

Belgium-Japan Association

& Chamber of Commerce ASBL- VZW



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Trade Flows & Cultural News

Japan & Belgium: Four Centuries of Exchange

by W. F. Vande Walle, Editor-in-chief of Japan & Belgium: Four Centuries of Exchange

Within the framework of the Belgian participation to the Aichi World Exposition 2005 this year, the Commissioner-General of the Belgian Pavilion at the Exposition has taken the initiative to publish a book which highlights four centuries of contact and exchange between Japan and Belgium. There is no doubt that this event offered the perfect occasion for the compilation of this book, which will be richly illustrated to underscore its contents.

The first European countries to establish contacts with Japan were Portugal, Spain and the Netherlands, in that order. Since the history of the Southern Netherlands, roughly the area which later constituted Belgium, is so intricately interwoven with that of these three countries, it is not surprising to find that from an early date Belgians were directly or indirectly involved in these exchanges. After Belgium became a formally independent kingdom in 1830, it vigorously pursued its own interests, but even then its relationship with Japan always remained firmly embedded in the broader international context of relations between Japan and the major powers of the 19th century. The history of the relations between Japan and the major countries has been well documented by nationals of these countries, who have not failed to highlight their major contributions to the history in question. In 2000 the Netherlands commemorated 400 years of relationship with Japan, which started when the ship

'De Liefde' landed off Bungo (Kyushu) in April 1600. The pilot of that ship was the Englishman William Adams, who was a model for James Clavell's best-seller *Shogun*. Many of the episodes that make up the history of the relations between the Netherlands and Japan have a Belgian chapter

however. We find proof of this close connection in maps, works of art, scientific and literary writings, as well as in the course of history itself. The 5th circumnavigation of the Globe in the Great Age of European Discovery, after Magellan, Drake, Cavendish and Van Noort, in which the 'De Liefde' was a part, may have flown the Dutch flag, but it is true nonetheless that it was commissioned by immigrants from the Southern part of the Low Countries: the banker Johan van der Veken, the merchant Pieter van der Haegen and the commander of the fleet Captain Simon de Cordes were 'Belgians'. They were the forerunners of the VOC, which ran the first Dutch trading posts in Japan. In the founding of the VOC, the world's first multinational company, shareholders emigrated from Antwerp played a pivotal role.

In the Edo Period, thanks to the cultural, artistic and scientific relations with the Dutch, the Japanese laid the initial foundations for the process of modernization which in the 19th century would catapult the country onto the world stage. Japanese scholars of Dutch Studies (Rangaku) embarked upon the translation and study of scientific works from the Renaissance and early modern times, including quite a few with strong Belgian connections. The Japanese discovered images of the whole earth, of the relative extent of their land, and of the inside human body. This knowledge was among others extracted from the works of Mercator, Ortelius and Plancius, often indirectly transmitted to them through the agency of Jesuits active in China. Through Dodonaeus' herbal *Cruydt-Boeck* the Japanese were not only confronted with an alternative to the Chinese materia medica, but also learned about the scientific classification of nature. This book helped in orienting them to a more scientific approach to the study of nature, giving rise to the Japanese equivalent of natural history, which in its turn laid the foundations of modern science.

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W. F. Vande Walle,
Editor-in-chief of Japan &
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Japan & Belgium: Four Centuries of Exchange

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In 1830 Belgium became a formally independent kingdom, while on the other side of the globe, in 1868 Japan opened its doors to the outside world. This set the stage for renewed and more intensified contacts between the two countries. After the Meiji Restoration, the Iwakura mission on its tour of the Western world visited Belgium and was impressed by the political economy and level of development of the country. It heard King Leopold II recommending Japan that it accelerate the pace of its modernization. Japan did follow the Belgian model in setting up a model banking system centred on a central bank. Japan endowed itself with state-of-the-art iron and steel and glass and textile industries while developing its railways with Belgian equipment and know-how. Belgian professors and advisers trained some of the cream of the Japanese financial, trade and business circles. Hitotsubashi University was set up in Tokyo in 1885, modelling itself on Antwerp's Institut Supérieur de Commerce.

Japan's contribution, in return, to the economic, cultural and artistic development of Belgium has been quite remarkable. In the nineteenth century Japan's arts seduced and influenced the greatest Belgian artists. Through them, Japanese art had a decisive influence on the Art Nouveau movement.

In the second half of the twentieth century major Japanese companies have set up their European headquarters in Belgium, and are contributing to the economic activity and living standard of the Belgian citizens. Asahi Glass, the world's leading glassmaker, established in 1907 with technical support of Belgians, then the world leaders in flat glass technology, made Glaverbel its 99% subsidiary and its Brussels HQ the worldwide base of its flat glass and R&D activities. More than 5,000 Japanese nationals live and work in Belgium, the 4th Japanese community in Europe after London, Paris and Düsseldorf, contributing every day to bridge the geographical gap between the two countries.

About thirty authors have contributed to this book, which is arguably the most complete presentation of the subject to date, and includes quite a few topics hitherto scarcely studied. It presents a comprehensive picture of the multifaceted exchanges between the two countries. Although it is not a narrative of undisturbed happiness or thorough familiarity, the contributions do bear out that on balance the relationship between Japan and Belgium has been mutually beneficial and inspiring for both sides.

Personalia and sponsors

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The BJA would like to extend a warm welcome to its newest members:

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BJA Contact: Mr Andreas ter Woort, General Manager Europe

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VIP Visit to Maasmechelen Village

5 December, 2004 - Maasmechelen

On Sunday, 5 December, the Cultural Committee of BJA organized a day visit to Maasmechelen Village, the most prestigious outlet-shopping town located in Limburg. Despite the bitter cold weather in the morning, the participants were delighted to see the number of exclusive brand shops as well as the enchanting Christmas decorations in the village.

After having a brief explanation about the Maasmechelen Village by Mrs Caroline Schreiber, the participants began the day to shop. Just before the lunch, the participants joined a workshop of how to decorate a dinner table, 'Art de Table' held by Mrs de Sy, a known interior designer of the Royal Belgian Weddings, and many of ladies were inspired by her stylish dinner table decorations.

After having some Belgian delicacies for lunch, the participants continued shopping and returned to Brussels by coach in the late afternoon with arms full of purchases!



From left to right: Mrs Wang, Mr Stappaerts, Mrs Osawa, Mrs Kanno and Mrs Sawada are continuing their shopping after the lunch.



Everybody listens carefully to Mrs. De Sy who is explaining how to decorate a table for guests.



Mr Shimizu of Mitsui & Co Benelux enjoys the company of the youngest participant, Ms Ayaka Matsumoto.



From left to right:
Ms Prémont, Ms Sonon,
Ms Kanno, and
Mr Delanghe

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The table decorated by Mrs De Sy for the workshop.



Mr Matsumoto of Cast Inc. joins the event with his family.

The Young Executive Stay Program YES IV in Japan

7-20 November, 2004

After going through a strict selection procedure, being instructed by experts and business people about dealing with business in Japan during two briefing sessions, having had the honour to meet the initiator of the YES Program, His Royal Highness Prince Philippe of Belgium and being introduced to all facets of what to expect in Japan, all the hard work in Belgium ended and Japan was awaiting. The YES candidates were ready to do business.

Tokyo welcomed the YES participants in a warm atmosphere of 24 degrees Celsius on 7 November for a period of two weeks. The young executives, the BJA and the BLCCJ directors met up with the respective business coaches, Waseda University students and other parties involved in the program during a welcome cocktail. A time to relax before the first week filled with seminars, case studies, company visits and the second week of business-to-business contacts would lift off.

Two dynamic YES participants Mr Eddy Blokken, Business Development Manager of IMEC and Mr Sergio Calandri, Managing Director of HerbalGem, share their experience of doing business in Japan in the following articles.



Visiting the factory of TetraPak



At the offices in the back of a supermarket: instructions how to dress and bow properly amazed the young executives.



At the seminars the importance of details was instructed creatively in the way one wraps a present according to Japanese fashion.



From left to right (standing): Mr Blokken of IMEC, Mr Dochez of TiGenix, Mrs Geens of Mitzlavv, Mr Hut of Brasserie de Malonne, Mr Dewaele of Waterleau, Mr Wyszegrodzki of Donaldson & Partners, Mrs Greisen of 7 X TMC, Mr Moliteur of ACTE, Mr Bastijns of Cardon Pharmaceuticals, (below from left), Mr de le Court of the BLCCJ, Mr Calandri of HerbalGem, Mrs Kellens of the BJA, Mrs Oishi of the BLCCJ and Mr Ohigashi of the BLMC.



The participants experienced Japan through seminars, formal meetings and cultural exchanges.



The Young Executive Stay Program YES IV in Japan

Enjoy the differences...

by Mr Blokken of IMEC

Every book you read about Japan will tell you that finding common elements between Europe and Japan is difficult. And in my short experience with Japan I have to admit that this is true. But that does not mean that you cannot work together: you have to enjoy the differences, and use them to the advantage of both communities.

Let's take some cases of 'culture gap', and see how you can use them to your advantage.

