

JAPANESE YOUTH : CHANGING WORK ETHIC

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GEMINI YADAV

**CENTRE FOR EAST ASIAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067
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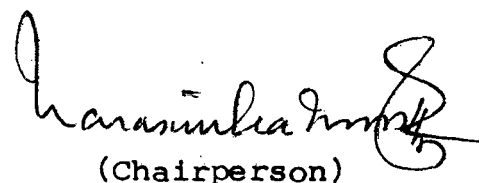
Centre for East Asian Studies
and International Studies

Telegram : JAYENU
Telex : 031-73167 JNU IN
Telephones : 667676/
667557/ Extn. 272, 419
Fax : 91-(11)-686-5886

CERTIFICATE

We have the pleasure to certify that Gemini Yadav, an M.Phil student of the Centre for East Asian Studies has pursued her research work and prepared the dissertation entitled "JAPANESE YOUTH: CHANGING WORK ETHIC" under my supervision. This is the result of her own research and to the best of my knowledge no part of it has earlier comprised any monograph, dissertation or book. This is being submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Japanese Studies in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree.

Lalima Varma
(Supervisor)


(Chairperson)

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PREFACE

Japanese work-ethic has been the object of observation and analysis by scholars from various fields such as political science, psychology, sociology and management. This interest has been a consequence of the spectacular economic success of post-war Japan, which, in turn, has been traced to the unique management system employed by the Japanese. The management practices utilized in Japanese industries seem to make use of the traditional psychological and sociological attitudes of the Japanese people towards education, knowledge, work and productivity. However, in recent years, with affluence and increased Western influence, the attitude of the new generation of labor-force towards work and leisure seems to be undergoing drastic changes. This has brought about major conflicts and contradictions in the Japanese society.

The objective of my dissertation is to study the effects of modernization on the Japanese society and especially on the youth in post-war Japan. It led Japan to interact with the outer world and has opened the Japanese society. This phenomenon brings about a change in the prevalent work ethic among the Japanese worker particularly the youth. Though the child-rearing patterns and the value-inculcation in the Japanese school

goes a long way in ensuring the desired work ethic from the youth. The changing status of women; internationalization of Japanese economy and greater interaction of Japanese youth with the outside world, is influencing the attitude of a youth towards work. Youth feel there is more to life than work and they are beginning to resent the corporate world's stronghold on their lives. The value system of the youth is changing surreptitiously.

The Japanese youth has come to realize the need to fulfil a broader role of a human being in a society and family and to possess an international outlook rather than just being identified with his company all his life. It is within this broader framework that one would see the progress, future and development of the Japanese economy.

This study has been carried out in three areas namely - (1) child-rearing pattern and value-inculcation during education; (2) Japanese corporate sector; and (3) impact of globalization on youth.

The first chapter deals with values-inculcated in a Japanese child like groupism, consensus, harmony and cooperation, other dependency or "amae" culture and so on that formulate the Japanese worker's ethic towards work. However, these behavioural patterns are undergoing

a change in the changed milieu of increased affluence; a more emancipated women; and increased Westernization. Hence slightly different values like individualism, disappearance of "amae" culture and hence the loyalty is in the offing.

Chapter two deals with the background of the corporate sector. The changing scenario like disappearance of traditional and outdated life-time employment system, seniority system and loyalty and emergence of opportunism, individualism and merit-system. Would it mean internationalization of Japanese management system since old traditional system are beginning to erode. Will the young Japanese worker continue to contribute to Japanese economic growth with his changing attitude towards work?

Chapter three deals with the impact of globalization on Japanese economy, on its society and its culture. The cultural confrontation in the society, its cultural ^{impact} amongst the youth due to increased global interaction. The modernity and traditional Japanese culture co-existing and the confusion it is likely to foster in the Japanese youth who are to be workers. The impact of this internationalization on the changing values of the youth, who has to pull the reins of Japanese economy in the future.

I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Lalima Verma, who guided and encouraged me with her constructive critiques. Her suggestions contributed a great deal in making this study a little less inadequate. I wish to thank our Chairperson Prof. P.A.N. Murthy. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Prof. S.B. Verma, whose encouragement and support enabled me to pursue the study of Japanese language.

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CHAPTER I

IMPACT OF CHILD-REARING AND
PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION ON YOUTH

Culture is the shared patterns of action, belief, feeling and thinking that are transmitted knowingly and unknowingly from one generation to the next, through learning. A large part of human behaviour in society is influenced by culture as the values, perceptions and customs of the group are inculcated in an individual since birth. This process of 'socialisation' occurs through interaction of the child with adults within the family and outside. This early socialisation during infancy and pre-school years, contributes in a major way towards the formation of adult personality.

In Japan, the process of 'Japanisation' begins on the very day the child is born, if not earlier. Hence, this chapter would examine the child-rearing practices and pre-school experiences in Japan as they relate to the development of a 'Japanese' perspective towards work. A comparative study of infant-caretaker interaction in Japan and United States would be utilized to bring out the influence of pre-school experiences on the formation of 'adult' personality in the two cultures.

Child-Rearing Pattern in Modern Japan

Comparative studies of infant development in Japan and United States started during the Second World War, and have increased in number in recent years. Among these, the studies of mother-infant interaction and those of infant-temperament have attracted ample interest in Japan. William Caudill and Helen Weinstein did an observation-based comparative study on infant-caretaker interaction, drawing matched samples of baby-mother pairs from Japan and USA. The study spanned the first six years of life of the babies, to explore how and why cultural differences become manifest in behaviour of infants. The focus on culture as a variable was in no way meant to deny the great, and inter-related importance of other variables such as the genetic endowment and physiological functioning of the infant; psychological characteristics of the parents; and the position of the family in the social structure.

Caudill and Weinstein found that the cultural differences in values and personality characteristics emerge as early as the age of 3 to 4 months among infants. This is due to the differences in the quantity and quality of time spent by the mothers with their infants. Thus,

Japanese mothers spent more time, emphasized physical over verbal contact by co-sleeping, co-bathing , in the differing patterns of social interaction among Japanese and American adults.

The Japanese psychoanalyst Doi Takeo has explained Japanese personality development as a reflection of the concept of "amae" of dependency. The Japanese mother encourages and fosters the self-indulgent tendency to expect or "amae" in the child, even beyond the age of 7 years when there is 'complete oneness'. This encouragement and the child's contentment with it, motivates the child to avoid any separation from the mother. For example, any assertion from the mother implying that the child does not have to obey her, actually works like a threat, carrying the message that if the child wants its own way, the mother will no longer consider the child to be a part of her - a condition that is unimaginable for the dependent child. This concept of 'amae' forms the basis of all subsequent human relationships and affects the personality of the Japanese individual. 'Amae' is also reflected in the hierarchical system in Japanese companies and within Japanese society. For example, the relationships between oyabun-kobun (boss-subordinate), sempai-kohai (senior-junior) and shacho-kacho (President-Section Chief) foster

the feeling of dependence and help the Japanese to work better in a group as against the Americans who work better independently and/or individually.

Vogel and Vogel (1961) reported that the American custom of baby-sitting was rare in Japan, because the Japanese mother is always with her child, giving it security and communicating to it the fear of the world outside the family, especially strangers. The child, therefore, remains dependent, and though curious, is often shy, inhibited and fearful of unfamiliar situations. American children, on the other hand, are encouraged to interact with strangers and to be verbally assertive.

Pre-School Child

Japanese child-care is oriented towards appeasement of the child's emotions and there is almost lack of discipline among the pre-school Japanese children. This is in contrast to the rigid discipline and inhibition required of Japanese adults. Ruth Benedict characterised the life cycle of a Japanese individual as "a great shallow U-curve with maximum freedom and indulgence allowed to babies and to the old".¹ This U-curve is exactly reversed

1 Ruth Benedict, The Chrysanthemum and the Sword (Boston, 1946), p.254.

in the case of Americans, who enjoy utmost freedom in the prime of their life. This is probably why the Japanese pre-school child pommels his mother, screams at her and even gets violent as against the American child, who is more disciplined as he is not allowed to throw tantrums and generating ittaikan - the feeling of oneness, and aimed at keeping the baby passive and contented. In contrast, American mothers spent less time, had more verbal interaction and aimed at having an active and self-assertive baby. This 'Japanisation' and 'Americanisation' is, however, not a conscious process, even though the differences in infant behaviour are in line with preferred patterns of interaction at later stages, as the child grows to be an adult in Japan and America.

A Comparative Study of Child-Rearing Patterns in Japan and America

Japan has its own traditional culture of child-rearing that has attracted recent academic interest because of two recent trends visible as a result of rapid modernization and drastic socio-cultural change. On the one hand, scholars are intrigued by the high achievement of Japanese children in school by international comparison; whereas on the other hand, problems menaching children are on the rise in the Japanese society.

"A number of studies² suggest that child-rearing culture in Japan provides an alternative to the Western models of child-rearing".³ Although the Japanese mother does not consciously teach her infant specifically to become a Japanese baby, somewhere along the infant rearing process such a conditioning does take place. Thus the "infants from 3-4 months of age start behaving differently in the two cultures".⁴ These differences in infant behaviour are manifested prominently at later stage.

The baby version of the popular game of hide and seek reflects the fear of being alone and the joy of togetherness in a Japanese child. An adult says, "I am not here. I am not here", then he goes close to the baby and reveals his face and the baby gives a squeal of joy. This game differs from the American game of peek-a-boo in that the Japanese player emphasizes his "absence" rather than "peeking". This makes the

2 A number of studies on child-rearing pattern have been conducted by Caudill and Weinstein (1969), Tabako Doi (1981) and Lebra (1984).

3 H. Stevenson, H. Azuma & K. Habuta (ed.), Child Development and Education in Japan.

4 T.S. Lebra & W.P. Lebra, Japanese Culture and Behaviour: Selected Readings (Honolulu, 1986).

Japanese child sensitive to the fear of being left alone and of loneliness as well as to dependency on his mother. This is the reason why "Japanese kindergarten children show more fear, bashfulness and mutism than American children".⁵ Thus, early socialization contributes to the sensitivity, to loneliness and the urge for togetherness exhibited by Japanese adults.

In Japan, very often there is a coalition of mother and children against father, which has an enormous impact on child development. But, in the American pattern, the tie between husband and wife remains the basic coalition even after the child appears on the scene. In Japan, father is treated as a high-status guest in the home who stands on the periphery of the intimate circle of mother and children. This emotional empathy between the mother and child has an enormous impact on the child development and its effects continue till the child turns old. As against interpersonalism of the Japanese, Americans speak of individualism and inculcating children with the values

5 E.F. Vogel & S.H. Vogel Family Security, "Personal Immaturity & Emotional Health" in A Japanese Sample: Marriage and Family Livings, vol.23, pp.161-66.

surrounding individualism which is of paramount importance in the American society. American parents coax their children by saying, "You have to make up your mind; it's "your decision", even before they are ready to become independent.

The American mother views her child as a potentially separate and autonomous being who should learn to do and think for himself. The Japanese mother views her baby as an extension of herself and encourages amaeru-amayakasu (indulgence and the one being indulged) relationship of indulgence.

The Japanese mother understands the desires of her child and responds to unspoken words encouraging an emotional, non-verbal understanding and mutual sensitivity to mood, desires and subtle body language. This encourages the child to reflect the consequences of his behaviour on others and thus teaches him to avoid causing trouble or discomfort for others (meiwaku o kakeru). Thus, a Japanese adult is trained to be intuitive of other person's moods and desires since childhood. This Japanese trait is reflected even amongst the Japanese businessmen who find it difficult to respond to the completely verbal and unintuitive communication of the Westerners.

Throughout the child-rearing process, the Japanese mother is alert to the norms of good mothering as reinforced by sekan, "the measuring community" - neighbours, kins, teachers - whoever will notice her own and her children's abilities and **behaviour**. Attending to children's predilections and qualities, while maintaining the proper profile of mothering in the sekan, are time-consuming tasks that contribute to the cultural definition of mothering as a full-time-job. This is the reason why Japanese society does not think highly of working mothers who do not have enough time with their children.

Role of Japanese Mother in value-Inculcation in Pre-School Children

It is the mother who plays a pivotal role in inculcating the values of a particular culture in the child, consciously or unconsciously and which has a tremendous impact on the personality development of the child.

"In Japan, human relationships are both the means and ends in successful child-rearing, which

is unequivocally the responsibility of the mother".⁶
A Japanese mother feels that her child possesses
limitless innate potential which can be tapped with
her effort and commitment towards the child's success
in the future.

