

“Cultural Script” on Japanese Attitude towards Emotion

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This paper aims to explicate and define the meaning of cultural norms/rules associated with some features of general Japanese people's attitudes towards emotions in Japanese culture, and to describe those characteristics in the form of '**cultural scripts**', using Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) method developed by a linguist Anna Wierzbicka and her colleagues.

This methodology makes it possible to capture the semantic invariant of the meaning encoded in emotion expressions or the tacit cultural norms correlated to emotion expressions clearly and explicitly. Through the use of the framework of the NSM in “cultural scripts” form, the semantic analysis of any expression/concept can be rigorously portrayed.

1. The Method Used for Describing the Cultural Rules on Emotions

1.1. Cultural Scripts

Each society has a shared set of cultural norms, or specific cultural needs and values, such as how to think, how to feel, how to want, how to speak to others, things that one can or cannot say, things that one can or cannot do, etc. These tacit cultural norms concerning Japanese attitudes towards emotions can be stated in the form of explicit “**Cultural Scripts**” using Wierzbicka's Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) method (cf. Wierzbicka, 1993 : 220; 1995 : 210).

Wierzbicka (1999a : 240) states that “Although human emotional endowments is no doubt largely innate and universal people's emotional lives are

shaped, to a considerable extent, by their culture. Every culture offers not only a linguistically embodied grid for the conceptualization of emotions, but also a set of **'scripts'** suggesting to people how to feel, how to express their feelings, how to think about own and other people's feelings, and so on" [Emphasis mine].

Different cultures have different norms and expectations towards emotions. Wierzbicka's (1999a : 241) claim is that when one analyses linguistic evidence concerning emotions and emotional expressions, there emerge basic cultural scripts associated with them. In one example, Wierzbicka (1999a : 246) discusses a common speech/conversational routine-the "how are you" routine-which manifestly reflects a cultural premises in English :

In English, there are many common speech routines which manifestly reflect a cultural premises to the effect that it is good to "feel good"-and to be seen as someone who "feels happy". In particular, the common "How are you?-I am fine" routine implies an expectation that "good feelings" will be expressed, and if need be, "artificially displayed". Of course this expectation may be violated, but it is undoubtedly there, as highlighted by the dictum "don't tell your friends about your indigestion, 'How are you' is a greeting, not a question"

(Arthur Guiteman, quoted in Leech 1983 : 1981).

Wierzbicka states that the ubiquitous presence of the words "great" or "happy" in American discourse is the linguistic reflection of certain American cultural scripts : roughly speaking, 'positive thinking', 'enthusiasm', and 'cheerfulness' scripts. Wierzbicka (1999a : 247) explains that speech routine where one frequently uses words such as "great" or "happy" suggests the following Anglo-American cultural scripts :

Anglo-American

[people think]²

it is good to say often something like this :

"I feel something very good"

This cultural scripts shows that American values positive, enthusiastic and

cheerful attitude very highly, even compared with that of Anglo-British or Anglo-Australians.

The cultural script method can facilitate cross-cultural communication, as stated in the following comments by Wierzbicka (1994a : 49) :

Since cultural scripts can be formulated in lexical universals, they can be easily compared across cultures. What is more, comparison of cultures based on cultural script can be undertaken from a language-independent and a culture-neutral point of view, and can be free of any ethnocentric bias. The fact that cultural scripts are directly translatable from one language to another and that they can be associated, so to speak, via any language whatsoever, ensures their universal and culture-independent character. (...) Natural semantic metalanguage provides us with a universal system of notation for stating and comparing tacit cultural rules in terms of which different societies operate and in terms which we can understand and make sense of differential communicative behaviour.

Different cultural values evident from the comparison of different cultures can be accounted by the 'cultural scripts' described by the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) method.

1.2. “The Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) ” Method for cultural scripts

In the previous volume of this Bulletin, Hasada (2002a) discussed the concept of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) methodology in detail (cf. also Hasada 2000, 2001, 2002b, In Press). NSM is a set of semantic primitive words which are maximally clear, maximally self-explanatory, maximally simple, and maximally universal. Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM), which consists of these semantic primitives and also relies exclusively on simple and universal grammatical constructions, allows us to explore human emotions from a universal, language-independent perspective.

“Basing our analysis on lexical universals we can free ourselves from the bias of our own language and reach a universal, culture-independent perspective on human cognition in general and on human emotions in particular”

(Wierzbicka 1995 : 236).

By using NSM, emotion words/expressions across cultures can be represented and compared with those in different cultures from universal perspective.

“The indefinable semantic primes” are universal elements in terms of which all complex meaning can be coherently represented. The NSM approach, which is based on these semantic primitives, has been developed over many years of cross linguistic semantic research (e.g. Wierzbicka, 1996, 1999a ; Goddard & Wierzbicka, 1994 ; Goddard, 1998, Godddard & Wierzbicka 2002). The NSM method uses these semantic primitives which are supposed to be possessed equally by all languages in the world, and it aims at capturing the semantic invariant of a word/expression and representing it by means of a paraphrase composed of these semantic primitives.

The same thing could be said about “**cultural scripts**” which is mainly picked up in this paper. The cultural script needs to be described by the Natural Semantic Metalanguage lexicon/grammar, because only a universally available lexicon or grammatical patterns can both reflect the invariant meaning of the cultural scripts and make it intelligible to cultural outsiders. For example, Wierzbicka (1999a : 254) gives examples of comparison between American and Polish culture as follows :

...the implicit “cultural scripts” which for the society’s shared frame of reference are different from the Polish one ; for the hierarchy of values governing interpersonal relations is different. “Anglo cultural scripts” encourage people to be “careful,” to be “considerate”, to be “thoughtful”, to avoid “hurting other people’s feelings.” (...) It is not an accident...that Polish doesn’t have any words corresponding to the English words considerate, thoughtful, or even kind, or expressions like to hurt someone’s feelings, all of which concentrate on the other person’s feelings, not on our own. (p. 254) [underline mine]

...the Anglo [pattern of way of thinking/behaviour] is clearly based on the cultural premise that it is good to try to avoid “hurting the other person’s feelings”, whereas the Polish one is based on the cultural premise that it is good to sat what one really thinks and what one really feels. (p. 257)

However, if we compare Japanese culture and Anglo culture, attitude of

people in Anglo culture are less “careful”, less “considerate”, less “avoiding hurting other people’s feelings” from the Japanese person’s perspective. Thus, complex and language-specific words/expressions such as “careful”, “considerate”, “not considering other people’s feelings” can not represent the cultural norm in its absolute sense.

Only the NSM method can clarify differences between cultures, including those most directly affecting the use of emotion words, the display of emotions, and styles of communication.

2. Attitudes towards Emotions in Different Cultures

In her writings, Wierzbicka (e.g. 1994b, 1999a) discusses the differences between Anglo culture and Polish culture in their attitudes towards emotions. She (1994b : 178) says Anglo culture has a tendency to emphasise control over the expressions of emotions, noting that such control is not the same thing as suppression of emotional expression. She quotes Lutz’s (1988 : 9) statement : “...controlling them [emotions] is letting them out in the proper time, in the proper place”. The ability to analyse one’s feelings rationally and to verbalise them with self-control is important in Anglo culture (cf. also Smith, 1995 : 408). On the other hand, Wierzbicka states that Polish culture has a tendency to permit spontaneous expression of emotion : “There is need to express my feeling and to express it now without thinking about it and without trying to analyse it, shape it, or suppress it” (Wierzbicka, 1994b : 173). Polish culture encourages people to show emotions (verbally or nonverbally) rather than to speak about them (pp. 168-169). Wierzbicka then (p. 177) portrays the different attitudes towards emotion between the two cultures as follows :

Anglo

when I do something, I want to be able to think :

“I do this because I want to do it

not because I feel something”

Polish

when I feel something, I want to do something because of this
when I do it, people can know how I feel

Moreover, while self-analysis and self-control are particularly encouraged in the case of negative feelings in Anglo (Anglo-American) culture (p. 171), Polish culture places no special emphasis on the free expression of bad feelings (p. 168). These differences are described in cultural scripts as follows :

Anglo (-American)

when I feel something bad, I want to think about it
when I think about, I cannot feel like this (any more)

Polish

when I feel something bad (very bad)
I want someone to know about it

What happens in Japanese culture? How can we describe Japanese people's attitudes towards emotions?

