

Decolonisation and new perspectives

Although it has not appeared on my blog before, while working on the assignment from “Educating a Challenging Future”, I began to think “Decolonisation” was my keyword. To be honest, when the word “Colony” was mentioned, I had never thought of it as a crucial matter to me and somewhat recognised it as an issue in other areas of the world. However, I realised that I had taken my colonised self for granted to the extent that I was no longer aware of it.

The definition of “colonisation” here is “the political and economic domination of one country by another for its benefit, and the acceptance of the state of domination as natural and inevitable.” Although Japan has never been dominated directly, our society has been influenced by Western countries since the war with many countries in the late 1800s. For example, we are unconsciously forced to believe that we have to learn English to success in society and people from Western countries are superior than us. The symbol of success for fresh graduates from Japanese universities is to be employed by American consulting firms. Many of us often eat bread and dairy products but they were not used to be a part of our food culture.

Seeing Japan as a colonised country seems to give me ideas to create a better society. Once I look back at our own lives in light of the powers that have probably influenced us, I would be able to question, and find facts and answers that I have overlooked (Several friends of mine are trying to decipher Edo period recipes and contribute to sustainable eating and farming. This would not have been happened if they had an assumption that our past has less value than the ones from the West).

When glancing over past academic literature with the words “decolonialisation” and “Japan”, I could not find anything that looked at the Japanese as colonised subjects(I did not take so much time to find it, so the literature may exist). This fact is one of my current motivations for facing “decolonisation”.

*This time, I looked at Japan from the perspective of a colonised country, but I must also acknowledge and take a responsibility that we have a cruel history of colonising countries and deteriorating indigenous cultures of remote areas in Japan.

*If I make the unit of colonisation smaller than the country, I would be able to see new impacts more. For example, I come from a rural area in Japan. Although we are Japanese with the same culture as people living in Tokyo, we also have many incompatible cultures in our lives. For example, I can live with little money in my hometown because many people grow vegetables, exchange what they produce, and live by complementing each other. In many contexts, life in rural areas tends to be recognised as inferior to metropolitan one. But isn't it colonisation by urban capitalists to impose that earning money and living in the city is success?

*The photo taken by me. The ordinary day at the table with my ex-roomie.