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ABSTRACT

Traditional familialism as a basic antecedent for understanding Japanese-American communication in Honolulu is examined. The traditional Japanese extended family evolved from economic interdependencies in agricultural, rural communities. This familial communalism demanded that individualism be suppressed so that the needs of the corporate group could be met. Permeating this sense of hierarchy and order was a feeling of obligation and adoration to one's place in the scheme of things. However, Japanese immigrants to Hawaii encountered a new society in which the close-knit family organization was challenged by expanding capitalism, urbanization, and industrialization The structural changes which the Japanese family underwent in Hawaii due to this new culture can be seen in the reduction of birth rates, family size, and urbanization of the Japanese family over the last 50 years. However, as the Japanese became ethnically assimilated into the culture, their familial identification strengthened with commensurate importance of filial piety and family honor in their human relations and communication patterns. (Author/DE)

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Communication Characteristics of Asians in American Urban Settings: The Case of Honolulu Japanese

The traditional approach of analyzing Asian American communication has centered on the Asian family and its effect on behaviors. Indeed, the Asian familial system stemming from ancient rural roots has been viewed as playing a dominant role in shaping the Asian American personality. Filial piety, family honor, shame, "saving face," the traditional "Oriental attributes," have been integral components of Asian American behaviors inculcated within the family and circumscribing social roles.

As the Asian American family has been urbanized, however, one would expect that the influence of these "Oriental attributes" would undergo continual de-emphasis. Concepts which have defined individual behavior in the rural environment of Asia would become irrelevant, even dysfunctional, in the modernized urban centers of Los Angeles, New York, Seattle or San Francisco. "Shame," "family honor," would seemingly become prohibitive anachronisms to modern generations of Asian Americans "on the make." But in analyzing the contemporary experience of Honolulu's Japanese American population, this is evidently not the case. Rural traditional patterns have not disappeared under the impact of social mobility and urbanization, but have become modified. Although not replications of the rural heritage, the traditional familial behaviors and values of the Asian American continue to influence communication behavior among the ethnic group.

To explore the importance of this traditional familialism as a basic antecedent for understanding Japanese American communication in Honolulu is the purpose of this paper. Consequently, discussion will focus upon the traditional Japanese concept of ie, "household," as it has evolved from rural Japan into the modern concept of the modified extended family,

and the consideration of certain modal familial values as they continue to affect the communication of Island Japanese Americans. From such an analysis it is hoped that the student of Asian American communication will gain a viable perspective or cultural outlook from which to create hypotheses concerning the communication of Japanese Americans in Hawaii's urban center of Honolulu. And in the process, the student might gain an insight into the communication of other Asian Americans residing in various urban environments throughout the United States.

The Development of a Modified Extended Family

The Japanese Americans of modern Honolulu trace their family heritage to the Meiji world of 18th century Japan. In ancient Japan the Japanese rural family was called ie, meaning "house." The ie was a residential unit which was comprised of not only the family of procreation, but a large array of members associated by kinship or affiliation. As a large social network of kin relations, the ie also was a critical economic unit, providing a stable agricultural work force in rural communities. Due to this economic function, the family was viewed as a corporate group, property and land being shared communally rather than individually.

Survival in a constantly demanding environment meant that the individual's will and effort had to be funneled into a group consciousness. Familial communalism demanded the suppression of individualism to the needs of the corporate group. The suppression of individual desires and motivations was insured by a social system which clearly defined the individual's place within the family -- a world view predicated on a vertical, hierarchical order of the universe. Every

family member had a specific, delineated role of behavior differentiated by status and power. As Ruth Benedict observed in her study of Japanese culture, The Chrysanthemum and the Sword, "hierarchy based on sex and generation and primogeniture are part and parcel of family life."[1]

Extending from the family, the hierarchy of social order formed a comprehensive "natural law" of Japanese society. From the symbolization of language to the everyday routines of behavior and value beliefs, the Japanese world view was marked by the emphasis on social order. The individual understood that the "natural" hierarchy presupposed that some should govern and others should be governed -- that authority and influence be rigidly inbred in the roles and statuses of the vertical arrangement of the world. In the following diagram of the Japanese hierarchy, each pairing is listed in relative order of importance, status, position and authority. The role on the left is dominant over the one on the right:

kun-shin -- Emperor and subject

fu-shi -- father and child

fu-fu -- husband and wife

cho-ya -- elder and junior

shi-tei -- teacher and pupil

footnote: 2

Permeating this sense of hierarchy and order, was a feeling of obligation and adoration to one's place in the scheme of things. The child was taught not to begrudge his restrictions of status and position, but to emote a strong sense of on, obligation to family, community, teachers and Emperor. The ie was idealized by ancestor worship into a quasi-religious deity, a symbol of social order

and meaning.

