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**Story of Chadwick International CEO, R. Warmington, and his wife on their two adopted kids and their 2nd phase of life in Korea as educators**

Amid the immensely growing interest from parents and alike in Korea, Chadwick International, formerly known as International School Songdo, made debut on September 7. This is the second time of living in Korea for Mrs. and Mr. Warminington, who will be responsible for managing the first international campus of Chadwick School that covers K-level through Grade 12. This pro-Korean couple told the full story of how they had been attracted to the Korean culture that had eventually led them to adopt two Korean babies, and of how they are now living as a one happy global family.

When I was invited to the Warmington residence in Songdo, I imagined the place would be a very modern, western-style apartment. However, I saw a number of Korean living accessories and decorative props standing throughout the house. Mr. Warmington, top executive at HP for 33 years after finishing the university, had worked in Korea as CEO of HP Korea for four years since 1988. His wife, Caroline, had been also with him. Since then, 18 years had passed, during which he had changed from a businessman into an educator. After he announced his retirement from HP in 2000, he started working as a trustee for a private school in California. Also, looking back on his years in Korea working with many young professionals, he thought that the quality of education in Korea lacked creativity and innovation that to some extent his decision to accept the job to manage Chadwick International seemed natural.

"When I first received an offer [to work at Chadwick International], I didn't fully consider the possibility of coming to Korea, except that maybe I could provide some service as a Chadwick alumnus. When I told my family about my decision, my kids fully supported me," Mr. Warmington explained. However, Mrs. Warmington humorously refuted it and offered her own observation, saying her husband was very excited. At first she was a bit flustered about the thought of coming to Korea, but was soon reminded of some great memories in Korea: good-hearted people, food, culture, and especially her two kids. The couple adopted Jade (now 25-year old) and Mike (20-year old) in Korea twenty years ago.

"We had wanted to be parents for a very long time. The thought of having kids became more serious when we were in Korea, so we decided to adopt kids. I can still vividly remember the moment we first met our then-four-week old son. He was really adorable and had very nice-looking ears. He was so energetic to prove that he was born in the Year of the White Horse," Mrs. Warmington revealed.

'The Year of the White Horse' was not what I expected to hear from her. The babies born in that year are usually known as being dynamic and energetic. I became more interested in this blue-eyed parents who know the meaning of 'The Year of the White Horse' telling their story about how they has raised their two adopted kids.

[PHOTO CAPTION: The family photo taken on the Thanksgiving Day last year.]

**The unforgettable moment when they first held their newly born son**

Their daughter, Jade, was first admitted to St. Mary's College but is now studying at the university close to their home in the U.S. She has not decided her major yet that she is now taking a variety of courses including archaeology, law, and astronomy. She is also very gifted at writing that she is an author of several published pieces. In addition, her interest in doing voluntary services has led her to participate in various community initiatives, including sending food aid and magazines to some of the most disputed regions around the world including Afghanistan. Their son, Mike, will start his second year at Loyola Marymount College in L.A. and would like to pursue the dream of becoming a sports marketer or a broadcaster. The couple tries to talk with their kids for at least 45 minutes a week through internet video program. Of course, their conversation inevitably includes some parental lecturing that their attempts to speak to their kids are sometimes denied; whenever this happens, they come to feel sad that their kids are now really grown-ups but at the same time are grateful.

"For me, living in Korea was in fact living overseas as an expatriate. On top of that, raising a newly born baby was a real challenge for me. Our then-nanny often gave Mike an '*Eobuba* (piggyback)'. In case of Jade, the language barrier was the greatest challenge in raising a 6-year old girl. We couldn't send her to school, because she couldn't speak a word of English. But later she went to Seoul Academy and did very well at the school," Mrs. Warmington recalled.

She had made many efforts in especially teaching her daughter English; she had read books and sung to her, and had conversations with her 24/7. She had read books to the little Jade in wherever they went to - cafes and parks - that at one time, someone misunderstood her as a private tutor and tried to hire her.

