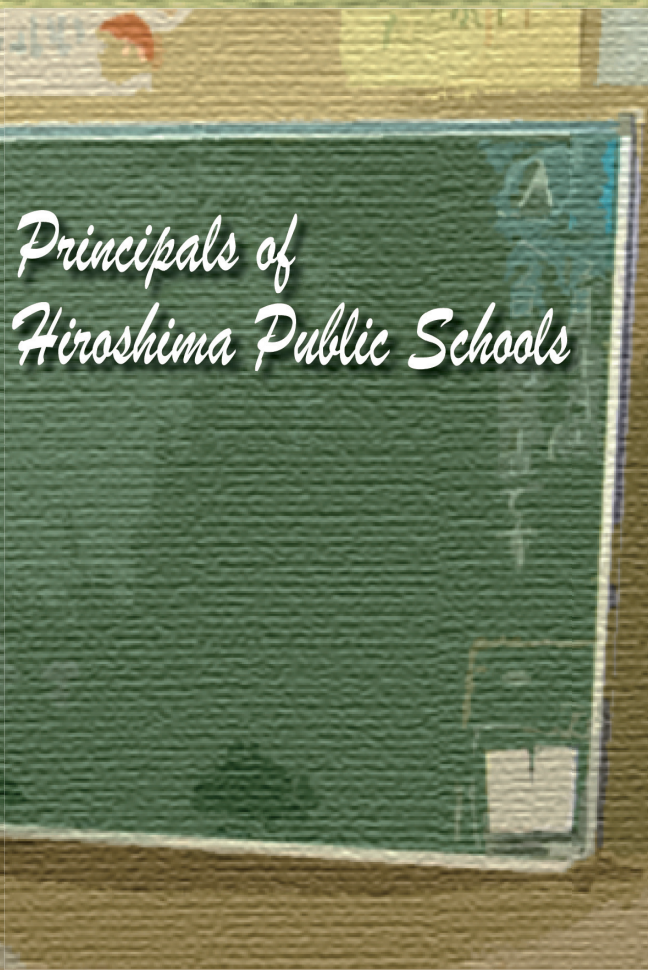


Principals of Hiroshima Public Schools



Co-Editors
Masafumi Nagao
“Principals of Hiroshima” Editorial Committee

International Development Center of Japan

IDCJ

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Co-edited by

Masafumi Nagao

and

“Principals of Hiroshima” Editorial Committee

Translated by

Ms. Naomi Nakagoshi

Dr. Amelia C. Fajardo

Dr. Robin Sakamoto

We would like to dedicate this book to all the educators in Hiroshima, educators in developing countries, and students who aspire to become teachers.

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Professor, Center for the Study of International Cooperation in Education
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This volume is an English translation of a book originally published in Japanese from the Center for the Study of International Cooperation in Education (CICE), Hiroshima University, in 2007 as an output of its “Principals of Hiroshima” Project. The copyright for the original Japanese book is now with the International Development Center of Japan (IDCJ), which has decided to publish the English version, as well as the original Japanese version, on line as an open source reading. The position and organizational affiliation of the individuals whose names appear in the book, including the co-editors, refer to those at the time of the original book publication.

Publication of the original book was made possible with a grant of Dream Challenge Award from the Hiroshima University Alumni Association. The co-editors of the book would like to acknowledge it and express their deepest appreciation to the Alumni Association and Hiroshima University for this support.

Foreword

This book is the result of a unique attempt by some students in our Department of Education, Faculty of Education, Hiroshima University. The contents were compiled through a project conducted by them, in which they interviewed well-known and competent principals in Hiroshima Prefecture and listened to their philosophy of education and outlook in life. Some of these students are now writing master's thesis in the postgraduate course, while others are already working as school teachers. I am convinced that the big challenge they hurdled to realize this project would be unforgettable and deeply influence them now and in the future. I would like to express my deep gratitude to Prof. Masafumi NAGAO who guided them in the course of the project implementation to reach the goal of project accomplishment in the form of this book publication. This type of project is what university education should aim for, and from which faculty like us should also learn.

University students nowadays are said to be apathetic and lacking in basic competencies, and their scholastic achievement is below the quality standards expected of them. Such criticisms are increasingly and openly voiced against university students, and Hiroshima University is not an exception. However, when you look at an outcome of a project like this book, you would understand that those criticisms may not necessarily be justified. The students who have participated in the above-mentioned project have gone through a competency raising project involving planning and conducting a survey-based research, analyzing and reporting the results. After identifying a problem, you conceptualize a project and execute it. Power of consistency, intellect and enthusiasm – aren't these the qualities and competencies that university education should aim to foster amongst students? It is no exaggeration to say that what they have accomplished fully reflects their proficiency in Japanese and English languages, independent thinking and strong volition for execution, as well as incorporation of the knowledge and skills of pedagogy studied in the university. This is indeed quite a feat, and I dare say they are exemplary students.

I should emphasize also that this book provides instructive materials for educators and personnel in educational administration, especially those coming from developing nations like Africa, to learn about Japan's experiences in public school education. The book's inclusion of a series of dialogues between Japanese principals and African educators about these experiences is considered a useful

addition to research in comparative and international education. For African educational personnel, what would be the most intriguing aspects? What were the aspects they questioned? What did they want to know more, or what weren't they interested in? What kind of meaning was implied in their questions? All these questions would give us deep and interesting insights as we take our time and carefully read through the book. At the same time, we should also pay attention to the principals' responses to their questions, through which we can comprehend the underlying characteristics and tendencies of Japanese school education. For all these learning possibilities, the book constitutes a truly instructive document.

Principals who contributed their life stories here in this book have disclosed their real names and backgrounds even with photos. I learned that they had been asked for an extensive interview by the students first and then was asked to contribute an essay. Above all, I would like to pay tribute to them for their sincere attitude of sharing responsible statements. Besides learning unlimitedly from the articles written by principals, the attachments in some chapters are our students' comments on what they felt and learned. I deeply appreciate the cooperation of all the principals including some who are friends of mine. Knowing their educational philosophy, I am convinced that school education in Hiroshima Prefecture will again take a firm step forward. We must learn sincerely from their courageous statements.

Lastly, I would like to pay my respect to the students who made tremendous efforts to publish this book. With their strong will, they fulfilled their task with utmost perseverance.

January, 2007.

Akira NINOMIYA

Vice President in Charge of International Affairs, Hiroshima University

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“Principals of Hiroshima” Project

Masafumi NAGAO
Professor, CICE

“Principals of Hiroshima” Project is a project for compiling in book form the life story of 13 educators who serve or have served as a principal in a public school in Hiroshima Prefecture of Japan. It is an attempt to capture, in their own words, the personal outlook in life, professional principles and educational philosophy of these educators. The project has been carried out by a team consisting of 5 undergraduate students majoring in education at Hiroshima University and myself. The project had two goals. The first was to develop a reference material on Japan’s educational experience for teachers, educators and educational administrators from developing countries who visited Japan for education training courses. The second was to prepare a reading material for Japanese university students aspiring to become a teacher. Let me explain how these two different goals were combined to form a single project.

The Center for the Study of International Cooperation in Education (CICE) of Hiroshima University (hereinafter referred to as CICE), where I work as a research professor, is a research institute focused on providing assistance to the educational development in developing countries through research and training. Annually, CICE accepts and provides short-term training courses to around 20-30 educators, including school teachers, teacher advisors and educational administrators, from developing nations. CICE conducts these courses mostly on behalf of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the technical cooperation arm of the Japanese government’s aid machinery. JICA provides technical assistance to developing nations facing challenges of human resource development for promoting socio-economic development and improving living conditions of people. As part of its educational cooperation program, JICA invites teachers and administrators from these countries to come to Japan in order to take part in training courses, such as those commissioned to CICE. In these courses, the participants learn about the Japanese educational policy, educational system, school management, in-service teacher training, and so forth, through lectures, visits to schools and boards of education, experiential learning at teacher training centers and other learning activities. The participants are also exposed to social and cultural life in Japan, interacting with people and taking part in specially organized programs and events.

In 2001, as part of a JICA-commissioned training course on local educational management and administration, CICE organized for ten educators from the Republic of South Africa a visit to a remote, mountainous school in Hiroshima Prefecture, called Geihoku Elementary School – a multi-grade school with 36 children and 6 teachers. The visit involved observation of classes, school lunch with the learners and joint meeting with the principal, Ms. Yukiko ODA, and her staff. I could see that the South African educators were deeply impressed with the school's educational practices, strategies and programs specially designed for the school located in a remote, mountain village. In the following year, when another South African group came for the same JICA training course to Hiroshima, I asked Ms. ODA, who had just retired from service, to come to our university to give a talk to this group about her life-long experience as a teacher and share her educational ideas and beliefs as an educator. She started with the reasons why she chose to become a teacher and went on to present her educational philosophy which she said was formed during the four decades of her teaching career. For 90 minutes, she delivered her lecture in a quiet, soft-spoken manner, as if sharing her life story with fellow teachers with much shorter working experiences. Excluding the time for the interpretation, the actual lecture was only for 45 minutes, but the time for asking questions by South Africans exceeded an hour. She left a very favorable impression among the South African participants. Among their comments were “I was touched by the passion to education by a Japanese educator.” “I have discovered the secrets of educational excellence in Japan.” “I wish she could visit South Africa and talk to our fellow teachers.”

Having witnessed this very fruitful exchange, I realized that besides lectures on system, policy and organization and occasions to visit schools and educational institutions, it was important to provide trainees with opportunities to learn about the educational philosophy, professional insights and outlook on life of Japanese educators who were the real actors shaping and moving the system to provide education. Through these opportunities, the developing country educators would have a clearer understanding of the educational development of Japan. Based on this recognition, a project to compile into a book the experiences of Japanese educators revealing their educational philosophy, professional insights and outlook in life was born. Since the book were to help educators from abroad understand better Japan's educational development, it would have to be translated into English. At the initial stage, however, we faced a more fundamental task. We were not certain as to how to select the educators, how to ask their cooperation, and how to

transform all the collected information into a book. Editing of the book would also require a lot of time-consuming work, which might not be warranted given already a heavy workload of the CICE staff.

As a solution to these problems, CICE decided that students’ potentials should be tapped. This was not only for expediency of gaining additional manpower but more importantly for providing an opportunity for students seeking primary and secondary teaching career to interact with experienced and widely respected teachers. This latter consideration was important because the decreasing number of new teacher recruits by public schools as a consequence of the sharp decline in school-age population was having a dampening impact on teaching career aspiration of undergraduates majoring in education, and the education faculty was in need of creating practical engagement possibilities for helping those students to regain confidence in teaching profession.

I conceived a study project to be carried out by undergraduate students for locating ‘good’ or ‘exemplary’ school teachers in Hiroshima public schools, interviewing them and compiling their views and experiences into a book of ‘stories’. My proposition was that they should conduct this research as an extracurricular activity under my guidance and financial support of CICE. I then invited the students taking an undergraduate course on ‘International Cooperation in Education’ at the Faculty of Education, Hiroshima University, to volunteer to form a study project team on school principals in Hiroshima. Fortunately, some students agreed to the aim of the project and volunteered to join the project team.¹ CICE asked Mr. Eishin TAMAGAWA, a former principal of Kake Upper Secondary School, to serve as project adviser to the project team members.

Considering the extent of the work involved in the project, the team determined the overall procedures or phases of the project as follows:

1. Project implementation should be entrusted as much as possible to the student members of the project team, with the faculty member playing only an advisory role except for the final publication phase.

¹ Seven students participated in the research phase of this project; they were Ms. Yuka AKAGI, Ms. Anna OKADA, Ms. Yukiko NISHIZUMI, Mr. Masahiko HIRAKI, Ms. Yuri MATSUZAWA, Ms. Yumi MURAKAMI and Ms. Fumiko KAMEYAMA. For compiling and editing this book an Editorial Committee was formed with the same members except Mr. HIRAKI, Ms. MURAKAMI and Ms. KAMEYAMA. Ms. Natsuko INOUE later joined the Editorial Committee, making five the total number of members to work for the preparation of this publication.

2. Target Contributors for teacher stories in this project shall be limited to principals, excluding ordinary teachers. This is because in Japan the principals are generally those who are at the final stage of their teaching career and usually endowed with rich, wide and deep educational experiences to share. In addition, the role and function of a ‘principal’ as an administrative head of a school is more or less universally shared, facilitating transpiration of smooth dialogue with foreign educators coming from diverse historical, cultural and educational backgrounds.
3. Selection of principals shall be limited to within Hiroshima Prefecture. The reason is that the name of “Hiroshima” is globally known as A-bomb stricken place. The selection should be made as follows(1) Identify possible candidates and establish a list; (2) interview each candidate; and (3) based on the interviews, make a recommended list.
4. Publication in Japanese and English: At first, a book entitled “Principals of Hiroshima Public Schools” will be published in the Japanese language, followed by publication in English to disseminate the contents to educational personnel overseas.
5. The final goal of the entire project will be “to make it known that there are principals who are making constant efforts to overcome difficult educational situations and to improve human relationships in schools, and that they always treat children as their top priority concern”.

In actuality, the selection of the principals was the most difficult step for the student members of the project team. They surveyed education literature and documents and asked opinions of university professors and others regarding what makes a good teacher and an exemplary principal. However, what helped them most was their direct encounters with the principals. Usually two or more students made a visit with a principal; they recorded the conversation, which they transcribed afterwards; they also prepared a write-up on each visit in order to share the interview contents; and they had repeated discussions to reflect on their ‘findings’. The principals made them realize that there were many different types of educators as well as many different ways of educating children and eventually helped them form a composite image of a ‘good school principal’ who kneels down to listen to children, who can fascinate children with their story-telling, who can stimulate their thinking with simple questions, who are committed to their teaching vocation and who believe that teachers themselves can change education. The team then used this image in selecting the thirteen principals who are featured in this

book.

All thirteen educators have experiences as principals at the public schools in Hiroshima Prefecture. However their actual practice in teaching, specialized subject areas, educational philosophy and professional insights are different. Their traits are reflections of their beliefs as an educator and so are the guidelines and policies they set as principals, and this makes every principal different. Among the thirteen principals, some are already retired and others are still working in schools. Three are elementary school principals; four from the lower secondary schools and six belong to the upper secondary schools. Two are female principals, and one coming from the private business sector. Some have served in the municipal boards of education for many years, while others have never worked in the administration office.

As broadcasted in the newspaper, T.V. and radio, public education in Hiroshima had been in chaos for a long period due to the conflict between the Educational Ministry, the Board of Education and the Teachers Union. Inevitably, school principals had to stand right at the middle of disputes having to withstand the intense pressure of the conflicting views and forces. The principals found in this book had experienced such pressure. Some principals had actually realized that their career as an educator was given attention only during the course of the disputes. However, it is not the intention of this book to deal with any political issues or the individual problems encountered by the principals.

Each and every principal featured here is a unique educator. The book is not presenting them as representative or typical of all the principals in Hiroshima, nor to imply that there are no other excellent principals in Hiroshima. It is perhaps meaningless to classify them into a group as ‘school principals of Hiroshima public schools’ and to discuss commonalities or trends surrounding them. What is certain, however, is that common to all the thirteen principals is their steadfastness throughout their teaching career in giving top priority to educating their pupils and students and putting this principle consistently into regular practice. What is presented in the succeeding 13 chapters is thirteen different expressions of this.

Elementary school

Pursuing education which can be done only now, only here

IKUTA Kazuto

IKUTA Kazuto was born in 1951 in Takehara City, Hiroshima Prefecture

After graduating from university, he became an elementary school teacher in Hiroshima Prefecture. While teaching at the Hiroshima University affiliated Mihara Elementary School, he completed his postgraduate study in the School Education Course, Hiroshima University and majored in Science Education. In 1994, he was promoted to vice-principal at Higashi-hiroshima City Higashi Saijo Elementary School. In 2000, he was appointed as the principal of Kurose Town-run Nominoo Elementary School. At the time of his appointment, the school was under the Kamo County administration district, but the area has now merged into Higashi-hiroshima City. Since 2005, he has been working as the principal of Higashi-hiroshima City Nishi-shiwa Elementary School.



1. The reason I decided to be a teacher

I cannot identify concrete reasons why I became a teacher. Not one of my family members were educators during my childhood. I don't recall having any teachers who could have inspired me to pursue this career. If I had to say a reason, I would admit it could have been my parent's desire. I recall that when I was younger, my parents used to tell me all the time that being an educator is good, so I had better become a teacher.

Once, when my mother and I were having a consultation with my homeroom teacher, my mother suddenly asked my teacher: "Being a teacher will be good for our son. What do you think, sensei?" My homeroom teacher replied. "That's great. I do believe that becoming a teacher would be wonderful for him." Besides my parents' prodding, her comment encouraged me at that moment. My parents believed that an educator was a sincere and stable profession. Parents naturally want the best for their children. Being young at that time, I was not sure what I wanted to do, and such circumstances enabled me to make the choices I needed to make.

Under the career education program of Nominoo Elementary School where I work now, grade six pupils attended a gathering entitled "Extracurricular Session:

Let's welcome our alumnus as a teacher", in which the school welcomed an alumnus to speak about their career. The speaker for the day was a baseball team manager. He talked about how he struggled as he pursued an athletic career, and how he succeeded in helping send his baseball team to *Koshien* Stadium. This is the most famous ballpark and the scene of the spring and summer upper secondary school baseball tournaments which are televised live throughout Japan. Thus, to play at Koshien is the dream of all young Japanese baseball players. He was a man who had so much devotion to his profession. I noticed that our pupils were getting a clear message which was "where there is a will, there is a way to go ahead."

The manager told us why he started to play baseball. "I first wanted to join the track and field club. A classmate who at that time was seated next to me coincidentally told me that he would like to join the baseball club. Then we started to converse about baseball. That was it!" shared the alumnus.

What interested me very much was that such a simple incident could lead a person to a lifelong career and passion. As his baseball career started with an innocent decision to join a different sports club, so too can someone else's. With what I heard from him, I realized that there is probably no need to be pressured to have a very serious or clear reason for choosing a career in the initial stages of pursuing it. Trifle matters or unexpected encounters may prove to be just as useful in guiding a person as one who makes the decision to choose a particular career path. What really matters is that the person has a passion to do something good, and that he or she tries to maintain this passion, which will eventually lead them to developing a strong will to make their dreams come true.

2. Pre-service training is the base where my teaching career was born

During those six weeks of my pre-service teaching training, I met two wonderful teachers who have made a significant difference in my life. Still now I appreciate them. Teaching practice indeed yielded a great harvest that boosted my morale and I finally found the will to enter the educational world.

(1) Wishing to create lessons like Teacher U

One of the greatest influences for me was the former vice-principal of a kindergarten. This educator was absolutely good at teaching. In my estimation, s/he was one of the best lesson makers at the University-affiliated Mihara Elementary School. I saw how Ms./Mr. U worked, and I had nothing but praise

Pursuing education which can be done only now, only here

for her/his teaching skills. So I started to dream of being able to deliver lessons well, however to this day, I never reached that point. I think I have to thank Ms./Mr. U for inspiring me to pursue educational research since I took it up in my earnest desire to make lessons like hers/his.

(2) Leading myself to the field of science education research

I am also grateful to Teacher O, whom I met when I was practice teaching at the University-affiliated Mihara lower secondary school. During the reviewing session right after my very first lesson in science, Teacher O who was my mentor gave me highly motivating comments. “You are good at teaching!” he said. I felt somewhat embarrassed yet ecstatic about the remark. Being praised by no less than the vice principal surely gave me a lot of confidence in my work as a practice teacher.

Then later on, I discovered that Teacher O actually had the habit of praising people, and s/he had given similar comments to other teacher trainees too. Without a doubt, the assurance and confidence I gained from his/her comments fueled my interest for science education research.

Eventually, I became a member of the Science Education Research Group at the University-affiliated Mihara School. At that time, I started presenting the results of my research, and also began joining the research trips organized by the Society of Japan Science Teaching; thus, I acquired the fundamental knowledge as a science teacher as well as a socially responsible adult.

3. Gem words useful in making lessons and conducting educational research

Five years after my pre-service teacher training, I was assigned to teach at the University-affiliated Mihara Elementary School. While I was there, I met teachers with expertise in each subject area, and their attitudes toward subject instruction were quite individualistic, so too was the way how they lead their daily life. They say meeting with good senior and fellow teachers will influence us to do something to further improve ourselves. It was through these encounters that I was able to reflect on my own educational views and lessons.

Advice given to me by those senior and fellow teachers has impacted my lessons and the way of leading my life.

Briefly, here are the things I want to share with you:

① It is only at the University-affiliated school that we can do certain things. In

other schools, this is just not possible. Therefore, we should do what we can there.

- ② Specialized can be generalized but generalizations can not be applied to a specialized environment.
- ③ Research targets should be placed higher than the possible target. One must aim for the latest frontiers of research.
- ④ Without summarization, there is no progress.
- ⑤ Never reject the offer of writing articles, no matter how busy you are. In fact, the busier you are, the more work you can do.
- ⑥ Good lessons are determined by the first five and last five minutes. Begin and end with a clear subject matter.
- ⑦ No matter how hard you have prepared, do not try to exhibit all that you have prepared. Teachers tend to show off as much as they can.
- ⑧ Avoid monotonous lessons. Design lessons that provide opportunities for children to engage in constructive conflicts.
- ⑨ Do not perform your lesson. Do not be too conscious in front of observers like parents.
- ⑩ Avoid unimproved lesson plans. Always be prepared with a new and characteristic lesson plan.
- ⑪ Spend 10% of your salary for purchasing books. Books should deal with subjects that are not within your field of specialization. Read books from other disciplines as well.

(1) Conducting educational research at the University-affiliated Mihara Elementary School

–School-based lesson study, the most challenging teacher training

At the affiliated school, lesson study was frequently conducted. School-based lesson study, research meetings, teaching practices, observations, and all sorts of open lessons were held all the time. After the lesson study, peer review-type discussion sessions followed. I do believe that participating in such reviewing sessions helped me to develop more teaching skills. As beneficial as this lesson study was, it was also stressful and challenging, as all of my fellow teachers came to observe and critically questioned me about my lesson.

For example, none of them praise the lesson they observed. The aim is focused on how to crystallize the school's research objectives in each subject. All the aims are oriented to this one purpose. The research objective has to be crystallized in



each subject, and all the subjects relate to each other, so you should not ignore other subjects. For instance, I remembered on some occasions, the research conference seemed to have turned into quarreling bouts in front of the participants and advisors coming from other universities and institutions. There was never quarreling among us, but for outsiders, it could have seemed so. Therefore, when the discussion was over, the faculty members got together and agreed on a common ground for further promotion of their research. I cherished the memory of those days sentimentally, and I remembered it was such a desirable working place.

At one point, a senior faculty member made this unforgettable comment: “The more questions are asked, the better the lessons and research conferences are.” This must be true because when there are many questions, we will be flooded with new ideas and will be highly challenged to incorporate those findings into the actual teaching of even more different subjects. Taking it to the extreme, can we say that lessons without questions are not worthy? I think that we educators should be happy, even when asked the difficult questions, as this indicates critical thinking on the part of the listeners.

(2) Educational research of University affiliated Mihara Elementary School Part 2

–One new idea at each time

My goal for every research meeting and lesson study was to bring out something creative. At least one new idea would do for me. So, I introduced the members of the meetings to some experimental tools and materials, as well as methodologies that I created, modified or devised. To achieve my goal, I really pressured myself to a great extent. I constantly tried to make or find new ideas and devices, and it was indeed a laborious task, though I must say that it was a labor of love. After demonstrating new ideas in the lesson study, some attendees would come to ask me about my inventions, and I felt my efforts had paid off through such a show of reception of my ideas.

From time to time, we in the faculty discussed how many people had come to observe our research lesson, and if we met their expectations of learning from our new ideas. At times, about eighty participants came, or on some days there were about a hundred. We excitedly counted them, as we used the number of observers and participants as a barometer to judge whether the lesson was good or not. As one senior teacher succinctly said, “There are those who annually come to observe our lessons. Those visitors are now our guests; then, they will become our fans. We will be regarded as a master of teaching by the number of fans we have.”

I recall the days of my hardships when I went through many trials and challenges. In those days I wished to be a master of teaching.

4. What we must value at school now, and what we want to seek.

(1) Education is immutable and current

① Learning from *Shokason-juku*

I believe that education is both immutable and current. The immutable aspect is the part which was handed down through the ages, while the current aspect is the trend that corresponds to the changes of the times. Education will be transformed as the years go by; however, there are also things in education that will remain fundamental for all time. When I think of how education is meant to be, I am reminded of one respectable educator in Japanese history --- Sensei YOSHIDA Shoin. The photograph above shows the Shokason-Juku or village school building in Matsushita. This small hut-like private school had only one room with the area



Shokason-juku village school in Matsushita

Master YOSHIDA Shoin (1830-1859)

of eight *tatami* mats, and master YOSHIDA Shoin devoted himself to teaching there for only two and a half years. Nevertheless, the school produced many graduates possessing distinguished talent during the tempestuous times from the last days of the Tokugawa Shogunate (Edo Period) to the start of the Meiji Period (Meiji Restoration).

To reconsider my educational philosophy from the origin, please let me review the educational philosophy of *Shokason-Juku*.

Master YOSHIDA Shoin believed in the following philosophy. When we have a chance to be aware of our responsibilities as members of the society, and make ample effort for self education, then we will become significant persons. “Education must provide chances to raise the consciousness of the students as a responsible social member. Raise their spirits and courage, furthermore guide them to have the methodology and confidence.” In the present school education, in other words, we help pupils self-grow with the potential they already possess.

② What the school and teachers should venerate and seek

Applying the principle of *Shokason-juku*, I value to work to help children self-grow. This education, I believe, is

- an education that develops good points in the children; and
- an education which helps children see things with their own eyes, listen to things with their own ears and develop their potential sensibilities and thinking ability.

In addition, I hope each and every child will have a zest for living, courage and confidence in life, and acquire basic scholastic ability, principles which have remained unchangeable for millennia. Contrary to this, along with the social changes, children these days also need to have a capacity to communicate in English. They also need to break down the information flow regarding how to take up and disseminate information, and need comprehensive problem-solving skills, which are usually studied in the period of the Integrated Study Period.

(2) Looking at what I believe now, in my educational philosophy and goals.

Within the University-affiliated Mihara Elementary School is a school accommodation called the *Keiun-Juku*, which was founded in 1944. Since then, it has become customary for teachers and pupils to jointly hold or attend school events at the Keiun house, which was founded when the nation was moving on from defeat after the War. During those times, a strong desire for the humane education of pupils being together with their teachers was advocated; under these circumstances, the Keiun-Juku was launched by the then teachers. The spirits of Shokason-Juku are encompassed in this name as is their educational practices. When Keiun-Juku was founded, it was aiming for two things, namely:

- For both teachers and pupils, by lodging together, to learn things that they can not learn from in-school studies and play; and
- For pupils themselves to take the initiative in planning and managing the overnight program, think about the harmony of group life, and recognize the importance of cooperation, thus, review and correct their own lives

The teachers' responsibility in running the Keiun-Juku is quite heavy, but the precious time they spend together with their pupils is irreplaceable. It is amazing for teachers to see the children behave properly in their daily life outside the school, and share the joy of their friends' company through cooperative activities. This is one of the school events that impressed me the most.

The aims of Keiun-Juku were 'living together', 'mutual understanding', and 'self development through cooperation.' These clearly reflected the education of Shokason-Juku, which I indeed appreciate. My experiences of Keiun-Juku helped me to establish the principles and goals in my educational philosophy, not the least being that it gave me the insight to reconsider them.

Pursuing education which can be done only now, only here

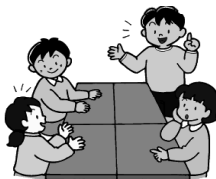
A sample day schedule at Keiun-Juku [one night two day program for grade 5 and 6]:

Extracurricular schedule

17:00 Cook dinner
18:30 Dinner, wash the dishes
20:00 Take a bath
20:30 Study
21:40 Reflecting on the day
22:00 Go to bed

Morning schedule

6:30 Get up, wash face
7:00 Cook breakfast
7:40 Breakfast, cleaning
Preparation for going to school,
review session
8:00 Go to school



Diary of a pupil

“Good afternoon.” The overnight program for us Group 3 began. Our lodge, the Keiun house is located right behind our school. The dinner menu of our group included tofu, soy bean paste soup, natto (fermented soy beans), rice, steamed potatoes and grilled capelins. The menu was just like a typical Japanese breakfast. I thought our cooking went well and we enjoyed the food.

Unexpectedly, we got into quarrels as to who gets to use the washroom for taking a bath. “It should be ladies first!!” Girls made an oral attack fiercely. Finally, it was decided by a game.

Now it is time to study. [-omitted-]

① Educational Philosophy ‘People grow while interacting with people.’

Being together overnight, the interpersonal relationship development between teachers and pupils, and among children themselves is essential and this is what Keiun-Juku aims for. In addition, I have heard a saying of one old person, ‘Paddy fields in paddy fields, human beings among human beings.’

I interpret that to mean that paddy fields which are surrounded by paddy fields receive the best environment to produce rice. Not until human beings interact with human beings do people grow as people. Many persons get together at school, communicate and interact with each other, and thus all grow up. Taking the interpersonal relationships into consideration, the following are the educational philosophy of our elementary school education.

- Have a consciousness to self-grow.
- Establish a basic life habit
- Learn how to mix up with people.
- Acquire a basic and fundamental scholastic ability
- Put oneself to work with a clear purpose
- Do things patiently
- Set a high value on the lives and personality of yourself and others
- Be aware of co-existence with nature

② Educational Goal ‘Self-Growth’

The Student Council of the affiliated Mihara Elementary School is called Jishin-kai, meaning ‘Group of Self growth’, and the original spirit has been inherited since its foundation in 1924. The following are the three beliefs of Jishin-kai:

1. We will grow while empowering ourselves.
2. We will be willing to labor for others and appreciate it.
3. We will respect our rules.

I got to know these beliefs during my pre-service teaching practice; since then, I have counted on them as they are universal for any era.

Will and motivation for self growth should be fostered in any era, and nevertheless, remains the most important for the present school education. Treasuring such feelings I would like to set up the educational goal of, ‘self growth.’



Pursuing education which can be done only now, only here

5. Creative school administration, creative school management –Do what can be done here only now–

Open lesson studies were frequently held at the university affiliated school. I remember teachers who participated said, “This can be done because it is the university affiliated school. This won’t be done in other places except the university affiliated school.” I felt it meant the selected pupils enable us to do this, but it won’t be realized at general schools. For sure, things universally applied are necessary. Specialized can be generalized but generalizations can not be applied to a specialized environment. But I came to believe that ‘Do what can be done here only now’ should be the philosophy to steer my course in a certain school.

I will be transferred to various schools in the future. Wherever I will be assigned, there are two things to consider. First, I shall reconsider what can be done there, no matter how hard the environment to do so may be. Then I will begin to do what can be done, and realize what can be done every time. This is my basic stance in educational research, and it is surely the fundamental stance in school administration and management.

(1) Sharing the Policies in School Administration and Management

What is needed to make the school administration and management creative? As a principal I believe that I must talk with and discuss things with the faculty members on a day to day basis about our school administration and management policies. “For what, aiming at which goals, and where we are heading to” -----repeating this once, twice, and even three times would not be enough; therefore, I must continuously communicate with them for a better understanding.

By releasing the school newsletter as well as holding the school assembly, class meeting and open lesson observation day, I am still thinking of ways in which I can disseminate my thoughts as principal, as well as the school philosophy to families and the community; thus, establish a close tie with them, to gain their understanding and cooperation to our school administration and management.

English activities at Nominoo Elementary School:

Enjoy learning English Activities
'Songs and chants' and 'games' are practiced.
Enjoyable and intriguing activities encourage kids to use English naturally.

'Enjoy Challenge, Kids of Nominoo!' 'Chance, challenge, change' with the 3 C spirits.

Ideal teacher image S/he can teach English, using only English, without the help of other staff members.



We want to foster kids who can openly express their own thoughts and feelings in any group, in any region or country. 'Anytime, anywhere, our kids can express themselves.'

Characteristics of English education activities at Nominoo Elementary School

1. The homeroom teacher is the major instructor to teach English with the help of an ALT (assistant language teacher) and GT. Respective talents must be well demonstrated.
2. An effective combination of 'short' and 'long' activities
3. Joyful participation in the activities using body movements, thus the ability of expression will be upgraded.

(2) Mutual understanding in ideal child image and ideal teacher image

Let me introduce an example from Higashi-hiroshima City Nominoo Elementary School where I previously served.

The school education goal should be something that the school and community desire the most to achieve now, and can only be realized there. First of all, attention must be paid to the ideal child image. 'How we want our children to be' must be examined by all the faculty members so that we can reach a consensus regarding this.

Higashi-hiroshima City Nominoo Elementary School receives children graduating from the same nursery school; thus almost all of them stay together for nine years. Pupils are placed in a situation where they did not have to speak out spontaneously among themselves because verbal communication was not necessary

to understand each other. In such an environment, children tended not to develop their abilities to express themselves. In the faculty meeting, we talked about the importance of the goal for those pupils, and made a decision that they should become expressive, in whatever group they are, wherever they are, even outside Japan. They should be able to express themselves and speak their own opinions.

(3) Proceeding with the research and practices

To realize the ideal child image and ideal teacher image, we conduct research considering certain courses and methodology. We persistently stick to our aim of realizing our ideal images of pupil and teacher. The stance to achieve this aim must be always coherent and consistent without digressing in the process. So let me introduce some cautions in conducting research and practices.

① Based upon the images of pupil and teacher

“All faculty members must be aware of one goal --- to guide pupils”

When all of us have agreed to the same goal and conduct educational activities in the same direction, we will smoothly reap a rich harvest. When we all cooperate, then pupils and parents trust us, and the faculty members and administration will feel a sense of solidarity that makes it easier to work toward one goal.

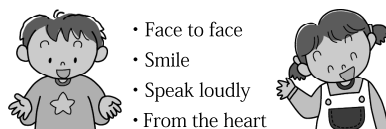
“Goals are common, but methods can be varied.”

It is essential to appreciate the same educational goals, but the methods to realize them can be varied as each individual faculty member exercises his or her creativity and talent. Moreover it will boost the faculty’s morale and give them confidence in this way.

“Evaluation is done in accordance with a child’s image.”

When the faculty is aware of the ideal child image, conversing with children will be indispensable for them during day to day school life, without limiting it within the lessons.

For example, the figure below shows the evaluation points for an ideal child image and will be displayed in all classrooms so that the faculty will be continuously exposed to it during the lessons and other activities, thus they can reflect upon and evaluate what pupils say and how they behave.



Evaluation points of Child Image in English Activities.

- ② In-service teacher training must be an occasion for the faculty to feel improvement and advancement.

There is no need for emphasizing the significance of the in-service training [including research and character-development].

Skills required for the school faculty nowadays are, in the case of teachers, overall skills to teach subject areas, for example, to speak in an easy-to-understand manner, to analyze teaching materials, to use appropriate questioning techniques, to apply new techniques in blackboard writing, and to do lesson planning. Looking towards the future, teachers should have a sense of humanity and love as an educational professional, patience, consideration, and generosity as these will be inevitably required. Both teaching skills and such personality should be upgraded in the training, and one should be able to feel the advancement through training events.

“Everyone must have something that will be admired by others.”

Teachers should have something excellent in their field of teaching so that everyone says “That’s superb!” Yet, they must not only excel in teaching but also have an excellent ability to mediate disputes in human relations. This need will become stronger and stronger as time passes by. In consideration of being more proficient in this field, teachers should participate in the training willingly.

“A balance between gentleness and strictness”

When you guide children according to the ideal images, you may encounter resistance which may inhibit your planned course, but whenever you can find a chance you must exhibit your unshakable belief in guiding pupils. It is indispensable to continue your efforts to become a reliable teacher who has both gentleness and strictness.

6. Endless steps in education

Apart from my teaching experiences, I recall some words in particular that I truly cherish. One is a comment from Mr. FUKUMOTO Masanori of Ousen Kiln. He is a potter of Mikawauchi Pottery which is characterized by its delicate fretwork. “There is no goal, no ending in my work. I think there are no goals in any type of work when you work seriously as a professional. If one thinks it is the

Pursuing education which can be done only now, only here

goal to be a large company's president or the Prime Minister, can you believe that is the best life? I feel it is sad to limit the course of your life in that way." [Quoted from a book entitled 'Words gifted to me on a journey' by WATANABE Fumio; Published by Iwanami Books]

The other is a passage from a song called, 'Headlight, Tail light' sung by Ms. NAKAJIMA Miyuki who is a very popular singer-songwriter in Japan. "Lighted ahead is my unblossomed dream, lighted behind is my childhood dream. Headlight, tail light, our journey seems to never end...."

This music is played in my favorite TV program, Project X, as a theme song. Every time the program Project X introduces a great team which achieved their goals, representing the inexhaustible obsession of a team, the quests of brilliant minds, great courage to challenge difficulties, and splendid leadership; thus I always get impressed whenever I watch this program. In particular, when the theme song 'Headlight, tail light' is played towards the end of the program, I emotionally overlap the hardships people went through in the program and feel moved.

People introduced to this program had dreams they never knew they could achieve. But they stuck it out and chased them without giving up. When the dream came true, it might look like something childish. After realizing one dream, they start to chase a bigger dream, and never stop having and chasing a dream. However, the journey never comes to an end.

This is similar to the educational profession. We pursue our ideal education and continuously make endeavors to grow professionally. As I mentioned, there is no ending. The thought of something that never ends could be a marvelous thing. I chase my own unfulfilled dream, applying my personality at my own pace, thus I am continuously making my steps to achieve my ideal education.

This chapter is based upon a lecture which Mr. IKUTA gave to South African participants in a course on Local Educational Administration and Management hosted by JICA. The lecture was held at Higashi-hiroshima city Nominoo Elementary School on October 1st, 2004.

Dialogue between Mr. IKUTA and JICA training participants from the Republic of South Africa.

Participant A: I want to know about the difference between University-affiliated schools and the other general public schools. Compared to the public schools, what privileges are given to the affiliated school?

Mr. IKUTA: Privilege is not an appropriate expression, I think. The university-affiliated school is national, so the system is different from the general schools. For example, there is no entrance examination to public schools, so anybody can enroll. Children have to sit the examination to enroll at the affiliated elementary schools. I do not deny the fact that it is easier to conduct in-service training at the affiliated school. In the case of general public schools, teachers seldom take the chance to go outside the Prefecture for training, but I had the advantage of visiting other Prefectures three times a year for in-service teacher training.

Participant A: What is the role of the university affiliated school?

Mr. IKUTA: I am not sure if I can tell you all the roles you want to know, but one mission is to train teachers. Universities with a Faculty of Education must send students to schools for student teaching in order to receive accreditation and a teacher's license, so the university needs affiliated schools. However, students who do not wish to get a teacher's license do not go for student teaching though they belong to the Faculty of Education. Nowadays the number of such students is on the increase.

Participant B: I want to ask about English education. How many elementary schools conduct English education? In South Africa, the mother tongue education is emphasized.

Mr. IKUTA: Japanese language education is also focused on at Nominoo Elementary School. Basic scholastic ability includes the Japanese language and arithmetic. We started English education not by simply teaching English, but by developing communication ability. Speaking English will give pupils confidence; then, they will overcome shyness. Therefore, we provide more time on communicating with others during English lessons rather than writing.

Participant B: Do other elementary schools also teach English?

Mr. IKUTA: There is a policy to some extent. Generally speaking, they start

English from Grade three, by utilizing the Integrated Study period, calling it International Understanding Education, but not English. About 60 % of elementary schools teach English and the remaining 35% conduct welfare education or community study. There are not so many elementary schools in Hiroshima Prefecture which teach English from Grade one.

Participant C: When you start teaching English, will you identify a new educational goal? Please explain about the aim of ‘individual development’.

Mr. IKUTA: Depending on the interpretation of the word ‘Individual’ it can mean a different thing. When we say a person is individualistic, in Japan it often means that person is weird. Individuality must be along the social norm, and when someone regarded as individualistic is not accepted in the society, then that can not be the true individuality. I believe individuality will also be developed through people’s interaction.

Participant D: Could you tell me about the PTA?

Mr. IKUTA: All the parents of Nominoo Elementary School children become PTA members. They select executive members and administer the PTA. The PTA cooperates with the school management for the annual Sports Day. A PTA membership fee is collected to purchase library books, etc.

Participant D: Do other schools also have a PTA?

Mr. IKUTA: All schools in Japan have a PTA. Sometimes it is called a Guardians’ Association.

[In the lecture, Mr. IKUTA mentioned about the importance to read the winds (=trend) as principal.]

Participant E: I think reading the wind is important for a teacher too. While you are reading the wind I wonder if the wind could have blown away before you read it entirely, what do you think?

Mr. IKUTA: When you read the wind, you should read not only the blowing wind but the incoming wind as well to some extent.

Participant F: I think principals face difficulties at work. Can you give us an example of the difficulties you have overcome?

Mr. IKUTA: Yes, I have faced quite a number of difficulties. That is why we are paid an extra allowance for managerial duties. During the past four years, I have made my Principal’s Office open and often talked with teachers over a cup of

coffee. Compared to official assembly, some comments really touched my heart. In Japanese there is an expression *Nemawashi* or root negotiation (negotiation in advance at the root level). Prior to the start of English education, for a period of about a year, I continued to speak to teachers and persuaded them about its necessity. It is not easy to launch something new, but after you tried, you will feel satisfaction with your achievement and with the growth you made. When one can realize what one has completed successfully, it will eliminate all the hardships one went through. In Japanese, we call it ‘hardships with great value’ (Hardship brings its own rewards).

Participant G: I’d like to know about the special class for the disabled. Are those classes isolated from other classes?

Mr. IKUTA: At Nominoo elementary school we’ve named the special class ‘*Nakayoshi* (friends) class’, and two first graders study there. There is one general first grade class, and pupils of the *Nakayoshi* class attend almost all the lessons at the general class except Japanese and arithmetic. To cite an example in arithmetic, pupils in the *Nakayoshi* class failed in conceptualizing numbers even only from one to ten before enrollment. Then a special program was prepared according to the individual needs. The same thing happened in Japanese. Other subjects like music, physical education, art and handicrafts are learned together with the general class pupils. Enrollment in the *Nakayoshi* class is made upon parents’ request; if the parents do not desire to send their children to a special class, the pupils can enter the general class.

Participant H: Is there a teacher union?

Mr. IKUTA: First of all, we principals can not be part of the School Staff Union. In Hiroshima Prefecture, the ratio of union members varies in regions like the East and West. In Fukuyama city, Onomichi city, Mihara city and Geihoku area, a lot more teachers are members, but here in the Kamo plateau area, the number is fewer. As my school is located in the Kamo area, it was relatively easy to be a managerial staff member [he laughs]. Teachers and the staff members themselves have the right to be a union member. When I was transferred to this school, six teachers were members. It is illegal for a principal to request the school staff to quit a union, so I will never encourage them to resign. School Staff Union aims to improve the working conditions of teachers and the staff; if the condition needs to be improved, they become very active, but if it is all right, they do not organize activities. The truth is, there was a teacher who used to work in Fukuyama City where the union

power was strong, but stopped being a member after being transferred to Nominoo Elementary School.

Participant I: Is corporal punishment prohibited in Japan? How do you guide students then?

Mr. IKUTA: Corporal punishment is not allowed in Japan. There are an increasing number of children who do not listen to teachers and do not behave well. I tell the faculty, “If you hit a child it will be the end for you.” We just continue to talk with naughty children until they understand. In the case of a child running through the corridor, which is prohibited, we tell him “Stop running, stop running, stop running,” until the child gives in. The child may feel it is more severe than physical punishment.

Participant J: Do you have addiction problems of drugs and smoking among pupils?

Mr. IKUTA: I heard about the drug problem occurring at upper secondary schools and universities, not with my own ears but from internet news, but I guess there are no such cases at the elementary school level here in Higashi Hiroshima City of the Kamo area. I heard some students of lower secondary school smoke. I know some are not addicted but just curious. Inside the school compound we have a non-smoking policy.

Participant K: You have mentioned about spending 10 % of your salary for purchasing books. I wonder if I can manage that.

Mr. IKUTA: I know it is something unrealistic. Even the teacher who gave me that advice had not spent 10 %, but I am sure he was reading a lot. What 10% means is that you should have the drive to study that hard. There are teachers who stop studying, but I think a teacher will not be able to teach pupils any more if s/he does not brush up. Only teachers who brush themselves up can teach children. I think my advisor meant the 10% of salary as a symbol to describe how teachers should be aware of brushing up.

Participant L: How long does it take for teachers to get to school?

Mr. IKUTA: For our faculty at this elementary school, the longest travel time is 30 minutes by car. The shortest is a five minute drive. As for me, it takes 13 minutes by car. The current trend is to expand the area of teacher and staff transfer. It is usually within 30 minutes for elementary and lower secondary school faculties, but the upper secondary school covers the entire area of Hiroshima

Prefecture, extending the possible commuting time to 90 minutes under the Board of Education, Hiroshima Prefecture. I know of upper secondary school teachers who take 90 minutes to get to school and are fatigued, but I do not know of such cases in elementary or lower secondary schools.

On Oct. 1st, 2004 at Higashi-hiroshima City Nominoo Elementary School.
Mr. IKUTA was a principal of this school at that time.

Teaching: Forever Alive in My Memories -realizing my dreams in remote area education-

ODA Yukiko

ODA Yukiko was born in 1941 in Fukuyama City, Hiroshima Prefecture. After graduating from university, she became a Japanese language teacher of lower secondary school. In 1988, she was appointed as vice principal of Geihoku Town-run Miwa-chuo Elementary School in Yamagata County (in northern Hiroshima). Then, after working as (a) senior teaching consultant at Kabe Educational Office of the Hiroshima Prefectural Board of Education, in 1993, she was appointed as principal at Geihoku Town-run Miwa-higashi Elementary School in Yamagata county. In 1998, she became the principal of Geihoku Elementary School and Geihoku Kindergarten. She retired in 2002.



1. My dream; “I want to become a teacher.”

(1) About my father

I was born in 1941, the year when World War II broke out. My father was a teacher. The first clear memory of my father being a teacher was in 1945 when I was four years old. It was the year when the atomic bomb was dropped in Hiroshima. My father supervised a party of schoolchildren from the Hiroshima Second Middle School on the labor work (force) right behind the Hiroshima Station building, and then the atom bomb was dropped. At that time, he was living in Hiroshima city alone; while my mother, I and my siblings had evacuated to a rural area to stay away from the air raids. After the atomic bombing, we went to the nearby train station many times to look for my father but we never saw him. I don't clearly remember how long we waited, but one day he suddenly came home, carrying a seriously burnt student in his arms. He was also burned and looked exhausted and completely different. This incident left a lasting impression in me that “my father was a teacher who was doing all his best to help his student.” One more thing that I clearly remember was that he used to write the word “sincerity” in his students' autograph albums at graduation. From my eyes as his child, he remained a teacher who thought of his students wholeheartedly and had always dedicated himself to studying the teaching materials. I think I was unconsciously

inspired by such an attitude of my father's since my childhood.

(2) Longing for teacher OHISHI, the heroine in the novel, “Twenty Four Eyes”

I first became conscious of my desire to be a teacher when I was in the fourth grade, after reading the novel entitled “Twenty Four Eyes”. It is a story of twelve pupils and a female teacher at a tiny school on Shodo-shima Island in the Seto Inland Sea. I wanted to be a teacher like Ms. OHISHI who had so much love for education. Since I liked the mountains, I also dreamed of being a teacher of a school in the mountains. When I was at the lower secondary school, I was indeed moved by the biography of Pestalozzi, an educator of love. It could be around this time that I decided to be a teacher.

2. Moving towards the realization of my dream

(1) Becoming a teacher of a school in the mountains

My dream came true. At first I got an unofficial appointment to be a teacher of a small lower secondary school in a mountain area called Toyohira Town, in Yamagata County, Hiroshima Prefecture. Although I was very eager to work in this school as soon as possible, I was also filled with anxiety because I was going to an unknown mountain region. My father lovingly said these encouraging words to me “If this were the place you wished and chose, then your dream would come true only there, and you would be able to give heartfelt and inspiring education.” My mother silently nodded in agreement to what my father said. So I was filled with dreams of hope and expectation.

This was how my teaching career started. Later I met another school teacher who became my lifelong companion. We lived in this mountain area, called Yachiyo Town, in Yamagata County of Hiroshima Prefecture for the rest of our lives. I served as a teacher at lower secondary schools for twenty six years and also experienced being a vice-principal and a teaching consultant. In 1993, I became a primary school principal and, for nine years I exhausted all efforts in school administration.

(2) As a female principal

Although they say there is no discrimination among teachers in terms of gender, in actuality not many women had become principals. Since very few female teachers had been appointed as principal in the very short post-war history,

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I never imagined that I would be one. As a result of the post-war educational reform in 1946, seven female principals of elementary schools were appointed across Japan. By 2000, the total number of female principals for both elementary and lower secondary schools reached some 4,000 but this is still just 11 % of the total number of principals in Japan. At present, in this 21st century, this percentage has largely increased; but when I was assigned to manage a school, I was the first female principal in that town. In those times, the social status of women in mountain regions was regarded as low. Therefore, during the first meeting with parents and community residents, I intentionally gave this comment, “Even though I am a woman principal, I will do my best. I hope you will count on me.....” Nowadays, I think it is no longer necessary to give this kind of comment.

With the under-representation of women in school administration as principal, I swore to myself that I would faithfully carry out my duties as a principal following the spirit of the female principals who came before me and making history myself. As a school manager, I thought that I should achieve and implement educational practices that would not only satisfy me but also all other stakeholders; consequently providing better career opportunities for future female principals. When I came across difficult situations, murmuring the poem, “Long Way” written by TAKAMURA Kotaro would give me enough courage to move on.

The poem goes like this:

There is no path before me
There will be a path after me
Oh Nature, Father,
Great Father who has made me independent
Keep an eye on me and protect me
Fill me with your spirit all the time
For the long way to go
For the long way to go

One day, a girl student of an upper secondary school sent me a letter. When I became a principal for the first time, she was a sixth grade pupil of the elementary school to which I was assigned. She said in her letter, “When you first came to Miwa-higashi Elementary School, I was amazed to know that even a female teacher could be promoted to principal. As I expected, working women like you seemed surely vivid and cool.” Her letter gave joy to women like me, and it once again encouraged me.

(3) Children - our gems who will build the future

Ever since I became a teacher, I had always believed that children are our gems who will build our future. I took it as a mission and responsibility to foster these children. To this end, I must consciously try to become a teacher who always keeps a strong passion for children and wholeheartedly helps in their proper development with guidance and security.

My parents raised us, their six children, in a frugal and simple life in the post-war era. They were always saying that we, their children, were their only real treasures. They equally showed their love to all of us, six kids, and with all their best efforts strictly raised us to grow up as good individuals. This philosophy of my parents about children has been alive in my mind even after I became a teacher, particularly when I became a mother myself, so I braced myself to realize the true meaning of this philosophy. When I was a homeroom teacher of the third graders at a lower secondary school, my students presented this message at the time of graduation. "Our teacher showers us with a warm motherly look. Her love cuddles the whole class as her family" or "Our teacher worried about us as if we were her own kids. She was strict when it was necessary....." Children encouraged me with this message and taught me a lot of things. Also, through several books I read to upgrade myself as a teacher, I learned that great educators were those who held strong passion and belief that children are (were) treasures. These great educators also never hesitated to be strict when they must teach what they must teach. Pestalozzi said that 'education means to substitute with mother's love'. My father and mother, Ms. OHISHI, the female teacher in the novel "Twenty Four Eyes", and Pestalozzi – my heart is overflowing with deep feeling from all of their love for children.

YAMANOUE-No-Okura, a poet of *Manyo* composed a poem that goes like this: "When I eat a gourd, it reminds me of my child. When I eat a chestnut, I further miss my child. Silver, gold, a jewel, none of these are a substitute for my child. This is my favorite waka or traditional Japanese poem. When I have a chance to see or hear news about former students who are now occupying important positions in society, I am once again reminded that children in this world are truly our treasures, and they are the ones who build our future. Therefore they should be properly educated and developed.

In my case, I became a teacher because I wanted to be; but whatever the reasons are for becoming a teacher, I believe we have to be aware of the fact that we have the mission to love and develop humans who will live for the future. To

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fulfill this mission, a teacher has to exert genuine effort to become a competent, trustworthy person who is a good planner, a good practitioner, and a good evaluator as well as a leader. Each and every child is endowed with incomparable potential and strength. We must believe in every child's innate potential and calmly and objectively observe his/her behavior. We must constantly guide each one with firmness but at other times with gentleness to draw out and enhance the potential ability of each child. I also wanted to be a teacher who could help the children make decisions and say "I want them to grow this way" and study towards this goal. Thus I would be able to help in the self-realization of the children. One thing we must be careful of and be reminded of is that we teachers belong to the world of children. We tend to be self-righteous but since we are in the children's world we must have a broader view, maintain objectivity and have a well-balanced sense.

When I was a teacher of Japanese language at a lower secondary school, I exerted effort studying about instructional methods, class management, and also library education. By teaching in creative ways as I paid attention to every pupil's thought, I stimulated their interests in learning, and made classroom activities more lively, and improved their academic abilities. As a principal, I shared my views on teaching to my faculty members whenever I had the opportunity.

