

Intercultural Communication and Change Agency

By Jeff Berglund

I. Channeling Change: A Successful Case of Change-Agency

見ても知れ いづれこの世は 常ならむ

おくれ先だつ 花も残らず

Don't you see that

All things are always changing?

Both flowers early and late blooming

Will vanish away sooner or later?

Ryokan

The inevitability of change is the only unchanging constant in our lives. Everything in the universe is in a state of constant change. That's the message of this poem written by the Japanese Zen monk, Ryokan, in the early nineteenth century. Ryokan also points out the beauty which may be found in change. The poem which I like best of his more than 400 is a haiku written just after he returned to his simple hut in the mountains only to find that a thief had stolen his winter kimono and his few meager eating utensils, Ryokan's only possessions. He wrote: 「盗人に 取り残されぬ 窓の月」, in English, “Poor thief, you left one thing of great value, the moon shining through the window.” Ryokan points to the moon as an object of beauty, fully aware that the moon is also often a symbol of change because of its constant waxing and waning. Are change and beauty interrelated? Can change make something more valuable? Are there different kinds of change? Are there good changes and bad changes? Can necessary changes be helped along?

In this paper I would like to examine one special kind of change, change which is initiated or helped along by a change agent. In *Diffusion of Innovations, Fourth Edition*, E. M. Rogers says that a change agent is “an individual who influences clients' innovation-decisions in a direction deemed desirable by a change agency” (p. 27). But this definition simply raises more questions. Who are the clients? What is an innovation decision? And what is a change agency? Instead of starting from a definition of terms, this paper will attempt to clarify these terms and, at the same time, examine the process of change itself. I will start by looking at what some researchers in the

field of change have to say about change in general, change at the individual level, and change at the organizational level. I will then take a specific case of individual change that is directly connected with the work of change agents: the change in the direction of my life upon entering the Antioch-I.C.I. program for a master's degree in intercultural relations. I believe that this program is an excellent example of a successful change-agentry project. There is one thing that bothers me about this change-agentry business, however: the moral issue of the “rightness” of promoting change in an individual or organization when the change agent and the client are members of very different cultures. This paper will conclude with an examination of the moral aspects of intercultural change-agentry.

I often give public lectures in Japan (more than 80 last year), and although the topics vary from education to family values and from the AIDS epidemic to environmental issues, the subject of change invariably comes up. I would like to use this paper to clarify in my own mind the issue of change so that I can address the issue more directly in future talks. It might be helpful, therefore, to start with a look at the characteristics of change. Janet Bennett has sorted the characteristics of change in the following way:

- 1. Change may be expected, unexpected, or planned.**
- 2. Change may be gradual or eruptive.**
- 3. Change may be perceived as positive or negative.**

Let's look at an example. We might look at the birth of a child as an expected change, an especially big change if the child is one's first. The gradual changes in the woman's body prepare us for the birth. In fact, we even refer to a pregnant woman as “expecting.” The changes in the baby and the mother are gradual, and the birth of the baby is usually perceived as positive. The death of the mother or the baby in childbirth would probably be an unexpected change that would be both eruptive and perceived negatively. The changes of weaning the baby, starting the baby on solid foods, and toilet training the baby are usually all changes that are planned, and when successfully completed are perceived as positive. This “perception” is one of the key points in any change situation. In change agency, too, how the participants perceive change greatly affects the success or failure of a change project.

In Change: Principles of Problem Formation and Problem Resolution, P. Watzlawick, J. Weakland, and R. Fisch provide us with a view of another important aspect of change. Change can be either first-order or second-order. A first-order change is “one that occurs within a given system which itself remains unchanged,” whereas a second-order change is “one whose occurrence changes the system itself” (p. 10). They offer an example of a person having a

nightmare who cannot terminate the nightmare through any change—running, hiding, fighting, screaming, jumping off a cliff, etc.—that takes place within the nightmare. These changes are all first-order: taking place within the system of the nightmare. The only way out of the nightmare is through waking; and this is their example of second-order change, a change to the system of dreaming itself. In Human Systems Development: New Perspectives on People and Organizations, Tannenbaum and Hanna describe this difference as “superficial change” and “basic change” (p. 102).

I believe that we might think of first-order change as *internal*, change which an individual, group, or organization brings about *to* itself through its own efforts. Second-order change, on the other hand, occurs when an entity from outside (often a change agent) helps initiate or direct the change. The source of the change is *external*. In one sense, then, we might all be said to be change agents. The things that we say to and do to other people often lead to changes in those people and since we are outside their system, those changes may often be second-order in nature. Dean Barnlund says, “Communication between any two persons involves a certain risk, for exposure to new meanings can vitalize or undermine existing values and behavior patterns” (1985). When the people are from the same basic cultural group (gender group, age group, country-culture group, etc.), however, even though we are external to their individual system, we are all part of the same general cultural system, and Barnlund's risk factor is lessened. In this case, any changes may be perceived as simply first-order changes. As in the case of negative-positive, first-order and second-order may often depend upon the perceptions of the participants.

I propose, however, that the more extreme the cultural differences between two people or two groups of people are, the greater is the chance that any change initiated or directed *interculturally* will be perceived as second-order change. In “An Introduction to Intercultural Communication” in Intercultural Communication: A Reader (eds. L. Samovar and R. Porter), Porter and Samovar have arranged sociocultural differences along a minimum to maximum scale (p. 22). At the minimum end of the scale, they have an Environmentalist and a Developer who share the same country, regional, religious, gender, age, etc. cultures. If the environmentalist can get the developer to leave more of the forest in its natural state when he builds a housing project, he has accomplished a first-order change. The developer is still developing (same system), but takes into account some environmental concerns during the development. At the maximum end of the scale, Porter and Samovar have placed the Westerner and the Asian. When an American farmer tells a Japanese farmer (who shares most other sociocultures with him) to try dry-field rice farming because it's less labor intensive, he's promoting second-order change. Wet-bed rice

growing in Japan *is* Japanese culture. Not only is the labor intensity a major factor in the development of group centered culture in Japan, but the water-filled paddies serve many ecological functions, among them the prevention of flooding. Rogers proposes that the diffusion of an innovation is strongly influenced by this homophily or heterophily of the individuals in a communication situation (p. 19).

Now let's look at the birth of the baby again. The parents and the baby are quite heterophilous at first. The baby is unable to do anything by itself. It cannot eat by itself, nor move about by itself, nor change its own clothes. It cannot use language to communicate in detail about its thoughts or feelings. The parents enculturate the child by acting as models of the cultural norms of their own culture(s). This is called socialization, and I believe that socialization can be considered as one form of change agency. In Understanding Culture's Influence on Behavior, R. Brislin says that children are guided *away from* the total range of different ways in which they might behave. "Instead, they are encouraged to engage in the more limited set of behaviors that are considered acceptable and important within any one culture" (p. 95). For example, all parents teach their children how to eat by themselves, but what utensils they use (if any), what they eat, when and where they eat, as well as who they eat with are all influenced by the parents' culture. By the time most children are three years old, they are miniatures of their parents in many ways. They can walk, talk, and behave in culturally acceptable ways. They have gone through an unbelievably great number of changes, a series of culture shocks as it were, that bring about the transition from a human being inside the womb who is completely dependent on the mother to an independent human being outside the womb who is able to use communication in culturally acceptable ways to provide for its own needs. I believe that this transition from baby to infant and on to child surely qualifies as an example of second-order change, brought about through the change-agency efforts of the parents, who at first are completely outside the baby's own system.

