

Japan, Germany and "September 11"

by Sven Saaler

Two years have passed since the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington. "September 11" has become deeply embedded in the consciousness of society and politics in the U.S.A. and Europe. Even in Japan, as many western observers concur, rapid changes in politics and society are noticeable everywhere in reaction to the events in America: Two years ago the media spontaneously covered each hour, for days on end, the events in the U.S.A. – and later also in Afghanistan. Some broadcasters even shifted their most popular television soaps (*dorama*) from prime time. Suddenly university professors, whose names were unknown only a day earlier, were under constant pressure to provide explanations and continuous-

ly in the limelight; the bodyguards of Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichirō were equipped with automatic weapons; moreover, the so-called "Anti Terror Law" was passed with incredible swiftness, which seemed to break records not only with regard to the brevity of the debate required to pass the legislation, but also to the length of the legislation's title that reflects the constitutional dilemma of Japan's military engaging in action abroad: "Special Measures Law concerning Measures Taken by Japan in Support of the Activities of Foreign Countries Aiming to Achieve the Purposes of the Character of the United Nations in Response to the Terrorist Attacks Which Took Place on September 11, 2001, in the United States of America as Well as concerning Humanitarian Measures Based on Relevant Resolutions of the United Nations" (*Heisei jūsan-nen kugatsu jūichinichi no Amerika Gashūkoku ni oite hassei shita terorisuto ni yoru kōgeki nado ni taiō shite okonawareru Kokusai Rengō kenshō no mokuteki tassei no tame no sho-gaikoku no katsudō ni taishite waga kuni ga jissshi suru sochi oyobi kanren suru Kokusai Rengō ketsugi nado ni motozuku jindō-teki sochi ni kan-suru tokubetsu sochi hōan*).

This legislation was an important step for Japanese politics along the path of the revision of the Japanese constitution, aiming since many years at a "revision by reinterpretation" of Article 9, which renounces war and the maintaining of military forces. Although Japanese politicians could thus score a political success under the impression of an "attack on civilization," it appears that the long-term effects of "September 11" on the political consciousness and public opinion in Japan have been greatly overestimated by Western observers. Clearly "September 11" will not be remembered as an *anno domini* in public memory, and it is not really regarded as an "attack on civilization *per se*." "Public opinion" is of course difficult to gauge. However,

both Germany and Japan possess a type of measuring stick for the political consciousness of the public at large that allows to comprehend the most important political topics for each year: In Germany, the Association for the German Language (*Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache*) awards the "Word of the Year," in Japan the "Award for Neologisms and Fashionable Words" (*Shingo ryūkōgo taishō*) is selected by the publishing house *Jiyū Kokumin-sha*, which is well known for publishing a specialist dictionary each year: the *Gendai yōgo no kiso chishiki* (Basic Knowledge of Current Expressions).

Interesting conclusions can be drawn from looking at the winners' list of the year 2001. In Germany, in December 2001 for the first time a date (September 11) was elected as "word of the year." Some other expressions directly concerned with the terrorist attacks in the U.S.A. were among the remaining top ten words of the year, namely "war against terror," "anthrax attacks," and "sleepers," while "holy warriors," "crusade," and "top terrorist" were chosen as the "most infelicitous words of the year." However, when the "Award for Neologisms and Fashionable Words" for the year 2001



Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichirō during the presentation of the "Award for Neologisms and Fashionable Words." Reprinted with kind permission of the *Jiyū Kokumin-sha*.

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was announced in December of the same year in Japan it was as if “September 11” had never happened. The “prize for the best annual performance” (*nenkan taishō*) was awarded to no other than Prime Minister Koizumi Jun’ichirō, whose predilection for political rhetoric – critics speak of one-phrasal politics – and easily remembered phrases had an obvious effect. The slogans of Koizumi, who even attended in person the widely covered awards, are all concerned with the one topic: “reforms” – in Japan. This included slogans such as “reforms without holy cows” (*seiiki naki kaikaku*), “pains of reforms” (*kaikaku no itami*), “substantial guidelines” (*honebuto hōshin*), “talk-show cabinet” (*waidoshō naikaku*), as well as “one hundred bushels of rice” (*kome hyappyō*) referring to the reforms carried out in the feudal domain of Nagaoka during the period following the Meiji Restoration of 1868.

In addition to the “prize for the best annual performance” (perhaps a witness of a certain apathy toward economic and political issues?), and heading *Shingo ryūkōgo*’s “top ten” list for the year 2001 was the title of the most successful cover song of the year “Well, tomorrow’s another day” (*Ashita ga aru-sa*). And yet another song title made it to the top ten of fashionable expressions: *Yadane-ttara, yadane* (“No, no, and still no”). Other less significant terms such as “e-politics” (*e-poritikkusu*), “mad cow disease” (*kyōgyūbyō*), “broadband” (*burōdobando*), “domestic violence” (*domesutikku baiorensu*) and “resistance group” (*teikō seiryoku*) – the latter referring to a group of politicians in the largest party of the government coalition, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which has resisted the reform efforts of Prime Minister Koizumi. (For this term alone in the “top ten,” no representative could be found to personally accept the award for this lexical creation ...) The term “biological weapons” (*seibutsu heiki*) was also chosen for the top ten, but there was no direct link to “September 11”; rather the selection was an acknowledgement of the work of a group of Japanese historians, who, based on their studies on the so called “Unit 731” that carried out experiments with biological weapons on prisoners of war during the Pacific War, called for the global banning of all biological and chemical weapons.

