PATTERNS OF COMMUNICATION BEHAVIOR IN JAPAN : A STUDY OF INTERPERSONAL INFLUENCE AND DECISION MAKING PROCESS

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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1983

PREFACE

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Inspite of the tremendous economic strides that Japan has made in the past few decades, its distorted image still persists in many parts of the world. Several attempts have been made to correct this distortion through various scholarly writings. There has been a phenomenal volume of such writings in the past few years that have focussed on various aspects of Japan. However, the area of social communication - the fundamental act of a society - still remains largely untouched.

This study is a modest attempt to bridge this lacunae in the understanding of Japan. The purpose of this study is to analyse the patterns of the communication behaviour of the Japanese people in order to understand the nature of their society. An attempt has also been made to relate the communication behaviour of the Japanese people to that of the Indian people in order to examine the role of these patterns of interaction in their bilateral relations.

The first chapter is the introductory chapter which deals with the nature and the processes of the act of social communication. Being a theoretical study, no reference has been made in it to either Japan or India. The second chapter deals with the Japanese social communication patterns. After briefly examining some of the salient features of the Japanese communication patterns, it proceeds to consider the communication behaviour of the business as a case study. Emerging largely as a post-world war II phenomenon, the business has been a major driving force in Japan's economic

progress. Due to this reason, this study tries to examine the extent to which these patterns of communication have contributed to the effectiveness of the business.

The third chapter deals with the Indian communication patterns in an attempt to make a comparative analysis of the two societies. Finally, fourth chapter carries the concluding remarks.

Not being fully grounded in the field of sociology or anthropology, there may be some inadequacies in my theoretical framework. But the present work is not intended to be either a sociological or psychological study. Being a student of the Japanese language and through it its society and culture, I have ventured to study the Japanese society through its language and patterns of social interaction. Due to the considerable period of my association with the Japanese people and their language, I feel I am fairly well-equipped to do justice to this research.

This work primarily depends upon secondary source materials. As mentioned earlier, published research works in this field have been few and far between, and I have made use of some analytical studies done by Japanese scholars on the Japanese language and its social use. Even though I cannot claim to have made use of all important publications in Japanese, I wish to state, in all modesty, that my knowledge of the language has helped me to a great extent.

I have, however, limited the scope of this study to only some aspects of the Japanese communication patterns so that I could make an indepth study of them. It is my intention to expand this present study to a doctoral dissertation at a later stage.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Dr K.V. Kesavan, Associate Professor, Centre for East Asian Studies, School of International Studies, who has been an extremely patient and exacting guide.

I would also like to thank both Tokyu Foundation and Japan Foundation for enabling me to live among the Japanese people and observe them while they interact with each other. This stay has been useful for collecting materials for this study. During this two-year stay in Japan, I was helped and guided by several Japanese scholars, out of which I would like to single out Professor Y. Sakata. Her patient guidance and valuable suggestions also contributed largely to the completion of this work. There were several other teachers to whom I would like to express my gratitude. They are Professor Toshio Tanaka, Professor Kazuhiko Machida, Mr Takeshi Fujii, Professor Tomio Kubota and Professor Heiji Nakamura from Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Professor Nara of Tokyo University, Professor Nobuko Mizutani of the Inter-University Centre for Japanese Language, Professor Hasegawa of Keio University, and Professor P.A.N. Murthy of Centre for East Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Finally, I would like to thank the staff of the libraries of the Indian Council of World Affairs, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Japan Information Center in India and Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, National Institute for Research in Japanese Language, Japan Foundation Library in Japan for making this study possible.

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New Delhi:

Dated: 18 July 1983

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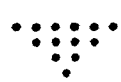

CHAPTER I

SOCIAL COMMUNICATION - ITS NATURE AND PROCESSES

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The purpose of this study is to make an attempt to answer some pertinent questions that come to one's mind while studying the enigma called Japan. Why is it that Japan, inspite of her over-dependence on imports and exports - a country that has the maximum interaction with foreigners - still remains a mystery of the world? Why is it still 'closed'? Is it her geographical situation? Or her historical past? Or does the answer lie embedded in her sociological structure? Or is it a combination of all the above?

In the past decade, several comparative researches have been undertaken on several aspects in order to facilitate better understanding and more effective communication with this country. The present study would be borrowing heavily on these empirical researches but would also try to employ a different method. The method would be to try to study its society through the processes of interaction among its members.

The history of the study of social communication (as would be observed in some depth later) is only three decades old, but intercultural study of communication pattern is still more recent. This chapter would try to justify the use of such a means for undertaking a study of the Japanese society.

The Nature of Social Communication

Unfortunately, the word 'communication' has become synonymous with mass communication, more so in the developing countries. It must be noted that newspapers, T.V., telephone, telegraph and others are just transmission agents of communication connecting the speaker and his hearer. It could be that its phenomenal development over the last few decades has resulted in the limited use of the word 'communication'. Ironically, however, the development of the means of mass communication itself had led to the broadening of the meaning of what really is communication.[1]

The phenomenal rise of faster and quicker means of travel has brought the world closer in terms of distance. But sensing the communication gap between societies, a number of disciplines have focussed both thought and research effort upon the mechanisms of information transmission over the boundaries of societies.[2]

There have been many reasons for this slow growth of interest. One of the reasons for this is the lack of an interdisciplinary approach of the various disciplines. The field of communication encompasses areas as varied as sociology, anthropology, psychology, art, literature, linguistics,

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1 G.N. Gordon, "Communication", Encyclopaedia Britannica, (Chicago, 1977), p.1005.

2 Ibid.

semantics, kinesics, mass communication, journalism and almost all other areas that are related to man's activities in and with society. Most of these, rather all of them developed in isolation of each other taking for granted that man communicates.[3]

The other reason, according to Ray L. Birdwhistell, an authority on communication studies, is that the process of communication itself has been limited to narrow boundaries by earlier experts thereby resulting in its stunted growth.[4] Communication, in the beginning, was studied as no more than a process identified by the passage of information through the transmission of meaningful symbols from one individual to another. This process, based upon the dyad meant that a knowledgeable emitted information to the less knowledgeable, something akin to the relationship between the teacher and the taught. This limited view widely shared by many during the birth of communication studies impeded the systematic investigation of the larger system of which this nature of the dyadic situation was merely a part.[5]

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3 Pier Paolo Giglioli, ed., Language and Social Context (Penguin, 1972), pp.7-8.

4 (i) Ray L. Birdwhistell, "Communication : A Continuous Multichannel Process" in Conceptual Bases and Applications of the Communicational Sciences (New York; Wiley, 1968); (ii) Ray L. Birdwhistell, "Communication", International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, vol.3, p.24.

5 Ibid. (ii), p.24.

The third obstacle lay in man's obsession with the aural-audio media. Communication to many scholars, meant language i.e. what someone verbalizes to the other. Or in the derivative channel, what someone writes to the other. There are several societies that stress vocal performance and have confidence in the reliability of lexicalized information. A storehouse of social experience of these societies is available to the investigator in the verbal form. But it would be dangerous to conclude from this that human beings are essentially a verbally communicating species - and that all societies rely on verbal communication. In fact, there are several societies that do not communicate vocally to the same extent as some societies and lay more stress on non-verbal means of communication.[6]

Let us first examine the nature of communication in some depth and then trace the course of its development over the years.

Communication is synonymous with social interaction. To explain it in some depth, it is obvious that for the building up of society, its units and subdivisions - and the understandings which prevail between its members, some processes of communication are needed. While we often conceive society as something static in structure and defined by tradition, it is nothing of the kind. It is in fact a highly intricate network of partial or complete understanding between

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6 Ibid. (ii), pp.24-25.

members of organizational units of every size and complexity, ranging from a pair of friends or a family to a league of nations. It is only apparently, a static scene of social institutions, but actually it is being reanimated and creatively reaffirmed from day-to-day by particular acts of communication. In other words, tradition is constantly being transmitted through communication. And if considered from an overall perspective, one realises that every cultural pattern and every single act of social behaviour involves communication in either an explicit or an implicit sense.[7]

And it is through communication alone that the human mind develops and inculcates the sense of self, the consciousness of personal identity and that very fundamental capacity, of being able to adopt one or more social rules that confront each new born infant in human society. It is important to realize that man lives through the learned and accumulated ways of thought and behaviour which in their entirety ~~from~~ form culture. At the bottom, culture is rooted by and inseparable from symbolic interaction; the interaction of human beings in terms of symbols with shared meanings. It is

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7 D. Hymes, "Toward Ethnographies of Communication", American Anthropologist, vol.66, no.6, part 2, 1964. Also see, J.A. Fishman, "The Sociology of Language" in Pier Paolo Giglioli, ed., Language and Social Context, n.1, pp.45-57.

only through symbolic interaction and social communication that human personality, character, self and identity is formed.[8] Thus one can clearly observe how fundamental is the relationship between the processes of social communication and society. One could easily conclude from this that a detailed study of these processes of a particular society would result in a deeper insight into the nature of that society.

Historical Perspective

Earlier studies of language, especially in the social sciences, concentrated mainly on the origin of language. The theories of Wundt,[9] Herder[10] and Noire[11] are significant for their attempts to explain how language came into existence. Research in that direction has largely been given up as it holds very little significance.

During the twenties and the thirties attention was focussed on the acquisition of language for which de Laguna,[12] Piaget,[13] Smith, Mc Carthy,[14] Rugg, Kreuger and Sonder-

8 C.F. and F.M. Vogelin, "Language", Encyclopaedia of Britannica, vol.10, 1976, p.655.

9 Wilhelm Wundt, Elements of Folk Psychology (London, 1928), Chapter I.

10 J.G. Herder, "Essay on the Origin of Language" cited in Vogelin, n.8, p.643.

11 L. Noire, The Origin and Philosophy of Language (Chicago, 1917).

12 Grace de Laguna, Speech : Its Function and Development (New Haven, 1927).

13 Jean Piaget, The Language and Thought of the Child (New York, 1926).

14 Dorothy Mc Carthy, The Language Development of the Pre-School Child (Minneapolis, 1930).

gaard[15] are especially well-known.

Since the thirties, semantics has been the focus of attention. Rudolf Carnap,[16] who distinguished sharply between semantics and syntax, became quite influential with his views shared by scholars such as Bertrand Russell, John Dewey, Charles Morris and others. They emphasised the distinction between factual truth which was dependent on facts; and logical truth which was independent of facts and depended merely on the semantical rules. That is, fact and logic were different.

George H. Mead[17] and Charles S. Pierce[18] were among those who were equally critical of the traditional study of semantics. They formed the pragmatic school of thought whose central thesis was that the meaning of any word or symbol lies exclusively in how it influences human behaviour.

Anthropologists were drawn into the science of meaning of words and symbols after Malinowski.[19] Some well known anthropologists whose works have created a great deal of

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15 Rugg, Kreuger and Sondergaard, "A Study of Language in Kindergarten Children", Journal of Educational Psychology, XX (1929), pp.1-18.

16 Rudolph Carnap, Introduction to Semantics (Cambridge, 1948

17 George H. Mead, Mind, Self and Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist (Chicago, 1934).

18 Charles S. Pierce, "Elements of Logic", Collected Papers, vol.2 (Cambridge, 1932).

19 D. Malinowski, "The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages" in Ogden and Richards, The Meaning of Meaning (New York, 1930).

interest in the role of language in its social context are Edward Sapir,[20] Clyde Kluckhohn,[21] Dorothy Lee[22] and Benjamin Lee Whorf.[23] The point emphasised in their works is that language is not just a means for expressing one's thoughts, but it actually determines the character of reality which one sees. Whorf clearly points out that people think, feel and respond to events according to what those events ~~reach~~ mean in their culture.

Then came Alfred Korzybski,[24] the founder of 'general semantics' whose theory was that semantics is the study of proper evaluation of words. He says that the scope of general semantics is not limited to just the meaning of the word but is extensional, i.e. it takes into consideration all possible relationships of the word. Similarly this science considers all the factors that modify its significance in the context of

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20 David G. Mandelbaum, ed., Selected Writings of Edward Sapir (Berkeley, 1949).

21 Clyde Kluckhohn, "Culture and Behavior" in Gardner Lindzcy, ed., Handbook of Social Psychology (Cambridge, 19), pp.921-976.

22 Dorothy Lee, "Conceptual Implications of an Indian Language", Philosophy of Science, vol.5, 1938.

23 John B. Carroll, ed., Language, Thought and Reality : Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf (Cambridge, 1957).

24 Alfred Korzybski, Science and Sanity : An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics (Lancaster, 1933).

its use. His ideas had considerable influence on the later scholars, some of whom were engaged in as diverse fields as psychiatry, group dynamics and general semantics, of course.

Despite such steps taken by scholars to study language in its functional arena, dialects, special parlances, national languages, linguistic acculturation and diffusion occupied the limelight for quite some time. It is important to note, however, that it was linguistic aspects that continued to be the main focus.

Since the fifties, however, this trend has shifted to, what one may call, social communication. Some of the major contributions have been made by D. Hymes,[25] J.A. Fishman,[26] Erving Goffman,[27] E.C. Cherry,[28] B. Bernstein[29] and others. This study would be borrowing rather heavily from their methodology.

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25 D. Hymes, n.5.

26 J.A. Fishman, "Who Speaks What Language, to Whom and When", La Linguistique (2), 1965, pp.67-88.

27 Erving Goffman, Encounters : Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction (Indianapolis, 1961).

28 E.C. Cherry, On Human Communication : A Review, a Survey and a Criticism (New York, 1961).

29 B. Bernstein, "Elaborated and Restricted Codes : Their Social Origins and Some Consequences" in Gumperz and Hymes, eds., The Ethnography of Communication, American Anthropologist, vol.66, no.6, part 2, 1964, pp.55-69.

Primary Processes of Communication[30]

With this perspective let us now briefly touch upon the primary processes which are communicative in character. This is of great sociological significance as these processes are common to all mankind. Among them are (a) language, (b) gesture in its widest sense, (c) the imitation of overt behaviour, and (d) social suggestion, something akin to overt behaviour.

(a) Language: Language is the most explicit type of communicative behaviour that we know of. Whatever may be the shortcomings of a primitive society, its language is as sure, complete and potentially creative as the most sophisticated language we know of. Therefore, for the student of communication it should be clear that regardless of its development, the mechanisms that facilitate understanding between peoples of one society are sure, rich and complex as the other.

(b) Gesture: Gesture involves much more than the manipulation of the hands and other movable parts of the body. Intonations of the voice are as important as the lifting of the eyebrow. Gestures interplay constantly with language proper, but there are many facts of a psychological and historical order which show that there are subtle yet firm lines of demarcation between them. To give an example sometimes a wink or a blush

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30 Edward Sapir, "Communication", International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, vol.4, pp.1004-1010.

may flatly contradict the message communicated by speech. The latter may be entirely conscious whereas the former entirely unconscious. Therefore, gestures in a given context could be psychologically more significant than the words actually used. In such cases, we have a conflict between explicit and implicit communications in the growth of the individual's social experience.[31]

(c) Imitation of overt behaviour is the primary condition for the consolidation of society.[32] Although it is not communicative in intent, one acts upon, as though it is in order to fall in with the ways of society. Going to a shrine or a temple is one such example. However, it is the function of language to articulate and rationalise the full content of these informal communications in the growth of the individual's social experience.[33]

(d) "Social Suggestion" so termed by Edward Sapir is even less directly communicative in character than overt behaviour. According to him it is the sum total of new acts and new meanings that are implicitly made possible by the various acts of social behaviour.[34] Thus, revolting against going to a shrine,

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31 Ibid. Also, Ray L. Birdwhistell,"Kinesics," International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences (Chicago), vol.8, 1968, pp.379-384.

32 Edward Sapir, n.30, p.1009.

33 Ibid., p.1009.

34 Edward Sapir, Culture, Language and Personality (Berkeley, 1957).

though contradictory to the conventions of the society, may receive all its social significance from hundreds of already existing communications that belong to the culture of the group as a whole.

Familiarity with the external forms of communication is not enough. In fact, unless one is aware of the unformulated and unverbalized form of communication of a society, one would always experience a psychological distance with the members of that society.

