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For Harmony and Strength
JAPANESE WHITE-COLLAR ORGANIZATION
IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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constitutes a neat complex, for precisely such attitudes contribute to the persistence of this general pattern by making those who quit large firms look strange, and by encouraging large firms both to keep quitting rates down and to conceal them from the public. The association of permanent employment with high status is one of the most prominent characteristics of the Japanese company scene, and it colors the entire statistical spectrum.

Most significant is not the question of which factors are more powerful—economics or values—in such situations, but rather the fact that there is a strong coincidence between the two, at least in Udagin. As we noted at the beginning of this chapter, it is not in the nature of ideology to be true or false, nor is it necessary that ideology explain behavior. What is of significance is the general fit, and the fact that events, no matter how mundane in motive, have elevated significance at the level of general interpretation.

Finally, I wish to emphasize that high turnover and the expectation of job changing have a profound impact on any organization: diluting human relations, emphasizing the impersonal, sharpening differences of background and interest, sponsoring individual competition, and generally fostering alienation from the organization and its goals. In America today these qualities are widely viewed as the results of large-scale organization, but studies of Japanese organizations remind us that all of these undesirable qualities derive also from the pattern and degree of individual mobility in large organizations, and this is a quality that undoubtedly varies with culture and with time. Like it or not, we must recognize that our cherished sense of individual independence from organizations greatly accounts for the unpleasantness of social relations we experience within them.

22 Tominaga (1968) and Abegglen (1969) both see the permanent employment pattern as increasing for large firms. Tominaga compares the prewar and postwar periods to reach this conclusion, while Abegglen compares the same companies over a decade from the late fifties to the late sixties.

Also, job changing seems to be on the increase among young blue-collar workers today (Cole, 1973), and this is best explained as the result of a shortage of skilled, semiskilled, and middle-school graduate labor making the ease and the rewards of changing companies relatively greater than in the past. This situation will not arise for Udagin in the foreseeable future because the labor shortage is least severe in the highly educated, white collar group, especially for large firms with good records.

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Nothing is clearer from interviews with Udagin people than that their primary experience of company life centers on their daily work in an office. Individual reports of satisfactions and dissatisfactions tend to focus on two things: the nature of the daily routine and the morale of the office group. Working hours are long, the average being ten hours a day during the week and another six on Saturdays. It is taxing work too, considering the tedious repetition and the pressure to avoid mistakes. Only the rare individual is not exhausted at the end of the day. Many complain of these conditions and look forward to the time when computers will lighten their burdens by reducing office record keeping and when Udagin growth will bring greater security to the overall enterprise and thus lessen the general pressure on performance.¹

The question of satisfaction, however, hinges essentially on whether pleasure can be found working as part of one’s particular office group. It is virtually axiomatic that some offices enjoy good working relations and others do not. At its best the office group can make this hard work exciting and meaningful, at its worst it is a cancer in the organization and the source of great individual unhappiness.

Many of the terms used in the bank’s ideology to describe the ideals of good relations, including “harmony” and teamwork, tend to be part of the vocabulary used by average members when discussing the morale of office groups.² In fact, it is the small group, not the overall

¹ Parts of this chapter are contained in Rohlen forthcoming in which I compare the Udagin material with data subsequently collected on company and factory work groups in a medium-size manufacturing firm.

² One of the most common phrases used to describe good relations in the group is matomari ga aru, “the group is drawn together,” “it has unity.” A major dimension of Japanese popular thought about small groups is represented by the contrast between this state and its opposite, referred to as bara bara, “scattered.” “fragmented,” or matomari ga nai, “lacking unity.” The term morale as used here refers to a general sense of enthusiasm within the group for common tasks and for
company, that can actually be measured by the criteria of good relations presented in the ideology. Finally, because Ueda in is a company constituted primarily of branches, the question of the office group is of particular centrality to our analysis.

A TYPICAL BRANCH WORK DAY

The following account attempts to portray the activities and atmosphere within an average branch office. It is based on notes made during a particular day of observation in an office of twenty people. The second half of the account, a description of a meeting and an office party, occurred on the same day, but these events are not to be understood as daily occurrences. Meetings occur on the average of once every month or two.

Branches open their doors promptly at 9:00, but for the people on the inside the day necessarily begins earlier. The standing rule is that people must be in the office in time for the morning staff meeting at 8:30. They have safes and files to open, cash boxes to check, adding machines to set up, and desks to arrange in preparation for the rush of business that begins when the doors open.

Until 9:00, there is an air of genial informality as people exchange greetings and make small talk while they go about their own preparations. The activities of the night before, the weather, bank gossip, and details of office procedures are discussed. The women finish their own preparations early in order to serve cups of tea to the others. The hot brew and cheerful attention bring smiles. Several younger men, sitting on top of their desks, enjoy a funny story.

The responsibility for presiding over the morning meeting (chōrei) is rotated daily. Everyone gathers toward the back of the office, forming a circle in front of the chief's desk. The proceedings begin with the leader bowing to the others and saying, "Good morning." They bow and in unison return his greeting. Still standing, they recite together the principles and teachings. "We, constantly abiding by the ideas of cooperative banking, will, together with the general populace, advance in our mission to serve as instruments of small and medium business enterprises," and so on. Occasionally, they sing the bank song.

With the formalities over, everyone sits down, and general announcements from the main office are read. The chief is called upon to make any remarks he may have. In this instance, he speaks about

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the regional meeting of branch chiefs and explains the coming month's goal for the collection of deposits assigned to their branch. He has his own reservations about the target the main office has set but asks all members to consider what they might do to improve the branch's record. He concludes by announcing a party after work to kick off their drive to meet the new goal. Next, the deputy in charge of the office reads a report on the number of clerical mistakes made by each branch. Everyone is relieved to learn that their branch has a relatively low monthly average. He urges them to work for an even better rating. Since there are no other announcements the meeting is closed. All stand once more and go through the morning exercise routine. These are of the stretching and loosening-up sort and are directed by a cheery girl's voice and piano accompaniment coming from the record player. Altogether the meeting has lasted about fifteen minutes.

