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A Sensitive Period for the Incorporation of a Cultural Meaning System: A Study of Japanese Children Growing Up in the United States

YASUKO MINOURA

Anthropology in its ideational traditions has addressed the questions of what one needs to know in order to behave as a functioning member of a society and how such knowledge is organized into meaning systems (Quinn and Holland 1987:4). But the discipline's practitioners have seldom asked the questions of how and when such meaning systems are acquired by the individual.

The experiences of children who live temporarily in cultures other than their own, however, offer an invaluable opportunity to

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assess how and when culture-specific meaning systems are incorporated as part of the developmental process. What it means to be brought up in Japan, for example, becomes clear in the light of a Japanese child's American experience. The transfer of residence from one culture to another exposes such a process in bold relief for close examination, providing the researcher with a critical period during which the degree of child induction into a particular cultural system is readily apparent. What I have found is that in children's lives there is a sensitive period for the incorporation of particular cultural meaning systems, specifically those that mediate interpersonal relationships among peers outside of a child's own family, and that this sensitive period appears to be between the ages of 9 and 15 years. This finding is in sharp contrast with dominant theories about when motivation to behave appropriately is learned.

Psychoanalytically oriented theories take the position that the child develops a superego through identification with parents before latency. Once a superego is formed, it becomes the moral imperative that motivates the child to behave according to a culturally appropriate manner, and the child's relationships with his or her parents serve as a prototype for other kinds of interpersonal relations. In this view, the parents are sources of cultural learning, the basic part of which takes place before age six. My findings indicate, though, that cultural meanings surrounding one's relationship with peers are learned much later than age six and, further, that peers have more power in cultural learning than parents.

According to Caudill and Weinstein (1969), who compared the behavior of mothers and three- to four-month-old infants in middle-class homes in Japan and America, it appears that by three to four months of age infants have already learned to behave in culturally distinctive ways because of the differing styles of caretaking in the two countries. Otaki, Durrett, Richards, Nyquist, and Pennebaker (1986) replicated, in part, the study by Caudill and Weinstein in 1981–1982 and found that the differences that existed in infant behavior seemed to have disappeared, although Japanese and American infant-caretaker interactions retained their respective distinctive characters. Hendry (1986:177), who studied preschoolers and their socialization environment in Japan in 1981, also concluded that the Japanese cultural ethos is learned early.

The implicit assumption underlying these studies is that behavior patterns characteristic of the Japanese personality are acquired during infancy or early childhood and perpetuated throughout later years without much modification. The present study does not support this assumption.

What children have learned in their early years may last if they remain in the same cultural environment. However, if the surrounding environment does not encourage the continued practice of such behavior and/or an adherence to cultural meanings previously acquired, this assumption becomes questionable. The reasoning behind this will be discussed further after a presentation of data about Japanese children growing up in the United States.

In addition, my studies of the intercultural experience of Japanese families residing in Los Angeles have led me to believe that theory building based on a unity of behavior, cognition, and affect is inappropriate and that, in fact, dissociation of the three is an essential feature of an intercultural experience. Affect, cognition, and behavior do not operate in one package. During my studies, I have considered this conceptual distinction of cognition, behavior, and affect to be critical. This theoretical perspective was crucially important to this study.

INFORMANTS

The informants in this study are Japanese children and their mothers who are, or were, in the United States as a result of the overseas assignment of their male heads of household. Sample A consists of 72 mother-child pairs who were interviewed during their stay in Los Angeles. Initial observations were carried out in two fifth-grade classrooms of a part-time Japanese School for Supplementary Education[1] in Los Angeles in 1976–1977 and continued until March 1978, when these students completed the sixth grade. Observations were also conducted in eighth- and tenth-grade classes in 1977–1979. By sitting in the backs of classrooms during class hours and having casual conversations at recess and lunchtime, rapport with these students was nurtured. Data about their age of entry, the number and age of their siblings, the extrovertedness of their behavior, and their preferred language for communication with friends were obtained through these contacts.

On the basis of these preliminary data, certain cases for home visits were chosen in such a way as to include students with a variety of ages of entry and lengths of stay. Parents were contacted first by letter about their willingness to participate in this study. A telephone call followed the letter. If the parents were willing, the first appointment for a home visit was set up. At the end of every interview, the possibility of follow-up interviews was explored and their Japanese address was secured if the family was about to leave the United States. They were also visited at least once after they returned to Japan in order to investigate how the American meaning systems they had acquired were transformed under the pressure of Japanese meaning systems and, if so, in what way.

Sample B consists of children who were interviewed for the first time after their return to Japan from the United States. In these cases, data about their American experience was obtained retrospectively. Addresses of students who withdrew from a Japanese Saturday School to go back to Japan were obtained in 1978 from their former classroom teachers or their friends. A letter similar to that used for Sample A was sent during the period April to July 1978. The rest of the procedure was identical to that of Sample A.

The impact of such an intercultural experience is multifold. For example, being placed in American schools, Japanese children grow to like math classes, as they discover that American classrooms use numerals with which they are already familiar. They then often do correspondingly well in mathematics. But these experiences were not the focus of my interest. My interest was in children's acquisition of the cultural meaning system embedded in the everyday social transactions of peers.

For Japanese families in the United States, the culture inside the house is conceptualized as that of "Japan," but that which transpires outside the house is "America." Children go to a local American school from Monday to Friday and, in addition, most of them go to a Japanese School for Supplementary Education every Saturday in order to keep up their ability to do a Japanese curriculum. Thus, children are constantly exposed to two sets of cultural meaning systems. In this study I focus only upon one such meaning system, with which these children are intimately familiar, namely, that for dealing with interpersonal relationships outside of one's family.

One of the reasons I selected the cultural meaning system specific to interpersonal relationships is that the greatest differences between Japan and the United States are probably those pertaining to the norms and patterns of interpersonal behavior. Therefore, changes that may occur among Japanese who are exposed to the American pattern might predictably be the most dramatic in this sphere. As a research strategy, then, it seemed wise to select such an accessible experiential arena as a dependent variable, with the length of stay, the age of entry, the degree of interaction with American peers, and so on, as independent variables. (Since it is cumbersome to reiterate the refrain "a cultural meaning system in the sphere of interpersonal relationships," henceforth "cultural meaning" is to be taken as a synecdoche for this extended expression.)

MEANING SYSTEMS IN THE INTERPERSONAL SPHERE: THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN

Each society has a different semiotic system that serves as a frame of reference for interpersonal behavior. This section explicates differences between Japanese and American cultural meaning systems, with my use of such national typing employed advisedly.[2]

Sapir notes a discrepancy between the public side of culture and its private side, that is, "the world of meanings each individual may unconsciously abstract for himself from his participation in interaction with people in his culture" (Sapir 1958:151). This private side, made up of what the recent literature in cognitive anthropology calls "cultural schemas," contrasts with the intersubjectively shared part of the public side, or those cultural models that are modified by the individual as they become part of his or her cultural schemas. What follows are the cultural models for self-other relationships prevailing, respectively, in Japanese and American middle-class neighborhoods. The models are constructed as heuristic devices with which to locate each informant on an axis of the Japanese cultural model at one end and the American cultural model at the other.

Individualism lies at the very core of American middle-class culture (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swider, and Tipton 1985). For Americans, "the Self" is the central point of reference for interpersonal transactions. Americans are very direct about expression of their feelings and opinions, compared with Japanese. Regarding this principle, Hsu (1971:443) states that, in America, individuals

are encouraged to value making their own decisions and being their own master. Schneider and Smith (1973:25) also explain the same characteristic of self-reliance.

