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“The Cultural and Social Participation of Asian-Australian Writers: Their Experiences Growing-up and Living in a Multicultural Australia”

Key words

Asian-Australian writers, multiculturalism, education, cultural and social activities

Abstract

Multiculturalism is being reconsidered in Australia in the current political and economic situation. The transformation of the characteristics of multiculturalism from a welfare to an economic orientation has affected the lives and social activities of immigrants. Under such conditions, how do Asian immigrants themselves interpret their situation and multiculturalism and take action in Australia? How Asian immigrants' experience has been subsumed into the mainstream understanding of multicultural integration policy also needs to be re-examined.

My presentation will focus on the works and the cultural and social activities of younger generation Asian-Australian writers. They have the experience of growing-up and/or living in multicultural Australia. Some of them have other kinds of professional careers before and/or while working as a writer. Based on sufficient cultural capital, they have expressed their views and opinions to the mainstream. Since the 2000s, several writings by Asian-Australian writers such as Alice Pung have attracted attention in Australia beyond their own ethnic communities. The contents reflect their experience in the multicultural and culturally-hybrid environment of the host society Australia and their explicit or implicit reviews of Australian multiculturalism. They differ from narratives about the difficulties faced in the origin country or the difficulties of being a refugee, which have been tended to be typically expected in Asian stories. In this sense, they include significant views to consider Australian multiculturalism critically.

My presentation aims to reveal the opportunity structures available for younger Asian-Australians in the cultural and educational spheres. Literature awards, literature events and the education curriculum, for example, can be examined to know how multicultural Australian 'national' culture is. The data of this presentation is based on literature research and fieldwork and interviews conducted in Melbourne in 2013.

First, the contents of the contemporary trend of writings by Asian-Australian writers and the evaluation of their works in the Australian literature scene, mainly in terms of literature awards and book reviews will be examined. Second, the presentation will consider

Australian English education. English proficiency is important for young people to develop their own careers, and the contents of the reading texts has a strong impact to understand who they are and what their living society and community is. English and EAL (English as Additional Language) education in the relatively higher grades will be treated. The presentation will pay considerable attention to the recent trends of the national English/EAL curriculum and the reality of the situation in relation to the Australian multicultural social environment and Asian-Australian experience.

Additionally, the Asian-Australian writers' cultural and social activities are also discussed in the presentation. Especially, participation in literature events, such as speeches made and workshops given in writers' festivals, will be addressed. This will shed light on one of the ways to understand how and what Asian-Australian writers try to say to the public.

ISHII, Yuka

ISHII Yuka is Professor of Faculty of International Relations, University of Shizuoka. She received her doctorate in Sociology from University of Tsukuba. Her recent publications include: “*Ajia Taiheiyō no Hito no Kokusai Idō to Ajia-kei Senmonshoku Imin* (International Migration in the Asia-Pacific and Asian Migrant Professionals),” Mizushima Tsukasa and Tamaki Matsuo eds., *21 Seiki e no Chōsen III Nihon/Ajia/Gurōbarizēshon*, (Challenge towards 21st Century III Japan, Asia and Globalization) (Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 2011); and *Ajia-kei Senmonshoku Imin no Genzai: Henyō suru Maruchikaruchuraru Ōsutoraria* (The Current Situation of Asian Migrant Professionals: Transforming Multicultural Australia), (co-authored by Sekine Masami and Shiobara Yoshikazu, Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2009). Her current research interests are in the field of sociology and include ethnic relations and international migration especially in relation to Asian migrant professionals.