

松 山 大 学 論 集  
第 31 卷 第 1 号 抜 刷  
2 0 1 9 年 4 月 発 行

How Intercultural Experiences Created Identities  
of Returnees : A Comparison of *kikokushijo*  
in the *Taishou*, *Showa* and *Heisei* eras

Kaori Ono

How Intercultural Experiences Created Identities  
of Returnees : A Comparison of *kikokushijo*  
in the *Taishou*, *Showa* and *Heisei* eras

Kaori Ono



## 1. Introduction

Increased mobility across countries and cultures has led to a global rise in the number of sojourning children (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2016). With this change, identity negotiation of the so-called *kikokushijos* warrants more attention. In Japan, most of the research on sojourning children has focused on challenges encountered by *kikokushijos* quite extensively (Ichikawa, 2004; Kanno, 2003; Kidder, 1992; McDonald, 1995/2011; Miyaji, 1985; Osawa, 1986; Podalsky, 2009; Pollack & Reken, 2001/2009; Sueda 2012), in contrast, the dynamics of a successful reentry and the emotional factors these children experience when they transfer between schools with different cultural backgrounds during their developmental years has not received due attention. This study sought to fill this gap since a clearer understanding of this process will assist Japanese communities that accept *kikokushijos* to help their repatriation better.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

To better understand the issues of *kikokushijo* [returnees] living in Japan, this paper will begin by first introducing empirical studies of cross-cultural values frequently referenced in the field of intercultural relations. Next, the term *kikokushijo* will be defined and the literature on previous studies of returnees will be examined.

### 2.2 Theories on the Adjustment of Individuals in Intercultural Contexts

Berry's acculturation model<sup>1)</sup> (Berry, 2005) explains the processes by which an individual either goes through cultural and psychological changes in an intercultural setting or actively resists such change. These processes are categorized

into four dimensions : marginalization, separation, assimilation, and integration. Marginalization refers to an individual who has little interest in either keeping their original culture or learning the other culture. Separation means to hold on to one's original cultural identity. Assimilation means to absorb the other culture without retaining one's original cultural identity. Lastly, integration means maintaining one's original cultural identity and at the same time interacting with the other culture. Berry (2005) explains that the integration strategy will result in better mental health than other strategies.

### 2.3 Analog and Digital in Intercultural Communication

The concept of analog and digital<sup>2)</sup> is usually used in the field of technology, however, these terms can also be used to describe an individual's way of perception. It is essential for us to understand this point in order to become aware of the balance between the two paradigmatic modalities of perception that are always in motion in all intercultural interactions. Hayashi (2011) mentions that the operating mode of analog<sup>3)</sup> is feeling and that of digital<sup>4)</sup> is thinking. The former is approximated by the following descriptions. The analog style of communication represents intuitive,

---

1) In this thesis, culture is referred to as shared meanings, beliefs, and traditions that arise in a group who have a common history and experience (Berry, 2005/2009). Acculturation theory facilitates the understanding of how *kikokushijos* in Japan adjust the process of acculturating to Japan. Acculturation has been researched extensively over the last four decades. Berry's (2009) theory is said to be the most prominent in the field.

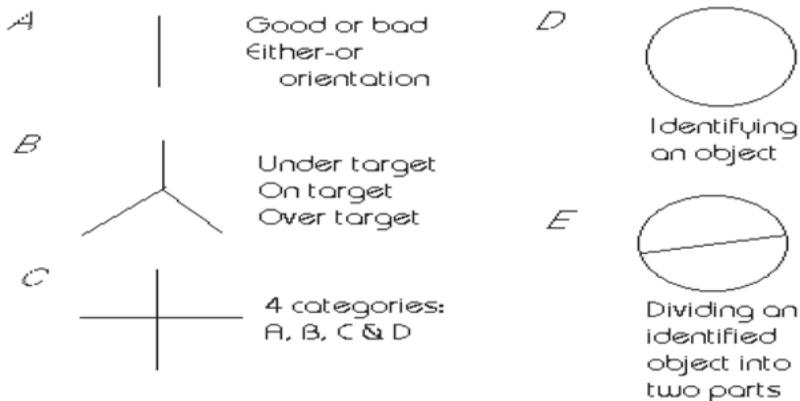
2) Due to the confusion between the current ICT trend, terminology reform may be conducted in the near future.

3) Constructing Analog Reality : Your intuitive sensitivity – visual (see), acoustic (hear), tactile (touch), olfactory (smell), gustatory (taste), and bodily vibes – bridges vibrations within the inner body and the outer universe. Therefore, what you see, you become. (Non-dual and non-local). Your sensibility interprets and constructs human reality out of what you “expect and wish” to see in reality. Therefore, analog perception tends to reproduce analog reality out of your stereotypical experience.

4) Constructing Digital Reality : Digital sensibility draws a boundary line in reality, making two sides of the line discontinuous. Being focused on differences is defining perception.

holistic sensing, followed by sense-making through feeling, and thus created feeling information is processed or communicated for the purpose of the feeler. In a way, analog is right brain in action. In contrast, digital style of communication means analytical sensing, followed by logical sense-making, and thus created logic is processed or communicated for the objective of the thinker (See figure 1), digital perception is left brain in action. The six lenses model including analog/digital, past experience/future vision and objectivity/subjectivity are all propensity and competence based (Hayashi, 2011). Individuals can work for high competence in some lenses even against one's propensity if one is encouraged to do so by parents, teachers and/or other influential persons. Furthermore, it is stated that the same person may fluctuate from one modality to another, either from digital to analog or the other way around depending upon the context and the function they are performing (Hayashi, 2002, 2011). Many people are engaged in interpersonal relations, art, sports, sales, *etc.* in the analog mode, but they switch to the digital mode in matters relating to science, law, accounting, mass marketing, *etc.*

