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## DIFFERENCES IN TEACHER CLASSROOM BEHAVIORS IN USA AND JAPAN : A FIELD NOTE

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The following comments are based upon several observations of American classrooms which I, as a Japanese developmental psychologist who has been interested in education, made during a year long visit to the United States during 1992-1993. The observations were not systematic in any way but do reflect deliberate efforts to visit a number of different educational sites. Given these limitations as well as the fact that English is not my native tongue and America is not my native land, these comments may contain some linguistic as well as cross-cultural misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Nevertheless, I am very curious whether and to what extent my interpretations may reveal patterns that are generalizable.

### 1. Using the Chalkboard

It was striking to me that teachers of the schools I visited did not seem to consciously organize their writing on the chalkboard in a way that would help promote communication with students. As well, they seemed to use the chalkboard less frequently than Japanese teachers.

In Japan, the chalkboard is used as a primary medium of communication so that teachers are always aware of clarity, size, shape as well as saliency of the items placed on the chalkboard. For instance, they sometimes bend or squat down while writing so that every one can see the process of writing or sketching as well as the product. On the top of the board, they like to use colored chalk and careful underlining to indicate emphases and embellish this by using :

- framing,
- edge as well as the point of the chalk,
- larger letters.

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Above all, teachers believe that the way the chalkboard is organized is an intrinsic reflection of their teaching processes, like a mirror reflecting back to them what they are doing and how it is coming across. It is as if a record of the teaching had been etched on the board for all to see. Accordingly, Japanese teachers pay close attention to the use of the chalkboard both for the way it supports learning and for the way it identifies them as a teacher. For example, chalk is very strongly associated with the essential character of teaching, and it is symbolic of a school teacher. We also use the title of "a life with a piece of chalk" which means teachers whose life-long teaching profession is, and we Japanese tend to admire individuals who remain engaged in teaching children more than those who leave the classrooms and are promoted to principals.

In the American classrooms I visited, the lesson often began with items left from previous lessons as well as schedules for the day and other notices to students. I often wondered who erases the chalkboards and why the boards were allowed to become so disorganized as if it were just a collection of miscellaneous items. For example, amongst the many items still on the board, a teacher would find a small space to write new things, and items written within those confines would be too small and too unorganized to get students' attention or even to be seen. The medium may be speaking louder to students than the messages carried.

## 2. Writing teaching plans in advance

Frankly speaking, while observing teaching in American schools I sometimes felt totally lost as to where the lesson was, where it was now or heading; certainly I could not predict what might happen next. I would also say that students also could not predict. While it is certainly possible that my inability to detect a strong coherence in the lesson said as much about me as it did the lesson, nevertheless it seemed to me that much of the problem resided in the lesson plan or lack thereof. Perhaps the teachers were deliberately being flexible but it seemed to me that if there appears to be no semblance of strategy or plan, then it will be very difficult for students to behave appropriately in contributing to the lesson or the direction it might take. In particular it would be difficult for the teacher to induce certain concepts or skills.

Although not every Japanese teacher prepares a written instructional plan, most do. Like the chalkboard, the lesson plan is seen as an important teaching device and is therefore carefully arranged as a preliminary expression of their logic of teaching. Given a common curriculum and common textbooks, the consistency of lessons from one teacher to another that one often observes in Japan is in part due to the attention and effort put into the teaching plans that carry out the intent of the curriculum.

## 3. Less time for explaining fundamental concepts

It struck me that American teachers basically like to employ what I would call a "trial-and-error" approach. Or more concretely, I sometimes had the feeling that teachers were hosts of a quiz show: They announce whether each answer is correct or incorrect, but do not explain one way or another. This is understandable in a TV show, but as an instructional approach it seemed questionable.

For example, I had a chance to observe a math class using a computerized game

to practice multidigit computation. In the game (simulation) the student had to go through a complex maze trying to avoid obstacles like the attack of killer bees and the wrath of tornadoes on their way to the goal. Whenever they passed a corner, they had to overcome a "barrier" which was to do a calculation problem. It was CMI (computer managed instruction) in a simulated game mode providing instant correct/incorrect feedback just as in a TV game show. But students didn't get any explanatory feedback if they made mistakes. I noticed one girl, after unsuccessfully trying the same problem three times, simply gave up and moved on. The program did supply a format based on place value to handle the multidigits. However, since none of the students brought pencil and paper with them, the fact that they were having difficulty in remembering the numbers moved from one column to another (carrying and borrowing), simply exacerbated the difficulty they were having in solving these problems. These circumstances forced them into having to do two things simultaneously and they were seemingly having little success on either and less on both.

After the class, I asked the teacher why students would not bring pencils and notebooks. He explained that students could use ten digits (from 0 to 9) which were placed in the lower-left corner of the TV screen. I admitted that I saw this frame on the screen but never saw a single student using it. In fact, I subsequently asked a student during the class and he was not aware of this provision. I could not help thinking that the lower-left corner of the TV screen was like the little space on the chalkboard where messages are crammed and overlooked.

Hence, I felt dubious about the effects of using computers in this particular manner. I also wondered how students could learn from computers if errors did not lead to opportunities to learn (through explanations or other modes of teaching).

I was very impressed by the another computer lab which involved students in the preparation of their own biographies. Every student devised a unique layout by placing pre-designed pictures into their essays. And the teacher in charge of this course told me that he used to be a computer science student and had been also interested in education. I have been told that in America the number of teachers with decent knowledge about computers and a strong interest in teaching children is rather small. Nevertheless, the number would be still larger than those in Japan where teachers enthusiastic about computerized instruction are seen as less competent in working with students. Because the vast majority of Japanese teachers believe that direct interactions between teachers and children are necessary for cognitive feedback as well as emotional support, they are apt to characterize teachers who are enthusiastic about using computers as being less competent in this very essential human aspect of teaching. I think this characterization, while having many exceptions, is largely true in Japan.

#### 4. Less time for discussion among students

Over and over again I observed is a certain kind of teaching style. I call it the Question-Answer cycle. The teacher asks a question, a student answers. This repeats again and again. This pattern was salient for me because it contrasted with Japanese teaching in which discussions among students are more prevalent. The teacher's role is more like a coordinator than a judge of student responses. Indeed, Japanese teachers

have coined a word "kneading ideas" (*neriai*) to describe the process occurring among students in order to emphasize the importance of group thinking and sharing of beliefs during which each child has many opportunities to elaborate and criticize ideas as well as to receive the same from classmates. Hence, from a measurement perspective, one important index of the quality of instruction is the opportunities that students have to intensively and extensively knead their ideas. Several instructional techniques have been invented to promote children's participation in and control of discussion. For example, even in a teacher-led discussion, a teacher will often refrain from directing who will speak next. Instead the class might adopt a convention that when a student has finished speaking, s/he designates the next speaker. At times during these discussions, the teacher will summarize the points or even intervene when she feels the need to organize the line of discussion. That is to say, she also participates in the kneading. Then, as long as these processes run smoothly, teachers let them go most of the time.

