VALUE CHANGE IN JAPAN AND (WEST-)GERMANY

Helmut KLAGES

I.

I want to start by discussing something which seems to be a hidden or basic assumption in much of the work that has been done with respect to the analysis of Japanese values. This can be most easily demonstrated by turning to Ronald Inglehart's treatment of the subject (Inglehart 1990: 144). According to Inglehart, Japan constitutes a striking contrast to the twenty so-called "Western societies" he has studied. While these twenty societies march, in his words, from "materialism" to "post-materialism," Japan seems to march on another path as it keeps so-called pre-materialistic values and combines them with post-materialistic ones.

Indeed, such a basic pattern of interpretation can be found also among those analysts who differ from Inglehart concerning the formula characterizing the general direction of value change on the international stage. Even some of those analysts who quarrel with Inglehart are inclined to regard Japan as a special case because of the unusual perseverance and stability of traditional values. This pattern of interpretation can be observed even among Japanese scholars. I see it when Japanese values are described in terms of a tension between "westernization" and traditional Japanese concepts. By calling the process of value change in Japan "westernization," a solitary Japanese position is hypothesized. Japan is seen as a nation, which – partly at least – sticks to more or less stable traditions, where other nations abandon them and follow a path of modernization with a homogenous set of different cultural features.

I think, the comparison of value change in Japan and Germany or, more exactly stated, West-Germany, is instrumental for overcoming such a dichotomization. My thesis is that "traditional" and "modern" values also coexist in Germany, and that accordingly "value change" in this country cannot simply be regarded as a process which typically leads to various forms of combinations or "syntheses" of more traditional and more modern values.

I want to add that I believe that this more complex kind of development is not only typical for Japan and Germany but for several other countries as well. I won't dwell upon this point, however, but will concentrate on Germany, in order to provide some coherent empirical evidence. I will

proceed in a two-step-manner, discerning between a view that aims at elaborating value-differences between the two countries, and a contrasting view that aims at making the existing correspondences visible.

If we look first for sources that aim at emphasizing value-differences between Germany and Japan, we may profit greatly from the scholarly work of Gisela Trommsdorff, who has summarized the results of various empirical studies (Trommsdorff 1983).

When I rush through Prof. Trommsdorff's pages I find, for instance, the following impressive differences:

– While 36% of Japanese adolescents thought in 1976 that seniority should be the basis for promotion, the respective figure was only 14% in Germany. Obviously at that time the traditional value of seniority had a stronger position in Japan;
– while discipline was favored as an educational goal by 66% of the Japanese respondents in 1977, the respective figure again was only 14% in Germany the same year. Duty orientations were apparently very much stronger in Japan at this time than in Germany;
– while in 1974 the majority of the Japanese women believed that the males should work and females stay at home, 59% of the German respondents rejected this view. Egalitarian values concerning the status of women were obviously weaker in Japan at that time;
– while in the same year 35% of the Japanese respondents regarded getting rich as an important goal in life, only 9% of the Germans held this view. One could guess that the Japanese were more materialistic at that time;
– in 1974 only 41% of the Japanese, but 61% of the Germans were in favor of the statement "to live as I like." Without any doubt individualistic values of self-actualization had a weaker position in Japan at this time.

II.

To sum up such figures, which certainly are quite impressive, seem to strengthen the view that Japan and Germany are far apart from one another because of a much more lasting predominance of traditional values in Japan.

I want to turn now to the second step of my analysis, however, by focusing on the similarities between Japanese and German values. I wish to mention that Prof. Suzuki Tatsuzō gave me decisive hints as to the possibility of such a second step when I met him last year. I received

similar suggestions when I was able to read a comparative interpretation by Hayashi (1992).

This second step has two methodological implications. First, it seems to be closely linked with a transgression from the static to the dynamic analysis, or, more concretely stated, to the time series-analysis of value-developments. And second, the effects that are tied to this transgression become much more visible if one concentrates upon the value-develop-ments that have taken place within the younger part of the population.

