

ACCULTURATION PROBLEMS OF FOREIGNERS IN JAPAN⁽¹⁾

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WHO (1978) definition is quite appropriate for conceptualizing the health-related problems of foreigners in Japan. The adjustment problems of foreigners in Japan is discussed from the viewpoint of acculturation. Acculturation involves not only the acquisition of a host culture but also the maintenance of a native cultural identity (Berry *et al.*, 1992). A questionnaire on adjustment problems was mailed to 1040 foreign residents in Tokyo, and 316 valid responses were received. Adjustment problems such as experience of discrimination and prejudice, lack of personal networks, and lack of awareness of how to interact with local Japanese people were found. From two case studies of Chinese residents, the necessity of joint productive activities involving foreigners and Japanese was proposed.

Keywords: Japan, acculturation, foreigners, adjustment, Chinese

Health is traditionally thought to be a human state without disease; but World Health Organization (WHO, 1978) defined health as a "state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." This definition is quite appropriate for conceptualizing the health-related problems of foreigners in Japan. That is, health is not only a disease-free state of mind and body but also includes factors such as whether or not individuals lead a meaningful and lively life. In this paper, we do not take up the psychiatric problems of foreigners in Japan, but rather we address the adjustment problems of foreigners in Japan from the viewpoint of acculturation.

'Acculturation' is a process that individuals undergo (often later in life) in response to a changing cultural context, while 'enculturation' is the process that links developing individuals to their cultural contexts (Berry *et al.*, 1992). Acculturation involves not only the acquisition of a target or host culture but also the maintenance of a native cultural identity. The relationship between the target culture and native culture can be explained with an analogy between second language learning and first language acquisition. Enculturation is parallel to the acquisition of a first language or mother tongue. 'Socialization' is a common term used in developmental psychology to describe enculturation in a society. As we call those who have acquired two languages 'bilingual,' we refer to individuals who have acquired two cultures as 'bicultural.' Three types of acculturation are described in Table 1.

A foreigner's legal status is not necessarily related to psychological acculturation or the bicultural process. For example, second- or third-generation Koreans living in Japan usually have simultaneous or overlapping acculturation styles. They are strongly influenced by Japanese culture from birth, although legally they are born as foreign residents. Filipinas who come to rural areas to marry farmers acquire Japanese nationality, but their acculturation process is 'successive.' They must learn Japanese behavior styles typical of agricultural areas after their native cultural identity is fully formed. Berry *et al.* (1992) classified types of ethnic human groups by voluntariness of ethnic contact and by mobility of the group (See Table 2).

Table 1. Three patterns of acculturation

1. Simultaneous acculturation	Enculturation and acculturation occur simultaneously. From the time of birth, the child is exposed to two different cultures. [e.g. children of intercultural marriage]
2. Overlapping acculturation	Before the formation of a native cultural identity, acculturation goes on under the influence of the host culture [e.g. overseas returnees]
3. Successive acculturation	After the formation of the native cultural identity, the acculturation process begins. [e.g. foreign students in graduate school]

Table 2. Voluntariness of Contact

Mobility	Voluntary	Involuntary
Sedentary	ETHNIC GROUPS	NATIVE PEOPLES
Migrant	IMMIGRANTS (relatively permanent) SOJOURNERS (temporary)	REFUGEES

Table 3. Four varieties of acculturation and ethnic policy

		Question 1: Is it considered to be of value to maintain cultural identity and characteristics?	
		Response	
		"YES"	"NO"
Question 2: Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with other groups?	"YES"	INTEGRATION (MULTICULTURALISM)	ASSIMILATION (CONSOLIDATION)
	"NO"	SEPARATION (SEGREGATION)	MARGINALIZATION (ETHNOCIDE)

(Revised from Berry *et al.* 1992, and Kim & Berry, 1986)

In this study, we discuss problems of individuals who are in the process of acquiring Japanese culture as their second culture as 'successive' acculturation. Although among foreign people in Japan there is a wide range of basis of life, purpose of being in Japan, socioeconomic status, and so on, we would like to discuss acculturation as an adjustment process of these 'foreigners,' regardless of their legal status.

