Kikokushijo:
The Category of Japanese Returnee Children

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Abstract

All Japanese children and youth who have lived abroad in connection to their parents’ job transfers, are, upon their return to Japan, categorised as *kikokushijo* (returnee children).

The Japanese educational system is rigid, with much focus on entrance examinations to universities and other educational institutions, and for a person who has been socialised into a non-Japanese society and school system it is difficult to adjust to a Japanese classroom situation. Also, because an entrance examination candidate is expected to be able to reproduce memorised facts, a person who has studied a similar curriculum, but with a different focus, will be at disadvantage in the competition for entrance to an educational institution.

Beginning in the 1960’s, the *kikokushijo*’s situation has gradually become a topic of discussion in Japanese educational and political circles, and they can now take special adapted entrance exams to most educational institutions, and many schools have specially designed programmes to make the *kikokushijo*’s adjustment to Japan easier.

Accompanying the category ‘*kikokushijo*’ there are certain notions concerning what a person belonging to the category should be like. A *kikokushijo* is, among other things, perceived as someone who is fluent in English, not afraid of saying his or her opinion, and has certain problems with the Japanese language and customs. These expectations are almost ubiquitous, both in school and in society in general, therefore the *kikokushijo* cannot avoid being confronted with and relating to them. The *kikokushijo* thus create their self-images in relation to the image of *kikokushijo* that they meet in dialogues with others.

The category *kikokushijo* is first and foremost important within the school system. I
therefore look at the Japanese school system and three special schools for kikokushijo in Part I of this thesis. The special schools are balancing between being ‘international’ alternatives to mainstream Japanese education, and integrated parts of the Japanese educational system.

In Part II I present individual kikokushijo and examine similarities and differences in their experiences. Further, I look more closely at the image of the typical kikokushijo as it is represented in media, and show that the kikokushijo’s own images of ‘typical kikokushijo’ strongly correlate with this. Because many of the persons categorised as kikokushijo do not have the skills or problems which they, according to the popular image, are expected to have, they have problems identifying with that image. Some feel that they do not ‘qualify’ as kikokushijo, because they cannot live up to others’ expectations concerning for instance English knowledge.
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BPH
A note to the reader

Names of *kikokushijo* informants are changed, as well as some specific details of their life stories. The real names of schools, institutions, teachers and other people with an official function connected to these are used, in agreement with the persons concerned.

When a person is referred to by his or her full name, I have chosen to write the personal name (first name) followed by the family name (surname). The reason for this is that most Japanese present themselves this way when writing or speaking English. Because this thesis is written in English I want to present Japanese persons in the way they would have presented themselves in this context.

Following the advice of Professor Arne Kalland of the University of Oslo, I have tried to limit the use of Japanese words to a minimum, in order to make the reading of this thesis easier for those with little knowledge of the Japanese language and society. Japanese words and expressions are first given with an English translation, and later the English word is used. Japanese nouns have no plural form. Thus when I write "*kikokushijo*", it can be singular or plural, depending on the context. A list of Japanese words and expressions is given in Appendix III.

Long vowels in Japanese words I have marked with a "^" above the letter. (Example: *gakkö* : school) Usually, the long vowels are depicted with a "–" above the letter, but unfortunately the computers and printers that I have had access to do not support these fonts. I have not marked long vowels in names. There are different practices when it comes to transcribing names, and I do not wish to contribute to the confusion.
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Tokyo Metropolitan Kokusai High School
School building and atmosphere
Summary

Some Comparative Aspects of the Three Schools
Tuition and costs
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Part II: Individuals

Introduction to Part II

Why is there a standard image of Kikokushiho, and why is it so prevalent?
Overview of dialogues
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Chapter 3 Nine Kikokushiho

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Nine Kikokushiho
Case 1 Rumi
Case 2 Kenichi
Case 3 Yasuko
Case 4 Misato
As a seventeen-year-old I spent one year as a high school exchange student in Japan, living as a ‘daughter’ in a family. Every morning I put on my school uniform and commuted on crowded trains to my public, co-ed high school, where I would sit in class, sometimes almost asleep like the others, and attend practice in the Japanese archery club every day after school hours. I often had discussions about the school systems in Norway and Japan with my teachers, who found my arguments and opinions interesting, albeit sometimes a little irritating. Coming home, I took up contact with some Japanese high school exchange students to Norway, and discovered that their opinions on many aspects of the Japanese society were not very different from my own. They dreaded the return to school classes where only the teachers would lecture, the ‘Examination Hell’ before entering universities, and that they would not enjoy as much personal freedom as they had during their stay in Norway. I remember having thought that it must be harder for them to return to Japan from Norway than for me to return to Norway from Japan, although I too experienced some re-entry adjustment problems.

When I in October 1997 returned to Japan on an 18-month scholarship granted by the Monbusho (the Japanese Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture), doing research on different sorts of re-entranets to Japan was what I had in mind. However, whenever I was
asked what my research plans were, the immediate reaction to my answer was, “Oh, you want to do research on kikokushijo”. It happened several times. After a while I learnt that kikokushijo is the term used for children and youth who have lived for some time, often many years, abroad in connection with their parents’ (in almost all cases the father’s) work. The word consists of four characters, meaning “return-to-country-children”. In English texts these children are mostly called “returnee children”, “returnees” or simply kikokushijo. Japanese would often comment on how kikokushijo were either lucky or pitiable, fluent in English or poor in Japanese. There was not much variation in what was said about them, apart from the fact that it was mostly either negative or positive, according to the person whom I spoke with. I found this extremely interesting, especially because I had spent my last two high school years studying for the International Baccalaureate in an Oslo high school, where many of my classmates were Norwegians who had lived abroad and attended local or international schools in those other countries. There was, however, never any talk about those with international experience being any different from the rest, that they had more or less problems or advantages than the rest of us. One girl in my class would use an English-Norwegian dictionary when she wrote Norwegian essays, but only for the first few months. My school was of course a special case, with lessons and exams in English, and following the requirements of the International Baccalaureate Organisation. But also earlier in my school career there had been students who returned from abroad, and as far as I can remember they were not treated differently or perceived to have special needs or qualities; except of course for the fact that it was interesting to hear about their experiences abroad.

I became curious and decided to look into what is associated with the word kikokushijo and how the individuals who are categorised as kikokushijo relate to the stereotypes attached to them.
Historical background

When trying to explain why it can be difficult for foreigners to adjust to life in Japan, or why some Japanese seem to be afraid of contact with foreigners, Japanese often say that it is so because Japan is a *shimaguni*, an island country. By this is meant that since Japan consists of islands, and thus does not border directly on other countries, it has always been difficult for Japanese to travel abroad, or for foreigners to visit Japan. This natural environment is said to have influenced the Japanese way of thinking. It is also often said that the Japanese are a homogenous race, and thus Japanese all over Japan have a similar way of life, and this way of life is different from other countries. Both these arguments belong to the *nihonjinron*, the ‘Theory of Japanese Uniqueness’¹, that I will discuss later in this Preface. According to Eriksen “the island is a powerful metaphor in everyday speech as well as in several academic disciplines” (Eriksen 1993:2). The belief that on an island cultural practices are insulated from external influence has proven wrong, and anthropologists as well as others have come to realise that also on islands social systems can hardly be believed to be completely closed. It is of course true that Japan is surrounded by water, but this is also true for the United Kingdom². And although the United Kingdom can be said to have some isolationist political tendencies³ the two countries cannot really be compared in this sense. And there has been much contact between Japan and the surrounding world in history.

Japan is believed to have been populated through Korea in waves, at least 100,000 years BC, although the exact details are not known. (Reischauer & Craig 1989:4). Pottery dating back 10,000 years has been found. According to Japanese mythology Japan was formed by the two gods Izanami and Izanagi, and their daughter, the sun goddess Amaterasu, is the ancestress of the imperial family line, which is believed to be unbroken until the present day. (Hendry 1995:8) Although the emperor is far less

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¹ The literal translation would be “theories of (the) Japanese”.
² Or Mauritius, which Eriksen describes in his article (Ibid).
³ E.g. the unwillingness to enter the European Monetary Union.
important for the Japanese today than he was previously (especially preceding and during World War 2) he still possesses a strong symbolic value for those on the political right wing. The emperor is, according to the Japanese constitution, the symbol of the state.

Japanese historical accounts have traditionally been concerned with the ‘unbroken’ line of rulers descended from the sun goddess and ‘Japan’s cultural uniqueness’. Because of this, the importance of Chinese and Korean influences have often been missed. (Brown 1993:1) Since the 6th century there has been continuous contact with China. Japanese scholars would go to China to study and bring home the Chinese writing system, Buddhist religion, bureaucratic systems and architecture, among other things that helped develop the country. (Reischauer & Craig 1989) Around the 14th century Japan would also send merchant ships to South East Asia, and later Portuguese missionaries and traders were allowed into Japan. But in the beginning of the 17th century the country was closed to foreigners, and no Japanese was allowed to leave Japan. The period of national seclusion lasted approximately 250 years. During this time there was still trade going on with China, Korea and Holland, but the trade with Holland was restricted to the small island Dejima just outside of Nagasaki. Japan was forced to open up for foreign trade in 1853. Following the new opening the Japanese leaders decided to learn from the west (Europe and the United States), and sent hundreds of young people abroad to study. These students returned to Japan with new knowledge that was highly appreciated, and they received very good positions within the Japanese government. Foreign experts were also invited to come to Japan to educate the Japanese.

From the beginning of the 20th century Japan grew increasingly militaristic and ‘expanded’ into Asia; Taiwan was taken under Japanese control in 1895, Korea was annexed in 1910 and Manchuria in 1931. Schools for children of the Japanese occupants

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4 Those who were caught attempting to leave Japan got capital punishment.
5 The most famous one and still remembered all over Japan today is William S. Clark from Massachusetts, co-founder of Sapporo Agricultural College, now Hokkaido University.
were set up in these countries. From Japan’s surrender in the World War 2 in August
1945 until the end of the American occupation of Japan, there were naturally not many
Japanese abroad. But from 1952, when Japan regained her independence, the economy
grew, and so did the ‘peaceful’ economic expansion into the world.

The Japanese School System

There are nine years of compulsory education in Japan. The school year goes from April
to March, as the Japanese fiscal year starts in April. Children start school at the age of
six. Primary school lasts for six years and junior high school lasts three years. Upon
graduation from junior high school, 95.9% go on to senior high school. The vast
majority of these high schools are what we would call academic or theoretical⁶,
although the level of the schools, and of the students’ academic abilities, are highly
differentiated.

Of the high school graduates 34.9% go on to four-year universities, and 12.4% go on to
two-year colleges. The two-year college students are almost exclusively female. In
addition to universities and colleges there are also students who go on to technical
colleges or miscellaneous schools. (Figures from Japan Almanac 1999)

Although Japan has a public educational system, many parents choose to send their
children to private schools. The percentage of students attending private schools rise the
higher up on the education ladder one gets. 30% of high school students attend private
schools. The percentage is also higher in urban areas than in the countryside.

The classes in Japanese schools are large; at the present there are up to 40 students in
each class on all levels, also in primary school⁷. Understandably there is not much time

⁶ 73% attend the ‘General Course’, 9.1% ‘Commercial Course’ and 8.9% ‘Engineering Course’.
(Monbusho statistics 1998)
⁷ In my Japanese high school in 1990 I was one of 47 students in my class.
for the individual student. School uniforms are used in almost all junior and senior high schools, and in most private primary schools. The schools also have rules for hairstyles, and for how the students should behave outside of school hours, though these rules seem to have become more lax since 1990, when I attended a Japanese high school. Still, some rules worth mentioning would be: no permanent waves or no dyeing of hair, no colourful socks or hair ribbons, no make-up, no stockings under the gym uniform even in the cold winter, no parties with classmates from the year before, no sleeping over at class-mates’ homes, no going to discos in the summer vacation etc. The students are seen as representatives of their school, and if a student should be involved in a criminal act or an accident, the school will usually be notified.

In the beginning of my high school exchange year I was very surprised that the students would never ask teachers questions and often not answer when asked something by the teacher, and that the teacher would not scold students for sleeping in class. I had come to Japan with the idea that all Japanese students study hard for the university entrance exams, but in my rather new, suburban, low-ranked school, most of the students wanted to start working after high school, or maybe go on to two-year colleges or technical schools. And those who went on to university mostly went to private, low-ranked institutions, and would never have a chance to get hired by a prestigious company. The atmosphere in my school was not at all comparable with that of Nada High School in Kobe (Rohlen 1983) where almost half of the students get accepted at Tokyo University, Japan’s most prestigious educational institution. If a Japanese is able to enter a good school or university, both he and his family will be respected and admired. The major companies only hire students from the top universities, and thus it is a goal for many families that their children get into a university that will increase their chances of finding a good job later in life. When I mentioned to a classmate that I had a friend at Kaisei Gakuen High School (which is on approximately the same level as Nada High School and famous all over Japan) she shook her head and said that “those people are

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8 Schools in Japan split the classes and put together new ones every year, and one is supposed to make new friends in the new group.
not normal human beings”. My host mother in 1990 was also very excited about this ‘boyfriend’9 of mine, and it was never difficult to get her permission to go on a date with him.

Education in Japan is very much focused on entrance exams to universities or other schools. And for these tests one usually has to memorise a lot of facts. English is taught from the first year of junior high school, when the students are twelve years old, but five years later there are very few who can actually speak English. In the English lessons at my school the teacher would explain in Japanese what the text was about and then go through different grammatical problems that occurred in the text. English was hardly spoken, and there was never any role-play or other activities where students could actively use what they had learned10. The tests were mostly in multiple choice style, followed by a section of translation of selected sentences. The students never wrote compositions in English. Pronunciation was also not practised, and often the teachers would also speak with a rather heavy Japanese accent11. The other subjects were taught in approximately the same way, there were never any discussions about social or political issues, and the students never had to make a presentation before the class.

In addition to the regular school hours approximately half of all students12 attend juku, or cram schools, where they study for the entrance exams, or to catch up or be ahead of their classmates. In 1990 my host sister was in her last year of high school, and she would study in a cram school every Sunday and several evenings a week. In the six week long summer vacation she would study in the cram school full-time. She had only two or three days off the whole summer, but then she would study in the library. She

9 The word はいふれんど does not necessarily mean a “boyfriend” in the western sense, but merely a friend who happens to be male.
10 This is considered a problem also among Japanese, and many schools hire native English teachers so that students will get some practice and an opportunity to meet a foreigner. That a school has native English teachers is also a big sales point.
11 Many きこくしえじ who speak good English have said that they also make their pronunciation more “Japanese”, in order not to stick out in class.
would also often sit up over her books until three in the morning, and her mother had a hard time waking her up at six when she had to get up in order not to be late for school. From what I have read and heard from acquaintances, my host sister is not an extreme case; it is quite normal for students who wish to enter a good university.

In order to be able to take the entrance exam of a Japanese university one has to have graduated from a Japanese high school. Graduates from international schools, or other non-accredited schools have to take a very difficult equivalency exam, in order to be considered as candidates. This is a clear disadvantage to members of the North Korean minority; since their high schools are not accepted, very few of their students are able to enter Japanese universities. The South Korean schools have taken the consequences of this policy and teach a fully Japanese curriculum, with Korean as a foreign language, and thus their students are accepted as applicants to universities\(^{13}\) (Goodman 1993, Ryang 1997).

For entrance to all state-run or other public universities and some private universities there is first a standard nation-wide test consisting of exams in Japanese, English, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science according to what one wants to study, and to the specific requirements of the particular universities one wants to enter. Later the universities arrange their own second-stage entrance examinations. Some universities have started placing more weight on high school credentials, interviews and short essays. (ISEK:17) Many high schools have a system of recommendation to particular universities (*suisen*). The school will select a limited number of its graduating students (this can be done through internal exams at the school) for direct entry into the cooperating universities. This selection is done before the regular exams start in January,

\(^{13}\) Japan has 645,000 resident Kורans (Japan Almanac 1999), making up 44% of the total number of foreign residents. Most of these are 2\(^{nd}\) to 4\(^{th}\) generation Koreans, descendants of Korean workers brought to Japan during the occupation years from 1910 to 1945. They are still Korean citizens although they often do not speak the Korean language anymore, as it is difficult for them to acquire Japanese nationality. Matters are further complicated by the fact that the Korean nationals living in Japan are split in two groups, according to their political affiliation to North and South Korea respectively. Both groups have built up educational systems of their own (Goodman 1993, Ryang 1997).
and thus the ‘recommendation students’ can relax while their peers are struggling with their exams. Needless to say, there is often great competition within the school for those recommendations, and if a high school can offer recommendation to renowned universities, it is a good sales point for the high school itself.

In the past years there has been increasing discussion about the ‘collapse of the classroom’ (teachers are not able to control their students), bullying (ijiime), violence against teachers and students, and students refusing to go to school (tôkô kyohi). There are especially many problems in junior high schools. The blame for this is often put on the examination pressure as well as on the society that ‘demands’ that fathers spend most of their time at work or with their colleagues after work so that there is barely any time left for the family.

**Nihonjinron – Discourse on Japanese Uniqueness**

Japanese love to read about and discuss themselves. Quite a large number of Japanese I have met had read one or several books about the Japanese race, how Japanese are seen abroad, the difference between the Japanese and other races, and so on. I was invited out to eat with a business man, and during the hours the meal lasted, he had told me both that “since the intestines of Japanese are longer than those of other peoples, Japanese more easily get intestine cancer if they eat a lot of meat” and that the Japanese are so conscious about how other people think about them because “in prehistoric times, Japanese lived in a village where they would work together on the fields under one village boss whom they had to obey, while in your country (Norway and Europe) people would go alone hunting in the woods”. Goodman (1993:59) says that “… examination of specifically ‘Japanese’ values is practically a national pastime in Japan … many such ideas are so widely disseminated that they are taken for granted by a broad cross-section of the Japanese public”. *Nihonjinron* has been used to explain culture shock for foreigners entering Japan and Japanese going abroad (Ibid.:60). *Shimaguni* (island
country), tan’itsu minzoku (one homogenous race) and sakoku (national seclusion) are words that appear again and again. The beauty of the change of the four seasons is also thought of as something uniquely Japanese, and is often mentioned in speeches. I cannot count the times I have been asked how many seasons we have in my country. A foreign friend of mine even experienced that a Japanese woman would claim: “But your four seasons can’t be as different as in Japan!”

Important and notorious within the nihonjinron genre is Tsunoda’s study from 1976 of the Japanese brain, which he claims functions differently from the brains of other peoples. (Goodman 1993, Kalland 1994) After having done research on children at the Hatano Family School, a school for kikokushijo, he declared that “the functioning of the brain of Japanese (which is determined by the use of the Japanese language) suffers severely from interference by foreign languages (Goodman 1993:66). According to Tsunoda the functional pattern in the brain is finalised by the age of 8, so there could be damage if foreign languages are learnt before this age. Also, if a Japanese go abroad before the age of eight he “will never be able to acquire a Japanese pattern of cerebral functioning, and those who go overseas after this age will be severely impaired in their ability to think in a Japanese fashion”(Goodman 1993:66). Tsunoda’s viewpoints are rather extreme, but the problems of forgetting Japanese language and behaviour when staying abroad is considered a very serious problem for most of the scholars studying kikokushijo. And hearing from others that they have become amerikajin (American) or gaijin (foreigner)¹⁴ and that they do not behave like Japanese are things that several of my informants have experienced.

According to Dorinne Kondo, many Japanese have a biological understanding of Japanese-ness. Thus, she, as a Japanese American, became a conceptual anomaly to the Japanese she encountered. She looked Japanese, but could not speak the language fluently, and did not understand all the cultural codes for behaviour. A person who looks

¹⁴ Literally ‘outside person’.
foreign, but speaks fluent Japanese and behave ‘correctly’ can never be accepted as a Japanese, but it is taken more or less for granted that a person who looks Japanese should also be Japanese. Kondo solved this problem by adjusting to the other’s expectations concerning not only language, but also body language and behaviour (Kondo 1990:11-12). Kondo’s experiences imply to us that the identity as ‘Japanese’ is very tightly scripted\textsuperscript{15}. Who can be Japanese, and how a Japanese should behave, is strictly defined. It is also not possible to be simultaneously Japanese and something else, such as ‘American’, which contradicts the identity as Japanese. This causes problems for individuals who in some way or other divert from the ‘normal Japanese’. Descendants of Japanese emigrants, like Kondo, foreign-born naturalised Japanese citizens, or kikokushijo are all, in various degrees, likely to experience being perceived as anomalies.

\textbf{Kaigai.kikokushijo (Overseas and Returnee Children)}

After World War 2 the first Japanese overseas school (nihonjin gakkō) was opened in Taiwan in 1953 and Bangkok in 1956. The first supplementary school (hoshūkō; mainly for teaching the Japanese language to the overseas children) came in Hamburg, Washington and New York in 1957, 1958 and 1962 respectively (Goodman 1993:203).

According to Monbusho Statistics (1997), there were in 1996 49,740 Japanese children of school age living abroad. 37.4% lived in North America, 30.2% in Asia, 23.6% in Europe, 3.7% in Oceania, 3.0% in Latin America, 1.0% in Africa and 1.1% in the Middle and Near East. In Asia 83.8% attend Japanese overseas school, while 1.8% attend supplementary school and 14.4% attend neither. For North America the figures are 4.0% for Japanese overseas school, 70.9% for supplementary school and 25.1% for neither. In Europe 31.0% attend Japanese overseas school, 30.9% supplementary school and 38.1% neither.

\textsuperscript{15} I will get back to ‘scripts’ in Chapter 4.
The tendency is that in English speaking countries, and to a certain extent in French and German speaking countries, the children will attend a local school on weekdays and a supplementary school on Saturdays. Therefore there are not so many Japanese overseas schools in those countries, but rather many supplementary schools. In the supplementary schools children will have classes in the Japanese language, and some schools also offer Mathematics, Social Studies and Science. Where there is no supplementary schools nearby, the children will often take correspondence courses. Most parents consider it very important that their children keep up their Japanese level, so that they will not have too many difficulties upon their return to Japan, but they also feel sorry for their children who have to study on Saturdays when their classmates in the local school can play outside. The future return to Japan is always of concern to the parents of Japanese overseas children, and especially many mothers see it as their prime responsibility to ensure that the children will not be at disadvantage upon returning to Japan (E.g. White 1988).

In countries where the local language is not English, more children go to Japanese overseas schools or international schools. The Japanese overseas schools teach the same curriculum as schools in Japan. In addition there will often be language classes in the language spoken in that country, especially if this is a major European language. Sometimes the father will go alone to work abroad, while the mother and children stay in Japan. The older the children get, the more reluctant the parents are to take them out of school and move them to another country. Especially to ‘unsafe’ countries (the third world) or countries where there are no suitable schools for the children, the father will often go alone. It is also quite common that the father goes alone at first, and the family follows him if it turns out that he will be stationed there for more than 1-2 years (White 1988:37).

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16 The principal of the Japanese overseas school in Munich, which I visited summer 1999, complained that they had to teach 5 hours of German every week on all levels. He felt that was too much for the smaller children. He also regretted that they were not allowed to have as many school days as they wanted, thus the students got less education than they would have got in Japan.
Since senior high school attendance is not compulsory in Japan, there are no public Japanese overseas schools with a senior high school programme. After graduating the Japanese overseas junior high school, more than half of the students return to Japan, where the majority enters high school through a special entrance exam for kikokushijo. Quite a number of students go home to Japan alone and stay with relatives or in dormitories until the rest of the family returns. There are also many families where the mother will return to Japan with the children and the father will continue to stay abroad. It is rather difficult to enter a Japanese high school in the middle of the school year, or even between school years, although many schools offer special entrance exams for students who wish to do this. Those students who continue staying abroad have the choice between entering local schools, international schools or foreign branches of Japanese private schools\textsuperscript{17}, including some boarding schools. If one stays abroad through high school, one also has the ‘advantage’ of entering university through the special entrance exams for kikokushijo, something one loses opportunity to do if one has been home in Japan for a certain number of years and graduated from a Japanese high school.

The public discussion about kikokushijo started in the late 60'ies. The parents of kikokushijo were mainly people with relatively high social status, and they would not accept that their children did not have the same chance of entering good universities as they themselves had had. They complained that “while they were loyally serving their country by working abroad, their children were being handicapped through not being able to compete equally with other students on their return to Japan” (Goodman 1993:204). Committees and pressure groups were formed by the parents, and in 1966 the first statistics on overseas children were collected. Already in 1962 Oizumi, the first school for kikokushijo, was opened, and in 1967 Monbusho started subsidising schools accepting kikokushijo (Ibid. 205). In 1975 a Monbusho run committee proposed that

\textsuperscript{17} Graduates of foreign branches of Japanese private schools are not eligible for special entrance exams for kikokushijo.
there should be more special classes for kikokushijo, and that foreign qualifications should be accepted when kikokushijo applied to high schools. Also a few special private high schools should be built using public money\textsuperscript{18}. It was also suggested that universities should consider accepting kikokushijo who had graduated high schools abroad (Ibid.207-208).

Outline of this thesis

In this preface I have presented the topic kikokushijo and the society in which they have become a category.

In the beginning after I became aware of the kikokushijo, I was very puzzled about the category and I could not understand why kikokushijo were considered so special. Further, I found it intriguing that ‘everybody’ I talked to was reproducing the same views about the kikokushijo and their situation. The individuals included in this category have, as far as I could see, very different backgrounds and experiences. How could they all be treated as belonging to the same group? What purpose does it serve to categorise all returnee children and youth as ‘kikokushijo’, and how has the image of kikokushijo as ‘fluent in English and self-expressive’ (among other things) become so prevalent?

Placing people in categories makes it easier for others to deal with them. When a person is defined as a member of category X, he can be treated according to the pattern for interaction with a member of the X category. The categories often come with notions of how one should behave (E.g. Appiah 1994) or one could say that the category comes with a given ‘front’\textsuperscript{19} which the member of the category has to take on. These ‘fronts’

\textsuperscript{18} One of these schools is International Christian University High School, which I will come back to in a later chapter.
\textsuperscript{19} According to Goffman, ‘front’ is “that part of the individuals performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance.” It is “the expressive equipment of a standard kind intentionally or unwittingly employed by the individual during his performance”. (Goffman 1971:32)
make a situation definition between the member of the category and the persons with whom he interacts easier (Goffman 1969).

As we have seen above, the Japanese school system is rather rigid. One is also dependent on graduating from ‘good’ schools for achieving success, thus getting entry to good institutions are very highly esteemed. Because the kikokushijo were perceived to have problems competing for entrance to educational institutions, it was within the educational system that the need for special treatment of kikokushijo was thought to be necessary. Thus the category kikokushijo came in focus through the educational system. Defining all children returning from overseas as belonging to the category of kikokushijo made it easier to make a policy directed to help that particular group, as dealing with a group of people is easier than dealing with individuals. The group ‘kikokushijo’ had problems adjusting to the school system in Japan, and their skills learnt overseas were not given the credit that many felt was deserved. These aspects of the kikokushijo identity thus came into focus, and influenced the way kikokushijo were perceived by educators, bureaucrats and the general public.

The placing of people in a category influences not only the way they are perceived by others, but also the way they perceive themselves. Those categorised as kikokushijo relate to other people’s notions of them when creating their self-images (Jenkins 1996, Appiah 1994). While the image of a typical kikokushijo among the general public in Japan is of someone who is fluent in English and has problems with the Japanese language and school system, many of the individuals comprised by the category kikokushijo may in fact be very different from that image. This causes a problem of self-identification among those who perceive themselves as different from the popular image.

I have divided this thesis into two parts. In Part I I will look at how schools are important in transmitting the state’s ideology to the children, and for socialising them
into their roles as adults in society. Schools in Japan focus more on equality among their students than the needs of individuals. The kikokushijo create a dilemma in this respect. There is a consensus that the kikokushijo have special needs that have to be considered, and special schools to make their adjustment to the Japanese society and school system easier have been opened. Simultaneously, the state is not willing, or capable, of changing the educational system and practices, which create the problems, not only for the kikokushijo, but for all the other students affected by it. There is a conflict between the state ideology and the actual situation. For instance, the focus on entrance exams is seen as highly problematic by most Japanese, including parents, educators, and politicians, still the system prevails. I will look at schools in general, in Chapter 1, and schools for kikokushijo, in particular, in Chapter 2. I will examine how three special schools are influenced by the state ideology and the Japanese educational system of which they are a part. I will also show how the schools try to foster a special kind of students in line with their educational philosophies.

Part I constitutes the framework for Part II, as the category kikokushijo became important because of the school system. In Part II I look at how different, individual kikokushijo see themselves, and how their self-images correlate with the popular image of the typical kikokushijo. In Chapter 3 I will present nine kikokushijo who have different backgrounds and experiences. Their ascribed category of ‘kikokushijo’ affect their self-images in different ways. With the nine cases I wish to show that it is problematic to place all returnee children in the category ‘kikokushijo’ without conceding to their individual differences and unique experiences. In Chapter 4 I will examine the popular image of kikokushijo in the Japanese society, and I will show how the kikokushijo’s own images of ‘typical kikokushijo’ strongly correlate with the popular image.
PART I

SCHOOLS
INTRODUCTION TO PART I

As we have seen in the Preface, the Japanese school system can be said to be the most important factor in the defining of the category ‘kikokushijo’. Without the schools and the entrance exams, the kikokushijo would hardly be a category recognised by everyone. True, those who have travelled abroad and returned with new knowledge have had a special status in most cultures (Helms 1988). Japan was also modernised mainly with the help of talented young men who were sent abroad to study and bring knowledge and technology back with them. These people were seen as a valuable resource for Japan (E.g. Reischauer & Craig 1989). But the kikokushijo as a group are more seen as something that causes complications, or disrupts the system. This is because it is considered difficult for them to go through the fixed path of schooling; they need special arrangements.

In his book Japan’s ‘International Youth’, Goodman (1993) suggests that the kikokushijo are not very special at all, and that they certainly do not have more problems that the average Japanese school children. It is also a fact that many people are envious of the kikokushijo because they are allowed to take entrance exams which are considered to be easier. There are cases of ‘fake (nsemono no) kikokushijo’ who are sent abroad on their own so that they later can enter prestigious universities through the special kikokushijo entrance exams (Sato 1997). In the eyes of some regular students, the kikokushijo can more or less sneak their way into top educational institutions.

The key to understanding the content of the category kikokushijo, and why the category is so important, is through examining the Japanese school system and its connections to the wider society. How are schools used as tools to produce ideas among people, ideas that have certain functions in maintaining a nation’s ideology?
Schools teach both according to an overt and a hidden curriculum (Cf. Apple 1990, McCutcheon 1988, Luykx 1999, Lynch 1989). The overt curriculum is visible for all through textbooks and learning plans. It consists of “what school people intend that students learn and what teachers say they intend to teach” (McCutcheon 1988:191). The ‘hidden curriculum’ has a deeper foundation, and both educators and students are often not aware of it, because it constitutes norms and ways that are often too obvious for one to notice. McCutcheon describes the hidden curriculum simply as “what students have an opportunity to learn through everyday goings-on under the auspices of schools” (Ibid:191), whereas others see the hidden curriculum as means used by dominant groups in the society to reproduce social injustice and their own hegemony (Apple 1990, Luykx 1999, Lynch 1989:3ff.). One can in any case agree that the teaching of the hidden curriculum is crucial for the socialisation of children and the preparation of them for their later roles as adults in the society.

The hidden curriculum becomes visible through the return of someone who has been socialised into another country and culture where other ways are considered ‘the right way of doing things’. A returnee is unlikely to accept the ‘new’ society as obvious, and may often not understand how to behave in for instance a classroom situation. Thus he or she may act in a way that others consider inappropriate. The overt curriculum may also cause problems. Especially in Japan where entrance exams demand a high knowledge of details, someone who has studied a subject with less focus on details, but more on analysis, will not get as good a score. That the new student might have other knowledge outweighing his lack of knowledge in some areas, is often not given credit, because it does not occur to the teacher or the classmates that this might be the case.

