

## PREFACE

The present volume of *Japanstudien*, the fourth yearbook of the German Institute of Japanese Studies, differs in two important points from its predecessors: Most of the papers are the direct outcome of an international symposium on "Aspects of Value Change in Germany and Japan" held in spring 1991 at the premises of the institute in Tōkyō, and it retains the *lingua franca* used by the participants at this symposium, i.e., English. We are sure our readers will understand and appreciate the advantage of getting to know the argumentation of our authors in the language the papers were originally presented, but would like to assure them at the same time, that German will be the language of communication again in the next volumes of this series to come.

One of the most important tasks Japanese Studies are facing at present is in our opinion the necessity to query the still prevailing image of Japanese culture and society as an entirely homogeneous and monolithic entity without any variations in time and space. As a first attempt to come to a better understanding of what is going on within Japanese society at present the institute embarked on a study of several aspects of value change as its first medium-term and interdisciplinary research project. Work was started in 1990 and two seemingly important values, i.e., individualism and social equality, were chosen. Family on the one hand and the firm on the other provided the societal institutions, on which research was centered. Parallel to this main focus of work, the results of which will be presented in a separate volume of our series *Monographien aus dem Deutschen Institut für Japanstudien*, we had very enlightening and helpful discussions with many specialists in the field, in Japan as well as in Germany and elsewhere, for which we would like to express our sincerest thanks.

The symposium mentioned above was one of these occasions, where we could bring together Japanese and German scientist from various disciplines to discuss several aspects of value change in these two countries from a comparative point of view. We are especially grateful to Professor Herbert Passin of Columbia University, New York, who as the nestor of empirical social research in Japan agreed to present the keynote speech of the symposium, drawing on his rich knowledge and experience. Besides the papers of professors Albach, Fujikura, Hirata, Manabe, Matsuda and Trommsdorff which are included in this volume, we had valuable com-

ments from our colleagues Irmela Hijjiya-Kirschnereit (Berlin), Klaus Lindhorst (Hamburg), Kuriyama Morihiko (Chiba), Watanabe Fumio (Kōriyama), Hoshino Akira (Kanazawa), Hans-Joachim Kornadt (Saarbrücken), Knut Wolfgang Nörr (Tübingen) and Toshitani Nobuyoshi (Tōkyō), which contributed very much to the success of our meeting.

The symposium was generously sponsored by a grant from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Bonn, for which we would like to express here again our sincerest thanks.

It was only after this symposium took place that in the pursuance of our research we became acquainted with the interesting results of other Japanese researchers in some fields we surely would have incorporated in our discussion if we only had known them earlier. I therefore extend my gratitude to professors Nishihira Shigeki, Inoue Tadashi and Nomoto Kikuo for their comprehension and good cooperation which enabled us to include their papers here. I am sure that they will contribute a lot to a better understanding of the width and the diversity of the changes going on in Japan. Professor Helmut Klages (Speyer) was so kind as to help us during several phases of our project research to re-evaluate and re-align our methodological framework. His enthusiasm and deep understanding of scientific guidance we will not forget. His paper included in this volume was read at a final evaluation meeting of our project in October 1992 in Tōkyō.

This volume was from its very early planning supervised by our members of staff Ulrich Möhwald and Hans Dieter Ölschleger, who are at the same time teamleaders of the broader research-project. They gave their best to ensure the publication of both volumes, the yearbook as well as the monography, in time. Together with them we hope that these volumes will contribute towards a better understanding of the changes Japanese society and culture are currently undergoing.

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