



Title	比較とは何か？：カナダの多文化主義と日本の共生の翻訳を通して
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What is a Comparison?

Translating Canadian Multiculturalism and Japanese *Kyosei*

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Abstract

In this paper, we explore the possibilities and challenges of the method of “comparison” in understanding diversity issues. We begin by drawing an initial contrast between “Canadian” multiculturalism and “Japanese” *kyosei* as distinct ways of interpreting and managing human diversity to suggest that each is a form of comparison. Drawing upon critical discussions of cultural comparison in the discipline of anthropology and from our observations during the Osaka RESPECT Summer School program at the University of Toronto, we argue that any comparison, whether multiculturalism or *kyosei*, implies a common basis among humans upon which certain kinds of difference are recognized. Such bases are specific to the historical and cultural conditions in which they exist and are used. We then examine what happens when these forms of comparison are translated. Such translations can risk reducing one form of comparison into the terms of another—for example, we may interpret *kyosei* as an example of “Japanese culture” that exists within the framework of multiculturalism. However, such translations always include “gaps” between the things being compared. These gaps point to new kinds of differences and similarities among humans that are not fully encompassed by a given framework. Instead, they are found and bridged in specific concrete situations and interactions. We therefore argue that comparison is a dynamic, situated, and interactive process, through which actors continuously experiment with translating and comparing forms of difference. We then use this dynamic and processual notion of comparison to illustrate the new and unexpected relationships and interpretations produced between ostensibly “Canadian” and “Japanese” ways of interpreting diversity.

Keywords

comparison, culture, translation, diversity, multiculturalism, *kyosei*

Introduction

How to deal with diversity as a strategy to enrich the society has become a common concern in many countries, including Japan and Canada. The ways that a society reckons diversity are collective agreements about what characteristics should be used to divide people into communities, groups, or individuals within that society. They also embody the kinds of commonalities are held to join all of the members of a society together. As such, diversity implies a form of comparison according to a common measure against which difference among people is recognized and respected in a given society. However, the ways in which the differences among the people who compose a society are measured vary in different social contexts. In order to create more inclusive ways of understanding and organizing society, we must be able to recognize the diversity of the different forms of diversity that have emerged in different places. But how can we productively compare different ways of addressing diversity in different societies?

In Canada, the official government policy of multiculturalism sets the guidelines for recognizing differences among people with various cultural backgrounds. Under this policy, Canada is often treated by other countries and represents itself as the world forerunner of multiculturalism and a successful example in managing diversity. In comparison, Japan has been stereotypically associated with the myth of homogeneity, and is considered to only recently have begun to recognize diversity with the notion of *kyosei* or *tabunka kyosei*. By comparing the existence of multicultural policies in Canada and Japan or the lack thereof, in the international popular discourse Canada is framed as advanced and Japan as lagging in their recognition of diversity in society. In this context, *tabunka kyosei* is used as a comparative concept with multiculturalism and as a measure for evaluating the advancement of Japanese society regarding its recognition of

social diversity.

Can we compare multiculturalism and *kyosei*? If so, what is the ground for comparison? Can we translate multiculturalism into *kyosei*, or *kyosei* into multiculturalism? In translation, how is the specificity of each concept negotiated and transformed? This paper explores the possibilities and challenges of the method of “comparison” in understanding diversity issues. The method of comparison has been the central component of anthropological knowledge making and the notion of comparison has been critically discussed among anthropologists. What are productive ways of comparing diversity in different societies? The discussion is inspired by the authors’ experiences as anthropologists and coordinators of the special summer school for Osaka University’s newly inaugurated RESPECT program held at the University of Toronto, which offers students from Osaka the opportunity to learn about Canadian multiculturalism on the ground. By drawing from anthropological debates on comparison and by using our observations of interactions among the Japanese group and their Canadian hosts, we address the incommensurability of Canadian multiculturalism and Japanese *kyosei* as strategies for incorporating diversity in society.