I believe that the enculturation process that the child undergoes is in many ways similar to the innovation adoption process that E. Rogers describes. Rogers posits five stages in the innovation-decision process: "(1) knowledge, (2) persuasion, (3) decision, (4) implementation, and (5) confirmation" (p. 20). Let's take walking as an example of an innovation that the child adopts. First, the child gains knowledge of walking through observation of its parents. In the persuasion stage the child forms a favorable attitude toward walking when it observes the advantages of greater mobility that it affords. The child's favorable attitude is also influenced by the parents' attitude: they encourage the infant to begin walking. The child revels in the parents'

encouragement because the need to be accepted is almost as strong as the need to breathe, eat, or drink. The favorable attitude of the child and the encouragement of the parents lead to the next step: the decision to adopt the innovation. The crawling infant becomes the walking child. The implementation process is filled with successes and failures, beaming smiles and scraped knees. The implementation process is helped along by the change agents, the parents, as they offer a helping hand to the struggling toddler. Confirmation that the decision to adopt the innovation of walking was a well-made decision comes as the child experiences more personal mobility and more encouragement from the parents.

But wait a minute. Isn't the innovation-decision process supposed to involve a *conscious* choice? At least we'd like to think so. But I believe that the decision making process involves much more ambiguity and ambivalence than we care to admit. We seem to be afraid of the ambiguity and ambivalence that accompany second-order change, but most of the writers in the field of change and transitions, whether individual change: Marris, Bridges, Adler, etc., or organizational change: Tannenbaum and Hanna, Kanter et. al., etc., "spend important sections of their work arguing that ambiguity and ambivalence are functional" (Phyllis Thompson in "Marginals as Leaders in Times of Change"). For example, in Transitions, Bridges says that "disorientation is meaningful" (p. 103). The child is unafraid of this ambiguity and ambivalence because it's the essence of the in-womb, no-spoken-language first culture of the child. However, when we go through major transitions as adults, transitions that involve second-order change, we are fearful of the disorientation that we experience in the "neutral zone" (Bridges). We are especially fearful if the change calls up the negative COEX (condensed experiences) memories of unpleasant emotional experiences (Tannenbaum and Hanna). I believe that unpleasant and pleasant, negative and positive, are strongly influenced by "perspective." It is the ability to change perspectives that Thompson alludes to as the core of the constructive marginal's ability to handle change.

The changes that accompany the re-enculturation process that constructive marginals have gone through in internalizing a culture vastly different from the one in which they were first socialized are very similar to the changes that accompany the growth from baby to child that I have described above. In fact, when I first came to Japan I often felt like a baby because I was unable to do the simplest things in the proper Japanese way. For example, to continue with the innovation of walking that I introduced above, I adopted a new way of walking when I came to Japan. As you probably know, the Japanese take off their shoes in the entryway when they enter a house and put on slippers. The slippers have no backs, so we really do *slip* them on. Before

coming to Japan I knew only one way of walking, the White-European-American way. You walk with your head held high (my parents were always telling me not to slouch) and your feet come down on the heels, making a thud-like sound if you are walking on a wooden floor. You then roll your foot forward and push off for the next step on the ball of your foot. When you walk that way with Japanese slippers on your feet, the slipper flies off when your heel hits the floor. I kept the slippers on my feet by curling my toes and exerting enough force to stop the slippers from flying off. When I took the time to carefully observe the Japanese way of walking, however, I saw that they were more likely to have their spine bent with the head slightly forward and slide their feet (sort of like ice skating) with the toe striking the floor first. I started practicing walking that way and slippers ceased to cause any problems. Many Japanese even walk that way outside when they are wearing shoes. Japanese students that I have taken to the United States on a homestay program of which I am the director often remark that after the second or third day back in the States, I start to “walk differently—like an American.”

Getting back to the definition of change agent that I introduced in the first page of this paper, a change agency is usually an organization (for example the World Health Organization, a government agency, a school, etc.), a change agent is an employee of such a change agency, and a client is usually a group of people (for example a minority group, an organization, a village, etc.) The example that Rogers begins his book with involves the public health service in Peru (the change agency) sending a change agent to try to get villagers (the clients) to boil water before they drink it in order to cut down on the incidence of infectious diseases. The change agent is unsuccessful in her work, however, mostly because of the incompatibility of her new ideas about boiling water and destroying germs “with the values, beliefs, and past experiences of individuals in the social system” of the village (p. 4). The villagers believe that healthy individuals should drink unboiled water and sick people should drink boiled water. If we think of culture as having different layers (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998) from the explicit—artifacts, products, and behavior—to the implicit—norms, values, and basic assumptions, we see that changes on the cultural surface may affect the deeper layers of culture. The change agent's attempt to change the explicit behavior of the villagers challenged their implicit cultural values. When implicit cultural values are obviously challenged, I believe, it becomes quite difficult for an individual or group to adopt an innovation. Rogers defines an innovation as “an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption” (p. 11). He talks of the diffusion of an innovation as “the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system” (p. 5) and goes on to suggest that “diffusion is

a kind of social change” (p. 6).

I believe that this “social change” that Rogers is talking about at the group level is similar to second-order change at the individual level. In talks that I give in Japan, I explain this second-order change process as involving three steps: Observation, Borrowing, and Internalizing. Just as Description–Interpretation–Evaluation (D.I.E.) can be used as a tool to help in understanding cultural differences, O.B.I. (which spells *obi*, a Japanese word that means “belt”) can be used to look at personal change. Returning to the example of my learning a new way of walking when I came to Japan, I began the process of change by closely observing the Japanese way of walking. I then borrowed, or copied, that way of walking and made it my own. I internalized the new way of walking until I became quite unconscious of walking differently in Japan and in the United States. (I didn't realize that I walked differently until it was pointed out by the students I took to the United States, as I mentioned above.) At the same time as I was learning a new way of walking in Japan, however, I was internalizing the value of group conformity. When you come home in the United States, you can take off your shoes and change into slippers or you can take off your shoes and walk about the house barefoot, or you can leave your shoes on in the house; it's up to the individual. But in Japan *everyone* takes off their shoes when they enter a house. In other words, what appears to be a first-order change (a change in explicit culture), actually may be part of a second-order change (a change in implicit culture) when the change agent (my Japanese host family) and the client (me) come from greatly different cultures.

That brings us to the problem of morality, but as Barnlund says, “Morality tends to be culture-specific” (1985). The ideal change agent in an intercultural situation needs more than anything else the ability to suspend his or her own cultural assumptions, and try to really understand the cultural assumptions of the client. This ability is what Bennett refers to as intercultural empathy, “the imaginative intellectual and emotional participation in another person's experience” (Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication, 1998, p. 207). The ability to empathize with the client is the number one element which I feel applies to intercultural change-agentry. What are some other important elements? I have made a list below and in parentheses mention some of the writers that suggest these characteristics as important for intercultural change-agentry. Although Michael Paige (1993, “Trainer Competencies for International and Intercultural Programs”) is writing about trainers in multicultural programs, I believe that his list of “Personal Attributes of the Intercultural Trainer” is equally applicable to the change agent. The first five in my list are important traits for the change agent to possess and the last three are important conditions for the success of the change-agentry project.

