

Tobunken/ASNET/GJS Seminar Series

Knowledge is a Polyglot:

Japan and China in the Global Competition for Terminologies

Speaker: Thorsten J. Pattberg [裴德思]

Ph.D. / Visiting Fellow, IASA

Hundreds of Japanese loanwords comprising brands, ideas, and concepts -from sumo, bushido, and Zen, over kimono, origami, and sushi, to karaoke, koi, and kamikaze- have found their way into the English language. By comparison, Chinese loanwords in the English are still relatively few. Following the spirit of HANEDA Masashi's proposal for a 'New World History' this lecture will discuss how the Japanese language became a global application for transmitting Japan's originality and inventiveness in the world. We will contrast this with past German and English forceful 'language imperialism', how US-Anglophone publishers are still discriminating against Asian words [this is going to change], and how recent national movements such as Abe's 'Cool Japan!', Xi's 'Chinese Dream', and Modi's 'New India' all aim at creating a more diverse, authentic, and accurate history narrative. Capitalism has taught us to compete for natural resources, market shares, and human capital. But nations should also compete for their terminologies. The 21st Century is going to witness tens of thousands of non-Western words enriching the future global language.

Time: January 8, 2015 (Thu) 5:00-6:00 pm

Location: Lobby, Ground Floor,

Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, University of Tokyo

Language: English

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Contact: Global Japan Studies Network,
gjs@ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp