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Information from the German Institute for Japanese Studies

What Is "Beautiful Japanese"?

by Irmela Hijiya-Kirschner

As in a number of Western countries, in Japan, too, complaints about the deterioration of language have grown louder. What is considered "beautiful" Japanese is perceived as being at risk, with enemies lurking around every corner. Thus, in 2001 the Agency for Cultural Affairs set up a body of advisors to partake in a so-called Forum of talks concerning beautiful Japanese (*Utsukushii Nihongo ni tsuite kataru kai*). In June 2001 the agency published the results of a survey concerning the use of language in everyday life as well as language education and language in the media. The aim of the survey was to determine people's "linguistic awareness and behaviour with a view to establishing future measures."

One of the main results of the survey – conducted in the form of interviews among 3,000 Japanese aged 16 and above – was that nearly 90 percent noted a degeneration of language (*kotoba no midare*) or, more literally, "language disorder" in everyday communication and in television. What is to be understood by this was clarified by 19 multiple-choice questions. The most frequently named complaints concerned "coarse language" (*ikata ga ranbō*), casual and nonchalant greetings, offensive and indecent language, and mistakes in the use of polite forms. Faults such as these were said to be observed mainly among secondary school and undergraduate level pupils and those aged between 20 and 30. According to the opinion of those polled, the foremost responsibility lies with parents, who are expected to instill the importance of correct language usage in their children. Next comes the individual, who is expected to make an explicit effort to strive for stylistic adequacy, while the role of school as an agent in teaching proper linguistic usage ranks only third. Apart from the issue of responsibility is the question of influence. As might be expected for Japan, by far the biggest influence on language is attributed to television, es-

pecially to the bad examples set by popular figures in entertainment shows. Ranking fifth, after the influence of mother, friends, and father, comes *manga*.

With regard to mobile phones and e-mail, the survey shows that many young Japanese frequently use their cell phones for no specific reason other than simply to chat (in acoustic or in written mode). This mode of electronic communication appeals to them as particularly comfortable since they feel no restraints in their way of expressing themselves, writing the way they talk. They obviously find it easier to establish intimacy and openness via these electronic channels. So far the results of the survey come as no surprise.

From the perspective of Western languages, which hardly know so-called genderlect as expressed through vocabulary, grammar and syntax, the opinion of Japanese speakers concerning gender-specific speech is of particular interest, all the more so since the difference between male and female speech in Japanese is said to be dwindling gradually, and the wording of the questionnaire's survey also presupposes this trend. During the past decades the slow erosion of distinct gender differences in spoken Japanese had been referred to as a sign of social equalization, social liberalization, and above all the emancipation of women. The survey posed the question whether this leveling out of gender differences is to be considered positive or whether such differences should be maintained. Here the answers are somewhat astounding, all the more so in comparison to the 1996 survey, the results of which came along with the present data. What we seem to witness here is a kind of conservative turn. Whereas in 1996, 9.8 percent of those polled favored an end to gendered speech, this year the number sharing this opinion is two percentage points lower. A vast majority finds gender-specific differences in language "natu-

ral, and thus unavoidable" (*shizen no nagare de ari, yamu o enai*) (34.8 percent) or simply "appropriate" (*aru hō ga yoi*) (52 percent), the latter figure increasing no less than eight percentage points compared with 1996.

One cannot help wondering about the percentage of men versus women who concur with this opinion. Unfortunately, the results published fail to address and quantify this and a number of other factors crucial for an in-depth interpretation of the survey. It remains to be seen what conclusions will be drawn from the results and what consequences these will have.

As is often the case, however, these "blanks" – the questions left unasked (and unanswered) – are just as telling. The survey did not set out to examine the "degeneration of language" in terms of the mainstreaming of language, the shrinking of vocabulary, or the trend toward stereotyped phrasing, which, at least from the perspective of nonnative speakers, are growing problems of language usage in public arenas, with the media functioning as complicit disseminators. Rather, the survey addressed attitudes that are summed up under the rubric of "beautiful Japanese." One member of the

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In the 2001 electoral campaign, one party (the Kōmeitō) used the slogan *Nippon agein* (Japan again). Shown here is a section from the full-page newspaper ad, the main message of which, in bold print on the bottom of the page, read: "*Nippon o bunka geijutsu taikoku ni shiyō*" (Let's make Japan a major power in culture and arts).

body of advisors set up by the Agency for Cultural Affairs was *rakugo* performer Shunpūtei Koasa. (One would probably have to liken the traditional art of *rakugo* to a form of cabaret or satirical revue.) He maintained in an interview printed in the *Yomiuri shinbun* that excessive stress in everyday life was to be held responsible for the decline in speaking manners, by which he referred to rough verbal interaction in the family, at school, at the workplace, and on television. His answer to "embellishing the soul and language" is to make compliments more frequently. Only when people learn to show more empathy towards others and regain a relaxed, composed attitude enabling them to pay compliments to each other, Koasa proposes, will Japan find itself on a better track again (*Nihon o yoku suru ni wa o-seji shika nai*).

