

実践報告

“Walk Within & Beyond Cultures
(WWBC) Project” in the 2014 UNESCO
International Conference in New York

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Introduction

The members of the “*Bunka-wo Aruku: Walk Within & Beyond Cultures*” (WWBC) project appreciate the contributions to world peace initiated by the Chancellor of Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, as President of the Kyoto UNESCO Association. Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, founded in 1947 in the days when the people of Japan were living with the tragic consequences of war, declared its vision of the future in the university motto: PAX MUNDI PER LINGUAS; World Peace through Languages. The university’s home city, Kyoto, is blessed with cultural glories which are recognized by UNESCO as important features of our world’s heritage. The UNESCO motto, *Building Peace in the Minds of Men and Women*, is an expression of the vision of Kyoto University of Foreign Studies. The motto of the University of Tsukuba, a key WWBC collaborator, *Imagine the Future*, resonates with the hopes of UNESCO and Kyoto University of Foreign Studies:

The following article is the text prepared for a presentation given at

the 2014 UNESCO International Conference (March 7th-12th) in New York. The presentation was made by Tetsuo Kubo on March 8th at the United Nations. The presentation described the “*Bunka-wo Aruku: Walk Within & Beyond Cultures* (WWBC) project, initiated by Kyoto University of Foreign Studies. Craig Smith, also a WWBC member, made a brief introduction to the presentation.

The members of the WWBC believe that the presentation, accompanied by a showing of the WWBC DVD “Water; A Primary Source of Energy,” has been successful in making important contributions to both the UNESCO principles and the University of Tsukuba’s outstanding leadership at the Conference. The University of Tsukuba, UNESCO and Kyoto University of Foreign Studies share the empowering educational principle that better communication is the fruit of learning other languages and understanding the world’s diverse cultures. It is our hope that we may inspire students and teachers to imagine a future of peace because we know that peace can only begin in the hearts and minds of the world’s children, women, and men.

The presentation, and its slide show, were completed with the kind support of WWBC members, Hiroaki Yanagida, Jeff Berglund and a young exchange student, João C. Pinto, from the University of Coimbra, Portugal, who devoted himself to the design of posters for the conference.

The WWBC is a project that aims to produce multi-lingual DVDs and multi-lingual texts on certain fundamental aspects of human culture to help raise awareness of the innate potential we share to look beyond cultures and learn to live together. The project team includes faculty, students and members of the general public, a total of some 40 volunteers. The WWBC principles, aims and commitments can be found in the

WWBC Homepage. (See the appendix.)

1) The document

Issues concerning ‘culture and identity’ and the ‘relationship between language and culture’, and more specifically ‘sustainable world peace’, are certainly central concerns among people in today’s global society, where people of different cultures have to meet together and communicate with each other, in order to discover better ways to understand what others have in mind.

Contrastive analysis techniques in linguistics and cross-cultural communications are certainly very useful means to see happenings around us in a contrastive way, but sometimes reveal differences rather than commonalities. On the other hand, INTER-national Relations studies which discuss issues in terms of the concept of ‘inter-’ rather than that of ‘contra-’ tend to find grounds for meeting in-between cultures rather than in one culture or the other. However, today, we all live in a global society, and we need to see the world around us from perspectives quite different from those we have been used to.

As you’ll see it in the DVD produced by our project, *Walk Within & Beyond Cultures*, in a few minutes, living on this blue planet, we have been so accustomed to seeing Sun Rise and Sun Set. But today, we have had a new expression, “Earth Rise and Earth Set.” The phrase is certainly the new symbol of today, just as “one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind” was in 1969.

As global citizens, we need to continuously seek better ways to communicate beyond our linguistic, cultural and national boundaries so that we can observe and understand the world around us, not as we would like it to be but as it actually is. I believe it’s essential to compare and

contrast the fundamental elements of our global society.

But more importantly, we hope that our aim in learning about the world's cultures is most constructive when we simply wish to find cultural characteristics that we can share in common, rather than to find differences that might justify self-assertiveness to the point of insisting that our own values and behaviors are superior to those of other peoples. Based upon this awareness, our exploration of the world's cultures may lead us to appreciate the true value of diversity on this beautiful planet. This is the very reason that we have our project name, WWBC: "Walk Within & BEYOND Cultures."

