

The ‘Heart’ of Things: A Conceptual Metaphoric Analysis of *Heart* and Related Body Parts in Thai, Japanese and English

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Abstract

Data from Thai, Japanese and English in the metonymic/metaphoric uses of *heart* (cf. Gibbs, 1994; Johnson, 1987; Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) as well as “head” and “belly/stomach” are analyzed for underlying conceptual metaphoric patterns and their expression of various aspects of interpersonal relationships, emotions, and modes of rationality in the Thai, Japanese and English languages. This cross-cultural study reveals significant conceptual differences about the culturally specific communicative goals represented in “heart” expressions in these three languages. In Thai there is a particularly rich vocabulary centered on *jai* (heart). The Thai data reveal a monistic cultural construct in which the emotive aspects of relationships are conjoined with senses of rational discourse. Japanese data similarly tends to fuse the mode of rational discourse with the emotive but primarily uses *hara* (belly) expressions in doing so. English in contrast maintains a sharp dichotomy between rationalities (head/mind) and emotions (heart), reflecting the dualism of Western cultural tradition. This study focuses on how the functional use of the “heart” and related expressions reveal cultural constructs of communication style through an analysis of the underlying conceptual metaphors.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor, heart (*kokoro/mune/shinzo, jai*), belly/ stomach (*hara*), Thai, English, Japanese, cross-cultural, cultures of communication

Introduction

Expressions related to *heart* are commonly found in languages around the world. The issues of embodiment in creating metonymic and metaphoric expression have been increasingly researched in cognitive linguistics. From Johnson (1987), Ruthrof (2000) and more recently Yu (2009) the significance of our bodily experiences in expressing not only emotion but various social relationships has been highlighted. An examination, in particular, of heart-centered expressions can reveal significant aspects of modes of thinking in each language’s culture, whether focusing on interpersonal relationships, expressive modes such as affective and emotive, or modes of rationalities. By comparing several cultures, the salient features which are highlighted in each can give insight into the expectations of how human discourse can be potentially realized. In order to examine how “heart” expressions are used in Thai, Japanese and English, other bodily related vocabulary need also to be included. In Japanese the expressions

centering on *hara* (belly) are significant in that they assume aspects of the modes of meanings and relationships that may be related to *heart* in Thai and English. English too has metaphors related to *belly/guts* and *mind* which need to be taken into account to survey the range of typologies found in each of the languages.

Edward Sapir (Mandelbaum, 1963 cited in Seldes, 1985) has argued for the significance of underlying language expressions which shape our understandings of our social relationships as well as how we see our life experiences in general.

Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. [...] The fact of the matter is that the ‘real world’ is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group [...] The worlds in which different societies lie are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached (Seldes, p. 203).

This research does not endeavor to validate the propositions in the theory of linguistic relativity, but does claim that the essential modes of our meaning do have underlying patterns which can create significantly different configurations of understanding. In more recent decades the work of George Lakoff and other scholars (e.g. Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff & Turner, 1989) have more stringently argued for such underlying conceptual patterns. These have been termed “conceptual” or “cognitive metaphors” to distinguish such patterns from surface expressions, the lexical resources used in discourse, whether figurative language, idioms or ordinary vocabulary.

Metaphor is for most people a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish — a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language. Moreover, metaphor is typically viewed as characteristic of language alone, a matter of words rather than thought or action. For this reason, most people think they can get along perfectly well without metaphor. We have found, on the contrary, that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, p. 3)

Rationale and Objectives

Any list of ‘heart’ expressions can quickly highlight aspects of human relationships and personalities: their attitudes, conditions for successful communication, socially preferred behavior. Expressions can create matrices in which social values can be expressed. Whether such expressions are seen as idioms, metonyms/metaphors, an underlying metaphoric analysis (it is hypothesized) can shed light on how people in their respective language cultures frame intellectual concepts about rational and emotive modes of behavior and reveal a possible culture of communication.

