

Switzerland and the Swiss in Japanese textbooks

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SWITZERLAND AND THE SWISS IN JAPANESE TEXTBOOKS

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Abstract

Although information on Switzerland and the Swiss in Japanese textbooks has increased somewhat in the past few years, it is still scant, cursory and lacking in cohesion. The present investigation of a sample of 52 Japanese textbooks indicates that Switzerland is presented to Japanese students as a small, idyllic, peaceful and prosperous country with a long history. Alpine dairy farming, the landscape and scenery, social harmony in a multilingual and multi-ethnic environment, and the political system are presented as unique features of Switzerland. However, only few Swiss personalities are mentioned. Information about Switzerland in Japanese textbooks thus conveys a positive, albeit somewhat one-sided image, with a distinct bias towards rural Switzerland and the Alpine economy.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Scope of the Survey

An investigation of textbook content does not necessarily provide an indication of what students know at the end of their school career. There is no way of knowing how many students read the whole book, how many skipped parts of it and how many virtually ignored it. Textbook content may, however, be regarded as the lowest common denominator of what is regarded as “essential or desirable knowledge” for students. Content and the way it is presented may at times also indicate what is deemed politically feasible or desirable. Where there are a lot of publishing companies competing to sell their products to schools – as is the case in Japan – the choice of what to include in a textbook also mirrors teachers’ and parents’ expectations.

This investigation sets out to supply answers to the question as to which aspects of Switzerland are generally considered by Japanese textbook authors

to be of sufficient importance to be presented to Japanese students. How often and in how much detail is Switzerland mentioned? Where do Japanese textbooks see Switzerland's contribution to world civilization? Does the information in textbooks help students acquire a balanced impression of Switzerland? Information about Switzerland conveyed in or omitted from the textbooks will give us a fair impression of how the image of Switzerland is being shaped and propagated in Japan and may therefore be taken as fairly indicative of the popular perception of Switzerland in Japan.

1.2 How significant are the results?

In order to answer these questions, a sample of 52 textbooks was scanned for references to Switzerland.¹ 18 of them are textbooks for primary schools, 15 for secondary schools, and 17 for high schools. The sample includes two textbooks on Switzerland produced by the Japanese School in Zurich, which are used only in Switzerland. Also included in the survey were 4 encyclopedias likely to be used for ready reference by pupils at primary and secondary school level. The textbooks surveyed cover the school subjects of National Language (14), Social Studies (13), History (11) and Geography (8). 8 textbooks are readers for ethics, which are used as supplementary reading material (*fukudokuhon*) since ethics is not a school subject in its own right. The survey of Swiss personalities mentioned in Japanese textbooks also covers textbooks in Natural Sciences. The earliest publication dates back to 1986, the latest being published in 2002. 24% of the material surveyed was published in the year 2000 or later. 70% of the surveyed books were published by the major Japanese publishers of textbooks, and received official approval for use in schools by the Ministry of Education. Textbooks produced by these publishing houses² are regarded as authoritative and are used in schools all over Japan. Valuable additional information about foreign personalities mentioned in Japanese textbooks was provided by the "Learner's Who's Who" (*gakushū jinbutsu jiten*) in the appendix to the

- 1 The Japanese School in Zurich was kind enough to provide me with all the books in use at their school for the education of Japanese students. I am also very grateful to all my acquaintances and former students in Japan, who sent me the textbooks they had used at school.
- 2 Tōkyō shoseki, Teikoku shoin, Mitsumura tosho, Kyōiku shuppan, Shimizu shoin, Yamakawa shuppan and Jikkyō shuppan.

various “Encyclopedias for Children” published by Shōgakukan, which are based on surveys of the full range of textbooks in use in Japan.

2. Information on Switzerland in Japanese textbooks

Switzerland is mentioned in 16 out of the 52 textbooks in the sample, most frequently in geography textbooks (total of 7) followed by social studies textbooks (4), history (4) and ethics (1).

Switzerland’s geographical position in Europe is shown on all detailed maps in primary as well as in secondary school textbooks and atlases.³ Statistical tables regularly list Switzerland among the major nations of the world. Even primary school textbooks feature a section presenting facts and figures for quick reference and comparison such as the capital city of each country, other major cities, population, trade figures, GNP and foreign aid. Here, interested students can learn, for instance, that Berne is the capital of Switzerland⁴ and that Switzerland’s per capita donations to foreign aid in 1998 amounted to 0.33% of GNP, as against Japanese donations of 0.28% of GNP.⁵ Statistics in a 1986 secondary school textbook contain information about total area, population and population density, number of employed in primary, secondary and tertiary sectors, GNP per capita, main products and trade figures with Japan.⁶ If only one Swiss town features on the list of the world’s major cities, it is Zurich.⁷

The Swiss flag is always shown in its correct square size as specified by Swiss law⁸ in lists showing the flags of the world,⁹ at least in textbooks

