

Cross Cultural “Dialogue” in the Age of Commodity Culture

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To write about meaningful dialogue between cultures, (n.1) at this time, would seem to invite either of two equal and opposite misconceptions: either to be “idealistic” and overlook the serious obstacles to the achievement; or to be “realistic” and fail to see the possibilities. The latter may be the stronger temptation, for in spite of the recent “interruption” of open hostilities, here and there, the world remains divided into many “factions” that are simply not “serious about speaking to one another.” One witnesses with growing concern the continuing, if not increasingly divisive, effect of nationalism and ethnocentrism. Any way to lessen their influence of setting nations and groups in hostile opposition to one another, one may suggest, will begin with a recovery of dialogue. For dialogue presupposes a willingness to see the legitimacy of the other’s “being,” in other words, a willingness to resist the temptation to demonize the other.

What I am primarily concerned with in this paper is a description and discussion of cross-cultural experience of Japanese and American young people, on two occasions: the “English Study Tours” of Nanzan students to Riverside, California, in 1987 and 1988; and an experimental “international camp”, held in the summer of 1988, at the writer’s place in Nagano Prefecture. My interest is in what the experiences may have to suggest about the possibility of encouraging dialogue across cultures.

We can look at these “case histories”, in other words, to discern what such meetings between young people in a cross-cultural experience

might contribute to the improvement of understanding between people, beginning with the obviously limited case of an exchange between young Japanese and young Americans of college and high school age. As we do so, we are aware that often the other culture is "next door", as well as across the Pacific, since more and more the participants in such cross-cultural experiences have ingested much of one another's cultures. In this time of shared interests, promoted by electronic media, they have taken on many aspects of one another's life-style, if not the values underlying the style. It is realistic to consider to what extent a kind of dialogue may have begun, between Japanese and Americans youth, through mutual involvement in the "community of 'Rock'", for example; not to mention TV, video and movies. How conscious are the young people of entering into a kind of dialogical relationship ?

There is a related concern in the mind of the writer. And that is the kind of exchange we have been talking about tends to be characterized as "international", "kokusai-ka". It seems important, at this point, to distinguish "Kokusai-ka" and the pursuit of dialogue between members of different cultures. Some of the ventures that fall in the category of "Kokusai-ka" may well be conducive to dialogue. But on the whole, the illusion that they do effect true or serious dialogue needs to be challenged. (See Appendix I)

Having said that, it becomes necessary to explain what is meant by "dialogue" in this context : (n.2) it is an exchange between persons who respect one another profoundly, and "work" to create new meanings in mutually sharing thoughts, feelings and attitudes which before the encounter may have been divisive. During the course of the exchange commonalities between them are discovered, but also serious differences. The latter require continual mutual respect and openness despite the discovery of differences. This demands a high degree of self-other understanding, founded on a willingness to discern and transcend the factors in each other which heretofore may have blocked understanding. Among such factors are the limitation on understanding imposed by each person's experience being unique, partial and self-centered. These traits are reflected in acquired habits of perception, thought and feeling, hence in speech. It likewise demands courage to face differences without suppressing or minimizing them, but to work through them to understanding. (This recognizes that the occurrence of differences, with conflict, is of the essence of interdependence.) Bridging differences with

profound respect for the other is a prime criterion of dialogue.

In view of this explanation of what is meant by "dialogue" in the context of this paper, it should be obvious why the writer has reservations about the possibility of achieving "dialogue" between young Japanese and Americans in such cross-cultural experiences hereafter described. To have reservations about the possibility of achieving dialogue in so short a time as one month, more or less, is not to conclude the experience of an "English Study Tour" or of an "international camp" has little meaning. Quite the contrary, these experiences can be excellent preparation for dialogue if they awaken an interest in pursuing that goal.

Description of Experience

The "English Study Tour", co-sponsored by the Divine Word Seminary in Riverside, California, provided the Nanzan students with a home-stay in the vicinity, and classroom study at the Seminary. While the study of English was a serious objective of this experience, the chance to live in an American home was considered to be equally as beneficial as the study. And, in fact, it was found more so by the students.

