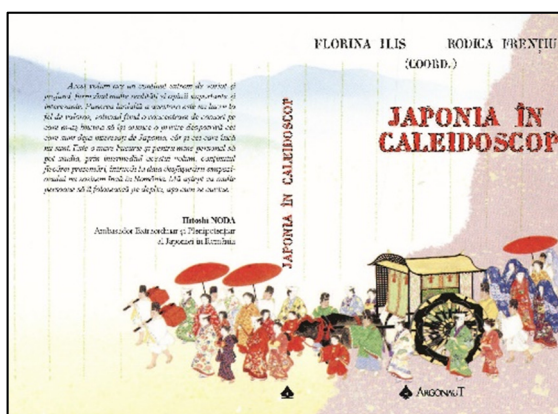


BOOKS

FLORINA ILIS, RODICA FRENȚIU (COORD.), JAPONIA ÎN CALEIDOSCOP. 20 DE ANI DE STUDII JAPONEZE LA UNIVERSITATEA BABEȘ-BOLYAI. [JAPAN THROUGH A KALEIDOSCOPE. 20 YEARS OF JAPANESE STUDIES AT BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY], CLUJ-NAPOCA, EDITURA ARGONAUT, 2019, 274 P.

Japan has always fascinated the world with its rich history and unique culture. The harmonious coexistence of apparently opposite elements along centuries-old traditions still standing the test of time are just a few of the peculiarities of the Land of the Rising Sun which never cease to amaze.

In order to celebrate two decades of Japanese studies at Babeș-Bolyai University followed by numerous achievements, Prof. Dr. habil. Rodica Frențiu (the head of the department) and Lect. Dr. Florina Ilis organized an International Symposium in November 2018 which gathered people from different academic environments with a mutual passion: Japanese culture and traditions. As a result of the manifestation, the volume entitled *Japonia în caleidoscop. 20 de ani de studii japoneze la Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai* [Japan through a Kaleidoscope. 20 years of Japanese Studies at Babes Bolyai University] was published the following year.



The fascination towards Japanese language, culture and traditions is transposed into words and images throughout the volume, exposing this universe from different angles, through both personal and academic experiences. Similar to the function of the optical instrument, *kaleidoscope*, it reflects the many facets of Japanese culture and traditions in different lights and colors, thus suggesting the uniqueness of each experience. The volume is divided into two main sections, *Români în Japonia – experiența culturii japoneze* [Romanians in Japan – experiencing Japanese culture] and *Centrul de studii japoneze Sembazuru. Noi perspective de cercetare* [The Sembazuru Japanese Studies Center. New research perspectives]. From Japanese management model (*kaizen*) to scientific developments, martial arts (aikido), architecture or calligraphy, the first part is constructed around personal experiences of Romanians discovering or rediscover-

ing the mysteries of Japan, whilst the second one is devoted to current and future trends in Japanese studies.

In *Kaizen – a Bridge that Connects Japan and Romania*, Julien Bratu, country manager at Kaizen Institute Romania and Andrei Răduțu, consultant and manager at Kaizen Romania emphasize the importance of continuous improvement on both personal and business level. The authors argue that the key to a successful bilateral relationship between Romania and Japan is to learn and live in *kaizen* spirit, thus to “change for the better”. Cristina Dobrotă, lecturer at the Faculty of Biology and Geology describes her personal experiences in *Japan - Retrospective Snapshots* and focuses on the connection between the idea of “static” and “dynamic” in the Japanese culture. In *Aikido*, the president of the Aikido Foundation in Romania, Dorin Marchiș draws attention to the capacity to evolve and create a better world through sports. For Dorin Marchiș, aikido is a „moving meditation”. Following, Arnella Nechita-Rotta, executive director at Sunimprof Rottaprint describes in her paper, *Diplomacy: 10-18 April 2018*, the journey of 23 Romanians eager to discover Japan through cultural and educational activities. The “cultural-diplomatic mission” aimed to reinforce the bilateral relationship between the two countries and to offer good practice examples to the young generations. In the following contribution entitled *Japan, Snapshots on the Architect's Retina*, one of the most important Romanian architects, Șerban Țigănaș invites the reader to explore Japan through its rich architectural heritage and pinpoints the important role of etiquette and order in the Japanese society. Moving to another visual art, in *A mo-*

ment's Memory: Notes from a Diary of Japanese Calligraphy, Rodica Frențiu, highly appreciated calligraphy master, defines destiny and the idea of finding your inner peach through *shodō* (Japanese calligraphy). Calligraphy works are not mere representations of objects through ideograms or pictograms, but the reflection of the mind, spirit and soul of the artist. Rodica Frențiu associates her first encounter with this centuries old art form with a journey-of-becoming. Like many Japanese arts, calligraphy can be perceived as an extension of the soul.

The second part of the volume is dedicated to Japanese language and culture studies and focuses on new research perspectives in the field. Starting with traditional Japanese poetry (*haiku*) [Florina Ilis, *Matsuo Bashō and the New Poetics of the Impersonal in the Art of the Haiku*], artistic writing (*shodō*) [Ciliana Tudorică, *Learning Kanji Ideograms*] and key concepts of pop-culture [Oana-Maria Bîrlea, *Kawaii – Symbolic Repertoire of Japanese Advertising discourse*; Ioana Toșu, *The Role of Yakuwarigo in the Study of Japanese Language*], the members of the Sembazuru Japanese Studies Center have presented their research interest and objectives revealing different perspectives on Japanese worldview.

The collective volume, *Japonia în caleidoscop. 20 de ani de studii japoneze la Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai* [Japan through a Kaleidoscope. 20 years of Japanese Studies at Babes Bolyai University] is not only a testimony of the Romanian fascination towards Japanese culture and traditions, but it is also a proof of two decades of efforts in promoting Japanese language, culture and values in Romania.

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