日本における人権教育の課題──政府の役割及び展望──
Agenda for Human Rights Education in Japan: Government Role and Perspective

バックリー　節子 BUCKLEY, Setsuko

● ワトコム コミュニティー カレッジ・国際基督教大学教育研究所研究員
Whatcom Community College/Research Fellow, Institute for Educational Research and Service, International Christian University

Keywords 多様性，公正，包含性，人権教育，少数民族
diversity, equity, inclusion, human rights education, ethnic minorities

ABSTRACT

　今日，日本は多文化国家になりつつある。グローバル化により国際的連携が増し，理解が高まる一方，国家，地方レベルで文化的ひずみが生じ，民族の多様性，公生，社会の受け入れに関する論争が起こっている。何世紀にも渡り，日本人は単一民族だと信じられてきたが，2007年の国連総会で世界の先住民族の存在が承認され，先住民族である少数民族の人権を保証することが可決された。翌年日本政府もアイヌが日本の先住民族であることを承認した。しかし，アイヌをはじめ，日本における少数民族の人権擁護は日本人の排他主義のために未だ不十分である。本稿はまず歴史的視野から日本における少数民族の人権問題を提起する。次に，世界的視野から人権の内容，人権擁護の必要性を叙述し，さらに日本における人権運動の核をなす文化の意味を分析する。そして最後に，人権教育に関する日本政府の役割，展望を検索する。

　Today Japan is becoming a multicultural nation due to globalization. There are positive and negative factors of its change. Despite increased interconnections and understanding across borders, cultures and societies have not yet quickly reacted and adapted to this change. That has caused cultural tensions at national and local levels, which has raised issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Equity embraces inclusion of everyone, especially groups of minorities who are marginalized in the pluralistic society because of prejudice and discrimination against them. Many Japanese believed for centuries that Japan is a homogeneous, middle-class society. However, the notion became a myth when Japan entered a long-term recession and when the United Nations General Assembly recognized the existence of indigenous people in

the world and guaranteed their human rights in 2007. Japanese government acknowledged the Ainu as indigenous people of Japan in 2008. Other major social minorities include Okinawans, *Zainichi* (resident) Koreans, and *Burakumin* (outcastes). Their human rights are deprived by the ethnocentrism of the mainstream Japanese who determine those social minorities as the others. This research examines: (a) human rights issues of social minorities in Japan in historical context; (b) the nature of human rights of social minorities and its advocacy in global context; (c) the meaning of culture in human rights movements in Japan; and (d) Japanese government role and perspective on Human Rights education. This research will benefit educators who are engaged in advancing equity and inclusion in valuing diversity.

1. Introduction

Today, Japan is becoming a multicultural nation due to globalization. Global change has enabled increased interconnections and understanding across borders, however, it also created cultural tensions at the national and local levels, because the external political and economic power might affect cultural traditions. This world-wide trend has raised issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. In principle, equity embraces inclusion of everyone. Thus, it is critical to include ethnic minorities who are marginalized in the current multicultural society.

In 2007, the United Nations General Assembly recognized the existence of indigenous people in the world and guaranteed their human rights. The following year, Japanese government acknowledged Ainu as indigenous people of Japan. As a result, the ethnically homogeneous Japanese society became a myth. However, Japanese government has not yet guaranteed Ainu's human rights as social minorities. Other social minorities in Japan include Okinawans, *Zainichi* (resident) Koreans, and *Burakumin* (outcastes); they are also still marginalized in Japan due to economic inequality and social stratification. Japan's economic shortfall since the 1990s along with the public recognition of those social minorities has affirmed the fact that Japanese society is multicultural, and it revealed a dichotomy between the rich and the poor based on ethnicity and class.

"Contemporary Japanese society is caught between contradictory force of narrow ethno-centrism and open internationalization" (Sugimoto, 2014, p. 197). Sugimoto's warning is well-taken. Despite the efforts on internationalization by the Japanese government aiming at fostering global citizens in the Japanese educational system, the notion of Japaneseness still held many Japanese as the national identity that tended to develop prejudice and discrimination against social minorities in schools, workplaces, and community. As a result, those social minorities are marginalized in the illusion of mono-cultural society by hiding and losing their ethnic, cultural identity, the core of human rights.