A frequently addressed point of criticism is the widespread loss of certainty as to the proper use of polite language. It is also the topic of a recent book under the title *Nihongo no kagaku* (the Chemistry of Japanese) by Iwamatsu Kenkichirō, a linguist at Keiō University who analyzes the language of Japanese youths. The most basic forms, such as greeting customers at convenience stores or so-called family restaurants, where many young people earn their pocket money, are not the problem, Iwamatsu reports, suggesting that everyone is capable of using standard phrases of welcome. But all too soon, when orders are taken or payment received, linguistic chaos takes over as casual expressions alternate with extremely polite honorific forms. Hoping to avoid mistakes, some speakers fall into an excessively re-

spectful tone even when talking to children and workplace colleagues. In letters to the editor, Japanese newspaper readers complain about such inappropriate politeness, with one quoting the example of a dentist who receives his patients saying, "If you don't mind, please enter" (*yoroshikereba o-hairi kudasai*), and later tells them "Please rinse now if you don't mind" (*yoroshikereba o-kuchi o yusuide kudasai*). To enter and to rinse after the procedure were what she had no doubt planned to do anyhow, a reader reports in a biting comment. Similarly, invitations to class reunions may have an awfully distanced ring of politeness, while in hospitals it has become the custom to speak of and to patients as "dear sir patient" or "dear madam patient" (*kanjasama*). This inflated and bombastic form of address is not likely to add to people's comfort, a commentator remarks.

Interestingly enough, the "degeneration of language" in Japan is not attributed to a supposed infiltration of too much English, an aspect which figures prominently in Germany in this context. Still, in personal conversations, many Japanese complain about the large amount of Anglo-American vocabulary in Japanese, which makes speech and writing hard to follow. It would indeed be worthwhile questioning the functionality of foreign loanwords in contemporary Japanese, not considering, of course, the domains of high technology and other specializations where newly formed terms are accepted all over the world at such speed that it would simply be a waste of time to try and find adequate terms in the native language. What comes to mind is everyday speech in areas such as sports, fashion, advertising, and even administrative guidance (i.e. intragovernment directives), where Anglicisms are fast taking over. Meanwhile, Japanese linguists, too, have started to question why employment offices in Japan need to be called *harō wāku* (Hello Work) or the classified telephone directory *taunpēji* (Townpage), or why recently problems and accidents are referred to as *toraburu* (trouble) and *akushidento* (accident) in the news. One of them, Uemura Yukio, regards these monstrosities as just the tip of the iceberg. The real problem, according to him, lies with a misconception of internationalization and the failure of methods in teaching both Japanese and foreign languages. In an essay on the Japanese language in the twenty-first century, Uemura grabs the topic by its roots, positing that the decay of language demonstrated by thoughtless political, bureaucratic, and legal jargon and by the linguistic in-



competence found in teaching materials is indicative of a failed education system and the failure of democratic society as well. Nobody, not even linguists or other intellectuals, he says deplorably, feels a duty to protest. One thing, however, is certain: As long as scholars such as Uemura intervene, the debate concerning "beautiful Japanese" will certainly gain depth and scope.

Notes: A slightly abbreviated version of this article was published in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on 9 January 2002 (No. 7), page N 3.

The Agency for Cultural Affairs survey was conducted between 1 Oct. 2000, and 28 Jan. 2001. The results as well as further information can be found under the heading *Kokugo ni kanshite* on the Agency's website www.bunka.go.jp. Shunpūtei Koasa's statements were cited from an interview article in *Tōkyō Yomiuri shinbun*, the morning edition of 19 May 2001, page 2, in the column "Kao." Iwamatsu Kenkichirō's book, *Nihongo no kagaku* was published in 2001 with Bunkasha. Examples and explanations concerning this publication are to be found in the article titled "Wakamono kotoba no midareron – Iwamatsu Kenkichirō-san" (A discussion on the decay of language among youths – I. K.), in the *Mainichi shinbun*, evening edition, 21 June 2001, page 3. Readers' opinions are quoted from an article titled "Fuyukai da yo, kajō na keigo wakamono keigo ni 'keii' nashi" (How nasty, this exaggerated polite language! Young people's polite language lacking respect), in the *Asahi shinbun*, morning edition, 30 June 2001, page 25. Uemura Yukio, Professor of linguistics at Okinawa University, published his essay under the title "21seiki no Nihongo" (Japanese in the Twenty-First Century) in the January 2001 edition of *Kokubungaku – kaishaku to kanshō*, vol. 66, no. 1, pp. 6–15. This month's focus is on "21seiki no Nihongo kenkyū" (Japanese linguistics in the twenty-first century).

CURRENT RESEARCH

Use of the Internet by Political Actors

The Internet has been hailed as an equalizer, leveling the playing field be-

tween larger and smaller actors in the political realm. Cost factors and the ease of linking up with like-minded individuals or groups despite geographical distance enable smaller actors, especially non-profit organisations, to have greater political impact. It is expected that via the Internet they can reach, network with, and mobilise previously unrelated publics for their causes.

