

# Music Education at Overseas Chinese Schools in Japan : The Changing Relationship between the Homeland and the Host Society

著者 (英)	Shino Arisawa
journal or publication title	Senri Ethnological Studies
volume	105
page range	267-281
year	2021-03-12
URL	<a href="http://doi.org/10.15021/00009775">http://doi.org/10.15021/00009775</a>

## **Music Education at Overseas Chinese Schools in Japan: The Changing Relationship between the Homeland and the Host Society**

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### **1. Introduction**

Japan's ethnic minority schools, particularly Chinese and Korean schools, are well-known for their 'ethnic education' (*minzoku-kyōiku*), in which students' identities as Chinese or Koreans are considered to be maintained and reinforced. For this reason, these schools are specifically called 'ethnic schools' (*minzoku-gakkō*), and as such, the Japanese government has been reluctant to acknowledge them as appropriate schools that are run in accordance with government guidelines, including the use of authorised textbooks.<sup>1)</sup> The ethnic education they provide is often controversial, as the curriculum is believed to seek to strengthen children's patriotic allegiance to China or North or South Korea, which may in turn result in anti-Japanese predilections due to Japan's history of colonialism and militarism. This chapter examines music education at Chinese schools and investigates whether strong patriotism and a strong ethnic identity are reinforced through music lessons.

Chinese people in Japan represent the second largest minority, after Koreans. The earliest flow of Chinese immigration to Japan was seen in the late sixteenth century. In the late nineteenth century, a more significant tide of Chinese immigration occurred, when the Japanese government opened up the nation after a long period of feudalism. Chinese immigrants initially arrived at trading ports such as Yokohama and Kobe to work for Western traders in Japan, but later, they also started their own businesses and began forming Chinatowns. Since then, there have been increases and decreases in the Chinese population due to the effects of wars, such as the Sino-Japanese War. After the Pacific War, however, the Chinese population began increasing again, especially after 1972, when diplomatic relations between Japan and China were restored. The reform and opening-up policy that China announced in 1978 also encouraged the arrival of 'newcomer Chinese' (*shinkakyō*), who are distinguished from the 'oldcomer Chinese' (*rōkakyō*) who arrived in Japan prior to the 1970s and their descendants.

Recent studies on Japan's overseas Chinese schools have pointed out that an increasing number of newcomer Chinese children as well as Japanese children began enrolling in overseas Chinese schools (Chen 2009; Sugimura 2011b), hence the 'ethnic

identity' that these schools try to pass on to students also began facing difficult negotiations (Ishikawa 2010). In 'ethnic education' at overseas Chinese schools, Chinese language education is considered a core subject. Recent studies have revealed that Chinese language has begun to possess a different value as a foreign or international language (Kamite 2009; Sugimura 2011a), and schools are caught in a dilemma between the ethnic education policy and parents' demand for the introduction of more flexible Chinese, Japanese, and English language education (Baba 2014).<sup>2)</sup>

In regard to today's music education at overseas Chinese schools in Japan, a pilot research study was conducted at two overseas Chinese schools in Yokohama (Arisawa 2015). The study has revealed significant differences between the school that is associated with the People's Republic of China and the one that is associated with the Republic of China (Taiwan); these differences were noted as concerning music textbook content and teaching styles as a result of the schools' different education policies. In the pro-China school (the Yokohama Yamate Chinese School), original textbooks that contain various Chinese songs handed down from the oldcomer Chinese community were used, together with the textbooks utilised in Japanese public schools. Music lessons were conducted in both Chinese and Japanese by a Japan-born teacher. On the other hand, the pro-Taiwan school (the Yokohama Overseas Chinese School) mainly used the music textbooks used in Taiwan, while some materials from Japanese textbooks were utilised supplementarily. Classes were given in Chinese (Mandarin) by a Taiwan-born and educated teacher who was in the habit of only using Japanese when it was necessary to help students understand the materials. The pro-China school aims to disseminate necessary knowledge and foster a sense of membership to the oldcomer Chinese community in Japan, while the pro-Taiwan school is geared towards promoting a connection with present-day Taiwan.<sup>3)</sup>