Given the volume and length of media reports on the events throughout the last few months of the year 2001, as mentioned above, it seems surprising that the events of “September 11” found little resonance in the *Shingo ryūkōgo* of the year 2001. However, the

type of reports may help to clarify some aspects. Although the Japanese people’s thirst for information was initially impossible to quench: Who is Osama bin Laden? Where is Afghanistan? What is a Saudi Arabian citizen doing there? How did he manage to get hold of four airplanes in the U.S.A.? And why did he commit an act of terror against the U.S.A. that is a great supporter of the Saudi Arabian political system? Reports were by and large superficial and uncritical, and television reports from the networks’ U.S. partner stations were broadcasted without commentary for hours on end. Neither U.S. policies nor the reactions of Koizumi’s cabinet were called into question, even when the latter’s actions took on almost bizarre forms, for example, during a visit to U.S. President Bush: “I’m very pleased to say, we are friends. Had a great talk, friendly. And I convey what I am thinking. We Japanese are ready to stand by the United States government to combat terrorism. We could make sure of this global objective. We must fight terrorism with a determination and a patience. Very good meeting. Fantastic meeting” (quoted verbatim from Prime Minister Koizumi during a press conference on September 25, 2001). More rapidly than elsewhere, the events in the U.S.A. and in Afghanistan were relegated in favor of other considerations, and after remarkably short discussions of issues such as revising PKO legislation and the Japanese constitution, or even Japan’s place in world politics, national policies and economic problems once again moved to the fore. Hardly anyone in Japan now speaks about an “attack on civilization,” at most, people speak occasionally of a threatening “clash of civilizations” that could have its origins in September 11.

Thus, it appears that the Japanese example demonstrates that the significance of “September 11” has been largely exaggerated in European and U.S. politics. The rapid return to political and economic business as usual in Japan reveals that this East Asian country does not regard “September 11” as an “attack on civilization,” but rather as a terrorist attack by Middle East terrorists that expressed above all dissatisfaction or disillusionment with the Middle East policies of Europe and the U.S.; policies which are met with little understanding in many places in Japan as well – although perhaps not by the government, at least for the moment. Similar observations made in Japan, where according to the *Shingo ryūkōgo* world politics did not play a role in the year 2002 – excluding North Korea –

could easily apply to Germany, too. Little is heard nowadays in Germany about the “attack on civilization.” Thus, it is not surprising that for the year 2002 in Germany the *Teuro* (a pun on the words *teuer* – German for expensive – and Euro) was chosen as the word of the year, followed by coinages such as *PISA-Schock* (referring to the shock of how badly German schools did in the OECD’s Program for International Student Assessment), *Jahrtausendflut* (flood of the millennium – referring to the massive floods along the Oder river in eastern Germany), *Job-Floater* (referring to the German federal government’s attempt to create new jobs for the masses of unemployed), and the terminally unwieldy *Arzneimittelausgabenbegrenzungsgesetz* (drug expenditure limitation legislation – referring to the amount that the statutory health insurance companies will pay for prescription drugs). Normality appears to be returning to Europe as well, a normality that returned to Japan already some time ago.

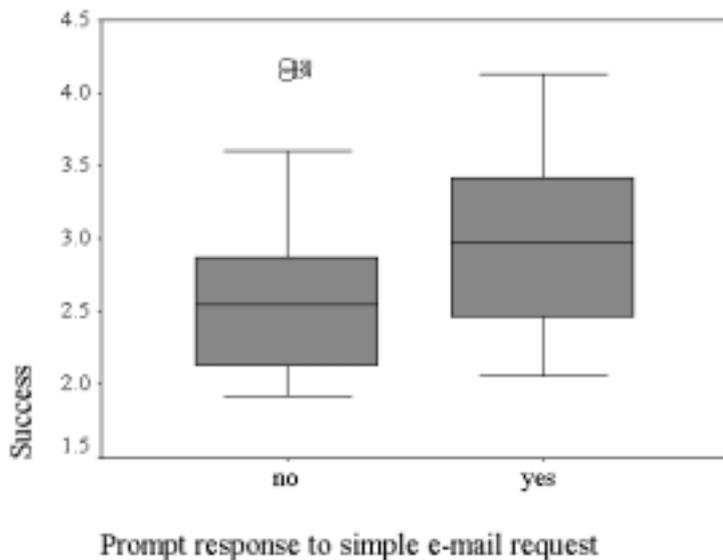
CURRENT RESEARCH

The Use of the Internet by Citizens’ Groups in Japan

The Internet is widely seen as an “equalizer” that can empower citizens vis-à-vis the state as well as small groups vis-à-vis larger organizations, and that can enable democracy on a grassroots level. While the assumed “digital divide” may curb that potential in many countries – where those who most need this empowerment often have the least access to new technologies such as the Internet – in a high-tech country like Japan even very loosely organized citizens’ groups can generally afford a computer and Internet access, and most of their members usually have online access, at least on their mobile phones.

An empirical study on the practical impact of Internet use on a group’s performance is therefore possible and useful. Isa Dücke’s research on this topic, which grew out of the DIJ Social Science Section project “Politics and the Internet in Japan” (see Newsletter 14, October 2001), studies the way in which nearly 150 Japanese citizens’ groups use the Internet. The study uses quantitative and qualitative methods





Although the range of "success" values is wide on both sides, the graph shows that citizens' groups that respond to e-mails on average have a significantly higher value on the scale. The grey area excludes the top and bottom quartile.

and relates several scales rating this use of the Internet to other scales rating the success of the groups, which are working on a number of issues as diverse as whaling, human rights, and abductions of Japanese citizens by North Korea.

Does the use of the Internet affect their performance, and, if so, in which ways? Which factors exactly have an effect on performance? What kind of unused opportunities does this suggest? Can we verify the claim of the Internet as an "equalizer"?

The first stages of the study were presented at several conferences, including Media in Transition 2 in Boston in 2002 and ICAS 3 (Third International Convention of Asia Scholars) in Singapore in 2003. The findings so far suggest that an active use of the Internet does indeed correspond to higher success, e.g., in terms of feedback and visibility. This does not yet confirm the hypothesis since an active Internet presence requires certain investments of time and money, but the data highlight some factors that seem particularly important, including regular updates, ease of interface, and dialogical features – which may mean just replying to e-mails (see graphic). This implies that a relatively low financial input combined with briefly trained volunteer staff can make a difference – although there are still few groups using the full potential of the technology.

