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Does Japan matter? – Introduction

Does Japan Matter? The End of Models and the Task of Learning

A Howl from a Lone Wolf

Who Needs Japan Anyway?

Future Visions

Scientific Upswing with Economic Decline: Research on Japan in Germany

Is It 'Japan' That Really Matters?

The Matters that Matter – Concluding Discussion

**THEME:
Does Japan Matter?**

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THEME: DOES JAPAN MATTER?

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The first Nordic NIAS Council (NCC) meeting took place at NIAS, on 4 March (see inset on opposite page)

The 'new' NIAS takes off

From January 2005, the formal ownership of NIAS was transferred to a new partnership, which consists of Copenhagen Business School and the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, Lund University in Sweden, and the Nordic NIAS Council (NNC – see inset).

The new partnership has agreed that NIAS should continue as an academically independent Nordic institute. The Nordic responsibility is written into a contract with the Nordic Council of Ministers, the previous owner, which will continue to provide financing to NIAS together with the new partners.

The 'new' NIAS will continue to be a hub for Asian studies in the Nordic region with a range of activities and services that will support the development of Asian studies and work to enhance the visibility and relevance of the field. The aim of the new partnership is to create both synergy and better coordination of activities within the field of Asian studies. NIAS will add value to existing activities through collaboration within and across the relevant disciplines in the social sciences, business studies, humanities, law and the technical and natural sciences. The partnership should contribute to the growth of Asian studies in the Nordic region.

The 'new' NIAS will coordinate an initiative to establish a Nordic networked research school, *The Asian Century Research School*. NIAS will also expand the NIAS SUPRA Programme for Nordic Master and PhD students.

The 'new' NIAS will tailor-make research-based information services to the needs of the users of NIAS LINC. We will also develop more comprehensive services for students under NIAS SUPRA.

In essence, the 'new' NIAS will strive to make the Asian region even more interesting and attractive to work with for researchers and students in the Nordic region. NIAS will also strive to make Asian studies more visible in the business community that deals with Asia.

The new ownership also brings us a new name: *NIAS – Nordic Institute of Asian Studies*. Some may want to ask: What is the difference? Subtle as it is, the acronym 'NIAS' has been brought to the front, because we believe that NIAS has become a brand name. Otherwise, the name is the same and we continue to do much of the same, while all the time striving to bring it into tune with the most recent developments in Asian studies.

NIAS is striving to be a modern research institute that has a breadth and depth of research and other services, activities and outputs in a combination which is unique in the Nordic countries. NIAS represents considerable historical and current investments that have produced unique results and assets. The 'new' NIAS will continue to build on these assets, activities and services in the future. Fundamentally, *Asian Insights* are what we want to achieve and communicate.



Jørgen Delman

Does Japan matter?

Why ask such a question? This is exactly what a group of young Nordic researchers did last year. They saw that Japan studies were declining in popularity, that the field was shifting focus, and that job opportunities were bleak. They wanted to create a debate on the issues and to point to the need for future investments in the field.

NIAS supported their workshop and we agreed to depart from the normal practice of *NIAS Nytt – Asia Insights* with thematic issues and publish a special issue to discuss the state of affairs in the field of Japan studies. We thought that, once in a while, it would be important to look at ourselves and what we do, and how we can do it better.

The theme here is a result of the efforts of this group of young researchers. We have provided them with a platform to discuss their views and stimulate debate. The guest editors and the individual contributors assert their ownership of the information and opinions presented under the theme. They should by no means be seen as reflecting the official views or policy of the institute. Readers may agree or disagree with these opinions, but NIAS supports that they are aired and discussed thoroughly within the institutions dealing with Japan as well as by individual researchers and students.

Enjoy your reading!

The aims of the Nordic NIAS Council (NNC) are:

- To establish an association that will cooperate through NIAS to develop Asian studies, i.e. research and education at the highest levels, in the Nordic region.
- To promote synergy in the activities of the members of the NNC and NIAS.
- To support NIAS in being a window for Nordic activities on Asia within the field of Asian studies.
- To ensure that NIAS maintains a Nordic mandate based on cross-disciplinary studies with a focus on the political, economic, business, cultural, and social transformations in modern Asia in their wider context and in a historical perspective.

The NNC is involved in the day-to-day operations of NIAS through membership of the NIAS Board. The NNC was founded at NIAS on 4 March 2005. The current NNC members can be seen on www.nias.dk

The Founding Partners of the 'New' NIAS



LUND
UNIVERSITY



Professor **Roger Greatrex**,
Director, Centre for East
and South-East Asian
Studies, Lund University

Deputy Chairman of the
NIAS Board

Lund University

Today, with its more than 42,000 students, a broad research programme and extensive international co-operation, **Lund University** is the largest unit for education and research in Scandinavia. International activity is a significant component in the university's profile, and over the years co-operation with hundreds of universities throughout the world has been established. Further expansion of contacts with universities worldwide is stated in the university's international strategy for the years to come. This applies both to internationally renowned centres of excellence and to universities in developing countries. One of the regions of highest priority for future co-operation is East and South-East Asia.

In 1997, Lund University was granted the five-year EU mission of being the residence of the European Project Management Office of the Sino-European co-operation programme "EU-China Higher Education Co-operation Programme". The programme involved a number of universities and its aim was to spread knowledge of the European Union and its member states throughout China. The fact that the mission was granted to Lund was a token of the university's long tradition of co-operation with Asia, a tradition that has been substantially vitalised during the nineties and the beginning of this century. The result is manifested in a number of endeavours and activities focused towards East and South-East Asia – from comprehensive international co-operations involving a number of universities worldwide to various long-term commitments, general agreements with partner universities and a large number of co-operations at the faculty level.

The revitalisation of activities aimed towards Asia is the direct result of Lund University's 1996 decision on a distinct Asia Strategy. This embraces, as its main goal, to further intensify research and education on East and South-East Asia and to expand contacts with universities within the region. Since the strategy was approved, a national Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies has been established in Lund, an international masters programme has been started and undergraduate education on Asia has significantly increased. The venture has also entailed increased research co-operation as well as student and staff exchange with a number of prominent universities in Asia.

The centre has, since 1997, conducted research, spread information, and managed development efforts and education focused on the region – mainly in the areas of Economy and the Humanities. The centre also functions as a national co-ordinator of common resources and has become an important factor in the contact work with East and South-East Asia.

SASNET is a Swedish network for research, education, and information about South Asia. The network is open to all disciplines. Priority is given to co-operation between disciplines and across faculties, as well as between institutions in the Nordic countries and in South Asia. SASNET is financed by Sida and Lund University. A network root node is based at Lund University and is operating an Internet gateway for South Asian studies. The root node also initiates, stimulates, and supports South Asian studies at

This three-semester masters programme was launched in the academic year 1998/99 and focuses on the rapid development of Asian societies. The programme especially takes a multidisciplinary view of the large questions the region is exposed to, and covers areas such as economic development, social change, and migration and urbanisation problems. The existence of the programme means that growing numbers of scientists and students will, in future, focus on Asia.

Lund University has general agreements with a number of the most prominent universities in Asia.

The University of Copenhagen

The University of Copenhagen was founded in 1479 and is the principal institution of research and education in Denmark both in terms of quantity and quality. The objectives of the University are to conduct research of the highest quality, to offer research-based education programmes of the highest academic excellence, and to disseminate new and classical knowledge to academic environments as well as society in general.

Researchers at the University have numerous professional contacts with colleagues within Denmark as well as with universities and research institutions all over the world, thus ensuring an international research environment. The results of the research are conveyed to the community at large by means of scholarly journals and books and through teaching carried out at the University.

The University employs approximately 2,500 full-time and part-time researchers as well as about 2,300 administrative staff members. Furthermore, about 32,000 students are enrolled on the University. The University consists of six faculties - the Faculties of Theology, Law, Social Sciences, Health Sciences, Humanities, and Science, offering three-year Bachelor's degrees, two-year Master's degrees and three-year Ph.D. degrees.

Almost all faculties are involved in research in Asian studies. At the Faculty of Humanities, the Carsten Niebuhr Institute and the Department of Asian studies (who were recently united to form a new department of Asian and cross-cultural studies) undertake the faculty's research in Asian studies. At the Faculty of Social Sciences, particularly the Departments of Anthropology and Economics carry out research in Asia (Vietnam in particular), but also the Department of Political Science have participated in East Asian studies. At the Faculties of Science and Health Sciences, research in Asian studies is carried out at the Institute of Geography and at the Centre for International Health & Development.

In the future it is expected that NIAS will inspire even more research projects at the University of Copenhagen and enhance the cooperation between the involved universities and Nordic Nias Council.



Dean **Tage Bild**, Faculty of Social Sciences, the University of Copenhagen
Chairman of the NIAS Board

Copenhagen Business School

Copenhagen Business School (CBS) was established in 1917 and is one of the largest institutions of higher education and research at university level in Denmark and is among the largest business schools in Europe. The strategic goals of CBS are: internationalization and a distinct international profile, intensified partnership with the business community and being a Learning University.

CBS offers Denmark's most comprehensive range of academic degrees in business economics and modern languages for international communication. Of the wide range of study programmes at the undergraduate, graduate, Ph.D. and executive masters levels about half are conducted in English.

CBS employs approximately 380 full-time and 1,100 part-time academic staff as well as about 500 administrative staff members. Furthermore, about 15,000 students are enrolled at CBS. CBS has exchange and cooperation agreements with more than 300 universities and business schools around the world and has about 1,000 exchange students each year.

Research related to Asia takes place in many departments and centres at CBS. In 1995 the Asia Research Centre (ARC) was formed in order to further promote Asian studies at CBS. ARC has a dual focus: international corporate strategy and management in Asia, and current social, economic and political developments in the region. ARC also publishes the international peer-reviewed journal *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies*. CBS also hosts the Asian Studies Programme (ASP) which offers specialized studies in Chinese and Japanese economy, culture and language for both the bachelor's and master's degree. In cooperation with the Asia House Foundation, the Asia Business Forum was established in 2002. The forum consists of a continuous, clubbased series of seminars and meetings for executives from Danish companies and organizations with business interests in Asia.

CBS sees clear synergy effects in the partnership of the cooperating universities and NIAS. This has the potential of creating a critical mass of Asian expertise in the Øresund region, which is bound to stimulate the study of Asian affairs in the Nordic countries.



Copenhagen Business School
HANDELSHØJSKOLEN



Professor **Kjeld Erik Brødsgaard**, Director, Asia Research Centre, Copenhagen Business School



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Does Japan matter? – Introduction

By Staffan Appelgren, Martin Flyxe, Linus Hagström and Pia Moberg (NAJS Steering Committee)

Being the second largest economy in the world, Japan has a hold on many markets. Its popular culture gains headway all over Asia and in other parts of the world, moulding the aesthetic sense of coming generations. The country's geographic position in the Pacific Ocean makes it a crucial pawn in the Asian geopolitical game. And yet, during the last decade, research on modern Japan has started to languish in the Nordic countries.

According to Professor Roger Greatrex, 'Social sciences-oriented research in Sweden concerning contemporary Japanese society is very weak...' Regarding the Danish situation, Professor Brian Moeran says that '...there are one or two individual researchers who do work of a reasonable standard...'. Professor Rein Raud points out that in Finland 'the main stress in academic activities related to Japanese society is still on teaching'.