Following the above-mentioned research findings, this paper further investigates the changes in music education over a longer period, i.e. since the 1950s, with a focus on the (pro-China) Yokohama Yamate Chinese School. The influence of political changes in China, including the propaganda of communism and the Cultural Revolution, greatly impacted the education system. However, Zhang (2008: 61–67) points out that the school policy shifted in the 1990s from a system of ethnic education that aims to maintain students' strong identity as Chinese who would someday return to China to the system of education that enables both oldcomer and newcomer Chinese as well as an increasing number of Japanese students to study together towards appreciating Chinese culture and society from their different identities and perspectives.<sup>4)</sup> The shift can also be seen in the school's current education policy, which values both Chinese and Japanese languages and cultures; 'Children of overseas Chinese will succeed in and exalt Chinese language and culture. Moreover, we conduct foundational education in order for them to understand Japanese language and culture ... so that they will become internationally-minded persons who promote friendly relations between China and Japan.'<sup>5)</sup>

This paper specifically examines changes in music lesson teaching materials since the 1950s and will discuss the ways in which music education has been affected by shift in school policy. This study is based on my 2014 fieldwork, including interviews with

the former and current music teachers at the Yokohama Yamate Chinese School.

## 2. Music Education in the 1950s to the 1980s at the Yokohama Yamate Chinese School

The following sections are based on my interview with Pan Lanying, who was the school's music teacher from 1968 to 2013 (Photo 1). She was born in Japan as a second generation overseas Chinese. She received her elementary and secondary school education at the Yokohama Yamate Chinese School, where she later became a music teacher. After graduating from the school, she proceeded to a local Japanese high school and then to Senzoku Gakuen College of Music, where she earned a degree in music education.

### 2.1 Teaching Materials in the 1950s

When Pan was a student at the school in the 1950s, she learnt many songs in her music classes that expressed an appreciation for socialism. Those songs included 'Socialism is Good' ('Shehuizhuyi Hao'), 'The Song of the Chinese Youth Vanguard Troupe' ('Zhongguo Shaonian Xianfengdui Duige'), 'Labour Is the Most Honourable' ('Laodong Zui Guangrong'), and 'Sunflower' ('Xiangrikui').

Composed in 1957, 'Socialism is Good' is a socialist revolutionary song that celebrates the People's Republic of China led by Mao Zedong. This military march-style song expresses how strong the socialist country will become in terms of its ability to protect its people and fight against imperialism. The song praises the Communist Party as the nation's guiding leader. This revolutionary song gained popularity in China and



**Photo 1** Pan Lanying surrounded by her students  
(Photo courtesy of Pan Lanying, ca1972)

came to be widespread in Japan among overseas Chinese communities that supported the People's Republic of China.

'The Song of the Chinese Youth Vanguard Troupe' was composed for the boys' vanguard troupe in China in 1950 to express their determination to serve as fighters for the establishment of communism. Meanwhile, 'Labour is the Most Honourable' was composed in 1952 as a children's song; its lyrics describe how animals such as birds, bees, and butterflies work hard to make their lives fruitful. Using animals' labour as a metaphor, the song expresses how delightful it is to make an effort to become a hard worker. 'Sunflower' is also a song for children; its lyrics describe some children telling a cuckoo that they plant a lot of sunflower seeds for their nation. The symbolism is that the children dedicate themselves to the country's growth.

## 2.2 Teaching Materials During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976)

When Pan began teaching at the school in 1968, the materials for music classes were mainly songs celebrating Chairman Mao and his regime, primarily from *Songs of Quotations From Chairman Mao Zedong* (*Maozhuxi Yuluge*), in which Mao's ideologies are expressed through military march-style music. She recalls that she might have been brainwashed to some extent and that there were no alternative teaching approaches available to her at that point in time, especially considering the school's clear policy in favour of 'ethnic education'. When she was a student at the school, she too was taught under this policy, which encouraged children to love their 'homeland' and instilled in them an appreciation for China. Therefore, when she became a teacher, she considered it natural to teach her students in the same way.