"Adoption definitely poses several serious challenges to face, but we have never regretted it. Because we had lived in Korea, we believe we have more advantages than those who have never lived nor visited here. One day, one of our kids was surprised looking at the mirror and said: "I do look like a Korean"; it means we had never recognized our differences. Our family is in love with the Korean TV dramas and food. I can even make Kimchi fried rice," Mrs. Wamington explained, with a smile.

"I have always wanted my kids to be proud of themselves being Korean. That was why we sent them to Korea to participate in the 2002 World Cup street cheering parade. Mike stayed with us for two weeks to see this year's World Cup as well," Mr. Warmington added. "Our family has been formed in a less conventional way and thus is more special."

In fact, there are a few special anecdotes to share. When the process to acquire MEST license for Chadwick International had continued to face several setbacks, a gift package of tablet with the inscription that says "Daddy Fighting!" arrived from Jade. For the couple, it was a lovely gift, but the manufacturer in the U.S. was puzzled over the request, repeatedly asking whether her dad is either a martial art professional or a military officer, and whether the message was a mistake. After being told by their daughter about the incident, the couple had to laugh again, knowing that they received and understood what exactly the gift was about - without questioning the meaning of inscription. Mrs. and Mr. Warmington have become and come to think like Koreans before they knew.

**Wife still keeps first-birthday rings for kids while husband retired to be with kids.**

After talking about some sensitive issues relating to adoption, Mrs. Warmington seemed more relaxed and was eager to talk about the kids. She started showing me her collection of family pictures. Listening to their talks, I was confident that they are the parents raising their kids with exceptional passion, regardless of the origins and nationalities. The couple still keeps the first-birthday rings for their kids and a super large-sized doll, which was bought in Itaewon twenty years ago. Every year, they take pictures with the kids and the doll standing side by side as a birthday ritual, comparing how much each kid has grown. Recently, a photo was taken of Mike putting the doll on his shoulder.

What has been revealed was only the appetizer demonstrating their devotion and education philosophy to their kids. The main dish to follow was more surprising and incredible that the reason for Mr. Warmington's retirement was to be with the kids. It was when the Warmington family was living in Hong Kong - Mike in Grade 3 and Jade in Grade 9 at Hong Kong International School. At that time, Mr. Warmington couldn't find his time to be with the kids, except on weekends, that he finally came to realize that he had missed the four precious years with his family while running the company, so he decided to retire and return to his home country. Upon arrival, he had worked for five years as a trustee of the school foundation that Mike was attending.

"I asked him once about how he would score himself as father. He couldn't readily answer me. But watching him how he has spent his time with the kids after his retirement - playing golf with Mike as often as possible and drinking milk shakes at cafe and watching classic films with Jade - tells me how wonderful father he has been," Mrs. Warmington stressed.

"Our education approach for the kids is to try to talk with them as much as possible on any issue. Earlier, Mike received a poor grade on one course, so I asked him to write an essay with 1,500 words on what efforts to be made to improve the grade and what further actions to be implemented. I wanted him to think independently and critically. After that assignment, he seemed fully aware of what my intentions were," Mr. Warmington explained.

Of many principles shared with their kids, Mrs. and Mr. Warmington always emphasize the genuine global citizenship, saying: "Our kids are Koreans but at the same time are not Koreans." They had travelled extensively with their kids. Especially, Mike enjoys travelling and meeting new people. Many times he was missing on board, because he was found either playing games with flight attendants or helping them serving food to guests. With this in-depth travel experience to many new places around the globe, he is grown as a confident, handsome young man.

"Koreans tend to stress the importance of being a racially homogeneous nation that I'm afraid this may have some adverse impact on a kid to grow as a global citizen. However, I see there have been enormous changes made compared to the first time we were here. Helping kids develop their open-mindness and thinking ability is more crucial than simply travelling overseas," Mr. Warmington stressed.