Successful Change-Agentry

Empathy: <i>Really</i> looking at things from the client's point of view.	(Marris, Rogers, Paige)
Personal and Cultural Self-Awareness	(Paige)
Enthusiasm and Commitment	(Rogers, Paige)
Patience: It takes time for the change agent and the client to get to know each other and for the innovation to be adopted.	(Marris, Paige, Beckhard, Bennett)
Homophily and Physical Attractiveness	(Rogers, Cialdini)
Respect the Autonomy of Different Kinds of Experience	(Marris, Bennett)
Expect and Even Encourage Conflict	(Marris)
Promote Relational Opportunities–Welcome New Ideas:Allowing people to interact in new ways.	(Bennett, Beckhard, Kanter)

The ability on the part of the change agent to truly empathize with the client, to see things from the client's cultural point of view, presupposes personal and cultural self-awareness, for in order to understand the client's norms and values and realize that they are different from one's own, one must first understand one's own norms and values. Enthusiasm and commitment are also based on a presupposition, the presupposition that change can be directed and that change can be for the good. These two suppositions are deeply rooted in Western values, but what about a situation in which the client believes that changes cannot really be directed and that change is neither good nor bad. I believe that the change agent in such a situation (my brother working on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation with Sioux Indians) can change his or her perspective. Change is something to be experienced, so why not have some fun and work together through the change? The *outcome* of the change may not be considered good or bad, but the change situation itself can be seen positively, as something to be enjoyed. This presupposes a characteristic that I have left off my list, but which both Paige and Bennett include: a sense of humor. In any case all the writers in the field of change-agentry would probably agree that patience is a necessary trait. I have included homophily even though I believe that most second-order change can only be promoted by a change agent who is heterophilous vis-à-vis the client because I also believe that the change agent can make himself or herself appear homophilous in values and norms through true empathy. Such a situation presupposes physical attractiveness in the sense of dressing and moving and gesturing in ways which are culturally acceptable to the client. I believe that one of the reasons I am so successful in Japan is because even though I look *gaijin* (foreign) as far as skin color, hair color, facial features, etc., I dress and move (e.g. “walk the walk”) and gesture like a Japanese.

The last three elements in my list are important when dealing with change at the organizational

level. Even within a certain cultural group (a company, a bureaucracy, a minority group, etc.), there are vast differences among individuals, so respect for the autonomy of different kinds of experience is important. When I talk to a group of two hundred Japanese, I realize that there are two hundred different individuals with different life experiences. Respect for those differences leads to the last two elements in my list. Values may also differ depending on the individual, so in any organizational change situation, there are bound to be conflicts. Marris adds, "There is, I think, in any important confrontation with disruptive changes, a hierarchy of conflicts, for each major division—between national and local, management and labor, organization and client, black and white—contains within it subdivisions, differences of experience and purpose which must be argued out or segregated" (p. 169). Even in Japan, where conflict is seemingly always avoided, the change agent must encourage such conflict to go on *behind the scenes*, not in public. In order to encourage conflict, relational opportunities must be promoted. The people in an organization, *who may only know each other in a certain way*, must be encouraged to interact in new ways in order to get the best ideas from the greatest number of people. I was amazed at one of the core sessions when Joyce Osland helped bring out completely new facets of some of the people in my cohort (whom I thought I knew quite well) through rope exercises.

Joyce Osland is not the only exemplary change agent in the Antioch-I.C.I. master's degree program; all of the facilitators are. I believe that the Antioch-I.C.I. program is an excellent example of a successful change-agentry project. The prime movers in the setting up of the program were Milton and Janet Bennett. They are the ones who approached Antioch and succeeded in getting the program approved in order to have the accreditation necessary for a master's program. Quoting an email from LaRay Barna, "Janet and Milton had many contacts and were visionaries and dedicated to the concept of intercultural communication. They wanted students to have an opportunity to study this subject so they, in turn, could be change agents. They had the resources and the energy, so they did it" (Oct. 1999). At the time they succeeded in setting up the program, however, I don't believe that Janet and Milton could have been able to visualize the degree to which the program would succeed. The facilitators for each of the core courses were recruited by personal contact. Although not included in my list of essential elements for successful change-agentry, this is an important element in success: face-to-face contact. Even Bill Gates, sometimes called the "father of the internet," says that for the most important business, he relies on face-to-face contact. In the previously mentioned email, LaRay goes on to say of the facilitators:

"Janet and Milton knew the leaders in the field and were respected enough to entice them

to join the program. Most of us do this because we are dedicated to the field, truly enjoy helping others learn about it, and we like the opportunity to get together and share ideas with our colleagues. Most of the faculty are one-of-a-kind at their own universities and SIIC and the Antioch gatherings are where we can be with others who 'speak our language.' There is little monetary reward, believe me."

The Intercultural Communication Institute and Antioch University pooled their resources to create a powerful change agency. This change agency, led by Janet and Milton, succeeded in gathering a number of facilitators who in their own rights are also powerful change agents. So who are the clients of these change agents? Those most directly affected by the program are the students in each cohort who come in direct contact with the change-agent facilitators and are deeply changed through both personal involvement with the facilitators and exposure to the principles and theories of intercultural communication. The students become aware that they, too, can be and often already are change agents in their own ways. LaRay agrees with me that "students are definitely change agents in their own right. By becoming aware of the principles and learning how to influence others to be more accepting of differences, etc. they can model behavior. Also, many are professionals in their own right (teachers, trainers, TV personalities, etc.) and have opportunity to directly impart information" (Oct. 1999 email). So the true clients may be the people who are affected by the change-agent students of this program.

Everyone that I have met in the Antioch-I.C.I. program displays all of the character traits that I have listed as being necessary for successful change-agentry. The enthusiasm and commitment that I sense in the faculty and staff often seems directed toward a deepening of personal and cultural self-awareness which leads to a strengthening of empathic ability. I have never seen anything but patience displayed, even in the face of extreme tardiness in the handing in of assignments. Everyone seems to realize that the final adoption of the innovation of intercultural communication and the successful completion of the master's degree program does take time. Even if the term "intercultural communication" isn't new to a particular student, the theories, principles, and concepts that we are exposed to in this program certainly appear as innovations—new ways of thinking and acting. The successful diffusion of this innovation is certainly helped along by the homophily, the similarity in life experiences among the faculty and students, life experiences of being exposed to multiple cultures, multiple realities. As for the trait of physical attractiveness, I believe that the beauty of everyone in the program comes from their ability to truly accept differences.

Respect for the autonomy of different kinds of experience was evident from the time I started

the program. Although I was born and raised a white-European-American, my thirty years in Japan led to a re-enculturation as a Japanese. Faculty members (as well as students) treated me as Japanese in American clothing (or is it the other way around?). I was also pleasantly surprised by the degree to which conflict was encouraged. There was extreme concern shown for the internal conflict, that the changes which the program entails not become too overpowering. Even the conflict in learning styles in my cohort (I am an extremely self-centered learner and ask questions or offer opinions with no hesitation) that my lack of restraint seemed to engender was only mildly discouraged. The most important factor in the success of the Antioch-I.C.I. program is probably the last on my list. Relational opportunities, whether inside or outside the classroom, are always promoted and new ideas, no matter how off-the-wall, are always welcomed. I was really amazed when a reader of one of my assignments said that my views, although quite different from her own, were not only acceptable but also quite interesting. In the more dualistic academic world that I experienced as an undergraduate, my views would probably have drawn a more scathing response. I have been encouraged, though maybe a bit indirectly, to interact with my family, my friends, my colleagues, the people who come to hear by public talks, indeed with everyone I come in contact with in new ways.