As ways of interpreting human diversity, both multiculturalism and *kyosei* are themselves ways of comparing human life. They each embody assumptions about what the people in a society share in common, which serves as a foundation upon which comparative judgements about differences between people and groups can be made. What has been striking and insightful about the RESPECT Program is how by comparing multiculturalism and *kyosei*—that is, by comparing two forms of comparison—we have observed how important it is to recognize comparison as a dynamic, situated, and interactive process. Comparisons, such as those made within the epistemological framework of multiculturalism, often serve to reify the assumption that the diversity of human life can be understood on some common and static basis, often “culture” or “ethnicity.” Conventionally, multiculturalism in Canada has been developed as a means

to reconcile historical conflicts between Anglophone (English-speaking) and Francophone (French-speaking) communities; it is based on the assumption that immigrants need not shed their ethnic or cultural identities and “assimilate.” Rather,

Canadian multicultural policy has proceeded on the view that recognizing and encouraging cultural diversity “may help build the country and have a quite positive impact on social cohesion” (Reitz 2009, 5). In other words, multiculturalism treats all people as possessing a distinct and static ethnicity or culture, and imagines Canadian society as a common sphere in which those cultures can exist. The effect of this framework is to reduce all forms of diversity to differences of culture, making it difficult to directly challenge the static notions of “culture” and “ethnicity” which assume a thing that is shared amongst all the member of a given group. These static notions have been critiqued in recent debates on multiculturalism. But why, in the first place, has cultural difference associated with ethnicity taken a central place in understanding diversity among various members of society over the many other possible ways of conceptualizing human diversity? This needs to be further explored in the broader context of political economy and intellectual history.

If we compare multiculturalism and *kyosei*, we run the risk of turning *kyosei* into a form of culture within the epistemological framework of multiculturalism. But comparing the two also reveals ways to view the relationship between multiculturalism and *kyosei* that disrupt the assumptions of multiculturalism. The encounter between multiculturalism and *kyosei* in the RESPECT Summer School cannot be reduced to a static basis. Instead, it asks us to look towards shifting combinations of differences in institutional ideals and structures, notions of nature, and language. In this way, the RESPECT school pushes us to rethink how we as observers and analysts of human society understand the act of comparison, and also to attend to the concrete acts and situations in which people make comparisons between multiculturalism and *kyosei*.

In this paper, we discuss several episodes from the RESPECT Summer School in

Toronto that have persuaded us of this grounded and dynamic understanding of comparison. Working with the students from Osaka, we saw each day how difficult comparison truly was, as student discussions oscillated between seeing multiculturalism and *kyosei* as each specific to their respective societies, or of seeing numerous commonalities between them. Participant observation of the RESPECT Summer School provided the authors with an opportunity to reflect on the question, "what is a comparison?" What we found most suggestive were the ways in which students compared seemingly incommensurable concepts. Below, after briefly reviewing anthropological debates about "comparison," we will discuss the challenge of comparing multiculturalism and *kyosei*. Then, we will explore what we can learn from the students' practices of comparison, which at first glance might look like category mistakes. In addition, we will touch on universities to discuss the institutional aspects of comparing that we experienced as coordinators.

Through these concrete episodes, we argue that a productive comparison is one that is always aware of the irreducible gaps between the things compared. A productive comparison does not assume that there is a stable way to compare one thing to another, but recognizes that people can still figure out ways to find similarities and differences. It reflects on how and why the act of comparison happens, and puts this new understanding back into the framework and the ground of comparison. Observing and participating in the RESPECT program as both coordinators and anthropologists, we have been pushed to think about what it means to compare, not just as a method of inquiry, but also as a form of grounded and iterative engagement that recognizes diversity as emergent in specific, concrete situations.

1. Anthropology as (the Comparison of) Comparison

Our attention to the significance and forms of comparison in the RESPECT program was piqued by how the way that students worked to compare multiculturalism and *kyosei* resonated with persistent debates surrounding comparison among anthropologists. Often,

when we compare different forms of human life, we implicitly assume the existence of a common ground that these forms share. That is, to be able to recognize two things as different, there must be some underlying notion of how they are essentially the same. As specialists in understanding human difference, anthropologists have taken the concept of “culture” to be this essential sameness.

However, since nearly the beginning of anthropology in the early years of the twentieth century, the culture concept has been the focal point for heated debates about how strong a basis for understanding and bridging human differences culture can provide to anthropologists. The disagreement between two of the fields pioneering figures—A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and Franz Boas—symbolizes the challenges of thinking and acting comparatively.

The British anthropologist A.R. Radcliffe-Brown thought of anthropology as a science of comparison, in which all societies could be seen as variations of underlying universal forms. Radcliffe-Brown (1952) espoused a type of anthropology whose ultimate end goal was to discover a set of general sociological propositions that explain the structure of human societies. This “nomothetic” (Radcliffe-Brown 1952, 1) approach emphasizes the inherent comparability of different cultures, based on the assumption that all forms of human social life share certain regular features. Indeed, as the historian Henrika Kuklick writes, British anthropologists under the tutelage of Radcliffe-Brown and his cohort, had reached a “broad agreement that social anthropology was a science, directed towards formulating laws of human behavior” (Kuklick 2008, 74).

