

【講演録】

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Courtesy

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Summary ●

What is “courtesy, 礼 *Lei*”.

The word “礼 *Lei*” means a code of conduct for maintaining social order. In the Orient, it is one of the “五常 five constants”, “仁 humaneness”, “義 justice”, “礼 courtesy”, “智 wisdom”, “信 integrity”. It might be translated as “courtesy” in English.

Therefore, as a scholar of courtesy, and as a producer of the Japanese traditional cultural education, I would like to discuss Courtesy about the following points *1. Meaning of “Courtesy”, 2: The Appearance of “Courtesy”, 3: Benefit of “Courtesy” and Conclusion: Reinstatement of “Courtesy”*

Key words : courtesy, virtue, tradition, culture, hospitality.

Introduction

What is “礼 *Lei*”.

The word “礼 *Lei*” means a code of conduct for maintaining social order. In the Orient, it is one of the “五常 five constants”, “仁 humaneness”, “義 justice”, “礼 courtesy”, “智 wisdom”, “信 integrity”. It might be translated as “courtesy” in English.

The oriental word “礼法 *Lei-hou*” means a form of code of conduct for maintaining social order. “法 *hou*” means “the way” or “the law”. So “礼法 *Lei-*

hou” might be translated as “The way of courtesy” in English, or “the law of manners and etiquette”. In the West, there seems to be no single word that expresses it.

I have been teaching the lecture “日本礼法論 Nihon Lei-ho Ron = Japanese Way of Courtesy” at a university in Japan for over 10 years. I have also published a textbook for the lecture through the university’s publishing bureau. And I have just set out on a year-long journey to explore the “British Way of Courtesy” in September 2021.

Therefore, I combine the words “礼 Lei” and “礼法 Lei-hou” in one word “礼 Lei = courtesy” to include, for example, politeness, respects, bows, etc.

And, as a scholar of courtesy, and as an architect (or producer) of traditional Japanese cultural education, I would like to discuss tradition about the following points *1. Meaning of “Courtesy”, 2. The Appearance of “Courtesy”, 3. Benefit of “Courtesy”, and 4: Appearance of “Courtesy” of kimono in London, and Conclusion: Reinstatement of “Courtesy”.*

And I will show that “礼 Lei” = “courtesy” is a universal and eternal value for mankind, regardless of the difference between East and West.

Section 1: Meaning of “Courtesy”

Once again, I would like to respect the definition that “courtesy” is “code of conduct for maintaining social order”. And I would like to reconfirm what “courtesy” means to humanity.

1. Society

“Courtesy” began when mankind established society. Can we imagine a society without “courtesy”? No matter how uncivilized a village looks, we can appreciate it. Therefore, it can be said that “courtesy” is a fundamental cord that makes up human society. There can be no society without “courtesy”.

Therefore, “courtesy” is the source of the society.

2. Culture

It can be said that the characteristics of each society and culture are determined by their “courtesy”. If you look at the “courtesy” of a society, you will understand its culture. This is because various cultural codes such as religion, politics, and life are shown in the “courtesy”. There is no culture without “courtesy”. Therefore, “courtesy” is an aspect of culture.

3. Morality

Because “courtesy” is the cord of the society, it is closely related to the morals of that society. Morality is described as “the way that a person should follow” (*Iwanami Shoten “Kojien” 7th Edition*). Therefore, “courtesy” is also a cord to guide moral order of the society in a good direction. “Courtesy” has the role and the mission to guide society. Therefore, “courtesy” is the cord of morality.

4. Education

Also, “courtesy” is required when one person meets another. For example, parents, brothers and sisters, friends, master and disciple, master and servant, lords and vassals, husband and wife, and gods and deities are required to show proper “courtesy” every day. From birth, it is taught correctly from parent to child and from child to grandchild at home. It continues to be taught correctly in communities, schools and societies. It should be taught before knowledge and technology. Therefore, “courtesy” is the beginning of education.

