

The Legacy of Imposed Reform: The Case of the US Educational Mission to Japan

戦後教育改革の考察—アメリカ教育使節団

Misao Makino and Ken Kempner
(牧野 三佐男 ケン・ケンプナー)

Misao Makino, Professor of English Education
Department of Business Administration
Faculty of Business Administration

Ken Kempner, Professor of International Education
School of Social Science, Education, Health and PE,
Southern Oregon University

Abstract:

The focus of this study is on the role the 1946 US Educational Mission to Japan had in formulating and imposing reform on Japan's educational and social system. The premise of the study is that the lessons learned from the reform of Japan's educational system have relevance for all countries undergoing educational reform, particularly those developing countries being required by international agencies to restructure their education, social, and economic systems. This paper addresses the intent of the US Educational Mission and then the contemporary cultural context of Japanese education. This is not, however, only a study of Japan, as the implications of imposed educational and social reform that are insensitive to national culture and sovereignty extend beyond the boundaries of one country. The paper concludes by considering the cultural implications and lessons to be learned from an externally-imposed reform and its role in contributing to a nation's social and economic development.

Introduction

Since World War II Japan has transformed itself from a devastated nation to an economic

superpower. How the Japanese accomplished such an overwhelming transformation in such a relatively short time is the subject of much debate both within and outside Japan. Understanding the reason for Japan's economic success is an especially interesting question when one considers Japan was an occupied country by the Allied Powers following World War II. Certainly, there is likely no single reason for Japan's economic recovery and rapid growth, but there is little doubt that education played a critical role in Japan's success (Reischauer, 1988).

In many ways the post-war reconstruction of Japan offers a classical study in educational reform, although imposed from an external source. In this investigation, therefore, we sought to understand the effects of educational reform on Japan's social and economic development as well as the larger question of the role that educational reform plays in a nation's economic and social development.

Japan offers a particularly revealing, yet unusual, case study because of its rapid economic success in the wake of the forced requirement by the Allied powers after World War II to reform its educational system. Few countries ever have had the need or opportunity to completely rethink and reform their educational system in the same manner as Japan did after World War II (Reischauer, 1988).

In this study we focus on the role the 1946 US Educational Mission to Japan had in formulating and imposing reform on Japan's educational system. Briefly, the US Mission was composed of a group of 27 US educators who took specific responsibility for studying and then recommending reform of the educational system to the Supreme Commander of Allied Forces (SCAP), General Douglas MacArthur. Even with the extraordinary circumstances underlying the reasons for education reform, Japan's experience in reconstructing its educational system (with the oversight of SCAP personnel) offers insights both into the role education plays in a nation's economic development and the cultural consequences of externally-imposed reform. Our premise in this study is that the lessons learned from the reform of Japan's educational system have relevance for all countries undergoing educational reform, particularly for those developing nations being required by international agencies to restructure their educational, social, and economic systems.

We are particularly interested in understanding the influence culture has on the current development of education in Japanese society and in what likely direction these cultural influences may take institutions, their students, and research (Kitamura, 1991). While the focus of our analysis here is on the cultural effects of the US Mission to Japan, we are interested, as well, in understanding the contemporary effects of externally imposed reform efforts. In the current era of globalization, we are concerned about the potential loss of national sovereignty to countries that must abide by the principles of the global economy and structural adjustment policies imposed by lending agencies, most notably the World Bank and IMF (see Readings, 1996 and Chossudovsky,

1998). Because international agencies and global corporations wield such economic influence, countries risk exclusion from the global market if they do not abide by the structural reforms expected by external agencies and corporations. Chossudovsky (1998, p. 37) terms this new form of economic and political domination by global agencies a form of “market colonialism “ that ” subordinates people and government through the seemingly 'neutral' interplay of market forces.” Similarly, our investigation of the historical reform efforts of the US Mission seeks to illustrate further the consequences of contemporary reform that lack an awareness and understanding of the cultural context in which reform efforts are being imposed.

Specifically, in this paper we consider the legacy of the US Mission on Japan's contemporary system of education through a cultural investigation (Kempner and Makino, 1993). First, we begin our inquiry into the case of Japanese education by considering the historical circumstances surrounding the purpose and function of the 1946 US Educational Mission to Japan, its recommendations, and subsequent follow-up Mission in 1950. Following this introduction we address the cultural context and unique circumstances of Japan's contemporary educational system and its place in the global economy. In this discussion of Japanese education we present varied perspectives from the literature and from interviews we conducted with educators, policymakers, and business leaders. The individuals selected for our interviews and discussions comprised a “purposeful” sample (Patton, 1990). We selected individuals who have a background and understanding of educational policy and the US Mission, in particular. Because of the somewhat controversial nature of the US Mission's influence in Japan, we were not able to get access to all the individuals we had hoped-specifically, some former MONBUSHO (Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture) officials would not agree to be interviewed. Therefore, as with any qualitative study of cultural issues, especially those that are contested, we rely on individual perspective, not for proof but to gain an understanding of these issues (Wolcott, 1994.)

