

Course No. 3507/3508

**Contemporary
Japanese Culture
and Society**

Lecture No. 2

NIHONJINRON

日本人論

- **“Theories of Japaneseness”**
 - Attempts to define the unique, essential nature of Japan
- **日本の本質を探る学問**

Nihonjinron 日本人論

Nihon Bunkaron 日本文化論

Nihonron 日本論

Japanology ジャパノロジー

Other key words

- **日本的** *Nihonteki* – Japan-ish
- **日本らしい** *Nihonrashii* – (Same)
- **日本の心** *Nihon no kokoro* – the Heart (Mind, Soul) of Japan
- **大和魂** *Yamato-damashii* – The Spirit of Japan (大和 Yamato, old word for Japan, also pronounced Daiwa)

Amazon Japan Theme Search

“Nihonjin” 日本人 – 4,387

“Nihonron” 日本論 – 4,067

“Nihonjinron” 日本人論 – 854

**“Nihonjin” + “Kokoro” 日本人 +
心 – 165**

Amazon Japan

- **TITLE SEARCH**
- **Nihonjinron in title: 81**
- **Nihon Bunkaron in title: 121**
- **Japanology in title: 6**

Foreigners do it too

- **Amazon (US)**
- **‘Japanese Mind’ in title: 41 books**
- **And many more referring to the ‘essence’ of Japan, the ‘true’ Japan, Japan behind the mask, behind the veil etc.**

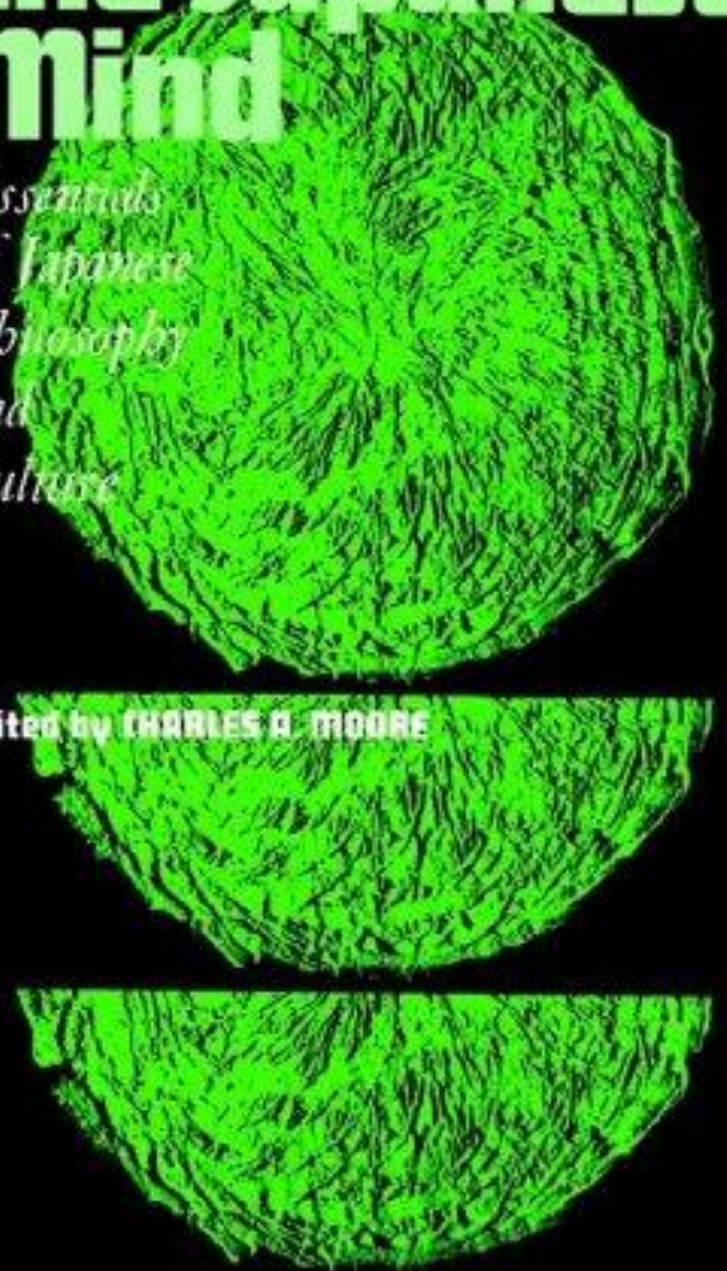
**Japan is presented as mysterious...
appearances are deceptive!**

***The
Japanese
Mind, by
Charles A.
Moore,
1983***

**the Japanese
Mind**

*Essentials
of Japanese
Philosophy
and
Culture*

Edited by CHARLES A. MOORE

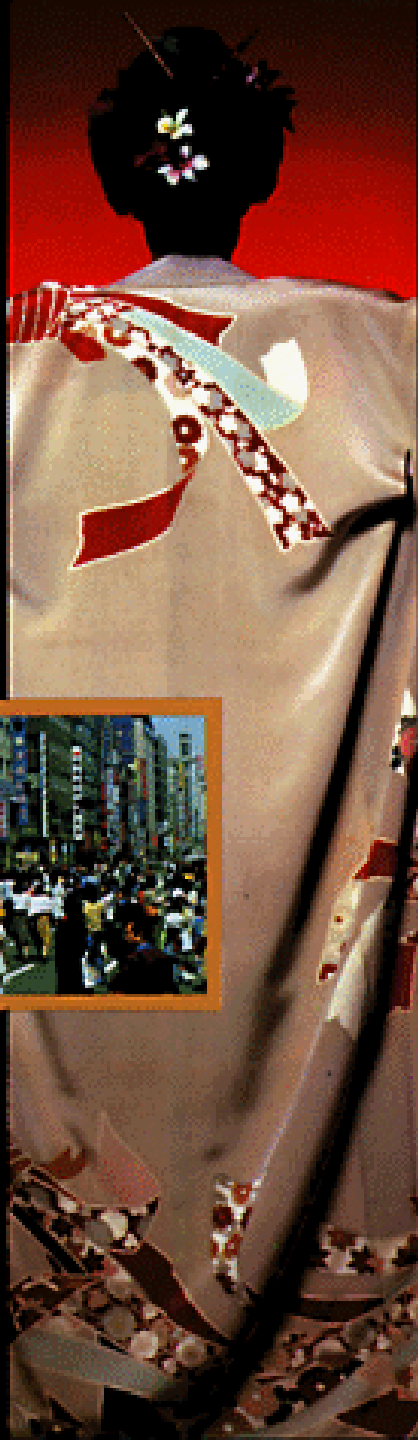


Witty. Wise.
Utterly fascinating.
The first book to illuminate
every aspect of
Japanese life and culture.

THE JAPANESE MIND

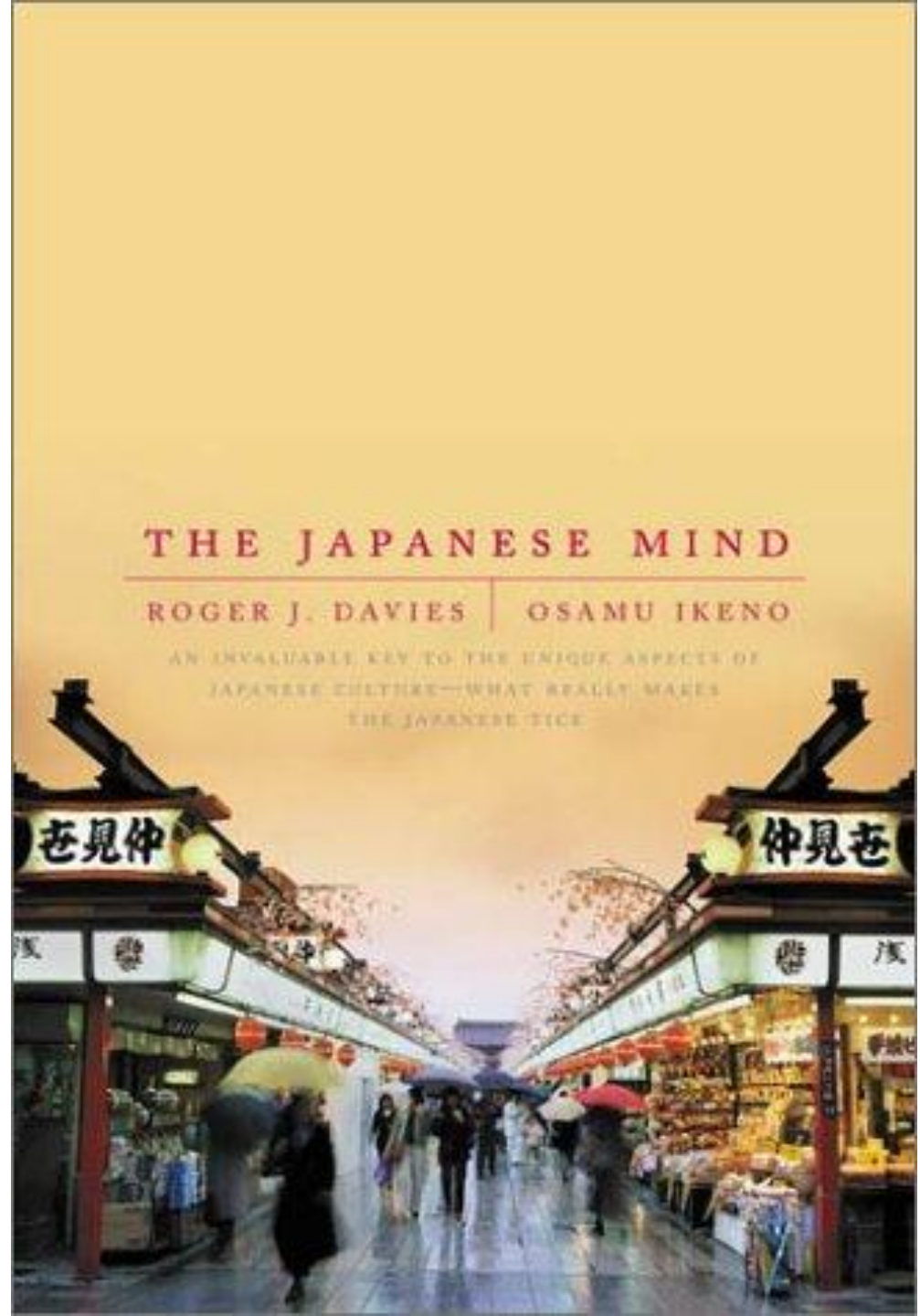


ROBERT C. CHRISTOPHER



The Japanese Mind, by Robert C. Christopher (1987)