'Thus the communicative process is accomplished through the society and its traditions, and through the verbal and non-verbal means of the speaker (or as Wendell Johnson puts it - "through sound waves and light waves").[35]

Basic Elements of Social Communication Process

Little of man's behaviour is instinctive. Rather most of it is learned behaviour. The kinds of skills and knowledge that man requires to survive and to develop are acquired both through interaction and communication with other men in society. Man is man because he shares with others a common culture - a culture which includes not only its living members but also members of past generations as well as those that are yet to come.

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35 Wendell Johnson, People in Quandaries : The Semantics of Personal Adjustment (New York, 1946). p.49

This activity is what sociologists call socialization, the transmission of culture. Most of this transmission is carried out in messages - both verbal as well as non-verbal. And it is the nature and the content of such messages that we are concerned with in these chapters.

There is a running debate going on between the sociologists and the anthropologists as to what exactly is the relationship between symbolic structure, like language, and others, and social structures. The classical sociologists consider that society shapes its value system along with its conceptual tools such as language. Some linguistically oriented anthropologists, however, attentuate, and sometimes reverse this theory. For example, Whorf asserts that it is the structure of language which determines ways of thought and cultural patterns, thereby influencing social structure as well.[36]

Instead of describing the viewpoints of both sides in detail, for the purpose of this study it would be sufficient to note the deep and fundamental relationship between the society and its conceptual tools. A brief analysis of the various components of social communication is necessary at this juncture.

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36 Clifton R. Jones, "The Sociology of Symbols, Language and Semantics" in Roucek, ed., Contemporary Sociology (New York, 1958), p.441.

Participants[37]

First of all, we identify the participants in the communication act - the senders and the receivers; the addressors and the addressees; the interpreters and spokesmen and the like. They form what one cay say, the 'who says' and 'to whom' of the events.

Social relationships are everywhere the major determinents of verbal behaviour. Furthermore, verbal behaviour is not stressed to the same extent in all cultures. The social variables that influence the participants and their speech behaviour are some of the following - age, sex, class, caste, country of origin, generation, region, schooling, bilingualism, multi-lingualism and so forth.

In the communicative act if we focus on the addressor or sender of the message in relation to others, then we would have to consider his attitude towards the others, the context of his statement, his attitude towards the content of his message and so on. Another important aspect of this consideration would be to note whether his actions are intended, attributed, conscious or unconscious.[38]

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37 D. Hymes, "Models of Interaction of Language and Social Life" in J. Gumperz and D. Hymes, eds., Directions in Sociolinguistics : The Ethnography of Speaking (New York, 1972), pp.58-59.

38 D. Hymes, "Towards Ethnographies of Communication : The Analysis of Communicative Events" in Pier Paolo Giglioli, Language and Social Context, n.3, p.37.

On the other hand, when we focus our attention on the addressee or the receiver of the message, we would then have to consider his attitude towards the speaker, his attitude towards the context and how he perceives the message form. The speaker often anticipates the listener's attitude, and speaks accordingly. Persuasion, appeal, rhetoric and others are names which characterize the speaker's actions. However, the effects on receivers may be intended, attributed, conscious, unconscious, achieved or frustrated.[39]

Due to the limitations of the aforementioned theory regarding the dyad, research on this element was inadequate till study of the process of communication began. Once the horizon of this theory was widened, the nature of who exactly were the participants became clearer. Some rules of speaking require three participants, like in a play, i.e. addressor, addressee and the audience, while others require two (addressor and the addressee) and the absent, but intended listener and so on.

Focus on the addressee or the receiver means identification of the destination and the ways in which the message - an event may be governed by anticipation of attitude of the destination. Persuasion, appeal, rhetoric and direction are part of this event. Effects on receivers, again, may be intended, attributed, conscious, unconscious, achieved or frustrated.[40]

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39 Ibid., p.37.

40 Ibid.

Channels

The second element consists of the various available channels and their modes of use: speaking, writing, druming, blowing, singing, face and body motion as visually perceived and so on.[41]

While focussing on the channels we have to take into consideration those factors that establish and maintain contact (in other words, communication) between the participants. While studying this we have to consider both physical and psychological factors. In other words what are the means used by the speaker to maintain the attention of his hearer. Attention has also to be given to the interdependence of the channels in interaction, that is, gestures accompanying speech and so on. Further, the hierarchy between the channels, i.e. the relative importance given to one channel in a particular situation and other, in a different situation and so on.[42]

Codes

The third elements are codes that, upon description, seem similar to channels, but in practice are different.[43] Channels are conventional elements common to the entire society, whereas codes are limited to members of a particular group only. These codes are both linguistic like speaking, paralinguistic, kinesic like gestures, musical and so on. It is evolved either through

41 D. Hymes, n.37, p.59.

42 D. Hymes, n.38, p.37.

43 D. Hymes, n.38, p.22.

the usage of a language that is foreign to the surroundings or derived from the native language. They could be commonly termed as jargon, parlance, secret language and so on.

The focus on this element would mean emphasizing its acquisition (learning), analysis,devising it and so on.

The focus on this element entails such functions as are involved in learning, analysis, devising of writing systems, checking on the identity of an element of the code used in conversation and so on.[44]

Setting

The fourth element in the communication act is the setting. To elaborate, they are the context in which communication is permitted, enjoined, encouraged, abridged and so on.[45] It not only refers to the time and place of a speech act, but also to the psychological setting of an occasion, i.e. whether it is a funeral or a wedding.

Message Form

The fifth element has in the forms of the messages and their genre which in verbal form ranges from a single - morpheme sentences to sermons and any other organised routines and styles. The form of message is fundamental. The most serious problem that occurs while doing research on communication is that the message form can never be recaptured. In other words, what

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44 D.Hymes, n.38, p.37.

45 D. Hymes, n.37, p.60.

exactly has been said in a particular moment and how, with what intention cannot be adequately reproduced for the purpose of analysis. It is precisely this problem that has led to the neglect of this field of study and has disrupted many attempts to analyse the significance of behaviour.[46]

It is a truism, but one frequently ignored in research, that how something is said is part of what is said. In order to analyse scientifically the mechanics of human speech and behaviour one needs to go beyond the content (i.e. what has been stated) to the explicit statement of social norms and rules and the salient features of the form (i.e. how something has been stated).

In order to study this element in detail one would have to indulge in activities like proof reading, mimicry, editing, stylistic concerns and so on.[47]

Topic

The sixth element deals with topics that a message centers around. Its analysis requires firstly the study of its content and then its change. Members of a group are fully aware of what is being talked about. When subject has received sufficient attention, they are also aware of when it needs to be changed. After its change they are intentively aware of the need to maintain it till its climax. In order to study the coherence of conversation, it is of particular importance

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46 Ibid., p.59.

47 D. Hymes, n.38, p.37.

to deal with this aspect of human ability.[48]

The study of this element can be done through the analysis of the content i.e. how much of what is being said, and reference i.e. the linguistic meaning of the content and its derivative meanings.

Character

The seventh and the final element concerns the nature and the character of the communicative event itself, taken as a whole. This element is nearly always based upon social rules. These rules could be accomplished or violated by the presence or shift in any of the components of speaking respectively. That is, the normal tone of voice or a whisper, formal speech or slang and so on is indicative of both the character of the communicative act and the social rule that it is based upon.[49]

In order to conclude this part one can only add that the study of the rules of speech so far is mostly generalization of the relationship among the above mentioned elements. It is not yet clear whether any of these elements is more important in relation to the other. One could suppose, however, that when the speech behaviour of individual societies has been analysed in depth, several of the unanswered questions would be clarified.

The Communication Gap

There are several obstacles to effective communication that one must keep in mind, if social communication is to be

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48 D. Hymes, n.37, p.60.

49 Ibid., p.64. Also D.Hymes, n.38, p.38.

studied in any detail. There are barriers inherent in the language itself, as well as in the psychological makeup of the communicator. Let us consider the obstacles within the language first.

The inherent problem of language is its inadequacy. To frame it plainly, there are far more things to speak about than there are words with which to speak about them. The distance between reality and language is too great and the physical inability of an ordinary person to remember all the words in his language widens this gap.

The barriers that the communicator raises are, unfortunately, mostly unconscious, or rather so habitual that they have become an inseparable part of our mental makeup. Let us examine them one by one.

Besides physical deficiencies and ignorance of the communicator, one of the most common problems that affects communication is '<u>identification.</u>'[50] Identification is commonly known as classification. That is, several items regardless of their inherent differences are lumped together as one due to their having one common feature. This is evident not only in the case of inanimate things and animals, but also in the case of individuals. For example, during the course of the conversation, one tends to view Masayoshi Sato as just another Japanese and left at that. No other

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50 S.I. Hayakawa, <u>Language in Thought and Action</u> (New York, 1949), pp.19-28.

characteristic of that individual is considered as he falls under the category of "Japanese" whatever be the image the speaker has of him. Effective communication, ideally, should safeguard against such undue and maladjustive identifications and be clear about what exactly the speaker means about the terms used.

Another common obstacle to effective communication is the confusion of subjectivity and objectivity. That is,people while speaking do not always specify that whatever they are saying is personal and not general.[51]

The third problem lies in the tendency to formulate issues and situations in a two-valued either or manner. That is, everything is viewed as good or bad, right or wrong, democratic or undemocratic, Japanese or un-Japanese. This attitude or mental ~~making~~ make up is conducive to conflict, prejudice, confusion and injustice. This is what is called the failure to verbalize in any direct or complete sense, the "facts" of the so called reality.[52]

This factor is related to the psychological fact that men's modes of thinking and their attitudes, develop out of their ways of life. Their mental worlds derive from everyday experiences in their occupational callings and they are not

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51 S.I. Hayakawa, Our Language and Our World (New York, 1958). Also, Ibid., pp.32-44.

52 Ibid.

equipped to understand a language which represents a different way of life. The individual lives in a private world of his own perception, emotion and thought which can be shared by others only if similar aspects of reality are experienced by them. Language cannot substitute for experience. This contributes to the communication gap. But, lack of understanding of this fact, thanks to man's extreme egocentricity in refusing to admit ignorance, leads to the aforesaid identification, or so Daniel Katz calls it 'stereotypes'.[53]

Finally, reification i.e. conversation and personification of facts and reality disrupts smooth social interaction. That is a general tendency for people to speak metaphorically and analogically about things as well as people, that unless clarified, one is not always sure of what the other person is saying.[54]

Such impediments exist not just within a small group of a society but also within dialects, regions and nations. The question takes a more serious nature when one considers problems between two languages within a country. When one crosses boundaries, then there can be at all levels scores of hinderances to smoother communication.

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53 Daniel Katz, "Psychological Barriers to Communication", Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, March 1947. p.34

54 S.I. Hayakawa, n.50, pp.105-121.

Therefore, some kind of cross-cultural study needs to be conducted which could identify clearly some of the major problem areas. The next chapter would try to identify patterns of communication within the Japanese society. Due to the difficulty of conducting research into entire range of the problem the present study would conduct a micro-level problems of communication in the area of inter-personal relations within the Japanese society.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL SYSTEM REFLECTED IN THE JAPANESE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL SYSTEM REFLECTED IN THE JAPANESE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Though Japan's social structure has undergone sweeping changes during the last century, it still retains, remnants of feudalism, particularly in human relationships. Nowhere is it faithfully reproduced than its communication system. In the last chapter we have observed how the patterns of communication and their means are deeply embedded in a society.

When we study a society we usually study its values -- values which have to do with what members of the society believe are good. Values, unlike fashion, change slowly and are supposed to endure over a long period of time. They give some stability, some order, and some predictability to all aspects of life. Language changes even more slowly than certain values, and if the values are reflected in the language, then it is one means of retaining them over a long period of time.

This is one problem which the students of international relations face - that is, understanding and realizing values of a society. Trying to see reality from "their point" is difficult and hence the communication gap. Nowhere is this fact more clearly felt than in the case of Japan.

Few people in Japan and elsewhere have realized how great the communication barrier is in international contacts. In most of the rest of the world differences of communication seem not to raise serious problems, but to be only minor complications or

irritants - a problem readily solved when one has learnt the language in question. But Japanese language is rather unique in this regard.

Nowhere in the world has communication problem led to more serious diplomatic wrangles than in the case of Japan. A classic case was of the ambiguous translation done during the 1970 discussions between Premier E. Sato ~~Eisaku~~ of Japan and President Richard Nixon at San Clemente, California in their notably unsuccessful attempt to settle the issue of large Japanese textile exports to the United States. When Nixon explained his position on the textile question, Sato answered, "zensho shimasu", a phrase that literally meant "I will handle it as well as I can". To Nixon it meant, "I will take care of it", that is, Sato would try to curtail the exports. However, to Sato this meant only a polite way to end the conversation. Therefore, even though the translation was done accurately, the communication gap remained.[1]

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1 Frank Gibney, Japan : The Fragile Super Power (Tokyo, 1975), p.148.

Much has been written about the confusion caused during the last-minute negotiations between the US State Department and the Japanese envoys in Washington just prior to Pearl Harbour, 1941 because Ambassador Nomura Kichisaburo probably misinterpreted the diplomatic politeness of Cordell Hull as a genuine offer to negotiate further.

Later, at the end of July 1945, what slight chance remained of averting the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the subsequent Soviet entry into the war, was ruined when the Japanese news agency Domei mistranslated a key word Mokusatsu in Premier Suzuki's reply to the Potsdam Declaration as "reject" instead of "ignore".

The Japanese communication system being so deeply enmeshed in the value system of its society, is a difficult tool to use by non-native speakers inspite of having a relatively simple grammar. The simple reason for this fact is that the language learnt in a classroom of a non-Japanese environment is vastly different from that used in the actual communication system. The boundaries of linguistic description have touched only what it could identify in the Japanese language which was only the periphery. As far as the internal characteristics of whole process of communication are concerned, no explanation has been possible. Sociologists have also come forward with various explanations about the Japanese social structure as we shall examine later. They have, on several occasions, used language to indicate the social system and the interpersonal relations, but most of them have been rather inadequate and incomplete.

An attempt would, therefore, be made here to study briefly some of the characteristics of the Japanese communication pattern and then present in a detailed manner the social characteristics that they symbolize, especially in the field of interpersonal relationship. Since conversation centers around the speaker-addressee relationship, we shall also concern ourselves with the study and analysis of this relationship. As is with almost all languages, Japanese language has two forms of speech : one is the formal form, symbolized with the 'desu'; 'masu' form and the other is the informal form symbolized with 'da', and

'suru' form. But, unlike other languages, informal and formal forms of speech in Japanese cannot be interchanged easily.

One of the major areas of debate in language teaching in Japan centered around whether the language teacher should teach the formal form of the Japanese language first or the informal form. Those who advocated formal form said that it did not matter if a student could not speak familiarly with the Japanese people in the beginning. If they learnt the formal pattern first, then they felt, the informal pattern would come naturally. But, those who thought informal form should be learnt first, felt that if students were to communicate with Japanese they should learn the latter first. The formal form, they felt, would lend a distance between the speakers and there would never be a sense of rapport between the two.

The advocates of both sides are correct up to a certain extent. The 'formal' advocates are correct in maintaining that formality is necessary at the beginning, but they put too little emphasis on the informal form. It does not come 'that' naturally and needs to be inculcated thoroughly.

On the other hand the 'informal' advocates too ignore the 'formal' aspect - or rather treat it as a secondary matter, ~~thus~~ which could lead to over-familiarity on the part of the foreign student and a possibility of a total break in the relationship.

But the final point remains that whatever be the case, these two levels of speech exist in the Japanese language, playing equally important roles and a total mastery of both the forms is necessary to achieve perfect communication. Let us consider them one by one, starting with the formal style.

Informal Speech

Whether he meets them in the speech of native speakers or in the printed word, the student learning the style of language explained and used in the grammar will, in all likelihood, be mystified by the patterns of informal and familiar speech with all its abbreviations, omissions and loosely knit structure. It takes quite a while for him to get acquainted with the ways the forms are shortened, parts of sentences omitted and word order is made dependent on spontaneity reflection, emphasis, etc.