As part of the research project on "Politics and the Internet in Japan" (cf. Newsletter 14), Isa Ducke examines the controversy over Japanese junior high school textbooks during Summer 2001. The government approval of a history textbook promoting nationalistic views led to protests, especially in South Korea, and efforts to prevent its use in schools. Official and non-official Korean protests and a Japanese NGO network with an extensive website are regarded as the crucial factors in achieving an extremely low actual adoption rate of the book in schools. It is the aim of the research project to outline the use of the Internet by various state and non-state actors in Japan and Korea regarding this issue.

A comparison between these actors' use of the Internet should indicate whether organisations such as the NGOs involved in the issue did indeed gain from the use of the Internet. Could small-scale actors achieve a relatively greater influence? At least with respect to some actors, a comparison is also possible with a similar textbook affair that occurred in 1982, without any influence of the Internet. The bilateral nature of the textbook issue additionally raises the question of whether the Internet eases trans-national networking between NGOs. This phenomenon could change the landscape of foreign policy, hitherto almost entirely the domain of government agencies.

Initial results of the project were presented at the "Media in Transition" conference in May 2002 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; it will be continued throughout 2002.

Opportunities and Risks in Intercultural Co-operative Ventures of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

Co-operative ventures are a possible alternative for small- and medium-sized companies internationalising on

their own. In a time when increased market competition forces companies to reduce costs of production and transaction, co-operative ventures limit investment risks and overcome limitations in expertise and capacity for going abroad. However, such co-operative ventures are often complex structures and difficult to manage effectively. They also have a higher potential for conflict due to intercultural differences between business partners. Therefore it seems to be necessary to establish trusting cross-border relationships.

Harald Dolles, together with scholars from the University of Bayreuth, analyses and evaluates co-operative ventures of German small- and medium-sized companies in Japan and Mexico. There are four major aspects to this research: (1) What are the aims of the co-operating firms with regards to the venture? (2) What difficulties arise and how do the companies handle them? (3) What role does trust play outside of contractual insurances and other control instruments? (4) How do the companies and their local partners measure the success of the co-operative venture?

The research aims to increase understanding in a search for trusting co-operative business relationships. The connection between the degree of trust in an intercultural co-operative effort and economic success indicators will be established. Furthermore, concrete suggestions towards successful, trust-based co-operative management in international business will be developed.

This is a joint research with the Department for Human Resource Management at the University of Bayreuth, Germany. The empirical surveys in Germany and Mexico were mainly financed by a research grant from the Bavarian Network Area Studies (FORAREA), Germany.

The Silver Market in Japan – Areas of Strategies and Action

In the summer of this year, Harald Conrad, together with two researchers from the Institute of Gerontology at the University of Dortmund, will conduct research supported by the German Federal Ministry of Family, Seniors, Women and Youth. This project examines the extent to which demographic aging, often associated with an economic burden for society, has been perceived as an opportunity for Japan's economy. It will analyse what kinds of



approaches and strategies exist in Japanese industry, commerce and politics to adapt to the special needs of senior citizens. First results of this research should be available in autumn 2002.

DIJ EVENTS

DIJ-Forum

J. Victor Koschmann: Hakone Conference Revisited: Modernisation and the Civil Society School in Post-war Japan

(21 February 2002)

In his talk, Prof. Koschmann (Professor of Japanese History at Cornell University) stressed the relevance of modernisation theory for American diplomacy, politics, and culture in the 1960s, and its relevance vis-à-vis Japan, especially in academic terms. Modernisation theory was actively promoted in Japan during the Hakone Conference in 1960, giving Japan specialists from the United States the chance to discuss the theory with Japanese researchers (in Japanese). That conference was the starting point for a series of conferences that resulted in the publication of several volumes with contributions concerning all fields of Japanese Studies, but with a focus on historical research. However, Prof. Koschmann also stressed the fact that in Japan, social scientists had long before worked out their own modernisation theories. Since the 1930s, the Civil Society School, in particular, had been focusing on the "total war mobilization" as a modernising factor and proposed a theory that significantly differed from American modernisation theory. However, their approach did not find wide acceptance during the Hakone Conference. A lively discussion followed Prof. Koschmann's presentation, which was attended by almost 60 listeners.

DIJ-Forum

Gerhard Krebs: Anti-Semitism and Policies Towards Jews in Japanese History

(13 March 2002)

Beginning with the early reception of Western anti-Semitism in the Meiji era, Dr. G. Krebs (guest professor at FU Berlin) discussed the political and financial factors which determined the Japanese policies towards Jews until 1945.

After the talk, Dr. Krebs showed a documentary about European Jews who immigrated to Shanghai during the Nazi regime. Among the more than 40 listeners contributing to the following discussion were also Holocaust survivors who had found shelter in Shanghai during the time.