Stereotypic views about teaching styles in Japan, held by people in Japan as well as overseas, depict Japanese teachers as authoritarian and restrictive, particularly as regards interactions among students. But, based on my observations, Japanese teachers in elementary schools appeal less to authority.

#### 5. American classrooms are less noisy

When I entered the kindergarten classroom, I was very surprised at its calmness. The teacher was conducting a lesson on the human body explaining each of the body parts using a skeleton-model and pictures of human organs. Students sat around the teacher in close proximity, making little noise, not speaking out of turn nor in an overly loud voice. There were no student initiated disturbances or interruptions.

In contrast, Japanese classrooms are usually noisier; indeed they are often quite boisterous (Sato, 1990; Lewis, 1994). In part this is due to the custom of saying *yes* ("Hai" in Japanese) when raising their hands to indicate readiness and willingness to respond, and this practice raises the noise level. Because this kind of noisiness is taken as a reflection of cheerfulness and attentiveness, it is encouraged by teachers. Additionally, and as mentioned earlier, the extensive use of "kneading" results in a prevailing level of talk almost like prevailing breezes. At the same time, there are some disruptive children in almost every class, especially boys in the lower grade who often if not regularly disturb teachers by making undue noise or speaking loudly, and annoying others. In contrast, in the schools I observed in America, there were some children who were not attentive to teachers, but did not express their inattentiveness through making noise. Rather they would take lengthy leaves to the washroom or withdraw in other ways. Most of the children whom I recognized as non-participants were avoiding their involvement in in-class activities instead of disturbing them. They were rather passive towards the teacher even though they would not comply with her.

In addition, even in the hallway children were less noisy. Less noise seems to be a fairly general characteristic in the United States. In contrast with this, we often see many children running through the hallway, and singing songs loudly in Japan. And I saw all the children singing their school song as they went out of their classrooms in two rows into the gym where the entire school assembled for the meeting which was

held in the morning. Generally speaking, noisiness itself is not always seen as disturbing behavior but as the desirable state of children being ready for charged energy within them. Of course, however, Japanese teachers also try to teach children the clear distinction (*kejime*) between these playful time and the time of having to be silent. In other words, teachers usually take advantage of the active state of children and sometimes try to induce them to discharge their overflowed energy in order to make an optimal level for paying attention. For example, when the bell (in most of the schools, they use an elegant bell sound of Westminster Abbey or such kind of sound instead of the sound of buzzer which is associated with factory) rings, children may have to freeze all of their actions during the time of ringing. This extremely contrasting shift of behavior gives the children a clearer distinction between play time and study time.

#### 6. Controlling children's deviant behaviors

As suggested above, American teachers are likely to intervene when the noise due to chatter is at levels which in Japan would have been deemed acceptable. Such acceptability is based on the assumption that a certain level of chatter is necessary if students are actively and genuinely participating in the lesson. For instance, teachers use "Shh" with a gesture of bringing their forefingers to their mouths and "zip up your mouth" very frequently in the classrooms and hallways when they had to wait to move to another room. If American teachers would witness the same behaviors in the hallways in Japanese kindergartens and elementary schools, they would be surprised by the level of children's noise and vivaciousness that is tolerated by teachers.

In general, American teachers focused on and controlled children's disturbing behaviors rather than only their off-task behaviors, while Japanese elementary school teachers attended more to the off-task behaviors. In one 8th grade class I observed a student lay with his head on his desk for the whole period sleeping from beginning to end and the teacher just ignored him.

Japanese teachers have developed several techniques to handle such situations. For example, when children are tired or inattentive teachers incite everyone to say something loudly in unison. Or they might order them to stand up and stretch their arms. I found it very strange that American children as well as teachers didn't have a time of stretching their arms although all of the audience were mildly forced to stretch their arms and legs in the middle of the ball game here. On other occasions I have witnessed teachers stopping the class and engaging the students in singing songs while moving around. This practice is believed to produce a more pleasant as well as more relaxing atmosphere.

#### 7. Children's attention-getting behaviors

As noted above, American teachers pay less attention to getting students focused on the chalkboard, the computer screen, or on the lesson generally as long as the students weren't actively interrupting the class. In keeping with this, they would often begin speaking to the class without checking to see whether anyone was ready to listen. Perhaps this is due in part to the fact that, as noted above, the noise level in American

classrooms is lower. Whether students are listening or not does not change the noise level much. In contrast, when Japanese students are listening, the noise level goes down dramatically. This makes it much easier for Japanese teachers to monitor the attentiveness of students.

Japanese teachers use several kinds of techniques in order to get children's attention. In addition to direct techniques like saying, "Check your mouth," "Stop chattering," or "Be quiet," they may gradually fade their voice to the point of not talking at all and wait until students realize that something had really changed. Such techniques may not work as well in some American classrooms.

A famous educator in an elementary school, Kihaku Saito, wrote in his huge collection of writings about one impressive example. When his students became noisy and less attentive, he suddenly opened several windows. It had been raining only a few moments ago but now it stopped. He pointed at the pine tree standing near by and asked what could be heard. He waited until students were able to hear the slightest sound of drops falling from the pine leaves to the ground. After appreciating the variation of the sound as well as the scene, he resumed teaching.

Perhaps one reason why American teachers seem less preoccupied with seeking the attentiveness and compliance of all of their students is because they value the process of self-paced learning, or they might believe that not all children are capable of complying with them. In a second grade classroom, the teacher distributed blank cards to students asking them to list words they did not understand. When a boy came to her with his card asking about the spelling of a certain word, she took his card and instantly wrote the word very quickly as if she were writing it for herself without any concern of his attentiveness to it. To me, this was a very astounding experience. In Japan, if a student made such a request, except under particular circumstances, teachers would write the letters (characters) very carefully, showing every stroke so that the child could see the order of strokes and at the same time learn the value of politeness in writing letters. I think the contrasting teacher reactions to this request reflect in part the large differences between the different letter systems. In Japan it is deemed necessary to teach the proper order of strokes that make up a character whether it be in hiragana, katakana, or kanji. I am told that such an emphasis on the proper form of writing is not a priority in America. Japanese believe that the right order of strokes is necessary to make beautiful letters, and furthermore believe that well shaped letters reflect intelligence as well as diligence. I have heard from my American friends a totally opposite view about the merit of hand writing: bad (ill-formed) hand writing reflects quickness of mind. This extremely contrasting attribution is not only very interesting to me, it does, I believe, help to explain why chalkboards in America also seem to be not so well-organized: perhaps messy writing and disorganized chalkboard displays are associated with sharp-witted and spontaneous teaching. Is it called "winging it"?

