

A Comparative Study of Educational Consciousness and Self-Appraisal of Teachers:

Based on a comparative survey of educational consciousness
in Japan, Korea, and China

Atsushi KADOWAKI

INTRODUCTION

Differences in economic systems which are rooted in opposing ideologies are becoming transcended by the globalization of the economic market. Our ability to take command of this increasingly globalized economic market hinges on the success of the information technology revolution. In the last decade of the 20th century, educational reform was initiated in many countries, including Japan, China, Korea, Taiwan and other northeast Asian economies, in response to this new era of new educational problems.¹

While this worldwide trend in educational reform occurred during the same historical window, the nature of the reform varied from country to country. This is perhaps a natural outcome of the differences in problems and issues confronting each country and also in the educational level of the citizens of these countries. However, the main objective of the educational reform, namely, the training and education of teachers, is the same across national boundaries. This is because the success of education, regardless of what the educational problems of the new era may be, is dependent entirely on the quality of teachers.

This paper aims to compare the educational con-

sciousness of teachers in three countries in which educational reform is currently taking place: Japan, China, and Korea. This comparison of the educational consciousness of teachers in these three northeast Asian countries is based on the following concerns and issues.²

The long history of cultural exchange among the North East Asian countries of Japan, Korea, and the People's Republic of China (hereafter China) has resulted in many underlying cultural similarities, including Chinese characters and Confucianism, that are unique to the region. Historically, another common feature shared by the countries is the early formation of a cultural foundation which attached importance to learning and education. However, wars and the ensuing relationships of domination and subordination experienced by the three countries since the Meiji Restoration, the start of the modernization of Japan, differences in economic systems adopted by the countries and differences in their relationships with the United States, have spawned significant differences among Japan, Korea, and China in culture and educational policy. Since the end of the Cold War in the 1990s, the three North East Asian nations have buried the bitter relationships of the past 100 years and have initiated various attempts to rebuild new relationships of

¹ It can also be said that this educational reform occurred in response to a historically significant social revolution which marked the transition from the modern to post-modern era. Educational problems and the role of teachers in the post-modern era have been discussed in detail by A. Hargurives (1994) *Changing Teachers, Changing Times*. Teachers' College Press.

² For a summary of all results obtained in this survey, see Chung-il Yun et al.: An International Consciousness Among the Korean, Chinese, and Japanese. *The SUN Journal of Education Research*, Vol. 9, December 1999. (Kadowaki was 1 of the 7 co-authors of this paper.)

mutual cooperation. At this point in time, it is essential that the education of the new generation, the bearers of the new age, is recognized as an important tool in the rebuilding of friendly relationships among the three countries in the 21st century. What should be done now to ensure the future cooperation of Japan, Korea, and China regarding education? Obviously, an accurate understanding of the present state of education in each country is required. In particular, it is important to understand how teachers, the actual mediators of education in schools, perceive the objective and role of school education, and how teachers perceive and appraise themselves as members of the teaching profession. To achieve mutual cooperation, teachers must first understand the way their colleagues in the other countries think.

1. Background of survey

This report is based on the results of "A Comparative Survey of Educational Consciousness in China, Korea, and Japan" conducted in the three countries in February, March, and June, 1998, respectively. The survey aimed to determine (a) how teachers in the three countries perceive the objective and role of school education, and (b) how teachers appraise their own teaching ability, social contribution, and social status. This paper compares the results obtained in the three countries.

A brief description of the comparative survey ("A Comparative Survey of Educational Consciousness in China, Korea, and Japan") is warranted prior to a discussion of the results obtained regarding the educational consciousness and self-appraisal of teachers.

This survey was planned by the Institute of Educational Research affiliated with Seoul Teachers' College in collaboration with the Institute of Education, University of Tsukuba in Japan and the Institute of Educational Research, Beijing Teachers' College in China. Research staff at Seoul Teachers' College headed by Professor Chung-il Yun prepared the initial draft of the questionnaire for comment by collaborators in Japan and China. The final question-

naire was produced after the necessary changes were made based on the mutual agreement of group members.