The focal point in this issue of *NIASnytt – Asia Insights* is to sound the Nordic academia out. What is the status of Japanese studies in our institutions of higher education, and to what extent do research councils only reward the latest trends? Will future generations get the

necessary institutional and financial support, to produce internationally competitive research? What have Japanese studies to gain if they stop treating Japanese society as a special case and how can the colonial legacy of regional studies be dealt with in a constructive manner?

Undergraduate students, Ph.D. candidates and young researchers focusing on modern Japan are scattered both geographically and thematically in the Nordic countries. Nevertheless, there is a young generation of researchers that actively seek to establish a common platform, a well functioning network and fora for co-operation. We established The Nordic Association for the Study of Contemporary Japanese Society (NAJS) in 2002 with this aim in mind.

With funding from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), NAJS organised a colloquium in Göteborg, Sweden, in April 2004, where over the course of a day and a half, eleven young scholars from the Nordic countries and Japan intensely debated whether 'Japan matters'. The complexity of the question became obvious during the vivid discussions, and it spurred us to pursue this special issue. The

First NAJS Conference was held right after the colloquium, with participants from all Nordic countries, Estonia, Germany and Japan. The Second NAJS Conference will be convened at NIAS in Copenhagen, on April 28–30 2005.

The writers in this issue were all participants in the first conference. Their articles provide a number perspectives by young scholars – personal and partial – on the state of research on modern Japanese society in Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Germany and Japan. Also, to enrichen the argument, we are proud to present the visions of leading figures in Japanese (or Asian) studies in a Nordic context. The discussion is concluded by stating what we believe are the most crucial aspects of Japanese studies in the Nordic countries today, and by giving our visions for the future.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank NIAS for giving us this chance to express our thoughts, to our colleagues who invested their precious time and energy in writing the articles and to senior scholars for sharing their thoughts on the state of Japanese studies in their replies to the questionnaire. ■



Pia Moberg is researcher at the Centre for Asian Studies, Göteborg University. In 2002 she got her Ph.D. in Japanese studies at the Department of Oriental Languages, Göteborg University. Her field of research is rhetoric and political communication.

Relevant bibliographical material concerning the present theme is available at:

http://www.niaslinc.dk/gateway_to_asia/Asia_insights/japan.asp

Does Japan Matter? The End of Models and the Task of Learning

By Carl Cassegård

The background to the question 'Does Japan matter?' is obviously the trend towards 'Japan passing' that has accompanied the country's economic crisis since the early 1990s. Since, however, the question can mean several things depending on the context and to whom it is directed, it will be useful to consider it from three vantage points.

Firstly, a country can 'matter' in a scholarly sense, for instance with regard to economic or cultural theory. It has long been common to claim that Japan merits special theoretical attention since it represents a special or even unique path of 'modernization'. As neo-liberal globalisation sweeps over Japan, however, it may appear that the country is getting more similar to 'us' and therefore deserves less study. This standpoint may be labelled a variant of Francis Fukuyama's infamous thesis of the 'end of history', only this time applied to the failure of the Japanese 'model' rather than to a Soviet-style planned economy. However, globalisation is always a 'glocalisation'. In other words, global influences are always shaped through an interaction with local factors. Japan is not 'as us' – and not only because strictly speaking there is no homogeneous 'us' in the first place – but also because its historical experiences still shape its response to globalisation in a unique way.

Why indifference makes Japan interesting

This is precisely the point made by the Japanese critic and philosopher Karatani Kojin in a lecture with the provocative title 'Japan is interesting because Japan is not interesting' (1997). Although Japan's economic crisis has made it less 'interesting' to many foreign observers, he hails the intrusion of global capitalism as a liberation, which has allowed alternative

hidden traditions (such as Japanese Marxist studies) to spring to light. Karatani foregrounds this argument precisely with the fact that globalisation does not shape the world into a uniform system. Instead it creates new conflicts, in which 'hidden' traditions may be brought to life and mobilised. Although Japan may have become less interesting as a privileged, self-contained cultural space into which various theories of cultural or national 'essence' can be projected, it can safely be predicted that the specific shape of Japanese glocalisation will gain in interest as an object of study.

Secondly, a country can 'matter' in the sense that it is a powerful actor, which must be reckoned with by policy makers because of its ability to influence its environment. To be sure, Japan's economic slowdown has made it less appealing as a model to emulate. Nevertheless, the abandonment of the once successful 'Japanese model' may paradoxically inspire the country to become more active in other areas (politically, militarily, scientifically and artistically), where its influence on the surrounding world, including Europe and the Nordic countries, will grow. As Japan re-orientates and tries out new roles in the world, it will be more imperative than ever for the world to monitor it closely, not least because Japan, despite the talk of crisis, remains immensely economically powerful (cf. Stockwin 2003).

Thirdly, a country can 'matter' to the general public in the sense that it arouses general interest, for instance because of its appealing 'image' or stimulating cultural output. Here a significant trend is the global spread of Japanese popular culture. In an influential article, Douglas McGray has coined the term 'Japan's Gross National Cool', arguing that Japan's pop-culture is taking the world by storm (McGray 2002). The debate triggered by this article is instructive. What is interesting is the eagerness with which conservative and nationalist intellectuals have welcomed the talk of 'Cool Japan'. McGray's concept was happily appropriated by a nationalistic discourse within Japan in which the 'coolness' of Japanese culture was explicitly considered in terms of power, as a kind of diplomatic resource (cf. Aoki 2004). The debate on Japan's national cool is interesting not least because of the way in which it demonstrates how the worldwide appeal of Japan's pop-culture is related to national identity and politics. It brings us face to face with a non-traditional sort of nationalism, which dispenses with the traditional icons. The philosopher Asada Akira describes this nationalism as a 'return to J' (*J kaiki*), in which the letter 'J' stands for 'Japan' in terms such as 'J-Pop' or 'J-League'. The cause of this 'return', he argues, is the recession of the 1990s and the growing resentment against global capitalism (Asada 2000). Whether Asada is



Carl Cassegård (PhD, Lund and Kyoto) is a research associate at the Department of Oriental and African Languages at Göteborg University. His PhD thesis, 'Shock and Naturalization', was mainly written during a five-year stay at Kyoto University and deals with the experience of modernity in Japan. He has taught sociology at the universities of Kalmar and Kristianstad and is presently engaged in research about social movements and the effects of the recession during the 90s in Japan.

right or not, it can be safely said that pop-culture too is an arena in which the specific dynamics of 'glocalisation' are played out in a fashion which merits close study.

From model to dynamics

The three points discussed above all relate to changes rather than to continuity. The reason why Japan 'matters' today – theoretically, politically and culturally – seems to derive primarily from its present *dynamics*, rather than from the persistence of any 'model' or static cultural characteristics.

These dynamics are clearly related to what we have called 'glocalisation'. Whether we look at Japan as an object of study, as a political actor or as a source of cultural inspiration, we shall find that Japan will appear most 'interesting', to use Karatani's words. Even if Japan is no longer interesting as a model, it is interesting as a process.

Unlike a model, a process is inherently many-sided and difficult to grasp from the standpoint of one discipline alone. For instance, the way responses to globalization are shaped in different contexts is never determined solely by economic or political factors, but is also often crucially mediated by culture and identity. In order to capture the dynamics of 'glocalisation' Japan clearly needs to be studied from the standpoint of various disciplines: society, history and culture (including literature and art), as well as economics and political science.

The future of Japanese studies in Sweden

Is it possible to draw any conclusions from our considerations so far in the form of any recommendations or perhaps even 'visions' about the future of Japanese studies in Sweden? Is it possible to say, for instance, that all researchers should turn from models to processes? Or that all such research must be interdisciplinary? Hardly, since the question why Japan 'matters'

must ultimately be answered by the researchers themselves – although perhaps paradoxically the very rejection of visions and grant recommendations can be said to yield, on closer inspection, one possible 'vision' – namely the encouragement of the greatest possible variety of approaches to researching Japan. Perhaps it is indeed only in the tolerance for odd ideas and eccentric suggestions that we can find the flexibility and wideness of scope that will help us grasp the complexity of the processes that are unfolding before us. Research probably benefits less from any preconceived ideas about what is important than from sensitivity to its object. And if, from this tentative suggestion, we were to make one further recommendation – this time to the funds and institutions that help sustain this research – I would suggest the following. One of the problems of Japanese studies in Sweden is clearly the isolation in which researchers often find themselves – from the material they need for their research as well as from colleagues that can provide helpful feedback. If research on Japan needs to possess the greatest possible variety, then clearly what must be encouraged and facilitated is the construction of networks. Networks among researchers in the Nordic countries, but also – and perhaps most importantly – between Nordic and Japanese researchers. Indeed, my experience is that the most fruitful and rewarding contacts with regard to research can often be found precisely in the personal contacts and networks constructed internationally, rather than in the departments and research-centres where researchers spend their daily lives. Increased travel grants would, of course, also help. In addition, local research centres specializing on Japan or East Asia are important because of the wealth of resources in knowledge and materials that they possess and

because of their relative geographical proximity to most Nordic researchers. In many of these respects, NAJS (the Nordic Association for Japanese Studies) is a promising development, considering its explicit endorsement of an interdisciplinary approach, its eagerness to establish contacts with and engage in dialogue with Japanese researchers and its readiness to problematize Japan as an object of study (cf. Hagström et al 2004).

To conclude, tremendous changes are underway in Japan, and this is certainly the wrong moment to lose interest. The current economic slowdown has not made Japan less interesting to study, as some would claim, but rather *more* so. Japan may perhaps no longer be a 'model' to emulate – but there may still be as much for 'us' to learn from it as before. And when we say learn, this should be taken to mean learn from the beginning. A 'model' is by definition something well known. What is happening in Japan today and the forces shaping its future, by contrast, are not, and it is precisely that which calls for research. ■

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A Howl from a Lone Wolf

By Lars-Martin Sørensen

Many years ago when I began studying Japanese one of my teachers wrote an article in a Danish daily on the state of affairs concerning Japanese Studies in Denmark. Her complaint was that the field of Japanese Studies was being short changed by funding authorities and that the tremendous growth in the Japanese economy ought to inspire a renewed focus on Japan as a trading partner and consequently an increased investment in the lucrative business of educating Japan specialists.

A few months later rumour had it that our department was to be closed down. Now, having read what a lucrative future I had in store and being very young at the time, I decided to try and raise hell in the media in order to offer at least some resistance to this threat against my lucrative career opportunities. I phoned various journalists who all showed some degree of sympathy with my cause. A few of them even listened for more than three minutes to my list of reasons why Japanese Studies deserved a much higher priority than it was being offered by what, in my opinion, seemed like short sighted university deans, greyish bureaucrats and ignorant politicians.

Leadership and money

But, alas, no headlines the next morning. Not even a few lines on page ten. Nothing. So I decided that if those journalists could not be bothered to take up this vital issue I would write the story myself. In order to get the facts straight I consulted my teacher who read the article and stated that there was only one slight error. She was not, as I had believed and written, Head of the department. A slight error? The Head, to my surprise, was somebody who had done very little to lead me to believe that he was the person in charge.

