

# Study of textbook for Systematically Understanding Japanese Culture

-Based on the Culture Model by Augustin Berque -

Shan Gao

School of Knowledge Science,  
Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology  
March 2011

**Keywords:** Japanese Culture, Augustin Berque, Principles,  
Systematic understanding, textbook

In China, there are about 830,000 learning Japanese. The proportion of higher education institutions as universities to the whole Japanese language education institutions in China is 67%. "Teaching material shortage" has been a big problem for Japanese language education in higher education institutions. In view of the importance of cultural understanding in learning the language and cross cultural communications, more advanced and well-organized textbooks are desired. Accordingly, I have developed a textbook for presenting the principle and system of the Japanese culture to Chinese people.

The textbooks about Japanese culture used in China lack the principle and systematic understanding of the Japanese culture. While, the book "Cultural Space in Japan" written by Augustin Berque systematically explains fundamental and important ideas. It was considered that they are useful for understanding the Japanese culture. Therefore, the Berque's cultural system is referred to in developing a textbook for Chinese people learning Japanese language and culture.

At first, I conducted a questionnaire survey about the Berque's book in a lecture class "Knowledge Representation" in which the Berque's book is used as textbook. Some items to make the textbook were carefully selected from the above book based on questionnaire survey

results. To make the textbook comprehensible, I made figures and flows of statements, and provided some diagrams and important words with collars in performing knowledge representation conversions. Cases of French and Western Europe in the Berque's book are changed into corresponding Chinese examples or cases about Chinese people. And, the author's own experiences in Japan were added and included therein.

The evaluation experiment including a written test and questionnaire survey was conducted to see effectiveness of the developed textbook. The result revealed that the points obtained by a group using the developed textbook were higher than the other group using the Berque's book, and the questionnaire evaluation to the textbook was also higher. Therefore, it is considered that the textbook developed is useful for Chinese learners. Accordingly, it is considered that the textbook developed is capable of supporting Chinese learners in systematically understanding the principles and aspects of the Japanese culture, and can be expected that it will play a part in the Japanese-language higher education in China.