〔研究論文〕

# 日本の学校における人種差別によるいじめについて

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### 要　　旨

　世界中の学校でいじめはおきている。近年メディアでは、日本の学校における行き過ぎたいじめの事例が大きな注目を集めている。子供たちがいじめを行う原因は多くある。日本のように集団と同一の基準をもつことが求められる集団的社会で、最も一般的ないじめの対象は、多数派とは明らかに違う子供である。外国人労働力の規模拡大と国際結婚の増加に伴い、民族的、文化的、言語的に日本人の同級生とは異なる背景をもつ子供の割合が増加している。こうした子供たちは、日本の学校の生徒、教師集団、管理運営の中で、おのずといじめの対象になる。本稿は 2007 年 9 月に行われたフォーラムで紹介された証拠と、新規に立ち上げられたネットワーク「いじめゼロ」で収集された証拠に基づいて、現在のいじめ状況を検証するものである。著者は人種の違いへの理解を深め、寛容さをはぐくみ、非日本人生徒を対象とするいじめ傾向を減らすために、いくつかの教育上のアプローチと教材を推薦する。

# Racially Based Bullying in Japanese Schools

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## Introduction

More and more foreigners are coming to Japan each day, and with them, more and more differences in skin, accent and habits are emerging in Japanese society. Independent of our plans for the future, we foreigners are here right now, and this is the precious time of our children's childhood. We know that whatever our children experience now will affect them for the rest of their lives. Most of the time, foreign children that are given the chance feel proud to share their culture and language at school, but are Japanese schools ready to support these ideas and implement them along with the foreign community help? Are the Japanese teachers ready to help in this sharing process?

（Karsten, 2008: 99）

These questions were asked by a Brazilian educator at a Forum held in 2007 to discuss ways

to create a multicultural society in Japan free from bullying. This paper will address these questions. Although the title refers to the notion of "race", I shall refer to people born outside Japan or who have one or both parents born outside Japan as foreign or bicultural, rather than biracial. In recent years, scientific research has shown that the notion of race is invalid. All humans are descended from the same ancestors who originated in Africa. As the human race spread around the world, our cultures have created different ways of behaving and relating to one another, but we share the same common humanity. This paper will explain, in section 1, the reasons for the rapid increase in the number of children in Japanese public schools with one or both parents who are not Japanese. In addition, evidence that foreign and bicultural children are bullied for racial reasons will be presented. In section 2, the incidence of bullying in Japanese schools will be discussed and the different types of bullying that affect these children in particular. In section 3, some examples to illustrate these points will be given from a monograph published in 1999 and the above-mentioned Forum. Section 4 will present some ways in which the foreign community has been taking action to improve the situation, and finally, in section 5, suggestions will be made for ways in which Japanese society and institutions could address this issue. These suggestions include a change of emphasis in school curricula and educational materials, greater attention to this issue in the Japanese media, the inclusion of the bullying of foreign and bicultural Japanese students in teacher training programs, more public funding for services such as hotlines, counseling and intervention with schools, and the inclusion of multilingual staff in these services.

## Section 1　　The reasons for the rapid increase in the number of foreign and bicultural children in Japanese schools

### 1.1　　The increase in numbers of non-Japanese nationals in the Japanese public education system

"Contemporary Japan is a more multi-ethnic society than ever before, with an increasing number of foreign guest workers having arrived since the mid-1980s" (Okano and Tsuchiya, 1999: 128). Initially, many workers came from developing countries to work in jobs that were not attractive to Japanese workers. They brought their families and sent their children to local schools. Others married a Japanese national and have stayed in Japan to raise their bi-cultural children. Other foreigners have come to Japan as educators on the JET program or as instructors or researchers in tertiary level education (Vaipae, 2001: 184). Many have stayed and married and are also raising children here.

In 1994, a new bill that eased restrictions on the return of Chinese 'War Orphans' and their

families led to a further increase in the number of foreign workers and children.（Vaipae, 2001: 184）In addition to these large national groups, there are smaller numbers of legal and illegal workers from the Philippines, South Korea, Vietnam , Thailand and other Asian countries.

The largest group of newcomers to Japan are second- and third-generation descendants of the Japanese who emigrated to South America at the start of the twentieth century. "They were granted the privilege of working in Japan, regardless of the level and kind of employment skills they held, by the revised Immigration Act in 1989"（Okano and Tsuchiya, 1999: 129）. As a result, the number of Brazilians and Peruvians working in Japan jumped from 2,865 to 145,614 in the 1987–1991 period and this group now constitutes the majority of legal foreign workers.

The year 2008 marked the 100th anniversary of the start of Japanese migration to Brazil and the Japanese-Brazilian community had grown to 1.5 million people in Brazil. Here in Japan, nearly 320,000 Brazilians are registered as Japanese residents, making them the third largest foreign community in Japan, after Chinese and Koreans（*The Japan Times,* 11.14.2008）. Of the 33,000 Brazilian children between the ages of 5-14 who are living in Japan, 10,200 are enrolled in public schools. Another 10,000 are studying at Brazilian schools in Japan, but more than 10,000 are not receiving an education. "Many children transfer from Japanese public schools because they can't keep up due to their lack of Japanese-language skills or because of bullying"（ibid.）. However, this is often not a satisfactory solution because most Brazilian schools are not accredited by the government, so their students do not have access to the same privileges that students attending Japanese schools enjoy, for example, medical health checks and cheap commutation passes.

Another recent article in the *Japan Times* reports that: "Nationwide, there are more than 25,000 foreign children in schools. The majority are believed to be Brazilians, followed by Chinese. Truancy among foreign children, who are often bullied because they are different or don't speak Japanese, has become a concern in recent years, especially in prefectures like Gunma and in the Chubu region where large numbers of foreigners reside"（Johnston: 2008）. Foreign children are being deprived of an education because their combined difficulties in not being able to speak Japanese and being bullied are driving them away from Japanese public schools.

