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## German geographical research on Japan

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**No. 33/2000**

**German Geographical Research  
on Japan**

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Deutsche Geographische Japanforschung /  
La recherche géographique allemande sur le Japon**

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# German Geographical Research on Japan /

Prof. Dr. Winfried Flüchter

## *Abstract:*

Comparatively speaking, Germans have made a substantial contribution to the international geographical research on Japan. This is true not only of the period of seclusion and the opening of Japan, but also of the entire 20th century. Four periods are differentiated on the basis of research methods and main focus of research:

- Seclusion (Tokugawa Period 1600-1868) and Opening of Japan (Meiji Era 1868-1912): Compendiums and Encyclopaedic Regional Studies
- Post-Meiji Era, the World Wars and the Period Between (1913-1945): Japan's Role in German Geopolitics, Japan Seen Through Its Ports and Urban Landscapes
- War and Post-War Period: Landscape Between Nature and Culture, the Cultural Landscape as Objectified Spirit
- Later Post-War Period up to 2000 – Modern Geographical Research on Japan: Increasing Specialisation, Problem Orientation, Language Skills

The greatest stress is placed on the most recent phase of research, in which new accents, protagonists, institutions, results and desiderata are presented.

# Deutsche Geographische Japanforschung

Prof. Dr. Winfried Flüchter

## *Zusammenfassung:*

Im internationalen Vergleich ist die ausländische geographische Japanforschung in entscheidendem Maße von Deutschen geprägt. Dies gilt nicht nur für die Zeit der Abschließung und Öffnung Japans, sondern auch für das gesamte 20. Jahrhundert. Der Beitrag unterscheidet vier Forschungsphasen, differenziert nach Forschungsmethoden und Themenschwerpunkten:

- Abschließung (Tokugawa-Ära 1600-1868) und Öffnung Japans (Meiji-Ära 1868-1912): Kompendien und enzyklopädische Landeskunden
- Post-Meiji-Ära, Kriegs- und Zwischenkriegszeit 1913-1945: Bedeutung Japans für die deutsche Geopolitik, Japan im Spiegel seiner Hafen- und Stadtlandschaft
- Kriegs- und Nachkriegszeit: Landschaft im Spannungsfeld zwischen Natur und Kultur, Kulturlandschaft als objektivierter Geist
- Spätere Nachkriegszeit bis 2000 - moderne geographische Japanforschung: zunehmende Spezialisierung, Problemorientierung, Sprachkompetenz

Der Schwerpunkt liegt auf der jüngsten Forschungsphase, in der neue Akzente, Akteure, Institutionen, Ergebnisse und Desiderata vorgestellt werden.

# La recherche géographique allemande sur le Japon

Prof. Dr. Winfried Flüchter

## *Resumé:*

Vue sur un plan international, la recherche géographique du Japon par des géographes étrangers est marquée d'une façon décisive par les allemands. Ceci ne vaut pas seulement pour la période de la fermeture et de l'ouverture du Japon, mais aussi pour l'ensemble du 20<sup>ième</sup> siècle. L'article distingue entre quatre phases de recherche selon les méthodes de recherche et les sujets traités:

1. La fermeture (l'ère Tokugawa 1600 - 1868) et l'ouverture (l'ère Meiji 1868 - 1912) du Japon: compendiums et géographies régionales encyclopédiques.
2. L'ère post-Meiji, les périodes de guerre et entre les guerres 1913-1945: l'importance du Japon pour la géopolitique allemande, le Japon vu à travers ses ports et villes.
3. La période de la guerre et après-guerre: le paysage entre nature et culture, les terres cultivées comme esprit objectivé.
4. De l'après-guerre à l'an 2000 - la recherche géographique moderne sur le Japon: spécialisation croissante, orientation vers les problèmes, compétence linguistique.

L'accent est mis sur la phase de recherche la plus récente, dans laquelle de nouveaux accents, acteurs, institutions, résultats et desiderata sont présentés.

