



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Realities of postwar education: Japanese teachers' views on the state of education during the American Occupation

Olthof, Alie

Citation

Olthof, A. (2023). *Realities of postwar education: Japanese teachers' views on the state of education during the American Occupation*.

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [License to inclusion and publication of a Bachelor or Master Thesis, 2023](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3636754>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Realities of postwar education

Japanese teachers' views on the state of education during the American
Occupation

Alie Olthof
01-07-2023
MA Japanese Studies
Dr. Ethan Mark
Wordcount: 12.681

Contents

Introduction 3

Overview of postwar educational reforms 4

Literature review 5

 Actors involved in postwar educational reforms..... 6

 Views on defeat and war responsibility 8

Analysis of three teachers’ postwar experiences..... 9

 Views on defeat..... 11

 War Responsibility 13

 Class relations 15

 Gender relations 16

 Political landscape..... 17

 Postwar education 19

 Grassroots innovation..... 20

Conclusion..... 22

Bibliography..... 24

Introduction

At the end of World War II both Germany and Japan faced not only complete military and political defeat, but also moral defeat on a scale that had never been seen before. The totalitarian regimes in these nations were removed, causing them to be rebuilt from the ground up. The way this recent history was conveyed to its current and future citizens was an important part of this rebuilding process. The way a nation teaches its history for a part shapes how it defines itself, and it was of international importance for those nations occupying the defeated and those victimised by them that these nations not shy away from the dark pages of its histories. As such, the democratisation and demilitarisation of education was one of the main goals of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, from now referred to as SCAP, during the American Occupation of Japan, which started in 1945 and ended in 1952.

To this day history education in Japan is a controversial topic. Since the educational reforms during the American Occupation reintroduced the subject of history to the Japanese curriculum, people inside and outside of Japan have been dissatisfied with its contents. Postwar education being mainly viewed in the context of the educational reforms and the textbook controversies that eventually stemmed from them causes the period to be analysed in from primarily “top-down” perspective. However, in this thesis I argue that viewing postwar education from a “bottom-up” perspective brings new information on the educational reforms and the experiences of teachers under the American Occupation.

To achieve this “bottom-up” perspective, three primary sources by Japanese teachers who taught at any point during the American Occupation are analysed. Due to the limitation of a Master’s thesis, this research does not attempt to be representative. The experiences of these three teachers are merely offered as examples to shine light on the lived realities of the time.

In this thesis, I distinguish between “top-down” and “bottom-up” processes. In the context of this thesis, an example of a “top-down” process would be a government, the higher hierarchical power and as such the “top”, influencing smaller, hierarchically lower groups, for instance by adopting a law. “Bottom-up”, on the other hand, would be when a hierarchically lower, smaller group, such as teachers, influence the hierarchically higher group, for instance by protesting a new law. To save space, the Pacific War/WWII will from now on be referred to as “the war”. Educational reforms will refer to the reforms implemented during the American Occupation as they are explained in chapter one.

In this thesis, I aim to answer the question “how did Japanese teachers themselves view the state of postwar education during the American Occupation?”. In chapter 1, a brief overview will be given of the state of education and the educational reforms during the American Occupation. In chapter 2, the scholarly debate on the issues surrounding Japanese education in the Occupation period (1945-1952) will be described and analysed, as well as the scholarly debate on the views of the Japanese people on defeat and war responsibility in the direct postwar period. In chapter 3, three examples of the realities faced by teachers in Japan during the American Occupation are explored on the basis of two published diaries and one published memoir: “How did teachers deal with defeat? Days of anguish and fumbling around - Two-year education diary (*Kyōshi wa haisen dō mukaeta no ka: Kunō to mosaku no hibi— 2-Nenkan no kyōiku nisshi*)” by Nagai Kenji and “War and love: a female teacher’s war and postwar diary (*Ikusa to ai to: Josei kyōshi no senchū sengo nikki*)” by Kobayashi Hana and *Reminiscences of an Elementary School Principal (Aru shōgakkō-chō no kaisō)* by Kanazawa Kaichi. The experiences of these teachers will be analysed in the broader context of the postwar education in order to get a better understanding of the “bottom-up” processes they participated in. I argue that viewing postwar education from a “bottom-up” perspective brings to light new insights on the educational reforms and their implementation, and the on experiences of teachers as under the American Occupation.

Overview of postwar educational reforms

Since the birth of the nation state, education has been used to create a sense of belonging in the nation state and a sense of history shared with all other citizens. Japan's wartime education, using the Imperial Rescript on Education and nationally designated textbooks, nurtured loyal "subjects" who would sacrifice themselves to the emperor and supported militaristic and materialistic acts. As such, education was one of the most important field the American Occupation wished to use to democratise and demilitarise Japanese society. SCAP's policies about the postwar education system and textbooks born out of this reflection and were used as a guideline by the Ministry of Education.

Soon after Japan's official surrender on August 15th 1945, and before SCAP's formation on October 2nd of the same year, the Japanese government was already trying to hide the rampant militarism in education by reversing wartime education laws and ordering the censorship of war and militarism related phrases in textbooks. On August 26th, the government gave the order to commence with the blackening out of any phrases in textbooks which would make wartime education look bad in the eyes of the Occupying Forces.¹ What were considered undesirable phrases was up to the discretion of the teachers. This led to the censorship of not only ethics, national history and geography textbooks, but also Japanese language and maths books, for mentioning or using images of military vehicles, guns, warships and fighter planes.² On September 20th the Japanese government issued more specific instructions on the censorship of textbooks, stating that phrases concerning national defense and armament fostered fighting spirit, and thwarted international goodwill.³

Following the formation of SCAP on October 2nd 1945, and with it the CI&E, four education related policies were published: the Fundamental Law on Education, in which SCAP's general plans for education were published; the Directive on Investigation, Screening and Certification of Teachers and Education offices, which caused the purge of 3.000 teachers and educational officials and the resignation of 115.000 teachers and educational officers who refused to be screened; the Shinto Directive, which demanded the censorship of any Shinto doctrine in teacher manuals and textbooks, and the Directive to Suspend Geography, Japanese History and Morals Courses and Textbooks, which proclaimed that these subjects were too steeped in militaristic and ultra-nationalistic ideologies for the existing materials to be simply censored, and for which instead new textbooks needed to be published.⁴

CI&E and the Ministry of Education supported the First U.S. Education Mission in Japan, which whose report affirmed the existing policies of SCAP and CI&E. After the mission, in May 1946, CI&E tasked the Ministry of Education to form a division which would be responsible for the writing of the new history textbooks for elementary, middle and normal schools. These books were finished about a month later and stayed in use until September 1949.⁵

In March 1947, with the enactment of the Fundamental Law of Education and the School Education Law, a new school system came into effect. This led to the adoption of the 6-3-3 school system, replacing the pre-war 6-5 system, and to the reform of the educational

¹ Thakur, Yoko. H. 1995. "History Textbook Reform in Allied Occupied Japan, 1945–52." *History of Education Quarterly* 35, no. 3. 264.

² Tawara Yoshifumi. 2020. *History of the Postwar Textbook Movement*. Tokyo: Heibonsha. 45.

³ Thakur, 1995. 265.

⁴ Dierkes, Julian. 2010. *Postwar History Education in Japan and the Germanys : Guilty Lessons*. A Study of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University. London [etc.]: Routledge, 2010. 113.