The textbooks usually caution him from using informal language until a great deal of facility in Japanese is acquired for. They say that, not only is it necessary to know when informality is permissible but it is also advisable to be capable of maintaining the fluent, easy pace of informal speech.[2]

(i) The changes in the language involve as varied changes as unvoicing of voiced vowels to contractions of

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2 Anthony Alphonso, Japanese Language Patterns, vol.2 (Tokyo, 1974), p.1188.

of words. For example:

(a)	Mimashita	: Mimashta
	anata	: anta
(b)	Yatte iru	: yatteru
	Yatte Shimasu	: Yatchau and so on.

(ii) Besides contractions, another distinctive feature of the language in the informal form is omission or what is called anaphoric process in the language of communication.[3] An omission occurs when one or more words, sometimes even a whole section of a sentence is left unspoken.[4] This is one of the most difficult aspects of the language to teach and, more often than not, it is left to the students to pick up from the society itself.

As observed in the last chapter that the more a way of speaking gets shared and meaningful within the group the more likely that crucial cues alone would suffice while communicating, this phenomena occurs frequently where Japanese language is concerned.

Frequently the speaker may feel it unnecessary to say the obvious; or he may deliberately choose to leave something up to the imagination of his hearer; or he may desire to leave

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3 John Minds, Japanese Discourse Structure (Tokyo, 1976), p.18.

4 To cite an example: 'Hayaku Kite Kuretara' (If he returned early....) here the "ii to omoimasu" (it would be nice) is omitted.

room for ambiguity for some reason or other. According to Nobuko Mizutani,[5] a leading Japanese communication specialist, these omissions are deliberate. She says that the Japanese notion of a conversation differs distinctly from a Western one in the sense that it is customary for the listener to conclude sentences started by the speaker. For example, if the speaker says "kinoo jishin ga...." (yesterday, an earthquake), the listner immediately replies "Arimashita ne" (we felt it, didn't we?). Unlike English speakers who refrain from completing a sentence started by someone else (a sign of bad manners, according to the books on etiquette), it is regarded as good manners not to finish one's own statement but to allow the other to finish it.

Another aspect of leaving sentences unsaid, according to N. Mizutani, is politeness. For example, when people want to leave, they just say, "Kyo wa Kore de..", and the listener understands that the speaker has to leave even though he has not been told specifically. Unlike the English speakers who give reasons for most actions, the Japanese try to convey, through non-verbal means, most things by short, frequently incomplete, sentences. This feature is specially seen among Japanese when they are making a request. In such a situation,

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5 Nobuko Mizutani, "Communication in Japanese", Japan Foundation Newsletter (Tokyo), January 1979, pp.1-6.

the speaker, conversely, just gives his reason without telling the listener what he should do. The listener usually senses what the speaker needs and offers his help. This is a feature that most books on language and communication do not identify, thus leaving language learners in a situation with a "non-plussed feeling".

Most sentences that are left unsaid, however, have some features that give hints to the listener about the intention of the speaker.[6] These features may be in the form of communications like ....

> Soto e ikeba kaze o hiku noni....
>
> (inspite of the fact that going out would mean catching a cold....).

It is obvious that the speaker is speaking of someone who caught a cold ignoring the basic rule of going out in the cold. In this 'he went', is left unsaid. Other hints are in words like 'yoni' like in "sono henji o sugu dasu yoni.... (send the reply immediately ....)", where the request phrase "...onegai shimasu" is deleted, but expressed in the tone. Suggestions, purposes and others frequently adopt this practice.

(iii) Another distinctive feature frequently used by the Japanese is inversion of the word order.[7] Word order does not play such a major role in Japanese sentences like

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6 Alphonso, n.2, p.1202.

7 Ibid., p.1206.

in English. If we say "the dog bit the man" and try to change the order (without making grammatical changes), the meaning would change completely 'the man bit the dog'. That is, position in the sentence is what makes 'man' or 'dog' the subject or the object. But in Japanese sentence, the meaning remains intact inspite of having changed nothing grammatically within the sentence.

For example - "Sukoshi hen da na, kono aji"
(little funny isn't it, this taste)
Moo Kaetta yo, ano hito wa
(has already come back, that person).

This feature is also vividly described by Frank Gibney[8] who says, "English grammar is rich in classifications and distinctions; it can be precisely analyzed. Not so Japanese, although since the 18th century Japanese grammarians have tried hard to do so. Words are thrown into the conversation at a seemingly needless confusion of nominatives, predicates and modifiers. It is up to the listener to sort it all out depending on his relationship to the speaker, the context and intensity of their conversation. The Japanese speakers' use of inversion is usually, if not always, dependent upon psychological factors, making systematization impossible." According to another textbook, certain general ideas can be

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8 Frank Gibney, n.1, p.147.

formulated to indicate what inversion indicates and how it works. That is, inversion occurs when:

(a) a person having been asked a question and having directly replied to it, adds more information almost as an after thought;

(b) a person spontaneously says something, as though talking aloud, clarifies what topic or what object he is talking about, as if seeing people around. In this there could be two possibilities. One is that he puts into words whatever comes to his mind; another, he deliberately states first what he considers more important, achieving the desired amount of emphasis;

(c) generally speaking, the speaker wants to reveal his personal feelings about a matter. That is, what he feels is more important in his mind and what is less important. The urgent idea will come first to be followed by reflective clarifying idea. 9

Inversion is closely linked with the conveying of feelings and emotions, obviously a part of informal and familiar speech. Fortunately for the Japanese, the verb or the adjective comes at the end of the sentence making the listener wait till the end. This enables the speaker to even contradict himself without giving any indication in the same sentence, if he feels what he is about to say does not agree with what the listener is feeling about the subject. This is made possible in English with the use of various intonation and accent changes. However, unlike the latter, these inversions do almost never feature on formal occasions.

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9 Alphonso, n.2, p.1206.

Male and Female Speech

Similarly, one can see a considerable degree of difference between the language used by Japanese males and females in the informal usage of the language. This is particularly so in their usage of particles and selection of lexical items.[10] Some typical differences are as follows:

Male	Female
(a) Kitto iku ze	Kitto iku wa (I am certainly going)
(b) nakanaka tsurai zo	nakanaka Tsurai wa yo (It is really terrible)

Formal Speech

Although this characteristic was mentioned in the beginning as being the style which takes the 'desu' - 'masu' form of verb and adjectival endings, this conclusion is too simplistic. It is common knowledge that one's behaviour should be in accordance with one's status in life. Nowhere is it so faithfully adhered to as in Japan. Proper selection of words keeping accord with the situation in the verbal means of communication to the correct extent of bowing in the non-verbal is indicative of one's position in society. Ignoring or neglecting these practices could lead to ostracization in the Japanese

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10 John Hinds, n.3, p.113.

society for the Japanese and being treated lightly for foreigners. It is in this area that one can clearly observe how sentences that are grammatically correct are not always perfect means of communication. Such sentences as "watashi wa-kore-o-anata ni agemasu" (I will give you this) are regarded as grammatically complete but they would sound strange if used when giving someone a present. For, in this case people would use "kore, tsumaranai mono-desu ga" (This is not a very big thing but ...) would be more appropriate.[11] Some characteristics of formal speech are as follows:

(a) Various greetings are used upon meeting and this can go on for quite a while before actually starting a discussion.[12] In English, there are several greetings such as, 'Good Morning', 'How have you been?', and so on. But once they are dispensed with, non-Japanese speakers usually plunge headlong into a discussion with, may be a, 'Have you heard the latest?', and initiating it.

But in the Japanese pattern of communication, one never plunges headlong but goes gently towards it. There are greetings like 'Ohayo gozaimasu' (Good Morning) in Japanese, but they are considered rather insufficient. Expressions about the weather, talking about prices, favourite baseball players,

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11 N. Mizutani, n.5, p.1.

12 Ibid., p.2.

commenting on the listeners' situation or one's own stage; all are included in the category of greetings.

(b) Referring to a common experience in the past is also something rather unique in the Japanese discourse pattern. The non-Japanese speakers are more concerned about the present and describe it aptly in the phrase 'Let bygones be bygones'. Not so in the case of the Japanese. To them, the present is a mere continuation of the past and it is relieved again. It does not matter whether days or weeks have passed since then, or whether there was anything important or not, but a phrase such as 'Senjitsu-wa gochisoosama deshita" (thanks for the feast the other day) or "Kono-aida-wa domo osewa sama deshita" (I am grateful to you for your favour the other day) must accompany the greetings mentioned earlier.[13]

Thanking the other for favours done for family members also is an observation of this rule. Wives would say, 'Shujin-ga-osewa-ni-natte orimasu' (thank you for your kindness to my husband) to their husbands' acquaintances and to doctors and teachers, parents would say "Kodomo-ga-osewa-ni, natte orimasu (thank you for your kindness to my child) and so on.

The underlying principle between the two above mentioned characteristics is the establishment of good relations or harmony between the speaker and the listener. Prolonged greetings and reminders of an experience shared together in the

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13 Ibid., pp.2-3.

past establish the harmonious spirit between the two - speaker and the addressee, and both sides end up feeling satisfied, even though nothing new or exciting has taken place between them.[14] This feeling is usually experienced by two Westerners after a long and prolonged debate or controversial argument.

However, it is important also to note that not only are such greetings and remarks important, the replies are also equally important. For example, if the speaker has said, 'Senjitsu Gochiso sama deshita' the reply 'ie, Osomatsu sama de sumi masen' (sorry, for I could not take care of you enough) being the usual accompaniment, is as important. The speaker, if he does not get the reply as is due, he would definitely feel strange or may even result in a withdrawal of goodwill on his part. Therefore, humility or "good manners", has to be shown from both sides, a fact to be kept in mind always.

Besides other characteristics, to be mentioned later, the most significant and distinctive feature of the Japanese formal speech is 'Keigo' i.e. the honorific system. Appropriate honorific usage is primarily determined by the relationship between the speaker and the addressee, as well as the relationship between these individuals and the subject under discussion.

First of all, of course, there is a distinction between formal and non-formal speech which has been mentioned earlier.

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14 Ibid., p.3.

A difference which is indicated by a formality morpheme - 'masu' in the case of verb and 'desu' in the case of adjectives and nominal adjectives.

However, the formal style speech is further changed into an honorific style speech depending upon the status of the addressee - a feature having no parallels in any other language except in Korean. The honorific style of speech has two main levels - one is called 'sonkei' level where the speaker exalts the addressee and the second is 'kenjyo' level where he humbles himself.[15]

The sonkei form of speech is used by the speaker to characterize the action or state of a person if he perceives that the person's social status is higher than his own. The 'kenjyo' form, on the other hand, is used if the referent of the object (direct or indirect) of the sentence is superior to the subject of the sentence, and the referent of the subject is superior to or identical to the speaker.

In other words, if the subject of the sentence is a person deserving respect (usually the addressee) then Sonkei forms are used, whereas, if the subject is the speaker or the family, the humble form of Kenjo must be used while talking to a superior.

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15 Alphonso, n.2, p.1211.

The mechanics of changing a formal style speech into an 'honorific style of the 'sonkei' and 'kenjyo' forms involves two complicated methods - indicative of how deep rooted is this phenomenon into the Japanese communication pattern and its interpersonal relationship. The first of these two methods is more frequent and more important of the two and it involves the changing of the verbs into an honorific verb. The second method involves changing some other word or words in the sentence into honorific words - and this method is frequently interpersed with the first method.[16]

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16 Changing of the Japanese verb into an honorific verb, as the first method necessitates, can be done in one or both of the following two ways:

(a) By using its honorific equivalent, if there is one. A number of verbs have such honorific equivalents, for example, 'Irassharu' is an honorific equivalent for iku (to go); kuru (to come) and iru (to be).

(b) By inflecting the verb into an honorific form. This is usually done by dropping the 'masu' from the verb and adding 'o' before the verb and adding 'ni naru' at the end. That is, to change the verb 'yomimasu', we do it by making it 'o yomi ni naru/narimasu'.

In the second method, nouns and adjectives are also changed into their honorific forms. This is usually done by adding the honorific prefixes 'o', 'go', or 'mi'. For example, 'osushi'; 'okane';'mikokoro', and so on. Other changes also entail the replacing of the entire word with another more formal and polite expression, such as:

dare	: donata
soo	: sayoo
hito	: kata
iranai	: kekkoo, and so on.

In a conversation carried out on any level of speech, there are always at least two points of reference: The speaker and the addressee (i.e. the one spoken to) connected with each of these two points of reference are any number of other persons and things, so that one may think of the speaker and the addressee as two anti-thetical spheres of influence.[17]

The sphere of influence of the speaker extends to the speaker himself, his actions, his belongings, his family, his friends, his superiors, his benefactors, and his group. Similarly, the sphere of influence of the addressee also extends to the same circle around him.

There is still another point of reference that might possibly enter the picture, which is usually termed as the subject or the one spoken about, if we presume that this third referent does not in some way or other belong to either the group of the speaker or the addressee, the speaker can find himself in need of describing something of his own in reference to something of the subject and vice versa, or describing something of the addressee in reference to something of the same and vice-versa. Although general textbooks and books on communication tend to ignore this aspect, on the honorific level, these distinctions are of the utmost importance.[18]

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17 Alphonso, n.2, p.1212.

18 Ibid., p.1213.

The social rules that pertain to the use of this honorific style briefly mentioned in the last chapter,[19] are broadly as follows:

(a) The speaker does not use formal expressions with those people falling within, what is called, his group. His group usually includes family, close friends, etc. However, within the family also certain hierarchy exists - husband over wife, father over children, elder brother over younger brother and sister, etc., and so on.

Although honorific style is not that common between them, unless it happens to be in front of guests or on a formal occasion, some deference is shown in the speech of the inferior person.

(b) A social superior does not use the formal or honorific style when speaking to a social inferior; a social inferior is required to use the formal and the honorific style when speaking to the former; whether the occasion is formal or informal - something in similarity with the situation in India.

(c) There is a shift to the formal style or the honorific style when the situation adds physical or psychological distance to the speaker-addressee relationship. This is clearly evident in telephone conversations, letter writing, formal meeting, or in presence of an elder or socially superior person and so on.

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19 Ibid., p.1214.

(d) Another situation where honorific style is normally present is when one is asking a favour from someone or is showing appreciation for some favour received. The concept of favour again is different from that of westerners. It need not necessarily mean that some kind of a material benefit. Japanese concept of favour includes both material as well as psychological benefits. Sympathy in times of need or the presence alone of someone at a difficult hour, or just showing deference to someone superior, one expresses gratitude.[20]

According to Takao Suzuki, "specific Japanese interpersonal pairs are fixed in terms of the role of each member and are virtually immune to changes of situation and passage of time".[21] That is, the honorific style of speech will continue to be used by the speaker for his benefactor or teacher, even if his status rises to become equal or even superior to the latter.

(e) Another distinctive characteristic of the formal speech is the relative absence of the terms of self-reference and address. Though not mentioned in the last chapter, one of the most important features of communication that is indicative of the social system and the social behaviour is the terms of self-reference and address of the speaker and the

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20 Nobuko Mizutani, n.5, p.5.

21 Takao Suzuki, Kotoba To Bunka (Words in Culture) (Tokyo, 1973), p.141.

addressee. Comparison of the Indo-European languages with the Japanese language in the concept of pronouns shows that in the former the terms of self reference and address have nothing to do with the concrete status that the speaker or addressee possesses. These terms merely serve the function of signalling abstract linguistic roles - active agent and passive agent in the dialogue. That is the first person pronoun, usually symbolized in the 'I' and the second person pronoun in the 'you' merely indicates that the speaker is speaking at the moment and the listener (you) is listening. When the speaker finishes, the listener takes over. This relationship is representative of "symmetrical characteristics".[22]

In Japan, however, it is common practice to drop the first person pronoun 'watashi', 'boku' or 'ore' and the second person, 'anata', 'amae', 'kimi', etc. This is evident almost on all formal occasions, but on informal occasions, too, this is noticed. That is, there is a tendency to avoid their use as often as possible and to carry on conversations using some other words to designate speaker and addressee.

People are usually referred to by their occupations and family relationships.[23] According to Takao Suzuki, "In Japanese, most kinship terms and innumerable occupational

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22 Ibid., p.94.

