

About this column

Discrete silence has long been considered a virtue in Japan. Perhaps due to this national penchant, the Japanese are somewhat unaccustomed to speaking their minds. However, in the contemporary world, it is essential for us to express our "honne" (honest, undisguised opinion) without mincing words if we are to promote international exchange and cooperation across borders. In fact, there has been a growing desire among non-Japanese for knowing where Japanese interests lie and how the Japanese are arriving at a consensus among themselves.

Responding to this call of the times, the English-Speaking Union of Japan (ESUJ) has set up the "Japan in Their Own Words (JITOW)" column on its website. The ESUJ intends to present a variety of views held by Japanese thinkers on a wide range of issues for non-Japanese readers both at home and abroad. As of the end of October 2001, the ESUJ has enlisted some 90 informed Japanese contributors who have consented to write for the JITOW from time to time on a gratuitous basis.

The ESUJ is a non-profit, non-political and independent organization, whose activities are supported by its members and funded solely by the private sector. The ESUJ does not intend to advocate any specific viewpoint of its own; the opinions expressed in the JITOW column are those of the individual writers.

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