Before we try to answer this question, it is worth mentioning here that we should be careful not to simply state that the way Polish people express emotions is 'direct', and the way American people do is 'indirect'. This will be clarified if we compare the attitudes towards expressing emotion not only between Polish and American people, but also among Polish, American, Japanese, and Malay people. Although Polish people tend to express their emotions both verbally and nonverbally in a more 'direct' or 'clear' way than Americans, since Polish culture values "spontaneity" in expressing feelings and encourages people to "show" emotions both verbally and nonverbally (Wierzbicka, 1999a : 253, 258), when we compare Americans with Japanese, the display of emotion of Americans is more 'direct' and 'apparent' than that of Japanese. On the other hand, although it is often considered that Japanese people express their emotions less openly than Anglo-American people do, in Malay culture, as Goddard (1998 : 346) observes, people are also encouraged

not to express how they feel verbally. Yet, in contrast with situation in Japan, in Malay culture it is all right to express feelings through one's facial expressions and other actions, and there is underlying assumption that people can be relied upon to be sensitive to such nonverbal manifestation. Although Japanese people are also expected to be sensitive to nonverbal signs of other people, this kind of apparent nonverbal (especially 'facial') expression of emotion observed in Malay culture is much less acceptable in Japanese culture.

In order to clarify Japanese people's attitudes towards emotions, we will discuss the difference of how emotions are dealt with for American and Japanese people. In countries like the United States, psychotherapy is very popular. Bellar, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipson (1985 : 128) point out that "practitioners [of psychotherapy] stress the primary importance of knowing how you're feeling". This cultural norm is represented as follows by Wierzbicka (1999a : 259) :

Anglo-American

[people think :]

it is good if I know what I feel

it is good if I know why I feel like this

it is good if I think about this

Wierzbicka (1994b : 170) shows this constant attention to one's feelings as well as the inclination to analyse and verbalise them in American culture in cultural scripts as follows :

Anglo-American

I want to know how I feel at this time

I want to know why I feel like this

I want to think about this

if I know why I feel like this, I can do something

Furthermore, Wierzbicka (1999a : 260) represents the American folk philosophy of stressing "control" over one's emotions by analyzing one's feeling

rationality as follows :

Anglo-American

[people think :]

when I feel something bad, it is good to think about it

if I think about it, I don't have to feel like this any more

In Anglo-American culture it is considered that self analysis enables people to gain some self control, in the double sense of controlling emotional expression and of changing one's feeling (shaping them) and decreasing their intensity (Wierzbicka, 1999a : 260)⁴.

However, the exact same method of psychotherapy does not seem to work for Japanese people. Yanagihara (1994 : 105), for example, states that a Japanese woman who lived for thirty years in the United States observed that American psychotherapy, which encourages the patient to articulate their thoughts or feelings verbally to a psychologist, would not be suitable for Japanese patients. This is due to the fact, firstly, that the Japanese people feel resistance to talking about their feelings objectively to an unfamiliar psychotherapist or doctor⁵. It is painful for many of them to confront their problems again by verbalising them to a stranger. Japanese people much prefer talking about their problem to familiar people who will listen and understand their feelings in private. For example, the Japanese counsellor Yooko Nohara advises that the way of avoiding mental illnesses which arise from stress in current Japanese society is as follows : "The best way to avoid mental illness is to talk of the true things or feelings in yourself to someone who would understand you. (...) There is no good in keeping your painful problems in yourself" (*SPA !* 1998 Oct. 14th 'Kokoro no yamai shoogeki-fairu' pp. 36-42 : 42).

A Japanese magazine *SPA !* (1999 March 10th : 28) picks up the topic of counselling culture in American society. The article criticises the "over-dependence" of American people on counselling, while recognising that their counselling system has wiped out negative images about people visiting

psychiatrists. In the article, the question is risen : In a developed and competitive nation like the United States, where people might have mental illnesses because of excess stress, is not there anyone with whom they could consult about their mental problems among the people they know? The Japanese psychiatrist Takehiko Kasuga analyses this phenomenon in the United States as follows: “Since they are in a very severely competitive society, they may basically think that it is not good to show their weak points to others. Only in the counselling system can they talk about their inner feelings without anxiety, so they have developed the custom of relieving their problematic feelings by visiting counsellors. In this sense of not being able to trust people near them, we might think that their society is not really pleasant one”.

Thus, American people would not usually reveal their psychological problems to their familiars. In order to confirm this point further, examine the following conversation between an interviewer for a magazine and a Japanese psychiatrist Hayato Kawai :

(1) Agawa : Nihonjin no baai, nanika mondai ga aru to mazu tomodachi ya kazoku ni soodanshimasu keredo, watashi ga Amerika ni ita toki, Amerikajin wa shitsuren shitari suru to, sugu serapisuto ni iku n desu ne. Kore wa ii koto na n desu ka?

Kawai : Ii koto ka warui koto ka wakarimasen kedo, kanashii jijitsu desu ne. Boku no shitte iru Nihonjin ga, Amerika no daigaku de “konogoro no Nihonjin no seinen wa, jibun no taisetsu na nayami o uchiakerareru yuujiin ga inaku natte ki no doku da” to iu hanashi o shita n desu. Soshitara, mukoo no daigakusei wa zenzen rikai dekinai. Nayami o tomodachi ni iu aho ga oru ka to omotte iru n desu yo. Ukkari tomodachi ya, sorekara oya ni datte iu to son suru to.

Agawa : Son o suru ! ?

Kawai : Sonna sekai ni ikiteru n da kara, semmon-ka ni iu yori shikata ga nai. Sore wa, boku wa hijoo ni kanashii koto da to omoimasu.

[“Agawa Sawako no kono hito ni aitai No. 215” in *Shuukan Bunshun* 1997 Oct. 2nd : 54]⁶

(MT⁷ : Agawa : In the case of the Japanese people, when they have problems, they consult their friends or families about the matters first. However, when I was in the United States, I found American people go to the psycho therapist immediately, for example, when they get disappointed in love. Is this a good thing?

Kawai : I cannot judge whether it is good or bad, but it is a sad fact. A Japanese student I know who is studying in the United States said to some American

students that he feels sorry that Japanese young people today are not able to confess their important agonies to their friends. These American university students could not understand what he was talking about. They think it is foolish to tell their problems to friends. They believe they will become losers if they carelessly tell their problems to their friends or parents.

Agawa : Become a loser!?

Kawai : Because they live in such a world, there is no other way than going to the specialist. I think that is a very sad thing.)

According to the anecdotes, in a competitive society such as in the United States, showing one's weakness to other people could lead one into a disadvantaged situation. On the other hand, in Japanese culture, people think they can expect specific intimate people to listen to their painful feelings/ thoughts with empathy, and to understand why and how they are suffering. However, in the United States, according to the article in SPA ! (1999 March 10th : 28), it is generally only psychiatrists that people can expect to listen with empathy to their problems during their psychotherapy. Morsbach and Taylor (1986 : 303) remark that compared with Anglo-Americans, for instance, the Japanese seem to have a relatively greater need and ability to openly show their desire for dependence on others. They further say that the relative absence of dependence on others in the West may contribute to loneliness in a cold, harsh world where all have to fight basically on their own and where there are precious few, if any, shoulders to cry on.

Actually, according to many observers, being cheerful as well as being positive is considered to be a wonderful characteristic in the United States. For example, Smith (1995 : 410) states that "Recently bereaved people in the United States often report that their friends avoid them and do not welcome their attempts to discuss their grief. Within a few days of the death, the bereaved begin to hear comments like the following : 'Isn't it about time that you got over this?' 'You have to stop feeling sorry for yourself and get on with your life'." . On the other hand, it is also a fact that there are 20 million habitual users of anti-depressants in the United States. Therefore, the article in SPA ! (1999 March 10th) ends with the question, "Oh, American people, do

you want to be cheerful and joyful even though you have to depend to such an extent on the counselling system and anti-depressant medicines?”.

The criticism in this article can be too much biased, and sounds quite exaggerated. However, it is a fact that some American open public talk shows, such as the popular American TV program “Oprah”, where people express their feelings or thoughts on various serious and private issues in a public forum, cannot be found on Japanese television. This is because Japanese people generally do not talk about their inner problems to unfamiliar people, especially not in a public place. Barnlund (1975 : 88) comments that “among Japanese there is substantially less disclosure of inner experience while among Americans substantially greater disclosure on all topics and with all persons”. The second reason why Western psychotherapy would not be suitable for many Japanese people is because many Japanese people are generally not used to expressing their thoughts and feelings verbally in an explicit form to any type of person/people. Moreover, while some Japanese people might manage to express their thoughts and feelings, they feel that the conflict in their hearts might not be solved. Many Japanese people do not accept that a psychological problem can be resolved just by talking about it and analysing it.

I propose the following cultural scripts which reflects this tendency ;

- <1> [Japanese]
 - when I feel something
 - I can say something about this to someone
 - if I know this person well
 - if I think this person could feel the same
 - I cannot say something about this to someone
 - if I do not know this person well
 - I don't want to say something about it to someone
 - if I don't think this person can feel the same
 - because I don't think : I feel something good if I do so

3. Are Japanese People “Emotional” ?

Wierzbicka (1992 : 395) states that one of the fundamental semantic themes of the Russian language is ‘emotionality’, that is, “the tremendous stress on emotions and their free expression, the high emotional temperature of Russian discourse, the wealth of linguistic devices for signalling emotions and shades of emotions” (also cf. Wierzbicka 1999b : 3).

