students so much as the students are immersed in American culture. The American life in the texts revolves around an idealized version of the traditional family. The two families have typical English names: the Smiths and the Jones. Jack and Betty's fathers are respectable middle class workers (an "engineer" and a "merchant", respectively), and their mothers are shown to be happy homemakers.

Jack and Betty mentions other foreign nations, besides the United States, in a positive light, but mostly in passing as travel destinations for Americans. *Jack and Betty* uses Jack's traveling salesman uncle who sends postcards to Jack from abroad as a device to introduce other nations (e.g. England, Italy, France). In one postcard he writes positively of France, praising its commerce and order: "The French people are very proud of their capital. It has many beautiful streets and parks. The stores are full of pretty things" (1st gr., 1948, 21).

The focus on American culture remains stronger than on any other

nations through the texts of the 1960s and 70s. Gradually the texts begin to include more in-depth, independent mention of other nations, particularly other English-speaking nations (e.g. Britain, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand). *New Prince* (1980) shows beginning signs of a more diverse internationalization. For example, it features an "International Dinner" in which guests from several nations are presumably present. However, only the American girl and the Japanese boy are identified (2nd gr., 50-51) (Image 3).

The 1987 *Sunshine* series initiates a big transition in the representation of foreign culture. Countries other than the United States receive far more mention and are covered in more depth. There are large sections featuring Australia and England (Image 4). Non-Western nations such as Kenya, Papua New Guinea, and Singapore, are also featured. The United States still remains by far the most prominent foreign nation though.

Nonetheless, the trend away from heavily focusing on the United States continues. *Sunshine* (1990) is even more diverse and less American in its focus. One typical section features the story of the first men to reach the summit of Mt. Everest. The section focuses first on Nepalese, Tenzig Norgay, paying him slightly more attention than New Zealander, Edmund Hillary,

who is often given the greater acclaim (1st gr., 71).

In the current *Sunshine* (2006) it is clear that the United States, while still, the single most prominent foreign nation, is no longer the central focus. After meeting the main character who is Japanese, the first foreign character you meet is from Canada, followed by a Chinese character and one from Brazil.

Recently non-Western, non-English speaking countries have been given more mention, as have aboriginal communities within English-speaking countries, notably Australian aboriginals (Image 5). The non-Western nations are admired for their positive qualities (e.g. nature, traditional culture, diversity) and their connections to Japan are also noted. For example, Kenya is praised for its beautiful nature and wild animals. Its Mt. Kilimanjaro is compared to Mt. Fuji, and Nairobi is compared to Hiroshima. Students are also told that:

> There are many Japanese in Kenya. They are helping people in cities and villages. They are working for the country with great hopes (*Sunshine*, 1987, 2nd gr., 42-43).

It is also worth noting that the modern texts resemble travel brochures

with their alluring photos of the world, alternating between breathtaking natural beauty (e.g. Niagara Falls, Yosemite National Park, Ayer's Rock, etc.) and impressive man-made attractions (e.g. the Empire State Building, Tower Bridge, etc.) (Image 6).

6.2.1.1   Native English-speaking characters

Starting with the eponymous *Jack and Betty*, a constant feature of all the texts is the use of recurring cartoon characters to introduce and model grammar points and conversations. As the emphasis on speaking has increased this feature has become more prominent.

The role of the native English-speaking cartoon characters has changed in several ways. The texts use native English-speaking cartoon characters at first to model a sunny version of middle class American life, as seen from an American perspective. As the *Jack and Betty* series focuses almost exclusively on the United States, all of its characters are American (i.e. Jack, Betty, their friends and families).

With the introduction of Japanese characters, the role of the American

characters changes. The texts use the American characters to show positive interaction with Japanese characters and to introduce the United States, along with the English language. The perspective also changes from an American one to a Japanese one

Initial contacts between Japanese characters and Americans are friendly but kept very general and brief. For example *Steps in English* (1965, 3rd gr., 39) represents Japanese / American interaction with the following scene: A young Japanese boy, Noburu, approaches a man in the park only identified as "foreigner" and strikes up a short conversation with him (Image 7).

Regular characters from other English-speaking countries such as Britain and Canada do not begin to appear until *New Prince* (1980). The texts of the early 1980s portray the Japanese / native English-speaker relationship as one of student and teacher respectively. The native English-speaker teaches the Japanese pupil about English and his or her home country. The texts gradually show the native English-speaking characters taking on more of an interest in Japan and Japanese culture though. Where the cultural exchange is largely one-directional in the texts of the 1960s, it is more mutual

in the 1980s. Emphasizing the mutual relationship between Westerners and Japanese, not only do Japanese go abroad (e.g. on home-stays) but Westerners also start coming to Japan as students.

