

STABILIZING EMPLOYMENT and KOBE UNIVERSITY:

なぜいまさら外国人教師を節にかける？

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神戸大学の教職員のみなさん、現在わたしたちの大学に9人いる「外国人教師」たちの身に何が降りかかっているか、ご存知でしょうか。

「外国人教師」といっても、外国人の教授や助教授あるいは非常勤講師という意味ではなく、その名前をもつ職に雇用されている外国人のことです。

去る7月15日、国立大学法人神戸大学と大阪教育合同労働組神戸大学支部との間で団体交渉がもたれ、大学側は「外国人教師問題検討委員会」（外国人教師の所属学部長で構成）が次のような議論を行っていることを報告しました。

外国人教師制度は今年度で廃止する。
来年度からは「特任教員（外国語）」（仮称）という身分を設ける。
その内容の概略は

- ・一般常勤教員として雇用。
- ・労基法14条による有期雇用（3年）とし、教授会には関与しない。
- ・採用は公募による。応募資格は特になし。というものです。

そして組合からの質問に対し、大学はこう答えました。

「公募に応じない場合は今年度で雇い止めとなり、公募に応じた場合でも選考基準に神戸大学での実績は考慮しない。すなわち神戸大学でのこれまでの勤務実績は、いかなる優先権も持たない。」

これが何を意味するか一目瞭然でしょう。9人の外国人教師は今年度限りで全員いったんク

ビとなり、公募というフィルターを通った人はたつとう3年間雇われるというものです。その後？また公募に一候補者として応募するわけです。

もちろん、公募であるかぎりこれまでの勤務実績が何の意味ももたないのは当然のことです。さもなくば、神戸大学の外から応募しようとする人に平等な競争条件が確保されないことになり、公募の名前に反する制度になってしまいます。

問題点は二つあります。

まずこれまでの契約実態です。これまで外国人教師は1年の有期雇用でしたが、その更新に際しては何の審査手続きもなく、大学の側から雇いを打ち切った例はありません。

外国人教師は毎年4月1日にそれぞれの所属学部の事務所に赴き、新しい契約書にサインする儀式を行っていたのです。もう母国へ帰ろう、別の職へ移ろうとする人以外は、同僚との曖昧な口約束（「X年で辞める」）にもとづき、不本意ながら大学を去った人はいますが、機関としての大学が常態として契約更新の是非を審査したことはありません。今度それを3年で自動的にクビを切る、というのです！これまでずっと3年どころか6年、7年と事実上フリーパスで契約更新がなされてきたというのに！その実態と長期に亘る神戸大学への「貢献」をいっさい無視して、続けて働きたければ一候補者として公募に応じなさい、というのは、勤務年数が長い人にとってほど屈辱的な申し出であるでしょう。そして大学にとっては、勤務年数が長くしたがって年齢も高い現任外国人教師より、若い外国人のほうが給与面ではるかに「安上がり」であること言うまでもありません。これまでの契約実態はどこの旧国立大学でも

程度の差はあれ、似たり寄ったりであり、その良く言えば「フレキシブル」であった制度の歴史を踏まえ、たとえば東京大学では現任外国人教師についてはこれまでどおりの契約を続け、新しく補充する場合にのみ新制度を適用するというような方式を採用するそうです。ところが神戸大学は一律に全員雇い止めといふ極めて「大胆」なことをやろう。

問題点の第二はある意味ではもっと深刻です。現場の教師は、良い(と彼らが判断する)外国人には長く働いてもらいたいと思っています。新教師の採用という行事はたいへんな負担をとまなうものである上に、長年の間には日本人教師と外国人教師の間に深い信頼関係も生まれます。このとき、3年ご一度やってくる公募は、そうした「良い」外国人だけをピックアップする装置、そして「良い」外国人だけを(さもなくば3年でクビ)と日常的に外国人教師を訓育する装置として働くようになるでしょう。この装置ですでに作動しはじめています!現在の外国人教師たちは、自分は公募の結果はたして採用されるのかどうか、不安に震えています。そしてそこに「君は大丈夫だからね」と「善意」からこっそり「教える」日本人教師が現れる。これは教える人間の主観はどうか、実質、悪魔の囁きでしょう。おとなしくしていれば、大阪教育合同労組なんかと係わり合いにならなければ、君は安泰。日本人同僚の「受け」を良くしておくことが何よりも肝要。公募という建前ですでに崩れているのです。そしてこれが「国際性」を謳う国立大学法人神戸大学の真実。

現在、外国人教師たちはこの囁きに耳を貸すか否かの瀬戸際で立たされています。とすれば、そんな非人間的な選択を強いられることそのものを拒否する人が出てきて当然でしょう。「私は公募に応じない!しかし『雇い止め』にも納得せず闘う。大学はこれまでどおり私との契約を更新すべきである!」

どのような結末になるかとこの闘いにおいて「負ける」のは大学です。もし現任外国人教師が誰も公募に応じなければ、装置は動き始めたように破壊されたことになる。そして公募に応じずる人が神戸大学内部から出てくれば、「公募」と「国際性」の看板が崩れ落ちる。

(文責 国際文化学部教員 市田良彦)

A challenge and an opportunity

faces Kobe University within its employment of foreign teachers. Kobe University inherited from Mombusho a Meiji-era system employing nine foreigners separately as “Gaikokujin Kyoshi.” What will Kobe University do?

Even without Mombusho’s support, Kobe University—as it did for 2004-- could discuss maintaining the conditions of employment for Gaikokujin Kyoshis who have been working here. Kyoto University and others have promised to stabilize such employment at least through 2005, and Tokyo University has stabilized its Gaikokujin Kyoshis’ employment through retirement.