### 1.2　Evidence of racially motivated bullying in Japanese schools

Although the Japanese Ministry of Education has conducted a number of surveys about bullying in Japanese schools over the last 20 years, no figures have been released of the numbers of foreign or bicultural children who have been targeted. Nevertheless, there has been one survey of 121 parents of language minority students who speak 12 different languages carried out by Vaipae and

Takahashi in 1996（Vaipae, 2001: 212）. The survey focused mainly on academic issues, but "teasing a child as a foreigner（*'gaijin'*）and physical bullying by schoolmates . . . were very frequently mentioned in the free comment column on the questionnaire. Moreover, bullying and teasing were the most common problems referred to in parents' letters and interviews"（ibid.: 215）. Two children in the surveyed families were removed from public schools because of bullying by other students, and a third child was removed after an incident of teacher violence（ibid.: 216）. Lack of acceptance or isolation of their child was another form of bullying that was of concern to these parents.

Apart from this survey, there is a wealth of anecdotal evidence that foreign and bicultural children are frequently targeted by bullies, some of which will be shared later in this paper.

## Section 2　Bullying in Japanese schools

### 2.1　The incidence of bullying in Japanese schools

Bullying（referred to as *ijime* in the Japanese context）takes place in schools around the world and there is no shortage of research published in English on this social phenomenon. This body of research includes studies from Scandinavia（Olweus, 1993）, Australia（Rigby, 1996）, the USA（Coloroso, 2003）and the UK（Duncan, 1999）.

One of Japan's leading researchers in this field, Yoneyama, tells us: "By the mid-1980s, *ijime* had already become a major social problem in Japan, and a major cause of a number of suicides"（Yoneyama 1999:158）. Since the shocking suicide by Shikagawa Hirofumi in 1986, statistics on the number of bullying cases in Japanese schools have appeared frequently in the media. However, it has been difficult to interpret these statistics over the last two decades for a number of reasons. Firstly, the Education, Science and Technology Ministry, more than once, has changed its approach to surveys of cases of "problematic behavior, including bullying and violence" in schools（*Daily Yomiuri,* 11.22.2008）. Recently, "it has come to place more importance on the feelings of victims of bullying"（ibid.）. This has affected the latest statistics gathered. For example, the number of cases of bullying appeared to have jumped 6.2 times from 2005（20,143 cases）to 2006（124,898 cases）. Prior to this, between 1985 and 1993, " *ijime* was defined not only as 'one-sided, continuous attacks' that accompany 'a serious sense of pain' on the part of the victim but also as attacks that had been confirmed by schools"（Yoneyama, 1999:180）. This meant that if the school did not acknowledge an incident as a case of bullying, it was not officially recognized. In 1994, the Education Ministry instructed schools to determine for themselves if an incident could be considered as bullying, based on how it was viewed by the victim. This has resulted in wide discrepancies in the data

recorded by different education authorities. It is impossible to know exactly how many cases were reported, but not officially recorded, and how many others were not even reported. One further factor affecting the interpretation of published statistics is that, in 2006, the Education, Science and Technology Ministry "expanded the scope of the survey from just municipality or prefecture-run schools to include state-run and private schools, and had schools report bullying cases through prefectural boards of education" (*Daily Yomiuri* 11.17.2007). The 2006 survey showed that bullying was identified in 48% of primary schools, 71% of middle schools and 59% of high schools (*Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Report on School Bullying,* 9.13. 2006).

Even if the exact number of bullying incidents is unknown, there can be no doubt at all that bullying goes on in almost all public schools in Japan.

## 2.2   Ways in which bullying differs in Japanese schools and western schools

There is a significant difference in the type of bullying carried out in Japan, a collectivist society, and western, individualist societies. Bullying is mostly carried out by a group of students in Japan, whereas in other countries it is more common for a single bully to target a victim (Yoneyama, 1999: 164–165). In fact, research shows that 80% of bullying among Japanese students is collective and "group bullying accounts for over 90 percent of bullying that lasts for more than a week" (Yoneyama, 2007). One reason for this is that many students fear becoming a victim if they are not part of the group doing the bullying. They feel safe when they see someone else being bullied or when they are part of the group of bullies. Sugimoto (1997: 128) had made the same point two years earlier: "*Ijime* is a collective act by a group of pupils to humiliate, disgrace, or torment a targeted pupil psychologically, verbally, or physically. In most cases of *ijime,* a considerable portion of pupils in a class take part as supporting actors." Many students acquiesce because they fear being chosen as targets themselves. Moreover, teachers frequently side with the bullies rather than the bullied.

### 2.2.1   Conformity as a motivation behind bullying

Sugimoto (1997) explains that the reason behind "rampant" bullying in Japanese schools is the Japanese education system, which is "characterized by a high degree of centralization and domination by the national government" (1997: 120). This works against diversification in school culture and leads to the unification of education in a number of ways: textbook censorship, curriculum guidelines, and conformist patterns of socialization. Conformist behavior is enforced in a number of ways: militaristic bowing and sitting in unison, wearing semi-military style uniforms, observing the *senpai-kohai* system, and carrying out tasks cooperatively, such as cleaning the classroom, corridors, and toilets. Sugimoto goes on to say, "Schools in Japan have developed techniques to promote

psychological uniformity and cohesion among pupils" (ibid.: 123). Sugimoto gives the following examples: an entire class reading a text book aloud in unison "gives the class a sense of working together and makes it difficult for any child to deviate from the set pattern." Also, each school has its own song to "promote emotional integration". Annual events are "designed to generate a sense of group cohesion" such as *undo-kai, bunka-sai,* radio gymnastics (ibid.: 123).

