Grassroots Initiative against Historical Revisionism

New Developments in the Japanese Textbook Debate

by Sven Saaler

In the summer of last year a small locality in the southernmost stretch of Tochigi Prefecture unexpectedly fell into the public eye. Fujioka, a community of less than 20,000, which does not even have its own homepage, became the center of the newly re-ignited Japanese textbook debate. Up to now, the name ‘Fujioka’ was familiar to experts on the textbook debates only as a family name – Fujioka Nokukatsu has been one of the main protagonists of the rightist-conservative camp for many years. However, the turn of events in Japan’s history textbook debate in summer 2001 was most likely not a source of joy for Fujioka Nokukatsu.

In spring 2001, all domestic and foreign protests fell ineffectively flat against the approval of a new and clearly revisionist history textbook for use at Japanese middle schools. In addition to the seven textbooks already under consideration for each subject, the new submissions were the “New History Textbook” (Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho) and its complementary volume “New Civics Textbook” (Atarashii kōmin kyōkasho) both produced by the “Society for the Creation of New History Textbooks” (Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho o tsukuru-kai, or Tsukuru-kai for short). It was assumed that the “new textbooks” had a good chance to be selected for use in class at not a few schools, since the authors of the right-wing Tsukuru-kai had at their disposal widespread support from people within the worlds of politics, administration, finance, and the media.

However, the adoption process for middle school textbooks did not take shape as smoothly as the textbook approval process (kentei seido) at the Ministry for Education and Science, which approved the “new textbooks” in April 2001. Yet, even so, the Ministry demanded 137 corrections, amendments, deletions, and improvements – a record that the Tsukuru-kai need not fear being broken. Despite this, both textbooks finally received the Ministry’s approval and, with it, the sanction of the Japanese state.

The Ministry’s approval, however, was only the first step toward the dissemination of the textbooks and their revisionist image of history. In the case of textbooks for Japanese high schools, each school has the right to select which textbooks it will use, while, in contrast, the selection of textbooks for elementary and middle schools is made by a supra-communal adoption commission (saitaku shingikai). The role of these commissions and the complex procedures of the textbook adoption process (saitaku seido) for elementary and middle schools suddenly stood in the center of public attention.

The saitaku shingikai are formed every four years as an advisory body of the education committees (kyōiku innai) of each communality. For the most part, the members of the commissions are named by the education committees in an extremely opaque and highly controversial process. Each saitaku shingikai is responsible for the adoption of textbooks for all subject areas for all schools within a regional adoption district (saitaku chiku), of which there are presently 544 in Japan. Some adoption districts encompass only one communality, if it has a certain size or population, while others encompass several communalities. In Tōkyō, each ward (ku) composes one saitaku shingikai, while, for example, the adoption district Shimotsuga in Tochigi Prefecture encompasses ten communalities, including the town of Fujioka.

The adoption commissions relieve the education committees of a great deal of work. Every four years between

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May and August they examine textbooks submitted for review in the 11 subject areas taught by elementary schools and the 14 subject areas taught by middle schools – altogether some 400 textbooks – and decide on a textbook for each subject. Normally, the decision of the adoption commission is communicated to the education committees of the communalities in each respective district for their acknowledgement, and the education committees pass on the decision to the Ministry for Education and Science. Since textbooks cannot be sold on the open market in Japan, the Ministry’s central procurement sees to it that a sufficient number of the textbooks are sent directly to the schools from the publisher, in keeping with the law guaranteeing free access to educational materials (1965).

In light of this system, schools have few opportunities to exercise influence over the choice of the textbooks that will be used in their classrooms. The decision of the adoption commission is binding for all schools in all communalities in each respective adoption district. Principals, teachers and parents can only have influence over the choice of textbooks through membership in the adoption commissions, but how large their influence is in such a case is unclear, since the appointment of the commission members is extremely opaque. Moreover, earlier common practices such as schools giving recommendations to the adoption committees (gakkō-hyō, or shibori-komi) are being done away with in more and more prefectures.

