

## JAPANESE/AMERICAN CROSS-CULTURAL BUSINESS NEGOTIATIONS

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### INTRODUCTION

When negotiating with Japanese business people, American business people sometimes feel uncomfortable, puzzled, lost, irritated and the like, based on some unfamiliar customs and behaviors demonstrated by the Japanese business people. Nothing is more comfortable and secure than understanding the cross-cultural aspect. Understanding can facilitate communication and avoid misunderstanding. Understanding then can also make the Japanese business people feel comfortable. This also enhances business negotiations.

When it comes to dealing with the Japanese business people, they negotiate with the American business people, bringing their own cultural background. In many cases, what may be considered to be acceptable by American standards may be unacceptable to the Japanese. Japanese and American cultures do not seem to have many things in common. At the same time, no Japanese would give American business people a single clue. Informing them that what they have done might not have been acceptable.

Although minor mistakes are permissible, misunderstandings and failure to recognize important cultural subtleties may lead to stagnation or dismissal of the negotiations. In reference to the cross-cultural aspect, more strict rules must be observed for the Japanese culture than for the American culture.

In this paper, many cross-culturally related areas in business negotiations are discussed. They are gift exchange in negotiations, values, exchanging business cards, and the like.

Naturally, these cross cultural areas are not the entire core of the cross cultural business negotiation. However, the initial understanding of the Japanese cross cultural business negotiations may be a good start.

### **BUSINESS PRACTICE AND CUSTOMS**

In this section, three areas are discussed: (a) business suits, (b) business card exchange, and (c) gift exchange (*temiyage*).

Many Japanese businessmen tend to wear dark suits of navy blue, dark gray or brown. They consider these colors to be acceptable at business meetings, for working in the company, for meeting their client, and the like. The suits and neckties that they wear are quite conservative.

A Japanese businessman usually fastens the high button of his suit when he comes into a room to meet with his American counterpart to discuss possible business negotiations. Based on Japanese business practice, it is common for a Japanese businessman to fasten that button before he greets his partner for the first time or when he talks to a superior or an older person, while standing. However, it is permissible for him to unbutton it while he is sitting in a chair. If his superior or a client comes in to introduce him to another person while he is seated, it is also a common practice for him to fasten the higher button first and to stand up in order to talk to them.

#### **Business Card Exchange (*meishi*)**

Among the Japanese, when businessmen meet each other, business begins with the exchange of business cards.

"Each day in Japan, an estimated 10 million to 12 million of the 2-by-3-inch *meishi* (business cards) are passed in a precise ceremonial exchange of bows that help keep this status-oriented society together."

(Arizona Republic, 1986)

#### **Taking Out a Business Card**

There are many different methods of taking a business card out of a business suit. One way is to keep some business cards in a small pocket located on the lower left part of the inside of the jacket. Another way to take out a business card is to keep the cards in a small wallet. Either way is acceptable as long as the businessman does not spend too much time looking for his business card, thus making his partner wait.<sup>1</sup>

When giving a business card, picking up papers from a briefcase, putting papers back into a briefcase and the like, it is considered very important to the Japanese not to make one's counterpart wait.

### **Giving and Receiving Business Cards**

When Japanese exchange business cards, it is common practice to stand up and give their business cards with two hands rather than with one hand, while at the same time bowing slightly. Bowing indicates humility and politeness as well as courtesy. Furthermore, when a Japanese businessman gives his business card, he normally turns it in such a way that the receiver can read it without having to turn it. Because these behaviors imply humble, polite, and courteous manners, when exchanging business cards, it is also very rare for a Japanese businessman to receive a card with one hand. If he does not use both hands, the other Japanese will consider him extremely rude.

Although the Japanese businessman may hand his business card with two hands to an American or foreigner, the foreigner may receive it with one hand. This is due to the fact that the foreigner would not know the Japanese business practice. The Japanese businessman would not feel offended, but slightly uncomfortable feelings may in fact remain.

### **Contents of a Business Card**

As a Japanese businessman receives a business card, he usually takes a look at it and reads the description of the contents.