On the other hand, Franz Boas, who is considered to be the “father” of American anthropology, advocated taking an “idiographic” approach (Radcliffe-Brown 1952, 1)—each culture is treated as a distinct form of life, with its own specific system of meanings born out of its particular history and surroundings (Hatch 1974, 238). Where anthropologists observed similarities in the practices or ideas of two cultures, these

similarities were not to be explained in terms of the same general cause or law, but as a consequence of specific and local events over time (Boas 1940, 274). Therefore, in Boas' view, there was no possible definition of a concept of "culture" which would share certain features across all its forms. Instead, anthropologists were to view cultures as naturally bounded objects (Bashkow 2004, 443), unique in form and history. No culture was more rational than any other; each operated according to its own logic, which could be known best by people who have lived and matured in those cultures (Darnell 2008, 42). In this view, comparison is not a method for finding the laws of human behavior across cultures. Rather, it is a way to understand the historical and social trajectories that have shaped the specificity of each bounded group. As such, the Boasian perception of culture has been used to support cultural relativism and to challenge social Darwinism.

While the contrast we have drawn obscures the complexities of the actual anthropological debates, it does serve to expose the major shortcomings of each. The issue with the former view, which we associate with Radcliffe-Brown, is that the forms that anthropologists then take as universal never turn out to be that universal. This has been at the center of a powerful critique of anthropological studies of Japan. As anthropologist Sonia Ryang has pointed out, ethnographic studies of Japan have often worked to universalize particular forms of social life drawn from studies of local Japanese life into claims about the "Japanese self." Henceforth, anthropologies of Japan have been strongly marked by a tendency to search for "a "Japanese" cultural core, a "Japanese" sense of self, a "Japanese" way of life, and the bounded, pristine group of individuals called the "Japanese" who are supposed to have embodied quintessential Japaneseness" (Ryang 2004, 10). Implicitly relying on the assumption that the ideas and practices that they have observed in one locality speak to the character of the nation as a whole, anthropologists have erased diversity. Oriented by the assumption that there is a "Japanese culture," anthropologists have overlooked what else their field data might have been saying about regional identity or highly local practices. Here, the idea that assumes the "nation"

should have a shared “culture”—a specific configuration of “nation” and “culture” developed in modern Europe—has been taken for granted and ended up affirming a viewpoint that all nations should possess a specific cultural identity. This is the very assumption that governs how immigrants are recognized under the Canadian policy of multiculturalism. If we are not mindful of the cultural specificity of our own ideas, including the idea that human behavior is meaningfully governed by universal social laws, we risk losing sight of uniqueness and diversity.

However, if we then veer too far towards the latter Boasian view, then heterogeneity is all that we can see. Every culture becomes a thing unto itself as if it has a solid boundary that naturally separates it from the external world, and we fall into the stereotypical trap of cultural relativism: the loss of the possibility of mutual understanding and comparability. Critiques of Ruth Benedict’s classic ethnography of Japan, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, illustrate this point. Benedict’s *Chrysanthemum* was written during World War II, and published to much acclaim and interest in 1946. The book’s analysis of Japan is based on the premise that Japan has a specific and unique system of values, distinct from that of the United States, which explains what may appear as exotic or incomprehensible practices to Western audiences. Historian Elson Boles (2006) points out that Benedict in fact used different principles to explain 20th-century Japanese militarism than those of Western nations. While Benedict ascribes the imperial expansionism of Western nations to political forces, she singles out Japan’s wartime aggression as caused by its entrenched and static culture (Boles 2006, 55). Wartime Japan could not be understood except as a nation that was distinct and separate from others because of its radically different culture.

Both approaches share one difficulty: whether we take cultures as strongly bounded unique entities and relatively incomparable or as variations of universal forms, assumptions originating in one cultural perspective can implicitly serve as the grounds

against which others are recognized and measured (see Asad 1986; Brightman 1995). This is the argument made by anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod in an influential essay, "Writing against Culture." She points out that anthropology is "primarily the study of the non-Western other by the Western self" (1991, 139), and that culture is "the essential tool" that anthropologists use to "make other." (143) She reminds us that anthropologists' otherings "always [entail] the violence of repressing or ignoring other forms of difference" (140). As we saw in the above discussion of the anthropological search for the "Japanese" culture, the culture concept erases differences among the people who the concept clumps together.

