

Japanese teachers identify with their schools and are committed to service, while American teachers are more independent and view teaching as a job.

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There are more differences than commonalities between the practices and attitudes of Japanese and American teachers. In 1980, 119 teachers in Los Angeles and 152 teachers in Tokyo responded to a questionnaire that defined their roles in three settings—their individual classrooms, their school as a work place, and in a wider social context. The questionnaire was designed to reveal whether Japanese teaching practices differed with respect to the Japanese cultural values of group interaction and paternalism, an attitude that allows another to control aspects of one's personal life and a willingness to accept control over the personal life of another.

Results of the survey show that teaching practices in Japan are consistent with that culture's system of industrial relations. Just as Japanese factory workers have closer identity with their companies than do American workers, Japanese teachers have closer identity with their schools. Japanese teachers prefer shared decision making and paternalistic procedures in supervision.

The survey also showed that Japanese teachers are more committed than American teachers to service. More than half of the Japanese respondents said they would give up summer vacations in order to improve their teaching, while only 4 percent of American teachers would do so. Further, 86 percent of the Japanese teachers would refuse to take a

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second job if it was not related to teaching, while 97 percent of the Americans would take it if they needed the money. American teachers reflect self-interest in their roles, putting personal enrichment before sacrifice to the social order.

In contrast with American teachers, the Japanese have high expectations that pupils will comply with the norms of school and society. Japanese teachers give more supplementary instruction to pupils who fail to achieve on a single lesson, and they work more closely with parents on instructional and disciplinary matters. Japanese teachers find the school as a work place more personally

satisfying than do their American counterparts. American teachers tend to separate their personal and professional lives and regard the school chiefly as a working place. Japanese teachers view the school as an essential part of their life.

It is noteworthy that within each culture teachers were nearly unanimous in their reporting of roles and that the views of teachers in the two countries were very different from one another. This suggests that teachers in the sample reliably described their attitudes and practices, and it shows the extent to which teachers are part of the particular social order in which they live.

As a former teacher in Japanese schools, I am not surprised that Japanese teachers accept teaching as a moral commitment. It is only remotely possible that Japanese teachers will move in the direction of Americans and forego social dedication for self-actualization. Even the teachers' union in Japan is reluctant to seek changes for these teachers if otherwise beneficial changes might weaken moral responsibility. While it may be that teachers in some small American communities still adhere to the old American value that gives duty the highest priority, most American teachers apparently regard such dedication as exploitation.

One implication of these different outlooks can be drawn when considering ways to affect instructional improvement. In Japan, the approach to teacher improvement follows a top-down order in which those in a superior position within the system appeal to national interests. In the United States, however, a bottom-up approach or a change that puts the teachers' own interests at the center is more likely to succeed. ■



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