

In Taking Office as President

Ambassador NAKANE Takeshi, President of the JDZB

Introduction

I took office as president of the Japanese-German Center Berlin (JDZB) at the end of May this year. During my 42 years as a diplomat, until retiring in January 2016, I worked in Germany for a total of 12 years, and was involved with the JDZB in a variety of forms, including four years from 2012 as director during my residence as Ambassador to Germany. In the future I would like to be more directly involved in JDZB management, as well as contribute to raising JDZB's visibility with its stated goal of "supporting and deepening Japanese-German and international cooperation in the fields of science and culture". I ask all of you for your support and cooperation.

The International Situation Surrounding Japan and Germany

The current international environment is at its most unstable and uncertain since the end of the Cold War for a variety of reasons: 1) the decline in Western

diplomatic power, 2) the expansion of Chinese influence, 3) the increasing tendency to maximize interests based on military/economic power rather than international cooperation based on common values and 4) progressive destabilization in regions such as the Middle East and Northeast Asia.

It is particularly troubling that the "rules-based international order" that has been led by the Western Bloc, including Japan, has begun to decline. The US, having previously championed this ideology and guided the maintenance and strengthening of international norms and the economic system, has now adopted an "America First" policy under the TRUMP administration, ignores preexisting agreements and takes unilateral measures. Its withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), as well as imposing high, one-sided tariffs are striking examples of this. It also seems that the US denial of the Iran Nuclear

Deal and its adoption of an extreme pro-Israel stance have caused turmoil in the Middle East. These policies lack regional/global strategy and appear to be geared towards upcoming domestic mid-term elections. Regarding the denuclearization of North Korea, an issue that is extremely urgent to Japan, the first ever summit between the US and North Korea was held in June. KIM Jong Un's commitment to direct denuclearization should be recognized, but the details have yet to be clarified, and future negotiations must be closely observed.

In Europe, and in particular the EU, we also find instability in the previously held shared values of EU integration. The UK's decision to leave the EU is the starkest example, but also notable are the strengthening trends of populism and the prioritization of domestic affairs in many EU countries as a reaction to issues such as the refugee crisis and fiscal policy. However, it is exactly in such unstable



Junior Experts Exchange Program 2018: Japanese participants, former participants and organizers invited by Ambassador YAGI at the Embassy of Japan (Berlin) on 15 June 2018.

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and uncertain international conditions that cooperation between Japan and Germany, with shared values and policy objectives such as international cooperation, law, democracy, free trade, respect for human rights, and contribution to international harmony, is becoming ever more important.

The Future of Japanese-German Relations

When I was working at the Bonn embassy in the mid-1980s, I think the close ties between Japan and Germany were taken for granted. In Germany, Japan was seen as the most important nation in Asia, and Japan also had a deep interest in Germany. However, as China's economic influence began to grow and Germany's interest in Japan declined along with the expansion and integration of the EU, Japan's interest in the countries of the Asia Pacific increased, and its interest in Germany and Europe declined.

This was shown most starkly in the long absence of reciprocal visits: Japan's prime minister did not visit Germany for almost five years after 2009, and Chancellor Merkel did not visit Japan for almost seven years after 2008. Of course there were opportunities to hold talks at multilateral conferences such as the G8, G7, and G20 summits, but in order to strengthen bilateral relations, it is important that the top political actors visit the other country and take time to exchange opinions on a variety of subjects.

Luckily, since Prime Minister ABE Shinzō visited Germany in 2014, the reciprocal relationship has been revitalized, and there is a now a visit at least once a year. Consequently, cooperation is increasing in various fields, including security, environment/energy, science and technology as represented by Germany's Industry 4.0 and Japan's Society 5.0, and measures to deal with the demographic change. In addition, sister city relations and exchange between NGOs are active. In Germany, as well as an interest in traditional Japanese culture and cuisine, pop culture such as manga, anime, video games, and cosplay have

also become wildly popular among the youth, becoming an incentive for learning Japanese. Moreover, there is still a persistent interest in Germany among the Japanese.

