
American Ideals in Child-rearing: A Comparative Study

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Let's think about similarities and differences between America and Japan in terms of family life.

What is your image of 'America' and 'American people'? A vast land, abundant natural resources, various races and so on. You may feel that America is completely a different country from Japan.

Of course, there are so many differences between America and Japan because they have different histories, geographical features and climate. And these differences have influenced not only the lifestyle of the people there but also the way of thinking and value system. They have influenced what people make believe to be important.

Now we'll study family life in both America and Japan.

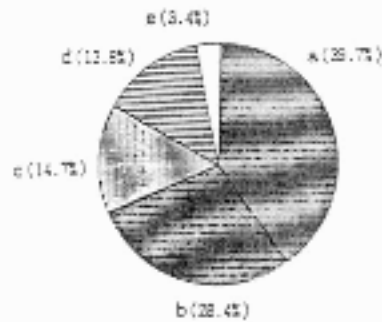
*important attitude and the way of thinking when we study other countries and lifestyle

- (1) We should keep in mind that every culture and lifestyle, which based on their natural conditions and their histories and when we study other cultures we should not evaluate only with our own sense of value.
- (2) We have to try to find not only their differences but also similarities.

1. Do you get up on your own?

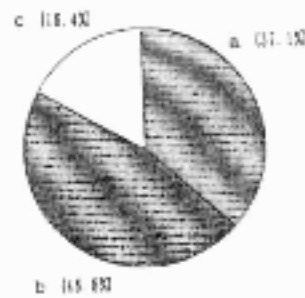
Look at graphs below. There are a lot of Japanese junior high school students who can't get up on their own. Are you one of them?

When did you get the habit of getting up by yourself?



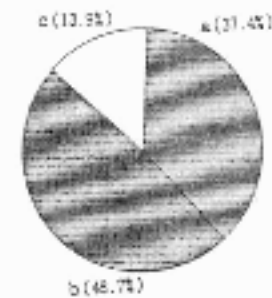
a. before 6 b. age of 6-9
c. age of 10-12
d. after the age of 13
e. I can't still get up by myself.

Who puts your clothes in order?



a. I b. sometimes parents
c. parents

Do you clean your room by yourself?



a. always b. sometimes
c. seldom

These inquiries were made in three J.H.S. in Hiroshima and Okayama.

They show that many Japanese children, even junior high school students get many things like cleaning up their room and putting away their clothes done by their parents. Do you think American children are the same? If not, Why?

2. Do you have your own household chores?

In America most of the children have their own chores at home and get an allowance for them. Here are some data on it. Read carefully and compare with your own life in Japan.

Summary of State of North Carolina

Area:	136,413km ²
Population:	5,880,000
Race:	
White	75.8%
Black	22.4%
Indian	1.1%
Japanese American	3,200
Main products:	Tobacco, Fiber
	Soybean, Broiler

Location of North Carolina



Tabacco Industry in N.C.



materials 1

Diana Lauth ,a fourteen-year-old girl,lives in the suburbs of Greenville in North Calolina has a job during her summer vacation. She works as a baby-sitter of a four-year-old girl whose parents both work . She goes to the house before they go out to work to take a little girl to her house . Then she takes care of her while her parents finish their work ,playing together,feeding and so on. She gets ten dollars a day for her job.

She says ,“I love her very much. She is like my real sister. But taking care of her is my job.”

materials 2 (Interview in Snow Hill Primary School in North Carolina)

Question: Do you get an allowance?

a girl (9): No,I don't.

a boy(7) : Yes, but if I don't do my chores ,I can't get any.

Question: What are your chores?

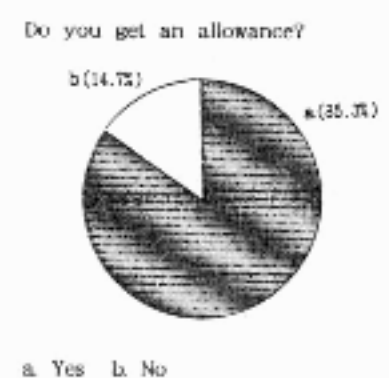
a boy (9) : I clean my doghouse . I wash the dishes.

a girl(13): Washing the car , ironing , cooking.

a girl(8): I clean my room,bathroom.I put away my clothes in my drawers.



