

## The Development of Close Relationships in Japan and the United States: Paths of Symbiotic Harmony and Generative Tension

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Findings from research on parent–child and adult mate relationships suggest that there are different paths of development in Japan and the United States. In Japan, the path is one of symbiotic harmony, as seen in the emphasis on union in infancy, others' expectations in childhood, the stability of relationships with parents and peers in adolescence, and assurance about the mate relationship in adulthood. In the United States, the path is one of generative tension, as seen in the tug between separation and reunion in infancy, the emphasis on personal preferences in childhood, the transfer of closeness from parents to peers in adolescence, and the emphasis on trust—a faith and hope in new relationships—in adulthood. The notion that there are different paths of development challenges Western investigators' presumption that certain processes—separation-individuation, use of the relational partner as a secure base for exploration, and conflict between partners—are central in all relationships. The notion of different paths also challenges the assumption of many cross-cultural investigators that relationships in the United States are less valued or weaker than those in Japan; this article highlights cultural differences in the *meaning and dynamics*, as opposed to the *importance and strength*, of relationships. The model suggests a need to investigate the processes underlying, and the adaptive consequences of, these two alternative paths.

*No account of ontogeny in human adaptation could be adequate without the inclusion of the population specific patterns that establish pathways for the behavioral development of children. (LeVine et al., 1994, p. 12)*

### INTRODUCTION

*Overview.* Western investigators' descriptions of close relationships contain several assumptions that have in common an emphasis on individuation. These investigators assume that: (1) there is a struggle between the desire for closeness and the desire for separation (Bowen, 1985; Bowlby, 1973; Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, 1975; Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985); (2) a primary function of close relationships is to serve as a base for exploration (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Shaver, Hazan, & Bradshaw, 1988); and (3) conflicts between the needs of self and those of the other are inevitable (Canary, Cupach, & Messman, 1995; Jacobson & Addis, 1993; Shantz, 1987). We believe that these assumptions help explain close relationships in the West, particularly the United States, and that very different assumptions are needed to explain close relationships in Japan.

The goal of this article is to review evidence of differences between close relationships in Japan and those in the United States and to provide a framework for understanding these differences. By "close relationships" we mean interpersonal ties entailing love, loyalty, care, and commitment, typically between dyads of parents and children, close relatives,

best friends, and sexual mates. We do not assume that the distinctions we draw in this paper apply to other, more distant relationships, such as those between teachers and students, co-workers, or casual friends. This review focuses predominantly on middle class, urban Japanese and U.S. samples studied from the 1960s through the 1990s because, despite economic and technological similarities, we perceive striking differences between these samples in the meaning and dynamics of close relationships and because these differences can be documented through a critical mass of published studies. In drawing upon these studies, which previously have not been integrated, we hope to provide a lifespan perspective on U.S.-Japanese differences in relatedness.

This article highlights the consistency across development in Japanese and in U.S. relatedness. In so doing, we take a step forward in the scientific study of development and culture. Although consistency across development within culture has been noted by others—as indicated by the opening quotation—the data needed to illustrate and identify the nature of consistency have been lacking. The requisite data are now available for comparing two cultures—Japan and the United States. Much of the present review of cultural differences is devoted to synthesizing the data from several developmental levels; at the end of the review we speculate about the processes underlying the consistency across development.

This review is intended to address such perplexing questions as: Why do U.S. parents encourage their children's expression of needs more, even though Japanese parents are more indulgent of needs? Why do U.S. parents, who view noncompliance as normative and appropriate for children, exert more authority than Japanese parents? Why do Japanese adolescents spend more time at home and report less tension with parents even though they talk less with parents? Why are Japanese marriages more stable if American partners try harder to "keep the romance alive?" In each case, the answer follows from an understanding of the meaning and dynamics of relatedness in Japan and the United States. We believe that there are common patterns underlying the answers to all of these questions and we attempt to identify those patterns.

Our thesis is that the U.S. path of development differs in fundamental ways from the Japanese path. Most Western theorists assume otherwise. Shantz (1987, p. 58) observes: "Conflict is a central concept in virtually every major theory of human development" (cf. Canary et al., 1995). U.S. theorists also maintain that separation-individuation and use of the caregiver as a base for exploration are prevalent in all cultures. The assumption that all essential features of U.S. relatedness are universal is due, we suspect, to overgeneralizing from studies of U.S. samples.

*Broad dimensions of social-cultural behavior that distinguish Japan from the United States.* Several dimensions have been used to distinguish values and behaviors that are more characteristic of the United States than of Japan. These include: (1) individualism-collectivism (i.e., ties between individuals based on personal goals versus integration of people into strong, cohesive groups; Hofstede, 1991; Triandis, 1995); (2) individual-centered societies versus situation-centered societies (i.e., behavior reflecting internal characteristics versus behavior tailored to the demands of a particular context; Hsu, 1983); and (3) independent conceptions of the self versus interdependent conceptions of the self (i.e., notions of self as independent of others versus notions of self as closely tied to others; Markus & Kitayama, 1991); (see Gisinger & Blatt, 1994; Hall, 1976; Sampson, 1988; Schweder & Bourne, 1982; Weisz, Rothbaum, & Blackburn, 1984, for similar dimensions).

A common denominator of the U.S. pole of these dimensions is individuation. The major behavioral components of individuation are autonomy, expressiveness (i.e., direct, verbal communication), and exploration (Harwood, Miller, & Irizarry, 1995; Triandis, 1995). A common denominator of the Japanese pole of the above dimensions is accommodation, which includes empathy, compliance, and propriety (Azuma,

1986; Kojima, 1986; Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelfand, 1995; Trommsdorff, 1995; Weisz et al., 1984). In this paper we rely on the individuation-accommodation distinction, based almost exclusively on research on adults, to explain how close relationships differ across the lifespan between the United States and Japan.

According to Triandis (1989), distinctions such as those described above constitute a first step in the construction of a theory of culture and social psychology. We believe that exploration of the developmental course of these constructs constitutes another critical step in theory construction. This latter step begins with a description of developmental levels, such as that provided in this manuscript, and progresses to an analysis of developmental processes—that is, "the ways in which the developmental levels intertwine and fuse in human life over time" (Cole, 1996, p. 145). We are not aware of prior efforts to integrate age-related findings from multiple studies that examine cultural differences across the lifespan. Integrating such findings is a prerequisite for exploring the processes that mediate development.

Our approach is consistent with that of cultural psychologists (e.g., Cole, 1996; LeVine et al., 1994; Rogoff, 1990; Schweder, 1991; Super & Harkness, 1986) who maintain that the person and the environment co-constitute one another and cannot be separated from one another. Culture represents local values, traditions, and activities, none of which can be understood without considering the contexts in which they are embedded. We believe that a fuller picture of the person-environment interrelation can be obtained by considering the myriad behaviors incorporated in this review. A focus on *specific behaviors*, such as U.S. infants' orientation to impersonal objects, tells us less about context than does a focus on *patterns of behavior*, such as the one documented later in this article involving infants' information-oriented vocalizations, distal interpersonal contact, orientation to the outside world, and exploration. This pattern of behavior suggests a context in which separations from caregivers are common and the impersonal world is stimulating and inviting.

The study of different developmental levels provides an understanding of a heretofore neglected aspect of context—the role that each level plays as a context for levels preceding and following it (LeVine & Miller, 1990). The way that children understand the world at any point in time is influenced by their history as a member of their particular community and their expectations regarding future experiences (e.g., U.S. adolescents' tension with their parents is influenced by both the parents' emphasis on autonomy in childhood and their own awareness of the need to

form exclusive romantic relationships in adulthood). Researchers should not isolate a particular developmental level, as has commonly been done in prior reviews, and study it as separate from other developmental levels any more than they should separate the person and environment and attempt to understand them apart from each other.

*Developmental paths to close relationships in the United States and Japan.* In the past, cultural theorists have tended to depict Americans as less invested in, or oriented toward, relationships than Japanese, because Americans are focused on the individuated self (e.g., Guisinger & Blatt, 1994; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995). Since there is compelling evidence that the desire for close relationships is profound in the United States as well as in Japan (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Baumeister & Leary, 1995), we de-emphasize the role individuation plays in undermining relatedness. We hope to shift the focus from cultural differences in the importance and strength of relationships to cultural differences in the meaning and dynamics of relationships. Specifically, we emphasize the ways in which individuation and accommodation influence the nature of relationships, rather than the ways in which individuation dilutes relationships.

We believe there are several aspects of relatedness, such as proximity seeking, contact maintaining, separation protest, and safe haven, that are rooted in biological predispositions and are manifest in all cultures (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1982). These biological predispositions for relatedness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Bowlby, 1982) can be seen as passing through cultural lenses (i.e., values, practices, and institutions)—one emphasizing accommodation and one emphasizing individuation—leading to distinctive paths of development (see Figure 1, top). The path of *symbiotic harmony*, which begins when predispositions for relatedness pass through the lens of accommodation, is characterized by a continual pull toward adapting the self to fit the needs of others. The path of *generative tension*, which begins when predispositions for relatedness pass through the lens of individuation, is characterized by a continual tug between the desire for proximity and closeness with primary attachment figures on one hand and the desire for separation and exploration of the surrounding world, including new relationships, on the other hand (e.g., Ainsworth, 1990).

