

WORKING WITH THE JAPANESE WORKSHOP FOR 'CULTUREWISE'

5 BASIC THEMES (CORE BUSINESS VALUES)

'WA' – Harmony:

Sense of order based on relationship between people, things and nature. Maintaining the appearance of harmony is important. **Honne**: expression of inner feelings or personal opinion, in balance with **Tatemae**: public stance or official opinion. (Dark side: Dishonesty)

'DORYOKU' - Effort:

Visible demonstration of hard work and giving one's best, or team effort. Strong work ethic throughout workforce. May include taking less efficient route in order to demonstrate commitment. Commitment & effort rewarded over achievement (Dark side: Inefficiency)

'BA' - Situationalism:

Appropriate action, decision or response is dependent on the time, place and the status and relationship of the people involved. Particularist case by case approach favoured over set of universalist system or principles. (Dark side: Inconsistency)

'NINGEN KANKEI' - Human Relations:

Essential web of relationships and group identifications needed to accomplish business goals or anything else. Various gradations of "belongingness" exist, depending on position on **uchi** (inside/home) – **soto** (outside/stranger) continuum. (Dark side: Disadvantage)

'KATA' - Form:

The way of doing something. Following the proper form creates predictability, which facilitates maintenance of harmony. Elaborate set of customs, rules and behavioural patterns pervade interaction of people to enable good relations. (Dark side: Stubbornness)

Historical / Geographical Context:

- Geography, only 10% of land inhabitable, very dense population, had to find ways of living together harmoniously to survive ✍ **KATA** - Form
- Agricultural background, collectivistic ✍ **WA** – Harmony (vs individualistic hunters)
- Japan island, historically little contact/exchange with world: ✍ **UCHI/SOTO** - Relations
- Samurai culture, search for cultured integrity through effort ✍ **DORYOKU** - Effort
- Plagued by natural disasters (fire, tsunami, earthquake), destruction, 'permanence of change' as in architecture, fluidity of organisation and approach ✍ **BA** - situationalism

Within these 5 macro themes or values, the workshop may explore various sub-themes, values or issues as below. Only some of these can be viewed in any depth due to time constraints, and this will depend on what comes out of participants' own experience.

KATA – Form

- **On / Giri** ('Give' & 'Take', reciprocity)
- **Enryo** (modesty)
- Sensitivity (receptiveness) and Subtleness
- **Amae** ('sweetness')
- **Kao** (importance of keeping face, incl. not undermining others)
- Formality (and importance) of **Aisatsu**
- **O-miyage** (gift giving culture, including hidden rules)
- **Origami** – culture of neat wrapping, incl one's presentation
- Politeness and forms of address
- Socialising (formally & informally)
- Introductions, significance of **meishi**
- Etiquette and taboos
- Dress, titles, cleanliness (in & out)

WA – Harmony

- Fundamental purpose of communication to maintain harmony
- Hence debate or discussion with caution
- **Tatemae** (official face) vs **Honne** (inner self)
- Communication holistic/circular (rather than functional/linear)
- **Haragei** – stomach to stomach communication
- Virtue & significance of Silence
- Importance of body language
- High Context communication (analogue view)
- Indirectness, implicitness to maintain harmony, dislike of explicitness
- 'What you say has 10 meanings'
- Say it, don't write it (but write a fax/email, don't call)
- Fundamentals of Japanese (kanji, multi-levels of formality, male/female etc)
- Japanese' ordeal with English – how to adjust one's English
- Key skill: Listen

NINGEN KANKEI – Human Relations

- Good human relations at core of all interactions and business transactions
- Long-term relationship, not legal contract, at heart of business relations
- **Uchi – Soto**: Insider and Outsider, need for **awase** (adjustment, alignment)
- Goal of relationship building is gradually enter **Uchi** zone
- Sincerity and Trust, absolutely no hidden agendas
- Taboo: Anger, impatience, action causing loss of face
- Importance of collective bonding (e.g. after work drink)
- Flexibility of human relations enables adaptability not possible in legalistic approach
- Absolutely '**Customer is King**' approach (in action not words)

- Supplier/Partner requirements:
 - Long-term relationship as evidenced in commitment, action (not words) and ability to participate in consensus building (hence drawn out info at first)
 - Purpose of relationship: ability to jointly work things out, not 'contract'
 - If relationship OK, possible to work on other 3 key areas: Quality, Delivery and Price – all operated on Pull basis

