

Meeting Reflection Paper

After meeting with the whole group on 10/21/2021 at 8am est, the discussion was pretty fun and informative for both parties in my opinion. I had some expectations for Ayu and Saki based on the question session with Hemmi-sensei. When we started the discussion, we first started on the topic of "Chorei". After Ayu presented the topic, after me and Jenna asked our questions. In my mind, I thought the meeting was over because we finished the topic. However Saki said that she had to present her topic of "Zangyoo", this surprised me because I thought that Saki didn't talk because she didn't have any input on the meeting topic. After going through this experience, I realized what Hemmi-sensei was talking about during her question session. Saki didn't want to interrupt or disrupt the discussion during the time. She only addressed that she had to present her topic when Jenna said "is there anything other topic we have to discuss?". The big thing I noticed when Ayu and Saki were answering our questions is that they both spoke softly. When they didn't have the answer to our question, they would say sorry a lot before moving onto the next question. I handled these situations by picking up the subtle hints when they were talking and moved the discussion forward without disrupting the meeting.

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Ganbaru

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Ganbaru, Ganbate, and Ganbaroo are often used to encourage people. Since its usage is common among

Japanese society, it leads to people feeling obligated to work harder. The negative effects from Ganbaru

are overtime, death, and expectations. Looking at the PDF meaning of Ganbaru, It states the term being

associated with achievement culture. I find that interesting because American culture values merit and

ability to do the job.

Moving on to Zangyoo, the Sophia team mentions the younger generation view it negatively.

Due

to government regulations, the practice of Zangyoo is decreasing but the culture surrounding it still exists.

The most common consequence of Zangyoo is Karoshi or death from work. The entry level jobs in Japan

don't force overtime work or pay the person for their overtime. In the PDF, there are three type of

Zangyoo; real Zangyoo, Sabisuzangyoo, and Minashizangyoo. In American culture, there is only one

overtime work with the person being paid. I find it intriguing that Japan has three types of overtime with

Sabisuzangyoo being illegal under the Labor Acts.

Lastly, The Sophia team were very quiet after presenting their pre-made presentations to us. In terms of communication, they did very well to convey what they wanted to say. They asked questions

based on international studies. I resolved the silence that lasted more than three to five minutes with

questions. Honestly, I asked some hard questions, so next time I'll ask some simpler ones.

When meeting with the Sophia students, they chose to describe keiyaku, shougoushoku and ippanshoku, zangyou, and oseibo and ochuugen. When it came to Keiyaku, the employment contract, they were able to shed some light on some of the things that I wasn't privy to, such as what could come of breaking such a contract. Another student chose to talk about the two different types of jobs, and while we didn't have any additional questions to ask them, it was interesting learning about how the ippanshoku jobs are not prone to transfer, and are comparable to the service and essential jobs you might find here in the states. I learned that overtime is not seen as a general negative in Japan, but can often impact health, and there is even a term for people who die from overworking in Japan. The last student to chat with us talked about the seasonal gifts of oseibo and ochuugen. It was interesting hearing them talk about the different budgets considered for these gifts, that it's a huge commercial market in Japan, and how younger people in Japan aren't as keen at continuing this tradition. Working with the students too, I could tell that they weren't all that confident with their English skills. There were several times that they asked us to repeat our questions as they didn't quite get what we were asking. We even started typing our questions into the zoom chat to help them. I felt that they were quite shy, but warmed up a bit when they began getting into their presentations.

The two topics we discussed were Chorei and Zangyō. We began the meeting by having casual greetings. Ayu gave us an overview of Chorei and its importance. We then followed up with questions from the reading and her poster. Chorei seems like an indispensable part of Japanese company culture since it strengthens the group harmony of a company through the practice of reciting company chants and company motto. According to Ayu, western managers and employees in the company nowadays participate in Chorei as soon as they begin working for the company, which helps with adaptation. Saki gave a presentation about Zangyoo after Ayu. Saki's presentation covered almost all aspects of the reading. Saki didn't mention too much about the karōshi and karōjisatsu, a big issue that was talked about in the reading. Therefore, we asked if karōshi and karōjisatsu are still a big problem in Japanese society, to my surprise the answer was negative. So I think that Japan's efforts on reducing overtime work must be showing a positive result. Saki also spoke about her opinion on overtime as a part-time worker in a Japanese store. The overtime she had was sabisuzangyō. Saki would stay after work to finish her responsibilities and not get paid for those extra hours. The word Saki used was "responsibility" instead of "work," which is why I think Saki was okay with staying later. Overall, I think the meeting went smoothly despite a few moments of awkward silence.