For Japan the most ideal instrument for performing the transgression to the dynamic analysis, is of course the *Study of the Japanese National Char-acter* (Tōkei Sūri Kenkyūjo Kokuminsei Chōsa Iinkai 1992). If we look at the eight surveys done up to now, we can quite easily identify a strong mainstream of value change which runs from "traditional" orientations (including an emphasis on duty and hierarchy) towards "modern" orien-tations, which definitely contain some elements of an individualistic type of self-actualization, as well as a vaguely recognizable tendency towards the equalization of the sexes.

I think that it is not necessary to name in this context all the various indicators that are relevant. If I name some of them, it is for better illustra-tion: Among the attitudes toward life the item "just live a life that suits your own tastes" was preferred by 21% of the respondents in 1953, but by 41% in 1988. The same tendency holds true for the equally individu-alistic – and at the same time hedonistic – item "live each day as it comes, cheerfully and without worrying", which was preferred by 11% in 1953, but again by 23% in 1988. In 1953 only 27% of the women wanted to be a women if born again. In 1988 this figure had risen up to 59%, however.

Of course there cannot be the slightest doubt that the development of values in Japan is very definitely characterized by the fact that those items, which reflect the trend from duty orientation and acceptance of hierarchy toward self-actualization and equality of the sexes, coexist with several other items that indicate stable traditional values that are found mainly in the field of group- or collective-orientations.

Let me switch, however, at this point to the value-development in Ger-many by showing a figure, that represents the only time series on values going back to the beginning of the fifties that we have, as we unfortunately lack an equivalent to the *Study of the Japanese National Character*:
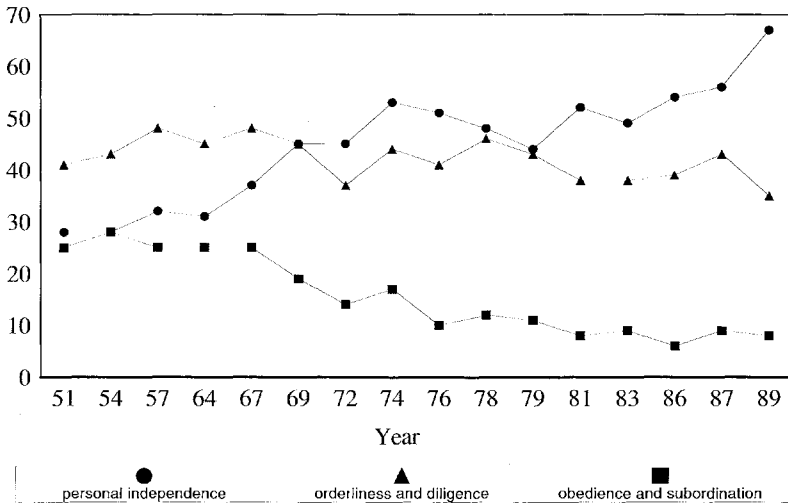
Figure 1: **Changes in preferential educational values in West Germany 1951–1989**
Source: EMNID, Bielefeld

The figure displays the changes that took place with respect to the pref-
erence of the (West-)German population for three groups of educational
values:

– personal independence (or autonomy);
– obedience and subordination;
– orderliness and diligence.

If one concentrates on the two groups of items which show the most sig-
nificant change, one can characterize the main tendency of the value
change in Germany by using the same formula we have used for charac-
terizing the mainstream of the value change in Japan, that is to say by
speaking about a value change running from duty- and hierarchy-orien-
tations toward self-actualization. The tendency toward the equalization
of the sexes could easily be added on the basis of other data.

Interestingly enough we have a relative stability, however, within the
third segment concerning orderliness and diligence, that represents be-
yond any doubt a core segment of traditional German values.

If we compare this result with the data in the *Study of the Japanese
National Character* we can easily find a direct connection between both
nations, for "diligence" has been a stable core of the self-image of the
Japanese people ever since 1953.

202

I think, however, that this is not the decisive point. This decisive point is, in my opinion, of a much more general nature. It seems to me that it has to be seen in the very fact that in both nations a value segment representing traditional orientational characteristics coexists with other value segments that carry a tendency toward value change that can be characterized by using the same formula.