The subjects of the survey included (a) Middle and High School students (total number of students in the 3 countries: 4,313), (b) parents of Elementary, Middle, and High School students (total number of parents in the 3 countries: 5,028), and (c) Elementary, Middle, and High School teachers (total number of teachers in the 3 countries: 2,148). Approximately the same number of schools were selected from urban (capital cities of Tokyo, Seoul, and Beijing) and rural areas, and the schools selected were responsible for requesting the cooperation of the subjects and the collection of the completed questionnaires.

Three versions of the questionnaire were prepared: for students, for parents, and for teachers. However, since the main purpose of the survey was to compare the responses given by students, parents, and teachers, almost 90% of the questions were the same in all subject groups.

The survey was conducted in February (China), March (Korea), and June (Japan) of 1998 at the convenience of the schools selected.

2. Background of subjects

As mentioned previously, the subjects in the present survey included students and parents, as well as teachers. However, this report analyses the responses given by teachers only. The actual number, sex, and age of teachers by region and ratio by school is presented in Table 1.

The actual number of teachers surveyed in Japan, Korea, and China was 518,860, and 770, respectively. The number of respondents from rural areas was high in Japan at approximately 60%, while the number of respondents from urban areas in the other two countries was high at approximately 60%. In Japan, there was virtually no difference between urban and rural area respondents in the educational

Table 1 Background of Teachers

		Japan (%)	Korea (%)	China (%)
a. Residential area	Urban	37.8 (n=196)	66.4 (n=571)	58.6 (n=451)
	Rural	62.2 (n=322)	33.6 (n=289)	41.4 (n=319)
	Total No.	518	860	770
b. Sex	Male	57.7	49.6	38.6
	Female	42.3	50.4	61.4
c. School of employment	Elementary	36.6	35.3	35.5
	Middle	28.3	32.4	34.5
	High	35.1	32.3	33.0
d. Age (yrs)	30 or less	10.8	9.8	41.6
	31-40	37.4	35.5	36.1
	41-50	39.5	34.1	15.1
	51 or more	12.3	20.6	7.2

consciousness of teachers. Therefore, the high number of rural respondents in Japan is not expected to bias the interpretation of the results.

Male and female respondents were virtually equally represented in Korea while there were slightly more males in Japan and more females in China.

The ratio of Elementary, Middle, and High School teachers was about 1:3 for each school in all three countries.

In Japan and Korea, one-third of the teachers were aged in their 30s and one-third in their 40s. Accordingly, these age groups comprised the core group of respondents. In contrast, teachers in China were young with 42% aged in their 20s, the largest age cohort, and 36% in their 30s. Therefore, a total of 78% of teachers were aged in their 20s and 30s which shows that teachers in China are almost all derived from the young generation.

3. Educational and social situation in Japan, Korea, and China today

In the next section, the educational consciousness of teachers, their image of a 'good teacher', and the self-appraisal of teachers will be compared on the basis of the results obtained in the survey. Prior to this discussion, however, the educational problems and the social situation surrounding teachers in the three countries will be outlined.

While Japan recorded epoch-making economic growth for about 40 years after the Second World War, it is currently confronted by various educational problems, the most serious being the irregularities in the socialization process of children. These irregularities, which are the cause of much concern by teachers, are manifested in the form of bullying, violence, breakdown of the class unit, refusal to attend school, social withdrawal, suicide, and other similar problems. While there is no simple explanation, it is generally accepted that over-adherence to the principle of meritocracy, including emphasis on performance and results, and the encouragement of competition, in both society and

in schools in order to realize rapid economic growth has caused a loss of latitude in daily life, a weakening of human relationships, and psychiatric disorders. To rectify this evil state of events, a new educational policy with a reduction in the curriculum and teaching hours, the introduction of a 5-day school week, and a revival of community activities is beginning to be implemented. It is hoped that, by relieving the pressures in family and school life, the level of latitude will be restored.³

After the Second World War, Korea achieved independence from Japan. Due to the post-war shortage of teachers from kindergarten to high school, though, an effort was made to ensure a supply of teachers by the establishment of various normal schools. As a result, it has been argued that the quality of teachers declined and, currently, there is an over-supply of students aspiring to be teachers. In the context of the prolonged economic recession and the decreasing number of children in Korea today, the status of teachers has become even more tenuous and their employment conditions have deteriorated causing increased teacher dissatisfaction.⁴

