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Japan in the World, the World in Japan
A Methodological Approach

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Cover design by Simone Livieri

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Introduction

The editors of this book met in 1997, as first-year students at the Japanese Department, Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Bucharest. This detail is significant because it represents the moment when our journey within the field of Japanese studies began. Besides personal academic achievements, we managed to establish in 2011 an international conference of Japanese studies, *Japan: Pre-modern, Modern, Contemporary. A Return Trip from the East to the West. Learning in, about, and from Japan* - a long title which attempted to explain how our colleagues and we had grown from undergraduate students who struggled with their first hiragana lessons, into young scholars and conference organizers. The conference, held annually (with a brief interruption) at "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University in Bucharest, has become a tradition, one of the major events in the field of Japanese studies in Eastern

Europe. In 2014, however, we realized that the transition from research to pedagogy, from scholar to instructor was not necessarily an easy one, which is why in June 2015, together with our American colleague, Dr. Erin L. Brightwell (currently assistant professor of pre-modern Japanese literature at the University of Michigan) we held the first "Japan in the World, the World in Japan: A Methodological Approach" workshop at Okayama University. This was a small-scale event, involving mainly our friends (of various nationalities, and teaching at various universities in Japan), who shared our dilemmas: we had been told that we could teach "whatever we wanted," with no clear guidelines as to what would be necessary or useful for the students, which made content selection for our classes quite a difficult task. Sharing our troubles as young educators, as well as exchanging information on methods that yielded if not the best, at least fairly good results, turned to be such a positive experience that we decided to continue the project.

In December 2016 we organized an international symposium at Otemae University, with the support of Kobe University, Kyoto University, and with an internal grant from Otemae University, the proceedings (as peer-reviewed papers) of which were published in the Otemae University repository (http://tinyurl.com/y27fq6y8). In March 2017 the third iteration of the symposium was held at the Center for Japanese Language and Literature, Osaka University, while the latest event took place in February 2019 at the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures,

University of East Anglia; on both occasions, we received support and generous funding from the hosting institutions. We mentioned this brief history here in order to show that our project is an ongoing one, intended to offer practical solutions to those involved in the teaching of Japanese studies at a tertiary level.

One of the most important features of this volume is that, although most chapters are concerned with the teaching of Japanese studies in Japan, the volume itself is not focused on a single geographical zone. Japan or Western Europe are not the only areas where Japanese studies as both research and pedagogical field developed, and we include here papers that present cases from India, Romania, and Thailand. As stated above, this is an ongoing project, and it was not our intention to offer an exhaustive survey of how Japanese studies are taught around world. We simply wanted to offer a selection of case studies, from various research fields, that might benefit educators finding themselves in methodological quandaries.

Last but not least, we would like to thank the University of Hyogo for funding the publication of this volume, Professor Hitoshi Kato for his continuous support of our project, and Dr. Simone Livieri, who has designed our posters since 2015.

Internationalizing the Modern Japanese History Course

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Abstract

This article contains a discussion on how the author, an instructor who teaches a "History of Modern Japan" university course, has taken steps to internationalize the Japan history course, in order to implement a world history or global/ comparative historical approach. By taking such an approach, a survey course in modern Japanese history can be understood from a comparative historical point of view. It is further argued that this can provide an entryway for international, non-Japanese undergraduate students to better understand the history of modern Japan, by offering them examples from other national histories

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which are comparable to the processes in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Japanese history. The author also provides examples of source materials, including literary sources, which are used in the teaching of this course, and how sources are interpreted in a global or comparative historical context, rather than treating the sources as in an historical isolation.

Introduction

In this chapter, I will explore how I am incorporating a world history approach in my teaching of two university courses referred to as "History of Modern Japan." The courses cover Japanese history from ca. 1600 CE until the Heisei era, with emphasis and more class time devoted to post-1850 history. These periods are crucial to the course, as Japan underwent a profound globalizing transformation in all aspects of the society, and there was a tremendous increase in Japan's reputation as a global and colonial and economic power. The paper will also discuss some of the benefits and challenges of pursuing a world history approach in the teaching of these courses, and the methodology employed. I have taught versions of "History of Modern Japan" for both international student classes and for Japanese student courses. I contend that applying a world history approach to the teaching of the "History of Modern Japan" course has many benefits both to the students and the educator, while it also poses a lot of challenges that are not inherent to the more traditional, approach to teaching "History of Modern Japan" as an isolated case study.

Defining the World History Approach

First I would like to define what is meant by a world history approach, which is what I am attempting to do in my teaching of "History of Modern Japan." World history has developed into a discrete field of historical inquiry, particularly over the course of the past 30 or so years with the development of the World History Association (WHA[1]), and the institutional backing from a number of higher education institutions worldwide. The WHA is the largest academic organization in the world for the promotion of world historical scholarship. Other academic organizations devoted to world history study include the Network of Global and World History Organizations (NOGWHISTO[2]) in Germany, and the Asian Association of World Historians (AAWH[3]) in Japan, South Korea, and China.

A world history approach is a method for exploring the past by searching for the connecting points between what we may traditionally label as "national history" and historical processes which extend beyond borders. World historians focus on global interactions including: trade and economic relations, political ideology and the spread of ideas, cultural transfusions, the history of human global mobility and migration, environmental conditions, and biological exchange. The WHA contends that "world historians use a wide spatial lens, though they do not always take the entire world as their

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[1] https://www.thewha.org, accessed April 10, 2018.
[2] http://research.uni-leipzig.de/~gwhisto/home/, accessed April 15, 2018.
[3] https://www.theaawh.com, accessed April 8, 2018.

unit of analysis. They tend to de-emphasize individual nations or civilizations, and focus instead on regions defined differently, including zones of interaction, or on the ways in which people, goods, and ideas moved across regions through migration, conquest, and trade.[4]"

There are myriad ways in which the instructor can apply a world history approach to the teaching of "Modern Japanese History." This can include the emphasis on international relations and interactions regarding trade, diplomacy, exploration, travel, missionary religious activity, and educational exchange as a few examples. Another approach, which is described briefly below, is to examine in some detail interactions that the nation of Japan and its peoples had with its neighbor, Russia, both in existing Japanese territories and through their mutual interest in exploration and possible settlement of the North Pacific, including the Kuril Islands, Sakhalin, and even Hokkaido. This sort of "borderlands" exploration of Japanese history is rarely approached in a survey course of Japanese history, but has a lot of potential educational benefits for examining the Japanese cultural interactions of the time.

Colonialism and Imperialism in World History Context

As a world historian, I am very interested in highlighting the role of global processes in the shaping of Japan's development. For this particular approach, one must delve

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[4] https://www.thewha.org/about/what-is-world-history/, accessed April 10, 2018.

into both traditional-national histories and the role of global processes. It requires a rethinking of the past beyond a hermetically-sealed notion of the nation-state. When a historian examines the Late Tokugawa, Meiji and Taishô periods, it becomes clear that there is no shortage of ways in which the nation and its people were profoundly affected by global historical forces: industrialization, modernization, westernization, colonialism, global capitalism, migration, and war/conflict, to name just a few.

During the last decade of the Tokugawa regime, Western interest in Japanese trade had been piqued, particularly for the British, Americans, and Russians, all of which sent delegations to Japan in hopes of breaking through the somewhat closed-door policy of the Shogunate. Although traditionally portrayed as a "closed country," there was in fact a fairly large amount of trade and international contact during the Tokugawa period (Huffman 2010). With the signing of the Kanagawa Treaty (1854) and the Harris Treaty (1858), the international floodgates were opened, as a series of Western nations signed "unequal treaties" with the Tokugawa Shogunate, which led to its further internationalization. Qing China and Korea had also been forced into unequal treaties. Although the unequal treaties were later revised, the internationalization that the treaties brought to East Asia in terms of western settlement, trade, and cross-cultural interaction was substantial. I highlight in my course how the enforcement of unequal treaties was a *regional process*. This was itself part of a wider global process

of colonialism and imperialism, which impacted Japan uniquely since Japan became the only East Asian nation to itself become a colonizing or even imperialist nation during the late nineteenth century (Hodge 2008). This process was completed by the end of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 (Jacob 2017). The Japanese experience with colonialism, both as a nation that other states wished to colonize and as a nation that later colonized other nations, is a particularly rich area of world history scholarship which students find interesting, though challenging, to analyze. Japanese leaders in part emulated the techniques of colonialism and imperialism that were found in western and central Europe and the United States, and to a less extensive degree in Russia, the Ottoman Empire, and Qing China. By the late nineteenth century, colonialism and imperialism were well-established global historical processes that looked similar in many ways around the globe (Adas 1998).

Japan's Encounters with Russia and Russians for Global Historical Context

One way in which I try to inject meaning into the teaching of Modern Japanese History is by highlighting my current research project on the Russian and Japanese intersection of colonial and exploratory missions to the North Pacific islands and Japanese territories.[5] The Russian exploration of the area coincides with the early timeline of my course, so this historical episode provides a lot of

opportunities for the class to examine Japanese history in a comparative or global context. To do this, I provide students with examples of historical primary and secondary sources in English, which highlight Russian exploration in the region, and the concomitant Japanese diplomatic response to these missions.[6] One interesting example of this is the history of the Russian hunting of sea mammals in the North Pacific, which led, among many other disastrous effects, to the extinction of Steller's Sea Cow (Jones 2014). This in turn coincided with Russian interest in Japanese territories for possible trade, settlement, and colonization. I attempt to situate the Russian competition with the Japanese during the period within the wider global context that this had in the history of colonialism (McDougall 1993). I think that this brings a lot of benefits to the students in thinking about Japanese history more broadly. By providing students with excerpts of these aforementioned texts, they can acquire a basic understanding of how Russia's interactions with Japan during the period reflected the Tokugawa's interest in maintaining isolation from most Western nations. This was a process that was more isolationist towards Russia after the fall of the Tokugawa.

Using Novels to Teach Historical Processes (*Musui's Story)*

One of the main global historical developments during the Meiji period, which essentially began during the late

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[6] There are too many sources to list here. A few essential ones for this topic include the work of George Lensen (1971), or John Stephan (1974).

Tokugawa period, was the introduction of a global capitalist economic system in Japan. One of the readings that I assign students is the autobiographical book *Musui's Story: The Autobiography of a Tokugawa Samurai* (Katsu 1991) This journal was originally written in 1843, and first published in Japanese in 1899-1900. Through this primary source account, we gain insights into how elements of market capitalism were already in place in Japan during the 1820s to the late 1840s. For example, the author Katsu Kokichi (a low-class samurai) often finds other ways of making money, including gambling, engaging in various "confidence schemes," and selling swords at a profit, in order to stretch his meager samurai stipend. The world around him consists of numerous entertainment districts, lavish ways for one to spend money, merchants looking to make a profit, and innkeepers catering to the passing daimyo and their entourages on the pathways to Edo. Katsu was constantly dealing with the "side effects" associated with transition to a capitalistic society, such as chronic debt, brought on in part by an expectation of "conspicuous consumption" for the samurai class to which he belonged. I use the teaching of this text to enlighten students on how a capitalist economic system began for Japan during this period. I think that Katsu Kokichi's example helps students to understand that the notion of a "closed" society in Japan at the time was an incorrect assumption: the globalizing nature of the early to mid-nineteenth century Asian and global economy was being felt even in relatively-isolated late Tokugawa Japan. I have had some success in

using this text in my international-student "History of Modern Japan" courses. The adventurous nature of the story resonates well with students and is a quick read.

It also helps to facilitate discussions of a global capitalist world-system in Japan, as originally described by the sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein, which encourages students to compare the development of capitalism in Japan with what they know of the histories of capitalism in their home countries (Wallerstein 1996). In the idea of a world-system, empires created systems of economic dependency, between core areas and peripheral areas. Under this type of model, empires used the exploitation of labor to promote the accumulation of capital. This was a process which was already occurring during the late Tokugawa period and accelerated during the Meiji period, as Japan expanded its periphery areas through colonial conquests.

Comparative Industrial Working Conditions

As my course progresses into the Meiji period, we see the forces of global capitalism truly taking root in Japan, often in ways that exacerbated inequality and led to exploitation of the poor and less powerful. Countless young girls and adult women, for example, found employment in textile industries, especially cotton and silk industries (Hunter and Mcnaughtan 2010, Gordon 2013). Although work was relatively easy to find for these young women and girls, the labor was exploitative, with very low wages, dangerous and unsanitary work conditions, and despotic overseers who kept close watch on the laborers in

their company dormitories. This led many young female textile workers to commit suicide (Gordon 2013). As horrible as the conditions were, I remind my students that this sort of poor treatment for workers was not unusual for many parts of the world in the nineteenth century, and that textile labor in particular was widely seen as an exploitative practice from its earliest days in England (Engels 2009). Therefore, the experience of these laborers is one example of how world historical themes can be drawn out and discussed from a comparative perspective. In the Japanese case, textile labor helped tremendously in Japan's rise as a major world economic power, but this was done through the pain caused to the lower classes, especially, in this case rural, young women and girls. When I teach this part of the course on Meiji Japan, I utilize primary sources on the conditions of laborers in British and American textile mills, in order to put the Japanese situation into comparative context[7] (Engels 2009).

A positive development eventually came out of this period of industrialization, which is that an international workers' consciousness and an organized labor movement developed around the turn of the century in Japan. This was a global process, as workers' consciousness and workers' activism had been gaining prominence in the western world during the same time period that it was gaining traction in Japan. This coincided with an increase in the literacy rate to over 80% of the adult population by 1900, and a widespread

[7]   http://www.smithsoniansource.org/display/primarysource/results.aspx?hId =1003, accessed April 12, 2018.

readership of newspapers in the country, which helped support international consciousness about workers' rights, in which Japanese workers began to see their own struggles as similar to those in western countries. During the 1890s and through most of the Taishô period, there were many strikes and protests for better working conditions across Japan (Gordon 2013). This first appearance of a global workers' rights consciousness in Japan led to the rise of and, in turn, repression of new political parties and ideologies in the country, which helped to make the Taishô period one of vibrant democratic debate and public engagement. I also attempt to frame the genesis of a workers' rights consciousness movement in Japan with parallel developments around the world during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This comparative approach allows students to access prior knowledge they may have of the history of such movements in countries outside of Japan.

Kokoro and Japan in World History

Another way in which I explore global themes in my teaching of "History of Modern Japan" is through in-class analysis of Natsume Sôseki's classic novel, *Kokoro*, which was originally published in 1914 in the newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* (Sôseki 2010). I assign this text to my international student classes and for nearly all of them it is the first time that they have been exposed to this literature. We read the book together and discuss it as we simultaneously cover the history of late Meiji and early Taishô period Japan. This helps

to situate the text in its unique historical context, so that the students can better understand the significance of the death of the Meiji emperor and the ritual suicide of General Nogi and his wife. A particular benefit I have found of assigning the book is its salient description of Japan in transition from the optimistic Meiji period to a time of worry and apprehension in the Taishô. Although the book is inseparably rooted in Japanese society and culture, I find that the students are able to draw parallels from their reading of western novels of the early twentieth century, including discussions of existentialism, intergenerational conflicts, love triangles, among others. *Kokoro* provides international students a window onto Japanese culture in many ways, while also affirming that the changes evident in the novel were reflective of changes associated with many nations' adjustments to modernity.

Conclusion

There are countless other ways in which the Japanese nation became globalized during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, but I would need much more time and space to discuss them in detail. I believe that, by incorporating a world history methodology to the teaching of "History of Modern Japan," I am helping all of my students to see Japan as a more integrated part of the world community, and not as "unique" as they may have assumed. My hope is that this will help my Japanese students to think more internationally about Japan's history by studying examples of similar phenomena abroad. I also hope that it will help my

international students to see a more open gateway to understanding the "History of Modern Japan," rather than seeing the country as strictly an exotic, alien, or incomparable nation, as is sometimes the tendency.

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Business and Culture: Student Projects Facilitating Authentic Connections between Japan and the World

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Abstract

As the Japanese government's target of 40 million tourists per year by 2020 appears increasingly achievable (with over 24 million in 2016, quadruple the number five years earlier), and with the domestic population set to shrink drastically over coming decades, it is vital for the Japanese economy that businesses can adapt to a more globalized market – a task that requires awareness of business practices and cultures, both domestic and foreign.

This paper will demonstrate aspects of a zemi (seminar) class in a Global Business School of a Tokyo university, which aimed to give

students the opportunity to establish authentic connections with foreign visitors and workers in Japan. I will begin by explaining the rationale behind the course and the research and methodology (employing project-based learning) used in designing the activities. I will then discuss some of the results of the course, including feedback from participating students.

The results suggest that by promoting and explaining the national culture (such as how to make takoyaki, or how to play with kendama) the zemi students deepened their knowledge of Japanese traditions, while also gaining a greater understanding of similarities and differences between their own country and others'. In addition, the experience gained in exchanging ideas with people from a variety of backgrounds helped the students gain confidence in their ability to work in a more globalized business environment. According to the students, the skills learned on this course will be of benefit in their future careers as businesspeople – both in Japan and overseas.

'Global' Japan

Through the 2010s, the term *global* has become ever more widely used within the university sector in Japan, with – in October 2018 – over 150 university departments or programmes employing the word 'Global' in their names. There are a number of reasons for this trend, the most visible factor being the 2013 announcement of Tokyo as the host city for the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020. This encouraged a drive by the national government to attract 40 million overseas tourists per annum by the year of the events (Murai 2016), quadruple the 2013 figure, which itself was the highest ever recorded at that time (JNTO, 2014). This goal in turn led to an increased emphasis on foreign language

learning. Soon after the Olympics announcement, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEXT) published its 'English Education Reform Plan Corresponding to Globalization,' stating that, "Timed with the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, in order for the full-scale development of new English education in Japan, MEXT will incrementally promote educational reform from FY2014" (MEXT, 2013).

Of longer-term significance to this government-approved movement towards globalisation is Japan's declining population. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications estimates that the national population will shrink by one-third in the next 50 years (Reynolds 2017), with the biggest drop being in the number of children and young adults. This should be of major concern to businesses, whose domestic customer base is likely to shrink, as well as to the city and prefectural governments who face a tax deficit – a problem that the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) is looking to remedy by attracting more foreign companies into Japan. According to METI (2018), "an increasing number of [overseas] cities have [...] been increasing their efforts to attract [foreign] companies. In this environment, it is significant for Japan to find better approaches to this goal."

The shrinking population will have an adverse effect on educational institutes, too, as colleges and universities will have a much smaller pool of potential students, and this has resulted in attempts to develop closer connections with overseas universities and plans to create programmes that will

encourage foreign students to study in Japan. Additionally, in a society in which business will necessarily be more connected with international as well as domestic partners, graduates with experience of different cultures will be required to fill roles within these companies (Taylor 2014). To this end, in 2014 the Top Global University Project (TGUP) was established, selecting 37 institutions out of 104 applicants to gain extra government funding in order to increase the number of foreign professors and students and achieve the goal of more Japanese universities entering the international rankings. According to the director of the Global Education Programme at Hitotsubashi University, Hiroshi Ota, the selected universities will be expected to "reform their institutions and focus on internationalization – with the aim of attaining a global standard" (Maruko 2014). Even though the scheme is controversial, with one academic suggesting that universities used superficial "slogans and themes designed to appeal to the education ministry" (Satoshi Shirai, quoted by Maruko 2014), TGUP and its government-approved mandate to internationalise Japanese higher education has contributed to an overall trend to create 'Global' departments and courses.

However, while the number of these Global programmes has increased, the vagueness of the term has led to variations in how it is interpreted at different universities.

Course and Class Background

This study was conducted in the School of Global Business of a private women's university in Tokyo. The university was *not* one of the successful recipients of Top

Global University status; however, the establishment of the department in 2013 was part of an ongoing project to boost the university's international profile and develop "future global business leaders" (according to its website). All undergraduates in the school were required to spend a semester on the university's American campus, and English-language classes were a required part of the programme in the first and second years (with at least 4 x 90-minute classes per week in the first year, and 2 x 90-minute classes in the second). However, beyond these measures, the exact method of developing "global business leaders" was not determined, with the content of most classes at the discretion of the respective professors. This issue was particularly apparent in the third and fourth years of the course, as students focused on *zemi* (seminar) classes, intended to help them develop specific skills that would be useful in their future careers, and prepare them for writing their graduation theses. The contents of a *zemi* class were usually related to the professor's specialisation, but for the first cohort of students there were no classes that reflected the 'global' aspect of Global Business, with all professors coming from a Japanese business background. Therefore, I was asked to design and conduct a new *zemi* class that would rectify this issue.

The theme of the class was designated as "Global communication in the business world," and the mandate was threefold:

1. Content classes should be conducted in the medium of English;

2. Classes should provide skills that students can use in future careers (in Japan or overseas);

3. Classes must contain a business component.

These aims appeared achievable over the two-year *zemi* class (meeting twice a week), and very much in keeping with the overall programme of Global Business. However, on first discussion with the students it was clear that their attitudes towards global issues were not always positive. Additionally, their confidence in using English to conduct the course was quite low. This led me to conduct interviews and a short questionnaire in order to glean a clearer picture of the participants in the class.

The findings, as noted in my research diary, are as follows:

● 12 x Global Business students (all born and raised in Japan).

● English level: Low-intermediate. TOEIC average 490 (out of a possible 990).

● Low confidence in their ability to converse in English. Asked to rate their English communication level *(1 = complete beginner, 10 = native speaker),* average score is 2.75.

● Only one student is interested in working abroad; the other 11 do NOT intend to work abroad.

● Only four students are interested in working for an international company (in Japan or overseas); the other eight intend to work for domestic companies only.

● *How do you feel about the word 'global'?*

7 x neutral responses, 5 x negative responses, 0 x positive responses.

Selected responses:

"It's difficult to work with foreign people." "There are many misunderstandings." "I'm not interested in global things. I'm Japanese."

These findings led me to reconsider my initial plan to discuss case studies of authentic overseas companies as a starting point to the course. Based on the questionnaire, the students' interest in foreign business practice was not high. I was also concerned about the difficulty of discussing and debating in English in abstract terms about, for example, marketing or economics, given the relatively low level of confidence and ability (according to standardised test scores). Additionally, the prevailing attitude towards the notion of 'global' was generally negative, so an emphasis on foreign companies seemed inappropriate for this class.

In order to meet the requirements of the programme, the course was expected to be performed in English and focus on building business knowledge and skills, but these findings suggested that an alternative approach was necessary.

Project-based Learning

Based on the initial discussions with the *zemi* participants, there was a lack of enthusiasm for their previous English-medium classes, whether language-focused or content-focused. (As well as the language classes discussed above, the students had taken business content classes

conducted in English during their semester in the United States a year prior). My priority, therefore, was to develop a course that would fulfil the class requirements while also building the students' confidence and enthusiasm in developing 'global business' skills. This led me to consider project-based learning (PBL). I have employed aspects of PBL with younger learners in previous research (Davies 2010); therefore, I was aware of its benefits. As Markham (2011: 39) states, "PBL refocuses education on the student, not the curriculum – a shift mandated by the global world, which rewards intangible assets such as drive, passion, creativity, empathy, and resiliency." In a class that was not enthused by previous English-medium curricula, and who appeared to be lacking "drive" and "passion" regarding the core requirements of this course, PBL appeared to be a more suitable pedagogy than teacher-centred instruction.

