МЕЖДИСЦИПЛИНАРНЫЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ

ETHNICITY AND VALUES

D. C. Lewis

Yunnan University, Kunming, China,
University of Cambridge, England
dlewis@yandex.com

Abstract. Cultures change in many ways but some basic values within the culture tend to remain over longer periods. Compared with some other potential markers of ethnicity, which may apply to only a certain part of an ethnic group, some traditional values are adhered to by most or perhaps even all members of the ethnic group. Over time, many core values of a culture remain relatively strong even though the manifestations of those values might gradually change. As such, certain cultural values can be regarded as stronger markers of ethnic or cultural identity than some other features of the culture which are more transient.

Keywords: values, ethnicity, culture, cultural change, Tatars, Japan

When conducting research among nurses in Leeds, near the beginning of the interview I asked them what had shocked them most when they started nursing. Some mentioned the death of certain patients – the kind of answer I had expected. One said she had been shocked by all the bureaucracy in the hospital, and another said that what had most shocked her was going into the hospital kitchens and seeing cockroaches running around on the floor! However, two nurses – one of West African and the other of Southeast Asian background – both said that what had shocked them most was the way in which British people do not show respect to older people.

In contemporary Britain, this kind of attitude might be seen in some circles as "old fashioned" but in itself that shows how a value that had been more highly regarded in the past has become less emphasized as the culture changes. Nevertheless, there are British people who still consider that respect for older people is an important value: moreover, they demonstrate their consideration for elderly people in practical ways, such as by offering them their seat on a bus or train. I might be mistaken but my impression is that such behaviour is more common in China than it is in the UK.

Values can and do change – but they tend to do so more slowly than alterations in fashion, modifications in technology or shifts in some economic, political or social relationships. Certain values seem to have been at the core of English culture for many centuries, perhaps for more than a thousand years. In his books *The Origins of English Individualism and The Culture of Capitalism* Alan Macfarlane

argues that several features of English society were already very distinctive traits in the Middle Ages[1]. For example, from at least the twelfth century onwards (and probably earlier) marriage was based on personal choice: it was "love marriage", not an "arranged marriage" of the type that was widespread in many other cultures [Macfarlane, 1978, p. 28; Macfarlane, 1987, pp. 133-142]. Likewise, in the economic sphere, there was the freedom to sell or bequeath one's own land to others outside the family rather than having to keep it within the family; there was private ownership of land, by women as well as by men, rather than the situation prevailing in many other parts of the world where the land belonged to a landlord to whom the peasant farmers had to pay part of their produce as rent [Macfarlane, 1978, pp. 86-87]. In these and other ways Macfarlane demonstrates the prevalence of "individualism" within English society over a time span approaching a thousand years. Jack Goody [1983] and others such as Henrich [2020] argue that some of the distinctive features of marriage in England go back much longer, apparently having roots in Anglo-Saxon England sometime between the 4th and 9th centuries[2].

Some of the features emphasized by Macfarlane – particularly demographic ones, including not only romantic love marriage but also a later age of marriage and a noticeable proportion of the population who did not marry – could be found elsewhere in north-west Europe [Hajnal, 1965, 1983]. They were not unique to England but they were part of a cluster of traits which, according to Macfarlane, were a distinctive combination that set England apart from most other "peasant" cultures. Although Macfarlane argues that England was not a "peasant" society in the way that was more typical of many societies elsewhere, the presence of some traits in other parts of northwest Europe at least shows that there was a gradation from "more" to "less" in this clustering and that to some extent there were shared characteristics with certain neighbours.

I suggest that we could go a little deeper and see in some of these features an underlying value of freedom of choice. It might even be regarded as two distinct values – freedom as one value and choice as another value. Marriage based on romantic love involved a choice between possible alternatives as well as the freedom to exercise that choice. In reality, there might not have been very much choice available

[1] Macfarlane's prolific writings also discuss many other aspects of the transition to "modernity" and the development of Capitalism. For example, his book *The Savage Wars of Peace* [Macfarlane, 2003a] examines the impact of aspects of health and hygiene on population dynamics; in *Green Gold* [Macfarlane, Macfarlane, 2003b] Alan Macfarlane and Iris Macfarlane discuss the effects of tea drinking on the health of a population. However, I am focusing on Alan Macfarlane's earlier writings because these illustrate more clearly the English values of freedom and individuality.

