

# Civic Education in Japan: Evolution, Practice and Its Review

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**Abstract:** Civic education is an important element of modern nation building. The development of civic education in Japan has gone through four stages, culminating in the formation of a civic education orientation based on overall national identity. In 2018, civic education reform in Japan focused on promoting civic subject reform and accelerating innovation in curriculum, curriculum objectives, and learning methods. A rich activity-based curriculum system was established to strengthen community-engaged service-learning and hands-on learning through experiential teaching. Based on the cultivation of students' subjectivity, dialogue, and deep learning abilities, a trinity of school, family, and society has been established as the model for civic education in Japan, and a new trend of education for sovereigns has been presented in the new era. In order to scientifically examine Japanese civic education, we should further strengthen the role of the "main channel" and "main force" in the curriculum and teachers' moral education in promoting the construction of civic morality in China, give full play to the synergistic role of family education and social education, and actively promote national identity with rationalism and patriotism as the core. In addition, we will give full play to the synergy of family education and social education, and actively promote education on national identity with rational patriotism as the core.

**Keywords:** Japan; civic education; schools; national identity

## 1. Introduction

The origins of civic education can be traced back to the ancient Greek city-states and the ancient Roman Republic. The word "civic" in civic education is derived directly from the ancient Latin word *civilis*, which means related to citizens and beneficial to the people. Cicero first proposed the term "*civilis societas*" to distinguish the urban civilized community of tribes and villages <sup>[1]</sup>. Civic education generally refers to the education of national citizens, which is an important element of modern nation building. It aims to strengthen citizens' understanding of their country's politics, economy and culture through the cultivation of their qualities and abilities, and ultimately to realize their effective participation in the public life of the country and society. Globalization, informationization, and modernity have accelerated what Giddens calls the phenomenon of "delocalization," and cross-regional mobility, multiple identities, and multicultural infiltration have exacerbated the problems of governance and social integration in multi-ethnic countries. How to realize the unity of individual development and collective development in the midst of increasingly fierce competition, and how to unify civic values with national identity, have become pressing challenges for national civic education. During the feudal era, the Japanese people were under the rule of the emperor in their own way and had no sense of nation and state.

## 2. What kind of good citizens the country needs: The development and transmutation of civic education in Japan

Citizenship as a symbol of identity with national significance is not always present, but fundamentally subject to the specific era in which it is lived. In the course of Japan's history, civic education has gone through a developmental process from the absence of civic identity, the germination of citizenship, and the establishment of civic education to national civic education after World War II. During the Tokugawa Shogunate period, the Japanese people gradually moved from a state of lack of civic identity to a state of national awakening, searching for answers to the question "Who am I? With

the development of capitalism, Japan established an identity relationship centered on the emperor that was consistent with the cultural and political identity of its citizens, and an identity that was unified with cultural identity, national identity, and state identity.

### ***2.1. Stage 1: The stage of lack of citizenship identity***

During the feudal period, the Japanese people had little sense of nationality or statehood and were subservient to the government and indifferent to public affairs. The American scholar John W. Hall called it “identity rule”<sup>[2]</sup>, in which the daimyo, samurai, court officials, merchants, artisans, monks, and untouchables each had their own identity and were distributed among different classes of society under government rule. Under the feudal state mechanism, civic identity was in a state of absence, and Japanese national consciousness was gradually strengthened in comparison with other countries.

### ***2.2. Stage 2: the budding stage of citizenship***

During the Tokugawa shogunate period, Japan was ruled in a semi-centralized, centralized manner. In the 1640s, Western culture and religion were introduced to Japan and had an increasingly profound impact on Japanese society. In the process of accelerated modernization, the contact between the Western world and Japan deepened, and the rejection of the West by the Japanese rulers increased. The famous critic Aizawa Masashi-sai (also known as Aizawa Yasushi) once said, “The Western barbarians are like possessed bones, not knowing their inferior status, crossing the four seas, wandering, repeatedly trampling on the countries of others, and now they are even more insolent, intending to challenge our country’s lofty position in the world, and what an arrogant attitude they have<sup>[3]</sup>.” In their dealings with the Western world, the Japanese shogunate rulers believed that only by rejecting the West could they truly rule Japan, and they created a new concept of “Japanese nation” by religious and social consensus, and rooted the Japanese identity in traditional Japanese culture and social norms based on Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shintoism, thus ideologically reinforcing the sense of nationhood and dominance.

