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Scope

“Global Perspectives on Japan” focuses on developing a global perspective on the study of Japan and Asia. The journal promotes innovative, interdisciplinary, inter-regional and transnational approaches to Japanese Studies.

The journal aims to be a venue for scholarship in E.M.E.A. region with a special focus on Turkey and neighboring regions. It especially encourages scholars from the Middle East, Balkans, Central Asia and the Mediterranean but also welcomes scholars from other parts of the world.

GPJ invites papers in the fields of history, humanities, and social sciences including topics of the past and the present. In addition to articles, the journal publishes occasional article size translations, book reviews, and surveys of current trends in Japanese and Asian Studies.

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Table of Contents

Editor's Note

Erdal K. Yalcin 9

Abstracts 13

Articles

Narrative Development across Cultural and Historical Contexts: A Case Study of the Asian Versions of *The Homecoming Husband*

Saida Khalmirzaeva 19

Japanese Sōtō Zen Monastery as a Worldly Institution

Merve Susuz Aygöl..... 38

Strengthening Germany-Japan Security Cooperation: An Examination of the Trends, Reasons, and Challenges

Weijing Xing..... 70

An Elite Analysis: Reimagining LDP's Factions, 1955-1993

Yalın Akçevin 100

Selected Abbreviated Translations

International Comparison of Constitutional Reform Processes In Terms of The Requirements of Indirect And Direct Democracy

Takashi Kitamura 125

The Image of "the State" Seen in Japanese Historical Novels: From Nation-state to a New Public Order Like The EU

Inoue Noriyuki 157

**Current Status and Issues of Basic Education Guarantee
in Japan under the Corona Crisis**

Makiko Shinya, Yohei Tanada 171

**Cognitive Linguistics and Japanese-Language Education:
How to deal with cross-cultural conflict?**

Michiyo Moriya 181

**From The Perspective of Language Simplification
Easy Japanese and Sign Language News**

Matsumoto Miho 197

**Constitutional Amendment Debates in Japan
Translated Abstracts of Selected Recent Japanese Literature**

**Public Opinion on Constitutional Amendment in Postwar Japan:
An Analysis of a “Pooling the Polls” Method**

Hirofumi Miwa, Shiro Sakaiya 217

**A Study on the Civilian Control concerning the Constitution of Japan,
Article 66th Paragraph 2**

Isaku Shibata 217

**Democracy and Constitutional Amendment regarding
the Constitution of Japan**

Ryosuke Yamada 218

**The Process of Making “Draft of Constitutional Revisions by Hisatada
HIROSE”: The Note of Arguments About Constitutional Revisions**

Keisuke Arakuni 219

**On Liberal Democratic Party’s Draft Revision of
Japanese Constitution**

Shigeaki Iijima 220

Problems of the Bill for a Referendum on the Amendment of the Constitution of Japan	
Shigeaki Iijima.....	221
Memorandum on the Referendum Law for the Constitutional Amendments: From the Perspective of the People's Freedom of Speech on the Right to Know	
Hiroyuki Ota.....	223
The Making of the Amendment Clause in the Japanese Constitution of Japan - Formation on Process of the MacArthur Draft and its Background	
Masatoshi Takahashi	224
Significance of Unwritten Constitution in England and Japan: As Help of Consideration of the Problem of Amendment to the Japanese Constitution	
Yoshimine Komori.....	226
Comments on the Chapter 1 “The Emperor” of the Draft for the Amamdment of the Constitution of Japan by the Liberal Democratic Parly of Japan: In Contrast to the Current Constitution	
Toru Enoki.....	227
A Short Bibliography on Recent Scholarship	
Hiroto Naiki.....	229
Book Review: Late Ottoman Istanbul Theater from a Japanese Perspective by Yuzo Nagata and Hikari Egawa	
Selçuk Esenbel	237

Editor's Note

Erdal K. Yalcin

Dear Readers,

As the pandemic gradually recedes from our daily lives, humanity is now facing a brand new challenge: A disruptive technological advancement called ChatGPT. Though it must have been brewing for several years, its announcement to the world in January this year, and its opening, to the usage of people other than experts in the field has attracted immense attention from the public while triggering controversy around the globe. Some of us warmly welcomed it as a useful device that will enhance our lives and assist us in our work routine; while others expressed their fears that AI may soon surpass human capacity and evolve into a super intelligence far beyond our control. No matter which side one chooses, it absolutely is clear that nothing will be the same from this point on. I believe invention (and/or creation) of artificial intelligence marks a paradigm change in human history. We humans, thanks to the invention of writing, were able to pile up and transfer our knowledge to next generations which in turn has provided humankind with a vertical memory surpassing human lifetime. This accumulation of knowledge has made it possible for us to add incremental findings or answers we have found on the way leading us to this level of civilization.