(4) Three pillars of school management that I value as a basis

Serving at a small school in a mountain area, I conceptualized three views resulting from my reflections on the particular status of the school and I was guided by these three pillars in managing the school. They are as follows:

1. making a vigorous environment in the school
2. making an educative environment of the school
3. making a humane school

The first pillar, making a vigorous environment in the school, actually means that:

- We use to the maximum our abilities under certain disciplines as a member of a group.
- Being in the school opened to the community, we will actively practice and,
- We create an ideal school environment best for education.

As for the second pillar, making an educative environment of the school means that:

- Teachers have to acquire teaching skills and, at the same time, acquire

the ability for self-learning. As teachers teach they educate themselves through self-study. Teachers have to keep in mind that children grow up while imitating how adults do things.

The third pillar, making the school humane refers:

- To cultivating the mind. We create educational contents which foster morality among pupils; and,
- We respect pupil's individuality and try to understand each other.

(5) You can do it if you try

To illustrate the practice of these three pillars, I will mention one of my experiences at Miwa-higashi Elementary School in Geihoku Town where I served as the principal for the first time. Geihoku Town is in the mountains located northwest of Hiroshima Prefecture. It is cool in summer, and in winter there are many ski grounds opened due to heavy snowfall. Schools in this town are officially classified as remote area schools. Miwa-higashi Elementary School is surrounded by hills, and wild cherry blossoms bloom in the school ground. The wooden school building reminded me of the novel 'Twenty Four Eyes.' At that time, my heart was full of hope for the good to happen, and I said to myself, "I can realize my dreams and hopes in this school." As a school manager, I dreamed of creating a school where all the children could enjoy themselves freely and be themselves, to achieve self-actualization. Since the school was remote and small, the vice principal also held another position, and only two teachers took care of multi-grade classes. The school had poor facilities and equipment and a limited budget. From the beginning I faced many issues to be solved. However, I strongly felt that in whatever condition, our pupils should not be sacrificed. While I could see that children were innocent and obedient, I could not observe characters like spontaneity and independence. Considering the status of the school and what I wanted to achieve, I thought I needed to boost the faculty's morale in education, and encourage pupils to be enthusiastic to study. There was a need for me to create an ideal educational environment inside and outside the school. I thought my dream would come true only if I could encourage pupils to have academic abilities and the strength to survive throughout life.

① Making the whole school into a library

The first thing I did was to tell my idea of school management to my teachers and staff, "Teachers and staff themselves should be full of life and zest. We

ourselves should prepare a good learning environment for pupils.” I further told them, “If we try hard, we can surely ask for funding by proving the necessity. It is hard but fun to create things by ourselves. Then the children will follow our examples. Other people will also see and support us. It is important that we set the ball rolling.” And my first proposal was “to transform the school into a library.” I noticed that the reading environment was lacking in this school. I explained to the teachers and staff about the necessity and importance of reading books.

When I was still a teacher of a lower secondary school in the mountains, I indeed missed cultural facilities, particularly a public library. The school library room was hardly functioning as a library. The books in most schools in the same county were generally very old which was not useful for students’ learning. Budget allocation was insufficient to improve the situation. So, I spoke to the Principal’s Association of the county, and initiated the ‘Research Council of School Libraries in Yamagata County.’ We wrote a white paper to ask for a budget. I was working at Chiyoda Lower Secondary School at that time, and I started the morning reading time for the entire school. I also approached the PTA and asked the parents to form a ‘Parents Association to Recommend Good Books.’ I did all my efforts to expand the reading activities. Now as a principal, I wanted to use this experience as a lower secondary school teacher for school management.

Under the motto of ‘The Whole School as a Library’, the teachers, staff and I, with the help of the children transformed a room which was used as a storage area into a library/meeting room. We carried in books miserably left in the auditorium. We also placed a *Kotatsu* [a low table with an electric heater inside and covered with a blanket] so that children could read books in a sociable atmosphere while warming themselves during the cold winter. We posted a chart on the wall on which pupils affix stickers of cherry blossom each time they read or checked out a book. Soon, the room turned bright and beautiful with a large quantity of bright colorful cherry blossoms. There were various activities promoted, such as book reading by adults and ‘Book Talk’ (*1). Books were placed not only inside the library but also in the classrooms and corridors, and practically everywhere in the school so that pupils could borrow books anytime. Then our reading project grew more actively. Eventually, local grandmothers also began to gather in the library to borrow books. Parents and community people were moved and delighted by this change and contributed to the improvement of the learning environment by donating books and shelves. Further, the town Board of Education approved our proposal and allocated some budget for the school. With this budget, the lights of

the auditorium were changed to fluorescent lights which made the area far brighter than before. This made parents and community residents, who attended evening meetings, joyfully remark “We feel shy as it is too bright to see everything.” The teachers and staff who were at first totally desperate became active enjoying making new things. They even came up with new ideas and energetically engaged in various other programs, not limited to library activities. Gradually, the school changed to be a lively place. As there was not enough staff, each person including the children had several roles, thus everything was done in collaboration. Children interacted among children of different age groups, encouraging or teaching each other, and learning to concentrate on things within their limited day time at school.

② Making the school open to the community

The children spend their everyday life with just a small group in the school, so I wanted to give them chances to mingle with as many people as possible. To meet this end, I made two approaches; first, I invited community folks to the school, and second, I allowed children to go out to the community and experience nature through seasonal changes together with the local residents. Through such interactions, I wanted children to know the local people and environment and understand the bonds of interpersonal relationships as well as the beauty and blessings of nature. As a result, they would feel a sense of attachment to the place where they live, and take pride in living there, however remote it was. Consequently, we decided to actively participate in planning the project called “Pride of Hometown” which was proposed to the community by the Town Government. In the meeting where all the representatives of various groups in the community attended, I shared my thoughts about the project, got a consensus, and we started the ‘Hometown Classes’ at school. We tried to increase the number of attendees e.g. by planning for lesson observation days open to the public, and making pupils present their opinions, so that community people would know about the school and pupils. Moreover, to learn about the community, children attended the session on *Warazori* [ancient straw shoes or slipper like sandals] making, or steamed rice pounding with a mallet in a mortar to make traditional rice cakes. On the study outcome presentation day, pupils were not the only ones who presented learning outcomes, but also the community people presented cultural performances in the afternoon as I thought such a Cultural Day was also meaningful. Our school was the only cultural facility in the community, so ideally speaking, I expected that the school could function as a Community Culture Center. Local folks performed

traditional Kagura, dance and music to worship Shinto deities. In the second year, even those people who left the town (to work in cities) came back to dance and displayed their paintings. As such, the day meant for pupils to demonstrate their academic progress became the day for local people's cultural performance as well. Almost all the residents attended and people enjoyed the whole day. Local people brought lunch with a huge pot of meat and vegetable stew called *Mizoguchi* Pot named after one of the districts in the community in which the recipe was invented in the Hometown Class. Everybody enjoyed eating the stew while having a friendly chat with others. Because many elderly people also visited our school with joy, we hurriedly attached handrails at the stairways for support while moving up and down the steps. A parent who was a carpenter helped in making these handrails. The whole community kept their eyes on our children, and it seemed the pupils felt that everyone was living in harmony. Though all the faculty members were as busy as a bee, they realized the importance of knowing the community. One time, a teacher who was living in this community, quietly but sincerely gave this comment from the heart, "This is the real open school, isn't it?" These words still remain in my mind. During my first year as principal, I helped the teachers bring out their talents and potential so that they participated in activities enthusiastically. I also endeavored to enhance the educational power of the community to promote a desirable educational environment.

Another thing we did was to accept the responsibility of conducting the special study program of "the Seminar for Educators in the Western Japan Remote Area." This seminar was launched by the Ministry of Education, and my school was commissioned by the Prefectural Board of Education through the local education office to implement the program. Remote area education is defined as "uniquely specific education undertaken in mountain regions or on far-off islands where the transport network, natural, economical and cultural conditions are disadvantaged." In the public schools, school education aims to implement a localized curriculum through effective utilization of local resources. In the Seminar, we held open lessons which shared the outcome of our experiences, as we aimed to learn from the wisdom of the local folks living in the area as well as from the local nature exploration activities conducted by the school. We also included sessions on extracurricular activities involving parents and community residents. It was a big experience for our children and the faculty to interact with numerous teachers from other prefectures, including those from Okinawa and Kagoshima Prefecture, in the southern region of Japan. It was a worthwhile experience for our faculty members

and pupils who gained self-confidence that if we truly have the will to succeed, though a small group, it is possible for us to even host a big seminar.

To achieve an open-school policy, we utilized the uniqueness of a remote area small school by doing various activities which could be done only by a small group. As a result, the relationships among the parents and community people and the school were deepened. Amidst trials, we progressed towards the goal in consideration of the human education of our pupils while taking care of each and every child.

This school was closed and integrated with other schools, but the school building became “the Miwa-higashi Culture Center” being managed by the community residents, and serving as the Center for cultural exchange programs for people of this community as well as other communities. Children also visit the center to borrow books from the library, or meet with others to study and relax together. The Cultural Presentation Day has continued since then for the people in the community.

(6) “To do my best,” as my personal motto

Five years later, I was transferred to Geihoku Elementary School in the same town. Two schools had been merged to form this school, thus the coverage of the school district was broader than standard. Some pupils took the bus to get to school, and some walked for a long distance of more than three kilometers on hilly roads which were snowy during winter. To get to know the environment of the school district including the roads within the school zone, I left home early in the morning, went to the nearby pupils’ houses and walked to school together with the pupils. While walking I talked with them and I could get to know their names, status in life, friends, relationships, and family members. The pupils would let me know of dangerous areas by telling me, “Bears pass by here.” This way I learned about the natural environment surrounding the pupils. After school in the evenings, parents went to school to accompany or instruct the pupils belonging to the Kids Sports Club, such as softball or a martial art *Kendo*. I thought I also needed to know about the activities of the Sports Club. While observing their games and practices, I socialized with the parents, and easily memorized their names. Winter time was not only cold but the snow level often reached above the knees or much higher. Just the same as in my previous assignments, I went to school earlier than usual, and with the help of the vice-principal, removed the snow so pupils could easily enter the school building. It was quite a chore to remove the heavy snow

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manually with only a shovel, but whenever pupils joyfully greeted us saying, “Good morning”, with a show of their perseverance in walking along the snowy road, I was reaffirmed that children indeed have innate strength and energy. Doing all of these helped me get to know every child easily providing me a base for giving concrete advice to their homeroom teachers based on their needs.

Based on my past educational philosophy characterized by my belief of adhering strongly with my personal motto of doing my best, and by the belief that understanding and reliability are the foundations of school management, I constantly made efforts to influence the faculty with my policy of school management. Due to the diverse values and points of views, I sometimes got into arguments with the faculty, but I was never persuaded by them if they brought out the educational theory written in books. I had an unshakable belief that I would never agree to what I could not support. So, I repeatedly told them that “I hope you speak to me about your actual practices which consider the children.” When the time came that the faculty understood my management policy, and agreed to work to achieve it, I became confident that it could be put into action. To implement our plans, I tried to understand every teacher and staff member, and became conscious of giving advice in each particular situation with affection and a certain level of strictness. I believe that the principal is an educational practitioner and a leading partner who should take steps together with the faculty. We have to be aware of this mission; thus continue to make efforts.

① Research practices conducted vigorously

In the academic years 2000 and 2001, we voluntarily accepted to be a model school to promote research as part of the Project called “Education Support for Our Hometown” administered by the Hiroshima Prefectural Board of Education. The project included three activities such as research and practice of the new curriculum, reading activities and experiential-activities week. This project aimed to enforce educational reform in the whole Prefecture, and before the implementation of the reform in the entire Prefecture, some municipalities were pre-selected and assisted by the Board to actually conduct the research and practice of the programs which are indicated in the Compulsory Education Improvement Vision. As a consequence, the outcomes of this pilot research would then be disseminated all over the prefecture. The key concepts of the Compulsory Education Improvement Vision were to establish definite academic performance, richness of mind and a reliable school. The duration of the research was two years and the annual allotted

budget was 500,000 yen for the new curriculum; 200,000 yen for reading; and 250,000 yen for experiential activities. Also in 2001, our school was designated to join the “Compulsory Education Research Improvement Project 21” based upon the Compulsory Education Reform Vision, and mainly worked to achieve a definite level of academic performance. We have a small number of faculty at our school, so the research duties were divided simply into two departments; the Research Promotion Department and the Practice Record Department. The principal and the vice principal involved in both departments, gave guidance and advice to the faculty synergistically. The eight faculty members including the principal shared the duties and worked together to promote the research.

The following are some of the research activities that we actually did:

1. To set up the daily and weekly time schedule in order to maintain the basic scholastic abilities among pupils – “The three R’s [reading, writing and arithmetic]” is conducted repeatedly and continuously; and “the Reading Time” before the first period class in the morning.
2. To establish a reading environment and promote reading activities; - establishment of a library, installation of mobile bookshelves in the corridor, placement of borrowed books from a public (local) mobile library in each classroom, use of library books during the lessons, reading sessions to pupils by adults, Reading Festival, reading events with parents, etc.
3. To observe and experience nature in the community - wild grass(es) mapping, observation of aquatic animals, rice cultivation, straw handicrafts, etc.
4. To develop basic life style habits that support scholastic achievement (performance) - survey on the status, collaboration with the families, etc.
5. To determine how “the Integrated Study Period” should be conducted - pursuit of issues making full use of the locality, international understanding, etc.
6. To identify the scholastic achievement, and improvement of teaching skill - achievement test, questionnaire on (daily) study, weekly school-based training, lesson study, computer training, promotion of training at the Education Center and at other pioneering schools in research, etc.
7. To open the school - construction of school’s website, invitation to open lessons and school events, distribution of a monthly school bulletin to all households in the community, etc.

Among these research projects, activities relating to children were carried out by the whole school, and activities exclusive to each grade were carried out by that grade. Children of different ages were put together and the content and the teaching methodologies were adjusted according to the developmental stages of the children. Story telling (Book reading to children), parent-child reading, development of an observation pond, rice cultivation and all other experiential activities were coordinated mostly by parents and local residents. We sincerely appreciated their support as we were encouraged by them.

There were two reasons why I could be actively involved in such research. First, based on my past experiences in my previous assignments, I had become confident with the fact "If I try I can do it." Secondly, if we kept a clear vision of promoting research, teachers would be empowered, and consequently children could develop better academic ability. Furthermore, when conducting research, we could get an extra budget to invite instructors from outside, and elaborate and modify the research activities. However, having only a small number of the faculty for conducting research, it was necessary to boost each and every member's morale and encourage active participation. As a principal, I always showed my appreciation to the faculty who naturally worked hard for the children as I felt a sense of satisfaction of the results coming in one after another. We conducted several kinds of research simultaneously. First we analyzed and categorized the issues, and promoted them systematically so that we could also apply the research contents concretely through continuously relating modifications with one another. Therefore, children were comprehensively introduced to a wide range of abilities. While valuing the basic scholastic abilities of reading, writing and arithmetic, we incorporated sessions of computer operations and applications necessary for this new era. We were convinced that pupils should develop having both skills in balance. The faculty members were happily talking about such outcomes. Not only the pupils, but also the faculty themselves were also satisfied with the practices which would further lead to new research in education for a new era, as well as subject teaching that is the most important in school education.

In Japan, there are these two expressions, "*Fueki* or unchangeable" and "*Ryukou* or trend." In education, there are phenomena or conditions which do not change and should be valued through time, and that is "*Fueki*". On the other hand, those aspects which change as time goes on to meet the social trend are referred to as "*Ryukou*". Having both *Fueki* and *Ryukou* always in mind, it will be possible to develop real abilities and potential. Taking these into consideration, I want to be a



Children always looked forward to hearing my picture book reading.
They laughed and shed tears from time to time.

teacher who can maximize the abilities of pupils and help them achieve their goals, instead of sacrificing any pupil at school.

② Early childhood education – basis for good living

Geihoku Kindergarten was established and attached to Geihoku Elementary School. This means that I was the principal of both schools. While I read picture books to children, had the school lunch with them, and played with them during the after-lunch recess, I learned that early childhood education is the foundation for children to develop the zeal for life. They always looked forward to hearing my picture book reading, and their eyes were fixed on the picture book I brought in. At the beginning, they just asked me about the book I was carrying in “What did you choose today?” but gradually, they started to say “Principal, please read this picture show too.” “Next is this book.” “I want this book to be read.” “Take turns, take turns!” They picked up their favorite picture books or picture shows, and asked me to read them. “You know, it is dangerous to run off the road.” “The man working in the zoo did not do anything wrong. It was the fault of the war.” Small

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children laughed; shed tears or unconsciously murmured as being absorbed in the story. I realized how the potential capacity of these young children could be drawn out and developed through their expressions, comments and behaviors, and I was touched by this fact. In 2001, my school was designated as an experimental site of “the Comprehensive Research School of Kindergarten – Elementary Coordination” which was a mandated research project of the Ministry of Education. In addition to our research started in the elementary school, we also promoted this mandated project from the Ministry with two kindergarten teachers. As a result, I sincerely realized the importance of early childhood education as well as the importance of the coordination between the elementary school and kindergarten.

3. What I think of my teaching career now after retirement.

Through my entire teaching life, I learned that when all teachers and staff understand the principal’s policy of school management and work together exerting all the effort to achieve a common goal, anything can be achieved satisfactorily. Consequently children will then be actively involved in the school activities. I am happy to have personally experienced them. Regardless of the circumstances, whether naturally, economically or culturally disadvantaged, children’s lives should be considered equally important and they should be able to live towards a future with the natural gift of strength. It is our responsibility as educators to educate them with all our strength and might regardless of the type of school we are assigned to, so that the children can study well and be able to demonstrate all their potential and live with an empowered mind. It is important that the principal in particular, identifies the current issues of the school, what problems are needed to be solved, and then boosts the morale of both the teachers and pupils, and applies concrete practices. All of these practices in which I was involved in the past, are what anybody may generally be doing these days. However as a small school in those days, the practices I carried out based on my thoughts and the unique local conditions, were certainly necessary and important because both schools and communities were empowered. The situations where teachers and the staff enthusiastically and sincerely worked hard together with me, where children spent days at school making great efforts with utmost concentration, all of these are still alive in my mind. The warm hearts of the parents and community people, and the events when they strenuously supported the school, I nostalgically recall them with a feeling of appreciation. Also, I can imagine the sparingly scattered houses nestling in the mountains with the changing colors of each season, and the

landscape with a school building, just like an Impressionist painting.

During my nine years as principal in Geihoku Town, with the support of the Board of Education, I was able to manage the schools to make them lively, truly educative, and warm. I am filled with a strong sense of fulfillment and satisfaction as I sincerely devoted myself to education. I appreciate all my past experiences in my teaching career.

Using an old expression, now “I have no regret in the path I took.”

This chapter is based on a lecture given to South African participants in a course on Local Educational Administration and Management hosted by JICA, and it was held at CICE, Hiroshima University in October 2002.

Geihoku Town, Toyohira Town and Chiyoda Town were merged with another town in February 2005, and the area is now called Kita-Hiroshima town.

Good Points about Remote School Education

Ms. ODA was the model educator for the “Principals of Hiroshima” project.

It was in 2002 when Ms. ODA gave a lecture on her own educational experiences to the JICA participants from the Republic of South Africa at CICE, Hiroshima University. I was not with them on that occasion, but later I was given a chance to hear about her lecture from Prof. NAGAO (CICE). The dialogue of Ms. ODA did not carry any particularly stimulating episodes, and she delivered the lecture in a rather calm voice. However, the South Africans who attended were equally moved and one participant commented, “I wish I could take Ms. ODA to South Africa, (to educate our teachers).” Some were listening with tearful eyes to the lecture. What in the world did her lecture have that made such a deep impression among the South African participants? I felt I discovered the reason when I met Ms. ODA for the first time in 2006.

Ms. ODA has worked only at schools in remote mountain areas ever since her first assignment.

The remote area education is defined as “education conducted in mountains or on solitary islands disadvantaged in transport network, natural, economical and cultural conditions”. The remote area is regarded as ‘an un-blessed region’ with difficulties for conducting formal education.

However, from the conversation with Ms. ODA, I did not feel any of the negative images which were often represented these schools as gloomy and inconvenient. On the contrary, what I could learn were all the positive aspects of being a small school where the educational activities were conducted with the teachers’ solidarity and interpersonal exchange with elderly citizens in the community.

I am convinced that not all of them were positive from the beginning but they were the results of the practices realized by Ms. ODA. She possesses the ability to convert handicaps of the remote area to a positive factor. It may be hard to imagine all the hardships she must have gone through while she tried to make various approaches. But when I met her, she cheerfully shared her episodes like “Children are very much looking forward to my book reading time, and all of them concentrate on listening to my reading”, or cases in which she solved the problems

by working together with other teachers. I was deeply mesmerized by her way of speaking as she vigorously talked about her experiences.

The remote area education is wonderful. It might sound like a contradiction. But when I heard of her story, I sincerely thought “how wonderful the education in a remote area is.”

Educators in developing nations may carry many problems overlapping with the difficulties Ms. ODA actually faced in remote area schools. Now, I know the reason why the South African participants were moved by her story, because their experiences in Africa could have been well reflected by hers. They must have been impressed with her attitude to constantly make efforts to overcome the issues, because she has gone through tremendous problems just the same as the participants have back home.

Upon hearing about the reputation of her lecture from Prof. NAGAO in 2002, we students were equally surprised at how much impact could be given to the participants from developing nations by simply listening to the experiences of Japanese educators, and we were touched with this fact. We wished to disseminate the experiences of Japanese educators to more people in the third world and as a consequence, the “Hiroshima’s Principals” project was launched.

The chapter by Ms. ODA is crammed with many episodes that not only the educators in developing nations but also any educator who is facing difficulties should read. It will be my pleasure if as many more people will have a chance to know the experiences of Ms. ODA and have a passionate feeling as we did.

Project member A

- (*1) Book Talk is a prepared introduction to a book to elementary, middle, or high school students. It most closely resembles a movie trailer, where the book talker gives the audience a glimpse of the setting, the characters, and the major conflict. In addition, the book talker usually reads a passage from the book. Throughout the presentation, the resolution or denouement is never addressed because the purpose is to entice students to read the book. Book talks are commonly used by school and public librarians, teachers, and reading coaches, to get a reader interested in a book or to recommend similar books. It is an excellent tool for reading motivation.

Going the road as an elementary school teacher all through my life

HANASAKI Noriko

HANASAKI Noriko was born in 1947 in Onomichi city, Hiroshima Prefecture

After graduating from university, she became an elementary school teacher.

She gained experience as a teaching consultant for the Onomichi City Board of Education, then in 1995 she was appointed as vice-principal of the Onomichi city-run Takasu Elementary School. In 1997 she became the vice principal at Onomichi city Kinoshohigashi Elementary School, then in 1998 she was appointed as the principal there.

Since 2003, she has been the principal of the Onomichi City-run Kubo Elementary School.



My lifetime mission, ‘An occupation dealing with elementary school education’ will soon be accomplished a year from now. I am going to arrive at the final point of my beloved task, which has been fun and meaningful, and of which I am also proud.

How I will spend the final year of my career will mean a lot to me. I feel I don’t want to leave this profession which gave me so much fulfillment, so now everything has become very precious as my final day draws near.

Let me share some of my experiences regarding this wonderful job and why I feel I was lucky to have this occupation.

1. The reason I chose to be a teacher

I don’t think I can be your role model, because, ironically, I didn’t become a teacher out of any enthusiasm I felt for this profession, nor out of the admiration I had for any teachers.

I went to a kindergarten that was held in a local temple. The community, lacking in early childhood education facilities, temporarily used the precincts of a Buddhist temple, and conducted kindergarten-level education, and I joined their first year program. We drew, sang songs and ate lunch in the main building of a temple. When we went outside, we played under the big maidenhair (ginkgo) tree

of the temple. A new building was completed only after our graduation. When I was a pupil in the first or second year of elementary school, it became my daily routine to visit that newly constructed kindergarten. I was not solely aiming to play with kindergarten children, but I guess I was rather enjoying being their senior sister, and I acted just like I was their teacher. I let my small friends sit around me, and read a picture story book in the form of an out-door theater. I can still remember the pictures or recite some of the stories, which proves how much I enjoyed those moments. As I was still in the first or the second grade, my reading was probably not fluent, but the smaller children intently listened to me with all their ears. I remember their eyes were sparkling with excitement. Every child seemed so happy to have me in their company. In my young life, that joy I had was everything to me; thus, I think this was the first time I fancied that I could be a teacher someday.

The next reason was something more realistic. I was influenced by the way my mother thought. My mother is now already in her eighties. During her time, women were taught to stay home and take charge of the household chores for the family members, such as washing clothes, cooking and rearing children. Such ideas were prevalent those days, so my mother also felt oppressed being a woman. She was convinced that it was her fault that she didn't have a job and had to go through such a humiliation, so she wanted her daughter to have an occupation. The best job that offers independence was being an educator. Being a school teacher, a woman could receive the same salary that a man did. She was telling me thereafter that it was better to become a school teacher. "Oh, well, is it so?" I was not very clear what she meant, but without thinking much, I had indecisively chosen to study in the faculty of education. When I took the teacher recruitment examination, the second baby boomers were reaching the school age, and a lot more teachers were needed for the increased number of pupils. Thanks to such a social change, luckily I passed the exam and was recruited as an elementary school teacher.

2. My start as an elementary school teacher

The first elementary school where I was appointed was in Innoshima city. It is an island city which will be merged to Onomichi city in January of 2007. At present, a bridge connects the island to the mainland so it is possible to use public transportation, but there was no bridge during my time, and a ferryboat was the only means to cross the sea. So I had lodgings on the island. Filled with dreams,

Going the road as an elementary school teacher all through my life

I was assigned to the second grade class. Contrary to my expectation, nothing was easy. Standing in front of me were more than thirty children, and no one else could help me in the class. Going through practicum as a student teacher was a lot of fun for me, for all the kids listened to my instruction, and behaved very well. Every day, I nostalgically recalled the past. Having had a very good experience during my teaching practice, I made my final decision to become a teacher as my lifetime occupation, but I found out that in reality it was different. I discovered that during the teaching practice, the kids were well controlled in the hands of their homeroom teacher.

Once you are assigned a class, behind the children are their parents; so, the task is more burdensome than merely looking after the children. A newly-recruited teacher is assigned the same responsibility of being a homeroom teacher, as well as those teachers with 20 or 30 years of experience. Facing this difficulty, I recognized I was not capable of being a teacher, and I started to think I had better look for different work which would suit me. So I went to talk with a fellow female teacher in her mid 40s. She was a homeroom teacher of the same grade and her class was in the next room. Her advice given to me is still unforgettable. “Ms. HANASAKI, you are a fresh first-year teacher. We have reached this level after working for 20 to 30 years. Are you sure you are meant to be like me? None of the novice teachers would be able to do so!” She flatly commented. I reconsidered what I could do. I was the youngest teacher in school, which meant I was the closest to the children in terms of age; thus, I thought I could play with them, which was far better than being with the older teachers. No other teacher could compete with me when it comes to playing with the children. Since then, my pupils also stayed closer to me, but I continuously suffered from similar worries in the next couple of years.

I accumulated more experiences, and became more capable in handling the worries typical in the first year of teaching; however, as time passed by, more difficult and diversified concerns and worries occupied my mind.

In whatever condition I found myself, I tried to keep and hold on to my educational philosophy. I always wanted to create a classroom where children look forward to coming back, saying, “I want to go to school again today!” and talk to their parents saying, “Mom, I am expecting to do this and that, so please wake me up early tomorrow!” Parents feel relieved when they see their children’s smiles and lively spirits after school. As a result, they trust the homeroom teacher. The atmosphere of the classroom becomes better and better when both pupils and

parents trust us. Consequently the homeroom teacher becomes happier. Every April when I was assigned a new class, I always consider what kind of goals must be set for the class. Once determined, I put my plans into action from day one in the class. I always prepared an inspiring activity for the first day when meeting new pupils. For instance, I instructed the pupils to research about their community all through the year, and compiled a picture book using the research outcome. Or I let the pupils write poems relating to life through the year, and compile an anthology. Every activity must be coherent or logical to the goals; this was how I tried to manage the class. Children will be greatly influenced by a teacher. I took this fact to heart early on in my career.

3. As a managerial staff member

After working at Onomichi city Board of Education, I was appointed as the vice principal of an elementary school in Onomichi city.

The school was located in a developing area. The population there was rapidly increasing, and the school district was wider than in other areas. People were gathered from various sectors, therefore, the people's ways of thinking and their values were also well diversified. There were big gaps in the levels of family life and academic achievement as well.

Under these circumstances, the children were strongly influenced; negatively, positively or both. Some were abused by their parents. In one family, both parents abandoned their children, and three small kids were left behind. What I learned the most in that school environment was that there were children who go to school even though they have big problems at home or have sad affairs elsewhere. I thought indeed that children are the energy of life. They come to school though they have not yet eaten breakfast. They come to school though their father and mother suddenly went missing. They come to school though they had to climb up the steep slopes while carrying heavy school bags on their backs.

“Such brave, persevering children must be protected!” I strongly and firmly said to myself. I told the teachers, “Please always prioritize the children here at work!” I requested that whenever pupils come to us, we should suspend whatever we are doing, and get ready to listen to them with all our attention. When pupils misbehave, there must have been certain unavoidable reasons, so before reprimanding them we should try to listen to them from the heart, except in cases where they created a fatal incident or hurt somebody seriously. As the vice principal, I asked all the faculty members of the school to keep these points in

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mind. As the number of pupils was many, the things I learned in that school were also numerous.

Though gathered together in one school, pupils have all sorts of family backgrounds. Not all of them are wealthy; thus, not all get to enjoy their school life. Therefore, school teachers should not look down on these kids with their prejudiced views; neither should school teachers judge the parents with their biased views. Biases and prejudices easily create dissension and conflicts among people. Teachers should always have a broad mind to accept and understand any situation particularly in accepting a child's way of thinking, a child's way of living as well as life style, even though they could have never imagined any of them. Teachers sometimes tend to criticize the parents, pupils or even the society, as if there is nothing wrong in themselves. I must emphasize that it is totally wrong to only criticize other people, more so if the criticizing is done by the teachers.

In 1998, I was appointed as the principal of an elementary school in northern Onomichi city. A principal must have a clear vision as to what kind of school s/he wants to create; otherwise, the administration and management of the school will not be smooth and clear. As a principal who had no previous experience in this type of work, I wanted to know the status quo. I conducted a survey, and asked pupils and their parents about the things they are proud of in this school as well as what kind of school they wished to attend. Through my opinion polls, I wanted to find out how I can create a school desired by the children and parents. As I reflect on what I did, it was a so-called school evaluation. In 2001 and 2002, my school was designated by the Hiroshima Prefecture Board of Education to conduct a school evaluation and survey of faculty members' proficiency rating. I admit that I had already done that before the official one. I used the outcomes of the questionnaire to set up an educational goal that would steer the direction of the school. It is the same thing we did for the homeroom teachers. No one can manage the class effectively without knowing the pupils as well as their parents. It is essential to make sure of the facts, by understanding what aspects must be reinforced to reach the goal; thus we can rear and train the children properly.

Let me share one episode from this school. Located in the rural farming area, the school had rice paddies nearby. A program for the integrated study period was created for grade five pupils. This program dealt with how to effectively utilize the school fields, and also how to incorporate the community people to join our educational activities. We cultivated rice. The teaching staff was composed of senior citizens from the elderly community association. Staff members, the age



of the pupils' grandparents, commuted to school so happily, and they were lively every time. The fifth graders discussed how to utilize the rice paddies and reached a conclusion to cultivate healthy non-chemical rice. Using a variety of methods, the pupils sought to learn how to produce chemical-free rice. Their inquiry raised a good learning opportunity and the children's positive attitude to learn was well demonstrated. As a result, they discovered that the *Aigamo* duck (crossbreed between a mallard and domestic duck) -assisted farming method. Fifth grade children came to my principal's office and asked for the construction of a duck-coop. I really wanted to support their plans, so immediately I put in a request to the Board of Education for the fund; thus, the duck-coop was constructed. Beginning from the transplanting of the rice seedlings in spring until the day of harvesting, the pupils learned so much that I am afraid my chapter in this book will not be enough to describe all the details, so let me end this story here.

After the harvest, we had no more need for the ducks. Usually the farmers sell those ducks to butchers, but our pupils loved the ducks so profoundly that selling them would never have been an option for the children. Five ducks followed

the kids while they were leaving the duck-coop. Wagging their hips, the ducks followed the children until they reached the rice fields. With this situation, we planned to let the parent ducks lay eggs and have chicks; thus, allowing for cultivating rice next year by the duck-assisted method. Being well taken care of, all the ducks survived despite living through a severely cold winter. Eggs were often laid but it was so hard to have the chicks born. The children learned so much about life as they were not limited to the confines of the classroom. After transplanting the rice seedlings, we launched the rice farming method with the use of baby ducks. The duck-coop where parent ducks and chicks were kept became gradually crowded as the chicks grew up. Lacking in funding to construct another duck-coop, we could no longer support the pupils' plan. The children discussed it over and over again, and finally decided to make the parent ducks into duck meat. There were kids who protested and opposed this plan until the last minute, but it also became an opportunity to learn about nature's providence and the theory of the food chain. As the parent ducks were loaded on a truck bound for a butcher, the children went away shedding tears. Some children ran after the truck until they reached the school gate. The processed duck meat was delivered to school for us to eat. Children now learned why we say "*Itadakimasu*" (*2) ('we shall take the life' in Japanese) just before eating. Children indeed learned the real meaning of the words through such a long but precious experience.

Children must be reared at home, fostered in the community and educated in school. Children should grow up supported by all. My educational philosophy is to effectively incorporate this idea into school management, thus to instill sound education in the children. I have always supported teachers and the staff, as this is my task as principal.

4. As a public education employee responsible for public school education

In 1998 when I first became a principal, Hiroshima Prefecture was targeted by the Educational Ministry for correctional guidance. It has never been executed in other prefectures before. The central government perceived the necessity to guide Hiroshima prefecture because of several reasons. Even at public-run schools, the educational content and educational activities were not aligned with the National Course of Study. The number of lessons per year is stipulated by the national guidance, but the local government of Hiroshima allowed a smaller number of periods conducted at schools. School-based educational content was selected and

implemented, and the ideology of individual teachers was incorporated in their teachings. The capacity of this chapter is limited so I can't tell you everything, but as we are public educational personnel whose salary is borne from citizen's tax, it is unforgivable that educators have not been behaving well for a long time, and have betrayed the expectation of the citizens.

Here in Onomichi city, the faculty's awareness of these things is gradually improving. Efforts toward the annual research meetings based on respective schools have been made; thus the lessons have been improved too. Furthermore, in Onomichi, the city-wide scholastic achievement tests are conducted at all public elementary and lower secondary schools, and the results are published; therefore, daily lessons are designed to make careful improvements to upgrade the overall academic achievement.

Just three years ago, the free selection system of elementary and lower secondary schools in Onomichi was introduced. Today, the children and parents have the right to choose the school they want to attend. In order to be chosen, each school is trying its best to provide everything that the children and the parents could possibly ask for; thus, constructive competition is created. Schools are continuously upgrading the quality of education; consequently, they are now gaining the trust of the citizens.

The basic policy of ideal teachers and the staff of Hiroshima Prefecture are shown as follows

☆ **Universal Item**

- To have an educational passion towards children, and make education one's vocation
- To exercise one's field of specialization, and to conduct duties properly and accurately
- To have high ethical views, and flexibly cope with changes in society and children

☆ **Items particularly necessary to create the new "Educational Prefecture of Hiroshima"**

Sufficient scholastic achievement Rich mind Reliable school



- To have sufficient teaching skills

- To have good communicative abilities
- To be motivated to spontaneously explore what was previously unknown
- To be capable in conducting one's duties in cooperation with other faculty members

These points are strongly expected from every teacher, so daily efforts for self-improvement are important. In this way, we can foster promising children who will build a better future for themselves and for others. The most important requirements for education are the teachers who are always facing their pupils.

I think that the minimum requirement for teachers is to be very good at teaching and making lesson plans. Carpenters who can not use a plane or a metal hammer cannot work as a carpenter. If they don't know how to use them, they are not professionals. Teachers who can not teach properly are not teachers. We have to be professional lesson makers. Our lessons must help pupils to acquire the necessary academic ability; if academic ability is not acquired, such lessons are not good lessons. In every period, step by step, teachers must develop in the pupils scholastic ability, based on their objectives. I hope our pupils would say that they enjoyed today's lessons, and that they understood very well and would want to come back tomorrow to study more.

5. Being a principal at my second appointed school

At present, I am in my third year of the principalship, since my appointment at this school. This is my second appointment as principal. As I have mentioned before, I always regard the in-service teacher training as one of the most important events in the school calendar. My school management focuses on the in-service training before anything else.

In 2004 and 2005, my school was designated by the National Institute of Educational Research (*3) as a research school relating to self-examination and self-evaluation in the implementation of curriculum.

We set up our research theme, "To improve the overall scholastic ability and the quality of the school using the development of language ability as a starting point." The subtitle of this research was "to plan to improve the learning environment through self-examination and self-evaluation of the curriculum". We conducted the research for two years. The theme seemed too big and burdensome. Honestly speaking, at the beginning, I neither knew what to do or how to do this research. During the end of the previous academic year up to the beginning of the current

one, we gradually grasped the procedure and finally structured the flow of our research system. First, we examined the seven areas of the curriculum and probed the matter thoroughly, then after checking what we had conducted, we could make improvements. In particular, in conducting a lesson study, we set the theme “creation of lessons that pupils learn spontaneously”, and the sub-theme “to upgrade the teachers’ qualities through establishment and fulfillment of a lesson observation system.”

I thought upgrading the teachers’ abilities and skills would make the most influence and impact on pupils’ academic achievement. We have continued our research with our efforts in order to improve and also to create ideal lessons that meet our objectives. We have been conducting self-examination and self-evaluation of teachers, and lesson evaluations are made by the pupils too. This fourth of November we organized an open research meeting, and many people, even from outside Hiroshima Prefecture, came to participate. I am sure we have made steady steps toward achieving our goals.

6. Woman at work

I have walked quite a long distance and left my footsteps in the education world.

Now, I would like to talk about another aspect of my life as a woman, as a wife and as a mother.

I believe, the younger the pupils are, the more indispensable is the influence of a woman. It is ideal, I think. There must be a reason why many of the teachers at kindergarten and nursery schools are female. At the elementary school level, there are still more female teachers.

Female teachers rear pupils with motherly care, as if they are raising their own kids. Female teachers not only teach their subject lessons and give guidance, but they also do a wonderful job of disciplining children, while contributing a lot in making children feel that they are individual human beings.

I feel passionately for the children just as I feel passionately for my own children. I feel sorry whenever I see a child suffering. No mother would want that for her child. I could take care of my pupils and speak kindly to help them as if I were the mother of these children.

However, parents prefer male teachers as homeroom teachers. Sadly, they reject young female teachers or those who are just married. This is because parents worry if young female teachers marry and have children, they will take a

Going the road as an elementary school teacher all through my life

long maternity leave. They also think that female teachers are not very strict in instructing pupils.

I don't want them to worry about me. I also wanted to earn the parents' trust, so I was determined to behave in such a way that parents would evaluate me as better than the male teachers. After I had a child, I even worked at home after my child had gone to sleep. I prepared lesson plans, wrote class newsletters, produced printed handouts until late at night. Furthermore, I had to wash cloth diapers very early in the morning, and hang them outside to dry, but during winter I saw the diapers gradually freezing. This happened not only once, but many times. Though my children contracted illnesses, I could not attend to them sufficiently, or bring them to the clinic. Being left unattended, my children received intravenous drip infusion or in worse cases, they were hospitalized. Without the kind understanding of my husband, I would have had to give up my work. All my family members supported me and understood the situation of my job. This is why I still have work today.

I am sure my children were feeling lonely. When my daughter became an upper secondary school student, she made this comment: "Mom, you never know how lonely I feel when I turn the lights on in the dark house after coming home from school. So when I grow up, I want to be an ordinary housewife or mother (but not a teacher)." This is true, but facing this fact, a working woman has to strengthen her spirits and make her family life and professional life compatible. Thankfully, my daughter is proud of her mother who did not give up working, and got promoted to be part of the managerial staff.

Final Remarks

I chose this teaching career as my life time mission. What I can tell you now is that first of all you must be healthy and enthusiastic to continue in this occupation. If a teacher is inactive, s/he will not be able to play with the children, and the teaching will not properly be done. Besides, you will not be able to discover, or think of, good ideas. You have to eat well, sleep soundly, laugh from the heart, and deal with your pupils seriously. If a teacher is worn down (dispirited), it is not only the class who suffers but also the individual child who will lose heart and be disappointed.

When a principal is gloomy, then the school and teachers will be influenced too; therefore, I always keep my motto, 'lively and cheerful.' This is the philosophy I bring with me to work every day.

Ms. Blooming-Flower(*Hana-saki*) whom I encountered in my studying of the teaching profession

“Holding back tears in her eyes, Ms. Hanasaki talked about her pupils. I thought she was a gorgeous teacher!”

These were the first words spoken by one of our project members who visited the Principal, Ms. HANASAKI. We heard that she had made remarkable progress in human rights education at schools; thus, we decided to visit and listen to her. “I want to meet her! I wish I could visit her too!” I indeed felt so, and we realized that we should invite her to give us a lecture in the Elementary School Teacher Education Course of the Educational Faculty, Hiroshima University. It was my first time to meet her, and I still remember that after the lecture I went home with my heart filled with emotion.

In Japan, almost all people go to schools, so with the exception of some topics in one’s field of expertise, anybody can join discussions about school education. “School education and teachers today are nonsense.” This type of criticism is typically dealt with by the mass media, and even by ordinary citizens almost everyday anywhere, anytime. However, I wonder why there is not more talk like “School is such a wonderful place!”

University students who specialize in teacher education programs, of course should know the harmful influences and problems in schools. We ought not to produce self-centered, close-minded teachers. But, if we only look at the negative aspects of school education, it will gradually make students throw away their dream of becoming a schoolteacher. This is actually happening.

When I was an undergraduate student, I was also distressed. Several times, I said to myself, “I don’t think I am capable to work at schools handling so many difficult problems”. However, as Ms. HANASAKI said, she was not successful at the beginning and she also thought she should quit as a teacher, then, she overcame all of her difficulties. She proudly introduced herself as ‘a lifetime teacher in elementary school education’. She shared all the hardships she went through; thus, she encouraged me strongly.

Also, I remember one of my college mates, a younger associate who was studying to become a social studies teacher. One day, he flatly declared that, “Being

a teacher will not be rewarding. There is no other unrewarding job like teaching, so I will not become a teacher! Ironically, he chose to take a teacher education course, having once dreamed of becoming a teacher. I really thought he should have listened to the lecture delivered by Ms. HANASAKI. If he had attended her lecture, I am sure his answer could have been somewhat different. I wished I could have asked him then whether he would want to be a teacher.

As I mentioned before, I was still a student when I heard of and attended the lecture by Ms. Hanasaki. I hesitated in making a decision whether to choose a teaching career or not, because I was not confident enough to work as a teacher. What impressed me deeply was the story about the children's experience in *Aigamo* duck-assisted farming. Children took care of the ducks, but in the end they had to agree to turn over the ducks to the butchers. The scenes in which the children protested against the slaughter of the ducks, how they ran after the truck crying profusely, and how they put together their hands so tightly as they learned the real meaning of saying "*Itadakimasu*" before eating. All of those scenes flashed before my eyes so clearly as if I was watching them firsthand. Certainly, children will be influenced by a school teacher who provides good learning opportunities; then, they will be transformed. I really wanted to try to make such opportunities for children and thus I decided to be a teacher.

Now, I am working as a teacher at a lower secondary school. When I re-read this story of Ms. HANASAKI, my impression did not lessen or diminish; I felt something even stronger compared to the time when I was still a student. I also met a girl pupil who came to school everyday even though she was going through many hardships. She came to school, that's why I managed myself to go to school. The problems I was going through at that time seemed endless; there seemed to be no solutions to the problem in sight. My fellow elder teachers commented, "I admire that you did not stop coming to school at that time. If I had the same experience when I was a fresh teacher like you I would have resigned." I believe what supported me at such a trying time was a message from Ms. HANASAKI. "Children come to school no matter how hard their lives are, how sad they are, they just come to school so laudably as if nothing had happened to them. Such persevering, brave children must be protected at all costs." This was the strong determination of Ms. HANASAKI.

Another thing is that, I am sure I will also face difficult times as a woman, regarding keeping my job. If again I read the story of Ms. HANASAKI, I am sure

she will again encourage me, probably in a different manner compared to now.

As you must be aware of, Ms. HANASAKI is the kind of educationalist whom you should really meet in your lifetime. If you are taking up a teacher education course, or if you are novice teachers, and especially female teachers, you should know her. Also, I expect the teachers in the managerial post can also learn a lot from her. Furthermore, people who are always taking a look at the negative side of education in Japan, saying ‘Education in Japan is a disaster...’, and foreign educators who are interested in Japanese education who wish to learn something to make use of for the development of their country’s education should read her story.

I sincerely appreciate Ms. HANASAKI who led me to and inspired me in the world of education and still supports me morally.

Project member M

*1 “*Itadakimasu*” (‘we shall take the life’ in Japanese). In Japanese culture, people say “*Itadakimasu*” just before starting to eat as a prayer or a custom.

*2 The National Institute of Education Research (NIER) is located in Tokyo; it is a semi-governmental organ under the Ministry of Education

Middle school

Seeking the impossible dream with an adventurous spirit

HAYASHI Tamotsu

HAYASHI Tamotsu was born in 1949 in Kumano town, Hiroshima Prefecture.

After graduating from the Pre-Service Training Course of Lower Secondary School Teacher at Fukuoka University of Education, he taught for a year in a lower secondary school. Then, he enrolled as a third-year undergraduate student at the Faculty of Engineering, Hiroshima University. He studied at Hiroshima University for another three years and again taught at a lower secondary school. Then in 1984 he enrolled in the graduate program of School Educational Research at Hyogo University of Teacher Education. After graduating from the graduate program, he worked at Hiroshima Prefecture Education Center, Hiroshima Prefecture Board of Education as a teaching consultant. In 1997 he became the principal of Fuchu town Municipal Fuchu-chuo Elementary School. In 2001, he became the principal of Fuchu town Municipal Fuchu-midorigaoka Lower Secondary School (current position).



1. Detouring is what I love to do most often

I don't clearly remember from where I heard this, but someone once said that there are three slopes (*saka* in Japanese) in life: the upward slope, the downward slope and the *masaka*, a Japanese word meaning unpredictable. If you ask my parents and family members, they will comment that I am an addict of *masaka*, and that I have made them worry almost all through their lives. After graduating from an upper secondary school in 1968, I had my first employment at a Civil Work Office in Kure city as a first rank public servant of Hiroshima Prefecture. It was from there where my unpredictable life commenced. I had a strong desire to be a teacher; so, I went back to study in the lower secondary teacher preparation course at Fukuoka University of Education. Thereafter, I was recruited as a teacher at Senogawa Lower Secondary School. My family rejoiced upon hearing that I had pursued a stable and promising career. However, I also had another dream --- that of becoming a scientist (engineer). A year later, I persuaded my parents and brothers to agree to my plans of fulfilling my dream. Having obtained their blessing, I enrolled in the third-grade of the Faculty of Engineering,

Hiroshima University, specializing in the field of Chemical Engineering. Prior to the enrollment, I appealed to the dean of the Engineering Faculty to allow me to take the entrance examination. I made a direct appeal three times. At first, the dean reiterated that the credits completed in the Faculty of Education can not always be regarded as equivalent to those in the Faculty of Engineering; he also told me that I was too insistent. However, I convinced the dean to allow me to take the entrance exam. I couldn't forget how delighted I was when I heard that I had passed the exam, and with a previously conferred bachelor's degree in Education, I was transferred to the junior year. After graduation, I was hired as a research assistant in the same faculty; however, only one year later I decided to quit working in the university due to family matters and personal reasons. In 1976, I again went back to teaching and started to work at Kumano Lower Secondary School. During those times, I fondly imagined about improving myself in terms of education, and this time I wanted to study pedagogy. Though I was already married and had three children, in 1984 I enrolled in the post graduate course at Hyogo University of Teacher Education. After completing my study, at first I was appointed as a teaching consultant at Hiroshima Prefecture Education Center (HIPEC); then I was transferred to the Guidance Division of the Hiroshima Prefecture Board of Education. Afterwards, I became a senior teaching consultant at Fuchu town Board of Education, and then became the principal of Fuchu-chuo Elementary School. At present, I am the principal at Fuchu-town Midorigaoka Lower Secondary School. During the above mentioned periods, I concurrently held the post of a lecturer for six years at the Faculty of Education and Regional Sciences of Tottori University. My teacher's licenses include a special rank license in science & industrial art of lower secondary education, and the first rank license in science and industry of upper secondary education. When I was a teacher of lower secondary schools or a teaching consultant, most of the time I was in charge of industrial art. I spent 12 years working as a teacher, and 11 years as a teaching consultant. As of today, I have nine years experience being a principal. During this period, I met many students and teachers and learned a lot of things. In general, once a person gains employment after graduating from a secondary school or a university, he or she is supposed to pursue that occupation; but as I have mentioned, I carried my dreams forward not only once, twice, but then three times. The pursuit of my dreams quite often created conflicts of opinions with my parents and family members, and I know I troubled them. However, my family now admits to saying that my efforts in foolhardily doing things my own way have

somehow borne fruit. Even my children appreciate my vitality which I always challenge. My family commented that what I have is not ‘vitality’ but ‘*baka*’ tality. (The word ‘*baka*’ illustrates I am almost fanatical or too zealous in regard to my passion, as if I am like someone who always leaps in the dark.) This *baka* tality truly describes me, and in my self-evaluation, I believe that I do have such a trait as my treasure.

2. One day I will achieve the goal!

I wanted to be a teacher because I used to love teaching my brothers and friends during childhood. I was also attracted to making things and creating devices. So, I was dreaming to be a school teacher or a scientist when I grew up. But I did not study hard, as I was always running around the fields and mountains, building my playing territory on a hill, and capturing birds with birdlime. As a result, my school record did not show praiseworthy results. When I was in the fourth grade, one day we were asked to fill out a questionnaire in school. The question was “what would you like to be when you grow up?” and I noted ‘a scientist.’ My female homeroom teacher severely scolded me. Since my academic ability was not good, she could hardly imagine that I would dream of becoming a scientist. I was even told, “You must have copied the answer of Mr. Y” who was sitting next to me. Mr. Y had superior academic achievement. To make matters worse, later the teacher called my mother and me together, and she scolded me again saying, “Mr. Hayashi copied another pupil’s answer sheet!” The day before, I remembered how to spell out the word ‘scientist’ when I saw the headline of a newspaper article about the Cold War between the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. I will never forget how sad I felt at that time. I remember that that was when I thought “One day! One day I will prove that even I can be a scientist or a teacher.” I had a sort of rebellious spirit against that teacher, and I retained that bitter feeling even after proceeding to lower and upper secondary schools. I promised myself that I would never be the kind of teacher that she was. After I became one and started to experience all sorts of ups and downs with pupils, however, I started to think in a different way. Perhaps the female homeroom teacher in my fourth grade knew my personality, and purposely scolded me with the intention of unleashing the rebellious spirit in me that would shed light on my future. Now, I have a feeling of gratitude for that homeroom teacher for having helped me, because I would never have become a teacher if not for what she did.

3. Being a lower secondary school teacher with obstinate resistance to education

During the nine years that I was working as a teacher at Municipal Kumano Lower Secondary School and Kumano-higashi Lower Secondary School run by Kumano town, I became obsessed with my philosophy on two fronts. First of all, through daily school life, I encouraged the pupils to set a life goal; in other words, let them live with the dream of a future occupation. I have an unshakable belief that when we have a dream, we set up a certain goal and exert all efforts to reach it; and if we continue our endeavors, the dream will come true. I still maintain this principle. I often lectured to pupils about my past dreams I had at lower secondary school, also I often shared experiences of success or failure in the course of my life. I used every opportunity to let them read biography books introducing the careers of great persons, and made the pupils think the way they were meant to be. I perceived that pupils were talking about their dreams vividly and they were likely thinking of the way of life they wanted to lead allowing for their young age. I also hoped many of my pupils would wish to become a school teacher in the future, so through the daily lessons and club activities, I talked about the glory and beauty of being a teacher who helps develop human resources. I haven't had a chance to ask them the reason though, in fact, quite a few of them became teachers. I feel very much excited when I hear about them or see them working enthusiastically at schools and the board of education offices. The second front of mine is to help pupils acquire and develop both literary and military arts. Virtually, lower secondary pupils can study well while being active club members, and I think they should be able to do both. I believe that it is our mission to help pupils acquire the scholastic ability sufficient to pass the entrance examination of upper secondary schools they wish to apply in. I repeatedly made my pupils engage in exercises relating to printed learning materials in Japanese, social studies, math, science and English during their spare time. These were the subjects required in the entrance examination. At first, some pupils were reluctant to do the exercises, but soon after they discovered their steady improvement academically, they began to be more spontaneous and more enthusiastic. Also from the viewpoint of human development, I sincerely encouraged them to attend a club. I was in charge of the baseball and girls' volleyball clubs for nine years, and supervised the activities aimed at 'friendship building', and 'patience development.' All year round, I allowed only four or five days off, and I was nicknamed as a pitiless monster for that. The other day, a parent of one of my current pupils came to visit me, and said

she was my graduate who had been in the volleyball club. Commenting on the fruitful but severe club days she went through, she said that those experiences have become very helpful leading to her present life, and wished that her children could have the same kind of unforgettable feeling.