DIJ-Forum

Winfried Flüchter: A New Capital for Japan? The Construction Industry and the Geography of Power

(11 April 2002)

Prof. Dr. W. Flüchter (Professor at the Institute of Geography and the Institute of East Asian Studies at the University of Duisburg, Germany) gave a talk on the 'Act for the Relocation of the Diet and Other Organizations' passed by the Japanese Diet in 1992. According to his thesis, the relocation of capital functions from Tōkyō to areas outside of the national capital region is a phantom based on legislation, but virtual nonetheless. Prof. Flüchter sees this situation as a result of the political system of Japan: the centralism and power structures involved, as well as the significance of the notorious 'Iron Triangle' to the construction industry. In this context he proposed that sustainable regional development meant functional representation (transfer of authority) rather than a geographical one (transfer of the capital).

DIJ PUBLICATIONS

Gerhard Krebs (ed.): Japan und Preußen [Japan and Prussia]. (Monographien aus dem Deutschen Institut für Japanstudien, Band 32) [DIJ Monograph Series, Vol. 32], München: Iudicium 2002, 356 pp. (ISBN 3-89129-843-9)

In the 19th century, a time of political modernisation, Japan took Prussia as a model in various realms inviting Prussian specialists from several fields to Japan as advisors. Because they were so successful, the Japanese were soon labelled 'the Prussians of East Asia.' The aim of this collection is to trace the long-lasting influences of the Prussian role model on Japan, while at the same time tracing the image of Japan in Germany. The Prussian model becomes particularly visible in the creation of the state and the establishment of a modern army in Japan. In both these areas, step by step, Prussia took over



France's role extant since the 1870s. Especially important was the decision to render the General Staff completely independent from the government making it possible for the military to intervene in politics. The German authoritarian form of state was also considered worth imitating. Opposingly, the Anglo-Saxon countries served as role models in marine, technology, and economy. As a counterpart to Japan's interests in Prussia, Germany also developed an interest in the far-eastern country, visible for example in the development of Japanese Studies, first and foremost in Berlin.

CONTENTS: I. Hijiya-Kirschner: Vorwort [Preface] • G. Krebs: Japan und Preußen [Japan and Prussia]. Zur Einführung [Introduction] • A. Nakai: Das japanische Preußen-Bild in historischer Perspektive [Japan's Image of Prussia from a Historical Viewpoint] • E.-J. Lee: "Konfuzianischer Idealstaat". Konfuzianismusrezeption in der deutschen Frühaufklärung ["A Confucian Ideal State". The Reception of Confucianism in Germany's Early Enlightenment] • R. Zöllner: Die preußische Japan-Rezeption bis Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts [Prussia's Reception of Japan Until the Mid 19th Century] • B. Martin: Die preußische Ostasien-Expedition und der Vertrag über Freundschaft, Handel und Schifffahrt mit Japan (24. Januar 1861) [The Prussian East Asia-Expedition and the Treaty on Friendship, Trade, and Navigation with Japan (24 January 1861)] • U. Wattenberg: Die Iwakura-Mission in Preußen [The Iwakura-Mission in Prussia] • G. Krebs: Japan und die preußische Armee [Japan and the Prussian Army] • A. Brochlos: Das Seminar für Ostasiatische Sprachen an der Berliner Universität und die japanbezo-



gene Lehre [The Institute of East Asian Languages at the University of Berlin and the Teachings Relating to Japan] • J. Ando: Japan und die preußische Verfassung [Japan and the Prussian Constitution] • W. Röhl: Die Einflüsse des deutschen Rechts auf Japan [The Influences of German Law on Japan] • B. Becker: Der preußische Jurist Georg Michaelis in Japan (1885–1889) [The Prussian Lawyer Georg Michaelis in Japan (1885–1889)] • M. Mehl: Japan und die preußisch-deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft [Japan and the Prussian-German Historical Science] • H. Walravens: Kunstbeziehung zwischen Preußen und Japan [The Relationship in Art Between Prussia and Japan] • R.-H. Wippich: Die deutsche Missionstätigkeit in Meiji-Japan [German Missionary Work in Meiji-Japan] • M. Rauck: Preußisch-japanische Beziehungen auf wirtschaftlich-industriellem Gebiet [Prussian-German Economic-Industrial Relations] • J. Möller: Japan und das preußische Erziehungswesen [Japan and the Prussian Educational System] • M. Horiuchi: Die Beziehungen der Berliner Baufirma Ende & Böckmann zu Japan [The Relationship between the Berlin Construction Company 'Ende & Böckmann' and Japan].

Susanne Kreitz-Sandberg (ed.): Jugendliche in Japan und Deutschland: Soziale Integration im Vergleich [Youth in Japan and Germany: Social Integration in Comparison]. Opladen: Leske + Budrich 2002, 314 pp. (ISBN 3-8100-3096-1)



This book presents a comparison of processes and problems that occur during the search for identity in adolescence in Germany and Japan, both countries that pay a lot of attention to

youth issues. Japanese and German adolescents grow up in similarly modern societies, but they are confronted with different social, cultural and structural conditions of life. This becomes evident in their social integration into family, school and peer groups, and especially in their transition into working life. This volume presents the research of German and Japanese scholars from the fields of education, sociology, psychology and political science. From various perspectives, the differences and similarities between and within these two societies are investigated. Special attention is paid to generational issues, the sexes, and the changing gender cultures in Japanese and German youth.

