The Roles of the Community-based Japanese as a Second Language Classroom: The Creation of the Co-learning Space to Make a Change

by

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Abstract

With the rapidly increasing number of foreign residents in Japan, community-based Japanese as a Second Language (JSL) classrooms have come to play an important role in offering them a space of gathering and learning. Acquiring the Japanese language is not always the ultimate aim of the learners to be in classrooms. They also come to find a safe place where they can gain self-esteem and life skills. In order to empower both tutors and learners, co-learning relationships have to be created between them. This can be realised if learners are given the opportunity to share their experiences and be active participants of their own learning process. Learning from lived experiences through their own voices will help participants of JSL classrooms learn from each other. If there is a power imbalance between tutors and learners, learners will be burdened by the pressures to assimilate into the mainstream society. Tutors and learners can instead create a co-learning space where they can encourage each other to challenge the status quo and make the necessary steps toward realising a better society for all.

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English

Adrienne said, "Yet, I need it to talk to you,"
oppressors' language that conquered us.
Yes, I need it to talk to you,
Good English without mistakes.

I am homeless in a strangers' language.
I am hopeless without Standard English.
I am helpless in front of you.
with countless words in my heart.

Do you listen to my nervous voice?
Do you listen to my nervous break?
Do you listen to my heartbeat?
Do you listen to my heartbreak?

Do I need to talk to you in
perfect English as you suggested
with correct definite articles
in order to tell you that I like you, my tutor?

February, 2000
Yuriko Kanao

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Chapter One: Introduction

This study aims to consider the roles of the community-based Japanese as a Second Language (JSL) classroom from the perspective of creating a 'space' for all participants to learn from each other in order to create an 'empowering' relationship.

The roles of the JSL classroom are often discussed focusing on how to balance the two main functions of the JSL education and the support of life for foreign residents (learners). However, the premise of this perspective is that the function of JSL education is separable from the life support function. Another premise is that volunteers should do something 'for' foreign learners, either teaching the Japanese language or supporting their lives. Only recently, the role of the JSL classroom as a 'space' where participants are incessantly negotiating the relationship among participants has begun to be discussed.

Learners in community-based JSL classrooms mainly consist of refugees from Indochinese countries, foreign workers from the so-called 'Third World', returnees from China, and women from other Asian countries who married Japanese men. They have been linguistically, socially and economically put into peripheral spheres of the Japanese society. There is a power imbalance in the whole society. Unless volunteers fully understand it and try to eliminate the power imbalance, the learning of a second language will not be an 'empowering' one to the language learners.

In this study, seven former learners and nine volunteers of a JSL classroom were interviewed. In analysis of the interviews, I focused on examining what kind of relationships have been made, how the volunteers see their relationship with learners, why their relationships were created in such a way.

Rationale

Major Research Questions

Society in Harmony with People from Southeast Asia (SHPSA)

Society in Harmony with People from Southeast Asia (SHPSA) is a community-based Japanese as a second language (JSL) classroom in Komano in Kanagawa Prefecture. In 1987, the original group was formed for the purpose of supporting the refugees from Indochinese countries, such as Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. In 1988, SHPSA was formally organised with the annual financial aid of ¥400,000 (U.S.$3,600) from the municipal government. The municipal government and some donors have funded SHPSA. Now, the annual budget is approximately ¥1,000,000 (U.S.$9,100) and the money is spent for the management and activities of the classroom. Volunteers are not paid[1].

For the first a few years, learners were refugees, but the immigrants from South American countries have gradually increased in numbers since 1990. Now, people from South American countries, such as Brazil and Peru, have replaced the refugees. Most of them are descendants of the Japanese emigrants to South America and their families.

In the first years of SHPSA, the JSL classroom had 15 to 25 regular learners. Most of them were Cambodians and Laos who lived in Komano. They came to the class in a family unit helping each other to drive to the classroom. They knew each other, so it was easy to grasp the conditions and numbers of learners in SHPSA. Now, most of the learners are temporary workers, who come to the class individually. They do not know each other, so it is difficult to grasp the condition of the learners. Only a few learners come regularly to the classroom. About 10 to 20 learners come to the classroom. Learners can join the

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[1] Most JSL volunteers in Japan are not paid at all. In some groups, volunteers receive transportation fee, but it depends upon the group's financial situation and policy.

classroom whenever they want, since there are no fixed groups divided by their JSL abilities, no regulations or membership fee for learners. SHPSA functions as a place to gather in order to meet people and get some information.

There are two Spanish volunteers and approximately ten Japanese volunteer tutors in SHPSA. There are equal numbers of men and women volunteers. Five volunteers have been members since 1987, three volunteers since 1993, and two volunteers joined a few years ago. Most of the volunteers have full-time jobs, but there are members like a retiree, a student and a housewife. Those who have been tutoring more than seven years are busy people who have full time jobs. The average age of the volunteers of SHPSA is over 50.

JSL classrooms are held at a community centre from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on the first and the third Sundays. In the first years of SHPSA, there was a nursery room for the children of learners, but now, there is no space and volunteers for it. Some tutors use textbooks and some use their own teaching materials.

Methodology

Interview

In this study, seven former JSL learners of SHPSA and ten volunteers were interviewed. In order to reference my experience as a volunteer tutor, I chose former participants of SHPSA, with whom I shared my experiences at SHPSA. The former learners whom I interviewed have already stopped coming to the JSL classroom since around 1992, but SHPSA has been supporting their community activities in various ways. Thus, most former learners have maintained contact with SHPSA[2].

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[2] In the spring of 2000, former learners gathered to have a big formal party for Shoichi Takeda, leader of SHPSA, because he became 60 years old and retired from work. Former

On the other hand, the volunteer tutors whom I interviewed have been with SHPSA since the time I was a tutor. Only one of them does not belong to SHPSA after she became a professional JSL teacher. The interviews partly followed the semi-structured interview guide, but were mostly conducted in an open-ended, conversational style.

Observation and Subjectivity

I made observations while I was a member of SHPSA, as a full participant and as a JSL volunteer tutor. Since then, I have been reflecting my experiences in SHPSA for years as an individual. It was not a neutral observation, but it was done for the purpose of improving SHPSA from a volunteer tutor's perspective. In that sense, this study has been based on certain assumptions. My observations and reflections were long-term and the broad- focused ones of a JSL volunteer tutor. (Patton, 1990, p.217)

In addition, I have acquired another perspective from my experience as a learner of English as a foreign resident in Toronto. My time in Toronto allowed me to experience first-hand situations and feelings of people who have difficulties in their second language. This experience has been reflected upon and has been related with the struggles of foreign residents in Japan. My two experiences, as a JSL tutor and as a learner of ESL have affected this study. The subjectivity of the researcher is considered important because this subjectivity contributes to knowledge of the study and deepens reflection. I would like to follow the advice of Bogdan & Biklen as follows:

> The goal is to become more reflective and conscious of how who you are may shape and enrich what you do, not to eliminate it [the bias]. On the other hand, do not be so head strong about who you are and what you believe that it leads to being

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learners celebrated his retirement and thanked him his contribution to the volunteer work for the refugees. This shows that their relationship among them continues.

> unreflective and to losing your self-consciousness. It is fine to shape your study, but you need to be open to being shaped by the research experience and to having your thinking be informed by the data. The data argues with your general notions, so your thinking is necessarily shaped by the empirical world you are exploring. You need to be open to this and not defensive of what you bring to the research. (1998, p.34)

My observation and reflection will be used with other interviews in order to triangulate the situation.

Maguire says that the dichotomy between personal politics and scholarly research is addressed head on by participatory research and that she tries to be explicit about her values, choices and feelings, and writes in the first person. (Maguire, 1987, p.7) I use the first person because I was one of the volunteer tutors in the community-based JSL class for adults and I would like to reconstruct the experiences of the learners, tutors and coodinators using their voices, as well as mine.

Data Collection and Analysis

In order to conduct interviews, I returned to Japan from May 21 to July 6, 1999. The former learners and volunteers were identified through my experience in SHPSA. Most of the participants agreed to join the study with the first contact, but a couple indirectly refused to join the study saying that they were busy. According to the explanation of a tutor, they prefer not to be identified as refugees after receiving Japanese citizenship. Two women from the Philippines who married Japanese men could not be contacted, because they had moved. It was impossible to find their new addresses in spite of a month's effort to do so. In total, seven former learners joined in this study[3].

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[3] Eventually, I conducted a phone interview with one of the women from the Philippines (June 16, 2000). Her opinions are insightful and valuable as she can compare two different

Regarding the volunteers, one of the two Spanish Catholic nuns who have been involved in SHPSA for more than 12 years was in Spain while the main interviews were conducted in June, 1999. The basic information was got through other members then. I interviewed with her in June, 2000 and confirmed that the information I had got in the previous year. Altogether, ten volunteers participated in the study.

The interviews were conducted both at their homes and at other places. Generally speaking, the participants were more relaxed and talked naturally at home, but all the participants talked actively about their experiences and opinions about SHPSA. The original plan was to conduct one-hour interviews twice, but it was changed because of the busy schedule of the participants. Some interviews were conducted for two or more hours once and some interviews were conducted twice. In the latter case, participants had two-hour interviews twice. In summary, nine participants had a two-hour interview once and eight participants had two-hour interviews twice.

The interviews were conducted in the Japanese language with all participants. The two Spanish volunteers who have been living in Japan for more than 30 years had little problem in communicating in Japanese. However, the language ability of the former learners varied. A few of them might have had difficulties in fully expressing their deep feelings in the Japanese language. They were communicative enough to convey their ideas, but it might not be enough to express their feelings about their complex experiences and feelings. When they could not express themselves well, their spouses helped them.

In the beginning of the interview, I explained the purpose of the study again. Then, the participants read the consent form and signed it. The interview began with the

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JSL classrooms, having learned Japanese in another group after going to SHPSA. Her attitude toward the new life in Japan, the positive one of a determined immigrant, is different from that of refugees (Ogbu, 1992).

questionnaires about their background. Following the prepared short questions, I recorded their responses on the sheet. This data was used to learn their background and write the profiles of the participants.

After these questionnaires, in-depth open-ended interviews were conducted. In the preliminary interviews, the use of prepared questions was attempted, but this proved to be too difficult. Participants expressed their opinions about the JSL classroom in their own way and the conversations were exchanged between the interviewer and the participants. Thus, the prepared questions were only roughly used to give direction to the interview when necessary.

After the interview, my questions, thoughts and feelings were recorded in my conceptual baggage[4] (Kirby & McKenna, 1989, pp.49-53). Conceptual baggage was being kept through the study and was used to clarify my thoughts and deepen my reflections. Questions and thoughts were layered and helped to analyse the resources.

After the interviews were conducted, I came back to Toronto. Then, the tape recordings were completely transcribed using code numbers and pseudonyms. While transcribing, questions and thoughts were written down in the conceptual baggage. The data was coded and analysed according to the themes.

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[4] According to the definition of Kirby & McKenna: "Conceptual baggage is a record of your thoughts and ideas about the research question at the beginning and throughout the research process. It is a process by which you can state your personal assumptions about the topic and the research process. Recording your conceptual baggage will add another dimension to the data, one that is always present, but rarely acknowledged. By making your thoughts and experience explicit, another layer of data is revealed for investigation. The researcher becomes another subject in the research process and is left vulnerable in a way that changes the traditional power dynamics/hierarchy that has existed between researcher and those who are researched. (1989, p.32)"

Limitations and Assumptions

This study is based on the assumption that changes for both Japanese and foreign residents in Japanese society can be created by changing the power dynamics in the JSL classroom. This assumption is not neutral but political.

I am not an objective researcher who tries to avoid affecting the objects of my research. I am a participant of the collaborative research, who tries to be involved in the JSL classroom with other members. At the same time, I have been a learner of ESL while I was doing this study. As Maguire says, "I try to be explicit about my values, choices and feelings and to write in the first person (1987, p.7)."

I did this study based on my interviews with the participants of a community-based JSL classroom. The learners were chosen from the former participants of the classroom. They had already stopped coming since around 1992, but have maintained contact with the classroom. Generally speaking, former learners who have maintained contact with the JSL classroom have adapted into the Japanese society fairly well and their Japanese language ability is good enough to communicate with people. In fact, five out of seven learner participants got their Japanese citizenship, which is a high percentage compared to the average immigrant. In addition, their selection was not random, but from the personal contact of the interviewer. In that sense, they do not necessarily represent the refugees in Japan. However, the fact that even those learners still have problems will testify to the difficulties of the JSL learners in the Japanese society.

This volunteer group was spontaneously formed at a time when other supporting groups for refugees were founded. Most founding members are still working and their average age is over fifty. In this sense, this group is different from new community-based JSL classrooms where young members can introduce new ideas. However, the difficulties and

the problems of SHPSA are still common to all community-based JSL classrooms. Therefore, it is worthwhile to examine their case.

My Experience as a Volunteer Tutor in SHPSA

I became a volunteer tutor in 1988, just before SHPSA was formally established as a group. I attended the meeting that discussed and approved the group's basic policy, which had been drafted by one of the leaders. The group members had already begun tutoring according to their policies. In the first few years, I taught mostly refugees from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam and women from the Philippines.

When I look back upon those days, I unconsciously treated the learners as care-receivers. Many of them had just started their own lives in a new place, so they needed various things. Catholic nuns brought various daily necessities to the classroom for the learners. I helped the nuns distribute those goods, but I was insensitive about the relationship between tutors and learners.

I knew only general information about their cultural and historical background. I tried not to listen to their painful stories. I seldom used their stories in JSL learning. Several years later, when I had already stopped going to the JSL classroom, I invited one of the former learners from Cambodia to the senior high school where I worked. I asked her to share her stories with my high school students. Students and I planned a cooking class for some of the parents of the school's students, inviting her as an instructor. Women from the Philippines also co-operated in having a cooking class for the citizens of Komano, a group studying about Asian countries, which I had initiated. They seemed proud to have had the opportunity to share their cultural knowledge. When I was a JSL language tutor, I had never thought of linking JSL learning and this kind of learner-centred activities.

When I taught three women from the Philippines, who married Japanese men, I did not actively use their difficulties as foreign wives in their learning. One of the Philippine women sometimes shared her experiences of failures in communication in the classroom. We talked about her problems, but I did not use her stories in combination with the language learning or life support functions. Meanwhile, they stopped coming to the classroom, because it was inconvenient for them to come to the classroom on Sundays. I did not talk about their problems of coming to the JSL classroom, either.

While I was staying in Japan to conduct the interviews in 1999, I was unsuccessful in locating them. When I visited the apartment building where one of them had lived, I learned that the housewives in the neighbourhood did not know her name. The way Japanese housewives talked about 'that foreigner' showed their lack of interest in strangers.

I stopped tutoring around 1992, as I become busy in doing other activities. However, I maintained contact with the members of SHPSA in various ways.

My Experience in Toronto

If I had not experienced life as a language minority in a foreign country, I would not have reflected the situations of language minorities in Japan so keenly. In fact, understanding the situation only in the mind is totally different from understanding it with body and mind. The problems and struggles of language minorities have become my own since I came to Toronto. I believe that my experience as a language minority and as an on-going learner of English will bring more insight into understanding the JSL learners' situation in Japan.

In a foreign country, I had to cope with daily inconveniences and uncomfortable feelings caused by the lack of language abilities. Some were small things and some were serious issues, but they accumulated and frustrated me. My feeling was that I was not the

same capable person as I had been before in my country. I was robbed of the information and knowledge that I had acquired with time and effort to cope with situations in my native country. They became useless in a place where nobody was interested in them. I had to learn new knowledge and skills for my new life from scratch. Yet, it was difficult to find how to access the information. There were bulletins and posters everywhere, but it took a long time for a non-English-speaker newcomer to find the appropriate ones. There was always too much information thrown away arbitrarily, especially on the OISE notice boards during the time of renovation. It took me more than two years to learn where to go in the OISE building to fulfil my needs. When I look back upon my first days, I got the most useful information from my Japanese friends in Toronto. Without them, it would have taken me more time to adapt to my new life at OISE. However, unlike with other ethnic groups such as Chinese and Koreans, there is no support for students of Japanese background at the University of Toronto.

At OISE, I did not have the courage to speak out in the sessions because I felt awkward and insecure about my lack of abilities in English. It was painful to sit there without uttering a word. However, there was no other way, because I could not follow the discussions without being familiar with the cultural[5] and historical background of Canada and the terms and jargons in academia. Some may ask why I did not ask questions, but it also needs courage to ask simple and silly-looking question like "What is 'The Simpsons'?" while classmates are seriously discussing post-modern media theories. I also felt frustrated when I was incapable of doing what I could do in my native tongue. For example, it takes some time for me to conceptualise new ideas and summarise them in English. One day, a

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[5] In graduate study courses, professors explain academic terms, such as 'hegemony', but they do not explain the cultural connotations of daily terms, such as 'The Simpsons'. I can consult dictionaries to find the meanings of technical terms, but it is more difficult to learn the cultural meanings of a word like 'The Simpsons' to various people in Canada.

professor asked the participants to summarise the content on the spot and I had to say that I was incapable of that in front of all the participants. This made me feel miserable. In addition, I was not used to doing presentations and knew little about various styles, which most students had already acquired since they were primary school students. I was at a loss by the amount of the skills I had to acquire as a student at OISE. What was most discouraging was that I had been unable to join in the conversations which were intellectually stimulating for me, conversations I previously enjoyed in my native tongue. My spoken English ability was insufficient to enjoy conversation freely. When my self-esteem was low, I tried to follow the ways and norms that had already been set by others without examining them, and then internalised them. However, I gradually realised that I had to re-examine the norms, such as 'superiority of native English' or the 'monopoly of the ways of approach to the knowledge of male dominant academics'.

The slight hope was that I felt more at ease in writing than in speaking, because I could convey at least something in my own way even though the style was simple. I could take time in writing as much as I like, which made me feel comfortable. It is important for my mind to have a medium to convey my thoughts. With the help of a volunteer who checked my writing, I became more relaxed in expressing myself. In some cases, I asked the volunteer to edit my personal writings, such as letters. It was, in a sense, more important than editing papers because I did not want to be rude and I wanted to be effective in conveying my difficult situation to the letter receiver. In order to ask such private things, I had to have a good relationship with the volunteer and trust the person and her common sense. It is difficult for a foreigner to find such a person.

The first course I took at OISE was a media studies course. I began to learn media literacy by watching media coverage critically. I noticed that the images of Japan and the Japanese people were negative ones in most cases. Most of them seemed to be biased and

stereotyped and it was rare to find decent images. For example, the Japanese images are created by a Japanese woman wearing Kimono with slant-eyed and strange make-up (The Globe and Mail, 1997, October 28, p. B7), or derogatory use of stereotyped words such as 'harakiri' (1997, November 5, p. A17) or 'geisha'. Newspaper articles that depict eccentric fashion or fads among younger generations have been creating these Japanese images. The 'otherness' in those images or articles is obvious. I felt angry at those articles written by Western press reporters, but at the same time, I felt vulnerable being an 'other' in the imaginary eyes of Canadian people. I also noticed that the well-circulated criticisms on Japan were welcomed even if they were one-sided and superficial, especially when they were articulated in fluent English. To be heard, an idea must be explained in a preferred and expected manner, thus I was unconsciously struggling with hegemony. Ironically, the more I was against stereotyped labelling, the more I internalised the images of 'otherness.' I had ambivalent feelings about my self and cultural background, caused by the lack of self-confidence and self-esteem. I imagined the feelings of the foreigners in Japan especially from so-called 'Third World' countries, because the images of the 'Third World' have always been clichéd negatively in Japan.

During this time, I was called 'Chink' by a young girl in a subway train and a middle-aged man in my neighbourhood yelled 'Hong-Kong' at me repeatedly. I had not known the word 'Chink', but I felt that it was a bad word on the spot. For the first time in my life, I experienced racism toward myself. In March 1998, it was reported (Nikkei Voice, 1998, March, p.1) that Franco Nuove, reporter of *Le Journal de Montréal*, appeared to ridicule Japanese facial features by distorting the slant of his eyes in a photograph while he was writing the columns of the Winter Olympic Games in Nagano. In spite of protests from groups such as the National Association of Japanese Canadians, National Association of Chinese Canadians and The Canadian Jewish Congress, *le Journal de Montréal* did not

admit the racism in the reports. This incident told me that I should have my critical eyes open so as to protest against the racism whenever it is necessary. By this time, I had learned that various independent ethnic groups and ethnic media do protest against this kind of racism.

After I visited the editors of *Nikkei Voice*, an ethnic monthly newspaper focusing on human rights issues of ethnic minorities, I learned about the history of Japanese-Canadians. A book entitled *Bittersweet Passage* written by Maryka Omatsu, a third generation Japanese Canadian who fought for the redress movements, taught me the perspectives needed to see the Canadian mainstream society from the marginal. I became conscious about the biases and stereotypes in the mainstream discourse and shared the concerns with other Japanese Canadians or foreign students. I had not found close Canadian friends of non-Japanese background at that time.

Whenever I mentioned my lack of abilities in English, some friends tried to encourage me saying that my English was 'all right'. I wondered 'all right' for what. Do they really understand the frustration I feel? Do they no longer expect English improvement from me? When I realised that there was a double standard, and I felt worse when I learned the bitter truth that I did not have enough ability to fulfil their expectation. I knew that they had good intentions of consoling me, but an easy consolation based on a double standard was not a solution. I appreciate the kindness of the friends who honestly pointed out what was lacking and wrong and corrected them in a helping manner. There is no end to language learning. As a learner of English, I need to continue improving my English abilities. Honest, fair and equal treatment would be better for me in coping with my language difficulties.

If I had enough background knowledge on certain topics, I could feel confident enough to speak about the topics in-depth. For example, I enjoyed my conversations with a friend

who is interested in Japanese social activism related to war atrocities during the Second World War and the compensation issues. When I knew that she wanted my assistance, I assisted her making contact with people in Japan and arranged interview schedules utilising my abilities in the Japanese language and my knowledge of Japanese society. This experience helped me to recover my self-esteem. With other friends who are film buffs, I could share interesting conversations on films. The knowledge I had was acknowledged in those cases, but the problem was how to find those who need it. There was a reliance on chance.

Activities without using language made me feel free and equal among participants. I enjoyed participation in an activity without using words in a session at OISE. I felt liberated and could be as active as other participants in the activity[6]. I enjoyed drumming with friends as well. In a drum circle, every single sound each member makes is an inevitable component of the whole music that is being created by all the members. Without using words, members are feeling the collaborative creation of music. Conversely, these activities show how severely I am suffering from my inability in the English language and the inequality I feel every day.

I often thought that all problems would be solved if only my ability of English improved. However, I attributed all my frustration to the lack of English ability. It is an easy excuse and explanation to say that all difficulties are caused by my poor English ability. My experience suggests that recovering self-esteem is necessary primarily in order to have stability in a different society. There are some factors to cope with: language, cultural

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[6] Tanaka points out the importance of the activities without using language among people with various social and cultural backgrounds. He says that they contribute in creating the space for equal communication. (Tanaka, 1997b)

knowledge and values, friendship, sense of fairness and equality, and a time and a place where no language is necessary.

I had many encouraging experiences as well. One of the most powerful ways to illustrate one's own problems is to create something that can cause a stir among people. This occurred to me when I saw a theatrical performance entitled *The Yoko Ono Project*. Many staff members, including actresses with various cultural backgrounds such as Korean, Chinese, and Japanese, created this theatrical event. The recent version was directed by a Korean Canadian woman and posed questions around North American Asian experiences, myths and perceptions of Yoko Ono, an Asian woman artist who happened to marry a Caucasian musician, John Lennon. I was impressed by the fact that many Asian Canadian women and other staff members collaborated to make this project with multiple media, such as language, dance, music, sound, video, light and stage and so on. This is not an art form that depends on traditional art frameworks, but a hybrid collaborative art form. I found hope in the multicultural and multilingual society of Toronto.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The Problem of Assimilation

There is a strong tendency of assimilation in Japanese society. Being the same as others is considered to be important and safe, while being different from others is considered to be risky and avoidable. Expressions such as *'hitonamini* [like everyone else],' *'futsuno* [ordinary]' and *'heikintekina* [average]' have good connotations in most cases. It is believed that everyone should be treated in the same way as other people and everyone is expected to be the same in order to be 'equal'. The *Report on the Application and Practice in Japan of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (Japan Federation of Bar Associations, 1993) contains the following explanation of Japanese society: "[There] is a tendency that the Japanese consider homogeneity important and exclude what is different (even what is unique). Therefore, they are expected to be the same as others from their childhood and they are extremely afraid of being different from others (P.252)."

This tendency in Japanese society is applied to foreign residents and leads to the conclusion that they should be treated in the same way as other Japanese people. A report[7] on the issues of foreign residents says, "What many of the foreigners who came to Japan experience are the 'request of assimilation' and the 'consciousness of being excluded'. It is the consciousness of the majority of Japanese people that should to be changed." (e.g., Kawasaki Citizen's Bureau International Section, 1995) (Yokohamashi Kaigai Koryu Kyokai, 1997, p.211) For example, once a foreigner becomes 'naturalised' as a Japanese

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[7] This report is published in Kawasaki City, which is one of the areas that has a large population of various foreign residents such as Koreans and Brazilians, and has promoted the policy to respect the rights of foreign residents more than any other city in Japan. There have been practices to build a community where people respect their differences in a

citizen, s/he is the same as other Japanese citizens. Treating the 'naturalised' people differently is not just. It is unfair to treat 'equal' citizens differently. They should be treated the same as other Japanese citizens.

Once this becomes a rule, it is difficult to modify it by adjusting to the situation of each case. A rule is a rule. Everyone is the same in front of this rule. Everyone should be the same in applying the rule. Those who think in this way do not see the different conditions that the 'naturalised' people have. For example, those who have returned from China and whose family members have Chinese background are encouraged to learn the Japanese language as soon as possible, their Chinese heritage being unappreciated. (Yasuda, 1999, p.85) They do not see the power relations, either. In this case, 'equality' means 'being the same.' It is difficult for them to understand the idea that people are equal, even though they are different.

When people think that 'equality' means 'being the same,' they have difficulty in appreciating differences in others. For example, no matter what special abilities or experiences bilingual or bicultural students have, they must be treated just the same as other students are treated. If they are treated differently, other students might be jealous of them. This is a negative way of looking at the case. They do not think that students with unique abilities should be treated differently in order for their talents to be expanded as much as possible, even though this is a positive way of treating those students. Differences are differences. It is necessary to admit this to respect others' human rights. Nakajima[8] points out the importance of admitting the difference in a positive way in human rights

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positive way in Kawasaki. For example, Kawasaki is one of the few cities where foreigners can be public servants.

[8] Tomoko Nakajima is one of the scholars who promote multicultural education in Japan.

issues, because the history of the *Zainichi* Koreans[9] in Japan. Their history shows that they have not been allowed to show their differences, but that assimilation does not allow them to be really 'equal'. She writes as follows:

> In terms of the human rights education in Japan, (...), to regard differences as the rich resources is the key concept in learning this issue. (...) There is a tendency to begin from the idea that we are the same. We tend to teach human rights education, saying that we are the same. But, we have human rights not because everyone is the same, but because everyone has given conditions and different social positions. Nevertheless we equally have human rights. (Nakajima, 1995, p.84)

There is still discrimination against the employment of foreigners as public servants[10]. Yongmei is a Chinese person who became one of the few foreign teachers in public senior

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[9] For example, Many *Zainichi* Koreans in Japan use their Japanese names and hide their Korean names because they are afraid of the discrimination. In schools where teachers and students are trying to abolish the discrimination, some Korean students use their real Korean names. On the other hand, in a public primary school in Nagoya in 1983, teachers were strongly advised to use a 'Japanese' name with the parents of a Korean student, because they were concerned that the student might be bullied because of the Korean name. The teachers' advice came from their kind 'consideration'. (Tanaka, 1995, p.147) Teachers avoided the conflict of using a real but 'different' kind of name from others' and were advised to use a 'similar' but not real name in order to have temporary peace. This example shows how strong the request of assimilation is.

[10] As of 1988, there are 514 foreign public servants out of 2,984,392 public servants in Japan. (e.g. The Ministry of Home Affairs) They are 382 Koreans and 132 Chinese from Mainland China and Taiwan. Among 514 foreign public servants, 39 are teachers in public schools. In 1973, the Ministry of Home Affairs announced the view that the employment of public servants in municipal governments should be restricted to people with Japanese nationality, because they participate in making decisions on the future of Japan. In 1983, the government announced that the teachers in public schools should be restricted to Japanese citizens, though foreigners were allowed to be full-time faculty in national universities. In 1991, the Ministry of Education gave an official notice that the Boards of Education should employ foreign teachers as full-time lecturers without the limitation of the employment years. However, this notice made it difficult to continue employing foreign teachers as full-employed teachers in some prefectures. As of 1991, there are 6 prefectures out of 49 prefectures that abolished the restriction of employment by

high schools in Tokyo. She explains the present situation of foreign teachers as follows. It is extremely difficult for foreigners to become fully employed teachers, but there are some foreign teachers, though their numbers are small. The problem is that foreign teachers in Japan are treated 'equally', so it is difficult for them to utilise the differences in a positive way. Those foreign teachers have potential abilities to work with students with diverse cultural backgrounds, but the administration treats those teachers just the same as the Japanese teachers are treated. Foreign teachers do not have opportunities to face the problems of foreign students unless they insist on it strongly, because foreign teachers are hired on condition that they assimilate into the Japanese system. (Yongmei, personal communication, January 13, 2000)

Yongmei says that she was ordered to teach foreign students in the same manner as Japanese students are taught, though the former had to deal with the controversial issue of the national flag and national anthem. There are foreign students who oppose their use in a forceful way. However, the attitude of the administration is that of promoting assimilation into the Japanese society. There is a strong emphasis on assimilation and assimilation is forced on both the foreign people and the Japanese people.