There have been observations about cultural differences or different valuations about behavior in communication. Deborah Tannen (1998, p. 4), one such researcher in cultures of

communication, has noted "... the Western tendency to view everything through the template of a battle metaphor, and to glorify conflict and aggression, in contrast to the Eastern emphasis on harmony as a way to defuse inevitable conflict. This concept has wide application as a means to understand our ways of communicating in public and private..."

The Western world with its roots in classical Greek anthropology about what constitutes the modes of human thinking has deeply ingrained in it a dichotomy between body (*souma*) and mind (*nous*) as well as categories of spirit (*pneuma*) and self (*psyche*) in the Greek language. *Logos* (words/discourse) as a culture of rational discourse is an important contribution to Western thinking modes. *Nous* as the locus for *logos* can be defined as "the constellation of thought and assumptions which make up the consciousness of the person and act as the agent of rational discernment and communication," (Clark-Soles 1998, p. 65-70). In the classical European anthropology, *kardia* (heart) is the center of the emotions, thought and volition. In the context of facing death and an afterlife, it is the 'heart' which is judged or metaphorically weighed as to what reward a person may get at the end of things. Classical categories in anthropology do not consider the issue of emotions but rather focus on the personal contexts of life, the *psyche* which deals with the publicly observable behavior of the individual person. *Pneuma* or soul is a major concern in this anthropology as it becomes the focus for the pros and cons in whether people have an eternal aspect to their lives. It should be noted that there is no clearly defined relationship in these categories; some are used at times interchangeably such as *pneuma* and *psyche*. In time, *kardia* is identified more with the *souma* bodily functions and *nous* the mind with the *psyche* or what we would call the "psychological" today.

The tripartite division in Western anthropology of what a person is can be seen in Shakespeare's *Othello* where Iago pledges total loyalty to Othello:

Witness, that here Iago doth give up
The execution of his wit, hands, heart,
To wrong'd Othello's service (III. Iii. 465-67)

The terms *wit* (rational intelligence), *hands*, and *heart* are metonyms that stand for the familiar Western ways of seeing the self as mind, body and soul.

For this study what is important to keep in mind is that the culture of a rational, logical discourse *logos* is not entirely separated from the emotive rather physical aspects of expression in the classical Greek rhetorical tradition. Nonetheless, the contemporary Western world does tend to demarcate the logical, rational from the emotive, intuitive as well as the qualities of relationship which play important roles in negotiating our meanings.

In order to see how these dimensions of the logical/rational, emotive/intuitive and interpersonal relations play out in the communicative styles of a culture, the *objectives* of this study are (1) to examine the conceptual metaphoric patterns (in the sense of Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff & Turner, 1989) underlying 'heart' and related body terms to see how these expressions shape our understanding of human relations, emotions, rationalities in our modes of thinking; (2) by comparing the patterns cross-culturally in Thai, Japanese and English, to see how each language culture presents and highlights the salient aspects and/or dichotomies in these conceptual metaphoric patterns; and (3) to consider the implications of

Monistic versus Dualistic cultural traditions in how interpersonal meaning is negotiated cross-culturally.

The *data* in each language is collated from standard and specialized dictionaries (thesauruses, idiom and figurative language collections) of the key words: *jai* in Thai, *heart, mind, belly/guts* in English, *hara, kokoro, mune* in Japanese. Only expressions deemed used in contemporary discourse are considered for analysis. The analysis seeks to uncover the underlying conceptual metaphoric patterns and their implications for social values (expectations) and implications for behavior, that is, their functions in communicative behaviors. How such relationships may reflect social structure is also discussed.

Analysis

The analysis below examines the data, in turn, from Thai, Japanese and English.

In the following discussion of the Thai data four categories are focused on: the condition of the heart/state of mind, conduct and behavior, thinking or making decisions, and interpersonal relationships. Each is presented with examples and commentary followed by relevant conceptual metaphoric patterns given in capital letters.

