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Abe Isô (1865-1949) and His Views on Education

MASAKO GAVIN, Bond University

Many intellectuals in the late Meiji period were dissatisfied with the trend at that time towards state-oriented education. They hoped for a 'spiritual revolution' that would go beyond institutional change and would reform basic habits of thought and reshape patterns of behaviour.[1] Abe Isô, one of the most eminent intellectuals of the day, believed in a liberal approach to education and opposed the trend towards state-oriented education and the egocentric approach that superceded it. This paper studies his views on education, and in particular his response to *tokuiku* (the national moral teaching).

Abe is one of the few eminent thinkers whose intellectual activities lasted over the Meiji (1868-1912), Taishô (1912-1926) and Shôwa (1926-1989) eras and his views are important to an understanding of educational issues during this pivotal period

[1] Kenneth B Pyle, *The New Generation in Meiji Japan: Problems of Cultural Identity 1885-1895*, 24-25.

in the intellectual history of modern Japan. His thoughts on education are significant because they were formed in response to national 'moral teaching', which remained the guiding principle of Japanese education until the end of WWII. However, they have been largely ignored by those who have studied the legacies of his vast and diverse intellectual output. While a few studies, both in Japanese and in English, shed light on his role as an early socialist, a Christian pacifist and a politician, they have failed to explore the significant intellectual territory marked out by his writing on educational reform.[2] This oversight is compounded by the fact that his extensive writings have not been compiled into a comprehensive collection but only exist as a few selected works. A list of Abe's publications, in *Abe Isô sono chosaku to shôgai* (Abe Iso: His life and works)(1964), edited by the Waseda University Press, offers a clearer picture of the sheer size of his intellectual output. In fact, many of his works are now housed in 'rare collections' at such institutions as Waseda and Doshisha universities. As such they are not available on inter-library loans, which makes it exceedingly difficult for overseas

[2] See my 'Abe Isô and New Zealand as a Model for New Japan', *Japan Forum*, 16 (3), Autumn 2004 (forthcoming), for a further examination of Abe's early socialist thought.

researchers to access them.

In his article 'Abe Isô the Utility Man', Cyril Powles claims, 'Abe attempted to escape the conflict [between active socialists vs parliamentary/Christian socialists] by resorting to social education as a gradual means of changing individual relations and attitudes'. He further maintains that Abe's view of socialism needs to be evaluated in the light of its long-term influence on social reform, as well as its immediate effect on the society of the day.[3]

Firstly, this paper discusses Abe's criticism of the trend towards state-oriented education, its conventional, authoritarian method of teaching morality, which he argued, failed to inspire students to serve the community and which exercised considerable ideological control. Secondly, it presents an overview of Abe's thoughts on education, central to which was his belief that spiritual independence was only possible through a liberal approach to education. Finally, this paper studies his

[3] Cyril Powles, 'Abe Isô the Utility Man', 164-165.

recommendations for rectifying perceived flaws in the existing educational system. It will be clear from this analysis that Abe hoped that educational reform would result in a positive transformation of society.

Introduction

Abe was born into the samurai class in its declining days and became concerned about poverty and social inequality as a child. He converted to Christianity in 1881 while studying at Doshisha (the present Doshisha University)[4] and then became a socialist after reading *Looking Backward,* a utopian novel by Edward Bellamy (1850-1898), while studying at Hartford Theological Seminary in the United States. Upon returning to Japan in 1895, he began proposing socialist solutions to the country's 'social problem'. At that time such ideas were still new to the Japanese. Hence, Abe is generally regarded as a pioneering 'Christian socialist', someone who promoted socialism at the turn of the twentieth century in Japan.[5]

[4] Japan's first English school founded in 1875 by Niijima Jô (1843-1890), a fervent Christian.
[5] However, the government's suppression of dissenting opinion was so severe that Abe eventually ceased

Writing the manifesto of Japan's first social democratic party, Abe demanded free education for all.[6] He believed that the primary goal of education was the individual refinement of each citizen. The course of one's life, he claimed, was largely determined by the education one received. Therefore, education should be available to all regardless of gender and should involve life-long learning about materialistic and spiritual matters that both enable people to earn a living, as well as heighten their ability to contribute as members of society.