Look at the graph on the right. We find that most Japanese junior high school students get an allowance. They can get it whether they do their chores or not unlike American children who get an allowance as a reward for their work. They might envy you.

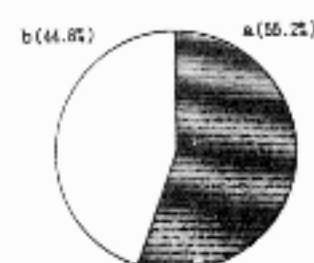


Q1 : Write your comments on the sentences about Diana compared with your life.

Q2 : Please discuss and find similarities and differences between their life in Snow Hill Primary School and yours. And think why there are differences.

Some of you have your own household chores and do well. As the graph on the right shows ,more than 50% of the students in Hiroshima and Okayama have their own chores. (This rate is much lower than the American one.)

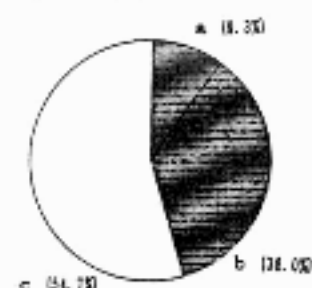
Do you have any chores?



a. Yes b. No

Then let's think about what the graph on the right shows. When we asked the Japanese students who have chores if they get a reward for them ,less than 10% of them answered "Yes."

Do you get an allowance for the chores?



a. Yes b. sometimes c. No

Q: American children get an allowance for doing their chores as a job. Japanese children also get an allowance but it has no connection with their chores. It's the money they can use freely. When they do their chores, few children get an allowance for them.

Let's think why there is such a difference.

American children get an allowance for their chores from their parents. There are few who can get some money for doing nothing. The parents explain the reasons below.

Interview in Snow Hill Primary School

mother A: The reason I give my children some chores is to let them be conscious as a member of a family and to let them have a responsibility.

mother B: I give them an allowance for their job because I want them to be independent and want to grow the good sense of value for working. This is a preparation for getting money in the future.

mother C: I think the experience to work and get money is very important to let them have responsibility for their own life ,that is, to let them be independent.

As you find reading above , parents in America think it important that they let their children be aware a family responsibility and be independent.

Then why don't Japanese parents give their children a reward for their chores?

Interview in a junior high school in Hiroshima prefecture

a mother : I give my children some chores. That is because I want them to

be a person in the future who can do their duty ,who never bother others and who can do any job which they like or dislike .

You may be beginning to find the difference between America and Japan. Yes, in Japan children are given chores not as a 'job' but as a 'home training'. The 'home training' is 'to have manners',so it is natural not to give them a reward.

Then let's get our ideas into shape.

In case of giving children household chores

☆ differences In America⇒ Children get a reward for their chores
(They don't get any allowance.)

In Japan⇒ Children don't get a reward for their chores.
(They get an allowance which is not concerned
their chores.)

☆ similarities In both countries the reason parents give their children some chores because they think it useful for their children's social life in the future.
(But remember parents in America think 'independence' important and in Japan 'manners' .)

3. What are your parents in the habit of saying to you?

We' ve found that 'independence' is a very important matter . But why? Then next,let's think about the words and phrases which are given to children by

parents. These are the top three in each country.

In America

1. Do your best.
2. Do what you like.
3. Keep what the God tells.

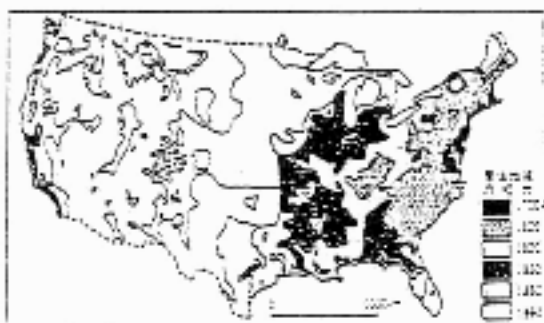
In Japan

1. Study.
2. Don't bother others.
3. Behave politely.

Q: Write your comments about the above statements.

