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Methods of Social Control and Socialization in Japanese Day-Care Centers

People learn normal responses to social control by being socialized. They become accustomed to the methods of control used in their society and learn to use them themselves. They then focus conscious attention on less common practices and events while taking the basic substrata of control methods for granted. But the basic methods are also interpreted and reinterpreted under differing social contexts throughout the life course.

This article applies an ethnographic perspective to social control and early childhood socialization in Japan. Methods of social control in Japan are directly or indirectly connected to such matters as self-control, time management, success in life, self-development, mental health, relaxation, and self-training, and these methods should be understood in relation to pervasive cultural concepts such as how the Japanese view children.

Here I will explore several methods of social control that I found significant at two Japanese day-care centers in suburban Tokyo where I conducted field research. In order to highlight what seem to be Japanese features, I will

This paper benefited from discussion among the participants of the Conference on Social Control in Japanese Early Education. Some parts of this paper were presented at a session of the 85th Anthropological Association Annual Meeting in Chicago (1986) in my paper “Controlling ‘Chaos’ in Time and Space at Day Care Center: Reflective Cross-Cultural Video Interviewing in Japan and the U.S.” My thanks to Ray McDermott and Frederick Erickson, discussants, and Mariko Fujita, the session organizer. I am grateful to Charles O. Frake and George and Louise Spindler for their encouragement and insight.


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use comparative data from my ethnographic research in a day-care center in a middle-sized Wisconsin community. In both Japan and the United States, I used a technique called "reflective cross-cultural interviewing" in which informants watch a videotape or film of activities in a different culture that are similar to activities that take place in their own. The interview centers on reactions to what has been viewed. One of the advantages of this technique is that it helps identify what the informants are culturally sensitive to and comfortable with.

What are the underlying assumptions Japanese teachers have about classroom control? What are their opinions about disorder as a management problem? Their answers fall into a number of categories including: (a) establishing the atmosphere of the day care, (b) letting children shift mood and attention, or kibun-tenkan, as a control technique, (c) developing self-control, and (d) using voice signals to guide children's activities and behavior.

"It doesn't seem to be chaos," said Mary, an American day-care teacher, while watching a videotape of 25 children at a Japanese day-care center who were sitting at a table waiting to be served lunch. One teacher is standing by the cart, taking out bowls and plates. Four children help the teacher take the dishes to the tables. The scene lasts about ten minutes.

Like Mary, other American teachers comment on this scene using the word chaos. I am surprised that this Japanese scene appears to contain a potential for disorder to Americans. Japanese viewers of the same scene do not see anything that would lead them to expect "chaos" from the way the children act, and I have never assumed that the scene could be chaotic. In fact, it appears quite natural to me. By "natural," I mean that the children sitting at the table are not just sitting quietly, expectantly waiting; rather, they are looking around and talking with others, so that the levels of activity and noise are both rather high.

I also find it intriguing that the scene leads American teachers to question how it is possible for 25 four-year-old children to carry out their activities when the teacher is not closely supervising them. American teachers rationalize that the Japanese must have some system of their own for main-
taining order, thus invoking a naive cultural explanation to bridge the per­ception gap. An opportunity is thereby created to inquire into American cultural assumptions by asking how the American teachers would avoid “chaos” among the young children in their own day-care centers.

Controlling “chaos” is one of the tasks of American day-care teachers in the real world. In contrast to Japanese teachers, Americans try to cut off opportunities for collusion among children when their activity turns chaotic. American teachers have a basic understanding of where, when, and in what type of activity disorder may occur, and based on this understanding, they carefully arrange the timing and location of various day-care activities to avoid such situations. They plan in order to avoid situations with a potential for collusive disorder among the children.