The above-mentioned aspects can explain how the kikokushijo have become a defined category. By placing kikokushijo in a category with certain traits associated with it, it makes it easier to ‘handle them’ without disrupting the already fixed system. That not all kikokushijo may fit the description that goes with the category is not so much of a
problem for the system as for the individual *kikokushijo*. I will examine the individuals behind the category more closely in Part II. In this part I wish to look into the system of which the *kikokushijo* are a part, and thus make out the framework for Part II. In Chapter 1 I will look at the Japanese school system in relation to its place in the wider society, and in Chapter 2 I will examine three schools that are especially designed to ‘meet the needs’ of *kikokushijo*. Goffman (1961) provides a useful conceptual apparatus with his concept of total institutions. I will also draw on different studies of the hidden curriculum and ideology.
1

Schools in a Wider Perspective

Introduction

In this chapter I will attempt to analyse the Japanese school system and the wider society in terms with Goffman's concept of total institutions, and also look at how and by which means ideologies can influence schools and school cultures. As my argument will show, most aspects of the Japanese society are more norm bound than our present western society. Therefore it is also fair to say that the Japanese schools exercise greater influence on all parts of their students' lives than what do schools in the west. They are part of an ongoing process by which individuals are closely integrated into an institutional society and spearhead the way forward to carefully designated paths toward higher education and white collar jobs.
Total institutions

A total institution may be defined as a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life. (Goffman 1962:xiii)

Erving Goffman’s Asylums was published in 1961 with the sub-title Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates. Although the patient in a mental hospital is his main object of study, he also draws on literature dealing with prisons, concentration camps and boarding schools.

According to Goffman (1962:3):

Social establishments – institutions in the everyday sense of that term – are places such as rooms, suites of rooms, buildings, or plants in which activity of a particular kind goes on.

Normally a person “tends to sleep, play and work in different places, with different co-participants, under different authorities and without an over-all rational plan”(Ibid:5). In total institutions we see a “breakdown of the barriers ordinarily separating these three spheres of life”(Ibid:6). Although some workplaces and educational institutions have cafeterias where the workers or students eat, they can not be classified as total institutions because using the facilities is voluntary.

The inmates in a total institution typically live inside the walls of the institution, while the staff or supervisors, who are much fewer in numbers, mostly live on the outside and have contact with the outside world. Interestingly, although there can be much hostility on the inmates’ part towards the staff and also the other way around, “when either grouping refers to the views or interests of “the institution”, by implication they are referring …to the views and concerns of the staff” (Ibid:9).
Entering the institution

As the individual enters the total institution, he has to adjust to a certain way of life, which may be very different from the life outside. Goffman speaks of primary and secondary adjustment. Primary adjustment is when “an individual co-operatively contributes required activity to an organization and under required conditions” (Ibid: 189); that is, he does what he is expected to do, neither more nor less. Secondary adjustment is when the individual uses the system for other means or ends than what it is intended for. For instance, some of the mental patients in the hospital where Goffman did his fieldwork would sign up for group therapy, not because they wanted the therapy, but because they wanted to meet a girlfriend who was in that particular therapy group, or because they thought that by signing up for different kinds of therapy they would give the staff a good impression of themselves and hence receive the staff’s goodwill. If a new patient arrived at a particular ward, it would soon be clear to the staff (and to the other inmates) whether the patient came from another institution or not. This is because a person with experience from another institution would very quickly show secondary adjustment. In other words, he had already internalised the specific ways of creatively using the system for his own benefit.

Goffman suggests that an organisation can be viewed as “a place for generating assumptions about identity” (Ibid:186):

In crossing the threshold of the establishment, the individual takes on the obligation to involve himself at the moment in the activity. Through this orientation and engagement of attention and effort, he visibly establishes his attitude to the establishment and to its implied conceptions of himself. To engage in a particular activity in the prescribed spirit is to accept being a particular kind of person who dwells in a particular kind of world.

The individual can also choose to forgo the activity, or to engage in an un-prescribed way or for an un-prescribed purpose. This would equal “withdrawing from the official
self and the world officially available to it.” “To prescribe activity is to prescribe a world; to dodge a prescription can be to dodge an identity”. (Ibid: 187)

Set conditions

As we have seen, the conditions for the individual’s behaviour, and implicitly his identity, are set before he enters the institution. There exist certain ideas of how a person should be, how he should think and act. These ideas are internalised by both the staff working in the institution and the inmates or clients who voluntarily or involuntarily enter the institution. That the conditions are set does not mean that they are not negotiable. Even total institutions in Goffman’s sense are open to external criticism1. However, the inmates confined to the institution do not have a fundamentally different conception of the institution than does the staff. This is true also for those inmates who, having adjusted secondarily, engage in activities that may go against the institution’s rules and ideology. We could here speak of the inmates being muted, i.e. not being able to express themselves because they do not possess the conceptual apparatus to express their ideas. The inmates are “not part of the dominant communicative system of the society” (Ardener 1989:130).

Society and institutions – ‘total’ traits

Although Goffman’s total institutions are ‘closed’ in the sense that the inmates cannot freely leave the territory, I do think that the concept of total institutions can be used in an analysis of institutions and organisations that in the Goffman sense are not ‘total’, i.e. are not cut off from the wider society. Although the concept then cannot be used in such a strict way as when one examines hospitals, prisons, boarding schools and the like, it gives us a means of looking at how dominant groups, – consciously or unconsciously –,

1 In the mental hospital there would from time to time be inspections by “outsiders”.
can ascertain their position and reproduce the conditions for their hegemony. I will argue that especially in the Japanese context the control which the society and the institutions have over the individual is strong and can thus be compared, at least partially, to that of a total institution.

The school

Most educational institutions have traits that are similar to that of a total institution. Both teachers, students and other employees are expected to show both commitment and attachment (Goffman 1962:174) to the school in which they work or study. There are certain rules and norms for behaviour to be followed, and often a dress code. Schools most often have a programme in which they state what kind of students they want to foster. If the school is public, this programme is similar to other public schools in the area or in the state, if it is private the school is freer to decide on the specific content of its programme.

In an article about socialisation processes at a Norwegian boys’ boarding school around 1960, Harald Beyer Broch describes how the school’s ideology is through different channels transferred to the students. Eckboskolen was a “total school” (Beyer Broch 1995:24) where the students lived, and where there were many strict rules and regulations. However, few students opposed the school structure and the totalitarian nature of the school was not recognised by the students. The boys at Eckboskolen were not aware of the school’s ideology, which they nevertheless incorporated as their own.

School culture is greatly influenced by the school leaders and their visions (Deal and Peterson 1998:28). The ideology of a school may not be directly outspoken, and it is sometimes not even clearly defined. A school culture is often taken for granted, but is still extremely powerful and influences everything that goes on in schools. In an article in Educational Leadership, two professors of Education, Deal and Peterson, state that:
[school] culture is the underground stream of norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals that has built up over time as people work together, solve problems and confront challenges. This set of informal expectations and values shapes how people think, feel and act in schools. This highly enduring web of influence binds the school together and makes it special (ibid).

The school building can also contribute to the school culture. Architecture is a powerful tool for creating a certain atmosphere or for representing a certain ideology.

A building [...] alters our environments physically; [...] it may through various avenues of meaning, inform and reorganize our entire experience. Like other works of art - and like scientific theories, too - it can give new insight, advance understanding, participate in our continual remaking of the world. (Goodman 1988:48)

...the height of tables, the direction of lighting, the shape of a room, the height of its ceiling, the colour of the walls, the positioning of doors, and the aesthetic character of the materials, all contribute towards building the mind as well as the body... [Buildings] can be used to serve the ends of political or religious authority. (Coaldrake 1996: 5)

It is known that a school’s design affects both students’ learning and behaviour (e.g. Hrbert 1998). When a new school is designed, the learning environment has to be considered. In most countries people have a certain image of what a school looks like. A school is often easily spotted. Although the design of schools is influenced by the general trends in architecture, the school has to have a functional design. This contributes to the image of the ‘typical school’.

In Japan it is rather common that a school is enclosed by a fence, with a main gate through which the students enter each morning. At the Japanese high school which I attended, there was one entrance for students and one for guests. In the student entrance there were shoeboxes where the students changed from outdoor shoes to slippers, which had to be worn inside the school building. One was not allowed to leave the school area during the breaks and between school hours and club activities, so the 1300 students and

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2 The Philosopher Nelson Goodman.
most of the 40 teachers spent from eight to eleven hours on the inside of the fence every weekday and four to seven hours on Saturdays. My school had three storeys. The 1st year classrooms were on the 2nd floor, the 2nd year classes on the 1st floor, and the 3rd year classes on the ground floor. The order was hierarchical; the older students did not have to climb the stairs. The classrooms were all identical; all were rectangular\(^3\) and had the same size with room for fifty desks. Students would sit one and one in rows. In the beginning of the school year the girls and the boys sat on different sides of the classroom, but after a few months the teacher changed the seating arrangement so that girls and boys were seated mixed. The teacher’s desk was on an approximately 30 cm elevated plateau. The classroom was separated from the corridor with a wall with windows, which one could see through if one was standing, but not if one was sitting. This meant that people could stand on the outside and look into the classroom, whereas those seated inside the classroom, at least the ones close to the wall, had no way of knowing when they were observed by people on the outside. At each end of the classroom there was a sliding door joining the classroom with the corridor. On the other side there were windows to the outside. In winter the heating consisted of one kerosene heater put in one corner of the classroom, and my classmates complained that it was far too warm next to the heater, whereas further away from it, it was very cold. In summer the windows would be opened, there was no air conditioner. On the hottest days all students would sit in the classroom fanning themselves with paper or plastic fans, or a piece of cardboard.

\(^3\) According to William Cochrane, a professor of Japanese and author of the book *Architecture and Authority in Japan*, “people feel different in square and rectangular buildings… the dominant direction of a rectangular classroom establishes a hierarchy based on distance from the teacher at the front” (1996:4).
Most schools in Japan are similar to what I have described above. However, since the 1980’s, more and more schools are designed by professional architects and thus emerge as “non-stereotype school buildings” (Meisei Publications 1994). This is partly due to programmes launched by the Ministry of Education that allowed allocation of a larger area for multipurpose spaces (Ibid: foreword). The new trend is to build schools creatively, with learning environment and local character in mind.⁴

The schools in Japan have regulations also for the students’ conduct outside of school. Many schools have rules saying that students are not allowed to ride motorbikes and may not go to discos, even in the vacation (e.g. Hill 1998). A foreign friend of mine who was an exchange student at another high school told me that at her school, all the students got a letter in which the school urged the parents to make sure that students did

⁴ On the Ministry of Education’s website there are several pictures of schools and classrooms, but none that look like the school I attended for one year. They mostly depict new schools with a modern design.
not attend parties and discos during the summer vacation. It is considered inappropriate for a high school student to stay out in the evenings. Those students aiming for good universities have no time for going out either. After school and in the weekends and holidays most of them are busy cramming for the entrance exams. Naturally, there are also in Japan juvenile delinquents, and students who do not intend to go on to universities. Students who break the rules do exist, and represent a problem for their schools (Murakami 1998, Rohlen 1983). The school is considered responsible for its students not only when they are on the school premises, but also in their free time. Likewise are the students considered to be representatives of their school.

Schools in Japan take responsibility for their students' future. There are strong connections between educational institutions and companies. One can therefore also suggest that schools have to produce the kind of workers that the businesses demand, and that both the overt and the hidden curriculum in schools reflect this. Merry White writes that “employers have relied on the educational system to produce appropriately trained candidates since the late nineteenth century” (White 1988:46), and this is still the case. When individuality and self-assertiveness are not desired qualities on the job market, one cannot expect the schools to embrace these qualities either. This may also be why it seems so difficult to change the curriculum and how it is taught in Japan5.

High schools often have connections with local companies, which hire a certain number of students recommended by the high schools (Dore 1989; 1990, Okano 1998). The schools also train the students for the job interview6. In a similar way, companies hire a certain number of students from selected universities. The major companies hire almost solely from the most prestigious universities. It is as good as impossible for a student at a mediocre educational institution to land a job in a prestigious firm. The students at

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5 A junior high school textbook article about the dangers of smoking had to be changed because it was "too detailed". My professor suggested lobbying activity from the tobacco companies' part; they would not want fewer people to start smoking (lecture, 1997).

6 At the high school I attended in 1990, I witnessed a job interview training session. Everything, from the correct way of entering the room to appropriate answers to "what kind of music do you like?" (here the student was told to answer "classical music") was practised together with the homeroom teacher.
Tokushima University, a provincial, albeit state-run (and thus with a comparatively good reputation) institution, where I was a research student in 1998-99, had severe problems on the job market. One friend of mine compared her situation to that of a friend of hers, a student of Waseda University (one of the two best private universities in Japan):

_We are both female, and we both spent one year as rônin². The only difference between us is that I entered Tokushima University, and she entered Waseda. I wrote to fifty companies, and only two invited me to their presentation³. My friend gets two or three invitations every day in her mailbox. She always says “oh, an invitation, again...” She really can pick her choice, even though the labour market is tighter now than it was earlier, especially for women._

My friend passed the entrance exam for a job in the immigration office (taking the level 3 examination, which is also eligible for high school graduates). But many companies and public offices send a letter of acceptance to more people than they actually have jobs for, expecting some applicants to decline the offer. Thus my friend ended up without a job as she graduated university in March 2000. Her situation is not unique, the labour market has become a lot tighter since the “bubble” years in the early 90’s. The system of lifelong employment is also changing. It has become more common to change jobs. More people than before question the companies’ right to demand so much of the employees’ time and loyalty. Thus the Japanese company structure that has become so famous in the west⁹ is slowly breaking apart.

**The workplace**

A workplace can be compared to a total institution; here too there are certain rules of conduct that need to be observed. But the workplace is generally not so much concerned

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¹ A student who, unable to enter the university of one’s choice, spend one or more years studying to retake the entrance exams. Literally, rônin means “person floating on the waves”. The word traditionally denotes a warrior who has lost his master and wanders about aimlessly without attachments.

² The job hunting process starts with sending a letter of interest to companies. The company decides whether the applicant should be invited to a company presentation meeting. Those invited can then take the company entrance examination. If the company does not write back, one is already out of the game.

with the employees’ moral and ethical formation. What the employees do in their spare
time is, in the ‘western world’, usually not of great interest to their employers. In this
sense a workplace differs from an educational institution, which in all societies has
some goal of teaching certain ethical standards to its students.

Goffman (1962:10) claims that:

In the ordinary arrangements of living in our society, the authority of the
work place stops with the worker’s receipt of a money payment; the
spending of this in a domestic and recreational setting is the worker’s
private affair and constitutes a mechanism through which the authority of
the work place is kept within strict bounds.

As stated, he points at ‘our” society, which for Goffman would be the USA in the
1950’s and 60’s. As for my own experience in Japan, I can say that although this applies
theoretically also to the present Japanese working society, in practice the reality is
different. In white collar company jobs the sarariman (white collar employee, ‘salary
man’) more often than not works overtime. If an employee wants to succeed and be
promoted, he has to show commitment and attachment to his company, and a way of
doing this is by staying there late, although the actual workload of the day is finished
within the regulated working hours10. A worker is also not ‘supposed’ to take the 14
days of vacation he is entitled to every year. On average Japanese workers use only 50-
60 % of their paid-holiday entitlement (Daily Yomiuri Online 20.12.1999)11. In
industries based on unskilled or part-time labour, the workers are more flexible12, but
have also less security and fewer benefits.

Masao Miyamoto (1995), a US-educated psychiatrist hired as a bureaucrat in the

10 Cf. T. E. Lawrence’s description of the R.A.F training depot: “...Impossible, therefore, to dignify a job
by doing it well. It must take as much time as it can (for afterwards there is not a fireside waiting, but
another job.)” (Goffman 1962:10-11)

11 Workers who are not on the promotion-track (most blue-collar workers and female staff) may use the
whole 14 days, whereas those opting for promotion take even less. My high school time host father, who
was a section chief in a large company, took no more than two or three days per year.

Japanese Ministry of Health and Welfare, ran into trouble when he wanted to take a two week vacation and travel to France. His section chief said that two weeks was too long, and would have a bad signal effect on the other employees. Miyamoto could not obtain the prescribed permission for travel overseas from his section chief, and made up a fake story about taking his sick mother to visit different temples and relatives in other parts of Japan. Still his boss insisted that he come to work only “to show his face” one week into the planned vacation, which of course was impossible, as he would secretly be in France. Miyamoto’s book is interestingly titled Straitjacket Society, which gives us associations to Goffman’s Asylums. Miyamoto is both a ‘difficult patient’ who will not try to fit into the new institution and at the same time someone who has partially achieved secondary adjustment, trying to use the system ‘in a prescribed way for an unprescribed purpose’. Miyamoto knowingly used his ‘sick mother’, temples and relatives as a means to gain sympathy from his section chief, because he knew the value that the obligation to one’s family has in Japan. Going to France for one’s own amusement’s sake would not be a valid reason to get the vacation, although he, in theory, was entitled to it.

In Japan, the employer has much more influence over the employees’ lives than in the west. In his field study from a Japanese bank, Thomas P. Rohlen (1974) describes the training that the new employees must undergo. All newly hired men spent three months in a training institute where they learnt both the practical aspects of bank work, and also underwent spiritual training that partly took place in a Zen monastery. Dorinne K. Kondo (1990:76ff) also describes how the owner of the Japanese sweets factory where she did her fieldwork sent all full-time employees for a few days of training at an ‘Ethics School’ where they would take part in various ethics seminars, with a programme consisting of both lectures, mental and physical exercises and meditation. The owner of the sweets factory gladly paid for his employees’ training, regarding it as a good investment.
The Japanese company is often likened to a family (e.g. Nakane 1972, Rohlen 1974, Kondo 1990). Rohlen describes how the company takes over functions that formerly were the family’s responsibility. For instance can a company senior be helpful when it comes to finding a bride for a junior. Even if a young man finds a bride on his own, his company senior will often act as the formal go-between in his wedding. Large companies also run dormitories for their fresh employees, and employees with families often reside in company-owned apartments, side by side with colleagues. In the dormitory for young men it was considered inappropriate if a man spent too much time with a girl friend, because he would then not be adequately socialised into dormitory life and the company. It was also unthinkable to have a girlfriend visit the dormitory, although there was no explicit rule against it (Rohlen 1974: 219).

When speaking about one’s company, an employee is likely speak about “uchī”. The basic meaning of “uchī” is “inside”, and it can mean one’s home, one’s family, the inside of something or ‘where one belongs’. A student would speak about “uchī no gakkō” (my school), and a company employee would speak about “uchī no kaisha” (my company). A company employee’s wife and children are also likely to speak about “uchī” when referring to the husband’s or father’s company. When speaking about someone else’s place of work, the term “otaku” (your house) may be used (Nakane 1972:3).

The state

We have seen how the schools and the businesses are connected, and how their ideologies influence the lives of the people attached to them. A state or a community can also impose a certain way of conduct on its members. This can be achieved through the means of laws and regulations, but also influenced for instance through the content of the education in its schools.\(^\text{13}\)

\(^{13}\) From 1890 until 1945, all Japanese school children had to learn ‘the Imperial Rescript on Education’ (kyōiku chokagyo) by heart. The Rescript concerned the importance of Confucian virtues and loyalty to the throne, and is an example of mass indoctrination through formal education (Reischauer & Craig.
In her study about schooling in small farming village in rural France, Deborah Reed-Danahay (1996) describes how the French state’s ideology reaches even the smallest village through the centralised educational system in which the teachers are state employees following the national curriculum. The way the local population meets the state ideology presented to them through schools is, however, influenced by the local identity.

In Japan, teachers are locally employed\textsuperscript{14}, but the curriculum and school policy is decided centrally. There are as good as no regional differences in Japanese schools, although school policy and curriculum may also in Japan be received differently by the population in various parts of the country.\textsuperscript{15}

The Ministry of Education\textsuperscript{15} issues strict guidelines for the number of school days per year, the amount of time spent on each subject, the number of students in class (now limited to 40, in 1990 there could be as many as 50 students in each class). These aspects of education are not different from what is also common in other countries, but the lack of regional variation should be emphasised. Conformity is highly valued. Also emphasis on form is seen in for instance the learning plans.

\textbf{Learning plans}

In the Ministry of Education’s learning plans (Ministry of Education 1976a, b, c)\textsuperscript{16} the objectives and contents of the subjects on all levels are stated. The objectives and contents are described in great detail. For primary school, first grade, under the heading \textit{Japanese language} and subheading \textit{Writing} we can read the following:

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{14} Primary school and junior high school teachers are employed by the city, whereas senior high school teachers are employed by the prefecture.
\textsuperscript{15} The full name in English is Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture.
\textsuperscript{16} I unfortunately did not have access to newer learning plans than those from 1976. I am aware that there might have been several changes since then.
\end{quote}
(3) Guidance on the following points concerning the teaching of transcript:

To write letters with the right posture, holding the writing instrument correctly.

To write a letter with minute care taken concerning its form, following the orthodox procedure of the brush stroke.

To write a letter correctly, being careful of its point and stroke.

(Ministry of Education 1976a:8)

Considering 3b), it should be mentioned that on kanji (Chinese characters) tests, students are often requested to write the strokes of the characters in the correct order, and if the character is correct but the order is not, the student fails that particular question (Primary school teacher, personal communication 1998).

For the subject Music, the Course of Study states for each grade which three musical pieces should be studied and which three songs should be learnt. Although it is not so that every child learns exactly the same at the same time of the day all over Japan, as in some other countries where education is centralised\(^\text{17}\) one may say that the curriculum is fairly uniform all over the country. The schools have very little opportunity to add other subjects or change the content of the prescribed subjects.

**Textbooks**

The Ministry of Education also controls and authorises textbooks through a committee whose members are university professors and school teachers all appointed by the Ministry. Books not approved of may not be used in schools. However, the schools may choose among the approved-of textbooks.

The textbook approval issue is a heated subject in Japan\(^\text{18}\). The teaching of history and

\(^{17}\) France is an often-mentioned example of this practice. However, in her book about education in rural France, Deborah Reed-Danahay (1996) shows that this is not always the case.

\(^{18}\) Norway also has textbook authorisation. The textbooks are examined according to demands concerning subject didactics, language and equal rights. Textbook authorisation is not considered a big issue in Norway, though in 1999 the (Christian People's Party) government proposed to abolish this system. (websites of The National Centre for Educational Resources and The Ministry of Education, Research and
the textbooks dealing with the Japanese invasion of Asia before and during the World War 2 are subjected to strong criticism. Whereas Chinese and Korean governments have protested that the Japanese textbooks do not deal enough with this issue, the Japanese right wing questions the accuracy of the claimed atrocities conducted by Japanese soldiers at for instance Nanjing in China. There was also a long and heated discussion whether one could describe the Japanese imperial army’s action in Asia as an *invasion* (*shinryaku*) instead of the more neutral *advance* (*shinshutsu*) (Cf. Murdo 1998). But not only the presentation of history is problematic. During my language training at Osaka University of Foreign Studies I attended a course about Japanese education, and in one class we discussed the 1997 textbook control of junior high school textbooks for home economics and social studies. One home economics textbook gave the recipe for the dish *gyūdon* (beef on rice) for one person. The committee demanded this changed to a recipe for four persons. A social studies textbook carrying a photo of a European father picking up his children at kindergarten had to be altered, because “the building in the background looked too little like a kindergarten”. Furthermore the description of “new household types” such as DINKS (Double Income No Kids) had to be deleted (lecture, November 1997). The committee’s interventions can be seen as a clear attempt on the Ministry’s part to ideologically influence the youth. An image of the family in which the mother is a full-time housewife who prepares a nutritious Japanese meal which the whole family eats together, and in which the father is the bread winner while the mother devotes herself to raising the family’s two harmonious children, is maybe wishful thinking on the committee members part, but it does not give an accurate picture of the modern Japanese family. A mother and 1.34 children¹⁹ hardly need four portions of *gyūdon*, even if they are hoping that the father might come home for dinner before midnight²⁰.

¹⁹ The average number of children born to a woman throughout her lifetime (Census, Ministry of Health and Welfare 1999).
²⁰ White collar workers often work overtime, and it is socially expected of them to go out for dinner or drinks after work with colleagues or business associates.
In his study of Japanese elementary school social studies textbooks Gary DeCoker (1998) describes how the government’s ideology is implicitly transmitted to the students.

Textbooks, a primary vehicle used by the school to transmit knowledge and skills, are a powerful tool in shaping the way students come to think as adults. Through their study of textbooks, students begin to construct images about themselves, their nation, and their place in the world. (Ibid:191)

DeCoker also illustrates how the textbooks influence the readers’ ways of thinking about their country, and their feeling of being in the same boat with all other Japanese (1998: 192). Japan is pictured as being 1) unique, 2) tied to the world, 3) vulnerable, yet strong, 4) Japan must understand the rest of the world, and 5) Japan and its people are adapting to change.

Because the schools have to choose their textbooks among those approved of by the authorisation committee, and teach according to the guidelines stated in the Course of Study (Ministry of Education 1976a,b,c), one can say that all students in Japan are influenced by the conservative viewpoints of the Ministry of Education21. As we will see in Chapter 2, schools aiming at being different also have to follow these guidelines and are thus influenced by the state ideology.

Japanese schools abroad
The Japanese overseas full-time schools and supplementary schools (nihonjin gakkō and hoshūkō) primarily have the function of teaching school subjects so that the students will not lag behind academically upon their return to Japan. A secondary aspect of these schools is that by attending a Japanese school overseas, the student learns how to behave in a Japanese class setting.

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21 White (1988:50) writes that “...the Ministry of Education itself has earned a reputation for conservatism in the content and administration of education.”
I have visited the Japanese supplementary schools in Oslo, Norway and Munich, Germany. They both teach Saturday morning. At both schools there was a morning meeting, at the beginning and end of which all the students had to bow to the teachers. One of the schools was planning a sports’ day, and thus practised ‘radio callisthenics’ (rajio taisō), exercises for which the accompanying music is played every morning on the radio in Japan. The principal of one of the schools stressed in her speech to the students that being polite was very important, and being able to stand on a straight line and bow correctly was something that the students had to practise. She also mentioned how happy she was when she met a student in the corridor and the students greeted her in the appropriate manner, and that they all should know the importance of proper greetings. Inside the classroom, some of the teachers stressed the importance of standing up before asking or answering questions, while others were more lax. One teacher admitted that it was very difficult to be strict. The children spent the whole week in a different school setting, and for many it was difficult to adjust to the Japanese way of doing things once a week. This particular teacher taught rather young children who had hardly lived in Japan. Some were half-Japanese. In classes with older children, and with children who had not been living abroad for such a long time, the students behaved more ‘exemplary’. All overseas supplementary schools teach Japanese language, and most of them teach Mathematics. In addition to this, many teach social and natural sciences. One mathematics class I found particularly interesting. The students might have learnt the same methods in the school they attended on weekdays. But in the supplementary school, they learnt how to set up the arithmetical problem in the Japanese fashion. For instance, in Japan, 1/3 (“one third”) is written with the “3” first and then the “1” on top of it, and described as san bun no ichi (“of-three-parts-one”). In division the set-up is also different from the standard they use in European schools. Clearly, in the supplementary schools, the form, not only the content, is important.

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22 Radio callisthenics is a concept to all Japanese. It is broadcast every morning at 6.30. Although few Japanese practise it regularly now, it is always an element of school sports festivals, training camps and the like.
The Hidden Curriculum

Schools do not merely teach subjects like Mathematics, Geography and foreign languages, but also the culturally accepted behaviour and way of learning. Although there are no classes specifically teaching these things, students pick them up by watching others and by being corrected if they do something inappropriate. Both students and teachers are often not aware of this knowledge because it is so obvious to them. When I came to Japan as a high school exchange student, I could not understand why the students never asked questions, and why they were so reluctant to answer the teachers’ questions. Similarly, teachers in other countries who get Japanese students in their class are often puzzled because it is so difficult to get the students to speak out (McPake 1998).

A Japanese student returning from abroad and entering a school in Japan may have problems behaving according to the prescribed conduct, because he or she simply does not know what the prescribed conduct is. Often the other students or the teachers do not inform him or her about it either, because they are not conscious about it themselves. The curriculum is hidden to both teachers and students, and someone entering from the outside can only pinpoint it because he or she does not understand it.

In a school most children are socialised simultaneously, when they enter school as members of a class, and the socialisation process is seen as natural. Therefore, the arrival of a new student who is not socialised into the school culture may lead to surprises for both students and teachers. In Goffman’s total institution the situation is slightly different, because new patients usually arrive not together, but one by one. When a new patient arrives at the ward, he has to be socialised into the ways of the ward and adjust himself to his prescribed role. If a new patient very soon shows signs of primary and especially secondary adjustment, it is clear to the other patients and the
staff that the new patient has experience from another mental hospital. It is recognised that it takes time to learn the codes for behaviour (Goffman 1961).

Gunei Sato, a professor of Education, writes about a boy returning from America and entering a Japanese high school (my translation):

Y has lived in North America for six years where he has attended a local school, and has now returned to Japan and entered a high school in C prefecture. In a Japanese class this happened: The teacher told the students that “until next time, everybody has to read this part of the text book. Students who don’t come prepared will not be accepted in the classroom”. In the next period the teacher asked the class if everybody had studied, whereupon Y raised his hand and announced that he had not. This immediately caused a commotion in the classroom. But Y did not understand what was going on. The teachers emphasised the importance of studying Japanese, and as promised asked Y to leave the classroom. Y promptly went home, where he read the textbook and again returned to school. The teacher was surprised at Y’s consequent behaviour, and took it as a rebellion on Y’s part.

Y’s parents gave Y this explanation: When the teacher asked if everybody had studied the text there were probably several who hadn’t, but they thought it was no point raising their hands and admit it. Although they had a bad conscience they thought it was better to pretend they had studied. And when the teacher asked you to leave the classroom, he probably expected an apology or that you would show reluctance to leave. There is no proof for whether one has studied or not, so no one would expect anyone to deliberately raise their hand when asked something like that. (Sato 1997: 178)

Y’s problem can be said to be due to the ‘hidden curriculum’. To him it was clear that when the teacher asks a question, he expects an honest answer²³ and that when someone is ordered to leave the classroom, he should obey the order. To Y’s teacher, classmates and parents it was clear that the teacher’s question was only a formality, and that when found out, a student is supposed to apologise and show reluctance to leave the classroom instead of taking the order literally. Having grown up in North America, he

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²³ In my junior and senior high school in Norway, we would inform the teacher in the beginning of the period if we for some reason were unprepared. As long as this did not happen too often, it was OK, and we would not be scolded. If the teacher questioned us during class and through that found out that we were unprepared, he or she would reprimand us, and if it happened more often it would influence our marks.
was accustomed to a school culture in which saying things honestly as they are and taking responsibility for one’s actions are highly valued. It is not without reason that such classroom behaviour is considered positive, and nurtured, in North America. In a country where it is widely believed that anyone can be successful if he works hard enough to reach his goal, and that success is something individuals, rather than groups, can achieve, it is only natural that this should be reflected in the school culture. In Japan, one should not be too individualistic, but rather try to achieve something as a group, and thus groups, not individuals, are praised. Learning to work as a group is stressed from kindergarten on (Schubert 1996). One should not say things too directly, because one might hurt other members of the group. Many kikokushijo, especially those with a ‘western’ background have experienced that others have thought them to be inconsiderate when they have given honest answers.

Theoretical approaches

Functionalists

As I have mentioned in the introduction to Part I, the hidden curriculum can be seen in different ways. In her theoretical overview, Kathleen Lynch makes a division between the functionalist and the neo-Marxist approaches. The term hidden curriculum was first used by the functionalist Philip W. Jackson in 1968 in the book Life in Classrooms. Jackson here identified the hidden curriculum as “the social requirements of the learning situation” (Lynch 1989:1).