The Antioch-I.C.I. program is probably such a successful change-agentry project because everyone is encouraged to examine their own cultural roots and become more cognizant of the myriad of cultural values that are held by the people we meet every day. It is this cognizance that lies at the base of this program's position on morality in intercultural change-agentry. I know that I have become a more successful and morally responsible change agent because of my exposure to this program and hope further exposure will lead to more new discoveries about myself and others and in turn to more successful change-agentry. Before I applied to the program, I had never heard of intercultural communication. I was looking for a graduate program that could make use of my thirty years of EFL teaching in Japan. I was thinking that linguistics would be my best choice, and in investigating the possibilities, I ran across the Antioch-I.C.I. program. I'm now so glad that I made the choice to work toward a master's degree in intercultural communication, not in linguistics. Robert Frost has written about standing at just such a fork in the road and taking the fork less traveled by. I would like to conclude this paper with Frost's closing line from "The Road Not Taken."

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

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II. Change Agency: A Different Kind of Courage

Next: to distinguish process
in its particularity with
an eye to the initiation
•
of gratifying new changes
desired in the real world.
Here we're overwhelmed
•
with such unpleasant detail
we dream again of Heaven.
For the world is a mountain
•
of shit: if it's going to
be moved at all, it's got
to be taken by handfuls.

From: "The Terms in Which I Think of Reality"

by Allen Ginsberg

Patterson, Spring of 1950

The world never changes, or at least it seems that the same mistakes are repeated over and over. And yet the world does change for the better, and sometimes that change is helped along by a single person, a change agent. In the first part of this paper I will examine the character of a master of ethical intercultural change-agentry, Mohandas K. Gandhi. I will attempt to show that three principles which Gandhi commits himself to, namely faith, truth, and personal change, can be practical guidelines for all good change agents. Yet, as Allen Ginsberg says in the above excerpt, "the world is a mountain of shit: if it's going to be moved at all, it's got to be taken by handfuls." The kind of courage that it takes to stand up and say what you think is very different from the kind of courage that it takes to move the "mountain of shit" by handfuls. Change agency requires a special kind of courage that stretches over the long period of time, often years, that it takes for a meaningful change in society to diffuse and be adopted by enough people to call the change a success. Even Gandhi notes that most people have a "partiality for exciting work, [and a] dislike for quiet constructive effort" (p. 463). In the second part of this paper I will examine my own work as a change agent in Japan and demonstrate how P-T-P (Practice-Theory-Practice) supports successful change-agentry. I will conclude this paper with some comments

about the unique position that I believe constructive cultural marginals can fill as change agents.

Gandhi: A Model for Change Agency

I was a college student in the late 1960s when American society was divided into two camps, one supporting the United States government's strategy of war in Vietnam and the other opposed to war in general and the Vietnam war specifically. Many college students backed up their vocal opposition to the war by burning their draft cards or sending their draft cards back to the Selective Service System that issued the cards. I had obtained a 1-O classification (conscientious objector status) at the time of my registration for the draft even though I was not a Quaker or a member of another pacifist group recognized by the government. I had proven to my local draft board that I truly believed in pacifism and that I always had, from the time of early childhood. This in itself was a strong statement of my opposition to war, but I wanted to join in solidarity with friends and fellow students who were destroying or returning their draft cards. So I also sent my draft card back to my draft board along with a letter explaining that although returning my draft card was legally wrong, I believed that it was morally justified. At that time that I did so, I believed that my actions were courageous. When people use the word courage, they often refer to the soldiers who face enemy fire in war and manage to kill the enemy without being killed. The kind of courage that it takes to refuse to take part in war is a different kind of courage. Choosing the path of non-cooperation requires a different kind of courage and it is that courage which Gandhi had in abundance.

Gandhi was, in the true sense, a change agent. The life style that he chose for himself was one of faith, truth, and love. Gandhi's faith was not simply a religious faith in the Hindu tradition. Gandhi's faith was based in his own experience. In his autobiography (1957), Gandhi relates how his faith in a simple diet and "household remedies" was tested when his son became very ill (pp. 246-251) and again when his wife nearly died (pp. 322-325). He says, "the thread of life was in the hands of God. Why not trust it to Him and in His name go on with what I thought was the right treatment?" (p. 247). "All that happens about and around us is uncertain, transient. But there is a Supreme Being hidden therein as a Certainty, and one would be blessed if one could catch a glimpse of that Certainty and hitch one's wagon to it. The quest for that Truth is the *summum bonum* of life" (p. 250-251). He summarizes his faith as "experience." He says, "I have made the world's faith in God my own, and as my faith is ineffaceable, I regard that faith as amounting to experience" (p. 279). I think that Gandhi means that he was born into a religious tradition (the world's faith in God), but his faith is now based on his own experience. A successful change

agent must examine his own culture (faith) and realize that his own values are based in that culture (experience). In other words, Gandhi was a successful change agent because he had a deep faith, but that faith was based not only on birth but on his own experience. In the introduction to Gandhi's autobiography, Sissela Bok offers Gandhi's faith, without the exclusivity and prejudice that often accompanies such faith, as one of Gandhi's three legacies to mankind: "Gandhi's example of someone deeply rooted in his own cultural and religious heritage who still remains utterly opposed to all forms of social, ethnic, or religious intolerance" (p. xvii).

Gandhi's faith was not only a religious faith in God; Gandhi also had faith in his fellow man and in man's ability to influence the course of events. He had faith that Satyagraha could be used as a peaceful weapon to gain respect for human rights, political autonomy, and peaceful coexistence with historically ethnic and religious enemies. His faith in nonviolence even extended to animals. For most of his life Gandhi refused to drink milk because he deplored the ill treatment that the dairy farmers inflicted on their cattle. He even mentions (p. 429-430) that although the ashrams of Phoenix, Tolstoy Farm, and Sabarmati were all built on wastelands that were marshy and filled with snakes, they had a policy never to kill snakes. Gandhi believed that no loss of life occasioned by snakebite was a direct result of this policy of nonviolence. He had faith that acting in the truth (Satyagraha) would be rewarded by God with peace, brotherhood, and physical as well as emotional health. Even in hardship, Gandhi's faith never wavered. In talking about the sudden outbreak of the pneumonic plague that attacked the Indian community in South Africa, he says, "It is my faith, based on experience, that if one's heart is pure, calamity brings in its train men and measures to fight it" (p. 291).