[2] Both Goody and Henrich argue that Christianity played an important role in this process. Goody focusses on features such as monogamy and the church's insistence on a woman's consent, while Henrich focusses on the way in which the Roman Catholic Church did not allow polygyny or marriage between close kin. What this does not explain, however, is why Christianity did not produce similar outcomes in other parts of the world. The Roman Catholic Church was dominant also in the Mediterranean region, while other branches of Christianity had spread during the first millennium AD into Africa (*e.g.* the Coptic churches of Egypt and Ethiopia), Eastern Europe (*e.g.* the Greek, Russian and other Orthodox Churches) and Asia (*e.g.* the Mar Thoma Church in India – regarded as being derived from the ministry of the apostle Thomas – or the Syriac Churches which spread across Central Asia into China, Mongolia and elsewhere). The vast majority of their teachings, based on the Bible, were essentially the same, even if there were differences in interpretation. Therefore there must have been other factors peculiar to northwest Europe which accounted for the distinctive pattern which emerged there.

in some circumstances: after all, it was not like picking products off a supermarket shelf! Nevertheless, the kind of mentality and values expressed by having a free market economy were also those which valued freedom of choice in the "marriage market".

These same kinds of values were exported overseas during the era of European colonialism and imperialism. Despite immigrants to the USA having a broad mix of ethnic origins, some of the characteristics of European individualism (especially the English features highlighted by Macfarlane) seemed to become even more conspicuous in American society. One index of this might be seen in the relative emphasis placed on rights and responsibilities – which are often two sides of the same coin. As a rough generalization, one could say that going east in Eurasia there is a growing emphasis on responsibilities balancing rights, whereas moving west the emphasis is more on rights than on responsibilities. Crossing the Atlantic, the focus on rights is stronger still.

Rights are often defined in various ways – human rights, voting rights, religious rights and so on – but the adjective "personal" is also a common way of expressing rights. In other words, rights tend to be associated to some extent with individualism. On the other hand, responsibilities tend to be associated with a collectivity of some kind – corporate responsibility, parental responsibility and so on. In Social Anthropology, a well-known definition of marriage is that it is a "bundle of rights" – a phrase coined by a British anthropologist, Sir Edmund Leach [Leach, 1961, p. 105], who chose to use the word "rights". It could also have been described as a bundle of responsibilities.

If freedom and choice were two fundamental values of English society a thousand years ago, we can see how over time these became manifested in a multitude of different ways. From the Magna Charta in 1215 to the development of a Parliamentary system (including the parliaments called by Simon de Montfort in 1258 and 1265), there was a concern with establishing freedoms and the rights of various groups of people. None of these freedoms came without a struggle and over the ensuing centuries there continued to be different factions with conflicting interests in matters such as free trade, the abolition of slavery, the right to vote, marriage choices and so on. These are all issues which have been addressed in other countries too – but it seems as if some of them at least have come to the fore as a result of an emphasis on individual rights which was characteristic of England and some other European nations, spread to America and other colonies of European powers, and nowadays influences virtually the whole world in some way or other. There continue to be differences of opinion and practice, especially regarding ideas about democracy, free trade and some other political, humanitarian, religious or economic rights, but in many countries there is an increasing preference for choosing one's own marriage partner. As cultures continue to influence each other, augmented by technological developments that facilitate the spread of knowledge and ideas, the whole world is becoming more of a huge Mega-culture within which there is increasing borrowing and adaptation of concepts from each other.

Freedom and choice are only two of several values that might be considered to be deeply rooted not only in English culture but also in some other European cultures, and now in parts of the world with a strong legacy from those European cultures[3]. Many of the traditional values are shared by several different cultures but the emphasis put on them, or the manner in which they are expressed, may differ from case to case. Often it is not the individual elements but the combination of elements into a distinctive pattern which imparts uniqueness to a culture.

For example, among the Volga Tatars of European Russia there are certain cultural values which are considered to be more distinctively "Tatar". In making such a claim, there is an implicit point of comparison with the Russians. Tatars consider themselves to be stronger than the Russians in terms of certain traits or values, even though many other peoples also share some of these characteristics to a greater or lesser extent. One of them is a sense of cleanliness: at least some Tatars claim that they value cleanliness to a greater extent than Russians. A Tatar friend of mine told me that she sweeps the public corridor outside her apartment, even though it is not her responsibility to do so, because as a Tatar she likes to have the environment around her home clean and orderly. She also remarked that one can easily tell if a village is a Russian or a Tatar one by looking at the streets: if there is litter thrown on the ground it means Russians live there!

