

CONVERSATIONS ON JAPAN AND ENGLAND

All of these conversations between Kenichi and Toshiko Nakamura and Sarah Harrison and Alan Macfarlane. Others were present at some of the conversations, especially the last set in 2006.

1. Conversations in Sapporo, July 1990	1
2. Conversations in Oxford, 27-28 October 1991	8
3. Conversations in Cambridge, 27-28 June 1992	19
4. Conversations in Oxford, 14-15 September 1992	31
5. Conversations in Cambridge, 27 July 2005	50
6. Conversation in Cambridge, 26th August 2005	54
7. Conversation in Cambridge, 2nd September 2005	55
8. Notes and Conversations in Japan, March-April 2006	61

CONVERSATIONS IN SAPPORO, JULY 1990

Double standards and the two meanings of truth.

Toshiko said that Japan was noted for its 'double standards', for instance in relation to war (where the constitution said one thing, de jure, and the de facto situation was very different). There is an 'inside' and an 'outside' truth, what one might call a 'surface' and 'deep' truth. This she also expressed as a clash between true desire (honne) and principle (hatemai). An example of this would be as follows. Businessmen only deal in the principles of the matter when talking to the head of a company during the day. But in the evening in the bar they will tell him their real desire, what is in their heart, their feelings. This may be entirely different.

Ritual, ethics, etiquette, ceremonial and icons

The progress towards 'modernization', to extend Jesse L. Weston's famous title, but be described as 'From ritual to romance to etiquette'. One of the striking features of English society since the sixteenth century as been the systematic elimination of ritual or iconic society, and its replacement by forms of action which do not imply a mixing of realms (see K.Thomas' work). Thus ceremonial, etiquette, secular ethics and morality, have come to dominate. Since this is such a basic part of the

"Protestant ethic", one would also expect it to be a feature of modern Japan. Is there anything in the life-cycle, annual calendar, or weekly or other activities which is the slightest bit ritualistic? My prediction is that there should not be.

The next day, after writing this, we had dinner with the Nakamura's and discussed this matter. They described about a dozen annual rituals, for ancestors, good luck and so on. They admitted, however, that they only did a few of them and that they were hazy about the origins and meaning of most of them. Furthermore, if they did not do them, it would not matter. In other words, they were like Easter or Christmas in England - mainly secular ceremonies. They claimed that the great change had occurred in the 1960's, when rituals had declined and faded away and there had been many other massive social changes.

Of the life-cycle rituals, marriage could be as formal/ritualistic or simple as one liked. One went to a hotel which provided a menu of choices, Buddhist, Shinto, Christian, informal, and arranged the food/priest/honeymoon etc. In the simplest form, one just filled in a government form with some witnesses and had a party.

In the burial, more elaborate things were done; relatives sat round for one night with the corpse, it was accompanied to the crematorium where, after burning, the bones were taken out with chopsticks, then a meal was eaten with the ashes/bones present, then the ashes were put in a family 'grave'.

Thus, in general, the situation in modern urban Japan is much like that in modern urban Britain; there is quite a bit of 'secular' religion, but little real ritual.

Ancestors and their power in Japan

There is no idea of avenging ancestors, I was told. There are 'peaceful relations with ancestors', no punishment and no particular blessings. Only unfortunate deaths should be 'worshipped'. In other words, there is no idea of ancestor worship, ancestor ritual, per se. Those who had died an unfortunate death were an "unhappy hero" and it is necessary to silence their spirits which are vengeful and grudging to the government and people in general. (This sounds more like ghost beliefs than conventional ancestor worship.) Such 'ancestors' can also help with an eye-illness. Ancestors are thought to give a general blessing, but no special gift, no sign of the continuity of the family.

Agricultural revolution of the sixteenth century.

Before the sixteenth century, the low flat river bottoms were not cultivated as the light Chinese plough would not work. They changed over from hoe to heavy hoes which, though much harder work, enabled them to exploit this rich river land. Part of the agricultural revolution was the better control of irrigation and rivers. A lot of the daimyo provided civil engineering works. At this time there was a change so that peasants were allowed to marry.

Concepts of descent

I asked about descent. People have to decide their line - which line to trace up through, it could be through male or female. One can only go back two or three generations, to those one personally knew. Kenichi said that "my father did not talk about his father or grand-father". Even in the powerful upper peasant and farmer families, there was a very shallow knowledge of kin. Nowadays, there is very little knowledge of forefathers. The four people with whom we were having dinner did not even really know much about their grand-parents.

I asked where 'blood' came from and they answered, entirely from the mother. Perhaps some of the physiognomy ("skeleton") came from the father sometimes. "The mother's side is stronger". In the aristocracy, the mother controlled the children. The Emperor was brought up by the Empress's father.

I asked two guests which side of the family (mother or father) they knew more about. One said his father's side, another the mother's side.

Kinship terminology

There are classificatory terms for 'uncle', 'aunt', 'cousin' etc, as in England. But guests said that they could distinguish uncle from grand-father and also grand-father from great-grandfather etc. This suggests that Smith's description may be wrong.

Buying and selling of land

Before the Edo period, there was apparently a lot of buying and selling of land, but it was stopped by the Tokugawa, a 'kind of re-feudalization'.

Family property and alienation.

I asked about family property. The father decided what should happen to land. He could sell off land without children's permission. If he retired, those who succeeded could sell it. The eldest son succeeds. Retirement is at the will of the father. In Samurai society (as English gentry), only the eldest succeeded. In farmer society, it could be anyone. They thought it was rare to adopt in.

Market activity in villages.

Around the Kyoto area there was some transport business in the villages. In many villages there were small markets once a month. But by the late Tokugawa, there were a lot of miscellaneous businesses in the village, from the nineteenth century onwards.

What held villages together.

I asked what held villages, or people together; what integrated society. Inoye said that it was; shared experience, labour exchange and co-operation (e.g. planting rice) and in all forms of activity

(e.g. building a house) , communal festivals, paper - as used in the administrative system with lots of roles and documents.

Literacy rates.

Literacy was very high. Ordinary peasants can read and write. Education in the middle of the nineteenth was higher than in France (Dore), with 45-50% able to read and write. The diary of a farmer shows how he taught Japanese calculation (abacus) to ordinary villagers, who were ready to learn the square root etc. in c. 1830. From the seventeenth century the village tried to provide a village school, employing as teachers a Buddhist priest or jobless samurai. Rich farmers funded schools.

Business attitudes

Farmers were keen to export silk as soon as the ports opened. In Japan even inland and in the mountainous area people were keen to consider business, whereas in China only in a small area around the ports did the business/trading mentality flourish. In Japan spinning and weaving were separate businesses, whereas in China they were the same. The Japanese were happy to buy foreign cloths.

In the eighteenth century the Kinsai (around Kyoto) area became commercialized in textiles. Cotton was widespread. There was a large rice trade in the seventeenth century. Even in the eighteenth century the farmers bought and sold rice.

Punishment, suffering, the devil and sin.

We discussed the attitude to punishment by spirits or gods. There is apparently no idea of such punishment. The Japanese 'devil' is always characterized as rather ridiculous, half-funny and far from diabolical. The little spirits which are expelled in the February house-cleansing rites are mischievous (stealing food and drink) rather than dangerous or evil.

One question is why misfortune/suffering occurs to a person. One explanation is 'batchi-gata', the punishment which falls on a person for some earlier uncharitable or unethical act. For instance, one's child might suffer because one had earlier in life done something bad. But I did not get the sense that this explanation was often invoked, and they had no idea of how or who the punishing force was.

Absence of ritual in Japan.

We discussed ritual and I explained what anthropologists meant by it. They thought and could think of no rituals in the proper sense in Japanese society. They partly put this down to the absence of a duality between natural and supernatural. All humans are potential gods, so there is no break between man and nature. Hence there is no need to break through to a spiritual dimension, using

ritual. (This has the same effect, but is perhaps at the opposite pole, to the situation in England, where the separation of man and nature is complete - and again, therefore, ritual is not used).

Evil eye and witches.

There is no concept of the evil eye. The guests had only heard of recently in comic books. It was obviously imported from outside. There is no concept of witches or witchcraft either, though they had heard of the idea and made a joke of Toshiko being a witch and flying on her vacuum cleaner. The only thing they had were balls of fire that flashed through the night, frightening people.

Astrology absence.

There is no astrological system or interest. This is in sharp contrast with China. In China, heaven is the world of the Gods and there is a great deal of astrology, which is absent in Japan. The skies, in Japan, are empty - 'just space'. Astrology in the popular press is just a recent fashion. (Could this be related to lack of fatalism in Japan as opposed to India, China etc? Nothing is 'written in the stars', and hence all is possible. There is, however, geomancy, probably from China.

Weakness of taboo in Japan.

I asked about taboo. In each village there is a mound with a few trees, rocks and perhaps a lake that is sacred. If this is defiled, then the community or individual will be punished. This is called the 'mori', the protector of the village. If it is insulted or destroyed, then there is catastrophe. But in cities (.e.g. Sapporo), there are no taboos in the strict sense of any kind. Everything is ambiguous, relative, context-dependent. If one does something wrong, a punishment may or may not occur. It all depends...

The 'nightwatchman God'.

Kennichi said that "Gods in Japan are quite idle", sleeping and drinking sake, and talking little interest in human beings. Even the sun-goddess, founder of Japan and incorporated into the Emperor tradition, is also lazy.

Difficulty of understanding Japan.

Japan, we were told, is like a "magic mirror" (or two-way mirror); people can look out, see out, but outsiders cannot see in.

Lack of satire in Japan.

Gilbert and Sullivan's 'Mikado' has never been performed in Japan, since it is too anti-Emperor. There is little satire in Japan, no equivalent of Private Eye, for example.

The managed society.

Why are there so few police in Japan? Not self-control from the inside, Yo thought, but the "managed society" (kandi-shakai). Everyone keeps an eye on everyone else and no-one likes to step out of line. There is self-policing, but not within the individual. The end or aim for the individual or society should given from the outside, an invisible power of conformity. We should do as others say. People feel easy and relaxed when they behave like others. The samurai group alone partly escape from this; they do something on their own, not imitating others. A few people have this 'will to rule', e.g. Yamagoto in the Meiji period.

The pursuit of perfection.

The secret of Japanese life is the pursuit of perfection, and perfection is nothingness (Zen). There is no cost/benefit analysis in this, just emptiness or a void. This is the Japanese target. This has perhaps turned recently into hedonistic, amoralistic consumerism.

Rationality and irrationality.

I suggested that, as Weber argued, as the area of (formal bureaucratic) rationality increased, so there expanded the heart of Japanese society a growing irrationality, a black hole, empty, irrational etc. Nakanishi agreed, saying that this was true, but not many people had seen this.

Discussion with Kenichi and Toshiko; aspects of Japan.

Kenichi asked what created needs in England. We agreed that media, advertising, political power, and the superior use value of things, combined to make goods attractive.

We asked what the purpose of life was in business. Kennichi had asked those training graduate students for business what their aim was. They answered "to give to people the life purpose to work there", in other words to make work in the company an end in itself. People can then relax at work.

We discussed the life-cycle and Kennichi drew a diagram (see diagram, p.20), which showed three stages in a life:

A period of insecurity/ competition and Society up to employment, a period of secure employment and Community, then another period of insecurity and Society.

What seems to be one of the keys to Japan is that it is trying to create "artificial gemeinschaft". Strictly this is a contradiction in terms since the essence of gemeinschaft is its 'naturalness'. But in Japan it is not created by birth and blood, but by will. Yet once it is created, it is almost as firm and stable as proper gemeinschaft.

One related feature is that there is a tremendous pressure put on the educational system. Only

during period between eight and eighteen do people have some freedom to compete and place themselves in a position to into a "lane" which they will be in for the rest of their lives. (see my diagram, p.20). Everything that happens in the rest of one's life depends on what happens in the competitive exams from eight to eighteen. Once at University, one's course of life is more or less decided.

A random thought; perhaps the above, which looks very like the pin-ball machines which are an obsession in Japan, may help to account for their popularity. These are incredible halls filled with smoke, noise, and thousands of people standing or sitting in front of machine and dropping little balls down tunnels. (cf. Riesman, who notes many times, without explaining).

We discussed the problems of consumption and over-production. The Japanese are an ideal consumer market, very docile and ready to throw away the old and both the new. Hence a huge problem of waste, where to dump things. There is a vast pressure on individuals, endlessly to consume. The British are more resistant and like old things, which they cling on to, hence making it more difficult for producers to shift their goods.

We discussed also the non-commercial sectors of life. Whereas in Britain there are quite large areas which are carefully fenced off from the intrusion of competitive consumer capitalism - sport, leisure, nature, love etc - in which commercial pressures, money-making, should not occur, in Japan almost everything from top to bottom is interpenetrated with money. Even art is heavily commercialized and valuable. Hence there is little of life that is an end in itself and not geared to profit in Japan. Kennichi thought that this is definitely a source of weakness in Japan.

We discussed the Japanese love of imitation and novelty. It is like a searching mirror, or vacuum-hoover, which tries to suck the best out of other cultures. Hence there are fads and fashions for certain 'foreign' things. For a while everything was learnt from America. Now that America is no longer able to supply 'new' ideas, the Japanese are turning to the older, apparently more cultured and elegant cultures of Europe. Hence their particular interest in France, Germany and now Italy. After a few years of absorbing these, they will no doubt look elsewhere. They always want the best, hence brand names etc.

CONVERSATION AT OXFORD ON 27-28 OCTOBER 1991

(This conversation partly included the remarks of Prof. Minamoto. ch8 etc. indicate that this section has been included in that chapter of the draft book on Japan)

Sacrifice in Japan - ch8

The idea of sacrifice seems to be more or less absent in Japan; certainly blood sacrifice is absent. The nearest to sacrifice is the sacrifice of the Emperor, who symbolically commits suicide for his people (very similar to Jesus). Thus in both Japan, there is a once-for-all sacrifice. The word for sacrifice is something like *idenie deana* - often means gifts of food, rice, saki etc. to the spirit. The Emperor's secret ritual of installation, includes an element of symbolic suicide for the people, and the myth of father killing (as Frazer). As with God/Jesus, the Emperor is both the sacrificer and the sacrificed.

Pollution - ch8

Apart from the pollution of death (dealt with by salt), and the pollution of power (e.g. sumo wrestlers - again cleansing with salt), and some residual pollution of bodily fluids (menstruation), there is really very little idea of pollution in Japan - as in Europe. Another curious similarity.

Shrines and pacifying of danger - ch 8

If there are natural disturbances (earth-quakes etc.), then it is assumed that it would be sensible to deal with by finding a cause - often a tragic death etc., and then to build a shrine to calm down the dead person. Dealing with the unquiet dead.

Outcastes and holiness

Discussed the burakamin or supposed outcastes; they are in some strange both at the bottom of the society, and have a link to the Emperor. For instance, they claimed the right to carry the Emperor in his installation (or perhaps at his death?).

Religions of the gangsters, prostitutes etc.

The Yakuza gangs have their own version of Shinto, as do the clans of prostitutes. It appears that there were once what looks like temple prostitutes in Japan. They were bright, respected, knowledgeable women (*Shiraboishi*).

The pillow book of Sei Shonagon

It almost entirely lacks a sense of death and religion; it is very secular in taste and fashion.

Religion in the Genji -ch 8

In the Genji, religion is, in Kenichi's words, a 'black box' - a nothingness. There is no motivation of liberation. Buddhism is a protection against fear - a teaching of man to accept the fact of mortality and death. The Genji gradually comes to terms and accepts death. It chronicles the movement from the temporal and moral world to the eternal world of nothingness, of dying before death.

Aim of Japanese Buddhism - ch. 8

A very special form of Buddhism, in which the aim is nothingness; in the training, if one thinks of anything, one is hit etc. It is the casting away, or emptying of everything. People become the living dead, shedding all desire and vanity. Only the stripped man is left - makes a person very strong. A person is no longer strong in himself, but becomes the tool of something stronger - you do not fire the arrow, the arrow fires you etc.

Absence of religion in Japan - ch 8

There is no functional equivalent to western religion because there is no individual soul and no external God; there is no theodicy, no idea of original sin, no after-life, no theoretical system. Those who need a salvation religion adopt Christianity.

Bushido

In part very individualistic, a heroic notion, the individual by himself against the world.

The tea ceremony

It is an anti-ritualistic ceremony, a curious contradiction. There is ceremonial, but not ritual, etiquette but not ethics. It acts as a functional equivalent to religion, but without the theological system. It is a chance to meet people whom one would normally not be able to meet. It may (before a battle), be the only occasion on which one can meet a person; before fighting to the death.

Tea house and its origins and function - ch 8

The tea house is the outside world (as opposed to the inside), but it is nevertheless safe and neutral and allows the kind of deep intimacy of communication which normally could only occur in the home. It is thus a place where all class and caste barriers are temporarily suspended. It is a neutral, empty space, an arena where you communicate by the language of movement and gesture, where you share space.

Functions of the tea house - ch.8

If there is a gap between people (e.g. class), difficult to talk directly; the tea house provides through

gestures, a possibility of communicating indirectly. It was invented to allow deep communication, to deduce the other person's goodness and intentions. It is half-way between games and ritual, partaking of a little of each but also different from each.

Games, ritual and the way of tea -ch.8

Tea house ritual is a third way. Games assume equality and create divisions, ritual assumes inequality and creates equality, the tea ceremony assumes nothing and creates nothing. It is formalised, yet not religious (cf. judo, which seems similar). It is half ritual and half game, but more than both.

Saying yes and no in Japan - ch 11

The word for 'yes' in Japan, 'hai' can be taken to mean yes, but can also mean anything from yes, through maybe, to no. Really it is reflecting the other's words and intentions and saying "you know" or "you decide". A person must not say no directly in Japan, where it is almost impossible to say no. Rather he must leave it to the other's discretion to pick up the negative signals that underlie a 'yes'.

The negative and no in Japan -ch. 11

One should not say no in Japan, for the word for 'no' is much heavier than in the west. It is only possible to say no to very close friends. With others, only very occasionally can one say no. If one does so, it precludes all future intimacy and communication, and is tantamount to a declaration of war.

Theory of political origins of tea ceremony (Prof. Minamoto) -ch.8

In the tea ceremony anyone can meet anyone equally, do the same thing. In the sixteenth century time of war, the meeting at the tea house was possibly the last chance to meet on neutral ground and avoid war. It functioned to allow political alliances, negotiations. It was also an anticipation of death - 'Ichiko ichie' - political empty ground (cf. Saints of the Atlas). It is a neutral stadium, an isolated space and a very shortened or compressed time. It is the crystallisation of the sense of eternity (as created in drama), in the midst of chaos and war. The floor plan of the tea house is very elaborate to create this separate space (cf. masons), to make a sanctuary. Since there is no God to help man resolve his tensions, the tea house makes a very special here and now situation - an aesthetic religion. In form it is a ritual, in content a joint game.

Change in the tea ceremony - ch.8

It changed very much after Rikyu, becoming narrower and narrower, until only two people came together. The reason why the cup is so rough and simple is to force people to concentrate on the taste of the tea, and not to get distracted.

Unification of mind and heart - ch 11

The split of heart and mind in the west is not accepted in Japan - the two are joined.

Changes in Japanese aesthetics; Zen puritanism - ch 11

Japanese aesthetics revelled in colour and luxury, but then there was an equivalent to the Puritan reformation of manners; when Zen was imported black and white became the highest colours, the red leaves of autumn and blossoms of Spring were replaced by the snow and ice of winter as the highest aesthetic experiences. Ice with its absence of colour and transparency became important. Mono-colours began to dominate. Nara, similar to China, is very colourful with red and gold - Kyoto is a mixture of the old colours with the greys and blacks of the zen gardens.

Divisions of space - ch 11

Prof. Minamoto and his wife were very struck by the fences between fields in England - suggesting an obsessions with private property which is absent in Japan.

The two strands in Bushido - ch. 11

There is the side of loyalty, devotion, self-sacrifice, to die for one's lord, loyalty and love to the lord. Then there is the 'Gentlemanship' side, Magasako - mixed with Confucian element and humanism - somewhat similar to Eliot's The Governour, they thought.

Real love in Japan cannot be declared - ch.11

The deepest form of love is hidden love, which should not be expressed. It grows and crystallizes, but the two people concerned should not show their love. They guess each other's love, like two mirrors reflecting each others, but it is not expressed in words. This also applies to the love of the servant for the lord and vice versa; they can guess the intention of the other. It is thus possible to have love and inequality - which the west tends to think as incompatible.

The Emperor as a black box in Japan - ch.6

The Emperor says nothing, a black box, a sounding board for other people; but sensitive people can guess each other's intentions, and need to anticipate those of the Emperor - who loves one and one loves. The Emperor absorbs all expectations without saying anything, all people project their deepest desire onto him.

The business of Japan

In noting what is unusual about England, Prof. Minamoto say that Japan is too busy, too short-tempered, aggressive, time moves too fast. In England (Oxford?), time moves relatively slowly,

people have the ability to wait and to endure. In Japan the most frequent phrase of parents to children is "Quick Quick".

English and Japanese children

English children (in Oxford) are well trained and behaved and well disciplined, much more self-restrained, calm, Protestant - as opposed to volatile and rushing Japanese (and French) children.

Japan and Germany

German children are very like the Japanese; indeed Prof. Minamoto feels very familiar in Germany in general (e.g. in German shops).

Individualism and war memorials in Japan and England

There is no tradition of war memorials with particular names in Japan; just mass memorials. Minamoto was impressed with the English memorials in small villages, living continuities and respect for individual persons. It may be that this shows something about English individualism and Japanese communalism. In Hiroshima, for a while, there were individual memorials where victims lived or fell, then they were all pulled down and heaped in one place (Japan is one large stone - see national anthem).

