

'Nanking' in Japanese Literature

by Irmela Hijiya-Kirschner

Earlier this year, we learned of the story of John Rabe, the 'Oskar Schindler of Nanjing'. In December 1937, Rabe witnessed the entry of Japanese troops into what was then the capital of China and courageously saved countless Chinese lives. His diary documents in detail on more than 800 pages the atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers against the civilian population. Giving all the more weight and credibility to his account is the fact that Rabe, who had lived for decades in China as the resident Siemens representative, was a thoroughly apolitical person, who acted strictly out of humanitarian concern and who attempted in vain to persuade the German leadership of the time to exercise a restraining influence on the Japanese government.

In Japan, knowledge of those events is, of course, still alive. During the war, even school children heard of them. Thereafter the stories increasingly took on a dominant role in the memories of veterans. Yet Japanese young people today are no longer brought face-to-face to what happened, and prominent politicians even attack what they call the 'Nanking lie'. There is also a growing revisionist movement that seeks to suppress any mention of the massacre, which only recently has found its way into school textbooks.

In the world of belles-lettres, however, the experiences have been well preserved. Anyone who attentively reads postwar Japanese literature will be confronted again and again with traces of what occurred in occupied China. We even uncover such in the work of Mishima Yukio (1925-1970), an author who won an international reputation primarily on the basis of stories, novels, and dramas with classical and *fin de siècle* themes inspired by European models and who aroused worldwide attention through his spectacular suicide.

Mishima was already quite well known as a writer when in 1955 he

published a short story entitled 'Peonies'. It is a brief tale, only about four pages in length, consisting of a single scene.

On a national holiday at the beginning of May, the first-person narrator is taken by an acquaintance to a park, a garden of peonies, in which each magnificently blooming flower has its own poetical name. A man, seemingly somewhat down-at-the-heel, is working there. To all appearances a gardener, he gives the visitors not so much as a glance. Questioning his acquaintance, the narrator learns that the man's name is Kawamata and that for the last two years he has been the garden's proprietor.

The narrator notes with amazement the great variety of freshly blooming peonies, the subtlety of colours, and the shadows cast on the damp black earth by the enormous heads of the flowers. In its uncanny vitality, the scene strangely inspires in the visitor a sense of gloom and melancholy.

The warm weather makes the visitors thirsty. The narrator follows his acquaintance to a hill at the edge of the park. There they sit under a sunshade, enjoying a panoramic view of the flowers and drinking beer. The narrator is asked how many peonies there might be and is subsequently given the answer: 580. Before he can properly marvel at how well informed his companion is, the latter tells him that this Kawamata is the notorious colonel in the Imperial Army, who made a name for himself as the officer chiefly responsible for the Nanking massacre. He had gone underground until the war-crime trials were over, then, once the air was clear, had reemerged and purchased the garden.

Though responsible for tens of thousands of atrocities, he continues, Kawamata killed only 580 with his own hands - and these he dispatched with great 'enjoyment' and 'special care'. Moreover, they were all women.

It was only the killing of women, the narrator is told, that excited the colonel, and in his garden he grew exactly 580 peonies.

'I've wondered', the acquaintance says, 'what he's up to with this strange diversion of his. And I think I now know the answer. The old man wanted to make a secret document of his wicked deed. He's managed to fulfill what must be the most cherished desire of a man who has committed an evil deed; he has found the means to secretly glorify in a perfect manner before the whole world the evil, which will never be expunged from his memory'.

With this commentary, the story ends. We do not learn what the narrator thinks. For his part, the companion does not brood about how it was that the colonel derived pleasure from murdering hundreds of women or what it means to kill with 'enjoyment' and 'special care'. From the perspective of the general situation, which is assumed to be known, his behaviour appears neither particularly unusual nor deviant. It is rather his response to what he has done that is striking: his erection of a public park, in which to each victim a peony is assigned.

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Moreover, the narrator's acquaintance implies that in tending to his flowers the colonel does not intend to engage in discreet atonement for what he has done or attempt to achieve symbolic reconciliation. It is simply a 'perfect' *mise en scène* of his misdeeds, a perpetual boast. Moreover, there is actually very little 'secrecy' involved. At least in the words of the acquaintance, we detect a sense of undisguised admiration for the boldness of the colonel in fulfilling his 'most cherished desire': 'the glorification of evil'.