The research continues as part of a two-year multinational comparative project on new technologies and the political engagement of citizens.

"Counseling" in New Religious Movements

Many religious organizations in present Japan emphasize the practical relevance of teachings and practice for the everyday life of their believers. The so-called "new religions" (*shin shūkyō*) and "new new religions" (*shin shin shūkyō*) are attractive for many because they offer support and orientation. In individual sessions, group discussions, or in a mediated communication with a transcendent power, many of them provide their members with the opportunity for consultation (or: "counseling" as it is called by the religions) on matters of everyday life, conflicts, and crises. Problems in family life or at work as well as illness or other sufferings (*nyayami*) are interpreted within the framework of a specific man- and worldview in order to find strategies for remedy and prevention.

This interface between the doctrinal and the practical aspects of the religions is the focus of Monika Schimpf's analysis where she takes two selected religious groups, PL Kyōdan and Shinnyo-en as examples. In her study she focuses on the application of "therapeutic strategies" in religious counseling and its consequences. In several interviews and observations made by participants it is clear that religious counseling propagates and legitimizes a specific morality. It correlates biographic processes and events causally with the moral development of their believers and propagates the implementation of a specific conduct of life

as the appropriate means to overcome crises and conflicts. Simultaneously, it contributes to the internalization of this causality by stimulating and controlling the narrative re-construction of biographic developments.

On an *individual level*, by offering counseling religious groups endow their members with moral coherence and biographical continuity and thus stabilize their personal identity. If they accept the causality of the man- and worldview their religion takes as a basis for the interpretation of their biography, the religion holds a monopoly on counseling. This strengthens the bond between members and the collective and thus contributes to stability on the *level of the religious collective*. Finally on a *social level*, counseling consolidates a specific social order by propagating a system of values and norms.

The outlined treatment on the generation of a moral identity in two new religious movements reveals how religions view and influence the individual's social interaction. The contribution new religions make on the creation or affirmation of a national consciousness are the subject of future research which will investigate if and how new religious movements create a national identity and how they shape it with regard to contents.

DIJ EVENTS

DIJ Panel at the EAJS Conference

History, Ethnicity, and Gender: Changing Paradigms in Japanese Historiography
(Warsaw, August 29, 2003)

Organized by the DIJ, this panel was held in Section 7 "History Politics and International Relations" of the 10th International Conference of the European Association for Japanese Studies. Among the panels that dealt with modern historiography, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past), and revisionism, this was the only panel that focused on the category of gender, and thus enriched questions of ethnicity, nation, and Japan's colonial past with a further essential structural perspective. The panel, chaired by Andrea Germer (DIJ) and cochaired by Ulrike Wöhr (Hiroshima City University), included three presentations and one commentary. In her introductory paper "Sexuality and Nation in Japa-



nese Feminist Historiography,” Germer traced how, in Japanese women’s history, sexuality and nation or ethnicity had been used by individual authors as objects of inquiry, even before these issues became the focus of feminist discourse on history in the 1990s. Ulrike Wöhr further analyzed this discourse in her paper “Korean Sex Slaves and Japanese Prostitutes? Diverging Feminist Interpretations of the ‘Comfort Women’ Issue.” She discussed various interpretations of sexualized violence of the “comfort women” system, which, to a lesser extent, victimized Japanese women as well, and how this is characterized either as primarily racist or sexist in transnational feminist discourse. In her differentiated analysis, Wöhr demonstrated how the overlapping of the categories of gender and ethnicity calls for a much more complex approach than that of a simple, either national or gendered, perpetrator-victim model. Ilse Lenz (Ruhr-Universität Bochum), in her presentation “Globalization and Asianization in the Japanese Women’s Movement and Gender Politics,” focused on the transnational and modernizing potential displayed in such discourses of Japanese women’s movements since the 1970s. She argued that the international perspectives developed in Japanese women’s movements are productive responses to tendencies and challenges of globalization. Commenting on the three presentations, Vera Mackie (Curtin University of Technology, Western Australia) highlighted their strong theoretical interrelation and emphasized the necessity of dealing with questions of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* from a differentiated as well as gendered perspective. This way we may succeed in approaching and understanding the complexity of historical events in which national, ethnic, gender and other differences may form contradicting lines of affiliation.

The discussion of these questions on how to come to terms with the past in a differentiated and responsible way is not limited to the Japanese case. In Warsaw, the host and site of the conference, it was of special interest, since, as Wöhr mentioned, it is relevant for the genocide and holocaust elements of German history, but also for the controversially debated history of German refugees from Poland after World War II.

DIJ Panel at the EAJCS Conference

Japan – Toward a More Market-Oriented Economy?

(Warsaw, August 30, 2003)

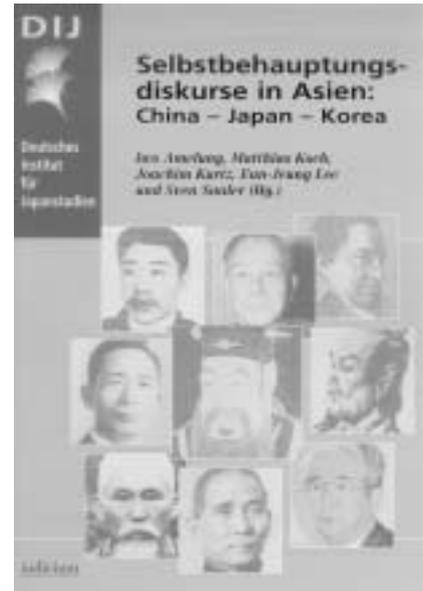
The 10th International Conference of the European Association of Japanese Studies in Warsaw was the setting for the DIJ panel “Japan – Toward a More Market-Oriented Economy?” which took place on August 30, 2003. All the papers at the panel (organized by Andreas Moerke) dealt with the question of which direction the Japanese economic system is headed. Dennis Tachiki (Tamagawa University) was the first speaker. His topic – the implementation of Koizumi’s business reforms in Japan – paved the way for three other papers that dealt with individual aspects of the economic system. Harald Conrad (DIJ) investigated changes in the remuneration practices of Japanese firms – wages, bonuses, and pensions; while Andreas Nabor (HWWA) questioned the direction the Japanese financial system (especially the banking system) is headed. Andreas Moerke (DIJ) then closed the panel with a paper on changes in Japanese interfirm relations.