To ensure that their children receive the
grounding for successful school career, most mothers
train the child in school-related activities during
the pre-school years. The gradual shift in emphasis
from the mother's role in fostering "good breeding"
or shitsuke, to an emphasis on training to prepare the
child for school or yogi kyoiku, occurs around the age
of three.

Japanese mothers take the education of pre-
schoolers very seriously indeed, providing a curriculum
that is consciously and sensitively managed through
informal activities and through cooperative games.
Japanese mothers use the playground to teach her child.
While the American mothers are more likely to buy games
and toys advertised to provide "hours of happy and
educational independent activity".

6 Merry White, The Japanese Educational Challenge
(Japan, 1985), p.21.

Besides increasing a child's store of information and cognitive skills, the Japanese mother tries to train the child to concentrate. She imparts to the child, the importance of single-minded effort, of intense dedication by letting the child do one thing at a time. In Japan, some teenagers are called nagarazoku, or people who do ~~one~~ thing while doing something else side by side. This is discouraged by mothers, i.e. if the child is watching T.V., he should do that and nothing else. This conscious effort on the part of the mother is a strategy to improve her child's chances in competitive examination to come.

What seems to be a "perfectionist" attitude of the Japanese is in fact seen as satisfying completion of a set of detailed tasks step by step. "The mastery of one discreet step is greatly applauded, with the child experiencing a moment of accomplishment".⁷

Japanese mothers and kingergarten school teachers appeal to feelings as against American mothers who appeal to authority in disciplinary situations.

7 *ibid*, p.100.

Japanese kindergarten teachers deliberately provide less paint brushes than there are children and withdraw toys as children grow older. This is done to increase opportunities for contact among children. Teachers design tasks such as joint play writing, which requires children within small groups to elicit and accommodate to each other's intention. This induces a spirit of harmony, groupism and consensus that helps the Japanese youth when he enters the company.

American psychologists accept that firm control by parents (i.e. consistent enforcement of clear rules) promotes internationalization of values by children. But Japanese mothers do not make explicit demands on their children and do not enforce rules that are resisted by children; yet children strongly internalize parental group and institutional values. In Japanese child-rearing, gaining the child's understanding patiently and not his immediate compliance, is the goal of the mother or the teacher.

Change in Status of Women and its Impact on Child Rearing

Women's job is shifting from being a full-time house-wife to that of a working woman gradually. The Japanese women have undergone major transformation in

the last 40 years and this phenomenon has had tremendous impact on the family life and child-care, the personnel policies of corporations, and the general direction of the Japanese economy. The role of Japanese women has changed from passive beneficiaries or victims of social change to being one of the driving forces behind such change.

In 1985, which marked the end of U.N. Women's Decade for Women, Japan was represented by the second largest delegation in Nairobi.

Changed Legal Status of Women

1. In 1975, government established the Headquarters for the Planning and Promoting of Policies relating to Women, headed by the Prime Minister. The headquarters drafted a "national plan of action" calling for :

1. improvement of women's legal status;
2. promotion of women's involvement in all fields of endeavour on an equal footing with men;
3. respect for maternity and protection of maternal health;
4. measures ensuring security in old age; and
5. international cooperation.

2. In 1981, the Civil Code was amended to increase a spouse's legal share of the family estate from one-third to one-half in recognition of the wife's contribution to the accumulation of household assets.

3. In May 1984, the Nationality Law was revised, from a patrilineal system, under which the child of a Japanese mother and a non-Japanese father is eligible for automatic Japanese citizenship, to a system where a child can adopt either parent's citizenship.

4. Enactment of Child Care Leave Law in 1975, which provides women in certain professions, with children under 12 months of age, to take up to 1 year's paid leave.

5. Revision of Pension Law in 1986, under which wives of salaried workers are entitled to pension.

6. Equal Employment Opportunities Law was passed in 1985. But this has been subject of great controversy. This Law calls for equal opportunity for both sexes in Job recruitment, living, wages, promotion, but it does not enforce compliance but is only a plea for employer's "best efforts".

Child Birth Rate and Child Rearing

Even though working mothers and families in which both spouses work are not longer the exception, women who opt to work when they are responsible for running a home are generally regarded with disapproval due to following reasons:

1. the double burden caused by the addition of a job to her responsibilities of housework and child care may overstrain a working married woman both physically and mentally and the management of the home may suffer.
2. In addition to her absence from home, a working mother will have an overload of household work and will be unable to give her children enough attention, thus affecting the children's character development and emotional stability and possibility leading to their delinquency.
3. Due to neglect of housework, home atmosphere will suffer and as the woman's physical and mental fatigue increases, she and her husband could become alienated from each other.

A working woman is able to lighten the burden with - (1) streamlining the housework through use of

electric household appliances and the careful planning of household tasks; (2) use of Creches and day-care centres, prepared foods, ready to wear clothing, professional cleaning, restaurants; (3) pay for a baby-sitter or housekeeper which is slightly expensive.

Non-working women utilize their free time pursuing their hobbies, sports or volunteer activities. Due to rationalization of housework and use of outside services by both working and non-working women, there is a lot of free time on the hands of women to pursue their personal activities.

Relatives especially husband's or wife's mother play an important role in child-care in Japan. According to a 1980 survey by the Japan Institute of Life Insurance on the changing role of women, 38 percent of working women with pre-school children sent their children to day-care centres, while 37.2 percent left their children with a grandmother, 3.9 percent with other relatives living in the same house, 1.6 percent with husbands, and 1.6 percent with relatives or friends living nearby. Child-care in the home was more prevalent than institutional child care. Forty-three percent of those responding to the survey said that a day-care centre was available but

they did not use it.⁸ Although it often said, "spare the rod and spoil the child" and that grandparents dote on their grandchildren, there seem to be many mothers who prefer to have their children taken care of at home rather than at an institution.

In 1984, there were 22,904 day-care centres able to accommodate a total of 2,124,000 infants. The number of day-care centres has increased ever since. In 1989, there were 23,000 child care-centres.⁹

"According to a survey on labour force (1989), about 62 percent of all women (between the age of 20-64) have jobs, and working women greatly outnumber women engaged exclusively in housework (34 percent).

In the past female employees were generally young unmarried women who worked until marriage or birth of their first child. But in 1989, 59.6 percent of all female employees were aged 35 or old. The proportion of who are married rose from 32.7 percent in 1962 to 58.5 percent in 1989.

7 *ibid*, pp.100.

8 "Women in Japan" in About Japan Series (Japan, 1981).

9 "Women in Japan", in About Japan Series (Japan, 1990).

In 1989 poll carried out by the Prime Minister's office, 58.6 percent of the female respondents, asked about the biggest obstacle to continuing work, cited child care and 48.7 percent mentioned care of the aged or sick.¹⁰

There is severe lack of facilities that accept infants under the age of one or that stay open into the evening. Of the 22,737 licensed centres, only 5,001 accept infants and 2,000 stay open until 7 p.m. To fill this gap a large number of baby hotels' unlicensed facilities that are open longer hours and accept infants have sprung up. These unlicensed centres have inadequate facilities and large children-to-staff ratio. In an attempt to cope with the situation, the Health and Welfare Ministry has decided to have 200 child-care centres around the country open from 7 A.M. to 10 P.M., beginning in April 1991.¹¹ The Ministry also plans to begin providing subsidies at the end of 1991 for child-care facilities that have entered into special contracts with restaurants, mass media organisations, department stores, airline companies, and other business that require employees

10 "Labour in Japan" in About Japan Series(Japan, 1990).

11 "Women in Japan" in About Japan Series(Japan,1991).

to work late night, on weekends or over consecutive days.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Law encourages employers to provide parental leave, but as of 1988 only 19.2 percent of all businesses had set up a system for this purpose.¹² Under existing laws, only female nurses in public institutions and teachers in public schools are entitled to take unpaid leave until the child is one year old.

A sharp decline in birth-rate has, however, prompted moves within the ruling and opposition parties to introduce legislation to the Diet for this purpose in 1991.

Because lifetime employment is the general rule, women who leave their jobs for a few years at the time of child birth have a distinct disadvantage in terms of salary and promotions. This is gradually changing. Whereas formerly it was nearly impossible to return to previous position after a few years' leave, as of 1988, 16.6 percent of companies had implemented systems for this purpose.

12 "Labour in Japan" in About Japan Series (Japan, 1989).

13 *ibid.*

The image of working female is changing from that of a single woman filling in her time before she got married to that of a more career-oriented woman. Though the majority of women are in the service industry, they have gradually been entering more professional fields and skilled occupations that had been closed to them earlier. Housing loan payment, high education costs of children and increased life expectancy of Japanese women are some reasons for them to venture into the job market. To fill the family coffers, a wife sells her time to work outside home and is forced to entrust household and child-rearing task to others.

To provide support for working women, the Labour Ministry plans to institute two support systems in April 1991. The first is a hot-line that women can call to get specific information on child-care, baby-sitter services, and home-helper services for the elderly. The second is an employment centre for women who wish to return to the labour force after a few years' absence.¹⁴

14 *ibid.*

Influence of Westernization on
Japanese Family System :

Unlike the Eastern thinking that is geared towards looking-after and respecting the aged, the American society is geared to the young. In a society of competition and survival of the fittest, youth and strength are positive traits, while age and weakness are negative. The entire value system is built on this attitude. People compete to remain youthful and try to avoid aging. In America old age is a miserable time of life.

American influence is pervasive in Japan. Women are being driven into the workplace not only by their desire for independence but also by their ever-increasing appetite for consumption. In his famous book "Economics", Paul Samuelson says that higher production levels seem to induce higher consumption standards; thus education, hobbies, sports, travel, central heating and other luxuries become a necessity.

To obtain these things, the husband takes on a second job and a wife goes to work as well. As the appetite for consumption escalates, people's lives become hurried. Skipping breakfast and eating canned

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food is a common sight in families where both parents are employed. In this age, where majority of the family in Japan are nuclear and old parents either stay on their own or in an old-age home, the children tend to get neglected and carry with them a key to their house. They are referred to as Kagi-ko or a child carrying the housekey.

Moods of Young Women

There is an increasing number of young women who abandon their marriages and return to their parent's home as lightly as they might change jobs. More and more women lack endurance, unable to cope with even minor difficulties. An increasing number reject any toil or hardship connected with marriage or a mother-in-law, saying they prefer to stay at home and be supported by their father.

At the same time, a woman arbitrator at family court reports that the number of men students, workers and even married men - abnormally attached to their mothers is increasing. With today's increasingly fierce entrance exam competition, this trend is particularly conspicuous among overprotected only son.

In addition, a growing number of young parents regard their offspring as a nuisance. Although for one reason or another they have married and become parents, they may feel that a child who requires constant care, is a burden. Young women in nuclear families often live in small apartments and have no acquaintances in the neighbourhood. It is like serving a prison sentence, being chained down by a baby, they report. From time to time, one hears of a child abused by a hysterical mother.

Most young housewives today have experience as office workers and are aware of the outside world and attractions of money. Inundated with employment advertisement as well as furniture and housing ads, they leave their children at day-care centres, even unlicensed ones, in order to get out of the house. Sundays find them at department stores, their earnings in their hands. A Tokyo department store employee reports increasing problem with mother who in spite of announcements, broadcast throughout the store, delay retrieving their lost children until they have finished shopping.

Children are pampered with money and designer goods, but do not have much interaction with elders of the house in nuclear families or with parents where both parents are working. Thus the value-inculcation that was carried out in a joint family is missing in nuclear families, as children grow up without interacting with elders of the house.

SECTION II

EDUCATION AND VALUE INCULCATION

Uses of Pre-School Education: Initiation Into a Group:

The Japanese attitude towards child education is epitomized in the title of Masaru Ikuba's best selling book, "Kindergarten Is Too Late". They believe that a child's nature and character are not given at birth, but is externally influenced. Hence, they stress the need and profitability of socialization process to begin at the pre-school age. A study conducted by the Nishinomiya Pre-School Education Study Group interviewed pre-school mothers and found that most interviewees wanted pre-schools to de-emphasize preparation for elementary school and instead, to mould the character and personality of the children.

The pre-school curriculum therefore includes not only reading and arithmetic but also learning through the I.Q. Box, to develop more general intellectual skills of thinking and observation. Moreover, some select pre-schools make a direct connection between the intelligence of the mother and that of the child, and administer tests to the applicants' mothers as well.

