



Monday, 10 November 2025, 18.30–20.00 (JST)

## The Politics of the Past and Memory Culture in Germany and Japan

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Looking back eight decades after the end of the Second World War, it becomes clear that from the moment their country was occupied by the Allied Powers, Germans had no way of evading their responsibility for the crimes of the Nazi era. However, in the Soviet Zone (and later in the German Democratic Republic), a doctrinal anti-fascism soon prevailed, while in the Western Zones (and later in the Federal Republic), the path to a self-critical confrontation with the past was taken: a decades-long, arduous process marked by social learning successes, but also by setbacks and scandals. Historian Norbert Frei provides an overview of how Germans have dealt with their Nazi history and analyzes the current state of memory culture in a reunified Germany. Former diplomat Yoshinori Katori will offer a comparative perspective on memory culture in Japan with a focus on current issues of historical reconciliation between Japan and South Korea.

**Norbert Frei** is Emeritus Professor of Modern and Contemporary History at the Friedrich Schiller University of Jena and the author of numerous books, including the standard works *National Socialist Rule in Germany. The Führer State 1933-1945* (Blackwell, Oxford 1993) and *Adenauer's Germany and the Nazi Past. The Politics of Amnesty and Integration* (Columbia University Press, New York 2002). His most recent books are the essay collection *Einreden. Zu Zeitgeschichte und Zeitgenossenschaft* (Wallstein, Göttingen 2025) and the biography *Konrad Adenauer. Kanzler nach der Katastrophe* (C.H. Beck, Munich 2025).

**Yoshinori Katori** is the President of Japan Korea Cultural Foundation, Japan-Austria Association, and President of Lee Soo-hyun Asia Scholarship Foundation. After graduation from the Faculty of Economics of Hitotsubashi University, he entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan in 1973. He served in the Embassy of Japan in Bonn, in Munich as Consul General, as the deputy chief of mission of the Embassy in Seoul, and as Ambassador in Israel and in Indonesia. He retired from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2014. His publications include a book on the German Unification titled *Kami no Manto ga Hirugaeru Toki* (Random House Japan, 2010) and *Higashi Ajia no Heiwa to Han-ei ni mukete* (Towards Peace and Prosperity in East Asia) published by Kamakura Syunjyū Publishing in 2020.

The event will be held in English, admission is free. The presentations will be followed by a Q&A session, and a networking reception. To participate, please register via email to [forum@diptokyo.org](mailto:forum@diptokyo.org). This is a public event. Please be aware that audio-visual recordings may be made, stored, and published during and after the event. This DIJ Forum is supported by the German Embassy Tokyo.