During the panel it became quite clear that changes in modern-day Japan are to a great extent due to initiatives taken by corporations that are facing and want to win global competition. However, it is also evident that different areas are changing at different speeds. While on the one hand new pension schemes are being developed (which are influenced by U.S. models), the reform of the banking system seems to be moving at a much slower rate. This can be seen particularly in the government’s latest actions to save the Resona banking group.

Although the panel took place on the very last day of the conference, it attracted a large audience of about twenty-five or thirty listeners, and lively discussions continued even after the conference had come to an end.

DIJ PUBLICATIONS

Iwo Amelung, Matthias Koch, Joachim Kurtz, Eun-Jeung Lee, and Sven Saaler (eds.): *Selbstbehauptungsdiskurse in Asien: China – Japan – Korea [Assertions of Cultural Uniqueness in Asia: China – Japan – Korea]*. Munich: Iudicium, 2003 (= *Monographien aus dem Deutschen Institut für Japanstudien*, vol. 34), 438 pp. (ISBN 3-89129-845-5)



Tendencies for the assertion or recovery of self-identity have become stronger over the past decades and recently are gaining importance in East Asia and other regions. By drawing distinctive lines of demarcation vis-à-vis the so-called “West” while at the time relying on “Western” concepts and argumentative strategies, a considerable number of public debates can be identified that strongly demand indigenous “values,” own ways of thinking and behavior as formative factors for policy, economy, culture, and education.

It has been the aim of several symposiums organized by the School of Human Sciences/Comparative Cultural Studies at Ōsaka University, the Department of Middle Eastern and Far Eastern Languages and Cultures/Chinese Studies at Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nuremberg, and the German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ) to initiate interdisciplinary research on the complex phenomenon of discourses of self-assertion. This volume presents a selection of contributions from symposiums held in 2000 and 2001 in Tōkyō and Seoul.



CONTENTS: I. Amelung, M. Koch, J. Kurtz, E.-J. Lee, S. Saaler: Einleitung: Selbstbehauptungsdiskurse in China, Japan und Korea [Introduction: Assertions of Cultural Uniqueness in Asia: China – Japan – Korea] · K. Mishima: Ästhetisierung zwischen Hegemoniekritik und Selbstbehauptung [Aestheticism between Hegemony Critique and Self-Assertion] · I. Hijiya-Kirschner: Der patriotische Gaumen – Kulinarik und nationale Selbstbehauptung in Japan [The Patriotic Palate – Culinarism and National Self-Assertion in Japan] · S. Richter: Geschichtsbücher als Medium neonationalistischer Identitätskonstruktion: Der Fall “Tsukuru-kai” [History Textbooks as a Medium for Neonationalistic Identity Construction – The Case of the “Tsukuru-kai”] · A. Ōnuki: Die erzählte Nation: Geschichte als Mittel der Selbstbehauptung und der performative Effekt der Geschichtsschreibung [The Narrated Nation: History as a Means for Self-Assertion and the Performative Effect of Historiography] · S. Saaler: Pan-Asianismus im Japan der Meiji- und der Taishō-Zeit: Wurzeln, Entstehung und Anwendung einer Ideologie [Pan-Asianism in Meiji and Taishō Japan: Origin, Development and Functions of an Ideology] · K. Antoni: “Wir Asiaten” (*ware-ware Ajiajin*): Ishihara Shintarō und die Ideologie des Asianismus [“We Asians” (*ware-ware Ajiajin*): Ishihara Shintarō and the Ideology of Asianism] · M. Koch: Nationale Selbstbehauptung in Japan durch Wissenschaft, Technik und Industrie [National Self-Assertion in Japan through Science, Technology, and Industry] · J. Kurtz: Selbstbehauptung mit geliehener Stimme: J. G. Fichte als Redner an die chinesische Nation [Self-Assertion with Borrowed Voice: J. G. Fichte’s Addresses to the Chinese Nation] · I. Amelung: Die vier großen Erfindungen: Selbstzweifel und Selbstbestätigung in der chinesischen Wissenschafts- und Technikgeschichtsschreibung [The Four Great Inventions: Self-Doubts and Self-Assertion in Chinese Historiography of Science and Technology] · M. Lackner: Philosophie, Theologie oder Kulturwissenschaft? Legitimationen des Modernen Neokonfuzianismus [Philosophy, Theology or Cultural Science? Legitimations of Modern Neo-Confucianism] · Y. Schulz Zinda: Die Historisierung nationaler Gründungsmythen und die Konstruktion von Tradition in der VR China und in Nordkorea [The Historization of National Foundation Myths and the Construction of Traditions in the People’s Republic of China and North Korea] · S. J. Han: Theoretische Reflexionen über die asiatischen

Selbstbehauptungsdiskurse [Theoretical Reflections on Asian Discourses of Self-Assertion] · S. U Chon: Geschichte, Gegenwart und Problematik des koreanischen Nationalismus [Past, Present and Problems of Korean Nationalism] · J. A. Kyburz: Korea im Wettstreit mit Japan [Japan and Korea, Contesting] · E.-J. Lee: Ahn Choong Kun als Symbol des “Koreanerseins”: Formen und Wandel des koreanischen Selbstbehauptungsdiskurses [Ahn Choong Kun as a Symbol of “Being Korean”: Forms and Change of Discourses of Self-Assertion in Korea] · A. Demirovic: Globalisierung und regionalistische Identität [Globalization and Regionalist Identity]

Isa Dücke and Sven Saaler (eds.): **Japan und Korea auf dem Weg in eine gemeinsame Zukunft: Aufgaben und Perspektiven** [Japan and Korea on the Road to a Joint Future: Tasks and Perspectives]. München: Iudicium, 2003 (= Monographien aus dem Deutschen Institut für Japanstudien, vol. 36), 232 pp. (ISBN 3-89129-846-3)



Events like the FIFA World Cup 2002, cohosted by South Korea and Japan, the Japanese prime minister Koizumi’s visit to P’yongyang in September 2002, and recent controversies surrounding the North Korean nuclear program have once again brought relations between Japan and the Korean peninsula to the world’s attention. In spite of continuing controversies about diverging interpretations of modern history, the cohosting of the soccer World Cup has demonstrated tendencies of rapprochement and cooperation between the neighbors.