When we examine this brief story in regard to its references to reality, we see immediately that the events in Nanking, which, incidentally, are designated as the 'Nanking Massacre', are taken as a given, as established historical truth. Its scale is likewise taken for granted; it is not intended to either astonish or disgust. Obviously, readers in the mid-1950s were sufficiently familiar with the facts, so that it is not the crimes themselves that are the focus of interest. What is to hold the reader's attention is rather the question of the colonel's motive in cultivating his peony garden, and it is answered from an aesthetic rather than an ethical or moral perspective, as a lesson in encountering and accommodating 'evil'.

Mishima's calculated, low-keyed presentation, with its amoral aestheticism clearly smacks of the spirit of symbolism and European *fin de siècle*, as evidenced in many of his other works. From a literary point of view, the story is weak, replete with Mishima's affectations and concluding on a wretchedly weak note.

For all we know, the topic of Mishima's story did not attract greater attention at the time. There are nonetheless many examples in contemporary literary – and now cinematic – history of artistic expression finding such disfavour in some quarters as to lead to attacks on life and limb. We may suppose that the calm with which 'Peonies' was received is related to the fact that the events that serve as background for the story were taken for granted as common knowledge. Since then, they have been downplayed, glossed over, or simply denied. Nowadays, however, it is scarcely imaginable that a writer could publish a literary (!) narrative portraying a Japanese army colonel as personally murdering 580 Chinese, without having to weigh in the balance the very real possibility of threats from historical revisionists and their violence-prone stooges.

At the same time, this is also indicative of the fact that in contemporary Japan the mere mention of such wartime behaviour is more strongly linked

than in the 1950s to ethical and moral norms and thus now implies an unambiguously critical view of the matter. For all we know, the publication today of a story such as 'Peonies', with all its cynical nonchalance in dealing with the historical background and the amorality of its narrative focus, might trigger a decidedly negative reaction from Japanese readers.

Literature entertains, distracts, offers aesthetic pleasure, and stimulates both the mind and the senses. Yet it also serves as source material for sociologists, ethnologists, and historians. It documents the spirit of the age and assists us in mapping an archaeology of knowledge. The assumptions of Japanese readers in the 1950s – that which amused, astonished, or angered them and that which did not – can be inferred from the literature of the time. In that sense, literature is an incomparable and, all in all, amazingly reliable medium of understanding.

Now and in the following weeks, excerpts from John Rabe's diaries are appearing in German and Japanese. The full Chinese translation is also being published, to be followed by an American edition corresponding to the German version and its Japanese translation. That which is preserved as knowledge in literary form will thereby again become available as an authentic eyewitness account.

(The German original appeared, in a slightly different version, in the September 10 edition of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung.)

DIJ EVENTS

DIJ History Workshop:

Labour in Transition: A Comparison of Germany, Japan and the United States
(Tôkyô, 14 July 1997)

In cooperation with the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation the DIJ organized a workshop on labour in postwar Germany, Japan and the United States, which was attended by about 50 people. The main speakers were professors Andrew Gordon (Harvard University), Horst Kern (Göttingen University), and Michio Nitta (University of Tôkyô).

DIJ Cultural Studies Workshop:

Obake to kindaika – fushigi to kagakuteki shikô no aida de [Ghosts and Modernization – between belief in the weird and wonderful and scientific thinking]
(Tôkyô, 31 July 1997)

The presentations given at the second DIJ Cultural Studies Workshop dealt with scientific understanding in Japan at the turn of the century. Their focus was on discourse at the time concerning 'spirits', in a wider sense on superstition (*meishin*), supernatural phenomena (*chôshizentekina genshō*), and spiritualism (*shinreigaku*).

Ichiyana Hirota of Yokohama National University, who in 1994 published a study of how spiritualism was adopted in Japan, contributed a paper describing the significance of *kokkuri*, an occult game modeled on 'table turning' in Japanese intellectual circles about 1900. He also pointed to its revival in contemporary Japan.

