Confucius
His influence on Chinese thought and society

Confucius (孔子, Kongzi; 551-479 B.C.) is the greatest teacher and philosopher in Chinese culture. His wisdom continued to be appreciated after his death, travelled from kingdom to kingdom through dynastic China, and his philosophy continues to have a tremendous influence to this day on the thought and life of people in China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, and on Chinese people in other countries around the world.

For thousands of years Confucianism, the teaching of Confucius, has been a foundation for Chinese society and it has also been the basis for the education of Chinese students. Much of Confucius' teaching spread to Taiwan with the migration of Chinese settlers to this island over the past four hundred years.

Confucianism is a way of life: a philosophy of ethics, a system that propounds proper personal conduct, and guidance for living a moral life. Confucianism shaped how people speak, think and act, and it remains relevant in the everyday values of the Taiwanese.

Though modern Taiwanese culture does not strictly follow all Confucian values, many of them are still taught by teachers and parents today in Taiwanese society. These basic Confucian values have profoundly influenced and remain deeply rooted in Taiwanese people's daily life. These values include the idea of the group, a need to retain harmony, respect for hierarchy, honoring one's parents, obedience to superiors, loyalty, propriety, and education. Understanding the way these traditional values are followed today will help you to interact successfully with Taiwanese nationals.

The group over individual

Let's start from how a Taiwanese generally sees one's self. The self is never defined by as the 'individual' self as "I do what I like to do and I am responsible for my decisions and actions". 'Self' for a Taiwanese is defined by the relations with others by the surrounding relationships. One always needs to live up to the others' expectations. For instance, living up the expectations of one's parents who may want their son or daughter to be a doctor or an engineer; participating in a drawing contest to please the teacher in school; or working overtime to complete a
assertiveness and directness can be seen as selfish, and thus are discouraged. In valuing harmony, each individual is aware of his role in society. They do not openly disagree, particularly with figures of authority; they speak indirectly and wait for their turn to speak according to their social role; they are comfortable with periods of silence and only express what they believe they want to be heard, and not necessarily the truth; they much prefer to be offered options or assistance than directly asking for support.

Consequently, a more ‘hand-holding’ process needs to be adopted when working with Taiwanese colleagues. A frequent check-up on the process of the project and generous offers of support and experience sharing may be required. Many meetings happen after the official meeting sessions, and private sessions encourage more self-expression.

Respect for family and hierarchy

Much of Confucius’ teaching focuses on showing respect for parents, family, the elderly and for those with wisdom and experience. Confucius taught the Five-Constant Relationships: emperor-subject, parent-child, husband-wife, elder brother-younger brother and friend-friend (this is the only relationship of equal status among the five relationships). Respect for parents and older members of the family (living or dead) is considered the greatest virtue for a Taiwanese. This principle is called xiao (孝, filial piety), and it denotes that a child needs to pay ultimate love and respect to his or her parents and family. Children should be obedient to their parents, and take care of them when they grow old. Listening to their parents and obeying without questioning is believed to be the duty of a son. (See the chapter on xiao on page 175 for further details).

Respect for hierarchy and veneration of those in positions of authority is taught from a young age. Parents, teachers and managers are among those of authority and ranking. Status in terms of age, ranking and experience should be observed at all times. It gives a structure and provides a clear guideline for correct behavior and communication. For instance, titles are frequently used to address senior executives; business cards are presented with both hands to show respect; decisions are generally made by those in authority and the subordinates follow.

The relationship between seniors and juniors should be similar to that of parent and child. Loyalty thus is extended from one’s family and one’s spouse to one’s leader. "Thus a good manager is seen as someone who shows genuine concern for the wellbeing of their subordinates, not only on work-related issues but also in personal and family matters. He provides stability and security and quite often is expected to know everything; he/she ought to be wiser and experienced, and should
have all the right answers. Seniors are expected to provide mentorship and, more importantly, protection to their junior employees, and thus receive great loyalty in return. This respect of hierarchy results in the manager being addressed with formal titles, and spending more time after work with Taiwanese associates at social gatherings like dinners and entertainment. Managers are also expected to comply with favors asked, and may be required to give more frequent advice.

**LI - The ethical code**

Confucius taught that rituals and protocol preserve social order. **Li** (禮, rite) translates as propriety, courtesy, respect, ritual, morals, standard of conduct, or the ‘way things should be done’. Without Li there can be no proper etiquette and social behavior in all relationships; there can be no rules on the proper status of the elders and juniors; no organization of the moral relationship between parents and children; and no standard on what is right and what is wrong. Li provides the structure for social interaction in social and political institutions, and is the Chinese code of ethics for daily behavior.