This emphasis on family environment relates to the effort of teachers in pre-schools to inculcate some social values in the children. Thus the child learns that there are clear rewards for being attentive to other people and to be sensitive to their ideas and concerns. To 'get along with others' is not just a means for peace in class-room but something that is valued as an end in itself. Another lesson learnt is the importance of doing things the "right way", step-by-step, so that the child learns to integrate himself into 'life of the group harmoniously as also receive encouragement at every attempt, rather than be judged solely on the result of his action.

Some of the important values and skills, other than those that contribute to group solidarity, which

are inculcated in pre-school environment are as follows:

1. Learning to gather and utilize every possible information - This comes to help in the later years of schooling when a child has to appear for entrance examinations, etc. But a child's memory is trained early through encouraging a small child to learn long poems and songs by rote. In later years of secondary schooling, they are taught to discern and analyse the facts gathered and rather than seeing facts as isolated bits of data, they are taught to work through the relationship between facts.
2. Learning to work diligently in an organised manner - Rather than emphasising on the results, the process or the way it is done is stressed upon. This gives rise to concrete work habits which the Japanese carry to their place of work also. They are taught discipline, i.e. to carry a task through to the end without cutting any corners.
3. Sincerity (Seijitsu) or Single-mindedness to complete a task - This kind of dedication involves giving yourself completely to the task at hand and not just a forced push through a series of talks. Through

giving yourself to the job, you derive or achieve a reason for living or "ikigai". Ideally, every job is seen as a complete life for a person who gives 100 percent.

Elementary School Education:
Harmony and Co-operation :

When a child is to enter an elementary school, he is considered a blank slate just as was as he entered nursery school and kindergarten - a candidate for initiation into another group. The child is not considered to possess any recognised skills after he has undergone socialization at home and preschool.

The elementary school teacher makes efforts to socialize the children to the practices of group life and customs of the school, rather than wading directly into the study of academic subjects. "She spends a very long time on such things as where one puts one's outdoor shoes, how one sits down, how one prepares one's desk for work (pencils at the top, note-book on the right, text on the left, etc.).

One of the first lessons follows up on the first day's exhortation to speak up when roll is called. It is very important, children are told,

to speak forthrightly and clearly in public, to project their voices and sound confident. The lesson here will stand them in good stead in school, work, and other situations to come".¹⁵

Japanese children are trained properly in public performance. Performance is considered a skill, which anyone can learn and master and is not considered as a display of material of his own creation. The general impression is that the Japanese children are not encouraged to develop independent thought, speak their own minds or project a strongly individualistic image to the world. The Japanese child is not as vulnerable as a child who is asked to "state his mind". The quality of a Japanese child's performance is usually high but somewhat ritualistic and predictable, thus minimizing a risk to his ego. Later, once the child has the confidence in his skill to perform, he is made to recite his own work.

The Japanese child is also taught self-reliance through mastery of certain small, discrete, carefully delineated tasks, one at a time, and is given a long time to learn them. The teacher ensures that the way

15 Merry White , op.cit., p.112.

has been learnt before the child is encouraged to proceed. The goal of Japanese self-reliance is, finally a capacity for self-motivated effort.

Lessons are repeated as often as considered necessary, in a step by step fashion. The child is not expected to grasp the method or principle throughout at first and does not feel any tension coming from high expectations. Initially a child does "mastery learning" and only later does he undergo "discovery learning". Thus detail and process form an important part of initial education in an elementary school.

Total engagement in task assigned -

Next is the engagement in the classrooms and the energetic way in which children form "han" (working groups) to solve problems and work on projects. When one walked into a fifth grade classroom, one might expect an authoritarian teacher in a class of disciplined children memorizing and learning by rote. This is far from reality in most classrooms. If one walks into a fifth grade math classroom, one would find "the mood to be distinctly chaotic, with children calling out, moving spontaneously from their desks to huddled groups chatting and gesticulating. An American

teacher would wonder, "who is in charge here"? and would be surprised to see the teacher at the side of the room, calmly checking papers or talking with some students. The noise and seeming chaos was in fact devoted to the work of the class; children were shouting out ideas for possible answers, suggesting methods, exclaiming excitedly over a solution, and not, as we might suppose, gossiping, teasing each other, or planning something for recess or after school. The teacher was not at all upset as long as total engagement in the appointed set of tasks persisted; she actually felt that the noise level was a measure of her success in inspiring the children to focus and work".¹⁶

The similarity between this kind of classroom and a typical Japanese office is striking. An office which is a large open room with many desks facing one another in rows, allowing everyone to be part of an active, usually fairly noisy environment. As in the classroom, productivity and "health" are measured by the visible and audible evidence of engagement.

16 *ibid*, p.114.

There are several characteristics of the class that deserve highlighting. First, priority was given to feelings, predispositions and opportunities for discovery rather than providing facts and getting to an answer fast. The teacher tends to emphasize process, engagement and commitment rather than discipline and the result.

Groupism

Japanese elementary schools are based on the idea that all children are equal in potential and that education can be exciting only amongst the unity of equals. Teachers do not encourage competition as it is seen to create division and pull the child toward negative individualism. Thus, Japanese teacher tries to maintain a "kyoshitsu okoku" or "classroom kingdom" of equals. The teacher tries to induce harmony in the class while paying close attention to the individual child.

The work team or han is not only used for studies but also for other school activities like cleaning up, lunch-serving, etc. It is used as a teaching device to engage children of diverse ability to unify and do a task, in which even underachievers are stimulated to do better. The children learn the value of cooperative team work.

Cummings¹⁷ talks about the every day's routine lunch period, during which "a group of students put on white aprons and masks, walks to the kitchen, and collects its class's portion. Each group then carries its class's portion back to the classroom and serves each student. After lunch, the entire class cooperates in putting away the dishes. Then after the rest of the class leaves to play on the school grounds, the lunch-period group takes out a set of brooms and rags and proceeds to clean the class-room. Over the course of a month, every student serves on a lunch-period group."¹⁸

Thus, the maintenance of school is considered a combined responsibility of all and all share equally in common tasks. On certain days each year, the entire school body from the principal down to the youngest child put on their dirty clothes and spend a couple of hours to clean the school building and grounds.

Besides this, there is student government that plans sports day, cultural day and sponsors gardening club, animal club, radio club, etc.

17 William Cummings, Education and Equality in Japan (Princeton, 1980).

18 ibid, p.117.

There are various groups for different school activities and are reshuffled after two months. The teachers try to promote a feeling of friendship, and comradeship by letting the quick students to help the slower ones. William Cummings talks about a socially backward boy put in a group with three "exceptionally tolerant" girls. They took him on as "their mission to bring the boy around; when he would not stand up for class presentation, they would push him up, and when he struggled with an answer, they would supply him with tips".

"Thus the teachers seek to channel the energies of the bright into pulling their slower fellows up".¹⁹

The presumption of the teacher that 'all students are equal' helps to motivate weak students to develop techniques through harder work to cover up their inabilities.

Unlike this team work of a group, in American learning is not regarded as a group goal rather tutoring is on a one-to-one basis.

19 *ibid*, p.127.

The teacher behaves in a somewhat traditional fashion as there is similar mode employed by religious orders, artistic and craft schools and other corporate organisations such as the pre-war "Zaibatsu" (holding companies) and academic department in universities. The teacher skillfully manages all individual relationship knowing each student's strength and weaknesses and helping each individual to develop. Thus Cummings says, "groups are conceived of as educational vehicles in the broadest sense rather than as mere instruments for rationalizing cognitive education".²⁰

Friendship within the han is considered to be important for the development of the child and teachers try to work as consillors for children who face problems socially. Thus, good human relationship is not regarded only as a means by which the students can be taught various academic subjects, but also as an end in themselves.

Engaged Effort as a Value

Just like maternal socialisation, Japanese elementary school pedagogy is based on the belief that a teacher's job is to motivate the child to work hard. In Japan, if the child gets 99 out of 100 right, the

teacher will say, "not perfect, but it could be so, if you really pay attention". They want to motivate the child to do a little better than his previous effort and do not compare him with other students which may give rise to competition and negative feeling.

Home and especially mother play an important role in the child's academic life, in the sense that she is most ambitious to get her offspring into the right middle schools, which have the best record of admission into best high schools. These schools are rated by the number of their graduates who make it to the most prestigious colleges and universities. A mother spends a lot of her time and energy to support the child not only with his homework but also tries to motivate and push the child, to the dislike of teachers. But both home and school provides a supportive environment for the child's future, which at times got taxing for the child who is unable to relax at home due to an ambitious mother. Thus, in school, it is not only the child, but also the child's mother who is being graded for his performance.

Parents tend to invest in the boy's education and talents more than that of girls as the boy's future is ultimately dependent on his educational

achievement. Once the child leaves the elementary school, (where warmth, harmony and cooperation are of primary importance), he moves to middle and high school, which looms as a period of serious effort and testing amid the harsh competitive environment that decides the future of the person.

Motivation and Incentives for Educational Achievement in Japan:

Motivation contributes to the educational standards of Japanese school children to a large extent. "Many observers of the educational scene in Japan have testified to the strong motivation for academic work among Japanese school children. Cummings (1980) contrasts the disorder prevalent in the typical American high school, where teachers struggle to maintain discipline, with the "sobriety" and quiet earnestness of high schools in Japan. Similar observations have been made by Rohlen (1983)".²¹

In addition to these observations, the strong motivation of Japanese school children is evident from their behaviour. Far more Japanese children do school work voluntarily than is the case in the West.

21 Richard Lynn, Educational Achievement in Japan (New York, 1988), p.64.

There are three principal areas in which this voluntary work is undertaken. Firstly, 94 percent of Japanese youth continue their education voluntarily beyond the statutory school-leaving age. In Britain only approximately 48 percent do so and even in the United States the figure is only 80 percent. Secondly, approximately half of Japanese children voluntarily attend the supplementary schools known as juku. Thirdly, Japanese school children do substantially more home work than American children (Stigler, Lee, Lucker and Stevenson, 1982), although among this age group it may be argued that this reflects coercion by teachers and parents more than high motivation in the child. "However, among 16 to 18 year olds it is estimated by Walberz et. al. (1985) that Japanese adolescents do approximately 60 hours of home work per week as compared with 5 hours done by American adolescents".²² It is not possible to achieve this amount of dedication to home work through coercive pressure alone. The Japanese youth seem to work hard because they are highly motivated to do so. It is difficult to determine the degree to which this dedication or motivation is intrinsic or extrinsic. Comparative studies of

22 *ibid*, p.64.

Japanese and Western youth using questionnaires to measure various forms of intrinsic motivation make it clear that it is a component in the total work motivation of Japanese youth. But the way in which Japanese youth refer to this stage in their lives as "examinations hell", clearly suggests that their intensive school work is not entirely a labour of love, and that a significant proportion of their motivation is extrinsic, that is purely a function of the external incentives for work effort.

Incentives in Japanese Education

The reason why the intrinsic motivation of Japanese school children is so strong lies in the strength of the incentives for educational achievement in Japan. There are two particularly powerful incentives for educational achievement in Japan. The first confronts Japanese school children at the age of fourteen and consists of the entrance examinations taken by virtually all Japanese children for entry to senior high schools. In every locality in Japan, the senior high schools are ranked in public esteem. Japanese school children are well aware that securing entry to a prestigious senior high school will both confer status for life, somewhat akin to that of the "old school tie" in England, and also be an important

first step on the ladder to a prestigious university and career. An important feature of these "fourteen plus" entrance examinations for senior high school is that they provide incentives for the great majority of Japanese school children, and not merely for the most able. The existence of these "fourteen plus" entrance examinations inevitably exerts a backwash affect on the proceedings of two or three years, and is undoubtedly one of the most important reasons that the educational standards of Japanese 13- and 14-year olds are so high.

The school's important incentive comes three years later in the form of university entrance examination. Once Japanese 14 to 15 year olds have secured admission to their various senior high schools, they are confronted in three year's time with a further set of university entrance examinations with hierarchically ranked universities in public esteem. The hierarchical ranking of universities in public esteem in Japan exerts unusually powerful incentive effects on adolescents for academic work.

The reason why the incentive effect of these examinations is so powerful lies in the exceptionally

high value attributed to a graduate from a high status university. Major Japanese companies and the civil service recruit their trainees for senior management almost exclusively from the elite universities, and on appointment, these trainees serve the company throughout their lives.

It is the practice of life-long employment in the same company that makes the standing of the university from which an individual graduates far more important for the whole course of his future career than is the case in Britain, the United States or Europe.