**Figure 1. Constructing Digital Reality**



## 2.4 High context cultures and Low context cultures

There seems to be a correlation between analog perception and high context cultures (Hayashi, 2011). For example, China, Indonesia and Japan<sup>5)</sup>. Similarly, digital traits are usually found in low contextual cultures for example the U. S. A<sup>6)</sup>, Canada and the U. K. The anthropologist Edward T. Hall (1976) coined the expressions high context culture and low context culture. These terms are used to differ cultures based on how explicit the messages are exchanged and how much the context means in certain settings. Hall (1976) explains, messages exchanged in a high context culture deliver meanings implicitly rather than depending on the words itself. This type of communication relies more on the context of the situation, so many things are left unsaid. On the other hand, in low context cultures, the message may have a clearer meaning and therefore, it is vital for the communicator to be very explicit with choice in word order for the meaning to be conveyed by the recipient in each respective country.

## 2.5 What is a mental model ?

### Defining a mental model

A mental model is an explanation of someone's thought process about how something works in the real world. It is a representation of the surrounding world, the relationships between its various parts and an individual's intuitive perception about his or her own acts and their consequences. In general, mental models can help shape human behavior and set an approach to solving problems similar to a

---

5) According to Hayashi (2011) many Japanese have an unconscious notion to value more highly on analog things, for example, intuition, gut feeling, and personal connections since these things are premised to have a large impact on Japanese society.

6) Hayashi (2011) also mentions that western cultures, including the United States is inclined towards digital propensity and competence. Many Americans, who come from a low context culture, have a tendency to place more value on things digital, for example science, facts, and other things that are based on logic.

personal algorithm or doing tasks. According to Hayashi (2011), mental models are known to have a powerful impact upon one's personality and intercultural communication style. Through use of a psychometric test by Kichiro Hayashi and Ryuhei Yagi (2011) it was claimed that a majority of Japanese people seem to have a mindset characterized by preferred propensities towards "right mind" rather than "left mind", "past experience" rather than "future vision", and "objectivity" rather than "subjectivity". As previously mentioned, Japanese culture is inclined towards or characterized by analog propensity and competence whereas, US and many western cultures are inclined towards digital propensity and competence. These authors claim that it appears difficult for most people to control these preferences, even when communication becomes more effective. One reason for this could be that these preferences are known to have been installed in the mind through the subconscious process of cultural influence at an early age from parents, school mates, and other agents of socialization (Shaules, 2007, 2015). If the preferred propensities can be aligned between the communicators this can further improve and strengthen this notion. However, the difficulty of this issue is complicated because analog/digital propensity and competence are mental models and therefore not easily recognized as such by conscious awareness. They stay in the subconscious and influence the person's perception, sense-making, and information processing.

## 2.6 Definitions of kikokushijos

Children who go overseas due to their parents' work assignments are called *kaigaishijos*. When these same students return to Japan, they are labeled as *kikokushijos* or *kikokusei* (Hirano, 1995; Ichikawa, 2004; Kanno, 2003; Kidder, 1992; McDonald, 1995/2011; Miyaji, 1985; Osawa, 1986; Podalsky, 2009; Pollock, D. et al. 2001/2009; Sueda, 2012). During the early 1970s and 80s, such

children were treated as ‘problem children’ because they could not fit into the Japanese school system upon reentering (Ichikawa, 2004 ; Kidder, 1992 ; Macdonald, 1995/2011 ; Miyaji, 1985 ; Osawa, 1986 ; Pollock, D. et al. 2001/2009). Norma McGraig and Dave C. Pollack (2009) coined the term ‘hidden immigrant’ in the mid-1980s to describe the experience of repatriating students from overseas returning to their home culture. However, the image of *kikokushijo*’s became positive in Japan from the late 1980s onwards. For instance, Goodman (2005) defined them as the ‘new class’ or the ‘new elite’ in the Japanese social structure, and Pollock, D. et al. (2001/2009) identified them as ‘repatriating students from overseas with multicultural identity’. According to Ichikawa (2004), no other country in the world besides Japan has special terms for children who reside overseas temporarily due to their parents’ work. In other words, no other country sees them as special or labels them as ‘others’. The Japanese researcher Momo Kano Podalsky also mentions both the positive and negative side of being a *kikokushijo* in Japan, in the book ‘Third Culture Kids : Growing Up Among Worlds’ (2009) as the following :

Being Japanese by nationality and descent, *kikoku-shijos* do not benefit from the same level of sympathy foreigners enjoy when they step out of bounds of Japanese common sense. However, by virtue of their life experience overseas, *kikoku-shijo* can also claim a quasi-foreigner status that so many Japanese envy. This ambiguous positioning within Japanese society can thus be both a curse and a blessing for *kikoku-shijos*. (p. 284)

With the recent growing interest in internationalism and efforts to develop global human resources, the Japanese government have been creating special programs to accommodate the *kikokushijos*. However, some educators still may

not know how to handle kikokushijos and they may not be aware of what these students deal with upon their reentry to Japan. For this reason, the Japanese school system has yet to be backed up with measures to fully address kikokushijos emotional needs (Ichikawa, 2004; Kidder, 1992; Macdonald, 1995/2011; Miyaji, 1985; Osawa, 1986; Pollock, D. et al. 2001/2009). For example, most schools have yet to accommodate counselors or other training programs to support the difficult reentry process that kikokushijos experience. Moreover, the Japanese government, the local communities and the local schools haven't showed eagerness in maintaining their second language abilities and fostering the second culture they have adopted during their time overseas.

