

German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ Tokyo)

DIJ History and Humanities Study Group



February 1 (Thu), 2024, 18:30h JST / 10:30h CET

From Tokyo to Marburg:

Japanese Female Doctors during the Meiji Era

Wen-Wei Lan, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (LMU Munich)

During the Meiji Era, numerous Japanese students studied medicine in Germany, attracted by its reputation for medical training. Historians have demonstrated the educational experiences of these students, but they predominantly concentrated on those of males. Scant attention has been given to their female counterparts. In my presentation, I focus on Japanese female medical students, offering a novel perspective on the historical study of education in Japan. Specifically, I examine the educational experience of two pioneer females, Dr. Urata Tada (1873-1936) and Dr. Fukui Shigeko (1874-1961), as case studies.

My presentation targets Urata's and Fukui's educational experience in Germany in the early twentieth century. Their experiences were a breakthrough in the history of medical education, as women at that time commonly faced extra restrictions in pursuit of higher degrees. Notably, as foreign students, Urata and Fukui achieved their MD degrees at Marburg University. Their medical training served as a basis for them later to dedicate their careers to facilitating the public health of East Asian women. Upon returning to Japan, Urata became dean of Dōjin Hospital in Tianjin, China, and Fukui worked as an obstetrician and gynecologist at the Osaka Ogata Hospital.

Urata and Fukui achieved a breakthrough in the status of female doctors in the Japanese medical profession. In this presentation, I employ the cases of these two female doctors to argue for their roles in facilitating the dissemination of knowledge during Japan's modernization in medical areas. Importantly, it offers insights into the reform of Japanese female higher education in modern Japan.

Wen-Wei Lan, a Ph.D. candidate affiliated with the Japan Center of Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (LMU Munich), is dedicated to her research in the historical dimensions of education, gender dynamics, and disseminating knowledge within the context of modern Japanese history. Her doctoral research centers on the subjects of education and the overseas experiences of Japanese female doctors during the Meiji era. Before her enrollment at LMU, she was a research assistant at Academia Sinica and National Taiwan University. Wen-Wei conducted her fieldwork for her doctoral project at the DIJ from August to October 2023.

About:

The DIJ History and Humanities Study Group is a forum open to scholars working on Japan in any field of the humanities. This session is organized by David M. Malitz. All are welcome to attend.

Venue:

Online only (Zoom)

Registration:

Please register via our [webpage](#). Log-in data will be provided after registration.