Decision making and taking: in Europe decisions are often prepared by decision makers in the company, and possible options are presented to the decision taker(s), that select on their turn the most promising opportunity. In Japan a decision grows in the organization, and it has to be accepted by all involved people. This process often takes significantly longer than the decision making process in Europe, but it has a significant advantage: once there is a general agreement to work with you as a partner, you better be ready for it because it can go fast. Everybody is well informed and the execution of the contract goes much more fluent (if you stick to what has been agreed!). At IMEC we experienced this in very detailed negotiations of partnerships, but non or few surprises after the signature of the contract. A crucial element in the decision making process with Japanese companies is that you emphasize on the value you can give to the partner, and why are you the best choice to source that product or service. If your product is unique, and offers value to the partner, price (within reasonable limits) will not be an issue.

Trust: one of the reasons why the process of learning to know each other is sometimes slow is the fact that trust has to be built-up. This trust can be bootstrapped if you have a good introduction to the new potential partner. This introduction can be by another business partner, or by a representative who has a vast network of people he or she knows in the domain of your interest. IMEC has used the latter to get a strong foothold in Japan. Dr. Ishitani, with a track record up to executive level in a major Japanese micro-electronics company, is working since a few years exclusively for IMEC. His main objective is to create and improve the contacts between IMEC and its Japanese partners, and to open the right doors of the Japanese microelectronic companies. He is of indispensable value to direct the IMEC people to the right levels for their introduction in the company, and to steer the information for an optimal decision making process.

Another element in the building up trust, that often is neglected, is the power of visibility in your Japanese market. A press release about a new collaboration with a Japanese partner or the organization of a seminar where you address both potential and existing partners can create a lot of goodwill. These events allow you to get the attention of people you didn't know yet, or to convince the people that were still doubting about your trustworthiness. Having these public events can give a significant boost to your visibility on the Japanese radar screens. At IMEC we have been organizing an executive seminar in Japan for the last five years, attracting more than 100 executives and top academia from the Japanese microelectronics companies and universities. This has created a snowball effect in contacts and also new collaboration opportunities.

Deliver: because both the decision they took to work with you as a partner, and the trust they have gained in you, are very valuable things in Japanese business. It is essential that you deliver what has been agreed: nothing less and nothing more. Very often your contact at the partner's company has a personal commitment to the relation, and his or her future position is dependent on the performance of the contract. So if you want to expand your relation with that partner, it is essential that you enable your contact(s) to grow within their company. But one has to be careful. It is difficult to look for a new entry point inside a company without the active support of your existing contact(s), because you could hurt the position of your initial contact(s). Questions could be asked why you are approaching the new person. Are the others not competent enough? Don't you trust them any more? So you should try to select your contacts very careful, and only invest in those with excellent career opportunities and a long term interest in your product or services. However the frequent job rotations inside the companies can not be foreseen.

Why YES? The elements above are some of the tools or skills needed to start and grow your presence in Japan. Of course, if you don't have yet an active presence in Japan, or if you didn't appear yet on the radar screen of a Japanese business man or woman, then it is extremely difficult to even get your first bridge-head on the island. At IMEC this bridge-head was built by the excellent results of our research, and the visibility this gave at international events. This on its turn created personal relations between IMEC executives and the Japanese business world. But for an SME it is not obvious to do this on your own. However, getting the good initial introductions, and creating

The Young Executive Stay Program YES IV in Japan

some interest in your product or service can be done via the YES program, and the support of the BJA and BLCCJ experts. It helps to overcome the stage fright, and it helps in the practical organization of the first contacts (introductions, meeting rooms, social events with potential partners, ...). It also gives you some advice on the do's and don'ts of doing business in Japan. However maybe the most important factor is the team spirit that is created between the YES members. To my opinion, this explains why a group event is more effective than multiple individual initiatives. IMEC is supporting the YES initiative because it will strengthen the ties that exist between both countries. Given the strong relational societies that both exist in Belgium and Japan, partnerships that are created by one YES partner can trigger or strengthen the relationship with other Belgian or Luxemburg partners, including IMEC. Its also an indication that for IMEC the relations with Japan are important, and we are committed to still expand this in the future.

HerbalGem

From tea to gemmotherapy remedies

by Mr Calandri of HerbalGem

Applying to the YES Program was the first decision I took as new Managing Director of HerbalGem. And I am glad I did as it turned out to be a very rewarding experience.

Japan is a priority market for us given that our products are well suited to Japanese consumers. In Japan, there is a long tradition of using natural medicines and plant extracts to improve the people's well being. The alternative medicine sector has experienced fast growth particularly in the last few years, as evidenced

for example by the explosion of the number of aromatherapy shops and health food stores in Tokyo and other major cities.

Our range of herbal remedies, called gemmotherapy remedies, are all derived from plant buds and young shoots. This is a new concept for Japan. Even if Japanese consumers already use tea, soya and bamboo young shoots in many daily preparations, they are not accustomed to using them for healing purposes. Finding a Japanese partner willing to invest in educating the consumers about the benefits and use of our products was our challenge! Thanks to the support of the BJA and the BLCCJ, I met several distributors and, to my initial surprise, there was a lot of interest in this new concept. The distributors were intrigued by the fact that it was a unique Belgian product produced by a Belgian company (gemmotherapy remedies were first developed by a Belgian doctor in the 1960s). Furthermore they recognized the opportunity to introduce a product that could generate the next wave of growth, as existing natural remedies are reaching maturity.

As a test, I gave a presentation of our products to health practitioners and consumers during my stay in Tokyo. The feedback was very encouraging as we received the first order within a few days – just a few bottles but it was a start! After the complicated product registration procedures are completed, we will be able to start providing large-scale trainings in collaboration with our selected partner and introduce the products to the market. The organizational support and valuable advice from the YES Program organizers were critical to achieve these positive results and we hope Japanese consumers will soon start using plants' young shoots not only to make special teas.



The Rubio Quartet entertained the audience with their virtuouse play on many occasions.



The Flemish artists paying a courtesy call to the Mayor of Osaka's Office.

Taste of Flanders

30th Anniversary of Flanders Center in Osaka



Left: Mr Declair, most famous Belgian actor at his best: entertaining the guests by singing an old folk song of Antwerp.



Right: Former Japanese Ambassador to Belgium Mr Nakamura and his lovely wife toasting on a wonderful relationship between both countries with Mrs Blondé of zeal and Mr Oda of Export Vlaanderen.

Osaka in November 2004 was a little bit Flemish, when the Flanders Center in the heart of Kansai, celebrated its 30th anniversary with the 'Taste of Flanders' arts festival. The Japanese public received the opportunity to 'taste' the best Flanders has to offer in the fields of music, design, literature, film and photography.

The Flanders Center has been devoting itself already for 30 years to put Flanders on the cultural map in Japan: concerts, language trainings, seminars, ... etc. This festival 'Taste of Flanders' was one of its campaigns, designed to support artists in gradually 'conquering' the Japanese cultural market. The first edition dates from November 1997. The second edition was held around the turn of the century, when Flanders also celebrated its 25 years' presence in Japan.

Among many, Mr Catrysse, Director of the Center, invited Mr Jan Declair to come to celebrate 30 years in Japan. Mr Declair is not only the most famous and respected Belgian actor for his roles in the Oscar-nominated films 'Daens', 'Karakter' and 'Antonia's Line', but also renowned as a painter. As Honorary Chairperson of the 11th Osaka European Film Festival, he was awarded with 'the Award of the City of Osaka' for his entire career at the Osaka European Film Festival. The Belgian film: 'The Alzheimer Case' was shown for the first time in the presence of lead actor Jan Declair. Not only film, but also music was brought into Japan: the Flemish composer Dirk Brossé conducted the Osaka Municipal Band through a program of eight works by Flemish composers.

A Flemish-Dutch literary afternoon by the in Japanese translated authors Bart Moeyaert and Toon Tellegen enchanted the public. The Flemish string quartet Rubio Quartet entertained with their then soothing, then lively music the pieces of prose, while touring five Japanese cities.

Another memorable event was brought to the public by Mr Yo Ishisaka, presenting his publication of the translation of the famous work 'Pallieret' of Mr Timmermans. Flemish songs echoed in the room and brought back memories of a time long gone.

Not only the ear, but also the eye were given a treat with the photo exhibitions by Layla Aerts, a young Flemish photographer and Yayoi Arimoto, a young Japanese photographer the Flanders Center continues the trend it has been following for a little more than a year. The Center organizes exhibitions for young and coming European and Japanese photographers, who link Japan and Europe via their work.

Mr Daniel Ost, reverated for giving flowers a grandiose surrounding displayed on the subject of chrysanthemums in the gardens of Ninna-ji, a privilege never before accorded until now. The beautiful setting, the magnificent flower arrangements moved many touched by the grandeur of Flemish artists.

The team of the Flanders Center performed magnificently the art of excellence and the Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce congratulates them on their 30th Anniversary.

