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NEWSLETTER
Kyoto International Cultural Association, Inc.

(財)京都国際文化協会

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会長 西島安則 ・ 理事長 千 宗室

国際交流講座 日本語教師養成講座

日本一を誇る教授陣とシステム

玉村文郎 (同志社大学教授・当協会理事)

現在国内には「日本語教師養成講座」と称されるものが多いぶんたくさんありますが、息長く活動を続けているところは、それほど多くありません。そういう中で、1983年秋にスタートした当協会の「日本語教師養成講座」は、京阪神在住の第一線で活躍中の有名教授を講師に迎えて、理論面・実践面での充実した内容を盛り込み、当初から密度の高さ随一 という高い評価を得てきた講座です。各地の講座の多くは、週2回制、あるいは2年連続性、1回4時間(午前午後)制をとっていますが、当協会の講座は、学生・院生・社会人・主婦の方々にも大きな負担をかけずに受講して頂けるように企画してきました。いわば 最小時間で最大の効果を というのが、この講座のねらいです。

今年度、国内国外で日本語教育の推進を図っている機関や当該部門の担当者による 教師活動の実際 に関する講義を加えたこと 海外主要地域での教授実態の講義を加えたこと 講座 (冬学期)の回数を増やしたことの3点の改善を行いました。しかも、受講料は据え置きです。大学の外国人留学生の倍増も叫ばれており、ますます日本語を教えるチャンスが増えることが予想される新世紀の幕開けに、日本語教師としての条件をととのえる絶好の講座として、ふるって当講座を受講されるよう、案内する次第です。

次頁の講座カレンダーをご参照ください。

特別企画 講演「日本語の未来」

6月4日(日)京大会館に加藤秀俊先生(国際交流基金日本語国際センター所長)を迎え、表題の講演会が開かれました。「いまや日本列島の局地的な言語ではなくなってしまった日本語に求められているのは何か」「『国語』か『日本語』か」「日本語が世界化するためには日本人はどうあるべきか」についての興味深いお話があり、聴衆からも質問や意見が出て活発な討論が交わされました。



「日本語教師養成講座」授業風景

Japanese Lessons

KICA tailors Japanese lessons on your requests. The class report appears on page 5.

KICA Private/Small Group Lessons

8:00 ~ 21:00 at your convenience

Fees: ¥2,000/hour

Call KICA Office (TEL 075-751-8958)

The Kyoto City International Community House offers Japanese Classes for Beginners on Fridays:

First Steps in Japanese

13:00 ~ 15:00 and 18:00 ~ 20:00

Second Steps in Japanese 15:30 ~ 17:30

Fees: ¥3,000 for 12 weeks

Call the Kyoto City International Community House Information and Programming Section(TEL752-3511)



特別講演 - 加藤秀俊先生

2001 (財)京都国際文化協会

国際交流講座 日本語を教える人のために

日本語教師養成講座 / 講座カレンダー

主催：(財)京都国際文化協会

共催：京都市

後援：京都府・国際交流基金

2001 国際交流講座 -- 日本語を教える人のために		
月日	日本語教師養成講座 I	
1	4.17	日本語概説 玉村文郎
2	24	外から見た日本語 玉村文郎
3	5.1	日本語の普及と日本語教育 清水陽一
4	8	言語のしくみ 吉田和彦
5	15	日本語の文法(助詞・助動詞) 加藤久雄
6	22	日本語の文法(構文) 加藤久雄
7	29	日本語の語彙 前田富祺
8	6.5	日本語の文字・表記 玉村文郎
9	12	日本語の音声・音韻 壇辻正剛
10	19	日本語の歴史 前田富祺
11	26	日本語の位相 浅野敏彦
12	7.3	教授法と教材 松井嘉和
13	10	異文化理解と言語教育 泉文明
14	17	求められる日本語教師 徐甲申
15	24	日本語教育の内容 玉村文郎
日本語教師養成講座		
1	9.11	音声・音韻の指導 杉藤美代子
2	18	聴解の指導 土岐哲
3	25	語彙の指導 玉村文郎
4	10.2	語彙の指導 玉村文郎
5	9	文法の指導 佐治圭三
6	16	文法の指導 佐治圭三
7	23	文字・表記の指導 泉文明
8	30	近・現代語の形成 玉村禎郎
9	11.6	近・現代語の形成 玉村禎郎
10	13	日本語学と対照研究 玉村文郎
11	20	日本語と中国語 大河内康憲
12	27	日本語と韓国語 泉文明
13	12.4	日本語と中南米諸語 田辺加恵
14	11	日本語とヨーロッパ諸語 田辺保
15	18	青年海外協力隊の日本語教師 特別講師 JICA 玉村文郎

2002 日本語教師養成講座		
1	1.15	日本語学と日本語教育 玉村文郎
2	22	社会言語学 真田信治
3	29	音声・音韻総論 壇辻正剛
4	2.5	韓国語話者に対する日本語教育 泉文明
5	12	中南米諸語話者に対する日本語教育 大倉美和子
6	19	中国語話者に対する日本語教育 徐甲申
7	26	ヨーロッパ諸語話者に対する日本語教育 乙政潤
8	3.5	文法総論 糸井通浩
9	12	語彙総論 前田富祺
10	19	日本語教育の現場から 特別講師 (海外技術者研修協会)
11	26	日本語教育総論 玉村文郎

全コースの講義科目を日英両文で記載した受講証明書を発行します
講座、の各コースにおいて、所定時間の受講者に該当コースの受講終了を認め、上記受講証明書に捺印します
全コースの修了者には、見学と実習の場を用意しています

会場：京大会館（京都市左京区吉田河原町15-9）

日時：毎回火曜日 6:30~8:30p.m.

費用：協会年会費 5,000円

受講料 講座 30,000円

講座 30,000円

講座 25,000円

お問い合わせは：

(財)京都国際文化協会

国際文化講座 KICAセミナー

京都府後援の当セミナーには在洛の外国人研究者をお招きして、専門分野のお話とともに日本や京都との関わりを伺います。

5月16日にお招きした国際交流基金フェローの歴史学者ジョン・アレン・タッカー準教授は、「赤穂浪士は忠臣」との通説の陰で忘れ去られた江戸儒学者らによる議論を紹介されました。17世紀半ば、幕藩体制は安定期を迎え、儒学が盛んでした。宋の陳北溪による『性理字義』などを学んだ学者たちは、「忠臣義士とは主君への忠誠を尽くす武士であり、殉死した忠臣は手厚く神社に祀られる」と考えましたが、この立場から論議すれば、「浅野家家臣は吉良義央討ち（1702年）によって幕府の治世を乱した者たちであるから、忠臣義士にあらず。よってその死後神社に祀るに値せず」と断じました。事件を真似た不満分子の台頭を危惧してのことでした。やがて時が過ぎ、赤穂浪士は「忠義の手本」として人々から愛され、儒学者らによる議論は忘れ去られて、現在に至っているとのことでした。

11月18日は、チェコ共和国のカレル大学出身のディタ・サロヴァさんが日本語でチェコの昨今を紹介しました。分離後7年が経って、子供たちは互いにチェコ語、スロバキア語の理解に困難を感じているとか。また、社会主義の崩壊で女性を取り巻く環境も変化。雇用差別や保育所入所年齢の引き上げが、女性の社会進出を妨げています。「西」からの資本流入は雇用を生む一方、古く美しい街並みを変貌させます。大きな歴史の変動の中、伝統が守られているのはクリスマスです。ご馳走は鯉の唐揚げとポテトサラダが定番。イエス生誕を祝う「馬小屋の飾り付け」を楽しみに、チェコの子供たちが家族と一緒に教会に出かけるのはこの先も変わらないことでしょう。



Ms Salova talks about Czech Christmas.

KICA Seminar



Prof. Tucker talks about “chusin gishi”.

Dr. John Tucker, the first lecturer for '00 KICA Seminar on May 16, spoke about the Tokugawa Confucian debate over *chūshin gishi*. The Tokugawa Shogunate had entered the politically stable period in the mid-17th century, and Confucianism fairly flourished. Early-Tokugawa discourse, especially flavored by Neo-Confucian writings such as *Xingli ziyi* by Chen Beixi, understood *chūsin gishi* to signify a kind of loyal and righteous self-sacrifice, which warranted apotheosis. The debate about the 1702 vendetta was, in part, a religious one over the posthumous status of Akō Rōnin. The Tokugawa Confucians denied that they were worthy of such apotheosis, with the fear that worship of them might have provided the beginnings of a cult of martyrs around which Bakufu opponents might rally.

Dr. Tucker concluded that the Rōnin were eventually worshiped as exemplars of a kind of self-sacrificing loyalism, while the Tokugawa Confucian debate came to be lost over time.

Ms. Dita Salova, a graduate of Charles University in the Czech Republic, introduced her country and Czech Christmas in Japanese at the Seminar on November 18. Seven years have passed since the splitting of Czechoslovakia and now it seems that children on both sides have a hard time to communicate in Czech and Slovak with each other. The environment around women has also changed because of the collapse of socialism. Sex discrimination and the rise of children's age for entering

「シルクロードの国々」と題して、12月9日にお迎えしたサルタナット・イブラインさんは日本語と現代ウイグル語における格助詞の類似を修士論文にまとめられたところ。5年前の来洛以来研究、出産、育児と多忙な留学生活の傍ら、新疆ウイグル自治区の歴史、文化、現状を紹介してこられました。水の確保も不自由なウイグル南部での暮らしに比べ、便利で快適な日本の生活に驚きと羨望を感じたこともあるサルタナットさんですが、思いやりを忘れないウイグルの人たちを懐かしみ、ふたつの文化の架け橋になりたいと締めくくられました。

ウズベキスタンのリズヴァングルさんとナジロフさんは国際交流基金関西センターで日本語を、グルノーラさんとアフマルさんは京都大学で薬学と医学を研修中。青く輝くモスク、オアシスの花々、くだものにヨーグルト、手仕事から生まれた生活用品。スライドからは、歴史遺産と伝統に基づいた人々の生活が伝わってきます。熱心に日本語を学び、日本との交流を希望しているウズベクの人々。翻って私たちの興味関心の在り方を考えさせられますが、民族衣装の4人に誘われて加わったウズベキ舞踊の輪はやさしく私たちの心を開いてくれるものでした。



Everybody enjoyed Uzbeki dance.

日本語個人/小グループレッスン

1995年から始まったこのプログラムで日本語を学んでいる人たちは、立場や母国語、日本語のレベルや学習目的もさまざまです。「日常生活のために」「なんとか意志を通じさせて暮らしているがきちんと基礎から学びたい」「大学

nursery schools have prevented women from equal opportunity in employment. During the tremendous historical change, it is only Christmas that people share a traditional celebration. People enjoy a special dinner of deep-fried carp and potato salad. Czech children are sure to go to church with their families, looking forward to seeing the ornamented manger, which is made in commemoration of Jesus Christ's birth, and will continue in the future, too.

On December 9, we invited Ms. Saltanat Ibrien who had just finished her master thesis on similarities of uses of particles in Japanese and modern Uighur languages. She has been active in introducing her culture to the Japanese public since she came here five years ago besides doing research, giving birth to her son and raising him.



Ms. Ibrien talks about her hopes.

Earlier in her stay, she felt a little envious of the highly technological conveniences in Japanese daily life, but she often thought of her own people and their simple lives with nice and warm memories. She concluded her talk with her hopes to continue bridging the two cultures.

On December 17, Ms. Lizvangul and Mr. Nazirov, from Kansai Center of the Japan Foundation, Ms. Beguvaeva and Mr. Maglufov from Kyoto University gave talks on their home country, Uzbekistan and showed us interesting slides through which we were able to learn their rich historical inheritances and traditions.

On seeing their enthusiasm in studying Japanese and exchanging ideas with the Japanese, we reflected and wondered if we were as interested in their culture as they were in ours.