Biculturalism can be achieved through a certain kind of ethnic relationship, namely 'integration,' as proposed by Berry *et al.* (1992) (see Table 3). One dimension of acculturation is whether a person maintains and develops her cultural identity and cultural characteristics or not. The second dimension of acculturation is whether it is important to maintain relationships with the host country's majority group(s) (and other minority groups). The first dimension is analogous to the issue of first language maintenance in a foreign country, while the second is analogous to active second language learning. If the individual pursues both tasks, she can be classified as 'integrated.' Those who do not mind losing their own ethnic culture and try to

assimilate themselves to the host or target culture exhibit the 'assimilated' type of acculturation. Those who regard their own cultural identity as important and maintain distance from the prevailing culture are categorized as 'separation' type. Those who fall into the category of 'marginalization' fail to maintain their own culture and to acquire the target culture.

This typology is also used for characterizing government policies toward domestic foreign people. For example, Canada and New Zealand employ an 'integration'-based policy for minority groups, thus attempting to form a multicultural society. The United States has adopted an assimilation policy, although ethnic cultural diversity is obvious. During the Japanese colonization of the Korean peninsula, Taiwan, and other occupied territories, native people were forced to assimilate to Japanese culture by prohibition of the use of their native language, forced adoption of Japanese names, compulsory prayer in shrines, and being made to vow absolute loyalty to the Emperor. In contrast, South Africa is a country which has adopted a separation (segregation) policy. Apartheid is a system which discourages the integration of black people and white people in marriage, occupations, residential areas, and so on. A typical example of a marginalization-based policy is that of Nazi Germany's policy against Jews in Europe, where complete elimination of a whole ethnic group was attempted. Another example of political marginalization was the policy of the Japanese government and the military before and during World War II, when Korean, Chinese and other colonized people were forced to work to death in horrible working and living conditions. Many women were deceived and forced to serve as 'comfort women' for Japanese soldiers.

Inoue (in preparation) has conducted a survey on experiences, stereotypes, images, and opinions regarding foreigners by collecting data from Japanese people who live in districts where foreigners live. The results show a strong desire among Japanese residents for foreigners to assimilate to Japanese customs. Furthermore, the Japanese were found to have little interest in the cultural background or cultural identity of foreigners. The survey revealed that Japanese residents hope for the assimilation of foreign residents. It also showed that many Japanese have 'separation'-based attitudes. They try not to have contact with foreigners in their daily lives due to the predominantly negative image of Asian sojourners as being closely associated with crime, AIDS, and so on.

However, this depends on the ethnicity of the foreigner. Generally speaking, the Japanese have positive images of Americans and Caucasian Europeans and desire integration with these people. On the contrary, many Japanese still maintain disdainful feelings toward Korean, Chinese, and other Asian people. Such deep-rooted feelings were formed before and during World War II.

Under these circumstances in Japan today, foreigners face various problems in maintaining and improving their health (Inoue, 1990). However, there are very few studies on acculturation of foreign residents in Japan. Except for a survey of Tsai (1992), which was conducted in Kansai area getting data from 321 foreign residents, there are no survey study of foreigner's psychological adjustment in this country. From the point of view of health psychology, the survey study is important to get information to help solving adjustment problems of foreign residents by community-level intervention.

In the following section, acculturation and health which appeared in a survey of foreign residents in Kita Ward, Tokyo, will be discussed. The survey on attitudes of foreign residents in Kita Ward, Tokyo, was conducted in August-September, 1990, for the Ward Office to get information, which will be incorporated into administration services of foreign residents to

provide them a more comfortable living environment. In a part of the survey, the first author administered questionnaire items related to the issue of psychological acculturation.

