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# A Study of Scaling of Life and Death (Ⅲ)

— A Comparative Study of National Character —

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## QOLD 評価測定尺度に関する基礎的研究 (Ⅲ)

— 国民性に関する比較研究 —

丸 山 久美子

先の研究 (Maruyama, 1999) において、我々は死生観には個人特有の性格特性が「死に対するイメージ」形成に強く作用すると推察した。個人の性格が何の様な状況によって形成されるのかを探るのは性格心理学の研究課題である。それによれば遺伝的要素と環境的要素が半々であるというのが大勢である。遺伝と環境の問題は性格に限らず知能の形成要因でもあるが、特に性格は「親の養育方法」、「風土的国民性」、「社会的習慣」などが重要な要素である。WHOのQOL測定尺度はこの種の問題を簡単に処理して一般化しようとしているが、QOLにおける「魂」の問題をも含めて考えれば性格形成の問題は避けて通れない問題と思われる。これまで余り考慮されなかったW. Wundt (1912) の「民族心理学」が今世紀末になって学界に浮上した所以である。Wundtの研究で最も今日的課題と思われるのは彼が人類の文化を4段階に分類した事である。それらは、原始文化、種族文化、国民文化、国際文化と名づけられている。ここにおける原始心性 (primitive mentality) はアニムズム、トーテミズムを含み原始宗教や呪術が生まれ、それが今日の混沌とした社会状況の中で無意識に働きかけると、新たな新興宗教 (カルト) を蔓延させる要因となっている。C. G. Jung の普遍的無意識の中に存在するある民族、文化にとって固有の無意識が個人の魂の問題に強く働きかけると考えれば、WHOのQOL測定尺度だけではどうしても測定不能の領域となる。「魂」の測定を可能にする手段の一つとして世界に固有の様々な「国民性」、「民族性」の様相を吟味検討することが本研究の課題である。

ゲルマン民族 (ドイツ, オランダ), アングロ・サクソン民族 (イギリス, 北米), ラテン民族 (フランス, イタリア, 南米) とヤマト民族 (日本) の固有な国民性を割り出し、これらの民族間の類似性や相違性を検証して行く。

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**Key words;** Primitive Mentality, Image of Death, National Character, Japanese Custom, The Way of Thinking

## 1. Introduction

In the previous study (Maruyama, 1999) we discussed the attitude of Japanese and Americans toward life and death. We considered the relation of religious attitudes and the quality of life and death (QOLD), especially attitudes toward the images of death. It seems that Japanese male and female students tended to make choices based on the Buddhist concept of transience or going with the flow of events as the way of living in a chaotic society (Maruyama, Biebler, 1998). The essence of this thought is not to be actively engaged in things happening around oneself, but rather simply to go along with the flow of events, tentatively observing the course of events. This way of living seems to reflect a typically Japanese view based on traditional Japanese religious values (Buddhism and Shintoism).

What is national character? Ever since W. M. Wundt, the originator of experimental psychology, first studied the national character scientifically, publishing voluminous papers during 20 years in *Völkerpsychologie*, Vol. 10 and *Elemente der Völkerpsychologie* (1912), the only systematic approaches to the study of national character appeared in academic publications. They could rarely be considered scientific by contemporary standards, being content to compare percentages, for example. In 1969, A. Inkeles published a study of national character in social psychology using the term "National Character." Indeed, scholars intentionally avoided the term "National Character." In Japan the Institute of Mathematical Statistics started quantitative survey studies of the Japanese national character in 1953.

The Institute defines the collective character as encompassing belief systems, ways of thinking, emotional attitudes, feelings and sentiments (Hayashi, 1998). Thus, a collective national or ethnic character is formed beyond individuals, and is buried deeply in their unconsciousness. Jung(1914) called this the "collective unconsciousness." Another expression by Japanese reflects a belief regarding the ancestral mind, the so-called *gosou* or five layers (Terada, 1935) which penetrate the soul as memories of genetic transmission from very distant ancestors in Japan. Also the concept of *mujoukan* (transiency), which is one of the most important views of the world in Buddhism, refers to the notion of the transmigration of souls. This holds that every single life inevitably dies and everything is under constant change. Especially in Japan, ancestor worship can be regarded as a religion, in which ancestors are objects of profound veneration and are believed to have a supernatural power over the living.