Yongmei suspects that the administration wants diverse students to be assimilated into Japanese society and does not want foreign teachers to encourage diverse students to be different from other Japanese students. She says as follows:

> [I] sometimes feel desperate seeing the small amount of employment of foreign teachers and the narrow-minded educational administration bureaucrats who do not doubt the thought of treating foreign teachers exactly the same way as treating

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nationality. There were 34 foreign full-employed teachers in 6 prefectures in 1991. In another 37 prefectures, foreign teachers were allowed to be full-time lecturers, but in reality, the numbers of foreign full-time lecturers are small. (e.g. Asahi, August 12, 1991) (Japan Federation of Bar Associations, 1993)

> Japanese teachers. I guess that this very notion of 'equality' is Japanese. In the situation that foreign residents are increasing, the time will soon come when people will realise that the existence of foreign teachers is necessary. However, I feel that it will take time for the administration to look at 'equality' in the personnel from a different angle and experience the true meaning of getting along equally. (Yongmei, January 13, 2000)

Another example is the tendency of assimilation in JSL literacy classrooms. Naoki is working in the section that deals with human rights education and multicultural education at the Board of Education in a city in Kanagawa Prefecture. He has been involved in JSL classrooms for newcomers in community centres, and he was a co-ordinator of the seven community centres from 1994 to 1997. From his 12-year observations of volunteers and the staff at community centres, Naoki has this to say:

> [The volunteers and the staff at community centres] aim at getting learners used to the Japanese language and the life in Japan, while they are trying to learn how to deal with learners in the beginning stage of the JSL classroom. Then, after they learn how to teach basic things, they notice the idea of "literacy classroom[11]" that the classrooms are the place where the main purpose is to learn about each other as citizens in order to live together in the community. However, after several years pass, volunteers get used to the routine of teaching and the ideals are forgotten with the change of the members. Then, volunteers begin to concentrate on teaching advanced Japanese, thinking that learning better Japanese, such as polite forms and correct pronunciations, will elevate the learners' life stages. Learning these things is also the request from learners, so it cannot necessarily be considered as assimilation, but the relationship between volunteers and learners

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[11] 'Literacy' here is not used in a narrow meaning of the word, but the broader one that means the ability to understand and make use of something. In Kanagawa Prefecture, there have been practices of 'literacy classrooms' for the first generations of *Zainichi* Koreans and day laborers, which put stress on the empowering relationship among the participants. 'Literacy' for the Japanese volunteers might mean the ability to live together with different people in a community.

> becomes that of teachers and students. The hierarchy becomes clearer than before. (Naoki, personal communication, January 15, 2000)
>
> I found that the ideal of the literacy classroom would be easily changed when there are personnel changes of the staff and the learning supporters (JSL volunteer tutors), and that how deeply the notions, such as the 'imposition of the Japanese language' and the 'assimilation', are rooted in people's consciousness. (Personal communication, January 9, 2000)

If there are volunteer tutors and staff who are conscious about the power relations between the native language tutors and non-native learners, they can avoid the imposition of the 'correct' Japanese language. However, it is easy and quick for the classroom policy to change into that of assimilation without the consciousness about the power issues and assimilation.

Oguma's Criticism against The Myth of the Homogeneous Nation

Eiji Oguma analyses the changes of the consciousness of identity of the Japanese people expressed in the forms of the racial theories of Japan in the book entitled *The Myth of the Homogeneous Nation.* (Oguma, 1996) Before and during the Second World War, when there were various races in the territories in Japan, many scholars insisted on the 'theories of mixed-race nation[12]' in order to justify the colonisation. However, as the numbers of

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[12] Oguma classifies six main 'theories of mixed-race nation' of before and after the Second World War. "1. The Empire acquired Korea and Taiwan and included the natives there as the subjects of the Empire. The notion that we limit the Japanese people within the pure 'Japanese' becomes an obstacle to expanding the territory and to admitting the native people into the Empire. That kind of notion should be abolished. 2. Japan has experiences of assimilating many different races and naturalized people in ancient times. The imperial family, too, is the descendant of naturalized people. Therefore, the Japanese people are excellent in ruling and assimilating different races. We have to utilize these experiences and expand the territory and execute the assimilation policy. 3. The Japanese race is the mixture of various races of southern and northern Asian races. They are related to the

people of the various racial groups in Japan decreased after Japan was defeated in the war, the 'theories of homogeneous nation[13]' became prevalent. Oguma's analysis is useful to reflect upon the ideas that underpinned the assimilation policy of Japan, especially now, at a time when the Japanese people are deciding the policy around foreign residents who come to a Japan with increased economic power.

According to Oguma, Japanese scholars have adopted the 'theories of homogeneous nation' in order to keep domestic peace and stability when national power weakens. They have adopted the 'theories of mixed-race nation' in order to underpin the assimilation policy when Japanese power became strong enough to invade other countries.

Those who supported the 'theories of mixed-race nation' insisted on the necessity of having foreigners assimilate to the ideal of the Japanese people that had already formed in the past. Unlike the Anglo conformity of the United States, the Japanese conformity included the mixing of various racial groups together with the Japanese race. The Japanese conformity has been influenced by the fact that Japan invaded China, Korea and other Asian countries where people have appearances similar to the Japanese people.

Japanese race by blood. Therefore, the assimilation of them should be easy. The invasion into Asian areas is the return to our homeland. The Japanese race has a constitution to adapt to both south and north. 4. Japan has been mixing and assimilating the various races with universal brotherhood under the reign of the Emperor since ancient times. Therefore, the Japanese race has nothing to do with racial discrimination. In this respect, we are ethically superior to the Westerners. 5. Even if different races are to be merged into the Japanese race, it does not contradict the fact that Japan is a family nation as long as we regard those races as adopted children. 6. In ancient times, the Imperial family came over to Japan from Korea. The Emperor was the King of that place. Therefore, it is natural for that place to be merged into the Imperial territory. (Oguma, 1966, pp362-363)"

[13] Oguma classifies four main 'theories of homogeneous nation'. "1. Japan has been a peaceful nation where the homogeneous Japanese race live as agricultural people without racial disputes since ancient times. 2. The Imperial family was not a conqueror from abroad, but the symbol of the unification of the cultural integration of a peaceful race. 3. The Japanese race has been living on remote islands, had little contact with different races,

Oguma analyses the Japanese assimilation policy, and says, "the 'theories of mixed-race nation' played a role in having many Japanese intellectuals not feel the control of Japan as control." (Oguma, 1996, p.373) In adopting the 'theories of mixed-race nation', they did not discriminate and control other races blatantly with power. Instead, they did not see the 'differences' between the invader and the invaded, and succeeded in ruling them by creating the system where there was no notion of human rights. Oguma defines the 'theories of mixed-race nation' as the system to make 'differences' ambiguous. He says:

> In this system, people do not recognise 'differences' as they are and avoid facing others directly. Consequently, there is no obvious exclusion, but there is no 'equality' among people. In this way, it is possible to discriminate and to assimilate at the same time, though these two notions are essentially contradictory. (p.376)

Oguma points out that the Japanese family system affected the assimilation policy. The metaphor of 'adopted children' was used to describe the colonised nations such as Korea and Taiwan. There is a hierarchy in a family system, and adopted children must obey the other members of a family and are expected to assimilate into the family completely. Oguma quotes the words of Kawashima (e.g., Kawashima, 1950) and explains that family members get along mutually, but it is a taboo to claim an individual's opinions and rights in a logical manner, because this kind of an act "breaks the pastoral peace in a family ". "Everything can be conveyed to each other by the atmosphere (e.g., Kawashima)" in a family. (Oguma, p.386) Therefore, there is no distinction between self and the other, neither is conscious of rights.

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and lacks the ability of diplomacy and battles. 4. Historically and at present, Japan has been peaceful, because it is a homogeneous state. (p.363)"

Oguma says that it is necessary to clarify what kind of multiracial nation Japan should be, predicting that it is inevitable for Japan to become a multiracial country in the future. He reminds the reader of the fact that Japan invaded other countries with the 'theories of mixed-race nation' and became a 'multiracial nation'. He warns that it is dangerous to assume that becoming a multiracial nation will solve the problems of the Imperial system. He also points out that there are conservative writers[14] and politicians[15] who changed their position from that of the 'theory of homogeneous nation' to the 'theory of mixed-race nation'. (pp. 396, 399) Okuno, Chairperson of the Foundation for the Welfare and Education of the Asian People, which has been in charge of the work related to refugees' status and resettlement, mentions *'Daitowa*[16] *Senso* [the Second World War]', and advocates that the Asian countries help each other. (FWEAP, 1999, p.0) I believe that it is

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[14] Oguma points out that Fusao Hayashi, who wrote *Daitowa-senso koteiron [The Affirmation of War for East Asian nations]*, is one of those writers, and that Hayashi advocates the 'theories of mixed-race state' from the viewpoint of supporting the Imperialism. Oguma also quotes the words of Shinto thinker, Ashizu. Ashizu says, "Japan should accept 5,000,000 or 10,000,000 immigrants, a figure comparable to the acceptance rates in other developed countries. (e.g., Ashizu, 1989, p.151)." (p.396)

[15] Shintaro Ishihara, Governor of Tokyo, is one of those politicians. His speech to officials of Self-Defence Force caused a lot of fuss in April 2000. He mentioned that there was a 'potential danger of the riots of the people from "Third Countries"' when natural calamities like earthquakes occur. He would not admit the racism in his speech. On the other hand, he clearly said that Japan was not 'mono-ethnic' country, answering the interview by the reporter of Newsweek. ("It's time", 2000) He stresses the importance to accept legal immigrants in order to secure the labour on condition that immigrants assimilate into the Japanese society and its culture.

[16] *'Daitowa'* means 'the greater Eastern Asian nations'. To unite Asian countries and construct the greater Eastern Asian nations was the excuse that Japan used in order to invade other countries during the Second World War. Today, those who regard *'Daitowa-senso'* as a war of aggression into Asian countries avoid using *'Daitowa-senso'* to mean World War II. Therefore, it is problematic for Chairperson of FWEAP to mention this word implying the strong bond between Japan and other Asian countries. (FWEAP, 1999, p.0)

important to examine the characteristics of the policies and the procedures of making policies around the foreign residents in Japan.

Oguma concludes his book saying that both 'theories of homogeneous nation' and the 'theories of mixed-race nation' are stereotypes that are created to avoid facing others directly. He says these theories are myths and concludes, "We do not need myths to live together with different people. What we need are a little bit of strength and wisdom." (p.404) I think that we have to listen to the voices of the others attentively.

The Problems of Direct Methods of JSL

Direct methods[17] in JSL education are to teach the Japanese language without using the learners' native language as a medium. The problems of direct methods in JSL education have recently been raised by scholars who were born after the Second World War. (Komagome, 1991, 1999; Kondo, 1991; Nomoto, 1996; Oguma, 1999; Tanaka, 1999) They stress the importance of re-examining the language policy of Japan in the colonies before and during the Second World War. They say that direct methods in the JSL education were based on the strong cultural assimilation policy of Japan. According to Komagome (1991, p. 142), direct methods were not effective in much of Manchuria, but the methods became a strong ideology to convey the 'spirit of Japan' to the foreign people. Direct methods used by the 'devoted' Japanese teachers under this language policy forced foreign people to use the Japanese language and neglected the native language and culture. (Kondo, 1991, p.103) It is also pointed out that direct methods by native speakers are still used in Japanese education since the Second World War with no critical examinations of

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[17] *'Chokusetsu-hou* [Direct methods]' is the language teaching method that uses only the Japanese language in classroom. Direct Methods have been widely used in the JSL education since the Japanese language began to be taught in Taiwan.

the ideology of the methods. (Komagome; Oguma) As is the case with English Imperialism, the Japanese language was taught as a tool of assimilation and control of the people who lived in the countries that Japan had invaded or colonised before and during the war. The Japanese language was taught using direct methods, "as though parents taught their mother tongue to their children in order to teach the Japanese spirit." (Oguma, 1999, p.83) Komagome points out that direct methods of teaching the Japanese language in mainland China were not successful as methods of teaching many adults in a short period of time. However, direct methods continued to be used to support the assimilation ideology. (1991)

Komagome and Kondo point out the frustrated feelings of the Taiwanese learners who were forced to learn the Japanese language that was useless in their daily lives. They both quoted the words of an anti-Japanese activist, Tsai Pei-huo[18], in Taiwan. Komagome summarises Tsai's criticism of direct methods:

> Japanese language education with no translation whatsoever is a way of making us incompetent. ... No matter how much we know of the Chinese language, we are forced to become babies as soon as the classroom space is created, where only the Japanese language is used. (Komagome, 1999, p.84)

Kondo quotes Tsai's criticism of the uselessness of national language education as follows:

> We are made to devote all our energy mimicking to learn the national language [the Japanese language] for 6 years as though children, like babies, memorise various things. ... Once we graduate schools and enter into the real life of the Taiwanese, it [the Japanese language] becomes useless and all our efforts of 6 years come to nothing. (Kondo, 1991, p. 98)

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[18] Tsai Pei-huo wrote a book entitled *Nihon-koku kokumin ni atauru [Message to the Japanese nation]* in 1928.

This shows the frustration of those who were forced to learn the Japanese language by direct methods that make them feel powerless as babies, being robbed of the abilities they have in their mother tongues. Direct methods used in the colonies of Japan have not been re-examined and are still used as "taken-for-granted" practices in JSL classrooms. (Oguma, 1999) Even though the Japanese language is not taught as a blatantly forced language, it is in reality a 'forced' language to those who have to use it.

Auerbach points out the necessity of re-examining the "English-only" method in the ESL classroom. The exclusive use of the language of the dominant group functions as a tool of domination. The problem is that the political power is invisible because it is forced through consent. Auerbach says, "[Practices] which are unconsciously accepted as the natural and inevitable way of doing things may in fact be inherently political, serving to maintain the relative position of participants with respect to each other--they help to perpetuate existing power relations (1993, p.11)." Auerbach quotes Phillipson's tenets that become the cornerstones of the hegemony of English worldwide and examines them. Some of them are:

- English is best taught monolingually.
- The ideal teacher of English is a native speaker.
- The more English is taught, the better the results.
- If other languages are used too much, standards of English will drop. (e.g. Phillipson, 1992, p.185) (Auerbach, 1993, p.14)

Auerbach says that allowing the use of the first language (L1) in early ESL acquisition is critical to later success and the use of both languages facilitates the transition to English. If learners are forced to limit access to the resources or experiences they can obtain in their L1, they are excluded from what they have. They will be silenced and their self-esteem will be damaged.

On the other hand, Auerbach says, evidence supports that use of the native language will be effective in acquiring English. L1 is effective in reducing the anxiety of the learners, making the communication more meaningful, making it possible to use the resources that can be obtained in L1, and addressing the problems they have in their lives outside the classroom. In so doing, it is possible to use "Paulo Freire's approach to adult education in which curriculum content is drawn from participants' experiences and invites reflection on [the] experiences (p.22)." Auerbach quotes Rivera (e.g., 1988) and says, "The role of education in this approach is to empower learners to use their native language actively in order to generate their own curriculum, and, therefore, their own knowledge (Auerbach, 1993, p.22).

If the issue of language choice is decided by the participation of learners, it enables a shift toward shared authority. The teacher moves from being a problem solver or arbiter of tensions to a problem poser or facilitator of critical reflection (Auerbach, p.24)." As Auerbach says, it is important for learners to participate in the process of decision making, because they need to shift from being the objects to the subjects of their learning. In this way, the process "becomes a kind of rehearsal for dealing with outside issues (p.25)."

The qualification of teaching is not necessarily a pedagogical matter, but it is a matter of insight into learners' experienced knowledge. In this sense, as Auerbach says, community people as well as ESL or JSL teachers can contribute their qualities to create community classrooms into collaborative learning places. It has been more than 20 years since Japan accepted refugees. There are many people who have mastered the Japanese language. They have strong potential to becoming tutors in community JSL classrooms, and the Japanese volunteers can cooperate with them to have more empowering JSL classrooms. The discussions around community-based JSL classrooms have assumed that tutors are

native speakers, but I believe that more and more first language (L1) tutors should be included. There are possibilities for team-teaching with native speakers and L1 tutors.

Learners' Participation into the Process of Learning and Classroom Management

Under the influence of Paulo Freire and critical pedagogy, Hiroyuki Nomoto (1996) examines the problems caused by the apolitical functional approaches of JSL education in Japan and claims that it is necessary to introduce critical approaches to JSL education. He points out three problematic factors of the functional approaches of JSL education: first, the notion of the language as a tool; secondly, the content of JSL education that neglects the reality of the learners; lastly, the alienation of the learners from participation in the learning process. (p.89)

According to Nomoto (p.90), the notion of the language as a tool promotes only the acquisition of the abilities of the language use and prevents the discussion about aims of language learning. Because language is regarded as a tool, the analysis of the needs of language learning is limited only within language use and is not related to the problems of the learners in their daily lives. Nomoto criticises this tendency and stresses that JSL learning should contribute to humanising of learners and to solving the daily problems of the learners, because "education cannot be neutral and it is either to contribute to emancipate human beings or to promote dehumanising (p.91)."

Secondly, the content of JSL education is not related to the learners' real-life problems. If JSL learning is to emancipate human beings, it cannot be divided into two parts, namely, language learning and problem solving in daily life. Nomoto introduces the problem-solving methods that Freire advocates as follows:

> Paulo Freire named the modern education that transmits knowledge as 'banking education' and criticised it as an oppressive education that brings the alienation of human beings. He proposed 'problem-posing education' as the opposite notion of 'banking education'. 'Problem-solving education' aims to humanise the society and human beings in the relationship of the teacher-student and the students-teachers as the equal subjects of cognition. It also aims to acquire the critical consciousness accompanied by praxis. 'Problem-solving education' poses the problems of the world as the objects of critical thinking and mediates learners and educators in the learning process. (Nomoto, p.94)

Nomoto introduces ESL methods developed by Auerbach and Wallerstein as an example of problem-solving methods. In the textbook written by Auerbach and Wallerstein, issues such as unions, security in the workplace and immigration are dealt with because these are the problems that most of the learners are facing in their daily lives. These issues, however, tend to be avoided in Japan because they are political issues. Nomoto says, "Educational act neglecting its context becomes a political act that represents the interests of the conservatives in the society. However, generally speaking, people overreact to political contexts, but they are extremely unconscious about political aspects of neglecting contexts (p.94)." Many educators in Japan do not notice that the apolitical educational approaches support the status quo[19].

Thirdly, learners should be the subjects of their own learning and the learning process should be reconstructed with the full participation of the learners, in order for the learning to be the power of the learners. Nomoto points out that there are few JSL classrooms where the learners participate in the learning process and the administration.

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[19] The indifference to the political issues and reluctance to be involved in them are prevalent all over Japan now. On the contrary, political interventions in education by the government have been strengthened every year. Apolitical education produces the apolitical attitudes of educators. If educators do want to realise social changes, it is necessary to break this vicious circle in some way.

Nomoto introduces an example of "*jikko iinkai hoshiki* [executive committee method]" used in social education in Japan. When the staff at "*kominkan* [community centre]" find out the needs of the citizens through their daily conversations, they become the co-ordinators of meetings with the citizens. The executive committee is composed of both the staff of community centre and citizens. They gather and discuss what kind of learning they are going to have and how they are going to have it. They discuss not only the content of the learning but also the conditions of learning and administration. (p.95) There is an example of JSL learning using this method in Iida City, Nagano, Japan. I would like to introduce this example and compare it with the Participatory Research in a later section.

In order for the learners to participate in the learning process, Nomoto says that it is necessary to discuss the use of L1 in the JSL classroom and to have volunteers who can speak the L1 of the learners. (p.96) It is difficult to rely only on Japanese volunteers. More volunteers are needed and it is also necessary to have co-ordinators who can connect the various volunteers with appropriate learners. I consider foreign residents who have already lived in Japan for a long time to be potentially strong helpers to connect both L1 and L2 groups.

Nomoto criticises the apolitical functional approaches of JSL education and advocates the alternative approach of critical literacy. However, Nomoto does not mention the social change aspect of critical pedagogy. This is what I aim to learn from Participatory Research.

Participatory Research

According to Maguire, "participatory research combines three activities: investigation, education and action (1987, p.29)."

Participatory research is an alternative research method that involves participation of the people who have often been the objects of the research and deprived of access to the processes of problem posing and solving. "Participatory research attempts to break down the distinction between the researchers and the researched, the subjects and objects of knowledge production by the participation of the people-for-themselves in the process of gaining and creating knowledge (e.g., Gaventa, 1988, p.19) (Hall, 1993, p.xv)."

In participatory research, there is no monopoly of knowledge by the experts. Both the researchers and the participants learn about the "structural causes of named problems through collective discussion and interaction (Maguire, p.29)." Researchers work "with" people, not "on" people.

Finally, the most unique aspect of participatory research is that it aims at action, both short and long term. (Maguire, p.29)

> [It] is a way for researchers and oppressed people to join in solidarity to take collective action, both short and long term, for radical social change. Locally determined and controlled action is a planned consequence of inquiry. (e.g., Maguire, 1987, p.29) (Hall, 1993, p.xiv)

According to Maguire, it aims to have changes as follows:

- Development of critical consciousness of both researcher and participants;
- Improvement of the lives of those involved in the research process;
- Transformation of fundamental societal structures and relationships. (p.29)

In the traditional research, there is a gap between research and action, and between knowing and doing. This is also the case in Japan. However, there is the attempt called "*kyodo puroguramu* [participatory programme]" that aims to do participatory activities

with participants who learn from each other as equal partners. I would like to compare this participatory project and participatory research and try to clarify the differences and similarities.

Participatory Programme (*Kyodo Puroguramu*)

Participatory programme has been promoted by the *Tatsuoka Kominkan* [*Tatsuoka* Community Centre] in Iida, Nagano, Japan since 1997. The following description about the activities is a summary of the reports written by Mikio Sunaba, staff member at Tatsuoka community centre, Norikazu Kinoshita, staff member at the Board of Education of Iida and Yoshie Tanaka, staff member at *Kikokusha* Centre[20] [The Resettlement Promotion Centre for the Returnees from China]. (Kinoshita, 1999; Sunaba, 1999; Tanaka, 1999)

Iida is a central city of the southwestern part of Nagano Prefecture.[21] The area is known for its community activities. There are 2,004 (registered number as of September 30, 1998) foreign residents out of about 107,000 population of Iida. Among the foreign residents, 706 are the returnees[22] from China in the city and 468 in the suburban area of Iida City. Most of

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[20] The formal name of Kikokusha Centre is 'Chugoku Kikokusha Teichaku Sokushin Senta [The Resettlement Promotion Centre for the Returnees from China].' 'Kikokusha' is a Japanese word meaning 'returnee(s) from foreign countries'. At Kikokusha Centre, Kikokusha means a person who had remained in China after the Second World War ended and returned from China after 1972. Kikokusha [returnees] are women who married Chinese men and people who were adopted by Chinese people under the age of twelve.

[21] Popular education has been deeply rooted in the community in Nagano Prefecture. Anti-discriminatory movement has been promoted by the local organisations, because there are many discriminated areas called *'buraku'* in Nagano Prefecture. People in Nagano are said to be eager to learn by themselves.

[22] Returnees are the Japanese people who came back to Japan from China long after World War II ended. When the war ended, some people could not return to Japan and stayed in China, because some were children and were adopted by Chinese families and some were women who married Chinese men. A detailed explanation is in the Chapter Three.

the returnees live in the prefectural houses in four districts. Tatsuoka is one of those districts. (Tanaka)

At the Tatsuoka community centre, a community programme called "International Exchange Meeting" has been held once a year since 1994. The meetings are mainly cooking classes demonstrated by foreign residents. (Sunaba)

In 1996, a returnee sent a letter to the community centre and said that the exchange programme did not help her to adapt into the Japanese society and that there is a need for JSL classrooms. (Sunaba) She complained that the returnees have been suffering from adapting to the different cultures since they went to China during the Second World War. (Kinoshita) The staff at Tatsuoka community centre took this complaint seriously and decided to respond to the request. They consulted with *Kikokusha* Centre and asked for advice. Then, two researchers at *Kikokusha* Centre, Tanaka and Kobayashi, visited Iida City several times and talked with the staff at the community centre. (Sunaba)

In January 1998, a committee was formed to prepare for a JSL classroom. It was called 'cultural committee' and 18 members gathered. The committee consisted of the staff of the community centre, members of young people's associations[23], and the staff of the social welfare association.

In February 1998, they invited Tanaka and Kobayashi and held a seminar. The participants learned that the needs of the returnees should be the basis of setting up a JSL classroom. They also learned that it is important to learn from each other instead of having the Japanese members become language teachers. With this advice, they soon held a meeting to consider the returnees. About 30 people from the community, including

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[23] Young people's associations, *seinendan*, are groups for young people in rural areas. The traditional Japanese society is supported by various groups in the community and *seinendan* is one of them. Usually, *seinendan* belongs to a local community.

returnees who were already adapted to the community, gathered and shared their opinions. A returnee said that young people easily learn the language on various occasions, but that the old people feel more comfortable to learn the language through daily communications.

The staff of the cultural committee noticed the necessity to conduct interviews in order to discover the troubles and needs of the returnees. They decided to conduct interviews with 41 people in 13 families. They visited families and listened to the stories of the returnees, learning the various opinions among the returnees. The staff realised what the returnees wanted most was not to learn the Japanese language per se, but to adapt into the community and have contact with local people as community members.

In July 1998, they invited Kobayashi and Tanaka again and held a meeting. The researchers advised the members of the cultural committee that they should try 'participatory programme'. Participatory programme aims to raise the communication abilities of all the participants through the whole process of activities. The necessity to have deeper communication will become a motivation for further language learning. It does not necessarily aim to have language learning in a classroom setting. Another important approach is to have a joint committee consisting of the local people and the returnees. They are equal participants and decide what to do through discussions of planning the activities. The staff of the community centre does not lead this participatory programme. The levels of the Japanese language of the returnees should be different in order to urge them to support each other through the programme. The aim of the participatory programme is that all the participants will raise their communication abilities to overcome the difficulties caused by the differences of language and culture. (Sunaba, Tanaka)

The joint committee consisted of five 'cultural staff', two women from the community and three returnees. Two of the returnees worked as translators when they conducted

interviews, and one returnee had been teaching JSL. In October 1998, one returnee staff member brought two other returnees to join the staff. They had stayed in Japan for only two years and were not fluent in Japanese, but the diversity of the members gave the participants motivation to learn both the Chinese and Japanese languages and a good opportunity to make the 'participatory programme' into 'a programme of learning together'. (Sunaba)

In the first meeting, they discussed what they were going to do. The returnee staff proposed exchange programmes of music, cooking and Karaoke and they also wanted to learn the daily habits of Japanese society. They decided to plan a big exchange programme through cooking in 1998. A returnee suggested naming the group "好友会 [Close Friends Group]" in Chinese, and they agreed to it.

In the second meeting in November, they discussed the details of the exchange programme and decided to have a programme of cooking New Year's dishes. In this meeting, two new returnee members requested a JSL classroom in a classroom setting as well because they had been feeling the inconvenience of the communication, as the discussion in the programmes was done with translators.

In the third meeting in December, they learned that the number of applicants to the programme was more than 60, which was twice as many as they had expected. The number of returnee applicants was 30, from 12 families. (Sunaba)

On December 13, 1998, they enjoyed *'mochitsuki'*, the traditional cooking of rice cakes for the New Year. With a mallet, they pounded steamed rice into the dough in a wooden mortar. In the kitchen, women were cooking and chatting in broken Japanese. The participants said that they enjoyed the programme with the local Japanese people. (Sunaba)

By the end of 1999, the joint committee consisted of 5 cultural committee members, 6 local people and 6 returnees. They are going to have the third exchange programme.

The participatory project is based on the tradition of social education in the community centres.

Comparison between the Participatory Programme and Participatory Research

The participatory programme is an alternative approach in JSL education that is promoted by the people who are involved in JSL education and social education at a community centre. I would like to examine the characteristics of the participatory programme compared with participatory research.

The participatory programme is a unique programme in Japan, because it aims to create a learning environment where all participants are equal partners in planning and carrying out the exchange programmes and where mutual learning is expected during the process. JSL learning usually takes place in a classroom setting where tutors are not conscious about the power dynamics between tutors and learners. The participatory programme aims to eliminate this power imbalance. Including the researchers in JSL education, participants in the joint committee discussed and learned from each other, and they conducted research in order to learn the needs of the returnees. In this sense, this programme puts stress on equal 'participation' of the participants.

Another characteristic of the participatory programme is that it is deeply rooted in the community. Historically, social education has been rooted in Nagano and people there have already had the foundation of community-based learning, such as '*seinendan* [youth group]' or '*otona no gakko* [popular school for adults]'. One of the aims of the programme is that the returnees become active members of the community in order to promote other adult programmes as local citizens.

Regarding the members of the joint committee, they have opportunities to discuss issues and learn much from each other, but other people only participate in the exchange

programmes a few times a year. The programmes offer the participants an opportunity to talk to each other through singing, eating and playing together. This kind of programme might offer opportunities to have casual talk among participants, but it does not offer opportunities to discuss issues related to their problems. In this sense, learning in the participatory programmes is focused on developing community skills in a broader sense. To most participants, the programmes are recreation.

However, there is an opinion that puts stress on the deeper learning than the mere acquisition of the communication skills. Kinoshita, who has promoted social education in Iida as a staff member of the Board of Education, positions the participatory programme in the social change perspective. He relates the participatory programme to the Peace Forum, which was held in 1995. The Peace Forum aimed to learn about the history of the returnees who went to China and were abandoned there[24]. He also relates the participatory programme with the problems of the foreign residents, such as those from the Philippines. In Iida, members of the Japanese Welfare University and the Philippine University have been carrying out a joint research about the problems of the Philippine residents in Japan. Through the research, they learned that the Philippine residents have serious, sometimes fatal problems. The results show that not only municipal governmental policy but also support of the citizens in the community is necessary. What is more important is that foreign residents have the power to solve their problems by themselves. Kinoshita says as follows:

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[24] In Kinoshita's report, there is no mention about learning about the responsibility of the Japanese people who committed war crimes in China. In my opinion, it is necessary to have discussions on the issues of responsibility for the atrocities that the Japanese military did in China as well as the sufferings of the people who were abandoned in China from the critical perspective of examining the Second World War. Otherwise, the local residents of Iida who had co-operated with the national policy of invading the north-eastern part of

> [What] is needed is to spread the movement that promotes the consciousness of self-help to improve the present situation of their lives by their own power. As long as the Japanese people are caregivers and they are the care-receivers, their situation is unstable because they are depending upon the situation of the caregivers. They have already organised a self-help organisation called United Filipino Community (UFC) and are active at the local Catholic churches. It is important that this kind of activity become more powerful by having networks with the activities of the Japanese supporters. (Kinoshita)

Kinoshita points out the importance for foreign residents to stop being care-receivers and be independent. He also points out the importance of having networks between self-help groups and the Japanese supporters. He concludes his report emphasising the importance of building a society where diverse people can live harmoniously together. Kinoshita does not mention the change of the consciousness of Japanese supporters. He does not mention the fundamental changes of society itself. Japanese local citizens, too, need to change their attitudes and their society. The aim should be independence of all the residents in the community.