4. Life in the Board of Education that exposed me to countless new experiences

I learned quite a lot from my 11 years in educational administration and management institutions such as at the Hiroshima Prefecture Education Center (HIPEC), the Guidance Division of Hiroshima Prefecture Board of Education, and the School Education Division at Fuchu Municipal Board of Education. I was truly awakened when I discovered I should not complain about my workload. In my sixth year at HIPEC, representing many other fellow teaching consultants, I appealed directly to the director, pleading that “we teaching consultants have been working till nine or ten every night, we will break down and get ill due to overwork. We request that our working conditions be reformed somehow.” The director smiled at me, and said “I understand you. Please let me consider it.” Soon after, I was transferred to the Guidance Division at the Hiroshima Prefecture Board of Education. As I had previously heard, the workload there was surely much harder than that at HIPEC. Around that time, the HIPEC director appeared at the Guidance Division of the Board of Education on some occasions, and came to talk with me. “Hello, Mr. Hayashi, I wonder if your workload is somehow relaxed now.” I could imagine that the director implied, ‘You knew nothing of the world before, and not only you were overworking....Keep your spirit up!’ Since then, I started to see things differently, so I replied with a smile, “I can manage this, thanks to everyone. I appreciate your consideration. ” One of the things I recognized, which I had not appreciated personally when I was a schoolteacher, is that laws and regulations are the foundations of the teaching profession. To be specific, public educational personnel must work observing the laws including national courses of study, and strictly obey the service regulations. In particular, when I was in charge of the in-service training for newly recruited teachers or for experienced teachers with certain years of service, I acknowledged this during the course of discussion with the activist groups on what the in-service training is meant to be. I learned that explanations affected by emotions or experiences do not help settle the issues at all. Of course I knew that we educational personnel should obey the law. But I confess that I was not taking it seriously, and to me, being a good teacher meant

having the skill of giving easy-to-understand lessons, fulfilling the school duties, and doing my best to manage the club activity. I was not very conscious of the importance of conducting educational activities in accordance with the laws. I was selfishly taking only what I thought, behaving how I wanted, being self-righteous, and to top it all off, I was harboring an irresponsible feeling that obeying the laws are the task of the managerial staff only. Now I perceive that I was totally blind, and sweat with fear when I remember that. Furthermore, I learned the significance of and difficulty in working organizationally and functionally to raise the level of efficiency at work. In the field of administration, you are a staff in charge of a certain assignment, and you are expected to be well-versed in handling it. But I am just one of the officers, and the final decision maker bears the final accountability. In some cases, a piece of action or thought of one staff might affect the education of the entire Prefecture. Therefore, self-centered judgment or behavior should never be permitted, and organizational work should be accurately conducted. For instance, if the superintendent of education, division head, division head assistant, section chiefs, and individual officers-in-charge work organizationally as well as organically with other divisions and sections, we can achieve the primary goal. To do good work in an institution, it is essential to realize three elements: *Ho-Ren-So*, that is, reporting (*Ho-koku*), informing (*Ren-raku*) and consulting (*So-dan*). (The acronym word *Ho-Ren-So* means spinach in Japanese; thus, using a word that is easy to remember for workers.) When I was in charge of an examination for which examination sheets were purchased from a private publisher, I failed to make decisions properly having overlooked *Ho-Ren-So*. I made inappropriate comments to the press; thus, I caused troubles to the head officer in my division. The division head had to take the responsibility for my failure, and it became an important lesson to me. The same situation must be considered in schools. Applying the rule of *Ho-Ren-So*, the principal, vice principal, head teachers and teachers in charge of respective duties should cooperatively work along a single line and thus create a system of open communication with one another. I believe our work will be fulfilled systematically and organically in this way.

5. Being a principal is worthwhile

(1) Vigorous Fuchu-midorigaoka Lower Secondary School

① Dream and hope with passion

The Fuchu-midorigaoka Lower Secondary School where I work now has

774 pupils. These pupils are divided into 22 classes composed of 20 ordinary and two special classes, of which one is for mentally disabled and the other for emotionally impaired students. One principal, two vice principals and 40 teachers hired by the prefecture; with 14 temporary teachers and 17 staff employed by the municipality, to make up a total of 74 faculty members. The Fuchu-midorigaoka Lower Secondary School is the sixth largest school among the 249 public lower secondary schools in Hiroshima Prefecture. One of the school management goals is 'to develop in the pupils high levels of intelligence, rich minds and strength to fight the good fight.' The other is to create a well-ordered school with an aesthetic and graceful environment. One of the management philosophies is, taking the pupils in mind, "if we want to create a good school, then we are going to make it good." The meaning of 'a good school' here is a school in which graduates can pass the exam to enter their desired upper secondary schools. The other is, taking the faculty in mind, "it is not whether you are able to do it or not; however, it is whether you actually try to do it for the sake of the pupils." Therefore, I emphasized quick action, 'start doing while thinking.' I believe it is essential for all the faculty and pupils to share the same goal in order to achieve our school management goals. This is represented in the three principle goals of Midorigaoka lower secondary school. They are: 'exchange greetings spontaneously and vividly,' 'keep time', and 'clean up properly' (*1), which are real basics. I believe when all the people in the school are able to realize them, we can create the best school environment. Therefore, during the school assembly or grade meetings, I have repeatedly mentioned our goals. Also, these slogans were made into posters and hung on the walls inside the classrooms and along the corridors to enlighten everyone. Whether or not we can reach our goals depends not only on the pupils, but on the way of living led by each faculty member. Schools with teachers who can't greet properly, who are not punctual, who do not tidy up, can't expect a balanced humane growth of pupils. Thus, I think it is a prerequisite that we adults must be role models for children so that they can copy us without hesitation.

② Hard but enjoyable battle

When I was transferred to my current school some five years ago, I was astonished with the site. During the assembly, I saw a few third grade boys with dyed brown hair, lying down in the gym where my inauguration ceremony was being held. They had ignored the teacher's instruction. Filled with private chatter, the atmosphere of the ceremony was noisy as if nothing ritualistic was reaching



their ears. As their fresh principal, first words which came out of my mouth were, “Is this a Midorigaoka Zoo? I don’t need to visit other zoos then!?” I said so all of a sudden without thinking, and I still can not forget the incident. It was the beginning of my battle in Midorigaoka Lower Secondary School. My anger was placed more on the faculty members, as I observed teachers who were not resolute in guiding pupils, teachers who ignored the pupils and teachers who did not cooperate with others organizationally. Under such circumstances, without a doubt, teachers and pupils were unmotivated. Besides, parents and community residents had almost no trust in the school and its teachers, and we were criticized harshly. In the school premises, there was a lot of trash, especially on the grounds below the windows I found printed learning materials scattered miserably. In order to fix this situation, I clarified the ideal images of a school, teacher and pupil, and emphasized the importance of work within a school body. As for my ideal image of a school, I expect that both pupils and the faculty be energetic in the school. If teachers are not motivated, pupils will never be so. As for the teachers’ image, I want them to be trustworthy and accepted by pupils, parents and community

residents. In other words, teachers should be adults who can be a role model for children and guardians. Also, the ideal pupils are those who can draw a line between studying and doing other things, and those who can eagerly participate in many sorts of activities. As a part of my concrete action plan, I picked up rubbish everyday for about 35 minutes inside the school and the surrounding area. I did this no matter how bad the weather was, on days with heavy rain, or even on days with strong winds. Analyzing the content and the amount of rubbish I collected, I perfectly figured out the condition of the pupils. The more chewing gum or spitting I found, I could presume that more pupils carried in cigarettes and items prohibited in school. When the litter decreased, the school ambience calmed down and became stable. It is a wonder I found. I'm in my fifth year at this school and I still continue picking up this litter. "If the principal changes, the school will change; if the teachers change, the pupils will change." This is my personal slogan. While trying to disseminate this in school, and enlighten teachers, I reshuffled the division of school duties for a better and more united school administration. To pupils, at every opportunity, I praised them when they were good; thus, intending to boost confidence in themselves as well as helping them to be proud of their school. Needless to say, I preached as well against their wrongdoing. Furthermore, we purposely let the parents and community know the actual state of the school with both merits and demerits. For example, I invited them to attend the opening ceremony, graduation ceremony, sports day, cultural festival, and implemented as many school open days as possible such as lesson observation days for the community residents, school research workshop research meetings, and requested the town associations and various other groups to participate. During the first year, only a handful of participants were there, but the number of participants increased in the second year. Afterwards it continued to increase in the third and the fourth year, indicating steady progress. Compared to the past, I have been seen that our teachers and pupils have become encouraged, and that teachers have started to work cooperatively as a body. Even club activities have become livelier, and have started to reach the top in competition, gaining the championship or the second rank. Regarding the entrance exam to upper secondary schools, a lot more pupils are now able to pass it and enroll in their desired schools. Parents and community people who used to criticize the school, also started to comment positively that 'there are no more hair dyed kids', 'children are dressed neatly', 'they exchange greetings with us', 'they keep rules', etc. There are many ways to evaluate the condition of school corruption and I think some indices are the number of violence

and bullying cases, the volume of litter, the number of windows with broken glass, and the increase or decrease of pupil's absence. Through my observation, I learned that when there are more corruption cases in the school, then the amount of litter increases and more window panes are broken. Also, the more bullying cases there are, the more the pupils fail to attend school. It is explained in such a simple way. In 2001, the percentage of absent pupils was 4.86%, way beyond the average of Hiroshima Prefecture which was 3.25%. In 2002, it was 3.35%, in 2003, 2.66%, in 2004, 2.05% and in 2005 this year, it is 1.80%, showing steady improvement. Though many problems still remain unsolved, I am going to continue my efforts, always working together with teachers and pupils as one body.

(2) A principal's life gave me a lot of new insights

Through my nine-year experience as a principal at Fuchu-chuo Elementary School and Fuchu-midorigaoka Lower Secondary School, I gained a lot of new ideas and tactics to enable me to create a better school. One of them is that it is necessary to raise the faculty's consciousness. Strictly speaking, the faculty including myself should understand that 'we are not entitled to get paid if we don't succeed in improving pupils attitudes'. Teachers must have confidence and pride in teaching, and at the same time it is indispensable to have a humble attitude to reflect upon what and how each particular lesson is taught. There are teachers who don't do this nor do all of them have a humble attitude. They may blame the leadership of head teachers and managerial staff like me, but among some teachers, quite a few actually reproduce old style lessons which they received when they were pupils of elementary, lower and upper secondary schools. Some, paying lip service, announce that they will improve their lessons, but actually, they can't evaluate their own lessons objectively and do not improve or even don't try to improve them. It is necessary to thoroughly instill in them the importance of accountability, and change their awareness through practices. "The customer is always right" is the motto in the business world for servicing a customer; and in schools, pupils are considered as our customers too. We teachers and the school should be able to satisfy the needs of the customers; thus we need to work hard. We must be aware that both the children and the faculty can grow through having good encounters as well as through having a good environment. Setting up a humane environment is particularly important, and if we try to identify the good points of the faculty and pupils, and perseveringly give guidance to them, they will grow dramatically. I have had many such experiences. I replaced a homeroom

teacher who was handling the most devastated class in the school as well as a club that was regarded as a nuisance. The replacement was done in the middle of the term so there were twists and turns to some extent, but both the class and the club settled down in peace; thus, I was astonished at how much the motivation and attitude of pupils depend on the teacher who is in charge. It is no exaggeration to say that, for children, a chance to meet a good teacher will direct their course of life. Ideally, every teacher should be aware of that and strive to reform themselves accordingly. However in real life, teachers are limited in time and physical availability; therefore, school managerial staff should deliberately develop human resources as is the case in institutions. In other words, the principal, vice principal, head teachers in curriculum and instruction, other head teachers and middle-management teachers in the pyramid must have their roles clearly defined. Thus, in-service education will be appropriately carried out according to the position. In my case, on a daily basis I let my fellow staff imagine, "If I were in a higher position, what would I think and how would I work?" For instance, I sometimes requested the vice principal and curriculum coordination teacher, on my behalf to draw up school management schemes or speeches for graduation ceremonies and entrance ceremonies. Through daily activities, I want them to understand the necessity of keeping a hand in the management by considering ways of developing school management policy and administration methods which are generally done by a principal. Also in front of the weekly school assembly I asked the vice-principal to speak to the children every two weeks. Along the same line, the vice-principal and the curriculum coordinating teacher give assignments to the head teachers and middle-management teachers to study the school management and administration, or how to make easy-to-understand lessons; thus, helping teachers reform themselves. While reshuffling people in different places, we develop appropriate human resources; thus, the school environment as well as the pupils will become energetic and vitalized. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to delegate responsibilities to the vice-principal and all the other head teachers, and mobilize them organizationally and functionally, while giving unerring approval and guidance. One of my goals in management is to develop as many managerial staff (principals, vice-principals, and teaching consultants) as I can. I believe my successors will develop more human resources corresponding to their abilities. Though I have never compared my case to others, during my nine years as the principal, eleven new managerial staff members were introduced. I also learned the importance of continuously encouraging the faculty to comply with the laws and

service regulations. Despite being socially responsible grown-ups, there are faculty members who violated laws and service regulations, and such cases were reported one after another. It is unforgivable because we are in the position to give pupils guidance or to be imitated by them. I use a slogan which is described in a sentence *Sa-i-ta-ma no Hi ni kiotsukeyo* (the acronym of which means ‘Be careful with fire in Saitama Prefecture’), and it cautions us with the following 5 items. *Sa* (*sake* or alcohol) means driving a car or working under the influence of alcohol. *I* (*isei* or the opposite sex) signifies sexual harassment related issues, of which we have to consider carefully when we speak and behave among pupils and fellow teachers. *Ta* is (*taibatsu* or corporal punishment). In Japan there are some opinions in favor of physical punishment, but it is strictly prohibited by law. *Ma* (*mane* or money) represents misappropriation and embezzlement of public funds, and forgery. *Hi* (*hyobo* or official documents) warns of the possible loss of curriculum guidance record or school report cards. Keeping them in mind at all times, the managerial staff should patiently give instructions to the faculty.

6. Aiming to be a ‘professional teacher’ and ‘professional principal’

‘*Kan-gineer*’ is a word I forever keep in mind to encourage myself. I think this word was created by YORINUKI Masahiro, the former President of Hiroshima University. The original word is ‘Engineer’ and it was purposely coined as *Kan-gineer*, from *Kan* which means intuition. As I mentioned, after I graduated from the Faculty of Education and got employment as a teacher, then I entered the Faculty of Engineering with a strong will. This word was used by Mr. YORINUKI to address me during my entrance examination interview by the engineering faculty.

Mr. Y.: If you are accepted in the Faculty of Engineering, what will you aim for?

I: (proudly saying) I hope to become a fully fledged engineer.

Mr. Y.: (with a smile) It’s not good enough to be an engineer, you should strive to be a *Kan-gineer*.

At the time, I had not fully understood the real meaning of *Kan-gineer*. Luckily I passed the exam, and through lectures of and personal meetings with Mr. Y, I gradually got a real idea of the word. Now I understood that *Kan-gineer* implies an engineer who can promptly cope with an unexpected emergency with the instinct (*Kan*) acquired through having various experiences based on all sorts of theories, and not depending on pure guesswork. I think this idea can be incorporated into any occupation. At present, I am teaching and educating my personnel as a principal but

Seeking the impossible dream with an adventurous spirit

originally I was a school teacher. Whether you are a teacher or a principal, there is no difference regarding how we develop other people. Perhaps the mere disparity is whether you are in charge of teaching a subject area and its class management, or in charge of school management. We should always be clear about our own task; in other words, we should understand the requirements for administration (=teachers) and management (=principals), and draw out the potential abilities possessed by the children and the faculty to the maximum. Then we can become a professional teacher or a professional principal. In addition, a professional teacher can potentially grow into a professional principal, but after reaching the level of principal, if the person preserves the idea of being a professional teacher, s/he can never be a professional principal. This kind of personnel should chase the path of becoming an expert teacher. There is a sense in which we should always know the requirement for our positions, and spontaneously and enthusiastically upgrade ourselves. We should instantaneously and unerringly understand what the children and the faculty have been through, what they have failed to achieve, what they rejoice about, are concerned about, suffer from and expect. We should continuously study how to be a real professional who can help others maximize their potential ability in individuals. Mr. Ron Clark (*2) who was awarded the best teacher prize in U.S.A. says, "You should be the best person you can be." As a person in a teaching position, I wish to appreciate these words from the heart.

Teachers are ultimate shapers of education

Mr. Hayashi describes himself as follows:

“I am an addict of *Masaka* (unpredictability).”

“I did what I wanted to do, and this vitality (my family calls it *baka tality*) accurately describes me, and I think of myself as having such a treasure.”

To begin with, Mr. Hayashi is well characterized by the variety in his life course. Mr. Hayashi’s diverse career is derived from his endless dreams and exertions to make those dreams come true. “I really wanted to be a teacher.” “I could not give up my dream to become an engineer.” “I desired to specialize in pedagogy.” The power of unaccountable feasibility that he possesses actually made him obtain his wishes. Not being satisfied with his present condition, and always with a dream towards the future, he never stopped thinking about the way that he should be. The way his life has been lived, has definitely influenced his educational practices. “When you have a dream, you will start making efforts; thus, you set up a goal, and if you continue to work hard towards that goal, it will come true.” This message he presented to the pupils as a lower secondary school teacher, must have carried a lot of conviction for them because it was spoken by a person who could actually manifest it.

Teachers should be aware that they will be imitated by the pupils. Mr. Hayashi’s experiences and practices represent this essential aspect of education.

Mr. Hayashi has created many revolutions in schools through his educational beliefs. Those changes were made by his power of feasibility which he displayed all throughout his life. “It is not whether we can do it or not, but it is whether we challenge to do it for pupils or not.” In these words, his unshakable belief in education is symbolized. His influential vitality awaked teachers, then changed pupils, thus the entire school was oriented to develop into a better environment.

Specific messages of his own are, ‘Let’s exchange greetings full of vigor’, ‘Let’s keep time’ ‘Let’s do cleaning properly during the cleaning time.’ All are fundamentals in human lives. One of his practices is picking up litter on the school grounds and in the periphery of school, and it was done even on rainy and windy days. Everyday he made rounds and picked up rubbish, and grasped the hidden condition of pupils while analyzing the items and amount of rubbish.

Before speaking to pupils to request them to do something, he tried to act first as a principal, keeping in mind that ‘I first take actions, then think while moving.’ He acted first because he was the principal. Step by step such a practice made steady progress. ‘The amount of trash will increase when the school has become more corrupt.’ As Mr. Hayashi observed, seeing less and less litter at the school, the environment in his school has become peaceful gradually.

“For children, it is no exaggeration to say that their future depends on an encounter with a teacher.” In saying this, Mr. Hayashi’s strong sense of responsibility and pride in the teaching profession is felt. He claims that pupils will be encouraged if we try to discover their good points and then if we show our great perseverance in giving them guidance, pupils will demonstrate great progress. Emphasizing his philosophy, ‘Move before thinking’, and based upon his educational practices with his diverse background and rich experiences, certainly he has become a *Kan-gineer* which had been his long sought aim.

In the end, I would like to mention Mr. Hayashi’s warm personality, which I believe you also might have noticed after reading his discourse. Upon visiting Mr. Hayashi at his lower secondary school, he welcomed us warmly and gave us a talk even with occasional jokes. We felt grateful that he took our meeting so seriously, and we learned a lot from him and had an enjoyable time in his company. Education is based on ‘human relations’, and we could deeply sense the stance Mr. Hayashi has taken.

While interviewing Mr. Hayashi, I hit upon an expression, ‘Teachers are ultimate shapers of education’. The educational issues would vary depending on in which country or prefecture you are now. But the phrase, ‘Teachers are ultimate shapers of education’ can be universally accepted. I got to know that pupils will learn a lot of things through interacting with teachers, by knowing their way of thinking and behaviors.

Project member N

*1 clean properly-- A period of cleaning up is a part of the educational curriculum. Pupils together with teachers clean the school (classroom, toilets, corridors, etc.) everyday.

*2 Ron Clark-- He has been a teacher since 1995 and has taught in the most difficult schools in North Carolina and Harlem in the U.S.A. Since winning Disney’s 2001 Teacher of the Year, he has spoken across the country to teachers, school boards and PTAs to share his 55 rules. He lives in Atlanta.

School Organization and Human Development

HIRAGA Masayuki

HIRAGA Masayuki was born in 1943 in Kure City, Hiroshima Prefecture. After graduating from university, he became a Japanese language teacher at lower secondary school.

From 1972 he worked at the Hiroshima Prefectural Juvenile Reformatory, Hiroshima Gakuen for 12 years. After working as Head of the First Guidance Division at the Hiroshima Prefecture Board of Education, in 2000 he was appointed as principal at Higashi-Hiroshima City Takamigaoka Lower Secondary School. In 2004 he was appointed as vice principal of Onomichi Upper Secondary School and concurrently the Head of the Establishment Preparation Office of Onomichi Lower Secondary School. In April of 2006, he was appointed as principal of Onomichi Gakuen Onomichi Lower Secondary School. Since August, 2006, he has been the principal of Onomichi Lower and Upper Secondary School (current position).



1. To have something meaningful in life

No matter how greatly the society changes, there must be something unchangeable (invariable) which must be valued eternally.

During the latter half of my upper secondary school life, I found myself experiencing miserable days, as my parents were both very old and unhealthy, and could not afford even the minimum food for the family. Due to economical reasons, I could not proceed to higher education like my three elder brothers, and I had lost my zest for life so I did not even attend my graduation ceremony. I was deeply discouraged and was living empty days looking at the mist of the early spring in an absent way. Two years later, my elder brother who became a medical doctor kindly offered me partial assistance, and I also did part time work to earn money for my life and tuition fees. I determined to create my life by myself, and I enrolled in a university. I lived in a dormitory for four years, and had part time work every day. My father passed away around that time. I would faint due to starvation and malnutrition. Whenever the deadline to pay my tuition fee drew near, I spent all of my time earning money doing such chores as “cleaning the dead bodies with formaldehyde to make them ready for anatomy classes.” When

I recall my past, I simply feel thankfulness to all the people who supported me at that time. My parents, brothers, and my teachers, though their assistance was not visually in sight, they were always worrying about me sometimes secretly behind my back, and sometimes openly in my presence. My parents, elder brother and the teachers, have all passed away, but I could survive and still am alive now thanks to them. After graduating from university, I have lived almost 40 years till now, and I sincerely think “I am not living but I am left to live by them.” This is one of the invariable teachings since ancient Japan.

At dinner time, my mother was just staring at her children who were eating merely a small bowlful of rice mixed with Japanese radish [finely diced radish was used to increase the amount of the staple food, ‘rice’ which was insufficient during the wartime]. She was not eating anything, but repeatedly told us, “Be patient! If you endure you will surely be paid off someday.” She also said to us, “Be someone who is worthy to other people.”

I am left to live, and remembering my mother’s words, I started to think of becoming a person who is useful to others, and wanted to make my life meaningful. Lower secondary aged pupils are in adolescence for whom it is as if they are living in a maze, and I know they are unconsciously rebellious due to the physiological imbalance in hormones. I want to stay by them, and be their supporter and guide, and thus I decided to be in “the teaching career.”

2. Learning as a teacher

I first worked at a public lower secondary school for four years as a Japanese language teacher. Then I became the dormitory superintendent (head) of a juvenile reformatory school. I lived in the dorm which was designed for a head couple (family), thus my family accompanied me to live there. While working there for pupils who behaved antisocially, I aimed to acquire the bases of teaching through learning the depth of youth psychology of pupils. I worked there for 12 years. Stipulated by law, children under 18 years old whose parents are no longer able to look after them due to their anti and unsocial behavior were sent to the juvenile reformatory after staying at the Child Guidance Center or juvenile corrective institution (detention home). They were emotionally unstable because they were unsatisfied and had distrusted life, due to the failure of their parents’ upbringing such as over-spoiling or abandonment.

Those children gave us a penetrating glance with hostile regard, and showed impudent conduct. Together with my wife who was the dorm mother, I prepared

their belongings for living and study while being distracted with anxiety. Through the daily routine of living together with my own family, we tried to make them realize that there are adults who still cared about them. If they think even for a split second “I wonder if I might be able to live with these people”, then they lift their faces up and show a sign to listen to us. Then we can stay closer to them, and we show them what to do or encourage them to imitate us. Then gradually we can discipline them, and let them establish a basic life habit. Our own children staying with us also spread invisible messages to them about the comfort in having a stable life. Once humanity revives, the child has a rosy complexion, starts to behave confidently, and then turns into an obedient child with a child-like faith. Their transformation is always beyond recognition. Through living together for certain periods, children gradually and naturally incorporate our character, way of speaking and actions, especially they acquire the knowledge for judging good and evil or true and false. That is called “Identification.” Afterwards we provide them many more chances to have social experiences in terms of study, life and labor, so that they will form their egos. One day I was in bed with a high fever, and then in the morning, I found that those inmate children had taken turns and stayed by me all night long, replacing the cooling wet towel on my forehead. I realized the fact that they were seeking an adult on whom they could rely. Through activities in groups, I encouraged them to form a strength of the superego which is the ability to control ego, so that they could be independent. Before they leave the juvenile reformatory, we also help them to have better relationships with their parents and the school which they used to attend and which they would go back to attend, so that they can rejoin the society. I helped more than 100 children to return to society, and I came to a conclusion that “None of the children are bad, but they were just driven to behave badly.” Through the developmental stages, those children had no love shown to them, or were unsatisfied by over-spoiling, and they were isolated from their family, society and the school. As a result, they became emotionally unstable, and misbehaved through acts of violence, running away from home, stealing, drug abuse or withdrawing from society (staying indoors at home without social contacts). Now I can tell that what they carry deep in their minds is “a loneliness” that they have nobody to share with, nobody who scolds them, worries about them or praises them, and nobody who will share their feelings. Children feel lonely when their parents keep a loose rein on them, but they also feel lonely when their feeling is not filled with real love but over-indulgence. This finding greatly helped me at my later work to teach children. When I reached the age of

forty, during the labor work period, I got out of breath when I demonstrated how to farm manually with a shovel. The next morning, five pupils ran away in a group. I understood that I reached an age not possible to endure the 24 hour work style. I made a request to be assigned to work at an ordinary public lower secondary school.

At the school to which I freshly returned, I could fully utilize my experiences from juvenile reformatory school, and taught pupils strictly and gently while always placing myself on their side. I always kept my stance to be on the side of the children, when I praised them or when I scolded them. As a result, I was quite often asked by pupils and their parents to be their homeroom teacher. I think I was evaluated as a teacher who could well understand the feeling of children. I myself am also convinced that I could conduct my class management as well as student guidance making the fullest of what I acquired in the past. Two years later, I was appointed as a teaching consultant at the Kaita Education Office of Hiroshima Prefecture.

My new assignment was the instruction of the Japanese language, not student guidance. I had never taught Japanese at elementary schools, so everyday I studied hard until late at night, remembering the words of my boss. “Once you are assigned (in charge), you must study the field.” These words were given to me by my senior officer, the Head of the School Education Division, when I was totally at a loss having been assigned to teach a specialized content that I had never experienced, besides being in a completely new environment and situation. The head barked at me saying, “You were called to this position, because we know you can handle the duty. So all that you have to do is study.” This has become my motto. Anyway, I read as many books as possible, and thought over and over, and answered more than 120 cases of questions coming from various schools and thus tried to lead the research. At one school, I was severely asked the methodology on how to write the letter “A” in Japanese in a lined (framed) penmanship. I felt it was sarcastic. At another occasion, as I was afraid of not being able to meet their expectation, I visited a school carrying as many reference materials as possible to “do my best with sincerity and enthusiasm” and I encountered many characteristic principals with rich personality, and established good relationships. These sound relationships which were established simply through sincerity and enthusiasm, greatly helped my later work duties. For instance, when I was a management officer in charge of teacher management, or when I was the head of the School Education Division in charge of personnel matters of managerial staff members. I still appreciate everyone

now. I am involved in the personnel transfer to form a school where the principal is in the center of the school management. As a result, the educational environment of elementary and lower secondary schools in the administration area of the Kaita Education Office, improved greatly. In particular, a lot of open research meetings were held, and fostered many excellent teachers which thus upgraded the overall educational level. Even the in-service programs held at Hiroshima Prefecture Education Center were mostly occupied by the teachers coming from Kaita district. These experiences gave me a lot of confidence.

In those days, those who worked at the Board of Education of Hiroshima Prefecture were usually assigned difficult schools. Without exception, I was appointed as principal at one of the worst three lower secondary schools in Kaita Town. One week prior to my assignment, a problem of discrimination already broke out. Twenty cases of intentional puncturing of bicycle tires occurred. Many cases of pupils' smoking and drinking alcohol were reported. Many pupils stayed away from home overnight, or ran away. A lot of pupils did not come to school, so there was student guidance conducted everyday. I carefully handled it case by case always considering the feeling and the situation of the children. At the same time, I reprimanded the teachers strictly, and each time, I instructed them how to handle the problems. To create a brighter future for children, I created a work place experience in the school curriculum, and asked for cooperation from the community. This also served to regain the trust of the community. Furthermore, our school was designated as "the Curriculum Research School" under the Ministry of Education, and worked to create a pioneering educational environment. "Hello, Principal! To tell you the truth, before we were afraid of your pupils so we always looked down while farming, but now they greet us. When I greet them back, they smile at me. So I feel refreshed and start a balmy day." Community people started to tell us about the changes in our pupils. The cases of complaints coming from citizens were also diminished and instead they started to cheer us up and provide support. The 50th anniversary of the school foundation was held for two consecutive days, and the PTA organized the big event together with all the community residents, so the school was roused. One of the school events is "Town *Ekiden* run", where all the pupils form a class team, and relay race all around the town. Besides them, other groups in the community such as the town's volunteer fire-fighting group and various youth groups also participate. Senior citizens spread straw mats on the roadsides to cheer the pupils running. Some teachers who were opposed to such events, were encouraged to cooperate and naturally forced to be

a part thanks to the active movements made by the community. However, I will never forget one ironic comment made by one of the former principals of this school. He said, “No matter how much better this school becomes, nobody would wish to work there.”

After three years, I was transferred back to the Prefecture Board of Education. As I wanted to continuously guide and support the open lesson research of this lower secondary school, I requested to remain in the same administration area, so I rejected the appointment to be in the head office of the Hiroshima Prefecture Board of Education. Fortunately I was appointed as Head of the Kaita Education Office. After a year, I was appointed as Head of the 1st Guidance Division of the Prefecture Board of Education. The correctional guidance was launched by the Ministry of Education to reform the education of Hiroshima Prefecture, so my appointment was to exert those corrections without fail. For instance, in accordance with the law, in-service teacher education should be organized by the authorities but not by the teachers union. Or, schools must hoist the national flag and sing the anthem according to the national course of study. We made a joint research opportunity with Hiroshima University, and also thanks to the help and leadership of a variety of people, I think we could achieve the expected correctional reform drastically and precisely. I was working hard solely for the sake of children in whichever educational positions I had, but in those days my feelings were not perfectly satisfied. If I had worked directly connected with the presence of the children, I thought I could have felt the meaning of education more realistically, and could have been fulfilled more in my teaching life. I also wanted to spend my final four years until retirement in a school, and therefore, I again requested a transfer. I was appointed as principal of a lower secondary school. Another reason was that I had a heart disease called angina pectoris and ever since I had the first severe attack, I had paroxysm of occasional attacks, so it was no longer possible to continue as the Division Head.

3. School Organization and human resources development

I set out for my new post with my strong desire to create a school where everyone would say, “This school is changed!” I had this experience before and I wanted to try it again. There were 525 pupils belonging to 15 classes, and most of the pupils were inactive and very calm, and they seemed to lack in expressing their intentions. Teachers were split into three factions, and the communication among them was not smooth, so they rarely reported or informed me of anything, and they

were rather quite arbitrary in taking action. Parents were enthusiastic for children's education, however, they were opposed to the school or had no more expectations of the school. Problems with pupils' misbehavior like violence and bullying as well as absenteeism of nearly 30 pupils urgently needed to be solved through student guidance. Also, it was necessary to enhance the scholastic ability by developing the pioneering curriculum and promoting the practical research using an evaluation system. These were the two urgent issues in this school. Therefore I determined to act like MIYAMOTO Musashi the prominent swordsman of Edo period who could utilize two short swords at a time, and not SASAKI Kojiro, his opponent swordsman who was famous for his use of a single long sword. Keeping my motto, "If I can change the pupils, then the parents and community people will also change", I decided to handle all of the cases always prioritizing children, and concentrating on the children.

Strategies and tactics of our dramatic reform since 2000

(1) Presenting the school management vision, and division of school duties strongly dominated by the principal

I set up the management philosophy "It is not whether we can do it or not, but it is whether we will try to do it or not! Before everything, we take action, then think while taking action." I also presented my vision with the focused policy of "Intellect, Virtue and Physical strength" at the first faculty meeting in the new academic year, and I explained the content in detail. The teachers and the staff might not have clearly understood what I intended, but I gave them anyway an impression that "This new principal may start something influential." Later on whenever I directed the teachers, I again explained about the vision printed on a sheet by indicating "What you are doing now is described here in this vision." Thus I made every teacher to become aware of their duties. I appointed the head teachers only considering their capabilities. As always, intending to develop more human resources, from my second year I domineeringly appointed the head teacher from among the teachers who had not belonged to any factions. I was never tolerant of any opinions against my policy.

(2) Reducing the frequency of the faculty meeting which was held four times a year, and mobilizing the head teachers more frequently, to enhance their capabilities

In order to increase “the time spent with pupils” and to assure certain periods for teacher training aimed for raising teachers’ awareness, I reduced the number of faculty meetings and abolished the department meetings and other conferences. Instead, I commenced a weekly Planning Committee meeting in which the participants were the managerial staff and seven head teachers [in curriculum coordination, student guidance, the respective three grades, research and student council]. For example, when planning school events or for reflecting on those events, I skipped the overall faculty discussion. First, I asked the head teacher in charge of a certain duty or members in the same group to draw up a draft plan. This draft was circulated among all the department members, and they brought up their opinions and ideas to revise the plan. Then the head teacher finalized the plan discussing it with the Department members. Here, at least one fourth (1/4) of the content from the previous year’s event must be revised. Then it was submitted to the Planning Committee which is held every Wednesday, for further discussion. Finally the principal approves it. The head teacher in curriculum and instruction will make a handout with the conclusion, and on the following day, distribute it to every faculty member for consensus. Teachers read the report and learned what they must do and thus worked cooperatively with others. As a result, there were no more faculty members who did not participate. The managerial staff and the head teacher in curriculum coordination evaluated every event by observing satisfaction, for example whether pupils are impressed or not, and also checked the procedural progress, then gave proper guidance, so that the outcome will be used to improve the next planning event. All the head teachers instructed other teachers, and all the teachers worked cooperatively and spontaneously for the sake of the children. The principal was placed in the center of the school organization, the factional divisions disappeared, and all the faculty started to work cheerfully. Led by head teachers, even younger teachers started to share their unique ideas to create an event focusing on the pupils’ impression. Since their ideas were well accepted and realized, they felt more satisfied at work, and pupils also started to be lively one event after another. Our school became a place with cheerful greetings everywhere. To hold the Sports Day, it generally requires marching practice for many days, but our pupils completed the marching parade after rehearsing only for two days, much

shorter than the commonly practiced period. Towards another event “Class Match sports games”, pupils spontaneously got together to practice sports in which they would compete among classes, in the early morning before the first-period class started, and even after school. While the entrance exam to upper secondary schools was drawing near, pupils encouraged each other, taught each other and thus the whole class formed a cheerful and well-behaved group. Every child was able to take action with pride and confidence. This environment helped them greatly when they chose their desired course after graduation.

(3) Establishment and functioning of the student guidance system through interacting with pupils organizationally

“Greeting, Punctuality, Putting things in order”, as three school mottos was printed on a banner and displayed on the sidewall of the school building so that it was visible from the school ground. Teachers by themselves demonstrated these three teachings, so that pupils acquired the ideal basic life habits. The basic life habit serves as the base for academic improvement.

The meeting of the Department of Student Guidance was held at the 4th period every Tuesday. Two teachers each from every grade heard preliminary hearings from all the homeroom teachers about “the situation of bullying, absenteeism and misbehavior.” The head teacher in student guidance heard from the member teachers about all the cases, and made a report, then submitted it at the meeting of Student Guidance. The Department of Student Guidance alone identifies the direction, and asks for guidance from the principal. On the following Wednesday morning, the head teacher of student guidance revises the report with the cooperation and advice from a school counselor, then the issues will be discussed at the Planning Committee held on Wednesday. In the meeting, with the cooperation of each grade’s head teacher, they make the proposal on how to solve the issues. Then on the following Thursday, all the faculty will be informed about the result with written documents, and thus everyone can start to work together. In this way all the teachers can get to know the situation of every child. The homeroom teacher, accompanied with a teacher from the Student Guidance Department visits the pupils’ home, based on the motto “until everyone understands clearly, we continue to interact with pupils.” The result of home visit is reported to the managerial staff and the head teacher of Student Guidance, and depending on the necessity, more actions are continuously undertaken. All the teachers in the same grade of those concerned pupils observe the pupils during the lessons, and encourage them.



Teachers in different grades as well as the school nurse can associate with those pupils during the club activities, in accordance with the situation of how intimately they have built a relationship with those pupils. Teachers who have no chance to be with those pupils still keep an eye on them warmly in school. In any case, it was ideal when all faculty members were involved in the procedure from all sides, wholly and impartially.

When the cases of misbehavior were serious and needed an immediate settlement, we immediately shared the above-mentioned process, of conducting the survey, and identifying the guidance direction. We made a sheet of handouts with those pieces of information as well as the information of the family condition. Keeping the common key words, “Be honest and turn ourselves flexibly always with cheer”, all the faculty members cooperated with each other, while the head teacher of student guidance took the leadership. When shoplifting by pupils was reported, the faculty first talked with the parents in advance. It was encouraged that the parents should wait for the words of apology from their children. Children were made to take an initiative to speak the truth to their parents if the family

situation allowed them to do so. When children apologize to parents spontaneously by themselves, and show regret for what they did, it will be possible to make them promise to straighten up their life style and study attitude from the following day. All in all, the parent–child relationship must be recovered to re-start their life. This method greatly helped the school to gain reliability from parents to the school. And, this once gained reliability spread a good reputation of the school widely, and the school itself was labeled as a trustworthy school.

Club activities in the past where teachers were absent changed to be held in the presence of a teacher in charge, thus pupils' attitude became more and more enthusiastic. Bullying disappeared. After all the pupils marched in on Sports Day, I spoke to the pupils showing a little of my expectation. "Your principal wishes to hold and hoist the champion flag in his hands even just once in his life." Parents had started to cooperate and cheered the children, and also accompanied by pupils' serious strenuous practices, I was able to hoist the championship flag many times afterwards.

(4) Creating the commonly practiced school events to be more 'touching'

I categorized all the school events into three groups. Graduation and Enrollment Ceremonies were planned and held by the school. Sports Day and the Culture Festival were produced by the school and pupils as a body. Class match games (sports played among classes in competition) and grade-level events were planned and managed by the pupils alone. First of all, we aimed to form the basic organization flow of the Sports Day and the Culture Festival. Then in the future, we can let the Student Council spontaneously plan and manage them. The Department of the Student Council was established to foster pupils' active involvement and the head teacher was assigned the Student Council activities to activate the pupils' independence. Here, we set a rule that the repetition of the same planning content every year would not be accepted, and we requested the teachers and pupils to revise the content at least by one fourth (25 %) every time. As a consequence, at every event pupils took more initiatives, and it was made increasingly impressive. Pupils themselves started to ask their parents and relatives to come to school to see their progress. Besides, local residents were also touched by the reformation of the pupils themselves and thus increased their participation gradually. I asked all the pupils to write a report on their impressions after every school event, and I read all of them carefully and returned them after writing my comments. In particular, I adapted the new ideas from those pupils' reports, and made great use

of their opinions for improvements, thus fully utilizing all the pupils' suggestions. In the beginning, some of the reports carried merely one sentence, commenting, "This event was boring so there is no need to do it." But gradually the contents were changed as follows: "It was touching. I will never forget it in my entire life. Next year, we must plan even a better one than this year's which was organized by our seniors." "I couldn't do well, though every one encouraged me and I felt the kindness of people." All the pupils wrote reports filled with their impressions and good evaluations. Pupils started to fill in the A4 size sheet from top to bottom, and the number of such pupils increased year by year.

The graduation ceremony is planned by the General Affairs Department with leadership taken by the vice-principal. The customarily practiced commanding such as, "Stand up! Bow! Sit down!" was abolished, and we held a refreshing new-style and yet solemn ritual event.

"Though we don't have children of the lower secondary age, we wish to be part of the graduation ceremony." The community residents also started to attend it and their number gradually increased. Also, the customarily held many day pre-practices were made shorter, regarding 80 % achievement as enough. On the day of the graduation ceremony, all the teachers and pupils put their hearts together as one, and created an impressive ceremony.

Through conducting my daily duties as principal, I always kept thinking of one thing, "What will our pupils benefit from if we do this", and then judged whether we should go ahead or not. Therefore, I repeatedly talked to the faculty, "It is not whether we can do it or not, but whether we will try to do it or not" and "Once you have decided to try it, just take action. Think while taking action, then improve."

(5) Establishment of Research System and Promotion of Research

The common desires of parents were "We expect children to achieve a higher scholastic ability, and learn how to form good human relationships, and have a will to spontaneously study", and these were the desires of the pupils themselves as well. I thought on how to promote the research purely thinking of children, by improving the teachers' awareness while understanding the educational policy of the country, prefecture and the city. I thought I had to brush up myself so I read the national Courses of Study over and over again, and tried to interpret the deep meanings between the lines (invisible hidden philosophy), and wrote down in it whatever came to mind. I summarized my understanding and made a summary sheet, and then explained it to the teachers at various times. In some cases, I

just extracted the framework of the research and indicated it to the faculty. For instance, if I wanted to form a small-sized ability-based class of Math and English, I indicated the following requests to each head teacher in charge:

- (a) Try to upgrade the scholastic ability of every child. If not achieved, analyze the causes and improve the situation.
- (b) One class is divided into two groups, and the group activity of each class must be valued.
- (c) At every content unit, let pupils choose at which level [basic or advanced] they want to study. To facilitate them to choose, conduct a quiz in advance, and let the pupils choose based upon their self-evaluation. Here, the teacher's role is to consult and support only.
- (d) The content to study in the basic course is to "carefully and slowly acquire all that the textbook contains and in the advanced course to "aggressively" prepare more advanced contents beyond the textbooks and challenge the pupils.
- (e) Evaluate achievement based on the uniformed standard of evaluation for both courses.

Based on these clauses, I asked the head teachers in charge to work out a detailed plan, and under my guidance, the scheme was completed. Head teachers presented the plan at the faculty meeting, and each assignment was allocated to teachers. The content was modified every year, year after year. In 2001, when we were preparing our following year's plan, and making documents to apply for the possible budget, our school was visited by a Math Prof. of Tokyo University as well as the officials from the Finance Division of the Educational Ministry, and both of them highly extolled what we had been doing. Right after this event, the budget allocation for our school grew bigger, and our activities also spread across Japan.

I asked several tasks of head teachers. The head teacher of Research created the "Morning Reading Time" "Drawing the annual teaching plan of all the subjects" and the "Development of Absolute Evaluation." Teachers with a certain number of years experience and younger teachers with only few experiences drew the annual teaching plan of elective subjects with an aim to develop children's individual ability, and head teachers of each grade drew the objectives as well as "the annual teaching plan of Integrated Study Period and the objective." In those days many of the pioneering schools across the country were not conducting true research but

just crawling along based only on what they had experienced. Some were simply replacing other school events as substitutes, so the pupils had not acquired any skills after the completion of such research. To enrich our pupils with “the zest for living”, I by myself analyzed the aims of the Courses of Study, and produced supplemental materials, and summarized my works in 2001, based on the study tour to upper secondary schools which was conducted in the previous year. Here I developed three steps. First of all, I set out “a Goal” of each unit of the Integrated Study Period, as well as “a Goal” of respective related subjects, and merged those Goals into one. Secondly, to achieve the goal, the “Teaching Plan” was drawn clearly indicating the relationships between the systematic experience activity and other related subjects. A third, a portfolio “Evaluation” was developed in relation to the school record.

I accepted all the opportunities to present our school reform anywhere in the country, and it was always highly praised. I also received a lot of offers from institutions including NIER (National Institute of Educational Research) and the Educational Ministry for its Curriculum Workshop as well as from various educational journals, and contributed reports and articles. In 2003, the national government revised the Course of Study exactly in accordance with our outcome. Through our approaches, we always valued the reaction of our pupils as a standard and made every judgment, thus gradually improving the content year by year. Teachers did not accompany the pupils on survey activities, so pupils by themselves made a plan because I noticed the voice of the representative of the pupils was trembling with fear, when they were making appointments on the phone in the principal’s office. Afterwards, they started to prepare questions in advance, and even prepared supplemental questions in order to be ready to make the survey smoothly. They even grew to be able to make additional questions instantly if necessary, depending on the responses made by the upper secondary staff. After experiencing several questions, the upper secondary schools started to comment, that “Before we were replying to them briefly, but now we must study the cases in advance, so that we can answer them more appropriately.” Pupils summarized what they surveyed, and presented the outcome making full use of a computer presentation software called Power Point. They had transformed in that they had grown to be able to say what they wanted to present even without looking at the manuscript and furthermore in a respectively more unique way. This activity originally started in the Integrated Study Period, developed, and influenced the presentation format of the Morning Assembly. Pupils from the Student Council

started to report freely and more confidently without having any written form of manuscripts. I was moved to see a certain growth in them. They had definitely acquired an ability to be independent which is necessary to live on their own in the future, and had exhibited their talent with great confidence. Pupils became cheerful, confident and actively participating in any activity, as a result of our creating a favorable curriculum which was always thinking of the pupils, and for the sake of the pupils.

Grade 1

- 70 periods of expression study focusing on oral language. [Reciting in a group, individual recitation, discussion, speech]
- 30 periods of expression study using a computer

Grade 2

- 40 periods of expression study focusing on written language. [Production of a local newspaper]
- 30 periods of work experience study

Grade 3

- 46 periods of career guidance aiming for self-realization [Upper secondary school visits, etc]
- 34 periods of career realization study

I requested all the teachers to conduct a research lesson once a year per person as a part of the lesson study aiming to upgrade their teaching skills. Among them, one lesson of Moral Education was made compulsory per grade. To improve the lesson delivery, I asked them to prepare card-type sheets to write down their opinions: “If I were this lecturer, I would have done this,” so that they could mutually compare and correct. In particular, I asked the head teacher in charge of Research to bring out new ideas for further fulfillment. All the processes were considered tough, but the content was improved greatly. Our attempts dramatically upgraded teaching skills of teachers and pupils scholastic achievement.

“Absolute evaluation and rating” suitable for the lower secondary school level, was created by the head teacher of Research with clear objectivity and reliability. We indicated the annual teaching scheme of all subjects for all the grades as well as the concrete view of evaluation, and developed the methodology to evaluate and rate objectively by using figures. At the beginning of the following academic year, we distributed to the parents the report including all of the information. The accountability of the school was thus fulfilled. Our research and development of

the annual teaching scheme which indicated both the target goal and evaluation method was disseminated locally as well as nation wide.

(6) Human Resources Development

Thanks to these strategies and tactics, the faculty members solidified placing the principal in the center of the organization. I appointed head teachers from among the teachers who could make swift actions seriously for pupils. While I assist head teachers, I try to draw out their potential capacities, and then gradually they demonstrate a characteristic ability. Teachers in their thirties were also given duties so that they could grow to be appointed as head teachers. For example, I asked them to bring out ideas which were “made for pupils and only considering pupils”, then, I required them to confirm reactions and transformation of pupils so that they accumulated experiences and thus matured. I tried to thoroughly instill in them the appropriate way of speech and behavior as a teacher with pride as well as the minimum requirements as public educational personnel which was undertaken by the correctional guidance of the Ministry. Teachers started to attend guests politely showing dignity [for example, bow low until the guests go out of the school], and pupils also stabilized in life style as they were favorably influenced by such changes of the teachers.

In 2002, some 800 participants attended the Open Research Meeting held at our school. Our school became prominent across Japan. Because of the high-quality performance of our research and stability of the school, I was requested to visit other schools even in other regions to give lectures. For example, I presented during the Research Meeting held at Fukuyama Lower Secondary School affiliated to Hiroshima University, and I presented at the training for public servants of cities, prefectures and the nation, and I wrote articles to educational journals, and so on. Furthermore, I was asked to be a lecturer for the Head Teacher Training and other conferences. As long as I did not stay away too much from my pupils, I accepted the opportunities to meet their needs as much as I could, because I thought that these would also serve as opportunities to brush up myself. I constantly developed more and more human resources, and many of them have been promoted to managerial posts or to administration offices.

4. Achievement and responsibility of the Principal.

The Prefecture-wide test, the “Basic and Fundamental Achievement Status Survey” for Japanese language, Math and English was conducted in Hiroshima

Prefecture. The number of our pupils per grade was below 200, but the achievement score was the best in Hiroshima Prefecture. I am convinced that this is the result of all the faculty members solidifying and mobilizing organizationally while always thinking of the pupils. Problematic behaviors decreased, and the number of absent pupils was reduced to only around eight. I still feel moved and feel appreciation to the parents who were involved in cooking noodle-soup for more than 1000 people at a school event. This memory brings tears to my eyes. Through various approaches, annually around 250 volunteer participants from the community came to the school to support our educational activities and thus enriched our school education, and I feel thankful to them. Everything is because the aim of our education was always placing pupils in the center of our mind, only for the sake of the pupils, always closely together with pupils we never forgot to think what would be the best for the pupils. In 2005, our school was awarded the Prize of the Ministry of Education with two other schools in Japan.

As principal, I planted flowers in the area around our school premises, and patrolled the school while picking up trash. When I took a short break after using an electric mower, suddenly a girl pupil said to me a loud voice, “Hello, Principal, keep up your good work!” I can still hear her words in my ears. It is important to have affection and passion to “do all for children until the end”. This is what I have determined as my vision and strategy for children.

Reflections on My Meeting with Principal Hiraga

For someone from the outside, entering Japan's social and educational system can deliver a massive cultural shock. Yet when I met principal Hiraga on a memorable winter's morning on the outskirts of Hiroshima, there was something about his welcome, his warmth and his wisdom that made me feel completely at home.

The first thing that struck me was his technical knowledge of the management of schools, something that clearly was accumulated over many years working in his position as teacher and principal. His knowledge of the operations of his institution, and the ingredients that make for a successful school, left me in awe—for what he shared made a lot more sense to me than the hundreds of 'how to' books that I have read on educational change.

The second thing that struck me was his craft knowledge of the leadership of schools, that inbuilt wisdom of a leader that inspires people to work together, to improve themselves, and to empower their students. It was clear to me that he knew that capability was not enough; that the credibility of the leader was equally important in leading schools.

The third thing that struck me was his spiritual knowledge of people, that innate capacity to recognize and affirm the humanity of other people. He was completely at ease with me as an African professor, with the young Japanese education students in the company, and with the American teacher in the same room. It was very clear to me that I was in presence of a man devoid of the racial, linguistic, cultural or age biases that so often demean persons of his accomplishment.

The cultural forms that I had become accustomed to in interacting with people from Africa and America, the two continents on which I lived, are the dramatic acts of engagement, the intense physical interaction and the direct statements of approval or otherwise. I learnt from my all-too-brief interaction with this wise principal, Mr Hiraga, that there is depth, meaning, sincerity and warmth in the quiet, determined spirit. Though the principal spoke softly, he spoke with conviction and clarity about education, development and change.

As we walked through the school, I noticed how the students respected him,

how his staff revered him, and how his deputies looked up to him for leadership. He clearly did not attain this respect through an authoritarian hand, but through the authority of his life as a leading principal in Hiroshima.

I was overawed by the man and his geography, and I remember saying to myself at the time: “how could they drop atomic bombs on this city? If they had met principal Hiraga, they would never have resorted to such barbaric behaviour.”

I left the office of the principal humbled, inspired and affirmed as a teacher, a leader and an activist. The experience was so riveting, I had completely forgotten that he was speaking through a translator.

Thank you, principal Hiraga, for your enormous contribution to the education of all of us.

Jonathan D. Jansen
Dean of Education
University of Pretoria

Double encounter with Mr. HIRAGA and Prof. JANSEN of South Africa

Prof. JANSEN, Dean of the Educational Faculty of Pretoria University, Republic of South Africa came to Hiroshima University and in March 2004, visited the Takamigaoka Lower Secondary School when Mr. HIRAGA was principal. I was lucky to have accompanied him and joined their meeting, and together with Prof. JANSEN, I heard the educational philosophy of Mr. HIRAGA and his ideal teacher image. I am glad I was there on that day. At that time, I was lingering over continuing my study in the teacher education course, while being at a loss whether to become a school teacher or not. It was a gift opportunity to learn “the ideal teacher image” and “the good points of Japanese educators”, and it became an unforgettable day.