Abe became a professor at Tokyo Senmon Gakkô (the present Waseda University) in 1899 and is perhaps best remembered today in Japan as the 'father of university baseball'. In 1901 Abe gathered together a group of students to practice baseball at Waseda University. In April 1905 – during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) - he took them to the United States to play against

actively propagating social reform. Despite this, he continued to advocate a socialist approach to education.

[6] Abe Isô, 'Socialism in Japan', in Marcus B Huish (ed.) *Fifty Years of New Japan kaikoku gojûnen shi*. London: Smith Elder & Co, 1909. Abe drafted the manifesto in collaboration with Kôtoku Shûsui (1871-1911) and Kinoshita Naoe (1869-1937) (Kimura, 104). The English translation is taken from his 'Socialism in Japan', edited in *Fifty Years of New Japan kaikoku gojûnen shi* .

American university students.[7] This put into practice his belief that it was essential for students to have 'hands-on' experience in sports in order to heighten their self-esteem and cultivate a sense of team spirit.

During the late-Meiji and Taisho periods, Abe opposed the state-oriented trend in education, particularly 'moral teaching' as promoted by scholars such as Inoue Tetsujirô (1856-1944), on the grounds that it had little application to everyday life. He argued that it was too ceremonial to imnbue students with a sense of "service" to the community and that it failed to help solve basic moral problems such as political corruption, public prostitution, debauchery, and public discord.

In 1928, after 29 years of teaching, Abe resigned from Waseda University in order to serve as the first chairman of *Shakai minshûtô* (the Socialist People's Party). While a politician, he strove to eliminate public prostitution, which he saw as a primary

[7] On departure, Abe advised his socialist colleagues that they should stop quarreling with the police . When students competed with Stanford University on 28 April 1905, Abe presented a seminar entitled 'Education in Japan' that same evening (Abe, 'Tobei nikki', 42). According to a librarian at Stanford, the library's rare collection has a record of Abe's visit. Personal communication, September 2002.

cause of moral disorder. In 1932 he reviewed the evolution of education in Japan since the early Meiji period and edited *Teikoku gikai kyôiku giji sôran* (Minutes of Parliamentary Meetings on Education)(vols 1-5).[8] This consisted of the minutes of parliamentary meetings on education between 1890-1927, a detailed analysis of the educational issues discussed, relevant documents and a listing of the intellectuals and politicians involved in the various debates. This little known but 'extensive' work bespeaks Abe's continuing dedication to educational reform.

Abe's Criticism of the State-oriented Trend in Education

In an attempt to arrest the moral uncertainty brought about by *bunmei kaika*, the swift transition from Confucian principles to 'western' civilisation, the Meiji government promulgated *kyôiku chokugo* (the Imperial Rescript on Education, hereafter referred to as the Rescript).[9] The Rescript represented the government's attempt to consolide an imperial ideology via the education system.

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[8] Abe Isô, *Teikoku gikai kyôiku giji sôran*, Vol. 1, 2.

[9] Prior to the promulgation of the Rescript, Mori Arinori (1847-1889), Japan's first Minister of Education, adopted military-style discipline at middle schools and teachers' colleges in order to encourage physical training in the schools. He believed that students should acquire not only knowledge but also 'unshakable inner strength', which could come only from both spiritual and physical discipline (Passin, *Society and Education in Japan*, 89-90).

Textbooks were brought under direct government control and teachers were forbidden to take part in political activities. School administration was tightly centralised under the control of the Ministry of Education.[10]

In order to clarify its message, the Ministry of Education appointed Inoue Tetsujirô (1856-1944), a professor of philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University, to write a commentary, *Chokugo engi* (1891).[11] In *Chokugo engi*, Inoue argued that the institution of the family functioned as an instrument of the state and emphasised a spirit of loyalty to the emperor. Subsequently, he claimed that Christianity and Japanese education were in conflict, that Christianity's asceticism and otherworldliness meant that it could not contribute to the progress of Japan.[12] Inoue believed

[10] Herbert Passin, *Society and Education in Japan*., 149.