CONTENTS: I. Hijiya-Kirschner: Vorwort [Preface] • S. Kreitz-Sandberg: "Andere Welten?" Soziale Integration von Jugendlichen in Japan und Deutschland im Vergleich ["Other Worlds?" Comparative Perspectives on the Social Integration of Youth in Japan and Germany]

Possibilities of Empirical Youth Studies. International and Intra-cultural Comparisons

A. Kadowaki: Die "andere Welt" als Lebensraum Jugendlicher. Jugend und sozialer Wandel in der japanischen Metropole [The "Other World" as the Life Space of Young People: Youth and Social Change in the Japanese Metropolis] • V. Schubert: Jugend und Schule in Japan. Zur kulturellen Konstruktion des Jugendalters [Japanese Youth and School. The Cultural Construction of Adolescence] • C. Toyama-Bialke: Elterliche Erziehungsvorstellungen in Japan und Deutschland. Jugendbilder im Vergleich [Educational Perspectives of Parents in Japan and Germany: A Comparative Study of the Conceptions of Adolescence] • M. Kobayashi: Werte von Studenten in kritischen Moralfragen. Eine empirische Studie in Deutschland und Japan [Moral Values of Students in Critical Issues: An Empirical Study in Germany and Japan]

Integration into Family, School and Work: Perspectives on Gender

H. Krüger: Neue Selbstbilder junger Frauen – alte Übergangswege in den Beruf. Zu Stagnation und Wandel im Geschlechterverhältnis in Deutschland [New Self-Concepts – Old Transitions into Professions: Stagnation and Change in Gender Relations in Germany] • Y. Nakanishi: Gender tracking. Schulkultur und Bildungsgänge junger Frauen in Japan [Gendered Tracking System: School Culture Effects on Young Japanese Women's Life Choices] • F. Taga: Der Wandel von Ge-

schlechterrollen und männliche Konflikte. Eine Biographiestudie mit jungen Männern in Japan [The Change of Gender and Male Conflicts: Life Histories of Young Men in Japan]

Integration into Society under Difficult Conditions

W. Heitmeyer: Soziale Desintegration, Anerkennungszerfall und Jugendgewalt in Deutschland [Social Disintegration, the Gap of Recognition and Youth Violence in Germany] • H. Tokuoka: Jugendpolitik und Jugendprobleme in Japan. Maßnahmen und ihre Auswirkungen im Wandel [Youth Policies and Youth Problems in Japan: Changing Measures and Results] • G. Foljanty-Jost: Schule und Gewalt in Deutschland und Japan. Problemstand, Analysen und Prävention im Vergleich [School and Violence in Germany and Japan: Problems, Analysis and Prevention in Comparison] • R. Kosugi: Steigende Jugendarbeitslosigkeit in Japan. Die Herausforderung des Übergangs von der Schule ins Erwerbsleben [Rising Youth Unemployment in Japan: Problems of Transition from School to Work].

BOOK REVIEW

Kato Shuichi: Närrische Gedanken am Abend. Essays zu japanischer Kultur, Politik und Zeitgeschichte [Foolish Thoughts in the Evening. Essays on Japanese Culture, Politics, and Contemporary History]. Edited by Frank Böhling with a Preface by Irmela Hijiya-Kirschner. München: Iudicium 2001, 296 pp. (ISBN 3-89129-086-1)

This collection of essays provides a vivid exercise in the art of changing perspectives. As one reads one short text after another the thoughts of the author unfold and illustrate the most diverse contemporary and historical, aesthetic and political, scientific and human issues. An expert in such fields as cultural history, literature, medicine, and critical journalist commentary the author demonstrates in these essays his ability to approach national, historical, and scientific matters from various perspectives. The texts elucidate his experiences in different cultural and academic settings as well as his wide reading. What he writes about Noma Hiroshi holds true for Katō himself: "(...) there existed nothing he was not interested in" (p. 207).

What is this book about? It is a translation of selected monthly columns published in the Japanese daily



newspaper *Asahi shinbun* under the title *Sekiyō mōgo* [Foolish Thoughts in the Evening] since 1984. These columns express Katō's opinions regarding issues of his choice, the only criterion being the identical length of the texts. Those were republished collectively in four volumes from the *Asahi shinbun's* publisher from 1988 through 2001. About one fifth of this collection was selected for the German edition and translated into a very readable form.

In her preface, I. Hijiya-Kirschne-reit, who according to editor F. Böhling initiated the German edition, calls Katō an intellectual (*chishikijin*), a representative of the "ever dwindling species of free-thinkers who are not willing to submit their intellect to any movement or fashion" (S. 11). The author's intellectual biography is introduced by Böhling on the basis of an autobiographic text by Katō, *Hitsuji no uta* [Sheep Songs], that has already been translated into German. In his insightful introduction Böhling gives a brief sketch of Japanese society and politics of the 1980s and 1990s, the time span when Katō's columns appeared and to which they refer. He summarizes some of Katō's main arguments recounted in the essays and, most important, conceptualises Katō's thought within the bigger frame of 19th and 20th century imperialism and colonialism.