A prototype of symbiotic harmony is the Japanese mother's extreme indulgence and the child's *amae*—complete dependence—on the mother (Azuma, 1986; Doi, 1973). Symbiotic harmony is also seen in the *amae*-based, interdependent relationships of later childhood and adulthood (Yamaguchi et al., 1997).

The harmony is symbiotic in that it is grounded in extremely close, mutually beneficial ties between persons with clearly differentiated roles. A prototype of generative tension is the securely attached U.S. infant's competing desires for proximity and contact with the caregiver on one hand and separation from the caregiver and exploration of the environment on the other. These desires are complementary in that separation fosters and is fostered by closeness, but they are also "antithetical" in that they cannot operate simultaneously (Ainsworth, 1990, p. 472; Bowlby, 1973, p. 237). Generative tension is also seen in the goal corrected partnership, where "conflict between opposing goals and plans is inevitable . . . throughout the life course" (Cicchetti, Toth, & Lynch, 1995, p. 8). The tension is generative in that it promotes the individual's social development (Bretherton, 1995; Cicchetti, Cummings, Greenberg, & Marvin, 1990).

The Japanese and U.S. paths of relatedness are similar in that they are derived from biologically-based predispositions (e.g., proximity seeking) and they are fueled by the culture's need for both accommodation and individuation. However, accommodation and individuation are emphasized to different degrees in Japan and the United States (see Figure 1, bottom). In Japan, the lens of accommodation is dominant and the most common path is one in which symbiotic harmony is paramount (DeVos, 1985; Gudykunst & Nishida, 1994; Iwao, 1993; Roland, 1988; Singelis et al., 1995; Trommsdorff, 1992; Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994; Zahn-Waxler, Friedman, Cole, Mizuta, & Hiruma, 1996). In the United States, the lens of individuation is dominant and the most common path is one in which generative tension is paramount (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Canary et al., 1995; Harwood et al., 1995; Shantz, 1987). Throughout development, the cultural lens continues to influence close relationships (see Figure 2). Although the United States and Japanese paths overlap, our goal is to document the differences between them.

There are four major hypotheses that derive from the contrasting paths of development proposed here. At each major stage, the paths of generative tension and symbiotic harmony manifest themselves somewhat differently, as follows:<sup>1</sup>

1. Infancy: The opposing processes of separation and *reunion* versus self–other *union*.
2. Childhood: the prioritizing of *personal preferences* in relationships and the resulting conflict

<sup>1</sup> These distinctions (e.g., between reunion and union) probably exist at all levels of development. We associate them with a particular level only because they are especially helpful in capturing the cultural differences at that level.

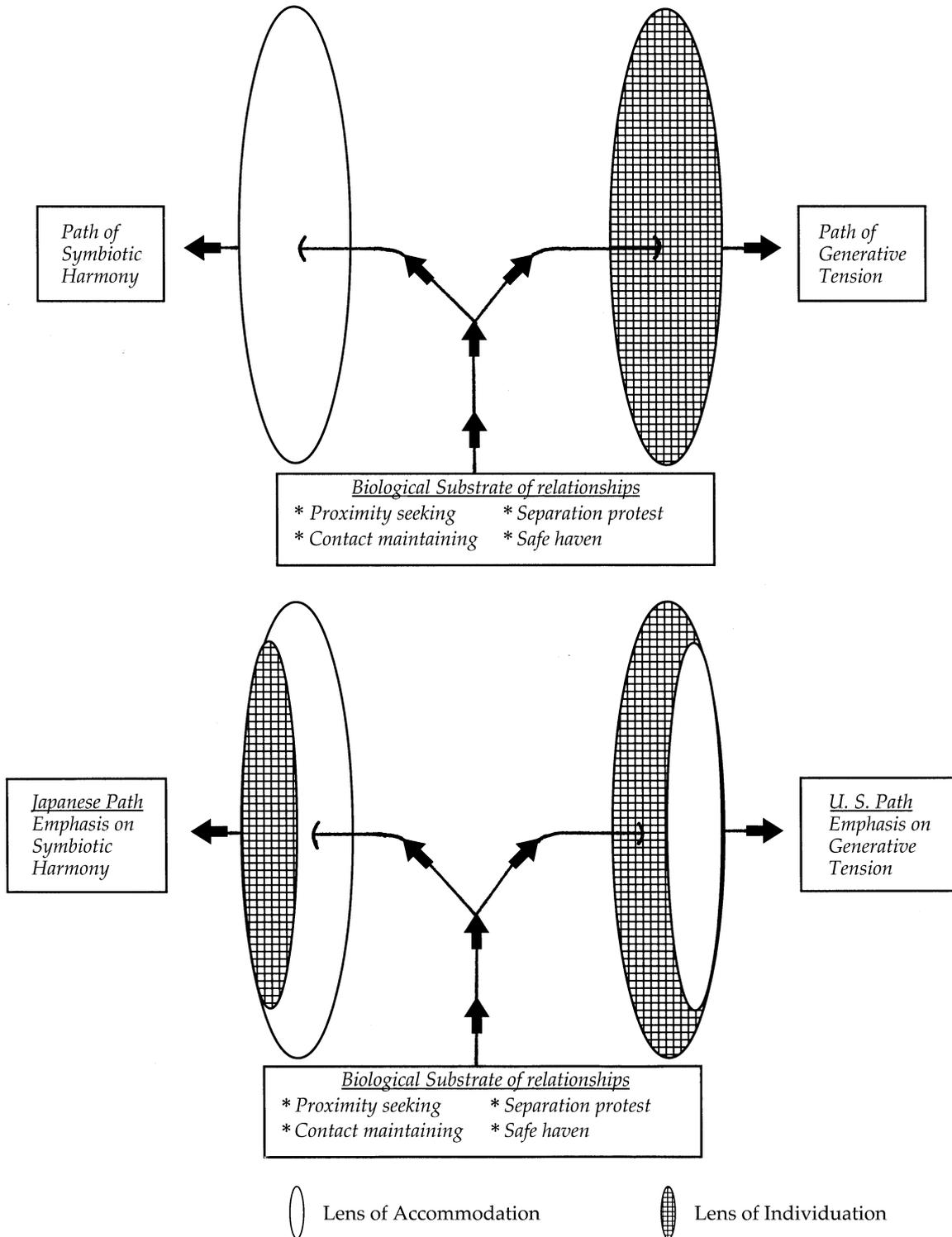


Figure 1 Origins of the paths of symbiotic harmony and generative tension (top), Japanese and U.S. paths of development (bottom).

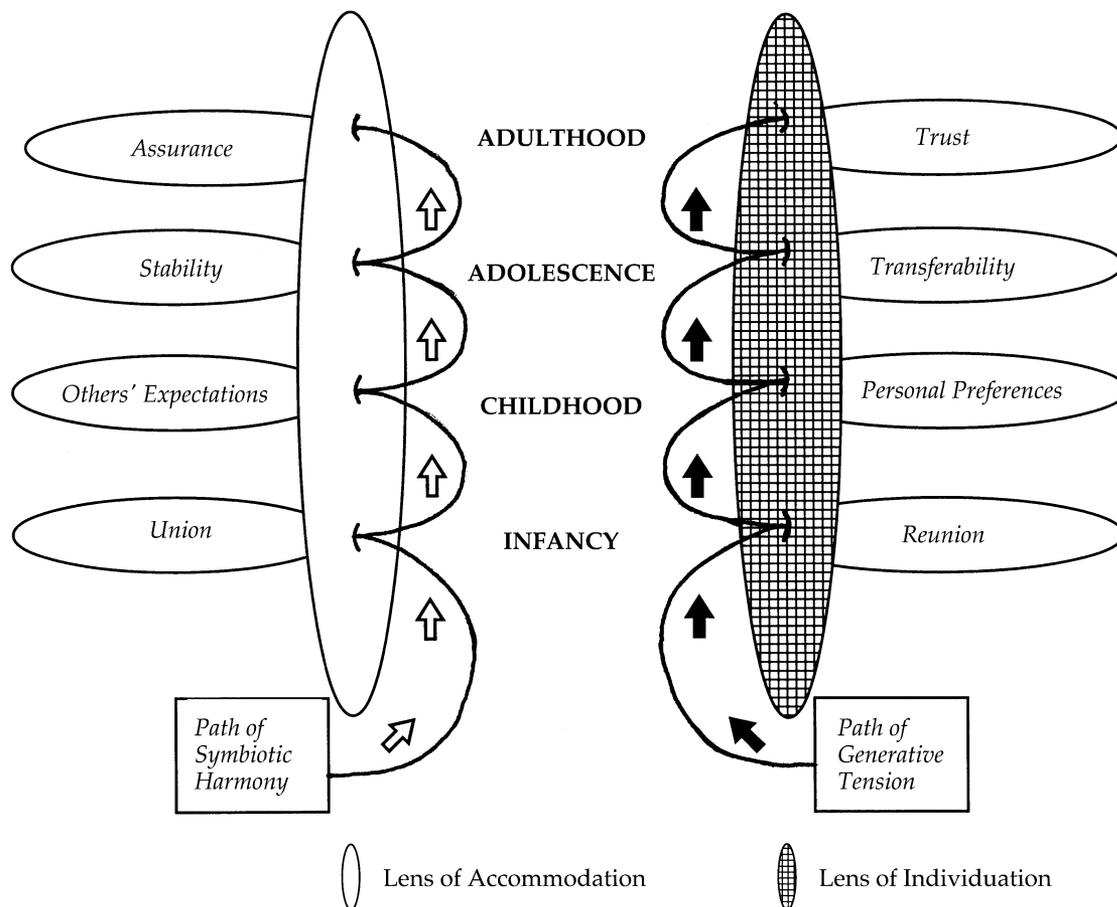


Figure 2 How paths of symbiotic harmony and generative tension are manifested at different levels of development.

between self and partner versus adherence to obligations and to *others' expectations*.