[11] Inoue dominated the world of Japanese philosophy until he resigned from all posts in 1930. His commentary was widely used as an official textbook and sold over four million copies; making it far more influential than its numerous rivals (Davis, 8-10)

It is interesting to note that while Inoue was writing a series of *shûshin kyôkasho* (self-discipline textbooks), such as *Sonken kôwashû* (Lectures by Inoue Tetsujirô)(1902) and *Joshi shûshin kyôkasho* (Textbook for Self Discipline for Women)(1904), Abe was similarly occupied writing his *risô* (ideals) on self-discipline such as *Risô no hito* (Ideal Person)(1906), *Risô no seinen* (Ideal Youths)(1909) and *Fujin no risô* (Women's Ideals)(1910). Abe often used the word *risô* (ideal) as a punning *nom de plum*, Abe Risô instead of Abe Isô (Powles, 144).

Other textbooks by Inoue include *Sonken kôwashû* (Lectures by Inoue Tetsujirô), part 2 (1903), *Teisei joshi shûshin kyôkasho* (Revised Self-Discipline for Women) vol. 3 (1907), and *Rinri to kyôkasho* (Ethics and Textbooks) (1908).

[12] Inoue in Passin, *Society and Education in Japan*., 152. Uchimura Kanzô (1861-1930), a fervent Christian and Abe's contemporary, sparked a national controversy with so called *fukei jiken (lèse-majesté*) of 9 January

that a unified national moral was vital for the foundation of state prosperity in the rapidly-changing world order. For this goal to be achieved, the state-control over moral teaching was crucial and nothing - particularly not religion - could be allowed to interfere with the nation's spiritual solidarity. Schools and the traditional paternal social structure were tools to maintain a unified national essence, *kokutai*. Despite much criticism, the state-oriented interpretation of the Rescript was adopted nationwide. As we will see, Abe was one of the intellectuals who opposed it.

In 'Ikanishite shimin kyôiku o nasubeki ka' (How should public education be offered?), Abe argued that the family-state ideology did not instill in people a sense of obligation and 'service' to the community. He maintained that the teaching of individual morality, of the need to respect one's family and the imperial ancestors, was widely accepted throughout the country, but that

1891. Uchimura, then a lecturer at Dai ichi Kôtô Gakkô (the First Higher School), refused to pay obeisance to the imperial portrait at a ceremony for the reading of the Rescript. 'His stand was interpreted as disrespectful to the Emperor and almost the whole country condemned him as a traitor. After this incident Christianity began to lose much of the ground which it had gained among intellectuals' (Passin, 152).
It is noteworthy that Abe [had] encouraged missionaries in Japan to set up their own universities [so that Christianity there would not be disrespected in light of the *Kyôiku to shûkyô no shôtotsu*, clash between education and religion] (Abe, 'Daigakkô to senkyôshi', 6).

it failed to teach people a sense of social accountability. In illustrating this, Abe claimed that 'people in Japan vandalised public parks, temples, shrines and schools, urinated and spat on streets, and threw rubbish on the roadside'.[13] While not opposed to state 'moral' teaching, Abe was concerned that it focused exclusively on the individual's paternal obligations and neglected any notion of the need for people to care for others in the community.

Abe was not opposed to morality or moral teaching per se, his opposition was to the kind of self-serving morality that the state was propagating through the education system. In *Jishûron* (Self-Discipline), he reiterated that virtues such as loyalty and filial piety should not be the sole basis for moral teaching. Cramming a citizen with knowledge of this form of morality has, he claimed, little everyday application and only becomes relevant when propagating 'patriotic' fervour in a time of war.[14] The essence of moral teaching, according to Abe, was its ability to promote spontaneous practice of one's concept of good. Different

[13] Abe Isô, 'Ikanishite shimin kyôiku o nasubeki ka', 2-3.
[14] Abe Isô, *Jishûron*, 217.

individuals may hold to different beliefs as to what is good, therefore moral teaching, Abe argued, should be about facilitating people's various beliefs and the actions that flow from them.

Unlike Inoue, who opposed the inclusion of religious instruction in school curricula, Abe argued that it could offer students spiritual guidance. A memoir of Nitobe Inazô (1862-1933), Abe's contemporary, voiced the concern of many Japanese Christian intellectuals at the time:

> 'Do you mean to say', asked the venerable professor [the lamented [sic] M. de Laveleye of Belgium], 'that you have no religious instruction in your schools?' On my replying in the negative, he suddenly halted in astonishment, and in a voice which I shall not easily forget, he repeated 'No religion! How do you impart moral education?'.[15]

Nitobe's apprehension might well have reflected that of other

[15] Inazô Nitobe, *Bushidô*, xi.

