Transmission, Inheritance, Emulation 19 by Peter Goldsbury

INTERLUDE:
VIII: Aikido and Japaneseness:
A Primer of Martial *Nihonjinron*

The next few columns (19 to 26) are intended to be 'pivotal' columns, which will discuss Japan in general, probably more so than the Japanese martial arts and aikido. The columns are intended to form a 'floating bridge' (well afloat, as it happens) between the prewar *koryu*, Daito-ryu, *aiki-budo* and wartime aikido of Morihei Ueshiba and the postwar aikido practiced by the combination of Ueshiba Father & Son and their disciples. Kisshomaru Ueshiba was the one who was largely responsible for the spread of postwar aikido internationally, but, by coincidence or as a consequence, he was also largely responsible for transforming the art from an elitist activity, reserved for the very few Japanese who had the correct personal contacts and recommendations—and also the leisure and financial means—to be *uchideshi* or who were called up to serve in the Japanese military, into a 'mass' art, potentially open to anyone around the world who was prepared to travel to a dojo and find a teacher.

This transformation needs to be seen both for what it was intended to be and for what it actually turned out to be. It was intended to be a clean break with Japan's prewar militaristic past and thus a total redrawing of the dimensions of the art—but one that sought to retain all the essential elements of prewar Japanese *budo*, as Kisshomaru Ueshiba understood this. However, this transformation also needs to be seen for what it actually turned out to be: a total redrawing of the art, certainly, but one that appears to have omitted some of the essential elements and also one that did not make as clean a break with the 'negative' aspects of the prewar Japanese regime as Kisshomaru had hoped. One reason for this is that Kisshomaru Ueshiba was a very astute pragmatist: his vision was certainly there, but it had to blend with the actual realities as he saw these. Column 27 will move from 'transmission' to 'inheritance' and will resume the 'narrative' element in this series of columns with an account of Kisshomaru Ueshiba's life and training. Overall, I will be concerned to examine Kisshomaru Ueshiba's contribution to aikido as widely and objectively as possible, and this might well involve attempting to repair the rather tarnished reputation given to him by those who claim that he removed some essential aspects of the training undertaken by this father.

Some Preliminaries
Previous columns have discussed the impact of World War II on aikido, but the focus of the discussion so far has been mainly on events relating to the life and activities of Morihei Ueshiba. What is still lacking is a sustained analysis of the deeper aspects of the impact of the war in general: the nature of the supposed transformation in attitudes and the extent to which this did, or did not, take place in 1945. In terms of straight history, pioneer researchers in this field are John Dower and Eiji Takemae, whose general works on World War II and its effects on Japan constitute an essential foundation for the study of any such transformation. (Details of authors and works quoted or cited can be found below, under **Further Reading**.)

However, to see Japan in general, and the world of the martial arts and aikido in particular, purely in terms of changes wrought by World War II would be a major mistake. World War II constitutes a convenient trope, or motif, for looking at the changes made by Kisshomaru Ueshiba to aikido training and the organization of the Aikikai, and for comparing the new order with the old order of the Kobukan. However, these changes, and especially the attitudes of Kisshomaru Ueshiba with regard to aikido and its international dissemination, need to be seen in a much wider context, as a microcosm of a wholesale transformation of Japan's sense of identity as a nation. There are much broader underlying issues relating to 'prewar' and 'postwar' Japan. Such issues include the following:
(Rather than take a chronological approach, I prefer to start with the evidence that confronts many long-term residents of Japan and then work backwards to look at the reasons for this.)

1. The belief in a 'unique homogeneous culture' in postwar Japan,
2. The general influence of this 'unique homogeneous culture' on postwar Japan,
3. The extent to which this 'unique homogeneous culture' was a construct, created in order to assuage the pain of defeat,
4. The extent to which there were prewar antecedents of this supposed 'unique homogeneous culture',
5. The extent to which the prewar antecedents of this supposed 'unique homogeneous culture' were part of a supposed transformation of Japanese 'identity' as a result of contact with foreign powers,
6. The extent to which the writing of Japanese history itself was part of a cultural tradition, influenced not only by the nativists and the 'militarists', but also by the World War II occupiers, especially the United States, who wanted to recreate Japan in its own image and likeness, as a beacon of 'western' democracy.
7. The extent to which the supposed ultra-nationalism of the 'militarists' in the 1930s can be seen in a positive light, as something actually beneficial, especially to the martial arts,

8. Conversely, the extent to which in the 1930s Japan actually ‘entered a dark valley' or ‘fell under a dark shadow', which are the code words for the theory that a generally benevolent, but generally hapless, population was manipulated by a band of ‘militarists'.

One pertinent example of the supposed transformation is education, especially education and training in the Japanese martial arts. It is generally understood that the allied occupation authorities (actually, General McArthur and the US component of SCAP) had the overall aim of refashioning Japan's educational system in the image and likeness of the system prevailing in the US; it is less generally understood that this refashioning was not wholly successful, in part because the occupation authorities had neither the personnel nor the skills in Japanese to do it themselves. They had to leave it to the Japanese Education Ministry, those diehard inheritors of the so-called ‘samurai' tradition, to implement reforms for which they themselves had only partial enthusiasm. However, training in the Japanese martial arts had been radically revamped already and it was this, not forebodings of any restrictions to be imposed by the SCAP authorities, which led to Morihei Ueshiba's decision to move to Iwama. (This point needs to be emphasized, since some accounts suggest that it was the development of the war itself, especially the bombing of Tokyo by the B-29s [which began late in 1944 at the earliest] and the threat of the Hiroshima bombing, that led to Morihei Ueshiba's decision to move to Iwama [which took place in 1942, two years before the B-29s actually started bombing Japanese cities].)

It is commonly accepted that by the closing years of the Tokugawa period, traditional *kenjutsu* and *jujitsu* training was radically changing and these changes continued after the Meiji Restoration, with the total abolition of the samurai class. However, a resurrection and renewal of sorts took place later, at the hands of people like Sokaku Takeda and Jigoro Kano. Morihei Ueshiba also has to be included here, in view of his training under Takeda and his subsequent career as the creator of the new art called aikido, which supposedly broke away from the traditions of Tokugawa and Meiji and reached its full flowering after World War II, from around 1955 onwards. This, of course, is the part of the ‘official' version of events described in his son's biography and deserves close scrutiny.

After the Meiji Restoration in 1868, training in kendo and judo became a means of educating the young in the cultivation of martial spirit, which was also coupled with the imported western ideas of sport and the gentlemanly amateur. Nevertheless, both traditional martial arts and the ‘modern' educational training were later seen as training young people to be good Japanese and later became essential components of Japan's imperial mission to ‘civilize' Asia and the rest of the world. With Japan's defeat, however, this mission came to an abrupt end. Prewar martial arts were no longer practiced and when they were resumed, the emphasis was firmly placed on their positive contribution to postwar society. This transformation is especially relevant to aikido training, not only because Morihei Ueshiba was a bridge between prewar and postwar attitudes, but also because of the changes that were supposed to have taken place in the traditional, almost sacred and mystical, relationship between teacher and student, master and pupil—which still underpins the way aikido is learned. For aikido, of course, the supposed transformation allows one to pose the question to what extent Morihei Ueshiba actually had a teaching methodology at all —and if he had, what happened to it.

Thus, all of the issues listed in a previous paragraph are to some degree relevant to Japanese martial arts. In aikido, especially, the general lack of competition and cross training in other arts entails that the perception and judgment of quality in the art has to be found in other ways. In Japan this judgment is sometimes made by appeal, for example, to a certain level of technical skill, conceived in a ‘Japanese' way, or to the understanding of or faithfulness to the Founder's ‘message', or to evidence of martial ‘virtue', also conceived in a ‘Japanese' way. To the extent that the supposed transformation of aikido is a microcosm of the supposed transformation of Japan as a whole, it is a worthwhile project to examine all of the general issues listed above and look at the extent to which they appear in aikido or influenced the development of the art. Another way of putting this is to ask whether a preoccupation with the ‘Japanese-ness' of aikido facilitates or impedes the international practice of the art.

Being Uniquely Unique…

The present column will begin this sustained analysis of the deeper aspects of the transformation of Japan from prewar Meiji / Taisho / wartime Showa to postwar Showa and beyond, more specifically with an examination of Items (1) to (3), above. These can be considered together as aspects of the evolution and development of what may be called ‘Japanese identity': how the Japanese saw themselves as a national culture. This preoccupation with identity can be seen in an important general phenomenon, the influence of which still pervades contemporary discussion of Japanese culture, history, ethics, social values, and especially the martial arts. The phenomenon receives greater or less attention according to varying circumstances and this fact will be of some importance later, when we consider how this phenomenon relates to the development of the martial arts and especially aikido. The phenomenon is a belief, very commonly held in Japan, that Japan and the Japanese exemplify a unique society or culture, more unique than any other culture, and that the culture cannot be understood fully by those who are not born into the culture from parents who were born and brought up as Japanese.

Although ambiguous, the term 'culture' is used here because it the closest translation of the Japanese term 文化 *bunka*, which is always used in such discussions. Some have a problem with this term, on the grounds that it is essentially artificial, a construct used primarily for the purpose of analysis or criticism. Both 文化 and 文明 are translations of western concepts (*bunmei*, usually translated as 'civilization', as in 文明開化: *bunmei kaika = civilization and enlightenment*, which was a movement in the 1850s). However, this does not really affect the arguments of this column and 'culture' is understood in a very wide sense here, as something that the Japanese consider themselves almost instinctively aware of, intended to include the whole spectrum of ideology, values, practices (which include symbols, heroes and rituals) and traditions, whether or not the latter are 'invented' in the sense discussed in Hobsbawn and Ranger (see below, under **Further Reading**). It is in this sense that the term 'culture' is used by Geert Hofstede. In *Culture's Consequences*, which is the detailed summary of his research with IBM employees in 30 countries, Hofstede defends the concept of 'national culture', despite the fact that nations tend to be more recent than the local cultures that they embody. I am also keenly aware that the term entails the use of a stereotype. The statement that, 'the Japanese believe that their culture is unique' has a peculiar status. It does not entail that each individual Japanese man, woman and child believes this, but nor is it a proposition seen to be true as a result of inductive reasoning.

To put this phenomenon in some context—and to emphasize what is **not** being discussed here, consider the general belief that native participants of a national culture have a unique access to and understanding of the culture. This is so basic and uncontroversial a view that it would be a truism in most cultures: in many respects the 'natives' understand their own cultures better than anyone else—their sense of themselves as natives is 'built' around the culture and the culture is 'built' around them. In fact, a downside of this general belief that natives uniquely understand their own culture is the fact that the natives themselves are sometimes less capable than outsiders of the careful scrutiny that aims to be as objective as it is possible to be when examining a culture. A concrete example of this is the reception given in Japan to Ruth Benedict's analysis of Japanese culture in her book, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*. Benedict was commissioned to write an account of the culture of the people whom the US and its allies were preparing to fight and, though she never set foot in Japan, she interviewed scores of Japanese residents in the US. Her account was judged very successful, so successful in fact that it was translated into Japanese as 『菊と刀』 (*Kiku to Katana*) and can be found, in either language, in any large Japanese bookstore. Ruth Benedict is considered by many Japanese to have a 'true', 'real' or 'deep' understanding of Japanese culture. (The Japanese term here is *rikai* [理解] and is a somewhat loaded term, as we shall see.)

However—and this is the message of some of the studies to be discussed below, one cannot conclude that the national culture itself, of which the natives are a central part and which they understand so well, has any ultra-special features that set it apart from other national cultures. To mention Hofstede once again, what he calls the 'software of the mind', which distinguishes members of one culture from those of another, is developed at an early age and rarely changes—and all cultures share this unique quality in common. However, this notion of uniqueness is where the issues arise with Japan and Japanese culture. What has been called the 'myth of Japanese uniqueness' is the belief that Japan is special, in comparison with other cultures, and that the normal generalizations that can be made about cultural understanding and intercultural exchange are either valid only to a certain degree or break down completely, in the case of Japan.

This is a controversial subject and must be discussed with a certain care. To put it in a modern context, we can consider the statements made by Ian Buruma, in a review of one of the books discussed below. The statements concern remarks made by a Japanese Prime Minister, Yasuhiro Nakasone, about Japan as a racially homogeneous society.

> "*Is the Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro a racist? Or must we read his recent remarks about the superior intelligence of a monoracial society like Japan, and unlike the United States, in context, as his defenders claim? If so, in what context? The physical context was a seminar for the Japanese equivalent of the Young Conservatives* [a political organization in the UK]. *Nakasone's statements were clearly not meant for foreign ears. He probably didn't mean to offend American blacks and Hispanics, although he obviously did, which showed a curious degree of insensitivity for a man who prides himself on being an international statesman. But perhaps the fact that few Japanese quarreled with the content of his remarks tells us something important*." (Ian Buruma, "Soul to Soul", review of Peter Dale, *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness*, *Times Literary Supplement*, undated.)

Buruma then expands in some detail the remarks made in the last sentence.

> "*Most Japanese do not need to be reminded of the supposed blessings of being a 'pure'* Volk. *This, indeed, is the context of Nakasone's ideas: the commonly accepted myth that the Japanese are superior because of their racial homogeneity. Japan is one of the very few advanced societies in the world where 19th century* Blut and Boden *theories still hold sway; where racism is not something to be hidden away or obsessively guarded against, but*

> *almost a national state of mind. How else one can explain why someone born and bred in Japan, who speaks only Japanese, but whose grandparents were Koreans, is still regarded as an alien. Or why Vietnamese refugees were refused entry on the grounds that the culture and climate of Switzerland were more congenial (a Japanese official actually said that).*" (Buruma, *ibid*.)

To Buruma's remarks, I can add some comments based on my own experience. I was living in Japan at the time Mr Nakasone made his remarks and I remember well that the Prime Minister was not the only politician to make such remarks not intended for a foreign audience. More recently, for the past ten years I have been Chairman (座長) of a committee established by the Hiroshima city government to examine the situation of foreign residents and make recommendations to the Mayor. There are four Korean members of this committee, who are in precisely the situation described by Buruma and they represent a sizeable population of Korean residents, the general name for which is *Zainichi Kankokujin* / *Chosenjin* (在日韓国人 / 朝鮮人: two names distinguish North Korea from South Korea). In other words the situation described by Buruma in 1978 has not changed in 2011. On the other hand, for almost as long, I have been running a local aikido dojo with two German colleagues, where all the students are Japanese and clearly have no problem with studying a Japanese martial art at the hands of non-Japanese teachers.

Expressed in terms of the martial arts and aikido, the belief is that Japanese martial arts are an essential part of Japanese culture and need to be understood in terms of this culture. A corollary is only a Japanese can fully understand (理解する *rikai suru*) such an essential and indispensable aspect of the culture as Japanese martial arts, including aikido. This belief was recently stated to me quite clearly, and bluntly, by an eminent Honbu shihan with the rank of 8th dan. An unstated and untested corollary here is that understanding also means approval and somehow entails, or is even equivalent to, technical ability and also teaching ability: deeper understanding implying superior ability, and deepest understanding, of the Founder or supreme model, implying superlative, unsurpassed, ability. Of course, the issue here is not simply one of ability, or if it is one of ability, then the issue also involves the 'cultural' dimensions within which this ability is perceived and conceptualized—and these dimensions tend to slide over and smother the possibility of any 'uncultured' natural talent, and the long hours of training required to transform this talent or ability into a high level of skill. (A parallel case here is 品格 *hinkaku* in sumo, usually translated as 'dignity' and considered a necessary condition for promotion to the very highest rank of *yokozuna*: Konishiki was a Hawaiian wrestler possessed of huge size and a high degree of skill. He reached the next highest rank, of *ozeki*, but was never promoted to *yokozuna* because it was considered that lacked this indispensable quality. In fact, Konishiki spoke his mind more often and more bluntly than the sumo hierarchy could accept.)

In my own experience of residence here in Japan for over thirty years—and of countless conversations with Japanese martial arts practitioners, this belief in the special uniqueness of Japanese martial culture is particularly prevalent with middle-generation, middle-ranking, practitioners of aikido. A vivid general expression of this belief can be seen in the annual demonstration, held in May every year at the Nippon Budokan in Tokyo. This enormous demonstration, with several thousand participants drawn from all over Japan, is truly a 'renewal of tribal myths': a paean to the so-called 'spiritual' virtues of aikido in Japan. This is interpreted as the belief that, in these difficult times, Japan has a duty to preach aikido to the rest of the world, in the cause of world peace. The speeches of the guests, mainly politicians, always stress this theme: by means of aikido, Japan has a unique mission to bring peace to a world torn with strife. These speeches are always scattered with references to Morihei Ueshiba and the impression is unmistakable that the peaceful purpose of the demonstration is exactly in accordance with his own wishes. The climax of the demonstration are the performances given by the Japanese armed forces and by the employees of the Aikikai Hombu Dojo, the latter invariably crisp and sharp in their own way, reinforcing the assumption that aikido around the world really needs to have a *Hombu* in Japan: a center of 'technical excellence' that also serves as the center of overseas operations. These overseas operations need to be 'serviced' by the regular dispatch of teachers who have supposedly reached certain levels of skill and have been awarded certain titles according to the internal system of this Japanese Hombu. The regular dispatch of *shihan* teachers in the other direction, from, for example, the US or France to Japan, is considered unthinkable and, in fact, there is no participation in the All-Japan Demonstration, not even a guest demonstration, by any non-Japanese of *shihan* rank. To my knowledge, the last such demonstration, very much a one-off demonstration in view of his status as a celebrity, was given by the actor Steven Seagal, shortly after he was promoted to the Aikikai rank of 7th dan.

There are several questions here, one of which is when and how this general belief in the 'uniquely unique' features of Japanese culture actually arose and how it continues to color perceptions about Japan and the martial arts. These are very general questions and some answers begin with *kokugaku* or nativism in the Edo period, which arose as a counter to the Neo-Confucianism espoused by the early Tokugawa Shoguns. However, there is much evidence to suggest that the general belief is a more recent phenomenon and is directly connected to Japan's defeat in World War II and subsequent economic revival. The belief is invoked in government propaganda (the export of the *Hello Kitty* phenomenon in Heisei Japan being a recent example) and can

include the sublime (the unique nature of Japanese religion), the mundane (the unique Japanese way of doing politics and writing history), and the ridiculous (the unique nature of Japanese stomachs and their inability to digest foreign rice—later mysteriously extended to the unique nature of Japanese snow and the inability of foreign skis to slide over it). Another question, more directly related to aikido, is to what extent this belief influences perceptions of aikido, if at all, and when, to what extent, and in what respects, the belief arose that the art of aikido is essentially and uniquely Japanese and would not be aikido if it were not. The question is especially relevant if we consider that the very same aikido was exported overseas by Japanese teachers after World War II. To see that, with the ambiguities and ambivalence involved, this is not a question admitting of clear and obvious answers, one should consider the parallel cases of judo, kendo and sumo, where 'westernization' in several guises has sometimes been seen as a major problem. One can see these arts as somewhere along a spectrum running from 'unfortunately westernized' to 'pure Japanese'.

