

# **Cultural Costs of Studying Abroad: Relationships between Culture Shock, Re-entry Shock & Social Support Networks in Japanese Student Sojourners**

Damon E. Chapman & Daniel Cochece Davis

Note: Dr. Davis is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication at Marist College, Poughkeepsie, New York, U.S.A.

## **Abstract**

Most sojourners experience culture shock, and may also experience equally strong “reverse culture” or “re-entry” shock, negatively impacting family and friend relationships. Due to the cultural identity and collectivistic nature of Japanese society, Japanese have unique sojourn experiences, and are often marked by their overseas experiences. The present study links culture shock and re-entry shock experiences with home culture social network communication. Consistent with previous research, correlation results indicate the 47 participants experienced host cultures as different from their home culture, especially those more individualistic Western cultures (e.g., Australia, the U.S., and U.K.). Age, length of sojourn, and how different friends viewed sojourners were significantly related to cultural reintegration difficulty.

## **Introduction**

A considerable body of research concerns the difficulties of residing in a foreign country, and adapting to that different cultural system, collectively referred to as “culture shock.” Less thoroughly researched, though, is the phenomenon of returning to one’s “home” culture only to find it a poor fit with one’s culturally changed self. Thus, there is also a potential “shock” of returning home. These “sojourners” (i.e., individuals traveling to other cultures) could be traveling and/or living outside of their home culture to work, study, travel, be in migration, or live full time, returning by a pre-planned date, or spending an “open ended,” if not permanent, time abroad (e.g., migrants). In most cases, however, they return home. Until somewhat recently the majority of research focused on western culture participants. Fortunately, there is now a growing body of research concerning Japanese who live abroad and eventually return home (e.g., Diggs & Murphy, 1991; Enloe, 1986; Enloe & Lewin, 1987; Furukawa & Shibayama, 1994; Gudykunst, Nishida, & Chua, 1987; Hoshino, 1982; Kidder, 1992; Nippoda, 2002; Okazaki-Luff, 1991; Sorimachi, 1994; Tamura & Furnham, 1993). With the increasing foreign exchange programs across all levels of Japanese education, let alone the number of people going abroad for business, such research on culture shock, and the potentially equal effects of re-entry

shock, has permeated even the popular press in Japan since the 1980s (e.g., “A Mix of Admiration,” 1987; “Educating Child Returnees,” 1983; “Japan in America,” 1988; Shibasaki, 1990; The “Salaryman” Blues, 1988).

As of 2002 (the latest year for which statistics were available from the Japanese Ministry of Education, or MEXT), there were nearly 80,000 Japanese citizens studying abroad in 33 “major countries” (see “Outline of the student exchange system in Japan,” 2005). The majority of these were in North America, followed by Asia (17,000) and Europe (11,000). Of those in the U.S., the majority (46,000) were enrolled in undergraduate courses (68%) with another 21% striving for graduate-level degrees. Britain is the most popular English-speaking destination for Japanese within Europe, with approximately 50,000 Japanese living in Britain, of which about 40% were exchange students (Nippoda, 2002).

With such widespread engagement in extra-cultural experiences, the questions of cultural preparation, cultural adjustment, and cultural *re*-adjustment become significant and meaningful phenomena to research and understand. The present study focuses on the latter of these phenomena by analyzing the role social support systems play in cultural readjustment as sojourners return to their “home” culture. Specifically, the current study focuses on Japanese students returning home from extended cultural forays involving study abroad, and how prevalent their home culture social support systems remained in use during the period abroad. Thus, the structure of this article will be to first examine those cultural elements specific to Japan that seem likely to impact an individual’s sojourn experience, as well as their return and reintegration success. Next, an outline of the present study’s methodology, analyses and results are articulated. Finally, a discussion of these results and their implications is provided, outlining the crucial next steps in this important line of research.

### The “Uniqueness” of Being a Japanese Sojourner

Japan has been widely viewed as one of the most homogenous countries on the planet. Bochner (1982) discusses the homogeneity of Japan and adds the fact that there is no country which is totally homogeneous, but that the one country that comes closest would be Japan. Nippoda (2002) furthers this idea, saying “Japan is largely unicultural and [as a result] Japanese people are not used to other cultures” (p. 1). The idea of “being Japanese,” with the perceived uniqueness stemming from being an island culture (manifesting itself in the Japanese term *shimaguni*, or “island mentality”), and the homogeneity of the Japanese population, has led to a Japanese self-concept, or shared national character, that has resulted in a rich body of literature going back to the end of World War II. As Befu (1983) notes, this is “variously known as *Nihon bunkaron* (theory of Japanese culture), *Nihonjinron* (the theory of Japanese national character), *Nihon shakairon* (theory of Japanese society), or simply *Nihonron* (theory about Japan)” (p. 252). The plight of returnees to Japan has also been analyzed quite often in the popular press with articles falling under such headlines as “They Ignore me at School,” “Returnees’ Plight: Educated Abroad, Rejected at Home,” and “Strangers in Their Own Country – the Misfit Returnees,” among many others (as cited in Enloe & Lewin, 1987, p. 224).

### Culture Shock: Symptoms & Effects

The day-to-day reality of a person’s life is based on the culture in which they live. When they enter a foreign culture, whether to live or to study there, briefly or for the rest of their life, their perception

of reality as they know it is challenged. This condition is commonly known as “culture shock.” Many researchers attempt to define “culture shock,” and through these attempts it is generally regarded as the more pronounced emotional and physical reactions to the disorientation most people experience when they move into a culture different from their own. As noted by Davis, Desiere, Naughton, Payne and Valianos (2001), culture shock occurs as a result of natural feelings of ethnocentricity that can suddenly no longer be supported. People assume that their own culture is the correct way of life, and must readjust when faced with an alternative way of living in which the vast majority of individuals are subscribing to an alternate culture from the one the individual knew, and they behave in different ways. Culture shock can prevent sojourners from adequately adapting to their host culture. This can complicate the already difficult transition from a home culture to a host culture. Further research adds that culture shock occurs during the early period of one’s entry into a new culture and continues until he or she has had time to develop a new set of “behavioral assumptions that help him or her to understand and predict the social behavior of the local natives” (Bock, 1970, p. 314).

Bochner (1982) presents various aspects of culture shock, including: a) strain due to the energy needed to make necessary psychological adaptations, b) a sense of loss and feelings of deprivation in regard to friends, status, profession, and possessions, c) being rejected by and/or rejecting members of the new culture, d) experiencing confusion about one’s role, role expectations, values, feelings, and one’s own self-identity, e) surprise, anxiety, and even disgust and indignation after becoming aware of various cultural differences, and f) feelings of impotence as a result of not being able to cope with the new environment. Other symptoms can include homesickness, loneliness, disorientation, frustration, and paranoia (Dodd, 1995). If these are not yet enough to argue for more research on stemming culture shock, others suggest sufferers experience, in extreme cases, physical side effects and possibly mild to chronic mental disorders including anxiety and tension, psychosomatic complaints, addiction to alcohol or narcotics, crime, and regressive or stunted personality development (Kohls, 1984; Wallace, 1961).

### **The Japanese Experience of Culture Shock**

Research on both business and student populations of Japanese abroad show that sojourners felt language was the major problem (see Diggs & Murphy, 1991; Nippoda, 2002; and Yashima, 1995). When surveying Japanese professors in the U.S. on what their greatest necessity was to live and work there, Kawabata, Kune and Uehara (1989) found language, along with the ability to express oneself, most important (see also Yashima & Viswat, 1991, 1993). That ability to express oneself is not limited to verbal expression, but also a combined form of verbal and non-verbal “extroversion” that can greatly enhance a Japanese person’s stay overseas (Yashima, 1995). When experiencing culture shock, it may not be just the new language, culture, customs and values of another country that make people feel unsettled, but concerns of friendship, dietary matters, and nonverbal matters have also been discussed as being potentially problematic. This includes the more personal aspects of nonverbal communication deemed the “right thing to do” in social situations, such as when, if at all, it is appropriate to touch another person, interpersonal space in various situations, when appropriate “levels of politeness” should be used, etc.