2. The Purpose of the Research

This research examines: (a) human rights issues of social minorities in Japan in historical context; (b) the nature of human rights and its advocacy in global context; (c) the meaning of culture in human rights movements in Japan; and (d) Agenda for Human Rights education in Japan and government role and perspective.

3. Human Rights Issues of Social Minorities in Japan

3.1 Historical Backgrounds of Social Minorities in Japan

The largest social minorities in Japan can be

classified into four: Ainu, the indigenous people; Okinawans, the indigenous people of the Ryukyu Islands; Zainichi (resident) Koreans, war victims; and Burakumin, native Japanese outcastes.

3.1.1 Ainu, Indigenous People of Japan

Ainu belied the formation of Japan as a single pure national identity. Despite today's recognition of Ainu as indigenous people of Japan, there remains hidden diversity. The existence of Ainu is an inconvenient racial and ethnic identity challenging the notion of a collective Japanese identity. The vertical dominant-minority group relations between the mainland Japanese (*Wajin*) traders and Ainu started in the 15th century. During the 18th–19th centuries, an unequal trade relationship caused an Ainu historical struggle with Wajin and the Tokugawa regime. Furthermore, Ainu had a struggle for subjectivity of identity against Japanese national identity when Japan opened its ports and adopted Western civilization at the beginning of the Meiji period. "The Japanese government's assimilation and opposition policy caused a loss of Ainu's distinctive ethnic culture and traditions deeply rooted in their language" (Buckley, 2021, p. 83). Since the 1890s, "the struggle over Japan's identity was because of the emergence of Ainu subjectivity caused by the power of Russian 'other'" (Bukh, 2010, p. 36). Thus, the establishment of minority Ainu status strongly relates to contact situation: Ethnocentrism of mainland Japanese, competition, and differential in power between two groups.

3.1.2 Okinawans, the Indigenous People of the Ryukyu Island

Okinawans are also identified as native, cultivating their own language and culture in Okinawa which had been called Ryukyu, but became colonized due to Japan's invasion, then post WWII, it became the allied territory for three decades (1945-1972), now it is Okinawa prefecture in Japan. Okinawans had struggles between inclusion and exclusion by the Japanese and U.S. military powers in the historical transformations.

> Juxtaposing Okinawan and Japanese contributions to debates over national identity, reversion, and the bases, Oguma demonstrates how many of the factors determining Okinawa's fluctuating status vis-à-vis the mainland have been driven by national (Japanese and, in the postwar period, American), not local, interest. (Young, 2020, p. 187)

Thus, Okinawans have very similar formation of minority status to that of Ainu who became the subject of colonialism of Japan under the power struggle between the modern state of Japan and Russian Empire. Because of the remaining US military bases in Okinawa, Okinawan's political, cultural, and ideological struggles continue with both U.S. military power and Japanese government. However, today "Okinawans want to assimilate into mainstream Japanese rather than the unique culture of Okinawa, as symbols of struggle against the American occupation and for the return of Okinawa to Japan, holding standard Japanese language and culture" (Frey, 2013, p. 107). In this respect, for Okinawans, the U.S. military power is determined as the other; their self-determination in Okinawa is not quite the same as that of Ainu.

3.1.3 Resident (Zainichi) Koreans, War Victims

Korea had been annexed by the Japanese military for 35 years (1910-1945). Because of that, Zainichi Koreans who had hardship with the annexation are determined as war victims. Not only being prohibited to express their own language and culture, but many Koreans were also forced to relocate to Japan as factory laborers after WWII and have settled in Japan for decades as resident Koreans without Japanese citizenship. They acted

as diaspora who resides far from home country with limited expressions of their own language, culture, and its identity, struggling with creating their own cultural space. Despite deprivation of their political and cultural rights, Zainichi Koreans have been striving to preserve their ethnic and cultural identity in their own ethnic schools and community.