The *Sunshine* series shows Western characters who are interested in Japan and Japanese culture, but are not very knowledgeable or adept. For example, *Sunshine* (1987, 2nd gr., 60) has a foreign teacher explaining, "I am studying about Japan at a Japanese university now. My Japanese is still bad, so let's speak English." (*ima nihon no daigaku de nihon no benkyou shite imasu. watashi no nihongo wa mada warui desu. dakara eigo hanashimashou.*) (Image 8). *Sunshine* (1990, 2nd gr., 40) portrays Miss Fields, a teacher from Canada, as being surprised by the Japanese food natto and having a hard time eating it (Image 9).

These foreigners are portrayed in a positive manner however, as they are shown to be willing to try new things and engaging Japanese culture. This willingness to try Japanese things becomes more and more pronounced. In *Standard Jack and Betty*'s (1965, 2nd gr., 116) story, "One Evening On Ginza Street", Americans come to Japan only to have a thoroughly Western experience in Ginza, eating sandwiches, drinking coffee, and enjoying the

bright lights. Contrast this with *Sunshine*'s (1987, 3rd gr., 66-69) story of a Hawaiian who came to Japan in order to become a sumo wrestler, and who "tried to be Japanese in every way and married a Japanese woman."

Western interest in Japanese culture has become a regular, growing feature in contemporary texts. There are several examples of Westerners embracing Japanese culture in the *Sunshine* series: An American family says they often buy tofu (1987, 2nd gr., 34); An American girl tells her Japanese pen pal that "eating sushi is popular in Portland" (1987, 3rd gr., 6); A Japanese TV reporter finds there are Japanese stores in London (1987, 1st gr., 73); The character Nancy admires the art of Hokusai in a New York museum (1987, 2nd gr., 33); In a chapter entitled "I Love Japan" (*nihon, daisuki*) Emily studies Japanese writing, Pat collects Japanese dolls, and Ann likes Japanese movies (1996, 1st gr., 28-50); Canadian children are said to write haiku poems (1996, 2nd gr., 82); In 2001 Lisa from Canada is keen to speak Japanese and speaks it with more confidence than Yuki, her Japanese friend, speaks English; In 2006 Mike, a young Canadian, attends an international school in Japan, and has apparently grown up in Japan.

6.2.1.2 Characters who speak English as a foreign language

Foreign characters for whom English is a second language are a rather recent addition to the texts starting in 1990. *Sunshine* now features characters from Brazil, China, and Singapore who have come to Japan. The texts show them speaking English and occasionally Japanese.

They serve three main functions: First, they introduce some elements of their own cultures to a limited degree, such as their home cuisine. Second, they are used to prompt discussion about Japan. A combined example of these two functions is when at an international potluck dinner, a Brazilian character commenting on sukiyaki compares Brazilian food with Japanese food (2006, 2nd gr., 20) (Image 10).

In prompting discussion of Japan the foreign characters are also used to raise social questions from a different perspective. For example, in *Sunshine* (2001, 1st gr., 35) the Brazilian character Mario asks the Japanese character Takeshi if they need so many vending machines in Japan, a question for which Takeshi has no answer (Image 11).

Third, the non-native English speakers are used to internationalize

English by diversifying the international experience. These non-native English-speaking characters are shown in a positive light. They speak English with confidence, and their presence takes the focus off of the culture of English-speaking countries transforming English from being the language used to speak with native speakers of English, to being a language of international communication. This also helps to remove the teacher / student relationship that is inherent in many native English-speaker / Japanese relationships in the texts.

6.2.2　Japanese identity

To the reader used to today's texts, the absence of Japanese characters comes as quite a surprise. Indeed, there is no reference to Japan in *Jack and Betty*'s (1948) 1st grade text whatsoever. The first reference to Japan comes in the 2nd year almost as a token aside: Jack receives a postcard from London from his Uncle George who says he will go to Osaka the next day on business (17). Following this, the only reference to Japan comes in the form of a model sentence, merely used to demonstrate the passive voice: "Japanese is spoken

in Japan" (2nd gr., 33).

The American themed texts ignore Japan throughout the next 20 years. *New Prince* (1965) still contains no references to Japan, but for one ghost story called "Mujina".

The regular inclusion of Japanese content constitutes a dramatic change. Japanese characters start to appear in the 1970s texts. *New Prince* (1977) introduces the Oka family and the texts look set to revolve around the Oka children like they once revolved around Jack and Betty. However after the beginning of the first year, the Okas rarely appear, giving way to the more traditional stories.

Initially the texts show the Japanese as recipients of Western learning such as in the story of John Manjiro, the first Japanese person to go to the United States and learn English (*New Prince*, 1971; 1974). The texts include stories of Westerners who taught the Japanese: *New Prince* (1977, 3rd gr., 21) features the story of William Adams in which the shogun Ieyasu is described as having "learned from William Adams mathematics, the movements of the sun, the moon and the earth and many other things." *New Prince* (1980) features the story "Boys Be Ambitious" about Dr. William S. Clark who

helped start an agricultural college in Hokkaido and was a great inspiration to his students there.