We conclude our study by presenting the implications and the cultural lessons to be learned from an externally-imposed reform of education and its role in contributing to a nation's social and economic development. We interpret these findings in relation to the value Japan's experiences hold for developing countries.

US Mission to Japan

The Mission's Purpose.

Tsuchimochi (1993) observes that studying the US Mission is necessary to understand contemporary Japanese education. Although the US Mission had an undeniably large influence on Japanese education following World War II, the importance of the Mission in Japan's modern history of education is debatable. For example, in our interview with Hajime Nagahama (1999), a

former Ministry official, he explained: “Although studying the US Mission provides insight to the Japanese higher educational system, Japanese education truly began reform during the Meiji Era [1868]. The US Mission did help modernize Japanese education after World War II, but it did not truly begin the new Japanese higher educational system.” From our discussion with Hirohide Konami (1999), Professor at Toyo University, he agreed, by noting: “It is more important to study the Japanese education system in the Edo Era and Meiji Era in order to understand the basic stream of Japanese modern education.”

Although the twenty-seven educators who composed the US Mission were predominantly noted US administrators in education, they were not experts in Japan. The actual mission itself consisted of one week of briefings upon arrival, one week consulting with SCAP and Japanese officials, less than one week observing the educational system and then taking a final week to write the report. This was an extraordinarily brief period of time to offer suggestions on how to restructure a country's entire educational system, especially by individuals who had no previous significant experience in Japan. As George Samson observed, regarding the Mission at the time: “Americans seemed to think that Japan can be supplied with a new system of education as a tailor might furnish a new suit” (Tsuchimochi, 1993, p. xv). Tsuchimochi also quotes Herbert Passin of the Civil Information and Education Section of SCAP: “we opened a Pandora's box, and since we did it through inadvertence, we would have been wiser to leave it to the Japanese to open it themselves.”

In his opening statement to the report, General MacArthur explained that the report “is a document of ideals high in the democratic tradition. In origin, these ideals are universal. Likewise universal are the ends envisaged by the mission” (Report of US Mission, 1946, p. iii). MacArthur's statement on what is indeed “universal” failed to acknowledge the long cultural history of Japan. Nevertheless, even with the tensions surrounding the Occupational Forces, the members of the Mission were sympathetic to the plight of the Japanese people: “On the whole, we have had revealed to us the variegated picture of a people bewildered by the turn of events, but earnest in their striving to use an emerging freedom to forge the instruments of a democratic society” (Report of US Mission, 1946, p. 2).

Within the democratic intentions of the US Mission, the “principal purpose” was “to help Japan to become readjusted to the community of nations” (Report of US Mission, 1946, p. 55). To quote again from the Report (p. 9):

The reorientation of Japanese education involves not only the negative aspect of a complete elimination of militaristic, ultra-nationalistic, and other objectionable features of instruction, but a careful appraisal of those aspects of the culture that will enrich the new

program. For example, in such subjects as history, ethics, geography, literature, art and music, consideration must be given to what can be retained that will increase cooperation between Japan and other nations. [emphasis ours]

How the Mission was to determine what was “objectionable” and on what basis elements of Japanese culture were to be “retained” in the curriculum were not specified. The Mission's proposals did attempt to balance, however, the directives of SCAP personnel and General MacArthur with what the Mission members believed was effective educational practice. The Mission (p. 57) members explained further that they recognized:

the original negative directives, such as those eradicating militarism and nationalistic Shintoism from the schools, but it [the Mission] has concentrated chiefly upon positive proposals. In so doing it has sought to aid the Japanese to set for themselves the conditions for reestablishing a sound educational system within their culture.

The Mission's Outcomes

The primary task of the Mission was presumably only to study potential reform with the actual recommendations to be made by the Japanese Education Committee, formed by SCAP and composed of Japanese educators and intellectuals. According to the Potsdam Declaration, post-war reform was to be based on Japanese initiative focused on the “revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people” (Tsuchimochi, 1993, pp. 6-7). The historical record is somewhat contested as to which Committee bears responsibility for the ultimate changes in the Japanese educational system. For example, former Prime Minister, Tanaka Kakuei, is quoted as complaining that “postwar education reform, particularly the 6-3-3-4 system, was forced on us by America.” Former Ministry official, now a university professor, Nagahama commented even further in our interview with him that “The educational system set up by the US Mission after World War II was unsatisfactory according to world standards. Apart from the US Mission's responsibility, those in charge of Japan's educational system have managed the system from a political point of view” (Nagahama, 1999). The primary focus of the US Mission's reform efforts, however, included an attempt to depoliticize schooling through the principle of decentralization and local control of schools, revising the curriculum, instituting language reform, strengthening teacher education, raising teachers salaries, emphasizing adult learning, and improving the quality of higher education. Konami (1999) observed that the Mission's outcome was not necessarily a successful one, particularly in the cultural area:

There is a saying, When one walks with the teacher, walk 6 feet behind in order not to step on the shadow of the teacher. This means the Japanese traditional way of thinking

that teachers are very sophisticated and honored by the Japanese people. The US Mission may have misunderstood such special status of professors in Japan.