Can we say that Japanese people are also “emotional”? If so, how are they “emotional”? Halloran (1970 : 219) regards the Japanese people as emotional as described in the following comment :

We Japanese are an emotional people and moved more by our emotion than by our intellect. (...) We Japanese can be volatile and can become angry or even infuriated by insults that touch our emotions. Sometimes the insults are real, but other times I think maybe we are so sensitive that we are offended when there really wasn't any offence even remotely intended.

Reischauer (1965 : 117) also states “the Japanese are an emotional people”.

What is characteristic of Japanese people is that it seems that they value emotionality over rationality (cf. Lebra 1976 : 19). Nakane (1972 : 84) says that :

The Japanese take greater pleasure in emotions than in logic and have an exceptional affection toward the former. (...) For the Japanese, logic exists in books and lectures, the scholar's study and the lawyer's work; it does not belong to the salon and the coffee shop or the dining table and the banquet. If someone brings logic to such an occasion, the topic will be dropped as being argumentative, and this type of person will be shunned.

Nakamura (1964 : 551) says that the Japanese language is “unsuitable for logically precise expression”, but “it is well adapted to the expression of intuition and of individual emotion”. According to Taylor (1983 : 125), “Many Japanese distrust eloquence and pure logic because they may not take proper account of feelings”. He asserts that :

The Japanese word rikutsu means “logic” or “reason”. It has all the positive connotations that “logic” does in English, but it also has distasteful connotations of coldness, hairsplitting, and pointless dispute. The word rikutsuppoi (“too reasonable”) is used to criticise thinking that does not take human relations into account. The expression “to speak reason” means “to argue” or “find fault”. Logic is useful, but it can be thrust aside when straightforward reasoning might bruise feelings. (P. 126)

The value placed upon irrationality by the Japanese is expressed in such phrases as “Things in this world do not always stand to reason”, or “Man cannot always be understood through reason” (Minami, 1971 : 122-123; cf. also Mizutani & Mizutani, 1980 : 20). Misawa (n.d. : 240) also points out that the people who value reason or logic are regarded negatively as “cold” people in Japan (cf. also De Mente, 1994 : 298-299). Similarly, De Mente (1994 : 62) states that the use of objective reason in making decisions and settling matters is regarded as cold and often inhuman in Japanese culture. Furthermore, Ishida (1974 : 17) says that “the Japanese do not value rhetoric or oratory that appeals to people by persuasion based on logical argument or moving one’s opponent with a shadow of eloquence”.

Indeed, Japanese people do not assign as high a value to logic as many people in Western cultures do. As Machizawa (1989 : 133) points out, although Japanese people can control their thinking, they cannot necessarily put their emotions under control. For Japanese, emotions can exceed reason. De Mente (1994 : 181) clearly states “one factor that stands out in Japanese life is the role of emotion, which often takes precedence over reason”. The following examples (1) to (8) exemplify this point. Examples (1)-(3) below are all taken from original Japanese texts.

- (1) Yasashiku saretemo, tsumetaku saretemo, itsumo kokoro wa yureugoiteru. Hitori omoinayandari, doo shitara ii ka hito ni kiite mitari shita kedo, kekkyoku koisuru kimochi wa rikutsu ja nai. Wakatte iru no wa, suki to iu koto dake. [Tooko Furuuchi “Interview : How about You?” in TARZAN 1996 No.246 : 84] (MT : My heart shakes, whether he is tender or cold. Although I worried about it, and consulted other people as to what I should do, in the end, my feeling of love towards him cannot be dealt with by reason [rikutsu]. What I know is that I like

him.)

- (2) Reikai-kenkyuu o tsuzukete kita watashi da kara, tatoeshi de aroo to, sonna ni shokku wa ukenai daroo, ookata no hito wa, soo oomoi ni naru kamo shirenai. (...) Shikashi, kore wa reikai-kenkyuusha no daremo ga kanzuru mujun de aru ga, **riiron rikutsu** de wa yoku wakatte itemo, genjitsu no munashisa ni wa taegatai. Tsurai. Hitasura kanashii.

Kanjoo to iu mono wa, **risei** de wa kontorooru no kikanai, jitsu ni yakkai na shiromono de aru. Atama de kangaeru koto to wa yuurishite katte ni hitoriarukishi, watashi no kokoro wa sugu ni kanashimi de ippai ni natte shimau no de aru.

[Tetsuroo Tamba (actor) in Fujin Kooron 1997 July : 205]

(MT : Because I have continued to study the spirit world, most people might think that, if, for example, my wife died, I would not be greatly shocked. But this is a contradiction all scholars of the spirit-world feel ; although one understands, via **theory** or **reason** (**riiron-rikutsu**), it is hard to bear the emptiness of reality. It is hard. I really feel sad from the bottom of my heart.

Emotion is a troublesome thing which cannot be controlled by the power of **reason** (**risei**). It separates from what we think in the mind and acts of its own will, and then my heart becomes immediately full of sorrows.)

- (3) Byooki no toki wa **rikutsu** de wa konna mono wa sootaiteki na mono da to kangaeyoo to shitemo, toojisha no byoonin ni wa “Kurushikutte, kurushikutte” shikata ga nai no de aru. Sore wa **rikutsu ya seppoo de wa doonimo shoridekinai** baai datte aru no da. [Endoo 1994 : 13-14]

(MT : When a person is ill, although he/she tries to keep the suffering in perspective, they cannot help feeling “painful and tortured”. This is a situation where things cannot be dealt with only by **reason** (**rikutsu**) or moralising discourse.)

The following example (4) is taken from two different Japanese TV programs.

- (4) Kagawa : Kasooba de nee, haitte dete kite hone tte no hajimete mita n desu yo, nikushin ga. (...) **Rikutsu** naku yappa namida shika denai desu yo nee. Nandeningen tte konna ni hakanai no ka na tte omotte.

[Teruyuki Kagawa on the TV programme “Tetsuko no Heya” January 14th, 1997]

(MT : Kagawa : I went in and out of the crematorium, and for first time saw the bones of a relative. Without **rikutsu** (**reason**) tears came out, I wondered why human beings are so short-lived.)

Of course, a similar phenomenon also can be seen in English, as in the

following sentences. The first one is from an English novel, and the second one is from an English song :

- (5) She entered hesitantly, but to him she arrived in a rush, a sudden, vivid presence bursting upon him, alive to an almost painful degree. It was hard to look at her. She was perfectly familiar, and yet her exotic quickness added an element of strangeness, as if she'd come from outer space. Some part of his **brain** registered that she was normal and that it was he who had changed but it didn't **feel** that way.) [Conroy 1993 : 432]
- (6) My **head** is saying "Fool, forget him"
My **heart** is saying "Don't let go"
[Olivia Newton-John "Hopelessly devoted to you" in Olivia's Greatest Hits Vol.2
1980 by Tooshiba EMI]

Nevertheless, this phenomenon is much more apparent in Japanese culture than in Anglo culture.

The Japanese cultural script about putting more value on their emotions than reason can be described as follows :

<2> [Japanese]

people sometimes think like this :

when I think something because I think something

I cannot know whether this something is true

when I think something because I feel something

I can know that this something is true

Thus, in comparison with people in the Western countries, Japanese people in general do not appreciate eloquence and put value on emotion.

4. Japanese People's Control on Expression of Emotions

In Japan, learning to control the expression of emotions, particularly negative ones, is regarded as an indispensable part of one's growth. The direct display of uncontrolled emotions, especially on the face, is regarded as unrefined and graceless (Kanayama, 1978 : 159), or as "sign of weakness and

is always in extremely bad taste” (Zimmerman, 1985 : 57).

An example of this may be seen in a Japanese woman who lived away from Japan and who stated that the reason she could not adapt herself to Japanese society was that she always expressed her emotions externally. She recalls that her unrestrained display of emotions threatened Japanese men (Yanagihara, 1994 : 183).

External expressions of strong emotions such as crying or showing tears in public places can cause disdain and embarrassment on the part of the on-lookers in Japan. This especially applies to males ; but even females cannot always resort to crying; they are also expected to try to suppress or hide their tears, if tears cannot be stopped at all. For instance, examine the following example where a wife denies that “she was crying” and instead she says, “tears came out”.

- (1) Ribinguruumu ni haittara, tsuma no Maki ga teeburu ni ryooude o nose, kao o fusete ita.

“Ara, shiranakatta. Okaerinasai” to kao o agetachikakeru. Sono kao ni namida o nagashita ato ga nibuku, nihon hikatte ita.

“Naite n no ka?”

“Naite nanka. Demo namida ga dechatta wa”. [Ikebe 1999 : 209]

(MT : When I entered the living room, my wife Maki had her face down on her arms on the table.

“I did not realise you were back. Welcome home”.

“Are you crying?”

“No, I’m not crying. But tears came out”.)