Songs that she taught during the time of the Cultural Revolution include 'The East Is Red' ('Dongfanghong'), 'The Train Runs to Shaoshan' ('Huozhe Shaoshan Pao'), and 'I Love Tiananmen Square in Beijing' ('Wo Ai Beijing Tiananmen').

'The East Is Red' is a famous song celebrating Chairman Mao and his regime, with its metaphor of the sun rising from the east when Mao declared, in Tiananmen Square, the foundation of the People's Republic of China. Similarly, in the song 'The Train Runs to Shaoshan', Shaoshan is Mao's hometown, and the song describes how people across China enthusiastically rush there by train to celebrate him. Moreover, 'I Love Tiananmen Square in Beijing' describes how the sun rises in Tiananmen Square, as if the great leader Chairman Mao is guiding the nation forward.

Pan remembers that there was a portrait of Mao Zedong in every classroom, and students read aloud from *Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong*; some commonly used quotes were 'Unity, friendship, mutual help' ('Tuanjie youai huxiang bangzhu'), and 'Study hard to make progress day by day' ('Haohao xuexi tiantian xiangshang'). She also recalls that she often taught the song repertoire from Mao's *Quotations* in her music classes, for example, 'Achieve Victory' ('Zhengqu Shengli'), which contained passages espousing Mao's teachings, such as 'Be determined and never be afraid of sacrificing'. Another example is 'My Dear Father and Mother Cannot Be Compared With My Dearest Chairman Mao' ('Tieqin Niangqin Buru Maozhuxiqin'), which came to be widespread among the youth during the Cultural Revolution. The song expresses how much young

people rejoice in Mao Zedong's leadership and how determined they are to follow him and his Communist Party. Pan claims that it would be 'nonsense' to express such ideas today. However, she taught these songs in her music classes because, at that time, the practice was strongly encouraged. She frequently taught these revolutionary songs with choreography, so that the lyrics' meanings could be expressed visually, often via evocative movements. Having learnt *nihon-buyo* or Japanese traditional dance, Pan's dance skills made her well-suited to this role. She also organised a performance troupe to sing and dance on various occasions outside the school, such as at an event celebrating National Foundation Day.

### 2.3 Teaching Materials after the Cultural Revolution

When the Cultural Revolution ended in China, the songs worshipping Mao Zedong and his regime lost their value, and the Chinese community in Japan came to consider them irrelevant.

Pan recalls how these songs were often sung during classes and school events in the late 1960s and 1970s in praise of Tiananmen Square, Chairman Mao, and so on. However, when the Cultural Revolution ended in China, she stopped teaching such songs. Instead, she began introducing new songs that express the new social values and thus became widespread in China. Those songs included 'The Ocean' and 'Oh My Hometown' ('Tahai a Guxiang'), which was a big hit when it was released as the title song of the film *The Ocean Is Calling (Dahai Zai Huhuan)* in 1982. The film depicts seamen's friendships with and faith in their colleagues, families, and countries, and the title song specifically expresses the protagonist's adoration for his homeland and his mother, the ocean. Unlike the military march-style revolutionary songs that were popular during the Cultural Revolution, this song is sung with melancholic melodies, conveying tenderness towards loved ones and the homeland. Such a song may have touched the overseas Chinese in Japan, whose own lives overlapped with the film characters' as well as the feelings represented in the song.

Another example that Pan introduced was 'Love My China' ('Ai Wo Zhonghua'), which was first sung in 1991 at an ethnic minorities event in China. The song describes China's fifty-six ethnic groups, which, despite each having different languages and cultures, also have members who live as brothers and sisters in a nation that is united as one family.

'How Beautiful Our National Flag Is' ('Guoqi Guoqi Zhen Meili') was also chosen to encourage students to understand their home country. This is a song for children that expresses appreciation for the national flag; its lyrics describe how the flag's golden stars shed light over the land. In Pan's view, this song is suitable for helping children remember how many stars are depicted on the flag and helping them gain an understanding of the meanings behind the flag's symbols in relation to their country's history. Pan explains that she continued to choose songs that express love for the homeland even after the Cultural Revolution; however, the examples she shared were not like the revolutionary songs that worship Mao Zedong and communism in a militaristic way.