The sense of harmony and identification with nature marks one of the most conspicuous dif-

ferences between Japanese and Westerners. The Japanese, unlike Westerners, have viewed nature not as opposed to man but as a blessing under which he is allowed to live in harmony with his surroundings. This Japanese concept of nature seems to be correlated more or less to the following.

- 1) Japan's long rice-growing civilization is blessed with four clear-cut seasons, a temperate climate, and abundant rainfall. Japan also experiences occasional typhoons and earthquakes. In such an agriculture society, the Japanese have had to follow the natural seasonal rhythm of climate change and at the same time live under the menace of nature.
- 2) Since early Shinto times there has been the Japanese indigenous belief in a superior and mysterious force of nature, the sacred, called *kami*, which resides in natural elements.
- 3) The Japanese adapted to the climate conditions. The Japanese traditional house is characterized by its open style. It typically has a *zashiki*, a main Japanese-style room used on special occasions and for special guests, with a *tatami* - covered floor. This main room faces the garden, usually partitioned by a corridor with two layers of wide-open sliding panels, *shoji*, paper sliding doors, on the inside and glass doors on the outside providing ventilation, light, and a view of the elaborate garden. Japanese lived for centuries in this kind of environment, which encouraged an appreciation of nature.
- 4) The Japanese inclination to highly value *kokoro*, heart or soul in contrast to intellectual ability is significant. *Kokoro* is believed to dwell not only in human beings but also in physical objects as an essence which constitutes each entity. Based on this belief great stress is placed upon deep communion between people and nature. For example, in any Japanese art such as painting or pottery, it is maintained that the ideal state is, paradoxically, *mushin*, a detachment from mind, in which an artist and his object are one. Moreover, because of such an attitude, in the medical field brain surgery has developed slowly. Medical authorities could not define brain death, and believed that death occurred only when the heart stopped, making organ transplants impossible, even though the number of patients who need organ transplants has been rapidly increasing in recent years. At last in 1997, the law recognizing brain death as human death laid the legal basis of organ transplants.
- 5) Historically the amalgamation of Shinto and Buddhist beliefs should be pointed out. As Buddhism gained a foothold in Japan in the 7th century, people gradually accepted the Buddhist belief that not only human beings but all existing things, animate or inanimate, possess Buddha-nature in themselves. One can thus extend oneself into nature with no

barriers.

In a previous study (Maruyama, Biebeler, 1996), Japanese and German university students seemed to have similar attitudes toward nature. For example, the response to the item “Religiöse Gefühle order religiöse Gedanken” was strongly positive in both male and female German university students.

## 2. Quantitative analysis of national character

Thus, national character as the collective unconsciousness is represented by a group structure which is realized as a data structure through various methods of data processing (Hayashi, 1998), and as an exploratory approach, it represents the perpetual circular movement between the individual and the collective as in Fig. 1.