The initial development of PBL in education is often attributed to John Dewey (1997 [1938]), who first expounded "the concept of experience," or "learning by doing." As interpreted by Hohr, Dewey's constructionist approach has gained popularity in recent political discourse on education as a counter-argument "against the reductionist traits in [many current] education policies" that are developing a "culture of reification, surveying, testing and measuring" (2013: 26).

While the precise elements of any PBL course may differ slightly, some aspects feature repeatedly in the literature. These have been summarised in two PBL wheel charts developed by the Buck Institute of Education:

Figure 1: Essential project design elements
(Larmer and Mergendoller 2015a)

This wheel chart shows design elements that are intended to keep projects "rigorous" (Larmer and Mergendoller 2015a) rather than simply unstructured activities with no clear goal. The centre shows 'Student Learning Goals' that include knowledge and understanding of the content (in this case, global business), as well as success skills (critical thinking, teamwork). Around these goals are seven project design elements that define exactly what a project should include in this context. These elements help differentiate this kind of "rigorous" PBL from other classroom activities. Of particular significance is the element of 'student voice and choice,' which requires students to use their own initiative rather than simply being recipients of knowledge. Additionally, the elements of 'authenticity' and 'public product' mean that any project must have real-world

relevance rather than simply fulfilling class goals assigned by the teacher.

Figure 2: Project-based teaching practices
(Larmer and Mergendoller 2015b)

This second wheel chart outlines the role of the teacher in PBL with her /his role changed from that of the traditional provider of knowledge to a "guide" for students (Larmer and Mergendoller 2015b). It should be noted that the role still allows for the professor to teach knowledge or skills when needed, but there is more emphasis on adapting and creating, and for fostering a classroom atmosphere that allows the students to express their 'voice and choice.' By using this framework as a guide, I was able to begin planning a PBL-based course.

The 'Go Glocal' Projects

In the next class I initiated a discussion in order to establish a 'challenging problem or question' (sometimes known as a "driving question" [NSW Department of Education 2018]) as described in the PBL framework, above. In order to make the process less intimidating for those students with low confidence in English, this discussion was conducted in both English and Japanese (the first language of all the students). By allowing L1 or L2 use at this stage, the aim was to make it possible for all participants to express their ideas, thus encouraging 'student voice and choice' for all members of the class. I prepared a list of discussion questions, but I allowed digression as long as the discussion remained on-topic:

1. What are you interested in?
   a) Aspects of business
   b) Hobbies, other interests
2. What are your goals?
   a) For this *zemi*
   b) After graduation
3. Have you ever participated in a class project before? Was the experience good or bad?
4. What project would you like to do in this *zemi*?

This discussion performed two functions. Firstly, it established that the students were in control of the process, with the teacher in the role of facilitator. As per the project-based teaching practices wheel chart, the teacher would coach, scaffold, manage, assess, align, and – to a lesser extent – design,

but the students would be expected to *do* any project themselves, including this initial discussion. Secondly, this session allowed the students a chance to think both broadly and more specifically about their future goals and how they would like this *zemi* to help work towards achieving them.

Through the discussion, some themes emerged. All of the students expressed interest in business and an awareness of the need to cooperate with overseas customers or partners in the future. The negativity towards the notion of 'global' was largely connected to the students' lack of confidence in their English ability rather than any tendency towards xenophobia. In fact, as the students discussed foreign brands, most of them appeared much more positive about international business. Furthermore, the discussion turned towards students' previous interactions with foreign people. Interestingly, while the prevailing attitude towards English *classes* remained broadly negative ("I can't remember the right words"; "My English is too slow"), the students' specific experiences of English-language interactions *outside the classroom* were largely positive ("I showed a tourist to the correct platform [at a train station]; she looked so happy").

Another reason for negativity towards global issues was the interpretation of 'global' as something that comes into Japan from outside. For example, one student said that, "I want to see more Japanese stores [in Japan], not only American." Another mentioned that, "I'm worried about Japan culture [*sic*] if there is globalization." However, when students discussed specific 'global' companies, Toyota and UniQlo

(both Japanese companies) were mentioned, and another student said, "'Global' means Japan too." This was the first time that the students appeared to interpret 'global' as referring to a multilateral exchange rather than a one-way influx of foreign business and culture coming into Japan. After this realisation, the students discussed in more detail about Japanese contributions to globalisation through NPOs, business and pop culture.

At the end of the session, the students formulated a research question based on their interests (while understanding that we still had to fulfil the targets outlined in the initial mandate for the course). This would become the basis for most of our activities over the two-year course:

How can we help <u>local</u> businesses or organisations connect with a more <u>global</u> market?

Based on this question, the students then decided their own homework task:

1. Visit or contact local businesses and organisations.
2. Do they have international staff, customers, suppliers, etc?
3. Do they require any assistance?
4. Think of at least one project idea for consideration next class.

This task resulted in a long list of potential project ideas that the students discussed in the next session, before they decided on those projects that they felt would be achievable, as well as beneficial to their future goals.

Over the two-year course, which the students labelled 'Go Glocal,' some projects were altered or replaced with alternatives, but every idea came from the students. The teacher was available as a resource (for example, in gaining permission from the university to participate in commercial activities; or in liaising with embassy staff to organise interviews with ambassadors) or to answer questions if required. The projects that the students completed were as follows:

● TV commercials: The students made video commercials explaining Japanese culture (for example, wearing a kimono, or how to play with a *kendama* [stick-and-ball] toy). They showed these to students at the intercultural exchange lounge then gave practical lessons and advice to overseas students on how to perform the activities.

● Cocoa imports: The students imported cocoa from an NGO in the Philippines then sold hot chocolate drinks at the university culture festival and at other local festivals. The profits were donated to educational projects in the Philippines.

● Embassy interviews: The students interviewed ambassadors and embassy staff (in English) from three different countries about their business connections with Japan. These interviews were recorded, and the students uploaded the videos to the local city office educational website, with the students providing the Japanese subtitles.

● *Omotenashi* survey: This was a research project intended to gauge foreign people's perceptions of Japanese hospitality and the Japanese concept of *omotenashi* – serving the customer. The students then provided local businesses

with the results so that they could adapt their service approaches to welcome the increasing number of overseas visitors.

- The *Takoyaki* cooking workshop. (See below.)

Project Case Study: *Takoyaki* Workshop

The *Takoyaki* cooking workshop was instigated by one student who had visited a local restaurant that specialised in the popular western Japanese dish, which consists of octopus and chopped vegetables in bite-sized balls of dough. The student discovered that the owner of the restaurant was interested in organising cooking workshops aimed at tourists, but that he was not sure exactly how to organise such an event. Additionally, the restaurant owner spoke some English but neither he nor his staff felt comfortable running the event entirely in that language. With the restaurant owner's permission, the *zemi* class explored ways of producing such a workshop. This began by the students conducting needs assessment independently, by liaising with the restaurant owner to establish exactly what was required. For example, the students enquired about the number of attendees necessary for the event to make a profit, as well as the maximum capacity; the time, date and length of the workshop; and the current marketing campaigns employed by the business, as well as available budget for advertising and organising.

Based on this need-assessment analysis, the students could begin the planning and preparation process. As the restaurant currently had no marketing plan in place for the

cooking workshop, the students designed an original campaign utilising social media aimed at tourists visiting Japan. They researched popular public pages on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram aimed at overseas visitors. They then posted about the event on these social media pages, with links to a website built by the students. They also collaborated with a local design school to create the logo for the website and for flyers that they handed out in major tourist areas of Tokyo.

As the event approached, the class then focused on planning activities for the workshop. This required further liaison with the restaurant owner in order to learn exactly what he would teach the customers in the workshop. The students then translated each of the steps in making *takoyaki* into English, as well as preparing a presentation that would give customers some history and context about the dish. Furthermore, they designed a quiz activity and sourced prizes with which to finish the event. Again, this process required constant critique, revision and reflection (as per the Essential Project Design Elements wheel chart, above [Larmer and Mergendoller 2015a]), as well as constant collaboration with the restaurant.

Finally, at the cooking workshop, the students acted as masters of ceremony and interpreters, reacting to any questions or problems that the customers had when preparing the dish for the first time. Interestingly, despite expressing low levels of confidence in using English at the beginning of the course, the students appeared quite comfortable conversing in the language with the foreign

visitors in this 'authentic' situation, and there were no obvious difficulties or misunderstandings.

This project showed that students could apply much of the knowledge acquired in the first two years of their degree programme, with their understanding of marketing helping the event attract the maximum capacity of customers. Furthermore, they used the small fund available (for marketing and presentation costs) responsibly, helping keep the event under-budget. The collaboration with the restaurant, as well as with the design college students who created the logo designs, encouraged authentic communication and sustained inquiry. Finally, the event itself required the students to consider the needs of customers in providing a public product with real-world value – for both the business and the guests.

Student Attitudes and Test Scores: Before and After the Course

The discussions at the beginning of the course showed that the participating students were unenthusiastic about the word and concept of 'global.' Their English level and confidence were low, and they had mostly negative feelings about working abroad or for international companies in the future. However, by the end of the two-year *zemi* course implementing a PBL approach, the attitudes and English test scores had changed significantly.

First, the average scores in the TOEIC test (a standardised test of English reading and listening, with an emphasis on business vocabulary and situations) improved dramatically.
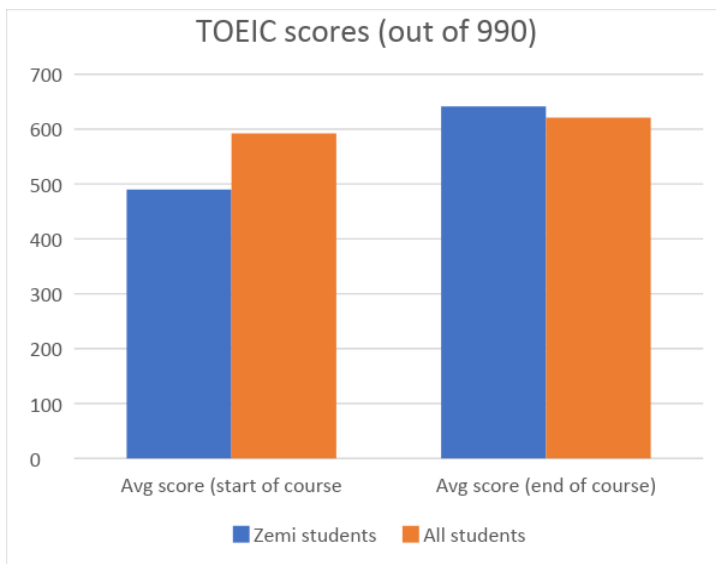
Figure 3: TOEIC scores at the start and end of the course

At the beginning of the course, the average score among students in this *zemi* was 490 (out of a possible 990); but by the final month of the course, the average was 641, an increase of 30.8 percent. This compared favourably with the students' peers throughout the same Global Business department (but taking various *zemi* classes). Their overall average score at the beginning of the course was 592, significantly higher than that of the students in this *zemi*. However, by the end of the course, the entire student population's average was 621, a rise of just 4.9 percent, and surpassed by the *zemi* students.

Furthermore, the *zemi* students' level of confidence in their own English ability increased. At the beginning of the course, when asked to rate their 'English communication

level' (*1 = complete beginner, 10 = native speaker*), the average score was 2.75. However, by the end of the programme, the average in the group was 6.58, an increase of 139 percent.

These gains in linguistic competence and confidence were complemented by more positive attitudes regarding working overseas or for foreign companies. It should be emphasised that at no point did the teacher suggest that foreign businesses were any more desirable places for students to work in the future; however, the initial negative responses by students regarding working for non-Japanese businesses could potentially limit their future career potential, particularly when Japanese government policy is leaning towards a more globalised society. At the beginning of the programme, only one out of the 12 students expressed interest in working abroad in the future; by the end of the course, this figure had increased to eight – two-thirds of the participants. Furthermore, when asked if they were interested in working for a foreign company (either in Japan or overseas), only four students said 'yes' at the start of the course, compared to 11 at the end.

While this was a small-scale study at just one institution, the findings of the research suggest that project-based learning can have a positive impact on students' confidence levels in intercultural communication situations. Among these students, the authenticity of the interactions appeared to stimulate linguistic confidence, and this led to tangible gains in standardised English tests. Furthermore, the experiences generated more positive student attitudes towards the notion

of 'global' communication. This may have real-world impact on their future lives and careers as Japan continues to globalise its higher education system and connect its people and businesses more closely with the international community.

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A Crash Course in Japanese Culture

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Abstract

At the university level, the Romanian curriculum concerning Japanese teaching in faculties of foreign languages and literatures requires that three areas be addressed: Japanese literature, Japanese linguistics and Japanese language. All three fields have proved difficult to tackle, especially for beginners in Japanese.

I have been teaching Japanese literature to Romanian students for eight years and I realized that before going into reading and discussing literature, be it poetry or prose, a general knowledge of certain elements that would generally speaking fall into the category of culture, is necessary. Most of the students are only familiar with

certain aspects of Japanese culture, mainly contemporary ones, such as anime, manga or J-pop.

My paper will focus on the elements that I chose to teach in preparation for my literature class, such as history or art. Moreover, because of time constraints and the vast amount of information that has to be discussed, I will present a few activities I devised for student use in order to help them remember the information taught in the class.

Introduction

The "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University was founded in 1990 as one of the first private academic institutions in Romania. It offers a range of different programs from undergraduate to graduate studies, mainly in Bucharest[8], but also in Cluj-Napoca and Timisoara. It is comprised of eight faculties: Law and Administration, Tourism and Commercial Management, International Business Administration, Finance, Banking and Accountancy, Marketing, Education Science, Foreign Languages and Literatures, Political Science. According to the Bologna Process, the undergraduate studies have a three-year duration and the MA studies follow for the duration of two years. The academic year starts in October and runs until January, and the second semester starts at the end of February or the beginning of March and finishes in June. Each semester has 14 weeks and is followed by a three-week exam session.

The Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures was opened in 1999, in Bucharest. It offers a double degree,

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[8] http://ucdc.ro/en/istoric-ucdc.php

meaning that the students are required to study two languages and literatures. The major is represented by English, French, German or Romanian, and the minor can be chosen from among the following languages: Spanish, Italian, Russian, Japanese, Arabic, Turkish or Chinese. Since its opening, the Japanese language and literature department has proved to be one of the most popular, and Japanese one of the most sought-after degrees in the entire university. The curriculum for all the languages (Japanese included) is designed to offer students a comprehensive understanding of their studies from both a linguistic and a cultural point of view. The table below details the requirements for the Japanese course.

Table 1

Japanese Literature	Compulsory course, 6 semesters
Japanese Linguistics	Compulsory course, 6 semesters
Japanese Practical Course	Compulsory course, 6 semesters
Translation Course (Japanese)	Compulsory course, 2 semesters
Languages for Specific Purposes (Japanese)	Compulsory course, 2 semesters
Kanji Course	Optional course, 2 semesters
Contemporary Japan	Optional course, 1 semester
Text and Image in Japanese Literature	Optional course, 1 semester
Semantic Fields in Japanese vocabulary	Optional course, 1 semester
Typological Principles in Japanese Language	Optional course, 1 semester

Japanese Linguistics along with Japanese Practical Course, Translation Course and Languages for Specific Purposes aim at providing a fundamental linguistic knowledge

of Japanese, as well as practical usage of the language in specific situations. Japanese Literature along with some of the optional courses, on the other hand, build a much needed literary and cultural background for the students. When they come to study Japanese, for the first year, they have different levels of language ability. We had freshman classes in which most of the students were beginners, but others in which their levels of Japanese ranged from the N5, according to the Japanese Language Proficiency Test, to the N2 level. As for their background, half of them studied in humanities programs in high school, which meant that they had benefited from an in-depth approach to the study of Romanian language and literature, as well as two foreign languages. However, the other half come from high-schools with different curricula. Adapting the classes and grouping the students according to their language level is a task we have to address each year. Still, the biggest challenge in teaching them has proved to be connected not to their language level but rather to their knowledge of Japan and Japanese culture.

Most students enter our course having some understanding of Japan and its culture, but most of it is based on their viewing of *anime*, Japanese *terebi dorama*, Japanese TV shows, playing computer games, and listening to J-pop. Some of them have read Japanese literature, but usually they are familiarized with only one author, Haruki Murakami. They are, obviously, focused on contemporary Japan, and even when they do possess some knowledge about traditional Japan, most of the times it is information they acquired from

the above-mentioned sources. Consequently, when teaching literature, there is a need for establishing a solid cultural background, which would allow for a better understanding of Japan. First of all, before going into reading and discussing literature, be it poetry or prose, I consider that a general knowledge of certain elements that would generally speaking fall into the category of culture, should be taught.

This paper focuses on the first semester of the first academic year that is dedicated to the general study of Japanese culture, out of the six semesters that are assigned for Japanese literature. This always proves a difficult task to accomplish as there are only 14 weeks to talk about such a broad topic.

The course is designed to cover all the historical periods of Japan's history and to give the students a general outline of the changes and specific events that occurred in Japan in order to help them better comprehend contemporary Japan. The purpose of the course is to familiarize students with each period and their most important characteristics.

A historical period is assigned to be covered each week. Besides this, however, the first course is an introductory one, and general data, such as geographical elements, administrative divisions and government are also introduced. There is also a mid-term paper before the Edo period (1600-1868) is covered, a final revision at the end of the semester, and a final written exam during the exam session. Each period is discussed from a historical point of view by presenting its most relevant events. I have also included in the course a few works of art or

architecture that are defining for that epoch. In the last part of the course, I assign time to do an activity that relates to the course contents in a fun way and I will present three of these, below. My class is taught using a Power Point presentation format, which allows me to incorporate a lot of visual elements. I also show illustrations of different festivals or of clothing that help students to picture better a certain period.

Next, I have chosen to discuss, as an example, the course content from Jōmon and Yayoi periods, Nara period and Edo period. Jōmon (10000 BC- 300 BCE) and Yayoi (300 BCE- 300 AD) periods are covered in the same course because of time constraints. Elements on prehistoric Japan and the context of the formation of Japan and Japan's population are presented as part of the general information on these two periods. In the second part of the course, a few works of art are introduced to the students. Jōmon pottery and *dogū* clay figures, as well as and Yayoi *dōtaku* bells, *kagami* bronze mirrors and *magatama* beads represent distinctive evidence of prehistoric Japan. In the last part of the course, students are asked to individually create their own inspired Jōmon or Yayoi work of art, out of play dough. The aim of this final part is to create a link between the materials taught in the course, and to make it easy for them to remember what they learned. Moreover, it shows students that the history of Japan can be learned in a fun and playful manner. In the three illustrations shown below, first year students created their own figures, a *shako dogū* (illustration 1) and a *hāto dogū* (illustration 2). At the end of the class, they also had a small exhibition (illustration 3).

| **Illustration 1** | **Illustration 2** | **Illustration 3** |

The next example I shall introduce is from the Nara period (710 AD-784 AD). Historical facts and events, such as the establishing of present-day Nara as the first capital of Japan and its growth are presented, along with the reforms and bureaucratization that consolidated Japan. In the second part, I talk about some of the first examples of literature, such as *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, the introduction of *kanji* from China, and the creation and the development of *hiragana* and *katakana*. My focus, in the last part of the course, is on discussing Buddhism, which flourished in Nara, and the great temple of Tōdaiji. The mnemonic for this period is a paper craft of the Great Buddha of Tōdaiji. This is designed as a group activity where students choose their partners. I hand out color printed explanations of the craft, scissors and glue. The students have to follow the assembling instructions and build the model. It requires more than one hour to finish the

whole craft, so most of the times students complete the task at the library or at home and bring it to school the next week.

Illustration 4[9]   **Illustration 5**

The last example that I chose to present in this paper is from the class on the Edo period (1600-1868). As previously shown, I start my course by presenting in brief the history of the period and, in this case, I speak about Tokugawa Ieyasu, the battle of Sekigahara, the *sakoku* policy, the *sankin kōtai* system or the building of Edo town. In the second part, I focus on art and discuss *ukiyo-e* and the Rinpa painting School. Last year, the activity that I chose for the end of this lecture was a visit to the National Museum of Maps and Old books. Opened in 2003, it is a new museum and a rather unique one in Europe. Its collection consists of over 1000 works from the XVI century to the XX century. The exhibition we saw, *Japonia, file de atlas* (*Japanese Maps of the XIX Century*) (illustrations 6&7) was on Japanese Maps of the XIX century and exhibited

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[9] https://cp.c-ij.com/en/contents/CNT-0011947/index.html

a selection of maps from late Edo period to early Meiji period (1868-1912). Students could observe the way Edo transformed and became the city of Tokyo; they had to identify on the maps, using the explanations for each map, the main attractions of Edo city.
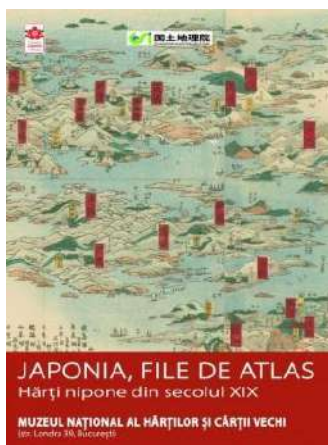
Illustration 6[10]

Illustration 7[11]

Covering in one semester such a vast amount of information can be a difficult enterprise, both from the teacher and the student perspectives. All three activities presented in this paper are meant to take place at the end of each course, and are used to help students interact with the material directly, which, in turn, helps them remember the information introduced in class. Two of the examples I gave make use of arts and crafts methods and have had very

[10] http://www.muzeulhartilor.ro/?lang=en
[11] https://www.facebook.com/MuzeulHartilorVechi/photos

promising learning outcomes. The third one takes the students out of their classroom and exposes them to a different environment: by visiting a museum, they can discover Japan in their own town.

In each situation presented above, the purpose is to prepare students for their Japanese literature course and to bring to their minds useful information that will help them understand future classes. A traditional lecture-oriented course, where students sit and listen will make this purpose more difficult to achieve. But a classroom of students more actively engaged in the process of learning through such activities will retain the information much better and much easier. Presenting them with alternatives to traditional learning and teaching will encourage them to become active learners.

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Muzeul hărților şi cărții vechi (National Museum of Maps and Old Books) (Facebook page) https://www.facebook.com/MuzeulHartilorVechi/photos

Combining Team Teaching and Class Teaching: Case Study of a Course on Intercultural Understanding for Exchange Students

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Abstract

The Maple Program (Osaka University Intensive Japanese Language and Culture Program for Exchange Students) designed by the Center for Japanese Language and Culture (CJLC), was recently reorganized and

redesigned. The mandatory course called "MDR," short for Maple Directed Research and Reading, was given a more important role and became the core of the entire program. The goal of this course is to promote the students' intercultural understanding through numerous cultural experiences. Students are divided into small classes mostly based on their language skills. Guided by a class advisor, each class works towards this unified goal of deepened intercultural understanding. In the fall semester of 2017, we introduced a unique team-teaching method, which made it possible to retain the merits of class teaching whilst adding a more holistic dimension to the MDR course.