We can see that in Japanese culture a negative image is associated with a person’s being the active agent of crying. This Japanese cultural attitude can be portrayed in the following semantic formula :

- ⟨3⟩ when people see tears in my eyes
I don’t want people to think :
this is happening to me because I want this to be happening
I want people to think :
I didn’t know that this would happen to me

An external display of strong emotional expressions, such as crying or showing tears in public is likely to be seen by others with some disapproval and embarrassment. As we have suggested before, this applies to men more than to women. The following sentence describes how men are trained not to cry from their childhood :

- (2) Josei no namida wa buki desu yo ne. Kanjoo to chokketsushiteru shi, “konna toki naite, waza to naite iru n chau ka?” to omottemo, otoko wa iu koto o kiite shimau yowasa ga arimasu. Josei wa chiisai toki kara, naite ishihyoojisuru koto o yurusarete kita shi....

Sore ni kuraberu to, otoko wa “naitara ikenai, kakko warui,” tte sodaterarete kite naku otoko wa yowai to iu koteikannen ga aru kara, josei no yoo ni wa nakenai n desu. [Fytte 1996 July No. 37 : 60]

(MT : Women’s tears are a weapon. Their tears are directly connected to their emotions, and although men think “Aren’t they crying now on purpose?” men cannot not listen to them when they cry. Women have been allowed to express their will by crying since they were little....

In comparison, men were raised being told that “Men should not cry, that’s not cool,” and there is a fixed idea that men who cry are weak; that’s why men cannot cry like women do.) ⁸

Matsumoto (1987 : 96) describes a scene in a public bath during which a father scolded his three or four year old son who was crying after falling over, “Don’t cry ! You are Japanese, aren’t you?” Shiraishi (1974 : 113) also mentions that a mother may reproach her little son, who cries after tumbling on the road, by saying “Men shouldn’t cry. It’s shameful. You will be laughed at by everybody”. The following example also shows that although there are some women who accept men crying in front of them, most women think that it is totally unacceptable :

- (3) Onna no mae de no “Otoko-naki”. Jitsu wa, tsui saikin made, watashi wa sore wa atarimae no koto da to omoikonde ita. (...) Watashi wa, utsukushii ‘otoko-naki’ no jitsurei o, mawari no dooi o motomeru tsumori de katari hajimeta. Are tto omotte futo kuchi o tsugunda totan, onna-tachi ga issei ni wamekitatete kita. “Nanit, soreee ! ” “Otoko ga naku nante, mittomonai ! ” “Doko ni sonna yarashii no ga iru no yot. Yurusenait. ” (...) “Shakaiteki katagaki ga doo de are, sono otoko-tachi wa, yappari aho yo. Koibito ni nante shitakunai. ”

[Toodoo 1994a : 88-89]

(MT : “Men crying” in front of a woman. In fact, until recently I believed that it was natural. (...) I started to talk about real examples of beautiful stories of “men crying” in order to get my female friends’ agreement. As soon as I stopped talking, they all started to let out a squeak at the same time. “What’s thaaaaat!?” “It is very shameful for men to cry !” “Where are those guys!? It is unforgivable !” (...) “However high up they have, men like that are stupid. I would never want a man like that for my boyfriend. ”)

Also, in the following example the subject confesses he changed his mind when he saw his grandfather crying :

- (4) Agawa : Taigaiku senkoku mitai na tegami dasarete dooshita n desu ka?
Kumakawa : Jiichan kara, nakinagara “Gambare, kaette kuruna” tte denwa kakatte kita. (...) Demo, sasuga ni, jiichan naita toki wa bibirimashita. Datte saa, otoko ga naku sugata nante. Dakara, kokoro o irekaeyoo to omotta.

[“Agawa Sawako no kono hito ni aitai No. 220” Tetsuya Kumakawa (ballet dancer) in *Shuukan Bunshun* 1997 November 6th : 52]

(MT : Agawa : What did you do when you were given a letter of expulsion from school?

Kumakawa : I got a call from my grand-father saying “Hold out ! Don’t come home”. He was crying. (...) I was indeed taken by surprise at that time. You hardly see men crying, do you? That’s why I have decided to reform myself.)

These examples show clearly that it is rare for men to cry in Japanese culture in front of other people.

4.1. Do Japanese Dislike Crying?

We should note, however, the reticence to shed tears in public doesn’t mean that Japanese dislike crying or shedding tears as such. In fact, the opposite appears to be the case. Words like ‘cry’ or ‘tears’ frequently appear in *enka* (Japanese ballads), or in catch-phrases used for advertising movies such as “Eiga ‘Nodo Jiman’ no sambai nakemasu ([This movie] makes you cry three times more than when you see the movie ‘An amateur singing context’ (CM of the movie “Big Show !” in *Asahi Shimbun* 1999 May 7th : 16), which really appealed to Japanese people. Mita (1992 : 31) reports that the word ‘tears’ is the most frequently used noun in Japanese songs. It occurs in 83 of the 451

songs mentioned here, or nearly twenty percent.

Indeed, on some occasions, people expect a person to show tears or cry. For example, in the following sentence, the audience expected the actress, whose son was arrested for drug use, to cry in order to show her “apologetic” feelings :

(5) Jinan (18) ga kakuseizai-shiyoo de taihosareta joyuu, Mita Yoshiko-san ga kishakaikenshita. (...)

“Gen'in-kyuumei wa kore kara watashi ga jinsei o kakete kodomo to issho ni yatte yukitai...” to iu kishatachi no iradachi ga te ni toru-yoo ni wakaruu.

[*AERA* 1998 No. 8 : 65]

(MT : The actress Yoshiko Mita, whose second son (18) was arrested on suspicion of using stimulants, gave a press conference. (...)

“As for clearing this all up, I want to do that, together with my son, all my life from now on...” That was all she could say, but Ms. Mita did not show her tears. She does not apologise with tears, she does not readily resign herself to fate, and the irritated feelings of reporters were clearly expressed.)

In another instance, Katoo (1977 : 15) reports that a Japanese audience would expect a singer who won the best record prize to cry in front of the audience so that they could empathise with him/her. Indeed, when the popular Japanese female singer despite her best efforts could not shed tears when she won a prize for singing, many audience criticised her as “namaiki (conceited)”. It is said that she then practiced in order to be able to cry on given occasions.

Furthermore, as Satoo (1989 : 21-23) observes, scenes of men crying can be found in Japanese movies more frequently than in American movies, although shedding tears is performed in a subtle or suppressed way. Haga (1979 : 23) also compares the attitude towards crying in Western men and in Japanese men, and points out that men in Western countries make more effort to suppress crying and to smile instead, than Japanese men do. Also, the example below illustrates non-Japanese people’s surprise towards the wailing of a Japanese president when his stock company, one of the biggest, went bankrupt :

- (6) “Shain wa, warukuu, arimaseeen. Saishuushoku oooo, yoroshikuuuu onegai-shimaaasu.”

Shoroo no otoko no yuganda kao ga, kurikaeshi terebi ni utsushidasareta. Yamaichi-shooken ga jishu-haigyoo o kimeta kishakaiken, Nozawa Masahira shachoo wa sando naki, saigo wa ootsubu no namida o nagashita.

“Konnan ni tachimukau toki reisei de aru koto ga shidoosha no jooken na no da ga”. **Gaikokujin-kisha** wa odorote ita. [*AERA* 1997 December 8th : 18]
(MT : “My employees are not baaad. Pleeease help them to find new jooobs. ”

The contorted face of the middle aged man appeared repeatedly on TV.

At the press interview about the voluntary discontinuance of business of the Yamaichi-trading-company, the president Masahira Nozawa cried three times, and finally shed big tear drops.

“Taking a calm attitude towards difficulties should be the prerequisite of a leader”, commented **non-Japanese** reporters who were surprised (to see the president’s crying).) [Emphasis mine]

Although there may have been some Japanese people who thought the president’s crying was disgraceful, I think many Japanese people accepted his attitude with sympathy. If the president talked calmly as expected by the non-Japanese reporters, he would have been blamed by the Japanese audience for not having shown sincere feelings of guilt and introspection.

However, we should be careful about who those critical ‘non-Japanese reporters’ are, in the above example. Culturally, for example, Latin people express their emotions more freely than Anglo-Saxon people, so they might take the above president’s crying more generously than Anglo-Saxon people. Also, we should consider generation and age differences. Compared with the older generation, where men’s crying was taken more negatively, crying is becoming more accepted even in Anglo-Saxon culture in the younger generation. Also, even in a culture where men’s crying is strongly disdained, there are some people who would sympathise with men’s crying on specific occasions. Thus, it is dangerous to simply generalise that Japanese people are more accepting of men’s crying than non-Japanese people. However, we might say that Japanese people generally understand the feeling of men who end up crying at specific situations, and can accept this with empathetic feelings.

Watanabe (in Meiji-Shoin-Kyookasho-Henshuubu 1997 : 8) also says that

although Japanese men are expected not to cry on ordinary occasions, there are a few special occasions when a man can cry, where crying on such occasions can be accepted warmly by other people. At the wedding of his daughter, for example, a father often cries aloud. Another example, in which after the final game of the national high school baseball tournament at the Kooshien, the winning team's players openly cry for joy, while the losing team's players show tears of sadness. On these special occasions, crying is accepted by everybody as a sign that the weepers are human with warm emotions.