"It is bad form simply to pocket a newly received card. You should study it for a moment with a furrowed look of interest." (Arizona Republic, 1986)

When a Japanese businessman receives a business card, he looks at it in order to find (1) the name of the other businessman, (2) his title, (3) the name of his company, (4) address, and (5) telephone number. He would like to know the other person's job description, his accountability, his age and title. (For further information on different ranks and titles, please refer to the final chart.)<sup>2</sup>

According to the Japanese corporate hierarchy system which is based on seniority and merit, the accountability and responsibility given to each person is pretty much determined by administrative position. For example, in order to assume the position of department chief (*bucho*), a man usually must be 45 years old or more, and to assume the position of section chief (*kacho*), he usually must be at least 40 years old.

When the Japanese businessman talks about a sale of goods, he is often able to tell from the other person's title whether or not the decision to purchase the goods might be made by that person. For this reason, the seller can be assured that he can sell the goods without having to get approval of a superior officer.

### **Age and Title**

In Japanese companies, most department chiefs (*bucho*) are 45 years old or older. However some young Japanese businessmen can be promoted to section chief

(*kacho*) or department chief (*bucho*), let's say at the age of 38 or so. When the receiver sees the title of department chief on the business card, and the other businessman looks quite young, possibly below 40 years old, the receiver can make the assumption that the other businessman is an extremely capable person for having earned that title at such a young age. Because one's age and title in most cases have a strong relationship, one can pretty much guess a Japanese person's age when looking at his business card, even without having met him. For further information in corporate ranking, please refer to the chart after the references.

### **GIFT EXCHANGE (*temiyage*)**

In giving a gift, a Japanese will stand up and hold the gift out with his two hands. Then the other Japanese is expected to stand up and extend his two hands in order to receive the gift. The process of exchanging gifts is known as *temiyage*. It is desirable for a foreigner to stand up and receive a gift from a Japanese with two hands, because in the mind of the Japanese, there exists a sense of expectation that courteous feelings and appreciation should be demonstrated in this manner.

When a Japanese stands up and gives a gift with two hands, if a foreigner remains seated and receives the gift with one hand, the Japanese may feel slightly hurt and the manner would give an unfavorable impression. This is because the Japanese feels that he has made an effort to bring the gift for the foreigner, but the foreigner has taken it lightly. It seems to the Japanese that the receiver did not consider the giving of the gift to be of value. To the Japanese, what is important is the thought and effort made in bringing the gift, rather than the value of the gift itself.

Although it may be permissible for the foreigner to remain seated and receive the gift with one hand, there remain some negative feelings in the mind of the Japanese.<sup>3</sup>

When a gift is received, it would be nice to say "Thanks again for the *omiyage* (gift)," at the end of the conversation. This makes the Japanese feel that the receiver appreciates the fact that he was given a gift. As a result, the Japanese feels content, happy and that it was worthwhile to bring the gift for the receiver.

### **General Practice of Gift Exchange**

In cases other than business, when the Japanese bring gifts to one another, they wish to convey their friendly feelings to each other. Although it would be possible to express such feelings as friendliness in other ways, their main objective is to express these with something tangible, such as a gift, rather than something intangible, like verbal communication.

A gift can also indicate that they wish to have some kind of relationship with each other. If the receiver is a friend, the giver could be seeking a deeper

friendship. By presenting a gift, the intention of seeking such a relationship is made clearer and appears greater than without it.

### **Business Transactions and Gift Exchange**

Generally speaking in Japan, when Japanese businessmen from one company visit another Japanese company to do business, they do not take gifts with them except, perhaps, on their initial visit. Then they might bring gifts such as cakes or sweet pastries. However when it comes to international business negotiations to be held in the U.S. between an American company and a Japanese company, a gift is often brought.<sup>4</sup>

If it is the first opportunity to get acquainted with each other, the giving of a gift is just a form of greeting. Presenting a gift implies good will, a friendly attitude and possibly, a desire to do business together. The practice of giving a gift is used in order to express these feelings indirectly rather than to express them verbally, which is too direct. Usually the Japanese would not take a gift on subsequent business meetings.

When getting acquainted with each other for the first time, if the receiver is a high ranking businessman such as a member of the board, the president, or the vice president of a large American company, for example, the price, quality and value of the gift will also be high.<sup>5</sup>

Even on the first occasion, whether the Japanese bring a small or large gift with them depends on the size difference between the two companies, type of business negotiations, participants and the like. In other words, generally, if the Japanese company is small and hopes to have many business transactions or large transactions, they will send high ranking participants to meet in a negotiation and will send expensive gifts as well.

