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Voicing Again: Education of Teachers in Crises

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1. Introduction

The aim of this article is to present an introductory argument in order to open a broader study with the central question: how could a teacher survive crises through one's education? Once this interest has been expressed, several questions will be presented: Who is a teacher you are talking about? Is education a mere tool for survival? Why do you take up the issue of teacher's education first, rather than students' education? These questions will be addressed in the process as the initial concern evolves. In order to begin the process, this paper focuses on two questions: Why does the survival and education of a teacher matter, above all? If it does matter, what kinds of study are needed to excavate possibilities for teacher education in a state of crisis?

2. Teachers' Crises and Education

Teachers historically had a 'respected place' in Japanese society (Lee et al., 1998, 170). As long as this historical position is secured, teachers' survival does not need to be put into the focus. Likewise, teacher education would not be scrutinized because it was expected to produce conventional teachers in the same manner as before. Over the decades, however, this has not been the case in Japan. Kudomi refers to the 1990s as an 'Era of Hardship' for Japanese teachers (Kudomi, 1991, 69). This 'hardship' is related to teachers' survival in two ways. First, professional identities were endangered. Asanuma and Sato cautioned against 'a professional identity crisis' of teachers (Sato and Asanuma, 2000, 126). Sato argued that teachers no longer teach students, but are rather public servants who provide educational services, having to focus on satisfying the demands of parents as well as of students (Sato, 1992, 161). Teachers are forced to spend, on average, more than half of their working time, which is growing, dealing with 'peripheral jobs', such as trivial paper work and committee meetings (Sato and Asanuma, 2000, 128). Gordon agrees that teachers in Japan have struggled in the midst of socioeconomic changes: 'Traditional values of respect for schooling and teachers', in particular, 'have faded into a consumer-oriented demand for schooling' (Gordon, 2005, 459). Fujita states that 'many teachers have become confused trying to make sense of their roles and lost confidence in being teachers, intellectuals and role models for

children' as a result of 'relentless attack from various stakeholders since the 1980s' (Fujita, 2007, 50). These studies indicate that teachers are, either as individual practitioners of education or as individuals that form an occupational category as a whole, striving for survival.

The other survival they are facing is biological one. Kudomi mentions that the 'hardship' is not only a 'wide disorder' in the classrooms, but adds that 'exhaustion' is found among teachers (Kudomi, 1991, 69). While the former relates to the severity of teachers' professional challenges, the latter indicates that teachers' personal lives are threatened by the problems with which they are struggling. Kudomi lists several symptoms of 'exhaustion', symptoms that became evident in his research: high rates of illness, a continuously increasing number of mental disorders, a high rate of 'burnout', early retirement, or quitting the job despite the benefits of the long-term employment system (ibid). A similar sense of 'exhaustion' or mental fatigue among teachers is also found in research by Yamaguchi et al. (Yamaguchi et al., 2000, 2-3). They conclude that cases of 'mental illness' spread among school teachers and is 'deeply rooted' in the peculiarity and intricacy of school culture: thus, these symptoms are not avoidable only by means of teachers' individual efforts, such as change of a state of mind, enthusiasm, or sense of mission (10). Ochi and Shiba also acknowledge that 'mental illness' among teachers is becoming a severe social problem (Ochi and Shiba, 2000, 27). Studying the relationship between teachers' beliefs/ideals and 'burnout' symptoms, they point out that the organizational or semantic context has a wider impact on the occurrence of 'burnout' syndrome, compared with that of complexity of tasks or responsibility for students (20). Thus, they insist that the issue of teachers' 'mental illness' is not to be attributed to personal inability, such as adjusting oneself to the profession (27). The facts and analyses shown in these studies caution that, at least for a decade, teachers in Japan have been fought to survive, not only for their professional standing, but also for their personal lives, or even a biological needs.¹

The depth of this struggle seems to be addressed, to a certain degree, by the administrative side. In 2010, in a White Paper, Japan's Ministry of Education² mentioned that the number of teachers who have contracted mental illnesses has been increasing for past ten years. Thus, there is 'a severe problem'.³