Why do the Americans make much of 'independence'? And why the Japanese 'manners'? Let's think these by studying both their histories and cultures.

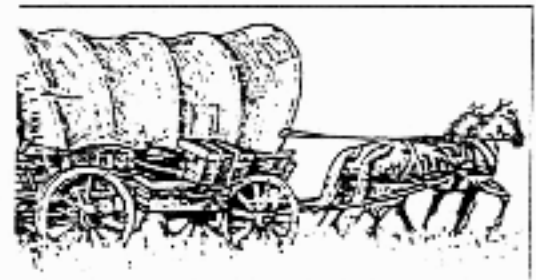
Expansion of the Place of Residence



Territorial Expansion



A Prairie Schooner



Q: Looking at these maps and picture above, explain how America was build.

As you know looking at materials about pioneers on the right, America was built by a lot of pioneers. Then how many people came to America and how many people became 'the Americans'?

Number of Immigrants to U. S. (1861-1910)			
U. S.	220,500	China	96,100
Italy	286,700	(including Taiwan)	
France	24,300	Japan	38,500
Germany	288,800	Korea	35,800
Greece	98,200	Hong Kong	35,600
Poland	73,300	India	31,300
Spain	20,500	Philippines	101,500
U. S. S. R	15,700	Canada	286,100
Cuba	250,800	Mexico	442,300
		Brazil	26,500

Q: Imagine the feeling of the pioneers who left their homeland and began to lead a new life.

Q. Write your idea why American people think 'independence' important referring the age of the pioneer.

Then next, let's think about the Japanese history and culture compared with American ones.

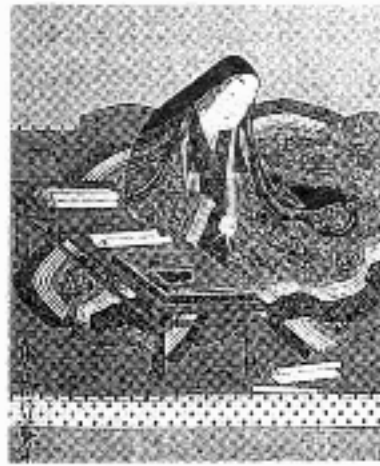
The picture on the right shows the scene of the birth of Japan which was found in 'Kojiki' and 'Nihonshoki' written in the 8th century. This is a myth and is not a fact. Then why has the myth been told among the Japanese people?

When we think about this, we found two important facts. One is that it is not clear how, when and who built the country Japan. This is a great difference from America. America was built on 4th of July in 1776, the Independence Day.



Another fact is that Japan has made a lot of cultures affected by some countries around and they have fused since the starting

point of the country. This is also a great difference from America which can be called a new country.



For Example,our staple food ,rice is regarded not only one of food but also something very sacred. In Inari-shrine ,as the Chinese characters of Inari are shown, a rice plant is portraited as a God. It has thought since Yayoi Period. Japanese have lived in a traditional culture and society which has built for a long time. The society where we live now not only has modern culture in 20th century but also has been deeply affected by the ones in Edo Period and Muro-machi Period.

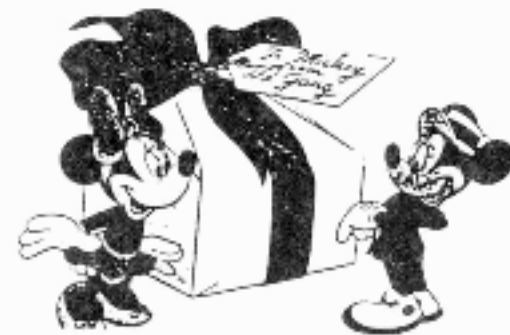
You have already learned that America was built by immigrants. The present America is the gathered of many cultures from many countries. The immigrants built a new country America ,American society keeping their own culture they succeeded to their ancestors.

