

**Assimilation to American Life vs. Maintenance of Mother Culture :**

Japanese and Korean Children in New York

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**異文化接触と母国文化**

—在ニューヨーク日本人・韓国人子女の場合—

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**要 約**

本論文ではニューヨーク在住の日本人ならびに韓国人子女をとりあげ、それぞれが示すアメリカ文化への同化の現象と日本・韓国文化の獲得と維持の状況を究明しようとする。

まず注目すべきは、アメリカ文化浸透の度合いは、両親の将来設計の違いによるところが大きいという点である。すなわち、一方では、日本人の両親は、いずれ日本に帰国することを前提として子供の将来を考える。従って、理想は別として、現実には日本人としての知識、教養、受験競争力を身につけてほしいと考える。他方、韓国人の両親は自分たちがアメリカ永住を考えているため、道具としてのアメリカ文化、言語能力は歓迎するが、心だけは韓国人としての誇りを忘れない人間に成長してほしいと願っている。

これを反映して、日本人の中でも、特に全日制の日本人学校に学ぶ子供はその生活のほとんどが事実上日本のそれと大差なく、アメリカ文化の影響は非常に限られている。一方、週日は現地の学校でアメリカ人と共に学び、週末のみ日本の補習授業校に通う子供は、アメリカ滞在が長期化するにつれ、アメリカの文化を身につけ、同時に日本文化の維持が困難となる。その境界は滞米4～5年と見られる。ところが、韓国人子女の場合は、ほとんどがアメリカ文化の影響を強く受けている。しかし、親の強い希望もあり、韓国人としての自覚は、家庭と韓国人学校とで人為的に子供たちの心に植え付けられつつある。

**I. Introduction**

These days, an increasing number of people are traveling and living in other countries

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than their own for many reasons. Some, like most Japanese businessmen living abroad, are assigned to offices abroad for several years or longer. Some, like most immigrants in the world, choose to leave their native countries and live in their new world. In both cases, they are accompanied by their families, including small children. Raising and educating children abroad may cause a number of serious difficulties in mother tongue training.

In most cases, parents expect their children to have a good command of the language of the host country in order to function as full-fledged members of the society, but at the same time, they expect their children to inherit the culture and language of their motherland, and to be proud of it. The parental expectations on the maintenance of their motherland's culture and language are varied. The parents' expectations are usually reflected in their choices of education for their children. While children are small, most decisions are made by parents in the course of education. Once the decisions are made, the kind of education that parents provide decide the life style of their children both at school and at home.

Here in order to examine the different style of education for the maintenance of parents' mother culture and language and children's assimilation to the host country and culture, we take the cases of Japanese children and Korean children living in the greater New York area.

On the one hand, most of the Japanese living in New York are businessmen assigned by their companies to New York offices for the limited period of several years or longer, and they are returning to Japan one day when they will be assigned back to Japan. On the other hand, most Koreans in New York anticipate that they will stay in the United States permanently. This difference of parents' life plans gives a striking difference in their children's education in mother tongue and motherland's culture. It shows the different styles of education, different emphasis in education, and different effects on children's assimilation to American life and culture. In the following chapter, we examine the kind of education that is provided to the Japanese and Korean children living in the greater New York area for the purpose of maintenance of mother tongue and culture.

## **II. Japanese and Korean People in New York : Past and Present**

### **A. Japanese**

For a long time, New York has attracted people from the world as a center of global business activities. After World War II, the number of Japanese businessmen in New York soared since the 1950s and has now reached fifty thousand. Among them, 77% are temporary residents who plan to go home after a stay of several years.<sup>(1)</sup> It apparently shows that approximately a quarter of Japanese residents in New York have either decided

or considered staying in the United States permanently.

Statistics also indicates that over 80% of those temporary residents are employees of Japanese private corporations and their families. In this way, we can briefly state that the majority of the Japanese people living in the greater New York area are temporary residents who will go back to Japan at a certain point of time when they are reassigned to their offices in Japan. It is also true, however, that for reasons of efficiency in management, more corporations tend to keep the same person in the same country for a longer period of time, more than five years or even ten years at a stretch. This may result in giving more opportunities to families to consider staying in the country permanently, partly for the sake of their children's education and partly for the convenience of living in the same country to which they have grown accustomed.

