

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING CENTRE

**A DICTIONARY OF JAPANESE MANAGEMENT
AND BUSINESS CULTURE**

MA project

KÄTLIN PÕLDMA
SUPERVISOR: ASSOC. PROF. ENN VELDI

TARTU
2014

ABSTRACT

The dictionary compiled in the framework of this MA project introduces 319 terms used in English texts in connection with Japanese management and business culture. As Japanese business culture has characteristic features and cultural nuances that need to be understood by those coming into contact with Japanese companies in the business context, this dictionary aims at explaining the cultural and linguistic aspects of relevant terms, with particular emphasis placed on the use of Japanese terms in English.

The MA project comprises an introductory part, in which the main characteristics of Japanese management and business culture, the role of the Japanese language in English, the compilation process and principles of the dictionary and the problems encountered are outlined. This is followed by the dictionary, in which the terms are provided with definitions in English, example sentences and, in the case of Japanese terms, with the headword in Japanese script and an explanation of its literal meaning and structure, where relevant. The dictionary is based on various books and articles on Japanese business, glossaries found online as well as some corpora.

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this MA project is to provide an introduction to the terms used in English texts in connection with Japanese management and business culture. The dictionary compiled in the framework of this project comprises English as well as Japanese terms that are used in the business context, with the latter constituting the majority of the headwords due to the fact that some terms do not have exact equivalents in English or have nuances that could be lost in translation.

The dictionary is preceded by an introduction to the main characteristics of Japanese management, a short description of the role of the Japanese language in English, an overview of the structure, sources and compilation process of the dictionary as well as the problems encountered while compiling this dictionary. In the dictionary, the terms are provided with definitions in English, example sentences and, in the case of Japanese terms, with the spelling of the headword in Japanese script and an explanation of the literal meaning and structure of the term, where relevant. The inner structure of Japanese terms is explained in order to make them more comprehensible to users who do not speak Japanese. The dictionary serves as an introduction to the way Japanese companies work, as well as providing a general insight into Japanese business culture. There are terms connected to the structure of Japanese companies, corporate titles, management techniques, quality control, the decision process within the company and many other aspects of Japanese business.

The target group of the dictionary comprises users of English who come into contact with Japanese companies and business culture. Conveying and illustrating the meaning of the terms is considered more important than providing detailed grammatical information in this dictionary, and care is taken to present the information in a manner that is easy to understand. The emphasis is on helping the user understand the terms and the contexts in which they are used.

The selection of this topic for the MA project was primarily based on the author's interest in the Japanese language and culture as well as the wish to explore the use of Japanese words in English. Furthermore, no dictionary of this kind has been compiled so far. While there are a variety of publications in English on the subject, they are largely not easily accessible in Estonia and finding thorough explanations of some of the terms related to this topic may prove to be difficult. Understanding the cultural aspects hidden behind the terms is important in Japanese business communication. Knowledge of Japanese business culture would be valuable to anyone having business relations with Japanese companies.

WHAT IS JAPANESE MANAGEMENT?

Japanese companies have a system of management with distinct features and a business culture full of nuances that may lead to misunderstandings in intercultural communication. It can be said that Japanese society and business culture are not completely comprehensible even for those who often come into contact with them (Picken 2007: xii). The three main characteristics of Japanese management, also referred to as the three pillars or the three jewels, are lifetime employment, a promotion system based on seniority and enterprise unions (Okumura 2000: 22). Lifetime employment stresses the significance of stable employment and loyalty to the company, while the importance of seniority makes it a hierarchical system.

Most of the characteristics of Japanese style management, as it exists today, developed after World War II (Kono et al 2001: 14). The foundation of the Japanese management system was laid in the 1950s, followed by fast economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s (Oh 2004: 31). Owing to the economic success of Japan, the 1980s saw the spread of Japanese style management practices on the international scene (ibid: 33). However, Japan was hit by an economic crisis in the 1990s (ibid: 35), but despite the fact that Japan no longer experiences the economic growth of the 1970s and 1980s, it can be said that it is still at the forefront when it comes to quality, efficiency and productivity (Picken 2007: XXXIV).

Central concepts of Japanese management also include kaizen, i.e. continuous improvement, lean (just-in-time) production that eliminates waste, and quality. Japanese companies place considerable importance on quality: according to Haghirian, Japanese consumers are seen as “the most sophisticated in the world” as they are resolute in their expectations regarding product and service quality (2010: 107). Manufacturers thus seek perfection, adopting a “zero defect” policy (Alston et al 2005: 13).

In Japan, group membership and loyalty to the group are considered to be of great value. Leaving an organization is thus viewed as disloyal (Haghirian 2010: 17). Harmony within a group is an ideal for which one should make an effort (Picken 2007: xxxix) and which should be maintained with the aid of an indirect and ambiguous manner of communication (ibid: xli). Owing to the significance of group membership and harmony, collective decision-making aimed at achieving a consensus is also an important characteristic of Japanese management. When it comes to business relations, company employees should therefore be treated as members of a group, not as individuals (Alston et al 2005: 3). In addition, due to differences in the style of communication, the western manner of negotiation is seen as “aggressive and too direct”, giving rise to misunderstandings in the business context (Haghirian 2010: 105, 125).

In Japanese companies, more importance is attributed to long-term goals than immediate profits (Kono et al 2001: 82). Therefore, they also aim at developing long-lasting business relations (Haghirian 2010: 129). This necessitates obtaining detailed knowledge regarding potential business partners (ibid), making socializing an essential factor in business relations with Japanese companies. Business socialising is the basis of business relations with companies as well as being an important element in the process of identifying oneself as a member of a group of colleagues within the company. The latter is so significant that it becomes difficult to distinguish between private and professional life (Haghirian 2010: 105). The impact of socialising should not be underestimated in business negotiations – the Japanese prefer to get to know their business partners before closing any business deals (Alston et al 2005: 11).

Age plays a significant role in the hierarchy of Japanese companies and the Japanese society in general. Younger employees have to use polite and respectful language when speaking to or about their superiors, while the latter may use more casual language. The

emphasis on the role of seniority in the hierarchy derived from Confucianism and led to a system in which the relationship between senior and junior employees is determined by the time of their entry into the organization and remains the same throughout their career (Picken 2007: xli).

When it comes to Japanese business culture, one should not disregard the Japanese language with its several layers of politeness that reflect the hierarchical system of Japanese companies. It can be said that the characteristics of the Japanese management system have not disappeared thanks to the language (De Mente 2012: 26). According to De Mente (2012: 26–27) “words in the Japanese language that are pregnant with cultural nuances and uses continue to influence the mindset and behavior of the Japanese, and are therefore keys to understanding the Japanese mind and behavior in business management.” Understanding relevant Japanese terms is therefore necessary for obtaining a clearer idea of the characteristic features of Japanese business culture.

THE ROLE OF THE JAPANESE LANGUAGE IN ENGLISH

This dictionary comprises many foreign words of Japanese origin. Only a few of these are listed in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (www.oed.com), namely *gaijin*, *kaizen*, *kanban*, *karoshi*, *keiretsu*, *meishi*, *on*, *oyabun*, *sogo shosha*, *shunto*, *sokaiya*, *zaibatsu*, *zaikai*, *zaiteku* (under *zaitech*). The OED includes 507 words of Japanese origin, out of a total of almost 90 000 words of foreign origin in the dictionary. However, as there are 1090 words originating in Central and Eastern Asian languages, the role of the Japanese language is the most significant among them. According to the OED, the first two words of Japanese origin were recorded in English already in the second half of the 16th century, but the majority of them were adopted in English during the period ranging from the second half of the 19th century to the end of the 20th century (168 from 1850 to 1899, 123 from 1900 to 1949 and 131 from 1950 to 1999). The terms that are included in this dictionary as well were mostly recorded in the second half of the 20th century, with only *on*, *oyabun* and *zaibatsu* entering the language in the first half of the century. Many of the Japanese words in OED are related to food, martial arts and arts, but there are also words from the fields of science, religion, technology and popular culture, for instance. It can thus be said that the field of Japanese management is not very well represented in OED with regard to Japanese terms.

COMPILATION OF THE DICTIONARY

Type, aim and target users of the dictionary

This dictionary is a monolingual dictionary of a subdomain of language, i.e. the language used in connection with Japanese management and business culture. However, as it comprises mostly foreign words and there are references to the language of their origin, it could be said that it is in essence partially bilingual. The dictionary includes encyclopaedic material in the form of cultural explanations that are added to definitions.

Dictionaries can be categorized as prescriptive and descriptive (Atkins et al 2008: 2). This dictionary serves a descriptive purpose, giving an overview of the manner in which the terms are used in written English. Dictionaries can also be divided into two types according to their function: decoding or passive and encoding or active dictionaries (ibid: 25, 40). This dictionary is meant mainly for decoding, i.e. understanding the terms when they are used in texts or business communication, as opposed to using them actively. Grammatical information is therefore kept to a minimum, giving priority to explaining the meaning of the terms and illustrating their usage with examples.

As this dictionary concentrates on a specific field, it has a specific target group of users. The dictionary has been compiled keeping in mind the needs of native or non-native speakers of English, who are not necessarily linguists, but rather professionals or students in the field of business. Ideally, this dictionary could be used for professional purposes. The average user would not be very familiar with the Japanese language or culture. It might be the first contact with the Japanese language (in written form) for many of them. Therefore, it is important to make the cultural background understandable to the users.

Selection of terms and the sources used

The process of compiling the dictionary started with gathering information about the terms used in connection with Japanese management and business culture. Being an MA project, the content of the dictionary is limited to around 300 terms. Decisions had to be made as to which terms should be added to the dictionary. The aim was to include terms that appeared in several sources or are highly relevant in the context of Japanese business. Emphasis was placed on explaining the most important terms very thoroughly. The author does not aspire to give a complete overview of the terminology in this field, but hopes that it will provide a general introduction to Japanese management practices and business culture.

The selection of terms is based on various sources: books on topics related to Japanese management, and texts and glossaries found online. The availability of up-to-date sources was the main difficulty in compiling the dictionary. The library of the University of Tartu has a limited number of books on the topic. Many online sources were thus used for compiling the dictionary, but assessing the reliability of the online sources was another difficult point. Ebrary and Google Books were helpful tools for finding sources and getting an overview of the use of the terms. Some English business dictionaries were also examined, but they usually include only a few of the most common Japanese terms used in English. For example, the *Oxford Business English Dictionary* (2005) has eight terms connected to Japanese business. In the case of other sources, the extent of the use of Japanese terms varied. Some authors prefer to use Japanese terms extensively, while others try to explain the concepts in English. When adding details regarding the meaning of Japanese words and *kanji* (Chinese characters), *The Kodansha Kanji Dictionary* and *Kenkyusha's New Japanese-English Dictionary* (5th edition) were used as sources.

To the knowledge of the author of this MA project, no dictionary of Japanese management and business culture (of the kind compiled in the framework of this project) has been published before. *The A to Z of Japanese Business* (2009) by Stuart D.B. Picken includes a chronological overview of business in Japan, a description of business in Japan today, a list of terms related to business, businesspeople and some companies as well as general terms regarding culture and history. In addition, there are three glossaries: business proverbs, traditional business expressions and modern business expressions. The book provides a thorough insight into the subject and its glossaries in particular would be useful for learners of Japanese, but even though the main part of the book is called a dictionary by the author, it resembles an encyclopaedia that gives explanations and background information, but does not comprise linguistic information. There is also the *Encyclopaedia of Japanese Business and Management* (2002) by Allan Bird that gives a thorough overview of the field. Some of the information provided by these books was used in the process of compiling this dictionary, but the selection of terms in the dictionary is not based solely on these reference books.

Example sentences are taken from sources that could be found online: the Brigham Young University (BYU) corpora (Corpus of Global Web-Based English (GloWbE), Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), British National Corpus (BNC)), articles and books on subjects related to the field. As the dictionary includes rare terms as well as terms connected to Japanese culture in general and therefore used more frequently, the author could not limit the selection of example sentences to one specific source, e.g. the examples found in the corpora. As the dictionary concerns a specific field, the terms are not very well-represented in the aforementioned corpora and many of them could not be found there at all. The example sentences are intended to supplement the definition, so that

the user can better understand the meaning of the term and the context in which it can be used.

The structure of the dictionary entries

The layout of the entries was designed so that it would make the information easily accessible. Using different kinds of typeface, various categories of information are made easily noticeable. Headwords are listed in bold in alphabetical order (letter by letter, without taking into account spaces and hyphens), followed by the headword in Japanese script in the case of Japanese terms (e.g. **kaizen** 改善). Abbreviations of the headwords appear in brackets after them, and are also listed as headwords together with references to the main entry. Variant forms are given after the headword, following a dash (e.g. *gōshi gaisha/ kaisha* (GSK)) or, if a part within the headword is optional, it is given in brackets (e.g. *kabushiki (sōgo) mochiai*). The pronunciation of the term is given in square brackets after the headword only when necessary. Diacritical marks on some vowels in Japanese terms indicate their pronunciation in Japanese (e.g. *kigyō shūdan*; see the section “Japanese terms and romanization” for more information).

On the following line, explanations concerning the inner structure of Japanese terms are given by providing the literal meaning of the term in English, the origin of the term where necessary, and the meaning of the separate *kanji* (Chinese characters) of the term. Note that here the Japanese terms do not have diacritical marks here, but the vowel ‘u’ is added to indicate the length of some vowels (e.g. *kigyō shūdan* for *kigyō shūdan*) as a reference to the spelling of these syllables in Japanese. The entries include mainly only the core meanings of the *kanji*. The meaning of an individual character is not necessarily directly related to the meaning of the whole word, but there often is a link to its meaning. See the following example:

gaijin 外人

* Japanese lit. ‘foreigner’; *gai* (outside) + *jin* (human being).

The definitions are preceded by the indication of the word class in italics (‘*n.*’ for nouns, ‘*v.*’ for verbs, ‘*adj.*’ for adjectives). If the headword has multiple meanings, the different senses are numbered and listed one after another on separate lines within the same entry. Additional information concerning usage is given under the heading ‘NOTE’ that follows the definition. This functions as a pragmatic force gloss, the purpose of which is “to explain the pragmatic message carried by a word or phrase” (Atkins et al 2008: 210), rather than its meaning. The definitions and the notes were mostly written on the basis of several sources. References to the source(s) of the definitions and the additional information can be found in footnotes. See the following example of the first sense of *teishisei*:

1. *n.* a low posture, a posture with one’s head held low as a sign of humility.

NOTE: It is particularly common when greeting someone with a higher position.²²⁷

If the headword has synonyms, these are listed in bold below the definition or the additional information note under the heading ‘Also called’ (e.g. in the case of *nenkō joretsu*: Also called ***nenkō*** system). If the synonym is a Japanese term, it is also given in Japanese script and the meaning of the characters is also stated within the same entry as in the case of the headword. The information is not repeated when the synonyms appear as headwords in the dictionary. These headwords are merely accompanied by a reference to the synonym (headword and the number of the corresponding sense, where relevant) under which the information is provided as in the following example:

kanban system

See kanban (1)

Example sentences are given in italics on the line below the synonyms, followed by a reference to their source in brackets. They illustrate the context(s), in which the term could be used, and sometimes give additional information. It should be noted that the dictionary was written in British English, but the example sentences include different varieties of English, thus causing inconsistencies in spelling. In addition, as the spelling of the terms in example sentences was not changed by the author, they can differ slightly from the headword (e.g. the term may start with a capital letter, while it is not capitalised as a headword). On the bottommost line of the entry, cross-references to related terms are listed following the heading 'See also'.

Difficulties in the compilation process

Firstly, decisions had to be made regarding the content of the dictionary, the structure of the entries and the extent of the information included in them. In addition to the difficulties that arose in connection with finding and selecting the sources, deciding on which terms are relevant to the topic and should be added to the dictionary was another difficult point. The aim of the project was to concentrate primarily on Japanese terms, but the scope of the use of Japanese terms in English was not certain at the beginning.

As the main purpose of the dictionary is to make the terms and their cultural nuances understandable to the user, the author decided to give limited grammatical information, including merely the word class. In Japanese, words do not have a plural form and this is reflected in the use of foreign words in English. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (www.oed.com), the plural forms vary. For example, in the case of *keiretsu*, the plural may be left unchanged or, alternatively, an 's' may be added to indicate the plural, while *sogo shosha* is "occasionally" used with a plural marker, and *zaibatsu* and *gaijin* remain unchanged in plural. According to the observations of the author while compiling

this dictionary, the unchanged plural is more common. Because of these variations, information regarding plural forms was not included in the dictionary.

Decisions regarding the wording of definitions and the choice of suitable example sentences to illustrate them also proved to be a complex issue. When creating the dictionary entries, care needed to be taken to ensure consistency in the definitions of terms belonging to a lexical set, i.e. a group of related words, and to include necessary cross-references. In the case of example sentences, a sentence taken out of its context could be incomprehensible to the user. Therefore, in some cases, several sentences were included in the dictionary entry in order to preserve the context. Furthermore, in a few cases it proved to be impossible to find a suitable example sentence, but the author decided to include the term in the dictionary in spite of this fact as these terms are relevant to the subject and connected to other terms in the dictionary.

Japanese terms and romanization

Firstly, the Japanese writing system needs a short explanation. Three scripts are used in the Japanese language: *kanji* (Chinese characters), *hiragana* and *katakana*. 2136 characters (*kanji*) that are included in the Jōyō Kanji list are commonly used in daily life (Halpern 2013: 1871). *Kanji* may appear as separate words or as components of words. Their main attributes are the “form, sound and meaning” (ibid: 19a). They have one or several meanings as well as multiple readings: *on* (reading derived from Chinese) and *kun* (Japanese reading) (ibid). *Hiragana* and *katakana* are syllabaries (i.e. they are alphabets consisting of syllables). The first is used for writing Japanese words together with *kanji* and the second for writing foreign words.

Inconsistent romanization (i.e. transcribing Japanese words in the Latin alphabet) of Japanese terms used in English texts led to considerable variations in spelling in the

sources used. The two main systems of romanization are the Hepburn system and the Kunrei system; in addition, the Wāpuro system is used for word processors (Halpern 2013: 1824). In the sources used, there were thus variations in the choice of letters and diacritical marks used for transcribing certain Japanese characters.

The author decided to add diacritical marks to the long vowels ‘o’ and ‘u’ in the Japanese headwords in the dictionary, although these are usually used without these marks in English, disregarding the length of the vowel, or sometimes the Japanese way of spelling (used in the Wāpuro system) is adhered to by adding a ‘u’ after the vowel to indicate its length. The diacritical marks in the headwords in this dictionary follow the Hepburn system of romanization and serve as references to their pronunciation in Japanese and hopefully increase the practical value of the dictionary. It should be noted that ‘ei’ is pronounced as a long ‘ē’ in Japanese, but is not transcribed in that way. Furthermore, it seems that the Japanese way of pronunciation need not be adhered to in English. For example, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (www.oed.com), *keiretsu* is pronounced in British English as /kei'retsu:/ and in American English as /,kei'retsu/.

Due to the fact that ‘n’ is pronounced as ‘m’ in front of ‘b’ and ‘p’ in Japanese, there are variations in the romanized spelling of Japanese terms, e.g. *gemba* or *genba* are both used in English texts, although only the latter reflects the actual spelling of the Japanese word. Furthermore, in Japanese compound words, the first consonant of the second word of the compound is often voiced, e.g. *kaisha* becomes *gaisha* in the term *kabushiki gaisha*. The romanized variants of Japanese terms do not always follow this rule and this also results in variations in spelling.

The use of capital letters, hyphens and the division of Japanese terms into several words was also inconsistent. In Japanese, capital letters or gaps between words are not used, so it is unclear what should be taken as a standard when adding capital letters,

splitting terms into several words or using hyphens. For example, the term *shachōkai* could also be spelt as *shachō-kai* or *shachō kai* (if the Hepburn system of romanization is used) and a capital letter could be added to either of these variant forms, whether merely to the beginning of the word or both words if the term has been split. In this dictionary, an attempt was made to give an overview of the variant forms of headwords, but capital letters were used only when it was justified, for instance because the headword includes a name or because it was used in this form in most of the sources.

The use of italics as a marker of foreign words varied in different sources. For the purposes of consistency, the author followed the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) with regard to formatting. The Japanese terms that could not be found in OED are in italics.

Terminological problems

There were also terminological problems as some sources presented conflicting information or different English or Japanese terms were used. For example, the classification of the types of *keiretsu*, alliances of Japanese companies, varied in the works of different authors. In most general terms, *keiretsu* can be classified as vertical and horizontal *keiretsu*, but there is a variety of (sub)types.

Richter (2000: 21) lists three types of *keiretsu*: capital *keiretsu*, production *keiretsu* and trans-*keiretsu*. According to van Acht (2004: 4–5), the three types of *keiretsu* are horizontal *keiretsu* or *kigyō shūdan*, vertical supplier *keiretsu* and vertical distribution *keiretsu*. Oh (2004: 74) describes the *keiretsu* as being divided into intermarket *keiretsu*, which include *zaibatsu-kei keiretsu* (*keiretsu* that developed from *zaibatsu*) and *kinyū keiretsu*, and vertical supply *keiretsu*. He uses the term intermarket *keiretsu* instead of horizontal *keiretsu*. Mokyr (2003: 216) claims that the three types of *keiretsu* are generally considered to be horizontal (*yoko*) *keiretsu*, vertical (*tate*) *keiretsu* and *kombinato*, i.e.

industrial complexes. The third type was not referred to in the other sources used. Witt (2011: 88) distinguishes between *ryūtsū keiretsu* (distribution *keiretsu*), *sangyō keiretsu* (production *keiretsu*) and *shihon keiretsu* (capital *keiretsu*). However, *kinyū keiretsu* are also referred to as capital *keiretsu* in English (Richter 2000: 21), which leads to confusion. The two forms of *keiretsu* are in fact structurally different: the *kinyū keiretsu* is a horizontal type of *keiretsu* (ibid), while the *shihon keiretsu* belongs to the vertical type (Witt 2011: 88). An explanatory note is added to the entries of these terms in the dictionary. In addition, while Witt (2011: 88) refers to production *keiretsu* as *sangyō keiretsu* in Japanese, Richter states that production *keiretsu* are called *seisan keiretsu* or *kigyō keiretsu* (2000: 25). However, Kikkawa (2013: 44) considers *kigyō keiretsu* to be equivalent to vertical *keiretsu*, and claims that the term *keiretsu* generally refers to the vertical type. Another source of confusion was the term *kigyō shūdan*. According to Scher (1999: 309–310), it should be distinguished from *keiretsu* because of its horizontal structure. The term *keiretsu* should thus only be used when referring to vertical alliances. However, in the other sources used, horizontal alliances are categorised as a type of *keiretsu* and *kigyō shūdan* is often considered to be synonymous with horizontal *keiretsu*. The author thus decided to treat them as synonyms in the dictionary. In this dictionary, *keiretsu* is defined as a general term that encompasses the horizontal and vertical type as well as other subtypes. *Kigyō keiretsu* is listed as a synonym for vertical *keiretsu*. *Seisan keiretsu* and *sangyō keiretsu* are considered to be synonymous with production *keiretsu*, which is a subtype of vertical *keiretsu* (*kigyō keiretsu* or *tate keiretsu*).

On the basis of the examples given above, it can be concluded that there are various synonyms in use and the choice of term depends on the author, while there are often no references to equivalent terms. This may create confusion with regard to the exact meaning of the term and its relation to other terms that are in use. Thus, to get an overview of the

terms and their meanings, the reader would have to consult several sources. This dictionary will hopefully give a clearer overview of the numerous terms used.

List of abbreviations

adj. adjective

BNC British National Corpus

BYU the Brigham Young University corpora

COCA Corpus of Contemporary American English

GloWbE Corpus of Global Web-Based English

lit. literally

n. noun

v. verb

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A

administrative guidance

See *gyōsei shidō*

***aisatsu* 挨拶**

* Japanese lit. ‘greeting’; *ai* (push) + *satsu* (press on, draw near).

1. *n.* a first meeting or social event for potential business partners, the aim of which is not to deal with business matters, but to indicate the wish to establish long-term business relations.

NOTE: There is a custom of exchanging small gifts. The meeting of company presidents is considered to be an approval for the start of a new business relationship.

*“While the details of negotiations may be left to a representative in Japan, the managing director of the foreign firm (or some other high official in the company) should establish an initial contact with his equal in the Japanese firm. This is termed the *aisatsu* or the greeting. The purpose of this *aisatsu* is to establish a presence.”* (BYU-BNC 1992)

2. *n.* a regular courtesy call to business contacts.¹

*“Now that I am in a position where my company markets to Japanese clients, I see that new year’s *aisatsu* is an excellent marketing tool.”* (Kopp 2009: para. 6)

See also *aisatsu mawari*

***aisatsu mawari* 挨拶回り**

* Japanese lit. ‘to go around and greet’; *ai* (push) + *satsu* (press on, draw near) + *mawari* (turn round).

n. the custom of making courtesy visits to clients, business partners or colleagues.