This stage was the budding period of Japanese nationalism, characterized by the gradual establishment of a sense of national identity and national citizenship in Japan. However, at this time, the main focus was on allegiance to the emperor and there was no general sense of citizenship, while the social and political hierarchy was determined by the closeness of people’s relationship to the imperial family.

### ***2.3. Stage 3: Civic Education Establishment Stage***

At the beginning of the Meiji Restoration, the emperor’s rule was strengthened and Japan’s economy grew rapidly. Along with the accelerated modernization, Japan gradually changed from a feudal economy to a capitalist economy, and civic education, which strengthened the sovereignty of the country and the identity of the emperor, became increasingly important in Japan. The central government established the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and promulgated the Gakushuin in 1872, which was a modern bourgeois educational reform decree. The Gakushuin emphasized “enriching the country and strengthening the army” and “promoting industry”, and incorporated the entire educational system into the militaristic track of enriching the country and strengthening the army<sup>[4]</sup>. At the same time, the conditions for the development of the domestic capitalist economy were not mature enough, and Japan’s social problems came to the fore, such as the widening gap between the rich and the poor and the disproportionate industrial structure. With the promulgation of the Koyu Edict in 1890, Japan actively advocated extreme nationalism and instilled the ideas of Bushido and loyalty and patriotism in the domestic public, and the idea of imperialism and militarism rose to an unprecedented level, which eventually led Japan to the path of foreign expansion.

Since then, modern Japan has established an absolute relationship between the imperial state, the Yamato people, and the “subjects” who have no self-purpose, as well as a Yamato culture that guarantees their respective status and relationship with each other, and thus the Japanese national civic education system has been established.

### ***2.4. Stage 4: Civic Education after World War II***

After the end of World War II, changes in the international situation and the domestic situation in

Japan prompted changes in Japanese education, and in 1947, Japan formulated the first “Study Guidelines” under the guidance of the U.S. occupation forces. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) established the “Social Studies” curriculum as a priority in school civic education. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology set the primary goal of social studies as “fostering an understanding of social life among young people and providing them with value guidance and ability building,” and introduced social studies in the areas of “the relationship between people and others,” “the relationship between people and the natural environment,” and “people and the social system. The 1969 Junior High School Study Guide specifies that the goal of civic education is “to cultivate the necessary qualities for citizenship” and sets the “Social Studies” in the third grade of junior high school as “the necessary qualities for citizenship”. The 1969 Guideline for Junior High School Studies specified that the goal of civic education is “to cultivate the necessary qualities of citizenship,” and set the third grade study area of “Social Studies” as “Citizenship,” with more specific requirements for citizens who are defenders and practitioners of national sovereignty.

In 1989, after years of rapid development, problems such as social stratification and economic crisis emerged in Japanese society, and it became urgent to enhance civic education in the country. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) redesigned the civic education curriculum and reorganized the subjects of “Modern Society,” “Ethics,” and “Politics and Economics” to create a new “Civic Studies”. Since then, civic education in Japan has evolved from the “Shugyo Course” to the “Social Course” and then to the “Civics Course” since the Meiji Restoration. In 2010, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), then an opposition party, first proposed the creation of a “public” subject <sup>[5]</sup>, focusing on the cultivation of “public spirit” and other related contents, which kicked off a new civic education reform. In March 2018, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) released the ninth revision of the Guidelines for High School Learning (hereinafter referred to as the Guidelines), which stipulates that a new “public” subject will be introduced in the Japanese high school civics curriculum starting in 2022. Japan has established a complete and coherent civic education curriculum, with social studies in elementary and junior high schools and civics in high schools as the main subjects. This change in the model and system of civic education in accordance with the needs of the current situation is an important reason for the effectiveness of civic education in Japan.

