

Concerning the Use of Basil Hall Chamberlain's *Things Japanese* as a Resource for a University Seminar in Intercultural Awareness

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With the goal of being accessible to a wide variety of students and/or being suitable for use in classes comprising students from a variety of nationalities, published activities for stimulating intercultural awareness often provide examples from multiple cultures of which Japanese university students have typically had no prior exposure or personal experience. To make some of the concepts involved in intercultural awareness education more accessible to Japanese university students, this paper proposes activities which focus on discussion of the writings of an Englishman about Japan in the Meiji era. The introduction of these activities into intercultural awareness training will allow Japanese students to consider aspects of their own culture and to reflect on how Japanese culture might be viewed by others who come from a different cultural background.

Introduction

This study explores the potential for using Basil Hall Chamberlain's *Things Japanese* as a resource for teaching a university-level seminar in Japan with the intention of aiding students in their understanding of intercultural awareness. For students who have had extensive experience of overseas travel, intercultural awareness can be taught by brainstorming with students their memories of cultural differences between Japan and whichever countries they have visited. However, even in the globalized world of the twenty-first century, it is often the case that Japanese university students have not yet travelled away from their home country, and for those who have experienced a visit to a foreign country, such travel has typically been on an organized school trip, with scarce opportunities for first-hand, personal experience of the local culture in that country.

This paper therefore proposes that *Things Japanese* can be used as a resource for understanding intercultural awareness by exposing students to the descriptions that the British academic Basil Hall Chamberlain (hereafter, Chamberlain) wrote in 1890 about Meiji era Japan. While reflecting on the different attitudes towards cultural difference which existed in the nineteenth century,

students will appreciate some of the concepts involved in intercultural awareness through discussion of how Japanese culture was explained to English readers at that time, as viewed from the standpoint of an English gentleman.

The first section of this paper briefly introduces biographical details relating to Chamberlain, and gives an overview of the topics covered in *Things Japanese*. In the second section, there is a discussion of some of the aspects relating to teaching intercultural awareness which are relevant to this paper. Section three will examine three of the topics ("Bathing", "Japanese People (Characteristics of the)", and "Topsy-turvydom") covered in *Things Japanese*, and will propose how these topics could be used effectively in the teaching of intercultural awareness. This paper concludes that, although it was written 135 years ago, *Things Japanese* can be relevant for the current teaching of intercultural awareness providing that appropriate context is given to modern students.

1. Background: Chamberlain and *Things Japanese*

Chamberlain (1850-1935) is counted as one of the

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foremost Japanologists of the late nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. Born in England, he was raised in France from the age of six, and at the age of twenty-three, arrived in Japan for the first time in May 1873, having elected to travel to the Far East as a means of recovery from a breakdown in his health. Chamberlain ended up staying in Japan for almost forty years, only leaving the country permanently in 1911, at which point he moved to Geneva rather than returning to England. His decision to live in Geneva was perhaps prompted by his cosmopolitan nature and the fact that he describes himself in a letter to Lafcadio Hearn in October 1893, by stating “I feel at home in no country but an amused guest in all”^[1].

Following his arrival in Japan, Chamberlain found work as a teacher of English (from 1874 to 1882) at the Imperial Japanese Naval Academy and he combined his lecturing duties with intensive study of the Japanese language. He published his first book (*The Classical Poetry of the Japanese*) in 1880 which contained translations of more than one hundred poems as well as four Noh plays. In 1886, Chamberlain was offered a post at the Imperial University in Tokyo and became the university's first Professor of Japanese and Philology.

Chamberlain left his post at the university in 1890 but remained in Japan, spending most of his time for the next twenty years at the Fujiya Hotel in Hakone, with intermittent trips back to Europe. He left Japan for the final time in 1911 but did not go back to live in England, choosing instead, as mentioned above, to spend the twenty-four years until his death in 1935, based in Geneva.

Bowring (1991)^[1] in his chapter entitled ‘An Amused Guest in All: Basil Hall Chamberlain’, published in *Britain and Japan 1859-1991: Themes and Personalities*, describes Chamberlain as having been a “gifted amateur” and an “archetypal gentleman-scholar” but neither of these descriptions should be misinterpreted as being remotely negative, since both the “gifted amateur” (for example, Sherlock Holmes) and the “gentleman scholar” (for example, the explorer Sir Richard Burton) were idolized by the Victorians as examples to which men should aspire. In terms of his contribution to the study of Japan and the Japanese language, Chamberlain is typically grouped with Ernest Satow and William Aston as being one of the three pre-eminent Japanologists of the Victorian era.