Pondering if leadership more than money was the problem with my department, I righted my wrong in the article and tried

– unsuccessfully – to get it published. After scores of phone calls to scores of editors I gave up. My fifteen minutes of fame as an agent provocateur ground to a halt because of two things. First and foremost, I was told that Japan is very far away and therefore of no particular interest to the Danish public in general. Secondly, what happens behind the walls of the university is of even less concern to the average Danish taxpayer. And the closing down of the department? Well, somebody somewhere apparently changed their minds. Perhaps this somebody was influenced by the number of phone calls from journalists, who wanted to double check the story I had been trying to feed them. I do not know. But at the time I liked to think so. In the end I went back to class to join the approximately twenty students at my level, a number that gradually decreased as time and exams went by. After completing three years of study, I too high tailed it out of there and headed for film and media studies where nearly 100 students enrolled each year. There was somebody to argue with! For a while I relished the thought that I would never have to decode another Japanese utterance. But very soon I found myself in the company of Toshiro Mifune, analyzing old Japanese films in the hope of a lucrative future as a specialist on the film history of Japan.

A privileged position

Now, many years later, I have been asked to comment on the state of affairs concerning Japanese Studies in Denmark. Japan no longer boasts tremendous economic growth but still – as one of the worlds leading economies – holds a lucrative future for Japan specialists. Danish taxpayers are no longer indifferent as to what goes on inside the universities judging by the present government's ever increasing demands for transparency, visibility and a more quantifiable academic production. Japan is only a click of a mouse away and I am not getting any younger. I am not even 100% certain of many things – for instance whether I am the right person to pass judgments on what goes on within the Japanese Studies circles of Denmark today. I do pay my respects, giving the odd guest lecture every now and then, but I consider myself to consist of approximately 25 % Japanese studies and 75 % film studies. On top of that I am a 100 % PhD candidate.

On second thoughts; perhaps this awkward constellation actually puts me in an ideal position to comment on the state of the field. And perhaps the 25/75 % split between Japanese and film studies even fortifies this position. It certainly offers a basis for comparison between departments and fields. Even if this was not the case, the status



Lars-Martin Sørensen is a doctoral student at the Department of Media, Cognition & Communication at Copenhagen University. His PhD-project, 'Narrations of Ambiguity', examines how resistance against American censorship and occupation reforms was expressed in the fiction films of the Japanese Occupation Era. (Photo: Pavel Bunin)

of being a 100 % PhD candidate gives me a privileged position to comment. The simple reason is that I am 100 % alone. I have no colleagues within the field of Japanese Studies in Denmark. I am a lone wolf.

Yesterday's popcorn

In order to find out why this is the case I contacted my old department in Aarhus and found that the number of students enrolled each year has decreased dramatically. I was one of around 20 students starting in 1989. These days classes start out with 10–13 students. Knowing the hardships of memorizing kanji, studying the history and literature and passing exams, I guess by the second or third year no more than five students turn up for classes. Here are the official numbers of candidates eventually graduating: In 2001 – one candidate. In 2002 – two candidates. In 2003 – three candidates. Not very encouraging unless one finds comfort in entertaining the idea that if the apparent trend inherent in these numbers continues then – eventually – by the year 2010 there will be enough candidates to have a meaningful seminar. I quit Japanese Studies back then partly because there was nobody to discuss with.

Then I tried to find comfort at the Department of Japanese studies at the University of Copenhagen. Fifteen to 25 candidates over a five-year period, I was told. Not very precise information, I thought, so I decided not to ask for numbers at the Copenhagen Business School, the third major contributor to the number of Japan specialists in Denmark. Thus also avoiding arming the three major competitors with any firm basis for unsound comparison and rivalry, when what is sorely needed is either closer cooperation between the three players, or

perhaps even a merger. Why? Because institutions that do not reproduce themselves, that do not produce a sufficient number of candidates, from the ranks of which new PhD candidates can be harvested and honed into researchers, almost inevitably go as stale as yesterday's popcorn. Furthermore, they easily – and perhaps justifiably – fall prey to deans, bureaucrats and politicians with intentions of closing them down. I do not possess first hand knowledge to claim that it has reached this state in either Aarhus, Copenhagen or at CBS, but I do know that there is a vital need in any field to train new generations of researchers who can challenge and inspire coming generations of students and keep the field alive and kicking.

NIAS and Japanese Studies

Perhaps the players within the Japanese Studies community in Denmark could benefit from taking the Japanese example as a model. In Japan, suspension of internal competition in order to beat the outside world has proved successful in many fields. Closer cooperation at the Nordic level would also boost the chances of attracting scholars of international renown who could revitalize the field from above. NIAS has an important and as of yet unfulfilled role to play in this respect: NIAS does not have one single Japan scholar on its payroll!

When you browse the NIAS homepage list of arrangements; lectures, seminars and lunch talks, which NIAS has organized, co-organized or had senior researchers participating in, the consequences of NIAS not having anyone on Japan become evident. Of the – roughly counting – 70 arrangements listed for the year 2003, only seven were specifically on Japan-related issues. Of these seven only one arrangement had a scholar affiliated with a Japanese University as

a lecturer. In 2004 the picture is largely speaking the same; around 75 arrangements, five on Japan and again, one scholar from Japan giving a lecture. This rather meagre output is in my opinion a consequence of the fact that four of the seven senior researchers employed at NIAS are China specialists, one focuses on Korea, one on Indonesia and the last one on 'pastoral societies'.

Seen in this perspective, the co-financing of the Second NAJS conference can only be characterised as a tiny step in the right direction. But there is plenty of room for improvement if NIAS does not want to end up being labelled an Asian Institute that has given Japan too low a priority.

A senior researcher, or perhaps even better – a Nordic Japan Studies coordinator – at NIAS could perform the important task of strengthening the ties between the Japanese Studies institutions within the Nordic countries, perhaps even making it attractive for international capacities to tour the Nordic Japanese studies scene or make stopovers for extended periods of time.

This is all not just a matter of economics, but also how to allocate the funds you already have. It might be a question of leadership as was the case in the old days when I studied in Aarhus. It might be a question of corporate culture at the departments and institutes. In the short term it is a question of making NIAS realize that Japan does exist, and a question of nurturing students and helping them develop ideas for PhD-projects that stand a chance of receiving funding in competition with projects from other university disciplines, or can attract external funding from private sponsors.

Of that I am 100 % certain. ■

Who Needs Japan Anyway?

By Riikka Länsisalmi and Bart Gaens

In Finland, Japan-related courses and/or modules are provided by a number of universities and polytechnics, but Japanese studies can be majored in only at the University of Helsinki. The subject is divided into two areas of specialisation, Japanese Cultural Studies and Modern Japanese Studies, but the courses provided by the department have an emphasis on the former and the Japanese language, including classical Japanese. Students opting for the Modern Japanese Studies line of specialisation can complement their curriculum by choosing courses from other departments and/or programmes, such as the Asia-Pacific Studies, offered by the Renvall Institute, the university's multidisciplinary centre for Area and Cultural Studies. At the end of 2003, 87 students in Japanese studies were working towards an MA degree (12 graduates in 1998–2002); eight were studying for a PhD. So far, the majority of doctoral dissertations dealing with Japan, however, have been defended outside the discipline and attempts to bring together researchers working on Japan have been scarce. Until recently, more effort has been put into forming interdisciplinary networks of students and researchers under the larger umbrella of 'Asian studies'. A newly registered association, the Finnish Academic Society of Japanese Studies, was, however, founded in May 2004 to promote Japan-related (cultural) research and cooperation, organise seminars and produce publications in the field. Since most of the founding members are currently on parental leave, its activities have been restricted to the inaugural meeting and no external funding has yet been applied for.

The role of the Japanese language in Europe

At present the Japanese language can be studied in Finland at most university language centres and several polytechnics, high schools and adult education centres. The global popularity of Japanese as a foreign language has increased rapidly, but mainly in areas *outside* the European continent. There is thus room for more Japanese language education within the EU, particularly in the fields of business and services and industry and technology. Traditionally, European language policies have emphasised the role of languages spoken within the borders of the EU, but more recent formulations promote the so-called 'mother tongue plus two other languages' formula, 'other languages' being, for example, major 'world' languages such as (Mandarin) Chinese, Japanese, Russian and Arabic. Since the range of foreign languages mastered by EU citizens is rather

limited (no other language than English, French, German, Spanish or Italian reaches even 1 per cent), industry and commerce are beginning to understand the market value of non-European languages: European companies continue to lose business because they cannot speak their customers' languages.

Although interest in Japanese (language) studies can still often be explained by individual 'preference structures', e.g. an interest in Japanese culture, rather than opting for Japanese studies, more and more students are choosing to major in, for example, social studies, economics or engineering and study Japanese on the side as a foreign language. Surveys examining language and communication skills required by (Japanese) companies in Europe point out that, although the need for Japanese speaking staff does not seem important statistically, it can be essential for the success of the business. In addition to Japanese language skills, non-

Japanese staff would greatly benefit from social skills and practical cultural knowledge. Accordingly, language teaching could be more geared towards 'contact situations', i.e. contexts of language use that European learners of Japanese are likely to encounter and language functions they are likely to need. Further analysis and identification of Japanese communication needs in working life and the development of Japanese language curricula towards such needs could prove to provide an invaluable competitive edge for Europe.

General awareness of Japan

As mentioned above, at the level of higher education the development from the classical 'Japanology' – oriented area to the more interdisciplinary scope of Japanese studies has been slow to take root in Finland. A similar tendency to focus on more 'traditional' aspects of Japan can be perceived in the media. Japan's economic rise as a global economic power since the



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1980s certainly contributed greatly to a growing interest in local business practices and intercultural communication, and has led to increased media attention on relations between Finland and Japan. However, the lack of continuous general news coverage and background information on daily life and culture in Japan remains salient. (The absence of an assigned reporter for Finland's largest and most influential newspaper, the *Helsingin Sanomat*, is illustrative.) What does catch the media's attention is, on the one hand, news from Japan of the spectacular, exotic or weird kind – the eccentricities – confirming the image of Japan as 'the Other', and, on the other hand, descriptions of what are perceived of as icons of 'traditional' Japan, such as tea-ceremony, ikebana, and martial arts.

This 'conservative' tendency in both higher education and traditional media contrasts with the increasing presence of Japanese culture in daily life. Never before have Japanese film, anime, manga, karaoke, and cuisine been so tangibly present in Helsinki, and, thanks in the first place to the Internet, students display an astonishing knowledge of contemporary Japanese popular culture. It is clear that Japanese popular cultural and media products not only function as a hitherto unknown source of access to knowledge on an increasingly heterogeneous Japanese culture, but at the same time play an important role in the formation of youth (subcultural) identities. The task at hand is to bridge this widespread presence and interest in Japanese pop culture, higher education and postgraduate research. A useful instrument to enhance awareness of Japan's relevance in the cultural arena could be the creation of a virtual-media-based network for the study of Japanese popular culture in the Nordic countries. The aim could be initially to exchange

information and ideas and function as a forum for an interdisciplinary online discussion.