Some other Tatar values include a propensity for hard work, respect for older people and a greater sense of family [Lewis, 2013, pp. 126-129; Льюис, 2001, с. 110-112]. I suggest that these values constitute a better index of what it means to be "Tatar" than some of the other criteria which are often used. Although the majority of Tatars regard themselves, at least nominally, as Muslims, about ten per cent of them are Orthodox Christians, some are Protestant Christians, a few belong to the Baha'i faith and others may consider themselves to be atheists or agnostics [Lewis, 2013, pp. 43, 91, 139, 142-145, 206-208, 211, 216, 229-231]. During the Soviet period many Tatars who were educated in Russian spoke that language more easily than Tatar, if they even knew Tatar at all, so language was not a good index of ethnicity [Lewis, 2013, p. 136]. Although nowadays Tatar is used much more widely in Tatarstan itself, there remains a large Tatar population in other parts of Russia (e.g. Moscow, St. Petersburg and other large cities) whose main functioning language continues to be Russian. If religion and language are insufficient markers of Tatar ethnic identity, it is even less the case for many other features of Tatar culture – such as eating, at least occasionally, traditional Tatar dishes such as chak-chak / чак-чак. However, the traditional Tatar values mentioned above could provide a more widely embracing way of defining what it is to be a Tatar. This is shown schematically in the following diagram[4].

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[3] Whereas freedom and choice are two of the values that are prized in democracies, other types of political systems can put emphasis on different values, such as stability or maintaining the *status quo*. Instead of a focus on individual rights, they may emphasize collective responsibility.

[4] There are other possible markers of Tatar ethnicity, such as participation in the *Sabantuy* Сабантуй festival, but for the sake of simplicity I have just put a few principal examples in the diagram. The size of the overlapping circles is not intended to indicate actual numbers of, for example, language speakers or adherents of Islam, but is simply a way of expressing visually a complex set of interactions.
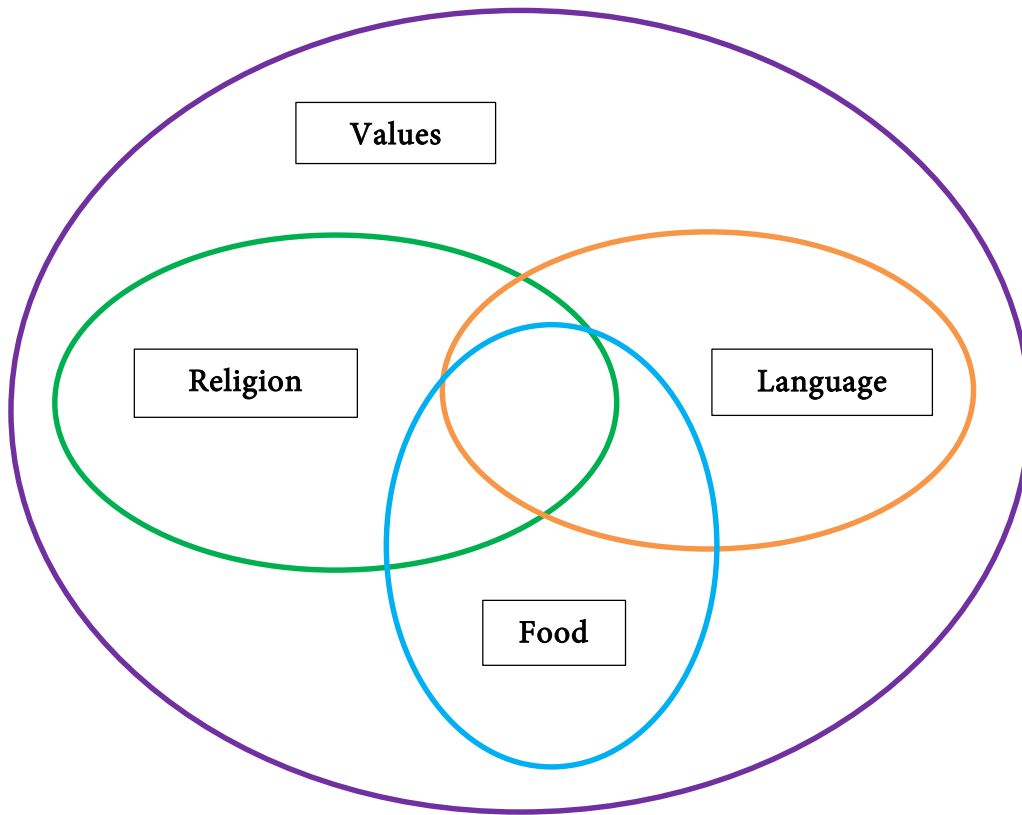
Diagram 1. What it means to be "Tatar"