院入試のために」「日本語能力試験受験のために」「仕事や研究上の必要に迫られて」など。それぞれのニーズに合わせてカリキュラムを準備し、学習の時間帯と場所を設定しています。昨年度の学習者数は約30人、ほとんどはプライベートレッスンですが、2～5人のグループもあります。1998年度「日本語教師養成講座」を受講、現在はボランティアで教えておられる土井茂さんからクラスレポートを寄せていただきました。

*

「脱線もまた楽し」

土井 茂

海外の方たちと接する機会が増えるにつれて、70年近くも日本語を母語として生活してきたのに、自分自身「日本語」を余り知らないのではないかという危惧の念から協会の講座を受講しました。クラスを持つようになった今も外国の方に日本語を教えるというより一緒に勉強しているといった気持ちでレッスンを楽しみにしています。

クラスでは「人間に国境はない」という思いにかられることが度々あります。言葉、文化の違いに橋を架けるのは、言語の習得だけではなく、人間としての触れ合いが一番大事ではないかと思われてきます。今の生徒さんの多くが留



Shigeru Doi with his students

学生の奥さん方ということもあって、私のレッスンはテキストから脱線することがしばしばで教室というより談話室の感があります。雨や風の日には「雨冠」の漢字や擬声語に枝分かれしてゆきます。日本、とりわけ京都の風習や伝統行事の話に花が咲く時もあります。やがて立春、節分の

KICA Private/ Small Group Japanese Language Lessons

People who have studied Japanese in our program since 1995 have different backgrounds, mother tongues, levels of Japanese skill, and purposes for studying; “for daily life”, “for mastering the proper way of saying though not feeling inconvenience in communication in Japanese”, “preparation for entrance examination of graduate school”, “preparation for the certification examination in Japanese”, “urgent needs for work or research”, and so on. Our curriculum, schedule, and classroom are set flexibly for each student’s needs. We had nearly 30 students last year and most of them studied in person-to-person lessons. The following is the class report by Mr. Shigeru Doi, who participated in the classes “Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language “ in the academic year 1998 and now teaches Japanese as a volunteer staff member.

*

—Going off the Rails is also Exciting—

Shigeru Doi

With the increasing opportunities of meeting with the visitors from abroad, I was getting uneasy about my shallow knowledge of Japanese. That is why I started taking the classes of “Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language” organized by KICA. I was close to 70 years old then. Now I am a volunteer teacher, having the pleasure of learning together with the foreign students and their families in the private lessons.

I often find similarities between them and us in the classes. Therefore communication is, I think, a top priority over the acquisition of Japanese language for the purpose of bridging the gap caused by the involved cultural differences.

These days many of my students are housewives, I teach things beyond the text in a relaxing atmosphere like a chat party. On rainy days I introduce Kanji with *ukanmuri* and onomatopoeia. For small talk, I bring beans for *Setsubun* and *sakuramochi* for Girls’ Festival as visual aids. City

福豆のあとは雛あられや桜餅が教材になります。地図やバス路線図も立派な副読本です。皆さん熱心に日本を知ることに取り組んでおられます。やり甲斐があります。いつの日か、お正月に百人一首でも一緒にとれれば、と楽しい夢を描いております。

外国人留学生交流プログラム

「留学生と作る世界の家庭料理」は、関西電力のアミュージアムとスタッフ宅で開きました。王冬梅さん、賈鞅輝さん、張榮さんの指先からは餃子が形よく包まれて出てきます。茹で上がった皮はとても柔らかく、いくつ食べても飽きません。ノルウエー科学技術大学のシグネ・ケルツラップ先生はカリフラワーのスープとタラのバター焼き、フルーツサラダを紹介してくださいました。ノルウエー特産のサーモンは輸出用なので、めったに家庭の食卓にのぼることはなく、フルーツサラダは最近まで特別のご馳走だったとか。李さん、朴さん、洪さん、元さんは若い研究者の奥さんで、協会の教室で日本語を勉強中。実家のお母さんを思い出しながら教えてくださった海鮮チジミは簡単に作れます。焼きたてがほこほこと美味しく、冷たい水キムチはさっぱりと爽やかです。アルタンツェッグさんが教えてくださった肉まんじゅうはミルク紅茶の中でゆっくり煮ます。故国モンゴルの雪害に心を馳せるツェッグさんのお人柄そのままに優しい味でした。



The joy of making jiao zi

日本人の食卓に興味を持った留学生やその家族に初夏の献立を紹介する集まりも持ちました。刺身と海藻サラダ、焼きなす、豆ご飯、そして赤だし。食器つかいや盛り付け

maps and route maps of busses are also used as supplementary texts. I explain about the local customs and traditional events, particularly preserved here in Kyoto at particular times. All the students are so enthusiastic in learning about Japan that I find satisfaction in teaching them. Now I have a dream of playing cards of one hundred famous Japanese poems, *Hyakunin-isshu*, together with my students at a New Year's party someday in the future.

KICA tailors Japanese lessons on your request. Call the office and make an appointment for interview.

KICA Program for Foreign Students and Families

Our program “The Joy of Cooking with Students from Abroad” invited a wide variety of people from many different areas including Ms. Wong, Ms. Xa, and Ms. Chang from China who demonstrated their exquisite arts of making jiao zi, and Prof. Signe Kijelstrup from Norwegian University of Science and Technology who with her husband, Prof. Dick Bedeaux from Leiden Institute of Chemistry introduced buttered fillets of cod, cauliflower soup together with fruit-salad on which she added a special comment that this was “her child-day feast”.

Ms's Wong, Lee, Park, and Hong are wives of young and promising researchers from Korea who taught us how to fix their famous ethnic pancake, “chijimi”, and kimchee-drink.

Mongolian meatballs tasted nice and warm after being simmered in a pot of milk tea just like the wonderful smile of Ms. Altantzeg who introduced the recipe to us. We thank the Museum of Kansai Denryoku Company for their kind cooperation.

One of our staff members invited friends from abroad to her home and cooked a typical early summer Kyoto meal. Participants all enjoyed the Japanese ingredients and how to prepare them as well as her collection of tableware and art of table setting.

も楽しく実習して好評でした。

歌舞伎鑑賞教室、博物館見学、いけばなインターナショナルのデモンストレーション、工房見学など恒例の「交流プログラム」には沢山の参加がありました。伝統の手法で襖紙を刷って見せてくださった「唐長」さんは日本で唯一の手刷り工房。江戸時代から伝わる版木は数百枚も。紙の伝来については中国の王さん、ヨーロッパとの文様交流についてはライデンから来られたディック・ベドー先生からコメントが。「唐長」さんとの活発なやりとりが参加者の心をはるかな時空へ誘ってくれました。寄木を解いて仏像の胎内や瞳の造りを説明してくださったのは「平安仏所」の江里康慧さん。仏像の裳裾を飾る伝統技術「截金」は、佐代子夫人によって現代工芸の世界にも見事に活かされています。プログラム参加者の希望に応じて、書道や日本画の手ほどきを、そして能楽や伝統音楽鑑賞への案内も行ないました。府立嵯峨野高校の夏のフィールドワークに協会紹介の留学生が招かれました。王さん、賈さん、張さんが水餃子を、ネパールのパッタさん夫妻とニルマラさんがチキンカレー作りを指導。食後はパッタさんと徐結苟さんを変えて異なった文化に興味を持つことの大切さを語り合いました。プログラムは好評で、秋にもお招きがあり、今度は、李さん、朴さん、洪さん、元さんが海鮮チジミを紹介して高校生と交流しました。国際交流基金関西センターで日本語を研修中の南イタリアのレッツェ大学日本語学科の学生さんは観光ガイドや通訳をめざして勉強中とかりんくうタウンからの上洛を受けてスタッフが京都の町を案内しました。このプログラムは当協会理事長千宗室氏の支援を受けています。



at Ikebana International Meeting



Italian students at “fusumagami” studio

We organized guided tours to two studios of Kyoto’s traditional arts. We were able to enjoy the beauty of “Fusumagami”, paper for sliding door hand-made in “Kara-cho” only because the family had passed down the hundreds of wood blocks and the skill of printing since the Edo Era. Accomplished sculptor, Mr. Koukei Eri kindly showed us the inner structure of images of Buddha in his studio “Heian Bussho”, and his wife, Sayoko-san, showed us contemporary works of hers using the traditional skill of shredded gold leaf, or “Kirigane.”



Mr. Eri shows his works.

Our friends from abroad were invited to Sagano Prefectural High School several times and introduced their own cultures to the young students. Our group of Japanese language teachers also enjoyed meeting the students of Japanese from Recce University, Italy.

We are very grateful to Dr. Soshitu Sen for his generous support of this program.

国際茶会

10月21日、第21回国際茶会（国際茶道文化協会共催、裏千家後援）が開かれ、裏千家センターに350名が集まりました。開会式の列席者は、千宗室家元・当協会理事長の心からの出迎えを受けて会場に。西島安則当協会会長と伊住政和国際茶道文化協会理事長それぞれの挨拶を受けました。参加者は順に茶室へ通り、薄茶を一服。お手前、お運びは裏千家で茶道を学ぶ外国人留学生グループ「みどり会」の皆さんです。会場に用意された下鴨茶寮のお弁当には秋の味覚がやさしく添えられ、お椀の中にも秋の景色が。くつろいで午後を楽しむ交流の輪が広がりました。

2000 KICA論文コンテスト「日本 私の視点から」

第23回論文コンテストは、10月14日に発表審査会が京大公会館で行なわれ、次の入賞論文4編が選ばれました。

京都国際文化協会賞 / KICA PRIZE	副賞 ¥100,000
“Reflection of a Moonface”	Aya Kanai(USA)
奨励賞 / Prize for Effort	副賞 ¥50,000
“A Summer Night’s Matsuri”	Daniel Bürgin(Swiss)
“A Borrowed Vista”	Ciaran Murray(Ireland)
「日本の女子学生 私の視点から」	張墨竹（中国）

今回は応募総数40編、うち11編が日本語での応募でした。『紀ノ川』の華子に自身を投影するカナイさん。来日後、人形劇の研究を通じて仲間との触れ合いを重ね、今後は二つの文化を大切に自分らしい未来を切り開きたいと話します。夏祭りの露店が並ぶ境内を歩くブルマンさんの心は、川端や芥川や三島の世界に。いまどきの若者や古き良き時代のすべてを捨ててしまったかに見える現代社会を憂いつつ、死者の魂を迎える真夏こそもっとも日本らしいと語ります。マーレイさんは18世紀の英国庭園のルーツは日本の庭ではないかと興味を抱き、謎の言葉「ソロワジ」を鍵に、東西の庭園の歴史を探ります。張さんは日中女子学生の比較論を。日本の女子学生がオシャレで、気軽に仲間を褒めるのに驚きます。好印象を演出して、人間関係を円滑にする彼女たちのしたたかさをこれからは見習いたいと話しました。

2001年度は6月から募集を始めます。問合せは協会まで。



Each guest enjoyed a bowl of tea offered by Midorikai.

International Tea Gathering

International Tea Gathering (jointly sponsored by Chanoyu Cultural Foundation and supported by the Urasenke Foundation) was held on October 21 with an attendance of some 350. Main guests who attended the opening ceremony received greetings from Yasunori Nishijima (President of KICA) and Masakazu Izumi (Chairman, Board of Director of Chanoyu Cultural Foundation) after entering the banquet room with a very heart-warming welcome from Sen Soshitsu (Grand Tea Master of Urasenke School, Chairman, Board of Directors of KICA). Each guest enjoyed a bowl of tea offered by Midorikai, the group of non-Japanese students who study Chado, the Way of Tea, at Urasenke. And the guests appreciated the beautiful autumn scenery that was also found in the seasonably arranged lunch by Shimogamo-Saryo. There was a harmony among the people who enjoyed the luxurious afternoon.