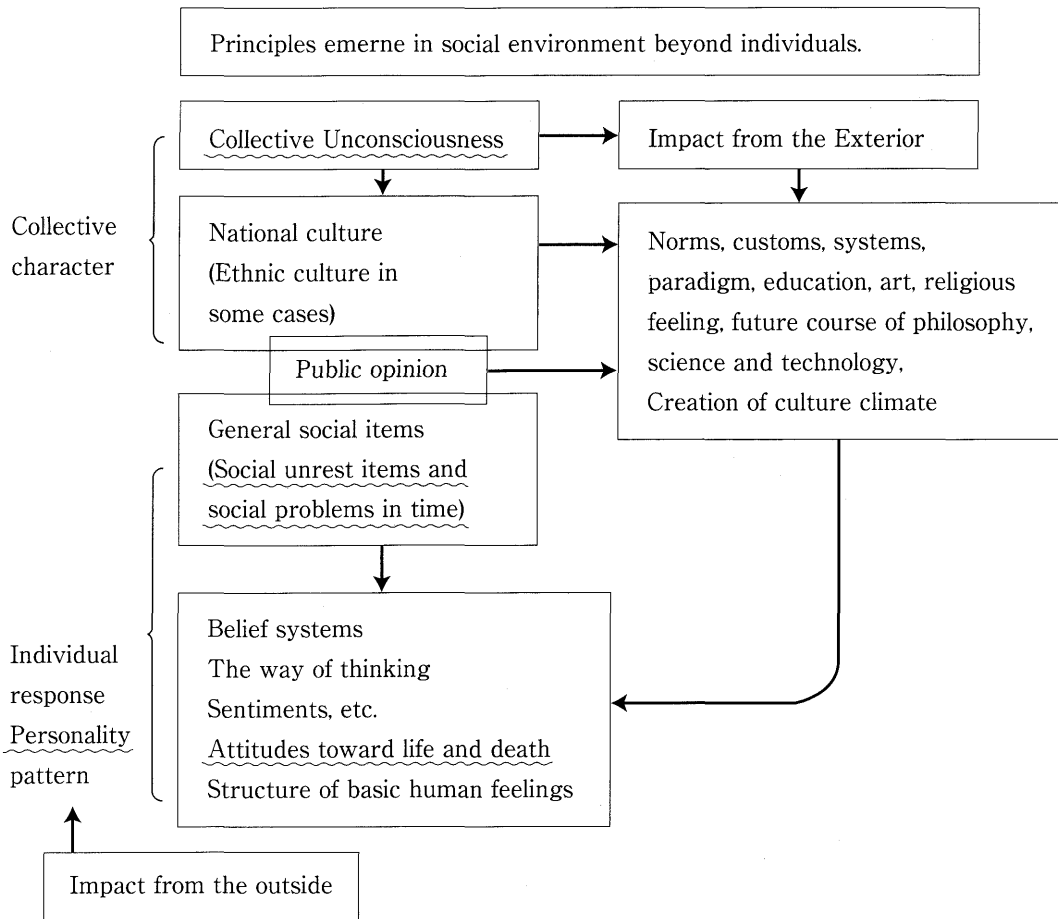
To put it another way, a social environment emerges; a cultural climate is created or there is a shift of culture or value, or a merging and commingling of social norms, customs, paradigms, education, contemporary thought and art, religious feelings and so on. The cultural climate in turn influences individuals. We see the strongest influence on individual response patterns in terms of general social items; the second strongest on national character items; and the weakest on items related to basic human feelings. However, we must find the structure of basic human feelings (Gefühl) in each national character and culture. In Fig. 1, some very interesting aspects are underlined by this author.

We can see cross-social surveys and the classification of nations in Hayashi's research (Hayashi, 1998). The groups taken up in this research include the Japanese, Americans, English, French, Germans, Dutch, Italians, Japanese-Americans, and Japanese-Brazilians.

Fig. 2-a shows a simple graphic summary of the similar relations obtained by the Research Committee for the Study of the Japanese National Character (1992). The items for survey are as follows:

- (1) Compared with ten years ago, do you think the standard of living of Japanese (Americans, English, Germans, French, Dutch, Italians, Japanese-Americans, and Japanese-Brazilians) as a whole is 1) much better, 2) slightly better, 3) about the same, 4) slightly worse, 5) much worse, 6) don't know.
- (2) Compared with ten years ago do you think your standard of living is 1) much better, etc.
- (3) Over the next five years do you think your living conditions will get 1) much better, etc.
- (4) Do you think people, in general, will be more happy or less happy than they are now?

Fig. 1 Function of National Character



Reprinted from Hayashi, C. (1998). The quantitative study of national character interchronological and international perspectives. In W. Sasaki, *Values and Attitudes Across Nations and Time* (Ed.), (pp.91-114). Brill: Leiden. Additional items (wave lines) are by this author.