As a result of these critiques, anthropologists have variously sought to reject, redefine, or re-orient their standpoints in relation to culture. Many anthropologists questioned the possibility and value of analyzing "culture" at all. In the 1980s, with critics of anthropology during the discipline's "reflexive" turn, culture was regarded as a politically dubious way of characterizing other peoples' lives which reinforced the power of metropolitan anthropologists to identify and fix them as scientific objects (see Asad 1986, 162). Taking culture as an inheritance from anthropology's imperial and colonial past, critics peeled back the façade of universality and scientific objectivity that culture had enjoyed, and challenged it as another way in which elites suppressed the agency of indigenous peoples and marginalized groups to narrate their own lives. Anthropologists, particularly those working from postcolonial and feminist standpoints, have endeavored to clarify and diversify the grounds we use for comparing differences to disrupt our embedded assumptions about human life, and worked towards developing more nuanced analyses of human diversity and difference (see Abu-Lughod 1991).

In this project, some of the most provocative and insightful challenges to anthropological comparison have come from our informants. Not only anthropologists, but a tremendous range of actors have taken up the culture concept as a way to make comparisons, and give order to the difference and diversity that they encounter (Strathern

1995, 156). It is not uncommon to hear companies discuss their “workplace culture” or to politicians who cite “cultural values” to justify retrograde immigration policies. As Marilyn Strathern (1995) playfully notes, the nice thing about culture is that everyone has it.

Whether it is put to positive or pernicious use, anthropologists have learned to pay careful attention to how “culture” is used by our informants to reveal unexpected kinds of relationalities—similarities and differences (see for example Helmreich 2001). Instead of taking these other imaginings of culture as mistaken, they can be used as ways for anthropologists to force themselves “beyond the limits of the culture concept,” and locate both informant and anthropologist in “the power-saturated world of practice, discourse, and history” (Helmreich 2001, 620). The ways in which different people apprehend and use the notion of culture are not constrained by the definitions that anthropologists give to it; instead they reflect what the users of “culture” themselves take to be important about their own world.

This shift in how we think about culture—not as an object in the world to be discovered, but as an idiom in which our informants make and mark relationships as important—twists how we understand the act of comparison. Comparison, following Boas and Radcliffe-Brown, was a framework that anthropologists could use to select and abstract certain features of human life that defined their uniqueness in relation to other forms of life, which we named “culture.” Comparison was a way of reducing and mastering the complexity of social life (Holbraad and Pederson 2009, 373). However, now anthropologists have come to understand that the comparisons that people make reflect how they understand and live in their own worlds. They compare in order to selectively connect with and separate themselves from their surroundings. People make comparisons, and are made by the comparisons they make (see Mohacsi and Morita 2013, 2011). Anthropologists must therefore look upon comparison as more than a tool that we use to analyze different forms of cultural life in relation to one another. Close attention to how people make comparisons can give anthropologists access to more diverse understandings

of human life, understandings which more conventional, reductive modes of comparison would obscure. The ways that our informants make comparisons and place meaning on certain kinds of difference can disrupt anthropologists' assumptions about how the world is ordered.

As an arena for making comparisons, the RESPECT program has proven to be full of provocations to us as anthropologists for thinking about comparison. *Kyosei* and multiculturalism each implied ways of understanding the other based upon grounds specific to their respective social and historical contexts. The students tried to make sense of their experiences in Canada by comparing their own experiences of *kyosei* projects in Japan. Their exploratory practices of comparison elucidated both the challenge and the excitement of comparison. By paying attention to the framework that students used as grounds for comparison, we came to realize something unexpectedly interesting. First, by making new grounds for comparison visible, RESPECT shows how comparing multiculturalism and *kyosei* can hold critical potential for realizing how diversity is envisioned and pursued in different societies. For us, by attending to how people compared forms of human life in the encounters generated by RESPECT, we learned to attend to human diversity and difference in unfamiliar ways, and attain new standpoints from which to challenge and refine our own ways of comparing. Furthermore, in the RESPECT program, *kyosei* and multiculturalism were not just compared, but made comparable by the students and people in the host institutions and organizations as they participated in this project and tried to understand each other's engagements in implementing multiculturalism and *kyosei*. Through RESPECT, we approach forms of diversity—multiculturalism and *kyosei*—not as things to be compared, but as things made comparable through their mutual social and historical positioning. By trying to understand how participants in the RESPECT program made *kyosei* and multiculturalism comparable, we became able to notice diversity among the kinds of differences that we and the students of RESPECT used to try and bridge the two. This practice of translating

multiculturalism and *kyosei* elucidates the unique specificity of each movement as well as the larger scale of global dynamics that made comparisons possible.