Participatory research aims at social changes and aims at having changes as follows:

- Development of critical consciousness of both researcher and participants;
- Improvement of the lives of those involved in the research process;
- Transformation of fundamental societal structures and relationships. (Maguire, p.29)

Compared with these aims, critical perspective is lacking in the participatory programme. The participatory programme offers participants opportunities to learn to communicate

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China will not understand who should have the final responsibility for the tragedy of both the Chinese people and the Japanese people who had to stay in China.

well in spite of their differences of language and culture. It does not aim to make changes in their lives in a direct way. The transformation of fundamental societal structures is clearly not aimed at.

Another thing is that there is no special mention of the problems of women returnees. Three reports written by Sunaba, Kinoshita and Tanaka all used a neutral word '*kinokusha* [returnee]' and women returnees are included in the word. In fact, the problems of returnees are problems of women, because returnees consist mainly of people who were adopted by Chinese people (*zanryu-koji* [orphans who remained in China]) and women who married Chinese men (*zanryu-fujin* [women remained in China]). However, the statistics related to returnees does not show the numbers of men and women. There are no statistics about women, such as the number of women who returned to Japan with their husbands. The only statistics that show the number of '*zanryu-koji*' and '*zanryu-fujin*' tell that the number of '*zanryu-fujin*' who returned to Japan permanently is 3,644 out of 5,929. The number of temporary returned '*zanryu-fujin*' is 4,228 out of 5,101. This number shows that most of the returnees are women. There are no statistics on the number of men and women who returned to Japan. As Maguire (1987) points out, the presence of women is neglected by the use the neutral word. Though most of the returnees are women, the reports do not show that there was special consideration of the problems from the viewpoint of feminism or when choosing both men and women returnees for the committee.

The problem is how to bring a critical perspective to the learning process. It is difficult to bring those issues to the learning process, because Japanese society regards harmony among people as most important. However, this programme has the potential to create the foundation for participatory research if they continue the programme with a more critical perspective. If the participatory programme adds a critical perspective and aims at the

fundamental changes of Japanese society, it has the potential to become closer to participatory research.

The Necessity to Aim at Critical Literacy

According to participatory research of community-based literacy done by literacy practitioners in Toronto (Gaber-Katz & Watson, 1991), three elements are essential to community-based literacy: learner-centredness, literacy from a critical perspective, and community-building. The learners of community-based literacy classes and JSL classes for foreign residents need to have empowering learning and social changes in order to enhance the quality of their lives. Thus, it is meaningful for JSL education to learn from the praxis of community-based literacy classes in Toronto, where diverse people have been probing how to have better learning methods. According to their study, in community-based literacy programmes, each element means as follows:

Learner-centredness means that programs:

- Listen to literacy learners and elicit stories about their lives;
- Believe that everyone can learn;
- Emphasise equality among learners, volunteers, and staff;
- Encourage learners to become involved, both in the program and in the community;
- Ensure that learning will be relevant;
- Provide a range of programming options;
- Assist learners in setting their own learning goals and measuring their own progress;
- Ensure that learner's interests and needs determine the curriculum.

A critical perspective means that programs assists learners to:

- Improve their basic skills in reading, writing, numeracy, communication, life skills, abstract thinking, and general knowledge;
- Increase their critical abilities;

- Build self-confidence;
- Increase their understanding of self;
- Participate more fully in society;
- Create language and culture
- Enhance the quality of their own lives;
- Work towards empowerment and social change.

Community-building means that programs:

- Are located in the community at convenient locations, are open at convenient times, are responsive to community needs, and co-operate closely with other neighbourhood services;
- Foster the development of common interests and goals;
- Encourage literacy to be understood and practised as a social progress;
- Create a sense of belonging;
- Draw upon members of the community to share responsibility for the education of other adults within the community;
- Help learners to acquire an understanding of self in relation to society;
- Work to build supportive communities.

(Gaber-Katz & Watson, pp. 172-174)

'Community-building' has already been introduced in JSL education as seen in the participatory programme in Iida. As there is a tendency to emphasise the necessity of 'community-building' in the Japanese society, this perspective seems easy to introduce to other JSL classroom situations. However, if the 'community-development' is as in the traditional Japanese community-development, there is always a 'request of assimilation'. In this sense, 'learner-centred' is contradictory to the idea of 'community-building' and therefore, it should be emphasised in the Japanese context[25].

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[25] Otani and Tanaka (1995) wrote a book about action research (p.31) in 'community-building' in Nagano Prefecture. The project was to create a musical about the town by the people of the community. They relate the creation of the musical to the creation of the foundation of a more democratic community. They also relate JSL education to the 'community-building', because they believe that it is necessary to create a community

Although, there are examples of learner-centred JSL educational practices in Japan[26], these practices are still few and it is necessary to have more and more emphasis on the equal participation of the learners in the JSL programmes. What has been least emphasised, even in the unique practices such as the participatory programme and the practices of Saito, is the critical perspective.

For example, in formal educational settings in Japan, there is a myth of 'neutral education'. Many educators in formal education believe that they have to teach neutrally based on 'facts.' In reality, those facts are written in the textbooks that are censored by the Ministry of Education, namely, by a political power. Even teachers seldom examine how 'facts' are created arbitrarily by a certain power, much less the students. Rarely are students encouraged to examine their experiences with critical perspectives, and they are seldom taught how to see things critically. In many cases, facts are transmitted to students with no critical perspective whatsoever. The educational system that is supported by the political power works to reproduce the status quo. (Ozawa, 1982)

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where people can discuss issues in a democratic way in order to create a community where foreign residents feel comfortable living.

[26] The practice by Hiroko Saito (June 1999) is an example of the learner-centred approach in JSL education. Saito relies on the ability of adult learners and puts stress on assisting them to learn by themselves. She thinks that learners should have the abilities to question, so she teaches the learners how to create simple questions. At the same time, she emphasises the importance of the ability to listen and to repeat the words that the learners do not know in order to ask questions. Saito uses her knowledge of learners' L1 as much as possible in order to teach JSL well, and the learners and she published usage books that she and the learners co-operated on by writing together. The learners brought up as many questions as possible, and Saito wrote down the questions and answers. In this way, Saito published usage books about Japanese set phrases, vocabulary in daily lives related to school and medical care and anecdotal experiences of misunderstandings between Japanese local people and the returnees from China or Chinese people. These booklets are edited from the perspective of both of the Japanese and Chinese cultures and aim at mutual learning of their cultures. Saito's practices use learner-centred methods.

Neustupný (1998) applied Krashen's language acquisition theory to the acquisition of teaching strategies of language educators and points out that language educators acquire their teaching strategies through their own experiences and use the same strategies they have already acquired unless they have strong beliefs against the use of them. Considering the fact that many volunteer tutors have little formal training in JSL education, there is a strong possibility for those tutors to use methods and attitudes towards learners that they have already acquired in their own education. Neustupný describes the elements of the educational strategies to be the social paradigm, the general educational paradigm, the [language] education that the educators experienced by themselves, and the pressure from learners. (p.23) If the learners experienced education based on a critical perspective, the educators would encounter more pressure from the learners to change their educational strategies. However, many learners in community-based JSL classrooms in Japan are from Asian countries where teacher-centred transmitting education is prevalent. In addition, there are cases where learners themselves want to have the teacher-centred transmitting type of education, because they are used to it. Therefore, it is difficult to expect the learners' pressure to change educational strategies. Instead, it is necessary to enrich the tutors' learning programme for critical literacy in order to change the perspective of volunteer tutors into a critical one.

Reclaiming the Learners' Voice

In Japan, only recently have the voices of socially and culturally marginalised people widely been heard and appreciated. Artists as *Zainichi* Koreans, Ryukyu people and Ainu people[27] have begun to express themselves through various art forms. Maher (1991) points

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[27] Both Ryukyu people and Ainu people are Japanese citizens, but they have different languages and cultures. In contrast to these people, people who live on the main islands are

out the importance for minority people to write their autobiographies in order to reclaim their language and culture. Maher introduces the example of Shigeru Kayano, one of the activists of the Ainu community, who wrote books about his experiences as an Ainu person in both the Ainu language and the Yamato language, namely, in his native tongue and a common Japanese language. A few decades ago, the stories of minority people were seldom heard and when they were, they were conveyed by Japanese people[28]. If works by the writers from oppressed people were praised, their works were introduced with a special prefix such as '*Zainichi* Korean writer', just as in the case of 'women writers' as opposed to simply 'writers'. Today, their works are beginning to be appreciated as they are, and their cultural background is not treated as negative 'handicaps'. They powerfully convey the reality of their own lives.

Zainichi Koreans have been neglected in various ways in Japanese society, such as in laws and in people's minds. They have been treated as if they did not exist. "A *Zainichi* Korean once said, 'We were transparent people.'" (Harajiri, 1998, p.64) When they appeared in the mainstream discourse, they were described in a stereotyped way as 'others'.

However, the unjust treatments of *Zainichi* Koreans have become more visible since newcomers arrived in Japan in the 1980s. In 1993, a film entitled "*Tsuki wa docchi ni deteiru?* [Which direction is the moon now?]" became a great hit and won many awards. A

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called Yamato people. Yamato people have been the majority in the Japanese society. Ryukyu people call their language as *'Uchina-guchi'* and Yamato language as *'Yamato-guchi'* in their language. Here, I discuss the minority groups of people, including *Zainichi* Koreans, so I use 'Japanese' as opposed to 'Korean', and 'Yamato' as opposed to 'Ryukyu' and 'Ainu'.

[28] For example, Shohei Imamura took years researching Okinawan culture and lived there more than a year to make a film entitled "*Kamigami no Fukaki Yokubo* [Profound Desire of Gods] (1968)", but Imamura was not a Ryukyu person and none of the cast was from Ryukyu. Today, Ryukyu film directors are creating films about themselves. This phenomenon is related to the reclaim of the voices from local areas as opposed to the central area like Tokyo.

Zainichi Korean director named Sai Yoichi (his Japanese name), Choi Yang-Il (his Korean name), directed it. He made this film based on a novel written by Yang Suk-Il and a script written by Chung Eui-Shin. This film became the first hit created by a *Zainichi* Korean[29].

'Tsuki wa docchi ni deteiru? [Which direction is the moon now?]" is the first film to describe the *Zainichi* Koreans as they are and left a strong impact on the Japanese audience. Before this film, *Zainichi* Koreans residents in mainstream Japanese films were either villains or victims. They were described by the Japanese as the 'others' even though some of the descriptions were empathic. No *Zainichi* Korean director had described ordinary *Zainichi* Koreans before. Harajiri said,

> "It seems to me that the producing staffs are speaking to us like this: 'We would like to describe our lives for ourselves, and to recover our way of life that others had defined for us. We made the film hoping that we could discuss '*Zainichi* Koreans' laughing together." (Harajiri, 1998, p.145)

Harajiri quoted the comment of Chung, a scriptwriter, about this film.

> "'It's time to explain ourselves [in a film]. With this utterance by the director Choi, we began writing the script for *'Tsuki wa docchi ni deteiru.*' ... It isn't surprising and it is natural to hope this, but the director Choi and I wanted to describe ordinary '*Zainichi* Koreans living in our neighbourhood'." (cited in Harajiri, p.147)

This film was appreciated by both Japanese people and *Zainichi* Koreans, especially by the younger generation. Not only was there *Zainichi* Koreans in this film, but also a Philippine

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[29] In a North-American society where hundreds of films have been produced, a film created entirely by native people, "Smoke Signals", was shown only recently in 1998.

woman working at a bar appeared as a heroine. This film shows the bare facts of today's Japan as a multicultural society. Harajiri also mentions the creativity of the *Zainichi* Korean artists such as Yoo Mi-Ri, a writer; Taro Maruse, a vaudevillian; and Eiichi Arai, a singer songwriter. They all use the Japanese language as their medium of art form.

What is important is to acquire the ability to fully express oneself in the Japanese society in various ways. It is not enough to acquire the ability of the Japanese language as receivers of information. It is necessary to stress the importance of also being the senders of messages. If the ability for learners to receive the information is too stressed, they will become passive information receivers. Thus, learners should be encouraged to have their own voices. More than twenty years have passed since the first Vietnamese refugees were resettled in Japan, but there are only a few written works about refugees written by them. Instead, mainstream Japanese people have created their images[30] and their authentic voices cannot be heard. Gaber-Katz and Watson say that it is important for learners to be heard by other members of their society. Through their authentic voices, people in the dominant culture will be able to learn what they have not yet known.

The ability to express oneself is not only for the practical purpose of conveying the ideas, but it is also to enrich one's life with the joy of expression. Gaber-Katz and Watson say, "A literacy education needs to include opportunities for learners to enhance the quality of their lives. This is the part of literacy that might be seen to nurture the soul as well as the mind, beauty as well as survival (1991, p.46)." Acquiring the ability to express themselves will bring the learners' lives joy.

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[30] Tanaka points out that the Japanese media has been working to strengthen the hegemony even though they deal with differences between the Japanese and the foreigners in Japan. (Tanaka, 1997b)

Empowering Relationships

Jim Cummins defines empowerment as the collaborative creation of power, where power is not a fixed predetermined quantity but rather generated in interpersonal and intergroup relations. Power is created with others and shared among participants. "In other words, participants in the relationship are empowered through their collaboration such that each is more affirmed in her or his identity and has a greater sense of efficacy to create change in his or her life or social situation."(Cummins, 1996, p.15)

According to Morita, empowerment is to recover whole self that is suppressed by one's negative inner power and outer power. (Morita, 1998) Morita says that people use both affirmative and negative powers. Affirmative powers are trust, sympathy, support, self-esteem, self-judgement, freedom of choice, love, knowledge, experience and technique. Negative powers are violence, suppression, authoritative power, control, war, bullying and abuse. (Morita, pp.18-19) Empowerment, she means, is to get rid of negative powers by using affirmative powers in order to recover a whole self.

Both Cummins and Morita think that empowerment is **not** 'adding of power' to someone by another person. They both believe that each individual has her/his potential power. Morita's definition puts more stress on one's inner perspective change rather than interpersonal relations, while Cummins stresses that educational structures are not static, and that power is created and shared within the interpersonal space where there are collaborative relations among educators, students and communities.

Chapter Three: A General Historical and Social Background

Description of the Foreigners in Japan

In this chapter, I will briefly describe a general historical and social background of the foreigners in Japan. Foreigners in this chapter are those who have the live in Japan for a certain period of time for economical or political reasons, mainly from other Asian countries and so-called "developing" countries. Many of them are potential learners of community-based JSL classrooms for learning JSL and for life support. Foreigners who stay in Japan only for a limited period of time and do not have to learn the Japanese language in community-based JSL classrooms are not dealt with. They are students from abroad who have opportunities to learn the Japanese language in formal schools, and professionals who have enough support from their workplace like workers from economically "developed" countries and government officials. In this study, learners of JSL classrooms are sometimes mentioned as 'minority' or 'powerless'. Those expressions mean that they belong to ethnically smaller groups in the population and have less social and economical power than the dominant group of people in the power structure of the Japanese society. However, many of them are 'powerful' on an individual basis, considering the fact that they have overcome the hardships in various cultures.

Foreigners in Japan: Old Comers

There are more than 1.3 million foreign people living in Japan now. Among them, about 50 % of them are *Zainichi* Koreans and 16% of them are Chinese residents.

Japan invaded China and colonised Taiwan and the Korean peninsula before and during the Second World War. Many of Taiwanese and Koreans were taken to Japan as forced labourers and died because of the cruel treatment they received. Even after the war,

Zainichi Koreans were deprived of various human rights and have suffered from discrimination. The Japanese government has not yet finished compensating the individuals who suffered atrocities and cruel treatment during the Second World War. Those *Zainichi* Koreans and Chinese people are called 'old comers'. They have been discriminated against because of the prejudices that were politically implanted into the Japanese people after the *Meiji* era. However, their status in the Japanese society has changed since the arrival of 'new comers' in Japan.

Economical Growth of Japan: New Comers

After the adoption of the floating exchange rate system in 1973, yen grew stronger against the U.S. dollar. In the beginning of 1970, 300 yen bought one U.S. dollar. In 1978, one dollar cost around 180 yen. During the 1990s, it oscillated between 80 yen and 150 yen and stabilised around 110 yen in 1999. During these 30 years, the average wages and prices dramatically increased.

By the middle of the 1980s, strong yen enabled even the average income earner to go abroad. Many Japanese people did experience different cultures. Many preferred to go to western countries. They enjoyed the temporary luxury and shopped expensive brand goods. However, some, mostly younger generation, went to the so-called 'developing' countries and learned through their own experiences.

On the other hand, since 80s, foreign people have come to Japan as labour because medium and small-sized factories there need workers. There are jobs called 3K: *Kitsui*=hard, *Kitanai*=dirty and *Kiken*=dangerous. Young Japanese workers do not want the 3K jobs. Today, foreign workers come to Japan in search for well-paid jobs and 3K jobs. They are called 'new comers'; they are mostly from other Asian and South American counties.

As a country with a strong economy, Japan has begun to be treated as one of the 'developed' countries. Japan has had to accept various international treaties including treaties related to human rights issues. Gradually, Japan is being forced to change its attitudes towards foreigners.

Increase of Foreigners in Japan

There are different groups of foreigners in Japan. On one hand, there are the professionals and university students from Western countries. The percentage of them is fairly small and they basically have little financial and linguistic problems. On the other hand, there are people from the so-called 'developing' countries. They are refugees, students who work as part-timers, Japanese descendants of Japanese immigrants from South America, other foreigners who overstayed, and foreign women who married Japanese men.

The Japanese government formally decided to accept the resettlement of Vietnamese refugees in Japan in 1978. The number of refugees rapidly increased in the 1980s, after the government accepted refugees from Cambodia and Laos in 1979. There were about 10,000 refugees as of 1997.

In 1983, the Japanese government permitted foreign students to do part-time jobs and announced to increase their number, in accord with the '100,000 Foreign Students Plan.' The number of foreign students, who mainly learn Japanese in language schools or learn technology at factories, rapidly increased in the 1980s. As obtaining student visa became easier, more students wanted to work as part-timers. Consequently, the number of Japanese as a Foreign Language (JFL) schools increased rapidly. In 1983, there were approximately 50 JFL schools in Japan. By 1988, they increased to about 300. These schools were mostly small private schools and their quality of teaching was not necessarily

good. (Tanaka, 1995, pp. 188-192) The Japanese government decided to control the small private JFL schools and announced the Regulations of the Administration of the Japanese Language Education Facilities in 1988.

In 1990, the Japanese government changed the Immigration Law. It prohibited unskilled labour from entering into the country, with Japanese descendants being the exception. Since then, people of Japanese heritage from South American countries, such as Brazil, Peru, Argentina and Bolivia have begun to come to Japan. The number of people from Brazil and Peru was 5,023 in 1988 and 66,708 in 1990. In 1993, it became 187,819 (37 times as many as in 1988). In 1989, the Government also established the Association for Advancement of the Japanese Language Education, which became a foundation under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Law.

As the numbers of foreigners increased, so did the numbers of overstaying people and workers without permission.

Returnees from China and their families

There are Japanese people who had to stay in China after the Second World War and then returned to Japan with their Chinese families when there was normalisation in Japan-China relations in 1972. They are Japanese people, but their situation is similar to that of the foreigners with respect to the language problems and the life difficulties they experience. Returnees from China are able to join the Japanese language educational programme at the *Kikokusha* Centre [The Resettlement Promotion Centre for the Returnees from China].

The figures for October 1999 indicate that 5,929 families, consisting of a total of 18,790 individuals, returned to Japan. By 1988, the total number of the returnees was 9,347. During the four years between 1986 and 1989, 4966 people returned, making it the peak

period. According to the *Kikokusha* Centre's website, by the end of October 1999, 5,929 families, consisting of a total of 18,790 individuals, returned to Japan. The percentage of returnees who live in Japan and can communicate without an interpreter in their daily lives is only 35.9% on average. This can be broken down further into: the returnees themselves (26.3%); spouses (22.5%); children (53.3%); and grandchildren (52.5%.) (*Kikokusha* Centre, 1999) This means that three-fourths of the returnee couples and half of their children and grandchildren cannot communicate in the Japanese language.

Women who Married Japanese Men

In rural agricultural areas, men have had difficulty in finding their wives. In the 1980s, some began to marry women from other Asian counties such as Korea, China and the Philippines. (Kuwayama, 1993; Association for Japanese-Language Teaching, 1997) This phenomenon is called 'brides lack[31]' and has been a serious problem. Most of those 'foreign brides[32]' come to Japan with little knowledge about the language and culture of Japan. Therefore, some local governments or local communities support families that consist of a 'foreign bride' and a Japanese man. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have established supporting JSL literacy classes for those women. (Kuwayama, 1993)

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[31] The expression "brides lack" seems strange to people who are not familiar with the Japanese culture. This expression implies the old Japanese custom of treating wives. In the Japanese language, the word "bride" means a woman married into a feudalistic family. The word itself reflects the Japanese patriarchal system, in which Japanese women are treated as commodities. Young women today do not want to enter into such a family system. That is the main reason why men in rural areas have difficulty in finding their partners.

[32] This expression of 'foreign brides' also sounds exclusive and not welcomed of the women from foreign countries. However, I will use this expression with quotation marks, because it is widely used in Japan. The number of 'foreign wives' is increasing in rural areas. For example, there are 1,006 'foreign brides' out of 3,352 foreigners who registered in Yamagata in 1995. Among them, Koreans are 41%, the Chinese are 28 % and the Philippines are 22%. (Tomiya & Utsumi, 1996, pp. 10-13)

Most of the JSL classrooms in local communities are organised and run by volunteers with little financial and staff support. The characteristic of these JSL classrooms is that they are organised and run by volunteers who do not always have a pedagogical background in JSL. Many of the JSL literacy classes are established to provide emergency help.

Refugees in Japan

The first arrival of refugees to Japan was May 12, 1975. The Japanese government consented that nine Vietnamese refugees could land and stay "temporarily" in Japan. After the government permitted the Vietnamese refugees to resettle in Japan in 1978, they agreed to accept 500 refugees from two other Indo-Chinese countries, Cambodia and Laos, in 1979. It was the beginning of the acceptance of Indochinese refugees into Japan. In 1985, the government decided to change the maximum numbers of accepted refugees from 5,000 to 10,000. In 1994, the limitation on the numbers of incoming refugees was abolished. At the end of 1997, there were 10,241 people from Indochinese countries are living in Japan. (Cabinet Secretariat of the Co-ordination Council for Indochinese Refugees and Displaced Persons [CS], 1998, pp. 55-56)

The acceptance of refugees has brought a big change into Japanese society. Though the number of refugees is small, the impact of their acceptance is crucial because it is the first time in Japanese history that refugees have been accepted into the country, as shown in Table 1. The Japanese government ratified various international treaties related to respecting and protecting the human rights of refugees, which affected the treatment of foreign residents who had already been living in Japan. With the increase of 'new comers,' the status of 'old comers', such as *Zainichi* Koreans residents, has begun to be seen from a new perspective.

Table 1

Numbers of Refugees Accepted in Various Countries

	Countries	Boat People	Land People	Total
1	U.S.A	402,382	424,143	826,525
2	Australia	108,808	28,892	137,700
3	Canada	1,00,012	37,211	137,223
4	France	21,421	74,263	95,684
5	Great Britain	19,329	715	20,044
6	Germany	15,489	3,940	19,429
7	New Zealand	4,476	6,259	10,735
8	**Japan**	**6,388**	**2,420**	**8,808**
9	Switzerland	5,814	2,657	8,471
10	Netherlands	7,332	732	8,064
11	Norway	5,950	248	6,198
12	Sweden	5,857	208	6,065
13	Denmark	4,592	160	4,752
14	Belgium	1,729	2,057	3,786
15	Finland	1,813	95	1,908
16	Others	6,526	13,352	19,878
	Total	717,918	587,352	1,315,270

Note. Cabinet Secretariat of the Coordination Council for Indochinese Refugees and Displaced persons, p.15, originally taken from UNHCR. Figures for December 31, 1997.

The Resettlement Promotion Centres

Three Resettlement Promotion Centres were built in order for refugees to acquire the basic knowledge and skills needed in Japanese society. Himeji Resettlement Promotion Centre was built in December 1979, Yamato Resettlement Promotion Centre in February 1980, and International Refugees Assistance Centre[33] in April 1983. These centres played a key role in supporting refugees to adapt to Japanese society.

[33] Omura Immigration Control Center, which was to protect boat people temporarily, was built in February 1982. Then, the International Refugees Assistance Center was built in order to cope with the increasing number of boat people and their longer stays.

The institution that is in charge of these centres is the Refugee Assistance Headquarters (RHQ), which is under supervision of the Foundation for the Welfare and Education of the Asian People (FWEAP). FWEAP was originally founded as the Foundation for the Welfare and Education of the Vietnamese Orphans (FWEVO) in 1969. FWEVO was founded with funds contributed from the annual expenditure of the Liberal Democratic Party[34] (LDP). Its original aim was to help the orphans and mothers in Vietnam, but as they went on to help orphans in other Asian countries, FWEVO changed its name into the Foundation for the Welfare and Education of the Asian Orphans (FWEAO) in 1971.

With the increase of refugees from the Indochinese countries, the Japanese government decided to allow them to resettle in Japan. The government entrusted the relief work to FWEAO, so the foundation changed its name into the Foundation for the Welfare and Education of the Asian People[35] (FWEAP) in 1979.

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[34] Liberal Democratic Party is one of the political parties in Japan. It is a conservative party with many supporters in the rural farming areas. It has been the ruling party since the end of the Second World War.

[35] Seisuke Okuno, a member of the House of Representatives of LDP, is the Chairperson of FWEAP. He writes in the brochure of FWEAP (1999, p.0) that the government should accept the refugees in 1978, saying, "I don't say to give them permanent residency, but at least immigrant status." His words were realised. There are 10,417 refugees in Japan and only about 4% of them got their Japanese nationality as of March 1999. Okuno once told an Indian Minister of Welfare about an Indian judge, who was the only person to claim that Japan was innocent in the Far East International Military Court. He says that he remembered the word *'Daitowa'* in *'Daitowa Senso,'* which means the war to create the larger East Asia, used during the Second World War. He says that he wants the Asian countries to help each other. The word *'Daitowa,'* which reminds many of the Japanese people of the invasion in other Asian countries, reminds Okuno of the unification of Asian countries. Okuno has been the Chairperson of FWEAP for these 30 years. Among the directors of FWEAP, there are not a few members of the House of Representatives of LDP. There was even a former Prime Minister and a former Chairperson of the House of the Representatives. They are LDP members of over 70 years of age. This suggests the character of this foundation. FWEAP was originally founded by the fund from LDP and there are many LDP members among its directors. There are 10 former and present members of the Diet out of 24 directors. The other directors are mainly the present and former executives of big corporations. It is a typical characteristic of this kind of affiliated

Refugees live at the centres for six months and receive JSL education for four months (572 hours) since 1988. It is aimed for refugees to acquire very basic skills in conversation, reading and writing in order to live in the community. They also learn the customs and habits, basic rules of daily life and the customs of work places. After the six-month stay at the centres, refugees have to leave there with only the minimum language and life ability to survive in the Japanese society.

At Yamato Resettlement Promotion Centre, refugees were divided into three groups. Survival Class was for elderly people, pregnant women and those who had never had literacy education. Adults' Class was for those who were over sixteen years old and aimed to learn the practical language ability for home and the workplace. Children's Class was for those who were between six and fifteen and aimed to learn the language ability necessary in schools. (RHQ, 1998, p.30) Other important functions of those centres were to find jobs and places to live. However, it was often difficult for refugees to find places to live because of the prejudice owners have against renting to foreigners. (RHQ, p.14)

However, the Japanese government decided to close two centres, judging that the numbers of refugees from Indochina would be decreasing after the Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA) was adopted at the seventh International Conference on Indochinese Refugees in Geneva in 1996. The centre in Himeji was closed in March 1996 and the centre in Yamato was closed in March 1998. After existing for almost twenty years, these two centres were closed. Only International Refugees Assistance Centre in Shinagawa remains. (CS, 1998)

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foundations of the government in Japan. Retired politicians and bureaucrats get a job in this kind of foundation. It is difficult to say if this foundation has not been affected by the conservative policy of LDP and economic circles that want to control the numbers of foreigners coming into Japan for their conveniences. People in political and economic

The Collapse of the Myth of 'Japan as a Mono-Ethnic Country'

With the increase of the new comers, people with different cultural background have become noticeable, both physically and ideologically, to the Japanese people. The ethnic minorities in the Japanese society are appearing from obscurity where they were forced to be. People are beginning to see *Zainichi* Koreans, Ainu and Ryukyu people as they are. Before, people saw them as though they were transparent. More and more people come to realise that the governing discourse of a 'monolithic' country has been created by the political power.

In 1986, Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone made racist remarks about the educational system of the U.S. The American press criticised his remarks immediately. Nakasone tried to excuse himself and added the explanation that education in the U.S. was difficult because it was a multicultural country and that the education was easier in 'mono-cultural' Japan. This statement triggered heated discussions around the issue of superiority of the 'mono-cultural' country both in Japan and the U.S.

Ainu people got furious hearing this statement. Maher pointed out the importance of this media event by quoting the newspaper article written by a journalist in Hokkaido. It says that the responses to the statements of Nakasone had the Japanese people realise that the mono-ethnicity of Japan did not exist and that there is indeed the Ainu ethnic minority. (Maher, 1991, p.159) The presence of ethnic minorities in Japan is gradually known to people in Japan, but racist remarks by government officials have often been made and are still made today.

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circles want to control the numbers of foreigners in Japan to suit the convenience of the Japanese economical situation.

Toward Multicultural Society

In some suburban cities where small factories gather, demographic map has been changing for these 20 years. There, foreign workers have been underpinning the factory work. One of those cities is Ooizumi Town in Gunma Prefecture, where more than 11 percent of the population are foreign workers and their families, who came to Japan mainly from South American countries like Brazil and Peru. In Ooizumi, there are many shops for these foreigners in the Plaza in downtown and there is even a carnival where South Americans dance with the beat of samba music. Whether Japanese natives like it or not, the scenery in those areas is changing drastically with the increase of foreign population. The apparition of this kind of area is a prominent phenomenon since 1990s because of the lack of Japanese labour in small factories.

With the increase of foreigners, more discourses about them appear in publication and media coverage. On one hand, there are favourable discourses toward foreigners that aim to create a new Japanese society where human rights of foreigners are respected and protected. A lot of publication about this has been appearing since 1980s. There are many non-profit organisations and small groups that promote better living conditions of foreigners. On the other hand, opportunistic discourses have been seen. The basic comments of these discourses are focused on the necessity of labour in order to maintain the Japanese economical power as it is. (Takayama & Warefritz) The main concern is how to keep enough labour in a Japanese society where people are becoming older and the birth rate is decreasing rapidly. The government policies around foreigners' status in Japan have been based on these discourses.