The pureness of heart that Gandhi refers to is closely related to Satyagraha, acting in the truth. Gandhi believed that Truth is the most important tool in the complicated relationships that arise in the conduct of human affairs. Gandhi mentions writing a letter to his father when he was fifteen in which he truthfully confesses to stealing some gold from his brother. The soul-cleansing feeling that came from this experience taught the young Gandhi the close connection between truth and love. Gandhi uses the word *ahimsa*, which I believe is closely related to the Japanese word *ninjo*, and might be translated into English as brotherly love. Gandhi says that "truth is like a vast tree, which yields more and more fruit the more you nurture it" (p. 218). Gandhi was challenged as a lawyer to always uphold the truth, when lawyers as a group are often regarded as obfuscators of the truth, if not deliberate users of untruth. In one court case in which court arbitrators, not Gandhi's client, had committed an error in calculation which was in the client's favor (pp. 362-366), Gandhi insisted on divulging the whole truth even if it might

damage the case. Gandhi's courage paid off, however, and the court, found in favor of Gandhi's client. Gandhi says, "I was confirmed in my conviction that it was not impossible to practice the law without compromising truth," and "I also saw that my devotion to truth enhanced my reputation amongst the members of the profession."

In explaining the meaning of Satyagraha, Gandhi mentions that it is often translated into English as "passive resistance," but the actual meaning of the Hindi is Sat = truth and Agraaha = firmness. "Truth" in this case must be broadly interpreted to refer to the ideal state of human relations in which human rights are respected and ahimsa, or brotherly love, is the basis of human interactions. Gandhi saw truth as a powerful weapon to change society, to remedy grievances, and to gain freedom, but it is "an absolutely non-violent weapon" (p. 380). In talking about civil disobedience, Gandhi explains that truth is "the voice of conscience," (p. 414), sometimes a higher law than the laws of the state. Following the path of truth requires a great deal of courage, the kind of courage that demands sacrifices, such as fasting, or even imprisonment. Gandhi says that "the ideal of truth requires that vows taken should be fulfilled in the spirit as well as in the letter" (p. 455). Gandhi believed that living in the truth made men stronger, even when their Satyagraha campaign may not have been successful in terms of a goal (p. 439). Gandhi sums up his own life with these words about truth: "The little fleeting glimpses, therefore, that I have been able to have of Truth can hardly convey an idea of the indescribable luster of Truth, a million times more intense than that of the sun we daily see with our eyes" (p. 504).

Probably the most important facet of Gandhi's character in his success as a change agent was his unswerving determination to change himself before attempting to change others. Sissela Bok points out that Gandhi insisted that "personal change and the ability to bring about social change are linked" (p. xvii). Gandhi believed that the exercise of will is necessary for the realization of *brahman*, the highest potential of the human spirit. He experimented in diet, trying to control his passions through fasting and eating only fresh fruit and nuts. He says, "Man is man because he is capable of, and only in so far as he exercises, self-restraint" (p. 317). He even renounced sexual relations with his own wife in his struggle to control his passions. Gandhi became more and more self-reliant in everyday life. He taught himself to wash and iron his own clothes as well as cut his own hair (pp. 212-214). He realized that self-restraint can be carried too far, however. "Fasting could be made as powerful a weapon of indulgence as of restraint. ...When each organ of sense subserves the body and through the body the soul, its special relish disappears, and then alone does it begin to function in the way nature intended it to do" (p. 321). The important

connection between self-control and change-agentry is probably best summed up in Gandhi's statement that "inhibitions imposed from without rarely succeed, but when they are self-imposed, they have a decidedly salutary effect" (p. 326). As Sissela Bok observes, Gandhi believed that "all people can shape and guide their lives according to the highest ideals, no matter how insignificant and powerless they might feel themselves to be" (p. xvii).

One reason that Gandhi was able to persuade millions to join in his non-violent Satyagraha movement was because everyone could see that Gandhi indeed practiced what he preached. My wife often criticizes me because I fail to exercise the understanding and respect for other viewpoints that is at the base of intercultural communication, in other words, for not practicing what I preach. I talk too much and don't listen enough. I believe that Gandhi really listened to the people around him and tried to act in their best interests. Although Gandhi was a creative thinker, I don't feel that he carried theories around in his head that told him what to do in different situations. His faith in God and in Truth coupled with his personal commitment to self-restraint and change made him a formidable statesman. Gandhi had strong ideas of what should be done, but in spite of his insistence on his own principles, he was equally ready and able to tolerate the views of others (p. 326). I am no Gandhi, but in my own way I try to help Japanese people to see that a greater respect for human rights is possible through the empathic point of view that intercultural communication espouses.

Facilitating Intercultural Communication in Japan

It is usually possible for me to understand how most Japanese think because I have a Japanese persona in addition to my American persona. E. T. Hall (1959) posits that there are three types of learning: the informal, the formal, and the technical. Informal learning includes the acquisition of culture that takes place during childhood and early adulthood. Informal learning takes place mostly outside of consciousness. Formal learning is more of a conscious process and includes the admonitions of our parents, grandparents, and other adults, as well as our schooling. The acquisition of a Japanese cultural persona that I went through when I first arrived in Japan contained elements of both formal and informal learning. Since I came as an adult (20 years old), many of the things that I learned involved conscious observations of Japanese cultural patterns, followed by a conscious attempt to copy the behavior and the underlying attitudes that I observed. Some of what I learned was at a completely unconscious level, however, and it is only in looking back at the long experience of gradually internalizing Japanese cultural norms that I can see that the process is quite similar to that which we all go through in acquiring our first

culture. I learned cultural empathy as a natural byproduct of internalizing two very different cultures—American and Japanese.

I give between seventy and eighty public speeches every year all over Japan. The main topic of these speeches is what the Japanese call *kokusaika*, or internationalization, meaning the slow movement of Japan from a society closed to outsiders to one more open to the international community, a dramatic cultural change in Japan. I have been giving such speeches for more than fifteen years, but recently my studies in intercultural communication have provided me with a theoretical backdrop to my own experience of cultural change. It wasn't until I encountered the technical learning involved in the M.A. in Intercultural Communication program that I came to realize the importance of theory. Theory gives shape to experience. Theory provides me with a cognitive framework in which to better understand my own experience and communicate that experience to the audience. Let me give some concrete examples.

The first thing that I do when I start one of my talks is to “inoculate” the audience, as Milton Bennett calls it. I point out the difference between stereotypes and generalizations. When I say that Japanese people are less aggressive than American people, it does not mean that all Japanese are always passive. Some Japanese are quite aggressive people most of the time, and nearly all Japanese become aggressive when the situation brings out that side of their character, e.g. when trying to get a seat in a crowded train or when cheering for the Hanshin Tigers baseball team. However, if we could take snapshots of all the people in Japan and all the people in the United States on a typical day and analyze it, we would find that on the whole Japanese people are more passive than Americans.

One of the cultural generalizations that I introduce is the strong empathic ability of most Japanese, always trying to see things from the communication “other's” point of view. The only problem is that this empathy is limited to other Japanese. In that sense it is very close to the sympathy that many Americans see as an ideal in human relations. Whereas many Americans see everyone in the world as basically “just like us,” most Japanese see non-Japanese as “not like us at all.” Either way is ethnocentric and is a major stumbling block to the functioning of real empathy that is the foundation of smooth intercultural communication. I point out to the audience that the empathy that many Japanese claim to feel in their relationships with other Japanese is actually an illusion. For example, differences in gender, age, ethnicity, place of origin, socioeconomic status, etc. are often overlooked when the communication “other” is seen only as one of “We Japanese.” The successful intercultural communication that must be a part of true “internationalization” should be built upon a foundation of respect for the variations in “common

sense” (常識) and values that one encounters every day in Japan. Learning to empathize with homeless people, gays or lesbians, disabled people, people whose age, gender, or area culture differs from our own is the first step toward being able to empathize with *gaijin*, or people from outside, in other words, foreigners.