NOTE: It is especially common after New Year’s holidays, but also after assuming a new position at the company.²

*“When a Japanese executive or sales manager takes a new post, one of his first tasks is *aisatsu mawari*. The *aisatsu mawari* consists of visits to the company’s major clients and commercial partners.”* (The Everything Japanese Guide)

¹ Alston et al 2005: 48, De Mente 2012: 154–155

² De Mente 2012: 155, Picken 2009: 345

*“This is the week of *aisatsu mawari*, when businesspeople pay visits to their clients and wish them a happy new year. There’s a lot of *ocha* being consumed, a lot of small talk and, salespeople hope, a lot of seeds being planted that could grow into business later in the year.” (Rutledge 2003: para. 1)*

See also *aisatsu*

aiso warai/ aiso-warai 愛想笑い

* Japanese lit. *aiso* ‘courtesy’; *ai* (love) + *so* (conceive, think of, imagine) + *warai* (laugh).

n. polite or false laughter that is a reaction to an uncomfortable situation in which one is not certain how to react or answer.

NOTE: It is used to hide one’s true feelings and may indicate that one does not want to give a negative answer or is embarrassed. It is common in the business context.³

“Because of the traditional role of aiso warai in Japan, the Japanese recognize an artificial smile when they see one; but because a smile is unnatural does not detract from its value if it is used in a traditionally accepted manner and place.” (De Mente 2004: 17)

amae 甘え

* Japanese *ama-* (sweet).

n. a relationship akin to that of a mother and child, in which the stronger is expected to be benevolent and supportive towards the weaker in exchange for loyalty and respect.

NOTE: Claiming oneself to be the weaker party in the business context creates an *amae* relationship. This is only possible when people have already met to establish a business relationship. As benevolence is an important value in Asia, it is expected from superiors. However, in business negotiations both parties are expected to make concessions.⁴

“This well known process of stable employment often means that capable persons do the work, so allowing lazy or not-so-capable people to get an average salary (an unconscious manipulation of the Amae complex by the lazy ones toward the active ones).” (BYU-GloWbE n.d.)

“Japanese education gets flak for suppressing individuality; encouraging group behaviour and conformity; and cultivating amae, a psychological reliance on other people.” (The Economist 1999: para. 10)

amakudari 天下り

* Japanese lit. ‘descent from heaven’; *ama* (heaven) + *kudari* (down).

³ Alston et al 2005: 50–51; De Mente 2012: 155

⁴ Alston et al 2005: 20–21, 117

n. the practice of hiring retired senior executives of companies and especially government ministries as management executives in private companies with the aim of taking advantage of their experience, knowledge of government procedures and personal connections.

NOTE: Companies can transfer senior employees to other firms, with which they are connected by cross-shareholding or have business relations, e.g. subcontractors and suppliers. Former government officials generally opt for companies in industries with which they had connections. This strengthens the relationship between government and industry.⁵

“The Diet began deliberating a bill this month aimed at curbing “amakudari,” the practice of giving retiring top bureaucrats lucrative jobs in private-sector firms and quasi-government entities in the business sectors they oversee.” (Nakata 2007: para. 1)

“Mr Abe’s current emphasis on stamping out amakudari suggests a tin ear for the public mood.” (The Economist 2007: para. 5)

andon アンドン

* Japanese original meaning ‘paper-covered lantern’.

n. a visual management tool comprised of a system of lights on machines in production lines that refer to the status of production.

NOTE: The number of lights and their colours can vary, but green (no problems), yellow (the situation requires attention) and red (production stopped, the problem requires urgent attention) are typically used. It is one of the primary tools used for *jidōka*.

Also called **traffic light system**⁶

“In the Toyota system the Andon, indicating a stoppage of the line, is hung from the factory ceiling so that it can be clearly seen by everyone.” (BYU-GloWbE n.d.)

“As in all its plants, behind every worker hangs the andon cord, which, when pulled, instantly summons a supervisor with the power to stop the line before any error is passed on.” (The Economist 2007a: para. 11)

See also *jidōka*

antei kabunushi 安定株主

* Japanese lit. *antei* ‘stable’, *kabunushi* ‘shareholder’; *an* (peaceful, safe) + *tei* (fix, determine; fixed) + *kabu* (stock) + *nushi* (master, owner).

⁵ Hasegawa 1986: 67, 159; Jackson et al 2004: 210; Alston et al 2005: 149

⁶ 1000Ventures; Kaizen Institute; the Official Website of Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky, Inc.

n. a shareholder who is allowed to hold the shares of a company because he/she is favoured by the management, and who does not have the right to sell the shares to those the management does not approve of and thus has to consult them if he/she wishes to do so.⁷

“With large firms in Japan, the majority of their shareholders are so-called stable shareholders (antei kabunushi) who continue to hold the firm’s shares over long periods irrespective of its short-term performance.” (Imai et al 1995: 32)

See also *antei kabunushi kōsaku*

***antei kabunushi kōsaku* 安定株主工作**

* Japanese lit. *antei* ‘stable’, *kabunushi* ‘shareholder’, *kousaku* ‘manoeuvre’; *an* (peaceful, safe) + *tei* (fix, determine; fixed) + *kabu* (stock) + *nushi* (master, owner) + *kou* (manufacture; construction) + *saku* (make; work).

n. the practice of giving shares to safe shareholders who agree not to sell them without consulting the company first.

NOTE: Companies sell their shares to financial institutions and firms with whom they have business ties to prevent takeovers.⁸

“First, the kaisha is comparatively independent from the control of its shareholders, which gives management tremendous freedom in running the kaisha. Such freedom can be attributed to the logic of kaisha: because the kaisha’s perpetuation and prosperity are of ultimate importance, both in pre-war and post-war Japan kaisha have engaged in shareholder stabilisation operations (antei kabunushi kōsaku) to defend themselves against takeovers.” (Wong 1999: 33)

“It is not known when the words ‘safe shareholder manoeuvre’ (antei kabunushi kōsaku) came to be used, but it was already in use in the 1950s to mean that cornered shares were taken over and put in the hands of ‘safe’ shareholders for them to hold.” (Okumura 2000: 66)

See also *antei kabunushi*

***aotagai* 青田買い**

* Japanese lit. ‘the purchase of a green rice paddy’, i.e. the practice of selling rice before harvesting; *ao* (blue; green) + *ta* (rice field) + *gai* (buy).

n. the early recruitment of high school and university graduates to get an advantage in selecting the best applicants.

NOTE: Large Japanese companies generally recruit new employees once a year and job offers are made long before graduation. However, companies have agreed

⁷ Sheard 1994: 314, 318

⁸ Okumura 2000: 66, 62; Sheard 1994: 314, 318

not to make official job offers before October 1st, i.e. half a year before new recruits start working.⁹

“Recruitment in large Japanese companies was systematic and based on a specific year long schedule. This early recruitment process is often referred to as “aotagai” (buying rice before it is harvested) since students were recruited far in advance of graduation.” (Firkola 2011: 60)

atarimae hinshitsu 当たり前品質

* Japanese lit. *atarimae* ‘proper’, ‘natural’, *hinshitsu* ‘quality’;

atari (hit, strike) + *mae* (before) + *hin* (article, thing) + *shitsu* (quality).

n. a principle of Total Quality Management, according to which everything will work as it is supposed to.

NOTE: This implies that products should meet all the expectations that have been set to them.¹⁰

“Today’s younger Japanese are no longer overtly programmed in the atarimae hinshitsu mindset, but they naturally absorb a great deal of it as they grow up.” (De Mente 2009: para. 10)

“Foreigners wanting to sell products [and services] in Japan should learn and use the atarimae hinshitsu phraseology in their initial presentations and in their sales approaches. This will alert the Japanese that you understand their concern for quality and that you are also quality conscious on the atarimae hinshitsu level.” (De Mente 2009: para. 15)

See also Total Quality Management, *miriyokuteki hinshitsu*

atogime/ ato-gime 後決め

* Japanese *ato* (after) + *gime* (decide).

n. after-sales price adjustment.

NOTE: The practice of fixing a price after the product has been sold and delivered has prevailed in the sale of intermediate products, such as steel, lumber, auto parts, and glass. A tentative price range is given to the buyer and can be changed six to twelve months later depending on changes in the market situation, so that one party does not get an advantage over the other. Use of this practice has decreased over time.¹¹

“While some industries moved away from ato-gime in the 1990s, it remains the predominant pricing mechanism in many intermediate product markets.” (Bird 2002)

⁹ Picken 2009: 333; Jackson et al 2004: 237; De Mente 2012: 156, Firkola 2011: 64

¹⁰ BusinessKnowledgeSource.com n.d. a

¹¹ Bird 2002; Schaede 2008: 154

autonomation

See *jidōka*

B

baito バイト

* derived from the German word ‘*Arbeit*’.

n. a part-time job.¹²

“If you run a business employing foreign labor part-time, or if you’re a foreigner doing a pocket-money “baito” on the side, you need to check, and quickly, that you are doing the right work on the right visa.” (Johnston 2005: para. 8)

baka yoke

See *poka yoke*

benkyō kai/ benkyō-kai 勉強会

* Japanese lit. ‘a study meeting’; *ben* (endeavour, make efforts) + *kyou* (strong) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club).

n. a type of preliminary meeting, the aim of which is to discuss a proposal.

NOTE: The usual course of the meeting is the following: a member of the group gives a detailed description of the proposal, seeking the support of the others, and this is followed by a discussion.¹³

“Foreigners wishing to give their proposals the highest likelihood of acceptance must convince an employee of the value of their proposals, attend the benkyo kai sessions themselves, or designate a consultant to make the presentations in person.” (Alston et al 2005: 95)

Big Six

n. six large Japanese corporate groups (horizontal keiretsu) that include Mitsubishi, Mitsui, Sumitomo, Sanwa, Fuyō and Daiichi Kangyo.

NOTE: The first three of these keiretsu derived from the dissolved zaibatsu, the rest were formed after World War II by main banks and financial institutions (*kinyū keiretsu*).¹⁴

Also called *rokudai kigyō shūdan* 六大企業集団

* Japanese lit. *kigyō* ‘enterprise’, *shūdan* ‘group’; *roku* (six) + *dai* (big) + *ki* (project) + *gyō* (work, business, industry) + *shū* (collect) + *dan* (body, group).

“The Big Six general trading companies, or sogo shosha, that Global Witness is particularly concerned about are Mitsubishi Corp., Mitsui & Co. Ltd., Itochu & Co.

¹² Hagherian 2010: 24

¹³ Alston et al 2005: 94–95

¹⁴ Richter 2000: 21; Oh 2004: 74

Ltd., Sumitomo Corp., Marubeni Corp. and Nissho Iwai Corp.” (Hesse 2000: para. 17)

See also keiretsu, horizontal keiretsu, *kinyū* keiretsu

bōnenkai 忘年会

* Japanese lit. ‘forget the old year’; *bou* (forget) + *nen* (year) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club).

n. an end-of-the-year party sponsored by the supervisor.

NOTE: A senior official makes a speech to thank the employees for their work. It is therefore an official event and compulsory. It plays an important role in maintaining harmony in the office.¹⁵

“Another tradition is an event called a ‘bonenkai’, or end of year party. Many companies hold a bonenkai for their employees while students, housewives, friends, etc. form their own groups to celebrate.” (BYU-GloWbE n.d.)

“Even office parties and end-of-the-year bonenkai parties often require suits.” (Chavez 2009: para. 15)

bu 部

* Japanese *bu* (section, division).

n. a department of a company.

NOTE: A department is made up of several sections (*ka*). The department head is called *buchō*. The departments in Japanese companies mostly resemble those of Western companies, but *sōmu-bu* and *jinji-bu* are exceptions.¹⁶

See also *ka*, *buchō*, *kokusai-bu*, *sōmu-bu*, *jinji-bu*

buchō 部長

* Japanese *bu* (section, division) + *chou* (head).

n. a department manager.

NOTE: It is the position below *senmu* and *jōmu* and above *kachō* in the company hierarchy. The responsibilities of a *buchō* are similar to those of a vice president in large US firms. Their main duties are to report to the president or his deputy, to participate in meetings of various divisions, and to communicate with the board.¹⁷

„According to the survey, which covered 110 major corporations, 107 said it is important to use women’s talents. But there are large gaps between those who have made it to “kacho” (section head) and the larger “bucho” (division head) positions.” (The Japan Times 2010: para. 4)

¹⁵ Alston et al 2005: 16; Picken 2009: 346

¹⁶ De Mente 2012: 68–69

¹⁷ Alston et al 2005: 29; Picken 2009: 38; Lazer et al 1990: 361

“After entering into a particular division or subsidiary, an employee may often serve under one *buchō* for his entire career, thereby developing a strong dependent relationship.” (Morgan et al 1991: 55)

See also *bu*, *bukachō*

bukachō 部課長

* Japanese *bu* (section, division) + *ka* (section) + *chō* (head).

n. the middle and lower management of a company that includes department and section heads and their assistants.¹⁸

See also *buchō*, *kachō*, *kakarichō*, *hirashain*, *yakuin*

bunkatsu hōshiki 分割方式

* Japanese lit. *bunkatsu* ‘division’, *hōshiki* ‘method’; *bun* (part; divide) + *katsu* (divide) + *hō* (direction; way of doing) + *shiki* (style).

n. a type of cell production in which four or five people work in a cell and perform specialised tasks.

Also called **divided production system**¹⁹

See also cell production

bureikō 無礼講

* Japanese lit. *burei* ‘impolite’; *bu* (without; nothing) + *rei* (etiquette; rite, ceremony) + *kō* (lecture).

n. an informal party where adhering to business etiquette is not compulsory.

NOTE: This includes for example regular drinking parties, end-of-the-year and New Year parties.²⁰

“There is a tradition in Japan known as “*bureiko*”, which basically means that when drinking usual manners can be broken. For example, addressing your superiors without adding their position (like *Tanaka shachō* (President Tanaka) or saying things to your superiors that you usually keep to yourself.” (Tokyo Life Navigator 1999: para. 3)

See also *nomikai*

¹⁸ De Mente 2012: 67

¹⁹ Isa et al 1999: 552; Haghirian 2010: 37

²⁰ De Mente 2012: 158

C

capital keiretsu

See *kinyū* keiretsu, *shihon* keiretsu

cell production

n. a lean production system in which a worker or a small team of not more than five people manufacture similar products in cells (small production units), which save time and costs and are able to respond flexibly to changes in demand.

NOTE: It is often combined with the system of *jidōka*. The three types of the cell production system are *bunkatsu hōshiki*, *hitori hōshiki* and *junkai hōshiki*.

Also called **multitask spiral line, one-man production line system, cellular manufacturing**²¹

“And since last year, robots have been helping to make Canon’s camera lenses. Before the switch, Canon used the conventional cell production style, which assigns one worker to multiple tasks. The new system is a man-machine cell production system.” (Goto 2014: para. 9)

“The most important system in final assembly plants, particularly in the electrical and information technology (IT) industries, has been cell production.” (Isa et al 1999: 549)

See also *jidōka*, *bunkatsu hōshiki*, *hitori hōshiki*, *junkai hōshiki*

cellular manufacturing

See cell production

chaku-chaku 着々

* Japanese lit. ‘load-load’; *chaku* (put on) + repetition.

n. a lean single-piece manufacturing technique, in which a worker takes the parts from one machine to the next, operating every machine throughout the production cycle.²²

“With the simple Chaku-Chaku line, the required quantities can also be achieved by deploying operators in a more flexible manner.” (Schloz: 20)

chase production system

See *junkai hōshiki*

chōrei 朝礼

* Japanese *chou* (morning) + *rei* (rite, ceremony).

n. the gathering of employees at the beginning of the workday.

²¹ Haghirian 2010: 36-37; Business Dictionary – cellular manufacturing

²² Business Dictionary – chaku-chaku; Gembutsu Consulting

NOTE: In larger companies divisions or teams have their own *chōrei*. This consists of the president's or division head's greeting, which may be followed by some physical exercises, the singing of the company anthem or reciting of the company slogan.²³

“This emotional identification with the company and the spirit of unity among the workers continue to be nurtured by chōrei or “morning pep-talk sessions”, and by company-sponsored recreation trips, cultural classes, sports activities, and even matchmaking and marriage counseling.” (Nishiyama 2000: 36)

chūken kigyō 中堅企業

* Japanese lit. *kigyō* ‘enterprise’; *chū* (middle) + *ken* (firm, solid) + *ki* (project) + *gyō* (work, business, industry).

n. a leading medium-sized enterprise (LME).

NOTE: This term distinguishes the LMEs from small, medium-sized and large companies.²⁴

“A warning to the chūken kigyō is the experience of two big firms, Canon and Nikon, against ASML, a Dutch company, in the market for steppers, the tools used to make computer chips.” (The Economist 2009: para. 27)

“These medium enterprises, known as Chūken Kigyō, have been gaining market share exactly at a time when Japanese end product manufacturers have been losing market share to South Korean and Taiwanese competitors.” (Kim 2014: para. 4)

chūshō kigyō 中小企業

* Japanese lit. *kigyō* ‘enterprise’; *chū* (middle) + *shō* (small) + *ki* (project) + *gyō* (work, business, industry).

n. small and medium enterprises (SME).

“The flagship of entrepreneurship, here, is the sector of chūshō kigyō – literally, “small and medium enterprises,” with an emphasis on smallness.” (Dana 1999: 63)

chūto saiyō 中途採用

* Japanese lit. *chūto* ‘midway’, *saiyō* ‘employment’;

chū (middle) + *to* (way, route) + *sai* (pick, gather) + *yō* (employ).

n. the recruitment of employees with work experience, as opposed to fresh university graduates as is the custom in Japan.

NOTE: It occurs when companies need to hire new employees before the usual time of recruitment.²⁵

“It is also widely believed that the labor market of the chūto saiyō workers is competitive and their job duration is much shorter than that of the workers in the internal labor market.” (Eguchi 2009: 11)

²³ Nonaka et al 1995: 150; Alston et al 2005: 149–150; Picken 2009: 346

²⁴ Ferguson 2003: VI

²⁵ Hasegawa 1986: 67

“Although it is possible to become a regular employee in some companies at a later point after a period of employment with another company, this path is both more unusual and more difficult, and it has even been given a special term: chuto saiyo or mid-career recruitment.” (Matsunaga 2000: 20)

See also *shinsotsu (ikkatsu) saiyō*

closed KK

See *kabushiki jōto seigen kaisha (JSKK)*

D

***daihyō torishimariyaku* 代表取締役**

* Japanese lit. *daihyō* ‘representative’, *torishimariyaku* ‘director’; *dai* (substitute) + *hyō* (express, show) + *tori* (take) + *shimari* (conclude; tighten) + *yaku* (service).
n. a representative director who has the right to act in the name of the company.²⁶

“He demanded at a shareholder meeting that he be named representative director (daihyō torishimariyaku) since, according to his calculations, he held even more shares than the firm’s president.” (Szymkowiak 2002: 53)

de-keiretsu-ization

n. the restructuring of keiretsu after the financial crisis of the 1990s in Japan.

NOTE: It does not mean the complete dissolution of keiretsu. The main banks of the six big keiretsu merged into four banks (Tokyo-Mitsubishi, Mitsui-Sumitomo, Mizuho, UFJ), which are no longer main banks, but financial holding companies that directly own and control former independent keiretsu member firms, thus intensifying the centrality of financial institutions in keiretsu.²⁷

“There is a clear divide between Toyota and Nissan. The former indicates the maintenance of group-centred inter-firm relations, while the latter is characterized by the advancement of de-keiretsu-ization.” (Kawai 2009: para. 19)

distribution keiretsu

See *ryūtsū keiretsu*

divided production system

See *bunkatsu hōshiki*

***dōki* 同期**

* Japanese lit. ‘the same period/class’; *dou* (same) + *ki* (term, period).

n. people who enter a company or school at the same time.²⁸

²⁶ De Mente 2012: 67

²⁷ Oh 2004: 78

²⁸ Jackson et al 2004: 59

“A douki is a cross between sibling and comrade — the unwritten agreement is that all douki will stick together, whatever happens.” (Shoji 2004: para. 19)

See also *dōkyūsei*, *dōryō*

dōkyūsei 同級生

* Japanese lit. ‘classmate’; *dou* (same) + *kyuu* (grade) + *sei* (student).

n. people who are in a non-hierarchical relationship in a company.²⁹

“These dokyusei have important, life-long bonding roles in Japanese companies and society.” (Chavez 2012: para. 5)

See also *dōki*, *dōryō*

dōryō 同僚

* Japanese lit. ‘colleague’; *dou* (same) + *ryou* (colleague).

n. a group of colleagues who join a company at the same time.

NOTE: The relationship of the *dōryō* is the only equal one in a Japanese company.

It is marked by the use of informal language among one another.³⁰

See also *dōki*, *dōkyūsei*

“A Japanese can usually only see himself in relation to other people in three ways. These are as an equal colleague (doryo), a junior (kohai) or a senior (sempai).” (Cotter 2011: 19–20)

E

enkai 宴会

* Japanese *en* (banquet) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club).

n. a business party or banquet.³¹

“But especially when the enkai is with business associates, the status or rank of each guest present is a huge consideration for how the evening will play out.”

(Japan Rider 2008: para. 3)

enterprise union

See *kigyōnai kumiai*

²⁹ Hagherian 2010: 19–20

³⁰ Hagherian 2010: 20

³¹ Alston et al 2005: 65

F

freeter フリーター

* derived from the English word ‘free’ and the German word ‘Arbeiter’.

n. a young person aged 15–34 who works voluntarily as a part-time or marginal labourer and changes jobs frequently, whose level of education is below average and who is not in the process of obtaining an education.³²

“The freeter phenomenon fuels the estimated 10,000 bands that play at hundreds of “Live Houses” throughout Tokyo each night.” (BYU-COCA 1990)

“But rather than being a manifestation of the problems bedevilling Japan’s economy, Mr Nambu believes, freeters are a solution to its ills.” (The Economist 2007b: para. 4)

fuku shachō 副社長

* Japanese *fuku* (secondary) + *sha* (company; society) + *chou* (head).

n. executive vice president.³³

“The two presidents are even adopting the English-language titles of “chief executive” and “chief operating officer”, rather than admit that one of them is shacho (the boss), and the other fuku-shacho (his deputy).” (Nicosia Business Review. 2011: para. 2)

Fuyō-kai 芙蓉会

* Japanese *fu* (lotus) + *you* (cotton rose) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club).

n. the presidents’ council (*shachōkai*) of Fuyō group.³⁴

“One day in September 1999, directly after the announcement to form Mizuho Holdings from Fuji Bank, DKB, and IBJ, it was reported that Fuji Bank quit serving as organizer of the regular presidential meeting, Fuyo-kai.” (Shimotani 2004: 198)

See also Big Six, keiretsu, *shachōkai*, *kai*

G

gaijin 外人

* Japanese lit. ‘foreigner’; *gai* (outside) + *jin* (human being).

1. *n.* an outsider.

“The distinction between insider and outsider, between Japanese and gaijin, is central to understanding the Japanese business machine.” (Morgan et al 1991: 69–70)

³² Abegglen 2006: 84

³³ Alston et al 2005: 155

³⁴ Lincoln et al 2004: 18

2. *adj.* non-Japanese.

NOTE: The term has had a derogatory connotation.³⁵

“When I arrived in Tokyo and began to staff my newspaper’s bureau, I found many young Japanese intrigued by the prospect of joining a gaijin company—an act that carried a whiff of individual risk and nonconformity, even of defiance.” (Smith 2011)

gaman 我慢

* Japanese lit. ‘patience’, ‘endurance’; *ga* (self) + *man* (arrogant).

n. a concept that refers to the ability to endure without complaining unpleasant things one cannot change immediately.³⁶

“In the past week three developments have cast doubt on the usefulness of Japan’s prevailing attitude of gaman, or endurance.” (The Economist 2011: para. 2)

“Gaman reflects a distinctively Japanese mentality, the direct consequence of geography and history in a country where the cycle of destruction and renewal is embedded in the national psyche.” (The Australian 2011: para. 7)

gambaru/ ganbaru 頑張る

* Japanese *gan* (stubborn) + *baru* (strain).

v. a concept that refers to making an effort to complete a task despite difficulties.

NOTE: It is used to encourage people to do their best as giving up or taking an easier path is seen as a weakness in Japanese society. It is often used in the expression of encouragement “*ganbatte kudasai*” (“Please do your best”, “keep trying”).³⁷

“It often seems that Japanese go to extremes to show that they have truly ganbaru-ed, put in the maximum effort.” (Kopp 2010: para. 3)

“Given the recent alarming upsurge of stress-related illness in Japan, perhaps the consequences of extreme ganbaru-ing need to be given further examination.” (Kopp 2010: para. 7)

gasshuku 合宿

* Japanese lit. ‘lodge together’; *ga* (combine; fit) + *shuku* (lodge).

n. a weekend retreat for employees.