In contrast to the active qualities of the foreign teachers, the first Japanese characters can be described as passive, reacting to situations. For example, in *Sunshine* (1987, 2nd gr.) Takeo as a guest on a home-stay in the United States, is largely silent in comparison to his host family. He answers their questions but asks few of his own. He appears to be in a constant state of surprise (Image 12).

As more Japanese characters appear in the texts, the texts become more introspective and mindful of a Japanese perspective. The increasingly Japanese perspective is evident in *Sunshine* (1996): The first few pages of its 3rd year text are written largely in Japanese despite the students having learned English for the previous two years. In the first section entitled, "Japan and the World", the text explains to students how:

> Japanese culture has been formed by tying together the cultures of various countries and regions. There are things around us that seem like they've always been in Japan that have actually come from foreign countries.
> *(nihon no bunka wa sekai no samazama na kuni ya chiiki to musubi tsuite katachi tsukurarete kimashita. watashitachi no mawari ni wa,*

*saisho kara nihon aru you ni jitsu wa kaigai kara haitte kita mono mo
takusan arimasu.)*

The textbook takes its time actually getting to the subject of English. It first focuses on the international community, telling how, for example, the Japanese word for bread (*pan*) comes from Portuguese, and how the words for pumpkin (*kabocha*) and potato (*jagaimo*) are derived from "Cambodia" and "Jakarta" respectively, where they were originally imported from.

Then in a section entitled, "Let's Talk about Japan", the influence of world culture and its impact on Japan is praised: "Japanese culture is a blend of different cultures. This blend has made our lives rich and interesting" (24). At the same time, students are instructed to seek a balance between world culture and Japanese culture, and to make sure to preserve their traditional culture:

> For many years our country has learned a lot from foreign cultures. But we still have much of our own traditional way of life. I'm sure we'll learn more through international exchange. But at the same time, we want to keep the good parts of our culture and build a better future (18-19).

Japanese characters gradually become more active, and Western

characters are shown less in superior roles. Instead, they are shown more as equals, as fellow students. Reflecting this change *Sunshine* (1996) again mentions William Adams. Yet here he is referred to as someone who "worked" for Ieyasu, rather than someone who taught him (3rd gr., 22).

Contemporary textbooks now revolve around a Japanese character, Yuki, a junior high school student with many international friends and classmates (*Sunshine* 2006). Further, where all the role models of the previous texts are Westerners, the texts from 1987 on feature inspiring Japanese people such as Ototake Hirotada, Mukai Chiaki, and Kawai Junichi. Japanese are shown assuming the active roles that Westerners previously occupied as teachers, doctors, scientists, and aid-workers abroad in developing nations such as Nepal, Kenya and Papua New Guinea.

Japanese culture is also shown to be influential around the world. For example, *Sunshine* 1990 shows how Singapore has adopted Japanese policing methods by implementing a *koban* or police box system with Japanese assistance. Recent texts also depict foreign students coming to Japan to study, such as the college student, James Chen from Singapore in *Sunshine* (2006).

Further moving the focus away from the United States and towards

Japan, there has been a move away from the inclusion of native English speakers in every section. Stories and particularly exercises with only Japanese characters, places, names, foods, etc. have become common (Image 13).

6.2.3 Awareness of cultural differences

Attention to cultural differences and similarities has been a notable feature since the beginning of the *Sunshine* series. This has also come about as the texts have moved away from the strong American focus, towards a more international one. The texts are overwhelmingly optimistic and positive in their embrace of the international community: *Sunshine* (1987, 1st gr., 74) states, "We're all from different parts of the world. But we are all friends."

Sunshine also emphasizes a mutual awareness of cultural differences. With sections entitled "We Look at Japan This Way" it includes the opinions of young foreigners about Japan. It instructs students to be conscious of their behaviour towards foreigners, to be careful not to cause offense (Image 14). It also gives them practice in "explaining Japan to foreigners" with questions

like "Do you really eat raw fish?"; "Do you always take off your shoes when you enter a house?" and "How do you take a bath?" (*Sunshine*, 1990, 2nd gr., 103).

Sunshine (1990) takes up the issue of cultural misunderstanding. The consequences though are treated as minor or even humorous. For example, as a result of one cultural miscommunication, one Japanese student ends up having to eat tomatoes, which she dislikes, every day of her home-stay.

Sunshine (2006) takes a more serious and thoughtful approach. As a result of a cultural misunderstanding, a foreign character, Jenny, is shown having genuinely hurt feelings. Japanese students are encouraged to explain Japanese customs to foreigners so as to avoid such misunderstanding. Further, some of the onus is placed back on the foreigners to learn more about Japanese customs (Image 15).

One exercise in the most recent *Sunshine* (2006, 3rd gr., 14 – teacher's ed.) is particularly assertive in this respect. In it, a young foreigner taken with *anime* (Japanese cartoons) reprimands his father, a long time resident of Japan, for his lack of knowledge about Japan:

Mike: You've lived in Japan for a long time, Dad. You should learn more about Japanese culture.
Father: Maybe you're right.