⁵ Thakur, 1995. 267.

curriculum. On March 20, 1947, the first social studies class was held in Japan, a course which was to be a replacement of the earlier banned ethics, geography and Japanese history courses. But this social studies course was not to be a simple amalgamation of the traditional subjects of history, ethics and geography under the name of "social studies". The social studies course was designed to foster a good sense of social life and character in the light of the lives of the people of today.⁶

On February 26nd, in an effort to decentralise the national textbook system of the time, SCAP's Education Division instructed the Ministry of Education to create a plan for a decentralised textbook system and to form a textbook committee to draft an outline of the system in cooperation with the CI&E by May 1947. A year later this Textbook Committee was turned into the Textbook Authorisation Research Committee, which was to handle the certification of new textbooks. Because the local education committees were not yet ready to perform any function, CI&E allowed the Ministry of Education the control over the censorship of textbooks. In this system, anyone is free to write and publish a textbook, but only textbooks certified by the Textbook Authorisation Research Committee were allowed to be used in schools. This was meant to be a temporary measure, but this system is still in use in Japan to this day.⁷

As the US became more preoccupied with the "containment" of the Soviet Union and communism at the beginning of the Cold War, their focus shifted. CI&E relied more on the Ministry of Education over the following years, eventually completely transferring its censorship duties by summer 1950. In 1953, after the American Occupation had ended, the School Education Law allowed the Ministry of Education full responsibility over school textbook education, rather than local education committees as SCAP had initially pushed for.⁸

Literature review

Secondary literature specifically about the views of Japanese teachers on postwar education is rare, if not non-existent. This topic seems to straddle two themes that are well documented in secondary literature: on the one hand there is the "top-down" perspective of focusing the contents and implementation of postwar educational reforms, and on the other hand the "bottom-up" perspective of the lived experiences of ordinary Japanese citizens in the direct postwar era. I argue that combining these two themes in an in depth look into teachers' experiences during the American Occupation and how they viewed postwar education can give us new insights about both the state of education at the time, as well as about the lived experiences during the American Occupation.

For the theme of postwar educational reforms I focused on secondary literature that covered these reforms, whilst also delving into who was involved in the reforms. Aside from that reason, I chose *The Long Defeat : Cultural Trauma, Memory, and Identity in Japan* (2015) by Hashimoto Akiko for its themes of conveying a nation's history in order to shape identity. *The Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan* (1994) by Ian Buruma for its covering of how the topic of war was taught in schools, "History Textbook Reform in Allied Occupied Japan, 1945–52." (1995) by Yoko H. Thakur, *War Memory, Nationalism, and Education in Postwar Japan, 1945-2007 : The Japanese History Textbook Controversy and Ienaga Saburo's Court Challenges* (2008) Nozaki Yoshiko and *Postwar History Education in Japan and the Germans: Guilty Lessons* (2010) by Julian Dierkes were chosen for their clear overviews of the postwar educational reforms and the in-depth exploration of the people

⁶ Nakanome Naoaki. 1996. "50 Years of Postwar Subject Education : Social Studies Education." *Sodai Kyoiku Kenkyu* 5: 83.

⁷ Thakur, 1995. 272.

⁸ Ibid. 272.

involved in them. *The Sociology of Educational Reform: What to Do with Schools (Gakusei kaikaku no shakai-gaku: Gakkō o dō suru ka)*. (1984) by Kumagai Kazunori, because it went into the reforms of the school system, rather than the reforms of the contents of the curricula. Finally *Embracing Defeat : Japan in the Wake of World War II* (1999)by John. W. Dower, which I also use for the other theme of views on defeat and war responsibility, as it is the leading work on viewing the reforms and changes during the American Occupation not just as “top-down” processes, but also highlighted the “bottom-up” perspective on a very wide array of themes. The other source used for the theme of defeat and war responsibility is *Grassroots fascism* (2015) by Yoshimi Yoshiaki & Ethan Mark, as it gives insights on diverse experiences of Japanese citizens during the (post)war period.

Actors involved in postwar educational reforms

The consequence of the educational reforms during the American Occupation have caused much international debate, in large part because they led to textbook controversies spanning decades. As these textbook controversies are often the context in which postwar educational reforms are placed, there is already little secondary literature specifically about Occupation period. And even when the Occupation-era education is covered, it focusses heavily on the “top-down” implementation of educational reforms, not on any “bottom-up” influences or how these reforms were actually received and applied in reality.

The postwar education reforms and the writing and publishing of new textbooks involved a great number of actors on both the Japanese and the American side. There is contention amongst the authors about which actors were involved, whose contribution are emphasised and whose influence was greater. Three groups that are often named as involved actors are SCAP, the Japanese Ministry of Education, and teachers and historians.

Hashimoto describes the actors involved as a simply dichotomy. She paints the events of the textbook reforms as a conflict between the Japanese government and state bureaucracy on the one hand and teachers on the other hand. Hashimoto describes the goal of the Japanese government and state bureaucracy as wanting to separate the pedagogical and academic aspects of history in order to use education as a way to instil national pride in students, whereas teachers were vying for history education to be based on historical facts as they were accepted in academic circles.⁹ By dividing the involved in two clear camps, any disagreements within these two camps ignored.

Buruma describes the occupation-era discussions regarding textbook reforms as a dissension between the Japanese government, who were accused by the left of militarist revivalism, and the leftist Japan Teachers’ Union, who were accused by the right of being “dangerous idealists at best and traitors at worst”. While these two groups were in disagreement, the Ministry of Education assumed responsibility for preparation and publishing of school textbooks and as such is portrayed as the more neutral party, as they satisfied neither side.¹⁰ Buruma argues “As a result of this endless tug-of-war, Japanese history textbooks failed to satisfy either side. Leftist and liberals criticize them to this day for being dishonest, evasive, and nationalistic. Conservatives and nationalists see too many “alien” traces of leftist ideology. Neither side is entirely wrong: the compromised textbooks are evasive, and Marxists have dominated scholarship since the war”.¹¹ As the section of textbook reforms is brief, the only

⁹ Hashimoto, Akiko. 2015. *The Long Defeat : Cultural Trauma, Memory, and Identity in Japan*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. 89.

¹⁰ Buruma, Ian. 1994. *The Wages of Guilt : Memories of War in Germany and Japan*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux. 192.

¹¹ Ibid, 192-193.

individual actor cited is Ienaga Saburo, who was a history teacher during the war and involved in the writing of the first new history textbooks during the American Occupation.¹² All other teachers are grouped together within the Teachers' Union, and such are made to seem like they had one singular opinion about the new contents of history education. Although generalisation are inevitable, highlighting other teachers than Ienaga could have also added to his analysis of postwar education.

Thakur on the other hand describes the events of the textbook reforms through a large and diverse number of actors. Attention is paid to the Ministry of Education, historians in employment of the Ministry of Education, SCAP, CI&E (Civil Information and Education Section, which was part of SCAP), ACJ (Allied Council for Japan), Marxist historians and teachers. She gives agency to the individual actors within SCAP, the Ministry of Education and history textbook authors who contributed to the shaping of the textbook reforms.¹³ She also gives voice to various opinions on the reforms and the new textbooks, with some finding them refreshing, whilst others were dissatisfied with how they covered Japanese atrocities during the war.¹⁴ Among this variety of actors, most emphasis is put on the role of SCAP, CI&E in particular.

Dower emphasises the involvement of the Japanese officials in reforming of education, arguing that "virtually all basic reforms were implemented, if not instigated, by a huge cadre of Japanese bureaucrats, technocrats, and outside advisors; frequently their input was creative and constructive".¹⁵ He also emphasises the voluntary nature of the contributions of reformist Japanese.¹⁶ He states that the SCAP tried not to order around their Japanese counterparts, but to work on an equal level. He acknowledges that the relation was inherently unequal and SCAP suggestions were not to be ignored, but again stresses that the Japanese supported and sometimes exceeded expectations SCAP had of their commitment.

Unlike Dower and Thakur, Nozaki does not focus on the cooperation between various groups, but more so on the conflicts between them. As the latter parts of Nozaki's book focusses primarily on the Ienaga Textbook Court Cases, she writes about the textbook reforms from the perspective of the group Ienaga belonged to at the time: the (leftist) historians involved in the writing of new history textbooks. These authors felt restricted by SCAP's policies, but they also recognised that the production of new history textbooks gave them the chance to articulate new national narratives.¹⁷ There was conflict between SCAP and the Ministry of Education too, as SCAP wanted all new content for the new history textbooks and the Ministry of Education was of the opinion that the elimination of militaristic content should have been sufficient.¹⁸ Nozaki differentiates between the Ministry of Education at the start of the Occupation and the Ministry of Education once it was "(ultra)nationalistically recaptured" by Japanese right-wing politicians. The earlier Ministry of Education allowed prefectural officials, school officials and teachers influence over curricula.¹⁹, whilst the later Ministry of Education is accused of allowing nationalist narratives to be added to textbooks. Nozaki seems to imply that the most important actors in the textbook reforms were the historians, who were at times encouraged or hindered by SCAP and the Ministry of Education.

