

海外子女を土曜日に育む在米補習校

Nurturing on Saturdays: A *Hoshuko* for Japanese Expatriate Children

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非英語民族コミュニティー学校,
補習校, 教育, 滞在期間, 海外子女への教育

Non-English-Language-Community-School (NELECS), Hoshuko,
Nurturance, Length of Sojourn, Expatriate Education

ABSTRACT

本研究調査は、アメリカ合州国に住み、平日は現地の公立学校に通い、土曜日には、日本の補習授業校（補習校）に通う日本人児童生徒の教育経験を定性的に調べたものである。14世帯の家族（自分のも含む）や、それぞれの子供の教師と出席する授業から採った、フォーカス・グループ、面接調査や授業観察に基づいたデータを利用して、彼らの日本語での補習教育に関する経験と、補習校に参加する目的を分析した。その上、やがて来る日本への帰国のために、子供に日本「文化資産」を維持させる必要性が緊急である短期滞在者の日本人家庭と、日本語での補習教育が学習強化活動である長期滞在者の日本人家庭や多人種家庭との違いを見る。尚、日本の学校の「集団での学習」への強調と、この強調点は、どれだけアメリカでの日本語土曜補習授業校で維持できるか、できないかも論じる。

1. Introduction: *Hoshukos*

I examined the experiences of Japanese expatriate families enrolling their children in a weekend supplementary school (*hoshuko*) in the United States.¹⁾ I explored ways in which *hoshuko* satisfied the purposes of families helping their children maintain native ability in their first language and culture while living abroad. I also examined the relationship between families' experiences at the school and the length of their intended sojourn. I thus addressed some of the goals that motivate long-term and short-term expatriate families to engage in supplementary educational activities.

Little research has been done on extracurricular schools, although they comprise a significant language resource. Fishman (1989) lists non-English-Language ethnic community schools (NELECS) in 53 languages in the United States, 2/3 of which are supplementary in nature. Most of these serve mainly English-dominant children. Some children attending NELECS, however, strive to maintain their native language and native academic knowledge in preparation for returning to their countries (Barbara Pan, personal communication). In the Japanese case, these are undoubtedly the majority of students. Common to NELECS is the shared goal of nurturing children's native or ethnic selves.

Japan (or Tokyo) is a prime example of a global urban economy (Sassen, 1991) and depends heavily upon mid-career company employees representing its economic interests abroad and taking their families overseas to live and work for several years. In 1999, nearly 800,000 Japanese were living outside Japan

(Figure 1 below) — a 36% increase over 10 years (Japan Information Network, 2000a). Of these, 324, 295 were living in North America, comprising 40.7% of overseas Japanese worldwide (Japan Information Network, 2000b).

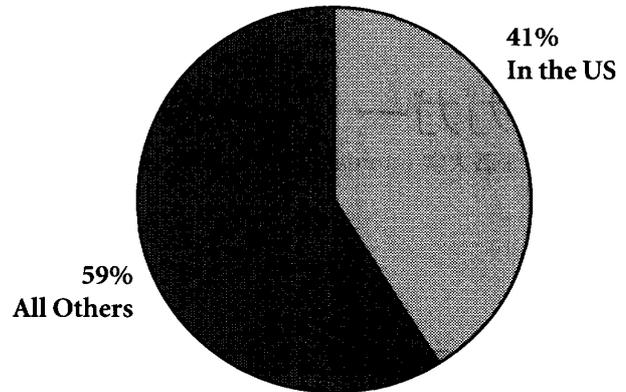


Figure 1. 800,000 Japanese Living Outside Japan

While living abroad, most Japanese children (68.3% of the 12, 228 in North America) attend local public schools (*genchiko*), where they study in English, and *hoshukos*, where they study in Japanese (Monbusho, 1998b). Worldwide, 22,000 children are enrolled in *hoshukos* (Figure 2 below; JOES, 1992). In a retrospective study of Japanese expatriate high school students (Langager, 1999), I found that *hoshuko* attendance was a signifi-

