

Japanese Culture: Traditional Meets Modern

Class 2

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Honne-Tatemae – “Reality-Façade”

- *Honne* → one's deep motive or intention
- *Tatemae* → one's motives or intentions that are socially-tuned
 - Shaped, encouraged, or suppressed by majority norms
- Do not like to express themselves in a straightforward manner
 - Usually careful about what they say and often use *tatemae* in order to get along well with others
- Great respect for harmony, or the spirit of *wa* since ancient times
 - *Tatemae* is used to maintain *wa* and create a comfortable atmosphere
- When to use which?
 - *Honne* is used in one's personal space
 - *Tatemae* is used in more public forums such as business meetings



TRY IT!
Using *Honne-Tatemae*



Uchi-Soto – “Us-Them”

Uchi:

- Inside
- My house and home
- The group that we belong to
- My wife and husband

Soto:

- Outside
- Outdoors
- Other groups
- Outside the home



- The Japanese clearly distinguish insiders from outsiders in daily life, depending on whether the others belong to an *uchi* or *soto* group.
 - Any ideas?
 - *Gaijin*
- Origins can be found in the traditional *ie* (“house”) system of Japan.
 - 3 main characteristics:
 - Male-dominated
 - Head of household was in charge of the family business
 - Household was considered to be far more important than its individual members.
 - Can also be seen in the physical arrangement of traditional *ie*-style housing, which is still prevalent throughout Japan today.
 - Although this pattern tends to create family unity, it widens the gap between the family and outsiders.
 - Dominates human relationships throughout Japan.

On – “Obligation”



- “Debt to Be Repaid”
- A man’s indebtedness is not virtue, his repayment is. Virtue begins when he dedicates himself actively to the job of gratitude.
- Two Categories:
 - Gimu
 - Giri

On: Gimu

- “One never repays one-ten-thousandth of this *on*.”
 - One’s gimu groups together two different types of obligations:
 - Any ideas?
 - Repayment of one’s *on* to parents (*ko*)
 - Filial Piety
 - Repayment of one’s *on* to the Emperor (*chu*)
 - Duty to State
- Both required and unconditional
- Compared to China:
 - Chinese did not make these unconditional
 - An overriding virtue called *jen*, often translated as “benevolence,” really means good interpersonal relations.
 - A condition of loyalty and piety
 - Never accepted in Japan



Gimu: Filial Piety



On: Giri

- “Hardest to bear”
- Like *gimu*, also a debt that must be repaid
 - Includes a list of all different kinds of obligations
 - Ideas?
- Key difference:
 - *Gimu* is a result of strong ties created from birth and is never defined as “unwilling”
 - Repaying *giri*, however, is
- Rules of *giri* are strictly rules of required payment
 - Not a set of moral rules like the ten commandments



Two Distinct Divisions

Giri to the World

Obligation to repay *on* to one's contractual relations

Giri to One's Name

Duty of keeping one's name and reputation unspotted by any crime or accusation

Giri to the World

- Any ideas?
- Encompasses all one's relations, especially those pertaining to marriage
 - Includes all the duties one owes to one's in-law's family
 - Marriage in Japan = contract between families and carrying out these contractual obligations throughout life to the opposite family is 'working for *giri*'
 - Heaviest toward those who arranged the contract (parents)
 - Heaviest of all on the young wife toward her mother-in-law because the bride has gone to live in a house where she was not born
 - The husband's obligations to his parents-in-law are different, but they too are dreaded
 - May have to lend money if they are in distress and must meet other responsibilities
 - 'If a grown son does things for his own mother, it is because he loves her and therefore it couldn't be *giri*. You don't work for *giri* when you act from the heart.'
 - 'Adopted Husband'
 - Takes his father-in-law's name, is subject to *giri* to his father and mother-in-laws.
 - In feudal Japan he had to prove himself in his new household by taking his adopted father's side in battle even if it meant killing his own father.

TRY IT!

