

Reform Leadership and Vision in Japanese Education

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I. Introduction Truth

On November 28, 1998, I was the guest lecturer at Beppu University's English Language and Literature Department's annual gathering. I was invited to lecture on Reform Leadership and Vision in Japanese Education. I am convinced that some of the students and professors in the audience did not want to hear what I had to say then. I do not think that they wanted to hear it because I told the truth about reform, vision and leadership in Japanese Education. I spoke the truth as I understood it to be because it is the logic of my nature and the logic of my experience. As an educator I know that sometimes the truth hurts so I hoped that they did not cringe at hearing the truth. In fact, I had hoped that they would rejoice in what I had to say. As a trained futurist and an educator I told them the truth as I believe it to be. I did so because I have faith in the truth as a purifying experience.

At the entrance of the Beppu University is a stone monument upon which is engraved the words *VERITAS LIBERAT*. These words are good words. They are strong words. They are words to live by. *VERITAS* means truth and *LIBERAT* means liberty. Put together they form truth and liberty. In other words the "truth shall set you free."

Am I a slave who needs to be set free? Are Japanese students enslaved? The truth is that yes I am a slave. I am a slave in my search for truth and knowledge. Are Japanese students slaves in their quest for truth and knowledge? Generally I do not think so. Japanese students may not be slaves to their quest for truth and knowledge, but they are slaves to the Japanese Educational system. I do not think that any Japanese students

would argue that they are slaves to the Japanese Educational system. However, some educational bureaucrats, secure in the system, may object. What is the truth? Why do we search for knowledge? Are the words *VERITAS LIBERAT* the truth of Beppu University? The truth of Japan? Or is it the truth as I believe it to be. For these reasons I welcome and applaud the efforts of the Japanese Ministry of Education in their nationwide reform efforts.

I make this point because before I came to Japan I thought that I knew the truth about Japan's system of higher education. However, the truth about Japan and its educational system as I understood it to be has changed. The truth has changed because I have changed. My mind has opened and the truth as I believed it to be has changed. It is a revelation to me. My truth has changed and continues to change as long as I experience Japan. The truth comes through each new experience that I have.

II. The Truth and Japan's University students

I must declare here and now that I make some generalizations based on my observations of Japanese university students. However, I also have some teaching foundations for my observations. They come from the University of Hawaii where I taught for seven years. In Hawaii I taught international relations, future studies, public policy and political science to undergraduates. I also taught at the University of Hawaii's Special English program. In this program I taught basic English conversation to Japanese university students. These students came from schools from various areas of Japan. The schools included Kanazawa Institute of Technology, Minami Kyoto, Nihon Kogakuin, Osaka University of Economics and Law and, last but not least, Beppu University where I have been teaching for almost two years.

I seek the truth because I too have been influenced by the mass media,

historical concepts and prejudice that exist about Japan and its educational system. Because I am an educator and a futurist, I seek the truth about university students. Before I came to Japan to teach the truth that I accepted about Japanese university students was prevalent to many instructors in Hawaii. I presumed that Japanese university students were exemplary students. In fact I believed that Japanese university students always did their homework. Japanese university students proofread their work. Japanese university students always attend class and I would never have an attendance problem. I would never have a problem getting Japanese university students to speak in my conversation classes. All Japanese university students are eager, attentive, and are always prepared to speak. This is the truth. At least it was the truth as I believed it to be before I came to Japan to teach Japanese students.

However what is the truth from my experience about Japanese university students. Well, to be perfectly honest, what I just wrote about Japanese university students is not the truth. Are Japanese university students lazy? Yes, some of them are lazy. Do Japanese university students always do their homework? No, Japanese university students do not always do their homework. In fact, the truth is that some Japanese university students do not do any homework at all. Do they always attend class? No, some Japanese university students do not attend class on a regular basis. Do I have an attendance problem with Japanese university students? Yes, I have an attendance problem with some Japanese university students. Do I have a problem getting them to speak in my conversation classes? Again the answer is yes.

Is what I am writing the truth for all Japanese university students? No, of course not. There are some Japanese university students especially here at Beppu University that are excellent students. They are eager, attentive, and are always prepared. They work hard and study hard and do it with style and conviction. But the truth is that their numbers are terribly small.

Distressing to me is the number of Japanese students with whom I have an attendance problem with. My lecture may have shocked some teachers and students in the audience but I did not think so. They are professors and university students who are experienced with the system. They knew that I spoke the truth. My words may have given the administration second thoughts about their wisdom in hiring me. But, I believe that if I can be true to myself then I cannot be false to others. *VERITAS LIBERAT* the truth will set us all free.

Seeking the truth and understanding the truth about Japanese education is, in part, the motivation that brought me to Japan to teach in the first place. Visionary Native American medicine men, "holy men," from the Apache Tribes in Arizona and New Mexico have said that "words have power". "Good words" bring good power and "bad words" bring bad power. For example "I love you" are good power words. "I hate you" are bad power words. The words "I love you" can move people to heights that are unreachable to them at other times. The words "I hate you" can unleash all the bad and terrible forces in the world. I truly believe this. It happens to be the truth consistent with the logic of my experience.

Like Native American medicine men, I believe in vision and the power of the imagination. I believe that words have power. Because I believe words have power, I have all my students repeat these three phrases in all of my classes. The first phrase is "I am not a lazy Japanese student." This phrase is followed by "English is not a difficult language to learn" and "I speak English very well." I believe that these power phrases give the students a positive perspective on learning English. A clear English language philosophy that can make a positive change in their minds. I do this because they use unfavorable power words everyday. An example of defective power words and phrases in my class are "I can't speak English.", "English is too difficult for me to learn." "I will never learn to speak English." Once these words are expressed they send a negative power message to the brain. This

negative message is self defeating. The brain takes these negative words seriously. Many of the students believe these words and the result is that they have a poor attitude toward learning English and as a result poor English language skills.

In the Navajo Indian language there is no general word for "divine" but there is a word that means "that which we know. "Divining, common to most cultures, is the skill of gaining inner knowledge, or wisdom beyond the five senses. Those who have this ability are regarded as practitioners of prophecy: for example Shamans. (Houseman, G. 1987, p.83) The American Indian has discovered himself in his imagination over a period of untold generations. He understands himself more clearly than perhaps any other people given his situation in time and space.

