

Communication Conflicts In The Filming Of Shogun: A Case Study

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Communication Conflicts In The Filming Of *Shogun*: A Case Study*

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Abstract

During the filming of James Clavell's *Shogun* in Japan film teams from both Japan and the United States experienced continual friction during the course of their daily communication as they sought to complete the enormously complex task of filming simultaneously a twelve-hour television series and a feature-length motion picture. This article analyzes the conflicts the groups encountered from the perspectives of communication theory and values orientation theory.

Introduction

From June 4 to December 9, 1979 for a period of 130 days a team of American filmmakers under the leadership of Jerry London and Eric Bercovici was in constant daily contact with a team of Japanese filmmakers from the Toho and Daiei companies together with numerous

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independents in the filming of the epic *Shogun*. In the words of the director, Jerry London :

Shogun was probably the greatest piece of film ever made in Hollywood. And that includes *Gone With the Wind* and everything else because it was twelve hours long.⁽¹⁾

For nearly eight months the experienced film crews from these two nations, most of whom could not speak the other's language, were forced to use speech and other forms of communication among themselves to accomplish something which had never been done before. The results, of course, were admirable. *Shogun* as both a television mini-series and a feature film was a commercial, popular and artistic success. For practically all of the participants, Japanese and American alike, it marked the highest point in their careers to date. For many it will likely remain the high-water mark of their professional experience.

Shogun has been praised by many quarters in the United States for if not giving greater insight into the minds of the Japanese at least creating a greater interest in things Japanese and the beginning of a broader appreciation of Japanese culture and history as well as for Japanese technical and economic achievements.

The Japanese for their part have often wondered what the fuss was all about. Watching *Shogun* for its entertainment value is more difficult for most Japanese because so many of the details of the film conflict with what they believe to be true of the history of the period in which the story is set and because many of the film conventions demanded by American television and film audiences clash with their expectations or do not communicate well to the Japanese. The Japanese did, indeed, watch the first few episodes of the television version in large numbers, but more perhaps in curiosity so as to see what it was that had stirred up the

Americans so. The general reaction of both personal acquaintances and the mass media in Japan at the time was mystification at the intensity of the reported American response to what, in most Japanese eyes, was a distorted "*jidai-geki*" (historical costume drama). Nevertheless, if *Shogun* has not had the impact upon Japanese audiences that it had upon American film audiences, most Japanese have appreciated the effort to make a film about things Japanese. And if it has indeed stirred up a wider and keener interest in Japan on the part of the American and European public, they are content.

And yet, while production crew, executives and actors are all unstinting in their pride in their accomplishment and praise of the results, there has also been widespread comment by many of these same participants on the persistence of communication difficulties encountered during the filming in Japan and, in particular, as to the problems the two nationalities had in working together. In some cases expression of these difficulties has been extreme or even sensationalized for its publicity values. In others it has been more objective and carefully prefaced with qualifying caveats emphasizing the positive achievements of the film and its contribution to intercultural understanding. The following citations are representative.

First, to observations by journalist, Dr. Neil Martin,

...Communication was a constant problem. Japanese being an imprecise, and indirect language proved to be a poor channel through which to communicate the short, specific and direct commands of the English speaking crew. And although the production at its peak, had more than a dozen interpreters on hand, English instructions were never passed along fast enough to suit the U.S. production staff. This, plus the Japanese penchant for wanting to hold group meetings and conferences every

time an unexpected order was relayed or there was a change in schedule, made filming sequences extremely difficult.⁽²⁾

The peculiarity of Japanese group relationships also proved nettlesome for the American staff. On the *Shogun* set in Kyoto, some of the Japanese crew were from Toho studios of Tokyo, some were from Daiei of Kyoto and a few were independents. Frequently, an order would be given to an "independent" who would pass it on to one or another or both of the other groups and despite the fact that the independent had a higher position on the crew roster, the other group considered action only after a conference with other group members. Such squabbles between the U. S. and Japanese production staffs built up in intensity.⁽³⁾

Next, from the director's diary,

The frustrations of making this film have come basically from the cultural differences.⁽⁴⁾

And finally two comments by Japanese members of the production staff,

We pointed out to them (the director and the screenplay writer) numerous places where the script was strange (from the Japanese point of view) but the response was always "That's all right. Don't worry about it."⁽⁵⁾

There was a lot of friction and that sort of left a bad taste in our mouths after the filming was complete. We understood that

the film was not a joint venture but thought that we were supposed to point out when things were mistaken. Then one day in Kyoto we were told by the Production Executive, "This is a Paramount picture, and we want things done our way." At that point we understood and resolved to do only as we were told. It would have been better if we had understood this from the beginning.⁽⁶⁾

The general tenor of these comments is that there was a perception by members of both the Japanese and American production staffs and external observers that communication problems were a source of friction and even conflict during the filming in Japan. Because of the extent and the intensity with which the two groups were in contact, it may be instructive to examine the making of *Shogun* more closely to determine to what extent conflict or friction actually existed, to what extent such conflicts or friction as did exist could be attributed to communicative behavior, the nature of the communicative behavior engaged in by the two crews, what generalizations can be made about communicative interaction between the Japanese and American production crews during the filming and what generalizations might be made as to the probable nature of communication interaction between Japanese and Americans in other encounters between members of the two cultures.