Widely seen as a polite, if not humble, culture that is reserved in its display of public affection and physical contact, the Japanese may appear to be especially affected by culture shock. As Reischauer

(1988) states, "one result of the emphasis on detailed codes of conduct is a tendency toward self-consciousness on the part of the Japanese—a worry that they may not be doing the right thing and thus are opening themselves to criticism or ridicule by others. This is particularly marked in their relations with foreigners, whose mores are not fully known" (pp. 146-147). The importance of such physical aspects within western culture is further highlighted by Furnham and Bochner (1986) who say that "when a high-touch culture meets a low-touch one," such as Japan, "the low-contact person is seen as aloof, cold and unfriendly, whereas the high-contact person may be seen as a perverted creep" (p. 207). Okazaki-Luff (1991) suggests that lacking the ability to communicate "correctly," in terms of the host culture, is a type of dysfunctional communication on the part of Japanese. Other behavioral examples of culture shock effects were seen in the isolation of sojourning Japanese housewives. In the U.S., there is a hesitation on the part of Japanese to build social relationships with other women because they don't know the other person's social status. *Newsweek* magazine noted that such housewives often "suffer a brutally lonely existence" ("The Salaryman Blues," May 9, 1988, p. 51).

Given the amount of research detailing all the possible problems of living abroad, and the effects of culture shock experienced by Japanese, the good news is that most research shows an overwhelmingly majority of sojourners see their experiences abroad as rewarding. Japanese families who lived in the U.S. mid-west mostly ranked their American experience to be "satisfactory" or "very satisfactory" (55 out of 66 replies in Diggs & Murphy, 1991). Enloe and Lewis (1987) note that "nearly all" families who lived abroad (again, in the U.S.) found their time there enriching. In the case of students, returnees exceeded not only the teachers' expectations, but those of parents as well (Tamura & Furnham, 1993), while Goodman (1990) adds that in many cases of student returnees, the fears of both the student and parents were exaggerated.

### **Culture Shock: The Experience of Japanese Students Living Abroad**

Generally speaking, there are two primary reasons for most young Japanese studying abroad: a) the desire to improve English language skills, or b) life experience and the hope of changing their perspective on life (Nippoda, 2002). Yashima (1995) finds that many Japanese students viewing their time abroad as problematic (i.e., they had difficulty making friends and felt "maladjusted" in the new culture) blamed their lack of English communication skills, as well as behavioral and social skills. In this view, Nippoda (2002) suggests that the more extroverted a Japanese student is, the easier the adjustment to western culture. Extroverted types of behavior exhibited by sojourners from Japan can be practiced in both verbal and nonverbal ways, though if not learned, may be seen as dysfunctional (Okazaki-Luff, 1991). Social skills, by definition, are observable and learnable skills which help people make necessary social adjustments to their environment. The difficulties from lacking these social skills stems from "everyday, common, even apparently trivial situations which nevertheless cause friction, misunderstanding and interpersonal hostility" (Furnham & Bochner, 1986, p. 241). When Japanese students were asked what social skills were important for interacting with people from the host culture at school, they cited "talk to someone without hesitation," "talk about my ideas without worrying about making mistakes," and the succinct idea to "talk as much as possible" as the most effective ideas. Also being open and "frank" was seen as vital by being able to "express feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction openly rather than hiding them" (Yashima, 1995, pp. 99-100). Nonverbal tactics for tackling poor social skills included "smile at people when I first meet them,"

“spend time with family members after meals,” and in the case of home stays, “volunteer to help with household chores.”

Target language difficulties along with these social skills are only one area of concern Japanese students bring with them when they study overseas, and nothing makes those problems unique to Japanese sojourners. What does set them aside, however, are the expectations they bring with them from home. The difficulties of the Japanese education system are well-known. Not only must Japanese student sojourners deal with the education system of the host country, but if they plan to attend either high school or university upon returning to Japan, they have to also keep up the necessary level of schooling for the Japanese language and school entrance tests. Detailing these factors, the simple fact that the language structure of English is very different from Japanese makes it hard to learn. It was previously shown that the language factor is the most significant negative factor to successful adaptation abroad. This factor, however, has far reaching implications. In Japanese culture, failure is viewed as a reflection of one’s internal self, while success is viewed as resulting from external forces (DeVos, 1985). As a result, many Japanese living abroad blame themselves for personal inadequacy if they experience lower competence in learning English, resulting in a loss of confidence.

Focusing on Japanese students specifically, Nippoda (2002) sums up four main culture-specific factors possibly affecting students’ adaptation to other cultures (focusing on Japanese students in the U.K.), including a) problems relating to language differences; b) differences in communication styles and the education system; c) motivation and pressure to perform well; and d) the insecure status of being students. As to communicative differences, the dynamics between Japanese teachers and students are very different than in the West. As students, Japanese tend to be much more passive than Westerners, listening with little vocal assertiveness. Such lack of participation stems not only from the language barrier, but also from the value of silence and humility in Japanese culture. Nippoda (2002) notes that this behavior led U.K. staff to see Japanese as having little self-confidence and, in turn, viewed them as having a childlike image. This view on the part of instructors then resulted in students feeling that teachers see them as incompetent and they, in turn, lose even *more* confidence. A similar negative effect comes from the education system itself in Japan, compared to western countries. “In Japan, organizations which individuals belong to generally look after the individuals in a sense that organizations know what people need. . . Japanese schools look after students very well in the same way . . . [in the U.K., however] Japanese would wait for the offer [from the academic staff] and the Western teachers would wait for the request [from the students]” (Nippoda, 2002, p. 4). Misunderstandings result from such differences, and this leads to a negative affect on student sojourners’ adaptation to the new culture.

On an internalized basis, students’ own level of motivation, as well as the social pressure placed on them to succeed, can affect adaptation to a new culture. Japanese always carry the burden of trying to *not* be a source of shame (e.g., DeVos, 1985; White, 1988). Shame, to the Japanese, is not internalized, but comes from the community, as a result of someone not living up to cultural norms. It is widely believed that Japan is a collectivistic society, so the members of that society generally try to live up to others’ needs and expectations. In the extreme, a person who fails to meet her/his own personal goals, is a failure to the entire family, at least in the eyes of their community. For overseas sojourners, the pressure of not meeting course goals, the level of language desired (e.g., an increased fluency in English, a higher TOEIC or TOEFL score, etc.), or the requirements set out by the sponsor of one’s

sojourn, can have a strong impact on the ability to adapt successfully to the new culture. Nippoda (2002) notes one last source of pressure to succeed abroad being the insecure status of students. While expatriates are generally supported by some larger, and often local, institution (i.e., the employer), an exchange student is usually self-supported. Stemming mainly from financial problems, a student living abroad, if not severely affected by the challenges of the language barrier, different communicative and educational systems, and the pressure to succeed, faces the lack of institutionalized financial support as another challenge to overcome. As if not enough to think about, what awaits Japanese sojourning students when they return is a potentially new set of challenges collectively referred to as "reverse culture" or "re-entry" shock.

### **Re-entry Shock: Symptoms and Effects**

Reverse culture shock is the readapting of an individual to their home culture after an extended stay in another culture (Martin, 1986). Also known as re-entry or repatriation shock, the less-than-clear vision of returnees learning that their self-concept and cultural identity isn't the same as it was pre-journey can be psychologically stressful upon returning home (Sussman, 2002). Back in the home culture, sojourners can "suffer from depression, uncertainty, confusion, and restlessness. They frequently want to be alone, requesting isolation. They change their previous goals and priorities. They have reverse homesickness, just wanting to get away again, and they have negative feelings toward their family and friends" (Davis, et al, 2001).

Dealing with the lack of interest on the part of their friends, if not the changed dynamics of their friendships, being among one's native language, etc. is not as easy as most repatriates think. Returnees find that there are very real emotional reactions, and potential identity effects after being home. Sussman (2002) describes two types of identity response: "subtractive" identity response where "once-familiar ways of behaving appear strange and cherished values seem unimportant, irrelevant or negative" (p. 4). The other response, the "additive" identity response, takes place when the returnees feel stress from having accepted many of the host culture's values and behaviors into their own.

Sojourners often feel trapped. They had more freedom and more independence in their time away from home. Family and friends are not as interested in sharing their abroad experiences. Without a similar experience, the sojourner's experiences are not as interesting to them. In many cases, friendships have changed. Since previous friends are not as willing to listen to "tales from abroad," new friendships now seem more important. Returnees gain a feeling of dislocation, and a feeling that they are sticking out like a sore thumb. They suffer from loneliness and a notion that they have lost their identity (Tamura & Furnham, 1993). Re-entry shock is not usually felt until the returning sojourner has lost his or her "being special" status.

The varying stages of re-entry shock are as clearly defined as those of culture shock. The first stage, leave-taking, is disengaging from a host culture while you are still abroad (Quarles, 2000). Such leave-taking is often characterized by the numerous gatherings for good-bye parties, etc., making the upcoming departure potentially more emotional. The next stage is the "honeymoon," where "upon first returning home, there is a sense of relief and excitement about being in familiar surroundings, seeing old friends and so on" (Dodd, 1995, p. 222). This is the euphoria that the host culture had not provided in the beginning of the sojourn. There is a distinct difference from the euphoria in phase two compared to the alienation felt during phase three: the friends and family that the sojourner longed for

are not always interested in listening to adventures and stories they cannot relate to. The fourth phase is the gradual readjustment stage, of which there is no real time limit or reliable gauge to know when it will end. The initial shock associated with re-entry is gone. It is then replaced by the understanding of the home culture in relation to the host culture.