Similar kinds of schema could be devised for other ethnic groups, although the specific items may need to be changed. Nevertheless, it seems to me that in many instances the circle of values is broader than those for language, religion, material culture or other markers of ethnicity such as the observance of particular festivals. For instance, among many of the indigenous peoples of Siberia there has been a loss of knowledge of their native languages because of Russification, compounded in some cases by dialectical differences leading to potential mutual unintelligibility among those with a shared official ethnicity. One of the factors leading to a loss of language use was the setting up of boarding schools where the language of education was Russian: children from remoter settlements spent the majority of their time at the schools and were only back with their own parents for a few months of the year. Many of them grew up with little practical expertise in traditional skills needed for hunting, fishing, reindeer herding, and so on [Lewis, 2013, pp. 31-40].

In many cases the reindeer was an important symbol of their ethnic identity, and influenced the idioms used in their native languages. A man named Yuri Vella, who belongs to the forest Nenets (as distinct from the tundra Nenets), remarked to me in 1991 that his own language and other local indigenous languages derive much of their distinctiveness from their rich vocabularies which are intimately connected with reindeer. "Without reindeer herding, our language could become

as Russian", he said. Already there are many Russian loan words such as those for "car", "motor" or "speed" which impart no sense of ethnic distinctiveness to their language. The reindeer, however, symbolizes their native cultures. Although some indigenous peoples had previously specialized in fishing or hunting rather than reindeer herding, many of those who had in the past relied on the reindeer are no longer able to breed them. Partly this was on account of Soviet policies such as collectivization which resulted in some communities specializing in reindeer herding whereas others had to specialize instead in fishing or other economic pursuits. Nowadays, however, a decline in reindeer herding is a product of market forces whereby the costs of transporting reindeer venison to distant markets can be prohibitive.

Nevertheless, even with the loss of many aspects of their traditional cultures there remain some values that they maintain and regard as distinctive aspects of their cultural identities. For instance, when I was in a Mansi village several people at the end of a meeting lined up to speak with the visitors who had been leading the meeting. One of the local people pointed out to me how they had lined up by age order, with the older people at the front, then the middle aged people and after that the younger people – in accordance with their cultural standards. Other attributes which are commonly found among indigenous peoples of Siberia include courage (in facing extreme weather conditions or dealing with dangerous animals such as wolves or polar bears), humility or modesty, and their skills or experience which help them to live in tune with the natural environment. Underlying such knowledge (or intuition) is an underlying value of respect for nature and an attitude that it is not something to be exploited to excess[5].

Sometimes one can discern traditional values expressed in creative ways through art or musical compositions, or through certain articles that are regarded as important symbols of that culture. In Turkmenistan there are different carpet designs characteristic of each of the five Turkmen "tribes", just as other carpet designs are characteristic of, for example, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan or Dagestan and of specific areas or ethnic groups within those regions. One could even say that the carpets themselves testify to certain traditional values such as patience and hard work.

In these examples, I am using the term "values" in the sense of something that was important to the people themselves, and which was highly regarded within their culture – that which was considered to be noble, admirable or praiseworthy. Values address the question "What is good?" but some cultural values address this in the context of aesthetics rather than ethics. Values that focus on beauty and aesthetics, or that are concerned with admirable character traits such as courage or humility, are not the same as ethical values about what is morally right and wrong in a particular situation – for example, whether or not one should accept a bribe from someone. Nevertheless, there may be some overlap

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[5] Although I believe that these generalizations usually apply to peoples of Siberia, at least in their traditional lifestyle, I am aware that there could be circumstances when these did not apply. For instance, the Russian fur tax (*yasak*) levied on Siberian peoples in the 17th-18th centuries forced the indigenous peoples to hunt more than had been sufficient to meet their own needs, and this seems to have been a factor in the decline of some animal populations. These kinds of generalizations about indigenous peoples may not apply in other parts of the world either.

at a deeper level. For instance, in Japan, where a cultural emphasis on purity and pollution may be manifested not only in aesthetics and ideas of beauty but also in concepts of ritual pollution or purity, the vocabulary of a "dirty" heart may be more understandable than terminology describing morality in terms of "sin" or "crime". Someone who has told a lie or whose actions have tarnished the reputation of a company or social group might not have committed a crime by breaking a particular law but may nevertheless feel internally "contaminated" as a result of this action[6]. This may be one of the reasons why the phrase "wash your soul" kokoro-o arau 心を洗う is frequently used in advertising shrines or temples at New Year.