Christian intellectuals of the time, including Abe, who suggested students did not have any foundation for their own moral conduct.

In *Risô no hito* (An Ideal Person), Abe claimed that only personal devotion to the community could inspire people, as exemplified in the lives of Christians such as Father Damian (1840-1889) and in literary works such as *Vicar of Wakefield* by Oliver Goldsmith (1730-1774) and *Les Miserables* by Victor Hugo (1802-1885).[16] Without such spiritual input, practical subjects such as chemistry, geography and physics, would not cultivate a society in which 'traditional' moral values were extended beyond the individual's paternal obligation.

Education Without a Compass to Guide People

It was not only the content of state-oriented moral teaching that troubled Abe but also the method with which it was taught. He believed that the long hours of sitting, learning by rote the precepts of moral teaching sacrificed the students' physical development and general health. This method did not help instill

[16] Abe Isô, *Risô no hito*, 32, 48-52.

students with care for others. It emphasised the passing of exams over actual understanding, and in resulted fierce competition for university places and good graduate jobs.[17]

Another shortcoming lay in the school curricula, which did not include subjects such as elocution and music. Abe believed such subjects would help cultivate the character of students. Parliamentary representatives in Japan were, he claimed, inept at debating and tended to resort to more physical forms of persuasion and political corruption. In contrast, in England, elocution was taught at primary schools in order to prepare children to be active members in a constitutional democracy. Abe saw the lack of musical education as another serious shortcoming, one that represented a missed opportunity to expand and foster students' sense of empathy.[18] In short, none of the subjects taught under the Rescript developed and refined students' feelings and their emotional responses to the world. Thus, Abe believed the

[17] Abe Isô, *Jishûron*, 105. Abe recommended that the number of textbooks used in schools be reduced and that those that remained be replaced with new ones every three months. It was not interesting for students to read the same book over a lengthy period; it took them almost a year to read so many books concurrently. Instead, he argued, it would be better for them to read fewer books in less time (Abe, 'Dokusho no kairaku', 6).

[18] Abe Isô, *Jishûron*, 21-24, 164.

whole school experience failed to develop students' capacities for independent thinking and thereby restricted their abilities to contribute to society after graduation.

For Abe, the Ministry of Education had clearly failed to fulfill its role as a 'compass' for guiding people.[19] Despite the crisis caused by a shortage of educational institutions, the Ministry postponed establishing the Kyushu and Tohoku universities for financial reasons. In 'Kyôikukai no zatsuji' (Miscellaneous Matters in Education) Abe proposed an immediate solution. He suggested that the government should sell a man-of-war and establish more universities with the proceeds. This would, he hoped, help abolish the culture of academic clannishness that dominated the few universities already established.[20] He argued that the military budget should not exceed those of education and industrialisation.[21] Although private universities had emerged to accommodate students rejected by the over-crowded and under-funded public universities, the introduction of the unified

[19] Abe Isô, 'Shiritsu gakkô to shite Tetsugukkan', 5.
[20] Abe Isô, 'Kyôikukai no zatsuji', 11.
[21] Abe Isô, 'Hanbatsu seifu to kajin no seitô', 7.

principle of education brought these institutions more or less under the control of the Ministry. As such, they were in effect proxy-public universities.[22] Thus, it deprived private institutions of *zaiya no seishin*, the spirit to be free from governmental authority.

Another shortcoming of the education system was evident in its failure to cultivate critical political thinking. In 'Gakusha no dokuritsu to Monbushô no kanshô' (Scholars' Independence and Intervention by the Ministry of Education), Abe claimed that the Ministry's fervent patriotism precluded political debate. This was well illustrated by the Ashio Coppermine incident, which focussed national attention on the issue of industrial pollution at a time when Japan was undergoing the process of rapid industrialisation. The discharge from the Ashio mine contaminated a nearby river and the soil surrounding it and thereby impoverished the local farmers. The government ignored all calls to regulate the mine and all appeals for compensation. Such appeals were led by individual intellectuals like Tanaka Shôzô (1841-1913), who

[22] Abe Isô, 'Shiritsu gakkô to shite Tetsugukkan', 5-6.