His heritage has always been rather closely focused, centered upon the landscape as a particular reality. Beyond this, the Native American has a particular investment in vision and in the idea of vision. You are familiar with the term "vision quest" for example. This is another essential idea to the Indian world view, particularly that view as it is expressed among the cultures of the Plains Indians. This is significant. I think we should not lose the force of the idea of seeing something or envisioning something in a particular way. I happen to think that there are two visions in particular with reference to man and his relationship to the natural world. One is physical and the other is imaginative, and we all deal in one way or another with these visions simultaneously. (Capps, 1976, p.81)

III. Japanese need for English conversation and desire to learn English

Despite these poor first impressions that I may have presented in terms of English language training in Japan, there is a real need and desire to learn on the part of individual Japanese students. They want to be successful in their English language ability. They know that English language skills are not only desirable but crucial to their future success for the Japanese people,

and the country of Japan. This is also why I welcome the Ministry of Education's' call for reform.

Why is learning the English language important to the reform movement? First English is the most important second language in the world. It is the language of business, and diplomacy. It is a central means of communication in the world. I am glad however that I am not the only scholar saying this in Japan. Professor Martin Brennan, a world traveler and Asian scholar, recently taught in the Economics department at Oita University. Professor Brennan departed Japan after many years of teaching Economics and English to Japanese students and Japanese business people. He returned to King Alfred's University in Winchester England in late 1998. Where he continues to teach as part of their Japanese studies program.

On November 29, 1997, Professor Brennan delivered a lecture to the staff and students of Beppu University on the importance of Japanese people learning English. What Professor Brennan said was true then and is even truer now. It is generally known that English language training is increasing in the nations of Southeast Asia. He made the students aware that English is the most important second language for Japanese students to learn in the world. English language training is important to Southeast Asia because English is the global language of business. Globalization is a key word in terms of the future success of the world's economies. One could say that English language ability is the key to globalization, and thus a key to future success within it.

Multinational corporations and international financial markets depend on the English language to conduct business. The rapid spread of global culture and the expansion of English media networks make it imperative to understand and be proficient in the English language. More and more international travel and tourism depend on the use of the English language to conduct business. The English language is also especially significant in

the computer world. One needs to look no further than the Internet to understand this. Also English media networks like the BBC and CNN make it imperative to understand and be proficient in the English language. This need for the English language ability may not be true in the distant future, say fifty to one hundred years from now. But for now, it seems to be the only smart game in town.

The fact of the matter is that English language ability is the key to globalization, and thus a key to future success. "Other reasons for the Japanese to learn English is job promotion and travel abroad. At the high school level, intensive English study is needed to beat "Examination Hell" thus securing a place at a top university and consequently lifetime employment. However, I have found at the university level that the least likely practical reasons to learn English are contact with foreigners or love of study." (Gauthier. 1993, p.9).

Anyone in Japan who doubts the truth of these statements is mistaken. When a business man from Japan and a business man from Indonesia meet and conduct business, the language of choice is English. They speak English so as not to misunderstand each other. Professor Brennan mentioned travel industry management as an example for the need for English. Other than travel agents and tour guides do Japanese people expect ordinary people from India, France, Belgium, Ireland or New York state to speak Japanese? Of course not. But, at nearly all the travel destinations in the world you, can be sure that someone will be able to speak and understand English. The truth is that you will most likely be able to communicate to someone in English.

My command of the Japanese language is poor. In fact, I know little of the Japanese formal language. I can hardly say "good morning" and "hello". I am not proud of this deficiency but, the truth is that I do not need to speak Japanese to live in Japan. I have lived in Japan for just a little over two

years. Yet I have traveled far, I have traveled by train, plane and bus to many destinations in Japan. Consequently I have not found it difficult to travel nor to communicate with Japanese people. It is not hard because someone will communicate with me in English. I admit our communications are mostly elementary, and sometimes crude, but, English is still a basis for shared communications. I sometimes feel remorse that I have never been able to communicate fully my mind or my thoughts to these very kind Japanese people. Nevertheless we still manage to communicate. The problem is that I am educated to the need for the Japanese language, but I am not articulate in the use of the Japanese language.

The truth about Japanese education, especially in terms of English conversation, is that Japanese students do not need education. At least they do not need education in the traditional sense of English conversational education. Japanese students do not need education because they are already quite educated. The Japanese students know that English is the most important second language in the world. They know that English is the language of business, the language of diplomacy, and a central means of communications in the world. What Japanese students need is conversation training. Japanese students need to communicate their thoughts on a one to one basis. This is not to say that grammar and structure are not important nor needed. Of course grammar and structure are needed but, communications is best achieved through the spoken word.

So what can an average college English teacher do to motivate students. I have a few suggestions based on the logic of my experience. It is the less motivated students that I try to reach first. I try to impress upon them the importance of the English language on a world wide basis as well as on the personal level. I try to clarify the relevance of English conversation to them in terms of their skills on job market. A small percentage of self motivated students know this already and apply themselves to learning English. However I believe these students would be successful at any study. These

special students will be successful because they are self motivated.

IV Examination Versus Conversation

It is well known that Japanese students have been studying the English language for up to seven years. They begin at their junior high school and continue through high school. They have studied grammar and structure and some of them are quite good. However, the majority of can hardly write at an elementary high school level. Japanese students study English very hard to pass an examination to get into a good high school or college. They do not study English to communicate. This is ironic since the most important aspiration to study languages is to communicate, not to pass an examination.

It seems that what most distinguishes Japanese universities from their foreign counterparts (specifically the United States, system) is the difficulty of their entrance examinations. By this I understand it to be almost the opposite of the United States system in many ways.

A few years ago the term *yontou-goraku* (four-pass, five-fail) came into vogue with its warning that anyone getting more than four hours of sleep a night will fail the university entrance exams. Today the entrance exam process for the national universities has two parts: a standard exam given by the National Center for University Entrance Examinations which everyone takes on the same day and the university-specific exam administered by each school. More and more private universities are also requiring this standard test. The competition to get into the elite universities is very stiff, and admission to medical school is especially prized. Because students who failed to get into the school of their choice commonly study full-time as *rounin* for a year or two until they pass the exam, cram schools have developed into a major industry. (Gakken. 1997, p.131)

The book *100 Tough Questions for Japan*, addressed this difference, of,

systems question. "Compared to American universities where entering is easy and graduating is difficult at Japanese universities entering is difficult and graduation is easy." Itasaka (1997) Because of this stark contrast I did not expect that attendance would be a problem at a Japanese university. But it is. I found attendance by some of the Japanese to be abysmal. They came only when it suited them or when they wanted to see other students. Unfortunately, I discovered that this is not a new problem but a continuing one for Japanese universities. Itasaka continues, "Skipping classes is no problem. The students can always manage to receive credits for the course by borrowing someone notes or reading a book that covers the lectures." (Itasaka. 1996, p.203)

Examinations are everything in Japan. Nothing of significance is accomplished without one or more examinations. And the competition is always fierce. Hiroshi Kagawa (1997) seems to understand why there are "examination wars" in Japan. He says that the answer lies in the Japanese education system and the bureaucratic thought process behind it.