### **Gift Exchange and Expectation**

The giving of a gift by the Japanese for the first time is not intended to push or to force a sense of obligation on the receiver's part to return the favor by doing business together. For instance, when a Japanese businessman goes to the headquarters of another company to discuss the possibility of their doing business together, he will at the same time take a gift. Thus, he is showing that his company is interested in their doing business with the other company, but at this stage, neither side knows whether or not that goal will be achieved.

### **Gift Giving during the Process of a Business Transaction**

When both parties have met with each other and have agreed to do business together, particularly just before the business decision making process and/or signing of a contract, some Japanese may bring valuable gifts for their

counterparts. This type of gift giving, however, has great expectations and shows a strong commitment to doing business together.

### **Opening the Gift**

To the Japanese, the value lies in the bringing of a gift and the effort that is made to bring it. The person bringing the gift hopes that the receiver has recognized this and appreciates that a gift was brought. The contents of the gift itself is not the primary concern for the Japanese.

In Japan, it is customary for a Japanese to take a gift when meeting another person for the first time. This custom is carried over into business and therefore, a Japanese businessman might bring a gift to an American businessman at the first meeting.

Because more emphasis is placed on the bringing of the gift rather than the contents of the gift, normally when a Japanese receives a gift from another Japanese, the receiver does not open the gift in the presence of the giver. (The author has never witnessed a case in which a Japanese opened a gift in the presence of another Japanese.) If the Japanese receiver opened it in the presence of the giver, the giver would probably consider that the receiver had demonstrated an extremely blatant act.

When it comes to an American businessman receiving a gift in an American company, the Japanese businessmen tend to understand the different custom of opening the gift in front of the giver in the U.S. as opposed to in Japan.<sup>6</sup> Many Japanese businessmen consider opening the gift in their presence to be permissible, though it is still preferable that it would remain unopened. Some Japanese businessmen feel that it would be even better for the American businessmen asked kindly for permission.

On the other hand, an American businessman receiving a gift from a Japanese businessman in Japan is a different "ball game." In this case, because the gift giving takes place in Japan and because a Japanese would not open a gift in the presence of the Japanese who gives it, opening a gift in the presence of the giver would be considered to be against the rule.<sup>7</sup> In many cases, it would make the Japanese feel extremely uncomfortable, especially when being asked for permission. This is because the Japanese would find it extremely difficult to say "No," as this is also considered rude.

Sometimes, especially when a clear difference in rank exists, the Japanese businessman may not give the identical gift to all businessmen present. In addition, the Japanese may be more closely associated to one businessman than another. In such a context, the Japanese might give a more expensive gift to the higher ranking or better known person. Thus if the American businessmen open their gifts in the

presence of the Japanese, the Japanese would feel extremely embarrassed when the Americans recognized that they received gifts with different values.

### **What Do Japanese Think American Businessmen Feel About Receiving Gifts?**

Japanese usually think that American businessmen receive a gift with curiosity, wonder and uncertainty as to why the Japanese has brought a gift. They realize that it would be difficult for the American to figure out the gift means.

Although the American would not feel that the Japanese has great expectations about receiving the gift, the Japanese may think that the American might wonder, "Why did he bring a gift," and "I wonder what he wishes me to do?" or perhaps, "Should I receive the gift?" However, the Japanese would think that the American would not interpret the receiving of the gift as negative. Rather, he would think that the American would think of receiving it as an interesting experience.

After American businessmen receive a gift a number of times from Japanese, they realize that the gift giving is a custom.

### **STRATEGY**

When a Japanese company feels it is in a relatively weak position, it often fears that the other company may refuse to do business with them. The following reasons that a company may feel that they are in a weak position: (1) a smaller market share, (2) high competition, (3) inferior technology, and (4) company needs.

### **Reasons for Using Such Words as "Success," "Profit" and "Satisfy"**

If Japanese businessmen feel they are in a weaker position, they will be careful not to use negative words when talking about their company. Instead, they will try to stimulate the interest of the other company, in order to do business together. Thus they try to create a good impression of their company by using such words as "success," "confident," "profit" and the like. Another reason for using such words is when a company is extremely concerned about the possible refusal on the part of the other to do business. Some example sentences used to stimulate interest are as follows:<sup>8</sup>

We established our company about 12 years ago and we are expanding rapidly, so we are very satisfied with our performance and our success.