On the surface, different cultures appear to diverge in their moral values. However, this impression is partly derived from the fact that human beings do not always live up to their own moral standards. In Britain, Russia, China and elsewhere there is a common recognition that one ought to tell the truth and not deceive others but in reality we all know of situations in everyday life when people do tell a lie. Extrapolating this further to cross-cultural situations in which an observer may not fully understand all the nuances of a local language or some of the cultural norms, besides issues such as politeness and not causing offence, there is plenty of scope for misunderstanding. The danger is that stereotypes develop in which everyone in a particular culture is branded as a "liar", "thief" or whatever. In practice, it is unlikely that everyone is like that, even if there are some exceptions within any society. None of us live up to our own moral standards 100 % of the time, let alone those imposed on us by other people.

Nevertheless, on the basis of wide-ranging cross-cultural studies, Schwarz [Schwarz, 1992, 2012 and elsewhere] argues that there exist ten core values as "desirable goals people strive to attain" that could be considered as universals. These clusters of characteristics include various nuances: for instance, the value that Schwarz calls "conformity" is defined as "restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms". Whereas the value of "benevolence" is defined specifically with reference to "those with whom one is in frequent personal contact", another value, classified as "universalism", relates to those outside of one's "in-group" and can include nature as well as people [Schwarz, 2012, pp. 6-7]. Moreover, among a spectrum of different cultures these ten inter-related values tend to be assigned similar rankings in terms of their relative importance, creating a hierarchy of values [Schwarz, 2012, p. 14].

All of us in specific situations find that we might have to make choices between different values. In today's world, politicians and others are facing difficult decisions about balancing the welfare of their own "in-group" (in terms of economic prosperity) versus the claims of "universalism" with regard to climate change and other issues. Decisions in one sphere affect what happens in the other sphere because we all share one planet having finite resources.

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[6] The usual translation into Japanese of the word "sin" in English is *tsumi* 罪 – which also means "crime". A person may not feel he or she has committed a "crime" by telling a lie or by not showing respect to parents, or by some other action, but he or she might still feel "dirty" inside.

If Schwarz is correct, it raises the question of why and how different cultures do share some very basic values in common. Is it simply part of being human? Is it to do with that characteristic of our natures that in English we call "conscience"? In response to a survey that I conducted in two urban neighbourhoods of Japan, I found that many Japanese people consider themselves not only to experience shame in certain situations but also to have a sense of guilt about various forms of conduct such as lying, stealing, betrayal of one's group, and so on [Lewis, 2018a, pp. 301-303]. In both Chinese and Japanese there is a word for "conscience" written as 良心 (ryōshin in Japanese and liangxin in Chinese) which combines the characters meaning "good" 良 and "heart" (or soul) 心. This is in a cultural context that lies outside of the principal spheres of influence of monotheistic religions so we cannot claim that the idea of "conscience" is derived directly from the Ten Commandments or the Qur'an – although the influence of Buddhism, Confucian thought or Daoism cannot be ruled out. Such religions or philosophies arose in the middle of the first millennium BC but concepts of righteousness, justice, truth, mercy, compassion and other qualities existed long before that: in China, such values can be traced back several millennia to the earliest accounts of the founders of the Chinese nation.

In many cultures around the world there are creation narratives which not uncommonly depict the ancestors of the human race as having violated in some way the standards of their creator. The best known account is the one in the Bible that depicts the creator as giving humanity the potential for choice. (It might be comparable to the value of choice expressed in "romantic love" marriage: one cannot force someone else to love you, otherwise it would not be love.) In the biblical narrative, the first human beings are depicted as being untroubled by any conscience while they were living in harmony with their creator but a "knowledge of good and evil" (that is, one's conscience) manifested itself once they decided that they knew better than their creator. It was not an intellectual knowledge but an experiential one. They became aware that their "good heart" 良心 – perhaps the voice of God – was troubling them. This inner voice of the conscience continues to manifest itself in all of us, whatever our cultures, but we often stifle or ignore it.