- 1) more happy, 2) less happy, 3) no change, 4) other, 5) don't know
- (5) How about people's peace of mind? Do you think it will increase or decrease? 1) increase, 2) decrease, 3) not change, 4) other, 2) don't know.
- (6) What about people's freedom? Do you think it will increase or decrease? 1) increase, 2) decrease, 3) not change, 4) other, 5) don't know.
- (7) Do you think that people's health will improve in the future, or do you think it will get worse? 1) improve, 2) get worse, 3) not change, 4) other, 5) don't know.
- (8) To what extent do you worry, either for yourself or for your family, about each of the fol-

Fig. 2-a Attitude toward socio-economic condition (s.c.)

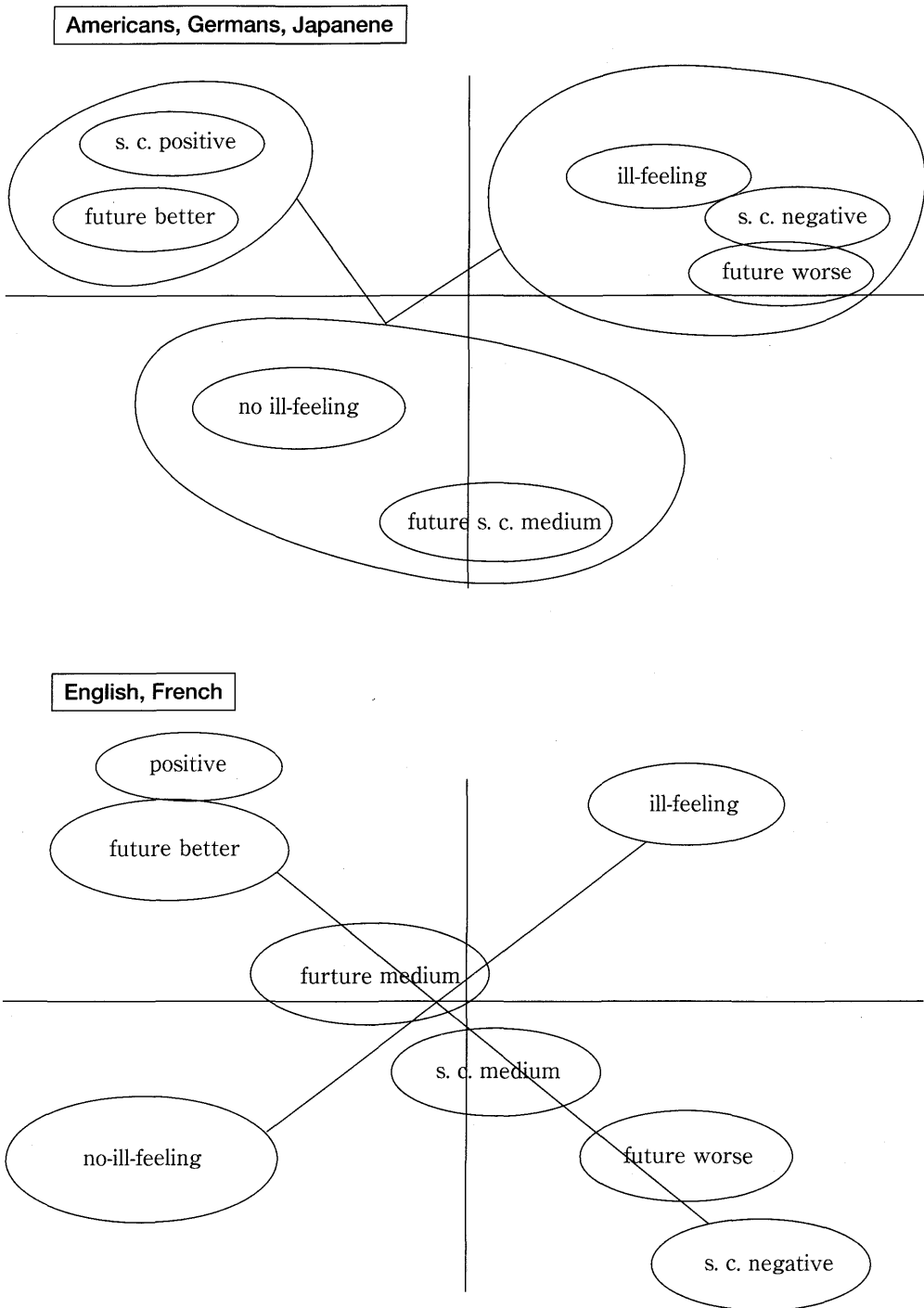
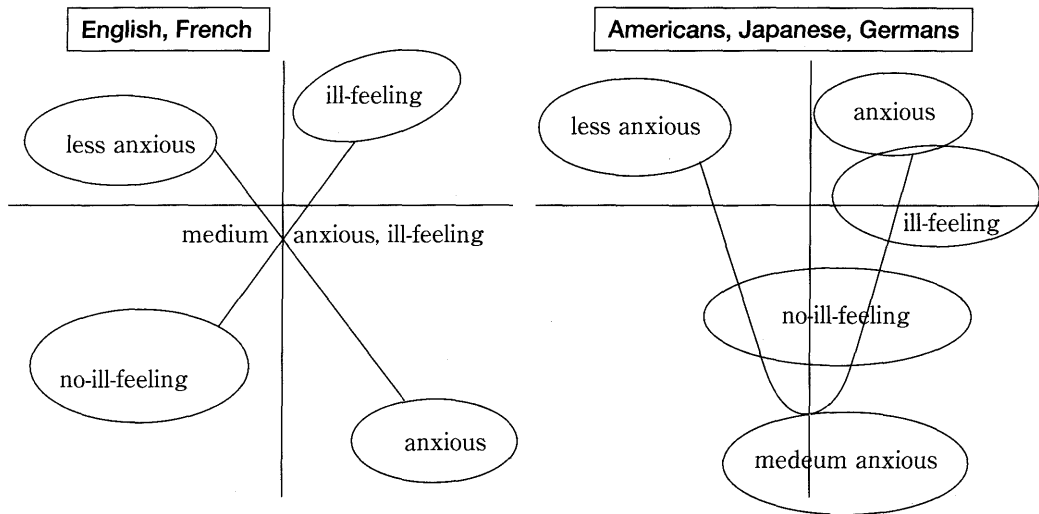