NOTE: It is organised as a reward for good work or for raising the morale of the employees. It also serves as a training session as lectures on new techniques are held during the *gasshuku*. It is a means of developing and maintaining the *wa*

³⁵ Haghirian 2010: 56; De Mente 2012: 162

³⁶ Haghirian 2010: 15, 79

³⁷ Haghirian 2010: 15, 79; Alston et al 2005: 14, 30

(harmony) of an office. The term is also used in the field of sports in the meaning of a training camp.³⁸

“It is hard for a non-Japanese to realize how important such company-sponsored activities as the gasshuku weekend retreats are to the workers. Many Japanese corporate employees work long hours; nor do they like to take long vacations away from their jobs.” (Alston 1986: 45)

“Most Japanese companies therefore implement a number of operations to allow employees to meet and communicate in a relaxed manner. These activities include nomikai (dinners with co-workers after work), gasshuku (short excursions with co-workers), or frequent tea or coffee breaks.” (Girard et al 2010: 80)

gemba/ genba 現場

* Japanese *gen* (actual; appear) + *ba* (place).

n. the shop floor.³⁹

“As improvements are made on the Gemba (actual pace of work) involving the people who do the work and those who support them, solutions tend to be fact based, realistic, and useful to those involved.” (Rivera 2006: para. 10)

“Upstream staff must examine how their own particular function must be reformed first, so that existing Gemba conditions can be improved.” (KAIZEN Management Consulting Co., Ltd. n.d.: para. 8)

gemba/ genba attitude

See *genchi gembutsu*

gemba/ genba kaizen/ gemba/ genba-kaizen 現場改善

* Japanese *gen* (actual; appear) + *ba* (place) + *kai* (reform) + *zen* (good).

n. an action-oriented approach to management that involves activities carried out in the workplace with the focus on small changes that introduce improvements in a long-term perspective.⁴⁰

“Applied to any workplace Gemba-Kaizen means continuing improvement involving everyone - managers and workers alike.” (Rivera 2006: para. 4)

“The first step towards implementing Gemba Kaizen is to recruit team members from various departments to identify existing problems at the shop floor level.” (KAIZEN Management Consulting Co., Ltd. n.d.: para. 3)

See also *kaizen*, *teian kaizen*, *jishuken*

³⁸ Alston et al 2005: 16

³⁹ Haghirian 2010: 11

⁴⁰ Haghirian 2010: 5

gemba/ genba walk

n. a lean management practice, whereby leaders, managers and supervisors visit the *gemba*, i.e. the shop floor, in order to facilitate continuous improvement and process standardisation.⁴¹

“Many managers of big organizations have found that Gemba Walk is an effective tool to manage and lead their associates successfully.” (Fumat Business Solutions 2013: para. 1)

See also *gemba*, *kaizen*, *gemba kaizen*

***genchi gembutsu/ genbutsu* 現地現物**

* Japanese *gen* (actual; appear) + *chi* (ground; place) + *gen* + *butsu* (thing).
n. a policy that requires managers to become involved in the company’s daily operations by experiencing the work on a production site or in a business section for themselves and seeing the problems to be solved first-hand.

NOTE: It is used to train young university graduates who are entering a company.

Also called ***gemba/ genba attitude***⁴²

“In at least one important respect genchi genbutsu represents a fundamental difference between western and Japanese management styles—whereas in the West knowledge is gleaned and digested in the office or the boardroom, in Japan it is gleaned on the factory floor.” (The Economist 2009a: para. 3)

“Each professional is expected to spend time out in the field talking to car buyers. The Japanese have a name for it: genchi genbutsu -- go to the scene and confirm the actual happenings. Most big companies have something like it; what distinguishes Toyota is that its executives actually listen and have turned those insights into profits.” (BYU-COCA 2007)

See also *kamishibai*, Total Quality Control

***genkyoku* 原局**

* Japanese *gen* (original) + *kyoku* (bureau).

n. a bureau in a ministry or agency that is responsible for the policies within a certain industry.⁴³

“The genkyoku are responsible for every aspect of an industry’s development. Though the genkyoku formulate policy and establish the same committees that evaluate and approve of them, the interests of the business sector are strongly represented via hundreds of industry associations.” (BYU-COCA 1994)

⁴¹ Bowen n.d.

⁴² Haghirian 2010: 10; the Official Website of Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky, Inc. n.d; Insightout 2007: para. 18

⁴³ Komiya 1999: 89; Witt 2011: 94

genryō keiei 減量経営

* Japanese lit. ‘slim management’; *gen* (decrease) + *ryou* (quantity) + *kei* (manage) + *ei* (manage).

n. a management strategy that aims at rationalisation and the reduction of costs at the time of recession.

NOTE: It was implemented during the oil crisis of the 1970s.⁴⁴

“The main concern of Japanese firms in the mid-1970s was how to overcome the first negative growth experienced since the end of the war, which was brought on by the first oil shock. One step they took in this direction was to ‘slim down’ (genryo keiei) by reducing the amount of external debt and the number of employees.” (Westney 1994: 154)

gentei 限定

* Japanese *gen* (limit) + *tei* (fix).

n. a limited or special edition.

NOTE: It refers to product adaptations that are on sale for a short time.⁴⁵

“And a word that sends consumers flocking to stores is gentei, Japanese for ‘limited edition.’” (Hall 2007: para. 3)

“The gentei phenomenon has made it harder for companies to build a brand around a few signature products.” (Hall 2007: para. 7)

giri 義理

* Japanese *gi* (righteousness) + *ri* (reason; basic principle).

n. an obligation or duty to one’s superiors.

NOTE: It refers to social debts that one has because of one’s rank or position in a group.⁴⁶

“Often when scandals erupt, it is the president of the company who resigns -- even if he didn't have any direct connection -- out of a sense of giri, or a duty to fulfill social obligations.” (Japanese Culture: A Primer For Newcomers 2004: para. 27)

See also on

GK

See *gōdō gaisha*

GMK

See *gōmei gaisha*

⁴⁴ Seiyama 1989: 65

⁴⁵ Haghirian 2010: 109

⁴⁶ Jackson et al 2004: 81; Alston et al 2005: 8-9

***gōdō gaisha/ kaisha* (GK) 合同会社**

* Japanese lit. *goudou* ‘combination’, ‘union’, *kaisha* ‘company’; *gou* (combine; fit) + *dou* (same) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club) + *sha* (company; society).
n. a limited liability company.

NOTE: This type of company was replaced by *yūgen gaisha* in 2006 with the implementation of the new Commercial Code of Japan. The liability of members is limited by their contribution to the capital.⁴⁷

“GK is a new system in Japan, so it is still not really trusted by corporations here. Most big companies in Japan still prefer to work with KK, especially if you have a small company or a startup.” (How To Start A Business In Japan 2013: para. 11)
See also *kabushiki gaisha* (KK), *yūgen gaisha*, *mochibun kaisha*

***gōmei gaisha/ kaisha* (GMK) 合名会社**

* Japanese lit. *kaisha* ‘company’; *gou* (combine; fit) + *mei* (name) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club) + *sha* (company; society).
n. an unlimited partnership; a general partnership, in which one or more of the partners have unlimited liability.⁴⁸

“Both unlimited partnerships (Gomei-Kaisha) and limited partnerships (Goshi-Kaisha) are granted corporate status under the Companies Act, but they are rarely chosen in practice because equity participants bear unlimited rather than limited liability.” (JETRO n.d.: para. 3)
See also *gōshi gaisha*, *mochibun kaisha*

***gōshi gaisha/ kaisha* (GSK) 合資会社**

* Japanese lit. *kaisha* ‘company’; *gou* (combine; fit) + *shi* (resources) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club) + *sha* (company; society).
n. a limited partnership.

NOTE: There are two types of members: at least one partner has unlimited liability (a general partner), the others may have liability limited to their contribution to the capital (silent partners).⁴⁹

“But because LLCs did not exist in Japan back then, Okayasu, formerly of game giant Sega Corp., registered his company as a limited partnership, or “goshi gaisha.” Limited partnerships are similar to LLCs but make the owner, in this case Okayasu, personally liable for all the debt his company takes on.” (Takahara 2006: para. 2)
See also *gōmei gaisha*, *mochibun kaisha*

⁴⁷ Company Formation Japan

⁴⁸ Company Formation Japan; Lloyd 2008; Majima n.d.

⁴⁹ Company Formation Japan; Webster’s Online Dictionary; Majima n.d.; Lloyd 2008

gosōsendan hōshiki/ gosōsendan-hōshiki 護送船団方式

* Japanese lit. *gosou* ‘convoy’, *sendan* ‘fleet’, *houshiki* ‘method’;
go (protect) + *sou* (send) + *sen* (ship) + *dan* (body, group) + *hou* (direction; way of doing) + *shiki* (style).

n. a system of regulation that aims at making all of the firms in the financial industry develop at the same pace.

NOTE: This creates close ties between the Ministry of Finance and banks.⁵⁰

“In the current Japanese trope, the Gososendan-hoshiki consists of strong and weak banks; the strong banks hold afloat the weak ones. By breaking up the convoy, central bankers around the world hope to allow the Japanese banks weakened by bad loans to sink and the strong to survive.” (Safire 1998: para. 13)

GSK

See *gōshi gaisha*

gyōsei shidō 行政指導

* Japanese lit. *gyousei* ‘administration’, *shidou* ‘guidance’; *gyou* (go; act) + *sei* (political administration) + *shi* (finger; point) + *dou* (guide).

n. guidance given by government officials to private companies, both formally and informally.

NOTE: It includes forcing or persuading company executives to adhere to policies that are not required by law but are deemed necessary by government officials. There is considerable moral pressure to follow the guidelines.

Also called **administrative guidance**⁵¹

“In fact, the LDP old guard, in an attempt to shore up sagging share prices in Tokyo, has reverted to its traditional pressure tactics to steer banks away from unwinding their vast blocks of cross-held stocks. This “gyosei shido,” or administrative guidance, has long been a symbol of Japan’s old and opaque style of decision-making.” (Kubo 2000: para. 17)

See also *madoguchi shidō*

H

habatsu 派閥

* Japanese lit. ‘clique’; *ha* (sect; dispatch) + *batsu* (clique).

n. a small informal group or clique in a Japanese organisation.

NOTE: There is rivalry between *habatsu*, but not within them.⁵²

⁵⁰ Malcolm 2001: 68; Kono et al 2001:204; Sakai 2004: 45

⁵¹ Alston et al 2005: 111; De Mente 2012: 164; Picken 2009: 105

⁵² Alston et al 2005: 150

“It is true that different school cliques or family groups can become habatsu (factions within a company) because they tend to treat faction members much more favourably than nonfaction members.” (Nishiyama 2000: 33)

“Habatsu are the settings for change and group rivalries.” (Alston et al 2005: 150)

haichi tenkan 配置転換

* Japanese lit. *haichi* ‘placement’, *tenkan* ‘conversion’, ‘switch’;
hai (distribute) + *chi* (place) + *ten* (turn) + *kan* (exchange).

n. a system of job rotation, in which employees work in various departments of the company, obtain knowledge of different fields and acquire an understanding of the company as a whole, as opposed to specialising in one area.

NOTE: This system helps the employees to identify with the entire company.⁵³

“More than 60% of Japanese firms – and over 80% of banking, financial and insurance firms – practice haichi tenkan.” (Haghirian 2010: 28)

haken 派遣

* Japanese *ha* (sect; dispatch) + *ken* (dispatch).

n. a temporary dispatch worker.

NOTE: This style of contract employment is more restrictive than the *ukeoi* style of employment. A *haken* worker has to pay into the National Health and Pension systems, does not have tax advantages, and the types of work allowed are limited.⁵⁴

“More and more manufacturing companies are bringing in contract workers (ukeoi) to have them work like temporary workers (haken) — as if dispatched from staffing agencies — but without haken benefits.” (The Japan Times 2006: para. 1)

See also *ukeoi*

Hakusui-kai 白水会

* Japanese *haku* (white) + *sui* (water) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club).

n. the presidents’ council (*shachōkai*) of Sumitomo group.⁵⁵

“Sometime in 1951, the meetings became organized on a more systematic basis among Sumitomo companies, resulting in formation of the Hakusui-kai, or White Water Club.” (Gerlach 1992: 105)

See also Big Six, keiretsu, *shachōkai*, *kai*

hanko 判子

* Japanese lit. ‘seal’; *han* (judge) + *ko* (child).

n. the personal seal used instead of a signature.⁵⁶

⁵³ Haghirian 2010: 28, 30

⁵⁴ Haghirian 2010: 145; Wahl 2009: para. 3–4

⁵⁵ Lincoln et al 2004: 18

⁵⁶ Picken 2009: 347

“In the processes of administration, the hanko of all relevant officials is required, with the president being the final one.” (Picken 2009: 347)

“A “hanko” personal seal is a necessary item for most adults in Japan, serving the same role as a signature in the West.” (Nakamura 2007: para. 1)

hanseikai / hansei kai/ hansei-kai 反省会

* Japanese lit. *hansei* ‘reflection’, ‘introspection’; *han* (counter, oppose) + *sei* (introspect) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club).

n. a meeting held after the completion of a project or task in order to discuss possible improvements that would lead to a higher level of quality.

NOTE: Such a meeting typically includes an analysis of the task, its success and the performance of the team members, feedback and a discussion of possible improvements for future projects. A task is considered completed only after the *hanseikai* has been carried out.⁵⁷

“Since a hanseikai can last a few hours, it is held right after the end of a task, when memory is still fresh and all members have ideas about how to improve the process in the future.” (Haghirian 11–12)

See also Total Quality Control

haragei 腹芸

* Japanese *hara* (belly) + *gei* (art).

n. an implicit manner of communication.

NOTE: According to traditional belief, the stomach is the centre of one’s emotions. *Haragei* can be a means of perceiving the thoughts of other people, but can also be used to deceive others. As opposed to *ishin-denshin*, in the case of *haragei* hidden messages are conveyed deliberately. The use of silence as a response is an example of *haragei*.⁵⁸

“He thought that such Japanese concepts as haragei, ishindenshin, tatemaie and honne, which some foreigners regard as a form of Japanese hypocrisy, were superior to rational argument as a means of communication.” (Cortazzi 2008: para. 16)

See also *ishin-denshin*

heijunka 平準化

* Japanese lit. *heijun* ‘level’; *hei* (flat, even; calm) + *jun* (standard) + *ka* (change into).

n. production levelling; a technique of just-in-time management that is aimed at levelling out the workload by producing the same variety of products every day by

⁵⁷ Haghirian 2010: 11

⁵⁸ Jackson et al 2004: 28; De Mente 2012: 165; Davies et al 2002: 103, 105–106

means of constantly producing several different products on the same line, thus helping to reduce inventory.⁵⁹

“The Heijunka schedule should specify what needs to be done during each minute of the available production time (excluding planned downtime for meetings, breaks, etc).” (Vidal 2011: para. 12)

See also *heijunka* box, just-in-time

***heijunka* box**

n. a visual scheduling tool used for production levelling.

NOTE: It consists of a grid of boxes with coloured cards (kanban cards) that give a clear overview of the tasks coming up in the production process. It is usually divided into horizontal rows representing different products and vertical columns representing time periods.⁶⁰

“Toyota uses a heijunka box to achieve the heijunka style efficiencies; this is basically a visual scheduling board that shows the different demand levels for certain products.” (BusinessKnowledgeSource.com. n.d. b)

See also *heijunka*, kanban

***hirashain* 平社員**

* Japanese *hira* (flat, even; calm) + *sha* (company; society) + *in* (member).

n. an employee without rank.⁶¹

“The hira-shain, or ordinary worker, is mainly involved in decision-making through quality circles and the suggestion system or in other limited ways that have direct implications for their jobs.” (Taplin 1995: 28)

See also *bukachō*, *yakuin*

***hitori hōshiki* 一人方式**

* Japanese lit. *hitori* ‘one person’, *hōshiki* ‘method’; *hito-* (one) + *-ri* (human being) + *hou* (direction; way of doing) + *shiki* (style).

n. a type of cell production in which a single person carries out all of the necessary tasks in a cell.

Also called **one-man production system**⁶²

“A number of quality circles were set up to discuss the issues and decided that the largest job satisfaction would come from job enrichment so a one-man production system was set up whereby each worker engaged in assembling a whole passenger car. The productivity increased 100%.” (Hignett et al 2005: 205)

See also cell production

⁵⁹ Haghirian 2010: 33–34

⁶⁰ Manufacturing Terms – heijunka box

⁶¹ De Mente 2012: 67

⁶² Isa et al 1999: 552; Haghirian 2010: 37

honne 本音

* Japanese *hon* (basis, origin, root) + *ne* (sound).

n. one's true feelings and actual private opinions that cannot always be voiced in public or in business situations.

NOTE: *Honne* can in some cases be expressed in a firmly established business relationship.⁶³

"Japan's "honne" and "tatemae" approach to some foreign policy issues has had poor results." (Clark 2008)

"The honne (real reason) of the program is to legally let small and medium Japanese companies import cheap labor." (Brasor 2007: para. 2)

"Unlike many people who hide behind their tatemae social mask, Osakans wear their honne inner selves on their sleeves." (Moriguchi 2001: para. 14)

See also *tatemae*

honsha 本社

* Japanese lit. 'head office'; *hon* (basis, origin, root) + *sha* (company; society).

n. a pre-war holding company of a zaibatsu.⁶⁴

"Within the six main groups, three have clear and direct connections to zaibatsu that dominated the Japanese economy during the prewar and wartime periods: the Mitsubishi, Mitsui, and Sumitomo groups all have at their center most of the companies that were first-line subsidiaries of the zaibatsu holding company, the honsha." (Gerlach 1992: 81)

See also *zaibatsu*

hōrensō/hō-ren-sō ホウレンソウ

* an abbreviation deriving from the Japanese words *hōkoku* (報告, reporting), *renraku* (連絡, communication) and *sōdan* (相談, consultation)

n. a reporting system consisting of three elements (reporting, communication and consultation) that form the foundation of Japanese business communication, with teamwork being viewed as the basis of success.⁶⁵

"Japanese take it as a given that ho-ren-so is a good way of working and that it is common to people from other countries. They often expect their American colleagues to do ho-ren-so, without realizing that it's not natural to them." (Kopp 2008: para. 8)

horizontal keiretsu

n. a type of keiretsu that consists of non-hierarchical member firms specialising in various industries, especially in the fields of banking, securities, trading and

⁶³ Haghirian 2010: 78; Alston et al 2005: 19, 33

⁶⁴ Oh 2004: 28

⁶⁵ Chapagain; Tokyo Work Life

transport, not general production, and that is characterised by cross-shareholding, taking loans from group financial institutions (including the main bank), exchanging board members and selling to and buying from other firms in the group, in particular the group trading company.

NOTE: This system developed after the dissolution of the zaibatsu to prevent takeovers of companies. Cross-shareholding of stock, financial transfers and administration by the presidential council (*shachōkai*) are the factors binding the members together. The term ‘horizontal’ may create confusion because in English it refers to rivals in a single industry, while in the case of this term it refers to the non-hierarchical relationship of the member firms. The big six keiretsu belong to this category.⁶⁶

Also called **yoko keiretsu** 横系列

* *yoko* (sideways) + *kei* (system; lineage) + *retsu* (row);

intermarket keiretsu;

kigyō shūdan 企業集團

* Japanese lit. *kigyō* ‘enterprise’, *shūdan* ‘group’; *ki* (project) + *gyō* (work, business, industry) + *shū* (collect) + *dan* (body, group).

“Typical of a Japanese horizontal keiretsu is Mitsubishi where the Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi sits at the top of the keiretsu.” (Twomey 2009: para. 5)

“Large Japanese firms are part of horizontal keiretsu clusters centered around a main bank. These corporate groups or *kigyō shūdan* played an important role in the allocation of financial resources.” (van Acht 2004: 5)

See also keiretsu, vertical keiretsu, Big Six, *kabushiki sōgo mochiai*, *shachōkai*

hōshin kanri 方針管理

* Japanese lit. *hōshin* ‘direction’, *kanri* ‘management’; *hō* (direction; way of doing) + *shin* (needle) + *kan* (exercise control) + *ri* (reason; basic principle).

n. a systematic planning method for determining the long-term aims of a company and ensuring the successful operation of the business with the aim of continuous improvement and while encouraging the involvement of all the employees.

Also called **hōshin planning**⁶⁷

“Hoshin Kanri is not as well-known or “popular” as some of the other lean tools – but it is an extremely valuable tool.” (Lean Production n.d.: para. 18)

hōshin planning

See *hōshin kanri*

⁶⁶ Okumura 2000: 39, 135–136, Lincoln et al 2004: 17; Oh 2004: 27–28; Mokyr 2003: 216; van Acht 2004: 4; Hoshi 1994: 289; Sakai 2004: 45

⁶⁷ Elmer 2005

I

iitoko dori/ iitoko-dori いいとこ取り

* Japanese lit. *iitoko* (good points) + *dori* (take).

n. the practice of taking over the best aspects of ideas or products and Japanising them.

NOTE: This is grounded in the Japanese companies' fear of high risks and a favouring approach to imitating the ideas of others, with the latter being considered a safe way of securing success.⁶⁸

“Through the process of iitoko-dori, the most effective elements of Western technology were brought into Japan and made its own, and this contributed enormously to the modernization of the country.” (Davies et al 2002: 129)

insei 院政

* originally referred to a retired emperor who continued to exert an influence on the ruler of the country; *in* (institution) + *sei* (political administration).

n. a retired official of a company or a politician.

NOTE: They maintain their prestige, contacts and influence in their company or organisation, offer advice and are of assistance owing to their experience.⁶⁹

“While the insei system has been very detrimental to Japan because it hides and protects the sources of power from public scrutiny and responsibility, it nevertheless has been very effective as a short-term weapon against foreign interests in both the political and economic sphere.” (De Mente 2003: 130)

intermarket keiretsu

See horizontal keiretsu

ippanshoku/ ippan shoku 一般職

* Japanese lit. *ippan* ‘general’; *i-* (one) + *pan* (sort) + *shoku* (employment).

n. the administrative track; the career track for employees who are given clerical tasks and are expected to support employees in the managerial track, and who have little hope of rising to a higher position.⁷⁰

“They provided day care centers, scrapped company uniforms and attempted to end the sogoshoku-ippanshoku division.” (The Japan Times 2010a)

See also *sōgōshoku, jimushoku*

ishin-denshin/ ishin denshin 以心伝心

* Japanese *i* (by means of) + *shin* (heart) + *den* (transmit) + *shin*.

⁶⁸ Haghirian 2010: 85, 142

⁶⁹ Alston et al 2005: 49, 150; De Mente 2012: 168

⁷⁰ Haghirian 2010: 101–102

n. a non-verbal manner of communication that is unintentional in nature.

NOTE: Particularly older Japanese people tend to prefer this way of communication. It is important in social as well as business communication in Japan.⁷¹

“But the telling part of the survey is revealed when you look at the reasons given by those Japanese who viewed the presence of non-Japanese coworkers as a liability. Fifty percent of them gave this as their reason: the inability to have Japanese-style ishindenshin communication.” (Pulvers 2010: para. 6–7)

See also *haragei*

J

JETRO [ˈdʒɛtrəʊ]⁷²

n. Japan External Trade Organization; an organization that promotes Japanese international trade.

NOTE: Its employees frequently act as introducers when it comes to the export of Japanese products.⁷³

“In January-May this year, Japanese businesses’ direct investment in Asean countries reached a record 8.24 billion dollars, a 70% jump on the year and roughly double that in China, according to Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO).” (Nikkei Asian Review 2013: para. 6)

jidōka 自動化

* Japanese lit. *jidou* ‘automatic movement’; *ji* (self) + *dou* (move) + *ka* (change into).

n. a system in which automatic detectors inspect every product that has been manufactured, stopping production and notifying workers if a defect is detected.

NOTE: It is one of the two main pillars of Toyota Production System (TPS).

Also called **autonomation**⁷⁴

“At the conference, Anglo-Saxon manufacturers for whom Skegness represented the Far East explained how lean concepts such as kaizen (continuous improvement) and jidoka (automation with a human touch) had saved their businesses.” (Guthrie 2006: para. 3)

“Lean production has given TPS a bad name, by associating it with cost reduction and job cuts. Yet people were always at its centre. Taiichi Ohno, Toyoda’s chief

⁷¹ Alston et al 2005: 3; De Mente 2012: 169; Davies 2002: 105

⁷² Oxford Dictionary of Abbreviations 1998

⁷³ Alston et al 2005: 37–38

⁷⁴ Haghiriyan 2010: 34–35; 1000 Ventures; the Official Website of Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky, Inc.

production engineer, called it “autonomation” – or “automation with a human touch”.” (Hill 2013: para. 6)

See also Toyota Production System (TPS), *andon*, cell production

***jimushoku/jimu shoku* 事務職**

* Japanese *jimu* ‘clerical work’; *ji* (affair, matter; abstract thing) + *mu* (duty) + *shoku* (employment).

n. clerical staff who are responsible for administrative tasks and whose career opportunities are restricted.

NOTE: Employees of this category are mostly female.⁷⁵

“If one wants to switch from jimushoku to sogoshoku, if such an option is even available and is not openly discouraged, it requires jumping a hurdle such as passing a test.” (Kopp 2013: para. 3)

See also *sōgōshoku*, *ippanshoku*

***jinji bu/jinjibu* 人事部**

* Japanese lit. *jinji* ‘human affairs’; *jin* (human being) + *ji* (affair, matter; abstract thing) + *bu* (section, division).

n. personnel department.

NOTE: It is usually larger and has more power than such departments in Western firms. Decisions regarding recruitment, assigning positions and job rotation are made there.⁷⁶

“Creation and sustenance of organizational culture in a Japanese organization is the responsibility of the human resources division or Jinjibu in Japanese.” (Miroshnik 2013: 262)

***jinji idō/jinji-idō* 人事異動**

* Japanese lit. *jinji* ‘human affairs’, *idou* ‘transfer’; *jin* (human being) + *ji* (affair, matter; abstract thing) + *i* (different) + *dou* (move).

n. personnel transfer.