Geographically, they tend to live in so-called Japanese communities in and around New York, such as Queens, Bronx, New Jersey, Westchester, etc., where there are Japanese or Oriental grocery stores, hospitals, etc. The Queens area is most densely populated by permanent residents, running their own business in New York. On the other hand, more affluent Japanese, intending to live in New York temporarily, tend to live in Westchester.

#### B. Koreans

On the other hand, the Korean population has shown quite a different picture from the Japanese. In the 1950s and 1960s, many Koreans arrived in the United States as temporary residents such as students and employees of Korean corporations; eventually, many of them did not go back to Korea but stayed there permanently. The greatest inflow of Koreans, however, took place in the 1960s and 1970s. Unlike their predecessors, they came to the States with a strong intention of starting their own businesses and rooting in the new world from the beginning. The most popular types of business among those Koreans were wig business, food retailing, restaurant, dry cleaning, etc. Thus, for political, economic or other reasons, more Koreans expect to emigrate to the United States than Japanese, and the number of those Koreans has reached one hundred and fifty thousand in New York.

Now that there are people who arrived in New York twenty years ago as well as those who have just arrived, we can observe social stratification among the Korean population, which is reflected in their geographical distribution. This means that richer Koreans are now moving out of the inner city such as Manhattan or Queens and finding their places in the suburbs such as Westchester or northern New Jersey where houses and living costs are much greater. In this way, they try to settle in places with a higher social status and better educational environment for their children.

As far as the residential area is concerned, Japanese and Koreans tend to live close together; usually Japanese come first, and then Koreans move in. However, it is clear that

the plans about their future lives are quite different. These differences in the way of thought and life plan between the Japanese and the Koreans in New York are naturally reflected in their opinions on their children's education. When we look at the schools for the mother tongue and culture education both for the Japanese and the Koreans, they apparently look like each other. But the contents of education and the way of operation are not alike at all. In the following chapter, we examine the system and contents of education at both Japanese and Korean schools in the greater New York area.

### **III. Schools for Japanese and Korean Children**

#### **A. Japanese Schools**

For the purpose of teaching the mother tongue to the children of the members of the Nippon Club, a mutual assistance association of major Japanese corporations in New York, a small school was opened with 36 students in 1962. After the school was opened to everybody, its enrollment increased rapidly, and it has now surpassed 4,000, including kindergarten, elementary, middle, and high school students.<sup>(2)</sup>

As the name of this school, Japanese Weekend School of New York, implies, it is a part-time school, meeting only on Saturdays. This means that these students study at local schools to receive an education to become Americans with American classmates, and that on Saturdays (only morning for kindergarten and elementary school children, and all day for middle and high school students) they study the Japanese language and other subjects.

This school is managed by the local Japanese people, but partly subsidized by the Japanese government in terms of rent of the school buildings and other costs. Financially, the public support reaches approximately thirty percent of its total expenditure.<sup>(3)</sup> As the Japanese population is spread in a broad area in greater New York, this school has to be operated in a number of locations in and out of New York. Now children are studying at thirteen locations, and the number is increasing steadily.

There are more than two hundred classes and teachers altogether. Recruiting as many as two hundred teachers in a limited area of New York is not an easy task, especially if you seek for people of quality and experience. As a result, most of those two hundred part-time teachers are without proper teaching certificates and experience. Due to the nature of the Japanese population in New York, many of them are forced to leave their positions without completing an academic year. The rate of turnover is approximately twenty-five percent both for students and teachers.

In order to give assistance to those inexperienced teachers by preparing a curriculum and teaching materials or demonstrating model teaching, eight experienced teachers are sent from Japan by the Ministry of Education. They usually do not teach students directly

but the teachers. In addition, the Ministry of Education also sends textbooks to be distributed free of charge to all the Japanese children in the area.

The major subject taught at this part-time school is naturally Japanese. Teaching the Japanese language to children, and helping them to adapt to the Japanese school system when they return to Japan are their two major aims of schooling. They are teaching not only the Japanese language but also subjects such as Mathematics. (See Table 1.) For the middle and high school students, they also teach natural and social sciences.