The Case of Thai ‘jai’ Expressions

The Thai language has a rich variety of *jai* (heart) linked expressions, which are used to express a broad and diverse range of meanings about emotions, social relationships as well as modes of communication. Moore (2006) lists 622 *jai* expressions plus variants in the Thai language. A selection of the *jai* expressions in Thai has been grouped into the four categories mentioned above. *Jai* (heart) is seen as a metonym for *person* in Thai. But *jai* is also by extension a metaphor for different modes of thinking, feeling and relationships, that is, attributes of people in their social interrelationships.

Condition of the Heart (—‘State of Mind’ in English).

Jit jai (=head, heart). This is a general heart phrase used to indicate the state of mind of somebody, which can be modified with various adjectives. That is, these two significant parts of a person represent the condition of the person’s State of Mind. ‘Heart’ and ‘Head’ are seen as ENTITIES in which the balance is crucial. Some other expressions related to this category follow: *im jai* (= contented heart); THE HEART AS CONTAINER IS FULL. This is a general expression to express happiness as being fully realized or “at its peak”. *Sabaay jai* (= comfortable heart); THE HEART’S CONTENT IS STABLE. This is a popular expression that expresses contentment as a fluid, calm state. *Jai haay jai khwam* (= lost heart; overturned heart); *jai haay* means to be frightened or shocked; to overturn one’s heart means a loss of the heart’s content resulting in very intense fear. Thus we have the underlying metaphoric patterns of HEART IS AN ENTITY and FEAR HAS POWER TO MOVE AN ENTITY. There is also the expression *jai mai yuu kap mieaa kap tuaa* (= one’s heart is frightened out of the body).

Table 1. Conceptual Patterns Related to Conditions of the Heart in Thai

HEART AS ENTITY
 HEART AS CONTAINER
 WATER AS LIFE SOURCE
 STABLE ENTITY AS GOOD
 FEAR CAUSES INSTABILITY IN ENTITY

Conduct and Behavior.

The ideals of behavior in Thai society reflect Buddhism both as role models and in making criticism about social behavior. Some common expressions follow.

Aw jai klaw maa sai jai raw (= take another person's heart into your heart) means to be considerate, have thoughtful behavior, empathy. This reflects the Buddhist value of compassion for others. This expression represents HEART AS AN ENTITY or HEART AS CONTAINER.

Naam jai (= water heart). The conceptual pattern is HEART IS CONTAINER FILLED WITH WATER. This common expression is used for a considerate person, lack of water is seen as a criticism. The value and need of water probably reflect the tropical condition of Thai life, the cultivation of rice and the lushness of the landscape with the monsoon rains. The condition/quality of water is also an extension of this perspective, such as in: *naam sai jai jing* (= water clear, true heart). The water based metaphor in these expressions are also linked to the first category above of Condition of the Heart/State of Mind. Such as in: *jai hiiaw* (= withered heart) and *jai haeng* (= dry heart). Both mean a despondent person. Water brings life and vitality, whereas its lack is a metaphor for emotional weakness. *Chup naam jai* (= soak a heart in water) means to cheer someone up who is despondent. The underlying conceptual patterns are:

HEART AS A PLANT/ENTITY
 WATER AS A LIFE SOURCE/BRINGS SUSTENANCE
 A VITAL HEART AS SUSTAINED BY WATER/EMOTIONALLY STRONG

Size is also an important dimension of "heart". *Jai yai* (= big heart), a big-hearted person is a generous, kind person. This is seen as well in *jai kwaang* (= broad heart). Again this reflects HEART AS AN ENTITY and BIG SIZE IS GOOD. There is also the expression *jai ben mae naam* (= heart is as broad as a river) where the metaphor of flowing water is combined with size or capacity. The opposite of a big or broad size as a positive value can be seen in *jai kheep* (= narrow heart). This represents a selfish or in English a narrow-minded person. The English translation illustrates the cross-cultural conceptual shift from "heart" to "head/mind".

Table 2. Conceptual Patterns Related to Conduct and Behavior in Thai

HEART AS ENTITY
 HEART AS PLANT

WATER AS LIFE SOURCE
 CONDITION OF THE HEART AS A REFLECTION OF ADEQUATE WATER
 HEART AS CONTAINER

Thinking/Making Decisions.