The effects of this system filter down to small and middle-sized companies who recruit their management trainees from universities of more moderate standing, so that there is an incentive for youth of more modest abilities to attempt to gain entry to these middle ranking universities. The incentives of university entrance examinations has tremendous effect on the academic work effort of adolescents in the 16 to 18 year old range, which are also present to varying degrees in Western nations, but the sheer number of young people affected in Japan

and the high credential value attached to university-attended make the university entrance examinations more crucial events for future careers in Japan than in the West. In the context of Japanese society and conventions, it is not difficult to understand why adolescents work as hard as they do.

CHAPTER II

MODERN CORPORATE CULTURE IN JAPAN

Each country has some values dominant amongst its populace depending on the country's historical experience and cultural background. In this manner, diligence is taken as a national ethic in Japan. "Diligence is considered close to religious practice. By tradition, labour is not regarded as an economic activity, but as a discipline of zen, inherited from the era of feudalism".¹

Historical experience shows that the Japanese have an ethic of hard work and thrift. Therefore, workers are motivated to work hard for their company. Perhaps this ethos could be compared to the puritan ethic. In countries of puritan background, emphasis on individual happiness comes first, while in Japan that of society comes first.

Japanese Values Seen in Historical Perspective:

Japanese are said to be industrious and hard-working which are part of the value-system that has been handed down in Japan over the generations.

1 Takao Watanake, "Universal Values", Demystifying Japanese Management (Japan, Gakusei Pub. Co. Ltd., 1987), p.110.

"Confucianism, the Jodo Shinshu sect established by Shinran, the Zen sect propagated by Seisan Suzuki, and Shingaku founded by Baigan Ishida (who unified and harmonized Shinto, Buddhism and Confucianism) share a common work ethic, which has passed down from the Middle Ages and which still has a strong influence on modern society".²

According to Confucianism, one is not allowed to stop hard work, even after he has made his fortune by hard work. This dogma of Confucianism encourages people to work with honourable poverty.

Statues of Sontoku Ninomiya were erected in primary school all over the country till the end of the war - with the boy Ninomiya reading a book while carrying bundles of firewood on his back. The statue installed in children, the value of hard work and struggle.

Samurai Influence on Japanese Work Ethics

The large scale rapid industrialization carried out in Japan under the aegis of the Meiji government was extremely nationalistic, as compared to the more individualistic process carried out in most Western nations.

2 *ibid*, p.114.

The enterprises formed soon after the Meiji Restoration adopted an imported Western format, departing radically from the old indigenous patterns of commerce and industry. In a way, these enterprises did in one sense follow the ideological traditions underlying the projects undertaken by the Tokugawa bakufu and the leading feudal clans (han) - that is to say, all the Western style Meiji era business were founded and managed by members of the feudal warrior (bushi) class, not for their own personal gain, but in the national interest. In the closed, stratified, agricultural society of Tokugawa Japan, the Samurai played the role of leaders, devoting their lives to the public good. Profit-making activities were disliked and money was seen as repugnant. A popular saying was "Merchants may seek profit, but Samurai seek honour". Since the creation and management of Western style enterprises was a "national" undertaking in the Meiji era, the Samurai took a leading role proudly and unhesitatingly. To differentiate from the parasitic merchant class of Japan the leaders of Meiji government invented the term jitsugyo, meaning industrial production, manufacture and commerce. Even the leaders of new Japan such as Fukuzawa Yukichi and Shibusawa Eiichi advocated preservation of confucian

ethics and motivated Samurai to contribute to the State by creating a new image of the warrior, who traded his sword for an abacus. Thus, the Samurai were motivated by a sense of nationalism that placed the welfare of the country above all. "In summary, the modern Western style enterprise centered around Samurai between the end of the Tokugawa period and the beginning of Meiji were thought of as organs designed to carry out national tasks; and this view of business management as a national mission, which might be called "managerial nationalism" persists strongly to the current day".³

"The Samurai possessed the key managerial ability of a mature understanding of organization behaviour as administrators and bureaucrats, and a well-developed devotion to their work".⁴

Samurai were extremely dedicated to their work and a failure in their work may have led them to take ultimate responsibility by committing suicide. The phenomenon of devoting one's life to society that is seen in Japanese management, is largely originated in the Samurai society.

3 Kan Toshio, "Japanese-style Management: Socio-economic and Cultural Factors", East Asian Cultural Studies, vol.28, No.1-4, March 1989, p.15.

4 *ibid.*

R.P. Dore believes that "the reasons for this internalization of a value system based on the responsibility ethic lay in the Confucian education system set up by the Tokugawa administration and has attempted to find therein the roots of Japan's achievement orientation".⁵

The Confucian ethic developed within the feudal education system contained a sort of unique ascetic ethos which provided a common platform for lower Samurai classes and the upper agrarian and town classes, so that by the end of the Tokugawa period the principles and practice of Confucian bushido had penetrated deeply into the masses. The spread of education contributed to this phenomenon. "Although the Samurai constituted no more than 5 percent of Japan's population at the beginning of the Meiji era, it is estimated that 40 percent of the male and 10 percent of the female population were literate".⁶ Thus, the Samurai ethic filtered down to become ethics of the masses, which was internalized as the value system, and hence they poured all their energies into the national goal of modernization.

5 R.P. Dore, Education in Tokugawa Japan (Boston, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), p.312.

6 ibid, p.313.

Thus, it was the widespread education and the Samurai work ethic that contributed in a major way to the industrialization of Meiji Japan.

Though a difference did develop between the merchants of Tokugawa period and the entrepreneurs of Meiji due to differing value system; but Samurai which were about 5 percent of the population, comprised 48 percent of Meiji era business founders, and entrepreneurs.

Japanese entrepreneurs have been praised for upholding the image of Samurai (men of purpose) in their work ethics, that helped in bringing about the Meiji Restoration.

The Corporation as Family⁷ and Salient Features of Japanese Society

To build a modern industrial society, the Meiji government paid foreign experts high salaries to train the first generation of skilled workers in government-run factories. These experts spread out to form nuclei of factories in private sector by becoming superintendents or work managers.

7 Kan Toshio, "Japanese style Management: Socio-economic and cultural factors", East Asian Cultural Studies, vol.28, No.1-4, March 1989, p.20.

With the favourable economic environment following the Sino-Japan war, labour shortages emerged, thus increasing labour mobility. To retain labour for a stable work force, school graduates were directly employed-internal training, seniority based systems and salary system, etc. were introduced to develop a corporate family system. Thus seniority system and lifetime employment system were new labour-management approaches to retain skilled labour resources over a long term.

The Ideology of Corporation as Family:

Before the Second World War, the value-system of the traditional Samurai families was upheld as ideal for Japan, by political leaders. The ultimate expression of this ideal was expressed in the Samurai motto "One's house above all" and this concept was internalized by the merchant classes. The entire country was thought of as one large family with the Emperor as its father; a similar concept was adopted by the corporation as well. The company was one large family with management as its father, the workers his well-behaved children. "When, at the end of the Meiji era, absolute managerial authority was threatened

by workers revolts based on socialist ideas, leaders concocted the image of the "respected manager" and borrowed the traditional family system as an ideological framework to retain the loyalty and dependency of labour force".⁸ Thus an affectionate parent-child relationship was raised to the status of social virtue, rather than tolerate class confrontation as in the West. Workers coming from farm villages were involved in this system that emphasized how everyone shares the same fate. "The Japanese managers were originally ex-Samurai and landowners, who were succeeded by their well educated children and thus, had an "elite complex" or a sense of noblesse oblige, which included a personal responsibility towards the down-trodden working class. What resulted was a corporate environment where the managers treated their workers warmly and ^{with} responsibility".⁹

8 R. Bendix, Work and Authority: Ideologies of Management in the course of industrialization (New York, Harper & Row, 1956), p.46.

9 K. Nakagawa, Nihonteki Keiei (Japanese Style Management) (Tokyo, Nihon Hoso Shuppan Kyokai, 1981), p.175.

Thus, in order to increase the sense of belongingness of a worker to the corporation, the ideology of corporation as a family developed. "In this set-up a child (worker) loyally carried out the tasks contributing to the prosperity of the family (company), under the direction of the family-head (manager)".¹⁰ The idea was to transform the corporation as a collection of capabilities into a joint familial entity. This transformation was achieved through familial management policies of life-time employment, seniority based wage system, corporate welfare policies for workers. In this sense, these approaches have seen the trials and tribulations of Meiji era and are truly Japanese. "This system deliberately designed to satisfy workers' physical and spiritual needs, including a sense of superiority, has been praised as the jewel of Japan's managerial system".¹¹ Thus, the docility of Japanese workers vis-a-vis those in position of authority has its roots in Japanese philosophy and tradition.

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- 10 H. Hazama, Nihon ni okeru roshi kyocho noteiryu (Undercurrents of labour management harmony in Japan), rev. ed., (Tokyo, Ochanomizu Shobo), p23.
- 11 M.Y. Yoshino, Nihon no keiei Shisutemu (Japanese Version of Japan's managerial system) (Tokyo, Daimondosha, 1968), p.91.

In Japanese sense of family, home transcends the person, and its requirements come before the individual. The head of the family manages the assets to ensure that they can be passed down to succeeding generations, and not to satisfy the needs of the family members. Household is seen as an institution which transcends the desires of individual members who compose it. It views competence as more important than kinship ties. Performance is the key to select an heir. Thus, the Japanese have a tradition of adopting an able son from the outside to promote goal orientation. The household is supported by loyalty and is a "goal oriented corporation".

This philosophy of corporation as a family and then nation as a family, is a phenomenon peculiar to Japan. The Japanese have structured non-family institutions along family lines, with a logical consistency, and hence ie is the core of traditional Japanese social value. Such approaches that surpass blood ties and emphasize social functions, have flourished on Japanese soil, have proved adaptable to the task of modernization and industrialization.

In Japan, an individual carries out duties to both one's parents (or ancestors) and political authorities as the ultimate goal, where the self has no clear boundaries and it is, thus fused into communal groups such as the family and country. These type of communal groups like family, village, prefecture, state, or family, company, nation - form concentric rings of loyalty in an unbroken fashion.

There is no conflict between the "individual" and the whole, rather a harmonious fusion of the two".¹² Under these harmoniously fitting concentric rings, individual needs can only be satisfied through membership in the various groups and ultimately through carrying out the goals of the state. Thus, parts belong to the whole, and the whole cannot function properly without the sacrifices made by the parts.

Group consciousness thus served to blur the distinction between private and public good, and pre-war nationalism legitimized profit making.

12 Kan Toshio, "Japanese style management", in East Asian Cultural Studies, vol.28, No.1-4, March 1989, p.22.

Post-Meiji business firms were viewed as economic entities whose purpose was to achieve the goal of a "prosperous nation and strong army". By emphasizing the public good, the Meiji government attempted to harmonize artificially, the pursuit of individual profit with the priority given to the public good. As long as this harmony was maintained, economic activity was promoted aggressively, with benefits flowing to industries most closely tied to the public good. Thus in this regard, the self-sacrifices required to meet state objectives were in agreement with the pursuit of personal profit and power. Japanese society thus facilitated acquiring private profit through priority placed on overall welfare of the society.

Post-war trends in Management

Post-war Groupism

The concept of the family (ie) and village (mura) began to disappear from the ideology of Japanese style management after the Second World War. But "corporation as a family" continued to function and took the appearance of a more "groupistic" management. The familial system was not destroyed, but rather reformed. Seniority system and lifetime employment system, continued. Employees tended to serve one firm longer than the pre-war period and corporate benefit programmes expanded.

What changed was the management concepts. The pre-war parent-child relationship gave way to a "theory of harmonious labour relations for greater corporate prosperity, better living standards for workers, and improved social welfare".¹³ This shift was towards "managerial welfarism", the "groupistic" element in Japanese style management". "Groupism refers to a "way of thinking, where relationship between the individual and the group subordinates the interest of the individual to that group",¹⁴ and the way to achieve this goal, is to emphasize group members helping each other and depending on one another. "Groupist management is the term referring to this Japanese behavioural characteristic appearing in the management arena".¹⁵ "Support for the organization principle of Japanese style management can be found in groupism stemming from Japanese psychological characteristics".¹⁶ In other words, in Japanese society, rather than dividing up responsibilities, individuals

13 H. Hazame, Nihonteki Keiei no Keifu (The roots of Japanese style management) (Tokyo, Nihon Noritsu Kyokai, 1963), p.262.

14 Harama, op.cit.(1971), p.93.

15 ibid, p.20.