TABLE1 SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE AT JAPANESE WEEKEND SCHOOL OF NEW YORK

	9 : 15- 10 : 00	10 : 05- 10 : 50	11 : 05- 11 : 50	11 : 55- 12 : 40		
Kindergarten	Pre-school Programs in Japanese					
Elementary S.	Japanese	Japanese	Math	Japanese		
	9 : 20- 10 : 05	10 : 15- 11 : 00	11 : 10- 11 : 55	12 : 45- 1 : 30	1 : 40- 2 : 25	2 : 35- 3 : 20
Middle S.	Japanese	Math	Japanese	Math	Natur.Sc.	Soc.Sc.
High S.	Japanese	Math	Japanese	Math	Soc.Sc.	Natur.Sc.

Source : The Japanese Weekend School, *Gakko Yoran* [School guide] , 1986, pp.15-16.

However, in teaching those subjects to children in New York, there are always dilemmas: (1) for those children who have been in the U. S. for many years, learning Japanese on top of their regular school activities at local American schools is a heavy burden; (2) the limited number of hours spent for studying at this school makes it impossible for both teachers and students to learn everything that is assigned to regular students in Japan; (3) learning about the geography, the natural phenomena typical of Japan, and the social system which they have never been familiar with is almost impossible.

More problems at this school come from the fact that children are assigned to classes automatically, based on their age, although their abilities in the Japanese language vary greatly. Some were born in the States while some recently have arrived from Japan. Although everybody understands that some measures have to be taken to solve these problems, so far, all attempts to establish special classes for those children who need extra attention in Japanese have turned out unsuccessfully mainly because of parents' unfavorable reaction.

Compared with the average Japanese parents, those who send their children to local schools on weekdays and to this part-time Japanese school on Saturdays are more host-country/host-culture oriented. Therefore, they expect their children to learn the culture and the language of the host country, English, which will surely be useful in the future.

However, it does not mean that they do not care about the Japanese language studies than on English although the time spent for it is very limited. Here we observe a very complicated aspect of Japanese children's education in New York, in which the school is expected to solve two conflicting problems.

In order to solve the problem and to meet the demands of the parents who strongly worry about their children's smooth adaptation to school life in Japan and the Japanese school system, the Japanese School of New York, a full-time school run on the Japanese system was founded in 1975 for children from the fifth through ninth grades. This school is officially recognized both by the Japanese and the New York State governments as a regular school, and therefore, the graduates are eligible to enter both Japanese and American high schools. In reality, however, most of them return to Japan upon graduation of this school. Thus, it is natural that all the attention of students, parents, teachers and administrators is directed to their smooth entry/re-entry to the Japanese school system. Unlike the part-time school, the number of students is fixed—560 at the maximum, with long waiting lists for the lower grades and some vacancies for the ninth grade. In order to teach them, they basically follow the Japanese school calendar and curriculum suggested by the Ministry of Education, except for some special subjects such as English (five hours a week) and American social studies (one hour a week). Although those special subjects are taught by locally employed American teachers, the rest are taught by teachers selected from all over Japan and sent by the Ministry of Education. They are assigned to teach at this school for three years. Including all the expenditures on these teachers from Japan, the financial support by the Japanese government at this school is much more extensive than at the part-time school. Approximately sixty percent of its total expenditures is covered by the public support; the private sector, including parents, pay the rest.<sup>(4)</sup> Since this Japanese School of New York was founded, people with children over the fifth grade have had a choice between the full-time and part-time Japanese schools. Generally speaking, those who have a stronger intention to raise and educate their children as typical Japanese tend to choose the full-time Japanese school, while those who expect their children to be more "international" with a good command of English and a better understanding of Western culture tend to choose the combination of the local school and the part-time Japanese school. Nowadays, in the appropriate age group living in the New York area, over thirty percent choose the full-time Japanese school instead of the part-time.

#### B. Korean Schools

The origin of the mother culture and mother tongue education among Koreans in the U. S. dates back many decades. Since the early period of time when Koreans came, Korean churches, founded and operated by Korean priests as ethnic centers, have played an

important role in offering not only religious services but also daily assistance to meet the needs of Koreans. From the beginning, offering Korean language education to their children was one of the major concern among them. Thus, as a part of the religious activities at Sunday schools, most Korean churches started to hold Korean language classes for half an hour or one hour every week. The number of those language classes numbered in the hundreds.