The experience of "making out a life together" was paramount in the "international camp," conceived and conducted by the writer for the first time. It was a foregone conclusion that English would be the language primarily used. Language ability was somewhat less among the "campers", as they were first and second year high school students. (The Riverside group were college students, many of whom were majoring in English as a language.)

The Riverside group recorded many of their impressions; the camp group left some, but not as many. In either case we have some "raw data", as it were, of reactions to a cross-cultural experience, about how the Japanese and Americans perceived one another. One observed, for example, the tendency to compare attitudes and behaviors. This is as one would expect; and it can abet dialogue if the comparisons are not invidious; when invidious they are, indeed, an obstacle to dialogue because they obstruct the "openness" that dialogue requires.

The Japanese students, in Riverside, were satisfied and pleased, on the whole; sometimes amazed and occasionally "shocked;" rarely quite

disappointed, and this only in the case of two or three individuals, whose ability to accommodate to strange circumstances was lacking from the beginning. In most situations the Japanese found the American people "friendly and cheerful, free and rational in their behavior, given to joking, laughter and loving exchange," in which they felt included. Home habits of Americans intrigued them, such that although adapting to them was not infrequently awkward, they were found constantly interesting. Some of their impressions were recorded under the title, "We wonder why...?" As examples, "We wonder why they don't take off their shoes in the house?... They don't lock the door of the restroom?... They keep dirty dishes in the sink for a week?... Do brothers and sisters kiss deeply?... They don't eat so much breakfast?" Food and meals were not generally appreciated, for the food was found "too sweet, too fatty and too much, especially too simple!" But as one student wrote, "I ate as much as the Americans did," adding, "My stomach already became American size." The houses and their surroundings gave the Japanese the impression of spaciousness which they relished, but the interior decor was not in all instances congenial to Japanese taste. Again, they wondered why "the lighting is so inadequate or why they don't put lights on the ceiling?" In nearly every case, they wonder why "there are bathtubs and toilets in the same room?" They admired the large gardens or space around the house and the fact that nearly all families kept pets which are "made members of the family." They seemed to think that "Americans enjoy their daily life more than Japanese", noting that children are "more free and independent." They observed that the latter sometimes causes problems, but contrast the situation to that of Japan where, they conclude, "children are too spoiled and dependent on their parents."

Among critical views is the perception that "Americans are indifferent and dirty." Or that "their clothing is without sense of season." Some contrast American sartorial habit to that of the Japanese, the latter seen "more limited by fashion." And Americans are seen as "captive to TV," to a fault.

American fathers' helping with the housework is admired, as also is their relation to their teenage children, with whom they take much time for conversation. (But they wonder why "American women dislike housework?")

Many of the Japanese students sympathize with Americans' having

to cope with many different races, nationalities and religions as represented in the population. Some think the "pledge of allegiance to the flag made in the schools is a way to encourage unity among these various peoples." In this connection, one comment was, "we have similar knowledge and similar commonsense in Japan, so we can get together easily without saying anything". Another student thought "The 'pledge' sometimes may be dangerous but necessary in the melting-pot which is America;" going on to add, "If Japan were a melting-pot, we would be more adaptable." A common observation was, "In Japan we read about cultural differences, but here (in America) we feel them!"

Generally, language difficulty was experienced, as one might suppose. Anxiety over "not finding what I should say," or discovering that "I can't speak more although so many years studying English," was expressed by one and all. Language difficulty, compounded with habitual suppression of emotion, may be seen in the revelation of one student who wrote that she keeps her troubles hidden, saying, "I think it is dumb to make trouble big and spoil human relations, so I hide it in my diary and pretend to forget." She doesn't like herself when becoming impatient and "rationalizes" that "trouble gives me time to be alone and consider." One wonders how many of the Japanese students may have "suffered" similar feelings and kept them to themselves? An exception perhaps is the student who, realizing the Japanese tendency to hide emotion, was especially appreciative of the way her host family showed their love and acceptance of her, and the way she felt accepted in America. "The strongest emotion I feel is love," she recorded, and added, "I never heard 'I like people' from a Japanese."