The social or institutional requirements of schooling are […] anathema in many ways to educational goals. It is conformity rather than creativity which brings rewards in school. (Lynch 1989:1)

In other words, the students should learn to adjust their behaviour so as not to disrupt a system. Students who are quiet and do what they are expected to are rewarded. Examples of this we can see already in kindergarten education (Apple 1979:51-57).
Another functionalist, Robert Greeben, focuses on the structural relationships between the school and the institutions of public life. According to Greeben

[...] the social experiences available to pupils in schools, by virtue of the nature and sequence of their structural arrangements, provide opportunities for children to learn norms characteristic of several facets of adult public life. (Greeben in Lynch 1989:2)

Socialisation into adult roles is probably one of the most important things that a school does, and schools are, as we have seen, aware of their roles concerning this. Of course socialisation is necessary for making society work smoothly. It can be focused on in the overt curriculum as well, in subjects such as Moral Studies and Social Studies (Ministry of Education 1976a,b,c).

Neo-Marxists

The neo-Marxist approach to the hidden curriculum focuses on the economic and political aspects and problematises these. Some suggest that “the schools reproduce the existing social relations of capitalist society by reproducing the consciousness necessary for such relations” (Lynch 1989:3). Bowles and Gintis, two conflict theorists, suggest that

[...] the hierarchical division of labour in school fosters the development of docility and compliance which is functional for capitalist employment later. [...] The lack of intrinsic rewards in school work prepares students to accept similar types of work relationships, while the constant fragmentation and evaluation of students through streaming and testing fosters status divisions and antagonisms which prepare them for their future stratified work careers. (Lynch 1989:4)

We almost get the impression that the state, co-operating with ‘the evil capitalists’, knowingly tries to subdue parts of the population through the hidden curriculum.

Michael W. Apple, also an outspoken neo-Marxist, says that:

Schools do not only control people; they also help control meaning. Since they preserve and distribute what is perceived to be ‘legitimate knowledge’
— the knowledge that ‘we all must have’, schools confer cultural legitimacy on the knowledge of specific groups. But this is not all, for the ability of a group to make its knowledge into ‘knowledge for all’, is related to that group’s power in the larger political and economic arena. (Apple 1979:64)

The habitus

Apple draws on Bourdieu’s studies about cultural capital or habitus. Habitus is “a system of schemes of thought, perception, appreciation and action which reflects the material and symbolic interests of the dominant groups or classes” (Lynch 1989:21). Each social class has its own characteristic habitus with individual variations. This is due to the differences in their primary socialisation24 (Ibid.). The habitus of the middle and the working classes are different, but still schools take the habitus of the middle classes and employ it as if all children have had equal access to it. Although the schools are perceived to be neutral, this is not the case.

[B]y taking all children as equal, while implicitly favoring those who have already acquired the linguistic and social competencies to handle middle-class culture, schools take as natural what is essentially a social gift, i.e. cultural capital. (Apple 1979:33)

Resistance

Although it may be hard to resist the hidden curriculum and the ideological influence through schools, students and their parents can defy them in different ways, more or less successfully. Reed-Danahay describes how children in a rural French village receive contrasting messages at home and at school, concerning several different aspects of their lives. The way they eat at home, and the middle-class table manners they are taught at school differ. At school their identity as French is emphasised, while at home the village or the regional identity is stressed. The national identity has not taken over for the local one, although this has been the goal of the French educational system for the last 100 years (Reed-Danahay 1996:207). Thus one can say that in Reed-Danahay’s

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24 With primary socialisation Bourdieu means the socialisation into the in-group, the first socialisation a person experiences. Secondary socialisation is socialisation into another group. The secondary socialisation takes place later in a child’s life.
example, the state has not been successful in the moulding of people by means of the hidden curriculum.

In Japan we can also see signs of resistance towards the hidden curriculum in schools. All schools in Japan are obliged to hoist the national flag Hinomaru and sing the national anthem Kimigayo on entrance ceremonies and graduations. But the flag and the anthem are by many Japanese seen as symbols of the country’s aggressive past, and not few were opposed to the official recognition of Hinomaru and Kimigayo as the national flag and the national anthem of Japan in spring 1999. In 1998 it made big news when 40% of the students at Tokorozawa High School boycotted their official entrance examination because they saw it as “excessively nationalistic” (Mainichi Daily News, 10.04.98). Normally, resistance towards state ideology is not that outspoken. In this case I also think that the students had the support of many of their teachers.

Conclusive remarks

Although theoreticians have different opinions about the hidden curriculum and its function within schools, it is obvious that the concept should not be ignored. The hidden curriculum provides us with interesting points of view, and used together with Goffman’s concept of total institutions it give us a good point of departure for looking into schools and how they are connected to the wider society.

As I stated in the beginning of this chapter, I think that the concept of a total institution can be used also in cases where the institution in question is not cut off and isolated from society. One of Goffman’s key points to understanding the total institution, is that it requires that people take on the roles that are assigned to them when they enter it. The

25 Many teachers in Japan are members of Japan Teachers’ Union, a leftwing organisation, which is against the use of the national flag and anthem.
content of these roles are pre-designed, the mental patient is not free to negotiate the content of his role. Goffman does not discuss the function of the total institution in the society as a whole and its connection to the outside world. Here the hidden curriculum gives us a way to use Goffman's concept in a broader sense. Although schools may appear to be neutral, there are strong notions that suggest that they are in fact deeply influenced by the ideology of the state, or dominant groups in the society. Thus, the roles assigned to persons (students) in the school, are not only given to them in order to make the life within the school work more smoothly, but are in fact a means which the society uses to prepare that person for his role in the society he enters the moment he leaves the institution. The ideology behind the role-ascription and the designation of role-content might not be clear, and there may not be consensus about it even among those who supposedly influence it. In a society there might be several ideologies co-existing. Nevertheless, the hidden curriculum can give us a cue to what the ideology of a society is.

Japan is a consensus-based society (e.g. Nakane 1972). That does not mean that everybody agrees with each other at all times, but that great efforts are made to achieve consensus, and this usually implies that some people have to put their own wishes aside for the group to appear unified. In school, children get to practise this, and learn to respect the group and its decision. We have seen examples of how students in schools, or workers in businesses, are expected to commit and attach themselves to the organisation or institution of which they are a part. I have touched the subject of the kikokushijo's encounter with Japanese schools, and some of the difficulties they may have. In the next chapter I will look more closely at the kikokushijo’s situation by examining three schools especially designed for kikokushijo.
SCHOOLS FOR KIKOKUSHIJO

Introduction

In this chapter I will examine three kikokushijo-accepting schools (ukeirekō). In which way are they different from ordinary Japanese schools, and are they influenced by the ‘hidden curriculum’ in the same way as them? I will show that although the three schools I visited each in its own way tries to challenge the concept of a Japanese school, they, also, are under influence by the wider society. When it comes to practical concerns, e.g. their students’ university entrance exams and the official designation of what classes should be taught, the schools have to be aware of their role in the larger society. And because both teachers, students, parents and other individuals attached to the schools are influenced by Japanese norms and ways of thinking, creating a different type of school may be difficult.

I will also show that these schools, which try to be different and not to be the type of ‘total institution’ the average Japanese school can be, also in some ways exercise great influence on their students. They too have ideals of creating a certain type of student / member of society, and both the schools’ way of teaching and the physical environment
contribute in promoting a certain student image.

Adult returnees to Japan are not seen as a single category, and are also not given a certain label. There are of course many adults who go abroad for study or work, and some of them have children, who then become *kikokushijo* on their return. The children are labelled as returnees because of the school system. Every child of school age enters school and thus gets counted in statistics. And since higher education is very much valued in Japan, whether one gets into an educational institution or not is of great interest not only for the individual, but also for the people and institutions around oneself. High schools have statistics on how many of their graduates are able to enter which universities, and if this result is good, it is used as a sales point for the school. Therefore it is also important for the school to attract a high-level student body, since it is the students who give the school its reputation.

As I have mentioned in the preface, the discussion about *kikokushijo* and their problems with the Japanese educational system started in the late 60’s, and as a result several schools were designed as *kikokushijo* *ukeirekō*, (*kikokushijo* accepting schools). These schools have to give special consideration to *kikokushijo* applicants, and they have special entrance exams which focus on what the applicant has learnt overseas. In the late 70’s three new high schools were built with the purpose of making it easier to return to Japan for the *kikokushijo*. They were all attached to private universities, but were funded largely by the Ministry of Education (Goodman 1993:208). *Kikokushijo* account for 2/3 of the student body of these schools, and Japanese and English are taught differentiated according to the student’s level. One such school is International Christian University High School, attached to International Christian University, located in a suburb of Tokyo. I will present ICU High School later in this chapter, but first I will examine Osaka Intercultural Academy, the ‘Japanese’ part of Senri International School Foundation, the first school I came in contact with.
Senri International School Foundation/Osaka Intercultural Academy

The first time I visited Senri International School Foundation was in November 1997. My assigned professor at Osaka University of Foreign Studies, Ms. Kobayashi, knew Mr. Iijima, a teacher of Japanese who is head of teachers at this school. Mr. Iijima was a former student of Ms. Kobayashi, thus it was easy for me to establish contact with him. It was arranged so that I would visit the school for about one hour, and Mr. Iijima would show me around and explain to me the specifics of the school. My apartment was not very far away from the school, so it would be of no use to go there by bus. Going there by public transportation would take more time than on foot, since I would have to change buses at a place 20 minutes' ride from where I lived, so I decided to bring along a map and walk there instead. But having a very bad sense of direction, I soon found myself to be lost near a forest, and the map was not of much help. In front of me I could see something that looked like a rather futuristic company building, it was rather big and the design was something out of the ordinary. In no way could it be the school I was looking for. But I figured it maybe would not be far away, because suddenly a non-Japanese woman was coming towards me and I thought that she might be the mother of a child in the International School. I told her I was looking for Senri International School Foundation and asked her if she knew where it was, and she pointed to the ‘company building’ in front of me. I was really surprised. I had seen many Japanese schools in my life, and they are always easy to spot because they all seem to be built according to the same standard. My own Japanese high school, as I have described earlier, had two three-story buildings connected by a hallway, making a U-shape. Schools usually have fences around them and a sports ground used for gym lessons and after-school practice. The colour of most school buildings is off-white, and inside the walls are painted white. In the entrance of a typical Japanese school there are lockers where the students put their shoes when they enter, and keep their school slippers when they are not inside. Some schools can be rather dirty because the students are in charge of the cleaning, no extra cleaning personal is hired, and usually the floors are only swept
and not washed. But the school building of Senri International School Foundation did not fit this image at all. There is no fence around the school and the building has a special design. Later I learned that it was designed by an architect. The school building is presented in the book *Educational Facilities: New Concepts in Architectural Design* (Meisei Publications 1994). The photographs are accompanied by the following text:

The school is situated within a housing development cleared from a bamboo forest and enrols non-Japanese, Japanese returnees from overseas as well as Japanese students. The key concept is the “cultural exchange” among students and teachers of diverse ethnicity and cultural backgrounds. Common spaces are likened to an urban plaza and streets, where the basic system of nodes and corridors is employed, and cozy and attractive gathering spaces are created at the junctions of corridors partitioned by furniture and utilizing the effects of light. (Ibid: 141)

One enters the school through glass doors, and comes into a lobby with a high ceiling. The lobby is big enough for having a small concert. The school has a cafeteria, a planetarium and an indoor heated pool. At least the latter two one does not often find in Japanese schools. There are also no shoeboxes and the students do not have to clean the school building themselves. The toilets are all western style, whereas in average schools Japanese squat toilets are most common. All students have access to computers and the Internet. The library carries a wide variety of books, newspapers and magazines, both in English and in Japanese.

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1 It is probably because of the coexistence with the International School that all the toilets are western style and that external cleaning personnel is employed.
Senri International School Foundation consists of Osaka International School (from this on OIS), with students from kindergarten to year 12, last year of high school, and Osaka Intercultural Academy (from this on OIA), with students from year 7 to year 12, i.e. junior and senior high school. The students of the two schools have classes such as sports and music, and extra-curricular activities together. Most of the students in the international school are foreign citizens, or they have one foreign parent. However, there are some Japanese kikokushijo students. One of the girls whom I interviewed had spent her junior high school years in OIS, and switched to OIA for high school. I was told that switching between the two schools was not uncommon, and it is also possible for students of one school to take some classes in the other school. Half a year after my field work was over, another change came: from 1999 on also the students in the Intercultural Academy were to start their school year in September, and not in April as is the case in other Japanese educational institutions. This change was brought forth to make it easier for OIA and OIS Students to pick their classes from both schools, and to make entrance easier for those students returning from abroad. The school year at OIA
will still end in March, though, so the change means that the students only attend school 2 1/2 years instead of 3 years before they graduate. Subjects would also from September 1999 be taught in modules, with courses lasting a few months (or one semester) with closing exams in the end. This will also make it easier for students to move freely between the two schools. These can be seen as revolutionary concessions given the rigid conformity we otherwise observe in Japanese schools.

School information brochure

OIS and OIA have a joint information brochure, written both in English and in Japanese. Headlines in the brochure are for instance “The World Comes Together in Senri”, “Informed, Caring, Creative Individuals Contributing to a Global Community” and “An Educational Environment Where Children from Various Cultural Backgrounds Can Learn to Understand and Teach One Another”. Under the headline “Educational Philosophy” we can read the following:

- Students will develop a strong sense of self, an understanding of their culture and the cultures of others, and an appreciation of the diversity of the human experience. They will develop a realization of global interdependence, and will grow into receptive and creative adults with the capacity for intercultural communication.

- Students will share responsibility in the educational process, discover their own talents and abilities, help to determine their own paths of study and growth, and proceed through the strengths of their own efforts.

- Students will develop a respect for a healthy and purposeful life, rich in individuality, facing challenges with wisdom and perseverance. They will expand their international awareness and caring, and demonstrate leadership in the creation of a better future for humankind. (SISF information brochure)

Here the school states its ideals, which sound very attractive to potential students and their families. Many Japanese feel that the school system, including both public and private schools, is too rigid with far too little focus on creativity and independence, and
“how to improve the school system” is an often-discussed topic in the Japanese media. Clearly, Senri International School Foundation strives to be an alternative to the ordinary stream, and thus stresses the aspects of its programme which make it different from what is considered to be the norm.

The school has these ideals but there are also some problems. The state structure places limitations on the degree of variation and experimentation possible. For one, it is important for a school in Japan that its graduates are successful at entering universities. That is the reason why the schools where most of the student body aim at good universities often teach their subjects with the entrance exams in mind. OIA says that it is not a *jukenkō* (a school preparing for the entrance exams to university) and thus does not need to prepare the students for the entrance exams in its classes. However, if a student studying on his or her own has a problem he or she can freely consult the teachers. Because OIA does not prepare for the entrance exams it is freer to ‘experiment’ and to focus on other topics and subjects than other schools. But some students complain that they do not get enough help with their entrance exam preparations, and argue that since most of the students go on to university anyway the school ought to acknowledge this fact and teach more exam-related material. Others again think it is fine to study for the exams outside of school. My informants told me that most students in their last year went to cram school several nights a week outside the regular school hours.

One informant felt that the school did not treat everyone equally, that a student entering a good university was more valuable to the school than one who did not, and that this was not consistent with the school not wanting to be an exam preparatory school.

I was also told that the school had changed quite a lot during the last years. In the first

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2 This explains the amount of researchers wishing to study OIA and ICUHS, the numerous newspaper articles about these schools, and the many books written by Jun Watanabe, my contact teacher at ICUHS. In one of his books, he even has a chapter about OIA (Watanabe 1995).
years the teachers had all been very enthusiastic, but the teachers who had started working there after the first few years were often not very interested in intercultural education, and taught their classes in the same fashion as they would in an average school. Also the school now accepts more general students who have not lived outside Japan (ippansei) than it did earlier. In the first years of junior high school there is a majority of general students, and there are sometimes problems with general students bullying the returnee students (kikokusei). Some say that the school is becoming more like an average school.

There is also some friction between the students in OIS and OIA. Some of the (Japanese) students at OIS say that the OIA students are ‘too Japanese’; meaning that their behaviour is too much like that of the average Japanese, that they are not ‘international’ enough. Kikokushijo who have attended a Japanese overseas school and Japanese cram school\(^3\) while they lived overseas may be not so different from the average Japanese high school student, and thus might not be the internationally minded student that OIA hopes for in the school information brochure.

OIA is a rather small school with a student body of only 420 for the six school years. There are not more than 20 students in one class, and for elective subjects there may even be fewer. OIA and OIS together have 700 students, which is still very few, considering that OIS teaches from kindergarten to year 12.

**Summary**

We have seen that OIA is an untraditional school in Japan, considering its architecture, its facilities, and its co-existence with OIS. OIA aims at being a true alternative to the mainstream of Japanese education, but has to teach the officially designated curriculum with officially authorised textbooks. Its goals are to nurture individuality, creativity and

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\(^3\) In foreign cities with many Japanese, there are branches of the major Japanese cram school chains (see e.g. Russel 1996).
an international outlook in its students. But some of its students are more interested in getting into university, and this partly undermines the school’s educational philosophy.

International Christian University High School

At a conference for intercultural education in Tokyo, May 1998, I got acquainted with Mr. Watanabe, a teacher of Social Science at ICUHS. He asked me to contact him again and visit the school, which I did for the first time in September the same year. At that time I had the chance to visit the school festival. Later, in December and January I came back for class observation and interviews.

ICU High School is located on the premises of International Christian University in the suburbs of Tokyo. The school was opened in 1978 and was funded partly by Monbusho. It was especially intended to be a school for kikokushijo. Two thirds of the student body are kikokushijo, and they have spent an average of 4.7 years abroad. Half of the kikokushijo students returned from North America. Of the kikokushijo students, only 18% came from Japanese overseas schools, the rest were from local schools abroad (genchikō) or international schools. 66.5% of the students at IC UHS are girls.

Although both ICUHS and OIA are private schools for kikokushijo, there are some differences. When I visited the school festival of ICUHS, I had associations to what I consider an ‘American’ high school setting. I saw the performance of the cheerleading club and the dance club, and was mightily impressed. I later heard that ICUHS’s dance club was the best on high school level in all Japan. It seemed that these ‘western’ style club activities were very popular and on a high level.

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4 According to Mr. Watanabe.
5 As of September 1998, according to ICUHS data sheet.
At the school festival there was also an English language guided tour of the campus. The two guides were *kikokushijo* from North America. I was the only foreign participant in my ‘tour group’ and was wondering whether this English language guided tour was not only a way to show off, for both the school and the participants. But for all I know there could have been foreigners on the other guided tours. In any case it gave me the impression that this was a school where the ability to speak English was something important, and something which the students were proud of.

School building and atmosphere

ICUHS is built like a normal Japanese high school, and is in this sense different from SISF/OIA. Even though the school festival gave it an air of being an ‘American’ school, I did not get this feeling when I walked through the corridors on a normal school day. ICUHS is a Japanese school for Japanese students, and it prepares the students for Japanese entrance exams. ICUHS has a much greater degree of conformity than OIA. Although ICUHS designed to accept many *kikokushijo*, studying for entrance exams seems to be more important than learning about other cultures. Merry White quotes a teacher at ICUHS to have said “They come there to think, not to memorize, but in a year they are tamed” (White 1988:61). I was told that they do accept one or two foreign exchange students every year, but there are no foreign regular students at the school. Although many different countries are represented in the list of where ICUHS students have lived, 68% have lived in ‘western’, English language countries. I do not have the numbers for OIA, but the North American/European dominance was not so strong there as at ICUHS.

At ICUHS there are about 40 students in each class, and a total of 726 students all together for all three grades. The students, under the supervision of teachers, are responsible for the cleaning of the classrooms, as in ordinary Japanese schools. This

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6 Only 5 of the 219 students graduating in 1998 went to universities abroad; in the United States and Australia.
7 According to the survey of students at ICUHS from 1978 to 1998.
means that the school is not necessarily very clean, because the floors are only swept and not washed on an everyday basis. One of my informants who had returned from the USA only a few months before the interview, was appalled that it was so dirty and that the students cared so little about keeping it clean. She could not understand how people could eat and drink in the classroom and throw candy wrappers on the floor. Personally, I did not find ICUHS especially dirty, it was neither better nor worse than most other schools in Japan.

Summary

ICUHS is a school that accommodates kikokushijo without diverting too much from the mainstream of Japanese education and school culture. It prepares the students for a life within the Japanese society, but at the same time students are encouraged to retain their language skills, and on some occasions, such as the school festival, the ‘internationalness’ of the school and its students is emphasised.

Tokyo Metropolitan Kokusai High School

At the May 1998 conference about intercultural education I got acquainted with Mr. Saito, a counsellor in Kaigai Shijo Kyōiku Shinkō Zaidan (Japan Overseas Educational Services). He invited me to visit their office and he offered to introduce me to Tokyo Metropolitan Kokusai High School, a public high school in Tokyo, with many kikokushijo students. I contacted Mr. Saito when I came to Tokyo in September, and was able to visit the Kokusai school festival. Ms. Akiyoshi, a devoted teacher of Japanese, showed me around, and I later came back for interviews with kikokushijo students.

8 The word kokusai means “international”. Since the school itself does not translate this word in documents etc. written in English, I will also use the Japanese word. Since most of the students just referred to the school as “Kokusai” I will do so as well.
Kokusai High School is located in Meguro, close to Tokyo University. The school was opened in 1989 and has since then established itself as a school where most of the students get into good universities. The school has approximately 720 students, 240 in each grade. One third of the students are kikokushiyo and foreigners. Foreign applicants can take the entrance exam in English. Foreigners are not barred from gaining entry into other high schools in Japan, but they receive no special treatment, and have to take the entrance exams in Japanese. At Kokusai there were, according to the 1998 school brochure, 62 foreign students. 13 of them, however, were citizens of North Korea, and had probably grown up in Japan\(^9\), speaking Japanese as their first language. So not all of the foreign students can be said to be foreigners in the sense that they do not speak the language or are not fully integrated in the society. The foreign students at Kokusai must understand enough Japanese to follow the classes, as they are all taught in Japanese. Foreign and returnee students can get special classes in Japanese, Mathematics and English according to ability, but having a good understanding of Japanese is essential for understanding the other classes.

**School building and atmosphere**

The school, being relatively new, does not look like a stereotypical Japanese school, but still the building clearly gives the impression of being – a school –, as compared to SISF, which really looks extraordinary. There is no fence around it, and one does not have to put on slippers when one enters\(^10\). The school has some smaller rooms for group education, and there are also computer facilities (Computer science is obligatory in the 2\(^{nd}\) year). The students have to clean the school themselves, and the toilets are both western and Japanese style. Kokusai, being a public school, had a rather sober atmosphere. The students do not pay more than they would do in another public high

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\(^9\) Many North Korean and South Korean nationals live in Japan, as their ancestors were brought there to work during the Japanese occupation of Korea from 1910 to 1945.

\(^10\) At the school festival there was a sign at the entrance telling people to walk in with shoes. Japanese are so used to putting on slippers at schools, that they would be puzzled if they could not find any at the entrance.
school\textsuperscript{11}, and the school’s funds are allocated through the metropolitan government. Still the atmosphere was lively. The student body did not appear to be so homogenous as the impression I got of the ICUHS students.

Summary
Kokusai has a smaller percentage of kikokushijo students than OIA and ICUHS, but in contrast to them it has a policy of enrolling foreign national students who are residents of Japan\textsuperscript{12}. In some aspects of the school life it recognises that some students are unfamiliar with Japanese school culture, whereas in other aspects it follows the 'Japanese way': The students do not wear slippers inside the school, but they are required to clean their classrooms.

Some comparative aspects of the three schools
After the above presentation I will now move on to comparing the three schools. I have chosen to focus on the costs, the teaching of Social Science and English, the schools’ teachers and the uniform question. These aspects provide examples of how the schools differ, both from each other and from the mainstream Japanese schools.

Tuition and costs
Both OIA and ICUHS are private schools. I was told that OIA is among the most expensive private schools in the Osaka district. The teachers’ salaries, however, are the same as everywhere else. OIA does not offer a discount for siblings, a practice that it rather common in other private schools, but the students can apply for a scholarship

\textsuperscript{11} I am not sure if the payment to the 'reserve fund' (mentioned later in this chapter) is standard for all public Japanese high schools, or if the sum was different from school to school.

\textsuperscript{12} OIA also has some foreign students, but most of the foreigners at SISF were OIS students.
grant.

It cost in 1998 ¥ 750,000 (Approximately NOK 45,000 in 1998) per year to attend OIA, and one also had to pay ¥ 300,000 (NOK 18,000) for entering the school. This is a considerable amount of money. On average students in private high schools pay ca. ¥ 640,000 yen (NOK 38,400) per year, including the entrance fee (Japan Almanac 1999).

I do not know how much it costs to attend ICUHS, but I would estimate that the price is not very different from other private schools, or maybe a little more expensive.

Although the tuition at OIA and ICUHS is expensive, the students are not necessarily rich. Japan has a strong middle class and most families save large amounts of money to use for their children’s education.

Kokusai is a public school, and the tuition fees are the same as for other public high schools in Tokyo, ¥ 104,400 per year. In addition to the tuition fee, the students have to pay ¥ 101,400 yearly to a ‘reserve fund’. Student council membership fee is included in this fee (Kokusai school brochure). It is much cheaper to attend Kokusai than ICUHS or OIA.

Social Science

All the three schools are defined as Japanese high schools and are thus required to follow the guidelines decided by the Ministry of Education. That means that they all have to teach a certain number of classes in Mathematics, Japanese, English, and so on. In Japanese Language, for instance, all high schools in Japan have to teach Japanese Language I and II, Japanese Language Expression, Contemporary Japanese Language, Contemporary Japanese Use and Usage, Classics I and II, and Appreciation of Classics. During the three years high school lasts, all of these courses have to be studied, and it is not possible to change the number of hours spent on each course.
(Ministry of Education’s website 1999). This of course limits the schools’ freedom to change their curriculum according to their philosophy and what they consider to be the needs of their students.

The three schools did, however, differ in the way of teaching their classes and to a certain extent also in curriculum, both from each other and from the standard Japanese high schools. Although all schools have to teach according to the guidelines for Social Sciences, they had all incorporated untraditional elements as part of their curriculum.

**OIA**

At OIA I participated in a Social Studies Class where all 10th graders gathered in a big meeting room. The school made use of the opportunity to have the students asking me questions about the Norwegian welfare system. Because this was my first encounter with an ‘unconventional’ Japanese school, I was quite impressed with the students’ many questions, which were asked spontaneously and without the least bit of shyness\(^\text{13}\).

**ICUHS**

At ICUHS, I was similarly impressed by Mr. Watanabe’s Presentation Class. The class was divided into groups with about six to seven students in each, and the groups took turns in presenting topics of their own choice. They had to approach Mr. Watanabe first to get the permission to study a certain topic, but he said that he generally accepted everything that the students wanted to present. The students were free to present their topic in any way they wanted, but most groups would at least partly use dramatisation. After the presentation the other students would comment, and later write a report about the presentation they had seen. In this way the teacher could ensure that everyone learned something, not only the group who had done the particular presentation.

\(^{13}\) I have visited several other schools in Japan where I have been asked to give a speech about Norway or the Norwegian school system. Sometimes students (normally class spokespersons) have to read aloud questions they have prepared in advance. If the class has not known about my visit in advance, no-one asks questions in the classroom, but a few students may approach me after the class is finished.
I observed two presentations, one was about suicide, and the other about stalkers. The group that did the stalker presentation had really used their artistic skills and must also have had a lot of fun in their preparations. They had made a video in the form of a documentary TV programme, including the scary music and the serious-sounding commentator’s voice. After the showing of the video there was a ‘panel debate’, in which one ‘stalker’ met his ‘victim’. Other participants were ‘law experts’ and ‘members of a support group for ex-stalkers’.

The students were used to having external visitors observing their class. On the same day that I was there, there was also a journalist from the Yomiuri Shimbun, the biggest newspaper in Japan (Japan Almanac 1999). After the presentation, both the journalist and I were asked to comment on what we had seen. I said that it had been both fun to
watch and very informative, and that I thought that they had done a really good job. I really did learn a lot about stalkers that I did not previously know. The journalist also expressed how impressed he was, and that he had never seen anything like it in other schools he had visited. That researchers and journalists visit their class and praise their presentations, must make an impact on the students’ self-confidence and make them feel special and different from other Japanese high school students.¹⁴

Kokusai

I did not have the opportunity to observe Social Studies classes at Kokusai, but my informants told me about the course called “Foreign Affairs”. Every week a guest comes to the school and tells about a certain topic. Foreigners come to speak about different aspects of their country. Once an American homosexual man with AIDS had been there, another time a Japanese journalist who had been to Bosnia. The students ask the guests questions and later write reports about it. My informants thought this class to be very important and interesting. Even if what they learnt there was of little use in the university entrance exams, most students show up even during the busiest exam preparation months.

English

It is significant to keep in mind that the teaching of English in all the three schools differs a lot from the English lessons in most Japanese high schools. To illustrate what the students in an average high school are experiencing, I include an example from the high school I attended in 1990, where most of the English classes were as following:

¹⁴ Actually, almost all respondents to my questionnaire, both at OIA, ICUHS and Kokusai, thought that their schools were really special and much more interesting than what they perceived ‘normal’ Japanese schools to be. I can also mention that a friend of mine who helped me with the ICUHS questionnaires, said that she had the impression that the ICUHS students had too high thoughts about themselves.
The teacher enters the classroom, smalltalks in Japanese for a few minutes, before he starts explaining today's text, - in Japanese. This takes maybe about 15 minutes. Then he reads the text, and we are all requested to repeat after him ‘in a loud voice’. A few students can be heard murmuring, but many just move their lips. After the reading comes a session of questions and answers, and some grammatical problems. Students answer only when asked, and not always then either. The teacher speaks mostly Japanese. He says one sentence in English, and then immediately translates it to Japanese. The last few minutes he smalltalks in Japanese again before he gives us the homework assignment.

Sometimes there is a written test. Questions have to be answered multiple choice style, and sentences memorised from the textbook have to be written down and translated. The students never write compositions in English, and they never do presentations in front of the class. English conversation is never practised. English pronunciation is sometimes practised, but this has little effect because the teacher also speaks with a heavy Japanese accent.

Most of my classmates were, after having learnt English for four years, unable to have a simple conversation in English. But because they had to memorise for English exams, they were able to reproduce complicated sentences like “They had to hide beside the road in order not to get caught” (this was memorised to learn the construction with in order to~) and “He is always thinking about you. In other words, he loves you” (in other words~). Also, some were able to say a word like “maintain”, but did not understand that the more simple word “fix” could be used in the same context.

In most high schools English is studied in the way I have described above, though more and more schools now employ native English teachers to teach conversation classes. However, these conversation classes comprise a rather small part of the total English lessons taught, and it is therefore fair to say that English education in Japan is still mainly focused on grammar and entrance exam related material. At OIA, ICUHS and Kokusai, English is taught more with the focus on the actual usage of the language, and students are expected to learn how to communicate in English, if they do not already know it before they enter the schools. English ability is an important part of the student image in all the three schools.

15 Thanks to my classmates' poor English, I learnt to speak Japanese rather quickly!

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OIA

English classes in OIA are differentiated according to the students’ level, and spoken English is emphasised more than memorisation of grammar rules, as I have experienced it to be in “average” high schools. I visited an English grammar class for 7th graders who had no previous experience of English before they entered OIA, being mostly general students (ippansei) who have not lived abroad. The teacher, who was Japanese, had a very good pronunciation, having studied abroad. She was very energetic and made her students speak up. She also corrected their pronunciation. In my own Japanese high school, the teachers hardly corrected the students, and the students did not say a word if they were not specifically called upon. In this OIA class, the students were not shy, and they willingly answered the teacher’s questions and did not appear to be afraid of making mistakes. I have not witnessed junior high school English classes in ordinary Japanese schools, but judging from my own experience in a senior high school and what I have heard from informants and friends, I can say that in ordinary junior high schools both the students’ and the teachers’ attitudes are different from in OIA.

Being able to speak English is a very important part of the image of OIA’s students, as is also clear when one reads the school’s information brochure, where words like “English” and “communication” are mentioned several times. The general students are aware of the focus on English when they enter the school; this is partly why they want to attend OIA in the first place. Their already positive attitudes make the socialisation into the roles as ‘English-able’ OIA students easy.