## 2.7 Identities of kikokushijos

There are various factors that differentiate kikokushijos from the non-kikokushijo students. Some scholars (Goodman, 1990; Hirano, 1995; Kanno, 2003; Kidder, 1992; Osawa, 1986; Pollock, D. et al. 2001/2009; White, 1988) mention one of the major differentiating factors as the kikokushijos' bicultural identity developed as a result of their overseas experience. Furthermore, Pollack (2001) and Kanno (2003) identifies that these children with cross cultural experiences may have a unique form of multicultural identity which composite their multiple cultures that affect their reasoning, values and beliefs. In other words, these studies indicate that kikokushijos identity tends to be a hybrid form of multicultural identity which could bridge multiple cultures, languages and countries (Goodman, 1990; Kanno, 2003; Kidder, 1992; Osawa, 1986; Pollock, D. et al. 2001/2009; White, 1988). Other scholars point out, however, because of this hybrid form of multicultural identity, kikokushijos are less likely to become a member of mainstream Japanese culture (Goodman, 1990; Kanno, 2003; Kidder, 1992; Osawa, 1986; Pollock, D. et al. 2001/2009; White, 1988). The kikokushijos

multicultural identity may lead to work against the high expectations for homogeneity in Japan. In addition, the greatest amount of adjustment in an intercultural environment is said to take place in the first several years (Hirano, 1995; Ichikawa, 2004; Kanno, 2003; Kidder, 1992; McDonald, 1995/2011; Miyaji, 1985; Osawa, 1986; Pollock, D. et al. 2001/2009; Sueda, 2012). Pollack & Reken (2001/2009) interviewed third culture kids<sup>7)</sup> who had grown up abroad, examining the keys to successful adaptation to life in their home culture. Many scholars (e. g. Ichikawa, 2004; Oikawa and Yoshida, 2007; Pollock, D. et al. 2001/2009; Sueda, 2012) found that those who successfully navigate between multiple cultures often use multiple identity strategies.

### 3. Data Collection

#### 3.1 Survey data : Kikokushijo of the Heisei-era

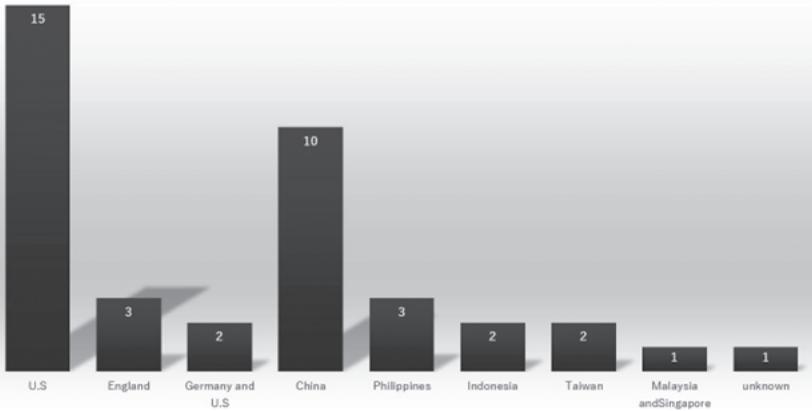
This study utilized a survey focusing on current kikokushijos who have resided overseas for more than a few years and repatriated to Japan. Forty kikokushijos were recruited to complete a simple survey. The number and percentage of the participants' gender was 22 male and 18 female, which consists of 55% and 45% of the respective totals. As shown in figure 2, the participants in this survey have repatriated from both Asian mainly from China, Singapore and Malaysia and Western countries mainly from, U. S, U. K, and Germany.

##### 3.1.1 Methodology

Participants were recruited via Katsushika Elementary school<sup>8)</sup>, which is one of the first returnee-accepting public elementary schools designated by the Japanese

---

7) Pollack (2001) identifies, third culture kids as children who “have spent a significant part of their developmental years outside their parents’ cultures” and who possess a unique form of multicultural identity. Pollack, categorizes kikokushijos as ‘cross-cultural kids’ which is a subcategory of third culture kids.

**Figure 2. The number of participants by country of overseas residence.**

government. The author was able to recruit 40 kikokushijos from this school who had lived in a foreign country for a year or longer. This study targeted mainly fourth graders to sixth graders to make good comparison with that of the researcher. The participants' average age was 10.7 years old, the average duration of their overseas experiences were also approximately four years. All participants answered this questionnaire in Japanese. Most of the kikokushijos had an ability to express themselves in written Japanese at the daily use level. Some participants answered in Japanese with the help of the teachers and their parents. This survey was conducted during November and December in 2016. The Matsuyama University Graduate School of Language Communication signed a research confidentiality form

---

8) This school has approximately 80 returnees and foreign students in total. Some of the kikokushijos are also categorized as mixed-race children. Since this public school is located near Tokyo, it is surrounded by many of the company houses such as major trading companies, megabanks, global manufacturers, and also housing for government workers such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2014, this school became the largest elementary school in Japan with nearly 1,450 students.

with Katsushika Elementary School to get permission to survey the participants<sup>9)</sup>. In addition, this study employed a semi-structured questionnaire which enabled *kikokushijos* to express their feelings or views on their own terms.

### 3. 1. 2 Results

*Kikokushijos* experienced an extensive range of levels of frustration at school upon their repatriation to Japan. Some were education-oriented, others were culture-oriented. Many of them have made efforts to combat this frustration with the support of their parents, teachers and friends. Some were able to make a smooth re-entry at school and gradually readapted to life in Japan, while others had to ease their frustration by turning to their old friends overseas. This section will describe the results of the questionnaire with particular comments.

Some *kikokushijos* indicated that they experienced disapproving reactions from their teachers or their peers for their lack of the Japanese language ability and the mannerisms/attitudes they are expected to have.

I can understand what my peers are saying in Japanese. What makes me sad is that my peers attitude becomes negative when I don't know some words in Japanese.