The largest post-war agenda in socialist China was to employ a population in excess of one billion people and achieve economic development. Increasing the level of education of the masses was of utmost urgency in order to strengthen national power. Accordingly, children who had previously

been unable to attend school were sent to school to study. The most challenging educational problem in China, then and now, was to ensure an adequate supply of teachers and schools to educate two hundred million children. After the Cultural Revolution, a change was seen in the treatment of teachers who, traditionally, were given the cold shoulder. More normal schools were established, teachers were awarded a pay-rise, and a "Respect Teachers' Day" was inaugurated. Despite intense efforts to attract capable students to the teaching profession, the shortage of teachers and schools still persists.⁵

4. Differences in educational consciousness of teachers

4-1 Objective and role of school education

First, differences among teachers in Japan, Korea, and China in the way they perceive the objective and role of school education will be considered. Tables 2 to 5 summarize the differences among the countries surveyed in the educational consciousness of teachers.

A significant difference in the educational consciousness of teachers was observed according to country, as shown in Tables 2 and 3. Based on the data in Tables 2 and 3, the most remarkable finding is that 3 out of 4 teachers (approximately 75%) in China contend that the objective and role of school education is "to cultivate talented people who will be useful to national development" and to "raise

Table 2 Most Important Role of School Education

	Japan (%)	Korea (%)	China (%)
a. To reform society and form a new social order	44.9	39.0	75.6
b. To protect traditional culture and maintain the existing social order	55.1	61.0	24.4

³ For a discussion of the current situation of children and youth in Japan, see A. Kadowaki: *The Different World of Children and Youth*, Toyokan, 1992, A. Kadowaki: *The Social Competence of Children*, Iwanami Shoten, 1999, and H. Fujita: *Education Reform*, Iwanami Shoten, 1995.

⁴ The discussion of problems regarding education and teachers in Korea was based on the paper by Kan Kan Koku: "Trends in teacher training in Korea" in T. Urano and T. Hata: *Teacher Training in a Changing Period*, Dojidaisha, 1998.

⁵ The discussion of problems regarding education and teachers in China was based on the paper by Chen Youg Ming: *A Comparative Study of Teacher Training in China and Japan*, Gyosei, 1994 and papers by J. Yamazaki, S. Miwa, and K. Shimura et al. in *The Annual Bulletin of the Japanese Society for the Study of Teacher Education*, Nos. 2 and 3.

Table 3 What School Education Should Emphasize

	Japan (%)	Korea (%)	China (%)
a. Education of the elite for national development	7.5	19.3	74.1
b. Self-realization of students (character building)	42.5	80.7	25.9

students as individuals who can contribute to social reform, and the formation of a new society and culture”.

China has a population in excess of 1.2 billion people and a stubbornly low per capita income. Therefore, the importance of the promotion of scientific technology and the development of economic strength can not be over-stressed in order to succeed within the context of an increasingly globalized economic market with a socialist economic system.

Clearly, the perceived objective of school education is that it must be useful in meeting the needs of the State: an objective that has probably been reiterated repeatedly to teachers. The intensity of expectations on schools and education in China today is probably of similar magnitude to that in Japan immediately after the Meiji Restoration.

In fact, the “Basic Law Pertaining to Teachers in the People’s Republic of China” was implemented in China in January 1994. Articles 1 (objective) and 2 (role of teachers) of this basic law are as follows:

Article 1: “To develop teachers with a propensity towards sound thoughts, morals, culture, and professional duties and to promote education based on socialist ideals.”

Article 2: “Teachers are specialists who perform duties related to educational activities.

Their role is to educate people through the teaching of knowledge, to nurture the founders and successors of a socialist State, and to improve the nature of the Chinese people. Teachers must be faithful to an education of the people which will build and maintain a socialist State.” (Miwa, 1994)

The perception of teachers in Japan is in sharp contrast to their colleagues in China. Japan has

realized modernization and economic development through an emphasis on education which can be traced back more than 100 years to the Meiji Restoration. Today, 93% of teachers believe that “the objective of education does not lie in national development but in the character building of students”. With per capita income currently being one of the highest in the world, teachers believe that education must allow the self-realization of children as individuals.