Prize winners and judges at the party held after the contest

Just write it! - our essay contest

Our essay contest has three groups of very active “participants”. They are the contestants, the organizers, and the judges. We have a format that allows and encourages intimate interaction among all three parties involved, and that is the secret behind our success.

While the contest is the culmination of a concerted effort by all participants, the volunteer organizers contribute by far the most. Considering that this contest is being run by a handful of hard-working female volunteers, the organization and the attention given to detail are truly impressive. I would like to take this opportunity to express my great admiration and heart-felt appreciation for their devotion.

A successful contest requires a solid main theme, and this one is no exception. One can see that a lot of thought went into our choice “Japanese Culture — My View”. It is intentionally broad, if not vague, in order to encourage people with diverse backgrounds and experiences to apply. Making personal experience the focal point of the essay helps writers to freely express their views on Japanese culture in their own words. The key here is “my view”.

Among the finalists this year were a young Japanese American woman who was studying Puppet Theater, an Irish professor of literature, an IT manager from Switzerland, and a student from China. It is because of the prudent choice of the main theme that we are always blessed with participants with such diversity.

I mentioned above that judges are also active participants of the contest. Indeed, they do much more than just reading essays and presenting awards.

After the preliminary selection, the finalists were brought to Kyoto for a presentation. It was only after this process was completed that the winner was chosen. The judges were given an opportunity to ask writers questions face to face. I took full advantage of this and tried to make it a discourse rather than a simple questions and answers. The writers responded to this with very clear and intriguing comments. The exchanges were casual but informative.

Masayasu AOTANI

This process greatly enhanced my understanding of the essays. I don’t know how else I could have picked the winner with conviction. Every finalist had submitted an excellent essay full of personal experiences and cultural analyses.

After the ceremony, was the dinner, which gave us another opportunity to talk to the participants. Greek philosophers were quite right when they said that the best way to get to know one another is to eat and drink together. It was made particularly attractive by the presence of the organizers and the judges in addition to the finalists. This friendly gathering was very symbolic of the kind of charm this contest offers.

I don’t know how many of the organizers are actually mothers, but their motherly love shines in everything they do. Their warm hospitality and dedication to helping other participants make this feel like a big family reunion. I hope that this contest will continue to attract highly qualified participants with even more diverse backgrounds in the future and maintain its great family atmosphere. Organizers, contestants, and judges all made it a memorable experience for me this year. I personally assure you that similarly great experiences will await all future participants of this contest.

Our hope is that, by writing essays, the contestants will get a chance to reflect on both their own cultures and that of Japan and to realize the value of their multicultural experience. This contest will be a smashing success if we somehow manage to help each contestant with even the first step in that direction.

I would like to close with a friendly advice for prospective contestants. What I want to see in your essays are significant personal cultural experiences, your interpretation of those experiences, clear descriptions and explanations, and enthusiasm. That is it. Simple. Right? Right. Good luck to you all!

Thank you for reading. See you there this year.
(Associate Professor, Kyoto University)

Reflections of a Moonface



Aya Kanai

PART I:

“This child saw Japan with the eyes of a foreigner and was always discovering something new, such as a particular shade of green or blue and the blossoms of cherry or peach. On the other hand, her grandchild was not really a foreigner. She was a Japanese who has no links to her Japanese heritage.” (1)

Ariyoshi Sawako’s novel, The River Ki, follows the lives of three women of the Matani family, Hana, Fumio and Hanako, through the historic transitions that World War II brought to Japan. Hanako, Fumio’s daughter and Hana’s granddaughter, grows up in the years right before the War and because of her father’s job as a banker, she receives her primary education outside of Japan. When she visits, it is to accompany her mother, who is going to have another child and wants to give birth in her own country. Hanako develops a romantic passion for Japanese traditional culture and spirit. Hana, quoted above, marvels at what a different experience her granddaughter has had growing up abroad.

My parents used to make a joke that “Aya is Japanese until she opens her mouth.” I am a first generation American born with full Japanese blood. Although I grew up in New York City, I did visit Japan as a child and young adult on various occasions to see family members. During those visits and in my New York home, the Japanese language did find a place in my brain although my formal training slowly went from not rigorous to nonexistent. In my grade school days the last thing I was interested in was studying Japanese when I came

home from school, swimming practice or dance class. I had no way of understanding at that time why such a thing would be useful and after a few years, recognizing my disinterest, my parents did not force me into dedication to those studies. Therefore, my level of Japanese language skills remained in child-like stages: limited phrases and vocabulary, no knowledge of writing, reading or *kei-go*, but decent comprehension of conversation. I could usually understand the general idea of what people were talking about but always had a problem with expressing my thoughts. I just didn’t have the words.

Born and raised in America, I did not have other American Japanese friends but it never felt awkward to me. It was only in my pre-teen years that I was teased for my Asian features; some gems that come to mind are “pushed-in face” or, my favorite, “moon face.” But once I got past that phase of youth, where even a small birth mark would make a girl feel like she came from another planet, I did not feel that my being Japanese was necessarily an impediment to my perceptions of myself or others perceptions of me. We used to make sarcastic remarks when a Caucasian and African-American friends and I were together, that we looked like a Benneton advertisement, the multicultural poster children. But at the same time, I would say that I have experienced more covert forms of prejudice, because of the extent to which Asian women are made objects of desire in American popular culture. The mystique of exoticism that would disallow an Asian woman to be seen as a full human and rather some sort of a “secret from the east.” These are two somewhat contradictory sides of the same experience. There is a way

that something can so profoundly effect every moment of your experience that it can be ignored if one chooses. My Japanese identity can at times be everywhere and nowhere. I believe that it was resolved, for me, by choosing not to address or resolve it. At that time it was *not* interesting to me to grapple with such issues and I put it aside in the same way that I put aside learning Japanese as a child, tossed into a mental folder marked, “to be dealt with later.”

It was not until college that I started to think about and become frustrated with the fact that I had so little knowledge of Japanese language and history. The issue of “looking Japanese until I opened my mouth” became more of a concern. I took a Japanese language course my first semester, but I breezed through it on my previous knowledge and realized that the teaching style of learning Japanese in the American college setting was inappropriate for me, someone whose original learning of the language was of a more organic nature. It was again put aside. By the end of my college career I did have an “East Asian Studies” Minor to throw on top of my other Majors but that was largely because of my shift in that department to studying Japanese history. Although I only have a couple of months of distance and perspective from my college experience now, I realize that, without fully recognizing it at the time, I was searching and continue to search for a mirror for the many ways I see myself. In studying Japanese history, I have a feeling of responsibility towards events, people and places. This is the background that I am supposed to know. In my often voracious reading of modern Japanese literature I am looking for the place where an author has previously described my experience. This comes in many different forms; searching for a character that resembles me, for chunks of information that offer me insight, or even for a minor trait that I might see in myself.

I often feel like I am role-playing. Books such as The Makioka Sisters, A Personal Matter, or The Wind-Up Bird

Chronicle, offer the perfect opportunity to try on, in my mind, the roles of the female characters I read about. But none fit right. Similarly, when I meet Japanese women I am always curious about what they value and why. I wonder the questions; “If I had been raised in Japan, would I have been like you? How are my ideas about the world different from yours?” All these pursuits and inquiries come from the same place within me; Japanese culture and heritage is written all over my body, but in what way has it effected how I look at my life and the choices that I make? I feel the presence of multiple possibilities and multiple persons that could be within me. There are so many different directions my life could have gone in the past and therefore could go in the future.

In Japan I feel there are moments when I am changed on the inside. I am in situations that rarely occur when I am in America and therefore make me feel, to some degree, like a different person. Two specific ways I often feel altered would be the heightened sensitivity to ancestry and a more distinct awareness of my womanhood.

First, with regards to the feeling of lineage, when I come to Japan, I am nearly smacked in the face with the reality of my family history through the quantity of people with whom I share blood. Such a feeling is in no way a part of my existence as an American citizen because the only other blood relative that I have in America outside of the immediate is one uncle. So to come to Japan is a shock that I am never quite prepared for. My American experience is often one of floating amidst the numerous possibilities of selves. Coming to Japan shakes the ground on which I stand, because it reminds me of how far back my family goes. It also makes me wonder in what ways it would have effected my past choices living with that knowledge as a daily reality. Perhaps if I had grown up in Japan, I would feel more of an inclination to follow a path that the older women of my extended family have. I feel a responsibility towards those family members; some

friends might drift in then out of one's life, but family doesn't go away. As basic of an idea as that is, this is something that is only made real to me when I am in Japan.

Secondly, in Japan, I have a different experience of my womanhood. My lifestyle in America is one where gender roles are more ambiguous than they seem to be amongst the Japanese women and men that I have met. Consequently I feel a simultaneous desire to be more "lady-like" and to overly demonstrate how unlike a Japanese "lady" I am. The push and pull between these two feelings has much to do with the fact that I am taller than most Japanese women. I am tall even by American standards and my body has a larger frame than Japanese women do. When I walk on the streets of Japan, many women seem so narrow and delicate that they are almost transparent. It is as if a light push would send them toppling over, like mannequins in the window of a department store. So in a way the differences and contradictions that lie within me are also written on my body. Additionally, my body language has not been trained in the manner of many Japanese women who might, for example, cover their mouth with a handkerchief when they laugh. I didn't even own a handkerchief until recently and only use it to wipe the sweat off my forehead in the heat of an Osaka summer. But as I stated, the balance shifts between adherence and assertion even though my version of adherence would probably pale when compared to the popular Japanese standard of womanhood in polite society. The unavoidable observance of such women on a daily basis can cause involuntary shifts in the ways I act. Although I know that there is no chance that I will ever look or act like one of them, I cannot help myself from observing their behaviors and trying them on in my imagination. The people I see on the street and the characters in Japanese novels are undifferentiated, like paper dolls in my mind, because neither are people that I will ever know. So they dance before my mind's eye as I think of where I fit in amongst all these bits and pieces of mannerisms and dispositions that I have stored

in my brain from my observations of and participation in Japanese and American society.

The best analogy I have found to describe the experience of all the selves that play in my mind is that of putting on a *kimono*. It makes tangible the feeling that usually remains inside me. In my adult life, the first time that I wore a *kimono* was for the *seijinshiki*. I was not able to do it in precisely the correct manner on January 15th of the year I turned twenty because of the academic schedule of my American College. But I did do it during the summer of my twentieth year. I knew that it would make my grandparents, who live in Tokyo, very happy and I too was excited about the ceremony however belated. I wore the *kimono* that my grandmother on my mother's side was photographed in when she was my age. It was worn as one of the numerous *oiro naoshi* changes for her wedding ceremony. Putting on the *kimono* with the aid of the two professional dressers was one of the most memorable experiences of my life. Layer upon layer from the primary plain white cotton undergarments, to the binding of my chest, to the layering of towels to build up my chest, to the more ornamented undergarments, and to the heavy silk decorated kimono, the process took almost an hour and a half. During the time, I watched in the mirror as I was pushed and pulled in various directions. The reflection was not the person whom I normally looked at in the mirror. It was certainly not the college student that dove out of bed to run to class without brushing her hair. It was a dressing process where the ways I felt and acted were changed forcefully. I was literally restricted from such common actions as taking long strides or slouching while seated. I felt permanently posed. But I do not mean to imply that these were feelings that I disliked at that moment. In fact, I loved the experience. I treasured wearing a work of art. And there are not too many times in one's life when one can feel literally encased in a symbol of a past they never knew. But most of all, I enjoyed feeling, looking and acting like a stranger to myself. It felt appropriate because the role-playing, that I often feel privately, was

brought to the surface as a physical reality: something that can be turned on and off like a *kimono* can be put on and taken off.