Relaxation and lack of hurry in England

Minamoto thought that relax is the key-word of British society; Japan lacks this and lacks the tradition of the church and particularly the quietness of the village church. He was struck by the weight and function of the Anglican church in English society.

Would Japan have developed industrialism without the West?

Minamoto thought that even in the Tokugawa, every Han was trying to industrialise themselves, but not sure whether this could have achieved industrialism without the west.

Empirical thought in Japan

Minamoto thought that Confucianism changed its character in the eighteenth century, becoming more empirical and rational; in the seventeenth century empiricism had arisen from the power of the merchants and the large cities. In Japan it was possible to expand the empirical, partly because of the practical, non-logical and intuitive thought. In China, everything was too rigorous and logical (as Catholic Europe, Alan), whereas the Japanese were not too strictly logical; practical and ingenious (like the English). The chu-si school. Thus it was not at all difficult for them to accept Western thought.

Empirical thought and its introducers in Japan - ch 11

The merchants and samurai were the carriers of thought in Japan; whereas in China Confucianism developed into a purely scholastic tradition, in Japan it had a double strand, the intellectual and the practical needs to the Samurai for military and other tasks. Thus it had a practical and rational streak to it, because it needed to work. Empirical thought was a combination of Confucianism and militaristic science. The merchants were even more rational than the Samurai - believing in free competition etc. They were contrivers, with cleverness. The cleverest person tended to get to the top. In China there was a growing separation of the literate and the military classes - which did not happen in Japan.

Combination of elements as basis for Japanese success

Prof. Minamoto stressed that so many elements needed to combine together to create development; native traditions with an acceptance of western learning and interest in technology. The Samurai were interested in Dutch learning which was imported from very early onwards. The Samurai were very eager for education, as were the Koreans.

Absence of caste or class stratification in Japan - ch 10

There has traditionally been a surprisingly small gap between the ruling Samurai and the rural classes in Japan, there is an overlapping 'common field' between them. This is shown in the tea ceremony, or the making of haiku, which is common to all. The tea ceremony is an attempt to eliminate all differences. It is a contrivance to crush all status differences. The merchant class is the most powerful economically and the most admired culturally for a long period.

The system of adoption in Japan - ch.7

This is called 'yoshi', and is not found in China or Korea. A person can adopt even if he or she has a son.

Had Japan discovered the method of discovery independently? -ch.11

Prof. Minamoto thought not. Although there were particular discoveries and parts of the puzzle were found, the whole was not there. There were bits and pieces, but not the system of discovery itself. Physics and mathematics were not combined in Japan. They quickly noticed that this had been done in the West and followed it up. There were no obstacles in Japan to its reception - thus they quickly learned Newton's law in the Edo period, and western mathematics. They realized they needed it.

Contrast of world religions and systems (Alan) - ch. 11

Christianity is realistic about the material world, and sees it as rational and real, non-magical.

China is rational about the material world, but under Buddhism starts to consider it as an illusion. Japan sees the natural world as real, but is in certain respects somewhat irrational.

Curiosity and the Japanese ch 11

Minamoto stressed the curiosity of the Japanese, though did not explain what it stemmed from; there was a big flow of information from China, geometry, agriculture etc. But the expulsion of the missionaries in the C17 somewhat stemmed this flow.

Difference of China and Japan - ch 11

In Japan, when they saw the superiority of Western weapons, they began to build them for themselves; learnt Dutch etc.

In China, when they saw the superiority of Western weapons, they bought them off the shelf.

Japanese attitude to nature - ch.11

Minamoto stressed the fear that the Japanese have of untamed nature; they need to landscape, or create artificiality. Raw nature is very sharp and threatening and dangerous; everything has to be tamed. He asked how long ago English landscape had been tamed by man.

Private property in Japan and England - ch. 12

Minamoto sensed that in certain senses Japanese property is more privatised; anyone can do anything with their own - hence the horrors of developments etc. In England, there seem to be invisible controls which have preserved the landscape.

Situational ethic and context dependency - ch 4

Minamoto disagreed with Nakane's ideas on this, but admitted that one treats different people differently; there are universal standards, for instance, parents tell children not to tell a lie; there is a basic consensus on what is right and what is wrong and what is true and what is not true, there must be agreement and honest feeling. There are particularistic aspects, but within a basic agreement.

Giri and responsibility in China and Japan - ch.12

Giri in China is much more general; in Japan it is more particularistic, meaning honesty or faithfulness.

The concept of the public good in Japan - ch.12

Oyeko is the concept of the public; in the West all people have a responsibility to act in the public good as a duty to God; this is absent in Japan, though there are elements of it in Confucian moralistic reasoning.

Groups and individuals - ch.10

See the original notes, diagram, which again contrasts three systems; groups and nothing else (tribal), groups within a society (Japan), and individuals within a society (America etc.).

The centre of gravity in Japanese society - ch.10

Several times Kenichi talked about the epicentre of power, or centre of gravity in Japan, which he believes is 'lower' than in England. In England roughly in the upper middle class, while in Japan in the lower middle class (lower samurai, middle merchants, prosperous farmers etc.). He thought there was little gap between the local squierarchy and the peasantry.

Possible Japanese donor to Cambridge

Kenichi described the person who had made the Seibu chain stores a success - turning the railway warehouses into something useful. This is Tsutumi Sieji, once a communist and now a millionaire, interested in trying to make the company as resolution of the contradiction between people and capital. The company should not get profit, but what profit there is should go into non-profitable means (e.g. art, museums etc.) Sony is another possibility.

Sympathy, sincerity and other Japanese virtues - ch.11

A very central place in Japanese life is played by a concept which can only roughly be translated into Western thought, but roughly means sincerity, true heart, devotion, authentic heart, a sense of beauty, compactness etc. - 'magokoro'

Co-operation and competition in Japanese business -ch 12

Toshiba and Matsushita actually communicate a lot with each other, try to say the true things to each other, shouldn't tell a lie, give a certain amount but not everything, etc. At formal meetings, they will say nothing, but in informal meetings, at drinks, the real intention will come out, and a great deal will be conveyed. This is in a situation of trust - for there are no external sanctions.

Trust and communication - ch.12

In Japanese business, you must show the opponent your naked self; it is most efficient if there is direct and honest communication, straightforwardness, pragmatism, sympathy etc. With the authentic samurai, it is "no good in telling a lie, a waste of time; need for real decision makers, straight forward. Thus there is a special ability to identify the real scholars, people one can trust and break through all the time-wasting outer shield. One needs not go through the greeting period.

Why the high co-operation and trust in Japan? ch.12

Kenichi pointed to irrigated rice cultivation and its needs, to the fact that taxes were levied on the whole community, both real taxes and labour taxes; that the senior village man was in charge, and that the village was given much autonomous power in decision-making, a participatory political system.

Sympathy and family relations in Japan. - ch.12

The relations which one Japanese ideally has with another are based on family relations, not contractual relations, but relations of sympathy, based on self-control and reasonableness etc. One should think of others.

Fukuzawa and his aims - ch.12

Fukuzawa was principally interested in how one combined reason and intellect, knowledge and virtue or sympathy. He assumed this could be partially based on the responsibility of the father to the child, the village chief to the villagers etc. Sympathy of this deep kind was assumed, by Fukuzawa, to exist in Japan. The Samurai have such an ethic e.g.

Confrontation and co-operation; premise of goodness

One should have a respect for one's enemies, 'jo', ; if we get to know each other, we will have such feelings. (Alan; Japan is based on the premise of basic goodness or virtue of human beings, while Christianity is based on the paradox of the basic honesty, yet sinfulness (original sin) of human beings.

The change in Japanese aesthetics - ch.11

With the emergence of reformist sects of zen, there was a change whereby food, art etc. lost some of its colour and freshness, to a situation of monotonous, endurance etc.

Why the rise of Japanese industry and capitalism? - ch.2

Minamoto retreated to the usual explanations; the Japanese are very industrious, they were part of a large south Asian trading zone in the C16, with a lot of trade, accumulation of capital, cotton etc. etc. But why not China?

Contract and status in the Japanese family - ch.7

I suggested the curious nature of the artificial corporations of Japanese families; Kenichi stressed that this was only true of the 'ie', which was a sort of kin organization which was confined to merchants and rich farmers. Most people lived in smaller households, where it was not true. (Hence adoption dying out in Japan now).

The importance of the 'name' in Japan - ch.7

The continuity of the larger families is expressed in the idea of the name, 'na', in Japan. This is the basis of the samurai ethic, the pride of the name, the honour of my name, keeping my name etc. etc. There is no God to remember my name, thus I need to remember it myself. There is a warring society; I am just a man but I have a name, a survival strategy. The origins of Japanese 'ie', Kenichi thought, was in the warrior clans (plus bilateral kinship - Alan), but later turned into business management succession.

Shame and guilt in Japan - ch.11

Kenichi dislikes this opposition of Benedict's very much. To start with, 'on' is a feeling of shame not towards others, but towards oneself, a failure on your own name; my image is within here. Thus there is an inner core etc. (see diagrams A and B in original notes.)

Two empty mirrors as symbol of Japan - ch.11

One finds this metaphor in the works of Mishima and Maruyama (see the former's 'Silk and Observation' for instance). Each is searching for signals in the other, an endless searching. Interestingly, the Emperor fits into this in that the mirror is one of the three main symbols used in the coronation - the sword (power), jewel (wealth) and mirror (communication). The Emperor is the ultimate empty mirror, reflecting everything. The mirror is the absorption of every particle of light. This is 'kyo', the capacity of a person who could absorb the expectation of others - the Emperor and other leaders do this.

Noh plays and the contradiction of revelation and concealment -ch.11

In the centre of Noh drama there is the contradiction that the best actors hide their feelings and expression; one should not express oneself, try to protest etc, but conceal. But through such concealment, one will leave to the audience of totally discovering oneself. One should hide one's real intentions etc.

Real love cannot be spoken - ch 11

One should hide one's real intention, if your partner or opponent really loves you, they should be able to identify your unspoken intentions, a subtle telepathy of relationships which is spoiled by talk.

Emptiness of people in Japan - ch.11

Kenichi agreed that many young girls, before they marry, are 'empty', with no real responsibility etc. This is truly a floating world; this part of the zen tradition - try to nullify yourself, reduce yourself to zero. One protects oneself, but one cannot hide, and the more you hide yourself, the more you reveal yourself - an obvious contradiction. You cannot, in particular, hide before the really powerful, the Samurai, and indeed it would be shameful to do so.

The tea ceremony; both revelation and concealment - ch.8

This provides the ultimate in both revelation and concealment, the final mystified protection, declaring oneself to be empty, but also that one has a symbolic existence. The goal is zero or nothingness, the extreme for the Samurai, the road or way ('michi'), the unending road. This sets an unattainable goal or God from within, hence the never-ending striving which is taken to be one of the key's to western restlessness and success. It is functionally equivalent to the Protestant ethic - an ever-moving goal, which keeps one striving for ever.

CONVERSATION AT CAMBRIDGE, 27-28 JUNE 1992

Divorce and children's homes

Despite the statement of a film on seven-year old Japanese children, to put a child in a children's home after a divorce is very rare. Divorce is still fairly uncommon in Japan (perhaps up to one quarter of Kenichi's colleagues have gone through), and hence single-parent families are still quite unusual. But usually a mother will look after her child if separated.

The rising number of broken families, step-parents etc. was one of the major changes to have occurred in England since K and T last visited.

Schools before nursery schools

Another wrong impression of the film was that children did not go off to school until they first attended primary schools at 7. Not only do they go to nursery schools, but there is now developing a necessity to have nursery schools to prepare children for nursery schools - since to get into even a good nursery school is important. Thus children may start some form of formal, out of home, education at the age of one or two.

The importance of children's success

Parent's success is achieved not only through their own success, but through the success of their children. If a parent is very successful in other things, he may still consider him/her self a failure if his/her children are not successful. Parents happiness is accomplished through the success of others. Thus the crimes of children reflect badly on parents and they feel ashamed. Hence, as Sarah observed, in the juvenile courts in Japan, the parents attend and are in tears at their children's offences. They feel a sense of responsibility.

An example of parental responsibility

K. told of a case where a man's son, aged about 23, had killed his grandfather (i.e. the man's father); the man had gone on national TV to apologise for his son's behaviour and to plead with the media to leave him alone, even though the son was mentally disturbed. The view is that the father's responsibility is limitless.

The power of adoption

There are seven main noh player families in Japan. The first son normally succeeds to the skills. In the chief family, there was no son for many years, so an heir was adopted in. Later, a male son was born. He became a noh player and turned out to be better than the adopted son. But the father felt that having once adopted another son as his heir he could not break the adoption, so the adopted son succeeded to his position, against the competition of blood and skill.

The dangers of adoption

In Kyoto, the Ogawa family had four sons. Two other families had no sons, and so they adopted two of these four. The two adopted sons turned out to be much better. One got a Nobel prize and the other was very famous. The two remaining sons were less successful. But nothing could be done about the fact that the father had been unable to pick out the likely successful candidates. The sons had been 'gifted' to another and could not be reclaimed. One of the adopted sons asked his sister whether the fact that his natural father had been prepared to make a gift of him in this way meant that he loved his son less; the sister replied, 'no, he loved you best' and it was for this reasons that he gave you away.

Types of adoption

Sometimes an adopted son will merely adopt the name of another family, to stop it dying out, but will continue to live with and be with his natural parents.

The relations of parents and children

Parents and children are like two mirrors, reflecting each other. But while the parents mirror remains constant in size, that of the son becomes smaller - i.e. his obligations decrease. Often, therefore, the expectations of parents become burdensome on a child. This may also be an historical shift, from the Meiji restoration. The novels of Natsume Oseiki deal with this.

Succession in many activities, e.g. academic

There are special expectations of the teacher-student relationships. One special student is expected to succeed his guru, to become an heir to his supervisor. Kenichi was the star pupil of his guru and was expected by all to succeed him. But he chose to go to Hokkaido. His guru was criticized for letting him go and selecting another successor from another university.

Sacrifice through abstention

Mothers, especially, make sacrifices for their children. For instance, when K failed to get into University on the first occasion, his mother gave up her favourite activity of drinking tea for a year. She did not tell him, but both were aware of what she had done. K could not see any directly religious aspect to this, for God or gods were not involved. But it was still believed to be helpful for K in his next attempt at entry.

Parental involvement in children

When K was forty and had to go to hospital, his elderly parents accompanied him there, while T did not go. They felt very involved in his health.

God and gods

In the past, if a son was involved in a duel with a very strong samurai, a mother would make constant visits to a shrine to pray for him. Now there is some element of pressure through self-sacrifices, but nothing explicit. Nor formal prayers are made, partly because it is thought that God, like a sensitive Japanese, would not need to be told that a person was making sacrifices. As to which God one was appealing to, neither K nor T could offer an answer.

Nothingness and Buddhism

One element of 'nothingness' is the idea that nothing is constant; the world is not constant, man cannot therefore control the external world. The universe is not controlled by men, but by transcending powers. If you understand this truth you are free from sufferings. There is no idea of God or Heaven. One should merely gain some sort of control of the external by way of control of the internal. Thus the Genji learns to control himself, to renounce, to co-exist with the world. This is related to mononaware, the truth for the life, the outside world which you cannot control becomes controllable internally, and one becomes free from suffering.

Essays in Idleness

This set of early writings, in the collection we have, by Kenco, has been translated. 'Essays in Idleness' is a rather bad translation, something like "searching for real life" would be better.

Difficulties of understanding Japanese religion

I explained that the basic problem for a westerner was that, in our definition of religion, there were two central features. First there was a God; secondly that there was a division between this natural world, and a supernatural or spiritual world. Neither of these are to be found in Japan, where there is no God, but all sorts of Gods or no Gods at all, and where there is no separation of this world and another.

The insidiness of one

K explained that within your mind you have to incorporate the uncontrollable, to discipline it. A master of arts or crafts does this. God is within you, not outside, not in heaven. Hence everyone is a God. Each man has god within them. Each person can become a God, even in their life. Each trade or occupation has their own God; a carpenter's God, a housewife's God.

The Holy Spirit

K could understand God the Father and God the Son, but found the idea of God the Holy Spirit very puzzling. But he felt that the secret of Christianity lay there. The idea of a God that transcended everything, time and space etc. is represented by God the Holy Spirit.

Living Treasures

These are not just craftsmen, but also kabuki, noh and musical instrument players.

Effortless achievement and God

K said that effortless achievement, that is the achievement of Masterhood, that is the real Godship.

The history of kabuki

K thought that kabuki, noh, crafts etc. became distributed and established mainly through the middle class in the Edo period; the lower samurai also joined in. Noh actors were originally from untouchable groups, but the form moved upwards. The standard repertory of Kabuki was probably laid down in the Meiji period. The Kabuki is a kind of mass media, a sort of news, information and amusement activity. People are still writing kabuki plays, for example Mishima.

Holidays

T and K found the idea of holidays rather strange. Not only because of the 'holy' association, but also because of the idea of a period of complete absence of work. But T said that she thought her mother had an idea of holiness; for instance she would clear the house on the evening of a celebration.

Weather, seasons in Japan

Because the differences of season are so much more pronounced in Japan, the contrasts of clothing are much more distinct. On the 1st June all those with uniforms, for instance policemen, school children etc, all change their clothes. Clothing is ritualistic, one has to wear clothes as appropriate. There are two uniforms; with bright colours for the spring, dark colours for the autumn.

Colours

K and T could not think of many colour meanings. Black and white in combination signify death (note: rather a nice symbolic statement of Japan as half-way or combining east and west; in the west black for death, in China, white for death - Japan mixes the two, Alan). The only other colour they could find an obvious association for was violet, which is an aristocratic colour (and is associated with Buddhism).

Englishness

K and T described a garden party after graduation as "quite English". When pressed on what this Englishness was, it seemed to be a mixture of formality (gowns, smart clothes etc), with informality (in a garden, wandering about, no particular structure to the occasion). People were quietly showing

off their achievement with their gowns, each discipline with different colours, in a somewhat child-like way ("look at me, am I not clever"), yet it was relaxed and unaggressive. People were "celebrating themselves" and each other.

Change in Japanese art and separation of religion and politics

Early Japanese art is more like Chinese art. It is full of red and gold and very stately. At the end of the eighth century, it begins to change, perhaps alongside the move of the court from Nara to Kyoto. This was part of an attempt to separate politics and religion, to escape the increasing pressure of the Buddhist orders. The Emperor's family 'escaped' and built a new capital in 792 A.D. Another change came when the samurai increased their power in the C12 and the new ascetic sects of Buddhism (Zen etc.) came to the fore. They started to adopt a much simpler form of art and religion. The Buddhist orders tried to follow the political powers to Kyoto in the Heian period. They set up their monasteries on the hills behind the royal palace and built up their orders of military monks. But they never regained complete control and were finally destroyed by Nobunaga in the C16.

Robinson Crusoe and the other

Although Robinson Crusoe became the model and hero of the guru of post-war Japanese economists, it is not clear why he should have done so. He seems to have been related to the "something is lacking" theory used to explain Japan's failure in the War.

For whom is one living?

Robinson Crusoe could have a meaning in his life because, implicitly, God was watching him. The "eyes of the relevant other" are important in Japan. Who are they? They are special people who can truly appreciate what one is trying to do; one's father, one's superiors etc. etc. Everyone knows, implicitly, whose eyes are the relevant ones. They are not the obvious person. If there is no one, or if the person(s) turn out to be a fraud, then one has chaos. These relevant persons have the ability to tell what is authentic and what is not. They can intuitively judge, often very quickly, whether someone is good or bad at their craft.

Authenticity and sincerity

We discussed this at some length because Kenichi had been struck that Charles Taylor should list 'authenticity' as one of the four important attributes of freedom. He seemed to think that authenticity was somewhat different from sincerity. One could have a sincere fool - but because their activity was of no value, they would not be authentic. It is clear that my understanding of authentic, and Kenichi's, are different.

Reaching the stars

We agreed that much of life in both cultures is concerned with trying to reach the stars; "boys be ambitious" etc. The aim in Japan is by using a code of rules and investing effort to reach the stars. But when I pressed K he admitted that while one should try to aim for the stars, one would never actually reach them. They would always be separated, (in G.M.Hopkins phrase, "Lovely asunder starlight"). Yet K also seemed to half believe that by internalizing God, it was possible to become perfect, to become as a God, in other words to reach the stars. One could become a perfect Master, God makes the person perfect. In the moment of illumination and ecstasy (my words), the gap between action and intention would disappear and one would just be - as in the firing of the arrow in zen archery.

The effects of technology

Because of the shining light of technology, a good deal of the mystery of life has been taken away. It is part of a general confusion, in with there are less and less focal points, absence of role-models or people to respect.

The mirror and the mask

Mishima uses this metaphor quite often, and believed in the emptiness of the mirror; there is nothing within the mirror. The mask is important in Japan because it is one of the many devices (like noh plays or presents) which is simultaneously showing off and concealing. Hiding is the highest form of showing off. Mishima's life was centred on this theme; both showing off and concealing, even his suicide was part of it, a great mixture of inferiority and superiority. But true sincerity cannot show off. And sincerity is taken for granted in Japan. If a person is not sincere, they are not worth considering. There is a dislike of arrogance.

The problem of causation and plan of work

We discussed at some length the way in which one would approach an analysis of Japanese history and culture. K thought that one should start with concepts, with the self-understanding of the Japanese. This self-understanding is fairly constant over long periods, but it influences another realm, namely social forms. These social forms change quite rapidly, and their changes then reflect back on the self-understanding. But as we discussed further, it began to look more and more circular; it was impossible to be certain of the 'first mover'.