But sitting in front of a computer and witnessing it producing elaborate answers to our (intentionally) complex questions (in our mother tongue) is a life-changing experience. For our generation which grew up with science-fiction movies, this experience is almost uncanny... We used rotary dial telephones by rotating the dial clockwise until our finger hits the metal stop; we witnessed b&W TV sets; we saw the rapid development of personal computers, video players, game devices and smartphones bringing all

together, but still this AI is something by far different. For the first time in human history, we have managed to find a way to expand our knowledge horizontally and vertically at the same time. So it is now both transferrable through generations and accessible in its entirety to each and everyone of us who are capable of asking profound, meaningful questions.

In the final analysis, this drastic change will clearly have an impact on all of our lives, and we will surely experience how...

On our part, we have been continuing our efforts to expand our knowledge on our field Japanese studies since our last issue was published a year ago. We are still indebted to Toshiba International Foundation (TIFO) for their generous support to our journal, without their kind assistance GPJ 6 may not have been possible at all. I also would like to express my gratitude to the Japanese Studies Association of Turkey (JAD) for standing firm behind this ambitious enterprise.

The main topic we chose for this issue was “Constitutional Amendment Debates in Japan”. To serve that end; we have abbreviated and translated an important article by Takashi Kitamura (NUCB Business School) titled 『憲法改正手続の国際比較—間接民主制及び直接民主制の要件の観点から—』 “International Comparison of Constitutional Reform Processes in Terms of the Requirements of Indirect and Direct Democracy”. In addition we have the translations of ten abstracts of selected recent Japanese literature on the subject, as well as a short bibliography containing 60 entries on recent scholarship about constitutional reform discussions in Japan. Providing bibliographical information to assist researchers who have limited access to Japanese sources is gradually becoming a popular section within the pages of GPJ. We are planning to continue this effort which started with GPJ5 in the future.

In this issue, we are featuring four original articles on a variety of topics selected for their novel perspectives they bring to the field of Japanese studies. First one is; “Narrative Development across Cultural and Historical Contexts: A Case Study of the Asian Versions of The Homecoming Husband” by Saida Khalmirzaeva (Okayama University). Second is; “Japanese Sōtō Zen Monastery as a Worldly Institution” by Merve Susuz Aygül (Amasya University). Third is; “Strengthening Germany-Japan Security Cooperation: An Examination of the Trends, Reasons, and Challenges” by Weijing Xing

(Freie Universität Berlin), and finally, “An Elite Analysis: Reimagining LDP’s Factions, 1955-1993” by Yalın Akçevin (Boğaziçi University). You can find the abstracts of these valuable texts in the Abstracts section.

In GPJ No.6, we also included abbreviated translations of four additional articles which were already published in Japanese. These texts were selected due to their original approaches to their subject matter. The articles are: 『日本の歴史小説に見る「国家」像 — 国民国家からEUのような新しい公的秩序へ』 “The Image of ‘State’ Seen in Japanese Historical Novels: From Nation-state to a New Public Order Like The EU” by Inoue Noriyuki (Kobe University); 『コロナ禍における日本の基礎教育保障の現状と課題 — 日本語教室・識字学級・夜間中学の現場より—』 “Current Status and Issues Concerning Basic Education Guarantee in Japan under the Corona Crisis” by Makiko Shinya (Osaka Sangyo University) and Yohei Tanada (The Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute -BLHRRI); 『認知言語学と日本語教育—異文化摩擦にいかに対処すべきか—』 “Cognitive Linguistics and Japanese-Language Education: How to deal with cross-cultural conflict?” by Michiyo Moriya (SOKA University), and 『言語の簡略化から見た「やさしい日本語」と「手話ニュース」』 “From The Perspective of Language Simplification Easy Japanese and Sign Language News” by Matsumoto Miho (Mukogawa Women’s University) respectively.

Hoping this issue may contribute to global scholarship on Japanese studies, and waiting for your valuable contributions for our next issue.

Greetings from a starry spring night in Istanbul, to a new era for our world....