### **3. How to be a good citizen of the country: The practice of civic education in Japan**

A citizen’s sense of identity and identification with and belonging to a country are not innate <sup>[6]</sup>, and he or she can be “defined” as a citizen of a country by law, but the transformation from “passive citizenship” to “active citizenship” requires continuous and effective civic practices. The 2018 civic education reform in Japan focuses on the “communal” perspective, and through various educational practices, it strives to create positive “social views and ideas” among young people. Instead of over-emphasizing individualism and dismantling social identity <sup>[7]</sup>, the 2018 Japanese civic education reform focuses on the “public” perspective. In this way, the entire population will be nurtured as active participants in a peaceful and democratic nation and society, and will be actively integrated into the globalized international community.

#### ***3.1. Implementation of the “Civics” curriculum reform***

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan believes that high school students are at a critical stage in the formation of their outlook on life and values, and that civic education at the high school level is an important stage for organically bridging the social and moral education received at the elementary and junior high school levels. The new Guidelines suggest that the purpose of the curriculum revision is to develop the four major abilities of high school students, namely (1) the ability to think logically; (2) the ability to consider real problems from multiple perspectives and make fair judgments; (3) the ability to identify various problems in the real world and solve them in a collaborative manner; and (4) the ability to participate in public affairs with positive motivation and attitude. According to Toshiaki Kuwayama, under the LDP’s policy of strengthening “moral education,” the subject of “public” has been given the nature of moral education <sup>[8]</sup>.

First, the new subject “Public” emphasizes the importance of guiding high school students to think about ethical, social, cultural, political, legal, economic, and international relations issues in modern society, so that they can become active participants in national politics and public life. Through the

three sections of “The Door to Publicity,” “Our Participation as Individuals in the Future of Society,” and “Our Role as the Core of Sustainable Development,” we will reinforce civic training for young people. The program is designed to strengthen the civic training of young people through the study of the three sections “The Public Gate,” “We as Individuals in the Future of Society,” and “We as the Core of Sustainable Society. At the same time, in order to make students feel the relevance to society, they will examine and analyze real-life issues as examples and work together to solve them.

Secondly, in terms of curriculum, the “Public” subject, which is an innovation of the current study guide “Modern Society”, continues the content framework of the subject, and substantially modifies the course content, curriculum system, and delivery methods. The former subject “Modern Society” has been changed to an optional subject, and students can choose to study “Modern Society” or “Ethics” or “Politics and Economics”. “The course was changed to an elective subject. After the curriculum reform, the subject “Public” has become a compulsory subject and is required to be completed in the first year of high school, while “Ethics” and “Politics and Economics” can be taken in the second and third years. In the second and third years of high school, you can take Ethics and Politics-Economics.

Third, in terms of curriculum objectives and learning methods, compared to “Modern Society,” which focuses only on “training young people to examine social life and develop the skills and attitudes necessary for conscientious citizenship,” the “Public In contrast to the “Modern Society” program, which focuses only on “training young people to examine social life and develop the skills and attitudes necessary for conscientious citizenship,” the “Public” program introduces the elements of “subjectivity, dialogue, and in-depth learning” and places greater emphasis on the participation of young people in social life as independent individuals, with an emphasis on the development of public character. All courses consist of three central components: “Knowledge and Skills,” “Thinking, Judgment and Expression,” and “Personality and Competence Development. In terms of learning methods, the “public” subjects are more practically oriented, encouraging and expanding students’ integration into public life beyond the classroom. The emphasis is on improving the teaching environment and building a team of highly qualified teachers to help students think holistically about each subject. At the same time, interdisciplinary learning is promoted to enhance the coherence of knowledge in order to better identify and solve problems. In addition, it is encouraged to actively seek cooperation in society with experts and relevant professional institutions, such as organizing courses such as Model United Nations, with a view to complementing the content of civic education classes.