6.2.4 Morals and social issues

Moral education has traditionally played a great role in Japanese education. Under SCAP however, during the American occupation, formal morals classes, which were blamed for encouraging militarism, were eliminated (Luhmer, 1990). The teaching of proper social behaviour did not completely disappear, but was sublimated into other subjects, such as English.

Even today with the reintroduction of morals classes, there remains a moral tone to the English texts. Further, English along with social studies is considered and integral component of Japan's Education for International Understanding effort.

6.2.4.1 Traditional moral values

Texts from 1948 to 1980 incorporate traditional moral lessons in their

English lessons. They emphasize such traits as honesty, fair play, hard work and intelligence through traditional proverbs and the examples of 'great men' taken almost exclusively from Western culture. *Jack and Betty* (1948) contains stories with moral and / or witty endings with George Washington, Columbus, Marconi, Albert Einstein and Abraham Lincoln. *Standard Jack and Betty* (1965) has stories with Noah, King Solomon, and Columbus, while *New Prince* (1965) features Helen Keller, Lou Gehrig, Father Flanagan, Dr. Schweitzer, George Washington Carver and Johnny Appleseed (Image 16).

There is a notable Judeo-Christian religious element to some of the lessons. Besides using Noah and King Solomon as role models in *Standard Jack and Betty* (1965), *New Prince* (1965) offers "Love God, or you won't be happy," and "Work hard and love God, and you'll be happy," as model sentences, presumably for students to memorize; A *New Prince* (1965) story also ends with the proverb, "God helps those who help themselves." Another example occurs in *New Prince* (1980, 3rd gr., 42) which tells the story of Robinson Crusoe. The shipwrecked Crusoe is shown as a missionary bringing English and Christianity to his native companion:

I began to teach him English. He soon learned the words yes and no. He called me master. I also told him about the words of God. It was hard for me to do that. But it was fun for him to learn a new language.

American holidays also feature in the texts. Christmas is depicted regularly though the years. Thanksgiving also appears and is described in *New Prince* (1965, 3rd gr., 56) as "the day when we should give thanks to God."

6.2.4.2 Global social issues

Together with *Sunshine*'s (1987) shift towards a greater international focus, a shift occurs in that year from lessons with moral or religious themes to ones that include what could be described as global social issues. While a few moral fables and stories of famous Western role models, such as Mother Teresa in *Sunshine* (2006), remain today, they have largely been replaced by characters' conversations that have social and environmental issues woven into them.

The texts from 1987 on are very 'green'. The only prior mention of the environment was in *New Prince* (1965), which makes a brief mention of the American holiday, Arbor Day, when children are encouraged to plant a tree.

Sunshine (1987) on the other hand, has an environmental theme running throughout (Image 17).

This concern for the environment has since become a standard feature of the texts. For example, *Sunshine* (1996) has a section on protecting the forests. The current *Sunshine* (2006) texts repeatedly mention technology or energy sources which are not harmful to the earth such as solar power (Image 18). It also includes an impassioned speech by a child environmental activist.

In addition to the conservation theme, the promotion of peace, charity, volunteering, and diversity have all become major themes. *Sunshine* (1987) contains no overtly religious references like before, rather it promotes a more secular message of peace and love, using, for example, a section on John Lennon that paraphrases his song, "Imagine":

> A world which has no countries; It is shared by everyone. There are no greedy or hungry people. There are no rich or poor people. All of them love each other and live in peace (3rd gr., 2).

Sunshine continues to promote a message of love and peace through to the present. *Sunshine* (1996, 2nd gr., 76) tells the story of "the Sound of Music", and contains the line, "In war there are no winners. All are losers." *Sunshine*

(2006) also has an anti-war tone in its inclusion of Hiroshima bombing

related material (Image 19).

6.2.4.3 International agencies

Hand in hand with the shift to global social issues, and an international

focus, comes the prominent display of international aid organizations to

which Japan is a contributor and / or member.

The first mention of such an international organization in the texts

comes in *Sunshine* (1987, 2nd gr., 36) when Takeo, a Japanese exchange

student in New York, makes the unlikely request to visit the UN

headquarters.

After that international agencies are mentioned with increasing

frequency. *Sunshine* (1996) abounds with the mention of international

organizations: the UN, UNESCO, UNICEF, and the Red Cross are all

mentioned. Along with the names of these organizations, their missions are

worked into the lesson themes. *Sunshine* (1996) features such model sentences as, "Education is a right"; "Good health is a basic right"; and in reference to the UN, "This flag means that world peace is very important."

Texts also highlight homegrown Japanese organizations such as the Japan Overseas Co-operative Volunteers (JOCV) (*Sunshine*, 1990; 2006) and the Japan Environmental Association (*Sunshine*, 1996). A new addition is the inclusion of organizations which involve children as participants, such as the Environmental Children's Organization (ECO) and (the fictional) Kid-Act (*Sunshine*, 2006).

