

REZENSIONEN

Claudia Derichs, Susanne Kreitz-Sandberg (eds.): Gender Dynamics and Globalisation. Perspectives on Japan within Asia

Gender Diskussion Band 6, Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2007, 194 S., EUR 29,90

This multifaceted book is roughly divided into two sections: "Concepts of Gender and Gendered Identities" and "Actors within Gendered Spaces of Society." This structure is based on the central arguments of the contributions, namely whether these arguments are concept or actor-oriented. In her introduction, Claudia Derichs reiterates the "importance of integrating gender as an analytical category into social scientific research" and stresses the new approach of the editors: "giving space to male- and female-dominated terrains of Japanese society [...] which still lack a gender-sensitive explanation" (p. 7). The introduction is followed by Ilse Lenz's lucid overview of how the concept of gender evolved in modern Japanese society and recent scholarship. Based on the premise that "gender has been a key paradigm (Osawa 2003:7) for structuring modern Japanese society" (p.11), Lenz elaborates on the dimensions of gender as a concept, such as gender serving as an organizational principle of classification and knowledge or an organizational principle of power relations and the division of labor. Lenz makes a case for using gender as a category to analyze modernization in Japan and explains at which stages of modernization a "national hegemonic gender order" is formed, how it evolves and ultimately erodes along three distinct stages of modernization: civil national modernization, organized national modernization, and modernization's reflexive stage of individualization and globalization. The other two articles in this

concept-centered first section are Michiko Mae's contribution "From Culturality to Transculturality: The Paradigm Shift in Cultural and Gender Studies" and Annette Schad-Seifert's article on "Dynamics of Masculinity in Japan – Comparative Perspectives on Men's Studies." Michiko Mae uses the example of the "1999 Basic Law for a Gender-equal Society" to illustrate the social discourse and legislative process with regard to gender and the controversial debates about the "gender-free concept." Mae develops the connection between culturality (the "self-centered concept of culture" (p. 27)) and gender in modern Japan and the "symbolic function of women as representatives and carriers of national and cultural identity" (p. 28). She argues that just as the gender order was influenced by culturality, the "gender-free concept points in the direction of cross-border transculturality" (p. 29) by helping to overcome cultural constructs like national gender orders. Schad-Seifert, in contrast, elaborates on Japanese men's studies and the dynamics of male gender identity in Japan, including the impact of the Men's Liberation Movement in Japan, the treatment of Men's studies in the Japanese mass media, and the peculiarities of the "Company Man" Discourse" (p. 39ff.).

The second part of the book, "Actors within gendered spaces of society," deals with the individual's perspective on and relationship to gender in Japanese society. Hiromi Tanaka and Mihee Hong analyze and compare the implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in Japan and South Korea. Maria Sachiko Baier investigates the impact of globalization on female labor (activism), using the Working Women's International Network in Osaka as a case in point. Ulrike Wöhr analyzes the

discourse on the divisive issue of Japanese comfort women and its implications for feminist politics and historiography. Wöhrl points to the peculiarities "arising in discourses which cross the historical boundaries drawn by imperialism and colonialism" (p. 109). She concludes that the "problem lies in the generalization of concrete historical cases into an abstract concept of sexual violence, which obscures more specific mechanisms and categories of discrimination like, for instance, that of ethnicity" (p. 117). Wolfram Manzenreiter, in his article on "Physical Education and the Curriculum of Gender Reproduction," exposes how "physical education classes [...] continue to be at the core of an ideological programme reinforcing the dominant gender order" (p. 123). Manzenreiter shows how "institutional, organizational, ideological, transcultural and corporeal currents" (p. 124) contribute to the (re)production of body regimes and proves that gender hierarchy is "most pervasively performed in school sports everyday life." (p. 140) Susanne Kreitz-Sandberg's article on "Gender and Education: Perspectives on Schooling in Japan and Comparisons from the Philippines" is concerned with gender in schools and provides a comparative secondary analysis of two studies of gender practices in primary schools in Japan and the Philippines. With an equally transnational approach Hilaria Gössmann analyzes "the construction of Korean characters in Japanese TV dramas" (p. 167), picking up on the notions of gender and ethnicity, as Wöhrl did earlier in the volume. In her conclusion, Susanne Kreitz-Sandberg emphasizes the relevance of gender as a unifying perspective for researchers from various disciplines and discusses how this perspective can improve our understanding of Japan within the Asian context and Japanese modernization and globalization.

It is difficult to do justice to each contribution in an edited volume such as this one. While all chapters are innovative in approach, this reviewer finds that the contributions by Ulrike Wöhrl, Susanne Kreitz-

Sandberg, and Hilaria Gössmann stand out for their distinctly transnational approach and their highlighting the issue of ethnicity and the inherent dynamics of gender in the Asian context.

Karin-Irene Eiermann

Judith Schlehe, Boike Rehbein (Hg.): Religion und die Modernität von Traditionen in Asien. Neufigurationen von Götter-, Geister- und Menschenwelten

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Der aus einer Ringvorlesung des Lehr- und Forschungsverbundes Asienwissenschaften an der Universität Freiburg hervorgegangene Band setzt sich das Ziel, einen empirischen Beitrag zur aktuellen sozial- und kulturwissenschaftlichen Debatte um die multiplen, verwobenen und ungleichen Modernen und die damit gelegentlich verbundene Behauptung einer Rückkehr der Religionen zu leisten. Dies geschieht aus der Sicht verschiedener Disziplinen und anhand ausgewählter asiatischer Länder.

Den theoretischen Rahmen des Themas formuliert der Freiburger Religionshistoriker Bernhard Uhde, der die abendländisch geprägten Begriffe „Tradition“ und „Moderne“ auf ihre kulturelle Übertragbarkeit hin hinterfragt. Er kommt in seiner vor allem auf die polytheistische Glaubenswelt Indiens eingehenden Analyse zu dem Schluss, dass die uns gewohnte dichotome Denk- und Begriffswelt, die auch eine temporale Folge von Tradition und Moderne impliziert, auf Asien so nicht übertragbar sei. Hier sei dagegen stärker eine Gleichzeitigkeit von Tradition und Moderne als „korrelationale“ Wechselwirkung zu finden. Genau darin sieht Uhde das Potential des asiatischen Ansatzes, der den scheinbaren Gegensatz zu einem Unterschied reduziere und dadurch Konflikte minimiere (S.31).