The following sentence also illustrates that Japanese people tend to think positively of men's crying on special occasions. The reporter describes quite positively a ski jumper crying after the success of his jump at the Nagano Olympics:⁹

- (7) (Nagano Orimpikku no sukii-jampu de) Tonda. 136 meetoru. Saichoo-kiroku datta.

Harada wa naita.

“Ippon de ii kara jibun no jampu o shiyoo tte omotta. Ima made jibun no dekiru koto ga dekinakatta koto ga kuyashii,” to umekinagara.

Koko zo to iu toki ni shippaishita kokoro no kizu (1994 Rirehammeru de shissoku no tame kin ga torezu doo-medaru ni owaru). Sono tsurasa o shiru hito wa ooi. Sore ni tachimukai kokufukusuru koto no muzukashisa o ooku no hito ga shitte iru. Dakara (jampu ga seikooshite) hooketa-yoo ni naku Harada o mite, kokoro kara yokatta to omou. [AERA 1998 No. 9: 13]

(MT: I wanted to jump to my own satisfaction, even if only once. 136 meters. That was the longest on record.

Harada cried.

“I wanted to jump to my own satisfaction, even if only once. I felt KUYASHII [‘vexed’] that I hadn’t been able to fulfil my potential.

His heart was scarred by his inability to succeed when most important (At the Lillehammer Olympics his team won bronze instead of gold due to his lack of speed). Many people knew that feeling of TSURASA (‘pain’). They also know the difficulty of confronting that, and overcoming it. Therefore, looking at Harada dissolving into tears upon his success, many people in their hearts thought that it was good.)

In another example, Mr. Kiyotsugu Shitara at the Tokyo Management

Union advises people who were fired from work because of the economic depression in Japan: “It is better to cry and apologise about the loss of employment in front of your family. If a father cries from the bottom of his heart, the family will certainly support him. (....) There are many cases where the ties of family get stronger after that” (“Risutora de shiawase ni naru” pp. 25-28. in *AERA* 1999 March 15th : 26).

It is interesting to see that in ancient Japan men’s crying was regarded as evidence of being a warm-hearted person, and men used to cry more freely. Yamaguchi (1984 : 372), for example, finds many noblemen crying outwardly in the writings of the Heian period (794-1192 A. D.). She says that the ethic of suppressing facial expressions of emotion began to be codified from the Middle Ages (1192-1609 A. D.), when the feudal-military code of Japanese behaviour became highly valued (cf. also Sakakura 1978 : 70).

Nomura (1996 : 136) points out that although men are expected not to cry in public places, men who never show tears are regarded as “inhuman” or “cold-hearted”. These people are disdained as “Chi mo namida mo nai (lit. having neither blood nor tears) ”. Although there are many occasions when Japanese men are supposed to suppress their crying, there are still a few occasions where it would be expected that they cry unreservedly. Stucki (1980 : 45) argues that Japanese people make clear distinctions about how freely they can express their emotions according to place, situation, or human relationship. Even in the Middle Ages, there were formal occasions where they had “bureikoo (a free and easy party) ”, where people could express their emotions freely.

The fact is that Japanese people, although they understand the desire to cry or shed tears, are well aware of the cultural norm which inhibits its direct manifestation. Honna and Hoffer (1989 : 88) remark that strong expression (verbal or nonverbal) of negative emotions could embarrass other people, and that direct expression of these emotions could cause feelings of insecurity in other people. That is why, when the Japanese cannot help expressing these emotions, they should do so “in a form that is neither offensive nor aesthetically unrepresentative” (March 1988 : 152).

The Japanese cultural norm which describes the disapproval of a public display of crying (or negative emotions in general) as well as their relatively generous attitude towards other people's feelings, such as that expressed by crying on some occasions, can be portrayed as follows :

- 〈4〉 when a person (X) feels something bad,
something happens to a part of this person's (X's) body
it is bad if other people can see this
other people can feel something bad because of this
because of this X cannot do anything
sometimes X can do something
when the person thinks : people don't feel something bad when they see this

4.2. More Examination on Controlling Emotions

We have seen Japanese people's efforts to suppress certain emotions such as sadness. In this section, we will further discuss the aspect of Japanese people's suppression/control of some emotions.

The passage below is drawn from an article about a Japanese Olympic ski jump player's control of his emotion.

- (8) Harada wa warau. Jampu ga seikoo shitemo, shippai shitemo.
Shippai jampu no ato, kuyashi-soo ni mienai, to shitekisareru to, "Kore ga boku no kuyashii kao na n desu," to Harada wa kotaeta.

Yukijirushi de Harada o koochi suru Tao Katsushi-san wa, "Puresshaa ni tsuyoku naritai to iu kimochi ga atte, donna toki demo egao de iyoo to omotta n ja nai kana." (...)

Shitashii hito ni wa iya na koto wa iya to ieru. Shikashi, terebi ya fan no mae ni deru to egao o tsukuru.

Doo medaru ga kimari, yooyaku egao o miseta.

"Are ga hontoo no egao na n desu," to tsuma no Keeko-san wa tsubuyaita.

[AERA 1998 No. 9: 13]

(MT : Harada smiles. Whether his jump succeeds or fails.

After a failed jump it is pointed out to him that he does not look anguished (feeling KUYASHII).

"This is my face when I'm feeling KUYASHII ", he answered.

Katsushi Tao, who coaches Harada at the Yukijirushi corporation, said, "I think he has decided to smile at any time, because he wants to be strong under pressure. " (...)

Harada can speak of any feeling including negative ones to people close to him. But he always smiles before the TV or his fans. (...)

After he completed the jump which won him a bronze medal, Harada finally smiled.

“That is his real smile,” Harada’s wife, Keiko, muttered to herself.)

Example (8) shows that Japanese people try not to show negative emotions in public places. Brosnahan (1990 : 99) says that :

... Japanese are traditionally, and still commonly, trained from childhood on to suppress external signs of high emotion and to control carefully expressions of pleasure or pain, anger, or joy, love, or hate. Japanese may then frequently maintain a neutral or even mildly positive, smiling facial expression while talking of extreme personal sorrow in an effort to keep from inflicting their sorrow on others.

Consider also the following comments by a Japanese counsellor :

- (9) Iya na koto ga attari, tsurai keiken o shita toki, watashitachi wa, unto nakitai, okoritai to omoi nagara mo, jissai ni wa, soo dekizu ni iru koto ga ooi. “Naitari suru watashi wa yowai n da” “Okoru nante otogenai” to, namida o gut to nomikondari, okoritai kimochi o osaetari shite iru.

To iu no mo, watashitachi wa kodomo no koro kara, “Hora, naicha dame deshoo” “Sono kurai gaman shinasai” to iu fuu ni, kanjoo o omote ni arawasu no wa ikenai koto da to, zut to oshiekomarete kita.

[Yuuho Asaka (counsellor) “Otona datte naite ii n da” pp. 40-43 in *Fujin Kooron* 1998 Dec. 7th : 41]

(MT : When something unpleasant or bad happens, we think we want to cry a lot or get angry, but actually we often cannot do so. Thinking “I am weak if I cry” or “It is immature if I get angry”, we suppress our tears or anger.

This is because we have been taught since our childhood that “Oh, you should not cry” or “You should be patient with such a thing”.)

The counsellor here reports a case which emphasises the fact that Japanese people cannot express their emotions freely because they are too concerned with other people’s views towards them. Japanese people are trained to believe that showing emotions, especially negative one, such as ‘sad’ or

'angry'-like feeling to others is unwanted. Apparent expression of unwanted emotions is interpreted as a proof of having a poor and naive personality. Honna & Hoffer (1989 : 88) say that "in social interaction, Japanese people generally are expected to restrain, if not suppress, the strong or direct expression of emotion. Those who cannot control their emotion are considered to be immature as human beings". The linguist Kanayama (1978 : 159) also says the explicit display of one's emotions is considered to be vulgar, and the suppression of emotions is refined.

In contrast with Anglo-American people who value controlling their emotions by changing their feeling and "decreasing the intensity of their emotions", Japanese people, as the anthropologist Kishimoto (1967 : 118) describes, tend to think "the more subdued in emotion a man is, the more he is respected". Moreover, the psychologist Minami (1971 : 85) says, "The longer a feeling is suppressed, the purer and firmer it becomes.... the more its potential energy increases".

What kind of emotions should be suppressed in Japanese society? Similar to the case in example (9), the following example (10) illustrates that Japanese often suppress 'negative emotions'. Their primary goal is not to disturb other people's feelings by showing their bad feelings, even if they themselves are in desperate conditions to the extent they cannot live a normal life.

(10) Wakai sedai to naru to, ikari to iu kanjoo kara wa sara ni toonoku.