Bellah and his team interviewed middle-class Americans during the period 1979 to 1984[3] and found "all the classic polarities of American individualism still operating: the deep desire for autonomy and self-reliance. . . ; a commitment to the equal right to dignity of every individual" (Bellah et al. 1985:150). Bellah and his colleagues recognized, at the same time, the irony of today's individualism: while Americans assert the value of self-reliance and autonomy, they also notice that the quest for purely private fulfillment often ends in emptiness. At the same time, however, middle-class Americans are still hesitant to articulate their sense that they need each other, since they fear that they would lose their independence altogether (Bellah et al. 1985:151). In the American conception, the person is still a basic unit of action, a self or ego with a definite boundary. It is in this ego that the function of decision making is considered to be located.

To the Japanese, "the Other" is the point of reference employed to define one's position in the world. This contextualization of a self is the basis for the Japanese cultural grammar of interpersonal relationships. A key concept used by the Japanese for understanding or relating to the Other is *omoiyari*, or empathy in English. "*Omoiyari* refers to the ability and willingness to feel what others are feeling, to vicariously experience the pleasure or pain that they are undergoing, and to help them satisfy their wishes" (Lebra 1976:38). This interdependence between the Self and the Other is also reflected in communicative modes. For example, in the United States, it is the sender's responsibility to compose a clear message, while in Japan "if a communication fails, the receiver, not the sender, is apt to be accused of lack of comprehension" (Nagashima 1973:96). That is, the Other is responsible.

Keene, a Japanologist of Columbia University who lives each year in New York from January to June and in Japan for the rest of the year, once wrote the following in Japanese:

Most of the time I am now able to understand what was not said, and to infer correctly what he really wants to say in case of an ambiguous reply. When in Japan, I am obliged to pay constant attention to signals in order to understand what he really wants to say. However, this is psychologically very taxing. If I could converse

with the Japanese without guessing behind their words as I talk with my friends in New York, I would be much more relaxed. [Keene 1987:9; translation is mine]

It is only those who are born and raised in this kind of society or who have spent an enormous amount of time studying its culture, like myself, who can discern and respond to signals in the Japanese style of indirect communication. [Keene 1987:10; translation is mine].

In the American conception, self is an entity packaged entirely within the individual, while the Japanese conception of self, *jibun*, is something that is found between the Other and *Ji*. The Japanese constellation may be called the "contextualized self" in contrast to the self-contained individual in the United States.

Doi (1962) was the first attempt to explicate this unique constellation of the Other and the Self among Japanese. He could not find an equivalent English word to describe interpersonal relationships particular to Japanese and used the Japanese word *amae* as a key concept for understanding Japanese personality structure. The twofold structure of Japanese consciousness, that is, *tatemae* (an external face shown to others) and *honne* (the true feelings that are generally concealed), is deeply related to the concept of *amae*. The *honne* behind the *tatemae* of a speaker is expected to be sensed by a conversational partner.

Japanese interdependence does not grow out of childhood dependence; it should be understood in the context of the world of meanings in which the Japanese live. Interdependence is as much an evolved social behavior as is independence among Americans, although Americans' independence may be overstated.[4] This is depicted well by Etoh:

Those who are not good at showing *amae* cannot expect to have a satisfactory human relationship in Japanese society. It is to leave the distinction between "the Self" and "the Other" blurred, without minding that fact too much. On the other hand, those who are not good at *amaeru* [verb form of *amae*] tend to stand out by trying to do everything by themselves. . . . In order to do something smoothly in this society, it is important to allow the boundary of "the self" to blur naturally by skillful *amae*. Conscious effort does not help much for acquisition of this kind of interpersonal skill. Just as our motor coordination operates tacitly, we acquire this kind of skill without consciously knowing it. [Etoh 1967; translation is mine]

It is now evident that Japanese cultural meanings are quite different from American ones. Despite the social changes Japan has undergone in recent years, meaning systems about interpersonal relationships have been relatively stable. What both Keene and Etoh

describe in the preceding quotations is also told by one of my informants, Rie's mother, as I will discuss later.

But which cultural meaning systems do Japanese children incorporate if they are raised in American communities by Japanese parents and are attending local American schools? Such a question is by necessity a developmental inquiry, since at issue is also the question of when cultural meaning systems are most readily incorporated by the individual, such that they play a significant role in directing one's behavior.

METHODOLOGY

UTILIZING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCE

My methodology consisted of a two-stage approach. In the first stage I observed and interviewed my informants, either at home or in school, in order to determine appropriate questions to be asked for a more quantitatively oriented second stage of the study. It was this first stage that made me aware of the fact that, when exposed to a culture other than one's own, one's affect, cognition, and behavior do not operate in an integrated manner, and consequently, one experiences discomfort or awkward feelings, a sense of something amiss, particularly in the case of adults.

Cognition, behavior, and affect at the interface of two cultures. Any human behavior in a cultural context is accompanied by cognitive, motivational, and/or affective functionings that are linked to meaning systems. However, when one lives in one's own culture and interacts with one's own people, it is difficult to realize by what kind of meaning systems one lives, especially since such meanings are so deeply embedded in everyday transactions. At the interface of two cultures, meaning systems to which the individual adheres are more apparent, as they are more readily dissociated from a context in which actions are taking place.

The case of a Korean guest in a Japanese house illustrates how a cultural meaning system is shaken loose from its usual embeddedness. Upon entry into the house, a Korean guest takes off her shoes, and her Japanese host repositions them with the front outward, as the Japanese customarily do. This hurts the Korean's feelings, but the Japanese host is unaware of her guest's altered sentiments. The

Korean guest becomes uncomfortable and less cheerful. The host begins to notice that something is wrong, but does not know why. Later, it is revealed that the way the Japanese host arranged her shoes implies, in the Korean setting, a wish for her guest's early departure; the Korean had instantly interpreted herself as an unwelcome guest. A cultural meaning system frames the individual's subjective experience, which, in turn, influences an internal state of mind. In this sense, a cultural meaning system acts as a grammar that defines how interpersonal transactions should be carried out.

A trivial act on the part of the host is interpreted very seriously from the framework of the Korean meaning system. Exposure of the host to this Korean meaning system makes the host pointedly aware of her own Japanese cultural system, which is otherwise so thoroughly embedded as to be invisible in this kind of setting. In Japan, it is considered rude to place your shoes with their front inward as you walk in. How to arrange shoes is a trivial, ordinary event that appears to mean little, but it turns out to contain a rather dense cultural meaning, apparent to the host only after its mundane exercise evokes a strong emotional reaction from a guest reading such behavior in quite a different way.

Any act laden with meaning, no matter who is the actor (myself or my partner in a transaction), evokes affective reactions, whether strong or weak, when cultural meanings to which one adheres are not positively sanctioned. Whereas one may be unaware of cultural meaning systems under which one usually operates, exposure to another cultural meaning system makes one aware of one's world of meanings, which, thereafter, emerges as a figure in the "ground" of another culture. This awareness makes one able to report one's cultural meaning system, comparing it with another.

However, in the case of children who have not yet acquired the cultural meaning systems of their own society, the story is different. Only when children have incorporated a cultural meaning system can their encounter with another culture make the familiar strange, thereby making them feel uncomfortable or awkward. For young children who have not yet acquired Japanese patterns, there are no differences between Japan and the United States. For young children, almost everything is new and strange.

