

German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ)

DIJ Social Science Study Group

February 27th, 2020, 18:30h

The Last Cowboys of Aso? Problems of Grassland Management in Contemporary Commons

Johannes Wilhelm, Kumamoto University (Kumamoto)



The transformation of the Japanese agricultural sector and the development of rural regions in the course of extensive infrastructure measures during the economic boom led to changes in many areas of rural life. Not only the often mentioned out-migration of younger generations but also the changing economic structures and the conditions for a livelihood in rural settlements were subjected to fundamental change. Among others, this also affected common work and the management of commons (common-pool resources) in the settlements, which had been embedded as a complex local system of cycles for a livelihood fitting the local environment. By examining the grassland management of Aso (Kumamoto Pref.), I will first outline the natural conditions and then proceed to show how this transformation took place in the livestock farming sector and what problems the local population involved is currently exposed to. The lecture closes with an outlook on possible solutions, which I am currently exploring during a three-year field stay on behalf of the Japanese Ministry of Environment researching "Regionally cycling and symbiotic area" (地域循環共生圏) in order to initiate a discussion within this working group about other possible forms of sustainable development in rural Japan.

Johannes Wilhelm is currently working at the Kumamoto Innovative Development Organization (KIDO) at Kumamoto University. He is also research fellow at the Department for East Asian Studies at the University of Vienna (project ASO2.0). He has worked as associate professor and lecturer at several universities such as Keio (Tokyo), Vienna, Bonn and Akita in the past. His current interests include new types of commons, processes of social abandonment as much as intersections and interactions of social-technological development in rural areas.

About:

The DIJ Social Science Study Group is a forum for scholars conducting research on contemporary Japan. Meetings are held once a month and are open to speakers from all disciplines of the social sciences. The event is open to all. Registration is not necessary but appreciated, online at www.dijtokyo.org or via ganseforth@dijtokyo.org.

Venue:

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

For directions visit dijtokyo.org/access.