Prof. JANSEN, after observing all the school facilities, had a dialogue with Mr. HIRAGA in the principal’s office. Following the conversation, Prof. JANSEN spoke to all the school pupils during the school assembly.

“I was a weird child. I liked playing soccer, and I was disliked by teachers because I didn’t study. Most of the classmates in my childhood are either dead or caught in prison. You may wonder why only I have survived and become a university professor. Now I’ll tell you the reason. I am a person who never did the same thing like others. I hope you will also find what you can selfishly devote yourself to, and grow up to be a creative person. Don’t think in the same way with the others. Recently, those who don’t admit the differences of thoughts from others joined a terrorist group and attacked a train in Spain that caused many casualties. It is indispensable that you have empathy for others, appreciate and respect them.”

“We are not supposed to use our ability for someone equal to us, but we are entitled to use our ability for those who are different.”

These last words of Prof. JANSEN particularly impressed me.

I felt I was given a new view which I didn’t possess before.

Through the conversation with Mr. HIRAGA, Prof. JANSEN seemed to have respect for him from the heart in various aspects, including his technical knowledge of the management of schools and craft knowledge of the leadership of schools, as well as his *spiritual knowledge* as “a person” who can accept anybody without

prejudice while respecting their differences. Regardless of the social status, he can share his feelings equally to anyone, and thus appreciate one another. All of these aspects must be crucial in the teaching profession. Coming from a foreign country, Prof. JANSEN speaks a different language and his skin-color and nationality is also different. Besides, he was accompanied with an AET (assistant English teacher of a public school, also coming from another country) and us Japanese students. Mr. HIRAGA heartedly welcomed all of us and showed to us great care. Prof. JANSEN described Mr. HIRAGA in his essay as follows: “It was very clear to me that I was in presence of a man devoid of the racial, linguistic, cultural or age biases that so often demean persons of his accomplishment.”

“A competent teacher, with an honest mind and sincere heart, who can treat anyone equally.” Coming from South Africa whose people had suffered from Apartheid, Prof. JANSEN could truly identify with “the image of ideal teachers” in his eyes through the actual meeting with Mr. HIRAGA.

Under the political system Apartheid, the Republic of South Africa extremely complicated its development. Under the past racial segregation policy, white people, Asia-oriented and mix-bloods called ‘Coloreds’ were educated separately. As a result, it created a great disparity in the education level. This racially discriminated educational system was abolished in 1994 with democratization, however, it is said that such negative assets from Apartheid still remain throughout the country. I had a chance to make a private trip to South Africa in my senior year right before my graduation. What I saw there were high-school-aged black children sitting on the road, seeking day labor. I also observed racially segregated school children. The residential areas have remained separated by races, and there were schools which only white children attend and schools only for blacks. The official system was abolished, but it doesn’t help all the people shift their old way of thinking. I realized that it would take quite a long time to completely demolish discrimination, and to develop a democratic society. I felt that such a society particularly needed an educator like Mr. HIRAGA who was competent and honest as well as who would be able to change the society for the better.

Only after I visited South Africa, could I clearly realize the real meaning of the words of Prof. JANSEN. “Our ability is not for similar people but for those who are different.”

What is necessary for different races to live in harmony and co-exist? It is to

appreciate each other. When we can accept other people with different thoughts, and can exert our ability for those different people, we will appreciate each other. We can demolish “Prejudice” harboring in our mind. “Let’s think creatively.” This is a motto of Prof. JANSEN. When we think creatively we can find new ideas and make things or our situation better. I think I can now understand the words of Prof. JANSEN in my own interpretation, because I visited and experienced South Africa,

When we hear about education in Japan, public news often carries negative aspects such as misbehavior like bullying and school violence, students’ absenteeism, psychologically retiring from society, low academic achievement as well as disciplinary measures against teachers. Good news seems to be rarely aired. But when we change the direction of our viewpoint, and carefully pay attention to look at the image of the teachers, I think most of the Japanese teachers do make efforts in associating with pupils/students equally. Japanese teachers treat all the pupils equally whether they are Korean-descendants living in Japan, or any other nationality. In addition, the Japanese education system has the curriculum of Dowa (social harmonization, anti-discrimination) Education and Human Rights Education, so that schools can properly handle the issues organizationally. Besides the parents, teachers are also adults who are very close to the children and thus will greatly influence upon their value formation. Therefore, teachers must be “honest and discrimination-free personnel”. They brush themselves up for the sake of educating children, and accumulate various experiences, and increase their technical expertise. I think we are very lucky to have such school teachers including Mr. HIRAGA, and we are also lucky to have many students who admire such teachers so that they wish to be like them.

Project member I

As time passes by

MAEHARA Toshio

MAEHARA Toshio was born in 1949 in Yoshikawa Village, Kamo County, Hiroshima Prefecture. After graduating from university, he became a science teacher of lower secondary school. After working as teaching consultant at the Hiroshima Prefecture Board of Education, he was appointed as vice principal at Higashi-Hiroshima City Hachihonmatsu Lower Secondary School in 1997. Since 2003, he has been the principal of Higashi-Hiroshima City Koyo Lower Secondary School (current position). He possesses the title of Hachi-Dan (8th Rank) of Iaido Kyoshi awarded (conferred) by the All Nippon Kendo Association.



1. What I remember

First of all, I recalled my past with the events which could have influenced me, and motivated me to become a school teacher.

(1) The soul nurtured by the age of three (*1)

The oldest memory I can recall is the following.

One of my grandfathers who is my mother's father was a military serviceman. After the war, he farmed with horses. I remember he was often taking care of his Japanese sword in a dark storage room. Ever since I can remember, I felt my body frozen with fear when I peeped at him with a sword in his hand through the Japanese *fusuma* [a framed and papered sliding door as a room partition]. The sword drawn out of the case was a shining ash-color, and the long shaped blade was extending as high as if it would pierce the ceiling through. Looking at the sight, my feeling was both of fear and wonder. I think it was the origin of my interest in the classic martial arts.

My grandfather is a farmer who had no school education. However, he could write letters with a brush and ink. Also he developed a reservoir for rice farming in the village, he kept cattle, built houses, he could do as many as a hundred things (just like the Japanese word for farmer *Hyaku-sho* =Hundred surnames). When I was three or four, I always accompanied my grandfather, and we pulled the cattle on the

farm, cultivated the forests on a hill, strangled chickens, pumped up the bath water, everything we needed for living. Thanks to these experiences, I learned how to use my body, and how to live with the soil and in nature, though I am not as powerful as he was.

My father was an elementary school vice principal. I remember when I accompanied him to school during the school events like excursions, I got gifts of lunch and snacks from other teachers, or slept in a night-duty room while listening to the cheerful conversation of the adults who were drinking together. “School is such a pleasant place, teachers are cheerful and kind.” I think I was imprinted with such a school view in those days.

Heartwarming scenes and the rich climate in my hometown that I felt in my infancy through living and meeting people still remain in my mind comfortably, and I feel it as a miracle and am thankful for my memory. I now appreciate the meaning of an idiomatic phrase: “The soul nurtured by the age of three will determine the personality which lasts until the age of a hundred.”

(2) A teacher in my memory.

① In my sixth grade

I was a huge boy 160 cm tall and weighing 70 kg. As I always helped with farming, I had strong arms and my leg muscles were well developed and persevering. Though I always brought up the rear in every footrace, at the obstacle race of straw rice-bag carrying, I was always the first. None of my classmates were strong enough to sumo-wrestle with me, so I alone had to observe others’ sumo matches. My homeroom teacher who could not bear to watch me being left alone, invited me saying; “Shall we sumo-wrestle together?” I can’t forget how delighted I was, when I made a smashing tackle to the teacher with all my strength. The teacher who gave me a chance to eagerly do something, who accepted all my energy with his entire body, I really adored that teacher. I still recall those happy moments. I believe in the following proverbs: “Master acts as a needle, a disciple behaves like a thread.” “Master and disciple face to face.” These are the fundamentals of the classic martial arts and practices of traditional Japanese culture. I think we should never forget this kind of educational philosophy through the eras.

② In my third grade at lower secondary school

My homeroom teacher was a science teacher. There are three unforgettable episodes from this time in my life. During the summer vacation, we went around the Saijo Basin area on bike and studied the stratum. The teacher said, "In Saijo, they say there used to be a lake half the size of Lake Biwa, the largest lake in Japan." He intrigued me by such words. We surveyed the things I wanted to know, and I summarized my study and presented it. I thought science was fascinating and I loved it. What I learned from this teacher on how to study it, helped me greatly when I wrote my graduation thesis at university.

One Sunday morning, I got a phone call from the teacher, "Mr. MAE, please come to school." Wondering "why?", I went to school. I was called to practice one type of the obstacle races 'passing through the cloth-tube' which would be held at the Sports Day. As my physique was big, I always struggled to go through the cloth-tube, and everybody knew I was going to be the last runner. The teacher helped me to find the knack to go through the cloth-tube smoothly and quickly, and I was touched by this offer; "How come this teacher devotes himself to me so much...", and I indeed appreciated it.

The third also started with a phone call one Sunday morning. The teacher said; "Mr. MAE please come to school." Then he said, "Let's go to see your father in the hospital." The teacher told my hospitalized father; "How about making your son a school teacher?" He gave him such a word by thinking about my future course. He was such an admirable teacher. The teaching profession means to establish human relationships, so reliability is the most important thing. Recommended by this teacher, I decided to study at Tamagawa University.

③ When I aimed to be a teacher

The President of Tamagawa University whom we called the 'Boss' was Mr. OBARA Kuniyoshi. He was often surrounded by students, and he sat down anywhere on campus and heatedly talked with the students with a smile. He gave us teachings like "Your mentor is your will", "Only those who brush up themselves are entitled to teach others" and "If a teacher does not discipline strictly, s/he is lazy."

Students described President OBARA as follows. [quoted from a publication "Master's Road", by Tamagawa University Press]

1. He made us carry the night-soil bucket, but he also made us sing Beethoven's "Ode to Joy"
2. He taught us how to read the Bible and how to use an abacus.
3. He guided us to be a damn fool, but also guided us to be like a snake which is a symbol of being quick and intelligent.
4. He made us wear a formal suit but also made us wear work clothes.
5. He had lofty ideals, but he was also a steady executor.
6. He was a wild visionary, but also a steady practitioner.
7. He had nerves of steel, but was also extremely scrupulous.
8. He understood things brilliantly but was obstinate.
9. He was uncommonly short-tempered but uncommonly a crybaby.
10. He loved his wife the most but was also a tyrant the most.
11. He advocated internationalism more than anybody but was a patriot more than anybody.
12. He displayed his originality but he also worked for others.
13. He took care of a sickly child, but also fostered an extraordinary athlete.
14. He educated gifted students but also educated poor students.
15. He was extremely complicated but also very simple.
16. He is a teacher but he did not look like a teacher.
17. Mr. OBARA, he is an expert who can merge opposites into one.

He is a great educator. The education held at Tamagawa University is the 'all-round education' method, and it is based on the immutable educational theory as well as the education of the soul. Education must aim to foster 'soul' before anything else.

④ Soul education

Soul education can take place even outside the school. I met a person who was not my "teacher" but a person whom I could call my "master." When I was a freshman and 18 years old, I had a chance "to become a disciple under this master." His name was HIROI Tsuneji and he was a *Shihan* [=Master] of a classic martial art who belonged to the Metropolitan Police Department. At first, I was only curious and peeped into the classic martial art practice held in the Town Gym, and I was riveted to the spot, rooted to the spot by fascination. "How amazing! This person must be real." I remember I strongly thought so. I am really thankful to this encounter, because I learned a lot of things since then.

“It is better to find a good master even if it takes three years. Then it could be better than starting three years in advance!” “If we don’t learn from a real master, it means we don’t learn anything.” As the priest Dogen left these words, good learning is made possible by meeting a good master. I was allowed to observe their practices for a while, and around two weeks later when I sat in front of the master, he gently gave me a kind word; “Would you like to try?” This moment when I decided to enroll in his group, marked the start of a new phase of my life, I believe.

There is no compromise between the master and a disciple. One technique is practiced for a period of six months. “The basics will be a basis to strengthen your character. You must acquire it only in your body. Lying or cheating are never to be accepted. You have something what will be shining if you polish it up.” All his words were strict but warm.

Here is an episode of my practice of *Kendo* (*2). Skillful players can freely apply a variety of several techniques, e.g., by implying one but actually using another. It is indeed praiseworthy. On the contrary, I was not yet skillful, so one stroke of *Men* (*3) was all what I could try out. When I was still at this level, I was given two types of instruction. One person said “Having only one stroke of *Men* is not good enough. There are other techniques such as *Kote*, *Do*, etc. and how come you are not trying to use them all? You must practice *Kote* and *Do* more and more!” However, the master HIROI did not say so. “Your stroke of *Men* is excellent. The straight –up and the large scale swing is indeed amazing. You should keep it as your strongest point.” Being told so, I felt encouraged, and naturally my *Men* strokes grew harder and swifter. My rival recoiled and I was given a chance to even try *Kote*. This is how I got to be able to use *Kote*.

“Don’t stamp, don’t stamp, be water!” and “Scold but do not get angry. Praise rather than scolding” are common idioms, and I found dignity in such a way of consistent teaching with the soul. Dignity and majesty are human nature which is developed through the long continuous ascetic practices, and they are indispensable elements for soul education.

I spent only four years at Tamagawa University, but I was blessed with opportunities to experience real society being away from my parents, to meet many precious people, to learn things through my body, therefore, every moment (everyday) seemed fulfilled.

After graduation, I came back to my hometown Hiroshima, and was recruited as a Science teacher. I became in charge of the *Kendo* Club, and practiced it (sweating) with pupils. Also in my leisure time, I continued my practices of *Kendo*, *Iaido* (*4)

and *Joudo* (*5). The best part of being involved in classic martial art practices was that I met a great many people. Gradually I started to think if I could incorporate “the good points of classic martial arts and the joy of meeting people” into school education.

2. As the Captain of KOYO-maru(*6) ship

I had the honor to be assigned as the head of the Koyo-maru ship (i.e.Koyo Lower Secondary School). While feeling the strong responsibility, first I recalled the words of the Captain of the Toyoshio- maru ship. Under such stress, I was greatly encouraged.

The Toyoshio-maru is a training vessel of Hiroshima University. I had experienced three days training on board and cruised the Seto Inland Sea. At night, we sat in a circle on the deck, and exchanged opinions while drinking beer. The talks by the Captain were particularly impressive. The humanity of the Captain who is responsible for the lives of the others, was represented by belief, decision, passion and action.

Belief: If there is one person who is not alert enough there will be no guarantee to keep the safety of the ship. Respective crews must fulfill their duties in respective places, thus the safe voyage will be secured. While keeping each duty, we must trust each other, that is required of a man on the sea.

Decision: At the time of a storm, it’s better to be off the coast in the sea rather than staying near the port or in the bay. When in a typhoon, I navigated the ship toward the eye of the typhoon, thus I saved lives by avoiding a possible disaster. Decision making is the biggest task of the Captain.

Passion: I studied all about the sea such as winds, waves, birds, climate, ports, ship routes, relations with foreign countries, history, machinery, and oil. A person who has gathered sufficient information can work with latitude.

Action: At least once a day, I patrol and see every part of the ship with my own eyes. Therefore, I can identify what must be done now. [Quoted from talks by the Captain]

Before starting my principalship, I reconsidered them as follows:

Brief: I must protect the school [establishment of relationships with mutual trust, stabilization of the school environment]

Decision: Following the old tradition can be unsafe. I must decide what to do and move ahead to the ocean [vision]

Passion: Be well acquainted with information, and share it with others [concrete methodology in detail].

Action: Confirm with my own eyes [practice, and evaluation of others]

I have been in my principalship for three years, and the Koyo-maru ship is sailing proudly while hoisting the sail of the Japanese spirit. Things have been accomplished thanks to the school faculty, people in the community and educational stakeholders.

3. Japanese spirit

The word Wa-gokoro [or Japanese spirit] doesn't exist in a dictionary. I met this phrase for the first time in 2000, when I was at the venue of the third meeting of the All Russian Kendo Tournament held in Moscow. The phrase was indicated right on the front part of the Prime Minister HASHIMOTO Ryutaro Cup. The former Prime Minister, Mr. HASHIMOTO, made a present of the phrase "Wa-gokoro" to the tournament to consider Kendo as a friendship bridge between Japan and Russia. This phrase was adapted with honor and respect as an appropriate expression to represent the aim of the meeting and the tournament. Until that moment, I had not been aware of the particular meaning of being a Japanese, but I was freshly awoken to the fact. My country Japan deserves attention from foreign countries, and I felt pride that I have as a base the spirit of a Japanese. I realized that we can fulfill our spirit and get energized when we are in a place with pride and a peaceful mind.

Since then, I have felt myself comforted with the words Wa-gokoro [the Japanese spirit] or (Wa-no-kokoro) Spirits of Japan. The word "Wa" indicates the country Japan, but there is more than that. Wa is also found in other words like Heiwa [peace] and Chowa [harmony]. Wa also reflects the view of humanity including affirmation, reliability and dignity which are considered important to keep good human relations. Nagomi [which contains the Chinese character Wa in written form] signifies the Japanese mind of 'wabi-sabi' ['austere refinement' and 'quiet simplicity,] the value of spirituality, poetic elegance, an aesthetic sense and rich mind towards nature. The good points and energy which exist in the spiritual culture of Japan are represented in these words.

The word Wa as a Chinese character is described by the left radical of 'Food' (禾) and the right radical of 'Mouth' (口) combined to make Wa (和). I think having a balanced combination of 'drink' and 'accompanied nibbling' also describes the meaning of Wa. At the best occasion, it is important to sit together with knees facing together around the drink and food, then to have discussion,



Performance of Tea Ceremony—from left, Mr. KAJITA Eiichi, President of Hyogo University of Education, Mr. NAKAMURA Satoru, professor of Hyogo University and Mr. MAEHARA Toshio, principal of Koyo Lower Secondary School

while forgetting the time. School will never be vitalized if we are filled with business and hardships. The energy of a school is made by the energy of the faculty and pupils. Energy is produced by cheerfulness. Cheerfulness is created by heart to heart communication of Nagomi.

Shotoku-taishi Prince once said, “It harmonizes as honorable.” The Japanese spirit which the Shotoku-taishi Prince indicated was that an independent individual or an autonomous group shall respect each other, trust mutually, and when integrated on a large scale, the wisdom will be further developed to create a well balanced better society. This spirit of independence and integration signifies the spiritual culture of traditional Japan, and its good point. When we reflect on the good things consigned to oblivion among us, I think we can find the right direction of educational reform.

In the light of the social conditions today, there are social problems including the increase of atrocious crimes, or the increase of part-timers (those who do not

intend to get proper employment) or NEETs (=not in employment, education or training and withdrawn from society). It seems we live in a terrible chaotic era. General citizens are seriously worrying about our future; “If nothing’s done, Japan will go to ruin.” Or if we leave these problems unsolved, “there will be no bright younger generation to build Japan.” While our concerns and worries are swelling, we must reconsider the countermeasures like “career education” and make efforts to answer the questions on how the education should be or how humanity should be.

Apathy or egoism will not be accepted in society. How should we foster the next generation to have “an attitude (and motivation) to contribute to the society with the Japanese spirit, human reliability or spirit of independence to establish their own lives?” It is our responsibility to face this issue as their senior generation. Then naturally, we will reach an answer of “What must be done is all in education.”

To realize the substantial education, concrete, intensive and constant learning opportunities in which pupils can find dreams, must be provided to vitalize the pupils. It is also necessary to train them so that they will be aware of manners and rules, and how they are related to their lives.

Nothing should be hard to achieve. We simply need to take a step forward to make the children have a “feeling of satisfaction in learning, working and living.” Encountering a real art or a genuine, meeting with people and goodness, and continuous study will provide a key to establish a base foundation in spirit (a rich mind, strong mind, manner and devotion, thankfulness and coexistence, a mind to love yourself and others). In this way, we can nurture Japanese people with awareness and pride to be a member of the international society.

“Japan will go to ruin.” The root of this worry may be from the fact that “Japanese have abandoned Japan”, and we must take this warning to our hearts. Then it will be delightful to challenge the new dreams of a “revival of the mind and body of Japanese people” and “help children to be independent and foster the spirit of Japan in them.”

Now, I have a strong belief that the soil and culture of “the Japanese spirit” must be included in the school curriculum as a new concept to learn the spirit of Japan in school.

4. Curriculum to learn “a piece of spirit”

The educational objectives in our school are; “to foster (nurture) a person who is well acquainted in the spirit of respecting others, and who is equipped with a

well balanced intellect, virtue and physical strength, and who is feasible as well as rich in creativity.” In short, we aim to foster an ability to live (=zest for living).

The following three are our slogans and we aim to help pupils grow towards our ideal pupil image:

- ① Bring in the wind of the Japanese culture to Koyo Lower Secondary School
- ② Construct! Brighten up! The culture of Koyo Lower Secondary School
- ③ Hand over the tradition. Brighten up our future.

We have been practicing our curriculum to learn spirit (=Japanese culture study). All the faculty members are participating in these educational activities while looking forward to seeing the development of spirit and motivation of pupils in study. Japanese culture study is taught as an elective subject, and it includes Koto [a horizontally long Japanese zither with thirteen strings], Shakuhachi [a vertical bamboo flute with four holes in front and one in back], tea ceremony, Joudo [one of the classic martial arts using a long stick to fight], Ink painting, picture card drawing and bamboo handicrafts. Let me introduce what we have implemented.

Efficacy of the Japanese culture study

Joudo [classic martial art] is taught as an elective sport and also as part of the Integrated Study Period. Here is an impression as described by a pupil.

I have chosen *Joudo* in the Japanese culture study. When I first had a stick in my hand, my feeling was filled with excitement to start something new and worries about studying something new. [omitted] I think the sports in the Western culture aim to gain as many points as possible and the “cool” performance is more focused. However, in the Japanese culture *Joudo*, we never hurt the rival. While respecting the others, we are seriously involved in the game.

While I was studying about *Joudo*, I started to think of “What is real respect?” I think it is not only that you use honorifics in conversation, or behave politely. I think “respect” also includes an attitude to research the techniques and skills of your counterpart, as well as to try to come closer to that level. When I concentrate myself on the movements of my counterpart with a stick, I feel I could discover more the meaning of real respect. Through continuing my practice of *Joudo* hope I can find as many meanings of respect as possible.

- ① Polishing sensitivity is a basis for “Study, think and act spontaneously” [our school motto].

While learning how to handle a stick, this pupil started to think about “What is real respect?” I felt passion in the pupil. I was touched by the pupil’s amazing sensitivity, impressed by the raised viewpoint, and once again, I was given an opportunity to think about the good points of the classic martial arts.

- ② Creating the rich soil [from form to mind, from mind to form]

In classic martial arts, acquiring the “Form” is valued in practicing. “Bowing to start, and bowing to end” is one of the forms. At the beginning, the pupils are “requested” to greet, but gradually they greet without being requested. It does not mean that the philosophy of “we must do it obediently” is crammed forcefully. But the classic martial arts have a function to bring out a real feeling to greet heartedly. This is the real value of the classic martial art or the Japanese way of learning. This pupil has started to notice the essential part of the classic martial art, that is “Practicing classic martial arts is equal to learn how to respect other people.” “Feeling” means to create a rich soil that will help grow new sprouts. Once a pupil is awakened and motivated by the aesthetic impression of the unknown world, the pupil will never stop but continue to challenge to progress towards the goal.

- ③ Experiences made by feeling in the body and thinking in the mind will help make strong roots

“Form” is a technique and theoretical method which is developed through millions of trainings and practices for people to live a better life, and was handed over through generations. Practices of classic martial arts aim to help form humans and the society. It is not simply training or cramming of knowledge. By intriguing the learners’ interests and concerns, we give them the potential to search for their futures in creating culture and establishing human relations. Therefore, it is extremely educational. When I think of education I wish to focus on this aspect and utilize it.

Having many experiences of “feeling in the body and thinking in the mind” is equivalent to expanding the strong roots of a plant. The strong roots once grown by taking sufficient time can steadily absorb water and nutrition by themselves, and thus bear a rich harvest. Life without roots, just like rootless grasses, will never find happiness or respect from others.

④ Posture represents a piece of mind

The practice of learning Japanese culture is held only once a week, but every time we are surprised at seeing some changes in the expression and attitude of the pupils. Without being instructed by someone, the stick itself orients the pupils to know the fact; “if you do not concentrate on yourself and if you do not keep your posture right, you can never do it right.”

When we practice the form, we interact with each other as if forming the Chinese character “Human” 人 or “Human beings”, approaching each other to learn and touching each other. Thus, the players will find the meaning of what they are trying to do between them. This awakening becomes the starting point of an “etiquette mind.” Practices in learning the Japanese culture will make them note it and think of it. Then everyone becomes straight-minded. Posture and behavior are represented by the status of the mind, and if one is equipped with a beautiful mind, one can greet straight-mindedly. Everything begins from this point. It fosters motivation and behavior with pride, and also good human relations and sociality. It is indeed the development of “the zest for living”. The real aim of education must be conducted to form a serious relationship of reliability just like the “Form” in classic martial arts. More than hearing a hundred times, more than seeing a hundred times, we can learn respect in teaching through one touch. I hope all the teachers would reflect on themselves in this way and brush themselves up.

⑤ Practicing is a basic style of learning

The Japanese word “Practice 稽古” is described by two Chinese characters, “稽 thinking” of the “古 past”. This means to deeply taste the wisdom and the innermost secrets of living by our ancestors. When our pupils start practicing the forms of tea ceremony or classic martial arts, they certainly prepare themselves for concentration. Pupils straightly get ready to start practices. If they keep this posture and continue their practices, they will surely acquire the art. Learning in this basic way of our tradition which Japanese people have cherished for years, will also provide an opportunity to form a character as a Japanese person.

⑥ Understanding and cooperation from the community [If one strongly wishes, it will bloom.]

In the study of the Japanese Culture, we rely on community people to teach techniques and specialized contents. Instructors from the community discuss

beforehand and make arrangements with the teachers in charge of each course, all in accordance with the school policy. For some occasions, we ask them to join the school-based teacher training, in order to create an ideal lesson by establishing good human relationships. After the lesson, the community instructors talk about their long private experiences including hardships and joy in the Principals' Office, and this also helps widen the view of the faculty members.

I recall once it was right after the open school event, some community residents, by knowing about the Japanese Culture study held at our school, telephoned us and said; "If you need help, I will volunteer and go to school to teach", or "I also want to join the pupils and learn together." How thankful we are. Having the understanding and cooperation from the local community is the best encouragement for us.

Our pupils encountered something "genuine" through interacting with local people, and discovered the joy of learning through the attentiveness of adults committed to them in teaching, and made great efforts so that they can now proudly present what they acquired at the local Culture Center Festival, and so on.

⑦ Creation of education, creation of school culture, character development, life choice

In education, it is essential to direct educational activities with genuine and spiritual value. Continued learning which cultivates the mind, will lead to creating a vigorous school culture. As an idiom illustrates, if one chases the worthy objective in life, one can be blessed with a good encounter. A good encounter means to mutually enhance human value. How can we create the best three years of lower secondary school in order to form a sound human, and to make the best choice in life? We need to think well and use our own initiative.

5. Pupils' awareness changes

People live with spiritual activities. Happiness, satisfaction, pride, motivation, or showing emotions like pleasure, anger, sadness and joy, all of these are spiritual activities. We can express our feelings when we feel impressions through experiences of achievement and satisfaction. Pupils exhibit their feelings in expression and actions, but they also convey messages to teachers in words [by writing a composition describing their impressions of the activities.] In their compositions, we can identify the inner growth in them. It is such a joy.

There is an idiom that goes like this;

[The most impressive thing for a person is the sincere words from the bottom of the heart.]

- From Pupils compositions- :

.....I am left-handed so I hated the period of calligraphy since elementary school. But the current instructor of ink drawing, said to me, “It doesn’t matter whether you use your right hand or left hand”, and since then I feel confident with drawing. I learned that if I concentrate to draw with my heart attached, even I could complete a favorable master piece. I think I will try to demonstrate my ability not only in drawing but also in my daily life without giving up.
[This pupil changed so much, nowadays she greets us vividly every time we meet.]

.....Koto [a long Japanese zither], is a mysterious musical instrument. In between the two notes, I can hear another beautiful sound. Every time I play the Koto, I feel I can concentrate more and more on myself. We keep silence right before the start of playing, and I feel the presence of a peaceful mind. Before, I could not stop private talks during the lessons because I could not switch myself off from the recess time and could not concentrate on myself, even after the lesson started.

Community people come to our school to teach us, taking time out of their busy schedules. At the Culture Festival, I want to play the Koto proudly to exhibit how much I have achieved, therefore, I must practice it now very hard.
[Confidence you gained after making efforts will turn into motivation to “wish to present”.]

.....What I gained from the picture-card drawing class is that now I can concentrate on the activity with a peaceful mind. Through drawing the picture cards, I took a chance to carefully look at vegetables and flowers. In addition, my view point of thinking about the names of flowers or looking at objects was changed.

.....We went to an elderly home called Choju-en, to bring our hand-painted picture cards. Before reaching there, I was very excited. (Omitted) At first, I was too nervous when I handed my picture cards to senior people, so I could not say anything except “Please.” While I was giving them to various people, I got accustomed to it gradually, and I managed to speak to them saying something

more. When I saw an old lady crying after receiving our picture card gifts, I really thought how glad I was to be able to bring them here. I thought I wanted to practice drawing more and be a better painter. All the staff at Choju-en was very cheerful, and whenever I met someone, they vividly greeted me, so I felt very comfortable. I think it was good to visit Choju-en, because I could please them, also I myself became natural and smiled naturally, and my heart was warmed up. My future dream is to be a care worker. I will make the best use of this experience, and after I study at upper secondary school, I want to be a care worker just like Mr. XX who was very nice. I want to visit Choju-en again.

[When she came back and reported what she did, her face had completely changed compared to that before the visit.]

.....Tea Ceremony is performed in a very quiet environment and some people say it is too stiff. I thought so too at the beginning. Since I started to enjoy making green tea, I feel quite comfortable to be in the quietness. In such a moment, I do sense this is Japanese Culture. Nowadays, there are many Japanese people who are not exposed to Japanese Culture. I think it is a big shame.

[It takes a while to nurture a piece of mind. When one continues to practice, one gradually discovers the good positive aspects.]

.....I used to easily get tired of doing anything, but now I can concentrate to listen to speakers until the end of the session. My goal this year is to pass the *Shodan* (first rank) with all other classmates, and I would like to make people outside the school astonished at our Japanese culture activities of Koyo Lower Secondary School. I want to make our tradition of Koyo with everyone in the school. Mr. OO teaches us enthusiastically, so I also want to meet his expectation. I am very glad that Mr. OO recovered and got out of the hospital. I will stick it out to do more practices.

[This pupil worried about the instructor who was sick in the hospital. We really want that he will achieve his goal of obtaining the 1st rank.]

Through impressive and satisfactory experiences, pupils feel the joy of learning, then they are more motivated as their attitude toward learning is boosted. Furthermore, through acquiring the techniques which help solidify the mind and body, as well as through understanding the cultural value, they can develop pride and an affirmative feeling in themselves and others. By associating with other

people smoothly, they acquire social skills as well. Even for instructors, they can realize again the greatness of the Japanese Culture [the true Japanese in the Japanese culture]. They can also witness the dramatic growth of pupils, and savor the happiness.

Closing Remarks

The Analects of Confucius include the following teachings. “If I can find the way to the truth in the morning, I won’t mind to die in that evening.” “If I can provide the best teaching which can satisfy all my disciples here, then more people will gather from outside.”

These teachings imply what Confucius was seeking the most in his life, and wanted to hand over to the next generation. When people live, they will face an occasion to question themselves, as to “what they must handover”. I think it will be around the age of 50. Confucius has also said, “People know the Province at 50”. I think we just live making a headlong rush until the age of 50 then, the real life comes afterwards.

What I would like to say at last is that, “Our work depends on meetings and thankfulness.”

Everybody knows what lacks in him/herself more than anybody else. But at anytime, someone supports us and cooperates with us so that we can go ahead. I am grateful to all the educational stakeholders [schools, parents, administration offices, universities] and to those people in classic martial arts who live in this city and those who come from other places in the Prefecture, even foreign enthusiasts of classic martial arts. They gave me warm kind words so that I could consult or make requests to them whenever I needed. I can hardly deny that the ultimate goal of education and classic martial arts are “building true human relationships.” A Chinese thinker, Mencius also said these words, “Depending on one’s situation, fate can change for better or worse. However, when everyone works together, no matter where you are, fate shines upon you.” Indeed, I am intoxicated with this teaching.

We must take a long time at work and in life. We must develop ourselves truly without a lie but also generously and deeply. Training yourself, brushing up, cultivating your culture, making such efforts outside the educational world can also be quite useful for the teaching profession. There is a saying, “a good well must be dug widely”. In addition, if we keep our own world, an inner world, we can also create good relations with other people, have enriched ideas and an educational

As time passes by

philosophy. All the rest is just lifting my face up confidently to the sun, while continuing my daily work as time passes.

This chapter is based upon a lecture conducted by Mr. MAEHARA Toshio for the JICA participants from the Republic of South Africa as part of the JICA training course on Science and Math Teacher Education. It was held on October 9th 2004 at Higashi-Hiroshima City Koyo Lower Secondary School.

Material 1: Words in the Principal's Office

All the visitors to our school are first invited to the Principal's Office. Teachers and the staff often come to the principal's office too. The principal's office serves as a place to help the visitors understand the school, or, convey the principal's thoughts to the faculty members. On the walls, the school's educational objectives and the school motto are usually displayed. In my case, in addition to them, I also place frames with my hand writing, for example my day-to-day (fugitive) feelings or words by quoting from other materials. I also aim to remind myself of them. Here are some of them.

- Ten Educational Instructions
Always smile and have a cheerful heart.
Vigorous greeting will make the day alive.
Converse with others with a mother's feeling.
A father's mind is deep and bias-free.
Brush up yourself, you are a mirror.
Promote research and foster (cultivate) your belief.
One day one progress every time in a fresh sense.
An educational mind exists also in scolding.
Complaints and ill-speaking will destroy myself.
- Humane love is warm and generous [from my old (former) teacher of classic martial arts, the certified *Hanshi* Mr. NAKANISHI Yasushi].
- When performing a classic martial art, use the body only honestly and on a large scale. Simply do it proudly and boldly [from my old teacher of classic martial arts, *Iaido Hanshi*, Mr. IWATA].
- When you are reported of something, galvanize yourself into action. Speedy handling will determine the result. This swiftness will determine the development of your organization as well as your growth [quoted from a newspaper article].
- When you have not planned yet, you must be humble and precautionous. Once you draw your plan, then do it boldly without fear. When you achieve it, you must be careful because security is the greatest enemy [from Mr. KATSU Kaishu, a naval officer and statesman during the late Tokugawa Shogunate and Meiji Era].
- "Did you greet someone with a smile again today?" "Dream" [from Mr. OHARA Kuniyoshi, president of Tamagawa University].

- “First you demonstrate what to do, then you explain over and over again, and then you praise them. Otherwise, you can never mobilize people.”
- Peach and plum trees bloom beautiful flowers and bear fruits, so people naturally get together and thus create a path [=Peach and plum trees signify a man of character, and people adore such a man of high virtue and naturally gather around him/her.] [from the Records of the Grand Historian written by SIMA Qian].
- If you change your view, you change your thought. If you change your thought, you change your mind. If you change your mind, you change your behavior. If you change your behavior, you change your habit. If you change your habit, you change your character. If you change your character, you change your fate.
- A person with a small talent can not notice a gifted chance, a person with an average talent can not utilize the chance though s/he noticed the chance. A person with great talent can even utilize a subtle chance as if only lightly scraping the sleeves among people.

Material 2: Introduction of an elective subject titled “Learning the Culture of the Japanese Spirit”

We launched an educational program on “Learning the culture of the Japanese spirit” which was created systematically in the “Integrated Study” for Grade 1, “Special activity” and “Moral Education” for Grade 2, “Elective subjects” for Grade 3. Here, a scene of an “elective subject” is introduced from the report of the instructor in charge.

① Music [Koto or a Japanese zither course, Shakuhachi or a bamboo flute course]

Community instructor (instructor from the community) plays the piece “Spring Sea”, and the music teacher talks about the Seto Inland Sea (the Sea in the south of Hiroshima Prefecture) and the composer MIYAGI Michio.

Pupils are guided to be able to reflect on the image of the scene clearly, and then they play the music. Though it is held once a week, every unit by unit the better developed pupils’ expression, posture and feelings were observed.

Pupils participated in the Community Center's annual festival or the musical concert participated in by all the lower secondary schools in the same city, as well as other events, having more stage performance experience, they gradually became confident.

Encountering adults in various scenes enabled them to have a good chance to learn how to interact with different people.

② Fine Art [Ink painting course]

Creating the darkness or lightness by mixing the black ink with water in different combinations, pupils can describe flowers or seasonal items on a piece of paper by various strokes made by a brush, so they were completely absorbed in ink painting.

Through learning the drawing pattern of four elements [composed of orchid, bamboo, plum and chrysanthemum] they acquired the special technique of ink painting and thus concentrate on painting by applying the newly learned skills.

③ Sports (Physical education) [Joudo course]

The form and basics of Joudo authorized by the All Nippon Kendo Association are repeatedly practiced, and then they learn the technical skills and rules, manners and relations with counterparts.

They experience the feeling and fulfillment to practice seriously. Judging is conducted in turn.

④ Social study [Tea Ceremony Course]

This course is related to the study of history, the unit of Azuchi-Momoyama Era (1500-1600).

Its aim is to understand the Spiritual Culture of harmony and respect which was free from the social ranks, by experiencing the performance of tea ceremony.

⑤ Japanese [Noh Theater Performance Course][=the world's oldest living theatrical tradition]

Its aim is to understand the brilliance and auspiciousness of a Noh song and a stage play of a tale titled "Tsuru-Kame" or "Tortoise and Crane". Pupils learn how to express the Noh song in body movements through understanding the meaning. Pupils are interested in acting in a Noh play, as they can feel the circle of words and comfort produced by chanting with a loud voice during the stage performance.

Things which shake pupils' hearts

The Koyo Lower Secondary School where Mr. MAEHARA works as principal is located quite near our campus of Hiroshima University. We launched this Principals Project focusing on the area of “Hiroshima”, and it was amazing that it has taken quite a long time to reach such a closely-located school while looking for a prominent principal.

We often know little of what is happening right at our feet, or in our own backyards, and chase something in the far distance as if things far away must be greater.

We have been dreaming to find the ideal education. To realize our dream, we have taken opportunities to meet prominent educators who have been readily taking action while overcoming difficulties. One of the reasons that it is difficult to realize this dream is because the issue “What kind of children do we want them to grow up as and what can we do to realize that?” is a difficult question to be answered.

Recently, schools have more freedom to conduct characteristic educational activities taking the locality of the community and the specialty of the children into consideration. When such a “freedom” is given, reversely the school may find it inconvenient. In order to implement good education overcoming such inconveniences, and difficulties, how can the Captain on a ship called a school with a large crew steer? In the case of Mr. MAEHARA, he made a decision to steer toward “Learning the Culture of the Japanese spirit.” I recognized that he was certain of the merits in what he himself had acquired through learning culture with a Japanese spirit.

Most of us were born in Japan, grew up, and lived here. As if it is for granted, we go to elementary school and then to lower secondary school. How many chances of knowing Japanese culture and noticing the good points of it do we have through our school life? I guess we must consciously involve ourselves in learning the Japanese Culture with a certain will to deeply understand it. Under such a circumstance, Mr. MAEHARA who had cultivated his “spirit” through the practices of classic martial arts, carried a passionate desire to provide the opportunity to make pupils learn widely about the Japanese Culture. He placed it in his school curriculum. Thanks to his attempt, his pupils are now blessed with a

chance to note the good points of their culture.

The practices of the culture education with the Japanese spirit were promoted with understanding and cooperation from the community. In every community, there is much expertise and people with a variety of talents who can be well-incorporated into the school education. At his school, community people who are professional technicians and specialists, taught pupils how to play the Koto, draw ink paintings, learn Joudo, etc. and provided the best chance to meet the “real” culture of Japan. They started to go to school with a will that “they wanted to learn and grow up with the children.”

We all desire to deliver good education. I understand that it is important to make the educational content as attractive as possible. However, besides that, when an educator passionately desires that; “I want to provide a chance for pupils to know something genuine”, and then this passion will be the force to shake the pupils’ heart. I strongly felt so. The thoughts of Mr. MAEHARA and the entire school reached the hearts of the people in the community. The desire of the community residents that: “We want to hand over the good things to children”, traveled around, and gradually reached the hearts of the pupils.

The pupils encountered a variety of people, and interacted with them, and realized the strong desire deep in the bottom of the heart of those people. And then they had a chance to face themselves. As a consequence, they learned sincerely about “what is important to be human” and “spiritual aspects that are only handed down from person to person.” None of them could have been learned from school textbooks. Through such experiences, children enriched their mind, thus, they developed the transformation of their expression and movement.

Learning from Mr. MAEHARA’s practices, I learned that it is important to have a clear view of what kind of pupils we want to develop. I also learned that it is important to have a passionate desire to mobilize them toward the goal. As a school teacher, what can we do for children? Before everything else, we should carefully pay attention to the children in front of us, and note that wonderful things are also in our backyards. I think this view is universally important for any educator even those beyond the country borders or regions.

Project members, I and N

- *1 This is part of a Japanese proverb “The soul nurtured by the age of three will determine the personality which lasts until the age of a hundred.”
- *2 *Kendo* is the modern sport of Japanese fencing. It is one of the few modern classic martial arts to have grown out of actual battlefield combat. Today it is a one-on-one competition between armored opponents using bamboo swords who try to strike one of 4 specific points using a specified part of the sword, a specific technique, and who call out the intended striking point as they attack it. The term *kendo* came into use in 1919 when the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai renamed the arts of *kenjitsu* and *gekken*.
- *3 The helmet worn in *Kendo* or in general terms a mask. The *men* is a valid striking point roughly between the temples.
- *4 Quick-draw manner of sword use where simply drawing the sword from the scabbard is a cut at the opponent.
- *5 One of the classic martial arts using a long stick to fight.
- *6 Suffix added to the name of a Japanese ship.

Five Years as a Principal who came from the private sector

RYOAN Takashi

RYOAN Takashi was born in 1946 in Toyama City, Toyama Prefecture. After graduating from university, he was hired by Mazda Motor Corporation, and worked in the marketing and public relations departments of the company. Having had 32 years of experience at Mazda, in 2001, he was appointed as principal of Kurose Lower Secondary School in Kurose Town, Kamo County (currently the area is known as Higashi-Hiroshima City) in Hiroshima Prefecture through the newly-established system of appointing principals from the private sector.



1. How I became a Principal

I became the Principal of Kurose Lower Secondary School in April, 2001 under extraordinary circumstances. In Japan, nobody can become teachers of public schools, even more so principals, without the necessary preparations. However, in recent years, as part of the School Reform Program in Japan, a person without teaching qualifications may be appointed as a principal.

Under this project, persons who have accumulated experience in organizational management in private companies may be given such post. This program was launched in order to promote innovations in schools under the able leadership of experienced corporate managers. At present, this reform initiative has now spread all over Japan. Today, there are about 100 principals nationwide who came from the private sector. So in 2001, for the first time in Japanese history, I became a principal even without a background in teaching.

It was the time the bubble burst, or the collapse of the Japanese stock and real estate markets. Many enterprises were under pressure to restructure their organization or dismiss their employees. My company was not an exception. In January 2001, an appeal for voluntary resignation before the retirement age was made in a large number. I had already served there for 32 years. I believed that I spent the best years of my life there; yet, I also felt that it was high time for me to relinquish my position. So without any regret, I tendered my resignation.

Not long after that, news reached me that “Hiroshima Prefecture was looking for a new public school principal who has had working experience at a private

company”. After leaving Mazda, I wanted to avoid the cutthroat competition life I used to have. Instead, I wanted to do something that would impact other people, no matter how small a task it could be. The post of a public school principal just seemed too big for me. Without the needed teaching qualifications, I thought this project was just a dream in some far-off land.

“Mr. RYOAN, (if you are appointed as principal,) you are not going to educate students firsthand. We expect that you will manage the school.” My feeling was shaken by this explanation and I felt I might be able to handle the job.

Prior to this stint, I worked at a car manufacturing company called Mazda. I was assigned to various divisions: merchandise planning, marketing, advertising, and public relations. I also worked as the president of its affiliate company.

While at Mazda, I always tried to understand the feelings of customers and the prevalent social trends, and concentrated all my efforts on prioritizing products and services that would meet the needs of the market (including the customers). In addition, I was always asked to exhibit my management ability to the fullest, and unite our comrades together and empower them so that our company would survive the highly competitive business atmosphere.

As I reflect on my recent years of working at Kurose Lower Secondary School, there is no doubt in my mind that the experiences I had with Mazda greatly prepared me.

2. Principal as a manager

(1) Importance of communication

The Kurose Lower Secondary School where I work is located in the central part of Hiroshima Prefecture. It is within the rural districts surrounded by Hiroshima City in the west, Higashi-Hiroshima City in the north, and Kure City in the south. Recently, new housing areas have been developed in Kurose Town, and many residents commute to Hiroshima City, Kure City or Higashi-Hiroshima City. The population of the town has grown to 25,000; still, my school is the only lower secondary school here. With 900 students, it is the second largest out of 250 lower secondary schools in Hiroshima Prefecture.

I spent 32 years working only in a private company, and I did not have any experience or specialized knowledge in education, but I have well adapted myself into this new environment without much anxiety.

The first thing I did in my assignment was to hold an individual meeting with all 50 teachers. I allocated one hour each for every interview with a teacher.

Five Years as a Principal who came from the private sector

As a former marketing man, I learned that hearing the opinions in the market or from people at the actual place of work was fundamental in making sound judgments and taking concrete actions. By listening to the opinions and views of the 50 teachers at Kurose Lower Secondary School, I could clearly see various aspects including the status quo and issues within the school, teachers' dreams and aspirations, and future directions and plans for the school.

I tried to listen to as many opinions and thoughts as I could about students' circumstances, teachers' daily working conditions and concerns, parents' views on school education, and things that ought to be done to make the Kurose Lower Secondary School better. It took me two months to finish hearing from all 50 faculty members, but by that time, I had become quite well-informed of my school.

What surprised me the most at school when I first entered the educational world is that school teachers work extra hard. Starting their day with early morning practices of clubs at around 7 am, they give lessons for five to six hours, and after school, again they involve themselves in club activities. At around 6 pm, they start marking examination papers and prepare for the following day's lessons. A great number of them go home after 9 pm.

So, I made it my mission to get to know and support these hard-working teachers. Welcoming a new principal coming from the private sector was new for them, and I was sure they were curious but also worried about what I thought and what I intended to do. Therefore, I thought of ways in order to open the communication lines between me and the teachers, as I know that good communication is vital in any organization.

I was quite taken aback when I first entered the school, because the practices being adapted there and the viewpoint of the faculty seemed incongruous for a person like me who had spent most of my life in a private company. Policies and perspectives in business activities such as "management toward a goal", "quality management, responsibility to quality", "concept of competitiveness", and "value efficiency" were rarely observed in school. I am not saying that private companies are ahead of schools. The nature of each differs in many ways, and it will be quite risky to force the schools to just accept and practice corporate principles and values. But sometimes in some cases, schools may adapt viewpoints and thoughts of private companies as well as of the general citizens, if these will result in better school operations. With these ideas in mind, I wrote some of my thoughts in a weekly essay entitled "Principal's Random Thoughts." I wanted to share my views and experiences coming from the business world with the teachers through those

articles.

For instance, in one essay on the topic of “Social Responsibility and Accountability of Schools”, I explained about the necessity of transparency in organizations. In “The Day When Schools Disappear”, I wrote about my predictions that along with the changes in the era, schools and teachers would be placed in an atmosphere that is highly competitive, and this would cause cut-backs on personnel. Writing about reinventing schools in “Creating a New School-Brand”, I proposed the need to “create an attractive Kurose Lower Secondary School trusted within and highly regarded by the community” to underscore the need of schools to operate with a clear understanding of the meaning of their existence. Every week, I brought various stories and proposals from different points of view. Thankfully, I heard that the teachers felt refreshed learning new things from my essays.

(2) Working for School Reform

– Creating an image of a new brand –

I used two approaches to reform the image of the school and to create a brand. The first one is “management technique in problem-solving style”. I discussed many issues with the teachers; for instance, ① how to teach meticulously, ② how to secure the sufficient number of lessons, ③ how to create learning opportunities beyond the lessons, ④ how to provide more chances to the students who want to study more, and ⑤ how to provide undivided support in learning, starting from grade one.

Various recommendations were given as a result of these discussions, namely: ① achievement-based class formation, ② drastic restructuring of school events, ③ implementation of extracurricular sessions including morning-study and supplemental study, ④ establishment of the Research Department, and ⑤ institutionalization of scholastic achievement tests starting from grade one.

The other approach I used was the “management technique in setting up goals”. Too mighty educational goals would not be helpful in setting up guidelines for activities. Based on the idea of creating an attractive school, we discussed among the faculty members how to make “the school, students and teachers” appealing as each of them is an indispensable element in our organization. So we set up three goals to create a desirable school, namely, “an institution that has a universally good reputation”, “energetic children”, and “teachers who can make easy-to-understand lessons.” Questionnaires filled out by all of the students and parents

were also considered in setting these goals. However, the details on how we operationalized our plans are omitted here.

(3) Holding the “School General Assembly” to disseminate information and inform the community residents

The new academic year’s annual plan named SMAP [School Management Plan] is completed every mid-April. Yearly, we invite people in the community, parents and stakeholders in Kurose Town to our general assembly at school, and then explain about the contents of the SMAP.

Publicizing our plans entails a lot of hard work, but from different perspectives, we must be proud of what we have made public, and then proudly implement what we planned. Gaining understanding and trust from parents and the community is the most needed for public education today.

During the General Assembly for the current school year, we presented our report of activities from the previous academic year, and announced the coming year’s annual scheme. The goals and plans of the past year had been smoothly and satisfactorily implemented, and many attendants praised our efforts.

Thanks to the trust and reliability of the people of Kurose Town, our educational activities have been continued.

3. Principal as an educator

I find a great deal of joy and thankfulness to be in this position, when I get the chance to directly give my lessons to the students, or when I have dialogues with students in the interview sessions. I attend them very seriously, however, to tell you the truth, even in my fifth year as principal, every now and then, I still feel nervous.

One of my concerns as the principal, is that I find it hard to remember the faces and names of 900 students. I cannot talk with all of them individually, as much as I would like to. Perhaps there are some students who never have a chance to speak with the principal during the three years of the lower secondary school life. If so, I feel very sorry for them as their principal. If it is possible, I sincerely wish to have a conversation with every student, one by one equally. In particular, I want to give an essential talk on “how we must live in our society”.

I have been harboring that feeling ever since, and so I proposed that on some occasions --- at least once a year --- where I can talk with them. One such occasion is the moral education lesson for newly admitted first graders, one lesson per class, held almost right after their enrollment. The other is for the second graders, and

I give a joint class lesson on the topic “What is good work?” right before their practice of work experience outside the school. Also for the grade three students, towards the end of the year, I sit for an individual interview. Originally I am not a school teacher, so I feel quite nervous when I speak in front of the students. But whenever the session is over, I feel joyful for having being able to contribute something to the growth of children, and I indeed appreciate the fact that I am now dealing with school education.

(1) Moral education for grade one

There are seven classes this year in the first grade. Last May, I was given a chance to do one period of moral education to each class. I gave the students homework a week in advance. The theme was “What would you like to do your best for the three years at lower secondary school?” Students wrote down freely a summary on what they thought. I asked them to present their work in accordance with the name roll.

“I want to do my best in both the student clubs and my studies,” said one student. Most of them presented similar ideas.

The principal’s question followed: “Which club are you referring to?”

“A baseball club,” replied the student.

“How are you going to do your best?” I inquired.

“I will attend the early-morning exercises seriously, and attend the after-school practice without fail. I will also practice on Saturdays because I want to be selected as a regular player.”

“Do you think you could be selected only by those practice sessions?”

“I will also practice swinging a bat at home.”

“Are you sure you can manage to survive such rigorous practice sessions? Can you continue it to the very end until graduation?”

“I think I can do it.”

“All right. Once you are chosen as a regular player, please come and tell me about it. I will go to cheer for your team.”

“Thank you very much.”

I spend about a minute talking with each student and a total of 40 minutes for all 40 students. I just try to listen to them and encourage them with a gentle smile. Other students also get to listen to our conversations. Every time somebody wraps up his/her presentation, we give him/her a big round of applause. After the presentation, I see half shyness and half delight on the faces of the students. I

remember a well-known saying by a poet SATO Issai who lived in the end of the Shogunate Era: “To rouse oneself is a catalyst to progress in learning.” I hope that students will rouse themselves to put their hearts and souls into the things they do during the lower secondary school life.

(2) Lesson for second graders

Every June, second graders go outside school to have a job experience for two days at local companies, shops or nursery schools. It is a good opportunity for them to know about the society they live in. It is also a refreshing experience for the students because as a person who came from a private company, I can give them a talk about jobs during the introduction session.