Cortazzi (1987)^[2] leaves no doubt that he considers Chamberlain to have been extremely influential in the field of Japanese studies. The index to Cortazzi's book, *Victorians in Japan: In and around the Treaty Ports*, lists five occasions on which Cortazzi refers to Chamberlain. Cortazzi's reverence for Chamberlain is demonstrated by the fact that on the first three of those occasions, the introduction of Chamberlain's name is either preceded by (once), or immediately followed by (twice), the words “the great Japanologist”. On the fourth occasion that Chamberlain is referenced, Cortazzi omits to apply his customary description either before or after Chamberlain's name, but this is perhaps only for the reason that it is not the first mention of Chamberlain in the chapter concerned. On the final reference to Chamberlain in Cortazzi's book, Cortazzi varies his description subtly, and uses the words “the great Japanese scholar” as the introduction which precedes Chamberlain's name. This final choice was probably due to the fact that the chapter concerned relates to the language problems experienced by Victorians in Japan and Cortazzi possibly wished to draw the attention of readers to Chamberlain's position as a scholar of the Japanese language in addition to his scholastic achievements in regard to other aspects of Japanese culture. Cortazzi's repeated assertions of Chamberlain's greatness serve to emphasize Chamberlain's role as a major figure in Japanology in the nineteenth century.

In addition to scholarly works providing analysis, explanation of, and instruction in, the Japanese language, Chamberlain also collaborated with a fellow Englishman called William Mason to produce one of the first guidebooks for English speakers wishing to travel throughout Japan after such travel came to be permitted by the Japanese authorities. This work was published as *A Handbook for Travellers in Japan* in the popular series of guidebooks popularized by publisher John Murray and it became the standard guidebook to Japan for many years.

However, in the twenty-first century, Chamberlain is most often remembered as having been the author of *Things Japanese*. *Things Japanese* was first published in 1890 but was subsequently reissued in a further six editions over the next fifty years. Chamberlain subtitled *Things Japanese* as “Being notes on various subjects connected with Japan” and the book operates like an encyclopaedia providing information on a wide range of

topics, or, as Chamberlain himself describes the book in the preface, as “a dictionary, not of words but of things – or shall we rather say a guide-book, less to places than to subjects?”.

The foreword to the Cambridge University Press reprint (2014)^[3], of the original 1890 edition of *Things Japanese* states that *Things Japanese* “gives an affectionate account of aspects of Japanese culture which Chamberlain realised were disappearing under the relentless impact of Western influence”. In fact, this is not a particularly accurate description of the content of *Things Japanese*. Although many of the topics covered undeniably reflect the Japan of the Meiji era that Chamberlain experienced, a large number of the topics have not disappeared from Japanese culture at all, and remain part of Japanese culture over 130 years later.

Table 1 shows the topics covered in *Things Japanese*, together with an indication (as represented by a number showing the approximate number of pages which Chamberlain devoted to that topic) of the depth in which Chamberlain covered each topic. As can be seen, the topics range from knowledge which may have been useful to the visitor to Japan, to detailed explanation of general topics relating to Japanese culture. Some topics provide statistics which help to clarify the state of Japan's position in the world in 1890, while other topics act as an introduction to various Japanese topics to interested readers encountering these concepts for the first time.

Table 1: Topics covered in *Things Japanese* and the number of pages devoted to each topic

Topic	Pages	Topic	Pages
Abacus	2	Abdication	2
Acupuncture	1	Adams	2
Adoption	2	Ainos	2.5
Amusements	2.5	Architecture	8.5
Armour	1	Army	1
Art	8	Asiatic Society of Japan	1
Bandai-san	0.5	Bathing	2
Bibliography	0.5	Blackening the teeth	0.5
Bonin Islands	1	Books on Japan	7.5
Botany	3.5	Buddhism	3
Capital Cities	2	Carving	2
Cherry Blossom	1	Chess	2
Children	1.5	Clans	1.5
Climate	4	Confucianism	2.5
Cormorant Fishing	4	Cremation	1
Currency	1	Cycle	0.5