Although not all OIA students become fluent in English, they do not have the ‘English anxiety’ which is rather ubiquitous among ‘ordinary’ Japanese. I have not spoken directly to general students, but the returnee students with background from Japanese overseas schools said that they could speak English fairly well and were definitely not

16 Most of the foreign language teachers at OIA are native speakers or Japanese with a near-native speaking ability, whereas in average schools the English of the English teachers can be poor, especially their spoken English.
afraid to speak English if the situation demanded it\textsuperscript{17}.

The school also teaches other foreign languages as electives. One of my informants took a beginner’s course in Chinese, and I visited a French class for students who had been living in French speaking countries. In OIS learning Japanese is compulsory for non-native speakers, so it goes the other way, too.

**ICUHS**

ICUHS teaches English and Japanese on differentiated levels and employ native speakers as foreign language teachers. The English curriculum consists mostly of well-known novels and essays, both present best sellers (e.g. *The Kitchen God's Wife*) and classic literature (e.g. *Death of a Salesman*, *Macbeth* and *Of Mice and Men*). In addition writing, vocabulary and grammar books are used. German and Spanish are taught as elective subjects.

I did not observe any language classes at the school, so I cannot say anything concerning how the classes are run.

Because so many of the students at ICUHS were \textit{kikokushijo} from English-speaking countries, the ability to speak English was very important for both teachers and students. I see this as the reason for the English-language guided tour I mentioned above. American culture is, for many students, an important part of their identity, and this influenced the school culture as well, especially as it appeared during the school festival.

I was told that many teachers of other subjects were eager to teach at ICUHS, but not English teachers. Many Japanese English teachers are not fluent in the language, and

\textsuperscript{17} Which can often be the case in Japan. I have seen foreigners asking for directions and the Japanese excusing themselves with “No English!” and run away. Once I experienced that a high school girl screamed and ran away when she entered a room where four foreigners (including me) were sitting.
dread teaching students who speak better than themselves.

Kokusai
At Kokusai, as at OIA and ICUHS, the English classes were taught on different levels, according to the students’ ability. Also at this school native English teachers were employed. I know little about how the subject was actually taught, as I was not able to observe any classes. In addition to English, students could choose another foreign language as an elective subject. They could choose to study Korean, Russian, German, French, Spanish and Chinese. None of the informants I talked to, however, had chosen to study another foreign language, mainly because they thought that it was enough to take English.

The teachers
All of the teachers whom I observed were doing their best and most of them were very enthusiastic about their work. But since I have not experienced all teachers at the three schools, I cannot say to what extent the ones I observed are representative. I suspect that a teacher who is very dissatisfied with his or her teaching abilities, or dislikes his or her students, would probably not invite an outsider to observe his or her classes.

The deficiency of teacher’s education and the lack of guidelines
I was very surprised to find out that there is no special course in the teaching of Japanese as a second language or in intercultural education in the Japanese teachers’ colleges. The teachers have to learn the special techniques by experience, and it is mainly up to the individual teacher to design his or her own teaching method.

Seen in contrast to the number of schools accepting kikokushijo and offering ‘international’ classes, this is very interesting. The schools are designed to accept children who in some ways differ from the average school children. The children are perceived as having special needs, and these needs have to be taken care of. But then
there are no official guidelines concerning how the schools should help these children. What the children’s main problems consist of, is also not agreed upon. Should they be helped so that they can better adjust to the demands of the Japanese educational system? Or should they be helped to retain their language skills and other things they learnt abroad? Most Japanese have a diffuse idea that the *kikokushijo* have problems of some sort, and it seems that also within the Ministry of Education, one is not sure exactly of what these problems consist and how they should be dealt with. But designing schools with special programmes for *kikokushijo*, without considering educating the teachers who are going to teach there seems very inconsequential. The students can be lucky, and get a teacher who is really dedicated, but even a teacher who is really creative in his or her work, would profit from learning new techniques. And considering the inexperienced or disinterested teachers, having them study certain techniques or educational philosophies, and teach according to certain guidelines, would at least increase the chances that the *kikokushijo* receive the special education they are perceived to be in need of.

**The circulation of teachers**

In all three schools students complained that whereas some teachers were very enthusiastic, those who had come to the school during the last few years were often not different from the teachers in ordinary Japanese high schools, where classes often consist of boring one-way communication from the teacher’s desk. A couple of students even said that some of the teachers disliked teaching *kikokushijo*, because they perceived them as ‘problematic’\(^\text{18}\). Since OIA and ICUHS are private schools, the teachers do not necessarily move on to other schools after a few years, and these schools are maybe because of this able to avoid losing their most enthusiastic teachers. For Kokusai the situation is different, it being a public school. All public high school teachers in Japan are employees of the prefectural government, and a teacher only stays at a school for a certain number of years, and is then sent on to another school in the

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\(^{18}\) Teachers’ often negative perceptions of *kikokushijo* are mentioned in Goodman (1993:138ff.) and Sato (1997:191ff.)
same district (Okano 1999:147ff). Ms. Akiyoshi was also transferred to another high school in April 1999, after having taught at Kokusai for ten years. The individual teacher has very little to say concerning which school they are sent to. It seems that the prefectural government does not consider Kokusai’s status as a special school when it makes the decision about which teachers who should work there. My informants at Kokusai said that although some teachers were motivated and friendly, others seemed to dislike working with *kikokushijo*, because it meant more trouble, and they blamed some of the teachers for not being ‘internationally minded’ (*kokusaiteki*).

This is an example of how the state ideology reflected in the structure counteracts the effect of the school’s purpose. The idea that a school should be different from another goes against the ideology of equal treatment. Everybody knows that schools are different in the sense that students at one school get into Tokyo University, while students at another school get jobs at petrol stations when they graduate. But within the system of public schools, teachers rotate between schools where the students are academically gifted, ‘average’ and low-achievers. One public school should not be favoured over another in the allocation of resources, whether material or human resources are concerned.

The teachers are expected to do their job in a uniform way with little regard to the constellation of students, and they are unprepared for possible difference from the norm. If difference appears, many teachers are not willing to deal with it. The teachers will, after all, move on to a new school after a few years, and adjusting their teaching methods for only a few years of work is maybe not worth the trouble.

The existence of Kokusai constitutes a structural paradox. The official recognition of the *kikokushijo*’s need for special treatment goes against the equality ideology. The attempt to create this ‘unequal’ school, is, though not at all a failure, severely impeded by the system which allows the replacement of well-qualified teachers by teachers with no
special interest in the teaching of kikokushijo and foreign students.

Uniform

The function of uniform

The wrapping of the human body [...] is one of the most obvious ways of communicating information about ourselves, or reading information about others, although we may not do these things entirely consciously. (Hendry 1993:70)

First impressions are important, and the way we dress signal to others what kind of persons we are. Character is believed to be immanent in appearance (Meadmore 1997), and there is a connection between what we put on and how we act. One does not behave the same way when wearing a suit as when wearing informal clothes, the clothing does something to us.

Japan can be said to be a 'uniformised society', as many occupations have uniform requirements (McVeigh 1997). Sometimes the uniform has an obvious function, such as making it easier for people to know whom to approach when in need of help (such as a uniformed, patrolling policeman). But often the main purpose of the uniform is to control people. There is no need for a secretary to wear a uniform, if she is only seen by her colleagues and superiors, and is not an outward 'face' of her company. But by making people put on certain clothes, one can effectively monitor their behaviour, and instil norms and ideologies in them. McVeigh suggests that there is a connection between Japan's economic development and the wearing of school uniforms. In order to accomplish economic goals, social co-operation, collaboration and co-ordination is important. Japan's educational system was designed to inculcate these values and:

students (who were primarily viewed as future workers, not learners) were socialized to accept the demands of rationalization: (1) hierarchy; (2) social categorization; and (3) social standardization. It is only natural that such a "strategic schooling" would require students to wear uniforms. (McVeigh 1997:194)
Schools may have uniforms for various reasons. In the United States, introducing uniforms has led to a decrease of school violence in some school districts. This may be partly because it is easier to get an overview of the students when they are dressed in the same clothes, but also, I think, because wearing the uniform alters the way students feel and act. In Australia, where school uniforms are predominant, it seems that they serve a similar function as in Japan. In their critical article Uniform Policy for School Diversity, Meadmore and Symes write that:

whilst the rhetoric of the state policies shows a concern with equity, health and safety, practice is still tied to the wearing of uniforms as a means of producing citizens with socially desirable characteristics and comportments that looks the part. (Meadmore & Symes 1997:179)

Many Australian schools implement stricter codes of dress than what is prescribed by the government, because many parents regard the uniform as one of the signifiers of a good school “— indicating, presumably, the existence of a disciplined and regulated body of students” (Ibid:177). Thus the schools use the uniform as part of their marketing strategy.

School uniforms in Japan

Most junior and senior high schools in Japan have uniforms. In most public junior high schools the girls wear a sailor suit, and the boys a (Prussian) military style uniform with a stand-up collar. Most high schools have dark blue blazer and trousers for boys and blazer and skirt for girls. However, there is no official rule saying that a public school has to have a certain uniform. Most private schools have uniforms, often also on the primary level. If the uniform looks good, the school may attract more students, and especially private girls’ schools are known to have hired popular fashion designers to create their uniforms (McVeigh 1997).

Most people argue that the uniform takes away the pressure to spend a lot of money on clothes, and by wearing a school uniform one never has to think about what to put on in
But school uniforms in Japan can be very expensive. One has to have a summer and a winter uniform, and in addition one needs special shirts, shoes, winter coat and sports clothes and shoes. Everything has to be purchased in shops designated by the school. By leaving little opportunity for choice, one can say that the school actually instructs its students and their families how to spend their money. Clearly the connections between schools and these shops also have some importance for the Japanese economy.

The uniform has an important function as an identity marker for the students. It is also important for the socialisation of the students into the school culture. Goodman mentions how the smart uniforms at Fujiyama (the school where he did his fieldwork) contributed to the students’ awareness of their special, elite status (Goodman 1993:125). Ryang describes the Korean style uniforms of the North Korea affiliated schools in Japan (Ryang 1997). No matter what the uniforms look like, others can identify you as a student, and often you can be identified as a student of a particular school. Because other people's image of a school is influenced by how its students wear their uniforms, most schools have regular uniform checks of their students, and violations of uniform rules are reprimanded or punished. Uniforms are an important factor in the moulding of students. McVeigh draws on Foucault (1979) and Bourdieu (1977), seeing donning the uniform as intimately bound up with disciplinary practices. The detailed rules as to how a uniform should be worn and the minute control of this “teaches a discipline imposed by authority” (McVeigh 1997:201). Also, “repetitive exercises, such as donning the uniform on a daily basis, nonconsciously build habitus that are demanded by the politicoeconomic order for productive purposes” (Ibid).

19 During my Japanese high school days I conducted a survey among all the 2nd year students in my school. I asked them whether or not they would prefer to wear casual clothes to school. I was quite surprised to see that the vast majority preferred the school uniform.

20 I think that my Japanese high school uniform cost around 60,000 yen in 1990. I was lucky, and could obtain a used one for free. 60,000 yen was approximately 2700 NOK in 1990, and 4800 NOK in 2000.

21 One girl in my class was told that she could not go on the school trip if she would not get rid of her dark green, rather plain shoes; it was stated in the school rules that shoes should be black.

22 See Appendix IV for school rules concerning uniforms.
Kikokushijo have attended schools abroad where there is no school uniform or where the function of the uniform may be different from that in Japan. Even if the school has a uniform, the rules considering for instance hairstyle, jewellery and socks are hardly as strict as those in Japanese schools. Kikokushijo are therefore almost expected to have problems adjusting to the rigidity of Japanese uniform rules. This is probably the reason why schools specially designed for kikokushijo often have milder uniform rules, or no uniform at all.

OIA, ICUHS, and Kokusai had different approaches to the uniform question. Keeping in mind what function the uniform has in ordinary Japanese schools, and in the Japanese society in general, I will now examine how the three schools for kikokushijo deal with this issue.

OIA
There is no uniform at OIA/SISF. Students wear whatever they want, most of them come to school in jeans and sweaters. There are also no rules concerning make-up, length of hair or general attire. One can see different styles; some dye their hair and wear heavy make-up, but my impression was that the general way of dressing was rather sober. At the Japanese high school I attended for one year, those girls who were breaking the rules by dyeing their hair and wearing make-up and jewellery, were considered to be bad students, and they were in fact the same persons who often did bad at exams and did not care much about getting an education. At that time I would often argue with my teachers and say that it is not bad to wear make-up and jewellery, and if the rule against it would not exist, there would be no rebelling against the rule. Clearly to me this was the case at OIA. What a student would wear was not really a topic of interest to either students or teachers. Though one girl who used to come to school with heavy make-up, dyed hair and miniskirt, complained about another girl who tried to imitate her style. There seemed to be little pressure to spend a lot of money on clothes. I did not see many students wearing very expensive clothing.
ICUHS
At the school festival I noticed that only a few of the students wore uniforms, and later I learned that although all the students have a uniform, they are free to wear whatever they want in everyday school life. Only on special occasions, such as graduation and beginning of school year ceremonies, wearing the uniform is obligatory. When I later came back to ICUHS to conduct interviews I saw that also on a regular school day very few would wear the uniform and those who did might wear a non-uniform sweater to go with the uniform skirt or trousers. I asked both teachers and students about the reason why there was a uniform when it was not necessary to wear it other than on special occasions, and whether this was not rather un-economic, since all students had to have both a uniform and non-uniform school clothes. I could not really understand the system at ICUHS, and I did not get any satisfactory explanation either.

Kokusai
Kokusai High School has a school uniform and wearing it is obligatory. In winter it consists of blazer and trousers for boys and blazer and skirt for girls. In summer only the skirt or trousers are obligatory, and the students are free to wear whatever shirt or T-shirt they like with it. The school is also quite liberal in allowing students to wear a warm sweater in winter and choose the colour and pattern of their necktie. There is also no rule against permanent waves or dyed hair, pierced ears or make-up. Still, the school has a uniform-related problem.

When I came to the schools for interviews in January 1999, I noticed a big poster saying “Let’s wear our uniforms!” Some of the students come to school wearing their regular clothes. If the student has a cold and therefore wants to wear a warm sweater, for example, he or she must bring a note from a parent or guardian asking for permission not to wear uniform that day. The students were divided in their opinions regarding the uniform. Two of my informants said that they were not for or against school uniform in

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23 In some Australian schools, the uniform can have interchangeable components in order to permit ‘individual expression’. Meadmore and Symes call this “a surface display of liberalism” (1997:183).
general, but that when the school had a uniform the students ought to wear it. Those who did not wear their uniforms, or did not wear them in a proper fashion, tended to be against school uniforms. I asked Ms. Akiyoshi whether the school would abolish the uniform if enough students were against it. She said that the students would have to discuss it in the student council and the parents and teacher would also have to vote about it in the PTA. In the meantime the teachers would have to use some of their energy on scolding students who do not wear their uniforms.

I was told that Kokusai has milder uniform rules than most other schools because of the returnees and the foreign students. Because they have seen another way of doing things they are more likely to ask questions. Also they will not accept rules if they do not get a satisfactory explanation of why the rule is there.

Discussion
I found the uniform problem at Kokusai very interesting. I had seen OIA, where there was no uniform, ICUHS, with uniform only on special occasions, and then Kokusai with obligatory uniform, although not so strictly enforced. In addition I have experienced wearing a Japanese school uniform myself. At my high school no student would ever dream of coming to school in their regular clothes. In my school we had a ‘problem’ with some girls making their skirts shorter (they were supposed to just cover the knees), and wearing a pullover over their shirts in winter on the coldest days. We had regular uniform checks and the ones who were caught were scolded and often hit lightly on the head. But the uniform related ‘crimes’ in my high school can not be compared to those at Kokusai. I have never heard of similar problems in other schools either.

The position of ICUHS and Kokusai concerning school uniform can tell us two things: First, kikokushiho are expected to be individualistic and to have problems accepting that they must wear a uniform. Second, they are also expected to, if forced to wear a
uniform, revolt against it by wearing it in an improper way that might damage the school’s reputation. To avoid such a situation, the schools have relaxed uniform rules. These relaxed rules also serve the image of the schools as liberal, and places where individuality is highly valued. But still, in ICUHS’ case, the uniform has to be bought, and worn on special occasions. By having a uniform, though not much in use, the school signals that it is part of the greater Japanese school system and the Japanese society, and that it, too, produces citizens that will be part of the Japanese work force in the future. At Kokusai, the relaxed uniform rules seem to have got a little out of hand. The school does not know how to handle those students who refuse to follow the rules, and resorts to poster campaigns. The students are clearly not willing to accept their expected socialisation into their roles as students and ‘uniformised’ members of the Japanese society.

At OIA, where there is no uniform, the students’ dress is not a big issue. By not focusing on clothing, the school distances itself from the wider Japanese society. The school’s goal, as we have seen, is to create ‘internationally minded members of the global society’ (my words). To attain this goal, making the students follow strict guidelines for dress is not necessary.

Conclusive remarks

I have now presented different aspects of three schools for kikokushijo. OIA, ICUHS and Kokusai adapt to their status as kikokushijo accepting schools (ukeirekō) in different ways, but one important thing which these schools have in common, is that they would not have been opened had it not been for the general consensus in the Japanese society that kikokushijo need special arrangements when it comes to education.

As we have seen in Chapter 1, the Japanese school system is very rigid, and much focus
is put on form. Form is, in many cases, more important than content. An example of this was the story about the boy who returned from America, and did not understand the dynamics of the classroom situation. What the teacher said, was not consistent with what was actually meant. Another example on the emphasis on form is the school uniform, which I have described in this chapter. School uniforms are important in the disciplining and socialising of students.

Form can be seen as one of the bearers of the ‘hidden curriculum’; what students learn in school that prepares them for their later roles as adults in society. The focus on form, and conformity, in Japanese schools, signals to the students that these are important aspects of the Japanese society, and the students incorporate the underlying ideology.

The kikokushijo are perceived as different from other Japanese school children. Having lived abroad, they are thought to have incorporated other ideologies and practices. They have not followed the formalistic Japanese school curriculum, knowledge of which is needed for passing entrance exams to schools or universities.

Schools like OIA, ICUHS and Kokusai were, as I have mentioned above, designed because of the general consensus that they were needed as alternatives to ordinary Japanese schools. As I have written in the preface, the kikokushijo’s problems within the educational system became focused on because their parents were mainly resourceful people who could get their views across to officials in the Ministry of Education and other influential persons. It was decided that kikokushijo could get certain special arrangements, such as entrance exams that take their foreign experience into account. The system of entrance examinations itself was not changed, it was only modified for those applicants who belong to the category of kikokushijo. As will be mentioned in the next chapter, these special entrance exams are not of any use for kikokushijo who do not have the skills which a kikokushijo is expected to have; most importantly English language skills.
The approaches of the three schools

OIA, as we have seen, visions itself as a new type of school. It makes this clear both in its information brochure, and through the symbolic architecture. It accepts general students only in the first year (7th grade), but allows a certain number of new returnee students to enter in every grade. Its co-existence with OIS makes it a truly special school, and most of the students are happy to be there. However, the school has an identity problem that is inflicted by the Japanese educational system. How should the school respond to those students who ask for more exam-related teaching? When most of the students want to sit for university entrance exams in Japan, should the school not take responsibility and prepare the students for this? The school has chosen not to be an exam-preparatory school, but how should it regard the fact that many of its students study extra at cram schools several nights a week? How should the school respond when some of its students are not the international type of person that the school hopes for? OIA’s own ideological programme is in conflict with the demands of the outside world, and its own ‘hidden curriculum’ can not effectively be incorporated by the students because of the contrasting messages they receive from the surrounding society.

ICUHS has not stated that it wishes to be very different from the norm. And indeed, many students are attracted to ICUHS because its graduates are able to enter good universities. Both ICUHS and Kokusai write in their information brochures or info-sheets which universities their graduates have entered, and how many students can be recommended to certain universities. They both take into consideration that these are things prospective students and their parents would want to know. And both schools help students prepare for entrance exams. ICUHS has adjusted its role to the demands of the society. Still, it aspires to be an ‘international’ school with ‘international” students. But this being ‘international’ is again in contrast with the school’s main aim, which is to enable its students to enter Japanese universities. Thus the school opts for an ‘international light’ version. The focus on English and intercultural understanding is mainly on the surface, and does not challenge the school’s overriding aims.
Kokusai is different from both OIA and ICUHS. What makes it unique in Japan is that it lets foreign residents take the entrance exam in English. Although all subjects are taught in Japanese, foreigners have at least got a chance to enter the school even if their Japanese is not fluent. Because it is a public school, and thus cheaper than OIA and ICUHS, the students, both foreigners and Japanese, come from various social backgrounds. Kokusai thus has a more heterogenous student body than most schools.

But Kokusai also has its problems. It being a public school means that it has financial limitations. It also has to follow the prefectural government’s guidelines. But the main problem is probably that it cannot make its own decisions about the faculty, as we have seen above. The teachers are the main bearers of the hidden curriculum, and when they are not all loyal to the school’s ideology, the students receive conflicting messages. The heterogenous student body also lay the grounds for potential ideological conflicts.
PART II

INDIVIDUALS
INTRODUCTION TO PART II

In Part I I look at how schools are important as a transmitter of the state ideology. The connection between school and state should be obvious. The schools socialise the students into the roles they will have as adults in society. I have looked at how three schools specially designed to accommodate kikokushijo are caught in the dilemma of being a special alternative and at the same time preparing the students for their future highly integrated roles.

The kikokushijo are defined as a category. According to Richard Jenkins (1996:80ff.), membership in a collective identity or collectivity is based on what people are believed to have in common and what makes them different from others. Jenkins distinguishes between ‘category’ and ‘group’. A category may be arbitrarily defined and is recognised by observers. A group is defined by the mutual recognition of its members. ‘Group’ and ‘category’ are connected to each other, because an internally defined group will also eventually be seen as a group externally, and because “categorising people is always potentially an intervention in their lives” (Ibid: 85); being placed in a category is likely to influence a person, who might see himself creating a group relationship with other members of the category. Being able to place a person in a category makes it easier for us to relate to that person.

“The ability to identify unfamiliar individual with reference to known social categories allows us at least the illusion that we know what to expect of them.” (Ibid:83)

The kikokushijo are caught in a paradoxical situation. The category to which they are assigned and which they cannot choose not to be a part of, comes with notions of how a kikokushijo is or should be; people have certain expectations towards members of the particular category ‘kikokushijo’. Most of these notions or expectations have to do with learned skills, school problems or personality. For some kikokushijo it is impossible to
live up to these notions. If they have never been in an English speaking environment, there is no way they can be fluent in English. Also, a shy person cannot suddenly start expressing his or her opinion, only because the category he or she belongs to implies that he or she should be able to do that. The confrontation with being categorised as \textit{kikokushijo} is maybe worst for those who have lived in English-speaking countries and still have not learnt the language properly, because they attended Japanese overseas schools, did not make local friends with whom to practice English, or were abroad for too short a time to reach fluency, for example. They often feel that their ‘excuse’ for not being fluent in English is not ‘valid’.

Obviously, the notions about what a \textit{kikokushijo} should be like cause some ambivalence among the \textit{kikokushijo} who do not have the skills or personality which they are expected to have. Those who do not fit the ‘standard’ image of the \textit{kikokushijo}, often consciously or unconsciously decide to hide their overseas experience, because they know that if they talk about it they will be met by the stereotypical attitudes held by others. Here I would like to point to the parallels to the situation for the stigmatised person in Goffman’s \textit{Stigma} (1986). Stigma is, according to Goffman, an attribute that is deeply discrediting for the bearer. It can be a physical deformity, a fault in character, or a “tribal stigma of race, nation and religion” (Ibid:4). Although I dislike to call ‘being a \textit{kikokushijo}’ a stigma, it is clear that the \textit{kikokushijo} are considered to be different, in a positive or negative way, from other Japanese, and that the non-typical \textit{kikokushijo}, confronted with the expectations of both other \textit{kikokushijo} and normal Japanese, may feel stigmatised. Further, the \textit{kikokushijo} create their identity in dialogue with the surrounding society\textsuperscript{1}. Thus they come to relate to, if not share, the popular image of the ‘typical \textit{kikokushijo}’ as a model for themselves, and this may cause ambivalent feelings.

Given that the stigmatized individual in our society acquires identity standards which he applies to himself in spite of failing to conform to them, it is inevitable that he will feel some ambivalence about his own self. (Ibid:106)

\textsuperscript{1} I will explore the concept of ‘dialogue’ later in this Part.
Even on such arenas as the three schools I presented in Chapter 2 the students are confronted with the expectations of what the *kikokushijo* should be like. These schools should be the first institutions to acknowledge that *kikokushijo* are persons with individual experiences. Compared to ordinary Japanese schools they do acknowledge individual differences, but I still find it interesting that also at Kokusai, OIA and ICUHS, many students and teachers have a rather stereotypical image of *kikokushijo*, and an image that is loaded with values. In schools 'where individuality is valued' it should not be necessary to hide one's identity, and to feel that others looked down on one's 'lesser' experience.²

**Why is there a standard image of *kikokushijo*, and why is it so prevalent?**

Knowledge of the Japanese school system is very important for understanding the category of *kikokushijo*. It was because of the problems which some children who had lived for a long time abroad had passing entrance exams to universities that the category of *kikokushijo*, – returnee children –, was defined. Thus every Japanese child of school age returning from abroad is counted in statistics and is eligible for special entrance exams to schools or colleges. The only differentiation made is between returnees from Japanese overseas schools and returnees from local or international schools abroad. The returnees from Japanese overseas schools often have different entrance exams from the other returnees, and they are not considered to have so many problems adjusting to the school life, having been in a Japanese school setting overseas. It is usually easier for *kikokushijo* from local or international schools abroad to enter a school than it is for *kikokushijo* from Japanese overseas schools and ordinary schools in Japan. At ICUHS, ²

² In ordinary schools, *kikokushijo* are often known to be stigmatised if they do speak good English and are 'too open' etc. They may then try to make their English accent worse to blend in with their non-*kikokushijo* classmates (e.g. Kidder 1992). At OIA, Kokusai and ICUHS, however, the 'typical *kikokushijo* do not hide, while the non-typical *kikokushijo* may feel stigmatised and not accepted.
65.8% of the applicants from foreign or international schools, 51.6% of the applicants from Japanese overseas schools and 29.2% of the applicants from general schools in Japan were admitted to the school (ICUHS Descriptive Data 1998).

Most Japanese people with no personal knowledge of kikokushijo, however, do not seem to be aware of the Japanese overseas schools returnees, and they do not seem to think of them as a separate category. When Japanese people volunteered their image of kikokushijo to me, very few even mentioned Japanese overseas schools. As I have mentioned in the Preface, the prevalent image of kikokushijo was mainly someone who spoke English fluently, and had problems with the Japanese curriculum, school system, and Japanese language and customs. Many also mentioned that kikokushijo also speak out their opinions directly. As Roger Goodman puts it:

> The fact is that all kikokushijo tend to be perceived in Japan as if they had spent fifteen years in the United States and know only a few words of Japanese on their return. Kikokushijo are categorized as a unified group with shared identifiable qualities often associated with western values, such as individualism and directness. (Goodman 1993: 212)

The image of kikokushijo is very much associated with an image of someone who has lived for a long time in the United States. In Chapter 2 we have seen how this ‘American image’ also influence the school cultures, and how students in OIA, ICUHS and Kokusai are expected to be independent and unwilling to adjust to strict school rules. The schools also promote an image of an ideal student which in part is similar to the image of a kikokushijo. All the schools wish to foster students who can communicate in foreign languages and who are creative and ‘intercultural’. In the schools, general students are supposed to learn from the returnee students, so that they, too, can be a part of the ‘interculturalness’. Kikokushijo are supposed to learn about Japanese culture etc. from the general students.

In Chapter I I suggested that Japanese schools and their connections to the state and the wider society could be described using the concepts of ‘total institutions’ and ‘hidden
curriculum'. In connection to this one could say that the category and image of *kikokushijo* is also a ‘total’ phenomenon. By this I mean that the image of the ‘typical *kikokushijo*’ is almost ubiquitous in Japan. The *kikokushijo* are confronted with others’ stereotypical views of them in most arenas, and internalise these. Jenkins writes that “internalisation may occur if one is authoritatively labelled within an institutional social setting” (1996:22). The labelled identities will then have an impact on the individual’s experience. In contrast to internalisation Jenkins sets ‘resistance’. Resistance is also a possible response to labelling, and it, too, has impact on the individual’s identity.

Internalisation of the labelled identity first and foremost takes place schools, as it is in this context that the label is most important. The labelling is here institutionalised and enforced, *kikokushijo* students cannot protest about their being labelled. Returnees enter the educational institutions as *kikokushijo* and are presented as *kikokushijo* in school statistics (Returnees who enter the school through the normal entrance exam\(^3\) are also often entered as *kikokushijo* in school statistics). The teachers and the students have preconceptions about *kikokushijo*, and if it is known that an individual is a returnee, the way he is treated is influenced by the label and the stereotypes that accompany it. If a *kikokushijo* chooses to hide his or her identity, it is often because he or she does not want to confront the preconceptions, or because he or she feels too different from the image of *kikokushijo* held by the others.

The stereotypical image is also prevalent in media, and in everyday conversation if it should touch on the subject of *kikokushijo*. The research done on *kikokushijo* also tend to focus on subjects such as bilingualism or school adjustment problems. The category, with its stereotypical content, seems to be taken for granted almost everywhere. The standard image of *kikokushijo* can thus be said to be part of the habitus of the Japanese society where everyone has a defined place and anomalies are problematic; no-one, or at

\(^3\) If an applicant has been back in Japan for a certain number of years (differs from school to school), or graduated from a Japanese educational institution, he or she is not eligible for the *kikokushijo* entrance exam.
least very few, seem to question the correctness of the category content.

Dialogues

[...] it is in dialogue with other people's understanding of who I am that I develop a conception of my own identity [...] but also because my identity is crucially constituted through concepts and practices made available to me by religion, society, school, and state, and mediated to varying degrees by the family. (Appiah 1994: 154)

The Japanese children abroad are mostly unaware of the category 'kikokushijo' before they return to Japan and become 'returnee children'. When I visited the Japanese supplementary schools in Oslo and Munich, the teacher had to explain what a kikokushijo was when I said what I was doing research about. The category 'kikokushijo' is not important for the Japanese children abroad, it is only after their return that they are labelled as kikokushijo and thus confronted with stereotypes. We can thus say that the context, which is Japanese schools, makes the category. Here we can again draw a line to Goffman, who describes school entry as the phase in the socialisation process "in which the stigmatized person learns and incorporates the standpoint of the normal" (Goffman 1986:32) after having been 'protected' by his family and neighbourhood:

Thus public school entrance is often reported as the occasion of stigma learning, the experience sometimes coming very precipitously on the first day of school, with taunts, teasing, ostracism, and fights. Interestingly, the more the child is "handicapped", the more likely he is to be sent to a special school for persons of his kind, and the more abruptly he will have to face the view which the public at large takes of him. (Ibid:33)

When the children arrive in Japan they are suddenly facing a lot of expectations from others as to how they should behave and what skills they should have. Since they are not conscious about being 'kikokushijo' before they are confronted with the stereotypical attitudes and preconceptions of others, it is natural that the kikokushijo
create their identity in dialogue with those. The internalisation does not happen only at school, but on different arenas in society. When the kikokushijo read about kikokushijo, or see a TV series where a kikokushijo is pictured⁴, their self-images are influenced by this. That the category of kikokushijo, which came into existence within the school system, is also important outside of the same system, tells a lot about the central place of schooling in this society.

Many of the kikokushijo were interested in my research topic, and several said after the interview that having been able to talk to me, they had got new insights, and that my viewpoints made them see things in a slightly different light. Similarly, some informants had read about ‘Third Culture Kids’ (I will present this concept in Chapter 3) and said that this concept helped them understand their own experiences better.