Research themes and collaboration

Interdisciplinary (Nordic–Japanese?) research collaboration, focusing on present-day and future challenges of the Japanese society, could also be used as a medium to bring together relevant recent research in (socio)linguistic theory, social sciences, media studies and cultural anthropology. To name just a few examples, 'Personhood' and how it is communicated and indexed in Japanese communication and social life is an area in need of more rigorous interdisciplinary research. Also, if we wish to gain a more thorough *overall* understanding of Japanese communication, more emphasis should be put on the roles of language in *emotive* communication (e.g. language expressing and indexing solidarity, self-representation, attitudes, and feelings). How syntax correlates with expressivity, emotion and affect in language is a topic, which has, quite undeservedly, received little attention in Japanese linguistics. Apart from issues related to language and communication, research concentrating on multicultural Japan would certainly benefit from Nordic–Japanese cooperation. Within the past decade or so, 'mainstream' work in this field has examined the *zainichi* Korean and Chinese populations and, more recently, Asian labourers and *nikkeijin* immigrants, but little or no interest has been shown towards more or less permanent settlers originating, for example, from the Nordic countries or other parts of Europe.

A recent survey carried out by the Finnish Institute in Japan on the contacts between Japan and Finnish scientific and cultural organisations showed that Finnish–Japanese collaboration in research and development activities, student, researcher or expert exchange and art is still often considered to be

one-sided – Finnish institutions being more active than their Japanese counter-parts – and are plagued by irregularity and lack of sufficient funding. Respondents to the survey expressed a willingness to continue and deepen collaboration, but listed few or no concrete ideas on how this could be done. The Finnish Institute in Japan, founded in 1998 in Tokyo to promote cooperation between Finland and Japan in research, higher education and culture, has since been active in supporting projects such as the cultural campaign 'Feel Finland', the Research and Development Unit at the Finnish Wellbeing Centre in Sendai (focusing on the ageing society, well-being technologies, and gerontology), the first extensive Japanese–Finnish dictionary, and so forth. It is, however, clear that the development of longstanding and trusting relationships between Finland and Japan in all spheres of research and cultural activities can hardly be left to one institute alone; it is the job of educators to help form 'Japan-minded and -knowledgeable' Japanese-speaking specialists for this task. One effort in this direction is the foundation of the Graduate School of Contemporary Asian Studies, a multidisciplinary graduate school open to PhD candidates focusing on East and Southeast Asian themes. The School is financed by the Finnish Ministry of Education and coordinated by the Department of Contemporary History at the University of Turku. It currently hosts seven PhD candidates, two of whom are working on a topic related to Japan. Together with other interdisciplinary programmes and networks, such as the Renvall Institute Asia-Pacific Studies and the University and Polytechnic Networks for East and Southeast Asia, it paves the way for new research themes and collaboration in contemporary Asian studies in Finland. ■

Future Visions

By NAJS Steering Committee

The future of Japanese studies rests not only in the hands of young researchers, but depends to a high degree on established academics in the field. To initiate a multi-faceted discussion, we have asked leading figures in Japanese (or Asian) studies in the Nordic region to present their visions for the future.

Respondent	1. How could you characterize the state of research on contemporary Japanese society your country or in the region in which your institute operates?	2. What are your future visions for it?	3. How can your visions be realised within the coming decade? Please be as concrete as possible.
Reiko Abe Auestad and Mark Teeuwen, Professors of Japanese Studies, University of Oslo	<p>1. So far it has not been the most prioritised area of our research. However, we have incorporated contemporary topics in our teaching, and have had positive responses from our students. Some of us are also interested in contemporary issues as research topics. We would like to include them more in our research in the future.</p>	<p>2. See 1.</p>	<p>3. First of all we would like to emphasise we support research on contemporary Japanese society. However, our resources are limited and time is short. We have an EAJS, a NAJAKS, and now this. Many of us, especially our students, cannot afford to attend two Nordic conferences in the same year. It would be very helpful if NAJAKS and NAJS meetings can be held at the same time, in the same place. That would definitely be a big step in the right direction in encouraging research on contemporary Japanese society!</p>
Magnus Blomström, Professor of Economics and President of the European Institute of Japanese Studies, Stockholm School of Economics	<p>1. The Japanese society is treated very much as a peripheral phenomenon in Sweden. <i>Research</i> on Japan attracts particularly little attention here. The fact that the interest is so low is to a large extent a result of the relatively small economic exchange between the two countries. In countries with more exchange, like the USA, research done at the EIJS within the fields of economics, political science and sociology attracts much more attention.</p>	<p>2. My future vision is to disseminate knowledge about Japan in Sweden, and in particular to increase the scope of human exchanges. I believe Japan has to be experienced first-hand, and to that extent I want to contribute by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inviting more Swedish business people to Japan, so that they can learn more about the possibilities of making business there, and better understand the potential threat from efficient Japanese firms in the future. • Continuing with student exchange programmes. Every year, six Japanese students spend at least a semester SSE and six of our students study in Japan. • Trying to get more Japanese companies to invest to Sweden. 	<p>3. To facilitate a more effective learning about Japan in Sweden, I will e.g. arrange a large-scale industrial delegation to Japan in connection to the World Expo in Aichi 2005. Furthermore, new student exchange programs will be launched. I also believe in spreading information the other way around. We plan to set up a 'European Information Centre' in Tokyo, to diffuse knowledge about issues of current relevance for Japanese society. What can, for instance, Japan learn from the Scandinavian financial sector reform in the 1990s, from the reforms (or in some countries, lack of reforms) of European education systems, and the changes in the welfare and social security systems in Europe?</p>
Jørgen Delman, Director, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies	<p>1. NIAS has had Japan studies as a focal point for many years with many own activities as well as support to various Nordic initiatives. Currently, NIAS has no researcher employed with a singular focus on Japan due to resource constraints. However, some of NIAS' researchers work on specific aspects of Japan in a comparative perspective. NIAS has noted that apparently the study of Japan in the Nordic region has lost some support among students as well as from the funding agencies, including the universities. There also seems to be a gradual shift of focus, so that social science approaches, including business studies, become as important as the more traditional, humanistic studies with language studies as the basis.</p>	<p>2. NIAS will continue to have a focus on Japan. We will support Nordic activities and projects, maintain our seminars, publish on Japan through NIAS Press (Nordic authors if possible) and maintain and expand our library collection on Japan and the associated services.</p>	<p>3. The issue is funding. Therefore, we have to generate external funding for expansion of activities and new recruitment. We need to bring up a younger generation of Japan researchers to stay in business. A NIAS initiative to establish a Nordic research school will provide opportunities for promotion of Japan studies within that framework. We will consider how to increase the focus on Japan in our dissemination activities. Finally, we would like to continue supporting the Nordic associations on Japan and encourage them to join hands to work out new initiatives.</p>

**Olavi K. Fält, Professor,
Department of History,
University of Oulu**

1. Japanese Studies at the University of Oulu is a multidisciplinary program, which is produced as a minor subject. It is implemented by the Department of Architecture and the Department of History. Main modules are Introduction to Japanese culture and society, Japanese art and aesthetics, Japanese architecture and garden art and the History of the interaction between Japanese and western culture. Especially in modules of Japanese architecture and garden art and Interaction between Japanese and Western culture research has focused on contemporary Japanese society. All together in Finnish universities research on contemporary Japanese society is increasing moderately although we are experiencing now the Chinese boom.

2. I believe that in the near future we can see the same trend. As a historian I believe however that situation will be balanced between Japanese and Chinese Studies. In the field of history focus will be more in present history (after the Second World War).

3. Because of a globalisation process young researchers will be more interested in contemporary subjects than before. Japan as a strong economic power and in future also as a stronger political power will be very interesting focus. Besides that the unique cultural heritage of Japan reflecting in contemporary society will also be very interesting subject.

**Roger Greatrex, Professor
and Director, Centre for
East and South-East Asian
Studies, Lund University**

1. Social sciences-oriented research in Sweden concerning contemporary Japanese society is very weak, and has been so for as long as I am aware. Why this is so is not fully clear, but it certainly has to do with the following. Japan is a fully industrialised nation, unlike China and the countries in South-East Asia. Many of the topics studied by social science researchers, such as poverty alleviation, social transition, changes in the workforce, and changing patterns of FDI, may not have appeared to be relevant to Japan. Also, bluntly speaking, Japan is significantly more expensive to undertake field-work in than mainland Asia.

2. As far as I can see there are three possible visions. The first is that things stay the same, or even deteriorate, something that would not be desirable. The second is that competence will be developed at the universities where Japan is already studied. Given the emphasis presently placed on the study of Japanese culture, this is a rather remote scenario. Thirdly, there is the radical possibility that the study of contemporary Japanese society could be localised at one university in Sweden. This step would require additional and complementary institutional efforts beyond what is done today.

3. The radical vision mentioned above would require several different forms of support. It would require a Swedish university to allocate substantial funding to the project, or a long-term agreement between several universities interested in and capable of supporting social-sciences research on contemporary East and South-East Asia to cooperate and take specific responsibilities. It would require the social sciences faculties of these universities to encourage PhD candidates to research on Asia, and employ staff members who have focused on contemporary Asia. It would require furthermore funding agencies to recognise the increasing importance of Asia, and by extension Japan, in the 21st century.

**Gunilla Lindberg-Wada,
Professor of Japanese
Studies, Department of
Oriental Languages
Stockholm University**

1. There are a small number of researchers in Sweden who have the competence to carry out this kind of research work using source materials in Japanese, a prerequisite for participating in a fruitful and competitive way on the international scene. These scholars, who are usually highly dependent on academic contacts with scholars in other parts of the world since the Swedish research community in question is too small in scope, do individually good work within a disparate field of specialties, but their position in the Swedish academic hierarchy is often insecure.

2. Research work on contemporary Japanese society is carried out by scholars with a thorough education both from the field of Japanese Studies and some relevant academic discipline(s) within the faculties of social sciences or humanities. It benefits heavily from the intimate cooperation established between the departments in question already on the PhD candidate level and gradually a flexible and fruitful academic network is established from within the research community. The research work is supported by a well-defined yet flexible financing system of long-term commitment. As a bonus effect the education on Japan at whatever faculty or academic organisation will improve considerably.

3. The faculty organisation, course system, supervision routines and financing of studies must be reformed to accommodate academic activities encompassing and involving two or more specialties and departments, such as graduate and post-graduate studies, research, and teaching positions. Studies and research committed to the study of Japanese contemporary society should get the necessary support to reach the competence needed, within the reformed faculty system. Financial resources to boost this kind of research could for example be invested in intensive Japanese language training, as well as means and methods for cooperation between departments in innovative course planning, research projects and teaching assignments.

Brian D. Moeran,
Professor, Department
of Intercultural
Communication and
Management,
Copenhagen Business
School

1. The research is, I think, rather like the curate's egg – good in parts. There are one or two individual researchers who do work of a reasonable standard, but there is no-one that I know of who has reached an above average level, and certainly not world class. The Copenhagen Business School is now operating an Asian Studies Programme, which attracts a comparatively large number of students, but this popular course needs to be strengthened on the language side in particular to enable really competent students to graduate in the future. Alas! The overall BA programme structure prevents this.