The entrance of customers transforms the entire mood and orientation of the group. At 9:00 sharp someone steps outside, winds up the metal door, and unlocks the entrance. Moments before, like backstage at curtain time, people scurry to their desks, adjust their posture, and assume businesslike expressions. Soft music is turned on, and attention is directed to the door. Until three in the afternoon the people at the counter and those located behind (who give record-keeping support) are totally occupied keeping abreast of the day's flow of business. 3

The young men and women working as tellers greet the customers as they enter with a "good morning" or "good afternoon." When possible they stand to greet them, showing added respect. In the smaller branches, many of the regular customers are well known, and, while they wait for the record keeping to be completed, the teller often engages the customer in friendly conversation. The stiff competition among banks for even small depositors has made the quality of counter service important, and everything from the greetings to the polite bow and "thank you" as the customer leaves is drilled repeatedly during initial training. The more enthusiastic tellers appear thoroughly to enjoy these brief encounters. During training they have learned a few impressive tricks, such as counting paper notes by fanning them in a half circle, and then, with a flick of the wrist and fast finger ac-

3 Argyris (1955:54-56) comments that contact with customers in banking adds a human element to work and reduces coworker interaction. Both of these are points made by Ueda in tellers, but there is also a counterinfluence in the case of Japanese branch banking, for it draws the office group together and creates isolation from others of the same company. The reduction in interaction during the hours a branch is open is balanced by more interaction in the "off hours."
tion, giving each bill a loud snap as it is counted. Impressing visitors with a sharp performance is part of a teller’s job.4

All but the largest branches function primarily to collect deposits. In this office, there is an almost equal division of personnel working inside and those who spend most of their day circulating through the neighborhood seeking new deposits. Known as salesmen, these men have undergone a special course in sales techniques. Their work is among the most trying, for salesmen are constantly under pressure to find more deposits.

One deputy supervises the work of the inside staff. His desk is located directly among his record-keepers, and it faces the line of tellers, keeping him in close contact with the people he supervises. Much of his work is to review and approve the transactions and reports completed by his subordinates, and he seems forever to be applying his personal stamp to a flow of office documents, most of which he has no time to consider.

The branch chief’s desk is not in a separate room, but at the back and center of the office. He, too, is close to his subordinates. During some part of each day, however, he is absent, for his responsibilities require that he attend numerous conferences with his superiors and fellow branch chiefs, as well as call upon leading customers.

Activity is usually so brisk that only one or two workers at a time may go upstairs to the meeting room to eat lunch (usually delivered from a nearby restaurant). The tellers can enjoy a long smoke at this time. On duty they must abstain, for it is inconvenient and unseemly. The bank has no system of coffee breaks, but the women pass out cups of tea when they have free time, and after the doors close at three people may take breaks whenever they wish.

Even though a few customers may still come in the side door, after three o’clock one can sense a gradual unwinding as attention shifts away from the counter. The metal shutters cut off noise from the street, and, with visitors gone, the office suddenly seems quiet. No one stops work, but conversation increases and people walk around more.

There are hundreds of calculations to be done, checked, and recorded

4 Role fulfillment as a virtue and roles as highly crucial aspects of individual identity in Japan are topics discussed at great length in DeVois and Wagner’s (1970). Because this account does not focus on individual job performance, the striking perfection of and involvement with work roles in the daily operations of the bank are not sufficiently emphasized. Let it be noted, then, that proper role fulfillment, specified and done to an extreme by American standards, permeates the nature of work routines. Perhaps for this reason matters outside the specified scope of an individual’s role are disturbing and can be paralyzing. The leader must provide guidance in such situations. We might label this “role inflexibility.”

before the day’s work is finished. Sometime before five everyone stands, stretches, and does the afternoon exercises. By 6:15, an hour and a quarter later than scheduled, all stop work, clean up their desks, lock the safe, and go upstairs to the conference room for the meeting.

However mundane this daily routine may appear, it does provide the setting for a variety of meaningful interactions among members of the group. The closeness of working relations and the repetition of procedures serve to intensify individual sensitivity to slight alterations of expected conduct. People expect, for example, to be served tea. For this act to encourage a cheerful response, however, it must be done in a personalized way, with a smile and some pleasant comment. Tact and attention to the proprieties of simple interaction, such as acknowledging each other with appropriate greetings, are crucial for the maintenance of good relations. An outburst of anger (never personally observed, but reported by a few informants), a failure to lend a hand, or an unusual reserve receives immediate notice and often leads to interpersonal problems that take a long time to resolve. During the course of daily work, then, there is ample opportunity for subtle variety. Some actions contribute to the goal of improving team spirit, while other actions may bring its very existence into question.

Two other occasions are central in the life of the group. These are discussion meetings and joint recreation activities.

AN OFFICE MEETING AND PARTY AFTERWARDS

On the second floor numerous folding chairs have been arranged in front of a long table. The chief and his two deputies sit behind the table, and the rest arrange themselves in front. The women sit together in the rear. As usual, all stand to recite the principles and the “President’s Teachings.” The chief next discusses the branch’s record for the last six months and reads a formal announcement from the president regarding the next half-year campaign to collect deposits. This document, filled with expressions of the difficult battle ahead, is listened to impassively. The deputy in charge of sales next stands to explain his ideas for improving the collection of deposits. Both presentations have been rather formal, and no one has interrupted or asked questions. People have been listening seriously, it appears, for soon a discussion involving about half of the men develops around the issue of how best to deliver the bank’s monthly advertisements to households in the area. The chief enters only to ask questions. In no way does he dominate the conversation. The topic shifts several times, but always the same people offer opinions. All along, the women and
several of the men have remained silent. When talk seems about to end, one deputy stands and announces that the meeting is for everyone and those that still have something to say should speak up before it is closed. The silent members indicate they have nothing to add, and the meeting ends. It is seven-thirty and time to start the party.

While some bring in the food and beer, the rest arrange the tables into one large rectangle. The chief, flanked by his deputies, sits at one end. The other men sit along each side (in no apparent order), and, as before, the women sit at the back. Although the general arrangement has been changed from the meeting, the three divisions (leaders, men, and women) has not.

The party, known as a teiki taikai (periodic meeting), is expressly held to initiate the new campaign to collect deposits. Numerous bottles of beer are passed out and opened, and glasses are filled. All members stand with glasses in hand as the chief offers a toast to the success of the coming months’ work. For the next fifteen minutes everyone settles down to a meal of Japanese and Chinese delicacies. A relaxed atmosphere with much animated conversation and laughter spreads over the group. Turns are taken filling each other’s glasses, and the two deputies circle the room, large bottles in hand, making sure everyone is drinking heartily. Only the women are permitted to refuse the repeated offers to “have another glass.”

When things seem sufficiently enlivened, the chief raps on the table for attention and suggests that singing begin. Everyone claps in agreement, and someone calls out Mr. Ono’s name. Clapping erupts again, and he stands, sings a brief folk song, and then sits down amid much applause. The chief calls next on Kato, another of the younger men, who, because he is a bit of a wiseacre, is regarded as the black sheep of the group. Kato makes an excuse, drinks a full glass in one swallow, makes more excuses, but fails to stand and sing as requested. An awkward silence follows. Everyone sympathizes with Kato’s embarrassment, but he must sing like the rest, for the solo performance is an integral part of office parties.

Suddenly, the older of the two deputys stands and begins telling a story to relieve the silence.