A recent experience which gave me hope was the 100th anniversary of the first performance of Beethoven's 9th Symphony in Asia, held in Naruto City, Tokushima, in June. After the end of World War I, a German being held at the Bando POW camp in Naruto performed the 9th Symphony as a thank you for the kindness of the people of the area; this performance of the piece was the first not only in Japan, but in all of Asia. To commemorate this event, the city of Naruto has hosted a performance of the 9th Symphony with hundreds of singers from all over Japan every year since 1982, on the date of the first performance. On the 100th anniversary this year, four countries participated: Germany, Japan, China, and the US. Having participated in the chorus of 1,200 singers myself, what surprised me was that everyone was singing without sheet music. I do not know why Beethoven's 9th is so popular in Japan but believe that that this is one of the catalysts that has drawn the Japanese to Germany.

I hope that the JDZB continues to contribute to the maintenance and strengthening of the deeply rooted friendship between Japan and Germany that has been nurtured by this affinity, and I will give my utmost to bring Japan and Germany, as well as neighboring countries together, as the JDZB has been doing in its recent activities, to encourage communication and deepen the understanding of the many problems that face us in the modern world.



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Dear Readers!

Since the end of May, the Japanese-German Center Berlin (JDZB) has a new President, and since August, a new Secretary General. For this issue, our new President Ambassador NAKANE Takeshi penned the opening contribution as a first greeting to our readers. I would like to express renewed thanks to our previous President Professor SHINYO Takahiro for giving guidance to the JDZB in many respects over the past three years. Under our new President and new Secretary General Claudia SCHMITZ, all employees look forward to a new chapter of continuing the JDZB's mission and work.

There are many things to be reported in this issue. The German Association for Social Science Research on Japan was founded almost at the same time as the JDZB, and continues to be an important partner building bridges between Japanese Studies and the Social Sciences, and advancing its interdisciplinary research. Approaching the 30-year mark, we look forward to more fruitful work in the future.

The report on a symposium in Tōkyō about work-style reform and digitalization, as well as a report on a project within one of our youth exchange programs about the compatibility of career and housework tackle issues well known in both Germany and Japan. Both countries need to change in order to build a better society, especially to ensure that today's children, responsible for building the future, grow up safely.

On the last page of this issue, former Secretary General Dr. Friederike BOSSE, who stepped down from her position at the end of July, looks back on the past 12 years. I thankfully appreciate her important contributions during this period.

After the heatwaves of this summer, I hope everybody is ready to welcome the fall in good spirits.

KIYOTA Tokiko

Deputy Secretary General of the JDZB

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Published quarterly in March – June – Sept. – Dec.

Publisher:

Japanese-German Center Berlin (JDZB)

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Opinions expressed reflect the author's opinion and not necessarily the opinion of the publisher.

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The German Association for Social Science Research on Japan (VSJF) will hold its annual conference again at the JDZB from 23 to 25 November 2018. On this event that also celebrates the 30th anniversary of the VSJF, we interviewed the first Chair of the VSJF, Prof. Anke SCHERER (Cologne Business School).

Why was the VSJF established, and what are your tasks and objectives?

The global attention Japan attracted beyond Japanese Studies circles in the 1980s led many academics in social, political and economic sciences to study the country. (Young) academics met at seminars and conferences to help foster exchange between these different disciplines, they then decided to establish an Association to serve as a platform for all disciplines with an interest in Japan. This interdisciplinary approach was a unique feature of the Association, especially in the first decades of its existence. Over the past decade, we are witnessing a decreasing interest in the humanities for Japan, which is also reflected in the membership of the VSJF. Nevertheless, the VSJF sees itself as an open alliance that seeks to allow other research approaches that are used for other disciplines to become better known in Japanese studies, and conversely, to translate the findings of Japanese studies into other subjects. In the best case scenario, we bring together researchers from different disciplines through their common interest in Japan. Contributing to this is the ongoing involvement of Japan-related researchers living in Japan, for whom the VSJF can function as a network for international exchange.

What are the special features of the VSJF, why would you join as a member?