A similar failure of the Mission to account for cultural differences in its reform efforts was explained by Koki Sato, Chair, Board of Trustees of Mejiro Gakuen and a member of the MONBUSHO Educational Reform Committee. He noted that the US Mission “didn't understand the Board of Education system, which traditionally appointed members at the local or provincial levels” (Sato, 1999). Sato explained that the Mission “tried to impose democracy” which was antithetical to the culture:

I just don't understand how the US government or SCAP selected the 27 for the US Mission. They didn't include even a scholar of Japan and specialist of the Japanese system. The 27 US Mission members didn't understand Japanese culture....Very strange to me.

As Sato noted, perhaps the greatest cultural misunderstanding by the US Mission in its reform efforts was in curriculum and language reform. The Mission determined the Japanese written language, which uses the Chinese (Kanji) characters, was inefficient and prevented the “appropriate” education of the Japanese people. Although the members of the Mission appeared aware of the cultural imperialism inherent in proposing such a reform, they proceeded with their suggestions, nonetheless: “We come now to a matter which both modesty and ease would counsel us to avoid, if our sense of responsibility to the children of Japan permitted. Language is so intimate an organism in a people's life that it is hazardous to approach from without” (Report of US Mission, 1946, p. 20). The Mission at least realized it was acting in a questionable cultural manner, yet still noted: “From a deep sense of duty, and from it alone, we recommend a drastic reform of the Japanese written language” (p. 20).

The US Mission proposed several alternatives for revising the written language, but favored “the complete abandonment of both Kanji and Kana and the adoption of some form of Romaji” (p. 21). Essentially, the Mission members, composed of US educators who did not speak Japanese, were calling for an end to the use of the Kanji characters that serve as the foundation for both Chinese and Japanese languages, art, and culture. At least the Mission members did note: “That certain esthetic and other values residing in the Kanji can never be fully conveyed by a phonetic system is readily granted” (p. 22).

Other attempts to impose cultural reforms and changes in written Japanese were equally misguided, according to Sato (1999): “They attempted to change all the traffic signs, but it didn't work....They also tried daylight savings time, but it didn't work either.” Sato explained further

that in Okinawa the Occupational Force even changed driving directions, which were later reversed when Okinawa was returned to Japan. In a similar cultural attempt to modernize the Japanese economy, SCAP broke the Mitsui and Mitsubishi trading companies into 213 smaller businesses. Within five years after the occupation, however, both companies were completely reconstituted as before. All employees had maintained their allegiance to the parent company through the supposed cultural reformation imposed by SCAP (Cohen, 1987).

The US Mission's attempt to impose a variety of cultural reforms adhered to the theory of modernization that proposes developing countries all must be "modern," as defined by the developed, core countries (Kempner et al., 1998). Modernization theory continues to guide much contemporary international policy, which assumes all countries must follow the mandates of global agencies. Similarly, the members of the US Mission either ignored or failed to grasp the cultural significance of this historical debate in Japan over the moral principles of obedience and filial piety of the Imperial Rescript of 1890. The Imperial Rescript was a proclamation by the Emperor that clarified appropriate "Confucian relationships and the duties of citizens to the throne (Reischauer, 1988, p. 204). Whereas the US Mission presumed "such instrumentalities" were "undesirable in a democratic Japan," they failed to account for the strength of the culture and Confucian philosophy in their attempt to restructure Japanese society. Reischauer, for example, has noted that although Japan has embraced modern ideas and democratic ideals and values "strong Confucian traits persist, such as the belief in the moral basis of government, the emphasis on interpersonal relations and loyalties, and faith in education and hard work" (p. 204). Although the US Mission and SCAP assumed education could serve as leverage for social change in Japan, they did not comprehend the depth of the culture. There was an implicit assumption among the US experts that if Japan became modern, similar to the US, the social difficulties that the US Mission members found "wrong" would be resolved.

The 2nd Mission: 1950

At the termination of their one month in Japan, the members of the 1st US Mission submitted their report to General MacArthur who, with his staff, the Japanese Education Committee, the Ministry of Education, and other governmental bodies, set about to reform the educational system. On August 27, 1950 five members of the original 1946 Mission returned to Japan to conduct a one-month follow-up study of the success and problems in the educational reform effort. Not surprisingly, the 2nd US Mission was quite complimentary of the 1st Mission's success: "The educational program outlined by the United States Education Mission to Japan in 1946 is working out successfully....The school program is being carefully evaluated and changed in ways which will help develop a democratic educational program" (Report of the Second United States

Education Mission to Japan, 1950, p. 1). The five members of the 2nd Mission were quite optimistic over the initial reforms implemented in 1946. They encouraged further investment in the educational programs proposed for Japan by explaining: “The real wealth of any nation is determined by the level of education of all its people. Money spent for public education is the best investment that can be made by any free nation” (p. 1).