Authority in the Japanese education system is very centralized, especially when compared to the United States. The content of what is taught each year and grade levels are standardized throughout the entire country. Education policies are overseen and regulated in detail by the Ministry of Education. Under this system, all Japanese children must study a full range of subjects until they enter college and begin specialized areas of study. Even young people who want to study literature and work for a newspaper or publishing house must do well in math and science, or they won't get into a well known university. And if they don't get into a well-known university, their choice of potential employers is limited. The math studied at higher levels is differential calculus and integral calculus, which forces students to study rigorously for exams. (Kagawa. 1997, p.199)

Another constraint to Japanese who have studied English but still can not speak it is "examinations hell". The "reason is because the ultimate goal of

test preparation is getting into college, and what is learned for examinations is mostly useless information. Most people quickly forget what they learned after entering college and becoming an adult member of society." (Kagawa. 1997, p.205)

If you do not believe me or my logic, try and engage a typical Japanese student in a conversation in English. Any topic will do. You will find out that they are like me in that I can hardly say good morning in Japanese. If you try to go beyond good morning, they are lost and bewildered. They are at the same level as I am in my Japanese and I have not been educated in the Japanese language for six years. Do not believe me? Try for yourself.

V. Hawaii Exchange Students

Japanese students require comprehensive intensive English conversation training to be successful in today's global community. Recently 18 Beppu University students returned from a three, week summer school session in Hawaii. The summer school session was an intensive elementary review and study of the English language. I had the pleasure and the opportunity to escort these students to Hawaii. I have been their teacher for some time. I have taught the junior grade students for one year and four months and the freshmen for four months. I was their teacher and their escort and I lived with them for three weeks in the dorms. We ate together, we laughed together, and we even cried together. I can tell you right now they were not ready for the truth about their ability to speak the English language. The truth is that they could not communicate their needs in English at all. Before these students went to Hawaii they were confident of their English language skills. Several had said that they were ready and wanted to communicate. After they returned from Hawaii they were convinced that their English language skills were not good enough. They knew that they had to study harder, to study differently to increase their language ability.

The general purpose of the University of Hawaii Special English Program summer school was to teach foreign students the basics of the English language. The specific purpose was to get the Japanese students to speak the English language in class. There was also a practical side to teaching English to these students. Many of the students were in a foreign country for the first time and they needed to know how to ask for directions if they got lost or how to order lunch in a restaurant. This is not as easy as it sounds for Japanese because the Japanese students are not used to speaking "free form English" as it were. My suggestion is to use less rote memory from their primary school education and more natural use of the language. This traditional rote memory style is not flexible enough for a real conversation.

All foreign students in the University of Hawaii Special English Program are classified by their ability to speak English. The students are tested for language speaking ability. After testing they are classified as low, medium, or high levels of ability. The low level of speaking ability indicated to me that the students could say "yes" and "no" in English and understand a little of the English language. At the medium level of speaking ability students could speak a few words and generally understand a little of what was being communicated to them. The high level of speaking ability students could put several sentences together in response to a question and generally understand most of what was being communicated to them. An added bonus to this high level of conversation is the fact that they can better communicate their deeper thoughts to you.

As a teacher at the University of Hawaii it was a real challenge to get shy and insecure Japanese kids to talk to me, and function in an all English language environment. Generally speaking these Japanese students were attentive and very polite. They were also prepared to work. They would show up to class on time, have a notebook and a pen or pencil with which to write. They were eager to learn and excited to communicate with me. They

were very attentive to each and every lecture even if they could only understand a fourth of what I said. They were quiet at first, but after I gained their trust they were eager to perform and speak the English language as well as they could. Generally speaking that is all that one could ask for from a class of foreign students during a very short summer session. At the time I was impressed with the general ability of these students. Not until later did I realize that these students were hand picked to attend our summer session because they were the best students and not average students of the English language. When I came to Japan to teach I gradually realized that the average low ability students were the reality.

Even though I was impressed by their attendance and willingness to learn, I was surprised that the English language performance level was poor with many Japanese students. I was under the impression that Japanese students excelled in education, including but not exclusive to, their English language training. I found that the few students that did perform well were self-motivated. They sought to improve their English language skills independently of their formal education. I do not know if they did so to land a future job or for the joy of learning. These students usually spent their extra time in conversation with me during office hours. They endeavored to speak English with me at every opportunity.

VI. Current Problems that Japanese English language students have with English language training

So what are the current problems with Japanese English language students? In my evaluation there is no one problem but a combination of problems. The problem that tops the list is the one that most Japanese students usually cite. Most Japanese students say that they are shy. I want to make the point that Japanese students only *think* that they are shy. Notice that I emphasize the word "think." I think not. I have watched the same students who say they are shy yell and scream and laugh with each other during their free time out in the university courtyard. They are outgoing and loud and boisterous. They are confident in their Japanese environment. However, foreign language and foreign people scare them. They are not afraid in a physical sense but they are scared in their minds. They are afraid to make a mistake and they want to try to speak perfectly. This fear leads them into paralysis. In the time that it takes them to find the perfect word and communicate effectively to a gaijin (outsider) their golden opportunity to communicate is over.

The most important function of language is to communicate. The most effective means to communicate is to talk. You can of course write what you want to say and have the person that you want to communicate with read what you want. But there is no guarantee that the person you show your writing to can read English. There are also times when a pen and paper are not available. I tell my students over and over again, "Don't be afraid to make a mistake." Don't waste time trying to find the perfect word in the dictionary. If a student can not remember a perfect word, a simple word will do. I advise them to think of the kiss principle when speaking. I tell them that the letters K I S stands for keep it simple. When one communicates, keep it simple, do not get complicated and do not worry about making mistakes.

