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EDITORIAL

By Mr Masatsugu Minaka, Chairman of the Board, Daikin Europe N.V., President Nihonjinkai and Vice-President BJA



A hint of thought on Belgian-Japanese friendship

It is a great honour and privilege for me to assume the role of Vice-President of the Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce. This is the second time that I undertake Vice-Presidency of this association, the first time being back in 2016 during the commemorative year for Belgium and Japan to celebrate the 150 anniversary since both countries established a diplomatic relationship. I look very much forward to working together with my fellow board members to further promote business and cultural relations between Belgium and Japan.

This is the second time I have lived in Belgium, the first time being for 8 years from 1992. After some time in Spain and a brief return to Japan, I came back to Belgium in 2003 and have been here ever since. In total, I have been in Belgium for more than 25 years. Interestingly, the impressions I had at my first posting are still with me. The Belgian friends I see today are still rather exceptional among Europeans: relaxed, reserved and attentive. On the other hand, the profile of Belgian cities, especially that of Brussels, is evolving. While still retaining the image of a "European provincial city", it is becoming more cosmopolitan and more like the "capital of the European Union".

Let me talk a bit more about what has remained unchanged in Belgium. For Japanese companies doing business in Europe, Belgium remains attractive as a host country of headquarters of multinational operations. This is thanks to the constant efforts of the Belgian government to attract investment, such as the revision of the corporate taxes, the incentives for R&D investments and the development of a system to avoid double taxation between Japan and Belgium.

The spirit of humanity. The culture that embraces diversity. The national character of excellent compromise and cooperation. I respect these unchanging virtues of the Belgian people and the Belgian state. As Belgium has weathered several post-war economic and political crises, it has deepened its commitment to the European Union and taken on more of a leadership role in the EU, showing further maturity as a host country for the EU's core institutions. In a time when politics and businesses need to work together to solve complex global issues such as global warming, how will Belgian enterprises and politics work with the EU and how will they behave? It will be a great stimulus for us, Japanese companies. Belgium is a respectful friend to Japan and the Japanese people, and we have much to learn from it.

Last but by no means least, the two countries and their people have always been good friends, even beyond business and political interests. Ten years ago, when the earthquake and tsunami struck East Japan, Belgium and Belgians supported the victims emotionally and financially. Under the current novel coronavirus pandemics, Belgium supplied vaccines to Japan and the rest of the world, and promptly launched a vaccination programme in Belgium to protect its citizens and residents, including the Japanese, from the crisis.

When I think about different aspects of Belgium – those remained unchanged and those evolved over the past 25 years – I am deeply moved by the fact that my work has allowed me to be so involved in this country. When I think about the future, I am excited by the challenges ahead for Belgium, and by the challenges ahead for me and my colleagues.

The development of pandemic is still unpredictable, although there are already a lot of bright spots. I would like to thank the members of the BJA office for their ingenuity in managing the association under difficult circumstances. In carrying out the duties entrusted to me, I want to contribute my best effort to continue this good relationship together, by sharing and learning from each other.

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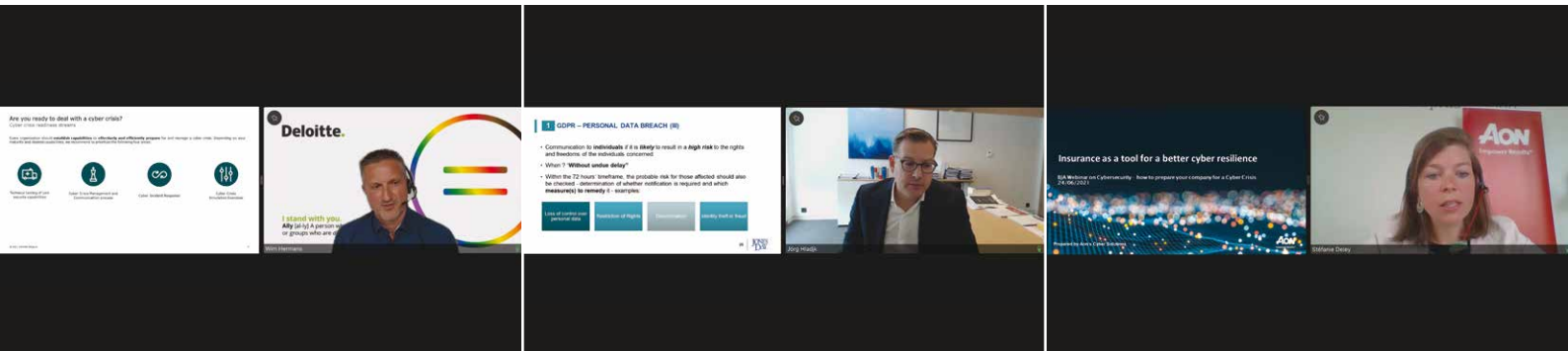
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BJA Webinar on Cybersecurity – how to prepare your company for a Cyber Crisis

BJAウェビナー：「サイバーセキュリティ」—サイバー危機から企業を守るために

Thursday, 24 June 2021 – Digital event - 2021年6月24日



Wim Hermans, Deloitte Partner & Director of Cyber Risk Services, discussing Cyber Crisis preparedness

Jörg Hladjk, Jones Day Partner in Cybersecurity and Data Protection, presenting the EU legal frameworks and Data Breach Response

Stéfanie Deley, Aon Cyber Expert Advisor, explaining how insurance is used as a tool for better cyber resilience

The recent waves of attacks on Japanese companies, Belgian governmental authorities and U.S. infrastructure have shown again that nobody is immune from the threat of a Cyber Security incident.

With that in mind, the Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce, together with Deloitte, Jones Day and Aon, invited the members to a webinar on how companies can be prepared operationally and legally, have their response plan ready, and minimize their exposure through use of insurance tools.

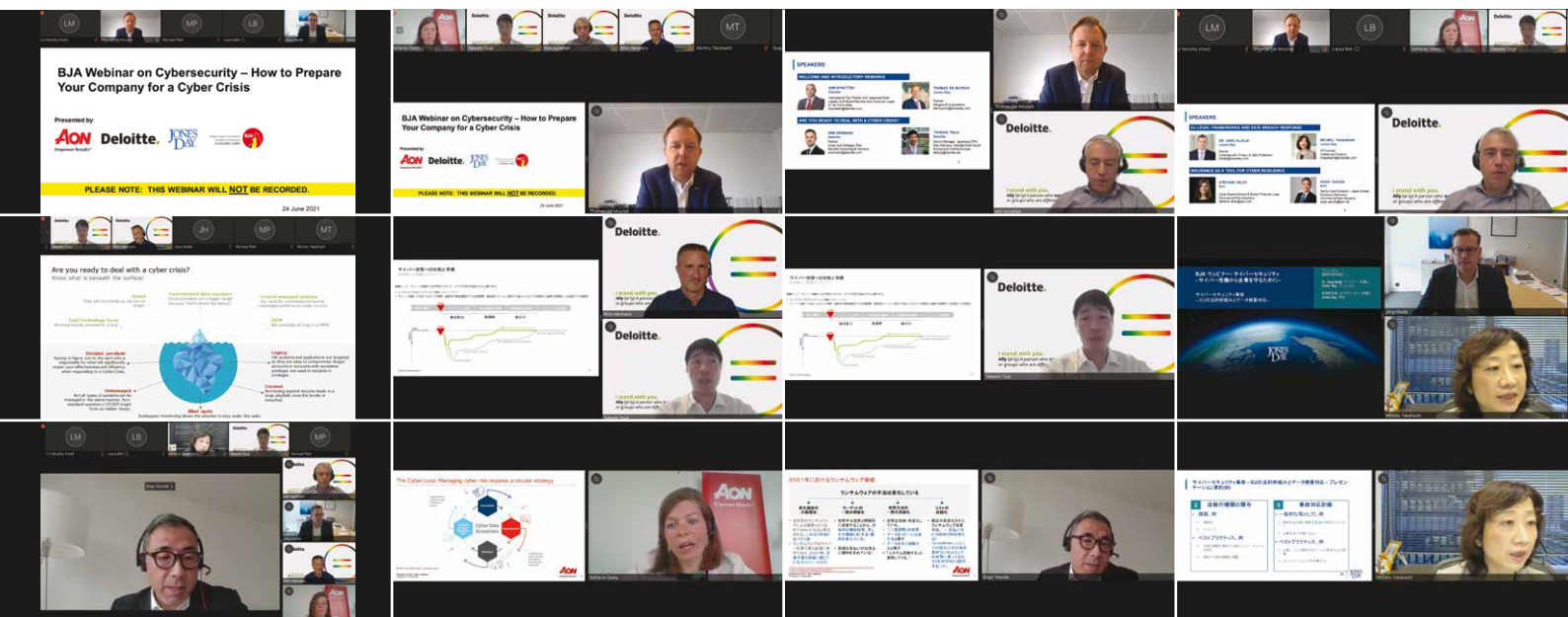
Following a brief introduction by Wim Eynatten, Partner, Deloitte & BJA Legal & Tax Committee Chair and Thomas De

Muyneck, Partner, Jones Day, Wim Hermans, Deloitte Partner & Director of Cyber Risk Services spoke on preparedness for a Cyber Crisis.

Following, Jörg Hladjk, Jones Day Partner in Cybersecurity and Data Protection, presented the legal aspects of Data Breach Responses, while Stéfanie Deley, Cyber Expert Advisor at Aon explained how insurance is used as a tool for better cyber resilience.

Each presentation was followed by a brief summary in Japanese. The event ended with a Q&A from the audience.

The presentations of the webinar are available in pdf [HERE](#).