Having a familiarity with two vastly different cultures has allowed me to see how strongly influenced we are by who and what surrounds us. It seeps into body language and mentality. Perhaps this could also be called “shape shifting,” an expression in English which usually has negative connotations. But I think it is unavoidable at least to be aware of the different faces, by that I mean different roles that exist for any person. The amount of faces increases exponentially when one has been exposed to two cultures from a young age and I begin to wonder if there is an authentic me underneath all the cultural influences. The choices are vast as they stretch across oceans and nations. But here I will contradict myself again because I have a feeling of belonging in both Japan and America and at the same time in neither, even though my Japanese language skills have improved tremendously. To choose one can sometimes be seen as to negate or devalue the other. I wonder what I should be looking for to solve the questions that revolve in my mind. I have the appropriate face to put on top of a *furisode*, but what of the mind inside that is fascinated by beginning to study *shodo* and *kei-go*, the mind that did not learn how to write her name in *kanji* until just this year. My education, formal and informal, often contradicts Japanese values, but there is a place inside me that does want to know where my past, which is written on my body, meets the directions I will choose in the future. I am at a point in my life where I am trying to expand my world as much as possible. Even knowing that doing so causes one to ask more questions, as I am doing now. I am trying to make my world as big as I can, looking behind and ahead. Trying to find all my faces.

The character in literature that I feel closest to would be Matani Hanako of Ariyoshi Sawako's [The River Ki](#). Hanako's complicated relationship to her past as a result of growing up

between cultures is assuaged by her memories of visiting her grandmother in Wakayama City. Hanako's confusion gives way to greater stability because she is able to maintain a balanced relationship between the tradition that she searches after, the part of herself that she resurrects from within, and the future that she will create. Hanako recognizes and respects her heritage but at the same time is looking towards the future. Knowing she has the women's lineage of the Matani family as a foundation, she can understand better her place within 'the modern lifestyle.' Ariyoshi reveals in Hanako's letter to Hana:

“According to T.S. Eliot, tradition negates all that preceded it and will be negated by all that follows. And yet I feel I know what that means when I think of the bond between you and me. The ‘family’ has flowed from you to Mother and from Mother to me...however difficult the present may be for me, I must live for tomorrow. Now I know why I feel nostalgic for Wakayama, I could not have made this discovery or experienced this peace of mind or happiness if I had never been close to you.” (2)

PART II:

These days, as I live in Japan, I feel increasingly more like a participant, not an observer of daily life here. I feel some of the ideas I expressed in Part I are changing. The Japanese author, Murakami Haruki, called Tokyo, “fathomlessly huge,”(3) which is a sentiment I have been having for the past months. It is difficult to believe that such varying landscapes and a population of over 28 million could all fall under the name Tokyo. Through learning about the different areas and living on my own in Tokyo for the first time, I feel people are no longer the flat cardboard cutouts that they were when I was a mere visitor. The seemingly heartless crowds and rushed atmosphere of train stations still make me feel as if I

live in a toy world or an ant farm. However as I live in Japan longer, people have become the animated complex humans that we all are. In this “fathomlessly huge” city I have met Japanese women and men that have defied my preconceived notions of the country and the people. As a part of my present fellowship research in puppet theater, I have been working at a Tokyo marionette company. Through getting to know the members of the family-run company I have learned that this huge city holds individuals and I cannot anymore think of them as the paper dolls I used to see in train stations, or characters in novels. My vision of Japan has gone from flat to round and I am thankful for it.

Recently the marionette company was performing at the Edo-Tokyo Hakubutsukan, a historical museum of the Edo period. The establishment surely tries to capture the feeling of the period in Japanese history. However, I have no idea whether this particular venue achieves its goal because I did not step foot in the museum. I spent my day at the Edo-Tokyo Hakubutsukan running about in the basement passageways that surround the performance space and helping make the puppet stage for the evening’s performance. I don’t regret missing out on the museum. I can leave that for another time. I am studying in such a unique Japanese company and I would gladly take hours of working there over a museum exhibition any day. Everyday I learn more about the tremendously complex inner mechanisms of this Japanese theater company that was established in 1635. These are precious lessons in Japanese culture.

My position as an American-Japanese visitor to the marionette company can be described in an experience I had on my third day. An American puppeteer came to visit a rehearsal and I was assigned the task of translator, a laughable position for someone of my level of Japanese. However, it was interesting to have the presence of another American to show me how different I could be when I was with the Japanese. I felt such conflicting loyalties. On the

one hand, I was responsible for representing the company to the American visitor and in relative terms a part of it but on the other hand, I could relate better to the American. I was trying to act as “Japanese” as I could by humbling anything I said with respect to myself while sitting with my legs tucked neatly underneath me. But I felt as clueless as he surely did. Yet I was in a position where I was expected to understand how to conduct myself. In that event, I was dealing with two languages, multiple loyalties, plus different cultural codes for speech and body language all at the same time. Similar to how I described wearing a formal *furisode* kimono as “being encased in a symbol of a past I never knew,” during my brief experience as a translator I felt I was representing something externally that I didn’t myself quite understand. Even without the *kimono* I often feel bound by what it symbolizes.

In Ariyoshi Sawako’s novel, [The River Ki](#), the reality that Hanako, the youngest character, lives in is one of another country but she also searches after Japanese culture, traditional and modern, the part of herself that she chooses to resurrect and strengthen from within. Like Matani Hanako, I am happy to have this search, as I learn more about Japanese culture and find new ways of thinking about the past and the future. In a recent conversation with an Argentine-American friend who shares similar sentiments on the issues of bicultural heritage, she stated “In a way I feel the search itself is guiding me.” I couldn’t agree more. I am growing and changing within this search, which makes a conclusion seem beside the point.

Footnotes:

- 1 Ariyoshi, Sawako. [The River Ki](#) (New York: Kodansha America Inc., 1981) p. 183.
- 2 Ibid. p. 222.
- 3 Murakami, Haruki. [The Elephant Vanishes](#). (New York: Vintage Books., 1993) p.232.

A Summer Night's Matsuri



Daniel Bürgin

It sprang to my mind that Japan is at its most Japanese in summer when humidity lies heavy on my chest like a suffocating cushion. The air is oppressive, saturated from heat and moisture, so much that one feels that an elusive haze lies between one's eyes and things watched. In this haze the souls of olden days, ghosts of the past come back to life and sojourn to important places of their lives. The cutting noise of the *semi* penetrates the ears as it swells and then ceases. Their perpetual noise is an integral part of Japan's summer heat and humidity. Maybe the cicada is the medium that allows the dead to return; year after year through eternal times Japanese. They implore the spirits of the dead from unknown faraway places to join with the living who remember them through praying in shrines and temples, and at home. Summer is the time of the year when most festivals take place in Japan during sweltering heat and the festival of *obon*, the returning of the dead, is near.

When dusk settles and night conquers the souls as they dance, they will then gather and frolic and glide between *yukata* clad young ladies. The spirits of the dead impregnate the moist air with reminiscences that even I, a foreigner, can sense. Maybe for this reason *obon* happens during August, Japan's hottest month because already now in July cicadas start calling the dead and the atmosphere has the right physical composition to host them. Probably for this reason so many *matsuri* take place in July, baiting with gaiety the passed souls to return and visit, to re-unite with their families during *obon* before parting again. Festivals in Japan are always of religious origin, however condensed the religious moment might be. All of the above might be the reason that

summer's *matsuris* leave the impression of an eternal Japan, of things Japanese – everlasting for also the Japanese themselves. I feel like under a magic spell when visiting a summer *matsuri* for I can see old Japan alive.

Whilst visiting Kyoto's *Yasaka Jinja* at night during this year's Gion festival, I would wish to be a ghost myself: restless and invisible. I would frequent the shrine's old vicinity, with its merry festival under the old trees along the chiselled path towards the *jinja*. The path is lined with food and entertainment stalls, visited by many Japanese old and young. The evening emanates timelessness. I would wish to only be voyeur, devouring my surroundings while tenderly caressing the texture of the past, which I sense in this lively place. I never want to leave, I am enchanted by Japan's atmosphere on a summer night's *matsuri*. Here they are within the shrine's precinct, the souls of the past. They confuse me. I can perceive them and absorb all their ambient tenderness through their lofty presence. It occurs to me that this is the very place, and the nights that the spirits of those who wrote so eternally about Japan, and who lived so much for the past, gathered. They talk through the leaves, they move on the wind and call on the shrill of cicadas. They move in shadows of foodstalls and people. They mingle with human beings, overhearing talk and watching scenes similar to those, they ones created in their novels. They kill their time by becoming onlookers of what they once lived themselves, of what they wrote and confronted us with. They are the spirits of the poets. It might well be them who soak my T-shirt with sweat, which have my hungry eyes consuming the timeless, everlasting effervescence of a summer festival's night. The

souls of those dead writers.

Japan, I see anew at its most Japanese in summer when *semi* drill through the hot and sticky air. I am held prisoner. I can't leave anymore. I sense the dead poets. They have returned. I watch across the path the small stand where one can throw for three hundred Yen old metal rings over targets of modern kitsch. It seems to me that Kawabata would enjoy the unfolding scene as part of an unwritten novel. A *geisha* in simple white *yukata*, with blue pattern and a contrasting elegant saffron-yellow *obi* tries her luck. Her *danna* stands a bit aside. He is full of pride. His eyes are hidden behind a camera lens which only focus is she. The *geisha* elegantly plays with the old metal rings in her hands, moves them between long fingers like a rosary. Then at leisurely intervals she throws the rings clumsily, yet graceful without really wanting to hit the target. In fact, the target is her companion, and he innocently takes the bait. He confidently takes off his eggshell coloured jacket and plays the iron rings himself to impress with his manly skills – although with no more success – yet still a hero. He trapped himself in the thin web of her admiration and the self-adorning belief in his own vigour. The *geisha's* beautiful hair is perfectly coiffured. All of a sudden she develops an expression of irritation, and a faint look of surprise is reflected for a brief moment in her widening eyes. A thin lock of her black hair has escaped the tight hold of the coiffure and has fallen from her right temple, flirting with her cheek. The slight disorder makes her look girlish, and with a childlike movement of her hand she tentatively fixes the lock whilst quickly casting a look at her companion. Is it possible that Kawabata's soul touched her, as his spirit watches over the two? He perhaps would have thought how to build the scene in one of his novels. At one point, if in a story, Kawabata would have left his readers behind, as the *geisha* and her companion left me when they walked away. Likewise Kawabata would have abandoned his heroes and his readers on the scene without any other answer than that of life; genuine life. Kawabata would force his

readers to think of what could have happened to the protagonists after one had lost their sight. The *geisha* and her companion left me imagining my own story of them. Left me deciding – if I would have had the courage – their faith. As may be, Kawabata never found the courage to state all the motives of his characters and thereby judge them. More likely he never wanted. More likely he was too wise to do so. Maybe for that reason he quit life and its beauty, as there is no answer to life, like there were no answers for the responsibilities of the heroes in his novels. They lived an invented life which, I as a reader, would not dare to judge. His characters are too human, too close to who I am. Kawabata escaped like one of his heroes for having the reader not daring to ask why.

I, the infinite anachronism, move so familiarly between gushing steam from *yaki soba* drenched in soy sauce and colour patches from *yukatas* without touching anything or anybody. I am often very close to people but, like a miracle, without any contact – as if I couldn't be seen, as if I would be one of these ghosts I can sense. Japanese people seem to have this natural skill, more than other nationalities, of keeping ones body away from others – even in the biggest crowd. People seem to falter without changing their posture and pass amid human obstacles. Yet, if I would bump into someone by accident, I would almost be thrown aside by the way Japanese move with their balance and weight located in the hip and not the chest. Japanese are more bound to earth than Westerners. - Whilst thinking of other people's centre of gravity, a young woman's face floats by.

Afterwards I only remember her face rising from a colourful, bright summer yukata. I have forgotten the colour, but it appeared buoyant and delicate, thereby emphasising the white texture of the woman's skin in contrast to her jet-black hair.