Linkage between affect and cultural meaning systems. Let me explain a little further about this dissociation of the cognitive, the behavioral,

and the affective experienced by Japanese sojourners in the United States. When I interviewed Mrs. T, she said:

It was in the 1960s in Texas when my husband was assigned to an American branch office for the first time. Around that time in Texas, generally speaking, a man opened the door for a woman and let her into a car. When we went out for a party with his business associate, my husband cautioned me not to get in the car until he guided me. He was very much afraid of my breaching the American way from my ignorance. Although he had never done so in Japan, he opened the door for me, but only when people were present around us. He is a real *teishu-kanpaku*[5] at home. He does not take an ideology of "ladies-first" for granted, but here in America he is obliged to follow the American way. I recognized his unpleasant feeling when he had to do "ladies-first" for me and felt sorry for him. [translation of interviews conducted in Japanese is mine throughout]

In this incident, Mr. T knew what was considered to be appropriate behavior in the United States and acted accordingly. This meant that he had a pattern for behavior (the cognitive) and was able to imitate the American behavior, though reluctantly, in order to avoid being perceived as an "uncultivated" man. From the outside, Mr. T appeared a worthy reflection of his American counterpart. But the affect accompanying his act was recognized by his wife as something quite different from that supposed by her to be typical of his American peers. The cultural ideology surrounding "ladies-first," taken for granted in the early 1960s and at that time internalized by most Americans, was not part of this Japanese man. Rather, his meaning system for relating to his wife had been that of *teishu-kanpaku*, an essentially males-first ideology. In the United States he had to act against his own world of meaning, which made him very uncomfortable. What Mrs. T describes is a dissociation between affect derived from the Japanese meaning system and behavior prescribed by the pressures of American cultural meaning. This case strongly suggests the existence of a linkage between affect and the cultural meaning systems to which one subscribes.

Awareness of this linkage enables me to pay more attention to discrepancies between the behavioral and the affective in data analysis. There are occasions in which performance of culturally appropriate behavior is not necessarily accompanied by affect normally linked to a cultural meaning that prescribes that behavior, for example, ladies-first ideology for behavior and males-first ideology for affect in the case of Mr. T. Behavior and affect are, in spite of simultaneous

manifestation, sometimes linked to different meaning systems, especially at the interface of two cultures.

Embedded meanings are void of passion or fire; they have a "cold positive value" in settings in which they are taken for granted (Mandler 1984:201). Cultural meanings to which the individual adheres may be shaken loose from their embeddedness by a sudden change in cultural milieu. These cultural meanings may then become more apparent in the form of "hot" negative affect when actualization of that meaning is interrupted by the pressure of another system at the interface of two cultures.

In the case mentioned above, Mr. T had to execute ladies-first behavior since he anticipated that his *teishu-kanpaku* behavior would be disapproved of by Americans. Consequently, he experienced a sullen mood. Therefore, this study pays more attention to those "hot" negative affects experienced by Japanese growing up in the United States, since they signify the deeper level of the incorporation of those meaning systems of one culture in contrast with those new meaning systems encountered upon entry into another society.

Affect and cultural meaning systems for children.   Children of Japanese businessmen assigned overseas work in the United States are on their way to becoming full-fledged members of Japanese society when they are suddenly uprooted from their Japanese sociocultural environment and placed in an American one. If children can enter another cultural system without much difficulty, we can infer that they will somehow cope with a host culture just as they used to cope with their home culture. No matter which cultural system they are placed in, they are in the process of acquiring cultural meaning systems. When they have not yet been gripped by their own culture strongly enough, exposure to a different cultural meaning does not evoke overly disruptive emotions. We can hypothesize that cultural meaning systems of their own have not yet become established to the extent that acculturative pressures disruptively mobilize their affective systems. But such seems to be the case only for younger children.

By contrast, older children might exhibit affect-laden reactions upon encountering an American cultural meaning system. If they have already incorporated a Japanese cultural meaning system, at least to a certain extent, they would use it as a frame of reference for reacting to American culture. By examining feelings experienced by

Japanese children of differing developmental levels at the interface of two cultures, we can infer whether or not they have incorporated a cultural meaning about interpersonal relationships and, if they have, which meaning, American or Japanese. These Japanese children, relocated temporarily to the United States, give us clues as to when a distinctive "Japanese" or "American" is made in terms of the cultural grammar of interpersonal behavior.

PROCEDURES AND CASE STUDIES

Five levels of the dependent variable. The relative dominance of American, vis-à-vis Japanese, cultural meaning among Japanese children of various ages living in the United States was assessed by the degree of affect-laden reactions elicited from them. By examining such subjective experience, obtained through semistructured interviews, I made systematic inferences about the cultural meanings each child abstracted from his or her interaction with American peers.

In order to assess the level of the incorporation of the American vis-à-vis the Japanese ways, the following questions were asked, usually after getting acquainted with the child's network of friends:

1. Would you tell me about differences between your American friends and Japanese friends (in Japan or in Japanese Saturday School in Los Angeles)?

2. Whose company do you enjoy more, American friends or Japanese friends? Why?

3. Are you a Japanese or an American?

4. Have you ever wanted to become an American? When and why?

5. Which do you enjoy more, Japanese Saturday School or your American school? Why?

6. Suppose you and your family had to leave for Japan next month, how would you feel?

7. Suppose you and your family had to spend the rest of your life in the United States, how would you feel?

An extensive interview with each child's mother was also carried out regarding how transition as a family from Japan to the United States took place, and how she and her children adapted to this transition. The degree of children's acquisition of an American pattern, the dependent measure, was assessed on the basis of their responses to the seven questions stated above, my observation of their behav-

ior in the Japanese Saturday School, and their mothers' observations of changes in their children's behavior.

The incorporation of the American pattern by Japanese children is conceptualized as five differing degrees of acculturation, which is a combination of the following three parts: (1) recognizing the existence of differences in cultural patterns (the cognitive); (2) mastering behavioral norms and practicing them (the behavioral); and (3) internalizing culture-specific meaning systems to the extent that an emotional reaction is evoked when their mundane exercise is interrupted (the affective).

Table 1 sets out a conceptual scheme by which such an acculturative process, involving these three cognitive-behavioral domains of experience, yields five possible degrees or types of acculturative patterns in these Japanese children.

Type I refers to those who do not have a perception of differences between American and Japanese interpersonal behavior and whose way of thinking, feeling, and behaving are very Japanese despite their living in the United States.

Type II refers to those who have an articulate perception about differences between the American and the Japanese cultural patterns, but whose feelings or behavior show almost no indications of acculturation toward American patterns. Illustrative of a typical response of this type is Takako, who came to the United States at age 15 and was interviewed after two years' stay. Takako notes, "Amer-

TABLE 1
A CONCEPTUAL SCHEME TO ASSESS THE ACCULTURATION TYPE

	Cognitive	Behavioral	Affective
Type I	J	J	J
Type II	J/A	J	J
Type III	J/A	J/A	J
	A/J	A/J	A
Type IV	A/J	A	?
Type V	A	A	A

Legend:
J = Japanese culture pattern in interpersonal relationships.
A = American culture pattern in interpersonal relationships.
J/A = They have both, but Japanese pattern is used more often.
A/J = They have both, but American pattern is used more often.

icans don't admit their faults even if they are responsible for them. They attack mercilessly when someone else makes a mistake. Really horrible! I don't like that." In this example, Takako exhibits articulate perception about differences, but does not have any intention of following American patterns. She is cognitively bicultural, but at the behavioral and the affective levels she adheres to Japanese patterns.

Type III refers to those who have two sets of cognitive scripts, one Japanese, the other American, and use one at a time depending on the demand of the given situation. Unlike Type II, Type III children can behave like their American peers. They appear to preserve the Japanese cultural meaning system while they are in the United States. Mr. T, the *teishu-kanpaku* previously discussed, is not motivated strongly to act like an American man, but the invisible pressure from Americans surrounding him obliges him to act like an American. This means that at the behavioral and the cognitive levels he is bicultural, but at the affective level he is Japanese, attaching himself to the meaning system of *teishu-kanpaku*. In the case of those raised in the United States who then come to Japan, they are more American at the affective level, though at the behavioral and the cognitive level, they sometimes become bicultural.

Type IV refers to those who adopt the American script for behavior and act like Americans, but whose cultural meaning systems are not apparent. Like Type III, they are American both at the cognitive and at the behavioral levels, but data fail to indicate to which cultural meaning they affectively attach. This may be due either to the fact that no cultural grammar at the affective level has yet been acquired or that the present data-collection method failed to detect child affective involvement in cultural meanings. For Type IV children, a prolonged stay in the United States might yield a more evidently Type V pattern.