If teachers' survival, either professional or personal, *does* matter, what could be done to alleviate their suffering, and enhance their well-being? One of the direct associations would be a systematic support for them, from a physical and psychological viewpoint. The Ministry seems to be aware of this. As is indicated, in the White Paper, the Ministry provides the following advice to the local board of education concerning 'mental health': (1) reducing chores, (2) promoting the atmosphere of the workplace so that teachers feel easy to talk and exchange ideas, and (3) making counseling and early medical treatment available.⁴ There is

nothing wrong with responding to the issue in the way stated in the White Paper. At the same time, however, if the severity of the problem is deeply connected with the culture of teaching profession itself, as Kudomi, Yamaguchi, Ochi and other co-researchers excavate, it is necessary to rethink the nature of teaching from a broader context. That is to say, the issue should be examined by addressing questions such as: Who are the teachers? What do teachers do? Why are teachers' lives imperiled, as they engage with their professional culture? Here, these questions show why teacher education is at stake because they shall be pursued. What sort of teachers are people trying to become, or actually becoming? What do teachers hope for their profession? What risks and fears do they face? These questions are mirrored in teacher education: they raise the issues of becoming a teacher, and the realities and expectations for life as a teacher.

The Japanese Ministry of Education, however, does not seem to consider the survival of the teacher to be a matter of teacher education. Its emphasis is, rather, on the 'improvement of [the] quality of teachers (*kyouin no sisitsu koujou*)' (International Reading Association, 2008, 60). According to the Ministry, '[t]he success or failure of school education to a large degree depends on the quality and abilities of teachers'.⁵ It is legitimate to assume that the 'improvement of [the] quality of teachers' would make schools work more effectively and smoothly, and that would help them to not only meet students' and parents' expectations, but also improve teachers' own professional confidence. Nevertheless, one discussion topic, with respect to the relationship between teachers' survival and education, is: If a teacher's predicament is something structural, rather than the mere result of unmet teaching qualities, is there any danger that the above approach puts more pressures on teachers thus aggravating their suffering? In other words, what is meant by 'quality of teachers' in advocacy, or the improvement of it? Is it relevant to make a difference to the endangered lives of teachers, both in and outside of the classroom?

In order to examine the extent to which the emphasis on the 'quality of teachers' relates to their surviving an uneasy path, two dominant approaches are highlighted, which have been discussed in the current literature on education reform: revising the system and quality of pre-service teacher training or addressing in-service training. A major example is the argument for the introduction of six-year teacher training. In the 2009 election, which was a landslide victory over the long-ruling Liberal Democratic Party, the Democratic Party of Japan called for a six-year teacher preparation programme as part of their election platform: 'Fundamentally review the teacher certification system in order to improve teacher quality. Extend the teacher training programme to six years (master's degree) and improve pre-service and in-service training' (Democratic Party of Japan, 2009, 8). This sharply contrasts with the present system, which mandates a four-year college-level education for the first level certificate, which is the common authorization held by schoolteachers.⁶ Several

analyses suggest that there is a common feeling among advocacates (academics, teacher educators, and citizens) for the six-year teacher training: they believe that four years are not enough to prepare well-trained, respectable professionals (Sakuma, 2009, 22; Yasuhiko, 2010, 6-7; Miwa, 2010, 13-14).

Yet, there is a different approach to the 'improvement of the quality of teachers'. This approach is most evident in the introduction of the teacher certification renewal system (TCRS), which went into effect in 2009.⁷ The legal basis of TCRS is the Revised Teachers' License Law, which was enacted in 2007. The law requires a total 30 hours of training, intended mostly for in-service teachers, to renew their certificates and keep their validity. The purpose of introducing TCRS was '[t]o ensure that teachers systematically acquire up-to-date knowledge and skills in order to maintain the professional competencies necessary for today's educators, teach with confidence and pride, and gain public respect and trust' (Jimbo et. al, 2008, 23). It seems to be true that, in this fast-paced and multi-valued society, 'up-to-date knowledge and skills' could be helpful for teachers to professionally engage with competence and dignity. In terms of access to ICT, for example, this system may have a point to a certain degree.