In the Japanese context, what the Americans see as “chaos” is understood as an episode of irregular flow within the larger flow of interactions and activities that stretch over days and years. In the day-care setting, disorder inherently occurs and should be managed as part of the day care’s program of learning. Japanese teachers, it seems, are trying to create or are willing to permit “real” group life under their auspices. For Americans, “chaos” is conceived of as an obstacle in the progress of the group and the life course. In their view, “chaos” should be prevented in order to carry out the program smoothly. Thus American teachers seem intent on creating “ideal” group life at day-care centers. The Japanese, on the other hand, intend to use disruptive events as part of their instruction.

I have perceived more interaction of children with others, including with teachers, in Japanese day-care situations than I have in American day-care centers. I also have a strong impression of observing a pattern of the teachers’ performance and the children’s response more in America than in Japan. Japanese teachers seem to play their role more from offstage; American teachers seem to perform their role at center stage. Are such perceptions biased by my own cultural background and my research purposes? How did I get such perceptions?

Disorder among children was, in fact, comparatively uncommon at the American day-care center I studied. American teachers were very careful to prevent their children from becoming wild or chaotic under any condition. Whether at snack time, lunch time, nap time, or during art projects, games, or even in transitional times between various activities, they were watchful and prompt to respond. During my observation at the Wisconsin day-care center, I noticed that the children played and moved in groups much more than I had anticipated. I had expected more individualized programs in America than in Japan because of the emphasis on individuality in American culture. Doesn’t the organization of children into groups increase the possibility that the children will become wild or unruly?
An answer to this question was suggested by the impression that Japanese teachers had of the American day-care center whose activities they watched on video. During a scene in which American children played outdoors, the Japanese teachers noted that the American teachers did not seem to be playing with their children. Actually, American teachers do play with their children, but they do so less than Japanese teachers. Rather, American teachers are busier keeping their eyes on their children.

American teachers place children into groups that they can supervise closely in order to prevent the children from becoming wild or unruly. The smaller the group, the easier it is to supervise. This is a principle of organization in American day-care centers and grade schools. In fact, American teachers have smaller size groups of children at both day-care centers (from three-year-olds on up) and grade schools than do their Japanese counterparts.

In discussions, Japanese teachers do not emphasize the issue of control. From the Japanese teachers' viewpoint, controlling a child may destroy the child’s nature. Constant supervision means the suppression not only of bad characteristics but also of the good nature of the children. They think that good children are vivacious, spontaneous, and creative.

Japanese teachers can see both the merits and drawbacks of dividing their own classes into smaller groups and letting each group carry out a different play activity or project at the same time. The merit of dividing into smaller groups is that teachers are able to interact individually with the children. The drawback is that the teachers are not able to see the class as a whole. Thus Japanese teachers actually prefer handling a larger group to supervising a smaller group.

Both Japanese and American teachers do many similar things at their day-care centers. However, there are important contrasts in management style between the two. It is important to grasp connections between these differences and cultural concepts of time and space. Japanese teachers are very careful in setting up an atmosphere of routine, an environment that forms the basis of day-care activities. This is considered necessary to make the day-care goals of socialization most effective.

Teachers think that the day-care group life starts from the moment each child leaves home with a parent and ends with the arrival back home. They encourage parents to walk with their children from home to the center because it makes the children physically stronger. Most Japanese parents take their children by bicycle or they walk together. The number of parents who drive their children to day care, however, is increasing. Teachers also discourage mothers from doing their shopping after work before picking up their children. The teachers feel they should pick up their children first; the sooner the parents pick up their children, the better for the parent-child re-
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It is also true that when the parents cooperate and follow these dictums, the teachers' work is lightened.

The experience of walking to day care can give children the perception that they are taking only one of the different pathways possible to go from home to day care, making turns at many corners. Children also see how people care for flowers and plants in front of their houses or along the street as well as how they care for their dogs and cats. This experience is useful when the child grows older and realizes that life is not straightforward but rich in people's concerns.

