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Java in Jerusalem

Israel Institute for Advanced Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, June 17–19, 2019
The conference “Java in Jerusalem” was the climax of the activities of a one-year research group on “New Directions in the Study of Javanese Literature – Reassessing ideas, methods and theories in the study of the literature of Java, Indonesia”. The research group and the conference were initiated and led by Ronit Ricci and hosted by the Israel Institute for Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. During the conference from June 17–19, world-leading scholars presented their findings on scripts, illustrations and performances of largely untouched sources from the seventeenth century to the present.

In the light of a decline of Javanese Studies in Indonesia and globally, the conference was a ground-breaking event, combining linguistic and interpretative expertise and providing insightful perspectives on the content, form, historical context and contemporary relevance of Javanese literary traditions, which are “among the world’s richest and most unusual” ones (<http://ias.huji.ac.il/rgjavaneseliterature>).

The first session gave examples of “Javanese Tales of the Miraculous”, which revealed that Javanese stories about saints, prophets and kings match peoples’ everyday social reality with exterior contexts – be it the Muslim centres in the Middle East or natural disasters. George Quinn (Canberra) provided an example of contemporary pilgrimage to Mount Tidar, a hill in Magelang that is today especially important for the Indonesian military, which runs a nearby academy and holds ceremonies at the tombs of famous Javanese figures. Narratives surrounding Mount Tidar’s nail, which keeps earthquake-prone Java steady, are interwoven with the military’s claim of maintaining stability in society.

Ronit Ricci (Jerusalem) introduced her study on the “Serat Anbiya” corpus (“Tales of the Prophets”), giving an example of a specific manuscript (Layang Anbiya, MS. MSB L 12 from the Sonobodaya Museum), which was produced in a *pesantran* (Qur’anic boarding school) in a rural area of Java, written in *pégon* script (modified Arabic for the Javanese language). Ricci discussed what role the manuscript’s colourful illustrations and the stories of prophets who preceded the Prophet Muhammad played in Javanese society.

Els Bogaerts traced the wondrous adventures of the famous Javanese king Sultan Agung. Through her analysis of the Serat Nitik Sultan Agung, which were composed in the Javanese poetic form *tembang macapat* during colonial times, she showed that the legends about Sultan Agung and his leadership success, and the conversion of Javanese society to Islam, related to their interaction with Dutch colonial authorities.

The second panel (“New Readings in Javanese Islamic Texts”) provided evidence of the interrelation between societal controversies and Islamic texts. Verena Meyer (New York) combined textual and ethnographic analyses of a recurring motif in stories about the *wali* (saints and bearers of Islam in Java), showing that a relatively recent *wali* story about Mbah Munawwir (died 1942) resonates with the older literary legacies of Sunan Kalijaga (one of the nine *wali*). Meyer suggests that there is a strategic reference to recurring *wali* stories in order to legitimate or dismiss traditionalist and mystical Islamic traditions.

Yumi Sugahara (Osaka) contributed another *wali* story, namely that of Sunan Bonang, discussing his texts’ relevance for the ongoing interpretation of Islamic doctrines in Java. Nancy Florida (Ann Arbor) presented an analysis of a *suluk*, a Sufi song, by Ronggasasmita (1815), which tells the story of a Javanese Mecca pilgrim and admirer of Rumi who visited the holy

mosque of Mecca in the appearance of a naked three-year old child and engaged in a meta-physical debate with Rumi. Florida argues that such stories must be understood as a local manifestation of universal Islam.

The third panel was dedicated to the most recent transformations in the study of Javanese, featuring insights into the digitisation projects of the British Library, presented by Annabel Gallop (London), and the non-profit foundation Yayasan Sastra Lestari, presented by its founder John Paterson (Jakarta). Gallop's presentation provided an understanding of the works of the royal library of Yogyakarta before and after the British assault on the palace in June 1812. Paterson explained the challenge of finding, refurbishing, digitising, translating, and interpreting the manuscripts. The discussion revolved around funding, open access, and online forums for cooperative work on translations and interpretations (both projects are open access), the decline of knowledge of the Javanese language and questions on repatriation.