People should accept and fulfill their social role in society regardless which side of the relationship they are on. Parents have an obligation to raise and educate their children, who will then care for their parents in their old age; seniors have an obligation to provide for juniors, who in return swear loyalty. People behave properly according to it so as not to lose face.

The ideal of following Li has been pointed out as a weakness of the Taiwanese education system. Showing extreme respect to the teachers and blindly following the ritual of Li has affected the development of students’ creative learning, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students are incapable of thinking freely and creatively, instead focusing on following the instructions of the teachers, who are believed to have the knowledge and right answers for every question. This phenomenon also transfers to Taiwan’s business and professional settings, where the person in authority is expected to have an answer to everything.

**Education**

I can’t emphasize enough the importance of education. Education is valued highly in Taiwan, and every parent expects his child to achieve the highest possible level of education. Confucius taught that the chief goal of life are to become well educated and to live a moral life. Education is a way to learn how to conduct oneself properly, thus creating a balanced society. Confucius is renowned for his support of ‘Teaching without discrimination’ (有教無類, you jiao wu le), that is, education should be for all, without class distinction, and that anyone should be taught if they desire to learn.

Education promotes social status. It led to the structure of civil services in the Taiwan government and the university entrance examination system in education. Through education, one is able to achieve a higher role in society. The higher the degree of education achieved, the higher the status and respect projected. As a result, to motivate Taiwanese employees it is important to acknowledge their educational background and achievement regardless of the age or the position of the person, as a sign of respect. In Taiwan, one’s level of education will always be asked at a job interview, regardless of the job experience. Every colleague is well aware of each other’s educational accomplishments, and which position they occupy in the ranking system among their peers. Though one’s performance and merit weighs more in the modern working environment in Taiwan, education is still seen as the benchmark for determining the success of an individual.

Confucius, held in the highest regard as a teacher, is famous for his many wise sayings, collected in the Analects. These sayings help us learn about human behavior, while offering guidance for living a moral life that remains relevant for us today. His often-quoted golden rule is: “Do not unto others that which you do not wish for yourself.” Some other examples of his wise sayings I like very much are:

- “I hear but, I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.”
- “When you enjoy what you do, you'll never work another day in your life.”
- “Silence is a friend who will not betray.”

In honoring Confucius’ life and contributions, his birthday has been celebrated as Teacher’s Day on September 28th since 1968 in Taiwan. As Confucianism is not a religion but a moral philosophy and ethical code, Confucian temples in Taiwan are not places for worship, but rather for paying tremendous respect to Confucius. Locals visit Confucius temples hoping to acquire wisdom; students come with their identification cards and leave them on the altar as a prayer to pass school examinations; on Teacher’s Day, formal celebrations and ceremonies are held at the Confucius temples to pay respect to the Sage.

The first Confucius temple in Taiwan was constructed in Tainan (台南, southwest Taiwan) more than three hundred years ago. It was the place for education and nowadays, its graceful, ancient looking architecture has become a famous tourist attraction in the city.

In conclusion, Confucianism is a complex system that taught the importance of moral and ethical relationships between all people. It had tremendous influence on the culture and history of the Taiwanese and has impacted them in their daily behavior and business dealings. Anyone seeking to work in Taiwan would find it vital to understand Confucian principles and values.
The Impact of Confucianism on Interpersonal Relationships and Communication Patterns in East Asia

JUNE OCK YUM

Introduction

New communication technology has removed many of the physical barriers against communication between the East and the West, but there remain philosophical and cultural barriers, which are not well understood. The increased opportunity for interaction between different cultural groups, however, has sensitized some scholars to the need to study Eastern perspectives on communication.

Most cross-cultural studies of communication simply describe foreign communication patterns and then compare them to those of North America, rarely going beneath the surface to explore the source of such differences. This paper goes beyond these limitations and explores the philosophical roots of the communication patterns in East Asian countries, before comparing them to those of North America. The assumption here is that communication is a basic social process and that, as such, it is influenced by the philosophical foundations and value systems of the society in which it is found.

There is always a danger in generalizing certain cultural patterns to large geographical areas. Even though we often refer to "Eastern" or "Asian" perspectives, there are many patterns, sometimes contradictory, within the region. For instance, the popular notion that Asians are more spiritual than Westerners might apply to India but not to China, Korea, or Japan. Nakamura (1964) has maintained that the Chinese and the Japanese are much more nonmetaphysical than Westerners. For this reason, this paper is limited to the East Asian countries of China, Korea, and Japan, those that have been most influenced by Confucian philosophical principles. Other countries that have been influenced by Confucianism are expected to have similar characteristics. For instance, Vietnam, the only country in Southeast Asia to have been influenced more by China than India, also exhibits the strong emphasis on social relationships and devotion to the hierarchical family relations that are the essence of Confucian doctrines (Luce & Summer, 1969).