23 Ibid., p.91.

titles are all personal pronouns".[24] Teachers and doctors are called 'sensei', whereas postmen 'yubinyasan', policemen 'omawarisan' and vendors or shopkeepers with their articles and the suffix 'ya san'. In the companies, the section chief is called 'kacho'; department chief 'buncho'; and the president 'shacho'. In the other cases, where the addressee is one's equal, it is usual for the speaker to use the surnames and add 'san' with it. To explain, the speaker would say something equivalent to 'How's Mr Nakamura's car running?', addressing Mr Nakamura himself.

On the other hand, when referring to oneself, one has to keep the addressee in mind. To one's junior, one can call oneself 'watashi' or by one's occupation. To one's senior, it is a common practice to use one's surname without 'san' and nowadays even 'watashi' or 'watakushi' is used. One never uses one's occupation to refer to oneself when speaking to a superior. Terms such as 'boku', 'kimi', 'anata' are nevef used when speaking to one's superior.

Within a family also, personal pronouns are used rather sparingly. More often than not, the family relationship is used for addressing the other. That is, the child will refer to his father as 'Otosan' and mother as 'okasan'. The rule is that the speaker cannot use a personal pronoun to address or directly refer to a relative above the dividing line.

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24 Ibid., p.93.

He calls him by a kinship term. It goes without saying that he cannot call him by name. On the other hand, when one talks to an inferior within the family, one can use a personal pronoun such as 'omae', 'kimi' or 'anata' and can also call him by his name. Another feature that very commonly observed is that the speaker calls himself by his own name when talking to a person above him in seniority or age, but does not normally do so in a dialogue with someone below.[25]

Besides the above mentioned characteristics of the terms of address, there are two other related features of the Japanese communication system that deserve special attention. This is related to the fictive use of kinship terms. That is, speakers are not referred to by their names or by the name of their relationship to the speaker i.e. the kinship terms, as mentioned earlier, but differently.

The first among this is the use of a kinship term that is not directly connected with the speaker and the listener, but a term that is connected with the listener and his junior. In other words, an older member of the family, usually the father or the mother, calls the older son as 'oniisan' i.e. elder brother.[26]

The second is that the older member of the family usually calls the eldest son as 'onisan' i.e. 'elder brother', or eldest daughter as 'onechan/one san' (elder sister)

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25 Ibid., pp.89-112.

26 Ibid., p.115.

instead of using her/his name. This feature is quite important especially when one is explaining the Japanese concept of 'self'. This characteristic is peculiar to the Japanese society. In Western society, and even in Indian society, it is generally more common to use names.

The third is related to the fictive use of kinship term. That is, one calls a stranger, usually a younger one by kinship terms as 'onesan' or one can observe vegetable vendors calling out to young women as 'onesan' and to older women 'okusama' i.e. polite expression for 'wife'. It is interesting to note that the term 'onesan' i.e. elder sister and 'onisan' i.e. elder brother is more frequently used than 'musuko' i.e. son or 'musume' i.e. daughter - something that is used commonly in the West and even in India.[27]

T. Suzuki says:

> The speaker considers himself as the starting point to establish on the basis of age and sex. What the hearer would be to him if they were related and to choose appropriate kinship terms for the hearer and for himself accordingly. 28

This feature in Suzuki's theory is called "egocentric" use of fictive terms where the speaker refers to his personal relationship with the hearer.

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27 Ibid., p.114.

28 Ibid., p.113.

On the other hand there is a 'allophonic"[29] use of fictive terms, rather unique to the Japanese use of terms for self-address, where an older member addresses a younger member by a term that designates the latter's position from the viewpoint of the youngest member of the family.

The above mentioned feature is particularly important when explaining the Japanese concept of 'self'. Obviously, addressing a junior by a term that indicates his seniority in a particular relationship is giving a boost to the ego of the listener. A feature that shows that the feelings of the listener are not treated lightly if he is a junior. What is noteworthy, however, is that this feature can be seen only in family relationships and not in work relationships. One can only hazard the 'honne'/tatemae' argument for an explanation.[30] One could also view this characteristic as a remnant of their rural background.

Besides these characteristics, there are other features that are evident in the communication pattern on formal occasions.

The first of these is a very common trait or rather complaint of non-Japanese executives. That is, Japanese people hesitate too much. It is true not only of international

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29 Ibid., p.116.

30 That is, although in the 'tatemae' position, a junior has to show servility, in 'honne' his 'ego' or 'self' is boosted up.

business meetings but also in Japanese business organisations. In other words when Japanese gather to discuss things on formal occasions, sometimes even in informal occasions (depending upon the participants and the context), they do not readily express themselves. The Chairman has to repeatedly urge the participants to express their ideas and those who are too ready to express themselves are regarded as immature or inconsiderate.

However, when a person finally starts to speak, he will say, "Soo-desu-ne... (well...) to show his hesitation. And when he has stated his opinion he will add an expression such as "... to omoimasu-ga, doo deshoo" (I think... in this way), but I wonder if it is true), as though he were more interested in listening to other peoples' view than expressing his own.[31]

Further, what is also to be noted here is that people strictly follow an hierarchical pattern if it were (a) closed door meetings, or (b) a formal meeting involving various authorities. Details about this point will be furnished a little later. Suffice is to note that in these meetings, the seniormost person speaks first, expresses his opinion and then it trickles down to the juniormost.

One more feature is also noted in this. That is, when stating facts the Japanese often choose expressions that avoid

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31 Nobuko Mizutani, n.5, p.6.

holding anyone responsible for an action. For example, even when it is clear who has decided on something, the speaker will often choose an expression such as "... suru koto ni narimashita" (it has been decided that ...) as though the action had taken place automatically. This serves two purposes; it spares the doer criticism as well as giving the impression that the decision has been authorized by everybody.[32]

Although the underlying idea appears to be that collective will to reign supreme rather than one's own will, there also seems to be, especially in the second characteristic, a sense of paternalism. It would also be that any decision does not rest upon a single person alone and therefore there is no individual responsible.

Hesitancy is also observed in those asking for something, even if it involves something absolutely urgent or necessary. Asking a favour is not a very pleasant task in any society, and same is the case in Japan also. Nowhere, according to N. Mizutani,[33] the Japanese are "expected" to sound hesitant when making a request even if it is well within his rights. She thinks, it means, "one should not be interested in one's own good more than in the good of the whole group. So the

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32 Ibid., p.6.

33 N. Mizutani, "Communication in Japanese", Japan Foundation News Letter, July 1979, pp.2-4.

speaker should indicate that he is feeling guilty by using a hesitant tone. However, she cautions us against thinking that a hesitant tone indicates an improper request by the speaker - something that most people in Western societies and even in India feel. One does not know how far one can agree with the sense of guilt but statistics prove that in many Japanese companies, over-time allowances and entitled paid-leave usually goes unavailed of. As these two benefits are properly utilized by the people in Western companies and in Indian companies also, one can, to some extent, agree with Mizutani in her analysis.

However, when making requests the speaker usually refrains from sounding matter-of-course and says something like "Anoo .... (Er, Excuse me...) or "Anoo, jitsu-wa-chotto....' (Sr, actually I feel inclined to say that....) and then wait for the listener to encourage him. It is generally customary for the listener to give all his attention to the speaker and say "Nanka...", if that listener is someone near or intimate to him; or 'Nanika goyoo-desu ka", if it is a formal meaning, (is there something I can do for you?)

Another very common feature one notices among Japanese in their formal speech is their insistence upon using phrases that are designed to avoid embarrassment to the listener.

Usually the speaker blames himself for bringing up a complaint. When he asks for an explanation of something, he tries not to sound as though he were demanding it as a

matter of indignance at the matter and apologize for having asked for an explanation. It is obvious that this sort of communication takes place between general public and officials. Contrary to this, if he were an American, he would storm into the office and directly ask the concerned official "What is the meaning of this?" In India, one has to only look at the PWD (Public Works Department of the Government of India) offices to see how the average middle class person reacts to an increase shown in his bill.

Similarly, the Japanese would apologize for being overly nervous when asking someone to be quiet or stop playing the piano, instead of shouting out "Cut it out". Sometimes embarrassment to the speaker is avoided by using approximate rather than exact numbers when making a request. They use expressions such as "Mittsu-bakari (about 3), "mikka-hodo (about three days) or ashita-atari (around tomorrow) instead of simply saying 'mittsu', 'mikka' or ashita. Giving exact numbers usually gives the listener some room for adjustment, and avoids embarrassment. English people, too, in general, tend to follow this practice and is also quoted in English books on etiquette.

The Japanese usually avoid saying'no' in social conversations and use various other indirect means to indicate refusal or disapproval. This is another feature of their communication pattern. According to Keiko Ueda,[33] in Japan

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34 Keiko Ueda, "Sixteen Ways to Avoid Saying "No in Japanese" in Condon and Saito, eds, Intercultural Encounters with Japan (Tokyo, 1979), pp.185-192.

there are about sixteen different ways to avoid saying no. When on intimate terms, as within a family, a definite answer such as 'no' may not cause bad feelings but rather increase their closeness. But outside the family, directly declining requests becomes difficult as one does not usually know the other's feelings and beliefs. Specially the Japanese average man-on-the-street would never refuse his senior directly for, according to Ms Ueda's thesis, "hurting the superiors' feelings might endanger his future promotion in the company. It could also show him a bad light as a selfish and unfriendly person". Some of the sixteen ways she writes are: (i) an apology, which, in Ryu Kumazawa's words, could be expressed by saying that the person requested to is in a very inferior position and has no capabilities, (ii) by giving delaying answers or false promises like 'kanagete okimasu' or 'Ichiyoo Yatte Mimashoo' (We will try); (iii) making conditions upon the request; (iv) silence or rather just shutting up; (v) lying or giving excuses, (vi) asking counter questions, or (vii) changing the topic completely, (viii) giving a vague 'no', or (ix) a yes, but... i.e. the 'demo' (but) following the spontaneous 'yes' manages to convey the message.[35]

The final feature that one comes across in the formal communication pattern is in the indirection in the offering of suggestions or advice. Politeness means that one should

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35 Ibid., pp.186-189.

avoid tones of condescension, or giving the impression of doing someone a favour. In no way should the listener feel offended. Advice is given out of kindness but there should be check on the latter. Thus even this is done in a hesitant tone. The ideal situation, according to N. Mizutani, is, by tact, the speaker manages to force a situation where the listener feels that it was he who came up with that idea.[36]

Non-Verbal Communication

Finally, a short note on non-verbal communication and the role of silence in Japanese society would not be irrelevant at this point. As mentioned earlier, in Japan people have viewed language as a - not the means of communication. Preference has been given to non-verbal communication. There has been a persistent tendency to believe that verbal language is not necessarily the best medium for enhancing human understanding.

This is in marked contrast to the Western concept of verbiosity. Inspite of the existence of such proverbs, 'silence is golden' and 'language is not the best means of communication', recognition comes to those who can use this means of communication rather adroitely.

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36 N. Mizutani, n.33, p.5.

On the other hand, Japanese language is conducive to protracted discussion rather than to crisp and matter of fact discussion as in Western languages, especially English. But even then it is widely believed that a person who relies heavily upon verbal communication as a means of expressing his feelings is said to prove his abruptness, immaturity and possibly dishonesty.[37]

According to a Japanese proverb, "silence speaks better than words". In other words, the highest form of communication is the language of silence. Nothing is said, yet everything is comprehended within one's heart - that is the ideal.

Rice farming, which was the way of life in traditional Japan, was conducive to non-verbal communication. Life in rice paddies was repetitive and routine. Members of the same family worked closely side by side, everyone knowing exactly what he or she was expected to do. Friends and relatives were all Japanese. So were strangers from other villages. And so were the officials who came to collect taxes. For centuries, Japan was a single communal world where each one's role was well-defined and well-comprehended. Thus agrarian life, cultural homogeneity, and the tyranny of the feudal regime all added to the discouragement

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37 Robert S. Ozaki, The Japanese : A Cultural Portrait (Tokyo, 1978), pp.226-248.

of dialectics and oration. But in spite of the nineteenth century transformation of Japan into an industrial society, the spirit of non-verbalism found its way into modern social organizations.

With this brief introduction of Japanese interpersonal communication pattern, an analysis of the social system reflected in this process would follow.

The Japanese Social System Reflected in its Communication Behavior

Since the end of World War II there have been several theories propounded and numerous books written to explain the nature of the Japanese society and social behaviour. As a result of these efforts there have been two kinds of beliefs that are prevalent.

One of these is that Japan is a nation of people extremely close to one another and bound by an iron code of honour. Due to the obligations of 'giri' and 'on', a person has to obey the rules and act in an exemplary fashion, forgetting all selfish interests for the greater good of the community. In tightly-knit family units the parents lavish affection on their children, bringing them up with tender care, but strictly so that the children might bear the traits of the nation. The children bound by filial piety, very naturally look after their parents in old age. The profound and humane religions of Buddhism and Shinto give a deeper spirituality to their lives.

The other is that Japanese society has modernized very rapidly without losing its soul. There is a "blend" of old and new. Due to time honoured traditions, the factory foreman or company president has become the "father" of his workers and the company itself is just an extension of the family. People are looked after and cared for, and in exchange show the greatest loyalty, discipline and industry in producing finely crafted goods. The modern factories are a marvel of technology and Japanese management methods, including lifetime employment and the career escalator, give the employee everything he wants. The bureaucrats are selfless and efficient. Democracy, due to the 'ringi' system and other methods of consensus making, has spread to both the higher level and at the grassroots. In the place of classes, there is now a meritocracy based on selection through education in an educational system left open to all so that even the humblest can rise to the highest position.

The works of several scholars come to one's mind while referring to the Japanese society. Right from Ruth Benedict's pioneering work to Takeshi Ishiida, from Hiroshi Minami to Dean Barnlund, one can get glimpses of the society from several angles and viewpoints.

This chapter having dealt, to some extent, with the communication behaviour of the Japanese, would now analyse the above mentioned beliefs through their communication patterns. While doing so, it would also make a brief survey

of the above mentioned prominent theorists of interpersonal relations and Japanese social communication.

Studies of interpersonal relationship in Japanese society began as early as 1945-46 with Ruth Benedict,[38] a prominent American sociologist and social anthropologist. Being among the first ones to comment upon the hierarchical structure of the Japanese society, she has earned the reputation of being one of the most quoted writers of them all. She believes that the Japanese social relationship is unequal and hierarchical. The Japanese, she feels, are extremely conscious of their "proper station" which is reflected in every greeting and every contact between two Japanese people.[39]

Although much of her writing is based on secondary sources, her views present some very important insights into the Japanese society. Unfortunately many of the later day scholars have quoted her views out of context. That is, inspite of the sweeping changes that have taken place within Japan, authors have continued to quote her views as gospel truth regardless of the times and circumstances under which she propounded them.

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38 Ruth Benedict, Chrysanthemum and the Sword (Tokyo, 1946), Chapter III, pp.43-75.

39 Ibid., p.47.

After the war, however, the world's attention was turned towards the Western world and Japan receded into the background. During the same period within Japan, the books that were written about the nature of society were self-critical in nature. The importance of such writings in the context of the present study would be discussed later in this chapter.

Chie Nakane's theory on the Japanese society was propounded when Japan had reemerged as a major economic power.[40] It is significant that her views also do not mark a radical change from Ruth Benedict's. Her theory also talks of strict hierarchy among people characterized by the rigidity of ranking among the salaried people (as well as the management) in the companies. She says:

> Vertical ranking rules the lives of those arche-types of city life - the sararimen, who are ubquitous organization men. The ranking principle leads them duty-fully to form groups and subgroups, built pyramid-style around a boss and his several underlings and their several underlings. 41

The views of Herman Kahn as seen in his writings during the early seventies also reflect a similar stance.[42]

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40 Chie Nakane, Japanese Society (Penguin, 1971).