2. RESPECT

One of the explicit goals of the RESPECT summer school is to “provide... students with a comparative framework for their further studies of multicultural coexistence in Japan” through a “first-hand experience of multiculturalism in Canada.” The key terms to be compared in the program are “multiculturalism,” which the students will find in Canada, and “coexistence” or “*tabunka kyosei*,” which is the ideal for diversity in Japan. One impetus for the program is to compare multiculturalism and *kyosei* to see what each might learn from the other. The program had experimental characteristics, especially in its first two years: participants had the task of using their encounters and experiences in Canada to diversify their notions of diversity.

Among the primary insights we have gained is that there can be no pure comparison between *kyosei* and multiculturalism. Both multiculturalism and *kyosei* are ways of engaging with and comparing difference, and the meanings of the terms themselves emerge from their particular social and historical contexts. Much like anthropologists who have struggled to understand their own implicit assumptions when comparing different cultures, students worked through different ways of relating multiculturalism and *kyosei*. This process showed that neither multiculturalism nor *kyosei* can maintain a stable meaning when the two ideas are compared. There is no pre-given or natural framework within which to compare the two terms, but the attempt to compare multiculturalism and *kyosei* generates the possibility of the comparison itself, and recreates the two as comparable ideas.

These processes were visible in two telling examples having to do with the translation of the key term “*tabunka kyosei*” between Japanese and English. *Kyosei* is ordinarily translated as “co-existence,” and *tabunka kyosei* would seem at first glance to

permit a clear correspondence of meanings, if not a direct translation, with the English “multiculturalism.” But as the occasions in which the RESPECT students encountered versions of multiculturalism in Canada multiplied, a straight correspondence between *kyosei* and multiculturalism became difficult to maintain and the relationship between the terms began to transform.

As one student presentation at the end of the 2014 summer school in Toronto pointed out, *kyosei* can refer to diversity at many levels: diversity within the self; between people; among groups; or with nature. It can recognize gender, age, social and economic class, and disability. Equipped with this wide ranging and rather elusive understanding of co-existence, multiculturalism in Canada came to appear to some of the Osaka students as a limited and malleable, if not self-contradictory, idea. Reflecting on one field trip to a Toronto-based non-governmental organization helping immigrants to Canada find employment, students pointed out how multicultural diversity seemed to be valued only as a source of economic profit and a means for human resource management. From this perspective, co-existence seemed to offer a corrective to multiculturalism, because it can value differences in more than economic and managerial terms.

This insight served as an important point of reference for understanding the activities of a group advocating for the rights of immigrant Filipino women in Canada the students visited on a later field trip. The RESPECT students learned about the group’s political struggles for the recognition and empowerment of immigrants from the Philippines to Canada. Admitted to the country under a live-in caregiver program, the women supported by the group were in Canada on a temporary basis to provide care for children or the elderly while residing in their employers’ home. Valued primarily as economic resources, many of these women suffered marginalization and abuse. The advocacy group worked to politically organize to make it possible for the women to more fully participate in Canadian society. This group showed the students that although multiculturalism may earlier have appeared to emphasize immigration for the creation of

economic profit, this limited form of participation could also be used as a foundation for immigrants to struggle for social and political recognition.

This experience twisted how the students thought of co-existence. With their second visit, the students could see multiculturalism as an unrealized ideal, under which marginalization could be resisted through political action. When the students compared the way this group engaged multiculturalism and immigrants' struggles for fuller participation in the community, a similar organization in Japan the students had worked with seemed to depoliticize immigrant groups. This group worked towards enhancing immigrants' participation in Japanese society by focusing on co-existence and integration through cultural activities, emphasizing cohesion instead of struggle. This was in spite of the fact that immigrant workers are similarly marginalized in both Japan and Canada.

As the concrete examples in which the students tried to connect the concept of *kyosei* and multiculturalism multiplied, the nature of the relationship between the two ideas always seemed to shift. This led one student to remark in her reflections at the conclusion of the summer school that multiculturalism seems to be "an empty box of a concept" that can take on a range of meanings. Such an empty box does not imply a lack of meaning; it shows that the term's meaning is made through its relations rather than its content. How we understand multiculturalism depends on who is holding the box, where it is placed, and what can be placed in it. In the hands of the employment NGO, the box became a receptacle to carry the economic value of immigrants' cultures, but with the Filipino women's group, that same box became an instrument for political mobilization, holding signs and leaflets advocating for the recognition of live-in caregivers' participation in Canadian society. To assume that the box carried the same contents regardless of who holds it would be to impose one meaning of multiculturalism on anyone affected by the idea.