NOTE: Every year in March, before the end of the fiscal year, Japanese companies appoint some of the employees to a new position in another department or division in order to provide them with experience in different fields of work.⁷⁷

“One of the unique factors of jinji ido which is often surprising to non-Japanese is that it is planned centrally by the human resource management department.” (Kopp 2013a: para. 3)

***jinmyaku/jin-myaku* 人脈**

* Japanese *jin* (human being) + *myaku* (vein; pulse).

⁷⁵ Kopp 2013: para. 3

⁷⁶ De Mente 2012: 70

⁷⁷ De Mente 2012: 171; Picken 2009: 348

n. a network of personal contacts that is necessary for finding employment, business partners or clients.⁷⁸

“It is often said that the biggest asset that executives can have in Japan is a wide circle of jin-myaku.” (De Mente 2012: 172)

jirei 辞令

* Japanese *ji* (word) + *rei* (command).

n. a document that is issued by the personnel department, mostly in spring, when a new employee is hired or when employees are transferred or fired or when they retire.

NOTE: In the case of recruitment, it marks the beginning of the relationship between an employee and a company, but does not give a specific job description as it is not necessary because of the system of job rotation in Japanese companies.⁷⁹

“In Japan, the kind of employment contract found in Western countries, one with specific job descriptions, is very uncommon. For example, a jirei or “letter of appointment” simply says, “You will be assigned to the Marketing Department.”” (Nishiyama 2000: 173)

jishu kanri 自主管理

* Japanese lit. ‘self-management’; *ji* (self) + *shu* (main; master, owner) + *kan* (exercise control) + *ri* (reason; basic principle).

n. voluntary activities of small groups of employees who meet regularly to find solutions to problems in their specific field of work.⁸⁰

“A critical element in the operation and practice of the kaban system is the network of human relationships among managers, workers, and supervisors, such as Japan’s software management systems of quality control, and jishu kanri — literally “autonomous management” — conducted through voluntary groups of workers contributing to managerial functions.” (McMillan et al 1998: 80)

jishuken 自主研

* Japanese *ji* (self) + *shu* (main; master, owner) + *ken* (grind, polish; research).

n. a study group in which managers and executives meet to discuss what needs continuous improvement, to foster lean manufacturing by trying to determine the influence of different types of waste on production, and to reduce waste.⁸¹

“When integrated into plant-wide long-term continuous improvement, Jishukens can be extremely effective at developing management’s ability to conduct and to

⁷⁸ Haghirian 2010: 145; Free Dictionary: Financial Dictionary - *jinmyaku*

⁷⁹ Haghirian 2010: 22–23; De Mente 2012: 172

⁸⁰ 1000Ventures; Lean Terms and Definitions

⁸¹ Lean Terms and Definitions; Ward 2008: 229

teach others to conduct daily kaizen and problem solving.” (Marksberry et al 2010: para. 3)

See also kaizen, *gemba kaizen*

JIT

See just-in-time

***jōmu* (torishimariyaku) 常務(取締役)**

* Japanese lit. *torishimariyaku* ‘director’; *jou* (normal; regular) + *mu* (duty) + *tori* (take) + *shimari* (conclude; tighten) + *yaku* (service).

n. a managing director, a junior executive vice-president.

NOTE: It is the position below *shachō*, *fuku shachō* and *senmu torishimariyaku* in the company hierarchy.⁸²

“*The executive managing director (jōmu torishimariyaku) is the top executive of a division within the company and also reports to the president.*” (Nishiyama 2000: 120)

See also *senmu torishimariyaku*

***junkai hōshiki* 巡回方式**

* Japanese lit. *junkai* ‘tour’, ‘round’, *hōshiki* ‘method’; *jun* (make the rounds; turn round) + *kai* (turn round) + *hou* (direction; way of doing) + *shiki* (style).

n. a type of cell production in which two or three employees carry out all operations in turn and nearly at the same speed.⁸³

Also called **chase production system**

See also cell production

just-in-time (JIT)

n. a management philosophy aimed at eliminating production waste in order to reduce inventory and maintain low storage expenses by means of scheduling the production process so that all the required items are supplied exactly when they are needed.

NOTE: It is one of the two pillars of the Toyota Production System, where it is founded on three principles: the Pull System, continuous flow processing and *takt* time.

Also called **lean management, lean production**⁸⁴

“*The authors blame a complacent reliance on the globalised economy and the widespread adoption of “just-in-time” business models that stress lean, ultra-*

⁸² Lazer et al 1990: 361; Alston et al 2005: 155

⁸³ Isa et al 1999: 552; Haghirian 2010: 37

⁸⁴ 1000Ventures; Oxford Business English Dictionary; Haghirian 2010: 32, 34, 37; the Official Website of Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky, Inc.

efficient operations with little slack built in for any unforeseen circumstances or stock held in reserve.” (Harvey 2012: para. 2)

See also *kanban*, *kaizen*, *heijunka*, Toyota Production System, Toyotism

jūyaku 重役

* Japanese lit. ‘double-office-holder’; *juu* (heavy; duplicate) + *yaku* (service).

n. a high executive.

NOTE: The term refers to the *shachō*, *fuku shachō*, *senmu*, *jōmu* and heads of departments, who are all also referred to as *torishimariyaku* (director).⁸⁵

“A foreign executive in Japan has been called *gaijin-juyaku*, or an executive from an outside or foreign country.” (Hamada 2008: 43)

K

ka 課

* Japanese *ka* (section).

n. a section in a company.

NOTE: It is the basic organisational unit in large Japanese firms. A section comprises a section chief (*kachō*), generally two assistants or supervisors (*kakarichō*) and several staff members. Sections are parts of a department (*bu*). Work is assigned to the section as a whole.⁸⁶

See also *kachō*, *kakarichō*

kabushiki gaisha/ kaisha (KK) 株式会社

* Japanese lit. *kaisha* ‘company’; *kabu* (stock) + *shiki* (style) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club) + *sha* (company; society).

n. a joint-stock company; a type of corporation that is run by shareholders with limited liability and by directors who are appointed by the shareholders.

NOTE: It is the most common type of company in Japan. It is the equivalent of a C-corporation in the USA and a public limited company in the UK. There are two types of *kabushiki gaisha*: closed (*kabushiki jōto seigen kaisha*) and open (*kōkai kabushiki kaisha*).⁸⁷

“A foreign company establishing a subsidiary company in Japan must establish it either as a joint-stock corporation (*Kabushiki-Kaisha*), limited liability company (*Godo-Kaisha (LLC)*), or a similar entity set by Japan's Corporate Law.” (Startup Overseas n.d.: para. 16)

⁸⁵ De Mente 2012: 66; Lazer et al 1990: 361

⁸⁶ Hasegawa 1986: 49; De Mente 2012: 68

⁸⁷ Lloyd 2008: para. 3;Majima n.d.; Venture Japan n.d.

“For a K.K, you are required to have a minimum share capital of 1 JPY and there are no limitations to the number of shareholders a K.K may have, functioning similarly to a Western corporation.” (Startup Overseas n.d.: para. 16)

See also *kabushiki jōto seigen kaisha* (JSKK), *kōkai kabushiki kaisha* (KKK), *gōdō gaisha*

***kabushiki jōto seigen kaisha* (JSKK) 株式譲渡制限会社**

* Japanese lit. *jouto* ‘transfer’, *seigen* ‘limitation’, *kaisha* ‘company’; *kabu* (stock) + *shiki* (style) + *jou* (cede, give up) + *to* (cross) + *sei* (system; control) + *gen* (limit) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club) + *sha* (company; society).

n. a closed joint stock company; a type of joint stock company (*kabushiki gaisha*), in which the shares cannot be transferred to a third party if the shareholders do not agree to it.

NOTE: It may be run by a single director, without a board of directors.⁸⁸

Also called **closed KK**

“The JSKK is also called a Closed KK and appears to be the most flexible vehicle for smaller start-ups.” (International Business Publications, USA 2012: 26)

See also *kōkai kabushiki kaisha*, *kabushiki gaisha*

***kabushiki (sōgo) mochiai* 株式 (相互) 持合い**

* Japanese *kabu* (stock) + *shiki* (style) + *sou* (mutual) + *go* (reciprocal) + *mochi* (hold) + *ai* (combine; fit).

n. cross-shareholding of stocks.

NOTE: This is a characteristic of the keiretsu member firms which has provided member companies and main banks with a means of holding the corporate group together and has prevented hostile takeovers of the members. The practice whereby companies mutually own each other’s stocks is characteristic of Japanese business.⁸⁹

“Corporations may have purchased equity because they saw a need for mutual stockholding (*kabushiki-mochiai*) to confirm business ties among firms or as insurance against takeovers.” (Lincoln 1988: 133)

See also keiretsu, horizontal keiretsu

***kachō* 課長**

* Japanese *ka* (section) + *chou* (head).

n. the head of a section (*ka*).

NOTE: It is the position below *buchō* in the company hierarchy.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Company Formation Japan. n.d: para. 5–6; Lloyd 2008: para. 3

⁸⁹ Okazaki et al 1993: 8; Oh 2004: 28, 62; Okumura 2000: 42

⁹⁰ Alston et al 2005: 155; Lazer et al 1990: 361

“Often the “kacho” is expected to take care of his subordinates over and beyond their official work hours and outside their official workplace – to be matchmaker, for example.” (Kaynak et al 1995: 35)

See also *ka, bukachō*

kai 会

* Japanese *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club).

n. a meeting.⁹¹

NOTE: Frequently used in compound nouns.

“The presidents of the member companies of a capital keiretsu regularly hold meetings in which they discuss the politics of the group. The basis of this kai is the alternately held stock of the firm. The kai aids the integration to the inside and the symbolism to the outside of the internal network boundaries.” (Richter 2000: 22–23)

See also *kaigi, Fuyō-kai, Hakusui-kai, Nimoku-kai, Kinyō-kai, Sankin-kai, Sansui-kai*

kaichō 会長

* Japanese *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club) + *chou* (head).

n. chairman, chairman of the board.

NOTE: It designates the position of a former president (*shachō*) or founder of a company who has given the right to make decisions to the new president and may act as an advisor before retirement.⁹²

“If you are a sarariman, you must raise the company’s performance so you can impress the kaicho (chairman) and sodanyaku (top advisers) who made you a boss.” (Otake 2008: para. 55)

kaigi 会議

* Japanese *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club) + *gi* (discuss).

n. a meeting.

NOTE: The aim and composition of a Japanese meeting differs from the western meeting, which usually consists of a discussion and the drawing of conclusions. In Japan, decisions cannot be made without the consent of everyone. Meetings are held frequently and everything is discussed in detail. This makes meetings very time-consuming. A Japanese-style meeting is thus meant for getting to know your

⁹¹ Richter 2000: 22

⁹² Alston et al 2005: 155; De Mente 2012: 67; Lazer et al 1990: 361; Nishiyama 2000: 120

business partners and building a friendly relationship as well as exchanging information.⁹³

“Japanese kaigi (meetings) are very strict in regard to the traditional rule of seating arrangements.” (Haghirian 2010: 132)

See also *kai*

***kaikaku* 改革**

* Japanese *kai* (reform) + *kaku* (reform).

n. a process of rapid and radical reform and innovation, sometimes used in preparation for kaizen activities.

NOTE: *Kaikaku* projects are mostly put into practice by managers and engineers and include for instance buying new equipment, changing area layouts, and work procedure.⁹⁴

“A popular pun in Japanese is to take the word kaikaku (reform, or change for the better) and turn it into kaiaku (to change for the worse.)” (Clark 2006: para. 1)

See also *kaizen*

***kaisha* 会社**

* Japanese *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club) + *sha* (company; society).

n. a private company.

NOTE: For the Japanese employees the company holds more importance than their occupation, which makes them loyal to the company.⁹⁵

“To join a large Japanese corporation as a junior executive, Hiro had to be a new graduate of a top-ranked Japanese college. He knew he would be disqualified immediately if he did not join a kaisha directly after graduation, if he attended a college outside the elite circle, or if he failed to graduate at all.” (Yoshimura et al 1997: 16)

“After-hours are typically spent with co-workers. This close camaraderie is an essential part of the team-building process that makes the kaisha a corporate family.” (Morgan et al 1991: 66)

***kaishashugi* 会社主義**

* Japanese lit. ‘companyism’, ‘company first-ism’; *kaisha* ‘company’, *shugi* ‘principle’, ‘ideology’; *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club) + *sha* (company; society) + *shu* (main; master, owner) + *gi* (righteousness).

n. the characteristic of Japanese corporate culture whereby management as well as regular staff stay loyal to the company and devote themselves to generating a profit for the company.

⁹³ Haghirian 2010: 127–128, 133; De Mente 2012: 172; Picken 2009: 145

⁹⁴ 1000Ventures; Lean Terms and Definitions

⁹⁵ Abegglen 2006: 7; De Mente 2012: 60–61

NOTE: Loyalty to a company is of utmost importance in Japan. It is established with the aid of on-the-job training and lifetime employment and contributes to innovation and productivity. Those who leave a company are considered to be traitors who should not be trusted by other employers.⁹⁶

“Information sharing among teams and workers led to the sense of company-first mentality, or kaishashugi, which in turn enhanced innovation and productivity.” (Oh 2004: 3)

“In the course of the recent debate about the future of the Japanese employment system, the alarming post-bubble weakness of the Japanese economic system has inspired more fundamental, wide-ranging analysis of the entire society, often centred on the concept of kaishashugi (company-ism).” (Holzhausen 2000: 227)

kaizen 改善

* Japanese *kai* (reform) + *zen* (good).

n. a philosophy of continuous improvement, according to which every member of an organisation is responsible for improvement and small daily improvements can amount to significant reforms.⁹⁷

“One of the most difficult aspects of introducing and implementing Kaizen strategy is assuring its continuity. When a company introduces something new, such as quality circles, or total quality management (TQM), it experiences some initial success, but soon such success disappears and the management keeps looking for a new flavour.” (BYU-GloWbE 2012)

“The idea of kaizen, of cutting corners without cutting quality, is a great Japanese business ideal.” (Kosaka 2010: para. 18)

“Toyota has long been known for its “kaizen” philosophy of constantly improving its production processes.” (Nakanishi 2014: para. 4)

“For a small business, a Kaizen strategy is one that works to constantly improve the performance of employees and managers, the interaction between staff and management, and the pursuit of better productivity.” (Root n.d.: para. 1)

See also kaizen event, kaizen culture, Total Quality Management, *kaikaku*, *jishuken*, Toyotism, *yokotenkai*

kaizen blitz

See kaizen event

kaizen culture

n. an organizational culture aimed at continuous improvement and based on three principles: taking into consideration the process as well as the results, the use of

⁹⁶ Takeda 2005: 128; Oh 2004: 3, 53

⁹⁷ Haghirian 2010: 6; Picken 2009: 145

systemic thinking, and a non-judgmental and non-blaming approach that prioritises finding a solution.⁹⁸

“Often, lean success is defined as the existence of a “kaizen culture” in which lean tools are effectively applied, by enthusiastic employees, to eliminate waste every day.” (Roper n.d.: para. 3)

kaizen event

n. a series of activities, usually over a number of days, in which a team of managers and workers decides how to improve a particular process within a company and then takes the steps needed to do so.

Also called **kaizen blitz**⁹⁹

“While a 5S kaizen event is a possible trailhead for a continuous improvement journey, great care must be taken in planning the event to ensure that all five components are adequately emphasised.” (BYU-GloWbE 2012)

“Using the Kaizen Blitz, employees learned how to work as a team to tackle problems from the shop floor and, most importantly, how to solve them quickly.” (Laraia et al 1999: para. 1)

“As with kaizens in manufacturing, business process kaizen events are exciting, energize the participants, and achieve dramatic and surprising waste reduction results by reducing non-value add time.” (Jean Cunningham Consulting 2014: para. 1)

See also kaizen

kakarichō 係長

* Japanese *kakari* (person in charge) + *chou* (head).

n. the supervisor of a section (*ka*).¹⁰⁰

“In general, staff is promoted by positions subsection chief (kakaricho) to section chief (kacho), and to department chief (bucho).” (Yashiro 2013: 28)

See also *ka*, *kachō*

kamishibai 紙芝居

* Japanese lit. ‘paper theatre’ (a theatrical form, which can be traced back to the 12th century Buddhist moral dramas, in which a storyteller relates stories with the aid of illustrated boards); *shibai* ‘play’, ‘drama’;

kami (paper) + *shiba* (lawn grass) + *i* (reside; be present; sit).

n. an auditing system and a visual management tool for checking whether work is carried out according to standards and for detecting problems.

NOTE: It is especially useful for adopting the practice of *genchi gembutsu* as everything that needs to be checked on the *gemba* (shop floor) can be organised and

⁹⁸ Kaizen Institute

⁹⁹ Oxford Business English Dictionary; Manufacturing Terms – Kaizen Blitz

¹⁰⁰ Jackson et al 2004: 115

scheduled. It focuses on checking safety rules, protective equipment, work standards, documentation, general workplace organisation and routine activities. The team leader takes a random card from the board in order to keep the checks unpredictable, completes the daily, weekly or monthly check, thereafter replaces the card and makes notes on the problem board if necessary.¹⁰¹

Also called ***kamishibai board***

“On the kamishibai board, the cards are arranged hour by hour. The maintenance person pulls the first card, does an hour’s worth of work, signs off on the card that it was done, and goes on to the next one.” (Liker et al 2011: 49)

See also *genchi gembutsu*

kamishibai board

See *kamishibai*

kamiza 上座

* Japanese *kami* (up) + *za* (seat; sit).

n. the seat occupied by the highest-ranked person during a business meeting or social gathering.

NOTE: It is usually located farthest from the door.¹⁰²

“The seminar began by defining the position of “kamiza,” the seat of honor, followed by instructions on how to hold, lift and place chopsticks and bowls using various areas of the hand in a graceful fashion.” (Kato 2009: para. 12)

See also *shimoza*

kanban/ kamban 看板

* Japanese *kan* (watch; care for) + *ban* (board; plate).

1. *n.* a system of manufacturing in which the production of parts and their movement around the factory is organised with the aid of instructions written on cards that are sent to the relevant employees to request specific parts when they are needed.

Also called ***kanban system***

“One form of supplier control to reduce rampant opportunism in the form of transaction costs is the kanban system (just in time system) that Toyota developed.” (Oh 2004: 57)

“The supply schedule of parts is fine-tuned according to daily production scheduling through the famed kanban system.” (Imai et al 1995: 43)

¹⁰¹ Miller 2009; Insightout 2007

¹⁰² Haghirian 2010: 132

2. *n.* a card or signboard used for organising the movement of parts during the production process.

NOTE: Each card lists the necessary information about the type, origin, destination and number of parts needed. It is an important tool of just-in-time production.¹⁰³

“The kanban card is a simple, highly visible device that the Toyota Production System uses to call-up components as they are required, meaning only a minimal stock of components is held in the assembly area.” (Toyota Material Handling Europe)

See also just-in-time

kanban system

See kanban (1)

kansayaku/ kansa-yaku 監査役

* Japanese lit. *kansa* ‘audit’; *kan* (oversee) + *sa* (look into) + *yaku* (service).

n. an audit & supervisory board member.

NOTE: This system of corporate governance can be found only in Japan and a few other Asian countries. The functions of a *kansayaku* include auditing and supervising the work of management together with the board of directors. The term ‘corporate auditor’ is widely used as the English equivalent of *kansayaku* and ‘board of corporate auditors’ in the case of *kansayaku-kai*, but the term ‘auditor’ does not sufficiently express their function as it is associated with external and internal auditors whose function is different.¹⁰⁴

“In Japan the role of company auditor (“kansa-yaku”) is generally regarded by foreign investors as an inadequate safeguard.” (Cortazzi 2002: para. 12)

“A few reform-minded businessmen want Japan to ditch its system of compliant board appointments, called kansayaku, in favour of American-inspired independent directors.” (The Economist 2000: para. 5)

See also *kansayaku-kai*

kansayaku-kai 監査役会

* Japanese lit. *kansa* ‘audit’; *kan* (oversee) + *sa* (look into) + *yaku* (service) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club).

n. an audit & supervisory board that consists of *kansayaku* who act as auditors and supervisors of management.

“The kansayaku-kai shall, among other things, perform the following duties; provided, however, that the determination made under item (3) of this article may

¹⁰³ Oxford Business English Dictionary; Haghirian 2010: 34, The Official Website of Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky, Inc

¹⁰⁴ The Japan Corporate Auditors Association. n.d: 1–2

not preclude any kansayaku from exercising his/her own powers: (1) preparation of audit reports; (2) appointment and removal of full-time kansayaku; and (3) determination of audit policies, the methods of investigation of the status of the operations and the financial status of the company and other matters regarding the performance of the kansayaku's duties." (Japan Corporate Auditors Association 2006: para. 4)

See also *kansayaku*

***kansei* 感性**

* Japanese *kan* (sense; feel) + *sei* (nature, character).

n. emotions and mental images that emerge in connection with an object.

NOTE: *Kansei* is mostly expressed as an adjective that refers to the impressions that people develop in connection with something, for example a product. It is used with regard to a principle of Total Quality Management, according to which feedback from the clients is the basis of product improvement.¹⁰⁵

"A good product is more appealing to consumers in terms of its price as well as its function, shape, and color. It is a product that represents consumers' needs and has Kansei incorporated into it." (Nagamachi et al 2011: 1)

See also *kansei* engineering; Total Quality Management

kansei engineering

n. a method of interpreting the feelings and impressions of customers and associating them with product properties in order to design products that meet their expectations.

NOTE: The method was introduced by Professor Mitsuo Nagamachi (Dean of Hiroshima International University) in the 1970s.¹⁰⁶

Also called ***kansei kōgaku* 感性工学**

* Japanese *kan* (sense; feel) + *sei* (nature, character) + *kou* (manufacture; construction) + *gaku* (study).

"Mitsubishi Motors was the first car maker to implement Kansei engineering, especially in the research of its vehicle compartment." (Nagamachi et al 2011: 11)

See also *kansei*

kansei kōgaku

See *kansei* engineering

***kao* 顔**

* Japanese *kao* (face).

n. the social reputation and honour of a person.

¹⁰⁵ BusinessKnowledgeSource.com: n.d. a: para. 4; Nagamachi et al 2011: 5

¹⁰⁶ Webster's Online Dictionary

NOTE: The Japanese avoid actions that humiliate others and thereby cause loss of face. Members of a group make efforts to maintain their own and others' *kao*. For instance, group decisions protect individual group members from having to take responsibility for failure.¹⁰⁷

“Japanese have adopted numerous kata, or social forms of behavior, to avoid humiliating others. By contrast, causing someone to lose his kao (face) cannot easily be forgiven, if at all.” (Alston et al 2005: 7)

karōshi 過勞死

* Japanese lit. *karou* ‘overwork’; *ka* (exceed) + *rou* (labour) + *shi* (die).

n. death resulting from overwork, mainly due to stress and exhaustion.

NOTE: It is most common among white-collar corporate employees as working long hours is considered to be a sign of loyalty to the company.¹⁰⁸

“Japanese have even given death by overwork a name – Karoshi. So if you are heading to Karoshi, pause to think, organise and delegate.” (BYU-GloWbE 2012)

“The reported number of karoshi deaths has increased in recent years because large-scale layoffs during the last decade resulted in fewer workers performing more duties and working harder.” (Alston et al 2005: 29)

kata 型

* Japanese *kata* (type, kind; set form).

n. a formal, proper manner of behaving.

NOTE: Conforming to expected ways of behaving is stressed in Japan as it is a *kata*-oriented society. Rules of behaviour should be adhered to in order for business relations to be fruitful.¹⁰⁹

“For Japanese, kata constitutes a necessary buffer against surprise, a mechanism for creating an atmosphere that is predictable and therefore comfortable for everyone.” (Shinomiya et al 2007)

Keidanren 経団連

* abbreviation of 経済団体連合会 (*Keizai Dantai Rengōkai*);

kei (manage) + *dan* (body, group) + *ren* (link, join).

n. Japan Business Federation; an economic organisation that includes Japanese corporations, industrial associations and regional economic organisations, and aims at supporting corporate activities and reaching a consensus in the business community on various issues.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Alston et al 2005: 7

¹⁰⁸ Haghirian 2010: 80; 1000Ventures; Alston et al 2005: 29

¹⁰⁹ Alston et al 2005: XVII; XIX

¹¹⁰ Keidanren n.d.: para. 1–3

“Seeking to preserve the billions of dollars spent on the country’s nuclear infrastructure over the last 50 years, Japan’s biggest and most influential business lobby, the Keidanren, warns of disaster should all the country’s nuclear power plants remain shuttered, with hundreds of thousands of jobs lost, while energy alternatives would be both more expensive and hampered by problems.” (BYU-GloWbE 2012)

“The disclosure of anxieties at the heart of the central bank is likely to increase pressure on the government to extract concessions from Keidanren, the most powerful of Japan’s business groups, which has not recommended a rise in total labour costs since the Lehman crisis.” (McLannahan 2013: para. 6)

keigo 敬語

* Japanese *kei* (respect) + *go* (language).

n. honorific language used in the Japanese language when speaking to superiors and respected elders, in formal situations and in business negotiations.