Several pictures are provided by courtesy of Mr Neefs of the Flanders Center



Founder and former director of the Flanders Center, Professor Vliegen and his wife together with the present director, Mr Catrysse, Mrs Blondé of zeal and Mrs Kellens of the BJA.



In the center of attention, the floral artist, Mr Ost surrounded by H.E. Ambassador of Belgium in Japan Mr. Branders and his wife.



One of the breathtaking masterpieces of Mr Ost in the Ninnaji in Kyoto

EU-Japan Relations

European Union and Japan: Partnership towards a common future

Seeking stronger relations between the European Union and Japan. 2005 is the 'EU-Japan Year of People-to-People Exchanges'.

The European Union and Japan have a long history of exchanges: close cooperative relations that have been built based on the common values of freedom, democracy and the market economy.

The 'Decade of EU-Japan Cooperation' launched in 2001 and, on the basis of the 'Action Plan for EU-Japan Cooperation', various cooperative initiatives are being undertaken with a view to promoting global peace and prosperity. At the 11th EU-Japan Summit Meeting that was held in July 2002, the European Union and Japan agreed to designate 2005 – the middle year in the 'Decade of EU-Japan Cooperation' – as the 'EU-Japan Year of People-to-People Exchanges', with the aim of giving a further boost to exchanges at the people's level, which forms the cornerstone of the cooperation between the EU and Japan.

We hope that the Year will be an opportunity to develop political, cultural and economic cooperation between the enlarged European Union of twenty-five Member States and Japan and to build a stronger partnership towards a common future.

Politics

The European Union and Japan are global partners that share the fundamental values of democracy, human rights and the market economy. Based on this recognition and since the July 1991 adoption of the 'EC-Japan Joint Declaration', the EU and Japan have been cooperating. Inter alia, in the reconstruction of Afghanistan and Sri Lanka and the democratization of the Balkan Region with a view to promoting international peace and security. The EU and Japan are also exchanging opinions and cooperating on common challenges such as the ageing of society and the environment.

Economics

As of 2003, the European Union accounted for 30.4% of global GDP and Japan for 11.9%, making for a total of 42.3% of the world economy.

In addition, the EU is the biggest investor in Japan and

there is growing interdependence in bilateral trade.

EU-Japan investment relations

Various Japanese industries such as auto and electronic goods manufacturers have been investing in the EU market. At the same time, there is a huge potential for the generation of great values by EU investment, as Japan has high-tech industries, namely, the nanotechnology, environmental technology, advanced materials, robotics, communications, as well as sophisticated design, demand for high quality, a safe environment, advanced quality control and infrastructure. For example, the 'Sendai-Finland Wellbeing Center' in the city of Sendai, which is the joint project between the city and the government of Finland, is expected to conduct research and development jointly by Finnish and Japanese companies and universities, and to provide services to the elderly.

People-to-people exchanges / sister-city exchanges

People-to-people exchanges are flourishing. During the past eighteen years, some 9,300 young people from EU Member States have visited Japan on the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme. They have helped to build cultural bridges by acting as assistant language teachers (ALTs) in schools, coordinators for international relations (CIRs) or sports exchange advisors (SEAs) in local communities throughout Japan.

In addition, to date, 4,218 Japanese people have utilized the working holiday visa system in order to spend time in Europe. There are 242 sister-city partnerships between the EU Member States and Japan. Exchanges between the European Union and Japan may be found in your neighborhood.



You can find more details about the 'EU-Japan Year of People-to-People Exchanges' on the web site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan:
<http://www.mofa.go.jp>

Source: http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/europe/eu/pamph_partner.pdf

EU-Japan Relations

Event Calendar for the '2005 EU-Japan Year of People-to People Exchanges' in Belgium

Source of information from the Japanese Embassy

March 11 - 26

23rd Brussels International Festival of Fantastic Films

(subsidy by the Japan Foundation)
[recognized as Exchange Year Event]

March 25

Yayoi Fuse Piano Recital 2005

(Cultural and Information Center)
[recognized as Exchange Year Event]

March 25 - April 12

Exhibition 'brush-kiln meeting' of Japanese-style paintings and ceramic arts

(Cultural and Information Center)
[recognized as Exchange Year Event]

April 15 - August 28

Exhibition of Japanese porcelains 'Imari'

(Koninklijke Musea voor Kunst en Geschiedenis, Jubelpark 10, 1000 Brussels)
(organized by Japan Foundation)
[Exchange Year Event]

April 18 - May 13

Exposition of paintings with theme 'Sakura' (cherry tree) by Natsuko KISHIDA, artist and Director of the Kiyoharu Shirakaba Museum

(Cultural and Information Center)
[recognized as Exchange Year Event]

May 23 - June 16

Exhibition of Sumi-E and Hanging Paintings 'After the rain'

(Cultural and Information Center)
[recognized as Exchange Year Event]

June 4 - September 11

5^{ème} Triennale de la Tapisserie et des Arts du Tissu de Tournai 'Fascinants Textiles du Japon' (Tournai)

June 17 - 18

Demonstration of Kimono

(Japanese Traditional woman's costume)
at Tournai by Kyoto Kimono Fashion Association
[recognized as Exchange Year Event]

June 5

Concert by Japan & EU amateur chorus

(St-Joseph Church, Uccle)
[recognized as Exchange Year Event]

June 7-9, 14-16

Pluridisciplinary Performance (music, dance and sculpture)

(Bureau local d'Art Contemporain)
[recognized as Exchange Year Event]

June 8

Concert by Japan & EU amateur chorus

(Cultural and Information Center)
[recognized as Exchange Year Event]

June 11-29

Joint Exhibition of Japanese paper-made dolls by Mrs Kiyoko Takanami and paintings by Mr Etienne Dekimpe

(Atelier de la Dolce Vita)
[recognized as Exchange Year Event]

July

Friendship visit by junior high school students of Himeji City to Charleroi city

(sister city partnership)
[recognized as Exchange Year Event]

July 12 - 27

Exhibition 'Art in Japan'

About 20 Japanese artists (paintings, sculptures)
(Cultural and Information Center)
[recognized as Exchange Year Event]

September 9

Public Reading of Shizue Ogawa's Poems by Mrs Shizue Ogawa and Donna Tamaki (Cultural and Information Center)
[recognized as Exchange Year Event]

September 9 - 11

10th Symposium on Japanese Language Education in Europe organized by Belgian Association of Japanese Language Teachers (KUL Leuven University)
[recognized as Exchange Year Event]

Autumn

Goodwill visit by Delegation of Himeji City to Charleroi City

(commemoration of the 40th anniversary of sister city partnership)
[recognized as Exchange Year Event]

October 10 - 21

Exhibition of Paintings by Japanese and Belgians 'Intercourse Culture Expression'

(Cultural and Information Center)
[recognized as Exchange Year Event]

November 21

Ancient Court Music (GAGAKU) Concert by Kitanodai Gagaku Study Association (Cultural and Information Center)
under planning

End November

15th Japanese Speech Contest

(Japanese school, Brussels)
(organized by Nihonjinkai)

End December

International 'Kendo & Iaido' Seminar and International Goodwill Kendo Championship

(Centre Sportif de la Forêt de Soignes, Brussels)
(organized by All Belgian Kendo Federation and International Goodwill Kendo Club of Japan)

日本

Facts and Figures on Japan

Regional focus: Fukuoka



Fukuoka – Japan's marketing place

*by Mr Kris Sierens of PhraseLift,
Member of the Editorial Committee*

What makes Fukuoka different? Every region has some particular claim to fame or set of advantages that others lack. From a business point of view however, most people just look at hard numbers. While this is a perfectly rational approach, it can often miss subtle opportunities and personal success factors. It is probably true that establishing a business in Fukuoka is a little more demanding than elsewhere in Japan. But that said, if it works in Fukuoka, it will work everywhere in Japan.

Fukuoka is actually an ideal market place. Like the rest of Japan, the population of Fukuoka is growing. However, Fukuoka has a young and dynamic target audience and local culture with an above average income. This is very critical. The monthly consumption is equal to that of Tokyo residents and 8% higher than in Osaka. Because of their higher standard of living and quality of life, people in Fukuoka have greater expectations. It is striking that much less retail space is available for rent in Fukuoka than in other major Japanese cities. It is a very challenging market. Prove yourself in Fukuoka and you can succeed anywhere in Japan.

Besides being an ideal export location, the prefecture of Fukuoka has a specialized industrial base. The automotive sector — including Toyota, Nissan, and Daihatsu — aim to produce one million cars in 2006. That also means jobs and profits for subcontractors. Belgian companies are already participating in the growing demand. The semiconductor industry in Fukuoka is a major player on the 'Silicon Seabelt Project' of East Asia. The area accounts for 10% of the world's semiconductor production. You will find more than 700 related facilities throughout the region.