In anticipation of the approval of the “new textbooks” by the Ministry for Education and Science, the Tsukuru-kai had undertaken considerable political and financial efforts to win or place supporters in the education committees and adoption commissions. Obvious opponents of the Tsukuru-kai textbooks, above all traditionally left-oriented teachers, were removed from the adoption commissions in many prefectures at the pressure of the Tsukuru-kai on conservative local politicians. The Tsukuru-kai made their targeted appeal to the decision-makers through mailings, direct distribution of the writings by the Tsukuru-kai and its members, as well as – the legally questionable – publication of the “new textbook” on the open book market. In Tochigi Prefecture, the Tsukuru-kai’s textbooks appeared to have an especially good chance to be chosen by regional adoption commissions since, in contrast to most other prefectures, the teachers there are said to tend to be more conservative. The traditionally left-oriented teachers’ union Nikkyō-so could never really gain a foothold there.

However, the adoption process proved itself to be extremely multifaceted and complex. On 13 July 2001, the district of Shimotsuga in Tochigi, the adoption commission decided on the Tsukuru-kai’s textbooks for history and civics after lengthy discussions and a controversial vote. The Tsukuru-kai’s first success in the adoption process for state school textbooks seemed assured. But, the decision of the adoption commission met resistance – in the educational committees (kyōiku inkan) of the affected communalities, which in just a few days were flooded with hundreds of letters, phone calls, faxes and e-mail from citizens all over Japan protesting the decision. Unlike other grassroots movements in Japan, which tend to act mainly on the local level, an infrastructure encompassing the entire country arose through the use of the Internet coordinating protests in other districts, providing form letters and e-mails, and circulating petitions.

At first, the education committee of the communality of Fujioka reacted to the pressure from beneath and refused to accept the decision by the adoption commission of Shimotsuga district. As the official reason, it was said that Tsukuru-kai textbooks “transmit a distorted perspective of history, have developed into an international political problem, and moreover are too demanding and detailed for instrumental use in middle schools.” The other communalities of the district followed suit after a few days and the adoption commission had to reconvene. After a new vote was taken, the textbooks from Tōkyō Shoseki Publishers were selected in Shimotsuga.

The decision in Tochigi and the intensity of the protests against the initial decision in favor of the Tsukuru-kai’s textbooks served without a doubt as a sign for all of Japan. In the end, the textbooks by the Tsukuru-kai were chosen in none of the adoption districts for state middle schools. The Tsukuru-kai textbooks were selected for use from 2002 to 2006 only for special schools (yūgō gakkō) in Tōkyō and Ehime prefectures by their respective prefectoral administrations. In addition, nine private middle schools chose to use the “new textbooks.” In the coming years, these textbooks will hardly surpass 500 copies in circulation, which is equal to a “market” share of 0.039%. However, in view of the financial backing that the Tsukuru-kai has, a discontinuation of the textbook is rather unlikely. Tsukuru-kai members such as Kobayashi Yoshinori have already announced “revenge” (ribenji) for the next adoption process in four years (see for example the 26 September, 2001, edition of the magazine “Sapiro”). The turbulent events of summer 2001 were certainly not the final chapter in the Japanese textbook debate.

**CURRENT RESEARCH**

**Comparison of Corporate Governance Structures**

The Japanese model of corporate governance, which is characterized by long-term perspective and stakeholder-orientation rather than shareholder-orientation, has often been quoted as one reason for the economic success of Japan. But on the other hand one has to acknowledge that the system is also characterized by insufficient (self-)control of the executive committees and a lack of transparency. The long crisis ushered in changes in the system of corporate governance mechanisms, although it is not clear yet in which directions these changes will go. Will there be a conversion to the Anglo-Saxon model with its focus on shareholders’ interests and return ratios? Or will there ensue an orientation towards stakeholder interests (which, in the case of Germany, was explicitly stressed by the Government’s Experts’ Commission on Corporate Governance)? Or will Japan perhaps follow a third way?

To answer these questions at least to a certain extent, Andreas Moerke focuses his analyses on two fields: Bank-firm relationship and changes in the Japanese financial market; and incentive structures for the top management.