3. Adolescence: *transferability* of attachment from parents to peers leading to increased distance from parents versus *stability* of relationships with both parents and peer.
4. Adulthood: a *trust* (hope and faith) in relationships which, ironically, "helps people out of committed relationships" and into new ones versus *assurance* about relationships—a role-based, socially supported sense of commitment (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994, p. 160).

Later, we review evidence that age-related manifestations of generative tension are relatively more evident in the United States and those of symbiotic harmony are relatively more evident in Japan.

While all of our conclusions are based on findings from multiple studies, there is more supportive evidence for the hypotheses regarding infancy and

adulthood than for those regarding childhood and adolescence. For example, in the infancy section, each of the four main conclusions (corresponding to the four subsections), is based upon at least seven, and often more, comparative studies; in the adolescence section, the three main conclusions are based on at least three comparative studies. The two other sections were intermediate in the support they receive. Before reviewing the evidence, we consider several important qualifications of the hypotheses.

*Qualifications.* Throughout this manuscript, we refer to cultural characteristics, but most of the research on which the conclusions are based relies on samples that exclude minorities and are predominantly middle class, urban, and from the 1960s through the 1990s. Thus, our discussion of differences between Japan and the United States pertains only to these groups. There is insufficient evidence to draw conclusions about other groups from these cultures.

Some investigators suggest that the within-culture differences in relatedness may rival the differences

between cultures (Holloway, 1997; Posada et al., 1995, van Ijzendoorn & Kroonenberg, 1988). There is evidence of within-culture variation from several sources:

1. Findings indicate SES differences in relatedness as well as Culture  $\times$  SES interactions (Azuma, Kashiwagi, & Hess, 1981).
2. Differences pertaining to the rural–urban distinction are seen, for example, in the greater prevalence of filial piety and three-generation households in Japanese villages than in urban settings (Hendry, 1995).
3. Different patterns of relatedness for men and women are suggested by findings that the role of caregiver is almost exclusively fulfilled by females in Japan (Barratt, Negayama, & Minami, 1993) and that Japanese husbands more often receive *amae* from their wives than their wives do from them (Iwao, 1993; also see Kashima et al., 1995, for evidence of a Culture  $\times$  Gender interaction).
4. Historical variation is seen, for example, in the dramatic increase in love marriages in Japan (Kumagai, 1995), the decrease in Japanese mothers' self-sacrifice (Iwao, 1993), and the increase in divorce in the United States (Hernandez, 1994).
5. Even individualism, which we suggest is central to the cultural difference, is increasing in Japan, in part due to the Japanese government's explicit attempt to make the educational curriculum more individualistic (Holloway, 1997).

While differences in relatedness are subject to substantial individual variation (see Posada et al., 1995), and are tied to historical, economic, and lifestyle conditions that are changing in both cultures, there is evidence that the cultural differences we highlight have endured over time and situations. For example, many of the findings obtained in the 1990s are similar to those obtained in the 1960s.

There is also evidence of continuity of cultural differences across generations (Iwao, 1993; Lanham & Garrick, 1996). Almost 100 years ago a Western observer (Bacon, 1902) wrote that a woman's life in Japan was "one of perfect devotion to her children." Similarly, a European traveler to Japan in 1645 commented that "[the Japanese] . . . raise their children attentively . . . punishment would not be used. . . . [Through] patience and gentleness, the child would be helped to understand" (cited by Lewis, 1996, p. 134). Despite remarkable post-WWII increases in Japanese industrialization, urbanization, and capitalism, the underlying value system remains intact (Lebra, 1994; Misumi, 1998; White, 1996). Once Japanese

achieve success via Western methods and values, they tend to return to mainstream Japanese methods and values (Miyanaga, 1991).

Another qualification of our thesis regarding Japanese–U.S. differences is that there are impressive similarities between the two cultures (*vis-à-vis* the four hypotheses mentioned above). In all cultures, people are concerned with reunion *and* union, with others' expectations *and* individual preferences, with stability *and* transfer of attachment figures, and with assurance *and* trust. These cultural similarities do not diminish the differences in relative emphasis, but they place the differences in the context of a common human heritage.

### INFANCY: UNION AND REUNION

A universal task of infancy is to develop a secure relationship with at least one primary caregiver, usually the mother. In Japan, infants derive security from the mother's indulgence of their needs. Caregiving techniques direct the child toward a near-constant union with the mother. Japanese mothers meet their infants' needs even before they are expressed, thereby blurring the self–other distinction. The mother conveys to the infant the message "I am one with you . . . we are of the same mind" (Kagitcibasi, 1994, p. 62). This symbiosis of mother and child is not regarded as healthy in the United States, where infants are seen as separate individuals from birth (Chen & Miyake, 1986; Roland, 1988). In the United States, mothers' caregiving simultaneously meets the child's need for security and fosters the child's orientation to the outside world. This tension is particularly manifest in the phenomenon of separation and reunion, whereby the child alternates between using the caregiver as a base for separation and exploration and reuniting with the caregiver to reestablish security. Reunion emphasizes the availability of the caregiver as needed (Ainsworth & Marvin, 1995) rather than as constant.

In this section we review data on Japanese–U.S. differences in parent–infant relationships, focusing on four areas of research: parental vocalizations, parent–infant proximity and contact, parents' directing of infant attention, and infant exploratory behavior.

*Parental vocalizations.* In general, Japanese mothers' vocalizations are relatively more concerned with the relationship and American mothers' vocalizations are relatively more concerned with the outside world. This conclusion is based on studies that employ very different operational definitions of "vocalization." Several findings indicate that Americans use more information-salient or object-oriented speech when talking to their babies (Bornstein, Tal, et al., 1992; Cau-

dill & Weinstein, 1974; Fogel, Toda, & Kawai, 1988; Morikawa, Shand, & Kosawa, 1988; Tamis-LeMonda, Bornstein, Cyphers, Toda, & Misako, 1992; Toda, Fogel, & Kawai, 1990; see Azuma et al., 1981, and Minami & McCabe, 1995, for studies of young children). Information-salient speech includes direct statements, questions, and reports about the infant, mother, and environment.

By contrast, Japanese mothers use vocalizations that entail more affect and less information. These vocalizations are more babyish, idiomatic, and meaningless, and include greetings, turn-taking, recitations, onomatopoeia, endearments, and the like (Barratt et al., 1993; Bornstein, Tal, et al., 1992; Caudill & Weinstein, 1974; Fernald & Morikawa, 1993; Fogel, Toda, & Kawai, 1988; Morikawa et al., 1988; Toda et al., 1990; see also Azuma et al., 1981, and Minami & McCabe, 1995). Of the studies that examined lulling (repetitive, comforting noises), two found that Japanese lull more (Caudill & Schooler, 1973; Caudill & Weinstein, 1974) and one found no differences (Otaki, Durrett, Richards, Nyquist, & Pennebaker, 1986). In the language of *amae*, the emphasis is on feelings (*kimochi*) rather than information.

The information-oriented speech of American mothers prepares the infant to become a separate autonomous individual capable of meaningful self-expression and exploration of the world beyond the mother. By contrast, the affect-oriented vocalizations of Japanese mothers match those of their infants, reflecting and reinforcing the notion that the infant is still very much merged with the mother and that the infant needs to be comforted and lulled more than to become a separate partner.

*Parent–infant proximity and contact.* Findings from studies examining proximity and contact depend on the specific variables studied. There are no cultural differences with regard to most categories of contact, including hugging, kissing, patting, touching, picking up, and comforting (e.g., Bornstein, Tamis-LeMonda, et al., 1992; Caudill & Weinstein, 1974; Fogel et al., 1988; Otaki et al., 1986;). The Japanese, however, exhibit more prolonged proximity and contact, for example, in cosleeping (Barratt et al., 1993; Brazelton, 1990; Caudill & Plath, 1986; Wolf, Lozoff, Latz, & Paludetto, 1994) and holding/carrying (Barratt et al., 1993; Caudill & Schooler, 1973; Caudill & Weinstein, 1974). This finding is supported by the greater amount of proximity-promoting equipment, such as snugglies, in Japan, and the greater prevalence of distance-promoting equipment, such as walkers and swings, in the United States (Barratt et al., 1993). According to some studies, Japanese mothers are also physically present more than U.S. mothers (Caudill &

Weinstein, 1974; see Fogel, Stevenson, & Messinger, 1992, for a review).