In recent years, companies have greatly expanded their research facilities in the area. The multimedia and robotics industries are also sectors where Fukuoka can rightfully claim to be among the world leaders. Special projects have been set up to reinforce Fukuoka's position, including the LSI R&D Center which is modeled on IMEC. The Silicon Sea Belt project connects several Asian countries and has established cooperation between regions and between key production and research facilities. The Eco Town project in Kitakyushu, an area once devoted almost entirely to heavy industry, now promotes an environmental friendly economy, with the goal of zero emissions. In spite of all the high tech

industry, one must never forget that Fukuoka upholds a strong Japanese tradition. It is one of the three major regions producing sake. Because of the excellent quality of the local rice and water, Japan's best sake is produced in Fukuoka.

Another of the primary advantages of Fukuoka is a very attractive economy. Professional and personal costs are considerably lower than in other areas. The average salary in Fukuoka is 339,200 ¥, while this is 429,700 ¥ in Tokyo and 374,500 ¥ in Osaka. The price of land is 27,200 ¥ in Fukuoka, 212,700 ¥ in Tokyo and 117,300 ¥ in Osaka. Renting an office in Fukuoka will be 29% cheaper than in Tokyo and an apartment even lower at 44%. In Fukuoka, 13% more people own their own house than in Tokyo. Also interesting is the fact that the resident tax is 108,000 ¥ in Osaka, 184,600 ¥ in Tokyo, but a mere 82,000 ¥ in Fukuoka.

When considering an investment in Fukuoka, it is important to note that there is a well-educated labor pool available at a much lower cost. Fukuoka Prefecture is home to 33 universities, of which 12 are specialized in science and engineering. A high quality of life clearly reflects employee motivation.

What are the opportunities for Belgian companies in the Japanese market? Subcontracting companies in the sectors mentioned above obviously have a good chance at success in Japan. The ideal marketing situation also presents a high potential for consumer goods. And of course, the Belgian food sector will always offer serious opportunities.

Pallierter is revived in Japan

by Yo Ishisaka

What a pleasant surprise! The publication of Pallierter in Japanese by Mr Ishisaka was on a news program of the national broadcast in Belgium. This suggests how people in Belgium and particularly in Flanders love their hero Pallierter, from the novel of the same name written by Felix Timmermans (1886-1947) nearly 100 years ago. This may be compared to Natsume Soseki's Botchan in Japan. Pallierter is part of the literary heritage in Flanders, Belgium.

Felix Timmermans was born in Lier near Antwerp. After finishing his study at an art school in Lier, he started to work as an illustrator while writing poems and short stories for magazines. More a folk tale than a novel, Pallierter first appeared in serial form in 1911. It was published as a book five years later when the

Fukuoka



Facts and Figures on Japan

author was 30 years old. Even after his great success with *Pallierter*, Timmermans continued to live in Lier and produced many novels, poems, prose, dramas and also paintings, etchings and engravings. Many of them show his deep feelings for his roots. His works were translated into more than 20 languages and are among the most widely read books written in Dutch ever to come out of Flanders. The novel moves like a diary. The author's lyrical observations about the Flemish countryside formed the character of *Pallierter*, who Felix Timmermans described as 'Dagenmelker' in Flemish dialect, literally meaning 'milker of the days'. Characters surrounding the young farm owner *Pallierter* are his devout housekeeper, Charlot, his best friend and painter, Fransoo, a priest in nearby Beguinnage, Marieke, with whom *Pallierter* falls in love, gets married to and has triplets with, and many other people in the Lier area called Neteland. The author described the life of the people guided by the Catholic faith in early 20th century Neteland and their pleasure in a quiet and peaceful life. *Pallierter* is a delightful book. Young *Pallierter*'s wildness and unique behavior, naive like a baby, as well as his delicacy are sometimes comical, which may lead readers to unconsciously feel a kind of admiration for *Pallierter*. The versatile talents of Felix Timmermans as a writer, dramatist, poet and painter, in addition to his own illustrations, are found in every page of the book. Some scenes such as a party and an



Mr Ishisaka, in the middle, enjoys sharing some stories of the past together with some cold Belgian beers.

outdoor dance seem to have come out of the paintings of Brueghel, the old Master of Flanders. The author's observation of nature—grass, trees, flowers, birds, sun, moon, clouds, rain and so forth—leads the readers as if they were seeing these things for themselves. Color, form, taste, flavor and movement in Flanders, together with Flemish vigor and the pleasure of life penetrate slowly through the five senses. The setting for *Pallierter* is still found in many places in Lier, called *Pallierter City*: the peaceful Beguinnage (UNESCO World Heritage Site,

Old Belfry of St. Gommarus Church), narrow cobbled streets full of cast iron pumps, potted pansies in the white painted glass windows with the lace curtains, and the winding river Nete with its famous Zimmertoren. While almost all Japanese know the statue of Nello and Patrache as 'A Dog of Flanders', the bronze statues of *Pallierter* and Felix Timmermans are found in Lier. Moreover, a contemporary sculpture of a shepherd and a dozen sheep could be found near Zimmertoren (I tell you confidentially that Sheep's Head is a nickname for Lier residents). Guiding a tourist in Lier may be one of the translator's obligations.

パリタァ 日本で復活

石阪 洋

ベルギーフランダースの文豪フェリックス・ティンメルマンス (Felix Timmermans 1886-1947) の初期文芸作品『パリタァ』が日本語に翻訳され、昨秋、編集工房ノアから出版発行されたことがベルギーのニュース番組に取り上げられ、全国放送されたらしい。何とも嬉しい驚きだが、百年近くも前に書かれた『パリタァ』が、現在もなお、ベルギー、中でもフランダースで人気があり、その作者の名とともに語り継がれていることを物語っているようだ。それは日本における夏目漱石と『坊っちゃん』のようなものであろう。『パリタァ』はフランダースの文芸遺産なのだ。

フェリックス・ティンメルマンスはアントワープの近郊リール (Lier) で生まれ、現地の美術学校を卒業してから挿絵作家として働く傍ら詩や散文を書き始めた。小説『パリタァ』は小説と言うより民話という方が相応しいが、最初 1911 年、挿絵とともに雑誌に連載され始め、本の形で出版されたのは 5 年後、著者 30 才の時である。『パリタァ』で一躍人気作家となった後も、リールに住み続け、郷土に根差した多くの文芸作品、小説、詩、散文、劇作の他、エッチング、油絵、板画など多くの作品を残した。彼の文芸作品は 20 ヶ国以上の外国語に翻訳され、オランダ語で書かれた作品としては世界でもっとも多くの人に読まれ、その名を知られている作家であると言われている。

さて、小説『パリタァ』はフランダースの田舎の自然、人々、その人達の暮らしの叙情的な観察を著者自身が日記を記すように展開していく。その中で、著者は、その地の方言でダーヘンメルカー (Dagenmelker, Milker of the days, 字義通りには人々の楽しみを搾りつくす人) というイメージを小説の主人公、若い農園主パリタァの人間像に当てはめ、その個性、生き様を中心にして、その回りを囲む敬虔な家政婦シャルロット、近所の修道院の司祭、パリタァの親友の画家フランソー、シャルロットの従姉妹でパリタァが恋をして結婚し、三つ子の母となるマリイェ、その他リールの地域、



Article continues on page 21

Focus on Belgium

Brilliant performance for Belgian economy

Belgian economy flourished in 2004, achieving a stunning 2.7%. Towards the end of the year however, the upward trend slowed down due to the high oil prices and the expensive euro.

The economic revival, initiated mid 2003, continued in 2004. The positive climate inspired confidence among entrepreneurs as well as consumers, resulting in an increase in consumption and investments.

In the fall season however, the growth slowed down by the rising oil prices, which had a negative influence on the purchasing power of the families and increased the expenses of the enterprises, while the expensive euro started to undermine their competitive position.

Nevertheless, Belgium managed to achieve a 2.7% growth rate, which is 50% above the growth rate in the global euro zone. These excellent figures are mainly due to the increased consumption of the families, who decided to spend more and save less. This tendency was made possible by the cut in income taxes and the repatriation of foreign savings.

Another record year for the Port of Antwerp

With a total cargo turnover over 150 million tonnes, the port of Antwerp set another record in 2004. All the freight categories except bulk goods went up in volume. Antwerp remains the second-largest port on European territory, and its market share keeps expanding. Container volume rose by 11 percent, a healthy prospect for the Deurganck dock that will start operating by this summer. The volume of non-containerised freight also increased by more than 4%. Steel handling is on the rise as well: steel imports rose more than 30% in 2004, due to the high prices in Europe, that lead the companies to purchase steel from overseas and importing it through the port of Antwerp. The steel exports remained at a high level. Handling of wood pulp and paper grew by 7% compared to the previous year, fruit imports for their part marked a 3% increase. Car imports remained stable at a high level, whereas the exports expanded by 7%. The total volume of dry bulk goods also rose by 6%; within this category, coal freight showed the strongest growth, increasing nearly 30%, as a result of the closure of several mines in Europe. There was a strong increase in cement exports, mainly to Africa. The volume of liquid bulk slightly decreased, but the port has almost entirely recovered from the dip in crude oil imports earlier last year, caused by the maintenance closure of an important refinery in the harbour zone. As for chemicals and oil derivatives, the port managed to maintain the same level as in 2003. Although the

number of ships calling at the port dropped with 2%, the total tonnage was up with 4%, because of the larger average vessel size.

