

# Perspectives

The Japan Foundation London Newsletter

## Beyond the Century of Confrontation

A personal reflection by James Mayall

Peace-time summits seldom result in major new initiatives or an immediate change of direction in world affairs. That is not their primary function. But they are concerned with agenda setting and legitimacy. In other words they help to establish the tone for more substantive diplomacy in the period ahead.

Through a careful selection of a particular location by the host government, summits also provide world leaders with an opportunity to demonstrate that international relations at the highest level is guided by the interests and preoccupations, not merely of a narrow elite, but of ordinary people. Whether they take this opportunity is another question, and on this occasion the Western media was noticeably critical of the G8's lack of collective will. Summits, however, cannot substitute for detailed and usually prolonged negotiation on intractable issues, and their justification requires a longer term perspective.

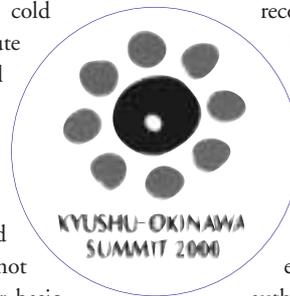
Certainly, the Japanese Government should be congratulated on the choice of Okinawa as the site of the last G8 summit of the twentieth century, as should the Japan Foundation on its decision to hold four symposia - the last also in Okinawa - to reflect on the problems confronting the G8 in the new century, away from the immediate pressures to which the leaders themselves would inevitably be subject. Okinawa was an inspired location as one of those places whose place in twentieth century world history had been tragically forced on it rather than freely chosen. It is also home to a people whose distinct identity and autonomy was historically achieved by what one participant described as creative ambiguity in dealing with a world of competing powers and allegiances. If there was one point of agreement amongst the participants it was that while, in the absence of world government, there was no alternative to G8 leadership, it should be exercised on behalf of the world community and not merely to protect the interests of the affluent countries. If globalisation is to be

harnessed creatively to preserve the welfare and identity of local communities, rather than tearing them apart and threatening world order, Okinawa might usefully stand as a role model in many more troubled parts of the world.

Modern technology - the impact of which for better or worse was to be a major theme in the discussions - was a feature of the symposium from the start. Its proceedings were broadcast on the Internet and were opened by two keynote addresses, delivered by video, by former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa and Mrs. Sadako Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Their contributions symbolised the hope but also the formidable problems that accompanied the end of the cold war. While Mandela paid tribute to the role of the international community in bringing about the end to apartheid, he also argued strongly that the advantages of liberalisation and democratisation would be forfeited if a way was not found to address the need for basic rights in the developing world. Similarly, Mrs. Ogata urged the major powers to mediate more effectively in local conflicts, even when their own interests were not directly involved, but also warned against the tendency to see democracy as an automatic solution regardless of whether the sense of community and levels of trust existed, which would support the construction of genuine democratic institutions. The third keynote speaker, the French sociologist, Edgar Morin, then set the scene by putting these contending ideas of universal rights and particular, and often antagonistic, identities into a broad historical perspective which stretched back to the sixteenth century.

It is difficult in a few words to convey the flavour of the panel discussions that followed. They ranged across many cultural, economic,

political and security issues, some like third world debt and nuclear weapons, left over from the cold war era, others such as ethnic and religious conflict and environmental degradation, that have risen to prominence in its aftermath. The recommendations with which the panellists closed the symposium is perhaps the most effective way of summarising its proceedings. Since they included a French Central Banker, an Italian former Minister of Science and Technology, two Professors of International Relations from Britain and Germany, a former Ambassador and President of the Japan Institute of International Affairs and a leading Japanese playwright and University President, not surprisingly their recommendations, like the discussion itself, ranged from the visionary to the down to earth. They included an international research institute to study cultural and civilisational values on a comparative basis, the establishment of a Security Council for the protection of the environment, the restoration of the authority of the UN Security Council after Nato's intervention in Kosovo, the strengthening of the nuclear non proliferation regime and the destruction of existing stockpiles, conventional as well as nuclear disarmament with an immediate ban on the international trade in light weapons, and the creation of an accountable system of world governance rather than government through the reform of the United Nations system. International action on any or all of these recommendations would provide genuine grounds for optimism.



