A Few Facts

About

Japanese School Children in Canada

1927

Canadian-Japanese Association
Vancouver, B. C.

The following is a resume of an address given by Mr. Brown, Principal of the Strathcona Public School, at the Japanese parents' meeting held at Holy Trinity Mission on May 12, 1925:

The education of the children is not only performed at school, but also at home; in short, it is required that both the school and home co-operate. There is, I think, by no means a racial problem arising in the matter of education. I feel that the children of Japanese origin are a little inferior in their knowledge of English at the beginning, but I must say that they improve quickly considering the fact that they grow up in homes where English is not spoken. There is no great difference between these children and others who were born in an English-speaking family as regards progress and understanding. Now I will give you a few items of the progress of children of Japanese origin attending my school.

First, Ability: There are 366 children of Japanese origin in my school, with a proportion of 30 per cent. of the whole school. During the past five or six years there has been a great increase in their number, but I don't think a problem would arise on that account because they were born in Canada and taught by Canadians who were born and educated in this country. About ten years ago there were some children who came from Japan and did not understand English well, and, in addition to this, were beyond school age. There was much discussion about them, but there is at present no more trouble of this nature. From the standpoint of their examination results I can safely say that your children occupy the first place on the list of seven classes out of the total sixteen classes. Now, if I take the number of children who were above tenth on the lists of sixteen classes, I find there are seventy-two Japanese among the whole number, that is to say, 56 per cent. of the total. This is not to be wondered at, but is solely due to their ability. I can therefore say that, according to the examination results of the children in my school, as these facts already mentioned show, the ability of Japanese children is above the average.

Second, Conduct: I always scold the children as I would my own when they do wrong. I have never scolded Japanese children excepting on two recent occasions. In referring to the sixteen teachers who are in charge of the classes, I have found

that thirteen of them hold favorable opinions of the excellency of the children's behavior, while two admit their behavior is good, and one fair.

Third, Health: Your children are comparatively short in stature, but that is a trait of the Japanese race, and does not mean that they are unhealthy. My school doctor and nurses report that they are quite healthy. Regarding their health, I should like to mention that (1) many of them are suffering from decayed teeth. This is due to the fact that they are consuming too much candy and too much soft food. It is one of the evils of civilization. I wish to draw attention to this fact so that mothers may take especial care as to what their children eat. (2) We have an enlargement of thryoid glands which causes a swelling in the throat; seaweed is a good remedy for this ailment. But I sometimes recognize some of your children who are suffering from this ailment now. I suppose the change in their food is the cause of the trouble. (3) Some of your children wear running shoes when attending school, but these shoes should only be worn when running, and not when attending school. (4) Generally speaking, Japanese boys wear twice as heavy clothing as other children. It may sometimes cause them to doze in class.

Fourth, Companionship: Respecting companionship among children, I can say that is very good on the part of Japanese children, and there is nothing of which to speak ill. Some Japanese children hold the leadership of the children organizing clubs. As to baseball, six boys of the senior team of nine, and six boys of the junior team of nine, belong to the Japanese race. The captains of both teams are Japanese. Japanese girls, on the contrary, are a little shy and are not so active. It may be said, though, that they are better than flappers.

Fifth, Music: It was once said that the Japanese lack the talent for music, but there is a quite different phenomenon existing in my school. We have two singing choirs, one consisting of sixty boys and girls, and the other of twenty-nine boys. They are the most talented for music, selected from the whole school. Twenty of the former party are Japanese, and twelve boys of the latter party.

In conclusion, I would say it cannot be denied that in my school the children of Japanese origin are above the average in ability, conduct, health, companionship, and music.

Extract from Vancouver Province, February 18, 1922, *from an article by C. A. Sutherland re Oriental Children in the Schools of British Columbia*:

Glancing through reports of various schools, one is forced to the conclusion that, on the average, the Oriental student is well up to his classmate in all subjects.

According to what the head of the schools' medical staff says, parents need not fear for the safety of the health of their own children in coming in contact with Orientals. Dr. Wrightman says that invariably he has found Oriental students healthy, well dressed and clean. When asked for an expression of opinion on the matter, he said: "I am forced to say that there is less malnutrition and more good health among the Oriental children than among those of other nationalities in attendance in our schools."

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Extract from "Assimilability of Orientals in Canada," by F. W. Cassilis-Kennedy, published in the November issue of the British Columbia Monthly, 1926:

All who have made a study of the so-called Oriental Problem know that intellectually the Orientals are not an inferior race, and that culturally they are capable of being assimilated. A visit to the schools and colleges in Canada and America will prove this. Teachers and professors speak in the highest terms of Oriental students with whom they come in contact. It is a well-known fact that a Japanese youth distinguished himself by taking the highest marks in the British Columbia High School entrance examinations last year.

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Extract from "Intelligence of Chinese and Japanese Children," by Peter Sandiford and Ruby Kerr, in the September, 1926, *issue of "The Journal of Educational Psychology"*:

During the winter of 1924-25 an extensive survey of the Educational System of British Columbia was made under the direction of Dr. J. H. Putnam and Dr. G. M. Weir. The writer was called in to conduct the testing programme which formed part of the survey. In Vancouver and neighborhood a large number of Oriental immigrants reside, especially Chinese and Japanese. The survey provided an excellent opportunity

for measuring the intelligence of children of these alien groups, and after a preliminary survey of the field it was decided to give the Pintner-Paterson "Scale of Performance Tests" to an unselected group of Chinese and Japanese pupils attending the Public Elementary Schools of Vancouver.