## 8. Shared activities and cooperative learning

American teachers stress individual learning and individual excellence. Japanese teachers stress the importance of improving the learning of the whole class and enlist

the help of all children, including the smartest, to take the discussion as far as possible. For example, Japanese teachers place a high priority on just how the lesson gets started as a way of ensuring discussion within the whole class. Many teachers admit that they will devote more energy to thinking how to “direct” the introduction phase than to the follow-up phases. For they think that if they will fail to get the children interested in a specific task and fail to bring about an atmosphere of ‘esprit de corps,’ the lesson may flop entirely. At times they speak as if they do not know the answer (and perhaps at times they do not) as a way of encouraging the whole class to resolve the challenge together. This strategy draws the students together while at the same time depending on the pride of each student. The main point is that when a task is shared with all class members they can all find resolution through helping each other. In summing up, the teachers assume children are more agentic in problem solving and are less dependent on teachers and those the students who have advanced knowledge.

Beyond the school, generally speaking Japanese people are apt to take a longer time introducing anything. For example, in a recent study Japanese mothers with three-year-old children took a longer time than their American counterparts in instructing simple rules (Azuma, Kashiwagi, & Hess, 1983).

In keeping with these general findings, introduction of new problems or units by American teachers are rather abrupt and brief in comparison. It is as if spending time laying out the setting for a problem is a waste of valuable time. American teachers seemed impressed by how far they had traveled and how many different topics they had covered. Because of this priority on speed and coverage, I often had difficulty keeping up with them: In trying to follow a certain line of development, my thoughts often got in the way of the changing course of the lesson.

I wondered if students felt this way too, or perhaps they are accustomed to this style. If teachers would take more time to discuss the task and children could realize the relevance of the task to their own interests, their attentiveness might be increased. Exchanging tentative solutions with other children will also allow slower learners time to enter and participate in the activities.

## 9. Tuning to children's developmental stage

During my first visit to a kindergarten class, I was shocked by the difficulty of the words the teacher used. It was as if she were speaking with her colleagues. She was explaining the parts of the human body and asked students to name the systems one by one: stomach, heart, large intestine, small intestine, cerebellum, and even esophagus. To my surprise, a couple of students could say all the names. It appeared to me that when dealing with vocabulary, the approach American teachers may like to use is to challenge and lift students to reach adult levels.

In Japan, I think the most popular approach of teachers might be the opposite. That is to say, teachers come down to the children's level both to participate and to emphasize the equality between teachers and students. In experimental as well as ethnographic studies (Azuma, Kashiwagi, & Hess, 1983; Peak, 1991), Japanese teachers and mothers were less likely to appeal to authority figures than their American counterparts. I think these behavioral differences in adults in the two countries come from the

differences in the acknowledged status of the reference groups. In other words, since parents, especially teachers are assumed to be respected (more so in Japan) regardless of their ages and their backgrounds, they will less likely feel threatened by students. Under the situation where dominance vs. submissive relationships were salient, it would work well if those who are accorded higher status would operate at the lower level.

I think there might be another reason why Japanese teachers would not take the same approach as American teachers: They are generally very cautious in introducing new learning materials of any kind. Like any other introduction, when introducing new material teachers would very carefully organize things so that all children could have clear conceptual access to the new materials. Teachers are likely to assume that instruction which depends on individual differences in the knowledge about the new material would not work well. Many of the students may feel inferior when more precocious peers become comfortable with the new material more quickly. Additionally, many children may become dependent on a small number of students who have prior acquaintance with the material, and they may not have strong motivation to solve that problem. Because of considerations such as these, teachers often ask more advanced children to hold their answers for a while or to ask for additional answers as well.

Basically, teachers are expected to attend to the developmental differences in children and not to press them for achievement too much. For, if children would not have achieved fully, they will finally reach the desired level as long as they have acquired appropriate attitudes and learning habits.

One of the most popular techniques, especially for teachers with younger children, is to speak to children at their eye level, squatting down if need be. I didn't observe this happening at all in the American classrooms. It seemed to me American teachers treat children as more mature.

#### 10. Evaluative feedback

It seemed to me that American teachers were less likely to use evaluative feedback, particularly when it is negative. For instance, in a second grade language class, students were making many spelling errors, but the teacher didn't correct them. I think this behavior reflects a belief on the part of the teacher that such corrections will diminish motivation. The teacher told me that she tried to encourage children to write as much as possible at this stage.

I am wondering whether use of this strategy may be restricted to only beginners. For example, my English composition teacher in America always told us that rather than being preoccupied with grammatical errors, we should do more writing. Thinking of my own experience in my studying English, Japanese teachers were more meticulous on subtle grammatical errors and provided a lot of feedback about it. To be honest, since this type of instruction seemed to be informative to us, I as well as other Asian students felt uncomfortable in the American style of teaching for a while. But, after a short while, I realized that there might be more pressure to conform and depend on the teachers in the Japanese style of English composition. And we were more likely to become obsessed with making mistakes which would lead to a deep rooted feeling of

inadequacy or incompetence.

### 11. To cover lots of topics in one class period

Generally speaking, it always seemed to me that instruction in the US did not focus and dwell on a major theme or problem. Rather, teachers seemed to prefer moving from one topic to another in quick succession. And as mentioned earlier I sometimes had difficulty keeping up with the shifts. While I failed to ask the teachers why they preferred this strategy, it may arise from the following beliefs. First, the belief that a person who can shift quickly and do two or more things simultaneously is more able or valuable than one who seems only to be able to engage in one thing at a time no matter how deeply. In other words, American people might idealize a "concurrent processing" person rather than a "sequential processing" one. When I went to the gym on a university campus, I was very surprised to see so many people doing two things at the same time: jogging while listening to their walkman (I would rename it as *jogman*); jogging while talking continuously with someone; reading books and newspapers while exercising vigorously under dimmed light. We in Japan listen to a walkman or read a newspaper while riding on a train, but I have never seen these multi-task persons in Japan.

Second, the great emphasis on quickness and briskness in American lifestyle as for example in speed reading and the skill of skimming and weeding out huge amount of material. In contrast, this type of skill training in Japan is not so popular, at least not in language education. Instead, Japanese teachers emphasize "*kodawari*," which literally means "*obsession*," so that they might make children focus on a single word or phrase, continuously coming back to subtle differences, and encouraging students to activate their images of and empathy with the writer and characters. In Japanese language classrooms, it is not unusual for teachers to use half of the period discussing one adverb like "*dake*", which means "only" or "just." An old Japanese proverb says that in any difficult book, after we read it one hundred times, we can naturally understand the meaning. However, in fact, we have one group of Japanese educators who advocate global comprehension of content as a whole with only one reading. But like rapid reading, this type of movement has not yet become popular.

