

The Formation of the Concept of the “Citizen” in Modern Japan and Development of Civic Education

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Introduction

As the framework of the nation-state that had maintained a sense of realism until the second half of the 20th century begins to waver, in every country, attention is turning to the ideal form of citizenship education for members of these nations that aims to develop citizens who actively participate in the construction of nations and societies. The debate around citizenship education is growing in Japan as well; however, many of these debates are based on a premise of positioning the relationship between the individual and the state in a binary opposition. In this study, in order to develop a framework for debate that is cognizant of the historical context of Japan, a focus is placed on the history of civic education that was promoted in the process of the foundation of the nation-state. It is through this that the ideological construction of the concept of the “citizen” is brought to the fore.¹⁾

Regarding the composition of this paper, Section 1 reconsiders the understanding of the relationship between the individual and the state in citizenship education and raises the importance of the grounding arguments in their historical context. Section 2 deals with analyzing the history of civic education in modern Japan. Subsequently, in Sections 3 to 6, with the development and spread of the school system in the second half of the 19th century and the emergence of the concept of the “citizen,” I will explore how the basis was formed for the full-scale formation of civic education from 1920s onward.

1. The Individual and the State in Citizenship Education

The spread of multiculturalism has greatly shaken the framework of the nation-state of one race and one nation, and the rise of neoliberalism has led to the dismantling and reorganization of the welfare state. Against this backdrop, there are two separate approaches to citizenship education, which continue to be developed in every country around the world. One of these approaches is based on a neoliberal understanding and focuses on creating individuals who can navigate through a competitive society where market principles prevail, while the other is based on social justice and focuses on developing organizations that can create peaceful societies, which are just and sustainable.²⁾ In the modern day, it can be said that these two trends in citizenship education co-exist as curriculums in the subject are formed in each country.

In Japan, an increasing awareness of citizenship education has been observed;

however, regarding the relationship between the individual and the state, it appears to be premised on a binary opposition in which the individual is either controlled by the state or entirely free from the state. These patterns arise from the type of understanding laid out below that is based on a comparative view of historical development with the West. In summary, in the process of forming the nation-state, in contrast with Western nations in which the individual is educated to be a citizen free from government power, the Japanese nation-state was formed as an imperial one in which a strong sense of nationalism was imbued, and individuals were not instilled with the idea of being a free citizen.³⁾

However, in Japan's case, whereby "in pre-modern society there was no uniform culture or style of living, a nation-state was created that retained this decentralization and diversity, and even as society modernized, affiliation with the nation-state overlapped with affiliation with local communities, both penetrating each other in a opaque relationship."⁴⁾ As such, the participation of individuals in rural society at the community level meant that they were also participating in the state in some respect, and therefore, the relationship between the individual and the state could not be understood as a pattern of binary opposition.

Related to this point, it is important to focus on two understandings offered by the educational philosopher Gert J.J. Biesta that concerns the concept of citizenship and the ideal form of citizenship education. One is the liberal explanation of citizenship in which the concept is understood as the rights and obligations of citizens, and citizenship education is posited as educating people about these rights and obligations. The other understanding is that of republican citizenship, which posits that the concept of citizenship is not solely about the rights and responsibilities of citizens, that the essence of citizenship is the participation of citizens in the political communities to which they belong and that the core tenet of citizenship education is the creation of citizens who participate in politics.⁵⁾

Therefore, it is necessary to reimagine the relationship between the individual and the state based on neither the liberal or republican understandings of citizenship exclusively, but with an understanding that an individual's participation in society and politics itself constitutes both the nation-state and political bodies in a circumstance in which the individual and the state are involved in a relationship in which they permeate one other.⁶⁾

The "citizen" spoken about in modern citizenship education is by no means a new idea. It is necessary to understand the view of the "citizen" encompassing how it has been formed historically and as incorporating the two seemingly opposing factors of "belonging to an organic unity" and "the independent individual who doesn't depend on the state."⁷⁾ This is related to the task of reconsidering the framing of the analysis of civic education that has been emphasized in establishing the modern Japanese nation-state, as well as the task of reconstructing a new image of citizenship that is based on historical context.

2. Perspective of Historical Analysis of Civic Education and the Concept of the “Citizen”

In the nation-state, rather than remaining as simple servants of the nation who are subject to state power and under its sovereignty, one was expected to be a *citizen* who was able to participate in the affairs of the nation as well as a leader who works toward its integration. Subsequently, for people to become citizens, the emphasis was on a series of education aimed at creating symbols of national integration such as national flags and national anthems, standardizing languages, and fostering sovereignty awareness. Furthermore, in Japan, school subjects were established at a comparatively early stage after the foundation of the school system. Moreover, in 1872 when the school system was opened, the subject of “Morals” emerged immediately and focused on educating students about morality and the imperial system (following the Revised Education Ordinance in 1881, this became a core subject). Following the enactment of the Meiji Constitution in 1889, in 1901 the “Legislation and Economy” subject emerged that focused on learning about the legal system and the economy.