NOTE: It has several categories, the most important of which are the following: *sonkeigo* (used when addressing a superior or speaking about them), *kenjōgo* (used when talking about oneself to a superior) and *teineigo* (a general polite manner of speaking).¹¹¹

“Appearing in texts as ancient as the “Kojiki” (712 AD), keigo is a fundamental part of Japanese, said to be as old as the language itself.” (Uechi 2008: para. 2)

“What is clear is that the use of honorific language, called keigo, to elevate a person or humble oneself, has especially fallen out of use among young Japanese.” (Onishi 2003: para. 9)

See also *kenjōgo*, *sonkeigo*, *teineigo*

keiretsu 系列

* Japanese *kei* (system; lineage) + *retsu* (row).

n. an alliance of a group of companies characterised by cross-shareholding, which makes it difficult for companies outside the group to gain control of any of the members, the main bank system, trade relations, and mutual support among members.

NOTE: As the alliance is informal, it might in some cases be difficult to determine whether a company is a member of a keiretsu or not. A keiretsu may include hundreds of companies. Keiretsu may be classified in various ways. There are two main types of keiretsu: vertical (*tate*) and horizontal (*yoko*, intermarket keiretsu, *kigyō shūdan*). A company may be part of both a vertical and a horizontal keiretsu, i.e. a member of a horizontal keiretsu may be the parent company of a vertical

¹¹¹ Haghirian 2010: 76

keiretsu. Horizontal keiretsu include capital keiretsu (*kinyū* keiretsu). Vertical keiretsu include production keiretsu (*sangyō* keiretsu/ *seisan* keiretsu), distribution keiretsu (*ryūtsū* keiretsu), *shihon* keiretsu. Trans-keiretsu and *kombinato* are also types of keiretsu.¹¹²

“Toyota is famed for its tightly knit group of suppliers and long-term, collaborative approach to supplier relations, or keiretsu.” (Manning 2012: para. 2)

“One of the greatest benefits of the automotive keiretsu organization is the protection of the firm from market failure and the mitigation of financial risks.” (Kawai 2009: para. 7)

“Lifelong employment and personnel transfers are a tool employed by keiretsu to strengthen corporate links and ensure mutual business interests are being upheld: the downside is that keiretsu are less likely to dismiss unproductive employees or replace poor-performing management.” (Lobo 2012: para. 10)

See also horizontal keiretsu, vertical keiretsu, *kinyū* keiretsu, *sangyō* keiretsu, *ryūtsū* keiretsu, *shihon* keiretsu, trans-keiretsu, *kombinato*, main bank, *wan setto shugi*, *shachōkai*, *kyōryokukai*

keiretsuization/ keiretsu-ization

n. the practice of integrating formerly independent companies partially into a keiretsu.¹¹³

“Have deregulation of retail stemming from foreign pressure intent on prying open Japan’s markets and the restructuring of banking due to the crisis in Japan’s financial sector flowing from the collapse of its bubble economy in the early 1990s weakened keiretsu-ization? Recent studies suggest that deregulation and restructuring have had, at best, a modest impact.” (Mokyr 2003: 216)

See also keiretsu, *de-keiretsu-ization*

***keiyaku* 契約**

* Japanese *kei* (make an agreement) + *yaku* (promise; contract).

n. a traditional Japanese contract.

NOTE: In business negotiations, it is a vague agreement to establish business relations. Employment contracts are not specific either as employees are not hired for a definite position, but rather simply join the company. The Japanese consider trust to be the foundation for a relationship, rather than a contract. If conditions change, so that one party is at a disadvantage, contracts should be adjusted according to the traditional Japanese viewpoint. The signing of a business contract

¹¹² Oxford Business English Dictionary; Abegglen 2006: 25, Okumura 2000: 135–136, Hoshi 1994: 287; Richter 2000: 21, Oh 2004: 75–76; Alston et al 2005: 24; Mokyr 2003: 216

¹¹³ Gerlach 1992: 219

is nevertheless an important event accompanied by a banquet during which gifts are exchanged.¹¹⁴

“Importantly, this shift was accompanied with other structural changes in employment, that is, increasing “irregular” or “non-standard” jobs such as part-time (arubaito), dispatched (ha-ken), and contract employment (keiyaku).” (Kariya et al 2010: 27)

kenjōgo 謙讓語

* Japanese *ken* (humble) + *jou* (cede, give up) + *go* (language).

n. a category of *keigo* (polite language) used when talking about oneself to a superior.¹¹⁵

“You will have to go through learning keigo and its categories, sonkeigo, kenjōgo and teineigo to differentiate how you speak to business associates and social acquaintances.” (Information Center 2011: para. 4)

See also *keigo, sonkeigo, teineigo*

kigyō betsu (rōdō) kumiai

See *kigyōnai kumiai*

kigyō keiretsu

See vertical keiretsu

kigyōnai kumiai 企業内組合

* Japanese lit. *kigyou* ‘enterprise’, *kumiai* ‘union’; *ki* (project) + *gyou* (work, business, industry) + *nai* (inside) + *kumi* (organize; assemble) + *ai* (combine; fit).
n. an enterprise union.

NOTE: In the Japanese system of trade unions, the employees of a company belong to the same union and identify with the company, not their profession. There are very few craft or industry trade unions in Japan. The union is entitled to initiate strikes, but does that rarely. Relations with the management are improved by the fact that the union is connected with the company and its members thus consider the success of the company to be their responsibility. Enterprise unions include both blue- and white-collar workers. White-collar workers who are promoted to managerial positions leave the union. The functions of enterprise unions include collective bargaining over wages and salaries and participation in joint consultation committees that aim at improving efficiency and profitability.¹¹⁶

Also called **kigyō betsu (rōdō) kumiai 企業別（労働）組合**

¹¹⁴ Alston et al 2005: 20, 106, 127

¹¹⁵ Haghirian 2010: 76

¹¹⁶ Abegglen 2006: 87; Haghirian 2010: 26; Alston et al 2005: 3; Picken 2009: 81

* Japanese lit. *roudou* ‘work’; *betsu* (separate) + *rou* (labour) + *dou* (work).

“The permanent employment system has been one of the three core employment practices in Japan for about a half century, along with seniority grading (*nenko joretsu*) and enterprise unions (*kigyonai kumiai*).” (Matsuzuka 2002: 1)

kigyō shūdan

See horizontal keiretsu

***kihon kyū/kihon-kyū* 基本給**

* Japanese lit. *kihon* ‘basis’; *ki* (base) + *hon* (basis, origin, root) + *kyuu* (supply; pay).

n. the basic monthly salary without allowances and bonuses.¹¹⁷

“According to the Rules, the salary of the Japanese employees was to consist of several elements: base salary (*kihon-kyū*), monthly allowances (*teate*), bonus (*bōnasu*), and several others.” (Wong 1999: 105)

See also *shigoto kyū*, *zokujin kyū*, *sōgō kyū*, *shokumu kyū*, *shokunō kyū*, *teate*, *shōyo*

***Kinyō-kai* 金曜会**

* Japanese lit. ‘Friday meeting’; *kin* (metal; gold; money; Friday) + *you* (day of the week) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club).

n. the presidents’ council (*shachōkai*) of Mitsubishi group.¹¹⁸

“Although hundreds of companies may be affiliated with one keiretsu, only the principal companies are allowed to join the presidents’ council (*shacho-kai*, or *kinyo-kai* in the case of Mitsubishi).” (Steers et al 2006: 188)

See also Big Six, keiretsu, *shachōkai*, *kai*

***kinyū keiretsu* 金融系列**

* Japanese *kinyuu* ‘capital’; *kin* (metal; gold; money) + *yuu* (fuse, fusion) + *kei* (system; lineage) + *retsu* (row).

n. a horizontal type of keiretsu comprised of companies that are linked through capital investments, a main bank and a trading firm.

NOTE: This type is probably most well-known among the keiretsu. It should be distinguished from the vertical capital keiretsu (*shihon keiretsu*).¹¹⁹

Also called **capital keiretsu**

“There were six such major *kinyū keiretsu* that competed vigorously in arranging a core set of heavy and chemical industries (such as steel mills, petrochemical complexes, heavy machinery shops and shipyards) under the so-called ‘one-set’ principle.” (Cohen et al 2000: 220)

See also keiretsu, *shihon keiretsu*, Big Six

¹¹⁷ Holzhausen 2000: 223

¹¹⁸ Lincoln et al 2004: 18

¹¹⁹ Richter 2000: 21; Oh 2004: 74

kizuki 機付き

* Japanese *ki* (machine; aircraft) + *zuki* (attach).

n. a system of responsibility developed by Japan Airlines, whereby a group of engineers and mechanics are assigned a specific aircraft for maintenance, so that they have to take responsibility for the performance of the aircraft, in order to improve maintenance standards and increase flight safety.¹²⁰

“The main objective for integrating human factors in JAL stems from the important fact that human error must be prevented from ever occurring in the first place. For this purpose, Japan Airlines developed the kizuki system to monitor the maintenance of each aircraft in the JAL fleet.” (Millward et al 1997: 154)

KK

See *kabushiki gaisha*

kobun 子分

* Japanese *ko* (child) + *bun* (part).

n. the person in the subordinate position in the *oyabun-kobun* relationship.

NOTE: The *kobun* is given help and advice by the *oyabun* and provides assistance in return when necessary.¹²¹

“They rely there not only on the coaching of the line-superior but informally also on the graduates from the same college who form usually a club of their own within the firm. The senior men, in leading positions, become automatically their protectors with often very strong ties of the parent-child (oyabun-kobun) type.” (Hirschmeier et al 1975: 286)

See also *oyabun*, *oyabun-kobun* relationship, *senpai-kōhai*

kōhai 後輩

* Japanese *kou* (after) + *hai* (fellow).

n. a younger member of an organisation, who is expected to follow the advice of older employees and to show respect for them, e.g. with the use of highly honorific language.¹²²

“The Japanese differentiate ranks of sempai (senior) and kohai (junior) by the slightest difference in age, graduation time, the time of entry into a company, and so on.” (Nishiyama 2000: 16)

See also *senpai*, *senpai-kōhai*, *kobun*

¹²⁰ Bird 2002; Picken 2009: 10

¹²¹ Nakane 1970: 42–43

¹²² Haghirian 2010: 18

***kōkai kabushiki kaisha* (KKK) 公開株式会社**

* Japanese lit. *koukai* ‘open to the public’, *kaisha* ‘company’; *kou* (public) + *kai* (open) + *kabu* (stock) + *shiki* (style) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club) + *sha* (company; society).

n. an open joint stock company; a type of joint stock company (*kabushiki gaisha*), the shares of which may be transferred to third parties.

NOTE: It is run by a board of directors that has at least three members.¹²³

Also called **open KK**

“The best option for foreign start-ups to choose from is that of a full-fledged Open KK—one that has a board of at least three directors, a statutory auditor, and which conducts quarterly directors’ meetings.” (Lloyd 2008: para. 8)

See also *kabushiki jōto seigen kaisha*, *kabushiki gaisha*

***kokusaibu/ kokusai-bu* 国際部**

* Japanese *koku* (country) + *sai* (among, inter-) + *bu* (section, division).

n. the international affairs department of a Japanese company.

NOTE: It is responsible for foreign correspondence and organising meetings with foreigners, etc.¹²⁴

“The first contact with Japanese officials that most foreigners have is with members of the somu bu (general affairs department) or the kokusai bu (international affairs department).” (Alston 1990: 60)

See also *bu*

***kombinato/ konbinato* コンビナート**

* derived from Russian ‘*kombinat*’.¹²⁵

n. an industrial complex; a type of keiretsu in the case of which affiliated companies are located close to one another, so that they can make use of the by-products produced by other members.

NOTE: *Kombinato* are most common in the petrochemical, iron and steel industries.¹²⁶

“Is it the volume of the far-flung plumes of lurid gas spilling out of the great kombinato complexes composed of petrochemical and iron and steel plants sandwiched together, which brings home to us the gigantic scale of the industrial capacity ringing the shores of Osaka Bay?” (Mosk 2001: 3)

See also keiretsu

¹²³ Company Formation Japan. n.d: para. 5–6

¹²⁴ Alston et al 2005: 89–90

¹²⁵ Kenkyusha’s New Japanese-English Dictionary

¹²⁶ Mokyr 2003: 216

kōsai hi 交際費

* Japanese lit. *kousai* ‘friendship’, ‘acquaintance’; *kou* (interchange) + *sai* (verge; occasion; among) + *hi* (expense).

n. social expenses as a part of a company’s budget, reserved for entertaining guests, which is an important aspect of Japanese business culture,¹²⁷ or as the expenses that an individual has to carry with regard to social activities, such as dining or drinking with colleagues or buying gifts on special occasions, which are necessary for members of a group.¹²⁸

“Witness the media attention given to the very large *kosai-hi* (literally, entertainment expenses) that once were typical of business dealings in Japan: “While the Japanese defense budget is 0.9% of the country’s GNP, corporate wining and dining accounts for 1.5% of the total national output” (*Time* 1981).” (Graham et al 2003: 395)

kūdōka 空洞化

* Japanese lit. ‘hollowing-out effect’; *kuudou* ‘cave’, ‘hollow’; *kuu* (empty; air; sky) + *dou* (cave) + *ka* (change into).

n. a phenomenon that emerged in the 1980s, caused by the fact that Japanese manufacturing companies relocate their factories abroad.¹²⁹

“There has been some talk of *sangyo kudoka* (the hollowing out of the domestic manufacturing base) through a steady shift of production facilities overseas. For example, electronics makers like Sharp and Canon had set up new factories in low-wage countries such as China.” (*The Economist* 2004: para. 8)

kyōryokukai/ kyōryoku-kai 協力会

* Japanese lit. *kyouryoku* ‘cooperation’; *kyou* (cooperate) + *ryoku* (power) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club).

n. a cooperative association of suppliers.

NOTE: It includes the suppliers of a vertical keiretsu as well as independent companies.¹³⁰

“The *shachō-kai* falls under a broader category of associations called in their most general form *kyōryoku-kai*, or cooperative councils. The *kyōryoku-kai* format is now found within even vertical alliances, bringing together the parent firm (*Toyota, Hitachi, etc.*) and its first-line subcontractors.” (Gerlach 1992: 105)

See also keiretsu, vertical keiretsu

¹²⁷ Picken 2007: 350

¹²⁸ Alston et al 2005: 7

¹²⁹ Oh 2004: 22; Schaede 2008: 24

¹³⁰ Lincoln et al 2009: 7; Kono et al 2001: 37

L

lean management

See just-in-time

lean production

See just-in-time

M

***madogiwazoku/ madogiwa zoku* 窓際族**

* Japanese lit. ‘window-side people’; *mado* (window) + *giwa* (verge, side) + *zoku* (family; tribe).

n. unnecessary or uncooperative employees who are placed in an insignificant position, are not able to take part in meetings and are not assigned any tasks.

NOTE: This is the only means to restrict the influence of workers who are not needed, but cannot be fired due to labour laws. The company frequently merely waits for such employees to leave of their own accord.

Also called **window-side tribe, windowsill tribe**¹³¹

“With the bursting of the bubble economy in 1989, Japanese firms have found it increasingly difficult to maintain the practice of madogiwa zoku assignments.” (Bird 2002)

***madoguchi* 窓口**

* Japanese lit. ‘window person’; *mado* (window) + *guchi* (mouth).

n. a contact person in a Japanese company.¹³²

“Networkers, known as “madoguchi” (window) to the industry, are typically male and around 40 years of age. As mid-level managers – most of them are section or division chiefs (kachou, buchou) – with a technical or product-related background, they are ideally positioned for their task: Having risen through the ranks of their prior departments, they have learned the ropes of the industry and know who in their companies is engaged in industry-related activities.” (Witt 2011: 98)

***madoguchi shidō* 窓口指導**

* Japanese lit. *madoguchi* ‘window’, *shidou* ‘guidance’; *mado* (window) + *guchi* (mouth) + *shi* (finger; point) + *dou* (guide).

n. a means by which the Bank of Japan and the government exerted their influence on banks from the end of World War II until 1991 with the aim of setting restrictions on loans given to companies.¹³³

¹³¹ Hagherian 2010: 23; Hasegawa 1986: 46; Picken 2009: 350

¹³² Kopp 2013b: para. 3

“The 1992 Financial Services Reform Act, the BOJ's 1993 abandonment of its ‘window guidance’ (madoguchi shido) policy, and the 1994 deregulation of stock brokerage commissions on large trades (over ¥1 billion) all worked to encourage the repatriation of financial business which had migrated to less regulated centres.” (Malcolm 2001: 154)

See also *gyōsei shidō*

main bank

n. a bank that has an especially long and continuous business relationship with a company.

NOTE: A main bank as a credit provider is an important member of a keiretsu. Its two significant functions are external monitoring and coordination, e.g. by means of stock ownership stabilization in order to protect the firm from hostile takeovers, accepting or dismissing keiretsu members, making investment or divestment plans for member firms or giving market information.¹³⁴

“The main bank system is regarded as a fundamental component of this so-called Japan-style capitalism.” (Abegglen 2010: 94)

See also keiretsu

marugakae 丸抱え

* Japanese lit. ‘total embrace’; *maru* (round) + *gakae* (hug).

n. a concept that refers to the utmost dedication of an employee to the company, with only a small distinction between private and professional life as Japanese companies expect total loyalty.¹³⁵

“Marugakae is often executed to an excessive level and harms the health of not only many Japanese employees but also their families.” (Haghirian 2011: para. 9)

meishi 名刺

* Japanese *mei* (name) + *shi* (card).

n. a business card.

NOTE: Exchanging business cards is an important part of introductions and indicates willingness to establish a business relationship. It has to be held with two hands when presented to someone and the cards of others should be read at once and the information memorised. Meishi should be handled with care and respect. One should offer a card first and never request to receive a card. Presidents of

¹³³ Oh 2004: 65; Picken 2007: 172

¹³⁴ Teranishi 1993: 63; Oh 2004: 44–45, 61

¹³⁵ Haghirian 2010: 80; Alston et al 2005: 2

companies do not usually give business cards as they should already be acquainted with each other when meeting.¹³⁶

“Every introduction starts with exchanging of meishi (business cards); the exchange serves a number of useful and important functions. The business card not only provides the person’s name, but also his job title, company name, address, telephone number, facsimile number, and e-mail address.” (Nishiyama 2000: 50)

“As a rule of thumb, it is safe to remember that the meishi incarnates one’s standing, achievements, pride, and identity.” (Haghirian 2010: 132)

messhihōkō 滅私奉公

* Japanese lit. *messhi* ‘selflessness’, *houkou* ‘public duty’; *metsu* (destroy) + *shi* (private; I, myself) + *hou* (dedicate) + *kou* (public).

n. the concept of sacrificing one’s personal interest for the public good.¹³⁷

“The ‘private’ sphere is expected to follow the public rules or laws stipulated by the state. Note that, historically, this idea and the expression 「滅私奉公」 (messhihoukou) ‘annihilation of the private for the sake of the official’ were forced on the people by the government.” (Nagasaka 95-96)

“It is difficult to say no to messhi hoko and look for another job, since most Japanese companies are based on this philosophy.” (Kingston 2014: 155-156)

miryokuteki hinshitsu 魅力的品質

* Japanese lit. *miryokuteki* ‘captivating’, *hinshitsu* ‘quality’; *mi* (charm) + *ryoku* (power) + *teki* (adjectival suffix) + *hin* (article, thing) + *shitsu* (quality).

n. a principle of Total Quality Management, according to which things should have an aesthetic quality.

NOTE: This implies that attention should be paid particularly to the appearance of products.¹³⁸

“In the software world, miryokuteki hinshitsu might be viewed as an attempt to uncover new and profitable products or applications that are an outgrowth from an existing computer-based system.” (Best Online Tutorials. n.d.: para. 5)

See also Total Quality Management, *atarimae hinshitsu*

mizusumashi 水澄まし

* Japanese lit. ‘whirligig beetle’; *mizu* (water) + *sumashi* (limpid, clear).

n. an employee who manages the work of supplying work stations with components and materials in small quantities, so that inventory for works in progress is kept minimal.

Also called **Water-Spider**¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Haghirian 2010:131; Alston et al 2005: 45

¹³⁷ Odaka 1993: 162

¹³⁸ BusinessKnowledgeSource.com. n.d. a: para. 5

“The developers of the just-in-time (JIT) concepts often utilize the Mizusumashi system as well as the Kanban system.” (Nomura et al 2006: 155)

mochibun kaisha 持分会社

* Japanese lit. *mochibun* ‘one’s share’, ‘equities’, *kaisha* ‘company’; *mochi* (hold) + *bun* (part) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club) + *sha* (company; society).
n. a partnership company; a type of corporation that includes general partnership companies (*gōmei kaisha*), limited partnership companies (*gōshi kaisha*) and limited liability companies (*gōdō kaisha*).¹⁴⁰

“The branch office generally has fewer procedural requirements under Japanese company law than a KK or Mochibun Kaisha and may therefore be less time-consuming to operate.” (International Business Publications, USA 2012: 238)

See also *gōmei gaisha*, *gōshi gaisha*, *gōdō gaisha*

monozukuri/ monotsukuri 物作り

* Japanese *mono* (thing) + *tsukuri* (make; work).

n. a term that generally refers specifically to Japanese-style manufacturing processes.

NOTE: Its meaning encompasses technology and production processes as well as craftsmanship and adherence to the principle of continuous improvement.¹⁴¹

“Just as the culture of Japan is detailed, elaborate and based on tradition, monozukuri is steeped in similar ideals. It involves extreme attention to the perfection of every possible detail — no matter the purpose of the product or how small or easily unnoticed it would be to the consumer.” (Sievers 2013: para. 4)

muda 無駄

* Japanese *mu* (without; nothing) + *da* (good for nothing).

n. a concept that designates various types of waste in manufacturing, e.g. overproduction, delays, unnecessary transportation, poor processing, inventory and defective goods, with the aim of raising profitability.¹⁴²

“Anything that does not add value to customers is waste, and the Japanese have an evocative word for it: muda. Getting the muda out of our lives and workplaces can make for more satisfying work and higher morale: fewer “redos,” less bureaucracy, lower frustration, greater identification with those we serve and a stronger sense of belonging to a high-performance organization.” (BYU-COCA 2010)

¹³⁹ Kaizen Institute

¹⁴⁰ Nottage et al 2008: 121; Tokyo Stock Exchange 2013: para. 13

¹⁴¹ Pringle 2010

¹⁴² Haghirian 2010: 33; 1000Ventures; the Official Website of Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky, Inc.

***muda* walk**

n. a short walk through the *gemba* (shop floor) with the aim of determining whether there are any types of *muda* (waste) and finding possibilities for improvement.¹⁴³

“A muda walk is conducted for the process or area. The purpose of the muda walk is to videotape the current state and identify wastes based on the eight categories of waste.” (Burton et al 2003: 90)

See also *muda*

multitask spiral line

See cell production

***mura* 斑**

* Japanese *mura* (unevenness, inconsistency; spot, blemish).

n. unevenness in production, which is a type of waste.

NOTE: Significant variations in the workload are a waste as they affect the productivity of workers and materials.¹⁴⁴

“Many organizations fail to recognize the importance of mura and muri. Pay attention to all three – muda, mura, and muri – if you want to succeed in and sustain your Lean implementation.” (Hines et al 2010: 6)

See also *muda, muri*

***muri* 無理**

* Japanese *mu* (without; nothing) + *ri* (reason; basic principle).

n. overburdening in production, which is a type of waste.

NOTE: It occurs when there is not enough time to complete various tasks and work flow is impaired. It is considered a waste because the overburdening of workers and equipment causes safety and quality issues, thus rendering the work inefficient.¹⁴⁵

“The key point is that we all need to look for muda, mura, and muri. However, the most engaging and least threatening of these is muri; and sadly for the sustainability of Lean transformations, it is the one least often mentioned or addressed.” (Hines et al 2010: 10)

See also *muda, mura*

¹⁴³ Kaizen Institute

¹⁴⁴ Haghirian 2010: 33

¹⁴⁵ Haghirian 2010: 33

N

nagara system

* *nagara* Japanese lit. ‘while doing something else’.

n. a production system that ensures the smooth flow of production by means of simultaneous operations, with ideally one piece produced at a time.

NOTE: It is characterized by the synchronization of production processes and the maximum utilisation of available time, including the overlapping of operations if it is practical. It makes it possible to carry out seemingly unrelated tasks simultaneously, thereby reducing waste.¹⁴⁶

“Another TPS management tool is the Nagara system which is based on the functional and sequential groupings of activities with the main focus on the product.” (Omar 2011: 338)

nainaitai/ nai-naitei 内々定

* Japanese *nai* (inside) + repetition + *tei* (fix, determine; fixed).

n. an informal offer of employment.

“Students are then invited to examinations and interviews, and the majority of successful applicants receive notice that they are likely to be given naitai, a process called “nai-naitei,” by the end of their university junior year or start of their senior year.” (Kato 2009a: para. 9)

See also *naitai*

naitai 内定

* Japanese *nai* (inside) + *tei* (fix, determine; fixed).

n. a letter in which an official offer of employment is made.¹⁴⁷

“Utilizing the longer time period between graduation and official job offers (naitai), students gain more autonomy in the job search process.” (Nisshin 2012: para. 4)

See also *nainaitai*

nemawashi 根回し

* Japanese *ne* (root) + *mawashi* (turn round).

n. the practice of giving information to those connected with making a decision before an official meeting and influencing their standpoint before the decision is made with the aim of avoiding conflicts and ensuring a consensus.