Japanese bank-firm relationships are characterized by the fact that a bank is generally assuming two conflicting roles: on the one hand banks are providing credits, yet on the other hand they act as shareholders. This influences bank behaviour, since a bank as a lender will try to lend out as much as possible in order to extend its business. This can be seen as one of the reasons for the huge amount of bad loans banks are now facing. Being a major shareholder, on the other hand, enables banks to dispatch personnel to the executive committees and exert influence on corporate strategies. Here is one opportunity for banks to prevent investments in risky (but potentially...
DIJ EVENTS

2nd Symposium “Assertions of Cultural Uniqueness in Asia” (“Asiatische Selbstbehauptungsdiskurse”) (Seoul, 14–17 November 2001)

As part of a series of symposia on “Assertions of Cultural Uniqueness in Asia,” which had started with an event in Tōkyō in autumn 2000 (cf. Newsletter 12), the DIJ organized a second symposium in November 2001 in Seoul, in cooperation with the Goethe Institute Inter Nationes Seoul. The project has already been introduced to an English-speaking audience at the International Convention of Asian Scholars in August 2001 in Berlin (cf. Newsletter 14). The Seoul symposium was again held mainly in German with scholars from Japan, China, South Korea, France, and Germany. Following up on the discussion in Tokyo and Berlin, this time the discourses in Korea also became a major focus of debate. Together with five South Korean participants, members of the audience promoted, discussed, and critically analysed Korean attempts at an assertion of cultural uniqueness.

The symposium started on 14 November with an opening address by the German ambassador to the Republic of Korea, Hubertus von Morr. Two keynote speeches by Choe Chung-Ho and Josef A. Kyburz followed. Choe (formerly of Yonsei University, Seoul) presented Korea as a model for the future, while Kyburz (CNRS Paris) discussed the cultural relationship between Japan and Korea. The actual discussion started the next day, preceded by an introduction by the two organizers able to attend, Mishima Ken’ichi (Osaka University) and Irmela Hijiya-Kirschnereit (DIJ Tōkyō, Freie Universität Berlin).

The individual papers were arranged in five thematic blocks, the first of which covered “accelerated modernity and the living environment.” Chon Song U (Hanyang University, South Korea) discussed in his presentation on the communitarian movement in Korea a possible “communitarian rationality.” Gu Xuewu (Center for European Integration Studies, Bonn) presented on the diverging strategies employed by Liberals and Nationalists in the People’s Republic of China.

Another block, chaired by Lee Eun-jeung (University Halle-Wittenberg), covered different “types of affirmation of cultural uniqueness.” While Joachim Kurtz (University of Erlangen-Nuremberg) looked critically at the Chinese adaptation of Fichte, both subsequent speakers argued in favour of an affirmation of cultural uniqueness in the case of Korea: Kim Moon-Hwan regarding cultural aspects, and Han Sang-Jin (both Seoul National University) regarding philosophical or Neo-Confucian aspects.

A third panel chaired by Isa Ducke (DIJ) discussed various aspects of “politics of everyday discourses,” including historical and philosophical questions. Sven Saaler (DIJ) outlined the emergence of the Pan-Asian movement “from below” and the adoption of this ideology “from the top” during the Meiji and Taishō periods. Mishima Ken’ichi covered the historical background of the adoption of German rhetorical strategies into the Japanese discourse of self-assertion, and questioned the shifting definitions of “East” and “West.” Irmela Hijiya-Kirschnereit’s presentation on advertising as a medium of national cultural self-assertion in Japan illustrated the everyday, contemporary use of national symbols as well as their amalgamation, particularly with culinary consumption.

A further discussion unit was dedicated to “history views and education.” Steffi Richter (Leipzig University) discussed the textbooks of the “Tsukuru kai” organisation as a medium for identity construction, while Ōnuki Atsuko (Gakushūin University, Tōkyō) concentrated on the political instrumentalization and the selective use of constructivist theses by this organisation.

In a final panel on nationalist influences in the research on the history of science, Matthias Koch (DIJ) und Iwo Amelung (University of Erlangen-Nuremberg) presented the situation in Japan and China, respectively. In both cases, claims of scientific achievement are used as means of demarcation vis-à-vis the “West” as well as other Asian countries.
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The conclusion of the symposium was drawn by Alex Demirovic (Wuppertal University), who characterized the various strategies of affirmation of cultural uniqueness as leadership techniques of the elites, with intellectuals, publishers, and the media playing important roles as transmitters. On a macro-level, Demirovic linked the issue to worldwide globalisation trends and the parallel emergence of regional identities (e.g., in the EU). He urged listeners to examine not only the dividing factors of such an assertion, but also its connecting aspects, in the sense of a promotion of regional identity (in Asia). A follow-up conference on the same topic is currently being planned for autumn 2002 in Erlangen and Berlin.