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# German Geographical Research on Japan<sup>1</sup>

German scholars have made a substantial contribution to the international geographical research on Japan. This is true not only of the period of seclusion and that of the opening of Japan, but also of the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the following this research is divided into four periods on the basis of differences in research methods and in the main focus of research, though the greatest stress will be placed on the most recent phase.

## **1 Seclusion (Tokugawa Period 1600-1868) and Opening of Japan (Meiji Era 1868-1912): Compendiums and Encyclopaedic Regional Studies**

During the period of seclusion it was extremely difficult, indeed even dangerous to do research on Japan. This of course did not hold for the geographer *Bernhard Varenius* from Hitzacker (1622-1650), the author of „*Descriptio Regni Japoniae*“. This first work on Japan ever written by a German was merely a compilation of reports by earlier travellers to East Asia, in particular Marco Polo and St. Francis Xavier. It was, however, definitely true of *Engelbert Kaempfer* from Lemgo (1651-1716) and *Philipp Franz von Siebold* from Würzburg (1796-1866), two German medical doctors in the services of the Dutch East India Company. From the Dutch trading post on the island of Deshima, an artificial island in the harbour of Nagasaki that was the only contact point with Western countries, the two carried out outstanding research on the country and its people under extremely adverse conditions.

First was *Engelbert Kaempfer* (in Deshima from 1690 to 1692), the most important explorer of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. His two-volume masterpiece, „*Geschichte und Beschreibung von Japan*“ („*History and Description of Japan*“), which appeared posthumously in English in 1727, in French and Dutch in 1729 and not until 1777-79 in German (reprinted 1964), deals with

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<sup>1</sup> Slightly extended version of the original paper of Flüchter, Winfried (2000): German Geographical Research on Japan, in Kraas, Frauke and Wolfgang Taubmann (eds.): German Geographical Research on East and Southeast Asia. A Report to the International Geographical Union (IGU). Bonn: Bonner Geographische Abhandlungen 102, pp. 53-70.

history, social structure, religion and natural resources. It also describes special geographical and cultural features of Nagasaki and a trip to Edo. Kaempfer's Japanbild had a forming influence on the European thought of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. He interpreted the Tokugawa shôgun's policy of national seclusion as a decisive precondition for Japan's peaceful peak in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and virtually held it as a model for Europe (cf. Kreiner 1993: 21).

The second great Japan scholar of this period was *Philipp Franz von Siebold*. During his stay in Deshima (1823-29) and on a second trip to Japan after 1859, he managed to gain a great deal of information on botany, ethnology and literature despite the strict regulations on secrecy that were still in force. The result was a large number of publications on Japan (Engelbert Kaempfer - Franz von Siebold Commemorative Volume 1966: 119-129), including his magnum opus of 1830, „Nippon. Archiv zur Beschreibung von Japan“ („Nippon. Archives for the Description of Japan“). Similar to Varenius Siebold's opus does not include an approach of valuation and, consequently, is lacking the aura when compared with Kaempfer's works. However, it had a forming influence on the change of the European Japanbild in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (cf. Kreiner 1993: 24).

In the period after the opening of Japan the first professional German geographer, *Johannes Justus Rein* (1835-1919), explored the Japanese islands. His large two-volume work on Japan, on nature and people (<sup>1</sup>1881, <sup>2</sup>1905) and on agriculture, forestry, industry and commerce (1886), formed the basis of his professional reputation and led to his appointments as professor of geography in Marburg (1876) and Bonn (1883). This work is overwhelming in the sheer amount of details it accumulated and reliably explained, but it is still written entirely in the tradition of older compendiums and fails to reveal any of the methodology of regional geography (cf. Aymans 1991: 198).

The German geographical publications on Japan of this entire epoch reflect the interests of their readers. There was a great demand for knowledge of unfamiliar, remote countries (cf. Troll 1968).