The fourth panel gave examples of interpreting the historical context of the creation of Javanese literature. Willem van Der Molen (Leiden) presented the "Panji Paniba", one of many so-called Panji stories, which concern the romantic adventures of Panji and his fiancé, princess Candrakirana. Given the fact that the text was created at a time when Javanese society had already been Muslim for centuries, van Der Molen discussed how religious elements were used to provide the story with a pre-Islamic background. Esrih Bakker (Leiden) introduced the "Serat Rama", arguing that the text needs to be analysed in an interdisciplinary and broad manner. Therefore, she is working on a hybrid edition consisting of a book and a digital scholarly edition.

In the fifth panel, Marc Benamou (Richmond), Opan Safari (Cirebon), and Ben Arps (Leiden) took the audience into the world of artistic and performative representations of Javanese literature. Benamou recited Javanese poetry and explained how its transcription and translation reveals the extent of fragmentation, engaging the audience in a discussion about the value of poetry and recitation beyond semantic meanings. Through displays of his own glass paintings, Safari elaborated on the tradition of *wayang* glass painting in Cirebon, where artists refer to a local version of the Bharatayuddha tales. The transformation of *wayang* shadow puppet performances also surfaced in Arps' talk on the creation of affect in the Asian Islamic epic of Amir Hamza. With new methods of multimedia philology of performance, Arps traces the interrelation between the textual and performative creation of affect.

Panel six brought discussions on new considerations of genre in Javanese writing together. Anthony Day (Graz) offered intellectual, artistic and culinary insights into his research on the "Serat Centhini", one of the most important pieces of Javanese literary art, arguing that the sung poetry was a means of dealing with political and cultural uncertainty in early 19th century Java.

Edwin Wieringa (Cologne) discussed the rare genre of autobiography in Javanese literature with the example of "Sêrat Raga Pasaja" by Raden Sasrakuksma, who was a devout Muslim but was also exposed to Calvinist and colonial worldviews. His autobiography deals with confessions of sins, which is very unusual for Javanese literature. Another genre that was influenced by Dutch colonial presence is that of paintings, as presented by Judith Bosnak (Frankfurt) in her talk on literary and artistic impressions of exclusivist travels on the Javanese Post Road in the 19th century. The comparison with European travelogues and paintings allows the conclusion that interaction with Europeans had a significant impact on Javanese art and literature.



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In addition to the insightful and innovative academic talks, the richness and variety of Javanese literary traditions became evident through a session of Javanese poetry recitations (*macapatan*), a Gamelan concert and students' performance of Javanese dance (see picture). All papers shared the observation that the storytelling traditions were and are interrelated with the social circumstances at the time of their creation and their ongoing representation. Furthermore, they gave insights into the complexity of Javanese art and literary traditions. The conference and its proceedings (a reader of Javanese literary texts and a special issue of *Bijdragen* journal are being prepared) are a highly relevant and pioneering contribution to the understanding of Javanese culture, religion and society – in its historical context and in contemporary resonance.

Mirjam Lücking

Konferenz der nordostasiatischen DAAD-Zentren „Zusammenarbeit und Zukunft Ostasiens – im Spiegel europäischer und deutscher Erfahrungen“