Third, American teachers might provide a wide variety of tasks so that children have a broader opportunity to experience success, at least on one of the tasks. Since they move so quickly from task to task, there is not enough time for children who fail one problem to be hurt severely, because soon they will be working on something else. A broad variety of tasks would likely be less boring as well, at least to the extent that variety itself is interesting.

### 12. Emphasis on achievement rather than on styles

American teachers paid little attention to children's sitting posture, position in reading a book, the way of holding the pencil, or to any other stylistic aspects of children's behavior. Perhaps American teachers look more tolerantly toward children's individuality and are less likely to expect a unified pattern of behavior. For instance, I was very surprised to find a scene in a first grade guidebook for parents depicting a

child lying on his stomach and reading a book. The caption spoke of encouraging reading in children. If it were in Japan, this boy must be taken as a model of ill-disciplined children. We think this kind of posture while reading will easily lead to deterioration of eyesight and to fatigue.

Traditionally, in other fields as well, there is a belief that proper form is important. For instance, baseball players from the United States playing in Japan complained that their Japanese coaches were only too eager to suggest modifications in their batting stance after only two or three bad games (White, 1989).

### 13. Leadership of principals

As shown by a recent cross-cultural survey on teachers in the US and Japan (Sato & McLaughlin, 1992) principals in the States were much more active and aggressive than Japanese principals. I think these differences are partially due to age (many principals in the US were relatively young; i. e. forties) and partially to differences in comparison with regular teachers in their academic background and career-minded. I was also very impressed that principals responded to each child by calling his/her first name.

In contrast, in Sapporo, the average age of the first promotion to a principalship is about 55, and because retirement age is 60, the position is not a career assignment (*note 1*). Principals do not possess special qualifications beyond those of ordinary teachers. Although principals are relatively older, they often serve at schools where they have been teaching and therefore know the teachers from before. This situation means that principals are less likely to assume a position of power over their colleagues.

Because of these conditions, the figures of principals are not salient for outsiders. A few years ago, I had a chance to guide a graduate student from Stanford University to my university's junior high school. The most intriguing question that she asked me was about the position of principal. In her observations of many schools in Japan, she couldn't discern that the principal was actually working in the school, and often could not find the principal there. Therefore, she was wondering what the principal was doing or what his (more than 90% of principals are male) duties were.

Generally speaking, leadership positions in Japan, regardless of field, are not salient and not clearly delineated. It seems to us that they do not have the same kind of power that American leaders have. The role and expectation of a Japanese principal is that of a moderator who reconciles the discrepancies and differences among teachers rather than influences them directly. While principals and senior leaders do have the final vote, they do not like to force their intention or determination on their followers. For example, our decision-making system is mostly dependent on "bottom-up" processes and all of the members are incorporated into these decision processes. These procedures usually take more time than "top-down" procedures, but it is easier and more efficient to execute once decisions have been reached, because having been involved in the process, all members have a good feel for what needs to be done and can easily relate their own work with the work of others, and to organizational goals as well. In this setting, good leaders must be patient, attentive and empathetic, listen-

ing to others and assuming that their power derives from their colleagues. "Sassuru," to understand an other's inclination without explicit verbal cues, is one of the most important concepts in the human relations among Japanese people. Lower ranked people do try to "sassuru" the inclination of their bosses, if their bosses are not bossing them around.

#### 14. Obligations for teachers

Although I didn't get enough information about their non-teaching responsibilities, American teachers seemed not to have so many. They may teach students longer hours than Japanese teachers, particularly at the primary level, but their other duties are fewer. For example, there is only one person, perhaps a part-timer, who is responsible for budgeting in Japanese schools. Every home room teacher has to collect money at least a few times a month: school lunch charge (every month), bus fee for outings, charge for workbooks and test sheets, and charge for learning materials such as art crafts and musical instruments. With limited clerical help, teachers are responsible for the paper work relating to the transference of children, enrollment, and other kinds of administration. They supervise and often participate with students in carrying out duties (i. e.: cleaning their rooms) that in America are done by custodial staff.

Lunch time is an excellent opportunity for Japanese teachers to teach children about manners and diet. In every lunch, "kyushoku toban," lunch attenders who rotate in turn among students, carry foods from the kitchen, distribute them to classmates, saying "itadaki masu" ("have lunch," the cue to start eating), saying "gochiso sama deshita" ("have had a nice meal," the greeting to end the lunch), then they collect all dishes and spoons. During the half hour of lunch time, they enjoy news and music through cable radios which are broadcast by students. Every teacher is responsible for having her/his students learn and carry out these luncheon duties. Concerning diet, first graders used to be taught "triangle eating" which means that they should eat bread, side dish (*okazu*) and soup in cyclical fashion so as not to avoid any part, although this manner is becoming less popular recently. Teachers usually try to identify special dislikes of students (carrots, cheese, etc.) and the nature of their appetite. They ask parents to try to make children eat everything and advice about children's lives. For instance, if a child seemed to be always hungry, they might ask the parent if the child skips breakfast.

All teachers have to commit to various kinds of in-school committees (*i'inkai*) and all of the school work is organized under the title of "kōmu bunsho" or school job specification (*kōmu* means work in school, and *bunsho* means sharing the duties among everyone). These committees and specified work groups number more than fifty (see Appendix which follows after notes).

#### 15. Quantity of interaction between teachers and children

In terms of the hours of teaching, there are not any clear differences between American and Japanese teachers, although American teachers in charge of lower graders teach a few more hours than do their Japanese counterparts. However, when we look at the amount of time teachers spent interacting with their homeroom students,

Japanese teachers have more contact than American teachers. For example, music, gym, art, and library study are taught by special teachers in the United States. In contrast, Japanese teachers have to teach all of the subjects (seven subjects for first to fourth grade teachers, and eight subjects for fifth and sixth grade teachers), because it is very rare to have special teachers in elementary schools (note 2). On top of this, they have to share their lunch with supervision responsibilities, oversee their students' cleaning classrooms, and participate in extracurricular activities such as club activities and students' autonomous activities. In brief, each homeroom teacher meets his/her children from the homeroom meeting in the morning before the first academic hour until after class meeting, and they often meet some of them in other activities in the schools.

The longer time and more extended opportunities for teachers to interact with their children in Japan may lead the teachers to understand children's lives and personalities much more easily. And they are more able to get information about disciplinary problems from parents during home visits and conferences with parents, because they are also expected to be responsible for disciplining their students to some extent (note 3). Given the mutual interest and shared knowledge about each child by teachers and parents, we expect that the actual process of socializing children in the schools will proceed more smoothly. I have heard many times that American teachers complain about parents being less interested in education and less cooperative with teachers and they have confessed to me that it is very difficult to talk with parents directly about the problems of their own children. After they have met them, the teachers still seem to have great difficulty in persuading them to change their children's behaviors.