¹² Buruma, 1994. 190.

¹³ Thakur, 1995. 264.

¹⁴ Ibid. 270.

¹⁵ Dower, John W. 1999. *Embracing Defeat : Japan in the Wake of World War II*. New York: Norton/The New Press. 245.

¹⁶ Ibid. 245.

¹⁷ Nozaki, 2008. 4-6.

¹⁸ Ibid. 5.

¹⁹ Ibid. 3.

Some authors, like Nozaki, seem to consider the bureaucrats of the Ministry of Education and the conservative politicians to be on the same side when it comes to the topic of postwar education and textbook reform, and imply that they worked together to gain control over the authoring and screening of textbooks. Dierkes however, differentiates between these groups. Dierkes argues that bureaucrats of the Ministry of Education forced empiricist historiography on textbook authors in the face of challenges from Marxist historians, foreign governments and individuals, *and* conservative politicians.²⁰ The Ministry of Education can come across as the Big Bad of the postwar education narrative and is by many authors implied to be the cause of the subsequent textbook controversies, which continue to this day. Dierkes however humanises the Ministry of Education by referring to the bureaucrats working for the Ministry of Education, rather than referring to the Ministry of Education on the whole as some faceless organisation.

Kumagai specifically has a subchapter titled “People calling for school system reforms”. In this chapter he chooses to define these people not as those who might wish for the improvement of education because they or their family members are actively involved in it, either as students or teachers, but as the people who wish for educational reforms to build a better education system for societal or official reasons, such as politicians in the National Diet or the Ministry of Education.²¹ SCAP is mentioned, but only in relation to what they demanded off politicians or the Ministry of Education. Even when discussing the matter in which the Ministry of Education had to defend its decision to not reverse the 6-3-3-4 school system which were implemented because of demands by SCAP, Kumagai does not mention who is making complaints on the matter in the first place.²²

Amongst these authors there seems to be dissent over who played what role in the educational which can’t merely be explained by the context in which the subject is put in their works. All authors agree that SCAP’s wishes were leading in the reforms, but the role of the Ministry of Education is contended, either depicted as right-wing nationalists or a middle ground which neither the left nor the right agreed with. Even though historians and teachers were the ones actually writing the new textbooks, only Thakur and Nozaki attribute any agency to their doing so. The other authors focus on the critiques historians and teachers had on the textbooks, not any input they might have been able to put in when writing them.

Looking at the contents and implementation postwar reforms from a solely “top-down” perspective like this does take into account the role teachers and schools played, who, based on limited information and their own judgement about what the Occupying Forces would and would not allow, had to creatively shape their own curriculum until clearer instructions were published.

Views on defeat and war responsibility

Like the lived experiences of teachers are analysed later in this thesis, Yoshimi argues that it is urgent to assemble and examine insights of the reflection and self-examinations Japanese people came to in the postwar period. In the last chapter of *Grassroots Fascism*, using surveys conducted by the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey Research Unit to give a sense of how people generally thought about themes such as defeat, the future of Japan and the emperor, whilst also showing the diversity of experiences by using examples of ordinary citizens and (returning) soldiers from both inside and outside Japan at the time of surrender.

²⁰ Dierkes, 2010. 15

²¹ Kumagai Kazunori. 1984. *Gakusei kaikaku no shakai-gaku: Gakkō o dō suru ka*. Tokyo: Yushindo Kobunsha. 21.

²² *Ibid.* 26.

According to Yoshimi, the reaction of Japanese people to their defeat was simultaneously one of stupefaction and despondence, as well as one of an indescribable sense of liberation.²³ So although the feelings about defeat were diverse, Yoshimi argues that there was one consistent point in the reactions of the Japanese people: that the people did not move to action on their own, instead awaiting directives from the Occupying Forces. However, as we shall see later in this thesis, some teachers indeed need to move to action. The Ministry of Education had called for the removal of militarism from education, and at some schools propaganda posters and such were removed days after defeat.²⁴ By December 1945, the Occupying Forces had started implementing reforms, but Yoshimi argues that many people still did not have a clear vision themselves about how Japan should change, for the moment clinging to the mantra of democratisation and demilitarisation. In this sense the teachers in this thesis also seem to differ from the majority, as they quickly developed the idea that Japan must be improved through the improvement of education. When discussing war responsibility, Yoshimi quotes another teacher, by the name of Inoue, and states that the pursuit of war responsibility, as well as the independence of the colonies from Japan and, to some, postwar reforms, were forced “from the outside”. However this teacher Inoue, as well as the teachers in this thesis, felt a keen sense of war responsibility soon after defeat, namely responsibility towards their students, for having taught them war propaganda and encouraging them to fight in the war.²⁵ Where these teachers experiences did not differ from the majority however, was in their regard for the emperor. In the survey U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey Research Unit, the majority of people supported to continued reign of the emperor.²⁶

Dower covers a very wide variety of themes in his book, many of which are also seen in the experiences of the three teachers. Although Dower does use first-hand accounts of Japanese people to support the picture he paints of Japan under the American Occupation, he has less room to highlight various different experiences for a single theme.

As reaction to Japan’s defeat, the image of Japanese citizens bowing their heads outside of the imperial palace in Tokyo is first invoked by Dower, as this became one of the defining images of the capitulation. However, like Yoshimi, also mentions the contrasting emotion many Japanese people felt, of anguish, regret and anger on the one hand, and relief and joy at the suffering now coming to an end.²⁷

Although Yoshiki also included the experiences of teachers, Dower’s description of teachers and war responsibility is more detailed, and corresponds largely with the experiences of the three teachers in the next chapter. Dower describes the defeat being exceptionally traumatic for teachers, because they went from teaching emperor-system-centric orthodoxies, to suddenly having to teach the new orthodoxies, and with the same passion as before. Although reactions and opinions varied under teachers, he majority adapted to the new “demilitarised and democratised” education quickly. Still, Dower emphasises that that they felt a “painful sense of responsibility” about the war, as many of those who died had been their students.²⁸

Analysis of three teachers’ postwar experiences

In this chapter three examples of the realities faced by teachers in Japan during the American Occupation are explored on the basis of two published diaries and one published memoir: *How*

²³ Yoshimi, Yoshiaki & Mark, Ethan. 2015. *Grassroots fascism*. New York: Columbia University Press. 232.

²⁴ Nagai Kenji. 1997. *Kyōshi wa haisen dō mukaeta no ka: Kunō to mosaku no hibi — 2-Nenkan no kyōiku nisshi*. Tokyo: Kyōiku shiryō shuppan-kai. 87.

²⁵ Yoshimi, 2015. 244-245.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 240.

²⁷ Dower, 1999. 38.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 249-250.

did teachers deal with defeat? Days of anguish and fumbling around - Two-year education diary (Kyōshi wa haisen dō mukaeta no ka: Kunō to mosaku no hibi— 2-Nenkan no kyōiku nisshi) by Nagai Kenji²⁹, *War and love: a female teacher's war and postwar diary (Ikusa to ai to: Josei kyōshi no senchū sengo nikki)* by Kobayashi Hana³⁰, and *Reminiscences of an Elementary School Principal (Aru shōgakkō-chō no kaisō)* by Kanazawa Kaichi.³¹ All direct quotes are translated by the author.

Academic literature about education during the American Occupation tends to focus on the contents of educational reforms and how they came to be. I argue that merely focusing on what these three teachers wrote about the reforms isolates other circumstances which influenced their opinions about the state of education at the time and the realities they faced on a day to day basis. As such their personal opinions and experiences relating to education as a whole are analysed, not merely their opinions on the educational reforms. The works analysed not only highlight "bottom-up" aspects of teacher's lives not appearing in conventional "top-down" narratives, but also shed new light on individual and collective experiences under US occupation. They show that the democratisation and demilitarisation of education in the direct postwar era were by a large part not dependant on the contents of the educational reforms and the way these were implemented, but on how teachers and schools interpreted them based on very limited information from either SCAP or the Ministry of Education.

