

Online-Section-Meeting „Education“ (VSJF), November 3rd 2023 10:00-13:00 (CET), 09:00-12:00 (GMT), 18:00-21:00 (JST)

The section meeting «Education» at the annual conference of the German Association for Social Science Research on Japan (VSJF) is a network for (young) researchers and students interested in education in Japan, but also for people outside the academic context. Our aim is to provide an opportunity to engage with the topic of education and its political and social implications in the Japanese context and to promote exchange between people from different backgrounds. We see ourselves as a forum for young scholars and students to present their research (from finished papers to work-in-progress) and benefit from feedback from senior scholars and the interested public.

For further information please refer to <https://vsjf.net/die-vsjf/fachgruppen/fachgruppe-bildung-und-erziehung/> or contact me at vincent.lesch@zo.uni-heidelberg.de / education@vsjf.net

Zoom:

Meeting-Link:

<https://eu02web.zoom-x.de/j/67570953807?pwd=bGl3OUZXWnhCSmxVOGZyS3pvTkdkdz09>

Meeting-ID: 675 7095 3807

Password: 340839

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Opening remarks

Vincent B. LESCH (Heidelberg University)

The Social Context of Collective / Collectivism Education in Japan in the Postwar Era

Shinichi AIZAWA (Sophia University)

This presentation focuses on the change of educational practices in Japanese primary and junior high schools in the postwar period of the United States' occupation of Japan. During this period, the concept of "democracy" was introduced into classrooms while experiential learning was emphasized. As Japan entered a period of rapid economic growth, business elites and political leaders started demanding the provision of highly standardized subject-based education with academic and vocational tracking. Consequently, a form of collective education was provided by teachers who sought democratic values as a counter discourse to business elites and political leaders at that time. It emphasized on collective activities to promote equality of learning opportunity in classrooms. However, this educational practice was familiar to the way of working of the manufacturing industry, which exhibited substantial development at the time. It coincided with the emergence and growth of

collective educational practices as well as rapid economic growth. Therefore, people remembered this collective educational practice as “戦後民主主義 (postwar democracy)”; it became an important collective memory in the context of Japanese education in the postwar era.

How did the collective aspect in Japanese school trips emerge?

Akimasa SUGANUMA (Kyushu Sangyo University)

School trips are an important aspect of collective education in Japan. However, Japanese school trips differ from the educational trips conducted in other countries; this is because they are conducted at both the secondary school level, as a part of their compulsory education programs, as well as the high school level; the style of implementation ensures that all students in the same school grade participate in the trips. As almost all junior high schools and high schools in Japan conduct school trips, they are considered one of the “national rites of passage” in the sense that almost all people who have reached a certain age experience them. School authorities usually decide the destination of school trips, and students have little choice in this matter. According to the Ministry of Education, school trips impart knowledge of “collective school life” and “collective behavior.” This study examines the formative process of the school trip culture from the viewpoint of social constructionism. The modern educational system was established in Japan during the Meiji period (1868–1912) with the purpose of strengthening the nation’s military power; the early school trips conducted at teacher training schools also had a military training aspect in the Meiji period. However, military necessity was not the main contributing factor in the popularization of school trips. After World War II, school trips were conducted in almost all the secondary school level and high school level. The main factors were the stakes between leisure-hungry teachers and travel agents, and the sense of equality held by parents who had experienced inequality during the wartime. While school authorities decided to conduct school trips in response to the sales activities of travel agents, parents did not oppose the trips and make their children on the trips as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. School trips were listed in the curriculum guidelines of the Ministry of Education after the popularization of school trips. This study shows that the collective aspect of school trips was not due to emerge from the educational significance of “collective school life.”

A collaborative approach with the community to ensure educational equity: Focusing on "displacement" from the existing order

Ayaka NAKANO (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science)

In this presentation, we would like to discuss how to “ensure educational equity” from the perspective of collaboration with local communities. Schools and communities have long been inseparable entities, but in the trend toward centralization of education, the presence of local communities was diminishing. A shift in this policy was made in the 1970s and 1980s. Under the trend of deregulation and downsizing of funding for education, the focus on children's “problem behaviors” in schools, such as delinquency, bullying, and classroom disruptions, led to a reduction in the educational function of children concentrated in schools. To compensate for the decline in children's “educational functions” of schools, cooperation with local communities is to be promoted. It was the late 2000s that the

perspective of educational equity was included under the policy on school-community partnerships. Here, a perspective that is not based on "compensation" logic, but is "participation" logic can be seen. However, guaranteeing fairness in education includes the perspective that "all children can exercise themselves regardless of their socioeconomic background and that all children can enjoy a good quality education. In other words, children need to be guaranteed a place to learn while shifting their socioeconomic background and their former physical arrangement in modern society. Therefore, it is difficult to guarantee equality in education simply by creating an environment in which children can "participate" in activities. In this presentation, we will focus on the perspective of "shifting the existing body arrangement," which is seen as "politics" by Jacques Rancière, in considering the guarantee of educational equity. Here, we would like to examine the possibilities/limitations of children not only participating in educational activities but also transforming their own perceptions and the surrounding environment in which they are situated, in collaboration between schools and communities. Specifically, first, we will focus on the community problem-solving class in collaboration with the local community, and consider how children may or may not change the existing order as they try to work on transforming the community and surrounding environment. Second, we will focus on classrooms for children who are not attending school, which are operated in collaboration with the local community. Here, we will examine, on a trial basis, how children's perceptions of their own positioning in society and their existing physical arrangement may or may not be altered by their autonomous actions that they can behave due to the differences from classrooms or free schools.