Navigating the Japanese Family



Children & Parenting

- Modern Japanese culture developed from the cooperative agricultural society of Traditional Japan
- Parenting differs greatly from Western cultures
 - “Seep-down” Parenting
- Two Main Features
 - “Learning by Imitation”
 - Less Concerned with Parental Authority
 - Rarely discipline or punish harshly
- Oriented more around teaching a child how to operate well within a group rather than being independent.
- *Kimochi-shugi* – “Tendency to put importance on other’s feelings, or to try to be sympathetic to other’s feelings and perceive their intentions.”

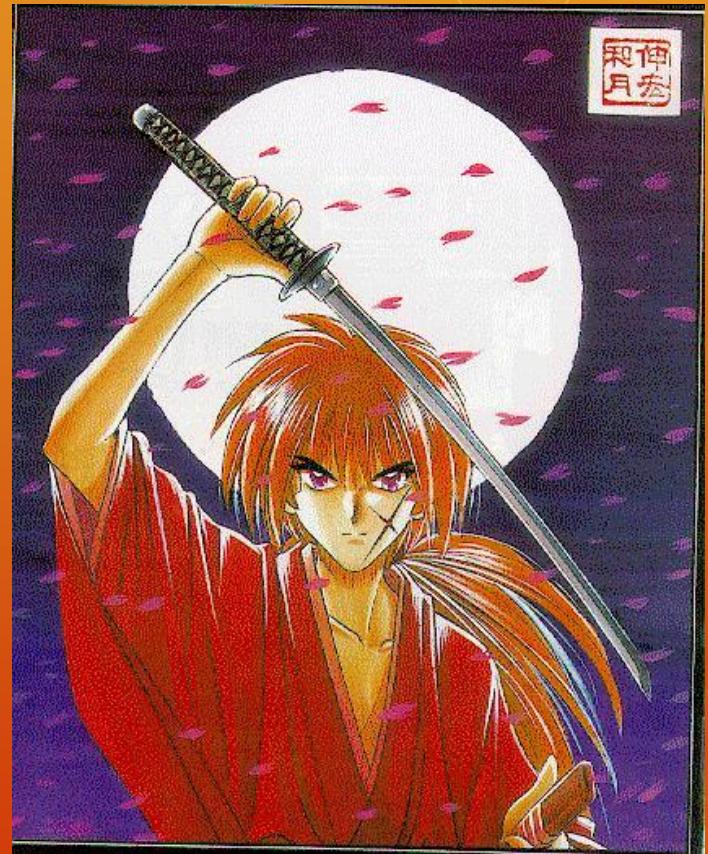


Giri to One's Name

- Giri to One's Name is the duty to keep one's reputation unspotted.
 - What do you think this would entail?
 - Maintaining one's proper station
 - Showing stoicism in pain
 - Defending one's reputation in profession or craft
- Also demands acts which remove a slur or an insult
 - A slur darkens one's good name and must be gotten rid of
 - May be necessary to take vengeance on the perpetrator or commit suicide
 - All sorts of possible courses of action between these two extremes
 - Can you think of some?
 - Regardless, one does not shake off lightly anything that is compromising
- So long as one is maintaining giri and clearing one's name of blemishes, one is not guilty of aggression.
 - It is human virtue, not a vice.

Giri and the Samurai

- Great traditional *giri* relationship
- Not only about vengeance, but also self-control and loyalty
 - Were forbidden to give way to hunger.
 - They could not give way to pain either.
 - A samurai should give no sign of suffering until he fell dead and he must bear pain without wincing.
 - Example: Musashibou Benkei
- When *giri* was from the heart and had no taint of resentment - modern Japan's daydream of a golden age.
 - When there was no 'unwillingness' in *giri*.
 - This of course, is a fantasy.
 - Plenty of retainers' loyalty was bought by daimyo on the opposite side of the battle.
 - Any insult spoken by the lord against his retainer could properly and traditionally make him leave his service and even enter into negotiations with the enemy.
- Vengeance is emphasized as much as loyalty