I have lived in many cities and two diverse states' California and Hawaii. I have traveled in many places in the United States. One summer I drove across the country from California to New York another summer from Mexico to Canada. I have traveled abroad from Vietnam to the Philippines. I have learned from the logic of my traveling experience that to make a mistake while trying to communicate is no problem. I do not worry about it. It is not the end of the world. The people are not going to condemn me to prison for making a mistake in trying to communicate with them. Most people one meets while traveling are sociable and they will usually appreciate the fact you are trying to communicate with them in their own language. Their usual response when you have trouble is to help you. I have found that it is better to make a mistake trying to communicate than not to communicate at all.

This leads me to problems two and three on my list of problems with Japanese students learning to communicate. It is the logic of my experience that **motivation** and lack of **confidence**, not skill or ability, are problems to Japanese students learning the English language. Most Japanese are not motivated to learn the English language. Why? One reason is because Japanese students do not have to learn English to exist in Japan. Thus many have no interest in English conversation. Some Japanese university students in my class honestly think that I am the only person they will ever have a chance to speak English to.

To be truthful, some constraints, to learning English conversation comes from institutionalization by the Japanese English language educational system. Other more serious constraints come from the students themselves. The students have a serious lack of confidence. This lack of confidence creates an adverse form of pressure on them. They hold themselves back. They are not confident in their verbal skills. They need confidence but they have never been encouraged to speak the language they are learning. This inability to converse with confidence destroys their will to communicate.

Why use their native intelligence or their acquired verbal skills if it is seen as not being important by the establishment? Why extend yourself trying to converse if it is of no use for the examination? Their verbal skills have been neglected at the upper levels of Japanese education for the sake of translation. These valuable verbal skills are dormant and will continue to lie dormant within them as long as the establishment sees no need for using them. If there is no perceived need for verbal skills, there will be no proper development of these skills. The status quo is king.

As you may have guessed I believe that a distinct but small percentage of college students are lazy this includes Japanese students. By lazy I mean they will not come to class if given a choice. If they do come to class it is only a place to get some sleep. They will not do homework. If they do homework it is half-hearted and not completed satisfactorily. A major source for this lack of motivation is their conviction of the truth and the logic of their experience. Their experience is that college is not the place to get an education but college is a place to play. It is a place to enjoy their life not study. They want to enjoy their college life before they graduate and get a job. They want to go out and get involved with the social aspects of their college life. This is the logic of their experience. Students spend a great deal of their high school life looking forward to a time when the extraordinary pressure that is placed on them to pass exams will be relieved. They believe that it is at college where they can heal their suffering of exam hell.

I suspect that this problem of playtime versus study will be with the Japanese educational system for a long time. However, one cannot say with any certainty that the same standard of lax behavior by some students at one university is true of all Japanese universities. "Of course, there are many Japanese universities where the students are required to study before they can be granted a diploma. But a great number of university students seem to be laid-back, perhaps stemming from the fact that the lectures are oftentimes carried out on a one-way basis on the part of the teacher."

(Itasaka. 1996, p.203) As a futurist I can not help but to think that this playtime versus study situation will have an adverse effect on future generations of Japanese students.

A large number of teen-agers are straining under Japan's grinding educational system notorious for rote learning and test taking. Some drop out because of the intensive pressure from an excessively strong desire still rooted in their parents' mind to advance their children much higher up Japan's hierarchical ladder to better schools and jobs. A recent survey disclosed that the number of school phobic junior high students absent from school for more than 50 days in 1986 was 29,694; that is 2.7 students per school. It also reported that there were 110 student suicides and 979 incidents of school violence. (Honna & Hoffer. 1989, p. 4)

Another important but incorrect part of this logic of student experience is that bad students actually expect to pass their classes despite the fact that they don't attend them. The students believe that skipping classes is no problem for them. They also think that they will pass because the professor will give credits to students who merely pass a paper exam. This logic may be true in history or the social sciences, but not true in a conversation class.

There was a student I once had that attended my class only four days the entire year. Each semester he attended the first day and the last day of class. He did no homework and was not there to participate in conversation or other class activities. The sad truth is that he actually expected to pass my class.

VII. Japanese English language Training.

Occasionally I ask some of my students why they are in the English language program in the university, and I am very surprised by their answers. I am surprised because most tell me that they want to be English teachers. Ordinarily I would applaud such a decision but I know these

students. They are not bad students or lazy students but they can not carry on even a basic conversation. If the future high school and junior high school English teachers in Japan can not speak English, then there is a significant problem for English conversation classes in the future. These future teachers are well trained in grammar and structure and test taking, not conversation. Herein lies the problem. The problem also involves the bureaucratic system in place in the Educational system in Japan which emphasizes grammar not language. This problem of retraining teachers to emphasize English conversation will take a serious amount of time, training, and money. English teachers who can not speak English are one of the problems in the future of Japanese English language education.

As important as it is to learn English, however, there are many constraints to the Japanese people doing so. I address but a few in this paper as there are dozens more. Evidence suggests that the Japanese system of education has to take some responsibility for a number of constraints which begin at the middle school level.

A representative example of the negative effects of this education system is the country's method of teaching English. Japanese children start learning English when they enter middle school, and continue until college graduation. Despite ten years of study, many people still can't handle spoken English. Why does this happen? Most of the English learned studying for test is through reading and writing. At test-taking time, language ability is evaluated solely through written methods. There is innumerable English language questions to answer in the heated examination wars. If you can't answer them, you can't get into college. Most of the questions have little relation to actual spoken English, but are detailed questions about grammatical principles, spelling, and so on. (Kagawa. 1997, p.205)

It is true some Japanese teachers have poor English language conversational skills. It is no wonder that some of their students end up with poor English conversational skills. But, it is not for the lack of trying to teach English language skills that this is so. "Schools in Japan start

teaching English from the first year of junior high school continuing at least until the third year of high school, but the students are unable to speak or to comprehend English. The reason lies in the fact that in the past, Japan relied heavily on the reading and the writing method of teaching English. During the Meiji period (1868-1912) onward, utmost priority was placed on reading the works written in English for the purpose of acquiring knowledge in order to catch up with the west." (Itasaka. 1996, p.205)

I agree with Itasaka when he states that one of the problems of English language training lies with the Ministry of Education's guidelines. "The guideline limits the English vocabulary that is to be learned during the three years of junior high school to about 1,000. Even the type of sentence structure that can be taken up in each grade level is stipulated, which greatly hampers language learning." (Itasaka, 1996, p.205) I do not know how to change this situation. I only hope that those in charge in the Ministry of Education will recognize the need for reform in English language training. I hope it becomes as important as the reforms they are calling for in the present university system.