Outline of Part II

In Chapter 3 I will present nine individual kikokushijo. Nine cases are rather many, one would think, but it is important for understanding the diversity comprised by the category ‘kikokushijo’. The individuals presented have different backgrounds. Some have spent almost their whole life abroad, and some only a few years. Some speak foreign languages, and some do not. Some have attended Japanese overseas school, some have been to local or international schools, and some have attended several different school types. Some returned to Japan for university, while others have attended primary, junior high school and senior high school in Japan, and have maybe travelled back and forth between Japan and several foreign countries. Since their experiences both abroad and in Japan vary, so do their understanding of and their relation to the category kikokushijo. Those who have returned to Japan at a later stage (to enter

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⁴ Kidder (1992) mentions a kikokushijo who compares herself to a kikokushijo in a TV series, and use the TV representation in creating her own identity.
university), and thus have not been enrolled in junior or senior high schools after their return, seem to have a less distinct image of what the ‘typical kikokushijo’ is like, and whether they are kikokushijo or not is not so important for their self-identification.

Some of the informants have attended standard Japanese schools, and some have attended ‘kikokushijo accepting schools’ such as OIA, ICUHS and Kokusai, and some have been enrolled in both school types. The daily school experience also influence their way of looking at their own identity and the category kikokushijo.

I want to show the variety both in life story and outlook among persons categorised as kikokushijo. Because Japanese mostly see kikokushijo as an undifferentiated group it is important for me to show that this is not the case. However, there are aspects of their life stories which suggest that there are certain experiences which all or many members of the ‘kikokushijo’ category have in common. The fear of being bullied, the frustration when not understanding the social codes, and the feeling of alienation from other Japanese are examples. The identity as kikokushijo is thus perceived as ‘real’ for the members of the category, and although some dislike being categorised, none of them contest the accuracy in their being labelled as ‘kikokushijo’.

In Chapter 4 I will take a closer look at the image of kikokushijo as it can be presented in Japanese media. I will also examine how the kikokushijo’s own perception of the ‘typical kikokushijo’ correlates with the general image. That the kikokushijo themselves to a great extent share the general image of kikokushijo, makes it difficult for some to identify with the category they are defined as being a part of. Towards the end of Chapter 4 I will take a closer look at what the kikokushijo perceive as problematic.
Introduction

I will begin this chapter with a presentation and discussion of my research method, before I move on to the nine cases of kikokushijo. In the end of this chapter I will discuss aspects of the kikokushijo experience which my informants have in common. These aspects will serve as background for the discussion in Chapter 4.

Method

I have conducted interviews with a total of 24 kikokushijo, of which 19 also had filled out a rather extensive questionnaire (see Appendix I). The questionnaire was filled out by an additional 53 people, who were mainly students at International Christian University High School and Tokyo Metropolitan Kokusai High School. I mostly picked my interviewees by reading the questionnaires which they had filled out, and chose among those who had volunteered to be interviewed. I had made the questionnaire as
preparation for my two and a half week stay at Senri International School Foundation in October 1998, thus the interviews completed before this time were done without the questionnaire as base. My first interview dates from February 1998 and the last one from March 1999, and most of them were done in October 1998 (Senri International School Foundation) and January 1999 (ICU High School and Tokyo Metropolitan Kokusai High School). The questionnaire I initially planned to use merely as preparation for the interviews. If all the informants would fill out a questionnaire, it would be easier to know what to talk about, and I would not have to ask a lot of background questions. I knew that I would not be able to spend more than 1/2 to one hour with each informant, and thus it was good to use the questionnaire for timesaving purposes. I wrote the questionnaire myself in English and received help from one of the kikokushijo medical students at Tokushima University in translating it into Japanese. I included questions that had come up during the previous interviews. After it had been translated I also received tips from Mr. Ijima, the head teacher at Osaka Intercultural Academy, and changed the questionnaire accordingly.

Interviews: Language and setting
The interviews were conducted in English or in Japanese, according to what the informant felt to be more comfortable. If he or she said that it did not matter which language was chosen, and he or she spoke both languages fluently, the interview was conducted in English. My own vocabulary is larger in English than in Japanese, and so for me it was easier to do it in English. But the most important thing was that the informant was comfortable in the language we chose. Another advantage by using English was that I did not have to translate the conversation from Japanese afterwards. 11 of the 24 interviews were conducted in English, and these informants had all lived for many years in America or in a country where they had attended international schools with English as the language of instruction. In most of the interviews, however, words, sometimes whole sentences, of the other language would be used to explain things that
were hard to explain in the chosen language.

The language and the setting of the interviews have probably affected how the interview situation was perceived both by myself and the informants. How the interview was held, and how the informant regarded me also influenced the kind of answers I got. All the interviews were done in private, only I and an informant were present. I always used a tape recorder. Adults I would usually meet and interview in a café or restaurant, and the high school students I would mostly interview in a meeting room or classroom at their schools. I always made clear in the beginning of the interview what it would be about, and that they did not have to answer questions they were uncomfortable with. I also stressed that they would be anonymous.

Japanese and English are very different languages. The main difference is that Japanese has many levels of politeness, according to the situation, rather than depending on the person, and that one often does not speak out the whole sentence, but lets it sort of hang in the air. This is in order not to sound harsh, and to probe the other person’s reaction. When the sentence is left ‘hanging’, the other person is likely to nod and say an affirmative “Yes” or “that is so true” or something similar, and then the speaker knows that the other person has understood.

When I spoke in Japanese with the informants, we would usually speak polite, standard Japanese, at least in the beginning, and especially if the informant was younger than me and we met at his or her school. With the informants who were about my age, we rather quickly changed to a more informal level of speech. I believe that there are two reasons for this difference. Firstly, school is a formal setting, whereas a café is more private. At the school, it was the teachers who requested the students to fill out my questionnaire,

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1 Yasuko Kanno similarly describes use of English words and phrases during conversations and other communication with her kikokushijo informants. She states that: “Bilingual individuals are not bilingual because they have the equivalent of two monolingual individuals’ knowledge in two different languages, rather they are bilingual because they live some aspects of their lives in one language [...] and other aspects in the second language.” (Kanno 2000a:2)

2 “Ee” (yes), “sō desu ne” (that is true).
and later made appointments for me with the students who had volunteered to be interviewed. Thus the informants probably associated me with the teachers, with whom they speak formal Japanese. Secondly, age and role is also important for defining the situation. With the older informant, who was either a student or a company employee, we both would try to define the situation as if we were friends. It was, because of various mutual interests (foreign languages and cultures, travel, politics, literature etc.) easy to establish a common platform. The ‘natural’ setting also helped this. With the high school student it was difficult to establish this kind of contact, as it would not be ‘natural’ for a 25 year old graduate student and a 16 year old high school student to be friends. I took one of the high school students out for lunch, and maybe it was just that we had a lot in common, but outside of the school building it seemed to be easier for both of us to relax, and our spoken Japanese was also on a less formal level than that with the students I interviewed in their school.

The interviews conducted in English were of course also more or less formal according to the setting, but since English is an ‘equal’ language, the differences are not so obvious.

Limitations

Most of the informants I only met once, and although I had contact via mail or e-mail with some of them later, I cannot say that I have followed them during months of their lives, and observed them on different arenas of their lives. If I had lived continuously in the Tokyo or Osaka areas, where most of the kikokushijo live, it would naturally have been easier to be in contact with them on a more constant basis. But even then I doubt that I could have got to know them in many other contexts than that of their school life. My informants were busy with their studies and exams, cram school, club activities, job

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3 By ‘equal’ I here mean that if two people have different social statuses, they use the same level of politeness when speaking to each other, whereas in Japan, a person with a higher status would speak downwards in a conversation with a person with a lower status, who in turn would ‘speak upwards’; thus the choice of words and verb endings are dependent on the statuses of both the speaker and the receiver.
hunting or work. When I asked and got permission to do the interviews, the schools often mentioned that the students were busy, and I could interview them as long as it did not take too much time. Also with the university students whom I met by introduction from friends, or by coincidence, it was difficult to fix more than one appointment. But with them at least I did not have to constantly look at the watch, and the interview could last 2-3 hours. One young woman I met three or four times, and we would have met more if time had allowed it. But this was shortly before I had to return home to Norway, and she was about to move and start her working life.

I am aware that the amount of time I have spent with each person is rather small, and for that reason I feel I cannot say much about the person other than what he or she told me him- or herself, and the impression I got from talking to him or her. But having lived in Japan for all together two and a half years, during two stages of my own life, first as a high school student with a Japanese family, and later as a university research student at two universities in different parts of the country, I think I can say that I have first hand experience from everyday life in Japan. I know what kind of society the *kikokushijo* are living in and facing every day. Many of the aspects of Japanese society they react to, in an either positive or negative way, I, being an outsider, have experienced and reacted to myself. I also sometimes experienced that I knew more about for instance the Japanese school system than the informant, and they several times commented that I behave in a ‘Japanese’ way. This includes of course body language, like gestures and bowing, but also the way of saying things indirectly.

Sidney Mintz (1979) writes in his essay *The Anthropological Interview and the Life History* about the benefit of observing the informant interacting with other members of the group, even when one is concentrating on only one informant. Verbal communication between interviewer and informant should not be the only source of

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4 I might add that I was rather surprised when I listened to the tape from one of the English-language interviews. During the interview my cell phone rang twice, and both times I answered “moshimoshi” (hello) in a high pitched voice, just like Japanese women do on the phone, in order to sound polite and feminine.
information. Mintz further says that

...many life histories lose some of their value because the fieldworker lacks sufficient knowledge of the community and culture within which the informant lives, and which he or she expresses, in one way or another, in nearly everything he or she says or does". (Mintz 1979:20)

My data can be seen as insufficient, as I have only interviewed the informants, and not observed them in different situations. I think, however, that my broad background knowledge and my own experience in Japanese homes and schools, and the observations I made at OIA, Kokusai, ICUHS and some other schools, can at least somewhat compensate for the deficiency of observation of the informants. Although I do not equal my own experiences with those of my informants, I can relate to and understand their stories because I have witnessed or experienced situations that are similar to what my informants told me about.

The informants

At Osaka Intercultural Academy I made a formal application to conduct a survey, and Mr. Ijima found six kikokushijo whom I could interview, and got their permission. He also introduced me to two other students, a Chinese boy and a girl of Korean descent, because he wanted me to have a broader perspective on the school in my research. Since they were not kikokushijo I have not included them in this presentation. At Osaka International School (the ‘international’ part of SISF) I introduced myself to all the high school students, and two or three took the questionnaire, but they never returned it. So I missed the chance to interview kikokushijo in the international school.

At ICU High School and Kokusai High School my contact teachers Mr. Watanabe (and his colleague Mr. Inoue) and Ms. Akiyoshi offered to distribute the questionnaire to the kikokushijo in some classes they taught, and later return them to me by mail. I picked out some of the students who had volunteered to be interviewed and the teachers sat up
appointments for me. At ICU I talked to four 1st year and four 2nd year students. At Kokusai it was harder because some of the students who had agreed to be interviewed were not attending school at that time, being busy with their university entrance exams. But still I was able to talk to one 1st year student and three 3rd year students. Two of the third year students were already accepted at a university and thus did not have to study, and one planned to go on to an American university and did not have to take exams in Japan.

At my own university in Tokushima, I met and interviewed two 1st year medical students, whom I found out about by coincidence. At a party I had met and talked to a professor at the university, and we had talked about my research. He said that the university this year had accepted two medical students through the special entrance exam for kikokushijo, and he offered to introduce them to me. These students were not originally from Tokushima, but had come there to study. Not many universities offer kikokushijo special entrance exams in their medical schools, but Tokushima University was an exception.

I met one informant at a meeting in Tokyo for university students who wanted to write their graduation theses about kikokushijo or related topics. The meeting was organised by Atsushi Furuiye, a journalist and kikokushijo himself. Furuiye writes for Kaigai Shijo Kyōiku, a monthly magazine about education of overseas children, and he also runs a newsletter and a web-site where kikokushijo and others write about their feelings and ideas. The meeting was very rewarding for me. One of the participants wrote her graduation thesis in university about a topic similar to what I was interested in, and she agreed to meet me for later interviews.

Of the other informants I met two by introduction from friends, and two I met by pure coincidence, one at a ‘friendship party’ for foreign and Japanese students at Osaka.

Furuiye later asked the participants to write short articles about their research for Kaigai Shijo Kyōiku (see Hansen 2000).
University of Foreign Studies, and one at a birthday party for Zoe, a Chinese-Australian
girl in Sapporo. Zoe was a classmate of my boyfriend Michael, and she had invited her
language exchange partner to her birthday. The Japanese young woman had as a child
lived in Hong Kong for five years, but had not learnt Cantonese then. As she grew older
she regretted it more and more, and she searched for a Cantonese-speaking person to
have a language exchange with.6

Nine kikokushijo

Case 1 Rumi

Rumi had lived in Europe almost all her life before she came to Japan to enter
university. She is now 22 years old. Her family background is not typical for
kikokushijo. Her parents had met in Europe and got married when her mother got
pregnant with Rumi’s older sister. They settled in Germany, and her father worked for a
Japanese company there. Rumi says that it was difficult for her mother, who had some
problems with her nerves, to take care of the three children, and that is why Rumi’s
older sister and brother at different stages were left in Japan with the grandparents and
received their education there, while Rumi herself grew up with her parents in Europe.
She is opposed to Japanese behaviour and traditions, especially the way they are
practised in Europe.

They came [to Germany] 25 years ago, and haven’t seen Japan for a long time.
It’s Japan 25 years ago, still going on in Germany. Children have to be home
by ten o’clock. My parents left Japan. Their parents were strict. The clothes
they wear, it’s so dark, they don’t want to stand out. They don’t know anything
that is going on in Japan; that it’s more open now.

... Japanese never explain. They never like giving hugs, they never like giving

6 For more data concerning where and how long my informants had lived abroad, in comparison to the
official Japanese statistics, please see Appendix II.
kisses. German people say their children are the best. If [the children] get involved in a fight at school, they say, "my child is not wrong", but my parents said, "it’s my child’s fault.” My parents never said that I am good, and they never explained to me why.

Rumi wished to study at a European university, but her parents wanted her to go back to Japan so that she could get to know more about her country. They had no special preferences for what university she should attend, and her father is ‘not so impressed’ by universities. But they wanted her to go to a public university, since they are cheaper. Rumi’s sister is in the graduate school of a private university, but her father has said that he will not pay for Rumi if she should go on to graduate school.

Rumi was at the time of the interview in her third year of university. She lived alone and worked several nights a week in a bar catering mostly to foreigners. She had both Japanese and foreign friends, but she seemed to be more comfortable in an international setting. In the e-mail introduction she sent me before we met, she wrote: “To tell you the truth, I don’t feel Japanese at all”, and I think this describes her quite well. She is very critical of the Japanese society, and plans to go back to Europe immediately after she has finished her studies.

I noticed that Japanese people are very selfish. They pretend that they understand. They say yes for no reason, I will do it, and [then] they don’t have any responsibility. I notice they keep the old culture on the surface, they don’t think about the meanings of it, so they just agree. With people they never met they can be very rude. If they walk on the road and bump into someone, if they are with their friends they say sorry, but not if they are alone. And in Europe you do say sorry.

... The trains...you are pushed in, I never experienced that before. They’re on their own, when they’re in a crowd. The more people are there, the more comfortable they are.

Rumi has also experienced that other Japanese consider her different. But she does not want to be like them, and she does not change her ways to fit better into society. I also find it striking that Rumi always is talking about the Japanese in a way that leaves no
doubt that she herself does not belong to this group. The tendency for some kikokushijo to mentally exclude themselves from other Japanese have been described by different scholars. Rumi did not want to 'come home' to Japan, and thus might have had a negative attitude from the beginning, but as we shall see later, the exclusion of oneself from 'normal Japanese' can also come as an unexpected reaction for those who consciously choose to go back to Japan. Rumi's sense of not being part of the Japanese society is partly due to her 'body techniques' which give visible signs that she is not like 'normal Japanese'.

...I've been told that I dress different, I stand different, I move different, my movements are different from Japanese people. I don't usually dress as nice; usually I've got jeans on, just a T-shirt. When I go inside I take my shirt off. Japanese don't do that. No matter how warm or cold it is, they dress the way the season is. There is exactly a time when they change all the summer clothes to winter clothes.

Rumi is also very critical to the system of special entrance exams for kikokushijo. She told me about the preparation course she attended and the entrance examinations she took.

State owned universities are more open to returnees. Private schools don't want any trouble with returnees not being able to graduate. They are looking for people; they just want to say they're very international. They only want some people that would fit for the title kikokushijo, or ryūgakusei (exchange student). They want people who can speak Japanese. Preferably they only spent two or three years in another country. I took an entrance exam in Kansai Gakuin (a private university), and they told me my Japanese is weird. And I said: what is weird. They told me I speak like a gaijin (foreigner). I don't make mistakes, they said, but I don't speak like a Japanese person. And that is one of the reasons why you don't get in. I went to a summer school, and the way I write essays, maybe the vocabulary I used was very small, since I wasn't used to speaking Japanese. I got a high score on my essays, and English I didn't

8 Mauss (1979) writes about how body techniques like running and digging are learnt, and can be very different from one culture to another.
9 I have experienced this myself. From the day on when it is autumn according to the calendar, almost all people will wear long sleeves etc. When I came to university in a sleeveless shirt and sandals, on what I considered a warm, late-summer day, the Japanese students commented on it, and said that now it was actually autumn, and it was interesting to see that foreigners did not have the same practice as them. Hendry also mentions 'dressing according to the calendar' (Hendry 1993:80).
have any problems with. But, I got kicked off from that exam, and this kid who
was the laziest motherfucker [sic] in the summer school got in. Most of them
got in, but I wasn't accepted. I was the longest one staying abroad, I stayed in
Europe for sixteen years. Yeah, they never had something like that. [Being a]
kikokushijo is a handicap, language handicap.

...’
In the summer course we had interviews, to prepare for the [entrance exam]
interviews, and we were told not to get angry ever. Because they try to make us
angry, and in Japan you’re not allowed to, especially returnees. The returnees
are very open and aggressive. They say whatever they want to. They have to
put up with the Japanese culture.

Of my informants, Rumi is the one most alienated from Japan. She feels different and
she acts differently. She has some difficulties with the usage of the Japanese language,
although she has no problems speaking everyday Japanese and understanding her
textbooks and lectures. She returned to Japan alone and is still living alone, and she
does not have much contact with her relatives or even her sister, who lives in the same
city. In that way she does not have to face pressure to conform. Her relationship to her
parents and siblings is not a warm one, and we sense that she feels that she has been
treated unfairly by them. Not having support from her relatives, and not being part of a
community of Japanese, made it easier for her to construct herself in opposition to
these. She is aware of what is expected of her as a Japanese when it comes to dress,
language and general behaviour, but she chooses not to follow the expectations of
others. Although she might, in some respect, fit the image of the ‘problematic’
kikokushijo who has severe adjustment problems to the Japanese society and school
system, whether she is a typical kikokushijo or not, is not an issue for Rumi herself. Her
lack of adjustment is not something she sees as a personal problem, as she has chosen to
live her life differently.

Rumi’s parents sent her back to Japan so that she should become more Japanese. This
was not her own choice and decision. In the next case I will present Kenichi, who chose
to return to Japan on his own.

10 For instance because she was ‘forced’ to return to Japan, and because her parents do not want to pay for
her education as they have done for her sister.
Case 2 Kenichi

Kenichi has lived in the USA for seven years, from he was twelve until he was eighteen. He has an older sister and a younger brother. His family has settled in America, but he decided to come back to Japan for his university education. At the time of the interview he was in his fourth and last year of university. He lived in a housing complex for foreign students, and worked as a ‘tutor’ for them. Being a ‘tutor’ does not mean that he is teaching anything, but that he is there to help the foreign students if they have any kind of trouble, such as taking them to the hospital if they get sick. In exchange for this he gets to live in the student housing free of charge.

After entering high school in America he started to feel a growing gap between himself and the Americans around him, and he felt that he needed to go to Japan in order to find out more about himself and what his ‘base’ was. Before he returned alone to Japan after graduating from high school, he had only been back in Japan three times during the seven years, and twice he had come to attend a funeral and thus had not had much time. The first time he came home to Japan he had only lived overseas for two years, but still he experienced a culture shock. He wanted to come back to Japan to understand “what Japan was”, but he is rather disappointed with what he found and feels that he is different from Japanese people.

That time [after junior high school, when I returned for a vacation] it was just a visual thing, like, why do they dress up like this, why do they act like this, why do they talk like this. But after I started living here, [I came to feel that] something visible is OK, like crowded trains, I can understand it. But the difference of mind is really hard to understand. It is hard to explain, but that kind of difference is the biggest struggle.

... The first two years in Japan were really hard for me, because I could not understand what they were thinking. When I opened up myself, they’d think I’m dumb, or something. Because opening up oneself is not appropriate in Japan. And when I open up myself they just go away from me. I had close friends but general Japanese... I just can’t understand what they’re thinking.
Like Rumi, Kenichi does not include himself in the category of ‘Japanese’. But for him this is more of a problem than it is for Rumi. After all, he wanted to return to Japan to find his ‘Japanese identity’. Instead he ended up spending most of his time with foreigners, who also have problems fitting into the Japanese society. Kenichi enjoys living together with the foreign students. He got the job as a ‘tutor’ through one of his professors. Kenichi thought that foreigners in Japan might experience a similar kind of culture shock as he himself did, and he thought that he might be able to help them. He also says that he used to feel uncomfortable about being with Japanese people and speaking Japanese all day long, and living with the foreign students he can relax more. Half of his friends are now foreigners, while the other half is Japanese. I asked him if he had been able to communicate better with the Japanese in the USA:

You see, there are a lot of different kinds of kikokushijo. I was there six or seven years, and some are there for two or four years. I really feel comfortable [talking] to someone who has been there for about the same amount of time. I still feel a gap to some of the Japanese.

Then Kenichi goes on to talk about ‘third culture’:

Anyway, what I feel like now is, I have something like ‘third culture’ in myself. Something not Japanese and not American. It is like a mix. When you mix two different colours it’s gonna be different [from the original colours].

I ask him if he has read about ‘third culture’ and he says that he has heard about it from his sister. He thinks that the ‘third culture’ is something he shares with other people who have been raised in two cultures. One other informant used the expression ‘third culture’ to explain the kikokushijo’s situation.

The expression ‘third culture’ was coined in the 1950’s by two social scientists, John and Ruth Hill Useem, who studied Americans who lived and worked in India. They also met expatriates from other countries and saw that expatriates of different countries had something in common. The expatriate culture was different from either their home
culture or their host culture. The shared lifestyle of the expatriates was named ‘third culture’. (Pollock & Van Reken 1999:20)

In their book about the ‘third culture kid experience’ Pollock and Van Reken use the following definition:

A Third Culture Kid (TCK) is a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents’ culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK’s life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background. (Pollock & Van Reken 1999:19)

Kenichi’s understanding of this concept is similar to the definition above:

Well, I think the point is, when you’re raised in different countries, but your parents are from your mother country, you are educated in different things at the same time. So I can talk to American people who are raised in Japan, or I met some Australian guy, he’s been to all over the world. I felt really comfortable with him. He had a way to talk and think that was kind of the same as mine.

Kenichi says that he has noticed that other people are envious because he can speak English. Although people do not comment on it other than saying that he speaks well, for instance in the compulsory English classes at the university, he can see it on their facial expression that especially some boys are envious. Because of this he tries to avoid speaking English in front of other Japanese.

When I tell Kenichi that many of my other informants have said that a ‘typical kikokushijo’ says his/her opinion, speaks English and does not follow the Japanese fashion, he disagrees:

But you don’t have to be a kikokushijo to do those things. I consider a kikokushijo that he or she understands the reality of that country, at least if he or she has been there a few years. If he or she has been there for a shorter time, they are maybe cheerful and energetic (other often-mentioned traits). If
they have lived there longer they maybe have the third culture.

Kenichi here expresses that there is a quality difference between kikokushijo according to the length of their experience abroad. According to his opinion, the shorter term kikokushijo may have the traits considered typical for a kikokushijo, but their experience is more superficial and cannot be compared to the understanding of another culture that a longer term kikokushijo may have acquired.

Case 3 Yasuko

Yasuko is 26 years old and living alone in Sapporo, a city in Hokkaido prefecture in Northern Japan. She has lived there since she entered Hokkaido University at the age of eighteen. Now she has graduated and found a job in Sapporo. When Yasuko was ten years old her family moved to Hong Kong. The father had worked there for one year already, and when his company prolonged his engagement there, the whole family moved after him. Yasuko lived in Hong Kong until she was 15, when her father was ordered back to Japan again. In Hong Kong she attended the Japanese overseas school. She did not learn any Cantonese, but the school had English conversation classes even on the elementary level, which is not common in Japanese schools in Japan. She enjoyed her school life; the clubs were more relaxed and she was able to be a member both in the orchestra and in a sports club, in addition to the ballet and English conversation classes she took outside of school. She did not want to go home to Japan after the five years. She would have liked to stay on in Hong Kong and attend an international school, because she hated the fact that she did not speak good English. But she could not stay on in Hong Kong alone, and she went home to Tokyo where she entered a private co-ed school, which had both junior and senior high school. On the junior level there was a special class for kikokushijo, but on the senior level the classes are mixed. The English language instruction was differentiated, however.

I didn't get in as a kikokushijo, but on the normal exam. Kikokushijo know English, even if they don't know the other things. The special exam is for those. So I didn't make it. But I took two exams.
Here Yasuko almost gives a general statement about kikokushijo that clearly does not apply to herself. We will see that for Yasuko, being categorised as a kikokushijo is rather problematic.

Yasuko did not experience bullying (ijime) on her return to Japan, and she says she was not really worried about being bullied either, since the bullying problem is biggest in junior high schools. But she did not talk so much about her experience abroad to her classmates or other people around her.

*I talked at first. But I thought afterwards that it might be better not to talk. I thought it might sound like boasting, when I saw their reactions. If it had been me, I would have been interested and said “please tell me more”, but it didn’t feel like that. They somehow changed the topic. So I stopped talking so much about it. I talked to people who were interested. The people around me now ask a lot of questions. And so of course I talk to them. But what I really don’t like is that they say, “Well, then you’re fluent in English and Chinese, right?”*

I ask Yasuko whether she has started learning Cantonese now because she regrets that she did not learn it while she was living in Hong Kong.

*I always wanted to learn it but I didn’t have a chance. A friend of mine learns English from an exchange student. So I asked her whether he could look for someone who speaks Cantonese. And she found out about Zoe. I wanted to study but I didn’t know how. I guess I should have expressed it stronger to my parents when we were there, and they might have let me study. Now I think that I should have gone to an international school, or even if I went to the Japanese school I should have learnt Cantonese.*

Yasuko dislikes that people take it for granted that she can speak foreign languages when they hear that she has lived abroad. She thinks that most of the kikokushijo from Hong Kong feel the same way.

*Most of them dislike that people almost take it for granted that they can speak English and Chinese. If you say that you have lived there it’s 100% sure that they will say that.*

...
It's not like I dislike saying that I have lived in Hong Kong, but I always have
to say "but I can't speak". I always excuse myself, and say that "when
shopping I used English and Cantonese, but in my daily life I used Japanese".

Still Yasuko does not think that it would have been better to go to the USA or another
country. She thinks that her stay was interesting, and that she was lucky to have a
chance to live in Hong Kong. Yasuko is not the only kikokushijo from Hong Kong who
has kept up the interest. Some of her friends from the Japanese overseas school have
been as exchange students to China, and others are working in Hong Kong.

Although Yasuko does not think that she, not speaking English fluently, fits the image of
a 'typical kikokushijo', she does not think that she is a 'normal Japanese' either.

The difference is maybe that if I meet a foreigner who can't speak Japanese,
I'm totally OK with that. I know some English. Some Japanese run away when
a foreigner asks them the way in English. And another thing; when a Japanese
is asked, "what would you do if you were transferred abroad?" most of them
would say that they don't want to go. I can't believe it! Especially when it's
Asia and not America. If it was me, I would happily leave soon! I don't think
that I always want to stay in Japan. I think it would be nice and interesting if I
could live in many different places. That's a difference. But of course there are
such Japanese too. My friends who are kikokushijo all say they would go.

Yasuko considers that her interest in foreign languages and cultures is what makes her
different from 'ordinary Japanese'. That she, when in university, developed a deeper
interest in learning Cantonese, the language of her host country, is something which
many kikokushijo who have attended Japanese overseas school have in common.

Atsushi Furuiye (1996) writes in an article in the Shijo Tsushin Newsletter that returnees
from Japanese overseas schools develop strong feelings for their host countries after
their return to Japan. Furuiye argues that it is ironic that Japanese who have little or no
contact with local people when living abroad, should become so interested in the culture
when they have no longer direct access to it. According to Furuiye

"This attitude is due to a returnee subconsciously not wanting to go on
denying the many years spent overseas but a type of self-defence
mechanism should have got a lot to do with it. Denying a part of one's past can only lead to psychological hardships and it is not healthy to lie in some sort of cross-cultural limbo. If a returnee asked himself what all those years overseas meant to him, he'll need to seek out the person he was when he was overseas.” (Furuiye 1996)

Case 4 Misato

Misato is 22 years old and in her last year of university. She lived in Great Britain from she was eight until she was ten, and then moved to Singapore where she lived until she was 13 years old. She has one sister who was born in Great Britain, and who now is 15 years old. Her father works for a major Japanese electronics company, and her mother used to work as a primary school teacher. She had to give up her job when the family moved abroad, and according to Misato this was hard for her mother, who is a strong woman who wanted to pursue her own career. Abroad Misato’s mother worked as a teacher in the Japanese supplementary school (hoshūkō). Back in Japan again she did not take up a job because she wanted to concentrate on the children and their education. But being very fond of reading, she reads a lot, mostly about history and women’s studies. She has also given lectures about childbirth and upbringing in other countries.

Misato’s family has gone through a lot of changes. Before they moved abroad, Misato can not remember having eaten dinner with her father; he always had to work late. In Great Britain and Singapore the family had a lot of time together. They would have dinner together every day and they also would go on vacations together. When they returned to Japan, her father had to work a lot again. He was offered work overseas several times, but Misato’s mother did not want to go abroad again because she wanted to raise the children in Japan. But when her father was stationed in northern Japan for two years, he could not refuse the company orders. It was a difficult situation for the family, and both Misato, her sister and her mother had counselling during this time. Misato says that their problems were not necessarily related to their stay overseas or that her father was away. Misato herself suffered from eczema that was mainly caused
by stress, and her sister was bullied physically and mentally in school, this leading to ‘school-withdrawal syndrome’ (tōkōkyohi). Misato thinks that her sister’s problems came because she felt different; when the family returned to Japan they moved into an apartment building where all the other children had lived all their lives. Only her sister was new.

Before Misato returned home to Japan, she had heard that she could get problems with bullying if she talked about her experiences abroad.

...So I controlled myself and didn’t talk about it. When I entered the school in Japan my teacher said that I had come from the Japanese overseas school in Singapore, but after that I didn’t say anything myself. I was very afraid of bullying, and I didn’t want the others to say that I was different from them. My mother also told me to not be very different from the others. In England all the girls had pierced ears, and they asked me why I hadn’t. I said that we didn’t have that custom in Japan. Then someone said; if you come to my house after school I will do it for you! When I told my mother she said “dame” (impossible, forbidden). I asked why, and she said that if I had pierced ears in Japan I would get bullied.

As Misato grew older she found it increasingly difficult to control herself, to not talk about her experiences.

People around me probably thought I was adjusted to Japan, because I didn’t talk so much about abroad, and I didn’t protest etc. I didn’t speak English. But it was very hard to keep quiet and control these things. I thought that if I talked about my experiences it would be like boasting. I didn’t have anyone to talk to.

Misato had her ‘breakthrough’ in the 2nd year of high school, when she took part in her school’s speech contest with the title “Japan”:

From that time on I started speaking. It was in 2nd grade and I spoke about the war and Singapore etc. People asked me if I was a gaijin (foreigner). Those were probably the ones who didn’t listen to what I said. Those who had listened said that they had never thought about these things before, etc. I was very happy, and I won the speech contest. The next year I also took part with a speech I called “Japan Part 2”. Then I talked about the Nanking massacre.
There was also someone who had copied my speech from the year before. But I won for the 2\textsuperscript{nd} year in a row.