In my talks I tell people that they should learn to communicate more “mindfully” (Ting-Toomey, 1999) with cultural “others,” people that they may not like or that they feel uncomfortable being around. I recommend the ODIS (Observe–Describe–Interpret–Suspend Evaluation) method for behaviors or ways of thinking that seem strange. I got a wonderful letter from a woman who had listened to one of my talks and then gone home to try the ODIS method on her mother-in-law, a woman whose age and area culture were quite different from her own. The simple act of starting at observation (instead of evaluation as is often the case with people we live with) and description had allowed the woman to see what a valuable cultural informant her mother-in-law was. The mother-in-law could teach the woman a lot about the traditional rural culture that the woman, who had grown up in the city, had to deal with every day. The woman's relationship with her mother-in-law improved greatly and their “intercultural communication” was rewarding to both parties.

Looking at my talks as a kind of change project, I believe that there are many instances when people in the audience, like the woman mentioned above, are able to take home some of the theories that I offer them and “change” their relationships with cultural “others” for the better. I try to mix general theories of culture with specific examples of changes in my life so that the audience can see their own culture more clearly, and come to realize that change need not always be something that “happens,” but may also be something which is “brought about.” During the thirty-four years that I have been living in Japan, I have observed many changes in Japanese culture, changes that I don't always feel are for the better. I center my talks on describing the changes that I have observed and then try to leave the audience with the idea that a reaffirmation and re-incorporation of many aspects of traditional Japanese culture would enhance present-day Japanese culture. At the personal level I'm trying to facilitate changes toward more mindful communication and at the societal level I'm trying to create an awareness of the preciousness of traditional culture.

In my talks I usually introduce the three primary relationships that F. Trompenaars and C. Hampden-Turner (1998) posit as a starting point when looking at differences and similarities among various cultural groups. These are man's relationship with nature (the environment), man's relationship with time, and man's relationship with other people. This is basically a scaled

down version of the model devised by F. Kluckhohn and F. Strodtbeck (1961) which includes two more categories: human nature and activity. Depending on the audience, it is sometimes possible to introduce Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck as a whole. In a recent talk which I gave to about fifty junior and senior high school teachers, I introduced Hofstede's (1991) ideas about how to understand cultural differences by placing the predominant tendencies of a culture along each of four continua: 1. the individualistic–collectivistic continuum; 2. the small power distance–large power distance continuum; 3. the weak uncertainty avoidance–strong uncertainty avoidance continuum; and 4. the masculine–feminine continuum. So let's look at some of things I actually say in a usual talk.

As far as man's relationship with nature, I talk mostly about the United States being a Judeo-Christian subjugation of nature culture and Japan being a Buddhist harmony with nature culture. Japan was traditionally strongly influenced by Buddhism and its teaching that man is simply part of nature. Japan was originally called *wa no kuni* (和の国), or the land of harmony, by the Chinese when they observed the Japanese people living in harmony with nature and with each other. I point out that Japanese culture has always been a combination of controlling nature and living in harmony with nature, with an emphasis on the latter. Even during the Edo period, before the strong influx of Western values that came in the Meiji period, dams were built on many rivers and there were large reclamation projects to create more usable land in coastal areas. The house that I live in was built during the late Edo period about 150 years ago and is a wonderful example of a residence that reflects a lifestyle of harmony with nature. I tell my audiences that the culture that produced my house is not the same as the culture of Japan today. The house was built with natural materials: wood, earth, paper, bamboo, grass (every room except for the kitchen and the bath has a floor made of *igusa* (藎草), a kind of Japanese grass), and stone and it wasn't until the Taisho period that glass windows were put in. The area under the floor is open from the front of the house to the back so that air can circulate and keep the house from getting too damp. The center of the house has a garden open to the sky so air is also circulating inside the house all the time, too. This is nice in the summer because the temperature inside the house is four or five degrees cooler than outside. However, Japanese today have become so used to air conditioning that they still feel our house is hot. In winter the inside temperature is four or five degrees warmer than outside, but everyone thinks the house is really cold. Hot in the summer and cold in the winter is the natural state of things, and I feel that living in harmony with nature has physical and psychological health benefits that far outweigh any discomfort.

Today, most Japanese don't live in harmony with nature. The western influence can be seen

everywhere. When I say western influence, I am referring to the Christian tradition of subjugating nature. The creation story in the Bible says that God said to man, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” (Genesis 1: 28) Most Japanese houses now are built mostly with man-made materials, in the western style, with insulation and sealed windows and doors to *keep out* the heat of summer and the cold of winter. Central air conditioning and heating allow people to live and work without being aware of temperature changes and air currents outside. When I first came to Japan almost every house hung wind bells outside in the summer so we were attuned to the movement of air. Now with sealed houses and offices, wind bells are seldom to be heard. The same thing has happened with food. Japanese used to be much more aware of the seasonal nature of fruits and vegetables and nuts and seafood. Now with refrigeration and scientific methods, most foods are available year round. The old Japanese calendar actually had twenty-four separate seasons, each based on slight changes that could be observed in nature. I remind the people who come to hear my talks that Japanese culture was truly in harmony with nature. Many Japanese people have lost touch with nature. There is a strong tendency to control nature, as much as if not more so than there is in the United States.

In talking about man's relationship with time, I divide cultures into those which are more rooted in linear time (Past → Present → Future) and those which are more rooted in circular time (Day → Night; Spring → Summer → Autumn → Winter). I say that most modern high-tech cultures (Japan and the United States) are rooted in linear clock time and most traditional cultures (American Indian) are rooted in circular time. Cultures emphasizing linear time can further be divided into those which are more oriented to the past (India) and those which are more oriented to the future (the United States). Cultures emphasizing circular time are more oriented to the present. One of my brother's best friends, Herman Red Elk, is a Sioux Indian (the native word is Lakota; Sioux is French). Through him I have learned that there is no word for “wait” in Lakota because waiting implies that we feel something that is not yet real (the future—what we are waiting for) is more important than what *is* real (the present and the immediate past). This is truly a culture which *is* oriented to the present.

The Japanese relationship with time is difficult to pin down. The family that I lived with when I first came to Japan had a Buddhist altar in the house with a book in which the names, along with birth and death dates, of the family ancestors were written. The mother of the family would place some rice from the freshly cooked rice in the morning along with some cooked fish and

vegetables on a shelf in the altar for the ancestors every day. When the father came home from work in the evening, he would sit in front of the altar, light some incense, ring a bell, and then offer prayers for the ancestors, after checking in the book to see who was born or died on this day. After he finished his prayers, he would eat dinner, and he always ate the rice and fish and vegetables from the altar first. There was a strong feeling that we should show gratitude to those who came before us for the present health and well-being of the family, in other words, a past oriented culture. On the other hand, the division of the year into twenty-four seasons that I have mentioned above shows a present orientation. In my talks I often point out that *wadokei* (和時計), or traditional Japanese clocks, were made to change the length of time they measured according to the season. There were twelve “hours” between sunrise and sunset, but the “hours” were each shorter in the winter and longer in the summer. I feel that this shows a strong present orientation.