Japanese LED lighting specialist moves into Flanders

The Japanese company CSS Inc., a specialist in the development, design, manufacturing, application engineering service and sales of LED lighting for machine vision, is to establish a European sales office in Flanders, the company has announced.

The company will be named CSS Europe and will be based at Sint-Pieters-Leeuw. It will join CCS America, which oversees the North American market, and RDV, which oversees Asian markets, as CSS international subsidiaries.

The company said that use of the LED lighting for machine vision manufactured and sold by CCS Inc. was spreading rapidly, not only in Japan but also in the FA field worldwide, as the products met market needs for improvement of product quality and improved efficiency through automation of inspection operations.

Through establishment of the subsidiary, CCS Inc. seeks to further expand sales in the European market by creating an environment in which it can provide customers in Europe with its strength, lighting solutions, in the same manner currently implemented for Japanese customers, it said.

Sony moves call center to Brussels

Sony, the Japanese electronics company, is to move its call center from the Dutch town of Heerlen to Brussels, according to online news reports. Some 55 members of the current 120 staff will move with the company.

Koito launches European operations HQ in Leuven

Koito Manufacturing Co. Ltd., the Japanese automotive lighting business, is to establish a new European operations headquarters at Wijkmaal, Leuven, in Flanders, the company has announced.

Koito Europe NV will control and manage Koito's European operations including the promotion of local research and development and the further development of marketing and management strategy in order to provide better services to its customers in Europe.

The new company will take over this role from Koito's UK and Czech manufacturing subsidiaries and will also control the flow of goods from both facilities. Customers include Toyota, Nissan, Honda, Range Rover, Volvo,

Focus on Belgium

Renault and Porsche.

Koito Europe NV will be established with two million euro of capital and will have around 40 sales, technical and administrative staff from January. Its director will be Mr Yutaka Furuyama, former Managing Director of Koito's UK facility.

FFIO News

Toyofuji Shipping Starts up services for new cars

The Japanese shipping operator Toyofuji Shipping Co will operate new roll on/roll off services for the shipment of new cars between the port of Zeebrugge and ports in the United Kingdom and Sweden. Initially, Toyota cars will be transported between Zeebrugge and Grimsby and Malmö. To start these services a car carrier will be chartered. Toyofuji Shipping intends to transfer a ship from Asia to Zeebrugge in the next months. Toyofuji Shipping Co was founded in 1964 by Toyota Motor Corporation, Fujitran Corporation and Toyota Transport Co and owns a fleet of 28 car carriers. Its main activity is focused on the shipment of new cars and car parts. For the port of Zeebrugge the arrival of Toyofuji Shipping Co emphasizes its position as world leader in the handling of new cars. Until now, Toyofuji Shipping Co operated in Asia, Oceania and North America. With the Zeebrugge services, the company enters the European market. Next to maritime transport the company also acts as terminal operator, customs agent and road transporter. The Toyofuji ships will call at the CTO terminal. Over the last few years, CTO has known a substantial growth in the handling of new cars. In 2004, the company handled circa 750,000 cars. Expectations for this year are over 850,000.

Port of Zeebrugge news

Web-application dictionary for Japanese-Dutch

A few days before Christmas, the Japanese Studies section of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven launched the first webapplication based on its Japanese-Dutch dictionary¹ (和蘭辞典 - *waran jiten*).

The dictionary itself is one of the products of this section's 'Japanology of the Low Countries' project² (Japanologie der Lage Landen), as well as a part of a larger international effort: the Reading Tutor project³. Initiated and managed by Prof. Yoshiko Kawamura from Tokyo International University, this effort's aim is the development of a multilingual electronic dictionary. Japanese-English and Japanese-German functionality is already in place (in fact we have been running a mirror⁴ since September 2003), many more languages are being prepared. Work on the Japanese-Dutch

dictionary started two years ago, at the moment it contains about 5500 lemmata and is available under a Creative Commons license⁵.

Functionality-wise, the inputscreen of the application allows users to paste (or type) text fragments or whole pages, instead of the classical approach whereby one queries a dictionary word by word. After selecting the target-language (Japanese, English, German or Dutch) the application parses the text fragment into individual lemmata, simultaneously derives the dictionary form of conjugated verbs and outputs a list of Japanese vocabulary with translations in the chosen language.



The further plans for *waran jiten* are, first, to add 15000 new lemmata with the translations of their most common meanings. Thus compiling a list of the 20000 most frequently used Japanese words and their translations in Dutch. Secondly, probably by the end of 2005, a new interface and more webapplications based on Reading Tutor's dictionaries will be available. Among other features, the new application will enable querying a corpus of Japanese example sentences with Dutch translations — a product of an other previous project. Not many Japanese-Dutch dictionaries have been conceived in the 400 years the two languages have been acquainted. This one is very much alive and we are duly proud and convinced that it will grow into a very useful, free and open tool for Dutch-speaking students of modern Japanese.

¹ <http://japanology.arts.kuleuven.ac.be/static/resources/waran.html>

² http://japanology.arts.kuleuven.ac.be/static/publications_and_research_projects/

³ <http://language.tiu.ac.jp/>

⁴ <http://japanology.arts.kuleuven.ac.be/waran/tools.html>

⁵ <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/>

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The Business Committee

The Business Committee is composed of Belgian and Japanese businessmen, as well as officials from both countries. It pursues the following objectives:

- sustaining exports by offering the expertise and market vision of specialists to Belgian companies wishing to export to Japan;
- encouraging Japanese suppliers to invest in Belgium by presenting our country as an excellent investment location;
- contributing to maintain a free trade and fair competition, which is the best guarantee that the consumer gets value at the best price;
- the Business Committee meets four times a year at the premises of the member companies. Business activities are organised by a few specialised committees.

Chairman: Daniel Thielemans

商工委員会は、ベルギー・日本企業の代表者および政府関係者で構成される委員会です。その目的として、

- ベルギー企業の日本への輸出・投資の促進
- 日本企業のベルギーでの投資促進
- 自由貿易と公正取引の維持への貢献などがあります。ビジネス関連の活動は、それぞれの専属の委員会によって企画されています。

商工会委員長：ダニエル ティルマンズ

BJA Business Committee members

Jacques Beherman

After a traditional education in Antwerp, where I was born, I started my business studies in Brussels and continued it first in Utrecht in the Netherlands and then in Detroit in the United States.

Various training courses in Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States have enabled me to acquire multicultural and multifunctional experience in the automobile sector.

My real professional career began in Antwerp as Manager of Morris/MG/Rover distribution in the city. Over the years, my responsibilities have been extended to the Brussels, Ghent and Antwerp subsidiaries of the family group.

In 1976, I took over management of the group that bears our name and I am now among other things Managing Director of Beherman Auto, importer of Mazda for Belgium and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

Married, father of two children, I'm also founder and Director of the Belgian Japan Association and Member of the Board of Directors of the Belgian Federation of Automotive and Cycle Industries (FEBIAC), as well as of the Brussels Motor Show.

Ann Blondé

Hello, I am Ann Blondé. I was born in Wilrijk on 24 February 1967 and graduated from Leuven University in 1988, Master in Japanese Studies. My personal history within BJA dates from my student years, when Mr J.A. Moorkens, former Vice President of the BJA asked me to become the founding chairman of the Youth Committee. After becoming mother of 3 children, my connection with the Youth Committee was, as you can guess, not so evident anymore. After a short career as assistant to the chairman of the Cultural Committee, I am now active in the Yes Committee and Editorial Committee. From a professional point of view, I have been working for more than 14 years for Blondé NV, and am now leading the communication agency of Blondé, called zeal.

Edward De Beukelaer

Born on the 11 November 1949. Married and father of Barbara and Stefaan. Graduated in Law at the C.U. of Louvain in 1972. Lawyer at the Bar of Antwerp till 1981. Director of H. De Beukelaer & Co. NV/SA since 1975, then Managing Director (1981), and President CEO (1991). The SA H. De Beukelaer & Co. is the distributing agent in Belux of major Japanese optical brands such as Nikon and Mitsubishi, and through one of its affiliate companies, Agena SA, it is producing Delsey licensed camera bags, which are exported worldwide including Japan.

Founding member and director of BEJAT (former Belgian-Japanese Trade Federation), later merged to BJA, and since then Director of BJA.

Serving the Editorial Committee since the foundation of BEJAT.

Willy De Cook

My name is Willy De Cook and I'm 56 years old. I'm married with two children.

I have received my degrees in Applied Economic Sciences – European Political Sciences.

Now, I have more than 30 years of experience with the Belgian Foreign Trade Office. At the present time,

The Business Committee

I'm Director of Brussels-Export but I'm also a member of the Board of Directors of the Foreign Trade Agency and of the Supporting Committee of the Foreign Trade Agency.

I have Cabinet experience as an expert-advisor for the East European countries as well as European and international experience (especially in developing instruments for the creation of partnerships).

During my career, I have had the occasion of organizing more than 180 foreign missions and 250 information seminars in Belgium and abroad.