MIYAZAWA KENJI

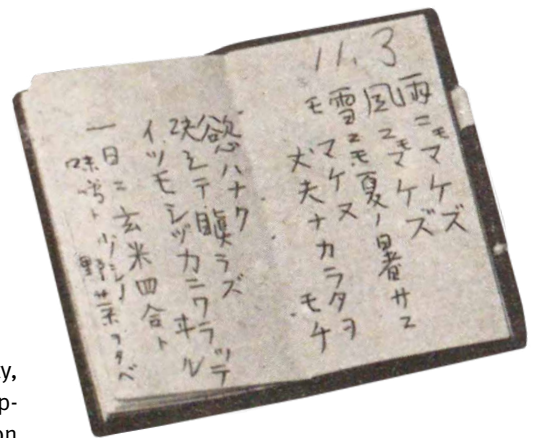
A philosophical introduction

By Dr Takeshi Morisato, BJA Editorial and Cultural Committee Member

Miyazawa Kenji 宮沢賢治 (1896–1933) is one of the greatest poets in modern Japan. His famous poem, “Unbeaten by Rain” (Amenimo Makezu 雨ニモマケズ), was scribbled with a pencil in his notebook and accidentally discovered at a conference commemorating his death in 1934. A Kyoto School philosopher, Tanikawa Tetsuzō 谷川徹三 (1895–1989) is mostly known as the father of another famous poet, Tanikawa Shuntarō 谷川俊太郎 (1931–). This philosopher was deeply moved by the poem, and hailed its beauty and importance in the late 1930s and the 40s by saying that Miyazawa was not only a literary giant, but also one of the greatest human beings in the history of Japan. We must note here that Miyazawa’s works had remained unknown to Japanese people during his lifetime. Unless the philosopher

stepped in and talked about its beauty, this poem would have completely disappeared just like your random memo on a Post-it note. We have to imagine how unusual it was for people to hear Tanikawa describing an unknown literati not only as a great poet, but also as a moral hero and a religious saint.

It is indeed remarkable for contemporary Japanese people or anyone who is familiar with Japanese culture to think that Miyazawa Kenji was nobody. If you say “Amenimo makezu” to them, it would be difficult for them not to respond with the following line, “Kazeni-mo makezu” (unbeaten by wind). It is equivalent to the game of Marco-polo—except in this case, we are looking for Polos among those who share the same cultural knowledge with the Marco. This

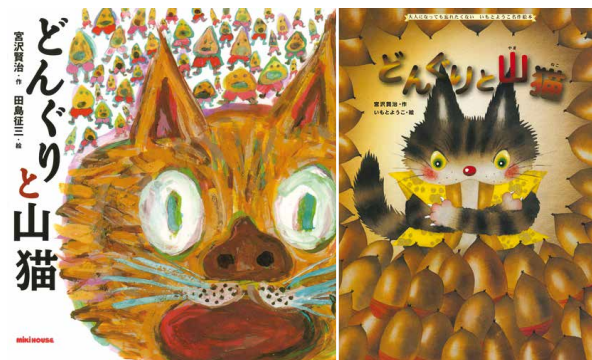
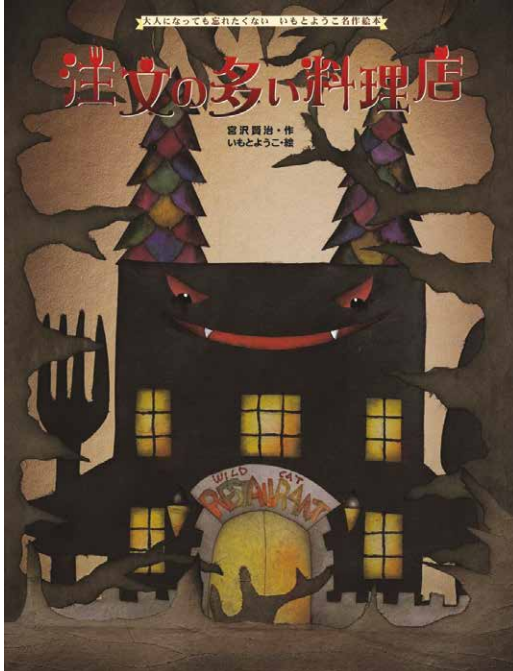


poem has left a great impression on the general consciousness of people in modern Japan.

If one has heard about “Amenimo makezu” poem, it is also very likely that one has come across the children stories of Miyazawa’s, such as “Night on the Galactic Railroad,” “Kaze no Matasaburō,” “A Restaurant with many Orders,” “The Wild Cat and Acorn,” “Zashiki bokko,” among others. I, for instance, grew up looking at the picture books of these fantastic stories in my childhood and as I grew older, I came across several versions of each story, which were periodically published by renown illustrators over the last few decades. Recently, my niece and nephew turned five and eight respectively in Japan, and as a thoughtful uncle, I gave them a mixture of newer and older versions of these picture books. Children loved them like Ghibli movies, while grown-ups talk about which version they like the most and why.

The purpose of this article is primarily to serve as an invitation to the literary world of Miyazawa Kenji, but it is also written from a philosophical perspective. By “philosophy,” I do not mean to show a complex system of ideas built into Miyazawa’s magical realism, but to show a hidden depth in stories that





many of us have taken for granted. When we were children, we ask many questions that start with “why.” But as we grow older, we simply assume many pre-established ideas and go on with our everyday lives as functional members of a human civilization. The purpose of philosophy, then, is to challenge these assumptions that protect us from the endless rabbit hole of “why” and Miyazawa’s children’s stories are a powerful tool for promoting this self-critical thinking. In the following, I will introduce the famous story, “A Restaurant with Many Orders” (注文の多い料理店), as an appetizer to the literary world of Miyazawa Kenji, a pinch of philosophical reflections, if you will. My hope is that, after reading this article, we will feel like (re)visiting this story in several picture books or finding ourselves on our way to Miyazawa’s other stories.

The Restaurant with Many Orders (1924)

The main protagonists of this story are two young gentlemen from Tokyo. These city folks were out in the countryside, roaming around hunting animals. There was a local guide with them and their two big white hunting dogs. They were dressed in an old-fashioned, but shiny and impressive, red British military coat with hunting rifles. They were walking around, talking very loudly about their expensive life in the metropolis, and complained about how they could not find a single prey during the whole adventure. Then they suddenly found themselves lost in the dark mountain. The local guide took a wrong turn somewhere and completely disappeared from

their sight. The hunting dogs too were disoriented and they “started to spin about, whine, and foam at the mouth. Then they all fell over dead.” The gentlemen complained how expensive these hunting dogs were and compared their prices against each other.

Of course, they were far from being equipped for the weather in the wild: so, they decided to head back on their own and agreed to buy a pheasant as a (fake) prize on their way home. They complained all the way during the process of “heading back” and it was quite clear at this point that they were completely lost. (And as we know, if we are completely lost, we cannot really “head back” anywhere!) Without knowing why, they looked back toward the path that they had just took and, out of nowhere, they saw a beautiful house built in a European style. They approached the establishment and the sign said: “Restaurant Wildcat House Western-style Cuisine”. They were too hungry, thirsty, and tired of walking in the cold to care about how strange it was for them to find a restaurant like that in the middle of nowhere.

The restaurant is indeed out of place. There is no menu stand that indicates what kind of European food they serve. There is no sign of plat du jour that helps us estimate their price range. Somehow, to these gentlemen, it looks welcoming to everyone, and everyone is expected to be served (even for free!). After a special welcome, the two men went through several doors, each of which with a sign asking them to do a certain thing.

The first blue door said, “this restaurant has many orders, please bear with us.” They thought it to mean that this place was very popular. Of course, they whined and complained that they would like to sit at a table immediately. They came to another door next to a mirror asking them to tidy their hair and clean their shoes with a brush placed under it. The following door slammed open with a gust of wind and asked them to leave their weapons. Well, that means there were many VIPs. Before giving too much thought to it, the next black door asked them to leave their hats, jackets, and shoes. Then, just like at the security check at the airport, they were asked to remove any metal or sharp objects. They came across with a pitcher of cream with a sign asking them to cover their faces, hands, and feet with it.

Every time they were requested to do something, these men came up with a reasonable explanation to support the significance of it. But each order slowly but surely got stranger and stranger. The next sign asked them to make sure that the cream was applied behind their ears. After a hallway, they were asked to put a golden bottle of cologne, which surely smelled like vinegar. The last sign said:

*Our sincerest apologies
for the many orders.
This is the last of it.
Take lots of the salt in this jar
and rub it all over.*

At this point, the gentlemen realized that they misread all the signs. This place was not designed to take their orders, but they were the ingredients that will be cooked in the European style. They tried to run back, but the door that they had just came through was tightly shut. Then giant eyes were looking through the keyholes of the next door, whispering how unfortunate it was that these unsalted men had figured it out.

Two gentlemen cried, cried, cried. They cried till their faces were crumpled. But suddenly two hunting dogs appeared out of nowhere, barked and paced around the room, and broke through the next door. The two giant eyes disappeared and there was the sound of fighting among animals in darkness. Sud-



denly, the room disappeared and these gentlemen found themselves in the middle of the field with all their belongings hanging from different branches of trees. The dogs returned to their masters, and the local guide also spotted them. After eating some food that their guide had brought them, they remembered to buy “a pheasant to bring back to Tokyo.”

Was it all a figment of imagination? The poet ends the story with an insight:

“However, the two gentlemen’s faces, scrunched up like balled-up paper, even when they went back to Tokyo, even when they took a bath, never returned to normal.”



A Concluding Philosophical Remark

This restaurant is the site of self-reflection. It symbolizes the place where we realize that what we are doing to animals, nature, and other humans happen to ourselves. Of course, this is just a children’s story. What you see here is a bunch of funny images. But it is also a serious critique of industrialized, urban life-style in any capitalistic society. In a place like Tokyo, we fail to see the true value of nature. We mistreat animals and misjudge the qualitative value of things because we are sometimes sucked into the crudest form of materialism. To save us from facing the inconvenient truth, we come up with a series of naive explanations that are designed to rationalize our essentially irrational and inconsiderate behaviors. We always misread each other for each of our own advantage. The solution to this problem seems to come from the side of the wild (since what saved the gentlemen from their delusions was the dogs). Maybe Matsuo Bashō was right: we should “learn of the pine from the pine, and of the bamboo from the bamboo.” We

should learn of nature from nature, of the wild from the wild.

