

German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ)

**DIJ History and Humanities
and DIJ Social Science
Joint Study Group**



Tuesday, 3 September 2013, 18.30h

Johannes Wilhelm, University of Vienna

**Prospects of the Coastal Fishery in Northern
Pacific Tōhoku in the Aftermath of 3.11**

This presentation addresses demographic pressures and the consequences of March 11 for Japan's coastal fishery sector. Coinciding with the declining turnover of Japanese offshore and deep-sea fisheries throughout the 1980s, Japan's coastal fishery sector gained in relative importance. Since then, the coastal fishery sector of northern Pacific Tōhoku (Sanriku) has managed to transform itself into an aquaculture-based industry that has become second important within Japan's fishery production. However, demographic developments such as ageing and depopulation have left Sanriku with serious structural problems familiar to many Japanese rural regions. Since the disaster, local governments in Iwate and Miyagi prefectures have built up structurally different reconstruction plans to cope with the aftermath.

This talk first lays out the fundamental structural problems of the fishery sector in Sanriku. Then, it moves towards the different steps that have been taken for coastal reconstruction after the Great East Japan Earthquake. Finally, I will discuss possible outcomes of disaster reconstruction with regard to the future coastal fishery development in the region by comparing reconstruction plans of Miyagi and Iwate prefectures, respectively. While past tsunami disasters have led to an influx of newcomers to the local fishery industry, this does not hold true for the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake. I argue that this situation in turn is likely to result in a redistribution of fishery use-rights in 2018, the second instance of fishing rights reassignment since the disaster.

Dr. Johannes Wilhelm is University Assistant at the Department of East Asian Studies (Japanese Studies), University of Vienna. He wrote his thesis on 'Resource management in Japanese coastal fisheries' and received a Ph.D. from the University of Bonn in 2009. His current research focuses on aspects of social resilience in context with natural hazards.

The DIJ History and Humanities Study Group and the DIJ Social Science Study Group are fora for young scholars and Ph.D. candidates organized by Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt, Susanne Klien, and Torsten Weber (History & Humanities) and Phoebe Holdgrün, Carola Hommerich, and Barbara Holthus (Social Science). All are welcome to attend, but registration (weber@dijtokyo.org) is appreciated.

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