### **3.2. Establish rich activity courses**

(1) Service Learning with Enhanced Community Engagement . The activity-based curriculum focuses on direct student experience, requiring participants to experience and participate in real-life situations and ultimately gain direct experience. Chinese scholar Feng Jianjun suggests that civic education, as a lifelong education, is a lifelong process of “learning to be” a citizen. Children should acquire direct knowledge or make indirect knowledge “live” in the exploration of activity courses <sup>[9]</sup>. In Japanese schools, civic education also attaches great importance to the development of students’ public nature through the introduction of “participatory” learning, in which service learning and volunteer activities become important forms of civic education activity courses. Kiyoshi Karoki also advocates that young people should strive to become “engaged citizens in their communities” through social participation, aiming to “do something to make the area where they live better <sup>[10]</sup>. The 2008 Secondary School Learning Guideline calls for the addition of “fostering the formation of participation in the local community” to the Geography Curriculum, expanding the learning space for young people from the classroom to the community and fostering good citizenship by applying book knowledge to practice and bringing it to life.

In practice, there are also many typical cases in Japan where students are guided to pay attention to social reality by conducting social practices through community service. For example, elementary and middle schools in Yawata City, Kyoto Prefecture, conduct cross-subject and cross-school civic education practices. In 2008, Yawata City was designated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), and for the next three years, all schools in the city have been engaged in civic education practices. The newly established course “Yawata Citizen’s Time”, which is conducted for 10 hours a year, is the centerpiece of the program, and the school curriculum, moral development, and extracurricular activities are being re-examined from a civic perspective. With the goal of fostering “rich citizenship” and “flexible physical strength,” the program includes student councils, sports events, and off-campus learning, and works together to foster civic consciousness and stimulate social thinking about public affairs <sup>[11]</sup>.

(2) Strengthening practical learning through experiential teaching In classroom education, it is important to deepen young people's understanding of their lives and the state of society as it should be, so that they can better integrate and participate in society. "In 1978, the "Guidance for Learning" pointed out the need to shift from purely knowledge-centered learning to the improvement of students' thinking skills. Kuang Hachiyonagi proposes to introduce performance evaluation into the teaching of civic subjects <sup>[12]</sup>, and to establish social simulation training to improve the ability of young people to participate in society in a dynamic way. For example, mock elections, mock parliaments, and mock petitions are held to enable students to think and discuss from various aspects, making schools a testing ground and training ground for students to enter society.

For high school students, social life and political participation become more urgent as the voting age and the age of majority decrease. Therefore, Japan takes social relations and social phenomena in students' daily lives as objects of study and actively cultivates students' subjectivity and participation through a step-by-step, subtle approach. In civic education courses, the practical nature of the curriculum is strengthened, and learners are encouraged to draw learning materials from real life and to think independently based on specific problem situations. This experiential civic education includes nature experiences, routine activities, domestic work experiences, and hardy life experiences. Here, instead of abstract indoctrination and rote learning, schooling focuses on encouraging students' ability and attitude to conduct independent research and think creatively. In addition, we are expanding the field of practice and the teaching environment for civic education by introducing discussions and interpretations of social issues into publicly distributed materials and by opening up public facilities such as museums, libraries, and other libraries as "teaching materials" and supplementary educational environments for teaching.

### ***3.3. To exemplify the role of teachers as "good citizens"***

The key to the quality of education and the success or failure of education lies in the teachers. Japanese school civic education also requires "good citizenship" for the teaching staff. After World War II, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) issued the "Book for Teachers of Citizenship in Secondary Schools and Youth Schools," which required teachers to understand the true meaning of individual freedom and equality, to participate in the common life on their own, and to be committed and sacrificial. It was emphasized that school life should be transformed into a "common life," and that as a common living area where students first experience sociality, teachers can influence students' words, actions, and thoughts in a subtle way <sup>[13]</sup>. Therefore, teachers, as good citizens, should actively participate in the "common life" of the school, guiding students to learn and acquire the qualities and skills necessary for citizenship and increasing their identity as citizens.

In September 2021, the Central Education Review Council (5th session), with the theme "Japanese School Education in the Era of Peace," made new requests to teachers for "field experience" and "active learning. New Requirements First <sup>[14]</sup>, they emphasized the importance of adapting to the rapidly changing society and the increasing demand for online courses due to the impact of the new crown epidemic, and of taking the initiative to enhance learning to meet the needs of the changing times. Second, it is emphasized that teachers should have rich field experience to ensure that they are receptive to new knowledge and new things and enter a "new state". This is because only educators who have modern democratic concepts and who model the words, actions, and thoughts of good citizens to their students can produce good students <sup>[15]</sup>. This is an important basis for the transformation of students from "I" to "we" and for the healthy functioning of civic education in schools.