“What is a good job?” is the title of my session, and I give a few examples and details about the difference between work and volunteer activity. I tell the students that the most important factor at work is the customer, and that a good job satisfies customers as well as the workers themselves. I also tell them that different people have different values. It is important to know what the customers are looking for. Three hundreds students seriously listen to me with great interest. They have said my face brightened up especially when I talked about my past job at MAZDA Motor Corporation.

After the introductory session, I asked the students to write a composition describing their impression of the session, and their reports always illustrate the content of my talks quite clearly.

“I was surprised that our principal was employed by MAZDA and also acted as the President of MAZDA SPEED. It was my first time to know about that. The principal displayed posters and various other items and explained to us clearly and so happily.”

“The principal told us that a good job makes both customers and workers feel satisfied. I agree with that. If I myself can not feel satisfaction, I don’t think that job is meaningful to me.”

“The principal said he felt good when he went to a convenience store and the shopkeeper said “Welcome” with a smile. I am going to cheerfully greet customers when I am at the work experience session.”

“When I am trusted by a customer, it means that “I am also bought by a customer” (=Customers paid money for the product and also for my service). These words were very impressive to me.”

“The principal’s talk was very clear. There is a greater variety of products at



cheaper prices in a supermarket than in a convenience store. So how come many young people still choose to go to the convenience store? It is because it is located everywhere, so it is closer to their residence. In the same manner, there is a wide variety of car models, so we can choose our favorite one. If there is only one model, it won't be attractive to us. I agree indeed.”

“Towards the end of the class, the principal suggested that we should work in a way that both other people including customers and we ourselves can rejoice. It was great to have a chance to listen to his talk.”

I was just so glad that they seemed to have absorbed straightly what I talked to them about. Children of their age must have opportunities to seriously listen to stories like these from others, and learn from them. I reaffirm that thoughtless talk or rash words will be poisonous to children. The students' reports describing their impressions are my most precious treasure. How lucky I am to have such a privileged occupation working at a school.

(3) Interviews with the principal for grade three students.

Recently, it has become common to require oral examination interviews as a character test during entrance examinations in upper secondary schools, just like the oral examinations for the recruitment of companies. Prior to the actual exam, teachers offer several opportunities for students to experience the oral exam, and give basic training on how to enter the interview room, how to greet and introduce oneself, how to choose proper words for polite expression, how to answer some of the questions, etc. For the final practice, our students attend the interview conducted by the principal. For the students, the interview with the principal is the experience that makes them feel the most nervous.

My interviews are carried out from October to December. I heard that the students indeed feel stressed out to be interviewed by me. For instance, after one interview, I saw one boy's trousers wet on both knees. I asked him why, and he replied that he sweat from the palms of his hands. It was funny and at the same time moving to know that.

The questions I ask my students are the same every time. I always start with "What have you done your best at for the three years of lower secondary school?" Many students talk about their club activities, the school's Culture Festival and the Sports Day. The other question I ask is, "After graduation, what would you like to do? Please tell me about your dream."

There was one not-so-noticeable boy to whom I asked "What did you do your best at for the three years of lower secondary school?" He replied, "I haven't done anything in particular."

"There must be something" I insisted.

"I cooked dinner."

"Oh, can you cook?"

"Yes, I can cook! I don't have a father, and my mother works until late in the evening, so I cook dinner for my mother and also my younger sister."

"I see. You are a laudable, fine young man. And is your cooking good?"

The boy seemed a bit disappointed with my question. "Yes, it is good, because both my little sister and mother eat it saying it's good! Delicious!"

An image of a warm, inviting home where the three family members were happily having dinner together crossed my mind. I think his mother is a lucky person to have such a good son.

Towards the end of the interview, I always make it a point to ask this question.

“What do you think of the three years at Kurose Lower Secondary School?” Every child would say, “It was pleasant and enjoyable.” “It was a fulfilling three-year school life.” “I am happy that I made a lot of friends.” It is in moments like these that I as the principal feel joy from the bottom of my heart.

4. Final remarks

(1) Differences between a company and a school

Most of my life had been spent in my career in Mazda, but I have well adapted myself into the school environment without much anxiety, because the school and the private corporation have something in common. Companies have workers and customers, while schools have teachers and students. Both involve ‘people’, so if we have placed a premium on ‘people’ and human resources, then there should be no bewilderment.

If I name the differences, will it then be of any value? Let me raise two things which are commonly practiced in a company, but not in a school. One is that “Outcome-based evaluation is strictly required.” Every year the stockholders’ meetings are periodically held in a company. A large number of stock-holders attend there, to hear the reports given by the president and the executive staff. When the performance made was better than the publicly pledged plans a year ago, they welcome us with big applause. If the performance was not achieved, the president and the executives will be made to feel impeached, or worse, denounced as if one sat on a chair of nails.

In a school, though the results of educational activities did not meet the expectations, it seldom happens that outsiders severely denounce the school staff. One of the big events in school is the Teachers’ Research Meeting / Workshop, and they report the research outcome to a large number of honorary guests and participants from outside. Of course, there is no such ‘failure in research’; therefore all the participants give them a big hand, thus the meeting will end in peace.

What we must be careful about is that though the presentation of the research outcomes was good, it does not mean that their educational activities were equally good. The school and every teacher has to make continuous efforts to upgrade the performance guided by such questions as “What is a good education?” and “What are the educational goals and philosophy by each (individual) teacher?”

The second difference is that in a company, philosophies that the “Customers are Always Right and Marketing is a Priority” are thoroughly inculcated among the

Five Years as a Principal who came from the private sector

employees. The management in private companies is very focused on satisfying the customers and the market by providing the products and services which meet their needs. Therefore, a company is very keen on “how to read and interpret the trends and sense what the customers are looking for now and in the future”.

In a sense, we will easily persuade the Department Director and the President if we can clearly explain about the demand from the customers and the market. Therefore, in a well-managed company, employees are taught and trained to listen to the customers and see the market trends more deeply than the executives.

In a school, if the principal and teachers are aware of the “outcome-based responsibility” and “marketing intentions”, I am sure the work attitude will change, and thus result in something better for everyone.

(2) Beautiful Japanese words

Recently, we have focused on one particular educational activity at our school. All the students in my school read aloud for ten minutes every morning in each class. What they read aloud are Japanese classics and masterpieces.

These days, there are strong criticisms being raised against youngsters who have too rough tongues. The youth can not express their thoughts properly through words due to a lack of vocabulary. It is also said that young people today seldom read books so they seem to lack consideration for others and do not know how to be discreet in their behavior.

I believe that learning our beautiful language should be given more importance. We have our beautiful mother tongue in Japan. Even before the Chinese characters and words of Chinese origin were introduced with Buddhism some 1500 years ago, we had already created our original mother tongue with a Japanese spirit. Some 1300 years ago, the *Manyoushu* anthology was published. It is a collection of *tanka* poems composed by a wide range of general citizens, regardless of their social ranks. The *Genji Monogatari* [the Tale of *Genji*], which is the oldest full-length feature novel in the world as well as *Makurano-soushi* [Pillow Book] an essay full of artistically structured sentences, were both published some 1000 years ago.

Even in this modern era, we can still enjoy the beauty of those words and sentences, and imagine how our ancient people lived and what they felt at that time. Besides the above mentioned literature, there are a lot more classic publications filled with beautiful words and sentences of the Japanese language. All of them are our treasures which we can pass on to the next generations.

In my school, we are promoting that every morning students and even every

teacher read aloud those classics and masterpieces repeatedly until they can recite them by heart. We did this so that our students will experience the beauty of the words written by our ancestors, and thus polish their sensibility, refine their sensitivity, and nurture and cultivate their Japanese spirit.

It is our wish, as well as the big responsibility of school education, that children be given this beautiful treasure of preserving our mother tongue, and enabling our people to maintain a beautiful Japan in the future.

Material: “Principal’s Random Thoughts”

Here are samples of the “Principal’s Random Thoughts” introduced in this chapter.

“Principal’s Random Thoughts”

May 28th, 2001

7. Social Responsibility and Accountability of the School

The Statement of Accounts of each company appears in large quantity in the newspaper at the end of May every year.

TOYOTA gained the highest profit in history with 471,300,000,000 yen.

In contrast, MAZDA and MITSUBISHI fell into the historically highest red of ▲155200000000 yen and ▲278100000000 yen respectively.

I am not going to tell you now the causes of this big gap between the profit and deficit. When I was in charge of PR (public relations) at MAZDA, twice a year in November and May, I publicly announced our Statement of Accounts of the one year period or half a year period, as well as our scheme for the coming one year period or coming half a year period, to the large number of stakeholders including the Tokyo Stock Exchange, the press club of the Federation of Economic Organizations, various magazines and analysts.

A company holds a general meeting of stockholders. A month after the Statement of Accounts is released, a company has to report the result of performance to all the stockholders. If the performance did not meet the expectation, the manager will be denounced and impeached during the meeting and be asked to take responsibility. If a scandal was uncovered, the manager will be questioned for five hours, or even for ten hours. It seems as if one is sitting on a chair of nails.

When I was president of an affiliated company, I had to constantly submit the long-term scheme, annual plan and half a year plan to the parent company, and report all the deals in details.

When the performance is good, nothing would turn into a serious problem, but due to the lingering depression in recent years, many companies are facing an ordeal to achieve the goals. Making it worse, while having no money, their operations are adversely affected because financing from the banks was also stopped. If we are delayed in paying for stocks, trading partners and client firms will stop trusting us, resulting in bankruptcy.

Out in the world, the cases of bankruptcy are on the increase, annually

breaking the record.

Executives on the management side of a company rarely possess their own company's stock, and all the executives are responsible for reporting and explaining to the stockholders such as investors, clients and even to the society.

Who are the stockholders, clients and the surrounding society for a school? These are clear for the Kurose Lower Secondary School. The stockholders are the Kurose Town Government, the clients are parents of students and the society, the residents of Kurose Town.

- ◇ What are the educational policies of the school?
- ◇ If children enroll, three years later what kind of children will they become?
- ◇ What kind of lessons are delivered in this school?
- ◇ How is the student guidance conducted in detail?
- ◇ What are the guidelines and concrete activities of the clubs?
- ◇ What was the achievement level of the previous term?

These will be the biggest concerns for stakeholders.

In general, if people say that they can not see what the school is doing, they are not satisfied with the school policy, and if they are wondering what teachers are doing, it is because the school policies and educational activities were not well communicated to the stakeholders.

It is often said that if a school must be open, or if a school must gain the trust of the people, the solutions lie on whether or not the school personnel, under the responsibility of the principal, carefully and clearly explain things to others.

Next April, I will hold the School General Meeting right after the PTA General Meeting, and talk about the following issues to the attendants.

- ① Target: Parents, Kurose Town Board of Education, Residents in Kurose Town, etc.
- ② Content
 - School policy
 - Subject teaching policy
 - Student guidance policy (guideline)
 - Club activity policy
 - Each grade level's policy (policy for the first grade, the second grade and the third grade)

It will be better if the principal and each head teacher will report and explain about them.

We run the school based on policies communicated in the meetings, so we must boldly and proudly implement our school management.

To realize this, we need to draw up a yearly plan earlier than usual. This is to make people understand our thoughts and strengthen our position so let us work together to achieve the ideal.

Thank you.

No.2

“Principal’s Random Thoughts”

October 15th, 2001

15. Creating a New School-Brand

1. Attractive brand

How do you make the decision to buy something? If you buy sports shoes, will you choose ASICS, MIZUNO or NIKE? When a woman buys a bag, will she select CHANNEL, LOUIS VUITTON or PRADA?

Before you actually see the products, you have already had a certain image in your mind even before heading to a shop, right? You imagine the scene in your mind that you are wearing those shoes or holding that bag.

How does this happen?

There is an expression called “Brand Worship”. It means that people distinguish certain products from the rest by giving a special sense of value, for example, high-grade image, elegance, sophistication, good quality, urban-style taste, youthfulness, and sporty sense or vigorousness. The brand value will be reflected in the products, and thus differentiate them from others.

NIKKEI, the Japan’s leading business and financial newspaper, and other survey organs, have recently conducted a study on the companies in Japan. In this survey, the Corporate-Brand was numerically evaluated according to its impact on the consumers, stockholders and employees. The result of the rankings was publicized.

They are NTT DoCoMo in the first rank, followed by SONY, and Seven-

Eleven Japan Co.,Ltd. In third, TOYOTA the fourth, and the fifth was NTT. The sixth was Murata Manufacturing Co.,Ltd. and the number seventh was Tokyo Electric Power Company.

Precisely, what are the brands and the brand image?

To put it simply, a brand is “a name, a code, a design or an integration of all three, and these factors set a product apart from the rest of the products manufactured by rival companies.” And the brand image is the product user’s image created by the product itself and the manufacturer. Also, it is how others perceive the product and its users whenever others see it being utilized.

The “brand worship“ which is represented by LOUIS VUITTON actually promotes the purchasing desire of people by giving their products a special value, through the established image created by the product and the use of the products.

Modern business activities have focused on how to satisfy or encourage the customers in the market. Such activities are called the marketing strategy. And the core of the marketing strategy is the brand strategy.

What kind of image shall be created for the product will determine the destiny of the company. In producing sports shoes, the appearance, sporty sense, urban-style, youthfulness, and good quality will be added in value. In the manufacturing aspect, the companies will use specially-developed light materials, or increase the number of stitches to make them durable, and employ globally known leading athletes for advertisement.

Once the targeted image is established successfully, then youngsters will rush to purchase it. The sense of exclusiveness and of a higher-grade were more valued in the past, but nowadays, inexpensiveness in price has also caught attention.

McDonald’s and UNIQLO have established a strong appeal because their products are reasonably or even inexpensively priced.

2. School’s brand

Is it possible to have a brand at school?

If the brand image of the Kurose Lower Secondary School is attractive to students, their parents, and the residents of the Kurose Town as well as of other communities, then the school will be trusted by them and will have an ideal environment.

Private schools went ahead in creating the school-brand. They have been

Five Years as a Principal who came from the private sector

making every effort to ensure the number of enrollees and to compete with other schools; thus, survive in competition.

First of all, they try to establish a good reputation. When the baseball team plays a game at the honorable *Koshien* Baseball Stadium, or other sports' teams win in the national tournament, the mass media will headline the news. On the other hand, they also exert effort to increase the number of graduates who go on to first-rank universities. Also, they are astute enough to ask leading designers to design the school uniform.

To make the sports teams win in the game, or to send out brilliant students to universities, an incredibly well-established system as well as tremendous efforts by teachers must be in place as the foundation of the school. Once the brand is established, it will just go on and on.

In the past, ten years were required to establish a brand, but nowadays five years will be enough. What type of school must be formed and what image should be fitted to the school? If we can describe the form as a whole, and work together to realize it, five years later, our new brand image of Kurose Lower Secondary School will surely be established.

Thank you.

Glory of working in educational institutions

It is a fact that Japanese people sometimes have not paid particular attention to some of the things unique in Japan because they have lived in the country since birth. But by having a chance to talk with someone who has spent life outside Japan, people can easily identify whether those were good points or bad points. Mr. RYOAN ... who came to a 'school' from a 'company' gave me such an awakening.

Towards the end of the campus holiday in March I went to visit the Kurose Lower Secondary School to meet Mr. RYOAN. I was a sophomore student. Unlike him, I had spent my whole life only in schools, and also specialized in school education. A principal who came from the business world made me imagine someone like a strict manager who often appeared as a typical fearsome character on TV or in comic books, so I was really nervous as if I were heading to my recruitment interview. I knocked at the door of the principal's office, and when I opened the door, I saw him with a gentle facial expression in a very polite manner.

In a confidential tone of voice and with tender accents, Mr. RYOAN spoke about a variety of his experiences in the principalship. He also told me about the differences between a school and an enterprise. The manner in which he compared and contrasted both made me easily understand, especially the difficult points and the weaknesses which a school possesses as an organization. It is natural to make price negotiations at a company, while at school, though everyone complains about the high price of school uniforms, nobody has ever tried to make it cheaper. At a company, goals that are unlikely to be achieved will never be set up, but at school, people tend to set up ideal educational goals, and as a result, such obscure goals tend to end up as a dream. I asked Mr. RYOAN "How have you made good use of your company experiences?" He just said, "I have been working as usual...actually, I am not sure what aspects of my past experiences have been helpful". However, through his dialogue, I could grasp the fact that the fundamentals in management he had acquired at a company have been well applied in school reform.

In fact, I have noted the reason why Mr. RYOAN has been skillful at school. It is not because he can identify the problems in school and is able to solve them, but because he can bring out the good, invisible points in school. I was touched by his attitude that he had been enjoying his new job while understanding the values of 'co-existence' and 'nurturing' at school, and those values are quite different from 'competitiveness' or 'defeating' others which are commonly practiced in a

company. His dialogues with students in the class, episodes during the faculty meeting, every point of his talk was delivered to me with his happy disposition. At Kurose Lower Secondary School, he encounters many people and has various talks with them, and observes a variety of growth. I got the impression that this principal must be the one who is enjoying school life the most, probably much more than the students. Upon hearing the comment of Mr. RYOAN, that “I should have become a school teacher from the start”, I refreshingly thought that ‘being a teacher must be definitely a wonderful occupation’. Mr. RYOAN came from the business world, therefore when he talked about the goodness of a school, it was particularly persuasive.

Now, I am also working in a school, and I sincerely feel that in the school environment there are not only students, but also other teachers, parents and community residents. Everyday is filled with interaction with those various people.

“Humane love. It is what is more important than just having a feeling that I love children.” This is what Mr. RYOAN told me when he was talking about one master teacher whom he respects. Also, Mr. RYOAN said that dealing with people is the same when you’re in a company and in a school. Now I feel I have more deeply understood what he meant by these words.

Perhaps, one condition to be a good educator is to be ‘one who likes people’.

Mr. RYOAN, who came from the outside world and transferred to academia, conveyed a lot of messages to us about ‘people’, the preciousness and the glory involved in education for people, and even the difficulties, all of which are irreplaceable and indispensable.

Project member O

High school

The Chemistry Teacher who became a Principal

ISHIDA Toshio

ISHIDA Toshio was born in 1950 in Hiroshima City, Hiroshima Prefecture.

After completing a postgraduate course, he became a science teacher of upper secondary school. In 2003, he was appointed as Principal of Hiroshima Prefectural Ono Upper Secondary School following his stint as a teaching consultant of Hiroshima Prefecture Education Center (HIPEC). Since 2005, he has been the Principal of Hiroshima Prefectural Aki-minami Upper Secondary School



1. I aimed to be a teacher, and then became a teacher [aptitude and the right job]

(1) Choosing whether to become a school teacher or a company employee

When I was still an upper secondary student in the mid 1960s, Japan was right in the middle of rapid economic growth, and private enterprises were in full bloom. The nation-wide trend leaned towards the Science and Engineering fields, and everybody seemed to be flocking to private companies right after graduation. During those times, every day I was enjoying the “Joy of teaching to others” in my upper secondary school. Many of my classmates quite often asked me to teach them how to solve problems in math and physics. I vividly remember how my friends seemed very thankful to me when I showed them the knack for solving problems. Unknowingly, by helping them, I was experiencing the work of ‘a teacher’ in my student life. So, throughout my three years of upper secondary schooling, I thought that being a teacher would be quite an interesting path to pursue. Perhaps, it would be a meaningful job option for me, though at that time I was not yet that decided on a career choice. Against my honest feeling, however when enrolling at university I chose the faculty of engineering which was very popular in those days, because I could not swim against the social stream. I was too weak to make my own decision. So in 1968, I entered the Faculty of Engineering of Hiroshima University, majoring in Chemical Engineering. In the first winter

as a freshman, university disputes stormed nationwide, influencing Hiroshima University. As a result, the campus was barricaded in January, and no academic activities were offered until the next September. I was not the kind of student who joined the disputes, however, the eight-month period was long enough to reflect and reconsider what I would be doing from now on. I nurtured the dream of becoming a teacher in my high school years, and once again I started to desire to be a teacher. I planned to transfer to the Faculty of Education when the classes resumed in September; however, being already registered as a sophomore student on the official document, I was not allowed to change my course. The only path was to take the entrance examination again and start anew as a college freshman to be accepted in the Faculty of Education. My family strongly opposed my plan for there was no guarantee of success in the exam. When my father saw that I was really determined to make this last resort in pursuing my dream, he made the bargain that if I graduated from the university within four years, he would allow me to do whatever I wished to do after graduation. But if I repeated a year or took longer than four years to finish college, I must look for a job in a company immediately. I took his offer. Later, I found out his real reason for bargaining with me. He didn't expect that I would still be interested in taking up another course after four years of completing my degree in Chemical Engineering. He was completely wrong. I was just so overjoyed that he understood my passionate feeling and allowed me to enter the Faculty of Education.

From then on, I studied with just one goal in mind - to simply get the minimum number of credits for graduation, and true to my word, as I promised my father, I graduated taking only four years. Flashing those days across my mind, I think my professors at the Faculty of Engineering had evaluated me as an unmotivated, lackadaisical student who was only going through the process of studying. In fact, I had lost my sense of attachment to the Faculty of Engineering, and no longer desired to study there, so it could not be helped that I was evaluated poorly. Thus, I entered the Faculty of Education as a junior majoring in upper secondary school education. After finishing the bachelor's degree, I proceeded to take up post graduate studies. When I was still in the senior year in the engineering faculty, the number of companies exceeded that of job hunters, to the point that at least sixty corporations were offering employment to just one graduate. My former campus mates easily found jobs in top corporations. In those days, the salaries of employees from these top corporations were much higher than those given to teachers. So, my relatives were wondering why I chose to be a teacher in spite of

my engineering degree.

After knowing the above episode, you readers might think that I had a high-minded ideal so I chose the teaching career. Certainly, whenever someone asks me why I wanted to be a teacher, I say that it is a meaningful occupation with a clear mission, and I also feel proud of myself answering in that way. However, deep in my heart, I simply love and rejoice in teaching, and I feel a deep sense of fulfillment doing it. In addition, I was only a student who was not independent economically so the truth is that I didn't know the real meaning of "making a living."

There is no need of saying that "aptitude" is important when you choose an occupation. I believe that in a sense my immature but pure and simple heart directly guided me toward the perfect job option. This is certainly the reason why I never thought of changing profession ever since. Thinking afresh, it is indeed essential to be honest in making decisions.

(2) Choosing a mountain or the sea

Today, the applicants for the teacher recruitment examination are more than ten times as many as the fixed number, but during my time it was not extremely competitive. However there were considerably many applicants, I remember. The first level screening consisted of a written examination on general and specialized knowledge; and the second screening included a test on the Constitution of Japan and an interview. During the oral examination, the interviewer asked me in which area I would prefer to work, whether in a mountain area or on the islands. In around 1976, newly-recruited teachers were first assigned to small schools either in the mountain areas or on the islands. After gaining a certain number of years of teaching experience, they were then transferred to mid- or large-scale schools in the urban areas. It was the system of personnel transfer in those days, and that is why I was questioned so. Comparing to islands, mountain areas are connected by roads which means I can easily visit various places, so is convenient for me, therefore I instantly responded, "I prefer mountain areas." Here, I just said so without considering anything deeply.

As a result, I was indeed assigned to a small-sized M Upper Secondary School in the mountains where a community antenna was necessary to receive TV and radio broadcasts. I lived in the government owned dormitory for single employees where there was no community antenna facility, so I could neither watch TV nor listen to the radio. It was quite an adjustment for me as there was an extreme

difference in the lifestyle I had in my hometown Hiroshima City, and in this area of my assignment. In Hiroshima City, it was so easy to access information and get in touch with people. I deluded that I was left all alone behind the modern culture. In the mountains, the only means with which I could connect to the outside world were through TV and the daily-subscribed periodical newspapers at school. After quite some time, I got used to a lifestyle minus the TV and radio. The quiet environment in the mountains was very much conducive to reading as many books as I could lay my hands on; something I rarely experienced in my life in the city. However, there were very few places to visit for leisure. The shopping area was less than a hundred meters away from the dormitory and the rest of the landscape consisted of paddy fields alone. Privacy was also an issue, as many students already knew what I had eaten every time I dined in the restaurant near the dorm. I felt like I was always under surveillance, and it bothered me.

Both physically and spiritually, there were many inconveniences. But I appreciated the people in the community who were very hospitable and often sent me food. Even to this day the memory survives. I always recall my fresh years of teaching in that place with fondness. I spent only two years in M Upper Secondary School, but those two years were a crucial part of my teaching life.

(3) Three important lessons

Three important things happened during my first few years in teaching, and these have significantly influenced me to form my own educational philosophy.

The first thing is related to the division of school duties. Since M Upper Secondary School was very small, there were few teachers assigned to it. It was different from a large-scale school, thus, all of us were given many assignments and asked to handle different subjects. Although I majored in Chemistry, most of the time I taught Math as well as Biology. This made my students think that I was really a Math teacher. When one is assigned to teach more than one subject, one needs to take a lot more time to prepare the lessons, however, I started to have interests and concern from a broader perspective. In fact, I also became confident and capable of teaching any subject though I had never taught them before. Since then, I experienced teaching all of the following subjects in Science; Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Earth Science. My teaching license is issued in Science, therefore there is nothing surprising in at that I taught all the subjects, however, in these days, not everyone is accorded this kind of rare opportunity, particularly, when it comes to the teachers of large-sized schools. It was a good thing that this enabled

me to look at Chemistry Education from different areas of the discipline.

The second event is that I was struck by the gap of the scholastic achievement and performance among students. Our school is a small upper secondary school in a mountainous region. Being the only upper secondary school in the area, it admits almost all graduates from the local lower secondary school. When our school gives an entrance examination, almost all graduates of the lower secondary school are able to pass which implies that our first year students seem to be just fourth year students of lower secondary school. This is evident looking at the similar disparity in the academic achievement of our students in the lower secondary school. There is a big disparity of academic achievement among the students. Although I had some ideas about the academic achievement gap in my students, my expectations were just beyond the actual situation. For example, in one lesson in Evolution as part of the Biology class, I divided the class into groups composed of three to four students and asked them to research and prepare for a presentation. Randomly from among the students of each group I appointed the presenter, MC and the one who answers the questions during the presentation. One of the groups presented their output which I thought was done haphazardly. After their presentation, I reprimanded the members in front of the whole class, and asked why they didn't do their research more thoroughly. I thought they weren't taking their studies seriously. Suddenly, a girl from the group cried and tearfully said that the presenter I appointed was of a low academic ability and could hardly read and understand the contents of the text. Even if the other members of the group researched thoroughly and helped the presenter practice his/her part many times, the presentation was still wanting, and they couldn't do anything else afterwards. I realized that I should have carefully checked the students' records and taken notice of the fact in advance, and made the necessary adjustments. Then, I could have made a proper evaluation of whether the presentation by that pupil was frivolous or done with all his/her effort. I learned how important it was to pay careful attention to each and every student. This became a very important lesson to me.

The third event was an episode that happened in my second school assignment. After two years with M Upper Secondary School, I was transferred to the I Upper Secondary School, which was three times bigger than the former. I was assigned as a homeroom teacher from my first year. The father of one of my students was suffering from *hepatocirrhosis* or cirrhosis of the liver, which was already at the terminal stage. Because his/her father was in need of a large amount of blood for an operation, my student appealed to me to seek blood donors among the other

students in the school. So during the faculty's morning assembly, I requested the other teachers to ask their students to donate blood. I was filled with a strong sense of justice, and was very satisfied as I knew I did something with the best of my ability. However, immediately after the assembly, I was called to the principals' office. I saw the principal, vice principal and the head teacher of the student guidance department there.

"Mr. ISHIDA," said the principal, "what you tried to do earlier was right. But when it comes to blood donation, we need to get the parents' consent because the school can not take the responsibility if something wrong happens. Without the consent, what you are trying to do will turn out wrong".

I was stunned, and realized that I didn't thoroughly think about the consequences of my request to the teachers. If it were now, I would have perfectly understood the necessity of such an official procedure. Then, the head teacher from the student guidance department said, "Don't worry, I will make the forms for the parents' consent right away".

Those words were indeed more redemptive than anything else, and I felt relieved. Consequently, several hundreds of students were willing to donate their blood. Unfortunately, the father passed away before the operation could be done. From that time on, the written consent form was one of the important lessons that I keep until now. It serves as a reminder for me that whenever I think of doing something, I must not only come up with a good, precise plan but also consult my seniors before taking any action.

2. Shifting from “easy-to-understand” to “eager-to-understand” lessons

(1) Doing my own instructional analysis

Even before becoming a full-pledged teacher, I always wanted to design lessons that were easy to understand. This conviction grew stronger during my first two years as a neophyte educator. Individual academic abilities vary, so I made it my goal to come up with lessons that are easy to understand by students of different academic abilities. However, in those days, there was no institutionalized system for teachers to mutually help one another through comments based on observations of classes. Teachers used to conduct their lessons inside their closed classrooms, so none of the classes were compared to one another, or a teacher's performance was not assessed. The video deck is a convenient apparatus nowadays, but it was not yet popular in those days. To know how my lesson was, I secretly placed a

recording device under the teacher's desk in the chemistry laboratory, and for recording, I flicked the switch very quietly so that my students would not notice it. After the lesson, I replayed the transcription, and checked the volume of my voice, the clarity of my pronunciation, the pausing, the precision of my explanations, etc. I analyzed my own lessons. I always was preoccupied with what my students thought about my lessons. So, I also made a survey questionnaire for students to answer, and analyzed the results. In spite of these ways of lesson analysis, actually I was eager to know how other teachers as professional educationalists assessed my lessons. Unlike now, some 25 years ago, teachers could not observe lessons of other teachers. In addition, it is now a practice that the public can observe lessons, which was not possible at that time. By sheer chance, I learned then that all of the science teachers of I Upper Secondary School felt the same way I did. Thus, upon the suggestion of a senior teacher, we launched an open lesson study and invited teachers from all the neighboring upper and lower secondary schools to join us. This became a great opportunity for me to be involved in lesson study which would also help me analyze my own lessons. I remember that on the day of our research lesson, a large number of lower secondary school teachers participated. The attendance was far beyond our expectation. The topic for the demonstration lesson was on 'freezing-point depression.' During the initial demonstration, I planned to show the phenomenon of the super-cooling of glacial acetic acid. It was a very cold winter morning, and usually the frozen acetic acid turns into liquid because of the extreme coldness of the climate. With a simple vibration of my finger, all at once the glacial acetic acid instantly freezes. This experiment could be conducted only once without preliminary practice. While everyone was staring at me, I tried to believe that I would not fail. With a trembling finger, I tapped the container with the chemical. Instantly, the acid started to freeze. There was a big round of applause in the classroom. The rest of my lesson went on successfully, satisfactorily meeting my expectation.

The joy of doing a successful lesson was my driving force to prepare for the next demonstration lesson study. The demonstration lesson study we conducted soon led to the organization of the Research Group on Instructional Evaluation, which included other subject areas not only science, and teachers of other schools joined too. Although I am no longer a member, the Research Group continues to undertake its activities, and new members are also joining constantly.

(2) Experiment; it is indeed my life

There was a turning point in my career in 1983 when I was 33 years old. The I Upper Secondary School was designated as the Secretariat of the Physics and Chemistry Group of the Science Education Research Association of Hiroshima Prefecture, and I was appointed the head secretary. I was overwhelmed with the responsibilities because I was still young with just a few years of teaching experience, so I decided firstly to take an action before standing on some pretext or other. There were Card-style experiment books in all Science subjects for students. These have been handed over to us by our senior fellow teachers. Each card in the book can be taken out one by one and on each card is one laboratory assignment or experiment unit which contains the objectives, method and evaluation. There is also space for writing down the results and discussion. After the class, teachers can ask students to submit the page as an experiment report. These cards had been used for a long time. After students have filled up the cards, based on the actual reaction of students, teachers revised the content or added information over a long period of time.

When I became the head secretary, the number of physics and chemistry experiment books in use had declined to one third in the entire prefecture. At first I thought these cards had been evaluated as poor in quality and that's why they were not widely used. We inquired into the cause, and soon learned that the real reason was not really the poor evaluation but more the lack of promotion. We were proud of the quality and we had also learned that the content was not poorly evaluated by others, however in reality, the number in use was decreasing. Thus, it could mean that the high quality was not approved by others. Therefore, whenever there was a chance, we promoted the experiment card books and tried to make others understand their good qualities. Consequently, the number of teachers using the cards increased three-fold.

Our next measure was to furthermore improve the content of the experiment card. We needed to conduct all the experiments and collect impressions of the students. The second year of the secretariat started with the goal to conduct as many experiments as possible during the one-year period. I placed hands-on experiments as the focus of my yearly plan in Chemistry. While proceeding from one experiment to another, I gradually started to taste the real delightfulness and profoundness of laboratory work. Since then, my greatest source of joy was the students' experiments, demonstration and also the development of new



experiments, etc. --- practically every aspect of chemical experiments. Besides, I also met many other Chemistry teachers through Chemistry-related experimental activities. In the Research Group, we actively discussed and examined how to conduct experiments. For instance, we examined the method on how to help students handle tools which require a better trained skill, the reasons for students' failure in obtaining the right outcome as well as the best knack to conduct experiments. The knowledge I obtained from the discussions has become my precious treasure. In addition, the casual conversation during the recess time of the official discussions created an atmosphere of a lounge or coffee shop. My role as the head secretary in the Physics and Chemistry Group entailed too much work like office documentation and the like. In spite of this, I learned a lot and grew professionally from these responsibilities.

(3) Lessons I want to deliver

The minimum requirement for teachers is to make lessons that are easy to understand. However, this is not an easy task. When we teach formulas and

concepts in Chemistry, we can not change the formulas and concepts to easily suit the ability of all students. Scientific formulas and the concepts are immutable. These “easy-to-understand” lessons entail that the number of steps required to reach the formula should be presented according to the students’ ability. Taking slow learners into consideration, many steps must be prepared; yet some unnecessary steps can be skipped to teach the advanced students. Easy-to-understand lessons do not mean taking up much time to teach subject matter. Sometimes it is more effective to teach the content repeatedly at a faster pace.

Keeping this idea in mind, I continuously revised my lesson plans after observing the reactions of my students. Going through a series of trials and errors, I started to doubt if these “easy-to-understand” lessons were the best, because they were structured using a one-way style, with learning inputs coming from the teacher alone. Teachers spend a lot of time researching the content and creating well-developed lessons; but if students have no chance to think, then what they have understood in such a lesson is not their real understanding. Both students and teacher should think together, should then exercise this way, and thus students performance will be highly elevated. I noted that the ideal lesson is a lesson where both teacher and students are eager to learn. I became aware of this when I conducted the presentation-style lessons which were formerly practiced at the M Upper Secondary School. I reconsidered those lessons, and implemented them after making some modifications. In the “evolution” unit of Science I, I divided the class into 12 groups, and presented the six topics about evolution. Each group chose one topic, and every two groups shared the same topic. I prepared a B4 size material sheet for each group, and the students used the sheets for their presentation. All the necessary materials were distributed to all the students beforehand. During the presentation, besides the presenting group, other groups were also assigned to play the role of an MC, timekeeper, inquirer and evaluator. I allocated three periods for research and preparation, then four periods for actual presentation. The very first presentation in the first lesson ended poorly, as the flow of the presentation was not smooth. Then, from among the groups which were scheduled to present in the second period, one group started to do more research and even rehearsed after school. Being inspired, other groups followed and started to work harder after school. Compared to the second period presentation, the third became better, and then the fourth was much better. I had a full realization of the gradual but clear progress in the content and method of presentation. The first group requested me to do it again, but due to the limited schedule it was

not possible. So I assured them that the difference in the quality of presentation among groups would not be reflected in the ability record. I recognized that even though students might have different motivations for doing an activity, such as for the school record, once they develop the habit of research, find the happiness in understanding, get the feeling of satisfaction out of making others understood through better ways of presenting, students would demonstrate abilities beyond our expectations.

“Eager-to-understand” lessons for students can never be realized with teachers’ one-way lectures. Teachers must intentionally plot their lessons in such a way so that students will initiate their own thinking. Besides lecture-style lessons, this idea may also be effectively incorporated into experiment-style lessons, demo experiments by teachers, use of models, and other lesson formats. Buying new tools and apparatus may not be necessary; but all schools can somehow reconsider how their lessons are made. I would like to further develop the evolution of my lessons, from ‘easy to understand’ to ‘eager to understand.’

(4) Chemistry teacher always and forever

2005 was my third year as Principal. I have not taught lessons in front of students for five years since the time I assumed the managerial post. Though I want to create my ideal lessons, I have no more chances to teach students. Being in the management position, what I must do is solely to mobilize the faculty organizationally in consideration of the entire school. As the leader in the school, it is my responsibility to make sure that we achieve our educational goals. Plus, these results must be favorable, and better every time for the students to possess the knowledge and skills they need. Producing positive learning outcomes results from designing effective lessons. I believe that a school should be a place where students develop their abilities, which include not only those in subject areas, but also skills for their holistic development as a part of humanity. The latter is, “an ability to be a responsible member of the society.” This can be nurtured through all the educational activities at school. Students spend most of the daytime at school attending classes, so we should remember that lessons play the central role in achieving their educational goal. Besides lessons, learning can take place in situations like school events, student council activities, and club activities. Although contents are taught in different subject areas, every lesson should also provide opportunities to teach and re-teach students how to salute, how to carry themselves, how to behave, and how to have the right attitude in their studies. Since assuming

a managerial post, I lost all the chances to teach, but I have always tried to behave like a teacher whenever I am with the students. Of course the role of a principal is different from that of the teachers. But I should not forget the teacher's spirit, which is fundamental in any school. I believe that if I continuously value it, I will be able to find the right direction for my school as the principal. I am not a principal who was once a Chemistry teacher, but a Chemistry teacher who is now a principal. I would like to be so all the time.

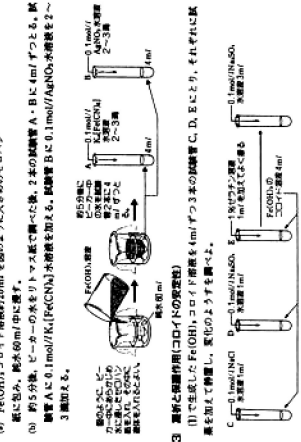
This chapter is based upon the lecture made by Mr. ISHIDA Toshio in a JICA course on Science and Math Teacher Education for participants from the Republic of South Africa. It was held on November 13th, 2003 at Hiroshima International Plaza.

Material: an example of a card-style experiment sheet
 This is one example of the 'Experiment Card' introduced in this Chapter.

実験7 コロイド溶液の性質

(目的) 水酸化鉄(III) Fe(OH)₃のコロイド溶液をつくり、その性質を観る。
(準備) 試薬：試薬、ビーカー(100 ml) 2個、メスリンデュー、ガラス棒、三脚、鉄鍋、セロハン紙(ビニルシタチュープ)、ピンセット
 薬品：3%塩化鉄(III) FeCl₃ 0.1 mol/l 溶液、AgNO₃ 0.1 mol/l 塩化ナトリウム、0.1 mol/l 塩化ナトリウム NaCl、0.1 mol/l 硫酸ナトリウム Na₂SO₄ 0.1 mol/l ヘキサシアノ鉄(II) 酸カリウム K₄[Fe(CN)₆]、1%ゼラチン、黄色リトマス紙

(操作)
 (1) コロイド溶液の生成
 50 ml の沸とう水に FeCl₃ 水溶液 0.5 ml を、よくかくはんしながら加える。この後さらに加熱をやめ、冷却する。このときの色の変化を観察する。
 (2) 沈析
 (a) Fe(OH)₃コロイド溶液約20 ml を図のように大さめのセロハン紙に注ぎ、紙水の約1/2中に落とす。
 (b) 約5分後、ビーカーの水をリトマス紙で調べた後、2本の試験管 A・B に 4 ml ずつとり、試験管 A に 0.1 mol/l K₄[Fe(CN)₆] 水溶液を加える。試験管 B に 0.1 mol/l AgNO₃ 水溶液を加えて 3 滴加える。



(講評) 沈析(半透性の実験)
 コロイドは、コンクリートやコンクリート水溶液とビタリン酸ナトリウム水溶液を混合しセロハン紙に入れ、ビーカーの中の沸水に浸ける。黄色のビタリン酸ナトリウムだけがセロハン紙から濾れ出し出てくる。
 ビタリン酸ナトリウムは黄色

(結果)

- 操作(1)での溶液の色の変化を記せ。
 FeCl₃ 水溶液 _____ 色から Fe(OH)₃コロイド溶液 _____ 色に変化する。
- 沈析
 リトマス紙の変化 K₄[Fe(CN)₆] 水溶液での変化 AgNO₃ 水溶液での変化

(注) K₄[Fe(CN)₆] 水溶液は下々の検出に用いる。

試験管 C	
試験管 D	
試験管 E	

- (考察)**
- 操作(1)では塩化鉄(III)は、沸とう水中に加えると、水酸化鉄(III)コロイドに反応する。このときの化学式を記述式で表せ。
 - 操作(1)の溶液の観察から、セロハン紙に裏面 10 cm 程度の穴があいているとして、セロハン穴から水溶液とビタリン酸ナトリウム水溶液を加えるときの観察のちがい()イオンの()イオン()イオン)は、どうの差別的である。
 - 水酸化鉄(III)コロイド粒子は正に帯電している()コロイドである。操作(1)で塩化ナトリウム水溶液とビタリン酸ナトリウム水溶液を加えるときの観察のちがい()イオンの()イオン)は、どうの差別的である。
 - ゼラチンを加えたときと加えなかったときで観察のちがいは、どうなるのか。

(結果と考察)

年	月	日	年	組	番	姓	名
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Dialogue between Mr. ISHIDA and JICA training participants from the Republic of South Africa

Participant A: How can we teach Chemistry to students who do not like it or who are not good at the subject?

Mr. ISHIDA: In my case, I would rather focus on experiments, by providing opportunities to actually touch and manipulate something, rather than cramming a lot of knowledge into students' minds. I never depend solely on the textbook, but I try to make the students notice how the knowledge of Chemistry is utilized in things and phenomena involving our daily lives. By learning Chemistry in this way, surely some students will be motivated. Of course, if they are prejudiced against chemistry before everything else, there is nothing we can do (laughter).

Participant B: In the lecture, you introduced the activities of Science teachers in Hiroshima who hold meetings to create Science experiment cards for students. I admire very much what they do. If there is an English version, I wish to take them back to South Africa. Could you explain to us how to use them in the Chemistry classes?

Mr. ISHIDA: Such experiment books are produced by Science teachers in most of the prefectures in Japan [Mr. ISHIDA shows the book to the participants]. This type of experiment card comes in the shape of a book. The Ministry of Education promotes the use of experimental activities at schools, and the Board of Education also encourages the schools to do experiments as much as possible. But not all the teachers use them for the class. Usually, one out of four periods can be allocated for lab work, and then teacher's demonstration will be done once every three periods. This is the case for very enthusiastic teachers. There are teachers who just make the students solve the entrance exam drills for university during the chemistry lesson. In the actual laboratory class, students work in a group and collect the data, but every student is supposed to fill in the experiment card individually. Students are asked to write down their impressions, particularly some queries that were raised, and then the teacher returns the card to each student after responding to their questions.

Participant C: In South Africa, we sometimes use a micro-Science kit which contains a simple apparatus and tools for experiments. The Provincial Government procures and distributes them.

Mr. ISHIDA: What kind of items are in it?

Participant C: Micro test tubes, some chemicals in small quantity, etc., and plastic containers that are not durable.

Mr. ISHIDA: Those types of kit are quite expensive, so we seldom use them in Japan. Plastic materials should not be heated up, so they are not recommended for use here.

Participant C: In South Africa, we can not afford the kit in most of the schools either. You have introduced to us a new idea. We can think of utilizing the materials existing in the laboratory, and then teachers may start on an experiment.

Participant D: Please let us know more about the Idea Cards.

Mr. ISHIDA: An idea developed by a teacher and used in the introductory part of the Chemistry lesson is summarized on each card, so that other teachers can also use them for their lessons. Any teacher can modify the content for their own use in their lessons. The information in the cards is published on the net by the Tokyo Publisher. For example, I have created a card for an experiment with my ideas on the topic of electrolysis of salty water using dry batteries. The good point of this experiment is that you do not have to use a large apparatus.

Participant E: In your school, if science teachers do not conduct experiments, how will you guide them as the Principal?

Mr. ISHIDA: I just tell them “Do it” (He laughs). In fact, I observe those teachers during the lessons and give them advice. Almost all Science teachers know each other since they periodically meet at the research meetings. Therefore, I have established a good relationship with them.

Participant F: You have mentioned that Principals give guidance to teachers, but if the subject areas are not the specialization of the Principal, how do they give guidance?

Mr. ISHIDA: In Japanese schools, all teachers participate in the lesson study of their respective subjects, and help guide each other. It is one of the fundamental duties for teachers in Japan to brush themselves up through the in-service teacher training. Basically, the principal is supposed to give guidance in all the subject areas; however, when it comes to the more specialized content I ask the well-experienced teachers to give advice in each subject. The ideal is not for the principal to order them to do it, however, through open lesson studies, teachers should have the motivation to upgrade themselves. It is the principal’s task to create

an environment in the school where teachers constantly upgrade their skills.

Participant G: Concerning the research meetings of Science teachers you mentioned in your lecture, I would like to know who acts as the representative. Also, I wonder if anybody can join in, and when do they hold the meetings?

Mr. ISHIDA: The representative is chosen from among the members who are mainly steering the meetings. The chair is to be chosen in rotation and the term of office is one year, which means if I take the chair this year, in the following year another teacher of a different school chairs. The chair person can be selected again. This kind of research meeting is approved by the Prefecture Board of Education, so the role of the chair is also important. The research meeting secretariat office is managed by a teacher of any other school, which the chairperson does not belong to. Teachers from both public and private schools can attend the meetings, and the meetings are held during office hours. Teachers must seek permission to leave school, and taking into consideration the participants' convenience, the meetings are usually scheduled on Thursday afternoons. So as not to cancel lessons, in general the meetings start around 3 pm and end at around 5 pm, but in some cases the meeting will finish much later at night.

Participant G: Is the research meeting held voluntarily? Who shoulders the cost for the meeting?

Mr. ISHIDA: Participation is upon one's own volition. The cost for the meeting varies depending on the group, but when the group is approved by the Board of Education, the subsidy for research is allocated. Also, each teacher has to pay a membership fee.

Participant H: Where do they hold the research meetings?

Mr. ISHIDA: It is usually held at school. Member teachers take turns to host the venue. The venue school has to prepare the drinks, etc. for the meeting.

Participant I: Your lecture today about "the frozen ground" was quite informative. I would like to clearly understand it, so could you explain it again?

Mr. ISHIDA:.....What does the phenomenon 'melting ice' mean?

Why do we scatter salt on the snowy road?

Why do skates slide on the ice?

..... (further) detailed explanation about these things.

Participant J: We practice corporal punishment in South Africa. What about in

Japan?

Mr. ISHIDA: If a teacher punishes a student physically, then the teacher will be punished officially.

Participant J: Without corporal punishment, how will you guide students who do not obey?

Mr. ISHIDA: It depends on the case. When a student disturbs the lesson, the student will be asked to leave the classroom, and then will be disciplined in a different room; in some cases we discipline them in the presence of the parents. I do not agree with the idea of school suspension because some students are not well-disciplined at home.

All the participants: We agree (They laugh).

This was held on November 13th, 2003, at Hiroshima International Plaza.

Mr. ISHIDA was the principal of Hiroshima Prefecture Ondo Upper Secondary School at that time.

Living life through turbulent educational conditions

- supported by the phrase ‘Isshokenmei’ -

Mr. UCHIDA Nobumasa

UCHIDA Nobumasa was born in 1943 in Hiroshima Prefecture. After completing the postgraduate course, he served for 12 years in upper secondary schools. Then he was appointed as the head of the Upper Secondary School Education Division at Hiroshima Prefectural Board of Education (HP. BoE). He became the principal of Hiroshima Prefectural Shisei Upper Secondary School in 1995, then of Hiroshima Prefectural Hiroshima Minami Upper Secondary School in 1999 and of Hiroshima Prefectural Hiroshima Kokutaiji Upper Secondary School in 2000. In between his appointments as principal, he served as the Director of the Education Department at HP. BoE. In 2001 he was appointed as the Director of the Hiroshima Prefecture Education Center. In 2004, he became an associate professor of the Faculty of Literature of Hiroshima Women's University. Since 2006 to the present, he has been a Senior Professor of the Faculty of Psychological Sciences at Hiroshima Kokusai International University.



1. The reason why I became a school teacher

I was born in 1943, which was towards the end of the Pacific War. I was the eldest son of a family living in a farming village with abundant greenery in eastern Hiroshima Prefecture. My father came from northern Hiroshima to marry my mother in this village, and he was adopted as the son-in-law into my mother's family, and was teaching at an elementary school. He chose the occupation of teaching, particularly to support my mother's family which was one of the village's good old families. My siblings are one elder sister, one younger sister and one younger brother. I studied at the village-run elementary and lower secondary schools, where there were 100 students per grade. Since both schools were located on the same premises, the schools' sports day was jointly held with full support from the village community. In those days, it was the general trend in this area. During the school events, namely the sports day, enrollment ceremony, graduation ceremony, etc., the village mayor, local policemen, post office director were invited as honorary guests. Nowadays, it is challenging to establish strong ties and cooperation among the school, families, local residents and other related

institutions. This reminds me of the good old days in which an ideal linkage among them surely existed.

I enrolled in school when the new postwar education period started. So, I received a democracy-oriented education based on the Fundamental Law of Education which was stipulated in 1947 under the jurisdiction of the Japanese Constitution. However, I doubt if the pre-war education could have been changed so hurriedly. This is because I recall one incident that could well support this doubt. When I was in grade six, my homeroom teacher gave us a lesson on *Kojiki*, the oldest Japanese anthology of poems from A.D.712. All the names of the Shinto deities in this anthology were written in *Katakana* characters and the teacher found out that we had not learned any *katakana* yet. *Katakana* is one of the three types of characters used in Japanese, and the other two scripts are called hiragana and kanji or Chinese characters which are generally used more. In a panic, first the teacher taught us six graders the *katakana* characters which should have been taught in the first grade. I imagine, probably in the beginning of the postwar years, teaching *Kojiki* was regarded as taboo (*1). Probably the reason we had not studied *katakana* until grade six could be well explained by the confusion in the chaotic situation of the post war education.

Telling my story when I was in elementary and lower secondary schools, would probably give you a detailed account of why I chose teaching as a career. The reason why I decided to be a teacher was not because of a dramatic unforgettable experience; nor because of someone who strongly influenced me; nor because of any special events. Within the present context or educational perspective, my motivation may seem rather odd or unusual. In short, I believe I was born to be a teacher. It was undeniable that I had to take over taking care of the family as the eldest son and maintain the UCHIDA family, which was the tradition from time immemorial. I was brought up in an environment where there were a lot of unwritten and unspoken rules which everyone was expected to follow. It was only natural that I decided to be a school teacher. I am not saying that now I feel sorry and regret making such a decision; but actually it is also true that when I was still a very fresh teacher, there was an occasion I asked myself why I chose this teaching profession.

Looking back, I also think I could have decided differently and have chosen a different direction in life. Usually, students decide what to do after graduation based on various sources of information and career guidance, while taking academic achievement, one's interests, concerns and ability into consideration.

However, in my case, there was already a destination and I just took it as if it was my choice. In other words, I chose my career without seriously thinking and having to go through the usual feeling of confusion like others. With the responsibility of taking care of the family, I planned what I should do. My priority was to look for a job near the house, so that I can live with my family and commute to work. There were three choices, either to be a teacher like my father, or to be a public servant in the village government office, or to be a staff member of the local agricultural cooperative. Then, I assessed my academic ability to determine where I'd fit in best. Considering current levels of school education, career choices are invariably made to support a student's self-realization. But my case was far removed from the modern ideology. I am not saying that I chose an occupation against my will. The fact is somehow I was also influenced by the situation that many of my relatives were already school teachers. That was why without any doubt I took the path to be a teacher.

I went to an upper secondary school in my local community, and studied in the general course. In those days, the upper secondary school program was conducted under three categories namely a regulated school district within small areas, integrated curriculum, and co-ed. This setup restricted access to upper secondary schools. Nowadays, such a system has become out of date, and students can apply for any upper secondary school in Hiroshima Prefecture, and it is indeed amazing to see such a big change.

The next stage was entering the university. As I was planning to become a teacher, inevitably I had to choose a teacher education course. It was fortunate that Hiroshima University was one of the two prominent universities in teacher education in Japan since the pre-war time. Here again without any hesitation, I decided to go to Hiroshima University. I specialized in social studies majoring in history, and in the post graduate school, I majored in Western history. When I was about to complete my master's course, nation-wide student activism had just started to be organized.

Toward the realization of my life-plan, I took a teacher recruitment examination, and got through it, and in 1968 I was recruited to an upper secondary school in the northern part of the prefecture in which there were two courses; the general course and the home economics course. I taught world history and geography and worked there for the next five years. Later I served at two other upper secondary schools over a span of seven years. Having a total of 12 years experience, I was appointed as a teaching consultant of the Hiroshima Prefectural

Education Center [HIPEC]. For the next two decades, my work was mainly at the Board of Education ranging from being a teaching consultant, a division head, a Director of the Education Department, and an executive director. During those years, I was also assigned to three upper secondary schools as principal over a span of four years. I retired as the Director of the HIPEC in March 2004, which ended my 36 year teaching profession.