### Re-entry Problems for Non-Student Japanese

Research suggests that the problems of returning to one's home culture may be more problematic for Japanese than for other nationalities. Such research focusing on Japanese returnees has confirmed that most, if not *nearly all* people coming home, suffer from "some sort of culture shock upon re-entry" (Sorimachi, 1994, p. 1; see also Enloe & Lewin, 1987; Kidder, 1992). Living abroad means opening oneself up to new cultures, customs, traditions, peoples and, depending on the level of commitment, the possibility of learning a second language. Besides such benefits of learning about *another* culture, one can gain a heightened sense of self, by contrasting one's self with people from other cultures, as well as gain insight into one's own culture, an alternative way of thinking about the world, and the "national character" from which they come. Through such experiences, people are better able to form a well-rounded perspective of the world. Yet, for Japanese, such potential benefits are countered by the fact that, after time spent abroad, they find they are no longer considered "real Japanese" (Kidder, 1992), or they have been "tainted" with a foreign culture, and would not "fit in" to the Japanese social systems (Tamura & Furnham, 1993). Returnees to Japan may find themselves experiencing a "degree of self-imposed isolation, identity confusion, and depression about the meaning of being Japanese, and the problems of being accepted back into Japanese society" (Enloe & Lewin, 1987, p. 225).

As Kidder (1992) notes, the problems of being a returnee in Japan have few, if any, parallels when compared to United States returnees. Reintegrating back into Japanese society and culture is made all the more difficult due to the "relatively closed nature of Japanese culture, which frequently penalizes the individual for the time he or she has spent away" (Enloe & Lewin, 1987, p. 224). Nippoda (2002) notes that coming from a group-based culture, living abroad gives Japanese individuals the chance to enjoy more freedom and to be free from oppression, especially for women. Living abroad lets Japanese tend more to individual needs, making readjustment back to collectivistic Japan that much more challenging.

Furthermore, people who worked overseas can find themselves stuck in "outsider" work units, which are seen as being less prestigious than other positions (White, 1988, p. 11). In non-work related situations, however, there seems to be much lower readjustment necessary for adults. Enloe and Lewin (1987) note that 86% of adult respondents reported no or minor readjustment problems upon returning to Japan. Of the minor problems, they included getting used to the daily routines of Japanese daily life such as driving on narrow streets, daily errands such as shopping, and different social customs. It was noted that the strong desire to maintain a sense of Japanese identity while abroad on the part of the parents probably contributed to the "relative ease" of readjustment reported. Of the small number of adults (14%) who did report readjustment problems, the biggest aspect of reverse culture shock regarded the number of implicit rules which control daily behavior. That is, as one respondent wrote, it was tough returning to "a tight and homogeneous society. I had the feeling I had to behave like others did and I was afraid that I stood out" (Enloe & Lewin, 1987, p. 234). Returnees also "describe their

indelibly direct manners as something they have no control over, despite the costs to themselves. They are unable or unwilling to adopt a softer, rounder [i.e. Japanese] mode" (Kidder, 1992, p. 388).

Compared to the reasonably low level of re-entry shock for adults described above, there is a much higher level of necessary readjustment for students when going home to Japan. For parents of young Japanese children, who are educated abroad during their most formative years, besides the possible detriments to not learning the language sufficiently, research suggest that the single biggest parental concern from their overseas sojourn was the child's sense of cultural identity (e.g., Enloe & Lewin, 1987; Farkas, 1984, as cited in Diggs & Murphy, 1991; see also Kidder, 1992; White, 1988).

### Being a "*Kikokushijo*:" The Potential Problems of Student Returnees to Japan

There is the possibility of not commanding enough of the target language (usually English) for the sojourn to be as satisfying as it could be, yet, simultaneously, the student is concerned about not maintaining a sufficient level of Japanese language ability for when s/he returns home. Thus, something of a double-edged sword exists for the Japanese student sojourner. There is a word in Japanese, *kikokushijo*, to describe student returnees. It is not used in a necessarily negative way, and does not deride the student returnees directly, but the fact that there is a word for them, and not for returnees who are *not* students, lends credence that they are unique within Japanese culture, and, therefore, stand out within a highly homogeneous culture.

For younger students, the problem of re-entry may be exacerbated by returning at an age where her/his own identity has not yet been stabilized. They may also have fallen behind in their study of the Japanese language which, due to the 1000s of *kanji* characters that must be learned over the course of many years for any young Japanese, can be a significant problem when not fully immersed in a Japanese-only speaking populace. The student returnee is also a source of disharmony within the Japanese school system (Enloe & Lewin, 1987). In some extreme cases, the students are bullied or, at the least, ostracized (Farkas, 1984, as cited in Diggs & Murphy, 1991). Hoshino (1982) noted that the teacher may see the returnee students "as thorns in the side of the native group" of students in class (p. 110).

Sorimachi (1994) notes that for student returnees staying abroad for nearly all of the critical period of acquiring the "culture-specific interpersonal grammar (presumably from age 9 to 15)," the feelings of readjustment back into Japanese culture were relatively low. Similarly, Enloe and Lewin (1987), in their study of 21 Japanese families, with a total of 40 children among them, note that only 10% of children returnees were seen as having no readjustment problems, while 90% reported some sort of difficulty. Of this, 55% reported "minor" problems, including different rules in school, anxieties over making new friends, concerns about Japanese language proficiency, and teasing about being a foreigner. The other 35% are of a more serious nature, having been evaluated as having a "special" problem, including a case of "school phobia" and, in the extreme, two cases where the family had to change the child's school. The children's "bicultural experience makes them 'third culture children' upon their return to Japan" (Enloe & Lewin, 1987, p. 243).

### Language Problems for Japanese Student Returnees: The "Cost" of Learning English

For young students, part of assimilating back into *any* culture's school is being accepted, or "reaccepted," into one's peer group. Focusing on returning Japanese college students having spent



anywhere from one to ten years outside of Japan, Kidder (1992) notes what some returnees describe as the “requirements for being Japanese,” and the accompanying problems with re-entry and reacceptance into one’s group of friends for those who don’t meet such requirements. One requirement is being a “pure” Japanese, as manifested in various ways. That is, due to having spent time abroad, returnees risk being seen as someone who has lost their “Japanese purity.” Part of this is a belief that the Japanese language is a barometer of this “purity.” Miller (1992), calls this the country’s “modern myth,” and notes that Japanese see their language as yet another reason they are unique among all cultures in the world. He argues that from their belief in their own uniqueness, it is only a short stop to saying that “the Japanese language possesses a kind of spirit or should that sets it apart from all other languages . . . or that the Japanese language is somehow purer . . . or that the Japanese language is endowed with a distinctive character or special inner nature that makes it possible for Japanese society to use it for a variety of supralinguistic or nonverbal communication not enjoyed by any other society” (pp. 10-11). For people in Japan to sincerely believe this would be most detrimental to returnee students, with their increased multi-cultural understanding, accompanied by a certain degree of competence in their target language. Moreover, returnees seem to know this, since research shows that many young Japanese returnees try to hide their English ability. The present study labels this aspect of readapting back into Japanese society the “cost” of learning English abroad.

In Japan, the benefits of learning a second language (in most cases English) must be weighed against the costs. As Enloe and Lewin (1987) note, “Being able to read a foreign language allows the Japanese to gain access to foreign knowledge, while being discouraged from learning to speak it prevents a Japanese from becoming ‘corrupted’ through too much intercourse with ‘outsiders’” (p. 243). One student returnee stated “I didn’t want anyone to know I spoke English well. Everyone would just think I was trying to show off.”

Having spent considerable time and energy focusing on English (or any target language), there is also the challenge of maintaining one’s level of English upon return to Japan. With some teachers treating returnees as outcasts, and students in many cases not surrounding themselves with other English-speaking people, the potential for squandering the increased proficiency in a foreign language grows. Coming home, then, means following up on their language, since “the possibilities for further growth that these returnees could make in English are often dampened, and the motivation to do one’s best is . . . extinguished, simply because what they have already accomplished is not supported” (Enloe & Lewin, 1987, p. 245).