Internationally, citizenship education (civic education) began to be promoted in earnest at the beginning of the 20th century. The background to this was the great imperial powers attempting to strengthen national identities in the face of international conflict surrounding overseas development and colonial strife. Furthermore, it constituted a response to the worldwide spread of notions of democracy in the aftermath of World War I and the ideas of liberalism and socialism that followed it.

At this time, in Japan, the nation-state was strengthened and the education system expanded and spread. Through this process, the government became very interested in how education outside of the school system should function (i.e., the education of youth and the general public in regional communities). This is linked to the unique pattern in which the nation-state was formed and mediated its relationship with regional communities in which affiliation with one overlapped with and permeated the other.

The Local Improvement Movement (*Chihō Kairyō Undō*), led by the Ministry of Home Affairs, was created to rejuvenate towns and villages left impoverished by the Russo-Japanese War and is an example of this uniquely Japanese relationship. To strengthen the nation-state while working in tandem with local communities, importance was placed on the indoctrination of Autonomous Civil Education (*Jichi-Min Iku*) to cultivate a “spirit of autonomy,” “civic spirit,” and “community spirit.” In other words, while sharing an awareness of a national civic unity and proactively participating in the strengthening of the nation-state, in the local municipalities that form its foundation, importance was placed on active participation in the promotion of industrial production and regional self-government. Moreover, as an indispensable means of motivating municipal citizens, importance was also placed on education that centered on “cultivating civic consciousness.” This gradually came to be conceptualized as civic education, and this was the point when civic education began to emerge in Japan in a

real sense.⁸⁾

If the period of the Local Improvement Movement is posited as the time when civic education began to properly emerge in Japan, the period from the 1920s to the 1930s can be positioned as the period of development. Before and after the establishment of the system of universal suffrage, which through the abolishment of tax payment conditions led to a massive expansion in the numbers of eligible voters, the government responded to the demands of citizens to participate in the political process while avoiding the exacerbation of class conflict through inspiring a sense of national and civic unity by way of civic education. In school-based education, a core subject dealing with civic education known as “Civics” was established. Moreover, outside of schools, an administrative system was established, responsible for adult education and community education, and in order to ensure rigorous equality in politics and develop the autonomy of the municipalities, courses in civic education closely linked to the constituency system were set up.

Turning to the emergence of civic education in its modern sense in Japan, a great deal of research in the fields of Education History and Social Studies History has accumulated linking it to the establishment of the “Civics” subject. However, there are two opposing viewpoints regarding this. One such viewpoint positions the emergent subject of “Civics” as part of the imperial public education system and emphasizes its reciprocal relationship with the subject of “Morals,” as well as its regressive nature. Others state that “Civics” possessed a sense of innovation in its content and methods, moving beyond the contemporaneously prevailing principal of simply injecting students with fixed knowledge. To reach a more nuanced evaluation, moving past a situation in which these two viewpoints exist in a dichotomy, it is necessary to understand the role played by “Civics” in the construction of society and conduct analysis that is cognizant of the internal construction of civic education. The research of Toshihiko Saito will be relevant in achieving this aim.

Saito stated that through civic education (citizenship education), which had developed in the West between the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, there were some countries that emphasized the development of a sense of national consciousness through fostering a love of country and service, while there were other countries that aimed to encourage the membership of regional communities. Despite being able to isolate these seemingly contradictory characteristics, there is a mutual opportunity afforded by both. This is that regardless of variation in how content is structured, civic education was established as an indispensable tool in cultivating political consciousness in some sense about the modern nation and the formation of society among the members of those same nations and societies. Through this, an attempt was made to spur the participation of individuals in both.⁹⁾ Therefore, civic education is not understood simply as exclusively either “regressive” or “progressive,” but instead, through an understanding of civic education as incorporating elements of

both, the importance of standing on the methodological awareness of considering the structural links is highlighted.¹⁰⁾

According to Saito, civic education, which emerged as a means of securing modern constitutionalism through education, features inherent ambiguity owing to its emergence as a “system maintenance ideology” and the aspects of it that are linked to cultivating an “awareness of basic human rights and the principals of local government.” Even in pre-war Japan, in which an imperial system was enthusiastically adopted, while the “system maintenance” aspects of civic education took precedence, this second set of aspects were also apparent.¹¹⁾ Therefore, when engaging in an analysis of the history of civic education in Japan, two analytical frames are adopted: “citizens as the emperor’s people,” relating to the first aspect of civic education laid out above, and “citizens under modern constitutions,” relating to the second. It is important to uncover the historical processes that led to the creation and development of civic education while embedding these two processes.¹²⁾

In this study, in addition to the two concepts offered by Saito, the concept of “citizens who promote the autonomy of local communities” is added, based on the unique characteristic of the Japanese nation-state in which local communities mediate between the individual and the nation. It is said that the Autonomous Civic Education, which was prioritized during the period of the Local Improvement Movement, contained two different ideas that stood in a tense relationship: “cultivating loyalty to the state” and “enhancing the local community as a place in which to live.”¹³⁾ If we consider that the concept of civic education was solidified during this period, it was these two ideas that were the foundational principles of this type of education. As such, it is necessary to position the idea of “enhancing the local community as a place in which to live” as linked to the concept of “citizens who promote the autonomy of local communities.”