3 cf. Teikoku henshūbu (1991: 49-50); Gotō (1986: 1-2)

4 Gotō (1986: 121-122)

5 Itō (2002: 285)

6 Gotō (1986: 121-122)

7 *ibid.*: 120; Gotō (1991: 120)

8 “The Swiss Flag has a white cross in a red field; the cross is the same length on all sides and each arm is one-sixth longer than its width. The actual measurements of the arms of the Swiss cross was officially fixed by the Federal Law of 12 December 1889. The official Swiss Flag (as used in the Army, etc.) is square and not rectangular. Only the flag of Swiss vessels is longer (length/width = 2 : 3), as fixed by a decision of the Federal Government of 9 April 1941, and confirmed by the Federal Law of 23 September 1953 concerning maritime shipping under Swiss Flag.” Retrieved 18/03/04 from http://www.eda.admin.ch/tokyo_emb/e/home/polsys.html

approved by the Ministry of Education. The “Geographical Encyclopedia for Children,” on the other hand, explains the origins of the Swiss flag in the 14th century, but shows the rectangular version of the flag with a length/width ratio of 2 : 3, which is allowed only for maritime shipping under the Swiss Flag.¹⁰ In another encyclopedia for children, the Red Cross flag is explained as the “inverse Swiss Flag.”¹¹ The Swiss flag is at times even shown without any reference to Switzerland at all. Thus, in an illustration to a short reading passage about a sports event, the Swiss flag appears besides the Japanese and the German flags, apparently just to indicate that a highly competitive sports event is taking place.¹²

In history textbooks, Switzerland is often simply mentioned in passing. The name of the city of Locarno turns up on the occasion of the Locarno Treaty of 1925¹³ and Geneva frequently appears in history textbooks as host city to the League of Nations.¹⁴ Some textbooks, however, refer to the League of Nations¹⁵ or to the United Nations¹⁶ without specifically naming Geneva.

Detailed presentation in textbooks occurs where textbook authors consider Switzerland to be unique in some way. This epithet appears to apply to the Swiss economy (Alpine dairy farming), to the landscape and scenery (geomorphology, glaciers, Alpine scenery), to social harmony in a multi-lingual and multi-ethnic environment (languages and religions) and to the political system (federalism, direct democracy).

Among foreign personalities portrayed in detail or mentioned briefly in Japanese textbooks, 11 Swiss are included, namely Henri Dunant, the spiritus rector of the International Red Cross, the natural scientist Auguste Piccard (together with his twin-brother Jean and his son Jacques), the author of “Heidi” Johanna Spyri, the novelist Hermann Hesse, the expert in consti-

9 Nakamura, Takahashi (2002: 26); Shirahama (2001: 30); Shōgakukan (1992: 151), Gotō (1991: 1); Gotō (1986: 1)

10 Shōgakukan (1992: 151)

11 Shōgakukan (1993: 185)

12 Kaigo (?a: 70)

13 Egami, Yamamoto, Hayashi, Naruse (2002: 290)

14 Sasayama, Abe, Okuda (2001: 181); Tabe (2002a: 154); Hamashima shoten henshūbu (1992: 147)

15 Miyahara, Kuroha (1991: 277)

16 Nakamura, Nishiwaki, Ōguchi (2002: 154-157)

tutional and international law Carl Hilty, the painter Paul Klee, the reformers Huldrych Zwingli and Jean Calvin and the mathematician Leonhard Euler.

3. Topoi in the presentation of Switzerland

3.1 *“Switzerland is a small country.”*

Some geography textbooks simply use Switzerland as a metaphor for “a very small country,” one that is in fact even smaller than Japan: “Half the size of Hokkaidō, Switzerland is landlocked and has a total population of 7,4 million.”¹⁷ One textbook asks students to compare the size of the four main Japanese islands with that of Austria, Switzerland and Germany.¹⁸ On a comparative map in another textbook, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Singapore are all placed in the Pacific Ocean to the Southwest of Hokkaidō to make students aware of the fact that “one tends to believe that Japan is a small country, whereas in fact it belongs to the larger countries in the world.”¹⁹

3.2 *“Switzerland is an idyllic country.”*

The information on Switzerland contained in the textbook sample makes Switzerland look rather idyllic. In a collection of colour photographs of various countries around the world, Switzerland is represented by a view of archetypal Swiss mountain scenery with the Matterhorn towering above the picturesque village of Zermatt. The caption here says: “Switzerland is a country famous for its many mountains. Many people visit it for sightseeing or for skiing.”²⁰ On a bird’s-eye view of a cross-section of Europe stretching from Hamburg to the Adriatic, Switzerland is depicted as an idyllic garden. Inserted into the landscape are the icons of a cow grazing on the northern slope of the Alps, tall buildings in Basel, the clocktower in Berne, and a watch. On the basis of this information alone, students would probably describe Switzerland as a pastoral country situated somewhere near the Black