*****SHORT BREAK*****

Watashitachi no dōtoku: Official morality in Japanese schools

Lukas BARTEL (Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf)

Children attending school in Japan are taught the subject of moral education. Since the early Meiji period, the teaching of a uniform and national morality has been part of the basic curriculum of state-run primary schools. Moral education became one of the state's strongest instruments for stabilizing Japan's society, which was marked by upheaval and change, with the help of normative provisions. Later, the ultra-nationalist and militarist regime instrumentalized the subject to morally bind the population to the aggressive expansion of the empire. It was not until the defeat in 1945 that this system ended, when the U.S. occupation removed the moral education subject from the curriculum and retired many active morals teachers. Democratic reforms aimed at transforming the school into a place of free and tolerant personality development, without a powerful central bureaucracy. However, two historical factors turned the tide once again. First, the U.S. transferred sovereignty back to the Japanese, so that the still strongly conservative and traditional ruling elite stopped the Americans' liberal approaches. On the other hand, the revolution in China and the Korean War strengthened nationalist tendencies. The political leadership clung to traditional values and elevated them to an anti-communist protective wall. The Kishi administration then rehabilitated moral education. Since then, conservative LDP governments have periodically engaged in political moralizing, touting 'patriotic education' for the benefit of national interests. In 2002, the Ministry of Education published and funded

a textbook for teaching moral education called *Kokoro no nōto* (Booklet of the Heart). In 2014, the *Watashitach no dōtoku* was published as an expanded glossy work. A large number of the texts included align with the patriotic education goal of the 2006 education amendment. To this day, nationalistic tendencies that seek to reinforce traditional values seem to have increased. The 'patriotic' education exerts a legitimizing effect on today's nationalism. Taking moral education as an example, I would like to present a comparative analysis of two textbooks from two different historical periods, both of which were edited by the Ministry of Education. By way of preparation, I outline the development of moral education from the early modern Meiji period to the present. This is followed by analyses of the textbooks *Jinjō Shōgaku Shūshinsho*, which was used in the Japanese Empire, and *Watashitachi no dōtoku*, which is used today. The result of my research contains, on the one hand, mainly external, stylistic and methodological differences based on the widely divergent historical periods. On the other hand, commonalities emerge on the functional level: the push for a state-dominated, uniform public morality. Concluding, this kind of state-run moral education, which I call 'official morality', competes with the autonomy of individual, socially negotiated moral concepts, and tends to negate their existence.

Granted self-determination and being with others – a pedagogical search for a more relational image of human being between Germany and Japan

Sandra TÖPPER

One of the main goals of German pedagogy is to lead the individual to become reasonable independent. Within this perspective it's more about the formation of correct individuality than about developing the dependency on others. The question here is whether such an image of human beings still meets the challenges of our time. Currently, ecological and social crises show that humans are dependent on harmonious relationships with the world and with others. If this isn't considered, humans will not be able to cope with these challenges or with their own vulnerability in the world. To do better there is a young pedagogical search for a more relational image of human being within the German pedagogical anthropology. Within my conversation contribution I would like to briefly outline why German traditions of thought in pedagogy find it so difficult to move away from their own anthropocentric view of human beings. In the next step I want to map out a common field of reflection (based on the approach of François Jullien) on this topic between Germany and Japan. For this I introduce critical objections from Tetsurō Watsuji, Takeo Doi and Bin Kimura against an anthropocentric thinking about human being. I chose these authors because they are already better translated into German. These three authors argue for human beings to be situated relationally in relationships between humans and between humans and their climate.

Within this common field of reflections between German and Japanese of thinking about the image of human being I want to ask if by others granted self-determination within a being with others and within the world isn't a more harmonic image of human being than just focusing on individuality and independence.

Teaching controversial history in Japanese classroom: examinations of teachers' perspectives on their approaches

Yumi DUNBAR (University of Manchester)

History education is of growing significance in global society because of its role in nurturing national identity and its impact on domestic and international relations. Japanese history education about the Fifteen Years' War (1931-1945) is important for developing Japanese national identity and citizenship (in spite of its negative heritage), and it matters greatly to neighbouring countries who suffered from Japanese aggression, both for moral reasons as well as for the maintenance of domestic narratives legitimising their nation states. However Japanese teaching about imperialism and the war has been a source of debate and conflict mainly due to a lack of a dominant or shared narrative of the war in Japan and the East Asian region.

It is largely believed that Japanese students superficially learn about controversial events during the war. This is because most research on Japanese history education about the war focuses on textbook contents and curricula, and together with Japanese history education being understood as a transmission of knowledge has led to the understanding that textbook contents are merely passed on to students essentially verbatim. The research that has explored how the war is taught indicated a variety of ways that teachers handle this controversial period of history which suggests that investigating classroom teaching practices would bring a greater understanding of this subject, but teachers' perspectives on such matters as what/how they teach about sensitive topics or their decisions around the way they teach have not been well investigated.

My research used qualitative data gathered from interviews with social studies teachers and lesson observations in Japanese junior high schools to examine how teachers handled sensitive topics (i.e. the battle of Okinawa and Japan's wrongdoings), with attention being paid to the influential factors that affect teachers' decisions on how they teach. The influential factors are examined using the theoretical framework of action space landscape which helped to illuminate the complex interconnected factors that affect teachers when teaching sensitive topics. My presentation aims to facilitate our understanding of Japanese history education about the war and highlight the significance of teachers' role as a mediator between the curriculum/textbooks and students.

Final discussion and closing remarks