If one looks a little bit closer at the figure, one's attention may be attracted by the irregularities which the lines are displaying. Particularly eye-catching is of course the temporary downward movement of the value segment "personal independence (or autonomy)" during the second half of the seventies. Within this time, many conservative-minded observers hoped for a resurgence of the "good old German values." Since then the trend of value change has speeded up again, however, and the farewell adresses for the value change have come to an end. What I want to accentuate at this moment is the obvious parallel to this German episode in Japan, where the so-called "U-turn" (Hayashi 1987) which became visible during the same time period, also proved to have been only a temporary phenomenon. I think that this parallel, which possibly might be a worthwhile object of further investigation, is a striking indicator of cross-national similarities in the movement of value change.

If we take a closer second look at the development over time of the value segment "orderliness and diligence," we notice that it displays a slight long-term downward trend. Given this trend I wouldn't reject a modification of my former statement that this value segment represents a "stable" piece of German tradition, should such a modification be requested. Indeed it will be difficult to discover in Germany any piece of the value structure that hasn't been affected by the value dynamics, and that hasn't passed through qualitative modifications at the very least. I would like to ask, however, if the situation in Japan is really different in this respect.

I would like to take this question to a segment of the Japanese value structure which was very often labelled the center of the traditional Japanese value system, namely group solidarity.

I am aware that I am moving on shaky ground when I, as a stranger to Japan, try to deal with this subject. Let me therefore tell you only my personal impression from looking through the data of the *Study of the Japanese National Character*, as well as through the results of the not yet published survey of the German Institute for Japanese Studies.

My impression is that "group solidarity" in Japan is quite certainly stable in quantitative terms, but that its qualitative nature is changing. If I understand Nakane's book on the Japanese society (1970) correctly, her main thesis was that Japanese group solidarity originated in the Japanese family and expanded later to higher levels of the social and political sys-

203

tem, namely the state and the firm. In view of the available data, my personal impression would be that this historical development is about to be slowly reversed.

Turning to the empirical evidence we find first at least some data which indicate a decline in emotional adherence to the state. Of course I think in this connection of the question concerning the visit of the Prime Minister to the Ise Shrine, as well as of question 7.4 in the *Study of the Japanese National Character*, refering to the correlation between individual happiness and the improvement of Japan.

Secondly we find an abundance of data that indicate the emergence of tension between small group- and large group-(or firm-)solidarity in Japanese firms, and that individuals experience to a greater degree inner conflicts between these two types or levels of solidarity. The data also indicate, in my opinion, that many individuals are to a greater degree inclined to opt in such cases for the small group inside and outside the firm (that is to say, for the family).

Since the literature has not dealt much with this phenomenon until now, I want to name some of the indicators that I have in mind. In the *Study of the Japanese National Character* I think mainly of the questions that indicate a gradual trend toward giving family ties a priority over firm-bound rational role requirements in critical situations. My main source in this context is, however, the not yet published survey of the German Institute for Japanese Studies, which contains a broad range of relevant information. According to this survey

- the majority of the respondents would prefer to earn more money annually, even if the economic situation of the company worsened;
- the majority of the respondents would be ready to leave the firm in order to get promoted or to receive a pay raise;
- the majority of the respondents thinks that an employee should protest if the firm moved him to a distant branch regardless of his family ties;
- the majority of the respondents thinks that an employee should refuse overtime work in case of private obligations such as wedding-day anniversaries or the visit of a good old friend;
- individual performance is regarded important as a basis for deciding on promotion by 91% of the respondents whereas length of affillition to the firm would be considered by the much smaller proportion of 61%.

In addition to these indicators there are several others that directly indicate a growing interest in small face-to-face groups inside and outside the work place with a particular emphasis on one's own family. The family obviously is seen by a growing number of people as a place where individual needs are fullfilled and the quality of personal life is guaranteed.

204

III.

