

Globalization in Japan: The Case of Moral Education

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Since the time of Socrates, youth around the world have been considered a disappointment to the older generation. Around 450 B.C., Socrates lamented the young generation's love for luxury, lack of respect, laziness, and bad behavior. Since the beginning of time, older generations have considered the younger generations as problematic, and Japan is no exception. In 1958, Osada Arata, President of the Japan Pedagogical Society, analyzed this seemingly eternal conflict:

According to [proponents of the morals courses], children have bad manners, speak impolitely, are egoistic and selfish, do not listen to their parents or teachers, are immodest and lack self-criticism and introspection. But the reason that the critics are making such an outcry is that they are measuring today's children with yesterday's yardstick.... The members of the older generation...are too quick to equate the idea of ethics with the outmoded forms of loyalty and filial piety pursued in the pre-war period. (Osada in Marshall 1994: 179)

Osada hints at the assumed loss of pre-war values in Japan, but the criticism he voices on the part of the older generation is remarkably similar to what Socrates pointed out in classical times, and countless after him: self-centeredness, lack of modesty and respect, and bad manners. Raising well-behaved children is one of the most important tasks of parents and educational institutions who try to impart on their charges the moral upbringing they find suitable for society. Although Osada's argument, that lamentations over the state of the youth of today are based on outmoded ethics is quite valid, it is also true that much of the discourse on morality and moral education assumes, as its point of departure, problems with the way things are at the time at which the discourse takes place.

In today's world, moral education does not merely exist on the national level. Globalization poses new challenges to any country and its ideas of identity and morality. This study attempts to trace one aspect of the global influence on Japanese education by using moral education as a case.

I propose to examine the contents of moral education as a reaction to (1) the challenges faced due to globalization, (2) the risks associated with modern globalized society, and (3) the anxiety born out of the challenges, both "real" or "imagined," perceived to be posed by globalization. A productive starting point would be to study initiatives where moral education

functions as “gate-keeping,” where those in a position of influence try to safeguard what is considered basic and inalienable in Japanese culture and morality while also adapting to global currents that cannot be ignored. I also contend that global influence is not a new aspect of moral education in Japan. I will provide a short historical overview of the development of formalized moral education since the Meiji era, and I will focus on the use of the “great person” approach, which implies the use of moral icons as examples for pupils to emulate.¹ In particular, I will study the publications of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)—*Kokoro no nōto*—for their use of moral icons.

A Short History of Moral Education in Japan

Moral education, known as *shūshin*² before World War II, was prominent in Japanese education since its formalization in the Meiji era. During the Meiji Restoration (1868), education functioned under the slogan “Rich Country, Strong Military” (*fukoku kyōhei*), and it fulfilled two purposes: One was to educate the human resources necessary for Japan to excel as a modern country; and the other was to aid in the cultivation of a national consciousness, “the Japanese,” implying a unification of the inhabitants of the Japanese archipelago that had not existed under the previous feudal system, which was dominated by relatively autonomous domains, each with individual “national” identities (Kaizuka 2009: 24–25).³ This unification would have been quite an arduous task for, as Todorov remarks, it is common for schools to become places where children learn to recognize themselves as having a common past, but this is a problem where no common past existed previously (Todorov 2010 [2008]: 73)—as indeed was the case in Japan at the time.

In the beginning, as expected, it was unclear on what Japanese morality—as taught in schools—should be based. Unlike the case in Europe or the Middle East, Japan did not have one common religion; therefore, there were discussions on whether Confucianism or Western modernization ideals should be the basis for constructing the Japanese national morality (Kaizuka 2009: 25). In the beginning, a combination of both seemed to be the choice. This has been described by Wray (2000: 15–16) as follows:

The original motivation for offering the course came from Meiji leaders deciding that Japanese parents, Shintoism and Buddhism, unlike Western parents and Christianity, did not adequately teach the public ethics and morality essential for order, harmony, national unity and loyalty to the emperor. Filling the vacuum meant offering moral education

¹ This approach has been extensively analyzed by, for example, Ampiah in his article on the use of the example of Noguchi Shika, mother of microbiologist Nogochi Hideyo, in Japanese textbooks.

² Titles and Japanese expressions (excluding names) are in italics to prevent confusion.

³ All translations from Japanese sources are made by the author.

courses to elementary school students and Western and Eastern models of good behaviour like Confucius, Shotoku Taishi, Benjamin Franklin, Socrates, George Washington, Ninomiya Sontoku and Florence Nightingale, the “great person” approach to social studies common at the time in Western schooling.⁴

Initially, from 1872 onward, *shūshin* was only taught to first and second grade students in elementary school for two hours per week; it was, if anything, considered the least important subject. Many of the textbooks used were translations of Western textbooks such as the British *The Moral Class Book*,⁵ translated by none other than the famed educationalist Fukuzawa Yukichi, and the American *Elements of Moral Science*⁶ or Aesop’s fables. The “Westernization and modernization,” or “globalization,” if you will, of Japanese education at the time is clearly identifiable (Tanaka 2010: 4–5; Kaizuka 2009: 26; Iizuka 2009: 155).⁷ This also explains the use of Western models of behavior, as described by Wray above. The “great person” approach of the time reflects a mixture of native and Western approaches in its mixed selection of Japanese, Chinese, and Western moral icons.