The ‘Heart’ is also the locus for the processes of thinking, of making decisions. It encompasses the Conditions of the Heart as a foundation for the decision making. *Jiing jai* (= clear heart) is regarded as a foundation for understanding, as the basic condition for effective communication, which relates to the use of WATER as a conceptual frame.

Thaam jai kwang (= look in heart, then choose); HEART AS CONTAINER

Chang jai (= weigh heart); HEART AS ENTITY, a weight scale reflecting how a decision is reached.

Jai rew (= fast heart). This represents someone who makes a quick decision. Speed is a metaphor for impulsive behavior. GOOD THINKING IS A DELIBERATE SPEED.

Nuek yuu nai jai (= think inside one’s heart) which means to think to oneself, to be reflective in making decisions. HEART AS CONTAINER where thinking occurs.

Khit nai jai (= think in heart). This expression means to avoid expressing oneself to avoid loss of face. HEART AS LOCUS FOR THINKING.

Khaw jai (= know in heart). As the ‘Heart’ is the locus of emotions, attitudes and relationships, to understand someone is then seen in a monistic manner, thought combined with attitude and feeling. The conceptual patterns are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Conceptual Patterns Related to Thinking/Making Decisions in Thai

HEART AS A CONTAINER
 HEART AS THE LOCUS OF THINKING
 HEART AS A CONTAINER (TO KEEP KNOWLEDGE)
 CLEAR (WATER) IS GOOD
 HEART AS AN ENTITY (WHICH CAN MOVE)
 HEART IS AN ENTITY AS A SCALE(FOR DECISIONS)

Relationships & Social Structure.

‘Heart’ expressions are used to express the hierarchical nature of Thai social structure, in which there is a sense of awe, respect with its attendant feeling of weightiness. The feature of ‘weight’ reflects what is highly valued in a scalar metaphor as to what is important. Undoubtedly, it can also express negative attitudes of fear and burdensome things.

Kreeng jai (= awe heart) is an essential social expectation in the hierarchically defined Thai society. It includes a sense of awe and respect but also fear and obligation in the hierarchical power structures of Thai society: THE GOOD IS HIGHER. THE GOOD HAS WEIGHT. But

the negative also reflects FEAR/BURDENS AS HEAVY. *Nak jai* (= heavy heart) means to feel responsible and worry about something. Although the metaphor is a transactional one, it is not just a monetary reference but also implies service, loyalty, love, reflecting HEART AS VALUABLE ENTITY. The underlying conceptual patterns are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Conceptual Patterns Related to Relationships in Thai

THE HEART AS PERSON
 HEART AS ENTITY
 HEAVINESS IS VALUABLE
 HEAVY WEIGHT IS BURDENSOME
 FEAR/RESPECT/POWER AS A CONDITION OF THE HEART
 THE GOOD AS HIGHER

Table 5 summarizes the basic conceptual patterns found in the Thai data. The heart *jai* is seen as the metonym of personhood in Thai and as such the metaphoric locus of various modes of communication, suggesting a cultural perception of what the person should be in communicating and behavior with others as well as what the expectations of that behavior is.

Table 5. Summary of Basic Conceptual Patterns in the Thai Data.

HEART AS PERSON
 HEART AS THE LOCUS OF EMOTIONS
 HEART AS THE LOCUS OF ATTITUDES
 HEART AS THE LOCUS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
 HEART AS THE LOCUS OF THINKING/DECISION MAKING
 HEART AS THE LOCUS OF SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS
 HEART AS THE LOCUS OF APPROVED/DISAPPROVED RELATIONS
 HEART AS ENTITY/CONTAINER
 HEART'S CONTENT AS WATER

The Case of Japanese

In contrast to the Thai language in which *jai* “heart” has an unparalleled importance in expressing State of Mind (Conditions of the Heart), Conduct & Behavior, Thinking & Making Decisions, Relationships & Social Structure, Japanese uses several key words to cover the same areas of social interaction. According to the *Japanese Comprehensive Dictionary* (1972), they are *kokoro* (heart), *mune* (breast/chest) and *hara* (belly).