Although there was considerable sharing of the views of one another between the Japanese and Americans in the international camp — some of it in a process of "image-exchange" in formal meetings — little of it was actually recorded. As one might imagine, the American young people (5 boys and 3 girls) found the Japanese life-style, proper behavior about the home, in particular, a challenge right up to the end of camp. They "flunked", as it were, in the matter of keeping their sleeping quarters and personal belongings in order. And their conduct at meals was hardly up to Japanese standard. But the Japanese students, in a gracious but no uncertain manner, "instructed" them in the required behavior. And it is to the Americans' credit

that after being "checked-up" they performed better, or tried to.

The American group were impressed by the courtesy and consideration of the Japanese, finding them, by contrast to themselves, reserved, a trait that they perhaps reluctantly admired. In the short period of two weeks together at the camp-site, some of the Japanese behavioral "style" wore off, as it were, on the Americans; they began to reflect a bit of the courtesy and consideration of the former in their conduct. The acceptance of differences, most evident in "imitation" of the respective other, or the mutual influence on each other's conduct, are to be seen as significant gain in flexibility of adjustment to different ways. Both groups learned to see themselves, to a degree, as members of a kind of "commingled culture." And as this discovery went on, the communication improved. Both groups began to be more free about probing one another's feelings as well as thoughts. Both groups came to realize that differences are not to be regarded with superficial acceptance or uncritical indulgence, but to be taken seriously; and there was a growing sense that a behavior that violates a given standard, so to speak, calls for critical correction. This more serious entertainment of differences helps build a climate for pursuing the goal of dialogue.

Comments were largely concerned with the physical arrangements of the living space and the daily habits associated with them. How to behave in the given situation, in other words. An obvious instance of such is the "rule" of behavior with respect to tatami. And it was a good lesson for the Americans to see and follow the attitude-of-care with which the Japanese regard this household artifact. They could appreciate the attitude to an extent; but the cultural-value underlying the attitude could not be explored. Such would have been a pertinent entry into dialogue, but was just beyond the capacity of both Japanese and Americans. It is significant, however, that both sensed a need for such exploration.

It goes without saying that there were other reactions and comments that have not been included in the foregoing description. Certain of the more representative ones only were selected. (n.3) However, there is one other comment, by one of the girls in the Riverside group, that is exceptional. It is exceptional in that it is not specifically related to her experience there. Rather it represents a concern about a world problem. It is the kind of concern that we might wish more had

expressed. The comment is rather long, and I have chosen to place it in an appendix. (See Appendix II) There is no indication that she may have talked with her host family or American friends about this concern ('the threats to Peace'). If, indeed, she did, it would be an instance of initiating dialogue of much significance. One that our little experiments in cross-cultural exchange are meant to prepare for.

This brief review of the "data" has of necessity left out the conversation that we may suppose to have taken place. And there is, of course, the nonverbal interaction which, if we could only have followed it, would tell us so much about the exchange. There was no way to observe the nonverbal interaction of the Japanese and their host families, in Riverside, other than on the occasion of the "farewell party" and the day of departure. At both times there was much feeling openly expressed through gestures of exceeding warmth. The "reciprocal affective" aspects of the interaction, bear the preponderant burden of shared meaning. The verbal exchange in either experience (Riverside or Nagano) was admittedly halting, and must have been frustrating even when not apparent. And it is evidence of the sincerity of seeking dialogue that in the majority of instances both in America and Japan the effort to keep at this exchange seldom flagged. There were times when one side of the exchange being unable to express himself/herself, that his/her "alter" helped to articulate. It is true that "when you have heard what I have been unable to say", and have helped to "get it out", dialogue is encouraged. The intention of reflective listening despite the other's inability at first to make himself/herself understood is encouraging. I am unable to say what degree of dialogue may have begun as these young people tried to share meanings about difficult matters. I do suspect that a lack of facility with words can, in many instances, evoke a relationship that may be more "dialogical" than when we are facile with words. The Japanese whose cultural conditioning leads to greater stress on proper selection of words and proper address, may have suffered more discomfort from the situational inapplicability of the "rules", so to speak. On the other hand, they may have appreciated the relative freedom of not having to follow them? And paradoxically speaking, they may have been more in touch with the other's feelings because of the intensity of the struggle to grasp what was being said to them. In such case, we may well be in surer contact with the other person, since