Of course, Japanese teachers also complain that there are many parents who are not cooperative with them. However, I think the nature of problems between teachers and parents are different in the United States and Japan. In Japan, the territory or zone of the responsibility for teachers and parents are always very blurred or vague; many problems come from these overlap. Teachers often blame parents for inadequately disciplining children and justify the teachers' intervening students' behaviors which are usually judged as to be corrected too much. And parents also blame teachers for overly intrusive attempts toward their children's behavior styles, hobbies, life styles and even eating habits (note 4). On the other hand, still considerable portions of parents often complain that teachers pay too little attention to above matters. There has been a lot of confusion between teachers and parents stems from these vague borders of responsibility for each party (note 5, 6).

#### 16. Flexible but a little bit unpredictable schedule

When I first went into a classroom in the United States, I looked around the whole room and wondered why there was not a large schedule. In every classroom in Japan, a large and colorful timetable is placed in front of the classroom. Then any newcomers can know at a glance what subject the children are learning now, and what is coming next. At the beginning of the semester, teachers distribute a schedule and children are required to place it in front of their desks in their houses. Before they go to school, they can prepare the right textbooks, notebooks, and other materials by

checking the schedule for that day. In Japan, all the textbooks are given to the children (*note 7*) and they have to carry them between school and their homes. In order to ease their carrying them every school days, textbooks are light and thin and those of basic academic subjects like math, language, science, and social studies are partitioned into two volumes.

The timetable is very important for children, and it will remind them of the homework today, and what things they have to prepare by next morning. It is also convenient for parents to monitor what the children learn today and to help children prepare materials for next day.

In the United States, since the textbooks are usually expected to leave at their classrooms, children do not select and prepare them everyday. Hence, they may not need a timetable.

### 17. Teachers are friendly but less cooperative with each other

I happened to witness a very impressive occasion in the classroom of a middle school in the United States. In the middle of the class, the teacher was notified as her daughter's illness by someone and had to pick her up soon. She went out of her classroom for several minutes and went back to resume in teaching. After nearly ten minutes passed, a tall black male came into the classroom, talked with her and sat down in the front seat. Not only I but also two of the American researchers there thought he must be an advisor or a supervisor of her. But, suddenly, he took over her teaching, and she left. He seemed to wait until a better time to alternate the teaching. Luckily enough, we met again one hour later, and we had a chance to talk to her and her colleague math teacher. Although these happenings occur only rarely, it seems difficult to arrange them between the teachers and ask another teacher to take care of their classrooms.

Judging from my observation and incidental talk with teachers in the United States, there seems to be relatively fewer opportunity to help and cooperate each other than there are in Japanese schools. In Japan, all teachers in charge of the same grade are to meet every one or two week(s) in order to exchange information how far each of them have proceeded in each subject (*note 8*) as well as the general information of students during a certain period, discuss the schedule of next week(s) and content of the specific grade newsletter (*gakunen dayori*). Older teacher, especially chief teachers (*note 9*) are expected to give advice to younger teachers in this meeting as well as doing this incidentally in everyday. Same grade teachers often integrate two or three classes in music and gym class and they are relatively easier to exchange with each so that they become familiar to children in other teachers' homeroom.

In order to maximize the cooperativeness among the teachers in the same grade, principals usually try to combine inexperienced teachers with veteran teachers in the hope of older teachers' taking a role like a mentor for younger one and the latter's stimulating the former one. Parental expectation as well as principals' ones toward each teacher is focused on his/her performing in the same level as other teachers in the same grade in order to assure the egalitarianism, rather than focused on differentiating others. Hence, each teacher is required to minimize the differences among the classes,

and more competent teachers are to help and give advice to the less competent ones. These lateral relationships may be taken as threatening to each other: more competent teachers will feel unfair if s/he help less competent one and this practice will impress others less salient in the differences among these contrasting teachers. And American people might also think that less competent teachers, especially young and less experienced teachers feel them more humiliating and miserable if they have been more frequently helped in stead of actively helping others. But, it is quite natural in Japanese school that such younger teachers are expected to depend upon the veteran and competent teachers. The competent teachers are to welcome being relied on them, because the behavior shown by younger ones is the clear-cut indication of dependability, reliance, and respect for them. Because these *amae* or mutually dependent relationships among the teachers varying in their extensive skills, veteran teachers are likely to feel rewarded by their influencing others and recognition from others and younger ones are likely to be encouraged by their every progress which has been reinforced by veteran teachers often. I think this pro-cooperative atmosphere is not special in the world of teachers but this is intermeatable even across the most competitive private companies. As long as the promotion is basically based on the seniority, the older ones who have occupied higher ranks do not feel threatened if they have more competent colleagues. Under this situation, younger promising ones will not compete with their boss, but rather they prefer to seek their support and encouragement in return for their commitment to their responsibilities. Therefore, in terms of a team spirit, or a sense of cooperation, American people as well as Japanese people understand these concepts clearly, but the contexts underpinning these concepts seem to be very different in two countries.

#### 18. Relationships between teachers and parents

Generally speaking, communication between teachers and parents seems more frequent in Japan than in the United States. For example, the open classrooms are arranged a few times each semester in Japanese schools, and the open classrooms in Japan are quite different from those in America. Typically, parents are invited to observe the actual instruction in their homerooms and to participate in a conference with their teachers which follows the instruction. These schedules are arranged in the mornings or afternoons of weekdays, and also on Sundays (*note 10*).

Topics at a conference cover various things such as information about the important school activities, contents of recent academic subjects, and lectures by the teachers about child rearing problems (*note 11*). Parents are sometimes integrated into the same grade classes to discuss the grade specific problems. Similarly, some experts in education and child development are invited to give lectures to all of the parents. The recent behavioral problems in school and out of schools such as traffic accidents, delinquent behaviors, and bullying are very popular topics.

Besides these meetings with parents, all of the teachers have to make home visits to each of their children's homes during the prescribed weeks within the first two months after the new school year. In the beginning of the first semester each child is required to report his/her own personal history including their past diseases, every person who lives with them, age and occupations of all of these people, their own personal-

ity characteristics, hobbies, preferences for foods, the attendance of out-of-school activities like *juku* (the cram schools in academic learning), and other lessons like piano, drawing, and swimming (*note 12*). In addition to the abundance of information about every student, teachers get still more information from their home visits. For instance, every teacher knows even the details of their students' private lives like divorce, discordance and makeup between the parents, bankruptcy due to the huge amount of debts in order to buy their houses, pregnancy of mothers, pets, and neighbors by relations. Teachers are expected to know this private information in order to understand their students and to give them the appropriate guidance (*note 13*).