Social Relationships Versus Individualism

If one has to select the main difference between East Asian and North American perspectives on communication, it would be the East Asian emphasis on social relationships as opposed to the North American emphasis on individualism. According to Hofstede (1980), individualism-collectivism is one of the main dimensions that differentiate cultures. He defined individualism as the emotional independence of individual persons from groups, organizations, or other collectivities. Parsons, Shils, and Olds (1951) have suggested that self-orientation versus collectivity orientation is one of the five basic pattern variables that determine human action.

Self-orientation occurs when a person gives "priority in a given situation to his own private interests, independently of their bearings on the interests or values of a given collectivity" (Parsons, Shils, & Olds, 1951, p. 81), as opposed to taking directly into account the values and interests of the collective before acting.

The individualism-collectivism dichotomy, however, is not identical to the difference between the East Asian emphasis on social relationships and North American emphasis on individualism. In East Asia, the emphasis is on proper social relationships and their maintenance rather than any abstract concern for a general collective body. In a sense, it is a collectivism only among those bound by social net-
works. For example, a recent study on the Chinese value system found that the Confucian value of reciprocity and proper relationships was not correlated with Hofstede’s individualism-collectivism dimension (Chinese Culture Connection, 1987). Hui and Triandis (1986) have recommended that collectivism be treated in two different ways: (1) as a concern for a certain subset of people and (2) as a concern for a generalized collectivity of people.

In the 1830s, the French social philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville coined the term individualism to describe the most notable characteristic of American people. Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton (1985, pp. vii, 142) agree that individualism lies at the very core of American culture, contending that “individualism... has marched inexorably through our history” and that “we believe in the dignity, indeed the sacredness, of the individual. Anything that would violate our right to think for ourselves, judge for ourselves, make our own decision, live our lives as we see fit, is not only morally wrong, it is sacrilegious.” According to Varenne (1977), there is but one system of principles regulating interpersonal relationships in America and that is individualism.

Even though many Americans feel they must get involved, they are also committed to individualism, including the desire to cut free from the past and define one’s own self. Thus, the primary mode of American involvement is choosing organizations that one can voluntarily join or voluntarily withdraw from. Varenne (1977, p. 53) said that Americans perceive social structure “not as a system made up of different groups considered to be in a symbiotic relationship, but rather of different individuals who come together to do something.”

Considering this cultural orientation, it is not surprising that the dominant paradigm of communication is an individualistic one. Each communicator is perceived to be a separate individual engaging in diverse communicative activities to maximize his or her own self-interest.

In contrast, the most notable characteristic in East Asia is the emphasis on social relationships. Hall and Beardsley (1965) have maintained that, compared to East Asian countries, North America is in the Stone Age when it comes to social relations. This East Asian preoccupation with social relationships stems from the doctrines of Confucianism.

Confucianism

In the philosophical and cultural history of East Asia, Confucianism has endured as the basic social and political value system for over 1,000 years. One reason (and indication) that Confucianism has had such a profound impact is that it was adopted as the official philosophy of the Yi dynasty for 500 years in Korea, of the Tokugawa shogunate in Japan for 250 years, and of many dynasties in China.

Confucianism was institutionalized and propagated both through the formal curricula of the educational system and through the selection process of government officials. Confucian classics were required textbooks in the school systems throughout the history of China, Korea, and Japan before modern educational curricula were implemented. Government officials used to be selected through national exams that mostly examined the knowledge and the level of understanding of Confucian philosophy.

Another reason why Confucianism has exerted a much stronger impact than the other religious, philosophical systems of East Asia (such as Buddhism and Taoism) is that it is a pragmatic and present-oriented philosophy. When a student named Tsu-lu asked Confucius about serving spirits, Confucius said, “If one cannot yet serve men, how can he serve the spirits?” Asked about death, Confucius replied, “If you do not understand life, how can you understand death?” (McNaughton, 1974, p. 145). Max Weber commented, “Confucianism is extremely rationalistic since it is bereft of any form of metaphysics and in the sense that it lacks traces of nearly any religious basis... At the same time, it is more realistic than any other system in the sense that it lacks and excludes all measures which are not utilitarian” (quoted by Nakamura, 1964, p. 16).