In the next section, we will look at how these three concepts of citizen emerged and developed from the second half of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, when the foundation of the Japanese nation-state was progressing. The mutuality of these relationships will also be explored.

3. Emergence of Two Concepts of the Citizen and Civic Education

In Japan, the second half of the 19th century marked a major shift from the hitherto dominant class-based society to an academic meritocracy with people thrown into a competitive society where the principal of survival of the fittest prevailed. Thus, if they wished to improve their position in life, they needed to internalize the modern values of diligence, hygiene, and knowledge, control themselves, and climb the rungs of the ladder in this new academic meritocracy. As the school system propagated throughout society at the beginning of the 20th century, in local communities, the dignity and self-respect that had been felt by those small manufacturers who remained poor was lost, and this led to a destabilization in people’s identity.¹⁴⁾ This also became a factor in imbuing a

sense of national identity. People became citizens and, therefore, members of society, or, in other words, the transformation of people into citizens proceeded at a steady pace.

Of the three concepts of citizen, those of “citizens as the emperor’s people” and “citizens under modern constitutions” had already begun to emerge from the 1880s to 1890s.

The former is said to have appeared in the explanation of the second chapter “Subjects, Rights and Obligations” in the book Commentaries on the Meiji Constitution, published immediately after the official proclamation of the Meiji Constitution in 1889. In other words, the concept of “citizens as the emperor’s people” was reborn as a new concept of “citizens” as subordinate and passive, devoted and obedient to the emperor, although with the “modern” window dressing of “equality.”¹⁵⁾ This is linked to the emergence and development of a new curriculum of ethical education in Japan at the primary and middle-school levels in the pre-war era in the form of the subject known as “Morals.” In the “Morals” curriculum established in 1872 in primary schools, textbooks that taught Western approaches to ethics were originally used. However, following the proclamation of the Meiji Constitution and through developments like the Imperial Rescript on Education (*Kyōiku Chokugo*) in 1890, an emphasis was placed on fostering a spirit of patriotism by focusing on content that emphasized an ethics education centered on justice, loyalty, and filial piety.¹⁶⁾

The second of these concepts, “citizens under modern constitutions,” also emerged at the same time. In 1888, with the establishment of the city and town/village systems, the development of a system for local government progressed, and although it was restricted to boys and limitations existed regarding the payment of taxes, the right to vote for members of the municipal government and municipal mayors was given to some residents. These people were known as “citizens,” as opposed to mere “residents,” and it was expected that these citizens would actively participate in local politics. Moreover, “Civic Education Theory” began to emerge in a prominent educational journal of the time, *Kyōiku Jiron* (Education Theory). Moreover, in elementary school education, the importance of the mechanisms of local government as part of citizen on the municipal level was emphasized.¹⁷⁾ However, taking a broader look at this period, the theory of civic education based on constitutionalism was influenced by Britain and by the elementary school subject Civics, which had already begun to be taught in America from the 1870s. Subsequently, a point of difference was noted when the fully formed concept of civic education that had developed in earnest in Japan from the beginning of the 20th century was largely influenced by Germany.¹⁸⁾

In this way, at the end of the 19th century, the two concepts of citizen, “citizens as the emperor’s people” and “citizens under modern constitutions,” were visible. However, at this point civic education had not sufficiently developed. In other words, the concept “citizens as the emperor’s people” had not formed into a clear theory of civic education, owing to the circumstances whereby there was no government sanctioned academism and whereby the official imperial system had not yet been established. Moreover,

regarding “citizens under modern constitutions,” because the government was reluctant to teach the principals of the Meiji Constitution within the school system, the concept did not gain sufficient acceptance until the emergence of the subject of “Legislation and Economy” when it was finally taken up within the school system itself.¹⁹⁾

“Legislation and Economy” introduced within the former middle-school system following the 1901 Middle School Regulation Enforcement Ordinance that was based on the Middle School Reform Ordinance Amendment of 1899, became the first true subject of civic education in the country. After the establishment of the school system, in elementary, middle, and teacher training schools, the subjects “Japanese Decrees” and “Economics” were established. In 1886, under the Schools Ordinance enacted by the then Minister for Education Arinori Mori, all such school subjects had been removed from the curriculum; therefore, this marked the return of subjects teaching law and economics in middle schools after a 20-year absence.²⁰⁾ Subsequently, these subjects would be introduced in 1907 in teacher training schools and in girls’ high schools in 1920. However, as they simply involved the instillation of fractured knowledge about law and economics, their rate of adoption in middle schools failed to rise and with the introduction of “Civics” in 1931, were ultimately abandoned.²¹⁾

4. Coexistence of Two Concepts of Citizen and the Links between them

As laid out above, two concepts of citizen related to the enactment of the Meiji Constitution emerged concurrently. However, they were not necessarily incompatible and showed potential to co-exist while entrenching themselves. How this occurred in pre-war Japan is a significant factor in understanding how the imperial system and constitutional systems coexisted at that time, and it is necessary to consider the nature of this relationship of coexistence. What is focused on in connection with this point is understanding how the relationship between the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement (*Jiyū minken undō*), which had a substantial influence on the Meiji Constitution, and the people whom it was expected would become citizens.