In general, it is worthwhile anyone joining the VSJF who has a long-term interest in Japan and its society, politics, economics and culture. In practice, these tend to be academics who regularly engage in research about Japan, but also students and doctoral candidates, journalists and professional whose work is strongly related to Japan. All members receive a Japan Annual Report, a journal which summarizes the most important developments of the year in Japan in article reviews. In addition, authors present results of their work in articles created in the so-called double-blind review process. Our annual

meetings held each year in autumn offer members not only the opportunity to present their own research and get to know more about what other academics are doing in similar areas, but they are also a great opportunity to deal with topics that members haven't come into much contact with in a concrete way. The eight specialist groups (Education and Training, History, Culture and Media, Politics, Sociology / Social Anthropology, Urban and Regional Planning & Research, Technology, Economics) that meet at the annual meetings offer junior scholars in particular the opportunity to present their work in the formative stage, engage in discussions and receive feedback.

For a few years now, the annual meeting of the German Association has been held in English, why?

The use of English at the VSJF's annual meetings has been quite controversial. To this day, there are various opinions on how useful it is for academics, who for the most part speak German as a first language, to hold a conference in English. Some rightly argue that it is important to cultivate German as a language of academia and that discussions of non-native speakers in English cannot achieve the quality and depth of native language exchanges. On the other hand, the use of English as a conference language allows the inclusion of all those who are not sufficiently fluent in German. It has also been proposed that – depending on the speaker – German, Japanese or English be chosen. However, this has proven to be less practical, since not all conference participants can sufficiently speak Japanese or German and meet the intended format of open discussions for all disciplines. So English is usually left as the lowest common denominator. In fact, however, it is up to the respective organizers of the annual conference to decide on the conference language; the specialist groups usually meet in German, and the Japan Annual Report



is deliberately a German-language specialist journal. The VSJF does not have a dogmatic approach, we are open to everything.

In November, the annual conference will again be held at the JDZB, the seventh time it has been hosted here. What's the overarching theme, which priorities have been set?

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the JDZB for the many years of great collaboration. This will be our 30th annual conference and its ideal that not only can we celebrate this anniversary ourselves, but we can celebrate it together with a reliable partner. The program of the conference will be presented by two colleagues of the Free University Berlin, Prof. Verena BLECHINGER-TALCOTT und Prof. Cornelia REIHER and their team. They have chosen the theme "Social Science Research and Society in Japan and Germany: Impact, Institutions and Perspectives". As befits an anniversary conference, we will be reviewing the history of Japanese social science research in the German-speaking world in the program, but above all we'll look at the present, where research funding is increasingly being determined via criteria of commercial or economic interest. The role of our disciplines for and in society and the relationship we, as researchers, have with other stakeholders in politics, the media, etc., shall be discussed. After all, we make a valuable contribution to the mutual understanding of Japan and Germany and must consider how we can continue to be relevant - we want to be able to celebrate our sixtieth anniversary in thirty years' time!

Symposium “Work Style Reforms, Digitization and Corporate Productivity in Japan and Germany”, 25 June 2018 at the Keidanren Kaikan, Tōkyō
Dr. Martin SCHULZ, Senior Research Fellow, Fujitsu Research Institute, Tōkyō

New digital platforms, better communication and robots should allow our rapidly aging societies to improve their sustainability. “Industry 4.0” in Germany and “Society 5.0” in Japan are therefore successful concepts. However, their implementation remains difficult, and concerns about overwork and job losses seem to be on the rise. How can traditional companies and their employees benefit from the new, digital styles of working and how can governments support this without loss of jobs? The JDZB and its partners from the Fujitsu Research Institute (FRI) and the Institute of German Business (IW Köln) brought together representatives of leading companies in Tōkyō to discuss.

SHIRAE Kimiko, General Manager of Diversity Management of the large Japanese trading firm Mitsui & Co, with 472 branches in 66 countries, clearly demonstrated that corporate boards can sustainably change corporate culture through diversification and innovation. The reforms carried out at Mitsui reach far beyond government goals to reduce overtime and strive for new modes of working by 2030, which should allow more women in particular to contribute innovations to the work environment. Mobile workplaces and telework have already had a positive impact on work-life balances, opportunities for learning and parenting.

