



- 1) In addition, the children learn to do Mathematics, Computer, Physical education, and art as well! Indian style English education in the Little Angels International Preschool starts from the age of 2!
- 2) Advanced level of Indian education is relatively unknown to the Japanese, but it is the pride of Indians

### **A breakthrough for Indian Education in Japan!**

The revival of scholastic ability is the main reason for the miraculous growth of the Indian economy. This very highly qualified human resource remains in great demand throughout the world. India is not just the country known for its “Curry” and “Yoga”, but, is now known for its human resources, and this Nation is now being noticed as the source of high-level of education as well.

#### ***Scene: Eleven 4 year olds engaged in a play.***

“Odd or even?” asked the teacher hiding marbles in her hands.

Each of the children shouted “Even!” or “Odd!” enthusiastically making a wild guess.

Then the teacher revealed all the marbles on the table and the children pounced on the table and began counting them, “one, two.....”

Then the children lined up 2 marbles in a row and in the end one remained. There were 9 marbles in all. Then those who had said “odd” jumped with joy.

These 4 year olds were learning “odd and even” which is taught in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade of Japanese primary schools, and that too, in English! This is obviously possible in the Little Angels International Kindergarten.

### **10 to 15 Minute Sessions**

In India, little kids play this game. They learn the concepts of addition and multiplication through such games learning it naturally, was the satisfied comment from the Preschool Principal Rani Sanku (48), who has a MBA from an Indian University. She became the Finance Manager in a major oil refinery at a young age, but in 1991, she came to Japan as her husband who is an engineer secured a job in Japan. She has two sons, both were educated in Japanese preschools and Japanese public schools.

She became interested in education as she saw the difference in the teaching methods of two different countries: India and Japan. She started by bringing in teaching materials from different countries of the world. She made it a point to visit various local schools whenever she went on overseas trips, thus continuing her research and developing her own curriculum. In 2002, she started English language classes, and 2 years later she accomplished her dream by starting the Kindergarten.

Presently, she has twenty five students in the age group of 2 to 4. Most of them are Japanese nationals. All the conversation in the school is held in English. All the 10 teachers are from Asian countries such as Indonesia, Japan, Semi-Dutch, besides India of course. None is a native speaker of English. The Principal, Rani believes that people who have learned English as a second language can teach it better.

While the pronunciation is typically Indian, for example saying “three” instead of “sree” that does not really bother Ms. Keiko Shimazu (34) who is sending her 4 year old daughter to this school and she says: “Whenever I say ‘sink’, my daughter corrects me by saying its not ‘sink’ but ‘think’. American and British forms of English are not the only versions! What is more important is being able to communicate well.”

All days, from Monday to Friday, are full of curricular activities. English, Mathematics, Computer, Science, Art, Library, Physical Education, Music, etc., Rani adds, “.... it is more like a primary school, but the concentration span of these kids lasts for about 10 to 15 minutes. Therefore all activities are more like games through which the children learn”.

### **Bold assertion develops confidence**

“My daughter was attending a regular preschool earlier, but I felt that this school has something special which my daughter can gain by being in this place, so I changed her school when she was 4” said Ms. Junko Ohira (38). Ms. Ohira had studied abroad and worked in a foreign company but realized that learning English becomes difficult as one grows older. She wants her child to learn English in a natural environment. She is more than satisfied with her child being in this school, not only with the level of English, but also the rich curriculum; the high level of computer education, using Indian software, and also the Indian style of teaching Mathematics, where 4 year olds are taught addition and multiplication.

I then attended a math class for 2 year olds. The children had already counted up to 20 and started practicing writing the numbers when a child asked the teacher in English “Can I go to the toilet?” and off she went off to the toilet.

The Japanese children attending the kindergarten use Japanese at home and English at school and they have a clear demarcation about it in their mind. They understand almost 100% of what the teacher says.

There is a boy in the 4 year-old class who cannot sit still for even 5 minutes, but once he is in front of the computer he was engrossed in the games which involves finding rhyming words, common theme identification.