devoted his life to helping the ruined villagers. While the government privileged the interests of the mining company over those of the people, professors at the Imperial University failed to enter the debate, one imagines because they feared for their own employment security.[23]

Abe pointed out that the main reason given for politics not being taught at secondary schools was that teachers considered it immoral for them to discuss socio-political issues. For example, *Kakusei kai* (the Purity Association, of which Abe was a director) attempted to survey the headmasters of one hundred and fifty junior and senior high schools about terminating public prostitution but failed to receive a single response. Abe questioned how the government could supposedly encourage moral teaching on the one hand, while on the other deprive educators of the right to criticise the source of moral disorder.[24] This revealed a contradiction at the heart of the state-oriented education system. If students were unable to criticise and debate current political issues, how could they possibly discern what was best for the

[23] Abe Isô, 'Gakusha no dokuritsu to monbushô no kanshô', 5.
[24] Abe Isô, 'Kyôikuka to jiji mondai', 11-12.

future of the society. Abe saw freedom of thought and speech as vital to the ability of a society to reorient itself if and when the state set it on a wrong course.

Abe's Liberal Approach to Education

In 'Gakkô seikatsu to shakai seikatsu' (School Life and Society), Abe maintained that the principal goal of education was to closely link school and society. In the West, school education meant a 'commencement', a foundation upon which students would build in order to earn their living. Students in England and the United States divided their daily activities into three categories: study, sport, and social activity. They were never over-burdened with studies and thus enjoyed learning and continued to study even after leaving school.[25]

In *Risô no hito* (An Ideal Person), Abe cited the case of an American student at Washington University in Seattle, who after having been a volunteer soldier in the Philippines, stopped over in Japan to do some sightseeing before returning to the United States. While

[25] Abe Isô, 'Gakkô seikatsu to shakai seikatsu'.

at university he had worked whenever he needed to pay tuition fees and was thus able to continue studying. After his Asian sojourn, he returned to his alma mater and resumed his studies.[26] If, Abe maintained, the time limit for 'graduation' was removed in Japan, then Japanese studnets would not have to compete so fiercely for university places and later for jobs.[27]

Furthermore, Abe cited the situation in Germany where a certificate of high school graduation was not required for university entry. Upon completion of high school, students could go to any university and study whatever they liked, then move on to another tertiary institution where a different discipline that took their interest was being offered. When students felt they were ready for a change, they simply moved again. Subjects which were no longer of interest to students ceased to be offered, thus forcing professors and lecturers to work hard to maintain the quality of their teaching and student numbers.[28] Abe advocated that Japan adopt a similarly flexible regulations regime and the 'live

[26] Abe Isô, *Risô no hito*, 102-103.
[27] Abe Isô, 'Gakkô seikatsu to shakai seikatsu', 21.
[28] Abe Isô, *Risô no hito*, 28-30; Abe Isô, 'Gendai no seinen wa naze genki ga naika', 31.

to learn', student-oriented attitude to education. This, he believed, would lessen the competitive pressure on Japanese students.

Abe's liberal approach to education was also evident in his thoughts on women's education. While women were expected to be *ryôsai kenbo* (a good wife and wise mother) and thus maintain their family in the patriachal order, Abe argued that if well educated, women could continue learning by reading books and newspapers even when at home raising a family. While remaining committed to domestic duties, they could still cultivate a broader understanding of the places they had visited and/or read of.

In the West, a housewife could continue her intellectual work at home as was the case with Harriet Stowe (1811-1896), the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.[29] Abe claimed that if women were not well-educated and became isolated from the wider world and too preoccupied with childcare and household duties, they risked losing touch with current world affairs and would then become

[29] Abe Isô, *Fujin no risô*, 197.

unwanted senior citizens or meddling mothers-in-law. Instead of spending money on bridal preparations, Abe asserted, young people would be better off investing their money in educating themselves.[30] It is noteworthy that Abe did not advocate the traditional family living arrangement, but recommended that, if they could afford it, married couples should live separately from their parents.[31] Unlike Inoue, who envisaged family as 'an instrument of the state', of the status quo, Abe envisaged it as a means of social transformation.