Data Sources and Objectives

For resource material in this study I will be relying upon several sources: excerpts from the daily diary of the director, Jerry London, which appeared in the September, 1980 issue of *American Cinematographer*, other articles and interviews with the director of photography, Andy

Lazlo, the producer, Eric Bercovici, and the author, James Clavell, in the same source, comments and descriptions from the book *The Making of James Clavell's SHOGUN*⁽⁷⁾, a series of articles by Dr. Neil Martin appearing in November, 1980 issues of *The Asahi Evening News*,⁽⁸⁾ and three extensive personal interviews with the director,⁽⁹⁾ one of the Japanese unit production managers, and one of the Japanese assistant directors for casting. I will be using this material to extract the perceptions of the staff members of the communication interactions among the crews and then analyzing these perceptions from several different theoretical viewpoints.

First, I will be looking at the extent to which the participants perceived communication problems as arising from language difficulties, personality conflicts, cultural differences, incompetent personnel, technical problems, and differences in film-making techniques. Next, I will be looking at the receiver variables operating to facilitate or reduce effective communication. Thirdly, I shall be looking at the cultural values which seemed to be operating to influence the perceptions of the communicative acts of the participants. And finally, I shall be looking at the efforts made by both sides to resolve conflicts once they perceived that conflict or friction had arisen.

One last caveat I should like to make before beginning the analysis is to stress that readers of this paper should not construe any comments made here as attempts to fix blame for problems or criticize either the film itself or any of the people involved in making it. Nor should readers feel that I am criticizing the values of one or another culture or advocating that participants in intercultural encounters such as the very intense one which occurred during the eight months of filming *Shogun* give up the values of their native culture and adopt those of their host

culture for the duration of their stay in that culture. What is being attempted here is to first determine what was actually happening from an objective point of view, identifying where possible what factors served to aggravate or mitigate friction between members of the different cultures, and finally to suggest steps which might be taken in subsequent encounters to mitigate friction and enhance the benefits to be achieved from such encounters.

Perceived Sources of Conflict

During the interviews I asked each interviewee to determine on a five-point scale the frequency with which he attributed friction between the two film teams to one of six general areas. The results are listed in table 1.

Table 1. Perceived Sources of Friction

Problem Source	American Director	Production Manager	Assistant Director
1. language difficulties	sometimes	sometimes	sometimes
2. personality conflicts	sometimes	sometimes	sometimes
3. cultural differences	sometimes	usually	usually
4. incompetent personnel	sometimes	sometimes	sometimes
5. technical problems	usually	frequently	frequently
6. different procedures	frequently	sometimes	sometimes

As can be seen, the perceptions of these three representative decision makers on both the Japanese and American sides is in fairly good agreement. It is interesting to note that in contrast to the statements made by Dr. Martin, language differences were not conceived of as posing a major problem for the production. All three interviewees stated repeatedly that the large staff of competent interpreters was a major asset. Problems mentioned in relation to language difficulties were as follows. Jerry

London found that relaying orders through the female interpreters seemed to be taking too long. He decided, therefore, to give his instructions directly to all production members, Japanese or American, and if the Japanese members could not understand then they would go to the interpreters to ask for clarification. The situation subsequently improved to his satisfaction. London attributed the initial slowness to respond to the fact that most of the interpreters were females from outside organizations and that the male Japanese staff resented taking orders from or through them.

The perception of casting director, Tatsuhiko Kuroiwa, on this point differed from London's. He felt that there was no aversion to taking instructions through the interpreters because they were female. He said, rather, that during the early stages of the filming the interpreters who who were language, not film industry, specialists were not yet acquainted with the special jargon of the industry or, perhaps more importantly, with the concepts lying behind the terminology being used. He indicated that discussion of interpreted orders in the early weeks of the shooting schedule was motivated by a desire to insure that the instruction had been understood properly. According to Kuroiwa's perception, London got better results when he switched his procedure for three reasons. First, the interpreters were becoming more accustomed to the special jargon being employed, second the Japanese were becoming adjusted to London's style, and finally, many of the necessary technical terms used by the Japanese were derived from English anyway and, in fact, the Japanese crew could respond directly to such instructions once they were accustomed to hearing them pronounced by an American.

It is, perhaps, necessary to comment on several other aspects of the language differences problem. London felt that some of the difficulties

reported in Dr. Martin's series of articles had been sensationalized for their story appeal. It was true that in some cases the necessity of interpreting instructions aggravated difficult technical problems, but it was not London's impression that this was due to the nature of the difference between the Japanese and English languages. He felt that such problems would arise in any large-scale, bilingual effort. Nor did the Japanese feel any different. As to the assertion that Japanese is an "imprecise and indirect language," it may be true that in many situations the Japanese find it desirable to use their language in such a manner. However, the language itself is not imprecise and indirect. Moreover, filming *Shogun* was not one of those occasions where the Japanese value such behavior. Indeed, one of the personal reasons I was motivated to make this study was that I had previously worked with the members of the Japanese staff involved in the filming and had noted that their use of commands and giving of instructions was as precise as that of American film crews (an area in which I also have direct experience as a former TV-film director for the U. S. Army). My personal observations in this respect were confirmed by all three interviewees.

All three interviewees felt that personality clashes did sometimes occur. They did not, however, feel that they had any important influence on the communicative patterns of the production as a whole. All three interviewees concurred in attributing the occasional flaring of tempers to the intense technical pressures of making the film, the extremely uncomfortable physical environment in some locations, and, toward the end of the shooting, the eagerness of some of the American staff to finish the job and get back to their homes and families. All three felt such problems as did occur were, therefore, a normal by-product of being placed in difficult surroundings and did not feel that it had a subsequent impact

on communication among the two staffs.