With the passage of time, *shūshin* gained recognition as an important subject in schools. Tanaka and Kaizuka both explain how those in power became increasingly worried that the flow of foreign ideas into Japanese education was not useful in people’s everyday life and that it could endanger the national identity of the Japanese. The counter measure was increased emphasis on Confucian values and the relatedness of the individual to the nation (*kokka to no tsunagari* in Japanese) (Tanaka 2010: 6–7; Kaizuka 2009: 27; Iizuka 2009: 116; Passin 1965: 226–28). This approach became entrenched with the issue of the Imperial Rescript on Education (*Kyōiku chokugo*) in 1890 (Kaizuka 2009: 27; Iizuka 2009: 117; Marshall 1994: 54–58). From then on, the Rescript came to be revered in schools alongside the Imperial portrait, becoming the foundational document of education in Japan. As such, it influenced the instructions provided by the Ministry of Education for all subjects, but especially for *shūshin* and related subjects like religious education, which was prohibited in an instruction from the Ministry in 1899. This prohibition was effected for Buddhism and Christianity, but not for Shinto, which was not considered a religion (Kaizuka 2009: 30–31; Iizuka 2009: 118).⁸ National interest and the Emperor were clearly fundamental to the thinking behind *shūshin*, which was a reflection of on-going nation building at the time.

⁴ Kaizuka (2009, p. 32) also mentions this “great person” or moral models approach; his examples are Ninomiya Sontoku, Kusunoki Masashige, Lincoln, and Florence Nightingale.

⁵ Tanaka does not state this explicitly, but it appears to be by William Sullivan, published in 1831.

⁶ This was probably the work authored by Francis Wayland in 1835.

⁷ Marshall states that textbooks directly translated from the French were the most widely used. Apart from noting that they emphasized respect for the Christian God and the Second Republic, Marshall does not elaborate on the content or the authors (Marshall 1994, p. 31). I have not found any references to this in my other sources, except that Aesop’s fables may have been translated from French copies.

⁸ A detailed account of the contents of textbooks at the time can be found in Karasawa (1989 [1955]).

Although a variety of globally influential political ideas naturally also influenced thinking in certain circles in Japan, particularly during what is sometimes known as the “Taishō Democracy” (Taishō period, 1912–26), growing fascism during the 1930s and increasingly harsh repercussions toward teachers⁹ considered to have a “bad influence” over children finally weeded out any liberal thinking in Japanese moral education; this left nationalist thinking along the lines of the document “Fundamentals of Our National Polity” (*Kokutai no hongī*, 1937)¹⁰ supreme in the realm of moral education (Tanaka 2010: 16–25).

Most researchers like Kaizuka and Tanaka do not go into any detail about war-time moral education in Japan; however, we do find statements like the following, describing the general state of *shūshin* in wartime Japan:

There can be no doubt that the policy of the wartime Japanese government was to utilize moral education classes for the explicit goal of total political subjugation of the Japanese people. (Hoffman 1999: 91)

After World War II, it became a commonly accepted fact by most in the establishment that *shūshin* had indeed played a role in manipulating the Japanese psyche, and it was therefore removed from the curriculum for revamping. It reappeared in September 1958 as “moral education class hours” (*dōtoku no jikan*). This reappearance met with criticism and resistance, particularly from the teachers’ organization (Nihon Kyōshokuin Kumiai) and the Communist Party; however, the Ministry of Education remained firm, and moral education has been on the curriculum ever since (Kaizuka 2009: 57–59).

Moral education differs from other subjects as there are no authorized textbooks for it, making it impossible to regulate through curriculum guidelines (Sugihara 2007: 14). It is not a subject (*kyōka*) in its own right which, in practice, means that there is no examination related to the lessons taught (Kaizuka 2009: 55–56). Based on recommendations from the Central Council on Education (Chūkyōshin) in 2008, curricular revisions of the moral education curriculum were carried out. Revisions emphasized major ideals like “the zest to live” (*ikiru chikara*); the value of balancing knowledge and skills with the ability to contemplate, evaluate, and express oneself; and the value of a rich mind and a sound body (MEXT 2008: 1). The revised *Kokoro no nōto* from 2009 therefore, will form the basis of my later analysis. First, though, it is important to discuss the issue of globalization.

⁹ A particularly famous example of this is the Nagano incident in 1933, where 600 teachers were investigated by the police, and 208 were arrested and found guilty of having a bad influence (*aku eikyō*) and dismissed (Tanaka 2010, p. 25; Wilson 2002, p. 137).