I want to repeat at this point that the intention behind these examples was to show that tendencies toward qualitative change inside the relatively stable traditional core sections of the value structure exist in German as well as in Japanese society. I would like to add the thesis that the direction of these changes is to a high degree similar in both nations. In Germany political attitudes have lost much of their former emotional intensity; in Germany we have been observing a growing tendency to prefer informal face-to-face group memberships and contacts, as compared to formalized role-taking in big organizations; also marriage-type relationships are central to the interests of young people.

I believe that all of this provides empirical evidence for my main thesis that the value dynamics in Japan and in Germany are not basically different, and that it makes sense and leads to quite interesting results, if one looks for similarities.

I would like to turn to the analysis of the results of the survey by the German Institute for Japanese Studies that followed a methodology previously used in Germany.

When we analyzed our data on values in Germany, we used a three-phase procedure. The first phase was a factor-analysis, from which "factors" resulted that we saw as representatives of "value-dimensions." Up to the mid-eighties we found two main dimensions in the material. The first dimension comprised the more traditional values that we called *"Pflicht- und Akzeptanzwerte"* (values of duty orientation and acceptance). The second dimension comprised idealistic, hedonistic, and individualistic values that we named *"Selbstentfaltungswerte"* (values of self-actualization). When we analyzed the correlation between these two contrasting dimensions, we found that they were only slightly correlated.

On the basis of this discovery we turned to our second analytic phase by combining the two dimensions with the help of a tool called cluster-analysis. The result of this second phase was four categories that represented different segments of the population. With some effort we were able to divide the total population into these four categories that we called "value types" (*"Wertetypen"*).

Our third analytical phase was to analyze all the material about attitudes available in our files on the basis of this categorization. The result was overwhelming: the value-types were able to explain a bigger part of the variance within the data than any other variable or set of variables. The spectrum of attitudes in the German population proved to be mainly a consequence of a more basic difference of values.

Correspondingly the value-types showed quite characteristic profiles

205

of attitudes. On the basis of these characteristic profiles we were able to attribute labels to them. The first type was given the label "conventional-ist", the second type the label *"perspektivenloser Resignierter"* (resigned type), and the third type the label "non-conforming idealist." The greatest surprise was the fourth type which combined traditional and modern values without any sign of tension. It received the label *"Synthetiker"* ("synthetic" type, or "integrationist" to quote Arnold Mitchell, who inde-pendently from us found this type in the United States; Klages 1988: 188; Mitchell and Crocker 1982).

When this kind of analysis was repeated at the end of the eighties, we saw that things had changed. We were no longer able to divide the popu-lation into only four value-types, because the two dimensions, which we had identified before, had – literally – given birth to a child. In other words, there was a third dimension now, which combined some elements of each of the previous two dimensions, namely "materialistic" ones that formerly were bound to the traditional dimension, and "hedonistic" ones that formerly were closely connected to the idealistic and individualistic aspects of the self-actualization dimension. We found satisfying results when correlating them all together into a new cluster analysis that pro-duced 8 value types. We reduced these to 5 main types, however, for con-venience, leaving us with one new value-type, which we called *"Hedomat"* (i.e., hedonistic materialist). We found that this actually newly born type had its basis of recruitment within the youngest parts of the population in our sample, where it seemed to be the fastest growing subgroup (Her-bert 1988).

When we checked the questionnaire of the survey of the German Insti-tute for Japanese Studies last year, we found that it contained a variety of quite well-formulated questions that refered to the confrontation between traditional and modern values. Compared with our German experience we only found the *Hedomat*-group lacking because it hadn't been included due to a concentration on individualistic and egalitarian values and their traditional counterparts.

Given this limitation the analysis of the Japanese data brought us four surprises: The first surprise was that the procedures which we had used in Germany also went smoothly in Japan. The factor analysis produced two main dimensions ("conformism" and "individualism", which could be regarded as equivalents to the two dimensions that we had extracted from the data in Germany up to the mid-eighties. As in Germany, these two dimensions proved to be slightly correlated, so that a cluster analysis could be done.