41 Ibid., pp.50-53.

42 Harman Kahn, The Emerging Japanese Superstate (Penguin, 1973).

According to him:

> Traditionally every Japanese is a part of a hierarchical structure. There are people who rank above every individual ... and there are people beneath. Having no concept of equality, to say that certain people are equal generally implies they are at an equal distance from some common superior i.e. they are equal in the way two privates or two generals are equal. Both have common rank in a pyramidal hierarchical structure. 43

Subsequent books and articles on Japan and its social structure have continued to maintain the same view. There has been, in fact, a profusion of books on Japan after these two books. Some examples of them are Takeshi Ishida's 'Japanese Society, 1971,[44] Hiroshi Minami's 'Psychology of the Japanese People', 1971,[45] Ezra F. Vogel's 'Japan's New Middle Class', 1971,[46] John M. Maki's (ed.)'We the Japanese' 1972,[47] 'Japan and the Japanese by Mainichi Newspapers in

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43 Ibid., pp.24-25.

44 Takeshi Ishida, Japanese Society (Tokyo, 1971).

45 Hiroshi Minami, Psychology of the Japanese People (Tokyo, 1971).

46 Ezra F. Vogel, Japan's New Middle Class (Berkeley, 1971).

47 John M. Maki, ed., We the Japanese (New York, 1972).

1973,[48] Tadashi Fukutake's 'Japanese Society Today', 1974,[49] 'The Silent Power of Japan Interpreter', 1976,[50] and so on.

Another view advanced by Takeo Doi[51] using a unique approach is also interesting. Using psychiatry to study the society, he shows us how Japanese society centers around the concept of 'amae' or the 'longing for belonging'. He says:

> The Japanese term 'amae' refers initially to the feelings that all normal infants at the breast harbor towards the mother dependence, the desire to be passively loved, the unwillingness to be separated from the mother-child circle and cast into a world of objective 'reality'. On the personal level, this means that within his own most intimate circle, and to diminishing degrees, outside that circle he seeks relationships that, however, binding they may be in their outward aspects, allow him to presume on familiarity. 52

Doi's theory also at several places resounds Benedict's and Nakane's opinions. He, in fact, tries to put some "scientificity" in their theories of 'giri', and 'ninjo' and 'sin' and 'shame' and the difficulty for Japanese to be truly free, psychologically.

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48 "Japan and the Japanese", Mainichi Newspapers (Tokyo), 1973.

49 Tadashi Fukutake, Japanese Society Today (Tokyo, 1974).

50 "The Silent Power", Japan Interpreter (Tokyo), 1976.

51 Takeo Doi, Amae no Kozo (Tokyo, 1971).

52 Ibid., p.74.

Other scholars also have repeatedly confirmed Benedict's and Nakane's theories in various words. What is significant in all their writings is that their views on hierarchy and vertical ranking are supplemented by the afore-mentioned speech levels (Keigo) in the formal pattern of communication.

We have noted clearly in the beginning that the Japanese social communication pattern has two aspects to it -- the formal style as well as the informal style. While discussing the question of the Japanese language textbooks, we have also noted how both the styles are equally important to the Japanese, unless one learns or knows the informal form of communication, one can never achieve or experience a sense of closeness or intimacy with the Japanese. It seems as if the formal style creates a wall between two Japanese.

This feature is clearly reflected in the Japanese terms -- 'honne' and 'tatenae'. It is 'honne' which is characterized with the informal style where all pretences are dropped and the real intention of the person revealed. On the other hand it is the "ceremonial mask of 'tatemae' which uses the formality of the 'Keigo'.

It is, therefore, an error to say that the Japanese, "as observed in their communication behaviour" are only concerned with hierarchy and put "others" above "self" all the time and in every situation. Similarly, it is difficult to admit that there is a rigid hierarchy among every group. To give an example, there are terms

such as 'onna doshi' which could be translated as among the 'comnaderie' of women"; or 'otoko doshi' in the case of men. Other groups can also be formed as 'gakusei doshi' and others. What one gathers from these terms is that there are groups that exist in Japan whose foundation is based on informality and equality. It would be onesided therefore to say that all groups are inherently rigid.

Takeshi Ishiida is among the first scholars to propound his theory on the "competition and conformity" aspect of Japan.[53] He calls this the "dual nature of the Japanese society". According to him, Japan being a capitalist country, there is a fierce competition among its members. This inversely promotes conformity among them. One is more inclined to believe that instead of there being a rigid ranking within groups based upon seniority and other inherent qualities of its members, it is this keenness of competition that leads to the formation of groups and makes the system rigid. The formality of the speech and the hesitation while speaking is the outward manifestation of this social situation.

After briefly analyzing the views of some major scholars on the interpersonal relations in the Japanese society this study would now attempt to critically examine some of the theories propounded by scholars on the pattern of social interaction in Japanese society.

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53 Takeshi Ishiida, n.44, pp.37-40.

Due to the novelty of the subject, research in this branch has been undertaken by only a few scholars. Takao Suzuki[54] is one, besides Nobuko Mizutani,[55] her husband Osamn Mizutani,[56] Hiroshi Minami[57] and an American scholar, Dean C. Barnlund.[58]

In his views, Takao Suzuki also adheres to theory of superior-inferior relationships and, thus, belongs to the Nakane school of thought. On the other hand, Hiroshi Minami believes in the 'tatemae-honne' philosophy of the Japanese and clearly shows us how the communication pattern reflects this belief in the Japanese society. It is important to examine both their views in some detail.

Suzuki's work centers principally around the terms of reference between the speaker and the addressee and this chapter has already emphasized the importance of these terms while studying social relationships.

To show how closely he agrees with Nakane's views, one can quote:

> In Japan, where practices such as permanent employment, a seniority system of promotion and male predominance are still common, the

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54 Takao Suzuki, n.21.

55 Nobuko Mizutano, n.5, and n.33.

56 Osamu Mizutani, Nihongo no Seitai (Tokyo, 1979).

57 Hiroshi Minami, n.45.

58 Dean C. Barnlund, The Public and the Private Self in Japan and the United States (Tokyo, 1979).

> society places more value on inherent qualifications such as age, sex and station in a stratified society which do not allow the persons concerned any free choice. 59

On his analysis of the rigidity of the interpersonal communication reflected in the terms of address and self-reference, one does sometimes feel that it has been carried too far.

For example, he says that the father while talking to his son, makes, in three direct explicit ways and one indirect implicit way, clear that he is superior to him. On the other hand the son also, while talking, confirms his inferior role in two direct ways and two indirect ways.[60]

One seriously wonders whether the father, while calling himself 'papa' tries to impose on the son that he is superior, or that, in using that term for himself, he is trying to be loving and gentle and reaffirming his role as an advisor to the son, rather than a dictator. One hears 'Otosan ni Makasete Kure' or 'Otosan no Koto o Yokukiite Kure' (listen to what your papa says) more often than, 'watashi wa otosan da yo (I am your father).

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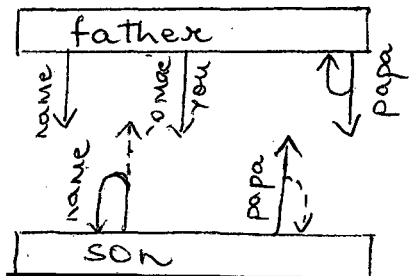
59 Suzuki, n.21, p.135.

60 Ibid. Refer to diagram on p.132.



Several times Suzuki's theory does not maintain continuity in his thought. One such instance is where he mentions the mature of the husband-wife relationship as revealed in their pattern of communication with each other.

He says that as the Japanese couple call each other by their names in the present-day society, it shows the "contractual" nature of their relationship. But as soon as a child is born to them they change to calling each other 'otosan' and 'okasan' which, he feels, inculcates "more security" in their relationship. One seriously wonders whether before the birth of a child, the husband-wife relationship in Japan is really "insecure, akin to tense".[61]

However, in the very next page, he says "for Japanese, marriage is a natural non-contractual relationship based on the static and unchangeable parent-child relationship which theoretically can neither be denied nor annulled".[62]

His conclusion is rather significant. Basing upon the terms of address and self reference, he believes that the Japanese have no sense of "self" or 'identity'. To quote:

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61 "At the time a man and a woman are married they may be regarded as having entered a relationship based on a kind of contract. Both the role of a husband and a wife have to be played semi-consciously, since they are roles actively chosen and entered into by these people. Consequently the state of marriage in which the husband and wife find themselves, alone as a couple until the first child is born, contains a certain degree of insecurity akin to tension". See T. Suzuki, n.21, p.136.

62 Ibid., pp.137-138.

> The Japanese ego may be construed as being in an indefinite state with its position undermined until a specific addressee, a concrete person appears and is identified by the speaker. 63

The other two scholars refute this view of Suzuki.

Hiroshi Minami confirms strictly to the 'honne' and 'tatemae' principle of the Japanese society and is more realistic in his views. Minami propounded his theory just after the oil shock when, because of a crisis in the society, several scholars (in fact the entire society) were going through a period of self analysis and self criticism. Although he does not take any specific element of social communication in action, he derives his conclusions about the interpersonal relationship in the Japanese society through an analysis of the literature written during the war and after.

He feels that the Japanese have a highly developed sense of 'self' characterized by the honne, but due to the kind of system created by the war situation, this self was forced to submit to the superiority of others - usually 'seniors' and "officials".[64]

However, due to the presence of his 'honne' the Japanese indigenousity devised a system whereby they could pretend to adhere to rules of submission i.e. 'tatemae' while maintaining his sense of identity. To quote:

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63 Ibid., p.143.

64 Hiroshi Minami, n.45, p.17.

> Men framed in a firm and strict order unless they explicitly deny order are apt to breathe within the frame of the order without infringing on its regulations or acting contrary to them. They become skilful in the use of submission and in knowing how to combine two contradictory things cleverly. 65

His views on 'giri' and'on', governing human relationships are also of deep interest to us. Unlike most other scholars who say that 'giri' led the Japanese people to put everyone else above themselves, he says, interestingly that in reality, "one's sense of 'giri' is deepened in exact proportion to the favour of a word just like a contract"[66] - not like "repaying one's giri - a thousand times", as claimed by Benedict.[67]

One does not really know whose theory one can subscribe to completely -- whether to believe that the Japanese have 'no sense of self" or have 'a strong sense of self', due to the paucity of research undertaken in this field. However, when we consider how the Japanese interact, one could say that the Japanese have a limited public self but a comparatively deeper private self. This is also the conclusion that Barnlund reaches after his survey of the American and the Japanese communication systems.[68]

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65 Ibid., p.20.

66 Ibid., p.158.

67 Ruth Benedict, n.38, pp.114-131.

68 Dean C. Barnlund, n.58.

Having reached this conclusion after an indepth study of the interpersonal communication pattern of the Japanese society, one would like to shift from broad generalizations to specificity.[69] One would like to take up the interpersonal communication pattern within the business management of the Japanese companies and see whether the previous conclusions can be confirmed.

Interpersonal Communication Within Business Management

If the theory that the Japanese have no sense of "self" is to be accepted then one would expect the elite to be dictatorial and ambitious - ready to do whatever they wish and get away with it. May be that was possible during the Tokugawa times and also during the pre-war (World War II) times, when attempts were made to organize the society in such a way that one's sense of self was totally suppressed and absolute submission to authority was the order of the day.

But due to the Japanese practice of imbibing knowledge and technology from the West and improving upon them, this total suppression was not possible to maintain. History saw how the borrowing of liberal ideas from the West upset the power balance of the Tokugawa times and heralded in the Meiji era. The Taisho era saw the rise of the labour force

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69 This study's choice of the interpersonal examination in the business management has already been explained in the preface of this dissertation. One would shortly observe how effective and correct communication can have far-reaching consequences.

which called for democratization of the decision making process. The Bolshevik Revolution and several other movements in Europe convinced the conservative elements within Japan that external influences could threaten their position. This fear was, to a large extent, overcome by strengthening the armed forces and by indoctrinating the people on the greatness of the Japanese Empire and the necessity of capturing markets and land abroad.

The shattering blow of the defeat, the sweeping changes made by the Occupation authorities to create a more democratic atmosphere,[70] the rise of a strong labour movement and the creation of alternative seats of power among the business, once again led to problems of adjustment among the various elements of the Japanese society.

In short, it was extremely difficult for the elite to continue indoctrinating absolute submission among the people with success. However, as Hiroshi Minami has clearly shown us how such indoctrination was apparently successful (through 'tatenae' principle), a lesson was learnt. And that was, apparent submission, in the end is more dangerous and harmful than outright opposition.

Having learnt this, the Japanese have, since 1952, perfected their own indigenous methods and practices in numerous sectors. So much so, that today even some of the

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70 M.Y. Yoshino, Japan's Managerial System (Cambridge, 1968), pp.29-34.

most developed Western countries, impressed by Japan's technological efficiency are seeking to learn a few lessons from them.[71] The Japanese art of management is one such sector.

As the purpose of this chapter is not to go into the details of the Japanese management system, one would not like to go beyond this brief introduction. Suffice is to mention that the Western scholars are firmly convinced that the Japanese have succeeded to build a socialist system of management without changing its economic system.

Having learnt that creativity is the essence of success, the Japanese business leaders realized that unless an atmosphere of harmony of encouraging participation is created, Japanese economy would not be able to survive international competition. Paucity of natural resources and a delayed entry into the world market made things worse for Japan. Effective managerial practices, however, came to their rescue.

Without going into the technical details of management like marketing strategy and production controls and finance, this study would limit itself to an analysis of the characteristics of the interpersonal communication patterns within it.

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71 Ezra Vogel, Japan as No.1 : Lessons for America (Cambridge, 1979). Also, Richard T. Pascale, The Art of Japanese Management (Penguin, 1982).

The underlying principle in all these characteristics is a recognition of the Japanese sense of "self" and an overwhelming emphasis on "consensus". The breakdown of the traditional autocratic system of management is one of the reasons for the gradual disappearance of the polite speech (keigo) from the Japanese communication system.

According to a prominent business leader, "Japanese and American management is 95 per cent same but different in all important respects".[72] An attempt will be made to analyse all those important characteristics.

Before we go into the details of the communication pattern of the managers within a Japanese organization, a brief reference to their nature must be relevant.

Most Japanese executives are university graduates, with no special training of any kind. Even the universities that they graduate from are restricted to a few elite ones. Most of them are inducted after an elaborate screening. As the Japanese companies follow a life-time employment system, it is understood that wages would be increased along with their experience, age and seniority. The executives are required to work at various departments and divisions till they get an idea of what is expected of them and then asked their choice of field. Once an area is chosen, the executive is

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72 Interview with Taizo Ueda, Senior Economist, Honda Motor Company, cited in Pascale, n.71, p.85.

expected to study the process and suggest means and ways of improvement. Although his promotions are based upon age and seniority, his ability and performances will determine how high he would ultimately go. His movement from one company to another is restricted by several laws on employment of labour, thus making him dependent totally on only one company. Furthermore, if found incompetent, he is asked to retire rather early (usually by mid-forties) or transferred to unimportant divisions, where his actions would be of less consequence. With this one can clearly observe how both traditions and "rationalism" have been incorporated into the Japanese companies.[73] It is significant to note Harbison's views on Japanese management at this point.

> Obviously it is organization and management rather than abundance of raw materials ... which have been major determinants and have enabled Japan to rise above the world's underdeveloped countries. 74

With the nature of the Japanese managers clarified, this paper would now limit itself to a study of three specific areas of interpersonal behaviour. The first is the composition of the work groups, their nature and interpersonal relationships;

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73 M.Y. Yoshino, n.70, Chapters III & IV.

74 Frederick Harbison, "Management in Japan" in Harbison & Myers, ed., Management in the Industrial World : An International Analysis (New York, 1959), p.250.

the second is the decision making process and their course of actions and finally the feedback of the performance of the work groups.

Work Groups

Due to considerations of traditions and culture, the Japanese function best in a group. As a result, work groups are formed in almost every division of the company. As team work is inculcated and encouraged, the Japanese manager has to work at harmonizing relationships within the groups.

For accomplishment of this, his management of the members of his group extends not just to their professional life but also to all aspects of their lives. He sees each individual as having needs that are not only economic and social, but also psychological and spiritual. Considering such needs as his own responsibility, the management does not, like in other Western countries, leave it to be looked after by other institutions such as the government, family or religious ones.[75] This fact not only confirms the earlier contention that the 'self' of the Japanese is not crushed but managed to an extent that is unparalleled in any country.[76]

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75 R.T. Pascale, n.71, pp.49-51.