Ondai yonensei no C-ko-san (27) wa, kookoo ichinen de gakkoo ni ikenaku natte irai, ie ni tojikomotte soto ni derarenai jiki o nando ka kurikaeshita. (...) Ima mo taijin-kankei ni fuan o idaiteru.

"Tomodachi ni yakusoku o yaburaretari, hidoi koto o saretemo, okottari, fukigen na taido o tottari suru koto ga dekinai n desu yo. Aite no kibun o gaisu n ja nai ka to iu kangae ga saki ni tatte shimatte".

["Motto ikari o" *AERA* 1999 March 29th pp. 48-51 : 51]

(MT : In the younger generation, people put more distance between themselves and anger.

A woman 'C' (27 years old) studying at a music school had confined herself in the home several times, without going out at all. (...) She still holds an anxiety about human relationships.

"Even if my friend breaks a promise he/she has made, or does something

terrible to me, I cannot get angry or show unpleasant behaviour. This is because my anxiety about the possibility of disturbing other people's feelings precedes my own feelings".)

Honna & Hoffer (1989 : 88) say that "strong expression (verbal or nonverbal) of such negative emotions as anger, disgust, or contempt could embarrass other people". They explain this is because "strong expression (verbal or nonverbal) of such negative emotions as anger, disgust, or contempt could embarrass other people. Direct expression of sorrow or fear could cause feelings of insecurity in other people" (p. 88). However, the following examples (11) and (12) show that Japanese people are taught to control or suppress, not only negative emotions such as 'anger' or 'sorrow', but also positive emotions such as 'pleasure'.

- (11) Omiyage o itadaite, ureshikute ureshikute tobimawaritai-yoo na kimochi da kedo, gut to sono kimochi o osaete, taishite ureshiku mo nai-yoo na kao o shita koto.

Doko ka kara yakyuu no booru ga tonde kite, kao ni butasukatte, itai to omou to, hara ga tatsu. Soredemo, mawari ni oozei tomodachi ga mite itari suru to, terete shimatte, waza to fuzaketa kakkoo o shite waratte miseta koto.

Yorokobi ya kanashimi o hajime, kokoro no naka no honoo no kimochi o, kaoiro ni dasanai no wa "okuyukashii" koto da. Oogesa ni warattari, hashaidari, mata naitari suru no wa "hashitanai" koto da to, kodomo no toki kara oshierarete ita node, otona ni nattemo, soo iu mono da to omotte iru no desu.

[Okada 1962 : 190]

- (MT : When I was given a souvenir, I was so happy that I wanted to jump about, but I suppressed that feeling and showed on my face that I was not that happy.

I get angry when a baseball flies from nowhere to hit me on the head. However, when there are others around me, I get embarrassed so I deliberately laugh playfully.

Since I was a child, I have been taught that not showing on my face the true feelings in my heart such as joy or sorrow is "refined", and laughing loudly or being playful or crying is "immodest". As an adult, I still believe this.)

Example (12) also illustrates the case where one person stopped expressing his pleasure in public :

- (12) Hayashi : Osumoo-san wa motomoto mukuchi na kata ga ooi n desu ka?
 Shikoroyama : Soo ja nai to omou n desu kedo. Katte intabyuu sareru toki mo, aite no hito no koto o kangaete, ammari yorokondara aite ni warui to omotte, “guuzen desu” toka “tamatama desu” toka itte, aite o kabau toka.
 [“Mariko no iwasete gomen No. 44” Kazuhiko Shikoroyama (former sumo-wrestler) in *Shuukan Asahi* 1998 July 31st pp. 46-50 : 50]
 (MT : Hayashi : Are most sumo-wrestler taciturn?
 Shikoroyama : I don’t think so, but... Even when I am interviewed after winning a match, if I think of the opponent’s feelings, I feel guilty about showing my pleasure. Therefore, I just simply say “I was fortunate” or “it just happened by chance” in order not to annoy him.)

This kind of attitude of not expressing one’s joy at success out of regard to another person’s feeling is culturally required in Japanese society. Matsumoto (1996 : 88) reports that “the Japanese need to display reserve in their expressions of joy and positive emotions in unfamiliar places, in order to maintain social distinctions among settings and situations”. Brosnahan (1990 : 103) also reports that “In the face of sincere praise by another person, Japanese will predictably deny the justice of the praise by both word and gesture, including face gestures of ‘disbelief’, ‘denial’, ‘non-acceptance’, even ‘sadness’”.

Hall & Hall (1987 : 59) report that Japanese people’s behaviours when they are complimented or congratulated, such as looking abashed, or being embarrassed, confuse Americans, who expect them to smile and look happy in such a case. Brosnahan (1990 : 103), comparing Japanese attitudes towards compliments with that of the English, who “will normally smile, accept the praise and say, ‘Thank you’, to express their pleasure openly”, points out that the Japanese behaviour is viewed by many English-speaking people as “too humble” or even “insincere” or “hypocritical”.

We should note here that, as Ekman (1985) writes, ‘controlling emotions’ is also important in Anglo culture. However, different aspects of control of emotions are required in different cultures. For example, Ekman (p. 125) describes the American way of controlling of emotions as follows :

Within the first years of life children learn to control some of these facial

expressions, concealing true feelings and falsifying expressions of emotions not felt. Parents teach their children to control their expressions by example and, more directly, with statements such as “Don’t you give me that angry look”; “look happy now when our aunt gives you a present”; “Don’t look so bored.” As they grow up people learn display rules so well that they become deeply ingrained habits.

In the United States, emotions such as ‘joy’, ‘anger’, or ‘disgust’ whose overt expressions need to be suppressed in Japan, are largely involuntary and it is generally best to express them. On the other hand, only the expression of ‘fear’, which does not necessarily need to be suppressed in Japan, is to be strictly controlled in American society (cf. Oatley & Jenkins, 1996 : 44-45 ; Berry et al., 1992 : 85).

Wierzbicka (1999a : 247) points out that Anglo-American culture appears to have gone further in the direction of positive scripts than the Anglo-British or Anglo-Australian varieties have, and has apparently developed some emotional scripts of its own, two of which could be called “the enthusiasm script” and the “cheerfulness script”. Wierzbicka says that speech routines such as words “Wow ! Great ! How nice ! That’s fantastic ! etc. ” suggest a cultural script which can be formulated along the following lines :

[people think :]

it is good to say often something like this :

“I feel something very good”

On the other hand, as Morsbach (1973 : 270) writes, the ideal in Japanese culture is to have an expressionless face when experiencing emotion :

Self-control, thought of as highly desirable in Japan, demands that a man of virtue will not show a negative emotion in his face when shocked or upset by bad news.... The ideal of an expressionless face in a situation of great anxiety was strongly emphasised in the bushido (way of the warrior) which was the guideline for samurai and the ideal of many others..... In public settings, the poker-faced ideal is common in present day Japan.

Bushido was the moral code of the samurai classes. Based on Confucian ideas, it originated in the Kamakura Period (1192-1336 A. D.) and reached its peak in the Edo Period (1600-1867 A. D.) (Nippon Steel Corporation 1978 : 226).

It is well known that the Japanese people display a smiling face in situations where they feel 'sorrow' in their hearts (e. g. Hearn 1893). Before the concept of bushido was established, Japanese people were able to cry openly in public places. Sakakura (1972 : 13) says that during the Heian Period (792 -1192 A. D.) even men cried openly in front of other people. The Japanese attitude of suppressing sad feelings was learned later as a basic precept of the bushido concept.

Thus, even though one could say people in both Japanese and Anglo culture have to control some emotions, there is a difference in the kinds of emotions people are expected to control in each culture. Moreover, the reasons for control are different. Anglo people try to control their emotions in order to show they do not get agitated by their emotions. Wierzbicka (1999a) points out that for Anglo people "whatever the emotion, it should not be allowed to express itself in uncontrolled physical behaviour". Thus, in Anglo culture, people can express their emotions more freely than Japanese people as long as they are expressed in a controlled way. On the other hand, Japanese people cannot always display their emotions freely and apparently. They often have to suppress or hide certain emotions because they are usually very concerned with how people might think about them when they show those emotions.

Suzuki's (1975 : 183) comment deserves attention here. He says that, in fact, Japanese people always want certain people to understand their true feelings, and that they act in a way such that those people would agree with and feel empathy towards them. Suzuki (p. 184) explains that this is because Japanese people don't have a strong self in which they can conceal important issues. The point to observe here is that the person to whom Japanese people want to express their feelings is a specific person whom they can really expect to understand and sympathise with their feelings.