Type V refers to those who tend to believe the American way is the only way. Children of this type are American at all three levels. They tend to say, "I don't remember much about Japan," or "I don't want to live in Japan, since I don't know what it looks like." Some say, "I guess what Mom told me about Japan is probably true, because she is Japanese," implying that they themselves are not Japanese. Type V children all came to the United States before the age of nine. For them, Japan is a foreign country. They tend to

experience greater difficulties in their relationships with peers upon their return to Japan.

These five degrees or types of acculturative patterning constitute five levels of the dependent variable for quantitative analyses.

Besides the dependent variable, interviews with the children cover: (1) the degree of involvement in peer relationships, especially those with American children; and (2) their level of proficiency in English. For each domain an interview schedule was prepared.[6]

How the level of each case was determined—two examples.   Five types were process models. I interviewed children repeatedly at intervals to investigate how they were influenced by living in the United States over time. For example, a child who was classified as Type I at the interview three months after her arrival might be assessed as Type IV three years later.

Let me explain how I assessed each type after each interview. My first example is Rie, a girl who came to the United States at the age of seven years and eleven months. After living in the United States for nine months, she said, "Americans say 'Hi' even to a stranger who comes across the street. I can't say 'Hi' from my side, but I can say 'Hi' if someone says 'Hi' to me."

Rie recognized the difference in greeting behavior between Japanese and Americans, but she was not yet behaving according to the American pattern. This means that she had incorporated the American greeting pattern only at the cognitive level. Therefore, she was classified as Type II. Newly arrived Japanese children sometimes cannot answer the question about differences between Americans and Japanese. They behave on the presumption that there are no differences, and, subsequently, they encounter numerous incidents that make their familiar patterns strange. This negative feedback is a starting point for cultural learning. In my study, those who are not yet acquainted with American ways even at the cognitive level are classified as Type I. When children know the standards of behavior prevailing among Americans and successfully act like their American peers, they are classified as either Type III or Type IV.

I interviewed Rie and her mother four times during their threeyear-and-three-month stay in the United States from October 1976 to January 1979. At the fourth interview, Rie's mother disclosed her worries about her daughter's Americanized behavior. Her mother's

talk indicated how much Rie had incorporated the American way of self-presentation. Her mother said:

I know it is important to be self-assertive in this country, but I don't want her to be too self-assertive. I was shocked by her essay which was included in an essay collection sent to parents by her classroom teacher of Saturday Japanese School. My child wrote, "In my previous school, I was the best student in math. The magnet school I am now attending collects the best students in math from many schools. I am one of those. I feel great." I was so shocked at what she wrote. If she had been raised in Japan, she would not have written such a thing in an essay. Compared with her elder brothers, she has been really amidst American friends and picked up what her American friends do. In turn, she is failing to acquire the Japanese way of expressing herself, skills of indirect communication of alluding to what she wants, or of blurring yes or no, but still getting across what she wants to say. These are regarded as bad Japanese habits, but you need them if you live in Japan. No matter how much effort I make I cannot inculcate those in her. Parents can't do that. These are things which she is able to understand only through the experiences of dealing with people outside her family. Because of my daughter's rapid Americanization, I was quite relieved by the decision of my husband to transfer to Japan next month.

Rie acted just like her American classmates and was classified as Type IV, which referred to those who had the American script for behavior and acted accordingly, but whose cultural meaning system for interpersonal relationships was not apparent. My fourth interview with Rie found no affect-laden reaction to either the Japanese or the American way, although her mother said she acted like an American.

After Rie went back to Japan, I had another chance to interview her. Judging from her feelings of disgust toward the way her Japanese friends behaved and her friction with them, I realized she should have been classified more properly as Type V, which referred to those who tended to believe the American way was the best.

The second example is Jiro, who moved to the United States at age 6 and returned to Japan at age 13 years and 6 months. His first frustration when he returned to Japan after seven years in Los Angeles involved the lack of clarity with which his Japanese friends expressed themselves. He could not handle indirect communication well, and, consequently, he was left out of peer relations. He thought his American friends expressed themselves much more clearly, and he did not have any difficulties in getting along with them. Letters from his American friends made him homesick and strengthened his

wish to go back to America for university education. He found the American way much more agreeable.

Jiro went back again to the United States at age 16 years and 9 months and enrolled in the 11th grade. At a later interview at age 17, looking back at his three years' stay in Japan, he said:

Coming back to Japan does not mean that I become a Japanese. I don't have any "Japan" to begin with. I had to make a Japanese out of myself. Around the time I entered senior high school [10th grade], I was determined to become a bilingual who could understand both Japan and the United States and be a bridge between the two, although I harbored my wish to go back to America in my heart. I convinced myself that I had to learn more about Japan by living there, in order to be accepted as a Japanese. If I go to a Japanese university, I will understand Japan more and know how I can make a career for myself, although it does not mean that I want to be part of Japanese society.

Jiro comes back to Japan as an American, so to speak (a Type V), and meets considerable difficulties socially and academically. In three years, problems with the Japanese language are no longer a serious academic handicap, and he is able to incorporate Japanese patterns both at the cognitive and behavioral level, as indicated by what he says:

In Japan you will not be acceptable unless you keep up with others. In the U.S. there is a lot of diversity. It is all right if you are happy with it. Things don't go that way in Japan. When I returned to the United States I felt relieved. I thought that now I could assert myself without worrying about conforming to others. But on the other hand, it was difficult. Here you have to make decisions yourself. Looking back, it was easy in Japan since others tell you what you should do and you just do that, although I hated it when I was in Japanese school. Here in the U.S. you should be alert and support yourself, or you will drop out. It was during my second stay in the U.S. that I understood these differences well between Americans and Japanese. Being taken care of in the Japanese way isn't so bad as I used to think. After all, you enjoy more a feeling of security.

Jiro's statement captures the typical climate of Japanese schools. The cultural meaning system operating behind this climate is maternalistic protection and indulgence, on the one hand, and pressure to conform to the situational demands, on the other. At first he resists this meaning system and expresses discomfort, but acts according to what the situation dictates him to do. By so doing, in over three years, he becomes less resistant and accepts Japanese ways to a certain extent. During my second interview with him, he exhibited more preference for American meaning systems and showed emotional ambivalence toward Japanese ones. Therefore, I regard this

as reflecting his upholding of American meaning systems and assessed him as Type III, with the American meaning system more dominant.

RESULTS

OVERALL FINDINGS FROM QUANTITATIVE ANALYSES

All children were classified into one of five types, according to the latest interview as of August 1979, which constituted a dependent variable. Therefore, Rie was classified as Type IV instead of Type V, and Jiro as Type V instead of Type III. Besides assessment of a type, the length of stay in the United States, age of entry, gender, proficiency in English, English use among siblings, the degree of involvement with American peers, and preference for American school vis-à-vis Japanese Saturday School were coded for the computer input, along with some variables related to parents. Independent variables, except "gender" and "sibling," were constructed as an ordinal scale so that they had positive correlations with the dependent variable.