In the 1960s and 1970s, however, the importance of recognizing the roots of the minorities and encouraging them to be proud of their history and culture was emphasized in the United States. This atmosphere influenced the Korean community, and many Korean parents began to feel it necessary to give their children more systematic Korean language/culture education at more formal types of educational institutions.

It was in 1973 that the first Korean school without attachment to any church was born in New York: the Korean School of New York. Nowadays, according to the Korean Consulate-General in New York, four out of ten registered Korean schools are operated by non-religious groups, and these are increasing in number. However, we have to note that all of these Korean schools in New York are part-time schools, operated either on Saturdays or Sundays, and give only supplementary education on top of the major part of their education in English at local schools. This is explained by the fact that most Koreans living in New York intend to stay there permanently, and thus expect their children to become full-fledged members of American society.

Unlike Japanese schools, Korean schools are managed and operated individually. Each of them is unique and has a specific group of the Korean population as its clients. For example, the Korean School of New York was established by the current principal who believed that education should be independent of any religious group. The students at this school are from families of rather high socio-economic status in the Korean community scattered in and around New York. Most parents are attracted by the personality and educational philosophy of the principal. The Korean School of New Jersey, most recently established with the largest student body among all, draws its students from affluent families who live in northern New Jersey. In establishing this school, the parents took the initiative, secured funds, and entrusted its operations to the current principal. On the contrary, the Korean School of Queens was originally a church school located in the district most densely populated by Koreans for many years. Therefore, this school's activities range from Korean language/culture education for children to American language/culture education for elderly Koreans. In this way, Korean schools in the New York area have been founded in different ways with different ideas in order to satisfy different needs of various groups in the area.

Although all of these schools are separate institutions, they share very similar purposes

TABLE2 SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE AT KOREAN SCHOOL OF NEW YORK

Classes	9 : 00-10 : 00		10 : 10-10 : 50	10 : 50-11 : 30	11 : 30-12 : 15
1	Korean Lang.	*	Music/Culture	Korean Lang.	Electives :  Classic Dance Tekondo Theater Composition Korean Lang. Abacus, etc.  Korean History Composition
2	Korean Lang.	S	Kor. Culture	Music	
3	Korean Lang.	N		Kor. History	
4	Korean Lang.		Music	Korean Lang.	
5	Korean Lang.		Calligraphy	Music	
6,7	Korean Lang.	A		Kor. History	
8	Korean Lang.		Chorus	Calligraphy	
Middle S. (A)	Korean Lang.	C		Composition	
(B)	Korean Lang.	K	Grammar	Korean Life	
(C)	Korean Lang.		Chinese Char.	Korean Life	
		*			
Kindergarten	Korean Language, Singing, Dancing, Art, etc.				

Source : School Guide of Korean School of New York.

and aims of education which are represented by those of the Korean School of New Jersey : (1) to educate children to have a healthy personality ; (2) to give the spirit of Korea through studies in the Korean language ; (3) to foster the pride and independence in children's minds through studies in Korean history and culture ; and (4) to give children the idea of contributing to Korea, America, and the world as Korean-Americans.<sup>(5)</sup>

Based on this principle, they have classes in the Korean language, history and culture for children from kindergarten to high school, but the number of high school students is relatively small. The classes meet only in the morning on Saturdays. The Korean language is required of all the children. Unlike the students at Japanese schools, these Korean children are assigned to classes based on their ability in the Korean language. As the level of proficiency in Korean language among the children is diversified, very careful consideration is required in the process of placement. Considering the fact that most of these children are familiar only with American culture, and that they may not need the same proficiency as average children back in Korea since their parents are going to stay in the U. S. permanently, their goal of achievement is not as high as that of Japanese schools. For this reason, several groups of Korean teachers living in the United States have published textbooks designed particularly for Korean children in the U. S.

For smaller children, Korean history is combined with culture and language. Korean culture particularly includes singing, dancing, painting, calligraphy, Tekondo, etc., and they are usually electives.