One of the reasons that we are confident in our success is that right now we have our headquarters in Tokyo...and we are making a profit every term, so we are very much satisfied and our shareholders are satisfied too.

### Speaking About Profits and Expansion

The very next question which comes to the mind of the reader is whether or not Japanese businessmen usually talk about their company's profits and expansion when speaking with Japanese businessmen from other companies.

The answer is no. There are several reasons for not discussing money and corporate strategy, both practical and historical. Firstly, businessmen from other companies represent "outsiders" as well as being the competition. In discussing these things a businessman would normally be somewhat circumspect and say things like, "We're doing O.K.," or "Everything is going well."

Some reasons for not discussing profits and/or money, can be attributed to Japan's historical background in the Edo period (1600-1868) under the Tokugawa shogunate. During the early 16th century, two clans, the Toyotomis and the Tokugawas, were fighting for control of the country. The Tokugawas defeated the Toyotomis in the battle of Sekigahara. After the victory, the Tokugawas divided the feudal lords (*daimyo*) into three distinct classes, the *shinpan*, *fundai*, and *tozama*. The *shinpan* were related to the Tokugawas, the *fundai* had been their allies against the Toyotomis, and the *tozama* had been their enemies. The Tokugawas also divided society into separate classes with the samurai at the top. The elite soldier class (*samurai*) was followed in rank by the peasant, craftsman, and merchant. These ranks were hereditary. Merchants fell at the bottom because they were non-productive—only profiting by trading goods produced by others.

The Tokugawa regime began operating in debt and was unable to pay the samurai their normal stipend of rice. In order for the Tokugawa government to offset the deficit, two notable economic reforms were enacted. One was Kyoho's economic reform in 1720 under the eighth shogunate Yoshimune, and the second was Tenpo's economic reform of 1841-1843 by Mizuno. In these reforms, the central government encouraged administrators to spend less and to be thrifty. Rice fields were expanded, increasing rice productivity, which in turn increased tax income (paid in rice) from the peasants. However, neither reform was successful. As a result, the central government was unable to operate in the black, and passed its fiscal problems to the samurai class by not paying them. Thus the samurai were forced to borrow from the merchant class. When the famine continued, and the samurai were unable to repay their debts, marriages were often arranged between samurai and members of the merchant class. The marriage made it possible for the merchant family to become related to the samurai family. Thus, the merchant was entitled to use a surname and to carry a sword, the symbols of the elite samurai class. In exchange, the samurai's debt was forgiven. In effect, the merchant bought the elite social status with money. The way the merchant used his wealth was considered vulgar, but money talked, even then. In spite of their elite status, merchants were still looked down upon. In order to raise their level of respectability, merchants

would not emphasize their money, which was considered vulgar. Instead, they would emphasize the fact that they were helping the community as a whole by providing rice during a famine and by purchasing extra rice when there was a glut. Even now, with all the respectability trade, business, and businessmen have earned, profits and money are not suitable topics of conversation.

Another reason the Japanese would not talk about profits and/or money stems from traditional Confucian teachings which were encouraged during the Edo period for the purpose of national unification. In the Confucian teachings, one excerpt discusses wealth and fame. The master said:

Everyone wishes to seek wealth and fame. However, if he has sought wealth and fame without following the spirit of humanity, wealth and fame will not last. Naturally, a noble wise man would not try to escape from being poor and humble when he has become so with reason... Generally, wealth and nobility should be viewed strictly because they tend to demoralize people whereas poverty and lowliness allow one to be fulfilled with the well being of a person and give the opportunity to be humble rather than luxurious.

(Norimoto Ushiro 1976: 46)

### **How Japanese Talk About Money and Profits in Modern Business**

Overall, expressions and words associated with money such as profits, payments, commissions, royalty, salary, wages related to the host company's employees, or recipients of sales may be discussed at the right time and in the right situation. One of the most important considerations must be the correct usage based on the relationship of the negotiating firms. When the rules are not strictly obeyed, their counterparts may be considered ill mannered, greedy, senseless, or lacking in common sense. It can be felt that they are more concerned about money than about the essence of the negotiations. The following examples may give some useful guidelines.