In 1991 Hofstede added a Confucian Dynamism Dimension to his four other orientations, and used it to divide cultures into those with short-term orientation (more present oriented) and long-term orientation (more future oriented). He placed Japan near the top of those countries whose predominant tendency is a long-term orientation. This may be true in the limited large corporation sampling on which Hofstede based most of his conclusions, but I don't feel that it is true at most educational institutions, in city planning, and at the small business and family level. One thing that may make Japan appear to more future oriented is the “*rootedness*” found all over Japan, mostly in rural areas but even in some of the cities. When I ask many of my audiences to raise their hands if they still live in the same house that they were born in, about seventy percent raise their hands if it's a rural area. When I ask how many still live in the house their father was born in, about half raise their hands. And when I ask how many still live in the house their grandfather was born in, about one-fourth of the people raise their hands. When the past is so strongly a part of the present, it provides a continuity that seems to stretch into the future. Even with thousand-year-old temples all over the country (past orientation) and multinational corporations planning far into the future, I still feel that Japan is present oriented. I believe that the failure of the Japanese government to make long range plans to get the country out of its present economic stagnation is a good example of the strong present orientation of Japanese culture.

There are three more questions that I usually ask my audiences. They are questions about life-style (cultural) changes that I have observed in my thirty-four years in Japan. The theory that lies behind these questions is the idea that culture is not found just in the broad areas of tradition,

education, economics, and politics, but can be found in the things we do in daily life, our life styles. The first question is: “Thirty years ago, what did you eat for breakfast, rice or bread? How about now?” Of course, the trend is toward more bread and less rice. The Japanese diet has really changed during the time I've been living here. But food is only one of the things that we “take in.” Just as the diet has become more westernized, so has the information and ideas that people take in. The traditional wet bed rice farming in Japan required intensive labor and was the foundation for Japan's collectivist culture. At the same time, the water-holding capacity of all the rice fields acted as a natural “dam” and with the change in diet, large ecological changes, such as more floods and landslides, have occurred. The change in diet has also affected the Japanese relationship with time. More “fast” food restaurants and “convenience” stores speeded everything up and there is less appreciation of the time that it takes for food to grow. One of my favorite Japanese poets, Tanigawa Shuntaro, wrote a poem about his feelings the first time he rode on the Shinkansen bullet train at nearly 200 k.p.h. In the poem he says that at that speed he couldn't see the hands of the farmers who were planting rice in the fields near the railroad tracks. He goes on to say that in such a high-paced society, we lose our connectedness with other people and we also lose our feelings of gratitude to the farmers for their work in growing the rice that we eat.

The second question is: “Thirty years ago, did your house have a Japanese style toilet or a western style one? How about now?” Of course, with the trend to more westernization, there are fewer and fewer houses with Japanese style toilets. I grew up in South Dakota, a place where it seldom rains and people are always worried about the lack of water. When I was a child, I wondered why we used water to flush away our human waste when water was such a precious thing. When I first came to Japan and discovered the Japanese style toilet with its large holding tank just under the toilet, a tank which was “vacuumed” out once a month by the “vacuum cars” (trucks with a large hose to suck all the waste out of the holding tanks), I felt that I had found just the system for South Dakota. Japanese style toilets are very eco-friendly. They also have a strong smell and, when the light shines in just right, we can see the waste collecting in the holding tank. I believe that this smell and sight keep us humble. We eat (take in) what tastes good (just as we take natural resources that are useful), take out the vitamins and minerals that our bodies need (just as we turn the natural resources into products), and discard the waste. When we are humble, and more aware in our daily lives that we are waste-producing beings, we are less likely to pollute nature. The change in Japan to western style toilets has taken the Japanese out of their traditional humility and allowed them to destroy the environment and pollute at will.

The third question I ask is: “Thirty years ago, did you bathe at home, or did you go to the public bath? How about now?” When I first came to Japan, most new houses and apartments were built with large baths, but people were still going to public baths. Traditionally in Japan, communal bathing was the norm. When everyone bathes together, there is much less power distance in human relationships than there is when people are clothed. This is probably because clothing is a communicator of power. The rich and powerful can afford brand name fashions and expensive jewelry, but in the bath everyone is equal. Even though there are far fewer public bath houses in Japan now, families still bathe together. Parents bathe with their children until the children reach puberty, and this “skinship” and the earlier “skinship” of the public baths is still at the heart of Japanese collectivism.

Through asking these three questions and getting the audience to think about the changes that have taken place in Japanese culture at a very basic level, I reinforce the idea that culture is based in daily life, and get the audience to reflect that we should be more aware of the direction that cultural changes are taking. There are two more theory-to-practice examples that I always introduce in my talks. The first basically is that any given cultural behavior, when examined long enough and closely enough, will teach us about larger cultural values. In other words, any particular cultural behavior has its roots in that culture's world view. I offer the example of bowing in Japan. When I first arrived in Japan, I was amazed at the complexity of Japanese bows. I thought that bowing would be fundamentally the same as shaking hands, both being behaviors that accompany greetings and partings. However, I discovered that this was a mistaken notion. The depth of the bow, the number of times one lowers one's head, the formality of the bow, and, of course, the verbal language which accompanies the bow differs depending on the relationship between the people and the particular situation they are in.

Japanese bowing reflects the Japanese cultural value of *tate shakai* (縦社会), or vertical society, that C. Nakane (1970) introduced as “ranking.” She says, “Without consciousness of ranking, life could not be carried on smoothly in Japan, for rank is the social norm on which Japanese life is based” (p. 31). This ranking is, of course, reflected in bowing, so it is necessary to rank people in order to know how deeply to bow. Although Nakane says that we are always “aware” of ranking, after a number of years in Japan, the depth of the bow seems to come quite effortlessly, without being conscious of ranking. I try to get the people in the audience to be more mindful of the value system deeply embedded in their bows. As I relate my efforts to mindfully obey the unwritten Japanese rules about bowing and my eventual success, the people in the audience begin to understand that their bowing can also be more mindful. The world view

that leads to mindful Japanese bowing is, I believe, quite Confucian: every person has her or his own place in society. The ideal harmony which Japanese society strives for is based on this Confucian principle.

The final theory that I introduce is that any particular cultural characteristic or value has both strengths and weaknesses, both positive and negative aspects. Individualism is not better or worse than collectivism; different situations may call for more or less of one or the other. The example that I offer is the Japanese cultural value of *uchi-soto* (内—外), dividing the world and the people in it into Inside-Outside, or Insiders-Outsiders. I first became aware of the importance of this cultural value soon after arriving in Japan. I learned that you always have to take off your shoes and change into slippers when you enter a Japanese house. At first, it seemed quite bothersome. I could easily understand that in a country with lots of rain and many dirt lanes, people would have a lot of mud on their feet, so taking off the shoes before entering the house would keep everything clean. However, in modern Japan most people spend most days stepping only on asphalt or concrete, so their shoes aren't muddy. The old style wooden shoes, called *geta*, would damage *tatami* mat floors, and leave marks on wooden or tiled floors, but very few Japanese wear *geta* now. People go into office buildings, hotels, restaurants, department stores, and supermarkets with their shoes on. (Many Japanese still do change into slippers in their own office, or at school in their own classroom.)