2. I am somewhat pessimistic, on at least two counts. The first is the introverted atmosphere of the higher education system in Denmark, which tends to militate against the appointment of above-average scholars from abroad – i.e. of precisely the kind of people who could help improve research on Japan in Denmark. This is occasionally accompanied, secondly, by a characteristic academic tendency towards bickering and in-fighting which has in the past, for example, prevented the appointment – unbelievably – of two crucial chair professorships, in both Japanese and Chinese, at the University of Copenhagen. This has deprived higher education of the kind of leadership that is, I believe, essential to help improve Japanese (and Chinese) Studies overall.

3. There needs to be a radical re-assessment of certain structural aspects of the tertiary education system, together with a complete change of mind-set among academics themselves. The Government should stop funding universities according to the number of students who *pass* exams, and fund according to enrolments, to ensure that mark inflation comes to an end. PhD students should *not* more or less automatically find themselves offered temporary positions in their own departments, but be obliged to seek initial employment elsewhere. A proper internal system of promotion should be instituted to enable those worthy of promotion to be offered higher positions *without* having to advertise their jobs publicly. Chair professors, with leadership qualities and an ability to liaise with government and business organisations, *must* be appointed in both Japanese and Chinese – and they *must* come from abroad in the first instance.

Rein Raud, Professor
of Japanese Studies at
the University of
Helsinki, Acting
Professor of Asian and
Cultural Studies,
Estonian Institute of
Humanities, Tallinn

1. In Finland, research pertinent to Japanese society is carried out in several places: two separate units of the University of Helsinki (Institute of Asian and African Studies and Renvall Institute), as well as in Tampere University, and, on a smaller scale, other universities that have Asia-related programmes (in particular, Oulu University and the Helsinki School of Economics). Although research papers are occasionally published and representatives of Finnish universities also appear on international forums, the main stress in academic activities related to Japanese society is still on teaching.

2. This will depend on funding, both public and private. I do hope that the level of the research will increase alongside with the awareness of these issues in Finnish society and the need for popularising will decrease. In all likelihood, the Asia-Pacific Studies centre at the Renvall Institute will develop and become the nucleus around which high-level research will concentrate, but hopefully the potential of Tampere, Oulu and other universities will also be realised.

3. It is impossible to be concrete, because this will depend on decisions that are beyond the academic units. It will be of crucial importance for the development of the field that the decision-makers realise that (1) high-level research is possible only on the basis of linguistic and cultural competence and cannot be achieved by non-Japanese-speaking social scientists on the basis of translated material, and (2) that the Finnish economy, in order to foster its relations with Japan, needs much higher-level competence in the field than is presently at its disposal.

Noriko Thunman,
Professor of Japanese
Studies, Department of
Oriental and African
Languages, Göteborg
University

1. I will just report the state of affair of our Department in Göteborg. At the Japanese Section of the Department of Oriental and African Languages in Göteborg, two researchers (Professor and Associate Professor) are working in the fields of literature and linguistics. A senior researcher is working in the field of sociology, who is the only person working with modern Japanese society. There are four PhD students. Their research subjects are 'Textbooks in early Meiji Era and pedagogy', 'Popular tanka in the Newspaper Asahi', 'Medieval tea-ceremony and politics', and 'Historicity of the academic subject history'.

2. The Department belongs to the Language Section of the Faculty of Arts. This and also the situation of supervisors tell that the main objective of research at the Japanese Section in Göteborg should remain in the field of linguistics, literature and culture. However, as the list of the PhD candidates shows, the situation is dependent on what kind of PhD candidates we have at the time, when the Department is assigned a PhD post. Regarding NAJS conference, a serious objection can be raised against the way it was organised in 2004.

Researchers in Scandinavian countries, working on Japan, are not numerous. There are not sufficient numbers of researchers to motivate two Nordic conferences on Japan in the same town and in the same year, as was the case this year [2004]. In future, there should be better coordination between NAJS and NAJAKS conferences. Every third year, when both NAJS and NAJAKS organise a conference, it is strongly recommended that NAJS cooperates with NAJAKS.

3. The future of Japanese studies is dependent on Governmental policy regarding postgraduate education.



Susanne Kreitz-Sandberg is working for her own company, TREE East, in Rimforsa, Sweden. She taught Modern Japanese Studies at the University of Düsseldorf, East Asia Institute, and in cooperation with the project Virtual International Gender Studies (VINGS) 'Gender in Globalization' from 2001 until 2004. She was a research fellow at the German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ) in Tokyo from 1995 until 2001. In 1997 she received the Tamaki Award for her article on suicide of Japanese and German adolescents. The Ph.D. at the Institute of Education of the University of Bielefeld with a work on 'Youth in Japan' in 1994 concluded Susanne Kreitz-Sandberg's studies of educational science, sociology, psychology and Japanese. She is member of the board of the German Association for Social Science Research on Japan (VSJF). Her publications focus on intercultural communication competence, comparative education, youth studies, methods in social science, social policy and gender studies.

Scientific Upswing with Economic Decline: Research on Japan in Germany

By Susanne Kreitz-Sandberg

Social Science research on Japan has increased tremendously in Germany in the last two decades. There is no nation outside the so-called 'Western World' about which so much is known available on as Japan. This is, however, quite a new trend and part of the irony is that at the time of the burst of the Japanese 'bubble economy' most institutions had just taken off with their research. The most influential associations and institutes were formed in the late 1980s. I shall introduce the major features of these institutions by citing mostly their self-descriptions. I shall also include a personal interpretation on why Japanese studies in German-speaking countries has been relatively successful in comparison with many other European countries.

Central institutions and associations for Japan-related research

German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ) 'Opened in 1988, the German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ) [...] is intended both to stimulate the further development of Japan-related research in Germany and to support younger scholars. [...] The DIJ also sees itself as an on-the-spot centre for research on Japan, actively and intimately involved in relevant international and intercontinental exchange.' (www.dijtokyo.org). The main focus of research is on the society, culture and economy of Japan with frequent publications, conferences, workshops, study groups and more. The DIJ publishes its yearbook *Japanstudien* as a refereed journal. The library aims at collecting all material published in German on Japan and provides an excellent tool for literature search.

The German Association for Social Science Research on Japan (VSJF) was also founded in 1988. 'The Association is conceived as a forum for researchers and students from the fields of Japanese studies as well as from social sciences, including cultural studies.'

(www.vsjf.net). Since its foundation, membership has continually grown to about 200, making the association one of the largest in Europe in the field of Japanese studies. Central activities of the association are its annual scientific conferences on selected topics. These are combined with workshops and regular meetings of the association's sections in the fields of education, politics, sociology, economics, media – cultural studies as well as urban-regional studies. Using Japan – and recently Asia – as a common platform the association aims at transcending the current borders between social sciences, humanities, and area studies. In trying to promote innovative venues of research, the association is strongly committed to increasing international exchange among scholars of contemporary Japan.

Cooperation between Japanese and German social scientists is expressed and practiced in the **German-Japanese Society for Social Sciences**, which was founded 1989 in Tokyo. 'Its members are approximately equal numbers of distinguished German and Japanese social scientists as well as those from related disciplines [...] The society is devoted to

'the mutual study and the comparison of [...] developmental processes. [...] Those studies can contribute to overcoming ethnocentric bias in theoretical approaches. Since this undertaking is more successful in the framework of a scientific organization than merely through individual initiative, an interest among German and Japanese social scientists in such a cooperation has gradually developed in the past years' (<http://www.uni-konstanz.de/FuF/SozWiss/fg-psy/ag-entw/djgsozwi.htm>).

The German Association for Japanese Studies (www.gjf.de) was founded in 1990 with the aim to coordinate activities of the various Japan studies institutes. The association organises every third or fourth year the so-called 'Japanologentag', a congress with sections on Japanese literature, religion, history, culture and of course also society. The GJF supports the discussion forum, 'J-Studien'. This association is the main contact partner for some of the public grant giving institutions although its monopoly does not seem to reflect the reality of present-day Japan-related research.

Other institutions

Japanese studies is taught at 18 university institutes in Germany and over 30 institutes provide Japan related teaching with differing foci. Many of the institutes dedicate their teaching to modern and contemporary Japanese society. Even nowadays quite a number of institutes for Japanese language and culture are very small and the conditions to study in such places are often not very favourable for the students. A trend towards bigger institutions and stronger cooperative structures like, for example in Bonn or Munich might be expected and hopefully more interdisciplinary approaches like, for example, in Duisburg, even if every smaller institute has its own reasons why they want to keep Japanese studies at their university.

The rise of social science research on Japan

The Japanese economic success helped to build up an acceptance in academic circles, in the business community and the ministries, that knowledge about Japan had to be increased in order to find adequate answers to and modes of communication with the economic power. Knowledge about the economy demands knowledge of the society and well-reflected information about the culture. This need was answered not only by flexible researchers in formerly more traditional Japanese studies but could already in the late 1980s build on a certain interdisciplinary expertise.

The German Association for Asian Studies (DGA) had over the decades contributed to Asian studies, including Japanese studies. 'In 1965 the Volkswagen Foundation took the initiative and invited a group of specialists to discuss means and ways how to support modern East Asian studies in Germany. This led to the creation of a co-ordinating

unit for contemporary East Asian studies attached to the Institute of Asian Affairs in Hamburg one year later. [...] After strong financial support by the Volkswagen Foundation and others ended in 1976 the DGA managed to survive on the basis of membership fees and considerable contributions mainly from the business community' (www.asienkunde.de). The above-mentioned *Institute of Asian Affairs in Hamburg* (IFA) supplies among others up-to-date information on Japan. 'The task of the Institute of Asian Affairs is to carry out research on con-temporary political, economic and social developments of the Asian countries. The analysis is based on the knowledge of the various languages and the various countries as well as on the background of the theories of various disciplines in the social sciences. In the center of its activities is the systematic continuous work related to the countries of East and Southeast Asia with relevance beyond the academic community' (www.duei.de/ifa). The Institute of Asian Affairs publishes three current affairs journals concentrating on political, economic and social developments in China, Japan and Southeast Asia.

Networks

The membership between these associations and institutions obviously overlaps and each of them has contributed their share to a better understanding of Japanese society. The main importance I see is in networking different fields of expertise between area studies and social science as well as developments in cultural studies. Japanese studies has developed from a very small subject 'high up in the ivory tower' of higher education institutions towards a

well blossoming field of research. Most important for the presently active situation was the tremendous boom in research and co-operation activities, which could be observed since the late 1980s and which encouraged a lot of networking activities. As a result Japan is undoubtedly the Asian country on which most information is available in Germany.

By now, Japanese studies is widening its regional focus und including more contributions on other Asian societies in order to take the consequences of globalisation into account. This seems to be a logical consequence of the increasingly active role, which other Asian nations play in the global economy. Japan-related research is somehow returning into the context of Asian studies and one future task is to extend its networks even further into other Asian studies fields and encourage more social science research on Japan's neighbours. This includes the possibility to overcome ideas of Japan as the only 'exception' to Western modernisation. How resources on research can be distributed in the longer run might become one of the challenges in the field.