Universität Peking (Zentrum für Deutschlandstudien), 2.–13. Oktober 2019

Der Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst unterstützt weltweit über zwanzig Zentren zur Förderung der Deutschland- und Europastudien. In Nordostasien sind es drei: an der Universität Peking, der Universität Tokio und der Chung-Ang-Universität in Seoul. Die beiden erstgenannten sind staatliche Einrichtungen und jeweils die Topuniversitäten in ihrem Land, die Chung-Ang-Universität ist eine private Einrichtung unter den *Top Ten* in Südkorea. Seit 2015

führen die drei nordostasiatischen DAAD-Zentren im Prinzip jährlich eine Konferenz im Turnus durch (s. dazu: György Széll, „Konferenzbericht „Asien und Europa. Auf der Suche nach neuen Horizonten für das 21. Jahrhundert“ an der Chung-Ang-Universität/CAU, Seoul, 21.–22. November 2013, ASIEN 130, 2014: 87–88). Der Schwerpunkt liegt dabei auf der Nachwuchsförderung. Die letzte derartige Konferenz fand im Oktober 2018 zum Thema „Herausforderungen der neuen Welt. Imaginationen der neuen Generation: 1968–2018“, 4.–7. Oktober 2018 statt (s. dazu auch meinen Konferenzbericht in ASIEN 150, 2019).

Ich berichtetet in dieser Zeitschrift über die erste derartige Konferenz in Peking zum Thema „Nation, Nationalismus und nationales Gedächtnis“, Universität Peking, 21.–23. Oktober 2015 (ASIEN 138, 2016: 152–153). Auch diese Konferenz war wiederum ausgezeichnet organisiert. Besonderes Lob dafür verdient Dr. Mao Mingchao.

An ihr nahmen ca. 50 Personen teil, davon zahlreiche Studierende der Universität Peking. Nach der Begrüßung durch den Direktor des ZDS, Prof. Dr. Liaoyu Huang, gab es 15 Beiträge in vier verschiedenen Gruppen: Geschichte und Gesellschaft, Wirtschaft und Politik, Kultur und Identität sowie Ausblick und Diskussion. Die Beitragenden stammten aus acht Nationen, da ein offener *Call for Paper* erfolgt war. Leider hatten einige Vorträge keinerlei Beziehung zum Konferenzthema. Zwei Vorträge erfolgten auf Englisch, zwei weitere auf Chinesisch mit Konsektivübersetzung, alle anderen auf Deutsch. Erwähnenswert erscheinen mir insbesondere folgende:

Prof. Dr. Cao Weidong von der Beijing Sport University mit „Die europäische Integration: ein Vorbild für Asien?“ Nach einer Würdigung der tausendjährigen Utopie europäischer Einigungsbemühungen kam Prof. Cao zum Schluss, dass der derzeitige europäische Einigungsprozess nur ökonomisch sei und im Gegensatz zu Nordostasien Europa keine gemeinsamen Werte verträte. Deswegen könne die Europäische Union kein Vorbild für Nordostasien sein. Dem wurde in der Diskussion teilweise vehement widersprochen und darauf hingewiesen, dass die Antriebskraft zur europäischen Einigung nach den beiden Weltkriegen jeweils das Motto ‚Nie wieder Krieg!‘ gewesen war. Andere teilten jedoch die Auffassung des Referenten.

Prof. Dr. Verena Blechinger-Talcott von der Freien Universität Berlin sprach über „Außenpolitische Identität und regionale Beziehungen Japans“. Sie unterscheidet dabei vier Phasen der Außenpolitik seit den Meiji-Reformen sowie sechs politische Positionen. Die Diskussion drehte sich hauptsächlich um die Frage, was Identität sei, und den Zusammenhang zwischen Innen- und Außenpolitik.

Prof. Dr. Han Dongyu von der North East Normal University präsentierte „Mizokuchi Yuzo’s Question and some Japanese scholar’s excuse for the Second World War“. Mizokuchi Yuzo war ein japanischer Pazifist, der sich dagegen wandte, dass sich Japan als Kriegsoffer sah. In der Diskussion wurde die Frage nach den Parallelen zwischen Japan und Deutschland thematisiert.