17 Yamamoto, Masai (2002: 214)

18 Tabe (2002b: 28)

19 Nakamura, Takahashi (2002: 19)

20 *ibid.*: 26

Forest to the South-East of the Bavarian castle of Neuschwanstein. Another small photograph on the same page shows cattle grazing on the slopes of the Alps. The caption explains that cattle are driven up and down the Alps according to the season.²¹

Generally speaking, the Swiss landscape appears to be given preferential treatment. Thus, a Swiss map²² adorns the cover of one high-school geography textbook²³ and photographs of the Swiss landscape are frequently used to demonstrate geomorphological features of the Alps, one example being when an aerial photo of Interlaken is used to illustrate the form of U-shaped glacial troughs.²⁴ Glacial morphology is explained with other photographs of Swiss landscapes and glaciers²⁵ and even the consequences of global warming are illustrated by a historical painting of the Rhône glacier juxtaposed with a photograph of the same scene today.²⁶ Great care is taken, moreover, to explain the connection between glacial geomorphology and Alpine dairy farming: "In the Swiss Alps, rather than the steep slopes in the U-shaped valleys, the gentle slopes of the region above [the major trough] are used as grazing grounds."²⁷

Ecological problems liable to mar the image of an idyllic small country appear very rarely. On a map showing the extent to which forests are dying in Europe as a result of acid rain, Switzerland is shown to be affected to about the same degree as Germany.²⁸ One map showing the water pollution of the river Rhine suggests that the situation in Switzerland is rather less severe than in neighbouring Germany and in the Netherlands.²⁹ Traffic-problems are hinted at by a photograph of the proverbial traffic-jam on the autobahn leading to the Gotthard tunnel.³⁰

21 Shirahama (2001: 31-32)

22 Swiss Federal Office of Topography, Landeskarte der Schweiz 1:50'000, Blatt Arolla, Nr. 283.

23 Satō, Tanioka (2002)

24 Yamada, Otō, Yamaga (1990: 29)

25 e.g. the Aletsch glacier in Yamamoto, Masai (2002: 75)

26 Hamashima shoten henshūbu (1992: 8)

27 Yamamoto, Masai (2002: 59)

28 Nakamura, Takahashi (2002: 129)

29 Gotō (1991: 38, map 3); Gotō (1986: 38, map 3)

30 Shirahama (2001: 33)

3.3 *“Switzerland is a peaceful country, uniting different languages, cultures and religions.”*

In Japanese textbooks, frequent mention is made of the fact that Switzerland is a multilingual and multiethnic country with different religions. A linguistic map of Europe in a textbook published in 1986 suggests that Switzerland is predominantly inhabited by German-speaking people.³¹ Another textbook, published in 1990, explains that there is no such thing as a Swiss language, but that either German, French or Italian “and other languages” are spoken, and then goes on to show correctly on a map where the various languages are spoken.³² Languages in Switzerland are explained at length in one paragraph of a new geography textbook:

Switzerland is a confederation of 23 Cantons (with an additional 3 half-Cantons). Each of the Cantons has its own language. Every community has the right to decide which of the official languages they want to use. Thus, the peace between the different languages can be relatively well kept.³³

A graph of ethnic groups in Europe in a recently published textbook shows Switzerland to be more or less equally divided between Germanic and Latin ethnic groups,³⁴ while another textbook appears to treat German-speaking Switzerland in a preferential way: “German-speaking Swiss are the most numerous; besides there are French, Italian- and Rumantsch-speaking Swiss.”³⁵

Although it is true that German speakers – with a share of 63.9% of the total population – outnumber speakers of other languages, there are nevertheless as many as 19.5% French speakers and 6.6% Italian speakers, but only 0.5% Rumantsch speakers.³⁶

A map explaining the various annual Christian holidays shows Switzerland to be divided into Protestant and Catholic Cantons.³⁷ When, as is the case in a recent publication, a map shows Switzerland to be a favorite destination for migrant workers from Turkey and the former Yugoslavia,³⁸ it

31 Gotō (1986: 33, map 3)

32 Yamada, Otō, Yamaga (1990: 17)

33 Yamamoto, Masai (2002: 125)

34 Tabe (2002b: 118)

35 Yamamoto, Masai (2002: 214)

36 Bundesamt für Statistik (2002)

37 Nakamura, Takahashi (2002: 126)

38 Tabe (2002b: 117)

would be all the more important to mention the 2.2% Muslim population in Switzerland today. Instead, a new textbook states that “the population is almost equally divided between Catholics and Protestants,” thereby disregarding not only the growing Muslim population but also the 7.4% Jewish Swiss.³⁹

As a multi-ethnic nation, Switzerland is usually named alongside such countries as China, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Israel, Nigeria, former Chekoslovakia, the former Yugoslavia, the former Soviet Union and Canada.⁴⁰ A linguistic map of Switzerland shows the regional distribution of the four official languages, but the accompanying text adds Belgium, Canada, Spain, Singapore, Malaysia as well as all African nations to the category of multilingual countries. In another textbook, a linguistic map of Switzerland is illustrated by a Singapore supermarket with a billboard in English, Malay, Chinese and Tamil.⁴¹ A photograph in another chapter shows a Malaysian newsstand with newspapers in a great variety of different languages.⁴²

3.4 “Switzerland has a long history.”