***The
Japanese
Mind, by
Roger J.
Davies and
Osamu
Ikeno, 2002***

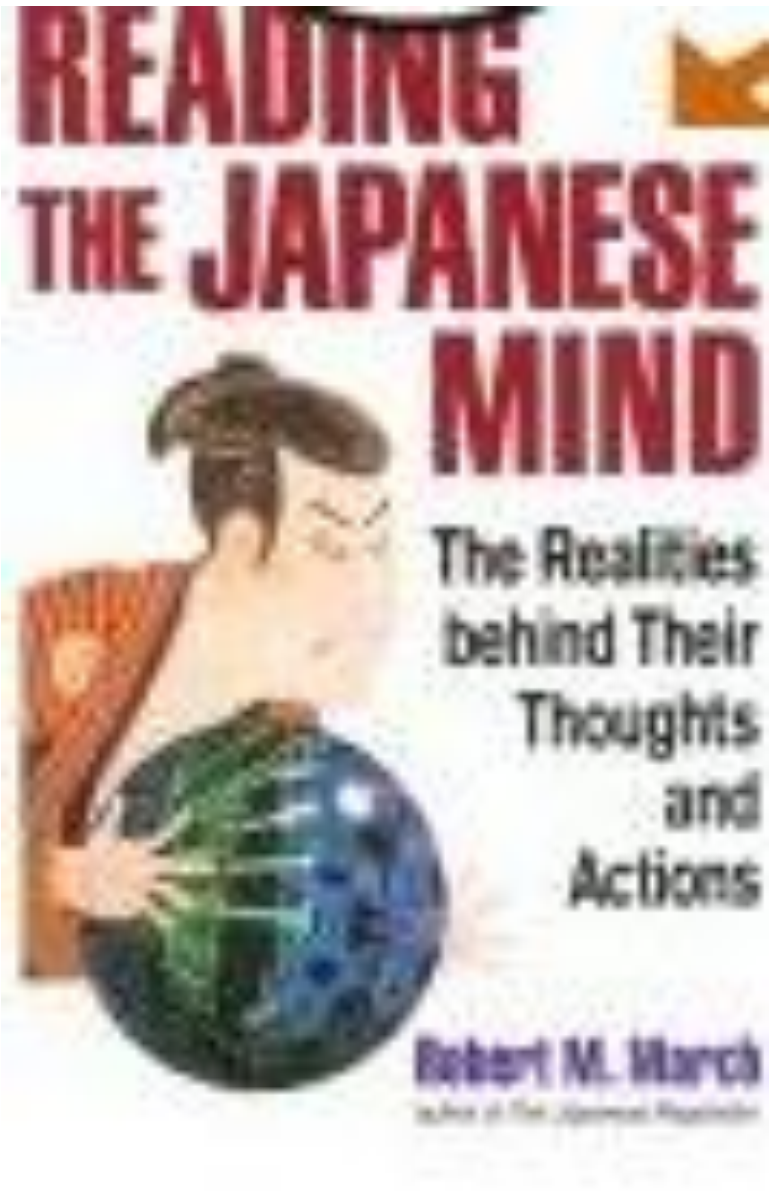
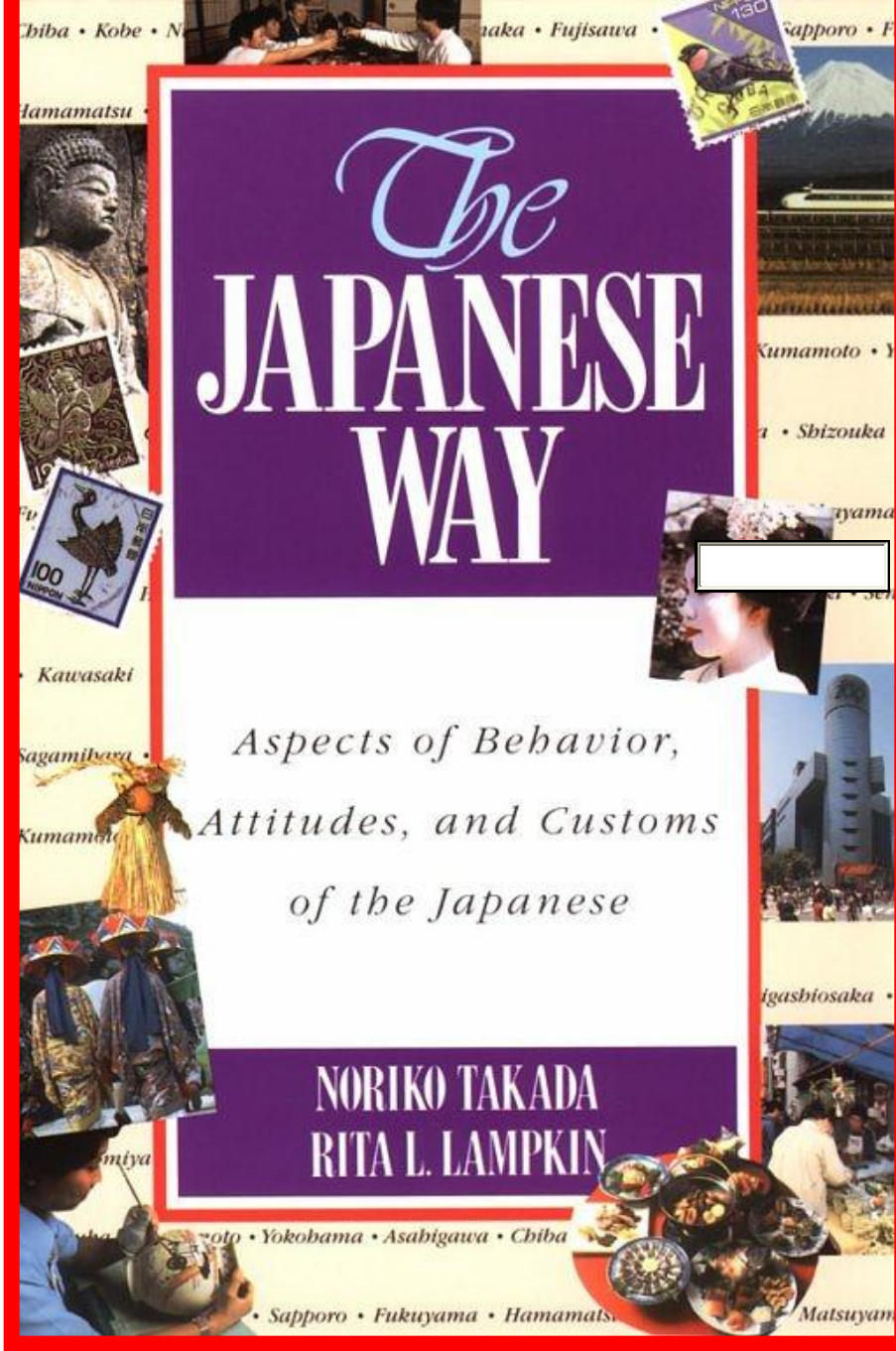


- **Understanding the Japanese Mind**
by James Moloney (1968)
- **The Kimono Mind: An Informal Guide to Japan and the Japanese**
by Bernard Rudofsky (1982)
- **The Japanese Mind: An Interpretation**
by Chee Meow Seah (1989)
- **Unlocking the Japanese Business Mind**
by Gregory Tenhover et al (1994)

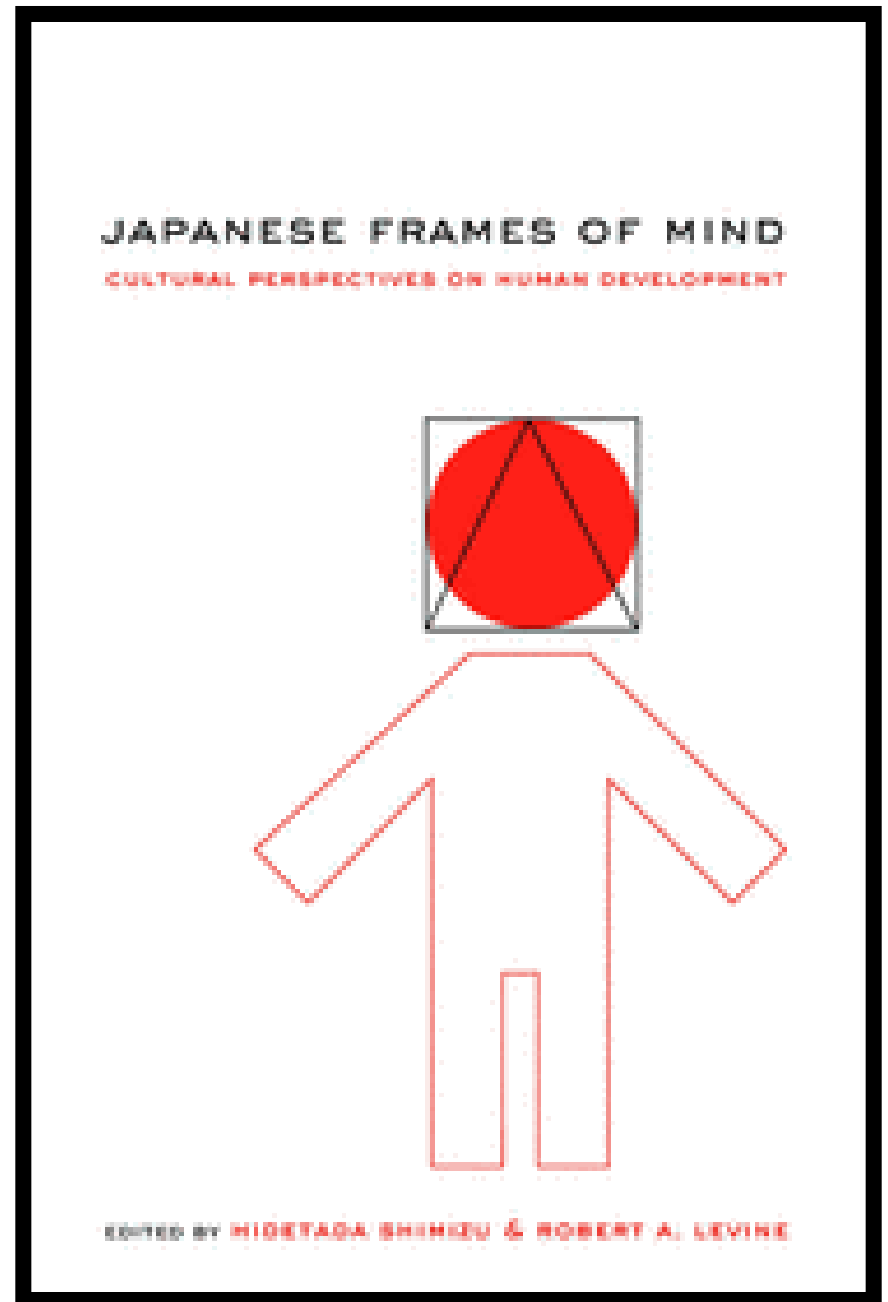
The JAPANESE WAY

Aspects of Behavior, Attitudes, and Customs of the Japanese

NORIKO TAKADA
RITA L. LAMPKIN



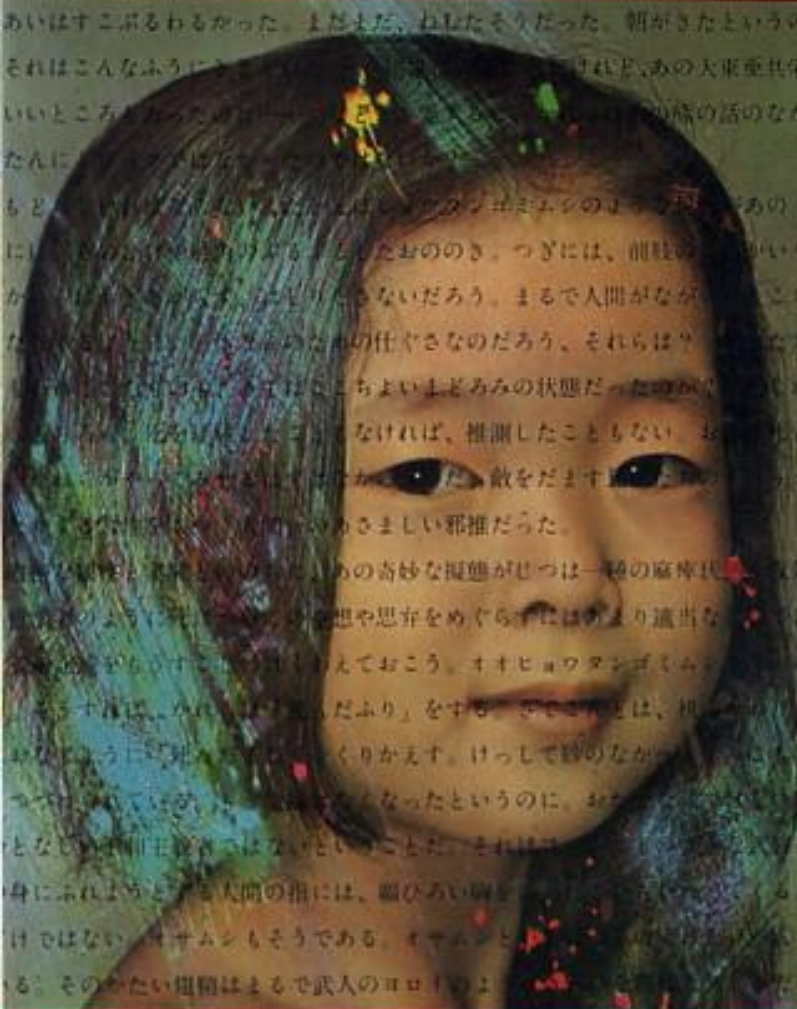
***Japanese
Frames of
Mind***
**Shimizu
and Levine
eds, 2002**



THE KIMONO MIND



キモノマインド: 日本式考え方



by Bernard Rudofsky

バーナード・ルドフスキー著

Japanese sense of self

Edited by Nancy R. Rosenberger



By the way...

There are NO books at Amazon about “the British/English mind”, “the British/English self”, “the British/English way” ...

... and NO books about ‘Igisujinron’ (イギリス人論) or “Eikokuron” (英国論) at Amazon Japan...

(There are a lot of books out about the AMERICAN mind, a few about the Chinese and Indian and German minds, but almost none about the French or British or Australian minds...)

I wonder why...