In their assessment of the progress in reforming the Japanese school system, the members of the 2nd Mission noted, in particular, difficulties in the adequacy of school buildings, the shortage in school facilities and teachers: “Many things remain to be done that will insure the real substance of a democratic educational program. There will never be a time when the people and educators of Japan can sit down and say that the task is finished” (p. 4).

The lack of adequate school facilities and teachers was not surprising given Japan's neglected and damaged infrastructure after the war. The members of the 2nd Mission noted: “As are the teachers so are the schools. As are the schools so will be the nation” (p. 4). For this reason, the focus of much of the 2nd Mission's concerns was on the shortage of teachers, their preparation, and the role of higher education in preparing these future teachers: “A well-qualified individual in every classroom and administrative position in Japan must be the goal” (p. 5). The 2nd Mission was concerned, however, over the capability of Japan's universities to adequately educate the teachers needed for the development of a successful educational system. The authors noted: “The great national universities of Japan have not yet fully recognized their responsibilities in the field of teacher education” (p. 5). The members of the 2nd Mission further found that teacher training programs tended to “over-specialize” and as a result they encouraged a broader, more general preparation for teachers than was currently being provided by universities at the time. The members concluded, however, that “Japan has the opportunity to develop one of the outstanding programs of teacher education for democratic purposes to be found in any country in the world” (p. 5).

The postwar growth in higher education was quite rapid with 18 national universities in 1946 expanding to 71 public universities by the time of the 2nd Mission report in 1950. With this rapid growth, the 2nd Mission determined its purpose was to answer the following four questions it posed concerning Japanese higher education:

1. How much higher education does Japan need?
2. What kind of higher education should Japan have?
3. How may higher education in Japan be most efficiently organized and directed?
4. Can Japan afford the higher education she needs?

The 2nd Mission members responded to their own questions in a vague manner by not-

ing: “No country requires more and better education of advanced character than does Japan. No country has a better opportunity to demonstrate dramatically the power of a great higher educational system to meet great national and world needs” (p. 8). The authors asked further how many engineers, artists, physicians, nurses, social workers, business and political leaders Japan needs and if Japan has “enough teachers properly educated to play their great role in a society that would dream of greatness” (p. 9).

Insuring Democracy and a Moral Education.

The authors of the 2nd Mission report posed further questions about the organization and efficiency of higher education and the need to support a strong system. Although the majority of the Report was composed of grand rhetorical statements over the value of education for Japan to become a peaceful nation, the underlying concern was clearly expressed by the following statement: “One of the greatest weapons against communism in the Far East is an enlightened electorate in Japan” (p. 12). Certainly, the 2nd Mission authors had great respect and compassion for the Japanese people, but reforming the educational system and higher education in particular, was as much to prevent the spread of communism as it was to help the Japanese people reconstruct their country.

A final area of considerable interest in the 2nd Mission's Report was the focus by the authors on “moral and spiritual education.” The authors noted: “We have heard it said, many times since coming to Japan, that the new education in the new Japan has failed to give to the nation that moral and spiritual stamina which is essential to its all-around development” (p. 14). Of course, from whom the authors of the Report “heard it said” is not clear, nor did they have much opportunity to actually hear from many people in the one month they were in Japan. The members of both the 1946 and 1950 Missions were also unclear and somewhat ingenuous in their lack of differentiation between the Christian and democratic morals they possessed and the Shinto and Buddhist morals of the Japanese. The authors explain: “Moral education must be emphasized throughout the entire curriculum and, moreover, it cannot be separated from the training youth receives at home and from religious and social agencies” (p. 14). Implicitly, however, these “morals” were to be Western ones, not the traditional morals of obedience and reverence for teachers and parents that provided the foundation for Japanese life.

The failure of the US Mission to understand the social mandates of Japanese culture was underscored in our interview with Sato (1999), who noted the considerable “confusion” that ensued in education and social issues since the US Mission. Sato explained further that because the grandparents were educated by the military, the parents were products of the reformed system after the US Mission. This conflict between the education of the grandparents and their chil-

dren in the 1950s lead to “much teaching confusion with grandparents over democracy, equity, gender, and race.” Sato explained further that he believes this confusion has led to a lack of “self-confidence” among teachers and parents “in the products of the reformed system after the US Mission.” Although this uncertainty and lack of confidence were due also to the consequences of the War and the trauma of a defeated nation, the US Mission played an important role in contributing to this cultural conflict.