These two approaches seem to oppose one another, as the former focuses on pre-service teacher training and the latter on in-service. This dichotomy might be strengthened because each position is supported by one of the two major competing parties in the current Japanese political scene respectively. Which approach, then, could ensure recapturing teachers' lost identities and prevent them from having a harmed life? This is not an either-or question. These two approaches have the same internal logic: they try to change education by improving the quality of teachers without tackling with the existing culture of schools and teachers. For one, a six-year teacher training programme is aimed at qualifying recruits, ready for the fight in the battlefield called the classroom. TCRS works toward recharging experienced (tired) teachers and raising the efficiency of their performance. In both efforts, it is common to seek better performance, not a change of, or reconsideration on, the structure and culture in which teachers are forced to muddle. In this sense, teacher quality is referred to as a magic wand, promising a better future without scrutinizing the existing school culture itself. In other words, in discussing teacher education, the idea of teacher has significance only if it reexamines the culture of teaching itself, rather than pushing teachers to fit into the culture as it stands.

3. Two Schoolings of Teachers

Therefore, a question emerges: how could such a re-examination of the structural or cultural framework be possible? In an essay exploring the possibility of an alternative engagement with teaching and learning, Paul Standish recognizes the conventional understanding of

educational practice and reasoning as a 'closed economy', which is his term (Standish, 2005, 54). It is a mode of living in which every interaction is counted and measured by a logic of exchange (ibid.). Those who relate to educational institutions, in which learning outcomes are becoming the central concerns, would recognize familiar in the following description:

Quality assurance is facilitated by the fact that what the teachers and the learners are required to do will be fully specified; the success in achieving the course objectives is transparent to scrutiny, providing clear measures of performance and means of comparison with rival institutions (ibid.).

On the contrary, an open-ended approach (55) implies an inexhaustible aspect of education. Standish characterizes such aspects as open or unpredictable, and, hence, strange, possibilities (62): this is the receptivity to an intense moment when the unpredictable fascinations of learning suddenly flows out (67). These attributes explain why Standish calls the alternative economy in education as 'the economy of excess' (62), which signifies a sphere beyond 'regimes of performativity' (70). If this alternative economy contains bearings on teacher education, which would enable the structural and existential examination of their predicament, how do such implications look ? In another essay, Standish discusses the notion of 'uncommon schooling' in contrast with conventional practices in schools (Standish, 2006, 150). The essay examines the notion of 'uncommon schools' found in H. D. Thoreau's *Walden*. As hinted at in Stanley Cavell's commentary, *The Senses of Walden*, Standish clarifies educational implications in Thoreau's enterprise. *Walden* was written, according to its author's statement, in response to his neighbors' concerns on the 'economy' (146). Yet, Thoreau carefully experimented, using economical terms ironically and thus successfully, showed different implications that the word 'economy' usually denotes in familiar territory (151).

A comparison of (common) schooling and uncommon schooling parallels that of a closed economy and open-ended approach to economy in education. It is acceptable to say that the degree to which the closed economy governs practices of schooling is widening and strengthening. In that sense, if one tries to seek any example or experiment beyond the dominance of such economy, it shall be called 'uncommon'. According to Cavell and Standish, 'uncommon schooling' is characterized by the acquisition of 'father-tongue' (ibid.). The term appeared originally in *Walden*, and Cavell and Standish pay attention to it, with respect to education and language. In Thoreau's own words, father-tongue is a 'reserved and selected expression, too significant to be heard by the ear, which must be born again in order to speak' (Thoreau, 1997, 93).⁸ Standish says:

As we grow up we inevitably learn to speak: we acquire our mother-tongue. This is our common schooling, our schooling into community. But we need later to acquire the ‘father-tongue’ (Standish, 2006, 150).

