

Carl Becker  
COMMUNICATION:  
EAST AND WEST

Annotated by  
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by  
Carl Becker

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## まえがき

現代は「コミュニケーションの時代」と言われる。昔から「和」の文化の伝統を持つ日本人はコミュニケーションの巧みな民族のほうである。しかし、日常生活の中でも誤解されたり自分の意志をうまく伝えられなかったりする事も多い。さらに、初めて外国の文化や言語に出会い、異文化間コミュニケーションを行うとコミュニケーションが思うほど容易なものではないと考えさせられてしまう。従って、外国語を学習する我々は、コミュニケーションの本質をここで改めて考えてみる必要がある。英語と日本語の違いを知ること自体は非常に興味深い学習になるだけでなく、言語の裏に隠れているコミュニケーション的要素の考察によって、物の見方や考え方の違いに対する洞察を深めることができる。そうすることで、我々日本人は日本語的発想から自由になり、英語的な視点を得られ、人間としての地平線を広げうるのである。

本書は、先ず第一章で身近で易しい挨拶、紹介、子供の言語習得をはじめ、文化間における表現の違いの意味を分析し、解説している。第二章は、人間の頭脳がどのようにして言葉を整理するか、どうして言葉が丁寧になりうるか、どうして目で見えないコミュニケーションが成立するのか等の問題を扱っている。そして、第三章では、コミュニケーションの基本となる文章の種別を更に学問的に説明すると同時に、その実践的な応用を考えている。

筆者のカール・ベッカー博士は、アメリカの若い哲学者・比較思想学者である。アメリカの哲学者は言語哲学を意識して研究するが、ベッカー博士は記号論理の権威である Irving Copi 博士に師事された。中学から大学時代にかけては、数々の Debate (討論) 大会に優勝し、日米両国での弁論大会の監督や審査委員とし

てもよく知られている。最近では、比較コミュニケーションの論文に対して学術雑誌より賞を贈られ、その分野でも注目されている。更に、博士は日本語や漢字が達者で、新漢音辞典「漢字早見表」を開拓社より出版されている。博士には何度かお会いしているが、真に立派な異文化の理解者であり、学者であると同時にその考え方の実践者でもある、という感を強くしている。

仏教とキリスト教の比較研究でハワイ大学から修士号を取得され、1974年に来日し、4年間天理大学と京都大学で学び、ハワイ大学に戻って博士号を取得された。その後、南イリノイ大学やハワイ大学で哲学を教え、日本では、大阪大学で英米文学史や比較思想史を教授され、現在は筑波大学で教鞭をとられている。博士の自伝的比較文化論“Japan: My Teacher, My Love”やその比較文化論的内容を教材とし学生のコミュニケーション能力を向上させる目的で作られた“A New Approach to Communicative English”は好評を博し、同じ英宝社から出版されている。

本書の英文は明解なもので、大学生諸君の模範とすべきものである。同時にその内容は、学問的裏付けがあるだけでなく、博士の実生活体験も踏まえて書かれているので興味のつきぬものとなる。鋭い発想の裏には、博士の日本に対する温かい愛情が終始一貫して流れている。学生諸君がコミュニケーションに関する認識を深め、国際人としてのスタートを切る上で本書が役立つことを願っている。

注釈は、ベッカー博士に質問をし、間違いのないよう心がけたが、思わぬ誤謬もあるかも知れない。御教示を願う次第である。

1988年秋

成毛信男

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## I. HOW WE LEARN LANGUAGE

### 1) How Do You Do?

Let us begin our study of communication where any conversation begins: with greetings. Japanese greetings generally are of two types. To people we do not know very well, we say, "Konnichiwa" or "Konbanwa." In fact, these words come from a village setting in which everyone knows everyone else. They mean to inquire, "And what are you doing today?" In friendlier situations, where we know the person we are greeting, we more often say, "Atsui desune," "Samui desune," or some similar comment about the weather. 10

Such greetings are possible in English, but much less common. In English, it is more common to hear requests for information as greetings, such as, "How's it going?" "What's new?" "What's up?" "What's happening?" or even the popular Spanish phrase, "Que pasa?" One day I ran into my American office and said, "It's hot today, isn't it?" in an English translation of a Japanese greeting. My American office mate responded with a surprising analysis: "No, *it's* not hot, *you're* hot, because you've been running. And if it *were* hot, that would be a dumb thing to say, because it wouldn't tell us anything we didn't already know." Perhaps that was too strong a response, 20

but it may partially explain why Americans don't use "It's hot today," as a greeting, except in small farm towns where there is not much news to talk about.

My office-mate's conclusion that "It's hot" is a "dumb thing to say," is a bit hasty, however. Although it does not convey new information, this phrase does have the valuable function of confirming that we share a common experience. The more difficult the common experience, the more important to recognize that we bear it together. The Japanese greeting, while gaining no new information, does affirm the common bond between the two speakers in the same situation.

From this little example we can begin to see a tendency which will become clearer as our study progresses: that English tends to stress communication of news and information over personal feelings, while Japanese values human relations and feelings over objectivity or truth.