The Second World War is not discussed very much in Japanese schools. Many people, including Misato’s grandfather who was a soldier, do not like to talk about it, and the Japanese text books, as we have seen in Chapter 1, give very little information about the Japanese aggression in Asia. When Misato lived in Singapore her class at the Japanese overseas school visited the national museum where they saw pictures of killings committed by Japanese soldiers.

In Japanese textbooks for junior and senior high schools not so much about the war is written. I know because I was in Singapore. But if you only live in Japan you don’t know so much, only about the nuclear bombs. Japan says that we didn’t invade the countries but the facts say that we did. I study in the international department, so we talk about these things.

Misato’s university has many kikokushijo students, and she has made many friends there. She feels relaxed there because she can be herself; she does not have to ‘keep quiet’ anymore.

My university is easier to enter for those who are good in English; so most people are interested in English and international affairs. Many kikokushijo are good in English, so that’s why they enter. It is not considered special to be ‘kikoku’ (short for kikokushijo) there.

For her graduation thesis Misato decided to write about kikokushijo, and how they relate to the image which they have in schools and society.

The Monbusho has decided that kikokushijo is someone who has been abroad for so and so long and returned after school entering age. But I think it is not like that; I think that my sister, who was only 4 years old, is also a kikokushijo. There is a Japanese saying that after 3 years of age the personality doesn’t change.

... For me a kikokushijo is someone who as a child has lived abroad, and has in some way or other been influenced by that experience. There might be people who are not influenced of course, and some who are very influenced. I am influenced. Because I left Japan I can see Japan in a more objective light. The
thing about English fluency, being energetic and so on, I think has more to do with personality.

Misato has the ability of seeing her experience in an ‘academic’ perspective. Having studied International Relations and written her graduation thesis on kikokushijo, her ideas were naturally influenced by the literature she had read. Many kikokushijo feel it as a relief to enter university\textsuperscript{11} and find new friends with similar backgrounds, and they often start studying languages or International Relations.

When kokusaijin (‘international person’) became a buzzword in the early 1980’s (see Goodman 1993, Sato 1997, Watanabe 1998), language abilities and intercultural communication skills came in focus. Since kikokushijo in some respects already have these skills, many consider it as natural that they should study such subjects.

Case 5 Tetsuya

Tetsuya is eighteen years old and in his last year of high school. He is an only child. He is born in Great Britain and lived there until he was seven years old. Then the family moved home to Japan for two years, and when Tetsuya was nine years old they moved to Scandinavia, where they lived for four years, until Tetsuya was thirteen. In Great Britain he attended local school, and in Scandinavia he attended an international school. After he returned to Japan he entered Osaka Intercultural Academy in the first year of junior high school. At the time of the interview he had spent five and a half years at the school and was preparing for the entrance exams to university. He wants to go to graduate school in Europe after graduation from a Japanese university. In the future he would like to work as a teacher in high school. Before he returned to Japan he had heard that there was bullying of returnee students (kikokusei\textsuperscript{12}), and was worried that he might be a victim. He did not encounter any bullying problems, but it took him some time to

\textsuperscript{11} Or schools like OIA, ICUHS and Kokusai.

\textsuperscript{12} In SISF everybody used the word kikokusei (returnee student) rather than kikokushijo.
make friends.

Tetsuya has experienced that others tell him that he is ‘different’, and he does not like that too much.

Maybe it’s just that I said something, and then people in Japan just say, “oh, that’s because you are kikokusei (returnee student)”, in that way. I’m just saying the same thing as other people are saying but they explain what I said by saying I am a returnee.

He does not talk much about his experiences abroad. This is partly because he does not want to show off, and partly because he does not think that it is necessary to talk a lot about oneself. He says that this does not mean that the years he spent in Scandinavia were not important to him, rather on the contrary.

In the questionnaire Tetsuya has written that:

In [the concept of] ‘kikokushijo’ there are different kinds of people. So I don’t understand how one can say ‘typical’ about them. But still, when I hear ‘kikokushijo’ the first thing I think about is probably that they can speak English.

... I don’t have a clear image of kikokushijo, so I don’t know what to write when I am asked if I am ‘typical’. I am satisfied being ‘me’.

Tetsuya here shows that he resists placing people, and being placed, in a category. I ask him if he thinks that it is problematic that I categorise him as a kikokushijo.

I don’t feel bad about it and I think that is what you have to do. If “kikokushijo” is just a word that means that you came back from another country to Japan, I think that’s OK, but there are some meanings inside “kikokushijo” that means that you can speak English and say your opinion etc. It has some meaning inside and I don’t really like that. Because there are kikokushijo who don’t speak English and who went to Japanese schools.

... I think that [the reason why the word ‘kikokushijo’ exists] goes back to the history of Japan. People who went abroad and came back were really
mezurashii (uncommon, rare). That’s why they made this word, because it was so mezurashi. And mostly they went to America and England, these places where they speak English, the developed countries. This was maybe 30 years ago. And when the word was made it meant to go to a developed country, where they speak English, and then bring back the technology and use it in Japan.

What Tetsuya here tries to explain, is why the word ‘kikokushijo’ has certain connotations. It is true that when the category came into existence, those included by it had mainly been living in English speaking countries for several years. But it was not their English knowledge that defined them, but their school and exam related problems. Tetsuya’s understanding of the category’s history is shaped by how kikokushijo are seen presently, and the image they have had since the 1980’s when ‘English’ and ‘international’ became buzzwords. ‘Bringing back new technology’ has as far as I know never been associated with kikokushijo, but with the many Japanese sent abroad to study in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (e.g. Reischauer & Craig 1989).

Tetsuya thinks that kikokushijo have a lot of stereotypes attached to them, and that other Japanese consider them to be different for a variety of reasons, but mainly because of their ability to speak English. I wanted to know how he himself felt about being Japanese and if he felt that he was different from other Japanese.

First of all, I think I have this Japanese culture inside me. Also I maybe have the culture of England and Scandinavia. I think these cultures are the base and then you build up your identity on that. It’s really hard to say if I’m Japanese or English or something. But I have the culture of Japan, and then I have my own identity on that. I myself include all of these. I think it’s weird to have just one. The Japanese people have this Japanese culture but I think they don’t have anything upon that, the identity part.

I didn’t think about it when I was in Scandinavia, but since I came back to Japan everybody says that you are kokusaijin, kikokusei, and so on. I was thinking about what’s ‘kokusaijin’ (international person) and what’s so special about it. So that was the first time I started to think about it. Maybe I had this ‘kokusai’ (‘internationalness’) inside me, but I wasn’t really conscious about it. But since I came back to Japan and people around me tell me about ‘kokusai’ etc, then I started thinking about what it was...Because the expression “kikokushijo” you don’t hear when you’re in Scandinavia. You do from other
Japanese people, but you don’t really think about it. It is not really special in Scandinavia but it’s going to be special when you come back to Japan and I think that’s when you’re beginning to think about these things.

Tetsuya’s thoughts on identity resemble Kenichi’s on some points. Some time after our interview, Tetsuya sent me an e-mail, where he wrote about ‘Third Culture’. One of his teachers had talked about it, and he felt that ‘Third Culture’ was a good concept for describing his situation.

Case 6 Megumi

Megumi is 18 years old and like Tetsuya in her last year at Osaka Intercultural Academy. She entered this school in the middle of the 3rd year of junior high school. She has one older brother. The family lived in South America from Megumi was ten until she was fourteen years old, and Megumi attended the Japanese overseas school. In the first year of junior high school Megumi went home to Japan for one month, and during this time she attended a Japanese junior high school, to try what it was like. She was unprepared for the culture shock she then experienced.

I had been in a Japanese overseas school so I thought I would be OK, but still, the people around me had preconceptions. I had to adjust to their preconception of a kikokushijo. And that was tiring. For example someone who had lived abroad was supposed to be able to speak English.

Although Megumi had gone to primary school in Japan and to a Japanese overseas school in South America, she was not completely accustomed to Japanese school life. In her Japanese overseas school there were few students; in her year there had only been four. The atmosphere in the classroom was very friendly and relaxed. When she returned to Japan for good and entered OIA, she experienced that she was not considered a ‘real kikokushijo’ and that others did not understand that she too could have readjustment problems.

I was abroad at a Japanese overseas school and had a culture shock when I
returned, but since I had been at a Japanese overseas school I was looked upon as an untypical kikokushijo. People around me wouldn't understand that I also had been abroad and had a shock upon my return. They would say: “but you attended Japanese overseas school, so it's different in your case, right?” Some people said that I had gone abroad, but returned without valuable experience [having attended Japanese overseas school]. So I was thinking that maybe one had to speak English in order to be a kikokushijo, or that one had to attend local school to be a kikokushijo.

In the questionnaire Megumi has written that “a typical kikokushijo has her own way of thinking and her own ideas”. She does not mention English ability, like many of the other informants.

_I have a complex about that. I am a kikokushijo, but I don’t speak English. So I guess I want to demote that one._

Megumi would have liked to go to a local school in South America, but her parents would not let her go because of the safety problems. Even though she would have preferred a local school she enjoyed her school life in South America very much, and she thinks that she has made valuable experiences that are different from those of others. She feels uncomfortable about talking much about her experiences, and one of her classmates at OIA, whom I also interviewed, was surprised that she was also a kikokushijo. He did not know that, although they had been in the same class for several years. Megumi thinks that she would have talked more about herself if the atmosphere had been different.

_I can’t say that [I am a kikokushijo] to people so much. Because they already have an image of kikokushijo. And I am different from that person’s image, which is why I can’t say that I am one._

... My biggest shock after I came here was in 9th grade social studies class. There was a class about Japanese overseas school being bad. The increase of Japanese going abroad only to study hard and not learn about the foreign culture. I picked up that this is bad. Then we had a decision by majority about which was better, Japanese overseas school or local school. Everybody raised their hand for local school. Although there are many different kinds of Japanese overseas school, I got a feeling that it was wrong of me to have studied there. The teacher also asked me why I attended Japanese overseas
school. After that I got the feeling that in this school I shouldn’t say so much about that.

...In Singapore the Japanese overseas school is very big and not different from Japan. But the school I attended was very small, different from both Japanese schools and local school. I think that many people have the idea that local school are like this, Japanese overseas school are like that. But in reality there are many different schools.

For Megumi, her identity as a *kikokushijo* is highly problematic. Although her experience in South America is important to her, she feels that others regard her stay in a Japanese overseas school as inferior to a stay in a local or international school, and that others have no understanding of the fact that she, too, has had a unique experience. The overseas children do most often not themselves decide which school to attend, and thus Megumi or Yasuko are not themselves ‘to blame’ for having attended Japanese overseas school. But in interaction with other *kikokushijo* or ‘ordinary Japanese’ they are often confronted with the ‘standard image’ of a *kikokushijo* as one having attended local or international school and being able to speak English. This may, as in Megumi’s case, create a feeling of not being accepted for who she is. Even in a school like OIA, which states its intention of being a new and fresh alternative to the mainstream of Japanese schools, old stereotypes may be hard to get rid of.

**Case 7 Yuriko**

Yuriko is eighteen years old and about to graduate Kokusai High School in Tokyo. She has already been accepted at a private women’s university, and thus does not have to study any more for entrance exams, although the entrance exam season is not yet over at the time of our interview. Yuriko has lived in the USA for two and a half years, from she was fourteen until she was sixteen. She has a 23-year-old sister and a 21-year-old brother. Her brother lived in America the first year, but went back to Japan for university entrance examinations, and then her sister, who was already in university, came instead. Her sister is now working as an English teacher in junior high school while her brother is still a student. Yuriko used to live in another prefecture north of
Tokyo, but now only the sister and grandmother still live there, Yuriko and her parents live in company housing in Tokyo, and her brother lives on his own, also in Tokyo.

Before going abroad Yuriko was not too worried about encountering language problems.

_I had kikokushijo friends, and they said that since I was so young I would learn the language fast. Also, I had not received so much English education in Japan so I had not picked up the wrong pronunciation yet. They said I would be OK. But when I went there, when people said, “how old are you”, I understood “How are you”, and things like that. Because I didn’t speak English I had to enter one class lower than my age. Because people said I couldn’t speak English, I felt that I had to try (gambaru) harder._

She learnt English rather fast and started enjoying her school life in America. The family was supposed to stay in the USA for about five years, but had to go home after two and a half years. Yuriko was disappointed, as she had hoped she could spend her high school years in the USA and then go home to Japan for university. Her family had grown closer during the time abroad, they would often do things together and eat dinner together almost every day. They have consciously tried to keep this up even after they returned to Japan, although everyone is busier now.

Yuriko is really happy that she entered Kokusai High School. The school has kikokushijo, ippansei (general students) and foreign students. Yuriko’s best friend is from Taiwan. They often discuss politics and what they read in newspapers, and she thinks that this is not so common in other high schools in Japan.

_[At Kokusai] there are of course those who don’t, but I think those who do [read the paper, etc.] are in majority. When I meet with my friends from junior high school we don’t have so much to talk about. I wouldn’t say that the level is low, but they talk gossip about people and about TV. It’s tiring to talk to them and I can’t say what I want._

... _I went to America and was asked about Japan, but I couldn’t answer so much. I thought that I ought to know about my own country and about the world. Also, we had classes about these topics._
Yuriko writes in the questionnaire that kikokushijo are good at languages and at expressing themselves, but that she is not so much like that herself. In the following excerpt from the interview she tells about her image of kikokushijo:

I was abroad for only two years. People who have been there for 10 years or so are of course more like that. [But] in this school you can see on a student whether he or she is a returnee or not.

BPH: How about people who have gone to Japanese overseas school in Hong Kong, for instance?

They are not different from normal Japanese. Sometimes I am really surprised when I hear that they are 'kikoku', because I haven’t known.

BPH: But those who have been in English speaking countries are different?

When I think about it, also those who went to Japanese overseas school are good at expressing themselves, even when they haven’t been in an English speaking country.

BPH: Are there people who have been to America who are not good at expressing themselves?

Yes, but they didn’t learn English when they were there.

BPH: How many of the kikokushijo don’t seem like kikokushijo?

Very few. Maybe about 20 percent. But the returnees are in the centre in class.

BPH: How about the general students (ippansei)?

Many of the general students know much better English grammar than the returnee students (kikokusei), although the latter may speak better.

For Yuriko the ability to speak English is one of the distinguishing marks of a kikokushijo, but she does not like that others put her in this category:

When I was accepted in the English department in my university some people said that that was “atarimae” (obvious, a matter of course), because I was a kikokushijo. It is a matter of course that I know English. I don’t like that they say that.
Yuriko believes that her mind is broader than that of the average Japanese, because she went to the USA and because she has studied at Kokusai High School. The stereotypes she encountered in the USA have also made her not take things for granted.

...They also had stereotypes about Asians, that all Asians are good in Math. When I had a good result they would say that it was because I was Asian, although it was because I had worked hard.

...My way of thinking got 'softer', I became more tolerant. My history teacher was lesbian, and everybody knew it. There are many gays in San Francisco. She was accepted as a human being; that could probably not happen in Japan.

...At this school we have a class about foreign affairs where different guests are invited to come and speak with us about their country's politics, culture etc. We take notes and write reports and essays about it. There are 3 or 4 such classes a week and there is always a guest there. Once there was a gay man with AIDS, he was American... I really like this class. I think that my notes will be really helpful also in university.

The interview with Yuriko clearly shows discrepancy between her ideas and her own experience. She says that the kikokushijo are easily distinguishable, but at the same time she admits that some are not different from other Japanese. Being good at languages is typical for a kikokushijo, although this does not apply to her. I am reminded of the teachers in Goodman's book whose ideas of kikokushijo’s problems were not consistent with what they themselves experienced in the classroom. Goodman conducted a questionnaire survey in which he asked the Fujiyama teachers to compare the kikokushijo to the general students, and whether the kikokushijo in the school had or caused specific problems.

The answers [...] suggest that some of the ‘problems’ of kikokushijo might in reality be the problems of others which have been projected on to the children themselves. Moreover, they suggest that the generally negative image of the experience of kikokushijo is so widely disseminated that it is accepted by some teachers even when it contradicts their own experience. (Goodman 1993:139)
It is interesting to see that Yuriko also reproduces general statements about *kokushijo*, while she at the same time sees herself as different, and agrees that many of the *kokushijo* in her school are not typical.

**Case 8 Shizue**

Shizue is also eighteen years old and a student at Kokusai High School about to graduate at the time of the interview. She wants to study in the USA and later work with “animal assisted therapy”. She said that being with animals often has a healing effect on people with handicaps or problems, and that in the USA this kind of therapy has had a lot of progress. Shizue has lived in Korea for four years from she was nine until she was thirteen, because her father, who is a journalist in a major newspaper, was sent there as a correspondent.

The first two years in Korea Shizue attended the Japanese overseas school. But her brother, who had been on a summer home-stay in the USA, changed to the international school, and hearing from him how nice it was, she asked her parents if she could change schools too.

Shizue returned to Japan on her 13th birthday, in the middle of the school year. She did not want to go to a Japanese junior high school, but her parents would not let her attend an international school in Japan. Partly because it is very expensive, – in Korea the company had paid half of the children’s tuition –, and partly because her father did not want his daughter to become ‘American’. He was afraid that if she studied in an international school already from junior high school on, she would not learn the basics about Japan.

In the questionnaire Shizue writes that she was worried about bullying before she returned to Japan, but it did not become a big problem for her.
I didn’t really experience bullying at first, but in the second year home, in gym class, we were asked to find a partner. So when I said to some girls that we had to find partners (using the word pâtonâ, from English) one girl said to the others that normal Japanese don’t use the word “pâtonâ”. She probably wanted to say that my Japanese was strange. On the other hand some people were impressed because I could speak English. I really didn’t like that. It was the opposite of bullying; they really looked up to me for being able to do things they couldn’t do. They would ask me to say something in English and when I said a few words they would say “sugoi (great)”, being very impressed.

Although Shizue did not have big problems in her junior high school, it was still a change for the better when she entered Kokusai High School.

For a kikokushijo, Kokusai high school is a place where it is easy to be. There are many people with a personality and they are able to expose the good parts about being a kikokushijo. Although I didn’t have to; in junior high school I didn’t like it when people said “sugoi, sugoi” (great, great!) all the time, so I have made my English accent worse than it actually was. In junior high school I was elected as a representative of my school and went to Australia. I was really happy about that. I was a member of the student council, which is why I was elected. We were about 30 students. In the host family I would speak fluent English, but when I had to hold a speech in front of the Japanese and Australian students I would make my pronunciation worse. At that time I even had level 2 of the English Proficiency Test\textsuperscript{13}. Of course that is not strange considering the fact that I am a kikoku (short for kikokushijo), but for a 2\textsuperscript{nd} year junior high school student it is really rare. And I didn’t like that they would make fuzz about that.

Shizue did not write in the questionnaire that it was typical for kikokushijo to speak English. She says that her image of kikokushijo has changed since she entered Kokusai High School.

That (image of kikokushijo being able to speak English) is also there. But especially after I entered Kokusai I learned that not all kikokushijo are from English speaking countries. There is one who speaks Indonesian really well but who doesn’t know any English. Before I came to this school, kikokushijo had for me the image of English fluency. I didn’t stay in an English speaking area, but I went to an international school. That is similar to having stayed in an English speaking area.

\textsuperscript{13} A standardised test of English as a foreign language, that is very well known and respected in Japan.
I ask how many of the *kikokushijo* in Kokusai High School have the qualities that Shizue lists as typical for a *kikokushijo*; saying one’s opinions straight out and not following the Japanese fashion. She thinks that less than half, maybe about 30 or 40 percent are actually like that.

*Of the rest, many are very Japanese, or ‘gyaru’*. *Not all of them go that far. Some people have been abroad but don’t speak English. When they never talk about it, no one knows that they are kikokushijo. Some of them don’t come to school. Maybe they didn’t really want to enter this school, but had to get in somewhere and used the kikokuwaku* for that purpose.

Shizue has experienced making her English accent worse, in order not to draw attention to herself. She is now rather embarrassed about having done this. But it was only after she entered Kokusai High School that she could start ‘being herself’.

*Kikokushijo* pretending that their English is worse than it actually is, is a phenomenon described by many authors (E.g. Kidder 1992, Enloe 1987). Shizue is not the only one of my informants who has described this, and even those who have not consciously made their English sound worse can often tell tales of siblings or friends who have done so. In OIA, ICUHS, and Kokusai I heard no talk of people making their English worse. This is naturally so because here there are more students in the same situation, and good English ability is one of the trademarks of the schools’ students. But at schools with few *kikokushijo*, and where the teachers themselves may have a bad English pronunciation, a person with good knowledge of English may try to hide this.

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14 _Gyaru_ is the Japanese pronunciation of the English “girl” and Shizue here refers to girls of high school age who put on make-up, dye their hair brown and hang out in some special areas in the evenings. A _gyaru_ is not necessarily a juvenile delinquent, but her behaviour and looks are not considered ‘appropriate’ by many Japanese.

15 The special entrance exam or quota for *kikokushijo*.

16 During a visit to the Japanese high school I had attended in 1990, I met a girl whose mother was American, and whose father was Japanese. She told me that they spoke only English at home, and she was naturally fluent. Interestingly, none of her teachers and few of her classmates had any idea about her ethnic background or language abilities.
After she entered Kokusai High School, Shizue has learnt that *kikokushijo* are not a homogenous group. Getting to know *kikokushijo* from different backgrounds, her frames of reference have widened. She still thinks that it is adequate to name certain traits that are typical of *kikokushijo*, as long as one does not state that all *kikokushijo* necessarily have to be included among those with ‘typical’ traits.

**Case 9 Noriko**

Noriko is seventeen years old and in her 2nd year at ICU high school in Tokyo. She has lived almost all her life abroad, in the USA and in Europe. Noriko was enrolled in local or international schools during her time abroad. She came to Japan when she was fifteen years old and entered ICU High School. Her looks suggest that she maybe is half-Japanese, – she has curly hair and wide eyes –, but both her parents are Japanese. She feels much more comfortable speaking English than Japanese, and is relieved when the interview can be done in English. Noriko has a sister and a brother who are older than her, but they only stayed abroad when the family lived in the USA. She has not lived together with her siblings the last six or seven years. Now her sister is married and her brother works in another city.

When Noriko was living abroad, she would only visit Japan about once in three years. She did not have any friends in Japan, so she felt quite isolated when she started living there. Before she entered ICU High School she attended a cram school for *kikokushijo* to prepare for the entrance exams. Although her classmates there were *kikokushijo* as well, she could not communicate well with them.

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*It wasn’t direct bullying, I just felt isolated, that I didn’t fit in with the others. I felt that they were not really my friends. Most of them had been to Japanese [overseas] school, and they didn’t speak English, so I couldn’t put my feelings across.*

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Noriko had severe problems with the Japanese language. Although her parents had
spoken Japanese to her even abroad, she was afraid of making mistakes and did not want to speak in front of others.

*I couldn’t go to the shops by myself, I couldn’t use public transport. I think I didn’t feel independent. Because I was afraid that I wouldn’t speak correctly, I didn’t speak to other people. So I couldn’t ask people what train to get on to.*

Now she can get around better and she can also read more of the kanji (Chinese characters) in her textbooks. But she still mainly speaks English with her friends in school.

Noriko has often heard comments that she is different from other Japanese, and I myself was wondering whether she was not half-Japanese.

*People say that I don’t look Japanese, but [like a] foreigner, just like you said. They say I act like a foreigner. I guess I do, but I know I’m Japanese. Outside I am Japanese and inside I am a foreigner. But I am getting used to the Japanese society.*

Noriko wants to be bilingual, so she thinks that it is very important that she maintains her English and learns better Japanese. She later wants to become a news journalist, maybe for one of the English language newspapers in Japan. But for that she feels that she has to increase her general knowledge. She says she has not tried hard enough before, but now she sees that study is important.

Noriko writes that it is difficult to say what a typical *kikokushijo* is like, since there are so many different ones, but those who can not speak English do not have the image of *kikokushijo*.

*I think they are kikokushijo, but as you said about Osaka*,

17*I had told her how some students in Osaka International School thought that the students of Osaka Intercultural Academy were ‘too Japanese’ and not ‘international’ enough.*
kokusaijin (international person), I feel that way. The people who don't speak foreign languages aren't real returnees.

...I think that everybody should try to go to an international school or local school. My brother, when he went to America, was in junior high school, and my mother put him and my sister in American junior high school, but my brother couldn't fit in, I don't know why. So he went to the Japanese school. But I think it was good that he tried, because he experienced something, I think. If someone goes abroad now, and doesn't try to go to a public school, I think they will always be hiding, not challenging. I think that it is a new challenge for someone.

BPH: But sometimes it’s the parents who want them to go to the Japanese school. I think that parents should let them try. It’s a new experience.

BPH: How about those people who stay only one or two years, maybe it’s difficult for them when they don’t know the language. Do you think that makes a difference or do you think that everybody in general should try to go to the local school?

Everybody in general. Even if you know that you will stay a short time, even if it's only a month, it's a new experience, new atmosphere, new environment, and I think that would help in the future, when you go out into the society, you become more outgoing.

Noriko feels different from Japanese people and it is often commented to her. Some people even say that she is not Japanese. But she does not dislike that people say such things.

I think I like that [others say that I am different]. I don’t know why, but I’ve got something against Japanese people. Everything they do; if someone is walking across the road I think “Why is she walking like that” and so on. Quite negative.

But still she does not want to leave Japan for good, although she says that she in the future would like to live in New York.

I still want some ties to Japan, because I feel that’s still a part of me, because my nationality is Japanese. And like I said before, I want to be a perfect bilingual person. That would make me proud.
Noriko could be an example of prototypical *kikokushijo* from the time when the discussions about *kikokushijo* started in the Japanese media some twenty or thirty years ago. She has stayed abroad for almost all her life, and has severe problems with the Japanese language. She would clearly have had insurmountable difficulties in an ordinary Japanese school setting. Like some of the other informants, she does not include herself among ‘the Japanese’. But unlike the others, she enjoys being different and that people comment on her un-Japanese ways and looks.

Perhaps most interesting is that Noriko clearly divides the *kikokushijo* in two groups one of which (the one including herself) is worth more than the other. For Noriko, one cannot be an authentic *kikokushijo* if one has not attended a local school abroad, if one has not had to ‘struggle’. She seems to have little understanding for the fact that the children who go abroad mostly do not themselves choose which school type to attend. Having lived in Japan for not more than two years, during which she has spent most of her time in a school with a lot of English speaking friends, it is maybe not so strange that she has such ideas.

**Discussion**

The *kikokushijo* whom I have presented above have in common that they are young, have lived abroad for a certain period of time, and have some years ago returned to Japan. Their experiences abroad are very different, and so are their re-entry experiences.

There are, however, some recurrent topics in the *kikokushijo*’s experiences and way of presenting themselves that are worth a closer examination.
Getting to know one’s country / Being ‘Americanised’

The *kikokushijo* who have lived abroad for a rather long period, may feel an urge to return to Japan to ‘find their roots’ or learn about their country of origin. As I have mentioned in the preface, the future return to Japan is always an important issue for Japanese families living abroad. The parents’ wish for an easy adaptation to Japanese society and school for their children, is the main reason for sending them to supplementary or Japanese overseas schools when living abroad. By attending these schools, the children learn not only school subjects, but also about their ‘being Japanese’. Some parents want their children to return to Japan in order to restore their identity as ‘Japanese’. Parents are sometimes afraid that the children become too ‘American’ because they think that they then will have problems living in Japan later. In Shizue’s case, it is notable that the parents worry about her becoming ‘American’, although she was not living in the United States and she was attending an international, not an American school. ‘American’ is often used as a synonym for everything that has to do with ‘western’ foreign objects, persons or cultures\(^\text{18}\), and it often seems like it is difficult for some Japanese to understand that people whom they categorise as ‘American’ may in fact protest to this.

‘American values’, ‘American personality’ are, by many Japanese seen as being in contrast to ‘Japanese values’ and ‘Japanese personality’. The learning of English is also by some Japanese seen as a threat to the Japanese language and culture. Some actually believe that bilingualism reduces intelligence, and that the ‘Japaneseness’ of the Japanese youth can be destroyed through knowing English too well. (Childs in Daily Yomiuri 30.10.00). Because this idea is rather prevalent in Japan, it is perhaps not strange that English knowledge and ‘americanisation’ is focused on in studies about *kikokushijo* and that this is a big issue among educators, students, parents and *kikokushijo* themselves.

\(^{18}\) I have often experienced that small children on the street, in the supermarket or in the public bath point at me and inform their mothers that “that person is an American” (*Ano hito, amerikajin da!*), and people of all ages see me as a potential English conversation partner. This can be a big nuisance to all Caucasian foreigners in Japan.
Someone living abroad for a longer time may have an idealised image of one’s home country and a false sense of belonging. We have seen examples of disillusionment and rejection among kikokushijo who returned to Japan on their own initiative. Kenichi had thought he would have a bigger sense of belonging in Japan than in the United States, but ended up spending most of his time with foreigners, and not being able to communicate very well with fellow Japanese students in his university.

Feeling ‘different’ and not belonging in the home society are things which ‘Third Culture Kids’ have in common (Pollock & Van Reken 1999)\(^\text{19}\). But it is not right to use the concept ‘Third Culture Kid’ on all kikokushijo. The concept gives a good description of the situation for someone who has really spent a long time in another culture, and has problems adjusting to his or her ‘home culture’. But not all kikokushijo can be classified as third culture kids. Some may have very little knowledge of the foreign culture in which they have lived. And if they have spent most of their time in a Japanese school and with Japanese friends, living their life almost as they would have in Japan, they would probably not lose their sense of belonging in Japan and have worries about whether they were ‘Japanese’ or not. Also, if someone lives abroad for only a few years, they are also very unlikely to lose their sense of belonging to their home culture. It takes time to adjust to the host culture or to the ‘third culture’\(^\text{20}\) as well. As Kenichi put it, the kikokushijo who stayed abroad for a short term may have superficial traits of a kikokushijo, but they do not have the ‘third culture’.

**Excluding oneself from other Japanese**

Whether or not the kikokushijo want to return to Japan, some seem to develop a sense of otherness when they compare themselves to ‘the Japanese’. They talk about ‘the Japanese’ as if they were a group of people in which the kikokushijo were not a part.

\(^{19}\) The concept of ‘Third Culture Kids’ I have presented under ‘Case 2 Kenichi’ earlier in this chapter.

\(^{20}\) The expat culture in the host country, which is different from both the home culture and the host culture (Pollock & Van Reken 1999).
Noriko (Case 9) admits that she has a negative attitude towards Japanese people, and that she feels different from them. Rumi (Case 1) observes the Japanese and judge them from her ‘European’ point of view, and is also generally negative. They feel alienated from the Japanese community and maintain a distance to it by resorting to stereotypes. Like many Japanese have a very stereotypical image of the kikokushijo, so do some kikokushijo have a stereotypical image of the Japanese. According to Jenkins, “similarity cannot be recognised without delineating difference”, “inclusion entails exclusion” (Jenkins 1996:80). Or in the words of Henrietta Moore: “Deciding on differences is one way of delineating identities” (1994:1). ‘Kikokushijo’ is seen as a contrast to ‘Japanese’ and the kikokushijo may apply stereotypical images of the Japanese to uphold the boundary between themselves and other Japanese, and thereby strengthen their self-identity.

The parents’ role

Parents of kikokushijo are, like schools, important transmitters of opinions and values. To the extent that the Japanese child abroad actually considers what it will be like to become a kikokushijo when returning to Japan, much of the information is based on what parents have told him or her. Many of the respondents to my questionnaire wrote that they were worried about being bullied on their return, and this was also brought up in some interviews (E.g. Case 4 Misato). Some might have heard stories of bullying from friends who have already returned, but many have been told by their parents that if they behaved differently (or what might be natural for a child who has grown up in another culture) from the other children, or if they talked too much about their experiences, they would experience bullying. Misato was told that she could not pierce her ears, because then she would be bullied at home in Japan. One could say that parents can use the threat of potential bullying as a means to make their children maintain their Japanese-ness when living abroad. Several of the informants had heard that if they talked

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21 “Stereotyping, the labelling and classification of social collectivities, ... simplifies information flows about complex situations” (Jenkins 1996:122).
a lot about their experiences, they would get bullied, and one can imagine that this worry of the parents, though often legitimate, may put an unnecessary strain on the children.