In some cases there may also be an overlap between certain cultural values and "motivations" in the sense depicted by Geertz [Geertz, 1973, pp. 96-98] who writes that a motivation is "a persisting tendency, a chronic inclination to perform certain sorts of acts and experience certain sorts of feeling in certain sorts of situations … Motives have a directional cast, they describe a certain overall course, gravitate towards certain, usually temporary, consummations … Motivations are "made meaningful" with reference to ends towards which they are conceived to conduce"[7]. In this sense, the cultural value of cleanliness among the Volga Tatars could be described as a "motivation". Of course, a concern with cleanliness is found in many cultures and is manifested in a variety of ways [Douglas, 1966] – so what makes it more particularly a "Tatar" trait, as compared with some other ethnic group? It is the comparison with a meaningful "other" – in this case, the Russians – which imparts to cleanliness

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[7] This is not dissimilar to the characterization of values by Schwartz, who refers to them as "a motivational construct".

the quality of a cultural value among the Tatars. Relative cleanliness is something that they can take pride in, and in this regard could consider themselves "better" than those who had conquered the Tatars and incorporated them into the Russian empire.

A high regard for cleanliness can be one expression of a more pervasive cultural concern with issues of purity and pollution. Although such concepts and practices can be found in many cultures, their specific manifestations vary between cultures. Some characteristics may appear very similar in different cultural contexts even if the details differ. For instance, on entering into a sacred place to pray there may be a requirement to wash oneself: Muslims do this before their ritual prayers at a mosque while Japanese people do it on entering a Shintō shrine. However, the details may differ: both Japanese and Muslims wash their hands; some Japanese also rinse out their mouths, as Muslims do, but Muslims also wash their feet, which is not normally done in Japan. I have also seen ritual hand washing on entering a sacred grove for a religious rite among the Mari people of European Russia – and visitors had to make sure that they had already gone to the toilet before arriving at the grove because they could not defile the sacred place by disappearing behind a tree there to relieve themselves [Lewis, 2013, p. 158].

While customs of this kind show similarities and differences between cultures, albeit all within the context of entering a sacred place, it seems that some cultures as a whole place a much greater emphasis on purity versus pollution (or cleanliness versus dirt) than others. The emphasis can be manifested in a plurality of contexts, not only "religious" ones but also aspects of daily life that maintain a separation between what is regarded as "clean" and that which is considered to be "dirty". Many examples could be given from Japan, such as:

- Taking off one's shoes on entering a home.
- Wearing special slippers for use only when going to the toilet.
- Sprinkling salt over oneself when returning home after a funeral.
- Cleaning the home thoroughly prior to the New Year celebrations.
- Shintō "purification" rites (o-harai お祓い) to drive away pollution from people or places.
- Concepts (now less prevalent) that menstruating women should not visit a Shintō shrine.
- Refraining from visiting a Shintō shrine if there has been a recent death in the family.

[Lewis, 2018a, pp. 96, 110, 149, 151-152, 175, 191, 206-207, 252]

In my interviews with Japanese people about their attitudes towards religion, I noticed that certain expressions kept cropping up in different contexts. For instance, in asking about safety charms o-mamori お守り often people would say that they were unsure to what extent a charm actually protected them but what was important was the sense of reassurance it provided. In a different context, if asking about name divination, people would also express uncertainty about the extent to which choosing an auspicious name for a child would have a positive influence on the child's future life; however, they still consulted name divination for the "sense of security" anshinkan 安心感 that it gave them. A common attitude was that they did it to be "on the safe side" as they would feel responsible if something happened to the child and they had not taken this precaution. Moreover, the theme of safety and security came up in a variety of other religious contexts, such as rituals at a shrine belonging

to a company which I was studying: most of them, in one way or another, were prayers for safety in the factory [Lewis, 2018a, pp. 166-170]. However, there were also numerous ways in which safety was promoted in the factory in non-religious ways, such as having prizes for departments with a good safety record, the almost ubiquitous "Safety First" anzen dai-ichi 安全第一 slogans around the factory, or the group chanting of a "safety eulogy" before commencing work [Lewis, 2018a, pp. 185-187]. Ronald Dore's comparative study of Japanese and British factories also noted how the theme of safety was much more conspicuous in the Japanese company [Dore, 1973, pp. 244-245]. More widely in Japanese society as a whole, one could argue that maximization of security lies behind certain features that had been considered to be distinctive, such as the so-called "lifetime employment system" for key workers in larger enterprises, or the strong pressure to get into a good university which was seen as a gateway to obtaining a secure job in the future. To some extent some of these features have been modified on account of economic and demographic circumstances but there remains an underlying emphasis on finding security in a stable group which also provides a sense of identity.