**Professor Mayall participated in the Symposium upon the invitation of the Japan Foundation and is Professor of International Relations at the University of Cambridge and of the Centre for International Studies.**

# Japan 2001 Update

## Travelling exhibitions from the Japan Foundation Collection

In the last issue we gave you brief details about the three travelling exhibitions that are available for loan during the JAPAN 2001 period.

### Painting for Joy: New Japanese Paintings in the 1990s

This exhibition is the Japan Foundation's first attempt to present contemporary art in a travelling exhibition abroad. It features 37 works by nine Japanese artists all of whom were born in the late 1950s and early 60s and who began to achieve prominence up to and during the 1990s. Takashi Murakami and Makoto Aida were forerunners in Japanese contemporary art and Taro Chiezo and Miran Fukuda are both internationally known. Many of the works are representative of the times in which the artists lived and each share a desire to establish the fertility of painting as a form and to retain communication between work and viewer. The exhibition depicts a great variety of styles and a broad range of topic and subject matter. The artists are: Makoto Aida, Yoshitaka Echizenya, Miran Fukuda, Takanobu Kobayashi, Naofumi Maruyama, Takashi Murakami, Yoshitomo Nara, Nobuhiko Nukata and Taro Chiezo.

The exhibition requires about 60 linear metres and catalogues are available free of charge. Further details and loan requests, contact Junko Takekawa.

### Work 1991-1995

This exhibition is a collection of 63 panels by the photographer, George Hashiguchi in which he has photographed and interviewed people representing different occupations within Japanese society. The panels are designed to be viewed along with the catalogue (provided free of charge) which gives descriptions in English of the working lives of the people interviewed, their feelings about their job, their dreams and their aspirations. The exhibition covers an interesting cross section of occupations that make up the rich myriad of Japanese society, from miso brewer and food sample modeler to mortuary cosmetologist, from deep-sea diver to schoolteacher, from construction worker to tatami maker.

18 panels 56 x 65 cms.

45 panels 65 x 85.5 cms.

Further details and loan requests to Stephen McEnally.



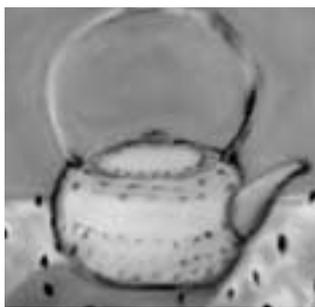
Subtitle Calligrapher, TADA Junko

### Japanese Manga Exhibition

The manga comic boom is now gaining ground in the UK. This exhibition takes us back to the roots of Japan's manga culture with a magnificent compilation of drawings by leading Japanese manga artists that have appeared in magazines over the years. It shows the wide variety in style and

narrative of this unique aspect of Japanese culture and offers a rare chance to see the works of such a large number of manga exponents in one exhibition.

Size: 150 linear metres. 350 x 400 sq metres. Catalogue available free of charge. Further details and loan requests to Junko Takekawa.



Iron Pot

by Naofumi Maruyama



In the White Room II  
by Yoshitomo Nara

*Big E no Higeke*  
The Tragedy of Big E  
by Jun Ishikawa  
From K,  
Futabasha, 1989



## SPOTLIGHT

### Exhibition of Shinto Art at the British Museum

One of the flagship events that we shall be co-organising and supporting is an exhibition of Shinto Art to be held at the British Museum during the three-month period September to December 2001. Victor Harris, Keeper of the Museum's Department of Japanese Antiquities and Curator of the exhibition, gives us a preview.

Following the success of two exhibitions showing the arts associated with major oriental religions, Arts of Buddhism in 1985 and Hinduism in 1992, the British Museum is to be the venue for a major exhibition of Japanese arts associated with Shinto which is to open on 5 September 2001 as a part of JAPAN 2001.

The exhibition will show material borrowed by the Agency for Cultural Affairs from over seventy Japanese shrines, temples and museum collections, and will be funded largely by the Japan Foundation. It aims to demonstrate how Shinto has been the nurse and guardian to the arts and crafts through the ages.

There will be several sections presented in reverse chronological order as described here. The first room will be devoted to impressive wood sculptures and paintings of the Heian and Kamakura periods depicting both pure Shinto icons and their syncretic Buddhist hybrids. Shinto ritual is represented by painted screens showing seasonal festivals, and masks used in sacred dramas. The exhibition then progresses back through time to the arrival of Buddhism in the 6th and 7th centuries, then the establishment of the creation myths and founding of the unified nation during the Kofun period, the significant early contacts with China in the Yayoi period, and finally the origins of Japanese culture during the Jomon period.