Fig. 2-b



lowing? Would you say 1) very much, 2) slightly, or 3) not at all?

a) serious illness, b) car accident, c) unemployment, d) war, e) nuclear power accident.

(9) During the last four weeks have you suffered from any of the following?

(10) For your age, how satisfied are you with your health? 1) very satisfied, 2) fairly satisfied, 3) fairly dissatisfied, 4) very dissatisfied, 5) don't know.

In summary, the answers regarding health questions for the French and English are similar according to this socioeconomic scale, while for Americans, Japanese, and Germans, these questions are on a uni-dimensional scale. In this case, Germans enter into the American and Japanese cluster.

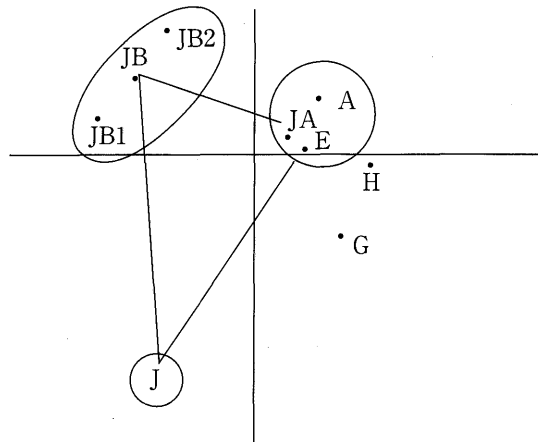
Fig. 3 shows the configurations of nations, but with French and Italian deleted.

In this instance, JB (Japanese-Brazilians) are found in a separate quadrant with the French and Italians. The similarity between the Japanese-Brazilians and the French and the Italians is very interesting. That is, they belong to the Latin nations. We can see the three cluster configurations in Fig. 3, that is, the Anglo-Saxons (English, Americans, Japanese-Americans), the Latins (French, Italians, JB), and the Japanese. Also, the Germanic nations (Germans, Dutch) appeared in this figure, and these nations are nearest to the Japanese. These are very interesting results.