This paper will discuss the MDR course design from the viewpoint of a class advisor and a teaching assistant (TA). First, we will start with an overview of the role of the MDR course within the Maple Program and show how we operate 7 different classes with a unified goal by applying a new team-teaching method using worksheets and rubric evaluation sheets calibrated for each class. Next, we will explain what role TAs fulfill in the MDR course, assisting both the students and the teachers. Furthermore, we will discuss how observing actively and practicing hands-on during TA activities helps master and doctorate students as future educators to develop teaching skills.

1. Introduction

The number of international students studying in Japan has been steadily increasing, especially this past decade. In 2017, the number of international students reached 267,000; of these, 188,000 attended an institution of higher education (JASSO 2017: 3-4). In institutions where learners with diverse backgrounds study together, the Japanese language is no longer used only to communicate with native speakers of Japanese; it has evolved into a tool for communication in a global context. Therefore, we need to create an environment in which learners can broaden their knowledge of the

Japanese language and culture and enhance their intercultural understanding and communication skills.

At present, about 200 international students are enrolled at the Center for Japanese Language and Culture (CJLC) at Osaka University. One of the programs CJLC offers is the Maple Program, an exchange-student program with 60-80 students from about 20 different countries and regions. Table 1 provides an overview of the number of Maple Program students and the number of countries/ regions they came from over the past five years.

Table 1. Number of Maple Program students and number of countries/regions

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Number of students	61	66	73	77	79
Number of countries/regions	18	16	19	23	25

The core course of the Maple Program is called MDR (short for Maple Directed Research & Reading[12]) and focuses on intercultural understanding and communication. Using a case study of the Maple Program in the year 2017-2018, focusing on the MDR course, this paper provides an example of how we can design exchange student programs to accommodate the needs of students who study Japanese language and culture in a multicultural classroom.

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[12] The MDR course is currently registered as "Special Seminar on Japanese Language and Culture" in the course guide, but in this paper we use "MDR," which is the general term used among the teachers and students of the Maple Program.

We designed and conducted the MDR course so as to enable almost 80 students with different proficiency levels in Japanese and various degrees of background knowledge to learn together through firsthand experiences of Japanese culture. We did this by adopting a new method that combined team teaching and class teaching, sustained by two pillars: (1) worksheets and rubric evaluation sheets, and (2) the help of support staff (teaching assistants and teaching fellows).

We will start by explaining the outline of both the program and the MDR course, after which we will discuss our new combined method, the tools we used (worksheets and rubric evaluation sheets), and the role our support staff played in the course, as well as the effect they had on class management.

2. Outline of the Maple Program

The Osaka University Intensive Japanese Language and Culture Program for Exchange Students is known as the "Maple Program." About 60 to 80 students from all over the world take part in this one-year program starting each October. Their Japanese language proficiency is required to be equivalent to or higher than the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) N4 level. However, not all students are majoring in Japanese studies at their home universities; hence, aside from their language proficiency level, their knowledge of Japanese culture also varies.

Led by program coordinator, Prof. Shigeki Iwai[13], we

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[13] Prof. Shigeki Iwai was the program coordinator from 2014 to 2018. During this time, we reorganized the program. In 2018 he was succeeded by Prof. Mari Komori, the current coordinator.

have been reorganizing the program for the past few years. The fully reorganized program started in the fall-winter semester of 2017, with the newly set goal of fostering talented individuals with a deep understanding of Japan, who are able to compare their language, culture, and society with those of Japan and can spread the knowledge back home. *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (NSFLEP 1999) provided us with a clear insight into which skills the Maple Program students should develop. Its chapter on Japanese-language learning standards offered an overview of the learning standards students should reach in communication skills and described three modes of communication: interpretive, presentational, and interpersonal. The three skills the MDR course has tried to cultivate correspond to these three modes of communication: gaining knowledge is an interpretive communication skill; relaying information is a presentational skill; and discussing is an interpersonal skill.

3. MDR Course Design
3.1. Combining Class Teaching and Team Teaching

When reorganizing the program, we also clarified the relative position of all our courses, and we made "MDR" the core of the entire program.

We designed the MDR course to stimulate a comprehensive understanding of the Japanese language and culture and to promote students' intercultural understanding through several cultural experiences. As it is a compulsory course, all students attend the MDR course. Each year we

divide the students into small groups mostly depending on their Japanese proficiency but also aiming for culturally diverse classes. In 2017-2018, 79 students from 25 countries and regions were divided into seven classes, from M1 to M7. We arranged several activities through which the students could experience Japanese culture firsthand: special seminars by guest lecturers, one-day field trips, and optional two-day field trips. The goal is to have one of each type of activity per semester. In addition, each year, students are required to conduct group research on intercultural understanding and present their findings at the end of the program.
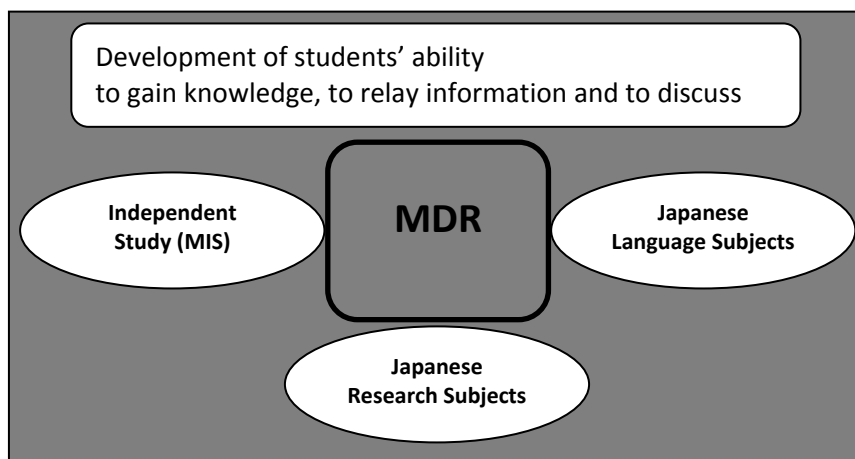

Figure 1. Program outline
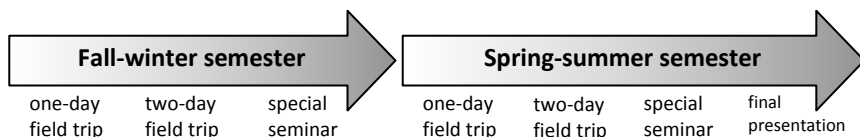
Figure 2. Annual schedule of the Maple Program

We have adopted a unique method to manage these seven classes in MDR: we combine class teaching and team teaching. In this paper, we refer to *class teaching* as the system wherein one teacher is in charge of most aspects of the course, such as the syllabus, the choice of learning material, class management, and evaluation. *Team teaching* refers to the system wherein multiple teachers manage the different classes together. In our unique combined method, multiple teachers draw up the course plan together and at times conduct classes together. At other times, teachers conduct their own classes individually.

In the MDR course, during most sessions, the class advisors run their own individual classes, and decide on the class activities, considering all relevant factors, such as their students' Japanese-language proficiency level, the teachers' own specialties, knowledge, and experience, and the program goal. When organizing cultural experiences such as field trips and special seminars, however, we take three set steps as a team: (1) a prior lecture, (2) the firsthand experience, and (3) post learning activities. All Maple Program students attend the same prior lecture, which covers basic knowledge that we want all students to acquire. In contrast, post learning is conducted separately, on a class-level, because we have found that activities such as discussions or presentations are more efficient in smaller groups. In this way, all Maple Program students can have shared experiences and still attend classes tailored to their specific needs. For example, if a prior lecture is too difficult for certain students' Japanese-

language proficiency, class advisors can use the class *before* the prior lecture to prepare the students, or, if the individual class advisors want to focus more on developing discussion skills, they can allot more time to post learning.

In this way, we have combined team teaching with class teaching. This combined method is more flexible than regular team teaching because all classes do not have to follow the same pace. We can team up when we need to do so.

In our method, we enjoyed the advantages of both team-teaching and class teaching. One advantage of team teaching was that it allowed us to work together toward a unified goal and efficiently deliver the same message to all students. One of the aims of working together as a whole program has been to make students feel that they are a member of the whole group and not only part of their own class. On the other hand, class teaching allowed us to differentiate: it made it easier to focus on the targeted skill levels students should achieve for each class and it allowed us to give extra preparation time or post-learning time to students who needed it. Furthermore, we could focus on individual students because we work in smaller groups. Finally, during the usual class activities, we could make full use of the advisors' specializations, such as linguistics, Japanese culture, or Japanese language education.

3.2. Worksheets and Rubric Evaluation Sheets

In this section, we present how we managed the activities in such a way that Maple Program students with differing Japanese-language proficiency levels could participate, and how

the teachers evaluated the students. For this, we used two sets of tools: worksheets and rubric evaluation sheets.

We used worksheets as a tool for connecting the three learning steps. The worksheets consisted of four tasks. The first three tasks were designed to specifically improve one of the targeted skills: gaining knowledge, relaying information, or discussing. The final task was meant as an overall review. Students completed the first task right after the prior lecture but before the cultural experience, the second task right after the cultural experience, and the third and fourth tasks during or after the post-learning activities. To give an example of a special seminar, in the fall-winter semester, we had a *zazen* [*zen* meditation] experience led by a special lecturer. We had a prior lecture on January 9, and held the special seminar on *zazen* on January 18. The related worksheet consisted of the following tasks:

1) Please write down what you have learned about *zazen* (or Japanese Buddhism in general) by attending the prior lecture and doing your own research.
2) Describe how you experienced the *zazen* meditation session.
3) Share thoughts on your experience with fellow students and describe in what way your experience was similar to or different from theirs.
4) Please write down in as much detail as possible what you have learned from the *zazen* experience.

Worksheets made it possible to connect the three steps of the learning process, but it was still difficult to evaluate the

students because of the differences in their Japanese-language proficiency. To overcome this hurdle, we used rubric evaluation sheets. A *rubric* is an evaluation guide with evaluative criteria and quality definitions for those criteria at particular levels of achievement. We used the same tasks in worksheets[14] for all classes to stimulate the students' group spirit, but since the students' Japanese-language proficiency levels were different, we calibrated the rubric evaluation sheets when setting the targeted level. Evaluation criteria were shared in the program, but the targeted level was calibrated for each class by the advisor. The teacher in charge of the prior lecture made a model rubric evaluation sheet that the individual class advisors calibrated for their own classes.

Our model evaluation sheets defined the different levels of achievement (from beginner to master) of the three different skills (gaining knowledge, relaying information and discussing). An example of a description of the beginner level for the skill "gaining knowledge" is as follows: "You are able to write down part of the information acquired during the prior lecture or experience. (Class advisors can decide how much of the information the students in their class should write)." The description of the master level, which is the highest standard in our rubric, read: "You are able to find important information

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[14] Sometimes the worksheets did differ slightly. For example, depending on the general language proficiency of the different groups, we provided more *furigana* [*kana* reading aid] for difficult *kanji*. Sometimes, we also divided the tasks into smaller steps. However, the contents of the worksheets (i.e., the four tasks) were generally the same for all classes.

by yourself building upon the information you acquired during the prior lecture or the experience."

Worksheets and calibrated rubric evaluation sheets made it possible for a large number of students with varying Japanese-language proficiency levels to participate in the same activities and for the teachers to apply the same set of evaluation criteria to evaluations of all students, differentiating only the targeted goals. On a side note, all students kept a portfolio in which they filed their worksheets, which enabled them to track their learning process and reflect on it even after they graduated from the Maple Program.

3.3. Role of Support Staff

The MDR class was supported by teaching assistants (TAs) and teaching fellows (TFs), who are Master's and PhD-level students, respectively, who specialize in Japanese Language and Culture at Osaka University. Some were of Japanese nationality and others were foreign students. Teaching fellows are experienced TAs who have completed a mandatory training session. Both TAs and TFs assist the students and the teachers, but TFs have more responsibilities, the most important one being that they do not only assist but may also teach up to 20% of the time. Since the majority of the responsibilities are shared, for simplicity, this paper uses the term TA as a general term to refer to both TAs and TFs, unless specified otherwise.

At the end of the semester, as part of a questionnaire with open questions, the TAs were asked to write down in detail what roles they believed they had fulfilled. At the same time, the

MDR course students were also asked to write down what they thought about the TA system. This student questionnaire was completed by 76 of the MDR students[15] and resulted in a total of 153 comments. Largely on the basis of the answers to both these questionnaires, we will discuss the role of our TAs.

On a basic level, our TAs lightened the teachers' administrative burdens and handled routine tasks such as setting up computers, taking attendance, handing out and collecting the worksheets, rubrics, and other documents. This reduced the teachers' workloads, and created an environment in which the teachers could focus on core teaching tasks.

Our TAs also took on more complex tasks, such as facilitating classroom differentiation. Allowing individualization and differentiation has already been addressed in a previous study (Blatchford et al. 2009: 34) as one of the key findings concerning the impact of support staff on pupils. To give an example, in our case, TAs supported individual pupils who demonstrated lower Japanese-language proficiency than their classmates. This ensured that the students' individual needs were being met and, at the same time, allowed the teachers to focus on the class as a whole. TAs also assisted small groups during group work, which allowed for more teacher (or assistant) contact time and individual feedback. In the questionnaires, aside from language support, the students and TAs especially stressed the part the TAs played in facilitating group work and discussions.

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[15] The questionnaire was taken the last class of the semester. Three students were not able to attend, so out of 79, the total number of participants was 76.

Our TAs also acted as go-betweens: they leveraged communication between the teacher and the students. The TAs stated that they believed it was easier for them than for the teachers to mingle with the students. This made them feel closer to the students and made them more approachable. They attributed this to their shared position as university students: they were *seniors* rather than *teachers*. Several students confirmed this in the questionnaire, saying that "they felt close to the TAs and it was easy to talk to them" (ten similar comments), and that "they could engage with the TAs as fellow foreign students or on a junior/ senior basis" (eight similar comments). Some students also pointed out that "TAs build the bridge between the students and the teachers" (two similar comments). The students could ask questions and consult TAs about possible worries or wishes, which the TAs could in turn relay to the teachers. By mediating between the teachers and the students, the TAs ensured continuous student input. Furthermore, several MDR Teaching Assistants were former Maple Program students themselves; those TAs said that, because they had experienced the same program, they could relate easily to the students and give advice based on their own experiences.

Not only in an abstract way, as Maple Program graduates, but also in a more concrete way, our TAs served as student role models. For example, by giving model presentations that fulfilled the top-level requirements stated in the rubric, they demonstrated the targeted skill levels as stated in the rubric evaluation sheets. In this way, the TAs

supported not only the teachers but also the students: they aided students with lower Japanese-language proficiency levels and assisted in the progress of the most proficient students as well.

4. Conclusion

Our new method combined team teaching and class teaching, giving us the best of both worlds. One of the advantages of team teaching was that all the members of our program (teachers, students, and TAs/ TFs) shared a common goal and worked together toward it. In other words, having a common goal unified everyone involved and gave us a clear vision of where we were going. Class teaching allowed us to keep class sizes manageable and to give students more individual attention. We used worksheets and rubric evaluation sheets as tools to make our system work. Finally, when conducting activities, whether we were using team teaching or class teaching, we received help from our support staff. Teaching assistants and teaching fellows lightened the teachers' administrative burden, facilitated classroom differentiation, leveraged communication, were able to give advice based on experience as former Maple Program students, and served as role models.

While this is just one case study, we hope it can contribute to the development of programs and courses where diverse groups of international students can broaden their knowledge of Japan and enhance their intercultural understanding and communication skills.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the Maple Program teachers, especially Prof. Shigeki Iwai, the former coordinator, and Prof. Mari Komori, the current coordinator, both of whom gave us permission and support to write this paper. Also, we are grateful to all the graduate school students who have supported the MDR course as teaching assistants and teaching fellows, for their continuous help and for their cooperation with the questionnaire.

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Teaching "Traditional Japanese Culture" in English: Constraints, Challenges, and Approaches

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Abstract

In the growing movement to incorporate more content teaching in English into the curriculum at Japanese universities and appeal to foreign students interested in studying in Japan, there has been an accompanying increase in interest in providing English-language instruction about Japanese culture. Although contemporary popular culture currently enjoys a lion's share of attention, there is also significant interest in courses in English on Japan's traditional, historical culture. At present, these classes are often taken by a mix of foreign students whose Japanese-language comprehension levels are insufficient to study the topic, and Japanese students who want to both learn more about their native historical culture and also work on their

English abilities at the same time. This creates situations that include both explicit and de-facto Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) environments; in addition to the inherent issues of such environments, the dense interconnectedness of the Japanese language to the traditional culture creates a second layer of challenges regarding the rendering of those ideas in, or through, English. There are also some fundamental questions about when translation of individual terms may be problematic.

This paper looks at the difficulties inherent in teaching the subject matter in English when some of the material is difficult even for Japanese students in their native language, and ways in which these problems can be addressed, including the use of glosses and bilingual texts. It will also discuss some of the ways different types of classes (depending on factors such as class size, foreign/ Japanese class composition, and English ability) can be handled, including two case studies.

Background

Since 2014, Japan's "Top Global Universities" Initiatives, through which the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) offers substantial funding incentives[16], have created an increasing demand for curriculum taught in English at Japanese universities, as those universities strive to bring in more and more foreign students, to enhance Japan's international academic reputation and to offset declining enrollment due to the declining birth rate. The stated goals include "Increase the ratio of international

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[16] As of 2014, these incentives amounted to approximately ¥420 million per year for the top-tier universities, and ¥170 million for the second tier (Maruko 2014).

students in the total student population," "Increase the number of subjects taught in foreign languages," "Increase the number of students enrolled in degree courses conducted in foreign languages only," "Increase the number of students who meet the standards of proficiency in foreign languages," and "Develop English syllabi" (MEXT 2018).

Not surprisingly, because of the effort to appeal to international students, much of that content ends up being Japan-related. Recently popular fields include such contemporary topics as *manga, anime,* and fan studies, but there continues to be significant interest in traditional Japanese culture as well. For example, a survey of English degree programs in Japan found that "[t]he nature of the curriculums of these programs is that they usually contain Japanese Area Studies including Japanese Culture, Japanese Politics and Economics, Japanese Literature and Japanese language learning. While Japanese students prefer to take courses such as International Cooperation, International Business or foreign languages, international students tend to choose majors or classes in Japanese Studies. ... Domestic students must be 'international' and international students must be 'Japanophiles' (i.e., well-versed in all things Japan)" (Shimauchi 2017a). Particularly in the fields of traditional-culture studies, the language used in native Japanese-language coursework tends to be far beyond the capacities of students who may only have acquired a rudimentary comprehension of the language, and sometimes even beyond that of the students who are otherwise generally able to keep up in academic environments

(indeed, sometimes beyond that of native-Japanese-speaking students, as well). Whole departments specializing in international/ global studies and conducted largely or entirely in English have proliferated, and more recently there is an increase in departments that are specifically geared towards Japan studies (or "Japan and the World" studies) as well. Few of these programs are able to bring in enough foreign exchange students to fill such programs at this point, however, leading to a situation in which a large portion of the students taking the classes may in fact be Japanese natives, who take the classes to work on improving and testing their English abilities, in addition to learning about the subjects at hand (Brown 2017). The push for "global *jinzai*" also plays a role in Japanese Studies in English, as a deep understanding of Japanese culture has been identified as an important feature of the idea of "global *jinzai*" by both university leaders (Huang and Daizen 2014), and MEXT (Shimauchi 2017b).

These classes take on two main formats. One has them presented as English-language-learning environments, where a significant emphasis is placed on the language-acquisition aspect of the class, although the degree of this emphasis can vary (CITE). This is the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) model. However, even within this model, CLIL courses can vary in the amount of class time, text and other resources, and outcomes evaluation is focused on the language-acquisition factor. The content learning may be predominant, or roughly equal with the amount of the course dedicated to learning the target language (Brown and Bradford

2017). The other model, usually known as English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), assumes that the learner will be responsible for making up any deficiencies in the language of instruction; there is no focus on the medium-language in the class. The assumption is that language learning (if necessary) will occur on its own, and the students will solidify their proficiency in the language simply by using it to learn the content, which is the sole focus of the coursework. The general attitude toward these latter courses is that these are normal content courses, just like those that would be offered in Japanese; the fact that they are being offered in English is incidental, not central to the nature of the class. However, realistically and in actual practice, non-native English-speaker students in these courses, particularly the Japanese students, often are in need of, or at least benefit greatly from, a degree of "de-facto CLIL" in the program (see Chapple 2015).

The CLIL framework has been described as being divided into four "Cs": content, cognition, communication, and culture (Coyle et al. 2010). In earlier work, Coyle also employs a fifth "C": context (1999). In this paper, I will begin with the last factor, and describe each of the other factors within the specific contexts of my own teaching. I will discuss two university contexts, and three courses specifically.

Contexts

To begin with, this paper will be restricted to discussion of the teaching of traditional Japanese culture in English *in Japan.* Secondly, it will focus only on university environments.

Two particular environments in which the author has direct experience will be discussed.

Program 1: This is a large, private university, falling in the top 50 in Japan in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings as of 2018 (Times 2018)[17], and one of the second tier of MEXT's Top Global Universities program mentioned previously. The title of the course is "Integrated English" with the subtitle "Traditional Japanese Culture Through English;" perhaps obviously, this is explicitly a CLIL-model course, where attention to the language medium itself plays a significant role. The class size has been small, ranging from as few as four students to ten or twelve. The department is specifically Japanese Studies, and internationally targeted. The students in the course, however, are often all Japanese, although non-native-English-speaking international students also take the course (the current roster includes two foreign students - one French, one Chinese - and three Japanese students). There is variation in English proficiency, but it does not tend to be extremely wide; on the whole, the students who take the class are motivated and relatively proficient in English, usually around a CEFR B2 level or even C1. The class meets twice a week for 100 minutes per session, over a single 14-week semester.

Program 2: This is also a large private university; it is also reasonably well-regarded, in the top 100 in Japan by the

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[17] Interestingly, the Times Higher Education rankings added "number of students in international exchange programmes", and "number of courses taught in a language other than Japanese" to their ranking factors in this year.

THE ranking as of 2018. It is not currently a recipient of MEXT Top Global Universities funding, although it is certainly making efforts in that direction. The specific department is International Politics and Economics. The classes are titled「文化と社会（英語講義）」*Bunka to Shakai* (*eigo kōgi*) ["Culture and Society" (English lecture)], and 「日本文化論（英語講義）」*Nihon Bunka-ron* (*eigo kōgi*) ["Japanese Culture Studies" (English lecture)]. The former is conducted as a general culture-studies class, taking as its central case study the impact of the samurai cultural legacy on contemporary Japanese society; the latter is a survey of traditional Japanese culture. From the administrative perspective, these are not language classes but content classes offered in English, and thus fit the EMI model. The classes have varied more in size than those of Program 1, but have tended to be moderately large, from around 30 students to nearly 100. Due to the fact that these are content classes rather than language classes, and due to the interest factor for international students, there tends to be a significant ratio of near-native and native-English-speaking students in the class. Despite warnings in the syllabus about the high level of English proficiency implied for successful completion of the class, the lower end of English proficiency among students registering for the class tends to be lower as well, so the range of proficiencies can be from around CEFR B1 to C2. Native and near-native English speaking students make up from a quarter to as much as half of the rosters. These classes meet once a week, for 90 minutes per class, over a single, 15-week semester.