Another constraint is that Japanese high school teachers are afraid to make mistakes in front of their students. This is understandable, but one should not care about making mistakes if only for the sake of the students. "We want to communicate with people, and the foreign speaker of a language is always going to make some mistakes. Nobody's counting them. We just want to hear what he wants to say. And if the teacher uses simple English in the classroom, the students will follow him. They will begin to speak better too." (Komatsu. 1997, pgs. 258 & 260)

With certainty Hiroshi Kagawa (1997) suggests that "..some Americans feel that the most boring English is spoken by Japanese English Teachers. These teachers excel at examination English but can't handle a real conversation. Their English lacks originality and spontaneity, and is

another example of the negative impact of examinations."

Mr. Kagawa also fosters the idea that at test-taking time, language ability is evaluated solely through written methods. Even if the test were oral, he suggests that the test answers would ignore well-known English nuances. "For example, the correct answer to the question: Write a phrase which has the same meaning as the Japanese expression: "I want you to go to Kyoto," is apparently "You had better go to Kyoto." In spoken English, however, the expression, "You had better go to Kyoto," conveys an urgency and a subtle sense of threat not in the original phrase."

No English conversation teacher in their right mind is against knowing English grammar and the proper usage of the English language, I certainly do not. Indeed, I encourage English grammar knowledge because it is a foundation of the English language, but it is also essential to understand that English grammar can not replace English conversation skills.

VIII. Personal back ground

I know what I am talking about when I say I know about bad and lazy students. I know because I failed in high school. I considered it to be a personal challenge to master a high school education, but I failed. Perhaps I failed in high school because I did not realize how exciting education and learning could be. Being a realist, I have to say that it had more to do with my having a learning disorder called dyslexia than anything else. For example I have a difficult time spelling without reversing the letters. The same condition is true in terms of reversing numbers. So I could not spell simple words or add a simple set of numbers. Even today I still have a difficult time spelling and doing math. What is worse is that as a high school student I was not motivated to pass nor did anyone try to motivate me.

With little motivation and after years of trying and still failing, I was asked to leave high school. There were very few career options for a high school dropout in San Francisco. One avenue that was open to me was a career in the military service. So with the spirit of adventure and the need to discover what was over the next hill in my life, I enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. This career move led me to a war in Vietnam, a hospital for a year and a half, and 16 years of post traumatic stress disorder. After the war post traumatic stress disorder affected most of my life but it did not stop me.

I chose education as a career and a healing focus for myself after my war time experiences. Education as a career was a long and difficult path for me to have chosen. It took more than sixteen years to accomplish and investment of thousands of dollars before I completed my education. Through hard work and a dedication to learning, I eventually overcame my learning disorder. I also got rid of some of my own continuing personal stress.

I currently possess an Associate of Arts Degree from City College of San Francisco in mass communications. A Bachelors of Arts degree in International Relations from San Francisco State University. One Masters degree in Education and Communications Technology and another one in Future Studies from the University of Hawaii. Finally, I completed a Ph.D. in Political Science from the same university. I completed these degrees because I became highly motivated. This motivation made a difference in my career as well as my life. I think this lesson will also help me to make a difference in Japan.

As you might guess, communications both in my personal and professional life is very important to me. This need to communicate dictated my choice of majors in the California university system. I began my academic career in mass media and communications. Next to the internet and computer technology mass communications may be the most important and influential

resource in the world of communications. As my Associate of Arts degree suggests I have had some professional and academic experience in radio and television production as well as communications theory. This training includes, but is not exclusive to, my knowledge of all areas of media production. Together with studio television production and remote video production I learned radio announcing, video and audio editing, advanced camera techniques, setting of lights, and sound recording. I received creative training as a staff producer, script writer, and TV director. This talent training also included news writing and broadcasting. Indirectly this advanced training led me to some professional work as talent, and a camera man.

There is no other arena in the world that depends on communications expertise more than in the world of international relations. In my travels as a Marine and adventurer I discovered that nation states miss communicate as much as they communicate. This led me to studying International Relations at San Francisco State University. At San Francisco state I discovered the many theories and methods of foreign policy and diplomacy. I learned how regional political systems survived the changing structures and processes of world governments. I learned the current and past issues of governments that are crucial to understanding national policy. I concentrated my studies on Southeast Asian countries and began my investigation of international relations with the People's Republic of China, followed by the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Japan.

I continued my search for knowledge at the University of Hawaii. Since I had earned a mass media degree and had studied the world of diplomacy and communications, it was natural for me to add to my knowledge the domain of educational communications. I earned a degree in Educational Communications and Technology. In the course of my educational studies I became a Communications Instructional Designer. I concentrated on the systems approach to educational instructional design with emphasis in

training design. (Instructional technology is a systematic approach to identifying, and analyzing, and solving problems in education or training)

In the process of learning educational technology, I discovered the world of future studies. Future studies involve the theories of social structure and change. It examines the causes and consequences of transformation. To understand change is to allow the construction of many alternative images of many possible futures. In future studies I specialized in selected forecasting methods as inputs into long range communications policy and planning. I am a specialist in the foundations of data-based scenario writing, Delphi research techniques, and cross impact computer modeling. I consider my future studies training to be the cutting edge of research in today's global society.

My next educational challenge was also a Ph.D. graduate student requirement. All graduate students are encouraged to teach while they are still graduate students. During the last six years of study I taught international relations, political science, future studies and public policy to undergraduates. I also had the opportunity to teach Japanese college students English conversation. I was introduced to the basics of English as a second language by the staff at the Special English Program of Hawaii. Thereafter, I taught English conversation to Japanese students every summer for a little over six years.

In the summer of 1997, I had completed my dissertation entitled Vision Tao of Humanity. I was seeking employment and I was in contact with several mainland universities. I had received positive responses from quite a few of them when unexpectedly, I got a long distance call from Professor Kenji Ueda, department head of the English Literature program, at Beppu University. Beppu University is a small private Liberal Arts University in southern Japan.

In 1996, I had the pleasure to teach Professor Ueda students during my last term of teaching in the Special English Program at the University of Hawaii. Professor Ueda and I had many conversations during his stay in Hawaii. During one such conversation with him, I had told him that I hoped to teach in Japan at some time in the future. I was surprised that he remembered this discussion. During our telephone conversation Professor Ueda challenged me to come to Beppu University to teach. He wanted me to teach English Literature, American studies, English composition and English conversation to his students.