Did the young gentlemen learn anything? Mostly “no,” but maybe also “yes.” It is “mostly no” because they bought the pheasant and went right back into the vanity fair of their social life. And yet, “maybe yes” because their faces bear the consequence of the choices that they made in their life. They at least had a chance to witness what they were doing to others. But perhaps, we should not be asking what these gentlemen learned at the end of the story. What we should be asking now is what we have learned from reading it. What is scrunched up like ball-up paper is not only the faces of the characters, but also our conscience. We don’t have to look for the strange restaurant in the Japanese countryside. But when we go for a walk next time, we should look back on the path we just took and think about what we have done to nature, animals, and ourselves. Maybe then we will find ourselves standing in front of a jar of salt with a sign of rude awakening.

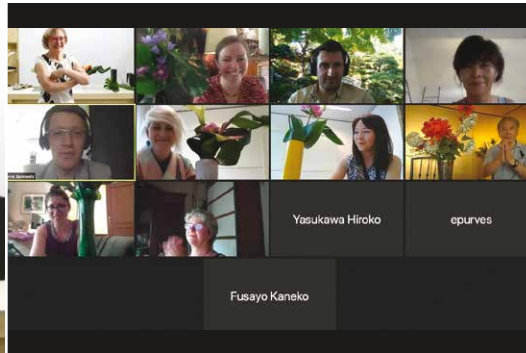
Ikebana Workshop: Fun with Leaves

生け花ワークショップ

Wednesday, 16 June 2021 – Digital event - 2021年6月16日



Mrs Ilse Beunen explaining the art of the Sogetsu Ikebana school to the audience



The audience trying their skills at Ikebana



A close-up view of Mrs Beunen's intricate skills

The Cultural Committee of the Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce was pleased to invite the members to an inspiring virtual workshop on Ikebana, Japanese traditional flower arrangements, generously offered by Ikebana teacher Ilse Beunen of www.ikebana.be.

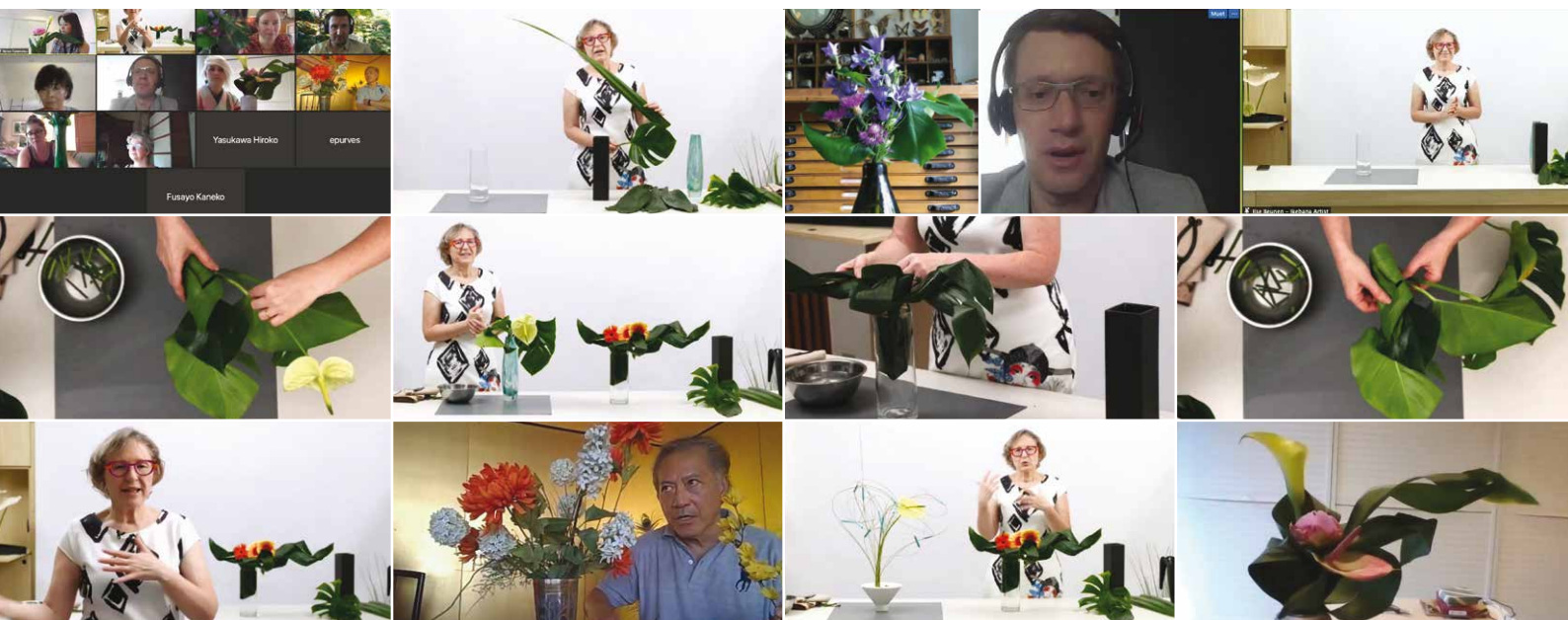
Dr Pierre Bonneels, Cultural Committee member, opened the event and gave a philosophical perspective to the art of Ikebana. Following, Mrs Beunen first demonstrated how to make an elegant arrangement according to the principles of the Sogetsu Ikebana school. She made two beautiful creations with aspidistra and monstera leaves.

The participants could then make their own arrangements under the guidance of Mrs Beunen. Some of them chose to emulate Mrs Beunen's creations whilst other went for more spontaneous creations.



Mrs Reiko Tatematsu of the Japanese Information and Cultural Center of Embassy of Japan, presenting her creation to the audience

At the end of the workshop, all the participants shared their creations with the group and reflected on the beauty and fragility of Ikebana.





THE EU AND JAPAN COMMIT TO A NEW GREEN ALLIANCE TO WORK TOWARDS CLIMATE NEUTRALITY

The European Union and Japan announced on 27 May 2021 their intention to form a Green Alliance to accelerate the transition of both economies towards becoming climate-neutral, circular and resource-efficient in the coming decades. The agreement was finalised during the EU-Japan Summit, where the two parties agreed to strengthen cooperation on protecting the environment, conserving biodiversity and fighting climate change.

Welcoming the historic partnership, the European Commission's Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal Frans Timmermans said: *"This is the EU's first Green Alliance. It is a true milestone in our efforts to create a global coalition for net zero by the middle of the century. Japan and the EU will increase their cooperation so that our combined efforts bring us closer to our goal of living up to the commitment made under the Paris agreement. Together Japan and the EU can further increase a global momentum that is gathering pace. If we pull together, net zero can be achieved."*

Both the EU and Japan share the aim of becoming climate-neutral by 2050. The Green Alliance will see both sides working together to ensure a successful outcome to COP26, and consensus on a realistic post-2020 global biodiversity framework at COP15.

The five priority areas for the Alliance will be:

- › pursuing a cost-effective, safe and sustainable energy transition by adopting low-carbon technologies, including renewable energy, renewable hydrogen, energy storage, and carbon capture, utilisation and storage;
- › strengthening environmental protection by promoting more sustainable, circular practices in production and consumption, and contributing to the global goal of protecting at least 30% of both land and sea in order to conserve biodiversity;
- › increased regulatory cooperation and business exchange to drive global uptake of low-carbon technologies and environmental solutions that will accelerate the global transition to cli-

mate-neutral economies;

- › consolidating existing collaboration on research and development in the areas of decarbonisation projects, renewable energy, and the bioeconomy;
- › and maintaining both parties' leadership on international sustainable finance to help converge on a definition of sustainable investments and ensure consistency and transparency about sustainability-related disclosures.

Finally, the two partners agree to work together closely on the international stage to promote cooperation on climate action in developing countries. The partners will work to facilitate the transition to climate-neutral and resilient societies, including through phasing out government support for carbon-intensive fossil fuel energy, promoting international access to renewable energy, the exchange of information on mitigation and adaptation efforts, and support in the deployment of safe and sustainable low-carbon

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/clima/news/eu-japan-green-alliance_en

The 11th Kobe University Brussels European Centre Symposium
Organised jointly with Vrije Universiteit Brussel

**Green Horizons, Sustainable Futures:
EU-Japan Research for
Climate-Prepared, Resilient Societies**

20 October 2021, 9:00-18:30
VUB Conference Centre, U-Residence, Brussels

Parallel Sessions and Workshops/Brokerage Events:

- Towards a Global Green Economy
- Emerging Breakthrough Technologies for Climate Solutions
- Enabling Resilient, Climate-Prepared Societies: the Role of Social Sciences and Humanities

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EU Academic Cooperation
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THE 11TH KOBE UNIVERSITY BRUSSELS EUROPEAN CENTRE SYMPOSIUM - 20 OCTOBER 2021

The Symposium 'Green Horizons, Sustainable Futures: EU and Japan Research for Climate-Prepared, Resilient Societies' will take place on 20 October 2021 at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). This is the 11th Kobe University Brussels European Centre Symposium and jointly organised with VUB.

During the event, leading researchers from European and Japanese institutions will present some of the latest research and innovation carried out in

Japan and Europe in economics, natural sciences, technology and SSH, to mitigate climate change and ensure the emergence of climate-aware, resilient societies.