Prof. Dr. György Széll von der Universität Osnabrück widmete sich dem Konferenztitel. Nach dem Verweis auf die derzeitige Krise der Europäischen Union verwies er auf den Helsinki-Prozess seit 1975, der eine vertrauensvolle Zusammenarbeit von inzwischen 57 Nationen beinhaltet. Eine solche Institution wäre auch für Ostasien sinnvoll. Die bisherigen zahlreichen Kooperationen in Ostasien sind sehr stark an wirtschaftlichen Interessen orientiert und haben die politischen Spannungen kaum abbauen können. Im Gegensatz zur Politik funktioniert die wissenschaftliche Zusammenarbeit wie auch bei dieser Konferenz sehr gut.

Prof. Dr. Kwang-Yeong Shin von der Chung Ang Universität befasste sich mit „New East Asia in the 21st Century“. Er betonte die zunehmende Ungleichheit in dieser Weltregion, die auch mit der Demografie, d. h. insbesondere stark alternden Gesellschaften zusammen hängt. Seine Annahme ist in Hinblick auf eine dauerhafte Entwicklung sehr pessimistisch.

Prof. Dr. Hiramatsu Hideto von der Universität Tokio widmete sich der „Wahrnehmung der fremden Erfahrungen und deren Translationsprozessen in der sozialen Wohlfahrtstätigkeit“. Dabei er zog er Vergleiche zwischen Elberfeld und Osaka in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts und kommt zum Schluss, dass die Mittelschichten aus Eigeninteresse das Gemeinwohl zunehmend betonten. In der Diskussion wurde die Frage nach dem Verhältnis von Korea und Japan und der Sozialgesetzgebung in Japan in den 1930er Jahren gestellt.

Prof. Dr. Dres. h. c. Bertram Schefold von der Goethe-Universität Frankfurt thematisierte das „Chinesische Wirtschaftsdenken als anschauliche Theorie: das Beispiel des Yantie Lun“. Dieser Autor, der im 1. Jahrhundert vor Christus die wesentlichen Fragen der Wirtschaftspolitik in Dialogform formulierte, hat bis heute nichts an Aktualität verloren, wie die anschließende Diskussion zeigte.

Die nächste Konferenz der nordostasiatischen DAAD-Zentren ist für Oktober 2021 in Tokio geplant. Sicherlich wiederum ein gutes Beispiel für die Zusammenarbeit und Zukunft Ostasiens.

György Széll

Jahrestagungen der Zhongshan Society Europe und der European Overseas Chinese Association

Dublin, 28.–30. Juni 2019

Die Jahrestagungen der Zhongshan Society Europe (中山學會) und der European Overseas Chinese Association (歐洲華僑團體聯誼會) vom 28. bis 30. Juni 2019 in Dublin mit 180 Beteiligten aus akademischen und politischen Kreisen diverser europäischer Staaten sowie Taiwans, Neuseelands, Kanadas und der USA beschäftigte sich hauptsächlich mit zwei Themenfeldern, nämlich mit den Lebensverhältnissen chinesischer Immigranten im Ausland und der aktuellen Lage in Taiwan. Beide Organisationen mit Affinität zu Sun Yatsens politischen Vorstellungen eines souveränen, sozialen und demokratischen Staatswesens behandelten in Vorträgen und Diskussionen die politische Wende seit den Kommunalwahlen 2018, bei der die oppositionelle Nationalpartei Chinas (Zhongguo Guomindang 中國國民黨, KMT) Terrain zurückeroberte und sogar in Hochburgen der regierenden Demokratischen Fortschrittspartei (Minzhu Jinbudang 民主進步黨, DPP) Bürgermeister stellen konnte. Obgleich Konferenzteilnehmer aus beiden Lagern präsent waren, überwog die Kritik an Präsidentin Cai Yingwen (蔡英文) und ihrer DPP hinsichtlich einer Politik des Abbaus von Arbeitnehmer- und Bürgerrechten, der Diskriminierung oppositioneller Gruppen, des massiven Eingriffs in die Medienberichterstattung sowie in die Autonomie von Universitäten und der Konfrontation mit der Volksrepublik China. Exemplarisch war hierbei der Vortrag der Abgeordneten Tong Huizhen (童惠珍), die als Auslandschinesin für die KMT in der Gesetzgebungskammer in Taibei tätig ist. In ihrem Vergleich zwischen der Politik Cai Yingwens und der ihres Amtsvorgängers Ma Yingjiu (馬英九), KMT, hob sie neben vielen Schwachpunkten Cais die Polarisierung in der Innenpolitik sowie die zunehmenden Spannungen mit dem Festland hervor, die auf der Nichtanerkennung eines Völkerrechtssubjekts China mit zwei unterschiedlichen