The need to change this conformist way of thinking now that Japan is becoming increasingly multicultural is further illustrated by a class survey in the form of 12 essays written by students, carried out in 1997 by junior high school teacher Fukuda Hiroyuki. The results revealed that two thirds of the class thought that bullying could not be eliminated. One student explained that: "[*Ijime*] arises because each person is different; you can't stamp it out as long as everybody's not the same" (Yoneyama, 1999: 163). This implies that students feel that human differences justify bullying. Japanese students acknowledge that if students cannot think and behave in the same way as others, they will be bullied. Japanese students returning from overseas discover that it is very difficult to be different from others in Japanese schools. Yoneyama quotes a study by Miyachi in 1990 in which two thirds of the returnee students who responded "indicated that they had been bullied because of their overseas experience － because of their English ability, lack of competence in Japanese, different manners, attitudes and ways of thinking" (Yoneyama, 1999: 169).

Yoneyama (Kimball, 2008) points out that the Japanese saying, "The nail that sticks out gets hammered down . . . clearly cautions people against non-conformity, against being different. It tells people to follow the norm, to fulfill the social expectation, and to be "normal". The nail that sticks out is apparently a nuisance and can cause damage or harm. The implication that such a nail needs to be fixed is a powerful one." Yoneyama recommends "increasing diversity in school on the principle of social inclusion. The presence of people of different abilities, shapes, sizes, ages, colors, and cultures makes it hard to find nails or poppies sticking out. Even in a small social setting, a deliberate effort to include people who are different would automatically challenge the culture of conformity" (ibid.).

### 2.2.2　Labeling children as *"gaijin"*

*Ijime* occurs in Japanese schools when Japanese students are seen to be not conforming. How much more vulnerable are non-Japanese students who have different cultural expectations, or students who have a mixed cultural background which sets them apart? The label *"gaijin"* is commonly applied to all these children and is very hurtful because it sets them apart. It is especially hurtful and unjust for children with a Japanese parent, who have been born and raised in Japan, who speak Japanese as their first language and consider Japan as their home. They may look different to the

majority of their classmates, but this does not make them an 'alien'.

Smith, a Canadian whose daughter was bullied in elementary school, explains how children of dual heritage seem to be singled out perhaps even more than children who are 'completely' foreign.

> Our daughter set us straight. Kids and teachers and other adults were going out of their way to come near and say a mocking 'hello' in English; or to draw attention to her 'differentness' in other ways. She said it was an everyday part of her life. She told us it didn't happen to her mother, and not even to full *gaijin* me. So, did we really understand how it felt? Her *'gaijinness'* might not have been a direct cause of the original problem, and perhaps not part of the problem with the school authorities. But 'halfness' or 'doubleness', this difference which seemed so important to others around her, was standing in the way of her being herself. She felt as if people were constantly questioning the naturalness of her existence
>
> （Smith, 1999: 55–56）.

Nevertheless, the notion that *'gaijin'* are fundamentally different to Japanese nationals and so should not be included is not shared by all and although there are a number of examples of teachers targeting foreign and bicultural children as different in the reports made at the Forum in Gunma and other publications referred to in this paper, there are notable exceptions. In Japanese schools, some teachers are very skillful at dealing with incidents of bullying as soon as they arise, while others lack the know-how and training. Wanner discusses how his son's elementary school teacher dealt skillfully with the matter of his son being called *"gaijin"* by other children.

> . . . Jessie was reluctant to bring up this issue in class so we addressed the teacher with Jessie's difficulty of people calling him *"gaijin,"* and the teacher felt that the students needed to think about how they would feel in Jessie's situation. The teacher therefore led a discussion addressing oppression of people based on age, sex, nationality, or other factors. She specifically mentioned the use of the word *"gaijin,"* and the very negative connotations it held. Following this discussion, my son didn't have any children call him *"gaijin,"* in his class to this day
>
> （Wanner, 1999: 46）.

### 2.2.3  The attitude that bullying is part of growing up

Unlike common thinking in western schools that bullying should not be tolerated under any circumstances, according to Sugimoto, a common view in Japan is that "it is extremely difficult to eradicate bullying practices completely" and "children must be exposed to *ijime* in the process of

growing up"（1997: 128）. This explains why a number of teachers and school principals appear to overlook incidences of bullying and do not respond to the requests of foreign parents to deal with the bullies.

### 2.2.4　The attitude that the bullying victim is to blame

There is a common view that there must be something wrong with the bullying victim as Ryan（1999: 3）points out: "There is also a tendency among some adults to blame the victim for being bullied. A *Mombusho* committee found that the belief that victims are at least partly to blame is "widespread" and went on to stress that there is no truth in it（"Bullying Victims," 1994）. Two years later, however, a mayor in Saitama wrote in his town's newsletter that "bullied children lack will-power and a sense of self-reliance"（"Saitama Mayor," 1997）. He was severely criticized for these views by educationalists"（Ryan, 1999: 3）. A further example of this common attitude that the victim is to blame is provided by Otake, whose bicultural daughter was ostracized. A meeting was arranged by the school for all the parents of children in the class to discuss the situation. "The last word was had by the mother of one of the girls whom M. had identified as one of the ringleaders in the ostracism, a child who had previously played at our home weekly, if not daily. The mother said that she didn't think our suffering had been as bad as we made it out to be and that M. was responsible（*M. ni mondai ga atta kara, kou ni narimashita desho*）"（Otake, 1999: 37）.

### 2.2.5　Different attitudes to physical violence

Some Japanese teachers have attitudes towards physical violence among children that are very different to those of many western parents. Bethe contrasts these attitudes.