¹⁰ The objective was to establish an orthodox interpretation of the national essence for the Japanese people, and this stands out as a clear articulation of the official ideology of a nation on the brink of war. See, for example, Doak (2007, pp. 110–13).

Globalization and Cosmopolitanism

The term “globalization” is in extremely wide circulation today, so I shall attempt to infuse the concept of globalization with new meanings by linking it to cosmopolitanism, thereby hopefully arriving at a working definition that will be useful for detecting signs of the globalization discourse in *Kokoro no nōto*, and in particular, the use of moral icons therein.

For years, the term “globalization” has been closely associated with economic processes, wherein globalization processes are easily identifiable. Horio Teruhisa, a long-time researcher of education and educational ideology, states that globalization reveals itself to be primarily “related to the expansion in the world of an economy based on multinational companies, media, high technology and financial assets, ... revolving around the United States and predicated on the world hegemony of American values ..., American politics and economy” (Horio 2005: 58). Yet, in terms of issues such as global consciousness and responsibility and emotional responses, these economically based interpretations of globalization do not produce any evidence *per se* of the existence of globalization, except perhaps in terms of the fear of losing one’s job to low-wage workers from other parts of the world.

The famous definition of globalization by Roland Robertson is very often the starting point of culture-oriented approaches to globalization; according to Robertson, globalization “refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole” (Robertson 1992: 8). Then, if we are to understand *Kokoro no nōto* and the values it promotes in terms of culture-oriented globalization, an analysis of the contents of *Kokoro no nōto* should focus on finding traces of influence of this globalization discourse in statements pertaining to, for example, a “world consciousness,” other cultures, relations to populations in other countries (hereunder also assistance in times of disaster), international development, peace, and the environment, as well as references to international phenomena and non-Japanese individuals. According to Robertson, while the possible existence of such a world or global consciousness may sound exceedingly homogenizing, it does not necessarily imply the formation of an uncritically accepted, singular “world identity,” or an “Americanized identity,” which scholars such as Horio seem to fear. Yet another feature of globalization does in fact function as a counterbalance:

In an increasingly globalized world there is a heightening of civilizational, societal, ethnic, regional and, indeed individual, self-consciousness. There are constraints on social entities to locate themselves within world history and the global future. Yet globalization in and of itself also involves the diffusion of the *expectation* of such identity declarations. (Robertson 1992: 27)

In addition to the demand of locating oneself within world history and being in thrall of a perceived global future, a consciousness of regional, ethnic, and civilizational identity is also a

feature of globalization, specifically inviting and expecting clear statements and declarations of identity. Todorov points to the dual event of transformation via, for example, what we perceive as globalization and defensiveness with regard to our identity:

The contemporary period, during which collective identities are called on to transform themselves more and more quickly, is thus the period in which groups are adopting an increasingly defensive attitude, and fiercely demanding their original identities. (Todorov 2010 [2008]: 57)

In Robertson and Todorov's views, statements of ethnic and regional identity are clearly invited or provoked by challenges like globalization; however, globalization also means that individuals and groups of individuals are expected to locate themselves within world history and relate to a global future.¹¹

I would now like to introduce the concept of "cosmopolitanism" to the discussion on globalization and *Kokoro no nōto*. Appiah suggests that we use the term "cosmopolitanism" rather than the now well-worn term "globalization." To him, cosmopolitanism is influenced by two ideals—universal concern and respect for legitimate difference:

[W]e have obligations to others, obligations that stretch beyond those to whom we are related by the ties of kith and kind, or even formal ties of citizenship. ... [W]e take seriously the value not just of human life but of particular human lives.... (Appiah 2006: xiii)

Appiah argues the existence of certain universal values that govern our interactions with strangers. A cosmopolitan person in Appiah's view knows that people are different, and that there is much to be learned and gained from these differences. Hence, we neither expect nor desire every person or society to converge on a single mode of life (Appiah 2006: xiii). On the other hand, values inspire us to want others to subscribe to those same values. Therefore, not all values are equal to different individuals. Appiah uses the example of the virtue of kindness. If we believe kindness to be a universal value, then we want everyone to share this value and be kind to others. We also want all people to want each other to be kind, because we recognize the value of kindness. We want people to agree with us, because people who agree will be kind and encourage kindness in others (Appiah 2006: 26). The same is true for other values we consider to be universal. Our values are judgments upon which we act with good reason, and we encourage these acts, thoughts, and feelings in others.

¹¹ As Bestor (2000) explains, such a global/local identity can be quite hybrid, or creolized, if you will: "Globalization doesn't necessarily homogenize cultural differences nor erase the salience of cultural labels. Quite the contrary, it grows the franchise. ... Throughout the world, sushi restaurants operated by Koreans, Chinese, or Vietnamese maintain Japanese identities."