METHOD OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

The questionnaire consisted of five main parts: (1) personal description, (2) condition of housing and neighborhood, (3) daily information, (4) daily life, and (5) comments. Problems of acculturation and psychological adjustment were asked in the part (4). Items of (1) and (4) are shown in Appendix A. The questionnaire was mailed to 1040 foreign residents, selected at random from 7952 foreign residents who had registered with the Kita Ward local government and who were at least 18 years old. All information provided by the respondents was treated confidentially. The survey questionnaire was written in English, Chinese and Korean. Three hundred and sixteen valid responses were received. The rate of reply was 30.4%.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Almost 80% of the respondents were of East Asian origin, mainly Chinese and South/North Korean. The greatest number were Chinese (55.4%), followed by Koreans (21.2%), other Asians (11.3%) and American/European (4.1%). The number of women (142) and men (154) was about equal. Most of the respondents were young adults in their 20s or 30s (about 80%). About 70% of the Koreans had lived in Japan for more than 5 years, and most were permanent residents. In contrast, 72.6% of the Chinese were newcomers, having lived in Japan for "less than 3 years" with short-stay visas. As for their visa status, "Regular Students (RYUGAKUSEI: College student visa status) /Language Students (SHUGAKUSEI: pre-college student visa status)" were dominant, regardless of sex, and about 70% of them were in their 20s. Of the Chinese, 63.4% were regular students or language students, and about 70% of them were working part-time.

One third of the respondents cited common problems such as "high living costs" (66.7%) and "poor housing facilities" (37.9%). Many also complained of "troubles at work," in particular, "few chances to display their own skills and experience." With regard to "daily information," American/European respondents wanted to obtain "official information" and "daily topics and events," while the Chinese answered "Japanese custom and habits" as well as "official services." This suggests that the Chinese have different types of problems, especially psychological problems, adapting to the local community compared with other nationalities. These acculturation problems fall into three areas.

(1) Discrimination and Prejudice

About 70% of the respondents said that they experienced discrimination and prejudice either "often" (15.2%) or "sometimes" (54.1%). The rate of experience of discrimination and experience is high (61.0-75.6%) regardless of the length of stay in Japan. The situation in which all nationalities felt discrimination and prejudice the most was when "looking for housing" (60.3%). More than half of the Koreans and American/European respondents experienced discrimination and prejudice "at public agencies (55.6%)," and more than half of the Chinese answered "on business (53.8%)." The Korean respondents, most of whom are permanent residents, felt discrimination and prejudice in cases such as "marriage (29.6%)" and the "social welfare system (37.0%)," while the Chinese felt discrimination and prejudice in interactive situations especially in the work settings. As a nationality group, they have the

highest rate (26.1%) of the experience of prejudice and discrimination when “in the company of Japanese friends.” Concerning the content of the discrimination and prejudice, Korean respondents answered “insulted (47.7%),” American/European and Other Asians answered “stared at (46.2)” first, and the Chinese answered “tormented (34.9%)” first. This feeling of being treated unfairly might prevent the Chinese from networking with the Japanese.

(2) Lack of Personal Networks with Japanese

In response to the question, “from whom do you ask advice?” 35.4% responded “Japanese friends”: this answer increases as the length of stay increases (ranging from 21.4%: staying less than 6 months, to 55.6%: staying 3 to 5 years). Comparing ethnic groups, 92.3% of American/European respondents answered “Japanese friends.” However, only 37.1% of the Chinese answered “Japanese friends.” Among all the nationalities surveyed, the Chinese reported having least “friends other than Japanese” (20.6%). Their response to having “nobody” as a friend was the highest (14.3%) of all the nationalities surveyed. The Chinese thus do not have the personal human networks through which they can ask advice when they experience trouble. Most American/European residents make use of volunteers, while Chinese, Koreans and Other Asians do not use these services personally. This again indicates that the Chinese relatively lack the personal support networks to support them psychologically and to help them adjust to the local community.