Kobayashi Hana was born in Kagoshima Prefecture in 1919. She graduated from Nara Women's High School Literature Department. In 1942, she was assigned to Nagoya Municipal Third High School Girls. In 1947 she transferred to Matsuo Junior High School in Iida, Nagano Prefecture. In 1952 she moved to Tokyo and worked at Higashimurayama Junior High School and Higashimurayama 3rd Junior High School until she quit teaching in 1967 to care for her eldest son. At the time of Japan's surrender, she was 26 years old and had been teaching for three years.

Nagai Kenji was born in Gunma Prefecture in 1928. At the time of Japan's surrender, he was 17 years old and had been a substitute teacher since April 1945. His parents and four siblings did all survive the war, however his family was barely able to support all the children, which is why Nagai moved out and got a job at Takasaki Elementary school in Gunma prefecture. He quit teaching after two years.

Kanazawa Kaichi was born in Aichi Prefecture in 1908. He graduated from Aoyama Normal School in 1928, after which he became a teacher at Tanishi Elementary School in Nishitama District. During his educational career, spanning 41 years, he taught at seven schools and was a principle at three schools, all in the Tokyo area. During the American Occupation, Kanazawa worked first at Aiko National School in the Shiba Ward, where he was transferred in 1944, and Sakuragawa Elementary School in the Minato Ward, where he was transferred in 1947 and continued to work until 1955. He testified at the Ienaga textbook trial from 1968 to 1969, and retired in 1969. At the time of Japan's surrender, Kanazawa was 37 years old and had been teaching for 17 years.

Although all to these three teachers kept (post)war diaries, Kobayashi wrote about all that occupied her, such as struggles to find food, family troubles, marriage, pregnancy and motherhood. Nagai wrote an education diary, and wrote solely about his activities as a teacher and his reflections on education and reflections on his own life relating to his own education. Although Kobayashi's diary is an interesting look into daily life during the American Occupation, her diary is, more often than Nagai's, merely descriptive, rather than going into detail about her struggles and opinions. Kanazawa held a different approach entirely, using this

²⁹ Nagai Kenji. 1997. *Kyōshi wa haisen dō mukaeta no ka: Kunō to mosaku no hibi— 2-Nenkan no kyōiku nisshi*. Tokyo: Kyōiku shiryō shuppan-kai.

³⁰ Kobayashi Hana. 1997. *Ikusa to ai to: Josei kyōshi no senchū sengo nikki*. Tokyo: Tokyo Shinbun Press.

³¹ Kanazawa Kaichi. 1967. *Aru shōgakkō-chō no kaisō*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten. 40-74.

(post)war diary to later write his memoirs. Although some diary entries are incorporated into his memoirs, his work is a retrospective reflection of his experiences with education.

The published works of these teachers will be analysed according to the following seven themes: views on defeat, war responsibility, gender relations, class relations, political landscape, educational reforms and grassroots inventions.

The first five themes shaped the daily lives during the direct postwar period and their sentiments about postwar education. Isolating these circumstances, as is often the case in academic sources, isolates the teachers' opinions from the circumstances that shaped them. Finally, I will analyse the actual opinions these teachers had about postwar education and how they then used their own creativity and innovation to shape postwar education.

Views on defeat

When the Shōwa emperor announced Japan's defeat over the radio on August 15th 1945, many of his subjects had a hard time coming to terms with this reality. Teachers had their own feelings to deal with, whilst they were also charged with reassuring their students, sometimes being the first ones to break the news of defeat to them, or finding themselves needing to convince the students that Japan really was defeated.

In her diary, Kobayashi wrote the following passage about August 15th 1945:

Japan was defeated. No matter what we say, in the end we were not strong enough in all areas. I can still do it. I still want to do it. Was everything so ineffective that even if we tried, it would be beyond our reach? It is frustrating, but there is no other way but to obey the deepest wisdom and live on the best path. I can't write my heart out. I must convey to my descendants how you feel now.³²

Although she was frustrated, her diary entry of the day of the official proclamation of defeat showed how she was looking toward the future, as she wrote that diary entry in order to one day convey her feelings to her descendants. As Yoshimi noted in *Grassroots Fascism's* final chapter, many Japanese citizens on the home front reacted to the defeat with despondency, many spending their days listlessly.³³ However for these three teachers, there was not much time for that, as they were expected back at their schools to prepare for the future. Kobayashi described several occasions on which she was scolded by her superiors, either for bringing luggage to school, for which she had no other place to store, or for not showing up on days she was not asked to come in.³⁴ As a result she started to lose respect for her superiors. On October 14th 1945 Kobayashi lamented in her diary that although the Occupation Army advance unit members she encountered were "meek", she was instead upset with the "sloppiness" and "cowardice" of her fellow Japanese as they clamoured to the servicemen for cigarettes and caramel.³⁵

Nagai struggled in his interactions with his students when it came to the subject of the defeat. When asked by a student whether Japan had lost the war or had merely stopped it, he was unsure of how to reply, eventually simply stating that the Emperor issued an imperial edict to stop the war and broadcast it himself.³⁶ Although later thinking that he would rather clearly tell his students that Japan was defeated, he did not feel like he could until he had figured out how to also apologise for having always taught them that Japan would definitely win the war.³⁷

³² Kobayashi, 1997. 138-39.

³³ Yoshimi, 2015. 233.

³⁴ Kobayashi, 1997. 139-140.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 142.

³⁶ Nagai, 1997. 89.

³⁷ *Ibid.* 90.

Not all of Nagai's colleagues agreed with this method, one was seemingly unconcerned with telling the students clearly about the defeat, as he disliked ambiguous statements as "we quit the war".³⁸ Nagai later wondered whether his students had actually changed since the war had ended when he had them write essays about their feelings about hearing about Japan's defeat August 15th. In these essays many of his students described themselves as being devastated when Japan surrendered, vowing to grow up, grow strong and dole out vengeance on the Americans who brought defeat and humiliation to the lives of the Japanese people.³⁹ Nagai was stunned by the contents of these essays, by the will of his students to avenge themselves on the US and Britain in the future. He wrote: "Is education really such a terrible thing? In just two and a half years of primary schooling, children who knew nothing at all can be transformed into such clear-minded individuals. Besides, the war is already over..."⁴⁰ Although Japanese citizens are often described in secondary literature as quickly applying themselves to the rebuilding of Japan as a democratic and demilitarised nation, at this point in time these students were not yet thinking about that, rather mentally preparing for a future war in which Japan would prove itself to be the victor.

Whereas Nagai was troubled by his students' attitudes about defeat, Kanazawa was inspired by his (ex-)students. One encounter that made a deep impression on him was when an ex-student who had recently returned from the front visited him at his classroom, not long after that the defeat of Japan. This was the first of Kanazawa's student to return from war. Tamai Yasukatsu was a student of Nishisugamo Third Elementary School, who had enlisted from the Faculty of Science at the University of Tokyo. He had risen in the army ranks to become a lieutenant.⁴¹ When this student visited Kanazawa's house in 1942, he had already said that Japan, which was inferior in both chemistry and materials, could not win this war. After the war however, Tamai argued that Japan did not merely lose due to inferior science and material resources, but also lost due to inferior morality, stating

"When I saw the embarrassing behavior of the officers, especially the senior officers, who were upset with the defeat, carrying military supplies from warehouses by truck, and swiping goods, I was saddened to think that this was the commander until yesterday. There was a lot of noise about the inferiority of science and technology, but that is peripheral. It was also said that our economic strength was not comparable, but more importantly it was a matter of morality. We did not lose because of science and economy, but because of morality. In the end, I think it was a lack of education. I think we have to make sure that people are educated to be mindful of what they cannot see."⁴²

Kanazawa stated that he felt reassured by these words. Other ex-students also provided comfort, as they argued that although some people might say the Japanese people were in a state of despair, that was not the way it should be, and if defeated, there was nothing to do but to stand up again. Amongst the ugly things there was still beauty to behold.⁴³ Although Kanazawa wrote that he was devastated by the war, the words of his ex-students gave him hope and motivation to work on a better future, as he did want to let their deaths be in vain, and did not wish to repeat the same mistakes.⁴⁴

These three teachers belonged to the group of people who did not necessarily see the defeat coming, but learned to accept it soon enough. Because the schools they worked at

³⁸ Nagai, 1997. 91.