This mechanism is hinted at by Todorov as well: he states that “[t]he universalism of values thus threatens the idea that human populations are all equal, and hence the universality of the species.” If one population does not share core values with another population, one population may try to impose its perceived “universal” values on the other. Those who believe in trans-cultural values risk assuming that those values to which they are accustomed are universal. On the other hand, if all values are seen as culture specific and relative, this may gradually lead to nihilism (Todorov 2010 [2008]: 13–14). To strike a balance between respect for diversity (also underlined by Appiah) and a reliable scale of values in terms of our diverse human societies, Todorov closely examines the way the term “barbarian” is used for that which we reject, while “civilized” is used for that which we desire. Both are described in absolute terms, and “being civilized”—which is of particular interest here because of its clear resonance with Appiah and the aim of moral education—is defined as follows: “A civilized person is one who is able, at all times and in all places, to recognize the humanity of others fully” (Todorov 2010 [2008]: 21).

When we combine Appiah’s cosmopolitanism and Todorov’s analysis of barbarity versus being civilized, and we add these to Robertson’s definition of globalization, we arrive at the existence of a certain level of a common value basis for humanity, respect for legitimate differences, and a common wish to have everyone agree upon certain basic values. We also get an explanation for why cultural exchange can sometimes work due to these shared values and respect for differences, and possibly for why it is that much globalization does not only mean homogenization but a co-optation or glocalization.¹² This is evident through many phenomena, for example “California-maki” sushi, which has added a new flavor to traditional Japanese sushi, or the status of baseball in Japan, which originated in the United States but was quickly co-opted by the Japanese and glocalized to fit into local frameworks of school and sports, coming mainly to signify values like cooperation, self-sacrifice, and group loyalty.¹³

Modern Moral Icons

In 2002, MEXT issued the booklets *Kokoro no nōto* for use in schools’ moral education classes. They are not authorized textbooks, as they are not legally sanctioned for moral education, but teachers are encouraged to use them to teach the subject. Their practical use has been questioned, their contents have been criticized for not being up-to-date in their orientations and topics, and they have been criticized as an attempt to indoctrinate children with nationalism (Shimamura 2005). However, the booklets, three for different levels of elementary school, are representative of the kind of morality that is official in Japan and certainly the kind that

¹² Many of these phenomena are also discussed in research on “creolization.” See, for example, Hannerz (1992), Willis and Murphy-Shigematsu (2008), or Willis (2009). In comparative education, this has been discussed by Anderson-Leavitt (2003), who uses the notion of “hybridization” in a similar sense.

¹³ For example, see Elias (2010) or Whiting (1988).

MEXT wanted to present to the public, and continues to do so, as the booklets have not been significantly revised.

It is difficult to say anything precise about how much *Kokoro no nōto* is used in practice, but certainly all schools have access (an on-line edition was made available in 2011). I spoke to parents about the booklets, and they admitted to only having seen them for the first time when their children brought them home at the end of the school year; teachers confessed to rarely using these booklets, although they were aware of their existence. Therefore, the discussion here will not be one of impact, but one of ideals and signification as expressed by the compilers and endorsed by the body responsible for publishing them, namely MEXT. Who are the specific icons, how are they presented, and what could they signify? Further, I hope to elaborate how these icons relate to the world or a “world consciousness” and how they relate to the creation of a Japanese identity and morality.

The *Kokoro no nōto* booklets for elementary school come in three editions: one for the 1st and 2nd grades, one for the 3rd and 4th grades, and one for the 5th and 6th grades.¹⁴ The front pages are illustrated with colorful drawings—for the 1st and 2nd grades, the page is warm orange and pink in color, with an illustration of a small boy and girl floating in the air surrounded by soap bubbles, smiling with their eyes closed, a book in their arms and the sun shining in the corner (MEXT 2009a). This signifies a dreamy and safe atmosphere. The front page picture on the booklet for the 3rd and 4th grades is less dreamy: the boy and girl are older, and they are waving and running, apparently shouting in excitement. The color scheme is blue and green with splashes of yellow, orange, and pink. The children are surrounded by objects of the modern world, such as airplanes, buildings, and trains (MEXT 2009b), evoking an exciting, active, and modern mood. For the 5th and 6th grades, the boy and girl look like adolescents, and the color scheme is green and blue. The adolescents are in a wooded area, apparently having just released three white birds, presumably pigeons, judging from their shape and relative plumpness (MEXT 2009c). Here, the impression is one of harmony and balance. In this way, the front pages set the tone for the content in the booklets; there is an attempt to adapt the booklets to the developmental stages of the readers, starting with the dreamy state of child-like innocence, advancing to the stage of a zest for life, and ending with a stage close to maturity, with allusions to peace (white birds) and a green environment (trees and the color green dominate the picture).