In this respect, the feelings of teachers in Korea, which has achieved some economic development, are similar to those of teachers in Japan. Teachers in Korea, like their colleagues in Japan, also believe that it is important for school education to raise individuals who can help to protect traditional culture and to maintain the existing social order, rather than to reform society through the formation of a new society and culture. To Korea, a country which is yet to achieve unification with socialist North Korea, the reformation of society would be tantamount to changing to socialism. If this is the case, how should these results be interpreted? It must not be forgotten that the concept of protecting traditional culture and social order is fundamental to contemporary capitalist societies. On the other hand, the reason that more than half (55%) of Japanese teachers today believe it is important to protect traditional culture can be attributed to the belief that there is no fundamental need to change society in affluent Japan with its free economic system.

4-2 Focus of educational budget and educational activities

As mentioned previously, whereas nearly all teachers in China consider that the objective of education is to achieve national development, most teachers in Japan and Korea hold the opinion that

Table 4 Investment of the Educational Budget for National Development

	Japan (%)	Korea (%)	China (%)
a. Education of the elite	7.4	31.5	12.5
b. Education of the masses	92.6	68.5	87.5

Table 5 Level of School Education with Highest Investment Priority

	Japan (%)	Korea (%)	China (%)
a. Elementary school	63.2	56.7	40.2
b. Middle school	30.1	25.4	39.3
c. High school	6.7	17.9	20.5

its objective should lie in the human development of children. This is not to say that teachers in Japan and Korea believe that education should be unrelated to national development. On the premise that education is also useful for national development, what type of education do teachers believe is most effective to realize this aim? Also, in which level of education do teachers consider that the national budget should be invested?

The beliefs of teachers in Japan are the most clear-cut, as shown in Tables 4 and 5. Of the teachers surveyed, 93% contended that a thorough education of the masses is most important for national development, and more than 63% responded that the budget should be invested in primary education. In that teachers in China also responded that it is important to raise the educational level of the masses for the sake of national development, their responses were similar to those of their colleagues in Japan. However, a significant number (21%) of the teachers surveyed in China stated that, even so, most of the educational budget should not be invested in primary education but that it should be used to further improve education at the high school level. In this respect, the views of teachers in China differed from those of teachers in Japan.

The country with the greatest number of teachers who responded that it is important to foster a small elite for national development was Korea where this

view was held by nearly 1 in 3 (32%) teachers. The disproportionately high number of teachers who embrace this belief in Korea may be due to the strong influence on teachers of Confucianism and its tendency to disregard the masses.

The educational consciousness of teachers in the countries surveyed is summarized below on the basis of the comparative analysis in this section.

Teachers in Japan: The objective of education should lie in the human development of each and every individual. To this end, primary education aimed at increasing the educational level of the masses is most important, and the educational budget should also be invested in education at this level.

Teachers in Korea: Education should aim to raise individuals who can protect traditional culture and maintain social order. Thus, while primary education is important, it is also necessary to invest the educational budget into fostering a small elite.

Teachers in China: Education should be targeted at national development and schools should cultivate manpower which can produce a new culture capable of social reform. Therefore, while most of the budget should be devoted to primary education in order to raise the educational level of the masses, it is also important for education to be improved at

the high school level.

Although situated in close geographical proximity, it is evident that the views of the teachers in the three countries on the objective and role of school education are quite divergent, as are the aspects of education which they emphasize.

5. Differences in attitude to the treatment of excellent students

This section will compare the way teachers believe they should treat excellent students. The views expressed by teachers regarding the treatment of these students are compared in Table 6.

Table 6 shows the ratios of teachers who agreed or disagreed with the following three views on the treatment of excellent students: (a) it is good to rank students in order of merit, (b) it is good to form ability-based classes with a different curriculum, and (c) it is good to give excellent students only special treatment. Basically, the responses were split by country.

Teachers who favored "ranking students in order of merit" tended to be from Japan, while teachers who indicated that they preferred "ability-based classes" and "grade skipping for excellent students" were mostly from Korea and China, respectively. How teachers in the three countries responded to this question can be summarized as follows.