The administration of the tests proved more arduous than was anticipated. In practice it was found that an examiner working to capacity could only secure from six to eight results per day. Eventually, however, the 500 records which form the basis of the present study were obtained.

In the Vancouver survey the method of scoring first used was that of the Year Scale. This gave a mental age from which the IQ's were calculated. Table 1 gives the distribution of these according to race and sex. Diagram 1 shows the results of Table 1 in graphical form.

TABLE 1

Distribution of the IQ's of Japanese Pupils in Vancouver Public Schools, according to Race and Sex

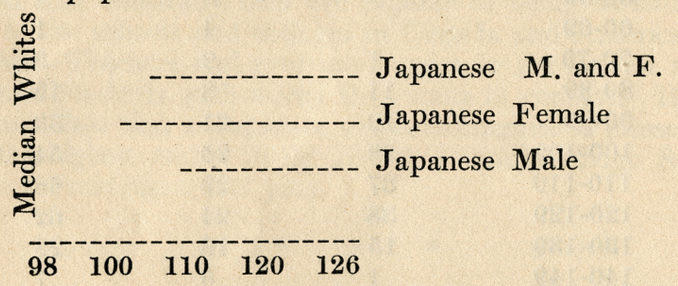
IQ	Males	Females	Total
40-49			
50-59			
60-69		1	1
70-79	1	2	3
80-89	11	8	19
90-99	12	21	33
100-109	28	26	54
110-119	37	29	66
120-129	38	24	62
130-139	15	13	28
140-149	1	6	7
150-159		1	1
160-169		1	1
170-179	1		1
TOTAL	144	132	276
Q (1)	104.3	100.4	102.4
Q (2)	115.4	112.8	114.2
MEDIAN			
Q (3)	125.0	125.0	125.0
QD	10.4	12.3	11.3

The results are somewhat surprising, even startling. The Median IQ of Japanese males is 115.4; of Japanese females, 112.8; of both together, 114.2. (The Median IQ of both together is 114.2.) Five-sixths of the Japanese boys exceed a score which is exceeded only by one-half of the whites; and of the total Japanese group 80 per cent. reach the median score of the whites.

The evidence from this test and the other methods of scoring used in the survey indicates that the IQ's calculated from the year scale ages are probably too high. In other words, the Japanese are not so intelligent as Table 1 makes them out to be. But what correction should be made is still uncertain. Taking every form of evidence that is available into consideration, there is every reason for believing that the Japanese are the most intelligent racial group resident in British Columbia, with the Chinese as a more doubtful second.

DIAGRAM 2

Showing the range of the middle half of the IQ's of Japanese pupils in the Vancouver Public Schools



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Extract from The Vancouver Daily World, February 21, 1922:

At the meeting of the School Board last night Municipal Inspector J. S. Gordon stated that he was not in favor of Orientals being segregated unless they were very much over the age of the other children in the class. In all his experience, he said, he had never found them in any way a detriment to the white children in the schools.

Mr. Gourlie of the Central School stated that during the last ten years there have probably been more Orientals pass through his school than through any other school in the city, but that he has never had to complain of any unseemly conduct on the part of an Oriental; neither of unhealthiness on their part. He does not consider it feasible to segregate all the Orientals, but thinks the older ones would make better progress in segregated schools. The younger children make better progress by leaving them with the white children, he said.

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Extract from The Morning Star, February 19, 1927:

A census of Orientals in Vancouver schools, just completed by Municipal Inspector Gordon, reveals 1,492 Chinese, Japanese and Hindoos enrolled. Of these he reports 1,292 are British-born and only 198 foreign-born.

Mr. Gordon's statistics indicate 889 Japanese in the public schools, 454 Chinese, and eight Hindoos, while the high schools have enrolled 68 Chinese and 73 Japanese, a total of 104. The report shows a larger percentage of the high school students are foreign-born. Of 141 in attendance, 37 were born outside Canada and 104 here, while, of the Chinese in public schools, only 71 are foreign-born, and 82 of the Japanese.

A query included in the questionnaire sent to all principals as to whether these pupils were detrimental to the school, was answered in all cases in the negative.

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Extract from "The Oriental Question in the Fraser Valley," by V. Harbord Harbord, in The Vancouver Province, May 2, 1926:

The Japanese are another hard-working people who force admiration from everyone. They have done wonders in the berry district of Maple Ridge, clearing land that no one else would tackle. They deserve reward—but not the gift of the whole country. There is a limit dictated by fairness and British justice. The Japanese of Maple Ridge are very rapidly becoming Canadian in all their ideas, and the children of both races mix so much in school and at play that there is no saying what may happen in the third generation. It seems almost certain that the Japanese will adopt the full Canadian standard of living and social equality.

Brief Explanation of Japanese Kindergartens

There are four Japanese Kindergartens in Vancouver, two conducted by the United Church and two by the Anglican Mission; and several others throughout British Columbia at places where Japanese reside. The children generally commence at the age of four years, and spend two years in the Kindergarten. Qualified and able kindergarten teachers teach them songs, exercises, paper cutting and folding and drawing, and tell them stories. These lessons are given entirely in English so that when the children leave the Kindergarten for public school they are able to understand English and Canadian manners and training. It is said that the Kindergartens belonging to the Missions are better equipped than the average.

Almost all the Japanese children without exception attend Kindergarten. According to the opinions of the public school teachers, there is no difficulty in imparting education to them at the beginning, and training is given as easily as to other Canadians; and they in no way hinder or retard the progress of the other pupils.