NOTE: It is usually carried out in the form of meetings and confidential consultations before a *ringi* document (proposal) is compiled. Relevant parties are

¹⁴⁶ Manufacturing Terms; Lean Terms and Definitions

¹⁴⁷ Haghirian 2010: 145

asked about their opinion on the topic and are encouraged to support the change proposed. The Japanese are often unable to make a decision quickly when negotiating with foreigners because *nemawashi* has not been carried out.¹⁴⁸

“The act of nemawashi is analogous to twisting a planted tree around to cut off bothersome roots or “objections” so that it can be uprooted easily. Nemawashi then is a sounding board for unofficially testing the responses to an idea without exposing or endangering anyone before making a commitment.” (Nishiyama 2000: 123)

See also *ringiseido*, *ringisho*

***nenkō joretsu* 年功序列**

* Japanese lit. *nenkou* ‘long service’, *joretsu* ‘rank’, ‘order’; *nen* (year) + *kou* (merit) + *jo* (order) + *retsu* (row).

n. the seniority system of traditional Japanese companies, according to which seniority depends on the time when an employee entered the company, and salaries and promotion are based on it.¹⁴⁹

Also called ***nenkō system***

“In the nenko joretsu (seniority-based promotion) environment, someone does not jump up a few ranks ahead of their time, no matter how fabulous the results that they achieve.” (Kopp 2012: para. 8)

“The nenko system in Japan is closely bound up with the in-firm policy for fostering talent and developing the capacities of the work force.” (Imai et al 1995: 22)

nenkō system

See *nenkō joretsu*

***Nimoku-kai* 二木会**

* Japanese lit. ‘second-Thursday meeting’; *ni* (two) + *moku* (tree; wood; Thursday) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club).

n. the presidents’ council (*shachōkai*) of Mitsui group.¹⁵⁰

“Toyota maintains close relations with the Mitsui keiretsu and enjoys observer status in Mitsui’s premier presidential council (NimokuKai).” (Karan 2010: 325)

See also Big Six, keiretsu, *shachōkai*, *kai*

***nomikai* 飲み会**

* Japanese *nomi* (drink) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club).

¹⁴⁸ Hagherian 2010: 82–83; Chapagain; Hasegawa 1986: 29

¹⁴⁹ Hagherian 2010: 25; Oh 2004: 18–19; Alston et al 2005: 16

¹⁵⁰ Richter 2000: 23; Lincoln et al 2004: 18

n. a drinking session with one's superior and colleagues after work, providing an opportunity for private as well as business discussions and also negotiations regarding business deals with partners.¹⁵¹

"They do not expect Western colleagues to join them if they plan a nomikai or weekend retreat. The problem that might occur in Japan, however, is that people who are not in attendance are considered antisocial and are suspected of not liking their colleagues." (Haghirian 2010: 98)

See also nomenclature, *bureikō*

nomination/ nomenclature

* derived from the Japanese verb 'nomu' (to drink) and the English word 'communication'.

n. the custom of exchanging information and communicating freely with colleagues while eating and drinking in bars and Japanese-style pubs after work.

NOTE: It is based on the belief that alcohol makes people honest.¹⁵²

"Nomination seems to facilitate the exchange of information that would normally not be shared in a more formal context." (Witt 2011: 99)

See also *nomikai*

O

office lady (OL)

n. a young woman working at an office.

NOTE: They are mainly assistants with a supportive role and are largely expected to leave the company when getting married.¹⁵³

"Nowadays the term "OL (office lady)" is seen as semiderogatory (about time, too), and some companies have trashed it completely and started using simply jyosei shain (women employees)." (Shoji 2002: para. 1)

See also salaryman

OL

See office lady

omake お負け

* Japanese *make* (lose, be defeated; bear, carry)

n. a gift given to customers by company employees to express gratitude.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Haghirian 2010: 21

¹⁵² Chapagain; Witt 2011: 99; Alston et al 2005: 61

¹⁵³ Alston et al 2005: 152–153

¹⁵⁴ Alston et al 2005: 9

“Even a cursory check of convenience store shelves these days shows how the omake giveaways that makers once offered as lures to buy certain candies have now become the main selling points themselves.” (Hani 2003: para. 1)

on 恩

* Japanese *on* (grace; debt of gratitude).

n. an obligation that comes into existence when someone does a favour to someone else.

NOTE: According to Japanese values, *on* can never be completely repaid. This makes Japanese hesitant when helping strangers. Ordinary behaviour does not lead to the emergence of *on*, it arises from something exceptional.¹⁵⁵

“On is quite different from the Western concept of simply paying back a favor, since Japanese on is an “unlimited debt of gratitude” that cannot be easily repaid. Onjin or a “benefactor” expects repayment of this social debt for many, many years.” (Nishiyama 2000: 8)

See also *giri*

one-man production system

See *hitori hōshiki*

one-man production line system

See cell production

one-set principle

See *wan setto shugi*

open KK

See *kōkai kabushiki kaisha* (KKK)

oyabun 親分

* Japanese *oya* (parent) + *bun* (part).

n. the person with the superior position and the status of *oya* (parent, i.e. a higher position) in the *oyabun-kobun* relationship.

NOTE: The *oyabun* provides help and advice to the *kobun* and receives help in return when necessary.¹⁵⁶

“The ideal oyabun watches his charges closely but allows them to make minor mistakes in order to learn.” (Alston 2005: 23)

See also *oyabun-kobun* relationship, *kobun*, *senpai*

oyabun-kobun relationship

* Japanese *oya* (parent) + *bun* (part) + *ko* (child) + *bun*.

¹⁵⁵ Alston et al 2005: 8

¹⁵⁶ Nakane 1970: 42–43

n. a close relationship between a superior (oyabun) and a subordinate (*kobun*), whereby the oyabun provides help and advice to the *kobun* who is of assistance to the oyabun when necessary.

NOTE: In its original meaning, it may refer to a patron and a client, a landowner and a tenant, a master and a disciple, but it has also been used with regard to the relationship of corporate employees with different ranks. In the latter case, it designates a closer personal relationship than that of a *senpai* and *kōhai*. *Senpai* are mostly addressed with problems connected to work.¹⁵⁷

“Most Japanese, whatever their status or occupation, are involved in oyabun-kobun relationships.” (Nakane 1970: 43)

See also oyabun, *kobun*, *senpai-kōhai*

P

poka yoke ぽかよけ

* it used to be called *baka yoke* 馬鹿よけ, which means ‘fool-proofing’, but the term was replaced by *poka yoke* due to its negative connotation (*baka* means ‘fool’ or ‘idiot’ in Japanese).

1. *n.* mistake-proofing, a manufacturing technique that gives warnings regarding defects, aiming at detecting defects by designing the manufacturing process, equipment, and tools so that an operation cannot be performed incorrectly, thereby reducing material waste, labour and space costs.¹⁵⁸

“The use of simple poka-yoke ideas and methods in product and process design can eliminate both human and mechanical errors.” (The Quality Portal 2007: para. 3)

2. *n.* mistake-proofing devices that prevent the occurrence of defects in production.¹⁵⁹

“Ideally, poka-yokes ensure that proper conditions exist before actually executing a process step, preventing defects from occurring in the first place. Where this is not possible, poka-yokes perform a detective function, eliminating defects in the process as early as possible.” (The ManageMentor. n.d.: para. 2)

„Poke-yokes are generally low-tech in nature (often characterized as ‘duct tape & cardboard’), and should be implemented at the operator level (contrast with automation/jidoka). However, ‘design’ poke-yokes (mistake-proofing directly designed into parts or fixtures) are particularly clever, preventing positioning and insertion errors.” (Lean Terms and Definitions)

See also *jidōka*

¹⁵⁷ Nakane 1970: 42–43; Alston et al 2005:23

¹⁵⁸ 1000Ventures; the Quality Portal 2007; Lean Terms and Definitions

¹⁵⁹ Lean Terms and Definitions; the Official Website of Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky, Inc.

production keiretsu

See *sangyō keiretsu*

Pull System

n. a manufacturing system in which production is based on actual demand and information flows from market to management.¹⁶⁰

“The bottom-line is that if you are using a PUSH system and are constantly finding out work waits for resources/people and vice versa, it is time you consider adopting a PULL system. Then instead of matching your capacity to demand, you match demand to the flow of work through your system.” (BYU-GloWbE 2013)

See also Toyota Production System

Q

quality circle

n. a small group, usually consisting of 8–10 people, who are active in the same field of work and are voluntarily involved in studying and solving product-quality problems with the aim of improving quality and productivity.¹⁶¹

“The success of quality circles has been found to depend crucially on the amount of support they get from senior management, and on the amount of training that the participants are given in the ways and aims of the circles.” (The Economist 2009b: para. 5)

See also Total Quality Control

R

***ringiseido/ ringi seido/ ringi-seido* 稟議制度**

* Japanese lit. *seido* ‘system’; *rin* (report to) + *gi* (discuss) + *sei* (system; control) + *do* (degree; time, occasion).

n. a group decision-making process, the purpose of which is to make use of the thoughts and suggestions of all employees and achieve a consensus.

NOTE: The process starts in the lower levels of a company with the composition of a written proposal (*ringisho*) which is then circulated around the company. The immediate superior decides whether to submit the document to the next level of management when it has been approved by the employees of that level. The process is continued until it reaches the executives.¹⁶²

Also called ***ringi system***

¹⁶⁰ Business Dictionary

¹⁶¹ Haghirian 2010: 9–10

¹⁶² Haghirian 2010: 83–84

“The notion of “decision by a majority” does not exist in the traditional Japanese process of decisionmaking or ringi-seido, because every member concerned must approve the proposal; it must be a unanimous decision.” (Nishiyama 2000: 118)
See also *ringisho*

***ringisho/ ringi-sho* 稟議書**

* Japanese *rin* (report to) + *gi* (discuss) + *sho* (write; book).

n. a document in the *ringiseido* decision-making process in which a recommendation is made and which is sent to all the relevant managers to get their approval or suggestions for improvement.

NOTE: It describes the problem and proposes a solution. In case of disagreement the author of the proposal can use *nemawashi* (preliminary meetings) to gain support, make amendments to the document and resubmit it.¹⁶³

“Many corporate systems are structured for cooperative employee performance. An employee submits an application for approval, for such things as a new plan, business trip or purchase (called “Ringisho”) to the chief who passes it along to a higher level where it is again passed up the chain of command.” (BYU-GloWbE n.d.)

See also *ringiseido, nemawashi*

ringi system

See *ringiseido*

***rinjikō* 臨時工**

* Japanese lit. *rinji* ‘temporariness’; *rin* (be present at) + *ji* (time) + *kou* (manufacture; construction; workman).

n. a temporary worker.¹⁶⁴

“The industry’s use of temporary labour began with the use of rinjikō (temporary factory workers), a high proportion of whom were female. Although this type of worker had existed previously, a rapid growth in this category of work occurred from the early 1960s.” (Macnaughtan 2005: 94)

***risutorā* リストラ**

* derived from the English word ‘restructuring’.

n. changes in the Japanese lifetime employment system due to economic recession, which have made lay-offs more common.¹⁶⁵

“This being Japan, however, risutora is a somewhat hazy concept. For most companies it merely means cost cutting -- curtailing overtime, reducing hiring, asking employees to limit travel and to use the subway rather than a taxi, and

¹⁶³ Hagherian 2010: 84; Alston et al 2005: 77; Hasegawa 1986: 28

¹⁶⁴ Odaka 1993: 165

¹⁶⁵ Oh 2004: 99; Alston et al 2005: 153

entertaining clients less lavishly. In a few extreme cases companies are actually closing plants and reassigning workers.” (BYU-COCA 1993)

“*“Risutora” became one of the most frequently used words in Japan after the collapse of the bubble economy in 1990.*” (Alston et al 2005: 153)

rokudai kigyō shūdan

See Big Six

ryūtsū keiretsu 流通系列

* Japanese lit. *ryuutsuu* ‘distribution’; *ryuu* (flow) + *tsuu* (pass by/ through; communicate) + *kei* (system; lineage) + *retsu* (row).

n. a distribution keiretsu; a vertical type of keiretsu in which distributors operate under a large-scale manufacturer or sometimes a wholesaler.¹⁶⁶

“The so-called ryutsu keiretsu - manufacturer-led distribution channels - have frequently been pointed out in the past as one major characteristic of Japanese distribution.” (Czinkota et al 2000: 117)

See also keiretsu

S

sangyō keiretsu 産業系列

* Japanese lit. *sangyou* ‘industry’; *san* (produce; give birth) + *gyou* (work, business, industry) + *kei* (system; lineage) + *retsu* (row).

n. a production keiretsu; a vertical type of keiretsu that is characterised by intricate hierarchies of primary, secondary, and tertiary-level subcontractors that act as suppliers for parent companies.¹⁶⁷

Also called ***seisan keiretsu***¹⁶⁸ 生産系列

* Japanese lit. *seisan* ‘production’; *sei* (life; be born) + *san* (produce; give birth)

“The inter-firm networks, the sangyo keiretsu, of the manufacturing industries in Japan are currently the targets most haunted by the prospect of change.” (Stam 2002: 25)

See also keiretsu

Sankin-kai 三金会

* Japanese lit. ‘third Friday meeting’; *san* (three) + *kin* (metal; gold; money; Friday) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club).

n. the presidents’ council (*shachōkai*) of Dai-Ichi Kangyo Group (DKB).¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Gerlach 1992: 68

¹⁶⁷ Gerlach 1992: 68

¹⁶⁸ Usui 2014: 8

¹⁶⁹ Lincoln et al 2004: 18

“The last group to formalize a council was Dai-Ichi Kangyo, which in 1978 formed the Sankin-kai (Third Friday Club), seven years after the merger of the Dai-Ichi and Nippon Kangyo Banks.” (Gerlach 1992: 106)

See also Big Six, keiretsu, *shachōkai*, *kai*

sanshu no jingi 三種の神器

* Japanese lit. *jingi* ‘sacred treasure’; *san* (three) + *shu* (variety, type; seed) + *no* (possessive) + *jin* (god; mind, spirit) + *gi* (vessel; instrument).

n. the three most famous Japanese managerial practices: lifetime employment, the seniority system and enterprise unions.¹⁷⁰

Also called **three jewels**

“Only keiretsu firms awarded three jewels to their workers, and only 30-40% of total Japanese workforce participated in keiretsu companies, if we include all their member firms and their subcontractors.” (Oh 2004: 55)

Sansui-kai 三水会

* Japanese lit. ‘third Wednesday meeting’; *san* (three) + *sui* (water; Wednesday) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club).

n. the presidents’ council (*shachōkai*) of Sanwa group.¹⁷¹

“In the mid-1960s the Fuji and Sanwa groups announced the formation of, respectively, *Fuyo-kai* (taken from an old group name) and *Sansui-kai* (Third Wednesday Club).” (Gerlach 1992: 106)

See also Big Six, keiretsu, *shachōkai*, *kai*

sarakin サラ金

* Japanese *sara* (derived from ‘salaryman’) + *kin* (metal; gold; money).

n. a high-interest loan company who provides loans to salaried workers.¹⁷²

“Back in the 1960s, Masao Kinoshita saw the potential in lending money when he owned a small chain of pawnshops. He started the first major *sarakin* -- a company lending money to consumers who lacked bank-quality collateral.” (BYU-COCA 1990)

salaryman

n. a white-collar worker at a Japanese company.

NOTE: This term has a connotation of a stereotypical view of Japanese male office workers who stay loyal to the company and completely devote themselves to work.¹⁷³

Also called **sararīman** サラリーマン

¹⁷⁰ Oh 2004: 17

¹⁷¹ Lincoln et al 2004: 18

¹⁷² Hasegawa 1986: 64

¹⁷³ Bird 2002; Haghirian 2010: 145

“Japan’s stoic salarymen were portrayed as modern day samurai, willing to sacrifice everything for their company. Indeed, many have done so as the problem of karoshi (death from overwork) signifies.” (Kingston 2013: para. 5)

“Freshly graduated from a top Japanese university, a fledgling salaryman is about to begin an intensive socialization process that will model for him how he is expected to behave in the company he joins.” (Yoshimura et al 1997: 14)

See also office lady (OL)

sararīman

See salaryman

satei 査定

* Japanese lit. ‘assessment’; *sa* (look into) + *tei* (fix, determine; fixed).

n. a system of personal assessment that is used in most large Japanese companies to evaluate the employees’ performance in problem-solving activities.¹⁷⁴

“Contrary to conventional wisdom, which often assumes that seniority-based wages are ubiquitous in Japan, merit-based wages also played a vital role and, more important, individual merit ratings, or personnel assessments (satei), have been prevalent.” (Miura 2012: 28)

seiban 製番

* Japanese *sei* (manufacture) + *ban* (numerical order).

n. a number given to parts, materials and purchase orders of a job or project, enabling a manufacturer to track everything related to a product, project, or client and to create an inventory for specific purposes.¹⁷⁵

“Seiban also facilitates setting aside inventory for specific projects or priorities to accommodate nonstandard production or service requests.” (Lighter 2013: 308)

seika shugi/ seikashugi 成果主義

* Japanese lit. *seika* ‘result’, *shugi* ‘principle’, ‘ideology’; *sei* (form, be completed; achieve, succeed) + *ka* (fruit) + *shu* (main; master, owner) + *gi* (righteousness).

n. a system of providing compensation and promotion according to productivity.¹⁷⁶

“In the latter half of the 1990s, more and more companies eager to contain rising personnel costs started to experiment with new compensation practices and sought to incorporate more performance-based pay elements as part of their overall compensation systems. During this period, the term seikashugi, roughly translated as ‘performance-ism’, became a frequently heard buzzword in the Japanese media.” (Conrad 2010: 116)

seiketsu 清潔

* Japanese lit. ‘clean’, ‘sanitary’; *sei* (clear) + *ketsu* (immaculate).

¹⁷⁴ Masahiko 1994 et al: 74

¹⁷⁵ 1000Ventures

¹⁷⁶ Abegglen 2006: 11

n. the fourth stage of the 5S System which refers to making all the cleaning, control, and improvement processes a regular activity in the workplace, facilitating control and consistency.¹⁷⁷

“After the initial 5S steps—the organizing and cleaning of seiri, seiton and seiso, seiketsu develops a consistent approach for tasks and procedures. How often do they need to be performed? And by whom? How thoroughly? Seiketsu is a system for maintaining and supporting ongoing and consistent seiri, seiton and seiso activities.” (Pringle 2011: para. 8)

See also 5S System

seiri 整理

* Japanese lit. ‘arrangement’, ‘adjustment’; *sei* (put in order) + *ri* (reason; basic principle).

n. the first stage of the 5S System which refers to tidiness and structured organisation.¹⁷⁸

“The 5S pillars, Sort (Seiri), Set in Order (Seiton), Shine (Seiso), Standardize (Seiketsu), and Sustain (Shitsuke), provide a methodology for organizing, cleaning, developing, and sustaining a productive work environment.” (United States Environmental Protection Agency n.d.: para. 2)

See also 5S System

seisan keiretsu

See *sangyō keiretsu*

seishain 正社員

* Japanese *sei* (right, proper) + *sha* (company; society) + *in* (member).

n. a regular employee.¹⁷⁹

“Even today Japanese companies almost never hire host nationals or third-country nationals for key managerial positions. If they do, they do not hire these foreigners as seishain (regular permanent employees) but only as shokutaku (contract employees), no matter how professionally or technically qualified they may be.” (Nishiyama 2000: 155–156)

See also *shokutaku*

seiso 清楚

* Japanese lit. ‘neatness’; *sei* (clear) + *so* (neat and trim).

n. the third stage of the 5S System which refers to the cleanliness of the workplace and all the items used at work.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ Hagherian 2010: 8

¹⁷⁸ Hagherian 2010: 7

¹⁷⁹ Hagherian 2010: 145

¹⁸⁰ Hagherian 2010: 7

“Well-implemented seiso programs also have long-term benefits when it comes to employee morale.” (Pringle 2011a: para. 11)

See also 5S System

seiton 整頓

* Japanese lit. ‘proper arrangement’; *sei* (put in order) + *ton* (sudden).

n. the second stage of the 5S System which refers to orderliness and the organisation of all the materials and tools chosen for the production process.¹⁸¹

“The ultimate purpose of seiton is preparedness, for items to be ready when needed.” (Pringle 2011b: para. 10)

See also 5S System

senmu (torishimariyaku) 専務(取締役)

* Japanese lit. *torishimariyaku* ‘director’; *sen* (exclusive, special) + *mu* (duty) + *tori* (take) + *shimari* (conclude; tighten) + *yaku* (service).

n. a senior executive managing director, a senior executive vice president.

NOTE: It is the position below *shachō* and *fuku shachō* in the company hierarchy.¹⁸²

“The senior managing director (senmu torishimariyaku) is second in command and has more power and authority than other lower-ranked directors. He is assigned to coordinate the entire operations of the company and reports directly to the president.” (Nishiyama 2000: 120)

See also *jōmu torishimariyaku*

senpai/ sempai 先輩

* Japanese *sen* (ahead) + *pai* (fellow).

n. an older member of an organization, who has more power and responsibilities than younger members and acts as their supervisor and adviser in professional and personal matters.¹⁸³

“It is customary for a young salaryman to share a room in the dormitory with a senpai; over the years, Hiro learned a lot about doing business from various older colleagues in the dormitory.” (Yoshimura et al 1997: 25)

“Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, if he is thoughtful, will not make Japan’s senpai countries angry or irritate them psychologically.” (Aihara 2014: para. 4)

See also *senpai-kōhai, kōhai, oyabun*

senpai-kōhai/ sempai-kōhai 先輩後輩

* Japanese *sen* (ahead) + *pai* (fellow) + *kou* (after) + *hai* (fellow).

¹⁸¹ Hagherian 2010: 7

¹⁸² Lazer et al 1990: 361; Alston et al 2005: 155

¹⁸³ Hagherian 2010: 18–19

n. the senior-junior system of Japanese companies and other organisations, according to which older members are in a position of greater power and respect.

NOTE: Superiors (*senpai*) are supposed to act as mentors of subordinates (*kōhai*). This senior-junior relationship does not change even when the status of the subordinate changes.¹⁸⁴

“Many executives and managers who have achieved the same rank are hesitant to act as equals. Previous sempai-kōhai (senior-junior) relationships can never be forgotten.” (Nishiyama 2000: 121)

“For something about Japan’s sempai/kohai hierarchy — in which the sempai molds and instructs the kohai — rubs wrong against my “gaijin” grain.” (Dillon 2004: para. 10)

See also *senpai*, *kōhai*, *oyabun-kobun* relationship

settai 接待

* Japanese *setsu* (contact) + *tai* (wait).

n. an event or activity for socialising with business guests, the aim of which is to show hospitality and get to know one’s business partners, not to discuss business matters.

NOTE: It may include a formal reception at a restaurant and leisure activities. Family members are rarely invited.¹⁸⁵

“Though doing deals in the bar after a round may be a worldwide feature of golf, the Japanese took this to a new level with settai (business invitation) golf.” (Freeman 2003: para. 23)

“For the moment only small and medium-sized firms may deduct a limited amount of money spent entertaining clients as a business expense. During the boom years of the 1980s that hardly held back larger companies, defined as those with capital of over ¥100m (\$1m). Back then, spending on settai, as formal entertaining is known in Japan, at one point rose to an annual ¥6 trillion and for several years comfortably exceeded Japan’s outlay on defence.” (The Economist 2013: para. 2)

shachō 社長

* Japanese *sha* (company; society) + *chou* (head).

n. the president of a company.

NOTE: He/she is addressed using this title by employees and non-employees with a lower status.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Hagherian 2010: 14; Alston et al 2005: 22; Picken 2009: 354

¹⁸⁵ Alston et al 2005: 58

¹⁸⁶ Alston et al 2005: 51

“His ascent from lowly salaryman to lofty shacho (president) traces corporate Japan’s rise in the 1980s, its descent into the “lost decade” of the 1990s and its subsequent tentative recovery.” (The Economist 2008: para. 1)

shachōkai/shachō-kai 社長会

* Japanese *sha* (company; society) + *chou* (head) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club).

n. the presidents’ council that includes the presidents of the main companies in a horizontal keiretsu.

NOTE: The presidents’ councils meet monthly. These councils have close ties with government ministries and influence economic decisions.¹⁸⁷

“It appears that the shacho-kai in practice is less a command center to determine the policies and practices of individual companies than a forum for the discussion of matters of mutual concern.” (Gerlach 1992: 107)

See also keiretsu, horizontal keiretsu, *Fuyō-kai*, *Hakusui-kai*, *Kinyō-kai*, *Nimoku-kai*, *Sankin-kai*, *Sansui-kai*

shigoto kyū 仕事給

* Japanese lit. *shigoto* ‘job’, ‘work’; *shi* (serve; do) + *goto* (affair, matter; abstract thing) + *kyuu* (supply; pay).

n. the job wage; a type of salary that is determined by the characteristics of the job and includes two components: the duties wage (*shokumu kyū*) that is based on the responsibility associated with the job and the competence wage (*shokunō kyū*) that is based on the qualifications of the employee.¹⁸⁸

“In the wage system introduced in 1996, ordinary employees were paid wages by job classification, called “shigoto-kyu.”” (Suzuki 2010: 333)

See also *shokumu kyū*, *shokunō kyū*, *zokujin kyū*, *sōgō kyū*, *kihon kyū*

shihon keiretsu 資本系列

* Japanese lit. *shihon* ‘capital’; *shi* (resources) + *hon* (basis, origin, root) + *kei* (system; lineage) + *retsu* (row).

n. a type of vertical keiretsu that consists of a parent company, subsidiaries and affiliated firms and which is characterised by the flow of capital from the parent firm, as opposed to materials.