I shall never forget my first day living with a Japanese family. I arrived in the late afternoon. They served me tea, followed by a lovely tempura dinner. The father of the house showed me to my room, up a steep ladder-like staircase from the kitchen. His wife promised to wake me the next morning, in time for breakfast and classes. They knew no English, but were extremely kind and hospitable.

The next morning, I was awakened by the wife calling



from below, "Becker-san, okite kudasai. Asagohan desu-yo!" (Rise and shine, Mr. Becker, it's time for breakfast.) Her voice was not unfriendly, but I was terrified. Hurriedly, I jumped into my clothes, folded my futon, almost fell down the ladder, washed my face and humbly took 5 my place at table. As she handed me a bowl of steaming rice and another of miso soup, the lovely wife greeted me: "Good morning, Mr. Becker, did you sleep well?" I thanked her as politely as I knew how, and finished my rice with a lump in my throat, not daring to ask for 10 seconds. I wondered what I had done to make her so cold and formal.

All day long, I tried to discover how I had offended the family. I could not concentrate on my classes, but simply worried about what sin I had unwittingly committed and 15 how I might return to the family's good graces. I ate dinner that night in fearful silence. After dinner, I simply could not stand it any more. I asked the eldest son of the family, "Why is your mother angry with me? What have I done wrong? Please, tell me!" He looked surprised. 20 "Mother isn't angry with you. Why do you think she is upset?" he responded. "Because, . . . because she keeps calling me Mr. Becker!" I blurted out. Now my host-brother was doubly puzzled. "Isn't Becker your name?" he asked. "Yes, no, well, I mean, it's my family name, 25 but not my personal name. The only time people call me Becker is when they are angry with me," I asserted. He

looked surprised, then relaxed into a smile. "In Japan, you know, we call everyone except our family members by their family names, not personal names." "You mean that your mother is not angry with me?" It was my turn  
5 to be surprised. "No, of course not. Is that why you looked so depressed today?" "Yes," I sighed, "I guess I'll just have to get used to people calling me Becker." He laughed gently in response. "Here in our family, we can call you Carl, if you prefer that to Becker. But you  
10 had better get used to people calling you Becker outside of the house—and don't think that they are angry."

This use of personal and family names is very deep-rooted. It is very hard for people to change their attitudes about what they are called, since they identify with their  
15 names from early childhood. In Japan, only intimate friends and family use personal names; everyone else is called by family names. In America, a notorious gun-fighter once said, "Only my enemies call me 'Mister'." Even people who are well-acclimated and familiar with  
20 the opposite culture cannot always fully internalize these differences.

After living with Japanese and working in Japan for nearly ten years, I have become very used to being called "Becker." It surprises me if a junior, or someone I don't  
25 know very well, calls me "Carl." But when a good friend occasionally calls me "Carl," it still makes me feel warm inside. By contrast, my respected friend Mr. Kunihiro

once told me, "You Americans are all concerned about phoney intimacy." "What in the world," I inquired, "is phoney intimacy?" "You all go around addressing each other by first names when you hardly know each other. Children call parents by first names, students call teachers 5 by first names, strangers call each other by first names. That's trying to show a sense of intimacy that doesn't really exist yet."

I agree that many Americans lack the strong family ties that Japanese have. They often desire intimacy, and 10 may even try "phoney" ways of finding it. I cannot agree that first-name usage is one such example. This is simply a case of cultural difference—a cultural difference so deep-seated that some scholars are not even able to believe it could vary from culture to culture. 15

From the viewpoint of Japanese tradition, it is only natural that such differences should come about. The Japanese use of family names focuses on the relation of each person to his family. He does not behave as an individual, but rather as a representative of his family. If 20 he does something good or bad, his whole family will be indirectly praised or blamed.

The American, by contrast, has rather little connection with his family. He considers that his family name is not *his* name, but simply the name of a situation or location 25 into which he was born. "Johnson" does not name an individual, but a whole long chain of individuals and rela-

tives. "Lyndon," on the other hand, names a particular American, whose ears are likely to perk up whenever that name is mentioned.

A similar case can be made about identification with  
5 place. Traditionally, Japanese families did not have much geographic mobility. It is only natural that such a situation led people to feel a strong connection between themselves and their "native places." When traveling abroad, two Japanese who would not normally speak to each  
10 other take on a strange intimacy, simply by finding that they come from the same neighborhood in Japan. By contrast, the American has relatively little identification with place. The words "furusato" and "kaeru" are difficult to render into single-word English equivalents.

15 Asking an American in Japan where he is from is likely to bring an answer like, "I was born in Chicago, raised in New York, went to college in California, and worked in Detroit, but now I live in Beijing." Because of this mobility, the American tends to think that the question  
20 itself is not a very useful one, since it does not tell the inquirer very much about what the American thinks is important. Similar comments also apply to asking about age, family members, and national backgrounds of Americans—while to the Japanese, these seem like natural,  
25 even important questions by which to identify the person. By contrast, the American believes that these questions only give information about "accidents" of his birth and