2. My educational philosophy

Before sharing my current thoughts in education, I would like to go over my recent years in education in Hiroshima. When I became a school teacher, Japan was right in the middle of a nation-wide dispute created by university students. Hiroshima was not spared and in fact it was rather at the center of the movement. The campaign was not restricted to the university campus alone, but had an influence on upper secondary schools too. There were student assemblies held almost daily in the upper secondary school where I was first assigned. The actual situation of my school was way far from what I had expected. This situation made me for the first time doubt whether or not teaching was the right profession for me.

As time passed by, student activism gradually subsided but the educational environment of Hiroshima was nothing like what I experienced in my school days in elementary, lower and upper secondary schools. At the same time, the educational world was experiencing various upheavals such as an anti-discrimination of minority groups' campaign, and an active School Staff Union. As a result, in every event people encountered various incidents and problems which those groups tried to blame on the Ministry of Education and the Board of Education. This turbulent scenario continued until May 1998, the time when the Ministry of Education promulgated the three-year plan on correctional measures. This means that for some 30 years starting from the mid 1960s till around the end of the 1990s, education in Hiroshima was in chaos. In fact, most of my teaching experience falls in this period. On April 1, 1998, I was forcefully transferred to the Prefectural Board of Education to take a role as the new Director of the Education Department, so I had to quit being the principal of Hiroshima Prefectural Minami Upper Secondary School. This happened right before the implementation of correctional guidance by the Ministry of Education.

Concerning my educational philosophy, I think it is not significant if I talk about my days at the Board of Education, because it is only in the school where we can actually practice our educational philosophy. Education should be conducted in

schools, and it means how teachers can teach students, influence them to transform towards positive change. Therefore, I am going to reflect on my earlier work as principal – my thoughts on school management and my accomplishments – therefore, you can see my personal educational philosophy.

(1) Practices at Hiroshima Prefectural Shisei Upper Secondary School.

In 1994 I was at the Board of Education as the Head of the Upper Secondary School Education Division. During this year, I was involved in a reform which was one of the long time educational disputes in Hiroshima, namely the group-based screening system for admission to upper secondary schools, which was resolutely abolished first in the northern area of the prefecture. The group-based screening system originally began to equalize the level and status of all the schools, so students were selected in a school group then distributed equally. It was the beginning of the educational reform of the entire Hiroshima Prefecture. Upper secondary school(s) with an Integrated Course as a new concept were also established in the Hiroshima City area. In either case, unprecedented negotiations with the School Staff Union as well as with the Anti-discrimination Body were made. In April 1995, I was assigned as the principal to Shisei Upper Secondary School in the east of the prefecture, where our negotiation counterparts had placed an activity center. The superintendent of education gave me the mission of newly establishing an Integrated Course in the eastern section of the prefecture. Shisei Upper Secondary School was regarded as an educationally difficult school and it was one of the targeted schools chosen by the Board of Education for taking countermeasures. I was transferred to this school with my previous experience as head of the upper secondary school education division of the Board of Education - the division assigned to implement the reform for upper secondary education. So it was natural that there was a strong resistance against me. On April first, right after my arrival, the School Staff Union members gave me a harsh welcome. I had no idea about the severe status of the school yet and what I discovered at that time was just the tip of the iceberg.

The students' academic performance at Shisei Upper Secondary School was the lowest compared with other schools in the same district. Some had not attended the lower secondary education properly and some had been bullied since before enrollment, and many students were facing various health and family problems. Classes were often interrupted or cancelled; problems due to misbehavior were rampant; students were loitering in and around the school during class hours;

there was also a seriously high occurrence of absences. All kinds of trash were everywhere in and out of the classrooms including that of cigarette butts although smoking was illegal. There was violence among students, mugging and even violence against teachers frequently happened. When I went to school for the first time on April first, I had a severe culture shock because I couldn't believe I was in a school. I commuted to this school located in the east of the Prefecture using a bullet train from Hiroshima City in the west. Every morning I carried a big vinyl garbage bag and a pair of tongs and picked up litter all around the school premise. It became my self-imposed daily duty. Almost every day I filled the trash bag with kitchen refuse or discarded food and cigarettes. The school's image of devastation possibly reflected the similar state of the students' homes and family life. They went to school without having breakfast and without any homemade lunch boxes. Taking a look at the 26 teachers, they frequently took paid holidays and leave for official trips, resulting in cancellation of classes almost everyday especially on Mondays. After having two days off over the weekend, five to six teachers were always absent. Almost everyday, the bulletin board was full of notices for cancelled classes. I was also assigned to take over some classes and gave makeup classes twice. Some young teachers frequently locked the door of a radio studio room and took their rest inside during their vacant periods.

I had a strong belief that teachers and students must have the physical interaction of sharing the same place and time as fundamental to real education, so I thought of how to change the situation. Students were disobeying the teacher's instruction and often violated teachers. I realized that teachers were intentionally not doing anything to avoid confronting the students. In this situation, I thought teachers were fatigued and felt hopeless at work. It was not fair to just blame the teachers as if they were too lazy. When I gave serious consideration to the relationship between the students and teachers, I thought the situation was already out of the teacher's control, preventing them to be motivated to seriously guide students, even though the teachers still had an inner feeling that they should interact with students..

In order to improve such circumstances, I took several concrete actions. For instance, we the faculty should have a liaison with the police and parents in preparation for any untoward incidents due to misbehavior. If violence occurs against teachers, we will immediately contact the surgery clinic next door, and obtain a medical report to be given to the police. Everyone has the right to protect one's human rights so any member of the faculty can freely report the case to the

police. I explained to the faculty that I, as the principal, was willing to take all the responsibility. Another achievement which I did for the first time in Hiroshima Prefecture was the creation of a rest lounge for the faculty. An unused classroom was renovated for this. I also created an educational counseling room for students who were having problems, and I requested for two psychological therapists to be dispatched two days a week. Furthermore, I continued discussion with the faculty, and tried to establish a system to fully support students. It was gradually realized through sharing a common understanding and practices among the faculty.

Here is one episode on how I changed students' behavior. At Shisei Upper Secondary School, fire alarm bells had long been out of order. In my second year, after I noticed some improvements in the school situation, I asked the educational board to allocate 1.2 million yen for the repair of the alarm system. To stop students from pressing the alarm button for fun, I told teachers that if the alarm rang even though they knew it was a false alarm, to evacuate all the students as if there was a fire. Students used to press the alarm to confuse the school, because they felt happy if teachers went into a panic and the lessons were interrupted. Under such a circumstance, I knew these students enjoyed being in the center of attention feeling like a star. Therefore, every time a mischievous alarm was set off, everyone evacuated, and took refuge at a designated meeting place. Teachers called the roll. In this way, students not attending the lessons were also forced to be at the refuge and the teachers asked why they were not in class. Moreover, when a lesson was disturbed due to this false evacuation, I did not cancel lessons but required makeup lessons for every minute lost. Consequently, when there was a mischievous ringing of the bell, students complained about why they were made to evacuate even though they knew it was a prank and they hated to have extended classes to make up for the lost time. When a false alarm happened the second time, an interesting scene occurred. When all of us were at the refuge, one student protested and appealed to all his/her schoolmates, "Please don't do this again! If lessons are extended and end later, I can not get to my part time job on time!!" Since then, the misconduct was no longer considered a star performance among the students, thus the false alarms never rang again. This incident triggered stronger ties among the students and harnessed the group power which is a foundation for friendship. We went through various experiences, but in around autumn of this year, the lessons started to be delivered smoothly, and the number of the faculty members taking leave has also decreased. The school was reborn as a school. In my second year, community residents and educational stakeholders started to evaluate the Shisei

Upper Secondary School better.

I conducted drastic reshuffling of faculty members. During the first two years, I reassigned 75 % of the personnel. Basically, the teachers and the staff who had been in this school for a long time were transferred, however, I sincerely did the reassignment based on their requests to be transferred to their desired schools. I gave priority to those who were recruited to Shisei Upper Secondary School since right after graduation, and remained there for a long period. I did this because I thought the reason why teachers had lost motivation was that the educational management was not playing the ideal role it is meant to, so I believed the responsibility was on the management side. My first year's staff reshuffling resulted in a boosting of morale of the faculty who remained in the school. Newly assigned teachers were nominated from among those who had long teaching experience and who were competent. In the beginning, they were reluctant to be transferred to our school, but they surely demonstrated their ability as much as I expected.

The revision of the courses that included the conversion of the General Course into the Integrated Course was a special mission mandated by the Superintendent of Education. At first it seemed hardly feasible at all. However, with the cooperation of the Board of Education, people of the community and concerned organizations, and the full support of the teachers, we realized it within two years. This is one of the accomplishments that I shouldn't forget to mention as I am indeed proud of it.

At that time, one movie had become quite popular starring a well-known Japanese actor Mr. KATO Go. In the movie, the quote "when a principal changes, the school changes" was made, and this phrase had become public knowledge. Through my own experiences at Shisei Upper Secondary school, I am convinced that "When teachers change, the school changes". Article 28 of the School Education Law which was stipulated in 1947 based upon the Fundamental Law of Education, stipulates ⑥ "Teachers manage education for children" ③ "The principal manages the school functions and supervises the teachers and staff". Therefore, teachers are the key persons who interact with students; thus they can directly influence them. It is essential to establish a strong foundation in the student-teacher relationship. It is my belief that teachers must have a clear understanding of what the teaching profession demands and must possess a lifelong sense of vocation and passion in education. The Principal's mission and role are to enable teachers to demonstrate their ability in every aspect of their daily educational life. Therefore, the principal must express his/her own philosophy of



education, and has to be competent in getting the teachers to understand.

(2) Practices taken at Hiroshima Prefectural Kokutaiji Upper Secondary School

In April of 2000, I was again transferred from the Board of Education office to a school, the Hiroshima Prefectural Kokutaiji Upper Secondary School which had a long tradition and history spanning over 120 years. Before the end of World War Two, this school had dominated the area as Hiroshima's No.1 Middle School in the old education system. It had produced many talented people, in the political, financial as well as various other worlds. Under the new postwar school system, it re-opened as an upper secondary school. Soon after the new system commenced, the group-based screening system was introduced and it lost its long-standing historical status of prominence and prestige. When I was appointed to this school in 2000, three years had already passed after the group-based screening system was abolished.

Under the group-based screening system, six upper secondary schools in Hiroshima City area formed a group. And after the introduction of the individual school-based screening system, those six schools were ranked and two upper

secondary schools had reached the top; but Kokutaiji Upper Secondary School was almost at the bottom. From my first day, I prepared the School Reformation Plan and presented it to the stakeholders in and out of school, aiming to regenerate and restore the school. On the basis of the plan, I was fully convinced of the high possibility and necessity of reform, not only because the school had a long history and tradition but also because of the suitable geographical location of the school. Being right in the city center it was easy to commute to and from the school.

First of all, I presented my reform plan [see the attached document] to the faculty. The catchphrase was “It was good to enroll here. It was good to send my child here. Let’s make everyone think so! Let’s create a new Kokutaiji Upper Secondary School.” It aimed to create an upper secondary school that is attractive for both students and parents. The bottom line of the reform philosophy is “To create an open school”. In general, schools had established a corporate identity and were somewhat isolated from outside society. The times had changed. To go with the social change, schools could no longer properly function without opening the door to the community and the public.

The pillars of the school reform philosophy were the principles of ‘Informed Consent’ and ‘accountability’. These principles have already become common knowledge in the medical world, and the principle of “Informed Consent” is already incorporated in this modern society as a general principle. In particular, in school education, it can be regarded as the most important principle in realizing the educational ideology and an ideal exhibited by the principal. Above all, the key is how a teacher conducts the daily educational activities for the students. When “education is helping students make a journey for self-identification”, teachers are directly responsible in guiding students on how to make the journey. Therefore, education will bear fruit only if the principal has abundant trust and faith in the teachers. The principal has to communicate daily with the teachers to make them understand the educational philosophy of the principal, so that teachers can make their ideas more effective in teaching practice.

The other principle, ‘accountability’ is indispensable in creating an open policy in a school. Often, the school tends to be isolated, and when we want to fulfill our educational responsibility with cooperation and support from the community and residents, it is important to make the general public understand the policy and educational programs that we are actually going to implement. By using accountability, the school can gain the understanding and cooperation from the community and residents towards the school.

To begin with, I presented my plan of action showing the principle of regeneration for Kokutaiji Upper Secondary School to all the teachers. What I presented was based on my past painful but rich experiences at Shisei Upper Secondary School. Thus I was able to convince them about the effectiveness in these principles and methods.

Through thorough discussion with departments and groups in the school, I raised the faculty's common awareness and explained about my management policy to the PTA general assembly and to the executive committee of the Alumni Association. To get the cooperation of the parents, the head teachers of: career guidance, student guidance, curriculum and instruction, and each grade coordinator, etc. presented their respective policy and programs. In these days, this type of practice is commonly seen at many schools, but I admit it was quite innovative in the school management of those days. The outcomes and the results were clearly evident to the public the following year by the fact that the number of graduates who passed the entrance exam to universities increased. I had a full appreciation of the success of our endeavor, though I do not intend to tell the details here.

3. Concluding Remarks

Everything that I have done – that moved me forward, encouraged me and even reproached me – is based on my motto, “Do all my best” or *issho kenmei* in Japanese. This word was originally used in a poem from the Kamakura Era (A.D. 1192-1333). The poem goes like this;

“ If I hadn't had this territory offered from my lord, how come I would revere my lord, how come I would sacrifice my life on the battlefield? The phrase 'Isshokenmei' means 'to sacrifice one's life for one's territory and occupation, and it implies the real significance of life. [Article 3-5, “Hojo Godaiki” which is a Historic Account of 5 generations of the HOJO Clan in the Warring State Period.] In the contemporary dictionary called Kojien, it is defined as ‘to protect the territory honorably given to you by the Lord, even risking one's life, or that land itself.”

The more commonly-used word *Issho kenmei* in modern Japanese means working hard exerting all effort. Considering the original meaning of *Issho kenmei*, it has a much deeper meaning. It connotes examination of one's situation and condition. To reconsider what is necessary to be done now, to determine what is important, and then act.

Why was I able to work *issho kenmei*? I don't think I can give you a simple

explanation. What I can tell you is that I chose to be a teacher without any hesitation; took the teacher recruitment exam as planned; then became a school teacher. To me, being a teacher and being involved in education seemed to be my mission from heaven; as such, I had to do my best.

To end, I would like to share part of my speech that I made at the 52nd graduation ceremony of Kokutaiji Upper Secondary School held on March first, 2001.

“.....By the way, I would like to repeat my first words given to you during my inauguration ceremony which was held last year when I was first assigned to this school. I told you “it is important to do what you can do here and what you can do now; or if you have to do something now, you have to do your best. It is important to live with dignity and self-pride. This Kokutaiji Upper Secondary School was reborn under the new school-based screening system. As a principal, I try to do what I can all the time and what I should do with all my might. No matter how others look at my actions, now or in the future, I will always be proud because I think I made the best decision at the right time. Anytime and anywhere I always do my best. It is important to convince yourself of this.”

This chapter is based on a lecture given to JICA participants from the Republic of South Africa in a program on Local Educational Administration and Management. It was held at Hiroshima International Plaza on October 15, 2003.

Material: The Framework of Reform Plan at Hiroshima Kokutaiji Upper Secondary School

1. Basic features of school administration

-establishment of an open school policy-

- School administration based upon ‘Informed Consent’ [explanation and satisfaction]

(1) Common understanding and cooperative practice among the faculty
[Educational activities under the responsibility of the faculty]

(2) Understanding and cooperation of parents and community
[Parents perform their duties in education]

- School management with accountability

(1) The faculty fulfills their duties as educational personnel in charge of public education. [Outcome-based responsibility will be questioned]

(2) The school itself plays a major role in promoting an open school concept

2. Guidance Policy

(1) To guide students to acquire an attitude towards a rational and effective life style using their power of concentration

* To encourage students to seriously attend lessons, clubs and do home study, and lead a daily life with discipline and order

(2) To guide students to have a positive attitude towards life by making the most of everyday lessons.

* Help students acquire a basic scholastic ability in all subjects.

3. Measures

(1) Introduction of the new system of two semesters per year, and seven periods per day

(2) Introduction of small group teaching [tracking class] according to student ability.

(3) To be designated as a school focusing on the Academic Performance Improvement Program of Hiroshima Prefecture, then to promote the program.

(4) Close collaboration with the local Kokutaiji Lower Secondary School and Rijo Alumni Association.

Dialogue between Mr. Uchida and JICA training participants from the Republic of South Africa

Participant A: I want to ask you a question as I hear that according to the statistical difference from the standard of academic achievement schools are ranked, therefore, students in the low-level schools are tended to also be ranked lowly? Compared with students at high-level schools, I think not enough attention has been paid to those students, what do you think about it?

Mr. Uchida: If you graduate from a prestigious school, you will be able to enter a prestigious university, and then get a prestigious job. This is the principle upon which the school system with the statistical difference from the standard is based. There is a huge disparity of situations among the schools I talked about today. At one end of the spectrum are the high-performing schools and at the other end are the low performing schools. Most graduates of high-performing schools enter universities. What about in your case in South Africa?

Participant A: Such differences as you mentioned are quite commonly seen in South Africa. There are prominent schools as well as unpopular schools, and parents want to send their children to a famous school. At a school with problems, students can not study properly, thus they have no hope to enter a good university. I think the situation is the same as that in Japan.

Mr. Uchida: In Japan, however, there is a tendency to have several course offerings in one school. For example, at Shisei Upper Secondary School where I worked, the percentage of students entering university was low and annually there was only one or none at all who could enter university after graduating from the General Course. On the other hand, at Kokutaiji Upper Secondary School and Minami Upper Secondary School, almost all of the graduates proceeded to higher education. So in such a school like Shisei Upper Secondary School, it is important to create courses other than the General Course.

Participant B: You have told us that when you were a principal you transferred some teachers from the devastated school to reform education. I would like to know what points you considered the most.

Mr. Uchida: The biggest reason that I was able to rebuild the school in a period of only two years was, by transferring some teachers I was able to boost the morale of the teachers in general. The chaos was not created by an individual teacher; thus the principal should provide a working environment that will give them comfort.

It is important for the principal to find what kind of environment can motivate teachers. Being able to create the best condition is the first step towards solving the problems, thus students will also be motivated. Not all the principals are always doing this. Therefore, first we must foster such principals in Hiroshima Prefecture.

Participant C: I understand that you succeeded in reshuffling 75% of the teachers in two years, also upon their requests. Apart from transferring teachers, what other measures can be helpful?

Mr. Uchida: The school system itself can also be changed. For example, converting the General Course into the Integrated Course, the school formulated a new goal. Then my teachers prepared themselves to work on achieving the new goal and thus transformed the school atmosphere.

Participant C: What is the difference between the General Course and the Integrated Course? What are the characteristics of the Integrated Course?

Mr. Uchida: The Integrated Course is a combination of the General Course and the Special Course. Students can choose subjects from a wide array of different course offerings not limited to the track they belong to. A class is opened based on students' enrollment after making choices. Thus the number of students per class can be smaller than the official quota of 40, so more teachers are needed at the school.

Participant D: In South Africa on pay day, quite often, teachers go home immediately after receiving their salary. What about Japanese teachers?

Mr. Uchida: In Japan, the salary is paid into a bank account. Also, work performance is strictly assessed. If a teacher goes home like in the case in South Africa, first the principal reprimands the teacher, and if s/he does not obey the principals' order, the case will be reported to the Board of Education for sanction. However, I have never heard of such a case. Our educational issues in Japan are how to make the incompetent teachers competent, or how to persuade them to resign from the teaching profession. For instance, annually about 20 teachers are sent to the Hiroshima Prefectural Education Center [HIPEC] for training, due to incompetence.

Participant D: Did you say only 20?

Mr. Uchida: But every year! Some resign and some go back to teaching. Annually about seven million yen is budgeted to re-train each one. At a private corporation, such incompetent teachers can be laid off instantly. But public school teachers are tenured and can not be laid off like that. Thus they are entitled to attend a one year

teacher training program being away from the school where they are regarded as incompetent. If these teachers remain incompetent after the retraining, they will be sent back to HIPEC again for more training.

Participant D: Do such teachers under the rehabilitation program also get paid?

Mr. Uchida: Yes, they do. Exactly the same salary is guaranteed. Therefore, the budget of seven million yen is allocated.

Participant D: In South Africa, our policy resigns such teachers if they fail to acquire proper skills after training. What about in Japan?

Mr. Uchida: We also have the same system but we are still studying the case of whether or not to actually ask the person to resign. Although we can legally fire them, we are still very careful.

Participant E: What if there are incompetent principals?

Mr. Uchida: Incompetent principals? That's a very good question. [He laughs.]

Participant E: I imagine you have no incompetent principals, and thus it is not possible to answer my question?

Mr. Uchida: As I mentioned, not all principals are attempting to realize the ideals I introduced to you. In Japan as well, there are incompetent principals and we would like to ask them to quit. But we have no system to demote them. In such cases, we transfer them to the most unpopular schools where nobody wants to be assigned. Then, some will spontaneously resign, but some may continue. Only if a principal misbehaves in violation of the law, s/he may be disciplinarily dismissed.

Participant F: I have heard the enrollment ratio in upper secondary schools is extremely high in Japan. Do you have a problem of school dropouts?

Mr. Uchida: Almost 100% proceed to upper secondary school, so of course there are dropouts. The ratio of dropouts from Upper Secondary School is less than three percent, but the total number is about 110,000, so it has become a serious state-concern. How about the dropout ratio in South Africa?

Participant F: Our situation is worse. Not even half of the entrees graduate from upper secondary school. Now we are undertaking educational reform and expect some improvements but in our country "a compulsory education system" just started, so we are not yet ready to tackle the issue.

Mr. Uchida: In Japan, our serious problem is that those who leave school fail to find a job.

Participant G: It is the same in South Africa. Job hunting becomes severe without a higher education background. For example, such dropouts may do high-jacking, and the possibility of this is not low. Thus, it has become a state-concern. Originally, education in South Africa had not been highly valued in the past, thus education was not given much importance in society. Our new trend focuses on education. In South Africa, the first 12 years of education until upper secondary school graduation is free, so there are no economic dropouts.

Mr. Uchida: Talking about the “economical reasons,” in Japan it does not include students who couldn’t pay tuition fees because of poverty; but the problem is caused more by dysfunctional families.

Participant H: You told us you have specialized in social science. Taking a look at South Africa, if we want to improve our education, I think we also need to improve the entire society not only looking at education itself.

Mr. Uchida: That’s right.

Participant H: When there is a good social system, children from the dysfunctional families will be supported, thus they will no longer dropout.

Mr. Uchida: Education is necessary to develop the economy of the nation, but it also plays a role to stabilize the society and keep order. Therefore, educational finance must be properly planned and allocated. The rapid growth of Japan in the 1960s was also achieved by quality education. In those days, the whole nation was taking a step forward with the motto, ‘Catch up with the Western nations, Go ahead of the Western nations.’ Our education was propelled by this slogan. We aimed at all of the children being treated equally to learn and acquire knowledge and skills. But as we moved closer to the world summit, and now towards the 21 century, we face a new issue on how to continue our nation-building with very few natural resources. Also the role of and expectation of education has shifted. For the last 20 years, Japan’s educational reform targeted developing the youth to think and make judgments independently.

Participant I: Going back to the issue of dropouts, if I look at the ratio, yours is much lower than ours in South Africa.

Mr. Uchida: Still, this is one of the biggest problems in Japan.

Participant I: Well, I am ashamed to tell you this, but in South Africa, we don’t have such reliable statistics as you have provided for us today. I think we first have to gain more accurate statistics like yours.

Mr. Uchida:They are made annually by the Ministry of Education and the data is as of May first.

Participant I: In South Africa, we have statistics on the enrollment rate made by the central government. But it is not yet generally utilized, and there is no practice to bring them into discussion to grasp the condition of our education. Neither are our statistics divided into Provinces yet.

This lecture was delivered on October 15th, 2003 at Hiroshima International Plaza. Mr. Uchida was the director of the Hiroshima Prefectural Education Center at that time.

(*1) During WWII, the Japanese Emperor was regarded as a deity and people fought in the war sacrificing their lives for the Emperor. In the post-war era, the Emperor became a symbol of the nation, and was no longer regarded as a deity. Since the anthology of poems Kojiki deals with the ancient stories of deities, probably the story was not taught as it was considered improper right after the war.

The meaning of life that I found in my teaching career

SEZAKI Nobutoshi

SEZAKI Nobutoshi was born in 1941 in Fukuyama City, Hiroshima Prefecture.

After graduating from university, he became an industrial arts teacher of upper secondary school. In 1991, he became the vice principal of Hiroshima Prefecture Miyajima Technical Upper Secondary School, and in 1994 he was promoted as principal. In 1996, he was appointed as principal of Hiroshima Prefecture Kure Technical Upper Secondary School and principal of Hiroshima Prefecture Hiroshima Technical Upper Secondary School in 2000. Later he became principal of the Hiroshima Institute of Technology, Polytechnic until his retirement in March 2006.



1. Introduction

Before I finally decided to be a teacher, I was at the crossroads of two possible choices. One road would lead me to be a public researcher working at a national institution like the Ministry of Construction or Architect Institute. The other way would lead me to be a teacher.

I thought over and over again and sought various opinions and suggestions from a great number of people. While I was spending much time thinking about my future occupation, I felt indeed determined that whatever occupation I chose, I should never regret about it in the future. I chose to be a teacher.

I never had any experience teaching. However, I have a very good lasting impression of a teacher who was my homeroom teacher at my lower secondary school. While I was studying to become a teacher, this teacher actually made me finally decide to be a teacher.

Except for some diligent students, most of us at the lower secondary school untiringly played softball in the school ground everyday until evening after school. This built a very strong friendship among our classmates.

Our homeroom teacher was still new, and our class was his first homeroom assignment. I can recall how we sensed his intense passion for education, which he had shown by his enthusiastic but careful interaction with us. He was concerned

with both our studies and personal life as evidenced by his daily practical dealings with us. One time, he became very worried about us because we were already in the third year but we had very low motivation to study for the entrance exam to upper secondary school. Because the exam was already near, he rode on a bike even during very cold winter nights to visit us at our houses where he taught us subjects necessary for the entrance exam. He encouraged some more students to get together in one house to study with him.

Though I was aware of my teacher's strong passion for education, I never studied seriously. One day as the exam day drew near leaving only a couple of months, the teacher asked me to which upper secondary school I wished to go. I knew my scholastic achievement level, so I pointed out to him the name of one upper secondary school for which I thought I could pass its entrance exam without making efforts. Surprisingly, he seriously reprimanded me. I had never seen him angry this way before. This incident remained in my mind very clearly. I think this served as the turning point for me to think about how I should spend the rest of my life.

2. Two episodes shaking my heart

(1) Meeting the best students

In April 1967, I was newly recruited as a teacher at Miyoshi Technical Upper Secondary School, now known as Miyoshi Seiryō Upper Secondary School. The school is located on a hill in suburban Miyoshi City. Surrounded by a Japanese cypress forest, this school was originally established as an Agricultural Upper Secondary School and that is why the school has a beautiful garden.

The Construction Course, newly opened that year, had forty students under my care. Aside from me, there were two other teachers in charge of specialized subjects, and we had a strong determination to create history for this new course. We wanted to instill the Pioneering Spirits among our students, so we fostered the traditional philosophy of apprenticeship or the 'Master-Disciple' principle.

In autumn, some six months later after the academic year began, when I went to school a fellow teacher on night duty told me; "Mr. SEZAKI, one of your students was drawing the design overnight in the design room." I quickly went to look for the student and asked him why he had been there overnight. The student answered, "Yes, I was so absorbed in my drawing work that I missed the last train. So I decided to stay at school."

This was just one of the episodes, and there were many more events when

The meaning of life that I found in my teaching career



students enthusiastically and spontaneously studied in order to meet our expectations. I can clearly remember those scenes even now.

Though I was a passionate teacher, my teaching skills were not good enough. I did repeated trial and error practice in student guidance. Soon I felt my efforts paid off because my students made great achievements. The students in that school were well worth teaching.

Through my students, I gradually convinced myself that the potential of every student is without limits. If teachers have the passion to teach, students can grow by themselves and have the strength to open up their future.

William Arthur Ward, an educational philosopher of the UK said, “The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.” On the contrary, I would say that my best students inspired me, so that I was able to sustain a long teaching career. This makes me appreciative of my former students.

Another point I admire in my former students is that most of them found a job which they maintained, and almost none of them gave up. Nowadays, they

are playing active roles as executives of administrative organizations, private companies, branch offices, and other important positions.

Whenever I meet my former students in the alumni association reunion affairs, they generally say “In our work, we faced countless difficulties, pains, and hardships and thought many times to quit the job. But when we think of the ordeals we experienced in our old upper secondary school, we believe we should be able to manage any difficulties in society. That is why we managed to overcome each one of these hurdles in our career.”

It is said that education is the preparation for the future. So the school education is the foundation of our personal lives, and I learned that it is important to make our students climb up the high mountains which they have never experienced, and develop the strength to endure the hardship of climbing. Thus after they have reached the summit, they can taste the joy of achieving something by seeing the scenic beauty from the summit as a reward for their hardship.

(2) Transforming a difficult school into a place for teachers’ dreams

I worked at Miyoshi Technical Upper Secondary School for nine years, and then in 1976, I was transferred to Hiroshima Technical Upper Secondary School. Founded in 1897, it is one of the distinguished schools in industrial education. I had been longing to work there and I once dreamed of entering the school gate which was being constructed at the time of its foundation. Today the gate serves as an emblem of the school.

Hiroshima Technical Upper Secondary School had many highly skillful teachers who had long working experiences. On the other hand, the students were also active both in their studies and sports. They were proud of being students of the school, and were aware of their mission to hand on the long tradition of the technical school. During the morning assembly where 1400 students congregated in the school ground, everyone concentrated on listening to the speakers and there was no private whispering at all. I worked at this Hiroshima Technical Upper Secondary School for eleven years.

Then in 1987 I was transferred to Miyajima Technical Upper Secondary School. At that time, the school was regarded by the community residents as a nuisance because it was in complete disarray. One reason was that the principal was not in the center of the school management. The faculty members hoped to remedy the situation to some extent, but they were not united; each one was just doing his/her thing individually. There were those who easily criticized others who had different

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thoughts or ways of doing things. Often this resulted in conflicts among the faculty and the disagreement precipitated to inconsistency in teaching, and students were not sure which teacher's guidance was the right one. Students had become emotionally unstable and eventually had lost their trust in the school and teachers.

Here and there we saw damaged school facilities. Though we repaired them, soon they were again broken by students; so the school no longer repaired them. Most students did not listen to teachers, and many classes were interrupted so that most lessons could no longer be properly delivered. Students were stressed as they never felt satisfaction from studying. This caused more troubles among students as well, and created a situation in which even obedient and diligent students dropped out of school in large number.

In my first year at this school, I was assigned to the student guidance department so I interacted with many students every day. Being a new and unacquainted teacher, the stricter I was with the students, the more they became rebellious. I realized that verbal conversation alone could not possibly persuade them. Therefore, I reconsidered what I should do to gain the trust of the students. The first thing I did was to change the environment by cleaning the classroom.

The classrooms in the Industrial Course had not been cleaned for a while, and there were many areas to be cleaned. I asked students to clean with me, but no one responded so I cleaned all alone. As days passed by, and the classroom gradually became tidier, a few students came to me and said, "Teacher, you really like cleaning, don't you"? They started to help me little by little.

By showing students how to do things, I had gradually touched their emotions. Finally one day all the students joined the cleaning of the classroom after class. From then on I observed that though I dealt with the students strictly, they began listening to me.

I wanted to extend my activity to the other faculty members, so I asked some younger teachers to join me. I obtained a positive response so that before any school event, many teachers joined in the cleaning of the school. When all the other teachers understood our school cleaning efforts, it soon touched the minds of the students. Eventually, young teachers were able to do student guidance and subject teaching freely and actively.

In my second year at the school, I was assigned a homeroom. At this time, the school started to show some signs of order but there were still many things to be corrected. Because of the school's bad reputation, the majority of the enrollees were not from the local lower secondary schools. So, most of the students

commuted to school from far places taking trains and buses.

There was one student Mr. A, who was the most impressive in my class. He was commuting from Hiroshima City taking nearly more than an hour. He had a well-built physique and seemed to be a naughty boy. Right after the enrollment he was invited to join the School's Cheering Squad where he got a leader-like position. Thereafter, he often caused trouble with other students.

Being in charge of the students' guidance at that time, I was confident of my strict guidance practice to any students but Mr. A was an exception. No matter how strict I counseled, he rebelled even more. I did not know how to handle the situation anymore.

Though Mr. A went through failures both in his studies and life, he managed to graduate and found employment in a large-scale construction company in Hiroshima. What amazed me the most about him was his huge and glaring transformation after graduation. Some time after graduation, he came to visit the school, and we were surprised at his polite manner of speaking and the content of his conversation. Everything in him was completely different compared with what he was during his school days with us.

I wondered how he could have changed himself so dramatically within such a short period. Mr. A told me; "Teacher, I knew what you were trying to tell me when I was a student. I fully understood what you were trying to point out, but I was too conscious of my classmates and friends. I had pride in that I could not change myself so easily after a teacher told me to do so. I just stuck to my original conviction. I appreciate your perseverance in guiding me. Now I can work at a place by making good use of what I learned in this school. I am really thankful that I could become a full-fledged member of society."

He showed his inborn leadership skills as site foreman at the construction sites, and excellently united all the workers. He even obtained the national qualification of a 1st grade architect. Thus he has grown to be an indispensable member of the company.

What I learned from Mr. A is that whenever I counsel students, they carry their own thoughts with them that may not be expressed in words or actions. As a counselor, I must be aware of this reality.

Later, the school became well-organized through the strong leadership of the principal as well as by the support from people in the local community. All the teachers unified their teaching policy and made serious efforts in teaching and student guidance. This brought stability among students as they started to study

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and did sports seriously as expected.

Around this time, a new PE (physical education) teacher came to our school. He was also asked to coach the baseball club which was then a weak team that lacked a sufficient number of players so it was not possible to participate even in a prefecture-wide preliminary game. To make things worse, the baseball play ground was covered by wild grass.

In such an environment, this new coach gathered all the baseball club members on the ground and said, "I am going to make your team participate in the nation-wide games at Koshien Stadium. In order to achieve this goal, I hope you will try to establish the base." He talked passionately of his dream to the students. Since then, they started to have early morning practices and even after-school practices that extended until late at night. Every time the team played in the local games, the players proudly said, "We have practiced baseball the most in this prefecture compared with other teams so we will never lose any games!" In reality, however, it took three to four years until they reached a certain level of competence to win over other teams. Our team improved and in the prefecture-wide tournament it started to win over powerful teams of other upper secondary schools including the prominent Koryo Upper Secondary School or Hiroshima Commercial Upper Secondary School. This influenced the new applicants coming to enroll in our school. For instance, excellent student players from local lower secondary schools also started to flock together wishing to join the baseball team of our celebrated coach. Finally in the 7th year that this coach was assigned to this school, the team was developed enough to join the nation-wide Koshien tournament.

Luckily, I was their principal at that time. I also cheered for the team from the bleachers of Koshien together with other students, parents, and even with alumni and community people. I nostalgically recalled the disastrous time when I was newly recruited to this school, and my heart was filled with emotion.

Thanks to this achievement, we started to gain a lot more support from the Prefecture Board of Education and people in the community, which resulted in the reconstruction of the school buildings and gym. Now, the school has turned into an indispensable upper secondary school in the community, with great trust from the local residents.

3. Reform of the Industrial Education and Instructional Improvement

(1) Reform of Industrial Education at Upper Secondary School

In the Second World War, our national land was devastated, and the industries were catastrophically damaged. The nation started a new life to alleviate themselves from poverty in clothing, food and living. Now, we are in the 60th year of the anniversary since the end of the war.

During the fifty years right after the war, the population constantly grew by a million annually, while the living environment including working opportunities and the housing system was developed, as well as the establishment of an educational system which aimed to raise children who would support our future. The whole nation was rebuilt, and now, the living standard includes not only “food, clothing and shelter” but also cultural and educational aspects, and the society is well formed so that a majority of the people can feel an abundance in life.

Despite Japan’s scarce natural resources, it has redeemed its status as a country with a high ranking development which is often called “a miracle.” This was achieved by the extreme diligence of the Japanese who were quick-witted, which the country prominently demonstrated in the field of technological advancement.

I first entered into industrial education in 1967. Japan was still at the gateway towards rapid economic growth. In those years the enrollment rate to upper secondary schools skyrocketed to the 70% level.

Students in those days were economically impoverished. This challenged them to develop a common clear goal that if they studied hard and found a job, and worked seriously they could achieve an enriched life. Reflecting on this idea, their morale for studying was high. School teachers scarcely faced problems like absenteeism or misbehavior among students.

At this time, Japanese industries achieved dramatic economic development. To catch up with Western-developed technology, companies manufactured products massively by using the conveyer belt while the production line was efficiently standardized. Strengthened by cheap labor, Japanese companies became superior in regards to cost effectiveness and won competition in the world market.

To back up this development, we needed a large number of technicians with certain skills. This led to the establishment of technical upper secondary schools nationwide since around 1961. Here in Hiroshima Prefecture, a total of seventeen technical upper secondary schools, both public and private, were established.

In those days, the abilities we expected of students at the technical upper

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secondary schools included memorization of known facts so that they can utilize their knowledge whenever the need arises. It was not expected to have an ability to deeply think and try to respond to challenges. As a consequence, the content of the daily lessons were mechanically unified, and lessons were in a one-way style delivered from the teachers' side to the students, mainly aiming to cram as much knowledge as possible.

Later on, the economic growth of Japan caused a high raise in the salary scale. The country was no longer able to compete with other developing nations mainly in Asia in terms of cost performance. It was time to change the customarily practiced manufacturing system which used to aim to catch up with the advanced countries. Nowadays, companies are expected to invent new products by making the best use of IT Technology, or to develop and manufacture highly value-added products both in functioning and designing.

Along with considerable changes in the industrial picture, engineers and technicians were expected to gain more knowledge not only in their area of specialization, but also in other related fields. At the same time, employees must have the capability to reconsider the situation deeply, to modify the products better, and find solutions for every issue to achieve the goal.

To meet these needs in the industrial world, new subjects were introduced at the technical upper secondary school like "Basic Industry," "Industrial Math and Science," which provided the knowledge and techniques related to the overall industrial technology.

Furthermore in 1995, a subject "Issue-based Research" was offered to train the students to study spontaneously, invent things with creativity and work to be able to solve problems.

By flexibly coping with the global environmental changes which surrounded the industrial world, the education of technical upper secondary schools stably produced human resources who could be the breadwinners in the industrial world.

Thanks to this approach, we have established a firm base to conduct basic research and development in scientific technology. This was proven when the nation experienced the burst of the economic bubble in 1993, and the management environment of companies went through severe deterioration. Today, aspects of those results are seen in the production of digital electronic home appliances and in automobile manufacturing.

(2) Lesson Improvement; Introduction of “Mastery Learning”

The compulsory subject “Industrial Math and Science” was officially introduced to technical upper secondary schools after the revision of the Courses of Study in 1982. It aimed to supplement the basic ability in science and math of technical upper secondary students along with the advancement of industrial technology.

The goal of teaching this subject is “to cultivate basic abilities in which students can practically and mathematically handle the concrete issues in all areas in the industrial field.”

I taught this subject from the first year of its introduction. Because it is a base subject serving for other specialized subjects, I wanted to assure 80% achievement in students’ learning.

While I was researching for the best teaching method to achieve this goal, I came across “Mastery Learning” which was developed by Prof. Benjamin S. Bloom at the University of Chicago, U.S.A. I started to study it and practiced it in my actual lessons.

The basic principle of this method is that “If both the content and method for learning are appropriate, the gap in achievement level among students simply indicates the gap of their learning velocity.” It means “there is no difference in the basic learning ability among students.” Therefore, even those slow learners can also fully understand the complete content if appropriate assistance is given in the process.

The method which I actually applied in my lesson was, that first of all I conducted a lesson to the whole class of 40 students all at once. Then before ending the lesson, I gave them a post-quiz to judge how much each student had reached the level of “Mastery”. Those students who had not reached the expected level were given supplemental instruction after school. During the supplemental lessons after school, after the overall explanation was given, the post-test was conducted again, and those who failed to learn the expected content were then given individual teaching. Through these steps, all the students were helped to reach the “Mastery” level before the next lesson to study the next level. Students had no fret about the delay, or worries to attend the next lesson, and all of them could proceed ahead comfortably.

As a consequence of the practice of “Mastery Learning”, students who attended the supplemental classes exceeded the term-end exam scores higher than those who didn’t attend the remedial lessons. In addition, many students who experienced

the supplemental lessons commented that, “It was quite effective to repeatedly study the same content to deepen understanding” “I gained confidence because I could catch up with my classmates through taking tests after remedial classes as well as individual tutoring”.

4. Realizing the school management where the principal is regarded as the real leader

(1) Structuring the school management system based on the authority and responsibility of the principal

Younger generations who will support the development of Japan in the future must have the power to be independent as individuals, as well as to bear results by cooperatively working in a group consisting of characteristic individuals.

The school must be autonomous, and must have developed a distinguished and unique character to foster this power, so that schools can be a place where enrollees come to attend with a desire to study there.

Educational activities in school are formed by class management, lessons and other activities, therefore organizations are necessary to conduct each effectively. To make the organizations function perfectly, first of all, the faculty members must fully understand the educational principle and policy of the principal. Then it is essential that all the members work cooperatively in the same direction. Before everything, the strong leadership of a principal with authority and responsibility is indispensable.

However in Hiroshima Prefecture, in the past many years, the final decision-making in school was left to the faculty meeting, and also during the graduation and enrollment ceremony, the hoisting of the national flag and singing of the national anthem were not practiced despite the national Course of Study. The authority of the principal was quite restricted as no one obeyed the principals’ instruction.

The head of the school is the principal, and the decisions in school management had to be made by the principals’ authority. So such practices in Hiroshima Prefecture were violations of the public education laws and ordinances.

This problem was pointed out at the Prefectural Assembly and then was raised at the National Diet, and in 1998 the Ministry of Education instructed the Board of Education in Hiroshima Prefecture to exert correctional measures.

Upon receiving the national guidance, some correctional measures were undertaken in all schools. In order to organize and function the school

management, principals tried to abolish the customarily practiced illegal filing such as agreements between unions and management. However, all of these measures seemed to destruct the vested rights and one's ideas and principles of the School Staff Union. Thus the faculty overwhelmingly resisted and I also felt chagrin at losing the fights many times.

However, through the unshakable policy and stance of the Pref. Board of Education, with the full cooperation of the Principals' Association, all the necessary measures were undertaken one by one. Gradually, the path to establish the school management with the principal's authority and responsibility was formed, and things went ahead by opening up to new horizons.

(2) Establishment of the League of Public School Principals Association in Hiroshima Prefecture

I served eight years as a principal for public upper secondary schools and in the 8th year, I acted as Chair of the Upper Secondary School Principals' Association of Hiroshima Prefecture.

To cope with the extreme changes in society, we have been promoting various reforms to re-create school education for the new era. This kind of reform tends to be conducted individually in each school, or even when they are grouped, still they are separated from the elementary school group or lower secondary school group. We must remember that students go to lower secondary school after graduating from elementary school, and then go on to upper secondary school. So if we look at a child, a constant education must be provided. To achieve consistency, smooth connections between schools must be formed taking into account the educational content and method.

Before, Principals Associations were organized separately according to the school type, and then they were allied to establish the League to secure linkages among the public schools.

I remember our case in Hiroshima Prefecture was the first attempt in Japan. For instance, about 990 school principals from all the public elementary, lower and upper secondary schools met once a year, to attend lectures to collect information about the future vision and school management, or report about their practices of handling issues in respective schools relating to teaching and career guidance. Also, we are planning to divide this League into sub-blocks according to 29 regions, so that they can further talk about the local issues based on each branch group.

5. Concluding Remarks

We were born to be an indispensable part of this society. But one day, all of us pass away as in the old saying, “Living creatures must die.” It is said that many of us will think of the following two things in the dying process.

- ① What will happen to me when I die? Will I really be going to the Land of Happiness? Will I be going back to the Great Nature, and then will I revive as a new life?
- ② Was there meaning in my life? Did I have a meaningful life?

I think the answer to these questions depend on whether I could have made other people happy through my efforts at work.

Many students and others speak to me at the graduation ceremony or during an alumni meeting, “Thanks to your particular words, that student recovered a smile on his face. Your guidance at that moment motivated that student and after successfully graduating, he has been enjoying a happy life”. It is a great joy for a teacher like me, to hear words of praise for me.

Whenever I talk about my experience, I am immediately flooded with a memory of my former student Mr. B. I was his homeroom teacher at Miyoshi Technical Upper Secondary School. His home was far away, and because of the inconvenient transport system, he was lodging at his grandmother’s house to go to school. His character was gentle and cheerful which earned him his friends. However, he was struggling with designing, and often failed to submit the assignment of architect designing in due time. When the graduation was nearing, he suddenly stopped coming to school, probably due to the pressure he felt for not making the report submitted by the deadline. I had experienced the same kind of hardships in architect designing during my university course. I knew what he had to do to go through this was just keep himself sitting at the desk and draw one single line to start. When I visited his residence to tell him what to do, his grandmother cried because she took the responsibility of taking care of her grandson and begged me to let him graduate. Thanks to the push by his grandmother, I was able to put him on my bicycle, and brought him to school, and made him sit at the designing desk. Exactly the same as I experienced before, this incident gave Mr. B a chance to boost his morale. Finally, he was able to accomplish his requirements and graduated. Now, he has grown to be an architect in the front lines while he manages his own office.

The teaching profession is an occupation that can make other people's lives happy. It can make one's life meaningful through the daily work. It is indeed a wonderful career.

This chapter is based upon a lecture conducted by Mr. SEZAKI for JICA participants of the Republic of South Africa as part of a JICA training course on Science and Math Teacher Education. His lecture was held on November 8th, 2005, at Hiroshima Institute of Technology, Polytechnic.

Dialogue between Mr. SEZAKI and JICA training participants from the Republic of South Africa

Participant A: Upon hearing your lecture, what impressed me the most was your admission that you learned from your students being their teacher. You also mentioned that you learned from fellow teachers too, I think it is a marvelous way of thinking that I can use back home. The major issue South African teachers are now facing is how to change the school. I would like to know how you did it.

Mr. SEZAKI: Even though the principal desires to effect changes in the school and works hard for it, he may end up in a situation where none of the teachers work with him. In such a case, the principal and even long experienced teachers get tired of the situation. Then, it will be impossible to change the school with the currently assigned teachers in the school. In Japan, there is a transfer system, and teachers are transferred from one school to another school. Taking advantage of this system, I transferred those fed-up teachers to other schools, and instead I welcomed younger and more energetic teachers to my school to work together to change the school.

Participant B: What I thought great is that when you were a teacher, you cleaned the classroom leading others ahead, and tried to give the message to students that it was important to modify the surrounding environment. I know it is not an easy task to apply this in South Africa, but I want to take your teaching method back home. It is indeed praiseworthy that a teacher took an initiative action without being commanded by the principal.

Mr. SEZAKI: One of the fundamental practices in the Japanese culture is when you are newly assigned to work, you start cleaning before doing anything. If you have a will, anybody can do cleaning. What I learned through my practices of cleaning is that students' spirits calm down in a good environment, or they feel unstable when things around them are out of order. Therefore, I think the environmental modification including cleaning is indispensable in school education.

Participant C: Do you think if the principal and some of the teachers in school work together very hard, the school can be changed?

Mr. SEZAKI: When we want to navigate the school to a better direction, if the principal values only the thoughts of the teachers, there will be no good results. In my experience, I learned that if issues are discussed only among the school

staff, we could never find the appropriate direction. When only teachers discuss the issues, things will be changed just for the sake of the teachers. Therefore, we asked the local residents and parents to join the group to talk about possible improvements for the school. The decisions made by the group will be used to set up the policy by the principal, and then the principal leads the teachers. In Japan, a new system has been introduced recently whereby the community residents and parents become the school council members. This is now spreading nationwide.

Participant D: In South Africa, our education is now in transition from teacher-centered education to student-centered education. I wonder what kind of instruction is needed to realize this goal of making the students responsible for their own learning and not simply waiting for the teachers' instruction, but to think by themselves. Based on your practices and experiences, could you give me some advice?

Mr. SEZAKI: I have mentioned that at one technical upper secondary school one student stayed at school overnight while concentrating on designing. I must emphasize that that student did not have that much motivation in the beginning. He enrolled in a newly-offered course so we teachers tried to instill "Pioneer Spirits" intensely among all the students in the course. Based on this spiritual approach, we set up different goals suited for individual students. For instance, participation in the national contest of designing, or obtaining various qualifications were among the goals. All the teachers supported the students patiently so that they could accomplish their goals. Maybe it was more "exercise" than teaching. Having been awarded at the prefecture-wide contest, students gained confidence. If you persevere to make efforts against ordeals, you will obtain good results. The process of investing efforts on students is of course important, but we really need to make them achieve their objectives so that they themselves can find some sense of fulfillment. After reaching one goal, students gain strength and confidence, thus they can set up new goals. Whatever students have acquired may turn into a driving force that motivates individual students to make more of their best efforts. Then they can achieve another goal. This favorable cycle must be established by us educators.

Participant E: Please let me know about the issue-based research project, e.g. the way of thinking and the method of assessment.

Mr. SEZAKI: Japan's industrial development was changed from the original idea of "catching up with Western Technology" to "creating innovative things." Along

with this, the industrial education was greatly reformed. Before, the educational goal was to develop human resources who were responsible to instructional manuals, and who can exert what was commanded, so that cramming the existing knowledge and being able to apply them was the main goal in school education. However in these days, it is needed more to develop personnel who can identify problems and find solutions by themselves. To cope with this kind of social need, this issue-based research has been introduced as a new subject for industrial education. Needless to say, the most important point of this subject is that students themselves find the issues. Unfortunately, our students were brought up in a system in which the education is given to them only from the teacher's side so it required much time for students to finally find the issues by themselves. Before, teachers did not have patience to wait for the students, and felt anxious guiding the students. In addition, none of us were aware of the method of assessment and evaluation. We gradually figured it out and reached one evaluation method with three points. We evaluated whether students worked cooperatively with others in a team, and then the content and the quality of the products. We also evaluated if they could present their outcomes so that the audience would understand clearly. What teachers needed during the issue-based research period was to observe students, without teaching them. Japanese teachers are too kind, so that they always want to teach immediately.

Participant F: I was impressed with the Flow Chart of the “Mastery Learning.” Without allowing dropouts, the students understand all the processes, and teachers check the students understanding in all the topics and units before proceeding to the next stage. Making sure that everyone in the class understood the lesson is indeed ideal. I also think that the method of group work, where students teach among themselves is admirable. I believe “Mastery learning” could also be effective in South Africa.

Mr. SEZAKI: In Japan, most teachers conduct small tests to confirm the students understanding after teaching the whole class. However, after identifying the fact that some students have not understood the content fully, it is not possible to conduct supplemental teaching as this increases the teachers' burden. It will be impossible to implement Mastery Learning in all the subjects if the teachers' tasks are not lessened. In teaching the subject ‘Industrial Math and Science’, I applied the “Mastery Learning” because this subject was fundamental, so I thought it was worth doing, even though my burden increased.

Participant G: If those students who were found “failing”, could not achieve the expected level even after the remedial lessons, what would you do then?

Mr. SEZAKI: For such a group of students, we prepared individual materials according to the student’s level of understanding. In the end, private tutoring was done. Then, the teacher easily identified how much the students had acquired. Then the overall unit test was conducted.

Participant G: Still then, if they failed again?

Mr. SEZAKI: We can not expect all the students pass, so our actual ultimate goal is 80% of the students.

Participant H: When the number of students rapidly increased, how did you handle the situation?

Mr. SEZAKI: In Japan, many technical upper secondary schools were opened from around 1961, and the number of teachers was inadequate at that time. There were 40 students per class and 36 period lessons weekly. One teacher was assigned around 23 periods per week. Now, it is only 17. Teachers had to work more to cover up for the insufficient number of teachers so they taught as many periods as they could.

Participant I: While the industry develops rapidly, how has the education changed in terms of what our environment and the society should be?

Mr. SEZAKI: In Japan, there is a popular saying from ancient times, that “When we have food, cloth and shelter, also we must have politeness and manners.” In the post war era, the industrial development brought abundance in the economy, and people no longer suffered from a lack of food and clothing. However, I feel we have lost something related to morality. Throughout the development in Japan, we have failed to value the other aspects of education, such as the way of living as a person, volunteer spirits or social contribution. In recent years, there is more concern that we must teach those values in school education. In addition, studying about environmental problems and coexistence with nature are also considered important parts of the school education.

This dialogue was also held on November 8th, 2005, at Hiroshima Institute of Technology, Polytechnic, where Mr. SEZAKI was the principal.

Going through the dark with just a flicker of light

TANABE Koji

TANABE Koji was born in 1950 in Tojo town, Shobara city of Hiroshima Prefecture

After graduating from university, he taught at Fukuyama City Upper Secondary School.

He worked with the educational office in Miyoshi for two years and then worked at the Educational Board Office of Hiroshima Prefecture. From 1999 to the present, he has served as principal in two schools, namely the Hiroshima Prefecture Sera Upper Secondary School (1999 to 2005) and Hiroshima Prefecture Miyoshi Upper Secondary School (current position).