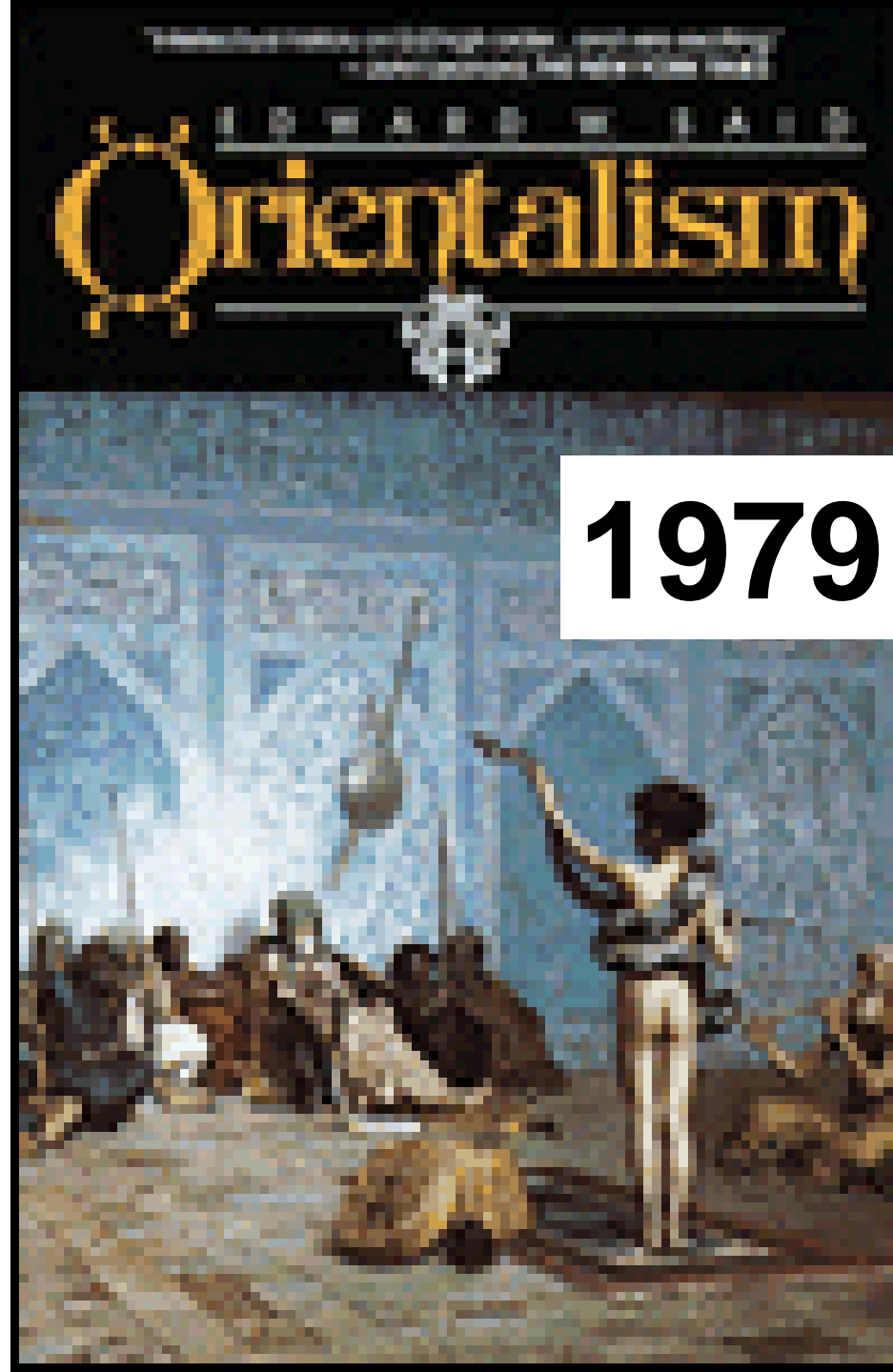
何でだろう...

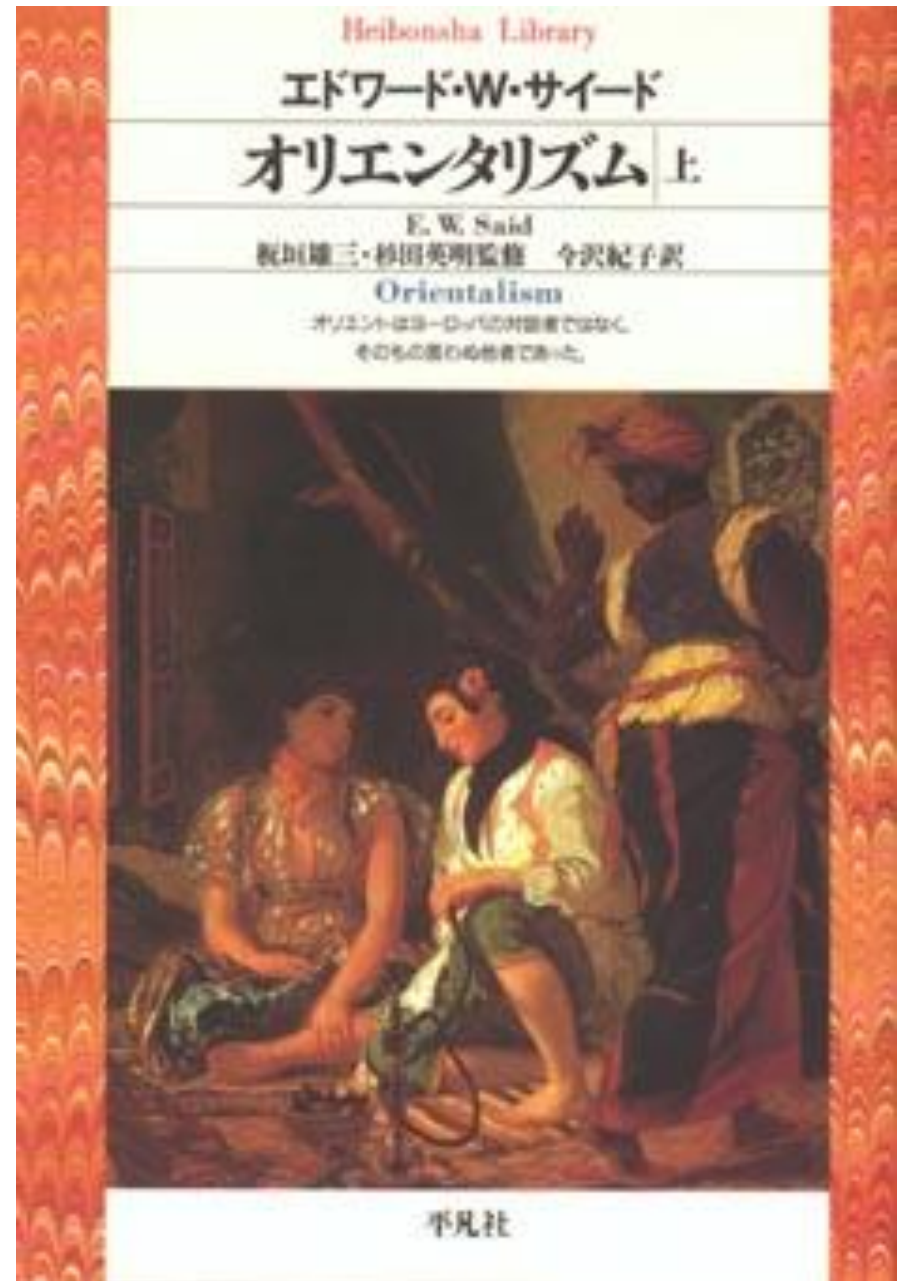
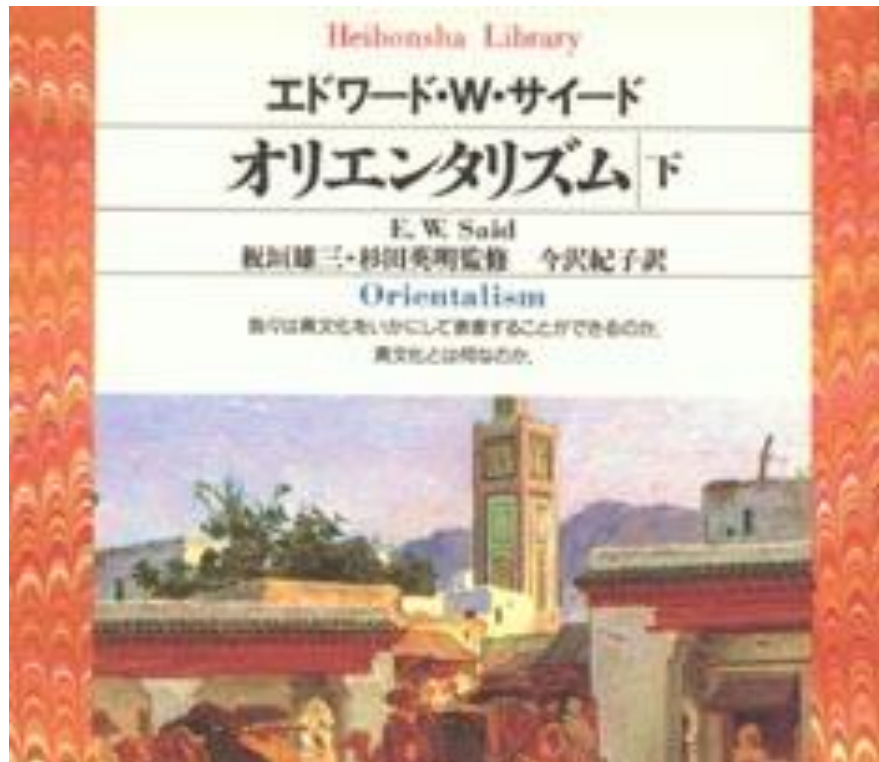
Any suggestions?

Edward Said, *Orientalism*

The active West
studies, the passive
East is studied....

Literary works
associate West with
masculine, East with
feminine... all that
tearing off of masks
and removing of veils
is a kind of rape...
cultural colonialism.





**「オリエンタリズム」
(東洋学・東洋主義)
エドワード・サイード
著、79年**

The lack of books on British, French minds...

... reflects an unconscious assumption on the part of Europeans that *their* mind is logical, rational...masculine? The Eastern mind is instinctive, emotional... feminine?

Said's book became famous because he linked these colonialist and patriarchal modes of thought, rather convincingly.

Japan's Appeal to foreigners

- 1. Ancient non-European civilization (Japanology, cf Sinology, Indology and Egyptology academic studies of a single civilization.)**
- 2. Deliberately sealed itself off from the world for c. 250 years (1600-1850).**
- 3. Successfully resisted colonization.**
- 4. Shocked the world with military triumphs over China (1895), Russia (1905) and in early stages of WW2.**
- 5. Recovered from defeat in WW2 to become the first non-western economic super-power.**

In short...

*... a country that demands
explanation.*

日本：要說明！

Nihonjinron by Japanese authors

A bid to resist the tendency for foreigners to define Japan... often a form of nationalistic advocacy (愛國主義の弁論) to justify Japan's ways to the world or to make Japanese people feel good about themselves.

4 kinds of Nihonjinron 日本人論の4種類

- 1. Psychological 心理学的
- 2. Sociological 社会学的
- 3. Aesthetic 美学的
- 4. Intellectual 思想的

Psychological Nihonjinron

心理学の日本人論

Ganbari

頑張り

Ganbari / Konjo 頑張り・根性

Gattsu
(Guts)

ガッツ

Faito
(Fight)

ファイト

Charenji
(Challenge)

チャレンジ



Never say die...



最後まで頑張るぜ

Ganbare!

“Ganbare” 頑張れ, or more politely 頑張ってください *Ganbatte kudasai* are usually translated as ‘Good luck’... something to say to a friend before an exam or sports event. But these words literally mean “try hard!” or “please put up a good fight.”

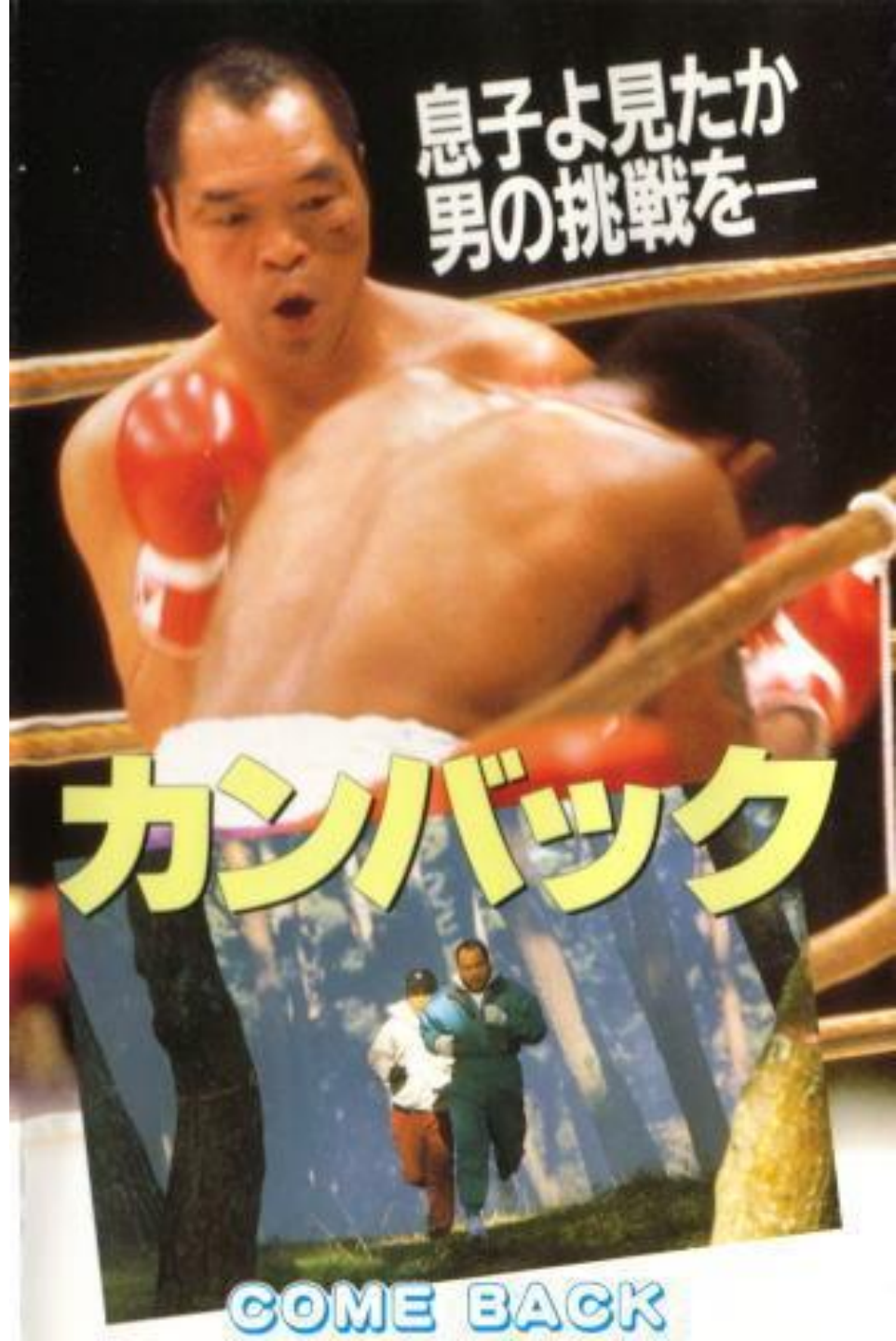
Luck has nothing to do with it!



