This chapter discusses the activities and characteristics of organisations oriented to ethnic Japanese in Melbourne. Here the unique characteristics of these organisations will be delineated. There are a variety of Japanese organisations with varying degrees of formality and informality. Some consist exclusively of Japanese nationals and others are based on a mixed membership with Japanese and local residents. The discussion for this chapter begins with an examination of two Japanese schools in metropolitan Melbourne. There are also several other major organisations which have contributed greatly to the development of Japanese networks in Melbourne. The way these organisations of Japanese residents have been established provides further evidence that it is the sojourners, rather than the settlers, who have played and continue to play, the vital formative role in the Japanese community in Melbourne. It is probable that this tendency extends back almost half a century.

5.1 Japanese Schools Overseas

To understand the characteristics and activities of Japanese schools in Melbourne, we will examine how Japanese schools in Australia compare with similar schools, overseas. I will list some characteristics of Japanese schools and patterns of schooling in foreign countries in order to present a background to the Japanese schools in Australia and Melbourne.

5.1.1 Types of Schools and Attendees

Following its global economic development, Japan now has multinational enterprises with foreign branches. As a result, the number of Japanese families sojourning abroad has increased. Since the 1960s, the number of Japanese corporate families living overseas has multiplied greatly. Sojourning businessmen are not always accompanied
by their families during their overseas assignments. Some Japanese businessmen decide to take an assignment abroad without their families. Clearly part of the reason is the desire to avoid sending their children to overseas non-Japanese schools. In this, the parental concern for their children’s education is an overriding factor. In this research, of 94 sojourner-respondents who have a school-age child, 18 had people left their child(ren) in Japan. Indeed, in my interviews with several corporate families, it was pointed out that educating the children in Melbourne was their major source of anxiety. However, there is another counter-tendency, in which even though a full-time Japanese school might be readily available, many parents prefer local Australian schools.

In order for school-age children to return to schools in Japan without fuss, Japanese organisations overseas—the Chambers of Commerce and Industries and Japanese clubs—have thus established their own schools, the purpose of which is to offer identical classes which are held back home in Japan. They are obviously sojourner-oriented. The Japanese government (Monbukagakusho) classifies Japanese schools overseas into the following three categories:

(1) *Nihonjin Gakko*, which indicates full-time Japanese educational institutions, established with the purpose of providing compulsory education (elementary and junior high school level) which is identical to that in Japan. In 2002 (15 April), there were 83 schools in 50 countries, among them the full-time schools of Melbourne, Sydney and Perth.

(2) *Hoshujugyoko* which means supplementary schools offering part of the school subjects in Japan at elementary and junior high school level. These schools are generally part-time schools which are conducted outside official school hours, such as after school or on weekends, and are for Japanese students who go to foreign local schools. Some schools include kindergarten and also teach some senior high school units. In 2002, 187 of these schools existed in 56 countries.

(3) *Shiritsu zaigai kyoiku shisetsu* indicates full-time educational institutions overseas, or constituted schools which are overseas branches of ‘mother-schools’ in Japan. These schools form curricula which are equivalent to those in Japan and are generally administered by their ‘mother-schools’. They are usually elementary to high school with some providing either junior or senior high school