The chapter on “The establishment of centralistic states in Western Europe” mentions the origins of Switzerland in a short paragraph:

The peasants in the region of Switzerland had since the 13th century started independence movements, defeating several times the ruling power Austria, and reached factual independence by the end of the Middle Ages. This was de facto acknowledged in 1648 (Treaty of Westphalia).⁴³

A small map with the caption “German and Italian region at the end of the 15th century” lists a “free confederation” (*jiyū renpō*) on the territory of present-day Switzerland.⁴⁴ In the chapter dedicated to the Protestant Reformation, historical events in Switzerland are outlined, as well as the basic tenets of the Protestant movement. The exponents of the movement named are Huldrych Zwingli in Zurich and Jean Calvin in Geneva, but explanations focus mainly on Calvin, whose doctrine of predestination “spread widely

39 Bundesamt für Statistik (1997)

40 Yamamoto, Masai (2002: 126)

41 Satō, Tanioka (2002: 134-35)

42 *ibid.*: 251

43 Egami, Yamamoto, Hayashi, Naruse (2002: 139)

44 *ibid.*: 139

among the burghers in the early period of capitalism.”⁴⁵ Another feature of Protestantism mentioned here is the election of elders from the congregation to assist the pastor.⁴⁶ A map shows how the Protestant movement emanating from the city state of Geneva later spread to France, England, Scotland and the Netherlands.⁴⁷ At the same time, a footnote also mentions the activities of the Anabaptists in Switzerland and the fact that their teaching spread to Germany and the Netherlands, adding that they were persecuted by the Catholic and the Protestant church alike “because their belief was regarded as a threat to the state.”⁴⁸

In a discussion on the differences between parliamentary and direct democracy, Switzerland is named as one of the places where the rights associated with direct democracy such as referendum, initiative and recall are exercised. These concepts are said to have been “advocated by Rousseau”⁴⁹ and elaborated by the political philosophers Alexis de Tocqueville and James Bryce.⁵⁰ The textbook then goes on to say that even in modern times direct democracy is alive, albeit in “small-sized communities in the provinces.” Direct democracy is said to be a feature “[...] not only of the ancient Greek polis and the towns of the Middle Ages, but also of American Town Meetings and of the Landsgemeinde (*jūminshūkai*) in each Swiss Canton.”⁵¹

A recently published geography textbook also attaches great importance to the institution of the Landsgemeinde. The two-page article on Switzerland is headed by a photograph of the Landsgemeinde in Sarnen with the caption “Swiss citizens voting by raising their hand.”⁵² After describing the federalistic Swiss political system, in which every Canton has its own constitution and government, the text goes on to explain that in some Cantons in Switzerland “voters exercise their political rights in the form of direct democracy.”⁵³ In fact, the Landsgemeinde in Sarnen, Canton of Obwalden, which is shown on the photograph, was abolished in 1998. At

45 *ibid.*: 160

46 *ibid.*: 160

47 *ibid.*: 159-160

48 Egami, Yamamoto, Hayashi, Naruse (2002: 159, footnote 1)

49 Itō (2002: 133)

50 *ibid.*: 60

51 *ibid.*: 133

52 Yamamoto, Masai (2002: 214)

53 *ibid.*: 214

present (2003), the Landsgemeinde is held once a year in only two Cantons, namely Glarus and Appenzell-Innerrhoden.

3.5 *“Switzerland is politically isolated.”*

Switzerland’s political isolation within Europe is implicitly highlighted in the chapter on Germany in a geography textbook, where there is a detailed discussion on the benefits of membership of the European Union (EU).⁵⁴ A drawing shows the benefits Germany enjoys as a member of the EU, namely the absence of border controls and tariffs, the free flow of capital and labour, student exchange programs and the standardization of electrical appliances. In contrast, a map of the EU and a photograph of the Swiss-German border in Basel, where cars are queuing up on the autobahn to pay the road tax before entering Switzerland, show Switzerland to be isolated.⁵⁵ One textbook, though, hints at possible changes in the near future: “Recently Switzerland has declared its intention to eventually join the EU – a possible turning point for the principle of eternal neutrality.”⁵⁶

One such turning point has already arrived as the Swiss electorate voted in favour of joining the United Nations (UN) in a popular referendum on March 3, 2002. Since Switzerland joined the UN officially on September 9, 2002, the following information in a textbook published in 2002 is therefore already out of date: “Switzerland is not a member of the United Nations, but participates actively in UN organizations such as the ILO or Unicef.”⁵⁷

3.6 *“Switzerland is prosperous” – but why?*

Descriptions of the Swiss economy are characterised by a strong dichotomy between a romanticised image of Alpine dairy farming and the acknowledgement of the fact that Switzerland has one of the highest per capita GNP in the world.