Confucianism is a philosophy of human nature that considers proper human relationships as the basis of society. In studying human nature and motivation, Confucianism sets forth four principles from which right conduct arises: *jen* (humanism),
The cardinal principle, jen (humanism), almost defies translation since it sums up the core of Confucianism. Fundamentally it means warm human feelings between people. Jen is like a seed from which spring all the qualities that make up the ideal man. In addition, jen refers to the possession of all these qualities to a high degree. The actual practice or embodiment of jen in our daily lives is closely related to the concept of reciprocity. Confucius said that practicing jen is not to do so another man what you yourself don’t want. In his own words: “If there’s something that you don’t like in the person to your right, don’t pass it on to the person on your left. If there’s something you don’t like in the person to your left, don’t pass it on to the person on your right.” (McNaughton, 1974, p. 29).

It is suggested that Confucius himself once picked out reciprocity (shu) as the core of his thought. Confucius said, “There has never been a case where a man who did not understand reciprocity was able to communicate to others whatever treasures he might have had stored in himself” (McNaughton, 1974, p. 28). Therefore, practicing jen implies the practice of shu, in which means to know how it would feel to be the other person, to become like-minded, and to be able to empathize with others.

The second principle of Confucianism is i (faithfulness), li (propriety), and chih (wisdom or liberal education).

forms) is its outward form. As an objective criterion of social decorum, li was perceived as the fundamental regulatory etiquette of human behavior. Mencius suggested that li originated from deference to others and reservation of oneself. Confucius said that li follows from jen, that is, from being considerate to others. Only when people overcome themselves and so return to propriety can they reach humanness. On the other hand, propriety without humanness was perceived to be empty and useless.

The Impact of Confucianism on Interpersonal Relationship Patterns

At least three of the four principles of Confucianism deal directly with social relationships. Under such a strong influence, East Asian countries have developed interpersonal relationship patterns that are quite different from the individualistic pattern of North America. Table 1 illustrates these five differences.

Particularistic Versus Universalistic Relationships

Human relationships under Confucianism are not universalistic but particularistic. As we described earlier, the warm human feelings of jen are exercised according to one’s relationship with another person. Ethics in Confucian thought, therefore, are based on relationships and situations rather than on some absolute and abstract good. Instead of applying the same rule to everybody with whom they interact, East Asians differentially grade and regulate relationships according to the level of intimacy, the status of the persons involved, and the particular context. The East Asian countries have developed elaborate social interaction patterns for those whose social position and relationship to oneself is known, but there are few universal patterns that can be applied to someone who is not known.

From a North American point of view, applying different rules to different people and situations may seem to violate the sacred code of fairness and equality that accompanies the individualistic values. In North America, human relationships are not particularized. Rather, one is supposed to treat
Table 1 Comparison Between the North American and the East Asian Orientations to Interpersonal Relationship Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>East Asian Orientations</th>
<th>North American Orientations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Particularistic</td>
<td>Universalistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Particular rules and interaction patterns are applied depending upon the relationship and context</td>
<td>General and objective rules are applied across diverse relationships and context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Long-term and asymmetrical reciprocity</td>
<td>Short-term and symmetrical reciprocity or contractual reciprocity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sharp distinction between in-group and out-group members</td>
<td>In-group and out-group distinction is not as sharp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Informal intermediaries</td>
<td>Contractual intermediaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personally known intermediaries</td>
<td>Professional intermediaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently utilized for diverse relationships</td>
<td>Utilized only for specific purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Personal and public relationships often overlap</td>
<td>Personal and public relationships are often separate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

each person as an integral individual and apply general and objective rules. For instance, it is quite common in America for people to say “Hi” or “Good morning” to anybody they encounter during their morning walk, or to strike up a conversation with another person waiting in line. If you said “Hello” or “Good morning” to a stranger in Korea, you would be looked upon as a rather odd person.

The East Asian approach suggests that it is more humanitarian to consider the particular context and the persons involved in understanding the action and behavior rather than evaluate them according to generalized rules which to a certain extent are impersonal.

Long-Term Asymmetrical Reciprocity Versus Short-Term Symmetrical or Contractual Reciprocity

Reciprocity as an embodiment of jen is the core concept in Confucianism, just as individualism is the core concept of the North American culture. While people may voluntarily join together for specific purposes in North America, each individual remains equal and independent; thus people join or drop out of clubs without any serious group sanctions. Commitments and obligations are often perceived as threats to one’s autonomy or freedom of action. Relations are symmetrical-obligatory — that is, as nearly “paid off” as possible at any given moment — or else contractual — the obligation is to an institution or to a professional with whom one has established some contractual base (Condon & Yousef, 1975).