Content

All of these courses involve some rudimentary Japanese history and a degree of basic culture-studies background material, including descriptive and analytical frameworks from Edward T. Hall (1976) and Geert Hofstede et al. (2010), among others. Early coursework involves arriving at a definition of culture in general, and then either "traditional Japanese culture" or "samurai culture" specifically. From this point the classes proceed to specific concepts, terms, and examples. "Traditional Japanese Culture Through English" and "Japanese Culture Studies" are both broad surveys of traditional Japanese Culture from social customs to aesthetics, with an emphasis on the influence of various religious/ spiritual traditions (including Shinto, Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucian thought) on the whole. "Culture and Society" uses the topics of Inazō Nitobe's *Bushido* and the characterizations of "samurai culture" therein as jumping-off points for critical analysis and broader discussions of topics such as "justice," "the role of women in society," "the education of children," and "crime and punishment." There is also a degree of self-determination to the content of all these courses, as students select topics of particular interest to them to do additional research and presentation on. For the assigned texts, there is a focus on writing either originally in English, or available in English, by Japanese authors (such as Nitobe, Kakuzō Okakura, and D. T. Suzuki in the first case, or Junichirō Tanizaki and Takeo Doi in the second), although this focus is not exclusive. Critical responses to assigned media such as readings and viewings are solicited.

The content is organized thematically, and investigated outside of class through guided readings and viewings of video, and through research and response papers. In-class work is comprised of guided group discussions of topics introduced in the content and reviewing the material (via review of guided-reading questions and discussion prompts), support lectures by the instructor, and student presentations. Content quizzes are used intermittently to check comprehension and retention of main ideas in the short term, and mid-semester and final exams assess overall understanding, synthesis of ideas, and longer-term retention.

For the explicitly CLIL course, content also includes the specific study of rhetorical structures for presentation and academic writing on cultural topics, as well as English vocabulary used, and these are also subject to evaluation, forming a part of the grading criteria. Research papers are also done through a more extensive drafting process, with specific feedback on formal linguistic issues as well as content. For the EMI classes, such considerations are very secondary: supplementary resources for English-skills support are provided, but not exploited as part of the class, and the research papers undergo a simpler drafting process focused only on content and organization. Testing does not factor in language accuracy, instead considering content knowledge/ analysis/ synthesis as entirely central.

Cognition

Due to the unfamiliarity of the material and language needs, cognitive requirements of these courses can be heavily

taxing for both Japanese and international students. Cognitive Load Theory has some implications that are especially important for teaching in this sort of situation (see Centre for Education Statistics 2017; Sweller 2017). One implication is that the input should be especially rich, whenever possible involving more than just text and spoken language: visual images, video clips, realia, and other media play an important role in scaffolding understanding of the central text information. Another is that glossing should be minimal-effort. Understanding what particular words mean should not use up cognitive effort that could be better put towards understanding the information and concepts that are being presented. In 2013, David Marsh, Víctor Pavón Vázquez, and María Jesús Frigols Martín also identified 26 recommendations for best practices in implementing EMI programs, several of which are particularly relevant to the contexts at hand:

14. Concept Formation: Concept formation is a key element of higher order learning, but it is sometimes problematic in EMI contexts. Peer-supported learning to support co-construction of knowledge is recommended. ...

21. Interactional Methodologies: Considering the generational shift towards more interactive and contributory media, and the increased language fatigue experienced by L2 students listening to extended monologues in lecture classes, EMI programs should be based on active learning strategies.

22. Conceptual Scaffolding: Because of the added challenges of both teaching and learning in one's L2, EMI programs need to pay more attention to scaffolding of ideas and concepts ...

24. Digitized Learning Environments: EMI programs need to take advantage of improving technologies for digital delivery of content and explore the benefits of flipped classrooms. ...

26. Virtual Environments: Web-based tools and learning environments are especially relevant for EMI. They give students access to materials and learning experiences that may be impossible to provide on campus given the limits on the English-proficiency of faculty or the availability of English-medium materials and resources.

<div align="right">(summarized in Brown 2017: 23-24)</div>

To these ends, the courses described above in both the explicit CLIL and "de-facto CLIL" EMI formats have a number of common features:

First, they employ a lot of glossing, both in the texts I select and in the lecture portions of classes, when I use slides with bilingual presentations of key terms. Glosses are kept close to the main text; whenever possible, facing-page translations are used, in addition. Digital/ virtual learning environments also assist in glossing, where applications or code can make it so that simply moving a cursor over a term can provide an instant, bilingual gloss. Full English/ Japanese bilingualism in materials does threaten to add cognitive load, but seems like the most equitable solution for the students involved, particularly when the subject matter is Japanese culture.

Visual media other than text are widely employed. Visual support in the form of photos or other pictures

accompanies text in presentations whenever possible, and video clips and full programs are integrated both in and outside of class in addition to text as part of the input methods. These input-rich modes do seem to act well as scaffolding and support any linguistic or conceptual difficulties the students may have.

Group work and discussion take primary positions among classroom activities; teacher-centered lectures have a supporting role (see recommendation 21 above). Whenever possible, work/ discussion groups are comprised of a mix of Japanese and international students. This fosters an environment where a variety of perspectives and background knowledge can be employed to the benefit of all the participants' understanding of the material.

One question that is raised with regard to the content, from the perspective of cognitive load, is: to what degree should critical theory be introduced and employed?

In a native-language context, these subjects might be approached by including a variety of critical "lenses" through which to analyze the material. However, many of the topics related to traditional Japanese culture already have a relatively high intrinsic cognitive load (see Sweller 2017); indeed, Japanese students point out that the material, when unfamiliar - as it often is - can be just as difficult to understand in their native Japanese as it is in English. Additionally, the scaffolding necessary to make critical theories accessible to the students would take up an unreasonable amount of reading/presentation time (and

since scaffolding of such concepts tends to be difficult to do with visuals, etc., to begin with), so the introduction of critical theory in the courses mentioned in these two programs is kept to a minimum. Critical perspectives are mentioned, and resources for further study are provided for students whose interests lie in those directions, but the central content of the courses remains mostly critical-theory-agnostic.

Finally, the range of cognitive skills employed in these courses is wide. In a revised version of Bloom's taxonomy in 2000, Michael Pohl identified the following scale of learning activities: remembering → understanding → applying → analyzing → evaluating → creating (p. 8), with the first three being the "lower-order" skills and the last three "higher-order." In my contexts, beginning with the lower-order skills of remembering terms and matching them to meanings in quizzes, and moving on to progressively more challenging activities, the students end up engaging in analysis, evaluation, and creation in their research projects.

Communication

Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010) identified three separate features of linguistic communication involved in the CLIL paradigm: language "of" learning, which is the vocabulary and structures crucial for exploration of the content at hand; language "for" learning, which includes linguistic structures involved in learning processes in general; and language "through" learning, which involves novel linguistic needs that emerge essentially through the interactions of the first two

types. In the contexts under discussion here, language "of" learning includes culture-studies terminology, numerous Japanese terms for cultural concepts as well as some correlating terms in English, and rhetorical structures used in their presentation. Language "for" learning here includes structures for negotiating meaning and expressing understanding (or lack of the same), language for expressing agreement/disagreement, and personal narrative to describe the students' own engagements with traditional Japanese culture. Language "through" learning is inherently emergent, and will depend on the directions individual students' learning takes them, but includes a wide range of incidental vocabulary and possibly rhetorical structures.

A few questions, then, present themselves. For one, how well can the non-Japanese students be expected to understand the vocabulary of "traditional Japanese culture," which often relies to a certain extent on unspoken cultural contexts that are absorbed subliminally or subconsciously, at least in part? In a review of EMI environments in Japan, Julian Chapple, of the Faculty of International Studies at Ryukoku University in Kyoto, writes of the danger of "double-sided dissatisfaction," wherein due to differences in levels of English competency, there is a risk that material presented and activities conducted in English will be insufficiently challenging for students from abroad and too difficult for Japanese students (2015: 6). However, in the context of traditional-Japanese-culture content, this effect seems to be significantly offset, if not reversed, by a tendency for the

Japanese students to have at least a vague familiarity with a lot of the material, by the inherent difficulty of some of the subject matter itself (even the most general understanding of Zen Buddhism required to begin to grasp its influence on a wide range of traditional Japanese culture, for one example), and by the cognitive load of the significant amount of Japanese terminology entailed for the non-native Japanese speakers. In fact, one might imagine there being a danger that, in providing sufficient explanation of certain Japanese cultural concepts, one risks "explaining the obvious" and boring the Japanese students (one can also imagine a "worst-of-both-worlds" scenario, in which an international student's English abilities and lack of knowledge of Japan both undermine their learning, but this situation has been extremely rare in my experience). However, this generally does not prove to be the case. As noted above, the Japanese students often find the material intrinsically difficult, and even in the cases where concepts are quite familiar to them, they are often (at first) at a loss to explain them in English, which is at least part of the motivation for their studying the subject in that language, rather than in Japanese.

Another question that arises is to what degree Japanese terminology should be simply translated, and to what extent left in Japanese and explained. To give one example, when presenting the ideas of "the sword of life and the sword of death" in D.T. Suzuki's *Zen and Japanese Culture* (2005 [1938]: 104) there are in fact two different terms being used in Japanese: 殺人刀 *setsu-nin-tō* and 活人剣 *katsu-nin-ken,* both

of which are rendered in English as "sword". However, *tō* 刀 and *ken* 劍 have different meanings and connotations in Japanese. *Tō* - also read *katana* - refers to a curved, single edged sword of a type that was heavily employed in battle in Japanese contexts; *ken* - or *tsurugi,* in the native Japanese reading - refers to a straight, double-edged sword of a type that never saw significant battlefield use in Japan, but instead was almost exclusively used in ceremonial and religious contexts (in fact, it is a sword of this type that makes up one of the three elements of the imperial regalia of Japan) (see Sakai 2014). These terms have also been variously translated in such ways as "the life-giving sword and the death-dealing sword" (Wilson 2003) and "the life-giving sword and the death-dealing blade" (Sato 1985). Sato's translation hints at the distinction, but "sword" and "blade" do not have correlating meanings to *tsurugi* and *katana*: "swords" are a subset of "blades", whereas *tsurugi* and *katana* are two different types of "swords". Thus there is a compelling argument to be made that the Japanese terms should be used when they carry significantly different information to an English translation. Another example is the important idea of 義理 *giri* in works such as Nitobe's *Bushido* (1998 [1900]); other examples include such terms as *oni* 鬼, variously translated as "devil," "demon," "ogre," and "troll," none of which properly seem to convey the precise sense of the figure, and *kami* 神, for which "god(s)" and "deities" do not seem to capture the combination of spiritual and natural essences conveyed by the Japanese term. Other terms such as

wabi-sabi are generally acknowledged to be virtually untranslatable from the start.

The author's own inclination is to include as much of the Japanese terms as reasonably possible within the English-language context of the materials. Language and culture are inextricably intertwined, so in order to understand the culture it is valuable to introduce the language to a significant degree, at least when it comes to key terms. This does, as mentioned previously, raise the cognitive load for non-Japanese-speakers, but this can be offset through glossing and conceptual scaffolding, and the payoff in conceptual understanding should validate it. Bilingual English and Japanese versions of texts with facing-page or side-by-side translation seem to be ideal, as they allow relatively quick support for Japanese students' English-language comprehension, and also allow flexible support for international students seeking to improve their Japanese language ability. In addition to simply being able to identify correlating lexical items in the two languages, discussions frequently arise regarding subtle differences between the English and Japanese versions (or even occasionally drastic differences, when one is in error!), and both international and Japanese students' understanding and awareness of both languages can be raised. This is an important factor in the last item in the CLIL "matrix," culture - particularly the raising of intercultural competence.

Culture

The final "C" in the Coyle/ Hood/ Marsh (2010) CLIL model is culture. Byram et al. (2001) point out that the

development of intercultural awareness and understanding is a fundamental part of language learning and CLIL in particular. Byram and Zarate (1997) identify five key factors in what they term "intercultural competence:" "intercultural attitudes," [intercultural] "knowledge," "skills of interpreting and relating," "skills of discovery and interaction," and "critical cultural awareness." "Intercultural attitudes" refer to an openness to different cultures and an ability to view one's home culture more objectively, even deeply-held values and beliefs. [Intercultural] "knowledge" indicates not just specific knowledge of particular cultures, but also general knowledge about how cultures and societies function. "Skills of interpreting and relating" are largely self-explanatory, encompassing the ability to translate elements of another culture and make it relatable to one's home culture. "Skills of discovery and interaction" describe ability to gain new understandings about another culture on one's own, and to utilize that knowledge in real communication in novel contexts and in real time. Finally, "critical cultural awareness" is competence in objective, critical evaluation of particular aspects one's home culture and others, based on specific criteria.

Obviously, the explicit teaching of a "traditional culture" involves the cultivation of a high degree of intercultural awareness. In the specific contexts at hand, slightly different areas of these competences are developed for different students. Foreign students obviously stand to gain a dramatically increased understanding of the cultural background for much of contemporary Japanese culture,

which can in turn help them make sense of a wide variety of new and often perhaps bewildering cultural experiences in Japan, and ideally increase their appreciation for them, or, barring that, at least their tolerance of them. Since there are often very marked differences between Japanese culture and visiting students' home cultures (particularly if they are not from East Asia), by exploring an obviously robust and viable culture that is at the same time dramatically different to their own, they can perhaps view their own home culture more clearly and objectively in comparison.

For Japanese students, exploring their own country's historical and traditional culture mainly via the medium of English (and often in voices intended for an international audience), allows them a new perspective on their home culture. Some even report that it is easier for them to understand some particularly unfamiliar aspects traditional Japanese culture in the way that it is explained to an English-speaking audience rather than in Japanese, with less reliance on assumed understandings - sometimes surprisingly, the English explanations simply are easier for them to understand than those in Japanese. Particularly in group work with international students, "skills of interpreting and relating" are highly practiced, as the Japanese students seek to clarify points of difficulty for their international counterparts.

From both sides, the variety of personal experiences, knowledge, and perspectives provides an extremely cognitively rich environment in which the material under

study can be contextualized. International students draw comparisons and contrasts with the cultures with which they are familiar, and the Japanese students can contribute additional detailed knowledge of their home culture to the larger picture.

Conclusion and Recommendations

As noted in the background, it seems likely that EMI and CLIL programs will play a significant role in the creation of curricula in Japanese universities for the foreseeable future, and also likely that there will be a substantial place for Japanese Studies, including presumably studies of traditional Japanese culture, in those programs. With that likelihood in mind, the foregoing frameworks and specific in-context experiences suggest a number of recommendations for some practices likely to maximize the advantages of mixed international and Japanese student enrollments, and minimize the problems. CLIL frameworks, Cognitive Load Theory, and intercultural competence models all contribute to these probable best practices for the teaching of traditional Japanese culture in English in these contexts.

1. The range of linguistic competence likely to be present (see Chapple 2015) indicates that linguistic and conceptual scaffolding will be necessary and important. In EMI contexts, this scaffolding, however, should be as unintrusive as possible. Support for English-language skills should be made available but not devoted class time.

Providing vocabulary lists and highlighting of important lexical items and rhetorical structures, from generically "useful expressions" to general academic use lexis such as the Academic Word List, to content-specific terminology, is useful in both EMI and CLIL contexts, and in the latter can be given classroom attention. Similar functions can be performed by external resources for doing research and academic writing in English, and presenting in English, which again can be devoted a degree of class time in a CLIL environment.

Figure 1

2. An easy and content-relevant way to scaffold material for Japanese students and at the same time provide a culturally richer learning environment for the international students in the classes is to include a high rate of glossing bilingually in English and Japanese. This can be done in

presentation slides (see Figure 1), through the use of digital texts with hypertext glosses or dedicated application/ applets that give pop-up glosses, and/ or through the use of fully bilingual texts in side-by-side or facing-page formats. Japanese publishers such as Kodansha offer a range of suitable options, and appropriate materials - paper and/ or digital - can be created to suit the class in question.

3. To adequately scaffold conceptual understanding and avoid linguistic burnout for both foreign and Japanese students, learning environments, whether in-class or online, should be varied and rich, including images, full- or clip-length video, audio such as music or ambient sound related to subject matter, and realia, whenever and as much as possible. "Flipped classroom" models where lectures, slide presentations, and other teaching modes are recorded and available for students to watch/ listen to outside of class can also allow students to absorb them at individually appropriate rates.

4. Group work and other peer-supported learning should be implemented frequently. Additionally, whenever possible an effort should be made to maximize content-focused interaction between Japanese and international students, as this has a variety of benefits for content-specific understanding and general intercultural competence, which is usually one of the goals of such curriculum. Group work should provide students with ample opportunities to not only review ideas presented in course materials but also to expand on them from their own backgrounds and perspectives.

5. In EMI environments, evaluation protocols can be selected and balanced to offset differences in linguistic competence. For example, multiple-choice tests may be preferable to essay exams for classes with a wide range of English abilities, or a combination may be employed to lessen the linguistic onus on the students. Research papers and presentations, on the other hand, can be assessed with main attention paid to content and less to linguistic accuracy. In CLIL environments, of course, this would not generally be the case.

6. Ideally, class size should be kept to a manageable scale in which the instructor can easily set up and monitor group work, circulate, and provide feedback. However, even in larger classes where this is more difficult, such peer-supported learning modes should be utilized. Similarly, although assessment may prove difficult at larger scales, as much as possible project work, individual research, and other productive modes should be included in the classwork, as these activate the higher-order cognitive skills.

These recommendations are general and have some basic application to most CLIL or EMI courses, although the first four have particular relevance to the specific context of teaching traditional Japanese culture studies in Japan. Other issues of course may present themselves with regard to the teaching of particular elements of traditional Japanese culture, but if the frameworks noted here are kept in mind, it should be possible to provide successful educational experiences for a wide range of both international and Japanese students studying traditional Japanese culture in Japan.

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Back to Black and White: From Words to Worlds in the Classroom

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Abstract

The number of foreign students studying at Japanese universities has been increasing in the last decades, and with it, the challenges encountered by programmes catering to their needs and expectations have multiplied and diversified. In many newly created programmes, for example, tuition is offered exclusively in English, under the (often) misguided assumption that both students and instructors will be comfortable using it as the medium for (high-level) academic communication. In other cases, not enough classes taught in English are offered within a specific department, and students have to attend classes in different departments, on unfamiliar topics, in order to accumulate the necessary number of credits.

This paper focuses on a university-wide, "International exchange course," taught in English, and attended by extremely eclectic groups of (mostly) foreign students, from freshmen to master's students, who come from Asia, Europe, and America, and have varying degrees of

proficiency in English and Japanese, and various levels of familiarity with Japanese history and culture. The class poses a wide range of challenges, to both instructor and students, owing to its size and composition, as well as to the motivations and learning habits of all involved. In this paper, I will discuss how I try to manage my students' - and my own - expectations, aiming for a "middle ground" that ideally takes us all outside the box, while still in the classroom. In an age of constant multimedia (over)stimulation, I try to make a case for the benefits of engaging students more - and differently - via extensive readings of black and white, written sources.

1. Introduction

As I specialise in Meiji (1868-1912) and Taishō (1912-1926) period literature, my sources are usually black and white, sepia or colourised at most, buried in quiet stack rooms, bi-dimensional, and often smelling of mould. People and events come alive only in my mind, through reading. I am used to building worlds from words, fleshing out characters and filling in the blanks using my imagination, or perhaps information that I can also only obtain by reading more. When I teach literature, my students are normally happy to learn and experience through reading, too - although I have been asked to schedule more screenings of movie adaptations, and this tendency is even stronger in classes that are not strictly about literature.

Four years ago, I started teaching a class on "Japanese Myths and Legends" at a large state university, one that has received government subsidies for globalisation through the

various programmes implemented after the turn of the century[1]; this has resulted in an increased number of foreign students, often enrolled in the several programmes that are offered exclusively in English, especially in the sciences.

My class exists under two different codes in the university-wide syllabus: it is officially part of the curriculum of an English programme in the humanities, but it is also offered as a so-called "international exchange course," in which - ideally - Japanese and foreign students have the opportunity to interact and learn together. This rarely happens, and I will explain why later on. What does happen is that all undergraduates and master's students enrolled even temporarily (on short exchange programmes) at the university, regardless of their specialisation, can, and often do take this class, some because the topic sounds appealing, some because there are not many classes taught in English that they can choose from in their own departments. There are no previous requirements for taking the class-nor would they be realistic, considering the fact that it is offered to all years and all specialisations; the instructor cannot decide the class capacity, either, which results in

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[1] The first such programme was the G30, or Global 30 (2009-2013), in which 13 state and private universities were chosen to spearhead the internationalisation of Japanese tertiary education, with the goal of bringing 300,000 foreign students to the country by 2020. This programme was followed by the Top Global University Project (in Japanese スーパーグローバル大学創成支援), initiated by MEXT in 2014 and expected to run through 2023, at 13 Type A (Top type) and 24 Type B (Global Traction type) state and private universities. Along with increasing the number of foreign students studying in English at Japanese universities, TGUP also aims to attract more foreign professors to tertiary education institutions in Japan. (cf. MEXT homepage, accessed December 19, 2018)

medium to large, extremely eclectic groups of students who come from Asia, Europe, and America, and have varying proficiency in English and Japanese, and various levels of familiarity with Japanese history and culture.

Adding to the conundrum is the fact that the title of the class cannot be altered to better match its contents; also, being optional, the class is usually offered by adjunct staff that changes often. For example, my predecessor was an anthropologist, and structured the course around fieldwork, with a focus on various beliefs and rituals extant in contemporary Japanese society and linked to mythological and legendary figures. Given my own specialisation and interest in something closer to the history of ideas than to anthropology and folklore, I chose to give the class a more "bookish" spin: we start by reading excerpts from *Kojiki* (712 CE) and *Nihon Shoki* (720 CE) in English, then focus on the way mythological/ legendary figures and folk beliefs have been rediscovered and reinvented in the early modern, modern, and contemporary age. As such, the class includes quite a great deal of reading, as well as discourse analysis, and is concerned firstly with the way myths and legends have been used in support of political ideologies or war propaganda, and secondly with their relevance and transformations in the contemporary world. Nevertheless, the title cannot be changed to reflect this, and students' expectations are often (at least partially) betrayed.

