

***Program for Mini-symposium among Freie Universität Berlin, Beijing
Foreign Studies University, and the University of Tokyo***



Date 24th of March, 2021

Time 9:00-12:00 (CET)

16:00-19:00 (CST)

17:00-20:00 (JST)

Registration to Zoom Link:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdzxXZepJEOShwgBfgRSbXKS6ULRFgO9iIxbgAwyOzQ1u9cSg/viewform>

Session 1 Analyzing Japanese Think Tanks

(1) *Changes in Japan's Decision-making System and the Role of Think Tanks since 1990s*

Ling LIU

(D3, Beijing Center for Japanese Studies, Beijing Foreign Studies University)

Abstract

Japanese think tanks were first established in the 1950s and have experienced six waves of "think tank booms" so far. Although Japanese think tanks have been developing continuously following the example of the United States, it is generally critiqued that Japanese think tanks before the 1990s did not perform as well as American's. The reason is that with a strong bureaucracy functioning as the primary repository for policy expertise, most of the information in the decision-making process was held in the bureaucracy who plays an absolute leading role in the decision-making process,

Japan's developmental state has long been discouraging the creation of independent think tanks. This phenomenon led to the formation of Japan's "A Strong State Versus Weak Think Tanks" before the 1990s. After the economic crisis began in the 1970s, Japan started to consider establishing American-styled think tanks. In the 1990s, Japan's bureaucracy and electoral institutions underwent extensive reforms, which led to the emergence of a diversified policy system, which provided new political and social participants, think tanks and other institutions with opportunities to influence the policy process. Since then, Japan experienced the fourth "think tank boom" characterized by non-profit independent think tanks in 1997. The competition among Japanese think tanks has intensified, and they have gradually played the role of influencing government decision-making, guiding public opinion, and dissemination of policy ideas.

This study analyzes the changes in the Japanese political system and decision-making models since the 1990s, uses literature analysis and case studies to introduce the function of the Tokyo Foundation Policy Research Institute as a non-profit independent policy think tank, and examine the role of Japanese think tanks in the decision-making process.

(2) *In Defense of the Liberal International Order? Identity, Ontological Security and Epistemic Communities in Japan's Indo-Pacific Policy*

Erik ISAKSSON

(D1, Graduate School of East Asian Studies, Freie Universität Berlin)

Abstract

Narratives and policies of shared values around democracy, the rule of law, and human rights between Japan, Australia, India, and the United States are a major part of Japan's foreign policy since the first Abe government. The existing scholarship explains them as either containment strategies against a rising China or as an effort to strengthen the liberal international order that facilitates cooperation. However, these explanations are not sufficient to show why Japan has otherwise not balanced against China in recent years, and why the Indo-Pacific values engagement is extended to certain like-minded and potentially cooperative countries, but not others, like South Korea. Against this backdrop, in this dissertation project I examine why Japanese narratives and policies promoting shared values with Australia, India and the United States have emerged since the first Abe government? Based in ontological security theory and status-seeking scholarship, I hypothesize that Japan's narratives and policies in the Indo-Pacific are explainable by reference to its long-time strive for recognition of its desired identity as a leader among peaceful, liberal democratic states and its fear of being denied international recognition of this identity. Focusing on the period 2006-2020, the project will conduct a discourse analysis of official Japanese narratives regarding shared values, and process tracing of policies toward the three states to show the chronology of their development. It will combine this with a network analysis of epistemic communities and foreign policy professionals who have supported a more present Japanese posture in the international community.

Session 2 Anatomy of National University in Colonial Japan

(1) Imperialist Strategies in Establishing Colonial Universities

Jiwon KIM

(D3, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, University of Tokyo)

Abstract

Throughout the Meiji Restoration, Japan adopted various Western institutions, including the modern school system. My dissertation begins with the idea that when Japan learned how to manage its colonies, it would have used the colonizing nations that went before it as models for its management.

When the colonial rule of the imperialist countries began in the late 1800s, the colonial rulers began to implant Western-style education systems in their colonies. However, the issue of establishing a "university" rather than an elementary or middle school in the colonial area has led to various conflicts among members of the colony. The colonizers argued that universities should be established for the education of their own children. However, the parent state government worried that the establishment of universities would raise the level of education in the colonies and cause difficulties in colonial rule. In the case of Chosen/Korea, a great desire for the higher education of Koreans led to a movement to conduct fundraising to build their university. It resulted in the establishment of the Imperial University in Keijo (Seoul). At the same time, the Imperial University was established in Taiwan, Japan's other colony.

In my dissertation, I attempt to compare the process of Japan's transplantation and operation of the university system in colonial Korea and Taiwan with the process of Britain's establishment of the University of Hong Kong. First, I will compare the extent to which the colonial government intervened in the university's establishment. Second, I will analyze the selection and career path of students to compare the extent to which universities in the colony influenced the supply of human resources necessary for actual colonial management. Through my research, I hope to establish how Japan, Britain, and other imperial nations differed in their colonial strategies regarding education and government.