The Case of Judo

In the case of judo, some of my Japanese acquaintances regret the fact that judo has become so internationalized that it is no longer recognizable as a Japanese martial art. They equate the internationalization of judo with its development as a 'western' sport. The *angst* of Jigoro Kano concerning the participation of judo in the revived Olympic Games is sometimes cited here, as an example of the danger that the quintessentially Japanese nature of the art has been lost because of 'western-style' competitions with referees and judges, in which the Japanese contestants are often defeated. (The Japanese term for such competitions is *shiai* [試合], in contrast to *kyoso* [競争], which has the wider meaning of general striving or rivalry.) The mere equating of modern judo with sport is not the main issue here, for it is quite possible to conceive of judo as a form of jacketed wrestling entirely shorn of Japanese terms except for the name of the sport. What is at issue is the apparent loss of another kind of judo, more closely related to its *jujutsu* parent, which retains its Japanese essence. However, when explanations are sought for what this essence consists in, there is a tendency to rely on concepts such as the 'spirit' [精神] of '*budo*' [武道], both of which terms are considered impossible to translate from Japanese into another language.

The Case of Kendo

Like judo, kendo has been taught in Japanese high schools since the early 1900s, except for a 10-year gap from 1945 onwards. Like judo, also, kendo has been successfully exported abroad, with the International Kendo Federation established in 1970. However, to a greater extent than judo, kendo is practiced and taught using more overtly Japanese concepts. Modern kendo manuals stress the importance of 和 (*wa*, translated as compassion and cooperation) and for the recent 2010 Combat Games, held in Beijing, the organizers of kendo produced a Japanese pamphlet, translated into English and Chinese, which, among other things, explained 'how to watch a kendo match.' The emphasis was placed on concepts such as 残心 (*zanshin*) and 交剣知愛 (*kokenchiai*). This latter phrase was left untranslated, but the characters mean, respectively, 'intersect', 'sword', 'knowledge', and 'love'.

The Case of Sumo

Sumo is even further along the spectrum towards a quintessentially Japanese art, but presents a more interesting problem. On the one hand, it is an activity that depends on competition, with referees and judges. On the other hand, it is not thought of as a 'western' sport at all. In fact it is officially regarded as Japan's national sport and professional sumo is practiced in Tokyo in the *Kokugikan*: the National Arena. Professional sumo has retained a more robustly nationalistic attitude to foreign participation and after their retirement foreign professionals cannot have any stake in the art unless they are granted Japanese nationality. The popularity of professional sumo has gradually been waning, in the face of baseball and soccer and, again, this is a source of chagrin to some of my Japanese acquaintances—along with the much more unpalatable fact that the recent holders of the highest rank in sumo, *yokozuna*, are all foreigners, of Mongolian nationality. The fact that there are currently no Japanese *yokozuna* has given rise to much soul searching. At present, this soul searching is becoming much more intense as a result of revelations of gambling with gangsters and also *yaocho* (八百長), which is fixing the result of sumo bouts in exchange for large sums of money.

And Aikido?

Like judo, kendo and sumo, aikido is one of the arts classified by the Japanese as *gendai budo* (現代武道), martial ways that were distinguished from *kobudo* (古武道), which originated earlier (major dividing points being the Meiji Restoration in 1868 and the revival of *budo* training after World War II, around 1950). When aikido was exported abroad after the war, it was taught & practiced mainly by judoists who wanted something 'extra'. As it became more popular, aikido also had to face the possibility of becoming a sport, with tournaments and rules, and becoming a member of sports organizations. The leaders of the Aikikai, the main line of aikido directly connected to the family (家 *ie*) of the Morihei Ueshiba, have always stubbornly resisted any attempt to take aikido down the road of judo and kendo, the official argument inevitably being that Morihei Ueshiba explicitly forbade competition. It is clear that Ueshiba did strongly criticize competitions (試合: *shiai*) in his *Takemusu Aiki* discourses; he stated that aikido "strictly forbids" (厳禁: *genkin*) such contests. However, it is also clear from the *Takemusu Aiki* discourses that he thought of these competitions primarily as ***western*** sports, for he must have been aware of the fact that the term *shiai* was also used for general sparring in Edo-era *bujutsu*. The forbidding of

contests has become like a mantra, always invoked whenever the question arises of the place of aikido in sporting organizations like the International Olympic Committee. However, behind the mantra lurks another belief, rarely expressed in clear terms, that aikido is the unique product of a unique Japanese culture—a uniquely unique *budo*, completely different from any other: this is the martial version of the 'myth' lying behind the subjects to be discussed in this column.

…And Arguing About It

One consequence of this Japanese preoccupation with cultural uniqueness is the general phenomenon known as *Nihonjinron* (日本人論, hereinafter, *nihonjinron*). The term, as controversial as 'culture', but for different reasons, combines the characters for 'Japanese' and 'discuss / argue' and is usually translated as something like 'Japanese discussing', or 'discussing the Japanese'. The ambiguity is appropriate here, because in Japan *nihonjinron* is a major activity and publishing industry, but the main players are not only Japanese TV *tarento* (personalities) and the occasional scholars. Non-Japanese scholars and journalists have also made notable contributions and many of these, like myself, have spent many years in Japan and know the country from the 'inside'. This point is of some importance, since one scholar, whose views are discussed below, has complained that *nihonjinron* is too often used as a form of 'Japan-bashing' by Westerners. Another scholar, whose views we shall also consider below, has stated his own view of *nihonjinron* quite clearly, though somewhat bluntly:

> "*The expression* Nihonjin-ron *has become an all-purpose term for the deeply searching identity crisis that has arisen on every level of Japanese society with the coming of affluence of the 1970s and also as part of the domestic Japanese reaction to the extensive penetration of Japanese business interests into world markets. When you go about selling TVs in Tunisia, automobiles in Australia and computers in Canada, eventually someone asks you: Who* are *you? And if your customers ask the question often enough, eventually you too begin to ask yourself the same thing. This question is essentially what is meant by the* Nihonjin-ron. *Many of those interested in the* Nihonjin-ron *try to find at least some of the possible answers within the myth of Nihongo*." (R A Miller, *Japan's Modern Myth*, p. 32.)

Miller dates the rise of *nihonjinron* to the 1970s, when Japan had largely overcome the economic privations of the postwar years, and also largely identifies *nihonjinron* with the 'myth of Nihongo', which is same general belief in 'unique uniqueness' that I have sketched in the previous paragraphs, but applied more strictly to the 'unique uniqueness' of the Japanese language.

Although I will present more specific evidence later, the general influence of *nihonjinron* in Japan can be seen from a visit to any large bookstore. In Hiroshima there are two such stores, with the vast majority of books in Japanese. Of course, as in any large bookstore, the books on display cover a vast range of subjects, but books devoted to Japan and the Japanese occupy a comparatively large amount of space and the few books displayed that are written in English are nearly all about Japan. In the English-language section it is as if no other country in the world is of such interest to the foreigners who visit as Japan. By contrast, I often visit the Netherlands and sometimes browse around bookstores. I have yet to find a bookstore anywhere in the country where the only books available in English are all books on Dutch culture.

Actually, Hiroshima is doubly suitable as a place for a field study of *nihonjinron*, since there are two potential myths involved. In addition to the general 'unique uniqueness' of Japan and the Japanese, there is also the special 'unique uniqueness' of what was experienced by those who suffered the atomic bombing of the city at 8.15 am on August 6, 1945. The *nihonjinron* elements are especially difficult to isolate here, since the general ethics and politics of Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima are still hugely controversial issues, constantly discussed in connection with the self-appointed 'mission' of Hiroshima to abolish nuclear weapons. However, laudable as this 'mission' undoubtedly is, attempts to separate the elements of *nihonjinron* within the discourse are sometimes condemned as an insult to the memory of the victims.

Anyone who practices a martial art like aikido in such a way as to encounter the host culture will also encounter the multiple influences of *nihonjinron*. Even those who do not have a close encounter with Japanese culture will come across traces of it: the cultural trappings of *keikogi* and *hakama*—with the 'meaning' of the pleats; the general awe in which 'Sensei' is held; the Japanese names and terms that are allegedly untranslatable—not because of any constraints relating to language in general, but because the terms are thought to be 'uniquely' Japanese—as can be seen in the whole verbal apparatus of *kotodama*. Accordingly, the influence of *nihonjinron* on the general study of Japan, including aikido, needs to be examined very carefully.

My own introduction to *nihonjinron* occurred very soon after I had begun studying aikido. My very first aikido teacher, who was Japanese, gave me a book by Lafcadio Hearn. In *Japan: An Interpretation*, Hearn sought to explain Japan and the Japanese in terms of a central overriding concept, namely, their religious attitudes. Many other scholars have followed Hearn in explaining Japan by means of one or two central features, among whom Nitobe Inazo (Japan as a culture of *bushido*), Ruth Benedict (Japan as a shame culture), Takeo Doi (Japan as a culture of *amae* or dependence), Chie Nakane (Japan as a vertically structured society), stand out—

as do Japanese language scholars who argue that the Japanese language is unique and thus unlike any other language in the world. It is ironic that some of these claims to uniqueness rest on the Japanese writing system, which was a 'foreign' import from China.

In giving me a copy of Hearn's book, my teacher was attempting to make sure that I had a 'correct' view of Japan, namely, a view that more or less matched his own view of Japan. In all my subsequent contact with this teacher, right down to the present day, there is the same concern—to make sure that the view of Japan that I present in what I write and publish, is orthodox. My teacher has always been anxious that, living in the country and being so exposed to pernicious postwar influences, I will develop a 'false' view of Japan. For him, it was—and is—extremely important that foreigners, especially foreign practitioners of the martial arts, have a correct view. At our last meeting, my first teacher presented me with a book, entitled, 『日本の伝統　魂をみがく武道』(*Nihon no Dento: Tamashi wo migaku Budo: The Tradition of Japan: Budo: The Path of Spiritual Refinement*), which is dedicated to conveying a 'correct' view of Japan, by means of Japanese *budo*.

I think one can see some of the issues immediately. A major issue is the choice of terms used, especially, 'Japan' and 'the Japanese'. The denotation goes well beyond innocuous geographical boundaries and the group of human beings who are native inhabitants of the particular landmass that bears the name. Another issue is the fact of his concern. Why is it so necessary that people like myself have a 'correct' view of Japan? In this respect my first teacher was followed by many others, some of whom have been quick to praise what they think is 'true' or 'real' understanding [理解], or, like the 8th dan shihan mentioned earlier, to denounce what they think is limited, or a total lack of, understanding.

One can generalize these issues somewhat and pose a wider question: to what extent did the concepts of Japanese uniqueness underlying the *nihonjinron* discourse influence the thinking about aikido of Morihei Ueshiba and his son Kisshomaru? To what extent do they influence the thinking of the present leaders of aikido in Japan, especially Doshu, Moriteru Ueshiba? It is attractive to think of aikido, like the other arts, as an 'international' *budo*, available to everybody who is prepared to put in the training required. Or, if we use language considered more appropriate to Morihei Ueshiba as an avatar, we can consider aikido as a 'great gift from O Sensei' to the whole world—in other words, as an activity completely purged of any nasty political—or obtrusively cultural—elements. However, this language seems reminiscent of that used by Onisaburo Deguchi in the 1930s, when he proclaimed the mission of Omoto to spread Japanese culture as a gift to the world, but always under the unquestionably benevolent rule of the Japanese Emperor, which is the 'true' meaning of *yamatodamashii* (大和魂).

Morihei Ueshiba used precisely the same language when speaking of aikido. Alternatively, a perceptive reader of the studies below might notice a kind of reversal taking place, especially when applied to aikido. Since Japan was defeated, this put an end to any idea of international expansion of *yamatodamashii* and so we can regard any prewar notions of Japanese uniqueness as a dead letter. Of more concern is the postwar revival of what Kosaku Yoshino called 'prudent cultural nationalism', which emphasizes both Japanese homogeneity and Japanese 'uniqueness as other'. In other words, the postwar revival of 'soft' and 'peaceful' cultural nationalism presents a more exclusive form than the nastier prewar version.

Examples of *Nihonjinron*

It is important to have some general understanding of *nihonjinron* and this is best achieved by considering actual examples. There is a vast field to choose from. According to a survey made by the Nomura Research Institute, between 1946 and 1978 approximately 700 titles were published on the theme of Japanese identity. (The *Wikipedia* article on *nihonjinron* gives a detailed breakdown into separate categories, of scholars, journalists, foreigners *et al*: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nihonjinron.) The Nomura survey has been criticized by Harumi Befu for omitting many important works and including only book-length monographs. (Befu, *Hegemony of Homogeneity*, p. 7.) Befu also notes that if a similar survey were made from 1978 to around 2001 (when his book appeared), it would contain well over one thousand titles. If articles from magazines and journals were also included, the number would be very much greater. The number of items published is of some importance, though the somewhat cyclic nature of the output also needs to be emphasized. However, relatively few of these items are in English and in this section I will consider three representative works written in English. The works are representative in two senses: first, they are avowedly 'scientific'; secondly, they deal with the Japanese language, which is considered to be **the** central element in *nihonjinron* discourse. The first, Tsunoda's study of the Japanese brain, purports to be a scientific examination of Japanese culture, based on research conducted in a laboratory. There are two other scientific studies that have become part of the core of *nihonjinron*: *The Anatomy of Dependence* and its sequel *The Anatomy of Self*, written by a psychologist named Takeo Doi, and *Japanese Society*, written by a cultural anthropologist named Chie Nakane. These studies have been widely read in Japan and form part of the general view of Japanese culture. The two other examples of *nihonjinron* considered in this column were written by specialists in the Japanese language and linguistics, though the strictly scientific nature of these studies is less obvious. This is partly because the nature of linguistics, seen as a 'western' science, was itself in question.

Tsunoda and The Japanese Brain

In 1978 Tsunoda published a book entitled 『日本人の脳：脳の働きと東西の文化』: *Nihonjin no No: No no hataraki to tozai no bunka*: *The Brains of the Japanese: The Working of the Brain and East/West Culture*. This became a major bestseller in Japan (my own copy of 1987 is part of the thirtieth reprint). The book purports to be rigorously scientific and perhaps this explains why. It told Japanese readers the welcome news that their culture is 'uniquely unique', but in a way that is supposed to be objective, and thus not open to challenge. Several sequels followed, including an English version with a more inclusive title, *The Japanese Brain: Uniqueness and Universality*, published in 1986. This did not become a bestseller and, in fact, the English work is not a translation of the original work published in 1978. The discussion aims to make clear how *nihonjinron* differs from genuine academic analysis of Japan and its culture.

Which Side Are You On?

In his Forward to the English translation, Tsunoda sets out the boundaries of his research and this should give one pause. 'Western' investigators take it for granted that synthesized computer-simulated speech sounds that can replace human speech in auditory experiments, but Tsunoda believes that there is a part of human speech, which he calls pre-verbal, that cannot be simulated by a computer. Through the study of semi-verbal sounds such as steady state vowels (in which the Japanese language happens to be especially rich), he finds that the human brain has a subconscious switching mechanism that discriminates sounds on the basis of their physical characteristics at the sub-cognitive level. Whereas this switching mechanism is "universal to all people on earth", Tsunoda believes that the Japanese brain is shaped by the peculiar features of the Japanese language. In other words, "The Japanese are Japanese because they speak Japanese." Their brain function pattern, shaped by the language, in turn serves as the basis for the formation of Japanese culture.

Tsunoda admits that the Japanese brain pattern is not "better" than the 'western' brain pattern. Nevertheless, "At a time when interest is growing in learning a 'world' language like English and French, it is all the more important that people speak their own language and cultivate their own culture." Here, Tsunoda reveals one common feature of earlier *nihonjinron* writing: he is concerned to safeguard Japanese culture and the Japanese language against the supposed encroachment of 'western' culture and English and French. Another common feature is the equating of language, race, and culture, depicted in very broad undefined categories, like 'Japanese culture' and 'western culture'. He appears to have done no research with, for example, second and third-generation Koreans, descendants of those brought to Japan during World War II and who subsequently settled in Japan, who speak Japanese as their native language.

Tsunoda is writing in a tradition of academically respectable research. It is so well known as to be a truism that the left hemispheres and the right hemispheres of the human brain process the information received about the world differently. Tsunoda starts off by accepting evidence that the left hemisphere is more involved with language and the right hemisphere with visual-spatial-musical skills. The disadvantage he finds in the methods used by other researchers is that their experiments involved conscious mental processes in the cerebral cortex, whereas his own method additionally involves 'subconscious' brain processes.

Tap, Tap, Tap…

Tsunoda bases all his conclusions data that he claims result from the Tsunoda Key-tapping Method. This consists of a tape-recorder or oscillator, measuring equipment incorporating a delay circuit, a headphone set, electric key and pen recorder. The subject, wearing headphones and seated on a chair, tapes the key in a prescribed rhythm: …/ …/ …/. Each time the fingers touch the key, a synchronous feedback sound is delivered to one ear for 0.05 to 0.07 seconds. (The sound could be any sound, but the type of sound is actually crucial to Tsunoda's conclusions.) The same sound is also sent to the other ear, but with a 0.15 to 0.4 second delay, through the delay circuit. When the delay feedback is gradually interrupted, at some point it becomes impossible for the subject to tap the correct rhythm because of the interference of the delayed sound. The same process is repeated with the synchronous and delay sides reversed. The ear that shows the greater resistance to the delayed feedback to the opposite ear is considered advantageous over the other ear. By implication, the sound is thought to be processed in the brain hemisphere that is opposite to the advantageous ear.

As will be noticed, the two crucial aspects of Tsunoda's method are: (i) the degree of resistance of one ear over the other (and thus of one brain hemisphere over the other); and (ii) the type of sound that the subject is given.

(i) Concerning the first aspect, Tsunoda ignores points that are crucial to the validity of his conclusions. The subject has to be trained to use the apparatus properly and to "stop thinking" during the experiments. Since the success of the experiment depends on the continued ability of the subject to tap out the correct rhythm, fully-trained 'non-thinking' subjects may well produce the best results, but these results cannot then be applied to all Japanese or 'westerners' across the board. However, Tsunoda does apply them across the board and draws speculative conclusions that go well beyond the experimental 'data'.

(ii) It is in connection with the second aspect of the method —the type of sound that the subject is given—where Dr Tsunoda's speculative talents range most widely. The central thrust of the thesis is that, whereas 'western' brains "clearly" divide auditory information into a logically processable group and a group that is not logically processable, consisting of emotional and 'nature-related' information,

Japanese brains process certain types of logical information and human emotional sounds, animal sounds, the sounds of nature and of Japanese music all in the same (verbal) hemisphere. Tsunoda concludes from this that Japanese brain functions account for the "Japanese tradition of affinity between logic and emotion".

This conclusion, however, is in no way warranted by his experiments. The conclusion rests on the more innocuous thesis that whereas the 'westerners' who were subjects of the experiments processed vowel sounds in the right (non-verbal) hemisphere of the brain, the Japanese subjects processed them in the left (verbal) hemisphere. This unexceptional phenomenon is probably due to the fact that the Japanese language has an abundance of meaningful vowel sounds. Tsunoda gives several examples, but I will quote just one, with the Japanese transcription from the original of Tsunoda's book:
"*Ooo, oooo, oo ooo = The courageous king conceals his tail when he goes out*." (Tsunoda, *The Japanese Brain*, p. 51)

> 「おおお、おおおお、おおおおお　雄王、往々、尾を蔽うーー東京方言による」*(*角田, 『脳の発見』*, p. 54.)*

However, the Japanese subjects also processed the chirping sounds of cicadas in the left (verbal) hemisphere, and the 'westerners' (and foreign-raised Japanese) processed them in the right (non-verbal) brain. Not surprisingly, Tsunoda's "intuition" about the famous Japanese sensitivity to nature is confirmed:

> "*Japanese people have always liked to hear crickets singing to them, the incessant cries of the cicada are not a mere noise. People in Japan are often tempted to believe that this feeling of relaxation they derive from listening to these insects is traceable to some kind of special sensitivity resulting from the 'unique' Japanese culture. To have found the explanation of this Japanese 'uniqueness' in the brain dominance pattern was greatly exciting, and for several days I was enthralled by the idea of a strong inter-relationship between the brain and culture with language as the medium*." (Tsunoda, *The Japanese Brain*, p. 78.)