The collar of her *yukata* underlines her face like a subtle frame. Her shiny hair is tightly combed back so that it

glistens like a crow's wing. Whilst passing, our eyes meet for a short moment. Her eyes are wide open and gleaming as they reflect the light of the night like in a mirror, or off the surface of a pond. I meet these eyes for only a fraction of a second, yet she recognises me. Interest. Her recognition lasts an instant and something from deep inside shimmers through this polished surface of her dark eyes. Her gaze leaves a mark in my memory – a fleeting moment of both comprehension and oblivion. Once in a while I can encounter such looks, and I always wonder if it means curiosity for a foreigner. The locking of eyes, however brief, is a custom not being perceived well mannered in this country. Vaguely one of Akutagawa's short stories comes to my mind: the story of a man encountering a young girl on the platform of a local train station on a daily basis, every morning during a certain period of his life. One day he sees her unexpectedly in the afternoon. Their eyes meet and he bows unconsciously. If I remember correctly the hero's name was Yasukichi. Shiny eyes locked for a brief moment before they split, before they cast downwards again. An encounter. He is disturbed by his own behaviour. For him, the brief encounter created a relationship. Hence it could be likely that only Yasukichi's fantasy was preoccupied with the girl whilst she had already forgotten him. Maybe she had never noticed him consciously; him a face among thousands. The hero of the story then nervously awaits the next morning and again, she is on the platform. They pass, facing each other, looking into each other's eyes and Yasukichi feels an urge to indicate a bow. But nothing happens beyond this short look and his impetus to bow. His thoughts remain with the girl for some more time whilst the rattling noise of the train closes the story. Maybe like Yasukichi I had an encounter. Like in Akutagawa's story, I was wondering whether I left a trace of my thoughts in that woman's memory. If this evening's *matsuri* is a meeting point of souls from the past, perhaps then Akutagawa was standing next to me. He might have observed us, might have entered our minds and perceived a scene of his story re-enacted. Akutagawa tells his story from

a certain distance, an observer rather than somebody being involved in the life described. What life does is not chance. Life rehearses. Akutagawa might have made me alert to see the woman's gaze, and to teach me the meaning of his narrative where the rattling noise of a train drowns over the story's end and over Yasukichi's thoughts. Yet, I was not an observer, I was involved.

Close to the shrine's main gate gathers a group of youngsters, laughing and chattering like a noisy crowd of sparrows assembled in trees before dusk. A new youth – still many in *yukata* and *geta*. However, this group is different to the others. It tries to stand out by already committing to a new uniform, a new standard. They are a group, one of many. They are young people who don't want to be oppressed, and pressed into the tight model of social norms. They cry a silent cry despite their noise, because their rebellion is already dressed in a uniform. It seems to me that most of them have already lost the revolution they loudly, yet gently try to bring to bare. Most are already subdued; are tamed without knowing. Most will bend and find their place in society despite the girlish look, shrill colours and gang behaviour. They gather but without communicating together. They all use *keitais*, with "Hello Kitty" thongs and covered with cute stickers of mini-photographs of themselves with friends, which replace traditional face-to-face interaction. *Kawaii* – cute: the girls most applied and generic word for anything they consider worth branding as "in". The word is hissed in a high-pitched voice, almost timed and preferably in unison between two or three girls. Cute thus seems to be what they can control, what is younger and smaller than themselves, what is another gadget and another flirt with adolescence. The list of things "*kawaii*" is open-ended and ranges from babies to yellow dyed hair, from platform shoes to the latest i-mode portable phone. The girls use male language mistakenly thinking it means emancipation and maturity. Talkative like sparrows, vulgar and loud, I watch these deeply tanned "Hello Kitty" faces and I cannot help

wondering whether they modelled themselves after icons from girls' *manga*. Makeup is carefully plastered over young and old age bronzed skin. Eyelids are painted ice blue in line with the latest fad, which seems to have evolved into a standard. These youngsters have chosen the place of the *matsuri* to enjoy themselves - and exclusively for themselves. They chose a location where people meet, but not so much the event itself. They are the event. This group of teenagers is the contrast to the eternal ambience of the summer *matsuri*. They stick out like a portent for how much Japan could change. They could be the colourful spots on the lid of a Pandora's box containing the disaster of a society out of control. Unless – they falter; unless they yield to the rules of adult society. What they paint in front of my eyes during this hot summer night uses opposing colours to what a novelist like Kafu might have created to describe the same place. The young use his place of past to exhibit their seemingly modern, unconventional style. They fight the unruly game with their youth but I can't help, after all they still somehow fit. Most will fit one day anyway, and I think most already lost their struggle to resist the rules of adulthood. Some however, will remain on the other side of the rift and will eventually lose their place in adult society. These might never be yielding but possibly breaking.

In the group is a girl in bright, Hawaiian patterned *yukata*, with the hem just above the knees, this year's latest attempt of re-inventing the traditional to something modern. Next to her and her girl friends stands an equally sized group of young men. I guess some kind of boy friends, hair coloured, like the girls in the same hues of ash and yellow. The hair is brushed into the eyes or standing up erect but short, as if it would be an attribute of power to simultaneously attract and scare away those of other tribes. Earrings, pierced lips. Their finery is the shocking. Then suddenly a brawl erupts. Voices bark in territorial behaviour. One guy is grabbing his fellow opposite at the collar of his loose shirt and shakes him, cigarette between loose lips. The two start to push each other as if an

invisible mass had slipped between them and inflated into something dark, triggering violence. The girl with the shortened *yukata* giggles, which seems to heighten the tension. Others try to mediate, but most avoid with laughter an increasingly violent quarrel. A dark current entered this timeless place, casting shadows, and shadows are watching: A bulky middle-aged man is an onlooker close by, his face expressionless. He absorbs the scene without a sign of approval or disapproval. He makes me think that maybe too often only the beautified surface of human beings appears. Maybe this man with his sturdy face hides another spirit gaping over his shoulder, as sturdy and as familiar with the unkempt. Had Nakagami Kenji still been alive, I think he would understand. Nakagami would have confronted a scene, he could adopt and further dramatise towards a climax, which leaves the reader with an uncomfortable feeling of sympathising with the irrational and often violent side of human nature. Nakagami might feel sad about the unnecessary outbreak of the brawl I watch, yet in a novel of his, the dark side of human nature might erupt as an elemental part of human life. For him, the dark side of mankind has its own sentimental beauty; has its own justification. Like the two belligerent youngsters at the festival, his protagonists are often reactive in a situation where others left them. Nakagami would have written a story of those failing in Japan's society, of those being on the wrong side of what Japan is so proud of, the orderly. But still his heroes would have their own ways of being tender, their methods of healing wounds. Maybe Nakagami's spirit, the presence of somebody who himself was not at ease with society, might have acquiesced the brawl which eventually brought those in conflict back to peace; for one more time.

By now I feel hungry. My mouth is completely dry and yet my T-shirt clutches against my body. I hardly dare to breath. With my eyes I still absorb everything, which surrounds me. Why are the nightly colours of a *matsuri* always the same? In any place, any year? A reiteration, occurring almost like a

secret ritual. Colours around food stalls for example, have an orange-shaded hue and are of yellowish warmth like a patina which superimposes all other colour, leaving a trace of its own on whatever lies underneath. This particular hue appears to come from the naked sixty-watt light bulbs at most of the stalls. Simple light bulbs, yet they seem to radiate a peculiar light which I never encountered anywhere else than in Japan. The difference from other light bulbs in other places is subtle and hard to substantiate. Possibly it exists only in my imagination. However, it might well be that the light's reflection in the red colour of a food stall's *noren*, in the brightness of a person's *kimono*, or maybe the moist night, is wrapping the luminescence of the naked bulbs with a soft gaze. The light does amalgamate with the cosy gleam of the many paper lanterns, white and red vertical stripes with beautiful black characters naming sponsors. The lanterns are lined up above my head winding their way to the shrine like a long gleaming serpent which guides the faithful safely through all the earthly amusement to the sanctum to bring the gods small offerings and prayers. How often did I innocently try to catch the ambience of the moment in pictures - without success. Is it the missing humidity, which cannot escape from photographs? Or is it the background noise of the clattering sound of wooden *getas* on the chiselled path which gently contrast to the hissing sound of *semi*? The sound of *getas* on chisels has a deeper meaning to me. It is cleansing ones soul to be purified in front of the gods, and the noise they create does truly empty ones mind and might alert the *kami* to the faithful approaching their abodes. The light, the cicadas and the sound of wooden clogs mould the evening into a Japanese event, firmer, more determined than any other Japanese tradition. It is all so evanescent yet incessant; all so peculiarly human. - Japan's summer is as much a summer of sounds as of views. I imagine that if I would hear these sounds again after many years of interruption, they would act as a catalyst, a ritual recalling all what I will have thought forgotten. They would refresh my memory to feel past life. Timeless life. Japanese life, with neither start nor end. I

think it logic that for this reason the upcoming *obon* festivals, the rites of welcoming the dead, *must* happen during the hottest month of the year. It might well be for that reason that I now stand here and perceive the vibrations of life, of the eternal. Calling the dead home...

The lights at the nightly food stalls lining the chiselled road to the shrine flirt with the dark and give birth to floating shadows. Whilst I buy some *tako-yaki*, a naked light bulb swings gently next to my bent head throwing long shadows of the old man behind the counter against the softly moving tent. Whilst I am paying my food, I seem to suddenly hear the whispers of those which accompany me through this night. Whispers of those who passed away but allow me to see with their eyes. Those I never met. Tanizaki would stroll by. He would feel comfortable here in the dark amongst the shadows and his eyes would absorb all about him and his thoughts play with what he saw. The shadows, for what they accentuate by hiding, would fascinate him. He would still think it a Japanese characteristic. Tanizaki would feel that some things were left to be the very way he recognises them.

Tanizaki would watch the three men walking a few steps in front of me. They swagger and something in their demeanour makes people give way to them. They *expect* that people give way. The three men shovel their way through the crowd. One of them, dark with permed hair and in his mid forties speaks with a boisterous voice. I notice that his language is very basic and when he talks, words spit from his throat with a barking sound. He wears a heavy gold bracelet around his wrist. Does he talk in Kansai dialect? - I am not sure. The three step into the shade next to a *yakitori-ya*. One of them strolls to the food stall and buys some meals and beer. I notice that his right hand holding a beer is short of the tip of his little finger. The others wait on tiny stools for the food. Did he pay the bill? Only now do I notice two women who were already sitting there. They seem to have waited. I think they look too elegant to be acquainted with the three

men. However, I am wrong: they do know each other. One of the three, as lean as a rake, takes off his shirt and reveals between his shoulder blades a part of a tattoo. It is not coloured but etched in his skin with blackish blue ink. The tattooed one grins in response to a pun. They all move a bit back and start to eat. Shadows now swallow their faces and leave anonymous bodies exposed to the light. I stop watching. These folks belong to the shadow side of Japanese society, regardless how public they are. The flow of people pushes me slowly forward towards the shrine.

A throng of women passes by, radiating a genuinely, leisurely atmosphere of Japanese gaiety. They seem ethereal and timeless in their brightly coloured *yukata*. They sway through the people, bare-feet, in lacquered *geta*. Coquetting between them, they spin a thin web of captive charm. Kafu seemed to have sympathised in his novels more with his heroines than his heroes. Kafu's spirit might go astray when close to a fragrant cotton *yukata*, close by to some naked forearm, close by their faces with eyes cast down. He would sense them like fruits. He would recognise those mature in life despite the cover of childlike coquetries. Kafu would try to enter their thoughts, look for those among them, he thinks he could read like an opening blossom of some flower. In his novels, he would show compassion and let the reader know his favourites. One can sense them when reading. He would not unravel life per se nor would he be passive observer. Kafu advocates for his protagonists, wishing everybody to see them through his eyes. For him describing the surroundings wherein his heroes act, is as important as the story. It is necessary for Kafu's own longing, to rebuild the atmosphere of Tokyo after the big earthquake. With a sentimental touch Kafu is on a quest for lost time, trying to preserve what does not return. Yet reminiscences can still be found here today. Also for Kafu.