2. The Syllabus

Based on my experience teaching a course in modern Japanese history of ideas at the same university, which was part of the curriculum for the same humanities programme in English, and whose capacity had been limited to 25 students, I initially put together a syllabus that included weekly group discussions surrounding various topics introduced through assigned readings or brought up by the students themselves; the evaluation was based mainly on final presentations and essays on topics chosen by the students (subject to peer review and an individual counselling session with the instructor). In keeping with the course topic, i.e., the reinvention of myth in modern Japan, the syllabus also included one field trip to Kashihara Jingū and the nearby Emperor Jinmu Mausoleum[2]. During the orientation& introduction weeks, students would

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[2] The shrine and mausoleum are located in Nara Prefecture. Kashihara Jingū was built in 1890, on the site where Emperor Jinmu, the legendary first ruler of Japan and descendant of Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess, is supposed to have ascended to the throne in 660 BCE, after a military expedition from Hyūga (Kyūshū), during which he captured Yamato (present day Kansai area), and established it as his centre of power. The location of Jinmu's tomb has been subject to much controversy, but is traditionally believed to be at the foot of Mt. Unebi, near Kashihara. (For details, see, for example, 高木博志「近代における神話的古代の創造—畝傍山・神武陵・橿原神宮、三位一体の神武「聖蹟」— 」, in 『人文学報』, 2000.03.) Along with Amaterasu, Emperor Jinmu is one of the figures around which Meiji Japan's ideology about the unbroken imperial line was shaped; moreover, Emperor Jinmu's words, recorded in the *Nihon Shoki* as 掩八紘而爲宇 ("I shall cover the eight directions and make them my abode") inspired the political slogan 八紘一宇 ("eight crown cords=the entire world, [under] one roof"), coined by Tanaka Chigaku and used to justify Japan's overseas expansion during the Second World War.

have been familiarised with the theoretical framework and basic terminology for the class (myths, legends, folklore; mythemes, archetypes; rites, rituals, traditions, etc), and encouraged to think about the relation between mythology and fields such as history, literature, politics, science, etc. There was also a mid-term "excursion" to the university library scheduled; here, students were to be introduced to the basics of academic writing and presentation, and get hands-on experience with searching for reference materials in the online databases, as well as in the stack rooms, in preparation for the final presentation and essay.

I had to fundamentally revise my syllabus (latest version attached as Annex 1) when I realised that the 30 - student capacity limitation I had set had been removed by the administration, and the handouts I had prepared for the first class were painfully insufficient.

During the first two weeks of class (the so-called "window shopping" period, before students decide what classes they will enroll in), around 70 students attend - unfortunately, a different group each time; most come attracted by the somewhat misleading name of the course, i.e., "Japanese Myths and Legends," without actually consulting the content as detailed in the online syllabus. Some of these students decide not to take the class after the orientation, when I introduce the syllabus at length. Also, about 10% of those attending the first classes are Japanese students, likely lured by the potential "international exchange" aspect and/ or hoping to improve their English; overwhelmed by the number

of foreign students and the level of English, most of them unfortunately quit after week 3.

At the end of the "window-shopping period," with over 50 enrolled students, I had to reconsider the field trip, the individual presentations and weekly group discussions, as well as the library visit. I removed the field trip from the syllabus, and turned it into an optional activity outside of class. Nevertheless, the size of the group and the entailing scheduling issues made this activity difficult to put into practice; the distance to the destination (over 1h) and the timing (during school breaks, i.e., either in conjunction with *hatsumōde*, in the first days of the New Year, or on February 11, for National Foundation Day) were also major obstacles. Therefore, after three years of low attendance, this year I replaced the field trip with a worksheet on New Year's activities that students can observe/ participate in and write about over the holidays, for extra credit. The library visit was replaced by handouts with basic guidelines for writing an essay, e.g., essay structure, citation styles, plagiarism, etc, and one class-wide brainstorming session, combined with individual feedback sessions on demand (face to face or via email).

2.1 Readings& Discussions

Extensive group discussions on assigned readings had to be curtailed too, mainly due to the difficulty of supervising and evaluating said discussions in a class of over 50 students, in a way that would ensure that the activity was productive for all. Instead, students were asked to respond to questions

via email[3], following guides that were sent weekly and were meant to help them extract and expand relevant information from the readings. For example, the reading guide for the class on Ainu mythology[4] included the following questions:

1. Based on the excerpt from John Batchelor's *The Ainu and Their Folk-Lore* that you had to read for today, briefly explain why and how the Eagle Owl was worshipped, based on its Ainu names.

2. Why do you think the Owl god helped the pauper boy in Chiri Yukie's excerpt from *Ainu Shin'yōshū*? What is the moral of the story?

3. What parallels or similarities can you find between Ainu mythology and other mythologies you are familiar with?

In the case of Kenneth Ruoff's "Imperial Heritage Tourism", students had to answer the following questions:

1. What is the 2600th Anniversary Celebration? Why were Miyazaki and Nara touted as sites of "imperial heritage tourism"? What mythologies were reinforced and how were

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[3] In the first three weeks, before the final list of enrolled students becomes available, we conduct short in-class quizzes instead.

[4] This class was prepared and taught by a teaching fellow, under my guidance and supervision. A teaching fellow is a doctoral student with at least two semesters of previous experience in class assistance, who is often training to become an instructor, too. They are allowed (and encouraged) to teach up to 20% of the course. See more about this system in Fujihira& Beké, Chapter 5.

they used to support tourism? How did "imperial heritage tourism" contribute to nationalism and the war effort?

2. Think of examples of myths and legends used for similar purposes in your own country. Do some brief research on the topic (when? how? by whom? to what extent? how efficiently?) and consider the similarities with, and differences from the situation in 1930s-40s Japan.

Finally, Yoshiko Okuyama's "Reading Film: The Nature of Interpretation" & "Mythology in Film: Why Study Mythology in Popular Film and Anime?" and the accompanying questions (quoted below) were used to prompt students to review material covered throughout the course, as well as critically reflect on the meaning of (studying) mythology today.

1. Define (according to the reading) archetypes, mythemes and motifs, and give one or two concrete examples of your own (from literature, art, popular culture, etc) for each.

2. What are some definitions of mythology the author mentions in Chapter 3 and in her Conclusions? How does she herself define "mythology" within the framework of her book, and for the purposes of the analyses she carries out therein?

3. What purpose do myths serve in modern society, according to the author? What do you think? Do you agree/ disagree/ want to add something?

4. Discuss: "*The ancient symbolism and mythological motifs from legends and folktales of Japan embedded in the*
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film's dialogue and key scenes are translated only sparingly, if at all, in the English subtitles. (...) The proper reading of such culturally loaded terms depends on the context in which the word is used. To interpret these mythological signifiers, one must understand the typical Japanese mindset. Subtle cultural connotations hidden in those idioms only come to the surface through cultural and linguistic analysis. This is very unfortunate for viewers who are unfamiliar with the cultural mindset shared between the filmmaker and audiences." (pp. 31-32) Do you agree/ disagree with the author's proposition that one should look for the "proper reading" through cultural and linguistic analysis? Why/ why not?

A selection of the students' answers was usually brought up during class, and developed into the occasional group, or (more often) general discussion. As I was aware that not all students were comfortable speaking up in front of their peers, or with their peers, for that matter, participation in discussion was not directly evaluated.

Most students were punctual and thorough with their responses to the assigned readings (which were due before class each week), but I did have some complaints in the midterm questionnaires, regarding their length and difficulty (most readings are academic articles or book chapters, 20-30 pages long). Since the syllabus clearly stated that the class will include extensive academic readings, and I also stressed this during the orientation and introduction, I chose not to make any amendments in this matter, so far. Nevertheless, given that every year about one third of the class consists of students

from East Asia, with intermediate to low English ability, it is becoming evident that the issue needs to be addressed. Particularly worrying this year was the fact that some of the students with lower English levels were copy-pasting their answers to the reading guides, either from the reading itself, or from various websites - without actually making sure that the copy-pasted text constituted an answer to the question! Normally, the registration system would prevent students with such diverse abilities, specialisations, motivations, previous knowledge on Japan, and learning habits, to take the same class, but, since finding and implementing an institutional solution to this issue will likely take time, in the near future I can only try to provide more language assistance to these students (glossaries, bilingual resources, etc). Nevertheless, I fear this will not be sufficient, or sustainable.

2.2 Presentations

Students' active participation in shaping the learning process was mainly achieved through 15' group presentations. Again, due to the size of the class, this activity had to be more strictly controlled than the individual presentations on free topics I had initially envisioned. Students were asked to choose from a list of 14-17 topics (the number and content slightly varies every year, depending on the number of students, feedback from previous cohorts, and input from teaching fellows; also, I need to allow for one or two extra topics that might not be chosen). The presentations are intended to complement class content by either 1) adding historical background, as many students are not familiar with Japanese

history (e.g., presentations on the Edo period, the Meiji Restoration, etc), 2) providing a theoretical framework to help students scaffold the information introduced in class, critically engage with it and place it in a larger, international context (e.g., presentations on Propp's morphology of the tale, Jung's archetypes, definitions of religion, myths and the Olympic Games, etc), or 3) modelling possible ways of "branching out" from the content introduced in class (e.g., alternative mythologies, mythology and popular culture, the "myths" of Japanese uniqueness and martiality, etc).

Scheduling the presentations is one of the greatest headaches caused by this class, one that has been partially alleviated by the fact that I was assigned very efficient teaching assistants from the second year onward. The ideal number of students in a group is three, but I have occasionally allowed groups of four, as well as pairs. Coming from various departments, and in some cases having just arrived in Japan, students might or might not know anyone else in the class; also, very recent arrivals specialising in, for example, robotics, might not have enough knowledge to make an informed choice of topic (and, surprisingly, they very seldom try to solve this issue by looking up terms/ names online…) Students - individually or in groups - send us their topic preferences in order of priority (from 1 to 3), and we schedule them accordingly, usually by week 4.

One other challenge regarding the presentations refers to how broad/ narrow the topics should be. As my intention was to give the students a certain amount of freedom in

choosing how to approach the chosen subject, I have tried to phrase the research topic in relatively broad terms, without sub-topics or follow-up questions. This usually works out well, with students sometimes asking for clarification or references prior to their presentation, which I am more than glad to provide. Nevertheless, every year there seems to be at least one group that misunderstands their task, partially or completely (this year, the group who was supposed to introduce the definitions of religion in general presented about Buddhism, Confucianism and Shinto instead...) In the future, in order to solve this issue, I intend to have students send me a detailed plan for pre-approval.

While their peers are presenting, the rest of the class is expected to fill out so-called "presentation worksheets," on which they write comments about both the form and the content of the presentation, as well as one or two questions. These worksheets are also used for taking attendance. At the end, we have 5-10' Q&A sessions with feedback from students and instructors, which often develop into class discussions and serve as a way to transition into the main topic of the day. As the course was drawing to a close, my assistant compiled a list with the most relevant comments and questions, and I relayed them to the class, for future reference (ideally, this would be done more often, during the semester, but personal scheduling issues prevented me from doing so this year).

Some students, in the midterm questionnaires, said they would have preferred that the class were structured as a lecture, i.e., without student presentations, which they often

found difficult to understand, as some of their peers read out from their notes, did not project their voices, were disorganised, or failed to explain content sufficiently. Indeed, the quality of the information introduced, as well as the presentation style itself were not consistent throughout the groups. Nevertheless, most students seemed to enjoy both preparing for, and listening to the presentations, and actively engaged with their peers through direct questions or in their written comments. Overall, I consider this activity valuable for the class, but plan to improve it by giving it more structure (pre-approving presentation plans), and making sure that feedback from the students is relayed in a more direct and timely manner to their peers (perhaps in an online forum).

2.3 Essays

Students are also expected to submit short academic essays (1500-3000 words) on a topic of their choice, in connection with Japanese myths, legends, or folklore (including comparisons between Japan and other cultures). As every year several students choose to compare myths and legends in various cultures, or to look at adaptations of myths and legends in modern and contemporary media, I make it a point to warn them not to merely list similarities and differences, but to discuss the reasons and effects of said similarities and differences, considering the socio-cultural and historical background (e.g., pre-modern vs. modern vs. post-modern), the changes in the medium of expression (e.g., from oral tradition to written story to manga or anime), as well as the intended audiences and the purposes served by the analysed adaptations.

In preparation for writing their essays, along with basic guidelines about essay structure, citation styles, and plagiarism, students receive a list of suggested topics (based on those tackled by previous cohorts) and a list of recommended readings. Before the Christmas break, we have one brainstorming session, in which they work in groups and discuss possible essay topics; at the end of class, students hand in worksheets with their ideas, which I check and return after the holiday, with written feedback. Both myself and my assistant make ourselves available for further individual feedback outside of class, either face to face or via email.

As students can be from first year to master's students, with different levels of English proficiency, their familiarity with academic English writing standards also varies, and I unfortunately do not have sufficient class time to offer more detailed guidance. In my opinion, one semester of basic academic English skills (writing and presentation) should be a requirement for taking any classes taught in English, where the focus is on content, and not on language, but such a curriculum is not likely to be implemented soon. As things stand now, the lack of a clear demarcation between content classes taught in English (EMI, or English as Medium of Instruction classes), such as my class, and English classes that use content for teaching language skills (CLIL, or Content and Language Integrated Learning) is also one of the problems most instructors - and students - have to deal with at Japanese universities[5].

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[5] For details, see Groff's discussion in Chapter 6.

As a result, in an attempt to bypass the language issue, every year a few students resort to "unsavoury" practices, such as the copy-pasting of online sources, sometimes after having them machine-translated, which results in untraceable, but highly unintelligible, plagiarised work. Recently I also have reason (but no actual proof) to suspect that some of the submitted essays are commissioned online, and executed by AI text compilers: the sentences are grammatically correct, but the meaning is elusive, or sometimes completely missing, and the overall development often verges on the absurd.

To deal with plagiarism and partially alleviate the students' burden of writing in a foreign language, I have considered replacing the final essay with a written examination consisting in a combination of multiple-choice and open-ended questions. Nevertheless, this would be a very imperfect solution: students with low levels of English will likely struggle even more with the open-ended exam questions, while deciphering hand-writing will be challenging to the instructors. On the other hand, given the structure and learning goals of the class, I am reluctant to use multiple-choice questions exclusively, as they would limit the freedom of the students to look for, and meaningfully engage with topics that are relevant to their own experiences or current specialisation. Every year I am fortunate enough to read numerous well-researched and informative essays, in which the students expand on the information introduced in class in original and unexpected ways, and I am not ready to give up on this blessing yet.

3. Conclusions

As I briefly mentioned in the beginning this paper, I have received requests from some of the students to include more audio-visual materials in my class, paralleled by complaints about the length of the weekly readings. In my defence, I do use slides that contain sufficient visual props, and I also show several short films and excerpts from one long film in class. The audio-visual materials are very carefully considered, and used only when justified, that is to say, when the content requires the form - for example, when we talk about mobilising folk tales in war propaganda animation, or when discussing post-modern adaptations of mythology, but not when we are reading comparatively excerpts from *Kojiki* and *Nihon* Shoki, or discussing Norinaga's *Kojikiden*. In these cases, readings need to be assigned, and the 20-30 weekly pages (sent as pdf files to the students' email addresses) are not (should not be?) "long" by university standards.

Nevertheless, it appears that the "digitally-native" generations that fill our classrooms these days feel, undoubtedly, more at home surrounded by the colour, movement, and sound of the internet, and multimedia (over)stimulation is indeed their way of life and of learning, while the silence of a book's pages might be unfamiliar, boring, or even threatening. As such, students are tempted to replace the assigned readings with online videos, where possible, and have to be warned that a contemporary animation of the *yuki onna* story made by an Asian director

carries different political, aesthetic, and symbolic valences from the written text included in Lafcadio Hearn's 1904 *Kwaidan* (already a retelling, in English, of a Japanese source circulating in several variants), and activates only one of the possible interpretations of the text - an interpretation dependant on the director's own sensibilities, socio-historical background, relationship with the audience, but also on the formal constraints (or liberties) of animation movies as a genre. One of the goals of the class is to make students realise that every new generation that interacts with these narratives re-presents them, and that every new medium in which they are rendered re-creates them; the goal is, most of the times, achieved, but it is always an uphill battle. And yet, reading black letters on white paper must be relearned, as the time one needs to go from words to worlds is also the time that allows one to doubt, to double-check, to think - and this is, I believe, something our students definitely need more and more today.

Annex 1: 2018-2019 Syllabus for *Japanese Myths and Legends*

Course objectives: This class discusses the concepts of mythology, folklore, and religion, and introduces some basic tools used in their analysis. It focuses on the way Japanese myths, legends, and folktales were rediscovered and altered in the modern and contemporary world in order to support state ideologies and changing lifestyles. A wide variety of media (literary texts, school textbooks, political discourse, illustrations/ manga, movies/ anime, video games) will be used.

Learning goals: At the end of the course, students will 1) be able to recognise unique and universal elements in Japanese myths and legends; 2) become aware of the way myths and legends are constructed/ reinvented throughout history; 3) have advanced knowledge about the role of myths and legends in nation formation, imperialistic endeavours, as well as in the everyday lives of individuals; 4) be able to critically reflect, orally and in writing, on topics related to the course.

Class plan:
① Orientation. This class: structure, syllabus, evaluation. Self-introduction(s); Questionnaire. Tech details.

READING 1: Doty W., 1986. 'The many dimensions of myths and rituals' (pp.1-11), in *The Study of Myths and Rituals.*
② Introduction. What is mythology? What are myths/ legends/ fairy tales? Rites/ rituals/ festivals/ traditions?

READING 2: selected excerpts from *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* ("The Age of the Gods").
③ Cosmogony in *Kojiki* (古事記), *Nihon Shoki* (日本書紀). Creation myths in the world.

READING 3: selected excerpts from *Kojiki, Nihon Shoki* (Ninigi& Jinmu).

④ Eastward expansion in *Kojiki* (古事記) and *Nihon Shoki* (日本書紀). From "The Age of the Gods" to chronicling human history.

READING 4: Motoori Norinaga, "The Texts of Antiquity: Clarification" (pp. 15-24) and "Discussion of the *Nihonshoki*" (pp. 34-43), in *Kojikiden* (『古事記伝』).
⑤ Edo period Nativist school (*kokugaku* 国学). Motoori Norinaga (本居宣長) and "pure Shinto".
Student presentations: 1. Japanese history in a nutshell, focus on Edo period. 2. Japanese monsters (yōkai).

READING 5: Joseph A. Josephson, 2012. "The Science of the Gods: Shinto as a Nonreligion" (pp. 94-117, 125-131), in *The Invention of Religion in Japan.*
⑥ "Religions" of Japan. Shinto, Buddhism, Confucianism through the ages. The invention of religion.
Student presentations: 1. What is religion? Definitions, limitations. 2. Interplay of Shinto, Buddhism and Confucianism in Japan, focus on Edo period.

READING 6: Fujitani, T., 1996. "Introduction: Inventing, Forgetting, Remembering" (pp. 1-18), *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan.*
⑦ Japanese traditions, myths and legends& Meiji Restoration state ideologies. Japan's myths& traditions discovered, created and consumed by the West.
Student presentations: 1. Meiji Restoration: when, what, why, who? 2. Early Japanologists and Shinto.

READING 7: Chiri Yukie (知里幸恵), 1923, *Ainu Shin'yōshū* (excerpts); John Batchelor, 1901, "Eagle Owl" (pp. 410-416), in *The Ainu and Their Folk-Lore.*

⑧ Ainu folklore and traditions in late Edo-early Meiji periods. Chiri Yukie's contribution. (Teaching fellow special talk).

Student presentations: 1. Mythology of the Ryūkyūs. 2. Alternative Japanese mythology: the Izumo cycle.

READING 8: David Henry, 2012, "Folktales and the Formation of Yanagita Kunio's Folklore Studies in the early to mid 1930s", *Yanagita Kunio and Japanese Folklore Studies in the 21st Century* (Morse, R.A., ed).

⑨ The birth of folklore studies. Local traditions and the unified modern national state. Yanagita Kunio (柳田国男), Orikuchi Shinobu (折口信夫).

Student presentations: 1. Vladimir Propp and the morphology of the tale. 2. Carl Gustav Jung's archetypes.

READING 9: Kenneth Ruoff, 2010, "Imperial Heritage Tourism", *Imperial Japan at Its Zenith: The Wartime Celebration of the Empire's 2600th Anniversary.*

⑩ Myth and Empire as international show: *Kigen 2600 nen* Celebrations (紀元二千六百年記念行事), the "lost" 1940 Olympics and the Second World War. + Essay guidance.

Student presentations: 1. Claude Levi-Strauss' structural anthropology. 2. Myths and the Olympic Games.

READING 10: Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, 1924, "Momotarō" (芥川龍之介「桃太郎」)& Dazai Osamu, 1945, "Urashima-san" (太宰治「浦島さん」)

⑪ Rewriting old stories in the shadow of war. Myths, legends, folktales in textbooks, literature, and animation movies during the imperial period.

Student presentations: 1. Myths& legends vs. fantasy& science fiction. 2. Bushidō and the myth of martiality.

READING 11: "Shinto symbols" (Nanzan Institute, "Japanese Journal of Religious Studies", Vol. 7:1& 7:2, 1966; in preparation for guest talk).

⑫ Guest talk: being a *miko* (巫女) in contemporary Japan.

Student presentations: 1. Contemporary practices at Shinto shrines& Buddhist temples.

READING 12: Yoshiko Okuyama, 2015, "Reading Film: The Nature of Interpretation" & Mythology in Film: Why Study Mythology in Popular Film and Anime?", *Japanese Mythology in Film: A Semiotic Approach to Reading Japanese Film and Anime.*

⑬ Myths and legends in popular culture. Recycling myths in the contemporary world. Manga, anime, games, etc.

Student presentations: 1. Nihonjinron& the myth of Japanese uniqueness. 2. Adaptations/ interpretations of Japanese myths in foreign/ Japanese media.

⑭ 01.23 Case study: film screening (*Onmyōji II*, Yōjirō Takita, dir., 2003). Analysis.

⑮ 01.30 Wrap-up.

Evaluation
* Attendance: 13% (first and last classes not counted)
* Quizzes& reading assignments: 22% (11 items x 2 points each)
* Group presentation: 30% (in groups of 3)
* Final essay: 35% (individual work; topic to be approved by instructor)

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The Current Situation of Japanese Culture Education in Thai Universities: To Set Shared Standards or to Embrace Diversity?

Chomnard Setisarn

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Abstract

Japanese studies in Thailand have gradually been developing since the 1950s. Nevertheless, research papers on Japanese culture are relatively limited in quantity, and are generally of inferior quality compared to those in Japanese language and Japanese literature. Part of the reason why research in the field of Japanese culture is not as prominent as that in the other fields may be accounted for by the way Japanese culture has been taught at a tertiary level.

This paper offers a study on how Japanese culture education is provided in Thai universities. The results show that, while Japanese culture-related courses exist in undergraduate Japanese language

curricula of the six surveyed universities, there are no shared standards or learning objectives maintained among different courses in different universities, while Japanese language education is governed by common international standards. Thus, the content of these Japanese culture-related courses may vary widely depending on individual instructors.

The objectives of Japanese culture education in Thailand nowadays are twofold: (a) professionally, students are expected to acquire knowledge of Japanese culture that can be applied, together with knowledge of Japanese language, in their future careers, and (b) academically, students should acquire knowledge of Japanese culture that may serve as a foundation for further study in related fields. To realize the latter objective, it may be necessary to lay solid foundations in Japanese culture through specialized topic courses. This helps improve the students' understanding of this specific field, and, in turn, can help increase both the quantity and the quality of research in Japanese culture.