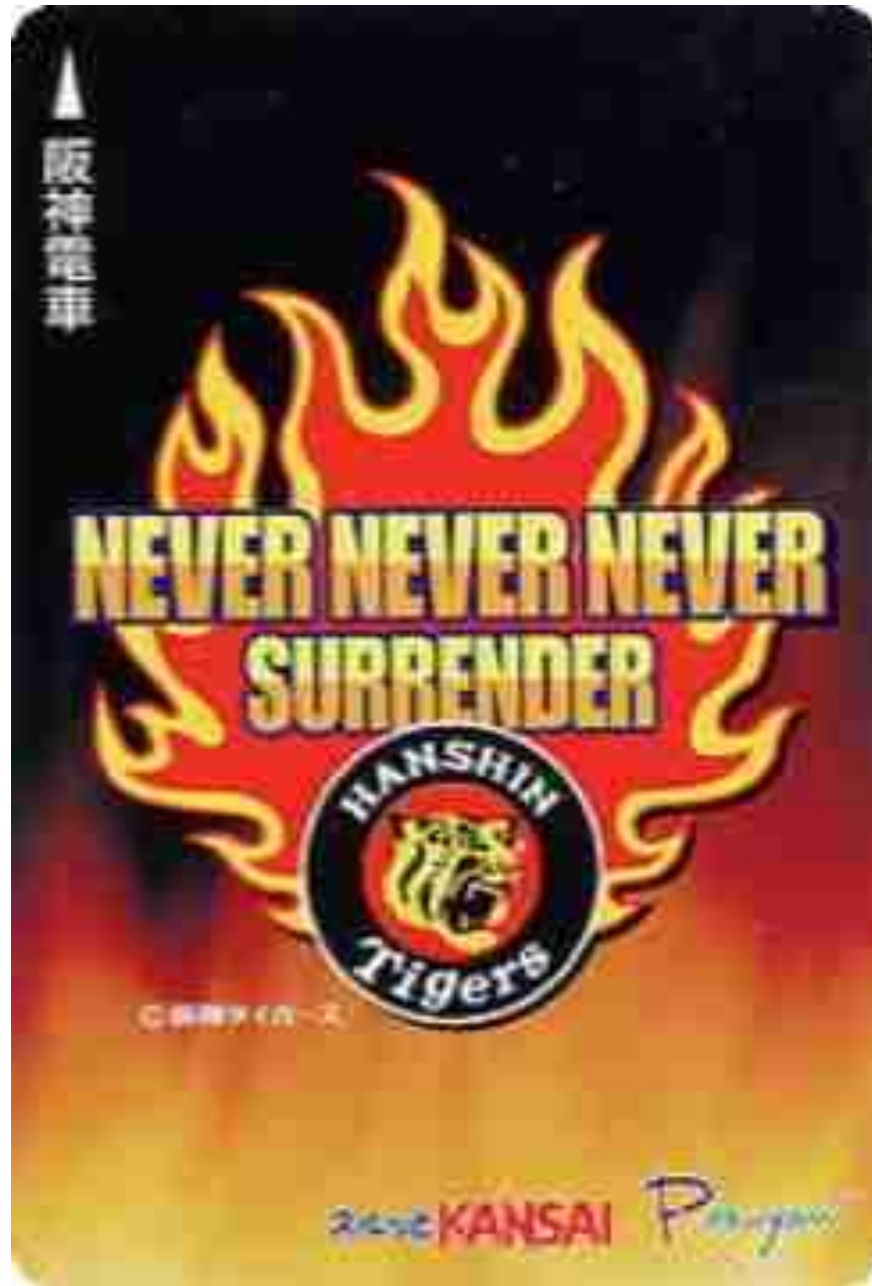
**Guts
Ishimatsu**

ガッツ石松

**5 world
title
defenses
in the
1970s**



Hanshin Tigers Baseball Club



阪神タイガーズのモットー
決して、決して、決して
降参するな！

Kaoru Amanuma wrote the book...

***‘Ganbari’ no Kozo – Nihonjin no Kodo Genri* (The Structure of ‘Ganbari’ – the Motive Principle of the Japanese)**

Pub. Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1987

天沼 香 あまぬま・かおる(著)

「頑張り」の構造—日本人の行動原理

吉川弘文館 1987年

我慢

Gaman

Endurance

A slight variation on the 'ganbari' theme.



‘Gaman’ is a popular theme of light-hearted TV game shows

過労死 *Karoshi*

Death by Overwork

- When 'gaman' goes too far and the ultimate price is paid
- 我慢しすぎると．．．最終的な犠牲が待つ？

Ammae

甘え

**That cozy
feeling of
being
indulged**

...



Pretending to be asleep in the train



... and expecting to get away with it

Takeo



Doi

土居健郎



**The
Structure
of *Amae*
1971**

**English version,
1973
(translated by
John Bester)**

***A very
influential
book***

The key analysis of Japanese behavior

The anatomy of dependence

Takeo Doi



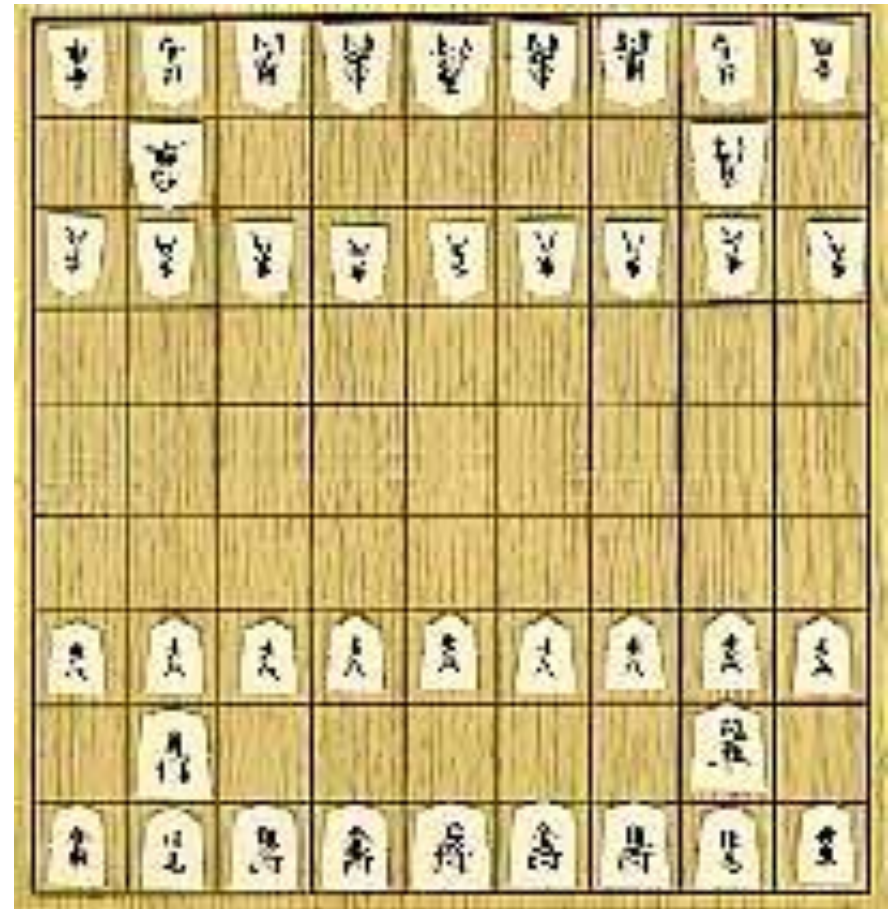
「甘え」の構造
土居健郎



A soft, forgiving culture...

- Kind of vague (aimai 曖昧), and undogmatic...**
- Not like the West, where mistakes are not forgiven and people hold to hard ideological positions**

Chess vs. *Shogi*



But wait a minute!

Is it really possible for the same group of people to both 'ganbaru' and 'amaeru'?

Isn't there a possible contradiction there?

Maybe...

... but being contradictory
*is **also** often cited as part*
of the Japanese character.

For example...

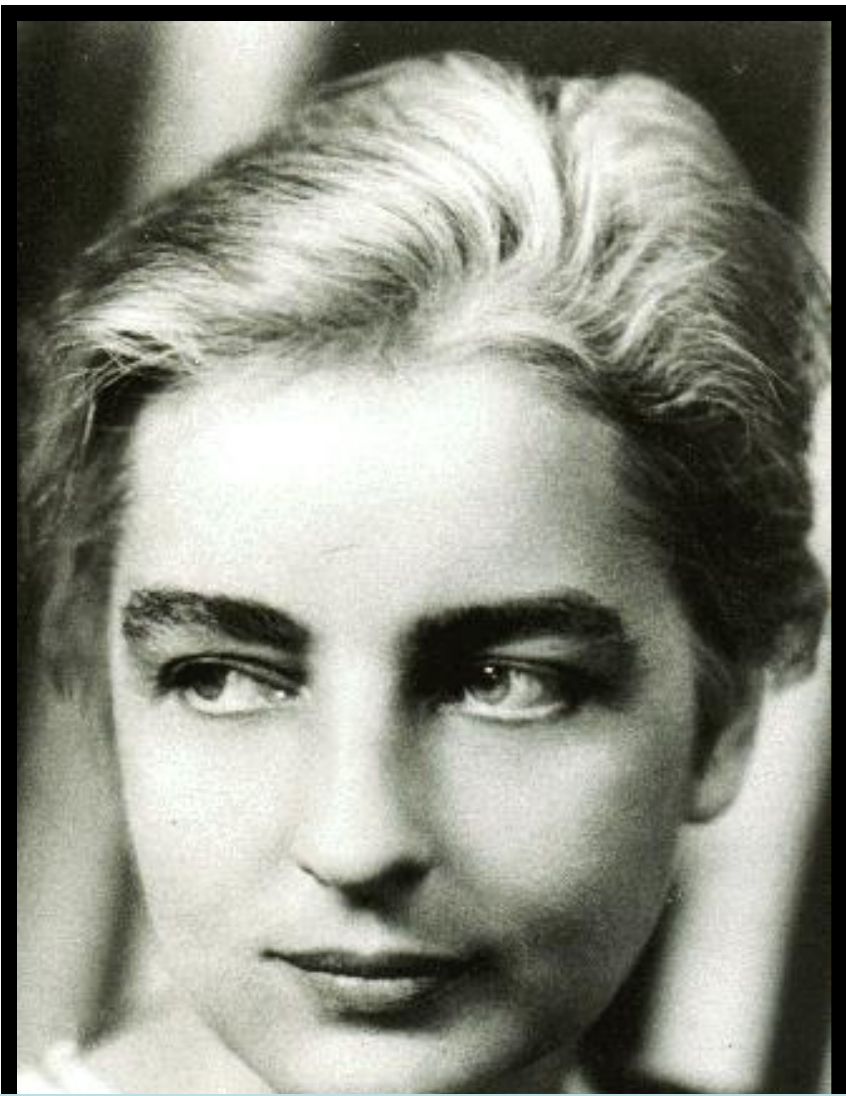
The Japanese are, to the highest degree, both aggressive and unaggressive, both militaristic and aesthetic, both insolent and polite, rigid and adaptable...

***... submissive and resentful
of being pushed around,
loyal and treacherous, brave
and timid, conservative and
hospitable to new ways.***

**Ruth Benedict,
*The Chrysanthemum and the
Sword, (1946) p. 2***


長谷川松治の和訳では：

日本人は最高度に、喧嘩好きであると共に
おとなしく、軍国主義であると共に耽美的
であり、不遜であると共に礼儀正しく、頑固
であると共に順応性に富み、従順である
と共にうるさくこづき回されることを憤り、忠
実であると共に不忠実であり、勇敢である
と共に臆病であり、保守的であると共に新
しいものを喜んで迎え入れる。



Ruth Benedict, 1887-1948

400,000
copies
sold


The Chrysanthemum
and The
Sword
Patterns of Japanese Culture
Ruth Benedict

定訳
菊と刀

2.3 million
copies sold

日本文化の11

菊と刀の文化
と歴史

1955年刊

Culture and Personality school

- **Some credit Benedict with saving Japan from savage punishment by arguing that Japanese culture was different from US culture, not necessarily worse... *a radical position in 1945.***
- **日本の文化はアメリカのと違うが必ずしも劣等ではない... 文化と性格学派**

SHAME CULTURE

恥の文化

=VS=

GUILT CULTURE

罪の文化

Americans answer to God and their own conscience

... whereas Japanese answer to society. Which some take as implying that you don't feel bad about doing something wrong unless you get busted. Thus Benedict's analysis, supposed to be liberal, sounds contemptuous of Japanese culture 60 years on.

恩と義理 *On and Giri*

**Words expressing
obligations to return
favours, pay off debts**

義理人情 Giri and Ninjo

In very close, personal relations, pure love or altruism (*ninjo*) can replace obligations (*giri*)

Benedict in *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*:

Japanese people are seen as trapped in a web of obligations and debts of kindness.