How about Japan? We Japanese has lived in an Island country where we have few contact with other countries. Therefore,we have lived on the assumption that 'we should not do something extra.' or 'we can understand well without saying all.' That means the Japanese believe all Japanese can feel and understand easily one matter in the same way.

Don't you find the reason the Japanese regard 'politeness' and 'cooperation with other people' important?

Q: Write your idea of why the Japanese make much of 'politeness' and 'cooperation with other people' in connection with Japanese history and culture.

Then, you know these people below very well. They overcame many difficulties and got wonderful achievements. For them a new country America is a dreamy country, and at the same time, for the people who tried to build the new country their efforts might be a support.



4. What kind of person is an 'ideal American' for the Americans?
What is the role of the family to let children to be an 'ideal American'?

What do you do after school? Look at the graph below. This is the answer of the Japanese students to the question, "Are you involved in out of school activities?"

Can you imagine this result? There are a lot of students who go to cram schools. The American children know about cram schools well and they think it incredible.

Do you attend any activities out of school?



a. sports b. artistic and cultural
c. voluntary work d. cram school
e. nothing

How do the American children spend their after-school life? In North Carolina, they went swimming in the pool, to the piano lesson, learning ballet, gymnastics and pictures. Some children learned horseback riding. There are no cram schools there, of course. And the biggest difference is that so many Americans are involved in voluntary work.

In American schools we can find many notices on a bulletin board. Getting some informations from them or from a local community center, they visit some facilities and join in many kinds of activities in their community.

Unfortunately in Japan it is different. Our research indicates only 1.7% are involved in voluntary work. Then why is the voluntary work important in America?

Gail T. Edmondson, a principal of Snow Hill Primary School told us the following.

“The ‘ideal American’ is a person who is devoted to our community, who is involved in voluntary work and who tries to make a democratic society.”

Q: What kind of the way of life which the Americans make much of?

What kind of society which they try to keep?

We found another which greatly influences on their life in America. It is a ‘church’. Most Japanese aren’t aware of their religion in their daily life. Just when we have a wedding ceremony or annual events like a new-year day and Bon, we are aware of it.

But in America ‘church’ is deeply related to their daily life. When we asked children at Snow Hill Primary School in N.C., they answered mentioned below.

Q: What is the most important thing in your daily life?

a boy (7) : To go to church and read a Bible.

a girl(9) : To make a good relationship with the God .

G.T.Edmondson also added 'a person who live with the God ' as an 'ideal American' and said;

"You know, education in America started on the basis of a missionary to make a democratic society."

We are sure that now you really understand why the Americans make much of 'church' and 'voluntary work'.

Q: What should we the Japanese learn from the Americans' way of thinking to their family and community? Write your idea.



Now America has a lot of problems about a 'family'. There are a lot of homeless people there. And there are many families where children are brought up by one parent because of his or her divorce. The problems of a drug addiction and alcoholism seriously affect families. In Japan divorce is increasing and a domestic violence is one of our problems about a 'family'. We should have an interest in the matter of a family and observe, because a 'family' is a fundamental unit on human beings life.

We have learned an attitude and a way of thinking which we take in understanding other cultures by taking up a matter of a family both in America and Japan. We Japanese tend to study other countries and people there and try to understand them by our own sense of value. It is based on our traditional culture and quite a long history. Therefore we reach a conclusion that we can't understand other countries or we feel them somewhat strange after all.

We found the difference of Parents' ways of thinking an 'allowance' in both America and Japan. They are both reasonable, because each way is under the influence of each history and culture. This is one example and it can be said that every lifestyle is reasonable. You should remember it. It is very important for all of you who should be a person 'international'.

And what is another important thing? It is that we should try to find not only differences but also similarities. When we study on the matter of a 'family' in both countries, we can find much similarities. And the most important similarity is that 'family' is lovable and every one tries to preserve it with good care.