In addition to these measures, teachers also distribute school newsletters, class newsletters, and grade newsletters. The class newsletter offers information concerning what they will learn each week, necessary preparations for upcoming tasks, and special topics pertinent to their own classes.

In contrast to these situations in Japan, I have heard some American teachers complain about the lack of parental availability. In the daytime it is harder to ask working parents to come see their classrooms, but it is also difficult to do so in the evening because of fatigue. One female high school mathematics teacher showed me the special format of her homework. At the bottom of the page, a column for the signature of parents/guardians is placed. She told me that this practice might cause parents to become more interested in their children's academic matters, although they might not understand the problems which were assigned to the children. She did tell me that the rest of the teachers in her school did not practice this type of activity.

## 19. Tentative conclusive comments : Some implications for Japanese education

### *Culturally Bound Windows*

As I noted before, my observations of American schools have many limitations based upon my incidental and unsystematic methods as well as the language barrier. However what I want to emphasize is that the nature of the window through which I see usually narrows the focus down to some aspects of the truth. Furthermore, although the concepts and the terms referring to certain phenomena are defined the same way in terms of the lexical meanings, the actual functioning may be totally different, depending on their contexts and cultural and historical background. For instance, I sometimes feel that the translation of "*tokoya*" into "barber's shop" is nonsense because there are huge differences between the same establishment in the two cultures (De Mente, 1991). So is it with the descriptions of teachers' behavior.

Honestly speaking, almost all my observations come through my own indigenous windows, or my frame of reference as a Japanese person, as the most excellent observations on Japanese schools by American scholars come through their own culturally specific windows (Lewis, 1992; Peak, 1992). I admit that my descriptions and interpretations of the American education system might focus on more of the negative aspects rather than the positive ones. However, I never mean that the quality of American education is inferior to that of Japan. Instead, I mean that my interpretations of the behavioral differences between American teachers and Japanese teachers are based on my own cultural frame of reference.

*Education and Nationality*

After the war Japanese educational reforms have been continually influenced by American education. Policy makers in education have often introduced “new” trends into Japanese schools, such as programmed learning in the early 1960s, the spiral curriculum in the middle of 1960s, taxonomies of educational goals and mastery learning in the late 1970s, open schools in the middle of the 1970s and its revival in the late 1980s. Very recently, for example, many policy makers as well as educators have hoped that students would develop their individuality and creativity by introducing open education, points which are assumed to be the weak for the Japanese people. I am quite skeptical about the possibilities of realizing such educational goals by transplanting a specific method from another country into one’s own country.

First, I am dubious about the validity of these educational goals. Are Japanese people really lacking individuality and creativity? (Lewis, 1992; Ichikawa, 1991) As I mentioned before, even if the word “individuality” is translated into Japanese as “*kosei*,” the adaptive value or functional meaning of this word seems different to the Japanese. Under the given situation where huge numbers of people are living within small islands, that is to say “zero-sum society” (Azuma, 1995), perhaps it might be the better way to live in Japanese society peacefully through the process of long selection over the thousands of years not to be assertive, or aggressive, but mutually interdependent. For example, since each of the personal space seems smaller and there seems to be shared more psychological space among the people in the less variety of ethnicities, languages, and cultural backgrounds, the clear and strong emotional expressions and explicit verbal message might exceed their optimal level of stimulation. Instead, restraining the self-assertion might be more needed in Japan.

Second, I am still doubtful about the truism of the presupposition which states that children will not develop their individualities within classroom instruction with a large number of students. In other words, they might say that the smaller the class size, the higher the probability of developing one’s individuality. Do many educators obsessed by the illusion of reformation know that a teacher’s full appreciation of a child’s individuality is the essential condition which leads to successful instruction, and every child can express their uniqueness fully and freely under the guidance of these teachers?. In the situation which emphasizes the group processes, I think a certain number of students, say more than 20, will be needed in order to induct the “kneading” processes exhaustively. The important thing is to examine the conditions which might cripple or incapacitate the success of the whole class, rather than introducing a foreign method without probing it thoroughly.

In a word, the Japanese should not merely imitate American education. Rather, they should learn from American education and become more aware of their own indigenous beliefs and meta instructional methods.

*Education for Looking-Forward vs. Looking-Backward*

Much empirical research focused on Japanese schools indicate that the students are generally well disciplined, thus enabling the teachers to devote more attention to

academic matters than to the controlling the deviant behaviors of children. This in turn might induce higher achievement of the children (Stevenson, Stigler and Lee, 1986; Stevenson and Stigler, 1992; Stevenson, Chen, and Lee, 1993). I think it would be better to explain the nature of the beneficial attitudinal and behavioral orientation toward learning in Japanese children. As I described before, the actual behavior of Japanese children in the classrooms is totally different from the general image of their being well-disciplined. They are not quiet at all, but seem to be much noisier than the children in American classrooms. I think these salient behavioral differences of children come from the differential treatment of teachers in the United States and in Japan. Teachers in America seem to be more likely to emphasize coping with problems individually and to use the one-on-one question and answer type of interactions more frequently. In contrast with the American classroom, Japanese students are more likely to participate in discussions involving the whole class or small groups. Given this instructional style characterizing the "kneading" processes, higher levels of noise or buzz in the classroom are not seen as obstacles to learning, but this energy will contribute to an active discussion.

Students, even preschoolers, are expected to perform many autonomous tasks and various management chores in the classroom (Lewis, 1984). However, the actual behavior of Japanese teachers seems very "hands off" toward children. There are still oversimplified stereotypic conceptions about Japanese education which are supported more strongly by Japanese people than by American scholars (Ad Hoc Council on Education, 1986; Rohlen, 1985-86). According to their claims, Japanese teachers force children and their mothers to constantly study harder and this relentless and inhumane pressure causes them to achieve higher scores in basic academic subjects. Therefore, Japanese children as well as their parents have to pay painful sacrifices like school refusals, bullying, neurosis, and suicides (Schoolland, 1990; Young, 1993; Goya, 1993). Although many of these descriptions are selectively collected, this preoccupation has not been challenged empirically until recent large-scale cross-cultural studies (Stevenson *et al.*, 1990; Crystal *et al.*, 1994; Fuligni and Stevenson, 1995). Based on Stevenson and his colleagues' studies, socio-psychological adaptation of senior high school students in Japan is generally better than that of the American students.

In fact, the atmosphere in Japanese elementary schools is very permissive to the students. These permissive attitudes and behaviors of teachers might contribute to the students' autonomous behaviors and attitudes toward school learning (Lewis, 1984). Although this interpretation may not be appealing to us, the effect of coercive measures on modifying the children's behaviors has been challenged by recent experimental research. For example, the generalization which comes from intrinsic motivation research and attribution theory research, strongly suggests that the internalization of a specific value is devalued when that specific behavior is associated with tangible rewards. In contrast, if the specific behavior is not associated with such salient rewards, children are more likely to attribute their personal interest to the task.