Topic	Pages	Topic	Pages
Daimyo	1	Decorations	1
Demoniacal Possession	4.5	Divorce	1
Dress	5	Earthquakes and Volcanoes	4
Education	6.5	EE-EE	0.5
Esotericism	3.5	Eta	1
Eurasians	0.5	Exterritoriality	1
Fairy Tales	0.5	Fashionable Crazes	1
Filial Piety	2	Flowers	4
Food	3.5	Forfeits	0.5
Forty-Seven Ronins	3	Gardens	2
Geography	3.5	Geology	1.5
Go	1.5	Gobang	0.5
Government	2	Guidebooks	0.5
Harakiri	1.5	Heraldry	1
History and Mythology	21.5	Interviewing	8
Ise	1	Japan	1
Japanese People (Characteristics of the)	11	Jinrikisha	1
Kaempfer	1.5	Kakke	1
Kurile Islands	1	Lacquer	6
Language	2.5	Law	6
Lighthouses	2	Literature	10
Loochoo	2	Luck (Gods of)	1
Maps	1	Marriage	5
Maru	1	Massage	1
Metal-Work	2	Mikado	1.5
Mineral Springs	2	Mirrors	0.5
Missions	8.5	Moral Maxims	2.5
Mourning	2.5	Moxa	1
Music	3	Names	3.5
Navy	2.5	Newspapers	4
Nikko	0.5	Nobility	1
Numerical Categories	2.5	Parkes (Sir Harry S.)	1.5
Perry (Commodore)	2.5	Philosophy	0.5
Pidjin-Japanese	1	Poetry	4.5
Porcelain and Pottery	18.5	Posts	1
Praying Wheel	1	Printing	2.5
Proverbs	1	Race	1.5
Railways	2	Religion	0.5
Rice	1	Roads	1
Samurai	1	Shinto	7.5
Shipping	3	Shogun	1
Shooting	0.5	Siebold	2.5
Silk	1	Singing-Girls	0.5
Societies	1.5	Sun, Moon, and Stars	2
Swords	1.5	Taste	1.5
Tea	2	Tea Ceremonies	6
Telegraphs	2.5	Theatre	4.5
Time	4.5	Tobacco	0.5
Tokyo	2.5	Topsy-turvydom	2
Torii	1	Trade	8

Topic	Pages	Topic	Pages
Treaty Ports	0.5	Treaty Revision	0.5
Tycoon	0.5	Women (Status of)	10.5
Writing	4.5	Yezo	2.5
Yoshiwara	2	Zoology	3

As stated above, Chamberlain himself described *Things Japanese* as a “guide-book, not of places, but of things” and it was his clear intention to educate his readers about an extensive range of subjects. Bowring^[1] answers his own rhetorical question “What is Chamberlain’s importance for us today?” by stating that “it is surely as the author of *Things Japanese* that he is read and known”. The following sections will discuss how this famous book can be a resource for the teaching of intercultural awareness.

2. Teaching intercultural awareness

The website of the British Council suggests that intercultural awareness should be considered to be the fifth skill of language learning, in addition to listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and that, because language is shaped by culture “we cannot be competent in the language if we do not also understand the culture that has shaped it and informed it”^[4]. It would be possible to argue against this statement if only for the reason that modern artificial intelligence language tools appear to have developed an impressive competence in languages without necessarily having mastered the cultural background to them. However, from the point of view of human communication an understanding of the culture behind a language certainly contributes to linguistic competency, and this can be aided through intercultural awareness.

On the other hand, the British Council website continues by stating that “We cannot learn a second language if we do not have an awareness of that culture, and how that culture relates to our own first language/ first culture”. However, this is not necessarily the case since there are children who learn a second language in childhood without necessarily understanding culture. The key difference between the British Council’s first statement and its second statement is the word “competent”. With low motivation and few incentives, many students, possibly the majority, may “learn” a second language for years without ever becoming “competent” at it. Alternatively, by introducing the fifth

skill of intercultural awareness to the other language learning disciplines students will become more motivated, and, by creating the conditions for a virtuous cycle of greater interest, communicative success, personal achievement, and coming full-circle to enhanced motivation, students are more likely to find themselves acquiring a satisfactory level of language competency.

However, it is also the case that intercultural awareness is often separated from the context of foreign language learning and that it is used as the method by which students of any age are taught about the cultures of other countries with the desired outcome of making the students more tolerant of the cultural differences they encounter when communicating or sharing their community with others who come from a different cultural background. In many cases, especially at the primary/elementary stages of education, intercultural awareness education has often been limited to basic explanations of the differences in culture which exist between countries, with the frequently unstated, albeit definitely implied, message that everyone should respect the cultural traditions of people from other countries.

However, in educational situations where there is a significant degree of cultural interchange, with classes consisting of children from a variety of cultural backgrounds, it can be beneficial to introduce more challenging activities, even at the primary/elementary level, so that children give greater consideration to cultural differences. In *Teaching and Learning for Intercultural Understanding*, Rader (2018)^[5] explains the development of intercultural understanding in education and provides her personal definition of intercultural understanding.

“I would describe intercultural understanding as the willingness and ability to interact effectively and appropriately with people different from ourselves, and in diverse cultural settings. This requires knowledge and understanding, beliefs, values and attitudes, and skills and behaviours that are developed throughout our lives.”

It should be noted that Rader uses the term “intercultural understanding” rather than the expression “intercultural awareness” which is used in this paper, however, both expressions are effectively concerned with the same topic. Rader’s book argues the case for

the teaching of intercultural understanding as an imperative, and covers chapters such as, “Exploring culture and language”, “Understanding and valuing personal and cultural identity”, “Cultivating transformative beliefs, values and attitudes”, “Engaging with difference”, “Developing essential intercultural, interpersonal and life skills” and “Embedding local and global issues”. Each of these chapters concludes with three separate lesson plans which could be used to teach the ideas within the chapter to classes of primary/elementary schoolchildren.