16 R. Iwata, Nihonteki Keiei no henshu gensei (Organizing Principles of Japanese Style Management) (Tokyo, Bushindo, 1977), p.21.

form mutual relationships by means of membership in a particular group, thus, entering into a specific relationship with society. Individuals in such a society are identified by which group they belong to. Breaking away from the group leaves them powerless and helpless. For this reason, they loath to confront society directly without the intermediation of their group. "Thus they seek a sense of belonging and stability in a group-oriented stability".¹⁷ The Japanese cannot participate in society without being a member of some organization or other.

Due to "groupism", members belonging to the same organization, share the same fate, and thus what they consider most important is, to exploit the capabilities of each member and satisfy his needs, so that the overall order thrives and achieves overall welfare and happiness for the group. This "groupism" of Japanese management seems to have been introduced "consciously" from the traditional group consciousness and values found in family and village.

The individual is viewed ideally as one with the organization, rather than, as sacrificing his interests to it. The reason is that if carried

17 *ibid*, p.45.

effectively the organization will be stronger and more flexible than, if managed according to an individualist philosophy. In other words, sum of the parts, if added up will be greater than the whole. This contributes to stable labour relations in Japan. All members unite to fulfil a common vision of overall management goals. That is why workers cooperate over and above the limits of assigned tasks in order to meet organizational goals, since attempting to achieve their own needs will enhance the welfare of the group. The society is structured so that individual needs and goals are fulfilled easily through the group rather than, through individual effort and responsibility. In this way "post-war groupism", by which organization took over the role of state as an object of loyalty, differ from "pre-war managerial familism".

The American "me-society", where all actions are triggered by the individual's personal utility function, differs greatly from the "we-society" of Japan, where all activities of group members are guided by organization's utility function. Japanese society does not function at the level of the individual; instead at organization level where individuals act

as members of their organization. "If it is for the company's good, it will end up being for your own good as well".¹⁸

"All Japanese belong completely to one single eternal group. This unilateral belonging includes the elements of what Chie Nakane calls ba, or "place", and arises as the human relationship in her "vertical society".¹⁹

Thus, instead of entering an employment contract, Japanese by nature just enter a company and create a life-long relationship with it, becoming totally involved with it and depending completely on it.

From Collectivism to "Katsujin"-ism (Individuality)

On studying and comparing the behavioural patterns of the Japanese and the Westerners, many scholars have characterized Japan as "collectivist" and West as "individualist".

18 R. Sato, Me-Shakai to 'We'-Shakai: Amerika-shugi Nihon-Shugi Shihon-Shugi (The Me-Society and the We-society: Americanism, Japanism, Capitalism) (Tokyo, Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha, 1983).

19 Chie Nakane, Tate Shakai no ningen kankei (Human relationship in the vertical society) (Tokyo, Kodansha, 1967).

Westerners do not lose their autonomy and subjectivity even when an individual belongs to a company. In general, they belong to a mechanical organisation, competing to gain upper class status while performing duties. Their conduct is mainly governed by competitive principles. In a company, an individual regards his existence as separate from others in the same office, or his superiors. Hence in order to unify individuals, a common goal is absolutely necessary. In the West, the motivating powers are profit, position and success; patriotism, religious dogma and a common goal like that of an institution etc., which are needed to manage and activate the group as an organisation.

These days, the "Japanese behavioural patterns can not be termed as collectivist as they could in the past, especially in case of a person working in a business organization. Though there are some "public considerations, that take precedence over "private ones",²⁰

20 Takao Watanabe, "New form of Japanese Collectivism", Demystifying Japanese Management (Japan, Gakuseisha Pub. Co. Ltd., 1987), p.128.

If we observe the relationship of human beings to nature in Japan as portrayed in tea ceremony and Japanese painting (ukiyo-e), it is one of harmony. Whereas, in the West, humans confront and try to defeat nature. Thus, the basic comprehension differs in the two circumstances, resulting in differing actions. Though in actual situation, as regard the consciousness of work, the differences do not come out very clearly in post-war Japan and the West. Japan being a homogenous nation as regard to culture, education and language for the past two thousand years, could accomplish intuitive communication in the company more easily than in the West. This induced a feeling of harmony and a feeling of intimacy at the thought of belonging to a company.

Hitherto, the family communal body was based on mutual trust and intimacy among members. Thus, the organization could operate actively and the members morale was raised. With the advent of the age of abundance and information, Japan is also involved in the process caused by industrialized society. "Even in Japan, younger members of an organization are coming to possess individualism, similar to western self-seeking attitude, with an individuality which urges

independent behaviour. The right of "individuals" is being extended and used in and out of enterprises".²¹

Until recently, each person acted with consideration of the other person. People and organization were tied up with "cooperation", "personal connections", and "harmony", which made the system efficient and systematic. Today, there is hardly or no mutual consideration and reliance between members or organizations is fading.

There are some changes appearing in the Japanese organization. What is commonly referred to as "decision-making" is, in fact refers to working for and achieving a consensus. It is usual that the authority and responsibility of business executives are not equal.

In the West, an individual who is in charge of decision-making has rights and responsibilities in principle. In case his decision fails, he can be removed from his position as an individual.

However, in Japan, even though the decision meets with success, it is regarded as achievement of

21 *ibid*, p.130.

the group until evaluated minutely. Thus, in Japan, executive do not feel responsibility towards decision - making.

"Since 1969, Nikkeiren (Japan Federation of Employers Associations) has advocated the meritocracy principle, and therefore many enterprises changed over to this principle from the seniority system. They draw up simple job descriptions according to the standards of each enterprise, and evaluate the skills, ability, and achievements of their members. However, the dimension of personnel estimation and procedure differ among companies. "Co-operation" in one's office is prescribed as a dimension of an indispensable requisite for an employee".²²

Till now, Japanese company required the employee to perservere and subordinate his will to the majority, rather than to persist in his views and assert his rights. The situation today has changed and the youth who work in these companies have little or no perserverence in the interest of the company. As a result members of Japanese corporate organizations are changing in quality, from traditional "friendliness" and mutual

22 *ibid*, p.136.

"reliance" between members to individualism, self-centeredness and lack of identification with the company.

Contemporary Japanese management organisations ought to be understood as different from Western individualism or so-called Japanese style collectivism. The main characteristic of Japanese management organization would be defined substantially as Katsujin-ism, that is oriented towards "individuality".

Human Relation in Company - Cooperation and Competition

From the point of view of a foreign businessman, Japanese companies engage in excess competition both at home and abroad, and at the same time indulge in co-operative action of the form described by "Japanese Inc". In Japan, competition does not arise from direct relationship between the individual and the society at large, but is exhibited in the pursuit of greater prosperity and prestige of the entire organization to which the individual belongs. Japanese management is called "tug of war competition" or "portable shrine management", but this competition is inherent in the management system itself. An individual

in a company is not evaluated on short-term consideration but on his life-time performance, i.e. not on their performance but on their contribution to the company in the long term. The result is to strengthen the sense of belongingness and loyalty to the company. To extract and mobilize the energy in such a groupism as exists in Japan, it is best to focus on loyalty of group to the organization to get a task done. This increases the contribution of an individual to the group based on "loyal competition" to fulfil group's goals rather than on internalized individualistic values. Japan is better organized than any other country, in the race towards rapid industrialization due to the cooperative behaviour of companies. Japan achieved its national goal, as the companies cooperated with affiliated companies in the same industry, taking advantage of unique homogeneous culture, the Samurai tradition and its unique organizational skills. Each company looked beyond its own interests keeping in view national business organization and society in view and thus, harmonizing social gain and private gain. These entrepreneurs with national interest can be called "community-centered entrepreneurs" in contrast to "auto-centered entrepreneurs" of the West.

Guided by this community-centered value system, brilliant graduates of elite universities entered government service and business. They gradually developed a set of principles aiming at effective management to fulfil a larger goal.

Gradual Disappearance of Lifetime Employment

Upto the present, the life time employment system has been the most ideal organizational provision in companies. Labour and management had endeavoured to observe such commitment in their business activities.

During the rapid growth period in Japan in 1950s and 1960s, industries made a remarkable development that it had never experienced in the past. One of the major reasons why Japanese companies could cope with the period of rapid growth was due to presence of skilled workers who had been well-trained under lifetime employment and were suitable for multisided jobs. Therefore, many scholars claim that Japanese companies' seniority-based wage system was an organizational success for the Japanese companies.

Companies, these days are expected to provide employees with various opportunities for the development of their abilities and techniques in either the

company or an outside training institute. This would satisfy employees and let them be motivated to work with high morale. Also, for those employees whose work is contributing most to their companies, management tries to develop the employees' abilities by providing fringe benefits, special training and rewards for those who work without taking leave. Even now companies try to communicate to the employees that the company is a family.

When lifetime employment was prevalent all over Japan, vertical human relations had more meaning compared to horizontal managerial organization due to their extreme cohesiveness. In case of vertical relation, sub-ordinates depended on their boss and in return, they were protected in various situations. Loyalty was guaranteed under the name of paternalism. Recently, such interdependence between employers and employees has been gradually disappearing.

The Ministry of Labour encouraged industries to establish a new employment system based on basic employment policy in 1970. This system aimed at enabling workers to enjoy a lifetime career plan without worrying about problems arising from advanced age.

Until recently, enterprises had maintained a hierarchy of management organisation, with a pyramid shaped age composition to maintain the lifetime employment system. Youth were recruited from a few elite universities with the clear expectations that they would become executives and managers, for middle management.

Trends amongst newly employed

"In 1985, 37 percent of high school graduates entered college or university".²³ At the same time, the number of young people who looked for a job immediately after junior high or high school has decreased remarkably. The number of university or college graduates who are training for specialized techniques such as medical trainer for rehabilitation, interpreter, photographer, hotel receptionist, etc. is increasing remarkably. Now a days companies no longer maintain pyramid shaped structure by seniority, sex and educational background.

The latest trend in the turnover rate of the newly employed is very high due to lack of understanding of the management policy of their company or due to

23 White Paper on Japan, 1986.

disappointment caused by their monotonous job, notwithstanding the fact that they are comparatively well paid. However, the labour conditions like wages and working hours are not so favourable in small enterprises compared to large and medium sized enterprises. If the fringe benefits and more favourable conditions are offered elsewhere, they would willingly quit their job to join the new company.

Gradually worker mobility is increasing. In thriving industry, the number of experienced employees and managers from other companies being hired is increasing. The reasons for change of occupation include dissatisfaction with the job, conflicts in human relations and few opportunities for developing their abilities. In recent years, it was discovered that half of the new recruits employed immediately after school graduation, quit their job within three years in big companies. The main reasons for change of occupation are career development and search for better competence, job and pay.

It is difficult for aged workers to quit their job and get position equivalent to those in their previous companies. In the past when one was young, they could put up with low wages to begin with, but

in the long run they needed comparatively high wages, as compensation, for their contribution to their companies.

In an organization where employees are evaluated by meritocracy, younger employees who have leadership qualities get promoted to managerial positions. But this practice conflicts with the Japanese traditional practice. Traditionally, Japanese people feel uneasy with leadership by the younger generation. The aged workers too find themselves in an unstable position, due to transition from seniority system to meritocracy.

The workers could not complain about their job rotation which they have to follow until retirement after which, they feel free to find a job unrelated to their past job experience. More and more retired people in Japan are taking up such jobs.

According to a survey released in July 1986 by Ministry of Labour, over 50 percent of workers wanted to quit their companies and look for better jobs.²⁴ Therefore, one can say that life-long employment hardly exists in major industries. "The following percentages

24 "Labor in Japan", in About Japan Series (Japan, Foreign Press Centre, 1988).

indicate those who remain in the same companies having directly joined companies of more than 1,000 employees after school graduation".²⁵

About 20%	50-54 years of age	white collar
About 35%	40-49 years of age	white collar
About 59%	30-39 years of age	white collar

Though the lifetime employment system exists, it is acknowledged that only about 20 percent of workers continued in the same companies until their retirement. It is expected that in the future, companies would apply life-long career development to a selected few chosen by the management.

The Outlook for Employment Practices

Life time employment and seniority based wage system was found in some companies before World War Second. But the present structure of employment was established during the high-growth era of the 1960s.

There has been an increasing pressure for change in the employment practices to accommodate the shifts

25 Takao Watanabe, Demystifying Japanese Management (Japan, Gakuseisha Pub. Co. Ltd., 1987), p.104.

occurring in Japan's social and economic structures. The reasons of their pressure include changing employee attitude, the graying of the population, the increasing number of women in the work force, new advances in the various fields of technology and globalization of corporate activity. There is a growing number of companies who are changing their promotion and wage setting systems.