## **2 Post-Meiji Era, the World Wars and the Period Between (1913-1945): Japan's Role in German Geopolitics, Japan as Seen Through Its Ports and Urban Landscapes**

In this tumultuous epoch marked by two World Wars, *Karl Haushofer* (1869-1945) was one of the principal influences on German research on Japan, at least with regard to its impact on public opinion. Haushofer, the leading protagonist of German geopolitics, spent the period from 1908-1910 in Japan. On the basis of his experiences there the former Bavarian army officer and later honorary professor of geography at the University of Munich developed his geopolitical doctrines of limited „Lebensraum” (living space), overpopulation and expansion (Haushofer 1928, 1937, 1939), using the East Asian island kingdom as an example (Haushofer 1913, 1923, 1933, 1941). His arguments focussed around the problem of the „overpopulation” of Japan. Following the traditional pattern, he saw the reasons for the problem as lying in the limited agricultural carrying capacity. In Haushofer's hands Ratzel's interpretation of the history of mankind as a permanent struggle for „Lebensraum” escalated to a diffuse theory that encouraged the „Lebensraum” ideology and the motto „Volk ohne Raum” (Nation Without Room [Living Space]), with which the Nazi regime justified territorial conquests. Haushofer's interpretations of Japanese conditions almost completely ignored the already obvious disparities in Japan's internal development and the possibilities for expanding and intensifying cultivation within the country. Haushofer's incapacity to recognise the opportunities afforded by industrialisation, particularly his aversion against large cities, population agglomeration and urbanisation (which he viewed exclusively negatively, as uprooting, rural exodus, dependence, instability) distorted his view of Japan, the world and Germany. In retrospect many of Haushofer's geopolitical concepts have been refuted, using Japan as an example (Schöller 1982, 1989, Flüchter 1995e).

Scientifically speaking, the most important authority on Japan of this period was *Ludwig Mecking* (1879-1952), who was, in contrast to Haushofer, a professional geographer and professor of geography at the University of Hamburg (cf. Manshard 1993). His field trip to Japan in 1926 was the basis of his masterwork on Japanese ports (Mecking 1931). The principal focus of this work lay on physiognomy/location-related and historical/genetic aspects, in accordance with the geographical interests of the time: causal relationships between natural and economic determinants within the context of hinterland, port form,

settlements and economic influence of ports. Further works on Japan dealt with urban and settlement research (Mecking 1930, 1931) and the development of large cities in an international context (Great Britain, Germany, USA, Japan; Mecking 1949). The theme of „affinity to the sea” is the common thread running through almost all of his works on Japan and is reflected in the title of his last major work (Mecking 1951). After decades of radical economic and cultural change many of Mecking’s observations no longer hold today. This, however, makes his works anything but obsolete; instead they are a reflection of the drastic changes of the times.

### **3 War and Post-War Period: Landscape Between Nature and Culture, the Cultural Landscape as Objectified Spirit**

The greatest authority on Japan of this period was *Martin Schwind* (1906-1991), who taught at the German school in Tôkyô beginning in the mid-1930s. His travels in the country led to studies on glacial morphology, cultural landscape, economy, emigration and colonisation. His „habilitation” (professoral thesis), submitted to the University of Danzig (1942), was on the transformation of southern Sakhalin (which belonged to Japan from 1905-1945) into a Japanese culture area. Already in this first, unusually comprehensive study (1942), Schwind developed the concept of the cultural landscape as objectified spirit, a concept that he later enhanced. The work is a typical regional geography of its period. Beginning with geology and physical geography, it attempts to relate the various systematic branches of geography to each other, but is predominantly descriptive in its structure.

Early in the post-war period Schwind published a study on the collapse and recovery of the Japanese economy (1954). As headmaster of a secondary school („gymnasium”) in Hannover he was caught in a dilemma between teaching and research. In 1967, at the initiative of Peter Schöller, he was appointed honorary professor at the Department of Geography of the University of Bochum. On the basis of his experiences in Japan not only before the war but also on several trips to East Asia beginning in the mid-1950s, Schwind began what he viewed as his lifework, his trilogy, „Das Japanische Inselreich“ („The Japanese Islands“), (1) The Natural Landscape, (2) The Cultural Landscape, and (3) The Urban and Town Landscapes – the last volume was not completed.