I would argue that the concern with safety and security is an underlying "key theme" in Japanese culture [Lewis, 2018a, pp. 164-165, 333-334]. Another such "key theme" is constituted by concepts of purity and pollution. Perhaps both of these are analogous to what Geertz calls a "motivation". Drawing on the work of Mary Douglas (1966), one could further argue that these two "key themes" are mirror images of each other: if "dirt" is regarded (in the words of Mary Douglas) as "matter out of place", then it becomes "dangerous". Conversely, what is "safe" is within the boundaries of the known, and is analogous to a kind of "clean space".

Another "key theme" – or core value – in Japanese society is memorialism. It is seen most obviously in ancestral rites, which, for some people at least, are performed not because of any professed belief in a life after death but in order to preserve the memory of the deceased [Lewis, 2018a, pp. 280-281]. However, a concern with preserving memories can be seen in many other facets of Japanese society, such as preserving some hairs from a child's first haircut (in order to make a calligraphy brush out of them, as the hairs taper to a fine point) or the taking of commemorative photographs to remember events in a person's life or places visited when travelling. Another expression of this emphasis on memory is the preservation of the tip of a child's umbilical cord which is given to the mother and is often kept in a special box. When asked why they keep it, many mothers say that they keep it as a "souvenir", although one commented that it shows one's "connection with the ancestors". [Lewis 2018a, pp. 91-92].

Nowadays internet blogs have to some extent replaced diary writing, which Ruth Benedict [1946, p. 274] had described as a "Japanese obsession". Diaries were being written over a thousand years ago: extant examples include the Kagurō Nikki, an autobiographical diary covering the period from 954 to 974, written by the wife of the Prime Minister of the time, or the eleventh century diary of Lady Murasaki Shikibu – who also wrote the Tale of Genji, sometimes considered to be the oldest novel in the world [Keene 1971, p. 33]. Men also wrote famous diaries, starting with the Tosa Diary of 935 or 936 and continuing into the Edo period (17th to 19th centuries) with the travelogue diaries of the poets Matsuō

Bashō or Kobayashi Issa [Keene, 1971, p. 31 ff; Janeira, 1970, pp. 75, 81-83]. Their modern counterparts include not only literary diaries but also the "I" novels, which came into vogue during the twentieth century [Nakamura, 1969, pp. 11, 66-68, 130-131]. Important anthropologically, but less obvious in the historical materials, are the many diaries and account books kept by ordinary farmers from the Edo period onwards [Smith, 1959, pp. 84-85, 88-92, 95, 119, 158 note a, 159 note c, 178-179, etc.]. I mention this historical continuity in diary writing because it shows that this "key theme" of "memory" has been strong within Japanese culture for over a millennium. It is deeply rooted within Japanese culture and could be regarded as a core value. With the advent of recent technology such as photography and the internet, the underlying concern for preserving memories is given new forms of expression. However, there is a difference in the audience. The female diary writers of the tenth and eleventh centuries seem to have written mainly for their own pleasure, sometimes as a means for consolation when their husbands were unfaithful [Janeira, 1970, p. 88]. In a society where women were often unable to express their inner feelings verbally, the written form of a personal diary provided such an outlet for personal expression. In my own fieldwork I encountered the same attitudes among some women who told me that they wrote personal diaries but would never show them to anyone else; however, they might look back at them sometimes, especially around the New Year period, and reflect on their lives. The form of Japanese diaries is often that of reminiscence, memory and reflection of one's inner thoughts as chronicled at a later point in time [cf.: Kimura, 1983]. Janeira [1970, p. 75] remarked that the diary had become "so much to Japanese taste that their number today is uncountable". In a culture in which "memory" in one form or another appears to be an underlying motivation for a variety of behaviours, various social constraints on expression have led to the genre being favoured particularly by women[8].

The long historical record showing a Japanese cultural emphasis on memorialism shows that this is a core value that might be comparable in its antiquity to the English emphases on freedom or choice. A feature that can be traced in a culture for a millennium or more is clearly deep rooted and important. I therefore see it as a core value that is less amenable to change than some other, more superficial features of a culture. Values of this kind lie close to the heart of a culture.

