

〈特 集〉

GLOBALIZATION OF JAPAN'S EDUCATION

Yasushi Kikuchi †

Waseda Institute of Asia- Pacific Studies

E-mail: ykikuchi@mn.waseda.ac.jp

1 . The Starting Point of Internationalization

Recently, the term globalization has been heard in a number of sectors. Basically, it is to think about matters on a global level based on a large worldview. The concept of globalization can not be defined as an absolute one. Here I would like to define the concept of globalization that could be to represent the aspiration of a world community that respects universal standards of fundamental human rights for individual autonomies and is characterized by a sensitivity to the need for global solidarity and a recognition and acceptance of socio-cultural differences. When it comes to thinking about the globalization of education, could it be that one theme that needs to be stressed is “cultural learning”? It can be easily assessed that if “cultural learning” were the starting point, then one extremely important point would be to look at inadequate Japanese cultural policies. Moreover, for example like the term “U.S.-Japan trade or economical friction”, the meaning of cultural friction can also be easily grasped. The foundation of the present problem of trade and political friction is that the Japanese are the weakest in their obscure notion of “culture” which is horizontal. It has not been until recently that I have spoken and written about at a number of locations.

Basically, trade friction must be considered one loop of cultural friction. From the quick start, a number of people have been thinking of a right solution, as of yet, without the discovery of a wonder drug it is very today.

In general, Japanese culture is considered homogenized. However, looking at the traditional Japanese family system, marriage system, etc., it can be determined that in fact Japanese culture is not homogeneous, there are large heterogeneous elements that are included. For example, the reason local endogamy systems were promoted was one characteristics of a traditional marriage system. It was because a problem arose regarding the customs of the intermarriage between the local people which is called as endogamy system (cultural diversity). In general, Japanese do not approach the idea of heterogeneous culture, they will not pursue it closely, will falsely have determination, also, they will seek the same mentality and homogeneity, and it will be normal to form brethren

† 早稲田大学アジア太平洋研究センター教授

groups. However on the other hand, travel and study abroad, job transfers, etc., people who have been thrown physically into an uncommon cultural society will come in contact with a number of different forms of this uncommon culture, yet one question remains on to how to cope.

2 . “Culture” : Re-thinking its meaning

Culture is an exceptionally complex term. Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn developed a taxonomy of the concept of culture, bringing out the convergences in no less than fourteen definitions (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952). We have surpassed the many branches in the concept of the word “culture” ; generally speaking, it is “while people are being challenged by nature, everything that is thought of to expand the chances of existence” in social anthropology. However, do most Japanese maintain an image that “culture equals expensive brands and luxury” ? While I was sent overseas to attend a lecture for engineers, one of the attendees said, “Does the Philippines have a culture ? ” none of the other attendees were astonished by this question. There are many Japanese business “moguls” who held this same idea similar to the time I traveled overseas over thirty years ago to do my field research. Basically, regarding these people, “culture” may be considered unfortunately overwhelming by an old form of European art and expensive prices of luxury household effects. In our society, those involved with chemistry or research, looking from a holistic social perspective, one part of culture does not surpass. Rather what is important in the cultural view is a complex form of social actions of people and customs and their way of thinking. Consequently, people without a culture means that their society does not exist. In addition, since culture is regional, it has peculiar characteristics of the times, and at the same time it is impossible to compare what may be something relative in the absolute merit system. Hence, when we search for the essence of culture, we can find relief in the principal factor of cultural friction.

The ideal way to understand original regional culture is to be immersed in the culture by having contact by sensing the environment at that point, you will no about heterogeneous culture. Evidently, in today's Japan, as mentioned above, with mass media you know longer have to actually experience culture since, possibly, you can vision that societies exist. Possibly that way of thinking may be better.

3 . The Third Culture as a Theme.

Looking at the disarray at the end of 1980th in Eastern European countries, it is necessary for all the countries of the world to rise above cultural barriers including high technological information systems and socio-economic activities. Similarly, we must accept this enormous theme, “What is culture ? ” For this reason, I think it is best to quickly register with the media and newspaper cultural events so that many young people today can get involved in a cultural society since some complaints have been raised. Cultural exchange is the exchange between people, more precisely; Japan had been accepting foreign exchange students also, it is important to send our Japanese young people abroad to gain a mutual understanding of other cultures. Basically, by studying abroad you can get an understanding of culture by physical senses. For example, my actual experience, what I can clearly want to say