Another important way to develop a child's autonomous behavior is "*hansei*," or self-reflection. Although, *hansei* is translated into English as self-reflection (Peak, 1992), the actual meaning of the word is considerably different from the English trans-

lation. Self-reflection and its related behavior in terms of Japanese meaning are the key concepts in understanding the achievement of Japanese people. We must be expected to reflect upon ourselves not only when we fail at something, but also when we are successful. We are usually required to think back on what we have done, and review whether we have fully devoted our efforts to the task in order to perfect the performance. Since success might come from luck or other incidental events, we should not boast about own works, nor should we be complacent. Meticulousness and perfectionism are pointed out as characteristics of the Japanese modal personality traits (Minami, 1953). These characteristics inevitably contribute to the endless cycle of the self-reflection.

As I described above, self-reflection or *hansei* means redirecting our attention toward the past. We never reflect ourselves towards the future. *Hansei* also makes us focus on our weak points, deficiencies, and inadequacies, rather than our positive aspects. In fact, I know the English word as "weak point," but I do not know its antonym in English. Weak point is a very popular phrase and even the elementary school children know the word in English but they might have never heard of the word "strong point." (note 14).

In contrast, self-reflection, in terms of the American viewpoint, seems to focus more on positive and strong points as well as their positive and hopeful time perspectives towards the future. I am always impressed by the elaboration and elegance of American people's constructions about the future. They tend to be more future-oriented and more likely to maintain and raise their self-esteem by reconfirming their inner sense of strength every time.

Let me cite one example of the difference of car equipment in the United States and Japan. In the United States, every car is not required to have a side view mirror on the right side and actually I see lots of cars with only one side view mirror. Furthermore, I have never seen the larger wide-angle mirror attached to the standard very tiny one. Although Japanese drivers are always aware of traffic behind them and on both sides, American drivers' attention always seems to be directed forward thus showing their emphasis on self-determination. I think this behavioral difference between Americans and Japanese might be generalized to their everyday behavior.

#### Notes :

- 1) According to the latest nation-wide information available (1993), more than three-fourths or 76.9 percent of principals are over fifty-five years old. And the mode of the age when they were promoted to this position is 56. Female's share of the position is 5.5 percent among all kinds of schools, but is 11.5 percent in elementary schools.
- 2) Special teachers: According to the Japanese regulation of educational law, elementary schools which have more than a certain number of classes, have the eligibility of hiring a few additional teachers. The numbers of teachers are defined by the numbers of the classrooms in the school. This means that these relatively large school can hire special teachers such as music, art, and gym. But, actually principals do not hire the special teachers in most cases, instead they hire regular teachers with very few exceptions. Principals used to hire music teachers before, although this practice was not frequently. For music teachers are likely to have much more difficulties in dealing with children. Since the opportunities for contact with children are very

limited, such as two times a week, most music teachers can not produce an atmosphere mutually supported by teachers and students which has been built up gradually through time and will contribute to the success of classroom instruction essentially. In addition, many music teachers were not interested in music education per se rather than music itself and this inclination and preoccupation made this situation still worse.

After these painful introductions of new policies, principals gave up hiring special teachers and were willing to invite regular teachers who were dispensable with any teachers. This gives principals more rooms to assign their fellow teachers as their charge of grade as well as school job specifications.

- 3) Traditionally, the Japanese school system was introduced by the new *Meiji* government which took over the Shogunate regime immediately after the restoration. Leaders in the new government expected the schools to realize their grand goal of "enrichment of nation and enforcement of army" policy by means of educating academically as well as morally and tried to incorporate these future workforces into the new nation. Since education, especially compulsory education was given by the government, or the Emperor and the school culture was assumed very foreign to ordinary parents, it was emphasized that the teachers' responsibility for moral education was in order to mobilize educable people into the goal of nation more efficiently.
- 4) As I wrote before, to eat everything that is served at a school lunch is encouraged and children are basically required to eat all of it. Beyond the goal of developing the better eating habits and manner, there are still more important reasons. First, it is always taught that children have to get along with everybody, even their most unwelcome peers and they are expected to yield their personal preference to the public goals and endure this uncomfortableness in order to establish a harmonious relationships (*wa*) within the groups. In the same vein, children's preference to special food is usually assumed as the sign of *wagamama*, or self-indulgence which must be corrected. That is, the principle of teaching about school lunch stems from values underlying in Japanese society. Second, teachers also put great emphasis on making children to empathize and appreciate farmers and cooks. Teachers would like to elucidate how painful it is for farmers to raise rice plants by explaining the makeup of a letter of rice. This word is composed of "eighty-eight" which symbolizes the idea that rice farmers have to care for rice plants as many as eighty-eight times until the harvest time, although children are served bread as their main food in most of the time.

But, this practice may sometimes go beyond their proclaimed goal which is to assure that children take in balanced nutrients. For example, I am sometimes asked by parents to give them advice about the eating problem such as habitual unbalanced diet or eating less in the schools. The extreme story is that teachers will not allow children to go out their classroom before they have drunk up the whole milk pack (200 ml), or eaten up all their food.

Recently, we have had a specially serious problem about allergic reactions of children. Several years ago, a third grade boy in Sapporo was dead several hours after eating buckwheat noodle in his school lunch. He was suffering from allergy to buckwheat, but he could not refuse to eat it, neither would his parents not tell his teacher about it. They might think that telling such a special eating habit might cause his teacher to view him as less self-controlled, or self-indulgent.

- 5) About one week before the long vacations in summer and winter, teachers hand out lots of printed materials to children. One is the dos and don'ts during the holidays (i. e.: do study in the morning and do not visit friend in the morning, go to bed early and get up early and at regular time, and so on). Then, teachers distribute written formats of schedules during the holidays and request to report them. Children have to fill out the personal goals during the holidays (for example, to become able to get up early, to become able to swim 100 meters, to become more skillful in computation, be more helpful to mother, not to fight with brothers, and various kinds of things which cover health, academic, life habits, and human relationships). In

addition to this, children are also required to fill out their daily plan from getting up to going to bed. Before the long vacation begins, teachers check each children's goals, plans, and schedules and sometimes ask them to modify them if necessary (i.e.: to study too much, or only playing around all the time). After this feedback from teachers, every child pins them up on the wall in front of their desks.

But, recently some parents have become a little skeptical about these policies and consider them invasion into one's privacy rather than teaching.