Giri – Gift Giving

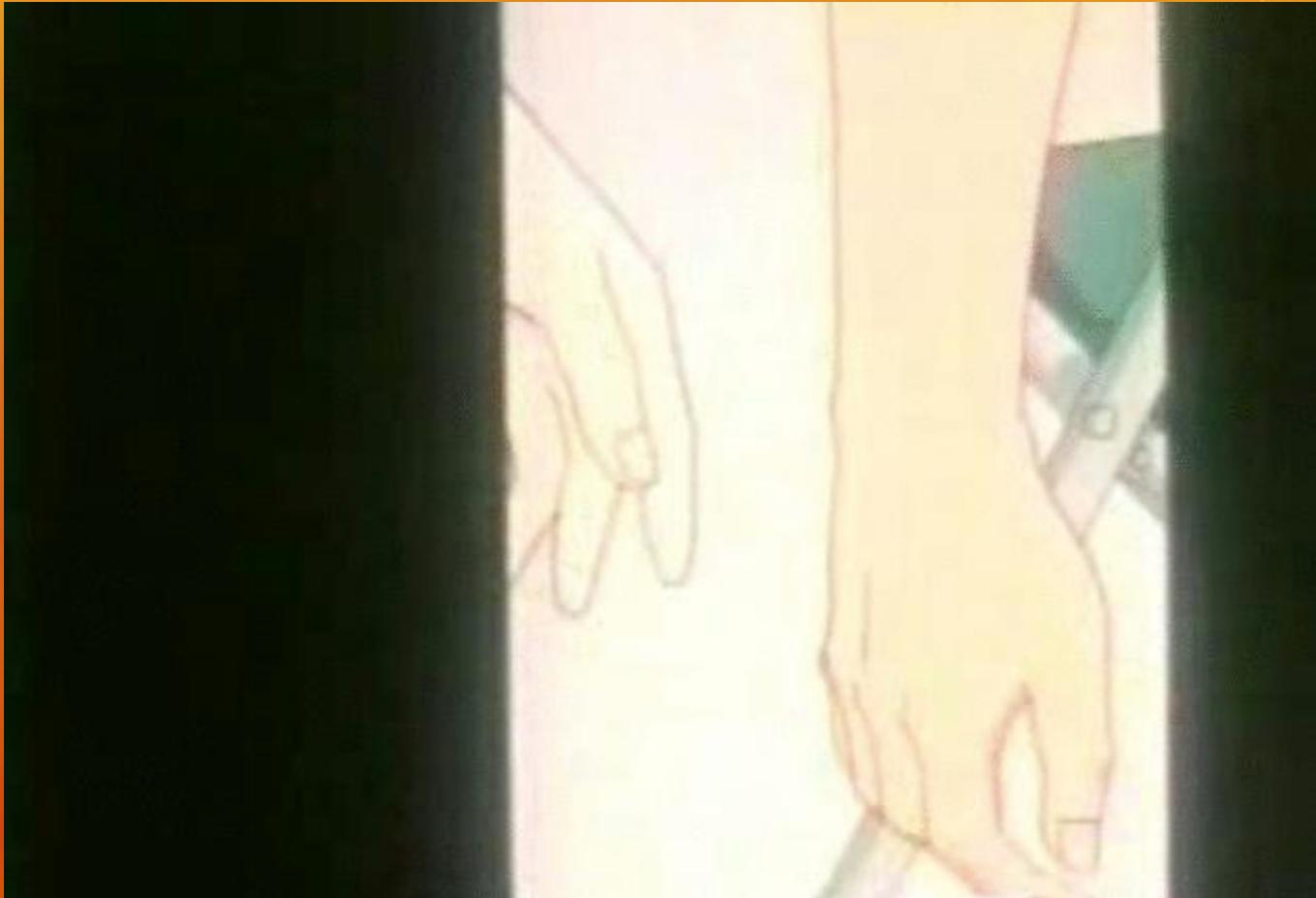
- *Giri* today is full of resentment and of emphasis on the lack of choice and being forced to repay it
- Every contact in life is likely to incur *giri* in some way or another
 - Letters, gifts, etc.
- Unlike *gimu*, *giri* is a repayment of an exact equivalent.
 - Whenever possible written records are kept of the network of exchanges, whether they are of work or of goods.
 - “Repaid a minnow with a sea bream” is one of the worst things that can happen.
 - Returning gifts with larger ones is taboo
- Tradition of Gift-Giving
 - *Omiyage* - Souvenirs
 - Twice per year (summer and New Year’s)
 - Family of a maid servant brings gifts as thanks for hiring her.