Teachers in Japan: All students should be given an equal opportunity to learn and it is undesirable for certain students to be given special treatment

just because their grades are good. However, to inform students of the grade they obtain at each stage of their education is not bad since the grade is a reflection of their effort.

Teachers in Korea: Ranking students in order of merit is not desirable. However, teachers should not hesitate to give special treatment to excellent students as such students exist in any school population.

Teachers in China: In the initial stage of education, all students should be given an equal educational opportunity. While it is not good to rank students in order of merit at this stage, it is easy to identify excellent students even without formal assessment and, for the sake of the State, these students should be actively selected and their talents developed by a superior education.

Thus, differences in the educational consciousness of teachers and educational issues confronting each of the three countries are reflected in differences in attitude to the way excellent students should be treated.

6. Differences in images of a 'good teacher'

What type of teacher do the teachers in the three countries consider to be 'good'? Also, in order to produce 'good teachers', should teachers be trained at normal schools and teachers' colleges which are explicitly geared to teacher training? These issues will be considered before the self-appraisal of teachers is discussed.

Table 6 Teachers' Opinions Regarding the Treatment of Students

		Japan (%)	Korea (%)	China (%)
a. Approve of ranking students' academic achievements in order of merit	Yes	48.7	27.7	24.1
	No	51.3	72.3	75.9
b. Approve of ability-based classes	Yes	34.8	45.8	41.8
	No	65.2	54.2	58.2
c. Approve of grade skipping for excellent students	Yes	49.1	57.9	79.2
	No	50.9	42.1	20.8

Table 7 Focus of Teachers' Activities

	Japan (%)	Korea (%)	China (%)
a. Character building	68.4	94.0	87.4
b. Academic achievement	31.6	6.0	12.6

Table 8 The Most Important Requisite of a Good Teacher

	Japan (%)	Korea (%)	China (%)
a. Sense of mission for education	44.5	65.4	60.5
b. Morality	15.8	17.8	14.9
c. Expertise in school subjects	28.4	13.5	22.3
d. Guidance ability	11.3	3.3	2.3

6-1 Images of a 'good teacher'

What are the requisites of a 'good teacher'? What should teachers do? The responses given to these questions by teachers in the three countries are compared in Tables 7 and 8.

A requisite of a 'good teacher' commonly expressed by teachers in all three countries was a 'sense of mission', as shown in Table 8. In particular, this sentiment was strong amongst teachers in Korea where nearly 2 in 3 (65%) of teachers held this view. A 'sense of mission' was also cited as a basic requisite by a high 61% of teachers in China. In Japan, less than half (45%) of the teachers surveyed responded that a 'sense of mission' is a necessary trait of a 'good teacher'.

In contrast, requisites of a 'good teacher' more commonly expressed by teachers in Japan compared to Korea and China were 'expertise in school subjects' and 'life-guidance ability'. Teachers in Japan feel that it is only natural that teachers have a 'sense of mission' but believe that teachers must also have an adequate ability to teach and to give guidance to students in matters related to their daily lives. That more teachers in Japan than either of the other two countries believe that the main work of teachers is 'to teach the curriculum' is also indicated in Table 7. What can be concluded from the results of this survey is that, to teachers in Japan, a 'good

teacher' is not merely a teacher with a strong sense of mission and excellent morals but one who is also able to instruct students in learning and to offer students apt guidance regarding their daily lives and future career paths. As such, teachers in Japan are more strongly oriented toward learning than their colleagues in Korea and China.

A comparison of the priorities in the educational reforms of the three countries shows that they seem to reflect differences in teachers' images of a 'good teacher'. In China, since a large number of teachers without appropriate qualifications were employed during the Cultural Revolution, the poor academic ability of teachers is the most serious problem. Therefore, the main objective of the reform is to provide teachers with academic training (Yamazaki, 1994). In Korea, the decline in teacher quality caused by an oversupply of teachers is a problem. Therefore, a major objective of the reform is to re-train teachers at graduate school (Kan Kan Koku, 1998). In Japan, on the other hand, the main emphasis of the educational reform is the introduction of a compulsory "comprehensive learning time" from Year 3 of primary school (age 8) to Year 3 of senior high school (age 18) from 2002. This reform is based on the notion that it is more important to nurture 'sociability' and the 'ability to live' than to implant knowledge. (White Paper on Education 2000, Ministry of Education)

Table 9 Teacher Training System

		Japan (%)	Korea (%)	China (%)
It is better to recruit teachers from graduates of teachers' college	Yes	33.9	88.7	90.7
	No	66.1	11.3	9.3

6-2 Teacher training system

What type of teacher training system do teachers in the countries surveyed consider to be the best in order to produce good teachers? Table 9 shows the differences in the responses of the teachers in the three countries.