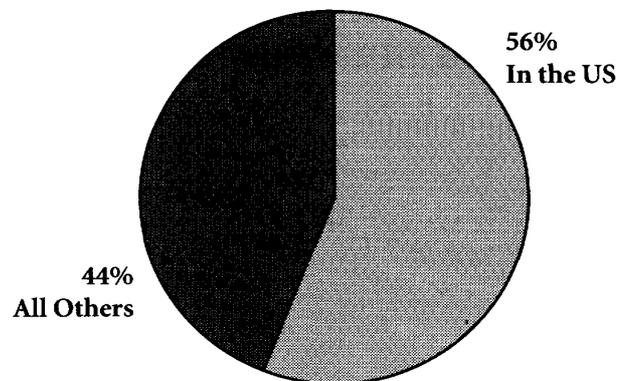


Figure 2. 22,000 Children Attending *Hoshukos* Around the World

cant predictor of grades.²⁾

Much is written about the cultural readjustment and life-long societal niche of returnees, or *kikokushijo* (e.g. White, 1988; Wakabayashi, 1995; Goodman, 1990). Little is written, however, about their experience while living abroad and receiving instruction in a double curriculum of English studies at their local public schools and Japanese studies at *hoshukos*. Yamada-Yamamoto and Richards (1998) and Takayasu (1997) give parent and practitioner perspectives on *hoshukos*. Nagao (1998) and Kanno (2000a, 2000b) discuss the cultural identities that expatriate young people develop while living abroad and anticipating their return to Japan. The present descriptive analysis gives parent and child perspectives on one such supplementary institution. In it, I attempt to make some basic generalizations about the *hoshuko* experience and distinguish between ways in which long- and short-term sojourners experience it.

2. Methods

To understand the purposes Japanese expatriate students and their parents bring to *hoshuko*, and their experiences of it, I employed participant observation and ethnographic interview methods at Japanese Language School (JLS), a *hoshuko* with 600 students in the Boston metropolitan area. I selected data from varied sources to expand my view of issues surrounding child-rearing and education among Japanese expatriates. Moreover, participant observation facilitated realistic, in-process data (Karlsen, 1991). The data I gathered focused on the perspectives of fourteen families whose children were enrolled.

In addition, I incorporated the views of teachers and administrators.

2.1 Data Collection

I collected data from the spring of 1999 to the spring of 2000 using: journaling, surveys, focus groups, interviews, and class observations. I wrote journal entries about my experiences as a parent at the school and about activities that took place in a class in which my son was enrolled, including that of taking my turn as a parent “helper” in the kindergarten.

I conducted a survey (Appendix 1)³⁾ of 48 families with children in grades 5-9. This age was chosen to cover the period during which issues of transition between countries are the most salient for Japanese expatriates (Langager, 1999). In my survey, I asked parents about their purposes for supplementary school, their experience of supplementary school, whether they were engaging in visiting enrollment, and if so, their purposes and experiences of that.

I then conducted two focus groups attended by six members (4 families) and twelve members (10 families) respectively.⁴⁾ I followed up on these sessions with telephone, email and in-person interviews with participants. I took notes during in-person and telephone interviews, which I later transcribed. The interviews were based on issues generated during the focus group. I observed children of focus group members in their Saturday morning language arts and math classes (grades 1, 4, 5 and 7) and interviewed teachers briefly after classes. I also conducted student interviews.

2.2 Participant Observation

In the participatory stages of data collection, I sought more subjective — rather than dispassionate — relationships with participants in my study and looked for roles in which I could participate. Although I played novel outsider roles in class observations, for instance, only survey respondents were anonymous. Many focus group members became close acquaintances. Some non-focus group members were fellow parents in my son's class, with whom I participated as fellow parent-helper. By choosing to negotiate as a group member, I sought to build theory from inside the social structure I was studying and connect it outward to the understanding of theory outside that structure. This contributed an emic perspective and guarded against an analysis built on a meaning structure that did not fit the experience of those whom I was studying, or on false suppositions endemic to a separate cultural view.

In interviews I used open-ended questioning techniques, following informants' thoughts into new insights, albeit motivated by my original questions. Moreover, I engaged in interactive conversation with informants, and I later strove to edit my perspectives out of the data transcripts, focusing on theirs.

The challenge of participant observation was in judging what elements of the experience were salient outside the JLS context. When a shared experience or ethos — even a transnational ethos — defines the world, it is easy for a participant observer to “buy into” this ethos, leaving the experience unanalyzed for outsiders. In this respect the observations of other research in Japanese education, identity development, and bilingualism were helpful.