The other day I was riding on a trolley, and unfortunately it wasn’t very crowded. You know, I like crowded trolleys because the girls bump into me, but this time I was just sitting reading the sports page. Two young girls were standing with their backs to me. They looked a lot like Miss Maeda and Miss Kondo over there: one was rather thin and the other a bit chubby. Well, they had these new mini-skirts on that come down no farther than here. Since I enjoy looking at girls, I was sort of sitting there contemplating the scenery, when I noticed that one of them had forgotten to take her laundry tag off the bottom of her skirt. I debated for a long time whether to tell her about this or not. I am a firm believer in helping others (turning to the framed copy of the “President’s Teachings” on the wall beside him, he recited the section on sincerity), but there are times, you know, when it is difficult to know just how to be kind. Finally, I threw caution to the wind, and tapped one of the girls on the rear like this with my paper, and pointed to her friend’s laundry tag. She understood and reached down to pull it off. Unfortunately it had been stapled and wouldn’t come off. Her friend turned in surprise and started trying to get the staple out too. Well, this caused quite a commotion and everyone in the trolley turned to watch the proceedings. When the tag finally came off, the girls looked up to discover that they were the focus of all eyes, and they turned red as beetles. It just goes to show how good intentions can sometimes make things worse.

The deputy’s style and gestures develop every risqué element in his story, and the room is filled with laughter from beginning to end. The women, embarrassed to be laughing at such a story, hide their faces in their hands.

The other deputy next stands and recounts discovering in public that his fly was open. He graphically demonstrates how he leaned over to close the gap in his pants and then, using his briefcase as a shield, attempted to zip up discreetly. The story is pretty much a failure, but the rest laugh and clap generously at the end.

During this time Kato has been swigging down glass after glass of beer and pulling on a cigarette. Attention turns to him once again, and everyone claps at the suggestion that he now try to sing. Finally ready, he hurries through a popular song and sits down amid thunderous applause, obviously relieved. Then everyone in the group takes his or her turn singing a solo. With much giggling and hand holding, two women pair off in a duet. One young man sings a song filled with taboo sex words disguised rather transparently as puns in the midst of an otherwise innocent story. Another offers a fine rendition of a soulful ballad. The deputy who told the funny story ties his necktie around his head in the homespun manner of folk dancers and proceeds to sing and dance an exaggerated rendition of an old folk song. He has everyone in stitches again. Finally, the chief, in a polished and charming manner, sings a traditional song and then its modern counterpart.

By nine, when the meeting closes with a final toast to the success
of the branch, over twenty large bottles of beer have been consumed, and the men are gaily drunk. The women are urged not to clean up, since their parents are probably waiting for them at home. After they leave, the men sit down to polish off the remaining beer, and then, at the chief’s invitation, they head off as a group to a nearby bar. The singing and drunken calling back and forth continue during their walk through the dark, empty streets. Several of the more euphoric stagger along arm in arm with a steadier companion.

Sitting along the bar, there is much effusive exchange of compliments and revelations of personal feelings. The chief and his deputies allow themselves what seems to be nearly uninhibited expression, but their subordinates appear to check themselves from reciprocating with as complete a degree of intimacy. Beginning with the younger men, people start going home about eleven, and only the chief is left talking to the owner of the bar at eleven-thirty.

To the American observer accustomed to the homeward rush of employees at quitting time, these office meetings and parties that last long into the night seem at first profoundly exotic and inexplicable. In Uedagin offices, there is no set time when work ends, no time clock, and a reluctance to leave before the rest. Staying late is a common quality of office work. In some instances, the whole office will stay until the last person is finished. This remarkable degree of cohesion is best understood through an examination of the main facets of Uedagin office groups.

THE OFFICE AS A COMPETITIVE UNIT

Branches are placed in competition with one another in numerous ways. In the collection of deposits, each is assigned a quota based on a certain percentage increase in performance. The standard of success is well understood to be relative to the record of other offices. Branches with good percentages of increase are held up to public notice in announcements. At the awards ceremonies gold, silver, and bronze awards (actually certificates for the office wall) and four other classes of recognition (for effort, cooperation with other branches, enthusiasm, and office efficiency) are distributed to the most successful branches. Awards to deputies for outstanding individual performance go almost invariably to men from the fifteen top offices. While a branch chief is seldom rewarded individually, any honors his office receives honor him and indicate that he is looked upon with favor. Obviously, the career chances of chiefs and deputies hinge to a large extent on the successful performance of their offices.

Reportedly, there is another reward for good performance. Offices that do well are said to receive larger amounts for miscellaneous expenses. This means that they can afford more sumptuous office entertainment, and in many cases it means less out-of-pocket expenditure for the chief who likes to treat his men to a drink after work.

Sections in the main office, because they do not collect deposits, are left out of this competition, but they are included in other comparisons. The morale of each office, for example, is measured by an annual survey. The answers to a long set of questions about satisfaction, office leadership, and personal problems are tabulated to give a profile of the morale level in each office. Personnel also pays close attention to the complaints and quittings for each office. A chief is judged by these standards as well as by rates of deposit collection and office efficiency.

SEX, AGE, AND RANK COMPOSITION OF OFFICE GROUPS

No matter how large the branch, the ratio of men to women remains about three to one. Important roles, such as supervisor and salesman, go exclusively to men. Only the positions of teller and record keeper are occupied by both men and women. Essentially the hierarchy within the office parallels the system of ranks. The youngest and least experienced men and women are assigned to either the front counter or record keeping. It is part of the official philosophy that all careers begin at the bottom and that training for later responsibility should include all of the fundamental jobs within a branch. For this reason, young men coming out of introductory training are automatically sent out to a branch to gain basic experience.

Most salesmen working out of a branch office are men in the twenty-eight to thirty-five age bracket. It is not unusual to find one or two much older men destined to work as salesmen until their retirement. They are regarded as tragic examples of wartime dislocation, because they tend to be people who lost their original jobs during that period and were subsequently employed by Uedagin as commissioners.

Close friendships within the salesman group are not particularly

6 Cole (1971:94-100) contains a description of a group-oriented incentive wage system in a small manufacturing firm that is interesting for comparative purposes. The Uedagin wage system, one that does not offer commissions or other wage incentives either individually or on a group basis, is described in chapter 7.
developed. The men are almost all married and self-sufficient in their work. They do, however, often befriend younger people in their branch, offering them counsel and accompanying them on pleasurable excursions after hours. Because they are married and removed in age, they may also assume the role of big brother toward the younger women in the office. The duty of serving as sponsors and chaperones for youth-oriented activities within the office usually falls on their shoulders.

The age range among deputys is pronounced. Promotion begins at age thirty-three, and the average age of deputys is thirty-nine. There are almost as many deputys of forty-five as thirty-five, and this wide age range is a major factor in producing variation in office relations. The ideal office is characterized by an even distribution of ascending ages within its rank hierarchy. Large age gaps and reversals of the usual parallel between age and rank are seen as potential problems for group relations. In reality, it is possible to find deputys in their fifties supervising people in their early twenties. One may also find a thirty-eight-year-old chief in command of a regular or deputy ten years his senior. To remedy such age disjunctures, a young deputy is usually assigned to branches with an older chief. Little more can be done short of a major change in promotion practices.