Both of our Japanese group members were very polite the whole time. It was clear that they had divided their responsibilities because the presenter was the one that addressed all of our questions related to that topic while the other student was silently waiting for her turn. One thing

I noticed was that they didn't want to disrupt the flow at all. Both Kenny and I weren't aware that our partners were presenting 2 topics, one from each student. At the end of Aki's presentation after the discussion, there was a silent moment. Saki was waiting for her cue, and didn't say anything until we said after a moment of silence, "I think we are done." I felt very bad, and this was because we didn't communicate before the meeting. Next time, I think that we should have an agenda or a nemawashi to help with the flow of the meeting

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n our meeting with the students from Sophia University, we discussed the concept of Zangyoo. We discussed how Zangyoo is the concept of overtime work, but to the point where workers are severely overworked. Our groupmates cited that in Japan, overworking is common, and that physical and mental degradation can occur from this workstyle. In Japan, hard work is associated with serving your company well, with the goal of keeping the group harmony stable. We then discussed how Zangyoo isn't quite as common in the US, but overworking can be seen through social and mental degradation over time. Ranging from wall street traders to roofers, overworking can increase stress and cause long-term physical damage to the body. In terms of communication with the Sophia students, they were quite stoic in the way they answered questions. They always made sure to answer with a thought-out answer rather than thinking on-the-spot, which Americans tend to do. Additionally, when we would ask them questions, sometimes they would take a good amount of time to think as well as respond, which may be a mix of the language barrier as well as the cultural differences. In Japan, silence is seen as a necessary tool to fill in blocks of time between conversations. It took a few responses for us to recognize these differences, but after some time we adapted.

For our Coil Initiation collab with the Sofia students Natsuki, Marino, and Sakuya, we discussed the concepts amae, oseibo and ochuugen, and overtime work. The first idea that was explored being amae in Marino's presentation. In regards to my understanding prior to this, I already had a clear grasp on the information provided in the text. However, Natsuki's informative presentation cemented the ideas as she defined amae, the want to be taken care of and accepted, provided examples, and specified where the roots of the concept came from. And this theme of clear and precise presentations continued with Sakuya's topic of oseibo and ochuugen and Natsuki's topic of overtime work. However, they did both add in a few supplementary notes. Sakuya detailed the construction of gift wrapping by telling us about noshigami, noshi, and mizuhiki. And Natsuki provided graphs and data on overtime work while informing us that there was still a lot to be done in regards to the work environment even after the implementation of no overtime mandates and work system reforms.

When it came to interactions alone, there were multiple long silences after questions were asked following each presentation. In these situations, it was clear from the Sophia students' faces that there was some confusion which would require the repeating or rephrasing of what was said. However, from my perspective this silence was easy to navigate as I have had prior experience talking with Japanese students and knew reflexively that I should try reiterating my statement in this situation. Moreover, specifically referring to people by name helped to further the conversation as well. Some of the other communication styles that I noticed throughout the call were apologizing and repeatedly saying うん or mhm. Specifically, the former was said frequently when asking for clarification while the latter were used when listening to said explanation. Overall, I think that this meeting with Natsuki, Marina, and Sakuya was very informative not only in regards to the content but also concerning typical Japanese nonverbal cues/reactions.

The first term was kyuuryou which refers to salaries. We've went over this topic a bit before with the seniority system and bonuses, where older employees get paid more as they work for longer at each company. The student who went over this topic, Takumi, did note these

things, as well as performance of employees not necessarily corresponding with salaries. As far as this topic, this one felt fairly straightforward so there weren't really any discrepancies. The next topic was ganbaru, which Masaki went over, I had barely heard of this before, except in the context of sports or such where a spectator might tell the players good luck. Though it's apparently used in a much wider context, including business. They noted that while it does indeed sound positive at a first glance, it does have the negative effect of causing overwork including karoshi. Even if I had heard of it in a business context, I definitely would not have thought about the downsides of it before.

The last student Nanami went over zangyou which is basically overtime. While overtime in Japanese business culture is a well-known concept, he expanded on the topic a bit with there being three types of overtime. Zangyou where you get paid for the overtime hours, don't get paid for overtime (he noted this was technically illegal), and zangyou where the overtime hours are already included in the salary.

As far as communicating with the other students, I suppose there were the things mentioned in class like somewhat extended silences while thinking about the answers to questions or after finishing talking. As far as handling situations, there did not really feel like a need to do anything different. I honestly probably wouldn't have even noticed any difference in the ways we communicated if it wasn't pointed out beforehand.