Some who think about the importance of foreigners' status in Japan are interested in realising 'multicultural' society in Japan. They often use the word '*kyosei* [living together]'

as a slogan of their ideal. *'Kyosei'* means to live together (peacefully). However, their vision of *'kyosei'* or 'multicultural' society is still a vague one.

Chapter Four: History and Background of 'Society in Harmony with People from Southeast Asia'

A Murder Case by a Cambodian Refugee

By the late 1980s, more than 5,000 refugees were living in Japan. Some seemed to adapt to a new life in a foreign country, but some didn't. A tragic murder case shocked the people not only in the concerned community but all over Japan. Through the process of the lawsuit, which took four years, the background of this murder case shed some light[36] on the problems of foreign residents in Japan. It reminded people of the fact that many refugees were still suffering from difficulties in adapting to Japanese society. Below is a summary of the story given by Sister Beatrice (personal communication, May 29, 1999) and Sister Rosario (personal communication, June 10, 2000).

A 36 year-old Cambodian refugee, B. M., killed his wife (26), his two daughters (7 and 3) and his son (5) in a small suburban city, Komano, Kanagawa, on February 8, 1987. (Naito, p.40) B.M. came from Cambodia and entered the Yamato Resettlement Promotion Centre on March 22, 1985. (RHQ, 1998, p. 98) During his stay at the Yamato Centre, he was often sent to the dermatologist because of his skin appearance. It seemed to be skin trouble, but it was not actually a disease. He had to go to see a doctor, so he missed lessons, which caused a delay in learning the Japanese language. Even after he finished his six-month training period, B.M. still had difficulties in communication in the Japanese language.

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[36] The council for the defense consisted of lawyers who live in a neighbouring city of Komano. They were all shocked by this tragedy and volunteered to defend B.M. Their devotion to clarifying the background of the case led to a better understanding of the circumstances faced by refugees and the inadequate support available for them to deal with them. The expense was covered by donations from the people.

He got a job and moved to Komano in September 1985. At the workplace, Cambodian workers gathered to have lunch or to chat, partly because they had communication problems in the Japanese language. The rest of the Japanese did not like the Cambodian workers' attitude, so they bullied the Cambodian workers. Meanwhile, one of the Japanese workers had his hand cut off by a machine in an accident. It was a great shock to B.M. and other Cambodian workers. Thus, all Cambodian workers except B.M. quit the job. B.M. was left with other Japanese workers. The workload increased and burdened the remaining workers. B.M. could not endure the stress caused by the heavy burden and the bullying, so he quit the job. Since then, he had tried to work steadily, but he was unable to work for long at one place. He began to play the pinball machines and go to cabarets, which became the source of the couple's quarrels. His children became afraid of him. The caseworker accompanied him to a psychiatrist following advice from the Yamato Resettlement Promotion Centre. At this time, his state of mind was unstable. Then, one day, he hit a woman while he was riding a bicycle. The woman shouted at B.M., "Idiot!" He got mad and struck her with his hand, which triggered the indemnity case against him. Consequently, B.M. had to compensate for it and the great expense for it made his wife angry with him. The couple's relationship got worse and his wife told him that she was going to divorce him. His friends happened to tease him saying that he should go into a prison in the coldest part of Japan if he committed a crime. He developed a persecution complex and became violent. When his wife went into a hospital for surgery, he planned to kill his wife and children. On the morning of the murder, the eldest daughter noticed the horrifying mood of her father and called the Yamato Resettlement Promotion Centre for help. It was Saturday, so there was only one person at the centre and it took a long time to decide to send a person to visit his house. It was not until the evening that a caseworker living in his neighbourhood called on his house. The house was dark and quiet, so the

caseworker did not knock at the door and went away. However, three children had already been murdered in the house at that time. If someone had visited him earlier on that day, the tragedy might have been avoided.

The judgement was made considering the background of refugees and the lack of an adequate acceptance system. The psychiatrist who had tested him at the court's order testified, "The accused was in a state of paranoia due to the adverse circumstances that most refugees face when trying to adapt to an unknown environment. Also, poor government policy toward Indochinese refugees and Japanese narrow-mindedness were the direct causes of B.M.'s dilemma." (Goméz, 1999, p.136) The judge said, "[The crime itself] was cruel and a planned one and the accused has not repented what he committed. Therefore, he has to be blamed seriously. His crime deserves the capital punishment," but, on the other hand, he said, "This is a tragedy caused by an honest accused, who had difficulties in communicating in the Japanese language. He gradually had to live in an isolated situation and became mentally ill. The accused and his family members were driven into a corner by the insufficient support for refugees by the Japanese government and the Japanese people and by the insensible speech and actions by particular members of society, which triggered this tragic murder case. Not all responsibilities are to be attributed to the accused." ("Tragedy", 1992) His feeblemindedness at the time of committing a crime was taken into account and he was sentenced to twelve years' imprisonment.

This case offered an opportunity to many people, not only the directly concerned people but also people in the community, to reflect on what they could have done to prevent this kind of tragedy from happening. In March 1988, a year after this murder case, the learning hours of the Japanese language at the centres were extended from three months to four months (429 hours to 572 hours). The number of counsellors for refugees at the Yamato Centre increased from one to four. However, this was not enough to support the life of

refugees after they begin their lives with only basic knowledge and language ability. Many volunteer Japanese language classes were born in various places around 1980.

The Preparation Period of SHPSA

The murder case shocked the people in Komano. Two Spanish Catholic nuns were among them. Sister Rosario and another sister visited the Komano Police on the day of the incident as soon as she heard the news about it on TV. Sister Rosario could not meet B.M. there, but she wrote a short note to him with the advice of the Police and she got a reply from B.M. in a few days. Since then, she supported him during the time of the trial, during his stay in prison, and after he was released from prison and went back to Cambodia in October 1998. Sister Rosario found him a place to live in Cambodia and accompanied him to that place with sufficient money to live on by himself.

Sister Rosario visited City Hall the following Monday, February 10, 1998, two days after the incident. She expressed her deep regret for having had no information about the refugees living in Komano. Sister Rosario, as a member of the foreign residents, reproached the authorities that they did not provide any information about the refugees to the Komano International Association, which was established about two years before the incident to promote friendship among foreign residents living in Komano. They did not tell the association that there were "other types of foreigners." (Beatrice, 1999) She requested that they inform her on how to make contact with the refugees directly.

Eventually, Sister Rosario and two staff members from City Hall visited the companies where refugees were working. They met refugees and talked to them in the Japanese language, but they could see that the refugees had difficulties in understanding them. Thus, they decided to have a meeting in order to understand the refugees' situation better.

In early April, two months after the incident, adults and children from about 13 families from Laos and Cambodia gathered in a restaurant in Komano. At that time, there were about 60 refugees from Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam (Imafuku, 1998, p.142), so most of them gathered. The Mayor of Komano was invited to the gathering as well. Sister Rosario and Sister Beatrice spoke to them as foreigners in the same community and asked them their reactions about the incident and what their urgent problems were. The memories of the incident were still vivid to the refugees, but they were afraid to be involved in it and did not want to talk about it. Their urgent need was to learn the Japanese language, because some of them had difficulties even in daily shopping. Thus, the Japanese class for refugees started.

Gathered were those who heard about the necessity for volunteers from the Sisters directly and from newspaper articles. At first, some volunteers taught the Japanese language in refugees' homes. Then, they began to gather at a cultural centre or at a junior college from two o'clock to five o'clock on the first and third Sundays of each month. They had no information about the model JSL classroom to follow, so they groped along in their own way. For those learners who had transportation problems, the Sisters drove them home. After they found that adults with children could not attend classes, volunteers began baby sitting for adult learners. When children got hungry, the Sisters asked a bakery to donate some snacks for them. The basic timetable of two sessions of learning with a snack time in-between was established.

The incident had a great impact on the citizens and the municipal administration in Komano. The city government decided to appropriate \400,000 (U.S$3,600) for supporting refugees in the fiscal year of 1988. It was reported that the financial aid to a volunteer group for refugees was the first one in Japan and it pioneered other groups. (Imafuku, 1998, p.143) With this financial aid and the donations from individuals and

groups, the spontaneous volunteer group became a formal group to support people from Southeast Asia.

The Start of SHPSA

In March 1988, those who were interested and involved in the volunteer support group gathered and decided the name and the regulations of the group. I participated in this group at this point. The original regulations were written by a member who knew the local administration well. The members discussed mainly the aims and the name of the group.

The members who gathered at the meeting agreed that their aim was to live together hand in hand with people from Indochinese countries. They did not use words such as 'aid' and 'help,' because they believed that those words had connotations of a power imbalance. They omitted those words from the name of the society. "Tonan-Asia Tomo no Kai" is the Japanese name. Its literal translation is "Society that is living together with people from Southeastern Asia." However, the regulations of the society show that the essential activities are to 'help' refugees.

The Definition of Members of SHPSA

According to the Regulations of SHPSA, Article three says, "This society consists of members who understand the needs of the people and their family members from Southeast Asia, cooperate to offer them the opportunities to learn the Japanese culture and language, and support their school attendance." Article 3.2 regulates two kinds of members. Active members are those who cooperate to tutor the Japanese culture and language, and supportive members are those who support fund raising and who supply learning materials.

These articles show that the members are tutors of the language and financial supporters. The important point is that learners are not included as the members in these regulations[37].

Today, most of the learners are from South American countries. Only a few people from Southeast Asian countries are learning the Japanese language. They are family members or relatives of former refugees.

The Aims of SHPSA

Article 4.1 of the regulations defines the aims specifically. It says,

> The society is:
> 1. To offer the places where people from Southeast Asian countries can learn the culture and language of Japan.
> 2. To support those who continue to study in institutions.
> 3. To support financially those who continue studying in institutions.
> 4. To support parents by babysitting while they are learning the culture and language of Japan.
> 5. To support the people from Southeast Asia in order to make their daily lives easier (SHPSA, 1988)

The main aims were to support the people from Southeast Asia to learn the Japanese culture and language and to support their daily lives. At first, members were thinking about their supports in a short time span, but they have come to realise that there were needs for a long time span such as educational system, election system or the pension plan. In order to solve these problems, the relationship between tutors and learners needs to be changed from the unilateral support to the bilateral community building.

Members of SHPSA have gradually changed since 1988. Today, most of the learners are the people from South American countries. SHPSA has been supporting them by

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[37] In reality, an annual general meeting has been held in the presence of both tutors and learners. However, the role of the general meeting is to report what is going on and the meeting does not work as a decision-making body. Thus, nobody seems to have checked the definition of the members of SHAPSA.

founding another supporting group for them. There are many beginners among the people from South American countries. With the increase of beginner learners, the former learners stopped coming to classes. The limited numbers of tutors does not allow them to have advanced classes for former learners. As long as SHPSA always opens its door to beginners, it is fully occupied with beginners' classes and there is no space for other levels.

However, whether or not to have advanced language classes for the former learners makes a big change to the character of the group itself. If advanced learners come to the classroom, members have to deal with the different kinds of problems that learners are facing. The problems in the lives of people from Southeast Asia have been changing with time. For example, when SHPSA was formed, most of the learners' children were small and guidance about higher education was not a problem for most of them. However, it became a serious problem after eleven years.

The regulations of SHPSA were written in March 1988. They were written in a hurry in order to form the society to receive a regular fund from the municipal government and they have not been revised nor discussed in detail since then. It is time to reexamine the regulations.

The regulations can be discussed on two points: whether to teach survival JSL or to aim for long term JSL learning; whether to offer minimum first 'aid' to the beginners of JSL or to aim 'community building' for both learners and tutors. In fact, it is not so simple to decide which to take, but it is necessary to clarify the aims of the group.

The Activities of SHPSA

SHAPSA has done various activities with refugees as follows:

Learning Activities

- Japanese Language Classes for Adults

Sunday classes
Volunteer Home Tutoring by Junior College Students

- Learning Supports for Children
  Volunteer Home Tutoring by Junior College Students
- Babysitting Service
- Support for Heritage Language Classes
  Lao Language Class
  Khmer Language Class

Life Supports

- Improvements to the social services of the local government
  Relaxation of the restrictions for moving into local governmental apartments for foreigners
  Preparation for parents, who have six-year-old children of the documents needed before entering school, in three different languages (Korean, Lao, Khmer)
- Assistance in daily lives
  Pension plan
  National Health Insurance
  Tax
  Law
  Acquiring driver's license
  School guidance/ Job hunting guidance
  Business
  Acquiring Japanese Nationality
- Publication of the newsletter in three languages (Japanese, Lao, Khmer)
- Cultural events
  Indochina Festival (1990, 1998)
  Citizen's Cultural Festival (selling ethnic food)
  Workshops on flower arrangement and tea ceremony
- Recreation
  Bus tour to the five lakes at the foot of Mt. Fuji
  Summer Camp in Ninomiya
  Barbecue party at Bodai
- Lectures
  Lecture on family planning
- Field trip
  Individual field trip to Laos and Cambodia
  Formal field trip to Brazil funded by the local government
- Support to the two ethnic groups
  Group of Laos
  Khmer Volunteer Group

The lists above show that SHPSA has done various activities. However, only few, if any, grasp what and how the group as a whole is doing, because each activity is planned by different members or different groups. Consequently, it is difficult to say what is the main purpose of these activities and what is the aim of SHPSA as a whole. Members have been busy doing each activity and there was little opportunity for them to reflect upon what they had done before. However, it is necessary to reflect upon the history of SHPSA, evaluate them and re-examine the main purpose of the group.

Profiles of Volunteers

In the interviews, participants related their personal histories along with the stories of their volunteer activities. These personal realities may vary, but there are some factors that are common among the volunteers. In this section, I provide a profile of each, focusing on the factors that led them to participate in the voluntary activities and that enabled them to continue. As I have mentioned in the chapter of methodology, pseudonyms have been used in order to maintain confidentiality. For the convenience of the writing, titles will be omitted from names and first names will be used though it is not common for Japanese people to call each other by their first names.

Shoichi Takeda

Shoichi, 60 years old, has been the president of SHPSA since its founding in 1988. He was asked to help the refugees by a Catholic nun named Rosario because he has been a member of a Catholic Church[38] in Komano City. Shoichi has known Junji, another leading

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[38] There is only one Catholic Church in Komano City, so most catholic Christians in Komano City are the members of this church.

member of SHPSA, in the church for more than 30 years and the nuns for more than 20 years.

Shoichi's father died when he was a small boy, so he was brought up by his relatives. Thus, he moved from place to place in Kanagawa Prefecture[39]. Not remaining in one place for a long time, he says that he is a kind of 'refugee' in the prefecture and that he does not stick to one place.

Shoichi studied education in a Catholic university. Though he did not grow up in a Christian home[40], he became a Christian. He began working as a teacher at a missionary school and worked there for four years. There was an orphanage in the school and he lived there with the orphans. He saw how Catholic nuns were working for the school and the orphanage. He does not always agree with the ways of Catholic nuns, but he has been used to working with them. He says that he learned the thinking and acting patterns of the foreign Catholic nuns. After quitting the missionary school, Shoichi worked in a public junior high school for four years, then became a senior high school teacher. He retired from a public senior high school in March 2000.

Shoichi has been involved in charity work for the church[41]. He advised students in his senior high school and introduced charity work into the activities of the Students' Council. There is a charity group[42], which is for people suffering from Hansen's disease on an island

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[39] Prefecture is a municipal governmental unit. There are 45 prefectures in Japan.

[40] Only 1% of the population is Christian in Japan. In most cases, those who become Christians in spite of their home religion are fully aware of the impact of being Christians.

[41] Voluntary work has come to be known for the last 15 years, but charity work had already been known among Christians in his generation. People in the younger generation are more interested in volunteer work such as development aid than the charity type of volunteer work.

[42] This group was formed in 1980 when Sister Rosario visited Culion Island in the Philippines. Today, this group is supporting people in several places in the Philippines and R.D. Congo. The annual expense of the year 1999 was more than \11,000,000 (U.S.$100,000).

called Culion in the Philippines. Sister Rosario has been in charge of this group and she visits his school to speak about charity work. Her open-minded character and unique speech in the Japanese language have had a strong impact on students and the charity work has been carried out in his school.

Sister Rosario often asks help from Shoichi, so he knows her well. He says that the life of nuns is totally different from the ordinary person's life, so they often know nothing of the ways of the world. Junji sometimes gets irritated this form of the nuns' naïvety, but Shoichi is used to it. He has been a mediator between the nuns and other members of SHPSA.

He was a teacher of English, which made him conscious about cultural differences in various ways. He has visited a refugee camp in Thailand twice, and in Laos and Brazil with other members of SHPSA.

Junji Fujita

Junji, 57 years old, became a member of SHPSA in 1987 and has been working for refugees as a volunteer and as a local government official. He always has many ideas for social change, but it is difficult for him to find ways to realise those big dreams.

Junji was born in 1942 and was brought up in Kita-Ku, Tokyo. In his childhood, Japan was still disordered in the aftermath of the Second World War. He remembers two different kinds of foreigners present at that time.

He saw many *Zainichi* Koreans in his neighbourhood because there was a school for Korean children. Not all his memories about them were good, but seeing the difficulties of the Korean residents in his early days affected his awareness and attitude towards the foreign residents in Japan. His basic attitude towards the foreign residents has not changed since his boyhood. He seems to have nurtured empathy with minorities in those days.

In those days, he saw American soldiers of the Occupation Forces as well. His impressions of American people were bad. Though he associates with various Americans now, he dislikes the United States as a nation state, particularly its despotic and self-righteous attitudes.

Junji recalls two completely opposite peoples, *Zainichi* Koreans and the American soldiers. The former is the people who were oppressed by the colonisation of Japan and have been suffering from the prejudices of the Japanese residents. The latter is the people who are oppressors whose nation state has a great power in the world politics.

Junji became a Catholic Christian when he was 21 years old, though he was not born in a Christian home. He studied religion and Christianity with other students from various universities for five years and helped the lecturer as an assistant for three years. Some of his acquaintances from this study group, such as a lawyer and a retailer, have been supporting his activities with the foreign residents.

Junji married a woman from Komano and moved there to became a local government official at the age of 26. What shocked him most in Komano was the exclusiveness towards people from other places in the local community and among his colleagues at City Hall. Junji cannot stand the insensibility of the local people of Komano, who have a tendency to socialise only with people with a similar background and cannot understand the feelings of people with different backgrounds. He said:

> Junji: Since I came to this city of Komano, I have felt a sense of incongruity. I always feel it. It is, in short, caused by discrimination. It is exclusiveness [of the people in Komano].

He relates his difficulties in Komano with those of refugees. He said:

> Interviewer: ... How did you feel?
> Junji: Exactly. I felt just like a refugee.
> Interviewer: I see. Then, you find some similarity in yourself. Do you share any consciousness with refugees?
> Junji: Sure. It is the problem of 'identity'. In short, I suffered from the confusion of my identity. ... I could not find a place to which I belong. There was no place where I could feel the stability of my mind. I suppose, it was exactly the same for the refugees in Japan. They must have felt very uneasy when they came into an entirely different society. That's why I can empathise with them.

He says that none of the volunteer members in SHPSA are the local people of Komano. In fact, none of them were born in Komano and all of them, except one, have moved to other places to live. He says:

> Interviewer: You say that it is a big help [for volunteers] if they have experiences of moving from one place to another?
> Junji: Yes, indeed, it is a big factor. All of them [who work as volunteersin SHPSA] want something [new]. It seems to me that those who became volunteers want to create something by themselves [without depending on what was given.]

Junji has experienced various kinds of volunteer activities. For instance, he played a leading role in creating ecumenical networks among churches in Komano. One of the results of his effort is the Christmas celebration gathering by citizens in Komano. The celebration has been held at the Municipal Cultural Centre every year since the beginning of the 1980s.

Junji once planned to construct a home for old people such as Catholic fathers, nuns and lay Christians. When he was planning this project in 1975, Vietnamese refugees had already been in Japan. Therefore, he also planned to accept some Vietnamese families as workers at the home for old people. In order to build the home, they had to move their church from the centre of the city. According to Junji, the plan was accepted by the 80% of

the church members, but 20%, mainly consisting of the local people, were against it because they wanted to keep their vested interests of being at the centre of the city.

Junji went abroad after he began associating with refugees in Komano. He visited Cambodia twice by himself. Each time, he spent about ten days there and visited the families and relatives of the Cambodian residents in Komano. At that time, few people visited Cambodia, because the Khmer Rouge were still in power and it was dangerous to visit the suburban area because of landmines. He also visited Brazil with two other members of SHPSA in order to learn about the country from which many learners in the JSL class recently came.

Junji has studied the Khmer and Vietnamese languages for three years each. Unlike his experiences of volunteer activities, Junji does not have any experience in teaching. He often thinks of various ideas and proposes them, but those ideas are often difficult to realise.

Hiroshi Kuruma and Chie Kuruma

Hiroshi, 44 years old, is one of the leading volunteers who established SHPSA and has been a tutor since 1987. He is a president of the Group of South America (GSA). He says that he began to participate in the volunteer activities after he heard the stories about the situation of the refugees in Komano City from a Catholic nun named Rosario. He says that he cannot remember any particular motivation to become a volunteer and that the nun asked for help from his colleagues as well.

Hiroshi was born in the neighbouring area of Kamano, he was brought up there and he has continued living in the same house. He is the only local person who has not moved from place to place.

He studied law at university and became an administration staff member of a junior college in Komano City. He came to know Catholic nuns at the Junior College, because nuns are living in a convent on the same campus. He is a Buddhist, not a Christian.

He had experienced teaching various things before he became a JSL volunteer tutor. He taught basic computer skills in a community college. He has taught the Japanese language to Korean people while he was learning the Korean language at the language centre in Korea for six months. He has a license for teaching flower arrangement and has taught it to a dozen people at home once a week from 1980 to 1990. Thus, teaching itself is not unfamiliar to him. He had not learned JSL methods formally, but he has had opportunities to learn the teaching methods of language through his colleagues who teach English as a Foreign Language.

He has learned various languages, such as Korean, Chinese, Lao, Khmer, English, German, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Esperanto.

He has visited various countries such as Korea, which he visited more than 20 times, Laos, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, France and Switzerland. He says that his experience in foreign countries made him open to different cultures. He was sent to a refugee camp in Thailand as a volunteer for one month in 1980.

His wife Chie, 53 years old, became a volunteer tutor after she married Hiroshi in 1993. She had the experience of teaching people as a computer instructor for 11 years until 1993, when she quit her job and became a housewife. She studied English literature at university and took a teacher's license of English for junior and senior high school students. She has visited Korea, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, France and Switzerland with Hiroshi and stayed in Singapore with her brother for two months. She has no other experience of volunteer work.

They both come to the JSL class regularly and are the leading members of SHPSA. They do not live in Komano City and come to Komano only for SHPSA.

Masaru Osanai and Junko Osanai

Junko, 44 years old, became a volunteer of SHPSA in 1992. Her friend, whose daughter had had a new classmate from a Spanish cultural background, learned that volunteers were needed to teach JSL to the parents of those children, and invited Junko to visit SHPSA. Realising that volunteers were much in need, she decided to become a volunteer, and asked her husband Masaru, 44 years old, to come with her. They have been regular volunteers of SHPSA since then. Masaru is a vice president of SHPSA and Junko is a treasurer of SHPSA.

Junko studied special education for children with disabilities in university and became a teacher of music soon after graduation. She had taught in a junior high school for three years before she moved to Komano because of the transfer of her husband.

When she was a college student, she and her college freinds formed a circle for children with disabilities. She belonged to the circle for four years and helped the parents of children with disabilities by taking care of the children on Saturdays. In those days, there was no formal education for children with disabilities, so those children had to stay home with no school or day care system for them to learn. The circle consisted of about 100 people. She was in charge of the administration of the circle and also published newsletters.

Junko has been suffering from diffuse collagen disease since her marriage, so she decided not to apply for a teacher's job after she moved to Komano. Instead, she began teaching piano lessons and has been giving piano lessons for about 18 years. At first, she was not confident enough to be a piano teacher, but now she is enjoying teaching piano lessons and watching the growth of each child. She is a conscientious teacher in various ways.

Junko has experienced various types of volunteer work. For example, she is a member of a supporting group for people with mental health problems. She was an editor of the newsletter of this group for about two years, when she retired because she had breast cancer and had an operation.

Junko took correspondent courses in Japanese language education for half a year in 1995. She found the courses theoretical rather than practical, but they taught her the foundation of Japanese language education. She has been learning English in a small circle of housewives with a native speaker. She learned basic Spanish in order to communicate with learners from South American countries. She utilises a Spanish dictionary to communicate with JSL beginners with a Spanish background.

Junko has been interested in social justice issues since she was a child. She does not believe in religion but she thinks that socialist countries in Northern Europe are close to her ideal society. She is an active and empathetic person. She has never been abroad.

When Masaru became a volunteer, he had no particular motivation except that his wife persuaded him to come with her. However, he has been teaching a JSL class for about seven years. He cannot always come to the classroom because of his work, but he has been trying to come as often as possible[43].

He studied computer science in university and became a computer engineer. He has learned English conversation for about two years for his work abroad. He has been to the United States seven times and remained there for up to a few months. He has also been to Europe three or four times and stayed there for a few weeks. In terms of teaching experience, he has taught managers for one year in his company.

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[43] Computer engineers usually work for long hours. Often, they have to work even on Saturdays and Sundays. Because of this working condition, it is rare to find volunteers with such a job. Considering that Masaru is a computer engineer in one of the big computer corporations in Japan, Masaru has been trying very hard to be a volunteer.

In terms of volunteer work, he was asked to become a president of a circle of sign language students in his company and has been in charge of it for several years.

Tomoko Mitani

Tomoko, 58 years old, became a member of SHPSA in 1988. At first, she volunteered as a babysitter for learners' children for two years. Then, she started teaching the Japanese language. After she volunteered several years, she stopped coming to SHPSA for about five years, but she began to come to SHAPSA again in1999.

Tomoko has taken various challenges after she became middle-aged. She wanted to be independent and began working at the age of 46. She began her career as an advisor at the Centre for Supporting Consumer Education, which is an organisation under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and the Economy Planning Agency. After working there for one year, she began working as an advisor at the Centre for Consumer in Tamaki. She has been working there since 1989. She has also worked at the Municipal Office in Tamaki since 1996.

Tomoko did not go to college when she was young, in common with women in her generation. She entered a junior college at the age of 51 and graduated in 1996. She passed the examinations to be a lecturer of consumer education in 1996 and to be an advisor for senior citizens in 1997.

With those licenses, Tomoko has been working as an advisor for consumers and as a lecturer of consumer education in various places such as senior high schools and technical schools. She is a specialist in storage and classification and gives lectures at various places. She is glad that she can utilise her knowledge as a housewife and a mother in her career.

Tomoko does not seem to be suffering from financial problems, but she says that she had experienced a hard time in managing on a small household budget. Her two sons could

not afford to go to school without the help of student loans. She says that she often felt that the transportation fee for her and her two sons to come to SHPSA became a burden[44], but that she came because she enjoyed meeting with various people.

Tomoko has volunteered in making lunch for the old people in the community. She enjoys making lunch and bringing it to the old people twice a year.

Tomoko visited a refugee camp in Thailand with Sister Beatrice and a female volunteer of SHPSA in 1988. She says that it was a shocking experience to her in the sense that she realised that her stable life as a Japanese now is only given by chance and she might have been born in an unstable situation in Cambodia. She felt that her stable life was a gift by chance. She shed tears when she met orphans the same age as her sons.

Tomoko decided to do what she could do lfor others when she received thoughtful and warm help in times of her difficulties. A neighbour took care of her two little sons when she got sick and had to stay in hospital. She also received a thoughtful offering from her friend when her husband lost his job. She could find no other ways to repay the kindness of her friends than to volunteer. Thus, she made contact with Sister Rosario and asked what she could do as a volunteer as soon as she read a news article that there was a murder case committed by a Cambodian man in Komano.

Tomoko was brought up by Catholic parents and has a cousin who is an Abbot. She says that she has been influenced by them though she has not been baptised as a Christian.

Tomoko is weak in health and has full time work, but she continues working as a volunteer as much as possible.

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[44] Volunteers are not paid at all, so they have to pay for their transportation themselves.

Machiko Sano

Machiko, 48 years old, became a volunteer in 1987. As soon as she read an article about the murder case in Komano and learned that Sister Rosario was trying to help refugees, she called Sister Rosario and asked what she could do for them. She soon visited Sister Rosario and was introduced to Chek and Rim. She visited the family once a week and took care of them for about half a year. That was the beginning of her activities before SHPSA was formally established. At that time, volunteers helped refugees in their daily lives.

After SHPSA was established, Machiko mainly taught housewives, who were still at the beginners' level of the Japanese language. Gradually, she realised that she needed language teaching knowledge as a tutor of the Japanese language. Thus, she participated in the summer seminar of JSL education in 1989. In the seminar, she learned that she had to learn more. Her husband said that the work done by volunteers stays within the limit of amateur activities. His words made her decide to study JSL education to become a professional teacher. She quit her job as a librarian, which had been her full-time job for five years, and began to study JSL education. She stopped coming to SHPSA in 1990.

Machiko studied JSL education at an institute of language education for 18 months and both Machiko and I passed the examination of Teaching Japanese Language Competency held by Ministry of Education in 1990. Then, she began to teach at a Japanese language school three days a week. She has been teaching the Japanese language as a professional teacher for 10 years. She has mainly taught students from other Asian countries such as Korea and China.

At the beginning of her career as a professional teacher, Machiko was busy in acquiring the necessary techniques as a language teacher, but she gradually came to question the teaching methods of a Japanese language school. She says that there is a tendency in a Japanese language school that only the teaching techniques matter and are discussed.

Teachers, in general, are eager to learn the techniques of teaching but not necessarily to question why they teach the Japanese language. She came to realise that what she wants to do is not teaching only techniques but teaching in a more social context of learning. She wants to consider Japanese language education again from the beginning of her experience with volunteer tutoring. She thinks that volunteer tutoring is her starting point.

Machiko also says that her motivation comes from the influence of Christianity. She went to a missionary school and was baptised as a Catholic during her junior high school days. However, she did not fully understand Christianity. She studied at a Protestant college and was strongly influenced by the lectures on Christianity. The professors there were deeply concerned about the student movements in those days and discussed the political issues with students.

After Machiko married a non-Christian, she was away from Christianity but she happened to meet a Catholic priest who has been working with volunteers involved in the community of people with disability. She learned about the Theology of Emancipation from the priest. In those days she knew the news of the murder case and became a volunteer in Komano.