Foremost in the confusion over cultural values and education, as Yoshimi Ikeda (1999), Chair and Japanese Literature Teacher at Ideda Gakuen (K-12), explained in our interview with him, was the “course of study” the US Mission implemented under the Ministry of Education.” In particular, Ikeda explained that the US Mission altered the traditional curriculum by “taking up moral education from the Japanese system.” He noted:

Although 80% to 95% of US students belong to some organized religious group, 85% to 95% of Japanese do not belong to the religious groups. US young have well organized bible education through church but not Japanese. Japanese used to be educated in moral education as a subject in the school system before World War II, but not after the US Mission.

For Ikeda, removing morals education from the schools has undercut the education of the young. Since morals education is no longer provided in the schools and since the majority of Japanese youth receive no morals education through church, Ikeda, believes, as many other Japanese, that such lack of education has contributed to the rise of discipline problems in the contemporary educational system. Ikeda explained that the US Mission did not understand how different the role of religion is in Japan compared to the US. Because there is no separation of the church and state, Ikeda noted that morals education is not only appropriate in schools, but expected. By removing morals education from the schools and not understanding such education did not exist elsewhere, Ikeda believes the US Mission helped create a new generation of Japanese who lack the moral orientation of their ancestors.

Although the US Mission issued no further reports, the effects of the reform efforts imposed and attempted by the US Mission have been long-lasting, if not controversial in contemporary Japan. As Tsuchimochi notes, “Not all aspects of education in Japan are the result of the education reforms of the Occupational period...” The present system, however, “still retains many aspects of the original US reforms, and can be described as a result of a combination of education reform under the Occupation and Japanese educators' own efforts and initiatives in cooperation” (Tsuchimochi, 1993, p. 214). Tsuchimochi also observes that even though the reform efforts lead to many positive results, much of the present crisis in Japanese education can be

traced directly to the intervention of the US Mission. The ultimate effect of the US Mission is, however, a contested issue among the Japanese, as is the complicity of the Japanese government in the implementation of the reform efforts. As noted above, former Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei believed the reform efforts were “forced” upon Japan by the US, whereas other Japanese officials believe the Japanese Education Committee willingly participated and directed the reform efforts.

What then are the contemporary perspectives on the legacy of the US Mission and the effects of educational reform, either suggested or imposed by the Occupational Forces? In one of his first statements to the press after becoming Japan's Prime Minister, Yoshiro Mori, called for a return to the Imperial Rescript of 1890 “which the US Mission eliminated.” Mori explained that “the Imperial Rescript on Education was better for Japanese moral education.” He noted that before World War II all schools required children and teachers to sing together in the morning and for principals to read in front of students during Entrance and Graduation Ceremonies (Mori, 2000). In his address to the Japanese Diet a few days later, Mori repeated his call for reform. He explained that some of the ideas in the Imperial Rescript are excellent; for example, “respect for the elderly and parents, and the philosophy of moral education.” Also, he noted that education should be more concerned with “fitting into modern or current society” and should be more international in scope.

Response to Mori's comments was mixed, of course, but the significance of his remarks is that the debate over the moral values of obedience and filial piety and the role education should play in instilling the cultural legacy of these Confucian values continues in contemporary Japan. In our follow-up interview with Koki Sato on his response to Mori's remarks, Sato agreed with the Prime Minister on the importance of the moral values of “filial piety to your parents, affection for your brothers and sisters; harmony between husbands and wives; bearing oneself in modesty and moderation; and extending benevolence to all” (Sato, 2000). Sato believed, however, that the former Prime Minister should have used a more modern “philosophical motto” and cautioned against using the “old expression” of the Imperial Rescript. Sato noted the word “Imperial” is “too strong for the people in the Southeast Asian countries where the Japanese Military once occupied.”

To understand further the contemporary legacy of the US Mission on Japan, we turn next to a discussion of education in contemporary Japan. As we have noted, understanding the US Mission's legacy is important not only for Japan but also for developing countries undergoing educational and social reform efforts imposed by international agencies or centralized authorities.

The Contemporary Context of Education

Although our focus here is on the effect the US Mission has had on contemporary education in Japan, we recognize that education does not exist in isolation from the larger political context of modern Japan and the global economy. We do not believe, therefore, that the problems of contemporary Japanese society and education are due categorically to the US Mission or the influence of the Occupational Forces. Because definitively sorting out cultural influences 50 years later is an impossible task, our goal, as we have discussed, is to question and attempt to understand the legacy and influences of the US Mission, not to prove its effects. In this regard, we consider the relationship between the internal Japanese culture and the culture of the external global market on Japanese institutions of education. Mindful of the current role Japanese higher education plays as a sorting and selection process (Amano, 1986), we are particularly interested in understanding the legacy the US Mission has had on the preparation of students for the economic and social needs of Japan in the evolving global economy (Evans, 1991).