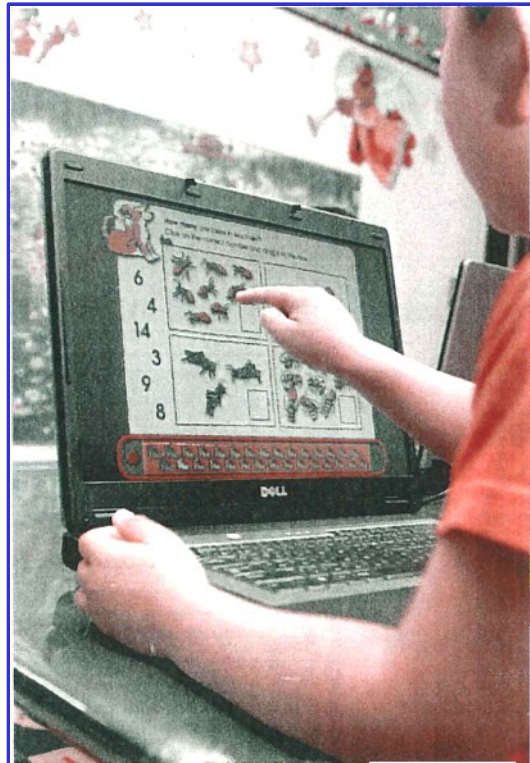
“We are not teaching the subjects here but the prime object is to stimulate the brain. This leads children to learn, and helps in their growth” said Principal Rani.

Rani wants the children to especially learn confidence. (Indians are known for their confidence and assertiveness) There is a common joke: “A competent chairman in International Conferences is the one who can keep the Indian contingent quiet and make the Japanese contingent talk.” Such is the confidence and assertiveness of Indians. She wants to inculcate that strength from a tender age.

This is why they have “show and tell” once every week. The children bring in their favorite toys or anything that fits the description of the theme of that week and they speak in front of other children, in English, about why they like it, and why they selected it.

The monthly tuition fee for a 5 day course/week is 55000 yen. The annual charge for text books and admission fee is about 80,000 yen.

“It is certainly expensive compared to other preschools, but when compared to the international schools, it is quite cheap. However, this investment made today is very cheap as compared to the future of these children.”





### *Primary School Children know double digits till 99*

Of late, some of the Japanese are sending their middle and high school aged children to boarding schools in India instead of International schools in Japan, Europe or America. India has many boarding schools which are a legacy of British colonialism. Among them, the Woodstock school is very popular among foreigners, including Japanese, as the language of Hindi is not a compulsory subject.

The school takes nearly 8 hours by car from the capital, New Delhi. This 150 year old school is located on a plateau at the height of 2000 meters, from where one can see the Himalayas.

Ms.Akari Ono (16) who was in the Thai International for her primary 5-6 grade continued her studies in this school (i.e Woodstock). She went to Thailand with her mother Harumi (45) who was sent as a Japanese language teacher from ICU. When the time came for middle school she had the choice of either coming back or staying abroad.

“Finally, I decided to continue my studies in the English medium as I had taken pains for 2 years to be able to speak in English” said Akari.

The Woodstock school was selected by Harumi as she knew many among her students or relatives of the parish of the ICU church had studied in that school.

“All those students were very adaptable and tolerant as Woodstock had the experience of naturally accepting other cultures. Given the choice, I wanted to send my daughter to Woodstock, not to an American school”.

Harumi is satisfied (about her experience) of sending Akari (to the Woodstock school).

“As I expected, Akari is getting interested in Nepal and Asia and most of the student are learning musical instruments. They are getting comprehensive education including music and fine arts which I liked about that school.”

Tuition fees, hostel, boarding charges, and Akari’s ( ) lesson altogether comes to less than 2,000,000 yen which compared to European or American boarding schools is quite cheap. The number of other foreigners in that school up to September 2005 is 246 out of the total of 472, including 16 Japanese students. Most of their parents heard about this school from someone, so it is just word of mouth that has brought these people here.

Recently, many IT Engineers from India have come to reside in Tokyo especially these past two years and an Indian International School was started in Edo-ku. While there are many European and American International schools, the Indian parents feel that the education standard is not as high as the Indian schools where the students learn about double digits up to 99 in Primary school. So, this Indian School was started to provide for the specific requirement. Currently, there are 140 students ranging from the Kindergarten to Middle school.

Jagmohan Chandrani who has contributed to starting this school said, “Once the Japanese know about the comprehensiveness of Indian education they will put their children in this school as well.”