The opinion of teachers in Japan regarding teacher training systems differed significantly from those of teachers in the other countries, as shown in Table 9. Whereas nearly 90% of teachers surveyed in China and Korea favored a "special-purpose (closed) teacher training system" implemented by specialist teacher training institutes such as normal schools and teachers' colleges, 66% of teachers in Japan disagreed. Instead, they unequivocally expressed a preference for the system currently employed in Japan. Briefly, the Japanese system is an "open teacher training system" which entails the study of general subjects and the completion of a parallel teacher certificate course at a general university, culminating in the acquisition of a teacher's license.

How can these differences be accounted for? It may be presumed that most of the teachers surveyed are themselves products of the teacher training system currently employed in their respective countries and, for this reason, positively evaluated the system currently used in their country.

If this is the case, we need to step aside from these results and consider what type of system is the best to produce good teachers. Here, what we should remember is that before the Second World War in Japan, teachers were produced at normal schools specifically built for that purpose. By promoting industry, enhancing military strength, and raising students who were faithful to the commands of their

parents and teachers, this closed teacher training system was extremely convenient for realizing the objectives of the State. This is because the teachers themselves taught the children by meekly obeying the commands of the nation. As a result, however, Japan committed such mistakes as the colonization of Korea and the invasion of China. Therefore, after losing the war Japan adopted the current open teacher training system where teachers are trained at general universities. Now students destined to be teachers broaden their outlook and study at university or graduate school alongside other students and, parallel with their general studies, acquire objective, scientific knowledge and receive training in preparation for becoming teachers. It should be stated for the record that the teacher training system currently employed by Japan is appropriate.

While Korea is currently shifting to a teacher training system which is more similar to that of Japan, it is promising that China is also introducing a partially open system. (Chin Ei Mei, 1994)

7. Differences in the self-appraisal of teachers

When teachers examined their thoughts on what they consider to be a 'good teacher', it can be argued that they were really evaluating themselves as teachers. At the end of this paper, the self-appraisal of teachers will be discussed by country. The term 'self-appraisal', though, is ambiguous and needs to be defined. In this paper, the self-appraisal of teachers will be compared, broadly speaking, from three viewpoints. Namely, (a) the attitude and contribution of teachers, (b) the guidance ability of teachers, and (c) the socio-economic status of teachers.

7-1 Attitude and contribution of teachers

First, to what extent do teachers themselves

Table 10 Self-Appraisal of Teachers (1)

		Japan (%)	Korea (%)	China (%)
a. Sense of commitment to education	Very low	2.8	5.2	2.6
	Low	23.3	16.3	3.2
	Average	36.9	51.8	28.8
	High	32.9	22.5	43.1
	Very high	4.1	4.2	22.3
b. Morality	Very low	0.8	0.2	3.8
	Low	13.7	3.2	2.9
	Average	47.6	28.3	24.4
	High	35.1	59.0	50.4
	Very high	2.8	9.3	18.5
c. Contribution to society	Very low	1.8	1.6	1.1
	Low	8.3	4.4	2.8
	Average	35.3	26.3	5.8
	High	39.8	33.6	32.7
	Very high	14.8	34.1	57.6

believe that they have a "sense of mission as a teacher" and "morals appropriate to their station as a teacher", and to what extent do teachers themselves feel that they "contribute to society as a teacher" will be examined. Table 10 compares the self-appraisal of teachers in the countries surveyed.

It is obvious from Table 10 that teachers in China scored the highest self-appraisal scores with respect to sense of mission, morality, and social contribution. Most of the respondents in China were young teachers in their 20s or 30s. Despite their youth, they have a firm grasp of the importance of education in China today and it can be presumed that they have a strong sense of mission and invest large amounts of energy into education. In contrast, while the self-appraisal of teachers in Korea indicates that their level of morality is high, they have a weak sense of mission. Notwithstanding, nearly 70% of teachers have a high self-appraisal of their contribution to society. This finding suggests that teachers in Korea are quite conceited.