Our group discussed Amae (甘え), Oseibo/Ochuugen (御歳暮・御中元), and Overtime Work (残業). Rina discussed Amae. Regarding Amae, I was reaffirmed that it mostly concerns a dependency type of relationship like those seen between a mother and her child and between those in higher stations and those in lower ones. Rina mostly emphasized how critical it is in Japanese culture and where it comes from; she even provides multiple examples of where it is seen. Sakuya discussed Oseibo and Ochuugen. On top of hearing a lot of the same things from the reading, Sakuya also went into more detail about each one. She discussed the style and meanings of the wrapping for each one and what specific kinds of gifts are associated to each one respectively which the reading was not clear on. Lastly, Sakuya discussed overtime work. She went into greater detail than the small section of the reading even providing a relevant and tragic example of the issues regarding overtime work with the suicide of Matsuri Takahashi. She also provided a little more details about laws regarding overtime work and Japan's overtime working hours as compared to many other countries.

It was a unique experience working with the Sophia students especially in regards to using English to talk to them and learning how Japanese people communicate. The previous time I did COIL I had to speak to the students of the other university in Japanese; so now that I am talking

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to them in English, it is a bit strange to me. There were a lot of communication styles that I observed. We experienced the extended silence, the shift of topics, and the brief misunderstandings to name a few. When we experienced the long pauses, I reacted by trying to get people to start talking; and in the event of not understanding a question, I tried extending out what I was saying (put my question into multiple sentences) to see if they could understand the key points of what I was asking (this was before learning how to clarify better). It did not work well. After a little bit more silence, the group member that I asked the question of abruptly

switched topics to which the rest of the Japanese half of the team went with. It did catch me off guard; but after learning why that takes place, I understand it a bit better now. Overall, I think the experience went well; but there is still more that I have to learn in regards to communicating with people from Japan. Most importantly, I need to implement what we are learning in a greater capacity in order to better communicate.

I will lead this paper by stating how the experience working with our colleagues in Japan went. In

interest of making every party to the meeting more comfortable, we had created a Google document

stating our names, phone numbers, emails as well as any social media platform we had (LINE and

Discord) prior to the meeting. We had also provided our names using katakana. This document was then

shared with our Japanese colleagues, and we wrote any questions we had down onto the document as

we went. There was definitely a sense of anxiety and nervousness by everyone involved (including

myself) but using my prior knowledge of Japanese customs I was able to effectively navigate around

most awkward pauses (I even began by asking about the weather, a trick I learned in the Genki language

books!).

The first topic we discussed was about wage, or kyuryo. The first curveball of the meeting was that the

discussion was led by the topic of stagnation, rather than explaining what kyuryo is. Adjusting quickly, I

decided rather than trying to course correct it would be best to ask relevant questions regarding this

new topic. I was informed that the root cause of the stagnation was due to the many small businesses

that were still operating under guidelines set 30 or 40 years ago. I had asked whether or not the low

wage due to stagnation had an effect on motivation for work, what the wage difference was between

the countryside and Tokyo was, and if a potential cause for the stagnation was the fact that most of the

jobs in Japan was located in Tokyo rather than outside of it (due to the great migration of people during

the meiji restoration). My questions were answered with:

- The lower wage did not affect motivation, however the long term life projection/happiness of the Japanese youth is negative due to rising costs and low wage.

- There is a significant difference in wage in the country versus the city, and thus it continues to drive people to move to the city despite governmental attempts at getting people to return to the countryside.
- That a potential cause for stagnation is indeed the increased jobs in Tokyo, both directly and indirectly due to the constant creation of small businesses (which is the root cause of the stagnation in the first place).

The most excited our Japanese colleagues was when I explained my deeply rooted interests in this

topic due to my reading of “Kokoro” by Natsume Soseki and “The Wild Geese” by Mori Ogai. Most

importantly, but I could not remember the title of the book at the time, was my reading of “Remembering Aizu: The Testament of Shiba Goro” by Shiba Goro.

The second topic we discussed was about jinzai kyouiku, or on the job training. I was under the impression prior to the meeting that it was similar to the on the job training we receive here in the

United States... and I was not entirely wrong. The biggest differences were the length of the training

(closer to one year rather than just a couple of weeks) and that most of the education and training is

done in the workplace rather than school. That last point seems to be a more efficient route, at least

compared to the US where new hires are regularly told to forget most of what was taught in school.

My mind was mostly preoccupied with the idea that training lasted a whole year, thinking that it would be quite a waste of company resources, and thus the wage must certainly be lower during training than after. But I was informed that it in fact was not much, if any, lower during and after training.

Over all I believe the meeting went well.

The link to the shared document (as well as the recording) can be found here:

Unfortunately, I was not able to make it to the meeting itself as my mom had an emergency and was not able to pick me up from the train station until after the meeting was scheduled to start. My group members and the Sophia university students made an attempt to wait for me to begin, but I just couldn't make it in time unfortunately and so I don't have anything I can say in regards to how I handled situations presented in the meeting. I spoke with my group members about their experience afterwards and they remarked they experienced long awkward silences to the point where some were uncomfortable in the meeting at times.