What are the consequences of age-rank disjunctures? Many said that younger men placed in positions of authority over older men can cause resentment and a refusal of cooperation, but few actual cases were encountered. Older men apparently can accept leadership from their junior if it is polite and considerate. Officés with an older deputy and chief, and thus an age gap, are liable to moral problems emerging out of a sense of distance and boredom among the young. Young people complain that men in their late forties and fifties cannot understand their generation, appreciate their humor, approve of their views of the world, or lead them in appealing recreational activities, such as bowling, hikes, and swimming. A sense of separation can be strong, and few older office chiefs are able to cope with this problem without the aid of a young deputy.

Problems in the main office occur less from disjunctions of age and rank than from other sources. Because all young men are sent to branches for their initial tour of duty, there are few men under twenty-five, but a large number of young women, in the main office. In the computer section, with its many key punchers, this shortage of young men is particularly acute. More characteristic of central-office problems, however, is a reduced sense of group involvement resulting from the availability of many activities and people not connected with the office group (most of which, however, are within the Uedagin framework). Bank-sponsored sports, hobbies, dormitory life, and the like do not replicate office group interaction in the case of the main office. Branches are like small islands in a sea of strangers, whereas offices within Aoyama have little of the outpost psychology.

Women occupy a place within the office only slightly different from the place they have in other areas of middle-class Japanese life. They are subordinate to men not only in rank, but simply because they are women. They never rise above the position of ordinary and never have supervisory powers. The only exception to the general rule that they occupy a position in the group analogous to their place in marriage is the nature of their work. At home the division of work by sex is almost complete, whereas in the office women work alongside and do almost precisely the same tasks as the youngest men. Both serve as tellers and record keepers, and in cases where the women are more experienced or more skillful they will be recognized for their ability. But no matter how valuable a worker she may be, a woman must play the part of a woman. This includes showing deference to men (even those younger), serving them tea, preparing food for parties, taking responsibility for brightening up the office with flowers and other decorations, and being cheerful. Women leave drinking parties early, act as hostesses for guests to the office, are expected to arrive at the office early, and are permitted to go home before the men. In all of these examples, they act the conventional part assigned to women in the home. At times the fact of working at the same tasks as men is rewarding, but just as often women report taking comfort in the womanly aspects of their place in the group. Making others happy and brightening up office life are tasks many mention as being the most satisfying.

Commenting on women in the office, men stress how sensitive and hard to manage they can be. A chief or deputy cannot get mad at them as he can at men, it is said, and the slightest friction may cause them to become upset. "Women's feelings are delicate, and we must be very tactful," they say. It is also felt that their presence at office parties and on trips interferes somewhat with the essentially male practice of getting drunk together.
These complaints are part of a general set of difficulties arising with the increasing utilization of women by the bank. Because they are as efficient, yet considerably less costly than men (they leave before their salaries get very high), women have since the war come to have considerable importance in banking, one area of Japanese business that has learned to use women efficiently in clerical positions. Problems center on the fact that they are not inclined to respond to the company and to their work with the same involvement as are men. Women have no career at stake in the organization and can always turn back to their parents. Office morale problems are quickly apparent among the women, and a great deal of effort is expended these days trying to find ways to keep the Uedagin woman happy. She has come to have a special kind of leverage because she is more willing to show her dissatisfaction and even to quit.

It must be emphasized that the chief assumes particular importance because he is the one responsible for the group’s performance, a matter understood to depend in large measure on good group relations. When morale is poor, office performance is poor, and almost invariably the leader is blamed. The people in the office may feel that responsibility falls on everyone’s shoulders, but the personnel department views the situation differently. For them, the prime variable in performance is the character and ability of the chief. When a branch does poorly the chief is likely to be transferred and demoted in responsibility.

**TRANSFERS AND OFFICE GROUP CONTINUITY**

Although the average man retains a long association with the bank, his participation in any particular office group is interrupted by periodic transfers. In 1968, four hundred people were moved from one office to another. This figure, representing over 10 percent of the total personnel, applies primarily to men. Transfers involving women occur only within Aoyama, where it is possible for the woman to commute from her home to a different office. The continuity of office group membership is also affected by women who leave to marry. One of four leaves each year for this reason. Combining the two factors, we

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8 The increasing utilization of women in the face of a growing labor shortage is a much-discussed trend, yet according to government statistics most categories of employment did not show significant increases in the percentage of women over the decade 1958-68. Only the category of clerical work showed a marked increase in female participation, from 36.9 to 49.3 percent, and this lends support to the observation that banks, one kind of organization that pioneered in giving women greater clerical responsibility, have been leading a trend of some significance (Office of the Prime Minister, 1970).

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can estimate an annual turnover of 15 percent for the average office, and the personnel department offers the additional information that the average time in an office is 3.75 years. Continuity, so characteristic of the individual-bank relationship (for men at least), is not particularly characteristic of relationships within an office group. It is useful to keep this picture of steady change in office group membership before us as we consider the efforts undertaken to unify the group and to sponsor good personal relations within it.

**INTERNAL ORGANIZATION**

Several general patterns of relationship are characteristic of office groups in the course of their normal activities. These patterns are manifested in the adjustments of the group to two basic requirements —work output and group maintenance. Both are the interrelated concerns of all participants, but especially of the chief.

The two fundamental configurations are the formal pyramid and the informal circle. The arrangement of desks within an office reveals much of interest in this regard. An aerial view of any branch office reveals a system of hierarchy with the lines of command beginning at the chief’s desk at the rear center, proceeding through the deputies’ positions immediately before him, and terminating at the desks along the front counter. Set on end, this picture fits the typical pyramid pattern. The fact that branch offices must be oriented to customers means that little internal facing can occur. Desk arrangement takes a somewhat different and more revealing form in the main office, where there is no need to face a front business counter. Typically, the chief’s desk is at the back center of the room. To his sides and a bit forward we find the desks of his deputies. The rest of the staff is gathered around in front, with many of them facing inward creating a ring. Whether an actual circle is formed or not is less relevant than the fact that desks are arranged to face one another. The exact pattern is determined by the space available and the preference of the chief, but never will one see a section arranged so that people are looking at the backs of others in the same group. Invariably, there is the

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9 These two primary aspects of small work groups, production and maintenance, are also fundamental aspects of the PM (production/maintenance) approach to small group leadership (Cartwright and Zander, 1966). It is fascinating to note that at the level of abstract scientific language the commonalities of leadership style regardless of culture can be demonstrated, and yet the actual practices, interpretations, and nuances of small group leadership can vary remarkably from culture to culture (as well as from group to group in the same organization), as this chapter hopefully illustrates.
sense of an in-looking circle, yet the positions of importance are easily determined at a glance. The chief, at a slightly larger desk, is clearly the focus of the arrangement, and his location permits him in a single glance to take in all that transpires within his domain.