It is interesting to note that both the Japanese respondents felt that cultural differences contributed more to friction and conflict than did the American respondent. It also interesting to note that at one point in his diary, Jerry London makes the statement quoted previously that, "The frustrations of this film have come basically from the cultural differences." When asked directly to clear up this apparent inconsistency,⁽¹⁰⁾ London replied that he felt the diary note was a product the situation on that particular day, and that looking back over the whole experience he felt that the friction that occurred was more likely to be attributable to the nature of the job being done than to cultural differences.

All three respondents felt that while there were some examples of incompetent personnel, they did not significantly affect the production by causing friction or conflict between the film crews. Rather, all three interviewees felt that the major cause of friction and conflict during the filming were the technical problems inherent in making a film of *Shogun's* scope under the conditions imposed upon them by time, money and the environment.

Somewhat related to the previous area, London, in particular, felt that different Japanese practices in filmmaking were a problem. Foremost, among these were casting and cast handling practices and certain technical practices. For example, the Japanese practice of allowing actors to do other work during a production created problems both in signing actors and in rearranging the shooting schedule when weather or or technical problems forced a change. Technical problems ranged from electrical power requirements to the lack of certain types of cameras and supporting equipment. The Japanese felt that this was less of a problem for them since they were willing to learn from the Americans anyway. However,

the casting director did concur that the conflict between the Japanese system of scheduling around the needs of the actors and the American system of scheduling around the technical requirements of the filming was a major and continuing source of friction.

Communication Variables

Based on the sources mentioned above I would now like to discuss the communication variables which I believe were operating in the communication interaction between the American and Japanese members of the production staff. First, I would like to look at the area of source variables. These are defined as the judgements which the receiver in a communication transaction makes about the source's communication acts. The three major categories of source variables are credibility, homophily-heterophily and ⁽¹¹⁾power.

Credibility

As Burgoon has pointed out, the credibility variable is the best indicator of effectiveness in communication.⁽¹²⁾ This was a particularly important variable in the filming of *Shogun*. Credibility refers, in general, to the trustworthiness of the source as perceived by the receiver. This is a concept that extends back to Aristotle's *ethos*, but modern communication researchers have operationalized the concept to include five dimensions and three stages. The dimensions are: competence, character, composure, sociability and extroversion. The three stages are initial credibility, transactional credibility and terminal credibility.⁽¹³⁾

Competence and Character

For Americans competence, or the source's knowledge of his subject or field, is the most important factor in assigning credibility. For the Japanese competence is important but means nothing if the source of communication is not perceived to be of high character. Character is defined as the apparent trustworthiness of the source. In Japan the character factor is assigned greater weight than competence in granting credibility. Moreover, the character factor is perceived in terms not shared by Americans in general. To grant a communicator a high character rating, the Japanese must perceive that source to be demonstrating concern for the interpersonal needs of the group (whether it is a temporary group or not) and placing his concern for the goals of the group ahead of his task or private goals. The Japanese operationalization of this concept is also modified by Japanese concepts of what constitutes a group. These concepts will be discussed later in this paper in the section on values. The fact that Japanese give a relatively greater weight to character than competence in granting credibility to a source and thus accepting the source's communication, does not mean that the Japanese are not concerned with private goals or accomplishing tasks. The Japanese, in general, are very task oriented, but their priorities in assigning credibility are different from those of Americans.

The Americans working on the *Shogun* project, for the most part, considered the Japanese to be hardworking, and determined but also inflexible, cliquish and technologically inferior *vis a vis* the film industry. The Japanese perceived the Americans to be technologically sophisticated and competent but lacking in sufficient concern for human relations, arrogant, unpredictable, brash, hardworking, friendly and insensitive to the nuances of interpersonal relations. (Again let me emphasize that these are a

catalog of perceptions; not an objective assessment of the character of the people working on this project.)

Initial Credibility

Differing perceptions of initial credibility, the degree of credibility perceived in the source prior to any communication, contributed to later frictions because of an early but major misunderstanding that resulted because the majority of the Japanese production staff believed that they would be involved in a co-equal production effort on the artistic side. The executive members of the Japanese staff knew that the majority of the financial capital was coming from the American side and that the film's main market was to be in the United States. However, they assumed that the reason the film was being made in Japan was to give it artistic authenticity, and they also knew that their work would be broadcast in Japan. They did not conceive from the signals given out by the American side that Japan was to be merely the background for the story or that the Japanese staff were being hired simply for their technical skills. As reported in one of the quotations above, the Japanese middle-management level staff did not clearly understand until the shooting was almost half over that the movie was not to be a co-production. Their misperception was due in part to the failure of higher management to communicate this to lower levels, in part to middle management overgeneralizing from previous experience in making movies with American companies (many of the Japanese crew had been involved in the filming of *Tora! Tora! Tora!*), and in part because the American executives and film crew did not perceive early enough that the Japanese crew was acting under this misconception. This misconception affected the whole quality of communication during the early months of shooting as the

Japanese repeatedly found the actions of the American team to be at variance with their expectations of what partners in a co-equal production should be doing and with what they had come to expect of American teams from previous experience.