The aim of the project

We agreed that the aim of any project would be to try to understand the "essence of Japan", in the same way as I am trying to do that for England. This "essence" or "spirit" is fairly unchanging, though its manifestations change over time. One part of it is the curious double concept of the person as both thing in itself 'nin' and relationship to another, 'gen'. This creates the essentially relational nature of the Japanese person.

Development of the idea of structural determinants

K drew a small diagram (see notebook, diag A), in which self-understanding was divided into Individual/Social and which then had effects on two levels of the social form, the individual and the social.

The continuum of societies

Another diagram was drawn to represent the contrasts. In this, Europe was at one end of the continuum, India at the other. Japan started slightly off the middle towards the Indian end, and moved across the middle towards, but not reaching, the European end.

Artificial gemeinschaft

We had a great deal of discussion of this concept, which seemed to be helpful and catch some of the peculiarity of the Japanese and English. The ratio of Group and Individual seems different in the two societies, but in each the pressure of the Group is less than in many societies.

Communalism, Individualism and artificial gemeinschaft

Normally, it is thought that one has communalism (i.e. as in many primitive or communist societies, where an individual is identified fully with a group, no private property etc), or one has individualism, where the individual is separated off, with individual property etc. In fact, the secret of both Japan and England is that they have other forms or ways of dealing with the relationship of person and group. They have something which is neither of these. In the Japanese case this is the small, artificially created (through adoption etc.) group, but which has the sentiment and feeling of a real group. In England, there are similar, though less total, institutions such as Fellowships, Guilds, Clubs etc. etc.

The rotting bean sprout image of the Japanese

I asked the name of the food which has been likened to Japanese social structure, endless fine roots intertwining as bean sprouts kept in water begin to rot; it is called moyashi.

Absence of charity in Japan

K has been looking at the importance of charity and voluntary work in England (Oxfam etc.). This is a tradition that is missing in Japan and is part of that wider absence of a civil society, a sense of 'public benefit'. He wondered why we did not just tax people a little more and shut down the charities & was discovered to find that a. charities and voluntary organizations are often more efficient and dedicated than government organizations b. that people feel that 'giving' voluntarily of their time and effort is preferred to being told what to do c. that the essence of this charitable, voluntary, effort is so old, dating back to at least Anglo-Saxon England.

How is it that the English are united

I explained that by the eighth century the English were united along the five major dimension; a unified language, a unified law, a unified religion, a unified political system, and a unified market (coinage). Add to this high geographical mobility, a sea boundary, and the absence of any significant disruption through foreign invasion or revolution over a period of more than a thousand years, and it is not difficult to see the depth of the unity.

Blood, community, state etc.

K drew some diagrams (see the large sheet and notebook diag.D), linking in a triangular way blood, individual and community, linked to the threat system and gift system. K will have to develop this further as it is very complex and needing elaboration.

Irrationality and irrationality

We discussed this at length, partly in relation to Fukuzawa. We agreed that Fukuzawa mainly meant by 'rationality' scientific rationality in Bacon's sense - i.e. the experimental method, testing of experience, questioning etc, the 'rationality' of physics. He was not addressing another problem of rationality, the fact that in most societies people's individual rationality and perception of the world becomes moulded/bent by the social structure. Social relations are more important than dispassionate cognitive truth. Nothing is absolute. Everything bends and depends on the relationships.

This may help to explain why the Japanese at times appear to behave in what looks like (externally, or after the event) a crazy way - for instance committing suicide to make a point, when they will no longer be around to savour the triumph (Kamikaze etc.). Or, as K explained, entering the Second World War fully realizing that they could not win it, but feeling that they must fight. It is "system irrational" and needs explanation. Or again, the Japanese Labour party recently resigned en masse. When K asked members why they had done so, all they could answer was that the "atmosphere was so tense".

Conflict of logics

Given the tension in the definition of the person, as both 'I' and 'I in relation to the other', there is a contradiction in matters of logic and truth. There is the logic created by the social relations to the other, social logic, and there is the logic of the internal 'I'. Hopefully they coincide. But when they do not, either the internal I gives way, or commits suicide.

The husband-wife tie

It somehow falls exactly between the normal classifications. It is neither a unity of two persons, as

in the western ideal where the partners fuse into one, nor is it a contractual relationship of separate individuals. It is difficult to explain what it is - perhaps complementary? K and T stressed that the ideal is separateness, yet complete sympathy and empathy. Each should anticipate the needs of the other and no words should be necessary. They are like two mirrors, each picking up signals from the other.

Japan as two magnets or two electric points

We discussed the image of the Japanese as like two electric points, between which sparks are constantly flying back and forth. The secret of this is to keep the correct distance. This is related to the "pathos of distance" (???). The yearning is to bring the other one closer, but as they approach closer there is a danger that the individual will be extinguished, that the gap will close and the sparks will stop moving, that the mirrors will merge and crack. So there is simultaneous attraction and repulsion - one cannot allow to escape, but nor can one pull too close. It is like two cars in thick traffic, one of which knows the way. The other must stay close and not get lost, but it must not crash into the first - perhaps towing a car with a two rope is an even better analogy. One is constantly adjusting speed with accelerator and breaks to keep the right distance.

One has to keep one's distance, or one will lose the source of the attraction (for instance, if one does not keep one's distance from one's guru, he loses his magic and his role as a source of respect etc.). There is some similarity here to the tension between hiding and showing off, concealing and making public. A constant sort of strip-tease, where if one reveals too much, the interest is gone, yet if one reveals nothing, then there is no interest either.

Ideology and actuality

One clue seems to be that there is a constant tension (shown for instance in Fukuzawa's work) between the ideology and the actuality. For instance, as he argues, the ideology of Japan is hierarchical and vertical, but in practice many relations are equal. In ideology, women are inferior and subject, in actuality they are not. There is a constant tension, as if the Japanese were trying to conceal things from themselves (this dissonance reminds one of some of the work of Maurice Bloch in Madagascar).

Again one finds the clash in the representation of power. While there is a formal hierarchy of power, from top to bottom, in fact, Japan has a system of bottom-up decision making. Many of the ideas come from the bottom, though the decision to implement them comes from the top. The result is that it is middle management who are really the most important and powerful since they lie between these two extremes. They are the crossing point between ideas and authorization.

Ideology and actuality in the kinship system

As I explained with a detailed diagram (see large diagram), there are two major forms of kinship system. There are those based on unilineal principles (e.g. China, India, many African societies). These form water-tight groups or boxes, and a society is built up from these boxes. Each box, based on kinship, is also a religious, economics, social and political entity. The society is a society of groups. At the other extreme is the English situation, an example of non-unilineal kinship where descent is traced through both genders and consequently it is impossible to form into groups. Instead, one has ego-centred networks and, at the most husband/wife dyads (see Toshiko's diagram).

These are the two basic types. In certain ways, as we discussed, the Japanese could be described with their cognatic kinship as being in structure a member of the latter class - hence with high status of women in theory, no bounded groups based on kinship etc - and yet, partly through the influence of China and other pressures **pretending to itself** that it is an example of the Indian/Chinese form. Thus over the actual relations is laid another ideology, just as one finds in the Japanese language or even in the kinship terminology - which has Chinese terms, but subtly altered.

This double layer, where ideology and reality do not fit is perhaps one of the major difficulties in the way of understanding Japan, making it difficult for both the Japanese and outside observers. This theme of the double level of reality, the actual forms and their illusory representations (not dissimilar to what Marx discovered in the fetishisms of capitalism) is worth analysing further. It will help to reduce or at least explain some of the tensions and contradictions.

In some way, Fukuzawa rightly saw himself as a sort of surgeon who, with his scalpel, is trying to cut away the external growths - the Confucian, Chinese, recent Tokugawa despotic influences, and discover the 'real' Japan beneath. Although, of course, we would now estimate that both ideological representation (however 'illusory') is just as real as anything else, the distinction is an important one. (In some ways it is similar to the Scottish clan system - a cognatic system pretending to be a unilineal one).

It is a dissonance, which, of course, we find in all civilizations - in reverse we find it in America where the patent inequalities are masked and people pretend that it is egalitarian (as Beteille and others have pointed out). What is curious about Japan is that it is back to front; usually it is inegalitarian structures which try to pretend that they are egalitarian, Japan (like males in many societies) is the reverse, trying to mask the egalitarian structure under a layer of unequal ideology.

Distance and closeness

Returning to the discussion of the need for distance in Japan, one can again invoke the metaphor of the two hands clapping. If distance is totally reduced, the hands join, there is one large clap - and then silence. So they must come together and then stay apart. The lips can hover, but they must not form into a permanent kiss. Such permanent joining is obscene because it destroys the differences/boundaries between things, the innate difference between men and women for instance, which is so necessary. Indeed, the greater the distance, the greater the chance of really strong

communication - as if the electric current had to be really strong to leap across a wide gap. Hence people at the bottom of an organization often have a double or very strong loyalty to people at the top. This is the phenomenon of the 'double patriot' explored by Story and others in relation to the unquestioning loyalty to the most distant one - the Emperor. This heightened loyalty which increases with distance is what is sometimes described as "the Japanese disease", though it can also be seen in Hitler's Germany.

Another way of looking at it is as a desire to pull things into the centre, a desire for excessive centralization, a reduction of all alternative centres of power. Carried to an extreme, of course, this is the path to absolutism and fascism.

Why marry at all?

We asked why people should marry in Japan? If it was not arranged by their parents, and if they did not fall in love, why should they marry? T and K answered in terms of duty or responsibility. It is a responsibility of human beings to carry on the line - and marriage is the way to do this. Furthermore, without a husband/wife, a person could not manage. There is a division of labour such that a man without a wife is incomplete and vice versa. The idea of the 'housekeeper' who as a servant will arrange everything for one, seems to be absent. A man depends on his wife to manage the household.

Marriage is not a union or community or *gemeinschaft*; it is a form of association or *gesellschaft*, out of which each partner profits. (As an aside, this is a curious contrast; in England, where almost everything is Association, romantic love tries to create a tiny pool of Community within marriage; in Japan, where many things are quasi-Community, marriage creates a tiny pool of Association!). Marriage is good for women, for instance, giving them stability, it is the lesser of evils, preferable to non-marriage. It represents an identity of interests, a sharing, if not a merging.

The core or true nature of people

T asked what the 'true nature' of an English person was. In Japan the 'true nature' of a person is good - it is a potential to be a perfect person. If one acts truly, sincerely and in accord with one's true nature, then there is the possibility to become perfect.

Here there seems a very basic contrast with the legacy of the Christian era, where one starts with the opposite premise. One starts with the idea of fallen nature, of original sin etc. A person is naturally filled with evil tendencies - aggression, lust, greed etc. etc. But as he or she grows up, he realizes that only through holding in check these basic, bad, instincts, will society survive. So life is a continuing exercise in suppressing one's true nature; in self-control and limitation. One learns not to attack others, one learns control over one's body, mind, emotions etc. And one learns that each inhibition actually gives one a deeper freedom. If one desists from killing others, they will desist from killing one (the Hobbesian contract); if one pays for other people's goods, they will pay for yours (the market contract); if one respects other people's property, they will respect yours (the Lockian

contract); if one is kind and truthful and charitable, others will be the same (the Christian contract) and so on.

Thus what is the 'core' by the end of one's life is different from what one started with. The instinctual, harmful, vices have been replaced by virtues. And by the exercise of this self-discipline one has gained those rights which one can now take to be 'natural' - life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. They are not really natural, but earned. And they can be alienated - but only by a personal decision of each actor (e.g. if he does things for which he is imprisoned). They cannot be alienated on his behalf by others - by birth, slavery etc.

The ultimate aim of our project

The ultimate aim of a comparative project, which might provisionally go under the working title of 'Capitalisms; A Comparative Study of Japan and England' or something like that, is to discover the "invisible thread that defines" each civilization. This thread is different in each case, but there is enough in common to be able to compare them. It is made more complicated because there is not just one thread, but several, a warp and a weft etc. But both K and T and Sarah and I have the feeling that both Japan and England are homogeneous civilizations that it may be possible to locate and specify at least part of their 'essence' in a sensible way.

In order to do this, it would be very helpful to carry on our 'conversations', whether in England or Japan, and by post. In order to do this, we may explore the possibility of getting some money for travel/subsistence over the next five years (assuming the Wolfson does not oblige). Among possible sources are: Mombusho (Japanese Ministry of Education Fellowship), the Japan Foundation, the British Council, the man at Seibu etc. A possible time for our next visit to Japan would be (assuming no Wolfson) in August 1993, for 3 weeks (from where we would go to Nepal for a month in September 1993).

CONVERSATIONS AT OXFORD, 14-15 SEPTEMBER 1992

Natto society

K. thought this metaphor was only partly appropriate; it suggested links and ties to all the other beans, whereas, in fact, an individual Japanese only has links to certain other individuals.

First-son syndrome

There are very great strains on the oldest son, who has a particular relationship to his mother and father. K had been visited by his parents for two weeks and this had caused considerable problems for T. K is pulled in two directions, by his wife and by his mother. There is no problem for daughters, and the pressure on the first son is slightly less if he has sisters.

Pressure on first sons

This is reflected in the folklore story of a man who was told by his wife to wear one pair of shoes, and by his mother to wear another. So he put on a left shoe from one pair, and a right shoe from the other. K. thought this just about caught the balance, half committed to mother, half to wife. A man would feel the same strain even if he went outside the house and had a concubine.

Retirement and wet leaves

The term for a retired man is 'wet leaves'. This is a fairly recent term, but reflects an older problem. A woman during marriage has seen little of her husband and has built up her own meaningful life. Suddenly her husband retires. He has lost his own world and clings to her, unwanted, like a wet leaf.

Two hands clapping in Japan

The shape of the left and the right hand are not the same. The metaphor implies a symmetrical situation, but in fact, as K. demonstrated, the two hands are different and only partly overlap. This seems to be related to the difference in hierarchical position. Hence it is very difficult to have a full and satisfying meeting with another; one is not comfortable with anyone.

Psychotherapy in Japan

Previously it was not common nor was there much interest. Recently, for those under about forty, there has been a considerable growth of interest in psychotherapy.

Mirrors and mothers

K said that his mother's expectations of him were like the inside of a mirror. I didn't quite understand this, but take it to mean that he tried to see himself as reflected in her expectations.

Difficulties of the older generation in Japan

Those in their seventies in Japan are in a particularly difficult position now. They fought through the war, often lost their children or husbands, and then re-built Japan after the war. Now they are neglected and confused by the new Japan.

Women and the war

Lots of widows were left by the war; they shouldered everything. Men's pride was lost since they were blamed for the war. Men had lost their direction and the women rebuilt Japan. There was thus a status revolution, with much liberation of women. They also benefited from the labour-saving in the home created by the electronics revolution and also from the example of American liberation. They enjoyed a new and better family life. But they are faced with the problem of having looked after their parents-in-law, but now their sons are deserting them.

Concepts of ages of life

Toshiko is beginning to envisage life as split into four sections or phases; childhood, child-rearing, return to a career, and old age retirement.

Dramatic retirement in Japan

Retirement in Japan normally means that you lose everything - influence, sources of power, belonging to a meaningful community etc. For instance, a retired academic Professor at age 60 will often stop writing, stop attending conferences, cut off all relations with his former students etc. Men tend to have more problems in this way than women.

Individualism and democracy in Japan

Only after retirement, having left the group which constitutes a firm, is a person truly an individual. This has led one commentator to talk of the "silver democracy". There is also a "women democracy", for women have much more potential to act individually.

What do old people do

Japan does not have many parks or benches for the old to sit on. But it has many clubs, for instance to play chess, and here the old men, the 'wet leaves' congregate. Early retirement is a considerable social problem.

Power and age in Japanese business

In companies, the vice-division chief, aged about forty, is the most powerful person in the company.

Those above are starting to lose their influence and are often side-lined. When a person retires they should disappear as completely as possible, otherwise they cause difficulties.

Eternal obligations of on

There are only two people who K can never reject; they are his Professor and his mother. Though T urges him that he can say 'no' to their requests, he feels that he cannot. He calls his Professor his 'father in the Nerima War' or 'Academic father'. K is his Professor's favourite son, almost an eldest son, and hence has to act like one. He is afflicted with what K calls "the good son syndrome".

Japanese language

There is no definitive theory of Japanese grammar. The western models do not seem to work well. Seidensticker is the only westerner who has really mastered the language of all periods. The order of the sentence in Japanese follows the Japanese thought process. Firstly, a speaker tries to define the field (as in field theory in physics), the date, space, relations, and finally comes to the movement of the agent. The verb and auxiliary verb comes at the end. There is no need for an explicit subject, since the subject has already been implied by the description of the field. This way of thinking makes structural thinkers like Foucault, Merleau-Ponty and others very popular in Japan. Thus the situation is defined first, and then the subject's action. This is a complete reflection of the way of Japanese thinking, where thought is first directed to the field.

Inter-personal speech in Japan

When starting a conversation, the first remarks are of a very general establishing kind. One starts by using the highest distance/ranking words, extreme politeness, "I am a very poor, humble person", "I know very little about this subject" and so on. But gradually the language becomes less humble and less formal. If one maintains the original distanced language, it is a sign that one dislikes the person and does not want to get any closer in the relationship. One wants to keep them outside the whole system. It might take up to thirty minutes of conversation to negotiate the right level. If one reaches a satisfactory communication, then one stands up at the end and exchanges cards.

Gauging distance in Japan

There are lots of short-cuts to gauging the social distance between oneself and the other in Japan, for instance their age, position in a company, education and so on.

Overcoming formal politeness

Because of the great difficulty of overcoming the normal distance and etiquette, mutual drinking is very important in Japan. It provides a kind of collective identity, a sort of sacred space and time, it is distinguished as an "unpolite is alright" situation. One can reveal one's true feelings at this time, for instance a cleaner can talk frankly and even criticize his boss. It is a sort of 'communitas' or liminal

period in Japan. One has to pretend all are equal, unpoliteness and forwardness are encouraged. Thus, for instance, Professors will sometimes go off with their students and drink sake and a sort of "ceremonial community" of drink will be established.

Keeping one's distance

Elaborate and formal language is a good way to keep the hands apart, to stop them clapping. For instance, if K is arguing with T, he will use formal language to express his distance. If she tricks or persuades him into using familiar language, he has lost.

Historical reason for men's weak position in family

K suggested that part of it may have been related to the practice in the Tokugawa of the Samurai being away for half of each year with their lords in Edo. Women are left alone for half the year to run things and get independence. Hence husbands have very little power in the household and hence women are much more individualistic. Some women have an alternate power base, in the home.

Effects of geographical position of Japan; marginality

Japan always had a sense of being on the margin of the huge Chinese Empire. Imagine if one dynasty ruled Europe from Russia to Spain, how the English would feel. It was a vast psychological presence, and from China many bits and pieces were imported. But Japan is far enough from the centre of Chinese power for both countries to feel it is separate. This marginality means that Japan is always comparing itself with something - with China.

Effects of geographical position of Japan; separateness

Paradoxically, Japan is made to feel self-contained and separate by the presence of China. This inward-looking, self-contained, attitude is considered natural in Japan. There has never been a tradition, as there is in England with its much smaller sea, of being involved in the Continent - for instance as it was through the middle ages. Thus Japan is an extremely 'insular' place. There is a strong belief that Japan and China are very different in many ways, though, in fact, there is of course quite a strong influence of China.

Origins of Japanese language

There seems to be some similarities to the languages of Polynesia and even Tamil Nadu; but the language is very different from that of China. The Japanese language of the eight-ninth centuries was already fully developed and much more flexible and powerful than the Chinese - as is shown in the works of the women novelists, who used Japanese. All the linguistic symbols are from China, but very much modified in Japan. Korea and Vietnam, however, invented their own languages.

Inferiority felt by Japanese towards China

There is a widespread and strong inferiority complex towards China for many centuries, which K and T still feel. When K travelled in China, he realized how much Japan owed to China. He had the feeling "my culture came from there", i.e. Confucius, Buddhism, the linguistic characters.

Differences of China and Japan

Chinese like absolutes. For instance, near Beijing there are huge tombs on the huge approach to the city. On one side the names are written normally, on the other side in mirror writing. This is "unimaginable" for a Japanese, implying too much symmetry.

Religion in Japan, China and India

The influence of Confucius on religion seems vastly greater in China. In Japan there is no such penetration. The "Chinese actually believe in their religion", K commented. In India there is an over-presence of religion - it is religion soaked. A Hindu shrine is a strange dis-orienting experience for a Japanese - he has no sympathy with the jumble of meanings. In a western Church or Chinese shrine, K has a solemn feeling of awe; but in a Hindu temple there is too much life, noise, colour etc.

The Japanese as shrinkers

The Koreans always say the Japanese are "shrinking Orientals", everything is miniaturized; the Koreans have no temptation to do this.

Attitudes the past in Japan

The Japanese have well developed methods of forgetting and forgiving the past, developed techniques of amnesia. To build and act, one needs amnesia. The Japanese are very good at re-organizing the past to conform with the present. One example is their practice of building two kinds of shrines, both for the winners and another to the losers. This tranquilizes the losers, calms down their anger and troubled spirits, tranquilizes the negative side of the past. Thus it creates rituals to calm down the old souls.

Forgiving the past in Japan

There is very little grudging of the past. For instance, at the Meiji restoration, the defeated side were not punished severely and were soon incorporated into the new framework. After the Second World War there was immediate acceptance of defeat and few recriminations. K half linked this to the fact that because of the very many natural disasters in Japan, typhoons, earthquakes etc, it was very necessary to forget the past and re-build the future. Whatever the cause, the whole nation or large groups could very quickly agree to forget and forgive. In Japan religion is largely a device to help forget and forgive.