Interpretationen („92er Konsens“) beruhten und sich negativ auf die Außenpolitik auswirkten. Breiten Raum nahmen weiterhin Vorträge und Diskussionen zu Taiwans anstehenden Wahlen für das Amt des Präsidenten und der Parlamentarier ein. Weitere Themen waren studentische Belange an europäischen Universitäten, die Auswirkungen des Brexit und die Bedeutung der Wirtschaft Irlands.

Thomas Weyrauch

Peoples and languages of the Sino–Russian borderlands: Dauria

Palacký University Olomouc, October 9–10, 2019

The international two-day workshop “Peoples and languages of the Sino–Russian borderlands: Dauria” was held at Palacký University Olomouc, supported by the European Regional Development Fund project “Sinophone Borderlands — Interaction at the Edges” (CZ.02.1.01/0.0/0.0/16_019/0000791). The workshop was organised by Ute Wallenböck (Palacký University Olomouc) in collaboration with Veronika Zikmundová (Charles University Prague), bringing together researchers of history, anthropology, and linguistics who deal with the area and peoples of historical Dauria. This was the first academic event that truly reflected the diversity of approaches and disciplines necessary to study the Sino–Russian borderland, especially as the culture and history of the Dagurs and other peoples of Dauria — which comprises lands around north-eastern Sino–Russian border — administratively the northernmost part of Heilongjiang, northern part of Inner Mongolian Hulunbuir, and the adjacent parts of Russia — have so far received little attention in the western scholarship. The two-days long event was structured in three sessions. Caroline Humphrey (MIASU Cambridge University) was an important guest who oversaw the presentations and contributed remarks and insights in the discussion. The first session involved the historical and social anthropological approaches to the topic of Dauria. By questioning the inherent connection of Daur names with Daur ethnicity, the first speaker, Loretta Kim (University of Hong Kong) presented a data collection of Daur names ranging from the seventeenth century to the present day. The discussion on identity and ethnicity continued with the second presentation by Bazar Tsybenov (Russian Academy of Sciences, Ulan Ude) on the evolution of the term “Daur-Mongol” and self-identification of Dairs in the revolution period with Fumintai and his involvement in the Pan-Mongol political activity as a case study. Then, Stephanie Ziehaus (Palacký University Olomouc) talked about ethnicity in the imperial context, which frames the Dairs as a vanished transnational community and analyses the impact of imperial categorisation. In the subsequent discussion, questions of ethnicity and identity, ranging from the conflict of territoriality versus kinship in clan affiliation, the conversion of clan names into Chinese surnames and the Daur-Mongols’ involvement in Pan-Mongolism, were revolved.

Sayana Namsaraeva (MIASU, University of Cambridge and Palacký University Olomouc) started the second part of the first session. She explored questions of ethnicity and kinship in the Sino–Russian borderlands through the case of Gantimur. Her presentation was followed by Kicengge (Otemon Gakuin University, Osaka) who presented the “cisan incident” as an example for the legal procedure of appeals in the Manchu Eight Banners and the importance of the textual recording of this legal case for the Daur community, which to this day preserves it as part of their identity. Subsequently, Katerina Zikmundová (Charles University Prague) presented her research on Merse-Guo Daofu, touching upon a topic explored early in the presentation of Bazar Tsybenov. However, she focused mainly on the results of her interview with his late daughter Odognowa, recorded in Hohhot in 2015. Then, Veronika Kapisovská

(Charles University Prague) concluded the first day of the workshop with her presentation on the results of her linguistic and folkloristic field-research by comparing the earliest recorded Daur songs from 1930 to the material collected in her field research in 2016 and 2017.

