

German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ)

## DIJ Social Science Study Group



Wednesday, 31 October 2012, 18.30 h

*Martin Lieser, University of Bonn*

### Football fandom in Japan – An ethnographic study

This presentation introduces part of an ongoing research project, which strives to compare the adaption of foreign cultural influences into local football supporters' cultures. This talk will focus on the fieldwork conducted in Japan and the case study of a hardcore supporters group of the professional football club Kashiwa Reysol.

Taiyō Kōmuten is one of the most notorious fan groups in Japan due to their creative support as well as some infamous incidents involving violent behavior. From its start in 1993, the J.League has been very eager and successful in attracting female spectators and creating a family-friendly event. However, Taiyō and other hardcore fan groups throughout Japan have a male-only policy. At every game they occupy the space right behind the goal and display a distinct form of collective identity and hyper-masculinity. The 'call leader' slips into the role of a conductor, telling the group and the other spectators via his megaphone what to sing or shout. The setting bears great resemblance to modern European and South American football games. For a number of observers this led to the conclusion that Japanese football fans are merely copying what they see abroad, creating a bricolage of myriad components of foreign fan and popular cultures. Surprisingly though, for the members of Taiyō the most important feature is uniqueness, such as in newly created chants.

This research sheds light on how the creative processes of forging for example new chants work, how foreign elements are translated into local context, and how the fans perceive their own fan culture. Rather than giving definite results, this presentation will introduce several fascinating 'tales of the field', talk about challenges the researcher faces while conducting the fieldwork as well as provide some interpretations and links to theory, which hopefully spur some vivid discussions.

***Martin Lieser** studied Japanese Studies and Sociology, and is now a doctoral student at the University of Bonn's International Graduate School – Oriental and Asian Studies. His research deals with broader questions of cultural globalization/glocalization and the sociology of sport. Currently, he is an exchange research student at the University of Tsukuba where he conducts his fieldwork funded by JASSO.*

The DIJ Social Science Study Group is a forum for young scholars and Ph.D. candidates in the field of Social Sciences organized by Maren Godzik, Phoebe Holdgrün and Barbara Holthus. All are welcome to attend, but registration ([holthus@dijtokyo.org](mailto:holthus@dijtokyo.org)) is appreciated.

German Institute for Japanese Studies Tokyo (DIJ)  
Jōchi Kioizaka Bldg. 2F, 7-1 Kioichō, Chiyoda-ku, Tōkyō 102-0094, Phone: 03-3222-5077

For a map please refer to [www.dijtokyo.org](http://www.dijtokyo.org)