Equally unwarranted is the obverse of Tsunoda's "intuition": "*On the other hand, western people seem to place no particular significance on those sounds and to them the sounds of the insects are as irrelevant as the noisy rumbles of an air-conditioner.*" (Tsunoda, *op.cit*., p. 79.)
As one eminent reviewer put it:

> "*The notorious Japanese intolerance for the rumbles and tattles of far more than air-conditioners is not commented upon. Nor is the Western liking for the summer sounds of cicada and cricket, so apparent in a literature with which Dr Tsunoda is perhaps unfamiliar.*" (Donald Ritchie, *The Japan Times*, March 8, 1986, p. 8.)

Booze and Sex…
A number of secondary conclusions follow from Dr Tsunoda's data. One is that Japanese brain dominance shifts from the verbal to the non-verbal hemisphere when acted on by emotional stimulus, such as the smelling of ethyl alcohol and sexual stimulation. On pp. 89-92 of his book Tsunoda describes experiments involving 20 male subjects—14 Japanese, 5 Westerners and 1 Korean, carried out before and after masturbation and conducted over a long period:

> "*The results have indicated that in the Japanese subjects the initial left ear advantage for the pure tone changes to a right ear advantage after masturbation. This post-masturbation effect continues for 90 to 100 minutes, after which a normal dominance pattern resumes. The right ear advantage for a vowel sound in the Japanese language is not affected by the sexual stimulation. In the six Western and Korean subjects, five showed no sexual influence. The remaining subject, an Austrian, felt that the stimulation by masturbation was "unnatural" and volunteered to replace the masturbation with sexual intercourse with his wife and then to take the key-tapping test. As a result, the subject showed that his dominance pattern was not affected by sexual stimulation*."

Tsunoda's critics had something of a field day with this experiment. The fact that the post-masturbation effect continued for 90-100 minutes (the length of a typical Japanese university language class) suggested to one reviewer that:

> "*This fact may be the nostrum that language teachers in Japan have been searching for and would give new meaning to the expressions "warming up" and "pair-work"*." (Angus Lindsay, *Daily Yomiuri*, May, 1986, p. 7.)

… In English
In fact, Tsunoda's experiments allegedly had relevance to language teaching, because one of his findings was that the Japanese brain dominance shifts from one hemisphere to the other under the influence of a foreign language, especially English. Tsunoda concluded that

> "*These results suggest that the use of a foreign language greatly activates or imposes a large workload on the left brain in Japanese people. For this reason, foreign languages may serve as a highly useful tool to develop the left brain. On the*

> *other hand, the excessive use of foreign languages may cause an imbalance of the hemispheres where the development of the right brain is stunted, resulting in poverty of nonverbal creativity and insight originating from the right brain*."

Tsunoda even suggested that Japanese fall asleep at international conferences (where English is spoken) and feel tired after hearing English all day because English affects their brain functions. However, a far more plausible explanation for the phenomena is the way English is taught in Japan. *Juken Eigo* [受験英語: 'Examination English'] is a term that is well known to generations of young Japanese who have to sit such examinations—and also attend one or more of the thousands of cram schools all over Japan, in order to obtain a satisfactory grade. Tsunoda believes that these findings are reinforced by consideration of the place where the foreign language is spoken.

> "*Another important suggestion obtained from the studies of the effect of foreign languages is that the examination of Japanese subjects outside Japan would be extremely difficult because of the chronically shifted dominance pattern caused by the daily use of a foreign language. Japanese subjects must be tested in Japan, where the influence of a foreign language is at a minimum, and where the subjects are probably least emotionally aroused, to keep a shift of hemispheric dominance from occurring*." (Tsunoda, *op.cit*., pp. 101-102.)

One critic has suggested that this may be the reason why the study of foreign languages in Japan is so backward. It has even been stated that such teaching aims not to teach the language, but actually to reinforce the cultural stereotypes extolled by Tsunoda.

A String of Coincidences?

Thus far, Dr Tsunoda has been concerned with the 'unique' aspects of the Japanese brain. In the short second part of the book, entitled, "A Microcosmos in the Brain", he turns to the 'universal' aspects, which non-Japanese brains also share. Here, too, the conclusions he draws are no less startling.

First, pure tones of 40, 60 and 80Hz induced a left ear advantage, or a right (non-verbal) brain advantage. However, tones of 39, 41, 59, 61, 79 and 81Hz could not induce a similar shift. Equally remarkably, when a subject (we are not told whether he was Japanese or Western) was instructed to perform the key-tapping test while looking at 40 or 60 black *go* stones randomly placed before him, the same brain shift was noted, but not with 39, 41, 59, or 61 stones. Tsunoda relates this phenomenon to the discovery of the pendulum clock in Europe.

Secondly, Tsunoda discovered that a 28-year-old male and a 19-year-old female showed a "clear" shift in brain dominance when hearing the pure tones of 84Hz (three times his age) and 95Hz (five times her age), respectively. In addition, one subject, highly trained in the tapping method, showed a clear shift in brain dominance on his 20th, 21st, and 22nd birthdays. This system of "annual rings" is declared by Tsunoda to be

> "*universal to the human species irrespective of nationalities and languages, and indeed makes the human race a cosmic child inseparable from the motion of the cosmos*." (Tsunoda, *op.cit*., p. 130.)

As if this were not enough, Tsunoda discovered that there was a shift in brain dominance in himself and three other subjects from 4 pm till 10 pm on September 10, 1984—the day of a full moon. Similar shifts were observed during other periods of lunar activity—and possibly during changes in the earth's magnetic field. He notes in passing that the werewolf's deviation at the full and new moon is not entirely the work of the imagination and draws conclusions that are not entirely warranted by the evidence presented:

> "*The link with cosmic activity suggests that there is a miniature cosmos in the human brain. Yet we have lost our ability to perceive this microcosmos within ourselves in the hustle-bustle of civilization. Prehistoric man was probably able to feel the internal cosmos, remaining humble before the workings of nature and also having a great deal of insight into the activities of nature*." (Tsunoda, *op.cit*., p. 139.)

Conclusions

Major demolition jobs have been undertaken by a number of scholars on Tsunoda's general research methods, his selective collection of data, his biased evaluation of the data, and his speculative conclusions. Among these scholars are some of the writers whose works are examined below. However, it is important to see why Tsunoda came to such prominence in Japan and why his work was generally held in such high regard. Here, there is a major difference between the Japanese and non-Japanese critics of the book that also reflects differing attitudes to *nihonjinron*. My own Japanese colleagues at Hiroshima University who are specialists in linguistics, dismissed the book as an academic travesty and one reviewer cites the report of a study that contradicts Tsunoda's conclusions. This report does not appear in Tsunoda's bibliography. The Japanese critics who praised the book are also specialists in *nihonjinron*. Shoichi Watanabe, for example, equated Tsunoda's belief that Japanese hear insect sounds as language with his own belief that Japanese language and culture have evolutionary traces shared by no other language or culture. (I will discuss Watanabe's views in more detail below.) The newscaster Masao Kunihiro

managed to praise the book even before it appeared: "I regard Tsunoda's theories highly and await further documentation. … Frankly, I have long held the notion that there is an as yet indefinable difference in the Japanese." (Interview in 1977, cited by William Weatherall, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 1, 1986.)

As for the book's popularity, Angus Lindsay noted that

> "*Here was a work that appeared scientifically impregnable, in which a venerable scientist was supporting received opinion and including phrases and topics loaded emotionally and easily recognizable. These include the phrases 'Japanese uniqueness', references to the special Japanese affinity to nature, and more general expressions of the dangers of exposure to foreign influence, as well as of the need to escape from Western dominance in certain fields of activity. All these topics are larded and basted in a good sauce of* nihongo *studies, a recipe for success*." (Lindsay, *ibid*.)

However, Lindsay does not state anything about the timing of the book's success. Since he wrote the review in 1986, in the middle of a *nihonjinron* boom that subsequently subsided, he did not have the benefit of hindsight.

Tsunoda focused on one aspect of the Japanese language and this provides a major common element in works of *nihonjinron*. This is the assumption or claim that the Japanese language is unique, especially in comparison with 'western' languages like English, French and German, and that this feature makes it both important to understand Japanese, because it is such a unique language, and also at the same time impossible to do so, for the same reason. There are two other Japanese scholars who have written works of *nihonjinron*, specifically relating to the Japanese language.

Suzuki on Soup and Mouths

In 1978, Takao Suzuki wrote *Words in Context: A Japanese Perspective on Language and Culture*, which is a translation of 『ことばと文化』: *Words and Culture*. The book is a pot-pourri of Japanese words and phrases, with explanations on how the various nuances render the accepted English terms inaccurate: a sort of language & translation general store, where one might find some valuable antiques, if only one knew how to recognize them. Notable examples are an explanation of the difference in taking soup among Japanese and 'Occidentals', complete with diagram, and an explanation of the definition of 唇/脣 (*kuchibiru* : lip).

In the case of soup, Suzuki distinguishes "overt" culture and "covert" culture, the latter not being easily visible.

> "*When a Japanese eats soup with a spoon, he lifts it to his mouth in a line parallel to his face. It follows therefore that he eats it from the side of the spoon. Moreover, he sucks the liquid into his mouth, an action attributable to the Japanese way of ingesting* suimono *'Japanese soup,' which literally means "something to suck in." An Occidental on the other hand lifts the spoon to his face at an angle close to ninety degrees and eats it from the tip of the spoon, and, instead of sucking in the liquid, he pours it in with the tip of the spoon placed relatively deep in the mouth*." (Suzuki, *Words in Context*, p. 23.)

The problem here is that the terms in which Suzuki makes the comparison between 'Japanese' and 'Occidentals' (which presumably corresponds to 西洋人*Seiyojin* in Japanese: the vast group of people who are not denoted by the much rarer term of 東洋人 *Toyojin* 'Oriental') requires him to make a very general statement that has to be made on the basis of very little evidence. Long before I ever came to Japan, I, for one, was taught to take soup from the side of the spoon, but not to make a sound when doing so, so sucking in the liquid was unacceptable.

Suzuki's discussion of 脣 *lip*, starts from a quotation from a short story by John Galsworthy, apparently familiar to many Japanese because the story often occurs in school textbooks of English. The facial features of a character are described in the following way.
"*Ashurst, rather like a bearded Schiller, grey in the wings, … with … bearded lips, just open*." (Suzuki, *op.cit*., p. 41.)

> *Since Japanese university students are required to translate such texts into Japanese, with the professor supplying an explanation, also in Japanese, the correct translation of "bearded lips" is a major issue for Suzuki. As he notes, in Japanese kuchibiru normally only refers to the two red areas surrounding the mouth and adds, somewhat desperately, "They cannot possibly grow any hair!" However, the situation is precisely the same with lip in English, which, according to the big Oxford English Dictionary, is:*
>
> "*Either of the two fleshy structures which in man and other animals form the edges of the mouth. Distinguished as upper and lower, also as †over (obsolete) and under, (colloquial or dialectal) top and bottom lip*." (Abbreviations expanded.)

Rather than surmising that Galsworthy might have meant something different, the lips, for example being obscured by the moustache, Suzuki concludes that *lip* in English can refer not only to the protruding, distinctly colored areas surrounding the mouth, but also to a fairly large area surrounding them. He adds, without the slightest touch of irony, that none of the dictionaries ever mention this and that

it is also unknown to scholars of English and English literature.

This analysis, moreover, is presented as an example of 'Japanese' linguistics, of which Suzuki adds an impassioned justification, after a lengthy discussion about the nature of cruelty to animals and whether it is appropriate to ask for horsemeat in London. He concludes,

> "*In my opinion, the measure for the Japanese language should be looked for in Japanese itself, just as the measure for Japan's reality should be found in Japan's reality itself. If universalization is the objective, it can be achieved only at a higher dimension where it is possible to consider and explain Japan and Western Europe on an equal basis*." (Suzuki, *op.cit*., p. 109.)

Again, Suzuki, like Tsunoda, has as his target English and French, for he is complaining that Japanese is 'measured' by European languages, though all he does throughout the book is to cite differences between Japanese usage and that of English and French. The nub of his complaints is the common observation that Japanese is 'vague' or 'illogical' by comparison with selective data from the two European languages—and that this is somehow a defect of the Japanese language. Considered as a position in linguistics, however, these complaints do not stand up to serious examination.

Kindaichi Comes to the Rescue

Haruhiko Kindaichi is a professor at Sophia University in Tokyo and the book discussed here has the Japanese title of 『日本語』 (*Nihongo = Japanese*, or, *The Japanese Language*, which is the title of the English version, published in 1978). In the Author's Preface to the English edition, Kindaichi explains why he wrote the Japanese original in 1957 and it is important to see the assumptions lying beneath his arguments.

> "*Soon after World War II, Shiga Naoya wrote an article entitled "Japanese Language Problems" for the magazine* Kaizo *that shocked the Japanese people. The article began with the following words: 'Japan has never experienced such hard times as the present. We are ceaselessly buffeted by an angry sea of difficulties.' Shiga went on to argue that the Japanese language was the cause of the terrible war and of Japan's present suffering. He concluded by saying, 'Japan might as well, at this juncture, adopt French as her national language*.'
>
> *At the time the Japanese were beginning to lose confidence in all things Japanese. Shiga was a person of stature, referred to as the God of Fiction. … What Shiga said about French was, of course, whimsical, but it nevertheless reflected a widespread feeling that the Japanese language had suddenly lost its vitality. There were even some people who had the illusion that … the Japanese language would be prohibited in the elementary schools and parents would be listening with sad resignation to the fluent English of their children*." (Kindaichi, *The Japanese Language*, pp. 19-20.)

Shiga Naoya was not the first person to propose the abolition of the Japanese language. Mori Arinori became Japan's education minister in 1884, but had made a similar proposal some ten years earlier:

> "*Without the aid of Chinese, our language has never been taught or used for any purpose of communication. This shows its poverty. The march of civilization in Japan has already reached the heart of the nation—the English language following it suppresses the use of both Chinese and Japanese. The commercial power of the English-speaking race which now rules the world drives our people into some knowledge of their commercial ways and habits. The absolute necessity of mastering the English language is thus forced upon us. It is a requisite of our independence in the community of nations. Under the circumstances, our meagre language, which can never be of any use outside of our islands, is doomed to yield to the domination of the English tongue, especially when the power of steam and electricity shall have invaded the land. Our intelligent race, eager in the pursuit of knowledge, cannot depend upon a weak and uncertain medium of communication in its endeavor to grasp the principal truths from the precious treasury of Western science and art and religion. The laws of state can never be preserved in the language of Japan. All reasons suggest its disuse*." (Arinori Mori, *Education in Japan: A Series of Letters Addressed by Prominent Americans to Arinori Mori* [New York, 1873, p. lvi], quoted in Ivan Parker Hall, *Mori Arinori*, 1973, Harvard U P, p. 189.)

Some have doubted whether Mori wished to do away with the Japanese language completely, rather than abolishing the Chinese characters in which it was written. However, the general reaction of shock at Mori's proposal suggests that it was popularly understood as a call for replacing the Japanese language with English. Mori's letter complained about 'our meagre language' and for Kindaichi, writing eighty years later in 1957, this was the greatest cause for concern: "*What kind of language it is; whether it is a superior or inferior language; what its strong points are; and how its weak points can be overcome*." Kindaichi, *op.cit*., p. 21.)

The major assumption here seems to be that languages differ in their ability to reveal the world to their native speakers, or, put another way, that native speakers are able to articulate the world to themselves and other natives only with varying degrees of efficiency, the efficiency depending on the quality of the linguistic culture into which they were born. The major problem with Japanese, thinks Kindaichi, is that it is also 'uniquely unique' as a language:

> "*The Japanese language has a unique position among the other languages of civilized countries. That is, there is absolutely no other language of a similar nature. This characteristic catches our eye when we compare Japanese with languages of the world.*" (Kindaichi, *op.cit.*, p. 30.)

Since it is so unique, with a structure all its own, it is isolated and it is this apparent isolation that renders the Japanese language so unsuitable as a tool for communication, seemingly with Japanese and non-Japanese alike. This unsuitability is especially conspicuous when Japanese is compared with 'western' languages like English, French and German. Kindaichi cites two examples. The first he believes is a "representative opinion":

> "*When Japanese is compared with other languages (especially Occidental languages), its conspicuous defects are, first, its lack of logicality and of precision of meaning, and second, its weakness in rhythmical quality and its monotony of expression.*" (Hagiwara Sakutaro, *Kokugo Bunka Koza, IV*, pp. 195-196, cited by Kindaichi, op.cit., p. 21.)

The Japanese armies advancing through Asia also found that, in addition to being unsuitable as a tool for communication, Japanese is difficult to learn:

> "*The Japanese language is making great advances abroad, following the expansion of the nation. Although this is the natural result of the advance of the Japanese nation, it is for this reason that I hope the Japanese language will become clearer and more accurate. I keenly feel that it is exceedingly disorderly at the present time. Indeed, Japanese speech and the characters that express it are extremely irregular and complicated. Recently at a university in Berlin, a course in Japanese was given for two academic years, but by the time they had graduated, the students, who numbered thirty at first, had decreased to one-tenth that number. Likewise, it is said that at Helsinki University in Finland, the more than twenty students who enrolled for the Japanese course when it was first given had gradually decreased until not one was left at the end of the third year.*" (Shimomura Hiroshi, *Kokugo Bunka Koza*, VI, p. 23, cited by Kindaichi, *op.cit.*, p. 22.)

Kindaichi and the sources he quotes omit to mention that the advancing armies imposed the Japanese language on those whose countries they invaded, like Korea and Taiwan, and forbade the use of the native language. This might well have contributed to the learning difficulties, but Kindaichi also notes that Japanese is difficult for Japanese native speakers:

> "*The Japanese language, however, seems to be difficult not only for foreigners but also for the Japanese themselves. European children generally learn how to read and write their own language in two years in Italy, three years in Germany, and in Great Britain, where to takes the longest, five years. In Japan, even after six years in elementary school and three years in junior high school, a pupil cannot adequately understand the newspaper. It is common knowledge that even after finishing senior high school, students cannot use the* kana *syllabaries and* kanji *(Chinese characters) correctly when writing.*" (Kindaichi, *op.cit.*, p. 23.)

Kindaichi presents no evidence that children in Chinese and Korean schools, who also need to learn a writing system based on Chinese characters, have similar difficulties and he also assumes that native proficiency in the language is the same as proficiency in reading and writing the language. As a result of my own experience here in Japan, I suspect that this view is based on the general practice of language teaching in Japan, which has long been dominated by philologists whose pedagogical model is the grammar-translation method, more appropriate to classical Greek and Latin than to a living language with native speakers.