In her presentation, 'Two ways of speaking of the spectral', Yokoyama Yasuko of the Edo-Tôkyô Museum tackled the works of two well-known Japanese scholars, Inoue Enryô and Yanagita Kunio, which illuminate how, from ethnological, religious-philosophical, and psychological points of view, Meiji-era Japanese were able to argue both for and against the preservation of the 'marvellous'.

Yasumatsu Miyuki of St. Paul's University (Rikkyô) discussed 'the western desire for Japanese ghosts' as evidenced in a book of Japanese woodblock prints, published in 1926 by the artist Cäcilie Graf-Pfaff, that includes ghostly motifs.

In her paper, "'Nerves" and Nostalgia – modern writers and ghosts', Lisette Gebhardt of the DIJ examined the status of 'ghosts' in the literary theories of Japanese writers in the Meiji and Taishô periods and how and which ghostly motifs were utilized in their texts.

The discussants were Umezawa Fumiko of Senkei University (history of religion), Hayashi Masako of Gifu University (literature), and Jonathan Hall of the University of California Santa Cruz (history of consciousness). The publication of the papers is being planned for the DIJ's miscellanea series.



DIJ-Workshop:

The Japanese Employment System in Transition

(8th International Conference of the European Association for Japanese Studies EAJS, Budapest 27–30 August 1997)

This workshop of the DIJ economic department was convened as part of the economics section of the EAJS conference. It focused on current developments and challenges in the labour market and employment system in Japan. Thus, the DIJ economic department was able to present the results of its common research focus for this year. The five lectures treated: the aging of society (Waldenberger); the shift of manufacturing activities abroad (Legewie); the creation of new jobs in the service sector (Meyer-Ohle); employment structures in research and development (Hemmert); current changes in the corporate personnel adaptation policy (Dirks). The ensuing discussion led to a lively interchange with the audience. The parallel treatment of different aspects related to the labour market and the employment system turned out to be highly stimulating and led to a strong overall interest in this half-day workshop.

DIJ Economic Panel Düsseldorf:

Japan – Konkurrent und Partner im globalen Wettbewerb [Japan – rival and partner in a global economy] (Düsseldorf, 1 September 1997)

The panel was organized and supported by several organizations (Industrie-Club e.V., the Industrie- und Handelskammern in Nordrhein-Westfalen, Deutsch-Japanische Gesellschaft, Deutsch-Japanischer Wirtschaftskreis) and gave the members of the economic department the opportunity to present their recent research results to representatives from companies and industry associations. In the presentations, on the one hand opportunities for foreign companies in Asia and Japan were indicated as they relate to recent trends in the Japanese economy (Waldenberger, Meyer-Ohle, Legewie); on the other hand measures by Japanese companies to strengthen their competitiveness were discussed (Hemmert, Dirks). Additional presentations were made by Rupert Vondran (Deutsch-Japanischer Wirtschaftskreis), Horst Wae-

sche (Hoechst AG) and Wilhelm Meemken (Ecos GmbH).

The presence of over 100 participants demonstrated the ongoing interest of the German industry in Japan. The skeptical view of many companies, as expressed in the discussion, may be related to inadequate information or predominantly negative publicity in the past regarding Japan. However, the organizers of this event are actively involved in bridging the gap.

DIJ Symposium:

Japan als Fallbeispiel in den Wissenschaften [Placing Japan in Paradigmatic Perspective] (Tôkyô, 16–17 September 1997)