1. Introduction

I was born in a small town called Tojo at the foot of Mt. Dogo in the Chugoku Mountains. Most parents at the elementary school and lower secondary school where I studied earned their living cultivating the paddy fields and harvesting forest products, therefore, most graduates left the town to work in the cities. My father used to say to me, “At this time, it is not good if you do not have a university education.” “You should graduate from a university and become a school teacher!”

It was the time of the baby boomers (*1) when I took the entrance exam for Hiroshima University. Imagine the number of applicants who tried their luck to enter the university, however, in spite of the very stiff competition I managed to pass and enter Hiroshima University. Honestly, I longed for this new campus life to study and do research, but college life did not turn out the way I expected. I desired to transform my apathetic self to someone who was more socially concerned by facing challenges in my environment. It was the time when student activism (*2) was starting to gain grounds in universities all over Japan, however, I couldn’t seriously join the nation-wide student demonstration against the government; neither was I brave enough to quit the university. I was a lost soul who couldn’t decide on what I really wanted to do as a student.

My indecisive character took its toll on my studies, and inevitably I needed to repeat courses and stay one year more in university. I was lonely and felt that people were blaming and accusing me. At this time I remembered my classmates

and other students who dropped out and those who already graduated. I remembered my old schools in my hometown where I was strictly disciplined. I remembered my teachers who accepted me wholeheartedly and guided without discrimination. I was indeed homesick. At this time, I felt a strong desire to spend my life with children, then, I finally decided to become a teacher.

At that time, although there was strong social criticism against spoiled and dependent students, there was also a safety network for juvenile delinquents. This worked favorably for me, and I was given a chance to reform my life.

I became a teacher. In my first year of teaching, I was assigned to an upper secondary school that was beset by several unresolved issues of student misbehavior. I kept myself absorbed in homeroom duties, subject teaching, student guidance and supervising a soft-ball tennis club. I discovered the joy of sharing happiness and hardships with my students while we were practicing soft-ball tennis also while performing my duties in student guidance. This made me contemplate on, and made me more determined about my future direction as a teacher.

I was transferred to Tojo Upper Secondary School in my hometown where I met the principal KIKUOKA Michio who was a graduate of Hiroshima Upper Normal School(*3). From him I learned the principles of community based school management. The environment of upper secondary schools in those days was strongly influenced by the Teachers Union and activist groups. Restructuring of courses was hardly realized due to resistance from these groups.

Under such circumstances, Mr. KIKUOKA, the principal, showed his leadership whereby all school teachers were involved in the revision of the courses in cooperation with the PTA, alumni association and the community. The Home Economics Course was revised into a General Course. For the first time in Japan, an Information Education Course was offered. Everyday the school conducted open school seminars on information technology until late at night, and the community residents learned how to operate computers. "The school can change, and the community can change." Having experienced this drama 20 years ago, it has become a driving force of my philosophy in school reformation.

2. Corrective Interventions by the Ministry of Education.

When Mr. TERAWAKI was appointed as the superintendent of education, he launched educational reforms such as the institution of the Integrated Course for Upper Secondary Schools. Initially, the Upper Secondary Schools Teachers Union and activist groups firmly resisted the reforms but when they accepted

the introduction of the Integrated Course, people started to see some kind of movement in education in Hiroshima Prefecture.

With his appointment as the next superintendent, Mr. KISO abolished the students screening system based on school groups (*4). People started to feel the movement of educational change in Hiroshima.

Contrary to these developments, at one lower secondary school in Fukuyama city, there were disputes over the national flag and anthem (*5) that led to the summoning of witnesses at the House of Councilors. Thus educational issues particular to Hiroshima were raised in the National Diet. The mass media reported Hiroshima as a place saddled with many educational problems; consequently the Ministry of Education did its own investigation of the prefecture and started to enforce some remedial measures.

Mr. TATSUNO, the newly appointed superintendent, implemented the Education Ministry's correctional measures which led to the issuance of guidelines in March 1999. The guidelines on the national flag and anthem seriously created a rift between the Prefecture Board of Education and the Principal's Association, and the Upper Secondary Teachers Union and activists groups. The Board of Education ordered the principals to properly handle the issue and strictly implement the guidelines by any means. Thus the schools should hoist the national flag and sing the national anthem in chorus at the graduation ceremony. At an upper secondary school in the northern Miyoshi city area, discussions held with the activist groups became an agonizing issue for the principal. It emerged that the whereabouts of a particular principal was unknown for a certain period.

Then the unexpected tragedy occurred on the fateful day of February 28. "I no longer know what is right and what is wrong. I have nowhere to proceed." These were the last words of Mr. Ishikawa, the principal of Hiroshima Prefecture Sera Upper Secondary School who took his life in desperation. It was the day before the graduation ceremony. While large numbers of mass media kept an eye on the following day's graduation, the anthem was not sung, and the once-displayed national flag was soon withdrawn behind the stage curtain in the middle of the solemn ceremony. I saw the teachers at the funeral of the late principal accompanying the pupils as usual. One could not see a single bit of evidence showing remorse in these teachers, and I was filled with deep anger towards them. "How bitterly regretful...." Upon hearing the message of condolence made by the Chairperson of the Principal's Association from the Onomichi city and Mihara city area branch, I swore to myself that "things need to be done so that schools comply

with the law without fail.”

3. As a principal at Hiroshima Prefecture Sera Upper Secondary School

In March 2000, I received unofficial notification of my transfer from Hiroshima Prefecture Board of Education to Sera Upper Secondary School. I could hardly tell my family about my transfer. So I kept it secret until the very last night before the official order was published in the local newspaper. When I finally confessed to my mother and wife about my transfer, my wife cried and complained, “Why does it have to be you?” “You have exhaustibly worked at the Educational Board until you almost got sick.” I told her, “This is my inevitable fate as a public servant of the Prefecture Educational Board. I chose this career and have an obligation to the Board.” “Being selected to this post, I must do my best to implement the corrective measures to achieve educational reform.”

On April 1, 2000, I received my official appointment from superintendent TATSUNO, and left for Sera Upper Secondary School. Pulling up in my car at the side of the front entrance of the school, I reached the front door, but none of the teachers came out to welcome me. Feeling that I was not welcome, I entered the school office, and presented my written appointment to the secretary and entered the Principal’s Office. At that point, I thought that as the principal I should make teachers understand what I expected them to do, and that in doing so I would not get angry.

Right from the very first day, I entered into negotiations with the members of the Teacher’s Union. We held negotiations constantly but intermittently and the Union requested the school management to forge an agreement with the Upper Secondary School Teacher’s Union. The Union executive organ threatened that “if we didn’t close the agreement, they would not cooperate with the school administration for the change in class schedule.” Further, as if tempting us, they revealed, that they could work cooperatively when they unofficially and secretly drafted the confirmation and agreement before I came. So they suggested that “We should work hand in hand for a better relationship.” However, I consistently rejected and said, “We are entitled to our own beliefs but we should always be ready to explain openly to the prefectural citizens about everything.”

At Sera Upper Secondary School, teachers’ registration in the Union membership was 100% making it a very strong Union branch. Even after the suicide of the former principal, the faculty continued to resist in the hoisting of the flag and the singing of the anthem during the graduation ceremony. I was

therefore sure it would bring much confusion to the enrollment ceremony in April if the guidelines were enforced. While I was sitting with them at intermittently-held negotiations, I visited the town mayor, the superintendent of local educational board, principals of lower secondary schools and the chairpersons and representatives of various autonomous groups in the community, asking for their cooperation. They assured me with these words, “We do hope you will hoist the flag and sing the anthem. We promise to support you.” With these words that I received, I was deeply encouraged and motivated.

During the faculty assembly, we discussed the issue of the entrance ceremony but everyone seemed against the hoisting of the flag and singing of the anthem because by doing so they believed we were going to trample on the innocent feelings of the new pupils. After the meeting, one teacher sneaked into my office late at night, and quietly told me “I hope we will hoist the flag and sing the anthem. I am afraid that if these are not done, Sera School will become isolated and abandoned from the community.” After uttering these words, the teacher hastily left. This incident made me realize that there was a silent opinion and I was completely blind not to see this.

The Union strongly resisted the presence of mass media during the enrollment ceremony as this should be a solemn occasion. I told them that it was not appropriate to reject the mass media’s presence because people in Japan were eagerly waiting to see how the entrance ceremony in our school would turn out.

Until late at night before the ceremony, we continued to hold the faculty assembly, but we never succeeded in reaching a consensus, even though I had firmly decided on what to do the next day. Together with the vice principal and the office secretary, we prepared the national flag and a cassette tape of the national anthem and checked the condition of the tape player. I took all necessary preparations including spending the night in my office.

On the morning of the entrance ceremony, the vice principal and I again checked the flag and the tape of the national anthem. During the faculty meeting in the morning, I announced to the teachers and the staff, “Based upon the national course of study, we should hoist the national flag and sing the national anthem.” Many resisted saying “You are trampling over our feelings and those of our children!” Many other harsh words were said to me one after another, and the atmosphere was tense and seemed out of my hand. After an hour of haggling and arguing, I declared, “The national flag and song are indispensable. I am going to take all responsibility.” Then I adjourned the faculty meeting.

The enrollment ceremony commenced. The secretary was the master of ceremonies and announced “The next part of the program is the singing of the National Anthem. We will sing together.” The vice principal pressed the play button of the cassette deck, but the music did not come out; he pressed it again and again, but still no sound. Almost in a panic, we tried to check the batteries but the batteries all fell on the floor. To pacify the vice-principal, I said “It’s OK. Let’s just sing together!” After having said this, I stood up behind the microphone and started singing alone. Very soon, the parents and guardians of pupils attending the ceremony followed me and started singing. Gradually the sound of voices became larger and created a big echo in the ceremony hall.

To tell you the truth, I am tone deaf; so I don’t go to Karaoke or have never sung in any drinking bars. But that morning, I thought that “if even the principal refrained from singing the national anthem, who else can guide the pupils to sing it?” Taking responsibilities for my duties to guide the school in implementing the national anthem in the ceremony, I practiced singing everyday on the way to school while driving. I used a cassette tape and having used it a million times could have almost caused it to be broken. It was indeed fortunate that I went through with singing the anthem during the entrance ceremony.

4. Creating a school supported by the participation of parents and community residents

After the ceremony was over, my life as a principal became “hell.” Teachers accused me of having begged the Board to become a principal with the promise to hoist the flag and sing the national anthem. Worst, they said they “didn’t regard me as their principal.” Thus, nobody called me *Kocho* (principal in Japanese); instead they called me Tanabe-san (Mr. Tanabe) whenever they talked to me. After the farewell and welcome ceremony for faculty members who were being transferred to other schools and those coming over, Union executives like the Union branch chairperson and secretary made sure they were around me and the vice principal. This was a deliberate attempt to isolate me from the teachers and staff and from preventing teachers approaching.

The entire school was under Union control, with the union executives at the center even to the point that the Union Personnel Committee determined in-school personnel matters. I, as the principal was completely excluded, and the task left for me was to oversee one grade and an assignment related to the *Dowa* (*6) education promotion department. The union held their meetings prior to any faculty assembly

to prevent free interaction between the teachers and the principal. Definitely, whatever I wished to happen would never be accepted in the faculty meetings. This type of system was firmly established way back before I became the principal.

I had a strong will to bring back the rightful authority of the principal. To do this, I needed to establish a participatory-style school management system which would allow active involvement of parents and community members. Thus, in June, I proposed the creation of a “Group” that would foster Sera Upper Secondary School. As expected there was strong opposition. They raised the questions like “Who will approve it? Who would like to be a member of a group that would pressure the school?” My explanation was “Without support from parents and the community, how can Sera Upper Secondary School survive?” I persuaded with utmost persistence. Thus, on August 30, with the active cooperation from half of the teachers as well as parents and community members, we managed to hold the General Assembly for the establishment of the Sera Upper Secondary School Fostering Group. This group aimed to represent the opinions of parents and community members, and to provide support for the strengthening of the school management anchored on the principal. The Group became my biggest supporter, and many events and movements took place, among these were “Brighten up!! Joint Concert at Sera Upper Secondary School”, “Sera Upper Secondary School-- Future Designing Congress”, “International Exchange Promotion Conference”, etc. Having many opportunities to go to school, parents and community people started “knowing, seeking, selecting and participating in” school activities. They started to trust the school again. I observed the rapid rehabilitation of the school with greater reliability and certainty.

5. Open school and compilation with laws

In September, the School Education Committee of Hiroshima Prefectural Assembly sent a delegation to observe Sera Upper Secondary School. It was unprecedented to allow the mass media in during the Education Committee observation, but I requested the Prefecture Board of Education to allow us to have the press. The condition of faculty meetings, in-school personnel recruitment matters, illegal filing of unofficial leave (for non-curricular activities and non-school related activities) etc. are examples of the many malpractices that needed to be disclosed. I believed that exposing these malpractices to the prefecture residents, corrective measures could be done thoroughly, and it seemed inevitable for our school at that time. Other schools and the former principals of the

school pointed out “You would expose all the shame of the school to the entire prefecture”, “It is only the principal who has to undertake reforms with all the power and responsibility”, “It is not ideal to use the power of media, which could only make the case go out of your control.” These opinions did not hold water as after the school observation of the School Education Committee, corrective measures ordered by the Educational Ministry were done immediately as were the implementation of the orders. After April, those who were resisting and fighting over the nullification of the unofficial leave of absence for reasons that this had been customarily practiced finally withdrew. The press release was a turning point, thus, this malpractice was completely abolished.

In November, NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) proposed the broadcasting of our faculty assembly while tackling the issue of the national flag and anthem. Since the decision would affect other schools, I asked the permission of superintendent Mr.TATSUNO, and Mr.KOCHIGAMI, the chairperson of the Principal’s Association. While it was easy to ask permission from the top administrators, it was far more difficult to get consensus from the teachers, causing delay in the airing of the press report. It was aired only in December. TV cameras were focused on the back side of the faculty members. No names were mentioned during the meeting. Several precautions were made to ensure the safety and privacy of the faculty members.

In general, a “Faculty Assembly” would connote democratic discussion and discourse, however, it was not the case at Sera Upper Secondary School. The Faculty Assembly was always preceded by the Union meeting wherein decisions on the Faculty Assembly agenda were made in accordance with the Union policy. The only thing the 59 faculty members would do was just to concede with and make comments in accordance with the pre-assembly decisions. It was pointless to engage in discussion as the decisions were already made by the union. No matter how eloquently the principal argued and proved his points, all the statements were denied. Though some would empathize or agree with the principal’s opinion and wish to support the principal in the discussion, it was better to keep silent because everything was already decided by the Union.

But once the TV camera started rolling, one could hardly deny the Principal’s authority, or say something against the law, nor burst out in anger in a loud voice. Therefore, the discussion on the national flag and anthem was often prolonged and covered only trivial matters like whether the ceremony should be held on the stage or on the floor. Since the faculty members would not attend the meeting if it

touched on the issue of the national flag and anthem, inevitably it was cancelled. It had been difficult to have an opportunity to talk about the issue. In mid February, we finally had the flag and anthem debate, but the discussion was not deep enough to solve the issue. When there was no TV camera, I would be rained with negatives comments like “We really doubt if you are competent to take responsibility.”

Whenever some teachers gave comments like “I agree with you, Mr. Principal” “I think we have to comply with the national course of study”, the opposition group teachers would go to the classrooms of these teachers and tell the pupils, “Your homeroom teacher is on the side of the principal, and trying to disturb your thoughts on the graduation ceremony.” Being provoked, the pupils rushed into the lesson preparation room and accused their homeroom teacher of antagonism.

In spite of opposition, the graduation ceremony was eventually undertaken upon the Principal’s discretion. However, there had been no guidance to pupils about attire and behavior during the ceremony. It was not only the teachers but also the majority of pupils who kept sitting even when they were asked to stand up, so we could say that it was a miserable and shameful graduation ceremony.

Making the faculty assembly open to the public through mass media was the most effective way of making everyone aware of the compilations of laws. We have to make decisions with a very clear understanding so that everyone can clearly explain to others when asked. We also have to show that we were responsible in deciding matters in accordance with the law.

6. Pupils change, the school changes

When I was new at Sera Upper Secondary School, I saw countless problems in student behavior, like children with inappropriate attire such as dyed brown hair, make-up and loosely-worn socks. Problematic behaviors included smoking and drinking alcohol, sitting in and around the school grounds but never going into the classroom, going to school in the afternoon and leaving school early.

Immediately from my first day, I started patrolling the school and brought those pupils back into the classroom. Instead of appreciating my action, I felt teachers were really annoyed with what I did.

One day around 50 angry boys burst into my office accusing me, “Ever since you came here, the school became strict” and “Don’t think this is your world.” They used abusive language against me and they occupied my office for about 3 hours. Most teachers who passed by my office just ignored it and I could feel their feeling of indifference. Indeed, I felt sad and thought teachers here had never

reproached the pupils from the heart; neither had they spoken to them a single word of affection.

This prompted me to initiate programs and with the support of the PTA, I launched a “Greeting Campaign.” (*7) I greeted kids on Tuesday mornings, “Good morning, it is nice to see you!” Whenever I greeted loudly, pupils put their face down with shyness but pleasantly went into the school at a smart pace. During the day, whenever I met a pupil in school, I greeted him/her “Good morning” in the morning, “Hello” in the afternoon, and “Good-bye” after school. Pupils gradually exchanged a greeting with us, and the community started to have a better evaluation of the school. Greeting is not something you wait for and reply to, but something that you start from your side! This became a lesson to me.

Pupils in the Life Welfare Course were very much looking forward to a fashion show at the annual Culture Festival. It is not an exaggeration to say that it was their dream to mark the end of their three years of schooling modeling on stage wearing a dress or Japanese *kimono* which each of them designed and handmade. In my third year, I daringly invited a professional model from Tokyo. The stage performance was beyond comparison, and pupils, parents and community residents were deeply impressed.

In special courses like Production Information, Environmental Science and Life Welfare, pupils practiced presenting their research projects but they failed to do clear and impressive presentations, and the outcome was nothing praiseworthy or for the pupils to be proud of. To remedy this, I instructed teachers to give thorough instruction on the proper use of the computer display tool called Power Point [program for presentation], and on reading the students’ manuscripts. Our efforts resulted in presentations beyond recognition, and this made pupils more confident during the presentation. Now, pupils from both the General Course and the Special Courses cooperatively present their research outcomes during the Integrated Study Period.

I believe that a school and its pupils can be changed by teachers who can share the same ambition with the pupils, live enthusiastically and work hard with utmost sincerity.

7. School management, being developed with the community

Like other mountainous areas, the Sera Plateau area faces social issues like the decreasing number of children, aging population, and a succession in agricultural activities. Sera Upper Secondary School can survive only when the Sera Plateau

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area develops into an ideal town in which people would wish to live at least once in their life. It is a must for our school to actively cooperate to promote the Sera Plateau community and address these social concerns.

We wanted to create “a town where senior citizens wish to live.” Thus, we established the “Sera Senior Citizen College” utilizing the vacant seats of students. We encouraged elderly residents to attend lessons with youngsters, on music, fine arts, Japanese calligraphy, computer operations, website construction, and cultivation of endangered plants using biotechnology.

Also with the cooperation of our pupils, they designed “The healthy road, strewn with greenery” and planted flowers along the river bank protection area, as part of an effort to create a “town in which people desire to live at least once in their lifetime.” In the near future, we want to launch a research project on grape cultivation utilizing the idle paddy fields.

Aiming to establish a town where the young and old live and work harmoniously together, in the Life Welfare Course, students learn the rudiments of providing help and care at home. Through this course, meetings are held providing opportunities for interactions among elementary, lower and upper secondary pupils and elderly folk. Included in the course is the actual practice of care giving at local welfare institutions. These various activities created a friendly atmosphere between the young and the old and the cultivated a welfare conscious mind.

To encourage local skilled parties (human resources) to support this welfare scheme, we are planning to venture into the welfare business such as offering ‘day care service’, food delivery, or providing a support service to elderly people living alone and those in welfare institutions. In the future, we hope to further promote our research to utilize the Botanical Garden [which will be opened in the Prefectural Citizen’s Park and Agriculture Park] as the senior citizen’s activity center.

To create ‘a town in which the younger generation wish to live’, we offer opportunities of agricultural internship programs at various agro-parks including rice paddies, orchards and vegetable farms, floriculture fields and tea plantations. This program also aims to transfer the skills of agro-technology to successive generations.

To make use of idle paddy fields, we grow vegetables and sell produce at a shop located in the bus terminal, which provides ways of experiencing farmland enterprise. We hope the General Course pupils will also actively join in this farmland management, and expand our agro-business.

Aiming to create a ‘town where people can dream towards the 21st century’, we are promoting international exchange actively with the Republic of Kenya, Taiwan, and other countries.

8. Promotion of International Exchange

Sera Upper Secondary School is proud of its past glory of being the national champion four times in the *Ekiden* (*8). It has also hosted the trial games for the Chugoku region. This community’s claim to fame is being the hometown of *ekiden*. However in November 2000, in the preliminary games of *ekiden* for Hiroshima Prefecture held in the northern Miyoshi city, Sera Upper Secondary School disappointedly ranked only second against everyone’s expectation. In the next games covering the Chugoku District, our school barely managed to be one of the finalists for the national competition tournament for upper secondary schools.

The same fate happened the following year in November of 2001 during the preliminary games for Hiroshima Prefecture held at the cross-country field in northern Saijo town. The school performance ranked second, which was not good enough to make it to the national competition level. The *ekiden* fans in Sera Plateau area were disappointed saying, “There is no more hope for the Sera Upper Secondary School.” I hopelessly couldn’t do anything to comfort them in their misery over the loss by the Sera Upper Secondary School. As I was driving back to school alone, I could not hold back the tears from rolling down my cheeks. I was determined to do my best so that one day Sera Upper Secondary School would be the national champion in the Upper Secondary Schools *Ekiden* tournament. This is one way of helping realize the dream of Sera people and making the school the star of the Sera Plateau.

As an immediate action, I organized an International Exchange Promotion Committee composed of faculty members, members from the PTA, alumni association and Sera community groups. On one cold and gusty day in December, Mr. KOJIMA Toshifumi, the chairperson of the campaign club of the track and field club and I went to the Embassy of Kenya in Jiyugaoka, Tokyo and expressed our desire to accept Kenyan students. So in February of the following year, we welcomed Kenyan students at Sera Upper Secondary School.

Soon after, more than ten JICA participants from the Republic of Kenya came to Japan for a training program. All of them were either Educational Ministry officials or secondary school principals, and as part of their program, they visited our school. Every year thereafter, Sera Upper Secondary School has welcomed



JICA participants from Kenya and the activities paved the way to our harmonious relationships with the Republic of Kenya.

Way back in the early Showa era (1926-1989) foreign students from Taiwan were welcomed to our school during the time of an agricultural recession. At present, there is a Taiwanese alumni association ‘Taiwan *Tong.xue.hui*’ with more than 60 members. Thanks to the great assistance of the alumni, we could form a sister relationship with *Datong* Upper Middle School in Taiwan. Three years after the establishment of a sister relationship, we were able to conduct a school trip to Taiwan that was participated in not only by pupils but also by community residents. At *Datong* Upper Middle School more than 3000 pupils, as well as their parents and people of the community, welcomed us warmly with open arms.

Some graduates of Sera Upper Secondary School are running schools or hospitals/clinics in Brazil, South America. We have also actively promoted exchange programs with the *Nisei* and *Sansei* (descendants of Japanese emigrants in the second and the third generation) in South American countries.

Having had exchange programs with people from over ten nations, these

activities have caused the deepening of understanding of cultures and histories among the countries involved. Every time we hoisted national flags and played national anthems of different countries including Japan, we instilled among the pupils the importance of showing respect to other countries. With this exposure and the various experiences in international exchange, the younger generation will surely forego any historical issues among countries, and favor the building of trust and friendship instead. I believe the opportunities to have face to face encounters with other nationalities could pave the way for a brighter future of Japan.

9. Educational reform at Sera Upper Secondary School

To implement the five-day school week (*9), we introduced a new structure. The school year is divided into two semesters, and everyday seven periods of 45-minutes each, is offered. The pupils were grouped according to academic ability and lessons were basically done through small group activities. Within a month, pupils got accustomed to it, but on the contrary, teachers continued to complain saying, “Teaching seven periods daily is too much work and very tiring.” “We have no time to summarize each lesson.” There was also strong resistance against ability-based grouping. Some believe students should be treated equally regardless of scholastic ability; thus some teachers taught exactly the same lesson content to both advanced and regular classes.

The enrolment was not enough to meet the quota of the school because there were not many applicants to our school. To attract more applicants, we incorporated the Integrated Elective System allowing the students more freedom in choosing their elective subjects; and expanded the application process to allow students regardless of their residence (as long as it is in Hiroshima Prefecture) to come to our school. These measures upgraded the school and added value. School-based subjects were also newly instituted, among which were “Intellectual development” and “Second foreign language.” Furthermore, working in cooperation with the university, we developed lessons with the latest sophisticated technology like, ‘Gene manipulation’, ‘IT meteorology’ and ‘Horticultural therapy’.

To guide the graduating students in choosing their desired careers, we organized a special college-bound class, a qualification-oriented class, supplementary lessons held early in the morning and after school, and extra lessons utilizing the satellite broadcasting system. As a result, the Sera Upper Secondary School maintained the original six classes per grade, and also demonstrated a skyrocketing improvement

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in the number of students going to college.

Faculty members commented, “Mr. Principal, you tied a rope around our necks and pulled us with force; but you made the school a very good one. This is not only good for the students but for us faculty as well.” Upon hearing this, I wept with joy. Normally, teachers hate change. Thus, the principal must initiate reforms based on his/her own philosophy; otherwise there would hardly be any reform. I always believe that the principal is the main engine propelling others to move.

Concluding Remarks

In 2006, Sera Upper Secondary School celebrated its 110th foundation anniversary. We continuously engage in changing the school environment to achieve two ultimate goals. The first goal is for forty of our graduates to pass the entrance examination to public universities (either national or prefectural). The second goal is for the school to be the national champion in the Upper Secondary School *Ekiden* tournament. Having high goals which require quantum leaps will hopefully change our attitude towards work. With a great wall to overcome, the normal reaction would be to give up without even trying. But we encourage the pupils to keep on trying and accepting the challenge instead of just giving up outright without even trying. We want our pupils to have the spirit, “Anyway, let me just try it!” Even if moving ahead may not immediately bring us closer towards the high goal, we just keep on moving because for sure we will reach these goals.

Through community based programs like agro-business, developing a town with plants and flower blossoms, and a welfare business, we were able to establish a relationship wherein there was free exchange of ideas and cooperation. Such unofficial organizations could expand outside the school, to Town Administration, Fruit Tree Group, International Exchange Promotion Committee with involvement by alumni and community residents. Thus, we gradually built the foundation for our school in the community creating a support network for the school.

In the past six years, though it seemed I was merely holding a tiny light in my hand, I made steady steps with the teachers. I sincerely appreciate them and their support.

Poem: Going through the dark with just a flicker of light in hand
No need to fear the darkness.
Depending on the light, small but trustworthy.

(by SATO Issai, a Japanese Confucian scholar, 1772-1859)

This chapter is based on a lecture delivered by Mr. TANABE Yasushi for JICA participants in the science and mathematics teacher seminar for the Republic of Ghana. It was held on August seventh, 2003 at CICE international seminar room of Hiroshima University.

The core behind his strength

I met Mr. TANABE for the first time in February 2003. I was at his lecture held for the students of the Faculty of Education which we project members organized.

The first impression I had was “How straightforwardly he presents key issues”. There weren’t any single uncertain terms in his comments, and I felt uplifted and comforted.

What impressed me next was the way he was, as I understood he was holding a strong anger and indignation against the current situation. It was against the background of the upper secondary school to which he was assigned. The school environment there was nothing praiseworthy and triggered the suicide of a former principal, and in general, there was low appreciation of teachers by the society. Facing such circumstances, he was not a person who could easily give up saying, “Oh, well, it’s OK.” “Well, there is nothing I can do.” I guess a lot of people tend to give up easily in such cases. But Principal TANABE tackled the problem; he did not think of his own safety but devoted all his life in bringing it back to order. One needs a lot of energy to convert the status quo. I wondered from where he drew his power to confront the difficulty.

During his lecture, one of the project members asked the question, “I understand you need a large amount of fuel to change the fixed customary practices. What has become the driving force in your case?” Then he replied, “Through my footsteps as being a school teacher, through teaching children, I encountered tremendous satisfaction when I achieved something together with children.” He said those experiences have fueled him up sufficiently. Also, to the other question, “What ability do students in a pre-service teacher training course need to have to become a teacher?” he answered: “Children grow up while looking at the grown-ups next to them. Thus, you should be an adult whom children want to be.”

Rebuilding the school where the environment was worse enough to have caused a principal’s death, and paying attention only to that, we can easily focus on his competency. But what flows below the reformation is, he hopes children will learn a lot from admirable teachers while building good relationships with teachers. Power must be taken from his straight and pure thoughts on education. Mr. TANABE’s ideas and ability in his uncountable reforms at the school are indeed admirable. In order to revive the trust in the school, he devised many schemes.

For instance, he opened the faculty meeting to the public, and made use of PTA newspapers. Regarding the depopulation problem in mountain regions, not simply accepting it as a fatal pinch, he also took it as a chance and searched for strategies to survive. He made the school a place where multiple generations and various nationalities can learn together. Beyond that, coming out with an abundance of elaborate ideas, he supported school education. His supremeness and energy for school reform comes not simply from his competency, but probably from his deep affection towards children.

I felt the aim of his school reformation was not to change the teachers alone, but in actuality addressing everything that was done for pupils.

In the core of his lecture, Mr. TANABE focused on “How I changed teachers’ awareness” and “How I rebuilt the school.” He clearly exhibited the critical aspects of the school situation, therefore in the first impression we thought “How straightly and critically he comments! He is a beacon of confidence and a great teacher.” But as the lecture went on, we could touch upon his real thought towards children deep in himself. In the end, we came to think “He is indeed a great teacher.” And we looked at him with admiration.

The difficulties Mr. TANABE went through must be globally experienced, and helpful to the educational personnel in Japan and in developing nations. By being exposed to the rich experience of Mr. TANABE, we hope you will actually feel his motivation to school reform and his warm thoughts deep in his heart given to school children.

Project member A

- (*1) Baby boomers are those who were born right after WW II (1945), so the birth rate was extremely high and the number of school children increased sharply.
- (*2) Nation-wide student campaign against government (policy), a student movement spread nation-wide in Japan from 1968, mainly involving university students, and devastated the academic facilities. Around 80 % of universities in Japan were effected [i.e. There were no lectures at these universities].
- (*3) Hiroshima Upper Normal School, publicly founded in 1902. One of the three major normal schools first established in Japan. Later it became Hiroshima University.
- (*4) Several schools in an area were grouped, and pupils could take the entrance exam relative to their school district, however as to which school they would go (after passing the exam) was decided by the district authority. Pupils could not choose a particular school where they wanted to study, but the enrollment was decided from among the group. It was aimed to relax examination hell and to generalize the school ranking. Now it is abolished nation-wide.

- (*5) The teachers' union claims the national flag and the anthem as remaining powerful symbols of Japan's wartime military and thus protests the government's contention that it is important to show proper respect to them, and protests the raising of the flag and singing of the anthem during the ceremonies of the school.
- (*6) In Japan there is an occupational minority group who were discriminated against simply because they were the descendants of people whose jobs were considered ritually unclean so they were ranked at the bottom of the society during feudalism. In 1871, the Meiji government promulgated the Emancipation Edict denouncing the lowest social rank, but for decades after that discrimination remained and special guidance was also undertaken at school to educate children.
- (*7) In the morning, the principal and PTA members in turn stand at the school gate or at the corners of the roads in the school district, and greet pupils who are going to school.
- (*8) Ekiden or long-distance relay road race
- (*9) The 5-day school week started in 2001. Japan had been criticized from the international society for its long working hours, and there was no exception for schools. The school week was shortened to Monday to Friday, and classes customarily-held Saturday morning were abolished.

My basic stance towards education • My steps taken as a managerial staff

BANMOTO Masakazu

BANMOTO Masakazu was born in 1947 in Kure city, Hiroshima Prefecture.

After graduating from a university, he became a Science teacher at an upper secondary school. After working as a management officer at Hiroshima Prefecture Board of Education, he was appointed in 1995 as Principal at Geihoku Branch School, an affiliate to Kake Upper Secondary School. In 1998 he was assigned to Kure Mitsuta Upper Secondary School as Vice Principal. In 2001, he became the principal of Gion-kita Upper Secondary School. Since 2003, he has been the principal of Hiroshima Lower & Upper Secondary School in Hiroshima Prefecture (current position).



1. Knowing the wonder of Natural Science

My uncle, who lives about a kilometer away from my house, has a unique personal history. After graduating from school, he worked as a carpenter for some years but at some time in his twenties, he quit his job. Then he entered a university, studied hard, and became a lower secondary school teacher who majored in the Japanese language. At the age of around 50, he quit his job again, and became an associate professor of a private university, then was promoted to a professor. While he was working at a lower secondary school, he was researching on his own theme “Study on *Haiku*, or an amusing and playful *waka* (traditional Japanese poetry)” and published many papers. My uncle also did a lot of other things that were not related to teaching. Taking advantage of being a carpenter previously, he crafted various things, for example, he built a tea-ceremony room in his garden, or created *magatama* (ancient-style good-luck charm in a C-shape used as accessories) by liquefying glass. He is now retired and still enjoys inventing many things.

When I was a child I used to visit his house. Each time I was there, he taught me how to make some kind of handicraft, which is now considered as scientific materials taught at school. There were no convenient science kits in those days, so we used wooden boards from *kamaboko* (which was sold in a shop with boiled fish paste on top), or empty cans from preserved food, and then made bells and motors

or crystal radio sets. We filled a bottle with baking powder and rice vinegar, and then made a simplified fire extinguisher. I still remember how excited I was when my handmade bell rang, when the motor ran, when I heard a sound through ear phones, and when the mixture spouted out of a beer bottle.

After entering a lower secondary school, however, I no longer paid frequent visits to my uncle's house, but I was completely captured by my interest for Natural Science which was cultivated in me by my uncle. I was indeed impressed when I by chance read the theory of differential and integral calculus in an upper secondary textbook, or when I learned the special principle of relativity written in a paperback pocket edition.

I used to take it for granted. Before I knew it, I was already being drawn to the world of Natural Science.

2. Whether to be a researcher, or an educator

After graduating from an upper secondary school, I enrolled in the Tokyo University of Science, and studied Chemistry at the Faculty of Science for one year. Then I took up Earth Science at the Faculty of Science, Hiroshima University. In both universities, I was allowed to enroll in elective subjects on top of the required credits, so I designed my weekly schedule such that I had practically no vacant periods for myself (though all other students had some open hours in their schedules). Considering the campus life as "a great opportunity to learn as much as possible", I tried to attend all kinds of lectures in subjects like Physics, Biology and Geography even in other faculties and departments. Whether my record was good or not, I just spontaneously studied and earned more credits than required. I am proud of myself at that time, even now. The number of credits I earned at Hiroshima University was a record high at that time, but within 20 years, one of my students broke my record.

After university graduation, I was unsure whether to proceed to a postgraduate course or to work as a teacher. If I entered the postgraduate course, I could specialize in geology or mineralogy, and thus make my way to be a researcher. If I became a teacher, I could teach pupils the fun and the wonders of Natural Science. Both occupations seemed quite mesmerizing as a life-time mission and vocation for me.

My thoughts changed over and over again, until on the 31st of March, the last day of the academic year, I finally made up my mind to go on with a post graduate course. I went to bed but at midnight, I was awakened suddenly, and

could not go back to sleep. My other option, to be a teacher, crossed my mind, and I reconsidered it for a few hours until dawn. Finally, I decided to be ‘a teacher’.

I ultimately chose to be a teacher because taking my personality into consideration, and imagining my life after the age of 30, I thought I would be having a more meaningful life as an educator. In truth, there are no available means of determining which occupation should have been chosen, but I believe that once a decision is made, one must stick with it, and since I decided to be a teacher, I stuck to this resolve.

3. Four seasons at school

In April 1971, I was newly recruited at the Geihoku Branch School which was affiliated with Kake Upper Secondary School in Hiroshima Prefecture. I faced a drastic change in life, as my residence was moved from an urban area to an under-populated town, and the school and teachers there were also far different from what I had imagined.

In general, a newly-recruited teacher has formed an image of pupils, teachers and the school based upon the school environment and the life experience from his or her childhood. Contrary to the expectation, there are a variety of pupils and teachers, and schools also vary in reality. The disparity between the imaged school and the real one is extremely huge, which will often lead us to have uncountable worries and anxieties.

I, for one, could not adequately handle the issues of teaching and class management as I wanted. In addition, I often had feelings of confusion and regret. Many times, I thought “I have mistakenly chosen this occupation, I should have proceeded to take up my postgraduate course.” During weekends on Saturdays and Sundays, I went to Hiroshima University as a research student; I also took several national qualification examinations in view of a possible career change in the future.

One year passed by. On the day of the graduation ceremony in March, I experienced one of the most moving scenes. I saw both students and the faculty members crying and shedding tears. Then I said to myself, “There are ups and downs in a teacher’s life, there are issues too difficult to handle, as if I had run up against a wall. But look at this graduation ceremony. Why is my heart filled with so much emotion? If I do my best, soon enough I will reap the fruits of my labor. If there is winter, spring can not be far behind. There must also be changing seasons at school, just like in a person’s life”.

In Geihoku Branch School, I made my first step of my long career as a teacher. “From time to time I may remain stagnant by facing difficulties, but I should not look back. Everyone faces hardships. I shall just look ahead and do my best all the time so that there must be a path to go forward.” All in all, I spent four years in the Geihoku area, and I had made a fresh start as a teacher though I was still green in the profession.

4. My experiences as a Science teacher

In April 1975, I was transferred to the Kure Mitsuta Upper Secondary School in Hiroshima Prefecture. This school was prominent for its high percentage of graduates who go on to higher education. The school mission was to upgrade the scholastic achievement of pupils and guide them to reach their goals about career-related choices, so the school demanded high levels of teaching and career guidance.

I had to be capable of responding to pupils’ questioning properly so during my first days I studied the university entrance exam drills until late at night every day.

(1) Promoting research on nature in the community, and developing teaching/learning materials using the research outcome

In Japan, the number of children who dislike Science gradually increases beginning from the elementary to the lower secondary school, then on to the upper secondary school. Several factors account for this. For instance, one-way lessons tend to be taught in ways that do not promote collaboration between teachers and the students. In addition, students can not see how Science is connected and actually relevant to their lives.

I wanted to further heighten my students’ interests and the spirit of inquiry toward nature, and deepen their understanding in nature and natural phenomena. I decided to connect the content of my lessons to daily life and nature in the community in order to motivate them. Therefore, I conducted basic research on topographic and geologic features, climate and natural disasters, then developed teaching materials for these topics.

(2) Creating lessons that facilitate students’ understanding

I utilized my self-made instructional materials in Earth Science and also in a school-based subject “Regional Research” at both Kure Mitsuta Upper Secondary School and the Geihoku Branch School.

As for Earth Science, I included contents that were indispensable for the entrance exam to a university, and I also prepared my own teaching material, called ‘Mr. Ban’s Notebook’, a summary of my research on nature in the community, and maximized its use in my classes.

(3) Attracting students to my lessons

Teachers are expected to deliver high quality lessons by carefully selecting the contents and improving and modifying the methodology. However, even if the teachers explain logically while clearly focusing on the objectives of the lesson content, if they failed to arouse pupils’ interests and concerns, then an active learning style will not be realized, thus the aims of the lesson will never be achieved.

In order to gain my pupils’ attention in my class, I often talked about my own experiences of making trips inside and outside Japan [see below for further details] in relation to the lesson content, and introduced the insights I gained through traveling. Also, to help explain scientific phenomena to pupils, I frequently used body movements to visually express the invisible structure. For instance, when I taught a lesson on geostrophic wind in Earth Science, I used my left hand to indicate the pressure gradient force, my right hand to signify the Coriolis effect, and my body to symbolize the wind, as I moved around the classroom. Pupils fondly nicknamed this as “geostrophic wind dance”, and the lesson became very popular among my students. I remember some of them even recorded my lessons.

I always tried to introduce my teaching practices and the outcomes of my research, so I published them in university journals or in journals of scientific societies. Furthermore, I applied for Educational Awards hosted by newspaper companies, and I wrote entries for paper contests. I did this not only to keep a personal record of my work, but by making my works accessible to the public, I expected I would be able to improve my craft through the comments and suggestions from various sectors. I also hoped it would be some kind of reference for other teachers as they plan their lessons. One of my publications, entitled “Development of Teaching/Learning Materials on Topographic and Geologic Features and Climate in Kure Area” [author BANMOTO, 1986] is one of them, and I heard it was used in lessons by teachers of other schools. Hearing this was enough to please me, furthermore there was another episode with this book. One day a visually-impaired person visited the Kure City Library and asked about the content of my book. As a result, it developed into a new activity that volunteers

made an audio book of my publication. It became the first of its kind in the Kure City Library, so the library staff established a section for this type of reference material. I was deeply moved by the turn of events involving my work.

5. Enhancing myself as a teacher

(1) Challenges to obtain various qualifications

I have constantly talked to pupils about the importance of spending their school life with certain objectives, as a homeroom teacher in the class, and as Principal in the school assembly. It is also important that I myself set up a certain goal as a teacher for their life model. Therefore, I challenged various examinations relating to the Natural Sciences, namely an amateur radio operator, a hygiene administrator, a hazardous substance operator, and obtained the official qualifications.

(2) Overseas observation and visit to museums

To deepen my cultural understanding and widen my outlook in education and natural science, I made sightseeing trips and formal observation tours abroad and I tried to utilize the new knowledge and experiences into my lessons as much as I could.

During the teachers' delegation trips abroad sponsored by the Ministry of Education, or (Pupils') Educational Counseling Groups hosted by the Hiroshima Prefecture Board of Education, I was able to visit schools in the U.S.A. and Canada. In addition, I made private solo trips to North America, Europe, Australia and Siberia, and to actually feel the vast continents I used trains and buses. Whenever I was abroad privately, I tried to visit museums of natural history in the local areas. I saw a large number of dinosaur skeletons exhibited in the Natural History Museum in the UK and visited the American Museum of Natural History in New York, and saw Apollo spacecrafts at the Smithsonian's museums in Washington and round sliced models of human bodies at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, Illinois.

6. School management and educational practices as a managerial staff

I was a teacher at Kure Mitsuta Upper Secondary School for 13 years, and then worked at the Hiroshima Prefecture Board of Education office for seven years. Later on I worked as Principal for three years at the Geihoku Branch School where I had previously worked as a fresh teacher. From 1998 to 2001, I was the vice-

My basic stance towards education • My steps taken as a managerial staff

principal of Kure Mitsuta Upper Secondary School. Since 2001, I worked as the Principal of Gion-kita Upper Secondary School in Hiroshima Prefecture. Since 2003, I have been the Principal of Hiroshima Lower and Upper Secondary School in Hiroshima Prefecture.

(1) Specifying the school issues and management policy

The School Evaluation System was introduced in Hiroshima Prefecture since 2003. According to the system, principals are assigned to specify the mission and vision of the school and its educational goals. Long before this was institutionalized, I had already been presenting to the faculty my basic thoughts towards education and my management policies. In both Kure Mitsuta and Gion-kita Upper Secondary School, in early April, I conducted an analysis on the current situation and issues in the school, made documented reports on the vision and educational policies to the faculty members, and printed them in the School Journal to make the information open to the public.

(2) Boosting the moral and motivation of the teachers, and improving their talents and teaching abilities

Boosting the moral and motivation of the teachers and improving their talents and teaching skills, thus helping them reach their full potential to demonstrate their abilities, will greatly contribute to their effectiveness in the classroom. This will also surely impact the students' academic ability and growth of humanity and thus will consequently lead to their self realization for the rest of their life.

Originally every teacher has excellence in ability, even if it is not displayed yet, it potentially exists. Some are capable to upgrade their talents and teaching skills, but others spend the days doing nothing, and as a result their abilities will regress in due time.

In general, when we are in an environment where we can feel self-existence, naturally we will find a feeling of self-satisfaction and a meaning in life, thus our morale will be boosted. The school should be a place where each teacher's ability is approved of, and helps teachers enable to participate in school administration duties spontaneously while having mutual trust. Under this kind of environment, teachers would surely actively participate in educational research and training, and make every effort to hone their talents and teaching skills.

Therefore, managerial staff must encourage the faculty to be involved in training and educational research inside and outside the school, and thus motivate

them so that they will voluntarily try to brush up their talents and teaching abilities. In my case I promoted the lesson study, and encouraged faculty members to take up postgraduate courses at the University of the Air (*Open University). I also recommended that they conducted their own research and contributed articles to the journals of the scientific societies.

Besides all these, I restructured our organization to be the best to realize the well-balanced school, and reshuffled the assignment of duties while giving special consideration in assigning the duties for each teacher, such that the individual teachers were still able to demonstrate their abilities to the fullest, and their abilities will be further strengthened.

(3) Working in close cooperation with the community

Every school has a role and a mission in the community. It is essential that the managerial staff properly understand the situation of the community and the students, and implement educational activities to fulfill the role and mission of the schools. Therefore, it is indispensable to work in close cooperation with the local administration, local elementary and lower secondary schools and the community residents, and provide the educational power of the school to the community, as well as utilize the educational power of the community, and disseminate the information of our educational activities to the community.

An example of this ‘providing the school’s educational power’ in my former school, is that at Geihoku Branch School, we planned and implemented personal computer and astronomy lessons for the people and children in the community.

Another example is that we invite community residents who are well acquainted with local nature and history, to teach pupils in special sessions.

Concerning the public relations and information dissemination, at Geihoku Branch School and Gion-kita Upper Secondary School, also here at Hiroshima Lower and Upper Secondary School, we actively published school magazines and reports and even constructed our own website.

(4) Working in close cooperation with the lower secondary schools and universities

In order to make sure that the content of education from lower secondary to upper secondary schools then to universities is continuous and related, and to improve the teaching methods in our school, we actively conducted the joint research on lesson study and subject teaching, and also conducted demonstration

lessons for pupils of local lower secondary schools. We also enlisted the help of university professors to make lessons. By providing the opportunities to attend the lessons of higher education, we hoped that pupils will have more interest and concern for their studies, and that they will take advantage of opportunities for higher education.

Also, at Gion-kita Upper Secondary School, while I was establishing a close tie with the University of the Air, the pupils have been able to study in the Faculty of General Studies since 2002. Upon students' requests and with the assistance of their teachers, subjects like "World of Physics" and "World of Materials" which upper secondary pupils can also understand were taken up. When the achievement in those subjects was regarded satisfactory, we honored the credits as a school-based subject. Here at Hiroshima Lower and Upper Secondary School, the same practice has been conducted since 2005.

(5) Establishment of Science and Math Classes in the General Course

At Kure Mitsuta Upper Secondary School and Gion-kita Upper Secondary School, nearly half of the pupils go on to universities in the field of Science and Math. In general, those pupils are already interested in Science and Math and have a desire to proceed to universities in Science and Math, even before enrollment to upper secondary schools. In order to actively and efficiently support them to achieve their goal, Science and Math classes in the General Course were established at both schools, to focus lessons on these subjects, and provide more opportunities like experiments, practicum and issue-based research.

(6) Promotion of International Exchange -exchange with a Chinese school-

Traditionally in Japanese society, we have the idea of the head family, (led by the eldest son's family) and a branch family, (led by the younger brothers' families,) and the head family is higher in status than the branch families. In the area where the Geihoku Branch School is located, some residents and pupils have imbibed this thinking. To put a stop to this idea, we promoted various programs based upon a slogan "Let's brighten up together with the community", to instill a greater degree of self-confidence among the pupils and at the same time to develop pride in them as Branch Upper Secondary School pupils while spending school life with positive feelings.

One of the programs we participated in is an exchange agreement with a Chinese school. In 1995, with the support of the Geihoku Town Board of

Education, all the second graders visited Xi'an and Chengdu cities in China and interacted with pupils of Chengdu city No. 20 Middle School (school focused with consistent lower and upper secondary school education, number of pupils 2000). In the beginning pupils were at a loss how to communicate with each other, but gradually they started to open up by speaking a little English and by means of writing some Chinese characters. An hour later, they had become quite congenial, and started to deepen their friendships as they began having pleasant chats cheerfully.

Chinese Middle School pupils exhibited their strong will to reach their goals, and everyone had a big dream towards the future. In addition, they could speak English fluently. Getting to know the youths of the same age who were highly motivated aiming to be an internationalized person, and having a chance to deepen friendships, I am convinced that it resulted in nurturing pride in our pupils.

Before going to China, many pupils were insisting that they wanted to go to Tokyo Disneyland on a school trip. In the questionnaires we distributed after coming back from China, all of the pupils equally mentioned "the school visit was great, and we made many new friends. It was an impressive trip."

Since then, the pupils of Geihoku Branch School visit the No 20 Middle School in China annually. From the second year, during the cultural exchange, Branch School pupils have performed the local arts of *Kagura* (sacred music and dancing traditionally performed at shrines) and presented the Japanese ancient myth on the stage, thus deepening the mutual understanding and promotion of cultural exchange.

Also, in 1997, 39 pupils and the faculty members of the No 20 Middle School visited Geihoku town. The School's Friendship Agreement was sealed and a ceremony was held, and we performed the arts like *Kagura*, and we also enjoyed skiing, etc. During their visit, many Geihoku town residents and lower secondary school pupils attended the ceremony and experienced in the international events.

Thanks to these activities, the Geihoku Branch School was officially designated as a research promotion school of sister school exchange programs by the Educational Ministry in 1997. Their exchange program has been continuously held even now.

When I was at Kure Mitsuta Upper Secondary School, having the same objectives as the case of Geihoku Branch School, we went to visit Beijing City Yuetan Middle School in December 2000 and had an exchange meeting with the counterparts pupils.

Here at Hiroshima Prefecture Hiroshima Lower and Upper Secondary School, together with Higashi-Hiroshima city Takamigaoka Lower Secondary School and Kinki University affiliated Higashi-Hiroshima Upper Secondary School, 19 pupils and teachers went to Beijing. We visited the Northern Jiaotong (Transport) University-affiliated Middle School and Beijing City No. 14 Middle School and had exchange programs. This was realized thanks to the support by the Asian Culture Center of UNESCO and the guidance given by the CICE, Hiroshima University. In November 2004, a delegation group from the Northern Jiaotong (Transport) University-affiliated Middle School visited our school and socialized with us on our Culture Day.

In addition, besides China, we have accepted many visitors from U.S.A., South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand. Whenever they come we not only provide opportunities to observe school facilities and lessons, but also hold educational meetings or goodwill meetings together. Taking advantage of all the opportunities, we would like to undertake international exchange, and thus promote international understanding to develop the communication skills of our pupils.

7. What is a school?

(1) Irreplaceable three years

The graduation ceremony is one of the most important school events. In the solemn and refreshing atmosphere, the Principal gives a farewell address to motivate the graduates to start a new life. In most of the upper secondary schools, the final homeroom activity is held right after the graduation ceremony, and the homeroom teacher gives pupils parting words while everyone reminisces about the past three years at school. These “parting words” have a very important meaning just the same as the Principal’s farewell address in the ceremony, so every teacher must examine the content well a few days prior to the graduation ceremony. I remember one of my particular “parting words” that I still keep in mind in order to admonish myself.

It was when I was still in my mid thirties, on the occasion when I bid farewell to my class. I had been their homeroom teacher the last two consecutive years. In the final homeroom activity, I talked to my pupils with words based upon my previous year’s manuscript which I pasted in my notebook. The pupils’ representative brought me a bunch of flowers, and all the ceremonial events were over. The pupils and their parents individually approached me and gave me their words of



thankfulness. At that time, a few girl pupils said, “Teacher, we are very grateful for your work in the last three years. But, we wished you could read the parting words with much more feeling and emotion. We expected also to see tears in your eyes.”

Their comments came as a terrible shock to me. How woeful I was to use the previous year’s parting words again. No matter how many flowery expressions I used to flourish my words, it is no wonder that they did not create much impact on my pupils. Once, I was a teacher who thought of all the pupils, and I used to rack my brain thinking about the best parting words I could give to my pupils. Why did I not do the same now? Once in a graduation ceremony, I was filled with so much emotion that in the presence of the pupils, tears almost rolled down my cheeks. What has happened to me now?

Since then, I counted this as a lesson for myself. “For a teacher, three years at school is only three out of 30-some years of a long teaching life, however, for pupils, the same three years are one of the brightest periods in their lives, and the most crucial moment which will determine the rest of their future. Thus teachers should never be with pupils with a heart of three-out-of-thirty. We should not be

their teachers by force of habit, but we should spend every minute as if it were our last. We must engage in education seriously and with real intentions at any time, at any place.” Whenever there is a chance, I always share this to the faculty members, and I also continuously remind myself about this lesson I learned.

(2) True sense of a teacher’s word

On the evening of the graduation ceremony, one graduate from another class and her mother came to visit me in the faculty’s office. She said, “When I was in the second grade, you advised me when we met in the corridor. That motivated me to study hard, and I passed the entrance examination of my chosen university. Thank you very much, teacher.”