For enquiries, please contact the Kobe University Centre for EU Academic Collaboration at: intl-kobe_u_bxl@office.kobe-u.ac.jp

Source:
http://www.office.kobe-u.ac.jp/ipiep/events/20211020_en.html

Friendship Committee Walk in the Forest

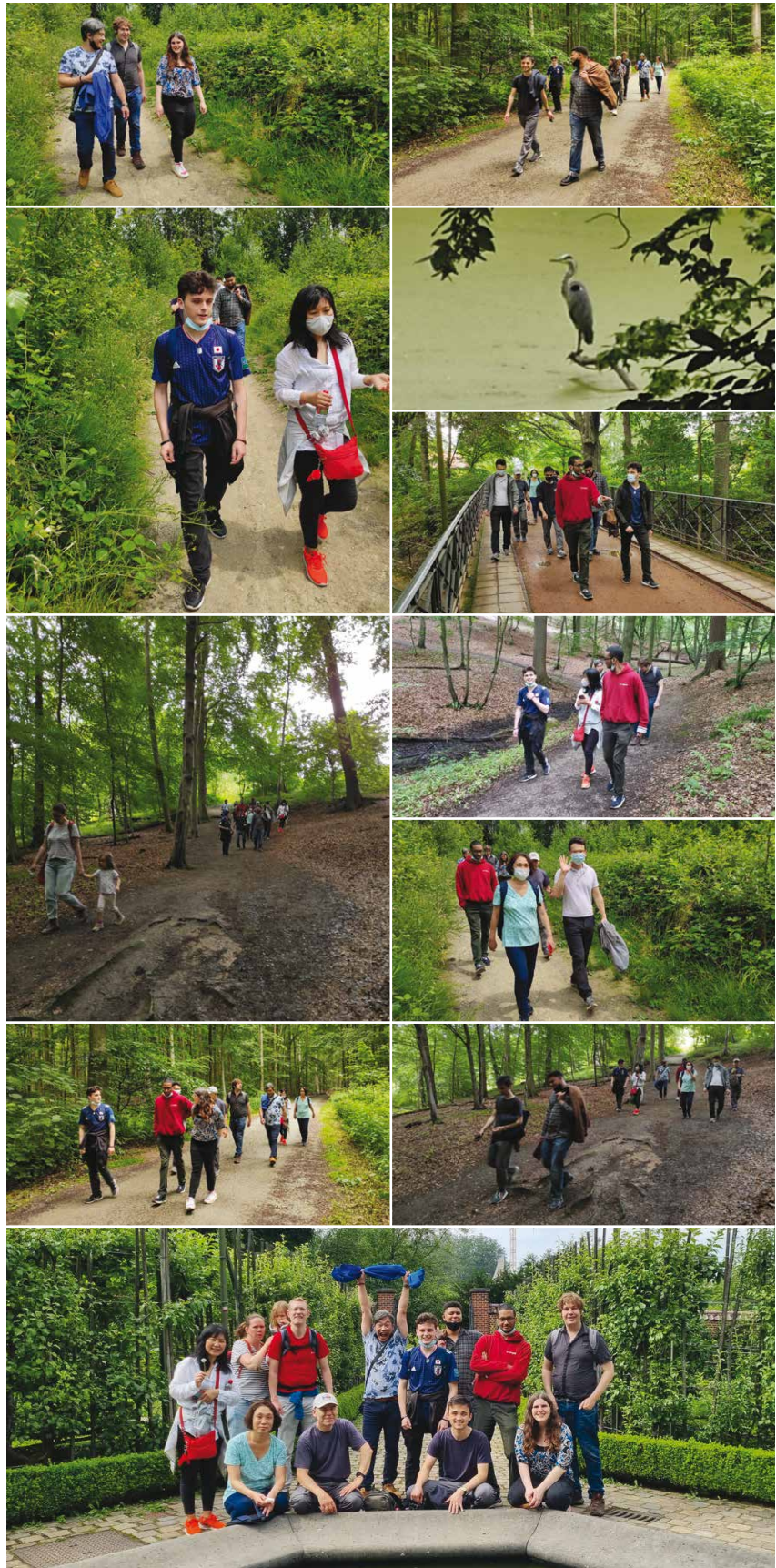
Saturday, 26 June 2021 - Sonian Woods - 2021年6月26日

After a year of being together apart, the BJA Friendship Committee could be reunited in-person again with the long-awaited forest walk. It was a bright balmy Saturday afternoon on June 25 as if a good omen of the things to come. People arrived one after another in front of Boitsfort Station. The whopping 14 participants ranged in age, nationality, and background, including families, students, and even one preschooler.

The group slowly ventured into the Beechwood Cathedral trail in the Sonian Woods, the green lung of Brussels and favorite hunting spot of the Habsburg Imperial family. The excitement was palpable as old friends greeted each other, those who had only met online become reacquainted without a computer screen in the way, and new friendships were kindled. Under the beech canopy, the group connected with one another immersing themselves in this ancient forest in form of ecotherapy (or 森林浴 shinrin-yoku as coined in Japanese).

Fittingly for such a serendipitous occasion, at one point, the group spotted a crane perching on a branch in the pond around the forest path. The trail was 6 km, although, as one participant pointed out, they had actually walked much farther than that. Once they returned to the entrance of the garden, they took a few group photos to commemorate the event. Now that restrictions have been eased in Belgium, the next BJA Friendship Committee event will be just around the corner.

*Tamara Latham Sprinkle,
BJA Friendship Committee Member and BJA Editorial Committee Member*



CROWN PRINCE HIROHITO'S VISIT TO BELGIUM IN JUNE 1921

A Centenary

By W. F. Vande Walle, Professor Emeritus KU Leuven, BJA Board Member

10 June 1921 turned out to be a particularly busy day for Japanese Ambassador to Belgium Adachi Mineichirō. On that day, a little before four o'clock in the afternoon, he was scheduled to welcome a Japanese delegation at the station of Mons near the French-Belgian border. The delegation was nominally headed by Crown Prince Hirohito, and further included his great-uncle Prince Kan'in no Miya Kotohito (1865-1945) and Yamamoto Shinjirō, a naval officer, who had been designated Hirohito's teacher of French and his personal aide. Japanese Minister Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Belgium since 1915, Adachi's

tors and their welcoming party headed for Brussels, where they once more went through the obligatory ceremonies prescribed for state visits. Once this hurdle had been cleared Adachi managed to squeeze in an audience with King Albert at seven o'clock, to at last present his credentials, which, as it happened, were nothing more than a telegram from his home ministry.¹ One hour later, at eight o'clock, he was one of the 180 invitees attending the official banquet in the royal palace in honour of the imperial visitor. Thus ended the first day of Prince Hirohito's visit as official guest of the Belgian royal family.

and it was only at Belgium's insistence that it eventually was (on 11 May 1921), two days into the delegation's tour of Great Britain. The eventual inclusion of Belgium in the schedule, was not unrelated to the elevation of Adachi's status to that of ambassador. Although the promotion had been under consideration for quite some time, the Japanese government had been procrastinating the matter, but it had suddenly been startled into action by the inclusion of Belgium in the itinerary. Adachi, who had been instrumental in convincing his government to include Belgium, would probably have wished a more orderly and neat elevation procedure, but he took the inconvenience in a stride.

First thing in the morning of the next day, Saturday eleventh of June, the crown prince paid a visit to the Royal Crypt in the Church of Our Lady of Laeken, where he paid his respects to the tombs of the preceding Belgian kings. Next, the party moved to the Royal Greenhouses in the palace grounds at Laeken, to be treated to a luncheon by the Belgian royal couple. The Japanese records of the crown prince's European tour describe the greenhouses as among the biggest in the world. Waxing lyrically, they liken the time spent while enjoying luncheon under the lush canopy of exotic trees, amidst an abundance of flavours and scents, to an earthly version of the Western Paradise of Pure Land Buddhism, and to the utopian land of the Peach Blossom Spring of Daoist mythology.

After this intermezzo of relaxation, King Albert guided his guests to the Cinquantenaire Park, where they viewed a grand



King Albert and Crown Prince Hirohito in a landau, after the arrival of the prince in the Brussels North Station on 10 June 1921 (Futara Yoshinari and Sawada Setsuzō. Ōsaka: Ōsaka Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1924, opposite p 244).



Cover of one of the fascicles making up *Eiga monogatari*, one of the classic books donated by Crown Prince Hirohito to the university library of Louvain. Photograph by the author.

status had only been raised to that of ambassador a few days before, on 31 May, and he yet had to present his ambassadorial credentials to King Albert I (1875-1934), when he was welcoming the Japanese party in Mons. After the customary exchange of greetings, addresses and other marks of homage in the station of Mons, the Japanese visi-

The crown prince's visit to Belgium was part of a European tour by the Japanese heir-apparent (installed in that capacity since 1916), to a few of Japan's European allies, with Great Britain and France taking pride of place. When the decision of the tour had been imperially sanctioned on 16 January 1921, Belgium had not been included in the itinerary,



Louvain Catholic University Rector Paulin Ladeuze (left) addressing words of welcome to Crown Prince Hirohito (to the right) in the ruins of the burnt-out university library. Standing to the left and slightly behind the crown prince is Cardinal Mercier. Further to the back the two escorting Belgian officers, Raoul Pontus (left) and Aloïs Biebuyck (right), both veterans of the Great War. Photograph courtesy of Emilie Vilcot, UCLouvain - Libraries Heritage Collections.

panorama painting, entitled *Panorama de l'Yser*. This was a huge mural, chronicling a series of battles and incidents that took place on the Western Front along the Yser river during the years 1914 and 1915. The painter, Alfred Bastien (1873-1955), who had been posted behind the Belgian lines on the Yser river, was on hand to give explanations to the crown prince about the various scenes featured in his painting, which measured an astonishing 115 meters in length by 14 meters in height. It had only just been completed. Bastien, who was close to the royal family, and in his days, one of the leading painters of Belgium, had executed the panorama at the suggestion of King Albert.²

The next stop was a visit to the 'Congo Museum,' now known as Africa Museum. This was followed in the evening by a banquet at the official residence of Prime Minister Henri Carton de Wiart. As if this was not busy enough, the visitors were subsequently expected at ten o'clock for a reception at the City Hall of Brussels, where they were presented to members of the diplomatic corps and ministers. The reception was followed by a dress-ball.