Bushido 武士道



**The Way of the Samurai... is also the way
of the salaryman... a corporate warrior**

**Inazo Nitobe
wrote the
book**

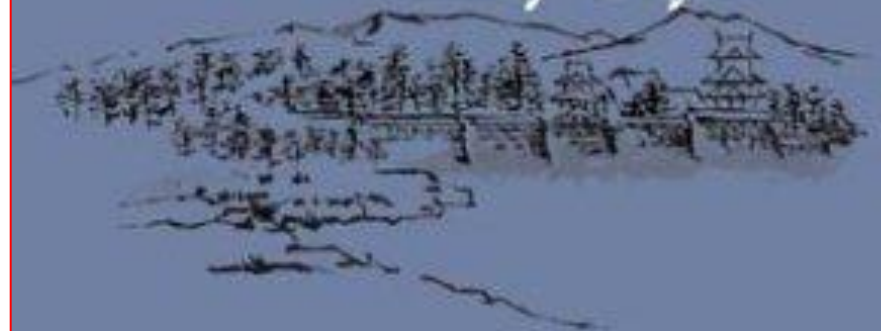
**... in 1905...
in English.**

Bushido 武士道

新渡戸福造著



The Soul of Japan



“In its highest form, politeness almost approaches love.”

A good name--one's reputation... any infringement upon its integrity was felt as shame, and the sense of shame (*Ren-chi-shin*) was one of the earliest to be cherished in juvenile education. "You will be laughed at," "It will disgrace you," "Are you not ashamed?" were the last appeal to correct behaviour on the part of a youthful delinquent.

2. Sociological Nihonjinron

社会学的な日本人論

The Group Society 集团社会



Family (ie) 家

Loyalty to the father...

responsibility of father to care for
wife and children... and more
distant relatives...

Village (buraku) 部落

Loyalty to the community, mutual
assistance, exchanged labour

Gassho-zukuri 合掌造り



And at the national level...

Japan is one big family-style community with the emperor at its head, like the father of the Japanese family

... or at least that's how it was up to 1945.



**Chie
Nakane**

中根 千枝

Japanese Society, 1970

縦社会の人間関係、1967年

***Tate Shakai no Ningen
Kankei (Human Relations
in a Vertical Society) 1967***

"Should be taken to heart by everyone who has dealings with Japan." – *Times Literary Supplement*

Japanese Society

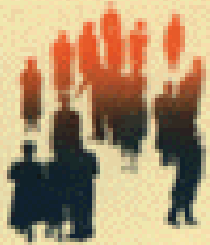
Chie Nakane



1955 講談社現代新書

タテ社会の 人間関係

単一社会の理論



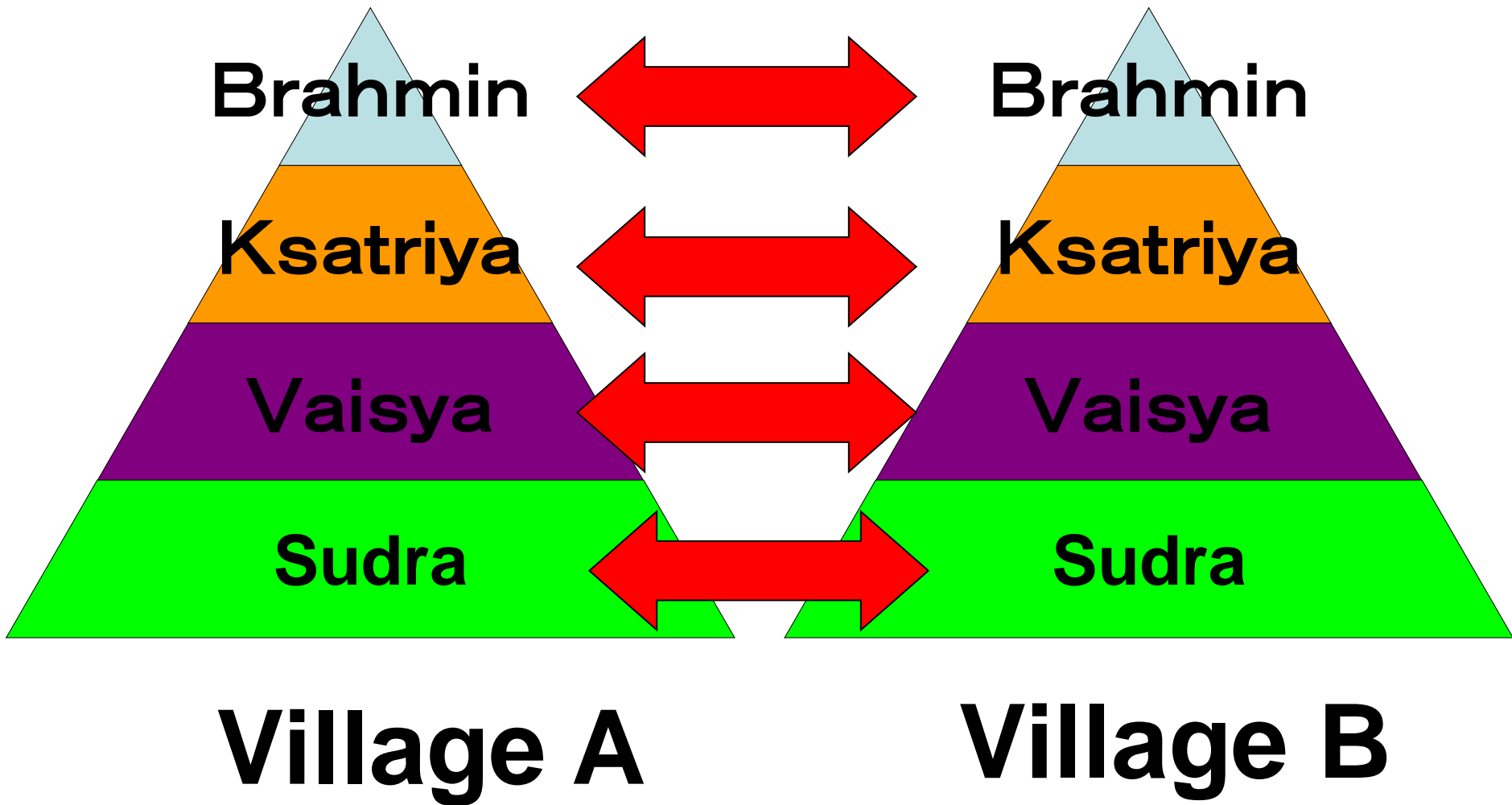
中根千枝

日本社会の人間関係は、個人主義・契約精神の横ついた欧米とは、大きな相違をみせている。「場」を強調し、「ウチ」「ソト」を強く意識する日本の社会構造にはどのような条件がもたらされるか、「単一社会の理論」によりその本質をとらえロングセラーを続ける。

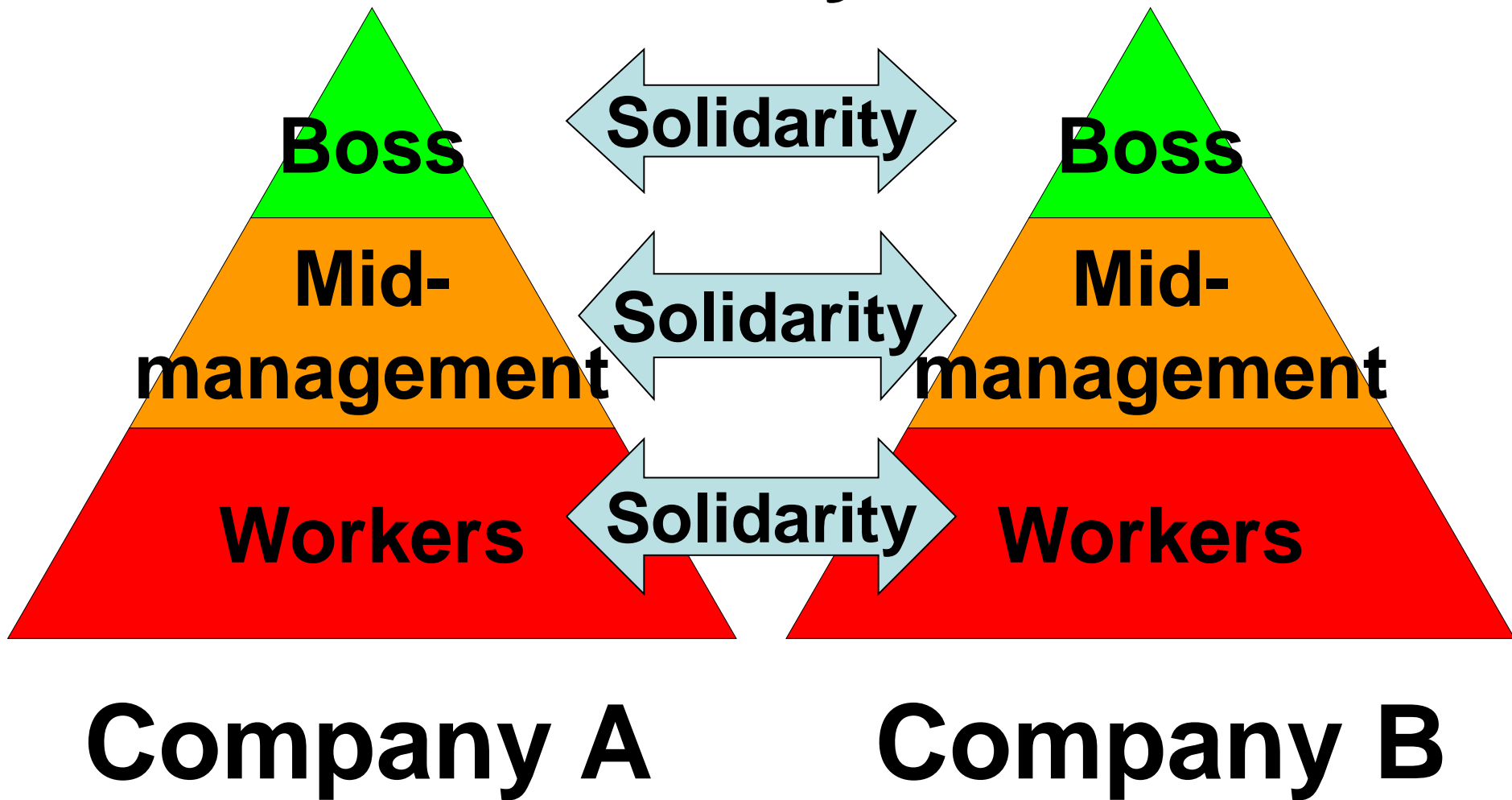
Key words:

1. Persistence パーシステンス
2. Frame and attribute 「場」と「資格」
3. Vertical society, horizontal society タテ社会、ヨコ社会

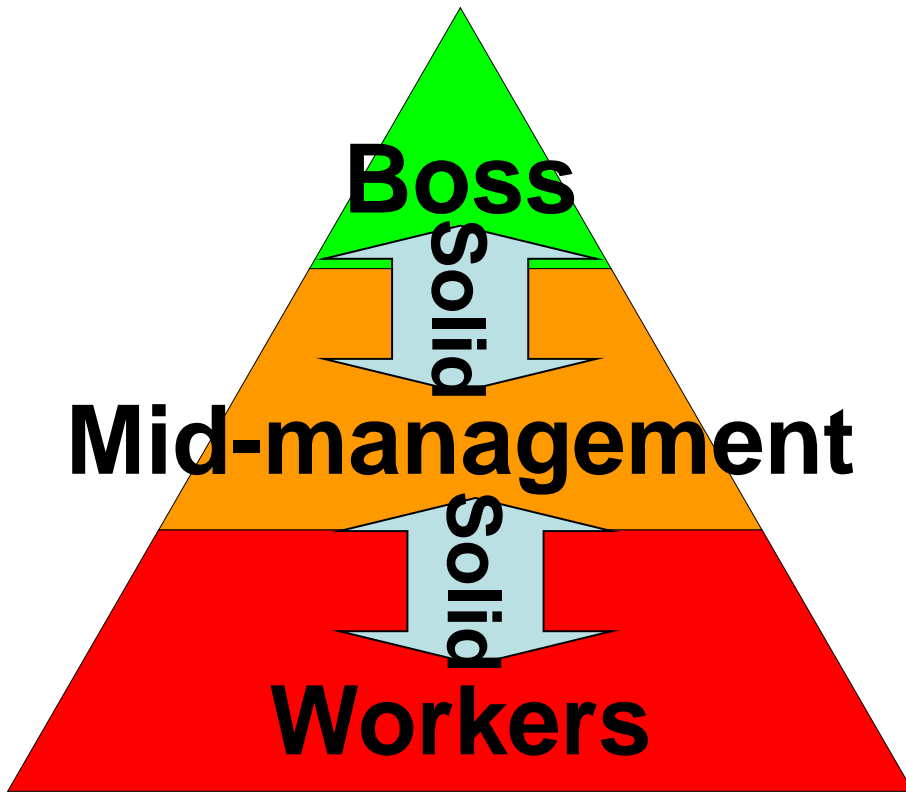
The Indian caste system



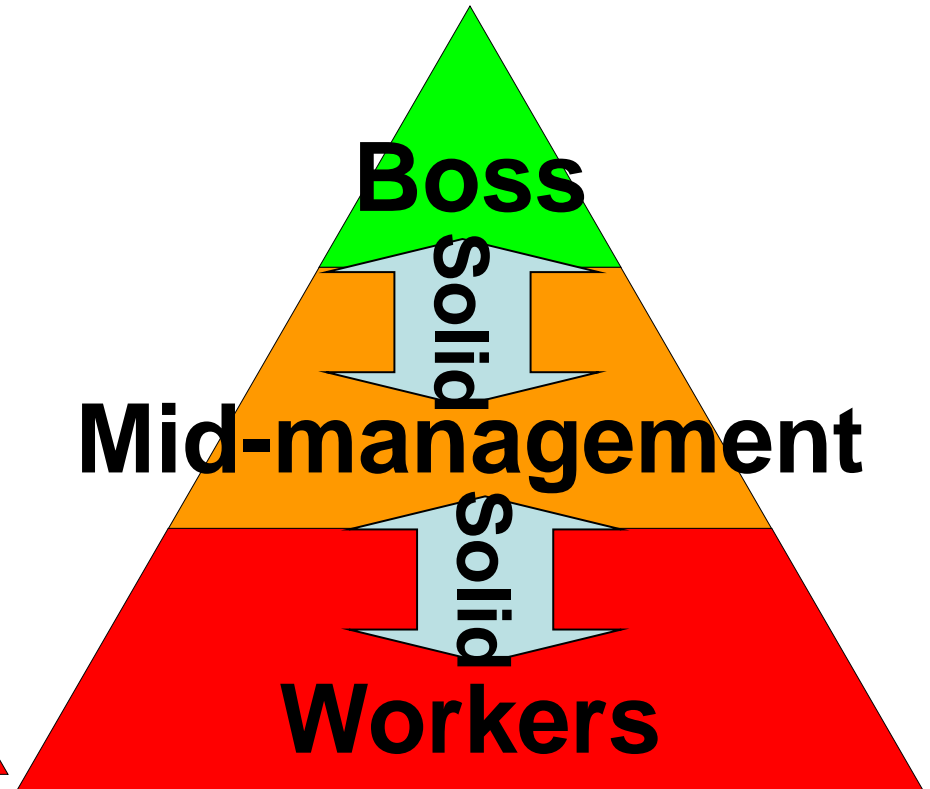
The British class system: a horizontal society



In Japan, corporate loyalty rules



Company A



Company B

‘Relational people’

「間人」

Kanjin

Eshun

Hamaguchi



Eshun Hamaguchi's relational theory

- ***Nihon-rashisa no Saihakken***
(Rediscovering 'Japanese-like' Qualities)
- **Pub Kodansha 1988**
- **『「日本らしさ」の再発見』**
- **浜口 恵俊 (著)**

The kanjin theory:

- **The basic unit of Japanese society is not the individual but the connection between individuals. Not kojīn but kanjin.**
- **日本の根本的な単位は「個人」ではなく、人と人との間の「関係」。つまり、日本人は「個人」ではなく、「間人」だ。**

Hierarchy, but not gross inequality

- **Relatively small gaps between rich and poor, no big wealth inequalities as in the US, and no strict class system as in Britain.**
- **A strong majority of Japanese say they are middle-class in government surveys.**

Competitive Communism?

The Success of Competitive Communism in Japan

**(日本における競争的な共産主義の
成功)**

Douglas Moore Kenrick, 1988

**“The nail that sticks out
gets hammered down.”**

「出る杭が打たれる」

**Perhaps Japan’s most
famous proverb...**

応援団 *Oendan* Cheerleaders



Oendan in action





**Every kind of
cheerleader
needs to be
well organized
and well
*disciplined***

**組織力は強
調される**

Senpai Kohai先輩後輩

Senior and junior

**Vertical relations in
companies, clubs,
organizations**

**Little boys in baseball teams
who only get to pick up the
balls...**

And above all,
HARMONY is stressed

和 wa

Japan, Country of Wa

- 日本、「和の国」 Wa no Kuni
- 大和, Yamato, old name for Japan =

BIG WA

Uchi and Soto 内と外

Inside and Outside

**Different behavior inside
and outside the group**

Uchi = House = 'We'

Related Terms

- ***Omote* and *Ura* 表と裏**
- The surface appearance and what lies behind

- ***Tatemae* and *Honne* 建前と本音**
- What you say for appearances and what you really think

3. Aesthetic Nihonjinron

美術系日本人論

Wabi 侘び & Sabi 寂び

- **Wabi**: “the beauty to be found in poverty and simplicity”
- **Wabishii** (侘しい): Lonely, solitary, miserable, cheerless, wretched
- **Sabi**: “elegant simplicity”
- **Sabishii** (寂しい): Lonely, lonesome, desolate, dreary...

**Plain, simple
elegance...
no glitz or
showing off**



Kind of old-fashioned and rustic



田舎の伝統的な
生活と関連する . . .



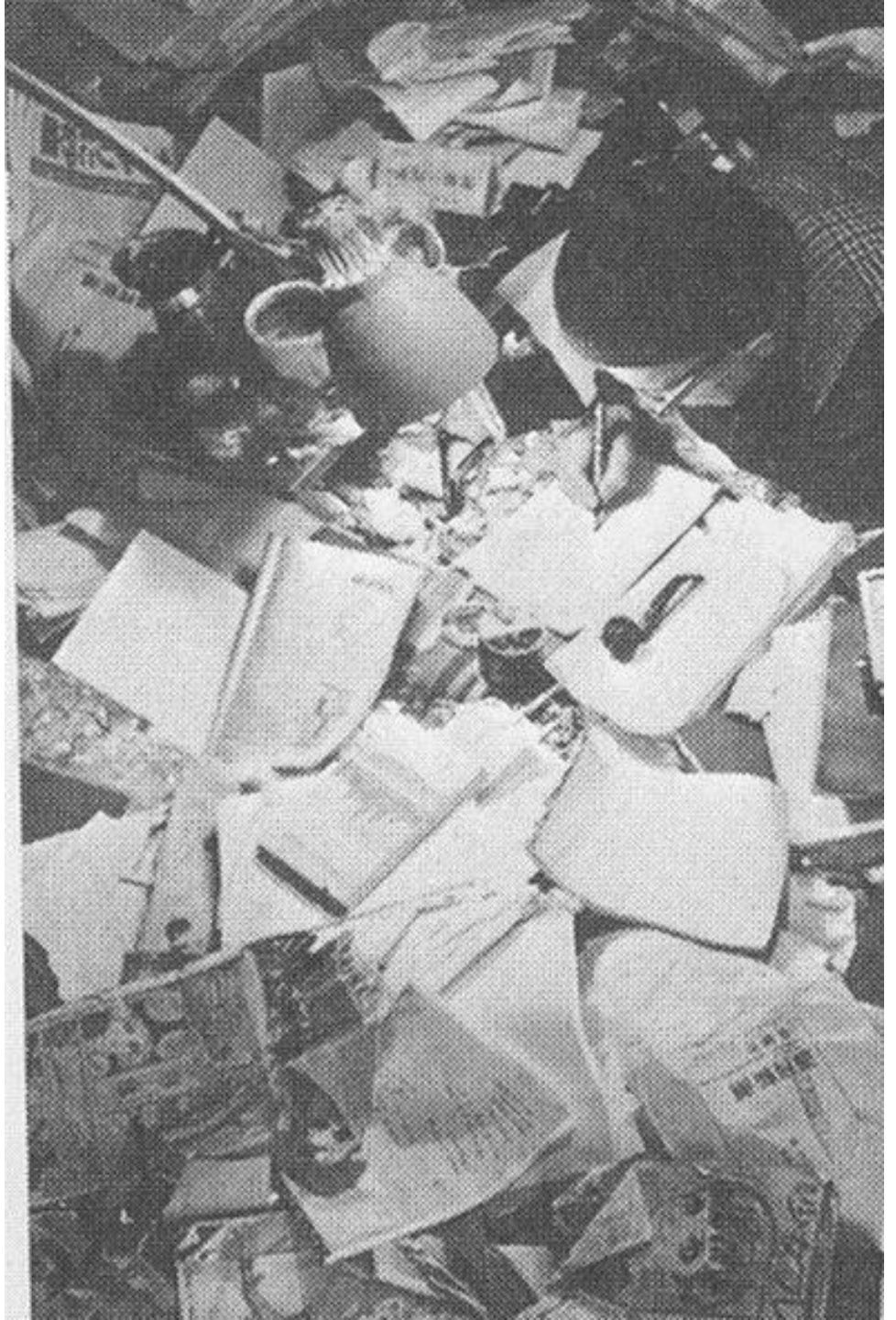


- **Mind you, not all Japanese rooms look like that...**

- **しかし、全ての日本の和室はかならずしもそのイメージに合っていない...**

The scholar Minoru Kida in his rather untidy study

「見事に散らかった
書齋」で働いている
学者、きだ・みのる



**There's a
gaudy,
flashy
side to
Japanese
culture
too...**



**... that tends to be
downplayed by Nihonjinron
theorists.**

***Sakura* Cherry blossoms 桜**





Cherry-blossom viewing



2 Nihonjinron categories in 1

Love of natural beauty

+

Love of doing things in groups

ダブル日本人らしさ

大自然の美しさへの憧れ+集団意識

But cherry blossoms soon fall...



Mono no Aware 物の哀れ

- **Pathos – an awareness of the transience of beauty and life**

... like *kamikaze* pilots...



More *mono no aware*

The cicada (*semi* 蟬). The sound of the cicada is part of the Japanese summer. They incubate underground for eight years, then emerge to fly around and look for a mate. When they find one, the female is soon impregnated; she lays her eggs and within two weeks she and her mate are dead. Hence the emergence from the soil is both a birth and a herald of death.

8 years underground, 2 weeks of flight and love, then death...