5. Diplomacy

In the international community, the most advanced politeness is the cord of international politeness. In diplomacy, it is necessary to follow international

rules of “courtesy”. Furthermore, if one dares to treat one another with respect for a guest that is specific to one’s own country, region, or ethnic group, the “courtesy” will be even more conveyed to the other. International etiquette also has a responsibility to respect local etiquette. “Courtesy” is a curious thing. It is the proof that has universal power.

On the other hand, there have been countless conflicts among countries or states over their behavior that apparently lacked proper “courtesy”. In other words, “courtesy” are the basis of diplomacy.

6. Hospitality

In order to resolve conflicts between countries, there is diplomacy, negotiation, and communication before conflicts. In places where every nation with different values and different historical views should deepen their understanding, and on top of that, where they insist on their own justice and show their noble dignity as human beings, there is the existence and role of reception and entertaining, that is, “hospitality”. “Courtesy” has been deeply involved here. In other words, “courtesy” is a tactic based on hospitality.

7. Justice

The justice of a country depends on the actions of each citizen of the country. One person’s rash behavior undermines the dignity of the country. To prevent this, each person should try to behave with “courtesy”. Behavior with “courtesy” will be dignified and the light of its dignity means the light of justice. In other words, “courtesy” is proof of justice.

Therefore, “courtesy” is the law (= truth) that is extremely important for the peaceful coexistence of individuals, societies, nations, and the world.

Section 2: The Appearance of “Courtesy”

1. Governance

Highly civilized and sophisticated societies, states, and nations have awakened to the meaning of their own “courtesy”, and endeavored to refine it, to sharpen their styles and forms, and to be proud of them.

First of all, the highest “courtesy” has been offered to each of their main Gods. The way in which their most precious faith has been showed to God is by their deepest “courtesy”.

Next, the second highest rank of “courtesy” has been established for their monarch. The monarch also had a mission to show the code of “courtesy” to their main enshrined Gods, and his subjects.

In the Imperial or Royal Courts, high level “courtesy” used to be developed, including civil officers and military officers. Sometimes, learning and practicing each “courtesy” showed an officer’s rank. The posts of “courtesy” were established in the Courts. In addition, some families became experts in “courtesy”.

2. Social Order

Civil officers have been responsible for maintaining social order. Courtesy should be valued to maintain order for a long time. It is a good policy for law enforcement to be done with “courtesy”, not by punishment, because for a long time the policy of “courtesy” has been the only way trusted by the people.

Military officers have been responsible for internal security and external defense. “Courtesy” of the battlefield was developed. In the military, justice, courage, humanity and honor have been respected. Cowardly, unfair, and underhanded behavior has been despised. Armies without “courtesy” are no better than thieves.

Farmers, craftsmen, and merchants etc. are firstly required to take pride in their work, as their “courtesy”. Being honest, diligent and proud of own work is a requirement for a professional. Second, each professional should be respected as their “courtesy”. Respect should not be lost whether there is a gap between the rich and the poor, because each plays its own role in this world. When it is lost, it triggers a struggle between classes.

3. Household

At home, there has been a “courtesy” to the head of the family and a “courtesy” between husband and wife, and brothers and sisters. Rewards for retired grandparents have also been important. Of course, “courtesy” between the family and servants has been observed.

The head of a family was responsible for showing the “courtesy” for Gods or deities, his respect for his grandparents and his family. The housewife should not lose her respect for her husband and her husband’s parents.

The head of a family was responsible for showing the “courtesy” for Gods or deities, his respect for his grandparents and his family. The housewife should not lose her respect for her husband and her husband’s parents.

When this “courtesy” breaks down, families break down. The collapse of the family, which is the basis of mutual aid, means the spread of misfortune. The collapse of the family leads to the collapse of the nation. Therefore, “courtesy” is the keystone of the security of happiness that individuals must constantly consider and observe in their daily lives and in their delicate actions.