Correlations between the dependent variable and the independent variables were calculated (Table 2). There were three language-related variables that had the highest correlations with the incorporation of American meanings. A high correlation suggested

TABLE 2
CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS OF SELECTED VARIABLES WITH THE INCORPORATION OF THE
AMERICAN CULTURAL PATTERN BY JAPANESE CHILDREN GROWING UP IN LOS ANGELES
(N = 72)

Proficiency in English	.76[a]
Preference for American school vs. Japanese school	.76[a]
Degree of English usage among siblings	.69[a]
Length of stay	.61[a]
Age of entry	−.60[a]
The density of interaction with American peers	.64[a]
White American inclusion in Japanese children's peer networks after school	.54[a]
Mother's proficiency in English	.35[b]
Extroverted behavior tendency	.34[b]
Father's contact with Americans in terms of type of company he works for	.26[c]

[a] $p < .001$.
[b] $p < .01$.
[c] $p < .05$.

that, among Japanese children, the more fluent English-speakers they were, the more they had incorporated American meaning systems. The second group that correlated highly with the dependent variable included developmental factors—that is, length of stay and age at entry. The third group was related to the extrafamilial socialization environment—the density of interaction with American peers. The fourth group of significant correlates was related to the parents as socializers—the mother's proficiency in English and the degree of the father's exposure to American ways, judged by the type of his workplace. The fifth significant correlate was the child's extroverted behavioral tendency. Age at the time of the interview and gender had no significant correlations with the child's incorporation of the American meaning system.

Selected variables in Table 2 were not independent of each other. The child's proficiency in English was intricately related to age of entry into the English-speaking environment, length of stay, degree of interaction with American peers, and mother's command of English (Minoura 1980:358). Likewise, the extroverted children tended to be included more in American peer groups. In order to deal with such covariance among independent variables and to determine relative dominance of each variable, stepwise multiple regression analyses were employed.

Seven predictors were selected as relatively unrelated variables: the subjective report of English proficiency,[7] length of stay, age at entry, child's extroverted behavioral tendency, density of interaction with American peers,[8] mother's proficiency in English, and the type of the father's workplace.[9] The last two variables were considered as indicators of familial cultural orientation.

Stepwise regression analyses were performed with the incorporation of American patterns as a criterion variable and with various combinations of seven variables as predictors. The results are shown in Figure 1, in which the age of entry and the length of stay were placed on the far left since they were more or less prior conditions for the incorporation of the American pattern. Because the age of entry and the length of stay were not independent of each other, the overlapping part was removed statistically, and the combined contribution of both predictors to a criterion variable was calculated ($R^2 = .43$). This was about 60 percent of the total variance explained ($R^2 = .70$) by all predictors used for this regression model.
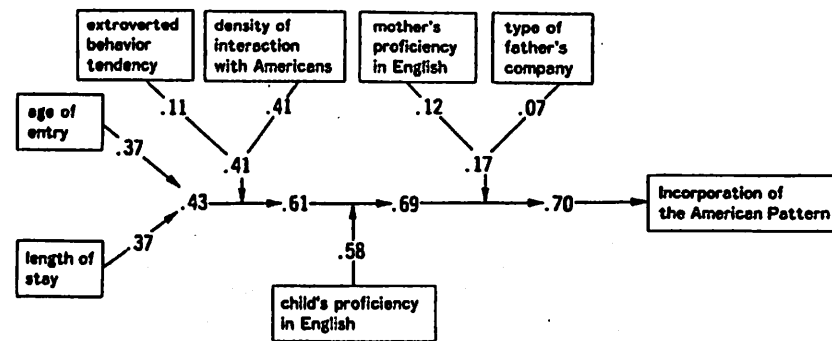
Figure 1. Regression model for variables that affect Japanese children's incorporation of the American pattern, with the proportions accounted for (R^2).

The results revealed the importance of age-related factors, as explained below, indicating that children acquired culture-specific meanings within the limits set by their sequence of development. Age-related factors were more or less related to the readiness of the individual.

The interaction with American peers also contributed greatly to the incorporation of the American pattern ($R^2 = .41$), but when its covariance with age-related factors was removed, the increase of accountability brought by this predictor alone remained 18 percent.

Language proficiency and the socialization environment were channels through which American meaning systems reached Japanese children. It should be noted that proficiency in English was closely related to the length of stay and the age of entry. Proficiency in English alone raised accountability of the model by 8 percent, after removal of covariance brought together by age-related factors, extroverted behavior tendency, and the degree of interaction with American peers.

In sum, maturational readiness was the primary determinant, and the amount of interaction with members of a host society was as important in the incorporation of cultural meanings. Although these were the two most important determinants, language still played a significant role in Japanese children's acculturation into the American pattern.

The regression analyses revealed the relative contribution of each variable to the Americanization of Japanese children, but they did not show how age-related factors affected the incorporation process.

Therefore, the age of entry was divided into four groups and crossed by the five types of incorporation. Table 3 shows that distribution of 72 children among the five types varied significantly across the age of entry at the .01 level ($\chi^2 = 44.3$, $df = 12$, $p < .01$). Relationships of the length of stay with the five types were also examined and found to be those of "more than four years' stay" significantly more among Type IV and Type V children at the .01 level ($\chi^2 = 17.9$, $df = 4$, $p < .001$).

These statistics indicated that those who came to the United States before age nine, and those who resided there for more than four years, tended to internalize the American meaning system most (becoming Types IV or V). This was interpreted as suggesting that children who came to the United States before age nine had not yet fully established the Japanese meaning systems in their minds; therefore, they were not so resistant to incorporating American meanings. They, most possibly, incorporate these meanings not only at the cognitive and behavioral level, but also at the affective level. This is discussed later from a theoretical point of view.

THE SENSITIVE PERIOD FOR THE INCORPORATION OF A CULTURAL MEANING

Age-related factors played a significant role in the incorporation of a cultural meaning system. In order to explore further how the developmental process interacted with the acquisition of culture,

TABLE 3

DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN AMONG THE FIVE TYPES OF INCORPORATION OF THE AMERICAN MEANING BY AGE OF ENTRY AND LENGTH OF STAY

	Age of entry				Length of stay		
	Younger than 9 years old	9–10 years	11–13 years	Older than 14 years old	More than 4 years	Less than 4 years	Total
Type I	3	4	2	1	3	7	10
Type II	4	5	4	2		15	15
Type III		2	6	1	5	4	9
Type IV	19	4			11	12	23
Type V	13	·			13		13
Undecided	1	1			1	1	2
Total	40	16	12	4	33	39	72

$\chi^2(12) = 44.3$, $p < .01$ $\chi^2(4) = 17.9$, $p < .01$

the data of 54 returnees as of September 1978 were analyzed. Their responses to the question, "Would you tell me about differences between Americans and Japanese?" revealed an age-linked cognitive ability, which was manifested as the perception of qualitative differences in interpersonal relationships (Table 4).

Seven out of twelve children (59%) who returned to Japan before age nine remained silent or said, "I don't know" to such a question. Part of these answers must be simply a matter of articulation. These answers do not necessarily mean that they do not feel, but rather that they have difficulty verbalizing the differences. Six out of eleven children, aged nine to ten, reported differences in physical characteristics, language, or the kind of games they played.

The quality of the responses, however, changed drastically around the age of 11. Fourteen out of nineteen children (74%), aged 11 to 13 at the time of their return to Japan, commented upon differences in the ways people interacted with each other (Table 4). One fifth-grade boy who returned from the United States three months before my follow-up interview said, "If you get into a fight or a quarrel, a bad feeling stays longer with Japanese kids. Americans get over it quickly, and next morning we are friends again. Since I came back, I am more careful in what I say to my friends." A sixth-grade girl, who had attended a Japanese school for eight months since her return, said, "If I said 'no' to a classmate who asked me, 'Can you play?', she would not ask me again, or it will

TABLE 4
American-Japanese Differences Reported by Four Age Groups
(N = 54 returnees from the United States)

| Age of return | Difference reported | | | | | |
	No difference	Difference in human relations	Concrete difference	No answer (D.K.)	Other difference	Subtotal
Younger than 9	1	1	3	7	0	12
9–10 years	2	1	6	2	0	11
11–13 years	0	14	2	0	3	19
Older than 14 years	0	10	0	0	2	12
Subtotal	3	26	11	9	5	54

$\chi^2(12) = 49.3, p < .01$

take a while for her to call me again to play. So I am now more careful to say 'no' than I was. To American friends I could say what I wanted to say."

What we have observed here are differences between American and Japanese patterns of emotional experience. This may be interpreted as showing that children who stay in the United States until after age 11 have shaped their emotional experience, at least partly, in accordance with American meaning systems and, thus, immediately recognize how Japanese patterns are different from American ones, and that they are flexible enough to switch their style of interpersonal transactions from the American mode to the Japanese one. These cases also indicate how sensitivity toward others' feelings was cultivated through daily interactions. Repeated exposures to these kinds of situations appear to result in the formation of a so-called contextualized self particular to Japanese interpersonal relationships, which was discussed earlier in this paper.

Ten out of twelve children (83%) who came back to Japan after the age of 14 or older responded to our question regarding American and Japanese interaction patterns with comments such as the following from a tenth-grade girl: "You don't need to say 100 percent to Japanese friends, they still understand what you want to say. To Americans you have to say 100 percent in order to make yourself clear." (See Table 4.) These results indicated that it was around age 11 that most children, upon moving across a cultural boundary, became aware, not only cognitively but, also, affectively, of differences between American and Japanese meaning systems for interpersonal transactions.

Articulate perception of such differences implies that children have already incorporated the Japanese cultural patterns, with which they can compare the American ones, or vice versa. Those who are aware of differences tend to show psychological resistance to incorporating a meaning system of the host society, while young children who have not yet developed their own system are more easily affected by the cultural meaning system of the host society. It appears to be at the age of 11 that a majority of children feel perplexity upon entering American society and discover differences in interactional modes, which they are able to report when interviewed. Being able to report perceived differences, however, may be interpreted as reflecting not only changes in actual perception, but also an increase in verbal skills.

Table 4 appears to indicate that, during a period between ages 9 and 13, children acquired a culture-specific system of meanings related to interpersonal behavior. The problem was that I could not find a sufficient number of informants who were taken to the United States after age 13 to draw a valid statement about the upper limit of this sensitive period. Therefore, the upper limit was explored by examining returnees. A follow-up study of those who were raised in the United States and returned to Japan after age 13 indicated that children of age 14 or 15 were flexible enough to switch to the Japanese meaning system, though they experienced considerable strain in doing so, as indicated by Jiro's case, previously discussed. However, great individual differences in the upper limit of the sensitive period were observed, partly because of the differing degrees of children's involvement in the American meaning system while they were in the United States and partly because of the differing cultural climate of the schools they enrolled in upon their return to Japan.

From Tables 3 and 4, and Figure 1, along with the case studies, we may conclude that children acquire a culture-specific system of meanings related to interpersonal relations during a period between the ages of 9 and 14 or 15. During this period the pattern of behavior develops deep roots from the symbolic systems, while also shaping the affective domain. Here the prototype of "an American" or "a Japanese," in a cultural sense, is born. Children who have crossed a cultural boundary after this sensitive period are basically operating on the cultural meaning systems to which they have been initially inducted during the sensitive period, although they are able to act in accordance with behavior norms of the host society upon moving to another cultural environment.

Informants returning after the sensitive period feel as if "part of their flesh is carved out" when the American meaning system once acquired is denied or placed under strong Japanese social pressures for modification. From this fact, there appears to be, for some, a point of no return, while, for others, it may take a long time for them to feel like Japanese. During the sensitive period, a cultural meaning system for interpersonal relationships appears to become a salient part of self-identity to which they are emotionally attached.

Thus, once acquired, cultural meaning systems constitute the core of cultural identity and come to have motivational and affective

significance for behavior. The meaning systems acquired during the sensitive period function as a dominant psychobehavioral system that enables them to maintain and regulate their daily interactions with people outside their family.

DISCUSSION

The theoretical questions involved in this paper are how and when something originating from the "outside" becomes incorporated into the "inside" of the individual and comes to have affective and/or motivational significance for behavior. First, I would like to discuss the fundamental issue revolving around the question of "how," and second, those issues related to the question of "when."

NECESSITY FOR A FUNCTION-ORIENTED DEFINITION OF CULTURE

The concepts of culture that anthropology has so far proposed are content-oriented ones, that is, "What is a culture?" However, these concepts are inadequate when answering the present question, which is concerned with the psychological functionings of a culture. In order to answer this question, we need a function-oriented definition of culture that addresses what a culture *does* for the individual.

Historically speaking, Kroeber is probably the first anthropologist who pays attention to the functional aspect of a culture and discusses relationships between the individual's affective state and a system of meanings (Kroeber 1952:136). However, content-oriented definitions of culture then prevalent in anthropology appear to have overshadowed his insight into the function of a culture. Hallowell notes cultural forces that orient its members in five dimensions and proposes the concept of behavioral environment as the "inside" view of a culture, that is, the actual structure of the psychological field of the individual who must act in a culturally constituted world (Hallowell 1974[1955]). He is interested in the functions of a culture, but not in its affective aspect. The degree of discrepancies between a symbolic universe of a society and what its members have incorporated into their minds is first discussed systematically by Spiro in the case of Buddhist ideology in Burma. He distinguishes five levels of ideological "learning" and concludes that "assessment of the influence of any ideology depends importantly on the level at which the ideology has been learned" (Spiro 1966).

Goldschmidt (1966:42) calls "symbolic self" the world of meanings each individual acquires. He writes, "Every society provides markers by which the individual can rate his symbolic self; that is, with culturally defined values. . . . It is in their terms that the individual is forced to act if he is to gratify that symbolic self" (Goldschmidt 1966:69–70). His idea of "marker" is in line with "a frame of reference" Newcomb (1950) proposed and with "cultural models" in recent literature of cognitive anthropology.

Recently, D'Andrade has proposed a more comprehensive argument on what meaning systems do for individuals. According to him, "Meanings in general, and cultural meaning systems in particular, do at least four different things. Meanings represent the world, create cultural entities, direct one to do certain things, and evoke certain feelings" (D'Andrade 1984:96). D'Andrade's four functions are postulated as potentials of a cultural meaning system, which are to be activated as psychological functionings under certain conditions. At least three out of the four—that is, the representational, the directive, and the evocative—have corresponding levels an individual may experience when being exposed to a particular cultural meaning system.

How do these potentials on the part of cultural systems manifest themselves as psychological functionings? Cultural meaning systems prescribe not only cognitive scripts for "behavior," but also emotional experience for "affect" (Lewis and Saarni 1985:5). The representational function influences an individual's perception of the world. In my conceptualization it is referred to as "cognition," while the directive force is the motivation for "behavior."

Affect is related to the evocative function of meaning systems. Many factors appear to influence the processes that link a cultural meaning system to the human biological system, which is responsible for the emotional state of the organism. What this study indicates is that cultural meaning systems come to be felt as a salient part of the self only when they are linked to the affective functionings of the individual. The mechanism of affective involvement in cultural meaning is yet to be explored. Suffice it to say, here, that there are significant relationships between the individual's affective state and cultural meaning systems.

The question of how children become full-fledged members of a given society remains an important challenge that requires a union

of anthropology and psychology (Harris 1991), although there is a doubt about whether or not a "full-fledged" Japanese or American actually exists. One of the reasons why intellectual cooperation between the two disciplines has been sporadic and unproductive lies in the content-oriented definition of culture, which does not fit easily to the function-oriented thinking in psychology. Psychologists have been studying how the mind works, that is, psychological functionings, but they have seldom raised the question of what children incorporate into the "inside" through psychological functionings developing over a period of years. What is surprisingly missing from the research on human development is how children acquire their culture. It is hoped that the function-oriented concepts of culture will bring more dialogue between the two disciplines in this respect.