The emptiness of the box does not eliminate the value of comparison. It draws attention to comparison as the collective work of the many hands that can hold it. Rather

than reveal how *kyosei* and multiculturalism are different from each other, the students' activities show that the value of comparison lies in the process of discovering how comparisons can be made. The students repeated attempts to make sense of *kyosei* and multiculturalism together revealed the importance of the ongoing, practical work of comparison for the discovery and creation of new common grounds upon which to understand diversity and pursue human equality and dignity.

3. Empathy

Recognizing these new grounds requires not only critical reflection, but also empathetic imagination. For the 2015 summer school, one of the RESPECT students, Kohei Takahara, wrote frequent reflections about his experiences in Toronto, which were posted on the RESPECT program website during their stay. The range of Takahara's reflections is impressive, and it shows us the kinds of concrete, situated, and even affective encounters and reflections through which *kyosei* and multiculturalism become comparable.

One particularly productive area of reflection had to do with land and nature. In his reflections on the first day's lecture, Takahara wrote that Toronto anthropologist Bonnie McElhinny's overview and history of multiculturalism in Canada brought him to the startling realization that the conceptualization of the land might be quite different between Japan and North America. In North America, because of its colonial history, the land might be perceived as an unlimited vast area to be explored. The land appears to have an infinite capacity to absorb immigrants from wherever they may come, and allow them to establish their own spaces and ways of life. In Japan, Korea or China—where the visiting students were from—land is limited and must be shared. People are required to live cooperatively, or to make “oriai” (literary meaning “folding along”, accommodating each other to get along well) to dwell shoulder to shoulder, and constantly intervene in each other's lives. The notion of oriai is central in *kyosei*, yet it is difficult to translate the word oriai to

English, as the nuances of the word are difficult to transmit without having experienced the everyday feeling of this close and densely intertwined social space (Takahara 2015; see Takahara in this volume).

This kind of contrast might fit with rather conventional conceptualizations of difference between the North American frontier land and the East Asian urban space. Yet, even if we need to be cautious about this tendency, the RESPECT students' presentations offer us a tremendous insight into comparison. Students often interpreted and framed their observations of diversity issues in Canada in ways that could, at first glance, appear to be category mistakes. As we show below, the experience of immigration was compared to that of earthquakes, nouns were compared to verbs, and national peace to ethnic diversity. But these examples served to highlight how the act of making comparisons does not always recreate the expected kinds of correspondences between *kyosei* and multiculturalism, and between Japan and Canada. We cannot assume that an equivalent category exists in a different society, just as we cannot assume the existence of the equivalent word in a different language system. We need to critically reflect on these kinds of gaps in translation and to explore what we can learn from them about the specificity of our societies. The gaps in comparison and translation are productive sites for critical reflection on the diverse ways that people deal with diversity issues.

Such a gap—between immigration and earthquake—became manifest after a student visit to a Ghanaian Pentecostal church. Reflecting on anthropologist Girish Daswani's lecture and field trip on the home making efforts of Ghanaian immigrants who attend a Pentecostal church in the Toronto suburbs, one group addressed the commonality between the Ghanaian immigrants' practice of socialization in their church in Toronto with the efforts to rebuild community among survivors of the Great Hanshin Earthquake. The group argued that both Ghanaian immigrants and the earthquake survivors try to establish spaces for living —new “homes”—after being uprooted from their original social context. As the Osaka students later wrote in reflection of their visit to the church:

One needs to find, create and manage the place one can call “home”, and invite someone who is similarly at a loss. But why? Why do we need home? Is the “home” we have in Japan “home” in its truest meaning? The place from which to say “I’m off” and the place we have marked “I’m home” is so easily destroyed in this severe society. Perhaps, both notions of “multiculturalism” and “coexistence” serve to protect the concept of “home”. (Koba et al. 2015)