In early modern Japan, because samurai monopolized power while the class system was maintained, politics was viewed by the general people as something that belonged to someone else, with a sense prevailing of being a kind of guest in the system. As a result of this, from the modern Japan of the Meiji era (1868-1912), which had as its aim the preservation of an independent nation-state free from Western forces as well as dismantling the class system, it was necessary to build a state with which the people more strongly identified.²²⁾ In this sense, the ideal form for a state that incorporated ordinary people was debated, and with the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement demanding the government open an assembly, this can be said to be an important turning point when considering the formation of the Japanese nation-state.

However, those members of the public involved in the civil rights groups who led the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement were not one unified group. Many members of

the public participated in the speech events held by civil rights groups throughout Japan; however, these people still felt removed from the political process and did not have a proper understanding of civil rights theory or the structure of the nation and simply shared the critiques of the government and the police that they heard at these events in the face of tougher crackdowns from the police and government officials. Through garnering the sympathy of the people with these “anti-government and anti-power” sentiments, civil rights groups emphasized the need to separate the government, that the public had considered their superiors, from the state, thus transforming the government into an object of criticism and establishing the state as something that should be loved, symbolized by the emperor and the flag.²³⁾

What is worth noting here is that at this time, when the ideology around the imperial system was not fully established, it was primarily the civil rights groups that, through leveraging the anti-government and anti-power sentiment among the people, spread the idea throughout the public that the emperor was an ally. This is also thought to form the foundation of the strengthening of the concept of “citizens as the emperor’s people,” following the full-scale implementation of civic education.

As such, through the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement and fostering anti-government and anti-power sentiment, the fact that civil rights theory and the structure of the state were advocated for through linking them to the imperial system meant that the concepts of “citizens under modern constitutions” and “citizens as the emperor’s people” were tied together when they emerged. This meant that through the Meiji Constitution, while the authority of the empire is shown in the statement that the “Empire of Japan is a kingdom of Gods centered on an unbroken imperial line,” the fact that the sovereignty of the emperor and the constitution are situated in a complex position is illustrated in how the specific exercise of this sovereignty is restricted by parliament.²⁴⁾

Therefore, the basic constructions seen at the time when these two concepts of citizen emerged strengthened both their ability to coexist and the links between them and, furthermore, formed the base of the Emperor Organ Theory (*Ten'nō Kikan-Setzu*) in which no conflict was seen to exist between the imperial and constitutional systems.

5 . Development of Another Concept of Citizen

Subsequently, at the time of the Local Improvement Movement, which occurred at the beginning of the 20th century, another concept of the citizen emerged, that of “citizens who promote the autonomy of local communities.” To resolve the contradiction that emerged between the rising nationalist sentiment, which occurred in the aftermath of the Russo-Japan War and the reality of citizens’ lives, the government enacted the Imperial Rescript of 1908 and the Local Improvement Movement developed with the aim of promoting autonomy in local communities and self-reliance. This was a movement of “Autonomous Civil Education” in which citizens came together, working diligently and

frugally to secure the foundations of municipal finances. Since this movement aimed to promote local areas and preserve self-governance, with the assistance of the *Hōtokukai* (indoctrination organization for rural improvement and social improvement) that preached devotion, labor, cooperation and division, as well as the public interest, the centers of this movement were found in the youth organizations (*Seinen-dan*) and technical supplementary schools (*Jitsugyō hoshū gakkō*) in villages where there were many heirs to their own farms and the children of tenant farmers.²⁵⁾ “Autonomous Civil Education” was related to the education of what were known as “citizens of the municipalities” as laid down in the municipal, town, and village system established in 1888, the education of residents of rural areas who have rights and obligations regarding local autonomy. Gradually this became known as “Civic Education for Citizens of the Municipalities,” and at the beginning of the Taisho Era (1912-1926), it was simplified to “Civic Education.”²⁶⁾

In this way, in Japan, where the strengthening of the nation state was undertaken through mediation with local communities, Autonomous Civil Education, which had its foundations in the Local Improvement Movement and subsequently Civic Education, an extension of this, encouraged people to proactively participate in their communities, enhancing the local community as a place to live in. It is here that the concept of “citizens who promote the autonomy of local communities,” as an addition to the previously introduced two concepts can be said to have emerged.

This concept of “citizens who promote the autonomy of local communities” played a role in strengthening both the concepts of “citizens as the emperor’s people” and “citizens under modern constitutions,” while simultaneously linking itself to these concepts.