On Sunday twelfth of June, the crown prince and his retinue were taken to the Palace of Justice, and from there to Waterloo. Waterloo has been one of Belgium's prime sightseeing sites since the 1830s, but the time of the Crown Prince's visit to Europe coincided with the centenary of the death of Napoleon Bonaparte (5 May 1821). Not surprisingly, there was a renewed interest in his historical significance as well as in his enduring myth, obviously particularly in France, but the Belgian press too had run numerous articles and essays on the subject. At the site of Waterloo, the party naturally visited the signature me-

morial hill, built by King William I of the Netherlands in commemoration of the wounds sustained by his son during the battle. Descending the hill, they were taken to the circular panorama, where they saw a three-dimensional reproduction of some crucial scenes of the battle. It is not clear whether they visited any of the other minor monuments that were in place at the time, but given the prevailing mood at the time, a stop at the memorial for the Prussians at Plancenoit would have been unlikely. The prince received detailed explanations about positions of the armies, strategy and tactics, from Lieutenant-General Aloïs Biebuyck, aide-de-camp to King Albert, and chief of the Belgian escort attached to the official guest. He was reputedly a specialist in Napoleon's tactics and strategy.

In the afternoon, the visitors were once again driven to Cinquantenaire Park, where they attended a horse show and the ensuing prize awarding ceremony. That evening, ambassador Adachi and his spouse invited the crown prince and thirty eminent Belgians from various spheres of elite society to a dinner party in the salons of the ambassador's residence. Technically speaking, the dinner was offered by Crown Prince Hirohito to his Belgian counterpart Crown Prince Leopold. The banquet was followed by a grand reception for around 300 invitees. This effectively concluded Crown Prince Hirohito's sojourn in Belgium as a state guest. The prince and his closest entourage, who during the official three days, had been staying in the royal pal-



Prince Kan'in (?) signing the golden book in the ruin of the Louvain university library, while (left to right) crown prince Hirohito, Cardinal Mercier, and Lieutenant-General Biebuyck are looking on. Photograph courtesy of Emilie Vilcot, UCLouvain - Libraries Heritage Collections.

ace, now moved to Hotel Astoria, where the prince spent his first night ever in a hotel room.

The two following days were devoted to excursions. On Monday thirteenth of June, the party headed to the province of West Flanders, for a tour of the battlefields of the First World War. The itinerary went via Ostend to the Ypres area, and the neighbouring villages, an area that had nearly completely been laid waste in the course of a four years' war of attrition. At Lombardsijde, near the mouth of the Yser river, Major-General Raoul Pontus gave detailed explanations about the battles that had taken place there. The party then continued its tour via Nieuwpoort and Diksmuide. At Kaaskerke the imperial visitor laid a wreath at the tombs of Belgian soldiers. Their final and most poignant stop was Ieper, a place of particular significance for the British. Clearing the debris was still under way, and only a minor fraction of the reconstruction work had been taken on. The crown prince was left speechless at the desolate sight of the killing fields, and the scenes of devastation, that unfolded before his eyes. The graves of the fallen soldiers were still makeshift crosses and headstones, and the improvised layout of the cemeteries presented a forlorn outlook. He had included this tour of the battlefields of Flanders at the suggestion of Britain's King George V, who had advised him to go and see the site of the 'Ypres salient' and its environs. The crown prince did not fail to send a telegram to George V to convey to him the depth of his emotions

at the sights of utter destruction. Allegedly, the British monarch was delighted to learn that his Japanese guest had followed his suggestion.

On the fourteenth of June the Japanese party went for a goodwill visit to the port City of Antwerp. Since 1898 Antwerp was a port of call for Nippon Yūsen Kaisha (Japan Transportation Company, N.Y.K.) vessels. Miyako shōkai, a so-called ship chandler, had set up business in Antwerp in 1919. There was a tiny community of Japanese staying or residing in and around the port of Antwerp. When Crown Prince Hirohito's party made a tour of the harbour on a small steamer, it was saluted by the crew of two Japanese ships anchored in the harbour and dressed for the occasion, hailing 'banzai' as the sightseers sailed by.

In the afternoon the party returned to Brussels to attend a reception organised by the Société d'Etudes Belgo-Japonaises, whose president was Baron Con-



State photo of Crown Prince Hirohito. Frontpage of Le Patriote Illustré of 12 June 1921.

stant Goffinet. This being the last event before his departure from Belgium, the crown prince went to say goodbye to the Belgian royal family, before attending a

farewell banquet in his honour at Hotel Astoria.

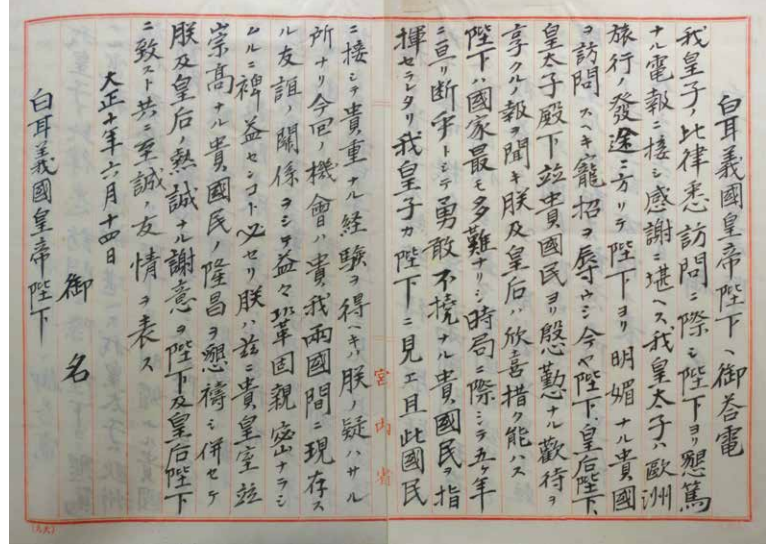
The following morning the party left for a state visit to the Netherlands, not a war ally, for the country had remained neutral, but a country with a longstanding relationship with Japan, it being the one European country to have entertained relations with Japan during much of the Edo period (1600-1868).

On the twentieth of June the party left the Netherlands en route for France. Taking the train from The Hague, they were greeted at the Dutch Belgian border by a Belgian welcoming committee, which included Lieutenant-General Biebuyck, Major-General Raoul Pontus and Charles Bastin, Consul General of Belgium in Yokohama from 1907 to 1917, as well as Ambassador Adachi. They accompanied the Japanese visitors on an official train to Louvain, making a brief stop en route at Mechelen, to allow Cardinal Désiré Joseph Mercier to board the train and join the visitors. The short visit to Louvain was laden with the symbolism of a pilgrimage to a site of martyrdom. The city was still in the initial phase of reconstruction, the ruins were still everywhere, notably the ruins of the burnt-out library of the university, where, judging from contemporary photographs, they had just finished clearing the rubble. The crown prince was guided around by Cardinal Mercier and Rector Ladeuze. The destruction of the university library and its contents had raised a loud and indignant outcry throughout the world of learning. At the time of the visit, an international reconstruction initiative known as the *Oeuvre Internationale de Louvain* was gathering momentum. The crown prince was, as always, accompanied by his personal aide

Yamamoto Shinjirō. During his former stay at the Vatican Yamamoto had become friends with Mgr. Simon Deploige (1868-1927), now commissioner-general of 'Le Comité International pour la restauration de l'Université de Louvain.' Deploige now insisted with Yamamoto that he would throw his full weight into an effort to set up a national committee in Japan, which would be charged with defining and implementing Japan's contribution toward the reconstruction of the Louvain university library and the restitution of its holdings.

The visit by the Japanese crown prince to the ruin of the Louvain university library no doubt marked an important step towards cementing Japan's commitment to join the *Oeuvre Internationale de Louvain*. Thanks to the efforts of ambassador Adachi and Yamamoto, a national committee was indeed set up in 1922, which in due time decided to make an impressive donation of precious books, manuscripts, reproductions and art objects as its share in the reconstruction effort.

After his return to Japan, and when the plan of the donation was taking shape, the by now Prince-Regent Hirohito, joined in the effort by donating nineteen titles in 301 volumes, as well as "an album," from the library of the Imperial Household, in addition to a porcelain flower vase by Seifū Yohei III 清風与平三代 (1851-1914), a potter from Kyoto, and a gift of 10,000 yen from the emperor. The books donated included fine editions of the Six National Histories, including *Nihonshoki* 日本書紀, *Shoku Nihongi* 続日本紀, *Nihon Kōki* 日本後紀, and other important historical and literary works, both printed editions and manuscripts,



Telegramme from the Taishō emperor to King Albert thanking the king for the invitation extended to the Crown Prince to visit Belgium, dated 14 June 1921. Gaikō shiryō kan 外交資料館, Kōtaishi gotoō 皇太御渡欧 Hakkoku go-hōmon no bu 白国御訪問之部.



Where I learnt to love learning

Disa, BSB alumna, Cambridge University

as well as a few Meiji era publications.³ Shortly before noon the crown prince and his retinue once again boarded the train in the direction of Liège. They got off at Ans for a brief visit to the fortification of Loncin. This was one of a ring of fortifications around Liège, at 45 km from the former German border. At the time of the German invasion, it had been destroyed by a direct hit on the powder magazine, killing instantly hundreds of Belgian defenders. Dumfounded by the sheer scale of destruction, the visitors travelled on to the city centre of Liège, for a courtesy call to the major and a crowd of cheering citizens. Here they boarded a French train, which took them to the French capital.