The Sophia team chose to talk about soogooshoku/ippanshoku, zangyou, oseibo/ochuugen, and keiyaku. Keiyaku refers to Japanese employment contracts,

soogooshoku/ippanshoku refer to professional staff or clerical support, zangyou refers to overtime, and finally oseibo/ochuugen refers to seasonal gifts.

Keiyaku refers to contracts; contracts, according to the Sophia team, are meant to provide a sense of security, help avoid future problems and misunderstandings, among other things. If a party is unable to keep a promise, they may find themselves liable for damages. Contracts are formed voluntarily by both parties, and Japanese businesses have long-term commitment in mind when making deals. Hence, wanting to avoid future issues and keep harmony. These businesses will take their time to get to know the client and make sure the contracts get to a point in which both parties are satisfied and happy to sign. This is made even more important in Japan due to the communication style being a lot more implicit rather than explicit. This is much unlike American companies which try to be as time-efficient as possible and get to talking business immediately.

Oseibo/ochuugen are seasonal gifts, with ochuugen being given during Obon in mid-summer and oseibo being given between 12/1 and 12/20 based on the solar calendar.

Ochuugen typically has a more varied budget (between 2,000-10,000 yen according to the Sophia team) when in comparison to the oseibo 5,000 yen budget. These gifts, according to the Sophia team, are important in communication among Japanese people, and, like all commercialized events, have a massive commercial market in Japan. Currently, this tradition is changing due to younger people no longer wanting to do it. However, typical gifts include food, hams, and daily used goods, and the gifts are more often than not relationship-dependent.

Zangyou is referring to overtime. Whenever this gets brought up, I tend to view it negatively. I think of how there is a term in Japanese specifically for working yourself to literal death through overtime and how Japan is at no.1 for having the most overtime hours in the world. Being from the U.S., I genuinely thought there weren't many if any benefits to zangyou given how dreadfully regular overtime is viewed here. There isn't any loyalty to your company in the U.S. given the shorter contracts and the way workers are treated here, so overtime is nearly always viewed as an inconvenience unless you want the extra money. However, I didn't account for how different worker-company relationships are in Japan. As such, I found it shocking that overtime is sometimes used in a good way and can be something to be proud of over there.

Soogooshoku/ippanshoku are the two ways to work in Japan. The first is comprehensive jobs, these include various types of jobs in which people can transfer to other offices and have future growth opportunities. The second option is limited to factory and paperwork jobs. These rarely transfer and offer little-to-no growth opportunities. Ippanshoku was established due to the establishment of men and female employment equality. However, due to familial traditions, women still find it difficult to become soogooshoku

The presentations covered just about most things that we did in class. I did not notice any discrepancies. There wasn't too much from Erika's presentation that I did not know already. There were some concepts presented in Yuna's presentation that was new though. She explained that there were different zangyos:

- Realzangyo
- Real overtime
- Receive payment for overtime
- Sabisuangyo
- Service overtime

- More than 8hrs a day/40hrs a week but not getting paid
- This is illegal
- Workers can claim premium payment for it
- Minashizangyo
- Included in the salary

During the meeting, we definitely experienced the silence, but I did not feel uncomfortable. I just felt worried that no one knew what we were supposed to do. We even discussed if the girls knew what they were supposed to do after this first meeting. It was true what Banerjee sensei said about the teaching styles; the students did not know what came next but did not worry, while Sarah and I understood what came next on our end.

Their communication style felt very brief and not a lot of pleasantries. Nothing bad, just something I observed. I do not know if it was due to their nervousness or something. We tried our best to ensure that the girls understood what we were talking about. Sarah and I spoke slowly and rephrased as necessary if we think they did not understand. I also summarised what we talked about when we answered the girls' questions. Afterwards, the girls thanked us and apologised for their speaking skills. I assured them that they did great and that I could not compare if the roles were reversed.

NOTES TAKEN:

Okyuryo — salary in japan

- Lifetime employment
 - kyuuryo — wages
 - Bonuses are paid annually according to how much you work and performance and productivity
- zangyoo

- Types of zangyo
- Realzangyo
- Real overtime
- Receive payment for overtime
- Sabisuangyo
- Service overtime
- More than 8hrs a day/40hrs a week but not getting paid
- This is illegal
- Workers can claim premium payment for it
- Minashizangyo
- Included in the salary
- Causes
- Lack of workers
- time-management/not enough time
- People who want to get paid for overtime
- Problems
- burnout/exhaustion
- suicide
- Tradition of working overtime means you are a hard worker
- Many people now do it due to pressure from boss or colleagues
- Possible solutions

- Companies should increase their number of workers or something

Yuna chose her topic because working in other countries, overtime is a big difference in regards to working. So she wanted to study it more.