In essence, each of these lesson plans are ideas for integrating the ideas of intercultural understanding into primary/elementary school classes. However, what could be utilized for instruction in intercultural awareness in a university level seminar? Edward T. Hall's (1976)^[6] model of culture as being similar to an iceberg is a convenient tool for exposing students at any level of education to the complexities of the elements which come together to form human culture. While this may not always be the case in other countries, university students in Japan have not usually encountered this model before they are introduced to it in an intercultural awareness class.

Nevertheless, university students quickly accept the metaphor of culture as an iceberg and, as part of a brainstorming exercise, are readily able to suggest ideas which could form part of the “visible” culture section of the iceberg. It is natural that students have more difficulty in imagining the elements of culture which are below the waves and which form the greater part of the cultural iceberg model. One contributory factor to this difficulty can be the terms used to describe the cultural elements which form the underwater part of the iceberg. These terms commonly form an opposite to the idea of “visible culture”, and therefore, in either English, or when translated into a Japanese equivalent, become “invisible culture” or “hidden culture”.

When viewed as the opposite to “visible culture” – the cultural elements you would be able to see with your eyes when walking down the street in a foreign country – these opposite terms of “invisible culture” or “hidden culture” are straightforward enough. However, upon reflection, students often become confused. Religion is usually included below the waterline on the cultural iceberg model, but the existence of religious iconography, the physical presence of religious architecture, and the active manifestation of festivals connected to religious

events and religious holidays, mean that it can be difficult for students to reconcile these “visible” aspects of religion with the concept of it being classified as “invisible culture”. The use of “hidden culture”, as an alternative opposite expression for “visible culture” can create problems of a different nature. Students may interpret the concept of “hidden” as meaning that the people of a culture are actively seeking to keep aspects of their culture secret from outsiders. “Hidden culture” can therefore be misinterpreted as “secret culture”, which is not the intention of the model of culture as being like an iceberg.

When discussing the cultural iceberg with Japanese students the author of this paper therefore prefers to use the terms “kanko culture” for the cultural elements above the surface of the ocean, and “keiken culture” for those which are classified as being underwater. “Kanko” is the Japanese word for “tourism” and it is explained to students that to understand the cultural iceberg model it is possible to consider those aspects of culture which are above the waterline as things which might be encountered on a trip to another country as a tourist. On the other hand, “keiken” is the Japanese word for “experience” so it is therefore explained that the aspects of culture considered to be below the waterline are those parts of a culture which you are only likely to become exposed to if you spend a significant amount of time in a foreign country, including visiting people's homes, communicating directly with the people of that country, making an attempt to learn the local language, and hopefully making true friends.

Since it is necessarily more difficult to experience culture in this way, aspects of “keiken culture” or “hidden culture” can be introduced to students vicariously in the form of studying the observations of someone who has experienced a culture over the course of several years and this is where *Things Japanese* can become a useful resource for study. *Things Japanese* can also be used to start discussions about aspects of Japanese culture which will help students to understand how people from another culture may misinterpret the culture with which they themselves are most familiar.

3. Using *Things Japanese* as a material for teaching intercultural awareness

3-1 Warm-up activity

The first method by which *Things Japanese* can be

applied for use as a teaching material for students learning about intercultural awareness is by discussion of the 140 topics covered in the book. Since it would be time consuming for the students to examine all 140 topics, it is more practical to divide the list into four groups, and, having quartered the total number of topics, to assign 35 topics to an individual student.

Students should then be encouraged to look at each topic word, and to decide, based on their own instinctive reaction, whether the topic would fit into the category of “kanko culture” or “keiken culture”. A quick warm-up activity involving the introduction of unfamiliar vocabulary used in the topic titles and, where necessary, translation of a title into Japanese, will make the topics accessible to all students. However, it will be absolutely necessary to explain some of the topic titles which Chamberlain uses which are incomprehensible without additional instruction. These topics could include “Cycle”, which Chamberlain uses to mean a “cycle of 60 years”, “EE-EE”, which Chamberlain helpfully explains means “express” when these letters are displayed outside a forwarding station, and “Topsy-turvydom” which will be explained in detail later in this paper.

Depending on the English language abilities of the students in the seminar there may be cases in which it is advisable to reduce Chamberlain’s 140 topics to a more accessible list of 60 topics, as shown in Table 2.