What can the Japanese model contribute to theory formation in the sense of refinement or modification? – that was the key question of the symposium held on September 16th and 17th at the DIJ. The starting point was the observation that in the humanities, the social sciences and economics the formulation of general theses and theories have, in the past, generally presupposed an Occidental model. The two-day conference brought together representatives from sociology, history, political science, economics, law, linguistics, and literature, who discussed the importance attached to the Japanese paradigm within their discipline. Michael Geyer (University of Chicago) opened the conference with his contribution 'Locating Japan in an Age of Globalization', followed by Carol Gluck (Columbia University, New York), whose subject was 'The End of Elsewhere: History, Memory, and Modernity in Japan'. Johann P. Arnason (La Trobe University, Bundoora) asked the question 'Is Japan a civilization *sui generis*?', while Wernhard Möschel (University of Tübingen) spoke about 'Japanese Cartel Law – seen from outside'. Paul Kevenhörster (Westfälische Wilhelms-University, Münster) analyzed the subject 'Japan – Political Structures of Decision-making reflected by Political Theories', the contribution of Franz Waldenberger (DIJ, Tôkyô) focused on 'Success by being different? The economical sciences' dealing with Japan', and Götz Wienold (Dokkyô University, Saitama) talked about 'Linguistic Typology and Japanese'. The eighth and final contribution, entitled 'Toward a Japanese Theory of the Novel' was given by Janet Walker (Rutgers University, New Brunswick). Each lecture was complemented by a comment (given by Ôtake

Hideo of Kyôto University, Hirowatari Seigo of the University of Tôkyô, Werner Pascha of the Gerhard-Mercator-University Duisburg, and Klaus Antoni of the University of Trier) as well as an ensuing discussion. The conference was concluded by an extensive exchange of views, which once again not only clearly pointed out the complexity of the subject, but also offered concrete prospects for ongoing research on the questions that were dealt with.

As was quite to be expected, the conference reflected in the individual presentations their discipline-specific nature and character, but thanks in no small measure to the commentators, each chosen from a different discipline than the papers they commented upon, it was possible to find a general access route to a meta-level of discussion.

One characteristic approach in the subsequent evaluation of results consisted in locating the explicitly stated albeit quantitatively varying presence of a residual 'Japan-specific' element. In other words, whatever was 'left over' as unaccountable in terms of the analysis of Japanese realities was used to illuminate the limits of current theory and methodology. Another means, presented in exemplary fashion in the paper from the field of linguistics, offered non-scientific factors, such as historical accident, as well as economic and other interests, as clues in explaining the inclusion and privileged consideration of Japan as an 'illustrative case'. Last but not least, this symposium proved again that it is possible to develop a fruitful and stimulating dialogue between representatives of completely different disciplines. A publication of the conference papers is planned.

The symposium was sponsored by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation.

DIJ PUBLICATIONS

Christian OBERLÄNDER (ed.): *Aging and Long-Term Care Policy in Japan*. Tokyo/Berlin 1997, 108 pp. (= *Miscellanea*; 15) (ISSN 0941-1321)

While economic globalization has cast serious doubts on the future of the welfare state in many industrialized countries, because of population aging, the problem of long-term care for the elderly has grown into a readily felt bur-



den during the last decades. In Japan, one even hears of 'care hell' (*kaigo jigoku*) into which a family falls once one of its members is in need of care. The problem of long-term care might well turn into a test-case for the reformability of the welfare state and reveals 'modernization gaps' in the industrialized countries on several levels. On the macro level, it lays open the limits of an ever more pervasive social security system in terms of financing, personnel recruitment, and desirability. On the micro level, in the family, it increases the ambivalence between the attachment to traditional values and modern, individualistic goals which women as the most frequent care providers get to feel in particular.

How do people cope with population aging and the resulting challenges for long-term care policy in Japan? How does social change affect family care in Germany and Japan? In conjunction with the symposium 'Aging and Social Policy – A German-Japanese Comparison' (Universitätsclub Bonn, 27 October 1997) of the German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ), this booklet is intended to provide information about different aspects of the long-term care problem in order to stimulate discussion. In the first part of this booklet, Ralph Lützel discusses the demographic, regional and household-structural particulars of population aging in Japan with a view to their effects on long-term care. In the second part, Christian Oberländer analyzes the development of care needs and the provision of care by the family and then poses the question to what extent Japanese long-term care policy is adequately reacting to changes in family care.

Japanstudien – Jahrbuch des Deutschen Instituts für Japanstudien der Philipp Franz von Siebold Stiftung, Band 9 [Japanstudien – Yearbook of the German Institute for Japanese Studies Vol. 9]. München: iudicum, 1997, 405 pp. (ISSN 0938-6491)

Volume 9 of *Japanstudien* will be published in November 1997. As in previous years the Institute's yearbook contains articles on a common theme, other articles, and book reviews.