University entrance exams are widely viewed as the single most important exam a young person will take, due to the fact that the name of the university from which one graduates is more valued than the curriculum taken at that school. There has been a belief in the past that those students with overseas experience may be at a disadvantage in going onto university in Japan (Tamura & Furnham, 1993). In the competition to get into the best school, the potential deficiency of Japanese student returnees’ language skills can be seen as a handicap, “more than offsetting the supposed benefits that accrue from knowing a second language” (Enloe & Lewin, 1987, p. 225). The same research notes that 19% of parents assigned to work abroad showed a preference for leaving their children behind in Japan, rather than “risk the potential negative consequences of a foreign experience” and its detrimental impact on the children’s language skills (p. 225).

To help with such student returnees, the Foundation for Japanese Overseas Education is a unit set

up within the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) to run schools at all levels of education from elementary through middle, junior and senior high school, enrolling returnees in both regular courses as well as remedial classes catering to returnees who have weakness in certain areas (e.g., language). Some of the high schools designed for returnees have dormitories due to the fact that many of the students' parents are still overseas. At the university level, some of Japan's best known schools give special consideration to returnees, and returnee applicants.

Besides learning the target language, it was previously mentioned that student returnees must keep up a sufficient level of Japanese, if not for academic purposes, then for simple reintegration into their Japanese-speaking environment. For those students managing to maintain a sufficiently high level of Japanese vocabulary and grammar, what they cannot practice abroad, however, is *keigo*, or the polite and respectful speech required in many different social settings in Japan. Being a hierarchal language, there are different levels of politeness necessary when speaking with one's grandparents and seniors, than when speaking to one's peers. Such ability requires communicative practice with other native speakers. Kidder (1992) notes that if the necessary "politeness seems forced or imitative, the [Japanese returnee] speaker still stands out" (p. 388). Besides the actual spoken words inherent in *keigo*, the appropriate intonation and gestures fitting the polite speech must also be learned. One of several returnees, complaining of the strictness of polite speech, prefers English, saying ". . .when I speak English I don't have to care about respect words. It doesn't mean I don't try to be polite. But I like the English way better" (Kidder, 1992, p. 389).

### Physical, Behavioral & Interpersonal "Markings" of Japanese Student Returnees

The effects of Japan's high level of homogeneity can affect how Japanese see non-Japanese. Japanese society is "marked by beliefs about Japanese uniqueness that place people from other cultures on the outside" (Kidder, 1992, p. 384). For returnees at home, adds Kidder (1992), the dilemma "is whether to maintain or trim the new aspects of themselves" acquired while abroad (p. 384), or risk being labeled "non-Japanese" as a result of one's physical or behavioral "markings." In the case of students in many Japanese schools, there are aspects of a physical nature that are more controlled than in other countries (i.e., Western countries), including hair length and color, school uniform, speaking style and body mannerisms. Prior to returning to Japan, one young boy wrote about the "effect" of getting his hair cropped short to meet the requirements of his high school: "I feel something is gone from me—something I got through playing basketball [with my American friends]; something I got under the Stars and Stripes; something I got without knowing the value at that time. Something is gone with the hair" (Shibasaki, 1990, p. 4). Adds Enloe and Lewin (1987), students' acquisition of foreign behavior patterns alienates them from their peers and teachers (p. 225).

Kidder (1992), in face-to-face interviews with Japanese returnee students, described what they see in themselves as "un-Japanese." They were categorized as being "marked" in three ways: physically, behaviorally, and interpersonally. Being "physically marked" was most often manifested in hair styles, since this is widely controlled in Japanese junior and senior high schools. Returnees felt "tainted," saying "It was really hard [coming home], because I looked different and I talked different. My hair was kind of light colored from all the sun, and my skin was really tan. And so when people looked at me, they didn't think I was a real Japanese." Others noted that students in class would tease or bully

them (*ijime* in Japanese, a far-reaching but widely-researched problem within Japanese schools due to it having become “institutionalized”), while even close friends commented on their “new” appearance: “Some friends say ‘you’re different’—maybe because my hair is different, brownish from the sun, or because I got my ears pierced.” In another, somewhat extreme case, a student describes her mother’s reaction to her physical characteristics upon returning home: “I cried a lot when I had to come home. And my hair had gotten real yellow . . . The first thing my mother said, before saying ‘welcome home,’ she checked my face for make-up and my ears (not pierced) and said ‘good.’ And that really hurt.”

Behavioral “marks” noted in the same research included returnees who described themselves as “standing out with more confident and active nonverbal styles,” (Kidder, 1992, p. 386). One student commented that she was able to identify returnees by the way they walk, while another student said “. . . my face shows expression, that’s what my mother said. And my body language became more vivid.” Another student noted that “people who’ve returned from western countries have direct eye contact . . . you can notice it. And they become very confident about themselves, so their way of talking or communicating is very active . . . but the longer you’ve lived in Japan, such active action changes back to the Japanese way.” Interpersonal styles were also found to be significantly altered upon returning back to collectivistic Japan. Whereas American society is one where people are taught to express themselves, Japan focuses on the emotions and feelings of others in society. Thus, upon return, Japanese discover how unacceptable their directness can be. Notes Kidder, “being polite, going around, and being ‘round’ stand in contrast with what returnees describe as the U.S. tendency to be ‘straight.’” Adds one student: “After coming back . . . I found out the Japanese don’t say what they want, don’t express himself or herself . . . like when they’re angry with something, or happy with something” (1992, p. 387).

### Changing Relationships

Even in the age of instant communication via the internet, anytime a sojourner leaves her/his culture for a school, business or pleasure journey, her/his contact with those left behind decreases. Daily e-mails may keep those in the home culture “in touch” and informed of the sojourner’s latest news and events, but lacking face-to-face contact may result in a lowered quality of communication as well as lead to misinterpretations. This physical distance is often a pre-cursor to increases in the emotional distance between parties. Heightened feelings of being alone, for both the sojourner and those family and friends “left behind,” create a sense of isolation (see Kohls, 1984). Furthermore, the type of relationship between the sojourner and people in her/his home culture will be affected differently. That is, as Martin (1986) notes, changes in relationships are directly related to the particular *type* of relationship.

Research suggests that relationships between sojourners and their parents tend to improve during the sojourner’s time abroad, while at the same time, romantic relationships and other friendships can deteriorate (Kauffmann, Martin & Weaver, 1992). Martin (1986) also researched sibling/sojourner relationships and found that such relationships usually have the least level of change. Bochner, Lin and McLeod (1980) found the expectations of Asian students going home from the U.S. differed depending on the interpersonal relationship with those back home. They were seen as highly ambivalent toward peers and professional contacts, but much less so for family relations. Diggs and Murphy (1991) take a wider view when discussing Japanese returnees, noting that any kind of social

contact may not be what it was prior to departure from Japan. However, placing blame on the family is not always a valid explanation. Storti (1997) says that when returnees come back home, they may initially have forgotten their role within the family, even resenting what they see as limits on their freedom. Japanese sojourners may be good examples of individuals who return home to a less than free habitat.

Given the potential for a rough return to the family, research shows that other relationships can suffer much worse damage. Almost 20% of participants in Martin's (1986) study felt that their relationships with their friends had changed negatively, compared with only 2% who felt their family relationships had changed negatively. Returnees viewing friends as not as interested as expected can feel upset at this lack of interest, possibly increasing their feelings of loneliness. "Returnees experience loneliness and feelings that their close friends no longer know who they are" (Storti, 1997, p. 31), as well as a notion that they have lost their identity (Tamura & Furnham, 1993). To make matters worse, such feelings could turn to feelings of helplessness, and embarrassment about asking friends for help during the sojourner's period of readjustment (Kohls, 1984). When comparing relationships between friends to romantic relationships, Martin (1986) also notes that romantic relationships and casual friendships have a greater potential to change negatively than do people with close but not romantic friendships.

### Summary

Overwhelmingly, research shows most people going on a sojourn experience some type of culture shock. Increasingly, research also indicates that most returnees experience equally strong effects upon returning home, a type of reverse culture shock. Re-entry shock may negatively impact family and friend relationships back home, where the returnee is not the only one who is affected. Japanese sojourners have been shown to be unique in their abroad experiences, as well as upon return, due to the cultural identity and collectivistic nature of Japanese society. Coming home, Japanese returnees may be seen as marked by their overseas experiences. Given this, the present study suggests a link between the amount of both culture shock and re-entry shock experienced, and the amount of communication the sojourner maintains with her/his support system back home. As such, the following hypotheses are proffered (as well as one research question).

### Hypotheses and Research Question

- H<sub>1</sub>: Individuals who are highly engaged in social networks are more likely to experience higher levels of initial culture shock.
- H<sub>2</sub>: Individuals who maintain higher levels of contact with their home culture's social networks while abroad are less likely to experience severe reverse culture shock upon their return.
- RQ: What are the main cultural challenges participants report during cultural re-entry/reintegration to their home culture?