Cultural differences in proximity and contact are particularly evident in times of stress. Research using the strange situation paradigm indicates that, while the percentage of secure babies is the same in Japan as in the United States, Japanese babies more strenuously resist, and are more upset by, separations, as indicated by crying, attempting to maintain contact with mothers, and lack of exploration (Dickstein, Thompson, Estes, Malkin, & Lamb, 1984; Miyake, Chen, & Campos, 1985; Mizuta, Zahn-Waxler, Cole, & Hiruma, 1996; Takahashi, 1990; Ujiie, 1997; Ujiie & Miyake, 1984). During reunion, almost all Japanese babies, but not U.S. babies, seek and achieve contact with the mother (Takahashi, 1990; Ujiie & Miyake, 1984). Japanese infants may more strenuously resist separation because they are less accustomed to it. Japanese mothers are much less likely to leave their infants in the care of babysitters (Imamura, 1987; Miyake, Campos, Bradshaw, & Kagan, 1986) or alternate providers (Fogel et al., 1992). Infants in Japan receive about 2 hours per week of nonmaternal care as compared to 23 hours in the United States (Barratt et al., 1993). Japanese childcare experts still insist that 24-hour selfless devotion is crucial to the child's well being (Jolivet, 1997). Japanese infants' lack of experience dealing with others may contribute to their greater anxiety in the presence of strangers (Takahashi, 1990). These cultural differences may also be reflected in Japanese mothers' being more likely to pick up their babies, and to hold them longer, than American mothers (Ujiie & Miyake, 1984). It is revealing that the most widely accepted measure of healthy attachment in the United States is behavior following separation, particularly behavior in reunions, whereas Japanese infants' reaction to this paradigm is often so adverse that the experimenters must curtail or end it (LeVine & Miller, 1990; Takahashi, 1990).

These findings are consistent with field reports that physical alignment between parents and infants is stressed in Japan (Azuma, 1994; Lebra, 1976; Morsbach, 1980). This includes "skinship"—extensive body contact between family members. Skin-to-skin contact during breastfeeding may be prolonged well beyond feeding per se (Caudill & Weinstein, 1974) and fathers as well as mothers bathe with their babies (Barratt et al., 1993). These findings highlight the greater proximity and constancy of contact among the Japanese, as contrasted with greater periods of separation, and hence greater emphasis on reunions, among Americans.

One measure of contact that yields higher scores for U.S. mothers than for Japanese mothers is time

spent looking at the infant (Barratt et al., 1993; Bornstein, Azuma, Tamis-LeMonda, & Ogino, 1990; Caudill & Weinstein, 1974; van Ijzendoorn & Kroonenberg, 1988). In the Strange Situation, Japanese mothers approach nearer their babies and stay beside them for longer periods (Ujiie, 1997). The more “distal” (eye) contact of U.S. parents may serve to balance the need for closeness and that for separation.

*Parental directing of infant attention.* American mothers tend to direct the infant’s attention out to the environment, fostering exploration. Japanese mothers tend to direct the infant’s attention in toward the mother, fostering accommodation to the mother. Americans, more than Japanese, encourage their infants to attend to properties, objects, or events in their environment (Bornstein, Azuma, et al., 1990; Bornstein, Toda, Azuma, Tamis-LeMonda, & Ogino, 1990; Bornstein, Tamis-LeMonda, et al., 1992; Shand & Kosawa, 1985b), and to explore (Bornstein, Toda, et al., 1990; Caudill & Weinstein, 1974; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 1992). American mothers focus more on toys, talking about them and using them in different ways (Bornstein, Tamis-LaMonda, et al., 1992; Caudill & Schooler, 1973); they offer a greater variety of challenging toys (Barratt et al., 1993) and encourage more exploration (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 1992). American mothers are also more likely to orient their children to novel social environments, particularly to strangers (Miyake et al., 1985). Japanese mothers, by contrast, encourage infants to attend to them—the mothers (Bornstein, Azuma, et al., 1990; Bornstein, Toda, et al., 1990)—and their infants direct more cries to them than do U.S. infants toward their mothers (Ujiie, 1997). During play, Japanese mothers more often use toys as part of a social routine intended to foster empathy (*omoiyari*), for example, using a toy dog to greet and engage the child (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 1992). *Omoiyari* is placed “on top of the moral-value hierarchy in Japanese culture” (Lebra 1994, p. 262).

*Infant exploration.* Complementing these findings on maternal behavior, researchers have found that in all five of the studies that examined infant exploration (Bornstein, Azuma, et al., 1990; Bornstein, Toda, et al., 1990; Caudill & Schooler, 1973; Caudill & Weinstein, 1974; Shand & Kosawa, 1985a), U.S. infants engaged in more exploratory activity than did Japanese infants. Another study found more exploration by U.S. babies (62%) than by Japanese babies (9%) when they were left alone in the Strange Situation, and more manipulation of toys by U.S. babies at reunion (Takahashi, 1990). Japanese infants are more oriented to the mother and U.S. infants are more oriented to the environment in circumstances involving

both distress (Miyake et al., 1985) and positive affect (Bornstein, Azuma, et al., 1990).<sup>2</sup>

*Summary of infancy.* Harmony is symbiotic in Japan in that the infant’s dependence on and union with the mother is inseparable from the mothers’ constant need to care for the infant. Japanese mothers use affect-oriented language that focuses on their relationship with the infant, such as lulling, onomatopoeia, and idioms that are unique to the mother–infant relationship. They are physically present more of the time and have more body contact with their babies, as seen in cosleeping and prolonged holding. They also have more contact in times of stress. They direct the infant’s attention toward them—the mothers, and their infants orient themselves to their mothers more than to the outside world. These behaviors reinforce parent–infant union and *amae*, the infants’ presumption that their mothers will meet all their needs.

Generative tension is manifest in the U.S. infant’s competing desires for separation and exploration on one hand and reunion and proximity on the other. U.S. mothers use information-oriented language that is concerned with the outside world, for example, in labeling objects. They are more physically separate from, and use more “distal” contact with, their infants. They direct the infant’s attention outward, and their infants explore the environment more. Mothers in the United States more than those in Japan orient the infant to the environment and serve as a base from which the infant can separate and explore the world.

## CHILDHOOD: OTHERS’ EXPECTATIONS AND PERSONAL PREFERENCES

A universal task of childhood (ages 2 to 12 years) is to learn skills for promoting the parent–child relationship within the context of a widening social environment. In Japan, parents emphasize the importance of empathy, obligations, and meeting others’ expectations. Japanese children are discouraged from making their wishes known; instead, they rely on others to sense and meet their needs (Roland, 1988). In the United States, parents emphasize the expression of the self’s will as well as skills at negotiating one’s own needs with the needs of others. Children are encouraged to assert their personal preferences and to respond to the personal preferences of others. Pursuit of personal preferences brings with it increased potential for conflict.

<sup>2</sup> As there is not clear evidence of greater activity among American infants (Bornstein, 1989), cultural differences in infants’ exploration are probably not due to differences in activity level. Future research should examine whether greater exploration by U.S. infants results from greater encouragement by their parents.

*Child noncompliance.* Beginning at about age 2 in the United States, there is a clear increase in noncompliant and oppositional behavior to parents, such as responding “no” to parental directives (Rothbaum & Weisz, 1989; Wenar, 1982). At times, Japanese children are also obstreperous and unruly (Lebra, 1994; Vogel, 1991), but compared to U.S. children, they make fewer demands of parents, give fewer orders, are less expressive of their emotions, and are less likely to assert that they will not obey (Caudill & Schooler, 1973). Direct observations as well as parent and teacher reports indicate that U.S. preschoolers show more assertion, anger, and aggressive behavior and language than do Japanese preschoolers (Kobayashi-Winata & Power, 1989; Zahn-Waxler et al., 1996).

The increase in noncompliance is seen by many U.S. investigators as an important milestone in the development of individuation which, in turn, is regarded as a foundation for mature relationships (Kuczynski & Kochanska, 1990; Kuczynski, Kochanska, Radke-Yarrow, & Girnius-Brown, 1987; Mahler et al., 1975; Sroufe, 1979). Compared to Japanese parents, U.S. parents place greater value on their children’s social initiative and verbal assertiveness as hallmarks of individuation (Azuma et al., 1981). They also encourage emotional expressiveness more than Japanese parents, even though expressivity correlates with anger and aggression (Mizuta et al., 1996; Zahn-Waxler et al., 1996). Verbal expressivity is seen as so central to close relationships in the United States that it has been used as a measure of children’s attachment security (Bretherton, 1995; Oppenheim & Waters, 1995).

In the United States, “healthy conflict” is sometimes regarded as a prerequisite for close relationships (Canary et al., 1995; Emery, 1992; Shantz, 1987). The goal of socialization is to make conflict functional rather than to eliminate it (Shantz & Hartup, 1992). Interestingly, in the United States, certain forms of noncompliance predict *absence* of child behavior problems as well as adaptive interactions with parents (Kuczynski & Kochanska, 1990). Assertion of the self’s preferences is critical to the development of negotiation skills and the “goal corrected partnership” (Bowlby, 1969/1982; Cicchetti et al., 1990). Children’s ability to assert the self is more emphasized in the United States than in Japan, where nonverbal, mutually empathic parent–child interactions predominate (Clancy, 1986). Yet noncompliance also leads to tension between U.S. parents and children and to parents’ efforts to squelch it. In contrasting U.S. and Japanese children, Fogel et al. (1992, p. 49) observe that “U.S. children are encouraged to stick up for themselves and say what they want . . . [but at the same

time] parents attempt to control their children’s self assertion by appealing to their own authority. . . . American ideals . . . contribute to conflict.”