But unfortunately, Kobe University administrators’ discussions are heading the opposite way: toward destabilization. On July 15, after six months of negotiations--and after signing last April 7 an agreement to negotiate “in good faith” about the employment of current Gaikokujin Kyoshis from 2005--Kobe University administrators delivered the report of Kobe University’s Gaikokujin Kyoshi Mondai Committee (GKMC), which suggests that on April 1, 2005, Kobe University should terminate not only the system of Gaikokujin Kyoshi employment, but moreover all the employees in that position.

That termination would include the Gaikokujin Kyoshis in Kobe University’s Economics, Literature, and Marine Faculties, plus the five Gaikokujin Kyoshis in the Faculty of Cross-Cultural Studies (CCS).

(According to the report’s suggestion, the new “Kokusai Communication Center” will get all the positions replacing CCS’s. CCS itself has offered no plans for replacing its loss of 82% of its long-term foreigner employees.)

(over)→

“Mass termination, only for foreigners”

—that’s the suggestion. We have not heard suggestions for terminating of any other full-time teachers at Kobe University—not even any the 50 or 60 Nihonjin teachers whose contracts are most similar to the Gaikokujin Kyoshis’ contracts.

The mass termination of “foreigners only” would be illegal, because Japan has signed an international treaty against discrimination. Moreover, the mass termination should make Kobe University famous among Japanese universities, as a leading discriminator against foreigners. Terminating all the Gaikokujin Kyoshis would be a big mistake for everyone involved, and for the university as a whole. So please help protest the termination.

Though change, of course, can be good, and certainly suggestions of change deserve respect, still, we cannot afford to stay silent when duty calls us to speak against these very harmful precedents.

Last year, as privatization approached, I asked to see a copy of my 2004 employment contract in advance of April. My request got nowhere, so I asked Kobe University’s in-house union—of which I’ve been a member since 1997—to help me ask the administration for advance notice of the terms I would be asked to accept, instead of waiting for the day those terms would begin, with privatization. Our in-house union declined to help me at all, and so with some colleagues I founded a new branch of another union, EWA.

Negotiations with the administration produced mutually good results for 2004. Furthermore the administration agreed to negotiate about the employment system for 2005, and to follow applicable laws.

Instead of maintaining the employment of the nine Foreign Teachers here, why does anyone want to mass-terminate them? Can you find any good reason for the GKMC’s suggestion?

Whether for a few years, several years, or almost fifteen years, by every measure all the Gaikokujin Kyoshis have been performing their jobs well, and earning continuance of their employment. If administrators have suddenly found a problem with the job-performance of all these employees—all the diverse Gaikokujin Kyoshis, all at the same time--then what is that problem? Are administrators attempting vaguely to smear the reputations of Gaikokujin Kyoshi? Anyway, if the employees themselves have been a problem, then why did administrators last year blame only the system of employment?

If their aim is to fix the system by abolishing the old positions, administrators could offer replacement positions to all the current employees.

If administrators mainly were concerned about money, they might simply aim for further reductions to the salaries and benefits of current employees.

But instead, we hear of termination: for both the positions and the employees.

We also hear a suggestion that Gaikokujin Kyoshis might apply in open competition for new, replacement positions. But we don’t hear any such suggestions for any other category of employees.

The suggested replacement positions would hurt Kobe University. A three-year-and-out contract as a “special teacher of foreign language”—particularly if it has a part-time level of salary and benefits—is not enough to recruit and keep reputable, career teachers here. So the suggested positions would bring a sharp decline in the quality of native-language teaching at Kobe University.

Should we allow a new system that would show students, and the world, that Kobe University has little use for foreign teachers except as relatively low-level language teachers?

Even aside from the implications, by itself the loss of almost all the long-term foreign teachers in the humanities here would diminish Kobe University. Gaikokujin Kyoshis with more than three years of experience here have become increasingly successful in scholarship, service, and teaching. Contributions to long-term projects and growth here include exchange programs, as well as development of native-language curricula well tailored to the needs of Kobe University students—needs which take years to learn fully. A mass departure would bring a new system in which overall the new, more temporary foreign teachers here are less educated, less professional, less scholarly, less renowned, less expert, less respected, and less experienced than their predecessors or their Japanese colleagues.

Cross-cultural

mission Though not many of Kobe University’s employees have authorized me to speak for them, still I have a kind of authorization from Kobe University itself. Because inasmuch as I have expertise in missions of internationalization, Kobe University recruited me here to share it. After seven years of quiet work here, I find now a duty to help motivate the mission of internationalization.

Regardless of what anyone here intends, Kobe University faces a challenge of institutional racism. Let’s resist administrators’ suggestion of mass termination: instead of strengthening its practice of discrimination, let’s strengthen Kobe University’s future.

The problem is not so much about the relationships between Japanese and foreign colleagues. More, the problem here is how institutional practices will handle many of the foreign employees. Let’s take action toward more fully integrating more non-Japanese professors into the main scholarship, teaching, and service that make Kobe University.

The more our employer depends on cheaper, disposable labor, the less it depends on career professors such as me or you.

Many employees feel helpless. But truly, we *can* do better. First, let’s make our voices heard.

At this historic turning point, let’s move to stabilize employment for employees—including Foreign Teachers—who already have been working here for more than a few years.

This way, Kobe University’s practices should overcome much institutional discrimination, towards fulfilling its role as the cutting-edge, Kobe flagship of Japan’s ongoing internationalization.

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