## Methodology

### Survey Instrument

Data were collected from 47 Japanese students at one private high school, one small private university, and one mid-sized public university in Western Japan. The survey, written in Japanese and administered during class time, had been translated and cross-translated from the English version by three native Japanese speakers, all fluent in the English language (for editing purposes, a combined Japanese-English version of the survey can be found as the **Appendix**). The survey consisted of a combination of Likert-type, ranking and fill-in scale questions, nominal questions, as well as more qualitative open-ended questions pertaining to both the students' past experiences living abroad, as well as their experiences upon coming home.

### Participants

The participant demographics indicate a disproportionate number of females (42) to males (5) provided usable data for the present study. Additionally, the age of participants was skewed toward the younger categories (i.e., 66% of participants were 16-17 years old). The average age of participants was 18.1 years. Of these participants, 16 were enrolled in a 4-year university and 31 in a 3-year high school. It should also be noted that the surveyed high school students are required to take part in a 2-month study abroad trip in Australia, including "home stay" with local families, during their junior year of high school. The sojourns took place primarily in Australia (n=35) followed by the U.S. (n=4) and the U.K. (n=4), with one each taking place in Canada, Korea and Malaysia. One participant failed to report where s/he studied abroad.

The younger age of the participants may have created a systematic bias within the data set, where the majority of months spent abroad and location were both impacted by the age of the participant (i.e., 76% spent two months or less abroad because they were part of a high school program, versus a college study abroad program, and 76% spent their abroad experience studying in Australia, respectively). Although this represents a clear concern when trying to understand *all* sojourning individuals, it also provides a unique and powerful opportunity for insight into some of the earliest patterns of host and home/re-entry culture shock existing for individuals experiencing different cultures on their own (i.e., without their friends and family members accompanying them).

### Analysis

The data analysis was conducted using a Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), version 12.0. Simple descriptive analyses (e.g., frequencies, measures of central tendency and distribution, range) provide clear demographic segmentation of the participant pool. Consistent with analyses by Davis et al (2001) on a similar study, a PPMCC (i.e., correlational) matrix was used to explore initial relationships between scaled variables.

## Quantitative Results & Discussion

Most participants viewed their host culture as either somewhat different or very different from the Japanese culture. This result is consistent with the decades of previous research into culture shock and even cultural analysis when one understands that, cumulatively, 93.5% of participants studied in either Australia, the U.S.A. or the U.K.. Scholars view these three cultures as more “individualistic” (versus a “group” oriented Japan) as well as being “low context” (versus a very “high context” Japan, or a culture where the context informs what was being spoken, often more than the words themselves). Thus, even though participants in the present study display a strong bias in terms of age and months spent abroad, their views on how different Japan is, from at least these three cultures, is consistent with existing research. More specifically, when comparing their home culture with living abroad, 38.3% of participants said the host culture was *very* or *extremely different* (mean = 5.02, where 1 = *extremely similar*, 7 = *extremely different*). Making adjustments to live in the host country, nearly 15% said it was *very* or *extremely difficult*, but overall Japanese sojourners reported little difficulty in adjusting (mean, 3.86, where 1 = *not difficult*, 7 = *extremely difficult*). Their first week abroad was much more “shocking” than time near the end of the sojourn with 36.2% saying it was *very* or *extremely intense*; while 70.2% said *little* or *not at all intense* during the last week.

During their time abroad, sojourners kept in touch with people in their home culture, and did so with family at home (mean, 1.06 times per week) more than friends (.85 times per week). As to the method of communication to family, in ranked order (1 = most preferred), the most popular method was by phone (mean, 1.56) followed by letter (1.92), email (2.26) and then by “other” modes (mean, 3.8). The “other” forms of communication were (as learned through follow-up interviews with several returnees) via internet chat programs (MSN Messenger, Yahoo Chat, both of which offer voice-chat services, as well as Skype internet telephoning). When communicating with friends, they preferred email (mean 1.71) almost as much as communicating by letters (1.77), followed by phone (1.97) and then “other” methods (3.44).

As other research on Japanese returnees (e.g., Enloe & Lewin, 1986) suggests, readjusting to life in Japan was fairly unproblematic, though not completely trouble-free: 55.3% said *very* or *extremely easy*, while only 6.4% said *very* or *extremely difficult* (mean, 2.7, where 1 = *extremely easy*, 7 = *extremely difficult*). Importantly, there were no significant differences between males and females in terms of their re-entry shock, indicating that sex does not seem to be a factor when readjusting to home life again. In the next section, qualitative responses address some of the specific challenge areas returnees experienced.

Finally, regarding any changes in interpersonal relationships with family and friends, participants believed that their families found a much higher level of perceived change in the returnee (23.4% said their families viewed them as *very* or *extremely different*) than did friends (only 10.7% believed friends viewed them as *very* or *extremely different*). This counters existing research (e.g., Martin, 1986) showing friendships are more likely to be affected by a sojourn than family relationships.

The PPMCC analysis reveals a lack of any statistically significant relationships between initial culture shock (“How difficult was it to adjust to your host culture?”) and social network contact (“How many times a week did you communicate with family at home?” as well as “How many times a week did you communicate with friends at home?”). As such, Hypothesis One was not supported by

the results of the current study. However, there is a statistically significant correlation between participants' contact with family members and their contact with friends, suggesting that individuals who maintain high or low contact with their family network also maintain high or low contact with their friend network, and vice versa. Essentially, a "social network" exists of both family and friends at home. It should be noted, though, that those individuals participating in the present study were "successful" sojourners, in that they completed their abroad experience, not quitting the program and returning home early. Thus, there may be a success bias in the data, where only those individuals who did not experience severe initial culture shock in their host culture are completing the study and providing data. In fact, maintaining contact with their collective social network is an almost perfectly zero correlation with initial culture, which is highly unusual, suggesting that social network contact is not a meaningful or valuable predictor variable for initial culture shock. This is consistent with what previous research on U.S. participants says (e.g., Davis, Desiere, Naughton, Payne & Valianos, 2001): the more contact an individual has with a home social network, the less culture shock an individual experiences. Of course, these individuals are also interacting less with their host culture, thereby minimizing their abroad experience. Indeed, St. John (2000) suggests that merely keeping in touch with friends and family at home through cyber chat rooms or e-mail is an effective way of coping with culture shock. Additionally, Gaw (2000) concluded from research that those sojourners who meet regularly with support services are less overwhelmed by culture shock than those who do not see a support service.

Specific to the present study, there is a strong positive correlation between the age and re-entry difficulty, such that as age went up (i.e., individual participants were older) so did the difficulty they had reintegrating into the Japanese culture.

### Qualitative Results & Discussion

Qualitative data from the present study address the Research Question asked, and indicate the main challenges participants report during re-entry and reintegration into their home culture. When asked to explain what made adjustment to the host culture difficult, the vast majority of write-in answers (over 70%) noted either language and/or communication problems, with common complaints being "it's difficult to explain my feelings," "explaining Japanese culture in English is hard," "I can't use *my words* to speak" and "I can't catch the real feelings of the people." Thus, this research confirms language as the biggest obstacle in adjusting to a host culture where the language differs from that of the home culture. Behavioral challenges included "there are rules against some things . . . sometimes it's strict to do things," the westerners were "too easygoing and irresponsible," they have a different "sense of responsibility" including their cavalier way of resolving problems: "when I lost my socks, the home stay family didn't care and said 'it's natural.'" Some participants noted the different aspects of lifestyle, such as foreigners' "time ethic" ("the pace of life is slow"), manners, different ways of thinking and "sense of worth." Regarding daily habits and dietary changes, several students noted the differences in food culture (e.g. "they don't have rice with meals," there is "meat-based stuff everyday" and "there are no chopsticks."), as well as hygienic differences ("the bathroom is different" or "not sanitary," and the "water is too hot to keep my energy"), as well as other smaller matters such as money, and transportation ("I had to fasten the seat belt every time I was in the car").

As to the increased preference for communication by email with friends over family, this may be due to parents seeing computers as less user-friendly, and relying on the easier and more direct phone call (regardless of cost). On the other hand, most, if not all teens and 20-somethings seem comfortable using email.

Factors student sojourners said made their adjustment back home relatively easy were generally one of three areas: returning "back to my usual routine (lifestyle)," being surrounded by friends and family (family life) again, and having Japanese food (with chopsticks!) and Japanese language again. The occasional student commented that s/he saw Japanese culture more "objectively," and a few students noted that being abroad wasn't that different from home, so they didn't feel the need to "readapt."