2.3 Data Analysis Techniques

I employed mainly qualitative data analysis techniques to “transform” (Wolcott, in Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p.9) transcripts of tape recordings and notes into theoretically oriented descriptions of JLS and families enrolled there. This transformation process included: translating, editing, profiling, coding and sorting (Figure 3 below). Both Japanese and English were spoken at focus groups and during interviews. For coherent analysis, I transcribed Japanese tapes directly into English transcripts and edited these transcripts to exclude all material irrelevant to my research questions (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990, p.104; Seidman, 1991, p.89). I further crafted transcripts into profiles by family (Seidman, 1991, p.91), which I could then code and sort without losing referential access to their “storied quality” (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). I coded family profiles according to a scheme devised inductively as I interacted with the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Data collected at JLS were sorted according to these codes and used to provide the description of the *hoshuko* I report in my findings.

3. Findings: The *Hoshuko* Experience

The experience that families had with *hoshuko* attendance can be characterized as an effort to nurture children's sense of being Japanese while living abroad. Nurture was concerned with children's linguistic, academic and social development. Their strategy was to build a large community of fellow expatriate families with children in similar situations, focus their activities around formal learning, and infuse this learning community

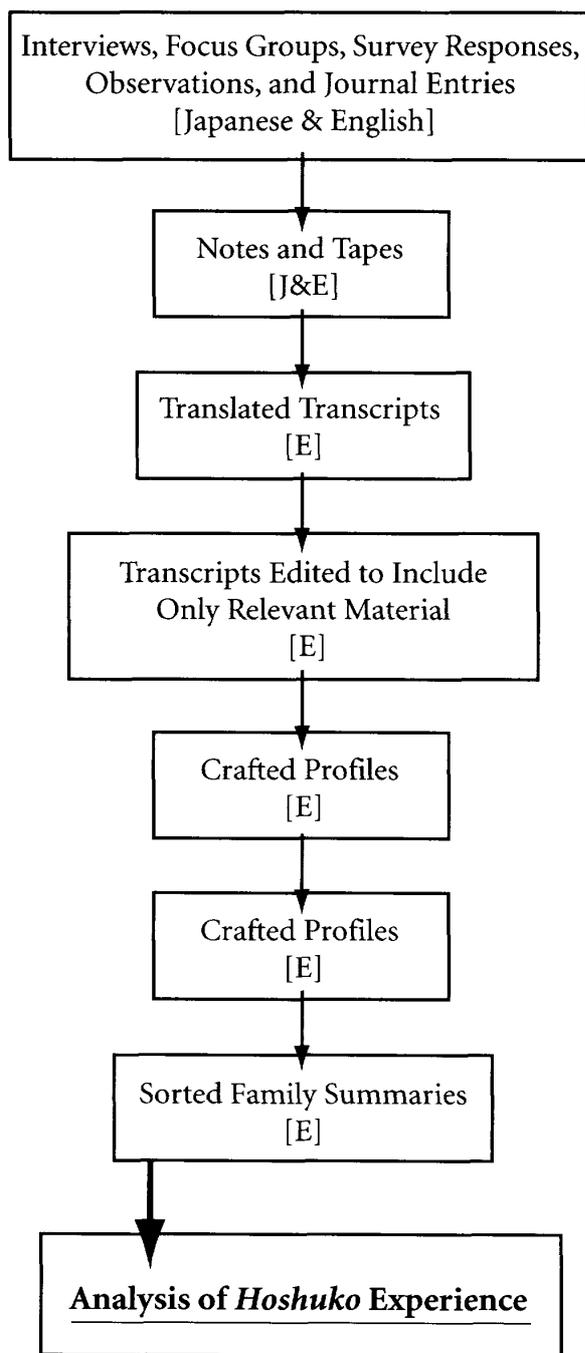


Figure 3. Data Analysis Techniques

with Japanese language and cultural mores. Some important elements of Japanese childhood were missing from the *hoshuko* milieu, however, suggesting that replication of a Japanese environment was not pragmatically feasible nor, perhaps, sought. Nevertheless, while falling short of replication, the commu-

nity strove to maximize opportunities for nurturance of their children's Japanese-ness. I also discovered that families' intended lengths of sojourn gave considerable definition to their expectations of *hoshuko*. Wakabayashi (1995) addressed the differences in goals between long-term and short-term Japanese residents of the US. I found that this distinction was very real in families' narratives at JLS.