The American side, for its part, had been assuming that the, to them, clear signals of all the artistic top positions being filled by Americans and the executive and financial power being in their hands was sufficient to communicate the true nature of the relationship (i. e. that the production was an American movie being filmed on location in Japan with local nationals being hired to do some tasks). Moreover, the American side did welcome and encourage artistic input from the Japanese, but placed lower priority on that input than meeting the film's budgetary and time objectives. In addition, the American manner of directly asking for such input was usually perceived by the Japanese as a courtesy rather than as a sincere request for input (that is that unless the request is repeated several times with other customary cues, it is in the nature of phatic rather than instrumental communication). In other cases, what the Americans conceived of as clear signals regarding the relationship between the Japanese and American staffs were not simply misinterpreted, they were not even perceived. The important point of all this is that even before filming began the Japanese felt that their advice in an area in which they felt that they were the experts was being unfairly ignored. This served to decrease the esteem of the American team in their eyes and therefore reduced their willingness to accept communication from the Americans. Thus, the initial credibility of the Americans as granted by the Japanese was lowered because the Americans were perceived as being less competent than expected in artistic affairs (historical authenticity and *jidai geki* conventions) and in character because of the manner

in which they failed to repeat requests for artistic input and dismissed suggestions that conflicted with time and budget criteria.

On the other hand, the Americans being experts in one of America's most technologically intensive industries tended to view competence in a technical sense. That is, they soon perceived that the Japanese film crews lacked the sophisticated machines the Americans were accustomed to working with (certain types of cameras, cranes and dollies), and therefore assumed that the Japanese crews were inferior in other skills as well. Having thus not granted credibility in one area they found it difficult to grant credibility in others. None of this was, of course, intentional or malicious. Such misunderstandings occur daily between members of the same culture. However, once credibility is lost or reduced, it is extremely difficult to recapture and thus diminishes the effectiveness of subsequent communication. Favorable modification of transactional credibility is a very difficult task and is often influenced by the remaining three dimensions of credibility.

Transactional Credibility

Recall that the remaining three dimensions of credibility are composure, or poise under conditions of stress, sociability, or the amount of time that communicators spend associating with each other, and extroversion, the eagerness with which the source engages in communication. Differing Japanese and American perceptions of these dimensions and their valuations both contributed to friction in some ways and failed to mitigate friction in others.

Composure

Composure, for example, is highly valued by the Japanese. Americans

value it, too, but consider that overt expression of emotion under stress is healthy and a sign of a stable personality. The Japanese perceive the overt expression of emotion, especially under stress, as childish and unmanly. In particular, the American production executive who was sent over as a replacement when the film began to exceed its budget was perceived by the Japanese to be deficient in composure because of his frequent verbal tirades. In addition, one of the most serious incidents of the filming occurred when the associate producer and film writer, Eric Bercovici, lost his temper at the refusal of the Japanese crew to work overtime on one occasion and vented his frustrations verbally. The Japanese crew refused to return to work until he apologized. Likewise, the outward composure of the Japanese was often perceived by the American staff as reticence, sulkiness, ignorance or non-cooperation. Composure, which is a dimension that often serves to mitigate frictions by increasing transactional credibility, in the case of communication among the American and Japanese crews working on *Shogun*, did not mitigate and often aggravated friction because of the very important ways in which their cultures define and value composure differently.

Sociability

One of the most important ways in which the Japanese and Americans manage the negotiation of changes in transactional credibility is by means of socialization. Put simply, the more chances that people have to be together, the more opportunities there are for their perceptions of credibility to be modified. This is particularly important in the Japanese culture where character receives greater weight than competence in granting source credibility. Socialization is even institutionalized under the term of *tsukiai* or association with one's work force colleagues after

working hours. On the other hand, for Americans socialization is primarily with non-work force friends and conducted dyadically for the most part. American socializing is conducted voluntarily for advocational reasons and normally in non-public places such as homes or (while on the road) hotel rooms. Vocationally oriented socializing is highly ritualized as in office parties and business lunches. The American crews followed their familiar patterns and generally returned straight to their hotels when a day's shooting was completed. Most engaged in private activities and normally those few who wanted to socialize did so among themselves in their hotel rooms. The few occasions when some the American staff did join their Japanese colleagues "to go out drinking" were primarily dyadic. That is, the American invited a Japanese he liked personally to go out for a drink.

Japanese *tsukiai* is a different concept of socialization though superficially similar to going out for a drink. First of all, it is done as a group not as pairs or as a small group of people with similar advocational interests. Secondly, although small bars are the most frequent locale of *tsukiai*, drinking is not the goal and in fact many of the group's members do not even drink anything stronger than coca-cola. The primary purpose of *tsukiai* is to give members of a work group the opportunity to intensify their feeling of group membership by getting to know more about each other without the task pressures inherent in the work situation. Whether groups are temporary or permanent, socialization through *tsukiai* is considered vital for effective communication in Japan. Thus anyone who fails to take frequent opportunities to associate with members of the work group outside of working hours finds his credibility lowered. On the other hand, many members of the work group who may be weak in competence credibility may find their character credibility amplified by sincere

participation in *tsukiai*.

Conversely, the Americans often perceived the group socializing of the Japanese as cliquishness or as an unwarranted attempt to intrude upon what little private time was available to them during their sojourn in Japan. There were some Americans who socialized very well with the Japanese, especially among the artistic crews, but in general both sides failed to make effective use of socialization to increase credibility and mitigate friction because of differing perceptions of the value of this dimension in assigning credibility and because the pressures of the task itself left relatively little time available for the crews to socialize outside of the work site anyway.