These patterns of agrarian ruralism shaping the Japanese ie were designs of environmental influence characteristic of cultural developments in most rural areas. Although Ronald Dore, a Japan scholar, could accurately state that few societies "are as consciously aware of their family system as the Japanese,"[3] all societies have a common heritage of familial relations molded by agrarianism. Whether it be the Phillipines, China, Korea, Portugal, nineteenth-century New England or ancient Hawaii, similar rural folkways necessitated a similar social ambience of cooperation and communalism as found in Meiji Japan. The ie, viewed in cross-cultural perspective, was simply a pattern of extended family relationships evolving from the economic interdependencies of individuals in agricultural, rural communities.

Since family members provided free labor to harvest the crop, plow the fields or maintain the household, large families became common necessities in most rural establishments. The extended family pattern developed where the grandparents, parents, children, uncles and aunts lived under the same roof. And because the extended family could not survive alone, it became economically and relationally interdependent with other extended family units, comprising the rural village.

The perpetuation of this extended family pattern required the successive generational enculturation of values and priorities conducive to cooperative interpersonal and inter-familial relationships. Most important of these values was an emphasis on affiliation. Individuals and families became implicitly linked and dependent on one

another through an emotional bond of love, by a notion of duty and commonness of purpose and the basic assumption that energy, property, affiliation and cooperation will be perpetually reciprocated. In the truest sense, the agrarian family and community implicitly recognized the intuitive integrity of their world system as a meaningful organism of interrelated values, structures and relationships.

The eminent German sociologist Ferdinard Tönnies in the late nineteenth century described this rural family organism, characteristic of the Japanese ie, as a component of what he called Gemeinschaft, communication, kinship, neighborhood and friendship. There is an implicit spirit between indiyiduals in Gemeinschaft, basing human relationships on an affiliative love:

> . . . We may now establish the great main laws of Gemeinschaft:
>
> (1) relatives and married couples love each other or easily adjust themselves to each other. They speak together and think along similar lines. Likewise do neighbors and friends. .
>
> (2) There is understanding between people who love each other.
>
> (3) Those who love and understand each other remain and dwell together and organize their common life.[4]

. Within this Gemeinschaft of instinctual human bonds, within the ie of order and obligation, the young Japanese child matured into a man. And in the case of the Japanese immigrant, as he found his rural world upset by crop failure and economic stagnation, he became enticed by stories of opportunity across the seas. Most likely a younger son who would not feel the responsibility of ancestral inheritance, he responded by testing his ambitions against the

resiliency of his character. Venturing to a foreign land, Brazil, Peru, the United States or Hawaii, he would labor to earn wages which he thought would one day raise his standard of living in his ancestral village. But after several years he found himself unable or disinclined to return to his homeland. He sent for a wife and established a family in his new host society. As a father, he sought to instill in his children the same world views which he had been given as a child -- the same values and behaviors which had defined his Gemeinschaft. But in most cases the conditions in the new homeland were not conducive to the behaviors learned in the rural village he had left in Japan. The jungles of the Amazon, the deltas of Sacramento and the backstreets of Honolulu demanded coping skills and values different from those in a small farming village in Hiroshima.

The most startling "social shock" the immigrant would encounter in many of his new host societies was the realization that the family organism, the spirit of ie with which he was so familiar, was challenged by an environment of expanding capitalism, urbanization and industrialization. The Gemeinschaft bond of love underlying his world view and community relations was being threatened by the bludgeoning effects of modern Gesellschaft society. Tonnies distinguished Gesellschaft as an urban, highly individualized society based not on implicit love, but explicitly defined social contracts. And as the immigrant discovered in Hawaii, self-reliancy, the ability to exert self-will, not love, was the tempo of the island plantation economy.

"In Gesellschaft," Tonnies wrote, "every person strives for that which is to his own advantage and he affirms the actions of others only in so far as and as long as they can further his

interest."[5] In such a system, the extended family is reduced to the nuclear of parents and children, serving as an enculturator of individualism and independence. Instead of affiliation, obligation and dependency, the child must learn self-will, self-expression and self-achievement.

Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft are archetypal forms on a continuum of social organization -- a continuum arising from the conflict between technological and industrial advancements and the rural lifestyle. The extended family, valuing affiliation and obligation, bound by love, undergoes transformation as industrialization and urbanization prohibit its economic worth. To survive under the impact of an ever expanding Gesellschaft, the extended family system, now a socio-cultural burden, gives way to the nuclear family. Values of dependency and affiliation give way to independence and self-aggrandizement. Intuitive bonds of love by necessity are supplanted by bonds of the social contract.

These tensions between the forces of Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft reshaped the Japanese family as it was adapting to the Hawaiian environment. The immigrant and his family had naturally sought to recreate the implicit bonds linking the communities of the homeland -- to transplant in toto the Gemeinschaft ie. But the need for modification became immediately apparent. The disorganization of plantation life, the general inability to purchase land and develop independent farming communities; the disorientating urban Gesellschaft of Honolulu, created a cultural setting far different from that of rural Japan. The world view designed to perpetuate a stable, landed peasantry was inadequate for the plantation and urban colonies of Japanese immigrant

families.

Internally, the fragmented character of the first generation Issei family equally exacerbated the inability of the ie system to find duplication in Hawaii. The Issei couples were, after all, separated from their homeland kinship systems -- the immigrant home became the domain of the nuclear, not extended family. There were no elderly grandparents, few uncles and aunts, brothers and sisters living under the same roof. The immigrant had come as a loner, and consequently the family he created in Hawaii did not represent the diverse ie pattern of Japan. "In Hawaii," a sociologist concluded in the pre-World War II era,

> the Japanese family system is undergoing changes. Immigration has resulted in the creation of conditions that tend to weaken moral bases of the family. The removal of the immigrants from their families and home communities meant that they left behind all the prestige which went with their family names. They left behind, too, the living symbols of land, house, family cemetery, and the village shrines which constantly reminded them of the love and affection of their illustrious forefathers. The economic system of Hawaii, with its money wages, has tended to undermine family solidarity. The presence of other peoples whose family systems have different moral bases has helped to weaken family sentiment among the Japanese.[6]

The structural changes which the Japanese family would undergo in Hawaii, the impact of Gesellschaft on the nature of the ie system, can be seen in the birth rates, size and urbanization of the Japanese family over the last fifty years. The simple extended family has

been affected by modernization and nuclearization as economic, social and cultural forces shaped the immigrant institution in this, now that direction. Prominent among the trends influencing the ie pattern has been the tendency towards a diminishing size of the procreating family and stabilizing birth rates in increasingly urban settings.

Actually, though, the early period of stabilization of the Japanese family coincided with a high birth rate. The peasant, extended family tradition of the Issei resulted in an initially high birth rate of the second generation, Nisei. The high fertility of the young Issei female population resulted in a rapid increase in births. In the years 1920-1921 the Japanese birth rate climbed to a level only exceeded by Part-Hawaiians. And in the period 1920-1937, the second generation catapulted from 39,127 to 113,289.[7]

The high birth rate in the 1920's resulted in the increased size of the family unit. By 1930 the size of the Japanese family in Hawaii had become larger than the equivalent unit in Japan -- in plantations the average size of the Issei family was 5.4, a figure varying from island to island.[8] Thus the early period of settlement of the Japanese family, as with other immigrant families in Hawaii, was characterized by a high birth rate and expanding family size. This pattern, similar to the rural family pattern in the "old country" would be tapered by a trend towards urbanization and the desire to improve the standard of living. Large families, necessary to the survival of a self-sufficient rural community of extended families, were economically unfeasible in a modern, socially progressing society. Large families meant larger costs, more expensive housing and less ability to save. As

urbanization moved the Japanese family from plantation to town, the family size would abate.

The gradual urbanization of the Issei population corresponds with the movement away from the plantation in the 1920's. The plantation, with its closed economic system, undemocratic worker-employee relationship and continually futile cycle of labor, was abandoned by large numbers of workers seeking alternative livelihoods, in either Honolulu, small towns or on independent farms. Although 62,000 Japanese immigrants had entered the Islands between 1900 and 1922, the population of Japanese on the plantation had dropped from 31,000 to 17,000.[9] More dramatically, the exodus of Japanese workers reduced their population on the plantation from 73.5% in 1902 to 18.8% in 1932.[10]