The day care shares with the home methods of social control by having parts of the day-care building constructed similar to regular houses. This facilitates the children's sense of "kejime," their ability to act appropriately depending on where they are. The entrance is a good example. Children learn how to take off and put on shoes when entering or leaving home and the day care. Through this exercise, children gain a knowledge that boundaries in space are mentally determined. The boundary between inside and outside is recognized not as a door, a physical object, but as a zone in which people take off and put on shoes. In the center of this zone, the floor of the "inside" is slightly elevated, but since this is only a slight indicator, children must learn to recognize what it means. In other words, the difference in levels is so small that people can ignore it, and many children just walk in with their shoes on because the boundary is marked by physical difference but not by a physical obstacle such as a door.

The classroom is also used as rooms at home are used: room space is multi-purpose. The concept for this in Japanese is ryōritsu, meaning co-existence or compatibility. Children learn how they can use a limited space for different and numerous purposes if they are creative. In fact, the classroom appears not to be crowded at a Japanese day-care center, not because of room size, but because of the uses made of the room. The Japanese classroom is empty until teachers and children take toys, tables, and project materials from storage areas and drawers. This is in contrast to American homes and day-care centers which have certain corners or space permanently set up for a particular use.

Social control in the context of Japanese day care does not mean the restriction of children's movements. Teachers do not supervise or limit the individual child's movement about the room. Of course the teachers watch over infants and control them by physical means when necessary, but older children seem to move everywhere they want to in day care. Japanese teachers are more permissive than Americans of children who are supposed to be doing a specific task or waiting in line. In the Japanese classroom, which is an open space, the children are allowed to go from one corner to the other, into other rooms, and even onto the playground when
they want to. They can use both doors, one open to the hallway and the other to the playground through the patio. When both doors are open, we have the impression that the whole building is one large open space.

Kejime and ryōritsu are important concepts related to each other, and also to shūchū, concentration. Without the power to concentrate, other abilities do not work well later in life. The ability to concentrate is shaped by one method of social control, kibun-tenkan. Many Japanese, both young and old, want to become good at kibun-tenkan but find it difficult to do so. Mothers often say, “My child is not good at kibun-tenkan. His playing time drags on for hours and he cannot find time to study before he goes to bed.” Workers say, “I am not good at kibun-tenkan. When I have trouble in human relations at work, it bothers me long after I have left the office.”

Kibun-tenkan is also one of the methods of social control used in day-care centers. I first noticed it while conducting a reflective cross-cultural interview. A teacher said that she used kibun-tenkan when she wanted to have the children change from one activity to another. I was puzzled by this, because to force children to change their mood seems to discourage children from having good attention spans. But Japanese teachers are not as concerned about children’s short attention spans as American teachers are. While American teachers talk about the problems short attention spans cause, Japanese teachers do not mention this issue.

In using kibun-tenkan as a control method, teachers change the children’s mood through the use of voice signals, music, teasing, and directions. The point is to make the children adapt to the teacher’s “unexpected” actions. It is their professional role to make children do well in group life, and as professionals, teachers are trained to work under the assumption that what they do helps shape children’s growth and development. In reality, day-care teachers are in charge of a group of children and in order to control their group, teachers need to be experts at group management. Therefore, teachers need to have all children change mood simultaneously so that they can go smoothly through their schedules.

4. Consider, for example, the exhortation of elementary-school principals to “play well, study well” that they tell students in morning gatherings. In the classroom, teachers rephrase this lesson by emphasizing three forms of behavior: ryōritsu (using time equally for study and play), shūchū (concentrating on one thing at a time), and kejime (shifting quickly from one activity (playing) to another (studying)). Students do not think the lesson too idealistic since they hear stories of many successful people who can both play and work well.

5. Some Japanese say or think that they are very good at kibun-tenkan and can manage psychological burdens in any conflict. Popular magazines and newspapers describe in special issues or regular columns the particular skill that corporate presidents, political leaders, and other executives have in kibun-tenkan. In interview articles, reporters often ask these people how they exercise kibun-tenkan.
Kibun is a word that Japanese people use in thinking, speaking, and writing about various aspects of their lives. In the phrase kibun-tenkan, the primary meaning of kibun is how one feels. Japanese commonly use this word as follows: “kibun ga ii” (I feel good); “kibun ga warui” (I feel bad); “kibun o kaeru” (to change one’s feelings); “kibun ga kawatta” (my feelings changed). All of these expressions signify that kibun is a condition that continues for a certain period.