Concern over Japan's educational system is a topic of considerable debate among students, parents, scholars, intellectuals, and national leaders. Foremost among the concerns expressed is the conflict over the educational role vs. the sorting function of Japanese higher education. The "testing hell" that Japanese students endure to gain admission to higher education is known worldwide. Once admitted to a higher education institution, however, the actual education students receive is often of marginal value and rarely the reason for attendance in the first place. The quality of higher education that Japanese students work so hard to access remains one of the key educational problems yet resolved. Reischauer (1988, p. 195), observed that because of the low quality of education students receive in Japanese universities, higher education in Japan "probably fills less of a role in society than the pressures over entrance examinations would suggest."

Ways to mediate the effects of testing hell are constantly being assessed, but only modest gains have been made. As Nagahama (1999) explained: "Examination hell itself is a competitive phenomenon in Japan. This system does not adequately allow students to present the best of their abilities. It also does not allow universities to choose the right students. The system should therefore be reformed to allow the selection of good students." Similarly, Konami (1999) noted:

The biggest problem in Japan, the extremely difficult entrance examination, was caused not only by the education system but also by the way of the thinking of Japanese people that even a bad-brain son can be an elite if he can once enter a famous university. This is a hotter issue to change such a social situation than to change the education system.

Whereas education was often heralded as the chief contributor to Japan's rapid develop-

ment, critics now point to the dysfunctional nature of its educational system, and higher education in particular. Fukunaga (1992, p. 5) believes the “collapse of education, for example, serves as eloquent proof that society has run aground.” Fukunaga explains further that because Japan was a relatively poor nation following World War II, education was designed to produce “good kigyō senshi, or corporate soldiers for Japan, Inc” (p. 5). Whereas the educational system was functional during Japan's rapid economic development over the past 50 years, the system is no longer as viable in today's global economy.

Knowledge has attained a new value in the global economy—certification and selection are no longer sufficient to sustain an economy. As Thurow (1996, p. 68) notes: “Today knowledge and skills now stand alone as the only source of comparative advantage.” For Japan, in particular, Thurow explains that as a global leader, it “needs to build a domestically pulled economy rather than an export-pushed economy if it is to resume growing. It has simply become too big to rely on export-led growth” (p. 204). As Japan must reform its export-focused economy if it is to flourish in the global market, it must also adapt and reform its internal educational system to foster the development of its knowledge workers.

Because Japan's contemporary system of education does not match its place as a first world economic power, reforming education would appear to be a critical necessity. The Japan Council on Education reports, however, that in spite of previous positive outcomes of reform by the US Mission after World War II: “it has unfortunately also created the present crisis in education: fiery zeal for entrance exam competition; school bullying; children's refusal to go to school; violence, and juvenile delinquency” (Tsuchimochi, 1993, p. 215). As Nagahama (1999) explained, as well: “The Japanese Educational system lacks relevance to everyday society. This weakness in Japanese higher education should be corrected by incorporation of modern society and cultural research.”

What then is the complicity of the US Mission in the “collapse” of the educational system that Fukunaga identifies? Although both the 1946 and 1950 US Missions to Japan focused implicitly on the need for Japan to become modern, the two Missions did not attend well to the underlying cultural differences between Japan and the United States. Whereas the US culture can be characterized as “utilitarian” individualistic (Bellah et al., 1985), Japan's culture represents a collectivistic culture that emphasizes the welfare of the group (Hui and Triandis, 1986). In a collectivistic culture individual identity is shunned in favor of group cohesiveness and association while an individualistic culture celebrates and promotes separate identity and personal goals. The processes of formal and informal education, therefore, will differ greatly between a collectivist-oriented culture and an individualistic one that fosters democracy and independent identity. Although the US Mission either did not understand cultural differences well or chose to ignore

them, the members at least were wise to focus their efforts on the education system, as opposed to attempting a reform of the larger Japanese culture.

Implications for Developing Countries

This is not only a study of Japan. Our basic premise is to seek an understanding of how education contributes to economic and social development—Japan is the case. The implications of our study extend beyond the boundaries of Japan and call for similar, comparative analyses of the role education plays within a nation's economic development. We offer our inferences here not only to assist in understanding Japan's system of education but as a model to gain a clearer definition of the effects of educational reform in a nation's social and economic development. Our premise, of course, is that to gain this understanding we must identify how a nation's cultural and historical circumstances are affected by education. As we have presented, the legacy of the US Mission is one of the keys to understanding Japan's unique educational circumstances. The lessons from this unique, albeit coerced, opportunity to reconstruct an educational system offer insights into the consequences of imposed educational reform and the ramifications on a nation's economic and social development. The balance between education for economic reform and education for social development is a delicate one that cautions reformers to learn the lessons from Japan's success and the serious problems that have emerged in its contemporary education system.