Students need to be reminded that even if a topic may not be particularly visible in modern Japan, they should give consideration to the fact that it might have been much more readily encountered in the Japan of 135 years ago. This exercise will naturally be completely subjective with both classifications being possible for a significant number of topics, but the value in the activity is that it commits students to thinking about the differences between “kanko culture” and “keiken culture”. Without necessarily being part of the activity, students can also be encouraged to think about modern alternatives for Chamberlain’s Japanese “things” and to consider the differences between those “things” which Chamberlain chose to write about and the “things” which foreign visitors to modern Japan might find fascinating or which would be worthy of inclusion in a modern version of such a book.

This paper now proposes the use of three of Chamberlain’s topics as the basis for in depth seminar discussion.

Table 2: Reduced list showing straightforward topics which should require little explanation

Architecture	Armour
Army	Art
Bathing	Botany
Buddhism	Capital Cities
Cherry Blossom	Chess
Climate	Currency
Divorce	Dress
Earthquakes and Volcanoes	Education
Fairy Tales	Flowers
Food	Gardens
Geography	Geology
Government	Harakiri
History and Mythology	Japanese People
Lacquer	Language
Law	Lighthouses
Literature	Luck (Gods of)
Maps	Marriage
Massage	Mineral Springs
Music	Names
Navy	Newspapers
Poetry	Porcelain and Pottery
Printing	Proverbs
Railways	Religion
Rice	Roads
Samurai	Shinto
Silk	Swords
Tea	Tea Ceremonies
Theatre	Tobacco
Torii	Women (Status of)
Writing	Zoology

3-2 Bathing

Bathing habits and the culture behind them are an excellent topic for use in a seminar concerned with intercultural awareness. Although it is true that in the twenty-first century the bathing cultures of many modern societies have become somewhat aligned to the practice amongst many people to have a shower once a day, the bathing practices of different countries and cultures have traditionally been completely idiosyncratic. Children in the United Kingdom are commonly taught that Queen Elizabeth I only bathed once a month, and many British adults, even in the second half of the twentieth century would not have considered it abnormal to have a bath or shower only once a week, unless they had been doing strenuous exercise or particularly intensive physical work.

For these reasons, Chamberlain’s commentary on the bathing practices of Japanese people in the late nineteenth century reveals interesting themes relating to intercultural awareness for discussion with contemporary students. Chamberlain’s comments on bathing take up

two pages of *Things Japanese*, and for the purpose of teaching intercultural awareness relating to this topic it is appropriate to precis his ideas as the following bullet points for discussion.

1. "Cleanliness is one of the few original items of Japanese civilisation. Almost all other things Japanese have their root in China, but not tubs."
2. "Viewed generally, the cleanliness in which the Japanese excel the rest of mankind has nothing to do with godliness. They are clean for the personal satisfaction of being clean."
3. "Cleanliness is more esteemed by the Japanese than our artificial Western prudery."
4. "The charm of the Japanese system of hot bathing is proved by the fact that almost all the foreigners resident in the country abandon their cold tubs in its favour."

For use in seminar discussion, these four ideas can be introduced by the teacher as follows:

1: Do you consider bathing to be a typically Japanese aspect of culture? What do you know about the bathing habits of people in other countries?

2: There is an English proverb which claims that "cleanliness is next to godliness". It means that having a clean body and a clean living environment is similar to being spiritually pure in a Christian sense. This is why Chamberlain jokes that Japanese cleanliness "has nothing to do with godliness" and by doing so he is subtly reminding his readers that most Japanese people are not Christians. On the other hand, Chamberlain states that "the Japanese excel the rest of mankind" in cleanliness. Do you think that Japanese people in the Meiji era may have been cleaner than people from other countries? Do you think that Japanese people still like to be clean "for the personal satisfaction of being clean"?

3: This statement is Chamberlain's way of explaining that the importance to which Japanese people ascribe cleanliness is more important to them than the modesty that was important to Westerners. This refers to the reluctance of Victorian Westerners to appear naked or even semi-naked at any time. Do you think that it is more important to be clean than to be modest?

4: If you were living in a country where other bathing habits were prevalent and where other standards of cleanliness were acceptable, would you adapt to those

customs, or would you maintain your Japanese bathing/cleanliness/hygiene habits as much as possible?

Prepared as a worksheet for discussion, these four ideas can be introduced as shown in Table 3 below.

Discussion of these questions will give Japanese students the chance to think about their own culture and to recognize, perhaps for the first time, that other cultures think differently about bathing. Students may not be aware that people from other cultures will not be familiar with the bathing culture that is normal in Japan. Students will be interested to learn that Western visitors to Meiji Japan were shocked to discover that standards of personal hygiene were much higher than those in other cultures at the time. In Yokoyama's *Japan in the Victorian Mind* (1987)^[7] a British officer in the Victorian Royal Navy by the name of Sherard Osborn is quoted as commenting on the Japanese people's "highly commendable liking for scrupulous cleanliness". Furthermore, in *Everyday Things in Premodern Japan* Hanley (1997)^[8] discusses cross-cultural comparisons of bathing in Meiji Japan, and suggests that standards of personal hygiene "were at least as high in Japan as the West and very possibly higher".