According to Pan, even after the Cultural Revolution, she continued to teach some representative songs from each period, including the 1950s, 60s, 70s, and 80s, and more recently, popular songs from the 1990s and 2000s. She says her selection included songs from the time when China was 'liberated' (from Japan), as well as those from the Cultural Revolution, although the latter may not be 'relevant' to today's cultural values. She justifies her decision with her belief that it is important not to forget history, since the present is built on the past. However, some problems have also arisen with regard to these political songs. In the 1990s, a student's parent complained about Pan teaching the song 'I Love Tiananmen Square in Beijing'. The song, as explained earlier, adores Mao Zedong as the great leader. Pan assumes that the parent, who was a newcomer Chinese, disliked the lyrics for their depiction of Mao Zedong as the great leader. Although she did not explain further, I deduce that she considers newcomer Chinese to have a different way of thinking compared with oldcomers, who take China's history into more serious consideration. A similar problem arose in the 1990s when Pan taught 'Protect the Yellow River' ('Baowei Huanghe') in her class. This song was composed to protest Japan's militarism with respect to China in the 1930s. When Pan taught her students the song, she accompanied it with an historical explanation of the Sino-Japanese War, including the issue of the Nanjing Massacre. One of the Japanese students in Pan's Grade 6 class complained that Japan never invaded China. Pan holds that she was not wrong to have taught these songs, given that the historical events they recount cannot be changed. However, these anecdotes illustrate how the students' backgrounds, such as their upbringing and nationality, have diversified, requiring teachers to negotiate a new landscape in that regard.

Later, around the 1990s, the materials for music classes gradually began to shift away from what Pan describes as 'political' songs to ones related to students' 'daily life', including ethics and manners, such as how to greet teachers; seasonal topics, such as how to celebrate the New Year; and other practical things, such as traffic rules. For example, the song 'Red Eyes and Green Eyes' ('Hong Yanjing Lü Yanjing') teaches children the colours of the traffic signals. In the category of songs that teach children about daily life activities, Pan included some old songs that she deemed to still be suitable for teaching today's children, for instance, 'Song of a Newsboy' ('Maibao Ge'), which was composed in the 1930s. When she taught this song to her students, she explained that at the time when the song was composed, a huge gap existed between the rich and the poor, which meant that poor children had to work, as newsboys, for example, to help their families survive. She believes that her lessons historically and socially contextualised the songs she selected from the past, while in China today, teachers may not tell students the details of how these songs came to be.

Since revolutionary songs lost their value after the Cultural Revolution, Pan also began choosing a large number of songs from Japanese music textbooks. These were mainly children's songs, such as 'Autumn Leaves' ('Momiji'), 'Snail' ('Katatsumuri'), and 'Mount Fuji' ('Fujisan'), which most Japanese people remember singing in their childhood. Although she could not teach all the materials from the Japanese textbooks, she chose what she thought was 'important' for her Chinese students to know in order to

continue living in Japan. However, she emphasises that she put more weight on Chinese songs because she wanted the overseas Chinese children to remember Chinese songs, even as adults. Therefore, about two-thirds of her teaching materials were Chinese songs, while Japanese songs comprised about one-third, though she mentions that the current teacher may be using a larger proportion of Japanese songs and materials from Japanese textbooks.

Pan notes that her ideas about what is necessary in music education continued to change during her forty-year teaching career; that is, what she considered appropriate and beneficial when she first started teaching is different from what she considers good and suitable for children today.