TIMING FOR CULTURAL LEARNING: CONTINUOUS PROCESS VERSUS A SERIES OF DISTINCT DEVELOPMENTAL PHASES

The next question is related to when and how cultural learning takes place. What we have found with Japanese children growing up in the United States suggests that the period between the ages of 9 and 15 is a sensitive period for the incorporation of the meaning systems concerning peer relations. This finding challenges dominant theories about the acquisition of cultural ethos.

The well-known Caudill and Weinstein study (1969) has led many researchers to hold the idea that children's lives spent in contact with their mothers lay the foundation for creating distinctive "Japanese" or "American" adult behavior. Recently, Shand and Kosawa (1985) noted that Caudill's interpretation was based on two implicit assumptions about what happened prior to three months of age. In this section I point to three additional implicit assumptions concerning Caudill's interpretation.

The first assumption is that children accept, without modification, what is offered by adults in their developmental niche. This assumption is shared by many other anthropologists who explore what the cultural environment explicitly and implicitly offers to children during their development. Only a few studies explore what children are really incorporating into their minds. It should be noted that individuals who are exposed to certain cultural meanings (stimuli) do not necessarily incorporate everything offered. Instead, in the process of incorporation they normally tend to modify what is offered.

The second assumption is that what children have once learned stays with them for the rest of their lives. Caudill and his associates have clarified differences in caretakers' value orientations and argue that cultural differences in behavior are already transmitted by three to four months of age. Although they do not provide evidence that cultural ethos acquired during infancy or early childhood is perpetuated until adult years without much modification, they argue that the foundation of Japanese personality is laid down at this early age through social learning in the maternal behavioral milieu. The findings of the present study indicate that there is a different "sensitive period" during which a cultural meaning system for interpersonal relationships is incorporated into the individual's personality.

What this study reveals is that the majority of Japanese children who (1) come to the United States at a certain age, (2) learn a certain amount of English, (3) have friends among Americans, and (4) stay for enough time can successfully incorporate American meaning systems and act accordingly while they live in the United States; some of them internalize American meaning systems about interpersonal relationships so deeply that, upon their return to Japan, they are no longer comfortable with Japanese ways. Because of that, some tend to have friction with others.

These results also imply that Japanese meaning systems learned in Japan before the sensitive period tend to lose their motivational force if children interact with American peers long enough. Judging from the fact that they continually live with their Japanese parents, this indicates that peers, not parents, are more influential in cultural learning, at least in certain important domains. On the basis of these results, it seems that the Japanese ethos that appears to be acquired during early childhood does not stay long with them once children have moved out from Japanese cultural contexts.

The finding of the existence of a sensitive period for the incorporation of a cultural meaning system is in sharp contrast with the third assumption underlying many anthropological studies of child development, that is, the view of development as a continuous process. Studies, including those of Caudill and his associates, implicitly assume that individuals are inextricably bound up with culture and that cultural ethos is incorporated into individuals' psycho-

behavioral system continually and ever-increasingly at all ages in cognitive, behavioral, and affective ways.

The present study does not support this view of cultural learning and suggests, instead, a view of cultural learning as a series of distinct phases. Observation of Japanese children who are growing up in the United States reveals that it is during a sensitive period that they are bound up with cultural meanings *at an affective level*. This suggests that the cultural meaning systems about interpersonal relationships have not yet been integrated into their personality system before this sensitive period. How cultural meaning systems are linked to the personality system will be discussed in a separate paper.

The incorporation of cultural meaning systems appears to take place at three levels: cognitive, motivational, and affective. In the incorporation processes, cultural meanings are modified, being influenced by such factors as the level of cognitive development, children's personality, predeparture orientation, and/or availability of adults who explain intercultural problems. For example, regarding the effects of cognitive ability, children appear to pay attention to a different aspect of interpersonal relationships depending upon their age, as shown in Table 4. In addition, formation of the cognitive representation (cognitive schema) of a cultural meaning does not necessarily mean that it will be accompanied by affect and behavior. Some cultural meanings remain at the cognitive level, while other meanings activate motivational and/or affective systems of the human organism.

It is during the sensitive period that cultural meanings acquire the power to activate the affective system and, thus, become capable of evoking emotions. In this paper, this part of the incorporation is referred to as the "interiorization." Regardless of whether a meaning is interiorized or not, however, when the pressure is very strong, even a slight motivation to act leads to behavior.

Children who cross a cultural boundary before the sensitive period are little affected by differences in cultural meaning systems: they imitate behavior common to their environment without apparent resistance. Their cultural selves, if they have any, have little to do with any meaning system. Children at this developmental stage have not yet attained the maturity that enables them to interiorize a meaning system or to notice meanings underlying concrete daily

interactions. The steady cultural self has not yet emerged, and, therefore, if the models to be imitated change in this stage through a move to American society, children can switch from the Japanese to the American model without much resistance.

These findings suggest that behavior patterns exhibited before the age of nine may not remain as a part of their psychobehavioral systems unless children continue to live in the same cultural milieu throughout the sensitive period. As far as cultural meanings about interpersonal relationships are concerned, during the period of ages 9 to 15 cultural meanings are intricately intertwined with the motivational-affective system of the human organism and, consequently, become a relatively established part of personality. This period appears to be much later than that which the usual psychoanalytic model for cultural learning has supposedly established.

SOME EXPLANATIONS FOR A SENSITIVE PERIOD

My finding is that the period between ages 9 and 15 is a sensitive period for what I call the interiorization of cultural meaning systems about interpersonal relationships. The question is, then, why is the age of 9 the lower limit of the sensitive period and why is the age of 14 or 15 the upper limit?

Rosenberg offers some evidence of when the psychological interior is constructed that may be helpful. By analyzing responses to the question, "What does the person who knows you best know that other people do not?" he finds that modes of self-conceptualization change around the ages of 12 and 13. During the period between 8 and 11 years of age, children tend to conceive of the self as a social exterior in physical, demographic, or behavioral terms, while older children believe "that the person who knows him best has succeeded in penetrating to his psychological interior" (Rosenberg 1979:200). This finding of a shift during the early teens toward construction of a psychological interior corresponds with my finding of age 11 as a watershed toward more interior-oriented responses (Table 4).

Around age 11, cultural meanings appear to start being taken into an individual's psychological interior as part of his or her more solid constitution, along with other noncultural components. It seems that, once being interiorized, cultural meaning systems come to have affective significance for an individual's psychological state. As the cultural part of the psychological interior becomes established more and more distinctively during the period of ages 11 to 15, chil-

dren of this age range crossing a cultural boundary experience more and more psychological strain when they are confronted with the cultural meaning systems of a host society.[10] The person's established psychological interior appears to evoke discomfort or awkward feelings toward the cultural meanings of the host society. Before this stage, for a child, cultural meanings may not have had much evocative potency. It should be noted that this process is qualitatively different from the incorporation of cultural meanings at the cognitive and behavioral levels. This is why I prefer using a separate term, "interiorization," for this part of the deeper incorporation.

Piaget (1970:296) appears to offer another possible explanation. He distinguishes four stages in cognitive development: the sensorimotor period before the appearance of language; the preoperational period (around 4 to 8 years); a period of concrete operations (around 7 to 11 years); and a period of formal operations (older than 11–12). It is only those who enter the United States after age 11 who become aware of the differences in meanings behind concrete interpersonal behavior between Americans and Japanese and, thus, can report them when interviewed. This suggests that, in order to abstract Japanese meaning systems underlying concrete behavioral transactions, cognitive ability has to attain this stage of formal operations. Three to four years are needed to incorporate meaning systems to the degree that they become a significant constituent of a person's psychobehavioral system. This may explain why the upper limit of the sensitive period is the age of 14 or 15.

The lower limit of the sensitive period is found to be age 9, two or three years prior to the onset of formal operations. Around age 9, cognitive competence is mature enough to recognize concrete differences between American and Japanese behavior. Experimentation in American ways by imitation appears to precede full induction of Japanese children into American meaning systems. Articulate perception of differences and subsequent behavioral imitation appear to be a prelude to the interiorization of meaning systems.