NOTE: It should be distinguished from the horizontal capital keiretsu (*kinyū keiretsu*).¹⁸⁹

Also called **capital keiretsu**

¹⁸⁷ Hoshi 1994: 287–288; Alston et al 2005:24; Lincoln et al 2009: 6

¹⁸⁸ Holzhausen 2000: 223

¹⁸⁹ Gerlach 1992: 68–69

“At the core of *shihon-keiretsu* groups was usually a manufacturing company.”
(Kajiwara 1999: 63)

See also *keiretsu*, *kinyū keiretsu*

shikkō yakuin 執行役員

* Japanese *shi* (execute; seize) + *kou* (go; act) + *yaku* (service) + *in* (member).

n. an executive officer.

NOTE: It refers to a system, in which heads of business units do not automatically become members of the board of directors. The aim is to make a distinction between the decision-making authority of the board of directors and business operations that are the responsibility of executive officers. With the aid of this system the number of board members was reduced, and outside directors were used as well. Sony was the first to use this system in 1997, and Mitsubishi Chemical, Hitachi and Toshiba also adopted it.¹⁹⁰

“According to Sony officials, the decision to change the status of twenty-eight officials to *shikkō yakuin* was a wrenching one. As mentioned earlier, the position of director, and therefore, board member, was the ultimate career aspiration of many a corporate employee, and a change in status to *shikkō yakuin* was inevitably seen as a demotion.” (Schaede 2003: 227)

shimoza 下座

* Japanese *shimo* (down) + *za* (seat; sit).

n. the seat occupied by the lowest-ranked person during a business meeting or social gathering, situated nearest to the door.¹⁹¹

“In the business world, the *sempai-kōhai* system has a powerful influence on human relations, such as in meetings where a junior employee will take a seat near the door, which is called *shimoza*, while the eldest person (often the boss) will be seated next to any important guests in a position called *kamiza*.” (Davies et al 2002)

See also *kamiza*

shingikai/ shingi-kai 審議会

* Japanese lit. *shingi* ‘deliberation’; *shin* (examine carefully; try) + *gi* (discuss) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club).

n. a policy deliberation council; an advisory council that provides assistance in policy formation.

NOTE: Managers and the government maintain cooperative relations through various committees, including *shingikai*.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Schaede 2008: 15; IFLR. 2003: para. 13

¹⁹¹ Haghirian 2010: 132

“In the postwar period, ministry-based deliberation councils (shingikai) had played an important role in Japan’s policy-making process, because in many cases they reinforced the power of the various ministries over their industries.” (Schaede 2008: 30)

“Some years back I found myself appointed to official committees and councils (shingikai) set up to consider nuclear energy policy and nuclear safety. What I saw and heard then gave me little confidence that Japan was on top of the safety question.” (Clark 2011: para. 2)

shinhatsubai 新発売

* Japanese lit. *hatsubai* ‘sale’; *shin* (new) + *hatsu* (start; emit) + *bai* (sell).

n. new products that have just been launched on the market.

NOTE: The development of new products is essential as Japanese customers prefer the newest releases and the constant release of new products can therefore be considered a Japanese management strategy.¹⁹³

“Japanese consumers are supposedly obsessed with shinhatsubai (brand-new products), which explains why people tend to buy new cars every three or four years.” (The Japan Times 2005: para. 4)

shinsotsu 新卒

* Japanese *shin* (new) + *sotsu* (graduate).

n. a recent university graduate.

“Most importantly, we discovered from our study that only about 30-50% of the male workers and less than 10% of the female workers employed as shinsotsu workers remain with their firms until over the ages of 55.” (Eguchi 2009: 12)

shinsotsu (ikkatsu)saiyō 新卒(一括)採用

* Japanese lit. *ikkatsu* ‘lump’, ‘bundle’, *saiyou* ‘employment’; *shin* (new) + *sotsu* (graduate) + *i-* (one) + *katsu* (lump together) + *sai* (pick, gather) + *you* (employ).

n. simultaneous recruitment of new graduates.

“During this gruelling recruitment period, known as “Shinsotsu Ikkatsu Saiyo,” students run the gauntlet of a string of job fairs, seminars and interviews. Those who haven’t secured a job offer by graduation often choose to stay in university for a fifth year to avoid being labelled an “unemployed graduate”.” (The Observers 2011: para. 2)

See also *chūto saiyo*

shimatsusho/ shimatsu sho 始末書

* Japanese lit. *shimatsu* ‘solution’, ‘settlement’; *shi* (begin) + *matsu* (last part) + *sho* (write; book).

¹⁹² Witt 2011: 94; Oh 2004: 51, Komiya 1999: 91

¹⁹³ Haghirian 2010: 108–109

n. a letter of apology sent to business colleagues in which the writer takes responsibility for what happened and expresses regret.

NOTE: An apology made in this manner should be accepted.¹⁹⁴

“Courts set the bar lower for disciplinary measures other than dismissal, of course, and there are many types of sanctions: ordering the writing of a shimatsusho apology letter, for example, a simple pay cut, demotion, suspension (with or without pay) and, ultimately, the dreaded “disciplinary dismissal.”” (Okunuki 2012: para. 4)

shitauke (kigyō) 下請け(企業)

* Japanese lit. *shitauke* ‘subcontract’, *kigyō* ‘enterprise’; *shita* (down) + *uke* (request) + *ki* (project) + *gyō* (work, business, industry).

n. a subcontracting company, a company whose business activities depend partially or completely on other firms.

NOTE: Many of the *shitauke* may be run by former employees of the parent company.¹⁹⁵

“There is a common business practice called shitauke tataki—pressuring suppliers to keep prices down, usually by threatening to use different suppliers or move operations overseas.” (Brasor 2012: para. 6)

shitenchō 支店長

* Japanese *shi* (branch; support) + *ten* (shop) + *chō* (head).

n. manager of a branch office.¹⁹⁶

“There had now developed wide income differentials between the directors (jūyaku) and the directors of departments or branch offices (buchō or shitenchō).” (Taira 1997: 278)

shitsuke 躰

* Japanese *shitsuke* (discipline, training).

n. the fifth stage of the 5S System which refers to the sustenance of discipline, to standardisation for the benefit of long-term kaizen goals and to the maintenance and reviewing of standards.¹⁹⁷

“Without the S of shitsuke, even the most carefully constructed systems of the first 4 S—seiri (sorting), seiton (organizing), seiso (cleaning, shining) and seiketsu (sanitizing, standardizing)—cannot be sustained for long.” (Pringle 2011c: para. 12)

See also 5S

¹⁹⁴ Alston et al 2005: 40

¹⁹⁵ Whittaker 1994: 211; De Mente 2012: 188

¹⁹⁶ Alston et al 2005: 155

¹⁹⁷ Haghirian 2010: 8

shōjinka 省人化

* Japanese *shou* (introspect; save) + *jin* (human being) + *ka* (change into).

n. the practice of continually optimising the number of workers in a work centre in accordance with demand.¹⁹⁸

“Shojinka has an especially significant meaning when the number of workers must be reduced due to a decrease in demand.” (Monden 2011: 144)

shōkaijō/ shōkai-jō 紹介状

* Japanese lit. *shoukai* ‘introduction’; *shou* (introduce) + *kai* (mediate) + *jou* (letter).
n. a letter of introduction.

NOTE: It is used as a recommendation made to initiate business relations.¹⁹⁹

“Before attempting to meet with representatives of a Japanese company, you should arrange for shokai-jo (letters of introduction) from well-known business leaders, overseas Japanese, or former government officials who have dealt with Japan.” (Engel et al 2009: 43)

See also *shōkainin*

shōkainin 紹介人

* Japanese lit. *shoukai* ‘introduction’; *shou* (introduce) + *kai* (mediate) + *nin* (human being).

n. a professional introducer whose services are needed in Japan if one wishes to meet potential business partners.

NOTE: Introducing oneself is not common as Japanese prefer not to deal with strangers. The introducer also helps to make complaints or solve disputes between the parties, attends the first meetings and the celebration when a contract is signed.²⁰⁰

Also called **shōkaisha**

“A shokainin not only introduces but also vouches for the integrity of the individual they are introducing.” (Delaney 1998: 143)

See also *shōkaijō*

shokumu kyū 職務給

*Japanese lit. *shokumu* ‘duties’, ‘work’; *shoku* (employment) + *mu* (duty) + *kyuu* (supply; pay).

n. the duties wage; a part of the job wage.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ 1000Ventures

¹⁹⁹ Alston et al 2005: 47

²⁰⁰ Alston et al 2005: 37, 121

²⁰¹ Holzhausen 2000: 223

“In fact, the dilution of the seniority principle started in the 1960s, when job responsibility pay (shokumu kyu) was introduced with the adoption of job evaluation in certain industries such as steel /.../.” (Sako 1997: 12)

See also *shokunō kyū, shigoto kyū, zokujin kyū, sōgō kyū, kihon kyū*

shokunō kyū 職能給

* Japanese lit. *shokunou* ‘one’s ability in the workplace’; *shoku* (employment) + *nou* (ability) + *kyuu* (supply; pay).

n. the competence wage; a part of the job wage.²⁰²

“The 1970s and the 1980s saw the introduction and the diffusion of ability-based pay (shokuno kyu), although /.../ an element of seniority tended to creep into this pay component via promotion in the qualification rank.” (Sako 1997: 12)

See also *shokumu kyū, shigoto kyū, zokujin kyū, sōgō kyū, kihon kyū*

shokutaku 嘱託

* Japanese *shoku* (charge with, ask to do) + *taku* (entrust).

n. a contract employee.²⁰³

“As a shokutaku, there was no possible career path for promotion, nor was there any real assurance of a future in the company.” (Kopp 2013c: para. 2)

See also *seishain*

shōyo 賞与

* Japanese *shou* (prize) + *yo* (give).

n. a bonus.

NOTE: Bonuses are paid twice a year: at the end of the year and during the summer.

The sum depends on the profitability of the company, which stresses the importance of the employees’ contribution to the success of the company.²⁰⁴

“Japan’s famous twice-a-year bonuses, shoyo (show-yoe), were originally regarded as a fringe benefit by employees and management, but workers and unions have long since considered them an integral part of wages.” (De Mente 2012: 82)

See also *kihon kyū, teate*

shukkō 出向

* Japanese *shutsu* (go out; put out) + *kou* (turn toward).

n. the practice of transferring employees to subsidiary and affiliated organisations temporarily.

²⁰² Holzhausen 2000: 223

²⁰³ Nishiyama 2000: 155

²⁰⁴ Alston et al 2005: 3

NOTE: This has enabled elderly workers to stay employed for a longer period of time. Employees are mostly transferred because the subsidiary or affiliated company needs assistance in a specialized field.²⁰⁵

“They have searched frantically for ways to save costs without laying workers off. Inter-firm personnel transfer (shukko), reduction of per-employee work hours, and calls for “voluntary” early retirement have been some of the measures firms have been taking.” (Matsuzuka 2002: 3)

See also *shukkō shain, tenseki*

shukkō shain 出向社員

* Japanese *shutsu* (go out; put out) + *kou* (turn toward) + *sha* (company; society) + *in* (member).

n. an employee who is transferred to a subsidiary or affiliated company.²⁰⁶

“In the formal language of Japanese corporate management, his status in a foreign subsidiary is that of a shukko shain, a corporate employee who still belongs to the home company but has been “sent away” to a subsidiary or an affiliate.” (Kurotani 2005: 65)

See also *shukkō*

shuntō 春闘

* Japanese lit. ‘spring struggle’; *shun* (spring) + *tou* (fight).

n. the annual negotiations of enterprise unions for higher salaries and improved working conditions.

NOTE: This phenomenon no longer exists as job security has replaced payment increases as the priority for unions, and cooperation between the employees and management has become more important than confrontation.²⁰⁷

“Both management and unions are aware of the acute damage caused by strikes and usually come to an agreement before the “Spring Struggle” occurs.” (De Mente 2012: 189)

shusa 主査

* Japanese *shu* (main; master, owner) + *sa* (look into).

n. the leader of a large project; an employee who supervises the production of a design and has various skills in the fields of design development and manufacturing.

NOTE: This job title was introduced by Toyota.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁵ Abegglen 2006: 43; Sato 1996: para. 1, 15; De Mente 2012: 189

²⁰⁶ De Mente 2012: 189

²⁰⁷ Abegglen 2006: 88–89

²⁰⁸ Manufacturing Terms; Itoh 1994: 277

“Another unique role at Toyota is that of *shusa*, a chief engineer or program manager who has complete responsibility for the development of a new vehicle.” (Beaudan 2012: 142)

***shūshin koyō (seido)* 終身雇用(制度)**

* Japanese *shūshin* ‘lifetime’, *koyō* ‘employment’, *seido* ‘system’; *shū* (end) + *shin* (body; oneself) + *ko* (employ) + *yō* (employment) + *sei* (system; control) + *do* (degree; time, occasion).

n. the system of lifetime employment, the aim of which is to provide a sense of security for the company and its employees.

NOTE: It is considered to be conducive to higher motivation and dedication. It is characterised by job rotation that does not enable the employees to specialise in any field, but rather obtain experience in different fields of work. Employees are able to identify closely with the company.²⁰⁹

“Seniority-based pay (*nenkō joretsu chingin*) has often been described as one of the so-called ‘three pillars of the Japanese employment system’; the two others being lifetime employment (*shūshin koyō*) and in-house company unions (*kigyōbetsu kumiai*) /.../.” (Conrad 2009: 115)

***sōdanyaku/ sōdan yaku* 相談役**

* Japanese lit. *sōdan* ‘consultation’; *sou* (mutual) + *dan* (talk) + *yaku* (service).

n. counsellor, advisor.²¹⁰

“It is customary that the chairman continue to serve as parttime *sōdanyaku* (advisor) for an additional year or two years before full retirement.” (Nishiyama 2000: 120)

***sōgō kyū* 総合給**

* Japanese lit. *sougou* ‘combination’, ‘synthesis’; *sou* (total; general) + *gou* (combine; fit) + *kyū* (supply; pay).

n. the general wage; a combination of different types of salaries (the job wage and the personal wage).²¹¹

“The three systems are the job wage (*shigoto kyū*), the personal wage (*zokujin kyū*) and the general wage (*sōgō kyū*).” (Holzhausen 2000: 223)

See also *shigoto kyū*, *zokujin kyū*, *shokumu kyū*, *shokunō kyū*, *kihon kyū*

***sōgōshoku/ sōgō shoku* 総合職**

* Japanese lit. *sougou* ‘combination’, ‘synthesis’; *sou* (total; general) + *gou* (combine; fit) + *shoku* (employment).

n. the managerial track; the career track for employees who are expected to obtain the skills necessary for managers and are able to rise to higher positions.²¹²

²⁰⁹ Hagherian 2010: 20–22; Abegglen 2006: 74; Alston et al 2005: 81

²¹⁰ Alston et al 2005: 155

²¹¹ Holzhausen 2000: 223

“Under the revised law, corporations will be deemed as committing indirect discrimination if they do any of the following without any rational reason: impose conditions on an applicant’s weight, height or physical power, require an applicant seeking a position on the managerial track (“sogoshoku”) to accept a possible transfer to any remote branch and make the experience of a transfer to a remote branch as a condition for promotion.” (The Japan Times 2007: para. 2)

See also *ippanshoku, jimushoku*

sōgō shōsha 総合商社

* Japanese lit. *sougou* ‘combination’, ‘synthesis’, *shousha* ‘trading company’; *sou* (total; general) + *gou* (combine; fit) + *shou* (trade) + *sha* (company; society).

n. a Japanese general trading company; a company that buys materials from large companies and sells them to medium and small companies and also takes Japanese products from small and medium companies to the international market.

NOTE: It is responsible for a significant part of Japan’s imports and exports.²¹³

“The role of Japan’s sogo shosha (“general trading companies”) in the country’s trade has declined substantially over the past 20 years, by some 40 percentage points.”

(United Nations Conference on Trade and Development 2005: para. 1)

“The sogo shosha have traditionally played a key role in Japan’s domestic and international trade.” (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development 2005: para. 2)

sōkaiya 総会屋

* Japanese *sou* (total; general) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club) + *ya* (house; small shop; occupation suffix).

n. a shareholder who disrupts shareholders’ meetings to prevent unwanted criticism.

NOTE: They often belong to the Japanese mafia (*yakuza*). Companies may hire them to prevent stockholders from addressing embarrassing issues.²¹⁴

“In Japan, stockholders have no real power over companies – many yearly stockholder meetings last less than an hour. To keep potential critics from talking during the meetings, a branch of organized crime – sokaiya – has offered its services until recently.” (Richter 2000: 19)

“Other law enforcement efforts have been aimed at cracking down on sokaya, or yakuza who buy stock in a company to threaten to cause trouble at its annual meetings.” (French 2001: para. 18)

“In the last decades of the twentieth century, the yakuza-sokaiya network served to broaden and deepen underworld penetration into the mainstream corporate system.” (Szymkowiak 2002: 185)

²¹² Haghirian 2010: 101

²¹³ Haghirian 2010: 61; Free Dictionary: Financial Dictionary

²¹⁴ Hasegawa 1986: 56; Oh 2004: 41; Alson et al 2005: 153

sōmubu/sōmu-bu/ sōmu bu 総務部

* Japanese lit. *soumu* ‘general affairs’; *sou* (total; general) + *mu* (duty) + *bu* (section, division).

n. the general affairs department of a Japanese company.

NOTE: It is responsible for communications, the coordination of interdepartmental relations, the maintenance of official files, company mail and telephone switchboards. In smaller companies it also takes care of foreign correspondence.²¹⁵

“The sōmu bu and kokusai bu personnel usually have no power or decision-making authority, nor will they even know much about the business that brought you to Japan. Their job is to facilitate dealings with foreigners and to coordinate various divisions.” (Alston 1990: 60)

See also *bu*

sonkeigo 尊敬語

* Japanese lit. *sonkei* ‘respect’; *son* (honour) + *kei* (respect) + *go* (language).

n. a category of *keigo* (polite language) used when addressing a superior or speaking about them.²¹⁶

“The first, sonkeigo, a more literal translation of “respect language”, ostensibly raises the relative level of an addressee or referent, the second, kenjōgo, or “humble language”, lowers the level of the speaker, and the third, teineigo, which is usually translated as “polite language”, in its most straightforward form raises the general level of the speech altogether.” (Hendry 1995: 52)

See also *keigo*, *kenjōgo*, *teineigo*

soto 外

* Japanese *soto* (outside).

n. an outsider, a person who does not belong to a company or organisation.²¹⁷

“A soto does not have to follow the same strict rules as an uchi and is given more leeway.” (Brannen 2003: 74)

See also *uchi*, *uchi-soto*

stable shareholder

See *antei kabunushi*

²¹⁵ Alston et al 2005:89; De Mente 2012: 69

²¹⁶ Haghirian 2010: 76

²¹⁷ Haghirian 2010: 16

T

Taguchi methods

n. statistical quality control methods that combine control charts and process control with product and process design to achieve a robust total design with the aim of reducing product variability and making the product function in extreme conditions.

NOTE: They were invented by the Japanese engineer-statistician Dr. Genichi Taguchi.²¹⁸

“Japanese companies including Toyota and its subsidiaries began applying Taguchi methods extensively from the early 1950s.” (Vasconcellos 2004: 62)

taishokukin 退職金

* Japanese lit. *taishoku* ‘retirement’; *tai* (retreat) + *shoku* (employment) + *kin* (metal; gold; money).

n. a monetary bonus that an employee receives upon retirement, generally the monthly salary for every year of service.²¹⁹

“When retiring, the person would receive a taishokukin, or a monetary bonus that could be as large as 36 months of salary, if the person had spent an entire career within the firm.” (Haghirian 2010: 21)

takt time

* derived from German *Taktzeit* ‘clock cycle’.²²⁰

n. the time of a work cycle that is needed to produce a component and fulfil a client’s demand.

NOTE: *Takt* designates the rate of customer demand. The term is used in the Toyota Production System to synchronise the production schedule with demand in order to prevent under- or overproduction and reduce waste.²²¹

“Determining the appropriate takt time is the final piece in developing JIT and is the heartbeat of any lean system.” (Middleton et al 2005: 39)

See also Toyota Production System

tama dashi kai 玉出し会

* Japanese ‘brainstorming camp’; *tama* (gem, precious stone) + *dashi* (go out; put out) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club).

²¹⁸ Business Dictionary; Bannock et al: 361

²¹⁹ Haghirian 2010: 21; Picken 2009: 356

²²⁰ Boyer et al 2009: 461

²²¹ The Official Website of Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky, Inc.; Toyota Material Handling Europe

n. informal meetings introduced by Honda for discussing difficulties in development projects.²²²

“In Japan, Honda has used informal, off-site “brainstorming camps,” called tama dashi kai, to accomplish this kind of tacit-to-tacit knowledge exchange in order to solve difficult problems in product development.” (Boyett et al 2001: 112)

tate keiretsu

See vertical keiretsu

tatemaie 建 (て) 前

* Japanese *tate* (build) + *maie* (before, in front).

n. public opinion.

NOTE: It is highly necessary in the context of business with regard to negotiations and official events as people are supposed to take a standpoint that is expected from them in spite of their real views. The aim is to avoid tension. It can also refer to the official corporate policy that is made known to the general public. If younger employees are better acquainted with a topic, they are allowed to make decisions, but older employees take the credit as leaders since this is required by the tradition of age-based promotion. It should be kept in mind, that according to the tradition of *tatemaie*, during negotiations the senior representative should be treated with respect, even though the actual decisions were made by subordinates.²²³

“Tatemaie, however, goes beyond the “little white lie,” as it is often justified less by the fact you have avoided hurting your listener’s feelings, more by what you have gained from the nondisclosure.” (Arudou 2011: para. 4)

See also *honne*

teate 手当

* Japanese *te* (hand) + *ate* (hit, strike).

n. a special allowance paid to employees in addition to the basic salary for special responsibilities, transportation, work uniforms, etc.²²⁴

“Monthly earnings are composed of the basic salary (kison-kyu) and various allowances (teate).” (Ballon 1993: 31)

See also *kison kyū, shōyo*

teian kaizen 提案改善

*Japanese *teian* ‘proposal’; *tei* (present, offer) + *an* (proposal) + *kai* (reform) + *zen* (good).

²²² Nonaka 1995: 63

²²³ Hagherian 2010: 78; Alston et al 2005: 19–20

²²⁴ Spinks 2002: 110; Picken 2009: 36, 356

n. a management approach that aims at improving business and manufacturing practices by means of strategic improvements that are influenced by managers.

NOTE: The main techniques used are total quality control and just-in-time management.²²⁵

“Gemba and teian kaizen both aim to develop higher production and quality standards.” (Haghirian 2010: 5)

See also kaizen, *gemba kaizen*, Total Quality Control, just-in-time

teineigo 丁寧語

* Japanese lit. *teinei* ‘polite’; *tei* (courteous) + *nei* (courteous) + *go* (language).

n. a category of *keigo* (polite language) that refers to a general polite manner of speaking.²²⁶

“One must be careful to at least use teineigo when speaking in business situations but as far as sonkeigo and kenjogo go, it is important to feel out the situation and the person who you are talking to.” (Lebowitz 2011: para. 4)

See also *keigo*, *kenjōgo*, *sonkeigo*

teishisei 低姿勢

* Japanese lit. *shisei* ‘posture’; *tei* (low) + *shi* (figure, posture) + *sei* (power).

1. *n.* a low posture, a posture with one’s head held low as a sign of humility.

NOTE: It is particularly common when greeting someone with a higher position.²²⁷

“In Japan, a self-effacing low posture (teishisei) is appropriate, but in the West, an erect posture showing self-confidence is called for.” (Nishiyama 2000: 151)

2. *n.* a low profile style of management.²²⁸

“The Prime Minister, Ikeda Hayato, had issued a long-term economic plan for ‘income doubling’ over a ten-year period, and hoped to achieve this by adopting a ‘low posture’ (teishisei) in his foreign and domestic policies.” (Ampiah 1997: 48)

tenseki 転籍

* Japanese *ten* (turn) + *seki* (register, record).

n. the practice of transferring employees to another company.

NOTE: The person loses his/ her employee status in the sending company.²²⁹

“Frequently referred to is the practice by which employees who are in their mid-50s are moved from their career jobs to jobs with subcontracting firms under arrangements such as shukko and tenseki.” (Casey 2007: 45)

See also *shukkō*

²²⁵ Haghirian 2010: 5

²²⁶ Haghirian 2010: 76

²²⁷ Nishiyama 2000: 24

²²⁸ Alston et al 2005: 35

²²⁹ Masahiko et al 1994:18; Sato 1996: para. 23; Casey 2007: 45

tenshoku 転職

* Japanese *ten* (turn) + *shoku* (employment).

n. the act of changing one's job.²³⁰

“Besides freeters, another result of the change in attitude towards work and lifestyle is the increase in tenshoku, which literally means job change.” (Haghirian 2009: 98)

tenshokusha 転職者

* Japanese *ten* (turn) + *shoku* (employment) + *sha* (person).

n. someone who has changed jobs.²³¹

“In 1989, the increase in tenshokusha was already noticeable.” (Haghirian 2009: 98)

three jewels

See *sanshu no jingi*

three Ms

n. the three types of waste: *muri*, *muda* and *mura*.