Volume 1 (Schwind 1967, reviewed in Schöller 1968a) deals with landforms, climate, soils, vegetation, fauna and the natural landscape as a whole. Based on an enormous amount of literature, this impressive work presents an enormous amount of meticulously adapted material. Its digressions into the liberal arts are original and highly individualistic. The book, one of its kind in the West, is an indispensable standard work on the natural geography of Japan, although the literature cited is out of date. Volume 2 (Schwind 1981) is likewise a comprehensive and, what is more, an extremely interdisciplinary study of the cultural landscape. In it Schwind resumes his theory of the cultural landscape, already introduced in volume 1, which was influenced by Litt, Spranger and Toynbee. The central focus is on the effects on the cultural landscape of the „responses” of the Japanese state and people to the “challenges” of an „environment” composed of natural conditions, the history of the cultural landscape and decision-makers who influence spatial development. Stimulating and revealing (though occasionally rather idiosyncratic) is the manner in which he makes the reader aware of and interprets fundamental traits of Japanese spatial development in their historical dimension – „objectifications of the human spirit in the cultural landscape.” The underlying speculative hermeneutics and the predominantly encyclopaedic structure of the supplementary theme, „major economic power in a limited space,” were actually no longer in accordance with the current scientific view at the time of publication (1981). The fact that in an age of increasing specialisation in all fields of research an individual still found the courage to present a synoptical, highly interdisciplinary regional geography of such a „difficult” country as Japan makes it so fascinating, but also so problematic (Flüchter 1984c).

Schwind’s final publication was an anthology, published on the occasion of his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday (Schwind 1987), containing 29 contributions by the author, chiefly older ones, on topics related to the geography of East Asia, in particular Japan. These papers, selected from a great variety of widely scattered publications, reflect the range of his research activity and experience from the middle of the 1930s to the middle of the 1980s.

Another of our older contemporaries was *Leopold G. Scheidl*, an Austrian geographer and professor at the University of Economics in Vienna. He worked intensively on Japan in the second half of the 1930s, particularly on the cultural landscape (Scheidl 1937a, 1937b, 1943; cf. Matznetter 1965: 1-17).

Fisheries and marine cultures, a typical branch of the Japanese economy, were the special interest of the geographer and fisheries expert *Fritz Bartz* (1909-1969, professor in Bonn and Freiburg), beginning in the late 1930s. Volume 2 of his three-volume work, „Die großen Fischereiräume der Welt“ („The World’s Great Fishing Grounds“), devotes a great deal of space to Japanese fisheries (Bartz 1965: 279-433).

## **4 Later Post-War Period up to 2000 – Modern Geographical Research on Japan: Increasing Specialisation, Problem Orientation, Language Skills**

### **4.1 New accents, protagonists, institutions**

A trend-setter in geography and geographical research on Japan was *Peter Schöller* (1923-1988). After his accession to the chair of cultural and settlement geography at the University of Bochum in 1964, his department rapidly developed into the main centre for the study of Japanese geography and for research on Japan. Though originally not a specialist on Japan, he developed an interest in Japan by way of urban geography. He made his first visit to Japan in 1959, after finishing his “habilitation,” drawn by the fascination of East Asian cities, particularly Japanese ones. A large number of research trips to East Asia and especially Japan followed, the last in 1987. Though lacking any knowledge of the Japanese language, he was still quite familiar with the problems of this island country. In this he was aided by his special antenna for things foreign. He was also supported by a large number of Japanese colleagues, who accompanied this outstanding representative of German geography on his research trips in the country with great dedication for many years. He deliberately made no attempt to learn Japanese, because he felt the price was too high at his advanced age and because his many activities as teacher and scientist did not leave him the time. Quite often he referred to himself as the last Stone Age scholar, whose lack of language proficiency he asked people to excuse. In the future, however, he felt that precisely because the cultures of East Asia are so very different from the West, serious research without a knowledge of the language should not be condoned. He urgently recommended the younger generation of researchers to obtain a sound knowledge of the language as the key to in-depth empirical work in the social sciences.