### 3. Present-Day Music Education at the Yokohama Yamate Chinese School

In the following sections, I will discuss the music lesson teaching materials that are currently in use at the Yokohama Yamate Chinese School, focusing on the changes that can be observed since Pan taught at the school. The information was provided by the current music teacher, Luo Shunying, who began teaching at the school in the late 1990s (Photo 2). Born in Yokohama, she is fourth generation Chinese. Like Pan, she studied at the same school where she teaches now. After graduating from the junior high school, she proceeded to the local Japanese high school and then went on to study at Musashino Music University in Tokyo, where she specialised in Western classical singing and gained a qualification as a music teacher in Japan. Although her teaching licence allows her to teach music at Japanese national (public) schools, she chose to return to her Chinese alma mater.



**Photo 2** Luo Shunying giving a music lesson at Yokohama Yamate Chinese School (Photo by the author, June 2014)

### 3.1 Music Lessons

I have described Luo's lessons for her Grade 3 elementary students elsewhere (Arisawa 2015). In a typical lesson, almost exactly half the time is dedicated to teaching Chinese materials, while the other half was reserved for materials from a Japanese textbook. The lesson started with practising the Chinese song 'Little Frogs, Please Sing!' ('Xiaoqingwa Ni Changba!') from a Chinese textbook. After singing the frog song, the teacher asked the students to open their Japanese textbooks to the Japanese tune 'Song of Picking Tea' ('Chatsumi'). Here, she switched her language from Chinese to Japanese. 'Song of Picking Tea' is listed in the 'Songs of Our Heart' ('Kokoro no Uta') unit, which is a collection of well-known children's songs that depict elements of the landscape, such as Mount Fuji, cherry blossoms, the sea, and rivers. These songs are considered nostalgic, as they evoke old memories of Japan. The lesson then shifted to practising playing the recorder, also using a Japanese textbook. The teacher first asked the students to write sol-fa in Japanese *katakana* syllabary under the staff notation. Through practising the recorder, students learn how to read Western notation, particularly with regard to singing in sol-fa in the Japanese syllabary, like students in general Japanese schools do in their music classes. Playing the soprano recorder in elementary school and the alto recorder in middle school is the standard requirement in Japanese schools, and this Chinese school follows the same curriculum.

During Pan's time, the primary focus was on teaching Chinese material; however, in present-day lessons, equal weight is placed on Chinese and Japanese materials. Luo notes that Japanese songs are taught because teachers want their students to become familiar with the music that Japanese children learn, since many students, especially in elementary schools, are oldcomer Chinese who will continue to live in Japan after graduating from the school. Luo considers the 'Songs of Our Heart' section, which contains songs such as 'Song of Picking Tea', to be especially useful for teaching students songs that have been handed down among the Japanese. She explains that when she teaches this song, she also tells her students about China's tea-drinking culture, explaining that the tea in Japan was introduced from China, where there is a tea-picking song. She says that she tries to 'convey the cultural connections between the two countries.'

### 3.2 Music Textbooks

At present, two types of textbooks are used in music lessons at the Yokohama Yamate Chinese School. The original textbook, compiled and edited by the school's music teachers, is written in Chinese. The other is the Japanese textbook *Music For Elementary School Children (Shōgakusei No Ongaku)*, which is the same one that was used during Pan's tenure as the school's music teacher.

The cover of the Chinese textbook depicts ethnic minority people, such as the Mongols, the Miao, the Gaoshan, and so on (Figure 1). Most of the materials in the Chinese textbooks are Chinese songs. For example, in the first-graders' textbook, sixteen of the twenty-one items are Chinese songs. The remaining content includes music idioms and introductions to musical instruments. The songs in the Grade 1 book are mostly children's songs about school life, such as 'The Song of Going to School' ('Shang Xue

Ge'), and 'Good Morning, Teacher' ('Laoshi Ninzao'). The Grade 1 textbook also includes songs appreciating natural elements such as the landscape and animals, as evidenced by 'Look for the Spring' ('Zhao Chuntian') and 'Two Little Elephants' ('Liangzhi Xiaoxiang'). There are only two songs that promote an appreciation of China, namely the aforementioned 'How Beautiful the National Flag Is' ('Guoqi Guoqi Zhen Meili') and the national anthem of the People's Republic of China.