Scribner (quoted from Cole and Scribner 1974:118–120) finds that Kpelle high-school students do taxonomic classifications, while 6- to 8-year-olds cannot use taxonomic categories regardless of school attendance. The 10- to 14-year-old nonschooled children were not much different from the 6- to 8-year-olds, but their schooled counterparts do taxonomic classifications to some extent.

This finding indicates, in line with Piaget's theory, that 6- to 8-year-olds cannot extract common attributes from familiar objects. This suggests that a child younger than 9 years old is not able to recognize attributes common to behavior of friends in Japan and to behavior of friends in American schools, and to compare them with each other.

I have some reservations in applying the findings of Piaget and Scribner to interpret my own findings, since their findings are derived from how a child interacts with a world consisting of inanimate objects. Human actions are loaded with meanings and vary depending upon a situation. Understanding such a variant world is considered a matter of social cognition, and findings about cognitive development based on interactions with invariant objects may not be applicable to social cognitive development.

GENERALIZABILITY OF FINDINGS

Three lines of research may offer chances to examine how far my findings can be generalized. The sensitive period I have discovered concerns itself with a specific meaning system about nonkin, especially peer, relationships. There may be a different sensitive period in a different age range for a different domain of human life. It is conceivable that sensitive periods for the acquisition of food preference or the cultural grammar for heterosexual relationships will be different from ages 9 to 15. Exploration of a sensitive period for different domains is one direction of future research.

As noted already in the results section, the amount of interaction with members of a host society and other situational factors are as important as age-related factors in incorporating cultural meanings (Figure 1), but this part was left undiscussed in this paper. It should be noted, however, that there is a possibility that the nature of peer relations in the United States might explain more the process of cultural learning than the developmental stage. It is also conceivable that the speed of acquisition will slow down when Japanese children are associated less with American peers and more with Japanese ones. My finding of ages 9 to 15 as a sensitive period is derived from observation of Japanese children in Los Angeles in the late 1970s, when many tended to associate with American peers under relative isolation from other Japanese children. It is also conceivable that the speed of acquisition will be accelerated as the surrounding cul-

tural environment offers more frequent and direct contact with other cultural meaning systems.

Another question is: Do children of other ethnic groups, for example, Korean or Mexican children, growing up in the United States, incorporate American cultural meanings during the same age range and in the same manner as Japanese children of this study did? American children who spent their childhood in Japan and returned to the United States may offer another chance to examine the degree of generalizability of my findings; a research project is now under way (Minoura 1988; Willis 1992).

Examination of the socialization processes of Japanese children in countries other than Japan and the United States will offer another look into how cultural contexts affect the processes of incorporation of cultural meanings. So far, a preliminary investigation has been made by the author in 1988 in West Germany.

It is Kluckhohn who notes the theoretical importance of research at the interface of two cultures in his introduction to Voget's *Navaho Veterans*. He writes, "The greatest increment to theory consists in the careful dissection of the intricate interdependence of personal, social, and cultural factors in the acceptance or rejection of aspects of a foreign culture" (Kluckhohn 1951:xii). The most crucial point lies in the fact that cultural meaning systems that are carried by a person when moving to another culture tend to dissociate themselves from the social contexts of the host society. What cultural meaning systems do for the individual is more readily observed in such situations than in ordinary fieldwork settings, where people are born and live continually in the same society. What is presented in this paper is my attempt to dissect such an interdependence of factors observed among Japanese children growing up in the United States, in the hope of introducing a new approach for understanding socialization processes.

NOTES

Their questions and doubts prodded me toward greater clarity.

[1] The Japanese School for Supplementary Education (Japanese Saturday School), with a student population of 911 in 1978 from the first to the twelfth grade, provided instruction every Saturday in major subjects so that children could adjust quickly to the level of instruction of a grade corresponding to their chronological age upon return to Japan. Before starting my study, the school administration and the Mothers' Auxiliary were contacted to obtain their consent for my presence in this school. Parents' names, addresses, and telephone numbers were found in a school directory that was given to the researcher by a school official. The Japanese Saturday School in Los Angeles was established in 1969 with 68 students from the first to the eighth grade and the number of its students has increased dramatically, reaching 2,947 as of April 1991 (*Kaigai Shijo Kyouiku*, July 1991). The problem has attracted a corresponding interest from Japanese scholars from the early 1980s. The initial research on Japanese children who have lived abroad was carried out by Kobayashi and his associates (1979) from the perspective of comparative education and by myself in the field of psychological anthropology (Minoura 1980, 1984).

[2] By the word "American," I refer to white middle-class Americans in whose residential areas most of my informants tend to reside, and to whose behavior and thinking they are consequently exposed more than to any other culture of the United States. The use of the terms "Japanese" and "American" in reference to cultural meaning systems is not meant here to imply a homogeneity of like-minded persons in each national setting. In this paper these terms refer not to actual types but, instead, to cultural models that are "presupposed," taken-for-granted models of the world that are widely shared ··· and that play an enormous role in their understanding of that world and their behavior in it" (Quinn and Holland 1987:4).

[3] Bellah and his team did fieldwork from 1979 to 1984 in San Jose, the San Francisco Bay area, a town not far from Boston, a suburb near San Diego, Philadelphia, and Santa Monica. My fieldwork was carried out from 1976 to 1981 in greater Los Angeles. Most Japanese families in my study resided either in white middle-class neighborhoods or in areas heavily populated by Japanese-Americans. Forty students of the Japanese Saturday School resided in Santa Monica in 1978. I consider Bellah's description valid for the construction of cultural meanings prevalent among middle-class Americans, to which my informant families were mostly exposed.

[4] Any society functions through interdependence, cooperation, and concern for the group, not solely through independence or dependence. As Bellah et al. (1985:vii) note, how Americans live is not identical with what American culture allows them to say. The language of individualism seems sometimes to make Americans unable to articulate and hesitant to acknowledge their sense of interdependence.

[5] *Tyiin* means husband, and *kanpaku* means big boss or master. Thus, this word categorizes husband behavior that demands services, attention, and indulgence by a wife, with the husband expecting her to totally serve his needs. This term has no simple equivalent in English.

[6] For interview schedule, see Minoura (1980).

[7] The oral proficiency in English of each child was assessed according to the following eight levels: very limited in both hearing and speaking; understands English but very limited in speaking; can hear, but has difficulties in classroom English; understands conversation almost

fully, but limited in speaking; understands classroom English, but limited in expressing complicated ideas; comfortable with English, but still prefers Japanese; handles both quite well, but no preference mentioned; and prefers English to Japanese. The acquisition of English as a second language plays a vital role in inducting Japanese children into American meaning systems. For theoretical discussions related to this and methodological details, see Minoura (1980, 1984).

[8] The density of interaction with American peers has four levels: isolated from any peer network of Americans; in a loosely knit network for lunchtime only; off and on in a crowd-type network; and in a clique or has a close friend. For ethnographic description of Japanese children's friendship networks and more details of the four levels, see Minoura (1980, 1984).

[9] There are three categories among Japanese enterprises operating in Los Angeles in the latter half of the 1970s: joint ventures financed by both American and Japanese capital, which are staffed mainly by Americans, with only one or a couple of Japanese sent by Japanese capital suppliers; state-chartered corporations with 100 percent Japanese capital, which are staffed by both Americans and Japanese, where English is used in the workplace; agencies and representative offices small in size and staffed by Japanese except for a receptionist, where Japanese is the dominant language in the office. These types usually determine the extent of a husband's and his wife's contact with Americans. This is considered, in turn, to affect the cultural orientation of the family.

[10] It is not surprising that the vast literature on culture shock has arisen from the experiences of college-age people and adults whose initial intercultural experience would have been after the sensitive period, after their cultural meaning system had been more or less firmly established.

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