Erika chose her topic because salaries are one of the biggest motivations for working. She wanted to explore more about it.

We met with the Sophia students on 10/12 at 7:00 pm which was 8:00 am for them.

Everyone joined the zoom meeting on time except for Giovanni who joined in about 5 minutes late. During that time we were all silent and kind of awkward, for me at least. As discussed in class, I was trying to pay close attention to their facial expression since we were waiting for someone. They all looked like they were in a lecture, concentrating on what we were going to say, if we were going to say anything. I tried to break the silence by asking a generic question like "What time is it for you?" and they responded smiling. Then I started to think what if they were in a hurry? Maybe they had class? So I first apologized for our groupmate's lateness and asked if they had class soon. They collectively reassured us that it was not a problem and that their class would still be later in the day. Once Giovanni arrived, he immediately asked for forgiveness for being late, both in English and Japanese, and once again the Sophia students shook their heads no and said that there were no worries.

Moeko was first to speak with her Powerpoint visual talking about the concept of lifetime employment. Everything she said corresponded to the teachings we had in class except for some differences. She claimed that lifetime employment is rapidly decreasing and that most people, especially our age, much rather prefer performance based wages. She kept on bringing up the idea of equality and that performance based wages increases it. They each have their own questions to ask us after their mini presentation. Moeko's question was which do we prefer, Lifetime seniority employment or performance based and why. Their facial expressions drastically changed after each of our own responses. Maybe because I know what it is like talking to someone who is still learning English, but I talked to them at a clear and moderate pace as possible. Being the only fluent English speaker in my family along with my brother, we

try to help our parents and relatives learn English over many years. From experience, I feel like the Sophia students understood what I said because of their head nods and even saying "mhm" a lot as in agreement. Vatey would go next and she would be a bit faster so the Sophia kids kept nodding their heads without sound. Giovanni would be the fastest talker and not the clearest talker so again, coming from experience, I was not sure if the Sophia students were going to be able fully understand him but they said nothing and just slowly nodded in agreement.

Jin went next and spoke about oseibo / ochuugen. He talked about how employees would give gifts to their boss twice a year, once in the summer and the other in the winter. I was not aware that it was common for these two specific times of the year and if we did learn this in class, I'm sorry I don't remember. A question I had that I didn't get to ask was why in these two times of the year? Does it correlate with some sort of holiday? For example, although Christmas isn't a national holiday, Japan still takes some custom from the holiday like Christmas decorations in shopping malls and maybe one of them might be gift giving? If so, what would be the event/holiday for Summer?

Miki went last and she talked about the concept of zangyoo or overtime. Miki went on to

explain how there are two types of zangyo, real zangyo and sabisu zangyo. Real zangyo means that you are getting paid to work overtime while sabisu zangyo means not getting paid to work over time. She also explained how zangyo is one of the biggest problems facing Japan today as it can lead to fatigue, burn out, stress, deteriorating mental health, and or suicide. As I was rewatching the recording from our meeting I wasn't able to understand what she was trying to say about zangyo being part of the job. I think she mentioned something about how sabisu zangyo is mentioned as a job description? This meeting was great overall

We met with the Sophia students Thursday October 21 and discussed several terms. Those included ganbaru (perseverance) and zangyoo (overtime). Masakisan spoke about how they use ganbaru

for encouragement when faced with difficult problems. She also spoke on how the word has various

meanings and usages in the Japanese language. In the assigned reading texts, we learned that ganbaru is

the virtue of doing ones best, persisting and working hard. This is one of the highest virtues that one can

pursue. Also, the spirit of ganbaru in Japanese companies encourages people to work long hours in

pursuit of this prestigious virtue. There is also a group obligation aspect in the business sense of the term.

One must work hard to not let their team mates down. Different variations of ganbaru are used to urge and

encourage people to work harder.

Nanamisan spoke on the term zangyoo which translates to overtime. He said a more direct translation is to work beyond the normal timed hours. He discussed 3 types of zangyoo one where you

work over the legal hours and get paid, one where you work over the legal hours and don't get paid

(which is illegal) and one where overtime is factored into your salary. Overtime work is an indicator of a

hard worker in Japan. Overtime work is a common practice in Japan that has the longest work hours in the

world. We ended up discussing overtime work here in the United States compared to that in Japan. In the

text 40 hours is the normal hours but Japan averages nearly 50 hours work week. The text also discussed

the 3 types of zangyoo. Zangyoo provides extra money and productivity, but the negatives (deaths from

fatigue and suicides) associated with it outweigh the pros. Many companies are phasing out zangyoo in

favor of more efficient work hours instead of longer ones.

