

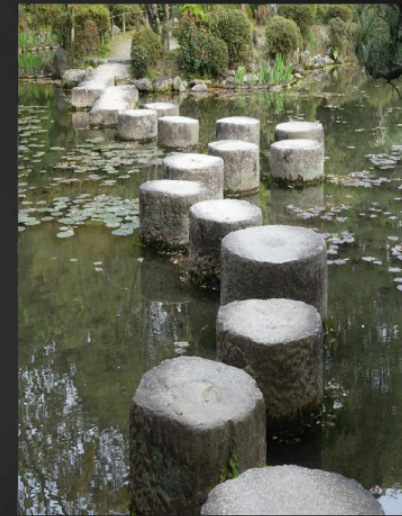
# Excavating 'good' sense in EDU-Port: Towards ethics in International Educational Development

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# Ethics in international educational development

“When a question is raised about the ethicality of international cooperation in education, it creates self-doubt and hesitation in the action of those involved. On the contrary, if it (international cooperation in education) is pursued without any hesitation, their acts will become unreflective and unethical. Ethics of international cooperation in education necessarily requires us to doubt and hesitate before even thinking about what we can do for others... EDU-Port Nippon shows no sign of self-doubt, nor hesitation. What is visible is promotion, only.” (Hashimoto 2019: 463).

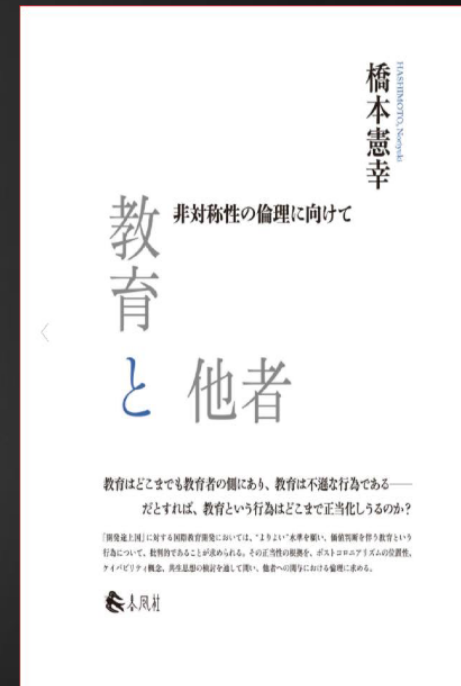
# Ethics in education & development

(Hashimoto, 2019)

## Education & development

- ▶ Necessarily normative (What is 'good' & 'desirable'?)
- ▶ Asymmetric relations (teacher vs student, aid giver vs aid beneficiary)
- ▶ Unilateral imposition of values
- ▶ False universalization of self through others (cultural imperialism)

Conditions for ethics: reflective, self doubt, reservation, hesitation



# Ethics in education & development

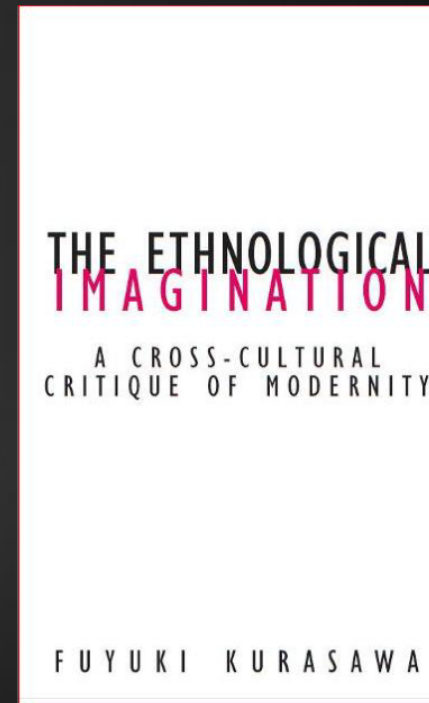
(Hashimoto, 2019)

Conditions for ethics in educational development

- ▶ De-stabilization of self (as opposed to unlimited expansion of self)
- ▶ Recognition of negativity in self through others

Ethnological imagination (Kurasawa, 2003)

- ▶ Cross-cultural mode of self critique
- ▶ Temporal and spatial estrangements of self through encounters with others
- ▶ Detachment vis-à-vis the here and now
- ▶ Self unlearning



Kurasawa, F. (2003). The ethnological imagination: A cross-cultural critique of modernity. University of Minnesota Press.

# Interview # 1

"I believe that Mr. K was hoping that EDU-Port would offer a view of Japanese education as seen from abroad. That is, to make visible those practices that had been taken for granted in Japan, including the so called 'strengths' of Japanese education, which was accepted without evidence."

"He was also of the view that Japanese education was stuck in the status quo, in that we were not trying anything new and different."

(former MEXT International Division Staff)

# Interview #2

“I think it might have to do with a sense of remorse about cultural imperialism (of Japan's past). MEXT tends to refrain from any attempts to promote strengths of Japanese education overseas, let alone anything to do with influencing foreign countries' education through cultural means, though I am not too sure about politicians.”