In socialization, kibun often refers to temperament in addition to feelings. The former meaning is used implicitly, as when a mother says, “My son is not good at kibun-tenkan,” she may mean that this boy cannot move quickly from playtime to studytime. She may also imply that this boy is constitutionally unable to manage his moods well, and he can hardly be expected to change his temperament. By saying that her son would not be smart enough to enter a prestigious university or a medical school because of his temperament as well as because of poor kibun-tenkan in managing his studies, a mother can conclude that it is not her fault in how she raised her child. However, day-care teachers use of the term kibun-tenkan is different from mothers’.

Japanese teachers use kibun-tenkan as one method of class management. However, they do not think of this as a way to control children because they do not use the concept of controlling young children as, for example, American teachers do. We cannot ask Japanese teachers how they supervise their children but we can ask Americans. If we posed this question to Japanese, they would probably say that they do not supervise their children. Yet I do not believe that Japanese do not control young children in day-care centers; the Japanese teachers simply do not have the same concept of control that American teachers have.

In the kibun-tenkan method, teachers make use of the short attention spans children have for controlling potential problems, especially for avoiding one child getting out of control. They do not think that one child out of control will make the whole class chaotic. Rather, in Japan other children will quietly look at the troubled child or at the interaction between the teacher and the child, and some children even help their teachers handle these situations. American teachers, on the other hand, explain that if one child becomes wild—for instance, shouting at meal time—other children will soon do the same thing.

Using the kibun-tenkan method, teachers create a new rhythm of play or activity. A teacher might suddenly play the organ without any announcement of the next activity. This method sets up a new cognitive orientation for the children. In other words, Japanese teachers insert a sharp discontinuity to shift the mood of the children. Such discontinuities are accepted practice in activity management in Japanese day cares.
To ask a child to do what he is supposed to be able to do at his age is one method of social control. It also tests his self-control. Let us take lending as an example. Having young children lend is common practice in Japan. Not only parents but teachers often say to older children who are in conflict with younger ones: "Since you are older and bigger, you can lend it to her." This implies age differentiation in that the older is better able to control himself than the younger. In other words, the younger is stronger than the older in social interactions. Older children are taught that they should yield to younger ones. In a similar situation, American teachers frequently tell two- and three-year-old children to share: "Share, Brian," or "Share the toys with your friends." Though the methods used by Japanese and Americans may sound similar, I feel there are crucial differences.

By saying "lend," Japanese teachers try to make children think that they keep ownership of the toy they have been playing with, so that they do not feel hurt psychologically. However, sometimes when a child snatches a toy away from another child without asking, the victim cries and expresses his hurt. The teacher will soothe him, saying "That was wrong." If the child does not stop crying, a teacher may stay with the child and walk around with him, even perhaps into another classroom for a while. The other children are left under a second teacher's supervision. In most cases, the child who snatched the toy is free from any reprimand. Teachers do not say to that child, "You should ask him first," as American teachers would.

What then in Japan is the importance of lending? By asking this question, I mean that I would like to find the underlying meanings of "lending" which are significant throughout the life course. It is dangerous to discuss Japanese lending as equivalent to American lending or sharing. In Japan, lending does not have the same cultural power it does in the United States. In adulthood, lending may bring about trouble, and thus it is discouraged and not much done in Japan. On the other hand, lending and sharing are basically accepted throughout the life course in America. Thus it is encouraged of people of all ages.