we not only want to hear what he/she is trying to say, but even more, where he or she is "coming from", that is, we want to sense the ground of his/her speaking. There is no question about meanings clearly articulated and understood being important. But even with minimal ability in verbal exchange there can be incipient dialogue.

Discussion

Our ventures in "cross-cultural dialogue" are often unsuccessful because we make premature judgments of one another. These judgments tend to be invidiously critical, on the one hand, or uncritically complimentary, on the other. A disinterested (impartial) approach to the experience of a different culture requires that we withhold judgments, especially those that may scarcely conceal a prejudicial attitude. The prejudicial attitude is one that, by definition, "prejudges" the other culture before contact. It is predisposed to approve or disapprove in terms of unreflective comparison with some "idea" or "norm" of culture that we have acquired through past experience. This idea is, typically, a reflection of the culture in which we have grown up. Moreover, it does not represent an adequate understanding of one's own culture. An inadequate or superficial understanding of one's own culture "colors" how we view another. To overcome the limitation of such a view it is necessary to examine closely, the substance of a culture, first the substance of our own, and subsequently, that of the other. The criterion of deferring judgment until we have experienced another culture in considerable scope and detail, and begun to discern what values underlay the modes of expression in that culture, is paramount. I could say that the young people involved in the two experiences described in this paper came to appreciate this requirement of serious dialogue. (n.4) (See Appendix III)

It seems to me, with respect to the foregoing discussion, that there is an aspect of their Culture that Japanese might well examine. This aspect is the "situation-specific" requirement of linguistic and social behavior. In the cross-cultural encounter it can be problematical. The "situational specificity" of behavior causes question on the part of the member of another culture: "What is going on here?" Since he or she is accustomed to "uniformity" of behavior for all occasions.

This is notably so with respect to ethical behavior. The member of another culture may be given to "black-or-white" distinctions of "right" or "wrong", distinctions that the Japanese is not as prone to make. And discrimination of conduct according to situational variants, such as social status of the other, and the like, while pertinent in the other culture, is not as de rigueur as it is in the Japanese. For the latter, moral and ethical value-distinctions are subject to what may be called "social aesthetics." That is to say, for example, that "emotional consonance" is valued over "logical agreement" in settling questions of appropriate response in ethical or moral controversy.

However, while language and behavior may seem to manifest less clear distinctions or determinant value-reference in the Japanese situation, they may be found psychologically "warmer." The intuitive communication, the controlled affect, the non-assertive intent on harmony, the required humility, and an indifferent morality are intriguing while they may raise questions in the member of another culture. He or she will probably not feel "included", but will be a fascinated, even ingratiated, observer. The aesthetic sensibility, which often is less conformed to the cultural rubrics just listed, is most often found pleasing. (The tolerance of one another's views among the Japanese, a characteristic rooted in a preference for "harmony," is not necessarily a matter of profound respect for one another; rather, it may only mean, "Don't ruffle any feathers." (Sawaranu kami ni tattari nashi). It is a guarantee of smooth relations.) Together with "the special way" in which each sub-system of the society carries on its affairs, the society as a whole exacts adherence to a "way" to be observed in each situation. All of this is, to be sure, the "ideal". And it would be misleading to say that the Japanese college or high school age young person is altogether subservient to the "way" or "ways". There is increasing disengagement of the young from such social requirements; accompanied by a good deal of dissatisfaction among their elders that the young no longer follow in the tradition. My perception of the young people with whom I have associated is that disengagement is partially true. "The acids of modernity" have to a degree eroded the young persons understanding of and obedience to the "rules;" but it also seems true that a certain "nostalgia" for them is "in the air," and that it could grow into a movement to return to them, albeit in a new form or "way."