Remembering the losers

In England there are many signs for remembering past events; less so in Japan. But where there are memorials and memories, they tend to be to the losers. There are very few tales of the winners, but many of the losers, e.g. the Heikei who were defeated. This is all part of the catharsis. There are lots of losers tales and shrines to the losers. For instance, the Heian government, after the smashing of the opposition, put up shrines to the losers, those who do the killing, make shrines to the losers. In the west, losers are crushed (note the retribution after the first world war, in Japan, if one neglects the losers, they will be angry and their souls will arise again. One has to win the peace as well as win the war.

Treatment of losers

There is a recognition that while one's enemies must die, or certain people be replaced, they should not be dishonoured; a shrine is put up to them. This is also partly because in any conflict, third and other parties will be watching to see with what honour one treats the enemy.

Harmony in Japan

Harmony is a keyword in the sixth century constitution of Japan; the word for 'governing' means making circles. Thus 'Subaru' is the word for the circle of stars known as the 'Pleiades'. It means to make a round or governing. A leader is the harmonizer of the community. What a real leader should do is to balance people against each other; find out what the individual interests are, and what their settling point is, and negotiate a solution acceptable to all. The 'losers' need to be especially carefully watched, and made to feel good - otherwise the agreement will come undone.

Fixing the losers

It is especially important to deal with the losers in any situation. Every decision has a loser, and you have to fix them in advance, persuade and encourage them to accept the decision. The harmonizer is a mediator, who gets his power from reconciling interests.

Working behind the scenes in Japan

A Japanese house is built on pillars. Below these pillars is a dirty, dark area, but a crucial one. If it is not kept in order, the house will collapse. A Japanese politician or harmonizer works in this area, working underground, behind the scenes, to make everyone's interests come together. Often a bright young man who wants to assume command is told by an older man, "You are good, but you still have not done enough background work". There is need for consensus politics. A good leader has to be a stage manager, financier, harmonizer.

Rebellion to the Emperor

If a leader or Emperor asks something and no answer comes back, it is assumed that there is a rebellion.

The power of the Emperor

The Emperor is like the man who is carried on the back in a coach - he is entirely dependent on those who carry him. In the West, a leader is expected to lead, like Moses leading the Israelites out of the wilderness, but in Japan the supporters decide everything, the top is powerless to lead.

On and the sense of obligation in Japan

People feel obliged to their parents, "I am here because of my mother" and so on. There is a saying that "the on of mother is deeper than the sea, the on of father is higher than mountains". It is obvious that the sea is much deeper than the mountain is high. The Chinese characters which make up the Japanese word 'on' has two parts. One part of the character means to contribute or support, and the other part is 'heart' or feeling. You thus have to contribute your careful and loving attention to a person.

On and obligations to a teacher

On-shi means the teacher who taught me as I am now. Without him I would not have been able to reach here. Thus he is similar to a father or mother. He has provided instruction and affection, which has enabled me to grow up to my present position.

On obligations to the environment

There are some feelings of on obligations to the environment. For instance, in the olden days, children were told that each grain of rice had a god within it and should be treated with respect.

On and obligation nowadays

The word 'on' is familiar to children, for it is used in comics etc. 'On' is unlimited, limitless, the object of the source of on is so diffused that it is unlimited. One lives within a 'cobweb' of many responsibilities, and much of life is spent deciding between them.

The start of a connection in Japan

If a passer-by accidentally touches one, it is the start of a connection, 'en', which may become binding.

The sophistication of belief in God

K admired the western idea of having a God. It made it possible to idealize him, make him infallible etc. There is a difficulty in Japan since no human is perfect and hence there is no ideal.

Obligations to support one's Professor

Both K and T felt an obligation to support their Professors, with money if necessary. If one's Professor was destitute, one might club together with other students to support him, paying regular money etc. For instance a case occurred at Waseda University where the Professor died and left his wife and children destitute; the students clubbed together to help them. But K seemed to think that things had changed and his own students would not do the same for him, though it might continue in other, more orthodox, Professor-student relations.

Passing on the succession within academic life

There was quite a strong tradition that if a bright student had been selected to succeed a Professor, the young man would marry the Professor's daughter - thus turning the Professorship into a sort of family line. K told a story of a young man who lost both the Professorship and the Professor's daughter at the same time.

The meaning of giri or justifiable reason

One needs a standard or justification for paying back a kindness. This is provided by 'giri'. Giri is composed of two characters, 'gi' meaning justice, and 'ri' meaning reason. (Thus, the name of Kenichi's second daughter, 'Yu-ri', means, 'There is' (yu), 'ri' a reason. Thus gi-ri gives one a justifiable, defensible, reason to do something. Thus one has justifiable and formal debts to a lord. The word has somewhat changed its meaning over time. Giri is the form of a gift, a justified gift, to someone to whom one is not related by blood - e.g. a lord, in-law etc.

The difference between gi-ri and other gifts

If the gift, for instance to a lord, has no heart or spirit or true feeling in it, it is 'giri'. For instance, one may give Valentine chocolates to people; some of them one really likes, and they are true gifts, others, for instance to a co-worker, are 'giri' gifts - done out of obligation and politeness but with no emotion in them.

Giri relations in Japan

All relatives through marriage - in-laws - are giri relations. One does not feel anything towards them, but has an obligation towards them. There is a 'justifiable reason' for doing things for them. Kim-il-Sung tried to use this idea in N.Korea, saying that "our socialism is giri socialism". One likewise might have a giri relation with a landlord.

Giri and artificial community

Giri creates a sort of artificial community. It is modelled on the true feeling relations of parent and child, and has some of its enduring and binding power. But it does not have the real feeling that arises from blood and affection. Real brothers are not 'giri'.

Adoption and giri

We asked whether adopted sons have a giri relation to their new parents and siblings. This caused K and T to think for a long time in a puzzled way. They discussed the matter and came to the conclusion that such relations were not 'giri', in other words they were true family relations. In-laws are complete strangers, but adoption absorbs a person completely into the new group and the person becomes like a real son and is so addressed and so felt to be. Ironically, therefore, while a wife is no relation to a person, an adopted brother is a real brother.

Incest and adoption

A puzzle emerged, or rather a contradiction. An adopted son becomes like a real blood relative, i.e. a real son or brother. He is called brother etc. by the girls of the family into which he marries. He is not a giri relative. Yet it is quite common for one of his 'sisters' to marry him. This cannot be explained by any difference in the adoption procedure. There is only one kind of adoption. It would thus appear that a marriage between brother and sister is taking place. Yet this contradiction did not seem to worry K and T.

Marriage with first cousins and tracing descent

Marriage with first cousins is fairly frequent and all types of marriage are allowed. Nor is there any preference for kin on one or the other side. One can marry anyone who is at least four removes from one. The rule is that one counts up to the common ancestor, counting each link as one, and then down to the person. Thus one's father is one remove, father's father two removes, father's father's son (i.e. uncle) three removes, and his daughter, four removes. Thus all cousins are permissible, at four removes.

Japanese kinship terminology

Checked this with K and T, and it seemed identical to ours. Uncles and Aunts on both sides are called by the same word etc. Thus it is ego-centred and symmetrical.

Real children and concubines children

There are different terms for these. The real son is 'chak-ku-nan', the concubines' son is 'sho-shi'. They have different rights of inheritance.

The meaning of ninjo

In giri one has lost the heart or spirit of the gift or debt (on). Ninjo replaces this. It refers to natural sympathy which one person has with another. One has to live under the formality of 'giri', but you must also have desire/ interest/ sympathy for certain things, in other words ninjo. And thus there is often a clash. Thus the framework is decided by giri, but inside this one has some room for movement and choice and spontaneity, for the play of 'ninjo' relations. Thus giri is duty and obligation, ninjo is the spontaneous feeling. There is a class of 'Ninjo' plays in the Kabuki theatre, describing the clash between the push of ninjo and the constraint of giri.

All strong emotion is ninjo

Ninjo is true emotion, and hence covers hate as well as love, if it overrides formality. For example, if one pulled out one's sword in Edo castle to attack someone, this was called an act of ninjo. All spontaneous feelings, of any kind - jealousy, sympathy, love, hat etc. were giri.

Carrying the culture within oneself in Japan

In my paper I had quoted Gellner on the fact that in the West, a society had arisen in which an individual could apparently carry the whole of the culture within himself. This greatly puzzled K, who could not understand how this could be. It would have to be reformulated for Japan as follows: "a society emerged in which a proper group could apparently carry the essence of a culture within themselves, with the help of relevant others, but without the help of either God or Heaven".

The feeling of 'on' or mutual obligations

We asked the children about their knowledge and both of them (aged c. 14 and 11) said that they knew the word on and what it meant. Toshiko said that she did not feel any 'on' to her mother, because she felt too intimate and close to feel on. On is not something one has between intimate relations, with one's really close kin. On implies distance. Friendship and 'on' are also different things. But K feels something closer to 'giri' than to 'ninjo' towards his mother. Subaru said that she did not feel 'on' towards her parents because she was not in their debt; it was the natural duty of parents to look after children.

Feelings of on and giri in children

Subaru, aged about eleven, knew both of the words 'on' and 'giri', but did not feel either of them. Toshiko does, however, feel a sort of giri or on towards the next door neighbours because of their kindness. Children only have these feelings when they become adult. Thus Subaru will feel giri and on when she is adult. It is the occupation of parents to have these feelings. Toshiko feels some on towards her Professor. On and giri are indoctrinated from the outside, they are forced social responsibilities when one becomes an adult.

The relation of mothers and son

Kenichi's mother has paid lots of attention to her son and wants it back; the husband-wife relationship is very weak so the mother directs her attention to her sons.

Difficulty of retirement

When a man retires, it is very difficult for his wife. She has been used to running the home and now the clinging "wet leaf" has returned, whom she must formally defer to, but is like a lost child who knows nothing. She keeps her relationships to others, and he tries to stick to her; he cannot be thrown away. Thus a man moves "From Big Rubbish to Wet Leaf". A husband loses his central position in a woman's affections as soon as a son is born. The wife's attention goes to the son. It does not go to the daughter, for the daughters will go away.

Tension of husband and son roles

There has long been a tension; in the Edo period there was lots of mother-wife conflict.

Concealing from children in Japan

Good parents should conceal the tensions between themselves from their children.

Parental sense of duty

Kenichi's mother does not like children and was not a natural mother; she was forced to look after K out of a sense of duty. Thus his relation to her is a forced and formal one - a sense of fear and duty, as to his Professor. There is the same problem for the Crown Prince.

Parental choice of wife

Kenichi's mother thought it her right to choose his wife; hence when he chose T for himself, there was great tension and he didn't see his mother for two years. This kind of tension sometimes leads to the break-up of husband-wife relationships. This will not continue, for our generation expect nothing from our children.

Difference of male and female models

Men often have problems when they go to the West. Women are much closer to models of western individualism; they are much happier in the West, where they feel comfortable. In the west one can say what one likes etc.

Similarity and difference of Japan, England and Germany

K and T felt that Berlin was very like Tokyo; people's character was similar, short-tempered, rather aggressive, for instance rushing to get off the train while it was still moving, always in a great hurry. There is much greater efficiency in Germany, but it is much more rigid. In England you have to ask people, and then they are very kind. We feel some similarity with Germany, for instance the structure of department stores is very like that in Japan. Germany is much more consumer oriented than England.

Consumer orientation in Japan and England

In Japan sovereignty is with the customer; the "customer is God" is the refrain of a song. You ask people to buy your goods. In England the feeling is that it is the customer's responsibility to choose wisely. In Japan, those who try to sell, humiliate themselves under the customer, but here customer and seller are equal. It is the seller's responsibility to sell perfect things in Japan. In England it is up to the customer. England is tilted in favour of the power of the shop-keeper's, a "shopocracy" as Richard Cobden put it. The shops have the power in Britain, while in Japan they are servants.

Violence of America and growing violence in England

T and K felt immediately the hidden violence of America; it is a very dangerous place. The Japanese could not understand what vandalism is. Berlin is clean and orderly.

Education in Britain and Japan

Education is very good for able children in England, there is a strong middle class bias to the schooling. The school reproduce the disadvantages of the weak and poor. The Japanese system is good for ordinary people (lower middling), teaching basic skills etc. But it is not very good for the really able. The University graduates are much better in England, ambitious, in control. In Japan they are dull, passive, not interested.

Obligations towards creating employment in Japan

It is the duty of big organizations to absorb the jobless in Japan, for instance city councils and others will take on any unemployed persons. Every big organizations has about ten per cent of persons it does not need. In England large numbers of people are told that they are not needed. Many organizations say that the first five years of salary for many people is wasted in Japan. It is the Japanese philosophy that no-one is useless. Organizations try to forge people into doing something useful. Useless and difficult individuals are dispersed through the organization.

Japanese business organization in England

At the Nissan factory in the North of England there is great pride in work, a good working atmosphere and high efficiency; one man creates some 47 cars per year.

The right to work and Trade Unions

There seems a strange difference in that in England the Trade Unions have endlessly tried to limit work - to make longer holidays, tea-breaks etc., while Japanese Trade Unions try to negotiate more work for their members.

Drama and acting in front of other people in Japan

In England there is training of very young children to perform and act in front of parents and strangers. This does not happen in Japan. To speak in front of many people is not a skill taught in Japan.

Conversation in Japan

The Japanese do not think it is important to make conversation with other people. They find it very difficult to start conversations with other people. At gatherings, there is often complete silence for long periods.

Western culture in Japan

The Japanese like Shakespeare, on TV etc. Going to the western theatre and opera is a new middle class phenomenon. Western opera is a status symbol - Wagner, Puccini, Mozart are very popular. Beethoven's ninth symphony is now traditionally played just before midnight on New Year's Eve. Hegel is fashionable. There are five versions of translations of Shakespear.

Kabuki and noh drama in Japan

Kabuki developed about the same time as Shakespeare in Japan. But Kabuki actors became hereditary. There are drama schools, but it is difficult to enter the Kabuki world from these. Noh is slow and boring; it is only a family business. It is gradually dying out, the rich patrons are dying out, though the State subsidizes it. There are no women Noh or Kabuki players. Kabuki men justify this by saying that they are more beautiful than women. There are four Kabuki theatres in Tokyo and two each in Kyoto and Osaka.

Ritual purity of great Kabuki actors

One of the leading Kabuki actors, aged 70, has never touched money, never cooked, has never married. He has no sons and is thus transferring his skills to a man who was adopted by another Kabuki actor.

Puppet theatres (bunraku) in Japan

This originated from village festivals, starting on a remote island where farmers performed the puppet dramas. Then moved to theatres in the cities. It is much more 'realistic' than the other forms of drama.

Noh drama in Japan

Most of the audience would not understand the words/singing in a Noh drama. There are about one thousand 'popular' sequences of Noh in the later Edo period, therefore seven or eight families of Noh players, each has its own repertory. The story of the plays are from classics, folklore etc. Noh is pre thirteenth century; the main textbook was written in the fourteenth century.

Development of drama in Japan and England

It was very similar in its origins, mean folk, wandering players, outcasts, then taken up by the richer Samurai and merchants. It was often played in front of a temple or shrine, a place where people gather. It was often sponsored by ecclesiastical authorities to attract people to Church. Part of the Noh repertory includes the dancing of geisha in front of the temple, linked to temple prostitutes.

Great transformation in Muromachi period in Japan

The fourteenth to sixteenth century in Japan was a time of great turbulence and change. The peasants became the middle class, the strong and clever could move to the top. Those at the top sank down, an "upside-down" period. The loser groups brought up with them their culture. Much of the culture changed. People started to eat three times a day instead of twice, food changed, clothes changed, an agricultural revolution occurred. There was massive hydraulic works, the control of rivers, new tools.

The agricultural and social revolution in early modern Japan

With the agricultural revolution of the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, it became possible to irrigate the whole plain, building dams, banks etc. The war lords moved their castles down from the hills to the plains. So the power shifted to Tokyo and Osaka. Tokyo was a small village in 1600, and within one hundred years a city of one million. In the Edo period, Osaka was a city of eight hundred bridges. Before this Osaka was the castle or temple town for a new religion, the major opposition to Nobunaga.

The great break in Japanese history

The late Muromachi (fifteenth to sixteenth centuries) is the great break in Japanese life; "before the Muromachi it is a foreign country". Before that K cannot understand the culture, after that it feels familiar, with a continuity up to the great changes of the 1950's and 1960's. Before the Muromachi women were very strong. In the Kamakura, there were women warriors and rulers. There were

Samurai women warriors. The great Kamakura Shogun was dominated by his wife, who killed off her husband's line to perpetuate her brother's line.

Recognition by China

The early Muromachi shogunate tried to imitate China, tried to get a letter from China confirming the shoguns as Kings of Japan - they did receive such a letter.

Simplicity and rusticity of the Tokugawa

The Tokugawa preferred simplified art; they believed themselves to be simple countrymen. They admired moderation and modesty.

Feudal confusion in Japan

The Emperor became very weak in the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries, a Civil War period. This refreshed the system, breaking the tendency towards absolutism of the centre.

Rebuilding of the Emperor's shrine

The shrine at Ise is rebuilt in wood every twenty years, moving from one spot to another, as a replica of the old one.

Fukuzawa's idea of society

According to Toshiko, when F. translated the phrase from Chamber's work "good of society", replaced it with "communication with other people". It was the powerful forms of communication through language and transport which struck him about the West. He believed that Japan had the basis for a good civilization, but it could be improved by better 'communication'.

Japan as an octopus jar society

There is a widespread belief that each Japanese is like an octopus within its own jar, everyone is separate, therefore the circulation of information is rather difficult, and there are barriers to unity.

Fukuzawa's concept of marriage

According to T, F translated Chamber's "marriage state" as "father-mother" relations. He also inserted a phrase about how this institution was "to look after children and helping each other". He was trying to argue that the feeling that father and mother must look after such children is the original human nature, it was the role of parents to do this. Thus he had not been aware of the fact

that there is no automatic right of children to be looked after in England.

The English preference for pets

T and K had noticed the English fondness for pets, and that the English seemed to prefer their pets to their children. Pets have the great advantage that they will obey commands, can be controlled, don't answer back, whereas children do.

Fukuzawa's dependence on Chambers

T said that Fukuzawa took his early and basic ideas about the family and society and competition from the Chamber's Educational Course. His central idea that one could build up a Civilization out of the natural and spontaneous feelings within the family came from this work, though it was later supplemented by reading of how civilizations develop in Buckle, Mill, Guizot.

Fukuzawa's attitude to Confucius

F rejects Confucianism as a bad influence in Japan. He thought there was an old spirit of independence in the Samurai tradition, which should be built on. F was trying to adapt Japanese traditions, to mix with those of the West.

Japanese and Chinese language

Chinese is a visual language, you are forced to see it, through the pictographic symbols, whereas English is an oral language, which you cannot visualize and you hear. Kenichi finds it difficult to learn English because of this; he has to see the words, then internalize and visualize them, and then bring them up again. Japanese is half way between, both a pictographic language with the Chinese characters, but oral within it, in the Japanese phonetics. There is a very heavy weight of the Chinese characters of a visual kind. The Japanese phonetics have two types. Type one are Japanese words, type two are foreign loan words. These are easily distinguished.

Language flexibility in Japan and China

With the rigidity of Chinese pictographs, the meaning is strictly tied to the word. Hence it is very difficult for a word gradually to evolve and change its meaning. In English it is easy - a word can drop some of its meaning and add others over a short period. Japan is half way - more flexible than Chinese, less so than English.

Japan and the West

A recent Professor from China who spoke to K said that when he visited Tokyo he felt that it was indistinguishable from New York. In other words, from the Chinese perspective, Japan is very western, and very different from China.

Understanding Japan

As far as outsiders are concerned, Japan is neither an open or a closed society. One is facing a switch-board when one tries to understand it. Different switches have to be activated to find out different things. Thus a visitor can travel through many different Japans, depending on which switches are pressed. Many cultural mediators, eg. the Japan Foundation, are set up to guide a visitor through a Japan which is a liberal, western-style civilization, but this is only one side.

Ronald Dore and understanding Japan

Dore is one of the few westerners who have got inside Japan. He has managed to build his own switchboard, learnt the language, got to know ordinary people, dressed in Japanese costume etc. Another who seems to have found the "inner side of wisdom" (as John Galt put it in *Annals of a Parish*) is Terry McCarthy, the Independent Columnist in Japan. He has overcome some of the many invisible barriers which are present. Many others engage in a kind of "airport anthropology", never really getting further than the superficialities of the transit lounge in Narita airport. The invisible barriers can be penetrated, but you have to ask the right questions, to say "open sesame" at the right spot. Otherwise it is all superficial. It would be helpful to learn a little Japanese, just a hundred or so useful words.

Mother-daughter relationship

This is a very strong relationship, Toshiko said, and does not end at marriage. It continues afterwards. On the surface, Japan has a sort of patrilineal system, respecting the husband's line, but the mother's line is emotionally and day to day more important. The male line is formally more important, but the mother's line is in practice more important.

Matrilineal bias in Japan

Although male line formally more important, sentiment and knowledge stressed the female line. Thus most people know their cousins on their mother's side, and have a relationship to them, but not those on their father's side. It feels very similar to England - the maternal grandmother is more important than the paternal one for instance. Although the son traditionally looked after his mother, the daughters provide their mother with much emotional support. Officially, however, the wife of the eldest son looks after the mother-in-law.

Inheritance in Japan

If a household is very important, it is possible to adopt. In urban Edo, the merchant class would often kick out their sons and marry one of their daughters to the best worker in the firm, who would then be the adopted son. It was basically a business, with a family system attached. Or if there was a son of some competence, he would be placed alongside a manager who would oversee him.