***Kokoro* Expressions.**

Kokoro translates broadly as “heart”, “core”, or “mind” into English; *mune* as “breast/ chest” or “bust”, and *hara* as “belly”, “stomach”. The expressions related with these Japanese body parts are seen as the location of emotion and thinking. *Hara* refers to abdomen, belly, gut, intestines, stomach, and is the location of emotion as well as courage, will, determination, decision making, etc. The Japanese *kokoro* may be the closest to the Thai *jai*, but it is not used as a metonym for person. Both *kokoro* and *mune* expressions are mostly related to State of Mind. For example, *kokoro ga yabureru* (=one’s heart rips) in which “heart” is considered as a thin object such as a leaf or paper. However, *kokoro ga kowareru* (= one’s heart breaks) means that one mentally breaks up, though it appears similar to the English “heartbreak” but used in a broader context. *Kokoro ga midareru* (= one’s heart gets out of order) means one feels anxiety, or is in agony. *Kokoro ga sawagu* (= one’s heart makes a lot of noise) means one’s heart is troubled. *Kokoro ni kizamu* (= to inscribe something on one’s heart) means to remember something with strong sentiment. In the cases above, *KOKORO* is conceptualized as ENTITY. The characteristics the ENTITY has include ripping (cloth), breaking (brittle/hard object), disorder (parts not properly fitted), noisy (metallic machinery), carving (a hard surface which can be marked, scratched).

***Mune* Expressions**

While *mune* physically refers to “breast” or “chest”, it can also refer by extension to the heart, as the heart is thought to be located in one’s *mune*. Typical expressions include: *mune ga itamu* (=one’s breast/chest aches) meaning that one is grieved exactly as in the English expression “heartache”. *Mune ga harisakeru* (= one’s breast bursts out and rips) also expresses one’s state of grief. *Mune ga odoru* (= one’s breast dances) means that one is very happy with expectation.

The underlying conceptual metaphor is also ENTITY. In a general comparison *kokoro* and *mune* are close to the English heart expressions in their domain of use. Conceived as ENTITY, they can move, break, sink, bounce, dance, and so on. In addition to the physical reference of *kokoro* and *mune*, Japanese also has the term *sinzou* which refers primarily to the physical organ and is mainly used in a medical context. However, there are instances where it is used metaphorically like *kokoro*. An example is *sinzou ga tobiagaru* (= one’s heart jumps up) meaning one is frightened. While *sinzou* is primarily used for referring to the physical organ and in medical contexts, *kokoro* and *mune* are often used interchangeably in their metaphoric uses.

***Hara* Expressions.**

The other common body part expression, *hara*, is more characteristic of the Japanese language and thinking and there is a rich variety of expressions centering on it. It literally refers to the abdomen or lower part of the torso, including belly, gut, intestines and stomach. There are, indeed, some metaphoric expressions in English using “guts” and “belly” but the

metaphoric use of such body parts is very limited compared to the Japanese *hara*. Examples of English include “gutless” (= lacking courage), “to have no stomach for something” (= to have no desire to do something), “to have a bellyful of something” (= to be annoyed with something), but *hara* expressions cover a much wider range of communicative functions than English.

The expression in Japanese of *hara-kiri* is well-known and notorious. It is the traditional method of committing suicide performed by samurai from the 12th century into the 20th century as the honorable way of dying in order to take some responsibility or to admit defeat. However, it can be said that it is a very ineffective way to commit suicide as it is messy, painful and time-consuming. An assistant is needed who beheads the warrior as he thrusts the sword into his belly. The beheading brings a relatively clean, painless, instant death.

Why then is *hara-kiri* (cutting the belly) such a symbolic act? That is because of the central position and importance of the *hara* in a person, both physically and mentally. The ancient Japanese believed that it is in the *hara* that one feels, thinks and makes decisions, which in contrast English symbolizes with a focus on the heart. In Japanese *hara* is at the core of life and symbolizes the whole life of a person.