Whatever, Japanese and American young people both live and share in a world where difficult decisions about inter-cultural (cross-cultural) exchange will increasingly be left on their doorstep, so to speak. And if the "progress" made possible by communications and other technological advance is to serve truly human values, the young people are going to have to discern what these values are. They inhere in the ethical and spiritual inheritance of all mankind. Value-systems and ethics, far from being peripheral are the driving variables in all societal activities, be these science, economics or politics. As these activities are common to all societies, we increasingly recognize we cannot find answers to any of the great questions that confront mankind, or direction for getting along together, without achieving a far larger degree of cross-cultural compatibility. And this requires, first of all, that we be delivered from seduction by false simplicities in our perceptions of one another. In other words, it requires more dialogue.

In this "small world," growing "smaller", in which cultures inextricably cross, there is need to develop a "commingled culture" and address the issues of that culture in a way that recognizes and respects the differences of our root-systems, and, if may be, find how to harmonize them for the good of our common humanity; that is, to become more sensitive to the social and spiritual desiderata that can sustain a "commingled culture."

Those to whom this "project" will be entrusted, in particular, persons who have been and will be privileged to participate in cross-cultural experiences, are asked, in Alvin Toffler's view, to develop a "future-focused role-image." In my view, such a "role-image" must contemplate giving up the pursuit of material goals with little thought for ethical and spiritual goals. Positively stated, what is hoped for is more cross-culturally oriented search for such goals. The culture presently shared among the young — of most developed countries, at least — is the commodity culture, a culture driven by "market forces" or "market-place values." (n.5) Can there be anything in a culture driven by market-place values that also speaks to deeper values? is a challenge put to us all. It is with intent to respond to that challenge that experiments in cross-cultural experience, such as those discussed in this paper, are undertaken. The promise of an effective response depends on the extent to which those participating realize a dialogical

relationship.

Epilogue

One hopes that young Japanese and Americans agree with Toffler's contention that it is crucial in facing the future to develop a "future-focused role-image." And the writer hopes they may share his contention/conviction that the eminently desirable "role" — some would say the role essential to our survival — is one rooted in a clear, strong and persistent intention to realize dialogical relationships with other cultures. Furthermore, it is his conviction that the "role" must not be subservient to the "commodity culture" or market-place values. Quite otherwise, it ought to be a role that challenges these values. Leaving myself open to the charge of being "irrelevantly idealistic," I hope for a cross-cultural exchange (obviously including dialogue) between Japanese and American young people about the values that may be thought to sustain a healthy international order. The dialogue, no doubt, should begin looking at the relationship of the two nations, both of which are currently involved in rethinking their respective identities. In what follows I shall call on a journalistic account of the relationship that was recently brought to my attention; principally highlighting what some Japanese have to say as it bears on the promise (or its opposite) of the dialogue succeeding. (n.6)

It is pointed out that the current image in Japan of what it means to become "international" is, as we earlier noted, a wrong conception, even a dangerous one. The image as described is one that only a "Roppongi-zoku" would think had any verisimilitude; and not one that a serious-minded person would have. The description has it that "the newly internationalized Japanese listens to African music, wears European clothes, does Chinese exercises and eats Indian food." If this comes close to representing what "internationalization" means to most Japanese, it is no wonder that a growing "force" is competing with such an "image" for the conscience of young people. That "force" represents a "return to tradition," beginning with a rejection of the "poisons of the Materialistic West." There is a paradox inherent in this representation in that its chief proponents tend to be, also, among the chief beneficiaries of Japan's materialistic success. (Perhaps it is not so contradictory when we recall the historical

precedent of alternation between "borrowing" from others and "assimilating" what is borrowed to a unique paradigm. Also there is an historical tendency to have "masochistic" doubts about one's own good fortune.)