The moral ideals and icons invoked are also adapted to the developmental states of the readers. This study focuses on human moral icons that are predominantly found in the last volume in the series; however, here, I will very briefly explain the moral ideals found in the volume for the 1st and 2nd grades and later more at length about the volume for the 3rd and 4th grades and finally concentrate on the moral icons found in the volume for the 5th and 6th

¹⁴ As mentioned, *Kokoro no nōto* have been made available on the Internet since 2011 (MEXT 2011). The e-editions are almost identical to the printed 2009 versions. Any changes between them will be noted when I describe the sections wherein they occur.

grades.¹⁵ *Kokoro no nōto* for the youngest school children is characterized by the extensive use of colors, attractive fairy or pixie-like characters, and animals and cartoon representations of families and friends. The main topics covered in this picture book look-alike are “a beautiful heart” (*utsukushii kokoro*); being healthy and active (*genki*); topics relating to family, friends, and local society, including understanding the importance of various occupations; being well-behaved; respecting life; and adhering to rules. This booklet also contains sections on acts to be avoided, such as lying, destroying things, bullying, and fighting. The examples are all generic, which makes the material open to interpretation and allows the children to identify with the topics. The only exception is the poem on the last page by renowned psychologist Kawai Hayao¹⁶ (MEXT 2009a). This poem by an influential person is an indication of what is to follow in the next installment of *Kokoro no nōto*.

***Kokoro no nōto* for the 3rd and 4th Grades**

Kokoro no nōto for the 3rd and 4th grades contains few illustrations and none of the attractive fairy-like characters; instead, this volume contains more photos and more texts by acclaimed and identifiable authors, such as a poem by Mado Michio¹⁷ called *Watashi no arigatō*; a text about living with animals and plants by a 3rd grader girl named Toshiko; a text about the teacher written by another 3rd grader, Yamakawa-san; a piece about nature by Kaneko Misuzu;¹⁸ and a text about life and nature by Noyori Ryōji¹⁹ (MEXT 2009b: 51, 60, 86, 106). The major topics covered are the importance of being brave (*yūki o dasu*) and honest (*shōjiki*) (MEXT 2009b: 20–25). This volume also contains sections on proper behavior, kindness, obligations to other people, the importance of keeping the body in shape, on being thankful, the beauty of nature, and on family and Japanese culture. The section on culture is of particular interest as it allows us a view into how Japan is characterized and how the rest of the world is treated at this stage. This section first introduces several Japanese traditions: traditional clothing (*wafuku*), traditional diets (*washoku*), traditional housing (*washitsu*), each with short descriptions that manage to incorporate the word “nature” (*shizen*) (e.g., clothing has beautiful pictures of Japanese nature and animals, food is the rich gift of nature, houses are built using natural materials) (MEXT 2009b: 92). Next, we are introduced to the seasonal festivals of

¹⁵ A detailed analysis of the moral contents of *Kokoro no nōto* can be found in the Ph.D. thesis “Moral Education in the Japanese Primary School” by Päivi Poukka (2011, unpublished but available at <https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/25716/moraledu.PDF?sequence=1>).

¹⁶ Kawai Hayao (1928–2007), psychologist and director of the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken) from 1995 to 2001. He also oversaw the compilation of the *Kokoro no nōto* series.

¹⁷ Japanese poet (1909–), awarded the international Hans Christian Andersen award for children’s literature in 1994. Mado’s poems *Zōsan* (Elephant) and *Yagi-san yūbin* (Goat’s Mail) are well loved by most Japanese children.

¹⁸ Poet and songwriter (1903–30) especially known for her children’s poetry.

¹⁹ Chemist (1938–), awarded the Nobel Prize in chemistry in 2001.

Japan—new year (*shōgatsu*) in the winter, the star festival and festival of the ancestors (*tanabata* and *bon*) in the summer, the autumn festival and 7–5–3 festival (*aki matsuri* and *shichi-go-san*) in the autumn (MEXT 2009b: 93). On page 94, we learn about the kind of thinking that has kept Japanese culture together (living in harmony with nature, helping people and sharing with each other, valuing beauty, and striving to be polite and well mannered). Nature obviously has a big role in the self-image and identity promoted by *Kokoro no nōto*. In terms of globalization, this appeal to the special relation the Japanese are assumed to have with nature can be seen as an indication of the “civilizational, societal, ethnic, regional and, indeed individual, self-consciousness” that globalization elicits in groups and individuals, as described by Robertson.

With this background, the readers are ready to learn about other cultures on page 95. Different types of clothing are presented (from Sweden, Peru, and Africa [the Masai]), as well as different diets (Italian, Indian, and Chinese), and different types of housing (from Greece, Malaysia, and Mongolia). The section ends with the following exhortation:

In different countries, cultures specific to them are born. Such cultures also reach us in Japan. Let us be friendly (*shitashimimashō*) with people from foreign countries and their culture. (MEXT 2009b: 95)

Here is the first sign of the need to know about and relate to foreign cultures and peoples. This issue is presented against the backdrop of Japanese culture, an approach that is quite common²⁰ and that is based on the idea that children should be well-versed in their own culture before attempting to familiarize themselves with other cultures. The volume thus, exhibits both elements of globalization—the clear expression of Japanese identity as well as “world consciousness” in the depiction of other cultures and the other element of legitimate difference (different countries, specific cultures) as described by Appiah.