76 Kitazawa Masakuni, "Militarism in the Management of Society" in Victor Kosehman, ed., Authority and Individual in Japanese Society (Tokyo, 1974), pp.200-202.

Similarly, conditioned by their limited space, the Japanese managers interact with members of their group face-to-face, at least 30 times more than their American counterparts.[77] This constant interaction not only smoothens working relationships but also results in improving the efficiency of the decision making process.

As is obvious by the nature of the work group, mentioned above, the manager of a work group is also a man senior to the others in the group. However, he, unlike the Western manager, is not a go-getter, uncaring and unmindful of his subordinates. He does not consider himself to be infallible and in complete control. He is aware of his shortcomings, shares this fact with his subordinates and manages to their trust, support and help. This sense of interdependence is most conspicuous in the Japanese management. Japanese executives having been traditionally taught to become interdependent with others consider themselves as integral part of a large human unit while exchanging dependencies with others.[78]

This sense of interdependency is clearly reflected in the interpersonal communication in their frequent meetings. Managers in the West believe that in a meeting there is either

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77 Survey conducted by Pascale and Maguire in their work, "Communication and Implementation Among Managers in Japanese and American Managed Companies in the United States", Sociology and Social Research, vol.63, no.1, 1978.

78 Pascale n.71, p.88.

agreement or disagreement of the members over various proposals. Points are made rather forcefully, and at times emotionally and decisions are evolved through a majority vote.

The Japanese tend to view meetings as an occasion to evolve consensus. "Principles" matter to them more than personalities. Differing views are presented not as contradictory but as complementary to the opinion that prevails. Knowing that members of a group would continue to be so, and a working relationship has to be evolved,[79] they feel it useless to disrupt harmony for petty "ego" problems.

For constant nurturing group harmony and group unity, regular after hours contact is held, something that although existing in the Western and Indian society, is not held to the same frequency and with the same purpose in mind.

There is another dimension to the senior-junior relationship in Japan. The Western executive always views a talented junior with a sense of panic, and tries his best to outmanoeuvre him or pull him down as superseding one's senior is a very common feature of the Western companies. In Japan, however, the junior executive, if talented, would eventually get his due. The senior executive, if not talented, would not get the promotions that he wants. He is resigned to it - but does not have to face the embarassment of his juniors superseding him. Therefore, he sees to it that his

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79 Pascale, n.71, pp.123-129.

juniors are adequately encouraged.[80] One can clearly see how the Japanese management in its interpersonal relationship has a balanced and harmonious nature.

Decision-making Process[81]

As is widely prevalent, Japanese managers take decisions through the consultative or the consensus based decision-making process. As we have just observed the Western managers believe in the majority decisions, their communication behaviour also reflects their belief. Opinions are forcefully put without caring for what the other person may think.

The Japanese, as mentioned earlier, believe in implicit communication. They conduct their dialogues in circles widening and narrowing them to correspond to the other's sensitivity to their remarks and each other's viewpoint. The Japanese manager would, therefore, prefer to say "I'd like you to reflect a bit further on your proposal" rather than "I think you are wrong and you should come up with a better idea". Such courtesies allow the listener to exist or retire with the self-esteem intact. Therefore, although all opinions are heard and the best one chosen, there is no sense of defeat or loss of "face".[82]

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80 This, somehow, keeps in line with the much quoted 'Oyabun-Kobun' relationship.

81 See Michael Blaker, Japanese International Negotiating Style (New York, 1977), pp.61-63.

82 Pascale, n.71, pp.97-101.

To Japanese, decision means 'choice' between two equally good alternatives.[83] To the Western manager, decision indicates mastery over the entire situation and his single handed dealing of it. Decisions are glamourized and legends are made of great managers and their timely decisions.

The Japanese managers on the other hand do not really like to implement changes. Improvement is more likely to be his cup of tea. Therefore, if asked to make changes especially on important policy matters he would prefer to hold extensive consultations and negotiations.

Similarly, the final choice is generally never a question of one over the other but a synthesis of the two choices. Further the Japanese find it wiser to flow along with the situation for a while before accepting the part that changes are needed. They wait till enough data on the effects of a decision are received and analyzed before taking the final step, a feature that is deeply inherent in their culture.

In the arena of communications, the Japanese managers for the purpose of flowing with the situation or waiting till enough data are available, believe in framing the decision in as vague and ambiguous language as possible. This, feels Pascale, holds strained relations together and reduces unnecessary conflict.[84]

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83 Ibid., 110-115.

84 Ibid., pp.101-102.

To maintain this vagueness, bold actions are avoided and short, tentative steps are taken towards the fulfilment of the goal. Similarly, the Japanese having a penchant for taking predictable steps, make changes gradually so that the issue loses its power to shock and confront.[85]

This characteristic is also reflected in their dislike of announcements. And it is in this feature also that the philosophy of 'honne' and 'tatemae' is applicable. As observed earlier in this chapter, the Japanese unlike the Westerners, avoid announcing their decisions, till everyone comes to know of the course of action. Announcement of actions is the 'tatemae' aspect of the management, which comes after all, prior consultations and discussions are over. These consultations, named 'nemawashi', are part of the 'honne' of the decision making process.[86]

Performance Feedback

Finally, in the interpersonal communication behaviour, one deals with the issue of the feedback or evaluation of one's performance. How this is achieved is also a significant aspect of that society's culture. Although monetary remuneration and promotions are significant and matter much to people, what is most rewarding to oneself, is recognition. Recognition of one's contribution is something that one can

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85 Pascale, n.71, p.96.

86 Ibid., pp.95-96. Also, Ezra Vogel, ed., Japanese Organizations and Decision Making (Tokyo, 1975), p.128.

get immediately much sooner than promotions or increase in salary and, if received, the satisfaction is tremendous.

The Japanese have unique way of conveying the evaluation of one's performance. Although all organizations prefer to be clear, certain and perfect in nature, human relationships induce a degree of ambiguity, uncertainty and imperfection in the conveying of one's message. Realizing that the needs of both the organization and the people have to be balanced, the Japanese manager has to deal with the assessment as carefully as possible. Besides, having meeting of several division heads to assess situations through comparisons, the management, without any words, manages to pull up lagging divisions. If instead, excuses or explanations are given, the management frames sentences that, though lack clarity, manage to convey to the other manager that his explanation is unsatisfactory. But never have the Japanese ever experienced a public embarassment of having "pulled up" by controllers or having created a situation of confrontation.[87]

Similarly, the Japanese prefer to maintain a similar nature of implicit communication when positive feedback has to be given. Sensing that public praising of the achievements of managers gives rise to unnecessary rivalry and bitterness,

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87 Pascale, n.71, pp.102-106.

the managers in controlling positions, convey their views privately. Another practice frequently followed in meetings, is giving importance to the views presented by such managers so that recognition of their work is conveyed to them in a subtle way.[88]

The Japanese managers by following such practices find it easier to call upon and bank upon the wholehearted dedication of their subordinates and also achieve higher and more difficult goals rather easily.

It is in this way we can see how effective interpersonal communication can be one of the reasons for the success of a society. Japan is one such society and the West, as one can observe from the frequent articles in the various journals, is trying to learn some lessons from them.

Having dealt with the interpersonal relations and its communication pattern in the Japanese society, this study would now shift its attention to the Indian society. The next chapter would attempt to study the interpersonal relations and the pattern of its communication behaviour and then try to make a comparative analysis of both the societies. The increasing contacts between Japan and India make such an analysis all the more relevant.

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88 Ibid.

CHAPTER III

JAPAN AND INDIA - DIFFERENCES IN THE PATTERNS OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

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In the third and the last chapter we shall concern ourselves mainly with the differences in the communication patterns of India and Japan. A brief examination of the pattern of relations that developed between the two countries over the past several centuries would be useful as providing a proper perspective for considering the communication patterns of the two countries.

Communication Through Chinese Interpreters

Ever since the dawn of recorded history, Japan never had the opportunity of having a continuous and prolonged face-to face interaction with India. Sheer physical distance separated the two countries which made communication a near-impossibility. All that Japan learnt about India was through China. Inspite of the attempts of several scholars both of India and Japan to show how intimate the cultural relations were between them, one can easily see how different the reality was.

It is true that not much would be left of Japanese culture if Buddhism and the art associated with it were excluded from Japanese life.[1] But it is also true that the Buddhism that developed in India was very different from the

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1 Suzuki Daisetsu, Zen To Nihon Bunka (Zen and Japanese Culture) (Tokyo, 1940).

one that reached Japan in 552 A.D. Furthermore, the Indian form of Buddhism that reached China somewhere around the dawn of the first century flourished in China for about five centuries before spreading to China. The conditions that gave rise to the Buddhist philosophy in India were in no way similar to the ones that existed in China at the time of the adoption of that religion. It is obvious, therefore, that its development in China also would be along very different lines. Similarly Chinese Buddhist scholars perceived the doctrines in a way that suited <u>their</u> purpose and not as the Indian Buddhists perceived them. Five centuries of intense philosophical debates, within China modified Buddhism into a religion that was essentially Chinese in nature. It was this Chinese Buddhism that reached Japan in the early sixth century.

It was the Chinese and the Koreans who interacted extensively with the Japanese and not the Indians. It was obvious then that certain misconceptions and wrong ideas would result in the perceptions of either country, of the other. This is precisely what happened. India was blessfully unaware of the existence of Japan and equally unaware of the effect Buddhism was having on it. On the other hand, Japan visualized India to be the chosen land where Sakya Muni was born - and to them it was no less than heaven itself. Thus the communication that Japan received of India was distorted and exaggerated.

One does, however, hear of Bodhisena visiting Japan somewhere in the late eighth century, but he is famous as the Baramon (Brahmana) in the Japanese legends. One can easily wonder why a Buddhist monk should be regarded a Brahmin. Obviously then the gap still existed in spite of his visit.

After the eighth century, as cultural contacts between India and China remained steady, works of Indian thinkers like Aryadevi, Asvaghosha, Dignaga, Harivarman, Nagarjuna, Paramartha, Vajraboohi and others reached China. They subsequently were also introduced to Japan. However, their ideas got lost somewhere in the transit and they came to be treated as minor gods. They were even Japanized and got rechristened as Fuku (Amoghavajra), Ryuchi (Nagabodhi), Ryumyo (Nagarjuna), Kongochi (Vajrabodhi) and so on.[2]

Similarly, through the medium of Buddhist literature, many gods and goddesses of the Sanskritic tradition reached Japan and got naturalized. For example Indra became Taisha-kuten; Lakshmi, Kishijoten; Shiva, Daikoku; Saraswati, Benten, and so on. As these reached Japan without the context in which they developed in India, their importance was transitory.

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2 See, The Lotus and the Chrysanthemum : India and Japan (Embassy of Japan, New Delhi, 1977), p.4.

The situation was identical in the art forms - painting, sculpture and literature also. These were important in Japan because China deemed them important. Each of these countries was undergoing different processes of development and it would be obvious that their perceptions about things foreign differed.

Therefore, one would like to start with the fundamental conclusion that throughout the ancient and medieval history of both Japan and India, there existed a communication gap which hampered their real understanding of each other.

Direct Communication Links in the Modern Period

As the relationship between the two countries remained one-sided, with Japan doing all the imbibing, the modern period of Japan changed all that. It is the modern period, therefore, that would be more relevant to examine.

The Meiji Restoration of 1868 is considered to be the dawn of the "modern" period in Japan, because it marked the beginning of industrialization. Throughout the medieval period Japan remained isolated from the rest of the world. This situation, however, changed dramatically when the policy of the rulers swung in favour of importing knowledge from everywhere possible. It was during this time that the Japanese people, for the first time, visited the Western countries. Similarly, it was during this time, that China

ceased to be its official interpreter and carrier of information of the world beyond. Finally, it was during this period also that Japan ventured into establishing direct contacts with the land of the "Oshakasama" (Sakyamuni - Gautam).

The need of the hour for Buddhist scholars was the modernization of Buddhist studies and it was felt that it could best be achieved through visiting India. Eminent scholars like Takakusu Junjiro, Anesaki Masaharu and Shimaji Daito visited India and were the ones to lay the foundations of modern Pali-Buddhistic studies and of Indian philosophy and religion in Japan.[3] One wonders what their initial reaction to the changes within India was. It is significant to note that both Inoue Tetsujiro and Inoue Enryo who played such an important role in reviving interest in Buddhism obtained their Buddhistic training in Germany, and not in India.[4] It must have shocked them to discover that their "heaven" was not invincible and lay captive to the mighty British. Similarly they must have looked at the "death" of Buddhism in India with dismay. On the other hand, however, due to the efforts of the above-mentioned scholars, academic facilities and departments for the study of Buddhism and

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3 Lotus and Chrysanthemum, Ibid., p.17.

4 Ibid., p.17.

ancient Indian thought were created even in universities such as the Tokyo University.[5]

The modern period in both the countries started on a different note historically. India lost its political independence and Japan had to build enough national strength to protect its sovereignty. Japan's goal was national strength which it achieved through a very long and careful process of probing into the secrets behind the Western power, borrowing judiciously and then applying it to selected areas of national life. It was this exercise that saved Japan from losing its sovereignty and helped it to achieve worldwide reputation and prestige.

Here then we see another interesting historical irony. That is, Japan now became the model that the Indians wished to copy for achieving political freedom.[6] For Japan, India ceased to be the land of Lord Buddha, but just another country rich in raw materials and cheap labour.

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5 Hara Tanzan, a Zen priest began giving lectures on Buddhist learning at Tokyo University two years after which a course on Indian philosophy was established. See, Ibid., p.18.

6 Tagore put it aptly: "Wearing saffron robes, the Masters of religion went to your country to teach. Today, we come to your door as disciples to learn the teachings of action". Quoted from Lotus and Chrysanthemum, Ibid., p.31.

The changes that were going on within Japan to strengthen itself, however, were vaguely known to India until the end of the nineteenth century. It was only when Indians came into direct contact with Japan and the Japanese, that the full significance of those changes was realized. P.C. Majumdar's visit in 1880s and Vivekananda's trip in early 1890s impressed them so much that they were the first ones to give the call for following Japan's example. The Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5 and Japan's victory stimulated the rise of Indian nationalism. Jawaharlal Nehru, Dadabhai Nauroji, B.G. Tilak, G.K. Gokhale, sister Nivedita and other leaders of the freedom movement, all felt that Japan had shown it to the rest of the Asian world that by following the path that it had followed, one could achieve economic and political independence like it did.

Ever since then, young Indians had begun to go to Japan in fairly large numbers for training and education; and new textile factories and mills were set up with Japanese machines and equipment to promote indigenous production. It was in the fields of industrial development and education that the greatest impact of Japan was felt.[7] Rabindranath Tagore [illegible]

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7 Even the Dewans of the South like Mysore stressed the importance of industrial development in India. In education, Syed Ahmed Khan in 1875 set up the Mohammedan Anglo Oriental School at Aligarh to impart Western education to the people. See, Lotus and Chrysanthemum, Ibid., pp.34-46.

also tried to foster a sense of unity with the Japanese to give rise to feelings of Asian unity.[8] But all these initial feelings of enthusiasm for the Japanese model started dying away when the militarist forces in Japan started raising their head.

The only other person who tried to win the Japanese support and then managed to maintain contact with them was Subhas Chandra Bose. After breaking away from the Indian National Congress over differences with Gandhi, Bose continued to fight for the liberation struggle and tried to gain the Japanese help in overthrowing the British. Their aims were similar and therefore very soon their plans were put into action. Though this operation met with failure, the Japanese role left an undeniable mark in the minds of the Indian people. Bose's role in the independence movement and his interaction with the Japanese indicates that he could, to some extent, manage to communicate himself clearly with the Japanese.

After the war, however, both countries due to being preoccupied with internal reconstruction could not give adequate attention to foreign policy matters. After 1952, Japan chose to align itself with the United States and India pursued the path of non-alignment.

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8 Ibid., pp.42-43.

India's generous and sympathetic attitude towards Japan's emergence as a sovereign nation and its subsequent entry into various world bodies like the United Nations, contributed to the development of warm relations during the fifties. Taking advantage of this favourable climate, leaders of both countries exchanged frequent visits at different levels, but the Sino-Indian border dispute of 1962 marked a change in the bilateral relations. Since then both Japan and India have maintained correct relations.

