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## The difference in movement of experienced and in experienced persons in Japanese bowing

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### Abstract

Greeting is the basis of omotenashi, and one of the ways to greet is to bow. We conducted an experiment on the difference in maneuver between an experienced and inexperienced person and measuring the positions and timing of the bowing motion. The bow of the experienced person had a stable angle, with the shoulder angle ( $\theta_1$ ) being around 180 degrees all three times; in other words the head was straight and the angle of the waist ( $\theta_2$ ) was at around 20 degrees all three times. The transitions from the onset of the bow till the head was lowered and from the head beginning to rise until the end of the bow were about equal speed, and the speed of the head was relatively slow at -100~100 (pixel/s). There is a case where the  $\theta_1$  and  $\theta_2$  of the bow of the inexperienced persons both with the Japanese persons and Thai persons are synchronized, and the case where the neck is bent before the movement of bending the waist. With the Thai person, the  $\theta_2$  was very deep and the movement speed was very fast. The difference in the experiences has more dispersion. Regardless of nationality, in the situation of no previous instruction, it is very difficult to express the gentle and slow motion of bowing.

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Peer-review under responsibility of the organizing committee of the 12th EMSES 2015

-Keywords: hospitality; Japanese bow, omotenashi, Thai

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## 1. Introduction

In Japanese, to receive a guest with hospitality and assist them in various ways is called “omotenashi.” The Japan Productivity Center defines “omotenashi” as “work to provide special service from the heart while valuing the perspective of customers and/or residents.” In foreign countries the same concept exists, called for example “hospitality (U.S.),” “dai ke zhi dao (China),” and “hospitalité (France),” but recently the word “omotenashi” has become internationally recognized as designating, along with the definition above, a form of welcoming rooted in the traditions and culture of Japan. According to an investigation of the Japan Productivity Center, a majority of people in the U.S., China, and France have heard of the word “Omotenashi.”

One of the reasons for the rising awareness of omotenashi is the increase in foreign visitors to Japan. In 2013 the number of foreign visitors passed 10 million for the first time, due to economic growth in Asian countries as well as success in the promotion of travel to Japan by a tourism policy called “Visit Japan” that was devised in 2003. The Japanese government will further devise a plan to increase the number of visitors to 20 million by 2020. In 2020 the Summer Olympics will be held in Tokyo along with the Paralympics Games. As the host country for the Olympics and Paralympics, Japan has an urgent need to convey its culture to the world in a comprehensible and assertive way. As stated earlier, omotenashi is a form of hospitality rooted in the culture and traditions of Japan, one that gives importance to touchpoints with the customer, an original way of giving high quality service from the heart based on mutual communication. Omotenashi could be said to be Japan’s most important aspect.

Greeting is the basis of omotenashi, and one of the ways to greet is to bow. Bowing has different shades of meaning according to the country or region, but generally speaking it is the action of bending from the waist to greet someone, express thanks, or apologize. In Japan bowing also is a traditional way to greet, give thanks, and apologize, but its role as the fundamental action of Japanese hospitality and culture known as “omotenashi” and its designation as high quality service from the heart gave it a different significance from that in other countries. Japanese bowing is classified according to the angle at which the bowing is done, the levels being “eshaku (greeting bow),” “keirei (respect bow),” and “saikeirei (highest respect bow).” The levels differ in degree of honoring and are used in different circumstances. The maneuver consists in these three stages: to stand tall, to bend from the lower back, and to return from the lower back [1-8].

To spread Japanese culture internationally and deepen understanding of foreign cultures, it is urgent to consider how to convey omotenashi in ways easily understood by foreigners starting from the act of bowing. For this paper we conducted an experiment on the difference in maneuver between an experienced and inexperienced person by recording their movements using a video camera and measuring the positions and timing of the bowing motion.

## 2. Experimental

### 2.1. The test subject and the bowing

The test subjects were 1 experienced person with a history of teaching omotenashi for 7 years, 8 inexperienced Japanese persons and 5 inexperienced Thai persons who had never received instruction in the motion of a bow. For the bowing we used “keirei” which requires an inclination of 30 degrees and is frequently used.

### 2.2. Experimentation method

As shown in Fig. 1, a marker was put on the head/shoulder/waist/knee of the both experienced and inexperienced test subjects, and the bowing motion “keirei” was videotaped from side directions. The same motion was done three times.

### 2.3. Analysis method

With the measured time and information of the markers’ locations we discerned the transition of location and speed. We paid special attention to the speed of the head ( $V_h$ ). And from the distance between the four points of head, shoulder, waist, and knees, we calculated the angle of head-shoulder-lower back ( $\theta_1$ ) and the angle of shoulder-waist-knee ( $\theta_2$ ).

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