Kokoro no nōto for the 3rd and 4th grades also introduces the “great person” approach using examples of athletes. Under the title “Let’s learn from the athletes we look up to” (*akogare no supōtsu senshu ni manabō*), we find a picture of Takahashi Naoko—a gold medalist marathon runner at the Sydney Olympics in 2000—waving a flag; we get to read the testimonies of two unnamed athletes, a volleyball player and a baseball player. The overall message from all three examples is that it is important to have a goal in life and that to achieve this goal one must take control of one’s own life and work to strengthen the body and soul (MEXT 2009b: 14). This message is further developed on pages 52–53 under the title “Learning together, supporting each other, helping each other” (*manabiai, sasaeai, tasukeai*). The members of the Japanese 400 meter relay team attribute their bronze medal at the Beijing Olympics in 2008 to their “togetherness” (the *ai*, which is also used in the title). The use of examples of well-known athletes not only elicits recognition from the children who have undoubtedly heard about these

²⁰ For example, see Roesgaard (1998, pp. 202–225).

famous athletes but also makes the examples less generic and more particular, without losing the opportunity for identification because, as *akogare* indicates, these are people whom children look up to and whom they should (at least from the editors' point of view) desire to imitate.

***Kokoro no nōto* for the 5th and 6th Grades**

Kokoro no nōto for the 5th and 6th grades (MEXT 2009c) contains a greater number of examples of the “great person” approach. The first major section, “Building yourself” (*jibun o sodateru*), starts by sketching the desirable physical regimen for everyday life (sleeping, eating, exercising, studying, etc.) and then proceeds to discuss how to set goals and realize dreams (MEXT 2009c: 10–19).

This first section deals with largely the same topics as those for younger children; however, this volume proceeds under the heading “There are steps you can take to reach your dream.” In other words, we now get not just examples to emulate but also a recipe for how to do it. The reader is asked to think about his or her goals and dreams. Dreams are believed to comfort and inspire us, and to reach our goals, we must take one step at a time and try our best; this is the road to happiness. On the opposite page is a large picture of Suzuki Ichirō—famous Seattle Mariners baseball player²¹—as a child of about the same age as the young readers. Lifting his bat, smiling in his white baseball gear and dark cap, he looks like any Japanese child playing one of his or her favorite games in school. Under the picture is a row of three photos documenting Ichirō's early career; to the left is a column with his biography and a picture of Ichirō as a small child in his gym clothes. The biography shares basic information about his career and a long list of his record-breaking batting scores (MEXT 2009c: 16–17). In the online edition of this volume, the photos of young Ichirō are replaced with one large photo of Ichirō in his signature pose, just before batting. The photo shows him in silhouette, with colors added to the background, giving the effect of an art presentation rather than a photograph (MEXT 2011: 17).²²

Suzuki Ichirō's other qualities aside, this example presents readers with a person single-mindedly pursuing his goals with little other distraction. The pictures in the printed version only show readers the happy child; they do not in any way indicate the toil and endless practice that no doubt went into Ichirō realizing his dream. The healthy/spirited (*genki*) aspect of the Japanese child—a topic that features heavily in all Japanese publications on child rearing—is clearly reflected in the pictorial material, with smiles and action. (In all the pictures, Ichirō carries a bat, and in three of these, he is shown actually batting.) Another strong undercurrent reflected through this example is the virtue of being upfront/frank (*sunao*); this is seen in

²¹ At the time, Ichirō was with the Mariners; he joined the New York Yankees in 2012.

²² In the presentation on Ichirō, two numerals have been changed to update the information to 2010, but this does not change the overall impact of the text.

Ichirō's supposed single-minded pursuit of his dream and his open-faced smile in the largest picture of young Ichirō. With regard to the artful presentation in the online edition, the impression is more of an icon, a virtuoso in his field, who by the sheer invocation of his signature pose needs no further introduction.

Suzuki Ichirō, the man, has been transformed into "Ichirō the icon," and in spite of still being a living person, this construction of his childhood allows educators to use him as a suitable tool for moral instruction, simultaneously existing in another dimension than Suzuki Ichirō, the man, and his real life experiences as an adult. The later presentation of him as an adult in the online version has effectively transformed the "real" person into a sports icon, recognizable by his pose alone, and hence into an icon by virtue of his athletic success. In terms of the globalization discourse, the Japanese identity is represented by "Ichirō the icon" with a description of his persistent struggle for success, his "spiritedness" (*genki*), and his apparently ordinary Japanese upbringing. As a successful baseball player in the United States, he becomes an illustration of how the combination of dedicated work and willingness to engage and participate on a global scale, can result in a "world consciousness."