The columns are well arranged and structured into ten themed chapters. However, it does not become instantly clear why the order within each chapter was not left chronological. The first chapter "Zu Beginn" [Beginning] consists of only Katō's first column "Über 'Närrische Gedanken am Abend'" [On 'Foolish Thoughts in the Evening']. As in all the texts, the author lets the reader partake in his flow of thought, introducing different people, experiences, and moods: the 18th century poet Kan-zasan, the writer Marcel Proust, the evening sky's colours of Venice and those of Shibuya in Katō's own childhood, both reminding him of the glaze on Chōjirō's 16th century tea cups. Moreover, he refers to the literature of Yoshida Kenkō from the 13th / 14th century, to philosopher Edmund Husserl, 11th century Chinese politician and poet Su Shi, 15th century painter Piero della Francesca, Dharma from the 6th century and finally Confucius. Such historical devices are always linked to thoughts on contemporary Japanese society and on the state of international relations.

The following nine chapters name the central themes: "Spekulationskon-junktur und Dauerrezession" (chapter II) [Speculation Economy and Permanent Recession] addresses domestic

political and social issues such as the Japanese work ethos, the sarin poisoning attack by Aum Shinrikyō, and the public wasting of tax money. At the centre of chapter III, "Unvergangene Vergangenheit" [Unpast Past], are issues of foreign policy, such as various politicians' denials of Japanese war crimes, the history of Hiroshima as well as of Nanking, the corps 731 or the "comfort" women. Chapter IV bears the title "Licht und Schatten der nationalen Tradition" [Light and Shadow of the National Tradition] and introduces perspectives and works of Western Japanese Studies as well as nationalist tendencies of the so-called "National Learning" scholars who tried to find the Japanese essence in national literature. The essays of the following three chapters "Kolonialismus und Modernisierung" (V) [Colonialism and Modernization], "Seitenblicke" (VI) [Side Perspectives], and "Verschiedene Exile" (VII) [Various Exiles] elucidate the earlier mentioned change of perspective in a very clear and fruitful way. One example is the column "Von den Ruinen von Karthago aus gesehen" [Seen from the Ruins of Carthago]. Katō reports on his visit to the excavation site of the ruins of Carthago from the 2nd century B.C., a city of which written documents only exist from the perspective of the Roman destroyers. Katō writes: "The ability to change perspectives is an expression of intellectual freedom. In the ruins of Carthago I thought about the modern history of far away Japan. Whether one holds Itō Hirobumi or [Korean freedom fighter and assassin] An Chung-gun to be a hero of the people or a criminal is a matter of perspective and viewed differently in Korea and in Japan. The free change of perspective, no matter which is the "correct" one allows for an understanding of a phenomenon in its entirety and guarantees for an independent spirit" (p. 140).

The assumedly best known intellectual of the Meiji era, Fukuzawa Yūkichi, noted of China that it had become nothing less than a garden for the Europeans and that Japan better look out to prevent the same thing happening to them. Fukuzawa proposed, as is well known, to leave Asia in an intellectual sense. Katō, on the contrary, being a modern intellectual of the Shōwa- and Heisei-era and having experienced Japanese ultra-nationalism, left Asia geographically and culturally on extensive journeys, staying in foreign countries and becoming a cosmopolitan in the best sense of the word. In the columns of the eighth chapter "Sprache und Literatur" [Language and Literature] carrying his comments

on foreign language education and his denial of the call to introduce English as a second national language, he returns to Asia on a different intellectual level: He stresses that one cannot successfully learn foreign languages without knowing his or her own, no Western languages without knowledge of any other Asian language or classical Chinese or Japanese. It is the scholar who speaks here, who from the perspective of Japanese youth and of cyberspace seems a bit outdated and yet in his proposal to turn to Asia hits the trend of the 1990s and of the soccer year 2002. In the same vein, Katō's comments on aesthetics in the chapter "Malerei und Ästhetik" (IX) [Paintings and Aesthetics] illustrate his sense and appreciation of Asian and Japanese art, thereby resisting any kind of judging comparison with Western aesthetic notions. The tenth and last chapter "Ausblicke" [Outlooks] is concerned with, among other things, Japan's political role in the world. Katō appears, as in other essays, as a worried proponent of Japan's pacifist constitution, and he cites historical reasons for his denial of Japanese military contributions in the international arena.

With numerous footnotes this book can be recommended for a non-specialist audience. It introduces a discourse in and on Japan and its international position through the descriptions of an intellectual who has experienced several cultures and knows their polarity, without having to polarize or to transmit any kind of exoticism.

(Andrea Germer)

OTHER MATTERS/ OUTLOOK

DIJ Conferences

Individual Responsibility vs. Social Solidarity – Current Economic and Legal Issues Concerning Social Policy in Japan and Germany

(Conference Center of Waseda University, 10–11 September 2002)

This conference, jointly organized by Harald Conrad (DIJ) and Arai Makoto (University of Tsukuba), will focus on current economic and legal issues concerning social policy in Japan and Germany.