Machiko was also influenced by the work of various NGOs and wanted to become a volunteer whose abilities are professional enough to help people in need. She did not want to become a volunteer who has a good intention but is not able enough to be of some help with necessary activities. However long she keeps on teaching in SHPSA, she says, she will not be able to be a professional teacher of JSL, which is different from her ideal volunteer tutoring. She thinks that being a volunteer does not give her/him an excuse to give insufficient teaching. That is why she decided to learn JSL education and became a professional. However, she says that Sister Rosario criticised her, saying that Machiko utilised the JSL classroom for her own purpose. Now, she wants to study more about adult

education and social education in the graduate school. She does not forget about the activities in SHPSA, but she thinks that she wants to work separately.

Machiko studied history in university and got a license for teaching junior and senior high school students. She did volunteer work during her college days. For example, she brought children to the camp in a rural area during summer holidays, and she was involved in a settlement movement with people in a rural community.

Machiko has been to the United States, Korea and Thailand.

Yuriko Kanao

Yuriko, 46 years old, became a volunteer in 1988. It was just before SHPSA was formally established as a group. She was an active member for three years, but she began to feel that she was not accustomed to the ways of SHPSA as a female member. She also became busy in doing her other activities. However, she kept contacts with the members of SHPSA in various ways, living in Komano City.

Yuriko became a teacher of senior high school after she studied French literature in graduate school. It is difficult to become a teacher of French in secondary education because of the scarcity of demand[45]. Thus, she became a teacher of English, but she felt guilty in teaching English with her ability of English. She quit her first job as a teacher of English and studied the Japanese language education from 1982 to 1983[46]. However, there were few job opportunities in JSL education in Japan in the beginning of 1980s[47] and the

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[45] In Japan, only few foreign languages other than English are taught in secondary schools.
[46] In those days, there were only few programs of JSL education offered by organizations except universities. She studied in the Training Program for Japanese Language Teachers offered by the Japan Foundation and the Society for Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language. It was an intensive course given to 15 participants by prominent lecturers of the Japanese Language Education Society.

society of the Japanese education was small, so she became a teacher of English again. She passed the examination of Teaching Japanese Language Competency in 1990[48].

Yuriko had had no experience of long-term volunteer work, so she decided to challenge herself with one in 1988. At that time, she was in charge of a volunteer club in the senior high school where she worked. She changed the policy of the club from charity to volunteerism. She arranged short-term volunteer work for students, such as visiting homes for old people, making arrangements for a circle of sign language, planning bazaars for NGO groups and so on. She had been supporting various NGO groups[49] since late 1970s and was interested in doing volunteer work. However, she had been busy with her full-time job as a teacher in a school with various problems, and with attendance at church service on Sundays in 1980s. After she became used to her job and stopped attending Sunday services, she became able to do extra activities on Sundays. Thus, she sought the advice of the welfare section of the Municipal Office in order to find volunteer work. She was advised to teach the Japanese language because she had studied JSL education before.

In 1988, Yuriko and her friends formed a learning group about Asia and Asian culture called 'Asian Breeze.' It was almost the same time that she began volunteering. She became interested in other Asian countries and visited India[50] with the members of a NGO group called 'Asian Health Institute' in the summer of 1988. She met many people who were working at NGOs in India and in Japan, and were impressed by their work. She came to know many people through the activities of 'Asian Breeze' and began to create a network

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[47] If she had studied a few years later, the situation of JSL education would have been completely different.

[48] The examination for Teaching Japanese Language Competency started in 1988 with an increasing demand for the Japanese language teachers since the middle of 1980s.

[49] She has been supporting such as Shaplaneer--one of the biggest NGOs in Japan started in the beginning of the 1980s--, Asian Health Institute, Médicins Sans Frontieres and so on.

of people who were interested in various problems in Asia. She enjoyed planning meetings for 'Asian Breeze,' where the members learned about various social issues such as the lawsuit case against the censorship of textbooks and the issues around compensation for people who suffered during the Second World War. At the same time, she learned the difficulties in organising a group.

She thought that development education should be introduced in formal education. Gradually, she became more involved in development education. She did not notice the importance of JSL education in formal education at that time, because she tutored only adults. College student tutors have been teaching the children of the foreign residents in Komano City, so it was difficult for her to notice the situation of the children. It took a long time for her to notice the problems of JSL teaching to diverse students in formal education.

Yuriko studied in a university based on Christianity and was influenced by Christian friends and faculty there. She became a member of the university ecumenical church and was baptised when she was 22 years old in 1976. After finishing the graduate school, she became a member of a Reformed Church[51], but she could not fit into the rigid, intolerant and conservative atmosphere of the denomination. She had attended church regularly before she stopped attending Sunday services in the late-1980s.

Though Yuriko did not fit into the church community, she learned from many Christians around her. One of the most significant influences was that she learned political activism by becoming a member of the supporting group of the lawsuit case[52] on the issue

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[50] She has been fostering a child in India since the late 1970s, so she wanted to learn more about India.

[51] It is a denomination of Presbyterian Church based on Calvinism. Not a few of reverends are theological scholars and church members study the Bible well. It is not a fundamentalist denomination.

[52] It is called *'Tsu-jichinsai iken sosho* [The lawsuit against the violation of the constitution by the Shinto ceremony for purifying a building site held in Tsu City]." The case went

of the separation of politics and religion. She learned that many conscientious individuals were fighting against the oppression of the hegemony of the Japanese society that disregards the rights of the minorities. She became conscious about the violation of human rights, since she learned the importance of protecting the rights of minorities through this lawsuit case.

Yuriko participated in various seminars and workshops of English language teaching, development education, human rights education and so on. In order to learn various educational methods, she visited England, Australia, Thailand, Burma, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, the Netherlands and Canada. She met scholars who translated the books written by Paulo Freire into the Japanese language in the workshops in Thailand and was influenced by them.

Yuriko decided to study in Canada after she participated in the global education seminar in Canada in 1996. She has been studying at OISE/UT since autumn of 1997.

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against the plaintiff in the Supreme Court in 1977. The opinion of the majority judges was that the Shinto ceremony for purifying a building site should be regarded as a secularised ceremony. The people who supported the plaintiff wanted to be conscious about the use of Shinto by the nationalistic power that was typically seen during the Second World War. Not only Christians but also Buddhists and believers in small religions supported the plaintiff and formed a supporting group. Yuriko happened to be a treasurer of the supporting group and learned about the case by lawyers.

Chapter Five: Analysis and Presentation of Volunteers' Attitudes and Thoughts

The Japanese Language Learning Support or the Life Support

The difficulty in bringing the JSL classroom together is that each volunteer has her/his own views on the activities that s/he wants to focus on in the group. One of the main differences among the volunteers is their attitude toward the JSL learning support and the life support activities. The four categories of volunteers' attitude toward JSL learning by Tomiya (1998) give a quick overview of the differences. These are four categories:

1. The aim of the [volunteer] activity is 'JSL teaching' and it is the only thing volunteers want to deal with.
2. Life support activities and the exchanges among members are also the aims of activities. Volunteers want to do life support and exchanges as well as 'JSL teaching.'
3. The main aims of the activities are life support and the exchange. 'JSL teaching' is only one of those activities.
4. Volunteer activities are the opportunities for volunteers to satisfy their own intellectual activities and curiosity. (p.29)

These categories can be applied to the attitudes of the volunteers of SHPSA. The first three categories above characterise the different attitudes among the members in SHPSA. Hiroshi and Chie represent category 1, Junji represents category 3, and the other volunteers represent category 2. As Tomiya points out, it is important to have diverse opinions in a group in order to support diverse activities. However, if members have difficulties in discussing matters positively and openly and in negotiating among themselves, these different opinions prevent the members from setting a goal, sharing their opinions about the goal and cooperating organically in order to realise it. (p.29)

The volunteers in SHPSA have been aware of the differences among them for these 12 years, but seldom discuss them in the meetings. According to Shoichi, some of the members of SHPSA tried to discuss various issues in the early days. However, they soon found it difficult to reach the same conclusion, so they leave the issues untouched because they fear splitting the group. Shoichi says as follows:

> Interviewer: In SHPSA, (...) I think each has an image of the group and those images are different. How have you made up them [those different images] into one as the President?
> Shoichi: Well, volunteers have strong personalities. After all, they work without any reward. So, basically, they don't want to be directed by others. If there are companions, they work together. That's the basic idea of volunteers. (...) I often discussed with Hiroshi, though we don't recently. (...) But, it's better not to. How can I say, we are dealing with people [in volunteer work], so 'Let's be kind to them [refugees].' That kind of loose framework can tie us, or 'We can work together because we are enjoying the work.' (...) We have different opinions, but we had better not be involved in the differences. (...) For example, there is a proposal to make this group into an NGO, but on the other hand, there is an opinion that it is too much. If we try to realise it, we cannot compromise with each other. So, I feel it's better not to dare so. (...) We've been getting along well, so I don't want to step into a new thing and break our relationships. I think it's difficult to do volunteer work in Japan. (...)
> Interviewer: What did you talk about with Hiroshi? How do you differ from him?
> Shoichi: Well, we differ in details. (...) If we discuss things and try to realise something, it is very difficult. (...)

Tomiya explains this kind of group dynamics as follows:

> In order to solve them [the differences of the attitudes toward the support of JSL learning], they have to have thorough discussions. However, if they discuss the differences, they have to confront their opposing views on communication, volunteer activities, human beings, values and beliefs. Thus, they tend to avoid

> the discussions on these views from the consideration of maintaining the relationship among the volunteers. (p.32)

This applies to the attitudes of the members of SHPSA. Instead of discussing the differences concerning the fundamental attitudes, they have been continuing the activities under the tacit agreement that at least JSL teaching is the common ground of the group activities. It was difficult to deal with life support issues as a group, so particular members have been involved in life support issues as individuals. Members do not share the problems in their lives in a positive way. Consequently, it is difficult to try to find the alternatives in JSL learning that combine language learning and life support issues.

At first glance, JSL education seems to be the goal set from the needs of the learners, but in reality, it is the most negotiable goal for everyone from the consideration of the group dynamics. In this sense, it is a passive goal for the volunteers, and in the long run JSL teaching becomes routine. They may end up repeating the same thing for a long time without changing their attitude. I think that this tacit agreement has weakened the attitude of the volunteers to undertake challenging new projects for these 12 years: through the interviews with them I found them tired, without the zest they had had at the beginning.[53]

Besides, as Tomiya points out, there is a premise that foreign residents are facing their difficulties because their JSL ability is insufficient. (p.29) This might lead to the simple and easy conclusion that foreign residents would live comfortably if their language ability improves. This notion, in some cases, prevents volunteers from tackling with other social

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[53] There are other factors that make them tired. For example, the main problems are the lack of human and financial supports. There is also discouragement in the decrease of media coverage that had encouraged volunteers in the first period of their activities. To those who have been working without any reward, media coverage was a great encouragement in a sense. However, as time goes by, the issues about refugees disappear from the media. Shoichi himself admits that he often wrote to the newspaper about the activities, but that he has stopped writing these days.

barriers as problems of their own society that affect foreign residents. It also prevents volunteers from thinking of other potentials of JSL classroom in the community. I am going to examine the different opinions of the volunteers in the following section.

Differences and Equality

Hiroshi insists that JSL education should be the only thing that he can do for foreign residents in Japan. He repeats again and again that what he can do is to teach the Japanese language to foreign residents who have trouble with language learning and he does not want to do more than that. Hiroshi's attitudes come under Tomiya's category 1. Chie, his wife, agrees with him, but other members of SHPSA do not emphasise the necessity of limiting volunteer work within JSL teaching as Hiroshi does. Most of them think that both JSL teaching and life support are necessary, though those who are involved in life support are few. Hiroshi explains the reasons as follows:

> Interviewer: Did you do many things [to support refugees' life around 1987]?
> Hiroshi: No, I did little. [My stance was to stand back looking at it thinking,] "Ah, there are problems like that." I mean, I have no human connections in Komano City, so I cannot help refugees to find jobs, and I cannot give them any advice to find apartment houses. I cannot help them to solve the problems of car accidents. So, my stance is that I know there are those problems [but I don't commit to solving them]. I participated in SHPSA after we began teaching JFL.
> Interviewer: Hum, hum. So, your stance is clear. You have limited your activity to that of a JSL tutor?
> Hiroshi: Yeah. But, unlike me, Mr. Fujita has a strong commitment to finding apartment houses, solutions for car accidents or housing problems. Well, he still regards it as important. His motivation comes from that kind of thinking background.

Hiroshi says that he is a bystander in terms of solving the daily problems of refugees, but it does not mean that he is cold-hearted. He has been a JSL tutor for 12 years and has been helping foreign residents who are in need of the Japanese language learning. He is a benevolent helper. However, he distinguishes strictly between what he can and what he cannot do.

Hiroshi is also conscious about the difference between the ideas about the volunteer work between Junji (Mr. Fujita) and himself. Hiroshi seems to stick to his stance as a bystander regarding support of daily life, which Junji has been actively involved in. He explains this again as follows:

> Hiroshi: On the contrary, I think that I cannot help refugees to organise local communities or activities. I think I shouldn't commit to that kind of things. Much less, can I help refugees to find jobs or take care of the problems of traffic accidents as a [member of a volunteer] group? I cannot do that kind of thing. For instance, it's another thing to help a person whom I know well as an individual. In that case, it is not a problem if the person has a different nationality or her/his personality. If a friend is in trouble, I will help her/him. It's different from taking responsibilities as a group of SHPSA. When we help people as a group, I think that helping people to find jobs or to take care of the accidents or housing problems is not what we should do. I don't think I can do that. We shouldn't do that.

Hiroshi thinks that life support can be provided on an individual basis and there is no problem for him to help someone as a friend but that he should not commit to the life support as a group. Hiroshi says that there should be the distinct limitation of what should be done and what should be left undone. The following part shows why Hiroshi thinks like this:

> Hiroshi: (...) I will listen to their [refugees'] stories, and I will say various opinions, but I only say my opinions as an equal person. It's not my job to do something for them. Well, considering their abilities to solve various problems, it is difficult for them to solve those problems. It's not because their abilities are not enough, but because of the characters of the problems relating to politics, economy and what their children think about their [parents'] native countries.
> Interviewer: (...) Don't you want to do something for them [refugees] as a citizen?
> (...)
> Hiroshi: No, I don't. If you say it like that, for example, to put it in an extreme way, your question is the same as I do want to do something for Japanese people who are in need.

Hiroshi's assumption is that there is no difference between refugees and Japanese people and that everyone, whether or not a refugee, has some difficulties. He thinks that it is discriminative to find differences between refugees and him because they are equal.

In the following part, Hiroshi and Chie, share almost the same opinion that the administration should do something for refugees and ordinary citizens should not be involved in it.

> (...)
> Hiroshi: What do you think after you heard what I'm saying, Chie?
> Chie: What do I think... let me see, ... we are in the position of guiding in JSL teaching, but I don't think we can take a position of guiding other things.
> Interviewer: I don't think that we are 'guiding', but I think that there are two kinds of support in JSL classrooms and they are mixed, namely, life support and JSL teaching, when I look at the examples of various classrooms. But the balance of these two factors depends on the group. Perhaps the numbers of the volunteer tutors of JSL, budgets, and the scale of the group will determine it. So, for example, if we can teach only twice a month in a limited time, what we can do is limited to JSL teaching. If the group is big enough to have a bureau where the staff always works for them, they can support their life. Perhaps, there are differences like that.

Hiroshi: I think there is a discriminative consciousness in that way of thinking.
Interviewer: What is the discriminative consciousness?
Hiroshi: The discriminative consciousness is, say, the consciousness that they are different.
Interviewer: Hum.
Hiroshi: I feel it sometimes.
Interviewer: For example?
Hiroshi: For example, saying that we do this and that for them [refugees], [it is discrimination]. How can I say it, among them [refugees], there are people who took residential status or became naturalised as Japanese citizens[54]. They are working with us in Japan and they are earning salary and they are living in Japan.
Chie: We are equal, aren't we?
Hiroshi: We have equal status. Though we are equal, the opinions such as [refugees are] special, this and that, to do something for them, I dislike such opinions. That's why I intentionally limit my position within certain things. Well...
Chie: We are ordinary citizens. As ordinary citizens, I feel it's strange that there are volunteers who are working in a bureau [for the support of refugees]. I feel it's strange. If the government deals with those issues, or if the Refugee Assistance Headquarters help them, those institutions are for refugees to advise them from the position of guidance.
Hiroshi: Yes.
Chie: Those are institutions for them, but if ordinary citizens...
Hiroshi: [If they] advise certain people, it is strange, isn't it?
Chie: If there are volunteer groups like that, I wonder if they can be called volunteers. (Laughter) I feel strange.
Hiroshi: What I wanted to say is just the same as you said. Primarily, it is what the administration should do, and they should do it fairly. If we help only the people in our group, in short, it's discrimination, if it's good or bad. It is there that the discrimination begins.

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[54] He used a word *'kikasuru'*. It is a verb meaning 'naturalise'. It is different from *'kokuseki o toru'* that means 'to get a citizenship'. The former is from the perspective of the nation state that permits people to become citizens and the latter is from that of the citizen to get a citizenship.

There are three ideas that affect their attitudes. First, Hiroshi thinks that he is equal to the foreign residents. Hiroshi does not want to see any difference between the foreign residents and him, because he thinks that it is a discriminative attitude to try to find differences in the foreign residents. He thinks that he should treat foreign residents equally and that it is presumptuous of him to 'support' them. In fact, as an individual, he seems to associate with foreign residents without discrimination. He thinks that he is equal to the foreign residents, thus he should not treat them differently in any sense. However, the problem is that he does not see the inequity in the larger framework of society. He does not understand that he is superior to the foreign residents in the power relations and he does not have the notion that he is equal to them even though he is different from them.

Secondly, Chie thinks that she cannot 'guide' people in their life, because 'guiding' people is the job of the institutions that are in the position of 'guiding' them. However, Chie thinks that she can 'guide' the foreign residents in JSL teaching. She does not seem to realise the political aspect of teaching a language as a native speaker who has the ability to 'guide' foreigners. If she does not notice the power relations between the native speaker and the non-native language learners, she becomes superior to the learners.

Thirdly, Hiroshi thinks that public institutions solve the problems of the foreign residents fairly. He thinks that it is unfair for volunteers to support only the limited number of people around them.

Hiroshi and Chie never criticised the present social system during the interview. They do not seem to doubt the fair 'guidance' from the authorities. As long as they limit the help within the personal relationships, they do not have to challenge the status quo of the broader system that impacts the lives of foreign residents in Japan. As long as they do not see the political aspect of teaching languages, they do not have to face the larger issues in JSL teaching.

On the other hand, Junji (Mr. Fujita) is aware of the necessity of changing the broader social system. He has been trying to change the attitudes of his colleagues in the municipal government. He points out that the authorities lack the understanding and consciousness on the human right issues of refugees. He says as follows:

> Junji: (...) They [the officials at the municipal government] didn't recognise them [people from Southeast Asian countries] as refugees. They regarded them [people from Southeast Asian countries] as simply general foreign residents. In short, they didn't understand the meaning of 'refugees.'
>
> Interviewer: It was you that wrote the manuscript of the rules of SHPSA, wasn't it? When you wrote the rules, what did you consider important?
> Junji: Well, [I think that it is important to have] a point of view of 'refugees,' so, I considered the protection of human rights [important]. Then, what do we have to do [for refugees]? For example, the language problems, life problems, and the problems of customs. How to solve those problems, how to have officials understand those problems, those were the things that I put weight on when I had to appeal to my colleagues. Through the process, for about five years, there were many troubles [in dealing with those issues]. (...) In terms of the dealing with them [refugees], in the municipal government or in the municipal section, in short, they don't recognise refugees, so their understanding is that the treatment of the foreign people should be different [from citizens], see, we should not be involved in helping [refugees]. They only have that kind of understanding.

Junji's attitudes are completely different from Hiroshi's. Junji has been trying hard to have his colleagues in the municipal government understand the human rights issues regarding refugees, such as the health insurance, the pension system and the tax system. His understanding of the refugees is that they have the same human rights as local residents, so the government should treat them as equally as possible. He is critical of the exclusive attitudes of his colleagues toward refugees. Because Junji is a municipal government official, he has been dealing with mainly the life problems as part of his work. That is why

Junji regards the language problems as part of the whole problem. His attitudes take on Tomiya's category 3. As far as I know, Junji has not explained the problems of refugees like this in the meetings of SHPSA. It means that the members seldom share this important information about the refugees with each other. In order for the members to get along well, they have avoided discussing critical issues.

Participation of the Learners to Indochinese Festival

If there is a lack of consensus among the members of a group, they have problems in carrying out a plan. For example, the volunteers faced those problems caused by the lack of consensus during the process of the Indochinese Festival in 1998. Even though Hiroshi acknowledges the good intentions and good works of the other members, he points out the lack of consensus on the policy of the group among the members, which he thinks puts a burden on the weakest of the group. He explains the situation of no consensus of the policy at the event as follows:

> Hiroshi: ... Well, if my word sounds like I am criticising people who are involved in those things now, I don't mean it. They are doing what they can do within the limitation of their abilities, so I think that they are doing good things. But the problem is the difference between doing good things and the group responsibilities. It is the most difficult [to distinguish the two], because the difference is vague. I'm going back to the topic of the festival, that kind of event will be a burden to the limited members, if we plan it in an irresponsible manner. (Chie laughs.) The difficulties in carrying out the event pass on to the weakest of the group and some people will cry, cry and cry and never show up in the group again. (Chie laughs.)
> Interviewer: Don't they eventually show up afterwards?
> Chie: That reminds me that they don't. (Laughter)
> Hiroshi: (Laughter)

Hiroshi: ... [This] sounds like I'm complaining, but the person who had to be in charge of the event of the Indochinese Festival had a lot of difficulties.
Interviewer: For what?
Hiroshi: I mean difficulties ... difficulties lie in various stages. First, there are difficulties that are beyond our abilities, which we have to deal with after we decide what to do. Then, there are difficulties we have to go through in the process of deciding what to do and reconciliation. Lastly, there are difficulties of ambiguity of something incomprehensible, before we decide what to do. This cannot be said a difficulty, but this is exactly caused by irresponsibility or compromise. This kind of difficulty...
Interviewer: You mean the person experienced the third kind of difficulties?
Hiroshi: Yes. In fact, it were not members of SHPSA that organised the Indochinese Festival, but the people of Z Company and the volunteer group related to Z Company that organised the festival and...
Chie: The members of the steering committee were those people, weren't they?
Hiroshi: The members of the steering committee were not the members of SHPSA.
...
Interviewer: Why did it end up like that? Why did you have to organise the festival in such a way?
Hiroshi: Well, (with a bitter smile) there was a necessity...
Chie: How long, the tenth year?
Interviewer: Was it because it was the tenth anniversary [of SHPSA]?
Hiroshi: Yes.
Interviewer: But, there was a choice of not celebrating it if it was so difficult to carry it out, wasn't there?
Hiroshi: Well, in the choices of doing it, there was a reason for continuing our group. There was a simple reason of holding some event regularly, but there was, of course, a political reason for continuing the group.
Chie: Yes. It was then that we began to receive financial support from the Refugee Assistance Headquarters.
Hiroshi: Then, it is important to appeal to the Refugee Assistance Headquarters that we are doing this and to ask them to continue funding to our group.
Interviewer: Does the appeal need to be that kind of event?
Hiroshi: No. Let me say an opposite opinion that I took responsibility in planning a seminar, about three years ago, of the teaching methods of JSL. The Refugee Assistance Headquarters funded it. I think that it was within my responsibility.

...

Hiroshi: Let's offer a place where the volunteers learn the teaching methods of JSL. I suggested that we should invite lecturers and that we should have an opportunity for discussion. That kind of planning is within my responsibility.

The various problems in the group can be seen in this conversation. First, the Indochinese Festival did not create good relationships among the members of SHPSA, because the planning process was not shared among the members based on mutual agreement. A special committee for the festival was established because the festival was funded on its own. According to Junko, who is in charge of accounts, the festival was planned only among the temporary members for the event that was funded by the N Foundation. The chair of the committee had difficulties because of the lack of consensus among the members of SHPSA. Hiroshi points out the group irresponsibility for planning an event too big for such a small group. Hiroshi mistook the name of the sponsor of the event for the Refugee Assistance Headquarters. It shows that only a limited number of people knew the details of the plan.

The most crucial point is that people from Indochina did not join the planning of the Indochinese Festival, though this festival was for the tenth anniversary of SHPSA. The first Indochinese Festival in1990 was held because people from Cambodia wanted to celebrate their New Year's festival in their traditional style. In 1990, refugees participated in the preparation of the festival. It was meaningful for the refugees in the community to celebrate their own New Year's festival, because it was the first time to plan such a cultural festival for them. Though some Japanese volunteers took the leadership, it was still a significant event to them. However, as of the year 1998, people from Indochinese countries lived in the community for more than 10 years and acquired abilities to plan such a festival. Considering this fact, the planning without including refugees was problematic.

This shows that refugees are still guests to the community and not the members of the society. Junko says as follows:

> Junko: It was all Japanese members that prepared [for the festival]. For example, if there is a program of Lao traditional dance, Lao people take the initiative in the dance lessons or the preparation of costumes. But, it was we, the Japanese members that planned the program and requested the related persons. We decided to do the festival, because we received a fund of a million yen from the N Foundation. So, we formed a steering committee for the festival, instead of doing it as SHAPSA. Mr. Z was the chairperson of the committee. There must have been members from SHPSA in the steering committee, but they had their own work to do. So, when the day of the festival was drawing near, their ideas on how to carry out the festival became different. That's why the atmosphere in the group grew uneasy. To tell you the truth, all of them became emotional.

The event was originally planned with the intention of celebrating the tenth anniversary of SHPSA. People from Indochinese countries have learned to live in the community and have power to organise their own festival for these 10 years. If they organise a festival of their own, which they could not organise alone ten years ago, it must be a good opportunity for them to gain confidence in themselves. I believe that having them at the centre of the festival is the most empowering way of building the community partnership among all the participants. However, the reality is that the initiative of the event was pushed off onto people outside SHPSA. Thus, the result of the events was not successful in terms of building good relationships among the members and creating networks in the community.

Hiroshi points out that the main aim of the event is a political one in order to appeal for funding, and the aim of benefiting the learners became secondary. If the contribution of the refugees is limited to performing the traditional dance, they are treated as guests forever and not treated as equal citizens. The most important thing is for the Japanese volunteers to ask the opinions of the people from Indochina. If they had joined the planning and thought

about what should be done for their community building and their empowerment, the result would have been different.

The Function of Offering a Place for Foreign Residents to Gather

Masaru participated in SHPSA in 1992 and realised that it was difficult to find a common ground among the volunteers. He believes JSL teaching is the most concrete activity that SHPSA has been practising. He says:

> Masaru: What we are doing there [in SHPSA] is to teach the Japanese language. It is a very simple and concrete activity different from various activities that many members suggested. The simple activity of JSL teaching is, in fact, nothing but the act of teaching and there is no implication in it. Perhaps, unexpectedly, the fact that the activity is too concrete, contrary to our belief, enables us to continue [SHPSA]. Whatever plans various members and Mr. Fujita have, say, inviting Buddhist priests [from Indochina to their community] or doing something else, those are totally different from the activity of JSL education. JSL teaching is a very simple activity and no one will oppose it. I guess this concrete activity makes us tied to SHPSA.
> Interviewer: Admitting it's true, this is a kind of very severe question to ask, to what extent JSL teaching can be successful? What do you think?
> Masaru: It's a little successful. No, I can't say 'little', because some tutors teach it well in their own way. But I'm (laughter) teaching inconsistently.

He also admits that the JSL tutoring offered by volunteers is not always an effective one, but that SHPSA has been offering a place for foreign residents to gather. He says:

> Masaru: I think I'm "*cat's hands*[55]".

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[55] There is a Japanese saying, "I want to have the help of a 'cat's hands.'" It means that I am so busy that I would like to have the help of anybody.

Interviewer: Well, learners come irregularly. So, I know well that it is very difficult to run the classroom, yet I'm asking hard questions.
Masaru: In that sense, I mean the effect of JSL learning is, I don't say not at all, but the learning is not half as effective as it should be.
Interviewer: Then, why do learners come to the classroom?
Masaru: Well, it's because, I guess, people come to the place to meet their compatriots. I think, as expected, there are many people who want to meet those people. In fact, there are quite a few people who want to go out together or go out to enjoy themselves after the class. I feel that they come to the class for that purpose. Those who cannot understand Japanese have a tendency to come to meet people much more. Perhaps, it is because those who barely understand Japanese may have difficulty in spending holiday time. They might think, "If I go there, I can meet compatriots. I can talk and enjoy with them." I guess we are offering this kind of a place to them. I think it is meaningful in its own way. There is a pretext of learning Japanese for them to come to the place. I guess it might be difficult for them to come to the place if they have no pretext. It will give them a chance to communicate, to communicate with others. We are offering such a place: a place to gather. I think that more than half of the significance of the JSL classroom is this.
Junko: May I cut in? I now see that a JSL classroom is like a garden. There, people gather to ask questions rather than to study something. They even come to ask only one question, as if they were waiting for the opportunity. And one more important thing is that we are getting to know each other as a natural result of meeting at each class. Eventually, on holidays, when they have nothing special to do, if they come to the classroom, they can see someone whom they know, whether they are Japanese or other members. It's nice to see people without any selfish motives. There's JSL learning, but meeting people who care for them is something more meaningful, especially for foreigners, it is important to know that there are caring people.
Masaru: For them, JSL learning is a kind of pretext for gathering. I think it's meaningful enough to offer a pretext [for gathering]. I think that offering a pretext itself is the aim of SHPSA. Even if the effect of JSL education is not so obvious. It seems to me that this aim is one of the original aims of the group, so it's good. I think everybody there [in the classroom], a learner or a tutor, does not necessarily expect too much from the JSL learning. That's my guess. That's all. (Laughter)

Junko adds her opinion that it is important for foreign residents to know that there are people who care for them. Masaru and Junko are trying to speak from the point of the view of the learners. However, Masaru and Junko have not asked the learners what kind of needs and care they want. He admits that they are guessing what the learners are thinking one-sidedly. He says:

> Hiroshi: I mean to listen to the needs of the learners...
> Interviewer: Yes, yes, yes. So, when I look back, I wonder to what extent we listened to the needs of the refugees. I don't think much.
> Masaru: Well, I'm sure we haven't heard the opinions of the learners. We are guessing, from our side, one-sidedly, we are guessing what the learners are thinking. It is true that this problem would be solved if the learners spoke actively. But in reality, it is very difficult. I think it is most proper that we should create the environment where we can listen to their opinions. But, we might be afraid of listening to their opinions.
> Interviewer: I know what you mean.
> Masaru: Probably, they have a lot of needs or requests. But, we're half-afraid that we won't be able to respond to their requests. So, we dare not to listen to them. We can do only what we can do. So, we don't think straightforward that if we listen to their needs, then we can solve their problems. The attitude that we only do what we can result is at the root.
> Interviewer: After all, this is a Japanese-centred group.
> Masaru: Yes. Yes, indeed. ... It is true that our group is Japanese-centred, but, I don't know much about their needs, but if there are various kinds of supporting groups, maybe one of them will respond to the needs. I'm sure. If those groups become more and more active, it is idealistic. That's as it should be. But, we haven't had a background to locate those various groups. The public organisation should back up those groups. I feel like that.