Like Suzuki, Kindaichi presents a wealth of examples illustrating the differences between Japanese, on the one hand, and English and French, on the other. In fact, Kindaichi's book contains an interesting selection of Japanese sentences, with explanations of how they differ, but all intended to show that Japanese is as good in its own way as English and French. This is a laudable aim, but is somewhat like Don Quixote tilting at windmills. If Kindaichi took more account of linguistics as a science, encompassing all known languages, he would not need to worry so much about Japanese holding its own with English and French.

Studies of *Nihonjinron* in English:
The books of Tsunoda, Suzuki and Kindaichi are all examples of *nihonjinron* in English; despite their scholarly credentials, the arguments are built round the central assumptions relating to language, culture, race and ideology. They follow a certain pattern, common with *nihonjinron* in Japanese. They are intended to be popular works, easily accessible to the general reader, but based on supposedly

serious academic research. Whereas the Japanese originals did indeed become bestsellers, the English versions have not been as successful, I suspect because the publishers misjudged the potential market for such works. By comparison with the carefully researched analyses of *nihonjinron* that will be discussed below, Tsunoda, Suzuki and Kindaichi engage more in speculation than in in serious academic discussion.

In contrast to what he calls ‘modern empirical research on Japan', Peter N Dale distinguishes three ‘major assumptions' or ‘analytical motivations' of *nihonjinron*:

> "*Firstly, they implicitly assume that the Japanese constitute a culturally and socially homogeneous racial entity, whose essence is virtually unchanged from prehistoric times down to the present day. Secondly, they presuppose that the Japanese differ radically from all other known people. Thirdly, they are consciously nationalistic, displaying a conceptual and procedural hostility to any mode of analysis which might be seen to derive from external, non-Japanese sources*." (Dale, *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness*, Introduction, Page unnumbered.)

Neither Dale himself, of course, nor virtually any of the scholars whose works are discussed the next few sections believe that they are doing *nihonjinron*: they are explaining and criticizing the phenomenon from a variety of viewpoints, and with varying degrees of success. Some of the scholars are native Japanese; others are not. Like Dale, I have argued above that academic discussion about Japan and its culture and history—with a careful definition of terms and a suspicion of theories that go beyond the evidence, is not quite the same as *nihonjinron* and this is why I have given the term a more minimalist definition than Dale does: exemplified in the general belief that Japanese culture, whatever this means, is ‘uniquely unique', exhibiting a uniqueness, whether or not this is expressed in a similarly ‘uniquely unique' language, that other similar cultures do not have.

The fact that there are several recent full-length studies of *nihonjinron* and many shorter articles in English attests to the enduring popularity of the subject. These studies are academic in aim and approach the subject of Japanese culture from different perspectives and some refer to and criticize the others. So it would be a mistake to read just one of them and assume that the subject has been covered satisfactorily. In fact, each study emphasizes certain aspects of the whole *nihonjinron* phenomenon and it is these aspects that I aim to uncover in the numbered sequence of discussions below. Precise bibliographical details are given under **Further Reading**, but the authors themselves merit some brief introduction here.

1. Roy Andrew Miller is a specialist in Japanese language and linguistics, who has spent much of his working life teaching and researching at the University of Washington in Seattle, USA. He also spent some time in Japan and his two books on *nihonjinron* appear to be a direct result of these experiences.

2. It is unclear from the introduction to Peter N. Dale's book, cited above, whether the author teaches in a university, but it is clear that his book is also a product of research conducted in Japan. The book is the first of a series published by the Institute of Japanese Studies in Oxford University.

3. Ross Mouer and Yoshio Sugimoto are both academics teaching in Australian universities. Sugimoto is also editor of a series of books on Japanese society, of which *Images of Japanese Society*, their joint study of the roots of *nihonjinron*, is one. Harumi Befu's study of *nihonjinron*, *Hegemony of Homogeneity*, is another. Befu is a professor emeritus at Stanford University and has written extensively on Japan. Kosaku Yoshino started his research in *nihonjinron* at the London School of Economics. Thus his book is distinctive for being the work of a Japanese studying his own culture outside Japan under the supervision of non-Japanese teachers: it is usually the other way round.

4. Finally, Takie Sugiyama Lebra is a Japanese expatriate who left Japan at the age of 28: "an age at which I had become irreversibly Japanese." (Lebra, *The Japanese Self*, p. ix.) She enhanced her academic reputation with a penetrating study of Japan's nobility, abolished in 1947 with the adoption of Japan's new postwar constitution. She has been teaching anthropology at the University of Hawai‘i. Lebra's book on the Japanese self is of interest here because of her sharp criticism of Peter Dale's book.

The above authors represent a fairly wide ‘cultural' cross-section, which I have included here, in order to head off the objection that this discussion is too heavily ‘western' biased. Many are Japanese and, like myself, all have lived in Japan and have done research here. Roy Andrew Miller and Peter N Dale are the two most strident critics of *nihonjinron* and we will discuss the studies by these two authors first. After a general review, I will focus on Miller's discussion of *kotodama* and compare his treatment with the different, though equally critical, treatment by Dale.

1. Leading the Attack: I
R A Miller: The Myth of the Language

Roy Andrew Miller has been mentioned in these columns before, especially in connection with the Japanese belief in *kotodama*. In fact, Miller regards *kotodama* as a core of the entire ‘myth of Nihongo', which is the subject of his books. Roy Miller is an American academic, originally based in

Seattle, but who spent some time in Japan as an academic. His training in modern linguistics affords him a knowledgeable vantage point from which to examine what he calls myths that have been cultivated about the Japanese language, one of the myths being *kotodama*. Miller has written several books, all attacking the supposedly uniquely unique features of the Japanese language, in comparison with the scientific generalizations applicable to all the other languages. *Japan's Modern Myth: The Language and Beyond* (1982) and *Nihongo: A defence of Japanese* (1986) are the two books that examine in most detail the background of the theories about the Japanese language that have led to *nihonjinron*. Miller's attack on *nihonjinron* bears some of the signs of a personal odyssey. His own experience of Japan's linguistic culture when he lived in the country seems to represent some of the stages of what is known as 'culture shock'. Thus, Miller describes the 'myth' in much the same phenomenological terms as he attacks it and the fact that he does not spend much time on explaining its provenance somewhat undermines the persuasiveness of his argument, if not its validity. He covers in turn the myth itself, the mythmakers (especially Kindaichi), the truth within the myth (that different languages have differing semantic and phonological structures), the 'unique' features of Japanese silence, the scientific uses of the 'myth' (with Tsunoda as the target), the non-scientific uses of the 'myth' (with a special focus on the political uses of *kotodama*), and the equation of language and race.

Languages in Danger

To put Miller's discussion in context, we should briefly consider what the 'myth of Nihongo' means. The context can easily be seen from Nicholas Ostler's discussion of language history in his book, *Empires of the Word*.

> "*From the language point of view, the present population of the world is not six billion, but something over six thousand.*
>
> *There are between six and seven thousand communities in the world today identified by the first language that they speak. They are not of equal weight. They range in size from Mandarin Chinese with some 900 million speakers, alone accounting for one-sixth of all the people in the world, followed by English and Spanish with approximately 300 million apiece, to a long tail of tiny communities: over half the languages in the world, for example, have fewer than five thousand speakers, and over a thousand languages have under a dozen. This is a parlous time for languages.*" (N Ostler, *Empires of the Word*, p. 7.)

Ostler goes on to note that languages are divisive and unitary at the same time.

> "*In considering human history, the language community is a very natural unit. Languages, by their very nature, divide humanity into groups: only through a common language can a group of people act in concert and therefore have a common history. Moreover, the language that a group shares is precisely the medium in which memories of their joint history can be shared. Languages make possible the living of a common history, and also the telling of it.*" (Ostler, *ibid*.)

They are also in principle immortal—but only potentially.

> "*And every language possesses another feature, which makes it the readiest medium for preserving a group's history. Every language is learnt by the young from the old, so that every language is the embodiment of a tradition. That tradition is in principle immortal. Languages change, as they pass from the lips of one generation to the next, but there is nothing about this process of transmission which makes for decay or extinction. Like life itself, each new generation can receive the gift of its language afresh. And so it is that languages, unlike any of the people who speak them, need never grow old, infirm, or die.*"
>
> "*Every language has a chance of immortality, but this is not to say that it will survive for ever.*" (Ostler, *ibid*.)

I have quoted thus from Ostler because the context he supplies to Miller's argument depicts the 'myth of Nihongo' much more starkly that Miller does (though the discussion of Tsunoda, Suzuki and Kindaichi, above, prepares the groundwork). The 'myth' states that within this wide spectrum of languages and language history, Japanese is the one language which stands out because it is 'uniquely unique' and thus unlike all the other known languages. This uniqueness is not exhibited in any of the ways stated by Ostler, for Japanese shares with other languages the features of being at the same time unitary and divisive and also potentially immortal. The uniqueness goes much deeper and assumes that the native speakers of Japanese share the memories of their joint history in a way that is completely different from the ways of the native speakers of all other languages.

At the heart of Miller's argument is the principle that all languages are conventional in the way that they relate their native speakers to the world, or their worlds, but one needs the context offered by Ostler to see why this is so crucial to the science of linguistics. Miller states this principle in two paragraphs at the beginning his book.

> "*Each different variety of language is itself essentially nothing more than a social convention. This is simply another way of saying that each language, indeed every language, is really nothing more than a tremendously involved but nevertheless quite arbitrary set of signs or symbols; but the signs or symbols that constitute language do not have significance or meaning in and of themselves. They mean something—and language itself means something—only because, in each individual instance, a given society has agreed upon what they should mean—at the same time and in the same way that the society in question has in the first place agreed to employ the given language to serve as its principal social convention*." (Miller, *Japan's Modern Myth*, p. 3.)

Some might take issue with the way Miller puts this, for he writes as if the members of a given society sat down, like Adam in the *Book of Genesis*, or in a Rousseau-esque State of Nature, and agreed on an Original Position of what language to use and what the words of the language would mean. Language convention does not work like this. In the next paragraph, Miller suggests that the arbitrary nature of language is widely recognized.

> "*The linkages between language and the world in which it is employed—or, more simply put, the meanings that language expresses—are arbitrary. Most modern societies and most modern cultures recognize this arbitrary nature of language at least implicitly, and the benign neglect that most modern societies and cultures afford to language is nothing more than one expression of the way in which most societies recognize that is indeed an arbitrary social convention. The world today is a busy place. Most of us do not have the time or the energy for fussing about purely arbitrary social phenomena; and so most of us, and most of our societies, leave our language alone*." (Miller, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.)

The *Nihongo* Myth

The major exception is Japanese and the three examples of *nihonjinron* discussed above all focus on the Japanese language. Not surprisingly, Miller subjects these theories, one by one, to severe criticism. Not all of them, however, emphasize the same unique aspects of the Japanese language and none of them focuses on the particular aspect of Japanese that gives rise to *kotodama*.

The view of the early *kokugaku* scholar Kamo no Mabuchi (1697-1769), that there is a perfect match in Japanese between signified and signifier, was the subject of a brief discussion in an earlier column. Mabuchi made a study of language, especially the language of the *Man'yoshu*, in order to understand ancient Japanese.

> "*One of the most important goals of his work was the recovery of this archaic, spoken language. Mabuchi observed that language was characterized by the unity of its words (*kotoba 言葉*) and their meanings (*kokoro 心 *or* i 意*). Put simply, the language of the ancients was perfectly transparent to the reality that it was used to reflect. In the words of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, the ancient language represented a unity of signifier and signified. This unique quality gave this language a magical power endowed by the kami, which Mabuchi called the* kotodama. *In contrast, the Chinese language began with arbitrary sounds that the Chinese then matched to written ideographs. Thus Chinese, like all languages, was in Saussure's terminology, "unmotivated"* [that is, with an arbitrary or conventional relationship between signifier and signified]. *Ancient Japanese, however, was a "motivated" language because of its* kotodama [that is, *kotodama* ensured that the relationship between signifier and signified was not arbitrary or conventional, but was an 'essential' relationship]." (Mark McNally, *Proving the Way: Conflict and Practice in the History of Japanese Nativism*, p. 19, explanations in square brackets mine.)

Although Miller does not mention the early *kokugaku* scholars and does not use Saussure, McNally's explanation gives the real substance of Miller's attack on the 'myth' and on *kotodama*. One of the general issues for scholars of Japanese linguistics is whether the Japanese language fits into any of the recognized language groups. Miller has spent much of his academic career arguing that Japanese is descended from a hypothetical language named Proto-Altaic. This thesis has not been proved beyond any reasonable doubt, but this fact does not at all undermine his central hypothesis that the Japanese language is a language like any other language and subject to the same general semantic and phonological structure, as McNally also assumes, taking his cue from the linguistic theories of Saussure.

Miller on *Kotodama*

I have already examined Miller's discussion of *kotodama* earlier, in Columns 13 and 14, including the Japanese original of the translated *Kokutai no Hongi* text on *kotodama*, quoted below. As a criticism of *nihonjinron*, Miller's treatment of *kotodama* can be summarized in thirteen propositions.

1. As a lexical item in modern Japanese, *kotodama* is easy to explain and translate. It means 'the spirit of the language' and its constituents are *koto*, meaning 'language', 'speech', 'words', and *dama* or *tama*, meaning 'spirit', 'soul'.

2. In the 'mythical' sense, *koto* is covertly taken to mean the Japanese language or the word (for anything) in Japanese.

3. In the 'mythical' sense, *tama / dama* refers to the soul / spirit, but in a more 'positive' and 'energetic' sense than these English terms imply.

   "*Japanese* tama *above all else refers to an active concept, one that embodies elements of creative energy, infusing a new, vigorous life and activity into its receptacle or vehicle—and in this case the vehicle of this marvelously energetic* tama *is of course* koto*, now understood as meaning the Japanese language*." (Miller, op.cit., p. 130.)

4. *Tama* in *Yamatodamashii* represents a similar way of understanding *tama* as in *kotodama*.

   "*The* tama *in* Yamatodamashii *was conceptualized as a vital positive source of energy, something capable of fueling the Japanese military advance throughout the Far East*." (Miller, op.cit., p. 131.)

5. The English terms are too pale, shy and retiring to do justice to *tama*. *Geist* (German) or *élan* (French) are slightly better. According to the 'myth', the Japanese language (*koto*) has abiding within it a distinctive spirit (*tama*), which imparts to the language an inner essence that makes it radically different from any other language on earth, living or dead.

6. The 'mythical' use of *kotodama* received official expression in the wartime *Kokutai no Hongi* (國体の本義 *Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*) and *kotodama* was an important part of the Japanese ideology of ultranationalism.

   "*True words most often become true deeds. It is particularly those words and solely those that are liable to be put into practice that are true words. Our nation's ideology of* kotodama *has its basis in this fact; words that are not liable to be put into practice are shunned and not uttered. This is the sincerity of the human heart*. Kotodama *means language that is filled with sincerity, and such language possesses mighty movement. This is what is meant in the* Man'yoshu *by 'a land to which* kotodama *brings good fortune.' Once anything is verbalized, it must necessarily be carried out; consequently, words having reference to anything that cannot be carried out are not lightly uttered. Further, once anything has been verbalized, it must necessarily be carried out; nay, the word that possesses sincerity, by reason of* kotodama*, must inevitably be carried out. Thus, sincerity is found in the fundamental principles of the word able to become the deed. There is no room for self in sincerity. All of oneself must be cast aside in speech, for it is in the deed and in the deed alone that sincerity is to be found, and there only that sincerity shines forth*." (*Kokutai no Hongi*, translated by Miller, *op.cit*., pp. 133-134.)

7. *Kotodama* in the *Kokutai no Hongi* is a conscious distortion of early Japanese folk beliefs, in order to serve the purposes of the authors of the document.

8. The early belief in the power involved in knowing a name, which in Japan was known as *kotodama*, was a refined form of sympathetic magic, not unique to Japan.

9. A recent form of *nihonjinron* represents a revival of the 'myth' of *kotodama*.

10. Shoichi Watanabe, a scholar at Sophia University in Tokyo, used the theories of Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814), to compare 'living' languages, like German and Japanese, with 'dead' languages, like French and English.

    "*After pondering his statements, it is probably safe to conclude that what Fichte called a 'living' language is, in the Japanese style of expression, a language with 'spirit', and a 'dead' language, one without it. Having made such a definition, we are compelled to examine what is widely known as* kotodama *(the spirit of the language), whose substance, however, remains very much in obscurity*." (Watanabe, "The Japanese Language", *Japan Echo*, Winter, 1974, distributed by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, quoted by Miller, *op.cit*., p. 138.)

11. According to Watanabe, Japanese differs from foreign languages—in particular, Japanese poetic expression differs from foreign poetic expression—by the fact of the existence of a palpable quality present in the former but lacking in the latter. For example, Shakespeare may be translated and the translated text will still communicate the intellectual and emotional content of the original. However, the *Man'yoshu* has this palpable quality, which cannot be translated into a foreign language, especially a 'dead' language.

    "*The only possible explanation is that in the Emperor's poem (Man'yoshu 2 is attributed to the Emperor Jomei) there is* kotodama *at work, which is warrantable among the Japanese people as a whole*." (Watanabe, "The Japanese Language", quoted by Miller, *op.cit*., p. 139.)

12. Shoichi Watanabe has applied the assumptions and arguments of nineteenth-century German *Shakespearomanie*, but substituted Japanese for German where necessary.

13. The Japanese language does not have a spirit that distinguishes it from other languages, nor does it possess any power that sets it apart from other varieties of human linguistic experience.

We will discuss any implications of Miller's views on *kotodama* for aikido, after examining the similar criticisms of Peter N. Dale.

2. Leading the Attack: II
Peter N Dale: The Myth in General

Peter N. Dales's analysis of *nihonjinron* is more far-reaching than Miller's, because he does not confine himself to discussing language differences. *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness* is based on a personal odyssey, which led to research into many aspects of Japanese culture. This is clear from his Introduction. Dale spent some time in Japan and was confronted by what he calls, " a pervasive academic approach which sustained precisely this thesis of uniqueness." So he made a detailed analysis of "every intellectual aberration I came across" and the result was a formal exposition of

> "*the ground rules which govern the production of this type of nationalistic idea through successive layers of thought, from linguistics, through to family structure theory, sociological concepts, and psychological notions to philosophical constructs, in order to show that this established way of interpreting Japan is formally invalid, and much work has to be done afresh because this kind of approach has influenced even western scholarship*." (Dale, Introduction.)

In a dozen chapters Dale produces this ‘formal exposition', with detailed notes given after each chapter. It is a fairly typical example of ‘western' academic research and this overly ‘western' approach is one of the reasons why the book has been condemned in very harsh terms by Takie Sugiyama-Lebra (see below, Section 4).

Dale on Tanizaki

Dale approaches his discussion of *kotodama* with reference to a manual of Japanese prose composition written in 1934 by Jun'ichiro Tanizaki, who is probably best known for his novel『細雪』 (*Sasameyuki*: *The Makioka Sisters*). In『文書讀本』 (*Bunsho Tokuhon*), Tanizaki expounds his theory of language, in particular, his view that language is not merely a tool of communication, but also a vehicle of thought. He also insists on the inseparability of a language and a nation that speaks it. According to Dale, Tanizaki is working within the framework established for *nihonjinron*.