DIJ Symposium on Regional Monetary Cooperation in East Asia
(Tôkyô, 7 December 2001)

The recent conclusion of various swap agreements between Japan and other East Asian countries within the framework of the Chiang Mai Initiative of May 2000 shows that the trend towards strengthened regional monetary and financial cooperation in East Asia has gained renewed momentum. The process of regional cooperation is set to make further headway, according to a recently published report by the ASEAN+3 East Asia Vision Group, entitled “Towards an East Asian Community.” The DIJ contributed to the ongoing debate on this issue with the DIJ Symposium “Regional Monetary Cooperation: Is East Asia Following the European Model?” organized by Hanns Günther Hilpert and Christian Schröppel of the DIJ and supported by the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation.

As a result of the presentations and the discussion it was concluded that, while major differences between the European and the Asian setting have to be considered carefully, East Asia can draw a number of important lessons from the European experience of monetary integration. With members of several embassies as well as a number of academics in the audience of approximately 30 people, the event provided an opportunity to exchange views in an open and relaxed atmosphere.

Following the welcoming address by Prof. Irmela Hijiya-Kirschnereit (Director, DIJ Tôkyô) and greetings by Nikolai Putscher (Financial Counselor, Embassy of Germany), Martin Schulz (Fujitsu Research Institute) pointed out the importance of macroeconomic harmonization for achieving the European Monetary Union, while Harnamshi Kenji (Institute for International Monetary Affairs) gave an assessment of the Chiang Mai Initiative and possible next steps to strengthen regional cooperation. In the second session, Prof. Helmut Wagner (University of Hagen) described and analyzed the pitfalls of the enlargement of the European Monetary Union to Central and Eastern European countries. Prof. Ōgawa Eiji (Hitotsubashi University) and Kwan C.H. (METI – Research Institute for Economy, Trade and Industry) presented on major issues related to the internationalization of the Yen and possible exchange rate regimes in East Asia. In the third panel, Prof. Kondô Takehiko (Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University) and Prof. Murose Tetsuji (Kyôto University) provided an outline for the creation of a common Asian or Asia-Pacific currency. The commentators, Cornelis Keijzer (Delegation of the European Commission in Japan), Orii Keisuke (IBJC Institute), Prof. Kinoshita Toshihiro (Waseda University), and Christian Schröppel (DIJ) helped to stimulate the discussion by giving their views on the presentations. Hanns Günther Hilpert (DIJ) summarized the discussion and outlined the main conclusions drawn by the participants of the symposium.

NEW DIJ SERIES

“Japan and Europe. Historical Relations and Comparative Studies”

The German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ) has launched a new publication series entitled Japan and Europe: Historical Relations and Comparative Studies. This scientific publication series is Japan-related and thus multidisciplinary as well as interdisciplinary. The research spectrum includes the humanities, the social sciences, and economics. Japan-related contributions from the natural sciences, the engineering sciences and the medical sciences are also most welcome, but would perhaps best be approached mainly from the perspective of the history of science and technology.

The principal task of the German Institute for Japanese Studies is to carry out research on modern Japan and German-Japanese relations in the fields of the humanities, the social sciences, and economics, as well as to communicate research results from Japan to Germany. In this sense the new DIJ publication series shall focus on German-Japanese relations concerning political, economic and cultural affairs, and at the same time take into account the European integration that is currently taking place. Regarding research on historical relations and comparative topics, a restriction solely to issues relating to Japan and Germany has made sense in the past and promises to remain fruitful and productive in the future.

In the western part of the Eurasian continent, the European Union is taking shape and emerging as a kind of would-be, self-contained political, economic and cultural actor vis-à-vis Japan, Asia and the rest of the World. This new entity seems to be developing a new post-national identity. Recently, with respect to relations between Japan and the countries that constitute the European Union, one can observe in various sectors a new form of denationalisation. The new DIJ publication series shall stay abreast of these changes and take into consideration any future developments. However, the US has been and will remain a point of comparison for both Japan and Europe.