Japanese parents value conformity more than do U.S. parents, and they expect compliance at an earlier age than their U.S. counterparts (Azuma et al., 1981). When Japanese children are noncompliant, their parents tend to discount it, attributing the misbehavior not to intent but to immaturity; it is not seen as an enduring aspect of human nature (Johnson, 1993; Lebra, 1994). There is no Japanese counterpart to the U.S. notion of adaptive noncompliance. Just as Americans believe that development is accompanied by an increasing desire to individuate and assert the self, Japanese believe that development is accompanied by an increasing desire to accommodate others and to obey them (Lebra, 1994; Lewis, 1988; Peak, 1989). In the United States parents reinforce assertiveness by speaking with pride about their “willful child” and by fostering the child’s self esteem; Japanese parents are more inclined to encourage self effacement (Markus & Kitayama, 1994; Whiting, 1989) which is incompatible with assertiveness.

*Parental control.* Although U.S. parents display greater respect for noncompliance, they also exercise more direct control. Compared to Japanese parents, U.S. parents use more commands and coercion (Caudill & Schooler, 1973; Hess, Kashiwagi, Azuma, Price, & Dickson, 1980; Lewis, 1996) and other overt displays of authority (Conroy, Hess, Azuma, & Kashiwagi, 1980; see Lebra, 1994, for a review). Both tolerance of noncompliance and limit setting are seen as fostering children’s autonomy and, ultimately, close relationships between distinct individuals (Baumrind, 1989).

Japanese parents are more likely than U.S. parents to avoid confrontations and contests of will (DeVos, 1996; Kornadt, Hayashi, Tachibana, Trommsdorff, & Yamaguchi, 1992; Lebra, 1994; Rohlen, 1989), they tend not to scold children directly (Miyake & Yamazaki, 1995); and they often back down when children resist their requests (Lebra, 1994; Vogel, 1991). To encourage their children to conform to social expectations, Japanese parents model deference: they “suffer” rather than forbid or inhibit via verbal chastisement (DeVos, 1985). When Japanese parents do oppose their children, they tend to express negativity indirectly—by removing something from the child, or by removing themselves via silence, indifference, or shunning (Azuma, 1996; Clancy 1986; Johnson, 1993). They curb their children’s expressiveness by modeling restraint of expressiveness (Caudill & Schooler, 1973; Matsumori, 1981; Miyake et al., 1986; Trommsdorff, 1989).

Japanese parents, more than U.S. parents, use indi-

rect and psychological methods to control their children: reasoning, guilt and anxiety induction, shaming, modeling, and appealing to the child's feelings and desires (Lebra, 1994; Shapiro, Ho, & Fernald, 1997; Stevenson & Stigler, 1992; Zahn-Waxler et al., 1996). A particularly common practice is to appeal to the child's awareness of consequences for others when they are hurt (DeVos, 1996; Peak, 1989; Zahn-Waxler et al., 1996). If the child is not ready to understand and accept social rules, and to comply with them voluntarily, Japanese parents believe that the rules have little value and cannot be enforced (Clancy, 1986; Lanham & Garrick, 1996; Lebra, 1994; Lewis, 1988). Even the language used by mothers assumes children's desire to agree. For example, in giving a directive the mother is likely to add the suffix "ne," which in effect asks the child "Isn't that right, don't you agree?" Japanese mothers use agreement bids far more frequently than do American mothers; they use simple directives less frequently (Shapiro et al., 1997).

Japanese parents' "laxness" reflects, in part, their belief in the value of indulging children, at least in the home setting. Japanese mothers, as compared to U.S. mothers, are more accepting and even encouraging of preschoolers' *amae* (dependent) behavior (Johnson, 1993; White & LeVine, 1986; see Trommsdorff & Friedlmeier, 1993, for similar Japanese-German differences), including children's desire for physical contact (Mizuta et al., 1996). This helps explain why the demands of Japanese children are more persistent than those of U.S. children (Mizuta et al., 1996). The Japanese emphasis on healthy dependence may be the counterpart to the U.S. emphasis on healthy conflict.

Japanese childrearing practices foster empathy (*omoiyari*), receptivity (*sunao*), and learning from the mother through osmosis (Azuma, 1994). Whereas in the United States the priority is on having a mind of one's own, in Japan reading others' minds is relatively more valued. Verbal exchanges between Japanese parents and children are more succinct than are those of their U.S. counterparts because listeners are expected to fill in the missing information as a show of empathy (Minami & McCabe, 1995). Empathy is fostered in young children (Clancy, 1986; Lebra, 1994; Vogel, 1996) because it is the cornerstone of the child's willingness to imitate and to please the parent (Azuma, 1994; Lebra, 1992, 1994; Lewis, 1996; White & LeVine, 1986). *Sunao*, the cooperative receptivity that Japanese parents seek to instill, is seen as a way to fulfill the self; it is likely to be seen by Westerners as giving up the self (Lewis, 1996; White & Levine, 1986).

*Inside-outside differences.* A critical component of proper behavior in Japan is knowing the difference between behavior expected inside the home (*uchi*)

and behavior expected outside the home (*soto*) (Hendry, 1995; Tobin, 1992). United States children, too, are taught this difference, but it is much more salient for the Japanese child (Azuma, 1994; Lebra, 1994; Mann, Mitsui, Beswick, & Harmoni, 1994; Miyanaga, 1991). The common Japanese threat to banish disobedient children outside the house, in contrast to the common U.S. threat to ground children inside the house (Johnson, 1993; Weisz et al., 1984), shows how *uchi* relations are more valued in Japan than in the United States. As another example, Japanese children take off their shoes when going from outside to inside. To keep children close and elicit cooperation, Japanese parents encourage them to associate the outside world with danger and pollution (Hendry, 1995).

The extreme indulgence that the Japanese child enjoys with parents inside the home is in contrast to the polite etiquette (*yoi gyogi*)—manifested in considerate behavior and language—that the Japanese child is expected to observe with persons outside the home. Throughout childhood, Japanese mothers, as compared to American mothers, place greater value on social control and courtesy (Hess et al., 1980; Itoh & Taylor, 1986; Johnson, 1993). Even in the 1990s, Japanese parents imposed what to Americans would appear to be elaborate rules of manners and conduct, insisting on compliance to others, self-restraint (passivity), suppression of inner feelings, observance of formal greetings and speech, appropriate gestures (for example, bowing) and regulations (e.g., regarding length of hair and shirt; Moghaddam, Taylor, & Wright, 1993). Japanese parents are more demanding than U.S. parents of good behavior toward others and less demanding of good behavior toward themselves (Clancy, 1986; Hendry, 1995; Matsumori, 1981). By relaxing requirements inside the home (Lebra, 1994; Hendry, 1995; White & LeVine, 1986), parents help children learn about the critical distinction between *uchi* and *soto* relationships.<sup>3</sup>

As boundaries between inside and outside become clearer, the unity of the inside—the family and, over time, the peer group—also increases. Rather than using their authority to elicit compliance, Japanese mothers often tell misbehaving children that their behavior will elicit negative reactions from others—demons, police, and strangers (Hendry, 1995; Ito, 1980; Lanham, 1966; Miyake & Yamazaki, 1995). The fear of external ridicule and danger allies the child

<sup>3</sup> Inside versus outside is not a simple dichotomy; there are degrees of *uchiness*. From the first to the sixth grade, children are taught about increasingly wide *uchi* groups—the family in the first grade, followed by the neighborhood, wider town or city, and in the sixth grade, the rest of the world. In each *uchi* group a different type of behavior is appropriate (Hendry, 1995).

with the mother, who depicts herself as helping the child avoid negative sanctions (Clancy, 1986; Vogel, 1991). In Japan, mother and child are further allied in that the child's misdeeds reflect particularly negatively on the parent (DeVos, 1985; Johnson, 1993).

*Summary of childhood.* In childhood, symbiotic harmony stems from a concern with obligation and others' expectations, which is more emphasized in Japan, and generative tension stems from a concern with personal preference, which is more emphasized in the United States. Japanese children are less encouraged, and less likely, to assert their personal preferences. Japanese parents believe their children will outgrow noncompliance naturally, and they encourage cooperation by using less coercion and more psychological control. Although the emphasis on proper behavior is much greater outside the family than inside it, proper behavior is learned from parents and contributes to family unity. Empathy training—learning to recognize and act in accord with the needs of others—is a major focus of the child's socialization.

In the United States, parents expect, and sometimes value, their children's noncompliance. Children's ability to negotiate with parents about personal preferences is seen as an adaptive relational skill, and their willingness to challenge their parents reflects increased individuation from parents. American parents are more likely to express anger, to directly resist their children's control, and to use force to maintain order, all of which create tension between competing wills. American parents' directness in dealing with their children is mirrored in their children's directness in asserting their own preferences, which contributes to healthy conflict.

