

Asienwissenschaften

Japanese and Asian Studies in Germany *)

The activities of the institutions concerned with Japan range from studies of Japanese language and culture through general studies of contemporary Japan to providing short-term results for immediate practical use. After some general points on the situation of Asian studies at German universities, I will briefly report on the research areas and major projects pursued by Japanese and Asian studies research institutes.

The July 1994 issue of *ASIEN* reprinted the contribution of Prof. Bernhard Dahm held at the occasion of the inauguration of the International Institute of Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden on Oct. 13, 1993. His title was "Asian Studies in Europe with special emphasis on the state-of-the art in Germany". There, Prof. Dahm pointed out some characteristics of Asian studies in Germany:

1. Asian Studies in Germany are not concentrated in one or two centers, but are distributed over more than 30 universities in all the German States.
2. Asian Studies are not systematically coordinated by something like a national institute, though the academic institutes and societies, especially the German Association for Asian Studies (DGA), help to monitor activities.
3. There is a gradual shift in emphasis in Asian Studies from a language-studies approach concentrating on linguistics and philology toward the study of contemporary Asia with a regional studies approach. The formal curricula, however, have not yet been revised from the classical program.
4. Probably due to Japan's status as an industrial superpower, Japanologists have found it necessary to move more rapidly in the direction of contemporary regional studies than their colleagues studying other regions. One of the first to orient their Japanese studies toward social sciences was the Berlin Free University.
5. For the same reasons, the number of students in Asian studies suddenly tripled during the Eighties. The formerly small, ivory-tower departments have begun to respond, though a few chairs for modern Japanology have still to be filled. In some places new Japanese Studies Centers were set up, such as in Koblenz, Herdecke, Hagen and in the East German Halle and Jena.

I would like to add a few more observations:

6. In the last five or ten years, the continuously increasing importance of the East Asian region has also inspired other faculties to offer lectures and courses about Asia or specific Asian countries. The German Association for Asian Studies (DGA) uses its questionnaire to continuously report on relevant activities of the departments of social studies, economics, politics, geography and others as far as possible.
7. At colleges and universities in Bremen, Halle, Duisburg and Marburg, the social sciences departments have expanded their range to Japanese and

- Asian studies. They now offer courses of study leading to a degree in business studies including knowledge of the Asian region. At Berlin Free University, Japanese studies are oriented toward social sciences, concentrating on contemporary politics and economics. The Düsseldorf, Tübingen and Ludwigshafen universities also offer special qualification courses for social scientists.
8. Several Asian Study Departments have chosen to concentrate on issues of management and technology. In particular, the Institute of East Asian Studies' Academy of Science and Technology at the University of Duisburg has been formed to arrange transfers of scientific and technical expertise. In Duisburg, there is also the Research Center for Developments in Science and Technology in Japan and the Pacific Region (FJP), coordinating interdisciplinary studies. The University of Marburg's Japan Study Center also provides services to business and academic users, such as database searches and information on subjects such as corporate data, laws and decisions, marketing information, doctoral dissertations etc. Munich has set up a separate Japan Studies Center independent of its Japanology Department.
 9. There seems to be a perception gap between the business world and the policymakers one side, and the academic study centers on the other, concerning the uses of expertise on Japan and East Asia. Not only academic institutions but also commercial providers of Japan information agree that they must increase their efforts to show the importance of the region, and of good data as well as capable analysis.
 10. In accordance with the developments listed above, the dialogue between the Asia experts and the public will have to be intensified. This is not only necessary in order to improve the working conditions for Asian research and to increase the number of people involved in Asian studies, but also to create job opportunities for the graduates. Certainly this challenge will be similar for all European countries.
- *) Excerpts from paper, presented to the Colloquium "The Acquisition of Knowledge about Japan and East Asia and its Transfer in Europe" at JDZB Berlin, November 3, 1995

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