Eight articles contribute to this year's theme, *Consumer and service in the 1990s*. They deal with subjects such as the significance and organization of service industries, spatial aspects of service activities, personnel management, consumer movement, advertising, consumption and social relations,

museums, and department store architecture.

In another article, German-Japanese relations are taken up in the context of cooperation in space. Contributions concerning Okinawa and the public debate on separate spousal surnames relate to recent issues of Japanese politics and society. Another article is about textbooks for women's education in the late Edo-period.

Nine book reviews evaluate recently published books in the areas of literature, history and economics.

REPORTS ON CONFERENCES

AJBS 10th Annual Meeting:

Making Global Partnerships Work (Washington, D.C., 13–15 June 1997)

This 10th AJBS (Association of Japanese Business Studies) conference saw considerably more representatives of the political and administrative establishment as well as economists than had been attracted to previous meetings of this association of management and business scholars. Obviously, the choice of venue was responsible for this marked difference, and security and trade policy issues related to the US-Japan relationship dominated most keynote and luncheon speeches, thereby in a way becoming the major part of the conference as a whole. The actual academic presentations covered, as usual, a wide array of topics, ranging from a historical analysis of the Japanese life insurance industry and different aspects of the internationalization process of Japanese companies all the way to personnel and employment practices and new challenges. In addition, a number of special workshops were held, addressing selected issues such as the ongoing *sexual harassment* dispute involving Mitsubishi America. The DIJ was represented by two contributions (Daniel Dirks): The organization of an international panel on the demand situation for Japan experts in Europe, and a paper presentation on personnel adaptation measures in Japanese companies. A selection of papers are, as in each year, available in print (Moore, Terrence und George Graen (Eds.): *AJBS Best Paper Proceedings. Making Global Partnerships Work. The 1997 Annual Meeting*) and can be or-

dered through the AJBS office in San Luis Obispo, CA (Fax: +1.805.546 8163, e-mail: abird@tuba.calpoly.edu).

EGOS:

Organisational Responses to Radical Environmental Changes (Budapest, 3–5 July 1997)

The 13th Colloquium of the European Group of Organizational Studies presented in ten sections an overview on recent trends in organizational theory and sociology. The opening of eastern Europe, increasing global entrepreneurial activity and innovations in technology call for new organizational approaches to problem solving at both the intra- and intercorporate levels.

In contrast to other fields in economics and business administration, the field of organizational studies already pays relatively close attention to Japan. Matters of interest include the compatibility of organizational forms in overseas operations of Japanese companies, interorganizational networks and organizational learning. Increasingly, efforts are being made to both broaden and differentiate knowledge in regard to other Asian countries.

4th International Product Development Management Conference

(Stockholm, 26–27 May 1997)

More than 100 experts from all parts of the world met at the conference organized by the European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management (EIASM) and the Stockholm School of Economics to discuss recent developments in technology and innovation management of business firms. A considerable number of the almost 60 presentations addressed various aspects of international differences in innovation management. It turned out that as a overall tendency, these differences are steadily diminishing in the wake of economic globalization.



8th International Conference of the European Association for Japanese Studies

(Budapest, 27–30 August 1997)

The triennial international conferences of the EAJS are a major forum for Japan-related academic research in Europe. This year more than 500 participants, many from non-European countries as well, convened in eight different sub-sections covering various topics (Urban & Environmental Studies; Linguistics and Language Training; Literature; Visual and Performing Arts; Anthropology and Sociology; Economics, Economic and Social History; History, Politics and International Relations; Religion, Thought and the History of Ideas). The conference's opening session, featured among others a welcoming address by the President of the Republic of Hungary, Mr. Árpád Göncz; it was concluded by Ôe Kenzaburô's keynote lecture on the development and current status of the field of Japanese Studies. This field's diversity and heterogeneity with regard to the object and the quality of scientific inquiry was amply demonstrated through the many presentations in the various sub-sections. Hence, the search for thematical and methodological commonalities and principles became a main topic of discussion in the final round-table panel discussion on the 'Future of Japanese Studies'. It became clear that rather than succumbing to individual demands for establishing clear definitions and boundaries, it is the continuous search for and critical self-evaluation of that which comprises the content and method of the field that must characterize the development of 'Japanese Studies'. A collection of the abstracts of papers presented in the sub-sections has been compiled as a conference reader.