I reflected a while on what a great challenge and opportunity it would be for me. I have been a Southeast Asia specialist for most of my educational career. Going to Japan to teach would be a great adventure, a serious challenge, and a great career move. It was a chance to put what I thought were my innovative teaching skills to a test. So throwing caution to the wind I found myself catching a plane one day after graduation receiving my Ph.D. on my way to Japan to teach.

IX. Call for Reform

The recent call for reform of Japans educational system is not new. Japan's educational system underwent major reform after World War II. Under the occupation, the old 6-5-3-3 system was changed to a 6-3-3-4 system (six years of elementary school, three each of middle and high school, and four of college). In addition, compulsory education was extended from six years to nine and most schools became coeducational.

Japan boasts one of the worlds best- educated populations, with 100% enrollment in compulsory grades and zero illiteracy. While not compulsory high school enrollment is over 96% nationwide and nearly 100% in the cities. This does not however mean that everyone is getting into the high school of his/her choice, and many people are setting for second- or third-best. At the

University level, there are 98 national universities, of which the oldest is the University of *Toukyou* (Tokyo), 53 other public universities, and 425 private universities. Some 46.2% of all high school graduates go on to college or junior college, making this very commonplace. (Gakken. 1997, p.131)

Gakken suggests, that Japan's call for equality of opportunity, coeducation, and other improvements, were successful. Japan's postwar system made education available to the masses, yet it soon fell into the trap of academic quantification.

While it contributed importantly to producing the kind of people industry needed to efficiently mass produce quality products, the down side of this was that the students were less able to think and judge for themselves, were less innovative and had less thirst for knowledge. The darker side was also manifest in hazing, violence in the schools and a rising drop-out rate. Thus the government's National Council on Educational Reform, The Ministry's Central Council for Education, and other councils have called for educational reforms emphasizing creativity and respect for the individual. (Gakken. 1997, p.131)

In October of 1998, there was again the call for educational reform of Japan's universities. This need for educational reforms are not unique to Beppu University but, unfortunately is a problem (it seems) at all universities in Japan. Current calls for reform are attempts by educational authorities to rectify what they believe is a major nationwide problem. These problems are being addressed by the advisory council to the Japanese Ministry of Education. In October of 1998, the advisory panel came out with a 226, page report. Highlights of this report appeared in *The Japan Times*, Tuesday, October 27, 1998.

The reform article states that "Management of universities should become more flexible, responsible and international, by implementing changes such as fall admissions and stricter grading." Another strong point is that

"Universities have improved by implementing some reforms over the last 10 years, but they are strongly expected to conduct even bolder reforms (to intellectually support and lead society." This particular comment suggests that the universities at the present time do not produce students that can intellectually support and lead Japanese society. What Japan desperately needs are leaders with vision and imagination to lead the country. Unfortunately, at the writing of this paper, the Japanese economy is in tatters. The reality of the situation requires a greater resolve from the universities to produce the future leaders of Japan, leaders with vision and imagination to lead the country forward.

The 226-page reform report points out several problems with the nation's higher educational institutions. One such problem involves the professors themselves. The report criticizes professors for giving credits to students who merely pass paper exams, "graduate schools for failing to turn out highly specialized professionals," and colleges for having "insufficient self-assessment systems."

The council calls for reforms based on four pillars: (1) improving the educational and research levels of both undergraduate and graduate schools; (2) making the higher education structure more flexible; (3) strengthening each school's decision-making process; (4) building up objective school-assessment systems. The report goes on further to say that schools should "ensure that students come to school to learn rather than simply to kill time, as is widely alleged, and also urges schools to make grading systems clearer and stricter".

X. Beppu University response to the call for reform

In terms of the reform that is called for by the Educational advisory panel, Beppu University measures up to this quite well. I cannot speak for any other department at Beppu, and I would not dare to try, but I can make some observations and comments about my department.

The Educational advisory panel report calls for flexibility, responsibility, and internationalization. I can truthfully say that there is no department that is more flexible, responsible, and internationally oriented than the English language department at Beppu University.

I am somewhat prejudiced when I talk about flexibility and the use of imagination in the English language department. At Beppu University I am in what can only be called an experimental program within the English Literature and Language department. I was given a chance to put what I thought were my innovative teaching skills to a test. This was an attempt by Professor Ueda and myself to see to it that every student at becomes a professional in their field. We wanted to ensure that the students will learn to speak basic conversational English during his or her first two years of college.

The students have to be challenged and encouraged to work hard to develop their verbal skills and their vocabulary. The teacher has to provide the student with an exceptional learning environment to use these skills. In addition, the student has to acquire the motivation and the incentive to build their English language skills.

In terms of internationalization, we are second to none at Beppu University. This word is carefully used by many educators in Japan. "Internationalization" has been a buzz word in Japan for more years than I care to remember. However, I think that it is appropriate that Beppu University does not give empty talk to the word internationalization but acts on the concept of internationalization.

Beppu University has a continuing and strong relationship with the University of Hawaii. Every summer for 20 years Beppu University has sent Japanese students to study English at the University of Hawaii. Beppu

University has also recently commenced a student exchange program with King Alfred's College in Winchester England. The program at King Alfred's is both a summer school and six-month exchange program. Recently six students from King Alfred's College studied at Beppu. Their stay and their study was seen as a stellar success by both the students and King Alfred's and Beppu University. Currently, there are six Japanese students from Beppu studying English at King Alfred's College. With a program like this, the international study program at Beppu cannot help but to be seen by every one involved as extremely successful.

When I was a young man I desired a certain amount of freedom and independence in terms of personal decision making. I was looking for a vision to guide me. From my observations and conversations with Japanese university students, I have found that they also desire this independence and a vision. They want independence not only in their personal lives, but in their education too. Honna elaborates when he writes "The energy and flexibility of today's young people are leading them to begin to protest against the preceding generations' work-ethic and the pressure of the current educational system. They are rejecting the current tough situation positively by seeking a more diversified and judicious choice in the course of their careers and schooling." (Honna & Hoffer. 1989, p.4) I believe that the current generation of Japanese students are seeking independence and also a vision for themselves and a vision for their country.

XI. Call for Vision Leadership and Imagination In Japanese Education

I wrote my Ph.D. dissertation searching for the need for leadership and vision in the public and the private sectors of society. This included the need for vision, leadership, and imagination in the world of education. The title of my study is "Vision Tao of Humanity." It is a study of visionary leadership from a non-traditional and futurist perspective. In this study I explored in a creative, interpretive, and philosophical way, the relationship of vision to leadership. I examined the **spirit** of visionary leadership to see what it is that drives and sustains a leader and what enables a leader to drive and persuade others. Thus I conducted a futures research study that explored the "power of imagination," what many leaders call "vision" as it impacts leadership.