On the one hand, textbooks explain how cattle are moved from the valleys to the Alps during summer; there is even a chart showing the altitudes

54 Nakamura, Takahashi (2002: 119-129)

55 *ibid.*: 127

56 Yamamoto, Masai (2002: 214)

57 Nakamura, Takahashi (2002: 127)

at which cattle graze in summer.⁵⁸ And in a recently published textbook, Switzerland is highlighted in the appendix to the chapter on Germany with a close-up on the story of “Heidi” by Johanna Spyri. A photograph shows cows lying in a lush meadow with huge snow-covered mountains and a village with lots of chalets as a backdrop. A map then indicates where Maienfeld – “the model for the Dörfli [village] in the story of Heidi”⁵⁹ – is situated and the well-known literary figures of Heidi and Peter are used to explain how peasants in the Alpine regions drive cattle and goats to the Maiensäss and the Alps in summer, returning them in autumn to their owners, who live in the villages down in the valley.⁶⁰

On the other hand, textbooks make clear that Switzerland has a positive trade balance with Japan⁶¹ and one of the highest per capita GNP in the world.⁶² Swiss export items mentioned are “watches, pharmaceuticals and gold.”⁶³ Not until the year 2002 does a high-school geography textbook actually attempt to give a comprehensive explanation for Switzerland’s prosperity.⁶⁴ In a paragraph entitled “The wealthiest country on Earth”⁶⁵ the authors point out that the Swiss have achieved one of the highest per capita GNP on earth in spite of the almost total lack of natural resources. The next paragraph, entitled “Industry on a high technological level,” gives the following explanation:

Since there are almost no natural resources, industries with a high added value such as food processing, precision machinery and chemical industry developed in this country.⁶⁶

Dairy farming is said to be widespread, “but since milk in Switzerland is produced too far away from the consumers, it is therefore processed into cheese or butter or – mixed with cocoa – exported as milk chocolate.”⁶⁷ A passage about the Swiss watch industry hints at economic difficulties in the past:

58 Gotō (1991: 37, map 7); Gotō (1986: 37, map 7)

59 Nakamura, Takahashi (2002: 130)

60 *ibid.*: 130

61 Gotō (1986: 121-122); Teikoku henshūbu (1991: 64)

62 Egami, Yamamoto, Hayashi, Naruse (2002: 347)

63 Tabe (2002b: 195)

64 Yamamoto, Masai (2002: 214-215)

65 *ibid.*: 214

66 *ibid.*: 214

67 *ibid.*: 215

For many years, precision machinery industry focussed on the production of watches, but after they had met with fierce competition from the Japanese watch industry, they are now concentrating on luxury watches.⁶⁸

Further Swiss industries include “electric power generator facilities” and “aluminium due to the abundant electricity” as well as “the chemical industry centering around the pharmaceutical industry.”⁶⁹ The article goes on to point out the high technical expertise of small-to-medium-sized enterprises. Big enterprises are said to outsource production abroad while keeping research and development as well as the financial departments in Switzerland. In the last paragraph, entitled “Financial Services and Tourism,” the authors write:

Large amounts of capital flow to Switzerland from all over the world because banks guard their clients’ secrets and because Switzerland enjoys a very stable currency. By reinvesting this capital, banks earn a lot of commission.⁷⁰

As to tourism, the textbook goes on to point out that Switzerland is “blessed with beautiful mountains and lakes and provides very good tourist services with mountain railways and hotels, thus earning large amounts of foreign currency.”⁷¹

4. The Swiss in Japanese Textbooks

Famous personalities are important cornerstones of the self-image of a nation and an important source of national pride. It is therefore in the interest of each nation to count as many famous personalities as possible among its citizens. In Japanese textbooks, Japanese as well as foreign personalities are frequently presented to Japanese students as role-models.

Hardly any mention at all is made of Swiss personalities. Henri Dunant (1828-1910), the spiritus rector of the International Committee of the Red Cross, always makes it onto the list,⁷² as do the reformers Zwingli and Calvin. The Swiss scholar Carl Hilty (1833-1909) was chosen by Japanese

68 *ibid.*: 215

69 *ibid.*: 215

70 *ibid.*: 215

71 *ibid.*: 215

72 Egami, Yamamoto, Hayashi, Naruse (2002: 236)

textbook authors to praise the “joys of professional work” with an adage which is as redolent of Calvinism as it is of *Sekimon Shingaku* philosophy:⁷³

There is no greater joy in life than when one has found the occupation which is most suited to oneself. Those who seek happiness should above all try to find out what this occupation is.⁷⁴

However, the fact that certain artists are Swiss is not always revealed. A sculpture by Alberto Giacometti (1901-1966) adorns the title page to a section on poems without any reference to the artist’s nationality.⁷⁵ Indeed, an enumeration of eminent 19th and 20th century European personalities in the fields of literature and fine arts does not list any Swiss at all.⁷⁶