Communication with the Sophia students during the meeting was difficult partly due to the fact I am somewhat deaf in both ears. (Worked in a loud saw shop for a few years. Even with ear protection I

still ended up with some hearing issues.) I noticed that they use hand gestures a lot when talking which is

common here as well. I noticed there were some pauses while they gathered their thoughts but that did not happen as frequently as I thought it would. Overall, I think they communicated quite clearly to the rest of my group, and I only had difficulty because I cannot hear that well. Communicating outside of the meeting was also difficult. It took a few extra weeks to get up with them because Takumisans computer broke, and he was our contact. Once the issue was fixed, they responded in a few days. Setting up a meeting time was not as hard as I thought it would be and we got the meeting set up efficiently. Just had to get over the initial hump of Takumisans computer breaking.

I think our session was very productive, and served to both reinforce and add to what we've learned about zangyou and chorei. Hikaru works overtime often for his job, thankfully working the typical type of zangyou, and getting paid for his overtime work. Learning about zangyou from someone who has experienced it in their work helped really solidify the concept as a real, common occurrence. It also highlighted that zangyou isn't exclusive to the white-collar, big business type jobs we often talk about, and that most regular, mundane jobs also often involve zangyou. Hikaru also answered my question about whether zangyou was becoming less common by saying it wasn't becoming much less common than it has been previously, and that real testimony is very elucidating to me. Natsume talked about chorei, and everything she discussed was mostly in line with what we learned, including that morning meetings are mostly to maintain harmony and bring employees together, and not necessarily to get much done as far as organization, decisions, and such go, as those things are left to formal meetings designated for such important issues. I did learn that chorei can be sometimes done at different times of day (and it is called different things for different times of day, such as yuurei for evening meeting). From Natsume's testimony, it seems that such meetings are becoming less frequent, especially with the development of Covid-19. Overall, we were able to communicate fairly well, though there were some periods of lengthy silence that we were a bit uncomfortable with at first. I was not sure whether or not I should break the silence at certain points, though we were able to get through it well enough. Of course, the linguistic barrier was present throughout, though our Sofia partners were able to communicate their points very well through their presumably rehearsed presentations. The main area of difficulty was outside of this, when we asked them questions. Through a combination of us using simple language and them taking their time to get their point across as best they could, though, we were able to reach understanding, presumably on both sides, communicating effectively, if with a little more time required than for fluent speakers of the same language, which is to be expected. I was pleased with how our communications went.

When meeting with the Sophia University students for the COIL assignment, my partner and I received presentations on Zangyō and Chōrei. Below is a summary of the key points covered in the presentations.

Zangyō:

Zangyō is the term used to describe overtime work in Japan. The Labor Standards act states that work hours are eight hours per day, totaling to forty hours per week. Like the United States, time spent at work outside of these standard hours categorizes as overtime. During the overtime, employees will receive additional compensation for their time on the clock. However, in Japan one may find that staying past the eight-hour daily standard is necessary to show dedication to their company. As discussed in class, staying late is a way to show one's superior that they are willing to sacrifice their time to support the company. It is often seen as disrespectful to leave the workplace before one's superior. In circumstances like this, employees may not receive the additional compensation that they are legally deserving. Unpaid overtime is an issue of fairness, as members unwilling to sacrifice their time may receive scrutiny regardless of the legality.

Chōrei:

Chōrei is the morning meetings that take place at many Japanese firms. Chōrei is meant to prepare employees for the day ahead and may entail rehearsing the company motto. Chōrei allows managers to address their employees and build a foundation for workplace relationships. When compared to western workplaces, some may struggle to see the benefit in Chōrei. After all, in an era where emails and digital communication are commonplace, a morning meeting is often unnecessary. Chōrei intends to provide employees with more than workplace topics; building encouragement and excitement is also vital. In a collective society such as Japan, face-to-face meetings are opportunities to strengthen bonds and come together as a group.

During the presentation, a question arose regarding how modern workplaces are adapting to emails, video conferences, and digital communication for Chōrei (primarily due to COVID-19).

Our

presenter pointed out that many Japanese companies are adapting to changes, and COVID-19 has solidified digital communication for many. One group member pointed out that digital communication is

so common in the west, that it often invades one's time outside of work. This issue is not present with

Chōrei.

Another question surfaced about how Chōrei is used in shift-based work (work that may start at staggered times). Like Chōrei, Chūrei would address company members working in the

afternoon

(second shift), while Yūrei addresses evening workers (third shift) similarly. This idea is not exclusive to

Japan, as one group member pointed out how US companies utilized similar meetings during shift

changes to inform incoming employees on ongoing work progress.