BOOK REVIEWS

YASHIRO Naohiro: *Nihonteki koyô kankô no keizaigaku* [The Economics of Japanese Employment Practices]. Tôkyô: Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha, 1997, 264 pp.

At present there is no shortage of suggestions and recipes concerning the Japanese employment system. Against what are often perceived to be relative-

ly one-sided interpretations of the current situation, Yashiro Naohiro's new book claims to offer a more differentiated and broader approach. It is based on four major hypotheses: (1) Present employment practices, rather than adhering to any kind of traditional or cultural premises, are following a perfectly rational, economic logic and have as such been a cornerstone of Japan's rapid industrial development in the post-war period. (2) No radical transformation of this system of practices is to be expected anytime soon. Instead, the author foresees a gradual, evolutionary transition towards a higher general flexibility and a respective shift within the employment portfolio itself, favoring the non-core segments of the labour market. (3) Changes in the labour market will affect other sectors of the society. Hence, more employment flexibility will bring about new challenges for families, child rearing and education, social welfare systems etc. (4) The long-held view of the Japanese employment systems as 'fair' or egalitarian in terms of granting equal benefits to all must be abandoned. Instead, one needs to acknowledge the relatively large group of market participants, who are negatively and disproportionately affected by given income disparities, cost reduction strategies, and downsizing activities during cyclical slumps. Women, part-time employees and, on the corporate side, many small and medium-size firms all belong to this disadvantaged group.

Apart from globalization and cyclical issues, the author believes the rapid aging of the population to be the major challenge for the Japanese labour market henceforth. This issue and its likely effects on companies' personnel policies (e.g., more flexible work conditions and remuneration systems) are the basis for the ensuing discussion regarding Japan's role within the global economy, the future of the country's social welfare systems, the role of women in the workforce, new family structures, and last but not least the reform of public administration. The book's strength lies no doubt in its attempt to view the Japanese employment system as but part of a greater socio-economic entity and to analyze the interdependent relationships between the various parts accordingly. In this sense, the current debate on the future of Japan's labour system is substantially enriched. The integration of comparative data from other major industrial countries is another plus. However, in comparing Japanese figures from the mid 1990s concerning, for instance, income curve steepness or length of service with the same em-

ployer, with West German data from 1972 or US numbers from 1969, little of value is provided to the reader.

Of more fundamental concern is the conceptual approach chosen. The explicit consideration of the major interest groups or stakeholders affected by changes in the employment system is, of course, a worthwhile endeavour. However, it appears to be insufficient to base all considerations primarily on the postulate of economic rationality that any future solution set must fulfill. Such an understanding is hardly capable of adequately describing – and prognosticating – the processes of policy definition and solution generation. In this respect, a more politico-theoretical approach, informed by the basic conflictual character of multi-interest situations, could have provided a more profound base for speculations about the future of the Japanese employment system. Irrespective of these critical comments, Yashiro has produced a piece of work that is a must-read for anyone interested in the state of Japanese labour and its future directions.

(Daniel Dirks)

Thomas HEBERER, Kerstin Katharina VOGEL (eds.): *Frauen-Los!? Politische Partizipation von Frauen in Ostasien* [Political Participation of Women in East Asia]. Hamburg: LIT-Verlag, 1997 (= *Ostasien-Pazifik. Trierer Studien zu Politik, Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft, Kultur, Band 4*), 259 pp.

Politics in East Asia typically strike the observer as a male bastion. Women elected as representatives and officials in the region have numbered so few that women politicians may be seen as an exceptional phenomenon. If one seeks the causes for the limited political involvement of women in this part of the world or attempts to learn whether the degree of their participation, i.e., their interaction in and influence on the political decision-making process, has changed in recent years, the pickings in the literature are slim indeed.