Table 3: Worksheet for seminar discussion of bathing culture

Bathing	Comments
1. Is bathing culture unique to Japan?	
2. Do you think it possible that Japanese people in the Meiji era were cleaner than people from other countries?	
3. Do Japanese people today like to be clean "for the personal satisfaction of being clean"?	
4. Do you feel embarrassed (modest) when bathing at an <i>onsen</i> or a public bathhouse?	
5. Do you think that you would find it easy or difficult to adapt to bathing traditions in a different culture?	

Modern Japanese students are likely to produce a variety of reasons for why Japanese people like to be clean but they will usually concede that "the personal satisfaction of being clean" forms a part of their thinking, and this can be contrasted with more practical feelings

relating to hygiene that people in other countries might recognize. On the contrary, Japanese students will be unlikely to admit to feeling embarrassed about bathing in public but they may be surprised to learn that many visitors to Japan feel reluctant to go to an *onsen*. According to a 2020 survey by Kimono Tea Ceremony Maikoya^[9], 58.3% of the foreigners who responded to the survey reported some level of discomfort about bathing in public. Finally, question five can help Japanese students to adjust to the reality of life in other countries by making them aware that a daily bath is not practical, or sometimes not even possible, should they be visiting another culture.

3-3 Japanese People (Characteristics of the)

The ten pages of *Things Japanese* which Chamberlain devotes to the characteristics of the Japanese people are also fertile areas for development as a resource for teaching intercultural awareness. It is often remarked that the study of intercultural awareness is not necessarily aimed at learning about other countries. Intercultural awareness is often at its most effective when students are recognizing their own identity and culture in comparison with the identity and culture of other people. To that end, any exercise which introduces the idea of “how others see us” will provide fruitful topics for discussion.

Chamberlain starts the topic by a description of the physical characteristics of Japanese people and he avoids making any controversial judgments himself by quoting at length from a paper written by a German doctor called Baelz. The generalisations which Chamberlain quotes may be said to be typical of the age in which they were written, and Chamberlain recognises that they are unflattering according to Western ideals of beauty. Chamberlain then proceeds to state one of the core concepts of intercultural awareness, by writing that “ideas of beauty differ from land to land”. Furthermore, Chamberlain recognises that the Japanese people living in Meiji Japan thought of the Anglo-Saxon foreign residents in an unflattering way, stating that “in the eyes of the majority of Japanese people” Anglo-Saxons are “a set of big, red, hairy barbarians with green eyes”.

Chamberlain opens his discussion of the mental characteristics of the Japanese by explaining the impossibility of reaching an opinion that will not be criticised by others. Chamberlain continues by declaring

that, once again, he will refrain from expressing his personal opinion and will complete the topic by quoting the opinions of others. The opinions Chamberlain refers to include those of St. Francis Xavier, Will Adams, Engelbert Kaempfer, Sir Rutherford Alcock, and out of seventeen opinions introduced, ten can be considered to be generally positive, three are generally negative, while the remaining four opinions referenced strike a middle course and are neither entirely positive nor completely negative.

As regards the use of this topic for a seminar with the aim of teaching intercultural awareness, the opinion which will be most satisfactory for utilization is that of Chamberlain himself who summarizes the various opinions he has introduced as follows:

“The average judgment formed by those who have lived some time in the country, seems to resolve itself into three principal items on the credit side, which are cleanliness, kindness, and a refined artistic taste, and three items on the debit side, namely, vanity, unbusinesslike habits, and an incapacity for appreciating abstract ideas.”

For use in a seminar these can be summarised as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Chamberlain’s positive and negative characteristics of Japanese people

Positive Characteristics	Negative Characteristics
Cleanliness	Vanity
Kindliness	Unbusinesslike habits
Artistic refinement	Inability to understand abstract ideas

Students can be encouraged to discuss whether cleanliness, kindness, and artistic refinement can still be considered as the most significant positive aspects of the character of Japanese people. At this stage, students can also be invited to discuss whether Chamberlain’s “kindliness” and the culture of *omotenashi* (hospitality) should be considered to be the same idea. Students should then be instructed to propose three overall characteristics for modern Japanese people which can be classified as positive.