It is one of the remarkable aspects of Japanese culture that objects which may be several hundred or over a thousand years old have been

preserved and appear as new, illustrating a particular awareness of, and respect for the spiritual in material things at the heart of Shinto. This is strikingly evident during the Kofun period, particularly within iron production and high temperature kiln technology. The iron sword, the bronze mirror and jewel were then adopted as the *sanshu no shingi*, the sacred objects of Shinto. Fine examples are included in a section, which also includes ritual pottery and *haniwa* figures. Another section is devoted to *go shimpo*, the shrine treasures intended for the everyday symbolic use of the *kami*, and includes objects from daily life - clothing, arms and armour, and other equipment in near-perfect condition.

Around the 3rd century BC, people arrived from the Asian mainland bringing agricultural and bronze technology. The first bronze bells, mirrors, and cutting weapons they brought were accorded a holy status, and have been found ritually buried in several early centres of power. Several bronze pieces of this period are decorated with hunting scenes. Others show aspects of the vital rice culture, which has influenced much of Shinto practice.

Finally, Japan's Jomon culture which existed from at least 10,000 BC is represented by a large number of Jomon ceramics from early times through to late Jomon, including some of the mysterious 'flaming' pots, vessels decorated with human and animal forms, and complete figurines. Jomon peoples enjoyed largely peaceful and stable lives with an abundance of natural resources which

must have given rise to a sense of gratitude to nature. An appreciation of natural, even accidental, beauty - a step beyond Man's artifice - is considered as the basis for the Japaneseness of Japanese art. Thus we draw attention to the exquisite metallurgical phenomena of hue and texture of polished sword blades, and the enduring fascination of natural glaze on ceramics.

**Victor Harris**



Kasuga Deer Mandala (Kamakura period)  
Nara National Museum

## Homestay UK

This is a core education project for JAPAN 2001 and is jointly run by the Japan Festival Education Trust (JFET) and the Japan Foundation London Nihongo Centre. It will give learners of the Japanese language between the age of 11 to 19 the chance to spend the weekend with Japanese families living in the UK. We are grateful to the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation for their very generous and substantial grant towards the total cost of the project and also to the Nippon Club.

A pilot project was run in June and July this year in which 5 students between the ages of

12 and 17 each spent a weekend with a Japanese family. It was an opportunity to test the project before it goes live during JAPAN 2001 with far greater numbers of young learners keen to improve their Japanese. Participants in the pilot project were amazed at the benefits a single weekend could produce in giving them more confidence in speaking Japanese as well as teaching them so much about the Japanese way of life. One of the underlying aims of the programme is for it to be two way and Heidi Potter of the JFET was delighted at the opportunities it gave to the

Japanese host families to deepen their understanding of the UK and to make new and lasting friendships. In some cases plans were already underway for future visits to each other's homes.

If you would like to participate in the project, either as a potential host family or as a guest, please contact Kazuko Sato, Homestay UK Coordinator, at JFET.

Tel: 020 7630 8696, Fax: 020 7931 8453  
or e-mail her on [hsuk@jfet.org.uk](mailto:hsuk@jfet.org.uk)

# Japan Foundation Grant Programmes 2001-02

The following programmes for the 2001/2002 financial year are now available for application. All of them are for UK organisations except for the Fellowship Programme which is open to individuals who meet the criteria and the Film Production Support Programme which is open to individuals as well as organisations. Further details and application forms are available from this office except those for the Support Programmes for the Japanese Language. These are available from our London Language Centre (The Japan Foundation Nihongo Centre). The deadline for all applications is 1 December 2000. Results will be notified during April 2001:

## Support Programmes for Invitations to Japan

### Fellowship Programme

Our Fellowship Programme gives the opportunity to academics, arts and other professionals to visit Japan to pursue research in their field. As a rule a named affiliate in Japan is required at the time of application. The Fellowship comprises airfare, stipend to cover living expenses and other allowances. There are a number of categories within the Programme:

#### 1. *Scholars and Researchers Category*

For academics working in the field of Japanese studies, the humanities and the social sciences. Duration of Fellowship: from (no less than) 2 to (no longer than) 12 months.