> "*Opposed to the objective, rational discourse of foreign speech, … he poses the subjective, emotive and situational idiom of his mother tongue in its archaic form. This in turn leads him to propose that ‘Our nation's language (*kokugo国語*) bears an unalienable relationship with our national character (*kokuminsei国民性*) and the fact that Japanese is poor in vocabulary does not mean that our culture is inferior to that of the West or China. Rather it is a proof that chatting (*oshaberiお喋り*) is not part of our national character.*'" (Dale, *op.cit*., p. 79.)

Here again, we have the disdain for ‘western' ways of thinking and speaking, set out by Suzuki and Kindaichi earlier. One of the ways in which Japanese scores at the supposed expense of Chinese and western languages is the efficacy of Japanese silence, compared with the reliance on the power of language. The crucial terms here are *ishin denshin* (以心伝心: empathetic understanding) and *haragei* (腹芸: ‘the art of the abdomen': achieving a difficult consensus by the force of one's *hara* or the seat of one's personality, now popularly thought to be the speciality mainly of gangsters). Westerners, in comparison …

> "*are brash squanderers of words. The dignity of the self is something they assert rather than demurely convey. In short, unlike the Japanese, the westerner is not humble before destiny, but defiant*." (Dale, *op.cit*., p. 79.)

Tanizaki bases his argument on a comparison of the Japanese text of the *Tale of Genji* with Arthur Waley's translation. The nuances and obliqueness of the original are explicitly clarified in the translation, which is based on a supposed western model of ‘quality equals clarity.' However, the aesthetic power of the original lies in the intensity of the connotative suggestions, which is annihilated by the lucidity of the paraphrase. Tanizaki claims that the Japanese language as a whole values connotation and context, relying on the reader's imagination to engage in, "a kind of hermeneutic collaboration with the text, whereas the wordiness of Western style subverts the resonance of allusiveness by its prosaic surfeit." (Dale, *ibid*.)

Dale responds to Tanizaki by the accusing him of appropriating to Japanese a feature of every language with a poetic tradition. Tanazaki is attempting to contrast East and West by means of the contrast in prose and poetic style applicable to other languages. Dale was originally trained in the Greek and Latin classics and he uses Greek to show that Tanizaki is mistaken: in that most logocentric (ロゴス中心主義) of languages can be found both the allusions of

Pindar's and Sappho's early lyric and the mocking dialectical discursiveness of Plato's dialogues.

The close connection between the Japanese language and the Japanese nation allows Tanizaki to claim that the language comes first, since it has an autonomous power. This is "the spell-binding lure of the word, and it is this inherent faculty to bewitch the user which leads him to remark that while man is a user of language, it is equally true that language uses man." (Dale, *op.cit*., p. 81.) Dale then goes on to discuss the more extreme views of Tanizaki's disciple, who is the Shoichi Watanabe mentioned earlier. Dale's discussion of Watanabe includes a discussion of *kotodama*.

Dale on *Kotodama*

Compared with Miller's analysis in his book, discussed above, Dale's discussion goes more deeply into Watanabe's use of Fichte to justify his use of *kotodama* and Dale also makes more use of Miller's original reply to Watanabe, which was an article published in a scholarly journal. According to Dale, Watanabe uses a distinction made by Fichte in his *Reden an die deutsche Nation*, published in 1807. Fichte distinguished between a 'living national language' and a 'dead national language'. The former has been spoken continuously from ancient times without suffering a high input of foreign loan words that cause a loss of contact with the linguistic roots of the pure language. A 'dead' national language, on the other hand, has suffered from being mixed with foreign imports. An example is given. The German word *Menschenfreundlichkeit*, (humanitarianism) is made up from: *Mensch* ('man'), *freund* ('friend') *--lich* ('-ly') and *keit* (a suffix, like the English 'hood'), all words from the same ancient native stock. The French *philanthropie*, on the other hand, is composed of the Greek *philos* (friend, lover) and *anthropos* (man), words that are borrowed and thus incomprehensible to native speakers. French is therefore a 'dead' national language.

As Miller noted, Watanabe uses the distinction to explain the Japanese distinction between the 'original' *yamato kotoba* (大和言葉) and the 'borrowed' *gairaigo* (外来語). The former are

> "*those words which the Japanese race has continued to use, handed down orally from prehistoric times. To speak in the language of evolutionary theory, … these* yamato kotoba *go right back to an age when some monkey-like animals first put together some coherent sounds as the ancestors of the Japanese. In other words,* yamato kotoba *are words which have their roots set down in the well-springs of the soul of our race*." (Watanabe, *Nihongo no Kokoro*, p. 11-12, quoted by Dale, *op.cit*., p. 84.)

For those who might be surprised at the reference to the 'monkey-like animals, here is the Japanese text:

> 「そ れは原則として大和言葉なのであり、日本民族が有史以前から口伝えに使い続けてきた言葉なのである。進化論的な言い方をするならば ．．．サル みたいな動物が、最初に日本人の先祖として何か口からまとまった音を出した時代にまで、まっすぐにさかのぼうのである。別の言い方をすれば、大和言葉は民 族の魂の源に直接に根を下している言葉だと言ってよいであろう。」

If it is argued that *yamato kotoba* in fact have Altaic or Malayo-polynesian etymologies, Watanabe would reply that they have been autochthonized to the extent that the ancient Japanese considered them indigenous. Dale retorts:

> "*Thus* [Watanabe's] *criteria switch from linguistic to psychological ones at the very juncture where his theory threatens to collapse under the weight of contrary evidence. He cannot see that in Fichte's schema, in any case, Japanese is a 'dead' language, since the suprasensual, conceptual component is constituted by* gairaigo. Menschenfreundlichkeit *in Japanese is translated by the Sino-Japanese word* hakuai." (Dale, *ibid*. *Hakuai* 博愛 is composed of: 博, *HAKU* [Chinese *ON* reading: there is no Japanese *kun* reading] = broad, extensive; 愛, *AI* [Chinese *ON* reading] = love.)

Dale spends some time discussing Watanabe's rebuttal of Miller and raises an important issue, which is relevant to later thinking on *kotodama* by Kisshomaru Ueshiba and others. Watanabe had published his views on *kotodama*, based, as we have seen, on a comparison between the Japanese text of the *Man'yoshu* and German translations of Shakespeare, in an early issue of *The Japan Echo*, a publication supported by the Japanese Foreign Ministry and distributed overseas by Japanese embassies and consulates. Miller published his response in a scholarly journal, *The Journal of Japanese Studies*. Miller went into great detail, amassing the technical philological and linguistic evidence that he believed demonstrated that the authors of the wartime *Kokutai no Hongi* had distorted the references to *kotodama* that they had found in the *Man'yoshu* and other ancient texts. In his response to Miller, Watanabe and others accused him of ignorance of the Japanese language and denied that Watanabe was trying to revive the wartime *kotodama* cult. Elsewhere, Watanabe used the term *kokutai*, in order to expound his postwar vision of a pacifist Japan. The *yamato kotoba* connote the Japanese spirit of pacifism: inward-looking, homely tender feelings, coupled to direct experience, expressed in poetry, as against the aggression,

intellectualizing, scholarly spirit, connoted by the Chinese *kango* 漢語loan words.

> "*The words 'The* kokutai *of Japan' invite misunderstandings, but I make bold to use them nonetheless*." … "*I think there are not a few people for whom the word* kokutai *bears unpleasant associations, but with the reader's indulgence I shall use it as a word that conjoins such concepts as 'national character' (*kunigara 国柄*) and 'polity' (*seitai 政体*), since no other words strike me as being appropriate*." (Watanabe, quoted in Dale, *op.cit*., p. 88-89.)

Watanabe's use of the term draws the following response from Dale, which also sums up the caustic response of Miller and Dale to *nihonjinron*, as expounded by Watanabe. "*It promises to be an interesting age when the idiom of peace draws philological support from the ideological jargon of fascist texts of indoctrination like the* Kokutai no Hongi*, when that 'mother-lode of philological quackery' is mined by a newer generation of Western-trained linguists for putatively new insights into the 'soul of Japan'*." (Dale, *ibid*.) Readers will need to judge for themselves whether Miller and Dale are excessively polemical in their condemnation of *nihonjinron*, as Befu suggests. However, the 'U-turn' involved in Watanabe's harnessing of *yamato kotoba* and the *kokutai* for peaceful purposes is not new. As we shall see from Kosaku Yoshino's research findings, discussed below, at least one Japanese opinion leader had no trouble whatever in making similar about-turns in 1945. What is more, he was following a tradition of 転向 (*tenko*: conversion), established earlier, when government authorities took steps to counter the effects in Japan of the 1917 Russian Revolution.

Dale has been criticized for presenting an excessively 'western' approach and for failing to distinguish carefully considered academic studies of Japanese culture and society, discussed on the basis of impartially considered evidence, from the *nihonjinron* caricatures. For example, Ian Buruma, whose review of Dale's book was quoted earlier, suggests that *amae* (甘え, dependence) is actually a very useful concept for understanding Japanese social interaction, as is the threefold distinction of *tatemae* / *honne* (建前 / 本音: officially sanctioned / privately felt), *omote* / *ura* (表 / 裏: overt / covert), and *uchi* / *soto* (内 / 外: inside the group / outside the group). Since Takeo Doi is considered one of the high priests of *nihonjinron* by Japanese and non-Japanese alike, the explanatory value of his distinctions is sometimes lost in the opprobrium of the consequences he draws from them, in terms of Japanese uniqueness.

Relevance to Aikido:
NOTE: At the end of the next few sections I attempt to sketch possible connections, relevance, or issues for aikido practitioners. This might well concern those who live in Japan, or who have trained extensively with Japanese teachers, more than those who have not. There are, however, cases occasionally discussed in *AikiWeb* columns of dojos outside Japan where the trappings of Japanese culture are embraced and displayed in a very concentrated fashion, more so, it seems, than in Japan. In my own experience, nearly all of my Japanese aikido teachers have used *nihonjinron* logic and discourse at some point or other.

Kotodama
Roy Miller and Peter Dale both argue that *kotodama* is an essential part of the 'myth' of the Japanese language. It has to be a myth because languages do not function in this way. Fabio Rambelli, a scholar of Shingon Buddhism resident in Japan, summarizes the main historical issues concerning *kotodama* in an article entitled, "The Sacred, the Empire, and the Signs: Religion, Semiotics, and Cultural Identity in Japanese History".

> "*Contemporary authors generally believe that a well-defined notion of* kotodama*, which supposedly arose during the Nara period (710-784), runs throughout the entire history of Japanese thought until today. In reality, there are several problems with this view: (i) there is no theory or explanation of the term* kotodama *and the conception of language it implies dating back to the Nara period; the term itself was very rare in ancient texts; (ii) as far as I know, the term* kotodama *never appears in medieval texts establishing connections between Japanese poetry and Indian theories of mantric language; (iii)* kotodama *became an important philosophical term only with the development of nativism, in which it is used as one of the crucial marks of Japanese cultural identity and superiority. In particular, the Shingon monk Keichu (1640-1701) was probably the first to discuss* kotodama *at length and in connection with Tantric philosophy of language. It is very possible, then, that* kotodama *was a very successful philosophical anachronism—a rare archaic word appropriated by the Nativists in order to carry out their intellectual and ideological agenda by projecting back into a mythological past contemporary Buddhist ideas about language and culture. In any case, it is clear that the role of the term* kotodama *in Japanese intellectual history cannot be taken for granted*." (Rambelli, p. 21.)

The thrust of Rambelli's argument is that the modern use of *kotodama* (that is, from the nativists onwards) is an invented tradition, used by the nativists. This lends some weight to Miller's arguments, endorsed by Dale, that the use of *kotodama* in the wartime *Kokutai no Hongi* was a distorted use.

On the other hand, many students of aikido are aware that Morihei Ueshiba stated on many occasions that aikido was *kotodama* and some present-day students suggest that *kotodama* in aikido is something more than part of Morihei Ueshiba's own personal belief system. This is one area where they would dispute Kisshomaru Ueshiba's judgment.

There appear to be two other approaches to *kotodama* in aikido, in addition to Kisshomaru Ueshiba's relegation of the concept as a prewar cultural relic. One is to argue that *kotodama* is merely the Japanese name for a much wider phenomenon. John Stevens is an exponent of this view and even believes that Morihei Ueshiba was mistaken in confining *kotodama* to the Japanese language. Given the structure of Japanese, Stevens in effect has to divorce *kotodama* from semantics and confine it essentially to sound. In this view, the focus of the *kotodama* is purely the sound, divorced from any meaning the sound may carry. In his published works on *kotodama*, however, Stevens includes as 'universal examples' only Japanese sounds or their English translations. *Kotodama* chanting might thus be a very good breathing exercise, but the problem with this view is that it divorces *kotodama* from its roots in well-established theories about the semantics / semiotics of the Japanese language.

Another approach is to accept the essentially Japanese nature of *kotodama*, but to 'modernize' it and apply it directly to aikido. This is the approach of William Gleason in his latest book, *Aikido and Words of Power*. Gleason makes use of the *kotodama-gaku* theories of Koji Ogasawara, as did Masahiro Nakazono, who trained with Morihei Ueshiba in the late 1940s. Gleason makes an interesting attempt to relate *kotodama* sounds directly to aikido training and so many readers might find his book beneficial for their own daily training. The problem here is that Gleason does not go far enough. He has bowdlerized *kotodama* and ignores the fact that Morihei Ueshiba studied his *kotodama* and *kotodama-gaku* at the hands of Onisaburo Deguchi, who in turn took it from Hirata Atsutane and the nativists. The materials illustrating the *kotodama* route from Hirata to Ueshiba, via Deguchi, are all there, but the route has not yet been traced—in Japanese or any other language.

In a previous column, I discussed the attempt of Jin'ichi Konishi to chart the disappearance of *kotodama* from Japanese literature owing to Chinese literary incursions from the Nara period onwards. In the article cited above, Rambelli mentions two other Japanese scholars who have attempted to trace the concept of *kotodama* throughout Japanese literature. Unlike Konishi's history, their works have not been translated, but neither give sufficient weight to the *kotodama gaku* output of Onisaburo Deguchi. (豊田国夫, 『日本人の言霊思想』; 川村湊, 『言霊と他界』, both published by Kodansha in their series 講談社学術文庫.) Finally, the analysis given by Miller of *kotodama* and *kotoage* in the age of the *Man'yoshu* should be compared with an analysis given by Michael F Marra, in an essay entitled "Things and Words". The essay assumes some knowledge of German phenomenology and precedes an English translation of another essay, written by Shozo Omori on *kotodama*, which sets out the kind of observations on Japanese parsimony given by Tanizaki, above, but without the more extreme *nihonjinron* elements. (Bibliographical details are given below, in **Further Reading**.)

Language

Apart from *kotodama*, another issue for aikido practitioners is the role of the Japanese language. It is clear that the qualities supposedly possessed by the Japanese language are very much a feature of modern *nihonjinron*. At a recent meeting at the Aikikai Hombu, I was told that when doing aikido demonstrations, it was very important to maintain 合気道の精神 (*aikido-no-seishin*, usually translated as the 'spirit of aikido'). When I asked what this meant, in terms of the actual demonstration, I was told that this was impossible to explain: it would be obvious, however, to a Japanese practitioner of aikido. The implication here seems to be that the practitioner would know the phrase—and what it meant—simply from seeing the demonstration. This has certainly not been the case with the students, all Japanese—and all exposed to *nihonjinron*—in my dojo. Aikido terms are most definitely not instantly understandable by these students and this becomes very clear at grading examinations and I do not believe for one minute that they would instinctively know the meaning of *aikido-no-seishin*. A more insidious aspect of 'stealing techniques' from Japanese teachers includes the obligation to 'steal' the language in which explanations are given and the obscurity of the explanations is sometimes assumed to be an essential part of the Japanese language.

3. Commenting from the Sidelines: Ross Mouer and Yoshio Sugimoto

The investigation of Ross Mouer and Yoshio Sugimoto is rather different from those of Miller and Dale. After reading the first two authors, one might be forgiven for thinking that the *nihonjinron* 'myth' was a constant and lacked any evolution or internal development. Mouer and Sugimoto have both spent time living and researching in Japan and base their study of *nihonjinron* on more exhaustive research. The result, *Images of Japanese Society*,is a formidable volume, the bibliography alone covering 70 pages. The authors are sociologists, who are concerned to reveal the special features of writing on Japanese society. The question of the differing 'images' of Japanese society was of great importance when the book appeared in 1986. Ezra Vogel had published *Japan as Number One: Lessons for America* in 1978 and this became a bestseller. Actually, Japan's economic 'bubble' was at bursting point, but this was not evident to many people then. The prevailing opinion was that Japan truly had been refashioned in America's own image and likeness, but was also increasingly seen as a formidable economic power and a possible competitor. Thus it was

important to understand what made Japanese society work. Times have changed, however, and thirty years later their results seem somewhat dated. Nevertheless, their analysis of *nihonjinron* as a culture of 'uniqueness' still stands.

Mouer and Sugimoto [hereinafter M & S] begin their treatment of *nihonjinron* with a discussion of Japanese stereotypes and these are related to the urgent need at the end of the 1960s to explain Japan's 'miraculous' industrial growth.

> "*Much of the effort to explain such special phenomena focused on* ***unique Japanese cultural elements****. In the late sixties and early seventies the literature emphasizing the* ***unique features of Japanese culture and the Japanese personality*** *came to enjoy a remarkable popularity, not only in the mass media but also among informed scholars as well. This was particularly true of the English-speaking world*." (M & S, *op.cit*., p. 21, emphasis mine.)

M & S go on to emphasize that while some "paradoxical" elements of Japanese society were highlighted,

> "*there seems to have emerged out of the emphasis on cultural inevitability of Japan's modernization a coherent picture of the society and culture as a holistic entity.* ***By focusing on these characteristics believed to be unique to Japanese society, considerable importance was attached to Japanese values or thought patterns as the major independent variables explaining Japanese economic development****. This development is assumed to have occurred in a spontaneous or voluntaristic fashion. Kahn, Nakane, Doi, Vogel and Reischauer and many others have helped to paint a picture of Japanese society which leads us to believe that it is exceptionally well integrated. The message is that, compared with people in other similarly industrialized societies, the Japanese are more group-oriented and are more influenced by cultural norms placing a value on consensus and loyalty to the group*." (M & S, ibid, pp. 21-22, emphasis mine.)

The general names for this literature, according to M & S are *nihonjinron*, *shifudoron*, *nihonbunkaron*, *nihonshakairon*, or *nihonron*. In addition, though there is no one precise model of Japanese society in the literature, the terms assume an analytical approach according to which societies constitute the major cognitive unit, that they have goals, ends and purposes that form the dominant components of the mechanism accounting for individual motivation, and that the characterization in terms of consensus entails that variants in behavior can be understood as 'deviant'. The authors and works mentioned above by M & S (with dates of publication) strike a balance between American and Japanese and underline the emphasis of M & S that *nihonjinron* is practiced by Japanese and non-Japanese alike: Herman Kahn's *The Emerging Japanese Superstate* (1970), Chie Nakane's *Japanese Society* (1970), Takeo Doi's *The Anatomy of Dependence* (1973), Ezra Vogel's *Japan as Number One: Lessons for America* (1969), and Edwin Reischauer's *The Japanese* (1978), which was translated by Masao Kunihiro as, *Za Japaneezu* (1979).