Teachers, including principals, are all part-time, and locally recruited. For cultural subjects and history, teachers are supposed to have sufficient academic or specialized background of the field. Unlike Japanese schools, no experienced teachers are sent from Korea. The lack of assistance by the Korean government is true not only in terms of



personnel but in most other aspects. They receive a very small amount of subsidy from the Korean government, and only some textbooks may be available free of charge from the Consulate-General upon request. Therefore, almost all the expenditures have to be paid by contribution and tuition from parents. In this way, these Korean schools are much more independent of each other and of the Korean government. And the parents' and teachers' expectation in children's achievement in their mother tongue is geared to a more moderate level than is the case in Japanese schools.

Although the Japanese and the Korean part-time schools look similar in their appearance, the nature of their education seems to be considerably different. In the following chapter, we examine the difference of children's life style, assimilation to American culture, and maintenance of their mother culture and language, with careful attention to the parents' ideas in raising and educating their children.

#### **IV. Maintenance of Mother Culture and Language vs. Assimilation to American Culture**

In order to clarify the assimilation patterns of Japanese and Korean children in New York to American culture and life, the writer conducted surveys of both groups separately. Due to the evident difference in many aspects between the children studying at the full-time and part-time Japanese schools, the Japanese group was divided into those two groups for the purpose of this investigation. The number of samples is 307 children and their parents for the full-time school and 316 for the part-time school. As to Koreans, we limit ourselves to the children and their parents of more formal type of Korean schools to match the Japanese counterparts. The samples are 102 children and 69 of their parents from seven Korean schools.<sup>(6)</sup> In order to match the children of the full-time Japanese school, samples were also taken from the children of the fifth through ninth grades for both Japanese and Korean groups. The following examination is based on the results of these surveys conducted in New York.

##### **A. Life Style**

Children's life style is prescribed by the kind of school they go. This is true especially of Japanese children. Those children who study at the Japanese School of New York (full-time) are physically in the United States, but practically they live in a small Japanese community. In the morning, parents drive them to the school-bus stop, and children ride the bus to school with Japanese schoolmates, speaking only in Japanese. At school, they learn from Japanese teachers using Japanese textbooks except for English and American social studies. A couple of days a week, they spend some time for extra-curricular

activities such as sports at school. And they go home again by school-bus. Reflecting extremely severe competition in entrance examinations for colleges and universities in Japan, many of them study at "juku" or cram school after coming home. When they have time, they play with mainly Japanese friends. When they have some extra time, they read books in Japanese, watch TV programs broadcast in Japanese, and talk with Japanese friends on the telephone. In this way, although they live in New York, they are not really taking advantage of being there.

This fact shows that their parents' anticipation in sending their children to this school is not fully realized in these circumstances. According to the survey, parents of this school expect their children "to become full-fledged and well-disciplined Japanese citizens with a firm sense of identity as Japanese. On top of being Japanese, it is also their concern that their children may take advantage of being in America by mastering English and widening their world view." Compared with the reality mentioned above, parents' expectation to foster the "Japaneseness" in their children is mostly realized in their life style. However, the latter part, their expectation to add "international" character in them seems to be difficult for the children to achieve in their everyday life. On the other hand, the Japanese children studying at local American schools on weekdays and having supplementary Japanese education at the Japanese Weekend School of New York (part-time) are experiencing quite a different life style. Usually they live a typical American way of life as American children during the weekdays. On Friday evening, their "Japanese" studies begin. Children and their parents have to work hard to finish homework due on Saturday. Many are tormented by that. On Saturday, children go to the Weekend School either by school bus or by car. Kindergarten and elementary school children spend approximately four hours in the morning studying Japanese and Mathematics. Middle and high school students study Japanese, Mathematics, Natural Science, and Social Sciences all day on Saturday. For those who have been in the U. S. for a long time, this can be a very difficult day of the week, but for those who have just arrived in the U. S., this is the only day that they can express themselves without reservation. At this school, all the classes are conducted in Japanese, but between classes and during the lunch time, some speak in Japanese while others speak in English with friends. Because they are at this school on Saturdays, they miss some fun activities of local schools such as sports or band practice. In this way, they live in both American and Japanese societies, with a different balance depending on the length of stay in the States.

Then what do their parents expect them to be? They admit the importance of maintenance of the Japanese language for their children. However, they recognize more value and importance in being "international" through their studies at local schools and interaction with multi-racial combinations of friends both at school and in the neigh-

borhood. They are worried about the lack of discipline in this process of Americanization, but still they believe that children can get more than they lose. In this sense, sending their children to local schools and the supplementary Japanese school is the right choice. However, it is also true that right before they go back to Japan, many parents do not know what to do with their children's lack of knowledge about Japan and the Japanese language.