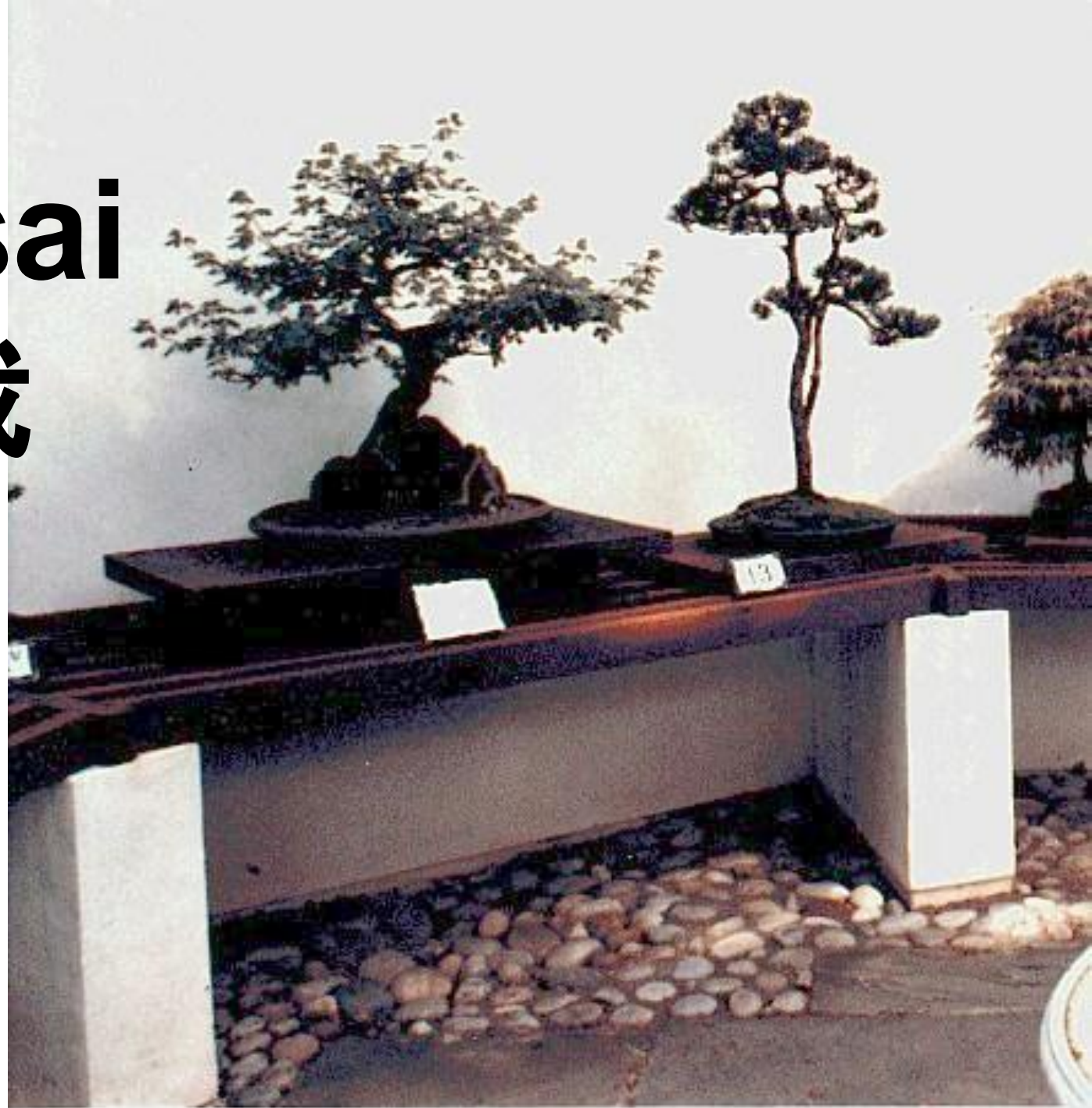


Miniaturization 小型化

**Japanese people love to
make things smaller!**

***Smaller is Better: Japan's
Mastery of the Miniature, by
Lee O-young***

Bonsai 盆栽



Mini-trees 小型化の樹



Netsuke 根付



Exquisite miniature ivory figurines

**And then
there are
haiku of
course...**

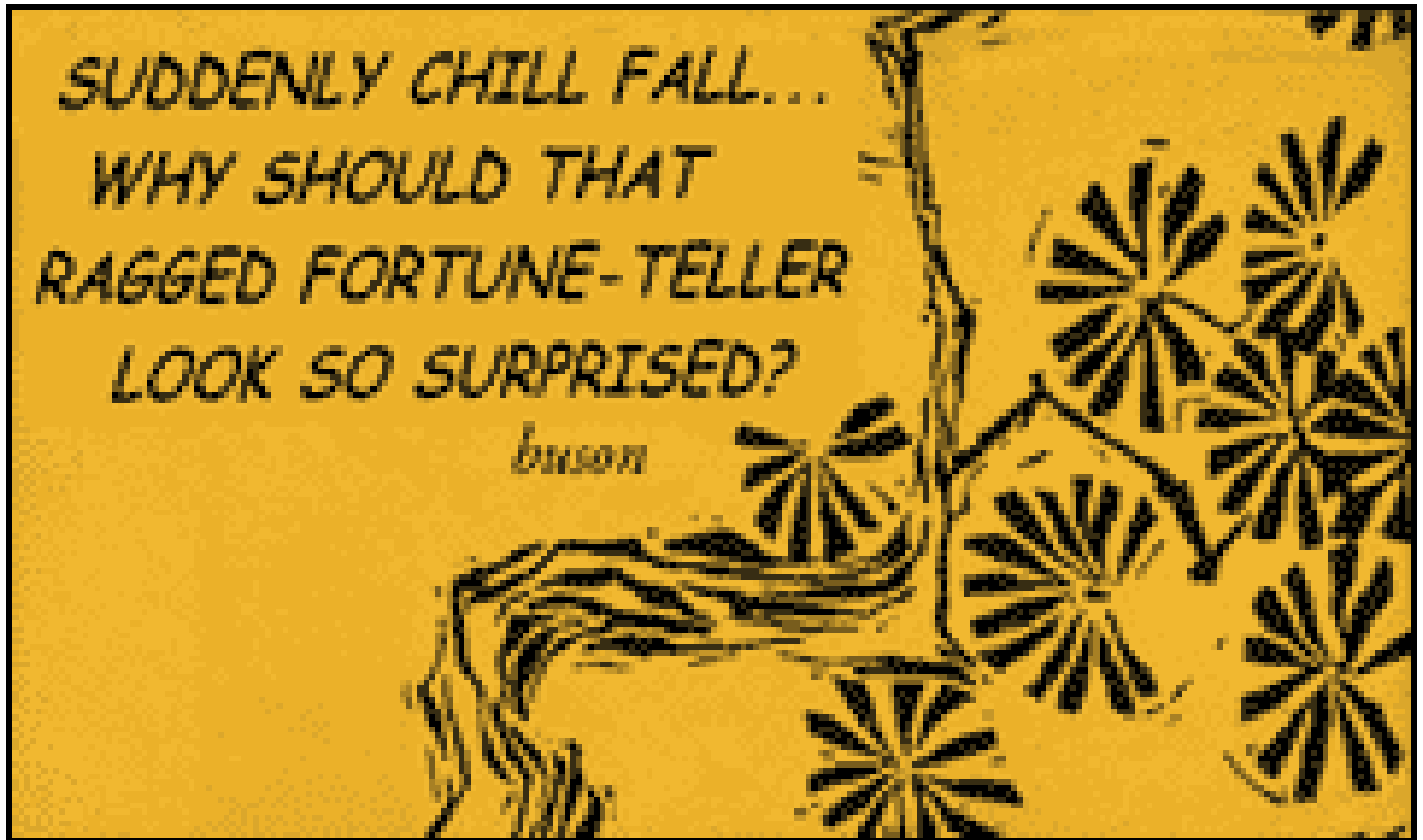
俳句

泳ぐ紫色の金魚

黄色のおたまじゃくし

インクつぼの中

Miniature poems... 三二詩



Cute little cars 軽自動車



Miniature cameras 小型カメラ



The Sony Walkman



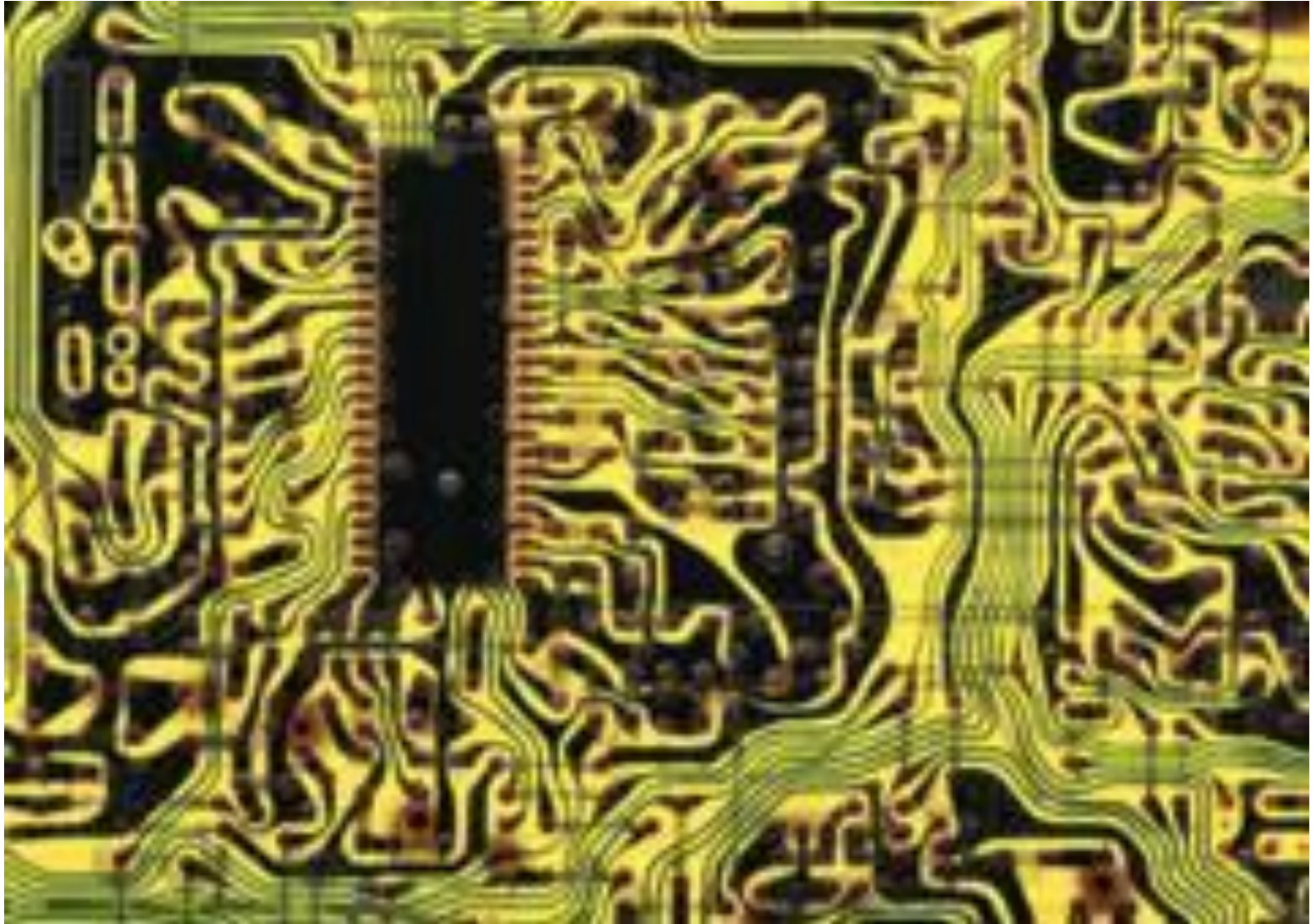
Mobile phones 携帯電話



Sometimes they even have little netsuke-type things attached to them....

根付付携帯電話もあるし...

Ever tinier computer chips



4. Intellectual Nihonjinron

思想的日本人論

The Rising Sun (Hinomaru) flag

A simple but elegant design [very wabi/sabi... the sun goes down, just as cherry blossoms fall, but comes up again just as the blossoms return year after year], symbolizing the goodness of nature. Not like [for instance] the Union Jack or Stars and Stripes, which are overtly *political* symbols.

See Agawa Hiroyuki, *My Patriotism*, 57-61

『阿川弘之、国を思つて何が悪い』 57~61.

**Japanese people depicted
as closer to nature than
other peoples.**

S

新潮新書

Brevity is the soul of wit,
and tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes.

藤原正彦

FUJIWARA Masahiko

国家の品格

すべての日本人に
誇りと自信を与える
画期的日本論!

新潮新書 新刊

新潮社
定価: 本体680円(税別)

A recent
example:
*Kokka no
Hinkaku (The
Dignity of
the State)* by
Masahiko
Fujiwara

**Published November 2005
and the top-selling Nihonjin-
ron book in recent years.**

**Japan is the world's only
“civilization of emotion and
form” (*jocho + katachi*)**

日本は世界で唯一の「情緒と形の文明」

**Fashionable “internationalization” is a
euphemism for “Americanization”, i.e.
submission to US cultural imperialism... and
is making Japanese forget their national
character and pride.**

国際化という名のアメリカ化に踊らされてきた日本人
は、この誇るべき「国柄」を長らく忘れてきた。

Reforms based on 'logic' or 'rationality' can never prevent the ruin of Japanese society.

「論理」と「合理性」頼みの「改革」では、社会の荒廃を食い止めることはできない。

What Japan needs now is not logic but emotion, not learning English but learning Japanese, not democracy but samurai spirit... to restore the dignity of the state.

いま日本に必要なのは、論理よりも情緒、英語よりも国語、民主主義よりも武士道精神であり、「国家の品格」を取り戻すことである。

Typical strategy 典型的な作戦

Take a cliché from Euro-American orientalism (e.g. Orientals are emotional and bad at logical thinking) and turn it on its head (Japan has an emotion-based culture and should return to that rather than slavishly imitating the US). This is how the debate tends to go.

「東洋人・日本人は論理に弱い」 → 「東洋人は情緒に優れている」

Japanese intuition

The emphasis on instinctive understanding as opposed to rationality and logic.

E.g. haragei 腹芸

一身伝心 *isshin denshin*

Haragei 腹芸

**“What the Japanese call
“belly - talk”, communicating
by one's attitude and the force
of one's personality rather than
in words**

- [研究社 新英和・和英中辞典]

“Air” *Kuuki* 空気

“Reading the air” – “*Kuuki o yomu*”

Understanding a situation from the atmosphere – no need for words.

“**KY**” – *Kuuki yomenai*. Slang:

Unable to read the air. Hence: lacking in sensitivity, instinct.

Example

The

misunderstanding

at Kyodo News.

A grand tradition

Kitaro Nishida (1870-1945), the father of Japanese philosophy, contrasted western logic (*ronri* 論理) with Japanese intuition (*chokkan*).

In *Nihonjinron*, the high intellectual discourse often sounds like the popular everyday discourse only with harder-to-understand vocabulary.

Nishida Kitaro 西田幾多郎

“Pure experience”

「純粹經驗」

“Experiential
intuition”

「行為的直觀」



Catch 22!

It is impossible to criticize Japanese intuition because the very tools of criticism (logical argument) are condemned as ethnocentric and lacking in understanding of Japan.