In recent years, Japan and Germany have been facing very similar challeng-



es: aging populations, changing family and job structures, and globalisation. How have these factors influenced social policies in both countries?

Since the end of the 1980s, there has been a heated debate in comparative social policy on how economic internationalisation may cause the convergence of welfare systems. One school of thought argues that competition for capital and markets increases pressures on industrialized countries to adopt low wage strategies; this then leads to a reduction of social benefits and weakening labour standards. According to these observers, social policies in such countries will become increasingly similar. Another school of thought argues that nation states in general are not losing their power to pursue distinguished social policies; these critics claim that political, institutional and legal factors still play an important role at the national level.

Against the background of this theoretical debate, economic and legal experts from Japan and Germany will discuss recent or planned changes in pensions, income policy, long-term care, the non-profit sector, and gender- and age-specific problems in social security. The following issues and questions will be at the centre of comparative analysis: To what extent have changing attitudes about individual responsibility and social solidarity led to a redefinition of social policy objectives in Japan and Germany? Are there new trends in social entrepreneurship? How are we to interpret the current public debate, which has focused on civil society and community-based remedies? What changes are taking place in the various policy fields on the instrumental level? Are we experiencing convergent developments? What similarities and differences exist and how can they be explained? What kind of instrumental adjustments should be in place in order to achieve the respective (changing) policy objectives?

For further information on this conference please contact Harald Conrad (conrad@dijtokyo.org).

Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History: Colonialism, Regionalism, and Borders

(Tōkyō, 29–30 November 2002)

Concurring with the DIJ's present research focus "Japan in Asia", an International Conference on "Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History" will be held in Tōkyō on 29–30 November 2002. This conference, organized by Sven Saaler, shall contribute to the understanding of the historical development of regionalism in Asia and the historical

factors still hampering the process of regional integration as well as regional cooperation until the present day.

Pan-Asianism, or Asianism (*Ajia-shugi*) has been identified as a strong ideological force throughout modern Asian history, particularly and most persistently influential in Japan. However, it is difficult to characterize Pan-Asianism unequivocally, since it contains elements of both an ideology that can serve as a factor for regional integration and of one that can serve – and did serve – as a mere tool of colonialism. Generally linked to the wartime chapter of the "Greater East-Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere," Pan-Asianism was, however, a very complex phenomenon that took many different forms during its development.

This conference shall explore various aspects of Pan-Asianism in modern Japanese political history, the stages in intellectual discourse on Pan-Asianism, and the process of applying it in foreign as well as domestic politics. The Japanese variant of the transnational phenomenon of "Pan-Asianism" began during the Meiji period. This mainly intellectual discourse pushed into politics during the late Meiji and Taishō periods, and was utilized as an ideology for colonialist and hegemonial foreign policies during the 1930s and 1940s. The conference will address this history, as well as post-war discourse on Pan-Asianism and the legacies of Pan-Asianism for post-war international politics.

Presenters will include Victor Koschmann (Cornell University), Miwa Kimitada (Sophia University), Harald Kleinschmidt (University of Tsukuba), Hatsuse Ryūhei (Kyōto Women's University), Kevin Doak (University of Illinois), Oguma Eiji (Keiō University), Gerhard Krebs (Free University Berlin), Kuroki Morifumi (Fukuoka International University), Nojima-Katō Yōko (University of Tōkyō), Christopher Szpilman (Takushoku University), and Li Narangoa (Australian National University). The conference is expected to be supported by *The Japan Foundation*. Further details as well as the programme of the conference is will be announced on the DIJ homepage soon. Inquiries should be addressed to Sven Saaler (saaler@dijtokyo.org).

Call for Papers

***Japanstudien*. Yearbook of the German Institute for Japanese Studies**

Japanstudien is a peer-reviewed journal published once a year by the German Institute for Japanese Studies, Tōkyō. This journal includes articles on the culture, economy, society, and politics of modern Japan as well as German-Japanese relations. Contributions on these topics are welcome from scholars in any academic discipline. Most issues of *Japanstudien* focus on a particular topic. The subject of volume 15, whose publication is expected by autumn 2003, is:

Misunderstandings in the Encounter with Japan

The encounter of different cultures – whereas culture should not be understood as essential – may cause different forms of perception, thinking, feeling, and behaviour to collide. In a situation where different cultures overlap in such a way, misunderstandings can occur when certain signals, words, or actions have a meaning different from what one is used to. Erroneous expectations or efforts to adapt to another culture complicate the situation when they are guided by simplified stereotypes or unmediated means of intercultural education in books or trainings.

The aim of this volume is to analyse the appearance, the solution, and the consequences of misunderstandings in encountering Japan. On a theoretical level, hypotheses regarding the processes of perception, processing, motivation and control are necessary to describe the complex interaction processes. On an empirical level, our aim is to study, based on theory, actual clashes with the different cultural environment in areas such as politics, economy, tourism, media, history, and cultural anthropology. Further aspects relevant for this yearbook are analyses of intercultural education programmes (intercultural trainings, written manuals, etc.) dealing with cultural overlap, or comparative studies reviewing already published works concerning this year's topic.