Teachers in Japan, who are predominantly in their 30s and 40s, have a low self-appraisal of their sense of mission, morality, and contribution to society compared to teachers in China and Korea. It can be concluded that teachers in Japan make an effort to do what they can for their students without being overly conscious of the fact that they are teachers.

7-2 Guidance ability of teachers

Next, the self-appraisal of the guidance ability of teachers will be analyzed. Table 11 compares the self-appraisal scores of the teachers in each country.

The guidance ability of teachers is two-part, encompassing "an ability to teach" and "an ability to offer guidance to students in matters related to their daily lives". On the basis of Table 11, teachers in China had the highest self-appraisal of both their guidance abilities and, while not as high as their colleagues in China, teachers in Korea had a considerably high evaluation of their guidance ability. In

Table 11 Self-Appraisal of Teachers (2)

		Japan (%)	Korea (%)	China (%)
a. Teaching ability	Very low	0.3	0.1	0.6
	Low	7.6	1.4	1.5
	Average	44.3	28.4	22.3
	High	42.7	64.3	61.0
	Very high	5.1	5.8	14.6
b. Guidance ability	Very low	1.1	0.3	1.0
	Low	16.8	5.6	2.5
	Average	46.1	43.4	39.3
	High	33.1	45.6	46.1
	Very high	2.9	5.1	11.1

contrast, the self-appraisal scores of teachers in Japan were relatively low. Even supposing the guidance ability of teachers in the three countries was objectively evaluated, it is questionable whether the ability of teachers in Japan would be evaluated as inferior to that of teachers in the other two countries. In fact, on the basis of the results of such examinations as the international baccalaureate, it is commonly accepted that the teaching ability of Japanese teachers is considerably high. If this is the case, why do teachers in Japan have a low self-appraisal of their guidance ability? While there is no concrete evidence, it may be due to Japanese culture

which moderates the exaggerated expression of one's ability. In any event, it is evident from the results of this survey that teachers in China and Korea have a high self-appraisal of their guidance ability, and that teachers in Japan have the lowest self-appraisal.

7-3 Socio-economic status of teachers

How do the teachers surveyed evaluate their social and economic status as teachers? The results of the survey are shown in Table 12.

First, the economic status of teachers, or how the

Table 12 Self-Appraisal of Teachers (3)

		Japan (%)	Korea (%)	China (%)
a. Social status of teachers	Very low	4.8	20.8	19.8
	Low	19.2	32.7	25.7
	Average	58.6	41.9	41.7
	High	16.8	4.3	9.3
	Very high	0.6	0.3	3.5
b. Economic status of teachers	Very low	4.7	19.1	23.6
	Low	33.4	45.4	40.5
	Average	53.7	33.8	30.3
	High	8.2	1.5	3.1
	Very high	0	0.2	2.5

salary of teachers compares to that of other professions, will be considered. Teachers who responded that “the economic status of teachers is low”, that is, “the salary of teachers is relatively low” were the most common in Korea at 65%, followed closely by China at 64%. This finding suggests that teachers in Korea and China are considerably dissatisfied with the level of their salary. In comparison, nearly 38% of teachers in Japan responded that “the economic status of teachers is low”, with more than half (54%) responding that they consider their status to be “average”. It can be concluded from this result that teachers in Japan are, to some extent, satisfied with their current salary.

How do teachers evaluate their own social status, or the relative level of social respect and prestige associated with the profession. As for economic status, the proportion of teachers who evaluated their social status as “low” was the highest in Korea at 54%. In China, teachers who shared this sentiment were also reasonably well-represented at 46%. Thus, these findings indicate that teachers in Korea and China believe that the “social status of teachers is still low”. In contrast, only 25% of teachers in Japan replied that the “social status of teachers is low”, with more than half (57%) responding that the “social status is average”, and 17% replying that the “social status is high”. This finding would suggest that teachers in Japan are also more or less satisfied with the social evaluation of teachers.