In contrast, Confucian philosophy views relationships as complementary or asymmetrical and reciprocally obligatory. In a sense, a person is forever indebted to others, who in turn are constrained by other debts. Dependence is not looked down upon. Rather, dependency is accepted as a necessary part of human relationships. Under this system of reciprocity, the individual does not calculate what he or she gives and receives. To calculate would be to think about immediate personal profits, which is the opposite of the principle of mutual faithfulness, t. It is somewhat unusual in Korea, for example, for a group of friends, colleagues, or superior and subordinates to go “Dutch” and split the bill for dinner or drinks. Rather, each person takes turns and pays for the whole group. In North America, people generally insist on “paying their own way.” The practice of basing relationships on complementary obligations creates warm, lasting human relationships but also the necessity to accept the obligations accompanying such relationships.

June Ock Yum/The Impact of Confucianism in East Asia 81
In-group/Out-group Distinction
North American culture does not distinguish as strongly between in-group members and out-group members as East Asian countries do. Allegiance to a group and mobility among groups are purely voluntary, so that the longevity of membership is and loyalty to a particular group are both limited.

Mutual dependence as prescribed by the Confucian principle of, however, requires that one be affiliated and identify with relatively small and tightly knit groups of people over long periods of time. These long-term relationships work because each group member expects the others to reciprocate and also because group members believe that sooner or later they will have to depend on the others. People immersed in this kind of network make clear distinctions between in-group and out-group members. For example, linguistic codes for in-group members are often different from those for out-group members. What is inside the group and what is outside it have drastically different meanings.

Informal Intermediaries Versus Contractual Intermediaries
Because the distinctions between in-group and out-group members are so strict, it is imperative to have an intermediary to help one initiate a new relationship in East Asia. Confucian emphasis on propriety (li) also dictates that one has to follow proper rituals in establishing a new relationship, and an intermediary is part of such rituals. The intermediary has an in-group relationship with both parties and so can connect them. One strategy is for the intermediary to bring up an existing relationship that links the two parties, for example, explaining that "you are both graduates of so-and-so college" or "you are both from province A." Alternatively, the intermediary can use his or her own connections with them to create an indirect sense of in-groupness, for example, explaining that one is "my junior from high school" and the other "works in the same department as I do."

Intermediaries in the United States, however, are mostly professional or contractual in nature; lawyers, negotiators, marriage counselors, and the like. The intermediary is an objective third person who does not have any knowledge of the parties' characteristics other than those directly related to the issue at hand. Also, the intermediary deals with each party as a separate, independent individual. Using personal connections to attain a desired goal does occur in the United States, but such a practice may be frowned on as nepotism and may also be perceived as giving up one's own individual freedom.

Overlap of Personal and Public Relationships
The Confucian concept of li leads to a strong distaste for a purely business transaction, carried out on a calculated and contractual basis. Therefore, in East Asian countries there is a tendency to mix personal with public relationships. Even though there is the obvious purpose of a meeting is for business, both parties feel more comfortable if the transaction occurs on a more personal, human level. According to the principles of social reciprocity, there are several steps to follow if you want to develop an effective business relationship in Korea (Lee, 1983): (1) have frequent contacts over a relatively lengthy period of time, (2) establish a personal and human relationship, (3) if possible, create some common experiences such as sports, drinking, or travel, (4) foster mutual understanding in terms of personality, personal situations, and the like, and (5) develop a certain level of trust and a favorable attitude. The goal is to diminish the clear distinction between a personal relationship and a public relationship. It is implied that if one develops a warm personal relationship, a good public relationship will follow, because it is based on trust and mutual reciprocity. Such qualities are expected to endure rather than be limited to the business deal of the moment.

In the United States, there is a rather sharp dichotomy between private and public life. Since the primary task of the individual is to achieve a high level of autonomous self-reliance, there is an effort to separate the two lives as must as possible. Since the notion of "organizational man" is contradictory to the self-reliant individual, there is a certain level
Table 2: Comparison Between the North American and the East Asian Orientations to Communication Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>East Asian Orientations</th>
<th>North American Orientations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Process orientation</td>
<td>Outcome orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication is perceived as a process of infinite interpretation</td>
<td>Communication is perceived as the transference of messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Differentiated linguistic codes</td>
<td>Less differentiated linguistic codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different linguistic codes are used depending upon persons involved and situations</td>
<td>Linguistic codes are not as extensively differentiated as East Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Indirect communication emphasis</td>
<td>Direct communication emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The use of indirect communication is prevalent and accepted as normative</td>
<td>Direct communication is a norm despite the extensive use of indirect communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Receiver centered</td>
<td>Sender centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning is in the interpretation</td>
<td>Meaning is in the messages created by the sender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis is on listening, sensitivity, and removal of preconception</td>
<td>Emphasis is on how to formulate the best messages, how to improve source credibility, and how to improve delivery skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

of anxiety about becoming an organizational man (Bellah et al., 1985). Some also perceive private life as a haven from the pressure of individualistic, competitive public life, and as such it must be protected.