He might now observe the booth, where for three hundred Yen children buy the opportunity to catch and win a small

goldfish of their own. Many fish swim in a rectangular, narrow basin and children try their luck to catch one or several of the red fish with a shallow cup of biscuit. A small girl squats in front of the basin with such a cup pierced on a handle of wire. She follows calmly with her hand an earmarked victim. An elegant lady in purple *yukata* steps by to watch the scene. The girl's first attempt to shovel the goldfish with the biscuit cup into a bigger plastic bowl fails. Time ticks away as the cup soon will dissolve once soaked by water. The lady gives advice, yet soon the cup is too weak to hold the weight of a fish. I can see the lady's face slightly agitated while the girl is intensely watching the basin, and the stallkeeper, an old man with cropped grey hair and a rolled towel around his head, gives the girl friendly words of encouragement. I imagine the lady to be familiar with the girl. Some faint interaction unfolds between the woman and the girl. Not that of mother and daughter, yet very intimate. The woman in the purple *yukata* appears very elegant with a single, silver hairpin in her coiffure. The two seem an uneven pair: the girl wearing Minnie Mouse socks and a pink skirt, and the lady dressed in the purple *yukata*. By now the cup got soggy. The lady pulls a small purse from her bag and buys the girl a second chance. Maybe it was pity, maybe she recognised her own childhood, maybe she shared the mood of a relaxed evening with the girl. Whilst distance and formality rules their interaction, I feel that a bond was established. Or was it already existing before I saw them? Kafu would find some deeper meaning. Very likely he would imagine the lady to be a woman from the demimonde, as he described so often and for which he sympathised so much. Possibly, if in one of his novels, she would be in the search of her own child abandoned to foster parents after birth. Kafu would still be able to re-create his lost world from fragments of what he could see today. His spirit might epitomise through this woman and the child, what the lost time meant for him. For better, he still would find some bits and pieces and for worse, would be sad by watching the remains.

The souls and spirits of those that passed away are returning to earth. It is the time of the dead. The living welcome them back home at family shrines, at beloved places. They all come back: myriad's of generations. They are revered in the shrines and temples, at home and in public. It gives comfort and security for what previous generations were. Nobody is forgotten, everybody is looked after – and so we will be looked after one day. This is the thought. I think it is a kind of victory over death. Looking after the dead also keeps their spirits at peace and protects those taking care of them from being haunted. In Japan people often say what the dead were fond of in life, they still enjoy in death. I felt that some of the dead poets' spirits visited the place I was this evening, visited what they enjoyed in life, many of them sentimental about the lost Japan as they already must have felt it lost in life. I could call their names - yet by now their souls have disappeared. I have left the place and so did they. Ours was the longing for Japan, and what it was. The longing for what one loves most in life. The moist summer night still enthrals me, but now

with traffic lights and noise.

Some spirits I could not find. Mishima. I couldn't find Mishima. Maybe because I am not at peace with him. Maybe because his life was a different longing for the past than those of the others. Maybe the mood here was too relaxed for what he wanted to represent? Perhaps I just could not recognise him? - Many I could not recognise. They hid in leaves and gestures as inconspicuous as their names; lost through many generations. Those I met all gathered to regret the loss of pastimes. To be alive is owning a future! They feast on what we living offer. The dead are amongst us during this hottest part of the year. They prepare for *obon* until we send them back, just to return again attracted from next summer's ritual of calling the dead. As long as there are those remembering, they will return.

Japan is at its most Japanese in summer for she reveals what is eternal. The cycle of life. For we are human.

A BORROWED VISTA



Ciaran Murray

I SAT in the garden at Entsuji. In front was a shipwreck of rocks and moss, with a clipped hedge behind. Over this, through a dark stand of Japanese cypress, could be seen the light blue of Mount Hiei, its peak, leaning to one side, cut into uneven segments by the trunks of the trees.

‘We call this “borrowed landscape”, or *shakkei*’, said the Japanese woman who had brought me there. ‘The mountain has been “borrowed”, or taken into the garden, which is designed around the view’.

We sat there for a long time as the peace of the place sank in. You would notice other details as you sat – for instance, the way the rocks in the foreground had been arranged to echo the shape of the mountain, but in reverse, the pattern of the rocks leaning one way and the mountain another. But all the time you came back to that distant object around which the garden had been so ingeniously built, and which gave it such unimaginable depth.

When I brought that Japanese woman, now my wife, back to my hometown in Ireland, I wanted her to see such sights as our small town had to show. One of these, just a little outside, is a park which was laid out in the style of the English eighteenth century. It has a classical house, with a view out over a lake with a wooded island. On that particular evening, as it was winter, there had been an early sunset, and you could see over the bright reflection of the lake to the horizon – in this case the highest mountain in the area, which now stood out against the cold brilliance of the sky.

Suddenly, it came back to me that the lake was artificial – that it had been created solely to give interest to the view from the house. At that moment, the image of Entsuji superimposed itself over it: rocks, hedges and trees. Was it

possible, that this, too, had been created as a foreground for the mountain beyond – that it was an example of *shakkei*?

This question intrigued me all through our holiday, and when we travelled back to the U.S., where my wife was now a student at Cornell University, and I was taking some courses, I dropped in on my professor of Japanese anthropology. There is a system called ‘office hours’ in American universities, where professors are available to their students at certain times of the week; and, as I passed my professor’s office, I saw that the door was open and there was nobody inside. On impulse, I stopped by to say hello.

He was the sort of person who remembered people’s names and what they were doing, so in reply to my greeting he asked, ‘How was Ireland?’

I told him, and spoke of the experience I had had in the garden outside my hometown – how it had reminded me of my experience in Kyoto. ‘It was’, I concluded, ‘a strange coincidence’.

‘Strange, maybe, but no coincidence’, answered my professor. And he told me of a rare book which was kept in a locked cage in the library, and which told of an influence, either Chinese or Japanese, on the English gardens of the eighteenth century.

The story began at the end of the seventeenth century, when the Netherlands (Holland) was the only European country which traded with Japan. The Dutch in this country were confined to a small artificial island, Dejima, in Nagasaki harbour. But once a year they travelled up to Edo to pay their respects to the shogun, and on the way stopped off at Miyako, or Kyoto, for a few days of sightseeing. Among the sites they saw were the great temples and their gardens.

At this time, the British ambassador to the Netherlands was a man named Temple. Part of his work was to negotiate with the company which handled the Japan trade. In this way, he would have met people who had actually travelled here, and had sat in the gardens of Kyoto.

This ambassador, Temple, was himself a very keen gardener, and, wherever he travelled, discussed the subject with other interested people. After he retired, he wrote a series of essays, among which was one concerning gardens, where he talked of the different kinds of design he had seen and heard about. Among these was something he thought very unusual: gardens that looked like nature, with small hills, streams, rocks and pools, all laid out with trees in irregular patterns.

This is a point which Japanese people tend to find difficult to understand. Why should a natural garden seem strange or unusual? Surely all gardens are natural? Surely that is the very meaning of a garden, that it provides a sense of natural landscape in a limited space?

True, but this was not the case in Europe three hundred years ago. Three hundred years ago, gardens there were designed in straight lines. There were avenues of trees that were laid out mathematically. There were square and rectangular pools. Instead of streams there were fountains. Instead of rocks there were statues.

How did that happen? What did it mean? How had these gardens become artificial? How had nature come to contradict itself?

For the answer, we must go back to the beginnings of the European garden. The great early civilisations sprang up along the banks of rivers, which not only supplied water but provided transport and encouraged trade. The best-known example is the Nile, which floods once a year, spreading rich mud over the land and making it fertile. This river does not flow through a green country like Japan. On either side of it stretch the desert sands. So when the people of Egypt wanted to store floodwater for the rest of the year, they made pools in the most economical shape – square or rectangular.

The oldest gardens we know are to be seen in Egyptian paintings, and they are designed on the principles of geometry.

Now let us move to another great civilisation, that of Mesopotamia. Mesopotamia means ‘between the rivers’, and that is a very good description. The rivers are the Tigris and the Euphrates, and they are very different rivers from the Nile. While the flooding of the Nile is regular, peaceful and creative, the flooding of the Mesopotamian rivers is irregular, violent and destructive. So the peoples in this area had to find ways to tame them – like a wild horse that, from being a menace to human beings, is turned by training into one of the most helpful of animals.

The Mesopotamians trained their rivers by turning them into canals, adding branch canals that could contain the floodwaters and carry them out over the land for agriculture. These canals had to be designed to carry the water evenly through uneven ground – that is, with a slight downward movement, so the water would continue to flow.

To do this, they had to become very good at mathematics; and the peoples of Mesopotamia, centred on their great city of Babylon, were among the most skilful of all mathematicians. They developed systems that we still use. For example, sixty was a very important number for them – it combines two other important numbers, ten and twelve. Because of this, we still use sixty for the number of minutes in the hour and the number of seconds in the minute. Yes, every time you look at your watch, you live again in Babylon.

One of the religious stories of Babylon tells how the goddess of nature went down into the underworld and died – an image of the water shortages that always threatened to destroy nature in the area. But, the story continues, she came back to life again when she was sprinkled with water – sixty times. So you see, it was not just water that made the difference between life and death; it was the regulation of water, through the Babylonian crisscross of canals. And the gardens of Babylon were designed in exactly the same style, with canals crossing in the centre. If you read the description

of Paradise in the Bible, you will find it is like this – that was how people in the area thought of the perfect garden.

This great civilisation had a strong influence on the ones which followed, so that their gardens too observed the patterns laid down by the peoples of Mesopotamia. That is why we find the Mesopotamian type of garden today in the most distant parts of the world. One of the oldest gardens in existence is at the Alhambra, in Spain. Here, at the centre, is a beautiful stone courtyard in which two small streams cross – just as they did in Mesopotamia. Another famous garden is the one which has been laid out in front of the Taj Mahal, in India. This is also designed around two crossing streams, with the squares between them divided into other squares, and these in turn into other squares again.

So it should no longer surprise us to find square gardens in Europe. Now we can understand why Temple was so amazed to hear of the natural gardens of Japan.

Why is this story not better known? Well, Temple, you see, made a problem for us here. He said that these natural gardens were Chinese. That's right: Chinese, not Japanese. He had two reasons for this. One was that he had read a book about China, and found there were natural gardens there too. The other was that people at that time thought China and Japan were more or less the same place.

Let me give an example. Europe imported plates and dishes from this part of the world, Japan as well as China. But wherever they came from, they were known in English as 'china'. They still are. A few hundred years ago, the word 'japan' was used in the same way. 'Japan', in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was the English word for lacquerware – whether it came from Japan or China. So that when Temple talks about something from China, he could just as easily mean Japan.

How can we decide which he meant? Well, fortunately, he gave us a very important clue. As opposed to the geometrical gardens of Europe, in which the left and the right sides were balanced, and looked exactly the same, he tells us that these natural gardens did *not* look exactly the same on each side –

that they were unbalanced. And the word he used for this was *sharawadgi*.

There have been a number of attempts to fit Chinese characters – *kanji* – to this word, but none of them sounds close to *sharawadgi*, and none of them means what Temple meant. However, an English teacher who lived in Japan 70 years ago, a man called E.V. Gatenby, suggested that *sharawadgi* was a Japanese word. He thought it might be the older form of *sorowanai desho* – that the two halves of a design did not match. This form was *sorowaji*.

That's all he said. He was tracing words of Japanese origin for the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and he never took the matter any further. When I tried to do so, I immediately ran into trouble. Historians of the Japanese language told me that the form *sorowaji* died out four hundred years ago. Temple wrote a hundred years later. So how could he have heard a word which was no longer in use?