Extroversion

Finally, in this section we turn to the dimension of extroversion. Even in the American culture optimal source extroversion is perceived of as being expressed in moderation. However, a certain amount of extroversion is desired for initiating communication and for negotiating changes in transactional credibility. To Americans the reticent communicator is deficient in credibility even when he or she does choose to communicate. The Japanese also seem to value moderate extroversion but may be more conservative than Americans in this regard. More importantly, the Japanese seem to place a strongly negative value on excessive extroversion and generally associate verbosity with excessive extroversion. Most of the members of the American film team were very verbal and their expansive friendliness and intense, verbal expression of their ideas, analysis of problems and defense of their points of views and ways of doing things may have had a negative effect on many of their Japanese colleagues. Conversely, the relative reticence of most members of the

Japanese staff was perceived by the Americans as shyness, slyness, ignorance or embarrassment when often the Japanese were simply listening politely and waiting for a sincere invitation to participate. (By sincere I am referring to the Japanese perceptions not American intentions. Repeating a request several times and patiently waiting for disclaimers such as "My opinion really isn't worthy" to be expressed are interpreted as a sincere request for participation).

Homophily-Heterophily

The next major, source variable of communication is called the homophily-heterophily continuum. Homophily refers to the perceived degree to which the source is similar to the receiver in outlook, values and other attributes. Heterophily refers to the perceived degree in which the source and the receiver differ in these attributes. Reduced to fairly simple terms, a certain degree of similarity between the source and receiver is necessary for communication to take place and the greater the degree of similarity the more effective communication will be. However, when similarities proceed beyond a certain level, there is no need to communicate as both source and receiver have essentially the same amount of information. Thus, a certain amount of heterophily or difference is necessary to motivate or energize a communicative exchange and to make it interesting. On the other hand, if the source is too different from the receiver, understanding is reduced or even becomes impossible. Thus, the best conditions for effective communication exist when these forces are in dynamic equilibrium where there is enough similarity to make communication possible and enough difference to make it desirable. This point is called optimal heterophily.

Turning to this homophily-heterophily continuum we find that both sides

failed to identify more than a few surface similarities such as the desire to make a good film within time and budgetary limitations. On the other hand, both sides readily identified differences and emphasized them. Thus, optimum heterophily was not achieved. The normal strategies for reducing heterophily to a manageable level are frequent interaction, empathy (or projecting oneself into another's place) and paying close attention to feedback.⁽¹⁴⁾ In the case of the communication among the members of the *Shogun* film teams these strategies often proved ineffective or were inoperative. For example, although there was frequent interaction it was all task related in communication. Differing Japanese and American perceptions and the interpersonal interactions of both contributed to friction in some ways and failed to mitigate friction in others.

Source Power Variables

As Burgoon points out, "when a receiver perceives that a source possesses some sort of power, specific patterns of communicative behavior can be predicted. In any communication interaction, a receiver has certain unique physical, psychological and social needs. The source's potential for satisfying the needs of the receiver provides the motive bases for power to operate in a communication situation."⁽¹⁵⁾ There are a number of such motive bases. They are reward power, referent power, coercive power, expert power, and legitimate power. Reward power is defined as the ability of the source to provide positive sanctions such as concrete or intangible rewards if the receiver complies with the source's requests. Examples might be salaries or new technological know-how. Coercive power refers to the ability of the source to administer negative sanctions such as punishment or withholding rewards. Examples would be firing an employee or withholding new knowledge. Referent power refers to

power granted to the source on the basis of human emotions such as loyalty, or liking, or respect. An example would be the referent power that a feudal lord uses when he asks one of his warriors to commit ritual suicide. Expert power exists when the receiver perceives the source as having superior knowledge or expertise on a particular subject. Finally, legitimate power stems from the internalized values and beliefs of the receiver that grant that the source has the "right" to influence her or him. An example of legitimate power would be the sense of values we have that allows a teacher to assign a grade to a student based on that teacher's evaluation of a student's performance.

In addition to these five classes of power, there are three conditions that exist to maximize the effectiveness of power. These are also perceptions that the receiver holds with regard to the source in a communication transaction. They are perceived control, perceived concern and perceived scrutiny. Even if the receiver grants that the source has one or all of the above classes of power, the receiver will not be influenced to receive the communication in a certain manner unless she or he perceives that the source can actually control the receiver's behavior by carrying out positive or negative sanctions. For example, if the source threatens to use coercive power, but the receiver perceives that he is bigger and stronger than the source, the receiver is unlikely to respond to a request to perform a certain action. Similarly, the receiver may grant that the source has power and control but doesn't care to exercise that power or control. This is a perceived lack of concern. Finally, the receiver may perceive that a source has power, control and concern but cannot observe the behavior of the receiver as when a teacher is not present in a junior high school classroom. This would be a case of perceived lack of scrutiny, and the receiver may behave contrary

to the request of the source.

In regard to power variables some friction arose among the American and Japanese members of the *Shogun* film team because Japanese groups retain legitimate power within the group rather than delegating it to executives. Japanese directors and other executives tend to be the spokespeople for their groups in public situations and peacemakers and coordinators within. Japanese producers are minor figures in the film industry. This clashed strongly with the autocratic styles of directors and producers in the American film industry. It also led to misperception on the part of the Japanese of the communicative styles of both the American director and the producer. In general, the Japanese did not grant power to the American executives to the extent to which Americans are accustomed. On the other hand, the Americans granted expert power to the Japanese in only limited areas when the Japanese expected to be granted more.