## ADOLESCENCE: STABILITY AND TRANSFERABILITY

A universal task of adolescence is to develop close relationships with peers. In navigating this task, Japanese adolescents are more invested in maintaining relationships with parents. That harmony is more valued in Japan than in the U.S. is seen in the Japanese emphasis on stability and continuity of relationships with parents and peers. By contrast, U.S. teens need to individuate from parents and to transfer their allegiance from parents to peers.

*Closeness to parents.* In the United States, adolescence symbolizes a second birth, a separation from one's past and one's parents (Lebra, 1994). From then on, the child is to be self-made. By contrast, in Japan, adolescence symbolizes the fulfillment of the closeness that has been nurtured since birth (Hendry, 1995; Hsu, 1983; Lebra, 1994). Drawings by expectant Japa-

nese mothers depict motherhood as a lifelong role whereas U.S. mothers' drawings depict their maternal role as terminating during their children's adolescence (Shand, 1996). Even Asian adolescents raised in the United States do not strive for autonomy as early as their European American peers (Greenberger & Chu, 1996). Lebra (1994) notes that Japanese are surprised by the U.S. habit of requiring students to take out loans to pay for their education; this practice implies a distance between family members that is uncomfortable in Japan.

Based on extensive interviews with parents and teens in both countries, White (1993) concludes that there is greater conflict between parents and adolescents in the United States than in Japan (see also Trommsdorff, 1992). In the United States, the pattern of contesting wills, begun in early childhood, escalates in adolescence. Bickering with parents, if not overt conflict, is common, and some degree of conflict is seen as adaptive (Montemayor, 1986; Steinberg, 1989). By contrast, the Japanese child has mastered the art of attending to subtle cues, reading minds, and otherwise avoiding conflict. Vocal and physical confrontation in the Japanese family are rare (Trommsdorff, 1992). Japanese youth are more likely than American youth to view disobedience or disrespect as characteristic of a "bad child" (Crystal & Stevenson, 1995), and they are more likely to "act in"—to internalize the problem in the form of somaticization, anxiety, and silence (White, 1993). Unlike in the United States, where a healthy image of parents is one that eschews idealization (George, Kaplan, & Main, 1996), in Japan, adolescents are guided by the principle of filial piety, which makes idealization of parents appropriate (Hsu, 1983; Lebra, 1994).

*The peer group.* The emphasis on generative tension in the United States and on symbiotic harmony in Japan is also seen in relationships between parents and peers. U.S. youth often place pressure on peers to resist the family's influence. In Japan, values taught in the home are more likely to be advocated in the peer group. Japanese parents tend to view the peer group as the site of valuable social learning and, as a result, have much less concern about peer involvement. In fact, "peering" in Japan is sponsored, albeit not managed, by parents (White, 1993; Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994).

Peers appear to be less important to Japanese than to U.S. adolescents (DeVos, 1996; Rohlen, 1983). Japanese youth spend far less time outside the home, and they have less recreational leisure time and fewer extracurricular activities with peers (Rohlen, 1983; White, 1993). Their willingness to spend time at home is not due to the greater lenience of their parents,

however; it is American parents who modify, lower, and suspend their expectations of teens (White, 1993). Japanese teens may spend more time at home because: (1) they believe that their parents know what is good for them (White, 1993), (2) they are inclined to confide in parents (White, 1993), (3) they have fully internalized their parents' expectations and act accordingly (Hsu, 1983), and (4) the *amae* relationship remains strong, as seen when mothers accompany their children on their first day of classes at college (Chen, 1996). Even in adulthood, the mother-child relationship continues to be the strongest and closest bond in Japan (Kodansha, 1983). Japanese adolescents' closeness with parents stems from the far greater valuing of the *uchi* than the *soto* realm.

By contrast, American teens see their parents as unaware of what they—the adolescents—want, and are much better able to confide in their like-minded peers. Adolescent intimacy typically occurs outside the home, with peers (Erikson, 1950; Steinberg, 1989). Moreover, there are institutional sanctions against sustaining close, dependent relationships in the United States. By about age 20, U.S. customs and laws assert children's legal and economic (and by implication, social) independence from parents; there are no corresponding laws and customs in Japan (Hsu, 1983).

In late adolescence, Japanese are less likely to live outside the home or to report tension with parents than are Germans and Americans, even though Japanese talk less with their parents (Hendry, 1995; Trommsdorff, 1992). The emphasis in Japan on nonverbal means of communication that relies on interpersonal sensitivity and consideration contributes to harmony within the home. Japanese teens see freedom as something permitted *within* one's home; U.S. adolescents more often equate freedom with being *outside* the home (White, 1993).

*Sexuality and relationships.* Sexuality is a sphere of parent-teen tension in the United States more than in Japan because adolescents engage in more sexual activity and because sexuality is more imbued with social meaning (White, 1993). In the United States, sex is related more to responsible adult behavior, marriage, morality, identity, emotional fulfillment and satisfaction of dependency needs (Hsu, 1983; White, 1993). American adolescents see sexuality as key to individuation and to forming a mature relationship with a significant other. In Japan, it is appropriate to have an active sex life and still maintain childlike qualities (White, 1993).

The greater preoccupation with sexuality among U.S. teens (Rohlen, 1983; White, 1993) reflects socialization practices begun in childhood. Passionate love is anticipated by American children as young as age 5

(Gordon, 1989). For adolescents in the United States, the search for security lies in sexual attraction (White, 1993). Indulging dependency needs in nonsexual relationships, especially with parents, is often seen as symptomatic of immaturity or regression. Consequently, dating and other heterosexual contact is more encouraged and more frequent in the United States than in Japan (Rohlen, 1983; White, 1993). The combining of sexual needs, intimacy, and attachment in U.S. adolescent relationships (Hsu, 1983; White, 1993) paves the way for the romantic relationships of adulthood. Hazan and Zeifman (1994) provide compelling data of American teens' gradual transfer from parent-child attachments to romantic attachments.

*Summary of adolescence.* In adolescence, symbiotic harmony, which is more emphasized in Japan, is fostered by the stability of relationships with parents and peers, and generative tension, which is more emphasized in the U.S., is fostered by the transfer of close relationships from parents to peers. Because Japanese adolescents experience consistency between parent and peer expectations, it is easier for them to meet both sets of expectations. Compared to U.S. teens, Japanese teens spend more time at home and less time with peers, and they use peer interactions as arenas for practicing social behavior endorsed by parents. There is little struggle for freedom from parents because there is little freedom to be gained outside the home.

Parent-adolescent relationships in the United States are marked by generative tension largely due to the transfer of allegiance from parents to peers. Challenging parental values and limits and engaging in conflict with parents are ways in which American teens secure their identity and forge new relationships outside the family. Peers' values are often in opposition to those of parents, a factor that fuels parent-adolescent tension. In the United States more than in Japan, sexual and romantic attraction and activity are common preoccupations; they expedite the all-important processes of individuation and separation from parents, and they serve as a psychological tether for intimate peer relationships.

## ADULTHOOD: ASSURANCE VERSUS TRUST

A universal task of adulthood is to form a mate relationship and create the next generation of family. In Japan, mate relationships are based on assurance—unconditional loyalty of partners. The social network, as well as established roles and the valuing of commitment, guarantee continuity of Japanese relationships. In the United States, mate relationships are based on trust, a hope and faith, but not a guarantee,

that the other will remain committed to the self. Relationships based on trust are characterized by instability since trust presumes that the partners are relatively free to choose new commitments (Averill, 1985; Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994).

While it is commonly believed that there are higher levels of trust in Japanese than in U.S. relationships, Yamagishi and Yamagishi (1994) review evidence that trust is higher in the U.S. For example, 47% of Americans, but only 26% of Japanese, agreed that "people can be trusted" (Hayashi, Suzuki, Suzuki, & Murakami, 1982). In this context, trust refers to the sense of confidence in others that allows people to form dyadic relationships without the support of a kin network or social group. Yamagishi and Yamagishi (1994) distinguish this kind of trust, which promotes new relationships, from trust that is based on social group loyalty. They refer to the latter type of trust as assurance, and they maintain that the Japanese are more assured about relationships. Assurance derives from an incentive structure, enforced by the social network, that surrounds all relationships within the group and serves to support those relationships. The incentive structure provides a guarantee of commitment by rewarding stability and imposing sanctions against termination (DeVos, 1985; Yamaguchi, Kuhlman, & Sugimori, 1995). Trust, as defined by Yamagishi and Yamagishi, is a hope and faith in commitment in the absence of assurance. Romantic relationships, which are characterized by belief in the sustainability of passionate love, are heavily dependent on trust. The connection between romantic love and trust will be elaborated below.