The reduction of Japanese workers on the rural plantation meant a swelling of their numbers in urban centers. Though in 1900 only 10% of the Japanese population were living in Honolulu, this number had climbed to 22.4% in 1920.[11] By 1930, one-third of the population of Honolulu was Japanese. Operating nearly 49% of the retail stores and influencing the composition of most blue collar urban jobs, the Japanese filled the urban ghettos in areas such as Kalihi, Palama, Moiliili and Kakaako.[12]

The urbanization of the Japanese family has remained a significant trend since 1930. The population of Honolulu Japanese in 1960 was thirty-seven percent greater than their general Island proportion. In the smaller towns as well, Japanese have predominated. Forty-seven percent of Hilo in 1960 was Japanese and the ethnic group also comprised the majority of the populations of various small urban

centers including Wahiawa, Waipahu, Wailuku, Honokaa, Lahaina and Lihue.[13]

The outcome of urbanization was a competitive spirit of social mobility. The immigrant family, without paternal protection, became keenly aware of the value of a rising standard of living. This in turn resulted in a decline of the early high birth rates and the subsequent reduction of family size. Especially the Nisei, trained to assimilate into an urban, competitive system, educated in birth control and the economic advantages of smaller families, continued the trend.

Even in the early stages of the Issei experience, urban families were smaller than rural ones. In 1907, when the Japanese family was in its infancy, figures indicated that the rural family consisted of 3.6 members, while the urban family contained only 3.0.[14] From 1930 to 1940 the birth rate of Japanese dropped substantially. In 1930, there were 1,112 Japanese children under five years of age per thousand women aged 20-44. By 1940 that number had tapered to 550.[15]

Except for a post-World War II baby boom, a phenomenon characteristic of national trends, the Japanese birth rate continued to decline in the 1950's and 1960's. Indeed, the birth rate for the socially mobile Nisei generation was one of the lowest of any ethnic group in Hawaii.[16] And statistics in 1970 suggested a continuation of the reduction of birth rates and procreated family size -- the younger Japanese, the third generation, Sansei, seem to be having continually smaller families.[17]

Even though with the younger Sansei generation the procreating family has become increasingly nuclear in profile, (the average Japanese household in 1960 was 4.1 persons)[18] these nuclear families were linked,

attitudinally and socially, with an extended kinship pattern. In other words, nuclear families of average household size are connected in the Japanese American community in a modified extended family network of relational dependencies and obligations. So as the Gesellschaft reality of urban mobility and economic aggressiveness was reordering the internal structures of the Japanese family, patterns of familial obligation and extended relations were finding re-expression.

In her study of Japanese families in Honolulu, Dr. Colleen Johnson investigated the familial identifications of a sample of Nisei and Sansei and demonstrated the emergence of this modified extended family. Dr. Johnson's results showed a progressively strong identification of succeeding generations not with the nuclear family, but with the extended familial network. So while 34% of the Nisei respondents felt their families were nuclear in design, only 16% of the Sansei responded in a like manner. In addition, 58% of the Sansei viewed their families as a network of extended relationships, compared to 49% of the Nisei.[19] Dr. Johnson noticed that in many cases, those interviewed even failed to mention the nuclear family as part of their familial relations:

> In defining who constitutes their family (as opposed to "relatives) most respondents identified their immediate family as consisting of their spouse and children, their own parents and siblings, and their families of procreation. The recognition of the nuclear family to some respondents was so minimal that they neglected to include their own husband and children in listing their closest relationships.[20]

What these results indicate is that progressively for the Island

Japanese family, as the birth rate and size of family has stabilized in nearly typical urban patterns, the extended relationships and identifications with kinship has for the Sansei and Yonsei generations, intensified. This modified extended family pattern, Dr. Johnson suggests, is a kinship model

> whereby nuclear families are bound together both through affectional ties and by choice. Although this family type does not resemble a corporate group sharing political and economic functions (as in primitive societies), it does preserve an emphasis on sentiment and sociability as well as mutual aid.[21]

In part the psychological mechanisms behind the growth of a modified extended family attitude is understood as a generational reaction to urbanization. For the Issei generation, without extended family relations, dependent on other immigrants, the identification was primarily with the Japanese ethnic community -- in the alien world one gained strength through one's countrymen. But urbanization and the Gesellschaft pluralistic world were to weaken the ethnic bonds between the immigrant's progeny and the ethnic community. By the Sansei generation, the community would have little geographical integrity, few self-help services not provided for more effectively by state agencies, few means to express itself as a single ethnic group since ethnic assimilation and social mobility had undercut community identity. Granted that the Sansei identify as "Japanese" vis-à vis other local ethnic groups. Granted that economic cooperation and cultural continuity of heritage as shared commonalities have a degree of relevancy to the young Japanese American. But these community

ties are certainly not as solidifying as were the ties for the early immigrant community.