In the above passage, the acquisition of mother-tongue reminds us of the purpose of pre-service teacher training, either with the traditional four-year curriculum or with the prospective six-year programme. Regardless of length, the process is oriented towards initiation into the community, more specifically. In other words, the process is designated for students to learn mother-tongue as teachers, how to speak as one and make sense of oneself in the teachers’ community or school culture. Aimed at the better functioning of teachers in a community as a fixed entity, in-service training helps current teachers to become better speakers. Learning to speak a ‘reserved and selected expression’ is unwelcome and out of place in a training where people are guided to speak convincingly and perform effectively in the conventional sense. Uncommon schooling for prospective or on-the-scene teachers might instead cast a fresh light on the necessity and potency of reconsidering the context or culture. It may threaten the present framework of teacher education, blurring the dichotomies of pre-service and in-service training, efficient and inefficient teachers, and qualified and unqualified teachers. This assumption tries to capture, as Standish claims, the possibility that learners—in the case of teacher education, teachers or student teachers—go beyond, or step back from, the existing supposition and given course of study.

4. Voices of Teachers

Some might wonder: if the ongoing argument about in- and pre-service teacher training, from a Standish’s point of view, is marked by the acquisition of, or upgrade in, mother-tongue, how could one describe another dimension of teacher education, with a focus on leaning of, or a ‘rebirth’ to speak, father-tongue? It is helpful to pay attention to the notion of voice, which is emphasized in answering the question. Fulford sees firm connections between father-tongue and (recovery of) voice. Calling for a careful re-questioning of writing frames, which became fairly popular in writing classes at universities in U.K., she points out a danger of suffocating students’ voices by imposing not only ideas on how to write but also on what to write:

Writing frames, particularly in their most prescriptive forms, may well deny the student voice that they aim to facilitate because they stifle possibilities of thought, in content as well as structure (Fulford, 2009, 233-234).

Instead of such instructions of a repressive kind, Fulford sees a necessity of some sort of

guidance to ‘father tongue’ (234). This depends on her conception of the relationship, which is stated as follows:

Although the contrast in Thoreau is between spoken language of the mother tongue and the father tongue typified by the written word (the ‘maturity and experience’ of our use of language), finding one’s voice is akin to activating the father tongue (233).

The process of writing as that of ‘finding one’s voice’ here is tantamount to ‘deconformity’ or ‘the aversion of conformity’ (Fulford, 2009, 231; Cavell, 1996, 66), in a sense that it is a move away from a fixed state of thinking. Thus, finding the voice, or the ‘recovery (Fulford, 2009, 231)’ of it in a case where one has been in chronic denial of it, becomes the key issue when an open-ended approach to education is to be probed. With regard to this, the notion of voice may have bearings on teacher education. If teacher education is confined with initiation into, and affirmation of, the existing culture, it would stifle teachers’ ‘possibilities of thought, in content as well as structure’. The acquisition of voice is at stake when teachers try to re-see what they are doing and speaking.

In clarifying the significance of voice in education with Cavell’s philosophical and educational theme called Emersonian Moral Perfectionism,⁹ Standish finds ambiguous connotations that the notion of voice may bring. On the one hand, he is sure that ‘[t]ypically the celebration of voice has to do with self-expression, with a kind of finding of oneself, with recognition and acknowledgement’ (Standish, 2004, 92). Therefore, ‘it is difficult not to think that something important is at stake, especially in the face of the normalising tendencies that proliferate in education’ (ibid.). On the other hand, however, he cautions that ‘there is an unsteadiness in the term’ (ibid.). The fact that the term is so often degenerated into ‘the emotive expressions’ is, according to Standish, one of the reasons that we have to be cautious (ibid.).