At last, I'm Board member for various Belgian-Luxembourg Chambers of Commerce such as CBL-ACP, Arab countries, Japan, Libya and of course a member of the Business Committee of the Belgium-Japan Association and Chamber of Commerce.

Masahiro Imamura

It has passed almost two years since I started my 'second' assignment at Nissan Belgium SA, a sole importer/distributor for Nissan products in Belgium and Luxembourg.

6 years after joining Marubeni Corporation, a Japanese trading firm, I got the first overseas assignment at Nissan Belgium SA in 1982, and spent very enriched 6 years in both private and professional life in Belgium until May 1988.

In April 1989 just 11 months after returning from Belgium to Japan, my second overseas assignment started in New Zealand, where I was running a Nissan car dealer for 2.5 years.

The third one was in Sweden, being the president of Nissan Sverige AB, the Nissan importer/distributor in Sweden during the period of 1994 and 1999.

And having such overseas experiences, I could have happily come back to Belgium in April 2002 to work at Marubeni Auto & Construction Machinery (Europe) SA, the European headquarter of Marubeni Automotive group, and have become the president of Nissan Belgium SA in April 2003. Out of 29 years of my professional carrier life, I have worked outside Japan in as many as 17 years, and out of these 17 years, I have spent good 9 years in total here in Belgium.

Belgium has become my second home country now.

Shinichi Ishida

Hello, my name is Shinichi Ishida. Since May, 2003, I am President/Managing Director of Sumitomo Benelux SA/ NV and last year have assumed additional assignment

of Assistant General Manager for Europe of Sumitomo Corporation.

Sumitomo Corporation has been developing European-wide business through its office in Brussels since more than 40 years ago.

Having operated a sales company of earthmoving equipment in Spain from 1993 to 1997 and having served as General Manager for Europe of the same field in Tokyo, my personal career has been always in the commercial side of construction equipment related business activities.

I love Belgian delicious cuisine and the beautiful forests in spring time spread over the city of Brussels.

初めまして、石田新一と申します。2003年5月にベネルックス住友商事の社長に就任し、昨年には欧州総支配人補佐の任務が加わりました。

住友商事は40年以上も前から、当地ブラッセルの事務所を通じて広域ヨーロッパにおけるビジネスを發展させて来ました。

私個人のキャリアとしては、1993年から1997年までスペインにて建設機械の販売会社を経営したり、東京本社で建設機械部門の欧州オペレーションを統括するなど、専ら建設機械ビジネスの営業分野に関わってきました。

ベルギーのおいしい料理と、春の季節のブラッセルの町に広がる美しい森が大好きです。

Johan Maricou

My name is Johan Maricou and I was born in August 1949 in Ypres. After receiving my degrees at the University of Ghent as Bachelor of Law, Bachelor of Political & Social Sciences and Master International Relations, I began my career at the Foreign Ministry mid seventies.

In 1976 I began to work at the Embassy of Belgium, successively in Cairo, Jeddah, Peking, Moscow, London, Kinshasa and Quito.

In January 1994 I came back in Belgium for one year to work at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as Head of Asia Desk.

From September 1995 to September 2002 I was Ambassador to Algeria and then to China.

Since October 2002 I have taken up again the post as Head of Asia Desk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Masatomo Nomura

A member of Board of Directors and Chairman of the Investment Committee of BJA. Director and Co-ordinator of Japan related businesses at KPMG in Belgium.



Jacques Beherman



Ann Blondé



Edward De Beukelaer



Willy De Cook



Masahiro Imamura



Shinichi Ishida



Johan Maricou

The Business Committee

In my current position, I am primarily responsible for developing advisory services towards Japanese companies based in Belgium and the Netherlands. My professional experience includes providing strategic advice to companies and organisations in such areas as European re-organisation, business expansion, business transformation, the EU company law and tax law, corporate governance and risk management. My work and living experience includes, in addition to Belgium and Japan, the Netherlands, the UK, France, Central & Eastern European countries, Russia and the US. I moved to Brussels in 1992 after three years in Amsterdam. I am a graduate of Waseda University and hold an MSc in Economics from London School of Economics. I am a rider and, with my horse Reykjavik, I practise show jumping. Away from Belgium, I often spend my time in the Alps for skiing in winter and for climbing in summer.

BJA では、ビジネス委員会委員に加え、理事および投資委員会委員長を務めています。KPMG ベルギーのディレクター、日本関連事業の統括コーディネーターとして、主に在ベルギーおよび在オランダ日系企業に対するアドバイザー業務の推進を担っています。欧州事業再編・拡大、ビジネス・トランスフォーメーション、コーポレート・ガバナンス、リスク管理、EU 会社法・税法などの分野での、戦略的なアドバイスが専門です。これまでに日本とベルギー以外にも、米国、ロシア、中東欧諸国、フランス、イギリス、オランダでの居住、ビジネス経験を持っています。ブリュッセルには 1992 年に参りました。前任地はアムステルダムでした。早稲田大学政治経済学部を卒業後、ロンドン政治経済学院で経済学修士を取得しました。趣味は乗馬、スキー、登山で、愛馬レイキャビックとともに障害を飛び越えることを楽しみとしています。

Patrick Schobbens

After education at Louvain-la-Neuve (IAG) and a Post-Graduate in International Trade (Solvay), I started my first business experience in the steel sector (Forges de Clabecq). 1992 is the year where my career turned in the Japanese direction. Indeed, I left Belgium that year to join the EU Program in Japan (ETP) where I had 'the pleasure' to try to learn Japanese language (mission impossible?) and to survive with this kind of asset inside Japanese Corporations (Snowbrand and Marubeni). After this program, I started a new business experience with Marubeni Benelux, working in a division looking for new business development for one of the largest Sogo Shosha. Since 1997, I am working as Head Corporate Clients

Japan within ING, co-ordinating the world-wide relationship with Japanese multinationals.

In order to try to maximise our Japanese client satisfaction, ING has indeed created a "Japan Desk" with dedicated people (Japanese and European with some Japanese experience) centralised in Brussels but having ramification in Holland, Tokyo and Czech Republic.

As a hobby, I am always glad to play golf with other BJA members so I hope to receive some proposals in the near future.

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Nicholas Sepulchre

Nicholas Sepulchre brings more than 20 years of professional experience. More than 12 years has been dedicated to the development of businesses in various service sectors. In 1999, he purchased PRS Europe, a company specializing in global relocation management, where he was credited with leading the organization to its position as one of the premier relocation institutions in Europe. While at PRS Europe, he served as Group Managing Director. In 2004, he sold the company to Sirva Inc., a major global relocation company headquartered in Chicago, Illinois.

Nicholas Sepulchre earned a degree in Marketing from Ephec in Brussels in 1983, and a Post Graduate from Cepac, Solvay Business School in Brussels in 1995. Nicolas is married and happy father of two girls and a boy.

As a member of the Business Committee, Nicolas is also the Chairman of the Membership Committee and a member of the Board of Directors.

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Hideaki Shimizu

I was born in Tokyo, Japan on May 26, 1953. After graduating Keio University (Economics) in Japan, in 1978, I joined Mitsui & Co., Ltd., head office Tokyo.

The Business Committee

Most of my career in Mitsui has been in the Chemicals field, starting with Synthetic Raw Fiber Materials, including a one year training in New York.

After coming back to Tokyo and being involved in Aromatics area as well as Carbon Black Feed, I got transferred again to New York, where I stayed during 1986-1993. Between 1993-2001, I was back in Tokyo, responsible for Methanol.

In 2001, I have been transferred to Brussels, as a General Manager of Chemicals Div. in Mitsui & Co., Benelux SA/NV. Since April 2004, I have been assigned as the President of the same company, which is involved in variety of fields, including Chemicals, Plastics, Steel, Non-Ferrous Steel, Dairy Products, Tires, General Merchandise, and Machinery.

Philippe Suinen

Philippe Suinen was born in 1949. He obtained a degree in law at the University of Liège and a degree in European law at the University of Nancy.

He joined the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1974 and dealt for three years with political matters on Zaïre (now Democratic Republic Congo), Rwanda and Burundi.

In 1997 he started working in ministerial cabinets (Jacques HOYAUX - Institutional Reform and National Education and Jean-Maurice Dehousse - Walloon Region).

In 1985 he was appointed Director General of the Foreign Relations Division at the Ministry of the Walloon Region, which will later become the International Relations Department and the Walloon Export Agency.

In 1992, Philippe Suinen was appointed Head of Cabinet in federal ministries (Minister Robert Urbain, Foreign Trade and European Affairs and Minister Elio Di Rupo, Economy and Telecommunications).

Since 1998, Philippe Suinen is Director General of the International Relations, Walloon Region; General Commissioner for International Relations of the French Community of Belgium and General Manager of the Walloon Export Agency.

Pursuant to the decree creating the Walloon Export and Foreign Investment Agency (AWEX), a body of public interest of the Walloon Region, the management of the latter is now entrusted to the General Manager for Foreign Relations of the Walloon Region.