In all cases chiefs work in direct contact with their subordinates. They have no separate private offices. Partitions, cubicles, and small side rooms are only used to set off special areas for conferences with visitors or for small discussions within the staff.  

The structure of work follows the office hierarchy, but there are qualities that distinguish it from a simple hierarchy. First, the general interrelationship of persons within the group is expressed by the desks' facing inward. Secondly, vertical ties within the office are direct and close, for no barriers are set up between the leader and his followers. There is little sense of individual isolation or of mechanical relationship in this pattern. The group, of course, is oriented to its work, but to the degree possible it is also oriented to maximize the sense of being a group. Interferences, such as noise, are not considered serious enough to justify separation or seclusion.

An informal circle is used for social relaxation and for other times when fellowship is the primary focus. Morale is sponsored by activities of the circle kind, in which differences of rank, age, and even sex are diminished while common membership in the group is manifested. If a pyramid represents the essence of the organization of work, a circle symbolizes the essence of the group principle.  

Considering all of its activities, there is no sense in describing the group as having but a single structure. Each activity and context calls forth slightly different arrangements based on a combination of the two principles, and the group finds it normal to shift from one to another. In the preceding description, the morning ceremony, the work routine, the staff meeting, and the party were all arranged differently. In the abstract, there are contradictions between the two principles, but in practice they depend on one another. In fact, one

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10 This and much else in this chapter exemplifies my assertion that in Japanese office groups distance and impersonality are not characteristic nor necessary for control in the way discussed, for example, by Johnson (1968) for American situations. See Dore (1972:280-281) for a similar view of authority in Japanese work groups.

11 The pronunciation of the character for circle and that for harmony are the same, wa, and this coincidence, if that is what it is, is utilized by some spokesmen for traditional morality. One Zen priest speaking to bank trainees expressed the opinion that the circle was the ultimately meaningful form, and a traditional artist in Aoyama, founder of a public association known as wa no kai, once spoke to me about the beauty of the almost completed circle as it reflects the dynamic and the ideal in social relations.

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key to maintaining an efficient office is to make frequent, but orderly, shifts from one arrangement to another so that the spectrum of relationship possibilities within the group, official and personal, may be realized. It is, of course, imperative that the pyramid regulate daily affairs. This makes the shift to informal, group-centered activities the direction that requires more effort and time. The general expectation of good group relations results in the fact that the working order will begin to break down, or at least lose motive force, unless discussion meetings, parties, and other maintenance gatherings of the circle type are forthcoming. It is part of the chief's job to be sensitive to this need.

Group maintenance requires effort and time. For the group to coalesce, for the potential cooperation and team motivation to be realized through informal activities, opportunities must be available after work and on weekends. This is why the administration and the office leaders plan, conduct, and usually pay for a heavy schedule of office social affairs. Individual members take time to participate, some out of obligation and others out of interest. Some feel coerced by the group pressure and resent having to go along, but whatever the reason few decline.  

Decision Making and Orders

The chief is empowered with the authority to make all decisions, and, if he wishes, he may maintain a strict order in which he alone decides. On the other hand, because the entire group is involved in the work of the office, most chiefs submit problems to discussion and, if they wish, to the rule of group consensus; or, after discussion they may decide the issue themselves. Of these possibilities, the last is the most common on major issues, whereas group decision making is characteristic of minor matters. Group processes require considerable time, and to push for an early consensus or to fail to involve everyone can lead to resentment and opposition. One simple rule influencing office decision making is: the more urgent a decision, the more likely it will be made according to hierarchy. Another basic consideration, however,
is that people favor group discussions wherever possible and have an expectation of participating in considerations of office affairs. This includes consideration at the office level of new bank-wide policies and directives.

This is also true of policies to which the chief has been committed by higher authorities. Office discussions, in this case, can transform an imperative into a solution endorsed and shared by everyone.

The question of delegating decision-making power is in all of these cases a subtle one. A chief, anxious for the positive effects of group discussions, may hold many meetings but submit issues of minor significance. He might choose to discuss his own decisions with the group. He might also introduce a question only when certain that his opinion will prevail. The conclusions may be foregone, but the fact that discussions have been held is most important, for a chief is expected to share his opinions, ask for advice, and permit dissenting voices to emerge. His trust and respect for the others and his acknowledgement of the group’s importance, both symbolized by this process, are what count.

OFFICE SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

During Japan’s most important holiday week, New Year’s, almost the entire office visits the chief’s home for a party. These gatherings are pleasant but far from carefree, for it is the chief’s house, and circumspection is expected. Some men bring their wives along, and this too contributes to the restrained atmosphere. The holiday season is a time for women to dress in their most gorgeous kimono, and the brilliance and warmth of the occasion parallel that of Christmas in the West. Next to family visiting and strolling about in public, the most characteristic event of the holiday for Uedagin people is the party at their boss’s.

The calendar of office social events for the year includes two overnight trips at company expense. These excursions, known as tamryokō, “rest and recreation trips,” are usually made to a scenic resort, where the entire group stays together at a hotel or large inn. Hot springs and famous tourist spots are popular. Planning of these trips is a group effort that provides pleasures of anticipation for all.

When the selected Saturday afternoon arrives, all typically board a bus and commence drinking and merrymaking. Excursion buses are especially equipped for onboard parties with microphones that can be passed from passenger to passenger, making the each-sing-for-the-
for it is a men's affair. The process of uniting the group has ended, and there is no further obligation for full participation. Those in the mood are left to continue the party.\textsuperscript{13}

Office groups experience six to a dozen such drinking parties a year. The ianryokō and teiki taikai, already described, are typical occasions, as are the traditional year-end party (bōnenkai), welcome and good-bye parties (kangetikai and sōbetsukai), and parties that develop out of the Saturday afternoon recreation program. The importance of the drinking party is strikingly illustrated by the observation of Uedagin friends that a man who could not or would not drink is at a great disadvantage in the achievement of leadership. Not to drink means to be unable to utilize the drinking party to win the affection of followers, to solidify the group, and to improve office morale in general.