The three Japanese values that I have focussed on here are ones which became evident in my research on Japanese religion. A fourth "key theme" is a cultural emphasis on a person's age, which is manifested in social features such as the respect shown to older people and in the cultural emphasis placed on age cohorts. A religious manifestation of it is the concern with "calamitous years" yakudoshi 厄年 – certain ages in the life-cycle when one is considered to be particularly prone to illness or misfortune [Lewis, 2018a, pp. 239-246]. These four "key themes" are ones that are more conspicuous in a religious sphere but they are also found in non-religious spheres of life [Льюис, 2018b, c. 71][9].

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[8] One of the constraints was the prestige given to using the Chinese language during the Heian era (794–1185), so men tended to write imitations of Chinese literature; this left the field of literary expression in the Japanese language more open to women at the court who were not expected to learn Chinese [Keene, 1971, pp. 28-29].

[9] I am avoiding the term "secular" because I do not wish to imply that there was at one time a more 'religious' worldview from which there has been 'secularization' and that one came from the other.

There might be still other "key themes" – such as a focus on community – which I have not discussed in so much detail[10]. Elsewhere [Lewis, 2018a, pp. 38-39, 304, 334] I compare these core values with the beads in a kaleidoscope which are reflected by mirrors to form a constantly changing series of unique patterns. Although the visible appearance alters, the basic beads remain the same, except that their relationships change.

Any culture has a set of core values (or "key themes") which are important enough to the people that they are handed down from generation to generation as integral constituents of that culture. Often they are central to the culture's worldview. These change relatively slowly over time. As such they may help to define ethnicity more comprehensively than features such as language or certain festivals or other traditions.

The examples of core values that I have given for Japan overlap with some of those which are also important to the Volga Tatars, although the actual manifestations of how these values are expressed in daily life are different. Moreover, the specific configuration of values within any one culture is probably unique to that culture. It is the way in which the elements are combined and how they are expressed which imparts a distinctive character or uniqueness to each culture. Just as each individual is unique, so each culture is unique. (It is, after all, made up of unique individuals!) What is it that makes me "me" and makes you "you"? Is it the external features of eye colour, length of hair, height and so on? Or is it something inside? Probably most of us would feel that the "real me" is inside, deeper than the visible features seen on the surface. Some of us may feel that we are more deeply characterized by the things that motivate us, which give us direction in life, which give us value and identity. Geertz calls these "motivations" but they are probably the same as, or very similar to, the features that I would call core values. At an even deeper level, at least some of them might even be manifestations of what the Chinese call one's "good heart" liangxin 良心 – that is, the inner promptings that come via one's conscience.

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[10] In referring to the focus on "community" as another possible "key theme" I have a broader notion than that which has sometimes been depicted as the "group model" of Japanese society, including the structure which Nakane [Nakane, 1970] describes as being an inverted "V" shape, whereby individuals in the group have strong vertical links to their leader but weak horizontal links to each other. While this may be one form of community, others may be constituted on the basis of kinship ties, neighbourhood, shared interests or other features and do not necessarily entail the kind of structure depicted by Nakane. Nowadays there is concern about the teenage generation that appears to be loners – isolated in their rooms with apparently little social contact; however, for at least some of them (perhaps the majority) there can also be a community in the form of people with whom there is interaction through social media or other forums requiring access via mobile phones or the internet. Even if this is a "virtual" community, it may still to at least some extent fulfil the functions that other forms of community have performed in the past.

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Информация об авторе / Information about the author

Льюис Дэвид С. – приглашенный профессор Школы этнологии и социологии Юньнаньского университета, Китай. Научный сотрудник Отдела исследований Монголии и Внутренней Азии университета в Кембридже, Англия. Помимо преподавания в Китае, преподавал цикл лекций о Японии в университетах Кембриджа и Лидса, проводит исследования по антропологии религии в Японии, Англии, России и других странах бывшего СССР. E-mail dlewis@yandex.com.

Lewis David C. – Visiting Professor at the School of Ethnology and Sociology, Yunnan University, Kunming, China. Researcher at the Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit, University of Cambridge, England. Besides his teaching in China, he has taught about Japan at the universities of Cambridge and Leeds and has conducted research on the anthropology of religion in Japan, England, Russia and elsewhere in the former USSR. E-mail dlewis@yandex.com.