Given that the vast majority of students saw returning to Japan as unproblematic, it is interesting to note that one of the factors making returning home challenging was the sojourner's native tongue: the Japanese language. Several write-in answers (nearly 20%) cited the difficulty of writing and being reacquainted with Japanese *kanji* characters on a daily basis. Some participants noted that they unconsciously fell into using English when suddenly and unexpectedly called upon to reply to someone. The next most frequently cited hindering aspect was the different "sense of time" in Japan than their host culture. Many examples said that the host family slept and rose much earlier and later than Japanese do, the time for meals was different, and the much faster pace at which Japanese live their daily lives. As to communication and personality traits, only one student cited "communication with my family" as being problematic, but other returnees saw Japanese people as "closed-minded," "strict," and their own culture as one that "follows a code" of unwritten rules and behaviors in their daily life.

### General Discussion

Adapting to a new culture is hard enough, but reentering one's own culture can be equally challenging, if not psychologically damaging. "No one wants to admit he or she is having difficulty readjusting to the home culture, so the re-entry process has often involved people suffering a quiet stress" (Dodd, 1995, p. 222). The present research study sought to add to a growing body of information that may help these silent sufferers of the world. Results from this study suggest strong relationships between variables relating to participant's age, how their friends view them upon returning home, and the length of their time abroad. Collectively, it appears as though there are several methods to alleviate one's initial culture shock experiences, though re-entry shock remains less well-researched.

The significant relationship between age and re-entry difficulty lends credibility to educational programs that sponsor and/or promote earlier cultural sojourns by students. It appears that younger individuals are more permeable in their cultural views and perspectives, and may appreciate, if not incorporate, cultural diversity (i.e., different ways of doing things) better than older individuals.

Beyond communicating with one's existing social networks (i.e., family and/or friends), if a sympathetic person carefully introduces sojourners into the host culture, then that sojourner may encounter fewer problems than they would if they were left to fend for themselves. This is further supported by Bochner (2003), who states that:

a critical factor in sojourner adjustment was the extent to which they had host-culture friends,



the reason being that these persons acted as informal culture-skills mentors. Those visitors who socialized exclusively with members of their own cultures did less well on a variety of measures than sojourners who had established non-trivial links with their hosts (p. 6).

Thus, an important element of cultural adaptation is actually the *breaking free* of one's existing social network to more fully experience one's host culture and to communicate with individuals from that culture. Conversely, though, this may actually set individuals up for increased re-entry shock, as they have more fully integrated another cultural system into their daily lives, and must extricate themselves from that new cultural perspective in order to reintegrate back with their home culture upon returning there. This issue speaks directly to Hypothesis Two, where individuals maintaining higher levels of contact with their home culture's social networks while abroad are less likely to experience severe reverse culture shock upon their return. What informs this hypothesis is whether communication with home social networks minimizes re-entry shock. A previous study by Davis, et al (2001) using U.S. participants found that those individuals experiencing stronger initial culture shock experienced stronger re-entry shock as well, and the opposite was also true (i.e., individuals experiencing weaker initial culture shock reported less re-entry shock). The two experiences are somehow linked, and it was argued that individuals experiencing initial culture shock were interacting with their host culture to a stronger degree than those not experiencing culture shock. As part of the adjustment to this systematic shock, they adapted to the host cultural system, thereby setting themselves up for a stronger re-entry shock upon their return to their home culture. The results of the present study suggest this is not limited to individuals from the U.S., but applies also to Japanese students from high school age and beyond. Yet, the present study's results provide inconsistent support, with communication with one's family while abroad not being correlated with adjustment difficulties upon return to one's home culture.

Since the concept of a "social network" includes both family and friends, both dimensions of a social network must support the hypothesis before it can be accepted. The result suggesting the most direct answer to this lack of support for Hypothesis Two comes from the variable of how one's friends viewed the participant upon return to the home culture, and the fact that this variable was positively correlated to a significant level with how many times per week the participant communicated with her/his friends in the home culture. The friends view of the participant was also significantly correlated to how difficult the sojourner's re-entry was, suggesting that friends play a *powerful* role in one's reintegration with Japanese society; quite possibly more powerful than family members. Further, frequent weekly communication with one's friendship network shows significant positive relationships with how different one's friends view participants upon return to Japan. While one might think that more communication with an individual would lessen the amount of disparity between the person friends knew as s/he went abroad and the person returning, the present study's results suggest the possibility of the opposite: the higher the weekly contact with friends, the *more* friends view the individual as different from what they were before the sojourn experience. Perhaps this is due to the general absence of nonverbal behavior communicated via instant messenger, text phone, and e-mail communication media.

For many travelers, especially student sojourners who are unmarried, one of the most important concerns s/he has is the relationship with friends. If the friends haven't had any overseas experience, the sojourner may wonder if they will understand what the sojourn experience is, and if s/he will still fit

in with “the ol’ gang.” Research detailed earlier shows this can be problematic for Japanese sojourners. When these worries become real, fitting in again, easily or otherwise, becomes less likely. Contrary to expectations, results in the present study show differences in readjustment from family and friends. Communication with friends was significantly correlated with ease of readjustment back into Japanese culture, even though higher communication was associated with higher levels of perceived difference in the individual from pre-sojourn to post-sojourn. As such, further investigation into distinct differences between one’s communicative aspects with family *versus* friends, in relation to culture and re-entry shock, seems in order.

### Caveats

The present research, although considered an initial study in a foreseen longitudinal project focusing on Japanese sojourners, has some areas that should be improved on in future work. First, the limited number of participants (47) weakens the results. Within these numbers, the vast majority of participants were high school students, skewing results toward the 16-year-old perspective. Given the potential differences between populations of high school students, who most always live at home, and university students, who have a much higher chance of living away from their families, an even balance of these two groups may yield clearer differences in how families view sojourners upon return. Similarly, future work should collect data from other parts of Japan, such as the greater metropolitan areas of Tokyo and Osaka, where much larger populations of foreigners reside and study, which may influence Japanese opinions of foreigners even before they leave the country. Increasing participants, regardless of the source or age, must also insure a more balanced number of males versus females. The present research shows no significant differences between sexes on any factors analyzed, which may not be representative of Japan as a whole.

In regard to the questionnaire used, one potential problem regards asking about “mode of communication,” yet not offering a separate choice for other PC-based communications (e.g., chat programs, etc.). Since these communication methods require no outlay of money (virtually every educational institution offers the free use of PCs), it is likely that some sojourners would use these “free” modes to communicate with individuals in their home culture.

### Implications For Future Research

The present study provides useful insight into Japanese sojourning student’s experiences, but these need to be placed within a larger context of student sojourns. Thus, additional research comparing experiences of students sojourning from other cultures would assist in determining what aspects of a sojourn are universal, and which aspects are culture specific. Additionally, although many educational institutions address “culture shock” through on-campus programs, training, providing reading materials and such, it appears as though too few institutions adequately address the challenges that cultural re-entry brings to both the sojourning student and the institution itself. A great deal of previous research offers suggestions for how to best deal with culture shock by preparing for it. Work focusing on Japanese sojourners, however, has generally avoided preparing those students with anything more than basic language skills (usually in English). But preparation in the area of English

language skills is only part of the solution. As Yashima (1995) notes, researchers can easily conclude that raising the level of English proficiency is necessary, yet it is not sufficient to solve interpersonal problems. To face those problems in Japanese sojourners, essential interpersonal communication skills need to be taught to the sojourners in preparation. Indeed, sojourners successfully adjusting to U.S. culture said there is a need "to be outgoing, to have participating behavioral patterns, and to open themselves up through talking," although students admitted they are not always successful at doing what they view as essential (Yashima, 1995, pp. 100-101). In order to help with behavioral and interpersonal challenges, Nippoda (2002) notes that training in intercultural skills would aid entry into western cultures, which, she adds, is almost non-existent at the time (in both Japan pre-departure, as well as within the host country upon arrival).

Suggestions for helping Japanese don't stop at the language and behavior of the sojourners themselves. Teachers of Japanese students, as well as mental health workers on and off-campus, have to be made aware of the adjustment problems and potentially psychotic symptoms of re-entry shock in order to recognize it and find solutions (Hoshino, 1982). It is important to remember that most repatriates don't even know why they are experiencing discomfort during re-entry shock. "They don't realize how their overseas adjustments have changed their cultural identity, which in turn affected their re-adjustment back home" (Sussman, 2002, p. 4). Just as the sojourner can expect her/his ideas, attitudes and identity to change from living abroad, s/he must also expect that those at home will have done the same. Believing that things will "be the same" is unrealistic. Perhaps making people more aware of what to expect upon returning home, prior to actually going home, is a step that should come before all others.