Philippe teaches at the 'Université libre de Bruxelles' (ULB). He gives lectures on federalism as well as on the organisation of international relations and of export support. He is also chairman of the Committee on Industrial Compensations and member of the board of Directors of B.S.C.A. (Brussels South Charleroi Airport).

Civic medal – First Class.

Commander of the Order of Leopold.

Daniel Thielemans

- Married to Christina and father of Elisabeth (20) and Thomas (13)
- Aged 48 and graduated from Leuven University as Master in Economics, Commercial Engineer.

I am now Director Corporate & Investment Banking at Fortis Bank, presently in charge of all Industry Corporate Customers worldwide.

Previously I worked in Tokyo, London and New York.

During my stay in Tokyo between 1985 and 1989 I had the opportunity to practice my favourite hobby: flying gliders. Flying gliders and single engine planes is what I do in the little spare time left to me next to my professional and BJA activities.

Olivier van Beneden

After graduating from Japanology (KUL, Leuven), I completed a one-year master program in the University of Kansai, in Osaka. I then joined NoordNatie's representative office in Tokyo for two years before working as business consultant for PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers) for another two years.

In 2002, after 5 years in Japan, I decided to return to Belgium. I am currently working at Bridgestone in Brussels. I try to keep my links with Japan alive by investing my spare time in activities from BJA-Youth Committee and Business Committee. In the time that I have left (not much...), I like to hike, scuba dive and read.

Tanguy Van Overstraeten

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A member of the Brussels Bar since 1987 and Partner at Linklaters De Bandt (formerly De Bandt, van Hecke & Lagae) since 1998, I have worked for years as a corporate lawyer advising multinational companies on their commercial transactions (including M&A and joint ventures). Since the mid-1990s, I have developed my firm's information technology and communications (ITC) practice. Together with my team, I cover a number



Masatomo Nomura



Patrick Schobbens



Nicholas Sepulchre



Hideaki Shimizu



Philippe Suinen



Daniel Thielemans



Olivier van Beneden

The Business Committee



Tanguy Van
Overstraeten



Dirk Van Steerteghem



Atsuo Watanabe

of ITC legal areas, such as e-business, personal data protection, telecommunications and broadcasting as well as computer-related agreements (including outsourcing). I am a regular contributor at conferences and in publications on legal issues pertaining to these areas.

I graduated from the University of Brussels (ULB) (Licence in Law, 1987) and, as a fellow of the Belgian American Educational Foundation (BAEF), from the University of Chicago Law School (LL.M., 1991).

Given my deep interest in Asia in general and Japan in particular, I also worked for a time in Japan for the Tokyo-based law firm TMI Associates, a spin-off of Nishimura & Partners, mostly specialised in IP and media law (1991-1992). This gave me the opportunity to learn some Japanese (at Nishibei Kaiwa Gakuin) and to become familiar with Japanese business.

Since my return to Belgium, I have enjoyed working for an international clientele, including Japanese companies, while increasingly contributing to the activities of the BJA. Back in 2001, thanks to the support of Fabienne Fujii-l'Hoost (then Executive Director) and Daniel Thielemans, I set up the BJA Legal & Tax Committee and later was appointed as Director of the Association.

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1987 年よりブリュッセル弁護士会の会員、1998 年より Linklaters De Bandt 事務所 (旧 De Bandt, van Hecke & Lagae 事務所) のパートナー。当職は、長年にわたり企業法務の弁護士として働いており、商業取引 (M&A およびジョイントベンチャーを含む) に関して世界各国の企業にアドバイスを行っています。1990 年の中頃より、当職は、当事務所における情報技術およびコミュニケーション (ITC) 法部門を立ち上げています。同部門のチームと共に、当職は、e ビジネス、個人情報保護、テレコミュニケーションおよび放送といった多くの ITC 法分野のほか、コンピューターに関する契約 (アウトソーシングを含む) にも携わっています。当職は、定期的に、これらの分野の法律問題に関する会議および出版物に出席、寄稿しています。当職は、ブリュッセル大学 (ULB) (法律ライセンス、1987 年) および、ベルギー・アメリカ教育財団 (BAEF) の会員として、シカゴ大学ロースクール (LL.M., 1991 年) を卒業しています。

アジア全般、特に日本に関する深い関心から、当職は、一時期 (1991 年から 1992 年)、日本において、西村とときわ法律事務所 (Nishimura & Partners) から分離独立し、主として IP およびメディア法を専門とした東京を本拠地とする法律事務所である TMI 総合法律事務所 (TMI Associates) にて勤務しました。このことは、

当職に、(日米会話学院にて) 何人かの日本人について学び、また日本のビジネスにつき精通する機会を与えてくれました。

ベルギーへの帰国以降、当職は、日本の会社を含む世界各国の顧客のために働くことを楽しむ一方で、BJA の活動に次第に携わるようになりました。2001 年には、Fabienne Fujii-l'Hoost さん (当時、専務理事および Daniel Thielemans 氏からのご支持のお陰により、BJA 法務税務委員会を設立し、その後、同協会のディレクターに選任されました。

Dirk Van Steerteghem

Dirk Van Steerteghem was born on 7 March, 1963 in Sint-Niklaas. After completing secondary school he got a degree in chemistry at the university of Ghent. Afterwards he also acquired a master in exportmanagement and a master in Asian business studies at the Economische Hogeschool Sint Aloysius (EHSAL) in Brussels.

In 1992 Dirk Van Steerteghem started working for Export Vlaanderen, where he soon became responsible for the Asia desk.

Dirk Van Steerteghem is member of the direction committee of Flanders Investment and Trade (F.I.T.). He is head of the 'trade' department of F.I.T. This department comprises the geographical desks and the network in Flanders as well as abroad.

In the spare free time that rests, Mr. Van Steerteghem enjoys sports and visiting the theatre.

Atsuo Watanabe

Born 1965 in Takarazuka, Japan.

After economics studies in Tokyo University, I joined the Japanese government, Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI). Since then, I have been in charge of industrial policy, energy policy, environmental policy and so on.

I obtained Master's degree of economics in Yale University of U.S. in 1997. I have worked for Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) Brussels Centre since June 2004 as Director General. We provide both information about Japan and private consultancy to Belgian companies which try to start business in Japan through seminars.

We support Japanese companies in Europe, too.

Belgian Economic Mission to Japan in June 2005, headed by HRH Prince Philippe of Belgium

Within the framework of the 2005 AICHI World Exposition, an important Belgian economic mission to Japan will be taking place from 11-18 June, 2005.

It will be organised jointly by the Belgian Agency for Foreign Trade and the Regional Institutions for Foreign Trade (Brussels Export, Flanders' Export Promotion Agency and the Walloon Export Agency). The mission will be presided over by HRH Crown Prince Philippe of Belgium, Honorary Chairman of the Agency for Foreign Trade. Mr. Marc Verwilghen, Federal Minister for Economy, Energy, Foreign Trade and Science Policy, will also take part in the mission.

Given the importance of the World Exposition, - with a clear business-minded character-, many Belgian businessmen will join as well as Belgian journalists. Many opportunities will be offered during the mission to make business successful between Belgian and Japanese partners.

The mission will mainly - although not exclusively - focus on following business sectors: automotive, harbour, lifestyle (in a very broad sense), environment and the biotech/chemical industry.

The provisional program of the mission is the following:

- Departure HRH Prince Philippe and the business delegation to Tokyo or Nagoya on Saturday, 11 June, with arrival foreseen on Sunday, 12 June. The entire delegation will stay in Nagoya until either 15 or 16 June.
- Monday 13 June: B-to-B contacts, seminars Belgian environment technologies, etc.
- On Tuesday 14 June, the most important activities will be organised in the framework of the Belgian Day at the Aichi Expo.
- On June 15, an activity involving HRH, Belgian officials and Belgian CEOs, on the one side, and the management of Toyota is to be scheduled. A visit to the harbour – contacts Belgian harbours and Japanese partners
- From 15-16 June a transfer of the whole delegation is scheduled for a complete economic program to be organized in Tokyo until the 17th of June. Amongst the activities: seminars by the Belgian Regions, one-to-one meetings, meeting Keidanren with HRH, company visits (Solvay, Wittamer, ...), etc.,
- The entire delegation will leave Tokyo for Belgium on Saturday, June 18.

A travel agency will take care of the general logistics related to the mission, including hotel accommodation, flights and local transportation.

Subscription forms to register for the mission can be obtained from the regional export agencies, whose coordinates are mentioned hereunder:

AWEX

Mrs Catherine Collet
Tel 02 421 85 08
Fax 02 421 87 75
c.collet@awex.wallonie.be

Brussels Export

Mr Dirk Vandervelde
Tel 02 645 25 66
Fax 02/645 25 70
dvandervelde@mbhg.irisnet.be

Export Vlaanderen

Mr Dominique Vanderhaeghen
Tel 02 504 87 42
Fax 02 504 88 95
dominique.vanderhaeghen@export.vlaanderen.be

Survey 'Export to Japan'

The Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce will contribute to make this Belgian economic mission to Japan a success by carrying out a business survey with Belgian companies. This survey will highlight the market opportunities and pinpoint some market access difficulties faced by Belgian exporters in Japan. One can complete the survey online on our web site www.bja.be until 20 March.