Sonoda (1991) characterized the Chinese interpersonal relationship as ‘connectionism,’ in which human relationships such as friendship and acquaintance are the basis for social life. Chinese ‘connectionism’ is different not only from European individualism based upon personal independence and but also from Japanese collectivism, in which harmonious behavior to the in-group (such as one’s company) is more important than personal or private relationships. The case of T (to be discussed below) illustrates the cultural gap which emerges in a couple’s understanding of their marital relationship; the Japanese husband regards the relationship with his colleagues in the workplace as primary, while the Chinese wife cannot understand why he considers his marital relationship to be of less importance.

(3) Need for Cultural and Personal Interactions with the Japanese

On the average, 79.4% of the respondents had Japanese friends; the more a foreigners stay in Japan, the more chance they get to have Japanese friends, ranging from 51.2% (less than 6 months stay) to 90.2% (more than 5 years stay).

Only 3.5% of whole respondents didn’t want to associate more with Japanese people. The tendency to get along with Japanese is very strong. However, only 37.1% of the Chinese answered that they wanted to keep in contact with Japanese after going back to their own country. This is contrastive to other nationality groups such as the American/European residents (46.2%).

This suggests that the main importance of interacting with Japanese for the Chinese is “to get a Japanese friend for the sake of convenience” rather than “to get a close Japanese friend.” In answer to the question, “what do you want to do while in Japan?” most Chinese answered “learn Japanese language, culture and traditions” (62.3%) and “learn Japanese technology” (50.3%), while only 21.2% wanted to do “sports and cultural activities.” American/European respondents, however, answered “learn about Japanese culture” (84.6%) and do “sports and cultural activities” (61.5%), which indicates a desire to adapt to the local community. By contrast, the Chinese tend to focus on achieving their economic/academic goals instead of interacting with people in the local community. Most of them are “Regular Students/

Language Students” and need to work as part-timers to make money for school tuition or to send money to their families back home. Consequently, they have less time and interest for cultural interaction with Japanese in the local community.

We found that foreign residents in Japan have general problems in adapting to the local community, such as “housing” and “daily information.” They also have acculturation problems, notably: (1) experience of discrimination and prejudice, (2) lack of personal networks, and (3) lack of awareness of how to interact with local people. The Chinese appear to suffer from psychological problems more than other foreign residents. The Chinese reported discrimination and prejudice in personal situations, not in public situations like the Koreans. This discrimination may stem from the historical, educational, and cultural relationship between China and Japan.

The Chinese seem to have relatively weak personal networks with Japanese who can support them psychologically in their efforts to adapt to the local community. This suggests that Chinese are too involved in activities related to their duties and economic necessities. Their human networks are often limited to monocultural relationships with other Chinese. Many Chinese do not have opportunities to interact with Japanese, as illustrated by Case K in the following section.

O'Donnell *et al.* (1992) stress the importance of “joint productive activity,” which provides opportunities for individual and community development since participants share the perceived purpose of producing a product through cooperative interaction. ‘Joint productive activities’ facilitate learning and the development of interpersonal relationships. These kinds of activities should be organized by the local government and people in the community. We will present two contrasting cases of adjustment of Chinese residents and discuss the role of community intervention to help foreigners’ acculturation. The first case represents cross-cultural misunderstanding exacerbated by problems in an intercultural marriage. The second case illustrates positive bicultural adjustment facilitated by appropriate opportunities for intercultural activities.

T is a thirty-one year old Chinese woman who came from Shanghai to Tokyo in February, 1989, as a “Language Student.” She married a Japanese man in May 1989, but the husband deserted her after just one week. She came to the Foreign Residents Information Service at Kita Ward office because she feared visa problems without her husband’s guarantee of support.