Sleeping arrangements on an ianryokō place the men together in one or a few rooms and the women together in a separate room. Group sleeping arrangements are pleasant and preferred, for the intent of the trip is cozy relaxation, and this can make for similarities with the American teenage slumber party.\textsuperscript{14} Sex, it must be emphasized, is totally out of bounds. During the drinking, suggestive joking and humorous comments often occur, but sex has no place within the office group, and even a secret romance between two young people in the office must be forgotten for the moment.\textsuperscript{15}

Although the trip is ostensibly made for rest, the marathon drinking party that ensues leaves people dazed the following day. Similarly, in the planning stages, scenery and places of special interest are considered, but in fact there is little time for sightseeing. Some people complain of this and find ianryokō a necessary, if disagreeable, chore that takes time from their personal pursuits. For one with this attitude, such trips involve a submission to the group that can be rather humiliating. Objections, however, are rarely voiced to the group. The individualist, if he is to succeed in the bank, must overcome his resistance to office group social rituals of this sort.

Once each month, under the cosponsorship of the union and the welfare section, each office spends a Saturday afternoon in some form of physical recreation. During the warmer months interoffice softball tournaments are held. An astute observer of bank social relations commented that the inversion of the usual hierarchy during sports events created by the athletic superiority of the younger men makes such recreation a useful means for reducing office tensions. That every strike-out by a normally demanding boss is a home run for office relations sounds funny, but certainly such recreation does intensify office solidarity.

A field day with relay races, children's entertainment, games, humorous skits, and other pageantry is held each summer by the offices within each region. A great deal of imagination and effort goes into these affairs. The focus is on entertaining the family, a departure from the usual pattern in which only office personnel are included.

With the overtime load so variable and the degree of informal socializing among office mates largely dependent on personal inclination, a precise estimate of the average time spent each week in social activities with others of the same office is impossible. Clearly individual variation is significant, yet an estimate should be attempted. My figures are intentionally conservative.

(1) Average work time in the office: 56 hours a week.
(2) Office parties and Saturday afternoon recreation: 4 to 6 hours a month.
(3) Office trips: 60 hours a year (two overnight trips).
(4) Informal gatherings of friends and small groups in the office: 2 to 4 hours a week.

Thus, a typical individual spends fifty-six hours a week working with and four to six hours socializing with office mates. The point that the work group does considerably more than share an office and a set of tasks is evident. The contrast here with the recreation patterns of American firms is striking in at least three respects: overall time, the work group (rather than hobby, family, or other) focus, and the degree of intimacy obtained through drinking, singing, and the like.

\textbf{DEVIATION AND THE RESPONSE TO DEVIATION}

Actions at variance with the expected and required behavior within the group seldom if ever take the form of open confrontation with authority or refusal to perform required work. Numerous factors, including the ethic of cooperation, inhibit direct confrontations, and deviance takes more private and qualified, yet quite discernible forms.

The individual unhappy with his boss or with relationships in the group is likely to set himself at odds with group norms where matters
of personal preference intersect. Wearing excessive makeup, drinking too much, joining a leftist youth group, avoiding office social activities, and remaining notably silent during discussions are examples. These are actions that disturb others but cannot easily be labeled insubordination and dealt with in a direct way. Along the narrow line where private inclination and public involvement join, creating ambiguity of interpretation, one finds much of the nuance of group life.

Conformity and full participation can thus be viewed as voluntary offerings to the common existence. They should not be forced from individuals. Disagreement and criticism, as well as unhappiness, can be expressed through acts of subtle nonconformity. In "resistance" (teikō), both unhappiness and disagreement are merged. The understanding is that resistance is analogous to the rebellious behavior of children toward their families. The individual's natural state of existence, it is assumed, is within some group, and resistance is interpreted as essentially a sign of unhappiness and personal need. Thus, with few exceptions, acts of nonconformity are answered with sympathy and with special efforts to bring the individual back into the fold. The group's members, especially its leaders, may experience considerable irritation and anxiety, too, but these reactions should be repressed. Though some chiefs assert their authority and attempt to control the situation directly, particularly if it involves a man, the more typical response is a general group effort to pay more attention to the recalcitrant member and thereby overcome his feelings of resistance.

A notable exception occurs when most of the group object to their chief. Certainly the fastest way to bring relief from an oppressive or otherwise undesirable chief is to protest to the personnel section, an agency usually responsive to serious trouble at the office level. Personnel constantly reviews office performance, the results of its morale survey, and other indicators of trouble (such as quitting) in its decisions about which chiefs to transfer.

Schisms and personal animosities within the group can also have an alienating effect, and we find revealed in one office leader's attempts to cope with this kind of problem a third response to deviation, one utilizing the personal influence of deputies and others intermediate in the hierarchy. In this example, a branch is experiencing difficulty with relations between three small cliques of women. They go out separately after work and are unfriendly to one another in the office. Each is led by an older woman (in her mid-twenties). The most serious aspect of the matter is the fact that one clique, including the most diligent workers, has recently followed its leader in attending weekly meetings of the Communist Youth Movement (Minsen). A deputy in the office explains:

Our chief has asked us men to engineer better relations among the girls and improve our own relations with them too. I have been taking groups of them out driving on weekends and invited them to have coffee with me after work. My approach is to invite girls of the same age and thus cross-cut the age vertical cliques. By bringing members of the separate cliques together I hope to break down their sense of separation. When some have complained to me that I did not ask other friends of theirs, those in their own clique, I have explained that I am operating on a same age principle and will invite a different age group next time. This apparently satisfies them.

The chief has also asked us to keep an eye on those in Minsen, to report what we can find out about their activities and the degree of their involvement. Of course, the bank can't say anything directly to the girls, nor can we go to their parents. That sort of thing would be criticized as unwarranted interference in individual politics. Some of the girls' parents, however, have come to us for consultation and advice on this matter.

We can do several things to make it difficult for the girls to get deeply involved. We can invite them out on evenings when there are Minsen meetings, if we know when that is. It is hard for the girls to refuse our invitations since we work in the same office. Another possible countermove would be to assign the girls to other offices in Aoyama far from their homes, so that so much time must be spent commuting that they can't attend meetings. Fortunately, girls marry and leave the bank. If our young men get involved in a left-wing group to the same extent, we would have a much larger problem.

In this and other instances it is often necessary to live with internal problems for a long time, and the chances of success often hinge on such separate factors as transfer and marriage. The departure of those who do not fit in or the arrival of a new chief or deputy able to draw the office back together often characterizes the final redemption of group spirit. Efforts to engineer cooperation and full participation through focusing increased attention on those withholding themselves from group life are highly predictable, and partly because they are expected, their success is not as predictable.

OFFICE GROUPS AND THE LARGER ORGANIZATION

The general nature of work groups is acknowledged by the treatment they receive from above. We have already noted the common practices
of encouraging competition between offices and of judging chiefs according to their group's performance, and the result, that rivalry is often strong among men of that rank. The team form of motivation is relied upon, even in cases where the lack of comparability makes intergroup competition impossible. This complex has the following general correspondences with the larger organizational set up:

1) The rank of chief has special significance. Its status is high; it is crucial to most operations, particularly nonroutinary ones; and careers are either made or destroyed primarily at this level.