#### 2. *Doctoral Candidates Category*

For candidates who are in the closing stages of their Ph.D. and who need to undertake field-work in Japan in order to complete their dissertation/thesis. Proof at the time of application that all other necessary requirements, bar completion of the thesis, have been fulfilled for the award of the Ph.D is needed from the candidate's supervisor. Duration of Fellowship: from (no less than) 4 to (no longer than) 14 months.

#### 3. *Artists Category*

Artists means arts professionals in the widest sense e.g. writers, performing and visual artists, as well as arts administrators and academics. The category is for those wishing to pursue a particular creative project in Japan. Duration of Fellowship; from (no less than) 2 to (no longer than) 6 months.

#### 4. *Cultural Property Specialists*

For specialists working in the preservation, restoration and repair of cultural properties.

Duration of Fellowship; from (no less than) 2 to (no longer than) 6 months.

## Support Programmes for Japanese Studies

### Visiting Professorship Programme for Japanese Studies

This programme is designed to support institutions of higher education, research and cultural organisations planning to invite scholars from abroad (including Japan) from between one and six months to give courses related to Japan in the subject areas of the humanities and the social sciences. The grant covers the return airfare and a proportion of the direct project expenses.

### Staff Expansion Grant Programme for Japanese Studies

For UK institutions of higher education, research and cultural organisations in order to enable them to expand faculty or library staffing in Japan-related areas in the humanities, the social sciences and the arts. Financial assistance is given for an initial three-year period and covers two thirds of the gross salary cost.

### Research/Conference/Seminar Grant Programme

Grant assistance is provided towards joint research projects, conferences, seminars, workshops and intensive courses that are Japan-related (**to include study tours to Japan**) of up to 12 months duration.

Comparative research projects, including those within a global context are also considered. Higher education institutions, research and cultural organisations are eligible to apply and the project should not be the work of a single individual.

### Library Support Programme

This programme is designed to promote and encourage research on Japan through the donation of Japan-related books and materials to the libraries of institutions of higher education, research organisations and to large public libraries that support departments and faculties of Japanese studies. Applications from individuals and from the commercial sector are not accepted. Applicants (libraries) should apply to a particular category within the programme depending upon the extent to which Japanese studies are conducted within the organisation.

## Visual Arts Exchange Programmes

### Exhibitions Abroad Support Programme

Under this programme financial support is provided to museums and galleries in Japan and abroad that introduce Japanese art and culture overseas. Assistance is given in the form of subsidies on a cost-sharing basis towards the direct costs of holding the exhibition, but not for preliminary research and development.

## Grants Available for Participation in International Conferences

### International Conferences outside Japan

We are able to provide funds to Japanese specialists in the humanities, the social sciences and the arts who have been invited to chair, to give a paper or to give a keynote address, at an international conference or symposium outside Japan.

Assistance comprises the round trip economy-class airfare from Japan and help towards accommodation/living expenses for up to 7 days.

Applications need to be made by the Japanese invitee direct to our Head Office in Tokyo by 20 December of the year preceding the financial year into which the conference/symposium falls. Applications are accepted after 20 December, subject to budget, and should be made 3 months before the conference.

### International Conferences in Japan

If you have been invited to chair, present a paper or give a keynote address at an international conference/symposium (including academic meetings, workshops or lectures etc) in Japan it is possible for the conference organiser (university, academic society, arts group etc) to apply on your behalf to the Japan Foundation Head Office for grant assistance. The deadline is 20 December preceding the financial year in which the conference is due to be held but for conferences taking place in the latter half of the financial year (October to the following March) additional applications are accepted up to 30 June. Assistance takes the form of round-trip economy class airfare and a grant towards accommodation/living expenses up to 7 days.

## International Conference Programmes

### Japan Europe Support Programme for Conferences and Symposiums

Financial support is provided to institutions of higher education, research centres, think tanks and cultural organisations wishing to hold international conferences, symposiums or seminars that will promote a better understanding between Japan and Europe on common issues in the political, economic, social or cultural fields.

## Publication Exchange Programmes

### Publication Assistance Programme

Financial support is given to publishers only towards the publication of books on Japan written in languages other than Japanese. Fields covered include the humanities, the social sciences and the arts but exclude the natural sciences. The publication must take place within the 2001/ 2002 financial year and the grant awarded is a percentage of the direct publication costs.

### Translation Assistance Programme

For publishers only and to encourage and support the translation and publication of quality works from the Japanese language. They must be translations of works on or about Japan in the humanities, the social sciences and the arts (excluding the social sciences). The programme offers financial support for part of the fees paid by the publisher to the translator.

