

Compare and contrast early 20th century china and japan as revealed in kokoro and...

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According to the story by McClellan in 1957, the young graduate who has come home after securing a degree, is not quite moved by the fact that he had been a graduate. Obviously the ailing father was very happy to have his son graduate before his demise. However, to the son it is just a normal thing in the city of Tokyo Japan to be a graduate since many had done the same. As depicted by the happiness in the father due to the graduating of the son, this seems to be a transition period where more graduates are beginning to secure their graduation in comparison to the old system where there were few. Obviously as shown by this story, Japan had achieved high levels of literacy by early 20th Century. The son just realizes the importance of his graduating after the father drives the sense in him. The father takes his graduation certificate to the area in their house where they put such-like credentials. It is a sad thing since the son had not taken good care of the certificate. But anyway, it is a milestone to this family living in Tokyo Japan.

1(Soseki Natsume, 1957) In the second personal story of Ah-Q that speaks about the restoration of discipline, it shows the situation of education levels in China. Ah-Q was away from his hometown for a while and the dwellers were wondering where he had been. According to this story, he was studying and working somewhere else, away from his own hometown during this time. Ah-Q's return was quite a story to be told. This shows that education was not widespread in China as was seen in the other previous story. It can be seen from these two stories that the Chinese situation is a quite a slower scenario of literacy in comparison to that of Japan. Ah-Q was working for a provincial leader while not in college. He was in fact a servant in the house belonging to a renowned Provincial candidate. The listeners to his story about being a

servant in the house of the man, who had also been considered successful education wise, left the people of Ah-Q's hometown astonished. The second story shows that education levels were not as advanced in China as has been seen in the previous story of Japan. In fact the previous story was about a graduate from the university while the second is about a young man going through the education process. This explains the story of Japan being quite ahead of China in terms of literacy levels in the early part of the 20th century. This has been explained further by scholars in others generalized explanations of the same issue. 2(Xun Lu, 1921) An essential general issue is that towards the end of the 19th century both of the nations of Japan and China had decided to fight the levels of illiteracy that had gone too high. The problem was considered complex in these nations in that there were high illiteracy levels under a writing system that was very complex. The literacy rates in China were a bit low while compared to those of Japan. This was so since China needed to simplify as well as standardize characters for the purpose of mass literacy. This process of simplification and standardization happened way later in the mid 20th century. As per the book, the issue of high illiteracy is still there in Nepal and the women as well as minorities are the worst hit. There was also the issue of literacy that had come up in Nepal was the application of writing that was script-based in the era of modern technology. The only way out of this was to utilize the more common standard based upon Unicode would be used and this would raise the levels of easiness in inter and intra-lingual written kind of communication. This was common in Taiwan, Japan and China. China would then be closer to the levels of literacy witnessed in Japan in the early 20th century. 3(Kaplan, 2008

p7) Japan had achieved literacy universally in the early part of the 20th century unlike the case was for China. In other words, almost all the children in entirety of Japan would be in school due to the compulsory and free education that had been introduced in the country in the early 20th Century. This was done by year 1907. China on the other hand, despite her declaration to fight illiteracy that was quite high amongst her citizens, was seen to sluggish when it came to the implementation of the same. While Japan was carrying out the process of reducing the levels of illiteracy, China was not doing the same. 4(Hayhoe, 1992 p1) This makes the issues as depicted by the personal stories presented earlier easier to understand since it explains the issue from a generic point of view. Works cited: Hayhoe, Ruth. Education and modernization: the Chinese experience. Pergamon Press. (1992). Kaplan, Robert B. Language Planning and Policy in Asia: Japan, Nepal, Taiwan and Chinese characters, Volume 1. Edition illustrated. Multilingual Matters. (2008). Soseki, Natsume. My parents and I. (1957). Retrieved 15 October 2011 <http://www.ibiblio.org/eldritch/ns/k2.html> Xun, Lu. From Restoration to Decline. (1921). Retrieved 15 October 2011 <http://www.marxists.org/archive/lu-xun/1921/12/ah-q/ch06.htm>