In my opinion, what is needed in the Japanese educational sector is vision leadership and imagination. It is needed from the lowest educational bureaucrat to the top educational professional. Leaders in the political arena and leaders in the private sector all claim to understand vision. They also sometimes describe themselves as having vision. But, while giving credence and voice to the precepts of vision, they confuse vision with intellect. They do this rather than explore the spirit and vision in themselves and that of potential visionary leadership.

As a futurist and educational professional, my interest in leadership is to explore and research the philosophy and building blocks of vision. I live in an academic world. In this world researchers stress the intellectual component of leadership. I do not. I believe that one should explore the spirit and vision in oneself and not just the intellectual component of leadership.

I have discovered through my research that vision transcends leadership

and is far too important to be the exclusive property of those in conventional leadership positions. I found that vision, or lack of vision, is an important leadership variable. My research opened my eyes to the understanding that the ability to be a successful visionary exceeds traditional leadership skills. I found that the lack of vision to be endemic to all forms of leadership, be it military, political, social, or educational.

At this point in my original research I made a distinction in the current visionary training process. I believe for individuals to develop vision there has to be a visionary experience. That is an experience that Native American Indians call "vision quest." In my mind, to seek a vision quest is the real key to visionary leadership. What I discovered is that they have a remarkable power of concentration and abstraction. They are also in touch with themselves and their spirit in an intuitive way. This concept of leadership is very much needed in the future leaders of Japan.

XII. Visionary Leadership

Thus, with the inspiration of vision in my mind, I present a path of visionary leadership to Japan in terms of Tao. I introduce Tao in terms of its concept and dedicate it as the way of visionary leadership. Within the context of this paper, I present Tao as the true path of visionary leadership, regardless of leadership discipline.

Deng Ming-Dao, in his book *Scholar Warrior*, stated that "It is experience, not book learning or scripture, that is the best teacher." I totally believe this and I try to guide my life with this basic tenet in mind. Deng Ming-Dao learned the secrets of his spiritual path from his master Kwan Saihung, an herbalist, martial artist, and Tao philosopher. Deng, through this book, passed on to others the practical application of spirit to western lifestyles. This included the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of medicine and meditation. "That is why it is said that the path of the Scholar Warrior is

one of self-cultivation. Concepts accepted through religion, books, hearsay, or from any other person will always be weak. But skill and wisdom gained through self-cultivation can never be shaken" (Ming-Dao, 1990, p.6). So, with this in mind, I urge the leaders of Japan's educational system to adopt the position of scholar warriors for their future vision of Japan. In other words, knowledge and experience do not necessarily speak the same language. Knowledge that comes from experience is more valuable than the knowledge that does not.

According to Chung (1995), people in charge like the idealistic *shi* of the Confucian persuasion in China often see themselves as "knowledge-experts," with a thorough understanding of reality and public affairs, able to articulate this knowledge very clearly in doctrines and laws about the way things are, and able to "work on the world," reshaping it the way it ought to be. He asserts that against this way, the *Dao De Jing* asserts the inability of conceptual knowledge to grasp the real "right way" (Dao) in which things ought to be done.

In many ways Japanese bureaucrats are encouraged to see themselves as knowledge experts. However, Chung asserts that "The truth about the world and how to manage it can only be intuitively understood by one who cultivates depth in his own mind. The *Dao De Jing* also emphasizes the unpredictability of events in the real world, and recommends respecting the spontaneous organic order of the social world — *wu-wei*, not working — rather than trying to "work it over" according to some ideal plan (see pp. 32-35, 77), (Chung, 1995, pp. 13-14).

Hoff asks us to visualize a person working in Tao and does so through the eyes of Pooh, a fictional character in his book. He thinks it odd, somehow, that Taoism is represented by the Scholarly Owl — by the Brain, the Academician, the dry-as-dust Absentminded Professor. "Far from reflecting the Taoist ideal of wholeness and independence, this incomplete and

unbalanced creature divides all kinds of abstract things into little categories and compartments, while remaining rather helpless and disorganized in his daily life. Rather than learn from Taoist teachers and from direct experience, he learns intellectually and indirectly, from books. And since he doesn't usually put Taoist principles into practice in an everyday sort of way, his explanations of them tend to leave out some rather important details, such as how they work and where you can apply them" (Hoff, 1982, pp. 25-26).

Hoff (1992) in his book *The Tao of Pooh* compares the Abstract Owl in his story to the dried-up Western descendent of the Confucianist Dedicated Scholar, who thinks he has some sort of monopoly on universal knowledge. "The Confusionist, Desiccated Scholar is one who studies knowledge for the sake of knowledge, and who keeps what he learns to himself or to his own small group, writing pompous and pretentious papers that no one else can understand, rather than working for the enlightenment of others" (Hoff, 1982, p.26).

Hoff makes the same point about knowledge and experience as Deng Ming-Dao in his Pooh narrative. "In other words, Knowledge and Experience do not necessarily speak the same language. But isn't the knowledge that comes from experience more valuable than the knowledge that doesn't? It seems fairly obvious to some of us that many scholars need to go outside and sniff around — walk through the grass, talk to the animals" (Hoff, 1982, pp. 28-29). It seems fairly obvious to me that there is a very candid message to the leaders in Japanese education in these words. That message is related to the word and concept of vision.

XIII. Leadership Defined

From a traditional academic perspective my approach to the research of leadership and vision connection is solid. In fact there has been much

discussion on the problem of defining leadership both in academics and the political sector. The truth is that there exist a diversity of views on the topic.

In his book *Why leaders can't lead: The Unconscious Conspiracy continues* Bennis says that a nation cannot survive without virtue, it cannot progress without some common vision, and we have not had a real sense of purpose, as a people, since the 1960s. "A healthy, productive society is based in high expectations. The individual expects society to be virtuous, just, and productive. As the individual must continually challenge society to live up to its promises, society, at the same time, must continually encourage the individual to fulfill his or her promise" (Bennis, 1989, p. 41).

When a leader seeks advice it may come from "another ruler, the head of a department, an oracle, a forecaster, a friend, a spouse, an outside consultant, a commission, an assistant-the agent that provides the advice" (Meltsner, 1990, p.17). I believe that the role of vision is very much like an adviser in that it "provides direction; it warns the ruler about a future calamity; it suggest to the ruler a path to select and to follow. It is information with inference" (Meltsner, 1990, p.18). So I suggests that Japanese educational leaders find direction from within.