The Impact of Confucianism on Communication Patterns

Confucianism’s primary concern with social relationships has strongly influenced communication patterns in East Asia. In general, it has strengthened patterns that help to build and maintain proper human relationships. Table 2 compares East Asia and North America in terms of communication patterns.

Process-Versus Outcome-Oriented Communication

Since the main function of communication under Confucian philosophy is to initiate, develop, and maintain social relationships, there is a strong emphasis on the kind of communication that promotes such relationships. For instance, it is very important in East Asia to engage in small talk before initiating business and to communicate personalized information, especially information that would help place each person in the proper context. Communication is perceived to be an infinite interpretive process (Cheng, 1987), which cannot be compartmentalized into sender, message, channel, and receiver. It presumes that each partner is engaged in an ongoing process and that the relationship is in flux.

In contrast, when the main function of communication is to actualize autonomy and self-fulfillment, as in North America, the outcome of the communication is more important than the process. With short-term, discontinuous relationships, communication is perceived to be an action that is terminated after a certain duration and then replaced by a new communication. Tangible outcomes in terms of friends gained, opponents defeated, and self-fulfillment achieved become the primary function of communication.

Differentiated Versus Less Differentiated Linguistic Codes

East Asian languages are very complex and are differentiated according to social status, the degree of intimacy, age, sex, and the level of formality. There
are also extensive and elaborate honorific linguistic systems in East Asian languages (Brown & Levinson, 1978; Ogino, Misono, & Fukushima, 1985). These differentiations are manifested not only in referential terms but also in verbs, pronouns, and nouns. They result from Confucian ethical rules that place the highest value on proper human relationships (i) and on propriety (ii). McBrian (1978) has argued that language forms an integral component of social stratification systems, and the hierarchical Confucian society is well represented by the highly stratified linguistic codes in Korea.

Martin (1964) has proposed that one of the main differences between English, Japanese, and Korean is the levels of speech. In both Korean and Japanese, there are two axes of distinction: the axis of address and the axis of reference. The axis of address is divided into plain, polite, and honorific while the axis of reference is divided into humble and neutral (Martin, 1964). An honorific form is used to refer to the receiver’s action, while a humble form is used to refer to the sender’s action - the reverse would not be appropriate. The most deferential form of speech combines the honorific address form for receiver and the humble form of self-reference.

The English language also employs different codes depending upon intimacy and status difference between the speaker and listener. In general, however, English forms of address are reasonably well described by a single binary contrast: first name (FN) versus title plus last name (TLN) (Brown & Ford, 1964). Certain European languages also contrast the familiar and formal forms, such as tu and vous in French. The use of FN or TLN can either be reciprocal (both sides use the same form of address) or nonreciprocal (one side uses FN and the other side uses TLN). Status and intimacy also play a role in greetings. For example, “Hi” is more common to intimates and to subordinates while “Good morning” is for distant acquaintances and superiors (Brown & Ford, 1964). In contrast, Ogino, Misono, and Fukushima (1985), working in Japan, found 210 different word forms, through 8 address situations, which can be put into 20 different categories. Moreover, in modern American English practice, the distance between the mutual FN and mutual TLN represents only a very small increment of intimacy, sometimes as small as five minutes of conversation. In East Asian communication situations, the distance between very honorific languages and very informal ones is quite large and more often than not cannot be altered even after a long acquaintance.

In English, the speech level is defined mainly by address forms, while in Korean or Japanese, pronouns, verbs, and nouns all have different levels. Thus, in English “to eat” is “to eat” regardless of the person addressed. In the Korean language, however, there are three different ways of saying “to eat”: muk-da (plain), du-shin-da (polite), and chapsoo-shin-da (honorific). Different levels of a verb are often accompanied by different levels of a noun. Rice may be bap (plain), shik-sa (polite), or jinji (honorific).