From the second-graders' textbook onwards, Chinese folksongs (*min'ge*) from various regions, including ethnic minorities' songs, begin appearing; for example, 'Song of a Herd Boy' ('Maitongge'), a folksong from Hubei province, is illustrated with a map of China. Songs that are associated with China as the 'homeland' can also be found, including 'Big China' ('Da Zhongguo') and 'Children Love the Homeland' ('Xiaopengyou Ai Zhongguo'). The former song describes China's grandness, with its high mountains and big rivers, such as the Yellow River. Although the latter song does not necessarily designate China as the 'homeland', the lyrics encourage children to love their homeland like bees love their flowers and like birds love their trees. The rest of the textbook, like that of the first-graders, mostly contains 'practical' songs to teach children about daily life, nature, animals, and so on.



**Figure 1** The cover of the Grade 3 textbook, depicting the Miao. The Yokohama Yamate Chinese School's original music textbook for the 3rd graders provided by Luo Shunying at the time of interview in June 2014.

**卖报歌** 安娥 作词 聂耳 作曲

中速

1. 啦啦啦啦 我是卖报的小行家，不问寒暑，天天起早。  
2. 啦啦啦啦 我是卖报的小行家，不怕大风，不怕暴雨。  
3. 啦啦啦啦 我是卖报的小行家，不怕烈日，不怕冰雹。

早晨起，一边走，一边叫：今天的天气真不好，真热呀，真热呀，真热呀，真热呀。  
早晨起，一边走，一边叫：今天的天气真不好，真热呀，真热呀，真热呀，真热呀。

好，笑，七个小报童，披只光，若光明，两我会，徐知来，报，送到。

★ 学唱歌曲，背唱这首歌曲。

**聂耳**

聂耳(1912-1935)云南玉溪人。在他短暂的一生中创作了三十多首歌曲和一些民族乐器。

他的《义勇军进行曲》后来被确定为我国国歌，其它如《开路先锋》、《大路歌》、《码头工人》、《铁蹄下的歌女》、《毕业歌》、《卖报歌》等优秀歌曲在群众中广大为传唱，长期以来有着重大的影响。

1935年，他在日本神奈川县藤泽市鹤沼海岸海滨游泳时不幸身亡，年仅23岁。

**Figure 2** An example of the content of the Grade 3 textbook, i.e. ‘Song of a Newsboy’ and its composer’s biography. The Yokohama Yamate Chinese School’s original music textbook for the 3rd graders provided by Luo Shunying at the time of interview in June 2014.

In the third-graders’ textbook, the previously mentioned ‘Song of a Newsboy’ is introduced alongside the biography of the composer, Nie-er (1912–1935), to whom the song that would eventually become the Chinese national anthem is also attributed (Figure 2). In the fourth-graders’ textbook, the controversial song ‘Protect the Yellow River’, which was also mentioned earlier, is similarly presented, together with the biography of the nationalistic composer/musician Xian Xinghai (1905–1945). The upper grades’ textbooks, i.e. Grades 4, 5, and 6, provide more detailed descriptions of Chinese traditional instruments. Explanations of theatre genres, such as the Beijing Opera, also appear in these textbooks to promote students’ understanding of the history and development of the traditional Chinese performing arts.

The fifth- and sixth-graders’ textbook is compiled as a single book, with a section titled ‘The Homeland Is in My Heart’ (‘Zuguo Zai Wo Xinzhong’), in which six songs expressing love for China are listed, namely ‘Impressions of the Homeland’ (‘Zuguo Yinxiang’), ‘Sing a Song of the Homeland’ (‘Gechang Zuguo’), ‘Love My China’ (‘Ai Wo Zhonghua’), ‘My Chinese Heart’ (‘Wode Zhongguo Xin’), ‘Song of the Yangtze River’ (‘Changjiang Zhi Ge’), and ‘The One Song’ (‘Tongyishou Ge’). Most were composed in the 1980s and 1990s, and the lyrics either adore China’s landscape, such as the mountains and rivers, or admire the unity of multicultural China. Although one of the above-mentioned songs, ‘Sing a Song of the Homeland’, was composed in the 1950s during the early period of the strong socialist movement in China, it does not explicitly express patriotic ideas or support for the Party. Instead, the song describes love for the

country, illustrating the national flag, the Yellow River, and the Yangtze River, among other national symbols. The songs in 'The Homeland Is in My Heart' section appear alongside illustrations of scenery that is representative of China, such as the Great Wall, Tiananmen Square, and the two iconic rivers mentioned above. It can be argued that the songs in this section aim to enhance students' appreciation of China, through the exaltation of its grand landscape, which symbolises a strong, broad-minded nation.

