

Personnel Reshuffle

It's said that spring is the season of encounters and farewells. In Japan, the new school year, as well as a fair amount of new employment, job transfers, and retirements coincide with sakura, or cherry blossoms, in full bloom, and among all this change there is a strong feeling of impermanence. What has especially made me feel this is the personnel reshuffle of teachers. More than ten teachers are being transferred from Yamada High School this year.

Every year in Japan, some of the teachers working at public high schools are transferred by the board of education to other schools within the prefecture. I was surprised when I first learned about this since it's not something commonly done in the United States. My initial reaction was to think that it was a bit extreme; there are only two weeks between when transfers are announced and when teachers have to start working at their new school. One result of these transfers is that many students and teachers are prevented from having a relationship that lasts from when a student enters the school to when they graduate. This is quite different from what I'm used to, seeing as my favorite teachers from high school were there for the ten years that both of my brothers and I were in high school.

But, when in Rome, I think it's important to try and think from the perspective of the Romans. There are many advantages to such a personnel shift. Shifting teachers around allows for the gender, age, and experience of teachers to be better balanced between schools and facilitates the transfer of knowledge and techniques from one school or teacher to another. Regular transfers can also prevent teachers from getting too settled in and resting on their laurels and have the benefit of rotating the staff working at remote or island placements.

Although I can't say that it's altogether negative, saying farewell is still difficult.



人事異動

春は、別れと出会いの季節だと言われています。新学年・就職・転勤・退職などの春に纏めた人間社会のイベントが、満開の桜と相まって、諸行無常を深く感じさせる季節だと思っています。私に春を多くに意識させたのは人事異動です。今年、十人以上の教員が山田高校から異動されています。

学校での人事異動というのは、毎年公立学校で働いている教員が県内のあちこちに異動することです。アメリカにはこんな異動がないため、聞いたときはびっくりしました。生徒と先生の入学から卒業までの関係を遮り、異動発表から新しい学校で働き始めるまでに二週間しか置かないのは不条理ではないかと思いました。私が高校生

として特に世話になった先生は、私と兄弟が高校に通っていた十年の間ずっと居たから、私の経験と大違いです。

でも、「郷に入っては郷に従え」の視点から考えてみるべきだと思っています。人事異動の長所として、教員の年齢・性別・経験を平均化し、異動した教員が別の学校と教員から得たノウハウをシェアする効果があります。それと一つの学校に慣れて成長しなくなることを防いで、片田舎や遠い島での教員を定期的に戻すのもっと平等かもしれません。

一概に悪いとは言えませんが、やはり別れは悲しいです。