### **CASE ONE - Job Interview**

When a student has an interview for his future career, it is common sense that his salary and other fringe benefits not be discussed in the first interview. In the first interview, the company representative is interested in learning his background, the kind of job he can do well, his specialty, and the like.

After the company has decided whether or not they can utilize the student's services, and after getting the hiring process approved by the personnel, the company makes an offer.

Discussing his salary normally comes at the very end of the interview process. If the candidate talks about salary before the company is ready to, his manners and motivations are considered questionable. His concern with salary

implies that he is more interested in money than in his service to the company. Bringing up salary considerations is not the prerogative of the candidate.

Japanese business people are more sensitive about discussing salary and money because of their historical and cultural backgrounds. The kind of service offered plays a major role in terms of contracts if it is related to services and technology transfer. The following cases will be helpful in understanding money and business practices.

#### **CASE TWO - Consulting Service** <sup>9</sup>

When an American consultant wishes to offer his services as a translator, an interpreter, or a negotiator to a Japanese firm, the Japanese firm becomes the client. In this situation, it would be rude for the consultant to speak of the service fee such as "We charge \$50 an hour if the job requires a day but if it takes two, we will charge \$40," and so on. The right time to speak of the service charge is determined by the client, after finding out whether or not the client can utilize the service. The first step is for the Japanese to determine the value of the service.

When the client feels a necessity to ask for a service, he will usually inquire about the service charge. The American consultant may feel that discussing the charge may be a consideration for the Japanese client in accepting the services. However, to many Japanese, it is a topic for the client to bring up.

If the American firm starts talking about the service charge, the first impression the Japanese may have is, "How dare you speak of the charge before we decide to accept your services!" The Japanese company clearly knows that the consulting service fee will be assessed if it relies on their service. They know that "there is no free lunch." The consultant should wait until the client starts talking about the fee.

#### **CASE THREE - Negotiations on Technology Transfer** <sup>10</sup>

When a Japanese company wishes to obtain the technology for the manufacture and sale of a product from an American company, the issues for the Japanese negotiating team are the reliability of the technology and whether or not other companies have developed similar products utilizing this technology. Unless the Japanese finds it worthwhile to have the technology, negotiations on the royalty and/or transfer fee should not be dealt with. To many Americans prices are a part of the entire negotiation agenda, however, price and/or royalty for the transfer is a second stage in the negotiations. A Japanese negotiator would rarely discuss the price in the first stage. This should be dealt with as a separate entity to be initiated by the buyer. In the American mind, costs are always a consideration, but this is not necessarily true with the Japanese. As has been

pointed out, the first goal of the Japanese team will be determining the quality of the technology and the potential advantage of possessing it. The content of the two stages are entirely separate in the minds of the Japanese.

### **Summary of Money and Profit Topics in Japanese Business**

To summarize the cross cultural aspect of money and profits in dealing with the Japanese, what the American might think to be harmless or natural may be interpreted as rude or mannerless. Another important point for Americans to keep in mind is the determination of who is the client. If the purchaser, and therefore the client, is Japanese, initiation of price discussions should be left to the client. It would be appropriate to give them the opportunity to ask questions about price, cost, royalties, and so on. When the Japanese client begins talking about these charges, it signifies a serious interest in the core of the negotiations and also that they have progressed to the second stage.

### **VALUE SYSTEM**

Among the many values in the Japanese culture, some of the most important for business are the following: showing respect, putting people at ease, and showing appreciation.

#### **Showing Respect**

One way for an American businessman to show respect for his Japanese counterpart is to synchronize himself with the Japanese.

#### **Synchronizing**

An example synchronizing is waiting to stand up until your counterpart does so. This is especially important in situations where one of the businessmen must arrange papers in his briefcase at the end of a conversation. To put the papers away before the end of the conversation, while someone is still talking, would be very rude. At the same time, it is very uncomfortable for one person to stand and wait while the other rushes to put his things in order.

In Japan, when a businessman visits an office of another company and he stands up sooner than the person who works for that company, it suggests that he wants to finish up the conversation as quickly as he can and/or he may have some other place to go. In either case, his standing up indicates that he wishes to leave the room.