2) Individual forms of reward do not receive strong emphasis in the salary and promotion systems, at least by American standards. For example, no commissions on deposits collected are offered to salesmen.

3) Work groups, because they are recognized as independent social entities, are allowed considerable autonomy. Experts are not utilized to solve operational problems for specific groups. This would be regarded as outside interference, and the result would be to undermine morale and leadership. The bank does have an inspection team that visits each branch once every few years, but basically the work group is entrusted with full latitude to handle its own daily affairs. When it cannot do this well, it is likely that a new leader will be found. Nor do policies announced by the central administration concerning the conduct of groups necessarily have binding force. One year after the bank made 5:30 the official quitting time (on Wednesdays only), for example, most offices still were ignoring the policy. On matters of this kind, each office is encouraged to comply, but not forced to do so. Management watches the performance of work groups with a keen eye, but is reluctant to interfere. When a radical change is necessary, however, the intervention of central authority can be thorough and swift. The sense of domain and the expectation of discussion and consensus in small groups mean that much of the normal effort at changing work methods is directed at gaining voluntary participation. Management frequently calls for branch-level discussion of company problems, and new programs are often initiated at a ceremony attended by representatives of each office. The basic rule appears to be that goals come from above, and the means of implementing them are decided at the office level.

4) The office group is constrained by the large organization in various other ways, however, such as the absence of office-level control over recruitment and promotion. Transfers may be caused by office problems, but no chief has much power over who will be assigned to his unit. In fact, chiefs' requests are discouraged as a rule. Furthermore, the size of office groups is not determined by considerations of group dynamics, but by the work load and other external factors, with the consequence that some offices are too big to be easily organized on a small group model.

5) The company does not have a written set of rules defining the procedures of decision making for any level, but it is assumed that collective consideration is proper and necessary. Obviously, the hierarchy of ranks and the establishment of central authority define much of the process, but, even above the office level, group discussion and consensus are acknowledged, although their significance varies. Even at the top many of the small group procedures are the same, and the same kinds of alternatives in decision-making patterns characterize the interplay of leadership and group discussion within the realm of management.

6) The intense internal life of work groups, based on such factors as joint effort, common competitive position, and the elaboration of relationships, contributes to a sense of separation between them that is often accompanied by cliquishness and difficulties in cooperating with one another. Loyalties directed inward tend to make relations with other units reserved and occasionally even hostile. Mutual suspicion and criticism are common between groups in private, and occasionally they surface in one form or another. Chiefs, set in competition with one another, find lateral lines of communication tenuous compared to vertical ones. Without firm direction and coordination from executives of the department-head level, these difficulties can get out of hand.

These manifestations of how the large organization and the work group are related are perhaps of secondary importance compared to the influence the ideals of small-group conduct have on the manner of administering the entire company. The image of a company comprised of people dedicated to the same goals, personally involved, and

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16 Vogel's observation that "the section chief in the large organization has none of the independence in imposing arbitrary patterns upon his underlings that the old middle-class boss had in his narrow social microcosm [1953:263-264]" is also true, indicating a different parameter for the term autonomy.

17 Contrast this with the situation in America as described by Argyris (1954:164) of a cadre of officers any of whom is a boss for the general group of clerical personnel. Even in the Uedagin main office the criteria of group limits override that of rank alone in defining authority relationships.

18 It is necessary here to distinguish between written rules and formality, for though the former are lacking there is a high degree of formality of procedure based on routine, precedent, and common expectation.
united by interest and common spirit is, we have seen, the common underlying theme of company ideology. Executives, rather than consciously concocting such an image, appear to take the model of the company as a small group for granted when human relations matters are considered.

The fascination here is that any organization over a certain small size will find it exceptionally difficult to preserve a sense of personal, emotional connectedness that extends beyond the work group and other face-to-face relationships. While the nature of work groups is best approached from the question of their fundamental conceptualization, it is less likely that an ideology emphasizing small-group values will have the same significance for the larger organization. Company leaders may be devoted to such values, but they are not in a position to unite the entire personnel in the same immediate way group leaders can. Ueda in has been able to elaborate a wide range of activities of symbolic participation (ceremonies, gatherings of representatives, company-wide outings, and civic and charitable programs) but none of this guarantees a sense of connectedness to the whole.

DYNAMICS OF THE OFFICE GROUP SITUATION

We have come full turn, from considering the office group as a competitive unit that ideally should have a high degree of teamwork (wa) and satisfy many of the personal needs of its members, to a discussion of the established means to realize this conception, and finally to an understanding that problems of disunity and dissatisfaction are as constant to the situation as are the methods adopted to overcome them. Solidarity in work groups is something to be achieved, and, compared to the ideal, groups are likely to be viewed as imperfect. Basic understandings and values not only point to goals, but also highlight existing inadequacies.

Acknowledging the various qualities of small groups to be matters of degree compared to a set of ideal expectations creates the basis for examining the dynamics of the situation in terms of shifting conditions within the group. When the sense of solidarity is down, for example, hierarchy is less agreeable and more apparent. The reverse is also true. Solidarity itself is essentially a mood related to the emotional aspects of the group, particularly the relationship between the group leader and his subordinates. When things go well, when the leader is followed out of affection and respect, the internal structure of the group appears useful and proper. The three basic factors—positive emotion toward the leader, solidarity, and structure—are thus interrelated in crucial ways. When structure comes to imply distance and difference and morale is threatened, then the able leader invokes activities of the circle kind. His style is thus crucial, particularly as he must be able to create a mood of fellowship.

The most poignant sources of stress in this situation are the requirements of work. Pelzel (1970) is justified in underlining the importance of the task orientation of Japanese groups. Without a common task, office groups would have nothing to justify their existence, and enjoyment of one another informally would become frivolous and soon terminate. On the other hand, the demand for greater production, the problems of sharing the work and the responsibility, and the fatigue of strenuous effort most tax the emotional ties and the sense of mutuality within the group. This pressure falls particularly on the chief, for he alone faces the full force of demands and criticisms from top management.

It is interesting to note the response of people in the bank to the characterization of their organizational life in terms emphasizing close personal relations and a sense of unity. These, they say, are qualities a foreigner might choose to emphasize, but such a description ignores the daily problems and inadequacies of Japanese organization. When these problems are discussed, however, the same people's comments imply the existence of models of close relations and solidarity. Outstanding groups, ones with good working relations of the sort described in this chapter, are standards of comparison. A cultural approach, we may conclude, is of significance because it highlights the standards and expectations taken so much for granted by insiders. As cultural outsiders we must penetrate to this level, for otherwise we will be unable to understand the conceptual unity underlying the dynamic flux within any selected single group.