This volume combines articles by Korean, Japanese, and German experts, each discussing the recent developments in Japan’s relations with its neighbors. It is based on papers given at an international conference organized in September 2002 in Brühl and Cologne (Germany) by the DIJ, The Japan Cultural Institute in Cologne, and the German Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung).

CONTENTS: I. Dücke and S. Saaler: Einleitung: Japan und Korea auf dem Weg in eine gemeinsame Zukunft [Introduction: Japan and Korea on the Road to a Joint Future] · I. Hijiya-Kirschner: Japan und Korea – Wandel und Annäherung im 21. Jahrhundert [Japan and Korea – Change and Rapprochement in the Twenty-First Century] · H. Kim: Die südkoreanisch-japanischen Beziehungen: Trends und Perspektiven [Korean-Japanese Relations: Trends and Perspectives] · H. Izumi: Die Fußball-Weltmeisterschaft und der Nordkorea-Besuch des japanischen Premierministers Koizumi: Die Bedeutung des Jahres 2002 für die japanisch-koreanischen Beziehungen [The FIFA World Cup 2002 and Prime Minister Koizumi’s Visit to North Korea: The Meaning of the Year 2002 for Japanese-Korean Relations] · H. Hummel: Regionale Integration als Brücke zwischen Japan und Korea? Vergleich der Integrationsprozesse in Westeuropa und Ostasien [Regional Integration as a Bridge between Japan and Korea? A Comparative Study of Regional Integration in Western Europe and East Asia] · J.-J. Chung: Die Schatten der Vergangenheit im südkoreanisch-japanischen Verhältnis [Shadows of the Past and Korean-Japanese Relations] · T. Sakai: Die gemeinsamen Forschungen zur Verbesserung der Geschichtslehrbücher in Japan und Südkorea [Japanese-Korean Research Aimed at Improving History Textbooks] · S. Saaler: Implikationen der Debatte um japanische Geschichtslehrbücher für die japanisch-koreanischen Beziehungen [The Textbook Controversy and Its Implications for Japanese-Korean Relations] · S. Kohari: Führt eine Zukunftsorientierung wirklich in eine Zukunft? [Does the Future Orientation Really Lead to a Brighter Future?] · K. Cho: Gibt das Jahr 2002 den Beziehungen zwischen Japan und Südkorea eine neue Richtung? [Does the Year 2002 Set a New Direction in Japanese-Korean Relations?] · I. Dücke: Kann das Internet Berge versetzen? Transnationale Bürgerbewegungen und neue Medien [Can the Internet Move Mountains?]



REPORTS ON CONFERENCES

International Conference of the German Studies Department of Rikkyō University

Schrift und Bild: Visuelle Kulturen in Europa und Japan [Writing and Image: Visual Cultures in Europe and Japan]

(Tōkyō, July 17–19, 2003)

The oft-proclaimed “iconic turn” is one of the reasons why special interest has evolved for the connections between text and image within the framework of literary studies and its sister disciplines. Thus, the program of this symposium, aimed at a comparative study of “Visual Cultures in Europe and Japan,” sought to provide a contrastive cultural comparison that brought to light surprising parallels and differences. The positive effects of such a comparative approach are already evident in the fact that the line of demarcation between image and text is drawn differently in various cultures, a discovery already suggested by Roland Barthes in his book on Japan, where he added the following comment below an illustration of a calligraphy by Yokoi Yayū: “Where does writing begin? Where does painting begin?”

The conference was opened with a coherent, if at first rather astonishing, introduction by Wilhelm Voßkamp (Cologne) about the relation of image (*Bild*) and education (*Bildung*) in the German *Bildungsroman* (novels of character development). Voßkamp started his rich survey with an outline of the historico-philosophical roots of the German notion of *Bildung* (the acquisition of education and cultivation) in the aftermath of Rousseau and Herder and ended today with A. Kluge and W. G. Sebald. Jan-Dirk Müller (Munich), who discussed the relation between image and text in the early modern age, emphasized that images in no way acted only as a medium for the illiterate. Rather they fulfilled a host of additional decorative,

memorial, and representative-symbolical functions. According to Müller, images can simplify as well as jumble meaning. Komine Kazuaki (Tōkyō) explicated a traditional Japanese understanding of text and image in his discussion of picture scrolls (*emaki*).

The papers presented on the second day discussed “Writing and Image in the Works of J. G. Hamann” (Miyatani Naomi, Tōkyō), illustrations of the nineteenth century (Jürgen Fohrmann, Bonn), “Writing and Image on the Skin” (Kamio Tatsuyuki, Tōkyō), subtitles of Japanese films (Maeda Ryōzō, Tōkyō), reading conventions of *manga* (Kubo Shun’ichi, Sendai) and the “Similarities of Theory and Image” in the versions of *Metropolis* by Fritz Lang and Rintarō (Axel Fliethmann, Melbourne).