“Particularly notable is that the (so-called) Toyota Production System (TPS) in the mass production of machinery was institutionalized by Ōno Taiichi of Toyota Motor Corporation in his pursuit to eliminate the three Ms, i.e., muda (waste), muri (overloading), and mura (inconsistency).” (Odaka 2011: 94)

See also *muri, muda, mura*

tokumei kumiai (TK) 匿名組合

* Japanese ‘silent/ anonymous partnership’; *tokumei* ‘anonymous’, *kumiai* ‘union’; *toku* (conceal) + *mei* (name) + *kumi* (organize; assemble) + *ai* (combine; fit).

n. a form of partnership in which non-operating (silent) partners have limited liability.²³²

“Tokumei kumiai arrangements continue to be a versatile planning technique for achieving a wide range of business and tax structuring objectives.” (Yoost et al 2001: para. 1)

tokurei yūgen gaisha/ kaisha (TYG/ TYK) 特例有限会社

* Japanese lit. *yūgen* ‘limited’, *kaisha* ‘company’; *toku* (special) + *rei* (example) + *yuu* (have) + *gen* (limit) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club) + *sha* (company; society).

n. a type of corporation that replaced already existing *yūgen kaisha* with the abolition of Japan's Limited Liability Company Law on May 1st, 2006.²³³

²³⁰ Haghirian 2010: 146

²³¹ Haghirian 2010: 146

²³² Webster's Online Dictionary; Venture Japan. n.d. b: para. 3

²³³ Venture Japan. n.d. a: para. 1; Zxentpro 2011: para. 6

“Initially, yugen kaisha already existing will be automatically converted to tokurei yugen kaisha (special private limited company), with the option to convert voluntarily and permanently into a kabushiki kaisha.” (De Vries Robbe 2006: 204)
See also *yūgen kaisha*

***torishimariyaku kai* 取締役会**

* Japanese lit. *torishimariyaku* ‘director’; *tori* (take) + *shimari* (conclude; tighten) + *yaku* (service) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club).
n. the board of directors of a company.

NOTE: It is comprised of high executives (*shachō, fuku shachō, senmu torishimariyaku, jōmu torishimariyaku*). Members of the *torishimariyaku kai* appoint senior managers. The Japanese board of directors does not have the same authority to make decisions as its Western equivalent as emphasis is laid on collective decision-making and reaching a consensus within the company.²³⁴

“Under present law, a K.K. must have a board of directors (取締役会 torishimariyaku kai) consisting of at least three individuals.” (International Business Publications, USA 2012: 31)

Total Quality Control

n. organized kaizen activities that involve everyone in the company, both managers and workers, and are aimed at advancing performance at every level.

NOTE: These activities are implemented in all phases of the manufacturing and work processes and are not simply result-oriented. The means of quality control include quality circles, *genchi genbutsu, hanseikai*.²³⁵

“The spectacular spread and application of Total Quality Control gave the impulse for the systematic involvement of employees in the improvement of quality and in the achievement of objectives of enterprise.” (McNulty 2004: 47)

See also *genchi gembutsu, hanseikai*, quality circle

Total Productivity Management (TPM)

n. a top-down approach to management that turns a company’s goals to tangible objectives and numeral targets and makes changes in the whole company, while aiming at reducing costs.²³⁶

“Our ultimate goal in TQC is to earn customer satisfaction. In contrast, total productivity management has an internal focus. It’s a means of doing things like reducing defects detected in the factory and eliminating line stoppages.” (Shimokawa 2009: 214)

²³⁴ Nishiyama 2000: 120–121; Oh 2004: 46–47

²³⁵ 1000Ventures; Haghirian 2010: 9

²³⁶ Haghirian 2010: 36–37

Total Quality Management (TQM)

n. a bottom-up approach to management that considers the overall continuous improvement of an organisation to be a process, not a short-term goal, while aiming at introducing thorough changes by means of progressive changes in attitudes, practices, structures and systems in order to ensure quality.

NOTE: It includes all the members of an organisation and covers all of its functions. The four steps of the Japanese TQM approach are *kaizen*, *atarimae hinshitsu*, *kansei* and *miryokuteki hinshitsu*.²³⁷

“Employee participation constitutes one of the main principles of contemporary TQM and it is considered as the key for the effective application and the effectiveness of a TQM philosophy.” (McNulty 2004: 48)

See also *kaizen*, *atarimae hinshitsu*, *miryokuteki hinshitsu*, *kansei*

Toyota Production System (TPS)

n. a production system that is founded on two main principles: just-in-time production and *jidōka*.²³⁸

“The Toyota Production System, a wonder of the industrial world rivalling the original assembly line as the most studied industrial phenomenon of all time, sets the carmaker apart from less successful competitors.” (BYU-GloWbE 2011)

See also just-in-time, *jidōka*, Pull System, *takt* time

Toyotism/ Toyodism

n. a production philosophy that is characterised by flexible mass production that includes the use of kanban and quality checks, job rotation, continuous improvement activities that are aimed at diminishing waste, and commitment to quality.²³⁹

“Later, adapting Fordism selectively, the Japanese developed flexible production systems. By using quality circles, team output, or pull systems, they transformed Fordism into Toyotism.” (Naruo et al 2007: 388)

See also *kaizen*, just-in-time

TPM

See Total Productivity Management

TPS

See Toyota Production System

²³⁷ Business Dictionary; BusinessKnowledgeSource.com. n.d.; Haghirian 2010: 36; Bannock 2002 et al: 367

²³⁸ The Official Website of Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky, Inc

²³⁹ Karwowski 2001: 1228

TQM

See Total Quality Management

traffic light system

See *andon*

trans-keiretsu

n. a type of keiretsu that is characterised by cooperation with firms of other keiretsu, with Japanese firms that are not members of a keiretsu or foreign firms.²⁴⁰

“Since the end of the 1980s the trans-keiretsu supplement the traditional forms of interfirm cooperation.” (Richter 2000: 28)

“Whether capital keiretsu, production keiretsu, or trans-keiretsu, the phenomenon of strategic networks has enormous relevance in Japan.” (Richter 2000: 28)

See also keiretsu

tsukiai 付き合い

* Japanese *tsuki* (attach) + *ai* (combine; fit).

1. *n.* a social event for the employees of a company.

NOTE: Socialising with colleagues after work is very common in Japan.²⁴¹

“The overall picture of C-Life tsukiai, then, is of a large number of social occasions occurring with a variety of company members of different ages and sections.” (Graham 2003: 130)

2. *n.* the social debt one develops when receiving a favour, for example from a teacher or an employer.²⁴²

“The greater a man’s tsukiai—the wider his network of giri-relations or, as the Japanese say, the ‘broader his face’—the greater is his power and influence and the greater the prestige accorded him.” (Dore 2013: 259)

TYG

See *tokurei yūgen gaisha*

TYK

See *tokurei yūgen gaisha*

²⁴⁰ Richter 2000: 26

²⁴¹ Graham 2003: 130

²⁴² De Mente 2012: 60

U

uchi 内

* Japanese lit. ‘inside’; it is used in the meaning of ‘house’ or ‘home’.

n. a person inside a company or organisation who receives the benefits of belonging to the group and contributes to the well-being of the group.

NOTE: It is used to distinguish clearly between members of a group and outsiders.²⁴³

“In any given situation, you are either uchi or soto. As a foreigner, you will always be soto.” (Brannen 2003: 74)

See also *soto*, *uchi-soto*

uchiage/ uchi-age 打ち上げ

* Japanese lit. ‘to shoot off (fireworks)’ or ‘launch (a rocket)’; *uchi* (strike) + *age* (up).

n. a drinking party held by colleagues to celebrate the completion of a project, the signing of a contract or gaining an important client.²⁴⁴

“Participants in an uchi-age are allowed excessive drinking and outrageous behaviour to let off steam though no quarrels or complaints are allowed.” (Alston et al 2005: 65–66)

uchi-awase 打ち合わせ

* Japanese lit. ‘to beat out an agreement’; *uchi* (strike) + *awase* (combine; fit).

n. a planning session, both in the field of business and recreation.

NOTE: These sessions are held before almost all events, including meetings. The *uchi-awase* preceding negotiations with foreign companies may extend to several days or even months.²⁴⁵

“The “sound-outs” on views and positions that take place in these short and frequent uchiawase meetings provide a major resource for the Japanese process of consensus decision building called nemawashi (literally, root-binding).” (Yamada 1997: 56)

uchi-soto

* Japanese lit. ‘inside-outside’

n. the practice of making a distinction between the members and non-members of a group.

²⁴³ Hagherian 2010: 15; De Mente 2012: 194

²⁴⁴ De Mente 2012: 194; Alston et al 2005: 65

²⁴⁵ De Mente 2012: 194–195

NOTE: In Japanese society, being a member of a group is seen in a more positive light than being a non-member. Japanese companies distinguish very clearly between full-time and part-time employees or non-employees and the latter are viewed as non-members. It is difficult to enter or leave Japanese organisations and employees are not laid off easily. Leaving is also viewed as disloyal.²⁴⁶

“The “us and them” mentality is not a uniquely Japanese concept, but in a society with a famously uchi-soto (inside-outside) group-based structure, being labeled an “outsider” can feel like the ultimate insult.” (Lewis 2010: para. 25)

See also *uchi, soto*

ukeoi 請負

* Japanese *uke* (request) + *oi* (lose, be defeated; bear, carry).

n. a style of contract employment, in the case of which people are hired as independent contractors who have more freedom than in the case of the *haken* style of contract employment.²⁴⁷

“If workers remain in the ukeoi status, customer companies need not take responsibility for their safety because such responsibility legally rests with the contractors.” (The Japan Times 2006a: para. 4)

See also *haken*

V

vertical keiretsu

n. a type of keiretsu, in which subsidiaries act as suppliers for the parent company.²⁴⁸

Also called **tate keiretsu 縦系列**

* Japanese *tate* (vertical) + *kei* (system; lineage) + *retsu* (row);

kigyō keiretsu

* Japanese *kigyō* ‘enterprise’; *ki* (project) + *gyō* (work, business, industry).

“In reality, financial and equity relations in the vertical keiretsu structure also exert a strong impact on corporate stability. Strong equity control of the car manufacturer over its suppliers in vertical production networks result in a stable and long-term demand for parts supplies.” (Kawai 2009: para. 11)

See also keiretsu, horizontal keiretsu, *kyōryōkai*

²⁴⁶ Haghirian 2010: 14, 16, 17

²⁴⁷ Casey 2009: para. 3

²⁴⁸ Okumura 2000: 135–136; Kikkawa 2013: 44

W

wa 和

* Japanese *wa* (harmony, peace).

n. harmony in human relations.

NOTE: Maintaining harmony in a group is of enormous importance and influences business decisions. For instance, negative replies are avoided, answers are kept uncertain, and groups are praised instead of individuals to maintain the *wa*. Face-to-face communication is necessary for the beginning of the development of *wa* in a relationship. *Wa* is taken into consideration already when recruiting new employees, and the personality and loyalty of potential employees are regarded as more important than knowledge and business skills. Senior executives are responsible for maintaining the *wa* in the company. The training programs of Japanese companies are largely aimed at improving morale and developing *wa* among employees.²⁴⁹

“Everyone’s views are taken into account for the purpose of maintaining harmony (wa).” (Haghirian 2010: 133).

wakon yōsai 和魂洋才

* Japanese lit. ‘Japanese spirit, western learning’; *wa* (harmony; Japan) + *kon* (soul) + *you* (Western) + *sai* (talent).

n. the general management approach of Japanese companies, according to which Western ideas can be adopted in a distinctly Japanese manner.

NOTE: It is a Japanese saying that spread during the Meiji period (1868–1912) when the Japanese started to try to catch up with the Western world in the fields of technology and industry.²⁵⁰

“Yet Canon is one major Japanese company that continues to defend the traditionally Japanese business practice of lifetime employment, while applying strong cash-flow and supply chain metrics to its management. It is the idea of wakon yosai, combining Western learning with a Japanese spirit in management.” (Hasegawa 2010: 167)

wan setto shugi ワンセット主義

* derived from the English words ‘one set’ and the Japanese word *shugi* ‘principle’, ‘ideology’; *shu* (main; master, owner) + *gi* (righteousness).

n. a principle of horizontal keiretsu, according to which the group has only one member from every field of industry.²⁵¹

²⁴⁹ Alston et al 2005: 13-15

²⁵⁰ Abegglen 2006: 73; De Mente 2012: 195

²⁵¹ Lincoln et al 2004: 17

Also called **one-set principle**

“Each group has a bank and a trading company, a steel firm, an automobile firm, a major chemical firm, a shipbuilding and plant engineering firm and so on — and, except by awkward accident, not more than one of each. (The ‘one set’ principle, as the Japanese say.)” (Dore 2012: 178)

warusa kagen/ warusa-kagen 悪さ加減

* Japanese lit. *kagen* ‘extent’ or ‘adjustment’; *warusa* (bad) + *ka* (add) + *gen* (decrease).

n. something that has not developed into a problem yet, but is nevertheless not correct and requires improvement.²⁵²

“Kaizen assumes, as a given, that every organization has its problems, at least the so-called warusa-kagen, things that are not yet problems but are still not quite right /.../.” (Van Staveren 2006: 57)

Water-Spider

See *mizusumashi*

window guidance

See *madoguchi shidō*

window-side tribe

See *madogiwazoku*

windowsill tribe

See *madogiwazoku*

Z

zaibatsu 財閥

* Japanese *zai* (wealth) + *batsu* (clique).

n. family-owned conglomerates that had a significant position in the Japanese economy from the late 19th century to the early 20th century, but were dissolved after World War II during the US occupation.

NOTE: Five famous families included Mitsui, Iwasaki, Sumitomo, Yasuda and Kōga.²⁵³

“The zaibatsu purge failed to destroy big business capitalism in Japan, although it ended family capitalism.” (Oh 2004: 27)

“As is well known, zaibatsu-affiliated firms were instrumental in developing Japan’s frontier industries – from the introduction of new metal and chemical

²⁵² Kaizen Institute

²⁵³ Free Dictionary: Financial Dictionary; Hasegawa 1986: 22; Oh 2004: 25

manufacturing processes to the development of an electrical machinery industry to the expansion into overseas markets.” (Lincoln et al 2004: 53–54)

See also keiretsu

zaikai 財界

* Japanese *zai* (wealth) + *kai* (world).

n. the business community of Japan; the elite of the economic world, i.e. large firms and their managers.

NOTE: The term is often construed as designating groups such as the Federation of Economic Organisations (*Keidanren*), the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (*Nihon Shoko Kaigisho*), the Japan Federation of Employers’ Associations (*Nikkeiren*) and the Japan Committee for Economic Development (*Keizai Doyukai*), but it may also refer to businesspeople who do not belong to these groups.²⁵⁴

“The zaikai was often considered a power behind Japanese politics because its basic goals often coincided with those of the government.” (Yui 2011: 62)

See also *zaikaijin*

zaikaijin/ zaikai jin/ zaikai-jin 財界人

* Japanese *zai* (wealth) + *kai* (world) + *jin* (human being).

n. a distinguished senior man, often a former high-ranking official in the field of business or finance, who acts as a neutral counsellor for major firms.²⁵⁵

“Ishizaka Taizo became the second president of Keidanren in 1955 and is still considered “the most prominent zaikai-jin (leader of the business community)”/.../. (Yui 2011: 63)

See also *zaikai*

zaitech

See *zaiteku*

zaiteku 財テク

* Japanese abbreviation of *zaimu tekunorojī* ‘financial technology’, ‘financial engineering’; *zai* (wealth; finance) + *teku* (derived from the English word ‘technology’).

n. the practice of using various financial investments for the purpose of gaining a profit for the company (as opposed to using the main activities of the company), e.g. stock market speculation, arbitrage, foreign exchange speculation.²⁵⁶

Also called **zaitech**²⁵⁷

²⁵⁴ Okumura 2000: 79

²⁵⁵ De Mente 2012: 197

²⁵⁶ Kester 1993: 222; Scok et al 2013: 320–321

“Japanese companies began relying increasingly on zaiteku for profits and imbedded increasingly risky structures into their balance sheets.” (Alloway 2011: para. 10)

zokujin kyū 属人級

* Japanese *zoku* (belong to, be subordinate to) + *jin* (human being) + *kyuu* (supply; pay).

n. the personal wage; a type of salary that is determined by certain characteristics of an employee, e.g. age, tenure or level of education.²⁵⁸

“The three systems are the job wage (shigoto kyū), the personal wage (zokujin kyū) and the general wage (sōgō kyū).” (Holzhausen 2000: 223)

See also *shigoto kyū, sōgō kyū, shokumu kyū, shokunō kyū, kihon kyū*

Y

yakuin 役員

* Japanese *yaku* (service) + *in* (member).

n. an executive starting from the position of director, i.e. belonging to the highest level of employees.²⁵⁹

“The conglomerate combinations consisted of mutual shareholdings, exchange of directors (yakuin), business networks centred around the group’s bank and general trading company, and monthly president meetings (shachōkai). In terms of structure, function and performance, these post-war groups differed fundamentally from the pre-war zaibatsu.” (Waldenberger 1996: 206)

See also *bukachō, hirashain*

yakutoku 役得

* Japanese *yaku* (service) + *toku* (acquire; gain).

n. gifts or other benefits, such as travelling or entertainment, provided to company employees because of their job positions, often by suppliers or those wishing to develop business relations with the company.

NOTE: They are considered to be important for maintaining good relations, but if overdone, they may be seen as an attempt to exert influence on the person.²⁶⁰

“A bureaucrat whose approval is needed for a business license or for other important purposes, can expect to be offered a great deal of valuable yakutoku.” (De Mente 2004: 307)

²⁵⁷ Oxford English Dictionary 1997

²⁵⁸ Holzhausen 2000: 223

²⁵⁹ De Mente 2012: 67

²⁶⁰ De Mente 2012: 195

Yamazumi 山積み

* Japanese lit. ‘huge mound/ heap’; *yama* (mountain) + *zumi* (accumulate).

n. a chart (Yamazumi board) with vertical bars representing the relative time to complete a task, which can be moved from operation to operation in order to balance a process to *takt* time.

NOTE: The board makes it possible to quickly rebalance a process when *takt* changes and indicates which operations are overloaded or not used enough.²⁶¹

“Toyota uses Yamazumi work balance charts to visually present the work content of a series of tasks and facilitate work balancing and the isolation and elimination of non value added work content.” (Applied Computer Services, Inc. 2013: para. 3)

See also *takt* time

YK

See *yūgen kaisha*

yoko keiretsu

See horizontal keiretsu

yokonarabi 横並び

* Japanese lit. *yoko* (sideways) + *narabi* (line up).

n. the practice of following the example of others.

NOTE: For instance, companies imitate competitors when making investments or developing new products.²⁶²

“Yokonarabi is so pervasive that it even influences the budgeting process in many *kaisha*.” (Yoshimura et al 1997: 114)

yokoten(kai) 横展(開)

* Japanese lit. ‘horizontal deployment’; *tenkai* ‘deployment’; *yoko* (sideways; horizontal) + *ten* (unfold, evolve; display) + *kai* (open).

n. the practice of transferring the successes of kaizen to other fields, other departments of the company or affiliated firms as well, adapting and improving kaizen methods in the process.

NOTE: It can refer to imitating product design ideas, business processes or better use of machinery, materials or methods in general.²⁶³

“A fundamental step in the design of our vehicles is yokoten – sharing knowledge and lessons learned between vehicle development teams.” (Toyota 2013: 23)

See also kaizen

²⁶¹ Lean Terms and Definitions

²⁶² Haghirian 2010: 146; Okimoto et al 1994: 183; Alston et al 2005:27

²⁶³ Kaizen Institute; the Official Website of Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky, Inc.

yūgen kaisha (YK) 有限会社

* Japanese lit. *yuugen* ‘limited’, *kaisha* ‘company’; *yu* (have) + *gen* (limit) + *kai* (meet, see; meeting; society, club) + *sha* (company; society).

n. a type of limited liability company that existed from 1940 to 2006.

NOTE: It was abolished with the Companies Act in June 2005. Most of these companies became *kabushiki kaisha*. Existing companies could continue as *tokurei yūgen kaisha*.²⁶⁴

“The formation requirements of Gomei Kaisha, Goshi Kaisha, and Kabushiki Kaisha are found in the Commercial Code, and those of Yugen Kaisha are in the Limited Liability Company Act.” (International Business Publications, USA. 2009: 168)

See also *tokurei yūgen kaisha*

yūgen sekinin jigyo kumiai 有限責任事業組合

* Japanese lit. *yuugen* ‘limited’, *sekinin* ‘responsibility’, *jigyō* ‘undertaking’, ‘enterprise’, *kumiai* ‘union’; *yu* (have) + *gen* (limit) + *seki* (responsibility; blame) + *nin* (office, duties) + *ji* (affair, matter; abstract thing) + *gyō* (work, business, industry) + *kumi* (organize; assemble) + *ai* (combine; fit).

n. a limited liability partnership (LLP); a partnership formed only by the equity participants, who have limited liability.

NOTE: Internal rules of LLPs are set by the equity participants. Taxes are paid from profits allocated to equity participants.²⁶⁵

“In the future, it could be expected that university spin-offs will take advantages of the opportunities offered by the Limited Liability Partnership or LLP (*yugen sekinin jigyo kumiai*).” (Debroux 2009: 167)

3K

* derived from the Japanese terms *kiken* (dangerous), *kitsui* (difficult), and *kitanai* (dirty).

n. a concept that refers to blue-collar jobs.

NOTE: The 3K phenomenon designates the trend of avoiding manufacturing jobs. This has contributed to the disappearance of the lifetime employment system.²⁶⁶

“The illegal foreign workers do jobs that most Japanese would do last, the so-called 3K jobs – *kitsui* (hard), *kitanai* (dirty), and *kiken* (dangerous).” (Karan 2010: 193–194)

²⁶⁴ Investopedia; Venture Japan n.d.: para. 1

²⁶⁵ JETRO n.d.: para. 5

²⁶⁶ Oh 2004: 58

5S System

n. a concept that refers to a set of guidelines comprised of five Japanese terms that describe how a workplace or production process can be effectively organized in order to improve quality.

NOTE: The system consists of the five stages of a production process: *seiri* (sort), *seiton* (set in order), *seiso* (clean), *seiketsu* (systematise), and *shitsuke* (standardise).²⁶⁷

“The 5S system is a good starting point for all improvement efforts aiming to drive out waste from the manufacturing process, and ultimately improve a company’s bottom line by improving products and services, and lowering costs.” (Lista n.d.: para. 3)

See also *seiri*, *seiton*, *seiso*, *seiketsu*, *shitsuke*

²⁶⁷ Hagherian 2010: 7; Alston et al 2005: 77

CONCLUSION

The dictionary compiled for this MA project gives a general overview of Japanese management practices and business culture. The dictionary comprises 319 terms, most of which are Japanese terms (244, but this does not include some of the English terms that were derived from Japanese or are compounds of Japanese and English words). Considerable emphasis was thus placed on observing the use of foreign words of Japanese origin in English and explaining their meaning. As cultural differences play an important role in the business context in Japan, some general cultural terms that are not strictly business-related were included as well. It was considered necessary to illustrate the use and nuances of the terms by means of example sentences and explanations of their cultural background. When searching for sources to be used for compiling this dictionary, it became apparent that even though there are numerous books on the subject of Japanese business, they are often not easily accessible in Estonia and there are no dictionaries of the kind compiled for this project.

The scope of the use of Japanese terms depends on individual authors, but some of the terms are extensively used for lack of English equivalents that would embody the same nuances. On the basis of the analysis of the words of Japanese origin that are included in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, it became apparent that even though Japanese is the most well-represented source of vocabulary among the Central and Eastern Asian languages, there are few terms related to Japanese management and business culture. In the opinion of the author of this project, the use of Japanese terms gives a more thorough insight into Japanese business culture.

Numerous difficulties arose during the compilation process of the dictionary. These included finding reliable and accessible sources, making decisions regarding the selection of terms and the extent and presentation of information in the dictionary, wording the

definitions, and selecting example sentences that supplement the definitions. The spelling of Japanese terms and the use of italics to mark them as foreign words in English sources proved to be inconsistent, with multiple variant forms in use. In keeping with the descriptive approach of this dictionary, an attempt was made to give an overview of the spelling variations of Japanese terms in English by providing headwords with variant forms, but all of them could not be included in the dictionary.

The author hopes that this dictionary is helpful to those who come into contact with Japanese business culture and contributes to their understanding of its cultural and linguistic features. As an MA project, this dictionary serves as a general introduction and does not include all of the terms relevant to the subject. A more extensive analysis of the terminology of this field would be useful in the future. In addition, in the context of Estonia, exploring the use of terms connected to this subject in Estonian would be interesting.

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RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL
TÕLKEKESKUS

Kätlin Pöldma

A Dictionary of Japanese Management and Business Culture. Jaapani ärijuhtimise ja -kultuuri seletav sõnastik.

(magistritöö)

2014

Lehekülgede arv: 137

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