The emphasis on Japanese society as a holistic entity, allows M & S to contrast two main schools of thought.

> "*One* [school of thought] *portrays Japanese society as an integrated whole; it seeks to extract unique aspects through social averages. It then uses such averaged behavior as the basis for international comparisons and for more limited statements and explanations about Japanese social phenomena. A second approach seeks to understand social realities in Japan by taking specific groups—particularly classes in the Marxist sense—as the major behavioral units by considering how inequalities in the distribution of wealth and power are related to conflicts of interest. This conflict-oriented approach, which in the broadest sense subsumes the Marxist viewpoint, focuses its attention on the causes, structure and dynamics of social class. The former approach is by far the most dominant in the Japanese-language literature, but in the Western-language literature on Japan it seems to hold a monopolistic position*." (Mouer & Sugimoto, *Images of Japanese Society*, p. 11.)

The first approach is termed, 'The Great Tradition: Theories of Uniformity and Consensus in Japanese Society' (M & S, *ibid*., p. 21) and this is what is actually identified by M & S with *nihonjinron*. The other traditions are termed, 'The Little Traditions: Theories of Conflict and Variation in Japanese Society' (M & S, *ibid*., p. 64), but these are not considered by M & S to be part of the *nihonjinron* phenomenon. The contrast seems very neat and somewhat problematic, since one might argue that M & S have set up the contrast between two 'schools', which, in any case, is shown later in the book to be based on dubious evidence. If it turns out that The Great Tradition does not yield an accurate picture of Japanese society, the same might be argued of The Little Traditions, also. In fact, M & S could be accused of basing their analysis on a prior division and selecting the evidence accordingly. On the other hand, the evidence for the existence of The Great Tradition seems overwhelming, given the amount of literature covered by the Nomura survey of 1978.

The Great Tradition

M & S marshal a vast amount of evidence for the existence of The Great Tradition in popular and academic literature. Their approach is cumulative and developmental and they delineate several phases of this. From America, there is the impetus of anthropology and the search for a 'rational whole'.

> "*Ruth Benedict was not the first to apply the techniques of anthropological study to Japan. … Because of her wide reputation and the ambitiousness of her efforts to understand the Japanese people as a totality, Benedict came to symbolize an approach which was, and still is, or prime importance to American scholarship. … During the 1950s in America, academic training about Japan was by and large dominated by the area-studies approach. … Japan was to be studied as a cultural entity on a separate but equal basis with our own culture. … The Japanese had to be made to appear reasonable both in the past and present, whether in the country or the city, whether dressed in a* sebiro *or* kimono." (John Whitney Hall, "Thirty Years of Japanese Studies in America," (*Transactions of the International Conference of Orientalists in Japan*, 1971, pp. 22-35, Quoted by M & S, *op.cit*., pp. 23-24.)

The consequence of this desire to present Japan as a totality was that the issue of conflict in Japanese society and the corresponding need to differentiate between different types of Japanese was played down. This was done by recourse to the second phase of The Great Tradition: emphasis on the importance of paradoxes as an essential element in Japanese society: Japan was special, because the society was more paradoxical than others. Again, M & S cite American sources:

> *"The following points … characterize the present attitude of the best-educated Americans towards Japan: that they are characterized by radical paradoxes; connected with this is a sense of alienness; that one aspect of their alienness is their insensitivity to others, their peculiar relations to other people; that because of this paradoxicality they are basically unpredictable; that because they are unpredictable … in effect they are unstable; since they are unstable, we must be distrustful of the Japanese commitment to democracy." (N Glazer, "From Ruth Benedict to Herman Kahn: The Postwar Japanese Image in the American Mind", 1974, cited by M & S, op.cit., pp. 25-26.)*

Glazer goes on to note how much has remained constant in the American image of Japan from 1946 till 1972.

> "*One would expect the general softening of language* [since 1945]. *Isolation now has positive as well as negative effects. But what is worth noting is how much remains the same: for example, Japan's difficulty in relating to the rest of the world*." (N Glazer, *ibid*., pp. 17-19, cited by M & S, *ibid*., p. 26.)

Another aspect of The Great Tradition is the hypothesis that Japanese society follows a constant linear development in one direction: that of modernization. This model applied the concept of area studies to Japan, but supposedly with more intellectual rigor. One scholar, Robert M Bellah, has applied to Tokugawa Japan Max Weber's theory of the 'Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism'. The focus was placed on Japan's century of modernization and its emergence as a modern state. In fact, the most scholarly treatment of this aspect came from an exponent in one of 'The Little Traditions'. Edward Herbert Norman, who was a Canadian, combined acute scholarly acumen with a Marxist perspective and this did not endear him at all to the Canadian and US authorities during the Cold War years of the 1950s.

In the late sixties and seventies, Japanese society was especially held up as a model for imitation. The suggestion is that Japan passed through the stage of industrialization and achieved a post-industrial situation so rapidly that it never had a chance to experience all the dislocations commonly associated with industrialization. "It arrived on the doorstep of tomorrow with its social structure intact and its culture integrated." (M & S, summarizing R P Dore, *op.cit*., p. 36.) The cultural norms emphasizing consensus and loyalty to the group, allied with an emphasis on harmonious conflict resolution made Japan a model that American, especially, could imitate.

> "*Misunderstandings of Japan are, and always have been, are legion in the West. A good current example is the craze among Wall Street types for* The Book of the Five Rings*, a classical manual on swordsmanship by the 17th century samurai, Miyamoto Musashi. Because the book was rumored to be a revelation of the spirit behind Japan's economic muscle ('Japan's Answer to the Harvard MBA'), American industrialists have been poring over the obscurity of its 96 pages in search of the samurai's power of positive thinking. Little do they know that in 1645, when the book was written, samurai were not allowed to engage in business and that those who did give up their swords for the abacus usually went broke*." (Winston Davis, "Japan as 'Paradigm': Imitation vs. Insight," *Christianity and Crisis*, September 1982, pp. 254-260, citied by M & S, op.cit., p. 38.)

M & S also cite others who stress the cultural dimensions of Japan-as-model: ethnic homogeneity, the absence of large differences between social classes, family paternalism at work, the prevalence of group solutions as opposed to individual solutions. They note the emphasis placed on conventional concepts such as saving face, groupism, consensus motivation, and *amae*. This last concept, of psychological dependence, was popularized by a major exponent of The Great Tradition, the psychiatrist named Takeo Doi.

Kosaku Yoshino
Yoshino's study is the product of a rather different type of research. As well as surveying the literature, he has conducted surveys of Japanese educators and business leaders about the uniqueness of their culture. (Actually, both M & S and Befu also seem to have done this, but the fact emerges only from occasional references and there is no presentation of a body of evidence collected from such interviews.) Yoshino has read all the *nihonjinron* literature (he calls the producers of this literature the 'intellectual elite'—without even a touch of irony) and the purpose of his research is to see who else has read it, among a range of Japanese opinion leaders. Yoshino chose a typical city in Japan and interviewed all the school heads and businessmen of large companies. His findings are of interest for me, because they confirm my own deepening suppositions and suspicions, based on thirty years of 'cultural exchange' with my fellow residents of Hiroshima—but on no direct research, and also suggest that my intuitions concerning *nihonjinron* and aikido are largely correct.

Elite *Nihonjinron*
In *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan*, Yoshino first presents a picture of *nihonjinron* as given by 'thinking elites'. This is similar to the accounts given earlier, but is more critical and far-reaching, and includes a detailed explanation of social culture, which in turn clearly involves racial issues. Yoshino deftly skirts the issues of definition here and presents his own.

> "*The concept of race is employed in this study with this understanding in mind: 'race' has no real biological foundation and is, first and foremost, socially constructed. 'Race' may thus be defined as a human group that perceives itself and/or is perceived by other groups as different from other groups by virtue of innate and immutable phenotypical and genotypical characteristics*." (Yoshino, *op.cit*., p. 23)

For Yoshino, the Japanese concept of race involves two aspects: (a) the notion of the 'Japanese race' itself, and (b) the close relationship between 'race' and 'culture'. (a) The 'invention of the Japanese race' (Yoshino's term) has three aspects: (1) the belief in 'pure blood' (純血主義: *junketsu shugi*), which is the popular phrase used to refer to that aspect of Japanese identity perceived to be immutable; (2) a belief in the Japanese as a 'homogeneous people', with disregard of the historical process of assimilation that actually took place; and (3) the general ignoring of Japanese minorities such as the Ainu or Korean residents. (b) The close relationship between race and culture, which is not the same as racism, can be seen in two hypotheses: (1) that genetically transmitted traits determine (or condition) cultural traits; and (2) that particular cultural traits should belong to, or are the exclusive property of, a particular group with phenotypical and genotypical traits (racially exclusive possession of a particular culture). Like others who have studied *nihonjinron*, Yoshino notes the vast number of examples that suggest the exclusive possession of Japanese culture by Japanese people, from Japanese phrases that defy translation and signal the 'uniquely Japanese' mode of thinking, and singles out Shoichi Watanabe, quoted above, as a leading example of *nihonjinron* exponents who equate Japanese culture with race.

The Interviews
Having adequately summarized the notions of *nihonjinron* established by the 'thinking elites': the Dois, Nakanes, Tsunodas, Watanabes, Suzukis, Kindaichis—and also the Benedicts, the Reischauers, and the Vogels, Yoshino then attempts to discover to what extent these notions are accepted by Japanese 'opinion leaders': educators and business people. Yoshino fully admits the limitations of his method, for the subjects were not randomly selected and the interviews were mainly open-ended, with the interviewees allowed to wander off the subject as they wished, but he still believes his results are of value.

Yoshino chose a large provincial city (because it was representative of Japan as a whole), which he calls Nakasato, and over the space of about two years from 1986 to 1988, interviewed thirty-five educators and thirty-six businessmen. He planned to interview educators only, in the belief that these played the central role in cultural nationalism, but in the course of many interviews he became aware that orientation to *nihonjinron* and cultural nationalism could also be gained form working in a Japanese company. The educators were all high school principals and the businessmen were all either 'company men', occupying positions in large enterprises, or those owning their own firms. In terms of age, the subjects were in three groups: those aged 55 and over: 42 (22 educators and 20 businessmen); those aged from 48 to 54: 7 (3 educators and 4 businessmen); those aged under 48: 22 (10 educators and 12 businessmen).

Limitations of space prevent a detailed examination of the responses (which are all quoted from Chapter 7 of his book), but Yoshino notes that they did indicate typical *nihonjinron* attitudes:

1 "*For the Japanese, sentiment and intuition are more important than logic. We are expected to avoid black-or-white decision and to reach a conclusion that does not make anyone unhappy. We value* haragei *or tacit understanding*." (company president)

2 "*Unlike in America, where any people -- Italians, Japanese, Hispanics, blacks -- could become American and appreciate the American way of life, you have to be born a Japanese in order to understand* nihonjin no kokoro *(the Japanese heart)*." (company president)

3 "*Japanese-speaking foreigners have increased in number both on television and even in our town. I have met an American woman teaching in one of our schools, and her Japanese is 'so good as to make us feel uneasy'* [君が悪いほどうまい]. (headmaster)

4 "*We have always been accustomed to the idea that those who speak Japanese should look like the Japanese*." (company manager)

5 "*We are not so assertive as Westerners. Our homogeneous society is less conflict-ridden than Western society. Sensitivity to other people and flexibility in human relations are the virtues of the Japanese*." (company manager)

One headmaster was more critical of groups and recalled his own first encounter with Ruth Benedict:

6 "*Whereas it has worked favorably towards building a stable society and successful economy, it has also formed a society in which its members have lost the spirit of challenge and rely too much on others*."

7 "*It was in 1949 that I heard of this work by Benedict, managed to obtain a copy from an American scholar who was visiting this city then, and read it with great excitement even before its Japanese translation was available. The book was so enlightening that I felt as if the scales has suddenly fallen from my eyes*."

Another headmaster for whom the war was a moral issue, recalled the actions of a teacher in his secondary school days who had no principles and 'made a 180-degree turn in his attitudes' at the time of Japan's defeat in 1945.

8 "*During the war, this art teacher was the embodiment of militarism. He was an ardent supporter of the war. He often took us to where the spirits of the school's former pupils, who killed themselves in* kamikaze *attacks, were enshrined, glorifying the young men's courage in serving the emperor. When the war was over, he quite easily and remorselessly switched over to belief in democracy and, this time, became an enthusiastic advocate of the new creed. Seeing his overnight change, I told myself that I could never change my belief as easily as he did*."

Yoshino also sought to find out how his respondents had formed their ideas of *nihonjinron*. The responses indicate that the majority of the respondents had read some or many of precisely the works discussed in this column: Ruth Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, Chie Nakane's *Human Relations in Vertical Society*, Ben-Dasan's *The Japanese and the Jews*, Tadanobu Tsunoda's *The Japanese Brain*, Shoichi Watanabe's *Japan and the Japanese*, Takeo Doi's *The Anatomy of Dependence*, and Ezra Vogel's *Japan as Number One*. The educators did not study *nihonjinron* as assiduously as the businessmen, and some of them, older headmasters who had experienced Japan's defeat and had grown up in the immediate postwar years and did so only to make their students aware of what they themselves had experienced. (Given the timing of Yoshino's interviews, some of his respondents were in a similar age range to the Japanese instructors who left Japan to teach aikido abroad.) The businessmen studied *nihonjinron* more actively because they believed this would enable them to run their companies more successfully. This was something that Yoshino had not expected.

Yoshino's final point is to distinguish two types of cultural nationalism that were revealed or confirmed by his interviews. The first type, which he calls 'resurgent cultural nationalism', has been the primary topic of this column. It developed in the 1970s and 1980s and was concerned with the rediscovery, redefinition and reaffirmation of Japanese uniqueness. It is this type of cultural nationalism that is manifested and generate by the *nihonjinron*. It centred around the activity of 'thinking elites', but certain sections of the Japanese population—the educators and businessmen—responded favorably and formed their own ideas of Japanese culture accordingly. The other type Yoshino calls 'prudent revivalist nationalism' and may be understood in relation to the old nationalism that was extinguished in 1945. The emperor system (天皇制 *tennosei*), with its concomitant symbols and practices, around which the old nationalism had centered, came under attack during the period of postwar reform and have continued to exist with negative connotations. The revival of some of these old symbols is regarded as necessary, even sufficient, element of the new, prudent nationalism of postwar Japan. In fact, the preoccupation with some of these symbols was the concern of my first aikido teacher and lay behind his desire to make sure that I had a 'correct' understanding of Japan. The crux of

his concern was that I understood [理解した *rikai shita*, which also carries the connotation of agreement] the postwar emperor system and the place of the martial arts within this system. His viewpoint, however, seem to be a minority viewpoint among Japanese aikido practitioners of his age—born around the end of World War II.

Harumi Befu

Harumi Befu criticized the studies by Miller, Dale, and Mouer & Sugimoto for being polemical. He considers the work by Yoshino and himself more detached and offers the following assessment:

> "*In Miller's and Dale's critiques, and in much of Mouer and Sugimoto's,* Nihonjinron *propositions are taken at their face value as purportedly true and valid empirical statements. These critics then demonstrate the invalidity of the statements on methodological, theoretical or conceptual grounds. Miller and Dale, in particular, endeavor to belittle the whole enterprise of* Nihonjinron. *The volume by Mouer and Sugimoto retains a good deal more balance, although they too at times seem to be more interested in the unworthiness of* Nihonjinron. *Also, as sociologists they (along with Yoshino, another sociologist) take up mainly sociological aspects of* Nihonjinron, *leaving aside others such as language race and culture. Yoshino's book informed by previous perhaps, is distinctly more analytical and objective, though total objectivity on a subject of this sort is impossible to expect*." (Befu, *Hegemony of Homogeneity*, p. 12.)

Befu is at pains to emphasize that he is not defending any *nihonjinron* proposition, nor making any judgments about *nihonjinron* writings, as Miller and Dale have done. His concern is rather to analyze *nihonjinron* "as a cultural phenomenon as critically and objectively" as he can: "in short to engage in the anthropology of *nihonjinron*." (Befu, op.cit., p. 4.) Befu, however, shares a desire for objectivity with all the other authors whose works are discussed in this section. He compares his approach with that of Miller and Dale in respect of an example: seeing ghosts.

> "*In analyzing beliefs about ghosts, one might take a positivist-realist position and expend one's energy disproving the existence of ghosts on scientific grounds and disparaging anyone who maintains such a belief. Or one can treat the belief as a social and cultural given rather than as a physical phenomenon, and investigate, for instance, who is more or less likely to believe in ghosts, and where ghosts are said to appear and why, without being judgmental about those who espouse such beliefs. My approach is the latter. A judgmental approach is tempting, and some have succumbed to it, but there is more to be learned from anthropological detachment*." (Befu, *op.cit*., p. 13.)

So what Befu offers is a general survey of *nihonjinron*. Less dense than the studies discussed so far, Befu's book covers in seven chapters all the main aspects of the phenomenon and presents his own view on how it arose and why it fulfills some sort of need. Of most interest is Befu's view that *nihonjinron* is a kind of Japanese religion.

Symbols

Befu starts off with the observation that Japan's defeat in World War II deprived the country of most it its symbols.

> "*Hundreds of books have been published on* Nihonjinron *in the postwar years to satisfy the voracious appetite of the Japanese seeking their national and cultural identity. Although there are many reasons for this boom, I would like to suggest … that the use of previous symbols of national identity and pride was made problematic by World War II and that Nihonjinron moved into this relative identity vacuum*." (Befu, *op.cit*., p. 86.)

Befu then briefly discusses the various symbols. The imperial institution is seen as a symbol, but very few of the younger Japanese whom I have taught over the years showed much enthusiasm for the Emperor or the 'Emperor system.' This is in spite of various guidelines published by the Education Ministry, requiring students to 'deepen their understanding of, respect, and love towards the Emperor.' (This was precisely why my first aikido teacher, who trains at the dojo attached to the Meiji Shrine, was at such pains to make sure that I had a 'correct' understanding of Japan.) There is still a kind of malaise felt about the question of the Showa Emperor's responsibility for World War II, felt especially deeply in Okinawa. Befu connects the Emperor's 'mistake' in leading the Japanese people into war with the wide public defence of the Japanese 'Peace Constitution', which some conservatives would like to revise, in order to enable the Japanese army to become legitimate.

Other symbols include flags, anthems, national monuments and public rituals. All are controversial in Japan. A bill to make the *Hinomaru* flag and the *Kimigayo* anthem officially the national flag and the national anthem became law only in August, 1999, in the midst of severe controversy. This controversy had led to the suicide of a school principal in Hiroshima Prefecture, who was caught between the prefecture's board of education, which had been pressuring him to display the flag and sing the anthem at the graduation ceremony, and members of the teachers' union opposing the government's position. Japan has a tomb of an unknown soldier, but, like its occupant, it is virtually unknown to the public. Much better known is the Yasukuni Shrine, which enshrines the souls of all the soldiers, whether Japanese or

not, who died for the country in wars fought since the Meiji Restoration in 1868. The shrine is part of state Shinto theology, but its role is so problematic that there is still a vigorous public debate whether the Prime Minister should visit the shrine, especially on August 15, which is the anniversary of the end of the Pacific War (another Japanese name for World War II). This debate is always of particular interest to China, with the public memory of the Nanjing Massacre still kept alive, and no foreign head of state has ever visited the Yasukuni Shrine.

