Education – compulsory education, higher education, qualifications and training

Introduction to Japanese Society

Today's Class

- The Education System, overview
- Educational Issues: Early years JHS/SHS, Systemic
- Special Needs and (Dis)Ability
- Japanese Education: Passes and Fails
- Active Learning
- Higher Education
- Lifelong education
- Education/Training or Immigration?

Educational System

Private and Public Education

MEXT Resources

- Overview of Japanese Education.
- For a history of the Japanese education, read "Japan's Modern Education System" on the MEXT website.
- Read about the latest educational policies in MEXT White Papers.

Educational Issues: Early Years

- Lack of pre-school facilities (nurseries)
- Social media and young kids
- English education: The perils or advantages of early start
- Parents, PTAs and pressures on kids
Educational Issues: JHS and SHS

- Bullying, school non-attendance, suicide
- Busy kids: yutori kyoiku, clubs, juku
- Entrance exams and the school calendar
- The JK issue and lolicon

Educational Issues: Systemic

- Basic Law on Education and the "Patriotic Education" controversy
- Textbook screening and History textbook controversies
- Public spending on education
- Multicultural and Multiethnic Education in Japan

Special Needs and (Dis)Ability

- MEXT page on Special Needs Education
- National Institute for Educational Policy Research paper: "Special Needs Education in Japan"
- The problem of discrimination highlighted by the Sagamihara mass murder in 2016
- Ben Dorman: "Looking in the Mirror: Reflections on Living with Autism"

Japanese Education Passes/Fails

- Japan scores high on:
  - Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)
  - Gender equality in education (with the caveats discussed in previous lectures)
- Japan scores low on:
  - Environmental awareness and other levels of activism.
  - English speaking ability … ahem …

Average TOEFL iBT Scores (2018)

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Active Learning

2. The English language barrier.

3. Workplace culture: Academics are teacher-administrators; Research treated like a “hobby”; Lack of incentives.


Nobel Prizes and Japan

- Japan’s Nobel laureates.
- But they have been sounding the alarm recently.
- We are most probably in the “Golden Age” of Japanese Nobel Prizes … with the decline just around the corner.

The Strengths of Japanese HE

- Your professors are your teachers. Let’s look at the situation in the USA, which has supposedly the best universities according to rankings.
- Terms and conditions remain relatively good. In the UK at the moment, university lecturers are on strike over pay and pensions.
- Top (i.e. national) universities in Japan are still considered places of education amidst the neoliberal fetish of turning everything into a “product” (the picture is more complicated at small private Japanese universities).

The Weaknesses of Japanese HE

- Universities as four years of “break” between high school and work.
- The thinking that “education = contact hours with professor”. Education should be more about generating independent thinking capability.
- Structure of the academic year inhibits study abroad.
- Budgets getting cut … and cut …

Lifelong Education

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<th>Social Education Facilities and Users</th>
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<td>Citizen’s public baths</td>
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<td>Private sports facilities</td>
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<td>Theaters, concert halls</td>
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<td>Lifelong learning centers</td>
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… and the Open University of Japan

Education/Training or Immigration?

- The Technical Intern Training Program: Sounds good in practice, but many problems (France 24 and The Guardian).
- A popular study abroad destination, with 298,980 international students in May 2018. But, some universities and language schools abuse the law and effectively act as brokers for cheap migrant labour.

Next Time

- Leisure – sport, pop culture, entertainment
- Suggested Reading: Handbook Chapter 16; Sugimoto Chapter 6; Hendry Chapter 10.