In Japan, the concept of sharing is not necessarily associated with something unique about an individual. "Sharing" often means that a specific person has a specific thing or experience to offer, and in the United States sharing is associated with "uniqueness" as part of American individualism. Story-telling, talking, and presentations are "shared" in the sense that each child is given equal access to what is thought of as unique. Recent editorials in some of the major newspapers have claimed that people need to enhance their consciousness of copyright. 6 The idea underlying this

claim is that the Japanese people can recognize the ownership of objects but cannot appreciate the ownership of subjective, invisible, or intangible properties such as copyright. Japanese people share such properties without acknowledging the owners of them. They do not appreciate an individual's uniqueness.

For what reasons then do children lend their things? Japanese children and to stop concentrating on them. They understand that they are to give up a feeling of possession and to change their mood. Doing so is highly regarded in Japan. On the other hand, in America, “sharing” is considered a good activity and teachers explain this, explicitly encouraging children to bring toys from home to share, for example.

To ask Japanese children to “lend” is to provide a cultural lesson in learning how to control themselves. Teachers need to have control over the children, and children need to perceive other children as an important part of their world. Teachers achieve this goal through different interactions with their children that change the children’s moods. Children achieve this goal by learning to sense when their mood changes or is changed by their teachers. Lending is therefore a lesson in self-control.

Japanese teachers also use voice signals to control children in specific projects. I observed the interaction of one teacher with her four-year-olds in an art project and recorded them on videotape at a day-care center in a suburb of Tokyo in 1981. In using the videotape to analyze teacher/child interactions, I will limit my analysis here to the scenes recorded from the beginning of the first small group’s session to the end of the third small group’s session.

In the art project, five or six children of the same age played with paint rollers using five colors on one very large piece of paper spread on the floor. Other children in the class played outside on their own while the small group was involved in the project. Each child in the project had a roller and one of five colors and drew lines on the paper, walking across it with the roller. Each group’s session was divided into three parts: painting, clean-up, and transition. In the main part, children used the rollers to draw on the paper. In the clean-up, the children cleaned the paint from their bare

7. Methods of social control become most powerful when students want to internalize the message of self-control. In reality, students want to have techniques to enable them to concentrate on their studies in order to pass both regular examinations and the college entrance exams. This self-training surely requires the ability to cut off distractions from the outside world. Comics, for example, are one way students can experience the “real” world between one study time and another. Comics do not disturb children’s minds because their stories develop without uncertainty or ambiguity. Rather, they are a good stimulus for children. Students can achieve the ability of concentration by sitting in a chair and deciding which book to take at one moment, comic or text.
feet and the floor with rags, and during the transition, children who had
finished their part in the art project went outside and children in the next
small group came in to participate in the project.

The teacher used voice signals differently in different parts of the art
session. The teacher used such utterances as “ja” (or “ja-a”), “hora,”
“hai,” and “hai ja” much more frequently in the main part of the session
than in other parts. The function of the four utterances was basically to
draw the children's attention to her as American teachers use “OK” or
“OK, now.” By drawing the children's attention, the teacher also focused
the children's mood on the well-organized activity to make the activity go
smoothly. In this sense, it is likely that the teacher frequently used these
vocal signals during the main part of the art project for directing the chil­
dren's attention to how to use the ink-roller, which was a new tool, and
controlling the behavior of children who misused the tool. The teacher did
not need to use such signals so frequently during the other parts of the ses­
session because the children were not engaged in new activities in either the
clean-up or the transition parts.

Specifically, “ja” is used in two situations. The first is when an indi­
vidual (teacher or child) or the whole group is to assume a new behavior.
The second is when an individual (teacher or child) or the whole group is to
behave as before but in a different setting. “Ja” is related to new behavior
or to a new setting for ongoing behavior. “Hora” is used to terminate a
child’s misbehavior. A teacher also uses it to explain what children have
done. “Hora” is related only to ongoing behavior. The meaning of “hai”
which we are dealing with is not “yes” in English, and I have excluded
from the present analysis cases in which “hai” meant yes. When she said
“hai,” the teacher expected a quick response from the children. Another
use of “hai” is to affirm previous behavior and to signal children to start
quickly to do a specific task. “Hai ja” is a combination of “hai” and “ja.”