3.1 Nurturance as a Central Aim

Nurturance of children's character was constructed both as an intrinsic educational goal and as a strategy for culturally displaced children. JLS itself was subsidized by the Japanese Ministry of Education, whose primary stated goals it is to:

1. Encourage richness of heart and strength of mind.
2. Emphasize essential knowledge and skills.
3. Nurture children's creativity and capacity to adapt to social changes.
4. Develop respect for Japanese culture and traditions as well as an understanding of other cultures and histories (paraphrased from the Monbusho, 1998a).

In my first interview with the principal, I was told the goal of the school was to "*hagukumu*" (nurture, raise up) children, rather than excessive information transmission. Their natural growth as children should be nurtured. This is, in fact, a recurrent theme among Japanese educators at the kindergarten and primary levels, whose entire curriculum is explicitly focused on children's character development, friendships, harmony, and a sense of belonging within numerous groupings (White, 1987; Lewis, 1995).

In parent surveys and focus groups I discovered that nurturance was also construed as a remedy for cultural displacement. That is, parents saw the *hoshuko* as a way of nurturing children’s psychological wounds, incurred through separation from their native culture during childhood. A number of parents spoke of *hoshuko* as a place of healing. It was a place where their children could enjoy the satisfaction of answering a question correctly in class. It was in their peer relationships at *hoshuko* that students were able to fully express themselves and be understood — to have “heart-felt communication.” Parents were concerned for their children’s language and academic development, but much of this was framed within their aspirations that their children would develop sufficient Japanese cultural skills to minimize their adjustment problems upon future repatriation to Japan.

The value of ethnic peer groups extended also to students’ and parents’ achievement motivation. One mother described her daughter’s entrance into the first grade of

hoshuko as a revelation regarding the great effort that families expended to ensure their children would learn Japanese reading and writing. Following examples of other mothers who spent many hours each week coaching their children in *hiragana* and *kanji* characters, she too began her daughter on a daily journaling regimen. Her daughter would write a rough draft, which the mother would correct before returning to her daughter, who would then enter the corrected version in her journal.

Language and cultural maintenance at JLS was thus directed toward children’s well-rounded development within a social and academic context similar to school life in Japan (Table 1 below). Efforts toward these ends included cultural rituals, language use, and classroom routines to build a community environment conducive to language and cultural maintenance. Cultural rituals included Japanese school traditions such as: the entrance ceremony, Children’s Day, *undokai* (field day), evacuation drills, *omikoshi* (miniature shrine-carrying), Moon Viewing

Table 1. Similarities Between *Hoshuko* and School Life in Japan

<i>School Traditions Observed</i>	<i>Classroom Routines Observed</i>
Entrance Ceremony	Classes 50 Minutes Long
Children’s Day	Classes Started and Ended with Bell
<i>Undokai</i> (Field Day)	Monitors Led Classes in Greetings
Evacuation Drills	The Use of <i>Han</i> (Work Groups)
<i>Omikoshi</i> (Miniature Shrine-Carrying)	Seeking Answers by Class Consensus
Moon Viewing Festival	
New Years	
Dolls’ Day	
Graduation Ceremony	

Festival, New Years, Dolls' Day and a formal graduation ceremony, among others.

Teachers and parents expended a great deal of effort to lend authenticity to these cultural events. At the *undokai*, for instance, colorfully choreographed games, such as the “ant race” and a team beanbag toss, were held with red and white teams. For each grade, all students were put into one of two teams, red or white — all wearing red and white reversible headbands with their team's color facing outward. Both teams consisted of half of the members of each class of each grade (teams were disbanded after the event). Equipment was color-coded as well. During each contest carefully selected, stimulating background music played over loud speakers, enhancing the excitement. According to parents, the practice of mandatory participation of all students contrasted with the local American school practice of optional participation. Through elaborate efforts at school events such as these, students were not only introduced to a variety of rituals associated with Japanese culture; they were afforded opportunities for membership in a variety of groups — a truly important part of the Japanese hidden curriculum.

Language use received considerable attention. The curriculum consisted of two subjects: an hour of math and two of language arts. These were generally regarded as the two subjects that students would not be (sufficiently) taught at local American public schools. During every class I observed, teachers reminded students to speak in Japanese. Newsletters from JLS and from the classrooms went home each week carrying articles of common interest and multiple exhortations to families to look for ways of using

Japanese with their children at home. The school operated a library of Japanese books and videos, and each child was given a library card and encouraged to check out books during recess times between classes.

