



DIJ Forum

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

Thursday, 15 December 2005, 18.30 h

**Glenda Roberts
Professor, WasedaUniversity**

Work/life balance in corporate Tokyo: Whose Work? Whose Life? Whose Balance?

Since the early 1990s, in efforts to shore up the birthrate, the Japanese government has put forth numerous policies designed to help families harmonize work and family life, and has encouraged firms to implement these policies. One could say that the government is trying to revolutionize Japanese gender practices. This paper, through analysis of case studies from two large firms in Tokyo, explores the extent to which harmonization is possible for career employees. The paper traces the differences in corporate environment and attitudes toward employee development in the two firms. Aside from explaining differences in rationales for implementing policies, I seek to document some of the gendered aspects of work/life balance, and point to reasons why piecemeal attempts toward gender equality do little to achieve a real quality of life for male and female "corporate warriors."

Glenda S. Roberts, an anthropologist, engages in research on contemporary Japanese society, especially gender, work, population, and migration issues. Among her publications are *Staying on the Line: Blue-Collar Women in Contemporary Japan* (University of Hawaii Press, 1994), "Pinning Hopes on Angels: Reflections on an Aging Japan's Urban Landscape," in Roger Goodman, ed., *Family and Social Policy in Japan* (CUP, 2002), and, edited with Mike Douglass, *Japan and Global Migration: Foreign Workers and the Advent of a Multicultural Society* (Routledge, 2000; U. Hawaii Press, 2003).

The lecture will be given in English. It will take place on **Thursday, 15 December 2005** at 6.30 p.m. at the DIJ. Admission is free, space is limited, so please register with Ms. Dinkel at the DIJ.