In the generation of Schöller’s students, *Winfried Flüchter* (born 1943, since 1987 professor of human geography at the University of Duisburg and founding director of its Institute of

East Asian Studies) was the first to follow up on this advice. After graduation he studied Japanese intensively and was one of the first persons to do geographical field research in Japan on the basis of a sound knowledge of the language. He was also among the first whose scientific work, including his Ph.D. thesis and his „habilitation“, concentrated on Japan. Since Schöller's death in 1988 the focus of German geographical research on Japan has shifted from Bochum to Duisburg. Here, within the framework of new East Asia-related study courses, the Department of Geography has institutional ties to Japan (since 1987) and China (since 1998) (Flüchter 1995a, Derichs et al. 1995). At the University of Duisburg – and this is unique in Germany – it is possible to study geography, along with economics and social sciences, as a major or minor in an integrated programme of East Asian Studies that includes intensive Japanese language training (since 1998 also Chinese). Another student of Schöller's, *Uta Hohn* (since 1988 “Wissenschaftliche Assistentin” of Flüchter and since 1998 lecturer in Duisburg), has also made a name for herself in Japanese studies, especially with her „habilitation” on urban planning (Hohn 2000). Very recently *Thomas Feldhoff*, the first Duisburg student to complete his studies in the East Asian Studies programme with a major in geography, contributed important studies on transportation in Japan.

Parallel to Schöller's work we have that of the Swiss geographer *Hans Boesch* (1911-1978). Though originally a geologist, his later work was in the field of economic geography. The holder of a chair in the Department of Geography of the University of Zurich, he visited Japan regularly in the last years of his life and published his findings in a volume on Japan (*Geographica Helvetica* 4, 1978: 169-172; Schöller 1980).

This phase also includes the work of *Gerhard Aymans* (1931-1996), professor at the Department of Geography of the University of Bonn, who was originally a student of Bartz. Between the 1960s and the 1980s Aymans travelled repeatedly in Japan and published studies on coastal marine economy, including his (unfortunately never published) „habilitation,” and population geography.

Since the 1990s the population geographer and Japan expert *Ralph Lützel*, who worked for many years at the German Institute for Japanese Studies in Tôkyô and is currently „Wissenschaftlicher Assistent” under Josef Kreiner in the Department of Japanology in Bonn, is continuing the Bonn tradition of geographical research on Japan that goes back to J.J. Rein.



There are a few further geographers of the younger generation who have at least a dissertation to demonstrate their expertise on Japan. They include the economist, economic and transportation geographer *Jochen Legewie* (Ph.D. from the School of Economic and Social Sciences of the University of Cologne), who is currently working at the German Institute for Japanese Studies in Tôkyô. Another is the economic geographer *Rolf Schlunze* (Ph.D. from the Department of Geography of the University of Tôkyô), who worked on a project under Peter Dicken in Manchester for a while and is currently a lecturer at the Ôtemon Gakuin University in Ibaraki/Ôsaka. *Carolin Funck* (Ph.D. from the University of Freiburg) is doing research on tourism and regional development and is currently a lecturer at the University of Hiroshima. Finally there is the urban geographer *Silke Vogt* who focusses research on city planning and planning culture (Ph.D. from the University of Bonn 2000).

Characteristic of the above mentioned younger generation of scholars is increasing professional specialisation and a good to excellent knowledge of the language. Though (for the latter reason) *Rolf Sternberg*, professor of economic geography at the University of Cologne, cannot be included among the inner circle of geographers working on Japan, his in-depth comparative studies that include Japan, for instance his „habilitation” (1995), deserve due respect. This also holds for all of the geographical colleagues who work only sporadically, but with great expertise on Japan, e.g. the research group of *Wolf Gaebe*, *Reinhold Grotz* and *Boris Braun* (Stuttgart/Bonn) on innovation oriented small and medium enterprises.