> "*The substitution of a revised* Nihonjinron *for nationalistic symbols allows continuity of nationalistic ideology while rejecting the ideology directly associated with the past war. Both wartime* Nihonjinron *and postwar neo-*Nihonjinron *rely heavily on Japan's primordial sentiments inherent in the presumed 'ethnic essence' of the Japanese -- blood, purity of race, language mystique, and so on. For example, the idea that the Japanese people are homogeneous and the Japanese culture is pure and unique, which formed the basis of the wartime nationalistic ideology, is repeated in postwar* Nihonjinron. *The familistic basis of the society, argued by … postwar* Nihonjinron, *mirrors the familistic argument propounded by the wartime ideologues, placing the emperor as the father figure of a nation conceived as a family writ large. The notion that Japanese spiritualism can conquer Western materialism, propagandized during the last war to cover up the paucity of war matériel, is very much alive now. The notion that Japan is the best nation in the world, now prominently argued by ideologues of* Nihonjinron, *was, of course, part and parcel of the wartime* Nihonjinron. *What contemporary* Nihonjinron *does is to strip wartime* Nihonjinron *of its imperial and militaristic elements and re-dress it in a language devoid of war and militarism*." (Befu, *op.cit*., p. 102.)

Befu published *The Hegemony of Homogeneity* in 2001 and my own experience is that *nihonjinron* proclamation of Japan as the best nation in the world has become somewhat muted, in the midst of a severe economic crisis and successive governments that seem to lack any direction. The *Yomiuri Shimbun*, that most conservative of Japanese newspapers, has recently taken to enlisting the aid of notable foreigners, in calling for a second Meiji Restoration. Unfortunately—or perhaps fortunately, there are no discontented samurai around to start things going, or to create another *Sonnojoi* movement (尊王攘夷: *Revere the Emperor: Expel the Barbarians!*).

Religion

Befu asks whether *Nihonjinron* qualifies as a religion. His affirmative answer is based partly on a curious book, which became a bestseller in 1970. In 『日本人とユダヤ人』, translated into English as *The Japanese and the Jews*, Isaiah Ben-Dasan made a fresh approach to *nihonjinron*. He compared the Japanese, not with Europeans, with whom they had been compared so often in the past, but with Jews, "who were foreign and exotic to most Japanese." (Befu, *op.cit*., pp. 105-106.) The first curiosity concerned the author.

> "The Japanese and the Jews *was written by Yamamoto Shichibei (1921-1991), who was also the book's publisher. Yamamoto adopted the pseudonym Isaiah Ben-Dasan and insisted for years that Ben-Dasan was a reclusive Jew born in Kobe and raised in Japan who had fought in the Israeli war of independence and settled in (of all places) Terre Haute, Indiana. Despite forays into the wilds of Middle America, however, Japanese journalists were unable to locate Ben-Dasan, however, and Yamamoto eventually conceded that he had written the book himself*." (David G Goodman, Masanori Miyazawa, *Jews in the Japanese Mind*, p. 180.)

For this column, we can leave aside the interesting question of any actual relationship between Japanese and Jews and focus on the second curiosity: what Ben-Dasan calls *Nihonkyo* (日本教: a religion that all Japanese subscribe to, simply by being Japanese). According to Ben-Dasan, no Japanese ever abandons the faith of *Nihonkyo* for another religion: the foreign religion is simply transformed into a variety of *Nihonkyo*. The novel published by Shusaku Endo in 1979, entitled *Silence*, is sometimes cited as an example of *Nihonkyo*.

Befu reviews the essential tenets of *Nihonkyo*, according to Ben-Dasan.

The first tenet is *kuki* (空: air). This is a kind of principle: "a thorough-going principle of principle-lessness", a kind of implicit normative constraint or filter. According to Ben-Dasan, when a Japanese speaks the truth, he/she filters the truth 事実 (*jijitsu*) through this 'air', so that it becomes culturally filtered truth 実情 (*jitsujo*), which is truth or facts as interpreted by human feelings and relations.

The second tenet is *michi* (道: way), which is best understood as the Japanese philosophy of life, or the Japanese principle of the universe. It is a fundamental principle underlying all Japanese traditional arts and crafts.

These two tenets have to be understood through the Japanese language. Here Befu mentions Miller's discussion of the 'mythical' qualities claimed for the Japanese language (discussed above). According to Ben-Dasan, the religious aspects of the language is seen when Japanese argue.

> "*They do not present a logical demonstration; instead they try to persuade others through feeling and emotion. The persuasiveness of the argument is predicated on the affective use of Japanese—that is, the use of its in-built facility for conveying emotions*

> *—and the understanding of the premises of* Nihonkyo. *…An understanding of the language, not only in its linguistic aspects but in its extralinguistic aspects is the sine qua non for the appreciation of Nihonkyo, as well as of Nihonjinron. Yet, Ben-Dasan admits, this is a feat impossible for foreigners, including himself (Ben-Dasan 1970: 94-95) -- though as Yamamoto Shichihei, I am sure he would have no problem at all*." (Befu, *op.cit*., pp. 108-109.)

As for sacraments, Befu lists seven 'functional equivalents' in *Nihonkyo*: nature (自然 *shizen*), true intention (本心 *honshin*), facts (実情 *jitsujo*), person (人間 *ningen*), purity (純粋*junsui*), order (序列 *joretsu*), marriage (結婚 *kekkon*). Befu has no problem in seeing the Nihonkyo expounded by Ben-Dasan as identical in most respects to Nihonjinron, and has no difficulty in seeing this as Japanese 'civil religion' as defined by three American scholars, all quoted by Befu (*op.cit*., p. 111):

> "*By civil religion, I refer to that religious dimension, found I think in the life of every people, through which it interprets its historical experience in the light of transcendent reality*." (Robert N Bellah, *Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial*, p. 3.)

> "*The set of beliefs, rites and symbols which relates a man's role as citizen and his society's place in space, time and history to the conditions of ultimate existence and meaning*." (John A Coleman, "Civil Religion," *Sociological Analysis*, 31, pp. 67-77, p. 70.)

> "*Systematic network of moods, values, thoughts, rituals, and symbols that establishes the meaning of nationhood with an overarching hierarchy of significance*." (Winston Davis, "Civil Theology of Watsuji Tetsuro," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 3, pp. 5-40, p. 6.)

The definitions clearly fit the kind of attitudes delineated by Ben-Dasan and, since Befu clearly believes that Ben-Dasan's Nihonkyo is largely equivalent to civil religion as defined above, for reasons of space, I will leave the argument there.

Relevance to Aikido

I have taken the works of Mouer and Sugimoto, Yoshino, and Befu all together, to consider their general relevance to aikido. All these researchers point to the continued existence in Japan of *Nihonjinron* and its basis in the uniqueness of the Japanese language and culture. So it should have been no surprise to me that it exists in the world of aikido. The belief that aikido is essentially bound to Japanese culture and the Japanese language—and that because of this Japanese aikido is superior to 'non-Japanese' aikido, jars with the other belief, also closely related to *nihonjinron*, that all cultures are relative and therefore equally unique. The organization of aikido must therefore be nationally based, but there is little thinking in Japan about what this actually means in practice.

With Mouer and Sugimoto, I have focused more especially on how they use American sources to build up a picture of 'The Great Tradition of Holism/Uniformity and Consensus in Japanese Society.' It is important to see the American contribution to the establishment of postwar *nihonjinron*, which is of course related to America's massive role in rebuilding the country after 1945. I have always been struck by the differences in aikido in the UK and in the USA, as I have experienced it. In both cases, the main question was how to deal with Japanese *shihans*, who had a different view of social customs, education, and morality. However, in both cases they were given 'guru' roles that in my experience no local shihan has ever had in Japan. Doshu and the very senior shihans in the Hombu, like Hiroshi Tada, have 'guru' status and the present Doshu is gradually acquiring more of this, as he grows older. I suppose the use of the term 'Sensei' marks the difference. In the US, 'Sensei' (always capitalized) and 'sempai' seem to have more clearly defined and elevated roles, whereas in Japan the term sensei is used to refer to politicians, doctors, lawyers, as well as academics. In the local aikido organizations here, 'sensei', referring to the most senior instructor, is used far less, and this was a source of great surprise to me when I first came here, fresh from the UK.

One of the issues for aikido is the extent to which the thinking of Morihei Ueshiba himself evolved. It is not clear that he ever subscribed to the doctrine of Japan as a homogeneous nation, though it is certain that he believed that *budo* could be exported to Japan's colonial empire, in accordance with Omoto beliefs, since he himself taught in Manchuria at Tenkoku University. Yoshino, with his interview data, comes closest to presenting a spectrum of attitudes to *nihonjinron*. In this respect Kisshomaru Ueshiba was completely different from his father and is also different from his son, the present Doshu, who would, in fact, have studied at the hands of older educators like those who answered Yoshino's questionnaires.

Befu aims to present a detached view of *nihonjinron*, but some aikido practitioners might not be able to do this. To take his example about belief in ghosts and apply it to *kotodama*, it is all well and good to have an anthropological analysis of *kotodama* as a Japanese cultural phenomenon, with a general survey of who is more or less likely to believe in it, and when *kotodama* is likely to be invoked and why. However, a student of aikido who is told by an over-zealous teacher that O Sensei stated truly that aikido is *kotodama* and that therefore everyone must chant the 75 syllables for one hour before practice begins, is not helped so much Befu's

approach. Actually, Kisshomaru Ueshiba made use of an approach like Befu's in the biography of his father, with a clear explanation of why Morihei Ueshiba thought *kotodama* was so important, but Kisshomaru went one step further—and made it very clear that he considered belief in *kotodama* was in no way necessary for aikido training.

4. Sugiyama Lebra and Cultural Logic

In the examples of *nihonjinron*, given above, the comment has sometimes been made that the Japanese language is not 'logical', compared with the structured organization of English or German. The tables are then turned and the lack of logic becomes a positive advantage, because Japanese is thereby 'softer' and more 'feminine', compared with the harsh masculinity of German, for example. Similarly, the 'lack' of logic becomes a positive quality and Japanese acquires a different kind of logic to that of German and English. In the distinction between Japanese logic and non-Japanese logic, the latter is usually divorced from particular national languages and cultures and becomes simply 'western' logic. Of course, the properties of the language are inevitably applied to the native speakers and this is true of Sugiyama Lebra's book, *The Japanese Self in Cultural Logic*.

Lebra's treatment is not without problems. She contrasts 'logic' and 'cultural logic' and then contrasts Japanese cultural logic with the non-Japanese variety, but her treatment of the latter is sometimes a caricature. Since her principal aim is to examine the Japanese self, as understood in a Japanese cultural perspective, her highly superficial treatment of so-called 'western' cultural logic will probably not upset her Japanese readers too much, though they might nevertheless receive a false impression of the supposed contrast as this is explained by Lebra. Since her book is very dense, with a heavy concentration of descriptions, anecdotes, narratives, and especially arguments, some preliminary scene setting is in order.

The Self

In her Prologue, Lebra sets out the main themes of the book. Her primary concern is the Japanese Self. Since she is writing as a cultural anthropologist, she assumes some acquaintance with this field, but it is crucial to know what she means by this term. Lebra starts with a sketch of her own self. She was an 'alienated' Japanese expatriate, who then became aware of how 'marginal' she was: "*marginal to both Japan and the United States…marginal to anthropology,*" because "*anthropology has traditionally insisted on studying a society other than one's own. As a native I was unable to replicate a non-native's "awakening" experience in my fieldwork.*" (Lebra, *op.cit.*, pp. ix-x.) Lebra then goes on to describe the crisis felt by the "Western Self", in its task of representing the "Native Other": the roles are being reversed and "participant observation" is no longer a given. Nor is it a matter for academics in their ivory towers. Globalization, localization, tourism, expanding consumer culture, media influence, the revolution in information technology are all invoked to explain the "current interest in the self."

Since I am not an anthropologist by profession, I do not share Lebra's anxiety. I did not leave England in 1980 with any sense of alienation, for I came to Japan with the aim of more intensely practicing the Japanese martial art I had already experienced for ten years in the UK. My efforts as a 'Western Self' to represent the 'Native Other' took place in the dojo, as much as in the classroom, but did not lead to the kind of crisis intimated by Lebra. I was a 'participant observer' in a much stronger sense that Lebra assumes as an anthropologist, and although I did no fieldwork, I had the non-native's 'awakening' experience (the '*naruhodo!*' moment) many times over.

Lebra borrows G H Mead's notion of two sides of self: Self as subject—"I"—and self as object—"me"—or the unique individual self and the social self, susceptible to others.

> "*I talk to myself, and I remember what I said and perhaps the emotional content that went with it. The "I" of this moment is present in the "me" of the next moment. There again I cannot turn around quick enough to catch myself. I become a "me" in so far as I remember what I said….It is because of the "I" that we say that we are never fully aware of what we are, that we surprise ourselves by our own action. …It is in memory that the "I" is constantly present in experience….As given it is a "me" but it is a "me" which was an "I" at an earlier time.*" (Mead, *Mind, Self and Society*, 1934, quoted by Lebra, op.cit., pp. xvi-xvii.)

Culture

This 'temporal duality' of the self leads Lebra to consider the concept of culture.

> "*Culture may be characterized as a gigantic storehouse of memories, collectively carried and temporally enduring but not independent of individual selves. Culture can thus be validated as a set of memories internalized in collective "me"s, yet acted out by a host of "I"s. This perspective helps account for the spontaneous, creative, improvising, generative, instantiating aspect of culture, which is "I" -- based, as well as the enduring, conformative, patterned, reflexive side of culture, internalized in the "me." Since both sides of culture must be taken into consideration, it seems unreasonable to discard the culture concept, as anticulture critics suggest.*" (Lebra, op.cit., p. xvii.)

The anti-culture critics, like Robert Brightman, argue that notions such as holism, localism, coherence, homogeneity, and primordialism conceal or falsify reality. This might well

be true, but one important reason for using the concept is that it is absolutely central to *nihonjinron* discourse. I think no one can live in Japan for very long without becoming aware that most Japanese believe that they share in a distinct and unique culture. So the concept of culture sketched by Lebra above should be compared with Hofstede's concept of culture, outlined at the beginning of this column.

Logic: Opposition and Contingency
Lebra has still left the concept of 'self', as in the 'Japanese Self', relatively undefined and she attempts to remedy this in the first chapter of her book, entitled "Logical Models for Self Analysis: Opposition and Contingency." The reason for such logical models is that they are more adaptable to the 'inherent fluidity' of culture. Lebra then discusses the term 'logic' and it is here where the problems begin.

Opposition
First, Lebra compares the 'classical logic' associated with Aristotle, with 'cultural logic' and lists the 'basic conditions' for the former. It must be "rationally reasoned", with no room for emotions or other non-rational thinking. It must be "internally coherent", regardless of its empirical validity. It must be "universalistic" not bound by particular experiential phenomena. The problem here is that she has taken a very small part of 'classical logic', such as appears in Arisotle's *Analytics*, where he discusses the theory of the syllogism. She ignores his other logical works, like the theory of scientific progress sketched in the *Topics*, his theory of persuasion expounded in the *Rhetoric*, and his attempts to cope with such issues as acting against knowledge in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The three conditions listed by Lebra do not cease to apply in the *Analytics*, but they have far less relevance in his other logical works.

To 'classical logic' is opposed 'cultural logic', which "involves the down-to-earth world of particular, variable, and subjective experiences. Indeed what I call logical models cover a great variety of particular instances of reasoning, thinking, feeling and acting." (Lebra, *op.cit*., p. 2.) Having clouded the issue further, by introducing "Western", to be juxtaposed to "Japanese" (her defence is that speakers often use these terms to refer to themselves), Lebra is now in a position to compare "Western classical logic" with "Japanese cultural logic".

According to Lebra, 'classical logic' is essentially opposition logic. Given P and Q, P is different from Q and the difference becomes opposition if P cannot be Q or vice versa. If P and Q have equal weight as opposites, then the opposition is symmetrical, as in male/female, right/wrong, individual/collective; if Q is what is missing in P, and P-ness admits of degrees, then the opposition is asymmetrical, as in real/unreal, permanent/impermanent. An important issue here is whether this schema is accurate or adequate. Later, Lebra mentions P -- Q relationships that are "inadequately served by opposition logic", but it is also possible that this is because her treatment of 'classical logic' is too simplistic.

For Lebra, the more relevant example of opposition logic to self-construction is subject/object, from which it is a short step to self/other. Beginning with the concept of self-as-subject, in opposition to everything else, which is non-self, Lebra then constructs the 'western' self, based on this concept and argues for its complete domination of European and, especially, American thought. Lebra notes that the merit of opposition logic lies in its simplicity and clarity, but we should be aware that in her book, this is mainly because she herself has simplified it. Thus, it is true that many 'long-term cross-cultural observers' are perplexed by seeming contradictions in Japanese society, but Lebra resists any temptation to explain these in terms of generation change, or intracultural variations based on class or gender etc, since these all allegedly rest on opposition logic. The only route to salvation is non-opposition.

Contingency
Against the harsh black and white of opposition logic, discourse, the self, Lebra posits the comfortable gray hues of contingency logic. Given that P and Q stand for subject and object, in opposition logic the two are logically separate, even if the two might seem to overlap. By contrast, in contingency logic, subject and object "share the same space, are contiguous and intersecting, even when they at first might appear to be separate." (Lebra, *op.cit*., p. 9.)

One problem found by Lebra is that contingency logic is apparently much harder to explain, since it "encompasses a broad range of reasoning at the expense of precision and coherence." (Lebra, *ibid*.) This need not necessarily be dismissed as 'non-logic' or 'anti-logic', but Lebra leaves it manifestly unclear why one cannot explain a 'broad range of reasoning' and at the same time do it precisely and coherently.

Contingency involves two types of logical operations, conditionality and uncertainty. The main form of conditionality is that P entails Q. In terms of the self, the logic is, "If self, then other," or "There is no self without other." According to Lebra, this logical entailment is *binding*. The other type of contingent logical operation is uncertainty and the logical form here would be, 'If P, possibly Q,' which also admits of 'If P, possibly not-Q.' This is an *unbinding* relationship. Lebra gives no examples of this logic as applied to the self, but I suspect that she would find that the schema, "If self, then possibly nothing at all," is not really applicable to Japanese culture, as she suggests below.

There and Back Again:
From Binary, to Ternary, to Unitary…
Thus far in Lebra's account, the logical model has been binary. Just two terms, P and Q, have covered all the cases so

far of both opposition and contingency logic. Lebra now adds a third factor, R, to account for those cases that the P -- Q relationship does not cover.

> "*The ternary mode is mobilized to play down or supersede the oppositional binary as P is unlocked from Q by R.*" (Lebra, *op.cit*., P. 11.)

In sketching this paradigm, Lebra seems to have forgotten a crucial feature of classical opposition logic, which also goes back to its "Socratic roots" (Lebra, *ibid*., p. 5). This feature is dialectic, practiced by Socrates (and which led him to his death), described in great detail by Plato and more especially by his disciple Aristotle, and resurrected by Hegel several centuries later. The opposition of P and Q leads to R, which in turn admits the opposition of S, allowing the synthesis of R and S in T, and so on.