In English, the pronoun “you” is used to refer alike to the old and young, to the president of the country, and to the child next door. In East Asian languages, there are different words for “you” depending upon the level of politeness and upon the relationship. There is also the compulsory or preferential use of a term of address instead of the pronoun, as when one says: jeh sh WangShin shen de shu ma? (Literally, “Is this Mr. Wang’s book?”) instead of “Is this your book?” (Chao, 1956, p. 218). Actual role terms, such as professor, aunt, student, and so forth, are used in place of the pronoun “you” even in two-partner communication because they clarify and accentuate the relationships between the two communicators better than the simple second person reference. Since Confucianism dictates that one should observe the proprieties prescribed by a social relationship, the generalized “you” does not seem to be appropriate in most communication situations in East Asian countries.

This differentiation of linguistic codes in East Asian cultures bears out the familiar psycholinguistic principle that for language communities the degree of lexical differentiation of a referent field increases with the importance of that field to the community (Brown & Ford, 1964). The importance of social relationships in Confucian societies has therefore promoted the differentiation of linguistic codes to accommodate highly differentiated relationships.
Emphasis on Indirect Communication Versus Emphasis on Direct Communication

Most cultures have both direct and indirect modes of communication. Metaphor, insinuations, innuendos, hints, and irony are only a few examples of the kinds of indirect communication that can be found in most linguistic communities. According to Searle (1969), indirect speech acts occur when the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he or she actually says by referring to some mutually shared background information and by relying on the hearer's powers of rationality and inference. Brown and Levinson (1978) have suggested that indirect speech acts are universal because they perform a basic service in strategies of politeness.

Even though the indirect mode of communication seems to be universal, however, the degree to which it is elaborated varies from culture to culture. For instance, the Malagasy speech community values an indirect style (Keenan, 1974), while certain Sabra culture prefers a straight-talking (dagri) style (Katriel, 1986). Rosaldo (1973) maintained that the Euro-American association of direct talk with a scientific and democratic attitude may not hold true in different cultural contexts. In Ilongot society, for example, direct talk is perceived as authoritarian and exclusionary while indirect language is perceived as accommodating and sensitive to individual wishes.

Brown and Levinson (1978) have suggested that politeness phenomena in language (indirectness is just one of them) derive from the notion of "face," the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself or herself. According to Katriel (1986), indirect speech acts are the result of predominant concern for the other person's face. The Confucian legacy of consideration for others and concern for proper human relationships has led to the development of communication patterns that preserve one another's face. Indirect communication helps to prevent the embarrassment of rejection by the other person or disagreement among partners, leaving the relationship and each other's face intact. Lebra (1976) suggested that "defending face" is one of the main factors influencing Japanese behavior. She listed a number of concrete mechanisms for defending face, such as mediated communication (asking someone else to transmit the message), refracted communication (talking to a third person in the presence of the hearer), and acting as a delegate (conveying one's message as being from someone else), which are all indirect forms of communication.

The use of the indirect mode of communication in East Asia is pervasive and often deliberate. In comparing Japanese and American organizations, it has been noted that American employees strive to communicate with each other in a clear, precise, and explicit manner, while Japanese often deliberately communicate in a vague and indirect manner (Hirokawa, 1987; Pascale & Athos, 1981). The extensive nature of indirect communication is exemplified by the fact that there are sixteen evasive "maneuvers" that can be employed by the Japanese to avoid saying no (Imai, 1991).

It has also been suggested that there is a significant difference in the level of indirectness between North American and East Asian communication patterns. An American might say "The door is open" as an indirect way of asking the hearer to shut the door, while in Japan, instead of saying "The door is open," one often says "It is somewhat cold today." This is even more indirect, because no words refer to the door (Okabe, 1987). Operating at a still higher level of indirection, one Japanese wife communicated to her husband her discord with her mother-in-law by slight irregularities in her flower arrangements (Lebra, 1976).

One of Grice's maxims for cooperative conversation is "manner," which suggests that the speaker should avoid obscurity of expression and ambiguity (Grice, 1973). This direct communication is a norm in North America, despite the extensive use of indirect communication. Grice's principle would not be accepted as a norm, however, in East Asia. Okabe (1987) has shown that in Japan, the traditional rule of communication, which prescribes not to demand, reject, assert yourself, or criticize the listener straightforwardly, is a much more dominant principle than Grice's maxim of manner.

Reischauer (1977, p. 124, concluded that "the Japanese have a genuine mistrust of verbal skills, thinking that these tend to show superficiality..."
in contrast to inner, less articulate feelings that are communicated by innuendo or by nonverbal means.” Thus, even though both North American and East Asian communication communities employ indirect communication, its use is much more prevalent and accepted as normative in the former than the latter.

**Receiver Versus Sender Centeredness**

North American communication very often centers on the sender, and until recently the linear, one-way model from sender to receiver was the prevailing model of communication. Much emphasis has been placed on how senders can formulate better messages, improve source credibility, polish their delivery skills, and so forth. In contrast, the emphasis in East Asia has always been on listening and interpretation.