6.2.5 The Internet

With the Internet becoming widespread only in the past decade, IT is naturally a relatively new topic in the textbooks. In the past there have been sections devoted to such communication skills as letter writing and using the telephone. Writing an e-mail or using a camera connected to a computer to communicate with friends can be seen to be an updated version of those skills. However, the Internet gets far more attention than letter writing and

telephone practice ever did.

In *Sunshine* (2001, 2006) students make calls, video letters, and learn how to send e-mails and surf the Internet. The international nature of the Internet is emphasized.

The Internet is a new medium which, in its variety of functions, exists on a completely different scale than older media. For many Japanese it will be their most direct and comprehensive link to the world outside of Japan. Accordingly, the *Sunshine English Course* encourages use of the Internet to:

1. to learn about foreign culture and make international friends by communicating with other children around the world

2. stay in touch with friends while they are abroad

3. to learn about volunteer activities.

It also includes a section on "netiquette", polite, proper use of the Internet (Image 20).

6.2.6 Discussion of the English language as a subject

The texts of the 1940s to 70s make no reference to the study of English as a topic. However the discussion of English as a subject becomes a regular feature starting in 1980. *New Prince* (1980; 1987) asks the question, "Why do we study English?" and proceeds to rationalize the study for the students:

> When we study a foreign language, we see things from a different angle. We can see them more clearly and understand them better. English is an important international language. You'll need it in business and in science. English is fun, too. You can enjoy English songs, TV programs, movies, books, and so on. You can also talk with foreign people and write to pen pals in other countries.

The *Sunshine* (1990) series actively promotes English in the section "Let's Study a Foreign Language." It describes English as an international language. New texts show the usefulness of English in the world, but also show that English is but one of many world languages. Texts open with a picture of children from around the world saying "hello" in their native languages, and a chart showing the populations of speakers of various world languages (Image 21).

English is shown to be a tool for international understanding. Increasingly English is used as the in-between language for Japanese and non-English speakers such as when Japanese students go on a school trip to Korea. But even as the international language, it is not the be-all and end-all. In *Sunshine* (1990; 2006, 3rd gr., 44) a JOCV volunteer recommends learning English "as an international language", but also that "it is important for us to learn the language of the local people" (Image 22).

Sunshine (2006, 2nd gr., 21) also encourages debate about English's importance:

> Student A: I think English is very important. We don't have to learn other languages.
> Student B: Do you really think so? I don't agree with you.
> A: Why not? Many of my friends agree.
> B: Well, I know English is important, but other languages are also important.

6.3   Chapter conclusion

This chapter has examined the great number of changes in terms of content in Japan's junior high school English textbooks over the period

1948-2006. English starts off as the language spoken in the United States. But in time, with the introduction of characters of other nationalities and the relocation of the setting to Japan, English is viewed more as an international language. To be sure though, standard prescribed English usage remains American English throughout (i.e. spelling, vocabulary).

Despite retaining American English as the standard, the role of English has been reshaped from the language used to communicate with Americans, to the international language, used to communicate with anyone, anywhere. Moreover, English is now used as a language to talk about Japan, as much as it is one used to talk about the United States and the rest of the world.

The following chapter will provide a more in-depth analysis of the meaning of these changes in terms of the internationalization and politicization of the education system as discussed in previous chapters.

Chapter seven

Analysis

Examining the texts across time has been very helpful in gaining a broader picture of how internationalization and English are related, and what the Ministry of Education has been doing with English as a subject. Looking at the texts from the past 60 years has shown how as the focus of Japan's internationalization has changed, how English has been conceived as a junior high school subject has also changed.

Japan's Education for International Understanding changed dramatically with the American occupation, and again notably with the reforms initiated by Prime Minister Nakasone and the NCER. The change in the content of the English texts has correspondingly been dramatic. The

dissertation now comes to analyze the meaning of these changes.

7.1   Major changes in the textbooks

To one used to today's 'Japan and the world'-themed texts surely the biggest surprise is to see that the English texts of the late 1940s do not have any Japanese characters or any connection to life in Japan. The texts change little over the following two decades. By the late 1960s Japanese characters do appear here and there, but always with a connection to native English-speakers – usually Americans. Then by the late 1970s and early 1980s Japanese characters become more common, but still in relation to native English-speakers, although not always Americans. The Japanese characters are generally passive in contrast to their Western counterparts.

Japanese interacting with foreigners in a mutual way is a rather new development. At first, Japanese interact almost solely with native English-speakers, but recently with non-native English-speakers or even with other Japanese while using English.

While some changes have been occurring gradually, the 1987 *Sunshine*

series initiates the most dramatic set of changes. In that year there were several important shifts:

1. The "internationalization" of the texts: A shift from the United States as the main foreign focus to a more widespread international focus.

2. The "Japanicisation" of the texts: A shift to a fully Japanese point of view, with active Japanese characters, positive Japanese role models acting in the world, and abundant use of the Japanese language and Japanese culture in the texts.