The results of the survey will be officially released at a lunch conference in April, followed by a Seminar about Japanese business etiquette and manners in May.

By participating in the survey, you will make your company's voice heard by the authorities. This is an important questionnaire, as we are convinced that this initiative will contribute to the promotion of Belgian export to Japan, and that the concerned authorities will not fail to take the measures required to facilitate Belgian export to Japan. It will also allow us to complete the historic data on export regularly produced with qualitative data on how the business community perceives the current situation.

Please make sure you take advantage of the opportunity to participate in this key study.

News from the Members

Titia, the First Western Woman in Japan

Nowadays we take travel to Japan for granted. As members of our association know, this was not the case in the not too distant past. Access to Japan from the early 17th to the mid 19th centuries was limited to a handful of Chinese and Dutch merchants. In fact, women were not allowed to enter the country at all. Illegal entry was a capital offense.

In Europe, the beginning of the nineteenth century was a particularly difficult albeit fascinating period. The Napoleonic Wars ravaged the continent. Both the Austrian Netherlands (today's Belgium) and Holland with its colonies had become integral parts of the French Empire. Curiously, the only place where the Dutch flag still flew was on the far-flung outpost of Deshima.

The English made several unsuccessful attempts to take Deshima from the French (sic), inviting the dozen Dutchmen on the island to switch allegiance. During their second attempt in 1813, they took the warehouse manager Jan Cock Blomhoff back with them to Batavia, the (then) British headquarters under Raffles. Following the ensuing arguments, Blomhoff was shipped off to London as a prisoner-of-war, where he arrived in late 1814. Having lived in London between 1795 and 1802 as protégé with the exiled Dutch prince who now was its newly crowned king, he had many connections and was freed soon, whereupon he returned to Holland.

While back in The Hague, he met the king, William I, and also his erstwhile fiancée, Titia Bergsma, whom he married in April 1815. After the Napoleonic threat had subsided, he was sent back to Japan on the orders of the king as director of the trading post at Deshima. He decided to take his wife with him, even though he knew the Japanese regulations forbidding her entry. He reached Japan in August 1816, and after several attempts to have his wife be allowed to stay, she was ordered deported.

René Bersma's book *'Titia, the First Western Woman in Japan'* describes the experiences of this courageous woman against the historical background of the times.

The book gives a very personal account of the events, as Bersma, a BJA member, is a distant relative of Titia. He located about seventy of the approximately 500 paintings made of her during her brief 111-day stay on the island. He questions why such a phenomenon has been allowed to slip even from the footnotes of history. To this day, her picture is used on teacups, noren, post cards and other souvenirs. The most popular local souvenir in Japan of 19th century Japan was the Koga Ningyo doll depicting Titia and her infant son. The same family, now six generations on, continues to produce this doll near Nagasaki; ordering time is three years!

The Japan Times commented that the book was

an interesting reconstruction of one of the earliest encounters between West and East. First published in English, it was reworked in Japanese and, finally, in Dutch. Especially the Dutch version, with 80 pages of colour illustrations, enhanced by calligraphy from Bersma's wife and layout by his daughter, has been acclaimed for its contents and presentation.

For more information, contact Bersma at 02/662 28 34. The book may be ordered directly via titia@mozaic.net.

Press Release YCOMM, BJA company member

Ycomm Europe, an integrated documentation services provider, is proud to announce the product launch of QA Distiller and ColourProof, part of an integrated Translation Quality Control service.

Ycomm Europe has identified the need to automatically detect measurable errors or defects in translations, and has therefore developed QA Distiller, a fully automated quality assurance tool that scans bilingual files and translation memories for omissions, inconsistencies, formatting issues and terminology mistakes.

QA Distiller provides a reliable, objective and consistent way to analyse and evaluate translation quality. It traces measurable mistakes and enables users to fix errors quickly. The design and development have been driven primarily by the need for a robust procedure for quickly evaluating translation quality and, if needed, improving it.

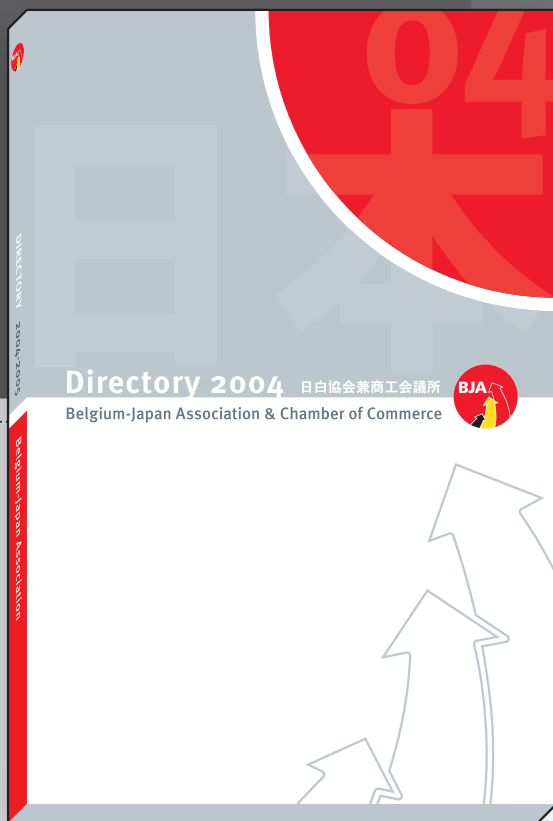
QA Distiller was successfully demonstrated at the LISA Forums in St. Petersburg and Paris. Recently it also received critical acclaim at the Localisation World Conference in Bonn, indicating a huge interest and need in the industry for automated QA solutions.

Ycomm has also developed ColourProof, a proofreading tool that allows proofreaders to have more control over the change management in the documentation process. ColourProof generates colour-coded PDF files, highlighting in different colours the segments that are retrieved from a translation memory and newly-translated or modified segments.

Ycomm's customers already benefit from this automated and integrated quality assurance approach. Ycomm Europe now also offers Translation Quality Control as a separate service. Customers can have their translation memories checked, before the 'garbage in, garbage out' downslide starts, or receive an objective vendor evaluation. With this unique service, Ycomm effectively adds value to the localisation process, and paves the way for trust-based relationships with customers.



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Pallierter is revived in Japan

(Article continued from page 11)

ネッテランドの人々の暮らしを描いたものである。20世紀初頭のフランダースにおけるカソリックの信仰に導かれた人々の暮らし、暮らしの中のゆしみは、明るく健康的で、そして時には滑稽であり、また穏やかな安らぎに満ちている。主人公パリタアの青年らしい奔放さ、破天荒な振舞い、そして幼児のような純粋さ、繊細は感受性はいつのまにか読み手の心を捉え、主人公パリタアに一種の憧れを抱かせるかも知れない。

小説は作家であり、劇作家であり、詩人であり、画家でもあったティンメルマンズの才能を如実に感じさせるものでもある。ブリューゲルの絵を思わせるような宴会風景、豪快な愉楽の描写、まるで自分が実際に見ているかのような錯覚に陥る草、樹、花、鳥、日、月、雲、雨…などの自然描写はその色彩、形、匂い、動きが読者の五感に滲みいるように展開する。

小説『パリタア』にでてくる風景は今もパリタアシティとよばれるリールのあちこちに残っている。ユネスコ世界遺産である静謐な修道院、これも世界遺産の聖ゴマルス教会の鐘楼、狭い石畳の歩道、白い窓枠の硝子窓のなかに飾られた鉢植えのパンジー、レースのカーテン、通りに見かける手押しの鉄製ポンプ、ネッテの川…。『フランダースの犬』はほとんどの日本人が知っているのだが、ネロとパトラッシュの銅像のかわりにリールにはパリタアやフェリックス・ティンメルマンズの銅像やら羊の群れを追う牧童の現代彫刻もある。なんでも、リールの市民の渾名は“羊の頭”と云うらしい。こっそりと、お教えしておこう。本を紹介するついでにリールの町の観光ガイドを勤めるのも何かの縁だ。

* 訳者石阪洋は1929年神戸生まれ、1952年(株)カネカ入社、1970年代初頭、カネカベルギー NV の設立に参画、1976-81年、同社に出向中、道路標識で見付けたパリタアランドという言葉がパリタアとの最初の出会いで、その時に交した会社の若い運転手との会話が小説パリタアの翻訳を決意させる動機となった。その後の翻訳作業の困難を考えるとそれはなんと楽天的な決心であったことか!まさにパリタアのような!そして、その計画はやっと昨秋、2004年11月に美しい341頁の日本語訳版パリタア(写真1参照)となって実現した。訳者は1975年以来現在まで在大阪の(財)ベルギーフランドル交流センターの理事を勤めており、昨秋同センターの設立30周年イベント(Taste of Flanders)のひとつとして催されたパリタア出版記念講演会で講演した。(写真2参照)

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