Regarding the first of these concepts, a link could be made between local Gods who were protecting the lives and lifestyles of rural people and the emperor who was protecting the nation. In pre-modern Japan, across the nation, it was believed that the Gods brought fertile crops and protected these crops from wind or flood damage, while patron deities known as *ujigami* (patron god) that protected the entire local community were celebrated at festivals. However, with the dawn of the period of civilization and enlightenment, hitherto closed off regions were inevitably exposed to external stimuli, and moreover, particularly through the participation of people from rural communities in the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars, awareness among the people of Japanese nation began to rise and adopt a sense of realness.²⁷⁾

In this way, at a time when the idea of the nation was garnering a sense of affinity in the minds of people, based on the theories of Autonomous Civil Education, the Local Improvement Movement that was developed to foster a sense of community spirit among rural people had a great impact through taking initiative in promoting the local community and fostering both a sense of citizenship in people and a sense of being able to contribute to the progression of the Japanese nation as an individual citizen. Furthermore, around the end of the 19th century, the position of the emperor began to

become more real to the people and continued to garner their acceptance through merging with the local Gods that were seen to protect local villages. In other words, the concept of “citizens as the emperor’s people” was linked to the concept of “citizens who promote the autonomy of local communities” and was strengthened by doing so.

Regarding the second concept of citizen, the Local Improvement Movement worked to foster a sense of constitutional awareness centered on municipal governance among the people through the improvement of lifestyles and promotion of rural areas, ideas with which the public could identify. In doing so, opportunities were provided to deepen the concept of “citizens under modern constitutions.” As noted above, in the process of developing the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement, as many of the members of public neither fully understood the theories of citizen rights nor how the state was constructed or identified with these theories, the concept of “citizens under modern constitutions” neither took hold nor appeared real to people.

However, tax payment conditions were relaxed, voter rights expanded, and politics began to gradually move closer to the people. Simultaneously, even for those who did not have the right to vote, through the Local Improvement Movement, just as regional self-government had begun to feel real to people through the promotion of local autonomy, by linking the concepts of “citizens under modern constitutions” and “citizens who promote the autonomy of local communities,” it can be understood that both were strengthened.

In this way, it may be thought that the concept of “citizens who promote the autonomy of local communities” that appeared at the beginning of the 20th century, worked to strengthen the other two existing concepts of the citizen. However, what is notable here is that education based on the theories of Autonomous Civil Education was also linked to the promotion of societal education outside of the school system.

What were expected to become the main strongholds for engagement with the Autonomous Civil Education and the Civic Education that developed under the Local Improvement Movement, were the local community youth groups, the night schools, and technical supplementary schools that were not positioned as formal education, but which instead were sites of societal education, which would subsequently be rapidly organized. Through this, using general reading materials and special supplementary books that were published one after the other from the end of the 19th century, so-called public reading materials, a type of education developed that disseminated a wide range of societal knowledge covering subjects, such as social structure, diplomacy, treaties, and war.²⁸⁾ Technical supplementary schools occupied a special role as the first institution in which the subject “Civics” that had been established within the education system in the 1920s was introduced.

These technical supplementary schools were educational institutions that were formed after the enactment of the 1893 Technical Support Schools Regulations with the aim of equipping working youth who had completed their primary education with the necessary

skills and knowledge for work and supplement work done in primary schools. They expanded throughout the country attached to primary schools. Originally, the focus was on vocational education. However, educators on the ground began to advocate for the need for civic education that instructed municipal citizens, those who bore the task of regional self-government. In 1920, the Technical Support Schools Regulations were amended, changing the focus of the schools from that of supplemental education to schools that were tasked with vocational and civic education.²⁹⁾

Part of the background as to why civic education was given such precedence in the technical supplementary schools is that from the beginning of the 20th century, the educational philosophy of the German education officer and pedagogue G.M. Kerschensteiner began to gain prominence in the world of Japanese education.³⁰⁾ At the core of Kerschensteiner's educational philosophy is that in order to realize the civic education that is the aim of all education, "labor education" is afforded prominence and the school is positioned as a "labor community" with the development of technical, mental, and moral skills occurring through projects of collective handiwork rather than the simple transfer of knowledge.³¹⁾ Kerschensteiner particularly emphasized civic education as part of labor education in supplementary schools and, in Japan, influenced by this, civic education centered on the two pillars of both civic education, and labor education was initiated in technical supplementary schools.

So far, in tracing the genealogy of the true development of civic education in the 1920s, we have travelled back to the commencement of the school system in the second part of the 19th century, but primarily focused on the citizen as a conceptual construction. It can be understood that the two concepts of "citizens as the emperor's people" and "citizens under modern constitutions" emerged together while linked to each other, and through further linkage to the concept of "citizens who promote the autonomy of local communities" that emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, all of these concepts were strengthened. Therefore, there was a multi-layered relationship between these three concepts of the citizen where they were mutually linked and strengthened. Subsequently, starting in the 1920s, a true curriculum for civic education would be implemented based on these three concepts of citizen that featured a multi-layered relationship.

6. Full Development of Civic Education in the 1920s

The links between the concepts "citizens as the emperor's people" and "citizens under modern constitutions" with "citizens who promote the autonomy of local communities" became even stronger from the 1920s, the period when civic education truly developed in earnest.