³⁹ Ibid. 95-97.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 95.

⁴¹ Kanazawa, 1967. 41.

⁴² Ibid. 42.

⁴³ Ibid. 43.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 45.

reopened soon after the proclamation of defeat and they were still responsible for their students, these three did not have much time to sit around listlessly awaiting what the Occupation would bring.

War Responsibility

The Shōwa Emperor of Japan was not made to abdicate the throne in the wake of WWII, in order to assure the willingness of the ordinary people to cooperate with the Occupying Forces, the blame for the war instead being put on the Japanese military top. He was, however, in a sense demoted to being an ordinary human being, rather than a direct descendant of the Gods that shaped Japan. A controversial decision, some people saw this as the start of Japan's unwillingness to take responsibility for the war. At the time however, People generally seemed to continue to feel positively about the emperor, not to blame him for the war, and also to respond positively to his "humanization". This is in line with the sentiments of the three teachers, who still felt affection for the emperor in the direct postwar period.

Kobayashi understood that the image of the emperor in the school had to be removed, as the emperor was no longer to be worshipped as a god. While she acknowledged that some people might say that the building and destroying of the hall housing the emperor's image was a lesson to be learnt, she admitted that in her heart there was a tinge of sadness and loneliness that could not completely be removed.⁴⁵ At a later date, when the emperor made his tour of Japan, Kobayashi saw him drive by their school in an open car, wearing a hat. She was happy to see him and noted that it was a new type of visit.⁴⁶

Nagai was also sad to see the room where the war memorabilia and emperor's portrait were stored be dismantled⁴⁷. The portrait of the emperor was removed from the principal's office, however the structure that housed it remained. There was a discussion amongst the teacher about the salute to the hall housing the emperor's image. Some argued that it was incomprehensible to force students to salute the structure when the image of the emperor had already been removed, and now that the emperor was no longer a god. It was decided that the decision to salute would be left up to the children themselves, without telling them that it was no longer necessary to salute the structure.⁴⁸

Many Japanese people at the time felt that they had been lied to by the military top, and as such all war responsibility laid with them. Kobayashi however felt a more collective war responsibility. At the occasion of the announcement of the execution of seven convicted war criminals, she felt very solemn, for she was allowed to live alongside her husband and child despite cooperating with the war effort. When thinking about the bereaved families of these men, she expressed that she would rather see the whole nation "extend a warm hand to these people".⁴⁹ Later, she also stated that rather than hating Tōjō Hideki, Prime Minister and general of the Imperial Japanese Army during the war, she would rather hate the lack of intelligence of the whole nation.⁵⁰

Nagai and Kanazawa felt the war responsibility specifically as teachers. They were the ones to teach impressionable children "the righteousness of war, about the victory of God's country, the heavenly country of Japan, about the evil of the US and Britain, and so on."⁵¹ Throughout the first eight months after defeat, Nagai again and again lamented his role about

⁴⁵ Kobayashi, 1997. 162.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 167.

⁴⁷ Nagai, 1997. 108-110.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 220.

⁴⁹ Kobayashi, 1997. 207.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 207.

⁵¹ Nagai, 1997. 88.

teaching “falsities” during the war. After much internal strife, he bowed his head and apologised to students about his role in teaching them incorrect things during the war.⁵² He also struggled with the fact that he taught his students to endure and fight in the emperor’s name, only for the emperor to suddenly supposedly being a man just like anyone else.⁵³ Not all of Nagai’s colleagues agreed that they bore any responsibility, some stating that they simply taught the students what the state told them to teach, and what they had been taught themselves in their own school days.⁵⁴

Unlike Kobayashi, who taught at an all girl’s school until 1947, and Nagai, who had only been a teacher for a few months by the time the Japan surrendered, Kanazawa had already been teaching for seventeen years. As such, like Dower also emphasised, Kanazawa was one of many teachers who knew of many (ex-)colleagues and ex-students who actively fought and died in the war.

Soon after this encounter, Kanazawa participates in a class meeting of the first students he had taught in Nishitama District. It turned out that 11 of the 40 or so students in the class were killed in action, and one died of mental illness later.⁵⁵ When looking back on the war, this is what Kanazawa considered to be the most heart-breaking. He also struggled with his responsibility to the students he was still teaching at the time.

“How can I stand in front of my children again with such a burden on my shoulders? Government leaders may be able to dismiss this as a great miscalculation, but a teacher who treats each individual soul, a teacher who approaches the truth of humanity, a teacher who always teaches the truth as the truth, cannot morally and ethically simply say that what has been done up to now was a mistake. The more innocent a child is, the more I was troubled by the depth of my responsibility as a human being.”⁵⁶

A colleague confided in Kanazawa that he would quit teaching, because he did not believe that what he had been teaching his students up to this time was false.⁵⁷ Kanazawa himself also struggled with this for a time, but eventually decided that he could not imagine a future in which he was not teaching. Nagai ended up only teaching for two years, but his affection for his students and his wish to work on a better future for both himself and his students was what later led him to become more politically involved.⁵⁸ Her affection for her students also caused Kobayashi to vow to work hard in the future for their sakes.⁵⁹

All three teachers change the guilt they feel over their personal contribution to the war and the teaching of war as a just one, into motivation to better education, and by extend improve the futures of their students. They accept that what they had been teaching was wrong, and although they (eventually) came to the conclusion that they had no choice but to teach the wartime materials, they did feel the responsibility to make sure that the quality of education improved from then on. What is also in line with other documented views on war responsibility, is that all war responsibility mentioned by these three teachers was about responsibility towards their fellow Japanese citizens. None of these teachers mention any war responsibility of the emperor, the military top or personally, to the victims of the Japanese army outside of Japan.

⁵² Nagai, 1997. 97-101.

⁵³ Ibid. 155.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 90-91.

⁵⁵ Kanazawa, 1967. 42-43.

⁵⁶ Ibid. 1967. 65.

⁵⁷ Ibid. 43-44.

⁵⁸ Nagai, 1997. 240.

⁵⁹ Ibid. 200.

Class relations

Dower and Yoshimi described how both during and after the war the more wealthy citizens were able to get their hands on all sorts of foodstuffs and other luxuries the black market offered, but that the less wealthy struggled with food and material shortages.⁶⁰ On top of their personal struggles with money, food, materials or housing, they were also on a daily basis confronted with the struggles their students faced.

Kobayashi's family home was destroyed during the bombings, after which she got separated from her family and tried to find lodging near her work. However she struggled to find housing, and her continuing inability to find a dorm caused her such anxiety that she could not perform her job as a teacher to her liking.⁶¹ The food shortages also forced her to reduce her food intake to two meals a day, and in her words "could not even share a sweet potato anymore". Although she herself was having a hard time making ends meet, Kobayashi at times tried to give money to those less fortunate. She was asked by her injured younger brother to send him extra money.⁶² She also donated money to support students who had lost their parents during the war, as she noted "It's not that easy for me either, but I'm still better off."⁶³ There were also times that the fact that she was a teacher lightened her monetary burdens. Her students visited her at home, gifted her food and helped her when she was moving house.⁶⁴

Nagai, as a young man living alone, seemed to be less personally affected by the food shortages, on several occasions even able to provide food for his students. But unlike Kobayashi, Nagai's family's economic situation did not allow him to continue his education beyond elementary school, a struggle he recognised in many of his students.⁶⁵ Where his fellow substitute teachers pursued further education in order to become fulltime teachers in their own right, or leave to pursue other careers, Nagai feels stuck in his position as substitute teacher because he did not have the monetary means to follow in their footsteps.⁶⁶

Among his students Nagai also noticed the effects of socioeconomic differences between his students. On a daily basis there were many absences from school because of these socioeconomic differences. Students who came from poorer households often could not bring lunch to school, causing them to lie and say they were heading home for lunch, while in actuality they waited outside until lunch was over, so as not to need confess a need for food.⁶⁷ Among some students, this inability to bring one's own lunch moved them to steal the lunches of other students and teachers.⁶⁸ To prevent their lunches being stolen, students started to hide their lunch boxes around the school building and school grounds.⁶⁹ Nagai tried to help his students by bringing food for them himself, but he himself did not have the means to support all of his own students, never mind all the students in need at the school.⁷⁰

Another cause for poverty leading to absence from school was when a family could not afford an umbrella for all the members of the family. During various school-wide investigations conducted by Nagai and his fellow teachers, poorer children who were not in possession of an umbrella would miss school on rainy days.⁷¹ Nagai's diary does not further specify why the

⁶⁰ Dower, 1999. 139-140. Yoshimi, 2015. 224.