Now I was like the character in the *Arabian Nights* who cannot remember the phrase 'open, sesame' which will disclose a door in the rock and give him access to a treasure inside. I could sense the treasure inside, but the phrase I had didn't seem to be working. I puzzled over this for a long time, until at last a friend who taught at Tokyo University introduced me to Professor Kanai Madoka. Professor Kanai was involved in copying the documents of Dejima, which are still kept in the Netherlands, and bringing a set to Japan. And he was the one who supplied my 'open, sesame'.

Professor Kanai told me that yes, it was true that *sorowaji* had died out four hundred years ago – but only in standard Japanese. It had stayed alive in the dialect of Kyushu. Now if you try to pronounce *sorowaji* in *kyushu-ben*, what do you get? *Shorowaji*. And if you try to pronounce *shorowaji* in Dutch, you get what Temple got – *sharawaji*. And Temple, you remember, was ambassador to Holland.

That is the first part of my story: how the natural garden came to Europe, and why it seemed so strange in the Europe of that time. Now I'd like to go into the second part, and describe the adventures of the Japanese garden once it had

arrived in Europe. And this is perhaps even stranger.

This second part of the story also involves Temple. As British ambassador to the Netherlands, he arranged a marriage between a Dutch prince and an English princess, William and Mary. And when the English king of the time tried to make his power absolute, and overturn the law, the English drove him out and brought in William and Mary as king and queen. But they were king and queen, now, in a different way from before. They could no longer overrule the laws, as these were embodied in Parliament. Parliament now became a power in the land, in a system which has persisted to the present day, and been followed in many other countries. The English at the time called their new system the rule of liberty.

That is the end of Temple's connection with the story. He has been more or less forgotten today. When we think of him now, it is because of his secretary. This secretary of his wrote a famous book which I expect many of you have read, and which describes a visit to Japan. The book is *Gulliver's Travels*; and the secretary, yes, was called Swift.

Swift had a very good friend named Addison. Addison was particularly happy about the revolution which had freed the English people from the power of their king. He belonged to a family which supported the king, and in which he himself had had very little freedom. While he was still a child, he ran away from home and lived in the woods. When he was a little older, he organised a rebellion at school. And when the revolution came about, he wrote in support of it. Because he was so talented a writer, he was taken up by the revolutionary party, and eventually became chief minister in the government. He was prime minister in effect, but that title did not yet exist.

Addison wrote all his life in support of liberty, or freedom. He had noticed while travelling in France that the great French geometrical gardens were designed to express the power of the king. How could a garden be designed which would express the English idea of freedom? Yes, of course: by turning it into a natural garden. Addison copied out

Temple's account of Japan, and suggested that it be followed in England. The response was astonishing. Within a few years, the idea was taken up in books of garden design, and so the eighteenth century was a time of natural gardens in England – gardens that you can still see, like that garden outside my hometown which made me think of Japan. You remember my American professor told me that this was not coincidence. No, it wasn't. The garden designs of England, which spread all over Europe, started from the gardens of Japan.

But there was more involved here than the garden. Because he had suffered so greatly from lack of freedom in his family, Addison supported liberty in other ways as well. He supported the idea of emotional freedom. Just as he took the straight line out of the garden, he opposed the idea of reason as the leading principle of human nature. As nature replaced mathematics in the garden, so feeling replaced reason in Addison's thinking about human beings. He described this – natural feeling – as 'nature' too. In this way he began the return to nature in Europe that we describe as the Romantic movement.

So you see what a tremendous influence the Japanese garden has had, starting from a Dutch description of Kyoto, being carried from Holland to England by Temple, who also helped to bring about the English revolution, and so made it possible for Addison to combine the two ideas, the freedom of nature and the freedom of human nature, in one of the greatest artistic and intellectual movements of history.

I have just come from a conference on Romanticism in the Lake District of England. This beautiful region of lakes and mountains could be called the Romantic heartland of England – so much of its poetry was written there. Every year, scholars of the Romantic movement gather in that area from all over the world to discuss the latest findings in their subject. The theme of my lecture this summer was 'The Japanese Source of Romanticism'. I had imagined that some at least of the experts there might not agree that the Romantic movement had a Japanese source – that the idea

would be too new, too shocking, too strange. Instead they offered enthusiastic support. They seemed to feel that at last the origin of Romanticism, which has been a very puzzling subject, had been clarified. I am now confident that the Japanese influence will come to be taken as an accepted fact.

All of this is described in detail in a book I have written. When I had finished, I gave a great deal of thought to the title. In the end, I decided that only one title was possible. I called it *Sharawadgi*.

I hope you have enjoyed reading of the adventures of a Japanese word, and how it changed the world. For myself, the subject has one more personal meaning. When I was at school, I liked to go to a hill which looks out over my hometown. This lies in a river-valley, with another range of

hills beyond, over which I liked to watch the sunset. The place I sat is marked by the ruins of a seventeenth-century house. All you can see today are the foundations, but while that house stood, it was lived in by Temple. At that time Ireland was ruled from England, and he represented my part of Ireland in parliament. He went out from here to become ambassador to the Netherlands, where he heard a strange story about Japan. It was the story I have just told you.

When I sat at that place so many years ago, I thought I might one day like to write a history of my hometown. I could never have imagined that, in order to do so, it would be necessary to come to Kyoto, to sit quietly in one of its gardens, and to discover something of Japanese culture.

日本の女子大生 私の視点から



張 墨 竹
Zhang Mozhu

My Views on Women College Students in Japan

Summary

“Japanese girls are pretty,” was my first thought I had in Shinshu University. After half a year of international student life, I have managed to know something about the ways of studying and living of women college students in Japan. They are roughly classed into two groups: those who have unclear ways and those who have steady ways. Most of them, however, make themselves look silly and hide true characters of themselves. Japanese girls make others feel good through what they say and their appearance and at the same time make their own living environments comfortable. I can personally point out at least three interesting characteristics of their psychology in their deep minds.

First, Japanese girls feel free and do not hesitate to show their beauty, which helps others get good impression of them together with their daily greetings in the morning and praises given frequently to others. Second, women college students in Japan put emphasis on human relations. Before a class of general education course begins, students from different faculties get in the classroom one after another. All of the women students exchange greetings as if they keep a certain kind of rule. When they are walking in the campus and see any of their friends, they never fail to say something to be

recognised. They meticulously find whatever merits others might have, admiring them by saying “You’re incredible,” to please them. The third characteristic, the most common one among Japanese girls, can be found in their traits of hiding true characters of themselves. I think that the third characteristic causes them to perform actions of the types mentioned in the description of the first and second characteristics. When they praise others or tell pleasant stories, they tacitly let them know that they do not intend to be their competitors. If their stories are believed by others, they can easily get several kinds of information from them. They build good surroundings for their own growing up under that situation, and that they are careful enough for others not to notice their growth.

Thus, women college students in Japan, contrary to their appearances, have a very tough side in their characters. But I think that it is not one of their negative characters. Each of them has experienced various situations in the Japanese society and it is the secret of her way of living she has acquired in the course of this training. Although it is different from any Chinese secret for living, it may be that I should follow it while I am in Japan.

1. はじめに

「日本の女の子はかわいい」これは、信州大学に来て、初めての感想であった。去年の11月、中国の北京はもう晩秋の候、筆者は聴講生として信州大学にやってきて、初めての留学生生活を始めた。キャンパスを散策していた時、笑いながら、おしゃべりを楽しみつつ歩く女子大生達をよく見かけた。彼女達の青春の明るさは、キャンパスの一つの風景になっていた。

今年の4月、正式に入学し、経済学部的一年生になった。勉強やサークルなどの活動を通し、多くの女子大生と知り合った。彼女達と一緒に遊ぶことや勉強することなどを通して、筆者は、何となくまだ中国にいるような印象を持った。日本の女子大生達と少ししゃべってみると、話の内容から雰囲気まで、筆者の高校時代の友達との雑談と大きな差がなく、ホームシックのストレスも解消できた。しかし、日本の女子大生の外見は、中国の女の子達と全く異なっていることも気になった。例えば、日本の女子大生は、ほぼ全てが化粧をする。もちろん、これは別に悪いことではないが、中国の大学では、珍しいことといえる。中国の大部分の学生の考え方では、通常、個人的な学識が外見より重要と見られる。したがって、各種のテストでいい成績を取るために、皆、少々暗く見えるかもしれないが、努力している。女の子も、勉強一筋に取りくんでいるのである。きれいな薄い化粧をすることや、はやっているファッションをしてアクセサリーを使い、自分をかわいく飾る女の子は、かえってバカにされるかもしれない。また、日本の女子大生は、よく人を褒める。女子大生が何人か一緒にいると、

さんはかわいくて話がどんなにおもしろいか、または××さんの頭がどんなによくて成績がいいかという話がよく聞かれる。もしくは、誰でもできることなのに、よく、「すごい」という賛美の話が伝えてくる。これは中国では、絶対にしないことである。筆者からみると、人を褒めることは、相手のある部分が自分より優れていて、自分もそれが評価できると感じて口に出すことである。もし、相手のことを無分別に褒めたら、自分を軽視することになるのではないかと考える。また、中国の受験戦争は非常に激しいため、少なくとも口では「誰にも負けたくない」と言うのである。したがって、中国の女の子の間では、褒めことば

が少ないわけである。

そこで筆者は当初、一生懸命化粧をしたり、すぐに人をほめたりするのは、日本の女子大生が甘いからではないかと考えていた。しかし、その行動の裏には、様々な心理が働いているようである。多くの行動に接するうちに、その心理が見えてきたように感じている。本稿では、日本人の女子大生の深層心理について、筆者の視点から、述べることにする。

2. 「すごいネ」

友人「レポートは進んでる？」、私「経済史のやつ？」、友人「うん」、私「もう出したよ」、友人「すごい」。以上はある友人との対話の一つである。課題を出すことは学生としての当たり前のことじゃないかと思うが、ほめられて気持ちがよかった。

筆者から見ると、「すごい」という言葉は、日本の女子大生の言葉の中で、使う頻度が最も高い言葉のように感じる。日本人の友達と一緒にいると、以上述べたような些細なことであっても褒められる。初めのうちは、何をしても褒め言葉が聞こえてきて気持ちがよかったが、その後、次第に嫌になっていった。誰でもできることであっても、「すごい」という賛美の言葉を、むしろバカにされているんじゃないかと考えるようになった。そして、日本語の「すごい」という形容詞の使い方も、よく分からなくなっていった。

中国では、もし誰かまわりの人に褒められたら、とてもうれしいことである。まず、中国では、皆に「すごい」と思われるレベルにならなくては、絶対に「いい」とは言わない。また、人に褒められることは、自分の努力が皆に認められることであり、したがってとても嬉しいことである。中国にいた時、筆者も周囲の人から褒め言葉をかけてもらうために努力していた。しかも、褒められることは、最も記憶に残る喜びである。しかし、日本に来て以来、筆者は頻繁に褒められた。今では、筆者はこれらの褒めことばに少々無神経になった。以前の喜びは全然なくなってしまった。ある時など、「これは反語ではないか」と迷うほどであった。その後、日本の女子大生との接触が多くなるにつれ、この「すごい」という言葉について、少し感覚がつか

めるようになってきた。

新学期が始まってまもなく、筆者は、スポーツ実習の授業で、バドミントンを選んだ。以前中国で、友達ともバドミントンをしたことがあったが、それは遊びに過ぎず、基本的な動作などが分からない。ある日、友達と昼食を食べた時、Mという友人にスポーツは何を取っているのか聞かれた。バドミントンと答えた。基本的な動作は全然できないから、初めから勉強したくて、前期のバドミントンを取ったと続けた。今の授業では何をやっているのかとMが続けて聞いた。「ゲームの形でやっているけど、毎回の授業の始めは、基本的な動作を練習している。今、スマッシュをやっているの」と答えた。Mは「すごいネ」と言った。なぜ、ここで「すごいネ」を使うのだろう。今の授業は、レベルが高いすごいことをしているのか、と訳が分からなくなった。おそらく、Mはバドミントンをやったことがないので、スマッシュが難しいと考えたのだろうと推測した。この数週間後、ゼミの時間に誰かがスポーツをやろうと提議し、皆で相談のうえ、バドミントンをやることになった。筆者は、仲がよいMとペアを組んで、ダブルスのゲームを始めた。不思議なことに、Mはコートに入ると、まるでプロのようにジャンプし、スマッシュし、ネットの前で絶対にとれそうもないシャトルを拾ったりしていた。実に自然にコートの中を移動していた。とても初心者などではなかった。筆者の存在はかえって邪魔になったように感じた。筆者は思わず「Mさん、すごい」と言った。