Since *hara* is one’s very persona, a metonym of person, it is considered that one’s relationships with others, the attitudes/reactions toward outside things and events as well as emotions/state of mind control the *hara* and vice versa. *Hara* reacts positively, negatively as well as physically to events, but categorizing the communicative functions into the above is at time problematical.

Hara wo kakaeru (= to fold up one’s stomach or bend over) means “to have a belly laugh” but a seemingly physical reaction. Both Japanese and English have similar understanding or experience to this emotion. In Japanese, as in Thai *jai*, one’s stomach may be described by various adjectives such as large, small, hard, or black to express various emotions. *Hara ga ookii* (= a big stomach) means a broad-minded person, while in Thai *jai yai* (= a big heart) means a generous or kind person. Similarly *hara ga chiisai* (= a small stomach) parallels the Thai *jai kheep* (a narrow heart), but each has a rather different usage. In Japanese it refers to a “chicken-hearted” or “poor-spirited” person, whereas in Thai it refers to a narrow-minded, selfish person. The Japanese *hara ga katai* (a hard stomach) is parallel to Thai *jai kheng* (hard heart). In Japanese it means a “well-principled” person but in Thai it may be positive or negative, a “determined” person or a “stubborn” person. Again in Japanese *haraguro* (a black stomach) and Thai *jai dam* (a black heart) both have negative uses, an “evil-minded” person in Japanese and a “pitiless, selfish person of no feelings” in Thai. Two other common expressions in Japanese are *hara ga tatu* (one’s stomach stands up) and *hara ga niekuri kaeru* (one’s stomach boils over), both meaning one is very angry. In the former, *hara* is an ENTITY which moves, while in the latter it is a CONTAINER with some volatile content in it. Another example is, *hara ga iru* (the *hara* is settled in a place) meaning one’s anger subsides. These are all used to express a State of Mind. But it is the “abdomen” or *hara* that is the locus of one’s emotional reactions. The underlying conceptual frame of ENTITY and CONTAINER can also be seen in the following, which can be classified as reflecting Conduct & Behavior. *Hara de iku* (= to go with the stomach) means to act whole-heartedly or courageously. *Hara ga hairu* (= something enters the stomach) means to fully understand

something. It has a positive meaning in contrast to the English “to stomach something”. *Hara ni osameru* (= to settle something in the stomach) means to keep a secret. *Hara ni itimotu aru* (= to have something in the stomach) refers to a person who has a scheme, often an evil one.

ENTITY and CONTAINER conceptual metaphors are also frequently found in expressions related to Thinking & Making Decisions as well as Relationships. *Hara ga saguru* means to snoop into someone’s mind. *Hara ga yomu* (= to read the stomach of another) means to understand someone’s attitude, intention or feeling. *Hara wo kimeru* (= to decide one’s stomach) means to decide/make up one’s mind. *Hara wo waru* (= to break one’s stomach) means to drop all pretense. *Hara wo awaseru* (= to join one’s stomach with another) is used to express either uniting one’s efforts with another or to have a good rapport with someone.

Summary of Japanese Expressions & Conceptual Patterns.

The Japanese body part expressions of *hara* and *mune* are used both for describing a physical aspect of the body and metaphorically while *kokoro* is used as an abstract noun for metaphorical purposes only. *Kokoro* and *mune* are much used in expressing the State of the Mind, similar to that of the English “heart” for emotive purposes. While *hara* is used to express the State of the Mind/Emotions, it is much more so used to show Conduct & Behavior, Thinking & Making Decisions as well as Relationships of persons. These latter are more often reflected in the function of the “mind” in English. In other words, *hara* is used in both emotional as well as rational communicative modes. It suggests that Japanese like Thai does not in its culture of communication have a heart-mind dichotomy found in Western philosophy. The Japanese verb “to think” *omou* and the related noun *omoi* is similarly used for both expressing rational and well as emotive “thinking”.