From here, we can proceed to a detailed analysis of the data without losing sight of the whole



Fig. 3 Configurations of nations and relevant groups



- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| A: Americans | JA : Japanese-Americans in Hawaii       |
| E: English   | JB : Jaanese-Brazilians in Brazil       |
| G: Germans   | JB1: First generation of JB             |
| D: Dutch     | JB2: Second and Third generations of JB |
| J : Japanese |   |

Reprinted from The Research Committee for the Study of the Japanese National Character, (1995). Application of cultural link analysis for comparative social survey. The Institute of Mathematical Statistics Research Report, General Series No. 77.

groups in questions where the nations are similar and different. This enables us to explore the simultaneous classification of questions and nations, or the universality and particularity of the data structure across nations (Hayashi, 1998).

### 3. A Comparison of attitudes toward death among German and Japanese University Students

In the previous study (Maruyama, Biebler, 1996), we discovered the attitudes toward death in both nations.

Table 1 shows the results of both nations on the image of death when they were a child. In both male and female German youth, they reveal something mysterious, something unknown in the images of death in their childhood. In both male and female Japanese youth, they have "heaven and hell" in the image of death. Japanese in general have simple thinking, while Ger-

mans have complicated thought. This is an interesting result.

Table 2 shows the results of both nations regarding what influenced their attitudes toward death. It was the same result in both nations, with no difference between sexes, that is, the death of family or a near relative. In the case of Japanese, there were not many responses regarding religious education, and in the case of Germans there were not many responses regarding personal health, illness, and physical conditions. Are Japanese youth always worried about their body, health, etc?

Table 3 shows the results of the most unpleasant effects of suicide. The most sensitive responses are about the fact that they will be unable to see their family any more.

Table 4 shows the motivation for suicide by Germans and Japanese University students. All of them answered that illness or pain could be a motive for suicide. We can order the motives for suicide for both nations and sexes.

Table 5 shows the results of rank order and the correlation coefficients between six groups. There are no differences between sexes in either nation, but differences between nations do exist. Comparing both nations, Japanese males and females had slightly different responses, and there was low correlation between them. The order of the item in loneliness or depression or despair was fifth for males, but for females it was ranked 10th. Most interesting results were found in the item regarding escaping nuclear war. German female and male students ranked this high, but in Japanese, especially males, these were ranked lower especially by males. These were very interesting responses. What is the Japanese character? They were the only nation in the world to suffer from nuclear bombing.

Table 1. The image of death when a child

	Germans			Japanese		
	M	F	T	M	F	T
1. Heaven and hell	3.25	3.21	3.23	3.75	4.06	3.90
2. Future life after death	3.10	3.09	3.09	2.83	3.10	2.96
3. Reincarnation	1.74	1.50	1.48	2.60	2.72	2.66
4. Death as a kind of sleep	2.77	2.71	2.74	2.27	2.36	2.31
5. Vanishing of all body and spiritual activity	2.19	2.17	2.18	3.19	3.01	3.10
6. Something mysterious. something unknown	3.61	3.46	3.53	3.01	3.11	3.06

Note: The scale is 1~5 points.

**Table 2. Experience influencing attitudes toward death most**

	Germans			Japanese		
	M	F	T	M	F	T
1. The death of family and a near relative	3.33	3.70	3.53	3.52	3.76	3.63
2. The death of friend or acquaintance	2.44	3.35	2.94	3.13	3.41	3.26
3. Religious education	2.07	2.12	2.09	2.10	2.39	2.23
4. TV, Radio, movies, magazines, etc.	2.69	2.45	2.56	2.86	3.14	2.99
5. Personal health, illness, and physical conditions.	1.43	1.55	1.50	2.38	2.15	2.27