## Audio-Visual Exchange Programmes

### Film Production Support Programme

Financial support is provided towards the production of films, TV programmes and other audio-visual materials that promote a deeper understanding of Japan and Japanese culture abroad. The programme is open to individuals as well as organisations with film making knowledge and experience and grant assistance takes the form of subsidies towards the production costs.

## Support Programmes for Japanese Language Instruction

### Support Programme for Japanese Language Courses Abroad

This programme is designed to help the creation of full-time teaching positions at universities, colleges or other higher educational institutions that run Japanese language courses and provides salary assistance for up to an initial three-year period.

### Japanese Speech Contest Support Programme

A grant towards the cost of prizes is given to those organisations planning to hold a Japanese language speech contest.

### Support Programme for Developing Networks of Japanese Language Teachers and Institutions

A new programme designed to help overseas teachers' associations, academic societies, higher education and research institutions to develop networks of Japanese language teachers and institutions abroad through seminars, academic meetings, workshops and training courses.

### Training Programmes for Teachers of the Japanese Language

These programmes are designed to provide teachers of the Japanese language both native as well as non-native speakers with the opportunity to improve their Japanese language skills and teaching methods by following a course at the Japan Foundation Japanese Language Institute, Urawa. Applications have to be made by the institution where the applicant teaches. There are three types of programme: The long term training programme (6 months) for teachers with less than five years Japanese language teaching experience; the short term training programme (2 months) for those with at least two years Japanese language teaching experience; and a one-month training programme in Japanese language teaching methods for Japanese nationals living abroad who have at least three years experience.

### Japanese Language Programmes for Specialists

These programmes are offered at the Japan Foundation Japanese Language Institute, Kansai and are designed for those who need to improve their Japanese language ability for vocational and academic purposes. The courses are specifically constructed for each different vocational or academic speciality.

### 1. Japanese Language Programmes for Librarians

A six-month intensive training course in the Japanese language for librarians in educational and research institutions. A prescribed level of Japanese ability is required before application (equal to level three of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test). Priority is given to applications from developing countries but applicants from other countries are welcome to apply.

### 2. Japanese Language Programme for Researchers

A nine-month intensive training course for scholars and researchers in the social sciences and the humanities who need to improve their Japanese language ability for research purposes. A prescribed level of Japanese ability is required before application (equal to level three of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test).

### 3. Japanese Language Programme for Postgraduate Students

A four-month intensive training course or a two-month summer course for postgraduate students in the social sciences or the humanities who wish to improve their Japanese language ability and already have a basic level of Japanese.

### Japanese Language Education Fellowship Programme

For educational institutions and publishers wishing to send Japanese language specialists to carry out surveys or research in Japan for the development of Japanese language teaching materials, teaching methodology and for Japanese curriculum development.

### Assistance Programme for Japanese Language Teaching Materials

For publishers and educational institutions that wish to produce and market resource materials for Japanese language instruction in the form of textbooks, dictionaries, a/v and computer assisted materials.

### Japanese Language Teaching Materials Donation Programme

Under this programme educational institutions that offer regular courses in Japanese language may apply for a donation of a variety of teaching materials published and distributed in Japan. These can take the form of books, tapes, a/v materials etc.

### Grants available for the Performing Arts

Should you wish to invite a Japanese performing arts group to this country, the Japanese group may apply direct to our Head Office in Tokyo for possible financial assistance. There are two programmes available depending on the size of the group.

For both programmes applications need to be made by 20 December 2000 but it is advisable to seek advice and more information about the programmes from this office before initiating application procedures.

# The Orient Strikes Back: A Global View of Cultural Display

Joy Hendry

Oxford: Berg. 260pp, 43 B&W illus, 8 colour pages, bibliog, index. ISBN cloth: 185973 328 X: £42.99 paper: 1 85973 333 6: £14.99

At the end of the week in which Nomura Bank announced plans to buy the ailing British Millennium Dome and to turn it into a European theme park, it was a pleasure to sit down and read Joy Hendry's latest book which deals with the nature of various forms of cultural display. The book is also an interesting response to the most current of anthropological theory in which the doomsayers of the late 1980s and 1990s ('the end of anthropology is nigh') have had to admit that they still write ethnography. The saving of the subject, it seems, lies in our increasing globalization: if we as scholars can free ourselves from thinking about national boundaries and follow people as they travel the world then we have found an appropriate subject matter or, at the least, one that has not yet been deconstructed out of existence.