It is very natural that ordinary citizens on this planet tend to think nature and culture are NOT directly related to each other, because they take nature for granted, and culture for granted; two separate entities. But, we want to see that they are mutually *intertwined*, shaping form and function with each other. Therefore, it may be more fundamental to ask ourselves, for instance, why we feel comfortable and easy living in the place we have chosen to live. I believe it's simply because the place we are raised is our basis, a very natural cradle, now called habitat on earth. That's the reason why it gives people tremendous hardship and bitterness if they are "forced" to move or relocate their habitat by some other physical forces like natural disasters, such as hurricanes, typhoons, volcanic eruptions, tsunami and mega-quakes, to name a few. People all over the world have long suffered from the massive destruction from these natural disasters, and we are having more and more. Why, then, you may ask, do people continue suffering from conflicts, violence and wars caused by the same members of the global community?

As citizens in the global society today, therefore, all of us need to learn to generate and construct knowledge to respect each other and

learn from others. That, I believe, is the concept behind 'sustainable world peace' because every one of us is very much at the mercy of this beautiful blue planet and cannot escape from it. Even if we have to face conflicts and struggles more often than happiness and comfort, we need to sustain peace for future generations to come. In other words, we need to educate ourselves to generate knowledge to continuously seek "global" humanism. This, I believe, must be the very basic principle governing any education in today's world.

Let me consider a simplified, a bit oversimplified, example to build global unity out of diversity, taking two Japanese words, "Sushi" and "Tsunami", two of the most widely known Japanese originated *lingua franca* today. At first glance, these two words do not appear to be related in any respect, but the truth may be different:

When you take a look beyond the beautiful coastlines of Japan, you will see many complicated layers of plate-tectonic movements taking their unique and complex actions beneath the ocean bed, and at the same time, you will know it's the place where you witness the world-known beautiful and dynamic ocean currents, nurturing all varieties of fish, shells and even various kinds of sea weeds: all major ingredients to make fresh and delicious Sushi, the unique Japanese culture. And behind these beautiful coastlines, we will also see many beautiful patches of rice fields with a greater portion of forest and rivers that sustain the lives of the people and more significantly sustain the lives of the ocean.

But, such observations may only be sufficient if we can train ourselves to have the kind of imagination that people in different cultures might interpret those two words quite differently. Is it, therefore, rational for the Japanese to claim that only the original features characteristic to Sushi are valid?, denying or remaining ignorant of the fact that

there may be other possible interpretations according to cultures? The California avocado roll is fine with me; Sushi with a lot of mayonnaise may be acceptable. Chocolate sushi, which is not easy to imagine for a Japanese, is also a possibility.

But, what is most important is the human creation and the commonalities that we share to live on this planet and to share food and meals together, in order to stay healthy and safe. This, I think, must be the basic concept behind sustainability; to stay safe and healthy and gently interact with the peoples on this planet because, as I said, we cannot run away from it and should not force others or should not be forced by others to change our place to live.

The basic stance of the Walk Within & Beyond Cultures Project, therefore, is that we would like to find unity “within” diversity, only if we are capable and willing to think beyond our own personal cultural constraints. Culture education, therefore, is crucially important in creating views in the learner’s mind in two ways; one is to lead him to feel comfortable and natural, and thus to feel his own cultural norms fit well and therefore are sustainable. That’s not sufficient enough, I would say: In today’s global society, we need to take on another responsibility by making every endeavor to generate and construct in the learner’ mind the awareness that there are fundamentals common to all human cultures.

By the word, “fundamentals”, I mean: “No matter what language one speaks all people have basically the same set of concepts and categories to describe the world....” (Bialystok & Hakuta *In Other Words* 1994:105-108) And from the linguistic and communicative perspective, it is the awareness that says: “The symbol is not the thing symbolized: The map is not the territory: The word is not the thing” To put this in other words, it is the

awareness that says: “Citizens of a modern society need more than that ordinary ‘common sense’ which was defined by Stuart Chase as that which tells you that the world is flat. . . . There is no necessary connection between the symbol and that which is symbolized. Symbols and things symbolized are independent of each other; nevertheless, all of us have a way of feeling as if, and sometimes acting as if there were necessary connections.” (S. I. Hayakawa *Language in Thought and Action* 1963:25)

Lastly, I would like to raise a question again: Are we capable in seeing beyond our own cultural boundaries? Education may be the process of extending meanings BEYOND our nervous system so that we may be able to connect human networks of humanism.

To implement the WWBC vision of encouraging better communication among the world’s peoples, we have begun our multi-lingual DVD project with themes connected to Mother Nature in eleven different languages, of which you’ll watch the English version. And I hope you can feel something connected to living in peace. So, please enjoy watching the DVD produced by a voluntary group of teachers and students at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, Japan.