### ***3.4. Collaborative civic education in multiple fields of family, school and society***

With the accelerated modernization, the structure of Japanese society has become more stable, individualism has increased, the size of the family has declined, and the number of nuclear families has increased <sup>[16]</sup>. How to carry out multi-field and panoramic civic education based on school civic education to improve the effectiveness of education has become an important orientation of civic education reform in Japan. In the 19th Conference for the Promotion of Sovereign Education in Japan, member Shimizu of the Japan PTA (Parent-Teacher Association) proposed that civic education in schools, families, and communities should be fully linked and the independence of family education should be respected <sup>[17]</sup>. In addition to the traditional fields of civic education such as families, communities, and schools, Japan also relies on civic halls, public libraries, museums, and various

companies to jointly establish various forms of civic education systems, the most representative of which is the civic halls rooted in traditional Japanese culture established after World War II.

The Social Education Law enacted in 1949 states that civic halls are required to “engage in various educational, academic and culture-related businesses that are appropriate to actual life, with the aim of improving The purpose is to improve the education of the residents, promote health, purify their morals, revitalize the culture of life, and promote social welfare.” As a central facility for social civic education, the Civic Hall holds regular lectures and exhibitions, acquires books and audio-visual materials for the use of local residents, and provides a place for social interaction and learning activities for residents. “The core spirit of the Civic Hall is to help Japanese citizens recover their commonality from a “collective without commonality,” and to develop a “commonality” based on this. “publicness”<sup>[18]</sup>. In 2017, the Izumigawa Civic Hall in Shinjūhama City established the Izumigawa Collaborative Council and held “district-led” discussions in response to issues related to the decline of local welfare, environmental degradation, and the aging of educational institutions in the local community, making the Izumigawa Civic Hall a center for local urban development<sup>[19]</sup>. At present, Izumigawa Civic Hall is actively transforming itself to meet modernization and provide diverse learning conditions and cultural atmosphere for the local residents, and has become a social education field that is dialogical, inclusive, and creative, and has realized an effective link between civic education in Japanese schools and society.

#### **4. Education for the Sovereign: New Trends in the Development of Civic Education in Japan**

Ancient Japan tended toward a collective identity in which the population, as subjects without self-awareness, performed unconditional obedience to the emperor. Joy Hendry argues that the origin of Japan’s cultural heritage can be explained by geographical, historical and mythological factors<sup>[20]</sup>. This traditional thinking has been broken by the development of modern society, especially in recent years, influenced by Western individualism and liberalism, the overall values of Japanese society focus on individual feelings, the citizens’ participation in the political life of the country is low, and the lack of public spirit is increasingly serious. The “individual” is equal to the “lonely” (pronounced the same way), and the question of how to integrate the isolated “I” into the collective “we” has aroused a great deal of concern among all sectors of Japanese society. “This has led to a profound reflection in all sectors of Japanese society. At the same time, in the face of the profound changes in the international environment and the emergence of various traditional and non-traditional security threats, the strengthening of civic consciousness and national identity through deepening social participation and sovereign education has also become a new trend in Japanese civic education.

On the one hand, Japan has been strengthening its identity education centered on national identity by deepening the education of sovereigns. Due to the policy of “ensuring political neutrality” stipulated in the Basic Law of Education, Japanese civic education has been less likely to discuss real-life political issues, and school civic education has been very cautious in addressing political issues, resulting in young people’s apathy toward political participation and public affairs. According to the Election Commission of Japan, in the 2014 House of Representatives election, the turnout rate of people around 70 years old was 70.01%, while the turnout rate of people around 20 years old was only 32.58%. In 2010, the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan (LDP) proposed for the first time to gradually promote “sovereign education” in the reform of higher education to build a perfect image of the country in the minds of Japanese youth in order to promote national identity and social honor<sup>[21]</sup>. The DPJ emphasizes the comprehensive national citizenship education through the trinity of family, school, and society, so that people’s social relations can be strengthened and the “unrelated society” can be transformed into a “related society”<sup>[22]</sup>.