One cannot deny that the "commodity culture" has taken a strong hold on Japanese youth, while he may question the judgment that they are being "poisoned by the West." What is more disturbing about the judgment and the "force" which has pronounced it, representing as it does a naively unconscious ethnocentrism or neo-nationalism, is its appeal to nostalgia. And its assertion that such nostalgia is rife among youth. From where I sit, as it were, the allegation that youth is becoming more conservative and xenophobic — not wanting to associate with foreigners — is hardly accurate. That they may be thinking that Japan has less and less to learn from the rest of the world is true in part. But, paradoxically, youth is an increasingly significant factor in a society ever more culturally integrated with the West, where integration is seen as joining the "consumer parade."

Perhaps there is no strong reason to challenge a motivation to recover tradition, provided it does not overdo Japan's "uniqueness," is not so strongly opposed to multi-ethnicity, does not over-eulogize the Samurai ethic, and does not conceal a resurgence of "militarism", forgetting history, and Japan's war-guilt. And we might agree that homogeneity makes for "a more intelligent society" (Nakasone), without accepting the claim that "the Japanese race is superior to all others because it is the most natural, moral and spiritual culture on earth," (Seisuke Ono). In other words, if there is an objective search for what is fundamentally Japanese and a "project" of sharing this with the rest of the world, I for one would be interested in watching the process and anticipate its success. But if what is considered most fundamental should be the Imperial Institution, for example, I would have my reservations.

The challenge enunciated by one of the MITI staff, calling the nation, or its leaders, to decide whether Japan is to be "a nation of salesmen or statesmen" I would like to see seriously entertained. And it is to be applauded that more and more Japanese are concluding that "making a lot of money isn't good enough." Although these are "establishment" voices, it would be wise to ask what the consensus is among big business, big banks, government bureaucrats and ruling

party politicians, largely supported by the media? This consensus is stronger than ever, and calls the shots. Few Japanese are asking the important questions. They are said to be only mildly interested, if at all, in astutely questioning the trends in either domestic or foreign affairs, and to have little mind to the rest of the world.

Uncomfortable with assertion, as with unequivocal expression, Japan and the Japanese alike have throughout their history decided their moves, not initiating them but in response to pressure from without. And the moves tend to be taken with the caution of perceived self-interest, pleading the "uniqueness" or "specialness" of the Japanese position, which I think is, basically, that of "Jibun ga kawai." (It is "amae")

Relations with the United States are predicted to become more "unfriendly," as Japan witnessing America's "decline" moves gradually out from under America's shadow. However one views this, the importance, the necessity, of encouraging dialogue between Japanese and American young people can only be emphasized. Encouragement needs to go beyond such "little experiments" as study tours and international camps, however much they may contribute to the cause of dialogue. And there are many other programs, as well, advancing exchange and cross-cultural experience. I do not doubt that there are both government and privately sponsored arrangements for bringing Japanese and American young people together, whose participants number in the thousands. Without sufficient acquaintance or knowledge about most of them it would be presumptuous on my part to comment on their effectiveness. But I feel safe in suggesting that it could be greater. I am not aware that such programs give considerate and focused attention to training in dialogue, in any case. And it is in this sense that I believe their contribution could be greater. By that I mean only to suggest that they might do more by way of satisfying what are to be regarded as important criteria of genuine cross-cultural dialogue. These have for the most part already been cited. — Here they will be summarized :

— Attention to and discernment of the forces and factors in one's own culture that influence one's present attitudes and behavior, one's habits of feeling, thinking and expression. (This has been referred to as "serious intra-cultural analysis", indicating that an understanding of

cultural processes is crucial to desirable cultural advance and change.)