Some aspects of leadership are common to all fields - business, sports, the arts, the academic community. However, the difference between a leader with vision and one without is like the difference between a manager and a leader. The manager thinks of today and tomorrow, the leader must think of the day after tomorrow. A manager represents a process. The leader represents a direction of history. It is this variable that is needed in Japanese leadership. Someone in power must provide leadership in the educational arena and, more importantly, in educational institutions in Japan.

As evidence of Japanese cultural and social change in terms of leadership and vision, I cite Miyamoto Musashi, Samurai warrior from the Edo period of Japanese history. However, there is no need for me to remind Japanese leaders about doing the right thing. I understand that good leadership is so much a part of Japanese heritage.

To attain the way of strategy as a warrior you must study fully other martial arts and not deviate even a little from the way of the warrior. With your spirit settled, accumulate practice day by day, and hour by hour. Polish the twofold spirit heart and mind, and sharpen the twofold gaze perception and sight. When your spirit is not in the least clouded, when the clouds of bewilderment clear away, there is the true void. (Musashi, 1974, p.95).

XIV. Observations of Japanese education

Today Japan boasts one of the world's best educated populations, with 100% enrollment in compulsory grades and zero illiteracy. At the university level, there are 98 national universities, 53 public universities, and 425 private universities. With this type and quality of education available, Japanese universities can produce people who can do more than efficiently mass produce quality products.

Today's university students need to be able to think and judge for themselves, they need to be innovative and have a thirst for knowledge. What Japan needs is educational reforms that call for and emphasize creativity and respect for the individual. For the sake of Japan's future, it needs leaders with vision and imagination.

Many Japanese English teachers lack vision and imagination which causes them to excel at examination English. Their English lacks originality and spontaneity, and is another example of the negative impact of examinations. "The main point is that the English that is used in college entrance

examinations is unnatural" (Kagawa. 1997, p.205). The Japanese system needs to add an English Language component and train its English language teachers accordingly.

If the reform proposals for Japan's universities are implemented, then the problem of students skipping classes should cease. Students would no longer be able to receive credits for the course by borrowing someone's notes or reading a book that covers the lectures. Students who do not study will fail. This is both a motivation problem and a higher education problem because even if there was enough time the students still need the motivation. The ultimate goal of test preparation to get into college will have to change. Examinations will not contain mostly useless information. Students "will no longer forget what they learned after entering college and becoming an adult member of society" (Kagawa. 1997, p.205).

From the Meiji period (1868-1912) to the present the, "utmost priority was placed on reading the works written in English for the purpose of acquiring knowledge in order to catch up with the west." (Itasaka. 1996, p. 205) The Meiji period is over. We are fast approaching the new millennia, Japan should no longer rely so heavily on the reading and the writing method of teaching English. The rationale is that Japan no longer needs to match the west in manufacturing or industry. Many countries today are changing from the industrial based society to an information based society and Japan needs to intercept the west in these other endeavors. Now it is time for Japan to startle the west in terms of ushering in the information society and a real global type university education.

Other systematic constraints in terms of the Japanese learning English were also endorsed by Mark Gauthier, (1993) in his book *Making It in Japan Work, Life, Leisure and Beyond*. Among those constraints listed were: Students just want their credits like American students did in high school French or Spanish. This situation is normal if the student only wants to get

a degree but these conditions should not exist or be tolerated if they want to be a professional. Seventy-five percent of the Japanese high school teachers can not speak English naturally and only have a limited interest in conversation and probably have poor pronunciation skills. This problem is one of English teacher conversation training with the proper motivation it should not be a problem very long.

At the present time universities, reward scholarship, not teaching skill. Thus, teachers spend most of their time researching and doing other academic tasks. Developing one's teaching prowess takes a back seat to easier book reading and translation activities. This is a common failure both in Japan and the United States and only a mind set change can solve it. Until teaching is equal to research and is rewarded accordingly this predicament will remain unchallenged.

In Japan translation is king. Text books are translated word for word. Fluency is not a realistic goal. Reading and writing form the basics of English instruction. In fact, English majors at top universities muddle through great literary works such as *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Keynsian Economics* and *War and Peace*, translating word for word (in some cases over 500 pages).

This situation would not be so bad if the Ministry of Education placed emphasis on conversation and not translation. Besides there is really no need for an emphasis on translation training any longer. Translation was needed when Japan had a self-imposed isolation policy but Japan is more open now and internationalization is the key to education. Knowledge is not isolated.

XV. SELF MOTIVATION

I have been in Japan for a year and a half and the latest question I ask myself is why I am here? I did not come to Japan for the money because quite truthfully I can earn better money back in the United States. For someone with my experience and education I would receive a generous salary plus associated perks including faculty housing and travel expenses. In fact with the wild fluctuations of the yen I feel am losing money by working in Japan.

I am not in Japan because I can not find a job in the United States. Quite to the contrary I have received over thirty inquires from colleges across the country. I am also not in Japan for the easy work load. I am working harder and more hours here at Beppu than I would be working else where. I do not stay in Japan because of the social and economic situation is good. Japan is on of the most expensive countries in the world to live in. There are also all the social constraints that a foreigner needs to adjust to. For example the feeling that one is living in a fish bowl. So why am I here?

In ending this report I quote a great man Martin Luther king. Martin Luther King once said he had a dream, well I have a dream also. Someday I envision that all of the professors and all of the students at Beppu university would share in this dream. One day Beppu University will produce some of the best English speaking students in Japan. One day Beppu University will be the model that other universities will want to copy. One day Beppu will produce students who are not shy, who will not be afraid of making mistakes in their attempt to communicate in English. One day Beppu university will produce students who are creative and imaginative. One day Beppu University will produce students who are willing to work hard who do not know the meaning of the words "quit" and "failure." One day Beppu University will produce students that will be prepared to intellectually support and lead Japan.

We all know that education in Japan is the formal jurisdiction of national, state, and local bureaucracies. We also know that trying to bring about change through various ministries, departments, and boards of education tends to be highly politicized. This makes the process of change slow moving at best. However, Japan's young people are Japan's most precious natural resource and they must be treated as such. Japan's young people are the most practical means of affecting long-term change in Japan's society, which is badly needed. The government needs leaders and today's young people can do it. They can be trained to intellectually support and lead Japanese society. In the future, Japan's young people should be known for their creativity, innovation, and imagination.

Peace be with you. Thank You.

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