Through counseling she discovered that her marriage had failed because of mutual misunderstanding from the outset. Her husband had married her out of sympathy, while she believed that he truly loved her. Her husband’s concept of a wife was that a wife should follow her husband obediently, just like a traditional Japanese wife, while her view was that a wife may assert her own independence in life, just like most Chinese wives. The reason why he deserted her after just one week of marriage was that he experienced serious culture shock based on these differences. It was impossible for her to understand the meaning and the depth of his culture shock. After about one year, T met another Japanese man and married again. She is now very nervous about her new married life with her second husband because her first marriage failed. She does not have any close friends whom she can rely on for advice and psychological support. She still goes to the Foreign Residents Information Service to receive counseling, hoping to understand what Japanese married life involves and how to be a Japanese wife. Since her first Japanese husband, like many Japanese men, did not express his

love for his wife in words, she felt isolated. Her most serious problem has been that she often feels she is losing touch with her own culture, habits and personal identity, as she tries to make a real effort to be a good wife to her husband.

K is a twenty-seven year old Chinese man who came from Shanghai to Tokyo in April, 1990, as a SHUGAKUSEI (language student). K attended a Japanese language school during the daytime and worked as a waiter at night. Now he goes to a college for film makers with a Regular Student visa status. Through a program at his college, he participated in work experience training in a rural village. He stayed with a farmer's family for two weeks and assisted the host family with their work routine, such as rice planting. Through this experience he felt that he had achieved his goal of cooperating with the Japanese through genuine interaction. He knows many Chinese who gave up trying to stay in Japan with a Language Student visa because of the pressure of hard work, insufficient opportunities to exercise their abilities in careers and business, discrimination and prejudice, as well as the lack of a personal support network. K did not want to be isolated from the community, and he participated in activities with Japanese volunteers for the promotion of intercultural understanding. He enjoys participating in this 'joint productive activity.'

It is effective and important to intervene with foreign residents who have difficulty in adjusting to Japanese community life because of cultural differences. We must provide them with more information about daily life, and more opportunities for consultation.

In the case of T, the counseling activity not only provided direct psychological support but also facilitated her intercultural understanding and better acculturation. We call this kind of intervention "remedial" or "therapeutic." This is one aspect of the role of local government; the other consists of activities which can prevent the maladaptation of foreign residents because of cultural misunderstanding. The local community must make more efforts in this area, through public relations, etc.

Table 4. Intervention Activity for Acculturation of Foreigners
(Inoue & Ito, 1992)

Levels of Intervention	Setting in Ecological Systems*	Purpose of Activity	
		(a)Therapeutic Activity	(b)Preventive Activity
(1) Assistance for Individual	Micro-	(1a) Individual counseling	(1b) Education about inter-cultural differences
(2) Direct Intervention to Individual +Group	Micro-Meso-	(2a) Counseling in the system Group work	(2b) Social skill training Education for prevention
(3) Structural Intervention to Individual +Group +Community	Micro-Meso-Exo-Macro-	(3a) Conflict resolution Mediation of groups Coordination of institutions Community policy	(3b) Joint productive activities Community enlightenment Community planning

*See Bronfenbrenner(1979) for the explanation of ecological systems.

K's successful adjustment suggests that participation in joint productive activities is crucial for achieving acculturation in a Japanese community. Volunteer activities to support foreigners by Japanese only is not enough. T's homestay at a farmer's house aided his adjustment to Japan and his understanding of life in Japan although the program was not specially arranged for foreigners. We must organize various kinds of joint productive activities in the community, schools, etc.

From the viewpoint of community psychology, Inoue & Ito (1992) suggested a comprehensive approach, as summarized in Table 4, in order to have foreign residents overcome culture shock and help their acculturation process in Japan. On the individual level (Level 1), counseling of the individual client who needs such assistance is important for treating the client and improving the particular situation (1a). It also must be utilized for prevention purposes (1b). To prevent misunderstandings of the respective cultures, intercultural education in a non-counseling situation is also important. Therapeutic approaches to groups (2a) are also effective. In such cases, the counselor must pay attention to the client's situation, including her meso-system, that is, various social settings in her life. As an example of preventive activity (2a) in Japan, Tanaka & Fujiwara (1992) have tried social skill training for foreign students for better adjustment to their social life. The approach of Rogers (1986) to social conflict such as political confrontation in North Ireland by utilizing his group encounter theory was one type of conflict resolution activity (3a) initiated by psychologists. Joint productive activities (categorized as [3b]) let participants prevent social isolation and cultural maladaptation and facilitate their integrative acculturation process, as shown in the case of K.