How do teachers use verbal interaction to control the immediate behav­
ior of children? Are words powerful enough to correct the behavior of chil­
dren who are disturbing other children working with them on a project?
Are they used to thwart children who might create a chaotic situation? Let
us look at a case that suggests the answers.

A boy, Jun-kun, was a member of the first small group in the art
project. After the children in his group finished painting, he wandered
around inside instead of going outside to play on his own. In the middle of
the second group's art project, Jun-kun began to shout, “Yowa-mushi
ko-mushi hasan de sutero.” This saying is common in Japan when a child
bullies another and literally means to pinch a weak worm, a small (imma­
ture) worm, and throw it away.

Jun-kun did not seem to be directing his jeers at anyone in particular,
but he first started shouting just after the teacher noticed that Aki-chan, a little girl, was still not using her roller even after the teacher had instructed her to begin. Somewhat accusingly, the teacher said, “Aki-chan, you haven’t started yet. Do it this way.” Aki-chan still did not move, and at this point Jun-kun started to bully her. He seemed to be responding to the interaction between the teacher and Aki-chan.

The teacher did not respond to Jun-kun at first, but after he shouted his taunt for the fourth time, the teacher spoke to him. I will cite the entire narrative because it symbolically reflects cultural ideas of gender, adult-child interactions, ijime or bullying, how to cope with unruly children and those who feel neglected, and so on.

Jun-kun: “Yowa-mushi ko-mushi hasan de sutero.”
J: “Hasan de sutero-tte iu hō ga omoshiroi.” (It’s more fun to say “Hasan de sutero.”)
T: “Yowa-mushi nante inai yo. Dare ga yowa-mushi nano?” (Nobody here is a weak worm. Who do you think is?)
J: “Iru yo.” (There is so!)
T: “Dare yo.” (Who?)
J: “Onna no ko.” (Girls.)
T: “Doshite onna no ko ga yowa-mushi na no?” (How come girls are weak worms?)
J: “Chigau. Ijiwaru suru’n ja nai no. Naki-mushi na no.” (Hey, I’m not bullying. They are crybabies.)
T: “Onna no ko ga?” (Girls are crybabies?)
J: “Un.” (Yeah.)
T: “U–n.” (Yeah?)

After this, the teacher turned her attention to other children. As a result, she had no more interaction with Jun-kun concerning his bullying. In fact, Jun-kun shouted his taunt again later. However, neither the teacher nor the other children showed any reaction to Jun-kun. He seemed to be neglected. Although Aki-chan knew that she was the target of Jun-kun’s bullying she did not show any obvious reaction to him. But after the above interaction between the teacher and Jun-kun ended, Aki-chan said to the teacher in a soft voice, “Jun-kun was climbing where he shouldn’t have. . . .” It sounded as if she was complaining about him. But the teacher was listening to another child, and so Aki-chan was also neglected.

What the teacher did to prevent a boy from disturbing the class was not to cut him off from the project group, as an American teacher might with a “time-out.” Nor did she say anything to change his mood. So did the
teacher intend to control Jun-kun? I do not think that the teacher had to have such an intention because the other children did not seem to be disturbed by him, though he had some psychological effect upon Aki-chan.

The question is what significance the teacher’s words had in the overall context. What she said was not what one would expect her to say if she was trying to control an unruly child. Rather, she appeared to let the unruly child do as he wanted and to let other children react to him as they wanted. In this sense, then, the teacher did not control children in managing her class. What seems to have occurred was collusion between the teacher and her children. We need to find a term to signify what the teacher tried to do in managing her class instead of using “control,” which has other implications.