Problems arise in those cases where individuals have multiple nationalities. Thus, Nobel-prize winner Hermann Hesse (1877-1962) is correctly introduced in the appendix to a translation of one of his short-stories as having been born in Germany and later becoming a naturalized Swiss.⁷⁷ Those who, despite having been born in Switzerland, spent most of their life abroad are often claimed by other nations as part of their cultural heritage. Le Corbusier (1867-1965), the Swiss architect, urban planner and painter, was born in La-Chaux-de-Fonds but spent almost the whole of his working life in France. The “Who’s who for Children” describes him as the “Swiss-born French architect.”⁷⁸

Then there is the case of Geneva-born philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). His main work, “Le Contrat Social” is indispensable to any explanation of the origins of modern democracy and hence of the spirit of the Japanese constitution of 1947. Against the backdrop of impending political reforms in Japan, a recently published textbook even emphasizes Rousseau’s strident criticism of parliamentary democracy and the fact that he advocated direct democracy.⁷⁹ At the time of Rousseau, Geneva was an independent city-state and ally of the Swiss Confederation. Geneva was

73 cf. Bellah, Robert N., *Tokugawa Religion. The Values of Pre-Industrial Japan*. New York/London, 1957: 115

74 Kaigo (?a: 34), quoted from Hilty, “*Glück*,” 1891/95 (reprinted in 1988)

75 Yamamoto (1991: 93)

76 Egami, Yamamoto, Hayashi, Naruse (2002: 242, 358)

77 “*Shōnen no hi no omoide*” in: Ishimori (1991: 257), (translated from: Hesse, *Schön ist die Jugend*, 1937)

78 Shōgakukan (1993: 56)

79 Itō (2002: 134)

therefore neither French territory nor did it belong to the Swiss Confederation. Rousseau himself was born in Geneva, but spent nearly half his life in Paris. In a German dictionary he is listed as a “French-Swiss philosopher and writer.”⁸⁰ The passages on Rousseau in Japanese textbooks, however, seldom mention his nationality.⁸¹ When they do so, he is described as a “Frenchman”⁸² or a “French author and philosopher,”⁸³ only rarely as a “Swiss philosopher.”⁸⁴ The notion of Rousseau being a French philosopher is reinforced in a textbook which shows a picture of his tomb in the Pantheon in Paris.⁸⁵

5. Switzerland and the Swiss in Japanese Encyclopedias for Children

In the Encyclopedias for Children published by Shōgakukan, we find scattered fragments of information about Switzerland and the Swiss. Facts about Switzerland center on the geography of the rural regions: Under the entry “Snow and Ice,” a picture of the Findelen glacier is used to illustrate the term “glacier,”⁸⁶ the Matterhorn is listed among the highest mountains in the world as “an Italo-Swiss mountain,”⁸⁷ and the Jungfrau mountain-railway can be found among the “Famous Trains of the World.”⁸⁸ Apart from these entries, the emphasis is rather on exotic and quaint aspects of Switzerland. Among the musical instruments of the world, a Swiss Alphorn is shown with a caption saying that this instrument can “produce a few sounds.”⁸⁹ In the chapter on domestic animals, cows are shown on a Swiss Alp.⁹⁰ The “Postage Stamps of the World” include a stamp issued in Switzer-

80 Meyers Grosses Taschenlexikon (2001, vol. 9: 73)

81 Egami, Yamamoto, Hayashi, Naruse (2002: 185); Egami, Yamamoto, Hayashi, Naruse (1998: 167)

82 Inada (1992: 20); Hamashima shoten henshūbu (1992: 100); Kaigo (?b: 95)

83 Itō (2002: 130) and Nakamura, Nishiwaki, Ōguchi (2002: 38)

84 Shōgakukan (1993: 386)

85 Inada (1992: 168)

86 Shōgakukan (1991: 463)

87 Shōgakukan (1992: 97,145)

88 *ibid.*: 106

89 Shōgakukan (1991: 92)

90 *ibid.*: 115

land in 1964 which shows a colour-drawing of a water lily.⁹¹ Among the “Puppets of the World” we find a wooden puppet of a Swiss Alphorn-player of the kind one finds on souvenir stalls.⁹² Icons on a European map indicating the places of origin of the most popular children’s stories show where Heidi lived in the Swiss Alps, just to the South-East of Little Red Riding Hood in Germany.⁹³

Yet opportunities to introduce the reader to aspects relating to Swiss industry are often neglected: Among the “Chocolates of the World,” readers find chocolates from Japan, the USA, the Netherlands and Germany, but not from Switzerland;⁹⁴ the picture of a giant Swiss watch on the facade of a Tokyo skyscraper – part of an advertising campaign to launch it onto the Japanese market – is simply a “giant watch,”⁹⁵ not a “Swiss giant watch.”