THE CHARACTERIZATION OF AUTHORITY

A central issue in any cross-cultural comparison of bureaucratic organizations will be the question of authority. Recently Crozier (1964), 
citing cultural difference as significant, has suggested how authority problems in French bureaucracy are closely related to various themes and patterns of French culture. Face-to-face dependency and warm primary group relations in work are difficult for the French, and the result is a high degree of impersonal authority and a reliance on rules. Crozier’s general approach, one that views the nature of authority as varying with such things as dependency, is one that receives support from this material.

To begin, legalism, such things as explicit rights and duties, is not characteristic of Uedagin hierarchical relations. Instead it is assumed that short of leaving the organization entirely the subordinate has no recourse to contend directly with his superior. Open argument with him, refusal to obey orders, and other forms of insubordination are all possibilities so rare as never to have come to my attention, and there are no rules that condone or permit such actions. People with exceptionally strong grievances usually hide them behind a screen of silence. In this sense the superior has absolute authority, but it is not legal in basis. Nor does the company union stand between a superior and his ability to exercise authority.

The acceptance of dependency (with limits) is a definite part of successful personal relationships in Japan, and there is much evidence that dependency is often regarded as a positive aspect of social relations. But dependency does not automatically lead to the “acceptance of most arbitrary discretion,” another of Crozier’s preconditions for bureaucratic success. We have seen that work group discussions and situations of informal intimacy are regular aspects of the program designed to maintain participation and acceptance. Without such efforts the group ideal of mutual interest would soon disappear. For the office leader, the ability to be arbitrary one moment depends greatly on his readiness to be highly responsive to the group the moment before and the moment after. This shifting emphasis is supported by official company policies and is therefore institutionalized and expected to a large degree.

Although Japanese procedures indicate much the same authority-compliance complex as that discussed by Bernard (1958) and those after him, the practices of American and Japanese work groups are quite different. For the Japanese, the procedures of discussion and participation are institutionalized, office groups are far more sensitive to the process of inclusion, and their leaders are far more inherently equipped to manage this form of direction than their American counterparts. In fact, the term for authority (ken) is not used in common thought to describe the dynamics of group activity. Acceptance (natto, participation (sanka), resistance (teikô), and opposition (hantai) are the dimensions of the problem, and impersonal rules and formal position are of little significance in adjusting behavior from the negative to the positive sides of these dimensions. Instead, the leader’s virtue, his concern for others, and the general esprit within the group are the most effective means to individual acceptance and participation. Involvement and trust, once established, permit considerable “arbitrary” discretion. Pelzel attributes essentially the same qualities to authority in Japanese household groups. He writes, “The tolerance for authoritarianism is perhaps higher in the Japanese than in many Western or Chinese situations, but in Japan no head can expect well-motivated action on any decision that has not been deliberately accepted by members who have the right by interest or competence to be heard.”

The patterns we have described are characterized by involvement, an emphasis on feeling, and little capacity to separate the people from their roles. Definitions vary with the people involved, not with some legal or rational formula. The energetic, warm leader creates for himself great power, while his opposite commands no more than a mechanical authority based on his position alone. Pelzel (1970:247) also asserts this view when he writes, “I argue that no attention is in fact paid to what may be called the social personality of the individual member. It is the emotional aspects of the personality that are instead


21 Nakane (1970:135) refers to the frequency of meeting as a basic measure of the closeness and firmness of the relationship.

22 Consider here David Riesman’s observation during his extended visit to Japan, “People refer to organizations as ‘undemocratic’ if there is no harmony or consensus. Thus, democracy and politics would seem antithetical [1957:202].” Nakane (1970:144) also emphasizes the particular democratic nature of small Japanese groups.

23 It is natural for American social scientists to ask about the conflict between “instrumental” and “affective” aspects of the leader-follower relationship. This distinction is not of primary importance to the Japanese, although it is recognized. Crucial personnel decisions (promotion, transfer, and firing) are made at the personnel department level to avoid excessive personal influence. The small-group leader will often use intermediaries, such as his deputies, to send or caution his subordinates when their personal influence is stronger, an illustration of how “affective” ties are used to support “instrumental” ones. Argyris (1954-154) describes “weak authority” contacts between officers and subordinates in the U.S. bank he studied, and there are, in Uedagin, leaders who also avoid almost any open expression of authority. The Japanese office situation allows much latitude here, but it does not allow the leader to withdraw to an impersonal distance. The marked centralization of crucial personnel functions in Japanese companies could well be interpreted as a counterpart to the strong “affective” pull at the office level.
given outlet in the procedures of the Japanese small group, and a wealth of standard behavior patterns can only be interpreted in this light." Loyalty to an immediate leader is obviously a crucial aspect in the flux of motivational levels. The more important motivation is to the work at hand, the more important leadership becomes.

It helps to keep these qualities of “authority” in mind when we consider such things as the union and the official ideology, for the vocabulary of both revolve around this and other key understandings.

A FRIEND AT COURT

In Japan many valued relationships involve a difference in age. Those between parents and children and between teachers and students are the most prominent, and they provide models for other relationships. Strong personal bonds between people of different ages have, for example, been noted for those working together in labor gangs, gangster outfits, village communities, and factories.¹

We have also seen how intergenerational ties are emphasized in the bank’s ideology. Finally, the most recent and prominent analysis of modern Japanese organization (Nakane Chic, 1970) gives a central place to the importance of what rather unfortunately must be termed senior-junior relations. It is Nakane’s conclusion that this relationship is crucial to our understanding of the uniquely Japanese qualities of modern organization. Clearly this aspect of Uedagin interpersonal relations deserves our close attention. And in fact, a detailed look at senior-junior relations will permit us to understand a great deal more

¹ Because they are so prominent a part of Japanese society, non-kin relations based on age differences have received considerable attention from scholars of various fields. Among the more notable works on this subject are Benedict (1934), Kawashima (1948), Ishino (1953), Nerbeck and Befu (1958), Bennett and Ishino (1963), Nakane (1967 and 1970), Whitehill and Takezawa (1968), and Cole (1971). Only the last four are addressed to the problem of senior-junior relationships in industrial and commercial organizations. Bennett and Ishino document the importance of such personal ties between a work boss (oyabun) and his followers (kobun) among temporary workers in many kinds of labor gangs. Whitehill and Takezawa note the importance of senior-junior relationships among factory workers, but they offer no details. Cole discusses the foreman-worker and other personal relations of a hierarchical sort among blue-collar workers. Nakane generalizes over the range of vertical relationships found in modern Japanese organization. Her work will be discussed briefly at the end of this book. The general topic of the patterning of non-kin relations on kinship patterns, of which the senpai-kohai relationship could be viewed as an interesting example, is taken up by Kawashima (1960), Wolf (1950), and Hsu (1970) among others. Drucker (1971) has noted what he calls a “godfather” relationship within Japanese management. His account contains inaccuracies but is an attempt to pinpoint informal senior-junior relations within modern management. For Chinese examples of a similar pattern see Folsom (1968).