Korean children's life style is similar to the Japanese at the part-time school. On weekdays, they study at local schools as Americans and only on Saturdays, they study the Korean language, history and culture at the part-time Korean school. Unlike Japanese children, they usually do not have any homework, and therefore their Fridays are much more peaceful than that of the Japanese children. However, reflecting parents' intention of staying there permanently, it is not easy for children to force themselves to come to this Korean school on Saturdays to study a very difficult "foreign language," Korean.

Parents send their children to this school with such an idea as follows. They appreciate the level and type of education that America offers to children. Therefore, they believe that it is very meaningful to get all the skills and knowledge that they can get at local schools. On top of such skills, however, they expect their children to have a Korean spirit and mind by absorbing Korean culture and tradition. In this way, from the parents' point of view, it may be possible to divide mind from their daily life. But the problem of uncertainty in their identity arises in children's minds especially when they reach high school or college age.

## B. Language

In order to examine the degree of assimilation to the American culture, we observe the language those children use. Naturally, they use different languages with different people—parents, siblings, friends, etc.

Among Japanese, partly due to the fact that those who have been in the States for over

TABLE3 LANGUAGE USAGE : JAPANESE OR ENGLISH

	Parents		Siblings		Friends	
	f-t**	p-t***	f-t	p-t	f-t	p-t
Japanese	91.5%	79.7%	69.8%	49.1%	65.1%	19.3%
Japanese & English	5.2%	13.9%	24.4%	35.6%	19.9%	30.1%
Japanese & English*	0.3%	3.2%				
English	0.0%	0.6%	5.7%	15.3%	8.8%	43.4%

\* Hear Japanese & Speak English

\*\* f-t : full-time Japanese School of New York

\*\*\* p-t : part-time Japanese Weekend School of New York

five years are limited in number, especially at the full-time Japanese school, the rate of dependence on the mother tongue is much higher than Koreans. Table 3 shows that their conversation with parents is overwhelmingly in Japanese at Japanese homes. Considering the low dependence on the Japanese language among part-time school students in speech

TABLE4 LANGUAGE USAGE : KOREAN OR ENGLISH

	Parents	Siblings	Grandparents
Korean	24%	1%	44%
Korean & English	47%	10%	10%
Korean & English*	20%		
English	9%	83%	1%
N. A.		6%	45%

\* Hear Korean & Speak English

with friends, lower than 20 percent, parents (79.7%) are apparently trying hard to direct their children to speak in Japanese at least at home. Here it is safe to say that the degree of assimilation to American culture among the majority of the full-time Japanese school students is very limited. On the other hand, the majority of the part-time Japanese school students have been assimilated to the American culture to a certain degree.

On the contrary, as Table 4 shows, the degree of assimilation of Korean children to the American culture is considerably higher. This may show their very natural, unforced state of assimilation in the figure of language usage with their siblings. Judging from this, we can say that most of them depend on English in terms of daily language. At the same time, it is understandable that they use mainly Korean when they communicate with their grandparents because of the limited knowledge of English on the part of grandparents. However it is questionable how far they are really communicating with each other in Korean. When we look at the figures in the column of "parents," we can see the efforts by parents trying to offer an environment to their children to speak Korean at least at home. Judging from the fact that about half of those children were born in the United States, and that most of the rest arrived in the States before they reached school age, it should be noted that approximately a quarter of them are using Korean as a mode of communication with their parents at home.

### C. Friends

For children, friends are very important. Especially when we mention the "best friend," he/she should be the person who is the most comfortable to be with. If children are bound more by the native culture, it may be more probable that they choose Japanese/Korean friends. On the other hand, if they feel more comfortable with the host (American)

culture, they may probably choose Americans as their friends. In order to see how much their minds are open to the native culture or American, we observe the "best friend" for each group of children in this section.