Future challenges

Concluding, we can state that language competence and context knowledge about Japan is no longer unusual even in general social sciences. However, if we consider that in the mid-1980s the aim of social scientists with research interests on Japan and Japanologists with social science and anthropological orientations was to coordinate their special competences, I would say that Japanese studies caught up quickly concerning the need to adapt theories and methods into their regional studies, while for many of the regular social scientists without special interest in comparative


studies Japan is still very exotic. It might be questioned critically if the increased expertise has reached the public since the German news media still features extreme and often displeasing aspects of Japanese society.

Certain knowledge about Japan is needed if we want to carry out good comparative research. With and against the strong backlashes of the Asian crisis to the Japanese economy (and vice versa) Japan is so visible in social science research in Germany that it can happen that three conferences focusing on various aspects of the Japanese society from a comparative perspective are taking place on

the same weekend in different German cities. From a German perspective the question 'Does Japan matter?' definitely calls for an affirmative answer. The challenges will be to coordinate the activities, to possibly set similar standards in the highly diversified teaching environments and to communicate the available expertise even more to the public.

Finally, from a Nordic perspective it might be of interest to ask why Japanese studies have such a strong position in Germany. I think that size obviously plays an important role. A country with a population of 80 million can put more resources into a 'minor' field of research like Japanese studies.

However, if we look at Austria we find a very favourable example in a small country. Vienna University has an excellent institute of Japanese studies, which combines progressive teaching approaches with leading social science research. They work closely together with other German speaking countries but more than this they have sent very important messages to the German research community with their anthropological approach. It seems that a focus of combined energy of a group of cooperative teachers and qualified scientists with a clear orientation towards research and teaching is able to set high standards in a field like Japanese studies. ■



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Is It 'Japan' That Really Matters?

By Hirotaka Kasai

I was asked to write a short article, introducing the current state of Japanese studies in Japan, but this is not an easy task to fulfil. One obvious reason rests with the multiplicity of subject matters. The more significant (and perhaps less obvious) issue is that 'Japanese studies' does not necessarily constitute an independent academic field of area studies in Japan. One can study issues on Japan, for instance, in disciplines such as political science, economics, sociology, and so on, but not in a single academic field called 'Japanese studies'. Yet most humanities and social science disciplines in Japan are divided into fields of study under the categories of 'Western', 'Japanese', and 'Oriental/Eastern'. This issue highlights some fundamental questions concerning the formation of Japanese studies itself. In the limited space provided here, I examine some conditions and possibilities for studies of contemporary society in the age of globalisation.

Dr. **Hirotaka Kasai** is an Associate Professor at the Department of International and Cultural Studies, Tsuda College, Japan

Let us begin by considering the implications of the overall theme of this issue of *NIASnytt – Asia Insights*, 'Does Japan Matter?'. What does this suggest? Is it possible, or even appropriate, to respond simply by 'yes' or 'no'? What are the implicit issues at stake? We need to pay careful attention to the series of questions buried in the theme title. First, 'does Japan matter?' to whom? Second, 'why and how does Japan matter?' These issues raise the question of positionality – the very conditions which make the structuring subjectivity possible for those who engage in Japan studies. If Japan matters, in what types of relations, and in what ways does it matter? Third, can we discuss 'Japan' as a research object without critically reconsidering the assumptions upon which area studies have been institutionalised in academia?

So, 'does Japan matter?' Whether the answer is 'yes' or 'no', the response is not the most significant aspect of the question. What matters here is the manner and extent to which we can problematise the conditions of research, in which we have been engaged. It cannot be emphasised enough that, if we were to discuss Japan without reconsidering the

implications and assumptions, then we would ideologically reconstruct and reproduce the particularities of 'Japan' within the conventional framework of area studies.

We need to search for an alternative way. In this age, an international intellectual network need not reproduce an institutional framework that divides exclusively the subject positionality and the objects of research – the conventional structure of area studies. Rather, by transforming the production of knowledge and its potentials into something more complex and multi-layered, one may create a space where transnational critiques of contemporary societies around the world can take place. A new type of international network is necessary – one that is not based upon a binary opposition of 'Country X and Japan', or more typically, 'the West vs. the East, or Japan'.

The following example illustrates how we may pursue this possibility. At the JSPS Colloquium on the Study of Contemporary Japanese Society, in collaboration with NAJS, held in April 2004, one of main issues raised by multiple participants was the poor state

of research conditions in Nordic and Japanese universities. In Japan, the educational system (and in particular, universities) has been one of the major sites targeted by neo-liberal reforms. The ongoing political, economic and social reforms in the language of neo-liberalism entail a new type of nationalist ideology, a paradoxical mobilization of both the logics of privatisation and state control, and universities have not been exempt from it. Through these 'reforms', research conditions at universities (e.g. research funds, job opportunities, etc.) have deteriorated, especially in the fields of humanities and social sciences.

What was interesting to me was that, as we shared information from differing regions and disciplines, it became gradually clear that these problems (for instance, university 'reforms') could not be attributed to any particular nation's 'peculiarities', or issues exclusive to a particular region. Rather, we are all facing the same logic/phenomenon that prevails in our world today – namely neoliberalism or globalisation. In order to 'work' this global logic of capitalism, profound reconsiderations of, and critical commitments to

academic disciplines are crucial and necessary.

If the conceptual foundation of academic disciplines, such as area studies, remained within the prevailing nationalistic structures and assumptions, the exchange of information, however international, would still remain within a nationalistic framework of internationalism, unable to free itself from dichotomies of 'the universal' and 'the particular'. What we seek is the transformation of this institutional framework for academic research – from that which is based on the ideology of the nation-state, to that which renders a transnational approach to the various problems in contemporary societies possible. At the very same time, it is also important to note that this transformation requires the conditions of knowledge production on contemporary Japan to be historicised. That is, these conditions, which dictate our engagement with and commitment to area studies, need to be continuously and

critically questioned. It is imperative to re-examine and reconsider what historical, political and economic conditions shaped Japanese studies in the Nordic and other regions.

In order to develop a multi-layered network, it is important to nurture intellectual exchange with scholars from other parts of the world, not just those from the Nordic countries and Japan, and not just those who focus on Japan. In this way, the production of knowledge is not constrained by a dichotomous relationship, in which the subject and the object of the research are assumed to be mutually exclusive and divided. By transforming the potential for knowledge production through complexity and multiplicity, we need not reconsolidate the particularities of Japanese society.

Through this process, one may be able to transform the original question, 'Does Japan Matter?' into 'Is it "Japan" that really matters?'. This inquiry comes at a crucial time, for the very basis of academic research

(not only in Japanese studies) – the university as a site for social criticism, or more broadly speaking, the social function of 'knowledge' itself – is being questioned. One must begin with the question, 'What is the real matter?' or 'What really is the matter?'. In order to precisely address this question and make this project possible, a new type of academic network is necessary. The real question rests not with 'Japan' itself, but in the institutional frameworks of knowledge production and consumption within academia. By intervening upon these structures, is it not our objective to produce knowledge that traverses such limitations, and construct new possibilities for social knowledge? This does not mean that area studies (academic research on specific regions) are no longer necessary. It is the very act of recomposing the assumptions and frameworks of area studies that will enable the creation of a transnational agenda and its potentials. ■

Linus Hagström (2005) *Japan's China Policy: A Relational Power Analysis*, London & New York: RoutledgeCurzon.

Japan's China Policy understands Japan's foreign policy in terms of power – one of the most central concepts of political analysis. It contributes a fresh understanding to the subject by developing relational power as an analytical framework and by applying it to significant issues in Japan's China policy: the negotiations for a bilateral investment protection treaty and the disputed Pinnacle (Senkaku/Diaoyu) Islands.

Hagström demonstrates that Japan exerted power over China in such divergent empirical settings for the most part by using civilian instruments positively, defensively and through non-action. Given that Japan's foreign policy is often portrayed rather enigmatically in terms of power, the unique contribution of Japan's China Policy is to demonstrate how to analyse power aspects of Japan's foreign policy in a more coherent fashion.

This revealing approach to Japan's foreign policy will be of huge interest to anyone studying Japanese politics, foreign policy or international relations to begin with.

The Matters that Matter – Concluding Discussion

By NAJS Steering committee

So, does it matter, Japan? Or are we just a handful of young scholars worrying about our 'lucrative' future? Certainly, none of us has a secure position, and career possibilities are negligible. The stakes, however, are higher than that, and we and others could, and should, make a difference. We even think that it is appropriate to talk about responsibility. Not because it gives a possibility to complain, but because it implies being able to respond; to engage actively in a dialogue about the conditions and visions of this particular field of research that is imprecisely called 'Japanese studies'. Since this vital dialogue is presently lacking, we have taken it upon ourselves to initiate it with this special issue of NIASnytt – Asia Insights, and we hope that it will invite many responses.

Over the next few pages we shall discuss why this dialogue is so crucial, and, more importantly, suggest where we would like to take this 'discipline' from now on. Naturally, many issues need to be addressed, but with limited space we will only focus on the most crucial aspects: our profession as a craft and the implications of this view for learning the trade; the promises and problems of regional studies; and the topicality of this discussion at this particular point in time. Lastly, we shall reveal the role that we think the *Nordic Association for the Study of Contemporary Japanese Society* (NAJS), which we founded in December 2002, can play.

Nurturing professional research environments

Our basic point of departure is the conviction that being a scholar is performing a *craft*. This statement might seem trivial, but it has very important consequences. Sørensen's vivid description of the absence of colleagues is a case in point. He questions the 'corporate culture' and the lack of leadership – the relevance of which is not least reflected in the absence of vision pertaining to *research on*

contemporary Japanese society in the responses to our questionnaire. However, Sørensen's critique is also echoed in the more proactive and visionary responses by Professors Greatrex, Lindberg-Wada and Moeran, all of whom recommend profound restructuring of Nordic universities. Lindberg-Wada suggests that 'The faculty organisation, course system, supervision routines and financing of studies must be reformed to accommodate academic activities encompassing and involving two or more specialties and departments, such as graduate and post-graduate studies, research, and teaching positions'. Moeran, moreover, proposes 'a radical re-assessment of certain structural aspects of the tertiary education system, together with a complete change of mind-set among academics themselves'. Existing research institutes could perform the role of bridge-builders in the construction of stable research environments, but in our field no one has accepted the challenge. Greatrex, though, suggests for the Swedish context 'the radical possibility that the study of contemporary Japanese society could be localised at one university'.

The importance of profes-

sionalism and stimulating research environments does not apply to Japanese studies alone, but it is possibly even more crucial in regional studies than within the traditional disciplines. The reason is that there is a tendency to accept PhD candidates with highly disparate projects, who need training in theories and methods adopted by other disciplines, and with no qualified staff to supervise (a circumstance which is even occasionally used to excuse the lack of proper supervision).

Considering our profession as a craft implies seeing it as basically composed of techniques, methods and skills that can be made explicit, taught and learnt, and believing that with relevant instruction and training most of us can become better scholars. It also implies acknowledging that this distinctly 'individual' occupation is in reality very much a collective practice. University departments need to set up creative and supportive institutional practices and routines to nurture a future generation of leading scholars. Networks, seminars, workshops, conferences and publication opportunities constitute practice grounds crucial for learning the

trade. In particular, the role of supervisors and tutors becomes crucial for transferring sound professional practices and skills to young scholars.