— Intention of critically discriminating those forces and factors which help and those which hinder the dialogical relationship, primarily in one's own culture, but, in turn, helping "alter" carry on a like discrimination with respect to "alter's" culture.

— The above two "functions" are to be fulfilled with a view to values that any truly human enterprise needs to respect, i. e.

1. the freedom and interdependence with mutual respect of the participants in dialogue

2. consideration of the basic criteria by which society is to be judged, among which is surely peace-with-Justice

3. And at this particular historical juncture :

- asserting moral claims over pragmatic decisions and judgments
- respect for and obedience to the ecological needs of the universe
- respecting that natural resources are the "heritage of all mankind."
- independence from the "commodity culture," i. e., "fashion", market-place values and the like
- a "sane life-style," realizing that "we must live simply so that others may simply live."

This listing of criteria of serious cross-cultural dialogue may seem to the reader to be "severe" and going beyond the bounds of relevant consideration in the case of dialogue between young people of different cultures. Whatever, it is my final contention that said "training" is well worth considering. And if it is to be considered, we shall realize, to paraphrase Robert Frost, that 'we have miles to go before we can rest on our little experiments.'

Note 1.

“Culture,” is one of the most complex concepts. By “culture” is meant all that human beings do together to develop and sustain their shared life in community. It includes their language, myths, life-styles, political systems, religious beliefs and practices, as well as their arts and artifacts. To be properly understood it requires that we get behind the manifestations of these features to the originating ethos. “Dialogue,” needless to say, is thus far more than sharing meanings of words as in the usual conversational exchange. However, if the deeper meaning of the words are articulated and mutually understood, that brings us closer to dialogue. That is to say, if we can share likes, dislikes, convictions and doubts, and their value-source we have begun to engage in dialogue.

Note 2.

This paragraph follows a description of “Creative Dialogue”, originally appearing as one of the papers prepared by The Japan Institute of Christian Education (JICE) at Rikkyo University. It can be found in Creative O.D Vol. I, p. 355 ff, a publication of Press Time.

Note 3.

Like the comments, the “We wonder why...?” questions are related to life-style, habits and character of the Americans, but often indicate more interest in the underlying causes or value-stance. Among such questions, notable in this regard are: “We wonder why are Americans lenient about boy-girl relations?” “We wonder why do teenagers go out at night? Why don't their parents worry about them?”

Note 4.

One further mode of perception and reception, noted by Reuel Howe, Director Emeritus of The Institute For Advanced Pastoral Studies, in the Institute Newsletter, Spring 1975: the “I have you figured out” attitude... “This attitude produces low expectations of our relationships. I can never ‘figure out’ anybody; the person is always more than the person I see because I see through the ‘screen’ of my subjectivity. so we want to enter into relationships with a sense of wonder and anticipation. Every time I meet the person I discover something new about him/her, if I can maintain this sense. At the same time, we must be careful that we do not maintain attitudes that sabotage this sense.”

Note 5.

One wonders if Publilius Syrus (42 B.C.) may not have been right when he said “Money alone sets all the world in motion.” Looking at our world today it takes an optimist to doubt his word, or to be sanguine in the face of the fact that it is indeed money that moves us, and that, more and more into a questionable future. For it is money that controls the “electronic imaging” of the world upon which we increasingly depend for our social and political perspectives —not to mention the economic. There would seem to be reason, therefore, to ask whether contemporary man, so controlled in his thinking, is willing to pay the cultural cost demanded for the achievement of genuine dialogue? Who will gainsay, to

paraphrase Syrus, that the commercial motive moving our world is furthered by communication which is anything but dialogical?

See Aufderheide, P., "Confronting Commodity Culture", *Christianity + Crisis*, Vol. 48, No. 13 September 26, 1988; p. 321f.

Note 6.

The material on which this discussion is based will be found in Brock, David, "Insular Culture's Global Ambition" and Brock, "Fortress of Mercantilism Still Wary of Competition", *Insight* July 18 1988. And Haberman, Clyde, "The Presumed Uniqueness of Japan", *The New York Times Magazine*, August 28, 1988.