Erdal K. Yalcin (Ph.D.)
Editor-in-chief

Abstracts

Articles

Narrative Development across Cultural and Historical Contexts: A Case Study of the Asian Versions of *The Homecoming Husband*

Saida Khalmirzaeva
(Okayama University)

The story of a husband who returns home in disguise after a long absence, strings his distinctive bow, punishes his wife's suitors, and reunites with his family is best known through its earliest recorded version, the *Odyssey*, and is widely represented in folk traditions throughout the world. A thorough comparative analysis of these tales and research on their historical and cultural background suggests that the original tale could have been transmitted from a place of origin to other parts of the world, giving birth to regional versions, such as Central Asian *Alpomish*, Japanese *Yuriwaka Daijin*, and other tales. My research led me to conclude that certain religious practices and population movements were drivers for the dissemination, development, and performance format transformations of this tale-type across the length and breadth of Eurasia.

This paper is part of a broader research on the tale-type *The Homecoming Husband*. It focuses on four stories representing the tale-type in Asia: *Alpomish* (Central Asia), *The Epic of King Gesar* (Tibet, Mongolia, etc.), *The Song of Chunhyang* (Korea), and *Yuriwaka Daijin* (Japan). In this paper, firstly, I identify major structural elements in each story and analyze how the stories based on the same pattern were narrated across sociocultural and historical contexts. Namely, what social customs, rituals, and beliefs are reflected in each tale, and how these affect the narrative development. Secondly, I discuss the possibility of a historical connection between the Asian Versions of *The Homecoming Husband*.

Keywords: The Homecoming Husband, tale-type, folklore, The Odyssey, transmission



Japanese Sōtō Zen Monastery as a Worldly Institution

Merve Susuz Aygöl
(Amasya University)

The Buddhist monastery is idealized as an institution free from worldly pursuits. The monks who enter the monastery need to leave their worldly interests and desires and adopt an entirely new way of life. However, in reality, in addition to its religious function the Buddhist monastery has been an institution with economic, political, and social aspects throughout its history, and has also existed as one of the centers where artistic activities are concentrated. The monks, who were supposed to leave their worldly interests and desires outside the monastery gate, have not cut off their relations with the worldly life, on the contrary, they returned to the world they left with transformed forms of relationships. One of the most obvious examples of this transformative effect of worldly pursuits on the monastic institution and the monk profile is the Japanese Sōtō Zen school. This article discusses the claim that the monastery and monks are not free from worldly interests, in the example of the Sōtō Zen school, based on Keizan Shingi, the text of monastic rules written by Keizan (1268-1325), the second important name of the school after Dōgen (1200-1253). The Sōtō school, which was founded by Dōgen on an ascetic monastic understanding, began to transform into a kind of folk religion that responded to the wishes and needs of the people within the framework of Keizan's policy of spreading the school to the people. This transformation has led to a radical change in the monastery and the monk profile by bringing worldly pursuits inside the monastery walls. Idealized as an institution free from worldly interests, the monastery had a great economic existence, and political, social, and artistic activities were included in the ritual routine of the monastery. On the other hand, the monks who had to abandon their worldly pursuits returned to worldly life in different ways as political actors, a kind of spiritual members of their families, and artists.

Keywords: Buddhist monastery, Zen Buddhism, Sōtō School, Sōtō monks, worldly interests



Strengthening Germany-Japan Security Cooperation: An Examination of the Trends, Reasons, and Challenges

Weijing Xing
(Freie Universität Berlin)

Despite being the world's third- and fourth-largest economies, political partners sharing democratic values, and important security allies of the United States, Germany, and Japan security ties stayed limited for a long period. However, since 2020, against the background of Germany's adoption of policy guidelines for the Indo-Pacific region and the formation of Germany's new government, Germany-Japan security cooperation has been strengthening.

This article aims to examine the trends of, the reasons behind, and the challenges to strengthening Germany-Japan security cooperation. The first section of this article explains the concepts of "security" and "cooperation" and then examines two trends that characterize bilateral security cooperation. The two trends are the increasing frequencies and contents of high-level communication regarding security affairs and the expansion of cooperation areas ranging from traditional security issues to non-traditional security issues. The second section explains three reasons at international, bilateral, and domestic levels that have contributed to the strengthening Germany-Japan security cooperation. The reasons include Germany's security-economy dilemma with China, Japan's issue-linkage tactic towards Germany, and Germany's domestic preference structure in favor of the value-based foreign policy. Before drawing the conclusion, section three identifies challenges to Germany-Japan security cooperation in the future, which include China's foreign policy toward Germany, Japan's foreign policy toward Russia and China, and Germany's shifting policy for the Indo-Pacific.