In Merry White’s book *The Japanese Overseas* (1986) we get the impression that most parents, and mothers in particular, have a negative attitude towards the moving of the family abroad. White explains this with the importance of the ‘right’ education, and that by going abroad, one might if not ruin, then in any case seriously disrupt the children’s chances in the fierce competition of getting into university. Although the parents would like to give the children positive and new experiences, the parents’ worries may often be transferred to the children. Misato’s mother did not want the family to go overseas again, because of the children’s education.

**Returning from Japanese overseas school**

The situation of *kikokushijo* from Japanese overseas schools can be very different from that of those from local or international schools. We have seen that they may choose not to communicate to others that they are *kikokushijo*. For them, openly to say they belong to the category *kikokushijo* means that they have to give explanations. Why do they not speak a foreign language? Was it not stupid of them not to take the opportunity to learn about another culture when they were abroad? People often tend to forget that the children do, in almost all cases, not choose themselves whether they should attend local, international or Japanese overseas school. The parents make the choices, naturally with what they consider best for the child in mind. But the children have to deal with the consequences, and ‘take the blame’ for the parents’ choice. Megumi, who had had a good experience at a small Japanese overseas school in South America, felt that no-one acknowledged that she, too, had had a good and unique experience.

Often, it does not occur to the child that there might be other options than those which the parents present as a *fait accompli*. Sometimes the child goes on regretting for a long
time that he or she did not learn more about the culture or the language of the host country, and may develop an interest for this later, in life. (Cf. Case 3 Yasuko, and Furuiye 1997).

Dialogues

Human identity is created [...] dialogically, in response to our relations, including our actual dialogues with others. (Gutmann 1994:7)

When I interviewed my informants, I based my questions on topics I knew were of importance in my understanding of the kikokushijo’s self-images. Before I came to Japan in 1997 I had no idea that the category ‘kikokushijo’ existed, and certainly I had no knowledge of the many meanings attached to it. It was in dialogue with Japanese people and through the reading of texts that I became aware of the importance of the concept.

My informants’ images of kikokushijo in general, and their self-images specifically, result from both the structural assignment by state institutions that they belong to the category of kikokushijo, and also their constant dialogues with different people, and what they have observed of other people’s dialogues concerning kikokushijo. As will become clear in the next chapter, the image the kikokushijo themselves have of the ‘typical kikokushijo’ more or less correlates with the image of kikokushijo which at a given time is prevalent in the Japanese society. As Jenkins puts it: “Your external definition of me is an inexorable part of my internal definition of myself” (1996:27). The kikokushijo compare themselves to the image others have of them, and incorporate this in their own self-definition. The popular image of kikokushijo, is, as we have seen, and will see in the next chapter, based on the image of someone who has been in an English speaking country and has certain problems and skills. For those kikokushijo who possess these traits, adopting the popular image as a signifier for their identity is
not so difficult. If they are different from the ‘typical kikokushijo’, they may, as we have seen, choose not to communicate their identity as a kikokushijo. But even if no-one is aware of a person’s status\textsuperscript{22} as a kikokushijo, the popular image of kikokushijo will still to a certain extent influence the person’s self-image, as he or she will always be aware of the category which he or she is ascribed to and the traits associated with it. If nobody knows that one is a kikokushijo one will of course not constantly have to respond to other people’s expectations concerning behaviour or personality, which is why Megumi (Case 6), and Yasuko (Case 3) do not volunteer this information about themselves if it is not absolutely necessary.

My own dialogues with the informants were, as I have said above, not neutral. I had certain ideas of what I was looking for and what I would find, and my questions were of course influenced by this fact. I did not force answers from the informants that would fit my assumptions, but my dialogue with them forced them to think about their identity and the concept of kikokushijo in a way they, perhaps, had not thought of before. Some kikokushijo have said that they are often able to see things from more perspectives than their Japanese peers, something which they credit to their overseas experience. Similarly I had a different point of view than most Japanese researchers of kikokushijo. Being an outsider, my focus was different from what many expected. Tetsuya (Case 5) said to me that he thought the questions I asked were weird, and he was not the only one who expressed surprise at my type of questions. Although I wanted to examine several aspects of the kikokushijo’s identity and life stories, my main aim was to understand what the category kikokushijo meant to the ones affected by it. I explained this to Tetsuya, and he could understand the logic behind my ‘weird questions’\textsuperscript{23}.

\textsuperscript{22} By ‘status’ I mean the ascription of a person to a category.
\textsuperscript{23} The questions 6 and 7 in the questionnaire, see Appendix 1.
In this chapter I will discuss the self-images of kikokushijo, and how they are created in dialogue with the people and the society surrounding them. As we have seen in the previous chapter, kikokushijo are not a homogenous group. However, all of them have to relate to the fact that they are labelled kikokushijo, both in official statistics, and by people with whom they interact. The discrepancy between their self-image and the image of the ‘typical kikokushijo’ which they compare themselves to, can be large, and this can very problematic for some of them.

What are the signifiers of a ‘typical kikokushijo’; the image most Japanese have of a kikokushijo? People are influenced by media, and compare themselves to persons portraited in TV, books or magazines. Identity is shaped through dialogue, as stated above, but this dialogue is not necessarily direct. Kikokushijo, like other ‘groups’ shape their self-image according to images which already exist. The images existing in society have their background in media discussions. As time passes the popular images may
change, as a result of a change of trends in society. The *kikokushijo*’s self-images will be transformed in interaction with such popular understanding. Because they are individuals, and not ‘uniform’, the *kikokushijo* can choose to focus on different aspects of the *kikokushijo* image in constructing their identity. But it is very difficult for a *kikokushijo* to ignore the popular image, because almost everyone he or she encounters will compare him or her to the popular image.

**A media representation of *kikokushijo***

As an example of the popular image of *kikokushijo*, I will use an article from the magazine *Men’s Non-no* (1990, vol. 10). On the next page I have inserted an illustration from the article, depicting a male and a female *kikokushijo* who are most probably university students. I think the two drawings give a good impression of what the image of *kikokushijo* can be for ‘ordinary’ Japanese, such as the readers of the magazine. The illustration suggests how *kikokushijo* may differ from ordinary Japanese in outer appearance. The rest of the article is devoted to other aspects of the *kikokushijo* image.
Not so easily recognisable kikokushijo boy: Handwritten text, clockwise, says: Intellectual face, only some small details reveal the overseas experience, uncharacteristic clothing.

Easily recognisable kikokushijo girl: Is sure to have pierced ears, exposes bare skin without reservation, talks with gestures, big accessories, walks briskly with her toes pointed outwards, book band: in the note books she writes a mixture of English and Japanese, speaks Japanese with an English accent, returnee make-up: oriental make-up or no make-up. (Illustration: Men's Non-no vol.10,1990)

Notably the kikokushijo boy does not divert much from the average Japanese, other than that he maybe has a slightly more serious look. One can only recognise his overseas experience in small details, such as his tie-pin. He has either adjusted almost completely to Japan, or his stay abroad never changed him that much\(^1\). The girl, however, is depicted as being ‘easily recognisable’ as a kikokushijo. One is supposed to see in her way of dressing and in her body language that she has lived abroad. Pierced ears, bare

\(^1\) Boys face more pressure than girls to enter good universities, and often try harder to keep up their ‘Japaneseness’ when they stay abroad. Boys also stay abroad for shorter periods than girls, as their parents opt to send them home so as not to ‘damage’ their changes of entering good schools and later companies (E.g. White 1988). Also, as we will see later, part of the image of kikokushijo correlates with positive feminine values, and the boy might thus not want to be seen as a kikokushijo.
skin, gesturing and they way of walking are described as codes for being a kikokushijo girl. But also clothing and make-up is part of the image. The article is from 1990, and I will not judge how well it fits the actual present situation. However, I still think that the article can serve well as a point of departure for my discussion about kikokushijo images.

Gender differences

The kikokushijo girl dresses in a way that shows more of her skin, as opposed to Japanese women who would not show so much skin. Further, her posture and body language is ‘un-Japanese’. The boy however, is not very different from other Japanese young men. One has to look really closely to discover things about him which makes him different from other Japanese. This difference suggests that the kikokushijo image also has something to do with gender expectations. This is something which the individual kikokushijo are mostly unaware of. The female kikokushijo is, according to the illustration in Men’s Non-no, acting her identity out, while the male kikokushijo tries to blend in in the Japanese society. Girls and boys are brought up differently. Girls may be encouraged to learn languages and become ‘international’, as these qualities are seen as positive for women. Boys, however, are expected to study hard and get into good schools, and get a good job so that they can support their families. Boys are essentially Japanese; they are expected to carry on Japanese traditions and thus they can be said to have less freedom than girls. Because Japan is a patrilineal society, the sons are the ones who carry on the family name and the obligations that go with it. For boys to achieve their aims and to do what is expected of them, the ‘kikokushijo qualities’ are of little use. Japanese men are expected to be less talkative and have a more serious air than women. It is probably not without reason that the number of male applicants to ICUHS is smaller than that of female applicants, and that a much lower percentage of the males than the females admitted actually enter the school (ICUHS descriptive data 1998).  

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2 However, in cases when there is not a male heir, the eldest daughter will carry on the family name, and her husband will then be adopted into her family and be entered her family register (koseki).

3 Finding gender-based statistics on kikokushijo for Japan as a whole or for other schools has proved
Boys also stay abroad shorter than girls. They face the heaviest pressure to reintegrate into Japan, and they may be sent home to live in a dormitory or with relatives so that they can attend school in Japan, while for girls, staying abroad is not thought to damage their future that much.

The kikokushijo girl in the illustration also signalises her differentness by her outlandish clothing and make-up. Also, in her notebook she writes a mixture of English and Japanese. She is not afraid of showing her identity, and does not try to downplay her identity as a kikokushijo, like the boy in the illustration does. From the way in which the kikokushijo girl and boy are depicted, we can deduce that a kikokushijo girl is expected to be comfortable in her role, whereas the kikokushijo boy is not. The boy practises self-sanctioning while the girl has freedom to play out her part.

If we deduce from this that for a boy, being a kikokushijo is more negatively laden than for a girl, and that the typical kikokushijo attributes are more associated with femininity, it is maybe not so strange that more girls than boys attend ‘kikokushijo accepting schools’, and that among those who filled out the questionnaire, a larger percentage of females volunteered to be interviewed than did the males.

**Collective forms as identity marker**

Anthony Cohen (1993) writes about how people use collective forms to assert their identities. Consuming certain products can be a way to express identities. One can interpret the Men’s Non-no article to suggest that kikokushijo use clothing and accessories as a way to express their identity. In schools or universities where there are many kikokushijo, they may constitute a group whose members are recognisable in the difficult, most institutions only differentiate between school type abroad and not gender.
way of dress, or in their common interests. I doubt that many kikokushijo consciously dress a certain way to express their identity, but unconsciously some may use clothing and body language in a way that makes them stand out in a group of otherwise ordinary Japanese.

Cohen thinks that “people’s attachment to collectivities is mediated by their personal experience”(1994:177). Since people have different reasons for choosing certain products or identifying themselves with certain collectivities, the use of collective forms should not be mistaken for uniformities of identity (Ibid:177). One has to see the individual behind the collective category. But Cohen laments that (functionalist) social science has generally seen individuals as ‘actors’ playing certain ‘roles’.

But roles are inventions, the performance of fictions, which are supposed to mask the actors who play them, to conceal them from us as persons with other identities. We have developed a social science which, consistent with these metaphors, depicts the individual as a performing self. [...] So we settle for the script, which we invent ourselves through our ingenious use of categories. (Cohen 1994:179-180)

The way a person acts or dresses, may be interpreted by others to signify belonging to a group or category, while the person’s reasons for his behaviour or dress may be various. Or even if the person does feel attachment to a category, he does not necessarily relate to the category in the same way as another person who is also attached to it. People’s understanding of categories are related to their personal experiences.

Life-scripts

Both Cohen and Anthony Appiah mention scripts for defining identity. Appiah describes these life-scripts, collective social identities, as narratives that people can use in shaping their life plans and in telling their stories. A person’s individual identity has two
dimensions, the collective dimension and the personal dimension. The collective dimension is the intersection of a person’s collective identities, such as religion, gender, ethnicity, race and sexuality. The personal dimension consists of for instance intelligence, charm, wit and cupidity, which are not forms of collective identities. Only the collective identities count as social categories, thus persons who are charming or witty do not constitute a social group. (Appiah 1994:150-152). As we shall see later, many of the traits or properties associated with kikokushijo, belong in the personal dimension, not the collective dimension, and this is maybe why the category kikokushijo is so problematic.

The collective identities come with modes of behaviour for persons sharing the collective identity. The notions concerning behaviour

...provide norms and models, which play a role in shaping the life plans of those who make these collective identities central to their individual identities. (Ibid:159)

Collective identities thus provide scripts, which can be used to tell life stories. Persons belonging to a social category will present themselves according to the life-script given by the collective identity. In many cases, a group can change the negative script into a positive one, by re-coding its content. Appiah exemplifies this with the African-Americans before and after the ‘Black Power’ movement.

An African-American after the Black Power movement takes the script of self-hatred, the script in which he or she is a nigger, and works, in community with others, to construct a series of positive Black life-scripts. In these life-scripts, being a Negro is recoded as being Black, and this requires, among other things, refusing to assimilate to white norms of speech and behaviour. (Ibid:161)

In many ways kikokushijo can be seen as a social category with a collective identity and a ‘life-script’ attached to it. Although ‘kikokushijo’ hardly is such a distinctive collective social identity as ‘gender’ and ‘religion’, it can be fruitful to use the concepts
of collective social identities and life-scripts for examining the *kikokushijo*'s situation. The *kikokushijo* are, as we have seen in the previous chapters, treated as a category, and the associated traits such as language skills and problems adjusting to the Japanese school system are the notions for behaviour which the category comes with. One cannot opt for not being a *kikokushijo*, as one is ascribed to the category by others. However, if one does not communicate to others that one is a member of the *kikokushijo* category, one can avoid having to respond to expectations concerning *kikokushijo* behaviour, personality, problems and skills. Still, as I have written in Chapter 3, being categorised as a *kikokushijo* always influences the individual to some extent.

The 'script' for *kikokushijo* has changed gradually during the 1980's, when the focus shifted from the negative aspects, such as readjustment problems and Japanese language deficiency, to the positive aspects, such as intercultural communication and foreign language skills. This change was not brought forth by the *kikokushijo* themselves, but by the society in which qualifications in languages and intercultural understanding were more in demand than earlier. Also, within the Japanese education system the voices calling for a change grew in number, and as we have seen in Part 1, new schools, more focusing on interculturalism and foreign languages were opened. I suggest that the scripts do not necessarily have to have been created by the person or group it describes. People often use others’ concepts of themselves to describe their own situation. Tetsuya (Case 5) and Kenichi (Case 2) in the previous chapter both use the concept of 'third culture' to describe their situation, and it is clear that they have not invented this concept themselves. Tetsuya had heard about it from his teacher and Kenichi from his sister.

The scripts come with notions of a certain behaviour. Persons being categorised as

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4 Using the terminology of others to describe oneself is not uncommon, especially in literate societies where one has access to books and articles about one's own society. Reading this literature can give one new insight in one's situation. and a conceptual apparatus to analyse it. There are cases where anthropological texts and knowledge are actively used in creating life-worlds or reconstructing history (E.g. Price's study of the Saramakas, 1983).
belonging to a certain group, with certain life-scripts, are expected to act in accordance with the norms attached to these scripts. Conformity to social categories is highly valued. However, as Appiah (1994:162ff.) writes, not all individuals are comfortable with the life-scripts or constructed identities, which come with norms for behaviour. Those who want to treat their skin colour, sexuality or religion as something personal and not too tightly scripted, often find this difficult. This also is true for the kikokushijo. Especially in the school setting it is very difficult to avoid being seen as a kikokushijo, and compared to the other party’s idea of what a kikokushijo is like. Examples of this we have seen in the previous chapter. For those with little or no foreign language skills it is uncomfortable to encounter the image of kikokushijo as a bi- or multilingual, and they often feel that they had to excuse themselves for not fitting the other person’s image of kikokushijo.

**Life-scripts for kikokushijo?**

The *Men’s Non-no* article previously mentioned is titled *Oishii kikokushijo raiyu* (Delicious kikokushijo life), and deals with the glamorous life of the kikokushijo, both at school and at home, their love life and their life course. It also features pictures and the life histories of some kikokushijo who have become famous *tarento* (singers, actors). The article is from 1990 and the popular image of kikokushijo may have changed since then, but I still find it very interesting as a document of that time, the early ‘bubble’ years of the Japanese economy, when being ‘international’ became very en vogue. Men’s Non-no is a magazine in the leisure category, dealing with music, travel, movies etc., and does not have any political or sociological pretensions.

The article goes on to present four ‘cases’ of typical kikokushijo, their life course

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5 *Tarento* comes from the English ‘talent’.
presented in cartoon style. Although they are very stereotypical, these ‘cases’ provide a good insight in the image of kikokushijo’s held by many Japanese, and thus they provide us with information concerning what expectations and preconceptions the kikokushijo have to relate to.

Four ‘cases’

The first ‘case’ is ‘Bairin Nancy-san’ (Nancy Bilingual) who goes to the United States in 6th grade. During the first three years, she has severe language problems, and almost never opens her mouth (first frame). For high school, she moves to Los Angeles, where she lives in a dormitory, and quickly learns to speak English. Because her name is Naoko, she is called Nancy, and she experiences the set course of alcohol, drugs and
boyfriends (second frame). She goes to university in Japan, and works part time in a TV channel, where she gets a regular job as a bilingual DJ and announcer (third frame). Nancy has become completely American, and her friends are other *kikokushijo*, Americans and half-Japanese. She marries an American and has a half-Japanese baby (fourth frame).

The second ‘case’ is ‘Bolivia Yoko-san’ (the characters for Yoko can mean ‘sun child’), whose father works in a news agency. She was raised in South America, and returns to Japan in fifth grade of primary school, where she is bullied because of others’ jealousy and her poor Japanese (first frame). Yoko can finally feel at ease when she enters a university with many *kikokushijo*. Because very few people can speak Spanish, she gets a part time job as an interpreter for famous people and earns a lot of money (second frame). After graduation she gets a job in an automobile company. She is good at her work, but her way of dressing is bold and she says things too straight out, and it becomes difficult for her to be there (third frame). She changes to a branch of a foreign bank in Japan. She wishes to be transferred to Brazil, and at last she is off to Rio de Janeiro! She feels that this is where she belongs, marries a local, and raises a family (fourth frame).

Then we have ‘Elite Rinne-kun’ (Reincarnation Elite), who after having lived in West Germany returns to Japan in the third year of high school. Because he is smart he enters a prestigious public high school through the special quota for *kikokushijo*. He makes friends quickly, but feels a gap because he is not familiar with for instance old TV programmes (first frame). He enters a first class university through the special entrance exam for *kikokushijo*, and is very popular among the girls because he can speak English. Sometimes he uses old-fashioned Japanese expressions (second frame). Because of his good grades and his good connections, Rinne enters a trading company. He retains his popularity among women. He has a two and a half year long relationship to a stewardess he got to know on a business trip abroad (third frame). He marries the
stewardess and thus gets a beautiful wife. He gets a job transfer to Canada and the wife is happy because their son thus will also be a *kikokushijo*. This baby will also in due time have good grades and good connections... (fourth frame).

The last case in *Men's Non-no’s kikokushijo* feature is ‘Joryu Melody-san’ (Melody High Class), who since she was three has lived in North and South America, several European and Arab countries and Africa, always one or two years in each place. She went to international schools for overseas children and is a very ‘international’ kid (first frame). Children of diplomats always learn to play either the violin or the piano. Melody always has the best teachers and is considered a musical genius (second frame). They are really rich and not gaudy like the nouveau riche. At first glance they seem modest, but on vacation they travel first class, and in Japan they live luxuriously (third frame). Melody enters a world famous music academy in Vienna. After graduation she lives in Japan, but is busy giving concerts all over the world. Because she comes from a wealthy family, she will probably marry someone with a good family background (fourth frame).

Although these ‘cases’ are very exaggerated, they reveal some traits that are important constituents of the popular image of *kikokushijo*. Clearly, speaking foreign languages (mostly English) is very important, and mentioned in three of the cases. Noticeably, Elite Rinne speaks English although he has stayed in West Germany. Maybe he attended an international school? Bolivia Yoko speaks fluent Spanish, which would be rather unusual, since most Japanese children in South America attend Japanese overseas schools and learn little Spanish. In addition she does not practise it for several years before she enters university, and one easily would forget a lot of the language when not being able to use it for a longer time. The image of wealth (Joryu Melody) is there, as well as that of belonging to an elite with special privileges (Elite Rinne). Language problems in the host country is mentioned once (Bairin Nancy) and so is bullying in

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6 According to Monbusho statistics (1997), 65.9% of the overseas children in Latin America attended Japanese overseas schools
Japan (Bolivia Yoko). Choosing one’s friends mainly among foreigners and other kikokushijo is mentioned once (Bairin Nancy). All of the four kikokushijo get interesting jobs wholly or partly because of their overseas experiences. All of them are very different from ‘normal’ Japanese, with the possible exception of Elite Rinne, whose success is more due to his intelligence and good connections. Especially Bolivia Yoko and Bairin Nancy are affected deeply by their foreign experience, and could never become ordinary Japanese. Both of them seem to be more foreign than Japanese, and both of them marry foreigners. This supports the notion that being bilingual or bicultural does harm to one’s identity as a Japanese, as I have mentioned in Chapter 3.

The gender issue is also present in these cases. Elite Rinne does not ‘act out’ his identity as a kikokushijo, although it helps him get into the ‘right’ schools. As soon as he graduates from university he becomes a serious and hardworking man, while especially Bairin Nancy and Bolivia Yoko live out their foreignness to the fullest. Especially kikokushijo girls are perceived as something special. This image is supported in another part of the article, presenting kikokushijo who have become famous actors, singers or TV-personalities. Not a single man is on the list. Obviously, being kikokushijo can be seen as a plus for a woman, especially in the entertaining business. Men are expected to appear more serious, and the kikokushijo image is not so useful in promoting this impression or quality.

The ‘life patterns’ presented in the magazine clearly give one the idea that kikokushijo are glamorous, exotic and enviable. They are pictured as wealthy, highly educated and able to speak foreign languages. Negative aspects about being a kikokushijo are not focussed much on in the article, except that they can be bullied in school because other Japanese children find them different or that their Japanese is poor.

The article shows that in the popular image of kikokushijo there are few nuances, and especially foreign language ability is taken for granted. The article is not meant as a
serious contribution to the debate about kikokushijo, but is nevertheless an interesting, and perhaps rare encounter with kikokushijo’s popular image. Most other articles, written by social scientists, educators or political journalists, deal more with the ‘serious’ side, such as special entrance exams, reallocation problems and the like. If we take the article as our point of reference for possible life-scripts for kikokushijo, there is no wonder that many feel that being labelled as kikokushijo is very problematic. One is expected to speak English and be ‘different’, e.g. more self-secure and direct than other Japanese. It may also be assumed that one is rich, although I think this image has somewhat changed. Only one or two Japanese have mentioned being rich as typical for kikokushijo when I have asked them.

How do the actual kikokushijo categorise ‘kikokushijo’?

In my questionnaire (see Appendix I) I included the question “What is, in your eyes, a ‘typical kikokushijo’ like?” (Anata ni totte, tenkeiteki na kikokushijo no imēji wa donna hito desu ka?) followed by the question “Are you yourself similar to or different from that ‘typical kikokushijo’ you described in the above question?” (Dewa, anata wa sono imēji to onaji desu ka, chigaimasu ka?). The answers to those questions give ideas about what is considered typical, and what is considered difficult by the kikokushijo themselves. Although the respondents were free to write whatever they wanted, there was little variation in what they actually wrote. Following is an overview of the answers to the question “What is, in your eyes, a typical kikokushijo like”. The numbers to the right say how many respondents, out of 72 in total, mentioned the particular trait.

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7 Gunei Sato (1997) has made an overview of how kikokushijo have been pictured in the Japanese media from the late sixties until the nineties (I found the Men’s Non-no article in this overview).
Typical kikokushijo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They have their own opinion / They can express themselves.</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They can speak English, (or another foreign language).</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They don’t follow the Japanese fashion / They have their own fashion.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are <em>sekkokyuteki</em>. (active, energetic, enthusiastic)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are self-centred.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are <em>akarui</em>. (cheerful, positive)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They have their own personality / They are unconventional.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They have a rich personality.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are noisy / They talk much.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are sociable.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They have a different way of thinking.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They have a broad perspective.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They have a lack of general education / They are poor in Maths.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are open.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are honest.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They don’t like / don’t follow group behaviour.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are bad in Japanese.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They boast about themselves.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can see that they have returned from the States.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are not serious.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are good at male-female relations.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They hate Japan.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They have bad manners.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are independent.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are chewing gum all the time.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are “my pace”.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They think in an American way.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How they feel shows in their faces.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are curious.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are not shy.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are good at adapting themselves to new situations.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They have an intelligent image.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They have some special skills that other Japanese don’t have.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They have darker skin and brighter hair colour (because of the sun).</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are not afraid of insects.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They can see their country in an objective way.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They can understand cultural differences.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are optimistic.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 The subject of the sentence is normally omitted in Japanese. While I have written “They...” in the table, the respondents to the questionnaire have not mentioned the subject of the sentence, but are referring to ‘typical kikokushijo’ in plural or in singular.
These statements touch different aspects of the content of the *kikokushijo* category. Some describe the outer appearance of *kikokushijo*, and some describe skills or problems *kikokushijo* have. Others again say something about a ‘typical *kikokushijo* personality’, and aspects that make *kikokushijo* different from ‘normal Japanese’. A few of the statements are very much dependent on the particular respondent’s personal experience (E.g. “They are not afraid of insects”, “They are chewing gum all the time”) and are not so much connected to the general image of *kikokushijo* in the Japanese society, though I could also here think of ways of interpretation⁹.

**Outer image – looks**

*Kikokushijo have darker skin and brighter hair colour because of the sun.*

*Kikokushijo* who have been a lot in the sun in their host countries, may have a (temporarily) darker skin colour and a more brownish hair colour than other Japanese children. This is a very visible trait, and something a person can do little about, but hair and skin colour return to ‘normal’ as time passes. Some schools have very strict rules concerning the students’ appearance, and even if it is not the child’s fault that the hair is brown, he or she may be requested to make it less visible. Louise Kidder (1992) mentions a *kikokushijo* who was told by her teacher to dye her hair black, in order to have the standard hair colour and comply with the school rules. The *kikokushijo* in question felt that it was wrong to change something that was “natural”; after all she had not dyed her hair brown. And dying of hair was against the school rules.

*Kikokushijo don’t follow Japanese fashion. Kikokushijo have their own fashion.*

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⁹ Chewing gum could for instance signify disregard for school rules and general manners.
Some of the kikokushijo said that they did not like the ‘cute’ way that Japanese girls dress, and they were not so interested in brand-name goods. Others again said that they liked the Japanese fashion. At Senri International School Foundation, where there is no uniform, I noticed that the students wore clothes rather similar to what teenagers wear in Europe; jeans, sweaters, little make-up. Very few of them would wear ‘Japanese street fashion’, which in my eyes can look rather outrageous and overdone. Maybe the students at SISF had a more relaxed relationship to the way of dressing and more opportunity to experiment and find out which clothing combinations fit them. The Men’s Non-no article states that kikokushijo girls dress differently from other Japanese girls, but I do not think that one can generalise on this point.

Something that is not mentioned in the questionnaire, but in the Men’s Non-no article, is that many girls who have lived abroad have had their ears pierced. This is not so common among girls and women in Japan, and many schools have a rule against it. Some of my informants had been criticised by their teachers for having pierced ears, although they took out the earrings when they went to school. According to the Men’s Non-no illustration, a kikokushijo girl is sure to have pierced ears. However, more ‘normal’ high school girls than before pierce their ears (and hide it from their teachers) and many girls pierce their ears when they graduate from high school.

**Skills**

*Kikokushijo can speak English or other foreign languages.*

Many kikokushijo can speak English or another foreign language. And that is what has become the most important part of their image. But not all of them can speak a foreign language, and some know the language only superficially. One does not become a perfect bilingual after staying one or two years in a foreign country (Kanno 2000a,
Taura 1998). Since kikokushijo in many ways are expected to be able to speak English, those who do not are often reluctant to say that they are kikokushijo. Case 3, Yasuko (Hong Kong) and Case 6, Megumi (South America) are good examples. They do not wish to be associated with the kikokushijo image, because the image is too different from their perception of themselves. As Appiah puts it:

“The story – my story – should cohere in the way appropriate by the standards made available in my culture to a person of my identity. (Appiah 1994:160)

Those kikokushijo who do speak good English may feel that the image (of a kikokushijo being able to speak English) is unproblematic, and some of them even say that those who can not speak English are not ‘real kikokushijo’ (Cf. Case 9 Noriko). English speaking kikokushijo do not have identification problems concerning the ‘bilingual’ image, as it describes them well. They have no difficulties accepting the behavioural norms that go with this particular part of the life-script, though they may reject being categorised as kikokushijo for other reasons.

Yasuko Kanno describes the irony that kikokushijo might feel lost abroad, having problems communicating in English10, but the status of their English change when they return to Japan, and their relationship with the language is redefined:

No longer voiceless in a language on loan, the four kikokushijo started to claim ownership over English and the sociocultural world that goes with it. In Japan, English became their language. (Kanno 2000a:19)

There is a big difference in how the English-speaking and the non-English-speaking kikokushijo regard themselves. For some, one could say that self-confidence comes with language ability; being close to the image of the ‘genuine kikokushijo’ gives them a feeling of belonging in a category. Noriko, who has lived almost all her life outside Japan, uses her identity as a kikokushijo to the fullest, and is probably aware that if

10 Her material is based on research on returnees from Toronto, Canada.
English ability were not a highly valued qualification she would, considering her
Japanese deficiency, have serious problems living in Japan. For Noriko, being able to
identify with a certain life-script, gives her a fixed point in her life.
Some of those who do not feel that they fit the image try to give the category
‘kikokushijo’ a new meaning content, while others decide not to let the ‘being a
kikokushijo’ be important for how they look upon and define themselves. They might
stress that kikokushijo are active and engaged people. One informant told me about a
kikokushijo classmate who worked as a volunteer after the Kobe earthquake. Being
interested in social issues and actually doing something to change the world is an ideal
that one can relate to and admire. It only requires interest and not that one has certain
acquired skills (like being able to speak a foreign language). Even for kikokushijo who
are not very socially engaged it is easier to imagine that one could do something. An
image of being active and energetic and interested in social issues is thus much easier to
relate to.

As mentioned above, identity is shaped through dialogue. Thus, a girl who had lived
most of her life in South East Asia, where she had attended Japanese overseas schools,
focused on the knowledge kikokushijo had about the region and the local customs where
they had lived, when she was asked what a ‘typical kikokushijo’ is like. This girl had
only lived in Japan for one or two years at the time of our meeting, and maybe this is
why her image of the typical kikokushijo seemed to be little influenced by the image one
encounters in the media or in dialogue with other members of the society.

Negative images

*They are not serious.*
*They have bad manners.*
*They are noisy.*
*They boast about themselves.*
*They are self-centred.*
*They are bad in Japanese.*
Having problems with the Japanese language also belongs to the 'standard image' of *kikokushijo*. Many people who were not *kikokushijo* themselves would mention this as typical when I told them what I was doing research about. Goodman describes the image in Japan of the 'typical *kikokushijo*’ as someone who has spent fifteen years in the United States and who hardly knows any Japanese (Goodman 1993:212). Very few are actually like that. Some of the *kikokushijo* in my sample did have serious problems with the language, but all of them had studied Japanese when they lived abroad.