Japanese studies as regional studies

Understanding the primacy of professionalism is crucial, because it deemphasises the question whether Japan matters. A logical consequence of this position is actually that *regional* proficiency, and thereby the emphasis on networks and research environments focusing on contemporary Japanese society, becomes secondary. In stating this, we are not trying to undermine the justification for NAJS or any other regionally based network. We just wish to clarify under what conditions they should operate.

Continuing the problematisation of regional studies, it is fruitful to return to Kasai's article. By probing 'if Japan matters', he rhetorically asks, is not the boundedness of 'Japan' inevitably reinforced? Research agendas clearly collaborate in providing the means for the nation to achieve its naturalised status. So, how can we strategically pursue regional studies and argue for its importance *vis-à-vis* policy makers and financiers without contributing to its particularity? Given its prominent position as 'a special case' within the realm of regional studies as dominated by the USA in the wake of the Second World War, the problem faced by Japanese studies is indeed – and ironically enough – particularly pressing in this respect.

If regional studies are ever going to develop beyond the limitations set by its colonial and Cold War legacy, these are discussions that need to be taken seriously. Accepting Kasai's well-argued view that there is a danger of reproducing the coherence of 'Japan' by acting

from a perspective of 'Japanese studies', we are still convinced of the possibility, and indeed of the need, to create strong networks for reinforcing the study of contemporary Japanese society, especially in the scantily populated Nordic research environment. At the same time, scholars should treat Japan as a 'normal' society in research terms – indeed, one comparable to any other society with particularities and commonalities that can contribute to the mainstream within the social sciences and humanities. Networking needs to be done at multiple levels and these are promising times for such interaction. There is now every chance to cooperate with scholars from other parts of the world with the same regional interest. Kreitz-Sandberg, for instance, reports of increasing cooperation between Japanese and German social scientists that can 'contribute to overcoming ethnocentric bias in theoretical approaches'. Equally vital is to seek out scholars with other regional focuses who share thematic or theoretical interests. Cassegård importantly points out how the present crisis in the interest in 'Japan' is actually creative, as predetermined 'models' now give way to a more complex scientific appreciation of Japanese society. Employing these strategies the preoccupation with Japan as a special – and by extension, irrelevant and dubious – case could be overcome.

Educational reforms and the struggle to define relevance

Cassegård's argument holds a second implication that needs to be addressed. If Japan in the eyes of some does not matter anymore, and that the absence of interest paradoxically creates promising spaces for new topics and perspectives to emerge, then we must ask again 'to whom'? Current 'reforms' of higher

education can be read in many different ways. Increased competition, the rule of budgets, and tight research agendas quickly come to mind, but greater transparency and accountability, improved professional attitude, and better institutional structures and practices might also follow if reforms are implemented sensitively (which, of course, they hardly are). However, the rhetoric of transparency, productivity and excellence conceals a fundamental struggle for the power to define proper research. The 'vision of no vision' – to not *a priori* and from the outside define what matters, how it matters, and to whom it matters, but to free the process of research and let it be governed by its own principles – is both attractive and imperative for preserving the autonomy of scholarly research. But presently politicians, bureaucrats and financiers exercise power on many different levels, from merely controlling the allocation of scarce resources to instituting the normative standards that are likely to govern the rationality of research as such for generations to come.

This is what renders the whole discussion particularly crucial and the question whether *Japan* matters particularly revealing. Conditions at the universities are changing at an unprecedented pace towards increased dependence on conditions set by actors and institutions outside of their control. In many instances universities collaborate in this general clearance sale of research, which threatens to loosen their function in society – to carry out critical investigation autonomously. The global interest in 'Japan' is vanishing and eyes are increasingly turned elsewhere, for example towards the rising China. As Lämsäalmi and Gaens emphasize in their article, a small field like Japanese studies in the Nordic

countries is vulnerable in itself, and this vulnerability is just increased by the whims of the 'market'. A few years of limited demand easily wipe out a whole generation of scholars, and when times change fast recovery will be impossible. While the lack of interest in previously dominating research topics gratifyingly opens up multiple answers to the question 'in what ways does Japan matter', it simultaneously withdraws the material conditions for carrying out new, important research topics. In the end, by allowing market rationality to govern research agendas, universities and scholars are selling out their right and duty to examine processes in society critically and unconditionally.

The role of NAJS

On 28–30 April 2005, the Second NAJS Conference will be convened in Copenhagen, both with papers at a nearly finished stage and presentations of projects in the making. The conference is not only a place for presenting one's findings or ideas and networking, but also one for giving and receiving constructive criticism. It has the character of a workshop, and thus provides an opportunity to practice our profession and its varied skills and techniques. This year publishing and editing will be given extra attention, because it is one part of the craft that many of us need more training in. While

the annual conference is still the natural backbone of NAJS, this is also an opportune time to create other fora and platforms for sharpening our skills. One aim is to develop the publishing theme. A first step is to initiate a working paper series; somewhat in line with Länsisalmi and Gaens' suggestion, *NAJS WP* will be featuring a virtual seminar room at the network's homepage, www.najs.jp. The point of publishing an article in a working paper series must be that it can fulfil the role of a station towards final publication. As such, it must give the author feedback in terms of constructive comments and suggestions on how to develop the text. This is particularly important for scholars pursuing research on Japanese society in departments and institutions where they do not get the necessary thematical, theoretical or regional feedback. An Internet-based seminar with active discussion groups is a promising format that can overcome some of the problems of geographically scattered scholars. Nurturing *NAJS WP* and the web-seminar will be difficult and time-consuming. Crucial to its success will be if it can feature a small group of salaried (!) 'editors'. Being decently paid for the time and energy that goes into reading and commenting on texts is not only

a matter of fairness, but also a guarantor for quality. In due time, a Nordic journal might well emerge from this endeavour.

NAJS WP as well as NAJS annual conferences should be seen as practising grounds. In a slightly different vein, we would like to engage in developing multidisciplinary research projects around certain themes, partly since most new PhDs face an insecure post-doc future, but also in order to make sure new generations of students can be admitted to post-graduate studies. Also, networking the network by extending contacts with scholars from Japan, from the rest of Europe and the rest of Asia is vital in order to develop critical intellectual communities. Kreitz-Sandberg's article is encouraging in that it shows how Japanese studies in German speaking countries have developed very differently than in the Nordic countries. There is obviously much to learn from these successful cases. Seeking transnational collaboration based on a common regional interest – Japan – is one step, and, following Kasai's suggestion, another one is to engage in exchanges with scholars focusing on other geographical regions along lines of common thematic or theoretical interests, such as gender, social movements, religious mobilisation, and popular culture, to name but a few. ■

NIAS Assists Martti Ahtisaari, the Former President of Finland, in the Mediation of the Aceh Peace Process

Aceh, is a province with approximately 4.1 million people, on the Northern tip of Sumatra Island in Indonesia. During the past 28 years Acehnese have suffered from conflict between the separatist movement (Free Aceh Movement, Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, GAM) and the Indonesian government. This war has already claimed something between 12,000 and 20,000 lives. Nordic countries have had an impact on the Aceh conflict, already for a long time. The leadership of the exiled separatist government resides in Sweden and more recently Finland's former president, Mr. Martti Ahtisaari has taken lead in the facilitation and mediation of a historical peace process between the conflicting parties. President Ahtisaari was Finland's

President from 1994 until year 2000. He has lead high profile mediation efforts in the Kosovo conflict (during his presidency), conflict on independence in Namibia, Northern Ireland, and in many other parts of the world. The first round of Aceh peace negotiations took place in Helsinki at the end of January 2005, the second in February and the third round has been scheduled for April.

Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) has lent its expertise and resources for work offering expert assistance for the facilitation of peace negotiations between the government of Indonesia and the separatist movement. For the purpose of facilitation of the Peace Talks, President Ahtisaari and the facilitation team have established and keep contacts with Dr Timo

Kivimäki of NIAS. Kivimäki has already previously lead several conflict-related expert missions for Danish, Finnish and Swedish Foreign Ministries, as well as for many EU and UN organizations.

In addition to Kivimäki, the Indonesian Conflict Studies Network, ICSN, a network coordinated at NIAS, has participated in assisting the mediating team. The ICSN coordinator of the Aceh operations, Mr. Azhari Idris acts as an expert on the economic side of the dispute, while Mr. Delsy Ronnie of the ICSN, is helping the mediating team with issues related to the involvement of the civil society. The aim of the Indonesian Conflict Studies Network is to facilitate Nordic-Indonesian research collaboration and to build up university-based conflict prevention/resolution capacity in Indonesia's conflict areas. The usefulness of the expertise of the ICSN-trained scholars for the mediating team of the Aceh Peace Process is a concrete proof that some valuable capacity has been managed to be created in Aceh. ■

NIAS 18/02/05

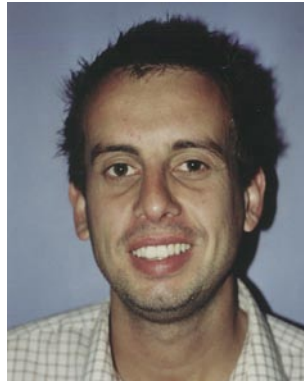


Hasan di Tiro, leader of Free Aceh Movement, and Zainal Abdulah, 'Foreign Minister' of Free Aceh Movement, photographed in June 2004.

Staff News



Martin Beck holds a BA in East Asian studies from Copenhagen University. He is currently working on his MA (International Development and Cultural Studies) at Roskilde University Centre. The focus is on China's Communist Party's development discourse and its securitization of Chinese cultural traits in order to mobilize the public and achieve economical development. The thesis is to be finalized by mid-2005.



Ruben Thorning recently got his MA with distinction in International Politics and Security from the University of Bradford, UK. He is currently working on a manuscript provisionally entitled 'Paramilitaries and the privatisation of civil security: exploring informal security structures in Indonesia and Nigeria' to be published by NIAS Press later this year.



Anna Kiertzner, student at the Institute of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen, is writing an MA thesis on Dalits and Human Rights. Anna Kiertzner has just returned from 8 months fieldwork in India, where she has studied local NGOs working with the so called 'untouchables' or 'Dalits' in a Human Rights framework.



Senior Researcher **Michael Jacobsen** left NIAS on 1 March to take up his new position as Visiting Associate Professor at the Asia Research Centre, Copenhagen Business School.



Nicole Danielsen has worked as library assistant at NIAS LINC since January 2005. She takes care of usual library tasks such as administration of the journal collection, assisting librarians, etc.

She holds a BA in Korean Studies from Copenhagen University and is currently working on her MA thesis on Korea's role in the international relations of East Asia.

New Board Members

At the time when *NIASnytt* went to print, Board representatives from the Nordic NIAS Council were yet to be appointed.



Dean **Tage Bild**, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Copenhagen
Chairman of the Board



Professor **Roger Greatrex**, Director, Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University
Deputy Chairman of the Board



Professor **Kjeld Erik Brødsgaard**, Director, Asia Research Centre, Copenhagen Business School



Director **Thorkil Kastberg Christensen**
NOVO



Senior Researcher **Geir Helgesen**
Staff Representative



NIAS SUPRA (Support Programme for Asian Studies) – the Student’s Gateway to NIAS and Asia

New! Students from institutions belonging to the ‘Nordic NIAS Council’ (www.nias.ku.dk/nnc) will have priority access to fully-financed NIAS SUPRA scholarships.