At present, the number of Japanese culture-related courses is very small compared to that of Japanese language courses. For this reason, instructors must design their curricula in a way that utilizes the available time as efficiently as possible. This involves deciding whether to set shared standards on content to facilitate the fulfillment of profession-based requirements, or to embrace diversity of content to match the instructors' wide range of expertise. It is advisable that Japanese culture education should be provided in a way that both promotes systematic thinking, and fosters question-framing and problem-solving skills regarding cultural phenomena, so that the students are sufficiently prepared for embarking on more advanced research work in Japanese culture in the future.

1. Introduction

Japanese culture education, along with Japanese language education, is important especially for foreign students of all disciplines studying in Japan. They need to communicate with their Japanese teachers and friends effectively, and can best adjust to life in Japan if they

understand the Japanese culture, along with the Japanese language. Needless to say, the understanding of Japanese culture plays an important part in Japanese language acquisition itself.

The Japanese Ministry of Education has long been aware of the significance of the study of Japanese culture. On the 21st of April 1962, the Ministry issued a decree encouraging the teaching of *Nihon Jijō* (日本事情), a discipline related to the general circumstances of Japan, Japanese history and culture, politics, nature, science and technology, in addition to Japanese language, to foreign students. It can be said that, apart from Japanese language, anything about Japan can be taught in *Nihon Jijō*, so that the foreign students can have a proper understanding of Japan. Thus, the word *Nihon Jijō* used in the ministerial decree reflects an awareness of the importance of formally providing Japanese culture education to foreign students.

Although it is essential to educate foreigners in Japanese culture, how this can be achieved is not very clear. There are no specific directions, methods, or manuals on how Japanese culture education should be implemented. Mimaki (1994: 31) talks about the importance of Japanese culture education and the lack of clarity regarding its implementation as follows:

Nihon Jijō is taught as a special discipline for foreign students along with Japanese language, but the content of *Nihon Jijō* varies from university to university. In addition, *Nihon Jijō* differs from 'teaching Japanese as a foreign

language,' as there is no discipline called 'Japanese culture studies,' nor are there any specialists or experts in the field. Thus, it can be said that it is a very obscure discipline. However, for foreign students who have just arrived in Japan, acquiring basic knowledge about Japan is as important as learning the Japanese language. Living in a foreign culture always involves risks of poor adaptability caused by misunderstanding. Additionally, when one decides to study in Japan, one should not just study or do research in one's specialized areas only. Rather, in-depth understanding of Japan and the Japanese may determine whether one's study will succeed or fail. (translated by the author)

From the passage quoted above, it is apparent that the term *Nihon Jijō* is used to refer to a discipline related to teaching Japanese culture to foreigners. The term *Nihon Jijō* can be translated into several different terms in English, e.g., 'Topics on Japan,' 'Japan: then and now,' 'Japanese culture and society,' 'Japanese culture,' and so on. These various terms reflect the flexible content of the course, as it was initially put forth by the Japanese Ministry of Education. It is therefore challenging to select the one term representing Japanese culture education that warrants complete and accurate understanding among users. In this paper, however, I shall use the term 'Japanese culture' as a central term to refer to the discipline related to Japanese culture education.

Not only are the subjects intended to educate students in Japanese culture quite varied, but they also have different

learning objectives, depending on an instructor's approach, the textbooks used, and the students' needs. For example, Hosokawa (1997) writes:

Students come to realize 'what Japan is,' and to understand Japan and the Japanese from what [they discover]. Then, they should begin to express what they have grasped, accurately and relevantly, in Japanese. This is the objective of *Nihon Jijō* after all.

Miyako (2001: 92-93) uncovers yet another objective of Japanese culture education through the analysis of major textbooks especially developed to be used in the discipline, and discusses it as follows:

Not only does the content of each textbook include general facts about Japan, but it also talks about problems found in Japan. This suggests that [these textbooks] intend that students be exposed to the Japan of today, as a living country. Content [in these textbooks], likewise, is diverse, as reflected in a range of different topics: children and their surroundings, women's lives, teenagers' values, individuality in organizations, foreigners in Japan, Japanese society and awareness, and Japanese conduct, for example. It can be said that these topics both promote the understanding of diversity currently existing in Japanese society, which is one of Japan's main goals, and help develop a vision for the future through understanding of present-day Japan, and its transition to the 21st century. (translated by the author)

It can be inferred, from both passages quoted above, that Japanese culture-related subjects are not designed to merely 'inform' students of Japanese culture and tradition. Rather, they are intended to educate students on facts about Japan from various angles, and, at the same time, encourage the students' critical analysis of those facts through their own experiences. In turn, the students acquire an improved understanding of Japanese society, and, consequently, can practically apply such understanding in their own contexts. This coincides with what Kindaichi (1991) proposes, namely that the objective of teaching Japanese culture through *Nihon Jijō* is to deepen the students' understanding of Japan. In other words, the discipline must not provide students only with abstract knowledge of Japanese culture.

What is discussed above is set in a Japanese context in which Japanese culture education is provided predominantly with the aim of preparing foreign students for their studying in Japanese educational institutions and living in Japan. Japanese culture education, however, is not offered exclusively in Japan, but also in many other countries. Japanese culture education implemented in such different contexts will certainly be different from the one in Japan.

In this paper, I shall focus on Japanese culture education in Thai universities as a case study, provide an analysis of the situation based on relevant information, and suggest directions for improvement.

2. Japanese Culture Education in Thailand

Before carrying out an analysis of Japanese culture education in Thailand, I shall first provide, briefly, a history of Japanese studies as well as Japanese language education in Thailand. The reason for this background description is that the two have strongly influenced how Japanese culture education is currently implemented, which, in turn, affects research in Japanese culture, one of the fields of Japanese studies.

2.1 Research in Japanese Culture in Thailand

Interest in Japanese society and culture began during the reign of King Rama V (1868-1910). As His Majesty King Rama V observed the significant westernization and modernization of Japan beginning in the Meiji Era, Thai scholars were sent to receive study and training in Japan by His Majesty's order. At the same time, also by His Majesty's order, Japanese experts and specialists in various areas, for example, education, law, and silk manufacture, were invited to Thailand to provide guidance and advice to Thai people. Afterwards, Thai scholars were consistently sent to receive education in Japan, especially after the 1932 Siamese revolution and until World War II. This tradition of exchange served as the foundation of Japanese language education in Thailand, which emerged after World War II.

Japanese language education in Thailand first appeared as a subject in 1947 at Borphitphimuk School. Later, in 1965, Thammasat University offered its first Japanese language

course, as did Chulalongkorn University the following year (Matsui et al. 1999). Japanese language education has since been continuously developed and has become very popular. In 2015, there were as many as 606 institutions teaching Japanese language, with 1,911 teachers and 173,817 students involved.

In what follows, I shall provide a brief background and history of research in Japanese society and culture. Japanese studies in Thailand have developed gradually since the 1950s. Tanseangsom (2001) divides the development of Japanese studies into five phases: Phase 1 – the 1950s, Phase 2 – the 1960s, Phase 3 – the 1970s, Phase 4 – the 1980s and Phase 5 – from the 1990s onwards.

Phase 1 was characterized by a genuine interest in Japanese studies, with limited topics focusing on the Bushido spirit, the defeat of Japan in World War II, and other related issues. Phases 2 and 3 were marked by the return of Thai scholars educated abroad, who then took a leading role in promoting Japanese studies in Thailand. More specifically, scholars returning from Europe and the United States played a dominant role in Phase 2, while in Phase 3 it was scholars educated in Japan who were the most active. Japanese studies, however, were still generally conducted from Western perspectives, which can be seen in Phase 4, too, when a range of textbooks written in English by European and American scholars were translated, along with a number of books on Japanese style business and marketing, prompted by the growing interest in the success of the Japanese economy and of

the Japanese business style. Additionally, during this period the Center for Japanese Studies at Thammasat University was founded (in 1983) with support from the Japan Foundation. In the second half of the 1980s, the Japanese Studies Club was established at Chulalongkorn University, its members being mostly Bangkok-based academics (the Club later became inactive as it lacked young member coordinators).

In Phase 5, from the 1990s onwards, while the economy of Japan and its business style still attracted people's interest, there appeared to be increasing interest in Japanese area studies and integrated studies incorporating Japanese history, politics, society, and culture. For example, the Faculty of Arts at Chulalongkorn University actively commissioned research and cultivated numerous scholars in Japanese literature.

In 2006, academics in Thailand gathered together and founded the Japanese Studies Network Thailand (JSN), which in 2013 became the Japanese Studies Association of Thailand (JSAT), to serve as a research center for Japanese studies in Thailand, incorporating two major research divisions: social sciences and the humanities. The humanities division consists of three fields of study: Japanese language, Japanese literature, and Japanese culture. Made evident by relevant statistics collected from past JSN (JSAT) annual meetings, there are marked discrepancies both in the quantity and quality of research in the three fields. Research works in Japanese culture are relatively limited in quantity and generally of inferior quality compared to those in Japanese language and Japanese literature.

Table 1. Number of articles published and presented in JSN (JSAT) academic conferences on humanities.

Field of study	1st meeting (2007)	2nd meeting (2008)	3rd meeting (2009)	4th meeting (2010)	5th meeting (2011)	6th meeting (2012)	7th meeting (2013)	8th meeting (2014)	Total
Japanese language (linguistic/ socio-linguistic/ Japanese language learning and teaching)	7	0	12	14	7	4	5	5	54
Japanese literature	3	7	2	8	5	7	8	9	49
Japanese culture	3	1	1	0	4	0	0	5	14

Several factors may account for the fact that research outcomes in Japanese culture are not as outstanding as those in other fields. An obvious difference is the fact that Japanese culture education occupies a very small portion in the university curricula, both in terms of hours and in terms of options, especially when compared to Japanese language education. In almost all universities having a Japanese program, most of the courses taught are in the field of Japanese language, with specialized courses in the fields of Japanese literature, Japanese culture, and Japanese studies being the minority. Table 2 illustrates this based on the

undergraduate curriculum in the Japanese language at Chulalongkorn University' Faculty of Arts; of a total of 52 compulsory course credits, only 3 are assigned to Japanese culture, and 6 to Japanese literature.

Table 2. Number of compulsory courses and credits within the undergraduate curriculum in Japanese language, at Chulalongkorn University' Faculty of Arts, categorized by field of study.

Field of study	Number of courses	Credit
Japanese language	16	43
Japanese literature	2	6
Japanese culture	1	3
Total	<u>19</u>	<u>52</u>

Not only does the field of Japanese culture constitute just a very small portion, generally, in the Japanese programs, but it is also a relatively young subject in tertiary education, having been introduced in the curriculum much later than the Japanese language, which was introduced before World War II. I myself was first assigned to conduct a course in Japanese culture at Chulalongkorn University only about 10 years ago, and the situation is likely similar at other universities, as well.

Occupying such a very small portion in the curriculum may actually be the root of a greater problem, as it is unlikely that students would choose to take up research in a field in which they do not possess sufficient fundamental knowledge. Consequently, this may lead to Thai academia having only a limited number of scholars in the field of Japanese culture.

2.2. Survey on Japanese Culture Education in Thai Universities

Given the circumstances presented in section 2.1, a survey was conducted to obtain more detailed information on how Japanese culture education is being conducted in Thai universities. In the survey, syllabi, publicly accessible as of 2015, from six selected universities were collected and studied. In addition, a number of interviews with instructors were carried out. Relevant information is presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Information regarding Japanese culture-related courses offered in six Thai Universities.

University	Course level	Credit	Class duration (hours/week)	Course	Brief course description	Course objectives
CU	year 2	3	3	Intro-duction to Japanese Culture	Japanese society and culture, especially way of thinking, beliefs, traditions, customs and rites that affect way of life of the Japanese, which are topics for students to select for doing research and report	1. To attain accurate knowledge and understand Japanese culture, especially the cultural aspects that are related to living; 2. To have wider view of Japanese culture; and 3. To be able to present and discuss interesting issues related to Japanese culture in the systematic manner
TU	year 2	3	4	Japanese Society and Culture	Lecture on development of Japanese society, its culture, way of life, politics and economy	To improve fundamental knowledge about Japan so that learners obtain the overall picture

	year 3 or 4	3	3	Japan Today	Lecture on Japanese society, politics, and economy to obtain the overall picture	n/a (information initially absent)
CMU	?	3	3	Japanese Area Studies	Learning of geography, climate and industry in each region of Japan, as well as way of life, nature and events in the four seasons in Japan	n/a (information initially absent)
	year 3	3	3	Japanese Studies 1	Politics, economy, society, and culture of ancient Japan, of Heian period, of medieval Japan, and of Edo period	n/a (information initially absent)
	year 3	3	3	Japanese Studies 2	Politics, economy and culture of Japan from Meiji era to World War II	n/a (information initially absent)
	year 4	3	3	Japanese Studies 3	Current situation and problems related to politics, economy, society and culture of Japan after World War II	n/a (information initially absent)
PSU	year 4	3	3	Japanese Studies 1	Topics concerning geography, history, culture and lifestyle of the Japanese	1. To enable learners to understand geography, history, culture and lifestyle of the Japanese from antiquity to the present; 2. To enable learners' acquisition of independent research skills and presentation, as well as discussion; 3. To enable application of acquired knowledge to relevant Japanese courses

SU	year 3	3	3	Selected Texts on Japanese Culture	Learning of culture, traditions, history, religions, philosophy, beliefs and values of the Japanese through selected academic articles and essays	1. To learn grammar and sentence structures of intermediate Japanese; 2. To practice Japanese listening and reading aloud; 3. To learn how to read Japanese kanji and their meaning; 4. To read academic articles about Japanese society, culture, politics and history, and then try to understand sentence structures, vocabulary and expressions; and 5. To practice information gathering for class presentation
RU	year 3 or 4	3	3	Japanese Studies 2 : Society and Culture	Improving knowledge of Japanese society and culture to better understand the Japanese and the language	1. To understand Japanese culture since antiquity to the present; 2. To understand Japanese domestic politics and external factors affecting social change; 3. To be able to apply knowledge and understanding of Japanese society and culture to daily life

Table 3 shows course titles, course levels, class duration (hours/ week), a brief course descriptions and course objectives of Japanese culture-related courses offered in the selected universities. The survey only targeted Japanese culture-related courses as understood in a strict sense, and does not include courses in Japanese literature or Japanese history.

The academic expertise of the instructors responsible for teaching Japanese culture-related courses was also reviewed during the survey and listed in Table 4.

Table 4. Expertise of instructors responsible for teaching Japanese culture-related courses at the six universities surveyed.

University		Instructor's expertise
CU		history and anthropology (Japanese folklore), comparative culture
TU		history of education in Japan
CMU		
1	**Japanese Area Studies**	cultural anthropology
2	**Japanese Studies 1**	comparative culture
3	**Japanese Studies 2**	information not available
4	**Japanese Studies 3**	information not available
PSU		Japanese studies
SU		teaching Japanese as a foreign language
RU		1. linguistics (Japanese) 2. international studies of history, sociology, and geography

The following observations about Japanese culture education in Thai universities were made based on information from Tables 3 and 4, along with that obtained from the interviews.

Instructors: Most instructors are native Thai academics with specific fields of expertise. Despite being responsible for teaching Japanese culture-related courses, they are required to teach courses in the Japanese language as well. Thai instructors demonstrate a clear advantage when it comes to

teaching challenging content to Thai students as they can effectively communicate with students in Thai, their first language. This allows students to grasp basic concepts more readily and form the whole picture of relevant content more easily. However, constraints may manifest when it comes to close study on particular topics or discussions on complex issues in Japanese culture. Thai instructors may generally have relatively limited experience and knowledge on certain topics, unlike their native Japanese counterparts, who can draw upon their knowledge and experience as native Japanese, being exposed to their own culture longer. Native Japanese instructors can then help students to arrive at a proper understanding of Japanese culture, especially on topics demanding a deep or instinctive understanding.

Students: Native Thai sophomore to senior students majoring in Japanese language display intermediate to higher level of competence in Japanese.

Courses: It is obvious, across all curricula studied, that Japanese culture-related courses make up only a very small portion, especially when compared with the much larger portion allocated to Japanese language courses. This may be caused by the fact that all universities aim to improve the students' language competencies in Japanese to an advanced level. Courses in other fields of study, such as Japanese culture, Japanese literature, and Japanese history, rank lower on the priority scale. Moreover, learning Japanese language

itself is time-consuming, which results in having much less time, if at all, to spend on courses in other, less-urgent, fields of study. It is likely that the students themselves do not demand knowledge in these fields, either. One reason may be that they do not live in Japan, and are thus less likely to comprehend the importance of social adaptability that can be facilitated by this type of cultural knowledge.

Course objectives: Most course objectives state 'what knowledge is taught' in a given course, such as Japanese culture, geography, history, and language, rather than 'what learners can do with the knowledge' acquired from the course in their future careers, or for continuing education in Japan. Phrasing course objectives in such a way makes it difficult to understand whether Japanese culture education serves as a supplement to Japanese language education, as knowledge in its own right, or is meant to facilitate social adaptability when one goes to study or work in Japan.

Course content: Japanese culture education in the universities surveyed involves a wide range of topics. Some topics, however, are more prevalent than others. Table 5 lists topics covered by Japanese culture-related courses offered by each university.

Table 5. Topics covered by Japanese culture-related courses offered by each university.

Topic	CU	TU	CMU	PSU	SU	SWG	KMITL	RU	Total
1. history of Japan		●	●	●	●	●	●		6
2. geography, climate, nature		●		●	●	●	●		
3. basic knowledge	●	●		●		●			<u>4</u>
4. beliefs, religions					●	●		●	3
5. rites and ceremonies in Japanese life cycle (folklore)	●								1
6. politics and economy				●	●	●	●		3
7. education					●	●		●	<u>4</u>
8. collectivism								●	1
9. social structure						●		●	2
10. contempo-rary culture	●				●	●			3
11. pop culture					●				1
12. ways of life						●	●		2
13. arts and culture		●		●	●	●	●	●	6
14. Japanese language					●				1
15. Japanese literature					●		●		2

As seen from Table 5, the top 3 most taught topics are:
(1) history of Japan / Japanese arts and culture (tie), and
(2) geography, climate and nature of Japan, and
(3) basic knowledge / education in Japan (tie).

Except for Japanese history, the top 3 most taught topics are topics of fundamental knowledge, rather than specialized knowledge. There are also courses dedicated to specialized knowledge, such as folklore, politics and economy, and Japanese literature, but they are offered by fewer universities; also, these topics are likely not designed according to the students' demands, but rather included because the instructors find them necessary for the students.

Thus, it can be concluded that the teaching of 'Japanese culture' or 'Japanese studies' in most Thai universities mainly involves delivering basic facts and knowledge about Japan. Some universities introduce specialized knowledge such as Japanese history, politics and economy, Japanese literature, and Japanese folklore into their curriculum, but topics about living in Japan or about how to adapt to a different culture are not commonly covered.

Moreover, several universities offer courses with content related to Japanese culture under different names, such as 'Japanese History,' 'Japanese Literature,' 'Contemporary Culture,' 'Japanese Corporate Culture,' and 'Japanese economy.' These courses, too, should be taken into consideration.

Available textbooks on Japanese culture (*Nihon Jijō*) are rarely used by Thai university instructors. Most instructors prepare their own course notes or teaching materials, which may include newspaper and magazine articles.

Kindaichi (1991) categorized Japanese culture education into three approaches: (a) a one-way, lecture-based approach involving instructors passing on knowledge to students, (b) a discussion-based approach involving learning from discussion of given information or data, and (c) an experience-based approach involving students learning through first-hand experiences in real settings.

In general, Japanese culture education in Thailand is provided in a lecture-based form. The discussion-based approach is adopted on fewer occasions. Usually, students are assigned a project on which they will ultimately give a presentation, followed by a corresponding class discussion. It is obviously quite difficult to utilize the experience-based approach outside of Japan. Some universities, however, help broaden students' experiences of Japanese culture through classroom and extra-curricular activities, such as demonstrations of tea ceremony, playing the Japanese card game 'Karuta', and preparing Japanese food and 'bento'. At Chulalongkorn University (CU), there have been successful attempts to create language and culture exchange opportunities through inter-institutional cooperation, such as a culture exchange hour held via a teleconference with a Japanese primary school on Tokunoshima island, and an assigned student research project on Japanese-Thai culture

topics undertaken by both Thai and Japanese short-term exchange students.

Teleconference between CU and primary school on Tokunoshima

3. Conclusion

By analyzing the current situation of Japanese culture education at Thai universities, the following conclusions have become apparent:

1. In general, Japanese culture education at a tertiary level in Thailand is lecture-based, aiming to pass on facts or knowledge from instructors to students, rather than encouraging and facilitating students to do their own study and research, or allowing students and instructors to learn together and from each other. This approach is unlikely to meet the students' goals; moreover, it is possible that students may have better knowledge than their instructors on

certain topics, as we are now in the age of information, and people with digital literacy can access information quite easily. I believe that passing on basic facts or knowledge to students no longer represents the main objective of Japanese culture education. Instead, emphasis should be placed on instructors recognizing the students' goals, and working together with them for the accomplishment of those goals. Adopting this approach, students should conduct their own research projects under the supervision of instructors with experience in Japanese culture. This way, Japanese culture education will likely be more enjoyable and students' various needs will be better met.

2. Japanese culture education given outside of Japan still lacks clear objectives compared to the Japanese-administered *Nihon Jijō*, which has the clear objective of improving the foreign students' understanding of Japanese people and society, so that this understanding can be applied to studying and living in Japan. In examining Japanese culture-related course syllabi from various universities in Thailand, it has become clear that there are no objectives as concrete as those of *Nihon Jijō*. Although it can be argued that this is because each university has its own values and approaches when it comes to what their ideal graduates are like, which may already be described in the curriculum objectives (for example, that graduates are ready for a highly skilled profession, or that they are intellectually ready for further education in Japan so that they eventually become scholars), none of these objectives are clearly reflected in any Japanese culture-related course

objectives. Additionally, when Japanese culture education is offered with the intention to prepare graduates for a job in a Japanese organization, it is also important to be clear whether it is for an organization based in Thailand or in Japan. Therefore, in order to determine how Japanese culture education outside of Japan should be administered, it seems necessary to obtain information regarding the students' goals, thus allowing for a proper positioning of the Japanese language and culture curriculum in general.

Furthermore, if Japanese culture education is offered with the intention to lay a firm foundation for further education, especially in the humanities in Japan, it may be vital to have students learning certain specialized subjects so that they have an appropriate understanding of the meaning of 'Japanese culture studies and research.' Although the humanities are so vast that it is impractical to cover basic knowledge in every single field of study, I believe that Japanese culture education taught through project/ discussion-based classes can help develop the students' abilities to think critically and to solve self-framed research problems, while also facilitating their understanding of Japanese culture via their own perspectives, powered by their own enthusiasm, all of which lead to cultivating future scholars in the field of Japanese culture.

As mentioned before, the proportion of Japanese culture-related courses at Thai universities is currently very small compared to that of Japanese language courses. This is understandable, as developing linguistic skills is of the highest

priority for students of Japanese in Thai universities. It is, nevertheless, necessary that instructors consider how such limited time can be utilized as efficiently as possible. This involves deciding whether to set shared standards on content to facilitate the fulfillment of profession-based requirements, or to embrace diversity of content to match the instructors' wide range of expertise. Either way, it is advisable that Japanese culture education should be provided so that it promotes systematic thinking, as well as fostering question-framing and problem-solving skills about cultural phenomena, which are fundamental skills to the study of the humanities, thus preparing the students for embarking on more advanced research work in Japanese culture in the future.

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Teaching Japanese History in an Indian Undergraduate Classroom

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Abstract

As one of only three central universities offering B.A. in Japanese in India, the English and Foreign Languages University attracts students from all over India (and beyond) – students with different mother tongues, different levels of proficiency in English and different expectations from the course. With Japanese language proficiency being the main thrust of the course and most students expecting to get quick jobs in multi-national corporations after finishing their course, papers on Japanese history are low on priority for most students. Further, most students are not proficient enough to understand primary material or academic writing in Japanese. To further complicate matters, the language situation of India has resulted in varied levels of English language proficiency among students on one hand, and lack of academic literature in Indian languages on the other.

The traditional approach in Indian Universities has been to teach Japanese history as a non-core paper in English at the undergraduate level, with the aim of making students acquainted with the basic flow of Japanese history. Most students coming out of such a system and opting to pursue Masters in Japanese Studies, are extremely proficient in the Japanese language, but have little or no training in the disciplines of social sciences. This paper will outline my efforts to design a paper on Japanese history keeping all these challenges in mind, using a combination of lectures, individual/ group projects and presentations, film screenings and reading assignments of Japanese and English texts to keep students informed and engaged.

There are three kinds of universities in India: central universities, state universities and private universities. Central universities are established by the Parliament of India and operate under the purview of the Government of India. State universities are run by respective state governments and private universities are run by private entities, but with the compulsory approval of the University Grants Commission (UGC, a statutory body of the Government of India). The 47 central universities of India cater to students and staff from the entire country, as opposed to state universities, which are mandated to cater primarily to the respective state's population. Central universities, therefore, get students from all over India and recruit teachers from diverse regions. Out of the 47 central universities, only four have undergraduate courses where students can major in Japanese. These four universities are English and Foreign Languages University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Visva-Bharati, and Benares Hindu University.

The university where I teach, the English and Foreign Languages University (hereafter EFLU), being a central university, gets applications and selects students from all over India. What this means in a country like India is that most students in a class come from different states and have different mother tongues. While students from the northern states (whose mother tongues are languages from the Indo-Aryan language family, ranging from Gujarati in the west to Assamese in the east) can mostly understand and converse in Hindi (even if it is not their mother tongue), students from the southern states (speaking languages from the Dravidian language family) or north-eastern states (speaking languages from the Sino-Tibetan language family) often can only converse with students from other states in English. It is, however, important to note here that with the ubiquity of media content in Hindi, Hindi is becoming increasingly intelligible to people from all parts of India. However, since no language in India has been given the status of national language (contrary to popular belief[1]), not all students learn Hindi in school. They do however always learn English in school, although the proficiency level in English can vary greatly depending on schools and socio-economic factors.

The medium of instruction can vary in Indian schools greatly. While central government-run schools have a strong Hindi component, schools run by state governments use the

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[1] See Gujarat High Court, Sureshbhai vs Union on 13 January, 2010 https://indiankanoon.org/doc/169332/ and p. 212 of the constitution of India at https://www.india.gov.in/sites/upload_files/npi/files/coi_part_full.pdf

official language(s) of the respective state. Private schools, however, generally use English as the medium of instruction in classrooms (commonly known as English medium schools in India). Higher fees in private schools also mean that only children from well to do families (who use English within the family as well) go to private schools. Proficiency in English, therefore, varies greatly among the students who enter a university like EFLU, ranging from near-native proficiency to elementary.

While designing the syllabus of the undergraduate course in Japanese language and culture at EFLU, a course on the 'History of Japan' was naturally considered crucial. It was decided that this course would be offered in the second year and would last two semesters. The first semester would cover Japanese history until around 1600 CE, and the second semester would continue from the beginning of the Edo period.

In most Indian university departments teaching European languages like French, Spanish and German, courses on history, culture and civilization of the concerned country/ countries are taught in the respective foreign language. However, because of the comparatively steep learning curve in the case of East Asian Languages like Japanese, undergraduate students are not proficient enough to read history textbooks or academic writing in Japanese. Also, undergraduate students cannot be taught Japanese history in Hindi or another Indian language, since one language would not be comprehensible to all. Therefore, there is no choice but to offer the course on Japanese history in English to the students, even though many

of them may find it difficult to follow academic English, especially those from government school backgrounds or from underprivileged sections of the society.

Another issue that arises when teaching Japanese history is the interest level of students. As diplomatic and trade relations between India and Japan continue to improve in leaps and bounds, it is getting increasingly easier for students majoring in Japanese to get well-paid jobs in multi-national corporations. Japanese language proficiency is the most important criteria for most of these corporations, and knowledge of Japanese history or society or politics are secondary considerations. What students expect from the undergraduate programme is also in line with this situation in the industry: most students are more interested in acquiring proficiency in the Japanese language than in gaining knowledge about Japan. A few students have expressed dissatisfaction in the past about the 'utility' of learning about Heian Buddhism or Kamakura politics and suggested that the time could be instead used in learning the language.

As a result of the above mentioned two-fold challenge of teaching Japanese history in the undergraduate program at EFLU, the course had to be designed in a way that made it easy to understand, not only for students from English-medium backgrounds but also for those from non-English medium backgrounds. At the same time, it had to be interesting and useful, not just for the students who want to continue higher studies after graduating, but also for students who are going to look for corporate jobs.

In order to address the first challenge, easier readings in English were chosen. Readings used include *Japanese Culture* by H. Paul Varley, *Japan: A Concise History* by Milton W. Meyer, among other books and articles. A Japanese textbook (*Ryūgakusei no tame no Nihonshi*) was also introduced. Among the purposes that this Japanese textbook served, one was neutralising the privilege of students from English-medium backgrounds. The authors of the book have done a commendable job in introducing important concepts and debates of Japanese history in very easy to understand language. The English readings were done before the Japanese ones for each historical period, in order to introduce the concepts first in English and make the Japanese text easier to understand.

Attempts to address the second challenge were made on multiple levels. Introducing the Japanese textbook helped to address this challenge, too. If we consider undergraduate courses in Japanese in Indian universities, while the traditional approach of using English as a medium of instruction does not pose many problems as far as learning the history of Japan is concerned, it misses out on some interesting possibilities of learning and generating interest in the Japanese language through learning Japanese history in Japanese. Using *Ryūgakusei no tame no Nihonshi* also helped in reducing the enormous amount of fear students have of reading academic Japanese.

Classwork was designed in a way that would help both students who want to take up jobs after graduating and

students who want to go for post-graduate studies. Students were required to make presentations on specific themes that would require investigation into the history of Japan. For example, a group was given the topic "Wa, Nihon, Japan: The Names of Japan" and the group had not only to present about the history of the names by which the country of Japan has been called, but also conduct surveys among students of other departments to understand what Indians think about the meanings of the different names of Japan. Students also had to rethink the name "Land of the rising sun," the geopolitics of cartography, and the concept of exonyms. Purely text reading assignments were also given, while sometimes assignments based on films and other visual media were given too.

To give an example of text-based assignments, students were asked to review and compare the first chapters of two books, *Japanese Culture* by Paul Varley and *The Japanese Experience: A Short History of Japan* by W. G. Beasley. While both dealt with the pre-historic periods of Japan, students were asked to pay attention to the differences between the contents and approaches of the two chapters, thereby becoming aware of 'historiography,' and as a result, understanding that history is ultimately written by historians and is not just facts set in stone. Interesting answers came up, highlighting the differences in the writing styles of the two books while concerned with the same topics. Shinto, for example, was introduced in starkly different ways, as answered by one student, "Varley is firm and direct in stating the indigeneity of Shinto, by outrightly stating that 'whereas

Buddhism and Confucianism were imports from China, Shinto was, of course, native.' Beasley does not outrightly deny or refute the nativity or indigeneity of Shinto but takes a more cautious approach. He starts out by stating the obvious 'our knowledge of what is now called Shinto, the Way of the Gods (*kami*), rests heavily on *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*'… 'it is difficult to be sure how far the account they give of pre-Buddhist religion is distorted by the assumptions and prejudices of the scribes, who were chosen for their work because they were 'experts' in things Chinese, or even immigrants.'"

Visual media proved to be very useful in keeping students interested. Period films are excellent supplements to history books, and at least one film was screened for each period in Japanese history starting from the Heian period. The film *Sanshō Dayū* (1954) was screened for the Heian period, *Zen* (2009) for the Kamakura period, *Ran* (1985) for the Sengoku period, *Hana yori mo Naho* (2006) for the early Edo period, *Tasogare Seibei* (2002) for the Bakumatsu era, *Kita no Zero-nen* (2005) for the Meiji restoration, *Kābē* (2008) and *Kono Sekai no Katasumi Ni* (2016) for the years of the Second World War, and *Always Sanchōme no Yūhi* (2005) for the years of post-war economic recovery.

All film screenings were followed by assignments based on the films, which students were expected to answer after reading the texts related to the period. For example, the first film assignment was on the film *Sanshō Dayū,* based in the late Heian period, when tax exempted private manors called *shōen*, mostly owned by nobles or monasteries, were

becoming more and more powerful, and the prototype of the *bushi* or warrior class was beginning to appear. Questions in the assignment included: "What changes were happening at this time in Japan's rural areas that produced people like Sanshō the bailiff?", in which students were expected to write about the growth of tax exempted manors and the need for protecting them using private armies led by powerful lords like Sanshō. Other questions the students had to answer included "When the film begins, to which class does Zushio and Anju's family belong to? (Warrior, Nobility, Peasant, Traders)" and "Give examples of scenes from the film which show that Buddhism was beginning to become popular in Japan by the time period of the film." The responses from the students were very interesting, and I was pleasantly surprised to find that they found an old black and white film about the Heian period to be interesting and moving. Although Miller (2007) criticises the film for introducing post-war humanist ideals in a story based in the Heian period (like the concept of "all men are created equal" as declared by a character in the film), it did paint a detailed picture of the social, political and economic changes that were happening in the Japanese countryside by the end of the Heian period.

Reading assignments were also given to both encourage students to develop habits of reading analytically, and help them understand the usage of history as a tool to question commonsensical perceptions about Japan. While learning about the Heian period, for example, students were introduced to the famous section of *Makura no Sōshi* that

begins with "Haru wa akebono..." As students had already heard numerous times about how Japanese people are very sensitive about the four seasons of their country, they identified these lines as one of the first instances of appreciation of the four seasons in the history of Japanese writing. Just after that, however, students were also asked to read parts of Haruo Shirane's *Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons: Nature, Literature, and the Arts*, and then re-evaluate "Haru wa akebono..." Students who found it difficult to read academic English were asked to read at least the introduction to the book, titled "Secondary Nature, Climate, and Landscape," so that they could at least get an idea of the argument the author is making in the book. Students were shocked to learn that despite the fact that "*The Tale of Genji* ... is often given as a prime example of the intimate connection between Japanese culture and nature," "it is also true that when *The Tale of Genji* was written, aristocratic women rarely ventured out... the only nature that such women encountered was in the gardens of their palace-style residences" (Shirane 2011, 1–2). Students immediately related it to Sei Shōnagon: as a student remarked, the whole section could be imagined as being written from her garden, or what Shirane calls "secondary nature." Students were also made aware of the diverse climatic conditions within Japan, from Hokkaido and Niigata to Kyushu and Okinawa, and asked to ponder whether one 'sense of seasons' (*kisetsukan*) could fit all of Japan.

As seen in the above discussion, the issue of the language to be used as the medium of instruction is one that is very

difficult to address. It is easier for state universities in India to address it, as most (if not all) students and teachers speak and understand the same language. However, central universities are left with no choice but to use English. The only way to address the problem in the case of a Japanese history course is to choose easier English texts and incorporate Japanese texts and visual media into the curriculum.

The problem of keeping students with different expectations interested in the course is comparatively easier to address. The Japanese history course needs to be justified as one that helps to build skills for every student, not just the academically inclined. At the very beginning of the semester, it was necessary to raise the age-old question of 'Why study history?' and extend it to the question of 'Why study history in a predominantly language-based course?' Skills developed through the study of history (not only for researchers of Japanese history or classical literature, but also for students going for other professions), as argued by American historian Peter N. Stearns in his 1998 article "Why Study History," include:

● the ability to assess evidence, that is, collect and analyse data, based on logical and scientific thinking;

● the ability to assess conflicting interpretations, that is, learning to take sides (or create a new side), based on informed decisions;

● experience in assessing past examples of change, that is, learning from the past, learning how to deal with change and be prepared for change.

These three skills obtained from the history class are useful for anyone graduating from a university, and making this clear to the students right at the beginning of the semester has motivated them and yielded positive results in the past.

In the future, more innovative methods need to be adopted, as pedagogy is always dynamic. One of my colleagues has used video creation as a way of evaluation for the Japanese society course, a method that can be adapted to the history class as well. Presentations about themes of Japanese history (like the 'names of Japan' theme mentioned above) can be easily converted into educational videos in the future, benefitting both the students (who will develop a new skill) and the general public of India and beyond (who could be potential viewers once the videos are uploaded online). History learning and teaching must inevitably grow beyond boring history textbooks.

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Beyond the Classroom: Fieldwork and Partnerships to Extend Learning

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Abstract

One of the benefits of teaching Japanese studies in Japan is the fact that lessons can be easily extended outside the classroom. Many university educators take advantage of the resources available here, and take classes of both Japanese and international students to cultural performances such as noh or kabuki, to museums, or to cultural sites such as temples, shrines, and festivals. Excursions that support learning about Japanese culture are often the richest and most memorable part of a course for both Japanese and foreign students.

Taking the importance of experiencing content as its starting point, this paper discusses ways to structure Japanese studies courses around experience both within and outside the classroom. It takes up as an example the Nagashima Project, a partnership between a Japanese university and the first National Sanatorium for the treatment of Hansen's disease in Japan. This course is designed as an intensive class into the history of discrimination and Hansen's disease in Japan that also serves to raise awareness. Students stay a week in the sanatorium, learning from the survivors who reside there. While it may seem like a niche subject, the structure of the course and its implementation can be used as a guide for multiple, productive ways to incorporate community and experience-based learning into the Japan Studies university classroom. In addition to broadly introducing the Nagashima Project and its adaptability, this paper also discusses unique opportunities to extend the learning beyond the classroom and the great benefits made possible by teaching in Japan.

Introduction

This paper introduces a partnership and project between Nagashima Aisei-en, the first national sanatorium for the treatment of Hansen's disease in Okayama prefecture in Japan, and Otemae University, a small, private, liberal arts institution in Hyogo prefecture. Informally known as the "Nagashima Project," this project has run for four consecutive years, on a volunteer basis in 2015 and as a class for university credit, Citizen Activism and Translation, in 2016, 2017, and 2018. It is

scheduled to expand and run again in August 2019. Here, we introduce the principles and ideas behind our partnership, then describe our work. We discuss the results this project has so far achieved and some of the challenges we have encountered, and then explore other ways learning can be extended outside the classroom in Japanese studies classrooms, particularly those based in Japan. While early results of this project have already been discussed briefly, this paper introduces the project in greater depth, in addition to detailing recent developments and new prongs of the project[1].

Otemae University is a small, private university in Western Japan with a student body of around 2,500 students. The students who participated in this project ranged from 1st year students to graduate students. The first year we had nine participants, and the second year we had twenty-two. The third year we had eight students; due to the scheduled maternity leave of Dr. Tanaka, in 2017 the project ran during Golden Week when many students were traveling rather than during the regular summer school session. In 2018, the course ran again as a summer school intensive subject, and fifteen students joined. Each yeah, while the majority of students take the class for credit, three or four students invariably join the project for their second or third time as volunteers. Two students have joined each year of the project thus far.

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[1] For a paper that introduces student responses to the project, see Tanaka et. al., "English Education and Social Activism in Japan: The Nagashima Project and English Translation as Praxis," *Journal of Research and Pedagogy Volume II* Otemae University, 2016: 39-57; and Tanaka et. al, "The Otemae-Nagashima UNESCO World Heritage Service Learning Project," *Global Issues in Language Education #101* (2016): 16-17.

Background and Project Development

Nagashima Aisei-en is Japan's first national hospital for Hansen's disease. It was established in 1930 as a quarantine hospital for the treatment of people diagnosed with Hansen's disease, also known by the more pejorative name of leprosy. The institution has a long and important position within the history of Hansen's disease and human rights not only in Japan but globally as well, as it was modelled on isolation colonies in Hawai'i and the Philippines. The history of the institution has been well documented in Japanese, but little is available about Nagashima in English.

As Tanaka is a specialist in literary works written by people diagnosed with Hansen's disease who lived in public institutions, this project developed in part out of her desire to teach this specialty in Japan in a way that was meaningful for the students. The social, medical, and literary history of Hansen's disease could be incorporated into other courses. She has included units on Hansen's disease in literature and comparative culture as well as in her junior and senior seminars, but she wanted to teach a class that could look more in-depth at the history, literature, and current social problems surrounding Hansen's disease. The course was designed from the beginning to be active and incorporate multiple interdisciplinary perspectives, from literature, history, translation studies, sociology and many more.

The class is framed around social activism and translation. In Japan, there is a sense that the problems of Hansen's disease were resolved after a group of survivors of

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the illness successfully sued the government in 2001 for violating their human rights. Despite this idea, the process of reconciliation is ongoing. Former quarantine facilities remain home to survivors of the illness. Nagashima Aisei-en is home to 164 survivors, and the average age is 86. With the average age increasing, some residents have begun movements to articulate and ensure the legacy of their stories of struggle with illness and discrimination. Many see this as a mission of global importance, and with the question of legacy a driving force, residents of Aisei-en launched a movement to earn the island UNESCO World Heritage Site recognition.

The movement for the institution to be registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site began in 2013, and now includes Nagashima Aisei-en, Oku Kōmō-en, and Oshima Seishō-en, three Hansen's disease sanatoria in the Inland Sea of Japan. The recognition, if realized, would be an important step towards a society where human rights are respected; it would also serve to display the strength of life in the residents, be an appeal to general society, preserve the landscape of the institution, and demonstrate the nation's position on human rights issues. In recent years, the movement has gained momentum; in November 2018, ten buildings in the national sanatorium Nagashima-Aisei-en and the national sanatorium Oku-Kōmyō-en, both located on Nagashima, were listed as national tangible cultural properties[2].

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[2] Takahashi, Yuki, "Facilities at Hansen's disease sanatoriums to be listed as national cultural properties," in: *The Mainichi Newspaper*, 21 November, 2018. Available online: https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20181121/p2a/00m/0na/017000c

Images from Nagashima

Thus, one goal of the project is to work for obtaining UNESCO World Heritage Site status and articulate the place of Japan in the global history of Hansen's disease. More fundamentally, however, our goal is to raise awareness for the disease and end discrimination. Finally, new extensions of our project aim to orient the history of the three institutions in the Inland Sea within the broader local community history.

The goals for Otemae were twofold: first, we wanted to support the three institutions, in particular Nagashima, and help them achieve their goals. In doing so, Tanaka also wanted to demonstrate to students how the history and language they learned in the classroom were immediately applicable and very important in Japanese society. Together, the authors wanted a project that made students realize the impact what they learned in the classroom could have. We wanted to raise students' awareness of their education as part of a larger project.

Project Set-up

This class runs as an intensive course for one week during the summer break. The first day is a day of intensive study in the university classroom. Students arrived at 9 AM and had five 90-minute courses throughout the day. First, they learned the history of Hansen's disease in Japan from Otemae history Professor Ozaki Koji, who works in the history of health and hygiene in Japan and England. They learned the local history of Nagashima from Dr. Matsuoka Hiroyuki, who specializes in autonomy in the Japanese

sanatoria. They learned about the history of volunteerism and activism from Otemae professor of hospitality Shikata Yoshiaki, who volunteered for years at Tama Zenshō-en. These classes were bilingual, with the professors teaching their areas of expertise in Japanese followed by a brief overview and discussion in English. Students further did bilingual summaries and question and answer sessions in their notebooks.

The day wrapped up with lessons in translation skills and practice. An additional lesson highlighted the importance of language sensitivity in our work, and some of the words that have weighted or unusual meanings within the context of the institution. Because the course is bilingual, it successfully accommodates a variety of levels of both Japanese and English speakers. Students with limited or, indeed, no Japanese ability, have participated in this project and are able to learn and make valuable contributions. Students with limited Japanese language skills often ask many questions about Japanese content and the translations we do, for example, and this reinforces the material we are going over to all the students involved.

After one day of intensive study at Otemae, then, the next day we go to Nagashima and begin our work there. On Nagashima, we start our work with a tour of the facility with Tomohisa Tamura, the curator of the Historical Museum and archives there. We also attend a lecture, followed by a Q&A session with a volunteer who speaks about their experiences with Hansen's disease and quarantine. Like other former

quarantine facilities in Japan, Nagashima Aisei-en has a Residents' Association, whose members do community education as part of their activism. We have been lucky enough to have them support our project and speak with our students in both formal and informal settings.

In 2018, the project incorporated a second prong. Our students also did field work in the Mokake community, which includes the island of Nagashima. In the past, histories of Hansen's disease have tended to neatly divide the community into two groups: people affected by Hansen's disease who were quarantined on the island and faced discrimination, on the one hand, and the Mokake community who discriminated against them. The new branch of our work seeks to complicate this dichotomous narrative and underscore the ways in which Mokake and Nagashima have always been part of the same community and have remained connected.

To that end, on the third day, students did anthropological, sociological, and historical fieldwork in Mokake. The first group to do this, we met with local leaders who gave us a tour of the community. We learned the history of the community and the ways in which having two institutions was both a benefit and a problem for other Mokake residents. While our work in 2018 was preliminary, plans are in place to extend this work in both Mokake and Nagashima, with the ultimate goal of publishing work that presents the shared experience and history of the local community.

After the tours, the interviews, and the fieldwork, students began the translation work they were assigned. We

give them a packet of the materials that need translating, and students decide amongst themselves the best way to divide the work. Students with weaker English would often pair with stronger students and work together. Students with weaker Japanese correct the translations and ask a lot of questions about the source material to make sure it is translated correctly. Even students with a relatively low level of English or Japanese were able to contribute meaningfully to this project and experience great personal growth in the process.

Lecture in Mokake

A student in Nagashima

Because students were seeing a living part of history with their own eyes, and hearing the stories of people who experienced the illness and Japan's quarantine policies, they became very passionate about their work and doing a sensitive and thorough translation. Students would visit archives for more information, or they would ask Tamura-san, or talk to the survivors themselves. The translations were therefore a powerful tool for communication between students and the community at Nagashima.

The personal connections students made on Nagashima not only made them more conscientious and passionate, but also contributed to the success of the project overall. Seeing the history and hearing the personal stories made students more aware of the importance of their translations. They were careful in their language to reflect nuance as well as direct meaning. Moreover, they were sensitive to the lessons survivors wanted them to learn. One of the most important things the students learned was not to feel fear or pity for the people who live on Nagashima, but to understand the importance of their stories and help share those stories with the world. As one student wrote, the dedication of the survivors to telling their stories inspired them: "I don't join this project just for fun. I kind of have a sense of mission." We truly believe this kind of education and personal transformation would not be possible without going to Nagashima and doing what we do there.