**Note:** The scale is 1~5 points.

**Table 3. The most unpleasant elements about suicide**

	Germans			Japanese		
	M	F	T	M	F	T
1. I will be unable to have any experiences.	3.01	3.04	3.03	3.67	3.84	3.75
2. I am afraid of what will happen to my body.	1.60	1.90	1.76	2.46	2.74	2.59
3. If there is life after death, I as anxious about what will happen.	1.98	2.11	2.05	2.36	2.57	2.46
4. I will be unable to see my family any more.	3.44	3.52	3.48	3.74	4.16	3.94
5. I relatives and friends will grieve.	3.31	3.47	3.40	3.18	3.75	3.45
6. Everything that I had planned will be ended.	2.57	2.89	2.75	3.45	3.55	3.50
7. I will cease to exist.	2.20	2.57	2.40	3.18	3.32	3.25

**Note:** The scale is 1~5 points.

**Table 4. The motivation for suicide**

	Germans			Japanese		
	M	F	T	M	F	T
1. In order to get revenge on someone or to put another person in a difficult position	1.09	1.05	1.07	1.41	1.39	1.40
2. Afraid of going insane	1.68	1.63	1.65	1.60	1.73	1.66
3. Illness or pain	2.32	2.24	2.27	2.01	2.11	2.05
4. Failure or shame	1.19	1.15	1.17	1.68	1.78	1.72
5. Loneliness or depression or despair	1.61	1.69	1.65	1.61	1.75	1.68
6. Loss of a loved one through death	1.63	1.74	1.69	1.82	2.03	1.92
7. Loss of love	1.19	1.22	1.08	1.32	1.39	1.35
8. Conflict within family	1.07	1.09	1.08	1.35	1.47	1.41
9. To escape nuclear war	1.63	1.87	1.76	1.28	1.42	1.35
10. Feeling of meaningless in life, self-hatred	1.43	1.67	1.56	1.67	1.88	1.77

**Note:** The scale is 1~3 points.

**Table 5. Rank order correlation of both nations on the motivation for suicide**

Items Groups	RANK ORDER										RANK ORDER CORRELATION					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	GM	GF	GT	JM	JF	JT
GM:	9	2	1	7	5	3	7	10	3	6						
GF:	10	6	1	8	4	3	7	9	2	5	.87					
GT:	8	6	1	4	5	2	9	7	9	3	.90	.93				
JM:	7	6	1	3	5	2	9	8	10	6	.44	.36	.45			
JF:	8	5	1	4	10	2	8	6	7	3	.31	.44	.46	.69		
JT:	8	6	1	4	5	2	9	7	9	3	.49	.50	.55	.92	.81	

**Note:** GM: German Males                      JM: Japanese Males  
 GF: German Females                      JF: Japanese Females  
 GT: German Total                          JT: Japanese Total

#### 4. Another analysis of nations

To reveal similarities and differences among the Japanese, Americans, and Europeans (English, French, Germans, Dutch, Italians), we will look at most of the general questions in Hayashi's Research Committee, 1991, omitting those concerning interpersonal relations. The following questions were used:

- a) economy and social class
- b) anxiety
- c) ancestors, family system, religion
- d) science and technology
- e) health and life satisfaction
- f) money
- g) expectations for the economy and social conditions
- h) trustfulness
- i) family and marriage
- j) political attitudes

Table 6 summarizes these results by rank order, and economy and social class(a); political attitudes(j) are omitted because they consistently obtained a two-dimensional structure instead of a uni-dimensional structure. The data was analyzed using the quantification method III of Hayashi.

Fig. 4 produced the information in Table 6 with high precision. Germans, Dutch and Italians

**Table 6. Rank order of 7 nations**

	Meaning of Rank							Smaller rank	Correlation coefficient
	G	F	E	A	J	I	D		
b. Anxiety	2	6	4	5	3	7	1	Not anxious	.93
c. Ancestors, family system, religion	7	4	5	1	3	2	9	Consider important	.96
d. Science and technology	7	3	5	1	4	2	6	Positive	.96
e. Health and life satisfaction	5	6	2	3	4	7	1	Positive	.71
f. Money	6	5	4	2	7	3	1	Not money oriented.	.89
g. Expectation for economic & social conditions.	2	7	4	3	1	5	6	Positive. optimistic	.93
h. Trustfulness	2	6	3	1	4	7	5	Trustful	.71
i. Family, marriage	7	5	4	3	1	2	6	Traditional	.89