As to the longitudinal study mentioned earlier, it is hoped to conduct a study following a group of Japanese student sojourners from the early steps of planning to sojourn, through their host culture experiences, up to and including their return home. Such a study would have to take place over a few (if not several) years, in order to collect data at all three stages from the same population, and proper follow-up on the individuals. As Davis et al (2001) state: "The results obtained would provide the researchers with an indication of the impact that preparation and awareness on the sojourner's part would have on the severity of re-entry shock."

Finally, as diversity assets, sojournered students present a wealth of cultural information, with a fresh perspective on both the host and home cultures, and institutions should incorporate their re-entry into the programming and curriculum in some useful way. Ideally, the possibility of incorporating these students in "training" or in some way preparing the classmates of sojourners to understand what s/he may feel upon return, benefits student populations beyond the limit of the individual sojourner. Specifically in Japan, as shown earlier, being seen as an "outsider" in one's own country can have nothing but negative consequences on the returnee, and lead to disharmony, in the case of the classroom, and within the group as a whole. To place these individuals in an instructional position, especially in relation to other students anticipating a sojourn, may alleviate re-entry problems and provide constructive outlets for the sojourner's experiences.

On a very personal note, one of the authors has a student who spent several years in the U.S., both in the mid-west during her elementary and junior high school years, as well as an additional year in Hawaii as a university exchange student. Upon return, she specifically asked that her high level of English fluency not be mentioned to other students in class, due to her fear of being ostracized. From

the western perspective, especially from a very non-homogenous society such as the U.S., such efforts to keep one's multi-cultural experience, as well as one's second-language ability, secret is hard to understand, and the need to do so in Japan should be much better understood.

### References

- A mix of admiration, envy and anger. (1987, April). Time, pp. 38-39.
- Befu, H. (1983). Internationalization of Japan and Nihon Bunkaron. In H. Minnari & H. Befu (Eds.), The Challenge of Japan's Internationalization: Organization and Culture (pp. 232-266. Tokyo: Kodansha International.
- Bochner, S. (1982). Cultures in contact: Studies in cross-cultural interaction. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Bochner, S. (2003). Culture shock due to contact with unfamiliar cultures. In W. J. Lonner, D. L. Dinnel, S. A. Hayes, & D. N. Sattler (Eds.), Online Readings in Psychology and Culture. Bellingham, Washington, USA: Center for Cross-Cultural Research, Western Washington University. Retrieved October 4, 2006: <http://www.ac.wvu.edu/~culture/Bochner.htm>
- Bochner, S., Lin, A. & McLeod, B.M. (1980). Anticipated role conflict of returning overseas students. Journal of Social Psychology, 110, 265-272.
- Bock, P. (Ed.). (1970). Culture Shock: A Reader in Modern Anthropology. New York: A. A. Knopf.
- Davis, D. C., Desiere, S. E., Naughton, K. M., Payne, M. M., & Valianos, A. J. (2001, November). The Relationship Between Culture Shock Expectations, Social Support Networks and Reverse Culture Shock: Initial Results in a Longitudinal Study of Sojourning Students. Paper presented at the 87th annual convention of the National Communication Association, Atlanta, GA. (International & Intercultural Communication Division)
- DeVos, G. (1985). Dimensions of the self in Japanese Culture. In E.J. Marsella, G. DeVos, & F.K. Hsu (Eds.), Culture and self: Asian and Western Perspectives (pp. 110-135). New York: Tavistock Publications
- Diggs, N. & Murphy, B. (1991). Japanese adjustment to American communities: The case of the Japanese in the Dayton area. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 15, 103-116.
- Dodd, C. H. (1995). Dynamics of Intercultural Communication (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Madison, WI: Brown & Benchmark.
- Educating Child Returnees. (1983, August 26). The Japan Times, p. 14
- Enloe, W. (1986). Issues of integration abroad and readjustment to Japan of Japanese Returnees. Hiroshima Forum for Psychology, 11, 3-15.
- Enloe, W., & Lewin, P. (1987). Issues of integration abroad and readjustment to Japan of Japanese Returnees. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 11, 223-248.
- Furnham, A., & Bochner, S. (1986). Culture shock: Psychological reactions to unfamiliar environments. London: Methuen.
- Furukawa, T., & Shibayama, T. (1994). Factors influencing adjustment of high school students in an international exchange program. Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, 182, 709-714.
- Gaw, K. F. (2000). Reverse culture shock in students returning from overseas. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 24, 83-104.
- Goodman, R. (1990). Japan's 'International Youth': The Emergence of a New Class of Schoolchildren.

Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Gudykunst, W.B., Nishida, T., & Chua, E. (1987). Perceptions of social penetration in Japanese-North American dyads. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, *11*, 171-189.
- Hoshino, A. (1982). An elaboration of the "culture-shock" phenomenon: Adjustment problems of Japanese youth returning from overseas. In R.C. Nann (Ed.), Uprooting and Surviving (pp. 109-110). Dordrecht-Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company.
- Japan in America. (1988, May). U.S. News and World Report, pp. 43-59.
- Kauffmann, N. L., Martin, J. N., & Weaver, H. D. (1992). Students Abroad: Strangers at Home. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
- Kawabata, M., Kune, T, and Uehara, A. (1989). An exploratory study of intercultural qualities, abilities and attitudes for the Japanese. Bulletin of the Center for Education of Children Overseas, *5*, (Tokyo Gakugei University), 93-105.
- Kidder, L.H. (1992). Requirements for being "Japanese." International Journal of Intercultural Relations, *16*, 383-393.
- Kohls, L. R. (1984). Survival Kit for Overseas Living (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
- Martin, J. N. (1986). Communication in the intercultural re-entry: Student sojourners' perceptions of change in re-entry relationship. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, *10*, 1-22.
- Matsumoto, D. (1999). Nihonjin no Kokusai Tekiouryoku. Tokyo: Hon no Tomosha.
- Matsumoto, D., LeRoux, J., Ratzlaff, C., Tatani, H., Uchida, H., Kim, C., & Araki, S. (2001). Development and validation of a measure of intercultural adjustment potential in Japanese sojourners: The Intercultural Adjustment Potential Scale (ICAPS). International Journal of Intercultural Relations, *25*, 483-510.
- Miller, R.A. (1982). Japan's Modern Myth: Language and Beyond. New York: Weatherhill.
- Nippoda, Y. (2002). Japanese students' experiences of adaptation and acculturation of the United Kingdom. In W. J. Lonner, D. L. Dinnel, S. A. Hayes, & D. N. Sattler (Eds.), Online Readings in Psychology and Culture. Bellingham, Washington, USA: Center for Cross-Cultural Research, Western Washington University. Retrieved October 4, 2006: <http://www.ac.wvu.edu/~culture/Nippoda2.htm>
- Okazaki-Luff, K. (1991). On the adjustment of Japanese sojourners: Beliefs, contentions, and empirical findings. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, *51*(1), 85-102.
- Outline of the student exchange system in Japan. (2005). Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports Science and Technology (MEXT), Japan. Retrieved October 5, 2006: [http://www.mext.go.jp/a\\_menu/koutou/ryugaku/06021615/002.pdf](http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/koutou/ryugaku/06021615/002.pdf)
- Quarles, J. (2000, Mar/Apr). The journey home. Transitions Abroad, *23*, 53.
- Reischauer, E. (1988). The Japanese Today. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Shibasaki, K. (1990, October 11). Students find adjustment difficult. Daily Yomiuri, p. 4.
- Sorimachi, A. (1994). Subjective feelings of cultural adjustment among Japanese high school students returning from foreign countries: Determining factors and changes over time (English Abstract). Japanese Journal of Counseling Science, *27*, 1-10.
- St. John, K. (2000, May/June). You've got mail. Transitions Abroad, *23*, 40.
- Storti, C. (1997). The Art of Coming Home. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
- Sussman, N.M. (1986). Re-entry research and training: Methods and implications. International

- Journal of Intercultural Relations, 10, 235-254.
- Sussman, N.M. (2000). The dynamic nature of cultural identity throughout the cultural transitions: Why home is not so sweet. Personality and Social Psychology Review, 4, 355-373.
- Sussman, N.M. (2002). Sojourners to another country: The psychological roller-coaster of cultural transitions.. In W. J. Lonner, D. L. Dinnel, S. A. Hayes, & D. N. Sa-ttler (Eds.), Online Readings in Psychology and Culture. Bellingham, Washington, USA: Center for Cross-Cultural Research, Western Washington University. Retrieved October 4, 2006: <http://www.ac.wvu.edu/~culture/sussman.htm>
- Tamura, T., & Furnham, A. (1993). Re-adjustment of Japanese returnee children from an overseas sojourn. Social Science & Medicine, 36, 1181-1186.
- The "Salaryman" Blues. (1988, May 9). Newsweek, p. 51-52.
- Wallace, A. F. C. (1961). Culture and Personality (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: Random House.
- White, M. (1988). The Japanese Overseas: Can They Go Home Again? New York: Free Press-Macmillan.
- Yashima, T. (1995). English proficiency, personality and intercultural adjustment of Japanese students studying in America. International Communication Studies, 1, 83-107.
- Yashima, T., & Viswat, L.W. (1991). A study of Japanese high school students' intercultural experience – "It's not a dream country, but I love America." Changes in Image of Americans –. Human Communication Studies, 19, (*The Communication Association of Japan*), 181-194.
- Yashima, T., & Viswat, L.W. (1993). An analysis of communication problems of Japanese high school students and their host families, Human Communication Studies, 21, (*The Communication Association of Japan*), 181-196.