It is not the purpose of this chapter to examine in detail the political problems that have hampered closer relations between the two countries. What is significant to note is the social distance that exists between the two peoples. There have been several instances in the world where close affinity has continued between two nations despite political differences. Pakistan and India provide one such example, China and Japan form another. The differences in the political systems between India and Japan are not so great that they cannot be bridged. This, however, needs the concentrated effort of people within the countries to make better understanding possible.

Having already examined the interpersonal relations in the Japanese society to some extent the following section would concern itself with the Indian society and its interpersonal relations.

1. Interpersonal Communication in the Indian Society

Before going into the finer points of the Indian society, one thing needs to be emphasized. The catholicity, the broad tolerance of other cultures, the assimilative and synthesizing tendency of the Indian culture are some of the characteristics that the Japanese culture cannot claim as its strong points.

The Japanese have been selective, and due to their isolation, made conscious naturalization of things foreign possible. Not so in the case of India. The Indian people have evolved as a result of the fusion of many races, ethnic and linguistic and religious groups and cultures from the pre-Aryan, Dravidian speaking people right down to the establishment of Western dominance. Inspite of diversities, the Indians are "heirs to the composite culture" of theirs. Their close contacts with the outside world have been of a cultural and commercial nature. Never having lived in isolation, they have from time immemorial been a part of world history.

However, due to the vastness of the country and the existence of inaccessible places within, the country should be conceived simultaneously as two different social phenomena: (a) those entities which are rural in their orientation and traditional in their values, and (b) those which are fundamentally urban and Western in their outlook.

Both the urban and the rural areas of India are socially stratified on the basis of the following factors:[9]

(a) property status where the amount of land controlled in the rural area is the criterion and similarly, material possessions are so in the urban areas;

(b) caste status where there is ranking;

(c) political power and the rank of the offices held;

(d) educational status in the urban areas and to some extent in the rural areas also; and

(e) occupational status where being in positions of power is considered prestigious.

Although these factors do get reflected in the patterns of interaction in the society, age, sex, and the degree of familiarity also affect the communication styles. It is interesting to note how the speech styles of the Brahmanas and their addressors have undergone a significant change.[10] Although they are still among the top in certain areas, other castes, possessing land, property, position and power, are now sharing this position with them.

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9 David G. Mandel-Baum, Society in India (Berkeley, 1967), p.56. See also D.M. Majumdar, Caste and Communication in an Indian Village (Bombay, 1958), pp.19-35.

10 J.H.B. Den Ouden, "Social Stratification as Expressed Through Language", Contributions to Indian Sociology (NS), vol.13, no.1, 1979, p.263.

The social stratification is clearly reflected in the speech levels present in the Indian languages. They are expressed in the following four ways:

(a) linguistic etiquette expressed in verb forms;

(b) the use and non-use of names of persons without honorific titles;

(c) the use of fictive kinship terms in interclass (and caste) communications; and

(d) the use of the term of address 'Sami' in the South and 'Mai bap' in the North.[11]

A brief analysis of these characteristics follows:

The speech styles of the juniors are marked by honorific verb forms - like in Hindi '<u>jaiye</u>', '<u>aaiye</u>', and so on. In northern India, the verb forms in the village community do not have the 'iye' suffixes, but use the neutral verb forms - or rather the 'familiar' verb forms as jao, khao and so on. In the south, for example in Tamil, the polite form of 'to go' or 'to come' is affixed to the verb forms. On the other hand, the speech styles of the seniors to the juniors are marked by 'disrespectful' verb forms - which depending on situations are forms used by equals or friends who are extremely intimate. The forms are 'kha<u>a</u>' or 'ja<u>a</u>' and so on.

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11 Ibid., p.263.

Besides honorific verb forms, the terms of address also indicate the social position of the speaker.[12] Appropriate kinship terms such as 'bhai sahab', 'pitaji', 'didi', etc. have to be used within the family, but without also, the 'position' with a 'ji' is a must. 'Panditji', 'darogaji', 'masterji' and so on are what can be called examples of such terms of address. However, in villages of northern India, the aforementioned neutral forms of verbs are very commonly used with those terms. In the South, however, this is different where appropriate honorific verb forms are used.

Besides these lexical differences, the existence of certain cultural norms also affect the verbal behaviour of the villagers. For example, maintaining silence by the junior member when the seniors in the hierarchy are speaking. The role of the former is to speak only when some clarification is needed or some questions are asked.

Similarly, the husband and wife refrain from using each other's names. They usually call each other either 'eiji' or 'are sunti ho' or '_ke pitaji' or '_ke amma'. Another cultural norm is refraining from speaking to each other at all, when the parents of the husband are present. Similarly, the wife usually cannot talk to her husband's elder brother

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12 Sylvia Vatuk, "Reference, Address and Fictive Kinship in Urban North India", Ethnology, vol.8, 1969, p.259.

or the father-in-law. In fact, even the seeing of each other's faces is avoided.[13]

These are some of the cultural norms that affect the interpersonal communication also.

In the second category also, personal names or occupational names are used with honorific title by the lower caste to the upper caste. However, the socially superior people do not reciprocate in the same manner. Personal names are used without any honorific title and neutral or 'disrespectful' verb forms accompany. Regarding the fictive kinship terms also, there emerges a clear pattern. In the Southern states, it is a simple rule which indicates the status difference. If adults of caste 'A' call adult men of caste 'B' 'appa' (father) or 'appici' (grandfather) and the latter respond with 'peranti', then caste 'B' is higher than caste 'A'.[14]

Similarly in the northern states, if adults of whatever caste or status call adults (men) 'mai bap', then the former is inferior to the latter. However, the use of kin terms implies a certain familiarity and would be avoided if the status gap was too great. The kin term also cannot be combined with disrespectful verb forms - but honorific or

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13 Sagar Mal Gupta, "The Ethnography of Speaking of the Bhil Tribe in India", The Eastern Anthropologist, vol.32, no.2, 1979, p.32.

14 Den Ouden, n.10, p.19.

neutral. The use of 'bhai', 'behen' or 'behenji' are commonly used in the rural areas to indicate brotherhood among the community.[15]

Although these features predominate more in the rural areas, they each also, to some extent, be observed in the urban regions. For the purpose of this study, a comparative analysis of both the urban and the rural forms of communication would be extremely useful.

In general, one can state that the rural patterns of communication existed all over the country before Western values pervaded the system especially the urban areas. Both Hindi and other regional literatures are full of instances where a country bumpkin steeped in the traditional culture goes to the city, adopted that way of life out of necessity and comes back to find that communication with his village folks has become difficult. This clearly proves that a communication gap exists between the urban people and their rural counterparts.

The differences can be due to several reasons, but one of which is to interpersonal relationship. In the village, the group is the unit of concern for more than the individual. The groups that matter are the village community, the caste and the extended or the joint family. The importance of the

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15 S.A. Freed, "Fictive Kinship in a Northern Indian Village", Ethnology, vol.2, 1963, p.95.

family in Japan is very well known to us, but in rural India, the family occupies a position even more important and dominant than its Japanese counterpart. However, the patrilineal family is the neutral unit of the Indian societies of both the regions and responsibilities are shared.

The rhetorical significance of such a system is obvious. Personality is considered to be communal and individual motivation loses some of its potency. All actions reflect not just upon the entire family but also their ancestors and descendants.[16]

Family, in their turn, join into communities, and villages are in their own way highly autonomous. For any important matter, the advice and consent of the old people in the family is sought. However, when the matter involves the opinion of others, apart from the family, such as borrowing money for business, immigration, marriage and other issues, the advice of kinsmen and village elders is also sought.[17] Consensus is considered of primary importance.

Besides the family and the community, caste ~~was~~ is another group that an individual belonged to. The caste ~~was~~ is another way of life that determined the individual's attitude towards others within the caste and without.

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16 Robert T. Oliver, Communication and Culture in Ancient India and China (New York, 1971), p.20.

17 Sagar Mal Gupta, n.13, p.40.

According to Oliver, due to these inherent qualities of the Indian society, the specialization of a person depends upon effective communication.[18] Coordinate group action is possible when problems are talked to a solution. It is because of this characteristic, the spoken word and not writing has been the basis of the literary and scientific activity in India.[19]

Whatever it is, reliance on mutual discussion and consensus of the entire community is an important form of communication. With this approach in mind, the question is not persuasive skills, but whether the sentiments of the assemblage are being rightly stated or not. The tone is not argumentative but of patient explanation. The appeal of the speaker is not to his own authority or to his own powers of reasoning but to the common beliefs which all reasonable men share. This is the characteristic of the speech styles in the villages.[20]

The speech styles differ considerably in the urban areas of the Indian society - which one feels, leads to discrepancies in the communication patterns not only within the urban and rural areas of India but also between the two countries.

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18 Robert T. Oliver, n.16, p.22.

19 Ibid., p.23.

20 Robert T. Oliver, n.16, p.22.

Due to the overwhelming urbanization of the countryside in the past century and the spread of education based on Western values and morals, the rural character of the Indian people has undergone a serious transformation. Although certain inherent values and norms of society have continued to dominate the minds of the people, there is no doubt, that the communication patterns have undergone a serious change.[21]

The urban communication system is now based more and more on the principles of logic, on the one hand, and of

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21 It would be apt here to mention what Caraka Samhita identifies as "five faults" of speech which is avoided by the "learned" and "wise" in the Indian society. Although considered characteristic of the speech of Brahamans, it nevertheless, is symbolic of what constitutes the speech style.

These were (a) saying too little, which occurred when supporting reasons were omitted, or examples not given, or application of an argument to the central thesis was lacking; (b) saying too much, which might consist of irrelevances or of needless repetition; (c) meaninglessness, when the words seemed jumbled and the speaker means to impress rather than to enlighten; (d) incoherence, when the categories or definitions used by the speaker were overlapping or vague, and (e) contradictions, which might consist of contrary verbal assertions or of opposition between examples cited and overall context of the speaker's remarks.

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Cited in Oliver, n.16, p.54.

politics, on the other.[22]

Thus, through the inculcation of such values for over a century and the domination of political activities in the country, the rural values of maintaining harmony and the rationalization of the status quo, changed to reformism and change. This being so, the methodology of speech changed from exposition to argument, and its aim, from enlightenment of the inquirer to overwhelming of an opponent. Its characteristic style changed from the earnestness of investigation to the fervor of conviction. Thus, speech came to be an instrument of persuasion. One can clearly observe this feature in the discourse style of the Indian urbanites.

Besides promotion of harmony, the traditional function of discourse is aimed at depersonalization. Emphasis is removed from the specific individual purposes of speakers and listeners, to universality. This feature is gradually disappearing, and people instead of speaking "generally", place more emphasis on individual examples for proving points.[23]

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22 The principles of logic, it may be useful to mention, consider rhetoric to be an offshoot of not only dialectics, which rendered it basically logical, but also of politics, which rendered it audience-centered. Societies based on this kind of speeches and rhetoric are directed to men who take decisions by majority vote. The purpose of the speaker is to win as many votes as he can. The measure of desirability of a proposal is whether it renders the greatest good for the greatest number. Hence, in its very nature, rhetoric is directed not only towards the explication of truth, but also towards the satisfaction of the prejudiced and personalized views of the listener. See Oliver, n.16, p.8.

23 Oliver, n.16, p.29.

Similarly the other values of communication which are highly westernized have slowly come to seep into the urban patterns of interaction. Values such as originality of style and ideas, unrestrained and uncontrolled handling of the subject, overemphasis on the listener and one-self, freedom of speech for everyone whether he is senior or junior, is today a part of the urban communication pattern.

The view that 'actions speak louder than words' i.e. not what one says what one does is more important, is widely prevalent in the cities. That is the role of speech is overlooked in the negative sense of the term. This view of speech, however, is diametrically opposite to the traditional Indian view where speech being a part of one's inner self, reflects one's innermost thoughts and feelings, and should not be taken lightly.

Finally, the role of silence has also diminished in the cities. Just as silence is awkward and embarrassing in the West, lengthy pauses of silence also make the city-dwellers in India shifty. The villagers, on the other hand, value silence rather than fear it.[24]

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24 In India it is said that if a group of people fell silent the reason could be: (i) no one has anothing to say, (ii) the subject under discussion is ambiguous where sense rather than words can convey meaning better, (iii) everyone is in total agreement (iv) the subject is too risky to be discussed - and so the need to talk is not there. Not so in the city where changing of the subject is better than remaining silent. Oliver, n.16, p.264.

2. Comparison of Communication Categories in the City and the Village

To put the differences of the communication categories in a brief note, one can notice the following features:

The Speaker:

In the urban area the speaker is conceived as an individual who is a spokesman for his organization. A skilled representative who, by his words, can change the views of the listener. On the other hand in the rural areas, the speaker is conceived of as an "elder" of the village and he "knew" - that is why he spoke to announce the truth.

The Message

The message in the cities is so formulated that the audience can find some "common" ground for comprehension. The unfamiliar portion of the message is related closely to the familiar and accepted belief of the listeners.

Not so in the villages, where what is to be spoken is "traditional wisdom" - the fundamental understanding of the community. Therefore, the message should be social rather than "individual".

The Audience

Just like the West, the city dwellers are cooperative and active participants in the communicative situation whose reactions shape the subject matter of the discourse.

In the rural areas, the listeners are "passive participants" where their role is learning.

The Channel:

The actual delivery of the speech in the cities is usually natural and unobstrusive and inconspicuous - but in the villages, it has a touch of formality and slightly ceremonial.

The Purpose:

The purpose dominates the speaker. The urbanites can use any means to convince the listeners but the purpose is to be his primary objective. Just as we noted in the second chapter, also both the Japanese and the Indian village dwellers do not think that "my" purpose, being important should form the subject of "our" discussion. Therefore, as Ouden says, purpose "somewhat" dominates the discourse.[25]

The Effect:

The reaction or the effect upon the audience is what the speaker tries to dominate and manipulate. However, the villagers only try to make the subject acceptable.

The Tone:

The city discourse tends to be animated, optimistic, dynamic and favourable to experimentation and change.

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25 Ouden, n.10, p.288.

However, the villagers in their efforts to blur individual differences and heighten the sense of harmony use mellow, unexcited gently, authoritative, and matter of fact tone.

Differences in the Indian and the Japanese Communication Patterns

Having analyzed the Indian interpersonal patterns of communication one can clearly observe certain similarities and dissimilarities with the Japanese communication patterns. While studying these features, a brief note on the theories of intercultural communication of India and Japan that have been propounded by various scholars would be useful.

There is no need to emphasize the most obvious similarity that exists between the two countries. That is, the communication pattern that exists between the rural people in India resembles the Japanese communication pattern to an astonishing degree. However, let us examine these similarities and dissimilarities point by point.

(a) Like in the villages, the family - the joint family forms the most important group for the individual, the Japanese society also features the same characteristic. However, the family in India occupies a position even more important and dominant than its Japanese counterparts. However, like Japan, the patrilineal family is the central unit of the Indian society and responsibilities are shared. This is clearly reflected in their speech habits also, as mentioned

earlier. Similarly, the belief that all actions reflected upon the entire family as well as their ancestors and descendants is quite reminiscent of the Japanese shinto traditions.

(b) Similarly group consensus, the feature that is of primary importance in the rural areas, is also a dominating feature in the Japanese society. In the similar view, the reliance on mutual discussion and consensus of the entire community is of primary importance in the Japanese hamlet (buraku) also.

(c) Although unlike Japan, speech, as such, is not frowned upon in the Indian context it does not have the intuitive character to the same extent as in Japan. This feature is rather subtle, difficult to exemplify and can be understood only by those who are well versed with the speech styles of both the countries.

(d) Similarly, the speech styles of the junior person and the senior person are also quite reminiscent of the Japanese. Interestingly it is the verb forms that are inflicted in both the countries. However, the Indian speech styles tend to be less honorific than those of the Japanese - probably because of the filtering in of both Muslim and Christian egalitarian thinking into the villages.

(e) Again on the question of the terms of address that indicate the social position of both the speaker and the listener, one finds a great similarity between Japan and India.

