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letters

I hope that in the future PHYSICS TODAY consults a Chinese reviewer first before publishing an article concerning the Chinese language.

JOHN T. C. KAN
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10/81

THE AUTHOR COMMENTS: Many of Chinese letters used in Japan at present have considerably different meanings from the original meanings in China. I learned this "modification" during my visits to China in 1975 and 1980. In my article published in September I mentioned the Japanese meanings of some Chinese letters, but never tried to treat the original Chinese meanings. The letter in figure 6 definitely means "congratulations" in Japan.

The letter in figure 7 (d) definitely means "thick." Figure 7 (e) is "heaven" which is mistyped as "heavy" in the figure caption as pointed by John Kan, but it is correctly read as "heaven" in the text, in the bottom of the third column of page 48. Figure 7 (f) really means husband in Japan. Figure 7 (1) is "mouth," but my correction of the galley proof was not in time for the press deadline.

As mentioned above, many Chinese letters are used in Japan with modified meanings, which again shows our adaptation to foreign cultures.

For your reference, the Japanese pronunciation of Chinese letters discussed above are listed below.

Figure 6: "kotobuki"

Figure 7 (d): "hutoi"

Figure 7 (c): "ten"

Figure 7 (1): "kuchi"

which reveals the Japanese meanings.

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11/81

More on POPA

Louis Rosen's comments (August, page 11) on the greatest danger to society are quite right, including the dependence on arms control for our survival and the importance of verification if we are to have confidence in arms-control agreements. But it isn't sufficient that physicists merely help to make it unattractive for anyone to start a war, and contribute to technical aspects of verification. Physicists need more than ever to be aware of what is going on politically, and how the actions of their government are viewed elsewhere. For example, acting collectively, physicists could have brought to bear significant influence in the US towards getting SALT II ratified. If arms control is as important as Cohen says, then SALT II is important.

Physicists also should be aware of undercurrents, either hypocritical or contradictory that taint many government dealings. For example, a government can be paying more than lip service to arms control, and at the same time be undermining the arms-control process itself. The US currently adheres to several arms-control agreements and principles, but now seems insistent on deploying cruise missiles in Europe, which may well undermine efforts at reaching an arms control agreement on "long-range theater nuclear weapons." The reason is simple: It is unlikely the US and USSR (if they finally agree on numbers of weapons and so on) will agree on what is acceptable as a means of verification for cruise missiles. The Soviet Union's position is just as self-contradictory if one considers the chemical weapon stockpile they have developed. All attempts at arms control in this area have failed on the question of verifiability, yet that nation has been crying out for arms control in other areas.

There was a time when it was militarily smart to have a secret weapon at one's disposal. In today's climate even a nonsecret but "unverifiable" one is a liability, because it cannot be brought under arms control and contributes to international suspicions and tension. As long as the Soviet Union and the US remain in a state of severe ideological conflict, our security will lie in deterrence and arms control, preferably minimum deterrence with very good arms control. Efforts to undermine either deterrence or arms control work against our security; nevertheless, several such efforts are in full swing at the present time. An example of efforts at undermining deterrence is research in antisubmarine warfare (advertisement, August, page 82). One could hardly expect the US to cease research in an area where the USSR is very actively engaged, but surely a bilateral or multilateral agreement should be reached on this as on other vital questions. There is much for the physicists to concern themselves with here, and maybe POPA should create a special task force to address such concerns.

DEREK PAUL
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10/81

Moral code for scientists?

Seldom do I find a concise phrase with which I am in such total accord as that used by D. H. McNeill as he closed his reply to G. H. Stumpff II: "At best it (the so-called defense industry) wastes money... at worst, empty of human value, it is suicidal." (May 1981, page 102).