<5> [Japanese]

I cannot always say what I feel to other people
because they may think something bad about me if I do this
I can not say what I feel to other people
 when I think these people will feel something not good if I say this
I can say what I feel to other people
 when I think these people will not feel something bad if I say this
 when I think they will feel the same when I say this
when I can do this, I feel very good towards these people
 because I wanted other people to know what I feel
 because I wanted other people to feel the same

What makes Japanese people suppress certain emotions is their awareness of social restriction, rather than a function of their reasoning power (Kushida 1979 : 138). Lebra (1976 : 16) comments that “one’s affect can and must be controlled, subdued, circumscribed; or diluted because it is the social relationship, not one’s own emotions that counts”. Clancy (1986 : 235-7) remarks that Japanese norms and behaviours are taught to Japanese children, so that they will conform to social expectation. This “conformity training” is usually given by their mothers, who often appeal to the imagined reactions of hito ‘other people’ watching and evaluating the child’s behaviour, and teach them to fear the criticism and disapproval of other people (cf. also Lebra 1976 : 2). Therefore, when Japanese mothers discipline their children, they say some behaviour is bad because “Hito ni warawareru (You will be laughed at by other people)”, “okashii (strange)”, or “hazukashii (ashamed)” (Clancy, 1986 : 236, 240). Thus, a Japanese person, when deciding on a course of action (such as displaying some emotion), will be influenced by how others act or are likely to act.

Kuwayama (1992 : 122) remarks that seken, a Japanese equivalent to “society”, represents the biggest category of a group of people hito (person/people). Niike (qut. in Kuwayama p. 142) comments “We live in a ritual place, so we are sensitive to seken-tei (lit. society-body : what people in society think of us)”. Japanese sensitivity to seken is also seen in the phrases like “Seken ni kao muke ga dekinai (unable to face the seken)” or “Seken ni awaseru kao

ga nai (have no face to show to the seken) ” (cf. Lebra, 1992 : 107). The following example sentences also illustrate Japanese people’s attitude towards seken/seken-tei.

- (13) Damatte itemo, okaasan, watashi no kimochi o chanto wakatte anshinshite irashitara, ichiban ii no da. Watashi wa, donna ni, wagamama demo, kesshite SEKEN no monowarai ni naru-yoo na koto wa shinai no da shi, tsurakutemo, sabishikuttemo, daiji na tokoro wa kichin to mamotte.... [Dazai 1967 : 95-96]

(J → E : It would be best if I didn’t have to do or say anything, if she would just understand me and trust me. However headstrong I may be, I’ll never do anything to invite people’s [SEKEN’s] ridicule, and no matter how hard it may be at times, no matter how lonely I may get, I’ll always be on my guard against making any of the really bad mistakes.) [Dazai 1988 : 79]

- (14) Kyuushuu no hito de, musuko-san ga sekigun-ha ni haitte dokoka de hade na koto o shita. Shimibun ni kakitaterare, sono otoosan ga heifukushite iru shashin ga dete imashita.

“SEKEN ni mooshiwake nai” to ii, otoosan mo okaasan mo jisatsu demo shikanenai hodo deshita. Okinodoku deshita ga, sore kurai SEKEN to iu mono ga aru-rashii.

SEKEN to iu kotoba wa, doomo Nihon dake no kotoba de aru-yoo desu.

Kore wa bukkyyoo no kotoba kara dete iru no desu ga, Nihongo no naka ni totekomimashita. Nihonjin no shakaiseikatsu no naka de, juuyoo na, maryoku to itte ii hodo no chikara o motte imasu. Kono SEKEN to iu mono wa, gaikokujin ni setsumeishigatai mono ga arimasu.[Ryootaroo Shiba “Seken ni tsuite Vol. 2” pp.

50-55. in Shuukan Asahi 1999 Feb. 19th : 52]

(MT : The son of someone from Kyushu entered the Red Army Faction and did something outrageous somewhere. It was written about in a newspaper, and the paper included a picture of the son’s father prostrate on the ground.

“I don’t know how to apologise to SEKEN”, he said, and the father and mother looked ready to almost commit suicide. I felt sorry for them, but it seems SEKEN has the power to make them act like that.

It seems SEKEN is a word which is used only in Japan.

The word was originally a Buddhist one, which entered into regular Japanese. It has an important, almost magical power in Japanese society. This SEKEN is something we find difficult to explain to non-Japanese people.)

- (15) Katoo : De, anata wa koo yuu fuufu-kankei ni nattemo wakaretai to wa omowanai wake?

Soodansha : Fuufu to shite no are wa, moo mattaku arimasen nee.

Katoo : Shinriteki ni wa moo fuufu ja nai nee.

Soodansha : Soo desu nee.

Katoo : Hooritsujoo fuufu demo nee.

Soodansha : Ee, tada yappa shuunyuugen ya nanka dee, SEKEN-tei ya nanka dee, maa ima kono toshi ni natte wakarenakutemo watashi wa.... Aijoo nakutemo ii to omotteru n desu kedo.

Katoo : Ano ne, 55 sai desho, ima. Kore kara mada nagai yo nee. Sore o SEKEN-tei to iu koto de kono seikatsu o anta kore kara moo 30 nen mo tsuzukeru tsumori? Datte chotto hidoi kaiwa da yo, daisansha ga kiite iru to. “Anta nanka konna manshon ni sumeru kota nai n da” toka ne. “Teishuzura suru na” toka nee. (...) Chotto omowanai? Koo iu kotoba hidoi to.

[Conversation between Taizoo Katoo (Consultant) and a man (55 years old) in Radio programme “Telephone Jinsei Soodan” on November 25th, 1996]
(MT : Katoo : Then, don’t you think you want to separate from her even though you are in this unusual kind of a husband-and-wife relationship?)

Caller : We don’t have a physical relationship any more.

Katoo : You are not keeping a husband-and-wife relationship any more.

Caller : No.

Katoo : Although you are a couple legally.

Caller : Yes. But because of the source of income, and because of the SEKEN-tei (appearance to the public), well, we don’t have to separate at this age.... I think I don’t mind even if there is no affection between us.

Katoo : Listen, you are 55 years old, aren’t you? You still have a long life ahead of you. Are you going to lead this kind of life for another 30 years because of the SEKEN-tei? Well, to the ears of a third person it is a pretty terrible conversation. She says “You don’t have a right to live in this kind of flat” or “Don’t behave like a husband”. (...) Don’t you think these words are just terrible?)

As Lebra (1976 : 11) says, “For the Japanese, goodness or badness is a relative matter, relative to social situation and impact, whose complexity may often be beyond any judge’s comprehension”. Therefore, Japanese often consider “seken/seken-tei” when they judge whether they should do or shouldn’t do something. Abe (1999 : 16) explains that Japanese people need to be accepted by SEKEN in order to be considered as becoming mature¹⁰.

Japanese people’s attitudes towards suppressing their emotions because of their concern about what other people or ‘seken’ think of them is linked to the important Japanese concept “wa”. In Japanese culture the concept “wa”, which roughly means ‘keeping harmony with other people’ is indispensable for

good human relationships. Japanese morality emphasizes group responsibility and the suppression of individuality. Philosophy, ethics and etiquette are based on the fundamental principle that harmony take precedence over all other matters--even though the concept, when put into practice, is often at odd with logic and common sense¹¹. Everyone and everything must wait until the demands of “wa” are met (cf De Mente, 1994 : 3, 12). Therefore, as seen in the example below, keeping harmony is often considered more important than functionality in the Japanese working place :

- (16) Shigoto sae dekireba, sore de ii to iu mono de wa nai. Kore wa otoko, onna dochira ni mo atehamaru. Yuushika no kanojo wa sono hen no kyoochoo-sei ni kakete ita. Tsune ni mai-peesu de, enkai ni mo deyoo to wa shinakatta. Shikashi ne, shokuba no enkai mo shigoto no ikkan na n da. Yoshi ashi wa betsu ni shite, kore ga Nihon no kigyoo no taishitsu. Sore o hihansuru no wa tayasui. Tayasui ga, kore ga genjitsu da. [Toodoo 1994b Vol. 1 : 234-235]
(MT : It is not the case that it's OK if you just do a good job. This applies both to men and women.

That woman in the financing section lacks inability to keep harmony. She was always doing things in her own way and did not even join in convivial meetings. However, convivial meetings also form a part of our work. Apart from the discussion of whether this is good or bad, this is the predisposition of Japanese companies. It is easy to criticise it, but it is a fact.)

Kitayama, Markus & Liberman (1995 : 539) further observe Japanese people who keep the concept of “wa” as follows :

It is likely, then, that the Japanese tendency of self-depreciation represents a form of adaptation to the cultural environment constructed with the core cultural idea of self as an interdependent entity. With fitting-in and interpersonal adjustment as an important cultural task, those socialized in the Japanese culture may be extensively socialized to be attentive to negative features of the self, not so much because they want to find them, but because they have to find them before they make appropriate corrections to them and, hence, increase the extent of fit of the self with situational expectations and social norms.

