

# PREFACE

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Given the globalization of business and current political realities, there remains an urgent need for persons with global mindsets, necessitating a broader understanding of the developmental process of such individuals. Such individuals with global mindsets who bridge cultures are metaphorically referred to as *Kakehashi* in Japanese, a term that literally means “bridge across.” This book is inspired by this powerful metaphor of the bridge and by its creator, Inazo Nitobe (1862-1933), arguably Japan’s most respected international diplomat, renowned for his life-long dedication to the promotion of understanding between nations and people with a diversity of cultural values.

While there has been a considerable amount of literature on the development of the global mindset (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002) and its closely related concept of “intercultural competence” (Byram & Zarate, 1996; Byram, et. al., 2002), the focus has tended to emphasize the conceptualization of these notions rather than mapping the concrete cases that illustrate how individuals develop these intercultural competences. Such conceptual approaches are unable to recognize the achievements of individuals whose personal profiles and experiences differ from that of the idealized and standardized learner that remains the focus of these more abstract studies (Kinginger, 2004). As Polanyi (1995) and Kinginger (2004) argue, there is an urgent need to listen to an individual’s unique voice and to acknowledge his or her lived experience as it is “tailored to, by and for that individual”(Polanyi, 1995, 287). This book hopes to illuminate the challenges and triumphs in the unique stories of individual *Kakehashi* who currently live cosmopolitan lifestyles and embody a bridge across cultures and languages.

2015 marked JALTA’s (Japanese Language Teachers’ Association) 40th anniversary as well as 50th anniversary for the establishment of the sister city relation between Yokohama and Vancouver. To celebrate this happy occasion, a symposium was held on Oct. 25, 2015 at the Asian Centre of the University of British Columbia. The theme of the symposium was *Voices of Kakehashi in Multicultural Canada: Transcultural and Intercultural Experiences*. The symposium consisted of two keynote lectures and a panel discussion by five panelists whose intercultural experiences illuminated their challenges and triumphs through

their unique and individual stories. The symposium had a goal to establish a supportive group environment for participants where processes of social interaction and learning could be present. This book came into existence as a fruit of the symposium held at the Asian Centre.

In Chapter 1, Noro introduces the key concept of this book, i.e., *Kakehashi*, contextualized in the history of Japanese language education in Canada. Noro explores Nitobe Inazo's legacy, and more specifically how his powerful metaphor of the "Bridge across the Pacific Ocean" has influenced the educational community in Canada.

In Chapter 2, Dr. Matsuo Soga, Professor Emeritus, of the University of British Columbia (UBC) chronicles the birth of JALTA, which has served as a cradle for students whose bilingual, bicultural, and intercultural aspects are well known. In Chapter 3, Dr. Soga gives a comprehensive and critical overview of Japanese language pedagogy in North America through the lens of the *Kakehashi* metaphor. In light of the remarkable increase in the number of interracial couples among Japanese in Canada, the enrolment of Japanese Mixed Heritage Youth (JMHY) in Japanese classes at post secondary institutions has increased. Nevertheless, in the field of Heritage Language (HL) education, there has been a very limited number of research studies focusing on this group of youth, or in distinguishing them from HL learners who have two parents from the same cultural background.

In Chapter 4, Naoko Takei provides in-depth understanding of some aspects of JMHY culture by analyzing narratives of their daily language use. In Chapter 5, Mr. Kojima discusses the changes and continuity of *Nikkei* with the special focus on identity issues. Chapter 6 is a synopsis of the panel discussion. The video clips of the panel discussion are available in order to listen to their "voices." In Chapter 7, Tadanobu Suzuki discusses Nitobe Inazo's seminal book, *Bushido* through the lens of the *Kakehashi* metaphor. Suzuki argues that the book, *Bushido* provides two bridges: 1) a *synchronic* bridge between East and West; and 2) a *diachronic* bridge between the past and the future. The last chapter epilogue provides not a conclusion to end, but rather a bridge to the future plans and aspirations of how to listen to more voices of *Kakehashi*. We also provide a resource list related to language education, especially for Japanese language education from the perspective of interculturality.

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