3. The "greening" of the texts: A shift from an emphasis on traditional morals to global social issues (i.e. environmentalism, development aid, the promotion of peace).

The recent promotion of IT (i.e. The Internet) in the texts is another major development. As the importance of the Internet has grown in this decade, mention of it in the texts has increased.

7.2   How closely do the textbooks match the Ministry of Education's goals?

Chapter two looked at how immediately following the Pacific War, Japan's internationalization was greatly influenced by the United States. Under the direction of SCAP, Japan radically reformed its education system. The UN through UNESCO briefly influenced the system in the late 1950s and early 60s, emphasizing a more international outlook. The focus soon returned to the United States though, and the Japan began to add a greater degree of Japanese content to it Education for International Understanding.

The Ministry of Education then undertook major reforms of the education system in the mid-1980s. In so doing, they sought to make the Education for International Understanding a mix of understanding of the West; understanding of other parts of the world, particularly concentrating on Asia and Oceania; self-reflection on Japanese culture; and once again UNESCO aims for education.

For the most part the texts reflect these changes in focus over time. The texts, from 1948 to the end of the 1960s, focus mainly on American culture. UNESCO's Education for International Understanding seems to have made

little impact on the texts during this period however.

The texts of the 1970s and early 80s do reflect the Ministry of Education's desire to include, along with more Japanese content, a more international perspective. That the texts of 1987 contain the greatest changes to occur over the past 60 years is to be expected considering the reforms initiated by Prime Minister Nakasone and the NCER in the mid-1980s.

The recent inclusion of Internet related sections in the English textbooks is reflective of the Ministry of Education's desire to include more IT education in the curriculum.

7.3   Whose vision of internationalization do recent textbooks mostly closely represent?

Chapter four, in examining the internationalization debate discussed how opposing parties have wished to see internationalization in education take different directions. Chapter two also noted how since the Meiji period, there has been a tug-of-war between nationalists and internationalists over

education. Rather than producing texts that could be classified as politically right-wing or left-wing, the Ministry of Education has authorized texts which are a hybrid of influences, reflecting a variety of goals across the political spectrum. They promote a vision of world order, based upon respect for differences, human rights, education, environmental concern, and international organizations. Japan is portrayed as a helping country and English is portrayed as a tool for communicating with people from around the world. In this reformulation of the subject the importance of the United States has been diluted, and in a sense English has been as much de-nationalized as internationalized.

So-called conservative concerns, such as shoring up a positive Japanese national identity and ensuring the next generation is able to compete in the world economy, are dealt with in these texts along with such liberal concerns regarding the promotion of peace and environmentalism. These varying visions of internationalization manifest themselves in the textbooks in a surprisingly coherent manner, and not ambiguously, as Ozaki Shigeru's (2003) analysis of Japan's Education for Internationalization would suggest.

Recent textbooks contain a considerable amount of Japanese content.

They are by no means ultra nationalistic in this respect though. The texts are

a mixture of engagement with the world, where students take active roles,

and introspection on Japanese identity, designed to help students explain

themselves to others.

The nationalism represented in today's texts is healthy in the sense that

foreigners are always presented in a friendly manner. Even in the cases

where Japan is seen giving assistance, the texts take care not to be

condescending. For example, the *Sunshine* (1987) story that shows Japanese

giving development assistance to Kenya also includes the line, "We can learn

a lot from Kenya" (2nd gr., 42).

Foreign culture is seen to be different, and to be different is explicitly

OK. As a poem in *Sunshine* (1996, 1st gr., 65) puts it, "We're all different but

that's OK. We're all unique and we're all happy."

It is as Peter Cave (2001, 182) suggests "…that the Ministry (of

Education) is in fact pursuing a middle of the road policy in political

terms…however critics have tended to focus on the right wing agenda."

Indeed, that the texts embrace as many concerns of the political left as they

do, is a bit of a surprise considering how left-leaning groups, such as the JTU,

have largely been shut out of the education decision making process by the conservative establishment.

7.4 Why are the texts the way they are?

The Ministry of Education appears to be trying to integrate the promotion of the nation's interests within the framework of an international community. It appears to be trying to simultaneously preserve traditional culture while working towards common goals with other nations.

In pursuing its twin goals of greater status on the world stage and ensuring a stable world order, the Japanese establishment has finally embraced development education. Although development education has come to Japan later than to other developed nations, UNESCO's goals for education are now having a greater impact on the internationalization of Japan's English curriculum and therefore, its textbooks. This is most apparent in the representation of international NGOs, and environmental concerns.

This conclusion concurs with the work of Yuri Ishii (2001), which

suggests that this sort of focus on development education is one means for a middle power to strengthen its international status through the use of soft-power. With the messages of peace, volunteerism; environmentalism; the positive contribution of Japan in the world; and the value of traditional cultures, the Ministry of Education is using the textbooks to promote a "healthy nationalism." The texts are designed to encourage the students to be good world citizens, as good Japanese citizens.