As Masaru points out, the reason why the volunteers do not ask for the needs of the foreign residents is that they are afraid of listening to their opinions, because they are worrying that they cannot respond to the needs and requests of the learners. Their time and energy, and

human and financial resources are limited. They fully realise that what they can do is limited, which is not enough to respond to the needs of the foreign residents, but at the same time, they have benevolent intentions of 'doing something good to others.' That is why they are afraid of knowing more about the reality. Instead of listening to the opinions of the learners and discussing their problems, they guess their needs and they do only what they can do. This is a one-sided way of creating the relationship. They have not been able to create an open and equal relationship among the members, and clarify what and why they can or cannot do certain things and how they can deal with what they cannot do. They have not done this not only between the volunteers and the learners, but also among the volunteers. Thus, they do not know what other group members can do. The volunteers do not know each other's potential abilities, because they do not share the information about themselves, either.

In addition, they have not created networks with other organisations, so they have to deal with everything by themselves. Masaru says:

> Masaru: I guess, this might be the opinion of Mr. Takeda [the President of SHPSA]. Unlike other groups, he cuts off the relationships with other volunteer groups and excludes the troublesome bonds as much as possible. If we have various bonds, we will be overwhelmed. Then, we won't be able to continue our activities. He thinks like that.

They have supported foreign residents using their own networks to a certain extent, but the networks some members have used are personal networks, not the networks open to all the members of SHPSA. Unless all the members have access to the networks, it is difficult for them to be open to the needs and requests of the foreign residents. Consequently, they guess the needs of the learners and they do only what they can do. The relationship between volunteers and the foreign residents is not an empowering one, unless they

become open to each other. If the volunteers feel powerless, how can they create an empowering community? The volunteers, too, have to be encouraged in order to learn the alternative ways to create empowering relationships with foreign residents in Japan. What the public organisations should do is to support volunteers in creating networks of volunteers to lesson the burden of their activities. Even if the activities that volunteers of a group can do are limited, other volunteers or organisations will be able to support them through networks. For example, there are not enough volunteers in SHPSA to offer an advanced course of the Japanese language learning, but there are other groups that have advanced courses. If a learner wants to participate in it, SHPSA will be able to introduce her/him to those groups. Learners will have wider choices to attend JSL classrooms depending on their situations, such as levels, dates, and locations. It may be convenient for housewives to attend the classroom during the day on weekdays, but workers prefer to go to the classroom at night or on weekends. It is necessary to have wider choices of the classrooms. Masaru has noticed this, but he has not said his opinions in SHPSA, considering the relationship among them. The volunteers have to change their relationship among them in order to use their limited resources effectively, but it is difficult.

Chapter Six: Learners' Needs and Thoughts

Who are the Learners of the Japanese Language?

Many learners of the Japanese language in community-based JSL classrooms are refugees, foreign workers from so-called 'developing' countries, returnees from China and women who came from Asian countries, such as China, Korea and the Philippines, and married Japanese men. Most of them are forced into the peripheral sphere of Japanese society, because of social, economical and political reasons. Their status in the power relationship of Japanese society is low and unstable. In that sense, they are 'powerless.' In fact, except those who were fortunate to have had a higher education in Japan, it is difficult to become white-collar workers. Mostly, they become blue-collar workers and have to work in a severe condition described as "3K[56]".

It takes a long time for non-native adult learners to acquire reading and writing skills in Japanese, especially when learners do not have the background knowledge of 'Chinese characters'. Even learners who can speak and listen fairly well cannot always read and write because of the complex describing system of Japanese. This prevents culturally diverse people from having quality jobs. In this sense, their situation is similar to those who have been suffering from illiteracy in the marginal society in Japan for a long time[57].

What do these people need most in JSL classrooms? When they are asked what they need, they often respond that they want to learn the Japanese language. However, when they say 'learning the Japanese language', does that mean only to acquire the functions of

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[56] The meanings of 3K are *Kitsui*=hard, *Kitanai*=dirty and *Kiken*=dangerous.

[57] Many of them are the first generation *Zainichi* Koreans, 'Burakumin [outcast people]", and day labourers in doss house districts, who did not have opportunities to have education for some reasons. Some of them become learners in literacy classes or night junior high schools.

the Japanese language? That is the question. What they need most is the feeling of accomplishment that they can get when they become able to read and write. That is to say, recovering their self-esteem is the most significant aspect. Both self-esteem and literacy are needed, and literacy without self-esteem is a fairly limited accomplishment. Ishii pointed out that the most important thing for the women who are married to Japanese men in rural areas is to really feel that they are respected as a social member of the community. (Ishii, 1997, p.163)

There are people who have had higher education in their native countries. Ishii points out that many of the women who married Japanese men in the northern rural areas in Japan do, in fact, have a higher education and worked as professionals before they came to Japan. (Ishii, 1997, p.163) However, the prevailing images of "Foreign Brides" are stereotyped images of women from "underdeveloped" countries. Ishii says, "There is a great gap between the self-images of their previous lives and those of their present lives in Japan." (p.163)

What feelings do they have when they realise that there is little hope in utilising their knowledge and skills? It must be the feeling that their significance of being is at risk or totally denied. If their knowledge and skills are closely related to their native culture, their feelings toward their culture, too, must be at risk. Their self-esteem becomes extremely low unless they rediscover their significance of being in the new environment.

What is most important then is the recovery of their self-esteem and the discovery of their raison-d'être in their new environment. If language is one of the greatest barriers in their self-realisation, because their lack of language abilities prevents them from utilising their knowledge and skills in Japan, acquiring it is one of the solutions to recovering their self-esteem. However, to master the language is not the last goal.

What if non-native participants cannot master the language well? If we consider the background of those participants, it must be difficult for some participants to learn the Japanese language. Some are too old to master a foreign language, some are too busy to find time to learn constantly, some cannot attend the class regularly because they are restricted to attending JSL classrooms by their family members, and some are simply not good at learning languages. If learning the language is considered to be the ultimate goal, which occurs the most often when tutors are the most convinced of the importance of language teaching, most of the learners must follow the discouraging process again in the JSL classrooms. Most of them will be disappointed by the fact that they cannot attain the goal of mastering the Japanese language, because they feel that they will never be able to fully realise themselves in the Japanese society. This can be compared to the situation of the students in the formal education. As long as the goal is set to transmit as much knowledge as possible to the students, most students will be frustrated by the fact that they cannot fit themselves into the set goals of this kind of "banking education". (Freire, 1979) This result must be the opposite of what all participants hope. Therefore, all participants should make it clear that the ultimate goal is not to master the Japanese language. The most important goal is for non-native participants to recover their significance of being and their self-esteem.

What do the Learners Want?

Learners come to JSL classrooms with various purposes and reasons, even though their main purpose seems to learn the Japanese language. However, the images accompanied with the Japanese language learning seem to be those of the classroom setting in the formal education. There are teachers, students and textbooks, with which teachers teach grammar and practice the Japanese language. The volunteer tutors who participated in the seminar

(YOKE, 1997, pp. 202-206) said that they wanted to learn the practical knowledge they could use in teaching lessons. Tomiya points out that volunteer expectations in the seminars are often expressed in such expressions as "advice, points, techniques, know-how, how-to, and tips which can be instantly useful, usable from tomorrow, ready to use, practical, and concrete." (Tomiya, 1998, p.31) This shows that volunteer tutors are ardent in teaching. However, as Yamada says (1996, p.28), it seems dangerous if the tutors suppose that the problems the learners have will be solved if learners are able to use the Japanese language.

In addition, learners tend to answer that they want to improve their ability in the Japanese language. However, as I related with my own experience, it is a convenient way to explain the complex suffering situation. It is almost impossible to say that I am suffering from the lack of self-esteem to a stranger or in a questionnaire. There is a strong possibility that learners might not be fully aware of their feelings or they might not be able to express it well. Therefore, the expression of "improving the Japanese language" could be interpreted in various ways.

Experiences of the Former Learners

I interviewed seven former learners in June 1999 and one learner in June 2000. I tried to learn what kind of needs they had and have in Japanese language learning. They have already been in Japan for more than ten years and most volunteer tutors think that there is no need for them to come to the JSL classroom. However, I have been wondering if it is really so. The learners' opinions about JSL classrooms are introduced in the following part.

Mai

Mai is 45 years old. She and her two children came to Japan from Vietnam in 1988, called by her husband who had already been in Japan as one of the boat people. She acquired Japanese nationality in 1992. She has been bringing up two children by working in a part-time job since she divorced him several years ago.

Mai's parents went to Vietnam from mainland China and lived a hard life as immigrants. Her parents wanted their seven children to have a higher education and sent them to a Chinese school. Mai even went to a high school, which was a privilege because of the expensive fee. However, the school was closed because of the Vietnam War, so she could not graduate from it. She speaks her native Chinese language, Mandarin, Vietnamese and Japanese.

Mai is an excellent speaker of the Japanese language. She studied by herself and got the second grade certificate for the Japanese language. She speaks in full sentences with a rich vocabulary in a gentle and polite manner, and writes well. Her effort to improve her Japanese language ability is such that she even records her conversations on the phone in order to check her mistakes. She knows well how to study by herself. She went to the JSL classroom of SHPSA from 1988 to 1990 and to another JSL classroom in her neighbourhood from 1990 to 1993.

Necessity to Have Someone to Consult

She does not seem to feel inconvenienced with her fluent Japanese in her daily life, but she still wants to study the Japanese language. She says:

> Mai: When I want to study an advanced level [of the Japanese language] and go [to the JSL classroom], but there are few teachers on that day, I have to study with intermediate learners. But, I'd like to study more advanced [Japanese]. That is my

> hope. And, I'd like to study not a textbook, but social knowledge. I'd like to study it more and more.
> Interviewer: Social knowledge? Does it mean to study about Japan in general?
> Mai: Yes. [I'd like to study] about Japan in general, and of course, about customs, and also about the workplace. I'd like to talk more, including the relationship with colleagues. I'd like to know how to behave on various occasions.
> Interviewer: I see. Well, if you have a close Japanese friend outside a classroom, and if you can ask those issues, is it all right for you?
> Mai: Yes, all right. I'd like to talk and listen to various kinds of things. I'd rather listen, listen and absorb various experiences.

It is obvious that what she wants to learn is not a functional ability of JSL. She wants to know how to behave on various occasions and how to cope with her colleagues. She wants to talk to and consult with a person who can be trusted in answering various questions about the Japanese culture and customs and be able to share various experiences with her. The ideal tutor for her is not a JSL tutor, but rather a life mentor or a close friend in a different culture. She also says:

> Mai: What I'd like to read is a newspaper. I'd like to read a newspaper. Even if I can read it [phonetically], there are many [sentences] that I can't understand. That's why I'd like to study more. ... It's difficult to read novels. Not yet. Very [difficult].
> Interviewer: Do you want to read novels?
> Mai: Yes, yes, I'd like to read [the novels].

To the question of whether she read high school textbooks in the national language of her children's textbooks, she answers as follows:

> Mai: [I can't understand] the meaning. I can understand the [content of] the national language[58] [textbook], but not other subjects. Not history. I haven't read it. No, I haven't.

Mai wants to understand the social issues by reading the newspaper. She can read phonetically, but it is different from understanding the content. What she wants is to understand the society she lives in. That is why she wants someone to explain the background of the written text.

Difficulty in Finding Friends to Talk With

Casual talk in our daily life is a powerful source of information and is also a way of reducing stress. However, it is difficult for Mai to find friends to talk to in her workplace. That is one of the reasons why she needs a place where she can easily find people to talk with. According to Mai, the only opportunity to talk to each other is lunchtime, but she cannot talk with her colleagues because some are taking a nap and some are chatting only with their close friends.

> Interviewer: You said you couldn't chat [with them] for a long time.
> Mai: No, no, I can't. Japanese colleagues make some groups, those who are close. There are groups, or they make groups. I can't be a member. No, no. Groups of two or three. Mostly groups of two. No, no.
> Interviewer: They chat only with close friends?
> Mai: Right.

If a foreign resident is reserved and shy, it might be difficult to break into the conversation. No matter how she can speak well in Japanese, it is useless if she is too shy to speak out and others won't talk to her. It is necessary to have changes from both sides, namely, from Mai's side and from her Japanese colleagues' side.

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[58] In Japan, the subject of the Japanese language to native speakers is called 'national language'.

The Feeling that S/he is Essential

Mai spoke about a group of Japanese housewives who have been supporting foreign students and foreign residents in the community. Mrs. S is a central figure of the group and actively works for the group in a neighbouring city of Komano.

> Mai: Do you remember Mrs. S?
> Interviewer: Mrs. S? Yes.
> Mai: Yes. Well, they get together once in a few months and enjoy cooking and, eh, having a kind of tea party until last year. Then, this year, they haven't had it at all.
> Interviewer: Why?
> Mai: Because Mrs. S is said to become the president of the community association and her daughter gave birth to a child, so she is busy. It isn't easy to plan[a tea party] easily. But, whenever they have one, I am always invited [to the party]. I'm so happy. I go there as soon as possible. A membership fee is \1,000 (U.S.$ 9). I pay for it. We all enjoy it, [saying], 'Today's main dish is the Japanese Sushi.' In January last year, we celebrated the Girls' Dolls Festival. Someone shot a video.

Mai explained about the gatherings of the women's group. She seemed happy talking vividly about their gatherings. Her manner of speech shows how much she is looking forward to the gatherings and how she misses them now. Her attitude of talking about the gatherings contrasted with that of talking about the JSL classroom. She was always invited to the gatherings, which made her feel that she was a welcomed and essential member in the group. Everyone wants to feel that s/he is needed. The sense that a person is needed is an important factor to motivate a person to participate in the group activity.

Rean and Kong

Rean and Kong are a couple with Chinese Cambodian background. Rean, wife, is 45 years old and came to Japan in 1982. Kong, husband, is 52 years old and came to Japan in 1980. They have been married for 26 years and have two children. They got Japanese

nationality for their children in 1993. One of the boys graduated from high school and began to work as an apprentice sushi chef. The other boy is a high school student.

They both graduated from primary school, but they could not study further because of the war. Kong was an excellent student in primary school and skipped grades. They did not go to a Chinese school. Rean lost her mother and Kong lost his parents in the atrocities in Cambodia. Rean had such horrible experiences in Cambodia that she never wants to return there even after the political situation becomes fairly stable, but Kong returned there to visit his family a few times. They came to the JSL classroom for four or five years from 1987.

In the interview, Rean spoke most of the time and Kong was smiling and listening beside her. Kong is not so fluent in Japanese, but Rean speaks fluently. Though she makes mistakes in some particles and has some accent in pronouncing a few words, she speaks clearly and fluently with confidence. Rean speaks her native Chinese language, Mandarin, Khmer, French and Japanese. Kong speaks his native Chinese language, Cantonese, Mandarin, Khmer, French, English and Japanese. They speak in their native Chinese language between them and Japanese with their children.

Rean and Kong have been working in a small factory in Komano as fully employed workers, so they are paid by the month. They live in '*shataku*'[59] and cope with their neighbours well, but at the same time, they want to move from *shataku*, because they have to live in a rigid relationship with their colleagues. They seem to be adapted into the Japanese society well and are model workers, who had an opportunity to work as translators of Chinese and Japanese for the new project in China of the company where they work. They proudly told me about their visit to China, showing me the pictures.

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[59] '*Shataku*' is a residence owned by a company and is rent to its workers for low rent.

Assimilation into the Japanese Society

Rean and Kong invited me to have lunch at home. She prepared various Cambodian dishes and welcomed me. Before we started eating, she brought some curry to her boss living in the same *shataku*, apartment house, saying that the boss is always glad to have some food from her and that it is a good way to please him. It is a Japanese custom to share some food with neighbours called *'osusowake'*. If *'osusowake'* is shared among neighbours, it is a good-old custom. However, if someone brings gifts to her/his superiors, it is called *'tsuketodoke'*, which means 'gifts to please superiors in order to have good impressions on them'. Rean answers the question if she takes care of others as follows:

> Rean: I take care of others, and I work earnestly in order not to be criticised. It is unpleasant to be criticised, isn't it? I have never been criticised at my task.
> (...)
> Rean: I always work earnestly. I work and I don't play. I don't take off so often. When I have to, I take off, but half day or one day. I don't travel during the holiday or I don't go and play. So, the bosses understand that [we are hard working people]. Superiors; the president, the executive director and the management director [understand this]. We are diligent and we don't take time off.

In the continuing part, she explains the others' cases of being fired because of their attitudes. She is proud of being a full-employed salaried worker who is trusted by her bosses. On the other hand, many of the refugees in Komano are working as workers with monthly payment of accumulated daily wages. Their financial situation is unstable because their wages will be cut off easily under the recession. Rean knows well how to adapt into, assimilate into and survive in the Japanese society.

Further Needs of the Japanese language

She does not seem to have problems with her Japanese language skills, but she says as follows:

> Interviewer: If you study something, what do you want to study?
> Rean: The Japanese language. (Laughter)
> Kong: Yes.
> Interviewer: More reading and writing?
> Rean: Reading and writing. There are Chinese characters that I can't read. The meanings are the same [as in the Chinese language], [I can't read.] No. And, the composition. For example, writing letters. Some particles, such as "*ni, no, wa*," I don't know how to use them.
> Interviewer: Are particles difficult? Do you want to study them?
> Rean: Yes.
> Interviewer: I admire you.
> Rean: No. I'd like to study [Japanese], because I haven't mastered it yet.

Even with her knowledge of the Chinese language, Rean feels some difficulty in reading and writing. In fact, her letters that I received were written in a polite form and convey her feelings well. However, she wants to learn reading and writing more, if she has an opportunity, and so does Kong. All the learners I interviewed still want to learn more JSL, but they stopped going to the classroom because they got busy. Women have more difficulty in finding the time to learn JSL because they are busier than men with their three roles of wife, mother and worker. Rean's youngest son is in grade 12 now, so she will have more leisure time after he graduates school and starts working. She can do something in her leisure time[60].

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[60] The issue about days after retirement is a well-discussed one, but it is rare to include residents with diverse cultures. Many refugees who have been busy in these decades in settling and raising children will have more leisure time. They are going to face this problem from now on.

Good Times in the JSL Classroom

Rean reflected upon the good times she had in the JSL classroom and says:

> Interviewer: When did you enjoy yourself most?
> Rean: When? Well, when I had tea [with friends]. (Laughter) And, when I talked with teachers. There were parties and the gatherings of the international exchange association, weren't there? I enjoyed them.
> Interviewer: We went to the excursion, didn't we?
> Rean: Yes, we went to the excursion.
> Interviewer: Did you go to Mt. Fuji?
> Rean: Yes, I did.
> Kong: So, did I.
> Rean: I enjoyed myself in the excursion.
> Interviewer: Yes, indeed. We cooked curry together at the Festival, didn't we?
> Rean: Yes, yes.
> Interviewer: I enjoyed it very much.
> Rean: Right.

Rean's good memories about the JSL classroom are associated with the familiar relationships among the participants. The teatime in between the two sessions offered the participants a good time to exchange their information. They also enjoyed chatting and there was an atmosphere of their being a community. There were other activities such as parties and excursions.

Feeling of Accomplishment and Progress

When Rean mentioned the content of the JSL learning, she had much to say about it. In short, she wanted to feel progress and accomplishment in the JSL classroom, but she did not always feel them in the classroom. Her complaints about the classroom management are that learners are not separated according to their levels. She wants to learn the content proper at her own level. She says as follows:

> Rean: I think I cannot make a progress if I repeat learning the same [level of JSL], without any change, day after day, I cannot step up to the next level. I can't make a progress. I don't improve. How do you say? Class?
> Interviewer: Level?

> Rean: Yes, yes. I think it's good to have several levels. For example, people from a Chinese background, they are separated and divided into groups. Beginners and advanced are better to be separated. If I learn with beginners, I don't feel good.
> Interviewer: I see. Do you think it's easier for you to learn to be separated into groups?
> Rean: Yes. For example, like the first, second and third grades.
> Interviewer: Then, those who can read Chinese characters and who can't. Like that?
> Rean: Yes. That's right.
> ...
> Rean: When we go to the JSL classroom now, we learn together. I feel a sort of...
> Interviewer: Uncomfortable about it?
> Rean: I feel uncomfortable, to tell you the truth (laughter), [to learn] together with those who don't understand much.

Rean complains about the repetition of the same thing. If she has to learn the same material with different level learners, she cannot feel the satisfaction of learning something new and advanced. Her suggestion is to separate the levels. It may be one idea to meet the needs of some learners, but there must be alternative ways to satisfy every learner without separate levels. For example, if thematic learning can be applied to the language learning, there will be more possibility of including different levels of the learners. As long as tutors stick to the textbooks, it seems difficult to involve the different levels of learners.

Rean mentions about assignments in order to progress as follows:

> Rean: (...) I'd like teachers to assign us homework.
> (...)
> Rean: In SHPSA, teachers did not assign us homework. If we have homework, we can learn our levels. Well, we can tell to what extent we can understand. I think it's better.

In terms of assignments, there are two purposes of having them: one is to motivate further individual learning, and the other is to measure the progress. Rean wants to make sure that she is progressing, which gives her the motivation for learning. The important point here is

that a learner wants to have the feeling that s/he accomplishes new tasks and is making progress. Tutors should be sensitive about the feelings of accomplishment of learners.

Learners' Background of Learning Experiences

There are learners' learning experiences behind the learners' expectation of preferable teaching methods. It is necessary to clarify them and cope with their expectations by negotiating between learners and tutors. Rean describes her learning experiences as follows:

> Rean: In Chinese schools [in Cambodia], teachers are strict. But, [teachers] at the [Yamato Resettlement Promotion] Centre, [they are] very lenient. [So, learners become] spoiled. Yes, they are totally different. Teachers are not strict in Japan. There [in Cambodia], teachers of the Chinese language are strict, for they have sticks everyday.

In Cambodia, Rean experienced a rigid education and teachers often use a stick to punish students who do not show any progress in learning. All the interviewees had the same experiences as Rean. They do not like meaningless rigid discipline, but they want respectful treatment. Rean's words show it:

> Rean: (...) Some [Japanese] teachers are gloomy and some are cheerful. Some like to explain in detail and some are reluctant to explain.
> (...)
> Rean: (...) I'd prefer teachers who explain well and eager to explain. Some teachers do not answer my questions with minimum explanation.

Rean's expectation of detailed explanation to her questions is the same as other learners. Mai says the same thing in the interview. Learners expect fair and respectful treatment.

However, when Rean says that teachers at the Yamato Centre are very lenient, she seems to have ambivalent feelings about it. In a sense, students feel that teachers are expecting much from them if teachers treat them with rigor. Rean might want to feel that tutors expect much from her.

More or less, learners from Asian countries have experiences of the traditional rigorous pedagogy. There should be some discussion about the ways of teaching in order for learners to understand the meanings of the differences. Unless learners consent to the teaching methods, they will feel some embarrassment and complaint to tutors.

Check and Rim

Check and Rim are a Cambodian couple. Check, 43 years old husband, and Rim, 42 years old wife, came to Japan in 1986. They have two daughters; one is 19 years old and the other is 17 years old. They applied for the Japanese nationality, but they have not been accepted yet.

Before they came to Japan, they lived in the refugee camp in Thailand, where Check worked as a translator for several NGOs using Thai language for four years and as a treasurer for another NGO for two years. Their first choice of the country to immigrate to was the U.S., but they were accepted by Japan before they received an answer from the U.S..

Check worked as the representative of the Cambodian community in Komano from 1988 to 1991. He is now trying to establish a group called the Khmer Volunteer Association with the help of a volunteer of SHPSA.

Check is able to communicate well, but it takes time for a listener to get used to his strong accent. He speaks Khmer, Thai, Lao, English, French and Japanese. Rim is a good listener and understands what is being said very well, but she is not a fluent speaker of

Japanese. Her sentences are short or broken, and she seldom speaks in full sentences. Her spoken Japanese seems to have made little progress since she stopped coming to the JSL classroom.

It is difficult to understand the meaning of the transcription if I translate the original faithfully. Therefore, I changed the word order and omitted the meaningless repetition of the words minimally in order for readers to understand the content.

The Necessity of the Japanese language to get Nationality

The couple was waiting for the result of the interview that they had had about a year and two months before. The necessity of the Japanese language is related in the account of the interview for the nationality inspection. He says:

> Check: ... In Japan, [there are] less than 10%[61] [refugees who got the Japanese nationality]. The refugees who got the nationalities. I guess less than that.
> (...)
> Check: Strict, indeed. (Laughter)
> (...)
> Check: When I, uh, had the inspection to get the nationality, it was very strict. Very. When I had the interview, I was asked various things. They ask in detail.
> (...)
> Check: Only me [my interview]. [It took] more than one hour [for my interview]. Only me. So, I had the longest interview. No one [in my family] had such a long interview. Neither did my wife.
> Interviewer: Didn't you have a long one?
> Check: No. Twenty minutes or so. Me, very long.
> (...)
> Check: (...) If you can't read [Japanese], it's over. First, let's see, I got the application form. An application form. Before I got it, I had an interview, in

[61] According to the resource of RHQ, the percentage of the refugees who got the Japanese nationalities is about 4.1% as of March 31, 1999.

> Japanese. Reading and writing. If I can't read nor write, it's difficult to be accepted. So, as a whole, unless all four family members understand [Japanese], we won't be accepted. But, first, first of all, me. In my family. If I can't understand [Japanese], we can't be accepted. A wife is O.K. If they can understand] little, it's O.K. But, husband must. I hate it.

When Check wrote the application form, he was assisted by Japanese volunteers. However, there was no help in the interview of the inspection, which must have been a strong pressure on him. There is an assumption that the head of a household[62] supports her/his family, so s/he must have the longest interview of all the family members. Check must have felt the responsibility of it. In this sense, to get the nationality becomes a strong motivation for learning the Japanese language before the interview. Compared to the Chinese speaking refugees, such as Mai, Rean and Kong, Check and Rim have difficulty in reading and writing because they did not have the knowledge of Chinese characters before they came to Japan.

Difficulty in Continuing the Language Learning

Check explained why he stopped coming to the classroom.

> Check: ... I get tired. That's why. And there is only one off day, Sunday. So, everybody gets tired. We felt like "No more [JSL learning]!". There's no problem [about the JSL classroom], though.
> ...

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[62] Japan has adopted a family registration system, which was not abolished in the restoration period just after the Second World War. In the system, there must be a head of a household. Traditionally, men are supposed to be the ones. There is a movement to abolish the family registration system, because it reinforces the family structure based on the patriarchal system.

> Check [If there is a choice to attend the JSL classroom,] Sunday is the best. But, everybody has sort of something to do. For example, friends to come, or going out to have fun. That's why we stopped going.
> Rim: We don't want to study on weekday. Everybody.
> Check: No. That's right. ... [When] young, I didn't get tired, so I wanted to go to school. Now, I get tired soon, so I stop going to school. But, I study by myself at the office at lunchtime. I do study. Now, I can read Chinese characters. But, not all. I can't read, but I can guess the meaning. It's very difficult to learn how to read. But, I can understand. (Laughter)

He seems to feel the necessity of learning to read more. However, it is difficult to find time to learn it. Language learning seemed to become less attractive to him compared to other activities now.

Check's Hope

Check has been working for the Cambodian community. There are two activities he has been involved in. One is to establish a group for the people with Cambodian heritage, and the other is to construct a centre for the women who lost their husbands during the wartime in Cambodia. According to his explanation, the former is a foothold to realise the latter. He enthusiastically talks about his dreams.

> Check: I want the [Japanese] government to help Cambodia, over there. That's the only way. Now, see, in Cambodia, the war was over. There are many women who lost their husbands. I'd like to help them. There are widows, elderly people, and children who lost their fathers and mothers. I'd like to help them. So, I want the [Japanese] government to participate in this activity. That's the only way. In the future, I want rich people in Japan to join us and to help them. We have not settled here for a long time, so our hands are still full taking care of ourselves, to the very edge. So, it's hard for us to help others. There are rich people who are selling goods and there are broad-minded people. I want their help.

Check explains the plan of the centre in Cambodia as follows:

> Check: The plan of the centre is, for example, [like this]. We build a house and there are an office and a farm. There are fields, or paddy fields. At the centre, they grow [rice and vegetables], and they feed themselves. Their life [is like that]. And, for example, Japanese people and broad-minded people, if they donate money, we ask teachers to teach them. Teachers teach repairing, repairing machines, or making clothes. Teachers teach them. For the people at the centre, if possible, just like [we were] at the Resettlement Promotion Centre, we will find them jobs. We hope they leave the centre with jobs. I'd like to establish such kind of a centre. Now, I am going to make Khmer Volunteer Association first, then, this is the first step. One step. Then, I will go back to Cambodia to work as a member of the Association. I hope that Japanese people will join us.

Though Check's plan is still rudimentary, he is eager to work for people in need in Cambodia. His dream seems to support him. It is impressive and interesting that Check is planning to utilise his experience at the Yamato Resettlement Promotion Centre where he and his family spent six months to adapt into the life in Japan. Not only Check, but also other people from Asian countries are supporting people in their home countries. They seem to be pleased to contribute to their home countries and their pride in their activities seems to give them self-esteem.

Junji has been helping him to make a plan and establish the Khmer Volunteer Association, because Check needs some help in writing various documents and in dealing with complicated procedures. At present, Check's needs are related to his voluntary work to establish a community group.

Power Relations among the Family Members

Rim seems to have more basic language problems than any other interview participants. She still has difficulties in communicating complicated matters in the Japanese language.

During the interview, she sometimes needed the help of her husband. In the following conversation, I often had to guess the meaning of what she was saying. She says:

> Rim: I also have [problems]. Miss. Nationality. I [am] the weakest [in terms of the ability of the Japanese language in my family]. (Laughter)
> Interviewer: Who is the weakest?
> Rim: (laughter)
> Check: [She is] not weak. [She is] the worst speaker [of the Japanese language].
> Interviewer: Ah, you mean that you are weak in the Japanese language.
> Rim: Yes. The Japanese language. My children, [they learned it] quickly. Next, Dad[63] [my husband learned it]. Of course, that's because kids have been attending school.
> Interviewer: Kids can quickly master it, can't they?
> Rim: Yes, they can.
> Interviewer: Don't they teach you?
> Check: (laughter)
> Rim: Little bit. Simple [things] they won't teach [me].
> Check: No. Not because they don't teach you, but you don't want to learn. (Laughter)
> Rim: Who? Me?
> Check: I don't know who. (Laughter)
> Interviewer: I see.
> Check: You don't want to learn it, so they won't teach you so much.
> Rim: I can understand, words, Miss, I speak, there're mistakes, they teach me. "This isn't correct. You can't say this." They told me mistakes. ... "You made a mistake, Mom." My kids taught me. For example, "sprouts bean". I've been saying "bean sprouts" conversely. Like that, really.