4. Martial arts, Sports, Accomplishments, and Professions

In martial arts, manners of “courtesy” are required. To strengthen each other, training begins and ends with “courtesy”. Even on the battlefield, as soldiers fought for their lives, “courtesy” became an important manner for armorers. The “courtesy” of martial arts became a model for the “courtesy” of

sportsmen.

In the development of sports, it was intended to avoid international conflicts between tribes by praising the winners and losers of specific games. The sports have been virtual fights which have been made to be festivals. This is the reason why “courtesy” was valued in sportsmanship. Sports have also been used as a method to train for “courtesy”.- Therefore, a sport that loses its “courtesy” sometimes becomes a fight and a conflict, even nowadays.

In the field of accomplishments, for example, in politicians, scholars, literature, the tea ceremony, manner of eating and drinking, serving dishes, social dancing, horseback riding, foxes hunting, and so on, many ways to value “courtesy” have been developed. Especially in the sophisticated and upper class societies of each country, there appeared specialists whose occupation was to teach those manners, who were called “Master”.

In many traditional professional fields, “courtesy” between a master and a disciple is essential. First of all, a disciple must not lose his respect for his master. A master must nurture his disciples carefully. Even, sometimes a master would strictly guide his disciples, because masters were also once disciples. To learn many skills, there is no relationship between a master and a disciple without “courtesy”.

5. Successions

People are born, live, and die. But the nations, society, and families can survive through the efforts of the people. It is the human wisdom to prolong their lives. Some cultures have gained their eternal lives.

In the scenes of these successions, the “courtesy” shows the strongest power. Enthronement, investiture of the Crown Prince, childbirth, naming, baptism, coming-of-age ceremony, weddings, anniversaries, celebrations, and funerals. The “courtesy” of these practices would try to guarantee the eternal

peace and stability of the nations, society, and families.

Since ancient times, because of the loss of “courtesy”, many disputes arose, including disputes over inheritance within the royal family, rebellions, slanders, assassinations, revolutions, civil wars, international conflicts, etc. Or in the nations, society, families, organizations, and businesses companies, etc. Many of these were triggered by behavior that was not in line with “courtesy”. Today, bloody riots, revolutions, occupation and genocide continue in the world.

On the other hand, there have been successful examples of well-mannered revolutions in which both sides respect each other while succeeding to power. Systems have been developed in which rules are set in advance and leadership changes are made in accordance with procedures.

This is the evidence that changing and succeeding leaders require mutual “courtesy”.

Section 3: Benefit of “Courtesy” _____

1. “Courtesy” Exalts Virtue

When people set a goal and try to do something, they always encounter difficulties. Only those who overcome it and make efforts can achieve it. Through this time of perseverance, one can raise one’s virtue. Here, you can feel the “courtesy” that comes from inside. There is no real respect for the person who blames others for his failure to reach his goal, or his environment, and yells and sweeps at his tools. True glory shines to a man who sets a goal and challenges, goes beyond his achievement and sets his own virtue up as his true goal.

So, a true hero values “courtesy”.

2. “Courtesy” Controls the Mind.

A person who knows the ideal way to behave as a brave man tries to

cultivate the proper sense of “courtesy”. Because he understands that his behavior with “courtesy” can control his own mind.

Form nourishes the mind, and the mind shows its form. By that synergy, the man aims to be a hero.

So, “courtesy” trains heroes.

3. “Courtesy” is Ultimate in Grace.

A true warrior should understand the sentiments of others. The hero of the enemy has his justice, and the people of the enemy have their families. Only when he knows his enemy’s mind and only when he respects his enemy’s, can he win without useless fights.

Therefore, truly brave men are required to learn religion, philosophy and literature, and to get the virtue called “courtesy”. As a result, a true hero has grace and elegance.

So, “courtesy” nourishes a graceful hero.