Crown Prince Hirohito's visit to Belgium was both a pilgrimage to some of the ruins of the most destructive conflict Europe had ever witnessed, and an appeal to put Japanese-Belgian, and by extension Japanese-European relations on a new footing. More specifically, it marked the beginning of a new era in Belgium's relationship with Japan, in the sense that Japan as a political, economic and cultural factor shed much of its former abstract and vague image, becoming a much more tangible and concrete existence. Contacts between the two countries grew in intensity and exchanges between their citizens grew in frequency, a tendency that was equally visible in the academic and scientific fields, as witnessed by the donation of the Japanese book collection.⁴

- [1] Fumihiko Kurosawa. "The Mutual Elevation of Diplomatic Status from 'Legation' to 'Embassy.'" In W.F. Vande Walle ed. *Japan & Belgium: Four Centuries of Exchange*. Brussels: Commissioners-General of the Belgian Government at the Universal Exposition of Aichi 2005, Japan, 2005, p. 234-235.
- [2] For more details, see: Aleks Deseyne red. *Alfred Bastien en het IJzerpanorama* (Tentoonstellingscatalogus: Memoriaal Prins Karel, Raversijde). Brugge: Provincie West-Vlaanderen, 2001.
- [3] As transpires from files in the Department for Archives and Mausolea (shoryōbu 書陵部) of the present Imperial Household Agency (Kunaichō 宮内庁).
- [4] This account is largely based on Kunaichō 宮内庁. *Shōwa Tennō jitsuroku* 昭和天皇実録. Vol. 3. Tokyo: Tōkyō Shoseki, 2015, pp. 289-308, and pp. 319-320. For a detailed account in English, see David De Cooman. "Crown Prince Hirohito's Visit to Belgium." In W.F. Vande Walle ed. David De Cooman ass. ed. *Japan & Belgium: An Itinerary of Mutual Inspiration*. Tiel: Lannoo, 2016, p. 129-145.



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LAUNCH OF THE MODERNISATION WORKS AT KANSAI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN OSAKA

VINCI Airports and its partner ORIX, concession owners of Kansai international airport, launched the modernisation works of the airport terminal 1 on 28 May, 2021, the largest works programme since the airport was opened in 1994.

In line with Japan's tourism strategy and economic development of the Kansai region, the works continue and accelerate the modernisation of the Kansai airports, initiated from the start of the concession in 2016. The goal is to create more capacity and improve the passenger experience without building a new terminal – an approach based on optimising existing spaces that fits with VINCI Airports' environmental objectives.

The works will involve enlarging and completely renovating the airport's international passenger journey: security controls, boarding, departures, retail spaces and arrivals. The new journey

will showcase the architecture of the building designed by Renzo Piano, while new technologies will optimise flows and enhance the passenger experience.

*Nicolas Notebaert,
Chief Executive Officer of VINCI Concessions
and President of VINCI Airports, declared:*

“Modernisation of Kansai international airport will act as a source of growth and enhance the attractiveness of the region. As a long-term partner working with the Japanese authorities, VINCI Airports is proud to stand alongside them in this new phase of improvements that will make the airport even more effective, sustainable and innovative.”

Domestic passengers will also benefit from a new, more functional and compact space with a broader range of services and a vast retail offering available right up to the boarding point.

All the renovated spaces will be designed to the most stringent environmental standards for reducing energy consumption and will enhance accessibility and comfort for all users.

The works, supported by the Japanese government, will make the airport the “First Pavilion” of the Osaka-Kansai Japan Expo 2025. They will offer visitors an immersion in a welcoming and experiential space that will showcase Japan's innovation culture, right from their arrival in the country.

Source:
<https://www.aviation24.be/airports/osaka-kansai-kix/launch-of-the-modernisation-works-at-kansai-international-airport-in-osaka/>

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HOSTING THE TOKYO NUTRITION FOR GROWTH SUMMIT 2021

Japan will host the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021 on 7 and 8 December 2021, in order to accelerate global efforts to tackle malnutrition, as the host country of the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games. (Nutrition for Growth Summit (N4G) has been hosted by the host country of Olympic and Paralympic Games.)

At the Summit, stakeholders from various fields will discuss broad issues related to nutrition and the ways to address the challenges, bearing in mind the global trend of malnutrition exacerbated by COVID-19 pandemic as well as

the importance of nutrition in disease prevention and control.

The summit will provide an opportunity for governments, international organizations, businesses and civil society to announce their commitments in response to global, regional and local nutrition challenges. Discussions will be centered around five thematic areas;

1. HEALTH:
Making nutrition integral to Universal Health Coverage,
2. FOOD:
Building food systems that promote safe, healthy diets and nutrition,

3. RESILIENCE:
Addressing malnutrition effectively in fragile and conflict-affected contexts,
4. ACCOUNTABILITY:
Promoting data-driven accountability and
5. FINANCING:
Securing new investments to tackle malnutrition.

Japan will promote the global efforts towards nutrition improvement through the Summit, and contribute to achieving the SDGs.

Source:
https://www.mofa.go.jp/ic/ghp/page22e_000958.html

Looking ahead: Hydrogen and its contribution to

CLIMATE NEUTRALITY IN EUROPE

By Dr Fabrice Stassin, Director Government Affairs Electromobility Projects & Director Government Affairs Northern Europe, France & Japan of Umicore, BJA Board Member and BJA EU Committee Member

As a growing number of countries aim to reach climate neutrality around mid-century, solutions to decarbonize our energy, mobility and industry systems are needed. In the EU, this endeavor mobilizing the public and private sectors, labelled as the Green Deal, is built on multiple strategies and one of them is the hydrogen strategy.

Hydrogen. The word is on everyone’s lips these days. It is a very versatile solution without which we will not reach decarbonization. Hydrogen can for sure act as an energy carrier or a feedstock for the chemical industry, but it can also be used to store intermittent renewable electricity and enable a growing amount of renewable electricity to be incorporated into the grid. Is hydrogen the solution to everything? Of course not, and it should be used for the so-called hard-to-abate (hard-to-decarbonize) applications for which electrification may not be the most appropriate approach. For example in energy-intensive industrial sectors - such as steel making or cement production or also for heavy-duty transport - where batteries are not most practical.

Today hydrogen still represents a negligible fraction of the energy mix. Less than 2% of EU’s energy consumption today and most of this hydrogen is used in the refining sector or to produce fertilizers. The other issue is that 95+% of that hydrogen is made from fossil fuels and leads to significant carbon dioxide emissions. So, hydrogen is a solution to decarbonize the energy, mobility and industry systems but the challenge is that first we need to decarbonize its very production. Still starting from fossil fuels, the emitted carbon dioxide can be captured and either stored or converted chemically. This is called blue hydrogen and it will be a solution for the short-term to produce the hydro-

gen quantity needed to scale up its use. Next to the transitional solution of blue hydrogen, comes green hydrogen. Green hydrogen is produced by electrolysis via an electric current of water into oxygen on one side and hydrogen on the other side. Provided the electricity used is renewable, the produced hydrogen can be called renewable or green.

Green hydrogen is the solution the European Union is backing as a major tool to decarbonize Europe. However green hydrogen does not come cheap and tremendous efforts are still needed to scale up its produc-

tion, drive down the costs and develop its many uses. To give green hydrogen a boost, the European Union has therefore set up its hydrogen strategy published in summer 2020 and it is now being rolled out. The EU’s economic recovery plan ‘Next Generation EU’ also supports this strategy and recognized hydrogen as an investment priority to boost economic growth and resilience, create local jobs and consolidate EU’s global technology leadership in the field.

The strategy consists of three main phases that will lead to the construction of the European hydrogen eco-system:

Figure 1: The many uses of hydrogen in a decarbonized economy (source: Hydrogen Council)

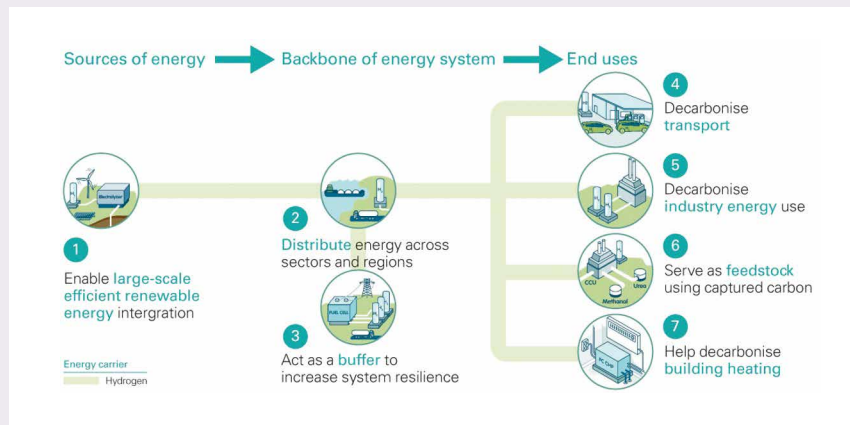


Figure 2: The main colours of hydrogen (SMR stands for steam methane reforming) (source: International Renewable Energy Agency)

| Color | GREY HYDROGEN | BLUE HYDROGEN | GREEN HYDROGEN |
|---------|---------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Process | SMR or gasification | SMR or gasification with carbon capture (85-95%) | Electrolysis |
| Source | Methane or coal | Methane or coal | Renewable electricity |

“I believe that water will one day be employed as fuel, that hydrogen and oxygen which constitute it, used singly or together, will furnish an inexhaustible source of heat and light, of an intensity of which coal is not capable”

Jules Verne, The Mysterious Island, 1874

- › From now to 2024, the EU will support the installation of at least 6GW of green hydrogen electrolyzers in the EU, and the production of up to 1 million ton of green hydrogen
- › From 2025 to 2030, hydrogen needs to become an intrinsic part of Europe’s integrated energy system, with at least 40GW of green hydrogen electrolyzers and the production of up to 10 million tons of green hydrogen in the EU
- › From 2030 onwards, green hydrogen will be deployed at a large scale across all hard-to-decarbonise sectors

Implementing the EU’s hydrogen strategy will require a toolbox of policies aiming at promoting hydrogen in Europe. Next to boosting demand for hydrogen in industrial applications and mobility technologies, the supply of hydrogen will need to be scaled up and decarbonized. This will clearly require a supportive European framework, well-functioning markets and incentives, clear rules to define and certify green hydrogen, a logistical network over Europe and last but not least a dedicated infrastructure connecting supply and demand points. The toolbox is now being developed in Brussels, among others as part of the EU’s ‘Fit for 55’ package under the Green Deal, consisting of revisions and initiatives to enable EU’s climate target of reducing greenhouse gases by 55% by 2030.

