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JAPAN AS IMAGES: CROSSING VIEWPOINTS OF EUROPE AND JAPAN

Regioninės studijos (4)

Edited by Dr. Kyoko Koma
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GREETING FROM THE AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN

It is very natural for anybody to be conscious about what kind of image he or she might get from other people. In my case the Image of Japan links directly with my occupation as a diplomat. In other words it is my duty first of all to raise public interest among Lithuanian people about Japan and to bring about as good and as favorable image as possible, then to develop frequent exchanges of contacts between Japan and Lithuania in various levels and fields to the extent of mutually sustainable and beneficial relations.

Frequently it is mentioned that the Japanese people are relatively too sensitive or too self-conscious about their image. The reasons behind such opinion could be firstly Japan’s geographical position as isolated by sea. Secondly in addition to such geographical position Japan took the close-door policy to the rest of the world for almost two centuries and a half in the past. So simply to say the Japanese were not used to associate with other people until recent years and they are nervous about how they would be evaluated. Moreover the Japanese are always looking for what is the best or No.1 of the world and do their best to catch it up. In return they cannot stop but ranking themselves.

Recently I’ve read the report on ranking of the world’s nation brands provided by GfK Roper Public Affairs & Media. The country’s brand image is evaluated by combination of the power and quality index in six dimensions such as exports, governance, culture and heritage, people, tourism, and investment and immigration. According to the report Japan’s total Nation Brand Index is the fifth among 50 nations after USA, France, Germany and UK, and only one nation from Asia among top twenty. Highest index is in exports as no.1 and in culture and tourism as no.8. But investment and immigration is as low as no.10. This is of course just one of the tools to be referred when we consider our position in the International communities but very interesting one.

The symposium organized by Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas under the subject of “Japan as Images: Crossing Viewpoints of Europe and Japan” made also unique impression in the direction of Japanese Study. The reports were made from wide range of interests and unique viewpoints. I hope that this booklet of reports will bring about more curiosity among readers to make their own image of Japan. And for the scholars and researchers themselves I sincerely hope that it would create new dimension of their study about Japan.

H.E. Miyoko AKASHI
Ambassador of Japan to Lithuania
The book *Japan as Images: Crossing Viewpoints of Europe and Japan* is a journal in which European and Japanese scholars discuss the images of Japan from the European and Japanese perspective interdisciplinary and internationally. The observation of Japan from the European perspective has been done from *The Travels of Marco Polo*, an impressionistic description of Japan written by a Catholic missionary in the 16th century, influencing Japonism, an aesthetic vogue for Japanese things from the mid-19th century to the present time. Thus images on Japan are constructed by a kind of accumulation of several historical and present descriptions of Japan. What is more, the period of publishing this journal is the time when the most globalized society and the most developed electronic media could be found and when various imaginary worlds constructed by the media are diffused in the world. During this time, the images of Japan constructed in the crossing of the other’s viewpoints and the self viewpoints tend to be recognized as “real Japan,” which, on the one hand, permits to promote intercultural comprehension but, on the another hand, risks to generate prejudice on Japan.

Therefore, we think that it is very important to perceive Japan from the images shared by others and self and to promote mutual Japanese-European understanding this way. This journal presents the papers under 4 main themes: the images of Japan from the linguistic and cultural perspective; the image of Japan in art and fiction; the image of Japan from the religious perspective and the image of Japan from the public diplomacy approach.

The first chapter is composed of 4 papers: “Myths and Binaries in Discourses on Japanese Photography” discussed by Marco Bohr of the University of Westminster; “Japanese as ‘the Devil’s language’ – An Essay on Linguistic Prejudice” presented by Professor Yoshihiko Ikegami of Tokyo University/Showa Women’s University; “The Cognitive Functions of “Distanciation:” the Image of Japan in the Works of Endō Shūsaku” analysed by Justyna Weronika Kasza of the University of Leeds; “Stereotypes and Foreign words: The Term *Kawaii* in French National Newspapers
(1999-2009)” discussed by Kyoko Koma of Vytautas Magnus University. This chapter focuses on the problem of language, constructing the images of Japan from a stereotyped meta-language on Japanese photography, the image of the Japanese language itself, the cognitive analysis of the Japanese writer Endō Shūsaku works and the usage of the Japanese word kawaii in the French media. In this chapter, Agnese Hajiima of the University of Latvia also proposes her research note “The Image of Nature in Contemporary Urbanized Japanese Society with the Focus on Eco-tourism as One of the Possible Spheres of Exchange between Japan and the Baltic States.”