Table 6. Conceptual Patterns in Japanese Related to KOKORO, MUNE & HARA

KOKORO/MUNE AS ENTITY/CONTAINER
KOKORO/MUNE AS LOCUS OF EMOTIONS
HARA AS PERSON
HARA AS ENTITY/CONTAINER
HARA AS LOCUS OF EMOTIONS/ATTITUDES
HARA AS LOCUS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
HARA AS LOCUS OF RELATIONSHIPS
HARA AS LOCUS OF APPROVED/DISAPPROVED RELATIONS
HARA AS LOCUS OF THINKING/DECISION MAKING

The Case of English

According to the *Oxford Universal Dictionary*, the oldest uses of “heart” expressions encompassed all of feeling, understanding and thought. The “heart” in Old English was seen as

the locus of thinking which in modern English is equated to the “mind”. The expression “learn by heart” still illustrates this old usage; the “heart” was seen as the seat of intellectual faculties, such as understanding, intellect, mind and memory. Another expression with a long pedigree “after one’s own heart” similarly combines understanding with shared intent, purpose and desire in communicating. These expressions still extant today derive from the perception that understanding involves an integration of rationality with other modes of thinking and expression.

In contemporary English usage “heart” expressions can be analyzed into three typologies, besides the physical references. First as the locus of emotions in which the “heart” is seen as opposed to the “head” as the locus for rational discourse. The underlying conceptual frame is THE HEART AS ENTITY/ CONTAINER. For example, “break one’s heart”, “heart of gold”, “heart of stone”, “hard-hearted”, “cold hearted”, “in your heart”. Negative attitudes are expressed with the adjectives “hard, brittle, heavy” similar to Thai and Japanese, while positive ones are “light, soft, tender, warm”. The second typology is given as the locus of “love and affection”. For example, “give/lose one’s heart”, “have/gain a person’s heart”, “near one’s heart”. The third use is as the locus of courage: “to take heart”, “to pluck up one’s heart”, “brave heart”.

What these heart expressions share is an underlying conceptual frame of HEART AS ENTITY/ CONTAINER. Conditions of various emotions and attitudes such as sincerity are expressed as conditions on the ENTITY or CONTAINER. What is not included in modern English are expressions of rational discourse with the implied assumption that the rational mode of the intellect can or should be separated from the emotive-attitudinal.

Rodale (1978) classifies “heart” into five typologies (physical organ, inner feelings, feelings for others or our social relationships, courage and core/center), and he links two of them with expressions focusing on “guts” (inner feelings and courage). This cross-metaphoric linkage is interesting both for its dependency of another body part for the discourse but also the fact that some of these share characteristics with Japanese usage.

Table 7. Conceptual Patterns in English Related to ‘Heart’

HEART AS PERSON
 HEART AS ENTITY/CONTAINER
 HEART AS LOCUS OF EMOTIONS

Conclusions

Understanding Communication Processes: Monistic versus Dualistic

What this analysis has suggested is that there are different cultural constructs in how thinking, feeling, human relationships and understanding are understood. By examining some key words and their metonymic/metaphoric uses in the Thai, Japanese and English languages an insight into cultural expectations and priorities can be seen. From the three languages examined we would characterize them as “monistic” or “dualistic”.

A “monistic” view of communication in which there is an integration of various modes of understanding and creating understanding can be seen in the data from Thai in the *jai* (heart) expressions. Similarly this integrative value can also be seen in the Japanese *hara* (belly/abdomen) expressions, although in Japanese there is a multiplicity of embodiment of several sources *kokoro*, *mune*, *hara*. There is no division of labor between the rational and emotive modes of communicating.

The “dualistic” dichotomy of the rational and emotive/attitudinal is evident in the Western tradition as in English “heart/mind” expressions. The dichotomy in Western culture between the rational mode and the emotive/attitudinal mode has created a dilemma of how the one may contradict the other or at least confound one to the other. Pascal in his *Pensée* #423 (1670) notes this when he says, “The heart has its reasons which reason does not understand.” This dilemma is interesting coming from Pascal as a representative of the high valuation of the rational mode over the emotive-attitudinal. Another advocate of 17th century rationalism François de la Rochefoucauld (*Reflections* 102) similarly writes, “The mind is always the dupe of the heart,” implying either a competition or loss of predominance between the two (cited in Seldes 1985 under “heart”).