Rim still needs to learn basic language, but she is too busy as a wife, mother and full-time worker to learn JSL, like other housewives of refugees' families. As long as the rest of the family members can use the Japanese language, she might depend on their help.

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[63] 'Dad means 'Dad of my kids'.

While Rim was speaking in the interview, Check often cut into the conversation and spoke instead of Rim. Even when Rim was expected to answer the questions, she sometimes could not answer them because Check answered them first. Check has a tendency to dominate the conversation. Sometimes, she said, "No" to what Check said and tried to say her opinions, but she had to ask her husband in Khmer when she could not express herself well in Japanese. Though both Rim and Check were laughing and the atmosphere between was good, Rim seemed to subordinate to her husband and her children. If the interview had been conducted in Khmer, the impression would have been different from this interview. This is the limitation of the interview conducted in other than the native languages of interviewees.

Sisay and Thip

Sisay and Thip are 43 years old, came from Laos to Japan in 1980, and got married in Japan. They and their only son got the Japanese nationality in 1999. Sisay is close to a bilingual speaker of Lao and Japanese, and he also speaks Thai. He is one of the rare fluent speakers of Japanese who came to Japan after they became adults. His fluency was acquired by his effort of graduating from a senior high night school in Yokohama, while he was working in the daytime and bringing up a baby. It is his fluency in the Japanese language and his honest personality that made him one of the leaders in the Lao community in Komano.

Thip is a fluent communicator in the Japanese language. Though she is not as good at reading and writing as Sisay and she does make grammatical mistakes, she speaks Japanese clearly and fluently with such a natural manner that listeners feel that she is an excellent speaker. She is also one of the active members of the Lao community. She has

been working as a part-time assistant in the International Classroom[64] in public schools. Thip has also been helping a heritage language classroom for Lao children held at a community centre in Saturday mornings. Some Lao parents have voluntarily been running the heritage language classroom, where a former English teacher in Laos has been the Lao language teacher.

Thip has had various jobs and she was running a Lao restaurant. She had a hard time in managing a restaurant, but Sisay and Thip closed the old one and opened a new one in autumn 1999. Thip did not talk about the problems in the interview.

Needs of Encouragement and the Meaning of Life

Sisay told his story about night school. He had felt the necessity to improve his language ability in the Japanese language since he began working in the Japanese society. Thus, he consulted his friends about entering a night school after quitting his job. However, all of them advised Sisay not to quit his job and they seemed to be passive and conservative in Sisay's eyes. Their advice was always the same, "Don't quit your job. You have to work hard." Sisay says that everyone tries to restrain him from doing something new and different.

However, Sisay decided to quit the job and ran away from Saitama where his workplace was and went to his friend in Yokohama[65]. Sisay consulted the Head of the Resettlement

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[64] An International Classroom is set up in a primary school where there are more than five students with diverse cultural backgrounds. It aims to support diverse students to learn JSL. In general, one full-time teacher of a school is in charge of an International Classroom and a part-time assistant who speaks the necessary languages helps the teacher to teach students JSL. According to the story of a classroom teacher of an International Classroom (Suzuki, personal communication, June 29, 1999), she said that the financial aid from the Board of Education is only $60 a year. With this money, she could not buy a dictionary of Portuguese, which she needed for the students from Brazil.

[65] Saitama is about 100 km away from Yokohama.

Promotion Centre, where he spent the first six months in Japan. The Head confirmed that Sisay's decision was unbending enough to continue his study, and he recommended Sisay to a night school. Sisay took the entrance examination and passed it.

While he was studying as a third-year student[66], Thip, his wife, got pregnant. This time, again, people around him, including teachers, told him that it was not a good idea to have a child while he was still a student. He says:

> Sisay: [It is] hard. It is difficult to consult with someone. Well, it may come from my character, this character, but whenever I consult with someone, s/he won't react the way I wanted her/him to. As is often the case, I will be suppressed. [They say,] "You shouldn't," or "You mustn't do," (laughter) or "You will sure to fail." [It is] always like that. So, in the end, I will do [it all by myself] according to my own decision. ..."
>
> Interviewer: ... Do Lao people have careful opinions, too?
> Sisay: Yes.
> Interviewer: I see.
> Sisay: Yes, all of them.
> Interviewer: All of them are. Yes, I see.
> Sisay: No one says, "All right. If you want to do it in that way, try your best. I will support you as much as possible." There is no one [like that]. (Laughter)
> Interviewer: Uh, it must be difficult.
> Sisay: We are refugees, all of us.
> Interviewer: You mean you are constrained?
> Sisay: Yes.
> Interviewer: Other refugees are cautious? Sisay, once you are determined, you want to rush headlong into something?
> Sisay: Yes.
> Interviewer: I see.
> Sisay: No matter how it seems adventurous, if we don't challenge it, say, our life is meaningless. At my age, we have kids and a family. But think about it. Usually, [at this age], if I were a salaried worker, see, I'd be waiting for retirement.

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[66] It takes four years to graduate from senior high night school.

> (Laughter) I'd be wearing earplugs and have a salary. If I could feed my family, it would be all right. But, what were all my efforts to leave my own country for? I left my parents and siblings there. If I have nothing else [new] from now on, it's not exciting.
> Interviewer: I see.
> Sisayt: Why? Why did I run away from the home country? I can't see the meaning of it, if I don't make any progress.

Sisay points out two issues here. One is the discouragement that Sisay has always felt when people prevent him from doing something new and adventurous. People suggest that they should take safer ways and restrain them from daring to change their life style. When Sisay says, "We are refugees, all of us," he sounds as if he is feeling regret and is disconsolate about being resigned to the majority's opinions.

To most of the Japanese people and even to refugees, it is natural and recommendable for them to adapt into the Japanese culture. In other words, it is better for refugees to live steadily and to endure the inconveniences because they are 'refugees' and have no place to go back to. They are always told to take safer ways. In general, there is a tendency to follow safer ways in the Japanese society or in any other societies, but the status of being refugees amplifies the tendency to be advised in such a manner. Refugees are expected to follow the mainstream ways, which means that they have fewer choices than the Japanese do. It is the assimilation process.

Sisay says that he wants to have some kind of encouragement once he determines to do something of his own responsibility in spite of the difficulties and the others' opposition. In reality, he is always reproached when he attempts to do something new and adventurous, and not surprisingly, he is discouraged. He has had few experiences of empowerment so far. It is a hard experience to live through hardships without having any empowerment.

Another issue is the fact that he always aspires to make progress in some ways. First, he determined to leave his home country and left his parents and siblings there in order to pursue a better life. Secondly, he decided to go to a night school to study further in order to improve his language ability in Japanese. In order to do so, he even ran away from the job he had.

He has been challenging the barriers he has in difficult situations. This challenging spirit itself has made him move forward. Twelve-year observations show that he is the last person to do things thoughtlessly. Therefore, what he means by the word 'adventure' is that he does not want to compromise with the reality. He is a proud and independent person. Thus, it is hard for him to refrain from doing what he wants and to assimilate into the conservative society, which is exactly the Japanese mainstream way. His description of people with 'earplugs' is an accurate expression of those who do not pay attention to what is going on around them and never challenge the status quo.

While he was a participant of SHPSA, he quit the job and studied manufacturing technology with the help of some central members of SHPSA. After finishing a one-year course, he began his own business. He ran a small factory, which thrived for a few years but it soon slowed down after the Japanese economy declined. Meanwhile, he had an accident while he was working. He closed the factory and changed his job after the accident.

I happened to hear the story of their recent failure after I interviewed them. They did not mention it in the interview, but it is reasonable for proud people like them to feel uncomfortable telling that kind of story. This shows that there are hidden complicated stories behind the surface story, which cannot easily be heard from interviewees.

No matter what other people say and no matter how difficult it is, Sisay has been carving a way for himself through many hardships. Now, he is in a difficult situation again,

but he seems not to be defeated by the burden at all. He is as proud as he was. Now that the result of one of the couple's adventures turned out to be a failure, it is easy to say that Sisay should have listened to others' advice. However, there must have been various reasons for the failure. It must be hard for him not to have encouragement again, especially at the time when he is down. What he needs most is encouragement rather than the analytical lesson of his failure done by others.

Sisay's View on the JSL Classroom

Though he has been challenging the conservative ways of living, he has also been trying hard to learn the culture of Japanese society in order to accomplish something in Japan, because the knowledge of its society is necessary in order to make a success in a short time span. In Sisay's case, he could learn it fairly quickly, because he had an opportunity to study in the Japanese high school, where he became an excellent speaker of Japanese. When he was asked about the JSL classroom, he replied as follows:

> Sisay: But, all the teachers at the JSL classroom have been teaching enthusiastically. So, I don't have any complaints about it. If only learners had the motivation to study, [there would be no problems.]
> Interviewer: Do you think so?
> Sisay: I have no complaints, because teachers have been challenging the various ways in teaching. So, I think that it is very satisfactory. But, the problem is how we [learners] can accept them. The problem remains. For example, why can't some Laotians speak the Japanese language well, though they have been here for 20 or 30 [sic] years in Japan? Why don't they improve in speaking Japanese? They still speak in broken Japanese. How come? They, too, uh, have different talents. There is a limitation of one's ability to make an effort. So, it [the JSL classroom] is satisfactory, I think. On the contrary, they [learners] are not serious [in learning]. It may sound strange to say, 'not serious', but see, for example, they collect fees from the students at the Japanese language schools. However, mostly volunteers teach in JSL classrooms without collecting fees. We can learn free.

> This is a very fortunate situation, eh? Usually, if you have a motivation to learn [Japanese], we will pay for it. [To pay] is normal, indeed. But, it [the reality] isn't. (Wry smile) With it [the JSL classroom], I am totally satisfied.

Here, Sisay seems to reserve saying what he really feels about the JSL classroom and jumps to the conclusion that the language incompetence of some people is attributed to the lack of their own effort and seriousness. Seemingly, he does not consider the different situations of different people. As far as the 'functional literacy' is concerned, he has few language problems now. That might be one of the causes of his seemingly cool words to the people who are not good at Japanese. Or, he might have been reserved to criticise the ways of the JSL classroom. It is difficult to know his intention. However, the following parts give a different interpretation of this part:

> Sisay: Well, I, too, sometimes want to go to the JSL classroom. Sure enough, I'd like to learn more and more what I haven't yet known. But, when I go there, I end up finding many beginners. Tutors don't have enough time to turn to me. All tutors. That's why I gradually drifted away from it. [There are] no one but beginners. Then, I sort of don't feel like going there.
> (...)
> Sisay: There is no limitation for requests. The more I learn, the more I want to know. There appear more and more things that I haven't yet known. But, there's no end. There's no way. So, the JSL classroom is all right as the way it is now, because [it is administered] by volunteers. So, if I want to learn more, I have to go to a proper place to learn something. For example, I have to go to the advanced class.
> (...)
> Sisay: They continue the JSL classroom under the name of "Society in Harmony with People from Southeast Asia," though the learners changed. There is no one from the Southeast Asian countries.

He also points out that there is no space for advanced learners in the JSL classroom because there are many beginners there. Like other advanced learners, he thinks that beginners have priority in the JSL classroom, because he understands that the urgent needs of the beginners have priority when there is a limitation of the human resources. From the words of Sisay in this part, he seems to feel the limitation of the JSL classroom run by volunteers. He says that he cannot expect everything for the benevolence of volunteers.

He mentions that it is contradictory that the JSL group is still using the name "Society in Harmony with People from Southeast Asia." Sisay and Thip say as follows:

> Interviewer: [There are a few people from Southeast Asia], but many people from South America.
> Sisay: So, the thinking of the community people becomes different [from the past].
> Thip: They seem to be fascinated by [the people from] South America.
> Interviewer: Um.
> Thip: Very much so. Well, in the past, we [Southeast Asian people] attract people's [attention], but now, people from South America?
> Sisay: The time changes.

They seem to be sorry that tutors do not look at them as before, though they know well that the people from South America have many more problems with language than they do. The problem here is that SHPSA has not decided its policy with the relationship of the people from Southeast Asia. The members of SHPSA need to discuss and decide what kind of relationships they have with the Southeast Asian people.

Thip's Self Evaluation of Her Own Language Ability

Thip is fluent in the Japanese language, but she feels that her ability is not enough for her to work as an assistant teacher in the International Classroom. She says as follows:

> Thip: If I could go to [a Japanese] school, if the school were not a senior high school like my husband went, if the school were a vocational college, I would like to go to school for a year, if possible. Then, I would be able to read and write correctly. If possible, a half-year would be all right. I really want to study. When I think of my attitude [toward language learning], it's not so bad but it's not good. It's halfway.
> Interviewer: I think you are a fluent speaker.
> Thip: (laughter) No, I'm not. I can't read or write. When I read, I'd like to read rapidly. When I write, I'd like to write quickly and easily, as though in my native language. If I could write quickly and easily, I could say I'm a good writer. Then, everyone would admit it and I would be pleased with it. But, now, I'm not happy about it. In schools, there are problems that I can't solve by myself with my Japanese ability. So, I wonder why I work at schools. I can't help thinking about it. I cannot express my feelings to teachers, because I'm afraid of the reactions of the teachers. I'm not comfortable with it.

Thip is not satisfied with her ability in the Japanese language, especially in reading and writing, when she works as an assistant teacher. In the interview, Sisay said that he had helped her to translate school documents from the Japanese language to the Lao language. It is difficult to translate school documents, because they are written in a particular style with particular vocabularies. She does not feel comfortable with her language ability at the schools.

Educational Problems of Children

First of all, she points out the language problems of parents. From her experience as an individual, an assistant of an International Classroom and a heritage language classroom, she has felt the urgent necessity of solving the language problems of parents and children. She says:

> Thip: There is no communication [between parents and children]. They cannot. [It is] not easy. Well, for example [conversations] about school, if kids ask their parents about school, if they live in Laos, parents can ask their kids what kind of explanation they want to listen to [in Lao language]. But, [in Japan], if kids ask their parents questions, they cannot speak Japanese well, so they cannot explain about their questions. Some parents scold their kids or say, "Don't annoy me!" Some parents say they don't know or they answer in simple ways. So, for those kids [who have questions to ask their parents], it is a sad situation. Poor kids! I don't know who is to be blamed. Parents cannot speak Japanese well, because they don't learn it [now any more]. They are fully occupied with their work, parents are. So, kids are away from home and make their own world. [For kids,] peers and groups have priority and become more and more familiar with them. Parents have their own world. On holidays, parents gather and drink. Kids have their own lives and play with peers. So, [parents and kids] become more and more separated now. So, I cannot tell whose fault it is. For example, letters to parents from schools. When kids receive them, they don't bring them back from school.
> ...
> Thip: When kids bring them back home, [parents] don't understand the meaning of them.
> Interviewer: Ah, they can't.
> Thip: So, [kids] throw them away. [They have] this kind of problem. In addition, kids seldom talk about their lives [in school] to parents. This is one of the problems. At most homes, kids don't speak about their lives [in school] to their parents. This is a problem. They don't tell us. And, there are kids who often forget to bring necessary things to school. [Those kids] aren't well taken care of by their parents. These are problems. Conversation problems. There is no conversation.

She points out one of the serious problems caused by the lack of language ability of parents and children. Most parents are not good at the Japanese language and most children are not good at their mother tongue. This causes serious problems of communication gaps between parents and children. If children have questions to ask about schools, they cannot receive answers from their parents. Parents cannot read the letters or handouts written in Japanese from schools, so in the end some children throw them away instead of handing

them to their parents. These problems should be solved not only by the individual efforts by parents and children, but also by the efforts of schools and administrations[67].

She stresses the importance of having communication between parents and children. Because of the language problems, parents have troubles in disciplining their children. Some parents tend to say only short words to stop children from doing something wrong and they cannot explain why in detail. Some are even irritated by the nuisance of the explanation and are hard on their children. In the end, parents and children draw back in their own worlds and become totally separated without communication. This may cause children's delinquency[68].

She also points out the problems about the teachers. According to her explanation, the teacher tends not to encourage students to study hard. Teachers seem to give up the hope for diverse children to study in higher education. She said:

> Interviewer: What about the problems of higher education? What about going to senior high schools?
> Thip: Kids seldom go [to senior high schools].
> (...)
> Thip: They seldom go [to senior high schools]. Laotian kids. Most of them graduate from junior high schools and they work. In their minds, they only think about working. They want to earn money. That's all. But, Vietnamese and

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[67] There are schools where teachers have been trying to translate the necessary materials into children's native tongues. There are also meetings that aim to give parents information about the school system and the entrance examination system. There is a translation service for parents in several languages. These efforts have just begun, but there are those changes. However, these efforts are made by the voluntary supporting groups and not by the educational administrations. These kinds of educational problems should be solved by the official administrations as the rights of the residents of communities.

[68] I heard a story of a Cambodian girl's problem from another interviewee. She dropped out from a junior high school and would not go to school. The homeroom teacher of the girl could not solve the problem and neither could her parents. Nobody actually seemed to be able to fully understand her problems. Eventually, her family decided to live in Australia where their relatives live. The girl got back on the right track there.

> Cambodian kids are different. Vietnamese kids are good. Cambodians, too. Usually, they graduate from senior high schools. They try as hard as possible. They go to senior high schools. But, Laotian kids don't, because teachers tell them that they cannot go [to senior high schools]. [Teachers say] they cannot. When I hear the cases, mostly they are told like that. I don't want teachers say so.
> (...)
> Thip: If kids cannot study well, there may be some schools for them to go. Isn't there any school? If kids have some possibility, [parents] want them go to senior high schools. But, in most cases, kids say [to their parents] before parents ask kids [what teachers are saying]. Kids say, "Teachers said that I cannot [go to senior high school]." Some said so. If kids heard their teachers say so, they become very sad. Kids are like that. If kids themselves have some hope of going to senior high schools, why don't teachers say, "Try your best and there might be chance to go to some school"? Then, kids have some hope to go to school. But, there are seldom teachers who say so. Now, only one [Laotian] student goes to senior high school. This year, there is one. A kid goes to the senior high school. That kid is the first one among the Laotian kids who goes to senior high school. So far, nobody goes to senior high school after graduation. They start working.

Thip says that only one Laotian student went to a senior high school in her community[69]. Most of the junior high school students give up in the early stages and tell their parents that they do not want to continue studying. They are eager to work and earn money instead of continuing studying. She questions why teachers do not encourage Laotian junior high school students to go to senior high schools. It is difficult to tell exactly what teachers said to Laotian students, but at least Thip thinks that teachers do not encourage students to study.

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[69] Though Thip did not use any concrete evidence to support her opinion, the rate of the culturally diverse junior high school students who go to senior high school must be smaller than that of the Japanese students. In terms of the rate of the Japanese students, it is more than 98%. However, according to the resource published by the Ministry of Education (1998, p.33), the number of the students who need Japanese language education is in total 11,806 as of September, 1995. There are 8,192 students in primary schools, 3,350 in junior

I heard the same kind of complaints regarding teachers from one of my classmates at OISE. She is an active primary high school teacher and is brilliant enough to pursue her Master's course at OISE. However, according to her story which was told in front of the classmates when they were discussing the problems about streaming, when she was a high school student, her teacher suggested taking the general courses instead of taking the advanced courses that were necessary to go to universities. At that time, she did not know the difference between the courses, but later she realised that she had to take extra courses in order to go to universities. Therefore, when her younger brother had to decide the courses to take, she advised him not to take the general courses but to take the advanced courses. She said that her brother is now a pilot for an international airline after graduating from university. She said that teachers tend to be negative in encouraging certain immigrant students to take courses that are necessary to have a higher education and use streaming[70]. The same kind of teachers' attitude might be given to the diverse students in Japan when they have to decide their future.

In Japan, the situation for diverse students is worse because of the difficulty in mastering the Japanese language and also their native languages. The system to support diverse students has not been established in formal education yet. It is difficult for them to improve their ability in the Japanese language to the level that they can pass the entrance examination. It is also extremely difficult to have bilingual education in order to improve the cognitive abilities in the students' native languages in formal education. There are

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high schools and 264 in senior high schools. Considering the fact that there is no natural population increase in the numbers of foreign residents, 264 students is a small number.

[70] She concluded that the teacher advised her to take the general courses just because she was from a Latin American country on the assumption that the students from Latin America are not so able as other students are. It is impossible to judge whether her conclusion is true or not from only her story, but it is true that she was not treated fairly and

problems of the lack of information about the general school system or the entrance examination system among students and their parents. Even a former volunteer of SHPSA, who knows the situation of refugees and is empathetic to them, said that the applicants to the senior high night school from Indochinese countries tend to get very low marks in the entrance examinations. There must be other factors that make it difficult for diverse students to improve their abilities in academic studies.

Thip points out that the educational problems of the diverse children are significant. The communication between parents and children is basic to an education. In order to support both parents and children, language education for both of them in Japanese and their native languages is necessary. In addition, teachers of diverse children should encourage them in various ways lest they should give up their hope of continuing to study.

Heritage Language Classroom

Thip has been supporting the Heritage Language Classroom. She does not teach herself, but she has been helping to organise the classroom schedule. She says as follows:

> Thip: I always say to kids, "You don't understand it now, but the Lao language is important to you. You may not be able to imagine what will happen in future, but you might be told to go back to your country. Then, you will have a hard time [in Laos], because you can't speak the Lao language. Now, you are young enough to learn the language easily and quickly. And also, it [the Lao language] will help you someday, if you learn it now." Well, some listen to my words, but those who don't listen to me won't do whatever I say. I've been supporting [the Heritage Language Classroom] for five years. But, recently, kids [changed]. From the very beginning, they won't listen at all. No matter what I say, they don't listen to me and they don't want to study. Kids play, come and play. That's all. So, I have

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she attributed it to her cultural background. This might have caused her distrust of the teacher.

> to sit among the children and watch them studying. Otherwise, they don't study seriously. They don't want to. Parents want their kids to learn both languages. Parents want them to. But, kids won't listen to me no matter how often I explain. Even if they study it [the Lao language], they can't understand the meaning [of why they learn it], because they don't go back to Laos. Every kid says so.

In spite of the efforts of adults, children do not seem to be interested in learning the Lao language. As Thip says, children do not feel the necessity of learning it. That is the main reason for their lack of motivation. I would like to write about the educational problems later in this thesis.

Maria

I made a phone interview with Maria in June 2000. It was impossible to record the interview, so the following is a summary from my memos. Her story is important because she compared two classrooms from a learner's point of view, which is helpful to learn the learners' needs. Maria stopped coming to SHPSA after about six months and became a member of another community-based JSL classroom.

Maria is a fluent speaker of Japanese. She speaks in full sentences with a natural accent and rich vocabulary. She has little difficulty in reading handouts from her son's kindergarten. She got the second grade certificate of the Japanese language.

Maria is a 33-year-old Philippine woman and came to Japan in 1990 to marry a Japanese man. She began her life in '*Shataku*' in Komano. She heard about SHPSA from Sister Rosario at a Catholic Church and began to come to SHPSA. At first, she learned from a woman teacher, who mainly tutored beginner level housewives. Maria liked her teaching method, but the tutor soon stopped coming to SHPSA. After that, Maria felt that the classes were difficult for her because they were mainly based on Japanese conversations. She wanted to learn from the basic grammar.

Maria happened to hear about another JSL classroom in a neighbouring city of Kamano and began going there every week. In that classroom, there was only a woman tutor, but she could explain the Japanese grammar in English. In addition, there were many beginner level Philippine women. Maria felt at home in this classroom and attended the JSL classroom from 1990 to 1999.

At first, JSL classrooms were held on Saturday nights once a week. After five or six years, more tutors joined the group. Now, there are day classes on Thursdays and night classes on Saturdays held by her group and there are night classes on Tuesdays held by another group at the same community centre. Learners can choose classes for their own convenience.

Maria thinks that good tutors answer her questions in a sincere way. There are tutors who do not answer her questions seriously or who make uncomfortable comments about her husband, saying that he should answer such questions. She thinks that those tutors do not understand learners' difficulties. Learners' families do not always have time to answer their questions or they are not always good tutors. Good tutors for her are those who share their own stories with learners. Those tutors do not turn away when learners ask questions. They often treat learners as friends. They drink coffee with learners, invite them to their homes and have dinner with them. She thinks that tutors and learners can communicate well once they make a good relationship between them.

What has motivated Maria to learn the Japanese language is that she wants to be recognised as a member of the Japanese society. For this purpose, she has been trying to learn Chinese characters constantly. She often hears a story about children of diverse cultures, who come back home crying and say, "I was the only one in my class that could not prepare for the classroom activity." She does not want to be a mother who cannot help

her children prepare for school because she cannot read handouts from her children's school.

At the beginning stage of her life in Japan, she felt an antipathy to the Japanese people with whom she could not communicate in English. However, as she gradually felt confident about communicating with people in the Japanese language, she no longer felt repelled by them. Especially after her son began to go to a kindergarten, she made friends with many Japanese mothers. Now, she does not feel a barrier between them.

Recently, she is often invited by schools and groups that aim to promote cultural exchanges with diverse people and talks about her Philippine culture and introduces songs, dances and cooking. She thinks that her activities are meaningful because children will go home with their experiences and share their stories with their family members. Children remember their experiences vividly and she is sometimes amazed at their good memory. While Maria was talking about her experiences at schools, she was lively and confident in the importance of her activities.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

SHPSA as a Pioneer Voluntary Group

The volunteer members of SHPSA have been trying their best to support the JSL learning and the life of refugees and foreign residents in Komano since 1987. Most of them began their voluntary work feeling empathy with refugees, after they heard shocking news of the hard life of refugees with little support from their community. Since then, they have organised SHPSA with trial and error without any model JSL classrooms to follow or enough financial and human resources. SHPSA is one of the pioneer voluntary groups to support refugees in Japan. Volunteers began JSL classrooms with child sitter service[71] and have supported refugees and foreign residents to solve various daily problems. Volunteers have never been paid or received any reward whatsoever. Many volunteers in SHPSA have Christian background and two Spanish Catholic nuns have played active roles in their voluntary work, so their activities are under the strong influence of 'charity work'. The pure benevolence and the joy given through the relationships with their learners have helped them continue their voluntary activities. In addition, most of the present tutors have been volunteering for more than ten years. It is a difficult task to maintain this kind of small voluntary group for such a long time. The services done by their strenuous efforts should be highly recognised and the members should be encouraged to share their experiences in various positive ways in order to create better JSL classrooms based in their community.

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[71] Child sitter service helped many couples with children to come to the JSL classroom. As many families came to the classroom, they could create a kind of community there. However, they do not offer this child sitter service now because of the lack of supporting members and the space.

An Element of 'Charity' in SHPSA

In 1987, two Catholic nuns visited the workplaces of refugees with two staff members of the municipal office, and asked refugees what they needed. When they found that it was difficult for refugees to communicate in the Japanese language, they held a gathering with translators of Lao and Khmer to ask their opinions. Most of them replied that their urgent need was JSL learning support. At that time, their Japanese language ability was sufficient only to survive in the Japanese society. Therefore, JSL tutoring began as an emergency support in their community. The forerunner of SHPSA was formed to offer immediate support to people in trouble.

Although volunteers had not intend to 'help refugees', for it seemed too intrusive for them to say 'help someone', in reality, the activities did 'help refugees'. There was and is an element of 'charity' in the character of SHPSA. My definition of a word 'charity' here is 'a **unilateral** act of support to those who are in need'. No matter what the intention of volunteers may be, the relationship between volunteers and refugees is that of 'unilateral support' if refugees are defined only as receivers of support.

The rules of SHPSA were written in 1988 and have never been revised since then. They were written and approved by volunteers in a hurry in order to receive a fund from the municipal government. No one noticed that the definition of members did not include learners. They defined the members as those who support the learning of the Japanese culture and language and as those who support the finance and teaching materials. Not all participants are regarded as members. Only those who support refugees are regarded as members. There is a distinction between teachers and learners, and supporters and the supported in terms of the participation of the administration of SHPSA.

Despite their good intentions, volunteers did not start their activities with any clear visions of a future community with culturally diverse people. Nobody, at that time,

imagined that SHPSA would continue working for more than ten years. Nobody realised the power relationship between caregivers and care-receivers, supporters and the supported, and language tutors who are native speakers and language learners. Thus, only tutors and financial supporters were defined as members of SHPSA and learners were not included as members in the founding stages of the group.

Changes in the Japanese Society

The political, social and economical situations of foreign residents have changed much from those of ten years ago. There are more and more diverse people living in Japan. Many foreign people become workers at small factories that underpin the Japanese economy. Even conservative Japanese politicians have come to realise that their economy cannot be maintained without foreign workers. Japanese citizens have begun to realise that they have to include diverse people into their society.

Some have begun to regard diverse people as neighbours on condition that they assimilate into their society. They consider JSL teaching as necessary for foreign people to adapt to the Japanese society. Others, however, are aiming at treating foreign residents as equal neighbours in their culturally diverse society. They have begun to change their perspective of society and are trying to include diverse people with different cultural backgrounds in their community as equal residents with same human rights as they do. They consider JSL learning as one of the human rights of residents to receive education.

Today, refugees who have already lived in Japan for more than ten years, have acquired knowledge about Japanese society. They have become active residents of their communities. Some have already got Japanese nationality and have chosen Japanese

names[72] in order to assimilate into the Japanese society. Some of them have acquired sufficient knowledge and strategy in order to organise support groups for their ethnic community, heritage language classes and support groups for their native countries. Some have contributed to Japanese community associations and enjoy social lives with Japanese people. Some actively introduce their ethnic cultures to others. Their experiences have given them enough materials to analyse the society they are in from culturally diverse perspectives. Their observation based on their lived experiences is valuable and should be listened to. They will voice their needs if they are given the opportunity to do so.

Necessity to Include Learners as the Same Members

There are other volunteer-run JSL classrooms apart from SHPSA that do not define learners as members in their group rules[73]. Although there is no specific intention about making the rule about members, it is apparent that tutors and supporters decide the group's policies and learners are supposed to follow their decisions. There is a clear hierarchy between supporters and the supported.