'Bad manners’, or rather, behaving in a way that is considered inappropriate, is also a problem. When one behaves in a certain way because one does not know that it is incorrect, it is one thing, but consciously going against norms is something else. Most of my informants had experienced that others had commented on their behaviour, but this was mainly in the beginning, shortly after their return. Emptying the bathtub after one has used it\(^{11}\), or walking around the house with the toilet slippers\(^ {12}\) are things one does not do more than once or twice before one has learnt that it is not appropriate. And since many overseas Japanese try to maintain a Japanese ‘home’, I do not think that such incidents constitute big problems.

What may be a problem for some *kikokushijo*, is the different levels of politeness in the Japanese language, and the hierarchical structures in society. One of Yasuko Kanno’s informants was tipped by an older member of her club in the university that she should do something about the way she addressed her elders (*sempai*). Even if the age difference is only one year, the younger members (*kōhai*) are expected to speak to the older members using polite speech (*keigo*), whereas the older members use informal speech when they address the younger ones\(^ {13}\). For some *kikokushijo* this is difficult to

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\(^{11}\) Japanese soak in the bathtub after having cleaned themselves thoroughly, and the whole family use the same water. The water may also be reheated and used the following days.

\(^{12}\) In Japanese homes one wears slippers in all rooms except the Japanese style *tatami* (straw mat) room. For the toilet there are extra slippers which one does not use in the rest of the house.

\(^{13}\) In the Japanese high school I attended in 1990, I was a member of the archery club. I found it extremely awkward that the 1st year students, who were much better at archery than I, addressed me (I was a 2nd year
The image of kikokushijo being self-centred or boasting about themselves, is probably due to the North American and partly European notion that one should have pride in oneself, and that one should not be ashamed to say that one has talents. Minoura (1992) describes how shocked a Japanese mother was when she read an essay that her young daughter had written at school. The daughter had openly written that she was the best in her class. In Japan one generally does not say directly that one is good at this or that, but in a more indirect way that makes the listener understand it anyway. One of my informants who had lived in the USA found the Japanese very hypocritical when they for instance said that they could not ski at all and then turned out to be able to ski very well.

Positive images

They have their own opinion. They can express themselves.
They are sekkyokuteki (energetic, active).
They are akarui (cheerful, positive).
They have a rich personality.
They are sociable.
They have a broad perspective.
They are open. They are honest.
They are independent.
They are good at adapting themselves to new situations.
They are optimistic.
They can understand cultural differences.

Whether all these statements can be considered positive is a matter of discussion. For instance, being independent can imply that one does not consider others’ feelings, and being open and honest, can, as we have seen above, be considered rude. But for the kikokushijo themselves, openness, independence and the ability to express oneself are seen as mainly positive traits, which the Japanese could profitably adopt. These are also,
as we have seen, qualities which are highly valued by the three schools I described in Part I.

These ‘positive’ images must be seen in comparison to standard ‘Japanese’ behaviour. Saying that kikokushijo have their own opinion and can express themselves suggests that Japanese in general do not have their own opinions and are not able to express themselves. In Japan one is often not supposed to say things straight out, but indirectly. A Japanese is supposed to understand what another Japanese means by using his ‘gut feeling’\textsuperscript{14}. Someone raised in a country where speaking out is encouraged, for instance in the USA, might feel at a loss in a situation where the ideals for behaviour are different from what one is used to. One cannot say that Japanese do not have their own opinions, it is just not common to say them openly because the feelings of others have to be considered. The image of kikokushijo being open and honest also reflect that Japanese do not generally talk much about their true feelings, at least not to people who are not very close to them. Kenichi (Case 2), who returned from the USA, experienced that people would turn away from him when he opened up himself, and he found it hard to express his feelings to other Japanese.

A broad perspective is something one can acquire when living abroad, so I think that it is quite accurate to say that a kikokushijo may have a broader perspective than a Japanese who has only lived in Japan. Some of my informants mentioned that in discussions they could often come up with twice as many arguments as their counterparts who were raised in Japan. However, people do not necessarily have to go overseas to broaden their mind, and one’s mind is not naturally broadened by living abroad either. Also, some kikokushijo feel that they lack general knowledge about many issues which their ordinary Japanese peers have.

Being active, cheerful and sociable are considered positive values in Japan, especially

\textsuperscript{14} As discussed in Peter Dale’s \textit{The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness} (1990).
for women. Young female high school or college graduates have for instance traditionally been hired by companies more to ‘brighten up the office’ than to actually perform specific job tasks. Kikokushijo are for some reason thought to be especially active and energetic. I asked some of my informants what it meant to be sekkyokuteki (active, positive, energetic), and they answered that those who were sekkyokuteki would often do a lot of volunteer work, or they would take on leadership in the student council, clubs or other organisations. Being sekkyokuteki seems to be another ideal attached to the kikokushijo image. Many of my informants thought that they ought to be more sekkyokuteki, and they admired those who really did something instead of only thinking about it.

Being sociable and cheerful I think has more to do with the personality than that someone has lived abroad. But it can also be seen as connected to openness and saying one’s opinion. By having lived in a different country and got to know different sorts of people. They might be more used to meeting new people and more relaxed in new situations, and thus appearing to be ‘cheerful’ in a situation when a person with less experience and self confidence would have been more restrained.

Other images

They hate Japan.
They don’t like / don’t follow group behaviour.
How they feel shows in their faces.
They think in an American way.

Some of the kikokushijo who have lived abroad for a long time, are very critical of Japan and Japanese customs. We have seen examples of this in Chapter 3. Noriko (Case 9) openly admits that she has something against Japanese people, and Kenichi (Case 2) can not understand how they are thinking. Rumi (Case 1) strongly dislikes that Japanese

15 These women have often been called ‘office flowers’ (shokuba no hana), a denotation which more or less accurately describe their function. (See e.g. Creighton 1996, Ma 1996)
act in one way when they are with their friends and another when they are alone. Also people who have lived abroad for a rather short time can be critical to some aspects of their society because their experience enables them to see it in another light.

Many of my informants have commented on Japanese group behaviour. In school many girls like to go to the toilet together, and two or three informants mentioned that they thought this action to be totally ridiculous. Most of the informants thought that it was an ideal to have one’s own opinion that one would stand for, but that one should also consider other people’s feelings. It is important to do what one thinks is right.

Not fitting the image
The *kikokushijo* who filled out the questionnaire were divided in whether they regarded themselves as ‘typical *kikokushijo*’ or not. Since they were asked first to write what they thought a ‘typical *kikokushijo*’ was like, and later whether they thought they fit the description they had given before, they naturally gave different sorts of answers; the ‘typical *kikokushijo*’ they described were not necessarily similar. Still I found it very interesting that many of them would describe a typical *kikokushijo* as being fluent in English and good at expressing his/her opinion, but said at the same time that they themselves were not typical because they had been abroad for only a short time, in a Japanese overseas school, or that their personality was not the ‘open’ type. Those who had been abroad in a local school or international school for a longer period\(^{16}\) tended to see themselves as more typical, although some who had been for a long time abroad were very critical about placing people in a category, and rejected being labelled as a *kikokushijo* (e.g. Case 5 Tetsuya).

\(^{16}\) A long period can be from four or five years and upwards.
Those who felt different gave the following reasons:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;Are you similar to or different from a typical kikokushijo?&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. I attended Japanese overseas school, and therefore I can only speak Japanese.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little different. I am bad at talking in front of other people and can't express myself well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little different. The Japanese way of thinking has become the base of my personality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I went to a Japanese overseas school. So it's impossible (to speak naturally in English).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I hate to speak English...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends say that I am not so typical. My mother was very strict about discipline, so the first impression I give people is that I am a serious Japanese person who knows the etiquette.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am shy and not good at expressing my opinion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am quite different. I attended a juku (Japanese cram school) even when I was overseas, and was at the same level as Japanese junior high school students. So I can keep up with the classes in Japan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For having lived abroad, I am quite conscious of how other people see me... But mostly I do say what I want to say.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Brazil they speak Portuguese, so I can't speak English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was like that in the beginning, but now I have been home for five years and I am now conscious of how others judge me and I now have more of the group mentality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. I like Japanese fashion because it is cute, and I like hanging out at Shibuya'.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I didn't like that I was a typical kikokushijo who didn't understand the way of thinking and behaviour in Japan. So I have struggled to become more adjusted to Japan and I like myself much better now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. In only one year one doesn't learn that much.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The answers here reflect the stereotypical images of kikokushijo. Not being able to speak English is a very important reason for the respondents to feel that they do not belong in the kikokushijo category. For some, even being able to speak another language does not ‘qualify’. Many also write that they are not able to express themselves, and that they are conscious about the impression they give others.

17 Trendy area of Tokyo where many teenagers and young people hang out.
Some seem to regret not being typical *kikokushijo*. They have incorporated the images of or script for ‘typical *kikokushijo*’ as the ideal, and would have liked to be like that. For different reasons, such as their background in Japanese overseas school or their personalities, they do not fit the image. Others have consciously or unconsciously become less like ‘typical *kikokushijo*’, and more like ‘typical Japanese’, as time has passed.

Some, who see mainly negative aspects of being a *kikokushijo* are happy not to be like them. They have struggled to become more Japanese, and to get rid of their ‘foreign ways’.

In addition to the quotes I have mentioned here, there were many respondents who felt partly like *kikokushijo*, and also some who would did not answer the question, or who felt that it was difficult to give an answer.

**Conclusive Remarks**

When a Japanese child of school age returns to Japan after having lived abroad, he or she automatically becomes a *kikokushijo*. One cannot avoid being categorised as one. As we have seen in the previous and this chapter, the category ‘*kikokushijo*’ come with notions of what a person belonging to the category should be like. The image of ‘*kikokushijo*’ has changed during the years, from a pitiful being who needed help adjusting to society, to a bilingual, ‘international’ person with great opportunities.

*A *kikokushijo* is expected to speak English, be independent and creative, and have some problems adjusting to the Japanese school system and society. These notions are shared by most Japanese, including many *kikokushijo*. 
Because identity is shaped in dialogue with others, it is natural that the *kikokushijo* will shape their understanding of their identity in line with the notions that are presented to them in media, at school or in conversations with friends and family.

It becomes problematic, however, when the individual does not have the qualities which a *kikokushijo* is expected to have. Even if the category does not fit the individual it can not be disregarded. The only thing one can do is to hide the fact that one belongs to the category. So a *kikokushijo* who does not speak English, will often not communicate to others that he or she belongs to the category, not wanting to be confronted with other people’s stereotypical ideas of what a *kikokushijo* should be like.
CONCLUSION

My intention with this thesis has been to examine the category of kikokushijo, how it came to be important and what it implies for the people comprised by the category. The existence of the category kikokushijo, and the notions for behaviour that go with it, tells us something about identity construction in Japan. As we have seen in the different parts of this thesis, conformity is an important aspect of Japanese society. Form is highly valued above and beyond content. Japanese are judged by how well they conform to their identities, as for instance students, wives, mothers, or employees. People unable or unwilling to conform to society’s expectations of what they should be like, are seen as outsiders or anomalies, and their possibility of changing the expectations others have of them are limited. We may conclude that collective categories are more defining for a person’s identity in Japan than in many other countries. In Part I we have for instance seen how employee and company relations are likened to a family (Chapter 1, p. 16f), and that students are seen as representatives of their schools (Chapter 1:p.13). Also, job applicants are evaluated not according to their individual skills, but which educational institution they have graduated from (Chapter 1 p. 14f). These aspects of Japanese society necessarily influence how people think about their own identities, and the categories they belong to become important for their self-identification.
In this thesis I have been concerned with a category that has come into existence within the boundary of the school system. Schools have the important function of socialising children into the roles they will take on as adults in society. State ideology is brought to the children via schools. This is achieved through the use of the ‘hidden curriculum’, which can be said to be what one learns in schools other than what is stated in learning plans. Knowledge of the hidden curriculum is also crucial for understanding the dynamics of the classroom.

In Japan, being admitted to educational institutions with a good reputation is defining for a person’s chance of achieving success later in life. Thus the focus on education is stronger than in many other countries, and many children attend cram school from an early age in order to improve their chances of being accepted into elite institutions.

It is in this context that the situation of the overseas and returnee Japanese children of school age became an issue. Their entry into Japanese schools led to a discussion about the educational system among educators, politicians and bureaucrats. Because many of these children clearly had problems adjusting to both the competition mentality, the way classes are taught and the general classroom situation, an alternative to the general type of schools was perceived as needed.

In Chapter 1 I have looked at the Japanese society and schools in general, and using Goffman’s concept of ‘total institutions’ I have shown how the Japanese society defines more aspects of the individuals’ lives than many other societies. In Chapter 2 I have presented three schools especially catering to kikokushijo. Being perceived as less rigid than ordinary Japanese schools, they are popular alternatives to mainstream education. But the special schools are in a difficult situation. Society, from individual parents to the state structure, expects and demands that the schools should ‘produce’ a certain kind of student. A good school is expected to produce successful university candidates. At the

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1 There was, and is, also a discussion about a need for a more fundamental change within all levels of Japanese education, but it is easier to change small parts than the whole system.
same time, these special schools are expected to produce students who are able in English and have an international outlook. For the schools it is difficult to balance between the two almost complementary demands of the surrounding society. As we have seen, the schools have positioned themselves differently as to how much they want to be an integrated part of the total Japanese educational system. All the schools follow the national curriculum, because without it the students would not be eligible for entrance exams to Japanese universities, but how much it focuses on teaching entrance exam related material varies. Also, ICUHS and OIA have more freedom concerning curriculum planning than Kokusai, which is a public school.

The three schools I have presented promote a student image that is different from the ‘typical Japanese high school student’. The ideal high school student of the three schools is in many respects similar to the ideal image of the kikokushijo, which I have described in Part II, and the kikokushijo do comprise, if not the majority, a substantial part of the student body. The schools wish to foster students who are creative, ‘international’, responsible and self-expressive. These qualities are highly in contrast to the image of the Japanese student as someone who only sits in the classroom, passively copying what the teacher writes on the board, and studying only things which are useful for the entrance exams. Especially OIA, which states that it is not an exam-preparatory school, has a legitimacy problem when many of its students are unable or unwilling to live up to the school’s ideal student image.

The returnee children and youth become aware of their categorisation as kikokushijo in their meeting with the Japanese school system. They learn that others have certain expectations concerning their behaviour, problems and skills. Not having known about the category kikokushijo previously, or having known about the term without knowing the meaning content attached to it, meeting others’ expectations or stereotyping is also shaping the individual returnee’s image of the ‘ideal’ member of the category he or she is assigned to. Becoming aware of belonging to a category influences the way the
person sees himself (Jenkins 1996), similarly do the dialogues with others shape the person’s identity (Appiah 1994).

Most of Part II has been devoted to the image of the typical *kikokushijo* and how individual *kikokushijo* relate to it. In Chapter 3 I have presented nine cases, and from these it is evident that *kikokushijo* cannot, to use Goodman’s words, be “seen as a unified group” (Goodman 1993:212). They have been living in different countries, under different conditions, and attended different school types. The amount of time spent outside Japan varies greatly. Also, their re-entry experience is dependent on their age when they returned, and what type of school they entered. *Kikokushijo* who attend mainstream Japanese schools may be stigmatised because of their being different from their ‘normal’ Japanese peers, whereas at schools with many *kikokushijo*, one may feel stigmatised if one does not meet the expectations of ‘typical *kikokushijo* behaviour’.

Especially English language ability is a *conditio sine qua non* for defining oneself, and others, as ‘genuine’ *kikokushijo*. The assumption of English knowledge is something which all *kikokushijo* will be confronted with, and will have to relate to. Anticipating questions or comments about their English ability, or lack of, make some *kikokushijo* uncomfortable about revealing their identity as *kikokushijo*. Others, however, use their English knowledge and their identity as *kikokushijo* to the fullest. Those who are fluent in English are less likely to have ambivalent feelings about their categorisation as *kikokushijo*. Other qualities and aspects associated with the *kikokushijo* category, such as self-expression, fashion, and school problems, seem to be of less importance for self-definition as *kikokushijo*. However, in evaluating whether others are ‘typical’ or not, these aspects have more importance, and they are more visible and thus easier to notice in others than English ability, as it is not so that every English-able *kikokushijo* speaks English all the time. At the same time, people generally see openness and self-

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2 To a certain extent also knowledge of other foreign languages. But we have seen that even a *kikokushijo* who speaks fluent Portuguese, does not see herself as a typical *kikokushijo*, because she does not speak English. And the image of *kikokushijo* among most Japanese, is clearly connected to English ability.
expression as part of their own personality and not the collective identity they share with others. People thus categorise others according to different criteria than those they use for ascribing themselves to the same category.

I have touched on how the image of the kikokushijo has changed through time. None of my informants had an image of kikokushijo as being pitiful beings in need of relief as was a general view at the time when the kikokushijo’s situation first became an issue (Goodman 1993). My informants images of kikokushijo were, as we have seen, very much influenced by media and the present discourse in society, and those who attended the special schools were influenced by the image prevalent in these institutions. Clearly, others’ understanding of who we are have an impact on how we perceive ourselves, and the image we are presented with can even be taken more seriously than what we can see with our own eyes.

Changes in the image of kikokushijo will necessarily have to be related to changes in society in general and the school system and the kikokushijo’s situation in particular. This is what happened in the 1980’s when the image shifted from being predominantly negative, to being more focused on positive aspects, following the society’s increasing focus on ‘international understanding’. But kikokushijo are still perceived as a more or less homogenous group, although their image has changed. Observing that many kikokushijo are very different from the image of the ‘typical kikokushijo’, does not seem to have much influence on how the kikokushijo are generally perceived, both among the kikokushijo themselves and others.

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<th>Year</th>
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APPENDIX I QUESTIONNAIRE FOR KIKOKUSHIJO

I am presently a research student of Tokushima University. This questionnaire is part of my research for my master thesis of Social Anthropology at the University of Oslo, Norway. My research topic is "images of kikokushijo". If I use your answers in this questionnaire in my thesis, I will change your name etc. to secure your anonymity. If you have questions concerning this questionnaire or my research, please do not hesitate to contact me. (Name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of researcher listed)

Part 1
1) Year of birth ___ male / ___ female
2) Present grade (Example: 2nd year of high school / 11th grade) ___
3) Please write down when and in which country you have lived abroad. Also write the length of your stay abroad and which school type you attended (local school (genchikō), Japanese overseas school (nihonjin gakkō), international school, supplementary school (hoshukō) etc.) as well as whether you took correspondence courses.

Example:
1980-85 Osaka kindergarten
1985-90 Hong Kong international school, supplementary school
1990-98 Osaka normal Japanese primary school, from 1992 OIA junior high school

4a) Why did you live abroad?
___ Father's job transfer ___ Mother's job transfer ___ Other reasons (Please explain!)

4b) If you stayed abroad because of one of your parents' job transfer, what is your parent's (the one who got transferred) profession?

4c) What is your other parent's profession? (Abroad and at present)

5) Do you have siblings? Please write their age and sex.

Part 2
Please give your answers on a scale from 1 to 6. 1: totally disagree, 2: quite disagree, 3: neither agree nor disagree, 4: quite agree, 5: totally agree, 6: I don't know.
Please read the following sentences and give the number that best fits your experience for each sentence. How much would you say that you agree with the following statements?

1) Before you went abroad, when your parents told you that you would move abroad;
   a) I was very happy and looked forward to it a lot.
   b) I was sad because I would have to part from my friends.
   c) I was worried that I wouldn’t understand the language.
   d) I was happy because I would have a chance to experience life in another country and culture.
   e) I was worried about whether I would be able to make new friends.

2) During the time abroad;
   a) In the beginning it was difficult to make friends.
   b) It was difficult to make friends even in the end.
   c) In the beginning the language was difficult.
   d) The language was difficult even in the end.
   e) In the beginning I didn’t understand the classes.
   f) Even in the end I didn’t understand the classes.
   g) I quickly made friends.
   h) I mostly spent my free time with other Japanese.
   i) I mostly spent my free time with local people.
   j) I mostly spent my free time with other foreigners.
   k) I mostly spent my free time alone, or with my family.
   l) I often was homesick (to Japan)

3) Shortly before I returned to Japan;
   a) I was happy because I would meet my friends and relatives again.
   b) I was sad because I would have to part from my friends.
   c) I was worried about whether I would be able to adjust to school in Japan.
   d) I was worried about whether I might not be bullied.
   e) I was worried about the entrance exam studies and competition.
   f) I was worried about whether or not my Japanese was good enough.

4) After I returned to Japan;
   a) I adjusted without any problems at all.
   b) I was bullied in school.
   c) I made many mistakes in Japanese.
   d) I felt that others were jealous because I could speak a foreign language.
   e) I often felt that I wanted to return to abroad.
   f) Even now I have a close relationship with my friends abroad.
   g) Others said that I had changed, or that I was different from other Japanese.
   h) Others didn’t show much interest in hearing about my experiences from abroad.
   i) Some people tried to become friends with me so that they would be more popular.
   j) When I returned from abroad, my friends had changed.
k) When we returned from abroad, the relation of my family changed.

If you missed some questions of if there were questions you did not understand, please write here:

Part 3
1) After your return to Japan, did you attend another school before you entered your present school?
   _yes _ no
2) Why did you enter your present school?
   _It was the wish of my parents _ it was my own wish (please write the reason)
   _It was my teacher’s recommendation _ other reasons (please explain)

3) Is your present school similar to your conception of an ordinary Japanese school? If different, please explain the difference.

4) Do you want to continue your education after you graduate high school?
   _yes _ no
   If the answer is yes, do you want to go on to  _ special training college
   (semmon gakkō)  _ junior college (tandai)  _ private university
   public university  _ university abroad  _ other (please explain)

5) What kind of work do you want to have in the future?

6) What is, in your eyes, a ‘typical kikokushijo’ like? Please explain.

7) Are you yourself similar to or different from that ‘typical kikokushijo’ you described in the above question? Please explain.

8) Are you part of a network of kikokushijo outside of your school (E.g. through the internet, a club, newsletter, etc.?) If you are part of a network, please write what kind of network.

If you would agree to being interviewed, please write your name here. _________

Thank you very much for filling out the questionnaire!
APPENDIX II  DEMOGRAPHICAL DATA OF SOME OF MY INFORMANTS

Number of stays abroad.

In Japanese statistics on kikokushijo, only the last country stayed in is listed. Often, however, a kikokushijo has stayed in more than one country, and in more than one period of their lives. The 24 kikokushijo I interviewed are by no means a representative sample of all kikokushijo in Japan. They were not randomly chosen, but their participation in the interviews came about by means of their self-selection. The schools which I visited, and where I met most of my informants were also not randomly chosen. Nevertheless I will here present some data about the informants who participated in interviews. These data can then be compared to official data where these exist.

Twelve of the 24 informants had stayed abroad only once; nine of these in the USA, one in Colombia, one in Korea and one in Hong Kong. One had stayed in the USA twice. The others had stayed in two or more different countries. I count it as one stay when the informant stays in the same country without returning home to Japan for more than a few months during the stay. Moving within a country I also count as one stay. All together the 24 informants had 38 stays abroad, which makes 1.58 stay per person. Of my informants’ 38 stays abroad, 13 were in North America (one in Canada and 12 in the USA). That equals 34.2 %, while the national average is 37.4 %. There were eleven stays in Europe. This equals 28.9% while the national average is 23.6%. Seven stays were in Asia, making a percentage of 18.4, while the national average is 30.2%. Then there was one stay in South America, that is 2.6% (National average is 3.0%). I counted four stays in Africa. This equals 10.5% while the national average is 1.0%. In the Middle East there were 2 stays, equalling 5.3% while the national average is 1.1%. My figures for Europe, North America and South America are not so divergent from the

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4 The statistics saying how many Japanese children were living abroad in which countries in 1997.
national average. The reason for the rather low percentage who have stayed in Asia, is probably partly because there most students attend Japanese overseas school, and students having attended Japanese overseas school can be reluctant to define themselves as *kikokushijo*, and thus be less inclined to agree to be interviewed. They also need to achieve better on the entrance examinations for *kikokushijo* than those who have attended local schools or international schools, and especially at ICU High School the majority of *kikokushijo* students had lived in North America or Europe. Of the respondents to the questionnaires, more of those with a North American or European background volunteered to be interviewed than those who had attended *nihonjin gakkō* in other parts of the world. Those with background from other parts of the world, were also maybe not typical representatives, but rather those willing to stick out. I must also add that the high occurrence of stays in Africa and the Middle East is mainly caused by one girl whose father works in the Foreign Service. I have not found any statistics on how common it is to have lived in several different countries, but from what I have seen from my questionnaires and heard from people, it seems to be rather common. The official statistics (Japan Almanac 1999) I have compared my numbers above to, say how many of the Japanese children abroad stay in which areas of the world.

**School type**

According to the official statistics, 83.8% of the children in Asia attend Japanese overseas school. Of my informants who had lived in Asia, everyone who at the time were of school age had attended Japanese overseas school, though one of them had after two years changed to the international school. It is not uncommon to change school types, and when moving from one country to another one often changes from local school to Japanese overseas school, or the other way around.

All the informants who had stayed in North America had attended local school. The
statistics say that only four percent here attend Japanese overseas school.

Of those who had been in Europe, none had attended Japanese overseas school, but here the statistics say 31%. Europe’s biggest Japanese overseas school lies in Düsseldorf, but only one of the kikokushijo in my sample had lived there, and she had attended international school. In the non-English speaking countries of Europe, most students attend international schools.

Length of stay abroad

The amount of time the informants had stayed abroad was very different from person to person. One girl, a university student, had spent 16 years in Europe. Before she came to Japan for university she had only lived there for two years when she was in primary school. Two of my informants had spent only two or two and a half years abroad. There were also variations in how long the informants had been back in Japan at the time of the interview. Two eighteen-year-olds had been living in Japan since they were 11 and 12. Others had arrived home to Japan only six months or one year before the interview took place. On average my informants had lived 7.9 years abroad\(^5\).

\(^5\) This includes all their stays. Several had lived some years abroad, then in Japan and then abroad again.
**APPENDIX III GLOSSARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>akarui</td>
<td>cheerful, positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amerikajin</td>
<td>American person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>atarimae</td>
<td>obvious, a matter of course</td>
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<tr>
<td>dame</td>
<td>impossible, forbidden</td>
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<tr>
<td>gaijin</td>
<td>short, colloquial for <em>gaikokujin</em>, foreigner</td>
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<tr>
<td>gambaru</td>
<td>fight, work hard</td>
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<tr>
<td>gyaru</td>
<td>‘girl’. Referring to a certain type of (teenage) girls who often dye their hair, use make-up and hang out in special areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>gyudon</td>
<td>Japanese dish, beef on rice</td>
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<tr>
<td>genchikō</td>
<td>local school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gijutsu</td>
<td>skill, technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>hoshūkō</td>
<td>supplementary school with classes in Japanese language, and often subjects such as Mathematics, Social Studies and Science, mainly catering to Japanese children living Overseas. Usually classes on Saturdays.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ijime</td>
<td>bullying</td>
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<tr>
<td>ippansei</td>
<td>general student, a Japanese student who has not lived abroad (in comparison to <em>kikokusei</em>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jinzai</td>
<td>man of talent, man of ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jukenkō</td>
<td>school preparing its students for entrance exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>juku</td>
<td>cram school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kachikan</td>
<td>values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaigai Shijo Kyōiku</td>
<td>Education of Overseas Children, monthly magazine published by Kaigai Shijo Kyoiku Shinko Zaidan (Japan Overseas Educational Services)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaigaishijo</td>
<td>overseas children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaisha</td>
<td>company, firm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keigo</td>
<td>polite speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kikoku</td>
<td>literally &quot;return-to-country&quot;, in colloquial speech also used to denote a kikokushijo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kikokusei</td>
<td>returnee student(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kikokushijo</td>
<td>returnee child(ren)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kikokuwaku</td>
<td>the special quota for kikokushijo or the special entrance exam that kikokushijo can take to enter schools and universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kōhai</td>
<td>one’s junior at school or at work etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kokusai(teki)</td>
<td>international (or ‘something international’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kokusaijin</td>
<td>international person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>koseki</td>
<td>family register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kyōiku</td>
<td>education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kyōiku chokugo</td>
<td>the Imperial Rescript on Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mezurashii</td>
<td>uncommon, rare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monbusho</td>
<td>the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moshimoshi</td>
<td>“hello” (on the telephone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nihonjinron</td>
<td>Theory of Japanese Uniqueness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nisemono</td>
<td>fake, sham, imitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>otaku</td>
<td>your house, home, family or company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raijo taiso</td>
<td>radio callisthenics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rōnin</td>
<td>student who failed the entrance exam and studies for another year or more to retake the exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ryūgakusei</td>
<td>exchange student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sakoku</td>
<td>national seclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sarariman</td>
<td>‘salary man’; white collar employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese Word</td>
<td>English Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>semmon gakkō</td>
<td>special training school (non-academic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sempai</td>
<td>one’s senior at school or at work etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sekkyokuteki</td>
<td>active, energetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shijo Tsushin</td>
<td>Newsletter for and written by <em>kikokushijo</em> and others. Title means “transmission of personal feelings”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shimaguni</td>
<td>island country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shinryaku</td>
<td>invasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shinshutsu</td>
<td>advance (military)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sugoi</td>
<td>great, terrific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suisen</td>
<td>recommendation of a student to a higher educational institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tandai</td>
<td>two-year junior college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tan 'itsu minzoku</td>
<td>one homogenic race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tarento</td>
<td>‘talent’; celebrity singer or actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tatami</td>
<td>straw mat floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tōkōkyohi</td>
<td>school withdrawal syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uchi</td>
<td>my house, home, family or company</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX IV EXAMPLE OF SCHOOL RULES

School Regulations, Showa Middle School and Showa High School, Okinawa Prefecture.

I. Purpose:
   A. These regulations are based on our school’s educational principles.
   B. All students must follow this code.

II. Coming to school and going home:
   A. Do not come to school by bicycle, motorbike, or automobile.
   B. Report to the teacher’s room when coming to school on a holiday.
   C. Do not stop at restaurants, coffee shops, arcades, or pachinko parlors on the way to or from school.

III. School uniform:
   A. Wear the uniform when coming to school, even on holidays.
   B. Wear the summer uniform from April 1 until October 31.
   C. Get permission in order to wear a modified uniform due to sickness.
   D. Boys must wear a very short hairstyle.
   E. Girls must wear an appropriate hairstyle [less than shoulder-length, or in a bun or French braid].
   F. No bangs more than eyebrow length.
   G. No permanent, hair gel, dye, or anything else that reflects badly on our school.
   H. No pierced ears. No nail polish. No makeup.
   I. On cold summer days it is okay to wear long-sleeved shirts.
   J. In the winter it is okay to wear the school cardigan, for boys, or vest, for girls, under the uniform jacket. [Schools are unheated in Okinawa but students are not allowed to wear coats or sweaters.]
   K. Do not modify the uniform in any way. [Four figures are attached depicting boys and girls in summer and winter uniforms, with many details annotated, e.g.,]
“Skirt length is seven centimeters below the knee,” and “White socks with no stripe.”

IV. Tardiness, absence, and cutting class:
   A. Attendance will affect the grade.
   B. After 5 instances, the teacher will call the parents.
   C. After 10 instances, the teacher will ask parents to come to the school.
   D. After 15 instances, the student can be suspended.

V. School life:
   A. Good behavior is needed, such as proper greeting, proper speech to elders, cleaning and tidying.
   B. Do not bring anything that you don’t need for study.
   C. Do not eat while you are walking.
   D. Do not use equipment without permission.

VI. Afterschool life:
   A. Behave well as a student of our school.
   B. Do not go to any disco or nightclub.
   C. Do not smoke or drink alcohol.
   D. Do not dance, except for folk dancing.
   E. Do not ride double on a bicycle or motorbike.
   F. Do not go out after 8:00 p.m. (junior high) or 10:00 p.m. (high school) without parents.
   G. Do not acquire a driver’s licence without school permission.
   H. Do not travel or go camping without school permission.
   I. Do not get a part-time job.

VII. Any student[s] who does not follow these regulations will be warned, suspended, or expelled from our school.

Source: Benjamin Hill: Breaking the rules in Japanese schools: kosoku ihan, academic