On the second day, Jargal Badagarov (University of Heidelberg) started the second session presenting a linguistic approach with his research on linguistic features of Buryad speech of a native Dagur speaker due to language contacts in that border area. His presentation was followed by Bayarma Khabtagaeva (Free University Berlin) who showed how designations for body parts play a role in the determination of Dagur language's place among other Mongolic languages. The subsequent third session focused on shamans. Veronika Zikmundová provided a new perspective and an eminently structural approach towards the Daur version of the so-called "Account of the Nishan Shamaness", whereas the presentation of David Somfai Kara (Hungarian Academy of Sciences) was preliminary based on his fieldwork among the Daurians with focus on the concepts of the mythological background of the story. These were two fruitful inputs for a subsequent vivid discussion. At the end of the workshop a round table discussion among all participants was organised. The main points which were discussed touched on the term "Dauria" itself by underlining the importance of the non-geopolitically usage of the term, and on the feasibility of future research activities on this topic.

Ute Wallenböck and Stephanie Ziehaus

International Symposium: The Digital Challenge in Germany and Japan in Comparison: Opportunities, Risks, and Digital Cooperation

Hamburg, June 18–19, 2019

Is digitisation a blessing or a curse? This question has recently taken on a pioneering role within the intellectual debate. This is particularly true given the inevitable impact on all areas of human interaction. From the agricultural, health, and industrial sectors, to the platform economy, to the legal and moral ethics of technological change, several scholars have begun to examine the impact of digitisation on postmodern society.

The interdisciplinary symposium on "The Digital Challenge in Germany and Japan in Comparison: Opportunities, Risks, and Digital Cooperation", organized by the Japanese Research Center, the University of Osnabrück (Prof. Dr. Carmen Schmidt), and the German-Japanese Society for Social Sciences (Prof. Dr. Gisela Trommsdorff) at the University of Hamburg and the GIGA Hamburg, and supported by the Japanese Consulate General Hamburg, highlighted future challenges, including the problem of an ageing society, the future of work, ethical and moral issues of digitisation, democracy, and identity politics, but also opportunities such as distance work, smart city technology, efficient use of resources, and effective health care, among others. However, digitisation raises questions that need to be answered, while providing answers to many of the problems we are currently facing. German and Japanese experts from various disciplines have addressed these problems and critically analysed the perspectives, but also the problems, of digitisation and made suggestions on how we can tackle these problems.

The symposium began with a presentation by Professor Franz Waldenberger (DIJ Tokyo) on "Society 5.0 — Japan's Visions and Ambitions for the Digital Age", in which he described and critically assessed the Smart Society Initiative, highlighting the strengths, weaknesses and challenges of achieving such ambitious goals. The second keynote speaker, Professor Arisa Ema (The University of Tokyo), who shared her experiences from the Japanese community,

stressed that, based on her experiences, ethics in AI and multidisciplinary networking are necessary to overcome the challenges of digitisation.

The second day began with a critical look at digitisation from a European perspective. Professor Ingrid Schneider (University of Hamburg) stressed the importance of the EU as a regulatory superpower in the digital environment where tensions between the US and China are increasing. Professor Dietrich Albert (Graz University of Technology), who spoke on “Digital Learning and Teaching — A European Perspective”, presented many of the current challenges and future developments in digital learning and teaching in Europe and suggested how digitisation can contribute to improving learning. Professor Christoph Busch (University of Osnabrück) built a bridge between government regulators, the platform economy and the general public and drew attention to some of the remaining gaps in regulatory policy in Europe and around the world.