Many *kikokushijos* indicated that they sometimes felt isolated and missed their friends and relatives overseas. Specifically, some expressed that they did not feel a sense of belonging and felt uneasy in Japan when they just moved back to Japan. They felt as if they were treated as "strangers" mainly because of the lack of their

---

9) Though many of the researchers contact this school to survey the students for their studies, it is getting harder for the elementary school side to cooperate because of the privacy protection law and this survey was not possible without the cooperation and support of both schools.

language proficiencies. A boy who came back from China stated that he was worried if he could blend in with his classmates. One girl was teased that her skin color was darker than the others. Another fourth grade girl from Huston also claimed :

“In the beginning, my peers called me ‘*ki-mo-i*’<sup>10)</sup>”

They were hurt by behaviors their Japanese teachers and peers showed them in those kinds of situations. In comparison to other nations, Japan remains rather ethnically homogeneous and may be a closed society even today.

In addition, a fifth grade boy who came back from the Philippines was hit by one of his peers. When the researcher surveyed him the following question “why do you think it’s difficult for you to make friends in Japan?” His sentiments are exemplified in the following :

My Japanese is not perfect, I often misunderstand what my peers are saying to me. One time, I was suddenly hit by one of my peers. Maybe it’s because I’m not brave enough to start a conversation with them.

In addition to vocabulary mistakes, some mentioned that they were careful not to be too straight forward in order not to offend their peers. After learning from mistakes kikokushijos become much better at communicating with their peers. In consequence, language was a source of misunderstanding and frustration, and a major barrier between the kikokushijos and non-kikokushijos. Kikokushijos

---

10) “*Kimoi*” is an abbreviation form for the Japanese word = “*kimochiwarui*” meaning, weird or odd looking.

become much better at communicating in Japanese with their peers through learning from experiences and from many mistakes. For instance, *kikokushijos* may look rebellious, through a Japanese lens since even if they can read and write and may even talk to their family or close friends but they never communicate a word in Japanese to their peers until they are confident in themselves. Teachers are recommended to explain these matters to the non-*kikokushijos* when these situations occur. In the meantime, *kikokushijos* will be better at communicating. Thus it is expected that the Japanese peers in turn are requested to be patient with *kikokushijos* that some of them need time to express themselves in Japanese. While all, except four who had confidence in their Japanese language ability, stated that they were able to make friends relatively easily upon their repatriation. On the other hand, when the researcher asked the same question “why do you think it’s difficult for you to make friends in Japan ?” to those who do not have a good command of Japanese, a fifth grade boy who lived in the U. S recalled :

“It really takes time to make friends here in Japan, maybe it’s because they are not used to me yet ?”

Another male student answered :

“Maybe it’s because I’m a transfer student.”

Being treated as an outsider in Japan can be hurtful for many *kikokushijos*. Couple participants also reported that when they just came back to Japan, it was hard to blend in with their peers as some of them rejected *kikokushijos* outright for their exotic appearances such as their dark skin color. Another girl stated that :

“I miss my old friends and relatives in China, I call them nearly every day.”

One participant of this survey mentioned that he exists now in the middle between Japan and China. He stated that ;

“I’m not able to make friends here in Japan, but I’m not comfortable communicating with my old friends anymore.”

He didn’t belong to the country he lived overseas anymore, yet completely adjusted to Japan. Moreover, it made some kikokushijos upset that even they were able to make a smooth reentry, when they step out of bounds of the Japanese culture, they were labeled as an ‘outsider’ or kikokushijos by their teachers and peers.

## 3.2 Diary data

### 3.2.1 A kikokushijo of the Showa-era

The various experiences and background which form a kikokushijos’ multicultural identity are shown in the following childhood diary data of the author. The first half of this qualitative data will explore the types of culture shock when entering a new culture while the latter half of the diary data will touch upon the reverse culture shock that makes kikokushijos reentry to Japan even more challenging.

The author enrolled in an elementary school in a small village in the US called Scarsdale<sup>11)</sup>. What is unique about this small town is that this place is famous for its outstanding education. When the first English settlers came from England in the

---

11) This town is located in the inner suburbs of New York City. In 2016, it was rated as the 3rd Safest City in the State of New York, out of 50 cities with people residing temporarily or having immigrated from over 80 countries.

18<sup>th</sup> century to this village, they decided to offer one of the finest school systems in the country as a means of improving their economy. Currently, Scarsdale is considered to be one of the best school districts in the nation. For example, the district's high school was rated 19<sup>th</sup> on the U. S. News' "List of The Best High Schools" in New York. SAT scores are consistently more than 100 points above the U. S. average, and over 95 percent of students go on to a four-year college. Almost 90% of the residents of this small town have a Bachelor's degree or higher<sup>12)</sup>. This is nearly 3 times higher than the national average. Above all, this town values their teachers, which is evidenced by the average salaries that are at the top of any district in the country<sup>13)</sup>. Nearly 90% of the school budget comes from the property taxes. Residents in Scarsdale, pay property taxes of \$ 31, 000 in one year on average. Accordingly, these high taxes result in spending \$ 27, 594, per student per year. This is more than double the national average. Accordingly, this abundant budget enabled the district to hire skilled ESL teachers, and offer bilingual pullout programs for the students who study English as a second language. Consequently, the residents of Scarsdale were interested in how their property taxes were being used. And many of the residents came to school on open school day and most of the school volunteers were also residents of the community. This small village succeeded in making a great circulation system of education by building great schools, inviting great teachers, and inviting education-enthusiastic residents. Now, the population of this small village is composed of people such as doctors, lawyers, politicians, astronauts, and professors from all over the world.