3.1.4 Burakumin (Outcastes)

Burakumin is a caste like minority group unique to Japanese society. Burakumin are the people whose ancestors were relegated to an outcaste status in the premodern era. Having no distinguishing physical or cultural traits, Burakumin are distinguished by their addresses in communities called Buraku, which were segregated in the premodern era, or by their ancestral backgrounds. (Nabeshima, 2010, p. 109)

Even though they obtain Japanese citizenship, their social and cultural rights are very limited due to overt prejudice and discrimination due to their descent and lower status of occupation, that resulted in limited access to education, economic opportunity, and social welfare. Thus, despite the fact that Burakumin are ethnically Japanese, their social status is identified as outcastes.

3.2 Issues of Japaneseness as Collective Identity

The common problem of those social minorities in Japan is the barriers to the mainstream society and marginalization by the society due to a dominant-minority relationship. Historically, the Japanese government had deprived a minority's ethnic identity, language, and culture by utilizing assimilation and opposition policies. Furthermore, Zainichi Koreans cannot obtain Japanese citizenship under Korean names even after long time of residency in Japan. This has resulted in no access to full membership in Japanese society. They have no voting rights for political participation.

These issues are derived from the notion of the purity of Japanese that creates barriers between the mainstream Japanese as the self and social minorities in Japan as the other. The notion of "inside-outside" (*uchi-soto*), that can be recognized in Japanese language and culture, has been developed in Japan as a national identity.

The issue of what it is to be "Japanese" is crucial. The definition of who is Japanese is essentially racial; Koreans, even those who have been in Japan for generations, cannot qualify. The indigenous Ainu, not to mention other Asians, exist in special but essentially foreign categories as the Japanese identity is narrowly constructed… Burakumin have been the unmentionable group due to ancient but still potent notions of pollution. (DeVos, 2010, p. 182)

Today, this barrier remains as an obstacle between the mainstream Japanese (the self) and diverse social minorities (the other) in Japan. Prejudice and discrimination against those social minorities have been developed along with the Japanese recognition of the differences between the self and the other, and the self is considered as superior to the other. Consequently, social minority's human rights are deprived and they become marginalized in the illusion of monocultural society. "Japan still faces significant challenges in eradicating notions of essentialism and purity that have superficially bound together those who view themselves as 'Japanese'" (Gordon & LeTendre, 2010, p. 202).

4. The Nature of Human Rights and its Advocacy

4.1 Three Dimensions of Human Rights

Human rights issues relate to a membership status of the mainstream society where social minorities cannot express their language and culture, participate in political practice, or access

to education and social welfare. Under the Japanese Constitution enacted in 1946, the fundamental human rights for Japanese people are guaranteed forever. "In a Japanese society, the term, 'citizenship' is substituted for 'nationality'" (Nakamura, 2012, p. 138). Thus, to be Japanese is equal to Japanese citizenship. Thus, social minorities in Japan who do not obtain citizenship or have limited citizenship lack of three dimensions of human rights: cultural, social, and political rights.

From a global perspective, citizenship goes beyond nationality. "Marshall (1992) classifies citizenship into three dimensions: Civic, political, and social rights. Civic is defined as 'to be concerned about public matters such as world hunger and global environment' (Yamada, 2010, p. 279). In other words, to be civic is equity in world resources and to find a best solution for public good. From Marshall's point of view, civil society is defined as autonomous and a free public space where everyone has moral and social responsibilities. In the emergence of a liberal democracy, political participation is critical as political rights. Access to social welfare and education, social rights include the structure belonging to social practice, membership in, and community participation. Thus, a full citizenship should include these three dimensions of human rights.

However, the notion of citizenship does not fully explain the cultural aspects of human rights. Advancement of identity, language, and culture at birth and developed over time are identified as cultural rights globally common in a liberal democratic society. Because of that, culture has the inner dimension of human rights instead of the outer dimension such as civic, political, or social aspects of human rights. Both inner and outer dimensions should be integrated into global human rights. Morality and social responsibility are derived from intercultural connections and understanding across borders, that links to care for social minorities who need help in the pluralistic society. Thus, it is critical to stress the cultural aspects of human rights.