It is evident from this comparison of the self-appraisal of teachers in Japan, Korea, and China that there are significant differences in the way teachers in these countries evaluate themselves. These differences are summarized below.

Teachers in Korea and Japan: Teachers have a considerably high evaluation of their own ability as a teacher. Even though they understand the importance of education, make an adequate effort as a teacher, and contribute to society, their salary is not commensurate with their performance. They are also very dissatisfied with their social status as a teacher.

Teachers in Japan: While their ability as a teacher is not poor, they believe that they contribute to society by making an effort to do what they can for their students without being overly conscious of the fact that they are teachers. They are reasonably satisfied with their present salary, and are not especially dissatisfied with the social evaluation of teachers.

8. Conclusion and discussion

Based on the results of the comparison of the educational consciousness of teachers in the countries surveyed, this paper has discussed the differences in educational consciousness, the image of a ‘good teacher’, and the self-appraisal of teachers. How do these differences in consciousness and self-appraisal impinge on the educational activities of teachers? In any study on teachers, how the results of the study ultimately relate to the educational activities of teachers should be considered, regardless of the theme of the study.

In this final section, this question will be discussed briefly on the basis of some very revealing data (Tables 13, 14).

Data in Tables 13 and 14 are derived from the same comparative survey. Table 13 shows the attitude of teachers to corporal punishment. Table 14

⁶ The reason why teachers in Korea do not have a positive view of the potential and future of children is not clear. Perhaps the decline in morals and morale of teachers caused by uncertain employment prospects due to an oversupply of teachers, decreased pay and poor prospects due to prolonged economic recession, a decline in the social status of teachers, and conflicting opinions regarding the teacher training system and the continuation of a “bandaid” approach to reform have become manifested in the form of negative views of, and attitudes toward, children. (Kan, 1998) It is considered that these changes in the attitude of teachers in Korea are increasing the number of “classroom-alienated students” who are effectively excluded from the classroom (E. Joo and B. Han, 2000).

Table 13 Attitude of Teachers to Corporal Punishment

		Japan (%)	Korea (%)	China (%)
Approve of corporal punishment by teachers	Yes	13.0	70.6	12.7
	No	87.0	29.4	87.3

Table 14 Opinion of Teachers Regarding the Future Prospects of their Students

	Japan (%)	Korea (%)	China (%)
a. Everyone can become a member of the elite	26.3	14.9	22.3
b. Most students can become a member of the elite	65.4	44.2	56.6
c. Only a few students can become a member of the elite	8.3	40.9	21.1

shows the opinions of teachers regarding the future prospects of their students. On the basis of the data provided in these two tables, it seems that the attitude and opinion of teachers in Korea regarding their students differ from those of their colleagues in Japan and China. For example, most (71%) teachers in Korea responded that they approve of corporal punishment and as many as 41% had a dim view of the future prospects of their students. What can be concluded from these results is that teachers in Korea are not very confident about either the potential or future of their students.⁶

In general, it is said that the minimum requisite of a teacher is to have "absolute confidence in the potential and future of children". However, the previous result suggests that this requisite is lacked by most teachers in Korea. How can this phenomenon be explained? It can be assumed that teachers in Korea today harbor strong feelings of dissatisfaction and despair due to not being awarded the economic treatment and social prestige commensurate with their pride and high self-appraisal. The victims of this state of affairs are the teachers, of course, but also the State and, most of all, the children. In the 21st century, population growth, environmental pollution, exhaustion of natural

resources, and numerous other difficult issues will have to be solved by human society. Critical to finding a solution to these problems is raising the educational level of mankind in general. The importance of the role of teachers in increasing the effect of education does not need to be stressed again. If this is correct, governments of all countries must improve the treatment and employment conditions of teachers so that they have confidence in the potential and future prospects of children, and so that they have a strong sense of mission and can be encouraged to perform educational activities of their own accord. It is the author's hope that the results of this survey will be useful in improving the treatment and employment conditions of teachers in Japan, Korea, and China.

It is my hope that our survey will result in the following:

- 1) a better understanding of the educational problems and issues regarding teachers in each of the three countries
- 2) an improvement in the education in each of the surveyed countries through mutual cooperation
- 3) an improvement in the pay, status, and employment conditions of teachers