Here, the force of commoditization (mostly with self-help sentimentalization, in this case) of the closed economy would soon take over the attempts to reconsider its regime from outside. Fulford shares the anxiety: voice in the classroom is easily reduced to ‘opinions of the customer’, ‘participation in classroom discussion’, or ‘personal development portfolio’, which often leans toward ‘narcissism and a limited view of the individual as self-contained’ (Fulford, 2009, 227). All of such quick incorporation into conventional, hence comfortable, discourse would reinforce the existing culture of teaching and learning, instead of changing it. So, what can be done in the face of the brutal but shrewd tide of impoverishment, which undermines learners’ (and teachers’) voices as well as studies on voice?

With regard to this question, it is interesting, and perhaps useful, to see what is in common in the works of Standish (Standish, 2004) and Fulford (Fulford, 2009). First, they both have

an inclination toward Cavell's approach to voice. Second, they take up Cavell's reading of film as an example of the investigation: *Stella Dallas* in Standish and *Gaslight* in Fulford. Third, these titles are from the genre of (what Cavell calls) 'melodrama of unknown woman'. Fourth, they pay attention to the ending of each film at the concluding section of their papers. Standish comes to the idea of receptivity and acknowledgement, by reading aversion from Hollywood ending (Standish, 2004, 105). Fulford emphasizes the recovery of expressiveness and continuity of its process, by listening to the final conversations between protagonists (Fulford, 2009, 235). Each film shows the heroine's voicelessness and, as stories evolve, indicates a recovery of her own voice. Drawing upon Cavell's reading, each study carefully follows a transfiguration, or conversion, which the heroine went through. In the case of *Stella Dallas*, Stella's taste was left unacknowledged by her husband, Stephan. After divorcing Stella, Stephan remarried Mrs. Morrison. Ironically, it was Mrs. Morrison with whom Stella can communicate through intuition and behaviors. In *Gaslight*, Paula had been denied her thoughts and voice by her husband, Gregory, and eventually recovered from the crises through the conversation with Cameron the detective. The sequence of the woman's experience is analogous with a drama of denial (or withholding) and, in time, the restarting of her learning and education (Cavell, 2004, 114).

5. A Figure of a Teacher in Emersonian Moral Perfectionism

Our attention may be drawn, by our original interest, to a question: What about their teacher's voice, in a shade of a heroine's search for hers? What is the nature of Cameron's voice in his investigation around Paula? What happened to Mrs. Morrison's voice when she talked to Stella? If these women's journeys were connected by their education, would it not be possible to find some educational experience shared by their interlocutors' side? These are questions about teacher education. Some may argue, however, that their associations are akin to friendship than a teacher-student relationship. This perception helps us to go forward in the inquiry, rather than go backward. In Emersonian Moral Perfectionism, the process of transfiguration or conversion, or that of education, is characterized by one's relationship with a friend. In the introduction of *The Cities of Words*, which consists of interwoven chapters on philosophers (or literary figures) and on films, Cavell states that there are 'two dominating themes of perfectionism' (Cavell, 2004, 26). His exposition of the two indicates how Emersonian Perfectionism closely relates to the subject of education of the self, as well as that of education with/by a friend.

The first theme is that the human self—confined by itself, aspiring toward itself—is always becoming, as on a journey, always partially in a future state. This journey is described as education or cultivation (ibid.).

The second dominating theme is that the other to whom I can use the words I discover in which to express myself is the Friend—a figure that may occur as the goal of the journey but also as its instigation and accompaniment. Any moral outlook . . . will accord weight to the value of friendship. But only perfectionism, as I understand it, places so absolute a value on this relationship. The present of friendship in the films we will consider (including the sometimes drastic lack of this relation in the melodramas) is of the most specific importance in establishing them as perfectionist narratives (27).

As stated above, the journey of the self is inclined to, and instigated by, a friend. The appearance of a friend characterizes a path, which Cavell recounts as that of ‘becoming’, and ‘education or cultivation’. Standish comments on the implied connection of friend and teacher:

The learner progressively find herself in the ways that the texts might come to word her, in a relationship that extends to, and is reflected back from, her teachers. The teacher and the text alike, presenting to her some possibility of becoming and offering the example of a next self to which she might aspire, have then this friend-like relation to the learner (Standish, 2004, 104).