Their encounter with these these experiences of uprooting and resettlement, led this group to further compare the English word “home” and the Japanese concept of “sumu”—living or dwelling. What is notable here is that, instead of a dictionary translation of the noun “home”, such as *ie* or *uchi*, the group found more suitable for their comparison a verb that indicates the act of living. Their comparison of the noun “home” and the verb “sumu” is not a mistranslation or a mismatch of concepts. It suggests the incommensurability of the English term “home” and its dictionary translation of “*ie*,” leading us to reflect on the taken-for-granted assumptions underlying how diversity issues are conceptualized in Canada. Why is the notion of “home” so central among immigrants, as indicated in the popular expression of “finding a new home in Canada”? When we situate Ghanaian efforts in the history of immigration in Canada that Takahara discussed in his diary, then we see how the act of dwelling is structured in territorial terms. The notions of “home” and “neighbourhood,” so central in the narratives of immigrant experiences and multiculturalism in Canada, are deeply territorial because of the legacy of settler colonialism. This showed us the fundamental conceptual framework that structures how we interpret even such basic and familiar terms like “home,” showing them to be rooted in a particular Canadian colonial history and experience. This we might have taken for granted if the Osaka students’ seeming mistranslation had not brought it to our attention.

A similarly provocative gap, but of a different kind—between peace and multiculturalism—was evident in another reflection in which Takahara compared multiculturalism in Canada to Article 9 in the Japanese Constitution, the “Peace Clause.” Multiculturalism struck Takahara as a fraught practical, political, and legal issue in his class discussions, because it is so central and foundational to Canadian national pride and uniqueness. These characteristics struck him as having less in common with discussion in Japan about co-existence—because co-existence is still an abstract ideal rather than actual policy—than they did with the contentious debates and national identity issues surrounding the Peace Clause of the Japanese constitution. As Takahara writes,

Many times since the end of World War II, Canada has made major changes to its regulations for immigrants for economic and ideological reasons. It feels to me that, for a nation built by colonists and immigrants (and through their conflicts and reconciliations with indigenous peoples), the impact of changing immigration laws may be of the same kind as the debates in Japan over dispatching peacekeepers to Cambodia, or the confusion surrounding legislation for dealing with military emergencies or Japan’s right to collective self-defense. (Takahara 2015)

Seeing multiculturalism from this perspective helps us to further understand its specificity to Canadian society and history, but also draws our attention to new potential for critical comparison of Canada and Japan. In the Canadian context, multiculturalism is imagined and idealized as the political realization of a basic right for equality, in terms of language, race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability, as specified in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The most obvious comparison between Canada and Japan might then draw attention to Japan’s relative lack of state recognition of diversity. However, Takahara’s writing invites us to imagine a different kind of comparison, in which Canadian multiculturalism does not find its Japanese

counterpart in some other approach to ethnic or racial diversity, but in the founding myths and the ideals through which the nation-state imagines and identifies itself. In order to develop constructive arguments on diversity and implementing effective policies, it is necessary to explore the diversity suitable in the specific social context while paying attention to the larger historical and social forces to which the practice of comparison guide us, instead of simplistically transporting a policy developed in a different social context.

At other moments, encounters with Canada in a more sensorially proximate and evocative mode inspired creative reflection and conceptual experimentation. In another entry, Takahara's tone turns poetic as he muses on the possibilities and impossibilities of certain forms of cultural life and expression as effects of an unintentional conspiracy of geography, climate, and built environment. He writes about sensing these forms of life in Toronto in the unfamiliar rhythm of a sporadic rainfall, the sonic texture of a dog's paws adhering to the city's sidewalks, and the relaxing intervals between office buildings. To him, Toronto's sunset was not of a sky that reddens and fades like autumn leaves, as a Japanese verb for describing sunsets—"kureru"—implies, but of the city reaching up and engulfing the sky with its characteristic constellation of lights. The ants that amble in the early morning through Toronto's Queen's Park, lighter in colour compared to Japanese ants, Takahara notes, evoke in him the image of workers permitted the luxury of lazy working days. What is striking about this brief reflection is how much Takahara experiments with selecting language to respectfully capture the sensations that he experiences. He draws on the poetry of Stefan George, the images of landscapes in *Gone with the Wind*, and descriptions of the night in the *Bhagavad Gita* as models for thinking about dusk in Toronto. His willingness to think through something as seemingly universal as a sunset shows us a model of the sensitivity and attentiveness that the act of comparison requires.

4. Institutional Comparisons

Closer to the ground we are most familiar with, our work with the Osaka-Toronto RESPECT program to create a collaboration between the two public institutions, has shown us the unexpected specificity of the university. While the student visits to Toronto are the most intense moments of collaboration, they are the outcomes of months of institutional and personal interactions that create the infrastructure for them. Approvals must be sought, schedules must be coordinated, and materials must be copied, scanned, and collected in preparation for the arrival of the RESPECT students from Japan and to bring benefits of hosting this program to the University of Toronto.