The First World War brought great changes to the politics and economy of Japan. The war in Europe led to an unprecedented boom in Japanese domestic industry and, as a result of this, the sophistication of domestic industrial structures progressed. Conversely,

owing to the decline in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, a wealth gap appeared between urban and rural areas. Moreover, despite the accumulation of capital, many labor and tenancy disputes occurred due to a lack of action to resolve the issues that arose due to this accumulation of capital, such as the legalization of unions and protection of tenant rights. In addition, in response to the growing movement toward democracy worldwide, there was an upsurge in movements to defend the constitution in Japan too, as well as movements for universal suffrage and an increase in liberal and socialist thought.

The development of civic education from the 1920s to the 1930s can be said to be a response in the educational sector to societal and conceptual problems in the aftermath of World War I. However, it can be stated that this development was particularly related to the movement toward universal suffrage. Regarding the election system of Japan, since the first election law in 1889, a system of restricted franchise was in place based on tax payments; however, through two stages of reform in 1900 and 1919, this tax-based restriction was eased and the number of eligible voters increased. The tax requirement was ultimately abolished in 1925 with the establishment of universal suffrage and the conferring of voting rights on all men aged 25 and over. In doing so, the pool of eligible voters increased from 3,000,000 people to 14,000,000.

The enactment of universal suffrage, as is reflected in an understanding of it as “a safety valve to prevent the working class from siding with a revolution,”³²⁾ responded in the eyes of the government to the demands for political participation while preventing an exacerbation of class conflicts. This is shown succinctly in the passage of the Public Security Preservation Law of 1925 enacted at this time, after which crackdowns on political and social movements and ideas began in earnest.

The concept “citizens who promote the autonomy of local communities” that emerged at the time of the Local Improvement Movement was strengthened at this time. According to Masayoshi Kimura, a bureaucrat at the Ministry of Education who played a central role in the establishment of the “Civics” subject, civic education up until that point had narrowly referred to the promotion of municipal autonomy linked to daily life that had been the slogan of Autonomous Civil Education. However, at that time, it is said that individual members of the public who were involved in political groups exercised their civil rights at the municipal level and that the exercise of the individual franchise adopted a new meaning as a form of political education.³³⁾

The concepts “citizens who promote the autonomy of local communities” and “citizens under modern constitutions,” as part of the Local Improvement Movement, were linked together through the familiar idea of promoting local autonomy by improving everyday life and promoting rural areas. However, in the 1920s, these two concepts mean that they will acquire knowledge related to political economy and society in general based on their daily lives, take charge of constitutional politics, and take an active part in the formation of the nation. Therefore, it can be said that it was more strongly linked in the dimension

of concrete political participation.

Moreover, it is said that the foundation of civic education that had come to be known as a type of national education was rooted in the theory of social solidarity, which itself developed out of social organism theory. Social organism theory compares society to a living organism, drawing parallels to a developing organic integration in which each of the individual elements perform a function as part of the whole. It was established in the second half of the 19th century and was influenced by evolution. The theory of social solidarity is a developmental theory in which society is constructed and evolves through individual members of society working together. Just as the theory of civic education was gaining prominence in Japan, from 1917 to 1923, the theory of social solidarity was actively introduced and leveraged with an emphasis not only on “vertical morality” toward parents and rulers but also on a “horizontal morality” of coexistence and mutual prosperity.³⁴⁾

In fact, for Kimura, it was not only the hitherto emphasized loyalty, patriotism, and filial piety of vertical life that was emphasized in the content of civic education, but also an emphasis was placed on horizontal life, through respecting the personality of others, living a communal life, and striving for coexistence and mutual prosperity. This shows the clear influence of social solidarity theory.³⁵⁾

What is noteworthy here is that the “horizontal spread” of the human relationships that form the basis for horizontal morality is brought about through the progression of the publicization of local organizations in the community. Since the Local Improvement Movement, local organizations, such as youth groups that were the leaders in this movement were emphasized, and their publicization proceeded at pace; however, at this time, organizations were already cooperating with each other over expansive communities that crossed the lines between villages. This meant that relationships that had been hitherto linked within remote and closed-off villages came to possess a sense of horizontal spread across wider societies. Taking youth groups as an example, organization at the county and national level continued, and through regular workshops and seminars, opportunities expanded for young people to connect with others outside of their own settlements.

Subsequently, through this “horizontal spread,” members of the public crossed settlement lines and shared the issues of rebuilding their villages and promoting local communities and while this spread strengthened the concept of “citizens who promote the autonomy of local communities,” it also had the potential to strengthen vertical morality or, in other words, the concept of “citizens as the emperor’s people.” The structure that has been historically constructed in the traditional closed settlement was as follows. There was a certain “horizontal relationship” such as strong friendship between young people in a narrow relationship, and there was also a strong “vertical relationship” with elders, parents, and ancestors based on blood and territorial ties. This structure was rearranged as follows. It created a “horizontal relationship” between

settlements and local communities, and these groups of communities and settlements transformed to be further positioned in a “vertical relationship” within the nation-state.³⁶⁾

It may be thought that the existence of the emperor, who was removed from the anti-government and anti-power movement, became more familiar to ordinary people, and with the reorganization and expansion of the settlements themselves, closed off regions were forced to change and gradually became more open. This made it so that in the minds of the people it became easier to link the idea of a God that protects their home to that of an emperor who protected the nation.

