

What sort of book did you, the reader, think this would be when you took it in hand? Likely you expected it to be a textbook on reading and conversation in Japanese-language education. Or perhaps you thought it would be a book that considered topics of Japanese society, such as Japanese affairs or cross-cultural understanding. In fact, the purpose of this book is to teach democratic citizenship. This book can be used in myriad ways in a variety of different classes. The following are just a few examples of how it can be used.

- (1) It can be used in courses on Japanese as a foreign language at the intermediate or advanced level.
- (2) It can be used in collaborative learning courses where diverse Japanese speakers gather.
- (3) It can be used in courses on intercultural or multicultural education.
- (4) It can be used in courses that improve multilingual and multicultural capabilities as part of a course that combines the above.

This book was created out of a desire for diverse people to engage in dialog with each other through cross-cultural interaction, and to cultivate something important (democratic citizenship) in the process. The following is a brief explanation about how to make this book useful. The book may seem to be written for students rather than teachers, but we wrote it for both audiences. Please think beyond the separation of students versus teachers when reading the book. We hope that just as students grow as they learn, teachers also grow as they learn together.

### **This book is not intended for you to find and memorize the correct answer.**

First we must state something very important. The book can be used in numerous different ways. It will likely be used not only in Japan, but in countries and regions outside Japan. Some lessons may be of interest to people from different backgrounds and cultures with different values, while others may not. Often, what is normal in one country is not normal in another. Therefore, this book does not intend for you to search for the correct answer and memorize it. We wish to cultivate the mentality to accept diversity while learning that there are many ways of thinking and take the opportunity to reconsider that which you feel is obvious. There is no single answer to how to respond to diverse opinions, or what to do when diverse opinions do not emerge. Instead, think of how you can find solutions in such situations in order to listen to different voices as much as possible, and practice that, rather than letting the teacher or most active student take the lead.

## **What will you learn and what capabilities will you develop (goals)?**

In this book, you will learn how to express your thoughts, opinions, and the rationale thereof in an easy to understand manner, and to acknowledge the thoughts, opinions, and rationale of others even if they are different from yours. Then, you will learn to accept those opinions that you can accept, learn to find solutions to problems that arise, and engage in dialog to reach those solutions. In the process, you will practice at times stressing your own opinion, while sometimes conceding to others, in order to reach the final goal. Thus you will learn how to live according to this posture. To put it another way, it means building experiences in which you learn to think critically, respect opinions that are different from your own, and promote new discoveries.

By thinking critically, we do not mean to criticize, deny, or exclude others, but rather to stop and consider things from numerous perspectives. It means to think deeply or widely, and ask yourself why something is the way it is, or whether something is really true, or what other examples there are, or to compare one thing with another.

Furthermore, while this book involves engaging in dialog with people from diverse backgrounds and with diverse values, the languages used may be diverse as well. We recommend that you choose from among the resources available to you according to the other person or goal, such as languages that come easily to you, languages understood by the other, or languages you wish to improve your communication abilities in, rather than focusing on Japanese alone. When doing so, please reaffirm the purpose of the activities. The language you use will likely depend on goals (1) through (4) on page iii. There are times when it will be more effective for the input and output to be in Japanese, but if you gather information in the language that is easiest for you and then communicate that information to others in Japanese, your thinking will grow deeper, and you will cultivate your ability to transfer information from one language to another.

All of these points involve learning and practicing tolerance for others, a critical stance, making insights through that critical stance, and the democratic method of dialog. In other words, the purpose of this book is to acquire the perspective or stance to take the concept of democratic citizenship promoted by the Council of Europe, and listed under Philosophy of This Book, and learn it for yourself, to acquire it and cultivate it within yourself so that you come to embody it. Next, we will give a brief description of the structure of this book.

## **Why the book is in four parts (with a special website), and the role of each part**

This book is generally divided into four parts (and a special website).

### **■ Preface: Learn the Purpose of This Book and How to Use It.**

Prior to Lesson 1, we describe some very important points in four sections. The first section is Phi-

losophy of This Book. Then, the How to Use This Book section explains the usage of this book that was prepared based on the stated philosophy. Between these two sections, there is a section entitled Six Points to Connecting the Philosophy with Use, which, as described in the title, serves as a medium or stage between the philosophy and how to use this book. Read the book in order of Philosophy, Six Points to Connecting, and then How to Use This Book. Finally, read the Message from the Authors. This will give you a rough picture of the purpose of this book and how to use it.

#### ■ **Lessons 1 - 4: Learn How to Read and Discuss**

The next part of the book covers Lessons 1 through 4, "Learn How to Read and Discuss". To compare this with sports, this part represents learning the basic knowledge of the sport and warmup exercises. If you play a sport without adequate knowledge or without warming up, you may fail or injure yourself. Therefore, please read "Learn How to Read and Discuss" first and practice the activities contained within. Your studies will likely be more effective if you think critically and ask yourself why you are doing those activities as you learn. In Lesson 4, you will apply what you learned in Lessons 1 through 3, "Learn How to Read and Discuss", using a short newspaper article.

#### ■ **Lesson 5 - 8: Get Used to Reading and Then Discussing**

The third part involves getting used to reading a variety of materials. To compare this with sports, it would be activities to improve your basic skills and capabilities. After acquiring knowledge and warming up in the first two parts, proceed to Lessons 5 through 8. You will learn how to read and discuss in Lessons 1 through 4, and then learn how to apply it in Lessons 5 and beyond. The lessons cover a variety of topics, but they are prepared in order using the same reading materials. You can of course read the lessons in order starting with Lesson 5, but you can also start by reading the topics you are interested in. You can even proceed to Lessons 9 and later after finishing Lesson 4, and skipping Lessons 5 through 8, but as you move further into the book, the time required to complete each lesson will grow longer. Therefore, proceed with consideration for balance given the amount of time you have available.

#### ■ **Lessons 9 - 20: Reading About Society More Proactively**

The fourth part includes a series of lessons in which you read longer, more complex materials and think about a variety of problems faced by society. To continue our sports analogy, this part involves more intense practice, followed by actually playing games or joining tournaments.

Multiple lessons have been provided on a variety of themes such as gender, discrimination and exclusionary discourse, the nation state, war, the environment, and local government, covering issues

that involve the domain of daily life to issues that involve society or the nation. However, just because an issue is involved with society or the nation does not mean it is not also involved in your daily life. Issues that are social or national in nature are also, in a sense, the very fabric of individual daily life, while issues involved in daily life are also important in terms of society and the nation.

You can also study the lessons in this part in whichever order you wish, but if you wish to deepen your understanding of a single theme, we recommend reading several lessons on the same or related theme in order.

### ■ **Activity Examples and Materials for Activities: Special Website**

The last part includes a variety of activity examples and materials for activities. While they may not be completely adequate in terms of quality or volume, you may modify and use them as you see fit. You may use the examples and materials while studying the lessons, or use them to review or apply what you learned after completing lessons. You may also use the lessons as a warmup and then use the special website for your main activities. Another good way to learn is to use the materials alone to design your own lessons. The URL of the special website is <https://www.bonjinsha.com/wp/edc>.

When using this book for a university course, considering that a single semester typically involves 15 classes, we recommend studying Lessons 1 through 4 in order, and then using the rest of the lessons as you see fit according to the remaining number of classes or student interests. You may also pick and choose from among the activities available in each lesson according to the size of the class or the readiness of the students.

What do you think?

Is this book something that you have never really seen before?

But we did not create this book haphazardly. Rather, this book is based on our philosophy.

Accordingly, the philosophy that this book is based on is explained on page viii.