The final day was dedicated to an extensive discussion, moderated by Takahashi Teruaki (Tōkyō), on the topic “Globalization, Media, Literature.” The panel addressed the relation between image and text in each culture as well as the higher degree of iconicity of Japanese script, when seen from a European perspective. It was noted that the conference, had it taken place in Europe, would most likely have been called “Image and Text” – an indication of the special emphasis accorded to the written character in Japan. A further important finding that became evident upon closer examination of examples throughout the conference was that images are not obvious unto themselves, rather they require cultural fore-knowledge. Umberto Eco’s differentiation between intellectual culture placing emphasis on the word and mass culture stressing the image was found to be untenable; moreover, the dichotomy of high and low culture should be reexamined. During the conference, no answer could be found to the recurring question of “which medium is superior.” It makes perhaps more sense to ask questions about the specific communicative and mnemonic functions of writing and image.

The conference, sponsored by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and cochaired by Maeda Ryōzō and Takahashi Teruaki, was noticeably based on many years of close German-Japanese cooperation. The discussions (conducted in German) were consistently of a high level and attracted a large and lively audience from all over Japan. Irmela Hijiya-Kirschner represented the German Institute for Japanese Studies and served as a commentator. At the ensuing reception celebrating the fortieth anniversary of

the German Studies Department at Rikkyō University and the fifth anniversary of the Study Group for German Literature, Hijiya-Kirschner presented a speech in Japanese on the topic “Lifestyle to Literature – Problems of Intercultural Communication.” The papers of the conference and the speech will be published shortly.

ICAS 3 – Third International Convention of Asia Scholars

(Singapore, August 19–22, 2003)

Finally an Asia conference has been held in Asia! After conferences in Leiden and Berlin in the previous years, the third ICAS event came “home” to Asia in August 2003. The organizers from the National University of Singapore as well as speakers of supporting associations did not only note the symbolic importance of this “coming home” in opening speeches, but they also greeted the fact that this made it easier for many Asian scholars to participate. Indeed, the number of participants rose to over one thousand this year, although the outbreak of SARS during the planning stage and travel impediments related to the fight against terrorism prevented many others from coming, and participants from some Asian countries like India or Cambodia remained underrepresented.

In contrast, presentations on Japan were abundant in the more than 250 panels of the conference. DIJ researchers took part in three of the panels: In panel 177 (“Information Technology and Society in East Asia”), Isa Duche presented a paper on “Citizens’ Groups in Japan and the Internet,” which was received with great interest.

Panel 172, organized and moderated by Sven Saaler, was unfortunately held at the same time. The panel was titled “Regionalism East and West: Considering Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History” and was a follow-up to a DIJ conference held in 2002 (see Newsletter 18, February 2003). The purpose of the panel was to illustrate and analyze problems of regional integration from a historical perspective along the ideology of pan-Asianism. Two panelists had to cancel their participation on short notice, but Robert Cribb (Australian National University) was so kind to act at the last minute as commentator for the papers of Li Narangoa (Australian National University) (“Pan-Asianism and Co-Prosperity in the Japanese Imperial Imagi-

nation”) and Sven Saaler (“Pan-Asianism in Late Meiji and Taishō Japan: Koderu Kenkichi and His Views on International Relations”). The panel concluded with a forty-minute intensive discussion.

Harald Conrad (DIJ) together with Hendrik Meyer-Ohle (National University of Singapore) initiated Panel 204 (“Perspectives on the Restructuring of the Japanese Employment System”). Franz Waldenberger (University of Munich) began with an analysis of general trends in the Japanese employment system, followed by Harald Conrad who focused on more specific aspects of changes in remuneration practices. In the second part of the panel the perspective changed to perceptions by employees and students about the ongoing changes in the employment system. Peter Matanle (University of Sheffield) discussed his research on attitudes to lifetime employment among Japanese and British students, and Hendrik Meyer-Ohle focused on opinions of company employees about downsizing efforts as expressed in online diaries. All papers approached the topic from a slightly different angle so that an interesting discussion unfolded between the roughly twenty-five participants.

Throughout the four-day conference, there were many opportunities for listening in and for discussion, for focusing and for broadening one’s view – especially since Singapore with its many attractions was waiting to be discovered. The organizers themselves had encouraged participants to venture outside the conference hall, not least by bringing in some mouth-watering examples of local cuisine. And indeed there was much to see (and hear, smell, eat, and buy...) in the multicultural city-state of Singapore. From a tourist’s point of view, the return to liveliness after the SARS shock was very welcome. Even those who were busy at the conference during the day could still visit the Night Safari in Singapore’s famous zoo.

The conference’s program can be found on the Internet at <http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/icas3/>.

BOOK REVIEW

Steffi Richter and Wolfgang Höpken (eds.): *Vergangenheit im Gesellschaftskonflikt: Ein Historikerstreit in Japan* [The Past in Social Conflicts: A Historians’ Dispute in Japan]. Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau, 2003. 243 pp. (ISBN 3-412-14402-9)

Andrew Horvat and Gebhard Hielischer (eds.): *Sharing the Burden of the Past: Legacies of War in Europe, America, and Asia*. Tōkyō: The Asia Foundation, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2003. 365 pp. (ISBN 4-9901627-0-6)

Followers of the debate on German history stress that the number of discussions on *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past) and the famous *Schlußstrich* (bottom line) are not decreasing, but rather they are becoming more numerous with increasing temporal distance to the events of the 1930s and 1940s. The same can be observed in Japan. Never before has the nation’s history been so vehemently and hotly debated as during the past decade.

In recent years, public controversies about “history” can be observed in many countries, but Japan has attracted particular international attention by closely linking historical debates with political and social conflicts. This has much to do with the fact that interpretative issues of Japanese history have time and again led to serious disagreements with Japan’s neighboring countries. At the center of such disputes is the so-called “Japanese history textbook controversy” – the debates led within Japan and between Japan and Korea, or Japan and China, on the contents of Japanese history textbooks. This controversy reached an all-time climax in 2001 with the approval of a neonationalistic and revisionist textbook, which prompted the publication of the two volumes under review here.