In this way, at this time, the theory of social solidarity based on horizontal and vertical morals was reflected in how civic education should be and the concepts of “citizens as the emperor’s people” and “citizens who promote the autonomy of local communities” became more deeply linked.

7. Conclusion

In new types of citizenship that are currently being debated internationally, not only are the hitherto defined “formal” elements of citizenship emphasized, that is, individual citizens of the nation-state who have rights and justice, but also “substantial” factors, such as identity and participation in civil society (community). Among them, while ideas, such as communitarian citizenship that emphasize solidarity and participation in the community rather than the rights of the individual are gaining prominence, there are more conservative perspectives that emphasize family, religion, and tradition and participation as a citizen’s responsibility, as well as liberal perspectives that demand public acceptance of cultural difference.³⁷⁾

While looking back on the formation processes of the Japanese nation-state, moving forward, communitarian citizenship is a perspective that cannot be ignored in Japan in considering the ideal form of citizenship (education). In that sense, a concept of citizen that adds the local community to the individual and state, like that which has been shown in this study, may be effective. In future analysis, it will be necessary to focus on the conceptual construction of the citizen from the time when the idea of civic education developed in the 1920s to modern Japan, as well as how it was inherited or discarded in the post-war period.

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Notes

1) At the beginning of the 20th century, primarily in Western countries, “citizenship

education” or “civic education” was promoted in earnest in order to strengthen national identity. In the 1920s, in Japan also, this developed under the name “*Kōmin Kyōiku* (Civic Education).” This includes both the establishment of the subject of “Civics” as part of the school-based curriculum and the organization of community education and adult education as part of promoting civic education outside of schools.

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3) “*Kōmin kyōiku* [Civic education],” *Nihon Dai Hyakkazensho 9* [*Encyclopedia Nipponica 9*], Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1986, p.39.

4) Kitou, K., “*Kokumin kokka wo sakanoboru* [Dating back to the nation-state],” Rekishigaku Kenkyukai. (ed.), *Kokumin Kokka wo Tou* [*Ask the Nation-State*], Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 1994, pp.239-240.

5) Gert J. J. Biesta., *Learning Democracy in School and Society: Education, Lifelong Learning, and the Politics of Citizenship*, Rotterdam;Boston: Sense Publishers, 2011.

6) Kodama, S., *Shitizunshippu no Kyōiku Shisō* [*Citizenship Educational Thought*], Tokyo: Hakutakusha, 2003, p.109.

7) Okano, Y., *Shitizunshippu no Seiji-gaku: Kokumin-Kokka Shugi Hihan* [*Citizenship Political Science: The People and Nationalism Criticism*], Tokyo: Gendai Shokan, 2003, p.14.

8) Saito, T., “*Chihō kairyō undō to kōmin kyōiku no seiritsu* [The movement of improvement of local community and formation of civic education],” *Bulletin of the Faculty of Education, University of Tokyo*, Vol.22, 1982, p.176.

9) Saito, T., “*Kōmin-ka kyōiku-shi kenkyū josetsu: rekishi kyōju-gaku-teki hōhō no shokadai wo megutte* [Introduction to civil studies education history research: On the issues of history and didactical methods],” *Bulletin of the Education History and Philosophy Division, Faculty of Education, the University of Tokyo*, Vol.8, 1982, pp.18-19.

10) Saito, T., “*Nihon kōmin kyōiku no rekishi to kōzō (sonoichi)* [The history and construction of civic education in Japan (part one)],” *Bulletin of the Faculty of Letters, Gakushuin University*, Vol.32, 1985, p.273.

11) Saito, T., “*Kōmin-ka kyōiku-shi kenkyū josetsu: rekishi kyōju-gaku-teki hōhō no shokadai wo megutte* [Introduction to civil studies education history research: On the issues of history and didactical methods],” op. cit., pp.29-31.

12) Saito, T., “*Nihon kōmin kyōiku no rekishi to kōzō (sonoichi)* [The history and construction of civic education in Japan (part one)],” op. cit., p.273.

13) Kasama, K., *Chihō Kairyō Undō-ki ni okeru Shōgakkō to Chiiki Shakai: 'Kyōka no Chūshin' to shite no Shōgakkō* [*Elementary School and Community during the Period of Local Improvement Movement: Elementary School as Center of Indoctrination*], Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Center, 2003, p.20.