Rights of children in parent's property in Japan

There is no feeling of right in Japan, K said. It is not against the law to disinherit all the children. But a family with all its advisors and relatives will put pressure on a father to behave in a certain way. The father does not 'own' the property either, he just manages it for future generations. It is the duty of everyone to find the most suitable manager for the future. Thus there may be nominal inheritance by a son, but actually an able non-relative will run the business.

Splitting succession and inheritance in Japan

In the political system, there is a division whereby the inheritance (transmission of rights of ownership) flows down through the Emperor, while the succession (transmission of the rights of power) flows down through the Shogun. The same thing can happen in families, where a son may 'inherit', but the real power is in the hands of a manager.

Difference of Japan and England in relation to family property

In Japan there is something higher than the individual, a 'family unit', to which the individual is bound. The estate has been inherited from ancestors and no-one has the right to destroy the family or go against its best interests. This is so important, that an individual may be sacrificed (as younger sons are), to this unit and disinherited. The same effect, but for different reasons, occurs in England. There is the individual who controls the property, and if such a person decides to disinherit the heirs he may do so (though, of course, there is a vast literature about attempts to limit his power through entails etc). In both cases, the individual is insecure, with no automatic rights.

Younger children in Japan and primogeniture

Second or third sons of peasants have no rights, no house, no right to get married. Thus they were a floating labour force. Second and third sons have to find their own way outside the farm, starting businesses etc. This is only true in England and Japan and may be significantly related to capital accumulation and labour mobility.

Primogeniture and capital accumulation

Primogeniture in both Japan and England allows capital accumulation since the property is not split up between all sons at each generation. The word for "foolish" or "stupid" in Japanese is "tawake". This happens to be composed of two Chinese characters which can be read as "ta", "rice field", and "wake" to divide. This word was later re-interpreted by the Japanese to mean that it was extremely foolish to divide property among heirs - and used as word to dissuade people from doing so.

Sacrificing the short term social in Japan and England

In most societies, one gives in to the short-term affections and gives all one's sons a part of the patrimony. Only two civilizations have stood out against this pressure - England and Japan. If one is wealthier enough, one tries to create a job for other sons, and send them off to the professions, or they may be adopted by another family. For instance a rising merchant family may adopt a son from a good family to obtain his 'name', thus joining blood and wealth as happened in England. But ultimately, the other members of the family are sacrificed to the oldest son.

Recent changes in Japan in relation to primogeniture

The new Civil Code in Japan in the 1950's, just as the change in law in England in c. 1938, has given rights to all children equally. Hence the centuries old system of primogeniture has been wiped away. But some Japanese still renounce, without a murmur, their rights to inherit under the new code. But many children now sell off all their parent's property and divide it among themselves.

Similarities and differences of Japan and England

See the diagram at the end of the discussions on this visit, which shows the evolution of my thinking over the summer. As a first stage, I tried to produce bench-marks or continua, with India at one end and America at the other, with Japan somewhere along this. This was too rigid. I next tried three corners of a triangle, with Japan equidistant from holistic and individualistic societies. Finally, I am trying a Venn diagram, in which India is almost separate and much further away from Japan and England, which lie alongside each other, half overlapping, and half not, and hardly overlapping with India and Chinese model. I showed this to K and T and they seemed to find it a helpful development of thought.

Reactions to my paper on Individualism

K had carefully read my early draft of the R-Brown lecture and a number of the points above emerged from that reading. He had three main comments. One was that I should not cite from certain light-weight authors. Matsumoto, though interesting, was very light-weight. Endo was a novelist and should be cut down. Lebra the anthropologist was quoted too much. Secondly, he felt that I had got to grips with a certain level of initial literature and now was the time to move to a deeper level of people like Maruyama. Thirdly, he felt that the argument as it stood was trying to do two things - show something about Japan and how it worked, and disproving some of the grand theories about the linked features necessary for capitalism. These two aims were not quite compatible and further thought was needed.

CONVERSATIONS IN CAMBRIDGE

27 July 2005

Toshiko and Kenichi here with Yuri all day, teasing our aspects of Alan's book on Japan. Very rich discussion which we all enjoyed. Kenichi cooked soba for lunch and we took them to the Indian restaurant in Bottisham for supper so that we could go on talking. Wet day.

Conversations about 'Japan through the Looking Glass' with Kenichi and Toshiko from notes.

Between the end of July and the first week of September we had a number of very productive full-day discussions, ranging from 8-12 hours, with Kenichi, Toshiko, and their daughters Yuri and Ai. We went over the various drafts that I was writing of the book.

The conversations were very intense and all I can do here, from the notes, is to reconstruct what I can remember of the main gist of some of the things we discussed. The main point is that although very little of the book is actually written by Kenichi and Toshiko in their words, much of it was spoken by them, or sustained by them endorsing my writing. So it is a joint book. I am writing this in this book as I want to calmly reflect on and elaborate as much as possible – expand in the mind – these important conversations.

Conversation at Lode on 27 July 2005. Kenichi, Toshiko, Yuri, Alan and Sarah

[At the end of their stay, Kenichi said that it was at this meeting that he suddenly realized, when I talked about tribalism, shamanism etc, that I was onto something. Before that he was absorbed in his own work and thought of the book on Japan as basically one between Toshiko and myself. A sudden revelation occurred and he understood many things which had hitherto been puzzling. So a key meeting.]

They started by saying that the draft I had sent to them was interesting and indeed inspiring. They stressed that my sense of wonder and puzzlement is very important and should be made as strong and explicit as possible.

The books should be about 'what we (Japanese) are and what you (Westerners) are.'

The puzzle concerns the fact that in Japan there is no God, no ethics [morality] and yet no crime.

They said that Jaspers' work had been translated into Japanese, but they had not heard of his theory of the Axial Age. (Clearly this idea appealed to them very much and along with the ideas of animism and disenchantment became the centre of all our subsequent discussions).

They were puzzled as to why we are so obsessed with our god schema. My questions also puzzle them. Kenichi was puzzled by the concept of hierarchy. In relation to the use of quotations in the book, they thought that some concerning the first innocent western shock of Japan were fine, but it would be best not to use modern observers. They thought that my observations and impressions are much more weighty and important. My insights as

anthropologist and historian are really interesting.

I pointed out my bias and lack of knowledge, but Toshiko said very forcefully that my bias was important. I should retain it.

Kenichi referred to the Japanese taboo on expressing oneself too strongly.

A "name" is personal and kept within the family.

It is shameful to talk too much about yourself.

We stressed how difficult it is to work with Japanese, because they normally will not talk about themselves (hence the good fortune of meeting Toshiko and Kenichi - Alan)

Foreigners are rejected if they get too close to the Japanese.

They felt that the methodology of the book should be more explicit – the process of coming to terms with Japan.

Toshiko felt that the book's conclusion (i.e. non-Axial, tribal etc) is right. Kenichi is at this point not sure (though as our discussions progressed he became more and more persuaded I think).

At this stage the book had a 5-fold structure (4 institutions and Arts). Toshiko preferred the 4-fold structure for it reflected my ideas of the central division between (Economy, Polity, Society and Ideology.) 5th September

We talked about the separation of the four spheres and Fukuzawa's realization of its importance. But, as Toshiko observed, the Japanese do not divide the world into the 4 spheres.

She asked what the principal division is and I stressed Economy, Politics, Society but said I had added 2 more because as well as Religion, Arts and Categories were important. (At our last meeting they stressed that what was most important for them was this bit. Many people have written on Japanese polity and economy, but if I can show how the Japanese themselves view their world, I will have achieved something new.)

We discussed the way in which English society is a mirror, just as Japanese society is a mirror. They urged me to set up the idea of the mirror more explicitly and hence the methodology for the study.

The book is a journey of understanding, but it cannot be written chronologically.

Kenichi thinks religion is very important, though Fukuzawa left this out. Also the family is very important, needs attention. Children and old age are linked.

Toshiko stated that the individual is not so independent in Japan.

Kenichi said that the life cycle is very important. A child is born unfocalized, everything is permitted them. Gradually they reach maturity. You end up as an empty circle – a person is a mirror, reflecting everyone else. You cannot be egoistic, but you build up layers around you.

At retirement the burdens disappear, social relations disappear. Novelists express themselves re. this.

Yuri experienced England as a child and hence learnt to express herself. Such self-expression does not happen in Japan.

People are patterned – outcasts cannot read the signals properly.

The life-cycle can be envisaged as an egg-timer, a little like the English class system.

Childhood is wild, loose, the middle part is contained and restrained and selfless. In old age and retirement you are free and unconstrained again.

Alan talked and read out bits of Jaspers to show what he meant by Axiality. Kenichi can

understand Aristotle (Descartes - parts), Hobbes & Machiavelli also the Scottish Enlightenment and the adaptations to the scientific revolution. But the theological writers like St Augustine, proclaimers of world religions, he finds incomprehensible. As a Japanese he cannot see the need for religion. Confesses that his views are half and half, not really Axial. They thought that in the conclusion I should stress the Basso Ostinato pedal of continuities (Maruyama). Yet Japan also needed the higher notes – the influences from the outside.

We talked of the dangers of *nihonjinron*.

Over lunch we discussed the problem of warfare and how to understand the Japanese behaviour in the 2nd World War. They said that for the Japanese war is a last resort. They are slow to go to war, but when they do, it is total war, with no quarter given. For westerners, war seems to be a game. For the Japanese, there is no surrender. They could not understand the limited war of the West.

Young women in Japan now have no incentive to marry. They want children but without marriage.

In terms of political control of the market, the Shogunate would give licences to traders, then they were pretty free to do what they liked. They mentioned again the futures market in rice.

I asked about the Evil Eye and they confirmed that there was absolutely no concept of the Evil Eye.

I asked Yuri what idea she had of heaven, and she confirmed that she had no idea of heaven. In relation to religion, she said 'we don't have religion'. She and others go to shrines to relieve themselves from anxiety, though she doesn't really believe that it has any efficacy. Just that people would feel anxious if they don't put up a message in the shrines to whatever is there. They do the ritualistic things to obtain good things and not to avoid bad things. They do hang little things in care to protect them. Kenichi buys these charms for the children to encourage and relieve himself. He stressed again that Christians in the Western sense do not really exist in Japan.

The word for religion is 'shu-ko', a Meiji word, *shu* means sect, and *ko* means teaching.

Some high status schools have religious affiliation and religious teaching – but when pressed, he said that the teaching was really just about the life of selected good persons.

'No sex, no sects. We are Japanese.' (Kenichi)

Some private schools were established by religious sects. Kenichi's school was established by Canadian Methodists. The girl's school had a chapel, otherwise nothing else was done.

I asked Yuri what she would think of as a cause if something went wrong. She said she would think she 'hadn't done thing right in life' – she would look for an explanation. Also just bad luck. Toshiko said she would only consider it bad luck.

Kenichi admired rationality – if he was ill, it was old age or unfitness.

Kali (Indian goddess) was introduced into Japan, and lion-like goddess eating children – but transferred in Japan into the role of "mother" to dead babies!

Perhaps if one of the girls died then they might look for causes that were quite practical.

Kenichi feels a kind of "sacred" responsibility.

The Fujiwara family built shrines to appease violent spirits. Kenichi here, and often, spoke as if events of the C6-C7 were still fully relevant today. Their mothers might think that an ancestor or ghost caused a bad thing to happen.

Astrology, *feng shui*, bad luck was associated with this.

"Tengu" is the Japanese devil, missing children are captured by "tengu".

There are forest sprites called "Kami Kakshi", "Kami Kids".

The Christians use "Tengu" as equivalent to devils, though they are really rather different.

"Oni" another Devil in Heian period, was red and green. They were really bandits. They had golden eyes with horns and teeth. Their body was red. Inhabited northern Honshu among the minority peoples – had a mace with spikes.

The Fox god – Inari – in Japan, a familiar wild animal, believed that a white fox messenger of god. They sometimes send a message. So people give nice things at the fox shrine. This would bring blessings, for example a good harvest.

The Fox tries to trick us, change into a bride. When there is rain with sunshine, it is caused by the wedding of a fox.

The Japanese are animistic.

Japan is a contextualized world, without an original creator or with any absolutes, western science and art is random.

There are no fundamental causes.

There is no faith in a grand design.

The Chinese are half way between the West and Japan.

Kenichi said that New Guinea and Japan had no scientific revolution.

Alan asked what the West could learn from Japan. It is the only real alternative to capitalism. It is good on conservatism, since there is only this world.

Kenichi talked of the need for an alternative to western models, otherwise one suffers from a "saturation of the imagination".

Japan managed to relativize world religion.

We talked about continuing our worked together next March/April (we have fixed dates and proposed project. Leave on Saturday afternoon and arrive back on April 5th).

[we continued the discussion at an Indian restaurant in Bottisham!]

Toshiko thought that 'To see ourselves as others see us' would be a good epigram.

We discussed *sumo*. They are delighted when small wrestlers win against large ones.

They talked about the importance of baseball. The high school baseball tournament is very important with over 4000 schools taking part. The hero is the pitcher of losing teams. You should not win. Great sympathy with the losers, that is beautiful, the picture of the loser is what the Japanese love, not the winner. In Kamakura shogunate they love the younger brother who was killed.

In the kojiki, the worlds of the dead, in a cave under the earth – Hell is fire – Buddhism
Kamakura - hell fire.

The world of the dead is continuity.

The Shinto interpretation is of another world, but never practiced in detail. Mirrors reflect the self-after death people are on the other side the mirror and can see through.

An eternal world – this screen between us and eternal.

A similar world to this, but without pain (ie. like the Tribal Heaven of the Gurungs]

A more beautiful world (in Uji). Heavenly girls playing pies. Our (western) world when we forget everything - an Alzheimer's world.

- Agreed (a) We would try to visit Japan for 2-3 weeks in 2006.
(b) The book would be collaborative, ie. 'AM in collaboration with...'
(c) They would make the Japanese version quite different, at least in terms of examples and evidence, though not in its basic argument.

[The session started at 10.45 and lasted to about 9.45 pm!]

26th August 2005

Alan went to meet Toshiko, Kenichi and Ai and took them to King's and Trinity. Brought them here late afternoon. Walked to the mill, then had tea and finally took them to The Bridge at Clayhithe for supper. As ever, all sorts of interesting ideas. Very enjoyable. [Sarah]

26 August 2005. Conversation/discussions with the Nakamuras - King's and Lode

Spent another very pleasant day with Nakamuras. Showed them King's and Trinity and then had lunch where we talked about the book. Toshiko asked about reconciling tribalism with hierarchy (feudalism) and it is clear that I shall need to explain the core of tribalism (as in trunk-of-tree metaphor), with the grafting on of other elements.

I explained what we taught in first year as integrated tribal societies and Ai volunteered immediately 'That is just like Japan'. Confirmation of the holistic, total, non-divided world.

I asked them if they were happy with the 5 chapters I had sent of the tentative introduction and conclusion, and they seemed quite happy with it, though Toshiko thought that the section on the history – what happened – was a little over simple for a Japanese audience and would need to be expanded in the Japanese version.

I asked Ai what she thought was the core of Japanese society and she said the very strong family – but in discussion it emerged how fragmented it is – 'A near stranger is preferred to a distant relative' is a Japanese saying and she was astonished to hear about the strength of Chinese clanship etc.

Kenichi promised to send me a quote of Maruyama's to the effect that 'The difference between West and Japan is that in Japan relations are "total" relations.'

Kenichi stated that 'our religion is very small and the boundaries very unclear' and it never dominated the rest of the world. The family also is very weak. He thought that politics was very powerful and Japan was a police state – this is what integrated it. Highly bureaucratized from very early on, with the system of 'double officials' as in Korea to check on each other.

After we arrived in Lode we had a long discussion trying to sort out law and justice, ethics and morals. They found the distinction between the last two very difficult to comprehend until it became clear that morality was to do with God-human relations, and ethics to do with human-human. At which they proclaimed that Japan had no morality, which put a far greater weight on ethics. I realized that if R. Benedict instead of confusing us with guilt and shame (internal and external) had contrasted morality (God-man) and ethics (man-man), she would not only have got down closer to the truth but not been attacked so much.

Kenichi talked frequently of a 'half-mirror', e.g. in relation to America. When I asked him, he said this meant a mirror out of which one could see, but not be seen – a one-way mirror. A favourite metaphor.

We discussed again the bringing up of children – the separation of Subaru in a separate cot, Yuri's refusal to stay in a separate cot, Ai in the same bed. We then discussed the flow of responsibility and affection. In traditional societies it is basically upwards – child-parents (as in China or India). In England it is more or less balanced, they thought. In Japan, curiously, it is downwards. When I asked Ai if she felt her responsibilities downwards, she said yes. She could never repay the on to her parents, but also would, if choosing, have to care more downwards than upwards. Is downwards a tribal solution, I wondered.

They mentioned that in Samurai families there was little differentiation of parenting roles. Fathers would carry babies, put them to sleep etc.

In the evening we discussed Hirohito TV film The question of atrocities came up. The Japanese were amazed that the Americans did not rape and pillage, for the Japanese had thought it was a total war, while the Americans behaved as if it was a game. This was a deep problem in all areas of the war.

Finally we talked at length about the odd succession rituals of the Emperor – in particular the sexual/fertility immersion in the bath seven times, the symbolic slitting open of the Emperor, the lying beside the dead Emperor of the successor. Kenichi convinced by this of my thesis of a basic animistic/pre-Axial stratum in Japan and hence my whole angle. Keen to look further into this Frazerian world.

SEPTEMBER

[There was only one more week for Toshiko and Kenichi in England, so the meeting of 2nd September was particularly important and full of content.]

2nd September 2005

Very late to bed as we had Kenichi and Toshiko here till quite late. Very intense discussions about the book and they had done a great deal of helpful work and thinking. They are working out who else we should collaborate with - Maruyama's "grand-children's" generation. They seem genuinely enthusiastic and both said that this visit and working on the book had made it easier for them to understand England - for the first time. Very exciting and nice to have them around.

Kenichi and Toshiko at Lode

Notes by Alan in small book.

We discussed the sources for studying animism in Japan. They said the four main sources were Lafcadio Hearn, Yanagata, Miyazaki Hayao – the animator/producer of 'Spirited Away' and all his films, cf. Nausicaä, especially Totoro. Also Miyakawa Kenji - a children's teacher. We discussed ageing. After the five twelve-year cycles, a person retires at 60 and becomes a child again. There is a ceremony with a red coat and a red cap to celebrate the re-birth and a person

starts again at the age of 0.

Eyes are very powerful in Japan as a communication tool – watching children (white eye etc). Japan is a very visual culture, rather than seeing with the mind (the mind's eye is always watching). People welcome eye contact.

We discussed the red sun. Toshiko had always seen the sun as red from childhood. Her children, though, draw the sun as yellow – which surprises her. 'I didn't imagine the sun is yellow until my children drew it as yellow. I did not doubt it.' She saw a yellow thing in a children's book – the moon is traditionally yellow – so she wondered why the moon was shining in the day time. Battle flags of the famous Japanese clans are gold, red, black and white (not green and blue). Japan is like a fan. It is closed up at first and nothing shows. The book gradually opens the fan, each section/chapter being another ripple/part – until the whole fan is laid out in all its immense complexity. And each part is another facet and a necessary join – separate, yet linked by paper and bamboo. Then, at the end, the whole thing is closed up in all its simplicity as a fan again. Difficult to understand when opened, but ultimately very simple – a closing together into a very simple shape.

Meeting at Lode. Kenichi and Toshiko

[N.B. Kenichi brought 9 pages of notes/diagrams which he had made to this meeting. They contain important supplementary materials.]

They commented on my Fukuzawa lecture, suggesting I started by emphasizing the accepted view of Fukuzawa and Maruyama as modernizer. This will show the originality of my approach, which challenges this view. Fukuzawa tried to change a tribal society into a modern one – the separation of four spheres etc. He did not see the results, but Maruyama did, he saw a supposedly modernized and democratized society, yet Japan still had problems. So he returned to the past. Returning to the book.

Kenichi gave a lecture on Shintoism. It does not really exist as a thing. The function of the shrine. Firstly as a treasure house for the Emperor – where the mirror, sword and jewel are kept. The mirror is the most important. They chose the Ise peninsula because it was like a mirror – looking East. Until the C13 there were no Shinto texts. Then the priests at the shrine began to code the rituals – the texts were kept within the family. In the C15 Yoshida Kanetomo (Yoshida Shrine) claimed to be an authority on Shinto ritual and tried to popularize it. He said he was the only one to keep the ritual – tried to popularize it, he authorized others to use the Shinto ritual – e.g. Sumo referees are to this day trained and authorized by the Yoshida Shrine to perform the ritual. They were criticized by the Ise shrine. The scholars critical of Yoshida, tried to make them control Shinto teaching but failed. At the beginning of the Meiji took minor scholarly studies as Orthodoxy.

During Tokugawa period, Buddhism was usual for social control and Confucius for ethics. The Meiji thought they needed a church-like system so introduced Shintoism. Shrines were family shrines – the Fujiwara shrine – sun-goddess by male god, this makes god their family ancestor. The Kashima shrine. They emphasized that their family was second only to the Emperor. The Heike & Genji families had their own shrines.

Each family has a small shrine – an ancestor shrine. The shrine was loosely related through

Shintoism. There was no word for national Shintoism until 1945. There had been a native shrine at Ise. Now two shrines – one built on top of, incorporating, the native shrine. The second shrine has something, unnamed, in it.

Animism. When the Palace moved from Nara to Kyoto, 2 Kamo shrines – upper and lower. Kamo was a nature god, with a white egret as the symbol. The native god was placated and included in the shrine.

This is completely opposite to Christianity, which is oppositional.