Despite the enormous international interest, as seen in the numerous conferences and seminars recently held on the issue, there is still only a scarce supply of books on the topic written in western languages. Perhaps publishers are worried that if the textbook dispute continues into 2004/05, as currently expected, the books could become rapidly outdated. However, in the meantime, the countless number of Japanese publications calls for books that provide an outline of the debate and an overview of the current state of research on the issue. Within this context,

both titles under review here are valuable contributions and have been published just in time to prepare foreign observers for the next round of the “textbook controversy.” Over the next few years, these books will become invaluable aids for understanding this complex issue.

The volume edited by Steffi Richter, an acclaimed expert on the Japanese textbook controversy, and Wolfgang Höpken, Director of the renowned Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, is a collection of translated articles that illustrates first hand the basic positions of the parties and individuals involved in the Japanese textbook dispute. The articles have largely been translated from Japanese; one has been translated from English; and two were written in German especially for this volume. Those involved in the debate are given a chance to air their views, for example, the recently deceased conservative historian Sakamoto Takao, and, representing the left or liberal faction, the historians, philosophers and social scientists Takahashi Tetsuya, Yoshimi Yoshiaki, Narita Ryūichi, Yoshimi Shun’ya, and others.

Richter’s introduction places the Japanese history textbook controversy within a global framework and characterizes the revisionists’ approach to history as a “neonationalist and right-wing conservative attempt to come to terms with [domestic] crises.” Such an approach can be found in other countries as well, but should also be seen as a concrete answer to Japan’s dwindling self-confidence since the burst of the bubble economy at the beginning of the 1990s. In response to this crisis, history revisionists demand a stronger emphasis in education on “national pride” (pp. 9–11), and history textbooks are regarded as an important medium in this context. Here is the major difference between the Japanese debate and the German “historians’ dispute,” that was limited to academia and the (narrowly circulated print) media, and voices of historical revisionists soon became silent.

The contribution by Tessa Morris-Suzuki about “Global Memories, National Accounts,” published in, among others, the periodical *Shisō*, which created quite a stir in Japan, furthers the aspect of Japanese neonationalist internationalism and contrasts their complaints about Japan’s unique masochistic tendencies regarding national history with the statements made by English newspaper columnists who see Great Britain threatened above all by the “disclosure of the fictitious character” of the nation, or French ideolo-



gists who praise the “natural nationalism and self-confidence of some societies, such as Japan’s,” and stress that “only France [!] appears to be retreating into a deadly lethargy” (p. 34). The “autism” of neonationalist revisionists, as so often denounced by the varied authors in the volume, becomes quite obvious here, but it is not exclusively typical for Japan; according to Morris-Suzuki, the “logic and ideas” of neonationalists are “remarkably homogenous, irrespective of whether they are writing in London, Marseille, Brisbane, Tōkyō, or Denver” (pp. 27–28), which leads the author to speak of a globalization of nationalism (*ibid.*).

Sakamoto Takao (“How we should write history textbooks”) seeks to clarify the matters of the conservatives’ concern in the Japanese textbook dispute: He stresses that the concept of a “nation” is in fact a construction – a fact that most traditional conservatives seek to contest because they take as their premise a “prepolitical,” naturally evolved nation – which can only exist through the “common ownership” of a national historical narrative (p. 154). To create a feeling of national unity among the people thus becomes the main task of teaching history (*ibid.*). With the aid of historical narratives, pride shall be imparted to one’s own nation and replace the “masochistic historical accounts,” as typified in current textbooks (pp. 157–161).

In contrast, authors such as Yoshimi or Takahashi condemn the instrumentalization of history for the nation’s interests and politics. The “positivist” Yoshimi Yoshiaki denounces the – conscious – silencing of facts that do not fit into the “eternally beautiful nation” (simultaneously the title of Jaqueline Berndt’s article in this book that deals with the role of art history in the context of historical revisionism). The concealment of the “dark chapters” of Japanese history, even if their contents has long been proven (Yoshimi points to the example of the “comfort women” in the Asian-Pacific War), must lead to a “bursting, primitive, autistic nationalism based on unjustified feelings of superiority,” which will “inevitably lead us Japanese into isolation” (p. 116). Takahashi Tetsuya emphasizes in his article, and in many of his other publications, that “the Japanese state [...] and therefore the Japanese nation as a sovereign of the state carries postwar responsibilities” (p. 78), but stresses concurrently the difference between “postwar responsibilities” and “war responsibilities” (p. 79). Even if the “legal responsibilities” of the state are fulfilled, this does not imply an end to the “responsibility of

‘remembering’” the victims of Japanese wartime aggression (p. 84). The articles contributed by Narita Ryūichi and Ōnuki Atsuko criticize the views of the history revisionists around Sakamoto and Nishio Kanji. Ōnuki highlights new elements in recent historical revisionism, but simultaneously underlines contradictions and inconsistencies in their argumentative strategies. She draws an even more radical balance than the other Japanese authors and finishes with the postulate that if a “school textbook concept wants to remain immune to nationalism and its powers of monopolization” then it must “relinquish any claim to the desire of creating an identity, in whatever form” (p. 147).

In contrast to this volume that provides first-hand insights into the history textbook controversy, the second book reviewed here presents an overview of *research* on the textbook issue. This book, which is unavailable in bookshops (but can be ordered free of charge from the two foundations who edited the volume), is the result of two conferences that were organized in Tōkyō in 2002. In the first section, Wolfgang Höpken and historians from Poland, France and Italy deal with the underlying reasons of the textbook controversies in Europe. Although the German example is enthusiastically used as a “model” in Japan, the articles clarify that a “European model” is hardly applicable to Asia, and that Japan should search for its own solutions. In Section 4, we also hear doubts expressed by the Japanese side on the dichotomy between an upright Germany, which has faced its past, and an apologetic Japan (p. 138); however, these arguments did not remain unchallenged in the ensuing discussions. In this and other contexts, the inclusion of commentaries and selected discussions in the volume (all articles are in English and Japanese, and some are also additionally printed in German) proved to be extremely valuable and underlines the great value and importance of conference volumes.