One of the most representative examples of the Ministry of Education's internationalization in English can be seen in *Sunshine* (2006, yr. 3). This lesson incorporates the use of the Internet, an NGO, active student participation, volunteering, interaction with foreign culture, and of course, the use of English as the international language (Image 23, 24).

It is also worth noting that this lesson has backfired in a minor way. Perhaps ironically proving the Ministry of Education's point that the next generation will need to be more tech-savy, the publisher made the non-tech savvy oversight of using a fictional web address in the textbook. After publication the address, www.kid-act.com, was opportunistically snapped up by a company who mimicked the *Sunshine* text's site's design in the creation

of their own site. However, instead of using the address for a volunteer network for kids, the company offers a chat network, games, and dating services; the sort of site schools discourage students from visiting.

7.5 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has examined the relationship between the major changes in the English textbooks since 1948 and the changes in the Ministry of Education's goals for English and internationalization. The chapter noted that changing Ministry goals have generally been reflected in the texts, with the greatest changes, since the occupation era, occurring since the late 1980s. The chapter also noted the wide range of interests recent texts seek to promote, and their overall political balance.

The following chapter, the conclusion, will summarize the dissertation's findings, raise a few questions for future consideration, as well as connect the findings to the larger political picture raised in the introduction and chapter one.

Chapter eight

Conclusion

As Japan begins to assert itself more on the world stage, more people will begin to take note of its hard-power. Japan's military spending is already amongst the highest in the world (CIA, 2006b). It is understandable, even if running counter to Japan's track record over the past 60 years, that Japan's re-emergence as a military power reawakens fears and diminishes the usefulness and credibility of its soft-power.

Some of this fear has spilled over into the realm of education. Some may be cynical about Japan's "real" intentions regarding internationalization. Some suspect that it is a mask to cover nationalistic or economic ambitions. After all, Japan's aggression in the 20th century was preceded by a period of failed internationalization.

The goals of any nations are myriad and in flux. Economic, political, and

social goals jostle with each other. Added to this competition, domestic and international aims sometimes seem to contradict each other. Therefore, it is difficult to find an internationalization program that will fulfill all of a nation's goals to everyone's satisfaction.

Yet it remains especially important that Japan come to terms with its identity with regards to the rest of the world. Barry Buzan (1998, 570) writes:

> …until (Japan's) nationalism is legitimate, it cannot play the full global role that its power and influence now demand and the overall well-being of the international system requires. In this way, if in no other, Japan needs to be the 'ordinary country' that Nakasone tried to make it.

Mark Lincicome (1993, 150-151) notes that:

> (t)he crux of the problem remains how to accommodate national goals to international ones and how to accommodate a new, "modern" Japanese identity…

Education is one means by which Japan has made moves to legitimize its nationalism and come to terms with its identity:

> …the school, like the state itself, is a site where different classes and interest groups regularly engage in ideological struggles over meaning, values, and principles. Dominant ideologies are thus products of compromise. （Lincicome, 1992, 125）

The results of this study seem to bear this out, as the texts surveyed here appear to be a product of just such compromise.

8.1　Summary of findings

This study has examined the internationalization of Japan's education system, focusing on its post-war English textbooks. It has shown how education is very much affected by politics and that the current texts are very different from the texts the Ministry of Education authorized immediately following the Pacific War. The political nature of history texts is bound to be more obvious and problematic than with English textbooks as they are called upon to describe power relations. Naturally, they have drawn more attention. However, English, as seen here, is also a political subject.

Chapter one discussed how the Japanese equivalent for internationalization, *kokusaika,* is not really a true equivalent. *Kokusaika*

has largely meant, for Japan, getting in sync with the West. Chapter two showed how as the West and Japan have changed over the past 150 years, Japan's internationalization goals have also changed. Broadly speaking, they were about catching up militarily, and then catching up economically, now they are about catching up politically and diplomatically. Public enthusiasm for internationalization and English in Japan has waxed and waned depending on factors such as economic conditions and public confidence.

Chapter three examined how English is taught in Japan and the Ministry of Education's current goals for English, which emphasize communication skills, international understanding, and interestingly, knowledge of Japanese culture. Chapter four discussed how different groups would like to use the internationalization of education to different ends, thus making the process controversial, and the education system political. Broadly speaking the right would like to see internationalization used to promote Japan's economic and political interests abroad, while strengthening patriotism at home. On the other hand, the left would like to see an internationalization program that promotes global social issues such as peace and environmentalism. The second half of the chapter commented on how

issues of Japanese identity complicate the teaching of English in Japan; The public and top educators alike hold deeply ambivalent attitude towards the subject, yet Japan continues to put considerable resources towards a system that produces notably poor results.