The new DIJ publication series shall also constitute a discussion forum for those doing historical, contemporary, and comparative research on German-Japanese and European-Japanese relations. Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research, Beziehungsforschung (research on the history of international/diplomatic relations), and Einflußforschung (research on the foreign influence of domestic developments), as well as comparative research, are all on an equal footing and can also be dealt with in an integrated fashion. Our primary concern is to bring together fragmented research efforts in the field of German/European-Japanese relations and comparative studies, to offer a joint platform and to stimulate further research. The new series will appear irregularly. Potential contributors may contact the editor, Matthias Koch, at any time by mail or directly via e-mail: koch@dijtokyo.org.
DIJ PUBLICATIONS


All through the 1990s Japan and China experienced diverging courses of economic fortune. The economic superpower Japan, following the collapse of its stock and real estate markets, went through a decade of enduring economic stagnation and most of Japan’s industry has not been able to keep pace with the high growth and rapid productivity gains of its main competitors in the US. In contrast, China has sustained high economic growth rates of around ten percent per annum and Chinese firms have gained dominant world market shares in an increasing number of industrial sectors. As a result, China’s developmental gap with the leading industrialized countries narrowed substantially, and China has achieved stature as a center of regional political and economic power.

Both in international business and in international economics, it is widely recognized that the current rise of China has wide implications for the international economic and political order in general and for the East Asian region in particular. From this broadly accepted assessment the obvious conclusion follows that Japan, more than any other major industrialized country, is facing the challenge of an economically and politically successful China. China’s industry, with its low sales prices and its improving product quality, is set to become a major competitor in global manufacturing products’ markets, including the Japanese domestic market, which is quite a worrying prospect for Japan’s economic and political elites. On the macro level, China is challenging Japan as East Asia’s center of economic gravity in terms of production and markets. Considering the increasing economic and political importance of China, the crucial question arises: What kind of relationship between Japan and China will evolve? Will it tend to be cooperative or conflictive?

Economic relations between Japan and China have been the centerpiece of the research program of the Economic Section of the German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ) over the last years, focusing especially on foreign trade, strategic management and human resource development. Hence, this publication brings together up-to-date research by a number of renowned Asian and European scholars and presents documentation, analysis, and an evaluation of the various micro- and macroeconomic aspects of the Sino-Japanese relationship. By elaborating comprehensively on trade, investment, economic cooperation, management activities and strategies, among other topics, the book closes a gap in the landscape of Sino-Japanese literature, which is usually more concerned with history, politics and security. It will certainly prove useful as an essential tool for academics and those doing business in East Asia.


This book deals with the change and structure of attitudes concerning gender roles and gender equality in Japan and Germany after World War II. Examining the Japanese case gives us insight into long-term processes of changes in gender-related attitudes in highly industrialized societies, because gender-related attitudes have long been the subject of opinion polls, with cross-sectional data for the late 1940s and early 1950s, and time series data since the early 1970s. Nevertheless, in the case of Japan, we have to take into account a number of peculiarities that set her apart from other highly industrialized societies. It is common wisdom that Japanese modernization proceeded from economic, political, social, moral and religious traditions that were quite different from the Western ones, and that have still strongly persisted well into the post-World War II era. We therefore might expect considerable variation if we compare the development of gender-related attitudes in Japan with that in Western societies. Such a comparison, with Germany, is attempted in this work.

The approach adopted in this paper is strictly exploratory. It mainly deals with the exploration of patterns of gender-role attitudes and values on the micro level. Its aim is to understand the processes of change in the two societies, as well as the similarities and differences between them based on the interpretation of empirical evidence. Of particular interest are combinations and mixtures of attitudes and values relat-
ed to gender roles by various population subgroups and the features of these subgroups. In order to gain a broader understanding of the processes of change in gender-related values and attitudes, it first analyzes the long-term development of gender-role attitudes in postwar Japan based on the results of various Japanese opinion polls. Then it undertakes an analysis of the items related to gender equality in the 1991 survey by the German Institute for Japanese Studies. The fourth section deals with the development and structure of gender-role attitudes in Germany, mainly based on the data from the German General Social Survey and the 1988 ISSP Survey on ‘Family and Changing Gender Roles.’ Finally, it compares Japanese, West German and East German gender-role consciousness, based on the German and Japanese data of the 1994 ISSP Survey.


Listing 2,150 titles in alphabetically arranged categories, this bibliography presents an overview of works in German on the subject of Japanese, including aspects as wide-ranging as the phonetics of old Japanese and the semiotics of modern T-shirt-slogans. Listing everything that appeared between 1794 and 2000, this bibliography, together with Dictionaries and Glossaries: A Partially Annotated Bibliography of Japane-German and German-Japanese Works of Reference (Bibliographical Series, vol. 5), attains the first complete coverage of German-language publications on Japanese. The bibliography is indexed by title, author and subject. The appendices offer some 300 pertinent bookreviews and 62 works on the Ainu-language.