2) Appendix:


Presentation by Powerpoint in the WWBC Homepage as follows:

The World Federation of UNESCO Clubs, Centers and Associations
2014 International Conference

"Walk Within & Beyond Cultures (WWBC) Project"
Kyoto University of Foreign Studies (KUFS), Japan


Presentation Supported by
University of Tsukuba, Japan

March 8, 2014




Some Quotations from the UNESCO Declarations:

- ▶ That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed;
- ▶ That ignorance of each other's ways and lives has been a common cause, throughout the history of mankind, of that suspicion and mistrust between the peoples of the world through which their differences have all too often broken into war;





Quotations from the UNESCO Declarations :

- ▶ That a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world,
- ▶ and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.



"PAX MUNDI PER LINGUAS"
(World Peace Through Languages)
Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, Japan

Walk Within & Beyond Cultures
(KUFS: WWBC) Project

"Second Language Learning & Learning Beyond Culture" material development

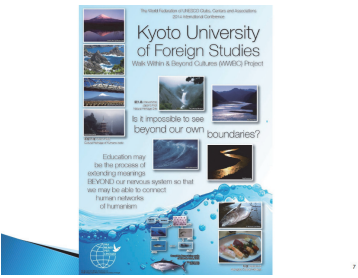
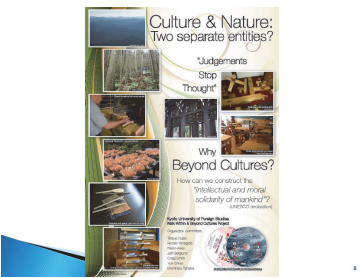
Tetsuo KUBO, professor of second language acquisition(SLA) research
Kyoto University of Foreign Studies
Kyoto, JAPAN

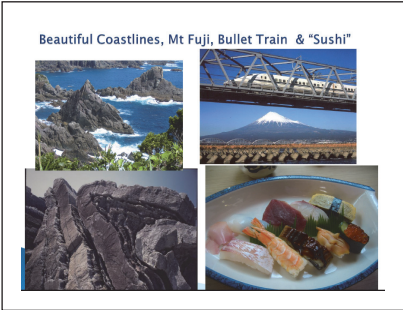


Beyond 'Intra-' to 'Contra-'
To 'Inter-'
& to 'Global-', 'Glocal-'

To seek better ways:

- ▶ To communicate beyond linguistic, cultural and national boundaries;
- ▶ To train ourselves to become harmonious global citizens to learn from others;
- ▶ To be aware of our own unique differences in order to treasure the similarities of all mankind;
- ▶ To generate knowledge to create the global humanism.








Why Beyond Cultures?
 How can we construct the "intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind" (UNESCO declaration) ?

What is the Purpose of Education in Humanities?

Walk Within & BEYOND Cultures Project:
 to help raise Importance of awareness of :
 Individual Cultural identities
 &
 Fundamental/Global cultural identities


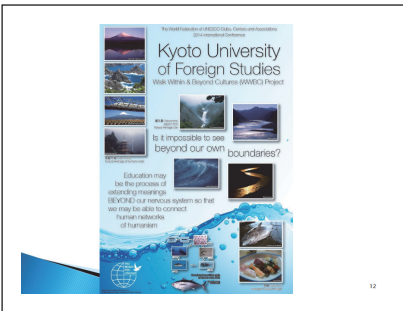


Where do we find 'Language' and 'Culture'?
 Are we capable of seeing beyond our own linguistic, cultural & national boundaries?

- ▶ Language Is In our Nervous System
- ▶ Culture (E. T. Hall 1966 T. Kubo: 2014)
- ▶ The symbol the thing symbolized.
- ▶ The map Is NOT the territory.
- ▶ The word the thing

(S. I. Hayakawa:1963)

"Judgments Stop Thought"

Multi-lingual DVDs on:
 Walk Within & Beyond Cultures
 Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, Japan

"Second Language Learning & Learning Beyond Culture" material development


Language: 11 ~ 12 languages
 Approx. 30 voluntary teachers and students:
 (Japanese and other language teachers + students from abroad + photographers + editing staff + many other people)




Thank you
Best wishes!

KUFS: Walk Within & Beyond Cultures Project
 Organizers' committee
 Tetsuo Kubo
 Hiroaki Yanagida
 Pedro Aires
 Jeff Berglund
 Craig Smith
 Yuki Enkai
 Michiharu Tanaka

Get the DVD
 during Lunch Hour



Kyoto University of Foreign Studies Kyoto Junior College of Foreign Languages