However, to make the leap from doing anthropology in what were taken to be small bounded communities to exploring a global phenomenon is one that many anthropologists have yet to make; instead anthropology has taken to looking at the global through its local manifestations. In contrast, Joy Hendry appears to have successfully crossed that divide by beginning with a global topic and then following it through to a particular place: Japan.

Hendry's book is concerned with an increasingly global phenomenon whose roots might be found in the pre-modern era of empires, the cultural display of Others. In *The Orient Strikes Back*, Hendry charts not only the changes in how 'we' view the world and its peoples, but also how 'they' have taken to viewing themselves and 'us'. As a specialist of Japan, Hendry uses her experience of Japanese theme parks as the starting and end points for a discussion that takes in the world: do theme parks which see themselves either as heritage sites or as a way of displaying other parts of the world constitute just a late capitalist obsession with identity, hegemony and making

money or are they about a different way of constituting the world than that of our Victorian ancestors who proudly displayed 'savages'? Is the world increasingly being presented as fantasy, or, as Baudrillard would have it, a meaningless simulacrum; or might we find something of 'amusement' and yet importance in these sites? Hendry comes down on the side of the latter, asking if an understanding of places like EPCOT Center in Florida's Disneyland or Tivoli Gardens in Japan might not act as a way out of the dead-end into which post-modern anthropological theory has painted itself. In short, rather than worrying about lost authenticity, we should be asking what is the power, indeed the magic, that is to be found in the 'making' of places for both entertainment and educational purposes?

As with her earlier book, *Wrapping Culture* (1993), Hendry's main agenda is to ask a rather old-fashioned, yet still important, question: what does studying Others teach us about ourselves? Within this framework Japan becomes not a unique oddity, but rather an example of human diversity as do all the wonderfully various theme parks, cultural heritage sites and museums which Hendry describes. Non-specialists could read this book for the single purpose of learning how widespread and diverse theme parks have become. Specialists will find in it insight into how a global ethnography might be carried out. It is well served by many plates, which offer the reader glimpses into all these sites, and by Hendry's prose style which remains,



The Japanese version of the Tivoli Gardens (above), creatively copied from the original with 'Old Copenhagen' instead of an 'Oriental' section, is close to the historical part of Kurashiki (below). This combination of an excursion back in time with a visit to a reconstructed European pleasure park is typical of the range of amusements available in contemporary Japan.



as always, lucid and cogent. This is a book to read and enjoy. Teachers of anthropology, Japanese studies, museum and tourism studies, will want to add it to their reading lists.

**Dr D P Martinez**  
Department of Anthropology, SOAS,  
University of London

The book has received a grant under the Japan Foundation Publication Assistance Grant Programme and will be published on 23 October.

Professor Hendry will be talking about the book at the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation on 25 October as part of the monthly UK-Japan Seminar Series "Bridging the Millennium" in association with the Japan Society.

Film Review

# Gaea Girls

## Documentary

**Director Kim Longinotto, Jano Williams**  
**Production Company: Vixen Films**  
**Editor and Sound: Brian Tagg**  
**106 minutes. 35 mm Colour**



Satomura Meiko wins her fight

This is the latest masterpiece from the Longinotto/Williams team. It had its UK premier at the Edinburgh Film Festival in August to much-deserved critical acclaim, and the Japan Foundation is delighted to have given it a grant under its Film Production Support Programme. Exploring the world of female wrestling in Japan, it centres on the fortunes of the Gaea Group, a training house for young Japanese women wrestlers, successfully shattering the image of submissiveness, restraint and diffidence that so often forms the western stereotype of Japanese women.

Like all good documentaries, the real narrative emerges slowly and reveals itself to be the story of Takeuchi, one of the raw recruits who has to pass a number of gruelling and punishing test bouts to prove that she is worthy of making her professional debut. If the show piece of the film is the top girl Nagayo Chigusa's defence of her title against Lioness Aska, where losing her title bout will lead to the loss of her name and "reduce her to zero", the heart of the film lies in the young Takeuchi's desperation to impress her coach and promoter. Outside the ring she is shy and good-natured but inside it she is transformed into a ball of determined aggression and energy. For deep down she knows that she lacks the natural strength and weight to attain her goal... The moving subtext is that these women are not just fighting for glory, but for identity. As Takeuchi remarks, "When I am in the ring I can show my anger and frustration... I can become someone who is noticed. I want to be someone". *Gaea Girls* is a film in which brutality and anguish are circumscribed with decorum, and where courage and determination both frighten and inspire.

