

VSJF-Jahrestagung 2022

Programm der Fachgruppentreffen am Samstag, 19.11.2022

Raum-G-01

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_0r5_g83WTQGiHxQ_mMXbdA

Organizers: Carola Hommerich (Sophia University, Tokyo); Nora Kottmann (German Institute for Japanese Studies Tokyo); Celia Spoden (German Institute for Japanese Studies Tokyo)

16:00-16:15 Einführung und Vorstellungsrunde

16:15-17:00 Session 1

Regina Bichler (Ludwig Maximilian University Munich): *Kamikatsu – Zero Waste Role-model or Drop in the Waste Ocean? (online)*

Although the global problem of waste abundance in households, landfills, and nature is widely recognized in the 21st century, there is no simple solution. One emerging approach is focussing on local governance as a “Zero Waste City” through waste reduction, reuse, and recycling. As the second German city after Kiel, Munich is striving to achieve this ideal, looking out for best practices around the world how to motivate its citizens to waste separation and sustainable consumption.

Kamikatsu, a small rural town in Tokushima prefecture with an elaborate waste separation system, high recycling rate, and a variety of anti-waste measures could be an interesting role-model for future zero waste cities. However, even in a close-knit, environmentally conscious community, challenges and obstacles are complicating the way to a sustainable lifestyle.

I will present the results of my fieldwork in Kamikatsu by introducing its waste management system and contextualizing its approach within academic and popular zero waste discourse as well as Japanese waste politics. Through an analysis of the meanings, competences, and materials constituting the waste- and consumption-related practices, I will argue that even big cities can learn from Kamikatsu’s zero waste transformation.

Barbara Holthus (German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ) Tokyo): *Furry Friends in Covid Japan*

For more than two years, as part of Japan’s anti-Covid measures, its citizens are told to engage in physical distancing and “self-restraint”. This has led to many people spending extended periods of time at home while less time with family and friends. In response, pets as “substitute” family members have gained added interest in order to fill the void in human-to-human interaction. Then-Prime Minister Abe Shinzō for example made waves with a 2020 promotional video for “staying home”, in which he is seen cuddling his lapdog and portraying

the “soothing comfort” of dog ownership – a controversial video, viewed by more than 20 million people by now.

While early 2020 reports of the U.S. and select European countries reported empty animal shelters due to a sudden spike in people adopting an animal, mostly a dog, Japanese animal shelters have seen less of that – as Japanese still remain more inclined to “shop” a new family member at a pet shop than adopt a shelter animal. The accelerated interest in pets, not since the pandemic but intensified by it, their role in human-animal interaction, as well as accompanying normative changes regarding pet ownership within Japanese society are the focus of this presentation. Through interviews with pet owners, shelter organizations, and pet foster parents as well as participant observation in veterinary clinics, in pet shops, and pet cafes this presentation tries to highlight the changing role of pets in Japanese society and the particular role of the pandemic.

17:00-17.45 Session 2

Felix Spremberg (Tübingen University): *From “Society 5.0” to “Digital Garden Cities”:* Recent Changes in Japan’s Digitalization Policy (online)

The transition of political leadership to prime minister Kishida Fumio in 2021 resulted in a surprisingly profound change in the LDP-government complex’s discourse on digitalization. “Society 5.0” – one of the political buzzwords of the Abe era – seems to have been almost entirely replaced with the new vision of Japan as a “Country of Digital Garden Cities” (dejitaru den'entoshi kokka kōsō). From the perspective of critical discourse analysis, I will argue that this move means a stronger entanglement of the discourses on digitalization and rural revitalization while the new agenda is still connected to general economic policy and is part of Kishida’s “New Capitalism” agenda. After exploring the main features of this new discourse with regards to meanings and discursive strategies, I tackle the question whether and to what degree the digital garden cities differ from prior “smart city” concepts discussed in Japan and elsewhere. Finally, I will share some possible explanations for the abandonment of “Society 5.0” and the subsequent formation of the garden city agenda from a social science perspective.

Konstantin Plett (Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf): *Die Geschichte des Japanischen Wirtschaftsstandortes Düsseldorf* (online)

Warum kamen die Japaner nach Düsseldorf? Eine Frage, der es bis heute an einer konkreten und überzeugenden Antwort fehlt. Auch wenn ergründet ist, dass die japanischen Aktivitäten in Düsseldorf einen wirtschaftlichen Ursprung haben, ist bis heute unklar, unter welchen Faktoren der Wirtschaftsstandort entstehen, und sich über die Jahrzehnte hinweg zum Europazentrum Japans entwickeln konnte. Bisherige Veröffentlichungen vermochten es nicht, die wirtschaftlichen Aspekte der Unternehmensansiedlungen mit den sozialen Implikationen der japanischen Migration in Verbindung zu bringen und stellten dadurch die Geschehnisse meist einseitig dar. Das Promotionsprojekt „Die Geschichte des japanischen Wirtschaftsstandortes Düsseldorf“ an der Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf schafft es

nun, eine schlüssige Erklärung für die Aktivitäten Japans in der Stadt am Rhein zu liefern, indem es mithilfe von Archivmaterialien aus Standorten in Deutschland und Japan sowie zahlreichen Zeitzeugen-Interviews wirtschaftshistorische Forschungsansätze mit Theorien zur Diaspora verbindet und die historischen Abläufe rekonstruiert. Anders als zumeist angenommen, lagen zu Beginn weder geografische Vorzüge Düsseldorfs im Augenmerk der japanischen Unternehmen noch lässt sich deren Erstsiedlung auf ein Interesse der deutschen Seite zurückzuführen. Stattdessen beruht die Entdeckung des Standortes stark auf den wirtschaftspolitischen Pfaden Japans, die das Land Anfang der 1950er Jahre einschlug, um zu einer Industriegroßmacht aufzusteigen. Für die Durchführung des Projekts war Konstantin Plett unter der Leitung von Professor Christian Tagsold verantwortlich – gefördert wurde das Projekt von der Gerda Henkel Stiftung.

17:45-18.00 Uhr Wrap-up und Abschlussdiskussion