As Neustupný (1998) points out, language educators acquire their teaching strategies through their own experiences and use the same strategies they have already acquired unless they have strong beliefs against the use of them. There is a strong possibility that tutors applied the teacher/student model of conventional schools to JSL tutoring in SHPSA. Only a few schools in Japan allow students to participate in the learning process and school administration. Generally speaking, it is rare for students to be asked opinions on the

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[72] The Immigration Bureau denies that they force immigrants to change their names, but immigrants do feel the pressure to change their names into Japanese ones. This is one of the typical examples of 'suppression of assimilation (Oguma, 1998, p.638)' that Oguma pointed out in his latest book.

learning process. Students are also excluded from the school administration. If tutors think that the main purpose of JSL classroom is teaching the Japanese language and culture, the school model will easily be applied to JSL classroom and learners are unconsciously excluded from the decision making process and administration. In SHPSA, most of the volunteers are over forty years old and their school experience was based on an old system. In addition, the school experience of the Indochinese refugees was that of Asian traditional schools[74]. Thus, it was natural for tutors/teachers to lead the group.

On the other hand, if tutors think that the main purpose of JSL classroom is to offer JSL tutoring as only one of the steps to develop a means of communication in order to create a community together with learners, all participants will be considered as members. It is necessary to redefine learners as co-learners and to have learners join the learning process and administration. In Japan, only recently have scholars begun to point out the necessity of critical perspective in JSL learning. (Nomoto, 1996; Ootani & Tanaka, 1995; Yamada, 1996)

Consensus Making among Volunteers

Volunteers and financial supporters are defined as members in SHPSA. They are supposed to decide the group's policies by following certain processes of consensus making. Instead of discussing problems to reach consensus, they chose not to interfere with each other, as they were afraid of the group's split.

At the beginning stage of SHPSA, some male members often discussed their thoughts on their activities, but soon they realised that it was difficult for them to reach consensus.

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[73] I checked several other JSL classrooms' rules. They do not say that all participants are members.

[74] Some interviewees told their experiences of physical punishment in their school days. Their experience was based on the traditional teacher-centred system.

They differed whether on whether or not to include life support in their activities. It became obvious that the group could split if they chose one opinion over another as the policy of SHPSA. Thus, certain members individually supported the refugees. SHPSA intentionally blurred the boundaries of the activities of the group and those individuals. There is a tacit understanding among 'some' volunteers that those who have initiatives can go ahead with their plans. However, it is difficult for other volunteers, especially new volunteers, to understand what is taking place in SHPSA as a whole. As details of activities are not discussed, effective beneficial strategies can not be shared among the volunteers.

Though learners are not defined as members according to the rules of SHPSA, learners have attended annual meetings. Nobody questioned why the rules and the reality were different. This is because the annual meetings have come to be regarded as mere formalities. Consequently, only a few members are decision-makers. They have run SHPSA in this manner for the last twelve years. Members of SHPSA have never evaluated their group work. Tutors have not researched learners needs since the two Catholic nuns' 1987 meeting with refugees.

Needs of Learners

Although learners are supposed to give their opinions in SHPSA, they reserve their opinions out of consideration for their tutors. Refugees from Asian countries feel they have to respect their 'teachers' or 'elders' and they consider complaints to 'teachers' to be disrespectful. Once they get to know each other as teacher and student, or as supporter and the supported, the hierarchy is not easily changed. Learners also understand that the volunteers have tried their best under various limitations, so they seldom express their complaints and needs. Those whose needs are not met leave the group without saying

anything. The power imbalance between tutors and learners prevents them from exchanging their honest feelings and needs. Unless tutors take the initiative to understand the needs of learners, it is difficult for them to learn the needs of learners.

Although learners have changed from Indochinese refugees to people from South-American countries, the name of SHPSA, Society in Harmony with People from Southeast Asia, is still maintained to show that it aims to have good relationships with people from Southeast Asian countries. JSL volunteers tutor beginner learners from South-American countries, but those learners do not always stay long in JSL classroom.

Meanwhile, former learners from Southeast Asian countries have stopped coming to SHPSA. Seemingly, they have already adapted to the Japanese society and are actively trying to be involved in it. However, as time goes by, their problems become different from what they experienced at the earlier stage of their lives in Japan. Some still feel the necessity of language learning and their language abilities vary from intermediate level to advanced level. Some have difficulties in communicating with their children, as the children tend to speak only in the Japanese language. Some have difficulties supporting their children's education. Their children seem to have mastered the Japanese language on daily basis, but not all of them are doing well in school. Many students from refugee families do not receive higher education and start working after they graduate from senior high school. Many cannot even go to senior high schools. Children want to be assimilated into the Japanese society, so most of them are reluctant to learn their heritage language and culture, which makes their parents disappointed. Parents still worry their residence rights in Japan could be taken away at any time due to the trauma of exile.

It is meaningful to learn the varying needs of refugees in order to change the society.

Necessity of Evaluation

Two of the most necessary steps that should be taken by the members of SHPSA are to evaluate their activities of these past twelve years and to redefine the purpose of SHPSA. The members-- tutors and learners--have not yet had opportunities to reflect upon the activities of SHPSA. Even though there are less than ten tutors in SHPSA, each member has tried to do different activities without reporting the details of their activities to other members of SHPSA. The various activities are JSL tutoring, life support, Indochinese Festival, and home tutoring[75]. Most members do not fully understand what is taking place in their group. Therefore, it is difficult for the members to grasp their group activities as a whole. Even if what each member can do is small, it is necessary for each member to place her/his role in the whole plan of SHPSA. Otherwise, it is impossible for members to be an organic member of the whole group. The lack of exchanging information may cause the delay of understanding the structural problems that lay under the difficulties of foreign residents in the community.

Learners of JSL classroom changed from Southeast Asian refugees to South-American people. Some tutors are beginning to question the purpose of tutoring foreign workers, because this had not been the original purpose of SHPSA. Those tutors joined SHPSA, thinking that they could 'help' people in need such as refugees. They view some foreign workers as economic migrants enjoying their temporary stay in Japan earning money. It is difficult for some tutors to find reasons to continue tutoring foreign workers in the same manner as they took in the refugees. If they continue repeating the same teaching activities to beginner JSL learners of different backgrounds, tutors will fall into pitfalls of

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[75] Home tutoring has been given to children of refugees and foreign residents by junior college students in Komano. There has been no exchange of information between junior college students and members of SHPSA, though they often tutor the members of a same family.

mannerism. Unless tutors understand the needs of foreign workers, it is difficult for both tutors and learners to create meaningful learning among them.

If each member grasps the general idea of SHPSA, this can be conveyed more effectively to new volunteers and will serve to maintain volunteers and recruit many more. It is necessary for SHPSA members to evaluate their activities and redefine the purpose of the group.

There are various foreign residents in Japan now and their needs are different. It is difficult to satisfy all their needs in a small community-based JSL classroom. It is also more effective for various learners to be able to choose the JSL classroom most suited to their needs. SHPSA will be able to be a co-learning space for both tutors and learners, if the members clarify the characteristics of their group, listen to learners needs and find ways to encourage learning.

The Purpose of JSL Learning

There is a discussion, "Which is the main purpose of SHPSA, JSL tutoring or life support?" There is no doubt that JSL tutoring/learning is the main thing that all the participants of JSL classroom can do as a group activity. Life support activities, on the other hand, can be done individually. It is necessary to understand the role of JSL tutoring/learning for foreign residents in the Japanese communities in order to place it in the whole framework of SHPSA.

As the stories of former learners show, acquiring the Japanese language ability is not their ultimate goal to attend JSL classroom. They come to JSL classroom to be more confident and to recover their self-esteem by learning the Japanese language, because language difficulties often become the obstacles to their psychological wellbeing. To recover their self-esteem is more important than to transmit the knowledge of language.

That is why many learners continue coming to JSL classrooms even after they have acquired the basic knowledge of the Japanese language.

They need someone to talk to in the Japanese language in a safe and relaxed atmosphere. They need someone who listens to their life stories and answers their questions attentively and seriously. They need someone who treats them as an equal person and a friend. They need someone to acknowledge them as a whole person. They need to be accepted as equal members of their community. They need to really feel that they are residents of their community, able to do various activities with other community members equally.

For example, former learners of SHPSA are lively when they talk about their various activities in the Japanese communities. Mai and Maria are active in introducing their heritage cultures in schools or in communities. Rean and Kong are proud of being accepted as able workers and translators of Chinese and Japanese. Check and Sisay are glad to be able to support their ethnic communities as co-ordinators between Japan and their countries. Thip and Mai are working hard to support diverse children in schools.

They have to communicate with people around them and convey their feelings and thoughts in order to be admitted as members of their community. The Japanese language is only one of the necessary means, but a significant one. Alternative means could be considered. For example, in cases of artists, they might use art as their means. However, ordinarily, language is the most effective means of communication.

The Voices of Learners

I had the opportunities to listen to the stories of former learners in the interviews and learned the importance of their impact to the Japanese society. I also learned various things through them and was encouraged by them. However, I did not notice the importance of

the voices of learners and the sharing of experiences until I learned about critical pedagogy and participatory research.

It is important to listen to the stories of learners. Those stories are the valuable resources of learning. They can be resources to learn JSL and also for the Japanese society where they are living to evolve itself. If learning starts from the observations and questions taken from the stories of learners, the learning is from the perspective of learners. To do otherwise would potentially impose assimilation on foreign residents.

Necessity to Have Critical Perspective

It is necessary to rethink the power relations among tutors and learners in JSL classroom. Unless tutors notice the power imbalance in JSL classrooms, the tutoring will remain as 'unilateral supports' to learners. In this relationship, learners are always regarded as 'the supported' and 'care receivers'. They are not treated as equal partners of learning. They are treated as 'the weak' and 'the powerless', even though they have various powers that have enabled them to survive the hardships of their new lives in a foreign country. As long as there is a power imbalance between them, their relationship is not an empowering one that enables both tutors and learners to challenge the status quo.

Former learners of SHPSA say that they want an equal relationship with JSL tutors. Good tutors for them are people with whom they can share their experiences. Good tutors are people who answer their questions frankly and sincerely. Good tutors are co-learners in creating social changes.

Necessity to Support JSL Classroom

Many community-based JSL classrooms are run by volunteers with limited human and financial resources[76]. Only limited numbers of classrooms have staff to support JSL classroom management. It is also difficult for volunteer tutors to have access to professionals who can offer them up-to-date resources related to JSL education and classroom management. It is still difficult for most JSL classrooms to have collaborative project like '*Participatory Programme*' with researchers as discussed in Chapter Two. Even if volunteer tutors feel the necessity to improve their teaching methods or classroom management, they are limited by the lack of supports. In some cases, there are classrooms that are run and managed actively done by housewives or retired people, who usually have more time and energy to volunteer[77]. However, not all classrooms have access to these human resources. In addition, volunteers have to cope with various issues with small numbers of members. Thus, volunteers do not have much time and energy to challenge old ways.

These limitations apply to SHPSA. It is difficult for the members of SHPSA to evaluate their activities of these twelve years. There are a few reasons that prevent members from doing evaluation of their group. One main reason is that they do not have sufficient time and energy to do evaluation. Though volunteers have noticed the necessity of doing evaluation, they are too busy to do this work. Most volunteers think they are not professionals, so what they can do is limited. Their group is small. They cannot continue their voluntary work if their group is split by clarifying the differences of their beliefs and

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[76] Theoretically and ideally, services to community residents, including JSL education and education to diverse children, should be offered by the Japanese government and municipal governments. However, I cannot discuss the issue within the limited space of this study and I focus only on JSL classrooms run by volunteers.

[77] See the example of the praxis done by Saito in the footnote No. 26.

attitudes toward their voluntary work. They prefer to leave the group as it is rather than to make a change.

Volunteers have little opportunities to learn about JSL education[78]. Unless they have basic consensus about JSL education, it is difficult for them to evaluate their activities. There has to be exchanges between tutors to effectively tutor JSL. It is often difficult for tutors to share their information because it shows the knowledge imbalance among tutors. It is sometimes easier for experienced outsiders to offer suggestions to tutors. However, it is difficult to find those professionals.

It is necessary to support and improve community-based JSL classrooms by offering human and financial resources to help remove the barriers preventing volunteer tutors from evaluation.

Suggestions

Creating Networks among JSL Classrooms

It will take time to realise structural changes in supporting community-based JSL classrooms. For the moment, one of the possible supports would be to create supporting networks among JSL classrooms. For example, the Resettlement Promotion Centre for the Returnees from China is providing such a network through its mailing lists on the issues of JSL education for both children and adults--'*Kodomo Mail* [Mailing List for Children's Education]' and '*Achikochi Mail* [Mailing List for JSL Classrooms Here and There]'.

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[78] There was only one formal seminar of JSL education given to the members of SHPSA. They had a two-full-day seminar inviting a professional JSL tutor to talk about JSL education. However, the expected effect of this kind of seminar is fairly small considering the fact that the instructor usually has little knowledge about the voluntary group and ends

Animated discussions and various kinds of information can be seen in these mailing lists[79]. If necessary, the researchers at the Resettlement Promotion Centre could offer their information through emails. Even JSL classrooms in rural areas[80] can access the Resettlement Promotion Centre.

Participatory Research

Gradually, scholars and students have begun to participate in the activities of community-based JSL classrooms and research on JSL classrooms and foreign residents in Japan. Although researchers often work as volunteers, their research process is not necessarily shared with participants of JSL classrooms. Participants remain as the objects of their research. If participants of JSL classrooms are able to participate in their research together, they will be able to create another co-learning space. If refugees and foreign residents cooperate in this kind of research, namely participatory research, they will be able to utilise their own learning experiences in order to create better learning space for all participants.

Education for Children

Only recently has the education for children with diverse backgrounds been discussed in Japan. No school system for diverse children has yet been established. Therefore, few children are able to have organised education that include both Japanese and heritage language education. Their education is dependent upon each teacher's effort. However,

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up giving the general knowledge about JSL education. Volunteers need specific suggestions to their group. (Tomiya, 1995)

[79] Reference to: http://www.kikokusha-center.or.jp/

[80] One of the aims for the Resettlement Promotion Centre is to support returnees from China living in rural areas in Japan.

teachers have limited access to resources related to the education for diverse children and they are usually given small budget to work with.

In interviews, former learners of SHPSA expressed their worries about their children's education. They want their children to have higher education, but many children have difficulties in entering senior high schools and colleges. They want to have more information about the Japanese school system and the Japanese entrance examination system to higher education. They feel the necessity to have more communication with their children. However, there is a communication gap between parents and children because the parents are not always fluent enough to communicate in the Japanese language and the children in their mother tongue. Heritage language classrooms are taught by parents[81], but children are reluctant to learn their heritage language and culture.

No research has yet been done about the problems of education for diverse children in Komano. As home tutoring for diverse children in SHPSA has been done by junior college students and they have not shared their knowledge with tutors of adults, it takes time for the latter to notice the problems of children's education. Some tutors in SHPSA prepared questionnaires about education for the refugees in Komano. The questionnaires are simple ones, but tutors have only collected a small number of questionnaire forms so far.

Although many refugee parents are concerned about this issue, tutors have not involved them in their research. If there were a collaborative research done by all the participants

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[81] I visited heritage language classroom of Lao language in Komano three times and observed the activity in June 1999. The teaching style was a typical transmitting one. The teacher wrote some sentences on the white board and explained their meanings of them. Then, he read them aloud and made the children repeat after him. He pointed at the children one by one and made them read the sentences. The teacher was strict in correcting the pronunciation of the children. In spite of his efforts, it seemed to be difficult for some

who are interested in this issue, it would be a meaningful activity for both Japanese participants and foreign residents.

Creative Space for All

As long as participants of JSL classrooms, both tutors and learners, remain the receivers of societal messages through language, their energy is used only to decode them and their attitudes become assimilation-oriented. If participants of JSL classrooms are encouraged to be senders of messages, they will have more opportunities to have their voices heard by tother members in society. Former learners of SHPSA who become active in their community gain self-confidence and self-esteem to share their experiences and knowledge with other community members. Language is a powerful means of communication and creation, but language is not the only means. There are alternative ways of communication and creation to express the voices of JSL participants. Language tutors should keep this in mind and should encourage learners to express themselves through a diversity of means. Searching for the most suitable means for creative expression will be one of the goals for all participants of community-based JSL classrooms.

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children to pronounce the words correctly. It seemed difficult to attract children's interest with this kind of language teaching.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Background Questions

Pseudonym:

Written Questions for the First Part of the Interview
(These questions were asked orally in Japanese by the researcher. The participant's oral responses were then written on this form by the researcher.)

A) Information about yourself:
1) Place of Birth:
a) Place of Birth: Date of Birth: Ethnicity:
b) Family in your native country:
c) Where do they live now?
2) Your Resettlement Process:
a) Date of Arrival in Japan
b) Years Resident in Japan
c) Did you come to Canada accompanied or alone? If accompanied, with whom?
d) Why did you choose Japan?
e) Where did you first live in Japan?
f) When did you move to the current address?
g) Why did you choose the place?
3) Present Family:
a) Family members
b) Spouse's schooling
c) Spouse's current job
d) Number's of Children: Age: Grade: Job:
e) Did you get Japanese citizenship?
f) When?
4) Language Use:
a) Present Japanese Language Skills (3point scale):
b) Reading: Listening: Reading: Writing:
c) What other languages do you use?
d) Other Language Skills (3 point scale: 1-no, 2-so-so, 3-well):
Language: Speaking: Listening: Reading: Writing:

---

d) Had you learned Chinese characters before you came to Japan?
e) Chinese Characters Skills (3 point scale): Reading: Writing:
g) What languages do you use when you use to your family members?
To your spouse: To your children: Other family members:

h) Japanese Language skills (3 point scale):

Spouse: Children: Other family members:

5) Job Experience:

a) In your native country: _____ Hours:

b) In Japan:_____ Hours:

6) Schooling:

a)Schooling in your native country:

Type:_____ Purpose:_____ How Long

b)Teaching style in your native country:

_____

c)Schooling in Japan:

Type:_____ Purpose:_____ How Long:

a) Japanese Language Learning:

Type:_____ How Long:

Pseudonym:

Written Questions for the First Part of the Interview
(These questions were asked orally in Japanese by the researcher. The participant's oral responses were then written on this form by the researcher.)

1) Information about yourself:
a) Age at present:
b) Ethnicity:
2) Formal Schooling (type, purpose, length):
_____3) Informal Schooling (type, purpose, length):

_____

4) Career experience (type, length):

_____

5) Language learning experience (languages, type of institutions, learning style, length):

_____

6) Language Skills (3 point scale: 1-no, 2-so-so, 3-well):

_____

7) Visiting or staying experience in foreign countries (counties, purpose, length):

_____

8) Volunteer experience in this group: from the year ____ to
9) Other volunteer experiences (type, length):

_____

10) Teaching experience in this group: None, or from the year _____ to
11) Other teaching experiences (type, length):

_____

12) Teaching training (type, purpose, length):

_____

13) Volunteer training (type, purpose, length):

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

Guide for Taped Interview to learners
(These questions were orally translated into Japanese by the researcher. The tapes were transcribed in Japanese.)

I) Schooling Experiences in Native Land

1) How did teachers teach in your native land? Please describe it in detail.
2) Are there similarities or differences between the teaching styles in your native country and that of in Japan? Please elaborate.

II) Life Experiences in Japan

1) Do you recall what you felt when you heard the news of the murder case in Komano?
2) Please elaborate.

III) Experiences in the 'Society in Harmony with People from Southeast Asia (SHPSA)'

A) ESL Literacy Class

1) When did you first come to the class?
2) How did you know about the class?
3) How often did you come to the class?
4) If you didn't come to the class, what were the major reasons?
5) Did anyone help you to come to the class or did you help anyone to come to the class?
6) Did you come to the class with your family members? Who were they?
7) Did you use baby-sitter system? If yes, how was the system?
8) Did you learn one-to-one or in a group? If in a group, can you recall who there were in your group?
9) If you can compare one-to-one learning with group learning, which did you prefer?
10) Why?
11) How long did you learn in one lesson? Was it long enough?
12) Were Sundays suitable for you to come to the class? Why or why not?
13) What kind of text or material did you use?
14) Do you keep any of the materials now?
15) Could you describe how tutors taught? Please describe it in detail.
16) What kind of lessons did you find it interesting or not interesting? Why?

17) What kind of lessons did you find it instructive or not interesting? Why?
18) Are there any other lessons you can recall impressive? Why?
19) Did you learn with a same tutor?
20) Can you recall any impressions of tutors? Please describe them in detail.
21) Did you feel equal with tutors as a person? Why or why not?
22) In general, what kind of impression do you recall from your experience of JSL literacy class?
23) What did you like about the JSL literacy class? / What didn't you like? Please elaborate.
24) How many years did you come to the class?
25) When did you stop coming to class?
26) Why?
27) What did you expect for the JSL literacy class when you first come to the class?
28) What did you learn from the JSL literacy class?
29) Do you learn Japanese now? If yes, where and how? If not, why?
30) When do you feel the necessity of learning Japanese?
31) What do you think are the roles of community-based JSL literacy class run by volunteers?
32) What kind of community-based JSL literacy class by volunteers do you think is helpful to the new comers to Japan?

B) Other experiences in the SHPSA

1) What kind of activities did you do except the JSL literacy class? Please elaborate.
2) What kind of experiences do you recall except the JSL literacy class? Please describe them in detail. (When, where, who, what, and how?)
3) Did you receive any help related to your daily life?
4) If any, please elaborate.
5) In what way SHPSA helped you or could not help you?
6) What did you feel about it at that time?
7) Did you take part in any administrative work for SHPSA?
8) If any, please elaborate.

C) Other experiences except SHPSA

1) Did you belong to any other groups except SHPSA?
2) If any, could you describe your experiences?
3) Why did you belong to them?
4) Have you organise any group by yourself in your community?

5) If any, could you describe about the group?
6) What are the differences between the experience in SHPSA and those in other groups?
7) What did you learn from the experiences in those groups?

D) Resettlement in Japan and Future Hopes

1) How do you feel about your life in Japan now?
2) Are you satisfied with your life in Japan? Why, and why not?
3) How do you cope with daily problems now?
4) What factors do you think is important to solve your problems?
5) What hopes do you have in your future?
6) What hopes do you have in your children's future?

Guide for Taped Interview to Volunteers
(These questions were orally translated into Japanese by the researcher. The tapes were transcribed in Japanese.)

IV) Experiences in the 'Society in Harmony with People from Southeast Asia (SHPSA)'

E) ESL Literacy Class

1) How did you know about the class?
2) How often did you come to the class?
3) What were the major reasons when you could not come to the class?
4) Did you teach one-to-one or in a group? If in a group, can you recall who there were in a group?
5) If you can compare one-to-one learning with group learning, which did you prefer? Why?
6) How long did you teach in one lesson? Was it long enough?
7) Were Sundays suitable for you to come to the class? Why or why not?
8) What kind of text or material did you use?
9) Could you describe how you taught? Please describe it in detail.
10) What kind of lessons did you find it interesting or not interesting to learners? Why?
11) What kind of lessons did you find it instructive or not instructive to learners? Why?
12) Are there any other lessons you can recall impressive? Why?
13) Did you teach with the same learners?
14) Can you recall any impressions of learners? Please describe them in detail.
15) What did you keep in mind when you taught Japanese?
16) Did you have any opportunities to discuss about teaching methods with your participants? If yes, please describe how.
17) Do you feel that learners and tutors were equal as a person? Why or why not?
18) In general, what kind of impression do you recall from your experience of JSL literacy class?
19) What did you like about the JSL literacy class? / What didn't you like? Please elaborate.
20) How many years did you come to the class?
21) Do you still continuing teaching? If no, why?
22) What did you expect for the JSL literacy class when you first come to the class?
23) What changes did your experiences in the JSL literacy class bring to your own life?
24) What did you learn from your experiences?
25) Do you teach Japanese now? If yes, where and how? If not, why?

26) Do you think it is still necessary for the former learners to continue learning Japanese?
27) What do you think about the correspondent education of the Japanese language started in1997?
28) What do you think are the roles of community-based JSL literacy class run by volunteers?
29) What kind of community-based JSL literacy class by volunteers do you think is helpful to the new comers to Japan?
30) What are do you think are the roles of volunteers in community-based JSL literacy class?

F) Other experiences in the SHPSA

9) What kind of experiences do you recall except the JSL literacy class? Please describe them in detail. (When, where, who, what, and how?)
10) Why do you remember them in particular?
11) Did you work to help learners to cope with their daily problems?
12) If any, please elaborate.
13) In what way SHPSA helped learners or could not help them?
14) Did you take part in any administrative work for SHPSA?
15) If any, please elaborate.
16) Who do you think were leading SHPSA?
17) What were the roles of learners in administration?
18) In terms of administration, were there any differences between men and women?
19) What about between volunteers and learners?
20) What about between Japanese volunteers and Spanish nuns?
21) What kind of meetings did you have about the administration of SHAPSA?
22) Did you have any opportunity to exchange the information about teaching Japanese?
23) Do you think there were enough opportunities to talk about the administrations among all the members?
24) If not, why?
25) When and how was SHAPSA established by whom?
26) What the purpose of SHPSA was when it was established?
27) Were there any gap between the ideals and the realities?
28) What changes did SHAPSA bring to the community?
29) What do you think are the roles of volunteers?

G) Thoughts and Feelings toward Foreigners in Japan

1) What images did you have toward foreigners living in Japan?
2) Did they change after you became a member of SHAPSA? If yes, how?
3) What did you learn through the activities with learners in SHAPSA?
4) What do you think were the problems they had when they were members?
5) Do you think that the problems are solved now? If yes, how? If no, why?

Appendix 3: Consent Form

参加者各位

修士論文研究への参加同意書

この度は、「東南アジアの人々と共に歩む会」の経験を振り返る研究に関心を持って下さりありがとうございました。私自身も、秦野にあるこのボランティア・グループの会員で、日本語教室で教えたことがあります。私は、神奈川県立高校の教員で、現在は、トロントにあるオンタリオ教育研究所の修士課程で学んでいます。私は、日本語教室への参加者の経験を、皆さまのご協力を得て再構成してみる研究を行おうとしています。願わくは、共同での振り返りが、日本語教室をよりよくし、家庭、学校、地域を結ぶコミュニティー作りに役立つことを希望しています。

これから参加していただく研究では、「東南アジアの人々と共に歩む会」の日本語教室に関わった約15人の方にインタビューを行います。簡単な質問に続き、インタビューは二回行い、テープに録音します。時間はそれぞれ一時間程度を考えていますが、状況に応じて、もっと時間をかけて伺うこともあるかと思います。最初のインタビューでは、個人の一般的な事柄についてお尋ねします。二度目のインタビューでは、日本語教室に、学習者、学習支援者、あるいはコーディネーターとして参加した時の経験についてお訊ねします。二度のインタビューのテープ起こしが済んだ後、希望があれば、原稿をお見せします。最後のまとめとして、参加者全員で集まり話し合いの機会を持てたらと思っています。この話し合いの目的は、それぞれの経験を振り返り、意見を交換することで、家庭、学校、地域での人びとの活動を結ぶ、配慮のあるコミュニティー作りに向けて、日本語教室には何ができるかを一緒に考えていくことです。インタビューは堅苦しいものではありません。リラックスして気持ちよく、日本語教室参加者に共通の話題について話しをして下さるよう希望しています。この研究の目的は、参加者が一緒になって経験の振り返りをすることです。私自身も参加者の一人でした。私も共同の振り返り作業に加わり、皆さまの経験から学びたいと思っています。従って、この研究の目的は、皆さんの経験の是非を判断するものではありませんが、反省をまじえた経験の解釈は起りうると思われます。

研究の課程において、あなたの名前、個人情報（たとえば、名前、住所、電話番号など）は、質問用紙、インタビューの録音テープ、そしてテープ起こしの原稿とは別に保管します。あなたの名前やあなたを特定する情報は最終的な論文の中には含まれません。参加者には偽名を用います。あなたは、研究の課程でいつ辞退されても構いません。もし辞退される場合には、収集した情報は、あなたの希望があれば、すべて破棄され使われることはありません。もし、以上の件につ

いてご質問があれば、いつでもご連絡下さい。カナダでは、電話＊＊、日本では、電話＊＊（＊＊さん宅）におかけ下さい。

お忙しい中ご協力ありがとうございます。もし、以上の件を了承下さいましたら、以下にご署名をお願い致します。

わたくし、＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿は、研究に関する以上の手紙を読み、研究に参加することに同意します。私のプライバシーが守られ、いつでも自由に研究から辞退できることをよく承知しています。

日付1999年　月　日　署名

Translation of the Consent Form

CONCENT TO PARTICIPATE IN MASTER'S THESIS STUDY

Dear Prospective Participant,

Thank you for your interest in my study on participants' experiences with the Society in Harmony with Southeast Asian People. I was also a member of this community-based volunteer group and taught Japanese in JSL literacy classes. I am a teacher of public senior high school in Kanagawa. At present, I am a Master's student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. I am conducting a study to reconstruct the participants' experience in ESL literacy class in order to reflect it collaboratively. Hopefully, I would like to use the collaborative reflection in order to improve JSL literacy class programs and to build a caring community where home, school and community can cooperate.

The study in which I hope you will participate will include individually interviewing approximately 15 people who involved in the JSL literacy class of the Society in Harmony with People from Southeast Asia. It will involve answering a brief questionnaire followed by two taped interviews each lasting about an hour. During the first interview, I will be seeking general background information about yourself. In the second interview, we will be examining your experiences in the JSL literacy class as learners, volunteer tutors and coordinators. I would provide you with the transcripts of the first two interviews after I finish transcribing the tapes. Then, I would like to have a meeting together with participants. The purpose of this meeting is to reflect upon the experiences and share opinions upon what could be done to improve the JSL literacy class and to build a caring community where home, school and community can cooperate. The interviews will be informal and I hope that you will feel relaxed and comfortable to share in conversations with me about these topics which are of interest to both of us. The purpose of this study is to reflect upon the experiences together with other participants. I was also a participant, so I would like to join the collaborative reflection and learn from your experiences. Thus, the purpose is not to judge them, but it is possible that an evaluative interpretation may occur.

During the process of the study your name and personal information (i.e. name, address, phone number etc.) will be kept separate from the questionnaire responses, interview recordings and transcriptions. Your name and any information that may identify who you are will not be included in the written thesis. Instead pseudonyms will be used for each participant. You are perfectly free to withdraw from the study at any time. If you do, all information collected from you will be destroyed and will not be used if that is your wish.

If you have any further questions, I can be reached at ** (in Canada) and ** (c/o ** in Japan).

Thank you for your time and assistance. If you agree to participate in the study, please sign below.

I, _____ have read the above letter describing the study and I agree to participate. It is clear to me that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Date: _____Signature:_____.