In 2015, Japan lowered the voting age to 18 years old<sup>[23]</sup>, the first reform in nearly 70 years since the age was lowered to 20 years old in 1945, and approximately 2.4 million minors are expected to join the electorate, and the central government is proposing to strengthen sovereign education for young people to participate in political life. In September 2015, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) released the “Education for the Sovereign” high school teaching aid. Education for the Sovereign” is defined as education on “the relationship between citizens and politics” and is promoted in the form of a national movement in all sectors of society and at all levels<sup>[24]</sup>. In contrast, it incorporates political confrontation and political values into the textbook, and allows students to engage in political discussions in civic education classes as “sovereigns” of the country, helping them to form a national identity.

In March 2018, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) released the ninth revised edition of the Essentials of High School Learning Guidance, which interpreted the new era of civic education from various aspects such as curriculum and course objectives, advocating that youth develop a sense of social participation and an attitude of solving real-world problems, and guiding students to maintain positive interactions with society and the world in the face of increasing challenges. In March 2021, at the 19th Sovereign's Education Promotion Conference, Shigeo Kodama proposed that efforts should be made through educational reform to create an environment in which Japanese teachers and students can actively participate in sovereign education and political education, to improve the political literacy of young people and their motivation to participate in political affairs, and to realize civic education with subjectivity, depth, and dialogue, and to transform it into an active democracy. as, "How to develop the ability to think about social issues and take initiative - practices related to the compulsory course 'Public'." The emphasis is on strengthening students' participation in their own country and society and linking their personal lives to the fate of the nation through their actual participation and personal experience. Through the introduction, creation, and refinement of the new subject "public" and a series of operations for the education of sovereigns, the isolated "I" of Japanese society is gradually integrated into the collective "we. The relationship between the individual, the collective, and the nation has become closer.

On the other hand, the education of the sovereign embodies a strong political and ideological overtone. With the profound restructuring of the world landscape and changes in national power contrasts, Japan's civic morality and social opinion are guided by a certain political, inflammatory, and extremist tendencies. In "We as the core of sustainable social development," we propose to investigate various issues of the real society in the process of social change in Japan <sup>[25]</sup>. The aim is to introduce young people to scenarios based on the construction of public places and social participation, cultural and religious issues, and to expressly reflect the importance of political participation of young people in the curriculum, showing the ideological overtones of state domination, in order to achieve strong political guidance for young people's values. In the 2021 Defense White Paper, Japan for the first time set up a special feature on Sino-U.S. relations at the top of the volume to play up China's national threats and security risks. In the same year, in the Defense White Paper for Children, which was released for the first time for elementary and middle school students, accusations were made against China's military development, the Diaoyu Islands and the South China Sea, and Shinzo Abe's proposed multi-national joint containment plan against China was reiterated. Under the negative news reports in the media and the government's bad opinion, the youth group has become "anti-China", and sovereign education has increasingly become an ideological tool to serve the realpolitik of Japan. This shows that the education of Japanese sovereign is not only the basic direction of Japanese civic education reform, but also full of strong ideological and political guidance.

## **5. Some inspirations for the moral construction of our citizens**

In 2019, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the State Council issued the "Outline for the Implementation of Civic Morality in the New Era,

It emphasizes the need to deepen the guidance of moral education and promote the cultivation of moral practice. Japan's national civic education emphasizes the establishment of a coherent civic education and the continuous adjustment of civic education contents and policies in accordance with changes in the domestic and foreign environment, etc., which have certain significance for China's moral education. At the same time, the expansionist and ultra-nationalist ideas that are increasingly permeating its national civic education are also worthy of our vigilance.