---

12) <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/EDU685214/3665431>

13) Scarsdalemura-kara.com

### 3.2.2 **Diary data before repatriation to Japan**

My memories from my diary – My small adventure

I usually enjoyed playing dolls, exchanging stickers and friendship pins with my American best friend, Jennifer. She was out of town with her family that day, so I was wandering around the neighborhood for a while and happened to find a bunch of Japanese kids playing in the park. They were a group of boys and girls, some seemed older than me. As I got closer, found out all were familiar faces and they seemed to know me as well, so we hit it off right away. We decided to explore around the neighborhood, which was one of my favorite ways to play with my friends at that time. That day we started off from crossing the trees by hanging on ivies and climbing over a big fence. When I somehow managed to climb the fence and turned around, we found a disused park, grasses growing freely everywhere, and a rusted swing, slightly tilted creating a gloomy mood even at daytime. It was totally a different atmosphere compared to the place we lived. There, we found a huge orange sled made of plastic, cracked almost halfway which someone seemed to have dumped. Taking the wet leaves and some dirt off the sled, we carried it together and headed to our next destination. Walking for a few minutes, we came across a big street with few traffic, it was a nice and quiet neighborhood. We soon noticed there were huge mansions on both sides of the streets, they were out of this world brilliant! Some were made of stone, so profound like a castle with an American flag at the entrance. I imagined their extravagant way of living with maids and hounds. There were no gates nor a single person near the house so we decided to run across the front yard in stealthy footsteps heading to the backyard with full of excitement carrying an orange sled. To my surprise, I was dazzled to find a beautiful garden, extremely spacious with

a river running in the middle of green lawn, we almost forgot it's some one's private property and we had to get out any minute but we all had the same thing in mind. We had to go downstream the river in the sled ! Luckily the river was shallow and we were able to enjoy going down the small river with a cracked sled by using a broken branch like an oar in someone's back yard. We headed home smoothly and quickly as possible. I was so excited to tell the story of my small adventure that day to my parents and friends.

### 3. 2. 3 **Diary data after repatriation to Japan**

School Lunch time on the first day of school in Japan

It was lunch time so we moved our desks so that they face each other and made a unit called "*han*". Each group had a group of six students with a leader called the "*Hancho-san*". I saw some of the students wearing a mask and a "*kappogi*", a Japanese apron. They started to serve the school lunch. In the corner of the classroom there was a poster with the word "*sankaku-tabe*" written on it, explaining the eating order. "*Hancho-san*", the leader of the unit seemed to check if everyone was following the orders of the "*sankaku-tabe*". I didn't eat everything and left a few things. After cleaning up the dishes and the containers, the teacher told everyone to sit down. The teacher said, in a more strict and disciplined manner, "Today, someone with bad manners put the leftovers back like this, look at this" showing my tray with some leftovers. "How many times do I have to tell you guys, you must eat everything!" One boy shouted in front of the class, "that's her, the new returnee girl! She's the one with bad manners!" I felt my face blush and wanted to hide somewhere. If only, I had known, that I must eat everything on my plate.

The above example from the authors childhood diary reflects the experience of the researcher's reentry to Japan during the mid 80's to the early 90's.

### 3.3 Historical data

#### A kikokushijo of the Taishou Era

Stretching back history to nearly 130 years ago in the Taisho era, the following will be a narrative data of a kikokushijo of the Taishou Era (Figure 3. shows the picture of George Orihei Shinji<sup>14)</sup>, the researcher's great-grandfather). George Orihei Shinji was born in 1885 in Shizuoka Prefecture as the second son of Touseichi Shinji. There are some similarities between the authors experiences, however, the way he became a kikokushijo is a completely different story to the author.

When the researcher's great-grandfather was in his early teens, his eldest brother took over the responsibility for the family's house and land from his parents. He suddenly had to leave his home and stand on his own two feet like many other children at that time. In those days, a child who did not come to take responsibility for his family's household would usually have to work as an apprentice of a merchant or a craftsman. His parents

**Figure 3. George Orihei Shinji, the researcher's great-grandfather.**

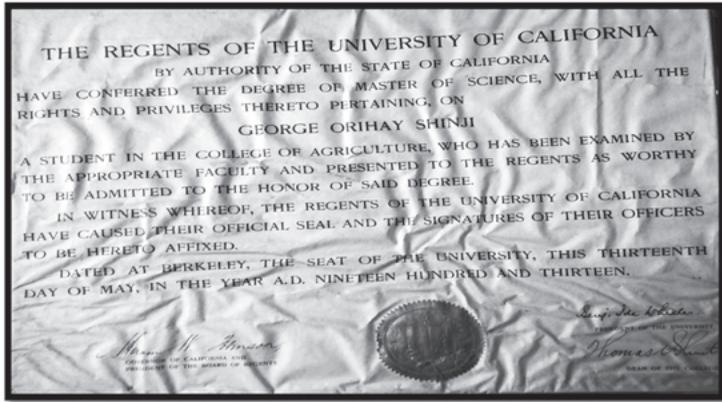


14) His name is *George Orihei Shinshi*. His last name is composed of two Kanji characters. The character "*Shin*" means to go forward and another character "*Shi*" means "*Samurai*". He was a forward-looking and innovative person who did things that were unique for his time.

gave him some money to buy a one-way ticket to go somewhere so that he could find a job. On the very night he left home, however, he discovered that all his travel money had been stolen by a pickpocket. Without any money and with no place left for him to go, he wandered around Shizuoka Sea Port. There, he saw many ships from all over the world. He didn't have a passport, but since he needed a job and a place to rest, on a whim, he smuggled himself into one of the passenger boats, which was headed for California. Later on, he told the author's aunt that there were many people on the ship who didn't have a passport and that it was not an unusual thing to do in those days. He soon found a job on the ship and worked very hard, day in and day out. He did all kinds of jobs like washing dishes and even learned how to cook. The ship stopped at Honolulu Harbor on the way. He was fascinated by the beautiful ocean, colorful plants, and different kinds of species there compared to those in Japan and felt he wanted to visit there again in the future.