The second chapter “Image of Japan in art and fiction” starts with a special contribution “Takarazuka Revue in Lithuania” by Professor Takashi Kitamura of Osaka University, who presents the first performance of Takarazuka theatre in Lithuania in 1975 as one of first cultural exchanges between Lithuania and Japan. This chapter includes 4 papers: “Japanese ceramics and the emblems of Japan at the French universal exhibitions in the second half of 19th century” discussed by Ms. Mariko Akutsu of Lyon 3 University; “A Self-Portrait of Japan and the Japanese in the 1970s: Interpretations of Renzo and Sayoko Kinoshita’s Animated Films” presented by Dr. Yoshiko Ikeda of Osaka University; “Amelie Nothomb’s novel Fear and Trembling: revealing the Japanese ethotype through fiction” analysed by Dr. Jean-Paul Honoré, Associate Professor at Paris-Est University and “Imaginary Japanese film: a creation of Western techno-orientalism, Japanese soft nationalism and narcissism” presented by Mr. Sten-Kristian Saluveer of Tallinn University. The contributions of this chapter reveal the images of Japan by discussing Japanese ceramics, Japanese animated films representing Japan when it realized its economic growth, discourse analysis of a novel by Amelie Nothomb and the analysis of modern Japanese film tendencies from the point of view of cultural studies. Ms. Hiroko Kugishima also presents her research note “Dual images of “An Ideal Japanese Woman” in a critical historical period ----- Through the analysis of A Daughter of the Samurai” in this chapter.

The third chapter contains 3 papers discussing the image of Japan from the religious point of view, Shamanism, Shinto, Zen and Catholicism: “Questioning the Image of Japan as a Miko Country: Representation of Shamanism in Ancient Japanese Myths” by Ms. Shchepetunina Marina of Osaka University; “Natural Shinto Images and Transcendental Zen Frame” by Professor Algis Mickunas of Ohio University and “Representations of
Modern Japan in the *Missions Catholiques*” by Mr. Atsushi Yamanashi of School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences.

The last chapter “The image of Japan from public diplomacy approach” presents the article “The Idea of Country’s Umbrella Image in Japanese Public Diplomacy” by Mr. Aurelijus Zykas of Vytautas Magnus University based on his newest empirical research.

These papers, which discuss several aspects of Japan images could emphasis, on the one hand, the fact that the images on Japan are not simple but complex, constructed by the accumulation of several historical repeated descriptions of Japan, and, on the another hand, the possibility to analyse them from several points of view. We hope that this journal is our first step to contribute to the promotion of Japanese studies in Europe and mutual understanding between Europe and Japan.

We express our sincere gratitude to Japan Foundation for the generous support while publishing this journal.

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SUBMISSION
A digital copy of the author's contribution must be sent to the publications coordinator of the Journal via e-mail (see below).

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If the article contains pictures or graphs, they must be presented in separate files. Files should be in .tiff or .jpg format and of sufficient resolution (at least 300dpi). Graphs should be in Excel format.

REVIEW PROCEDURE
Submissions will be subject to a double-blind refereeing procedure, unless they are submitted by invitation. Authors should be aware that papers submitted to the Journal should not be simultaneously submitted for review to any other publications.

Authors will be given the opportunity to purchase offprints of their paper once typesetting has been finalised. Authors will receive one free copy of the issue containing their contribution.

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Articles prepared for publication must have the following structural components in the following sequence:
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- Body text;
- Endnotes;
- References;
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Size: The size of the article is not limited.

Page layout and fonts: The articles must be in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) format. Titles of introduction, chapters and subchapters are typed using 15 pt. bold font size (lowercase). They are left aligned. Numbering and bullets are not needed.

Acronyms, foreign words and names: Surnames are provided in original language, e.g. J. J. Rousseau.

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For contributions written in English, Lithuanian, French, German, the words of the non Latin script based languages should be Romanized. Original word in original script, written in the brackets after Romanization is optional.

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Examples of references in the text:

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“Regioninės studijos“ (Regional studies) is an academic journal devoted to interdisciplinary area studies. It was established in 2006 at Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania, and currently is coordinated by three institutions of the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy: the Regional Studies Department, the Japanese Studies Centre and the Centre for Studies in Multilingualism and Intercultural Communication.

The articles of this issue discuss the images of Japan from the European and Japanese perspectives interdisciplinary and internationally. They emphasise, on the one hand, the fact that the images on Japan are not simple but complex, constructed by the accumulation of several historical repeated descriptions of Japan, and, on the another hand, the possibility to analyse them from several points of view.

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