

## **Cultural Tendencies-Japanese Orientation**

### **Time Orientation Vs Event Orientation**

The Japanese tend to be more time oriented. An example is the precision of their train schedules, for which arrival and departure time are extremely accurate. Tension increases quickly if a class starts late or a meeting ends late, typically after a few minutes. A summer missionary's daily schedule is packed with activities from morning until evening. A Japanese person may not indicate tension with time to a foreigner because they may feel that they are being rude to excuse themselves early.

### **Dichotomistic Thinking Vs Holistic Thinking**

The Japanese tend to be more holistic thinkers. First, judgments are more open-ended. For example, rather than considering one religion, such as Christianity, as absolutely right and others wrong, Japanese may consider some good in every religion. For example, many Japanese have Shinto ceremonies for births, Christian weddings, and Buddhist funerals. Second, Japanese people may feel that their place or interaction in a community is more important than feeling that they are right. Americans tend to think more of their individual "rights" instead of the "whole" picture. Therefore, one should be aware that holistic thinking by the Japanese allows them accept more gray areas rather than labeling things black and white.

### **Crisis Orientation Vs Non-Crisis Orientation**

The Japanese tendency is towards non-crisis orientation. Typically, Japanese are involved in group decision-making that requires patience, time, and input from all members. Americans tend to plan for any potential emergency and are anxious to fix problems, whereas the Japanese may take more time to resolve a problem. For example, a missionary may be concerned that a particular ministry activity may fail because few people are accepting invitations to attend, but the Japanese pastor is more patient in waiting for a response to the invitations. Therefore, Americans must be more patient and trust the Japanese in their perceptions during times of crisis.

### **Task Orientation Vs Person Orientation**

The Japanese appear slightly more task oriented on the chart. Satisfaction is gained by completion of activities. People in the church are particularly busy, preparing the worship program, making lunch, etc. Students are busy in extra-curricular activities, such as sports clubs, in addition to their schoolwork. On the other hand, relationships are highly significant for Japanese people. Individuals may sacrifice their personal goals to keep harmony within their group and avoid loneliness. Businessmen sacrifice family by

going out for drinks after work, thus securing their work relationships. Therefore, one should appreciate the balance between task and person orientation in Japanese culture.

### **Status Focus Vs Achievement Focus**

Japanese are more achievement focused. People tend to be satisfied by achieving academic goals or succeeding in their jobs. Failure can be devastating, as evidenced by the number of suicides by students who do not pass entrance exams or businessmen who lose their jobs. Status-wise, much of Japanese culture is middle class. There are fewer people at the extreme levels of poverty or wealth. Therefore, the Japanese find high self-worth through achievements

### **Concealment of Vulnerability Vs Willingness to Expose Vulnerability**

The Japanese in this survey show a willingness to expose vulnerability. This survey was taken by Japanese Christians, age 25-35 during the 1990's. All spoke English and most have been to the United States. This background explains their tendency towards being more open about their weaknesses. Some Japanese feel that they are more open to speaking to foreigners about personal life than to their own group circles. In general, though, Americans are more willing to admit weaknesses, and Japanese are more concealing, due to the need to save face and not disrupt harmonious relationships. Shame would be a factor in concealing vulnerability.

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1/28/02

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