(former MEXT International Division staff)

# Interview #3

“What I have always stressed to the EDU-Port grantees is something like, ‘education is so deeply entangled with the tradition and culture of the country, so, please don't think that copy and paste of Japanese education will work. This is absolutely crucial.’ I know there were some grantees who simply thought of transplanting Japanese practice as is into other places. But perhaps that is not really what Edu-Port should be about. It is about grasping the essence (of Japanese education) which can be applicable to other countries. It is a mistake to think that EDU-Port is about how wonderful Japanese education is. Unless it helps us understand what it is that makes Japanese education work, the goals of EDU-Port aren't really achieved.”

(former MEXT International Division Staff)

# Interview #4

“But education is a bit different from trains or bullet trains. It is very sensitive, not something to be imposed upon (others). And MEXT officials do not even think about making money by exporting Japanese education. Whether it is good or bad, they have no idea, nor any taste, for business. Besides, they find a project like this (EDU-Port) troublesome; it cost them too much with little return for them. They are not interested in the infrastructure export, while the Prime Minister's Cabinet Office and Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry are. As I worked at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, I have the business sense. So I think I can appreciate the both.”

(EDU-Port Steering Committee Member)



# Interview #5

"If I say, 'because Japanese education is superior, you should do as told,' then it is the attitude of cultural imperialism, isn't it? (This is not what EDU-Port is about.) When Japanese education gets tried elsewhere, it acts like a mirror, where we get to observe what is great or otherwise about Japanese education. So seeing others trying Japanese education allows us to rethink what Japanese education is. And I believe this is the aspect of EDU-Port that is most important for MEXT, and it is precisely why I decided to get involved."

(EDU-Port Steering Committee member)

# EDU-Port 'promotional' videos & exhibition

- ▶ 'Average'
- ▶ Sharing facts
- ▶ Ordinary scenes
  - ▶ 'One day of elementary school students in Japan'
  - ▶ 'Japanese style education from the viewpoint of teachers'
- ▶ No spin, no gimmick, no branding...
- ▶ 'Proactive' promotion?



# Tradition: Japan's international development assistance

- ▶ 'Self-help' discourse:
  - ▶ respect for recipient countries' ownership and 'intrinsic characteristics' (King, 2016, p. 17; Kuroda, 2010)
  - ▶ "Wait until ownership is in place" – time-consuming, "Admirable principle" (King, 2016, p. 17)
- ▶ Historical backdrops
  - ▶ Started as part of postwar reparation for war loss & damage (Sawamura, 2007)
  - ▶ Reflection on GHQ's intervention in Japanese education during the postwar reconstruction period (Saito, 2009)

# False universalization of self:

Pilot project grantee A (Private corporation)

"I have come to realized that Japanese education is the culmination of all the efforts made by the generations before us beginning from the postwar era of material shortages to today. Home economics, school lunch and national course of study are all integrated around the concept of education for/through food (shokuiku). I was just struck how remarkable it is to have such a well developed system."

"I have come to realize that Japanese teachers have the teaching skill sets that are truly the world standard."

→ Unreserved drive to promote Japanese education globally.



[prim.rikkyo.ac.jp/schoollife/schoollunch.html](http://prim.rikkyo.ac.jp/schoollife/schoollunch.html)

# Self in 'minor doubt' :

Pilot project grantee B (University)

To introduce Japanese physical Education practice to an Africa country

- ▶ Less regulation, more freedom, individuality in Country U
- ▶ African bodies "undeveloped"
- ▶ Self awareness→ Japanese physical education: Strong regulation, collectively focused
- ▶ Negativity of Self via Others: 1) Lack of attention to individual differences, 2) Use of music in preparatory gymnastics

Japanese 'superiority' largely intact, self only slightly disturbed

Raised awareness around strong disciplinary nature of Japanese PE



[blog.meshprj.com/entry/case\\_edu\\_chiba-u-e-1-pe](http://blog.meshprj.com/entry/case_edu_chiba-u-e-1-pe)

# De-stabilized self :

Pilot project grantee C (NPO)

- ▶ To transfer Japanese community center (JCC, Kominkan) to Country E in Africa.
- ▶ A shift in focus: To reclaim what Country E used to have.
- ▶ Negativity of JCC: Lack of substance, out of touch, & stuck in status quo.



[www.city.kyotango.lg.jp/top/soshiki/kyoikuiinkai/syogaigakusyuu/4/3/2983.html](http://www.city.kyotango.lg.jp/top/soshiki/kyoikuiinkai/syogaigakusyuu/4/3/2983.html)

Describing a response from a Country E counterpart to whom the grantee had just explained about the decline of quality in some JCC.

“It is not just a problem for Japan. We are looking up to Japan. We want Japan to be a exemplary for other countries.’ When he told me all this, I felt like I had my heart shot through. We cannot possibly be slacking off when other countries are looking up to Japanese Community Center. They say ‘unless you keep up good work, there won’t be any that we can use as a model.’ When I heard him say this, I felt like he had given me some homework to do...I said to myself that Japan must have a hard look at JCC and remodel it in a way that is suitable for the contemporary time. And we must let it grow so it can be a useful resource for other countries.”

## Conclusion: Japanese 'model' of international educational development?

- ▶ Potentials of EDU-Port: International educational development as a self-estrangement/self-transformative project,
- ▶ Limits of EDU-Port: how consistently was the ethics promoted by and factored in the design of EDU-Port?
- ▶ Would strange bedfellows work?
- ▶ Ethics, reflective of Japan's particular historical experience
- ▶ Role of researchers: Beyond critique, to recognize 'good' sense and release the potentials.