The custom of taking off one's shoes and changing into slippers is less practical than it is psychological. There is a difference between the way one feels away from home, in the outside (*soto*) world and the way one feels at home, in the inside (*uchi*) world. I believe most Americans would agree that being at home feels different. We say things like “kick your shoes off, sit back, and relax” when talking about the way we feel at home. When the host invites the guest to “make yourself at home,” it is an invitation to feel as comfortable as one does at home. So I had no trouble adjusting to this new way of doing things, and began to feel that Japanese culture was in some sense “superior” to American culture because it had formalized a common feeling of relaxing at home: take off your shoes and slip into slippers. The behavior gives outward expression to the inner feeling. I found that this division of the world into *uchi-soto* was not only confined to shoes and slippers, however. At the entrance to shrines and temples there is always a place to wash one's hands, a ritual that allows the spirit to switch from the *soto* outer world of materialism and emotional entanglements to the *uchi* inner world of meditation and tranquility. The important thing is *kejime*, a Japanese word usually translated as making a distinction or distinguishing between one thing and another. *Kejime* is like a psychological or spiritual “line”

that is drawn between two things. The *genkan*, or front hallway, of the house and the *tearaiba*, or place to wash hands, at the shrine or temple are places of *kejime*, separating the world into *uchi* and *soto*. *Kejime* is also the word that Japanese use when talking about taking personal responsibility. The office worker who offers to resign after making a major mistake is expressing *kejime*; a person who has done wrong can no longer remain in the same in-group.

In the case of human relations, *uchi-soto* is very similar to the English in-group and out-group. The ultimate out-group is foreigners, or *gaijin*, the *gai* meaning outside and the *jin* meaning person. I had been deeply impressed with the *uchi-soto* concept and the everyday behavior that it underlay, formalized behavior that allowed for the expression of a deep human feeling. In that sense, I had thought of *uchi-soto* as a strongly positive cultural characteristic. After a couple of months in Japan, however, I realized that dividing the world into Us (Japanese who keep the harmony and serenity of *uchi*) and Them (*gaijin* who disturb the harmony because they come from outside) is a very ethnocentric way of looking at the world. I realized that the concept of *uchi-soto* resulted in some very serious negative behaviors (discrimination) in intercultural contexts. I tell audiences that any particular cultural trait is the same, just like the two sides of a coin, the head, or positive characteristics, on the one side, and the tail, or negative characteristics, on the other. The audience can readily understand the theory and the example that I use also makes them aware of the tendency for Japanese to be ethnocentric. That awareness is the first step toward ethnorelativism. I hope that it eventually leads to a cultural relativism that encourages a deep respect for people of different gender, age, body ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic situation, or any of the other cultural differences that create an in-group/out-group mentality.

The Role of the Cultural Marginal as Change Agent

What is a cultural marginal? “Marginality” in the intercultural communication literature is used generically and does not simply mean “feeling like an outsider.” In “Cultural Marginality: Identity Issues in Intercultural Training,” Janet Bennett (1993) cites M. Goldberg:

... When an individual shaped and molded by one culture is brought by migration, education, marriage, or other influences into permanent contact with a culture of a different content, or when an individual from birth is initiated into two or more historic traditions, languages, political loyalties, moral codes, or religions, then he is likely to find himself on the margin of each culture, but a member of neither (1941, p. 52).

J. Berry (1990) concurs, “The classic concept of marginalization now appears to be used

generically to refer to this situation of being on the margin of two cultures, being accepted or supported by neither one” (p. 245). Bennett herself says that “whether through immigration, sojourning, marriage, adoption, or birth, a wide range of people are actively carrying the frame of reference of two or more cultures” (p. 110). Bennett goes on to say, “The use of the term ‘marginality’ in this context carries no negative valence, but rather is intended to indicate a cultural lifestyle at the edges where two or more cultures meet, which can be either encapsulating or constructive” (p. 113).

Following Berry's (1990) line of thought, we may say that there are as many kinds of marginality as there are types of culture. For example, an elderly person (age culture) may feel marginalized by the youth-centered culture of CDs, cell phones, and internet email, but at the same time not feel part of the sharing stories about diseases and friends who have died culture of many aged people. A homosexual person may feel marginalized by the powerful heterosexuality of mainstream culture, but yet be reluctant to “come out” and join the homosexual group.

Bennett (1993) talks about “internal culture shock” as “the recognition of conflicts between two cultural voices competing for attention within oneself” (p. 112) The cultural marginal carries on an “internal dialogue” when trying to create a synthesized identity. “When a person responds to this internal dialogue with compromised ability to establish boundaries and make judgments, we can say that the individual is ‘encapsulated’ or trapped by marginality. ...In contrast, by maintaining control of choice and the construction of boundaries, a person may become a ‘constructive’ marginal” (p. 113). The constructive cultural marginal realizes that the particular “self” which is appropriate for a certain situation is inappropriate for another situation. Boundaries must be set firmly, but they are not permanent. The self is seen more as a process than as an object. The awareness that “reality” is constructed is exhilarating. Culture is the filter through which the sensory data of “external” reality is processed, so when cultural awareness changes, reality changes, too. M. Yoshikawa (1980) has described this sense of exhilaration in constructive marginality as “dynamic in-betweenness.” In explaining his double-swing model, Yoshikawa says, “One is in constant tension between the various polarities of life, therefore one feels keenly that one is alive” (p. 13).

I believe that constructive cultural marginals are in an excellent position to act as change agents in facilitating intercultural communication for three reasons. First, they are able to see two (or more) large cultural groups from the margin, with an awareness or objectivity that is quite different from the people immersed in the center of the culture. G. Yep (1998) says, “Negotiating one's identity from the cultural margins can allow us to see things from both the center and the

margins—a perspective that those who attempt to prescribe labels for us simply do not have” (p. 83). This perspective or awareness allows for a discernment of strengths and weaknesses of each culture that can be used in facilitating mindful intercultural communication.

Second, because constructive cultural marginals have gone through the process of culture shock, either caused by external or internal changes, and have learned how to deal with changing identity, they can act as role models for identity integration. J. Bennett (1993) says, “Simply stated, the resolution of multicultural identity requires an integration of both the psychological and social aspects of self and society” (p. 121). There are so many people who really *do* want to engage in more mindful intercultural communication but are afraid of the loss of core identity that really empathizing with the communication other triggers. Constructive cultural marginals exemplify the liberating aspect of multicultural identity at the personal (psychological) level and, acting as change agents, can guide society at large toward a larger acceptance of both cultural marginality and diversity.

Third, and maybe most importantly, just as Gandhi insisted that “personal change and the ability to bring about social change are linked” (p. xvii), constructive cultural marginals are not just using theory to change people's attitudes and behaviors. They are starting from their own life experience. We should never forget that the Wells-Knefelkamp Model for Analyzing an Intercultural Change Plan (1985) is Practice-Theory-Practice. Intercultural change should always begin with practice, with one's actual life experiences. Constructive cultural marginals would do well to study the theories in order to give order and cohesion to their work as change agents, but they should never forget that they are starting from a position of power, of dynamic-in-betweenness.

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