'Kami' – birds, foxes etc are "worshipped". Native and family shrines are put together. Kami is not God in the Western sense.

Fukuzawa talks of gods – believed there was something beyond human capability. A Confucian sense – heaven - godo.

On the kami, see Yanagita, and Origuchi Shnobu (a Shinto priest and scholar). "The Japanese god is a strange visitor" – people give the gods a cordial reception. They serve sake to him to calm him down and pacify this world. This strange visitor is beyond human knowledge and capability – for example, bad things such as typhoons and earthquakes, or good things such as harvest.

The appearance of a phenomena beyond human understanding is a kami or 'tatari', for example a strong wind. They build a Tatsuda Shrine near Biwa Lake in a strategic position to control floods and typhoons during the Heian period. Had to worship there.

The prevalence of earthquakes etc. in Japan encourage the use of shrines. People try to search out the cause of the trouble.

The Emperor would ask his specialists – "scientists" of the "eki" – they traditionally located troubles in either the Buddhist or Confucian tradition – astronomers and astrologers.

If there are floods, people build dams and build a shrine on it.

Nowadays, building tunnels or any extensive earth moving, people ask permission of the kami and build a shrine. Watanabe calls this religion, but polytheistic and animist together.

In the C16 the Catholics came and Japanese called the Christian God 'Deus', not kami. Most of the converts were very poor and underground, but were accommodated. The Meiji did tolerate them, but when a Bishop came from Rome, he questioned those who had hung on to their religion and said they were not Christians.

Maruyama's *basso ostinato* refers to the *koso* or old layer.

The Uragami Church was the old Christian Church in Nagasaki – exact centre of the Atom Bomb – lots of Christians died.

The Axial/non-axial. the Japanese acceptance of Buddhism was not an Axial change in 645. The Kojiki was the first Japanese text. The first writing in a sort of Japanese c. fifth or sixth century. Shinto texts were 'oral'. the Kojiki was oral. Fujiwara Fubitu 'invented' the Kojiki, stimulated by China to have a written history.

The Ise shrine is to worship the sun goddess – the mirror is the icon of the sun.

The Japanese had conquered Kyushu by 3rd century – native Kakas. Part conquest, part absorbed. There were for long 3 powers in Japan. Tohoku-Ainu, the East – Kamakura Shogunate – West – another power.

Modernity consists of strong religion dominating society and politics.

Japan is non-axial, a compromise – religion has a 'cafeteria' feeling.

Politics is flexible, economy as well. Society and Family do not change and are the deepest and thickest layer – others are upper, thinner, layer.

The parent-child relationship is very strong, but not a clan or domestic group. Japan is like a tribal society, based on kinship. It is a segmentary, self-organized, society. People are united by facing inwards towards the Emperor. If they face outwards, it is a sign of rebellion.

We discussed acephalous societies and E-Pritchard's ideas of what held the Nuer together. We discussed the analogy of the powerless, yet authority-endowed, Leopard Skin Chief. The Tenno (Emperor) family in Japan was the weakest of the families, but it had strong ritual power. All the other clans had links to the outside, only the Emperor family was not involved with outside powers.

It is paradoxically the weakness of the Emperor that holds the rest together.

There is a dual system of authority and power.

As you move up an organization you become more powerless.

If the top man did try to use power, it is a disaster, as with Hirohito. Strong men did not try to stop Hirohito. Japan is the opposite of Acton's dictum.¹

All power evaporates.

Japan is like the roof of King's Chapel, with the Emperor as the keystone.

Parent-child relationship, China and Japan feel very different. The Japanese are not patriarchal in the Chinese sense.

Toshiko (citing Hiroko Hara) said that in the West, adults stand in front of the children and teach them, in Japan they stand behind them and watch/guide them. Gradually they funnel them in a certain direction.

There is no corporal punishment, except for an occasional smack. – very like the Gurungs.

The Japanese have the saying that children are treasures, or gifts from heaven. The goal of parents is to make children healthy, happy and socially aware and honest. If children do not achieve this, it is the parent's failure. Aborting children happens if you can't take on the burden of bringing up children. If you are a human being, you will take on the burden. This may partly explain the late divorces in Japan – the obligation to children continues. A very different attitude to that in the West. Maruyama experienced the militarism of the 1930s, after the War he was the top intellectual. In the 1930s intellectuals criticized the western model as decadent, so Maruyama supported western democracy against Nazism, Stalinism, McCarthyism & Japanese Military. He thought they all came from the same origin – and were very bad. He tried to import democracy into Japan. He thought he'd succeeded, but never counted on that post 1960s success, but reverted to ancient scholarship and tried to read and understand the whole history of Japan.

Tribal happiness.

Amae and *koko* (filial piety) – children sense that there is always someone who will understand you, this is *amae*, the dependency of feeling safe. If your parents die, you have to be independent, but it is very difficult for orphans – anomie.

¹ Lord Acton: 'All power tends to corrupt. Absolute power corrupts absolutely.'

In marriage, the husband is managed by the wife, who should understand him – wet leaves,² *amae* of a kind. Mothers and daughters have a strong bond in a general sense of ‘*amae*’, not between daughter and father. A husband had an "affectionate" relationship in the work place. In the Office he has his own cup, personal desk and possessions, slippers, goes on outings with office friends, also this is done in universities.

But there is no common room in Komaba,³ which is an exceptional Japanese workplace. The marriage of the Professor's daughter with one of his disciples happens – a sort of *ie*.

Parents do not expect money from their children, would be insulted, but only wanted their children to fulfil their expectations to be happy.

At retirement, people pass their power to the younger generations. The wife of the house hands over money to her daughter in law. Even after retirement, parents are marginalized, but successors have some duty to consult their parents and the retired persons have some significance.

Older people are respected for their experience and maturity – their wisdom and experience. This is still the case. Power is in the middle, authority and respect in the older. The retired person is like a leopard-skin chief. In the company, the just-retired person takes charge of external relations. These retired persons still want to be powerful and want to interfere.

Watanabe was Maruyama's (youngest) student – his named successor is Karube, aged 35.⁴ He has been chosen by Watanabe – grand-child of Maruyama. A specialist on Japan (Traditionalist Watsuji – ethics – is the subject of Maruyama's successor). A scholar's value is measured by his successors, a supervisor's fame is increased by them.

Another grand 'grand-child' of Maruyama is Okubo (Meiji University) – does work on the Meiji period, similar work to Toshiko.

Natural disasters are very important in Japan, suddenly life changes from heaven to hell – add to ecology section.

'Science' in Japan was never oppressed by religion. The 'scientists' were time keepers, calendar keepers, astronomers. Just before Meiji people started experimenting and discovering themselves. Physics was very important in the 1920s. There was no conflict between science and religion e.g. over body dissection.

'Kaito kudo' school – merchant or practical science, TekiTekjuku-school of Dutch learning. Fairly low status, but those who want could be taken into a merchant house.

The Japanese are interested in utility, not involved in studying the laws of nature. Might be dangerous anyway to tamper with the natural world.

Smallpox vaccination early introduced, though fear that people would become ill.

Famine relief food like potatoes quickly adopted.

Experiments with electricity thought of as black magic, but once this utility was shown, it was adopted at once.

People do not like mutilations of the body as it is precious – it is not yours, it is a gift of your parents (note: Sarah found in book on Confucius that this is a direct Confucian idea). It is also associated

² A reference to the Japanese view that when husbands retire from their all-demanding jobs, they have little to do but trail after their wives, attaching themselves like 'wet leaves' to their partner.

³ Komaba is the arts and social science campus of Tokyo University, where I had been a visiting Professor for three months in 1997.

⁴ There are long interviews with both these scholars in the next volume of this account.

with the mutilation of criminals.

You are a compound of everything that has been put into it.

Sepuku (ritual suicide) is very rare. It is mostly forced. Often self-sacrifice for the rest (for example if a Daimyo in a castle committed, then his followers would be spared). 47 Ronin and Mishima discussed.

NOTES DURING VISIT TO JAPAN

Notes by Sarah

21st March 2006

Child-rearing

Alan had noted how a Japanese baby on the plane had emitted a high-pitched scream to attract its mother's attention and wondered if this was a particularly Japanese sound. Toshiko thought that it was a reflection of modern mothers who are not so attentive to their children as in her day. She would never have allowed her children to reach that stage. Then, children would walk in front and the mothers followed so that they could make sure the children didn't fall etc., now children walk behind their mothers and are expected to take care of themselves.

Life-time employment

Concept now coming back as the baby-boomers are reaching retirement and there is the beginning of a labour shortage so it is in the interest of businesses to hold onto good employees.

Continuity

Kenichi mentioned the argument in a book by Watanabe, ? using the accounts of early visitors to Japan that old Japan has completely disappeared which is contrary to Alan's perception.

Original settlement of Japan

Has multiple origins. The east and west of Japan are very different. Burakumin are only in the west. Dividing line is near Nagoya. Tokyo is east. East settlers may be predominantly from the north while western settlers from the south-west. Alan noted Hayami's line although Osamu's findings do not show such a distinct difference. Alan suggested they needed overlay maps to try to crystalize patterns.

Maruyama

Sadly, little translated. He starts with the Kojiki - myths written down in the 8th century to legitimize emperor but there is no reflection of Confucianism in the original myths so must date from before China's influence. Kenichi suggested the myths were shamanic, chanted by female shaman although there is little evidence for this. K referred to an Empress-shaman (Koyo?) who commissioned the Nihongi, the Tenno - (Emperor) commissioned the Kojiki, each to justify own right to rule. Chinese emphasise heaven while Japanese emphasise the sun. Idea of basso-ostinato there from the first with "new music" ie. Confucianism, Buddhism coming in which is absorbed into the basso-ostinato. But the problem is whether the basso-ostinato changes it or is itself changed.

Divorce

Has always been easy. Although a man has to write a declaration of divorce, a woman can actually initiate it. Often happened where a man had been brought in as husband to a daughter-heiress. When her parents died she would divorce the man and usually marry again. No real evidence of how actively she would have sought a divorce or whether she was pushed to do so by relatives or a more attractive mate. Whichever it was, the heiress could maintain the 'ie'. Literary evidence suggests the most cruel thing to happen to a man is to be married to the daughter of a rich family as his situation was tenuous. Neither Toshiko, Kenichi nor Osamu were aware that divorce was very difficult in England until 1970. This is important as it may be the reason why English marriages are companionate and central and Japanese marriages appear flaky and peripheral.

Adoption and social mobility

Mechanism to allow a rich merchant's daughter to marry a Samurai was for another Samurai family to adopt her, she would become a Samurai by adoption and then could marry a Samurai. This overcame the Tokugawa prohibition on Samurai intermarrying with merchants etc.

Adoption

Now adoption is very rare as there is no need to preserve the family name. Toshiko feels that the very close relationship between parents and children in Japan makes adoption unattractive. You must feel the blood link. A description by Osamu of American neighbours who had already adopted two children then adopting a Japanese baby because she was cute amazed him and appalled Toshiko.

21.3.2006

Koseki

Introduced by Meiji government. Before that there were population registers in temples. If one moved then a registration document was taken to a temple in the new area.

21.3.2006

Manure

In C17 cattle and horses were kept for manure and transport in the west especially. Neither were eaten, nor did they use the milk. They were not used for ploughing. Afforestation showed how the need for fodder exceeded the limited land which was mainly used for rice. Disappearance of animals has to do with loss of fodder.

21.3.2006

Horse shoes

Japanese horses were not shod with iron. We wondered if straw shoes were used although Osamu thought they could not be strong enough to last on all but the best roads.

21.3.2006

Kojiki

Toshiko talked about the Tenu Emperor legitimising himself through the Kojiki. His ritual purification meant that some people had to become "grey" to distinguish him as "white", and this could be the origin of Burakumin and other untouchables.

Religion

Osamu said that the only time when religious belief had any meaning for the Japanese was during the Kamakura period. Then there was a distinct interest and concern about the after-life and other-world. It was a time of gloom preceded by years of harvest failure and famine. Is there something similar in Europe at about the same time with plague and famine and ideas of the end of the world? Toshiko mentioned a new edition of the Genji by a woman who later became a Buddhist nun. She suggested that monasteries and nunneries were seen only as places for retirement from the cares of the world at that time, not as places where you could prepare for an afterlife. She sees even the copying of sutras to be activities without real meaning.

Appearance of continuity

Observation by Prof. T. Komori that English houses give an appearance from the outside of no change although the insides are modern, Japanese houses give the reverse.

Parallels between 'oya kabun' and businesses

Osamu and Komori agree with Alan's observation that there is a similarity between the modern employment system and the 'oya kabun'. On retirement an employee can take some stock from the main company and set up another which maintains a link though it is not the parent. Heads of big firms are insiders whereas in US and the West they tend to be new to the company.

Apprenticeship

Osamu said in the Tokugawa period it was rare. Sons were trained at home. After the Tokugawa, with the introduction of machines, apprenticeship began and with it a labour market arose.

22.3.2006

Adoption

K. Yoshida said that in 1987 the adoption law was modified to bring it in line with the West, but very few adoptions.

Government involvement in business

Asamu said that it is post 1940 when Unions were set up and there was more planning in the economy which was Miti led. This unlike the earlier role of the government which was very low-key.

24th March 2006

Conversation with Toshiko

Talked about impression of androgyny, both male and female, in Japan on the basis of the

clothes that young people are wearing. Toshiko agreed. She thought this had always been the case until 1970's when increasing wealth and a Western approach to women, encouraged by the Americans after the war, confined women to the home and separated them from men. Since the economic downturn they have gradually reverted to the old way so there is a good deal more similarity between men and women. Toshiko said that before the 1970's women had always worked but, similar to Saito's observation on the invisibility of apprentices because fathers trained sons at home, the wives too were working alongside their husbands.

24.3.2006

Conversation with Professor E. Sakurai

He said Japanese accrete and don't throw away [cf Japanese language]. They still use the same terms in finance for bonds and equities. They have the ability to create new words but prefer to imbue old words with new meanings while retaining the old meaning at the same time. This is in complete contrast to China which changes continually (does it?). Why does Japan preserve things? Because there has been no internal revolution and because destruction of things is regarded as very inefficient.

Conversation with Professor E. Sakurai

The Samurai did not destroy the Emperor because their justification for their existence was the same as his - the mythologies of Kojiki and Nihonji. To destroy the Emperor would destroy that mythology. Seems that McArthur was also aware of this bond in his treatment of the Emperor.

Conversation with Professor E. Sakurai

Continuity and relevance is shown very nicely in the fact that Jomon-style earthenware continued to be made alongside new porcelain. Possibly the only country in the world where an earthenware tea-bowl of crude construction can be as valuable as the finest porcelain.

Conversation with Professor E. Sakurai

Preservation is not always intentional. Japan imported Chinese coinage until C11 and just continued to use it.

Conversation with Professor E. Sakurai

Japan centralizes in times of threat from the outside - Heien, Tokugawa, Meiji, Showa - then relaxes back when the threat subsides.

Conversation with Professor E. Sakurai

Samurai appeared not because of external threat. They were economically independent due to gifts of land. Controversy whether Japanese feudalism is the same as European, but Samurai are very like English knights.

Conversation with Professor E. Sakurai

Was the Kamakura period the only time when there was a common belief in heaven? Certainly, a period of millenarian belief as shown in religious writings of the time. However, suggested that

"end of the worldism" was common turn of phrase, probably without much meaning. By Muramachi period Buddhism and Shintoism have already mixed. 'Amida' - heaven. Buddhist idea of heaven very like Christian - clouds, music etc. cf. Uji. Appeared in C11 and originated with the Jodo sect. (NB. This idea cannot be so pervasive as it does not reflect in Japanese literature as it does in English, a point made by Kenichi in the past).

Conversation with Professor E. Sakurai

1270 Japanese taxes changed from rice to coin - influenced by Sung China and Yuan who used coin. Coin importation from China promoted tax in coin which led to production of goods for sale to make money to pay taxes. Prices then set by supply and demand. Labour market was not influenced by commodity prices - quite distinct. Eg. cost of lodging on the Tokaido remained the same from C14-16 while the price of rice fluctuates. Carpenters, for instance worked from sunrise to sunset throughout the year but were paid the same amount per day, winter and summer. The demand for labour was high in summer and low in winter and the price of materials was high in summer and low in winter, so there is evidence of social factors triumphing over market factors. In ancient Japan, workers had been paid differently in spring, summer and winter copying the Chinese model, but, although this was written down and so coded he is not sure whether this was so in practice. (NB. Supports the idea of a dual economy - social factors and market factors). On the inflexibility of the price of labour, working for an employer is seen as a gift and the wages are the return of the gift (NB. a reciprocal relationship). The Japanese word for salary is 'roku' which means gift. A labourer's wage translates as "money for liquor". In the Edo period (or Edo, as a reason given was fires?) commodity prices did begin to influence labour prices. Even today labour is thought of as a gift. (NB. fits with the life-time employment model although he thought this model was linked to the idea of the 'ie', the importance of the continuity of the business. Can't both be true?).

Conversation with Kenichi

'Kabuku' = showing off. Sasaki Doyo a Samurai sent into exile accompanied by kabuki players. (NB. relevance to Godaigo????)

Conversation with Toshiko

Japanese society remained very similar over the whole period from Muramachi up to 1960's and then great changes, but now seems to be reverting.

Comfort women - just for comfort. An extension of the geisha/floating world concepts of Japan. "We are very tolerant of sex - men need women - concubines, etc. so wives quite tolerant about this." (NB. not to be muddled with rape which was seen as retribution).

Divorce and the fragility of marriage - Toshiko was not aware of the weak legal state of marriage in Japan compared to England due to ease of divorce by men. She was not sure if women could legally initiate divorce proceedings.

Toshiko had thought and been taught that the Meiji Civil Code was very patriarchal, but when

she examined it she found that it was not so patriarchal. She is beginning to realize that Fukazawa's writings on women are not reflecting the post-Meiji Civil Code but seem to reflect the more egalitarian world of the late Tokugawa period.

Toshiko is coming to realize that law and practice are very different in Japan.

Conversation with Kenichi

Axial idea spread through Jodo sect from C11. Shingan sect has some transcendentalism in it - millenarianism. Maruyama saw that in the late C13 'basso ostinato' (ancient animism) might have absorbed some axially through Godaigo. He was the danger point. He mobilized against the Samurai using labourers, prostitutes - odd people. He believed he was a shaman and tried to destroy the Shogunate through spells - believed in the power of sex (NB. how would this work?) - elephant headed humans (NB relevance?). He was the last shaman-emperor. With his defeat, which ended the Kamakura period, the imperial system was divided into two and the Samurai were in the ascendant.

26th March 2006

Conversation with Toshiko

Wages as a gift

Payment for goods and humans is totally different in Japanese thought so salaries and wages thought of as a gift. Fees for school fees in Edo was not an obligatory but a voluntary payment - schoolmaster could not ask for payment and would never send a bill, neither was there a legal right to payment as such. Fees were not set but parents would talk among themselves to get an idea of the general rate. Schoolmaster would often accept varying amounts depending on the parents' wealth or poverty. It would have been considered very impolite to ask how much to pay. When the library was set up at Keio the fee was very small and remained so. There are still a lot of "voluntary" fees. Toshiko's sister-in-law teaches piano but finds it nearly impossible to ask for payment and relies on the parents of her students to do the honourable thing. Often money is paid but also presents given at certain times of year which underlines the sentiment of "gift". Thus, fee payment is part of a social relationship not transactional. Labour contracts in Japan = gifts = exchange in disguise - money should not be paid directly and explicitly. Money for labour should be "wrapped" in gifts. Early money used for ritual purposes, not as means of exchange, so magical - (restricted spheres of exchange in Japan, not into human relations).

Giri and contract

Toshiko stated that 'giri' was not a contract - "we have no contract between human beings". Japanese have idea of contracts with things but not with people - "we cannot contract ourselves out". There are agreements which describe the conditions of the relationship, and authorize it, but there are not contracts as such. As no contracts between people just matters of fact, there is no shift from status to contract in Maine's sense. Relations are recognized - "contracts" are expressive, not instrumental. "We may look like a modern contract society, but we reluctantly

register marriages, property etc. We don't care about registration". Even today they are no contracts. "We think we are modern and have contracts, but in fact not contractual. When we buy or borrow things, the human relationship is more important - it is beyond contract, too important for contract". Divorces are usually arranged between a couple, possibly with the help of friends but lawyers are only used as a last resort. "We Japanese have never understood contract". Things and people very different - contract with things, status with people - de-axialization. Money they destroyed by relationality. Gemeinschaft and gessellschaft both continuous.

Conversation with Kenichi

Money (Amino's theory)

Magical coins - 5-yen coin = 'goen' - same sound as "relations" - so "good relations" to the gods. Before 1270 only Chinese coins of this value imported. Money restricted for things not people. Coins have particular magical power because they cut off relations - so tendency to bury coins. National network along the coast of special places, in shrines or temples, where money-lender monks were found. Temples turned into banks rather like with Jews. Money is related to religion and controlled by priests etc. Heiazen Temple main money lender for Kyoto people - pseudo-monks. 1270 lots of money imported which weakened the monk money lenders (Sakurai's point). These monks become outcastes, like Jews. Yanagita's "silent trade" - mountain people and valley people exchange.

Craftsmen and other occupations

There was a network of craftsmen to C14. Each Daimyo would invite them to market goods in their cities. Amino found a coastal city with poor agriculture that 40% of so-called farmers were fishermen, craftsmen, traders etc. and that the city was rich through trade. He found this elsewhere too. Money and the trade network active. Emperor had special relationships with certain traders or craftsmen who sent their best work to the Emperor or to temples who in turn sponsored and protected them - low tax etc. - starts from C7 onwards - Toji document is the oldest source of evidence for this. Through relations with the Emperor there was a kind of guild-like structures throughout Japan. Sakurai challenges the centralized theory of Amino and thinks it much more fragmented. Guilds still religious-related - the free-lance bell-founders, for instance, emulate the patterns of the authentic (guild-member) bell-founders.