> My son's teacher came many times, because my son was injured in one way or another many times. I knew from the first encounter that we held very different views about education and human communication. It would be impossible for him to understand my approach, or for me to alter his basic attitude that: "Boys become men by fighting things out." So he as a teacher preferred to look the other way. We compromised on my suggesting he discuss fair play and discourage groups of boys from ganging up on single people（Bethe, 1999: 41）.

Bethe's son moved to an international school and she makes the following observations about differences in the schooling systems.

There are three notable differences. One is the school has a clear policy of peaceful debate to

prevent aggression. The Japanese school had no policy, but dealt with problems when they got out of control. A certain amount of 'boisterous play' was viewed as character building and inevitable（Bethe, 1999: 42）.

### 2.2.6　Different cultural expectations

Clearly, there has to be respect shown by both sides when Japanese and foreigners living in Japan try to deal with bullying incidents. Different cultural expectations need to be treated with sensitivity. Smith shows how this can be a highly stressful for a bicultural family.

My Canadian cultural values were telling me to go for the truth, have a reckoning, and then make changes for the better. The folks at the school were thinking about a different sort of cultural wisdom which was telling them to preserve everyone's dignity and avoid confrontations. And my ［Japanese］ wife was stuck somewhere in the middle, trying to stop me from making a bigger mess while she was protecting her daughter. Her own emotions were making it tough for her to follow either culture's standards（Smith, 1999: 54）.

## Section 3　Examples of racially based bullying

### 3.1　Examples of racially based bullying of non-Japanese nationals or bicultural children with Japanese nationality in Japanese public schools

As stated above, there is no nation-wide data on the number of cases of bullying of foreign and bicultural children. However, cases of such bullying have been documented and reported in 1999 in a monograph, edited by this author, and cited in part 2, and at a Forum held in September 2007. More recent examples from the Forum "Creating a Multicultural Society Free from Bullying: What We Can Do Right Now for Children in Education and Social Welfare" will be discussed below. Each case illustrates a different aspect of the problem of bullying and ways to work towards a solution.

### 3.2　Racist bullying

Joel Assogba is Canadian of African ancestry. His wife is Japanese and they have three children. He explains the frequent racist comments that are directed at his family.

My children have darker skin than the other Japanese children, and many people openly make cruel and racist comments about them: "kitanai（dirty）," makkuro（black & dirty）," "baikin（microbe）," "unchi（pooh）," "kimochiwarui（disgusting）," "kurokoge（blackburn）," etc. When

I go out with them, many parents also point at us "gaijin." Those people are wrong because my children are not foreigners in Japan; they are born here and are Japanese citizens just like the other Japanese children. And above all, they love Japan and the traditional Japanese culture（Assogba, 2008: 60）.

Assogba anticipated the racist bullying that his daughter might be subjected to when she was about to start elementary school and went to talk to the Principal, Vice-Principal and teachers a week before school started about the importance of respecting individuality and accepting people who look different as equals. They did not take him seriously at the time, and when his daughter was told to change the color of her skin to "normal" color *(hadairo)* by a classmate only two weeks after school started, he was again disappointed by the response of the Principal, the teacher and the classmate's family. None of them viewed the matter as serious and refused to take any action. Even the School Board officials could not see this as a problem. Assogba was disappointed at their response. In Assogba's opinion, "Racism here is based on the idea that the Japanese belong to a "unique ethnic group" that is totally different from all the other ethnic groups in the world. The education system must make a considerable effort to denounce this myth. To do this, schools must familiarize students with the reality of the "singleness of the human family," and explain that all of the people in the world belong to the same human race"（Assogba, 2008: 60–61）. He recommends that: "We must teach our children that all human beings come from the same ancestral stock. Every person on our planet belongs to the same species. This unity, however, does not mean uniformity, but implies a celebration of diversity, because once the reality of unity is understood, diversity becomes an asset rather than an obstacle"（ibid.）. Assogba makes the point that people of Japanese heritage have fitted into other societies and asks why people from other heritages cannot be allowed to fit into Japanese society（Assogba, 2008: 132）. Although it will take some time to build a "harmonious multiethnic Japan", we should not just sit back and wait for this to happen. "Educators, politicians and the media must teach the public that a person of any ethnic origin can be a proud Japanese citizen"（ibid.）.

Assogba himself has been taking action to help children understand these matters by writing and illustrating children's books that celebrate diversity as well as lecturing on human rights. His publications and other activities can be found on his website at: http://www2.saganet.ne.jp/joel/ His example is an inspiration to foreigners wondering how to bring about greater acceptance of diversity in Japan.

### 3.3　Two Filipina sisters and the different responses from two schools

Two sisters with a Filipina mother, Vivian, and a Japanese father, suffered severely from bullying when they were in 6th grade and 3rd grade at elementary school. The older sister, Sakura, had been an excellent and popular student. However, she started coming home angry with her teacher and eventually refusing to study and finally refusing to go to school. "Greatly alarmed, Vivian rushed to see Sakura's teacher in October of that year. She told him of all Sakura's alarming changes in her attitudes and actions. Yet instead of an understanding and collaborative attitude, Sakura's teacher gave Vivian the cold shoulder. He seemed to listen to her story about her daughter, but later didn't take any concrete action to help Sakura" (Tenoso, 2008: 55). The truth eventually came out when one of the bullies confessed to her mother about how she and her group of three friends would force Sakura to go to the toilet where they would verbally abuse and threaten her until she trembled. The girl's mother quickly took action and told Vivian exactly what had been happening. The school principal and class teacher were apologetic when informed of this and the bullies and their families apologized, but relationships never really healed. Vivian and her husband decided to move back to his hometown so that Sakura could make a fresh start in a new school. Her younger sister then experienced ostracism by her three best friends and was so traumatized that she wrote a suicide note to the girl she liked the best. The girl was alarmed and showed the letter to her mother, who was also shocked and went straight to the class teacher.