I had already forgotten the conversation we had in the corridor. According to her, I told her, “Judging from your personality, you are suited to be an elementary school teacher. I think you will be a good teacher. As long as you show determination and perseverance, any of your dreams will come true.”

My words, probably casually given to her, had greatly influenced her in her career. This made me think that on the other hand, my words could have possibly hurt the hearts of pupils and put them down. How dreadful it is if such a case exists. Teachers’ words and behaviors indeed affect the future of pupils to a large extent. We teachers can both give dreams to pupils and wound them deeply by what we say.

We must deeply engrave in our minds that teachers’ comments, any trifle words and behaviors can react as a big impact on pupils who are in the stage of decision-making for the future.

(3) What is school for, for whom is there a school?

Once, there was a frequently debated issue about the school administration and education itself, on whether the decision of a certain topic was made ‘democratically’ or not. When this type of debate is done by teachers and the staff, it is sometimes dealt from the viewpoint of their personal interests under the name of ‘democracy’. For example, during the faculty meeting, we discussed the issues on how the student guidance should be, or the working conditions of the faculty. When I recall the remarks made by the faculty, there were many opinions without taking the pupils and teaching objectives into account. Regarding the personal information of pupils, some staff were just curious to know it, and they were joining the discussion without a viewpoint on what each piece of information

will mean for the pupil's education towards the future and what effect is expected by knowing it. Whenever I encountered such opinions, I doubted what the real meaning of their 'democratic' way was.

Precisely, under a 'democratic' system, citizens select the politicians and their lives rely on the policies made by these officials. In other words, the result of selection will reversely affect the people who made the selection. Likewise in schools, the selections in terms of educational content or methodology made by teachers will largely influence children. Education must be done for pupils but it should never be carried out for teachers. The school is a place where pupils achieve self-realization towards their future, and the school is not created for teachers. Frankly speaking, I think school should not be a place of democracy in the narrow sense in which the faculty often talked about it. Venturing an objection, school should be a place for pupils and a place only for children.

8. Creating a wonderful school

The period during the lower and upper secondary schools is the most crucial for pupils as they decide their future course. Every child possesses talents and potential. It is the mission of the faculty and the school to draw them out and mold them to the persons they were born to be.

My school was newly established last April of 2004, with great hopes for the citizens in Hiroshima Prefecture. Now, I am going to commit myself to engaging in education with strong resolve without forgetting the ideal to create a new school with my everlasting passion for education.

This chapter is based upon a lecture conducted by Mr. BANMOTO Masakazu for the JICA participants from the Republic of South Africa as part of the JICA training course on Science and Math Teacher Education. It was held on November 13th, 2002 at Hiroshima Prefecture Gion-kita Upper Secondary School.

Dialogue between Mr. BANMOTO and JICA training participants from the Republic of South Africa

Participant A: How do you motivate the teachers especially those in science education?

Mr. BANMOTO: I try to promote a better way of assigning our personnel. I also try to create a desirable working environment so that teachers can have a feeling of satisfaction and achievement, and exhort teachers to be involved in self-study research or attend in-service training to brush up their teaching abilities. Also, I repeatedly tell them that “We must be at work keeping in mind every time that the school is a place for the self-actualization of children.” Concerning Science Education, I tell them that “We must motivate the pupils through proving the linkage between the subject contents and real life, and creating easy-to-understand lessons so that by achieving the higher scholastic ability we may encourage the pupils to set a future career course goal.

Participant B: Mr. BANMOTO, I have felt that you are an excellent leader and at the same time a skillful principal. I wonder how you could gain trust from other teachers and community people? What do you think were the major reasons?

Mr. BANMOTO: I think it is essential to interact with other people faithfully. You should not be two-faced, but always deal with people in all honesty, earnestness and with good intentions. This should be practiced not only in educational activities but in our private lives as well. Another is that I try not to forget my basic convictions. I, myself, always keep my passion, dream and adventurous spirit toward education, and always set my goals and achieve them by making efforts, and by continuing to take on challenges.

Participant C: I think a good teacher should be able to self-examine. Could you give us some pointers (or hints) to confirm whether I myself have become a good teacher or not?

Mr. BANMOTO: At the beginning of every academic year, I request all the teachers to write and submit their individual goals in education. Based on this written plan, I conduct a person-to-person session with them to discuss their goals. At mid-year, I evaluate the progress and give guidance, then by the end of the year, I summarize it to make an outcome, and clarify the issues so that we could set better directions for the following year to solve the remaining issues. In teaching

science and math, before conducting the mid-term and term-end examinations, I request the teachers to set the estimated average scores, so that after the examination, the actual average scores of pupils can be compared to the planned ones. Then considering the gaps, teachers can self-assess the appropriateness of the examination content in regard to the pupils' actual achievement.

Participant D: You value the observation of other schools and museums abroad in order to improve the teaching ability in science and other subjects. I would like to know how you finance those trips. Do you pay for them by yourself or is there a sponsor?

Mr. BANMOTO: I have been abroad more than 30 times. So far, seven trips were hosted by the national or prefectural governments. I myself paid for the rest of the trips, and there was no sponsor. I looked for discount tickets and stayed at cheap hotels, I did everything to make my trips as cheap as possible. For example, I slept in the YMCA hotel in the USA, or used long-distance buses with overnight service or sleeping trains.

Participant E: Through your long teaching career, I think you have also met unmotivated teachers. How did you associate with them?

Mr. BANMOTO: That is a very difficult problem. Certainly there are unmotivated teachers, but I believe all teachers have the capability of doing something superb. When some were unmotivated, I tried to tell them about their good points so that I could boost their morale; however, it was not always very easy to do so.

For instance, I encouraged the teachers to contribute a report with their educational practices or views (ideas) to a prize-awarding competition. In Japan, there are several organizations which offer a reward for prize winners of educational papers. We call it 'we fish for someone with money' which results in teachers to be tempted, and I have actually fished them. (He laughs.)

Participant F: In your school, do you implement in-service teacher training? If so, how do you do it?

Mr. BANMOTO: Compared to other schools, we organize in-service trainings more actively in my school. All the teachers in all subjects are scheduled to do an open research lesson once or twice a year.

Participant G: What is the role of the principal when the school-based training is conducted?

Mr. BANMOTO: The principal does not directly guide the teachers. In my school,

there is the Department of Educational Planning, and the member teachers draw a training scheme; the principal approves it before implementation. In some cases, we invite the teaching consultant from the Board of Education as an instructor.

Participant H: Mine is not a question but I would rather ask for your advice. I am also a teacher, and when I come in contact with pupils, I sometimes become too emotional in my daily work. I wish to stop this, and I want to know how I should, so that I can help children have hopes.

Mr. BANMOTO: From time to time I also become too emotional, so it is very difficult to answer your question; however, I think one thing is that we should pause for a while before making emotional remarks or giving guidance.

Also, if you want to help children have hope, I think you should interact with children while keeping the same stance with other teachers. Specifically, you should never forget that each and every child potentially possesses excellent talents and potential. Each child is unique and has both strong and weak points, so we teachers must focus on their strong points so that they will be motivated. For instance, I invite alumni of our school to give lectures on their experiences of both success and failure, so that our pupils can think of their future.

Participant I: How do you make pupils comply with the regulations?

Mr. BANMOTO: Teachers belonging to the Department of Student Guidance have taken the lead in giving guidance to pupils. The school assembly where the 1200 pupils attend is held in a hall every month, and I give talks and guidance to pupils; also, a teacher from the student guidance department does give talks and guidance following the principal. In addition, all the first graders attend overnight training camps, so while camping, they learn the importance of complying with regulations and being responsible social members.

Participant J: I was quite impressed with the idea of international exchange programs which you introduced to us in the lecture. I think mutual communication beyond borders are quite important.

Participant K: What can we do to make science lessons easy to understand for pupils?

Mr. BANMOTO: Depending on the school, the ability and scholastic achievement of pupils will vary. When the average academic attainment is high and the distribution of pupils' scores is not wide, if 80 % of pupils could understand the content, that lesson can be regarded as a success. For the rest of the 20%, they will

need individual instruction after school to supplement the content.

I often utilized my self-made materials in the Science class. Also, as often seen in elementary school, I used my body movements quite often to explain about the scientific phenomena. I mimicked the wind, or a star.

Furthermore, in these days in Hiroshima Prefecture as well as other parts of Japan, when the gap between quick learners and slow learners is large, a tracking system based on the achievement is introduced, and careful attention is provided to all the pupils.

Participant L: You have mentioned that you have obtained many certificates through having a wide interest and concerns in various fields. I wonder how you utilize such a variety of qualifications?

Mr. BANMOTO: First of all it was aimed at demonstrating to the pupils that I myself also had a goal to achieve every time. It was solely aimed to obtain the qualifications; therefore, they are no longer in good use. For example, as a qualified amateur radio operator, I have installed a radio in my car and enjoy receiving various waves. The qualification of a hazardous substance operator may be revived after my retirement, so I might establish a chemical plant (He laughs).

Participant M: Through your long teaching life, you met a lot of teachers and pupils, and experienced various ups and downs, I imagine. If you have overcome any difficulties, could you tell us how you went through them?

Mr. BANMOTO: I am not sure if I can answer your question perfectly, but I believe there are four seasons in school. In April, you will be assigned to be a homeroom teacher and start the year in high spirits, saying “I am going to work hard for this coming year”. However in every class, there will be pupils who do not listen to our instruction, or who rebel and rebel against us. Then, one may regret becoming a teacher. By the time when such pupils graduate, they may give you words of gratitude like “Teacher, I am so sorry for causing troubles, but you looked after us patiently. Thank you very much.” Their words can easily change our minds, and once again you feel it was right to be a teacher. There are four seasons in school, and you experience all the seasons. There will always be winter with hardships but spring will surely come after winter, this is what I believe.

This chapter is based upon a lecture conducted by Mr. BANMOTO for JICA participants of the Republic of South Africa as part of a JICA training course on Science and Math Teacher Education. His lecture was in November of 2002, at Hiroshima Prefecture Gion-kita Upper Secondary School. Mr. BANMOTO was then the principal of the Gion-kita Upper Secondary School.

To foster the treasure of our society and the school management vision

To foster the treasure of our society and the school management vision

YASUMORI Yuzuru

YASUMORI Yuzuru was born in 1945 in Kure city, Hiroshima Prefecture.

After graduating from university, he became an English teacher of upper secondary school in Osaka prefecture, and served there for five years. After 1974 he started to work in Hiroshima Prefecture, as an English teacher of upper secondary school. In 1994, he was appointed as vice principal of Hiroshima Prefecture Yuki-minami Upper Secondary School, and was promoted to be the Principal in 1996. In 1998, he became the principal of Hiroshima Prefecture Inokuchi Upper Secondary School. In 2001, he was assigned as principal Hiroshima Kokutaiji Upper Secondary School. He retired in 2006, and since April of the same year, he has been a permanent advisor at the Hiroshima YMCA (current position).



1. Path to the teaching career—power of words, foretold prophecy—

I have four elder brothers, and two of them became school teachers. One served at the educational administration office for many years after working as an English teacher of upper secondary schools. The other retired as a Japanese language teacher of upper secondary school in another Prefecture. The reason why I started to talk about my brothers is because when I think of the reason I chose a teaching career, I have been largely influenced by them. When I enrolled in upper secondary school, my brothers had already left home, one was teaching at school and the other was studying in the education faculty. Whenever they came back home during holidays, they proudly talked about what they had been doing. They told me their experiences of being a young male teacher, or the experiences of wild and free college life, and these were unconsciously instilled in me and influenced my choice. Or, it could have been jealousy that I probably wanted to better them. Consequently, I chose to study in the faculty of education.

To be honest, I was not fond of schools so much all the way from elementary through upper secondary schools. In a sense, I could not get along well with teachers and adapt myself to a school life. However, I have some teachers somewhere in my memory. For example, I remember my elementary school homeroom teacher who enduringly and gently stayed close to me though I hardly

opened up my heart to anyone. I also remember a lower secondary school teacher who led me to have an interest in studying English, and an upper secondary school teacher who praised me in the presence of my classmates when my scores in math were a little bit elevated. One of the subjects I was not good at was math. Those teachers might have sown seeds towards my future deep in my heart. Various possible causes have oriented me to choose the teaching career. Life is indeed unpredictable.

Educators at college have also inspired me by sharing various teachings. For instance, I was told that “the disparity between the students and educators depends on the amount of time spent for teaching/learning preparation. If you students have taken one hour to be ready for the class today, we have had done three times or even ten times more preparation.” When I heard this I was dumbstruck and felt myself straighten up. Furthermore, after my teaching practice, I was given the following comment from my supervisor, “Teachers can be classified into two types. One is “Sunshine & Spring Drizzle Type”, and the other is “Scorching Sun & Autumn Frost Type.” I think you belong to the latter type.” Actually, he had observed my lesson only once so I had not taken it so seriously. However, the power of the words given by my mentor or the Pygmalion effect in other words was indeed greatly effective. Just as he told me so, I became a teacher of “Scorching Sun & Autumn Frost Type” and never admitted a compromise in class, and exercised students tremendously hard so that they were all struck with awe. I also insistently persuaded the students as well as fellow teachers that “Pre-study of the lesson must be thoroughly done taking sufficient time. Lessons must be conducted in “Scorching Sun & Autumn Frost” style, and occasionally allow “Sunshine & Spring Drizzle” style. I believe teachers must be aware of the responsibility of their words in that they have power and prophecy. In addition, words spoken by highly trusted teachers penetrate the students mind. Contrary to this, despised teachers’ words exhibit no meaning at all. What the students do is superficially pretend as if they have agreed with the teachers but in actuality, they hold contempt. I have every confidence that teachers have to be involved in education with all their spirit and body.

2. Expectation and desperation in teaching —the horrifying transformation of people—

I took the teacher recruitment exam in 1968 when I was a senior student. The number of recruits at that time was quite low, so I took exams held in three

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different prefectures, Hiroshima Prefecture, Osaka Prefecture and Nagoya City. Fortunately, I passed all of them. I had a strong desire to be independent staying away from my family, so I chose to work in Osaka Prefecture. Three to four months prior to my graduation, in around December, the principal of Nose Upper Secondary School of Osaka Prefecture contacted me and I was invited to a personal interview. We met at a coffee shop beneath the railroad bridge of Osaka Station. One month later, the principal of Sano Upper Secondary School of Osaka Prefecture came to visit me in Hiroshima, and then I was invited to work in his school. As I honestly confessed about my prior engagement, he said to me. “You were too hasty in making an engagement. There must be something wrong to such a hasty offer.” Nose Upper Secondary School is located in Nose Town in northern Osaka Prefecture, and it is a small scale school with two courses, the General Course and Agricultural Course. I started lodging very near to a private railway station called Kawanishi-Nose-Guchi Station of the Hankyu Line. However, it was quite inconvenient to access the school. So every morning and evening, the school sent a taxi to my nearest Station, and I got into it with other teachers to go to school. One day I missed the morning taxi and took a train and a bus to get to school, and it took three hours to do so. Since then, I went to bed wearing a shirt, trousers and a tie, without the suit jacket, so that when I got up in the morning I just needed to put on only the jacket, and jumped from my room to the taxi for school. Every night I lay frozen in place so as not to create any wrinkles in my clothes. It is quite funny when I recall myself, but at that time I was indeed serious.

Lodging was my first experience. The owners were an old couple, and I also learned a lot about the hardships of living from the way the couple were living. One day, unexpectedly, I had a high fever and did not go to school for a couple of days. One evening, I heard the sound of the shutter door at the porch opening and I felt suspicious as if someone was intruding into my residence. To my surprise, I saw my parents who came far from Hiroshima worrying about me. The owner of my lodging had informed them of my sickness. I still remember how delighted I was to see them, especially my father whom I had believed was a man only at work. My parents stayed with me one night and went back home. My parents have both passed away, but even now, I do appreciate their deep love for me.

In spring when the next academic year was approaching I was planning to rent a house in Nose Town, because the school was in the pastoral environment and interesting to me. Also I was planning to get married. However, suddenly the principal of Sano Upper Secondary School contacted me, and asked me to meet the

principal of Higashi-Sumiyoshi Upper Secondary School. “You know, last year, I missed the chance to recruit you. I think it will be OK for you to change your school as one year has already passed now. I myself will speak to the principal of Nose Upper Secondary School to transfer you.” This is how I changed my assigned school after only one year. Higashi-Sumiyoshi Upper Secondary School was a large school with a fifteen year history since establishment, and it was prominent in its particular activities including Kirigamine Educational Camp in which students sleep at a floriculture farm, and Sports Day for which students make stands by fabricating the logs. In those days, at Higashi-Sumiyoshi Upper Secondary School, only homeroom teachers had to keep official working hours in order to attend the morning and evening assemblies in class, but the rest of the teachers were allowed to go to school only for the assigned lessons, and they could go home after giving the required lessons. After the term-end exam, we teachers had to attend only the grading meeting, and could stay home for self-study. The summer holiday was 50 days, and everyday we could stay home for self-study if we wanted. I was not assigned a homeroom in my first year, and I was in charge of the overall guidance section of the Life Guidance Department as well as a martial art club Judo. When the school assembly by each grade was held in the ground, teachers in the overall guidance section took turns weekly, and stood on the stage, and pointed out the students who were not behaving well so that they straightened up. I also played this role, but later, this type of school duty began to assume a serious meaning.

I became a homeroom teacher in my second year. When I think of myself at that time, I think I was too young and daring, but I believed we should firm the base, so before anything I strongly demanded of the students to comply with the school regulations, even picking up on any trifle matter. The influence of the campus activism was still lingering on, and the activist students of the City-run University wearing helmets were distributing flyers in front our of school gate. One time, in an article of those flyers, I found one of the students who had dropped out from our school due to a personal reason. Under such a circumstance, in around 1973, the School Uniform-Free Campaign occurred at quite a few public upper secondary schools in Osaka Prefecture. It led to frequent boycotts of lessons, and student assemblies were held. Teachers, particularly in charge of life guidance, which related to the compliance of the school regulations, were targeted and caught up in the severe disputes with the students.

When the school environment fell into disorder, teachers who agitated the students appeared, and caused unfavorable situations. They leaked the confidential

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information of the faculty assembly to students, and placated the students to attack the antagonist teachers or utilized the students as puppets. I was in charge of life guidance, and a homeroom teacher of the third grade. I had devoted myself passionately to my class, but some of my students were tempted by the agitating teachers, and they bared their fangs at to me. It was indeed a nightmare to me, even now. I was driven to despair by knowing that “Students can easily be brain washed by malicious adults.” This incident pushed me to decide to go back to my hometown, and I sat the recruitment exam again. I was employed by Hiroshima City, so I resigned my post in Osaka by the end of March in 1974. I was still planning to attend the Leaving/Retiring Ceremony because I felt an obligation that I should be present, however I was not able to attend it due to the delay of a train caused by bad weather, even though I had already bought my train tickets to go to the school.

3. Recovery of a pride as a teacher

—Students were my saviors—

After coming back to my hometown, I started to serve at Hiroshima City-run Technical Upper Secondary School. Homeroom assignments were given mainly to the teachers who specialized in Industrial Arts, so during the first two years, I was only in charge of English lessons and had duty in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. The school had five specialized courses such as Mechanical engineering, Electric engineering, etc. I went through ups and downs and experienced some difficulties in delivering my lessons in some Courses, but I admit I also learned a lot.

In April 1976, I was transferred to Hiroshima City-run Motomachi Upper Secondary School which was located right in front of Hiroshima Castle [At that time the school was called Hiroshima Prefecture Hiroshima Motomachi USS]. It was one of the five schools in a group of Integrated Selection System [later Inokuchi Upper Secondary School joined and the total of six schools formed the group. This Selection System based on schools’ grouping was abolished in 1997]. The school had a General Course and the atmosphere was liberal with the motto of “Spontaneous and Independent.” From my first day, students cheerfully greeted me when I encountered them in the hall. I was struck and moved by that since I had lost my trust in humans. The level of English education was famous as the best in the Prefecture, and I was trained hard by competent and experienced fellow teachers. The content of the school-based term exams was unified, and all

the teachers marked simultaneously, and then we shared the result information. It meant that if I had not taught correctly, it was revealed by the exam results, and then I had to apologize to the assigned classes and needed to correct my mistakes. The results of the term exams, and nation-wide exams were made open, and the average scores of each class were released announced. Therefore, every time I was scolded and encouraged by senior teachers, so I had to indeed be serious in teaching. The teachers' workshop of English book reading was held periodically. Each teacher took turn and had to explain the outline/meaning of the assigned chapter and then long experienced teachers raised questions to the members in the group. I felt embarrassed by always being questioned on the part with which I was not confident. When I mistakenly pronounced a word, a fellow teacher softly pointed it out and commented "Oh, is there such a way of pronunciation? If I were you, I would have pronounced it this way." I felt ashamed of my being inept, thus I was really motivated to study harder. I instilled their methodology "teamwork" such as "to make an annual scheme, and educate students organizationally", or "to make each small quiz in large quantity and share them with other teachers to be used for all the classes" as well as "to prepare handouts for pre-study and self-made handouts, and share all of the information among the teachers", and thus everything was done in a team.

From the second year, I was assigned a homeroom class. When I was a teacher in Osaka Prefecture, I had met terrible experiences caused by the students. It usually happened after students had a group meeting alone after school until late. Therefore, I was still affected even at this school in Hiroshima. When my class students did not come in due time to tell me about the completion of the school cleaning program unit, I was scared expecting something wrong might have happened. Little by little, I found my fear was groundless, and gradually the ice in my mind started to melt. Let me give you a couple of examples. In those days, hour-long homeroom activities were frequently held at Motomachi Upper Secondary School spontaneously by the students, and students had to prepare the program in advance taking sufficient time, and every time, I was astonished at their diligence of making a thoughtful plan. One time, they asked me to rent two-wheeled carts, and I wondered why. I was amazed to know the reason as they were planning to clean around Hiroshima Castle as part of their homeroom activity. Before the school excursion to Etajima Island town, I saw some students making appointments at the Self-Defense Forces Office and the Town Office. It really made me wonder why they needed to make contact with the Town Office. In

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actuality, on the day of the outing, some classes visited the Museum of Educational Reference belonging to the Training School of the Maritime Self-Defense Forces, and we headed to a pier after lunch. On the way to the pier, our class representative suddenly told me that our class was going to stop by at one more place. I didn't know what was going on and why only my class was going to separate from the rest of the school. Our destination was a Town-run Sports Ground. My students, while they were planning the excursion program, had fit in a volleyball tournament. It was a joyful surprise to me to know that they had prepared everything and had brought the necessary volleyball kit secretly. The day was fulfilled perfectly thanks to their programming. There are many more episodes which helped recover my trust in students, and I once again recalled the words of my senior fellow teacher; "Trust and future prospects are most important." There is no need to say that teachers educate students, but I can't deny another fact that students also foster us teachers by influencing us visibly and invisibly. To my class, I requested the students to strictly observe the rules of "Greeting, Cleaning and Punctuality". When the turn came to our class for cleaning of toilets, first of all I demonstrated how to do it. I instructed them to completely clean thus not to leave any colors of yellow and brown, and together with my students, I wiped the toilet stools with a dust cloth in my bare hands. Including the classroom cleaning, every time I visited all the allocated sites of cleaning, and every time I wiped the blackboard and the desks with my fingers to check if there was any dust left. Whenever I found some dust or chalk powder on my finger, I demanded that they clean up again. I always kept my words and never tolerated violations. As if proving myself as "Scorching Sun & Autumn Frost Type", I was very strict in class teaching, and I ordered pre-study and post-study of every lesson, and reprimanded any lazy students. I was in charge of the baseball club. The club had financial difficulty, so the members could not renew their uniforms for a long time. The playground was covered with sand, so the balls deteriorated very easily, and the club manager (student) was always busy sewing the torn balls to repair them. I felt sorry that it was not an ideal environment for the baseball club members.

4. Having pride to take responsibility for my work in school —being appointed as a head teacher—

I worked at Hiroshima City-run Motomachi Upper Secondary School for seven years, and in 1983, I was transferred to Hiroshima Prefecture-run Inokuchi Upper Secondary School which was one of the schools belonging to the Integrated

Selection Group. In this year, Hiroshima City was officially approved as an ordinance designated city, and became independent to have school administration authority. My official recruitment was restricted within Hiroshima City, so I resigned my post to be newly recruited to Hiroshima Prefecture. It was not an easy procedure to change my employee, but because English education had been floundering at the lower level in that school, the principal entrusted me to recover the level of English education. Hiroshima Inokuchi Upper Secondary School was established in a Commerce-Industry Center which was built on reclaimed ground from the sea. Some hundred thousand citizens in the area petitioned the government to establish an upper secondary school, and six years had already passed after its establishment. The school building was built with pre-fabricated materials, and the water pipes were installed to pour water on the roof to reduce the heat during the summer. The school ground was once nicknamed “the Inokuchi Desert” as it was filled with harsh rocks and rough gravel. During the first years after the establishment, both students and the faculty cooperatively worked hard to smooth the ground, and their labored work was famed as the spirit of Creation. Though the school was new, it achieved a high percentage of graduates going to universities, which was the highest among other schools in the same Integrated Selection Group, and this accomplishment was called “the Inokuchi Mythology”. This has been maintained for the past six years. The reclaimed ground was not hard enough for the construction of a building so beneath every pillar of the school building, square holes the size of 1-meter each were drilled until reaching the steady mother rock bed, and then reinforced concrete was poured into the hole. This construction method of making the firm foundation can actually also be reflected to nurture humans so I have quoted this story several times when I wanted to explain about human development.

Right after my transfer to this school, I was assigned a homeroom class in my first year. My class management policy is “Greeting, Cleaning, and Punctuality” and I strictly requested the students to obey these. As usual, I cleaned and polished the toilet stools with bare hands together with students and repeatedly told them, “If you are sincerely faithful, you can also achieve higher academic ability.” Students were terrified with my lesson and nicknamed it “Mr. YASUMORI’s English” (instead of calling it simply ‘English’). If some students had not done pre-study at home, I made them copy all the new words of the unit from a dictionary. If the result of a small quiz did not meet the expected level, I made them write down the mistaken words many times in a notebook exclusively used for corrections only. If

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some failed to memorize and recite the assigned textbook dialogue, I made them memorize the chapter completely. Thus, I never changed the nature of my teaching style as “Scorching Sun & Autumn Frost Type.” I always went to the classroom before the beginning of the lesson period (during the recess time), and also my lesson ended in the recess after the lesson period so the official 50 minutes’ lesson always ended up taking 60-70 minutes. I have heard my students say that they felt that the whole day was over when my lesson was dismissed. I nicknamed my supplemental lesson as YY Juku School which is copied from a famous private cram school, and I put 90 students in one class, and taught two classes of 180 students until late at night. During the summer holidays, I zealously conducted four lesson periods intensely for the consecutive days of one week. It was at the time when air conditioning was not popular in general, and in summer, the temperature in the classroom soared high because of too many students, and some of them became sick. Furthermore, when I requested my fellow English teachers to do teaching management in a team, all the teachers were very cooperative to it, so we could achieve the goal rapidly. Actually in that time, the level of the Math Department achievement was indeed superb, and it was the best in Hiroshima Prefecture due to their use of the Sparta method. When I was transferred to this school, I made an announcement that “our English Department will soon go ahead of the Math Department.” Math teachers responded saying “the devastated English Department could never be able to excel us, ever,” as if turning their noses up at us. However, when I was in my second year, our English Department had gone ahead of the Math Department and the English level of students ranked first among the schools of the Integrated Selection Group.

During my eleven years at Inokuchi Upper Secondary School, I served as homeroom teacher for six years, and thus sent off the graduates twice. In the division of school duties, I was in charge of the Student Council for three years, and in the Students Guidance Department for eight years in which I was the head teacher of the Department for four years so I was always at the frontline with students. The student Council of this school was quite autonomous and active. Students strongly made several requests to change the attire regulation, etc., and made some improvements. For instance, the uniformed black-leather school bag was abolished, and also the school uniform was renewed. When I became the head of the Student Guidance Department, six upper secondary schools of the Integrated Selection Group were divided into two groups; West and East, and the entrance exam was held in each of the two groups. The number of applicants between

the two groups was compared at every exam. The west group won every other year, and the east group won also every other year, thus they biannually repeated winning in terms of the application percentage. The entrance exam system was then modified, and a secondary step or screening exam was introduced. As a result, the scholastic level of enrollees in this school went down and at the same time, the cases of special guidance for misbehavior started to increase. The school management system gradually deteriorated as time passed by compared to the ideal environment in the past at the time of its foundation. Teachers also started to be influenced by the ideology of the teachers' union organization. However, I stuck to my own ideology "Even if there is no one to trust, I myself will surely assume full responsibility for the school" and thus devoted myself to my daily work as a head teacher.

5. School Reform is the best student guidance

—Students are the treasures of our society

—Any reform will meet resistance

In April, 1994, I was appointed as vice principal of Yuki-minami Upper Secondary School. It was a small scale school with three classes in each grade in the general course. It is located in Yuki Town, Saeki County [now this county is merged into Hiroshima City], which took about 30 minutes by car from my previously assigned school area, the Saeki Ward of Hiroshima City. At that time, only about 30% of enrollees were coming from the two lower secondary schools in the town, and the rest were commuting from outside areas. In particular, those who were coming from out of town had no motivation, and the lessons were delivered in an unfavorable environment with lots of disturbances. I had accumulated quite a lot of experience in the matters of student guidance, but still I faced great difficulties with hot-tempered students who often flew into a rage. There is a common catch phrase in the educational world, that "Students loaded with big problems are educational treasures", which actually gets at the heart of the truth, but I don't appreciate it and I myself object to this phrase. Through hundreds of interactions with students, I have understood that the students during the upper secondary life stage show merely one aspect of themselves. I knew once they graduated from school, they would transform themselves depending on how much they would adapt and devote themselves to the new social environment, which was always beyond our expectation. Needless to say, all of the students will be those who will build our future so the destination of our society depends on the sound growth of

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these youths. Therefore, regardless of the status quo, all the younger generation must be protected by an idea that “Youths are social treasures.” “Youths MUST be social treasures.” One time, I told them that “You are our social treasures. Our future relies on you.” Then, one student said, “I have never been told I was a treasure. Are we really treasures? How glad I am to hear that!” The comment truly pierced my heart. Since then, I repeatedly talked to them about being a “Social Treasure” at all occasions, whenever I had a chance.

Around July when I was getting accustomed to work as vice principal, the principal sounded me out about applying for the designation of a “New Curriculum Research School.” In fact, I was firmly convinced that “strengthening the student guidance function in school would be the most important, and research of new curriculum could be nothing useful for our school.” So I rejected the proposal. However, after I thought about it over and over again, on the following day I had changed my mind. I thought of the status quo of our school. We had students who took no notice of the teachers and school regulations. One girl student once appealed to me saying “I wish to attend a lesson in a quiet and calm classroom even once.” Then I came to the conclusion that “Without the reform of the entire school environment, there will be no future for us.” If I had not made this decision, nothing could have been improved. Certainly, the day you made a decision is the root of all luck.

The faculty members were up to their ears in daily work, so few of them agreed to this idea, and we often reached a total deadlock in the process. However, in September, we launched “the Vision 21 Committee”, of which the principal and the vice principal had the initiatives, and the committee covered all the subject areas and division of duties in school. It aimed to reform the entire school in ten fields such as curriculum, student guidance, career guidance, educational environment, PR, cooperation of community, etc. Based on the basic belief, “Take action immediately”, first of all, we conducted rush work in order to complete the planning of the curriculum by April so that it would be implemented in the coming academic year.

Firstly, we analyzed the outcome of “Needs Research” conducted at lower secondary schools. Then, we set up the reform concept as “First we let the students find their dreams, and then we provide them the widely arranged curriculum to support their dreams”. For the first grade, it was made compulsory, and we incorporated some subjects which would help them find a dream. The second and the third graders studied electives according to their dreams. As a new subject

which helps to look for a dream, “Industrial Society and People” was introduced in the general course for the first time in Japan. In 1995, a nation-wide presentation was held at our school, and a large number of people came to participate.

Three courses such as “International Understanding”, “Information & Culture”, and “Life & Culture” were established. However, it was still before the correctional guidance from the Ministry of Education was undertaken, and almost all of the teachers were influenced by the teacher organization and activists groups to a certain extent. Most of them opposed the idea of establishing separate courses, and very few were standing on our side, so we strongly encouraged and supported our advocates. I told the teachers, “If we try to do it, something must become better in any case, and nothing could possibly be worse than now”, and thus persuaded the opposing teachers. The number of subjects prepared doubled to sixty-five, so logically the class size became smaller, and teachers could pay careful attention to all the students. As a consequence, we could realize our students’ desire, to study in a quiet environment with a small-size class. Furthermore, they could study subjects relating to the realization of their dreams, with classmates who have a similar desire.

6. School Rebuilding as the principal

—The worst pinch can be the best chance—

In 1996, I was promoted to be the principal in the same school. We were in the second year of the school reform which was almost at the final stage. Suddenly, the official school attendance district was re-organized, and we thought that could be a fatal disaster for us. Still, around 30 % of students were town residents, and the rest were coming from the 2nd School District, mainly from Saeki Ward of Hiroshima City. This 2nd District was going to be merged into the 4th District from April of 1998, so we had no more hope to have applicants from there. I was deeply disappointed, but I had to think of a solution, and decided to increase the number of applicants within the town. To achieve this, we set up several countermeasures such as to enhance the PR to let the local residents know about the improvements of our school reform, to establish a task force group in the community which supports the school, and to create an attractiveness which would surprise town residents and cause them to rejoice. I determined myself “to change this worst condition into the best chance.”

We strengthened the PR in particular. I contributed articles to the Town Newsletter for four consecutive months, and introduced our school with our unique



curriculum, courses taken after graduation, situation reports of students' guidance and club activities. I made a special request to the Town Office to publicize these articles, and I myself wrote all those articles. Plus, I asked the educational superintendent of Hiroshima Prefecture as well as the Town Mayor to contribute articles to our school bulletin printed in color, and we made from volume one to volume three with those contributions. The colorful school bulletin was distributed to all the households together with the Town Newsletter. I also formed a school supporting group whose members were the Town Mayor, all the members of the Educational Committee of the Town Assembly, principals of all the local elementary and lower secondary schools, and their PTA chairpersons, autonomous town association heads, in total 32 people, and the group was named as "the Group to think of the vision of Yuki-minami Upper Secondary School". To increase the attractiveness, we linked a sister school tie with a secondary school in the UK, and as I expected, this movement was greatly welcomed by the whole town. We also negotiated with the universities and junior colleges to set a special admission quota for designated schools on the recommendation system, so that the graduates from

our school can have some advantage in entering the higher educational institutions.

As a result of all of those efforts, in 1998, we had a surprising achievement. A total of 80 students enrolled from the lower secondary schools in town, which was twice that compared to the past. Furthermore, the accomplishment made by our graduates became greater, with one graduate passing the entrance exam to a national university and the other succeeding in enrolling in a municipal university. Sending graduates to either a national or municipal university was a first for our school since it became independent 12 years ago, and this made the local people rejoice.

7. Reform and Revival of Hiroshima Prefecture Inokuchi Upper Secondary School

—Along with “the correctional measures” under the Ministry of Education—

In April 1998, I was transferred to Inokuchi Upper Secondary School in Hiroshima Prefecture as principal. The Superintendent of Education at that time strongly encouraged me to “create the school as the stronghold of the western region of the Prefecture.” In accordance with the prefecture-wide educational reform, the Integrated Selecting System was abolished. Four years had passed since I had left the school. The school situation was quite deteriorated in that the advancement rate to higher education was lowered and the cases of misbehavior which required special guidance had increased, besides the disorganization of school management system. Parents and local lower secondary schools had lost trust in the school, and as a result, even possible applicants had flown away to apply for other neighboring upper secondary schools. I immediately analyzed the predicament and came to the conclusion that partial reform would no longer help rebuild the school. Therefore, I decided to reform the entire school on a large scale. I set up the basic vision “Revival of Inokuchi Myth” which meant to realize each and every child’s dream. The concrete vision was to “produce a school with charm, to deliver the best lessons to elevate academic ability, and to strengthen the advertisement system for new applicants. Together with these three pillars, 12 basic policies were drawn up and the “Hiroshima Inokuchi Upper Secondary School Renaissance Project” was commenced. At that time, the staff organization was handling the personnel, money and materials, which included the Personnel Committee, Financing Facility Committee and School Duties Committee. It was time that the Principal’s right was no longer infringed upon and therefore I formed

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an execution force “Vision Committee” which was directly controlled by the principal.”

One month after embarking upon our school reform, the correctional measures by the Ministry of Education was launched to reform the malpractices in school and correct the management and administration function according to the law. I was tried in the furnace on all fronts, but consequently, all the challenges paid off. The graduation enrollment ceremony was held under the Course of Study, the working hours were properly managed, the faculty meeting was administered by the principal, and the appointment of the head teachers was properly conducted as well as having the education research organs and groups reorganized. We assumed the offensive and it seemed all the faculty members were ready to join the reform. In particular, we strengthened the advertisement for applicants. For example, we published the School Bulletin printed in color three or four times a year, and made 20,000 volumes of each, and distributed it to lower secondary schools. We also launched new programs to refresh the educational activities, thus in 1998 we became a sister school of Elizabeth College, Australia, and in 2000 with the Aiea High School in Hawaii, as well as the University of Hawaii. Plus, a scholarship program sponsored by the Alumni Association was founded to send the students abroad for a short period.

Thanks to the reform of the entire school, the academic achievement of the students rapidly skyrocketed. We always encouraged the students to modify the school atmosphere with the motto “Proudly and with good conduct, we do what we must do.” Since 2000, the school has been nominated as “a focused school for improvement of scholastic ability”. As a result, greater attention has been paid to the responsibility to the outcome of the lessons. The consequence of these actions was that in the third year after the embarkation of the reform, in 2001, a total of 93 students including some of the former-year’s graduates passed the entrance exam of national and public (municipal) universities. The number was twice that of the previous year, and I was convinced that “the Inokuchi Mythology” had revived.

8. Reform of Kokutaiji Upper Secondary School and Revival of the reputation as a prestigious school

—Making the best of the history and tradition since the establishment of the prominent Hiroshima No.1 Middle School

When I was plotting to take the next step in strategies for making the Inokuchi Upper Secondary School better and better, in April 2001, I was transferred to

Hiroshima Kokutaiji Upper Secondary School. The superintendent of education honored me with his words saying that “I expect you will bring in the alumni’s association to support the school, and rebuild the reputation of the school with such a long history and tradition, as the former Hiroshima No.1 Middle School which was the best school in the pre-war system.” My limited knowledge about the school was that, it was once the most prestigious school in Hiroshima Prefecture but currently it had been lingering in a despairing situation. Plus, besides the ordinary full-time course, there were night courses and a correspondence course congested within the same school premise. Furthermore, after the abolition of the Integrated Selection System, under the new free competition, this school stood left behind compared to other schools which were in the same group. So I inwardly said to myself, “What chaos I am going to now. Rebuilding the devastated fame of the school will be the biggest task that anybody has ever done before” and thus I resolved to carry it through. The former principal gave me the advice that “First of all you’d better conduct interviews with the head teachers, and it is you who will decide on what to do.” As s/he told me to do, I scheduled the interviews in the first week of April and at the same time I carefully read the school history book of the 124 years since its foundation in the Meiji Period. I was deeply touched with all the head teachers’ “sincere wish to change the school”. Also, I was strongly impressed with the school history, as I truly admired the great history and tradition, and once again, I felt tense at this heavy mission to revive the distinguished status of the school. By mid April, I drew up a summary plan, entitled “Hiroshima Prefecture-run Kokutaiji Upper Secondary School Phoenix Project.” The mission was the “Development of the greatest treasure (=valuable national asset) with a promising future” which was also the spirit of the school foundation. The visions were “Realization of the truly perfect balance in both study and sports”, and “Embodiment of the school motto, ‘simplicity and fortitude & good manners with dignity.’” In making it, I asked the help of more than 40,000 alumni, and I had the reform plan cover all areas such as the management system, educational condition, educational content, guidance (teaching) system and support system. I divided it into two phases; the first phase of three years as foundation building, and the second of three years as concrete content forming.

The flow in detail towards the revival of a prestigious school is as follows. At first, collect the students who have high academic ability through intensive and active PR. Secondly, uniform the power and direction of all the faculty members, then provide the students the best lessons in quality and quantity. Thirdly, enhance

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the potential energy of the students by promoting a good balance between study and sports. We have already established the fundamentals, and now “the New Phoenix Project” is in the final stage towards completion.

At every occasion, we instilled the students with “the long history and traditions handed over since the establishment of the former Hiroshima No.1 Middle School” as well as a slogan, “DNA simplicity and fortitude, good manners with dignity.” We expected our students to have an inner pride, and they have been certainly responsive to our expectation. In 2002, a new Science and Math course was introduced, and fortunately our school was selected as “a Super Science High School” designated by the Ministry of Education. The first designation lasted for three years, and after completing the first phase, our school was again selected for another five years until the year 2009. We have been working on the “Development of human resources in Science and Technology to play active roles internationally.” We have implemented several activities including the presentation by students at a sister school in the U.K.

One of the main reasons which caused the deterioration in the reliability of the school was the lowered advancement to tertiary education. However in the spring of 2004, right after the first phase of the reform, the enrollment rate to national or municipal-run universities was 2.5 times more than in the year 2003 [91 graduates as well as 13 who had graduated in the past years]. In 2005, (compared to the year 2003), 3.6 times more passed, of which 130 graduates and 19 who had already graduated (in the previous years) passed, thus all went on to progress. About 80 % of the students belonged to clubs (though the participation is their free choice). With the traditionally handed down spirit of “stick-it-out” both the soccer club and baseball club remained among the best four teams in the Prefecture-wide tournament, and also the badminton club and broadcasting club obtained satisfactory results remaining in the upper rank in the nation-wide competition. More cases worthy of mention are the outcomes made by the students belonging to the Science and Math seminar group, of which the Biology section group won the Ministry of Education Prize in DNA analysis of giant salamanders, also the Solution section group remained in third in JSEC 2004 at the national competition.

The school is located right in the middle of a metropolis, so students severely suffered from the heat in summer. After many complications in August of 2002, air conditioners were leased and installed for the first time at a Prefecture-run school, thanks to the cooperation from the Alumni Association and parents. In the beginning it was only for the third grade classrooms. But as of today, air

conditioners are installed in all of the classrooms including the first and the second grades, and all the expense is borne by the parents. Since the start of a 5-day school week, we have launched Saturday sessions of supplemental lessons by inviting lecturers from outside. That was also the first attempt of a Prefecture-run school, so we faced a lot of criticism in the beginning. To promote the international exchange, in 2001, we entered into a sister school tie-up with Moanalua High School of Hawaii, and since 2002, Hawaii became the destination of our annual school trip. We also became a sister school with Tasker Milward High School in the UK, and the Kalamazoo Area Mathematics and Science Center in the USA, so we tried to establish a system to meet the diversified needs of our students. Also a new style of advertisement was conducted to increase the number of applicants. The reputation has been restored and due to the abolition of school enrollment district, we have almost achieved the targeted goal to revive our prestigious school.

9. Concluding Remarks

—School reform and the knowledge of rebuilding—

I have rebuilt three upper secondary schools in my life as principal, and I would like to tell you one of the attitudes needed for rebuilding. That is “vocation with pride.”

This vocation means that we do whatever we must do for the students at the sacrifice of ourselves. If we think we can not leave it as it is, then we take action immediately. If we think it is dirty, right away we clean it with all our heart attached. If we find a child who is desperate to understand a subject, we just throw away everything and teach to make that child understand. If students say they are not comfortable to study at school, or if the parents do not trust the school, immediately we take countermeasures to reform the school. If a student wishes to enter XX University, then you teach her/him thoroughly so that s/he will pass the exam. Cleaning, improvement of academic achievement, school reform, all of those will be dependent on the teacher’s vocation. If the principal does not care about litter in school or if the principal does not pick up the trash, I think there will be no hope for the school to be rebuilt.

In addition, though the principal thinks nothing was his/her fault still he will be quite often in a situation where it is necessary to make a humble apology on behalf of the students, the faculty members and the school. You may find it difficult to apologize when you are not at fault, but if you have someone whom you must protect, you can unperturbedly apologize for them. This is real pride. In fact, I

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could have given you many more such episodes. However, I myself have suffered a lot from those past incidents and, to tell you the truth I tried to forget them as I personally didn't want to recall them again. Another reason is that I had better refrain from disclosing any more details of such experiences, because the people who were actually involved, also have their own life now. For instance, I have had the experience of being isolated and surrounded by enemies on all sides, because I failed to properly negotiate the issue of subsidy for students, therefore I boldly apologized to solve the issue. Also, when a financially-disadvantaged student wanted to enter a university by applying for a full scholarship, the homeroom teacher kept the application forms beyond the deadline, so I alone had to handle the complaints from the institution. Another case is that parents who were dissatisfied with our student guidance approach for their child, brought in a third party (outsider) to the school, and the school was thus coercively intervened upon by this heavy-handed measure. All of the incidents occurred unexpectedly and it was always an abrupt attack. In the initial stage of my career, I could not straightforwardly apologize but kept being too stubborn and as a result things turned worse, and I caused students and the school troubles for a very long period. When I could calm myself down, I went ahead and apologized, and things took a turn for the better.

Last but far from least, I would like to mention one more thing. The principal's duty is heavy, but it is indeed enjoyable. If I want to do something, I can do anything. Almost nothing is impossible. No matter what situation the school is in now, if you work hard putting forth all efforts with your body and spirit in unison, I am sure within the period of three years, any school can be rebuilt!

Children are treasures of our society

“When we (project members) visited Mr. YASUMORI, he was the principal of a prestigious school whose percentage of university enrollment by graduates was the best in Hiroshima Prefecture. “He must be a very strict educator.” We had imaged him selfishly and we were scared to death while heading to the Principal’s Office. In reality, he turned out to be a very nice teacher who possessed both strictness and kindness.

In the interview with Mr. YASUMORI, he shared the following episode: When I was appointed as vice principal at one of the most corrupt upper secondary schools, on my first day I aired an announcement, and requested the students saying, “Ladies and gentlemen, please do” Bad acting students came to tell me something then. “Mr. Vice principal, it was the first time we were called ‘gentlemen’. I think you are the only person in the world who would call us gentlemen!” How pleased I was by their words. One day when a group of 14-15 students who were illegally smoking cigarettes were forcefully taken to me, at first they went wild in a bad temper and said; “What’s going on here! Why in the hell did you watch us and get us arrested!” Then I told them, “You are our treasures, aren’t you? You are treasures of our society. Please stop saying such words and please grow up so we feel proud of you. Our future depends on you, you know.” Then they replied, “Oh, no. Are we also treasures?” I thought we shouldn’t forget to tell every child that “they are treasures of the society.” When I was at that school, I always kept the spirit to respect everyone with the philosophy, “Children are the treasures of the society.” That is why, I myself had never experienced the full antagonism of the students [from the interview with Mr. YASUMORI].

When I interviewed Mr. YASUMORI, I was very impressed with the phrase “Children are treasures of the society.” He admitted he had not carried this idea from the outset of his career. The first place he served as teacher was not in Hiroshima Prefecture, but Osaka Prefecture. It was right in the middle of the time of upper secondary schools students’ rioting, so his circumstances were indeed trying and full of hardships. During those days, he had strongly advocated an idea that students should be forcefully bound by the school regulations, so he didn’t want to tolerate any trifle violations. However, the stricter he instructed his students, the stronger they resisted. Ever since he came back to Hiroshima Prefecture, he himself was gradually transformed into a different person thanks to

various favorable interactions with students.

Through the entire process of this project, we have constantly questioned ourselves, “What are good educators? What are good principals?” And as we met one principal after another, we felt the indistinct images we had before were gradually solidified into one stream.

From among all the principals we met, particularly from Mr. YASUMORI, we strongly felt the importance to keep a deep love for children, which is the eternal fundamental in education. This affection must be kept even when he reprimands students strictly.

Mr. YASUMORI was once in Osaka. And now he is in Hiroshima. In both places he was a very strict educator [he describes himself as “Autumn Frost & Burning Sun Type”] however, I clearly see a big gap between the two. That is, now at the bottom of his heart, he has a strong thought “everything must be done for students.” What I can see in his episodes is his strong love that is described in the idea, “Children are treasures of the society” and is also represented in various reforms he conducted in schools for the sake of children.

Mr. YASUMORI told us, “All the answers we need, can be found in(side) the school.” From these words, I can feel every bit of his pride has been formed by his efforts from his daily practices in school, as well as from the experiences of overcoming all the difficulties in school one by one by making his own decisions.

The educational experiences of Mr. YASUMORI are full of the actual practices in school.

Project Member A

Courage to take a leap

“Principals of Hiroshima” Editorial Committee

This book is a collection of essays from school principals in Hiroshima Prefecture. Thirteen principals freely wrote their stories based on their personal educational philosophy, professional viewpoints and outlook on life. All of them are phenomenal educators as they chose to take the road less traveled in the journey of school education.

Some of them spent their whole life dedicated only to schools beginning as a humble teacher. One principal came from the private business sector. One devoted her life to education in the remote mountain areas. Others successfully accomplished the mission to rebuild devastated schools immersed in various problems.

Indeed, their experiences are diverse but all of them share the same intense sincerity in attitudes towards educating the children.

1. Reason for this Project

When Prof. NAGAO informed us about this project the ‘Principals of Hiroshima’ for the first time, we had ambivalent feelings. On the one hand, we appreciated the project as it is a mesmerizing and fascinating attempt; however, we did not have the self-confidence to do so because we were still university students of about twenty years old. We asked ourselves if we could fulfill the task as members of the project - to listen to the stories of the principals, ask them to write their experiences, and compile them into a book. In fact, our anxiety was bigger than our confidence. As if sensing our concerns, Prof. NAGAO told us the following words.

“Whenever we start something new, we must set our first step bigger than usual and have the courage to take a leap. I’m convinced you’re able to do so.”

Encouraged by his words, we decided to take the very first step.

2. Passion for Education, Love for Children

The project was commenced, and we visited and interviewed the principals. Upon personally hearing their stories, we were deeply touched by their great efforts in education as well as their educational philosophy and professional viewpoints to always prioritize children and take action in favor of the children. Although there seems to be nothing dramatic or shocking about their stories, we were very

impressed with their deep concern for children. Their life histories were based on their feelings in daily educational practices, and on their dreams to become a teacher. In one interview, a principal ardently talked about her /his feelings towards children, occasionally shedding tears. Another principal used a frank expression that she loves children very much. Their ways of expression varied, but all of them demonstrated the same sincere feeling of affection for children.

Besides the interviews, we also listened to lectures delivered by some of the principals. Their lectures were part of the JICA courses conducted by CICE for foreign educators from developing nations. All the foreign participants were impressed by the enthusiasm of the principals for education. Attending the JICA course lectures, we confirmed that Japanese educators are honorable professionals whom we can be proud of in the world.

3. Changes in ourselves as Project Members

Nowadays, issues about teachers are often the target of criticism due to scandals or incompetence. With these problems and issues plaguing and disgracing the teaching profession, university students of the Faculty of Education, who once dreamed of becoming a school teacher, gradually lose their hopes and interests. We often hear this kind of sentiment among other students. Even some of our project members had once almost lost their initial dream of becoming a teacher. Through this project, we met praiseworthy educators, and learned aspects of Japanese education that made us proud. Those project members who almost lost their interest in the teaching profession are now actually teaching at elementary or lower secondary schools.

This book is filled with the educational philosophy, professional viewpoints and outlook on life of the principals. The book may have the same effect on those who wish to work in the educational world and to those who are about to abandon their hopes for education. It will be our great pleasure, if this book provides the opportunity to know and appreciate the good and impressive aspects of education in Japan.

Through this project, we the committee members learned that “If we challenge, we can do the job even though we are just students.”

We started by determining what kind of principals are here in Hiroshima Prefecture. Then we made an appointment and interviewed them. Afterwards we asked the principals to write their stories. Everything was new to us. In particular, we felt quite nervous when we phoned them asking for an appointment. We

wondered whether the principal would give us their time and attention to talk to mere students. Contrary to our concerns, all of them were kind enough to listen to us and gave us their time in spite of their tight schedule. Making the very first phone-call to a principal and requesting to write an essay about his/her professional experiences, proceeding through the different stages of this project seemed almost impossible for students like us to fulfill. However, once we started everything was possible. We were able to overcome every hurdle at a time, one by one. “Even students can do it!” We realized this as we progressed through the different stages of the project.

“Principals of Hiroshima” gave us many insights which we would not have gained through university lectures alone. After reading this book, we hope you will also have the courage to take a leap and have a wonderful adventure, as we did.

Lastly, we would like to acknowledge several individuals who cooperated in the publication of this book. First in the list, we would like to thank the thirteen principals who contributed their experiences, for their kindness in accepting our request in spite of their crowded daily workload. Publication of the book would not have been possible without even a single principal amongst the thirteen. Thank you very much.

We also give our thanks to Mr. TAMAGAWA [former principal of Hiroshima Prefecture Kake Upper Secondary School] for his precious advice and guidance as a project adviser; to the Staff of CICE who assisted us especially in clerical works. Thank you very much.

In the end, we appreciate this significant opportunity of working with the project members, who helped develop our mind and character by working hard together towards the completion of this project.

Photos and diagrams used in the book

Photos and figures used in the book have been provided by the writers of different chapters. The photo and the figure on p. 13 have been provided by Mr. Kazuki Sakai.

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