Maruyama and 'basso ostinato'

This theory is very well known in Japan but the idea still controversial. The article on b.o. probably the most attractive "magical" product as it is digging up the most secret element of Japanese history. Maruyama showed a kind of fatalistic despair in it. "It opens up a magical coffin of Japan." Alan warned not to step on the tail of this dragon but stick to his own findings. Maruyama's idea of a musical score - different instruments - crazy about Wagner.

Axiality

Non-axiality explains 25% of Japan - non-binary characteristic - need to explain the other 75%. Political power superior to religious power - positive side. Maruyama ignored Axial/Non-Axial

though he knew of Weber's argument. Followed Weber in developing idea of 'basso ostinato'

Beauty and The Body

Kenichi's thoughts [Most of this in film]

Cherry blossom

Cherry blossom watching was invented in the Meiji period. The particular cherry tree seen in cities is from a single clone. Earlier, in the Edo period there was a great boom in the cultivation of trees and plants, bonsei, gold-fish etc. for rich merchants. Kenichi described it now as a drunken community-building exercise - togetherness is everything. If you don't drink it is hell! (He hates it).

Manga and violent sexual material [see film].

Beliefs and kami

Motoori Norinaga - originator of Shintoism - saw in it something of the sublime. Japan has the idea of sublime but not the deity. Norinaga's definition of kami - man, bird or nature, sea, mountain or anything very unusual and extraordinary and makes your hair stand on end. So both good but also bad, strange or exceptional. cf. Soseki 'I am a Cat'. Essential point is that it is something beyond imagination. Kami are not gods. Their strange "heaven" is here, there and everywhere. Apparent when something moves you or you feel a touch of the sublime.

Kabuki and enchantment

Danjuro, a kabuki actor of Edo, played a buddha role and audience thought of him as a living Buddha - wore magical colour (brown) which is worn by burakumin to keep evil things at bay. "Our idea of god is very light".

Enge charm

An 'enge' is a little charm sold in temples. It is a small bag which contains a 5-yen coin. (see photo of one bought by Kenichi for Yuri at exam time). "Our attitude to religion is in charms - not important, but it is good for us. Chance most widely accepted cause in Confucius's teachings - many charms - even Kenichi feels need of charms in relation to events - "Some things are beyond my control. I cannot protect my family by myself. I need some strength from the science of chance" - Persimmon have special powers.

Judgement by ordeal

Early Tokugawa disputes between villages settled by hot water/iron ordeal. But although one village might win the other does not accept the judgement of god.

Ghettos

Japan is a "ghetto" society with special areas for the outcasts of society, the actors, prostitutes, burakumin etc.

Giri

In Chinese, two characters = justice, reason, but de-axialized when the word comes to Japan where it is contextual and relational and does not refer to universal reason or justice but the obligations between persons.

Names and identity

According to Amino there are four categories of given names in Japan.

1. Childhood name - affectionate, diminutive. Many boys had names like 'maru' meaning round, pretty things
2. Name used by others - eg. Ichiro = first son, a term of address or father's name
3. Real name, carefully given by father. Tradition after C9 that boys given name with two kanji characters, which echoed their grandfather's name. In western Japan this was bilateral, in east, patrilateral. Before that time they were called after insects, food, plants. Real name was not often used except officially for registration
4. The name given when you reach adulthood and can choose your own name. This will usually aim at appearing humble and traditional

28th March

Conversation with Jin Makabe

Criticism of Maruyama's 'basso ostinato'

Had an obsession with Norinaga (mid-Edo). Norinaga was trying to kick out the Chinese element in Japanese thinking, to purify Japanese culture. Maruyama wrote two articles on the basso ostinato of historical consciousness and political structure, also a draft on ethics which was never finished as he found it too difficult. Trouble is that if you kick out the Chinese elements, bits of Buddhism, Confucianism etc., then only Japaneseness remains. Makabe thinks there is not such thing as Japaneseness from the start - no DNA. Two dimensions to failure of ethics part - the most difficult part and also politically dangerous as it could make Japanese culture more authoritarian. Had a most honest/transparent attitude - he lectured on this and noticed that he was becoming of kami status - (opening coffins) - a magi element. If you can define the essence of the ethical system it is the end of history for Japan. B.o. makes it too heavy. Maruyama debate still continues. He was thought of as a democratic liberal and a modernizer, whereas b.o. thought of as a conservative model. So scholars have strong reservations. Maruyama tried to explain b.o. as a defence mechanism or modifier of axial impacts. In 1984 Kenichi thought there was no continuous b.o. through Japanese history but changed his mind. "We may be changed. A mechanism for absorbing" - (cf. "The changing same"). From 1964-67 Maruyama's lectures were presented and published. Two important messages - b.o. also Kamakura Buddhism, Christianity, Bushido - double attack theory - need to pick up both strands.

Maruyama's understanding of Weber

Among Japanese intellectuals, idealization/mystification in relation to Weber. Idea that we are lacking Protestant individualism etc. A misunderstanding of the myth of Protestant individualism etc. - whereas Calvin = authoritarianism/fundamentalism. A mistake by Maruyama - too much Weber. Toward the end he realized the other side of Weber - the bureaucratic/rational nightmare. Inferiority complex towards Protestantism by Japanese intellectuals - idealized view.

Problem of relativism and comparison

We political scientists had a basic training to study Western political thought - we create a measurement through these descriptions and look back at our own society - we borrow and sometimes model it. We study using these categories, so it is sometimes understandable by Westerners. 'Nihonjinron' - failure of - caused by foreign measurements applied directly to Japan and we are completely different from it - so end with particularistic solution. Political science using concepts from West, translatable between cultures. E-P 'Nuer' less plausible approach for us so rather surprised that the approaches are so different.

Amino's theory

Japan is half isolated, half penetrated by other cultures - half and half (cf. Kachin) on fringe of huge empire. Japanese categories influenced, half-penetrated, half-integrated - always importing new things. Basso ostinato cannot stand up on its own - needs more than Japaneseness. The bones are Chinese, the flesh is Japanese (or the other way round). B.o. unifies the different elements into a manageable pattern.

Maruyama's character

Maruyama had some aspects of a shaman. Kowai witnessed relationship between Dick Storey and Maruyama. Dick Storey reported Maruyama's reaction when he saw a sword in a castle near Oxford in the 1960's. He grabbed the sword and started to dance with it. Whenever Maruyama listened to Wagner he started to conduct like Furtwangler. Apparently when he left Storey at the station in Oxford he burst into tears.

29th March

Essence of Japanese style according to Ai

Tokyo = 'iki' - manly geisha - short, clear, express yourself, simplify, decisive, keep your distance.
Kyoto = ephemeral, cherry-blossom, soon gone.

Distinction between arts and crafts

1873-4 first distinction made between arts and crafts - Vienna Exhibition 1873 - founding of College of Art by Fenellosa
(cf. cat at Nikko)

Chance or kami?

Ai experiences deep feelings from nature etc. When she saw Michael Angelo and Leonardo it

was a hair-raising experience. Experience of nature and art was different. Great art is beyond nature. She never entered into enchantment from watching Miyazaki but understood that world. Of their daughters, Kenichi thought Subaru least enchanted and Yuri most, with Ai in the middle.

Idea of death

Asked what happened when she dies, Ai said she didn't believe in a surviving spirit but just return to nature in some way. She thinks her grandmother brings grandfather back to the butsudan for her satisfaction and Kenichi added that all death rituals are for the living. All the individuality of a person dies and just goes back into some sort of natural mass. There is no other world. There are now many neglected graveyards. There used to be collective family grave (based on the 'ie' system) now they are individual or just the nuclear family. Mount Fuji is sacred and there are many graveyards there including Toshiko's family grave. People returning from Manchuria after the war were given rough land there which they turned into graveyards and then sold plots for a living. If a writer died, their publisher used to arrange and pay for the funeral and grave. Firms still do so if the employee dies but not if retired. Some old friends of Kenichi's father and his mother complained that the railway company paid nothing for his funeral even after thirty years' service. In Hokkaido University, if a colleague dies then they would have to organise the funeral, reception, everything.

30th March

Coincidence

'En' = strange link. Toshiko said this when we found we had the same taxi driver again.
30.3.2006 Kyoto notes Sarah

Summary and comments by Kenichi on an article by Hiroshi Watanabe

Watanabe starts with the Iwakura Mission. The Japanese members of the expedition on their trip to America spent much time speculating on what religion they should say they had when questioned by westerners. Buddhism had no real content; Confucianism was not religion; Shinto was just guidance on family behaviour. They felt embarrassed not to have a religion and annoyed by the question.

The draftsmen of the Meiji constitution noted also that Japan lacked religion, while every western country had it. They concluded that if the Japanese had nothing to integrate themselves with, or to contribute to the stability of ordinary people, the place would fall apart. They needed a functional counterpart to religion. Which religion could they adopt? They decided that the 'loyal family' system of Shinto was the best to adopt as their axis.

So, in the Japanese Meiji Constitution, chapter 1, clause 1, it was stated that 'Japan was governed by the Tenno who had a straight trunk line or connection from the ancient times to the present day' and this should be the axis of the system.

Ito, the main drafter, was highly influenced by Gneist, but Gneist was interpreted within a framework. Why choose Gneist?

Watanabe linked the interpretation to the specific interpretation of Confucianism through Sorai. In China, Confucianism was based on the virtuous character of people, which needed to be nourished. Non-religious Sorai turned this upside down so that the purpose of our 'michi' is to govern or stabilize. He made a Machiavellian or cynical interpretation based on state power and the need to govern.

The Shogunate had destroyed all religion. Buddhism was an instrument of power and most of Shinto was forgotten by the mid-Tokugawa. The aim was to create a stable and powerful situation among the ruling elite. All religions were neglected and the ruling class was cynical and secularized.

So, the Japanese, who were so secular at the end of the Edo period, were shocked and embarrassed that the western people might really believe in Christianity. Sorai's argument had been to create not ethics for religion, but ethics for politics (like Machiavelli).

The intellectuals could not understand western religion and misinterpreted it. They assumed that the only rational solution was that the West only used religion to stabilize the society ('opium of the people' idea - AM).

Japan was already fully secularized and had a manipulative attitude to ideology, and they faced the apathy of the masses. So, the leaders put the royal family as the functional equivalent to western religion.

This led to a dilemma for the intellectuals. They never believed in the royal family itself, for everyone knew it was weak and fragile and had no attractive power at all. But they had to put up the royal family, which they had to pretend to believe in, despite their disbelief, as an unreal mask on their faces.

The result would be tragic. The very fragile royal family as a mask for the country, which they pretended to believe in, and tried to create belief in through indoctrination as an equivalent to western religion. It was a very radical argument.

Kenichi's reflections after conversation with Professor Takayoshi Matsuo

Today Matsuo differentiates Tenno 'religion' from Shinto. Matsuo thought religion was the attitude of Japanese to accept something unconditionally or as a source of cultural hegemony which makes the people follow even if this ideology is quite conflicting with their own interests (as Gramsci argues). It is a cultural magic to follow without any doubts or questioning. In fact, this is completely different from western religion.

If this is Emperor pseudo-religion, it would be very dangerous for Matsuo and Maruyama to

substantiate it as the quintessential part of Japanese ethics, since this would turn it from a pseudo-religion to a real religion.

If Maruyama had said that the Emperor is the centre of the systems, this would have put concrete into the ethics and made Emperor religion a real religion.

30.3.2006 Kyoto

Kenichi says that the core is empty - deliberately. And Watanabe is saying the same. If you say that the ethical system is quintessential, it creates a new religion. This will repeat the tragedy of the Meiji, who created a pseudo-religion.

Watanabe quotes Ito to the effect that Shinto mythology is superstitious, but he found that Genesis is even more superstitious, so it might be acceptable to put Shinto in the centre of Emperor pseudo-religion. The intellectuals during the Meiji had 'serious cynicism'.

What Matsuo called 'Emperor religion', Watanabe called **Kokutai** (koku - nation; tai - body) At the end of the Pacific War the minimal condition was to conserve the kokutai. Watanabe thought this derived from a misunderstanding of religion and the use of religion to integrate the whole system.

Kenichi's reflections after conversation with Professor Takayoshi Matsuo
Shinto is just a superstitious story; hence Kenichi and Toshiko are very uneasy when they read about Shinto.

The magical power of the Emperor declined in the late Heian period and samurai power increased; then the power was restored in the Meiji, when it was politically deliberately constructed.

The Meiji pretended to restore the magical power of the Emperor. The system had succeeded in two wars so perhaps it was a good idea to have the Emperor's power. The disaster of 1945 crushed the Emperor system and it was now near to zero. The form still remains, and it is still the first article of the present constitution that the Emperor is present - though the wording is very different. For now, it states that the Emperor is the symbol of the integrity of the Japanese people (sho-cho, A stands for B, dry wording for symbol). The only thing the royal family can depend on is its symbolic status.

Kenichi's reflections after conversation with Professor Takayoshi Matsuo

The present has experienced the further collapse of the Emperor system. The new Emperor succeeded in 1989; he said he would keep the constitution, and so became for the first time a constitutional monarch, a sort of coup d'état since he decided this for himself (rather than the government doing so, since he tricked them by a sudden announcement). 'I am under the constitution' he stated; many loyalists were upset by this.

Kenichi's reflections after conversation with Professor Takayoshi Matsuo Maruyama thought that after the 1960's the danger of the Emperorship disappeared. He told Kenichi in 1989 - 'I forgive them'. But he was frightened earlier on of reviving the Emperorship and giving weight to the loyalists. Some crazy nationalists would be pleased to find they had their own ethical system and if you do something against it, you go against 'Japaneseness'.

Kenichi cannot guarantee that my book will not open up the coffin - awaken the dead (Kenichi himself tried to bury the Emperor in a couple of articles). If the Japanese are frustrated and cornered, for instance a few atomic bombs are lobbed at them by N. Korea, there is danger. In the middle-range future, maybe there is a danger.

The Japanese are more secular, cynical, disenchanting, today - more realistic than any other country. There is no illusion about their leadership. They feel that we (the west) are idealistic, partly because we have never been deeply defeated, unlike Japan. Matsuo warns of the possibility and danger of forgetting. But Kenichi is pretty sure that for at least twenty years Japan will not be aggressive.

On a sliding scale of 0 (no religion) to 10 (very religious), the Japanese have moved from 6 to 2 over time. The West has moved from 10 to 0 (for a few atheists). Thus, it is impossible to remove all religion from Japan, but they have never been as extreme as the west.

When we went to the old shrine in Kyoto, Kenichi explained that the Shinto gods were also real (dead) ancestors. Usually the main god would be in the middle, but he is on the right in this case. In the middle was the father Emperor and on the left the brother Emperor.

Conversation with Professor Takayoshi Matsuo

(An expert on political history of the C20. He showed list of books of Alan's held in the library and various departments of the University. Said 'Savage Wars' widely read.) Alan asked if the binary system of political parties worked in Japan. Matsuo said there were deep differences between Britain and Japanese case - post-war conservatives have been 2/3 and liberal 1/3 but very little between these two. 20 years after the war, after collapse of Soviet Union, adopted British system of one seat per constituency. Before that numbers of members - caused collapse of socialist party. Now socialists smaller than communists. LDP split and joined with moderate socialists. LDP and newly formed Democrats both believed in the capitalist system. Politics much the same. They are competing to please U.S. so confrontation with China and Korea - accepting American hang-ups. If you compare Democratic party and LDP, latter thought more trustworthy by the public. Public want changes of policy on one hand, but on the other want Democratic party to influence LDP - not dramatic change. In Britain, high possibility of change - two party system works well. In Japan, change very small and short, then return to one party democracy. LDP very complex party - is itself a kind of coalition. Change of governing faction changes the style of the party. LDP structured itself into very clever way of structuring politics. Not sure about future. Koizumi destroyed some factions and kicked them out. Next Prime Minister will probably be Abe - structure of LDP will change. LDP meant to be compromising

force between multiple factions. If Koizumi untamed might turn into one man, one faction - more totalitarian. One possibility is that both the LDP and Democratic Party will split into more less conservative parties. Might bring about a two-party system. He hopes this may happen, but pessimistic.

Conversation with Professor Takayoshi Matsuo

Alan asked what he thought about the future relations between Japan and U.S. Matsuo hoped that Japan would improve its relations with China, Korea and Asia, but especially China. Strange that all Japanese politicians fail to face up to China. Pyongyang regime very dangerous. Many Japanese fear a missile strike against Japan. Japanese foreign policy towards Pyongyang quite hostile. Reciprocal escalating process going on between North Korea and Japan. Threat from North Korea makes Japan depend on U.S. Abductions by North Korea of Japanese - some returned. Gesture of cooperation from Pyongyang, but Japan rejected it. Just told them to return people. Japanese Government asking the impossible as people are dead. Public followed hostile attitude of Government. With China, Yasakuni Shrine problem, stupidly created by Koizumi. Those who had experienced the war are now dying. When the war ended Professor Matsuo was 16. Younger generation's attitude to the war is changing. Dreadful war, but feeling that Japan was responsible is gradually fading out. Books support this. Yasakuni Shrine honouring war dead. China invasion under name of the Emperor gradually fading - process of forgetting war, also forgetting responsibility. Young people support Koizumi through forgetfulness. Rape of Nanking - some Japanese insist that numbers matter - 1m 1/10m 100m - if 100m then Japanese military killed many including civilians - numbers don't matter, it was a massacre.

Conversation with Professor Takayoshi Matsuo

Alan asked about the relation between the Nanking massacre and Japanese reputation for cruelty. Is Japan cruel? Matsuo said relative to our character as an island nation, the difference between Japan and Britain is that the latter has been in continuous conflict with Scotland and Ireland. Suspects that Britain has had to learn to deal with the problem of wars. Comparatively speaking, Britain much closer to the continent than Japan to China. Japan had no internal fighting but then plunged into fighting with China and Korea. Isolated, so no exchange of monarchs. Japanese had ten centuries of isolation, so very little experience of how to deal with other nationals. After Meiji, Japan got Korea and part of China. In British case, very skilful in forming Empire. Japan had no experience. Japanese Government had obsession that Koreans were inferior to Japanese. Japanese way of dealing with them was for Koreans to move towards Japanese and become Japanese - assimilation. Extension of Japanese homeland to Korea (as with France). End of Russo-Japanese war - modernisation of Japanese society. After Russo-Japanese war was desirable that Japanese gradually retreated from Korea but didn't happen. Intellectuals advised leaving but nationalists stayed and conquered. Comparatively speaking with Britain, we naive and inexperienced. Still there is the same failing in Japan, which mixed with naive Japan is not good.

30.3.2006 Kyoto notes Sarah

Conversation with Professor Takayoshi Matsuo

Alan asked about treatment of comfort women. Matsuo said that there were two categories of such - Japanese and Chinese/Korean etc. problem only over the latter group. There were a few Dutch comfort women but only a handful of others. Japanese military took Japanese comfort women to China. Not only prostitutes but ordinary women were encouraged to go. They were used in cities but in the countryside, force was used against native women.

Conversation with Professor Takayoshi Matsuo

Alan asked whether there was a grading of ranks of people in the Japanese mind. Matsuo agreed there were racial tendencies. The British were respected as advanced and the Chinese not respected as thought of as backward. During the Russo-Japanese war there were lots of Russian prisoners. Those kept in a prison in Shikoku were seen by the outside world and well looked after. But there was another, closed, camp in Sakhalin where Russian prisoners were treated very badly. In general, they thought of the Russians as half-civilized, so similar to the Japanese according to Fukuzawa.

Conversation with Professor Takayoshi Matsuo

Maruyama died aged 82, working until the end. Matsuo spent some time in London, living at Clapham Junction, as he wished to get to know real Britain. Lived in a lodging house. Enjoyed theatres, the Festival Hall concerts, and Wimbledon. Friend of Professor Nish whom he met at Ann Arbor. They worked together in Japanese not English so Matsuo gained the confidence to travel. At that time Japanese intellectuals quite reluctant to go to U.S. suggesting they'd be bought off. Harvard Yenching

- America supported this university in China. After Mao it moved to Harvard. Had lots of money. Matsuo advised in 1976 to take this money and not Government money. Went in 1978 to England. Impressed by Hammond's work on the Chartists and Asa Briggs.

Conversation with Professor Takayoshi Matsuo

Alan asked what is wrong with Japan. Matsuo said it was difficult to answer but that Japanese tend to be influenced by the majority mood and move as a group. In history, Taisho = democracy, Showa = military, after the war democracy etc. To establish individuality in Japan would be difficult. Society consists of collections of relations as an entity - relational prevailing mood moves society, and the individual can't cope with this. Can't stand up against it. Alan noted that Tocqueville advocated civil society to counter mood of the mob. Matsuo said that there were and are historical and contemporary groups that stand against the stream. Within these small groups and individual cannot keep his individuality. For example, once trade unions had supported the war all turned and gave their support. Sarah commented that Japanese politics are consensual so can't be confrontational. Matsuo reiterated that Koisumi had broken up the small dissident groups so not appeals to the mass - totalitarian. Alan asked if this related to lack of religion. In West individuals could stand apart from the rest (cf. Tony Blair and Iraq war). Matsuo said as he had no religion himself he couldn't answer.