The next moral icons in the volume for the 5th and 6th grades are found under the heading "Curiosity (*kōkishin*) is the starting point." Here, the objective is innovation and creativity and ultimately making oneself useful to society. The moral icons are Nobel laureates Yukawa Hideki (theoretical physics) and Marie Curie. The text invites children to think about the invention of useful things in their immediate environment, from paper clips to airplanes. Behind every invention lies the effort and hard work of creative and innovative people.²³ This section uses simple drawings and smiley faces, giving it an air of note-type explanations, much like what can be imagined to take place on a blackboard or in personal class notes. Page 30, on which Yukawa and Curie are described, has three smileys, one with a question mark, one looking surprised, and one showing signs of realization/sudden revelation. The two icons are shown in old photographs with explanatory notes about their achievements. We learn that Yukawa always kept a notebook beside his bed; he was an inquisitive child (he had *kōkishin*) and his discovery of the meson²⁴ is attributed to his persistence and curiosity. Similarly, Marie Curie's curiosity and persistence are emphasized (Curie and her husband boiled down tons of material just to get 0.1 gram of radium). The two icons in this section are clearly intended as moral examples of what can be accomplished with curiosity and persistence (or *ganbari*); the last page of the section invites the reader to think about useful things in his or her surroundings and how they have been invented; the reader is also invited to imagine things that would be useful to have and come up with ideas for their materialization (MEXT 2009c: 28–31). Here, "world consciousness" is reflected in the choice of Marie Curie as an icon and in the global

²³ A similar approach was used in the NHK *E-tere* airing of a moral education (*dōtoku*) program about Kawaguchi Jun'ichirō, the creator of the satellite *Hayabusa*; the key words here are curiosity (*kōkishin*), persistence (*ganbaru*), and interest (*kyōmi*). An important lesson to be learned from Kawaguchi is to aim at being the first to do something rather than the best (NHK *E-tere* 2012).

²⁴ The carrier of the nuclear force that holds the atomic nuclei together.

importance of Yukawa's discovery. The Japanese identity is seen in the presence of Yukawa as well as in the identification of the virtues that both of the two icons allegedly possessed, virtues that are consistently linked to Japanese identity. Interestingly, the inclusion of Marie Curie shows the reader that these virtues are not exclusive to Japanese people, again linking the text to the discourse on world consciousness.

The final icon is presented under the heading "We live holding each other's hands" (*te o toriatte ikiru*); the icon here is Mother Theresa. The piece on Mother Theresa forms part of a larger section about fairness, justice, and the equality of human beings regardless of gender, skin color, and age (MEXT 2009c: 84–87). The text begins with an explanation of the ideals of equality and fairness:

Since we are all human, discrimination and prejudice is unforgivable. People who have a distorted way of thinking surely have a weak spot within. (MEXT 2009c: 85)

The next page explains that the true way to live as a human being is by showing respect for fellow human beings and using our knowledge and skills for the good of humanity. The facing page contains a small black and white photograph of Mother Theresa holding the hand of a little girl who is sitting in her smiling mother's arms; Mother Theresa is quoted as follows:

The greatest suffering of this world is the pain suffered by people who are all alone, who are not needed by anyone and not loved by anyone. (MEXT 2009c: 86)

Readers are then invited to think about their own knowledge and strengths and how they can use this knowledge to help other people; they are also encouraged to think about what can be done for other people immediately. *Kokoro no nōto* for the 5th and 6th grades also contains a section titled "Not clouding the window of the heart" (*Kokoro no mado o kumorasenai*), with an illustration of a boy standing aside from a larger group. Here, readers are urged to consider whether they are causing other people pain and if this is really the kind of people they want to be (MEXT 2009c: 87). From this perspective, Mother Theresa is presented almost as though she were the "world consciousness" personified. Mother Theresa's relevance to the Japanese identity lies in references to caring and helping and in relation to other people, general, universal values that are promoted as central to the formation of the Japanese identity as well as central to the world at large.

Another section is titled "A heart that loves our country and home" (*Kyōdo ya kuni o aisuru kokoro*) (MEXT 2009c: 104–107). Through this section, readers are asked to think about their hometowns, that is, where they come from (*furusato*), and their country. They are told that the country is made up of different people from different hometowns and regions (*furusato*), each having a rich tradition and culture, and the present residents are the keepers of this tradition. The challenges faced by the country today (technological development, internationalization,

information flow, ageing of society) are to be overcome by respecting tradition and mustering the strength to cope with the future (p. 105). Through this, we see the “pressures of globalization” discourse; the aforementioned civilizational, societal, ethnic, regional and, indeed individual, self-consciousness (Robertson 1992) is clearly expressed, and we can also detect a defensive attitude, wherein people fiercely demand their original identity (Todorov 2010 [2008]).