Longinotto and Williams are a unique team. They excel in detached observation refraining from casting judgement on their subject. There are no interviews to camera nor is there commentary. "In our films we want the people to express their own feelings, we act as a vehicle as they let us into their lives. In *Gaea Girls*

the story unfolded as we filmed it".

Indeed this was the stuff of their previous collaborations beginning with *Eat the Kimono*, a film about Hanayagi Genshu, the Japanese dancer and activist and her lonely and passionate battle against discrimination. Says Longinotto, "I was determined to make a film about her because she seemed to break all the conventions. The film was meant to be one off but I was hooked". After that she met Kazuko Hohki with whom she made *The Good Wife of Tokyo*, a film about love and marriage in Japan "an excuse really to show Japanese women breaking all the rules and to show how strong and full of humour and life they were". There followed *Dream Girls* about Takarazuka and *Shinjuku Boys* depicting the pain and joy in the lives of boys who had been born women.

And now the wrestlers in *Gaea Girls* whom Williams describes as "fighting to make their dreams come true" "All the subjects of our documentaries have moved me and I hope that watching these films viewers will understand that underneath the cultural differences we have so much in common".

*Gaea Girls* was shown at the New Zealand Film Festival in July, and has been at the Toronto International and other venues in Canada during September. In October it is going to the Chicago International, to Pasadena, to the DOcTober in Los Angeles and to Ireland (Dublin and Cork).

It will play during the 7th Sheffield International Documentary Festival October 16-22 at the Showroom Cinema 15, Paternoster Row, Sheffield S1 2BX after which it will go on a national tour between November and January 2001.

Those interested in attending the Sheffield festival should phone 0114 276 5141 or fax 0114 272 1849. For full details on the whole festival programme, including the national tour, visit the festival website; [www.sidf.co.uk](http://www.sidf.co.uk)

It will also be shown on the BBC in early 2001. Don't miss it!

**Editor**

Dates for your Diary		
<b>September 2000</b>		2001/2002 Programme Guidelines and application forms available
<b>19 September – 4 October</b>		Japan Foundation Secondary Schoolteachers' Study Tour to Japan
<b>12 October</b>		Deadline for receipt of applications for the Japanese Language Proficiency Test 2000
<b>24 October</b>	<b>5.30</b>	Lecture by Professor Hidenori Fujita, Dean Graduate School of Education, University of Tokyo and by Professor Geoff Whitty, Director Institute of Education, University of London. At the Institute of Education
<b>25 October</b>	<b>6.00</b>	Lecture by Professor Hidenori Fujita at the University of Birmingham. See article on back page for details.
<b>1 December</b>		Deadline for receipt of applications for the 2001/2002 Grant Programmes
<b>3 December</b>		Japanese Language Proficiency Test 2000

# Progressive Traditions

by Helen S E Parker

Earlier this year I was awarded a Japan Foundation Fellowship to enable me to work on an illustrated study of plot repetition in traditional theatre. I was based at the Tsubouchi Memorial Museum, Waseda University. In this project I set out to explore traditional theatre as an integrated whole and to develop audio-visual material to make the subject accessible to a wider "audience". I hope to present the results as a book examining the links among traditional genres, with an accompanying CD ROM illustrating examples cited in the text through a combination of video clips, still photographs, *nishiki-e* and music. I take as my focus "plot repetition" or the repeated use of well-known plots in different genres, because this enables me to take account of the blend of artistic skills that occurs in any one genre, and the interaction and interdependence of the best known, most frequently performed genres: *nob*, *ningyou-joururi* (*bunraku*) and *kabuki*.

The study begins with definitions of plot and observations about plot repetition from Japanese commentary on the traditional theatre, then, before moving on to analyse two examples of repeated plots about Yoshitsune during the period of his downfall, assesses the appeal of this consistently popular theme. Successive playwrights drew on stories about Yoshitsune's final, fugitive years, recognising the dramatic potential of the universal type fighting a losing cause to the last and peripheral characters like Benkei

and Shizuka who can be brought to the fore when Yoshitsune's role becomes less dominant.