For those children at the full-time Japanese school, friends are mostly Japanese both at school and in the neighborhood. Approximately seventy percent of them do not have American friends at all. If we focus on the "best friend," 62 percent are from the Japanese school, while no one named Americans as the best friend. This fact implies that the culture those children at the full-time Japanese school are comfortable with is nothing but Japanese culture. On the other hand, those children who study at both local American schools and the part-time Japanese school naturally have good friends in both American and Japanese communities. As to the best friend, particularly, approximately 40 percent of them name Americans, which is quite different from the figure of the counterparts of the full-time Japanese school students. Judging from their life style mentioned above, this result may be predictable.

On the other hand, among Korean children, friends are basically from the American community. Some of them may happen to be Koreans, but most of them are Americans either at school or in the neighborhood.

#### D. Schools

In this section, we examine the state of mind of children through the school of preference. Here we assume that the more they are assimilated into the American culture, the more they may prefer local American schools to Japanese/Korean schools.

As to Japanese children, since the full-time Japanese school children study at only one school currently, we focus on the part-time Japanese school children. For those children, their preference differs slightly in the cases where they are asked about the school program and the friendship. Shortly after arrival in the United States, less than half of the population prefer the school program of the American schools to that of the part-time Japanese school. (See Table 5.) This trend holds for two years. After that, the percentage of students who prefer American schools constantly grows. On the other hand, about 25 percent of students prefer the Japanese school programs for four years and then the percentage drops to a level below 10 percent. The end of the fourth year seems to be a watershed in terms of compatibility with studies in Japanese.

In the first year at the American schools, the school life seems rather enjoyable. Many American classmates must be friendly. About one-third of the recent arrivals prefer friends at American schools, and another third prefer the Japanese school. (See Table 6.) However, the opinion about American schools in terms of friendship goes down to its lowest level during the second year, and about 45 percent prefer their Japanese school

TABLE5 SCHOOL OF PREFERENCE IN TERMS OF SCHOOL PROGRAM

Length of Stay in the U.S.	American School	Not Sure	Japanese School
Less than 1 year	37.3%	39.0%	23.7%
1-2 years	32.9%	40.0%	24.3%
2-3 years	50.0%	28.6%	21.4%
3-4 years	51.5%	24.2%	24.2%
4-5 years	71.4%	21.4%	7.1%
5-6 years	84.6%	7.7%	7.7%
6-10 years	70.4%	18.5%	7.4%
10 years or more	66.7%	22.2%	11.1%
Born in the U.S.	72.0%	24.0%	4.0%
Total	49.7%	29.7%	17.7%

TABLE6 SCHOOL OF PREFERENCE IN TERMS OF FRIENDSHIP

Length of Stay in the U.S.	American School	Not Sure	Japanese School
Less than 1 year	33.9%	32.2%	33.9%
1-2 years	15.7%	40.0%	42.9%
2-3 years	21.4%	40.5%	38.1%
3-4 years	24.2%	33.3%	42.4%
4-5 years	64.3%	14.3%	21.4%
5-6 years	38.5%	30.8%	30.8%
6-10 years	55.6%	22.2%	18.5%
10 years or more	50.0%	44.4%	5.6%
Born in the U.S.	72.0%	24.0%	4.0%
Total	33.9%	32.6%	31.0%

friends in this period. This trend holds into the third year, and from the fourth year, the situation turns over quickly and steadily. The higher the grade is, the more students prefer the friendship at the Japanese school. It is probably because the students of higher age may feel more difficulty in making close friends over the language barrier.

In this way, when we look at those two aspects in school of preference, we can say that their attitude toward schools turns from the Japanese school to the American in the fifth year of their stay in the U. S. In other words, their assimilation to American culture is accelerated after four years of stay.

Among Korean children, on the other hand, since most of them have been in the United States either since their birth or from the time they started their school education, there seems to be little significance in analyzing the result according to the number of years they have been in the States. Instead, we look at their preference according to the gender of the samples. Since they have been in the States for a long time, over 80 percent of Korean

children prefer local American schools to Korean schools. (See Table 7.) A little less than 20 percent for both boys and girls seem to enjoy programs at the Korean school as much as regular American schools.