Join the club! The NIAS SUPRA was initiated in 1993. The programme is open to students resident in the Nordic countries, who have been admitted to a university MA or PhD programme and who actively carry out work on an Asian topic. To become a member of the NIAS SUPRA

programme, the student must register their project and CV in NIAS’s contact database <http://www.nias.ku.dk/contact/contactdtb.htm>

NIAS SUPRA gives support to graduate and postgraduate students resident in the Nordic countries who have been admitted to a university MA or Ph.D. program and are actively carrying out work in Asian studies.

NIAS SUPRA package

Scholarships for visiting MA students and PhD candidates

We offer two kinds of scholarships to the student members of the SUPRA programme:

- **Fully-financed Nordic Scholarships for members of Nordic NIAS Council**
For students affiliated with institutions that are members of the Nordic NIAS Council (see www.nias.ku.dk). All scholarships cover travel expenses, accommodation and full board at “Nordisk Kollegium”.
- **Öresund Scholarships for students from Lund University.** NIAS will reimburse daily commuting costs.
- **Students from non-members of Nordic NIAS Council will have to pay for accommodation and transportation.** NIAS SUPRA will be happy to provide information on inexpensive accommodation in Copenhagen.

Application deadlines in 2005: 4 April, 5 September and 28 November.

Application forms are available at <http://www.nias.ku.dk/activities/supra/scholarships.htm#students>.

Services

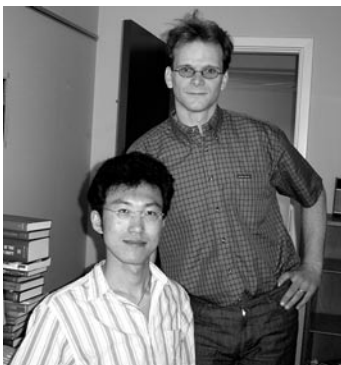
The librarians at NIAS offer a comprehensive introduction to the use of the resources at NIAS LINC to the holders of scholarships, who will also have at their disposal a suitably equipped work place. They will be able to interact with NIAS researchers and will have the opportunity to participate in the various activities at NIAS while being here.

NIAS LINC – NIAS Library and Information Centre is an open-access library. See www.niaslinc.dk

Other services include thesis advice, invitations to participate in courses and workshops, the possibility of having one’s PhD thesis published by NIAS Press as a monograph, discount on NIAS Press publications, and the supply, free of charge, of *NIAS Nytt - Asia Insights*, NIAS’s quarterly on Asian affairs, and SUPRA News and SUPRA Bulletin, NIAS’ electronic student newsletters on Asian studies.

Work place

For SUPRA students living in or near Copenhagen, there is a possibility of applying for a workplace (‘studieplads’) at NIAS where we would expect you to become part of the Asia research environment at the institute.



**NIAS SUPRA
received 47 students
in 2004**

A Retreat at NIAS? – Scholarships for Nordic Guest Researchers

NIAS offers special scholarships for senior researchers and post-docs from members of the Nordic NIAS Council (www.nias.ku.dk/nnc) to work in a stimulating research environment and use the research facilities at NIAS for periods of two or four weeks. Longer stays are possible, but need to be negotiated. The scholarship provides the affiliated Nordic researchers with an opportunity to stay at NIAS, covering inexpensive travel to and from Copenhagen and accommodation at “Nordisk Kollegium” (www.noko.dk).

The visiting scholar enjoys full access to the library and information services of NIAS LINC (www.nias.linc.dk), office facilities, contact networks and scholarly environment while being at NIAS.

More information and an application form can be found at <http://www.nias.ku.dk/activities/supra/scholarships.htm#students>



Recent Visitors



Bruce Henry Lambert from the European Institute of Japanese Studies at the Stockholm School of Economics held a Guest Researcher Scholarship in December. He is working on a EUEREC (European University for Entrepreneurship) project dealing with *Entrepreneurial University Projects in Asia: Benchmark Cases*.



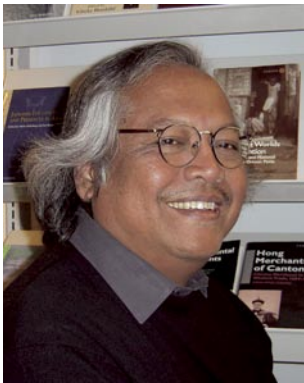
Esther Zwart, Ph.D. candidate, from the dept of Culture, Organization and Management, Vrije University in Amsterdam, will be attached to NIAS as a guest-researcher for three months, starting 7 March. During her stay at NIAS she hopes to make a big step towards finalizing her dissertation on *Local Business Identity and Regional Interdependencies. Processes of ethnic and national identification in Malaysian-Chinese transnational business coalitions*.



Samuli Leminen, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Helsinki, held a Contact Scholarship at the end of January. His MA thesis is on *Hindu-Muslim Violence in India: The symbolism and Patterns of Religious Violence in Gujarat 2002*.



Rüdiger Frank, currently Professor of East Asian Political Economy at the University of Vienna, visited NIAS in February, collaborating with Geir Helgesen. He has written several articles on economic reforms in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), ideological changes and EU-DPRK relations.



Shamsul A.B. worked at NIAS in the beginning of March. Shamsul A.B. is Professor of Social Anthropology and currently also Director of Institute of the Malay World & Civilization (ATMA) and the recently established Institute of Occidental Studies (IKON) at the National University of UKM.



Lill Margrethe Vramo and **Marte Kjær Galtung** from the Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Oslo, had each a Contact Scholarship in January. Lill's MA thesis is on *Fair Trade in Unfair World (Bangladesh and Norway)* and Marte is writing on *Children of Migrant Workers in a Chinese Industrialized Village*.



Dr **Hua Han**, a guest researcher at the Program for Contemporary Silk Road Studies at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University, visited NIAS in the beginning of March. She is Associate Professor at the School of International Studies (SIS), Peking University. Her research interests rest on security-related issues, such as international arms control and nonproliferation, and China's security strategy on its periphery, including Asia-Pacific and South Asia.



Kristin Svartveit from the Institute of Social Anthropology at the University of Bergen, and **Naichuan Miao** from the Institute of Journalism and Communication at Stockholm University, held a SUPRA Scholarship each in the beginning of March. Kristin's MA thesis on *Taichi as Phenomenon in Chinese Culture* and Naichuan Miao is writing his MA thesis on *The Emperor's New Clothes – Media Policy by the New Chinese Leadership*.



Wang Fengxian from the Institute of Sociology, Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, worked at NIAS for two weeks in January–February. She collaborates with NIAS Senior Researcher Cecilia Milwertz on the project *Chinese Women Moving Boundaries – Activism, Constraint and Support*. Wang Fengxian’s stay was financed by a grant from the Danish Social Science Research Council (SSF).



Juho Simpura from the University of Helsinki had a Contact Scholarship in December. His MA thesis is on *China’s Rhetoric and Politics in and out of the United Nations 1963–1974*.



Kjersti Skjervheim, Department of Social Anthropology, University of Bergen, and **Torgrim Ødegaard**, Department of Visual Cultural Studies, University of Tromsø, held a Contact Scholarship each in February. Kjersti is writing an MA thesis on *Young Rural University Students in Kathmandu, Nepal*, Torgrim’s MA thesis is on *The Mahar Community in Maharashtra, India*.



Farhat Taj, Centre for Women’s and Gender Studies, University of Bergen, held a Contact Scholarship at the end of January. She is preparing a Ph.D. project on *Women-Specific Islamization in Pakistan Extending its Tentacles to Norway*.



Ph.D. Candidate **Ajaree Tavornmas** from the Department of Politics, International Relations and European Studies, Loughborough University (UK), presently affiliated to Lund University’s Department of Political Science, has been awarded a workplace at NIAS for two months, starting 15 March. Ajaree Tavornmas is carrying out a Ph.D. project on *The European Union’s Commercial Strategies towards Asia*.



Dr **Joseph Y.S. Cheng**, City University of Hong Kong, visited NIAS in February for a roundtable discussion with specially invited journalists and researchers. He also gave a seminar presentation on *The Potential for Civil Unrest in China* at Copenhagen Business School (here photographed together with Senior Researcher Michael Jacobsen, NIAS).



Geir Sigurdsson, who recently defended his Ph.D. thesis on *Learning and Li: The Confucian Process of Humanization through Ritual Propriety* at the University of Hawai’i at Manoa, visited NIAS in February. He is preparing to set up a China studies programme at the University of Akureyri in Iceland.



Bu Wei from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) in Beijing worked at in December. Bu Wei is collaborating with Cecilia Milwertz on the research project *Organizing for Gender Equality in China*.

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Kristina Lindell, 1928–2005



Kristina Lindell, renowned scholar of Asian folklore, linguistics and culture, internationally well known in particular for her long-term research on and engagement for the culture of the Kammu people of Southeast Asia, passed away on February 8, 2005, in Lund, Sweden.

Kristina Lindell was born in Lund in 1928, and Lund University was for many years the home base for her wide-ranging research in Asia, which earned her an honorary doctorate, the prestigious Rausing prize. Kristina Lindell contributed decisively and long-term to the establishment and development of Asian studies at Lund University, including its department for Asian languages and its center for East and Southeast Asian Studies, from the 1970s and onwards. She also earned a Thai order for her efforts in promoting the teaching of Thai at Lund. She was a superb teacher, not least in languages, an outstanding academic leader and administrator, and an accomplished Sinologist, linguist and Asian folklorist with broad interest and knowledge in many adjacent fields. She was also a

warm, colourful and distinctive person whose house was always open to visitors, a producer of wonderful children's books, and an inspiration in scholarly perseverance, curiosity, and dedication for her many students in a host of different fields.

Over more than three decades, Lund University's research project on the heritage of the Kammu resulted in an impressive list of publications that received international scholarly acclaim. Of significance here were the following volumes published via NIAS and Curzon Press: *Folk Tales from Kammu I–VI*, *The Kammu Year*, and *Hunting and Fishing in a Kammu Village*.

The Journal of the Siam Society described these books (in all of which Kristina played a leading but collaborative role) as

of enormous value to the study of all aspects of Southeast Asia, not only for their insights into the Khmu language and culture and to the field of folklore generally, but because the Khmu, ranging over so much of the northern mainland, have become a repository for much that has been lost or ignored in other literate culture.

Only weeks before her death, Kristina contacted NIAS Press expressing lively interest in the forthcoming publications of two volumes on Kammu music involving Håkon Lundström and Damrong Tayanin. She also warned that a further *Folk Tales from Kammu* volume was in preparation. It thus seems incomprehensible that this valuable whirlwind is suddenly stilled and that the throngs of visitors passing through her Lund apartment must now find warmth and purpose elsewhere in this world.



A person of many talents, Kristina's own illustrations can often be found in her Kammu Series. The wasp appeared on the cover of *Folk Tales from Kammu – V*, NIAS Monograph series No. 66, Curzon Press 1995

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