Dr. Hubertus BARDT, the managing director of IW Köln, emphasized the close connection between digitization and labor market reforms. Labor market reforms, which started 15 years ago in Germany, remain controversial, while the digitization initiative “Industry 4.0” received a broad positive reception. “Labor 4.0” is about using effective digital practices to increase flexibility and productivity, even in traditional companies.

Dr. Martin SCHULZ from the FRI explained the close connection between successful digitization and the innovation capabilities of companies and their employees. Especially in smaller companies in Japan, digitization is lagging well behind what’s

possible. However, a FRI company analysis of Japan and Germany clearly revealed that the key to digital success can be quite “simple”: companies with user-friendly IT platforms were in the lead across virtually all areas. He outlined a number of examples of how this is already working today through the collaboration of digitization strategies, innovation and training.

OTA Keiichi, the Executive General Manager of the engineering department of the major Japanese-German machine tools company DMG MORI, confirmed the potential of work style reforms in a “traditional” digital enterprise. In a direct comparison of two plants in Japan and Germany, the introduction of “German” time efficiency models saved around 20% of working hours. This had a positive effect on employee motivation and innovation through less overtime and more holidays. Conversely, the transfer of Japanese design and production processes led to more cost efficiency in Germany. Now, both sides are working on innovations in implementing digital platforms.

TANAKA Yūko, Head of Corporate Planning at CrowdWorks, Japan’s leading crowd working company, showed that even Japan, after initial scepticism, has well and truly arrived in the “gig economy”. There are eleven million freelancers working mostly mobile and digitally. Since 2015 alone, this market has grown by a quarter to 20 trillion Yen. Since this growth in an otherwise stagnant Japanese labor market has mostly been due to increases in the employment of women with family commitments and older workers, the impact is very positive. CrowdWorks has become an

important partner of companies that would otherwise not be able to take on new tasks and projects.

Lutz BECK, the CIO of Daimler Trucks Asia, and ISHIZUKA Yasunari, the Executive Consultant for the public sector of FRI, showed how varied the “right” digitization strategies can be. At Daimler (Mitsubishi Fuso Truck and Bus), digital integration was a success because it focused on increasing the digital skills of its employees. Individualized IT training, English courses and future seminars in a modern work environment all played a major role.

Due to severe resource constraints, these options are lacking in the regional administrations of Japan. Overworked officials have even greater burdens dealing with newly introduced systems and can scarcely rely on support from experts. Here workplace reforms are important, mainly through outsourcing non-urgent and governmental activities. As a result, partners such as CrowdWorks and Freelancers can play an important role in digitization if the legal framework supports this sort of flexibility.

The closing discussions clarified how important the right incentives for changing working methods are for successful digitization. Companies win here when they share the potential efficiency gains through digitization with their employees. Career development training and better work-life balance play an important role. The government is sending important signals through work-style reforms in supporting workers through protecting flexible contracts and providing incentives for training. The “right” strategies seem to be very similar in Japan and Germany, but the implementation can be very different.



Family and Career: Increasing Incompatibility and its Effects – Case Studies from Japan and Germany

Stefani GÜNTHER, Psychologist and Participant of the German-Japanese Study Program for Specialists in Child and Youth Welfare 2018

May 15th is the International Day of the Family in Germany. To mark this occasion, we counsellors working in the Diakonisches Werk Hochrhein (charitable organization of Protestant churches within Germany) wrote an article titled “The Incompatibility of Family and Career – Diakonia calls for greater assistance for young families”. The article outlines our experiences in providing counselling services to young families. We work with families, providing care for pregnant women before and after birth, social welfare assistance and financial support, psychological counselling, and early development counselling for parents with children aged 0-3 years. The counselling assignments we receive are all different, but behind them we see a common theme of increasingly overburdened families struggling to reconcile the demands of work and caring for children, trying to meet social expectations and balancing housekeeping budgets, and reaching their limits. Families who are new to the area and lack the resources offered by extended family ties face an additional burden.