#### **Using Two Hands**

When in Japan, an American businessman should exchange business cards using both hands, and when receiving a gift should stand up and receive it with two hands.

### **Non-Verbal Communication**

Non-verbal communication can be demonstrated using the whole body, many parts of the body, or one part of the body either accompanying speech or without speech. Some of the parts of the body frequently used in non-verbal communication are the following: (1) head, (2) face, (3) eyes, (4) arms, (5) fingers, and (6) legs.

### **Japanese Method of Communicating**

In reference to non-verbal behavior of the Japanese, the Japanese tend to communicate indirectly by beating-around-the-bush rather than a direct method. Thus one does not transmit one's ideas to a listener in a direct manner. Directness often leads to confrontation, which in Japan must be avoided. Therefore, the more directly one communicates his ideas, both verbally and non-verbally, the more uncomfortable the Japanese listener becomes. Thus, it would be very rude to express oneself in such a manner.

It is considered to be rude to express one's feelings and emotions freely, particularly in public. The Japanese consider these manners to be inconsiderate of other people's feelings. This communication system always places more importance on the listener's part rather than the speaker's part. In other words, the speaker's position is secondary and the listener's position is primary.

In The Wall Street Journal, there appeared an article about Aunt Helen (Bottel), who is the Dear Abby of Japan. The newspaper said the following:

"A Japanese wife who complains about her husband will end her letter asking 'Am I a bad person?' while an American wife usually concludes 'How do I get rid of the bum?'" (March 26, 1987: 36)

The Japanese tend to choose what to talk about and how to talk according to when, where and to whom they are speaking. More non-verbal behavior and less subtle behavior is used among people with a close relationship.

### **Facial Expressions**

Japanese tend to maintain the same posture throughout a conversation. Because of this, it is difficult to detect any mood changes. However, the subtle smile of a Japanese can portray many different feeling. For example, a smile at the beginning of a conversation is often an attempt to create a good mood. During the conversation, a smile may be due to pleasure with the outcome of the conversation, embarrassment, congeniality or because of something humorous. On a more personal level, a smile may be in appreciation of praise. A smile at the end of a business conversation is generally due to the fact that both speaker and listener can relax and can become more personal.

### **Eye Contact**

Maintaining eye contact is a very unusual behavior among the Japanese since the Japanese custom is to look at the Adam's apple of the listener, with only

occasional eye contact. Most Japanese would find it uncomfortable if their partner kept continuous eye contact with them. However, some Japanese accustomed to dealing with foreigners will attempt to maintain eye contact.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion of the analysis and interpretations of the preliminary stage, business card exchange is conducted in a traditional manner among Japanese businessmen. The two Japanese businessmen stand up and extend the business card with their two hands and turn it so that the receivers do not need to turn the card around to read the contents. The chart at the end will be useful in order to understand the spectrum of authority when dealing with Japanese businessmen since, in many cases, age and scope of decision making correspond to rank.

The title of the businessman is the identification of his position, which, if prestigious, must be honored. Naturally, the higher the title, the more courtesy must be demonstrated in approaching the businessman, although the size of the company also plays a major role.

At one occasion, I witnessed a scene in which a receiver of a business card wrote the businessman's office number with a pen on the card, since the office number was not printed on it. The (Japanese) businessman felt a little hurt knowing that the receiver did not cherish the card, although the receiver had no intention of hurting his feelings.

All in all, the business card is something that the Japanese businessman can proudly present to another businessman, representing his title as well as his company. In the mind of the Japanese businessman, there is the expectation that the receiver will cherish the business card.

In the section on gift exchange, I have discussed the reasons why Japanese businessmen bring gifts to American businessmen. Based on my experience of conducting workshops for American companies, I noticed that many American businessmen knew the gift exchange custom, having dealt with the Japanese. In fact, they had figured out that the gift exchange practice had "no strings attached." After detailed presentations, however, the American businessmen were assured and felt more confident, knowing that what they had felt about gift exchange was correct. Therefore, the American businessmen felt more confident and at ease in real business situations.

Non-verbal communication demonstrated by Japanese may be very subtle and therefore, it may be difficult to detect. In many cases, the Japanese tend to demonstrate less non-verbal communication than Americans. As a matter of fact, some foreigners are lead to believe that the Japanese are like "statues" and do not indicate their reactions at all.