Appendix I

As Professor Hoshino of the Department of Human Relations, Nanzan Junior College, has written, "Internationalization has for some time been a popular concept, a kind of slogan in Japan; college and university departments have been set up under that title; study tours, so-called, to foreign countries are flourishing. There is a gradual change in the understanding of the concept, to be sure; but as I look around, our thoughts and actions are far removed from becoming 'internationalized.' The awareness of national identity, of being Japanese, is important, but that awareness is so uppermost in the Japanese mind that it becomes an obstacle to 'internationalization.'"

Bulletin of the Department of Human Relations, No. 14, 1986. 12. 15.

Anyone who seriously intends to promote "internationalization" must realize that an inevitable precondition for the same is ability to dialogue. However, so much of the talk and promotion of "internationalization" today disregards that condition. Not only so, but the concept has been taken over for commercial purposes and is abused. Those who are in earnest about "internationalization" and working for it are opposed to this trend, of course, and view the prevailing understanding of the concept as deficient and attitudes as frivolous. In a sense, "Japan is not ready for it" is the verdict of some responsible voices.

Fr. Pedro Simon, Chairman of the Board of Nanzan Gakuen makes a relevant observation: "Japanese are exceedingly introvert and avoid being open-hearted in their communication... Even in the university where communication between faculty and students is so essential to the educational transaction, they are graduating students without the heart or the skill for genuine communication."

Bulletin of the Center for Spanish-American Studies, September 1987

Appendix II

Reflective comment of one of the girl students participating in the English Study Tour to Riverside, California:

"Atomic bombs were dropped in two cities in Japan... After that, we

sware eternal peace. While we are doing like this, many weapons are produced somewhere. Why do people hate and hurt each other? Man's invention has turned into a Frankenstein monster. That is scientific achievement of which we can be proud? Now place in the hands of our generation. The power to destroy whole mankind. True intensity is not having many strong weapons. We have to renounce all wars. I think it is the true courage. We need vitamin pills for the mind. And we must not forget the people who are wounded both mentally and physically even forty years has passed. We have to say again and again. 'No more Hiroshimas. No more Nagasakis. No more wars' and 'Love people more'”

Appendix III

Matsumoto, Seiya, in his article, “Cultural Instruction in Foreign Language Teaching in Japan”, *Journal of Nanzan Junior College*, Vol. 15, pp 1-13, offers The following interesting discussion of The problems of “Cross-Cultural” understanding.

Matsumoto recognizes the “threat of an identity crisis” that cross cultural contact may bring about. The crisis most often occurs when the experience of another culture is shallow and that culture is superficially judged as “better than one's own.” Conversely, in Matsumoto's view again, one's reception of the cross-cultural experience may emphasize the differences one finds between another culture and his own, in a way that shows hostility and/or contempt toward the other. And there is yet a third mode of reception, likewise undesirable; and that is thinking that all cultures are pretty much alike, that all peoples think alike. It is Matsumoto's contention — one with which the writer has already indicated sympathy — that these three ways of reacting to the cross-cultural experience are “a consequence of neglecting intra-cultural analysis”. They are modes of reception that follow on the failure to probe the deeper levels of one's own culture. For it is in probing the deeper levels of one's own culture that we may discover there is a “cultural relativism” that qualifies the respective modes of reception of the cross-cultural experience. This discovery, hopefully, leads to a realization of the compatibility of differing cultures.

As members of a monolingual and monocultural society, Japanese tend to make judgments of the members of another culture that are tendentious or exclusive; that is, these judgments tend to emphasize the “specialness” of Japanese in a way that disallows “compatibility;” a tendency within homogeneity to distrust other cultures and their members. This tendency needs to be “checked” through developing an awareness of intra-cultural variation, and coming to terms with the ambiguity that such variation implies. In this way ability to empathize with what ever variants are discovered is cultivated. And, in turn, this can lead to an integrative “reception” of the cross-cultural experience.