After a long and thrive journey on the ship, he finally arrived in California. He soon started working at a church, went to an elementary school and took English lessons with small children who were nearly ten years his junior. When he felt homesick, he sometimes had to talk to himself in the mirror in Japanese because he never met a single Japanese person in California. After several years of working hard at church and learning English at school, he gradually learned the language. He was able to read and write and wanted to study more. He was interested in botany, entomology, and nature since childhood. Therefore, he decided to move on and went to the University of California at Berkley to study entomology in order to research about the process of evolution and became a scientist.

The authors great-grandfather worked his way through college by doing all kinds of jobs. He sometimes worked as a gold miner during the holidays, which enabled him to yearn his annual tuition in only a few days if he was lucky. If not,

**Figure 4. Diploma of University of California at Berkley**

he had to risk his life and go to Alaska on a small fishing boat to fish for salmon to sell at the market. He met several interesting people from all over the country along the way, both through his university and his work. They influenced his way of thinking, and this experience helped broaden his mind. He gradually became interested in philosophy and international politics, so soon after he got a degree from the University of California at Berkley he went on to graduate school at the university of Missouri to study more about philosophy (See figure 5). During his stay in Missouri, he met someone who would change his life.

**Figure 5. University of Missouri**

After he earned his Ph. D. from the University of Missouri, he thought it was time to go home. He had lived abroad for more than thirty years, and through all

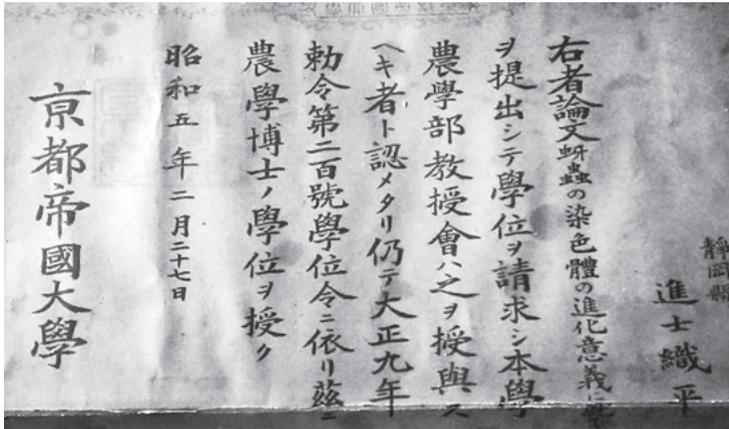
those years his dream was to contribute to the Japanese society by working for the Japanese government. On his arrival back in Japan, he noticed that he needed a degree from a Japanese university to get a meaningful position. He also realized that in order to become a government official who would make himself heard by the people, he had to graduate from the university of Tokyo. So, he tried other professions, but the result was the same. Unfortunately, a Ph. D. from a foreign university meant nothing in Japanese society back then. It took him a while to find a job as a teacher in Iwate Prefecture. Figure 6. shows a picture with his students at *Iwate koutou-nourin* [Iwate university].

He was satisfied with his new job and got married to the author's great grandmother the year before he moved to Iwate. At their new home, he grew tea plants, coffee trees, and tobacco plants in his garden. He used his equipment from his scientific experiments to boil hot water for his coffee and raised chickens in order to eat eggs every morning. He made everything by himself, even his own cigarettes, so that he could live a lifestyle which was comfortable for him. He had

**Figure 6. Picture with his students at *Iwate Koutou-nourin*.**



Figure 7. Degree certificate from Kyoto University



five daughters by then but he still wanted to continue the research he had done in the United States therefore he applied to Kyoto University.

When he finally received his degree from Kyoto University and applied for a new position, he found out that the reason he wasn't hired by the government or any other institution was not that he only held a degree from foreign universities, but also because of his 'difference' and his 'uniqueness.' Though he was called George, he wasn't a foreigner, but he wasn't a 'pure Japanese' anymore. He was a kikokushijo, a kikokushijo like me and many of my peers who were sometimes treated as 'the others' or the 'inbetweeners' in Japanese society. His appearance with a mustache, a white suite, panama hat, and cane may have made him stand out from other Japanese when people were still wearing kimonos. He spoke Japanese quite well but some of his attitudes and behaviors may have seemed too Westernized or odd to other Japanese people. He finally understood the implicit premise of Japanese society was that people had to conform and be the same. 'Different', 'unique' or 'original' had rather a negative meaning compared to the United States. However, he continued to write books and to make speeches to the public,

sometimes at train stations, on the political and economic ideas he had studied in the United States. One day, a black luxury car suddenly pulled over right in front of his house. It was an associate of President Truman. President Truman was searching for my great grandfather to offer him a post in the Economic and Scientific Division of SCAP, Supreme Commander for Allied Powers. He also offered him a job as an interpreter and a translator for the United States Government. A few years later, my great grandfather met his future son-in-law at the post-war Tokyo Trials, which he attended as a translator. The author's great grandfather was one of the interpreters for the United States Government side and my grandfather, who had just become a government official, was one of the interpreters for the Japanese Government side. Several years after the Tokyo trial, my great grandfather and my grandfather became a part of the same family and even lived in the same house in Tokyo for several years.

#### 4. Findings

As cultural differences were magnified during their reentry to Japan, *kikokushijos* needed to work harder to acculturate to their new culture. Data showed that the *kikokushijos* cultural identity was strengthened through being able to cope with cultural conflict and cultural integration. These elements reciprocally influenced each other and facilitated their acculturation. Those who were not able to get the opportunities or the support they needed during their developmental years, had a tendency to struggle throughout their lives with their in-between identities. On the other hand, some *kikokushijos* faced these challenges as a team with the support of their family and the community, which facilitated their cultural identity as a Japanese.