Japanese health psychologists should employ the WHO (1978) definition of health and apply it to solve the adjustment problems of foreigners in Japan. By facilitating integrative acculturation, our intervention will help foreigners to lead healthy lives in their communities in this country.

NOTE

(1) This paper is a revised version of Inoue & Ito (1992). *Adjustment process of foreign residents living in Japan: The case of the Chinese*, presented at the XXV International Congress of Psychology held in Brussels, July 19-24, 1992. This research was financially supported by research funds of the APIC Foundation provided to the authors.

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APPENDIX A (Several questions are omitted.)

Excerpted from [Survey on the Attitudes of Foreign Residents in Kita Ward]

Q 1 Sex 1.Female 2.Male

Q 2 Age 1.18-19 2.20-24 3.25-29 4.30-39 5.40-49 6.over 50

Q 3 Visa Status

1.Sight Seeing 2.Investor/Buisness Manager 3.Student
4. Permanent resident 5.Spouse or child of Japanese 6.Others

Q 4 Nationality

1.Chinese 2.Korean(PDRK or ROK) 3.Bangladeshi 4.Filipino
5.Other Asian countries 6.American 7.European 8.Others

Q 5 How long have you lived in Japan?

1.Less than 6 months 2.6 months to 1 year 3.1 to 3 years
4.3 to 5 years 5.More than 5 years

Q 6 How long have you lived in Kita Ward?

1.Less than 6 months 2.6 months to 1 year 3.1 to 3 years
4. 3 to 5 years 5.More than 5 years

Q 7 Do you have a job?

- 1.Yes 2.No

a.What is your occupation?

- 1.Employer/Administrator 2.Company employee
 3.Teacher /Translator 4.Artist/Musician
 5.Cleaning, construction or public works
 6. Waitress/Waiter 7.Others

Q 9 Are you a full time student in Japan?

- 1.Yes 2.No

Q 19 Do you meet friends regularly in Japan?

- a.Japanese people 1.Yes 2.No
 b.Other nationalities 1.Yes 2.No

Q 20 Do you want to associate more with Japanese people?

- 1.Yes
 2.Yes, and would like to continue after I go back to my own country.
 3. No

Q 21 What do you want to do while in Japan? Please circle all that apply including things you are doing now.

- 1.Introduce my mother language and culture
 2.Learn Japanese language, culture and tradition
 3.Sports and cultural activities
 4.Learn Japanese technology
 5.Volunteer work in the local community
 6.Others
 7.Nothing especially

Q 22 Have you felt any discrimination and prejudice toward you in Japanese people's attitude?

- 1.Often 2.Sometimes 3.Seldom

Q 23 In what situation did you feel it?

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1.On business | 2.At public agencies |
| 3. Social security system | 4.In the company of Japanese friends |
| 5.Looking for housing | 6.At school(towards your children) |
| 7.Marriage | 8.Others |

Q 24 Have you had any of the following experiences because you are a foreigner?

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--------------|----------|
| a. Insulted | 1. Seldom | 2. Sometimes | 3. Often |
| b. Cheated | 1. Seldom | 2. Sometimes | 3. Often |
| c. Tormented | 1. Seldom | 2. Sometimes | 3. Often |
| d. Stared at | 1. Seldom | 2. Sometimes | 3. Often |
| e. Left out of a social event | 1. Seldom | 2. Sometimes | 3. Often |
| f. Treated specially | 1. Seldom | 2. Sometimes | 3. Often |

Q25 When you or your family have problems, to whom do you ask advice?

Please circle all that apply.

1. Superior or colleagues in your office
2. Teacher or friends in school
3. Kita-ku's officials
4. Volunteers for foreigners
5. Japanese friends
6. Friends other than Japanese
7. Others
8. Nobody