Classroom routines were another opportunity for children to experience something of life in Japan (Table 1 above). Classes lasted 50 minutes, and each started and ended with the ringing of the school bell, as is done throughout Japan. Classroom *kakari* (monitors) were responsible for having the class rise to attention to greet the teacher at the beginnings and endings of classes, a common Japanese practice. Many classes were organized into *hans* (work groups) to expedite classroom order and learning activities, as is nearly universal in Japan. Teaching reflected common Japanese pedagogies, such as withholding the answers to questions until a class consensus is formed (Stevenson & Stigler, 1992).

Through a wide variety of identifiably Japanese cultural rituals and classroom routines, the *hoshuko* endeavored to provide children with a tangibly Japanese community to which they could belong even while living abroad. The Japanese quality of this community, moreover, was strengthened by efforts to preserve a Japanese-speaking environment and, of course, the Japanese curriculum. Underpinning these linguistic, cultural and academic efforts was the central goal of nurturing children's well-rounded character development within a Japanese social context.

3.2 Hoshuko as a Multicultural Institution

Although the *hoshuko* I studied was clearly successful in providing this Japanese social context, it was clearly no replica of life in Japan, as noted above. Nor, perhaps, could it

be. Gaping holes — generally considered inevitable by parents and teachers — existed within the landscape of ritual, routine and curriculum (Table 2 below). Moreover, the influence of local American language and culture penetrated the Saturday walls of this Japanese school community to guarantee it would be a multicultural, rather than a transplanted, Japanese community.

While many rituals of Japanese life and routines of Japanese school life were present, the school was not able to replicate the whole gamut of Japanese ritual. Immediately obvious was the absence of shoe racks, which obviated the changing of shoes throughout the day, as is done in Japan. Similarly obvious was the presence of hundreds of parents at JLS, something for which the school had received much commendation from other *hoshukos*. Parents — spending their free time on Saturday mornings — played a large role in the life of the school by monitoring the halls, organizing lecture groups, taking turns

as “helpers” in the kindergarten classrooms, and generally steering the language use toward Japanese by their presence before, between, and after classes.

Japanese routines one could not experience at JLS included the practice of children serving each other school lunch and the junior-senior relationships students in Japan typically establish through after-school clubs. Classroom routines were altered as well. Many classes had no *hans*, and classes with *hans* had three, rather than six. As a corollary to the partial three-*han* system, JLS policy set class size at 20 students, rather than 40, as in Japan. Although monitors led classes in ritual greetings, this was basically the only role they played in classroom management, unlike classrooms in Japan, where they have many other managerial functions.

Perhaps the most salient gap, from the perspective of a Japanese school, was in the curriculum. With only three hours per week for formal study, the pared-down math and

Table 2. Aspects of *Hoshuko* Experience Unlike School Life in Japan

<i>Gaps in Ritual Landscape</i>	<i>Influence of Local Culture</i>	<i>Abridged Curriculum (3 Hours Weekly)</i>
No Shoe Changing	English speaking and Code Switching	1. Language Arts
Many Parents Present	Japanese Language Attrition	2. Language Arts
No School Lunch	American Values/Interests	3. Mathematics
No Clubs	Local Holidays	
Only 3 <i>Han</i> Per Class		
Many Classes With No <i>Han</i>		
20 Students Per Class		
Limited Monitor Roles		

language arts curriculum was an all-consuming endeavor. Even this à la carte approach was criticized by some long-term sojourners and mixed-race families as having too heavy a focus on information mastery.

In an additive sense, the American influence also worked against replication. JLS children attended public American schools during the weekdays, which seemed to impact their language use, their values, and those of parents and teachers as well. Code switching was very common (I observed it in every class I visited). Moreover, the potential for Japanese language attrition was a constant community fear. Many elementary students simply spoke English with each other during recesses. When I served as kindergarten helper, a boy from another kindergarten class strayed over to me, far from his group, and started speaking English with me — a likely English speaker, demonstrating the strong English language preference of many younger children as well.

The influence of local American values and interests could be detected at the school, especially among long-term expatriate families and teachers. During one class observation, a boy entered the classroom at 10:30 a.m., 90 minutes after school had started. As he entered, the teacher asked, “Who won?” “Oh, we did,” the boy modestly groaned as he put down his soccer bag and took his seat. The teacher later told me that she encourages students to be fully involved in their local school activities, even if it means tardiness at Saturday school. She herself taught at a local elementary school on weekdays and said she strongly believed in being rooted in the local school.