Interacting with Sophia Students

While working with the Sophia students, I noticed many of the cultural differences covered in class. Silence is commonly used in Japan to allow the speaker to finish their points and process the

exchanged information. During our meeting, this pause was noticeable. My group member and I filled

After meeting with our Sophia University COIL partners, I felt that I did learn a little more about the Japanese business topics we discussed. One of our partners discussed salary/kyuryo and the other discussed overtime work/zangyo. They both presented their topics pretty well and covered most of the information that was in the reading. Along with the information from the reading and what we have discussed in class, I wasn't really left with many questions. The topics were both relatively simple and our partners reviewed the concepts so that I didn't have any additional questions.

Though the concepts weren't too difficult, our discussion did help reinforce the importance of bonuses in Japanese business culture. I found it interesting how bonuses in America are something which are not to be expected and a sign of gratitude from an employee to a worker. In Japan, on the other hand, there are biannual bonuses that are expected by workers and are factored into the worker's salary. From an American perspective, these wouldn't be true 'bonuses' because the money is almost mandatory (even if it is slightly more than the worker would receive than normal).

The most difficult issues my group faced were due to communication issues and the language barrier. Though we had been told that we would likely have trouble in these areas from the start, they were pretty big barriers to having a zoom meeting that seemed to flow well. To start with, our group had to have professors intervene in order to get our group members to respond to our initial emails. In a business setting, I could compare this to asking your boss or someone else within the company who has a connection established between themselves and the Japanese business partners to help establish communication. Once we were able to contact each other, we offered to talk over LINE which helped with the ease of communication. I think that this may be due to the fact that texting over LINE was less formal and therefore less intimidating.

During our zoom meeting, one of the main things I noticed was the silence. While part of it was the type of silence we discussed in class, I do believe that part of it was due to both us and the Sophia students being unsure of the structure of the meeting, what to discuss, etc.

When it came to communication style, one of our partners talked in a way that seemed more similar to how American students might present a project, while the other had a more direct communication style. This seemed mostly due to a difference in personalities but is an important note because it shows that what we are learning in class are guidelines of how to communicate

and act in Japanese business. Not everyone adheres to these guidelines exactly, so it is important to be very aware of who you are speaking with and how they communicate as well as how they best receive communication, then tailor the way you speak to this.

The language barrier was one of the obstacles that I am unsure how to overcome. Not being able to speak comfortably with one another in English made it difficult to ask questions as well as overcome the air of hesitancy that we had in our meeting. It seemed to block our ability to get to know one another and kept us as two separate groups. While we did work through this by typing what we said in the chat, this will be a long-term obstacle that we will all need to work through in order to have better communication.

Before discussing the differences between my interpretation of the reading and what I learned additionally after speaking with the students from Sophia, I wish to discuss the communication procedures and situations that arose. The first thing I noticed when emailing our partners was how prompt they were with responses, at least in comparison to my expectations when emailing fellow students at UNCC. This was greatly appreciated since it meant that if any last minute changes to our meeting schedule had to be made, they were likely to be seen shortly after being sent. After several emails back and forth, we settled on 7am EDT on October 18th to meet. However, since Japan does not observe Daylight Savings Time, our Sophia partner thought that the time difference between us and them was fourteen hours instead of thirteen. We had not taken this into consideration when we sent them our desired meeting time, and since we did not confirm the time equivalent in JST, Karen and I showed up to the Zoom meeting at 7am and neither of our partners were there. We swiftly emailed them, asking if there was anything wrong with setting up the meeting or if there was a need to reschedule. It was only at this time that I considered that there may have been a mixup of times, and that ended up being the case. This was, of course, not their fault at all; time zones are confusing enough to deal with on their own, not to mention them changing arbitrarily. They were very apologetic for the misunderstanding both in email and in the Zoom call, when it really was not a big deal for Karen or I since we had both blocked off quite a bit of time for this call. We also apologised for not being more specific about the time equivalent in Japan that we would be meeting at, and no other major issues arose during the meeting. This experience actually saved me from repeating the mistake with my COIL group for my Japanese language course, where my partner was also unaware of Daylight Savings Time and would have possibly led to another time mixup. From here on out, I will make sure that I specify each local time that a meeting will be taking place when meeting with people from different countries to avoid any misunderstanding in the future.