The so-called life-time employment system refers to hiring inexperienced college or high school graduates, training them, and keeping them on pay roll until retirement. But today, more companies are hiring experienced, mid-career workers. Moreover, it is becoming increasingly difficult to retain workers within a single company till retirement age due to personnel management problems arising from higher retirement ages and the aging of the Japanese work force.

The following table²⁶ (Table 1) shows corporate attitudes toward life time employment system and how they are expected to change. As the table indicates, large companies will increasingly transfer older workers, especially there in managerial positions to

26 "Labor in Japan", About Japan Series(9), 1988, p.4.

temporary or permanent posts will subsidiaries and other affiliated firms. In other words, companies will continue to seek to provide life-time employment, but not necessarily within the same organisation. Meanwhile, there are part-time and temporary workers who do not fall under the traditional lifetime employment framework.

Table 1

Employers' Attitudes to Lifetime Employment (%)

Size of firm	Employ workers as long as they can work	Employ workers until retirement age	Try to transfer older workers before retirement age	Expect workers to leave voluntarily	Others
<u>Present Practices</u>					
- 5,000 or more employees					
Managerial	0.0	63.3	36.7	0.0	0.0
Clerical	0.0	88.9	10.1	0.0	1.0
- Under 300 employees					
Managerial	17.3	72.7	6.3	0.0	3.7
Clerical	7.3	85.4	3.6	2.1	2.1
<u>Expected Future Practices</u>					

contd....

contd. from pre page....

-5000 or more
employees

Managerial	1.0	42.9	56.1	0.0	0.0
Clerical	0.0	73.8	23.2	2.0	1.0

-Under 300
employees

Managerial	14.0	73.6	9.3	0.0	3.1
Clerical	3.6	85.6	6.2	3.6	1.0

.....

Source: Ministry of Labor, Keizai shaka kankyo no henka to Nihonteki koyo kanko ni kansuru chosa (Survey on Changes in the Socioeconomic Climate and Japanese Employment Practices), 1986.

The Changing Structure of the Labour Supply

The Japanese labour market is changing gradually in terms of both supply and demand. There are several factors on the supply side that include the aging of the working population, rapid influx of women into the labour force and rising levels of educational attainment. These trends are likely to continue throughout this century and may also be influenced by the increasing influence of foreign workers. Another major factor is the shift in the workers' attitudes which could ease qualitative changes in the labour supply of Japan.

The Graying Labour Force:

"According to Ministry of Labour Statistics for 1987, Japan has a population of 122.1 million, a working age population (15 years old and over) of 97.2 million, and a labour force (those employed plus those classified as unemployed) as 60.8 million. Females make up 40 percent of the labour force.

During the 1950s the percentage of the population in the 65- and over age group remained more or less steady at around the 5 percent level. This age group began expanding in the subsequent decades, by 1987 it had grown to 11 percent of the population. By the year 2000 it is expected to reach 16 percent and by 2020, 24 percent. What is most unique is the rate with which it is increasing as compared with other industrial nations. The expansion of the 65 and over age group from 7 percent to 14 percent of the total population is taking 75 percent in the U.S. and took 45 years in Britain and West Germany. The same is expected to take only 26 years in Japan. This certainly seems like an increasingly serious problem as graying of population means an older labour force.

According to Ministry of Labour, in the future, workers aged 55 or over are expected to make up 20 percent of the labour force by 1990 and 24 percent almost one in four workers- by the turn of the century.²⁷

27 "Labour in Japan", About Japan Series (9), 1988, pp.6-7.

Table 2

Population and Labor Force Projections
(1000 people)

Age	Population			Labor force		
	1985	1990	2000	1985	1990	2000
0-14	2,603	2,313	2,359	0	0	0
5-24	1,719	1,899	1,593	733	857	753
5-34	1,688	1,597	1,885	1,260	1,250	1,527
5-44	1,988	1,970	1,584	1,597	1,585	1,296
5-54	1,618	1,715	1,931	1,297	1,370	1,568
5-59	700	773	870	488	545	617
60-64	541	674	764	288	377	435
65+	1,247	1,482	2,134	300	370	539
Total	12,105	12,423	13,119	5,963	6,354	6,735
Share 55 or over(%)	20.6	23.6	28.7	18.0	20.3	23.6
Share 65 or over(%)	10.3	11.9	16.3	5.0	5.8	8.0

Source: Ministry of Labor, Rodoryoku jukvu no choki yosoku (Long-Term Projections for Supply and Demand in the Labor Force), 1987.

Table 3

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY AGE (MALES) (%)

Age	1970	1975	1980	1985	1987
15-19	2.7	4.8	5.5	8.9	9.3
20-24	1.8	3.1	3.6	3.8	4.3
25-29	1.1	2.1	2.0	2.4	2.6
30-34	1.0	1.3	1.7	2.0	2.2
35-39	0.8	1.5	1.3	1.9	2.0
40-44	-	1.5	1.0	1.6	1.8
45-49	0.7 ^a	1.4	1.3	1.5	1.7
50-54	-	1.6	1.5	1.9	2.3
55-59	1.8 ^b	3.2	3.1	3.9	4.0
60-64	-	3.2	4.6	7.0	7.6
65-	0.6	1.8	2.2	2.1	1.6
Total	1.2	2.0	2.0	2.6	2.8

Source: Management and Coordination Agency, Rodoryoku Chosa (Labor Survey).

a. Ages 40-54

b. Ages 55-64

The trend towards higher education

Post-War increases in the percentage of those who go on to high schools and beyond, have produced a more - educated labour force. It shows that higher education has promoted the corporate hierarchy in both the pre-war and early post-war periods. The rise in income level made it possible for parents to keep their children in school longer.

Foreign Workers:

There is an increase in number of foreign workers entering Japan due to sharp increase in the value of year since 1985. As a result, the Japanese wage levels are amongst the highest in the world. Some Japanese companies try to fill unpopular jobs by employing foreign workers on low wages in order to reduce costs. Thus, there is an increase in the number of illegal workers, particularly from Asian Countries. And if the present trend continues, the numbers are expected to increase further.

Malaise in Japanese Corporation:²⁸

It is said by some scholars that a malaise is developing in the Japanese corporation since the past few years.

28 Esaka Akiwa, "Malaise in the Japanese Corporation", Japan Echo, vol.11, No.3, 1984, p.35.

The Japanese corporation seems to be falling out of favor of late.

The strength of the Japanese till now has been formula of - loyalty and self - sacrifice, lifetime employment and seniority system, worker participation in management and a well-developed education system. But the problems of a rapidly aging population, personnel cutbacks, cutthroat intercorporate competition, and increasing labor mobility are shaking the foundations of the corporate organization. The education system has been devastated by an epidemic of school violence, rising juvenile delinquency, and the overcompetitive entrance exam system.

The generation of loyal, self-sacrificing war veterans who pushed Japan toward economic prosperity have finally passed into retirement. The younger generation, products of the baby boom have flooded the market. The younger generation who is waiting to take over, puts career over company, family and leisure over career. More than half these people indicate a desire to change companies.

Japan's productivity is among the highest in the world and is increasing every year. But somewhere along the way, something seems to be slipping out of gear.

There is a shadow of "British disease" creeping on the Japanese. Employees of the big leading conglomerates, considered to be highly sensitive to signs of change, have forecasted that Japan will eventually, lose out to United States and will be toppled from its high economic pedestal. The major reason behind this malaise seems to be its workers and their attitudes toward work.

Neurosis on the rise:

Depression is on the rise among Japan's white collar workers. A study by Japan's productivity centre reports that one out of every 10 workers in Japan suffers from depression, be it emotional or psychological, it is also predicted that in the coming decades, neurosis will be the major epidemic in Japan. Presently there are over 5 million Japanese who suffer from depression.

"The Japanese blue-collar worker was once thought to be safe from the alienating effects of mechanization noted in Western companies, since Japanese firms presumably did not rationalize production at the expense of the human element. But cracks have appeared in this popular myth. All companies where automation has proceeded most rapidly, have taken away the smiles from the faces of the younger workers".²⁹

29 ibid, p.36.

Normally, it occurs amongst the middle-aged and older male employees, disoriented by new technology and changes in the work environment. But from now on it is likely to victimize baby-boom white collar workers and youth who are subjected to gruelling competition from elementary school till college and job placement.

"May Sickness"

It is called the "May sickness". Male graduates of prestigious university, suddenly quit their job within one month at large. Companies at the start of the fiscal year in April. A young employee of a well reputed city bank suddenly quits or one of the graduates of an elite university develops neurosis and is incapacitated during on-the-job training at a company.

More and more young people are changing jobs at the drop of a hat. Their reasons vary from job dissatisfaction in terms of low pay, personal interaction in office, to too much work load.

The companies are looking for loyal foot soldiers who will climb the corporate ladder through sheer hard work and determination. But the younger generation recruits are unwilling to settle for this, which brews dissatisfaction among the management. They find the young

recruits to be blase, lacking morals and the drive to work dedicatedly for the growth of the company. They are called unmotivated and uncorporative, spoilt and tied to their mother's apron. The slightest difficulty sends them into a panic, and they quit for no reason at all. The younger recruits have no interest in becoming self sacrificing fort soldiers. Today's graduates do not have the necessity to work in order to eat. They have been liberated from the shackles of poverty brought up as mass consumers in an industrial society which is willing to cater to their limitless desires. These are the true children of the media living in a consumer culture.

But that is not to say that the younger generation has lost the desire to work. The results of attitude surveys of new employees conducted yearly by Japan productivity Centre point to a steadily diminishing sense of loyalty amongst to days young people with fewer number inclined to permanent employment at a single company. The survey also shows these young people to be ambitious, willing and eager to work but not along the traditional lines of loyalty, but for their personal promotion and growth.

CHAPTER III

KUKUSAIKA (INTERNATIONALIZATION) AND YOUTH

Recent increase in the flow of ordinary individuals across national boundaries in the last decade has led to an increase in cultural conflicts. This is more in case of economically developed nations which includes Japan. International trade which is a form of cultural borrowing gives rise to increased international flow of personnel including workers and their families, and it makes them more sensitive to their cultural identity. We can see such a process in Japan that with the flow of labour, goods, students and professionals, there has been exchange of culture.

The flow of people is evident from the number of "Japanese who went abroad in 1985. It was 2.1 times the figure in 1975, while the number of foreign visitors to Japan increased by 2.9 times in the same period. The number of foreign students studying in Japan increased from about 5,500 in 1975 to about 15,000 in 1985. Furthermore, the Japanese government has announced an ambitious policy to raise the number to 100,000 by the year 2000".¹

1 Kenichiro, Hirano, "International Cultural Conflicts: Causes and remedies in Japan", Japan Review of International Affairs, Fall/Winter 1988, p.152.

As we move towards the twenty-first century, the cultural aspects of international relations are gaining more attention. This is more so with international relations with Japan and the Japanese. As the world is moving close together irrespective of national boundaries towards increasing political and economic international relationships, cultural relationships become more apparent.

Japan's Position in the Global Economy

Japan underwent protracted economic growth in the high growth period from the late 1950s to 1960s, overcame the two oil crisis in the 1970s and managed to sustain higher growth than other developed countries. Further, owing to the impact of the sharp appreciation of Yen in the 1980s, the country has grown to hold one of the most powerful economies in the world. "In 1989, Japan's GNP rose to \$ 23,472 the highest in the world. The growth rate of GNP (1986-1990) was 4.7 percent".²

Trade and International Balance of Payments

"In terms of trade, the share of Japan's exports and imports in the world rose from 1.4 percent 1.6 percent in 1960 to 6.7 percent and 6.2 percent in 1970, a period of high economic growth and 9.7 percent and 7.9 percent in 1990".³

2 Japan 1992: An International Comparison (Japan, Keizai Koho Centre), p.1.

3 White papers on International Trade (Japan, JETRO, 1990).

From late 1960s to early 1970s, Japan's international competitiveness increased and its surplus on its current account grew. At the start of 1980s, the surplus on its foreign balance, primarily the surplus on its trade balance with the US, grew by a large amount. "In the peak year of 1987, the surplus on its trade balance reached US \$ 96.4 billion and the surplus on its current account balance reached US \$ 87 billion. In the process of this, Japan's cumulative net foreign assets also grew. By the end of 1985, Japan had exceeded United Kingdom to become the world's largest net foreign creditor nation and by the end of 1988 held US \$ 291.7 billion worth of net foreign assets. Japan also came to wield considerable power on the financial front. The foreign assets of Japanese banks increased 2.5 fold from the end of 1985 to the end of 1988. During that period, the share of these banks in the report of the Bank of International settlements (BIS) rose from 26 percent to 38.2 percent".⁴

Corporate Activities:

On the other hand, the scale of corporate activities also increased in Japan. "Among the top 500 manufacturing companies in the world, in terms of sales, there were 66

4 Japan 1992 , (Japan, Keizai Koho Centre).

Japanese companies in 1980 and 102 in 1988. Japanese companies have become more active in international business as well, with the direct foreign investment of Japan rising from US \$ 12.2 billion of fiscal 1980 to US \$ 67.5 billion in fiscal 1989, to US \$ 56.9 billion in fiscal 1990 (based on Ministry of Finance reports)".⁵

Significance of Expansion
of Japanese Economy:

Thus, Japan has come to take on a major position in the global economy. This has two implications. First Japan has become a large market for other countries. "Japanese imports have increased since 1985, rising 1.6 fold from 1985 to 1989 on a dollar basis. In particular imports of manufactured goods rose 2.6 fold on a dollar basis during that period and 2.0 fold on a volume basis. Imports of manufactured goods from the developing countries rose from US \$ 10.1 billion of 1985 to US \$ 33.4 billion in 1989, a 3.3 fold rise. In 1960, there were only 3 countries with over 20 percent dependence on exports to Japan, but this rose to 17 countries by 1988".⁶

5 ibid.