#### **4.2 Problem oriented regional geography (“länderkunde”)**

As Schöller pointed out (1978a), in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a *regional geography* must concentrate on certain major themes, i.e. it must contain a deliberate selection of topics that would be treated equally in an encyclopaedic regional geography. They should include elementary cultural-historical and political-societal forces, a description and appraisal of the natural features and an analysis of the connections between physical, cultural, economic and social structures. An example that is illustrative and problem oriented, though statistically no longer up-to-date, is Schöller’s chapter on Japan in the volume „East Asia“ of the Fischer series, „Länderkunde“ ([Regional Geography], 1978b: 325-440). As a monograph it was

translated into the Japanese under the title, „Japan from the Viewpoint of a West German Geographer“ (Schöller 1980e).

The regional geography by Boesch, also published in 1978, focussed on socio-economic problems. According to their significance for the present time, they are dealt with in the following order: urbanisation, industry, services and original production. Physical geography is only considered where it contributes to the understanding of central problems. Briefer regional geographical publications are structured around various themes to meet individual priorities, e.g. those by Aymans (1974, 1985) and Flüchter (1981, 1994/<sup>2</sup>1998) and textbooks for the senior forms of secondary schools by Flüchter/von der Ruhren (1994) and Herrnleben (<sup>1</sup>1989,<sup>2</sup>1995).

### **4.3 Publications in various branches of geography**

In *physical geography* little has been published since the handbook by Schwind (1967), except for a few brief articles on periglacial and glacial morphology (Ellenberg 1976, 1977; Ellenberg/Hirakawa 1982) and on vegetation geography (Thannheiser 1994). Other short articles have been on the *significance of physical geography for human beings* (Ellenberg 1979, Flüchter 1986) and on *natural disasters* (Hohn/Hohn 1990).

*Economic geography* is heavily represented, especially *industrial geography*. Aymans emphasised the *primary sector* with his papers on fisheries (1976) and aquacultures (1965, 1980a). Agriculture (Bronny 1986), however, has been almost completely disregarded. As for the *secondary sector*, Schöller dealt with the changing industrial structure (1962) within the context of cultural change (1966). Flüchter studied land reclamation along the Japanese coasts to provide space for new industries, a feature that was typical for the phase of rapid growth. The focus was on the functions, structures and impact of the reclaimed areas (*umetate-chi*) (1975, Ph.D. thesis), i.e. on heavy industry in the form of Japanese industrial combines (Flüchter 1976). He also investigated land reclamation from the viewpoints of the expansion of modern infrastructure, the persons involved and the resulting environmental problems (Flüchter 1984b). In particular he dealt with the Bay of Tôkyô, its changing structure and regional planning problems (Flüchter 1985), and the bay reclamation in an international context (1989). The manifold causes of Japan's extraordinarily impressive economic success

up until the beginning of the 1990s, including geographically relevant factors, were analysed by Flüchter (1995c). Hemmert/Lützel (1998) combined general geography and history with economic development. In his “habilitation”, Sternberg (1995/1998) analysed technology policies, high tech industries and high tech regions in an international comparison, in which he subjected sample regions in the U.S., France and Japan (Kyûshû) to a cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis. Legewie (1997b) dealt with the problems arising as Japanese companies are moving production into foreign countries. Economic geographical studies on urban, e.g. enterprise oriented *services* (Eichhorn 1997) are the exception so far.

Geographical studies on *world economics* and Japan’s *foreign orientation* have only existed for a few years. Attention should be drawn to Schlunze’s dissertation (1996), which contains a regionally differentiated analysis of Japanese investments in Germany. Flüchter has written about Japan’s role and influence in East and Southeast Asia (1996), especially with regard to the Japanese electronics industry (1998b). At present it is Legewie who is doing the most intensive research on Japan’s foreign trade connections (Legewie 1998a, 1999b; Blechinger/Legewie 1998), with a special view to Southeast Asia (1997a), 1998c, 1998d, 1999c) and the automobile industry there (1999a).