In the “Who’s who for Children,” an encyclopedia containing only biographies of famous Japanese and foreign personalities, was published in 1993, Switzerland is depicted as a country where famous people such as Charlie Chaplin spend their “happy later years.”⁹⁶ The entry for Albert Einstein states that he was born in Germany and that “he worked at the Berne Patent Office,”⁹⁷ but omits to mention that he studied and later taught at the Universities of Bern and Zurich and at the Federal Polytechnic in Zurich and that he acquired Swiss citizenship in 1901. Henri Dunant is not granted an entry of his own, but is presented as an insert in the entry for Florence Nightingale.⁹⁸ The only Swiss to receive in-depth coverage is Auguste Piccard (1884-1962), whose space and the deep-sea exploits are presented in detail on two whole pages together with those of his twin brother Jean and his son Jacques.⁹⁹

The “Geographical Encyclopedia for Children” also mentions a Swiss “Piccard” as world record holder in deep-sea diving.¹⁰⁰ This, in fact, refers to Jacques Piccard (born in 1922), son of Auguste Piccard, who, in 1960, dived to a depth of 10,916 metres with his bathyscaph “Trieste.”

91 *ibid.*: 143

92 *ibid.*: 365

93 Shōgakukan (1992: 125)

94 Shōgakukan (1991: 311)

95 *ibid.*: 345

96 Shōgakukan (1993: 163)

97 *ibid.*: 4

98 *ibid.*: 185

99 *ibid.*: 214-15

100 Shōgakukan (1992: 82)

The “Learner’s Who’s Who,” which students find in the appendix to the encyclopedias for children, lists all Japanese and foreign personalities mentioned in Japanese textbooks.¹⁰¹ 55 non-Japanese are listed, but there are no Swiss among them.¹⁰² The enlarged version which was published two years later includes a brief biography of the Swiss mathematician Leonhard Euler (1707-1783).¹⁰³ The “Learner’s Who’s Who” in the appendix to the “Geographical Encyclopedia” lists the Swiss artist Paul Klee,¹⁰⁴ the author Johanna Spyri¹⁰⁵ and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who is here referred to as a “Swiss philosopher.”¹⁰⁶

6. Conclusions

Although information on Switzerland and the Swiss in Japanese textbooks has increased in the past few years, it is still scant. In most cases, the information is correct, but cursory and lacking in cohesion, the result being

101 cf. *Jinbutsu gakushū jiten* in: *Shōgakukan* (1991: 487ff.)

102 Roald Amundsen, Archimedes, Hans Christian Andersen, Jesus Christus, Aesop, Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein, Eratosthenes, Galileo Galilei, Mahathma Gandhi, Ganjin, Pierre Curie, Marie Curie, Johannes Gutenberg, Coubertin, Jakob Grimm, Wilhelm Grimm, Erich Kästner, Confucius, Robert Koch, Vincent van Gogh, Copernicus, Christopher Columbus, Francisco de Xavier, Ernest T. Seton, Franz von Siebold, Buddha, Albert Schweizer, Charles Darwin, Walt Disney, Florence Nightingale, Napoleon I., Isaac Newton, Alfred Nobel, Pascal, Townsend Harris, Jean-Henri Favre, Ernest F. Fenollosa, Henry Ford, Khubilai Khan, Ludwig van Beethoven, Matthew G. Perry, Alexander G. Bell, Helen Keller, Mother Theresa, Jules Mazarin, Douglas MacArthur, Marco Polo, Gustav Maeterlink, Amadeus Mozart, Claude Monnet, Wilbur Wright, Orville Wright, Abraham Lincoln, and George Washington. (cf. *Shōgakukan* 1991: 487-502)

103 *Shōgakukan* (1993: 334). The Swiss mathematician Leonhard Euler was added to the earlier list together with the following 11 non-Japanese personalities: The Egyptian mathematician Ames, Itō Hirobumi’s assassin An Jun Gung, the English statistician John Grant, the Greek philosopher Simplicios, the Dutch Mathematician Simon Stevin, the Greek philosopher Thales, the Austrian Zoologist Karl von Frisch, Giordano Bruno, the English doctor and palaeontologist Gideon Mantel, the French mathematician Louis-Joseph Lagrange, and a “German biologist named Radcliffe (sic)” (cf. *Shōgakukan* 1993: 327-388)

104 *ibid.*: 341

105 *ibid.*: 352

106 *ibid.*: 86

that only by accessing many different textbooks can students find sufficient information.

Switzerland is presented to Japanese students as a “normal country.” Features of Swiss society such as multilingualism, direct democracy and federalism, which constitute an integral part of the traditional Swiss self-image and national pride, are viewed from a global perspective: Switzerland is a multilingual nation, but so are many other countries. The Swiss enjoy basic democratic rights such as initiative and referendum, but so do voters at American town meetings. Modern democracy is said to have originated in France. In the discussion on federalism, the USA, Germany and Canada are often quoted as examples, whereas Switzerland is sometimes even omitted. Only a few Swiss personalities are ever mentioned in Japanese textbooks. Even personalities like Auguste Piccard and Henri Dunant cannot match the popularity of the literary figure of Heidi.