Since the beginning of the 1970s, scholars from various cultural and social science disciplines have been investigating, in the framework of 'gender studies', the question of sex-specific differences in role relations between men and women and have produced a series of studies on the relationship of women and politics. These, however, are concentrated almost exclusively on Europe and North America.

At the University of Trier, a research project is currently underway on the topic of 'Processes and Change



in the political participation of East Asian women, as seen in Japan, South Korea, and the People's Republic of China'. The focus is on the role of women in the social and political life of these politically and economically diverse countries.

In this context, a conference was held in April 1996, the lectures of which appear in this volume. The papers cover four themes: (1) a theoretical introduction into the political participation and integration of women in East Asian politics and society; (2) three case studies on the institutional and non-institutional involvement of women in the politics of Japan, South Korea, and the PRC; (3) the women's movement in Japan and South Korea; (4) an assessment of the actual political participation, particularly in village communities, of women in the PRC and Taiwan.

Nearly all of the papers call for a broadening of the concept of participation, which, it is argued, is much too limited to conditions in the democracies of the West and is therefore not appropriate to East-Asian societies. It is also criticized that because of its narrow institutional and political perspective, the use of current political science terminology leads to an underestimation of both the situation of women and their potential to act politically in the framework of social structures.

With these modifications in mind, one comes away from reading this stimulating and worthwhile volume convinced that politics in Asia are not as 'women-less' as they may seem to be at first glance. All of the articles remind us of the dynamic process of transformation present in these countries, even when such is not immediately visible to the observer. It is only when, as in this work, cultural and social background are included that a differentiated picture of the political process and the role of women in the region emerges. One hopes that the book will find many readers and thereby encourage further studies of the topic. At the same time, we must not forget that a well-rounded description of political change in East-Asia must take *both* sexes into account.

(Verena Blechinger)

Yoshio SUGIMOTO: An Introduction to Japanese Society. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 285 pp.

In this book, the sociologist Sugimoto Yoshio, who lives and works in both Australia and Japan, offers a structured introduction to central aspects of

Japanese society. It is directed at both specialists and interested laypeople. His central concern in the present work, as in *Images of Japanese Society* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1986), which he co-authored with Ross Mouer, is to reject the thesis that Japanese society is much more characterized by homogeneity and uniformity than its counterparts in other industrialized nations and is therefore somehow 'unique'.

In order to demonstrate that Japan is to virtually the same degree as heterogeneous as Western societies, the author covers an extraordinarily wide domain. In addition to the standard descriptions of social strata, education, family, and minorities that one finds in introductory works, he offers unusually detailed analyses, in distinct chapters, of regional differences and of the functioning and interaction of politics, bureaucracy, and society.

In his final chapter he juxtaposes the many centrifugal forces, both older and more recent, which are transforming Japan into a multicultural society with the centripetal, homogenizing power of what he views as Japan's dominant 'friendly authoritarianism'. In this, he adopts some of the central positions held by the so-called revisionists around Chalmers Johnson and Karel van Wolferen, though he advances these further with an approach that gives greater emphasis to internal differences, thereby avoiding sweeping judgements about 'Japan' and 'the Japanese'.

All in all, the breadth of the book provides quite a wealth of interesting facts in often vivid and graphic scope, thereby offering new insights to specialists as well as to ordinary readers. The double intention of the author is to present a general overview of Japanese society and, at the same time, to demonstrate a specific thesis. In this, he does not entirely succeed in balancing the two aspects. Missing, for example, are chapters offering a general description of social and population developments since 1945. These would have given readers relatively unfamiliar with Japan a useful basic orientation. On the other hand, some points are superficially treated. The claim, for instance, that virtually all Japanese wish to marry and that there appears to be no variation in that aspiration regardless of educational background (p. 165) is ten years out of date. A presentation of today's realities might have provided a further argument to Sugimoto's thesis of Japan as 'non-monolithic'.

Despite these weaknesses, the book is a valuable addition to interested reader's bookshelves and is recom-

mended as a stimulating alternative to those previous works on Japan that treat it as a homogeneous society.

