

**The Influence of Politics and Culture on English Language Education in Japan**  
**During World War II and the Occupation**

by  
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### **Certificate of Original Authorship**

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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Mayumi Ohara

18 June, 2015

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## Abbreviations

CIE	Civil Information and Education Section
CGK	<i>Chuto Gakko Kyokasho</i>
GHQ, SCAP	General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers
GSYDSI	<i>Gakushu Shido Yoryo Detabesu Sakusei Inkai</i>
HiSET	Society for Historical Studies of English Teaching in Japan
IGAHHI	Iris Girls' Academy <i>Hyakunen-shi Hensan Inkai</i>
JACAR	Japan Center for Asian Historical Records, National Archives of Japan
MEXT	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
MFPB	Ministry of Finance, Printing Bureau
MIC	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications
NHK	<i>Nippon Hoso Kyokai</i>
SKP	<i>Senso o Kataritsugu Purojekuto</i>
SRFO	Division of Special Records, Foreign Office, Japanese Government
TJ	Translation from Japanese
USEM	The United States Education Mission to Japan
UTS, HREC	University of Technology, Sydney, Human Research Ethics Committee

Note. Italics are in the Japanese language.

## Japanese Terms

***Buke seiji* (politics by the *samurai* class)** was a political form in Japan by which the *samurai* class maintained political control through a system based on their military force. Generally, *Buke seiji* is regarded as having lasted approximately 700 years, from its foundation by the Kamakura Shogunate at the end of twelfth century CE to the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate of 1867 (Hitachi Solutions Business, 2013).

***Bushido*** literally means the ways or principles of *samurai*. Its ethics developed among the class of *samurai* during the Kamakura period (1192-1333) and still existed in the Edo period (1603-1867), by which time it had combined with Confucianism. It honoured loyalty, bravery, sacrifice, faith, decency, courtesy, honour, simplicity and affection (Shogakkan, n.d.).

**ESS** is the abbreviation of English Speaking Society, an afterschool activity seen in many schools, from junior high school to universities. Its activities vary from school to school, but the members are often involved in, for example, staging plays in English, participating in English speech contests, conversation hours with native speakers of English, and debates in English.

**Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere (*Dai Toa Kyo-eiken*)**. The concept behind the Co-prosperity Sphere was that Japan had a mission in East Asia to eradicate all European and American imperialism, and also the influence of communism. Japan adopted this notion as a national objective in 1940 with a bloc consisting of Japan, Manchukuo and China, and the area later extended to South East Asia, India, and parts of Oceania. The ideas underlying the sphere were mutual economic co-prosperity, linguistic-radical-religious links, racial equality within Asia, and the eviction of outsiders from its geopolitical region. However, the partnership between Japan and its satellite states was illusory. It is doubtful if any of the countries gained much from it and the doctrine became unpopular with those countries that suffered from the Japanese. (Dear & Foot, 2005; Hitachi Solutions Business, 2013).

**Imperial Rescript on Education (*Kyoiku Chokugo*)**. This was the most important guiding principles of education for modern Japan and was issued on October 30, 1890 in the form of the Emperor's message. Its principles of loyalty and patriotism are based on the morality of Confucianism and the view that the people are the Emperor's children. Its spirit was taught in moral education (*Shushin*) and became important for the Imperial system. It lapsed in May 1948 (Hitachi Systems & Services, 2006).

A photograph of the text of the Imperial Rescript on Education with Imperial sign and seal with a translation in English can be found at <http://www.meijijingu.or.jp/english/about/6.html>

In addition, the rescript translated into contemporary English can be found at <http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic1392009.files/THE%20IMPERIAL%20RESC>

**Juku schools** are privately owned schools where students go after regular school times, on weekends, and/or during the breaks between the academic terms. They function either as compensation to catch up with the classes at school, or as extra input to pass higher-level entrance examinations for more competitive schools. They are outside the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), and need not follow the curricula or the regulations issued by the MEXT. (Kitahara, 2002-2004)

**Special higher police** (*Tokubetsu koto keisatsu*, often shortened to *Tokko*) was a police force established in Japan in 1911 specifically to investigate and control political groups and ideologies deemed to be a threat to public order.

The **military police** (*Kenpei*) also was initially involved in thought control of the military, but it gradually expanded its authority until thought control of civilians became its main duty. “The *Kenpeitai* (Military police corps) was the military police arm of the Imperial Japanese Army from 1881 to 1945. It was not a conventional military police force, but more of a secret police like Nazi Germany's Gestapo” (Takahashi, 1982, p. v) [Translation from Japanese, TJ]. The military police had a *Tokko* branch of its own, through which it discharged the functions of a secret police force. These organizations’ names were interchangeably used by some people because of the similarity of their duties towards civilians. Both the special higher police and the military police were dismantled after World War II. (Hitachi Solutions Business, 2013; Shogakukan, n.d.)

***Tonari Gumi*** is literally translated as neighbours’ groups and was a network of neighbourhood associations. The *Tonari Gumi* system was a feudalistic, quasi-governmental institution decreed by the Ministry of Home Affairs in 1940. Ten to fifteen households made a unit for mutual aid such as firefighting, civil defence, internal security, and so on, in addition to having regular meetings. By means of this system, the personal lives, activities and even the thoughts of the people of Japan were brought under the effective overall control of a mere handful of central government officials. This system provided a chain of command from the central government bureaucracy down to each family and individual, and channels of intelligence up to the central authorities. It was an arbitrarily imposed, mutual responsibility system, but in effect it was an espionage and hostage system of coercive protectionism. The members of the *Tonari Gumi* were to report any unusual behaviours of the other members to either the police or the leader of the region, and any wrongdoing discovered was the responsibility of all the members of the group. The *Tonari Gumi* system was abolished in 1947. (Dear & Foot, 2005; Hitachi Systems & Services, 2006; Kitahara, 2002-2004; Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, SCAP, 1949)

## **Abstract**

After the defeat in World War II, Japan was occupied for six and a half years by U.S.-led forces. The Occupation transformed Japan from a militaristic, totalitarian nation to a democratic nation with comprehensive reforms. Among various publications, including studies and opinion polls, little input has been garnered from students who actually studied English during World War II and the Occupation, when English language education was influenced by two different powers. In addition, the fact that the population of eyewitnesses is rapidly diminishing due to their ages should be noted. To bridge a gap in an under-researched area, this study explored how students themselves perceived and negotiated their way through English language education and society during these periods, and implications of this for understanding the events, causes and effects of the time.

This thesis investigated the following research questions:

1. How did education, especially English language education, at middle level schools in Japan during World War II and the subsequent Occupation, reflect the policies and shed light on the apparent mindset of the political power holders of the times?
2. How might Japanese culture and the Japanese psyche explain some of the responses to those events?
3. What was the perceived impact of these policies on those teachers and students of English during these two periods?

This is a qualitative, phenomenological study with nine research participants, who were students during the War and/or Occupation. The collected data from documents and the interviews were analysed from a standpoint of critical pedagogy.

The study compared the above two periods and investigated causes and effects with regard to the democratization of education and society, as well as the volatile status of English and English teachers. Eyewitness accounts were added to what is already known

about the events of the time. The study also investigated, among other phenomena, the role of Japanese culture in the changes at the time.

The study found that some of the responses on the part of the research participants could be explained by Japanese cultural phenomena and the reality or a perception on the part of the research participants of General MacArthur's accomplishments. The changing of the guard also caused political changes which influenced education. Some of the Japanese cultural traits supported enforcement of policy of the powerful of the time. The findings have implications for intercultural education, and for subsequent U.S. foreign policy.