This investigation into the content of Chinese music textbooks shows that the lower graders' materials focus on 'practical' songs, while the upper graders' textbooks feature a higher proportion of songs that adore China as the 'homeland'. According to Luo, the teachers compiled their own Chinese music textbooks rather than using the textbooks published in China because the latter are inclined towards Western music, and thus they contain very little material that the teachers find appropriate for their students (Arisawa 2015). Luo believes that the people in China today consider songs composed around the 1980s, which meet the approval of Chinese people living abroad, to be somewhat old-fashioned; nevertheless, through her teaching, she wants to hand down songs from the past to overseas Chinese children, so that they can familiarise with and remember the tunes that their 'grandpa and grandma know'. However, she also emphasises that teaching songs that promote students' positive feelings towards China is distinct from the patriotic education that has recently been considered controversial in countries such as China and North Korea. Instead, she explains that the school's education policy is to raise children who are not biased and who are able to look at things from various perspectives. Therefore, the school provides bilingual education in both Chinese and Japanese, teaching not only the two nations' languages, but also their cultures and customs. For this reason, she believes that oldcomer Chinese teachers who were educated at the school are more suitable than teachers from China. In fact, the school recruits many alumni. It can be argued that both Ms. Luo's beliefs and the school's policy indicate that by virtue of having had the same life experiences in Japan as students from the immigrant minority, oldcomer Chinese teachers are well-positioned to understand what is necessary for the education of oldcomer students.

As for 'problems' like those the former teacher, Pan, encountered when she taught a politically controversial revolutionary song in the 1990s, the present teacher, Luo, did not mention any similar issues in her interview (Arisawa 2015). This might be because she avoided the political issues behind the songs she taught in class. However, she underscored another problem: newcomer Chinese children often complain about learning 'old-fashioned' songs that their grandparents used to sing. Newcomer children, according to Luo, do not appreciate the songs that oldcomers recognise and value as comprising the backbone of their identity.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This research shows that the teaching materials for music lessons at the (pro-China) Yokohama Yamate Chinese School have continued to change from the 1950s up until today to reflect the social changes in China, with which the school is associated. In the

early period of the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the 1950s, songs supporting socialist ideologies were taught at the school in Japan. Later, during the Cultural Revolution between the 1960s and 1970s, many patriotic and revolutionary songs worshipping Mao Zedong and his communist regime in China also became widespread among the overseas Chinese community in Japan, including at the school.

When the society in China changed after the Cultural Revolution, many songs reflecting new social and cultural values were born. Among them were songs that expressed love and adoration for China as the 'homeland'; these were chosen as material for music lessons at the school in the 1980s to nurture children's emotional attachment to China. Such songs often describe China's landscape, emphasising its grand mountains and rivers, as well as the ideological image of a united multicultural. Since the 1990s, the use of politically 'controversial' songs that espouse patriotic ideas has begun to decline in music lesson teaching materials; these have been supplanted, in large part, by more 'practical' songs that describe children's daily life activities, as well as natural phenomena, such as the four seasons and animals.

Although the school is known to support the People's Republic of China, it is currently not heavily influenced by the Chinese government. As far as I could tell, there are no portraits of Mao Zedong in the classrooms or on the school premises. Based on my observation of a music lesson, coupled with my interview with the current music teacher, the education the school provides today does not aim to reinforce children's patriotic allegiance to China; rather, it seeks to foster the shared identity of the oldcomer Chinese who are destined to live outside of their origin root country. Therefore, the school seeks to encourage them to treasure the songs that their grandparents' generation appreciated, with the hope that through singing such songs, children will be reminded of their lineage and will be able to share musical heritage with the oldcomer community.