Conflict Resolution

Now, let me turn to the area of conflict resolution. Both sides soon realized that they were having difficulties in communication beyond what they had anticipated. Since all the parties were sincerely engaged in trying to make the best film they could within the parameters granted, both sides sought to define and then resolve the conflicts as they saw them. We have already touched on a number of areas in which perceptions were unconsciously different, and we shall touch on more in the next section on value differences. Here, however, I should like to deal with not the nature of the conflicts themselves, but the manner in which attempts were made to resolve them. In American culture when two parties to a conflict seek to resolve that conflict, an important first step

is to restore credibility by meeting directly, face-to-face, and attempting to determine the causes of the conflict by analysis. Credibility is increased by a process of mutual self-revelation and negotiation.

In Japan, on the other hand, looking for causes is interpreted as trying to duck the central issue of credibility and interpersonal trust by trying to avoid being blamed for the conflict or its initiation. Moreover, self-revelation is perceived as a childish effort to get one party obligated to the other. Finally, when credibility has been lost, the role of a mediator is essential. The two sides have already lost faith in each other. How can they talk honestly to each other? Americans see the resolution of conflict as a task. Japanese see the resolution of conflict as the reestablishment of interpersonal trust.

Thus, in the conflicts which arose the normal strategy of the Americans was to get together with the Japanese party to the conflict and explain what was really happening as the Americans saw it. The Japanese side in such a situation was likely to bring along someone to serve as an intermediary; someone they perceived as having the trust of both sides. The Japanese would perceive the American strategy as childish, and the Americans would perceive the Japanese as unnecessarily complicating matters by bringing in someone who had no business there or else as the Japanese trying to gang up on the Americans. Thus, the culturally preferred strategies for resolving conflicts in many cases served to aggravate rather than mitigate or resolve the conflict.

Japanese-American Value Orientations

As should be apparent by now, communication conflicts in the filming of *Shogun* can primarily be traced to incidents of what are termed ascribed communication. That is, receivers in one culture group assigned

perceptions to communicative behavior that were not intended by the source of that communicative act. This important concept can be placed in perspective by referring to figure 1.

	Source has an intent to communicate	Source does not have an intent to communicate
Receiver perceives an intent to communicate	A. Communication	B. Ascribed Communication
Receiver does not perceive an intent to communicate	C. Communication Attempt	D. Behavior

Fig. 1 Communication and intent.

Such misperceptions are common among communicators in any culture, but in an intercultural encounter such as that which occurred during the filming of *Shogun* there is likely to be a much higher frequency of ascribed communication or non-perceived communication attempts.

One of the important reasons for this consistent pattern of misperception was the different values held in regard to certain fundamental areas of human interaction. Many of these values can be drawn from the Kluckhohn values orientation model as modified by John Condon.⁽¹⁷⁾ A value orientation is a solution held in common by members of a particular culture to certain universal problems and conditions common to all human beings. It is assumed that since all human beings exist in relation to nature, the self and societies and the interfaces between them, i. e. human behavior (society and nature), the family (self and society) and the supernatural (self and nature), that all human cultures will have evolved

value orientations regarding these areas. These are diagrammed in figure 2.

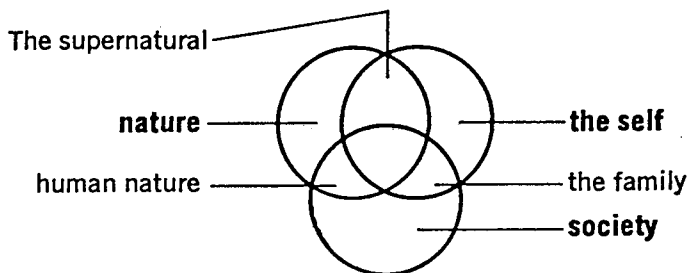


Fig. 2 Kluckhohn-Condon Values Orientation Model

Human cultures use these value orientations as guidelines to decide what is right or wrong or good or bad. The value orientations constitute the ideal criteria for behavior in the culture.

Furthermore, it is assumed partly on research and partly due to theoretical force that certain clusters of value orientations are likely to occur, but that others are not. Those likely to occur are listed in table 2.

Table 2. Value Orientations

SELF

Individualism—interdependence

- | | | |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. individualism | 2. individuality | 3. interdependence |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------|

Age

- | | | |
|----------|---------------------|------------|
| 1. youth | 2. the middle years | 3. old age |
|----------|---------------------|------------|

Sex

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. equality | 2. female superiority | 3. male superiority |
|-------------|-----------------------|---------------------|

Activity

- | | | |
|----------|----------------------|----------|
| 1. doing | 2. being-in-becoming | 3. being |
|----------|----------------------|----------|

THE FAMILY

Relational orientations

- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|-----------|
| 1. individualistic | 2. collateral | 3. lineal |
|--------------------|---------------|-----------|

Authority

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. democratic | 2. authority-centered | 3. authoritarian |
|---------------|-----------------------|------------------|

Positional role behavior

- | | | |
|---------|------------|-------------|
| 1. open | 2. general | 3. specific |
|---------|------------|-------------|