- 6) Since Japanese teachers, with the exception of a very small portion of part-time teachers, are paid twelve months, about fifty days during summer and winter vacation are defined as days of studying in their own homes and developing their professional skills. In fact, almost all teachers have to go to their schools at least several times during the two off-school periods in order to supervise swimming pools opened to children, clean up the school yard, and attend the teachers meeting.

Teachers used to be envied by many people for their having lavish holidays until about a decade ago. But after the introduction of the policy of the five work-day in many company as well as the national and civil institutions, the number of off-work days become the same or sometimes outnumber those given to teachers. In fact, teachers are allowed to have paid off-days, but it is very rare to use a whole day-off except the very special days like wedding ceremonies and funerals of the close relatives. Now, although the relative strength of incentives of this has become less, still some principals would give their teachers the following precautions immediately before the vacations: they had better stay in their homes during the daytime and try to impress the neighborhoods with their studying something in their homes.

- 7) All textbooks are free to the students who are eligible of compulsory education: from first to ninth grade children. We used to buy them, but this new policy began about thirty years ago. Some of the influential political leaders of ruling party have tried to cut this expense due to aggravated national budget. However, in fact, parents have to pay a lot of money for their children who are even given free textbooks. For instance, they have to buy notebooks, work-books, test sheets, school materials such as art and craft kits, musical instruments, bus fee for outing, fare of watching movies, and school lunch. Let me put one example, I paid about 39,000 yen or about 390 dollars and 75,000 yen or 750 dollars for my fourth grade and ninth grade sons during last year.
- 8) All the teacher in charge of same grade students are very nervous about the pace of their instructing each subject. If one class proceeds far beyond another class, or vice versa, parents of the class which is behind the another one sometimes complain it at the teacher-parents conference. Or, parents may remonstrate it directly to the principal. Generally, Japanese parents seem to expect the equalities among classrooms and every homeroom is called in terms of numbers like 1-*kumi*, 2-*kumi*, instead of being called; for example, Ms. Brown's classroom.
- 9) Nearly twenty years ago (1976), the Ministry of Education ordered all of the board of education in every Prefecture to assign a head teacher. In elementary schools, the head teachers are to be posted as one in every grade, curriculum, etc. Former the Japan Teachers Union (*Nikkyoso*, the nationwide largest union for teachers but it split at 1989 into several unions) has been very strongly fighting against the introduction of this new policy so that it will deteriorate the egalitarianism among teachers. However, these positions of head teachers end up being assigned at almost of the schools and they are paid additionally about 70,000 yen or 700 dollars for one year.
- 10) Open classrooms on Sundays used to be called "Fathers' observation day," because the rest of the open classroom are set on weekdays. In fact, many fathers with their wives are willing to attend their children's classrooms. However, there are more than a half mothers work as the part-time or full-time workers, but many parents, especially mothers of the first grade children are expected to attend the observation days. This means many parents are usually allowed to leave their workplaces temporarily in order to attend these meetings.

- 11) As I noted before, Japanese teachers are expected to involve in disciplining the child to some extent. All of the teachers regardless of their age and experiences of the child rearing practices are assumed to qualify the advisers on child development. Since very young teachers as just twenty or twenty-two years old, especially most of the teachers in kindergartens are less than 25 years old and they do not have their own children, they often feel nervous about the wide range of disciplinary problems brought by mothers and are pressed with their requirement of advice. Even though each mother should have known their own children more than their teachers do, mothers still have some expectations upon their teachers in terms of giving them the important advice of the child rearing.

Reflecting upon these situation, there are many books and cover stories in the monthly magazines for teachers which deal with the topics how to tackle these problems.

- 12) Parents used to report their academic careers, job status and names of their working places, but recently parents are becoming less willing to report this kinds of private information to the schools. Then the format titled home survey sheet comes to be more simplified than before.
- 13) In fact, some of these factual things look much more intriguing to us than the novels. Since some sorts of accidents or misdemeanor by the students and their parents are usually informed to the teachers through their frequent everyday conversations, principals sometimes warn their teachers not to go to restaurants or bars in their school districts for the fear of leaking such private information.
- 14) In everyday after the academic hours, they are to have "hansei meeting" in the classrooms. Usually two day-duty students (*Nicchoku*, or *Toban*) (a boy and a girl) assume as the chair persons and ask the classmates to report how they devote to learning and other school activities. Although various positive behaviors like their contributions and helping others are reported frequently, the children who do some nasty things and naughty behaviors are nominated there. It is the considerably painful experience if they are nominated as the child who do some bad things and lose their faces in the public. Hence, this type of sanction by their inner groups will induce them to pause and keep their awareness of watchful eyes of other people before committing potential deviant behaviors.

## Appendix : Content of school job specifications

Let me introduce an example of school job specifications from one public elementary school in Sapporo. According to the 1992 fiscal year version, there are six divisions :

### *Curriculum*

This division is involved in making timetables, annual plans, preparing the teaching, student-teachers and newly recruited teachers, publishing school newspaper, arranging the special rooms (music, gym, and art), evaluation forms, administering intelligence and achievement tests, taking homeroom pictures, coordinating audio-visual media, landscape maintenance, and some other jobs.

### *Research*

This division plans in-school workshops about instruction and management of classroom, curriculum development, planning the invited lectures and interest-group meetings, and other activities.

In this school, they had their division meetings twenty-two times during 1991. And they had exhibition instruction for five days which went with a conference.

### *Supervising students*

This division checks three of the divisions concerning extracurricular activities (homeroom activities, children's activities, and school ceremonies).

### *Homeroom activities*

In order to support children's adjustment and homeroom teachers, they make concrete action plans which covers : adjustment, safety (natural hazards like earth quake), traffic, and water,

school lunch, and library.

#### *Children's activities*

Is involved in teaching and monitoring students autonomous activities (music, play, library, broadcasting, health, public relations, newspaper, gym, student meetings, raising plants and animals), student board, club activities (gate ball, mini basketball, baseball, Guinness book, softball, dodge ball, field athletics, soccer, table tennis, badminton, tennis, art craft, cartoon and illustration, classic Japanese poems with only 31 letters (*waka, hyakunin issu*), embroidery, Othello, cards, science, pottery, cooking, and painting)(in every activity, one to three teachers are assigned), planning ceremonies like entrance and graduation ceremony, and others. They had this sub-division meeting thirty-three times in 1991.

#### *School ceremonies*

Involved in making action plans for various ceremonies, rallies, excursions and other activities: entrance ceremony, measurement and medical checkups, traffic safety class, whole school morning meeting, outing in spring, sports day, transplanting young rice plants to the school rice field, touring science museum, school excursion, outing for painting, practicing evacuation from disasters, injections, X-ray, outing for climbing, watching dramas, crop rice plants, play and music performance by students, exhibition of students' print works, outing for skiing, big cleaning up whole school, and graduation ceremony.

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