Alongside the EU hydrogen strategy, the European Clean Hydrogen Alliance was also launched by the European Commission as part of the new industrial strategy for Europe to compete globally and develop its open strategic autonomy. The alliance brings together industry, national and local public authorities, financing institutions to build a robust pipeline of investments to deploy massively hydrogen technologies in Europe by 2030.

As it has been the case in the previous European programme for funding re-

search & innovation (Horizon 2020), the European Commission will again fund the development of hydrogen technologies in the new programme for funding called Horizon Europe. All EU-funded projects will fall under the umbrella of the fuel cells and hydrogen joint undertaking which is a public private partnership set up by the European Commission and the private sector to define an ambitious innovation roadmap, fund the research work and bring more cost competitive, performant and sustainable hydrogen technologies to the market.

There is thus still a long road ahead for hydrogen technologies to be scaled up and fully deployed to decarbonize our economy. The challenge is not a European one but a global one. In that respect international collaboration with Japan in the field of hydrogen will also be embraced in the frame of the EU – Japan Green Alliance, building on the great talent of European and Japanese researchers and the industry.

Hydrogen is part of our decarbonized future. Let us do our best ... *がんばりましょう!*



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AGC SELECTED TO DELIVER THIRD COATER FOR THE LARGE MIRRORS OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST TELESCOPE

The European Southern Observatory (ESO) and AGC Glass Europe, with its business unit AGC Plasma Technology Solutions, have signed a second contract to deliver a coater specially equipped for the large mirrors (M2, M3, M4 and M5) of the world's largest telescope(1).

The ESO telescope will be installed in the Atacama Desert (Chilean Andes) at Cerro Armazones (3,046 m) equipped with a gigantic 39-meter segmented primary mirror and additional 4-meter wide large mirrors. The telescope has the purpose to acquire scientific data to study the universe and through specific observations address certain unsolved problems of fundamental physics, study exoplanets and investigate other objects and phenomena across the universe.

In 2018 AGC was already selected to assemble and install the two magnetron sputtering coaters(2) for the primary mirror segments of the Extremely Large Telescope (ELT). The third coater is for the additional 4-meter wide mirrors. The magnetron sputtering coaters are important to maintain the performance of the telescope optics. It is necessary to have the coaters on site for ESO to be able to re-coat the mirror segments regularly with a protected silver layer stack.

The telescope's location in the Chilean desert knows harsh climate conditions, such as sandstorms, that affect the silver layers of the mirrors, therefore regular recoating is required. The newly ordered coater will be installed in the dedicated section of the telescope's technical facility on the Paranal observatory site in Chile within 32 months.

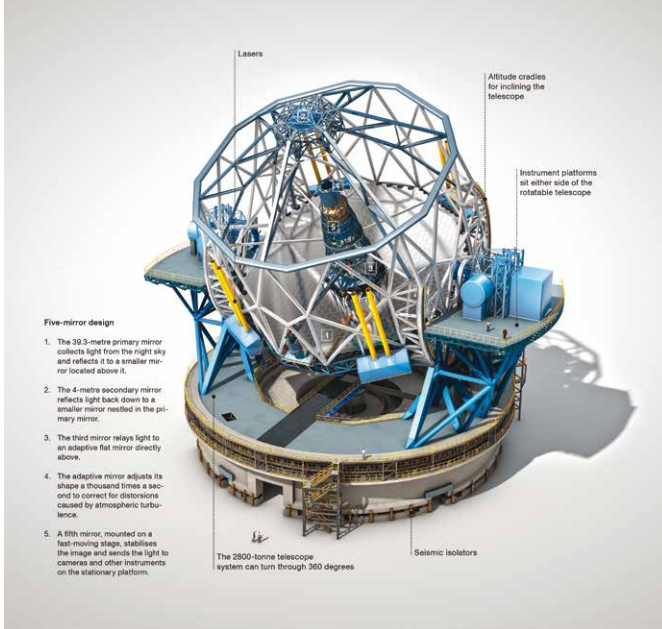
*Patrick Van Bortel,
VP Industrial & New Businesses of AGC
Glass Europe comments:*

"It is a great honour to be selected again by the European Southern Observatory for this ELT Large Coating Plant. The coating plant for the segments of the primary mirror, which is also supplied by the team of AGC Plasma Technology Solutions, has arrived in Chile and is ready for on-site assembly. The coating plant that is now ordered by ESO will be used for coating the 4-meter wide convex secondary mirror and concave tertiary mirror, as well as the fourth and fifth mirror. That implicates that all large area mirrors of the ELT will be manufactured with coating equipment supplied by AGC".

The uniformity control of the highly reflective coating over the entire surface of the 4-meter wide mirrors is a real challenge for this project. AGC is proposing a technical solution by including an Online Shimmable Magnet Bar technology(3) in the cathodes that allows superior thickness control of the deposited thin layers. The teams of AGC Plasma Technology Solutions in Gosselies, Belgium and in Lauenförde, Germany are acknowledged for their expertise and know-how in building custom-designed plasma coating equipment.

1. More info on the world's largest telescope on <https://elt.eso.org/>
2. See the presentation about the coating plant for M1, presented at the SPIE conference, on YouTube
3. Online Shimmable Magnet Bar Technology (iOSMB): The working principle of iOSMB technology is a magnet bar which consists of a series of individual magnets known as yokes. Each individual yoke can be positioned in height relative to the target surface with motors controlled by integrated electronics. The independent control of each individual yoke enables locally precise control of the magnetic field strength along the entire cathode length. This allows users unprec-





edented control of coating thickness uniformity on large area substrates and curved objects.

AGC Glass Europe, a European leader in flat glass

Based in Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium), AGC Glass Europe produces, processes and markets flat glass for the construction industry (external glazing and interior decoration), car manufacture and other industrial sectors (transport, solar power and high-tech). It is the European branch of AGC, the world’s leading producer of flat glass. It has over 100 sites throughout Europe, from Spain to Russia,

and employs around 15,500 employees.

More information on www.agc-glass.eu (corporate site), www.agc-yourglass.com (glass for the construction industry) and www.agc-automotive.com (for the automotive industry).

AGC Plasma Technology Solutions

AGC Glass Europe entered a new field of business activity by offering its vacuum coating technology to a broad range of industries outside the glass world. Visit the website www.agc-plasma.com to learn more about the equipment and services offered by AGC Plasma Technol-

ogy Solutions.

ESO, the European Southern Observatory

ESO is the foremost intergovernmental astronomy organisation in Europe and the world's most productive astronomical observatory. It provides state-of-the-art research facilities to astronomers and is preparing to build the largest telescope in the world in Chile. ESO employs around 700 staff members. More info on www.eso.org

Source: <https://www.agc-glass.eu/en/news/press-release/agc-selected-deliver-third-coater-large-mirrors-worlds-largest-telescope>



A ROYAL VISIT TO ANA

On 10 June 2021, All Nippon Airways (ANA), Japan's largest and 5-Star airline for eight consecutive years, received the honour of welcoming His Majesty King Philippe of Belgium to view ANA’s cargo handling and loading facilities at Brussels Airport.

King Philippe visited the ANA Aircraft airside to see the continued efforts to safely transport pharmaceutical and medical materials to Japan and around the world. During his visit, King Philippe witnessed the loading of medical freight onto the air-

craft which operated as a cargo-only flight using one of ANA’s passenger B787-9 Dreamliner aircraft.

“We are very honored at King Philippe's recognition of our cargo facilities, excellence in service and of our positive contributions made throughout this Covid-19 pandemic”, said Keiichi Ueda, General Manager of ANA Brussels Office.

Source: ANA

news from the members

FLEMISH EXPERTISE CENTRES JOIN FORCES WITH INDUSTRY TO PUSH GREEN HYDROGEN PRODUCTION FORWARD

On May 28, 2021, Flemish research centres imec and VITO (both partners in EnergyVille), together with industrial pioneers Bekaert, Colruyt Group, DEME and John Cockerill announced that they are joining forces to invest in the production of green hydrogen. Under the flag of Hyve, the consortium aims at a cost-efficient and sustainable production of hydrogen at gigawatt level. Hyve

“Colruyt Group has been producing its own green hydrogen for about ten years. Three years ago we opened the very first fully integrated public hydrogen filling station in Europe. In the coming months, four more public hydrogen filling stations will be equipped. Recently, our group put the first 44-ton hydrogen-powered electric heavy-duty truck in Europe on the roads. We clearly believe in hydrogen technology as a promising zero-emission solution for transport and logistics and are committed to invest in innovative hydrogen applications.

We are convinced that with our partners in a strategic cooperation for the development of a new promising hydrogen electrolysis component, we can take important steps towards a more sustainable mobility and energy supply”, says Jef Colruyt, CEO at Colruyt Group.

will put the Flemish region in the driver seat for the deployment of a hydrogen economy and the transition towards a carbon neutral industry in Europe.