[PHOTO CAPTION 1: A special necklace with the motif of her two kids was designed and bought in Itaewon twenty years ago. Mrs. Warmington has never taken it off since then.]

[PHOTO CAPTION 2: Mrs. Warmington is surprised to see her son, who was a little baby when first met, grown as a young man. Having tea times with her adolescent son as often as possible made their relationship strong.]

[PHOTO CAPTION 3: The couple still keeps their Year 2004 calendar made with family photos. With a variety of memories shared with one another, their conversation never stops whenever they meet.]

**Finding one true value combining two different cultures is important.**

I was wondering how their education principles, by which they have raised Korean kids to become global citizens, will be applied to the new school. While doing a pre-research for this interview, I came across some very interesting findings on a number of internet blogs posted by prospective parents of Chadwick International. Of course, they all said they want to send their kids to the school, and even some of them showed their high expectation, saying: "Even I want to attend Chadwick International!" At Chadwick International students will be taught in the environment with the highest state-of-art facilities, on the 1:8 of teacher verses students ratio. They will also be qualified to continue their university education in the U.S. after graduation. We asked the couple whether they are aware of Koreans' high enthusiasm for their children's education.

"Absolutely! Despite delays in acquiring MEST license, I believe the high competition among parents speaks itself. Under the Confucian culture, in addition, the value of education is highly emphasized. Aside from that, the astronomical figure of money spent on private education each year for kids, which by the way I can't fully agree to, is one of the most solid examples showing how the Korean parents are indeed devoted to their children's education," Mr. Warmington answered.

"I think the Korean education landscape lacks a sense of balance. Children need to spend their time with their families and feel happy about learning. But in Korea having a good memory is regarded the best asset, so most of students are forced to spend their time on developing this. I'd like to advise the Korean mothers to think first how their kids would remember them as mother later. I wish the Korean kids would say that they enjoy time learning with their mothers," Mrs. Warmington added.

However, Mr. Warmington was relieved after directly meeting with prospective Chadwick parents during interview sessions, for they were more interested in 'how Chadwick International would guide their students for their wholesome education', rather than 'how the school would help them develop their English proficiency'. Even potential students who took admission tests were excited.

Mr. Warmington himself conducted a series of the 2-hour info sessions with prospective parents that ran from 7AM through 4PM three times a day for a week. Considering that for the parents' generation the mainstream perception of a school principal is still associated with his/her boring speech during a weekly school assembly, it was a sensational approach.

"As a former CEO of HP Korea, most of my effort went into brining harmony between two different cultures in order to achieve one goal and to build one strong entity. Of Chadwick's core values, for example, 'respect' can be mistranslated into 'respect for one's elder', instead of 'respect for one another'. Finding a common value combining two different cultures at the end of the road is what I'd like to pursue. It will not be easy, but I see it is achievable through many efforts and talks," Mr. Warmington said.

For some years ahead, Mr. Warmington will fully reflect his earlier experience from living in Korea and educating his own Korean kids in running Chadwick International. In addition, he is planning to deal with some of the real challenges – some geographical limitations given by the fact that there are a few parents and kids who have already experienced the advanced school systems overseas - through the proactive exchange programs named "Round Square School", the international networks connecting Chadwick School as well as other 85 global partner schools, via TP classes on a real-time basis. Above all, his wife, Caroline, is his most ardent supporter.

"I will listen to him more carefully and, if needed, suggest my ideas. Actually, he offered me a temporary teaching position but I decided not to accept it. While I'm in Korea, I'd like to continue what I had been doing before. I had done some voluntary work for the Pearl Buck Foundation for two years, and my job was to develop a funding program and place it to wherever the help was required. Most of all, our kids may still need me," Mrs. Warmington said.

She smiled and said that no matter how long the time has passed, her kids would be still young in her eyes. At that moment, her smile reminded me of my own mother who still thinks her married daughter is her little girl. After the interview, I was assured that with the guidance of CEO and executive principal who has formed this true global family, children will be finding themselves learning happy at Chadwick International.