What sort of effects do a growing number of household chores and duties, and the resulting stress have on families? Partners often stop communicating with each other, in many cases marriage breaks down, relationships become fragile, psychological problems such as depression, anxiety and addiction increase, financial pressures grow. The victims are increasingly children and adolescents who see their parents overburdened and unable to provide guidance. This limits children’s development, leading to psychological problems and seeking role models in other adults, thereby increasing the danger of finding support and strength in radicalization.

On 15 May 2018, I was a member of this year’s specialist delegation of the two-week study program for specialists in child and youth services in Tōkyō. Under the heading “Acting for a Society of Youth”, we were given the opportunity to meet and lead discussions about welfare services and practical work, and the situation and experiences of young people with representatives from the Japanese Ministry of Education,

the National Institution for Youth Education and youth work specialists.

We visited a middle school (Daisan Sunamachi Junior High School), an infant (*Ai-iku-nyūjien*) and children’s home (*Kibōkan*), a mothers’ meeting place (NPO Biino-Biino) and Kawasaki City’s Kodomo Yume Park (pillars: open meeting, seat of the Kawasaki Children’s Council, adventure playground, free space for school-absent children and adolescents, counselling for parents) – to name but a few – giving us in-depth insights into the work with local children and adolescents. As part of the visit to a children’s counselling center with an adjacent home caring for vulnerable children and adolescents - corresponding to the Allgemeinen Sozialen Dienst des Jugendamtes (General Social Service of the Youth Welfare Office) in Germany – our discussions with the manager there crystallised our experiences.

We repeatedly learned that in Japan self-esteem of children and adolescents is low and that children are increasingly endangered – growing pressure on families increase aggression. The demographic change in Japan has also led to an increasing number of old people and a declining youth population. Women are joining the workforce in growing numbers. However, young families often relocating to the city for work no longer have their extended families available to provide help. Fathers see their duties unchanged and focus on their professional work.

Women are standing at the crossroads between fulfilling traditional roles and meeting the demands of modern society. They are supposed to work and raise a child to benefit society. Often they make the decision to place their child at an early age in care for many hours a day or not even have any children.

If we look at professional literature outlining the required conditions for children to develop positive self-esteem, we find the following recommendations: positive reflection (“shine in the eyes of adults”), support without expectation of certain results (unconditional love), letting go of expectations, no comparisons with other children, attentive listening, allowing mistakes to create a learning experience. How does this fit in with the expectations of a meritocracy, getting young people on the right track at an early age and preparing them for gainful employment?

Actually it doesn’t fit in at all, this is the problem and the difficulty of designing living conditions for children and adolescents. This also applies to Germany, although here the participation of fathers (parental leave, part-time model) is at least becoming more socially acceptable. Every society has to decide for itself how to prioritize and to rethink things. It is about nothing less than the future of a society and how much protection and support we give to families investing in this future.

I would like to finish with a quote from NISHINO Hiroyuki, Managing Director of the NPO Free Space Tamariba (bearer of the Yume Park): “It is not about pressing children and young people into existing structures, it’s about bringing the social and employment structures or frameworks closer to the lives of children and adolescents”.





The German STEM delegation at the Super Science High School Student Fair (SSF) from 7.-10. August in Kōbe.

Since 2012, German delegations made up of students who participated in the national final of “Jugend forscht”, visit the SSF in Japan every year, which is the Japanese equivalent of the competition.

The trip is organized by the JDZB and Gesamtmetall / STEM and financially supported by the foundation Jugend forscht and the Gesamtmetall Employers’ Association.

(Photo © MINT-EC)



Open House on 9 June: Whether inside (Bentō workshop with Debra SAMUELS, left) or outside (Japanese skills game Kendama, right), lots of Japanese culture was offered to try: Japanese board game Go, Shodō (calligraphy), workshop for drawing manga figures, introduction to Furoshiki cloth wrapping techniques, Ikebana (flower arranging), Japanese language taster courses, relaxation with Daishin Zen and exercises with KaQiLa and much more. The jazz evening performance of “Kyoto mon Amour” concluded the event.