Chapter five then established that the textbooks are the most important teaching resource and, as a result, the most important medium in communicating ideologies to the students. Chapter six looked at the changes in Japanese identity and relations with the rest of the world over the past six decades by comparing and contrasting the junior high school English textbooks over the period 1948-2006. The major changes noted were: the greening of the texts (i.e. the move from emphasizing traditional moral virtues to promoting global social issues, such as environmentalism); the internationalization of the texts (i.e. the move from focusing on the United States to including countries from around the world, and the reinvention of English as the language of native English speaking countries, to the language of international communication.); and the Japanicisation of the texts (i.e. the greater focus on Japanese culture, and the increased Japanese content in the texts over time.) Finally, chapter seven analyzed these changes

with regards to the different visions of internationalization, coming to the conclusion that the texts are a surprisingly coherent hybrid of concerns from both the left and the right. In short, the texts, while political, are fairly politically balanced.

8.2   Limitations and questions for future consideration

Several questions have been raised by this research that go beyond the scope of the original point of study. Just as the educational debate has "tended to…concentrate on political issues rather than pedagogical issues" (Roesgaard, 1998, 145), so has this dissertation examined the internationalization of education issue through a political lens. Therefore this study has largely looked at the texts without regard to their quality as language texts.

While it is beyond the scope of this survey to go into great depth, it is worth noting that with the change in goals and content over the years, there has also been a change in form. For example, comparing texts from the 1940s with 2000s and we see the purpose of model sentences in the 1st grade texts of

the 1940s is largely to convey grammar. While this makes sentences simple, it also makes them not very meaningful as communication.

For example, *Jack and Betty* (1948, 1st gr., 5) contains the simplistic model sentence, "Are you a boy?" (Image 25). However, recent texts have, even at the start, loaded meaning on to the point of obscuring the grammar, burdening the student. Beginning students are given, as a comparable model sentence, "Are you an international student too, Mike?" in *Sunshine* (2006, 1st gr., 17) (Image 26).

As a result of the focus on political nature of the textbooks, the study does not take into account how compatible the goals of internationalization are with the goals of learning English as a foreign language. It may be worth asking whether the political ends of these textbooks conflict with or enhance the learning of English. Further, an examination of the textbooks themselves in isolation does not take into account how teachers are presenting the material or how children are reacting to them.

It would also be interesting to compare the public school texts with privately produced texts used for example, in English conversation schools, in terms of which is more useful for the goal of teaching English, which has

more information on the target cultures, and which is liked better by children.

A preference for privately produced texts would call into question the priorities of the Ministry of Education's goals vis-à-vis internationalization and English education.

A greater examination of internationalization in other nations' English textbooks would also shed some light on how 'normal' it is for Japan to talk so much about itself in its foreign language texts.

8.3   Final words

Internationalizing English frees it as a subject from its traditional focus. One does not have to aim for native like levels, and one is free to talk about anything one likes, not just the customs of English-speaking countries.

This makes the English texts a convenient means to shore up healthy nationalism. The Ministry of Education has used the idea of English as an international language and the inherent ambiguity of the word internationalization to shift the focus away from solely concentrating on the United States to mutual interaction with Westerners, to Japanese acting in

the world.

The texts have become more authentic in terms of the realism of the conversation, but less authentic in terms of a foreign experience in their turning away from immersion in American life. Students are studying more about how to interact with a foreigner, for not only the purpose of learning about foreign cultures, but also for teaching foreigners about Japan. The subject of these texts is often Japanese culture.

Japanese English classes are about far more than gaining competency in a foreign language. It could be argued that that is a secondary function of the class. While a degree of language acquisition is necessary to appreciate the full message of the texts, preparing students for contact with the world outside of Japan (through international understanding, awareness of Japanese culture, knowledge of the Internet) may be as important an objective for internationalization as the acquisition of proficiency in English. For that matter, individual junior high school students may be forgiven, if learning English so that Japan can compete on the global stage is not an immediately compelling motivation for them.

It is not the intention of this study to apologize for the Ministry of

Education's history textbooks, which have gathered the most international attention. Unlike the history texts, the English texts are not required to broach any negative subjects, unlike the history texts. The "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all" rule generally applies. In cases where the texts do tackle a negative subject such as the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, they are able to leave out the agents of those incidents without fear of reproach or controversy.

What can be said here though, is that in their English classes, through their textbooks, students are receiving a positive worldview that encourages both active interaction with other cultures, and respect for Japanese culture. The English textbooks reflect a variety of goals and are surprisingly complex in their multiple ambitions.

Since the beginning of Japan's formal education system in the Meiji era, there have been numerous pendulum swings in Japan's education for international understanding. The key to avoiding such swings would seem to be to forge a middle path that incorporates the concerns of both ends of the political spectrum, but does not push too far in either direction. With the current textbooks, Japan appears to be on such a positive, well-rounded, and

hopefully sustainable course.

While I have reservations about the overall quality of the texts from a pedagogical perspective, the changes made in order to meet the goals of internationalization over the past 60 years, particularly the past 20, are impressively balanced and to be commended.

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