Lebra gives apology as an example of ternary rationality. Her example is that of a Japanese Diet member accused of embezzlement and breach of trust, but the example of a road accident in Japan will present the issues more clearly for non-Japanese readers. Actually, the best analogy for a road accident in Japan is a classical Greek tragedy. Let us assume that P, a driver, hits and injures Q, a pedestrian, or cyclist, or driver of a smaller vehicle than P's. Regardless of the innocence or guilt of P or Q, it is crucial for P to apologize to Q, and especially to R, who is the police officer summoned to deal with the accident (who occupies the position of the gods in a Greek tragedy). If P has good insurance, it will be understood that the hospital will charge exorbitantly for any treatment needed by Q and that P's insurance will meet the cost. R will be aware of this, since it might influence any penalty that P might incur. For R, there is no simple question of total innocence or guilt: the issue is how the accident could have been avoided: who acted to break the sacred *wa* (和 harmony), that governs the smooth functioning of Japanese society.

Lebra concludes her explanation with the unitary contingency mode, which is another alternative to binary contingency. "Light and dark, for example, may occur in binary opposition, but they are also conceivable as binary contingency (if P is light, Q is dark) and they are also unitary in the sense that light and dark are one and the same." (Lebra, op.cit., p. 13.) She adds that unitary contingency logic is most relevant to the 'discourse' on the 'inner reflexive self', or on 'metaphysical, cosmological or aesthetic reality'. 'Immediate life routine', on the other hand, or 'self-other social interaction' is bound more by a 'binary or ternary contingency', but not, it seems, by opposition logic. Again, Lebra would have done better to study the roots of her 'opposition logic' more deeply. The student of that arch-purveyor of opposition logic, Socrates, established by his theory of dialectic a way to the divine, and Plato's theories became an essential part of the early Christian doctrine of how one achieves mystical union with the divine.

Having set out the parameters of opposition and contingency logic in the first chapter, Lebra devotes the rest of the book to showing how her models of contingency logic operate in relation to the 'Japanese self'. The models set out in the first chapter are then deployed. The 'social self' is analyzed in the 'front' (表 *omote*) zones and 'interior' (内 *uchi*) zones, and in the 'back' (裏 *ura*) and 'exterior' (外 *soto*) zones. The second pair (*uchi* 内and *soto* 外) are deployed to explain the contingency of the 'inner, reflexive self' and the book concludes with an analysis of the 'self' in cosmology and aesthetics.

There is a constant interplay between language, culture and the 'self'—and a vast amount of detail. It is as if the breadth of the entire *nihonjinron* discourse is summarized in four large chapters. In this respect, the work of Takeo Doi and Chie Nakane, archetypal *nihonjinron* exponents, is of great value here, for their initial explanations of *amae*, vertical / horizontal, and the three oppositions of *tatemae* / *honne*, *omote* / *ura*, and *uchi* / *soto* provide a road map that can be used to navigate Lebra's denser chapters and thickets of detail. My own view is that Lebra falls into the same trap as the *nihonjinron* exponents and assumes that one central concept, namely, contingency logic, is sufficient to explain all the dimensions of the 'Japanese self'. With Takeo Doi, it was *amae* and the three oppositions noted above; with Nakane, it was vertical social structures; with Benedict it was shame against guilt; and now with Lebra it is contingency logic against an opposition logic that is too narrowly conceived.

We can see this in Lebra's treatment of cosmology. She makes the claim that,

> "*Asymmetric opposition logic is well articulated in the monotheistic cosmology of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, all of which claims a common descent from Abraham, whereas unbinding contingency logic characterizes the polytheism of Japanese Shinto and Buddhism, including a mixture of these*." (Lebra, *op.cit*., p. 225.)

Lebra has no trouble in seeing "asymmetric opposition logic at its best" in the Old Testament stories of the monotheistic God's dominance over his human creatures and the latters' resistance to his power. This

> "*left a potent legacy that Christianity and Islam tapped into to wage their respective missions under One God. Instead of promoting solidarity and sympathy, however, this common legacy seems to account for the ongoing ferocious and prolonged*

> *life-and-death battles among peoples espousing these religions*." (Lebra, *op.cit*., p. 231.)

When we come to the *Kojiki*, however, we pass from the cold darkness of asymmetric opposition logic to the warm light of unbinding contingency logic. Even the deities and the human rulers are

> "*genealogically linked and behaviorally more or less continuous. Biblical tales are characteristically of God-human confrontations, but the Japanese counterpart reveals connections and overlaps*." (Lebra, *op.cit*., p. 232.)

This might well be true, but Lebra is rather selective with the evidence and seems to change the goalposts as she goes along. For example, she has no problem in reading "rationality" into the battles recorded in the Old Testament, but the peaceful message of Jesus in the Gospels, especially the Gospel of John, is omitted, as is the entire Trinitarian theology of the New Testament. Similarly, after an account of the pacification of the earthly deities in the *Kojiki*, in order that the Amaterasu o mikami's Heavenly Grandchild may descend and rule the land, which Lebra sets out very clearly in the same precise terms of asymmetric opposition logic with which she recounted the Biblical battles, Lebra then gives up and denies that opposition logic will make any sense of the *Kojiki*.

> "*Even the above motifs* [the pacification of the land by the Heavenly Grandchild]*, which seem clear-cut, in the original are laid out against a complex background of mini-stories that distract the reader from the main story line, confounding, muddling, and diverting the order of events. Reading "rationality" into the* Kojiki *mythology, in the end, is easier said than done*." (Lebra, *op.cit*., p. 233.)

Lebra seems to have decided on other grounds, which she does not explain, that monotheism is essentially ordered to asymmetrical opposition logic, whereas polytheism is essentially ordered to contingency logic and thus she interprets the complexities of both traditions, the Biblical tradition and the mythical tradition of the *Kojiki* and *Nihonshoki* alike, accordingly. Hence, Lebra's account—and also the rest of her book—is not free of the *nihonjinron* assumptions illustrated earlier.

Relevance to Aikido

Lebra is concerned to show how contingency logic is a major factor in the construction of the Japanese self and this should have important implications for how aikido is conceived. While I believe that Lebra's dichotomy of opposition logic / contingency logic is too simple to carry the weight it bears in her book, her detailed exposition of Japanese behavior and attitudes is accurate—and should challenge anyone who regularly trains in a Japanese dojo.

Given Lebra's discussion of binary and ternary contingency logic and her application of this to apologies, one issue for aikido practitioners is how this would apply to moral issues, such as improper relationships between the Japanese *shihan* and students, dojo injuries, or cases of harassment.

A Defence Against Dale

Lebra's distinction between contrastive logic and cultural logic allows her to mount a defence of Japanese studies against Peter Dale's attack on Japanese uniqueness. Dale's analysis of *nihonjinron* is an undesirable example of 'western' opposition logic, whereas Lebra's own defence of Japanese studies places *nihonjinron* in the 'softer' framework of Japanese contingency logic. However, Lebra discards this mantle when discussing Dale and reverts to the most classic form of 'western' opposition logic, namely, denunciation—in this case, in the absence of any evidence. In an academic study of cultural logic, this is remarkable. The attack on Dale comes in the Epilogue, entitled, "In Defense of Japanese Studies".

> "*A strong critic, like Peter Dale (1986), however, identifies NJR as penned primarily by 'Japanese' authors and denounces their publications (if I have correctly interpreted his ideas, given his deliberately complicated, often incomprehensible writing style). Dale's perception of Western and Japanese writers represents a moralized asymmetry: the modest, well-meaning, self-effacing Westerner is contrasted to the aggressive, exploitative, self-aggrandizing, silly Japanese. While Dale does not hesitate to attach severe pejoratives to Japanese authors, Westerners receive mainly praise. I find particularly objectionable his ill-concealed rage against what he calls native NJR scholarship. His language is so ferocious that I cannot even bring myself to quote it*." (Lebra, op.cit., p. 277.)

Having read Dale several times, I wondered whether Lebra was referring to the same book. The results of the 1978 Nomura survey indicate that over 80% of the *nihonjinron* output was the work of Japanese authors and, since Dale states that his residence in Japan provided the spur for his research and that he also studied Japanese, his focus on Japanese authors is understandable. Lebra's last sentence is especially unfortunate, since she fails thereby to provide any evidence for the truth of her diatribe against Dale. Her epilogue is tacked on to the book as an afterthought and she would have done better to take Dale as her stalking horse throughout the book and explain how and why his analysis fails: how contingency logic applied to the Japanese 'self'

gives a better explanation of what Dale describes than his own explanations.

Conclusion: What about *Igirisujinron*, or *Amerikajinron*?
'England' is rendered in Japanese by '英国' or more commonly 'イギリス', which is the *katakana* rendering of *English*, 'イングランド' (*Ingurando*) being used to denote a soccer team. In Japan the notion that Great Britain is an amalgamation of four distinct national cultures is very hazy and it comes as a complete surprise to many Japanese to discover that Wales, for example, has its own ancient language that is largely not understood beyond its borders. The closest anyone has ever got to *Igirisujinron* is probably A G Macdonnell's 1933 satire, *England their England*, or Idries Shah's *Darkest England*. The fact that both Japan and England are 島国 (*shima-guni*: island nations) facing large continental land masses, is sometimes invoked to explain Japanese fondness for England and English ways, with the inevitable mention of 'English gentlemen' invariably wearing '*sebiro*' (suits, as in *Saville Row*), bowler hats and carrying rolled-up umbrellas. It is Japan's answer to *Madame Butterfly* and *The Mikado*.

In his work discussed above, Peter N Dale has given some idea of an English counterpart of *nihonjinron*.

> "*Just imagine the situation which might ensue had English letters over the past 100 years been singularly preoccupied with the clarification of 'Englishness', not only as an essayistic form but as a major subject of austere academic research. Imagine then dozens if not hundreds of works pouring from the presses of Oxford and Cambridge, in which the Hare Professor of Moral Philosophy discussed the uniqueness of the English ethical tradition, or Wittgensteinians examined ay book length hundreds of terms in the Oxford English Dictionary to derive concepts of Englishness in such terms as 'fair play', 'good form', 'gentleman', 'guvner' etc, or wrote books on the influence of bad weather on parliamentary institutions and democracy, of cricket on the outlook of the English people, on matriarchy as a constant element underlying British institutions from the times of Boadicea to Mrs Thatcher; treating everything under the English sun as consequences of some peculiar mentality unchanged since one's ancestors first donned woad and did battle with Julius Caesar; imagine this as something which filtered down through newspapers and regional media to everyday life, and you have something of the picture of what has taken place in Japan, where almost any discussion from the formally academic to the colloquial marketplace can reflect this ideology of nationhood.*" (Dale, *op.cit.*, *Introduction*, page unnumbered.)

Yoshino, on the other hand, gives his own ideas of Englishness, based on his sojourn in the country, but he makes it very clear that the preoccupation of the English with their own culture pales in comparison with the vast output of *nihonjinron*. His important point, relevant to the UK as much to Japan, is that reflection on one's own culture depends as much on age as on economic conditions. In England, there is an increasing perception that unemployment has prevented young immigrants from blending very well into English society, to the extent that the government is now considering teaching the essentials of Englishness and setting some conditions for admitting immigrants. By comparison, Japan's economic circumstances have put a brake on the more triumphalist expression of *nihonjinron*, and the prevailing questions are more, 'What went wrong?' Of course, the beliefs in the uniqueness of the culture and language have not disappeared.

Further Reading
'Nation', 'national' and 'nationalism' are concepts best explored in Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spirit of Nationalism*, 2006, Verso. National culture is the main focus of Geert Hofstede's research on culture: Geert Hofstede: *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations Across Nations*, 2001, Sage; Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, Michael Minkov, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: Intercultural Cooperation and its Importance for Survival*, 3rd Edition, 2010, McGraw-Hill.
John Dower has published several books: (1) *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878--1945*; 1979, Harvard U P; (2) *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*; 1986, Pantheon; (3) *Japan in War and Peace: Selected Essays*, 1993, New Press; (4) *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, 1999, Norton; (5) *Cultures of War: Pearl Harbor, Hiroshima, 9-11, Iraq*, 2010, Norton. All except the last one deal with issues relating to World War II. Most relevant to this column are Items (3) and (4). Complementing Dower's research is that of Eiji Takemae: *The Allied Occupation of Japan*, 2002, Continuum.
The best all-round treatment of judo, kendo and sumo can be found in Joseph Svinth and Thomas Green (eds.), *Martial Arts of the World*, 2009, ABC-Clio. A collection of essays with a similar title is also very much worth reading: Thomas A Green and Joseph R Svinth (eds.), *Martial Arts in the Modern World*, 2003, Praeger. In addition to the pioneering volume edited by Hobsbawm and Ranger (Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds,), *The Invention of Tradition*, 1983, Cambridge U P), the examination of invented traditions, as they apply specifically to Japan, can be explored in another collection of essays: Stephen Vlastos (ed.), *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, 1998, U Cal P.
Examples of *nihonjinron* cited in the column are: Takeo Doi, *The Anatomy of Dependence*, 1973, Kodansha International;

Takeo Doi, *The Anatomy of Self*, 1986, Kodansha International; Chie Nakane, Japanese Society, 1973, Penguin. The Japanese originals are: 土居健郎, 『「甘え」の構造』, 1971, 弘文堂;『表と裏』 , 1985, 弘文堂; 中根千枝, 『タテ社会の人間関係 単一社会の理論 』, 1967, 講談社.

Tadanobu Tsunoda, *The Japanese Brain: Uniqueness and Universality*, 1985, Taishukan, is an English translation of 『脳の発見　脳の中の小宇宙』*No no hakken: No no naka no sho-uchu*: *Discovering the Brain: The Small Universe in (the Midst of) the Brain*. Examples of linguistic *nihonjinron* discussed include: Takao Suzuki, *Words in Context: A Japanese Perspective on Language and Culture*, 1984, Kodansha; Harihiko Kindaichi, *The Japanese Language*, 1978, Tuttle. On the teaching of Japanese and foreign languages in Japanese schools and universities, essential reading is Brian McVeigh, *Japanese Higher Education as Myth*, 2002, M E Sharpe. The book touched a few raw nerves, for McVeigh was dismissed from his university post soon after it was published.

Books by Roy Andrew Miller include: *The Japanese Language*, first published in 1967 by the University of Chicago Press and reprinted in 1980 by Charles Tuttle; *Japan's Modern Myth: The Language and Beyond*, 1982, Weatherhill; *Nihongo: In Defence of Japanese*, 1986, The Athlone Press; *Languages and History: Japanese, Korean and Altaic*, 1996, White Orchid Press. For an account of the consequences of the conventionality of language, how languages rise and fall, a detailed account can be found in Nicholas Ostler, *Empires of the Word: A Language History of the World*, 2005, Harper-Collins.

Other studies relating to *nihonjinron* and other topics by the authors cited in the column include:

Peter N Dale, *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness*; 1986, Croom Helm, Nissan Institute for Japanese Studies. As far as I know, Tanizaki's *Bunsho Dokuhon* has not been translated into English. The Japanese edition I used is 谷崎潤一郎, 『文書讀本』, 2008 reprint, 中央公論社. Dale criticizes the work of Shoichi Watanabe, who has produced well over a hundred books and articles on *nihonjinron*. Dale's main source is *Nihongo no Kokoro*, published by Kodansha in 1974. My copy is a 2009 reprint, which means that the book has been in print for 45 years. It is pure *Nihonjinron*—and clearly very popular. I have indirect acquaintance with Watanabe's thinking, since one of his students was a colleague at Hiroshima University and has produced books on the Japanese language, including a *festschrift* for Watanabe. The only book published by Watanabe in English known to me: is Shoichi Watanabe, *The Peasant Soul of Japan*, 1989, Macmillan.

Ross Mouer and Yoshio Sugimoto, *Images of Japanese Society: A Study in the Social Construction of Reality*, 1986, KPI; "Japanese Studies: *Nihonjinron* at the End of the Twentieth Century: A Multicultural Perspective, in Yoshio Sugimoto and Johann P Arnason (eds.) *Japanese Encounters with Postmodernity*, 1995, KPI.

Weber's theories of the Protestant Ethic are applied to Tokugawa Japan by Robert Bellah: Robert M Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion*, 1957, Free Press.

E H Norman's papers have been collected by John Dower: John Dower (Ed.), *Origins of the Modern Japanese State: Selected Writings of E. H. Norman*, 1975, Pantheon. Dower's introduction is a perceptive essay on Norman's writings, which are also discussed on the following website: http://www.canadianmysteries.ca/sites/norman/home/indexen.html

Kosaku Yoshino, *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan: A Sociological Enquiry*, 1992, Routledge.

Harumi Befu, *Hegemony of Homogeneity: An Anthropological Analysis of Nihonjinron*, 2001, Trans Pacific Press; "Symbols of Nationalism and Nihonjinron," in Roger Goodman and Kirsten Refsing (Eds.), *Ideology and Practice in Modern Japan*, 1992, Routledge. Befu cites several other books: Isaiah Ben-Dasan, *The Japanese and the Jews*, 1970, Weatherhill, which is a translation of イザヤ・ベンダサン, 『日本人とユダヤ人』

Takie Sugiyama Lebra, *The Japanese Self in Cultural Logic*, 2004, University of Hawaii Press. Other books by Sugiyama Lebra include: *Japanese Patterns of Behavior*, 1976, University of Hawaii Press; *Above the Clouds: Status Culture of the Modern Japanese Nobility*, 1993, U of California P; and a collection of essays that she edited with William P Lebra: *Japanese Patterns of Behavior*, 1986, University of Hawaii Press.

Other discussions of *nihonjinron* in English include: Nishikawa Nagao, "Two Interpretations of Japanese Culture," in Donald Denoon, Mark Hudson, Gavan McCormack and Tessa Morris-Suzuki (eds.) *Multicultural Japan: Palaeolithic to Postmodern*, 1996, Cambridge, pp. 245-264;

Fabio Rambelli, "The Sacred, the Empire, and the Signs: Religion, Semiotics, and Cultural Identity in Japanese History", Lecture 8, University of Toronto, available on PDF file: http://projects.chass.utoronto.ca/semiotics/cyber/ram8.pdf.

The most recent treatment of *kotodama* in English I have come across can be found in a study of Japanese terms: Michael F Marra, *Japan's Frames of Meaning: A Hermeneutics Reader*, 2011, U of Hawaii P.

Peter Goldsbury (b. 28 April 1944). Aikido 6th dan Aikikai, Emeritus Professor of Hiroshima University, specializing in philosophy and comparative culture. B. in UK. Began aikido as a student and practiced at various dojo. Became a student of Mitsunari Kanai at the New England Aikikai in 1973. After moving back to the UK in 1975, trained in the Ryushinkan Dojo under Minoru Kanetsuka. Also trained with K Chiba on his frequent visits to the UK. Moved to Hiroshima, Japan, in 1980 and continued training with the resident Shihan, Mazakazu Kitahira, 8th dan Also trained regularly with Seigo Yamaguchi, Hiroshi Tada, Sadateru Arikawa and Masatake Fujita, both in Hiroshima and at the Aikikai Hombu. Was elected Chairman of the IAF in 1998. With two German colleagues, opened a small dojo in Higashi-Hiroshima City in 2001, which is now independent and directly affiliated to the Aikikai Hombu. Instructed at Aiki Expo 2002 in Las Vegas, Nevada.