DORYOKU – Effort

- Cannot beat nature, in harmony, so best efforts in given circumstances valued
- Collective effort is key, effort towards goal of group, not self (***gambatte*** – try hard)
- Personal development based on '***Naru***' (becoming) within group, not '***Suru***' (doing) individually – advancement ascribed, not achieved
- Effort for benefit of group which is there to support you (not for self enrichment)
- Hence importance of teamwork and collective empowerment
- Decisions based on Consensus (***Nemawashi, Ringi-sho***)
- Synchronicity dynamics of activities (including meetings)
- Polychronic time management as reflected in simultaneous product design
- Company viewed as communal ownership, there to help people (mutual loyalty)
- Focus on people (human potential first, then capital & technological assets)
- Hence Personnel & Training highly valued
- Therefore negotiations always win-win or nothing, (win-loose = taboo)
- If pushed into a corner, Japanese will take a tit for tat approach
- Examples of Values as reflected in manufacturing principles:
 - TQC, TPM, *Pokayoke* – total team involvement in preventing errors
 - *Andon* – empowerment to allow above
 - Multi-functionality – team pitching in, development
 - *Kaizen, Teian* – small innovations in team spirit, empowerment
 - HST – focus on people (awareness) not on safety barriers or rules
 - Production Levelling (*Kanban, JIT*) – synchronous activity of all involved, hence human relation (1 failure, whole chain falls apart)
 - Key slogan throughout workforce: ***yaruki*** (can-do attitude)

BA – Situationalism

- Four seasons, natural dangers: ***Tsuyu, Taifu, Kaji, Tsunami, Jishin*** – destruction
- Constantly rebuilding, regenerating, nothing permanent, fluidity
- Architecture: wooden structure (temples) rebuilt every 10-20 years
- Fluidity of inner & outer space, ***tatami*** homes with flexible ***fusuma*** (redefine space)
- Fundamental philosophy: only permanence is change
- Approach to life and business built around change principle (fluidity)
- Organising principle: Adaptability, receptivity, organism
- Hence case by case approach, particularism (not universalism) enables change
- Hence corporations very flexible, fluid, adaptable to environmental change
- Fluidity in jobs delineation, functions and management
- Only permanence hierarchy and social order (*sempai*) to give some structure
- Hence hierarchy based on ascription (seniority), not achievement
- Manager hence as leader, mentor and coach, facilitating consensus bottom-up
- ***KATA*** (hierarchy) & ***NINGEN KANKEI*** glue holding it all together
- Hence 'contract' mere formality, what really counts is relationship

JAPANESE PROVERBS

- *Ishibashi tataite wataru*
 - **Tap the stone bridge before crossing**
- *Jishin, kaminari, kaji, oyaji*
 - **Earthquakes, thunder, fire, fathers**
- *Doku kuwaba sara made*
 - **If you are going to eat poison, include the plate**
- *Furuki o tazunete atarashiki o shiru*
 - **Learn new things by studying the past**
- *Senri no michi mo ippo kara*
 - **Even a thousand mile journey begins with one step**
- *Sannin yoreba monju no chie*
 - **When three people are together there is the wisdom of god**
- *Umpu tempu*
 - **Trust to chance (allow fate to take its course)**
- *Kuchi wa wazanai no moto*
 - **The mouth is the root of evil**
- *Iwanu ga hana*
 - **Saying nothing is a flower**
- *Deru kugi wa utareru*
 - **The nail that sticks out gets hammered down**
- *Ishin denshin*
 - **Through the heart the heart communicates**
- *Fugen jikkkoh*
 - **Action before words**
- *Onaji kama no meshi o kutta naka*
 - **Amongst those having eaten from the same pot of rice**

Next: Tentative Workshop Schedule. Tentative, i.e. to be revised, if necessary, in light of needs arising from participant questionnaires and other input from Culturewise.

WORKSHOP - TENTATIVE FORMAT:

#	Activity	Materials Ref
A	Introduction - self introductions - workshop objectives	N/A
B	Japan Quiz – What do you know about Japan? Elicit core values	Work with Japanese, Ch. 1 Introduction
C	THEME 1: KATA – Form Geography, density – etiquette, do's & don'ts	N/A
D	Discussion: Proverbs – small groups interpretation	Proverbs Sheet
E	THEME 2: WA – Harmony Coherence of society, do's & don'ts <u>LANGUAGE</u> – Brief intro to structure of Japanese (kanji, formality, ...). + Use of English	Work with Japanese, Ch. 2 Communicating with Japanese
F	Elicitation: What went wrong? Elicit participant's own 'case studies'	(Work with Japanese, Ch 7? Case Studies)
G	THEME 3: NINGEN KANKEI – Human Relations Relations superseding legalism, do's & don'ts	Work with Japanese, Ch. 4 Building relationships
H	Activity: Perception exercise Different perceptions, no right or wrong	OHP
I	THEME 4: DORYOKU – Effort Work ethic, teamwork, do's & don'ts	Work with Japanese, Ch. 3 Working with Japanese
J	Elicitation: What have been your frustrations Elicit participants frustrations dealing with Japan	N/A
K	THEME 5: BA – Situationalism Organising principle in companies, do's & don'ts	Work with Japanese, Ch. 5 Leading / Teamworking
L	Proverbs (D), Cases (F) & Frustrations (J) Revisited , Re-interpret in light of Themes 1 – 5 <i>What can be learned from this?</i> What strategies for creating positive impact	N/A
M	The new Japan – what has changed? Small groups discussion, plenary	Work with Japanese, Ch. 6 The new Japan
N	Action Planning – Strategies for more effective working: How can what learned above be put into action plan for next business trip, 10 actions	Work with Japanese, Ch. 8 Action Planning
O	Q & A, Close	N/A