The *Funa Benkei* plot, which I examine first, tells of Yoshitsune and Benkei encountering their enemy Tomomori during a storm at sea. Its pattern comes close to a typical model of "plot repetition", and is easily open to comparison with other repeated plots. The original *nob* plot, developed from war chronicles about Yoshitsune's life, was repeated when a team of three playwrights worked it into a longer *ningyou-joururi* piece, *Yoshitsune Sembonzakura* (1747), along with material from other *nob* plays. In this transition, important changes were made, for example, the recasting of Tomomori as a living threat to Yoshitsune instead of a ghost trying to possess him. Shortly afterwards, in 1748, *Yoshitsune Sembonzakura* was adapted for *kabuki*, using the same script with variations to accommodate human actors instead of puppets. The *Funa Benkei* plot was later extrapolated from *Yoshitsune Sembonzakura* for a new version in the Meiji period, when there were moves to upgrade the image of *kabuki* to that of a high class performing art form, and borrowing as directly as possible from the *nob* was seen as one means towards this end.

My other example, the *Ataka/Kanjinchou* plot, is about Yoshitsune and his party attempting to cross the barrier disguised as *yamabushi*, and includes Benkei's improvised reading from a blank "subscription scroll". This is rather an exception to many of the rules the *Funa Benkei*

plot and others follow. It started its transfer from the *nob* play, *Ataka*, to popular Tokugawa theatre in a comparable manner, but proved more durable as a *matsubamemono*, or *kabuki* piece aiming to replicate *nob* performance. *Kanjinchou*, as the first such piece in 1840 helped forge new relationships between *nob* and *kabuki*, in terms of both production techniques and treatment of plot. This led on to further experimental interactions between *kabuki* and *ningyou-joururi* using the plot, which was adapted for the puppets in 1895.

Groups of plays like these that feature plot repetition are strongly linked with previous works, as well as with the experience of the audiences. Allusion through plot repetition and other intergeneric links has the effect of compressing the playwrights' and performers' aesthetic goals into discernible forms, while sharpening the audience's powers of response. As material that is already familiar in an artistic context is repeated, the ideas it expresses become easier to understand. Through my study and illustrations, I hope to show how acquiring an understanding of the traditional theatre as an integrated whole enhances our understanding of each traditional performing art genre, and of the progressive traditions that grow in familiarity as they are reinterpreted in each genre.

Dr Parker is Lecturer in Japanese at the Centre for Japanese Studies, University of Edinburgh.

## Education Lecture Tour 24 & 25 October 2000

Professor Hidenori Fujita, Dean, Graduate School of Education, University of Tokyo to visit the UK

Following the success of the comparative education seminar at the Nihongo Centre in May 1998, we have invited Professor Hidenori Fujita to give 2 lectures in London and in Birmingham on 24 and 25 October.

Dr Fujita is Dean and Professor of Education in the Graduate School of Education at Tokyo University and his main areas of research are the sociology of education, social change, education reform and teacher education. He is a member of the Advisory Committee to the Prime Minister on educational reform, the latest of his numerous publications being *Civic Society and Education: Proposals for Education Reform towards the 21st Century*. He will talk on the problems facing secondary education in Japan, the

curriculum, and the impact of the current reforms.

He will be joined in London by Professor Geoff Whitty, newly appointed Director of London University's Institute of Education who will talk on the same themes from the UK perspective. Before his appointment Professor Whitty was Karl Mannheim Professor of Sociology of Education and Dean of Research at the Institute.

Like Dr Fujita, his principal areas of research and scholarship are the sociology of education, education policy and teacher education. He has directed important research projects on the impact of national education policies in England and undertaken comparative studies of education reform in other countries. His most recent book (with Sally Power and David Halpin),

*Devolution and Choice in Education: The School, the State and the Market* (Open University Press, 1998) discusses recent education reform in five countries.

The London lecture will take place at the Institute of Education, University of London, at 17.30 on Tuesday 24 October and will be chaired by Professor Andy Green. Admission is by ticket only. Those wishing to attend should contact this office on Tel: 020 7499 4726.

The Birmingham lecture will be at the University of Birmingham on Wednesday 25 October at 18.00. Contact Lisa Linegar at the Japan Centre at the University of Birmingham for further information and to reserve a seat. Tel: 0121 414 3269.