The second and third sections contain articles that analyze history textbooks in the U.S.A. (Mark Selden, Philip West) as well as the Japanese textbook controversy (Steffi Richter) and its implications for Japanese-Korean relations. Sakai Toshiki and Chung Jae-Jeong – both members of a Japanese-Korean historians’ project that is currently working on a compilation of teaching materials to be used in both countries – provide insights into current bilateral research. The volume is rounded off with articles by Charles Burress on the role of the U.S. media in

the reception of Japanese attitudes toward the past, commentaries by Ian Buruma and Fujiwara Kiichi, as well as a section on the issue of forced labor during the Second World War (with a contribution by Otto Graf Lambsdorff).

Both volumes reveal the vehemence of discussions about the history of Japan, and they paint a picture that differs from the one presented so often by foreign media in articles and reports about a Japan unable to come to terms with its past. In these very diverse, but also ambivalent articles, the whole variation of historical perspectives voiced in modern Japan are covered, and once readers have finished the volumes they can guess what awaits them in the next expected round of the “textbook controversy” in 2004/05.

(Sven Saaler)

OTHER MATTERS/ OUTLOOK

New Book Shelves for the DIJ Library

It had been clear for quite some time that there was little space left for new books in the DIJ library. New reference works could not be placed on the shelves at all or only in the proximity of the systematic section where they belonged. In addition, shelves for the general book section were nearly full. Luckily, this year the long awaited extension of the DIJ library was carried out. Because of the limited floor space of the DIJ, the library area itself could not be expanded. However, every centimeter of unoccupied space available within the library was used for new shelving. Users who are familiar with the DIJ library will notice that the reading room is now smaller and the shelves are more tightly spaced. Since the type of shelving used in the DIJ library is no longer available, one of the existing shelves for journals was taken down and rebuilt in another section of the stacks. In addition, the three wooden shelves of the reference section were relocated. The books from the disassembled shelf and the ones from the three wooden shelves were temporarily packed into boxes by a moving company. More than two hundred boxes were squeezed into the reading room. In the then empty space, twenty-one new shelves were built, providing a total of 18.9 meters for books. Once earthquake security measures had





Every centimeter of unoccupied space was used for new shelving.



During the refurbishment more than two hundred boxes were squeezed into the reading room.

been installed, the books were restacked on the shelves by the moving company. Then the actual work of the two DIJ librarians began. The entire reference section (37.80 meters of shelving), which had been roughly stacked by the moving company, had to be rearranged in the right order as well as provide enough space for new reference works. In the general books section where books are ordered by accession, new shelves had to be inserted in the middle of the stacks. Consequently, all remaining books after call number B 2079, (i.e., 72.90 meters of shelving) had to be moved ... No need for a workout at the gym after that. The librarians also used the opportunity to make an inventory of all the library's books. Fortunately, some of the books that were considered lost were redis-

covered behind shelves. The DIJ Library was closed for two weeks (September 1–15) during the refurbishment, but now an expanded and newly systematized library has reopened, and we hope its users will find the space more enjoyable.

Personnel News

Dr. Harald Dolles was elected in March 2003 as spokesperson for the DIJ research fellows, and thereby he has become a permanent guest in the institute's Advisory Board. In August 2003, the spokespersons of the seven German research institutes abroad belonging to the Stiftung D.G.I.A. elected Dr.

Dolles as their representative in the D.G.I.A. Foundation Council. His deputy is Dr. Lutz Klinkhammer, research fellow at the German Historical Institute in Rome.

Dr. Monika Schrimpf was elected in April 2003 as DIJ staff-council representative. Her deputy is Dr. Harald Dolles.

Dissertation Fellows

Mira Sonntag, Japanese Studies, Russian Studies, Theology, Religious Studies, Ph.D. candidate at the University of Tōkyō: "Rationalism and Salvation in Japan of the Taishō Era" (July–December 2003).

Axel Karpenstein, Political Science (political economy and international relations), Ph.D. candidate at Columbia University, New York: "The Politics of Contemporary Japanese Financial Reforms" (September 2003–August 2004).

DIJ Forum

Sharalyn Orbaugh, Professor, University of British Columbia: "General Nogi's Wife and the Gender of the Modern Nation" (October 23, 2003).

John Benson, Professor, Department of Management, University of Melbourne: "The Japanese Company: Management, Unions and Financial Performance" (November 20, 2003).

Dennis S. Tachiki, Professor, Faculty of Business Administration, Tamagawa University: "Does E-Commerce Create a Level Playing Field? The Cases of Germany and Japan" (December 9, 2003).

Other DIJ Events

Information and Communication Technologies in Japan, Germany and the U.S.: Institutional Frameworks, Competitiveness and Learning Processes (conference). Contact: Andreas Moerke (moerke@dijtokyo.org), venue: OAG-Haus, Tōkyō (October 24–25, 2003).

Management in Japan – Herausforderungen und Erfolgsfaktoren für



deutsche Produktionsunternehmen in dynamischer Umwelt (Management in Japan – Challenges and Success Factors for German Manufacturing Companies in a Dynamic Environment) (symposium). Contact: René Haak (haak@dijtokyo.org), venue: University of Mainz (October 30, 2003, 4:00–8:00 p.m.).

The Changing Structure of Labour in Japan: Japanese Human Resource Management between Continuity and Innovation (workshop). Contact: René Haak (haak@dijtokyo.org), venue: German Institute for Japanese Studies, Tōkyō (November 21, 2003, 1:00–6:00 p.m.).

Die japanische Automobilindustrie – Strategische Herausforderungen und neue Perspektiven (The Japanese Automobile Industry – Strategic Challenges and New Perspectives) (workshop). Contact: René Haak (haak@dijtokyo.org), venue: Produktionstechnisches Zentrum Berlin (January 12, 2004, 9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.).

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