Wierzbicka (1997 : 253) explicates the meaning of this concept “wa” as following :

WA

these people want to be like one thing
they all want the same
they don't want this :
 one of them says : "I want this"
another one says : "I don't want this"
they don't want to say about some of them :
 "these people did something good,
 these people did something bad"
they don't want to do some things because of this
 "this person did something very good"
they want to do some things because of this
they all feel something good because of this
they can do many good things because of this
they couldn't do these things if they didn't all want the same
people think this is very good

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have examined certain aspects of cultural norms which are embedded in Japanese society. In order to successfully communicate with people in a country like Japan, we need to understand the cultural psychology and socio-cultural norms shared by people in a given culture, which motivate those nonverbal patterns of behaviour.

It has been the intentions of this paper to explicate the thinking patterns or the socio-cultural norms attached to some typical patterns of Japanese behaviour and interaction as associated emotion expressions. The approach taken for this purpose was to use the universally based "Natural Semantic Metalanguage" method. We have seen that this method allowed us to translate various aspects of a cultural ethos encoded in behaviour and thinking into semantic formulas which can be accurately understood by people in another culture.

We have seen how cultural norms encourage or discourage certain kinds of behaviour in Japan. It was found that norms such as the necessity of being conscious of other people's gaze, having consideration not to offend other people's feelings and keep harmony with others, govern important aspects of

behaviour in Japan. When Japanese people feel certain emotions they often try to suppress them since they are concerned with what people will think about them. They try to control their actions not only because they are concerned with society, but also because they have an internal moral concern or conscience. However, it is a fact that Japanese people pay great attention to what other human beings or the entire society (especially “seken”) think of them rather than just to the individual’s perspective about him/herself. It was also found that Japanese people have a relatively “forgiving” attitude to men’s crying on special occasions, despite the fact that generally they have a negative view toward any open display of negative emotions, especially men’s crying. This relatively generous attitude towards crying may be related to the hidden Japanese fondness of sad-like feelings which often appear in Japanese ballads whose theme is mainly sad-like feelings after a separation from one’s lover or partner. In many cases, popular songs whose melodic theme is about a state of unhappiness rather than happiness appeal more to the taste of Japanese people.

We have also found that although Japanese people are quite “emotional”, and put more value on emotion than on reason, they can and also want to express their emotions clearly to people whom they know and who will listen to them with empathy, and understand their feelings.

As for controlling emotional expressions because of concern about other people’s views, Ishii (1984 : 51) says that in Japanese society people avoid the display of negative emotions and feign a positive emotion, or have a blank expression even when they feel quite negative “in order to preserve peace and harmony in groups”. On the other hand, Matsumoto (1996 : 91) says: “In American society it is easier to attribute the responsibility for one’s emotions, especially negative ones; the lack of strong emphasis on interpersonal harmony implies a corresponding lack of concern for blaming others for one’s negative emotions”. In Japanese society, not only negative emotions, but also positive emotions are often suppressed in order to keep harmony in interpersonal relationships. For example, when complimented by another person, Japanese people will often act humbly and say they don’t deserve such a

compliment. However, we should really pay attention to the fact that in the situation where there is no possibility of a future relationship, Japanese people often do not display emotions that foster harmony. This fact can be related to the phenomenon that Japanese people sometimes act without any consideration towards other people when they travel in foreign countries, or in some situations where they do not feel the necessity of maintaining a harmonious interpersonal relationship in the future.

A systematic and comprehensive examination of how the concepts, meanings and cultural norms of Japanese emotion terms/expressions are similar to, and different from those in different cultures is indispensable for successful inter-cultural communication. In addressing this task, it is particularly important to be careful to investigate not only the stereotypical images of each culture, but also individual variations in usage. The various faces of this kind of research need to be studied systematically, methodically, and above all cross-culturally. A deeper understanding of the cultural issues discussed in this paper can only be realised through further detailed study. This is urgently needed for better and more successful inter-cultural communication.

Notes

1. Leech, Geoffrey N. (1983). Principles of Pragmatics. London : Longman.
2. As for comparing emotional norms across languages and culture, the contrasting cultural scripts (attitudes) can be stated with a phrase involving the following component which starts each explication :

[everybody knows :]--cultural model

[people think :]--normative cultural script

The above component "people think : " which opens the scripts reflects the fact that even people who personally don't identify with the content of that script are nonetheless familiar it : they, too, belong to the community which shapes familiarity with this script" (Wierzbicka 1999a : 242). These cultural scripts are formulated from the insider's point of view. These cultural scripts try to articulate the native's tacit knowledge rather than an outsider's objectivist and experience-distant representations of human experience and competence. At the same time, being formulated in universal human concepts, they can be intelligible to outsiders, too (Wierzbicka, 1999a : 272).

3. For the latest set of semantic primitives in English, see Wierzbicka, 1999a : 36-37, Workshop paper : New Developments in NSM Semantics : Metalanguage, Scripts and

Expressions held in August 2002

4. In modern Western (especially Anglo-American) “therapeutic” discourse, the focus is more on introspection into one’s subjective internal states, rather than on social and moral concerns (Wierzbicka, 1999a : 306).
5. Of course, there are counselling systems in Japan, too. The psychiatrist Kawai (1992 : 74) says the words which counsellors give to patients should take into the consideration the understanding of the patients’ feelings as much as possible, and should support them in improving their lives. For example, when the consulter says “My problem is that my child wets the bed at night”, a counsellor should not say something like “Really? When did it start?” or “How old is your child?”, but say sympathetically “I see, she/he wets the bed at night” (Ooe & Kawai & Tanigawa, 1996 : 52).

However, although the counsellor should have sympathy with the patient, as Kawai (Ooe & Kawai & Tanigawa 1996 : 21) points out the counsellor should try to grasp the patient’s background objectively. For example, when a woman complains about her husband, the counsellor should try to imagine the husband’s voice while listening to the woman’s story. A similar technique (called “mirroring”) is also common in Western therapy (Cliff Goddard : personal communication).

6. When examples are taken from literature, full details are given in the ‘Index of Sources’ at the end of this article. In this case, only the author’s name and the year of publication are provided below each example which it appears in the thesis. However, when the example comes from magazines, TV or radio programs, popular songs, or advertisements, all the details are given in the brackets just below each example.
7. All translations are my own except where indicated otherwise. When translations of original texts were available I have used those translations. In these cases I have shown which part of the English sentence corresponds to a Japanese emotion word/expression by inserting the Japanese emotion word/expression in square brackets []. I have marked the gloss for each referenced examples as follows :

MT : My Translation

J → E : This indicates a translation from Japanese into English

J ← E : This indicates a translation from English to Japanese.

8. Henley (1977 : 174) says that the training of children’s facial expressions by adults is a primary avenue of sex stereotyping in English-speaking countries, too. Boys are told it’s not manly to cry, and girls are admonished that growling isn’t pretty.
9. Takano (1995 : 66-67) remarks that crying/weeping is not an expression of ‘sorrow’ but also of ‘anger’ or ‘joy’. It is also worthwhile noting here Frijda’s (1986 : 53) observation that “Weeping and laughter have much in common. Their facial features resemble one another”; ... “weeping in happiness can be seen as the manifestation of powerlessness to absorb and integrate the new, overwhelming situation; that situation is too much to be grasped and adjusted to”; “They differ in vocalisation and in the tendency toward extensor activity in laughing and flexor activity in weeping”.
10. Abe (1999 : 62) further says that Europeans also had a concept similar to SEKEN until

around the 12th century. At that time there was no concept like the one expressed by the current word 'individual'. People were embedded in a group. In Japan the word "kojin" was introduced as a translation of this English word "individual" in the Meiji era (A. D. 1867-1912). However, since its history is still short, this concept has not penetrated into Japanese people's minds.

11. Kitayama, Markus & Lieberman (1995 : 524) mention that in many Asian cultures, including Japan, people believe in the fundamental connectedness or interdependence among those within an in group. According to this culturally held idea the self is made meaningful in reference to the relationship of which the self is part. The major cultural task is to fit in, adjust to the relationship, to become a member, while constraining, taming, or otherwise conditioning internal desires or wishes so as to facilitate the ever-important interpersonal harmony and unity.

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Cultural Scripts を用いて記述する感情に対する日本人の心的態度

HASADA, Rie

羽佐田 理恵

本論は日本人の感情表現にまつわる社会的、文化的思考／行動様式のルールともいえるものを“Cultural Scripts”という形式で記述する。ある文化圏言語に片寄らないよう、記述する事を可能にするため、世界中の言語に普遍的に存在する語彙、文法のみを使う Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) method (筆者は同論集の先号でこの方法論の概念の考察を論じた)を駆使している。使用したデータはあらゆるジャンルの著書、ラジオ、テレビ番組などから採取した。文化的背景を多面的に考察するためにも、他言語文化の文化的行動様式との比較、検証も行っている。ページが限られているため、ここで論じるテーマとしては、「ある文化的行動様式の背後には、どのような事に価値をおく文化的ルールがあるのか」という点を考慮しながら、日本や他の国では“どういう状況で、どのような感情”表現を、自由に「できるか／してもよいか／してはいけないか」という無意識あるいは意識的に人々の思考形式に潜在する文化的特徴とその背後の文化的思考を取り上げ、考証している。