(f) However, the speech styles of men and women do not differ to the same extent from those of the Japanese. The only feature that is similar to the Japanese women's style of speaking is the presence of silence. Women in both the countries tend to remain silent when their husbands are talking. Similarly agreement to or the supplementing of the husband's speech is the common feature of their speech styles.

(g) The 'sami' or the 'mai bap' term of address for socially superior people did exist to some extent in the Japanese communication system during the Tokugawa period. But in the modern period the honorific verb forms and their complications seem to convey the same degree of humbleness.

(h) The use of kin terms for people within the family and its fictive use for people without, is also surprisingly similar in both Japan and India unlike that of the Western countries.

(i) Finally, the overall nature of the communication pattern is also similar to the Japanese pattern to great extent.

The urban speech styles with all their similarities with the Western communication behaviour form the source of all problems. It is this feature that has led to the communication gap between India and Japan. The urbanites

are the ones to get maximum opportunity to interact with the Japanese and not knowing the way to do so, their efforts largely result in misunderstanding and confusion.

As the focus of the present chapter is on the differences of the interpersonal communication behaviour of the Indians and the Japanese people, one would like to highlight some salient points raised by scholars on the problems of communication.

The theory propounded by Chie Nakane is significant. Being a pioneer in this area of intercultural communication between India and Japan, it would be useful to study her theory in some detail. As noted in the first chapter of this study, her theory analyzes the Japanese social system in terms of vertical and horizontal relationships. According to her, it is the former that plays a dominant role in the Japanese social relationships.

When dealing with the Indian social system, she calls it "horizontal", inspite of the caste systems. In fact to her, the Indian caste system is not hierarchical but horizontal.[26]

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26 Chie Nakane, "Role of Japan and India at Large : Special Emphasis on Economic and Cultural Aspects", paper presented at Japan-India Symposium, 1979 (Embassy of Japan, New Delhi and ICSSR), p.27. To quote her: "The Indian system is horizontal and the Japanese system is vertical... The best manifestation of this is the castes.

She feels that due to the structuring of the two societies being entirely different, and the social hierarchy dissimilar, smooth relationship between the two countries has been hampered.

It could be true to some extent that the heterogenous society of India does pose a problem for the Japanese people. But as these diversities do form a part of the unified usage and culture of India, this problem could be treated as only superficial. After all the Chinese and the Russians are also equally diverse.

It is, however, an accepted fact of Indian sociology that the caste system has stratified the entire Indian society, into several groups and sub-groups. The Japanese people are also firmly convinced that the caste system, a feudal hangover, is the main reason for India's backwardness - and that the people are not equal, unlike in Japan.[27] Therefore, it would be more apt to call the Indian society "vertical" just like the Japanese society. It would not be wrong to say that the Japanese society being stratified, as it is, would find it easier to communicate with the Indians. However,

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27 Several scholarly studies have been made in Japan in support of this conviction. One of them that could be mentioned here is the work done on 'the caste of the Political Leadership in India', by Oshikawa, unpublished thesis, Ajia Keizai Kenkyujo (Institute for Developing Economies, Tokyo).

another Japanese scholar, Nakamura Heiji, does not consider caste as a passive phenomenon that is an Indian legacy of the past. He considers caste and caste conflict as a manifestation of the class conflict that is going on in the country.[28] Therefore, the stratification of the Japanese and the Indian society are on totally different lines.

Another factor that hampers the social relations of the two countries, according to Nakane, is the Japanese perception of India. Her theory states that to many Japanese people, India seems a part of the "West" (more British, to be precise). It goes on to state that the Japanese do not have the same impression about Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and other countries of South East Asia, as they had some sort of affinity with Japan in the past.[29]

The urban communication patterns of India are similar to the Western system, that it could constitute a reason for this particular belief. However, it would be wrong to say that culturally India is a part of the West. Nakamura gives us another clue to this Japanese perception. He says

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28 H. Nakamura, "Japanese View on India Reconsidered", Japan Quarterly(Tokyo), vol.29, no.1, January-March, 1982, p.108.

29 Chie Nakane, "Cultural Identity in Modernization", paper presented at Japan-India Symposium, 1981 (Embassy of Japan, New Delhi), p.29.

that the Japanese tend to perceive nations as cultures, because their textbooks tell them so.[30] In other words, the Japanese tend to equal Pakistan with Pakistani culture, Nepal with Nepali culture rather than viewing culture as a result of a whole historical process of evolution. Therefore, one would like to say that if Pakistan, Nepal and Burma areeasier to understand, then why not India.

After dealing with the Japanese perception of the nature of the Indian society as an obstacle, we would now pass on to consider the interpersonal relations in the Indian society, as perceived by Japanese scholars.

Nakane's theory suggests that even in the smallest of the social units, the Indian and the Japanese systems differ. Taking the family first, she states that the Hindu family by its very nature is traditional, closed and more tightly knit than the Japanese. The joint family system with its close and intimate ties leads to such a nature.

On the other hand, the Japanese family is much more open and less tightly knit, making it easier to modernize. One of the reasons of this nature was that the family due to severe economic pressure had to force their children to search for work in far flung areas, leaving the eldest son behind.[31]

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30 H. Nakamura, n.28, p.112.

31 Chie Nakane, n.29, pp.45-46.

However, it would be difficult to say that due to these reasons, Indian society is more traditional and Japanese society more modern. Both the countries have had different historical backgrounds, making both of them modern as well as traditional in certain aspects.

After the discussion of the family Nakane's theory views the nature of both the Indian and the Japanese group and the social institutions. Her views on the group structure are totally different from those of the family structure. She says that the Indian groups are less tightly knit than the Japanese groups and because of its heterogenous nature the rules that apply to them are universal.

On the other hand the Japanese institutions are much more tightly knit because of the spirit of cooperation and competition among its members. Also, the institutions' rules are not universal but specific. Therefore, there is greater harmony among the group members.[32]

There is another dimension to this issue. The social mobility in India is greater than in Japan; changing groups or institutions is almost prohibited in Japan, and members of a group have to make or break their careers within that group itself. In India, however, due to a greater freedom of movement, certain bonds get loosened, unlike Japan. Thus, one can see how the groups in India and Japan differ.

32 Nakane, n.26, pp.28-29.

The American scholar Steven Hoffman by his observations does contradict Nakane at several places. Making a comparative study of the structure of the Indian and the Japanese groups his conclusions are interesting. He says that the Indian group is characterized by a small inner circle of persons gathered, around a leader, with several other associated circles subordinate to it. Regarding the nature of the personal relationships that prevail within this inner circle, he says:

> The personal relationships ... are warm and caring rather than strictly businesslike. The circle exists not just because the leader supplies benefits like patronage, information and protection, but also because of the near-blending of the identity of the follower with that of the leader. 33

What he implies then by this is that the group is more important than the individual in the Indian society. Interestingly, this is a characteristic that most scholars say about the Japanese society.

He cites political leaders such as members of Mrs Gandhi's party as people who tend to merge their total identity with that of their leader. He calls this a tendency that has its roots in the Indian social institution of jati (one's sub-caste) and village (gaon), and also in

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33 Steven A. Hoffman, "Faction Behavior and Cultural Codes : India and Japan", Journal of Asian Studies, vol.XL, no.2, February 1981, p.234.

the classic ties of 'guru' and 'chela' idealized in the Brahminical segment of the culture.[34]

Due to this total identification of one's identity, he feels, that the boundary between the inner circle and the rest of the faction is very difficult and impregnable. And this is the reason why it is unusual for any individual to change his alignment within the same group - while defection of one group to another is possible and common.[35]

If we were to accept this theory then one can confidently say that in India and Japan there is no difference between the concept of the group and the individuals and, therefore, interpersonal relationship can easily be fostered between the two countries. Similarly one can also observe the traces of 'amae' warmness and dependence, so vividly described by Doi in the interpersonal relationships of the Japanese society.

However, in reality Hoffman's hypothesis is not entirely true - as one can observe from the everyday news in India where constantly individuals and groups are shifting their support to different leaders not just within the same region but also to leaders belonging to different regions, caste, religion and community. However, when such defections

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34 Ibid., p.236.

35 Ibid., p.237.

are made, public statements of "absolute allegiance" and loyalty are always accompanied. No one, however, is deceived. The leader, the defector and the public on conscious of the fact, that such alignment and realignment are made to suit one's convenience and that the moment there is a break in the flow of personal benefit, the relationships come to an end.

It is, therefore, appropriate to mention here that the values inculcated into the education system have made the Indian extremely individualistic and concerned about personal gain and power.

Similarly, as the near-blending of the identity does not take place in reality, the statement that the inner circle is unbreakable, too, is open to question. As defections are an everyday phenomenon in the Indian political scene, of both inner circle members and outer, this has been disproved effectively.

On the other hand, the point that Hoffman makes about the nature of the Japanese group proves the earlier statement of this study true. And that is, the Japanese are extremely conscious of their "self". He says, "The Japanese group consists of individuals who do not lose their identity when they accept the membership of a group. They are also conscious that others in the group give the same amount of respect to them as they give to others".[36]

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36 Hoffman, n.33, p.246.

The similarity that one can clearly observe in the Japanese and the Indian interpersonal relations in the group is that members have to display great sensitivity to the ideas and emotional needs of others for maintaining group harmony and trust of other members as well as that of the leader.

Finally, a note about the decision-making process in the Indian groups follows. After having discussed the Japanese decision making process, one has to agree with Nakane. The urban communication style is reflected in the discussions in the sphere or decision-making which quite similar to that of the Western pattern are.

As the Indian system of the decision-making process provides more scope for a thorough discussion among individual participants, quite often the discussion itself rather than the decision becomes the object of the participants. This is the prime reason for the Indian system being conducive to decision making at the top.[37]

Although most of the Japanese decisions, as we discussed earlier, are taken at the top, the consultative decision-making process is quite different from that of the Indian system.

Therefore, one would like to conclude this chapter by saying that there are quite a few similarities that exist in the communication patterns of the two countries.

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37 Nakane, n.29, p.29.

However, it is the value system that differs in the urban regions of these two countries that makes the inter-cultural communication difficult.

In order to bring about a balance between the two communication patterns, as has been noted before, efforts must be made by both the countries to view each other in a proper perspective that is free of any bias. The Japanese people should open up some more and be prepared for some serious soul-searching over their views on India. Some suggestions are given for the Indian people to follow so that they too, could contribute to the smoother inter-cultural communication between the two societies.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

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Are the Japanese "inscrutable"? The West seems to think so. There have been several writers both from the United States and Europe, who have found communication with the Japanese frustrating and tiresome. There have been many accusations hurled at the Japanese that they are "closed", they are not "forthcoming",and are persistently vague and ambiguous.

The Japanese, on the other hand, have made several attempts to open themselves up in their own inimitable way so that the Westerners could find some clue to what moves the Japanese.

One feels, however, that the accusation that the Japanese are inscrutable is unfair. This state of affairs as K. Murata points out, is due to a serious imbalance[1] of both the Japanese to explain and the foreigners to understand - a reciprocal lack of perceptions between two sides' cultures.[2]

One hardly ever hears the Japanese complaining that the Westerners are 'hard to comprehend'. They complain that they find it difficult to communicate with them but not hard to understand.

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1 Kiyoaki Murata, "Japanese Inscrutables", Japan Times, 28 March 1980, p.14.

2 Ibid.

We are today living in a world of dialogues. One constantly hears of North-South; East-West; North-North and South-South dialogues. Countries are trying to move closer to one another so that mankind may be able to live amicably and peacefully - in an effort to grow and develop, not retard and destroy. The starting point, one feels, lies in a dialogue from one national to another, across cultures.

For this one communication event, this dialogue across cultures, to be successful, one needs to make all necessary efforts to see that it does not end disastrously.

Effective communication, as is well known, is directly correlated to the extent to which a person can express his own beliefs, principles and feelings and at the same time also indicate consideration for the feelings and thoughts of others. As our objective is aimed at understanding and comprehending the Japanese, one would like to conclude this study by listing some of the essentials that should be kept in mind while dealing with them.

As has been mentioned by Roggendorf, a careful observer of the Japanese for forty years, group integration is the most conspicuous Japanese national trait. And because of this trait one has to put oneself into their shoes and see how they communicate.[3]

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3 Joseph Roggendorf, "The Group - Key to the Japanese Mentality", Japan Times, 21 December 1980, p.12.

One of the basic ways of reaching out to the Japanese is to convince them on their own terms, bring them into the process under discussion, make them a part of it and then let them take action. The simplest way to do this is to master their language and get the message across. But since most foreigners are unable to do so, some behavioral guidelines could be made for successful or meaningful communications.

Foreigners often complain that the Japanese do not explicitly say 'Yes' or 'No'. That the Japanese express negative feelings and opinions only implicitly. This, however, should be used to one's advantage and taken to mean that while negotiating, there is greater flexibility for both sides. It actually allows the necessary time required to feel out new ground and temporarily withdraw without losing face or the business deal.

Another frequently heard complaint is that the Japanese flatter, in a somewhat insincere fashion. Western "tact" does not include saying something that isn't true. It is important to recognize that this feature indicates the Japanese desire or keenness are friendly and pleasant, rather than worrying over the actual words used.

Another characteristic that the Indians fail to understand is the Japanese humility which, they feel, is sometimes rather insincere and hypocritical. The Japanese believe

that humility is a virtue and even if one is not he must at least try to act humble. Thus, self-assertion, an attribute which is so respected in the Western and Indian societies, must be avoided while dealing with the Japanese.

Similarly, one should try not to be direct with the Japanese, as the Japanese identify directness with rudeness. This is precisely why there are so many formal and fixed greetings of "aisatsu" in so many routine and daily encounters, which are necessary for people in order to make themselves acceptable.

While the Indian society places value on mutual independence in discussions, the Japanese like to wait till asked to speak. Therefore, in a conference or a group, one should try and identify the seniormost or the oldest, and communicate with him directly. As observed earlier, individuals in a Japanese group do not voice a view or speak out of turn, as this is regarded as highly impolite and as an attempt to show off one's ability or seize the spotlight upon oneself.

The Indian involved in a discussion with the Japanese should learn to call on or select the proper spokesman for his remarks. If he does want to talk to someone else he should, then clearly indicate to others in that group that he is seeking only an individual opinion and preferably do so through the "elder" in the group.

Another Japanese trait that one should not take offense to is seen in the personal questions directed by the Japanese. One should recognize that the Japanese trait to put personal question is not an attempt to embarass a person but an attempt to place him in the all important "us" category. Japanese people find it difficult to start or continue conversation without background information such as the group to which a person belongs, or his social, family and economic status. The exchanging of the 'meishi' serves one such purpose. It would be in order for foreigners to do the same as this would be interpreted by the Japanese as a genuine attempt to be friendly.

While the Japanese are very much open to private questions, they are completely closed to the ideological prying or the conceptual attacks which so many Indians relish and engage in with near-strangers. One would be more successful in handling the Japanese if one tries and avoides such questions unless the purpose of the discussion is such.

Another common Indian characteristic which the Japanese cannot appreciate is the game - like approach to arguing. As has been mentioned in the last chapter, such style of argument which has now become a part of the Indian urban discourse style, is considered flippant and insincere by the Japanese.

Similarly, our method of thrashing out moot points by discussion too is not compatible with the Japanese communication patterns. The Japanese firmly believe in avoiding confrontation, for they feel that it does not pay ~~according to them~~. They revere apology as a lubricant which, if constantly used, has a very defusing and disarming effect. Confrontation and giving vent to one's feelings is considered by the Japanese as immature and childish, which should be avoided as much as possible.

One would like to conclude on the following note:

It is important that one attempts to understand and have some correct perceptions of Japanese behaviour and their cultural characteristics. It is not necessary, however, to fall into or conform to these characteristics superficially, but should try to be as considerate, patient and sensitive as possible.

Similarly, it pays to be a good listener in Japan with a receptive mind to open and frank communication. One must at the same time remember to proceed at their pace with the minimum of interruptions and contradictions as possible.

Finally, it would be to our benefit to see ourselves as the Japanese see us. The Japanese find our communication patterns and styles just as strange and unique as we find theirs. Therefore, to facilitate communication, it would be more advantageous to believe in mutual give and take.

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