Damon E. Chapman, M.A. (言語文化学科国際コミュニケーションコース)  
Dr. Daniel Cochece Davis  
(Assistant Professor, Department of Communication,  
Marist College, Poughkeepsie, New York, U.S.A.)

(2006. 10. 31 受理)

**Appendix: Questionnaire (Combined English/Japanese Version)**  
FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE STUDIED ABROAD (留学経験者用)

Thank you for participating in this research study. The study is being supervised by [NAMES REMOVED FOR REVIEW PURPOSES]. The purpose of this survey is to examine how people deal with differences between cultures. It asks people who have studied abroad how they felt about their experiences before, during and after they went abroad. Your participation is completely voluntary and you are free to skip over any question you feel unable/or unwilling to answer by simply writing "no answer". The results of this study will appear in a scholarly publication. However, all participants' responses will be kept anonymous, and your honesty and participation are appreciated.

今回、アンケート調査にご協力下さいまして、誠にありがとうございます。この調査は、比治山大学言語文化学科のデーモン・E・チャップマンと、ニューヨークにありますマリスタカレッジのコミュニケーション学科、ダニエル・デイヴィス助教授の共同研究のために行います。主たる目的は、文化間の違いに対し人々はどのように対処していくかという経験を集め、解析させて頂くことです。その方法として海外留学する以前、最中、以後の経験についてどのように感じているかを尋ねます。この調査にご協力頂けるか否かは、全く自由です。また、答えるにあたり抵抗を感じる質問がありましたら、抜かして頂いて結構です。無記名でお答えください。ご協力を感謝します。

1. What is your sex?    Male        Female    あなたの性別 (○をつけてください) :    男    女
2. What is your age?    \_\_\_\_\_        年齢 \_\_\_\_\_ 才
3. Why were you interested in studying abroad? (*please explain briefly*)  
なぜ、留学することに興味をもたれましたか。(簡単に説明してください)
4. For how many months were you abroad?    \_\_\_\_\_ *months*  
留学期間はどのくらいですか。        \_\_\_\_\_ カ月
5. During which semester and/or year did you travel abroad? (e.g. Spring, 2005)  
どのセメスターもしくは何年次に留学しましたか。
6. In which country did you study?    \_\_\_\_\_        留学先の国はどこですか。    \_\_\_\_\_
7. How different was your host culture compared to your home culture? (circle one)  
留学先の国の文化と自国の文化にどれくらい違いがありましたか。(1つ選んで○をつけてください)  

|                          |   |   |                |   |                            |   |
|--------------------------|---|---|----------------|---|----------------------------|---|
| 1                        | 2 | 3 | 4              | 5 | 6                          | 7 |
| <i>extremely similar</i> |   |   | <i>neutral</i> |   | <i>extremely different</i> |   |
| たいへん似ている                 |   |   | 中間             |   | たいへん異なっている                 |   |
8. How difficult was it to adjust to your host culture?  
留学先の国の文化に適應することはどれくらい難しかったですか。(1つ選んで○をつけてください)  

|                      |   |   |                |   |                            |   |
|----------------------|---|---|----------------|---|----------------------------|---|
| 1                    | 2 | 3 | 4              | 5 | 6                          | 7 |
| <i>not difficult</i> |   |   | <i>neutral</i> |   | <i>extremely difficult</i> |   |
| 難しくなかった              |   |   | 中間             |   | たいへん難しかった                  |   |
9. What were the greatest challenges you faced in adapting to the host culture? (*please explain briefly*)  
留学先の文化に適應するに当たり、何が一番大きな障壁でしたか。(簡単に説明をしてください)
10. How many times a week did you communicate with family at home?    \_\_\_\_\_ *times a week*  
一週間に何度、自国の家族と連絡を取りましたか。        1週間に \_\_\_\_\_ 回

11. How many times a week did you communicate with friends at home? \_\_\_\_\_ *times a week*  
一週間に何度、自国の友達と連絡を取りましたか。 1週間に\_\_\_\_\_回
12. Rank in order, from most used (1) to least used (4), the main method of communicating with your family (1 to 4) during your abroad experience.  
留学中に家族と連絡を取るために最も使用した方法を(1)とし以下の4つの方法に順位をつけてください。
- Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Letters \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_  
電話 \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ 手紙 \_\_\_\_\_ その他 \_\_\_\_\_
13. Rank in order, from most used (1) to least used (4), the main method of communicating with your friends (1 to 4) during your abroad experience.  
留学中に友達と連絡を取るために最も使用した方法を(1)とし以下の4つの方法に順位をつけてください。
- Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Letters \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_  
電話 \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ 手紙 \_\_\_\_\_ その他 \_\_\_\_\_
14. How intense were your feelings of homesickness during the *first week* away? (*circle one*)  
留学して最初の1週間のホームシックの強さを示してください。(1つ選んで○をつけてください)
- |                    |   |   |                |   |   |                          |
|--------------------|---|---|----------------|---|---|--------------------------|
| 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4              | 5 | 6 | 7                        |
| <i>not intense</i> |   |   | <i>neutral</i> |   |   | <i>extremely intense</i> |
| なし                 |   |   | 中間             |   |   | たいへん強い                   |
15. How intense were your feelings of homesickness during your *last week* away? (*circle one*)  
留学して最後の1週間のホームシックの強さを示してください。(1つ選んで○をつけてください)
- |                    |   |   |                |   |   |                          |
|--------------------|---|---|----------------|---|---|--------------------------|
| 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4              | 5 | 6 | 7                        |
| <i>not intense</i> |   |   | <i>neutral</i> |   |   | <i>extremely intense</i> |
| なし                 |   |   | 中間             |   |   | たいへん強い                   |
16. How difficult was it to adjust to your home culture upon your return? (*circle one*)  
帰国した後、自国の文化に合わせるのはどれくらい難しかったですか。(1つ選んで○をつけてください)
- |                       |   |   |                |   |   |                            |
|-----------------------|---|---|----------------|---|---|----------------------------|
| 1                     | 2 | 3 | 4              | 5 | 6 | 7                          |
| <i>extremely easy</i> |   |   | <i>neutral</i> |   |   | <i>extremely difficult</i> |
| 難しくなかった               |   |   | 中間             |   |   | たいへん難しかった                  |
17. How did your family view you upon your return? (*circle one*)  
帰国後のあなたを家族はどのように感じていましたか。(1つ選んで○をつけてください)
- |                          |   |   |                |   |   |                            |
|--------------------------|---|---|----------------|---|---|----------------------------|
| 1                        | 2 | 3 | 4              | 5 | 6 | 7                          |
| <i>extremely similar</i> |   |   | <i>neutral</i> |   |   | <i>extremely different</i> |
| ほとんど変わっていない              |   |   | 中間             |   |   | たいへん変わっている                 |
18. How did your friends view you upon your return? (*circle one*)  
帰国後のあなたを家族はどのように感じていましたか。(1つ選んで○をつけてください)
- |                          |   |   |                |   |   |                            |
|--------------------------|---|---|----------------|---|---|----------------------------|
| 1                        | 2 | 3 | 4              | 5 | 6 | 7                          |
| <i>extremely similar</i> |   |   | <i>neutral</i> |   |   | <i>extremely different</i> |
| ほとんど変わっていない              |   |   | 中間             |   |   | たいへん変わっている                 |



19. What were the things that most facilitated you readapting to your home culture?

(*please explain briefly.*)

どのようなきっかけもしくは出来事が自国の文化に再び適応することを容易にしましたか。

(簡単に説明をしてください)

20. What were the things that most hindered you readapting to your home culture?

(*please explain briefly.*)

自国の文化に再び適応するに当たり、何が一番大きな障壁でしたか。(簡単に説明をしてください)

21. What do you believe are the greatest benefits of studying abroad? (*please explain briefly*)

留学することの一番大きな利点は何ですか。(簡単に説明をしてください)

Thank you very much for cooperating with this research. ご協力ありがとうございました。