Imanishi Kinji

今西 錦司(1901~
1992)

Japan's top
primatologist

日本の霊長類
の一人者。

『人間以前の社会』
岩波新書1951年



In English

A Japanese View of Nature: The World of Living Things

**Original *Seibutsu no Sekai* 生物の世界
1941**

‘Natural thinking’

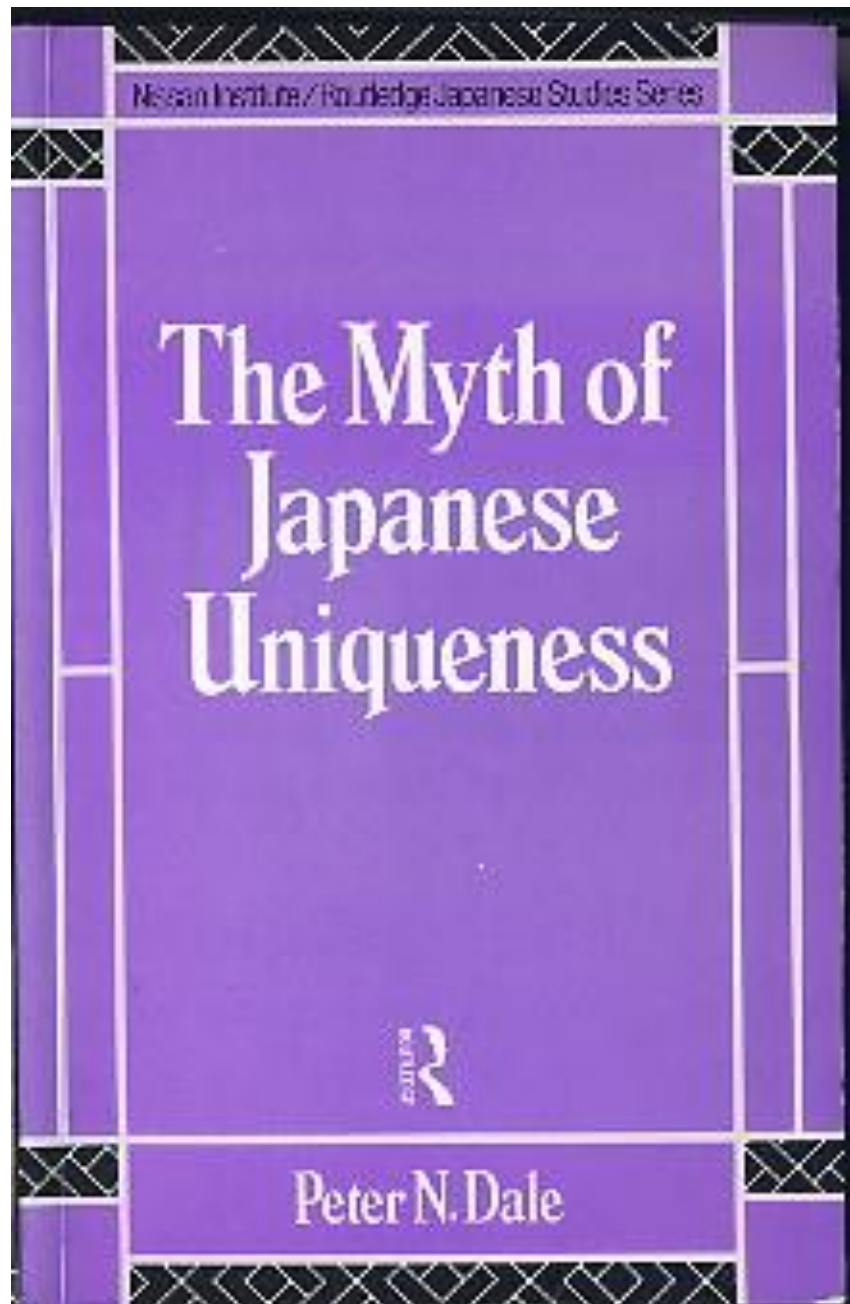
Because Japanese are ‘closer to nature’ than westerners, they have a closer empathy with animals.

Hence Imanishi could recognize individual monkeys, whereas his western colleagues had to use tags to tell them apart.

日本人は日本猿に生物的に近いから、猿と猿の間の違いがすぐ分かる。西洋の霊長類学者はタググをつけなければならぬ... とか。

See Peter Dale's 1986 classic,

***The Myth of
Japanese
Uniqueness.***



DO THE JAPANESE DIFFER
FROM OTHER NATIONALITIES?

HOW SCIENTIFICALLY SOUND
ARE THE INTELLECTUAL
ARGUMENTS THAT THEY DO?

『日本人の独自性という神話』

ピーター N. デール

Explanations

**Supposing it is true
that the Japanese
have developed such
a unique set of
characteristics...**

Why?

1. Ecological Explanations

「生態学的」な説明

Seasonality...

Japanese people have traditionally had to live with the four changing seasons of winter, spring, summer and autumn...

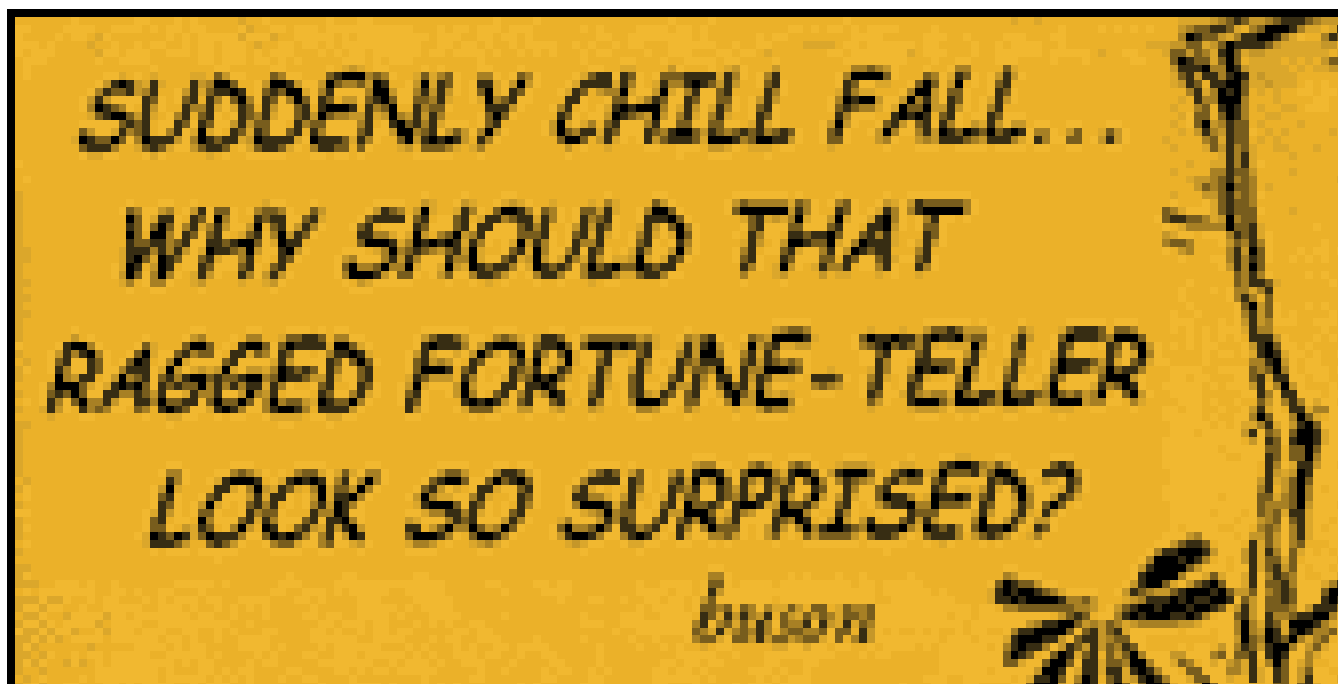
... or six seasons if you count the rainy season in May/June and the typhoon around October...

冬春夏秋という季節のサイクルは日本人の伝統生活に染み付いている... 梅雨と台風季節もね

... that's why Haiku are always supposed to have a seasonal reference in them

だからこそ俳句は必ず「季語」は入っているし.

...





**Tetsuro
Watsuji,
philosopher
(1889-1960)**

**和辻哲郎
哲学者
明治22～昭和35**

Climate (Fudo)

風 人間學の考察 和辻哲郎著 土



頁144.2
岩波文庫

Also called 'Climate and Culture'

- **Eurasia: 3 types of climate: monsoon, desert, pastoral. Japan is in the monsoon belt (hence the rainy season, a mini-monsoon...)**
- **BUT Japan is further north than most monsoon countries and gets cold air coming down from the Arctic.**

Therefore...

- **Japan has a wet rice-cultivating agriculture, where everyone has to work together at planting and transplanting times...**
- **Japan has houses with open architecture to let the humidity out in the monsoon season so there's little privacy...**
- **But a tendency for people to huddle together when it's cold...kind of cozy...**

And that's why Japan has this group society with little room for individualism.

- **A form of argument known as 'environmental determinism'**
- **環境決定論です**

2. Historical explanations

歴史学的な説明

Sakoku 鎖国

A Closed Country

- Japan was almost cut off from the world for most of the Edo period (c. 1600-1868), and developed its own unique social system, whose influence remains today.

"This book is an insightful analysis of one of the cardinal problems of any New World Order."

—Chalmers Johnson, President, Japan Policy Research Institute

Globalization of Japan

Japanese *Sakoku* Mentality
and U.S. Efforts to Open Japan

Mayumi Itoh



**Mayumi Itoh
(2000) argues
that Japan's
diplomacy is
still influenced
by the
'sakoku'
mentality to
this day**

...and will respond only to 'outside pressure' from other countries, especially the United States

- 伊藤は日本の外交政策は今までに、「鎖国精神」に影響が強く、他国、特に米国の「外圧」に対してしか動かないと指摘する。

Yet another Nihonjinron word:

外圧

Gaiatsu

External pressure

A Tale of Two Perrys



Commodore Matthew Perry



**Defense Secretary
William Perry**

William Perry's handshake (1996)



Result?

開國 Kaikoku

‘Opening the country’

3. Biological Explanations

生物学的な説明

Could it be biological?

The
Japanese
Brain

Uniqueness and Universality
Tadanobu Tsunoda

Translated by
Yoshinori Ojima

日本人の脳—脳の働きと東西
の文化
角田 忠信 (著) 1978年

Tsunoda, Tadanobu. *The Japanese Brain, Uniqueness and Universality*, Translated by Yoshinori Oiwa, Tokyo, Japan: Taishukan Publishing Company, 1985.

- . . . Argues that Westerners use the right side of the brain for logic and the left side for emotion, whereas Japanese use the right side for both... and hence logic and emotion are mixed together. .
- 西洋人は脳の右半徑で「論理」をやって、左半徑は「感情」をやる。ところが、日本人は「論理」と「感情」を両方脳の左半徑でやっている...

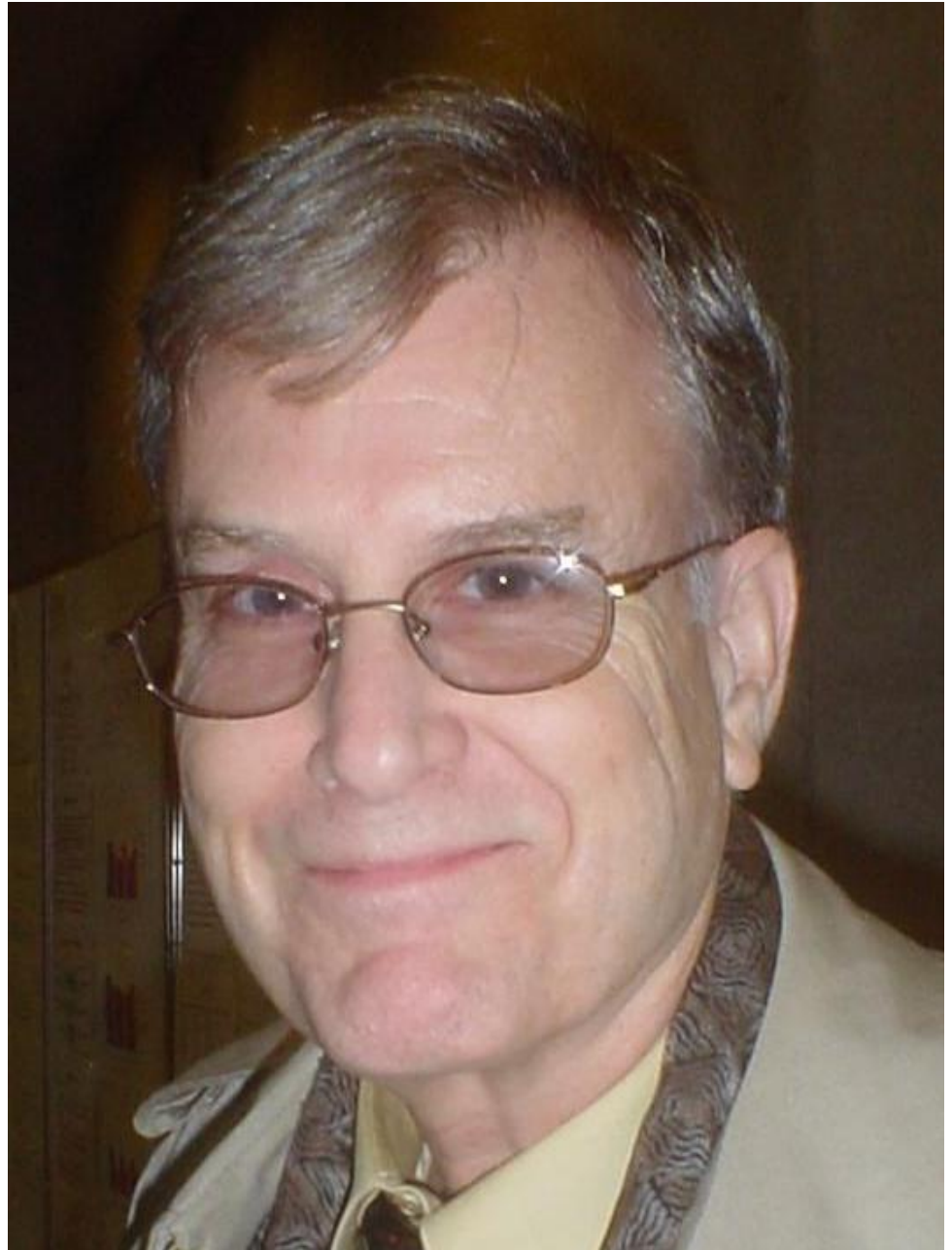
This book teaches you how to use the right side of your brain to improve your memory



右脳記憶法
著者: 七田 真

Another self-help book suggests losing weight by brushing your teeth left-handed. That supposedly stimulates the right side of the brain... the side that controls fat digestion.

**Richard E.
Nisbett,
author of
*THE
GEOGRAPHY OF
THOUGHT
How Asians and
Westerners
Think
Differently . . .
and Why.***



Nisbett:

***Westerners see trees,
Easterners see a forest***

Coming up next ...

来週の知らせ

ANTI-

NIHONJINRON

アンチ日本人論