The waning community identifications have been overshadowed by an increasing family identification. While the ethnic group as a whole might not have much relevancy to Sansei lives, the ethnic family does have a significant impact. Uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews, nieces, grandparents and even in some cases great-grandparents for the first time in the Japanese American experience can play an effective role in creating cultural and psychological stability in the home. Even though the modified extended families do not live under the same roof, they are involved in relationships of extensive interdependency due to geographic propinquity. In Dr. Johnson's study, 75% of the Sansei respondents indicated that thirty or more of their relatives, compared with 53% of the Nisei respondents, lived on Oahu.[22] Such kinship solidarity, geographically and attitudinally, implies that for the Sansei, familial values, behavioral influences and structural relationships are becoming more prominent as a source of identification and communication.

Familial Values and Their Affects on Communication

Due to the development of the modified extended family, traditional values of familialism continue to be inculcated in the present day Japanese American experience. These values as they have been perpetuated in an urban setting remain to serve as determinants of Japanese American behavior and communication. In particular two broad tradition values can be examined as cultural forces shaping the interraction among the Japanese of Honolulu. First, the generations

of Island Japanese have shared a common familial value towards filial piety and obligations in parent-child and sibling relationships. Secondly, family honor and image, the notion of the institution as an organic social whole, has been vigorously protected. Essentially, filial piety can be defined as the oath of empathy which links a person to the hierarchical order of the world. "Be loyal to thy land and be filial to thy parents,"[23] said the Japanese ethnical code. And the loyalty was engrained as an unquestioned emotional attachment to parents and siblings.

Filial piety was a Chinese Confucian concept transplanted into the Japanese conceptualization of ie and ancestral worship. Elders were to be respected, the authority of the ie was beyond reproach, the individual was committed, obligated to the family:

> The filial duty of a son is a continuous obligation as long as the family is in existence. It is handed down from one generation to another. "Fathers may not be fathers but sons must always be sons," and they must learn to be more pious than their fathers were to their forefathers.[24]

Among Japanese Americans, then, the deference shown parental authority, the acquiescence shown the parents through duty and compliance are communication patterns stemming from filial piety which have been commonly affected. In essence, these patterns function to maintain familism as an organic unit. Indeed, the instance is rare of Japanese Americans who cannot identify to some degree with the feeling of obligation and duty to family. Although the expression of individual desires and interests has perhaps increasingly modified the notion of absolute obedience,

for the younger Sansei generation, the wishes of the family for even the Sansei are frequently the "last word" on the issue. Silent acquiescence to authority, an obedient submission of the individual for the "good of the family" are still cultural behaviors and attitudes functioning to maintain the integrity and cohesiveness of the Island Japanese family.

In addition to filial piety and obligation, another broad traditional value linking Japanese Americans has been the notion of family honor and image. If the family is an important social and economic unit, an organic whole demanding obedience of its individual members, then the status of the family in the community is an imperative factor in behavior. The family must not be shamed. The individual must do nothing which reflects negatively on the image which the family projects to neighbors and friends. As Ruth Benedict noted: "The Japanese learn ... in their family experience that the greatest weight that can be given to a decision comes from the family conviction that it maintains the family honor."[25]

Essentially, honor to the family organism involves the functions of several behavioral mechanisms creating communication patterns of self-restraint. Most prominent of these mechanisms is the use of haji, shame, to regulate individual behaviors. "What will others think of you?" "What will the neighbors say?" are behavioral injunctions reinforcing family honor and image.

This orientation of the Japanese individual as opposed to one of guilt or the self-appraisal of personal actions through conscience, is a more highly valued and effective tool of social conformity in the rural, Gemeinschaft community. In the Gesellschaft individual interest

and will are supreme -- what others think of you is really secondary to the establishment of mutually rewarding social contracts. In the Japanese Gemeinschaft world of relationships, implicit bonds of common purpose and mutual interdependency characterize social relationships instead of willfully designed explicit contracts. Consequently, the judgement of your peers and family, what others think of you, is an important determinant reinforcing bonds of love. If you fail to implicitly perpetuate the open bonds of love and trust, then you irrevocably threaten your position in the society -- you are shamed.