Educational reform is about power and culturally imposed control over knowledge and access to the labor market. The US Mission's role in 1946 corresponds to the externally imposed reforms of contemporary international agencies that require “structural adjustment policies” be made in order to receive the loans requested or to defer debt payments. International agencies, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, demand economic, social, and educational restructuring for those developing countries that have lost or are in danger of losing the global economic war. When international agencies ignore a nation's culture in their structural adjustment policies, however, it is at the social and economic peril of the developing country and the economic viability of the agency's loans. Herein, we find risks to national sovereignty when international agencies require structural adjustment policies in violation of national constitutions, such as the privatization of nationally-owned industries protected by constitutional law. Whereas such structural adjustments may be efficient economic practices, they potentially endanger the political stability of national governments.

In our attempt to understand the effects of the US Mission, we find identifying its legacy on Japanese education is best explained by the concept Nagahama introduced: “tsugiki”—the joining of two trees. For example, more than two educational systems (trees) were responsible for

the creation of the contemporary Japanese educational system. As noted, prior to World War II Japan borrowed heavily from the German educational system. This German legacy is still very evident both in the organizational structure of schools and the style of school uniforms most elementary children still wear to school everyday. The caps and jackets many Japanese children wear today are in the style of pre-World War II German school uniforms. This ability of the Japanese people to meld several cultures into the tree of contemporary Japanese education is a greater legacy than any one tree in the process of *tsugiki*. Konami (1999) noted that "Japan introduced the system of higher education from the United Kingdom during the Meiji Era, except graduate programs. Therefore, the US Mission's impact was not as strong in elementary education as it was in graduate education." Whereas the US Mission influenced graduate education, specifically, this effect has been mediated by the single-minded efforts of students and their higher education institutions to secure jobs in the nation's major corporations. Japan's higher education system is resoundingly criticized for its narrowness and over reliance on "testing hell" for admission (Reischauer, 1988). Nagahama (1999) responded to this criticism by explaining:

While this criticism is mostly correct, it was the wish of society to prepare workers for entering companies after graduation. Unfortunately, with its new ideas of individualism, the Japanese higher education system could not provide the education to society's satisfaction. There is a struggle between the ideas of individualism and group-orientation in the Japanese higher education system. Whichever has a more fundamentally stable foundation at the time will command more respect and thus have more influence over the system.

Because the US Mission was not able to establish a "stable foundation" of reform, it bears responsibility for its error in failing to understand the Japanese people and the high esteem in which they hold education and teachers. Not to consider further the voices of the Japanese people in their report is indicative of the members of the US Mission's lack of awareness on how educational and social reform could ultimately be implemented and accomplished. Because post-colonial reasoning recognizes the voices of the unimpoverished, the US Mission would have benefited from such reasoning by listening further to those whose system it was attempting to reform. Power circumvented reasoning in the US Mission's efforts to reform education in a manner culturally appropriate, socially acceptable, and economically feasible in the post-war reconstruction of Japan.

As other cross-cultural research has shown, recognition of the cultural mandates of a nation is foremost in understanding what types of educational reform are appropriate and feasible (Kempner et al., 1993). Initially, the awareness of underlying cultural conceptions of individual-

ism and collectivism are critical in formulating educational reform. The basic assumptions of modernization theory, as employed by the US Mission (i.e., every country wishes to be “modern,” and that being modern is in the best interests of every country and its people), lacked awareness of the cultural circumstances of Japan. Whereas the US Mission members did believe they were operating in the interests of the Japanese people, the decisions made, such as restructuring the Japanese written language, indicate a lack of understanding or disregard for the enduring strength of the culture. Such cultural imperialism is an ineffective and inefficient procedure to induce social engineering: “Successful imports are those that follow local proclivities and improve on them, rather than replace them...Going against the cultural grain is too risky” (Kempner et al., 1993, p. 389). The imposition of a foreign, cosmopolitan culture will be resisted, misinterpreted, and then adapted by the indigenous culture to fit the unique circumstances of the local context. For externally-imposed educational, economic, or social reform to be successful a *tsugiki* must be grown or formed in a culturally appropriate manner. As Nagahama explained, educational change should “establish a system with a soul” which he believes is “crucial for international development.” This disregard for the soul of the local culture is the principal error in the coercive implementation of structural adjustment policies and other forms of cultural imperialism by external reformers (Stiglitz, 2001).

The implications for international agencies are obvious from the legacy of the US Mission. Change and structural adjustment policies should be accomplished with a greater understanding and awareness of the cultural context. Furthermore, protecting the soul of the system being changed should preserve human dignity. How then is change effected in a culturally appropriate manner that preserves such dignity?