⁶¹ Kobayashi, 1997. 148-149.

⁶² *Ibid.* 165-166.

⁶³ Kobayashi, 1997. 156.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 143, 163, 204.

⁶⁵ Nagai, 1997. 202, 221-222.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 219.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 114.

⁶⁸ Nagai, 1997. 144-145, 240.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 162.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 244.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* 141-142.

lack of umbrella prevented the students from attending school, whether because of concern for sickness by the family or unwillingness of the students themselves.

In 1946, Kanazawa started to travel around, performing puppet shows for children, in order to “start a movement to raise children's emotions as warmly as possible.”⁷² However when on the road, he realised that before he could warm the hearts of children, they first had to think about eating, in other words, living. Confronted with the sight of ill children in an orphanage not having enough to eat, he started a campaign called “white rice for war orphans”. However, he found that other people were too busy caught up in their own lives to reach out and help out in that kind of manner.⁷³

Many people struggled with financial difficulties and food shortages after the war ended. As they were in charge of some of society's most vulnerable members, these teachers were confronted with these struggles in a different manner than many. As discussed later, the confrontation with poverty amongst children led both Nagai and Kanazawa to become involved in politics, believing that they could not rely on the government or the Occupying Forces to elevate the suffering they witnessed.

Gender relations

I really feel that women are powerless. I feel that the root of this is their economic powerlessness. And also the tradition of "fighting" as ugly. We women, who have been educated to have neither the conviction nor the methods to fight wisely, are made to reflect once again. Moreover, both mother-in-laws and daughters-in-law are Japanese women.⁷⁴

Much more than the other two (male) teachers, Kobayashi detailed her homelife and the struggles she faced there as well as at her work. As a female teacher, during the direct postwar era she not only dealt with defeat, food and material shortages and navigating postwar education, but also the expectations placed upon her as a woman, both at work and at home

At work, Kobayashi found that as a woman her opinions were not listened to as much as her male colleagues.⁷⁵ In contrast, at a meeting of a countryside school, when she was able to freely speak her opinions, the experience was so out of the realm of what she was used to that for a moment she forgot she was a woman in the first place.⁷⁶ At a conference in a well-known middle school, rather than focusing on the contents of what was being said, women were instructed to use feminine language when debating.⁷⁷

In 1947 Kobayashi married Jiro, another teacher. Jiro assured Kobayashi from the beginning that he would respect her work as a teacher and even said “It is fine if school comes first and the household comes second.”⁷⁸ Nonetheless Kobayashi was still expected to take care of the housework next to her work, a situation she described as “next to impossible”.⁷⁹ Moreover, despite her husband's understanding of her desire to keep working, her mother-in-law did not agree with the situation. After the birth of their first son, Kobayashi had even more responsibilities, as her mother-in-law often refused to help look after the child when Kobayashi was at work, forcing her to take the child with her to school or on school trips.⁸⁰ She also lamented that her husband, also a teacher, could stay out late for work without being judged for

⁷² Kanazawa, 1967. 50.

⁷³ Ibid. 50-52.

⁷⁴ Kobayashi, 1997. 161.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 166-167.

⁷⁶ Kobayashi, 1997. 198.

⁷⁷ Ibid. 166.

⁷⁸ Ibid. 173.

⁷⁹ Ibid. 181.

⁸⁰ Ibid. 193-196, 200, 205.

it, while she was already judged by her mother-in-law for working a little longer than usual. “Both men and women are engaged in official duties, but it is embarrassing to think that being late for men is a matter of course, and that being late for women is like an unavoidable crime.”⁸¹ She went as far as to describe her situation as a “constant war”, between not being able to properly do her job, properly raise her son and dealing with her mother-in-law’s irrationality.⁸²

In 1951 Kobayashi travelled to up to Tokyo with her husband and son so she could take the teacher employment exam there. She was anxious to pass, because if she failed she would have to stay living in Iida, Nagano Prefecture for another year, which meant putting up with her mother-in-law for another year.⁸³ She ended up passing the test, and in March 1952, she put an end to her five years of struggle in Iida, moving to Tokyo to start teaching at Higashimurayama Junior High School.⁸⁴

Despite the conflicts with her mother-in-law and her difficulties with juggling her work with housework and child rearing, Kobayashi expressed that she wished to continue teaching for the rest of her life. She was lucky enough to have an understanding husband, something many other women were not fortunate enough to have. This shows how improvement of women’s circumstances and women’s rights were interlinked with improving education. As Kobayashi attested to, female teachers having to choose between quitting their jobs upon marriage or continuing and juggling the responsibilities of a teacher with those of a wife or mother, and ending up not being able to satisfactory commit to any of them.

Political landscape

After defeat, SCAP wished to turn Japan into a democratic nation as soon as possible. Faced with unprecedented freedom of ideas and a clear slate to drastically change the country, many Japanese people became enthusiastically involved with politics.

The first general election after the war took place on April 10th 1946, the first Japanese election in which women were allowed to vote as well. Because she was not registered in Nagoya on November 1st 1945, Kobayashi was not able to vote during this election, which disappointed her. As there must have been many people like her, and because she had heard that Americans were even able to vote on the battlefield, she found the situation unreasonable. At the time she wrote: “There is no other way than to get the politics right. Education is a parallel effort. But the problem at the moment is to improve politics rapidly. Education cannot be achieved so quickly.”⁸⁵ Unlike Nagai and Kanazawa, Kobayashi did not join the Teacher’s Union during the Occupation. She did however participate in a round-table discussion surrounding Major O’Brien, head of the 25th Division Education Department, and attended meetings and talks about the significance of Japanese politics and the role of women in society, to deepen her knowledge and form her own opinions on the state of Japan.⁸⁶

Unlike Kobayashi and Kanazawa, Nagai found that he did not love teaching as much as he initially thought. By his second year as a teacher he was bored with the repetitiveness of teaching the same material even two years in a row. However, he cared deeply for his students, which is one of the reasons he would later become committed to the Teacher’s Union.⁸⁷ Several times he wrote that he did not see how Japan could improve itself if the circumstances of

⁸¹ Kobayashi, 1997. 203.

⁸² Ibid. 207.

⁸³ Ibid. 218.

⁸⁴ Ibid. 220.

⁸⁵ Ibid. 153.

⁸⁶ Ibid. 156, 192-193.