Photo right: MIRRORS. German-Japanese Encounters – Members of the Junge Deutsche Philharmonie (Reimers Concert 2018) in concert with works by German and Japanese composers on 6 June 2018 at the JDZB: Julien FLORÉANI (Clarinet), Magdalena Cerezo FALCES (Piano) and Basile ORTH (Violoncello).

The Junge Deutsche Philharmonie was founded in 1974 by members of the Federal Youth Orchestra. Since then, the award-winning ensemble has been bringing together the best students from German-language music academies under renowned conductors and artistic advisors.



German-Japanese architectural dialog RADICAL MODERN_Berlin Avantgarde and its International Interactions

RADICAL MODERN_01: Lecture by the Japanese architect ISHIGAMI Junya on 31 May 2018 at the JDZB. Discussion with the Berlin architect Heike HANADA (Association of German Architects BDA, Berlin) on his approach to architecture and design.

RADICAL MODERN_02: Lecture by Prof. Jörg H. GLEITER (Professor of Architectural Theory, TU Berlin) on “Machinery, Villa Katsura, Acropolis – Bruno TAUT’s Original Architectural Fantasies” on 11 July 2018 at the JDZB, followed by a conversation with Heike HANADA.



CONFERENCES BY FOCAL AREAS

GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY

Symposium: Global Health II

C: Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva; National Center for Global Health and Medicine, Tōkyō
6 September 2018, in Tōkyō

Security Policy Workshop, Track 1.5

C: German Federal Foreign Office; Berlin; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tōkyō; The Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA), Tōkyō
29 October 2018

SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Symposium: Different Paths to the Mobility of the Future

C: Alumni Association of the German-Japanese Young Leaders Forum; Innovation Center for Mobility and Social Change, Berlin
7 September 2018

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

Symposium: Demographic Change in Germany and Japan

C: Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Berlin; Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare (MHLW), Tōkyō
3–4 December 2018

STATE, ECONOMY, GOVERNANCE

Conference: Internationalization of Japanese Companies Put to the Test

C: Free University Berlin; École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), Paris; Said Business School
20–21 September 2018

Symposium: Law and Politics

C: German-Japanese Association of Jurists, Hamburg; German Academic Exchange Service, Bonn and Tōkyō Office; Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Tōkyō Office
2 November 2018, in Tōkyō

Work Style Reform – How Can Women (and Men too) Shine? Gender Time Gap and Gender Equality in Japan and Germany

C: Tōkyō University; Düsseldorf University; Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Tōkyō Office; German Institute for Japanese Studies, Tōkyō
7 November 2018, in Tōkyō

Conference: Social Science Research and Society in Japan and Germany: Impact, Institutions and Perspectives

C: Free University Berlin; German Association for Social Science Research on Japan
23–25 November 2018

Symposium: 10 Years After the Lehman Crash

C: German Institute for Japanese Studies, Tōkyō; EHESS, Paris
14–15 December 2018, in Tōkyō

CULTURE AND CHANGE

German-Japanese Architects' Dialog III with the Architect KAIJIMA Momoyo

C: Association of German Architects, Berlin
Date: Autumn 2018

Symposium: 150 Years Meiji – The Function of the West for Social Change Processes

C: University of Halle-Wittenberg; Japan Foundation, Tōkyō
13–14 December 2018, in Halle

SPECIAL PROJECT

27th Japanese-German Forum

C: Japan Center for International Exchange, Tōkyō
18–19 October 2018

CULTURAL EVENTS

EXHIBITION

Exhibition “Distant Affinities” with works by Wojtek SKOWRON, YAMAMOTO Akihiro and CHIBA Yūdai

Opening: 5 September, on display 6 September until 2 November 2018

Exhibition “Japan’s Masterpieces of Wooden Architecture” Photographs by FUJITSUKA Mitsumasa

C: Japanese Cultural Institute Cologne (The Japan Foundation), Berlin University of the Arts (UdK), designtransfer
Opening: 29 November 2018, 7 pm
On display 30 Nov. 2018 until 1 Feb. 2019

Talk with Photographer FUJITSUKA et al on the occasion of the opening of the exhibition “Snap On – Rapid and Light Wood Construction” by students from an UdK architecture course