In December 2001, volume 13 of the DJJ yearbook Japanstudien was published. This year’s volume focuses on the topic “Living Conditions in Japan: Markets, Lifestyles, Forms of Dwelling”. Housing and living conditions not only reflect basic human needs, they also are an expression for the complex and varied lifestyles in a society and culture. Economic, social, demographic and environmental developments have brought along significant changes in terms of lifestyles and forms of dwelling – changes which are receiving growing academic attention and are reflected, for instance, in the increase of research in the field of urban studies. The eight contributions in volume 13 of Japanstudien relating to the major topic discuss such questions from a multi- and inter-disciplinary perspective and approach a wide range of issues related to changing forms of living and lifestyles in Japan. Moreover, Japanstudien includes five articles on various other topics, as well as ten book reviews of German, English and Japanese publications.

Philologies and Area Studies – Responding to the Challenges of Change
(Kyōto, 10 December 2001)

One generation ago, classical national philologies such as Germanistik (Ger-
man language and literature studies), Romanistik (Romance languages and
literatures studies) or Anglistik (Eng-
lish studies), but also East Asia-related disciplines such as Japanology and Si-
nology have opened up, after a partially
painful process of identity negotia-
tions, in the direction of a number of
new approaches and methodologies
such as structuralism, Marxism, socio-
logical and psycho-analytical theories.
The adaptation of these approaches
differed from field to field. Thus, Ger-
man language and literature studies
had to attempt at “overcoming” its ori-
entation within national categories as
a consequence of an ideology-critical
discussion of its history, whereas in Ro-
mane philology, a semiotic orienta-
tion became dominant. In some cases,
the authority of native speaker philolo-
ogy was critically questioned.

In spite of all regional, national and
disciplinary differences, however, one
aspect persisted as a common basis be-
Yond challenge, i.e., the central role of
language command and thus of
knowledge of text. The canon, too, in
spite of or even because of it being con-
stantly criticized, continued to exist as
a topic to be discussed.

During the last decade or so, in
which these disciplines were submit-
ted to a wholesale redefinition, both of
these preconditions became obsolete.
Neither in cultural nor in post-colonial
studies does language acquisition play
a central role. Likewise, the canon is no
longer criticized but is simply aban-
donned. The corpus of texts, formerly
the object of subtle and complex
hermeneutic operations, gives way to
other forms of expression such as fash-
ion, cityscapes, film, gender-specific
discrimination, racisms, etc. As a
vague tendency we may diagnose a
withdrawal from the fad of sociologi-
ization towards a predominance of
“cultural” studies. Anything goes,
with the exception, it seems, of linguis-
tic entanglements. Thus, a distancing
from languages appears to be an irre-
versible development in former philo-
logical disciplines, albeit in combina-
tion with a growing hegemony of
English.

Against this backdrop of problems, a symposium planned and moderated
by social philosopher Mishima

Ken’ichi (Osaka University) was dedi-
cated to an exchange of information
and experience in order to draw a more
differentiated picture of the situation
in various cultural, regional and discip-
linary contexts. This should serve as
a basis for theoretical considerations
aiming at a new profile for the former
philologies. The first part of the sym-
posium therefore thematized the
present state of a number of disci-
plines. Commonalities as well as dif-
fferences were outlined. Mishima, in his
introductory remarks, ironically titled
“From the perspective of a non-mem-
ber of the trade,” presented a number of
mercilessly penetrating observa-
tions on tendencies of decentering and
defocusing in the former philologies
during what he called the “permanent
transition period” of present times.
In his contribution titled “The intercul-
tural dimension of cultural studies in for-

ey language philologies. Concepts,
methods, and perspectives of develop-
mboat, Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink (Uni-


ersity of Saarbrücken and Montréal)
presented theoretical proposals as to
how to confront the aporias and chal-
denges of de-nationalization, de-terri-