A striking number of papers are concerned with *settlement geography*, especially *urban geography*. The trailblazer was Schöller with his studies on the growth and change of Japanese urban regions (1962), a century of urban development since the Meiji Restoration (1969), development of underground city centres (1976), urban conservation and environmental preservation (1979), urban concepts of values (1980c) and regional urban types (1983). In addition there are his studies in settlement and religion geography dealing with the centres of Japan’s new religions (Schöller 1984) and with temple towns and temple centres (1986). Flüchter analysed the nature and port-city relationship of large Japanese port cities (1983) and compared the urban development of Tôkyô with that of Berlin (1997a). Studies on *centrality* were published by Schöller (1962, 1980a) and Flüchter (1980a, 1980b), the latter especially with regard to central place preference.

After almost two decades of standstill, research on the structure and problems of Japanese *urban planning* (Flüchter 1978) has been reactivated and intensively pursued by Hohn, initially from the standpoint of urban conservation (1997, 1998), but especially with a view to urban planning, urban renewal and urban reconstruction. Hohn’s comprehensive, profound

empirical study (1998, „habilitation“; Hohn 2000) is essentially a handbook on Japanese urban planning and fills an important gap in Western research on Japan. It is a „must“ for anyone who is seriously interested in planning history, legislation, practice and theory, not only in relation to Japan but on an international scale and as an interdisciplinary challenge (Hohn 1999). Problems of waterfront development with particular regard to the Bay of Tôkyô are analyzed by Hohn/Hohn (2000). Approaches of modern Japanese city planning culture on the micro-level of Tôkyô based on selected machizukuri projects are represented by Vogt (Vogt 2000, Ph.D. thesis). Finally Flüchter (2000) analyzes Tôkyô's earthquake and agglomeration risks from the point of view of city planning and hazard protection.

The particularly severe problems in *regional planning and regional development* faced by Japan in its phase of rapid growth were studied by Schöller (1970) and since then particularly by Flüchter (1990a, 1994-95) and most recently by Lützel (1998). The central problem is that of the growing concentration on the capital, Tôkyô (Schöller 1976, Flüchter 1990b) and, in this connection, the question of the chances (agglomeration advantages) and limits (agglomeration disadvantages) of metropolitan growth (Flüchter 1997b). There have been various studies on regional development on the basis of the technopolis concept (Schöller 1984, Flüchter 1994/<sup>2</sup>1998: 34-38, Sternberg 1995, 1997). The influence of the new media policy on Japanese regional development was investigated by Sternberg (1999).

*Population geography* is represented by a goodly number of studies. In the phase of rapid economic growth Schöller was interested in the problems of internal migration in the context of urban growth and regional development (1968, 1970a, 1970b, 1973). Zielke (1982, Ph.D. thesis) studied the mobility of Japanese managers in Düsseldorf as an example of international migration for a limited period of time. Aymans analysed historical family registers as a source for studies on population geography (1969). He also looked at certain peculiarities in the population development, such as the Japanese generative behaviour in the „year of the fire horse,” 1966 (1980b). Bronny (1984) wrote about the Ainu as a subpolar minority. Since the beginning of the 1990s Lützel has turned his attention to population geography, initially analysing the natural population change from the viewpoint of life expectancy (1991), rapid economic growth (1992, „Diplom” thesis) and especially mortality as an indicator of regional living conditions (1994a, Ph.D. thesis). Further studies have included an investigation of the regional dimension of social problems (Lützel 1994b, 1995a), a review of Japanese language demographical literature (1996a) and, finally, aspects

of the population structure: the foreign population (1995b), the family (1996b) and the elderly (1997).

In the area of *education and educational behaviour*, which is very illuminating for an understanding of Japan, Flüchter (1990, „habilitation”) analysed the connections between university locations, access to education, educational migration in relation to metropolisation, Tôkyô centrality, regional planning and regional, social and gender specific equality.

The fascinating potential of *transportation* in Japan, dealt with in older studies on the Tôkaidô high-speed train (Schöller 1964) and on airport locations (Mayr 1984), has only recently stimulated research. Examples include, first, freight transportation and changes in the logistics of companies (Legewie 1996, Ph.D. thesis) and energy, transportation and telecommunications (Legewie 1998); second, commuting in the Greater Tôkyô region (Eichhorn 1996 „Diplom” thesis, Feldhoff 1998 „Diplom” thesis), and third, air traffic, airport locations and competition between airports (Feldhoff 2000, Ph.D. thesis). The latter outstanding compendium on air traffic in Japan links ecological, economic, political and socio-cultural processes at different levels of scale and provides insights into the role of air traffic in the international competitiveness of large Japanese cities.