When we worked to create the summer school as a space for discussing diversity, we gradually realized that we held an unexamined assumption that universities should operate in the same manner in Osaka and Toronto. The outward similarity of their research and education functions notwithstanding, during the planning process, it became evident to us that the institutions were built on different notions of how students and staff relate to each other and the institution. In this process, reflecting on the assumptions of the Osaka teaching staff, we have gradually realized the characteristics of the University of Toronto that we were not strongly aware of; our university looked more like an institution whose internal operations have deep affinity with a contemporary North American model of corporate transactions in which relationships are based on the immediate exchange of money for services. From the use of an empty classroom, to the work of graduate student assistants, to the video recording of a workshop, everything is private property with a price tag. The university appears as a market populated by service providers and consumers much more than we assumed by comparing to the expectations of the teaching staff of the Osaka University.

On the other side, we have Osaka University, also a public institution that is no less strongly structured by the flow of financial resources. But in our experience of bridging

the institutional practices of the University of Toronto, it seemed to us that Osaka's RESPECT program approaches its internal relations and its interactions with other universities on the expectation that the public university is an intellectual commons. Rather than payment for an empty classroom, its use is offered without recompense on the understanding that it is for the benefit of students. The relationship between the faculty members and students are also significantly different. Graduate students are encouraged to help organize the events not for monetary payment, but as an opportunity for a sort of academic gift exchange and reciprocal intellectual improvement. It was an exhausting task to bridge the gap between these different conceptualizations and practical systems of public university, and push this project forward. But, it was also a tremendously exciting opportunity for anthropologists to explore what we can find in this gap of translation. The assumptions of each university that were unnoticed in our everyday operations became apparent in our mutual acts of bridging the gaps and moving the program forward by negotiating different assumptions. Comparison provides a site of critical reflection on whether a "university" in a specific social and historical context can be commensurable to another in a different context, and how the unique characteristics of each institution emerge in the act of making these institutions comparable.

We had to recognize that the university was not universal in the ways that we had assumed to establish the RESPECT program as an actual academic and pedagogical space. We realized that alongside seminar discussions of diversity as philosophy, policy, and practice, countless comparisons and translations of bureaucratic procedures, institutional routines, and understandings of personal and professional relationships had already begun to create the space for that discussion. This example reiterates the points made earlier: diversity emerges from places that we might otherwise overlook, and it takes careful attention to the processes of comparison to draw out ways they might shake our assumptions and change our thinking.

While it is obvious to state that universities work differently in Japan and Canada,

it is the concrete and specific ways in which they are different that matter. If we focus on these specific differences, then we can avoid reducing the contrasts between the institutions to national or cultural differences. Instead, we can look at the otherwise amorphous sense that the institutions are different as the accumulation of distinct ways of ordering human relationships and managing collective resources, and the varying weights placed on gift versus commodity exchange. These details reveal the multiple ways in which universities can connect with the kinds of relationships, ideas, and forms of organizations that matter to the societies in which they are placed.

Conclusion

The conventional wisdom in Canada may be that the country has a great deal to teach the world about diversity, especially to a country that is purportedly “homogeneous” like Japan. We may be tempted to assume that Canada is more politically and socially progressive because it is multicultural. In response, we might be enticed to say that *kyosei* could be a corrective to multiculturalism that makes up for its blind spots and is free of a history of settler colonialism or capitalist resource management, making Japan appear more potentially inclusive than Canada. But productive comparisons, such as those that we observed and experienced numerous times in the RESPECT program, show us that we should be suspicious of such characterizations. Anthropological comparisons avoid romanticizing or condemning one form of life over the other, and take care not to reducing complexity or difference for the sake of easy comprehensibility. They demand of the people doing the comparing attention and sensitivity to the time, place, and situation in which differences are produced, be they between *kyosei* and multiculturalism, peace and equality, or home and “sumu.” Productive comparisons involve a critical awareness of the naïve violence and impossibility of pure comparison, and they maintain a vigilant commitment to sensing and understanding the diverse ways that human beings engage with social diversity. Most important, however may be the willingness to learn how to

see and sense difference and sameness from other standpoints. Multiculturalism and *kyosei* are not goals to achieve but points of departure from which to better engage the actually existing diversity in the world.

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