In general, information about Switzerland in Japanese textbooks conveys a positive, albeit somewhat one-sided image. To a certain degree, Switzerland is idealized, a case in point being when “eternal neutrality” is mentioned without reference to the Swiss militia system and to the principle of armed neutrality. The same holds true for the bias towards rural Switzerland and the Alpine economy. The resulting lopsided image of Switzerland as a predominantly agrarian country hardly accounts for Swiss prosperity. Even recent publications focus almost exclusively on Alpine pastoralism in their description of Switzerland, while the urban sprawl between Geneva and St. Gallen, where the majority of Swiss live and work, is ignored. In fact, only 4.6% of the Swiss working population work in agriculture,¹⁰⁷ and of these, only about a third work in the Alpine regions.¹⁰⁸ Swiss export statistics indicate that in 2003, only 1.19% of total exports to Japan were agricultural or forestry products, while the share of chemical products amounted to 44.72%, with 32.8% for instruments, watches and jewelry and 11.86% for machinery and electronics.¹⁰⁹

There is a considerable gap between the Japanese image of Switzerland and the way Swiss see themselves. The textbook *Watashitachi no Suisu (Our Switzerland)* compiled by teachers at the Japanese school in Zurich in 1991 (revised edition 1997), represents an interesting attempt to blend the

107 Bundesamt für Statistik (2003: 9)

108 Bätzing, Messerli (1991: 151)

109 Eidgenössische Zollverwaltung (2004)

Japanese image of Switzerland with the Swiss self-image. Based mainly on Japanese language material published in Japan and in Switzerland, 33 out of 192 pages are devoted to the geography of Switzerland, 40 pages to Swiss industry, 26 pages to Swiss history and 28 pages to the Swiss political system.¹¹⁰

With ample space available, Swiss personalities and their achievements receive more coverage.¹¹¹ But even this textbook does not mention the existence of any 19th or 20th century Swiss literature. The Calvinistic Swiss work ethic, however, is evoked in a statement by an anonymous Swiss woman scientist in pharmaceutical research:

We have to work very hard – every day, often even on Saturdays and Sundays, sometimes all night long. Of 10'000 experiments, only one is successful!¹¹²

The principle of armed neutrality (*busō chūritsu*) is mentioned in the context of the Vienna congress,¹¹³ the Swiss army in the context of World War I and II. In a short paragraph about World War II, most of the space is devoted to the Rütli-speech by General Henri Guisan, in which he called upon the Swiss population to resist the Axis powers.¹¹⁴ In the description of the present-day political system, however, neither the army nor the militia system is mentioned. While a graph of the federal government offices lists a “Ministry of Defense,”¹¹⁵ the explanation in the text mentions among the tasks of the federal government only the “upkeep of law and order within the country.”¹¹⁶

110 Sources include i) Japanese government institutions such as the Japanese Embassy in Switzerland, ii) Japanese institutions briefing Japanese expatriates with factual information on foreign countries such as the Nihon kokusai mondai kenkyūjo, iii) Japanese-language publications by Swiss government organizations such as OSEC, iv) translations into Japanese of books on Switzerland written by Swiss journalists and v) books written by Japanese historians on Swiss history. Cf. Moto Chūrihi Nihonjin gakkō kyōshokuin (1997)

111 Besides Johanna Spyri, Heinrich Pestalozzi and “Geneva-born” Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Swiss culture is represented by the artists Arnold Böcklin, Giovanni Segantini, Ferdinand Hodler, Paul Klee, Alberto Giacometti, Max Bill and the architect Le Corbusier. Moto Chūrihi Nihonjin gakkō kyōshokuin (1997: 177-184)

112 Moto Chūrihi Nihonjin gakkō kyōshokuin (1997: 111)

113 *ibid.*: 153

114 *ibid.*: 155-156

115 *ibid.*: 163

116 *ibid.*: 161

With space in Japanese textbooks being limited, it would be unrealistic to expect Japanese textbooks to contain more information on Switzerland in the future. It is therefore all the more important to use what little space is available in such a way as to convey a realistic impression of Switzerland. A shift in the Japanese perspective towards urban Switzerland centering on the economic regions around Zurich, Basel and Geneva would be conducive to creating a more realistic image of Switzerland in 21st century Europe. The Swiss government could support this process by offering a Japanese-language version of its comprehensive information on Switzerland on the official website of the Swiss Embassy in Tokyo.¹¹⁷

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117 A list of websites of various foreign embassies in Japan in one of the Japanese textbooks surveyed does not list the English-language website of the Swiss Embassy, but the Japanese-language website of the Swiss Tourist Office in Japan. Cf. Nakamura, Takahashi (2002: 217)

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