## 5. Discussion

The way we perceive our world, behave, communicate and interact with people from different cultural backgrounds is influenced by various factors such as analog and digital perception (Hayashi, 2011). If kikokushijos and people surrounding them are informed that our behavior is largely decided upon the processes we are not even conscious of, our society may change drastically. In addition, we may be able to utilize these traits to bridge the cultural differences. The key in doing so is becoming aware of differing cultural perceptions, in particular the “analog and digital” concept. For example, the expression *omotenashi* used as a catchphrase for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics is a good example of Japanese cultural characterization in receiving foreign visitors to Japan. *Omotenashi* commonly translated as hospitality, refers to a spirit of unconditional hospitality, which has been passed down by our ancestors. The word has two meanings in Japanese. The first meaning derives from the word “*ura-omote nashi*”<sup>15)</sup> which means that any act of kindness is not two-sided and is a genuine act of hospitality from the giver’s perception. The second meaning comes from the phrase “*mono-wo motte nashitogeru*” which means to “carry through” with an act of kindness, or service. It does not simply mean to provide somebody with something rather it refers to doing the best an individual can do through the entire process of hospitality. For example, beginning with welcoming the customer, providing the service, accompanying them, sending them off *etc.* Many Japanese are fond of the phrase *omotenashi*, but they may have never thought of the conceptual origins of the phrase and that it originates in the analog mental model. The researcher suggests, however, the ideal stage for an

---

15) *Ura* meaning the back or the inside *omote* means the front of the surface and *nashi* means [there isn’t and there aren’t] therefore, *ura-omote-nashi* means a genuine act of hospitality without seeking something in return.

individual is to be able to bridge the cultural differences. That is, switching between Analog and Digital perceptions. Hayashi (2011) suggests the importance of training both Analog and Digital perception for the following four reasons. Reason number one, analog and digital gaps underlie many paradigmatic and intercultural dilemmas as well as diversity issues both in socio-cultural and personal interactions. Secondly, Analog and Digital awareness reveals your mental model and helps you conquer any inferiority or superiority complex in personal identity. Reason number three, Analog and Digital competence helps develop higher inter-/intra-personal work skills through better communicating, leading, team-learning, organizing, planning, and innovating. Finally, reason number four, Analog and Digital interactions, if well facilitated, markedly improve your creativity and imaginativeness. This could be achievable through a deep understanding of both cultural differences.

## 6. Conclusion

The term “globalization” has been hugely popular in Japan for the past 30 years and diversity within a family is becoming the ‘new normal.’ Through my own experience and from my great grandfather’s story however, I personally think that basically, in some aspects, Japanese society hasn’t changed from the time my great grandfather lived. My family may seem to be a typical Japanese family from the outside, but there is much diversity within. What my great grandfather represented at that time might have been too progressive for Japanese society to accept. However, even nowadays, many of the adult *kikokushijos* are leaving Japan and going back to work overseas. In addition, it is widely known in Japan that *kikokushijos* may be treated unfairly within the society when returning back to Japan after long periods abroad. One such case could be when a Japanese person who may have lived in the US for a prolonged period of time studying for an

MBA ends up quitting a Japanese post on returning due to huge discrepancies between their ideas of business and their company's. Conversely, several Japanese companies have recently known to have changed their Japanese operating mindset to follow a more Western operating system, as they became more globalized, for example, Toyota, Nissan and Panasonic *etc.* Examples may include from experiential seniority to visionary leadership, from objective consensus to a top-down strategic management, intuitive feeling to analytical-logical decision-making, passion to planning, *etc.* As a result, Japanese recruiters may feel disappointed unless young returnees appear to have acquired, for instance, U.S. left brain orientation, which will be explained later in detail in this paper. Those Japanese children or *kikokushijos*, who spend a long period of their life in Western cultures, particularly north America, may have returned to Japan with non-Japanese propensities. Though the answer to this may vary a great deal depending upon certain circumstantial factors including the age they went abroad and the length of time they stayed. It is not too difficult to imagine what difficulties these young Japanese people may be confronted with soon after they return to Japan.

What our society needs is the ability to accept the 'uniqueness' in others, to judge by the qualities of an individual and make use of it in order to build a better future for our country.

### **Acknowledgements**

The author would like to express her heartfelt gratitude to Professor Jay Scott Ercanbrack and Professor Bruce Lander for their invaluable advice and assistance. Thanks are also due to Professor Yukiko Taki and Professor Susumu Kubo who generously provided support for this study. Finally, I would also like to thank Etsuko Inoue and Masayo and Eriko Kawamoto for their tremendous support.