In Cavell and Standish, a figure of a friend is tantamount to a picture of a teacher. If it is not for such a figure, one cannot be driven to leave the status quo, or hinted at the availability of a next step. A question is: why do they not simply call such a figure as a teacher, rather than a friend? They would respond, I assume, that it is solely because a teacher in perfectionism is not that of a common school, but uncommon. The use of the term ‘friend’, they would continue, demonstrates how a teacher in uncommon schooling performs differently, unlike teachers who tends to be coerced to focus on the role of transmitting skills and ideas to pupils in a one-sided way.

Returning to our initial question, then, how could the picture of education with/by a friend indicate the path of teachers’ survival? At this point, one fact shall be recalled. Cavell stated that friendship shown in the films has ‘the most specific importance’ in what makes these works subjects of studies of perfectionism (27). As mentioned earlier, Standish and Fulford took up the films in a genre called melodrama of an unknown woman. In Cavell’s study of film, there are two genres: melodrama and remarriage comedies.¹⁰ Unlike classical comedies, which mostly describes ‘a young pair’s efforts to overcome an obstacle and to get together in something called marriage’ (Cavell, 1990, 103), remarriage comedy is concerned with ‘a somewhat older pair’s efforts to overcome a threatened divorce (say an inner obstacle to the

marriage) and to get together *again, back* together' (ibid. [original emphasis]). In pointing out that the wedding of the pair is never shown in the films of this genre (except ones that are parodied, subverted, or interrupted) in this genre's films, Cavell stresses: it reflects the idea that 'what constitutes marriage lies not, as it were, outside of marriage (in church, state, sexual satisfaction, or the promise of children) but in the willingness for marriage itself, for repeating the acknowledgement of the fact of it' (104). It seems, he continues, 'as if all genuine marriage is remarriage' (ibid.). In these films, in the process of such continual acknowledgement, the pair constitutes 'a state of conversation' (ibid.). The melodrama of an unknown woman, on the contrary, 'negates this possibility of conversation between a woman and the men there are' (105).

6. An Acquisition and Reacquisition of Voice

As we have seen, heroines in this genre find their interlocutors outside of their marital relationships. It is legitimate to say that the husbands in remarriage comedies play a role of interlocutors in melodrama (e.g. Cameron for Paula), namely that of friend as well as teacher. A question of teacher education occurs: what kind of education has been taken place at the husband's side when the pairs is engaged in conversation? According to Cavell, any outside factors cannot define and guarantee how such education happens and keeps happening. Only willingness to acknowledge and continually provoke makes their conversation possible. This by no means suggests that teacher education shall be attributed to a teacher's individual and spontaneous efforts. Rather, it shall be emphasized that, in *conversation*, a willingness and acknowledgement of it are realized through one's engagement as voicing.

This suggests a correlation between the topic of marriage in Cavell's study of perfectionism and the issue of acquisition of voice, with respect to our interest and question about teacher education. If teacher education, as we have argued, does not conform to a fixed state of school culture but is a process that includes reclaiming one's own viewpoint to question the culture, it is considered to be a process of acquiring one's own voice. A teacher's willingness to converse with her students, colleagues, and neighbours, and to acknowledgement of this, ensure her conduct and quality as a teacher. As 'all genuine marriage is remarriage', all genuine acquisition of voice is a reacquisition. In light of this, conventional dichotomies of pre- and in-service teacher education become lose their focus.