6 White Papers on International Trade (Japan, JETRO, 1989).

Second, Japan's role in global stabilization and development is increasing. Japan has not only developed a self-sufficient economy, but also ties with the rest of the world through free economic activities in the free-trade global economic system. Japan is playing its part through gradual opening of its market and expansion of its imports so as to allow herself to function as a force behind global economic development.

Japan is expected to play a greater role in the economic development growth and stabilisation of the developing countries. "The official Development Assistance (ODA) of Japan rose to US \$ 9.13 billion in 1988, second supplier in the world after the US. Japan's ODA totalled \$ 8.965 billion in 1989 (net disbursement basis)".⁷ The amount which was slightly below the actual 1988 figure on a dollar basis, but Japan was the world's number 1 donor nation surpassing the United States for the first time.

While the global economy is facing various problems, Japan is steadily strengthening its position. Japan is looked upon with a lot of expectations regarding its role in promoting the smooth and stable development of the global economy.

7 ibid.

The Globalization of Human Resources⁸

Global executives are the need of the hour in this fast moving age of internationalization. The large cultural differences between Japan and the other countries, global executives become a necessity to solve the crucial day-to-day problems to penetrate the Japanese market.

What is a Global Executive?

A global executive is expected to articulate and communicate cross-culturally. To behave natively in two cultural contexts is the ideal situation.

Language skills do play a role, but international competence is not directly related to language skills. There is a difference between syntax and semantics. There are Japanese who can construct perfect English sentences but make no sense to an American as they do literal translation of a Japanese expression. Ambiguous phrases like "I do not think so", or "I think so" used by Japanese leaves a foreigner in utter confusion regarding the meaning of the sentence. Lack of clarity in communications is ineffective internationally for it cannot communicate across cultures.

8 T.W. Kang, Gaishi: The foreign company in Japan (Tokyo, Charles & Tuttle Co., 1991), p.153.

The Japanese society or education system does not encourage articulation and get few opportunities to verbalize complex thoughts that need articulation.

The Japanese who have studied abroad or have worked abroad for some years are resented by the Japanese on their return to Japan - for their overt and direct expression. They become "weird", as they get outspoken and "out of tune" with the subtle and unwritten code of behaviour of the Japanese. This cultural strength or cohesion is unique to Japan and is lacking in other Asian nations, or newly industrialized economies that have a larger number of English speaking populace than Japan. The Japanese firms go out of their way to recruit Japanese graduates from foreign universities or firms lest it hurt the delicate balance and harmony in their organizations. Thus, international vitalization is rare in a Japanese organization.

Unlike the West where efficiency is considered a virtue, in Japan harmony takes precedence over efficiency. Therefore, accepting the surface meaning of a Japanese person's statement without probing the underlying thought process is likely to result in surprises later on, when one finds out that the initial understanding was based on a false assumption. Thus, flexibility and an open mind is important for a global executive.

Another important quality required of a global executive is mediation skills to avoid encountering an impasse in trade negotiations. A judgement call, based on knowledge of the two cultures and of the issue is important and so is the flexibility to look for common ground.

Lack of Global Executives in Japan

Even though the Japanese would beat any other nationality in their zest for travel, yet why are not they able to bring about more global executives? Why is there such a strong intolerance to understand other's values. Could be the cultural adhesion and the inability to stray away from the precepts of their upbringing. One of the answers could be the way in which the Japanese travel, with all their accommodations arranged, with assistants travelling with them and wherever they go Japanese business associates meet them and try to make their superiors comfortable. Working through translators and interpreters makes it difficult to imbibe the spirit of foreign culture..

Japanese are famous for their package tours which is like travelling in an incubator in foreign lands, with no interaction with the native culture or people of the foreign land. The reason or the fear behind such an attitude is anshinkan for example Japanese fear is to get into trouble with a cab driver regarding the fare or enter

a restaurant alone for fear of causing some trouble.

Japanese who go abroad for a few years ought to become Ambassadors and leaders in orienting their organizations internationally. But this is not so. This was evident from the response of several Japanese alumni of a graduate school in United States when asked if they had any adjustment problems on their return to the Japanese employers who had sponsored them. The consensus was that they had not. "The trick", they said, "was to get through the schooling without being influenced by the American culture, that way, they would have the easiest re-entry into Japanese society".⁹

That is why the Japanese students undergo tight coupling when in the West, keeping to themselves as a group, eating Japanese food, travelling together, speaking Japanese and even preparing for exams together.

But the amazing part is that the Japanese employees are unlikely to give the alumni of an American school, any power to influence the operations of the business for at least five years. The purpose of their education in the United States was to understand American psychology

⁹ ibid, p.167.

and thought processes, which the firm could use in its strategy immediately.

Recently, Japanese companies have started hiring foreigners not for their subsidiaries in foreign countries but for their companies in Japan. They have hailed this practice as a giant step towards kokusaika (internationalization), but the foreigners are normally placed in peripheral organizations or given work that is not fully integrated into the core of the organization. "Japanese can be considered to go international when they start taking foreigners into the mainstream of their organisations, breaking the tight coupling and their fear about heterogeneity"¹⁰.

Japan in a World of Growing Interdependence

Japan's overseas exchange has expanded and is continuing to diversify in every field, and its relations with other countries in the world are rapidly deepening. Under stable post-war system governed by GATT and the IMF, Japan established increasingly interdependent relations with other countries in trade, finance, investment and other aspects of the economy. "In 1970 Japan's dependence on trade (as a proportion of GNP) was about 10 percent for exports and a bit less than 8 percent for imports; by 1984 it had risen to 14 percent for exports and 10 percent for imports".¹¹

10 ibid, p.176

11 White Papers of Japan, 1985-86.

Moreover, with the deepening interdependence that has accompanied economic growth, the influence of Japan's economy on other countries has considerably increased. As a result, any change in Japan's fiscal or monetary policies, for example, will have a pervasive effect on other national economies - in employment, inflation and industrial environment. Likewise changes in other countries will effect the Japanese economy. "As the international financial and capital markets become increasingly integrated through deregulation of domestic markets, Japan's influence will extent - through not only trade but also exchange and interest rates as well as capital transfer - to currency, finance and every other aspect of other national economies".¹²

On the corporate level as well, the international presence of Japanese enterprises is on the rise. For example, overseas direct investment, in terms of figures reported to the government rapidly grew in tandem with capital liberalization, from "an annual average of around \$ 550 million in the latter half of the 1960s to nearly \$ 2.5 billion in the 1970s and to \$ 10.2 billion in 1984".¹³

12 Yasuke Nurakami and Yutaka Kosai (ed.), Japan in the Global Community - its role and its contribution on the eve of the 21st century (Tokyo, University of Tokyo, 1986), p.19.

13 *ibid*, p.21.

In addition to overseas production, Japanese corporations are actively engaged in international exchange of investment and technology and in a wide variety of industrial cooperation programmes through Original Equipment Manufacturing (OEM) contracts and other arrangements.

At the individual level, the number of Japanese travellers abroad has risen to over 10 million (as of 1990). In terms of costs also, the distance between Japan and the rest of the world seems to be shrinking for the average Japanese.

The increased interchange and interdependence between Japan and other countries has provoked friction in trade and other economic issues, and has grown to encompass the social institutions, customs, practices, culture and mode of behaviour that characterize Japanese industrial society. Compared with the rapid advances of Japanese products, money and corporate activities overseas, international exchange of persons and cross-cultural understanding of Japan's society and culture lag far behind due to friction and misunderstanding.

It is probable that both interdependence and friction will continue to increase in international society in the

years to come. Japan, which is a major beneficiary of interdependence, will be in particular need of heightened awareness of the global community. At present such consciousness is still weak and insufficient. Today more than ever, it behoves the Japanese government, individual citizens and corporations to evaluate Japan's relationship to the world from their respective positions.

Toward Deepening Internationalization

In these times when Western culture is expanding rapidly, Japan has become the target of lot of criticism due to conflict with other countries. She has no choice, but to deepen and improve its relationship with international society. To successfully internationalize, Japan needs to understand the various countries with their varied cultures, and vice-versa.

Japanese culture seems to have certain characteristics that seem difficult, if not impossible to internationalize. However, with Westernization amongst the younger generation, cultural and technological exchange seems to pay the way for internationalization in the future.

Recently, many Japanese have begun to discuss "internationalism" which till now has been Western culture. Some of the "Japanese" attributes viz., the peculiar features of the Japanese society and culture, have tended

to be exaggerated or slightly distorted when seen in the context of a world civilization centering on a Western culture.

Direct Investment

Japan should follow the example of US of opening or liberalising its own markets to increase its share in the world trade. The past 20 years of activity of Japanese corporations is in Southeast Asia, in Central and South America and of course the West testifies the degree of internationalization they have attained. No one can deny that in the business world, the corporations, in particular, have been the most consistent promoter of internationalization. The term, formerly referring only to the existence of trade relations, has come to signify a much more extensive involvement with foreign countries in the form of direct investment.

Direct investment allows superior management of resources to be widely and deeply infused into a foreign economy. In addition to being an extremely valuable contribution to technological and economic progress in the host country, it also deepens interdependence and promotes mutual understanding between the investing country and the host country. However, direct investment calls for broader

human exchange than movements of capital or technology. It necessitates communication on various fronts, not only between labour and capital, but also with local business partners and the surrounding society.

Japanese Corporations and Internationalization
in the new environment:

Japanese firms have to confront the task of internationalization in the midst of a changing domestic and international environment. The major changes likely to occur are explained below. First is the changes in the action and thinking of the new generation. Labour mobility may increase as members of the next generation seek self-realization in contexts wide than a single corporation. They may also demand a distribution of benefits based on individual merits.

Liberalization and internationalization of financial and capital markets constitute a second area of change. The internationalization of the capital structure of Japanese firm implies that their management, too will be susceptible to the logic of international capital. Japanese firms must find methods of management which can effectively grapple with the problems of internationalization.

In formulating such principles, two tenets must be met. First the application of these principles must result in corporate activity that is acceptable to other nations of the world and that contributes to world development. The second is that it should be capable of answering the fundamental dilemma of internationalization - that posed by the "localism" of people and "international" character of capital and technology. They must respond to the problem of international distribution that arises because people are not easily moved across national borders, while capital and technology easily transcend such boundaries.

As the international activity of Japanese firms expands, portions of the Japanese management system will have to draw nearer to and move into harmony with foreign practices. This will be similar to the present practice of some foreign firms reshaping some of their management practices after the existing Japanese model.

Since the Japanese firms have little or no experience of including foreigners among the core member of the firm, they cannot be said to be truly international.

Another problem is language. These days more and more company officials and youngsters undergo English conversation tuition classes.

The managers who want to carry out the internationalization of Japanese firms must be conversant with not only the economic performance of the company, but be familiar with trends in politics, culture and society. They should be business leaders who as individual readers can act as private-sector diplomats in countries with which they work.

Human Exchange in International
Arena : Its Significance :

Material, financial and human exchange are all part of today's growing global interdependence. Of these, human exchange is the most difficult to promote. As long as human relations lag behind other forms of international exchange the countries involved may neither recognize the extent to which international interdependence is increasing nor come to a proper understanding of the societies with which they have ties.