The second surprise concerns the results of the cluster analysis. It was possible to divide the total sample into four value types, as we had done

in Germany, with a tolerable number of missing cases (12%). As in Germany these value-types represent the different possibilities of combining the two value dimensions (these possibilities are: both dimensions low; individualistic values low – conformistic values high; individualistic values high – conformistic values low; both sides high). Furthermore the proportions of the four types proved to be similar. So the *"Synthetiker"* ("synthetic" type or "integrationist") that combines traditional and modern values proved to be the biggest subgroup in both countries with a nearly identical percentage around 30%.

The third surprise was that in Japan the value-types are also able to explain a very high portion of the variance of the social attitudes of the respondents and that they correspondingly show clearly distinct attitude-profiles. Finally the fourth and certainly most significant surprise was that these profiles resemble very much the profiles we found in Germany.

Only the type which shows low traditional values as well as low modern values has a somewhat differing profile. While we had to name it *"perspektivenloser Resignierter"* in Germany because of his prevailing lack of motivation, the Japanese "double negative type" develops motivational tendencies towards material interests and leisure time-orientation. We think that this particular type comprises elements of the German resigned-type and the German *Hedomat*-type. It may well be that the particular type which Tanaka Yasuo (1981) has described in his book on the crystal generation hides between the figures of the survey that are somewhat diffuse at this point because of the already mentioned lack of data in the area of materialism and hedonism.

IV.

In my opinion the similarities of value change in Japan and Germany, which I have been trying to capture, also raise questions concerning the future of value change.

The expansion of a "crystal"-type, who remains "cool" when confronted with the institutional structures of the state and of society while enjoying private life, seems to be a very real possibility in both countries. Also an alternative possibility seems to be similar in both countries. I see it incorporated in the "synthetic type" (or "integrationist"), who manages to unite tradition and modernity in an active way, and who is able to establish a productive tension between himself as an individual and the institutions of the state and society.

REFERENCES

Hayashi, Chikio (1987): Statistical Study on Japanese National Character. In: *Journal of the Japan Statistical Society* (Tōkyō) Special Issue 1987: 71–95.

Hayashi, Chikio (1992): Belief Systems and the Japanese Way of Thinking: Interchronical and International Perspectives. In: H. Motoaki et al. (eds.): *Social, Educational and Clinical Psychology. Proceedings of the 22nd International Congress of Applied Psychology.* Hove (UK) and Hillsdale (USA): 3–34.

Hayashi, Chikio and Tatsuzo Suzuki (eds.) (1990): *Beyond Japanese Values: Trend and Cross-National Perspectives.* Tokyo: The Institute of Statistical Mathematics.

Herbert, Willi (1988): Wertewandel in den 80er Jahren: Entwicklung eines neuen Wertmusters?. In: Heinz Otto Luthe and Heiner Meulemann (eds.): *Wertewandel – Faktum oder Fiktion? Bestandsaufnahmen und Diagnosen aus kultursoziologischer Sicht.* Frankfurt/M. und New York: Campus: 140–160.

Inglehart, Ronald (1990): *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society.* Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press.

Klages, Helmut (1988): *Wertedynamik. Über die Wandelbarkeit des Selbstverständlichen.* Zürich: Ed. Interfrom (Texte und Thesen; 212).

Mitchell, Arnold and Stephen Crocker (1982): *The Integrateds: An Exploratory Portrait.* Menlo Park, Cal.: Values and Lifestyles Program, SRI International.

Nakane, Chie (1970): *Japanese Society.* London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson (The Nature of Human Society Series).

Tanaka, Yasuo (1981): *Nantonaku, kurisutaru.* Tōkyō: Kawade. [German translation: *Kristall Kids.* Translated by a group of students from Bochum University under the direction of Jürgen Stalph. Frankfurt/M.: Wolfgang Krüger, 1987.]

Tōkei Sūri Kenkyūjo Kokuminsei Chōsa Iinkai (1992): *Dai 5 Nihonjin no kokuminsei. A Study of the Japanese National Character.* Volume 5. Tōkyō: Idemitsu Shoten.

Trommsdorff, Gisela (1983): Value Change in Japan. In: *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* (New York) 1983: 337–360.