Gift Giving: Valentine's Day & White Day

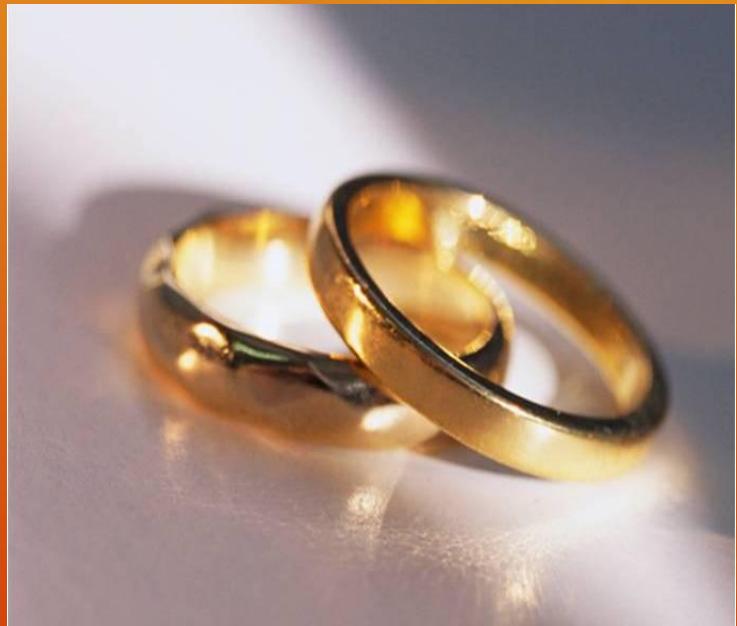


Dating Culture in Japan



Marriage

- Statistics show that the rate of marriage in Japan is reaching alarmingly low levels.
- Today, nearly 40% Japanese women are still unmarried at the age of 29, while the divorce rate (low by Western standards) is more than 4 times that of the 1950s and is continuing to rise.
 - Projected that by the year 2015, 58.2% of all Japanese men between 20-39 are expected to be bachelors
- A large number of women are able to find jobs and make a living.
 - Many Japanese women are much more selective in choosing a marriage partner or deciding not to get married at all.
- When the Japanese do get married, they generally choose one of two methods:
 - “Love Marriages”
 - *Miai-kekkon* “Arranged Marriages”
 - *Omiai*; continues to be surprisingly popular in Japan



Omiai – “Looking at One Another”

- In ancient times, marriage was village/community-centered
 - As a result, people generally married those who lived close by and whom they already knew well
- As time went on, marriage became family-centered
 - Head of the family decided on the choice of spouse
- Selection criteria emphasized the social status of the family of the prospective spouse, which in turn promoted the long-term prosperity of the family.
- The wishes of the people who were getting married were most often ignored
 - Sometimes the couple did not even meet each other until the day of their wedding.
- Nowadays, marriage is individual-centered
 - Although family background is still an important consideration in modern *omiai*.



TRY IT!
Being a *Nakado* for
an *Omiai*



Ryuunosuke

Age: 25

Health: Good

Education: Kyoto University

Occupation: Doctor

Family Background: Comes from a family of doctors; they own a hospital

Other: Speaks Chinese Fluently



Kimiko

Age: 25

Health: Good

Education: Japan Women's University (Tokyo)

Occupation: Business Woman

Family Background: First in her family to go to university.

Other: Speaks English Fluently & Lives independently from family



Satsuki

Age: 22

Health: Very Good

Education: Tokyo Girl's Academy (High School)

Occupation: Kimono Model

Family Background: Family owns a very successful traditional inn in Osaka

Other: Short Stature



Tomoe

Age: 24

Health: Okay

Education: Tokyo University

Occupation: High School
Teacher

Family Background: Family
owns a private high school

Other: Is a certified master
in *ikebana*, “flower
arranging”



Why *Omiai*?



Change in the Japanese Youth



Change in the Japanese Youth

- Parasite Singles
- Freeters
- NEETs



Questions?

- Next Class...
- Last Concepts:
 - Group Mentality
 - *Gaijin* / Outsiders
 - Discrimination in Japan
- Education & Work
- Crime & Punishment