*Mate selection: ingroup-outgroup differences.* When selecting mates, Japanese are more concerned than Americans with the potential mate's ties to the self's group. This is because Japanese groups are more tightly knit; members perceive themselves as emotionally close and they believe that "preferential treatment to insiders is a matter of social fact" (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994, p. 153; see also Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995). A marriage between group members (*shiriai*) is more likely to entail a sharing of habits, attitudes, and a network of committed relations that will support and reinforce the new relationship (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994). More often than in the United States, group ties in Japan involve informal and intimate (*honne*) behavior: self disclosure; sharing secrets; spontaneous, informal, relaxed conversations; nonverbal affection; and positive emotion (Gudykunst, Nishida, & Schmidt, 1989; Gudykunst, Yoon, & Nishida, 1987; Matusmoto, 1994). With outsiders, by contrast, formal and constrained (*tatemae*) behavior dominates (Gudykunst 1983; Gudykunst & Nishida, 1986).

Where group ties are weak, as in the United States, people are less governed by group norms (Triandis, 1995). Americans lack the assurance that binds together members of tightly knit groups, and instead rely on trust in the closeness, intimacy, and "contracts" they form with relatively unfamiliar others (Gudykunst & Nishida, 1994; Ting-Toomey & Korzenny, 1991; Triandis, 1995). According to Yamagishi & Yamagishi (1994, p. 136), trust is a "social lubricant" making transactions beyond immediate partners possible.

Traditionally, the Japanese family has had substantial influence on mate selection and remnants of that influence continue today. Initial contacts leading to 33–50% of all marriages are still arranged by go-betweens in Japan (Dion & Dion, 1993; Hendry, 1995; Iwao, 1993; Rohlen, 1983). It is also common for parents to investigate the background of potential spouses of their children.

In the United States, personal attraction is expected to dictate the mate relationship. Americans generally perceive themselves as having more choice, control, and independence with regard to important events than do Japanese (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Weisz et al., 1984). Indeed, in the United States, disregard of others' views of one's lover is common in romance (Dion & Dion, 1993).

*Loyalty and romance.* In Japan, as compared to the United States, there is more emphasis on aspects of relationships that provide assurance—namely, loyalty and commitment (DeVos, 1985; Dion & Dion, 1993; Iwao, 1993). Yamagishi and Yamagishi (1994) review considerable research indicating that Japanese are more willing than Americans "to forego better deals with new partners to maintain longterm relationships with loyal partners" (p. 135), and DeVos (1985, p. 166) concludes that the Japanese value "permanent membership and ultimate loyalty." By contrast, in the United States, there is relatively more emphasis on relationships in which romantic love continues to bind mates even after marriage and children (DeVos, 1985; Dion & Dion, 1993; Iwao, 1993).

The cultural differences are implicit in Sternberg's (1986) typology of love, which is based on research that mainly involves U.S. samples. Sternberg labels love as "empty" when it includes commitment but lacks passion and intimacy (key ingredients of romantic love), reflecting Americans' derogation of relationships based primarily on assurance. Sternberg's conclusion directly contradicts Benedict's (1946) claim that, in Japan, to be loyal is to love, and Miyanaga's (1991, p. 19) claim that "unconditional loyalty and compassion is central to Japanese morality just as love is central to U.S. morality." Research indicates that Asians, as compared to Americans, place greater

value on companionable forms of love in which partners develop close, long-lasting friendships characterized by enduring commitment (Dion & Dion, 1993).

The data on divorce are illustrative. The divorce rate from 1984 to 1991 was more than three times greater in the United States than in Japan (Kumagai, 1995). When asked about a couple that wanted to get divorced, 93% of Japanese, but only 39% of Americans, said that the couple should stay married just for the sake of the children (Soumuchou, 1987).

The duration of relationships in Japan is seen in other close relationships. Same-sex relationships tend to be established early in life and to be lifelong (Gudykunst & Nishida, 1994). Veneration of the elderly and ancestor worship remain important aspects of Japanese society. In Japan, three-generation households are still more common than the United States (Wolf et al., 1994), and almost twice as many elderly persons live with their adult children (Kumagai, 1995; Sundstrom, 1994). A clause in the Japanese civil code requires family members to take care of their genealogical records (Hendry, 1995, p. 29), and there are elaborate ceremonies following the death of a family member: In addition to several ceremonies during the first 49 days, there are eight more ceremonies ranging from 100 days to 50 years after the funeral (Hendry, 1995). In Japan—a Confucian-oriented society that practices filial piety—devotion to relatives, especially parents, is regarded as normal and healthy (Hsu, 1983).

There is reason to suspect that romantic love is, in part, a biologically based phenomenon that serves to draw mates together (Hazan & Zeifman, 1994). Even in Japan, there is considerable emphasis on romance and love-based marriage (Dion & Dion, 1993). A survey of 18- to 35-year-old Japanese women indicated that 63% of them want to marry based on romantic love (Bando, 1992). But romance in Japan appears to be more of a premarital matter. After marriage and children, romance in Japan is diluted by pragmatic and dependency needs, whereas U.S. partners continue to emphasize physical attraction and eros (Devos, 1985; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986; Hendry, 1995; Hsu, 1983; Iwao, 1993; Roland, 1988). Pragmatic concerns (e.g., finances, work, and ingroup commitments) pertain more to the affairs of the community than do romantic concerns (e.g., sexuality, verbal intimacy), and serve to link the couple to the wider social network. In a comparison between Japanese and French popular magazines dealing with children, the Japanese magazines had less focus on the spousal dyad and fewer psychological themes (Norimatsu, 1995).

What distinguishes mate relationships in the United States from those in Japan is the attempt to maintain romance over time (Iwao, 1993). Romance is often fleeting; relying on it as a glue for family cohesion undermines assurance. According to Averill (1985), the essence of romance is a decision, open-ended but perpetually insecure, open to reconsideration at any moment. "Love is a lifetime of decisions and that is why it cannot also be a commitment" (p. 105). The lover hopes that each decision will lead to renewed commitment to the relationship. This reliance on faith and hope is the essence of trust and what distinguishes it from assurance (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994). Adding to the tenuousness of U.S. mate relationships is the emphasis on "keeping the flame alive" and "rekindling the spark." Just as *newness* is key to initial attraction, *renewal* of the relationship is key to maintaining attraction.

Renewal is not a concern in Japanese marriages (Iwao, 1993). Japanese obtain emotional intimacy in same-gender relationships more than do Americans (Gudykunst & Nishida, 1986; Iwao, 1993; Vogel, 1996). Since there is less reliance on marital partners to satisfy intimacy needs, it is relatively easier for them to meet each other's marital expectations and to achieve harmony. Thus, there is less pressure to recreate sex appeal and emotional intimacy—for wives to dress up for husbands and husbands to buy flowers for wooing their wives (Vogel, 1996). Stability of marital relations in Japan relates more to complementarity in roles, successful rearing of children, and participation in wider kin ties and less to refueling passion (Imamura, 1987; Iwao, 1993; Vogel, 1996). Romance in Japan is more often viewed as a mental and physical vacation than as an expression of libidinal impulses (Hendry, 1995; Lebra, 1994; Iwao, 1993). Saying that a marital relationship is "like air," (i.e., smooth, relaxed, and harmonious) is a compliment in Japan (Iwao, 1993, p. 95). It is the familiarity and ease of the relationship, not its novelty and passion, that sustains it (Iwao, 1993).

*Mental telepathy and direct communication.* Direct communication in Japan is often seen as problematic, especially in close relationships (Iwao, 1993). Putting feelings into words is a sign that they are not deep or sincere (Barnlund, 1975; Clancy, 1986), that the listener's ability to infer feelings is limited (Clancy, 1986; Doi, 1974; Singelis & Brown, 1995), and that the relationship is not close (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey, & Chua, 1988; Iwao, 1993). In Japan, expressions of appreciation are likely to be seen as a sign of interpersonal distance; in a close relationship, appreciation would be understood in the absence of verbalization (Iwao, 1993). Direct communication also disrupts har-

mony, which helps explain why almost 90% of Japanese respondents report arguing with their spouses less than once a month (Long, 1996). Self-assertion brings with it the possibility of offending others and causes feelings of guilt in close relationships (Zane, Sue, Hu, & Kwon, 1991). In Japan, if an intimate complains directly, it probably signals the end of the relationship. Mind-reading and avoiding self-assertion are ways in which partners assure one another of their closeness and commitment.

By contrast, direct, verbal communication is a hallmark of close relationships in the United States. Directness is much more valued in the United States than in Japan (Gudykunst et al., 1988). It increases the likelihood of conflict, but in the United States conflict is seen as inevitable (Canary et al., 1995; Emery, 1992). Moreover, certain forms of conflict are seen as adaptive and healthy (Emery, 1992) and avoidance of conflict is sometimes seen as destructive (Canary et al., 1995). Rather than reflecting a breakdown in the relationship, direct conflict is seen as providing an opportunity for reunion and strengthening of the relationship. Americans, much more than East Asians, believe that the success of romantic relationships depends upon the quality of verbal communication (Chang & Holt, 1991).

In Japan, maturity is expected to lead to *ittaikan*—elimination of the boundary between self and others close to the self (Lebra, 1994; Weisz et al., 1984). Reading others' minds, a form of *ittaikan*, reflects and contributes to adults' assurance regarding their closeness (Gudykunst & Nishida, 1994; Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994). In the United States, if certainty about the other is based on mind-reading, it is more likely to be viewed as a sign of regression or pathology than of maturity.

