

Deutsches Institut für Japanstudien
German Institute for Japanese Studies

DIJ Forum



Thursday, 3 February 2011, 18.30 h

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International Research Center for Japanese Studies

Inventing Ise: the Ise Shrines in Meiji Japan

This presentation explores the dynamic transformation of the Ise shrines in the aftermath of the Meiji restoration (1867/8). Located in the city of Ise, Mie Prefecture, the shrine complex is Shinto's most sacred site. There is almost no work done in Japanese or any other language on the modernisation of the shrines. This is a major shortcoming, not least since the Ise shrines and the myth they articulate came to acquire huge importance for the modern Japanese state, its sovereign and its citizens. The involvement of the state in the modern invention of Ise is of course vital, but the critical focus of this talk falls rather on the activities of a local organization known as the Shin'enkai.

John Breen is Reader in Japanese at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, and Associate Professor at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies in Kyoto. He is interested in ritual, religion, politics and power in modernising Japan. Among his recent articles in English are 'Resurrecting the sacred land of Japan: the state of Shinto in the 21st century', *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 37,2 (2010) and "'Conventional wisdom' and the politics of Shinto in postwar Japan", *Politics and religion* 4,1 (2010). He is co-author (with Mark Teeuwen) of *A New History of Shinto* (Wiley-Blackwell 2010) and editor of *Yasukuni, the War Dead and the struggle for Japan's past* (Columbia University Press 2008). He is also the author of the forthcoming *Girei de miru: tenno no Meiji ishin* (Heibonsha, 2011).

The lecture will be given in English. Admission is free, but please register with:
forum@diytokyo.org

or

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