> Very alarmed as well, the teacher called Vivian and her husband to school and showed them Sampaguita's suicide note. They were shocked to find themselves in such trouble again. But this time, the teacher and school authorities were all very cooperative. They called Sampaguita's friends and their parents asking them to be kind and gave their wholehearted support. They showed great efforts to dialog with the kids in order to repair the emotional damage done to Sampaguita and her parents as well (ibid.: 56).

This story illustrates several aspects of the current situation for many foreign children and their families. First, is the reluctance of some teachers and schools to intervene in cases of bullying. Second, is the ineffective ways that bullying incidents are dealt with. The depth of despair that a 9 year old felt can be seen in the fact that she resorted to writing a letter threatening suicide. Third, there is no effective reconciliation process. There seems to be a great need to provide training for teachers and school administrators in ways to restore good relations, to help the perpetrators to understand the errors of their ways, and to help heal the wounds inflicted on the victims' self-image. The development of a new approach to dealing with such cases, called Restorative Practices, will be

discussed later in Section 5. Lastly, this family felt obliged to move home to allow their daughter to make a new start. This was a very extreme solution, but it paid off because the family was welcomed warmly by the husband's home community. Racism and intolerance do not exist everywhere in Japan. Many communities have open hearts and open minds.

### 3.4　The lack of information and support for foreigners seeking help

　　Martine Tsumoto is French, married to a Japanese national and the mother of two boys. Her younger son was first bullied in 6th grade at elementary school. Children would write *"gaijin"* on stones and put them in his bag. They would arrange to play with him after school then not show up and leave him waiting alone. He had also been suffering verbal abuse for some time, but had said nothing to his parents because he was ashamed of being bullied and so "endured the abuse in silence"（Tsumoto, 2008: 49）. One day he could endure it all no longer and refused to go to school and even to have contact with his best friend. Tsumoto and her husband gave full support to their son and found a specialist to give him counseling. This helped and he was able to return to school and go on to junior high school where he "received support and care from many teachers, had good marks, was envied by many of his classmates for being a "star" in some subjects, also because of his "exoticism" and his being good looking. He began to accept his dual heritage and had great dreams for his future which he imagined connected with the international"（ibid.: 50）. However, the following year at junior high things started to go very badly for him. "In the second grade, he encountered many serious problems: verbal and physical abuse, from one teacher and from a group at school"（ibid.: 51）. Eventually, he was so traumatized that he developed PTSD and never returned to school. Tsumoto found it impossible to get information and support in her hometown of Niigata. She says:

　　I failed in finding information and getting support in my town, because at that time and even now, the support network is not developed. No support from the town or the prefecture is provided, especially for international families in that case. I often went and searched for some help and support from official services, but I just had each time the impression that I bothered them with our problems! I was supposed to be happy and to *"gaman"*（ibid.: 51）.

　　Tsumoto, like Assogba, has taken action herself and has founded an information centre to help young people facing the same sorts of difficulties that her son faced. This will be discussed in more detail below in part 4.2.

### 3.5　The need for translators to help build mutual understanding

Not all foreign parents are in a position to take action in these ways. A letter was read at the Forum from a Peruvian mother whose daughter was verbally tormented and struck on a daily basis. She explains her frustration in trying to discuss her daughter's troubles with the class teacher and the principal.

Con todo esto decidí enfrentar a la profesora hable en tres oportunidades y fui muy persistente, también hable con el director, por parte de ellos recibía solo excusas, son niños, ya va pasar, Ud. no tiene que venir mas a la escuela, Ud. Seguro tiene problemas en su casa, esta estresada que mi hija no era la única discriminada, que eran cosas de niños.

Yo no podía creer lo que ellos me decían, son maestros y ellos tienen que velar por la seguridad de los niños, ellos no creían bueno para su escuela ni para sus maestros que este problema se supiera, me sentía muy desprotegida pero a la vez tenia que luchar por la seguridad emocional de mi pequeña

（Carta de una Madre Peruana, 2008: 58）.

（In view of all this, I decided to talk with the teacher. I spoke to her on three occasions and was very persistent. I also spoke with the Principal. They just gave me excuses, that these are only children and they will grow out of it. There was no need for me to go to the school anymore. They said I must have problems at home and that I was under stress, that my daughter wasn't the only child being discriminated against and that this is the way children are.

I couldn't believe what they were saying. They are teachers and they have to oversee the safety of the children. They were not doing any good for the school nor for their teachers who were having to deal with this problem. I felt very vulnerable, but at the same time, I had to fight for the emotional security of my child.）（My translation.）

This mother was fortunate to find out about the School Hotline in Gunma when her daughter brought home information written in Spanish from school about this free service.（See section 4.3 for more information.）She decided to make use of this service and they translated into Japanese a letter she had written and represented her at meetings with the school and the Board of Education. Eventually, her daughter moved to the next grade, and was placed with a new teacher and in a different class from the bullies. Her daughter is content now and this mother says that she is aware

that there are cultural differences between her and the Japanese and that it was a struggle for the Japanese to understand her point of view as much as it was for her to understand theirs. Overcoming cultural differences and reaching mutual understandings requires a lot of time, patience and people with linguistic and cultural knowledge who have the time to dedicate to working on such hotlines as these.

## Section 4　Ways in which the foreign community has been taking action

### 4.1　Examples of action that has been taken to deal with racially based bullying in Japanese schools

The foreign/bicultural community has started to take action to support the children and their families who are suffering from bullying. This section describes some of these projects.