Cheng (1987) has identified infinite interpretation as one of the main principles of Chinese communication. The process assumes that the emphasis is on the receiver and listening rather than the sender or speech making. According to Lebra (1976, p. 123), “anticipatory communication” is common in Japan, in which, instead of the speaker’s having to tell or ask for what he or she wants specifically, others guess and accommodate his or her needs, sparing him or her embarrassment in case the verbally expressed request cannot be met. In such cases, the burden of communication falls not on the message sender but on the message receiver. A person who “hears one and understands ten” is regarded as an intelligent communicator. To catch on quickly and to adjust oneself to another’s position before his or her position is clearly revealed is regarded as an important communication skill. One of the common puzzles expressed by foreign students from East Asia is why they are constantly being asked what they want when they are visiting in American homes. In their own countries, the host or hostess is supposed to know what is needed and serve accordingly. The difference occurs because in North America it is important to provide individual freedom of choice, in East Asia, it is important to practice anticipatory communication and to accommodate accordingly.

With the emphasis on indirect communication, the receiver’s sensitivity and ability to capture the under-the-surface meaning and to understand implicit meaning becomes critical. In North America, an effort has been made to improve the effectiveness of senders through such formal training as debate and public speech, whereas in East Asia, the effort has been on improving the receiver’s sensitivity. The highest sensitivity is reached when one empties the mind of one’s preconceptions and makes it as clear as a mirror (Yuki, 1984).

Recently, there has been increased interest in listening in the United States as well. Both communication scholars and practitioners recognize that listening is not only necessary from the instrumental aspect of communication (comprehension) but, more importantly, for the affective aspect (satisfaction of being listened to).

**Discussion**

This paper compared the East Asian emphasis on social relationships with the North American emphasis on individualism. These two emphases produce very different patterns of interpersonal relationships and communication. The conclusions drawn in this paper are not absolute, however. Each culture contains both orientations to some degree. It is simply more probable that East Asians would exhibit certain patterns of communication, such as indirect communication, more often than North Americans, and vice versa.

The North American preoccupation with individualism and related concepts, such as equality, fairness, and justice, and its far-reaching influences on the whole fiber of society are well documented. On the other hand, the importance of social relationships as a key to the East Asian countries has been recognized only recently. For instance, investigations of Japanese management styles have found that one of the fundamental differences between Japanese and American management is the personalized, interdependent relationships among employees and between managers and employees in Japan. These human relationships are related to loyalty and high productivity. It is not uncommon to explain such relationships away as merely a result
of other organizational practices, such as lifelong employment. If one looks under the surface, how-

However, one realizes that it is derived from a thousand-

year-old Confucian legacy, and that similar human

relationship patterns are found outside of large or-

ganizations. Consequently, attempts to transplant

such a management style to North America with its

philosophical and cultural orientation of individual-

ism cannot be entirely satisfactory. The culture it-

self would have to be modified first.

There has been increasing concern in North

America about the pursuit of individualism at the

expense of commitment to larger entities such as

the community, civic groups, and other organiza-

tions. It has been suggested that modern individu-

alism has progressed to such an extent that most

Americans are trapped by the language of individu-

alism itself and have lost the ability to articulate

their own need to get involved (Bellah et al., 1985).

Although individualism has its own strength as a

value, individualism that is not accompanied by

commitments to large entities eventually forces

people into a state of isolation, where life itself be-

comes meaningless.

If human beings are fundamentally social ani-

mals, it is necessary to balance the cultural belief

system of individualism with the need to get in-

volved with others. Americans have joined volun-

tary associations and civic organizations more

than any other citizens of the industrialized world.

However, such recent phenomena as the "me" gen-

eration and young stockbrokers who pursue only

personal gain at the expense of their own organiza-

tions or the society as a whole can be perceived

as pathological symptoms of individualism driven

to its extreme. Bellah et al. (1985, p. 284) have

maintained that "social ecology is damaged not

only by war, genocide, and political repression. It

is also damaged by the destruction of the subtle-

ties that bind human beings to one another, leav-

ing them frightened and alone." They strongly

argue that we need to restore social ecology by

making people aware of our intricate connected-

ness and interdependence.

The emphasis of Confucianism on social rela-

tionships is conducive to cooperation, warm re-

laxed human relations, consideration of others,

and group harmony, but it has costs as well. Under

such social constraints, individual initiative and in-

novation are slow to appear, and some individuals

feel that their individuality is being suffocated. Be-