The second session began with Professor Jürgen Schupp (DIW Berlin). He affirmed the need for transparency in the “social construction” of algorithms to maintain a democratic society, as algorithmic processes increasingly determine everything from creditworthiness to our position in the social hierarchy. The second lecture was given by Professor Rainer Knauf (Technische Universität Ilmenau), who presented different definitions of the term “artificial intelligence” (AI) and what can be expected from AI in the near future. The second session ended with a presentation by Professor Gabriele Vogt, Anna-Lea Schröder and Anne-Sophie König (University of Hamburg). They presented their findings from their research project “Sustainable long-term care: technology use, care migration and community building in Japan”. Above all, they emphasized the discrepancies between political plans, economic necessity and the social rejection of robotics and technology in the everyday life of nursing services.

Professor Akira Tokuyasu (Hosei University) opened the third session of the symposium. He looked at the formation of physical identities using digital devices. Professor Gisela Trommsdorff (University of Konstanz) critically examined the adaptation to digitisation and the need for a culture-oriented theoretical framework of interpretation. Professor Mototaka Mori (Waseda University) concluded the session with a critical assessment of the transformation “from the monetary value society to the non-monetary value society” and asked whether the ageing population will adapt to the digitised cashless society.

Using the example of animal identification in the agricultural sector in Japan, Professor Masato Kimura (Takachiho University) examined in the fourth session the traceability and behavioural targeting system developed in the field of raw materials marketing. He came to the conclusion that the increasingly biometric information, the “digital twin”, as he called it, determines identity rather than the human self. People are therefore increasingly “digitally traceable”. Tami Lang (University of Osnabrück) presented Instagram as an example of identity in the digital age. She deals with questions of identity formation and self-representation in a digital world as well as with potential impairments of offline self-well-being that can result from active involvement in online social networks. The last lecture by Professor Carmen Schmidt (University of Osnabrück) was an uncovering of the general research fields and research questions of digitization, viewed through the lens of modernization theories. In a summary of the lectures of the symposium, Schmidt pointed out the connection between second modernity and digitisation and asked questions about the nature of postnational identities and regulations in all areas of human interaction, including but not limited to the level of state, society and economy.

The symposium concluded with a panel discussion with experts chaired by Makoto Kobayashi (Tamagawa University) to answer the question asked at the beginning whether digitisation is

a blessing or a curse. In a very intensive brainstorming session, several ideas and proposals were presented. These included the adoption of a public business model for platform economics and data protection, the need for a double-checking system to separate facts from opinions, the development of the potential of digital education, moral and ethical limits to use of open access data (especially in our world of multiplicity in socio-political systems), decentralisation of data collection and presentation (especially in science), the need for accountability mechanisms, national, regional and international regulation, and the important role of civil society and other data protection authorities.

The controversy over whether digitisation is a blessing or a curse again came to the fore as the threats and benefits were explained in detail. In the end, the participants took an optimistic view of the future of digitisation and stressed the need for effective regulation and open dialogue in all areas of engagement, including, but not limited to, academia, civil society, business, regulators and politics.

Jan Kronschnabel and Opeoluwa Joseph Oguntoye

Studying Japan: The impact of transnationalization and technological innovation on methods, fieldwork and research ethics

Freie Universität Berlin, July 23–24, 2019

The international conference “Studying Japan” took place at Freie Universität Berlin on July 23–24, 2019. It was kindly funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), the German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ), Ernst-Reuter-Gesellschaft (ERG) and Freie Universität Berlin. Organizers Cornelia Reiher (FU Berlin) and Nora Kottmann (DIJ Tokyo) welcomed an interdisciplinary group of Japan scholars to discuss methodological trends in times of transnationalization and technological innovations and to talk about ways to make methods education more accessible for students and junior researchers. The conference consisted of five panels that encompassed the whole research process from finding a research topic to publishing one’s results.