Good class management is the key for understanding how Japanese teachers think of their goal as day-care teachers, how they consider the group of children, and how they actually act in managing their classes. Teachers do not concentrate on the activity of the entire group, whether a large group of 25 children or a small group of 5. Rather, they are trained to pick up an individual child’s behavior and feelings as he is playing with other children. Good teachers keep track of the atmosphere of the whole group, wandering around the classroom just as their children do. When they encounter children creating problems or in trouble themselves, they try to solve the problems in the same way Jun-kun’s teacher did.

Teachers accentuate the whole group, though the focus is on a specific child. Teachers feel as if they are “navigating” the group by managing happenings (e.g., bullying, fighting). Thus, teachers handle chaos in a passive way, letting the children provide the activity and the irregularity. However, the children do not know exactly where they are going, and therefore the teacher as navigator gives them instructions and signals.

One navigating technique is *kibun-tenkan* in the sense that teachers change or activate the atmosphere or focus of the entire group as well as the behavior of the children. The teachers are part of this same atmosphere because they are part of the group, not supervisors. What the teachers say has meanings on more than one level: it leads to *kibun-tenkan* of both the children and of the teachers themselves.

If the methods of social control, such as *kibun-tenkan*, are as culturally accepted as coaxing, is it discipline for the children to internalize this in

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adapting to the "real" world? Or are adults deceiving them in getting them to behave as the adults want?

From the American teachers' viewpoint, Japanese teachers "deceive" the child. They do not give enough instructions for the project to children beforehand so that children understand what they are to do. Teachers do not explain everything because they want to teach the children how to cooperate in a social group and solve the problems partly on their own. And though American teachers would say that Japanese teachers do not seem to supervise their class—obviously, since one teacher is stuck to one child—Japanese day-care classes seem to be well organized. How is it possible to organize a group of children without what Americans would consider sufficient adult supervision? This question suggests that the types of social control found in early childhood education in Japan and America are different.

Japanese teachers might think American "sharing" is a "directive." But using the term lending would be "deceptive," American teachers might think. They would say, "Children have a very short attention span. Japanese teachers make use of this tendency to avoid problems but it doesn't let children conceptualize how important it is for everybody to learn they can use the same toy."

On the other hand, American teachers in the same way would interpret the frequent use of vocal signals by Japanese as indications that the teachers may be untrained, immature, or unprepared for organizing and managing a project. They might interpret the Japanese teachers' use of vocal signals as a cover-up for their weaknesses. But in order to use verbal signals to focus the children's attention so they will concentrate on the project, Japanese teachers purposely do not teach in advance a full set of rules to which the children can refer. American teachers would give full instructions on how to use the tools and how to clean up. They would demonstrate the whole series of actions the children are supposed to perform, and they do not necessarily repeat the instructions. On the other hand, Japanese teachers like to work together with the children. To be asked what to do next and to think about what to do next seem to stimulate and excite the children during the project though the teachers give a partial set of instructions before the project starts.

Although the methods of social control used by Japanese teachers seem to Americans to have aspects both of discipline and of deception, such an analysis ignores the Japanese context of meaning. The Japanese teachers have their pedagogical reasons for these practices.

To summarize, the crucial point I wish to make is that the different underlying conceptual frameworks of teachers in the two cultures in question provide differing goals and approaches to interpreting the nature of social
control. The American day-care teacher aims at an ideal order of self-disciplined children but assumes that she must actively create that order first, whereas the Japanese teacher, while also seeking an orderly world of self-disciplined children, feels less a necessity to directly shape such a world and more a responsibility in guiding indirectly a process by which the children themselves progressively learn to interact with one another smoothly and with less and less disruption. Differing assumptions of what is "natural" to children of this age and differing expectations of the teacher's role in relation to the children are also part of the subtle cultural distinctions involved. Kibun-tenkan, lending and sharing, perceptions and expectations of "chaos," and the style of verbal cues and interventions all make greater sense within this comparison of cultural contexts. What is at least observable at this early stage of socialization subsequently becomes aspects of cultural differences of adult social ordering and control that are much more difficult to perceive, decipher, and analyze.

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