Mobility

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. high mobility | 2. phasic mobility | 3. low mobility, stasis |
|------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|

SOCIETY

Social reciprocity

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. independence | 2. symmetrical-obligatory | 2. complementary-obligatory |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|

Group membership

- | | | |
|--|----------------------------|---|
| 1. many groups, brief identification, subordination of group to individual | 2. balance of nos. 1 and 3 | 3. few groups, prolonged identification, subordination of the member to the group |
|--|----------------------------|---|

Intermediaries

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. no intermediaries (directness) | 2. specialist intermediaries only | 3. essential intermediaries |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|

Formality

- | | | |
|----------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. informality | 2. selective formality | 3. pervasive formality |
|----------------|------------------------|------------------------|

Property

- | | | |
|------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1. private | 2. utilitarian | 3. community |
|------------|----------------|--------------|

HUMAN NATURE

Rationality

- | | | |
|-------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1. rational | 2. intuitive | 3. irrational |
|-------------|--------------|---------------|

Good and evil

- | | | |
|---------|-----------------------------|---------|
| 1. good | 2. mixture of good and evil | 3. evil |
|---------|-----------------------------|---------|

Happiness, pleasure

- | | | |
|----------------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1. happiness as goal | 2. inextricable bond of happiness and sadness | 3. life is mostly sadness |
|----------------------|---|---------------------------|

Mutability

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1. change, growth, learning | 2. some change | 3. unchanging |
|-----------------------------|----------------|---------------|

NATURE

Relationship of man and nature

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. man dominating nature | 2. man in harmony with nature | 3. nature dominating man |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|

Ways of knowing nature

- | | | |
|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. abstract | 2. circle of induction-deduction | 3. specific |
|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------|

Structure of nature

- | | | |
|----------------|--------------|------------|
| 1. mechanistic | 2. spiritual | 3. organic |
|----------------|--------------|------------|

Concept of time

- | | | |
|-----------|------------|---------|
| 1. future | 2. present | 3. past |
|-----------|------------|---------|

THE SUPERNATURAL**Relationship of man and the supernatural**

- | | | |
|---------------|--------------|--|
| 1. man as god | 2. pantheism | 3. man controlled by
the supernatural |
|---------------|--------------|--|

Meaning of life

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. physical, material
goals | 2. intellectual goals | 3. spiritual goals |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|

Providence

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. good in life is
unlimited | 2. balance of good and
misfortune | 3. good in life is
limited |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|

Knowledge of the cosmic order

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. order is
comprehensible | 2. faith and reason | 3. mysterious and
unknowable |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|

I shall only be discussing a few of the value differences which I feel were most relevant to communication conflict between the American and Japanese crews.

Activity

Because the Japanese-American film team was essentially a task group the activity value orientation of the two societies influenced their communicative behavior. The American culture is described as a doing culture and this was the orientation of the leadership in the making of *Shogun*. Jerry London repeatedly stated in his diary and in his interview with me the necessity for adhering to the shooting schedule; of never losing a day's shooting. It didn't matter so much what was being shot on any particular day as long as they were doing something that moved them concretely closer to the goal.

On the surface, the Japanese often appear to Americans to have a

similar orientation, but at a deeper level we find that the orientation of the Japanese is a being-in-becoming orientation. This is the orientation illustrated in the modern fable of *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*. The activity that one is engaged in is not valued in itself or even for the task it accomplishes. It is valued for the deeper insight it gives one into one's self or the closer it moves one to superordinate goals of the group or society. The Japanese members of the crew with whom I spoke were proud of what they accomplished with *Shogun*, but were uniform in remarking, "I wish we could have done a better job of explaining Japanese culture to the Americans." "I think the film could have been better artistically." Again, the American members of the crew might well argue with such remarks, but what is important here is the different values they illustrate.

Social Reciprocity

Another important value difference was along the continuum of social reciprocity. Americans hold the idea that social relationships are voluntary, contractual and equidirectional. This is said to be a value of independence in social relations. The Japanese value is toward complementary-obligatory social ties. Social ties are obligatory and not voluntary. Moreover, they differ in kind between parties. A good illustration for American readers of a complementary-obligatory relationship is the parent-child relation. A child does not voluntarily enter into the relationship of being a child to his parents. Nor can the child repay his parents in kind for being born. Normally, the child repays the love, affection and protection his parents give him by showing them the love of a child and growing up and acting as a parent in the same manner with his or her own children. The relationship is not contractual. That Americans often wish it were

is illustrated by the complaint of many rebellious youngsters when they cry out, "I didn't ask to be born, you know."

Like the naturally derived obligations of parents and children to each other, the Japanese believe that leaders and followers and all members of all groups have such complementary and yet obligatory relationships among themselves. This view of the world is even reinforced by such terms in the language as *senpai* and *kohai* (very roughly senior and junior) which are almost impossible to render into English short of a full-fledged dissertation on the nature of interpersonal ties in the Japanese society. The Japanese, therefore, expected certain forms of behavior from the Americans that were not forthcoming such as tolerance for weak group members or consultation on major decisions. An example is illustrated by Andy Lazlo relating the story of his staying up late in the workshop one night to make an American type slate for recording scenes and takes. The Japanese were impressed by his handicraft and diligence but told him it was best to leave that type of task to someone in a less senior position. The complimentary-obligatory orientation is closely tied to rather rigid role definitions.