The first panel, chaired by Cosima Wagner (FU Berlin), opened the conference with keynote speeches by Levi McLaughlin (North Carolina State U) and Akiko Yoshida (U of Wisconsin-Whitewater) on methods in area studies. McLaughlin discussed how to navigate vulnerabilities of researchers and research partners during the research process. Yoshida introduced the audience to several methods to get interview partners to talk about themselves. They both emphasized the important topic of new technologies and their role in fieldwork and showed how social media is linked to vulnerability by bringing fieldwork to the home of researchers. Verena Blechinger-Talcott (FU Berlin) chaired the following roundtable discussion about new trends and challenges in research on Japan and their implications for methodology. The panelists shared their experiences from research in Japan and particularly highlighted the significance of the researcher’s relationship with research partners in the field and research ethics. While Joy Hendry (Oxford Brookes U) addressed her position as an anthropologist without prior methodological training, Karen Shire (U of Duisburg-Essen) reflected on the systematization of methodologies and stressed the need for mutual discussion between Japanese and western scholars. Chris McMorran’s (NUS) criticized the western-centric view on Japanese studies and emphasized the role of interpersonal relations in the field. Celia Spoden (Hannover Medical School) added the importance of the researcher’s self-identity as well as their positionality during fieldwork and Marie Weishaupt (FU Berlin) reflected on the role of social media in this context.

The second day kicked off with a panel chaired by Annette Schad-Seifert (HHU Düsseldorf), which started with Roger Goodman (U of Oxford) speaking about the diversity of Japanese studies and the process of identifying a research topic. Kaori Okano (La Trobe U) presented different research designs with a focus on case studies and Urs Matthias Zachmann (FU Berlin) outlined the topic of finding and reviewing literature for the literature review. Levi McLaughlin talked about how to do field work in Japan, focusing on building and maintaining social relations and the importance of a digital presence. Kai Schulze (FU Berlin) presented the next panel on collecting data in social science research on Japan. Akiko Yoshida first provided an outline of qualitative social science methods and highlighted aspects such as the availability and acceptance of participants. Following this, Nora Kottmann and Cornelia Reiher discussed different approaches to qualitative interviews in research on Japan. In their presentation on participant observation, Christian Tagsold (HHU Düsseldorf) and Katrin Ullmann (U of Applied Sciences Düsseldorf) addressed the researcher's positionality, the importance of research ethics and empathy. Theresia Peucker and Cosima Wagner (both FU Berlin) raised awareness for the impact of digitalization on archives, libraries and databases on finding primary and secondary literature.

In the next panel, Japanese Studies students and doctoral researchers (FU Berlin) talked about their experiences with fieldwork in and on Japan and introduced their perspectives on methods education. They stressed the importance of keeping instructions simple and hands-on and suggested that senior researchers share their experiences and struggles with methodology as lessons for junior researchers. Following this, Hannes Mosler (FU Berlin) introduced the panel on analyzing qualitative data in social science research on Japan. Carola Hommerich (Hokkaido U) and Nora Kottmann presented three models of mixed methods designs, followed by an introduction to methods of and approaches to data analysis by David Chiavacci (U of Zürich). Celeste Arrington (George Washington U.) outlined the topic of qualitative content and frame analysis and Cornelia Reiher critically discussed qualitative discourse analysis. The last panel focused on ethics, theorizing and publishing was chaired by Elisabeth Scherer (HHU Düsseldorf). James Farrer (Sophia U) and Gracia Liu-Farrer (Waseda U) talked about writing for different audiences. Caitlin Meagher (U of Oxford) discussed coding and theorizing and Chris McMorran spoke about the challenges of writing and the importance of mental health management. Cornelia Reiher and Cosima Wagner introduced and focused on ethical research practices and the open science movement.

In a final wrap up, Nora Kottmann and Cornelia Reiher summarized the discussion and named relevant topics that require further elaboration, like a researcher's positionality, language issues, comparing Japan with other regions or countries, different audiences of academic work, reflexivity, and the impact of social media on research on Japan. The two interesting days of the conference produced many new ideas the conference organizers will incorporate into the methods handbook "Studying Japan: Research Designs, Fieldwork and Methods" they are currently editing.

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