### ***5.1. Strengthen the role of the "main channel" and "main force" in the curriculum and teachers' ethics education***

(1) Realizing the integration of ideological and political education curriculum . The establishment of a nation-state needs the strong support of the official language, school curriculum and a unified legal system <sup>[26]</sup>. As an important field for systematic and conscious implementation of ideological and political education in schools, realizing the curriculum of ideological and political education has become a trend and tendency in the development of civic education in the world. An important reason for the successful continuation and renewal of civic education in Japan is the establishment of a complete and coherent civic education curriculum. Through the implementation of the "Civic Studies" curriculum reform, the curriculum objectives, contents, curriculum system, and delivery methods have

been revised and improved. At the same time, public facilities such as museums, resource libraries and libraries are used as “teaching materials” and supplementary educational environments to expand the field of practice for civic moral education, so that students are constantly trained in both knowledge and action. The students are constantly trained in moral education at both the knowledge and action ends.

In recent years, research around the integration of moral education in the academic world has become an academic hotspot, and active exploration has been conducted in Beijing, Shanghai and other places in terms of building an integrated system of moral education in universities and elementary school, etc. However, there is no curriculum construction completely for civic moral education in China, and civic moral education is still in a decentralized and fragmented distribution, either as a part of ideological and political education or embedded in education themes such as patriotic education and Chinese national community consciousness education. The ideological and political education curriculum system linked by primary, middle and high school stages has not yet achieved systematic articulation and coherence in content, and is still far from the goal of integration. The implementation of practical courses on civic and moral education is uneven, and the overall situation is one of form over content. A coherent civic ethics education system should be established for elementary schools, middle schools, high schools and universities, and the construction of a curriculum-based system for civic ethics education should be deepened. Following the route of progression of factual knowledge, conceptual knowledge and procedural knowledge to metacognitive knowledge, a knowledge system of ideological and political education with increasing difficulty should be constructed. Improve the integrated curriculum system of civic and moral education including Civic and Political Science courses, general education courses, professional courses and practical courses. In accordance with the law of cognitive development of students and the development of domestic and international situations, we adopt a whole-chain education method that is dynamically adjusted and appropriate in terms of difficulty and ease, so as to break away from the low-level and homogeneous education and explore the higher-order cognitive education mode.

(2) Emphasis on the development of the teaching force. As an important medium for “spreading the concept of citizenship in contemporary society and telling the story of the good past and the glorious future of the community”<sup>[27]</sup>, teachers play an important role in the process of civic education. In the early days, civic education in Japanese schools required teachers to be not only “good people” but also “good citizens” in the sense of social and civic identity through the requirement of “good citizenship. “By actively participating in the “common life” of the school, teachers are able to influence and motivate students to identify with their citizenship and develop the necessary civic qualities and skills. Recently, new requirements for “field experience” and “active learning” have been introduced for teachers in order to enhance their capacity and ability to implement citizenship education.

Education is an intersubjective process of mutual transformation, equal dialogue and consensus between educators and educated people through purposeful interaction mediated by educational content. The improvement of students’ civic literacy depends to a large extent on the teachers’ own socialization level and the state of civic literacy. In recent years, important conferences such as the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities, the National Education Conference, and the Symposium for Teachers of Ideological and Political Theory Courses in Schools, as well as the introduction of important documents such as the 2018 Opinions of the CPC Central Committee State Council on Comprehensively Deepening the Reform of Teacher Team Construction in the New Era and the 2019 Outline for the Implementation of Civic Morality in the New Era, have provided important guidance and follow. At present, in addition to systematic study and training for teachers and improvement of institution-related institutional mechanisms, it is also necessary to strengthen conscious civic literacy training for teachers both inside and outside schools, such as expanding channels for participation in public affairs, actively creating social service platforms, and opening up channels for the dissemination of public discourse, in order to improve the public spirit and public service capacity of the majority of teachers, and to provide students with public education through innovation in education and teaching methods and diversified curriculum design. We will continue to provide students with effective public education through innovative teaching methods and diverse curriculum design.