The dualistic separation of various communicative functions in creating understanding as seen in English suggests a different priority scale in its cultures in comparison to those of the Asian Thai and Japanese.

Priority Scales

These two cultural constructs that feature distinctive patterns of understanding, relationships, rationality, feeling and attitude can be represented in the following diagrammatic manner. In monistic cultural values of communication the relationships /social behavior, attitudes, expression of feelings are integrated with the decision making. All impinge on the metonym of PERSON as interlocked or interdependent, even if not simultaneously. This can be seen in the cluster of *jai* (heart) expressions in Thai and the *hara* (belly) in Japanese.

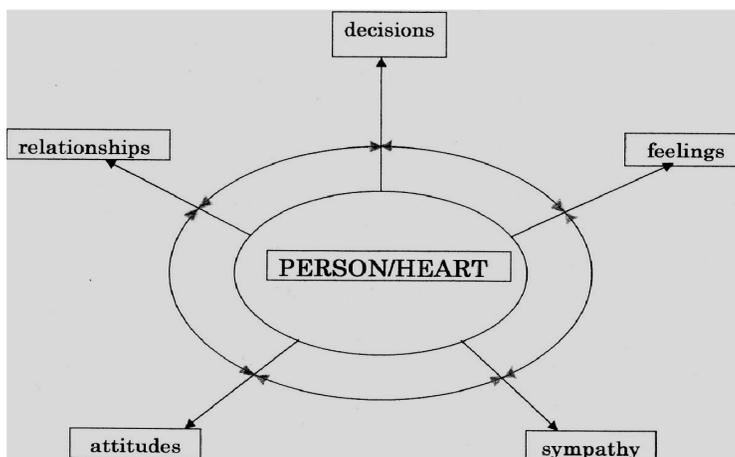


Figure 1. Interdependence Culture of Communication

In dualistic cultural values where there is a valuation of the rational/logical discourse over other bodily linked modes, the “head” over “heart”, the result is a scalar model of weighing and balance between them. But the emotional as linked to the body is usually denigrated and placed in a lower metaphoric plane.

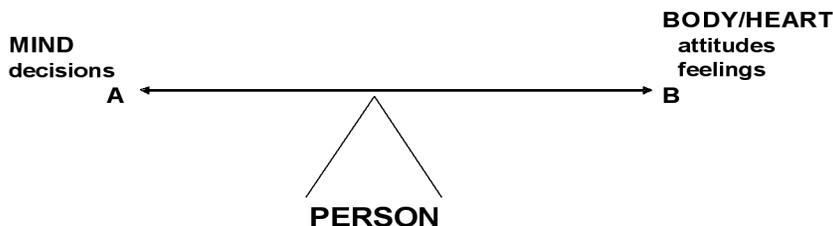


Figure 2. Dichotomous Culture of Communication

These two modes of understanding do create expectations in social behavior through their respective cultural constructs. The metaphors, idioms and other expressions related to “heart” and other body parts reflect values of each society through its language. To summarize these two cultures of communication constructs, the Thai data focuses on HEART AS THE PERSON with a construct of priorities on interpersonal aspects of communication as the foundation for creating understanding. In the Japanese language the comparable underlying conceptual pattern would be: HARA AS THE PERSON. However, in a dichotomous construct such as in English, the modes of achieving understanding are divided into several underlying conceptual patterns which represent a cleavage between the emotive-attitudinal and the rational intellect, as summarized in Table 8.

Table 8. Dichotomous Conceptual Patterns in the English Culture of Communication

HEAD/MIND AS LOCUS FOR RATIONAL UNDERSTANDING
 HEART AS EMOTIVE-ATTITUDINAL EXPRESSION
 THE HIGHER (HEAD) HAS GREATER VALUE THAN THE LOWER (HEART)

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