### 4.2　The AmerAsian School in Okinawa（AASO）

The AmerAsian School in Okinawa was founded in 1998 by a small group of Japanese wives of Americans working on the military bases, led by Midori Thayer. Their children had experienced prejudice and bullying in Japanese public schools and these mothers wanted to provide a safe space for their bicultural children to learn the languages of both their parents and to learn the history and culture of both their nations. The curriculum is unique in this respect, in that it aims to incorporate both an American syllabus and a Japanese syllabus. The school educates children from Kindergarten to 9th grade and prepares the majority of them to enter Japanese high school. Some children go on to American base high schools or to high school in the USA. Most children, however, expect to live and work in Japan and so completing their high school education in a Japanese high school is of great importance. The school accepts up to 10% of children who are not Amerasian on the understanding that the double curriculum may not suit their needs exactly. The school has received support from the national government in the form of its own school building. The move to its own building allowed the school to increase student numbers and currently there are 75 students enrolled. The school aims to accept all Amerasian children who demonstrate a real need to learn in the sheltered environment it can provide.

A survey conducted by Naomi Noiri（Acting Executive Director）and presented on February 22, 2009 at the 4th Committee Meeting to set up the Ijime Zero Network（see section 4.6 below）showed that many of the students have been the targets of racially prejudiced attitudes in their local community, not just by other children, but also by adults. One indication of the success of AASO is

the level of self-esteem and tolerance that the school creates in these children. The survey results show that that the majority of the students（30 out of 45 interviewed）say that they are proud to be Amerasians and appreciate their unique identity as a blend of both cultures. Here are two comments made by children surveyed. "I am proud of belonging to two cultures. They cannot let me down, because I can learn from such negative things and I can become stronger. I am quite happy to be an Amerasian!" "I am not shame of myself. I feel good to be mixed. Everyone is mixed, so there are no perfectly pure Japanese or American. Our roots are not important. However, we Amerasians are sometimes discriminated. It is one negative point."

### 4.3　Youth Information Space/ NPO　団体「うちらのスペース・にいがた」

Martine Tsumoto, who is French and married to a Japanese national, created this association after her son was bullied both in elementary and junior high school.（See section 3.4）Tsumoto was unable to get any help or information in her town, Niigata, because there was no support network. She decided to found a NGO Information and Support Center for young people along similar lines to such centers that exist in every town in France. The French centers are funded and supported by the central government and the local municipality. Young people can get advice and information about any topic they are interested in or worried about, such as accommodation, health, education, training, internships, jobs, overseas stays, etc. The center in Niigata also provides such information and organizes events. It is staffed by volunteers, many of whom are students from local universities, and is a neutral space, independent from any school system, where young people from Japan and other countries can meet and get to know and help each other. This is a good example of how foreign residents in Japan, who see a need that needs to be met in Japanese society, can contribute to greater genuine international understanding and cooperation. The young people suffering from bullying in Niigata can now find the help and advice they need and which the local government does not yet provide.

### 4.3　The Multilingual Education Research Institute NPO /International Community School（ICS）

This research institute and school were founded in 2000 by Cheiron McMahill, together with other bicultural or foreign families living in the Maebashi area of Gunma. McMahill is American and her eldest daughter, whose father is Japanese, had experienced racially based bullying in elementary and senior high school.（She had spent a few years in an international school in Tokyo where she was able to recover her self-esteem and academic prowess.）McMahill did not want her two younger daughters to suffer in the same way and so decided to found a school where cultural and

linguistic differences are celebrated. The school teaches and uses not just English and Japanese, but also Portuguese, Spanish and Tagalog. McMahill says, "At ICS, my daughters have made friends with and grown to love children and adults from the Philippines, Brazil, Peru, Japan, and other countries. They have learned that languages and cultures are resources for connecting with those we love or could come to love, people who are worthy of our interest and respect, no matter where they or their parents come from. They have expanded their notions of what it means to be a resident of Japan. I think this is something so missing from the foreign language or international understanding education in public schools"（McMahill, 2008:65）.

### 4.4　School Hotline Gunma

This multilingual school hotline was started in 2006 as part of the activities of the Multilingual Education Research Institute NPO/International Community School（ICS）. Although the national government has set up hotlines around the country for people who are experiencing bullying, the staff only speak Japanese. The need for a multilingual hotline was outlined to the Multiculturalism Support Office of the Gunma Prefectural Government, which agreed to fund the hotline in 2006 and 2007. The hotline is staffed during weekdays by parents and staff from ICS, who receive phone calls, emails, and visits from parents worried about their children's education and has helped these parents and children whose mother tongues are Japanese, English, Portuguese, Spanish and Tagalog. The hotline workers assisted 72 children and their parents in 2007（McMahill, 2008.12）and have been able to act as representatives and interpreters at meetings between the parents of bullying targets and school or education office officials. Recently, they have received calls from other prefectures such as Niigata, Nagano and Saitama. Clearly, there is a need for more multilingual hotlines throughout the country. In the course of their work, they have encountered many serious cases of harassment of foreign children in Japanese schools. "This bullying or *ijime* has a different nuance than the bullying which Japanese children experience. It is based on discriminatory attitudes of xenophobia or racism in the greater society, which is played out in the everyday actions and words of ordinary Japanese children and teachers, as well as other foreigners who have become infected with it… We are talking about *ijime* based on the mistaken idea that our children are different, somehow not the same people or human beings as other Japanese children"（McMahill, 2008: 43）.

### 4.5　National Forum in Gunma 2007: Creating a Multicultural Society Free From Bullying: What We Can Do Right Now for Children in Education and Social Welfare

This forum was held in Maebashi, Gunma from September 22-23, 2007. It was organized by staff and parents of ICS and funded by the Welfare and Medical Agency（WAM）or 社会福祉医療

機構 独立行政法人. The Forum brought together parents or representatives of children who have suffered from racially based bullying in Japanese schools, psychologists, and educators. The source of much of the information contained in this paper is the Forum Proceedings and Commentary （http://icsnet.or.jp/）. There were presentations and workshops which examined the experiences of the targets of bullies, the psychological impact of bullying, the motivations of the bullies and ways to deal with racially based bullying.