torialization and globalization in con-
temporary societies and cultures. From
the perspective of General and Com-
parative Literature Studies, Josef
Fünnkäs (Keiō University) pleaded,
“For a transcultural study of literature –
How a new approach in the study of
literature can be developed from the
anticipated death of national philolo-
gies”. Imelda Hijiya-Kirschmireit (DIJ
Tōkyō, Freie Universität Berlin)
sketched “Tendencies of language
abandonment in Western (or German)
Japanology and Sinology,” highlight-
ing the internal discussion of the field
which can be read even from such de-
tails as the various new denominations
of the respective fields. She also hinted
at some of the problematic conse-
quences of an adaptation to relatively
short-term demands from ‘society’ and
the positioning of the field in the aca-
demic landscape. Engelhard Weigl
(University of Adelaide and Tōkyō),
in his statement on “Tendencies of lan-
guage abandonment in Australian


in the context of European studies, as
well as within a new theoretical frame-
work.
The main conference offered different viewpoints on issues in “media in Japan,” organised in five sections: cultural studies/media & popular culture, economics, sociology, political science & education, and urban & regional studies. Hanns Günther Hilpert (DIJ) chaired one of the panels on economics. Speakers included Harada Takeshi (Japanese Consultate), Gunther Schnabl (Tübingen/Stanford), Franz Waldenberger (Munich) as well as Andreas Moerke from the DIJ economics section. Moerke argued that a short-term solution of the economic crisis as promised by the Japanese government is impossible because the amount of the “bad loans” is not known, nor were concerted measures taken by the institutions in charge.

In the politics section of the conference, Patrick Köllner (Institut für Asienkunde, Hamburg) discussed the personnel politics of public broadcasting agencies in Germany and Japan, while Verena Blechinger (DIJ) argued that Japanese members of parliament tend to use the Internet for self-portrayal rather than for interactive exchange with their voters.

The next annual conference will take place on 21–24 November 2002 in Wittenberg with the topic “Japan in the 1990s.”

BOOK REVIEW


Like many other compatriots who served as advisers or teachers in Meiji Japan, Georg Michaelis (1857–1936) would have hardly been remembered in Germany if he hadn’t become Imperial Chancellor for fifteen weeks in 1917. As a young man Michaelis spent almost four years in Japan (1885–1889) teaching German law at the Doitsu-gaku Kyōkai Gakkō, a private school for higher education based on German sciences. Michaelis’ employment belonged to an era when, after the decision to model Japan’s first modern constitution on the Prussian constitution, German influence on Japan was increasing.

In later life, Michaelis told his grandchildren that his experiences in Japan had been a decisive preparatory step toward his later career. His letters, mostly to his mother, notes in his diary, and other documents written in those days have been edited by Bert Becker.

Michaelis gives a vivid and extensive account of his impressions of Japan and its people, as well as of his life and work at the Doitsu-gaku Kyōkai Gakkō, of his contacts within the small German colony in Tōkyō and Yokohama, and of his commitment to the activities of the German protestant church and of the German East Asia Society (OAG). His letters provide firsthand information on the Doitsu-gaku Kyōkai Gakkō, its German teachers, and their dealings with the school’s Japanese students. Becoming vice-principal of the school in the summer of 1887, Michaelis also contributed effectively towards realizing the acceptance of the German method of education in law. Thus, from 1888 on, the Ministry of Justice employed graduates of the Doitsu-gaku Kyōkai Gakkō, some of whom became judges without further examinations.

At the same time, in his letters Michaelis proves himself a self-confident representative of the educated classes of Germany. A conservative Prussian nationalist he was convinced of German superiority. With regard to Japan and Japanese he doesn’t restrain himself from mocking comments on this non-Christian, uncivilized nation that, as he repeatedly emphasizes, would never play an important part in Asia. Moreover, his offensive remarks on Jewish people, above all on Prussian jurist Albert Mosse, show a plain anti-Semitic attitude intensified by his envy of Mosses’ influential position as legal adviser to the Japanese government. Altogether, as the editor rightly points out in his introduction, Michaelis’ thinking and attitude reflect the typical spirit of the time in Germany. The readers may also take into account that the letters were written by an ambitious young man who obviously tried to entertain his widowed and ailing mother with amusing descriptions of his experiences abroad, and who was eager to show what had become of her son.

But through the years Michaelis’ initial poor opinion of Japan gradually changed into better understanding. In the end he developed a certain liking for things Japanese; thus, towards the
end of his stay, he even regretted having to leave the country behind.