⁸⁷ Ibid. 248-249.

children were not improved.⁸⁸ At the time of the formation of the All Japan Teachers' Union on December 1st, a branch that would in 1947 join the Japan Teachers' Union, Nagai and his colleagues were unsure of their intentions, but nonetheless elections were held for the committee members who were to join the meetings of this union.⁸⁹ The union led to discussion amongst the teaching staff. At this point in time Nagai considered himself too young to have opinions about the union, as all his life the country had been on a war path and there was no room for such things. Instead he quoted the opinions his colleagues expressed. Some teachers did not mind the idea of a teachers' union as an "bottom-up" alternative to the school council and the education branch. Other's disagreed with the existence of the teachers' union, due to the idea that a teacher was a "holy profession". One argued:

"...being a teacher is a very special job. It is completely different from making products in a factory, if not even a holy profession. I want people to understand this well and protect the status of teachers, and for that reason, I am not afraid to do things similar to the factory strikes of the pre-war period. If it is a trade union that is not even aware of the type of work it does, then I am not in favour of it now. The factory of status - the factory of education - will speak out, win and demand what is required for that. I would like the union to have such an awareness and pride as teachers."⁹⁰

During this discussion Nagai felt "a strange sense of discomfort and was keenly aware that there was another society that I did not know and that no one had told me about."⁹¹ As over time he learnt more about political parties and labour unions, Nagai started to question why their existence was not taught in the textbooks of the old junior high schools. He also wondered whether the "Second Sino-Japanese Incident and the Greater East Asia War" might not have occurred had that there been a teachers' union and had teachers all over Japan reflected on war.⁹² Over the months Nagai attended meetings about politics and the teachers' union both at his school as outside of it, and started subscriptions for journals and magazines.⁹³ In the immediate context of his own problems, Nagai have thought about and wished for equal opportunities in education and the environment, and he became increasingly dissatisfied with the society that created and tolerated disparity amongst its members. As a result his activities for the teachers' union became more active and he turned his attention to politics.⁹⁴ These activities included putting up posters around town, printing flyers for distribution in the streets and giving speeches at rural schools for the teachers' union.⁹⁵ Aside from his desire to continue his education and the boredom he felt at teaching the same material two years in a row, another reason for Nagai's eventual resignation as a teacher was that no matter how hard he worked, his position as assistant teacher did not allow him to make the changes at work that he would have like to see.⁹⁶

Much like Nagai, Kanazawa was not convinced by the Teacher's Union when it was first formed. He went to see a rally in Hibiya Park on January 28th 1946, but followed the proceedings from the other side of the street. Although he agreed that the Teachers' Union needed to be a united force, he was not sure whether it should be in the same form as ordinary trade unions. "I have always felt that I cannot willingly participate in this. This may be an

⁸⁸ Nagai, 1997. 156, 202.

⁸⁹ Ibid. 178.

⁹⁰ Ibid. 178-183.

⁹¹ Ibid. 181.

⁹² Ibid. 186-187.

⁹³ Ibid. 193, 204-205, 239-240.

⁹⁴ Ibid. 240.

⁹⁵ Ibid. 221, 229, 243-245, 259.

⁹⁶ Ibid. 265.

insignificant self-respect, but I want to maintain my dignity as a teacher... and I just can't take the plunge. ... I was going through my days wondering and worrying, not having the courage to stop being a teacher and not having the courage to work willingly for education reform through the union movement.”⁹⁷ However, after he travelled around with his puppet show and working together with other teachers to collect food for war orphans, he experienced first-hand the “brotherhood and cooperation” of teachers working together, and believed that this could not have been achieved by government directives and notices alone. Although he had been critical of teachers' unions, this was one of the reasons why he finally became more familiar with union activities and became actively involved.⁹⁸

As a result of their works as teachers, all three became more politically involved, wishing to work towards a better future for themselves as well as other like them, like women or the socioeconomically disadvantaged, and for their students.

Postwar education

With defeat came changes in education, even before new textbooks were distributed. Schools were run differently, curricula were changed and textbooks were blacked out. Teachers struggled to continue to provide education for their students in as normal a manner as possible while trying to decipher the little information they received from the Ministry of Education and later SCAP. And even when information was provided about how to proceed, it often took a while before this information spread from Tokyo to schools in the rest of the country, especially to the countryside.

Kobayashi tried to further her own education in order to better teach her students, but found the materials available for students and herself alike to be lacking. When she was tasked with teaching two thirds grade classes for the first time, she tried her best to prepare, but “I want to study, but I don’t have time, and I don’t have any books.”⁹⁹ However, she did notice a change in how the school was run after the war ended, as there was more opportunity for discussion and stating one’s own opinions at meetings with her fellow teachers.¹⁰⁰

At Nagai’s school there seemed to be a general feeling of unease surrounding the educational reforms. When the order from the Ministry of Education came to use ink to black out any words and passages in textbooks pertaining to war and militarism, Nagai expressed his frustration at both the necessity to black out these phrases, as well as the fact that the textbooks contained so many phrases linked to war and militarism in the first place.¹⁰¹ As Nagai was only young himself, his education was very similar to what he was teaching his students up to that point. Nonetheless he found himself now having to teach to his students that what he had taught them up to that point was no longer considered correct, whilst he himself was still coming to terms with the fact that his own education was also lacking.¹⁰² When the announcement came that history, ethics and geography were to be suspended for the time being, Nagai wondered whether education would be (properly) reformed, and expressed hope or textbooks that would not hide the truth, unlike before.¹⁰³ However, the lack of information available about the new textbooks caused the teachers at Nagai’s school further anxiety. There were rumours that the new textbooks would be written using the Latin alphabet rather than Japanese, which would be hard to comprehend for both teachers and students alike. If the “disarming” of education were

⁹⁷ Kanazawa, 1967. 47-48.

⁹⁸ Ibid. 52.

⁹⁹ Kobayashi, 1997. 149, 152.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. 156.

¹⁰¹ Nagai, 1997. 213-214.

¹⁰² Ibid. 211.

¹⁰³ Ibid. 191.

to truly continue like that, several teachers expressed that they would consider switching careers.¹⁰⁴ The lack of communication from the Ministry of Education caused the teachers to feel uneasy.¹⁰⁵ Even after the new textbooks were composed (not using the Latin alphabet), they were not readily available for all schools. Nagai expressed his frustration that, although textbooks for children could not be produced new due to a shortage in paper, there were piles of erotic magazines to be found in the bookstores.¹⁰⁶

Kanazawa, already a well-experienced teacher by the time of Japan's defeat, considered the betterment of education to be the way forward to a peaceful future.

It is not enough just to say that peace is important, but Japan itself must create a way for the Japan ... It must begin precisely with education, with us. I don't think that doing what the government and the military say is the road to happiness for the future of the nation. We teachers, who are in touch with the human soul, must become more trustworthy and educate to seek more truth. I told myself that I had to educate myself so that I would never repeat my mistakes, and I called out to my children as well. I myself was at a loss as to what to do, but I can say that my determination to live as a lecturer from the beginning has gradually solidified.¹⁰⁷

Around the time the new constitution, the Fundamental Law of Education and the new 6-3-3 school system were implemented Kanazawa transferred to a different school, marking a new start for himself personally as to the way he approached teaching.¹⁰⁸ The neighbouring school, Sakurada Primary School, was one of the model schools where they experimented with the implementation of social studies, where they would often receive visits from education officers from the Occupation Forces. At the sight of these visits, Kanazawa felt incredulous that after resisting the US for so long, Japan was now so reliant on them.¹⁰⁹ After sitting in on one of those new social studies classes, Kanazawa was dissatisfied with how it was taught. He was of the opinion that social studies in Japan face the harsh realities of its society and find the truth in them, and should focus on how Japan could become independent under and after the Occupation. As things were at that time, Kanazawa considered the type of education like at Sakurada Primary School to be colonial and subservient to the US.¹¹⁰

Despite the uncertainties in the direct postwar period, the teachers were hopeful about opportunities for change the educational reforms could provide. They, like SCAP, saw education as the place to start building a new future for Japan. However, as time went on the limited information from the Ministry of Education and SCAP caused unease, and the "top-down" implementation of educational reforms which were heavily influenced by the Occupying Forces caused dissatisfaction and, in the cases of Nagai and Kanazawa, a desire to approach education different in their own classes.

Grassroots innovation

As shown above, the initial lack of information regarding educational reforms and the later dissatisfaction with them forced teachers to trust their gut instincts and get innovative with what was allowed or possible within the bounds of the new situation. They did so not only out of a desire to continue the education of their students, but also because after defeat they feared that

¹⁰⁴ Nagai, 1997. 210-211.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 210

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. 253.

¹⁰⁷ Kanazawa, 1967. 54.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 56.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.. 59.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 60.

if they did not sufficiently demilitarise, they would get caught up in the purges of militaristic teachers.

As they found at Nagai's school as well, many of the songs they had children sing at school had the potential of being seen as too militaristic. Kobayashi combined this situation with a new way of encouraging her students' autonomy by having them compose their own class songs.¹¹¹

At Nagai's school they were willing to cooperate in no longer teaching subject matters pertaining to the war and militarism, but struggled to determine what was and what was not allowed in the new political climate. This especially came to a head when they wished to organise the yearly Sports' Day. The activities for the girls did not cause much trouble, as those were often music or rhythm games, but the activities for the boys caused much debate, as their activities were more reminiscent of military drills. The teachers also wondered which marching songs were too militaristic to sing, whether it would be alright to use a pistol to signal the start of a race, whether it was still appropriate to shout "banzai" when winning, and whether they could keep using the word *taosu* (倒す/たおす) when a team was defeated, as this word was also used in the context of defeating one's enemies during war. In the end, despite all their worries, no local authorities or Occupying Forces were ever involved in the Sport's Day, and teachers and students alike could enjoy a day of fun in which they did not have to think about war or defeat.¹¹²

In his own classes, Nagai tried to shift to a direction of education that would allow children to think and develop their individuality, as well as focussing on subjects that he himself was good at, such as drawing and writing.¹¹³ He would draw pictures on test and he also had the students bring their own crayons and colour their answers on the Japanese and arithmetic answer sheets. This method made the test time more enjoyable and made the children very happy.¹¹⁴

In 1950 Kanazawa, in the spirit of democratic education in which the student's autonomy was respected, asked his sixth-grade students what they wanted to study in their last term before graduating. His students then asked him to teach them Japanese history. History education had become part of social studies, but the implementation and contents of the social studies classes were still being workshopped at this point. Although Kanazawa was aware that teaching history was "not appreciated", he decided to try because of the students' earnest wish. He did not have much in the way of materials, and it felt "inconvenient" to him, but he managed.¹¹⁵ He described the lessons at times as "primitive and systematic, like scattering fireworks with the children".¹¹⁶ Kanazawa argued that if the aim of social studies was to develop an awareness of the real world, it was not possible to develop a correct understanding of the real world if there was no historical inquiry into how that real world came to be. Because of the support of the principle and the encouragement of the enthusiasm of his students, he also conducted research lessons and received judgement and guidance from many others. This allowed him to develop his own way of teaching, which laid the foundation for his way of teacher later in his career.¹¹⁷ These history classes allowed his students to become more engaged and critical of current events. When the time came for the Japan-US administrative agreement that would lead to the Security Treaty, Kanazawa's students drew a connection to the unequal treaties of the Meiji period and voiced their dissatisfaction with Japan signing such

¹¹¹ Kobayashi, 1997. 148.

¹¹² Ibid. 117-127.

¹¹³ Nagai, 1997. 155.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. 257.

¹¹⁵ Kanazawa, 1967. 60-61

¹¹⁶ Ibid.. 64.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. 64-65.

treaties, both in the past and in the present, even going so far as to lament that although they were Japanese citizens, as children they did not have the right to vote and have their opinion on the matter be heard by parliament.¹¹⁸

Although the implementation and contents of the postwar curriculum were decided by SCAP and the Ministry of Education, it was up to the teachers to teach new materials in a way that encouraged enjoyable and active interaction with the new educational contents. The experiences of these three teachers show concrete examples of how this was achieved.

Conclusion

After defeat, Japan had to rebuild itself from the ground up and regain the trust of the international community. After the shock of defeat, the Japanese people were ready to demilitarise and democratise, although they were at first unsure how.

As shown in chapter 1, in a brief overview of the educational reforms that were implemented by the Occupying Forces, the initial aim of these reforms was also to democratise and demilitarise education, in order to build a peaceful future in Japan. This meant that teachers would be instrumental in building a peaceful Japan. However, as seen in the secondary literature analysed in chapter 2, teachers were always not considered an important part of the educational reforms. Instead, there is a strong “top-down” focus when it comes to postwar educational reforms. “Bottom-up” perspectives were found in secondary literature, but not specifically of teachers. Nonetheless, many of the experiences shown in chapter 3 matched the experiences of general Japanese people.

What set teachers apart from many other Japanese people, was that teachers were still responsible for their students at the time of defeat. As such they had to spring to action sooner than non-teachers. Nagai and Kanazawa also felt a more keen sense of war responsibility, than many Japanese, because they felt guilty towards their (ex-)students, for teaching them war propaganda and assuring them that Japan would win a just war.

Even though these reforms were meant to democratise and demilitarise education, the analysis of experiences the three teachers covered in this thesis show that there were many circumstances that contributed to this process than the mere contents of the education children received in the direct postwar era. Kobayashi Hana and Nagai Kenji described how their struggles with class, gender and age influenced their ability to provide the quality of education they wished to provide, and how they saw these issues reflected on their students as well. They had to navigate the new educational landscape with little to no guidance from either SCAP or the Ministry of Education, had to come to terms with their own war responsibility and convey to their students that what they had been taught so far had been wrong. Kanazawa, a more seasoned teacher, turned to politics after encountering the poverty faced by war orphans.

These teachers clearly struggled with their own circumstances, preventing them from teaching to the best of their abilities. Rather than the contents of the educational reforms, the teachers struggled with the lack of communication about the educational reforms from SCAP and the Ministry of Education. They felt that the most important thing for students was for their socioeconomic circumstances to improve, for them not to have to worry about food, umbrellas, whether they can afford further education or are limited in their options for the future based on their socioeconomic background or sex.

As this thesis has shown, there is a wealth of knowledge to be found in a bottom-up approach to consequences of the postwar educational reforms. Rather than generalise the opinions of whole groups, it pays to at times focus on individual experiences. For future research a larger number of diaries of teachers can be analysed, perhaps finding other

¹¹⁸ Kanazawa, 1967. 71-73.

perspectives and social issues aside from socioeconomic, gender and age. A larger sample size for teachers from different areas of Japan could also prove to uncover fascinating differences. Doing so might uncover more grassroot innovations than described in this thesis. Doubtlessly, teachers all over Japan used all their creativity and innovation to provide the highest quality of education they were capable of at the time.

Bibliography

Buruma, Ian. 1994. "Textbook Resistance" *The Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux. 189-201.

Dierkes, Julian. 2010. *Postwar History Education in Japan and the Germanys: Guilty Lessons. A Study of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University*. London [etc.]: Routledge.

Dower, John W. 1999. *Embracing Defeat : Japan in the Wake of World War II*. New York: Norton/The New Press. 244-251.

Hashimoto Akiko. 2015. *The Long Defeat : Cultural Trauma, Memory, and Identity in Japan*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 84-118.

Kanazawa Kaichi. 1967. *Aru shōgakkō-chō no kaiso*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten. 40-74.

Kobayashi Hana. 1997. *Ikusa to ai to: Josei kyōshi no senchū sengo nikki*. Tokyo: Tokyo Shinbun Press. 138-218.

Kumagai Kazunori. 1984. *Gakusei kaikaku no shakai-gaku: Gakkō o dō suru ka*. Tokyo: Yushindo Kobunsha: 7-27.

Nagai Kenji. 1997. *Kyōshi wa haisen dō mukaeta no ka: Kunō to mosaku no hibi— 2-Nenkan no kyōiku nisshi*. Tokyo: Kyōiku shiryō shuppan-kai. 85-280.

Nakanome Naoaki. 1996. "Sengo no kyōka kyōiku 50-nen: Shakaikakyōiku". *Sodai Kyoiku Kenkyu* 5: 83-91.

Nozaki Yoshiko. 2008. *War Memory, Nationalism, and Education in Postwar Japan, 1945-2007 : The Japanese History Textbook Controversy and Ienaga Saburo's Court Challenges*. Routledge Contemporary Japan Series ; 20 291529852. London [etc.]: Routledge. 1-25.

Tawara Yoshifumi. 2020. *Kabā sengo kyōkasho undō-shi*. Tokyo: Heibonsha. 42-50.

Thakur, Yoko H. 1995. "History Textbook Reform in Allied Occupied Japan, 1945–52." *History of Education Quarterly* 35, no. 3: 261-278.

Yoshimi, Yoshiaki & Mark, Ethan. 2015. *Grassroots fascism*. New York: Columbia University Press. 232-256.