### 4.6   Ijime Zero network

The setting up of this network is one of the main outcomes of the Forum held in 2007. It is being funded by theWelfare and Medical Agency（WAM）or 社会福祉医療機構 独立行政法人 and the organizing committee has met four times so far. The goal for 2008 was to set up a multilingual website（initially in Japanese, English, Portuguese, Spanish and eventually Tagalog, too）under the name Ijime Zero. The website will provide three main services. First, it provides information and links to resources, such as counselors in these languages and academic articles so that families and educators in Japan, both Japanese and non-Japanese, can get assistance in dealing with bullying. Second, it provides a multilingual forum for foreign families to discuss their concerns and provide support for each other. Third, it offers a children's lending library service. Members of the NPO are able to borrow multilingual books written for small children to teenagers as well as DVDs on the topics of diversity and dealing with bullying. They will only pay the cost of the postage. There are already 3,000 items in the library. The website can already be accessed at http://www.ijimezero.org. It will be officially launched in March 2009. The Multilingual Education Research Institute NPO is making plans for a new project for 2009–2010. If funding is approved, it will organize a series of public hearings in areas of Japan where there is a high density of foreign workers. These hearings will aim to raise public awareness of the increasingly multicultural nature of Japanese society and the need to address the issue of racially based bullying in schools.

## Section 5   Ways in which Japanese society needs to address the issue of racially based bullying

### 5.1   Greater media coverage

Cases of racially based bullying and activities and organizations dealing with this issue tend to be reported mainly in the English and other foreign language media in Japan. In order to reach the general population, much more media coverage in the Japanese media is needed. These reports should include not just stories of the pain and damage caused by racially based bullying, but also

show the diversity that the foreign community brings to Japan in a positive light.

## 5.2　Funding for NPO groups already working on this issue

First of all, continued and, if possible, guaranteed additional funding for the NPO groups mentioned in section 4 that have already started work on this issue is greatly needed. Such funding would enable these groups to make longer term plans, to publish more, to provide more services such as speakers to address communities throughout Japan, and to set up more centers such as the one established in Niigata. The number of existing groups is still very small, so more funding is needed to increase their number.

## 5.3　Central government support and funding

Prefectures such as Mie have been providing special language support and developing teaching materials for Brazilian children in public schools (*The Japan Times,* 11.14.2008). However, this is inadequate to keep up with the increasing numbers of Brazilian and other foreign children in Japanese schools. Moreover, they have not been addressing the matter of bullying. Greater international cooperation between the Japanese government and the governments of the countries where these families come from is needed so that suitable teaching materials in the children's mother tongue can be supplied in all prefectures in Japan and views on how to deal with bullying can be shared.

The School Hotline in Gunma has already helped a large number of international families. Although the Japanese government has set up bullying hotlines throughout the country, they are staffed by Japanese speakers only. There is a clear need for speakers of English, Portuguese, Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, and other languages to staff such hotlines as well. Rather than relying solely on non-Japanese residents to take the initiative and set up multilingual hotlines, it would be a wise use of resources if speakers of other languages were to work alongside their Japanese colleagues at the hotlines already in place. Ideally, these people would be able to direct the non-Japanese individuals and families who contact the hotline to counselors and other experts who can intervene on their behalf and set up meetings with the school officials and act as interpreters. Furthermore, based on her research on the work of the Gunma School Hotline, McMahill (2008.12) suggests that there is a need for active mediation on behalf of non-Japanese residents, not simply translation services or information, in order for them to receive proper assistance from Japanese authorities.

Lastly, more assistant teachers are needed in schools who can speak the language of the foreign children who arrive with little or no knowledge of Japanese. These children need to be able to

study at the appropriate academic level in their mother tongue at the same time as they learn Japanese to allow them to meet their full potential and to prevent them from falling behind their peers or dropping out of school. When children feel supported, they are far more motivated to study and they will adapt and learn Japanese much faster than if simply expected to focus on Japanese to the exclusion of all else.

## 5.4   Curriculum innovation

These are probably the most crucial, but also most controversial changes that are required. First, the outdated notion of the unique nature of the Japanese race and culture needs to be replaced with the current scientific findings that all human beings are descended from the same African ancestors. Accordingly, the underlying principle of International Studies/Social Studies/History/Geography syllabuses should be to emphasize how people of different ethnic backgrounds are similar, not how they are different. Our common human ancestry should be celebrated and, at the same time, human diversity should be shown as a positive attribute. This very diversity, which is the result of the successful adaptability of our species, is the reason why humans, together with their pets and livestock, now account for 98% of the planet's terrestrial vertebrate biomass. 10,000 years ago we accounted for a mere 0.1%（Levitin, 2008: 7）. Humans have adapted to live in almost every habitable part of the surface of the planet resulting in a great diversity in physical appearance, languages and lifestyles. Nevertheless, we all belong to the same species and experience the same emotions, dreams and fears. If such a theme had a strong presence in educational materials and activities, children would easily understand that it is wrong to treat each others differently because of physical appearance, language, and customs. Furthermore, children and parents from other countries could be invited to teach about their own languages and cultures as part of these studies. If they were to be seen as a wonderful teaching resource, rather than as a burden, everyone would gain from the situation.

Another suggestion related more to daily school life is to reduce the emphasis on conformity in schools. This would greatly reduce the pressure on foreign and bicultural children, who find it not only hard, but also unreasonable to change their attitudes and behavior in order to be accepted by their Japanese peers. Foreign and bicultural children should not be expected to assimilate into Japanese society. They should be allowed to choose if they wish to or not and supported in the decision they make.