Manuscripts should not exceed 10,000 words (about 20 pages). Abstracts (about 400 words) are to be submitted to the Institute by **1 August 2002**. Accepted manuscripts should arrive by the **end of 2002**. Articles previously published or submitted for publication cannot be accepted. Book reviews re-



lated to this year's subject are welcomed, too.

Details of previous issues as well as contents and articles of *Japanstudien* can be found on our homepage (<http://www.dijtokyo.org>). For further information on volume 15, please contact Isa Ducke (ducke@dijtokyo.org) or Harald Dolles (dolles@dijtokyo.org).

Personnel News

Dr. Hanns-Günther Hilpert, research fellow in the economics section since July 1999, left the Institute in February 2002 to take on his new position at the German Institute for International Politics and Security (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik) in Berlin. The main focus of his research at the DIJ were macroeconomic studies, e.g., research on Japan's foreign trade and trends of economic integration in East Asia. As one part of this, he carried out research on Japan's agrarian import, Sino-Japanese trade and the market activities and strategies of the Japanese General Trading Houses in China (latter two falling within the framework of the DIJ's research focus "Japan in Asia"). Besides organizing several workshops and meetings in Europe, Mr. Hilpert was the organizer of two international symposia in Tōkyō: a conference entitled "Japan and China: Economic Relations in Transition" together with René Haak (DIJ) and Dennis S. Tachiki (at that time Fujitsu Research Institute, now University of Tamagawa), and a symposium on "Regional Monetary Cooperation: Is East Asia Following the European Model?" together with Christian Schröppel (DIJ). Mr. Hilpert also served as co-editor of two publications on the economic and business aspects of the Sino-Japanese relationship, the first of which was published by Palgrave. Furthermore, Mr. Hilpert edited the DIJ monthly contributions to the journal "Japanmarkt: Magazin der Deutschen Industrie- und Handelskammer in Japan" in 2000 and 2001, and organized, together with René Haak, the DIJ Business & Economics Study Group in 2001.

Dissertation Fellows

Alexander Kimoto, Japanese Studies, Sociology, Law, Ph.D. candidate at Ruprecht-Karls-University Heidelberg: "Revisionism – Anti-Revisionism: On the Dynamics of Cultural Educational

Initiatives in Japan" (April 2002 – June 2002, October 2002 – June 2003).

Oliver Loidl, Japanese Studies, Educational Science, Ph.D. candidate at Eberhard-Karls-University Tübingen: "Suzuki Bunji's Contribution to the Development of Workers' Education in Japan" (April 2002 – March 2003).

Daniela Rechenberger, Japanese Studies, Political Science, Ph.D. candidate at the University of Trier: "The 'Comfort Women' Issue. Analysis of its Coverage in Japanese Print-Media 1991–2002" (April 2002 – September 2002).

Julia Walkling, Law, Ph.D. candidate at Westfälische Wilhelms-University Münster: "Informal Administrative Acting in Industrial Permitting Processes" (April 2002 – January 2003).

Study Groups

As Dr. Hanns-Günther Hilpert left the German Institute for Japanese Studies as of the end of February, the DIJ Business & Economics Study Group will be continued by Dr. René Haak and Dr. Andreas Moerke. As before, the Business & Economics Study Group is scheduled for every first Monday of the month at the DIJ.

DIJ Forum

Peter Duus, William H. Bonsall Professor of Japanese History, Department of History, Stanford University, and Senior Fellow, Hoover Institution: *Civilizing Tōkyō: Meiji Visions of a National Capital* (30 May 2002).

Alex Kerr, Bangkok and Kyōto: *The 'Dark Side' and the 'Bright Side': Coming to Grips with the New Japan* (20 June 2002).

Other DIJ Events

Political and Cultural Challenges for Germany and Japan in Dealing with Terrorism (Panel discussion). Organizers: Japanese-German Center Berlin, Asahi Shinbun in co-operation with the DIJ, held at the National Press Club, Tōkyō (2 July 2002, 10:00–12:30h).

Writing as Profession. A Literary Dialogue between Ulla Hahn and Tsushima Yūko (Panel discussion). Organizers: DIJ in co-operation with the Center for the Advancement of Working Women (*Josei to shigoto no miraikan*), held at the Josei to shigoto no miraikan (<http://www.miraikan.go.jp>), Tōkyō (3 July 2002, 18.30–20.30 h).

Japanese Companies between Structural Reforms and Internationalisation – Challenges and Opportunities for German Business (Presentation of research and discussion). Organizers: Industrie-Club Düsseldorf e.V. in co-operation with the DIJ, held at the Industrie-Club Düsseldorf (7 October 2002).

Japan and Korea on Their Way Towards a Common Future: Tasks and Perspectives (International symposium). Organizers: Ost-West-Kolleg der Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Japanisches Kulturinstitut (The Japan Foundation) Köln, in co-operation with the DIJ, the Japanese-German Center Berlin and University of Erfurt, Brühl (25–27 September 2002).

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