筆者からみると、日本語の「すごい」という言葉は、あいさつの言葉というよりも、人間関係を良好にこなすための用語としたほうがよりふさわしいように感じる。日本の女子大生が人を褒めるのは、相手を安心させ、自分は相手の競争の相手にならないことを分からせるためである。そのようにして、相手との関係を良好に保とうとしているのだ。

3. 「私はトップになりたい」

「日本の女の子は勉強しない」これは、筆者が中国にいた時に、日本の女子大生に対して持っていたイメージであった。なぜならば、筆者の出身校では、第一外国語の授業として日本語を教えるので、毎年、日本から来る数多くの

修学旅行の学生達と交流会などを行うことになる。おしゃべり会の際、筆者達はよく来訪の日本人学生に「将来の夢は何？」という質問をした。答えの多くは「結婚」であった。これを聞いて、筆者は驚いた。中国の女の子の中では、「仕事で一人立ちしてから、家庭を作る」という言葉が流行している。つまり経済的な独立は、非常に重要視されているのである。学校を出てすぐ結婚することは、まだ社会的にも経済的にも独立していないのに家庭にしばられることであり、悲しいことではないかと考えていた。このように考えれば、学校での勉強も無意味になり、もしかしたら、彼女達は勉強しないのかもしれないと想像した。

日本に来たばかりのころ、この考えは正しいと思っていた。新入生のオリエンテーションが終わったばかりの頃、多くの友達は各種のサークルのガイダンスに出るために忙しそうであった。最後には、一人平均して少なくとも二つぐらいのサークルに入ったようである。また、ほとんど誰もがしている、週に2、3回のアルバイトを加えると、勉強する暇などないのではないかと予想された。筆者の本意では、勉強に集中したかったので、サークルなどにはあまり入りたくなかったのであるが、逆に考えれば、サークルや部活などに入れば、より多くの人と接触することができ、多くの人と話せば、日本語の勉強になるのではないかと考えるようになった。そこで、友達に誘われ、あるサークルに入った。

サークルで、Aという女子学生と知り合った。Aは非常に個性のある学生であり、筆者は、彼女の上質な化粧と欧米風のファッションによくひきつけられる。Aは、運動好きでもあり、週に一回のスポーツの時には、ほぼ毎回、運動場でAの活躍している姿を見かける。Aと少し話してみると、話は「キャンプに行こう」というような遊びの内容ばかりであり、勉強にはまるで関心がない様子であった。しかし、このことは、筆者がサークルに入った目的とうまく合致した。Aとは仲良く遊ぶことができ、話すことができるので、一緒にいれば日本語の上達もきっと早いだろうと考え、何回かの触れ合いの後、筆者とAは親しい友達になった。

Aとの付き合いが深くなるにつれ、筆者は、よく近くにいるAが、以前イメージしていたAと同じ人ではないとい

うことに気づいてきた。筆者は図書館で資料を調べる時、窓のそばの決まった席に座っている理学部・数学専門のAが、静かに、かつ真剣に計算をしている姿をよく見かける。また、同じ専門の他の女子学生がどんなに勉強しないかを、たまにもらしてくれる。このような例から、Aはおそらく勉強に熱心な人だと感じるようになってきた。これは、グラウンド上のAとは、全く異なる人間である。

ある日曜日に、Aの提案に従い、筆者の部屋で、日本料理教室を行った。私達はAが作ってくれた肉じゃがを食べながら、話し始めた。話は次第に受験勉強の話題になった。中国の戦争のような受験競争を経験してきた筆者は、「中国に比べると、日本には受験勉強がない」と言った。するとすぐに、Aは「ある。日本にも受験戦争は確かにある」と応じてきた。そして「試験の前には、みんな、敵みたいにお互いに話もしない。その時、私はよくクラスの男の子に、私は君の入れない大学に入るつもりだと言っていた。」と続けた。そのライバル意識に満ちた話を聞き、「Aさんは成績がよかったですよね」と聞くと、Aは少々恥ずかしそうに「成績から見ると、私のテストの点数はトップ集団に入っていた。でも私の上にはいつも3人の男の子がいた。彼らの頭は私と同じレベルじゃなかった。彼らを追い越そうとするのも私のストレスになった。本当は、頭から考えると、私は周りの女の子達にも及ばない。だから、頑張らないと、成績がすぐに落ちるかもしれない」と言った。「ああ、Aも努力家なんだ」と筆者は心の中で感嘆した。

Aは、確かに真剣に努力する人である。私達は仲が次第に良くなるにつれ、一緒に勉強するようになった。筆者の分からない数学の問題が出ると、Aが丁寧に教えてくれる。その際に、Aの厳密な思惟方法に、筆者はよく感心させられる。しかし、図書館を出ると、Aは再び以前と変わらない様子になり、友達との会話を楽しみ、よく笑い、話の内容も遊ぶことばかりの女の子になる。おそらく、私達は学部が異なることで直接の競争関係にないために、Aもまじめな話をしてくれるのだと考えている。そして、仮の姿だけでなく、自分の真剣な姿も見せてくれるのである。

日本の女子大生は、本来は持っている自分のライバル意識を内面に隠しているのである。誰を追い抜くと口には出さないが、自分一人でコツコツ努力しているのである。そ

の裏で、人にはバカな自分を見せる。努力していないように、勉強せずに遊んでばかりいるように見せる。こうして、周りの人の目につかないようにし、自分に警戒心を持たせないようにし、自分に有利な成長環境を作っているのである。

4. 「モクちゃん、オース」

新学期が始まってまもなくのある朝、筆者はぎりぎりの時間まで寝ていたので、1限の授業の教室へ急いでいく途中、突然、どこからともなく「モクちゃん、オース」という明るい声が聞こえてきた。道を急いでいた筆者は、非常に驚いた。あたりを見回していると、10メートルぐらい離れている所に友達のスと別の女の子一人が一緒にいるのを見つけた。Sは私のほうを向いて、手を振っていたのである。筆者もすぐに反応して、向こうに手を振り返した。それから、みんな各自の教室のほうへ向かった。その日は1日、ずっと気持ちがよかった。おそらく、その朝のあいさつの効用のためだろうと考えている。それからもよく、キャンパスの中で、バイト先で、ほとんど友達と会うたびに、「モクちゃん、オース」と声をかけられる。私も「郷に入っては、郷に従え」のように、「ちゃん、オース」と大きな声で言うことにしている。実は、筆者も次第にこのあいさつの仕方に慣れてきたのである。また、日本人の友達と一緒にキャンパスを歩いていた時、隣にいるその友達が筆者と話しながらも、周囲に目をやっていることが気になった。その時、その友達は突然「Bちゃん、おはよう」と声をかけた。友達の視線に沿って、ようやく、前にBが歩いているのを見つけた。Bはあいさつを聞いてすぐに、「オース、オース」と連発した。Bとは簡単なあいさつをしてから、別れた。それからも、「Fちゃん、Fちゃん」、「Oちゃん、おはよう」といったあいさつが続けて飛び出してきた。短い道なのに、筆者もその友達の影響で、初めて多くの人とあいさつを交わすことができた。体力的にも、心理的にも、多少疲れがあるが、今までに感じたことがない愉快さを感じた。このことから、筆者は、自分の視野が周りの女の子より狭いということを確認した。例えば、筆者が人とあいさつしなければならぬと考える範囲は、日本人の女の子と異なっているのである。筆者の考えでは、

自分を支点に、2メートル以上離れていればあいさつの範囲ではないと判断する。相手と遠く離れていてもあいさつすると、相手は筆者のことが気になり、筆者がいる場所を探さなければならない。これでは、相手にも迷惑ではないかと考えていた。また、大声で、人の名前を呼ぶと、呼ばれた人が恥ずかしくなると考えていた。以上のような理由で、筆者は中国にいた時、自分の真正面にやってくる人へのみ声をかけていた。これ以外の場合はあいさつしなくても、失礼だと考えなかった。これに対し、日本の女の子の「視野」ははるかに広いのである。知り合いが遠くにいても、会うたびに必ず声をかける。

在日期間が長くなるにつれ、筆者は、このあいさつの仕方慣れるようになった。最後には自分もこのようにするのもいいのではないかと考えるようになった。大きな声で、相手の名前を呼ぶことは、相手にいいイメージを与えることができ、自分のことを相手により注意してもらうためだと考える。また、大きな声で呼び合うことで仲が親密だという態度を前面に出し、相手との関係をより補強し、さらに周囲の人に、自分達の関係のよさを知らしめる意味があるのではないかと考える。

5. 結論

日本の女子大生は、あいまいな人としてしっかりやっている人と、大きく2種類に分かれているが、ほとんどの人は、人にバカな自分を見せて、本当の自分を隠している。日本の女の子は、自分の言葉や格好などで、相手にいい気持ちを与えるとともに、自分が過ごしやすい生活環境を作っているのである。

半年あまりの留学生生活を通して、筆者は日本の女子大生の勉強態度や生活態度について、少々理解できるようになった。個人的には、日本の女子大生の深層心理について、

主に三つ興味深い点があると思う。まず、日本の女の子は、自分の持っている美しさを、少しもけちけちせず、遠慮せずに前面に出す。日本の女の子は、しっかり青春を楽しんでいる。丁寧に化粧をすることや、ファッションの流行に敏感に反応することなど、みんなが極力、自分の美しさを人に誇示しようとしているようである。これは、朝、会ったときのあいさつ、及び頻りに交わされる褒め言葉とともに、相手にいい気持ちを与える。二つ目に、日本の女子大生は非常に人間関係を重視している。一般教養の授業の前に、学部が異なっている学生が続々と教室に入るが、みなルールを守るように、教室に入りながらあいさつを交わしている。したがって、教室の中には、やさしい友好的な雰囲気が満ちている。キャンパスを歩いている時にも、知り合いに一人も漏らさずに声をかける。相手のいいところを細大もろさず見つけ、「すごい、すごい」と褒め、相手を喜ばせる。三つ目は、日本の女の子の中で最も共通している所だと思われるが、本当の自分を隠していることである。失礼になるかもしれないが、上述した一つ目と二つ目は、三つ目のためにしているのではないかと考える。相手を褒めることや、甘い話を聞かせるなどして、相手に自分が競争の相手ではないことを暗に伝える。もし、相手がこの話を信じれば、相手から各種の情報を受け取りやすいようになる。そうしておいて、自分の成長に適した環境を作っている。しかも、周囲の目に気づかれないように成長していけるよう注意している。

このように、日本の女子大生は、外見とは裏腹に非常にしたたかな面もあわせ持っている。しかし、それは批判すべきものではないように考える。日本の社会の中で、各人が様々な状況でもまれるうちに、体得してきた処世術なのであろう。それは、中国の処世術とは異なるものではあるが、日本にいる間は、利用してもいいものなのかもしれない。

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スタッフ・日本語教師一同 その他受講生の皆さん

(敬称略・順不同)

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編集後記

さわやかな風が木々の緑をわたってきます。言葉や習慣は違っても互いを認め、手をたずさえようと、京都の町で始めたわたしたちの小さな歩みも、皆様のご協力のお蔭でここまで重ねてくることができました。ニューズレター27号をお届けいたします。ご支援はもとより、ご意見やご批判もお寄せください。お待ちしております。

Dear Readers,

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