With regard to Chamberlain’s three negative characteristics, students can be asked to discuss their feelings about personal vanity and that of members of

their families, their friends, and then finally Japanese people in general. They can be asked to consider whether, based on their experiences of interacting with people from other cultures, or failing this, based on the impression they have of people from other cultures gained from television, the media, or hearsay, do they think that, compared with people from other countries, Japanese people are vain today. Following on from that discussion, the students should discuss whether the “vanity” which Chamberlain reports was actually an obviously extreme characteristic of Japanese people in the Meiji era, or was it simply the different culture of the European or American observers visiting Japan who perceived that the Japanese were more concerned with their appearance than was acceptable in their own cultures.

As for Chamberlain's proposals of “unbusinesslike habits” and “an incapacity for appreciating abstract ideas” students will recognize that these ideas are strongly culturally prejudiced and that they do not, in general, apply to Japanese people today. Chamberlain is, in fact stating that Japanese people in the Meiji era did business according to different cultural rules when compared with Westerners, and that Japanese people had not yet had the opportunity, through lack of exposure, to study the abstract ideas of Western philosophy.

This being so, students should also spend time discussing their ideas for general negative characteristics of modern Japanese people. In conclusion, this exercise will assist Japanese students in recognising the cultural bias inherent in Chamberlain's observations and it will guide them towards an appreciation of “how others see us” which is one of the key concepts for intercultural education.

3-4 Topsy-turvydom

This is the topic within *Things Japanese* which possesses the greatest potential for an effective activity designed for teaching ideas relating to intercultural awareness to university students in Japan. The reason why the topic of topsy-turvydom has this potential is because it introduces the concept of there being “one correct way” of doing something in contrast to which any other method is “incorrect”.

As a warm-up for the activity, it will be necessary to introduce students to the concept of topsy-turvydom. The Cambridge Online Dictionary^[10] defines topsy-turvy

as “(in a state of being) confused, not well organized, or giving importance to unexpected things” and with an additional meaning of “upside down”. Chamberlain's usage of topsy-turvydom is to imply that something is not as it should be according to the opinion of the observer. The other English expressions “inside-out”, or “back-to-front” are closely related to the concept of topsy-turvydom, but each of these expressions relates to a specific, definable instance of something being not as it should be, whereas topsy-turvydom relates to a more general state of things not being correct. Judgments about topsy-turvydom are usually highly influenced by cultural ideas as they indicate that something is contrary to the speaker's prejudiced stereotype of how something should be.

In *Things Japanese*, Chamberlain covers the following topics, all of which, he proposes, show that Japanese people go about performing everyday tasks in an unnatural way from a Western point of view. Table 5 shows these topics as prepared for use in seminar discussion.

Table 5: Chamberlain's list of topsy-turvy aspects of Japanese living

1	Japanese books begin where a European book ends.
2	Men get themselves tipsy before eating dinner, not after eating dinner.
3	Japanese people mount a horse from the right-hand side.
4	Boats are hauled up on the beach stern first instead of bow first.
5	The Japanese language uses the term “east-north” instead of “north-east”.
6	A baby is carried on his mother's back, not in her arms.
7	A postal address starts with the country, then the city, then the street, and moves from the general to the particular.
8	Japanese keys turn towards the lock instead of away from the lock.
9	Japanese carpenters plane wood towards themselves rather than using the plane away from themselves.
10	The best rooms in a Japanese house are at the back.
11	The roof of a house is the first part to be constructed.
12	In bookkeeping, the numerical amount is written first, before the item to which it corresponds.
13	Politeness prompts a Japanese man to remove his shoes rather than his hat when entering a home.
14	Needlework tasks are performed while the garment in question is inside-out.
15	Men have precedence over ladies.

In fact, Chamberlain demonstrates his own, personal, intercultural awareness in his introductory remarks to this topic. He states that,

“It has often been remarked that the Japanese do many things in a way that runs directly counter to European ideas of what is natural and proper. To the Japanese themselves our ways appear equally unaccountable. It was only the other day that a Tokyo lady asked the present writer why foreigners did so many things topsy-turvy, instead of doing them naturally, after the manner of her country-people.”

As with other aspects of *Things Japanese*, it is obvious that many of Chamberlain's examples of Japanese topsy-turvydom will be unsuitable for use in a modern classroom. The number of contemporary students with sufficient knowledge of horsemanship to understand why it would have been shocking to Chamberlain to see horses mounted from the left-hand side, is likely to be very few indeed. There are also likely to be no students at all who have fixed ideas about the “correct” way to haul a boat up onto a beach, or the “proper” manner for planing wood. These topics are therefore not appropriate for seminar discussion because it is impossible to think of something as being topsy-turvy unless you already have a strong opinion about what is the accepted manner for performing that activity. It is remotely possible that Chamberlain included this topic in *Things Japanese* with the subconscious intention of raising the intercultural awareness of his readers.