Group Membership

One of the major value orientations affecting communication on the project was the attitude of the respective cultures toward groups. Americans tend to view group affiliation as a temporary or limited phenomena. Task groups are created to deal with certain problems and discarded when no longer needed. Such was the nature of the group created to film *Shogun*. Japanese, on the other hand, tend to perceive membership in any group or organization as being permanent or at least potentially permanent. Most employees, including the people from Toho,

Daiei and the independents, were already permanent members of one organization and would in all likelihood be working together on another project at some time in the future. Thus, the Japanese members of the group viewed warily the forming of interpersonal ties and moved into even task related activities slowly as they assessed the interpersonal network. Rivalry among the groups, however, was not a factor as was asserted by Dr. Martin. Or, at least, that was not the Japanese perception. Their penchant for discussing everything derived rather from the need to accommodate all members of the group. From their point of view it was better to chance being yelled at by the Americans who would be gone in a few months or let the task be delayed a bit rather than risk damaging personal relations with someone they might be seeing daily for another twenty years.

Time

The most important value difference affecting communication during those 130 days, seems to me, to be the American preference for using time as a control in conflict with the Japanese predilection for using people as a control in task groups. This is illustrated by the great care with which the director, Jerry London, planned his shooting schedule so that he could flexibly deal with technical or personnel problems without losing shooting time and incurring the financial burdens that that entailed. His approach was the very embodiment of the American belief that time is money. One of London's first major problems, however, arose when Judy Ongg, the actress originally scheduled to play Mariko, pulled out just two days before shooting started. She had originally consented on the assumption that, as was normal in Japan, she would be able to take other engagements during the course of the shooting. When it was

made clear that this was not possible; then her manager insisted that she be paid for those engagements she could not take. That turned out to be too expensive, and she was out. London was able to cover for this inconvenience for several weeks by rescheduling until Yoko Shimada was signed.

From the Japanese side, however, it was this very flexibility of scheduling that caused them the greatest headache. In Japan most actors continue to do other work while making films, and casting directors coordinate the schedules of major characters on an almost day by day basis. Then, the shooting schedule is arranged to meet that schedule.⁽²⁰⁾ When the schedule is suddenly shifted to meet the dictates of weather or technical problems all that coordination has to be thrown out and things have to be planned over from scratch. The Japanese staff had reached an internal compromise with the American staff by which the Japanese casting director attempted to work out rescheduling arrangements in anticipation of the director's needs. However, because of the enormous technical difficulties encountered in making a film on the scale of *Shogun*, rescheduling was frequent and was the most common source of conflict on both sides; the American when actors were not available; the Japanese when they had to tell some people to go back to Tokyo and others to stop what they were doing and try to get down to Kyoto or Nagashima (in Wakayama Prefecture) for location shooting.

Conclusion

This paper is far too short to give adequate coverage to the study of all the communication processes operating to facilitate the successful completion of the filming of *Shogun* or to aggravate the frictions and conflicts that arose as highly trained people from two very different

cultures struggled together in close proximity for nearly half a year to surmount great technical difficulties under often adverse conditions. Yet, what little has been talked about here should make it clear that many problems which were cursorily attributed to differences in language, customs and personality can better be understood as resulting from different cultural values and their pervasive impact upon the communication process itself. That the vast majority of the people making this film were competent and sincere and channeled their best efforts into making the project the success that it became goes without saying. However, we can also feel that it should have been possible to achieve the same or better results with less friction and conflict if more members of both contingents had been aware of the dynamics of the communication process itself and of how variables, because they are indeed variables, operate differently in an intercultural environment. While it would be naive to believe that we can eliminate or at least anticipate those factors which lead to such conflicts in future encounters of this scale, we can hope to learn from *Shogun* information that may help others to mitigate such conflicts in the interest of happier as well as successful accomplishment of such tasks.

Notes

- (1) Personal interview with Jerry London at his office in the CBS Studio Center in Studio City, California on March 29, 1982.
- (2) "The Making of *Shogun* Part 4." *The Asahi Evening News*, Saturday, November 8, 1980.
- (3) *Ibid.* Part 7. Saturday, November 15, 1980.
- (4) "Behind the Scenes Diary on James Clavell's *SHOGUN*," *American Cinematographer* Vol. 61. No. 9. September, 1980 p. 960.
- (5) Interview with Japanese Unit Production Manager Katsuaki Fujii on March 20, 1982.
- (6) Interview with Assistant Director for casting Tatsuhiko Kuroiwa on

July 23, 1983.

- (7) *American Cinematographer*, *op. cit.*
- (8) *The Making of James Clavell's SHOGUN*. Dell Publishing Co., New York, September, 1980.
- (9) *op. cit.*
- (10) *op. cit.*
- (11) Burgoon, Michael and Michael Ruffner, 1978. *Human Communication*. Holt, Rinehardt and Winston. New York.
- (12) Burgoon, p. 35.
- (13) Burgoon, p. 35 and pp. 41-42.
- (14) Burgoon, pp. 47-48.
- (15) Burgoon, pp. 48 & 49.
- (16) Burgoon, p. 16.
- (17) Condon, John C. and Fathi Yousef, 1975. *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication*. Bobbs-Merrill. New York.
- (18) Condon, p. 59.
- (19) Condon, pp. 60-62.
- (20) This is one reason why I am able to hold down a full-time job as a university professor and still do occasional part-time work as an actor myself.