In reference to the value system, Japanese will be pleased by Americans who know their customs, such as standing up and receiving a gift with two hands, and are sensitive in such things as synchronizing themselves with the Japanese at various times during their encounter.

Over all, understanding Japanese business practices and demonstrating what American businessmen know about the Japanese business practices in the areas of business card exchange, gift exchange, values and the like will usually make American businessmen feel more relaxed and confident. At the same time, understanding the Japanese business practices certainly will enhance good communication between them. After all, cross cultural awareness between Japanese and Americans is a key, if not the key, for good communication between two cultures so far apart from each other and yet, so in need of effective communication.

### Notes

1. An interview conducted with some Japanese business people in Glendale, Arizona, November 1987.
2. The chart has been reconstructed based on interviews with three Japanese business people who have been working for their companies for 15 years or longer in November and December 1987.
3. An interview with a Japanese businessman in Glendale, Arizona, in September 1987.
4. An interview with a Japanese businessman in Glendale, Arizona in, September 1987.
5. An interview with the manager of a Japanese wholly owned subsidiary in Phoenix, Arizona, March 1988.
6. An interview with a Japanese businessman who works for a Japanese automobile company, October 1988.
7. *Ibid.*, October 1988.
8. The two examples sentences come from "Japanese/American Cross Cultural Business Negotiations, " and are uttered by Mr. Nakamura, September 1987.
9. The author has experienced it when dealing with a Japanese company, October, 1988.
10. An interview with a former corporate executive officer of a Japanese company, Glendale, Arizona, November, 1988.

## References

An interview conducted with a Japanese businessman in Glendale, Arizona, in September, 1987

An interview conducted with a Japanese businessman in Glendale, Arizona, in September, 1987

An interview conducted with a Japanese businessman in Glendale, Arizona, in November, 1987

Interviews conducted with three Japanese business people who have been working for their companies for 15 years or longer in November and in December, 1987

An interview with the manager of a Japanese wholly owned subsidiary in Phoenix, Arizona, in March, 1988

An interview with a Japanese businessman who works for a Japanese automobile company in Phoenix, Arizona, in November, 1988

An interview with a former corporate executive officer of a Japanese company in Glendale, Arizona, in November, 1988

Arizona Republic, September 14, 1986, "Meishi: Card of status," p. F-1 and F-8.

*Confucius Teaching (Rongo)*, Norimoto Ushiro, 1976, Obunsha, Tokyo, Japan

Wall Street Journal, "Aunt Helen: Japan's Answer to Dear Abby," March 26, 1987, p. 36.

SUMMARY CHART

A. RANK SCALES*		B. AGE	C. TITLES USED IN JAPANESE ON BUSINESS CARDS	D. LITERAL TRANSLATION
8	10	50 or above	kaicho (large corporation) shacho daihyotorishimariyaku fukushacho vice president senmutorishimariyaku (middle level) jomutorishimariyaku hiratorishimariyaku shocho	chairman president chief executive officer  senior executive officer  executive officer (junior level) executive officer director of research center
	9		bucho  department chief	department manager
7	8	48 or above	jicho	assistant department manager  assistant department chief
7	7	45 or above	kacho	section chief
6	6	42 or above	kachodairi assistant section chief kachosa	assistant section manager
5	5	35 or above	fukucho	
4	4	31-35	kakaricho	chief clerk
3	3	27-31	shunin	chief or head
2	2	22-28	no title college graduate	
1	1	18-23	no title high school graduate	

\*Some companies use one scale and some use the other.

**SUMMARY CHART continued**

E. ACTUAL TITLES IN ENGLISH ON JAPANESE BUSINESS CARDS	F. QUALIFICATION	G. TITLE IN AMERICAN COMPANIES
chief executive officer president CEO president CEO vice president executive vice president  executive director managing director director	sanyo  vice president vice president	chairman president president senior vice president executive vice president
director executive vice president general manager	sanji	senior vice president executive vice president
deputy director manager submanager	sanji	vice president director program director
chief section manager	shukan	manager
assistant director deputy director general deputy director senior manager	shuji	program manager
account manager	shuji or shumu shuji or shumu	account executive
		senior representative sales representative