*Adulthood summary.* In adulthood, Japanese relationships are symbiotically harmonious because they are based on assurance—the knowledge that role-prescribed behaviors, social networks, and societal values ensure continuity. Loyalty-based love, which is unconditional, permanent, and grounded in compassion, is emphasized. Within the family, the priority is meeting children's and grandparents' (or ancestors') needs; needs of the marital dyad and the individual are lesser concerns. The emphasis on pragmatics in marriage also fosters harmony. Conflict is not readily accepted; rather, cohesion, mind-reading, and cherishing of the relationship are stressed.

In the United States, relationships are not guaranteed. They are primarily based on trust—hope and faith in the partner's love. Trust acts as a social lubricant, fostering relationships outside one's group, and closeness is more easily established with unfamiliar

others. Fluid boundaries between groups enable individuals to more easily end pair bonds and form new ones. It is important that romance and sexuality continue beyond marriage and children; relationships endure when romance is "kept alive." High divorce rates reflect the limited influence of the social network and a focus on the desires of the marital partners as opposed to those of other family members. Conflict is seen as inevitable as well as healthy in that it provides opportunities for partners to openly assert and to renegotiate their personal needs.

## CONCLUSION

*Summary.* The study of culture and close relationships has been dominated by two views. Western investigators have assumed that generative tension—as manifested in separation-individuation, use of the caregiver as a base for exploration, and conflict—is prominent in all close relationships. As a reaction against this Western egocentrism, several cross-cultural investigators have offered a second view, distinguishing between an emphasis on interrelatedness in Japan and an emphasis on individuation and independence in the United States. According to this second view, individuation and independence undermine, or dilute, relatedness. We suggest a third view. We believe that differences between Japan and the United States are better understood as differences in the *meaning and dynamics* of relatedness rather than in the *importance and strength* of relatedness.<sup>4</sup> For example, reunion is not simply a low level of union; reunion and union entail different types of relatedness. The distinction between symbiotic harmony and generative tension is intended to capture broad Japanese–U.S. differences in the meaning and dynamics of relatedness.

*Direction of causal influence.* Whereas we tend to assume that parents' behavior influences cultural differences in relationships (see Bornstein, Tamis-LeMonda, et al., 1992, for support of this assumption), in fact we suspect that other causal pathways are also involved: the child's genetically predisposed behavior may influence the parent, or a third factor (such as population homogeneity and density, and the political, economic, and kinship systems) may influence both parent and child (Chen & Miyake, 1986). For example, the generative tension between attachment and exploration in

<sup>4</sup> Robin Harwood, in her excellent contrast of relatedness in the U.S. with relatedness in Puerto Rico (Harwood et al., 1995), also claims that the nature of relationships in the U.S. is different from that in other cultures (see also Raeff, 1997; Sagi, 1990). However, the evidence of U.S.–Japanese differences is far greater than the evidence of differences between any other cultures.

U.S. infants may reflect encouragement of exploration by U.S. parents, greater predisposition of U.S. infants to explore, and greater space and stimulation available in U.S. homes. Research is needed to clarify the relative contributions of these causal influences.

*The coherence of the paths.* We have identified one major path in each community. Each path, however, may be a composite of more or less independent paths. Statistical analyses (e.g., factor analysis) that examine correlations between behaviors from different developmental levels are needed to test whether there is one relatively coherent path that defines development in each culture, corresponding to symbiotic harmony and generative tension, or if there are multiple paths linking the different developmental levels (i.e., several "developmental lines"). For example, studies may indicate that loyalty and mental telepathy pertain to two distinct developmental lines. Such findings would suggest a more differentiated view of development in each culture than that provided here.

*Processes linking different developmental levels.* Our review is limited to documentation of differences at each of several levels of development; it does not address how differences at one level pave the way for differences at the next. For example, we provide no evidence of *how* an emphasis on reunion (as opposed to union) in infancy might pave the way for an emphasis on personal preferences (as opposed to obligation) in childhood. Several possibilities exist. It may be that, as U.S. infants venture forth from the secure base provided by their parents, they have the time and space to explore their own wants and the confidence to do so. Alternatively, the recurring experience of reunion may buffer the infant against fear of separation and the perceived necessity of working hard to preserve the relationship. Or, more simply, experiences with the outside world may be rewarding, leading to a desire for more of the same. Obviously, these interpretations are not mutually exclusive, but some processes are probably more influential than others, and it is important to investigate the relative contribution of each.

Similar questions can and should be raised about processes mediating between childhood and adolescence and between adolescence and adulthood. With regard to the shift from U.S. children's concern with personal preference (as opposed to obligation) to U.S. adolescents' concern with transferability (as opposed to stability), several possibilities again present themselves. Making children attuned to their own wants may increase their dissatisfaction with current relational partners' ability to meet their needs and thus may energize their search for new partners. Relatedly, if skills at meeting others' needs are poorly devel-

oped, children may experience failure and lack of fulfillment in ongoing relationships, thus reducing their motivation to maintain them. It is also possible that the norm of reciprocity may be operating: children who have not felt obligated to give to existing relational partners are not likely to expect much in return.

With regard to the shift from adolescence to adulthood, we would speculate that Western adults' trust (as opposed to assurance) may derive from adolescents' experience successfully separating from parents or from their investment in romantic (sexualized) relationships with their peers. No doubt, our readers will formulate richer and more productive possibilities. The point we are trying to make in generating multiple interpretations is that the documentation of different paths sets the stage for a new era of theory and research. The clearer the identification and articulation of the different paths of development, the more productive will be our search for the processes underlying them.

*The adaptiveness of different paths.* Several major theories in the West suggest that relationship quality is associated with indices of adaptation, particularly mental health, and with functioning in the realm of work. These associations have been empirically documented (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Hazan & Shaver, 1990). Yet, this topic has not been examined from a cultural or a developmental perspective.

The two paths of development we have documented here may be associated with overall differences in adaptation. In support of this hypothesis, there is evidence of less problem behavior in Eastern than in Western samples, including findings involving Japanese and U.S. children (Stevenson & Stigler, 1992). U.S. students spend more time out of their seats, talk more to their peers at inappropriate times, and engage in other disruptive activities to a greater degree than do Japanese students. The greater problem behavior of American children is linked to their poorer academic achievement.

Whereas Stevenson and Stigler (1992) focus on the causal influence of classroom practices (e.g., the emphasis on self-discipline in Japanese classrooms), the Japanese and U.S. paths of relationship development may also play a role. For example, Japanese parents' emphasis on conformity, their psychological control, and their emphasis on inside-outside differences (i.e., the need for proper behavior outside the home) may prepare children for the discipline demanded in Japanese classrooms. Or earlier experiences, such as American parents' use of themselves as a base for their children's exploration, may contribute to a teacher's difficulty controlling U.S. children in the confines of the classroom.

To test whether the paths of symbiotic harmony and generative tension play a role in the cultural differences reported above, it would be necessary to assess the extent to which children's behavior corresponded to each of these paths, and to correlate these assessments with problem behavior and achievement. We would hypothesize that the more children's development corresponded to the path of symbiotic harmony and the less it corresponded to the path of generative tension, the less the problem behavior and the greater the achievement.

It is unlikely, however, that Japanese children function more adaptively than U.S. children in all measures of problem behavior and achievement or in all situations. With regard to type of measure, there is evidence of more internalizing problems (e.g., depression, anxiety, fearfulness) in Asian than in U.S. samples (Weisz, Chaiyasit, Weiss, Eastman, & Jackson, 1995). Just as Japanese parents' psychological control (e.g., use of anxiety- and guilt-induction) paves the way for their children's greater discipline and self-control, it may pave the way for greater incidence of internalizing problems (Barber, Olsen, & Shagle, 1994). Similarly, psychological control may interfere with performance on measures of achievement that assess intrinsic motivation and personal initiative (Steinberg, 1990). With regard to situation, Japanese children may exhibit more behavior problems when they are called upon to express themselves, particularly in one-on-one situations (as opposed to when they are asked to sit still or otherwise inhibit action, particularly in group contexts). And they may fare less well in exploratory, open-ended achievement situations that demand self-initiative and self-esteem (as opposed to rote learning and avoidance of shame)—precisely the kind of work situations examined by Western investigators (Hazan & Shaver, 1990). The same factors that lead Japanese children to perform well when confronting discipline-demanding, structured situations may cause them to perform poorly when confronting, self-expressive, open-ended situations.

A more interesting possibility is that the findings of differential adaptiveness are mediated by developmental level. For example, close relationships in Japan may mitigate problems that are more prominent in childhood (especially conduct problems), but they may foster problems that are more prominent in adolescence and adulthood (especially shame-based depression). Similarly, close relationships in Japan may pave the way for children's achievement in the early school years, especially in highly structured classroom environments, but they may be less likely than close relationships in the United States to pave the way for achievement in later adolescence or adulthood—

especially when demands increase for exploration and autonomy in academic and work contexts. Although Culture  $\times$  Age interactions for adaptation have been hypothesized by others, there has been little consideration of whether and how close relationships contribute to them. Because this review provides a basic blueprint of the development of close relationships, it helps pave the way for an examination of such interactions and, ultimately, a fuller understanding of the function of close relationships in each culture.

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