Japan provides a clear example of this state of affairs. In the post-war economic development, Japan focussed more on material and financial forms of international exchange than human. This has proved to be a stumbling block to Japan's international relations, giving rise to frictions and confrontations with other nations.

Human exchange can be classified in many ways. Participation in conferences or meetings abroad is a relatively short-term human exchange. While overseas study and business activity involves longer time periods. Human exchange can take many forms, readily understood by people of different culture and language. For example, music, culture, sports are of common interest across the globe, whereas academic and business activities are specialized and need considerable effort to understand. Human exchange that transforms every aspect of human life like immigration is the toughest of all.

Japanese Human Exchange Efforts

Human Exchange effort is reflected in increase in the number of foreign students studying in Japanese universities, even though the medium of instruction is Japanese. "In 1988, there were 25,000 foreign students studying in various Japanese institutions".¹⁴

Frontiers in Corporate Globalization

Japanese corporations have undergone globalization as a result of internationalization of its sales. Once the products are successful in the domestic set-up, the corporation seeks additional outlets in foreign markets.

14 Japan Colleges and Universities (Tokyo, Maruzen, 1989).

The late 1970s witnessed the internationalization of sales in the area of high technology as Japanese manufactures of products, like semi-conductors, developed export capabilities.

After sales, the next stage of industrial process to go international is production. "The three major factors involved here are: low wages, proximity of natural resources and other cost-related considerations. Thus, Japanese started to locate their production sites overseas. The strategy adopted by giant US, based multinational corporations during the 1960s and 1970s was to cut costs. In the case of Japan, the cost factor played a major role especially in textile and consumer electronics in South-East Asia, a process that began to accelerate in the 1960s".¹⁵ The rising value of Yen in the late 1980s brought this factor to the fore in various industries, making it unprofitable to produce many standard products domestically. Thus, the globalization process has also had a negative effect on Japanese economy.

Japanese Tourists Abroad

The recent trends have shown that increasing number of Japanese are travelling abroad. Japanese tourists are

15 Aoki Masahiko, "Frontiers in Corporate Globalization", Japan Echo, vol.17, Special Issue 1990, p.26.

no longer viewed by their hosts with amused tolerance as earlier. Travelling in large packs, equipped with a staggering load of cameras, videocameras and guidebooks and wearing expressions of mild bafflement, they are found dutifully clambering aboard tour buses, filing passively in and out of souvenir shops and lining up patiently to await their turn through the gates of mega-attractions of the world.

The appreciation in the value of Yen has changed the individual disposable income of the Japanese. The Japanese are also becoming more adventurous, eschewing group outings in favour of more varied and individualized activities, especially amongst the youth. "In 1986, some 5.5 million Japanese travelled overseas, by 1988 it had risen to 8.5 million. Of these about 2.8 million travelled to the United States, the largest number from any single foreign country".¹⁶

The Japanese Ministry of Transport, seeing foreign travel as a good way to reduce the country's trade surplus with the rest of the world, "set a "10 million plan" in 1989, whereby Japanese travelling overseas was expected to reach 10 million by 1991, with spending topping \$ 20.2 billion

16 Nancy Zimmerman, "Japanese Tourism: The Untapped Bonanza" in Business Tokyo, February 1989, p.13.

(plus another \$ 6.34 billion for air fares). This target was met by 1990".¹⁷

The Ministry of Labour of Japan is cooperating by encouraging companies to reduce overtime work, and long paid vacations. The boon in foreign travel has contributed to the improvement of Japanese understanding of the international community.

The fast growing segment in Japanese tourism is young people. Recent graduates (who bring their graduation gift money for a stay of a month or more) and single working women (known as office ladies or OLs, who live with their parents and thus, have a tremendous amount of disposable income) form a major chunk of this group. They shop a lot and are adventurous and affluent. "In 1987, 13 percent of unmarried women between 20 and 29 years of age made trips abroad".¹⁸ Their salary does not make them rich in Tokyo, but when they travel abroad, the high Yen transforms their spending power.

These days Japanese youth are travelling to Asian countries also. They find close cultural affinity than they do towards the West.

17 *ibid.*

18 Osamu Aridome, "Those affluent OLs", Business Tokyo, February 1989, p.16.

With increased travel, Japanese youth comes into contact with various cultures and does get influenced by Western culture and music. The world famous singers like Michael Jackson, Madonna Bruce Springsteen, etc. are a rage in Japan. Thus, world famous stars do very good business in Japan. The young generation in Japan gets influenced in their choice of music, clothes, food, etc. The youth do not buy anything except the latest designer wear whether it is Bennetton or adidas shoes or Gucci bags. The Western idea of fast-food has taken roots in Japanese cities. Macdonalds, Wimpys, etc. are favourite points of the youngsters. All in all the life-style of the youth is predominantly Western in style as they try to keep up with the latest fashions of the world.

Thus, the Japanese youth has grown up in a mixed culture, i.e. Western and indigenous -

1. Products of materialistic and affluent society
2. Questioning attitude towards culture
3. Conflict of values.

Japanese who go abroad discover differences in many aspects and realize that they cannot impose their own customs and values on foreign nationals and learn to accept cultures different from theirs. Thus, to visit a foreign

country gives the Japanese an opportunity to change their perception and awareness. Such a change may proceed naturally through the experience of living abroad, but at the same time, conscious efforts are required for each person. It is expected that real, internationalization of Japanese will be realized through such experiences and efforts.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

After an assessment of Japanese economic success it can be concluded that it was possible because of Japan's unique culture and values. Japan has a large degree of linguistic, religious and social homogeneity in contrast to many other countries. Other countries may have a single political entity but comprise of a number of parallel, independent cultural systems including language, religion and culture. The cultural homogeneity of Japan has played a major role in making Japan a closed society, where its values were concerned. The traditional values of paternalism, that is, treating an organisation as family, exists in their cultural ethos, right from the pre-school stage till they retire from the company. Another major cultural factor that contributed to the Japanese prosperity was the work ethic of the Japanese worker. The value of loyalty and groupism, however, is steadily undergoing a change amongst the younger generation due to various factors like their slightly westernised upbringing amidst the traditional Japanese society and their individualistic approach life in general.

One cannot forget that it was Japan's culture amidst historical situations which created an exclusive Japanese management system. However, these cultural realities no longer exist. The management system and the work ethics

of the youth is gradually adapting itself to the changing circumstances.

In the 1980s, Japan became an economic superpower transforming itself from a relatively closed, controlled, backward economy, into a more liberalised and open society, confident of its economic and political power. This transformation could not have been dreamt of forty years ago. Japan has been forced to reform its trade policy to expand its domestic market and to increase imports, due to prodding the outside world. This economic necessity has compelled Japan to realise the importance to internationalisation.

With the adoption of international monetary reforms, Yen started to play an important role and Tokyo became a financial capital of global importance. In order to recycle its trade surplus, Japan carries out an ambitious plan to aid the developing countries.

Japan realises that it cannot stay in isolation. It imports raw material and needs the overseas market to cut its production costs. Thus economically, Japan has no alternative but to interact more actively with the rest of the world inspite of cross-cultural differences.

This success in the international trade has brought about manifold changes in the Japanese society. A society that was closed till a few decades ago is being exposed to

varied foreign culture. If Japan has to retain its economic prosperity, its culture has to withstand the invasion of foreign influences.

The advent of the 1990s have shown the Japanese youth coming to terms with foreign culture. The youth is becoming increasingly westernised whether it is fashion or food habits. The major impact of internationalisation has been on the work ethics and its management system. Today the youth want quick promotion, better paying jobs, reward according to merit etc. As a result there is increasing labour mobility and lack of loyalty towards one's company. The old traditional values that contributed to Japan's prosperity in the past, namely, lifetime employment system, loyalty, sincerity system are facing gradual erosion. The value system and priorities of the youth in the labour market differs from their predecessors. An increasing number of young people look at work as a means to personal goal rather than an end in itself. There is an indication of a gradual shift from groupism to individualism.

The 1990 White Paper on labour issued in late July, 1991 provides evidence of the shift in attitude. It states that young workers who hope to stay at their present

place of work have decreased so sharply in number that their share in the work force is smaller than that of the satisfied workers in other industrialised countries.

The management is scrambling to keep abreast of the times keeping in view the changing ethics of Japanese youth. There is acute labour shortage in Japan and, as a result, more and more companies are promising higher starting salaries, shorter working hours, more days off, and a variety of other benefits like housing and overseas trips to the Japanese worker. According to a National Survey conducted in July 1991 by Japanese Government Agency regarding work hours in Japan, on an average 75 percent youth (age 20-35 years) preferred not to work overtime.¹

The youth do not hesitate to voice their views about jobs. This attitude is a far cry from the mentality of their fathers who viewed productive activity as work rather than labour (which connotes drudgery). The youth does not wish to take up certain jobs that are difficult, dangerous and dirty (kitsui, kiken and kitanai, commonly referred to as 3K's).

1 Asahi Shinbun, Japan, 13 October 1991, p.9.

The growing globalisation is affecting the traditional child rearing practiced and is compelling the Japanese women towards emancipation. There is a growing tendency amongst the Japanese women to have free time for their own leisure activities due to automated household appliances. The values of the youth work like groupism, harmony and co-operation, loyalty, intuitive, communication, diligence, single mindedness to complete task, etc. are inculcated from the very childhood. Now, because of the involvement of women elsewhere and the increase in the nuclear family pattern, there is nobody to teach these values to the child. With the increase of tomobataraki,² the child is brought up in creches and day-care centres. On top of this, he has to undergo severe competition to get into good high schools and universities when he grows up. This, at times, leads to a deviant personality and affects their values. Another factor that contributes to the erosion of traditional values is the increased affluence and westernisation. The Japanese are having fewer children and have more money to indulge them. Where is the newly affluent generation heading for? A number of problems have emerged in the schools-including violence, bullying and suicides - due to changing values in the midst of fierce competition.

2 A situation where both parents are working.

An advisory panel to the prime minister was formed in 1984 to consult these issues, but there is yet to be any substantial change in the competitive education system. Keeping in mind the growing westernisation of Japanese society and information revolution, there is an urgent need to relax the competition to enable them to lead a normal childhood, the youth aspires for a job, where his merit is recognised and adequately compensated. The transition of the Japanese society has left the youth extremely dissatisfied.

The present Japanese society is in a state of flux. The youth is coming into conflict with the older generation. It is at odds and ends in spite of having achieved material success.

In 1959, E.F. Vogel concluded that the moving force of the Japanese was their group loyalty. He attributed Japanese economic growth to groupism in Japan, where all members try to fulfil group roles.³

The Japanese management used both in born (traditional) and acquired (modern) aspects like two sides of the same coin.

3 E.F. Vogel, Nihon no Shin Chusan-kaikyu: Sarariman to sono kazoku (Japanese version of Japan's New Middle class: Salaried workers and their families (Tokyo, 1968)).

It valued unity over capability of the individual to accomplish big goals. In the late 70s, "Japan was said to have modernized economically (externally), but remained traditional in human aspects (internally)".⁴

In 90s, however, the situation of Japan has changed considerably. Even the human aspects (internal) i.e. values, and norms are being destabilized with the onset of Westernization.

Japanese youth are travelling overseas and are getting more exposure to foreign cultures and ideas than their predecessors. As a result, the youth have begun to look inwards - to question their values, attitudes and priorities in life. This could be the beginning of erosion of values that, in the past contributed to Japanese prosperity. Does the changing workers' attitude mean that Japanese prosperity is on the path to its declination?

History reflects that Japan has the capacity to weather shock in a flexible manner as was shown by the two oil crises in the 70s that shook the world economy. "As long as that flexible machine known as the Japanese economy continues to

4 Hirschmeier and Yui, Nihon no keiei hatten: Kindaika to kigyo keiei (The development of Japanese business: Modernisation & Management) (Tokyo, 1977), pp.310-14.

grow , Japanese-style management will continue to adapt itself to new environment and function successfully".⁵

Japanese strength lay in adhering to its tradition, which once withered will slacken the pace of Japanese prosperity.

Some scholars say that they cannot see the Japanese youth becoming lazy. But their work ethic is certainly changing. With the changing status of women, child-rearing patterns are changing. Even the Japanese youth are under the influence of Westernization, but once they graduate and join a company, they become Japanized. The changing values and attitudes are likely to be visible gradually in their work environment. At present there is no drastic change likely to appear in their work ethic. But the gap has appeared, which could take a decade or two to manifest.

5 Yang Tein-yi, "Japanese-style management", East Asian Cultural Studies, vol.28, No.1-4, (Tokyo, March 1989), p.40.

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