While his unpleasant remarks sometimes put one off from reading his informative letters, it is well worth reading Michaelis’ reports of his journeys. He is never so enthusiastic about anything Japanese as he is when writing about the country’s nature. His detailed descriptions of his journey to Hokkaido and to the Kuril Islands together with Alexander von Siebold and Julius Scriba are unique and most informative. Michaelis not only describes Ainu and their life, but he also mentions his encounter with the English natural scientist John Henry Leech (Michaelis writes “Leesh”). In this context, it would have been more convenient for the reader if the editor had put the conversions of the Japanese linear measure ri into kilometres directly behind the ri, rather than adding them to the annotations.

With this volume Becker presents a thoroughly annotated collection of source material. Apart from some inaccuracies regarding historical data on Japan, there are quite a lot of German expressions explained in the annotations, even though they are still used nowadays. Becker’s comprehensive introduction includes detailed information on Michaelis and his family as well as additional explanations of Michaelis’ account to gain added perspective as additional explanations of Michaelis and his family as well as additional explanations of Michaelis’ account to gain added perspective on his experiences and descriptions.

As a compilation of valuable contemporary documents, this volume is recommended, along with the diary of Erwin Bälz and the collection of Albert and Lina Mosse’s letters, to all those interested in German influence on Japan.

Dr. René Haak was appointed Economics Group Manager of the German Institute for Japanese Studies in November 2001.

After five years as a research fellow, Dr. Verena Blechinger left the DIJ at the end of January 2002. Dr. Blechinger was also head of the DIJ’s Social Science Section from October 1999 and Deputy Director of the Institute from April 2001.

Her areas of research at the Institute were the Japanese political system, especially government-business relations, and political finance. Building on her dissertation on political corruption, she also worked on political reform in Japan. In July 1998, she organized an international DIJ conference in Tokyō on the topic of “Political Reform in Japan – Entering a New Era of Japanese Democracy?” The papers presented at this conference built the basis of an edited volume on Japanese political reform in the 1990s which will be published in the DIJ Monograph series later this year.

Participating in the DIJ research focus on “Japan in Asia,” Dr. Blechinger analyzed the influence of domestic interest groups, especially from big business, on foreign policy decision making processes in Japan. Together with Jochen Legewie, she organized an international DIJ conference in October 1998 on the topic of “Regional Cooperation in Asia.” The revised conference contributions were published in the co-edited volume “Facing Asia – Japan’s Role in the Political and Economic Dynamism of Regional Cooperation” (DIJ Monograph Series Vol. 24).

Besides co-organizing and participating in various workshops and conference panels on Japanese domestic politics, political finance, and international relations, Dr. Blechinger initiated and conducted for four years the DIJ Social Science Study Group, a monthly forum for young researchers and Ph.D. candidates in the field of social sciences.

Since October 1999, she has been a visiting lecturer at the Institute of Political Science, Münster University, Germany, where she is teaching regular intensive courses.

Since April 2000, she has been an editorial board member of Social Science Japan Journal, a refereed journal jointly published by the Institute of Social Science, University of Tokyo, and Oxford University Press.

After leaving the DIJ, Dr. Blechinger will continue her work on a postdoctoral thesis required for university professorships in Germany (habilitation). In this research, she will explore other dimensions of the relationship between political parties and interest groups. Her research focuses on the transition of longterm ruling parties in opposition. As basis for comparison, she will look at the five parliamentary democracies in the G-8 group of advanced industrialized democracies, Germany, Japan, the UK, Italy, and Canada.

Dissertation Fellows


Christian W. Spang, History, Ph.D. Candidate at Albert-Ludwigs-Universi-

**DIJ Forum**

Ronald Toby, Professor of Korean and Japanese history at the University of Tokyo, and Professor of History, East Asian Studies, and Anthropology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: “The Foreign Side of Fuji: Internationalizing the Mountain in Early-Modern Discourse” (13 December 2001).

J. Victor Koschmann, Professor of Japanese History at Cornell University: “Hakone Conference Revisited: Modernization and the Civil Society School in Postwar Japan” (21 February 2002).

**Social Science Study Group**

As Dr. Verena Blechinger has left the institute at the end of January, the DIJ Social Science Study Group she founded will be continued by Dr. Harald Conrad und Dr. Isa Ducke. As before, the study group is scheduled for every last Wednesday of the month at the DIJ. It is meant as an informal forum for young scholars and Ph.D. candidates in the field of Social Sciences. Please refer to the DIJ homepage for the current program.