Conclusion

In summary, we have found the US Mission's legacy to be analogous to the formation of two trees in the manner of *tsugiki*. The US Mission could not alone alter the cultural circumstances of Japanese education. Yet, as Tsuchimochi has noted, contemporary Japanese education cannot be understood without consideration of the effects of the US Mission's reform efforts. These efforts were both self-serving and compassionate. Whereas the US Mission believed strengthening Japan through education would serve as a weapon against communism, the members of the Mission also saw education as a way to help Japan attain its dreams of “greatness.” The imposition of such reforms has left long-lasting effects on contemporary education, among them the “fiery zeal for entrance exams,” the lack of moral education in the schools, yet an increased interest in equity and democracy. Regardless of the ultimate beneficial or detrimental effects of the US Mission, it has left an important legacy, as Sato (1999) observed: “Japan histori-

cally always changed systems by pressure from other countries. In this way, the US Mission has great meaning for us.”

What is perhaps most notable about the US Mission's legacy and the associated cultural change efforts of the Occupation Forces are the reforms they did not accomplish. The efforts to change the Japanese language failed, as did daylight savings, driving on the right in Okinawa, self evaluation of faculty, and a number of other curricular reforms. Again, in the manner of tsugiki change was mediated by the larger cultural and historical circumstances of the Japanese people. Similarly, externally-imposed reform efforts in developing countries by international agencies are mediated by the cultural and historical circumstances of a nation and its people. If external agencies wish to successfully introduce reform efforts and structural adjustment policies, such efforts must be in concert with the national culture. Reform efforts cannot stand alone, but must be in conjunction with and connected to the existing cultural circumstances, as in the tsugiki manner. This, then, is the ultimate legacy of the US Mission and the lesson to be learned by international agencies that attempt externally-imposed reform efforts.

REFERENCES

- Amano, I. (1986) Educational crisis in Japan, in W.K. Cummings et al. (Eds) *Educational Policies in Crisis: Japanese and American Perspectives* (New York: Praeger).
- Bellah, R.N., Madsen, R., Sullivan, W.M., Swidler, A., and Tipton, S.M. (1985) *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (New York: Harper and Row).
- Chossudovsky, M. (1998) *The Globalisation of Poverty: Impacts of IMF and World Bank Reforms* (New York: Zed Books, Ltd.).
- Cohen, T. (1987) *Remaking Japan: The American Occupation as New Deal* (New York: Free Press).
- Evans, R. Jr. (1991) The contribution of education to Japan's economic growth, in E. Beauchamp (Ed) *Windows on Japanese Education* (New York: Greenwood Press).
- Fukunaga, H. (1992) Japan at a dead end, *Tokyo Business Today*, 60: 5.
- Hui, C. and Triandis, H. (1986) Individualism-Collectivism: A study of cross-cultural researchers, *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 17, pp. 225-248.
- Ikeda, Y. (Sept. 1999) Personal Interview.
- Kempner, K., Castro, C.D.M, and Bas, D. (1993) Apprenticeship-the perilous journey from Germany to Togo, *International Review of Education*, 39, pp. 373-390.
- Kempner, K. & Makino, M. (1993) Cultural perspectives on Japanese higher education, *Comparative Education*, 29, pp. 185-199.

- Kempner, K., Mollis, M., Tierney, W.G. (1998) Introduction, in K. Kempner, M. Mollis, W.G. Tierney (Eds) *ASHE Reader on Comparative Education* (New York: Simon & Schuster)
- Kitamura, K. (1991) The future of Japanese higher education, in E. Beauchamp (Ed) *Windows on Japanese Education* (New York: Greenwood Press).
- Konami, K. (Sept. 1999) Personal Interview.
- Mori, Y. (2000) Quoted from radio broadcasts on April 22.
- Nagahama, H. (Sept., 1999) Personal Interview.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990) *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods: Second Edition*. Newbury Park: Sage).
- Readings, B. (1996) *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press).
- Reischauer, E.O. (1988) *The Japanese Today: Change and Continuity* (Tokyo: Tuttle,).
- Report of the United States Educational Mission to Japan: Submitted to the Supreme Commander for the allied Powers, Tokyo, Japan* (March 30, 1946) (Washington, DC: US Printing Office).
- Report of the Second United States Educational Mission to Japan: Submitted to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, Tokyo, Japan* (September 22, 1950) (Washington, DC: US Printing Office).
- Sato, K. (Sept. 1999) Personal Interview.
- Sato, K. (April 2000) Personal Interview.
- Stiglitz, Joseph (2001) Scan globally, reinvest locally: Knowledge infrastructure and the localization of knowledge, in Ha-Joon Chang (Ed) *Joseph Stiglitz and the World Bank: The Rebel Within* (London: Anthem Press).
- Thurow, L. (1996) *The Future of Capitalism: How Today's Economic Forces Shape Tomorrow's World* (New York: Penguin).
- Tsuchimochi, G. (1993) *Education Reform in Postwar Japan: The 1946 U.S. Education Mission* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press).
- Wolcott, H. (1994) *Transforming Qualitative Data*. (Newbury Park: Sage).