The behavior of the individual with respect to the family organism is also maintained through the cultural norm of enryo. Enryo involves a complex of deference behaviors helping to establish the perimeters of the individual's freedom. Harry H.L. Kitano in his definitive study, Japanese Americans, employed the concept of enryo to discuss many of the self-restrained communication patterns of the Japanese American:

> Enryo helps to explain much of Japanese-American behavior. As with other norms, it had both a positive and negative effect on Japanese acculturation. For example, take observations of Japanese in situations as diverse as their hesitancy to speak out at meetings; their refusal of any invitation, especially the first time; their refusal of a second helping; their acceptance of a less desired object when given a free choice; their lack of verbal participation, especially in an integrated group; their refusal to ask questions; and their hesitancy in asking for a raise in salary -- these may be based on enryo. The inscrutable face, the noncommittal

answer, the behavioral reserve can often be traced to this norm so that the stereotype of the shy, reserved Japanese in ambiguous social situations is often an accurate one.[26]

Highly sensitive to the feelings of others, reactive to the opinions of peers and relatives, deferent to status and age, the Japanese individual becomes hesitant to express himself verbally -- once the words have been said, they cannot be retracted. The shame, the confrontation, the highly emotional charge have already been released. The individual learns the value and advantages of "keeping the mouth shut" when necessary, demurely acquiescing in unpleasant situations and kuchigotae suru na "don't answer back" in the face of authority.

The values of filial piety and family honor have to varying degrees and styles defined the cultural character of Hawaii's Japanese. In no two families, for no two individuals are communication behaviors, values and world views identical. But the modally shared values of family respect, obligation, the sensitive regard for honor, image and status, and the intense personal identification with the family unit, often at the expense of individual self-action or open communication, are themes of the Japanese family which have touched all generations.

And these values have, to a large degree, superceded the structural urban changes of the nuclearized Japanese family. Though the family has become structurally attuned to Gesellschaft society, patterns of communication and other behaviors in step with a Gemeinschaft spirit of ie, especially on the familial level, have tenaciously survived. And this "survival" of ie patterns will be increasingly relevant to

the Japanese American modified extended family as the cultural transmission between generations become more coherent. As an enculturator of ethnic values, the Sansei family will have to deal less with the difficult social and cultural issues with which previous generations grappled. Langauge difficulties, value confrontations and adapting to multicultural inputs are concerns mostly irrelevant for Sansei. The culture of the Japanese American, the fusion of a number of cultural elements in everyday lifestyle and the promulgation of numerous highly ingrained values will be passed on with greater integrity for future generations.

Moreover, for the Sansei and their children, the greater emergence of grandparents as active cultural transmitters will also enhance the ethnic integrity of the Japanese family and individual. Grandparents, especially in the extended family situation, are "caretakers of culture," passing on the cultural continuity of their world view to the grandchildren -- a role perpetuated by many grandparents in the Sansei family. Significantly, Dr. Johnson's study revealed that 60% of the Sansei respondents indicated that grandparents played an active, welcome part in family affairs.[27]

This active role of a new generation of Nisei grandparents, the kinship solidarity between economically independent but emotionally affiliative nuclear families in a modified extended pattern, portend a continually strengthened ethnic communication among the Sansei and future generations. Family, not community will be the focus of Japanese American ethnic identity and communication in a Hawaiian pluralistic society. And the basis of this family identity will be a maturing blend of dynamic Gesellschaft structures with a pervasive spirit of Gemeinschaft cultural commonalities.

Conclusion

As have been discussed, the determinants of Japanese American communication in the urban setting of Honolulu have evolved from several familial values having traditional roots in the rural villages of Japan. Though perhaps in the Japanese American experience other values have been adapted or lost in American acculturation, the values of filial piety and family honor appear to have remained vibrant in the human relations and communication patterns found within the Japanese ethnic group. Indeed, contrary to the general notion that urbanization has produced radical changes in cultural values and outlooks, as seen by the modified extended family of the Sansei, a spirit of Gemeinscahft continues to be generated binding individuals with their families and families with their ethnic group.

More importantly, in providing insight into the general area of Asian American communication, perhaps the case of Honolulu's Japanese Americans also suggests an apprpach to the study of the communication of Chinese, Korean, Filipino and other Asian groups found in urban settings. Perhaps the familial organism remains to function effectively within the Asian American cultural matrix of today. And if such is the case, perhaps the humanism, the bond of affiliative relationships, the sense of tradition and ethnic identification innate in the Gemeinschaft family will continue to provide meaning for Asian Americans, counterbalancing the alienating, impersonal forces generated in a modern, technological society.

Footnotes

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