4.2 Advocacy of Global Human Rights

The affirmation of the indigenous people in the world and guarantee of their human rights as social minorities is a significant advancement of human rights at the global level. One can identify it as global human rights gained in the historical struggle between local activists and the national government that executed its political and economic power over cultural tensions. The principle of global human rights "has been codified into the International bill of Human Rights, which consists of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted in 1948), the International Covenant on civil and Political Rights (adopted in 1966) entered into force (in 1976)" (Tsutsui, 2018, p. 7). Since that time, the human rights NGOs in the world have been striving to promote global human rights. Tsutsui explains the differences between current human rights principles and the original ones: "First, human rights principles now apply universally to all human beings, not just to men, or Christians, or whites. Second, they can sometimes override state sovereignty, at least in theory" (Tsutsui, 2018, p. 7).

This evidenced that the emergence of global human rights and a victory of social minorities was caused by empowering the relationship between local NGOs and global institutions, but a lack of the national government initiative or support.

5. The Meaning of Culture in Human Rights Movements in Japan

Culture is deeply embedded in language and

identity, and its formation. Furthermore, culture is the way of thinking, feeling, communicating, and conveying from generation to generation. Thus, it is critical to analyze the meaning of culture in human rights movements in Japan.

In the case of Ainu, the cultural tensions continued by the dominant-minority political relationship between the Japanese government and Ainu.

> What makes this zero-sum game model (total biculturalism and bilingualism is a theoretical impossibility) a self-fulfilling prophecy is the fact that the dominant culture of Japan is imperialistically homogeneous. It is intolerant of other cultures, pressuring minorities to accept the dominant culture and abandon their own. (Befu, 2010, p. 193)

Befu explains both cultural assimilation and opposition policies by the government as legitimated actions to press minorities for national benefits. Here, one can recognize cultural tensions between the local actors and the national authority that strives to promote an ethnically, linguistically homogeneous society.

Ainu's ethnic re-vitalization movements were initiated in 1946 when Ainu Association of Hokkaido was formed with the aim of the restoration of their lands. Despite the defeat of most of their land claims, restoration to their lands in *Niikappu* was attained. After their continued efforts on disseminating Ainu information and their unique culture, the Ainu leaders established the *Hokkaido Utari* Association in 1984, aiming at advancing Ainu's cultural traditions. Today, the recognition of Ainu as indigenous people of Japan has spread throughout the world, supported by the United Nations and the Japanese Constitution. In addition, Ainu's political rights are evidenced by *Kayano Shigeru*, an Ainu leader, who was elected as a member of House of Councilors in 1997; as a result, he represented a political voice of collective

Ainu. Furthermore, their cultural rights evidenced by the establishment of the National Ainu *Upopoi* Museum founded in 2020. Thus, Ainu's victory of gaining global human rights is the results of empowering the relationship between the local activists and the global institutions in support of the Japanese government.

Yet, the problem still remains in the role of the Japanese government on further advancement of human rights of social minorities at the national level, especially concerning the conservation of their cultural identity and traditions, not only as individual, but as a collective.

6. Government Role and Perspective on Human Rights Education

Several East Asian scholars have conducted research on social minorities in Japan linking it to the Japanese educational system in the 21st century. "The educational system will play a key role in Japan's future. How national educational agendas affect changes in the global culture of educational reform and intervention?" (Gordon & LeTendre, 2010, p. 4). One of their focal points on human rights education is to create a balance between unity and diversity while eradicating the notion of purity of Japaneseness that causes prejudice and discrimination in Japan.

6.1 Historical Background of Japaneseness and Human Rights Education

Japan went through modernization and Westernization in the Meiji era and shifted from the imperial, military state to the democratic nation in the postwar. The legacy to the historical transformations was the purity of Japaneseness.

The Fundamental Law of Education enacted in 1947 stressed the political knowledge necessary for full citizenship and the adaptation of the principles of equal educational opportunity. Under the law,

the Course of Study, issued for primary and secondary education, became the national standard school curriculum. "Human rights issues are integrated into social studies at several year levels. But systematic human rights education programs are not designated either as a subject or course or extracurricular subject" (Nabeshima et al., 2000, p. 23). For social minorities, only "Dowa" education projects to protect Burakumin were funded by the Ministry of Education (MOE) as human rights education and the local school boards of education executed the projects under the supervision of the MOE.