The school is also aware that its students must negotiate their identity as Chinese living in Japan. Once they graduate, they will likely attend a Japanese high school, and many will work at Japanese companies or in the public sector. Therefore, the school also aims to raise children who are able to share musical culture and heritage with their host society's majority Japanese through the songs and music that they will remember singing in childhood. As a result, today's music lessons place more weight on Japanese materials than they did in the past, when Chinese songs and other Chinese music materials were given priority. This indicates that the teachers' ideas and the school's policy have both shifted from maintaining a strong connection with the contemporary ideologies in China to bringing up children who can more easily adapt to the host society's social values—a skill that has become even more important given the experiences of the several generations that immigrated at an earlier time.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my gratitude to Pan Lanying and Luo Shunyong from the Yokohama Yamate Chinese School for their kindness in sharing their experiences and thoughts for the benefit of this research.

## Notes

- 1) The Japanese government does not acknowledge 'ethnic schools' (*minzoku-gakkō*) as official schools and providers of compulsory education. Instead, they are categorised as 'various schools' (*kakushu-gakkō*) that are not part of the government's standard education system.
- 2) There are currently five Chinese schools in Japan. Two are located in Yokohama, and the others are located in Tokyo, Osaka, and Kobe. The two schools in Yokohama were originally one school that was founded in 1898. In 1949, the People's Republic of China was founded and the country split into two (China and Taiwan). This impacted the overseas Chinese community in Yokohama and resulted in the splitting of the school in 1952 (Tan 2008: 135–144; Zhang 2008: 50–52).
- 3) The study (Arisawa 2015) also evinces a remarkable difference in students' and teachers' backgrounds in regard to their origins. While the (pro-China) Yokohama Yamate Chinese School accepts few Japanese students that have no ancestry in China, nearly half of the student population of the (pro-Taiwan) Yokohama Overseas Chinese School are Japanese. The pro-China school also attracts oldcomer Chinese, who maintain their Chinese nationality, whereas the pro-Taiwan school contains more newcomers, including children who have gained Japanese nationality because one of their parents is Japanese. According to interviews with the teachers, the pro-China school encourages alumni to return to the school as teachers, while the pro-Taiwan school actively recruits teachers from Taiwan. The detailed numbers are shown below (as of August 2014): the Yokohama Yamate Chinese School (pro-China) enrolls a total of 541 students in the elementary and junior high schools. With regard to nationality, they consist of 160 Chinese (30%), 357 Japanese of Chinese origin (66%), 6 people of other nationalities of Chinese origin (1%), and 24 Japanese of Japanese origin (4%). There are 39 full-time teachers, among whom 11 are alumni (oldcomer Chinese) (28%), 15 were born in China (newcomer Chinese) (38%), 12 are Japanese (31%), and 1 is British (3%). The Yokohama Overseas Chinese School (pro-Taiwan) enrolls 362 students in its elementary, junior high, and high schools. With regard to nationality, this population is comprised of 42 Chinese (12%), 153 Japanese of mainly Chinese origin (42%), and 167 Japanese of Japanese origin (46%). There are 18 full-time teachers, among whom 1 is an alumnus (6%), 16 were born in Taiwan (88%), and 1 is Japanese (6%).
- 4) In the pre-war period, Chinese schools in Japan were subject to the jurisdiction of the Government of the Republic of China concerning their curriculum, the contents of textbooks, and teaching licenses. The People's Republic of China, founded in 1949, took over control of pro-China Chinese schools until 1955, when the overseas Chinese were allowed to choose their nationalities, and their schools were no longer under the Chinese government's control; they began running the schools independently. They have since maintained a 'cooperative relationship' with the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of China (Zhang 2008: 56–57).
- 5) From the website of the Yokohama Yamate Chinese School: [www.yycs.jp/school/info/info.html#a](http://www.yycs.jp/school/info/info.html#a) (accessed: 18 August 2017)

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