Results

The project has been very successful in its results. Thus far, we have English translations of the museum exhibits, a

hiking course guide with detailed explanations of the historical landmarks around the island, and an English GPS audio guided tour now available thanks to the students' translation of the script. We also have a list of guidelines for touring the island available in English. An English translation of the website and 24 survivor testimonies were completed. We translated a book written by the former president of the Residents' Association about his life experiences and activism, and are currently in talks with publishers. Furthermore, because recently we have more exchange students from many different countries participating, we have been able to complete Chinese and Korean translations of the hiking course brochure, which will also be available in the near future.

In terms of less tangible results, all of the students reported tremendous personal growth, and most have repeated the project and plan to go again next year. Furthermore, another result that we did not foresee was the way students shared their experience and their growth on social media. They did so enthusiastically and respectfully, and that served to raise awareness among their peers as well. Many of the posts were bilingual, and many were shared by friends of the students.

Since 2016, the project has been run as a course for credit through Otemae University. In addition to students enrolled in the course for a grade, each year several students repeat the project as volunteers. Course evaluations reveal that in 2016, 2017, and 2018, students enrolled in the course for credit (22 in 2016, 11 in 2017, and 15 in 2018) ranked the

"course overall" as a 3.95 out of 4. Furthermore, 100% of students reported academic growth. Negative comments from students on the course evaluations typically did not relate to course content or their experiences at Nagashima. In 2016, a student wrote: "I want us to decide the groups for cooking sooner. A number of students forgot," and a second commented, "We live as a group [on Nagashima], so it would be better if the teacher could figure out who was more motivated and who was less motivated before we go." And in 2018, most students complained about our food management: "I wanted different soup broth," and "there were too many vegetables. We should've practiced making curry before we went. There wasn't enough meat. I want seafood mix."

The most common complaint, however, is that students wanted more time in the course. In 2016, one student wrote that the schedule was tight and they wanted more time on Nagashima. In 2017, the only negative feedback was again about time: "The class isn't enough time," and "I need more time." Also related to time, a student remarked that the workload was large, so "I want four credits for this class." Time issues can to an extent be ameliorated by allowing students to refine their translations after returning from Nagashima, but the nature of the project makes it difficult to extend the length of our stay there.

However, the positive feedback far outweighs the negative. To give just a short selection from the positive feedback, students in 2016 wrote: "Having the goal of world heritage site registration really motivated me," "It was a

valuable experience. I learned so much about Hansen's disease and I'm more concerned about it now," "Instead of just learning the historical background and learning about Hansen's disease, actually going to Aisei-en and working to do English translations to contribute internationally to the local people we met there meant this was a project where we could see our social contribution," "By actually coming to Nagashima and speaking directly with the residents, we learned things about Hansen's disease that we would never learn from books, the experience," "It was nice to actually talk to the residents," and "We were able to learn about Hansen's disease in depth and we were able to use our skills to communicate this in English."

Actually meeting the people and hearing about their experiences was echoed repeatedly in the feedback from all three years. Being able to use both their English and their Japanese to make a difference in society was also repeated as a point that students found especially important. It is a difficult class that challenges the students, but all of them report it to be worth it, and this is reflected in the course evaluations as well as the messages students share on social media.

The Mokake community leaders reported they felt their participation in the project was beneficial to the community. The interest students took in the local community helped residents rethink the meaning of their own history and the ties they shared with the institutions on Nagashima. In particular, Mokake community leaders remarked that it was very meaningful to examine the isolation policies that target Hansen's disease patients and the history of the sanatorium

from the community perspective as well. They noted that while the average age of survivors in the sanatoria is increasing, so too is the age of those in the broader community. This project, they hoped, would continue to be an important avenue to rethink society and discrimination from multiple perspectives.

Nakao-san

Nagashima Aisei-en Resident Association President Nakao Shinji (84) echoed this when he noted that the project has been positive for Aisei-en as well. In addition to deepening ties between Aisei-en and Mokake, Nakao reported that, "We greatly appreciate the way students deepen understanding of the issues surrounding Hansen's disease through their translation of books and materials. We've had

Japanese students come, and foreign exchange students have also been part of this project, and I have been personally delighted that we are able to have warm talks in addition to their studies. In fact, one of the students once drew my portrait, and I've got it on display in my home. For our part, we hope the project continues as it has done, to act as a bridge not only for Nagashima but also for our Mokake community. We hope it continues to be not only a way to study and raise awareness, but also a project that creates connection and communication between us all."

Challenges

While we report many positive results from the Nagashima project, it is not without its challenges. One challenge is the unevenness of the language ability of the students, both in Japanese and in English. With careful management, students with strong English and weaker Japanese can be paired with students with strong Japanese and relatively weaker English. But this is not always possible, resulting in uneven translations that must be carefully edited. This can be very time-consuming depending on the quality and fidelity of the translation.

A second issue is the varying degree of student interest in the materials translated. In 2018, for example, our translation was of a history book that underscored the shared history of Mokake and Nagashima. For some students, the materials were interesting and they enthusiastically read the entire packet. For others, the historical information was

difficult to absorb and they read little beyond the section they were required to translate, resulting in a lack of context.

Again, in the case of both Hansen's disease and Japanese history, there is a certain level of specialized vocabulary that was a challenge for the students. It was quite demanding for students to look up vocabulary related to history, such as the different samurai ranks during the Edo period (1603-1868) referenced in the text. Students then needed to continually cross-reference the materials with each other to ensure they all had the terms translated in the same way.

A second challenge we faced in 2016 was when we tried to translate recorded video testimonies of survivors speaking about their experience of the illness. The spoken Japanese coupled with the dialects made student translations very uneven and, in many cases, incorrect. Many of the translations were not correctable, but needed to be revisited. This experience highlighted the difference between the translation of spoken and written words, and we have learned from this experience and hope to improve upon ways to translate spoken interviews and testimonies in future iterations of this course.

Extension and Other Possibilities

This project will continue for the foreseeable future, working with both institutions on Nagashima and the Mokake community. Nagashima faces a long road to gaining UNESCO World Heritage Site recognition, and Tanaka and her students are prepared to continue to work for that.

As survivors start to articulate their legacy and send their message out into the world, English becomes an

important tool to reach a wider audience. This is true not only in Japan, but almost anywhere. We hope that through this translation project the history of Nagashima will become known globally, and that this will play a small role in raising awareness about Hansen's disease and ending discrimination.

In conclusion, we offer ideas for smaller scale projects based on this model that can be incorporated into most classes, i.e., visits or collaborations with local museums, archives, or institutions. Indeed, this is a common practice for international Japanese studies faculty based in Japan. Teachers frequently conduct tours to cultural sites such as shrines, festivals, or museums. To give a few small examples: Tanaka has had students who take her course in Japanese literature design a local literary tour as a midterm project. Students have to pick an area (Nishinomiya, Kyoto, or Ashiya) and then design a meaningful literary tour that engages with text and the way the text comes alive in local culture. As a class, we then go on the tour and talk about the text as we go through. For example, we did a literary tour of Kyoto that centered around Sei Shōnagon and Murasaki Shikibu. Students picked places like Rozanji or Go-sho that appeared in the text and wrote about why place was so central to the text. Similarly in a modern literature class, we did tours of Nishinomiya and Ashiya, reading and discussing the importance of location in Tanizaki Jun'ichirō and Murakami Haruki's works. Course outings also include trips to museums, such as the Osaka Human Rights Museum. Such excursions allow students to understand a more nuanced history than they would get in a classroom. Finally,

partnerships with smaller, local history museums are also fruitful avenues for Aisei-Otemae model partnerships. Students learn more about local history and gain valuable translation experience and insight, in addition to creating deeper ties with the local community.

In addition to visiting places, Tanaka often incorporates experiences into her classes. For example, in a pop culture class, she assigns three "pop culture experiences" students must do as homework over the course of the semester. These can be anything: going to an animal café, going to a cosplay event, or watching a Japanese movie. This assignment requires students to participate in Japanese popular culture in a meaningful way. They must write a report and submit images on the experience and how it relates to the broader issues covered in class. Students enjoy these assignments, and as a teacher, they are an enjoyable project to grade.

Conclusion

All of these projects, from museum tours to the Nagashima project, require willing students and institutional support, but our experience demonstrates that these activities that take advantage of moving students out of the classroom to apply what they have learned create enthusiasm that they then bring back to the classroom. For Japan Studies educators based in Japan, our location and our ability to partner with local institutions and make trips to cultural sites is a unique asset that we can take advantage of. Such active and experiential learning makes for a memorable and transformative educational experience.

"Myths in Contemporary Japanese Society"
- An Active Learning Course

Carmen Săpunaru Tămaș

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Abstract

This chapter is based on a course I organized and taught at the Faculty of Letters of Kobe University, in November 2017. The purpose of the class was to help students understand how Japanese myths recorded in the ancient chronicles *Kojiki* and *Nihonshoki* related to contemporary society, being reflected in annual events and daily practices and rituals.

The class was focused on Awajishima (Awaji Island), considered the first piece of land born out of the divine marriage of Izanagi and Izanami (the creator gods of Japan), and included a theoretical introduction, a two-day visit to Awajishima, where we went to a bunraku performance and visited three major Shinto shrines, plus a final class where students did presentations based on the information they gathered during the trip. It was the student presentations that convinced me of the success of the class itself, as well as the efficiency

of active learning. Here I shall try to explain the syllabus, the class structure, and the connection between the theoretical framework provided by the instructor, the practical experience, and the learning outcomes.

Introduction

I was a lecturer in Japanese anthropology and international student coordinator at the Graduate School of Humanities and Faculty of Letters, Kobe University, when I was asked to teach an active learning course. A "global active learning" course, to be more precise. I shall not attempt to define here what "global" means in the context of Japanese tertiary level education; in this specific case, it meant a course taught in English where both Japanese and international students, from all departments and all years of study could enroll. As my co-editor explains in Chapter 7, mixing students of different academic backgrounds and language abilities creates various problems; however, as this class was more about learning through various experiences than through the study of written material, these issues were more easily overcome.

From my point of view, more than the eclectic group of students, the concept of "active learning" itself represented an obstacle. The curriculum in our department already included an active learning course, related to literature based on the atomic bomb incident and involving a two-day trip to Hiroshima, which I had joined once, and I had not been impressed with the learning outcomes. As an anthropologist, I realize the importance of the visual elements, as well as the

direct experiences in the learning process, but I also believe that a solid theoretical framework (which can only be acquired from books) is necessary. My goal in designing this course was to offer the students something more than a pleasure trip wrapped in the fancy package of "active learning," something that would offer them a deeper insight into Japanese culture, and that might benefit them in the future.

Class Structure and Content

The purpose of the class was to familiarize the students with the Japanese myths recorded in the ancient chronicles *Kojiki* (712) and *Nihonshoki* (720), and to help them achieve an understanding of how they relate to contemporary society, how they are reflected in annual events and daily practices and rituals. The visit to Awajishima, the island which, according to *Kojiki*, was the first born of Izanagi and Izanami, the creator gods of Japan, was obviously the highlight of the class, but I wanted my students to remember more than ocean whirlpools and onions (Awajishima is so famous for its onions that they are present even in cookies). Thus, the class was structured as follows:

- two regular classes on November 9th and 16th, where students were introduced to the basic texts, as well as general theories related to the study of myths;
- November 18th and 19th - trip to Awajishima;
- November 30th - student presentations.

The medium of instruction was English, but I had indicated in the syllabus that some knowledge of Japanese

was preferred. Again, as my colleague stated in Chapter 7, the concept of "myth" seems to be attractive to students, most of whom have some knowledge of Japanese mythology usually acquired from video games, manga and anime, and the idea of a trip to Awajishima was appealing as well. However, due to organizational issues, we had to limit the number of participants to 15, on a first come, first served basis, and in the end I had a group of students of various nationalities, Japanese included.

For the first class I used materials I had previously compiled for a textbook of Japanese mythology (*An Introduction to Japanese Myth and Ritual*, Osaka University 2012), focusing on the following themes:

I. Myth, Mythology and Mythography
II. The First Gods and the Creation of the World
III. The Sibling Wedding. Ritual and Taboo
IV. Hiruko 水蛭子and Ebisu 恵比寿

In my selection of topics I had to take into account both the time constraints and the connections to the place we were going to visit. During the first class, I distributed handouts with various definitions of myth (attached at the end of the chapter), and fragments from the first chapters of *Kojiki* (I used the 1997 Shogakukan edition, which includes the text in *kanbun*, classical Japanese, contemporary Japanese, as well as extensive explanatory notes). After I had introduced the concept of "myth," the students had to work in groups to answer the following questions:

1. Which of the following definitions of myth and mythology do you prefer and why?

A. "Mythology has been interpreted by the modern intellect as a primitive, fumbling effort to explain the world of nature (Frazer); as a production of poetical fantasy from prehistoric times, misunderstood by succeeding ages (Müller); as a repository of allegorical instruction, to shape the individual to his group (Durkheim); as a group dream, symptomatic of archetypal urges within the depths of the human psyche (Jung). ... Mythology is all of these." (Joseph Campbell - *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*)

B. "One of the major characteristics of myth[s] worldwide is their polyfunctionality. That is, a mythic narrative may be read in many different ways and at several levels. For example, the myth of the Chinese deity Hou Chi may be viewed as a myth of the grain god, of the miraculous birth of a god, of the child hero overcoming attempts on his life, or of the inauguration of temple sacrifice to the grain god, and again as the foundation myth of the Chou people." (Anne Birrell - *Chinese Mythology: An Introduction*)

2. What is the relevance of myth in contemporary society? Give examples in support of your argument.

"Today myth tends to be lumped together with religion or philosophy or the arts as a superfluous facet of culture considered enjoyable, but not particularly useful. In this sense myth suffers from the same ambiguity that prevails with respect to the arts or aesthetics in general today: an "interior

decorator" may be called in to supply the finishing flourishes of a new office building, but the building contractor is thought of as the more important worker, and customers are seldom aware of the symbolic significance of the type or shape of the building." (William G. Doty - *Mythography. The Study of Myths and Rituals*)

As homework, the students had to review the materials discussed in class, and read the indicated fragments from *Kojiki*. For those who did not have a sufficient level of Japanese I recommended Basil Hall Chamberlain's translation, *The Kojiki: Records of Ancient Matters* (also available for free online[1]).

During the second class I presented some of the ways myths are preserved and re-interpreted in contemporary society, with a focus on *kagura*[2]; the example I gave was Takachiho Kagura. Since works of art depicting the gods of Japan are scarce up until the modern era, the *goshintai* dance is one of the best available visual representations of the marriage ceremony between Izanagi and Izanami, and the

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[1] http://www.sacred-texts.com/shi/kj/index.htm

[2] "The divine dance is most often called kagura, and it takes different forms for different purposes. Honda Yasuji, a prominent expert on matsuri, divides kagura dances into three types. He distinguishes between kagura, danced for the sake of renewed life; dengaku, for an abundant harvest, and furyū, to placate evil spirits and to avoid pestilence. These distinctions, however, have appeared only recently. Originally, dance was a divine activity that combined all these purposes. These distinctions probably arose when festival performance became specialized and professionalized. To the popular mind, however, these distinctions barely exist: all dances are performed by deities, whose costumes clearly indicate the dancers' divine status." (Plutschow 2007: 158)

humorous way it is performed in Takachiho made it attractive enough for students. The next topic concerned the mythological elements associated with Awajishima (an island located between Kansai and Shikoku, at a distanced of approximately one hour by bus from Kobe City):

- "the first island that was formed in the world[3]"

- Izanagi Jingû, the Great Shrine of God Izanagi, "the oldest shrine in Japan, a shrine located where the god Izanaginomikoto supposedly spent the rest of his life after committing to his godly duties[4]"

- Onokorojima Shrine - according to the myth, Onokorojima was created from the drops of water that fell off the tip of the bejeweled spear Izanagi and Izanami used to stir the primordial waters

- The Awaji Puppet Theater - "This Ningyo Joruri has a deep connection with the creation myth. According to the origin of the Awaji Ningyo, Uemura Gennojo's "Epic of Dokunbo," the puppet theater was created to appease the child of the gods during the creation of Japan[5]."

One of the main ideas I tried to emphasize was that, regardless of personal faith, such elements of mythological tradition are still a part of daily life in contemporary Japan, and in preparation for the workshop to be held in Awajishima, the students had to either reconsider the examples discussed in class and compare them with similar

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[3] Information available on the official website of Awaji Island, https://www.awajishima-kanko.jp/en/history/.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*

aspects of their own cultures, or find other instances of myths being present in the 21st century Japanese society.

The Trip to Awajishima

On the first day on the island, we went to a bunraku performance at the Awaji Puppet Theater[6], followed by a mythology workshop at Kokuritsu Awaji Seinen Kôryû no Ie, a facility that offers both accommodation and rooms for special seminars and events. The bunraku performance was included in the program mostly for the Ebisu dance - the closing part of the majority of the shows, which is, as stated on the island website, a kind of symbolic offering to the god Ebisu. Ebisu was actually Izanagi and Izanami's first child, but he had been born unable to walk and cast away by his divine parents; a shrine by the sea was erected for him, and various rituals and festivals are performed in order to gain his benevolence.

During the workshop, students presented their findings about myths in contemporary society:

- Izanagi and Izanami as characters in video games and anime (Ôkami, Yugi-Oh)
- *Kodama* spirits in the animated movie *Princess Mononoke*
- Eating food from the other world and not being able to return to the world of the humans in *Spirited Away*
- the connection between myths and the Imperial House

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[6] http://awajiningyoza.com

Two of my students at the Sekirei Rock

Izanagi Jingû

On the second day, we visited Onokorojima Shrine and Izanagi Jingû, where the task was to look for elements that have a less direct connection to the records from the 8th century, and yet are perceived as being linked to the original tales. As examples, I told them about the small shrine dedicated to the white sand characteristic to Awajishima, located inside Onokorojima Shrine. Although nothing is

mentioned in the ancient records, the sand is seen as having fallen directly from the tip of the bejeweled spear, and as being endowed with the magical property of easing the pains of women in labor, which is why many pregnant women go to pray there. Also inside Onokorojima Shrine there is a rock called Sekirei (wagtail) Rock, from which a wagtail assumedly watched the nuptials of Izanagi and Izanami. Nowadays, two ropes, one red and one white, are tied to it, and couples who go there are supposed to hold one rope each (red for the man, white for the woman), and make a wish. If a person goes there alone, he or she should hold the red rope first, then the white one, and pray (the prayers are usually related to romance and finding a partner).

Student Presentations. Conclusions

As stated in the introduction, I initially had doubts that this class would actually become a meaningful learning enterprise, but the student presentations convinced me of the contrary. The general theme was "Myths in Contemporary Japanese Society," and they were free to choose any topic as long as it had some connection to Awajishima. Out of five presentations (due to time constraints, they had to do group presentations), the best was titled "Awajishima - A Place for Couples", a detailed analysis of the various spots on the island that were labeled as sacred and luck-bringing places for people in love (such as the Sekirei Rock from Onokorojima Island or the couple trees from Izanagi Jingû). The other focused on the relationship between myth and enterprise, or the way ancient

stories are developed into profit-bringing activities and objects - *ema* depicting Izanagi and Izanami, and various charms and amulets sold at the shrines. It seemed that I had accomplished my goal of having the students become familiar with the original stories (or at least the first recorded versions), and acquire an understanding of how those stories are still present in contemporary everyday life. They also understood that, although many of those who visit the island and the shrines are only superficially aware of the connection with the myths, or the content of the myths themselves, every time somebody visits the sacred places ("power spots," as they are often called in Japan), or buys a good luck charm, the tradition is perpetuated and the myths are kept alive.

It was a short class, conducted only once (although I now intend to alter it to suit the new Japanese language and culture program that I coordinate at the University of Hyogo) with a relatively small group of students, but the feedback was one hundred percent positive. One message sent by a student after he had returned to his country left a particularly strong impression: "Thank you, sensei! Undoubtedly your class had the biggest impact on me while I was in Japan." Besides the personal aspect, such feedback demonstrates that when sightseeing is combined with knowledge about the destination (not just data, but also historical and cultural information, as well as a theoretical framework), it can become a meaningful and, if not unforgettable, at least hard to forget, learning experience.

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Introduction. Myth, Mythology, Mythography

I.1. What is myth?

- *mythos* (Greek) = fable, tale, talk
- *mythos* vs. *logos/ historia*
- **Plato** considered myth to be an art of language alongside of and included within poetry. He cited mythic stories even while he suggested that the creativity of the poet-artist ought to be regulated closely by the state. (4th century BCE)
- The myths represented the confused memory or imaginative transfiguration of the exploits of great primitive kings. (**Euhemerus**— *Sacred Writings*, 3rd century BCE)
- Myth is the result of the "disease of language". What was at first a name became a deity, and thus myths came to represent the personification of abstract ideas as gods and goddesses, with the pantheon constructed around the dawn, the sun and the sky.

Mythologies were invented to explain underlying causes for natural phenomena. (**Frederic Max Müller -** *Introduction to a Scientific Mythology*, 1825)

- Myths reflect actions, ideas and institutions which actually existed at some time in the past. (**Andrew Lang -** *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, 1901)

Myth interpretations throughout the centuries (William Doty, 1986):

- ➢ an aesthetic device, narrative, literary form
- ➢ subject matter having to do with the gods, an "other world"
- ➢ explaining origins (etiology)
- ➢ mistaken or primitive science
- ➢ words to rituals, dependent upon ritual, which it explicates
- ➢ making universals concrete or intelligible
- ➢ explicating beliefs, collective experiences, or values
- ➢ "spiritual" or "psychic" expression
- ➢ the ideological framework for a culture

- Mythologies may convey the political and moral values of a culture and provide systems of interpreting individual experience within a universal perspective, which may include the intervention of supra-human entities as well as aspects of the natural and cultural orders.

I.2. Myth and ritual

- Myths may be enacted or reflected in rituals, ceremonies, and dramas, and they may provide materials for secondary elaboration, the constituent mythemes (mythic units) having become merely images or reference points for a subsequent story, such as a folktale, historical legend, novella or prophecy.
- Myth is the explanation of ritual, and as such altogether secondary. Since myth is the interpretation of a specific ritual, in many cases it would not have arisen until the original meaning of the rite had been forgotten. (**W. Robertson Smith**—*Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, 1888)
- Myth is only the verbal explanation and justification of ritual: the actors impersonate the supposed inventors of the rite, and this impersonation must be expressed verbally; it is their speech in this impersonation which we come to know as myth. (**A. M. Hocart**, beginning of 20th century)
- For members of archaic and traditional societies, myth narrates a sacred history, telling of events that took place in primordial time, the fabulous time of the "beginnings". Myth is thus always an account of a "creation" of one sort or another, as it tells of how something came into being. The actors are supernatural beings, and myths disclose their creative activity and reveal the sacredness of their work. Thus, the history of this activity is considered to be absolutely *true* (because it is concerned with realities) and *sacred* (because it is the work of supernatural beings). The cosmogonic myth is "true" because the existence of the world is there to prove it; the myth of the origin of death is equally true because man's mortality proves it, and so on. (**Mircea Eliade**)