(Ralph Lützel)

OTHER MATTERS / OUTLOOK

DIJ History Conference:

The Japanese Empire in East Asia and its Postwar Legacy
(Tôkyô, 17 October 1997)

One of the DIJ's current research projects is Japan's role in Asia today. In order to provide a necessary historical dimension, the DIJ History Conference 'The Japanese Empire in East Asia and its Postwar Legacy' examines Japan's past involvement with East Asia in the past, ranging from the late Meiji period to the 1970s. Both Japan specialists and historians of other East Asian countries will discuss the dissemination of the Japanese vision of empire, forms of colonial control, co-optation and resistance, and its implications for postwar relations. The proceedings of the conference will be published in the Monograph series of the DIJ.

Aging and Social Policy – a German-Japanese Comparison

(Bonn, 27 October 1997)

Japan's rapidly aging population poses several problems for social policy makers. This invites useful comparison with the situation in Germany, which has already been confronting these problems for some time. In this symposium, we shall begin with the demographic 'facts' of the aging process, with special emphasis on regional and local differences. In an ensuing comparison of social programs, it will be examined in how far Japan is inclined to transfer German concepts such as long-term care insurance. On the other side, the possibility of a transfer of Japanese policy concepts to Germany will also be treated.

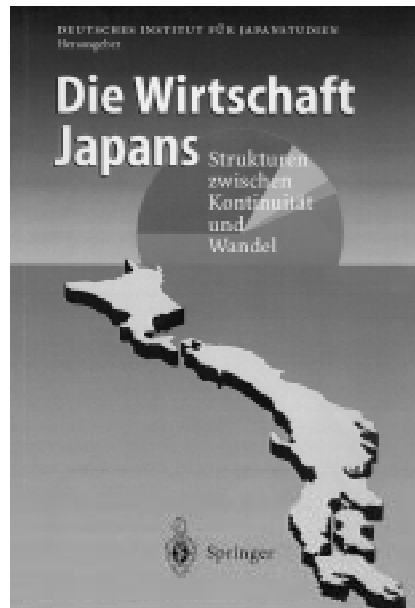


Management Conference:

Between External Shocks and Internal Evolution: Towards a New Phase in Japanese Management Practices (Tôkyô, 30 Oct – 1 Nov 1997)

The DIJ, in cooperation with the Maison Franco-Japonaise, Tôkyô, is hosting a conference on the future of the Japanese management system. Experts from Japan and abroad will discuss their latest research on Japanese corporate strategies and organization as well as ongoing restructuring activities in the fields of human resource management, finance and corporate control, and R&D. At the same time, business researchers from Europe and North America will comment on these developments with regard to the questions of how, if at all, these corporate solution sets differ from those of their counterparts in other countries, and whether or not the existence of a distinctive Japanese management model can be assumed for the future. A publication of the conference papers is planned. This conference will be supported by the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation, the Japan Foundation, the European Commission, the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation Tôkyô, and the Japanese-German Centre Berlin.

Deutsches Institut für Japanstudien (eds.): *Die Wirtschaft Japans* [The Japanese Economy]. Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer Verlag, Nov. 1997, 329 pp. (ISBN 3-540-63536-X)



The twelve chapters of this book, written by researchers of the DIJ, cover the following areas and topics to do with the Japanese economy: geographic and historical background, economic development since 1945, economic and social policy, infrastructure, the labour market, the financial system, manufacturing, service industries, structure and management of Japanese enter-

prise, technology and innovation policies in enterprise, regional economy and policy, international economic relations. Each chapter gives an overview of essential structural characteristics, sketches of recent developments, comments on present problems and offers, where possible, a comparison with other industrialized countries, in particular Germany. This volume is, therefore, addressed to students of economics and Japanese studies, as well as business executives dealing with Japan.

DIJ History Study Group

The *DIJ History Study Group* is intended as an informal forum for younger historians and Ph.D. candidates. A scholar offers a 45 minute presentation on the first Wednesday of the month at 6 PM at the DIJ, which is then discussed at length by the participants. The schedule for the monthly meetings of the study group until the summer of 1998 can be found on the DIJ homepage.

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