Conversation with Professor Takayoshi Matsuo

Kenichi explained the Axial argument. Matsuo said that in the early Meiji there had been serious

Christians, especially among the younger generation. Buddhism was influenced too by the emergence of Christianity, so both were strengthened. There were sharp theorists then, but they disappeared. After Taisho no serious religious feeling, so it is up and down, a temporary phenomenon. Now there is only a weak church system although his own daughter is married to a Christian vicar. There are many strange teachings of Christianity - some worship Emperor - syncretism - not strong on theology.

Conversation with Professor Takayoshi Matsuo

Alan asked about his attitude to nihonjinron

. Matsuo's general impression 1. Similar - difference between Britain, US, Japan - balance. 2. Emperor system rare - continuous - pre-war talked of as one glorious trunk line - is it exceptional? 3. System has influenced economics, political system, all strange,. Different centre of gravity. Suggests that Emperor not just a system but a king of religion which influenced every aspect of Japanese life - keeps out monotheism - "religion" space is filled. Emperor = Shinto? Shinto as a religion and Tenno as a religion are different. Tenno is respectable form of Japanese religion - psychological pressure to use respectable form - Emperor and family above honour. There are two kinds of Shinto shrine - local and Imperial. Local shrines have nothing to do with Shinto but just relate to ancestors and nature worship. However, they have the same priests and buildings. Tenno religion - ie. belief in the Emperor. Imperial Shinto - Ise, Yoshida - Tenno is a belief - collective feeling, focus of affection - only Japanese have felt it - failed to get Korea or Manchuria to do so. When the Indonesians tried, Japanese felt funny. Pre-war, people taught that ancestor of Tenno was the ancestor of the whole Japanese nation. After the war stopped teaching this, but still collective affection.

Conversation with Professor Takayoshi Matsuo

Alan asked for his advice on trying to understand Japan. Matsuo said that in order to understand the bright and dark side read novels - Ryotaro Shiba - historical novels - not epicentre of Japanese mind - they are a bit more conservative - he is progressive. Also watch films - good mirror of age when made. Nagisa Oshima mentioned. He mentioned no academic works. "Not impossible to understand Japan. We Japanese understand British culture to some extent and vice-versa". Alan pressed him on books. He mentioned Amino's three volume history and Morishima Michio's autobiography. None but the last has been translated. Also books by historian Shunsuke Tsurumi.

1st April 2006

Conversation with Professor Hiroshi Watanabe

Confucianism contained a supreme heaven, some idea of transcendence, but not the Axial opposition. Confucius rejected the heaven/hell dichotomy and did not believe in another world. It was a cunning trick of Buddhists to use the lure of heaven and the threat of hell to win followers.

In Christianity, the idea of original sin trapped people. Confucius believed that human were

essentially good and could improve themselves and could become very good, this possibility was hidden inside the person. 'Michi' should be the process of humanizing yourself, just as Fukuzawa believed would happen with civilizations.

Sorai turned Confucianism upside down; the masses were very bad and could not understand the humanizing process. The Chinese rulers ruled by virtue and by encouraging the humanizing process in a basically good mass of people whose virtues they reflected. The Japanese thinker Sorai was more like Machiavelli, the Shogunate should rule the ignorant masses through force.

Both Japanese and Chinese are secularized because of the teachings of Confucius. By the end of the Edo period the Japanese were perhaps eighty percent secularized, whereas the west were only fifty per cent.

There are many conflicting images and even in the Chinese model many were more cynical than this implied.

Conversation with Professor Hiroshi Watanabe

Is China Axial? Perhaps half so, though the big gap is between the monotheistic and non-monotheistic religions. There was no real Axiality with the Chinese Emperor.

Japan had a counterpart to the Emperor in what Chamberlain called 'Mikado worship'. In opening up the country, they had to pretend to be Axial (the Watanabe argument), a mask of axiality which stuck to their face. The Japanese did not believe in it.

The Japanese were forced to be educated into a sort of Axiality, they had to pretend to believe in Axiality. The Japanese government had to invent all sorts of indoctrination, as in the educational system. Education was based on Amaterasu, no concrete foundation of the religion.

The seventh century mythology was re-invented in the later nineteenth century as a basis, pretty superstitious stuff. Sarah suggested that Japan was more 'modern' than the west, since it was inoculated against religion.

Japanese self-confidence needs boosting, for self-preservation.

Meiji intellectuals could not understand the west, covered by Christianity, so much enchanted, everything messed with Christianity, the trap of Christianity. They felt very uncomfortable with this. Yet they admired the sophisticated science of the west.

Japan was moving towards the Confucian corner through the Edo period, until it was suddenly jerked towards the top right through the Meiji 'pretence' of inventing axiality.

Conversation with Professor Hiroshi Watanabe

Watanabe show sympathy with top officials who see Christianity as being maintained because of

its social cohesion functions.

Kenichi said that if we understood Watanabe's scheme properly, then we would be the only outsiders who really understood the Japanese system. This would provide the answer to my questions.

Watanabe said that he was often asked by Korean colleagues etc. what are the fundamental ideals of post-war Japan. He was unable to answer, for the Japanese can do without such general ideals.

I asked Watanabe what the worst thing about Japan was. He said that conformism is the worst thing, for it makes it hard to live in your own way. It is a tightly knit society and to be an individual is not easy here. Maybe a University Professor can do so, which is why I selected this job. In most cases I can say 'I disagree'. It is often suffocating. We act in groups and we have a colourless life and opposed to colourful and individualistic foreigners. Thoughts here are equal and tending towards the average. I can always anticipate what people will say before they say it - too boring.

2nd April 2006

Building work

The constant re-construction of Tokyo. On 2nd April noted that while there was nothing like the break-neck speed of China, there were something like 14 cranes visible from our hotel window in Tokyo - placed on the top of buildings. A subtle but systematic change.

Poverty and beggars

During our stay we saw two or three makeshift shacks by the river in Kyoto and walking through Tokyo we saw two or three homeless people sleeping in cardboard boxes. But there seemed to be less people - and none in railway stations - than on our earlier visits.

Conversation with Yuri

She said that Japanese boys are very shy and difficult for her to chat to.

I asked Yuri about why Japanese girls quickly averted their gaze when I looked at them in the street (while very friendly and plenty of eye contact in shops etc). She said it was all a matter of etiquette. From childhood they were taught that it was rude to stare at people.

Edo museum

We went around the Edo museum, which was full of shrines. There was the gathering luck god, a Shinto shrine (or shelf), a non-Shinto kitchen god. The very small reconstructed houses had, on average, about three shrines apiece, taking up much of the space.

Conversation with Yuri

Yuri told me that there was a child God living in many houses, only children could see it. Children grew out of it. She does not have in her house, but still in the countryside many people had such invisible gods, and in older houses. This is one reason for the popularity of Miyazaki, and particularly Totoro, many people were reminded of such spirits. It was natural for children to see such house gods. Although Yuri had never seen any, many of her friends had done so. Yuri said that 'I believe we are surrounded by such things (spirits) though I cannot see them'. Many people enjoy Miyazaki because they are longing to experience such things.

I talked to Yuri about texting and mobile phones. She said that some of her friends spent up to 10,000 yen a month on phone bills.

There is a social-networking system called 'Mixi', you are invited to join by a group of people. There are ten people in her group. There are a million people using (it is only in Japan), and has been going for about two years. It is free. She contacts people two or three times a week.

Yuri said that there were not so many internet cafes now, but now there were 'manga kisa' (one of which we later visited - an intersection between a manga library, tea and coffee self-service place, cubicle hotel, internet bar). These places would have violent manga. Toshiko said that she grew up with manga, so nowadays adults also enjoy them. In the old days they were just for children, now also adults. Animation (manga and films) are a big export - especially to France and Italy, also Taiwan and China, somewhat like Ukiyo-e.

Yuri thought that Shinto shrines were more 'religious' than Buddhist temples. Toshiko found them calm and relaxed. Toshiko thought that the shrine priests are not religious.

One of Yuri's friends at university is the son of a shrine priest and will become the successor priest in the shrine; he is not at all religious. If there is only a daughter, she will marry a man who is brought in to do the job of the shrine. These are hereditary priests, ie. a job and not a vocation.

Shrine finances

The shrine we visited had a parking lot and marriage parlour, which helped finance it. Shrine priests also sometimes teach at University to earn enough.

2.4.2006 Tokyo

Buddhist cemetery

We went to another memorial building where there were a lot of 'jizo' (Bodisatvas) to help guard children - see film. If people see a funeral procession, children cover their thumb - to protect their parents.

Conversation with an economic adviser to the Prime Minister, Professor Yoshikawa and wife

The Japanese have a dual economy. The manufacturing sector is very efficient, the non-manufacturing sector very inefficient, roughly about 60 per cent as efficient as U.S.A.

The manufacturing sector makes many products but does not absorb labour. The absorbing

sector is non-manufacturing. Demand is shifting towards the non-manufacturing, with a global shift from manufacturing to services, towards construction, banking, retail etc. In the medium term, Japanese manufacturing is still strong.

The University of Tokyo was top in the world in a survey of universities for its physics department.

Conversation with an economic adviser to the Prime Minister, Professor Yoshikawa and wife
Low quality steel is being produced by Korea and China, cheaply, but Japan concentrates on high quality steel. Here we need human capital, though many places are over-staffed (as the hotel we were sitting in).

Conversation with an economic adviser to the Prime Minister, Professor Yoshikawa and wife
In terms of financial technology, British and Americans are superior to the Japanese.

He thought that in the technology of manufacturing, Japan was a leader, but in the non-manufacturing, the intellectual and information areas, Japan is still backward.

He had been reading a textbook of 1860 and was amazed to find how much the British already knew about Japan, and were hence able to guess that the Shogunate would be defeated.

We Japanese may be good at making things, but we are still myopic.

Conversation with an economic adviser to the Prime Minister, Professor Yoshikawa and wife
The Osaka futures rice market only operated within Osaka, not open to anyone else.

Conversation with an economic adviser to the Prime Minister, Professor Yoshikawa and wife
Wife, an art historian, said that the wood-cut art was flat, the colouring reminiscent of Matisse, with no perspective and a different viewpoint. One thing was seen in close-up, such as a horse's foot or Mt. Fuji

Fenellosa did not like Ukiyo-e, much preferring classical painting. He authenticated the classical school for the Japanese and taught them to appreciate classical art as well as Ukiyo-e painting. The latter commented on this floating world, and the concern with everyday things around us had a big effect on the French impressionists who were able to discover their own society as a source of art. The woodblocks were mass produced. They were purchased by ordinary people. Ordinary art was appreciated - parallel discoveries to Yanagi, Hamada etc.

3rd April 2006

Discussion with Kenichi

Why did animism continue, despite Buddhism etc? A highly Japanized world religion allowed animism to survive. There was a division of labour among the religions. Tokugawa Confucianism was philosophical teaching, multiple means in parallel or sometimes merging, for over 200 years. Buddhism, Shinto and Confucianism continued alongside each other. If logic had prevailed,

there would have been religious wars. At the start of Meiji, the Shintoists tried to kick out the Buddhists, but it was not so serious.

There was a multiple party system, so to speak, which gave some freedom. We had a multiple, vague, system to maintain animism. This is what makes Japanese ethics so illogical, as opposed to the logical ethics of the west. Ours is contextual and bending. Affection is more important than logic or ethics. If one is too logical, it will destroy the other. Affection becomes the link. Animism at the basso ostinato level knits the multiple religions together.

What makes the Japanese consider that feeling is more important than logic?

Karube's work on Watsuji explores the clash between individualism and conformism. W wrote of ethics as a study of 'in between peoples', which made Watsuji move from individualism to conformism.

The high points of individualism in Japan was the later middle ages (Samurai period) and the Taisho period. The possibility of individualism in Japan was related to Christianity. A link to God.

We think of relations to other people, many compromises with others. When we have a difficult decision, we constantly think of other people and what they would think.

Discussion with Kenichi

The West has binary divisions, Japan has multiple/combining, a special switching system. If you enter into the Confucius system go to into its guidance, and then leave and switch off again, turn on and off.

The meaning of shrines, and the tablets hung up in them is very slight.

Usually we don't think of God, but of others, other-directed.

In the west we have some Entity up in heaven. In the Confucian ideas, every person has some seed of something inside them when born. Fukuzawa thought it might be the origin of individualism. Western people are depending on God, not really individualistic and depending on themselves.

Confucius etc. thought people had a good nature and sense of direction to become virtuous and reasonable.

Free will is the basis of individualism.

The Samurai view was that you should die in front of your master; you show a master who has made a mistake your feelings by committing suicide in front of him.

Toshiko does not like the Emperor system, but it has to be here.

3.4.2006 Tokyo

We don't know how we can become individualists without God. So, conformism is a danger.

3.4.2006 Tokyo

It is believed that affection to all of society is better than affection to myself. Vertical affection is central in Japan.

Affection and virtue, 'michi', is the supreme teaching of Confucius - the way.

Most people go towards affection rather than reason. Monotheism and individualism seem to be connected.

Discussed the educational system. The Japanese schools are too competitive and hard working. There is not enough space, too much regulation and pressure.

There is total permissiveness in families, total regulation in schools.

An attempt to liberate education failed because Japanese education is an iron cage; Dore's inspiration for the Diploma Disease came from Japan.

The Emperor

Mizubayashi on the Kojiki. Amaterasu relates to man God or woman God. In Nihonshoki it is clearly a Goddess - so the origin is different. The same mythology, but the ideology behind are clearly different. The Kojiki is the result of the Emperor Temmu, and the Nihonshoki the result of the widow of this Emperor, who turned the God into a goddess.

There were many families or Uji before the coup of 645 in the position of the Emperor, who came from quite a weak and peripheral family which only had a fairly high ritual power. After 645 the house of the Emperor became dominant.

At this time there was no influence of the Chinese Emperor system in setting up the Japanese Emperorship.

Chinese visitors at this time mentioned rituals in Korea, but nothing in Japan, suggesting there was no Chinese influence or ritual at this time.

The Temmu Emperor at this time was quite shamanic in battle and set up close links with the Ise shrine.

Crime

We saw a number of 'wanted' posters in the underground etc., most of them featuring some

members of the Aum cult not yet arrested. One in Toshiko's sister's house had a man on it who had shot (but not killed) a police chief in the early 1990's.

I asked Ayako at dinner what were bad things about Japan. She said it was very dangerous - many terrible crimes, but when it boiled down to it, there was little. Also the suicide rate was rising (which we know to be true, but still quite low).

Conversation with Professor Tadashi Karube

Subject of his thesis was Tetsura Watsuji, an intellectual of early C20 - translation of 'Climate' published Tokyo 1950's and another 'Ethics in Japan' NY University Press recently. The original title was just 'Ethics' - intentional difference. Many Japanese philosophers tried to put themselves in the position of Western philosophers such as Heidegger and Jaspers. Tried to systematize thinking on relation of individual and society, or individual against society. Watsuji and others tried to think in parallel with Western thinkers but looking back and comparing their thought and Western thought, there are clear differences. Watsuji and Kitaro Nishida tried to criticize individual and society in the West which made these thinkers aware of the Japaneseness of their approach versus the West. After Meiji, thinkers tried to criticize Western thinkers - double mirror - attempting to understand West and then themselves. This started not from modern Meiji but before with Confucianists in Edo and Buddhists in Kamakura versus China - double mirror from the start. Process of learning monotheistic (axial) philosophy from China and India is process of discovering selves eg. of double thinking. Individualism is essentially different from Japanese culture so serious thinking started for the first time ie. not possible to "double mirror". Even in Edo period there were individualistic tendencies where people decided for themselves - not conformist - so double mirror is there to some extent. In Edo period according to Masao (anthropologist), each had own plate and chopsticks etc. This individuality - plate for mother, father etc. but when guest comes in all use same sort of plate, so individuality defined within the family only. Westernization process made changes in individual plates - Karube had individual plates within his family, but his wife's family had common plates, they had lived in U.S. He accustomed himself to his wife's habit.

Conversation with Professor Tadashi Karube

Alan noted that it could be said that Japan was the most or least individualistic, so not helpful. Karube said "octopus pot" sometimes ambiguous - one per pot looks individualistic, but not - 'seken' = many units - family, company etc. Once you are within these have connections, but if you lose these links, atomised. Only Buddhist thinking of the "I am I" type is the way out of atomised fate. Individual in Japan always has relationships. In Buddhist teaching, should cut off all links intentionally to reach Nirvana. Maruyama used word "atomization" rather than "individualism". Alan said that in Japan everything is relational but in England the alternative is strong institutions. Japan has strong relational systems which work very well. They could not adopt English individualism as don't have binding that we have through law, markets etc. [drawing of circumscribed Japan with small-scale links while England has long links through institutions and God]. Karube noted Confucian scholars in Edo saying man could criticize own master, similar in Shinto and Buddhist tradition. Confucians talk to other Confucians, Shintoists

to Shintoists etc. but not to each other. Fukuzawa's problem - Kojunsha founded to bring people together. Only turmoil of Meiji changed the old systems. Early Meiji period had its own goal to create integrated transport, education, etc. so individualism in Western sense important to achieve this. Afterwards, scepticism started. Once goal of unified nation achieved, another goal - is it alright to make Japan like the West? When Japan entered 1930's more nationalistic but needed a moderating line to control the right. Rethinking started. 1945-70, again individualistic. Now in phase of looking inwards and ultra-nationalism not quite disappeared.

Conversation with Professor Tadashi Karube

Is Japan religious or not? Depends on what you mean by religion. Herman Ooms - multiple dependency on a religious system - Shinto for life, Buddhism for death (only in Japanese version!). Logical structure of Shintoism - accommodates foreign kami - looked at from a Christian point of view highly "this world" orientated. Hasn't absorbed transcendence. Shintoism has own local kami which will be strengthened by outside kami. Opposite effect for others encounters with world religions. Shintoism strengthened by absorption. Nihongi = kami in shrine has own power, wanted Buddha as a kami to strengthen power. Timing of story C9 when Chinese system entering Japan, ie. penetrating Chinese system into Japan which it absorbs. Within Shinto system kind of innovation system to adopt a new kami into a shrine (like insect-eating plant). Word 'Shinto' some say is after Edo. Karube says C14, C9 story teller regarded Buddha as a kami. Before C14 Shintoism not regarded as a religion. C14 Shintoism starts a doctrine. Ise tried to theorize teaching - mixture of folklore and animism. Buddhism inspired them to sort out and identify themselves as different. Now majority of shrines organized under headquarters - Jinja Honcho (introduced in 1940's)

but no unified beliefs. Meiji Government insisted that Shinto was not a religion. Reason why there is no unitary doctrine is that if you tried to do so it would disintegrate. Meiji Government defined Shintoism as custom and folklore - you can force Japanese people to follow customs, but these are state legitimate customs. These related to Emperor as son of sun god. Government forced people to accept this as custom. Presence of Emperor worship for common people would be the addition of another kami. Meiji quite tolerant of Christianity if they did not reject Emperor worship. There were Christians who were punished for rejecting Emperor worship.

Conversation with Professor Tadashi Karube

Axial thesis? Without axiality Japan could not modernize itself. Shintoism could absorb axial religions - became functional equivalent - pseudo-axiality. Is Japan really non-modern? Japanese system not ethnocentric but believe that something good will come from the outside. Division of labour of religion in Japan: Shintoism takes care of you in life, Confucianism of ethics, Buddhism at death - so the three aspects of axiality. Syncretism - this core of Edo period. Pre-condition to accept Western impact. Able to absorb the axiality. This core lasted to 1950's, then lost it. In Edo, in Osaka - city supplied culture and scholarship and teaching of Confucianism to the local village level - had good matching of syncretism until 1950's, then all urbanized and the system broke. At local level, new teachings of Buddhism etc. from centre would be a new kami. After 1950's all equalized. Now we are in good condition even at local level. Even locals don't want to invite new kami in - becoming inward looking. If outside culture is good, we will adopt it, if not,

won't. Now stopped. Kenichi and Toshiko looking to outside still, younger generation are not. Alan said this was pluralistic syncretism, not axially. Japan has not been axial. Karube agreed that Japanese plurality would be better than axially - 3 multiples, Shintoism, Confucianism and Buddhism designed to kick out Christianity. Whether these could apply in future is debatable. Strong pressure to axialize. In the 3 multiple system use to have the ability to help new things to emerge, but Karube is less optimistic that this could happen in the modern world - that three-fold system is not possible.

Conversation with Professor Tadashi Karube

Alan said he came to look for alternative models for society - Japan a Utopian model. Karube said that a source of his pessimism is that people stopped looking outside or inside - complacent. His father teaches Chinese poetry at the Confucian school we went to yesterday. Syncretism works as Shintoism concedes that it has no doctrine and uses Confucianist ideas at the local level. Alan asked what held together a non-axialized syncretic system - should split apart. What are the joints? Karube said now in a time of peace - no outward impact, 'A' bombs etc. so system kept intact. Under very huge pressure it might collapse. Alan asked how Japan preserved a non-axial model - Shinto? Emperor? Karube said the Meiji state used the Emperor system very well. Doesn't believe that in the present situation that the Emperor system is useful. Because the Emperor system is not strong there is a mood for a strong leader - a new shogun? The abductions by North Korea are a big issue as bereaved families have become iconic - people invested sympathy in them. Japanese need person to invest affection in. Once thought it was Koizumi. Now? Alan asked why Japanese ethics were affection-strong rather than logic-strong. Karube said Confucianism is the origin with its emphasis on affectionate benevolence. When it was imported from China it put off the logical and accepted the affectionate. Alan said that binary Greek logic doesn't fit Japan. Karube noted that in the Chinese system there is also syncretism - Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism - but logic was orientated at the top level there. In the Japanese case, logic was all replaced by affection - there was no logic. Our system is not axial but permeated by affection. Fukuzawa ranks benevolence - family first, then neighbours, then others - but this is not Japanese. One of the big differences is the difference of love in England and affection in Japan.