Again, contrary to convention, Abe believed that all schools should be co-educational, that if they were then many young people would educate each other about the opposite sex. Separating girls from boys at primary school, he argued, robbed them of an opportunity to socialise in a natural way and made them overly curious about the opposite sex. In the United States, for example, most schools were coeducational and students met naturally and sat at meal tables together. Simply from being together, they

[30] Abe Isô, 'Watashi no musume o kyôiku suru hôshin', 19-22.
[31] In retrospect, Abe mourned the death of his first daughter who had not liked the classical music lessons her grandparents had given her. Since this incident, he believed that young couples should live separately and bring up their family in the environment where they could avoid too much interference from their parents (Abe, *Kodomo hon'i no katei*)

observed and developed a knowledge of the opposite sex. This encouraged them to assess a potential partner's personality rather than allowing physical appearance to be the sole source of attraction. Abe believed such early co-mingling would instill young people with the confidence to wait for a suitable companion rather than rushing into marriage with just anyone.[32]

Unfamiliarity with the opposite sex was causing serious problems in early twentieth century Japan. There had been frequent suicides by couples who arrived at an impasse simply because they could not bear to continue living together.

> Double suicide is rare in the West because couples consider marriage only after becoming fully aware of the responsibilities involved. In comparison, our young appear unready for marriage.[33]

Opportunities to socialise with the opposite sex from an early

[32] Abe Isô, *Fujin no risô*. 254; Abe Isô, 'Danjo kongô kyôiku o shuchô su', 8; Abe Isô, 'Danjo kyôgaku to danjo kôsai', 8.
[33] Abe Isô, *Fujin no risô*, 254.

age was, Abe asserted, an essential element of education. He was convinced that co-education was advantageous to a society during the transition from a feudal morality to a modern Western one. He also recommended that parents should set up occasions for children to socialise with a mix of friends at home, inviting them for meals and so forth.

Abe's Recommendations for Educational Reform

Abe believed that it was essential to readjust the country's educational objectives in order to foster spiritual independence in its students. His first recommendation aimed at providing a community perspective to school curricula. In 'Ikanishite shimin kyôiku o nasubeki ka' (How should public education be offered?), he claimed that educators should encourage students to form autonomous bodies, through which they would undertake citizenship roles.[34] Such bodies would provide opportunities for students to work together in solving basic moral problems. It was hoped that the work done through them and the associations they established

[34] Abe Isô, 'Ikanishite shimin kyôiku o nasubeki ka', 6-7. For example, Abe himself belonged to *hyakusai kai* (the 100 years club) and hoped to increase his longevity and thereby his chances of attaining greater enlightenment. He believed that geniuses that had achieved great things in short lives may have achieved even greater things if they had lived longer (Abe, 'Hyakusaikai no ki', 8). For him, such ongoing self-cultivation was the means by which one might achieve spiritual enlightenment.

might continue long after the students had left school.

Abe's second recommendation was that the Ministry of Education be abolished and replaced by a bureau of education within the Ministry of Home Affairs.[35] He also advocated that more public libraries should be built throughout the country and that scholars should publish their ideas and regularly present them in public seminars.[36] These measures would provide essential opportunities for continuing the education of people after they leave school.

Abe's third recommendation was that team sports, particularly baseball, be introduced into the curricula. In 'Yo no yakyûkan' (My View on Baseball), Abe pointed out the specific advantages of baseball:

> Not many sports have more strength than baseball, which fosters attentiveness, team spirit, decision-making and does not require extreme physical exercise but only short

[35] Abe Isô, 'Gakusha no dokuritsu to monbushô no kanshô' , 6.
[36] Abe Isô, *Risô no hito*, 32 -33.

sprints.[37]

He envisaged that such casual group activities would promote team spirit and provide an opportunity to overcome clannishness. For example, Oxford University, which recognised the importance of physical development, allowed team members to choose a captain, whose instructions they then followed. Sport taught students to cooperate with each other and how to observe rules.

Abe was further convinced of this theory when in 1905 he took the first student baseball team to the United States. Watching the games with American students, he was confident that his students would not only quickly improve their basic baseballing skills, but also gradually develop the sophisticated deportment demonstrated by their U.S. counterparts:

> They are relaxed and enjoy the games, without caring about their outcome. It will take at least ten or twenty years [of worthwhile perseverance] for my

[37] Abe Isô, 'Yo no yakyûkan', 91-95.

students to learn such demeanor.[38]

It was also hoped that baseball would help to mitigate the country's obsession with winning. Prior to Abe's departure for the United States, some journalists said they would eagerly await reports of the team's wins but not of its losses.[39] Abe believed the Japanese needed to learn the spirit of 'fair-play' if they were to ever free themselves from the ego-centric materialism of the time.