The EU’s commitment to reaching climate neutrality by 2050, as part of Europe’s Green Deal, will only be reached

when we drastically transform our energy system. Within the Green Deal, hydrogen technology is considered es-

“Bekaert has a commitment to create green and sustainable solutions. Therefore, we look forward to work closely with the consortium partners and develop the building blocks for this electrolysis technology of the future, fully consistent with our ‘better together’ aspiration. We are committed to delivering long-term value to all our stakeholders and as such, create sustainable business partnerships. Like the one of this consortium”, says Oswald Schmid, CEO at Bekaert.

sential in the energy transition towards a carbon neutral society. Especially in the chemical industry, the steel and cement industry, and in heavy duty transport, green hydrogen is considered key in decarbonisation. Today, the chemical industry depends on grey

“In line with its vision to provide solutions for a sustainable future, DEME is proud to participate in Hyve, a project in which partners along the value chain jointly develop a novel green hydrogen technology. This initiative complements and reinforces DEME’s ongoing efforts towards solving global challenges, like reduction of CO emissions, and is fully aligned with its strategic objectives”, says Luc Vandenbulcke, CEO at DEME Group.

hydrogen, produced by steam reforming. Unfortunately, this process involves the emission of large quantities of CO₂. Green hydrogen, on the other hand, is produced through the electrolysis of water using renewable energy. To make green hydrogen competitive, the price of green electricity should further decrease, electrolyzers should be made more cost-efficient and the economy of scale should do its trick lowering the production costs.

“John Cockerill is very pleased to partner with renowned research centres and major Belgian industrial players on this innovative project. Thanks to our position as world leader in the manufacture of high-capacity electrolyzers and our expertise in the field of hydrogen, we can put our know-how at the service of improving performance to make this project an innovative and iconic success in decarbonizing industry”, says Jean-Luc Maurange, CEO of the John Cockerill Group.

The Hyve consortium brings together players across the value chain to achieve this ambitious goal, merging expertise in developing new components for electrolysis, with material suppliers, integration companies that will integrate the new components into their electrolyzers, and companies that will use this innovative infrastructure to generate green hydrogen.

Flemish research centres imec and VITO (both partners in EnergyVille) will leverage their knowledge to boost the efficiency of the electrolysis-technology.

news from the members

“Sustainable development is in VITO’s DNA. We focus on a systems approach, paying attention to the whole techno-economic value chain. That is the best way to approach the complex problems of the energy transition. We do this together with our EnergyVille partners and with the necessary focus on industrial applicability. Hyve is a striking example of such collaboration and constitutes an important step for the research on green hydrogen in Flanders”, says Dirk Fransaer, managing director at VITO.

Bekaert, supplier of Metallic Porous Transport Layers for electrolysis, will supply the appropriate materials. John Cockerill, world leader in the production of alkaline electrolyzers, will integrate the results into its production. DEME, worldwide leader in dredging and offshore energy services, aims at using the novel electrolyzers to convert wind and solar energy into green hydrogen and derived green products (‘e-fuels’). Through the ‘Hypor®’-concept, DEME aims to import cheap green hydrogen products into Europe, complementary to local European production. Retailer Colruyt Group will support research applications for sustainable transport. Colruyt Group is already running a hydrogen filling station, testing hydrogen-powered forklifts as well as the first heavy-duty trucks, collaborating on a green hydrogen plant in Zeebrugge through the energy holding company Virya Energy and is exploring e-fuels via Dats24.

“As a world-renowned research centre in nanoelectronics and digital technology, we believe that technology is key in realizing a sustainable society and we are committed to leverage our expertise to enable this. Our ‘power-to-molecules’ program, investigating how CO can be converted into valuable molecules for industry, points the way towards a carbon-neutral society”, says Luc Van den hove, CEO at imec. “Within Hyve, imec and VITO combine their knowledge and transfer it to an ambitious, large-scale innovation project to make Flanders a frontrunner in green hydrogen.”

Imec’s expertise in solid state electrolytes, electrode surfaces, and process technology at nanoscale is combined with VITO’s expertise in membranes, catalysis, and system integration.

Source:
<https://www.imec-int.com/en/press/flemish-expertise-centres-join-forces-industry-push-green-hydrogen-production-forward>



IN MEMORIAM DR JOHAN VAN ZYL

It is with deep sorrow that we inform the passing away of Dr Johan van Zyl, former CEO & President of Toyota Motor Europe and former BJA Board Member, end of July 2021.

We will always remember Dr van Zyl as a very dedicated, humble and gentle person, who has supported us warmly and closely during his tenure at TME and the BJA. The BJA extends to the wife of Dr van Zyl, his children and family our deepest condolences.

Dr van Zyl began his career with Toyota in 1993, when he was appointed Director of Vehicle Sales & Dealer Network for Toyota South Africa (TSA). He was promoted to the role of President and COO of TSA in 2002, before becoming President and CEO in 2003. In June 2009, Dr van Zyl was appointed a Managing Officer of Toyota Motor Corporation (TMC) and became CEO of the Africa Region in April 2013. In 2015, he took on the role of President and CEO of Toyota Motor Europe (TME) and became a Senior Managing Officer of TMC in April 2017. Dr van Zyl retired from TME at the end of March, but remained as Chairman of TSA on his return to South Africa.

Glimpses of far-off places through translated fiction

By Tamara Latham Sprinkle, BJA Editorial and Friendship Committee Member

In recent years, there has been an explosion of Japanese literature in translation across the world. If you peruse the shelves at the average bookstore in Belgium—whether in French, Dutch, or English—you're guaranteed to find multiple titles by Haruki Murakami, and perhaps even a display of recent fiction translated from Japanese.

In addition to the many Murakami novels, the type of stories told and authors in translation have significantly diversified, with many prominent female authors like Mieko Kawakami and Sayaka Murata. This popularity of modern Japanese literature abroad was paved by the success of Murakami's work and facilitated by the increased interest in Japan through pop culture, manga, anime, and games. Foreign literature, after all, has the unique appeal of revealing aspects of another culture through the lens of the author's philosophy and creativity, and filtered by the translator's interpretation of that work. It's that latter filter and the unique writing styles of the translators themselves that make reading the same novel hit slightly different in Japanese, Dutch, French, English, or any other language.

Whether you want to learn more about Japan or to find out what these novels sound like in another language, there is a wealth of recent literature to choose from allowing you to explore different literary worlds and perspectives.

With Sayaka Murata's *Earthlings*, translated by Ginny Takemori (in Dutch, *Aardbewoners* translated by Luk van Haute and in French, *Les Terriens* translated by Mathilde Tamae-Bouhon), the reader views the wild rural Akishina Mountains in Nagano Prefecture and constraining suburban life in Chiba through the unique eyes of the protagonist, Natsuki, a self-proclaimed magician. Her close relationship with her cousin, Yuu, a self-proclaimed alien, is deemed abnormal by her family who in turn separate the two and closely monitor every aspect of her life as she grows up. As an adult, she has entered a contractual asexual marriage with a stranger sharing her unique perceptions of reality who she met online to escape the control of her family. However, as the demons of her past catch up to her, she leaves the suburb for her grandparents' home in the mountains where she reunites with her cousin and embarks on a cosmic flight that shatters every taboo. Follow along for this darkly intense ride questioning every social norm in a transgressive manner.

With Toshikazu Kawaguchi's *Before the Coffee Gets Cold*, translated by Geoffrey Trousselot (in Dutch, *Voordat de koffie koud wordt* translated by Maarten Liebrechts, and in French, *Tant que le café est encore chaud* translated by Miyako Remondet), the reader is transported to a historic, art deco café with broken grandfather clocks in a small back alleyway in Tokyo. We follow the close-knit staff of this unusual place and the patrons frequenting the shop wanting to take advantage of

the unique experience it offers—namely, time travel. The workaholic Fumiko wants to see her boyfriend before they broke up, the nurse Kohtake wants to speak to her husband before his Alzheimer's progressed to the point that he forgot who she was, the free-spirited Hirai wants to speak to her deceased sister who she had avoided in life, and the sickly Kei wants to meet the daughter she won't live long enough to raise. However, there are some rules: no matter what they do the past will not change, and they have to go back to the present before the coffee gets cold. This sentimental and life-affirming tale shows how the smallest moments can be life changing.

With Haruki Murakami's *First Person Singular*, translated by Philip Gabriel (in Dutch, *Eerste persoon enkelvoud* translated by Elbrich Fennema), the reader goes on a journey throughout Japan—to an abandoned concert hall in a Kobe mountain, a dinky apartment in Asagaya within Tokyo, the international Jazz scene, Kobe in the 1960s, a hot-springs in Gunma prefecture, a sophisticated classical music hall in Tokyo, the baseball parks: Koshien baseball stadium in Kobe and Jingu stadium in Tokyo, and a neighborhood bar in Tokyo. Each vignette is imbued with a sense of nostalgia and loneliness, depicting the oft surreal experiences of this narrator, who may or may not be the author, and the impenetrable chasm between him and the many people—and one talking monkey—he had a short but memorable encounter with and who he reminisces over as an old man.

With Mieko Kawakami's *Breast and Eggs* translated by Sam Bett and David Boyd (in French, *Seins et Oeufs* translated by Patrick Honoré), the reader experiences the sweltering summer in a poor suburb of Tokyo and Osaka along with Natsuko, a 30-year-old struggling writer Natsuko, Makiko, her older sister and an ageing hostess, and Midoriko, Makiko's daughter who has stopped speaking to her mother. That summer, Makiko and Midoriko leave Osaka to visit Natsuko's rundown apartment in Tokyo where the three women slowly get closer, sharing their anxieties. Eight years later, having found moderate success as a writer, Natsuko finds herself reminiscing about that summer in Tokyo and her childhood in Osaka, as she grapples with her growing desire to have a child despite being unable to have a partner. She confronts existential questions about what makes a family, the ethics of having children, and what it means to be a woman in modern Japanese society, in this unforgettable and moving story.

During the last year when traveling has been restrained, literature is a freeing refuge, taking you by the hand to transport you to different places and expose you to a diversity of stances and ideas. Even as things continue to open and we go back to some semblance of normal, I encourage you to take a gander at the many works of Japanese fiction at your fingertips.

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

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