## ***5.2. Give full play to the collaborative role of family and society in moral education***

Civic and moral education is not limited to school education, nor is it confined to the purely school field. Japan has established a complete ideological and political education curriculum, with social studies in elementary and junior high schools and civics in high schools as the main subjects. The



national civic education system is based on family, school, and society as the educational fields, and the national civic education field is open to family education, school education, and social education. Japanese civic education includes a large number of community practice courses, and through socialization methods such as mock elections, young people are guided to actively participate in the public affairs of society. In view of the fact that young people will join the larger “school” of society after leaving school, Japan has made museums and libraries open to all citizens free of charge, while actively innovating new media for civic education and finding new support points for its development through the Internet platform [28].

Along with the profound changes in the educational environment and tasks in the new era, “the traditional education model must change to a new model of collaborative education in which the educational space is more open, educational resources are integrated and shared, and educational subjects are diversified and symbiotic.” Civic moral education should not only guide students to learn to be a “good person”, but more importantly to become a “good citizen” with positive attitude, public spirit and sense of responsibility towards the country, society and others. This requires not only the basic and infiltrative influence of family education, but also the continuous and effective civic training and public spirit cultivation in the social field [29]. The Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee drew a grand blueprint for the construction of a high-quality education system during the 14th Five-Year Plan period, with special emphasis on improving the mechanism of school-family-society coordinated education. In practice, in addition to traditional classroom education, many schools actively promote practical teaching and second classroom construction, organizing study and research practices, street and community volunteer services, and establishing bases for collaborative parenting, which constantly enrich new forms of collaborative parenting between home and school, school government and school community. In recent years, such melodramatic movies and TV series as “The Age of Awakening” and “Love in the Mountain and Sea”, as well as schools’ own creation of micro-videos and micro-films and other forms of parenting have highlighted the new advantages of social education and network parenting in the information age, providing new perspectives and spaces for innovative promotion of civic moral education .

### ***5.3. Strengthen rational patriotism as the core of national identity education***

Modern citizenship not only establishes a sense of association with others and society, but in its public nature, it points first and foremost to the state, and “the modern conception of citizenship is closely related to the development of the liberal state [30].” The Encyclopedia Britannica defines citizenship as “the relationship between an individual and the state in which the individual owes loyalty to the state and thus enjoys the right to its protection [31].” Therefore, almost all countries have incorporated patriotism and national identity education into their civic moral education systems. Fan Shoukang once said in Education and Nationalism in Modern Japan, “If we want to maintain our international independent status in China and restore our lost rights that China should have, we should quickly implement nationalist education today [32].”

In recent years, the Japanese government has been actively promoting “sovereign education” in its higher education reform in response to the profound changes and adjustments in the world situation and the low level of participation in the national political life of young people in Japan. The government has continued to strengthen students’ public participation and political involvement in their own country and society, and has reinforced the education of the sovereign by exaggerating the threat posed to Japan by China and its neighboring countries, even though the relationship between the individual and the nation is being further strengthened. The strong ideological overtones of state domination are displayed, making Japanese civic education an ideological tool in the service of Japanese realpolitik.

In the process of accelerated modernization of Chinese society, individualism, liberalism and consumerism have taken advantage of the situation, leading to weak ideals and beliefs, lack of national consciousness and civic awareness among some young people, and posing a certain degree of dissipating effect on their national identity. Civic moral education should focus on adding elements of patriotism and national identity education to the education system and educational contents, innovating educational means and forms such as civic literacy training, participation in political consultation, and immersive experiential learning, and raising the majority of youths’ awareness of the great motherland, the Chinese nation, Chinese culture, the Communist Party of China and socialism with Chinese characteristics by cultivating publicness, nationality and Chinese national community consciousness. We should also note that patriotism is not only an instinctive and emotional patriotism, but also should not be a patriotism based on hegemonism, power politics, and narrow nativism and nationalism.

## 6. Conclusion

Today, the world is in a period of change and turbulence that has not seen a major change in a century, and China is in a critical period of great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. We should always be alert to the expansionist and ultra-nationalist tendencies that permeate Japanese national civic education, and actively guide students to establish a rational and reflective patriotism in the process of promoting national identity education. At the same time, we should actively respond to the development of globalization and the building of a community of human destiny, incorporate the concepts of equality and cooperation and win-win sharing into the civic moral education system, and cultivate students' global awareness and world sentiment.

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