Another form of local influence was

American holidays, which were celebrated in some form at the school. Children attending local schools on weekdays were introduced to customs such as trick-or-treating on Halloween, eating turkey at Thanksgiving, and passing out valentine cards on Valentine’s Day. Children naturally brought these topics into their writing compositions, and some children passed out valentines to their JLS classmates. Teachers generally encouraged this as well.

Regarding values toward the curriculum, some long-term expatriate parents and mixed-race families complained that middle school language arts classes should not spend so much time on classic Japanese forms. A similar complaint was that their second graders were having to learn new *kanji* characters every Saturday, but did not have sufficient opportunities to practice reading them before the next round of *kanji* were introduced in a weekly onslaught. Many long-term expatriate families had to struggle to keep up with what they saw as a rigorous curriculum powered by the intense motivation of families preparing to return to Japan in the short term.

Although it was clear, then, that the school was successfully providing a Japanese community context for learning abroad, it was equally clear that it did not provide students with what they would have been experiencing in Japan. The absence of many important routines and rituals, and the inevitable thinness of the curriculum, as well as the local influence of American language and culture made that quite impossible. Moreover, the interests of long-term expatriates were clearly different from those of short-term expatriates, and this seemed to contribute to a less

authentically Japanese environment as well. The school could be seen, then, as a surrogate, multicultural community for nurturing a Japanese identity in transnational children during their absence from Japan itself.

3.3 Intended Lengths of Sojourn

The distinction between short-term expatriates (*tanki taizaisha*) and long-term expatriates (*choki taizaisha*) was an explicit part of the community discourse. Acting together with this distinction were dimensions of race (Japanese or mixed) and age group (kindergarten/elementary or middle school level). Length of intended sojourn was addressed in the narratives of numerous informants in connection with the needs any given family brought to the *hoshuko*. Long- and short-term expatriate families varied in their purposes for sending their children to *hoshuko* as well as their level of satisfaction and their evaluation of the experience.

Short-term families generally seemed ready to make a greater commitment to studying the curriculum, whereas a number of long-term and mixed-race families were somewhat critical of the ambitious curriculum, referring to parts of it as “esoteric.” Long-term families, who were often happily settled in the US, tended to regard the experience of *hoshuko* attendance as an enrichment activity for their children, one that would provide them with skills they would need for contact with families in Japan and for their future resumés as well. Short-term families, in contrast, treated *hoshuko* attendance with a sense of urgency, stressing their children’s need to prepare for repatriating to school life in Japan as well as the therapeutic value of *hoshuko* attendance.

Although members of the school commu-

nity often spoke of this or that concern in terms of whether it affected *tanki* or *choki taizaisha*, it was not always clear which category a given family fit into. One mother, whose family’s expatriation stretched from an original 5-year intention to a 10-year period, expressed her aspiration to get a green card and continue her daughter’s education in the US until high school graduation if possible. For her family, *hoshuko* attendance seemed to be shifting from “urgent” to “enriching” in that she saw it as a way for her daughter (who was attending a predominantly white school on weekdays) to come to terms with her Asian identity.

4. Discussion

My findings helped me understand the nature of the Japanese *hoshuko* as a surrogate, multicultural Japanese community for nurturing the Japanese linguistic, social and academic development of children living abroad. Parents’ descriptions of their motivation for enrolling their children in, as well as their experience of *hoshuko* centered around children’s social and academic development within a Japanese linguistic context. It was premised on the notion that children’s development as well-rounded Japanese people needed nurturing while they were living outside their native culture (Figure 4 below).

The *hoshuko* experience is neither authentically Japanese (in a purist sense) nor fully corrupted by the local culture. It is sufficiently Japanese to fulfill at some level its role of nurturing expatriate children’s Japanese-ness during their families’ sojourns. As such, it