- 14) Makihara, N., *Kyakubun to Kokumin no aida: Kindai Minshū no Seiji Ishiki* [Between the Guest and the Nation: Political Consciousness of a Modern People], Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1998, pp.232-233.
- 15) Saito, T., “Nihon kōmin kyōiku no rekishi to kōzō (sonoichi) [The History and Construction of Civic education in Japan (part one)],” op. cit., p.278.
- 16) Ogawa, T., Otsuki, T., Yamazumi, M. (ed.), *Gendai Kyōiku-gaku Jiten* [Contemporary Education Encyclopedia], Tokyo: Rōdō Junpōsha, 1988, p.396.
- 17) Wako, T., “Meiji-ki no kōmin kyōiku [Civic education in the Meiji era],” The Japanese Association for Civic Education. (ed.), *Kōmin Kyōiku Jiten* [Civic Education Encyclopedia], Hiroshima: Daiichi Gakushūsha, 2009, p.188.
- 18) Saito, T., “Nihon kōmin kyōiku no rekishi to kōzō (sonoichi) [The History and Construction of Civic education in Japan (part one)],” op. cit., pp.295-297.
- 19) Ibid., pp.313-316.
- 20) Matsuno, O., *Kindainihon no Kōmin Kyōiku* [Civic Education of Modern Japan], Aichi: University of Nagoya Press, 1997, p.174.
- 21) Tsuchiya, N., “Hōsei oyobi keizai [Legislation and economy],” The Japanese Association for Civic Education. (ed.), op. cit., p.191.
- 22) Makihara, N. op. cit., pp.7-9.
- 23) Makihara, N., *Minken to Kenpō: Series Nihon Kingendai-shi 2* [Civil Rights and the Constitution: Series Japan Modern History 2], Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2006, pp.24-29.
- 24) Ibid., pp.189-190.
- 25) Omori, T., Mori, H., “Wagakuni ni okeru kōmin-ka seiritsu no katei to seiritsu-go no tenkai [The Process of the Establishment of Civics in Japan and its Development Afterwards],” *Bulletin of Tokyo Gakugei University (Sec.III)* , Vol.20, 1968, p.120. Wako, T. op. cit., p.189.
- 26) Omori, T., Mori, H., op. cit., pp.121-122.
- 27) *Dai Nihon Seishōnen-dan-shi: Kindai Shakai Kyōiku Shiryō Shūsei 4* [History of the Japanese Youth Group: Collection of historical materials for modern social education 4], Tokyo: Fujishuppan, 1996, pp.7-10.
- 28) Wako, T. op. cit., p.189.
- 29) Nagata, T., “Taishō-ki no kōmin kyōiku [Civic education of the Taisho era],” The Japanese Association for Civic Education. (ed.), op. cit., p.192.
- 30) According to Takaya Yamazaki, it was Iwazo Ototake who, in the journal “*Kyōiku Gakujutukai*,” introduced the educational philosophy of Kerschensteiner in earnest. Yamazaki, T., *Kerschensteiner Kyōikugaku no Tokushitsu to Igi* [The Significance and Characteristics of Kerschensteiner Educational Theory], Tokyo: Publishing Department of Tamagawa University, 1993, p.536.
- 31) Fujisawa, H., *Gendai Doitsu Seiji Kyōiku-shi* [Modern German Political Education History], Tokyo: Shinhyoron, 1978, pp.24-40.
- 32) Japanese Modern History Study Group, (ed.), *1920-Nendai no Nihon no Seiji*

[*Japanese Politics in the 1920s*], Tokyo: Otsukishoten, 1984, p.73.

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34) Yamazaki, Y., “1920-Nendai ni okeru monbushō no kōmin kyōiku-ron [The policy of the ministry of education on civics in the 1920s],” *Tokyo Metropolitan University journal of law and politics*, 49 (2) , 2008, pp.369-370.

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36) *Dai Nihon Seishōnen-dan-shi: Kindai Shakai Kyōiku Shiryō Shūsei 4* [*History of the Japanese Youth Group: Collection of historical materials for modern social education 4*], op. cit., pp.7-8.

37) Delanty, G., *Citizenship in a Global Age: Society, Culture, Politics*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000.

The Formation of the Concept of the “Citizen” in Modern Japan and Development of Civic Education

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The debate around citizenship education is growing in every country. In this study, in order to develop a framework for debate that is cognizant of the historical context of Japan, a focus is placed on the history of civic education that was promoted in the process of the foundation of the nation-state in modern Japan from the late 19th century to the early 20th century, especially the ideological structure of the concept of the "citizen".

In previous research, the analysis axis of the concept of citizen has been set from two concepts, “citizens as the emperor’s people” and “citizens under modern constitutions”. In this study, in addition to the two concepts, the concept of “citizens who promote the autonomy of local communities” is added, based on the unique characteristic of the Japanese nation-state in which local communities mediate between the individual and the nation.

The two concepts of “citizens as the emperor’s people” and “citizens under modern constitutions” were formed with the advent of the school system in the late 19th century. The concept of “citizens who promote the autonomy of local communities” was formed during the Local Improvement Movement (*Chihō Kairyō Undō*) in the early 20th century. Then, the three concepts with ties to each other, led to full-scale deployment of civic education since the 1920s.