Section 4: Appearance of “Courtesy” of kimono in London ———

It’s been almost three months since I stayed in the UK. Whenever I walk around London, Oxford, or Cambridge, I decide to wear a kimono dressed in a *haori-hakama*, which is a style of formal wear of Japanese gentlemen. This is to investigate the reaction of people of the UK. The appearance of my traditional Japanese clothes is very reputable to the people on the road. Many people who noticed me are given a nod to me. Some of them praise him as “wonderful”, “lovely” and “cool”. Furthermore, there are people who talk to us. “Are you a Buddhist monk?” “Are you a martial arts master?” “Are you a Zen meditation master?” etc. Sometimes “samurai!”, “bushido!”, or “Ninja!” etc.

Many of the people who recognized me from the front are worshipping me with their hands together in prayer, and bow to me. This was surprising to me

as well. For us Japanese, this style is not the dress of a monk, but the dress of a high-class *samurai* warrior. Why do so many people worship me? The reason is probably that my traditional Japanese *kimono* style may be precious. The appearance of traditional Japanese culture may be precious. It seems mysterious, courtesy, noble, and grace. It looks sacred. Therefore, the sacred light might make people bring their hands together in prayer, and, make people bow.

Some person who know Japanese even a little, talk to me in Japanese “*Kon-nich-wa!*”. After that, in English, “I have lived in Japan” or “I have been to Tokyo (Kyoto, Osaka)” etc. Then, the conversation bounces, and “Please take a picture together.” We took pictures together, exchanged business cards, started correspondences of emails, and talked together as friends with tea and food. Through the interaction with those people, I was given an unexpected opportunity.

For example, on October 2nd, I was invited to “The 110th National Day Reception of the Republic of China (Taiwan)”. On November 18th, I was invited to the event “Music and Diplomacy” at the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania. When representing such a nation, I wear in the most formal style of a black (with five crests) *haori-hakama* of a high-class samurai warrior. Many ambassadors asked me, “Don’t you have a long sword today?” They may see a long Japanese sword on my left hip. I answered, “I’ve brought it to my home in London,” and I opened the fan on the left hip and danced a passage of a Noh-theatre. And in response to their expectations, I talked about Bushido.

In an international social banquets like these, the appearance of traditional Japanese dress looks great. It symbolizes the spirit of traditional Japanese culture. This is the power of “courtesy” in traditional Japanese culture.

I would like to thank Kogakkan University, University of London, and University of Oxford, and Gods and Buddha, for giving me this opportunity to stay in London. And I would like to thank my parents for teaching me

“courtesy” and raising me. And I would like to thank the traditional culture of Japan, which has refined the appearance of precious “courtesy”.

Even today, I wear a kimono dressed in a *haori-hakama*, which is a style of formal wear of Japanese gentlemen. and walk around the streets of London. To tell the truth, I have the feeling that the city of London is changing. To be honest, I feel that the appearance of our traditional Japanese culture is purifying Britain as a Shintoism priest rather than a Buddhist priest.

Conclusion. Reinstatement of “Courtesy”

Looking back, there is no-one who has not been taught “courtesy” by their father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, master or teacher. In the modern world, although society has developed, international conflicts still continue. Our imagination must develop.

It is time to see the earth as a family and mankind as brothers. When “courtesy” fades, the world becomes turbulent, and when “courtesy” is respected, the world flourishes.

Now is the time for model nations that really respect “courtesy” to show these models to the whole world, as truly developed ones.

It is important for us to reconsider our sense of “courtesy” as an important virtue.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Special thanks for the review. SI-UK (Tokyo) (except for Secssion 4)

礼

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抄録：

礼とは何であろうか。

東洋で礼（れい）と呼ばれる言葉は、社会の秩序を保つための行動規範である。「仁」「義」「礼」「智」「信」という五つの徳目「五常」のひとつである。英語では「courtesy」と訳される。

ここでは、「礼（れい）Courtesy」が、東洋と西洋の分け隔てなく、時代を超えて、人類にとって普遍的で永遠の価値であることを示す。そこで、「礼（れい）Courtesy」を研究している者として、これより、[1] 礼の意味、[2] 礼の姿、[3] 礼の効用、[4] まとめ・礼の復権、について論じる。

Key Words : 礼, 礼法, 徳, 伝統, 文化, おもてなし.