## 5.5   Teacher education

Teachers need to be aware that other cultures view bullying differently and that levels of

physical violence and verbal abuse that are considered acceptable in Japan are not tolerated else-where. They also need to be aware that racially based bullying is likely to happen in their classrooms and that they need to be observant and supportive of the victims and to accept that the parents and victims may communicate and respond to the situation in ways that are appropriate in their own cul-ture, but which are different to Japanese communication styles. Another suggestion is for greater recognition of the role that the Japanese as a Second Language（JSL）classrooms play in the lives of the foreign and bicultural children in their school. Although some children may have a reasonably good command of Japanese, and teachers may feel that they no longer need to attend JSL lessons from a linguistic needs point of view, these children often need the emotional support that the JSL classroom can offer. They can feel isolated, especially when it is the school policy to put children of the same ethnic background in different classes in order to facilitate assimilation. The effectiveness of these policies needs to be reviewed. Finally, teacher training in the new and innovative methods for dealing with incidents of bullying（described below in section 5.7）would greatly improve the re-sponses of schools to bullying.

## 5.6  Use a classroom management approach which promotes respect and cooperative learning

International schools and schools in western countries use a classroom management style called TRIBES, which can best be described as a process for learning and being together. Children work in mixed ability groups and do not work with their best friends all the time. This is for them to learn cooperation and toleration. There are four basic agreements that the students must observe at all times:

- Attentive Listening（this means not just listening to the teacher, but to each other as well, and listening with their ears, their eyes and their heart）
- Mutual Respect
- Right to participate or pass
- Appreciation/No Put-downs

When all students adhere to these agreements, they feel willing to work together as a cooperative group（or tribe）. This creates a secure, safe and inclusive environment, which allows all students to realize their full potential. Consideration could be given to such a classroom management style in Japanese schools.

## 5.7  Implementation of innovative techniques to deal with bullying

There are two approaches that are proving successful in dealing with bullying in a way that

maintains the dignity of all parties concerned and which aim to create improved understanding and relationships. Rigby's *Method of Shared Concern*（Rigby, 2005）is being used widely in Australia and other English-speaking countries. It seems particularly well suited to the Japanese context where bullying is usually carried out by groups of students. Rigby（2005）explains: "The method of shared concern consists of a series of stages in which interviews or discussions are undertaken with students who are thought to have been involved in an episode of bullying. These include suspected bullies and their victim or victims. Cases are generally chosen in which a group of students are involved in bullying an individual student who has become distressed as a consequence." The bullies are interviewed individually（often on more than one occasion）in the first stage and invited to respond to concerns about the victim. Care is taken not to blame the bullies for their actions. Instead, they are invited to suggest appropriate action that can be taken to relieve the distress of the victim. The victim of the bullying is interviewed in the second stage and questions asked to determine if there is anything the victim has done which has caused the bullying. In the third stage the bullies are brought together and complimented on the progress that has been made towards a solution and to see if they are ready to end the bullying and meet with the victim. When the interviewer judges that all parties are ready to meet together, they meet and work out an agreement to end the bulling. This agreement may even be signed.

A second approach that is also meeting with a lot of success not just in schools, but also in companies and other organizations（such as the police force in Japan and the development of the new trial by jury system）is the practice of Restorative Justice. It is based on the New Zealand Maori custom of bringing together the community that is responsible for the wrongdoing with the community affected by the wrongdoing. The underlying principle of Restorative Justice is that all members of a community are interconnected. It encourages communities to solve problems like bullying by moving from a position of control and compliance to one of community and cooperation. It raises awareness of accountability, responsibility and empathy among all members of the community, which leads to students choosing to change their behavior. The ultimate aim is to restore relationships among all members of the community. Restorative Practices, based on this approach, are being used in international schools in Japan already. They quickly have an impact on the whole school climate because all students soon become aware that they will be treated with respect, they will be allowed to explain their feelings and motivations and that they will not be blamed. Moreover, the students themselves suggest how the situation should be resolved rather than teachers dispensing punishments. Teachers are actively involved in the process, but as facilitators, not judges. The end result is greater understanding among all the parties involved. In a multicultural situation, this could lead to greater tolerance of difference and enable Japanese and foreign children and adults to

live alongside each other respectfully and in peace. More information can be obtained from K. International School, Tokyo（www.kist.ed.jp）.

## Conclusion

Although there are no statistics, there is a great deal of anecdotal evidence that foreign and bicultural children are being bullied in Japanese schools because they look, behave or speak differently to their Japanese peers or teachers. Clearly, the fact that there are no statistics on the numbers of foreign and bicultural children who are being bullied suggests that research into this is needed. In addition to the hearings that the Multilingual Education Research Institute plans to organize next year, a grant application for research funds could also be made and a multilingual team of researchers found to investigate the situation nationwide.

There needs to be greater recognition among the general public in Japan that *ijime* causes long-term psychological damage long after the bullying has stopped. It does not build character. Instead, it teaches that intolerance is acceptable and that the vulnerable can be oppressed. These are very unhealthy attitudes to instill in the younger generation.

There also needs to be greater acceptance that Japan is not a homogeneous society, but an increasingly multicultural society. Karsten, cited at the beginning of this paper, points out that the foreign and bicultural children in Japan are not only in Japanese schools to learn, but also to teach. They are a wonderful resource and can teach others about their customs, experiences and their languages. I will use her words to make the concluding point of this paper:

> . . . if Japanese society puts effort into starting to educate children to accept every language and culture as something which could enrich them, and most of all, as something NORMAL, that would be a good start to reducing bullying, especially at schools. Schools indeed have the power to form a new society, a society constituted of people with open minds who are happy to share their different identities, in order to celebrate their unique identity as human beings
>
> （Karsten, 2008: 100）.

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