**Note:** G=Germans, F=French, E=English, A=Americans, J=Japanese, I=Italians, D=Dutch

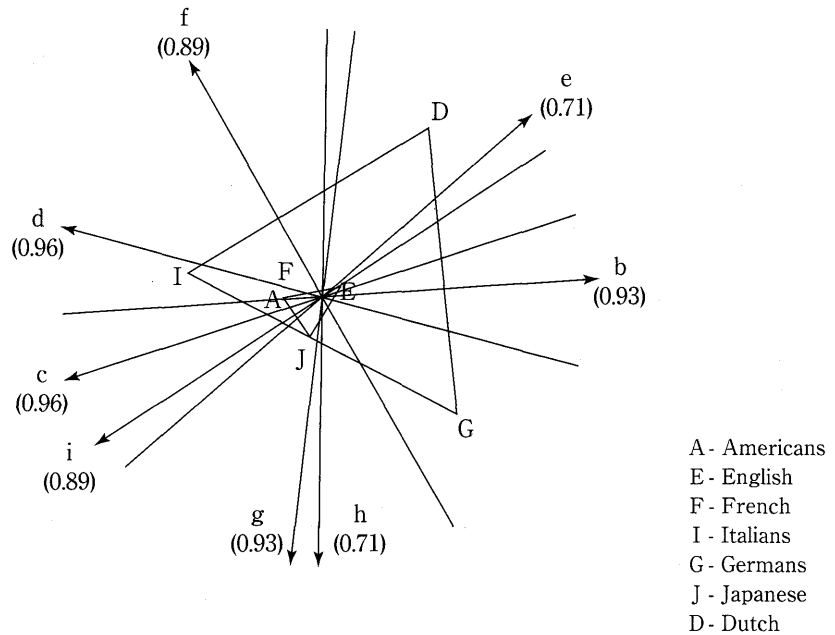
The Research Committee for the Study of the Japanese National Character, (1991). Hayashi. C., Suzuki. T., Sasaki. M., Miyake. I. and Hayashi. F. Cultural link analysis for comparative social research — a new approach for the exploration of structure in ways of thinking applied to cross-national analysis of general social attitudes. The Institute of Mathematical Statistics Research Report, General Series No. 71.

form a larger, approximately regular triangle. The Americans, English, and Japanese form and approximately regular triangle within that triangle. The French are located approximately on the same line as the Americans and English. This means that the Germans, Dutch and Italians show different features on the various scales from the others, and they differ from each other. The Americans, English, French and Japanese are comparatively similar. In the configuration of double triangles the Germans are found rather closer to the Japanese, the Dutch rather closer to the English, and the Americans and French rather closer to the Italians. In conclusion, the Japanese are similar on some points and different on other points in comparison to the Americans, English, French, Germans, Dutch and Italians. We must analyze these results in greater depth, and find the structure of the seven nations from anthropological and social psychological points of view.

## 5. Consideration

Various kinds of national character have been considered by various kinds of analyses. What can be concluded from the results obtained from statistical analysis of the data? Can we relate

Fig. 4 Position of Nations



Reprinted from The Reserch Committee; Hayashi, C. , Suzuki, T. , Sasaki, M. , Miyake, I and F. Hayashi. Culutural link anaysis for comparative social research-a new approach for the ex ploration of structure in ways of thinking applied to cross-national analysis of general social attitudes. Research Report, General series, No. 71. The Institute of Mathematical Statistics. 1991. Triangles are by this author.

national character to the QOLD scale? It seems to be very difficult and complicated to find the structure of the unknown, unconscious mind in the human soul.

We can simply reveal some aspects of the state of the disease, such as physical condition, pain, being in a bad mood, feeling tired easily, sleeping well, having a good appetite, and so on, but we can not see the pain, the groaning of the individual soul in patients.

Nevertheless, this problem is a very important aspect of terminal care. Can we develop some kinds of strategy to deal with mental anguish toward death in the future? That is a challenging question, especially for doctors, the family, and other people caring for the patient.

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