6.2 Today's Government Role and Perspective on Human Rights Education

Today, the strong central state's dignity was replaced by Japan becoming the world third largest economic power while morality as an indicator of social order among the Japanese has sharply declined. Consequently, the positive image of Japaneseness has turned negative along with the declining level of the Japanese educational system.

After 55 years, the Fundamental Law of Education was finally revised and enacted in 2002 to adapt to global social change. The new law aims at integrating both integrity (Western individualism) and intimacy (Japanese collectivism) in Japanese education. The role of education within the Japanese cultural context is both caring and justice based on two opposite components to build an inclusive, equitable community in school with positive moral discourse and valuing diversity. This inclusiveness of self and others will help develop mutual respect and care for one another; that will result in taking social responsibility for honoring human rights. Care and social responsibility are deeply rooted in Japanese traditional culture and moral education. Furthermore, a new approach to human rights education can be recognized in moral-based civic education that creates a strong relationship between the individual and the government as civic function while making schools as a miniature of the inclusive, civil society where the individuals have multiple identities, languages, and act as global citizens with care and social responsibility.

References

Befu, H. (2001). *Hegemony and homogeneity: An Anthropological analysis of Nihonjinron,* (Vol. 5).Trans Pacific Press.

Befu, H. (2010). Societal and cultural context of educational issues. In J. A. Gordon, H. Fujita, T. Kariya, & G. LeTendre (Eds.), *Challenges to Japanese education: Economics, reform, and human Rights* (pp. 189-195). Teachers College Press.

Buckley, S. (2021). Ainu's identity, historical struggle, and ethnic revitalization movements. International Christian University, *Educational Studies, 63*, 79-86.

Bukh, A. (2010). Ainu identity and Japan's identity: The struggle for subjectivity. *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies*, *28*(2), 35-53.

DeVos, G. (2010). Challenges to Japanese education: Concluding thoughts. In J. A. Gordon, H. Fujita, T. Kariya, & G. LeTendre (Eds.), *Challenges to Japanese education: Economics, reform and human rights* (pp. 181-188). Teachers College Press.

Frey, C. J. (2013). Ainu schooling: Self-determination and globalization. In G. DeCoker & C. Bjork (Eds.), *Japanese education in an era of globalization: Culture, politics, and equity* (pp. 101-114). Teachers College Press.

Gordon, J. A., & LeTendre, G. (2010). A new policy context for schooling in Japan. In J. A. Gordon, H. Fujita, T. Kariya, & G. LeTendre (Eds.), *Challenges to Japanese education: Economics, reform, and human* rights (pp. 196-204). Teachers College Press.

Marshall, T. H. *(1992)*. Citizenship and social class. In T. H. Marshall & T. Biltmore (Eds.), *Citizenship and social class* (pp. 3-49). Pluto Press.

Nabeshima, Y. (2010). Invisible racism in Japan: Impact on academic achievement of minority children. In J. A. Gordon, H. Fujita, T. Kariya, & G. LeTendre (Eds.), *Challenges to Japanese education: Economics, reform, and human rights* (pp. 109-130). Teachers College Press.

Nabeshima, Y., Akuzawa, M., Hayashi, S., & Park, K.

(2000). Japan: Human rights education in schools. https://www.hurights.or.jp/archives/pdf/asia-s-ed/v03/04nabeshima.pdf

Nakamura, K. (2012). Thematic research trend: Citizenship. *Shakaigaku Hyouron* [Japanese Sociological Review]*, 63*(1), 138-147.

Sugimoto, Y. (2014). *An introduction to Japanese society.* Cambridge University Press.

Tsutsui, K. (2018). *Rights make might: Global human rights and minority social movements in Japan*. Oxford University Press.

Yamada, R. (2010). Guroubaru shitizunshipp no kanousei [Possibilities for global citizenship]. In R. Yamada (Ed.), *Shitizunshipp no Shatei* [The Range of the Theory of Citizenship] (pp. 247-293). Nihon Keizai Hyouron Sha.

Young, V. (2020). Contemporary Okinawan studies and its borders: Four perspectives. *[The boundaries of 'the Japanese': Volume 1: Okinawa 1818-1972 – Inclusion and exclusion, by E. Oguma]. The Journal of Asian Studies, 79*(1), 185-194.