

electronic journal of contemporary Japanese studies

Conference and Seminar Papers

Images of Asia
in Japanese Mass Media,
Popular Culture and Literature

Papers presented at the
2nd International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS 2)

Berlin, Germany

9-12 August 2001

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Introduction

The papers of the panel “Images of Asia in Japanese Mass Media, Popular Culture and Literature” arise from the research project, “Japan’s ‘orientation towards Asia’ respectively Japan’s ‘return to Asia’ in literature, media and popular culture. A factor in the creation of an ‘Asian identity’.” The research project is being conducted at the Department of Japanese Studies at the University of Trier, Germany, and is sponsored by the DFG (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft), the central public funding organization for academic research in Germany.

The introduction by Hilaria Gössmann highlights some of the trends and issues relevant for Japan’s “return to Asia”, and provides an over-arching analytical framework for individual case studies. Three case studies, by Barbara Gatzen (NHK documentaries), Susanne Phillips (Japanese *manga*) and Kristina Weickgenannt (Japanese literature), analyse the images of Asian countries (not including Japan) and non-Japanese Asians in Japanese mass media, popular culture and literature. Ulrike Wöhr’s commentary discusses the relevance of these case studies in the context of history, diversity and gender in Japan’s “Asia discourse”.

The papers as well as the commentary by Ulrike Wöhr were presented at the 2nd International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS 2), held in Berlin in August 2001. With the exception of the commentator, the authors of all papers are members of this research project.

[Hilaria Gössmann](#)

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March 2002

About the Authors

[Hilaria Gössmann](#) is professor of Japanese Studies at the University of Trier, Germany. She majored in Japanese Studies and German Literature and received her PhD from the University of Trier in 1992. She held a research position at the German Institute for Japanese Studies in Tokyo from 1992 to 1995. The focus of her research is on gender and interculturality in modern Japanese literature and TV dramas. She has edited a Japanese book (together with Muramatsu Yasuko) on the construction of gender in Japanese and German media (*Media ga tsukuru gendâ. Nichidoku no danjo - kazokuzô*, Tôkyô, Shinyôsha 1998).

[Barbara Gatzel](#) received her PhD from the Free University of Berlin, Germany in 1999. She is a visiting research fellow at the Australian National University in Canberra and a post-doctoral fellow at Trier University in Germany, and the author of a recent study on Japanese television news (*Fernsehnachrichten in Japan. Inszenierungsstrategien im interkulturellen Vergleich mit Deutschland*. Gunter Narr Verlag, Tübingen, 2001.) She is also a research editor (media and popular culture) for the *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies*.

[Susanne Phillipps](#) majored in Japanese Studies and Linguistic Studies in Frankfurt (Main) and Berlin, where she received her MA in 1995. From 1995-97, she was a research fellow at the Free University of Berlin. In 2000, she completed her PhD on Tezuka Osamu, Japan's most famous *manga* artist. From August 2000 to July 2001, she was a research fellow at the University of Trier.

[Kristina Weickgenannt](#) is a PhD candidate at the University of Trier where she is working on a thesis on the Japanese-Korean author Yû Miri. She majored in Japanese Studies, Political Sciences and International Relations of Asia and Africa at the Humboldt-University of Berlin, the University of Duisburg and the Free University of Berlin. From 1995-1996 she studied Japanese Language and Contemporary Japanese History at Rikkyô University, Tôkyô. In 2000, she completed her MA with a thesis on the use of fish and water metaphors in the works of Yû Miri. From 2000-2001, she participated in the JET-Programme, working as a Coordinator for International Relations at the Nagano Prefectural Government.

[Ulrike Wöhr](#) is an associate professor of Japanese Studies and Women's Studies at Hiroshima City University. She majored in Japanese Studies and History at the Universities of Freiburg/Breisgau, Vienna, and Heidelberg. Her main publications are on the women's movement in pre- and post-war Japan, on Japanese women and religion, and on women and the print media in prewar Japan. She has also written on recent trends concerning the genre of *Nihon bunkaron* (discourses on Japanese culture).

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