In the school of preference in terms of friendship, there is a significant difference between boys and girls. While boys like American friends as much as they like American schools' programs, girls are much more attracted by Korean friends. (See Table 8.) Only 56 percent of girls clearly state that they prefer friends at local American schools, which is significantly lower than their preference of American schools in terms of the school program. This implies that although about half of them were born in the United States and most of the rest came to the States before they started their education, a considerable percentage of girls feel more comfortable being with Korean friends than with Americans. This may be partly backed by the fact that girls are taking their coming to the Korean schools more seriously and that they tend to be affected by parents' ideas in their daily lives. Considering this, it may be safe to say that although they are reluctant to study at Korean schools, they feel compatible with the atmosphere at the school and feel happy to

TABLE7 KOREAN CHILDREN'S SCHOOL OF PREFERENCE IN TERMS OF SCHOOL PROGRAM

	American School	Not Sure	Korean School
Boys	81%	19%	---
Girls	80%	17%	3%
Total	80%	18%	2%

TABLE8 KOREAN CHILDREN'S SCHOOL OF PREFERENCE IN TERMS OF FRIENDSHIP

	American School	Not Sure	Korean School
Boys	75%	22%	3%
Girls	56%	27%	17%
Total	64%	24%	12%

TABLE9 MOTHERLAND

Korea	Not Sure	U. S.
78%	7%	15%

be with Korean friends there. In this way, their acquisition and maintenance of Korean culture is considerably encouraged by studying at Korean schools. In other words, without this experience of mixing with other Korean children and studying the Korean language and culture with them, it may be quite difficult for those children born in the States or who

came to this country at an early age to be "Koreans" at all.

This tendency can also be observed in their sense of identity. Although most of them do not have any clear memory of Korea, as many as 78 percent of them think of their motherland as Korea. (See Table 9.) While they usually live a typical American life as "American" children, pledging allegiance to the American flag every morning in the classroom, their minds are closely bound by their motherland or Korean culture. This is clearly the result of the influence of their parents, grandparents and schools.

## V. Conclusion

It is clear that the assimilation patterns of the Japanese and Korean children are quite different mainly due to the facts that Japanese parents plan to go back to Japan in several years while Koreans intend to stay there permanently, and that the length of stay in the United States for Korean children is much longer than that of Japanese children. As Japanese parents consider Japan as their arena, they suggest that their children should "take advantage" of their experiences in America by mastering English, a very useful tool, and adding some "international" flavor in their mind. In this sense, Japanese parents never worry that someday their children's minds may be occupied by American ways of thought and culture. They also naturally consider that the Japanese language is much more important than English. Based on their slightly different balance in value between devotion to the Japanese system and attachment to the American, some parents send their children to the Japanese School of New York (full-time), and others to the Japanese Weekend School of New York (part-time). Those children studying at the full-time Japanese school seem to stay being Japanese with almost no "international" flavor. On the other hand, the part-time Japanese school children seem to turn to be more like Americans as they stay in the States longer. The turning point in assimilation to the American culture may be in the fourth or the fifth year of stay, even though parents still expect them to be "Japanese."

Korean parents who plan to stay in the States permanently take the meaning of giving proper American education to their children very seriously. Therefore, they suggest that their children should master English and study other subjects as tools to a good life in America. On top of that, parents are concerned about transmitting their Korean culture to their children. They expect that their children may keep a "Korean mind" with "American tools," and this is strongly reflected in the educational programs at Korean schools. In this way, among Koreans, people know that children may be totally assimilated to the American culture unless they do something forcefully. The effort made at Korean schools is one thing, and that made at home is another. It seems that they have succeeded in having some impact on children's minds to a certain degree. But it is also true that many Korean youth are destined to struggle with the question of identity for many years



throughout their lives.

### NOTES

- (1) *Kaigai Shijo Kyoiku*, April 1986, pp. 26-27.
- (2) The Japanese Weekend School of New York, *Gakko Yoran* [School guide] , 1986.
- (3) The Ministry of Education, *Kaigai Shijo Kyoiku no Genjo* [Current condition of overseas children's education], 1987.
- (4) Ibid.
- (5) Korean School of New Jersey, "A Memo on Purposes of Education," 1986.
- (6) The Korean School of New Jersey (262 students in total)  
The Korean School of New York (205 students)  
The Korean School of Queens (141 students)  
Korean Language School, The Church of Brooklyn (120 students)  
The Broadway Korean School of New York (97 students)  
Westchester Korean School (50 students)  
Pearl River Korean School (36 students)