The concept of “Japaneseness” (*Nihon rashisa*) is introduced next. The idea of Japaneseness is based in tradition, and this should be the starting point from which Japanese people develop their skills and personality that will be useful in the future, in modern society. Examples of Japanese traditional skills representative of Japaneseness are haiku poetry, carpentry or woodwork, seasonal rites, woodblock prints, traditional music (*hōgaku*), regional traditional crafts, and traditional arts. “Skills” (*gijutsu*) are included in the idea of Japaneseness to indicate that it is not just the old way of life that they have to be proud of, but modern skills and technology, which should also be a source of pride and respect for the elders who helped in the building of ships, tunnels, and bridges (p. 107). Thus, we see how tradition and technological development is interwoven to being about the concept of “skill,” which in turn is embedded in Japanese tradition and held up as a source of particular pride and identity for Japanese youth today.

From this inward-looking focus, the next section, “Together with the people of the world” (*Cekai no hitobito to tomo ni*) turns outward to include the rest of the world; this section includes quotes attributed to famous Japanese personalities like Sakamoto Ryōma,²⁵ who said that “we cannot but turn our gaze to the world,” and Nitobe Inazō²⁶ who wished to “become the bridge over the Pacific.” The message here is clear: from at least the time of the late Edo period, educated Japanese people have believed in the idea of Japan as part of a wider world community. The 5th and 6th grade readers are encouraged to become “splendid internationalists” (*rippa na kokusaijin*) who will engage with the world, for instance by arranging money collections for areas stricken by disaster (MEXT 2009c: 108–110). In this way, the awareness of a national background and identity is used as the backdrop for outward-directed activity and relatedness. Being Japanese, one has the opportunity to help and the human obligation to do so out of respect for life and other human beings.

Conclusions

Moral icons in *Kokoro no nōto* are used to fulfill at least two purposes: one is the possibility that the young reader will identify with the icon at some level, either as a fellow learner/child

²⁵ Sakamoto Ryōma (1836–67), low ranking samurai of the Tosa domain (today’s Kōchi prefecture), who became one of the leaders of the movement to overthrow the Tokugawa-shōgunate in the Bakumatsu period (ca. 1853–67).

²⁶ Nitobe Inazō (1862–1933), agricultural economist, author, educator, diplomat, and politician. He is particularly known for his work on samurai ethics and Japanese culture in *Bushidō: The Soul of Japan* (1900).

or as a model of good behavior. With Suzuki Ichirō, for example, this identification is achieved particularly effectively by showing him as a child and by relying on the knowledge today's children have of his career and exploits as a sportsman. In this way, he becomes peer as well as model. In the example on Yukawa Hideki, the inclusion of information about his personal habits, such as keeping a notebook beside his bed, similarly serves to make children relate to him as an ordinary person, making him accessible as a moral model they can follow.

The other purpose of the great person approach is recognizable on the theoretical level, where the moral icons function well within the globalization discourse. There is clear focus on the expression of the national identity-aspect of the globalization discourse, seen in all the texts on the icons, with the possible exceptions of Marie Curie and Mother Theresa; however, even in their case, personal traits that are often attributed to being “Japanese” are extolled, making them familiar in a Japanese context. The sections on Japanese identity that focus on love for the country and particular references to what is considered central to “being Japanese” (*Nihon rashisa*) also contribute to the overall focus on national identity.

Expressions of Japanese identity in *Kokoro no nōto* clearly reflect the dimension of ethnic and regional self-consciousness in globalization; these “expressions of identity,” along with attempts to relate individuals and social groups to a global future, and the provisions made to learn about local history, such as culture, nature, the environment, and world peace, would, to Robertson, represent the workings of the discourse on globalization and world consciousness.

The dimension of world consciousness is reflected of course in the foreign icons employed in *Kokoro no nōto*; however world consciousness is also reflected in the Japanese icons as they too relate to the global community: Ichirō plays baseball in the United States, Yukawa Hideki has contributed to the international research community, and Sakamoto Ryōma and Nitobe Inazō are presented with examples of their attempts to relate to the world outside Japan. *Kokoro no nōto* contains sections on how the Japanese identity can be related to the international community, with a focus on equality among people, respect for other cultures or “legitimate difference” as Appiah has termed it, and the exhortation to become “splendid internationalist[s].”

The two-pronged approach to globalization, as found in *Kokoro no nōto*, is in tune with the type of globalization outlined in this study, which is based on the views of Robertson, Appiah, and Todorov. This dual nature of globalization helps us deal with the ambiguity of the messages inherent in *Kokoro no nōto*. Instead of merely sending out mixed signals, the local and international elements create a balance demonstrating that the challenges of globalization are truly being acknowledged and engaged. It is my hope that this paper will demonstrate that theories of globalization and cosmopolitanism are useful for clarifying the results an analysis of *Kokoro no nōto* has to reveal that what may at first glance be interpreted as ambiguity or even confused messages are in fact quite consistent with what we may expect based on theories of globalization and cosmopolitanism.

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