

Deutsches Institut für Japanstudien

# DIJ Forum



In its series of public lectures, the German Institute for Japanese Studies will present on

**Thursday, 08 November 2007, 18.30 h**

**Alfons Deeken**  
**Professor Emeritus, Sophia University**

## **Evolving Japanese Perspectives on Death and Dying**

Japanese attitudes toward death and dying have gone through profound changes during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I shall describe the recent changes from my own experience by introducing the activities of the “Japanese Association for Death Education and Grief Counseling”.

The three basic goals of the Association are: 1. providing death education (for hospital and hospice staff, the general public, and for junior and senior high schools); 2. Improving terminal care in hospitals and developing hospice programs; 3. Establishing mutual support groups for bereaved people.

We have to be aware that different cultures have, indeed, different attitudes toward death and dying, as well as toward bereavement and grief. Japanese perspectives on death and dying are not a static phenomenon but are rather in a dynamic evolving process. In order to understand a country's perspectives on death and dying, we have to look at the cultural background and the underlying value structures of the culture.

Dr. Alfons Deeken was born in Germany and received his education in Munich, France, Tokyo and New York, earning a PhD in Philosophy from Fordham University. In 1982 he founded the Japanese Association for Death Education and Grief Counseling, which has chapters in 53 Japanese cities with over five thousand members now. He serves as Honorary President of the Association, and also is a consultant to the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

Dr. Deeken has published 30 books, mostly in the field of death, dying, bereavement and grief. Among the many honors he has received are the “Global Award” in 1989, the “Cross of the Order of Merit” of the Federal Republic of Germany, and in 1999 the “Tokyo Metropolitan Cultural Award” by the Japanese government.

The lecture will be given in English. It will take place on Thursday, 08 November 2007 at 6.30 p.m. at the DIJ. Admission is free, please register with Ms. Dinkel at the DIJ.

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