The first topic that we discussed was 残業, overtime work. While much of the logistical aspects of it were discussed in both the reading and the slide presentation, it was interesting to hear more about why workers who work サービス残業 do not complain or seek compensation; in America, almost anyone going through that would complain to their higher-ups or threaten action such as leaving the company or filing a complaint with a workers protection agency. However, due to the peer pressure and hierarchical structure of Japanese businesses, many workers do not seek

compensation or complain about their long hours since it would make them seem not as hard-working as those who press on. It was also interesting hearing about how COVID-19 was impacting the situation recently; with the introduction of working from home, hierarchical relationships and peer pressure become a non-issue, and workers are able to work at their own pace and not have to worry about staying late due to business or social etiquette obligations. The second topic was 贈り物, specifically お歳暮 and お中元. While in America we give gifts to each other on some special occasions, such as birthdays and holidays, the level that the Japanese go to based on the reading and presentation is far beyond what it is like here. For instance, as far as I

know, there is no industry designed to help choose gifts for people specifically based on their relationship in America, however it is quite popular in Japan. These gifts also tend to be consumable, whereas I feel that consumable gifts in America are looked down on a bit more than non-consumables since they can feel like gift decisions that were made with little thought (aside from expensive wine and things like that). The Japanese also seem to use gifts as a measure of relationship more explicitly than Americans do, or they at least think about the implications of gift value more than Americans tend to, and I have not heard of someone who keeps account of gifts they receive (and their value) for the purpose of giving something back of equivalent value. It was very interesting learning about the types of gifts, as well as who they are given to, while listening to the presentation.

Overall, I am very glad that we were able to organise a meeting with the students from Sophia and discuss the topics. Though it was only a short glimpse into the customs and traditions of Japanese business and culture, it was very insightful to hear it from people who have first-hand experience with the culture and to learn what they think about it

My experience working with the Sofia University team was a learning experience of time zones and cultural differences. I noticed that they wait till we are done and did not interrupt while we were talking. I have also noticed them nodding when another is talking. I think I handled the situations well like forgetting to hit record for our session, I apologized and continued. It was a bit awkward at first while we waited for the last member to come online, we broke the silence by talking about the weather. The topics we went over were kyuryo and jinzai kyoiku. On the topic of kyuryo or wage I learned about the differences in wages between the countryside in Japan and big cities like Tokyo. With jinzai kyoiku or job training I learned how the training works over there and how it differs from job training here in the U.S.

We had our session with the Sophia students on Oct 20th, 2021 from there the Sophia students were kind enough to give us a presentation from each of them, presenting topics such as; keiyaku (contract), kyuryo (wage), zangyoo (overtime) and jinzaikyoiku (employee development). This presentation itself was interesting we had previously discussed these in class for the most part

but hearing it from the students did well to remind me of how businesses still work in Japan. After the Sophia students were done, we asked some questions like how they felt about Zangyoo and their opinions on how Japan's business practices. I was surprised to hear that some had a strong opinion when it came to criticizing it things like overtime, bringing up points like the rate at which workers will commit suicide due to overwork. I also have critical opinion when it comes to Japan's practices but I didn't expect the Sophia students to have those as well, it gives me hope that the current generation of Japanese young adults will change a lot of the unfair business practices going in Japan.

Behavior wise they didn't act any different then someone from the U.S there were times where they were seemingly embarrassed because they made a mistake when speaking English but I didn't observe any behaviors I would attribute as unique to the Japanese. Overall, it was a little awkward here and there but I did enjoy seeing and speaking to them.

Moeko, Jin, and Miki chose to do their presentations on 'kyuuryou', 'oseibo/ochuugen', and 'zangyou' respectively. I've noticed that whenever Japanese students do presentations, it's usually a single page or slide with some information on it, while the rest of the information is given orally.

Moeko's presentation on kyuuryoutold us about how the Japanese wage system is based on nenkou joretsuand that the wages are distributed evenly among the workers according to how many years of service they have within the company. This system allowed for the work environment to be tuned towards being supportive of one another and gave little room for their to be competition among the employees. Moeko was curious about what we thought about the system and if we thought it was a good idea. For the most part, we agreed that being able to have equal pay for the same job was a good idea overall, however it is not something that happens often in America.

Jin's presentation on oseibo/ochuugentold us about seasonal gift giving. In Japan, it is etiquette to give gifts in order to maintain relationships and business contracts. According to Jin, he said that although it was a tradition, he doesn't see oseibo/ochuugen happen often anymore. Maybe now only among close friends and family. He was interested in learning if we gave gifts in America. We told them that we don't really give out gifts unless it's to close friends and family and sometimes only for special occasions. In a business setting, you may not receive a gift, but the company may throw a company party around special holidays such as Christmas. Miki's presentation on zangyoutold us about the types of overtime in Japan. There are three types of zangyou: real zangyou, sabisuzangyou, and minashizangyou. Real zangyouis