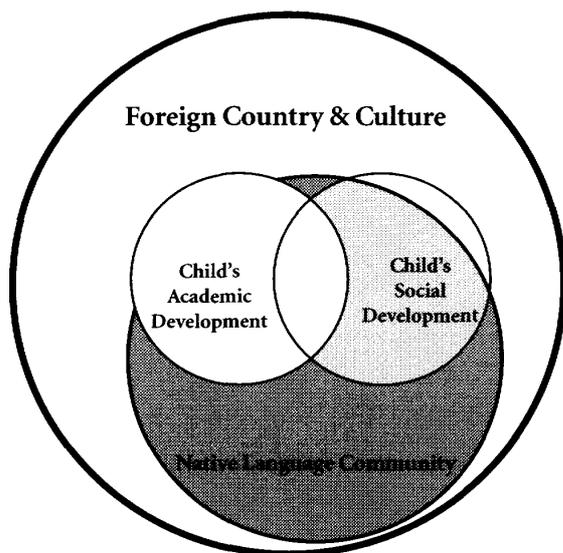


Figure 4. Situational Context of Parental Goals

provides a coherent social context for well-rounded character development of Japanese individuals: Japanese linguistic, academic, and cultural support while living outside Japan. That is in spite of important missing elements, such as an all-Japanese speaking environment and the full range of rituals of Japanese school life.

This general understanding derived from the particular experiences of informants, who differed from each other in many idiosyncratic, but some general, ways. Idiosyncrasies aside, the most robust dimension of diversity among informants was their intended lengths of sojourn, which seemed to affect both their purposes for enrollment and their experiences of attendance at the *hoshuko*. Long-term sojourners construed their children's enrollment as an enrichment activity, whereas short-term sojourners viewed it as a crucial means of preparing for repatriation.

Notes

- 1) The data I analyzed here were taken from my doctoral dissertation on this theme (Langager, 2001).
- 2) I found that, for long-term expatriate children with extensive ESL instruction in public schools, the type of educational approach that incorporated extensive *hoshuko* attendance during the compulsory education years was a significant predictor of grades at a Japanese-English bilingual high school.
- 3) I structured focus groups as action research groups for JLS parents planning to enroll their children in public schools during summer visits to Japan. I also used focus group data for an analysis of visiting enrollment (Langager, 2001).
- 4) One parent other than myself attended both sessions.

Appendix. Questions on Parent Survey Conducted at JLS

(English Translation)

Basic Information

Grade:

Class:

Teacher:

Question Set 1

How many years have you lived in English-speaking countries ?

Please circle all the educational choices you have made for your child(ren):

Juku

Hoshuko

Visiting Enrollment

Genchiko

Other _____

Question Set 2

What was (were) your purpose(s) for enrolling your child(ren) at JLS ?

What has your child(ren) gotten out of attending JLS ?

Have you ever taken your child(ren) back to Japan for visiting enrollment ?

If so, what did your child(ren) get out of the experience ?

Do you plan to take your child(ren) to Japan for visiting enrollment this summer ?

If so, what is (are) your purpose(s) for doing so ?

Would you be interested in participating in a Visiting Enrollment Action Research Group, where members can meet to exchange information and talk about our plans for visiting enrollment ?

If so, please write your email address below, so I can contact you.

Glossary

Children's Day	a Japanese national holiday on May 5 th , during Golden Week (a week in early May with many holidays). This day traditionally commemorates boys, and is celebrated by decorating one's house with <i>koi nobori</i> (carp flags), one for the father and one for each boy in the house. Other ways boys celebrate this day include taking a bath of irises, and eating rice cakes wrapped in sycamore leaves.
<i>choki taizaisha</i>	long-term expatriate(s).
<i>genchiko</i>	local public schools in host country of sojourn.
<i>hagukumu</i>	raise, nurture.
<i>han</i>	one of six class-wide groups typically consisting of 6 to 8 students each.
<i>hiragana</i>	syllabary characters that are derived from cursive kanji characters and phonetically represent the syllables used in normal Japanese speech.
<i>hoshuko</i>	supplementary Japanese schools, meeting generally on Saturday mornings.
JLS	Japanese Language School, a <i>hoshuko</i> in the Boston metropolitan area.
JOES	Japan Overseas Educational Service (in Japanese, <i>Kaigaishijo Kyoiku Shinko Zaidan</i>).
<i>kanji</i>	Chinese characters used to write Japanese script.
<i>kikokushijo</i>	Japanese (minors or adults) who returned to Japan after living abroad during childhood.
<i>Monbusho</i>	Japanese Ministry of Education.
NELECS	non-English-Language ethnic community schools, as in Fishman (1989).
<i>tanki taizaisha</i>	short-term expatriate(s).
<i>undokai</i>	field day, in which all students are expected to participate and must swear to do their utmost.

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