Pre-service teacher education has generally been considered merely as preparation and initiation into the existing school culture. In-service teacher training tend to be treated as a tool for maximization of on-the-job efforts. Although they share the same goal of maintaining the existing teacher culture, pundits and policymakers argue over their priorities (i.e., which should come first). With regard to the connections between pre- and in-service education, people's concerns are, at best, about the smoother transition from the one to the

other. In Cavellian teacher education, the acquisition of voice is always accompanied with a future struggle for the reacquisition of voice. Any teacher, either prospective or experienced, cannot be exempted. This solemn fact, however, does not suffocate a teacher, but rather might bring a refreshing space to step back and take a breath in the course of the busy daily conduct. In Perfectionist teacher education, neither extending pre-service education nor strengthening in-service training is prioritized. Instead, reconsideration of their teachers' daily conduct, not to say their utterances must come first. Now that the richness and relevance of Cavell's study of voice and questions of teacher education were elucidated, what shall be emphasized is not a choice between producing competent future educators and reshaping current practitioners. Rather, rethinking the idea of teacher education itself must come to the fore, in a hope that it would reconstruct common understanding of educational practices from within. The (re)acquisition of voice shall not be defined outside the teacher's engagement as voicing. This does not intend to compete with the advocacy for raising competent teachers. The notion of voice, instead, leads us to ask why the question of, or a searching for, a good teacher *is* a question. A voice in a crisis is, thus, to be voiced, heard, and understood (or left unvoiced and unheard, or misunderstood) as a reengagement in such a question. It is a voice to question the premise at which the question occurs. It is a voice to teach. It is a voice of a rebirth.

Notes

¹ One of the most extreme cases, which is the most tragic, occurred on March 2010. The Tokyo branch of the Fund for Local Government Employees' Accident Compensation recognized the suicide of a newly employed teacher as an accident during duty. The decision was made as her fatality occurred during official duty, resulting from severe stress and insufficient support from her school (*Japan Today*, March 9, 2010 (Kyodo News)).

² Official name is Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

³ (2010) *2009 White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (heisei 21endo monbukagakuhakusho)*, 158 (in Japanese).

⁴ (2010) *2009 White Paper on Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (heisei 21endo monbukagakuhakusho)*, 158-159 (in Japanese).

⁵ The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). (2010). *Improvement of the Quality of Teachers*. Retrieved September 26, 2010, from <http://www.mext.go.jp/english/org/struct/015.htm>.

⁶ According to the Ingersoll, 82% of teachers, in either elementary or secondary schools in Japan, earned bachelor's degree as the highest academic diploma (Ingersoll, 2007, 11).

⁷ This system has been discussed and enacted under a series of administrations of the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan.

⁸ Let me repeat by quoting the appearance of the term ‘father-tongue’, but with a broader context, hoping that it helps readers to have a clearer image: ‘It is not enough even to be able to speak the language of that nation by which they are written, for there is a memorable interval between the spoken and the written language, the language heard and language read. The one is commonly transitory, a sound, a tongue, a dialect merely, almost brutish, and we learn it unconsciously, like the brutes, of our mothers. The other is the maturity and experience of that; if that is our mother tongue, this is our father tongue, a reserved and select expression, too significant to be heard by the ear, which we must be born again in order to speak’ (Thoreau, 1997, 92-93).

⁹ Some may feel puzzled by the use of the term ‘perfectionism’. The assumed reasons are: (1) it is often used as psychological term, implying a person who is obsessed with the idea that everything has to be done—unrealistically—without flaw, and (2) it is also referred to in the history of philosophy as the line of thought directed toward *telos*. Cavell’s perfectionism roughly rests upon the second association: however, he uniquely elaborates on the notion of perfection, especially in a sense that ‘perfection as perfecting with no fixed ends’ (Saito, 2005, 53). This conception of perfectionism also relates to why Cavell calls it as ‘Emersonian’. He says: ‘Emersonian Perfectionism does not imply perfectibility—nothing in Emerson is more constant than his scorn of the idea that any given state of what he calls the self is the last’ (Cavell, 1990, 3). Cavell, however, does not intend to give a fixed definition to the term, and keeps the word ‘perfection’ in play. One important reason is ‘to register Emerson’s sense . . . that each state of the self is, so to speak, final’ (ibid.).

¹⁰ Examples of films that belong to this genre are: *The Philadelphia Story* (1949), *Adam’s Rib* (1949), or *It Happened One Night* (1934).

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