C: Berlin University of the Arts UdK
Venue: UdK (designtransfer, Einsteinufer 43)
30 November 2018, 6 pm
On display 3–7 December 2018

CONCERT

“The Power of Voice” Dramatic Jōruri Singing from the Japanese Bunraku Theater

C: Japanese Cultural Institute Cologne (The Japan Foundation); Agency for Cultural Affairs, Tōkyō
5 October 2018, 7 pm

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EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

- Junior Experts Exchange Program
- German-Japanese Young Leaders Forum
- Youth Group Leaders Exchange Program
- Study Program for Youth Work Specialists
- Exchange Program for Young Employees
- JDZB SCIENCEYOUTH PROGRAM

For details of the programs, please refer to: <http://www.jdzb.de> --> Exchange Programs

Opening hours of exhibitions

Monday to Thursday 10 am to 5 pm, Friday 10 am to 3.30 pm

Registration for the concerts opens close to the date

C: = in cooperation with

Venue: JDZB, if not stated otherwise

For more information please refer to: <http://www.jdzb.de> --> Activities

For information on JDZB language courses please refer to: <http://www.jdzb.de> --> Japanese Courses

German-Japanese Relations Cannot be Taken for Granted

When the Japanese-German Center Berlin (Japanisch-Deutsches Zentrum Berlin, JDZB) was founded in 1985, German-Japanese relations were the focus of attention: In particular, Japan's successful economic development was much admired and there was a strong desire for the two countries to work together more closely. In the 1990s, this special attention faded in comparison to German unification, the end of the Soviet Union, the rise of China and increasing globalization, and gave way to a positive normality – from both sides. In numerous bilateral and multilateral forums, Japan and Germany worked together naturally and constructively, and could rely on a broad foundation of established commitment, respect and appreciation as well as understanding of needs. And just as the economy was an object of fascination in the 1980s, today Japanese (pop) culture is the focus of attention.

Nevertheless, despite this fundamental commitment and the oft-cited close partnership of shared values, German-Japanese relations cannot be taken for granted.

Each country has its own interests and priorities which are a consequence of the political situation in each respective region, domestic policies, economic competition and other factors. Lack of knowledge and understanding of conditions in the other country, the policies and decision-making processes and the culture (of debate) sometimes leads to irritations as well as different assessments and strategies (for example nuclear power). Even direct communication is not always straightforward, discussions can seem circuitous, while others seem critical or naive (for example



Participants of the 12th Young Leaders Forum 2017 in Tōkyō

and Japan on the other hand that leads to good results. Prerequisites are that relevant topics are taken up and dealt with, exchanges are not just one-offs and a common foundation can emerge, and that there is fundamental openness.

These sorts of experiences are made possible by all partners of the JDZB: the specialists in youth work as well as the ministry officials and young researchers, the young leaders or politicians who are unable to solve trade issues on their own. Both countries should make greater use of each other's resources to better meet their own challenges. And they should make greater use of the JDZB, because the JDZB's work is aimed at sustainability and leads to new impulses for both sides.

Dr. Friederike Bosse

Secretary General of the JDZB from August 2006 to July 2018



Former Chancellor Helmut SCHMIDT (†) holds the ceremonial address on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the JDZB in October 2010

dealing with China).

Moreover, in today's globalized world, scientists, politicians, and entrepreneurs alike have the choice to enter into discussions and do business with the United States, France, China, India, and other countries, and they certainly have good reasons to consider these other countries.

To ensure that we don't just rely on old connections, the JDZB has engaged new, younger stakeholders and those active in German-Japanese relations, and initiated new projects. The JDZB has created fora where they can participate and experience meaningful exchanges, be they in the field of care services or in young leaders' networks. By looking from the outside in, they develop new approaches and solutions for their own work. Ideas for new research projects develop or are confirmed in previous approaches. And although this applies in principle to intercultural exchange of all kinds, it is precisely the combination of similarities in structures and key challenges (order based on rules, demographic change, digital transformation etc.) on the one hand, and the differences in processes and approaches in the case of Germany



The members of the JDZB Foundation Council after the 33rd meeting in Tōkyō in November 2017