Abe believed that if Japanese people were as enthusiastic about sport as Anglo-Saxons were, they would be less susceptible to unhealthier temptations. The saying goes, 'a man that strives in sport is temperate in all things'.[40] According to Abe, facing physical challenges and participating in games might also help refine the Japanese character, which in turn might ultimately help Japan become a "first-class" nation.[41]

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[38] Abe Isô, 'Waseda daigaku no yakyû senshu', 19.
[39] Abe Isô, 'Yakyûkai ni taisuru shin kibô', 46.
[40] Abe Isô, 'Hyakusaikai no ki', 3-4.
[41] Abe Isô, 'Waseda daigaku no yakyû senshu', 19.

Abe's final major recommendation regarding education was to replace universities with centres dedicated to life-long learning. He argued that secondary school education should be compulsory, but that Japan should adopt the German approach to higher education, whereby a graduation certificate, rather than exam results would become the prerequisite for university entrance.[42]

> The major cause of deadlock in our education system stems from the fact that one's qualification is judged by a piece of paper issued by a prestigious institution.[43]

This was symptomatic of a stagnated society and, for Abe, illustrated the need for reform at the very heart of the education system.

In his article "Risô no hito" (An Ideal Person), Abe maintained that Oxford and Cambridge universities had already adopted the principles of a liberal education. Doshisha University was another such institution, producing model scholars such as Onishi Hajime

[42] Abe Isô, 'Gendai no kyôiku', 1.
[43] Abe Isô, 'Gendai no seinen wa naze genki ga naika', 31.

(1864-1900), a fervent Christian intellectual. At least Abe was encouraged that Okuda Yoshito [1860-1917], the Minister of Education in 1913, held discussions with eminent religious leaders, thereby tacitly acknowledging a religious factor in spiritual education[44]. In essence, Abe believed that education should stimulate the well-balanced development of both mind and body throughout a person's life. It was equally important that acquired knowledge be passed on to others for the betterment of people in need in the community.[45] Thus, Abe believed that a nationwide reform of education needed to be implemented in order to revitalise the population and relieve the young from a persistent dearth of food for thought.

Conclusion

In *Hawai Nikkei imin no kyôikushi – Nichibei bunka sono de'a'I to sôkoku* (The Educational History of Japanese Immigrants in Hawai'i), Okita Yukuji maintains that Japan's interest in

[44] Abe Isô, 'Shûkyô no dokuritsu', 54. Abe stressed that this was pleasing especially, after two decades of fierce accusations directed at Japanese Christians, instigated by a professor [Abe was most likely referring to Inoue Tetsujirô] at the Imperial University.
He claimed that people had been too materialistic and too preoccupied with obtaining the basic necessities to read self-discipline books, which had been popular among the youth a decade earlier, but no longer (Abe, 'Gendai no seinen wa naze genki ga naika', 29).
[45] Abe Isô, 'Gendai no seinen wa naze genki ga naika', 29-31.

international affairs intensified when the country was faced with the so called 'post war state' following the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), many intellectuals advocated internationalism and emphasised the need for a more communal morality, while others opposed change from the past.[46] While Abe's thoughts on education can be seen as representative of the former, those of Inoue, were representative of the latter.

As we have seen, Abe did not oppose the moral teaching *per se,* but argued that the way it was being taught failed to prepare people for the exigencies of the future, for their membership in a modern state. He believed in an education system that would make his contemporaries aware of a new social order, one that extended beyond the family-state boundary and that encouraged citizens to engage in communal, collaborative activities. His recommendations for educational reform underscore his belief in the need for Japan to gain international respect and acceptance as a modern society. By studying this unexplored territory in the landscape of Abe's thought, this article has demonstrated the significance of his

[46] Okita Yukuji, *Hawai Nikkei imin no kyôikushi - Nichibei bunka sono de'a'i to sôkoku*, 73.

contribution to educational debates during this pivotal period in the intellectual history of modern Japan.

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