is it was for the first time staying for a long period of time in a foreign culture where I learned to recognize a mutual heterogeneous culture. You have to understand that the other person finds you unusual, but you must accept that. In other words, those who have some cultural knowledge, I call "third cultured man" (see chart I). For us, we consider Japanese culture to be first culture, the culture or society where you would be at foreign countries as student or salary staff are called second". There are conflicts between the first and second cultures, but this is where new viewpoints and ways of thinking are born. Not everyone can create a third culture between himself and herself. Only a few are able to create their own third culture. Most of people would have cultural regressions and they will unconsciously try to go back to the first culture. And these people hardly can create the informal relationship with other people in the different society. It is the problem of nature of individuals, moreover in the education scene, regarding "cultural diversity" ; I believe that this is largely due in part by the physical constitution of Japan's educational system. As in the past, homogeneity in Japan's education, uniform ideas are instilled as a child from the harmony which is considered a good Japanese word. Clearly, Japanese personal internationalization is closed. That is, in order not to exhibit individuality average people are created. This type of phenomenon is to emphasis the good aspects of Japanese social group's, however there are bad aspects which is creating a society where the individual's originality and surroundings are conceived to be reckless.

4 . Aiming for an international education - Globalization and Individualization

However, regardless of likes or dislikes, internationalization (globalization) of Japan's society cannot be avoided today. In regards to Japan's education, Japanese society should reevaluate its institutional educational values, especially with regards to cultivating individualism and accepting diversity in order to promote mutual understanding. Education should shift towards promoting individualism, lest Japan fall behind in the next century. The first step towards this is encouraging young people to go out and experience foreign cultures. In line with this, Japan should send youths to neighboring countries for them to get an actual exposure to other cultures. In doing so, people who possess a third cultural viewpoint would increase, facilitating coexistence with other nations. As we look towards the 21st century, so that the education will not create a backward's country, the development of education must change. Moreover, we have to pay attention to the information technology which rapidly progresses and changes the communication system. Now our communication system is globalized and individualized (see chart II). Such a globalized internet system which is e-mail and world wide web system and the distance education would encourage us to have global language capabilities including languages of minorities in web sites. Such an impact of the internet on modern life is creating new forms of action and interaction, and reordering the way in which individuals interpret and response to the social world. Today whether we like or not, we must face the new culture, which is an internet culture. When we address the way in which the internet is making possible new ways of using and articulating information - in the sense that it is facilitating the reorganization of social relations - then we are studying how the internet is involved in cultural transmission. Consequently it is a theory of cultural transmission which must provide us with a framework for understanding the internet's interactional impact. Then

dilemmas of the loosing the characteristics of local cultures and political barrier might be the contradictory issue for globalization in the existing political framework. In terms of the global education, the internet culture can provide us enormous knowledge and a new sense of virtual communities. Then a lot of people can have the virtual experience to associate with different cultures at their localities without going to foreign countries physically. International assistance of large countries for education is one part from elementary trials are worldly ideas which will cross the third culture. This is the genuine essence of global education for next decas.

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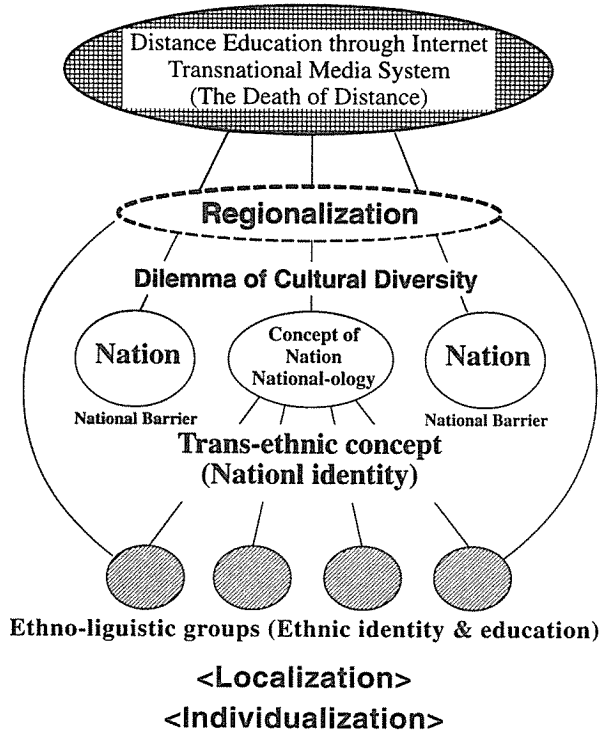
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The Trap of Globalization

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Cross Cultural Education