### References

- Bennett, M. J. (1986). A developmental approach to training for intercultural sensitivity. *International journal of intercultural relations*, 10 (2), 179-196.
- Bennett, M. J. (1993). Toward ethnorelativism : A developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. *Education for the Intercultural Experience*. Yarmouth, ME : Intercultural Press.
- Bennett, M. J. (1998). *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication*. Yarmouth, ME : Intercultural Press.
- Bennett, M. J. (2004). Becoming Interculturally Competent. *Toward multiculturalism*. Newton, MA : Intercultural Resource Corporation.
- Bennett, M. J. and Hammer, M. R. (2006). *The Intercultural Development Inventory manual*. Portland, OR : Intercultural Communication Institute.
- Ben-Menahem, Y. (2006). *Conventionalism*. Cambridge, UK : Cambridge University Press
- Berry, J. W. (1990). Psychology of acculturation : understanding individuals moving between cultures. In R. W. Brislin (Ed.), *Applied cross-cultural psychology* (pp. 232-253). Newbury Park. CA : Sage.
- Berry, J. W. (2005). Acculturation : living successfully in two cultures. *International journal of Intercultural relations*, 29, 679-712
- Beverly Daniel Tatum, Ph. D. (1997). Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria ? Basic books
- Dulay, H, M. Burt & S. D. Krashen (1982). *Language Two*. Oxford University Press.
- Goodman, R. (1990). *Japan's International Youth*. Oxford : Oxford University Press.
- Hall, E. T. (1989). *Beyond culture*. New York, NY : Anchor Press.
- Hayashi, K (2011). *Rokugan shinri tesuto*. Osaka : Sogensha Publication
- Hirano, R. (1995). *The Diary of Returnees' Mother*. Tokyo : Kindai Bungei Sha Publication.
- Hofstede, G. (1986). Cultural differences in teaching and learning. *International Journal of intercultural relations*, 10 (3), 301-320.
- Hofstede, G. (1997). *Cultural and Organizations : Software of the Mind*. New York, NY : The McGraw Hill Companies, Inc.
- Ichikawa, C. (2004). *Don't Teach Children English ! (Eigo-wo Kodomo-ni Oshieruna !)*. Tokyo : Chuou-Kouron.
- John C. Condon, Tomoko Masumoto. With respect to the Japanese, 26.
- Kanno, Y. (2003). *Negotiating Bilingual and Bicultural Identities : Japanese Returnees Between Two Worlds*. New Jersey : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Kano Podolsky, M. (2004). Cross-Cultural Upbringings : A Comparison of the "Third Culture Kids" Framework and "Kaigai/Kikoku-Shijo" Studies. *Kyoto Women's University Gendai Shakai Kenkyū* (6), 67-78.

- Kidder, L. H. (1992). Global Japan : The Experience of Japan's New Immigrant and Overseas Communities.
- Kidder, L. H. (1992). Requirements for Being "Japanese": Stories of Returnees. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* (16). 383-393.
- Kim, Y. Y. (2001). Becoming intercultural : An integrative theory of communication and cross cultural adaptation. Thousand Oaks, SA : Sage.
- Kim, Y. Y. (2008). International personhood : Globalization and a way of being. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 32, 359-368.
- Kobayashi, Y. (1991). Japanese Schools Can't Cope with Cosmopolitan Kids. *Transcending Stereotypes*. Yarmouth, ME : Intercultural Press.
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (1999). *Yori Yoi Deai No Tame Ni (For Better Encounters With Returnees)*. Tokyo : Gyosei Publishing.
- Murphy-Shigematsu, S. (1993). Multiethnic Japan and the Monoethnic Myth. *MELUS* (18)4, 63-80.
- Osawa, C. (1986). *Tatta Hitotsu no Aoi Sora : Kaigai Kikokushijo wa Gendai no Sutego ka ? (The only one sky : Are returnees abandoned children of the modern era ?)*. Tokyo : Bungei Shunju Publishing.
- Pollock, D. et al. (2001/2009). *Third Culture Kids*. Yarmouth, ME : Intercultural Press. *London - United Kingdom* Nicholas Brealey.
- Robert Fulghum (1986). All I really need to know I learned in kindergarten
- Shaules, J. (2007). *Deep culture : The hidden challenges of global living* (Vol. 16). Multilingual matters.
- Shaules, J. (2010). *A Beginner's Guide to the Deep Culture Experience : Beneath the Surface*. *London - United Kingdom* Nicholas Brealey.
- Stewart E. C, Bennett M. J (2011). *American Cultural Patterns*. *London - United Kingdom* Hodder & Stoughton.
- Sueda Kiyoko (2014). *Negotiating multiple identities : Shame and pride among Japanese returnees* Springer
- Takeuchi (2014). purposive sampling
- Weaver, G. (1999). American cultural values. *Kokusai bunka kenshu (intercultural training)*, 9-15.
- White, M. (1988). *Japanese Overseas : Can They Go Home ?* New York : Free Press.
- Burgess, C. (2007). Multicultural Japan ? Discourse and the 'myth' of homogeneity. *Asia-Pacific Journal : Japan Focus (Article ID : 2389)*. Retrieved from : <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Chris-Burgess/2389> on Oct. 1, 2015
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Annual Report of Statistics on Japanese Nationals Overseas.

Retrieved from : <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/tokotokei/hojin/index.html> on June 3, 2016

Seely Place Elementary School. Retrieved from : <http://www.scarsdalemura-kara.com/> on September 15, 2016

Katsushika Elementary School. Retrieved from : <http://www.city.funabashi.lg.jp/gakkou/0001/katusika-e/0003/p014180.html> on September 15, 2016

**Appendix 1 Survey questions**

- (1) Are the Japanese school rules strict compared to the ones overseas ?
- (2) Have you ever thought that you don't fit into Japanese society ?
- (3) Do you contact your old friends living overseas ?
- (4) Which are you good at, English, Japanese or both ?
- (5) What language did you use at home when you lived abroad ?
- (6) What were the things you got scolded for by your Japanese teachers (and not by your foreign teachers) ?
- (7) Did you find friends easily here in Japan ?
- (8) Did you find differences in lifestyle here, compared to that of the place you used to live overseas ?
- (9) Do you have a place to speak English besides class after your repatriation to Japan ?
- (10) Were you conscious of cultural gaps when you first went overseas ?
- (11) Have you had any difficulties living in Japan ? If so, what kind of difficulties were they ?
- (12) Were you teased at school either in Japan or at school overseas ?
- (13) Did you try to learn the language of the surrounding culture when you went overseas ?
- (14) Do you tell your friends that you are a returnee ?
- (15) How much did you know about Japan before you repatriated, and what was the source of your information ? For example, the internet, You Tube, SNS, *etc* ?