Keywords: Germany, Japan, security, cooperation, foreign policy, Germany-Japan relations



An Elite Analysis: Reimagining LDP's Factions, 1955-1993

Yalın Akçevin
(Boğaziçi University)

The factions of the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan have been studied from cultural and functional-structural viewpoints, and have been characterized as being integral to both the functioning and breakdown of the Japanese political system and the LDP.

This study seeks to expand the discussion on the factions by moving beyond both these existing viewpoints by using elite and Weberian theory, as well as through a reconstruction of available data and discourse on the subject. The aim here is to reexamine the functions of the factions and their political significance, seeking to reconceptualize them as politically engaged elite organizations. The findings indicate that the factions of the LDP are competing elite organizations with discernible policy involvements and differentiations, both from a theoretical and evidential perspective.

Keywords: Elite theory, Weberian theory, Liberal Democratic Party of Japan, factions, elite organizations



International Comparison of Constitutional Reform Processes In Terms of The Requirements of Indirect And Direct Democracy

Takashi Kitamura

This paper is an international comparison of the requirements for indirect and direct democracy in the constitutional revision process. It aims to examine whether a “comparison with other countries’ constitutional revision procedures” is a valid basis for amending Article 96 of the Constitution of Japan by making an international comparison of the requirements for indirect and direct democracy in the constitutional revision process.

Keywords: Indirect democracy, direct democracy, the constitution of Japan, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), constitutional reform



The Image of ‘State’ Seen in Japanese Historical Novels: From Nation-state to a New Public Order Like The EU

Inoue Noriyuki
(Kobe University)

This paper is an attempt to search for traces of the notion of “state” within Japanese historical novels. It starts with the historical aspect of state development: The image of the state in Japan since the pre-modern period, and continues with the modernization in Japan and its downfall after the foundation of the Empire of Japan; the new modernization after World War II and its demise; the solution to the public

form of the new future: Public government as a way of networking instead of human connection. The paper concludes with an evaluation of the literature reflecting on the social circumstances throughout the period in question.

Keywords: Nation-state, Japanese literature, modernization, state, Empire of Japan



Current Status and Issues of Basic Education Guarantee in Japan under the Corona Crisis

Makiko Shinya
(Osaka Sangyo University)

Yohei Tanada
(BLHRR)

This article clarifies four points with respect to the current status and challenges of basic education guarantee in Japan during the coronavirus pandemic: “Decrease in the number of learners and supporters”, “Possibilities and challenges of online activities”, “Growing needs for basic education”, and “Need for a fact-finding survey”. The background of the decrease in the number of learners and supporters can be attributed to (1) the decrease in the number of new learners due to restrictions on the number of foreign immigrants, (2) the long-term suspension of activities, and (3) the departure of learners and supporters due to difficulties and insecurity in terms of living and health. In the field of basic education guarantee for the coronavirus pandemic, the function of consultation as well as support for daily life, health, and application procedures for special fixed benefits, vaccinations proves to be indispensable.

Keywords: Basic education guarantee, coronavirus, pandemic, school attendance, Japanese education



**Cognitive Linguistics and Japanese-Language Education:
How to deal with cross-cultural conflict?**

Michiyo Moriya
(SOKA University)

Japanese companies are increasingly expanding their employment quotas for international students and foreigners in recent years. On the other hand, this movement has exceeded expectations and is having a major impact on the field of Japanese language education. This paper examines the current situation and problems surrounding Japanese language education at Japanese universities, analyses the cases of cross-cultural conflicts from the perspective of cognitive linguistics, and based on that, proposes training of mentors equipped with knowledge of cognitive linguistics to cope with cross-cultural conflicts.

Keywords: Cognitive linguistics, cross-cultural conflicts, employment, Japanese language, JLPT



**From The Perspective of Language Simplification Easy Japanese
and Sign Language News**

Matsumoto Miho
(Mukogawa Women's University)

With the increase in the number of local residents with foreign roots, "Easy Japanese" for people who do not speak Japanese as their first language has been receiving attention. "Easy Japanese" is Japanese that has been simplified by controlling the vocabulary and grammar of ordinary Japanese; however, there is no established theory as to what constitutes "easy", and there is ambiguity about the matter.

Therefore, this research, it is aimed to investigate what "Easy Japanese" is, how it is simplified, and how native Japanese speakers can make full use of it. Hence, "Sign Language News", which has a track record in broadcasting and other activities, is analyzed from the viewpoint of "language simplification" in sociolinguistics.

Keywords: Easy Japanese, Japanese language, Sign Language News, language simplification, sociolinguistics