Even in cases where modern Japanese students may have some personal knowledge or direct experience of the topics covered in “Topsy-turvydom”, and in cases where they may readily agree that Chamberlain's description is applicable to the Japanese style of doing something, in the case of other topics, they are unlikely to have noticed or experienced the reality of people in other countries performing those tasks in accordance with an opposite way of thinking. Modern students may agree that the best rooms in a traditional Japanese house are located at the back; they are unlikely to have a strong impression that the rooms for entertaining visitors in a Victorian house, and therefore those rooms classified as being the “best” rooms, were located at the front of the house. As another example, whereas Japanese students will naturally understand Chamberlain's statement about removing shoes when entering a private dwelling as being a non-negotiable aspect of a Japanese cultural upbringing, they are unlikely to recognize that for Chamberlain, the removal of one's hat upon entering

a home was, for a gentleman in Victorian Great Britain, an equally important part of etiquette.

It is therefore important to introduce this topic in a general manner and to focus on general feelings of something being topsy-turvy and what that feeling can reveal about someone's cultural bias, rather than on the outdated and somewhat inaccessible ideas referenced by Chamberlain. In terms of intercultural awareness, it is necessary to ask the students to consider why it is that Chamberlain considers the Japanese way of doing things to be topsy-turvy, and whether there are modern habits of Japanese people which are considered to be the “correct” way to do something even though other approaches would be possible.

4. Discussion

If the activities outlined in this paper are introduced in a seminar, what should the teacher of intercultural awareness be hoping to accomplish? What will the teacher be hoping to inculcate in the students in order that they will become more interculturally aware?

It has been mentioned above that Chamberlain himself was in tune with many of the lessons of intercultural awareness. Chamberlain writes in his topic concerning the characteristics of Japanese people that “ideas of beauty differ from land to land” and if students are given the opportunity to discuss this idea, they will surely recognize that intercultural awareness is about understanding that ideas about anything may “differ from land to land”. Education in intercultural awareness helps students recognize that, not only is every culture different, and not only that cultures change over time, but also that the ideas that the students themselves hold, for example about beauty or hygiene standards, are strongly influenced by the culture in which they live. By completing the discussion activities relating to the topics of “Bathing” and “Japanese People (Characteristics of the)” students should gain an appreciation of these ideas.

Furthermore, by contemplation of the ideas introduced in Chamberlain's topic of “Topsy-turvydom” students will gain further knowledge of the way in which culture influences the worldview of themselves and others. Cultural conflict is often the result of one set of people believing that their way of doing something is the correct way of doing it. As Barna (1994)^[11] states “Rather than try to comprehend thoughts and feelings

from the worldview of the other, we assume our own culture or way of life is the most natural". In fact, this is also true at the smaller-scale level of personal relationships and one method for avoiding conflict is to allow for the fact that there may be various "correct" ways of doing something. Recognition of Chamberlain's light-hearted observance of how Japanese and Western methods can be different should help students to be less dogmatic in their tolerance of different approaches.

5. Conclusion

Chamberlain's *Things Japanese* was first published more than 130 years ago with the intended purpose of educating people about Japan. Chamberlain's intended readership at that time would have included those Westerners who had already experienced a visit to Japan and also the handful of people who might have been planning a trip to Japan. However, the overwhelming majority of Chamberlain's readers in Great Britain, the British Empire, and America would probably never get the opportunity to sail to the Far East. For most of his readers Chamberlain was therefore describing a world which they would never directly experience.

In contrast, Japanese university students experience the Japanese culture that surrounds them in their daily lives so they do not require education about Japan. Nevertheless, *Things Japanese* can be a useful resource for educating Japanese students about some of the ideas involved in intercultural awareness. Through the process of identifying the Japanese culture of the Meiji era as observed by someone coming from a non-Japanese cultural background, students are able to reflect on how other people might view themselves. Barna (1994) also reflects that intercultural awareness is about helping students so that they "can squarely face the likelihood of meeting up with difference and misunderstanding" and if the activities described in this paper act as a conduit for helping students to achieve this then Chamberlain's observations can find a new way of being educational today.

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概要

大学における異文化理解セミナーの教材としてチェンバレン著『Things Japanese』の利用について

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多様な学生層に適用可能であること、あるいは多国籍の学生で構成される授業での使用に適していることを目標として、異文化理解を促進するための既刊教材では、日本の大学生が通常事前に触れたり個人的な経験を持ったりしていない複数の文化からの事例がしばしば提供される。本稿では、異文化理解教育に関わる概念を日本の大学生により身近に感じてもらうため、明治時代の日本について記したイギリス人著述家の文章を題材とした活動案を提案する。こうした活動を異文化理解教育に取り入れることで、日本の学生は自国文化の諸側面を考察し、異なる文化的背景を持つ他者から見た日本文化の在り方について考察する機会を得られる。

キーワード：異文化理解、国際交流、明治時代日本