(2) National Identity of the Students at Kenkoku University (1938-1945)

Yiran YAO

(D2, Beijing Center for Japanese Studies, Beijing Foreign Studies University)

Abstract

Kenkoku University (Nation-Building University, abbreviated as Kendai) recruited male students of Japanese, Chinese mainland, Korean, Taiwanese, Mongolian and Russian backgrounds, and was founded in 1938 by the Kwantung Army, aimed at nurturing leaders who would actualize the goal of “harmony among various peoples residing in Manchukuo” with “Manchurian” identity.

Existing researches about national identity of the students at Kendai are mainly mentioned separately in students’ daily activities and perceptions of Manchukuo, lacking analysis of identity formation. This report attempts to explain identity of students of Japanese, Chinese mainland, Korean and Taiwanese backgrounds before they were enrolled in Kendai, and focus on awakening or changes of national identity they experienced while at Kendai affected by various causes.

Deviating from the route planned by the Kwantung Army and Manchukuo’s governing authority, students contemplated their identity and made distinct choices. A majority of Japanese students became obsessed with their Japanese identity shaped by Japan’s colonial relationships with other Asian nations, while some of them vacillated between the identity as Manchukuo citizen and Japanese. By contrast, Chinese mainland students who were born or raised in Manchukuo constructed or reinforced their Chinese national identity after entering in Kendai.

As for Korean students who encountered identity dilemma, later influenced by Professor Choe Nam-Seon or stimulated by crucial events, most Korean students who disbelieved the principle of *naisen ittai* propagandized in Manchukuo struggled on the issue of nationalism and awakened to their Korean identity. Similarly, most students from Taiwan started to identify themselves clearly as Taiwanese and of Han Chinese. The national identity of students at Kendai shows a great diversity and indicates an example of the failure of colonial education.

Session 3 Politicized Gender in Contemporary Japan

(1) Different lenses? Navigating Gender in Contemporary Japanese Photography

Elizabeth NOBLE

(D4, Graduate School of East Asian Studies, Freie Universitat Berlin)

Abstract

This dissertation explores the complex relationship between women and gender systems in Japanese photography. In the 1990s, an apparent increase in the number of young women photographers winning critical and popular acclaim excited the media and photography critics. Dubbed *onna no ko shashin* (girly photography), these young women were viewed as a photography movement which expressed an inherently female principle, and as only able to access photography due to easier technology. Although in recent years the label *onna no ko shashin* has drawn criticism, gender labels are still widely used across the photography industry, from art photography exhibitions, to camera advertising, photography magazines, and by women-led photography clubs and women themselves. Given this wide usage, and photography's position as a visual culture and technological industry deeply ingrained in daily-life, this dissertation answers the question: how do women navigate gender labels in contemporary Japanese photography? It explores how gendered terms like *onna no ko shashin* form a system of communication which reproduces and maintains particular gender norms and expectations of women present in Japanese society within photography. Through analysing interviews, camera and photography magazines, exhibition guides and the experiences of women photographers, it consequently argues that gender labels continue to shape how women photographers are perceived and discussed. However, this dissertation shows that rather than passively accepting gender labels, women actively engage with terms like *onna no ko shashin*, producing their own meanings and explorations of what it means to be a woman in Japanese photography today.

***(2) The Practices Enabled by the Gender Identity Categorization
: Focusing on the Use of “X-jendā” in Japan***

Kyoko TAKEUCHI

(D2, Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology, University of Tokyo)

Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore the practices of gender nonconformists enabled by gender identity categories. In Japan, contrary to the global trend, gender-nonconformists are generally known by the term “gender identity disorder,” which is a medicalized category that brings a framework of mismatch of mind and body. However, various categories are used by gender-nonconforming people and there are some conflicts and exclusions among people who identify with these categories.

Previous transgender studies assume categorically homogeneous groups, noting and drawing attention to the norms associated with categories and the diversity of group members. However, it is unclear how the categories themselves change and construe their meaning, and in turn how they influence the people who identify with them. One method to address this difficulty is to view categories as being formed in the process of interaction through people’s experiences. Through narratives from magazines and interviews with 20 gender-nonconforming people, this study examines dynamic processes such as categories bringing about norms and changing methods of self-understanding. The category “*X-jendā*,” which refers neither to men nor women, was chosen as a case for this study because its otherness demonstrates the situation surrounding various categories in Japan.

As a result, we clarified how “*X-jendā*” was utilized in the self-help group as a transgender subcategory to enable differentiation from the norms of existing categories in the 1990s. In addition, this study shows how “*X-jendā*” is recently used to avoid the negative meanings of medical categories and to position the self, while avoiding the categorical pursuit of the self. These practices are accompanied by those of institutionalizing the care for gender-nonconforming self and body under the same category, which leads to conflicts among gender nonconformists.