*Tourism and recreational behaviour*, themes of a contribution by Schöller (1980), have been intensively investigated by Funck, especially from the viewpoint of regional imbalances (1999, Ph.D. thesis).

Only older articles exist on *environmental protection* (Schwind 1975, Flüchter 1984).

Informative from the point of view of *geography education* is the study by Hillenbrand (1987, „habilitation”) on the view of Germany portrayed in Japanese geography books and geography education.

Apart from Kyûshû/Okinawa (Hemmert/Lützelner 1998) and Hokkaidô (Heltmann 1990, 1996, M.A. thesis), studies on Japanese *regional geography* are almost exclusively limited to the Greater Tôkyô region (cf. above).

## 5 Desiderata and Research Perspectives

Looking at the studies briefly mentioned above, a few suggestions for future research priorities come to mind, though the following list does not pretend to be complete.

1. More attention needs to be paid to the *human ecology* paradigm. Geography, the connecting link and interface between the natural and cultural sciences, should more clearly articulate its competence to evaluate physical, cultural and socio-economic relationships. As examples let us mention: (1) elucidating the contrast between the special Japanese affinity to nature and love of nature so often apostrophised in the literature and their environmental problems and massive interventions in the ecology; (2) research on risks with a view to natural disasters and disaster management and especially the earthquake hazard.
2. More research is necessary along the lines of *behaviour, action and decision theory* at different levels of scale, focussing on the *causes* leading to spatially relevant results and trends, i.e. particularly political and societal *forces*. Here we should especially look at the role of the notorious Japanese „iron triangle,” composed of politics, state bureaucracy and economy, not only in relation to national decisions, e.g. mega-infrastructure projects or moving the capital, but also to regional concerns and impacts, e.g. in the construction branch and in regional development.
3. Due attention should focus on *globalisation* and the challenges to *national, regional and local decision makers* and their (re)actions. Examples that could be mentioned are (1) the status of Japanese *agriculture* from the standpoints of trade liberalisation, economic policies, self-sufficiency and the cultural landscape (with particular consideration to national ideology and the highly charged topic of “paddy rice agriculture”); (2) Japanese *direct investments* and the „hollowing out” of Japanese industry, as production is increasingly being shifted to foreign countries; (3) globalisation and Japan’s *urban system* with particular regard to the *financial system*; (4) a close scrutiny of the „global city” theory, especially in relation to intra-urban disparities.

4. Much more attention should be paid to the *tertiary sector*, particularly including *qualitatively high ranking services* („quaternary sector”), with a view to hierarchisation and regional differentiation. This holds not only for the urban system, but also for regional and national development. An example is the education and qualification system and its significance for the structure of regional labour markets and the revitalisation of regions.
5. More *theory-based* research: it is essential to integrate the research results gained in Japan into the international context, simultaneously questioning or emphasising the Japanese peculiarities. The goal is to overcome both an idiographic approach, which assigns a special or unique role to Japan without perceiving common intercultural features, and a universalistic approach, in which Japan serves merely as a test case to confirm prior hypotheses.

## **6 Co-operation and Future Research**

### **6.1 Intradisciplinary co-operation**

A scholar whose research concentrates on Japan and who has a good command of the Japanese language – though it can never be perfect – is in danger of falling behind the level of highly specialised colleagues in his field. They, in turn, are lacking the socio-cultural and linguistic basis for serious research on Japan. Co-operation between the two, Japan experts and specialists in systematic branches of geography, would provide new ideas and result in more in-depth research. Unfortunately, neither side has shown much interest so far, whether from fear of exposing their own ignorance or from inertia. The new *Working Group East Asia* (spokesman: Winfried Flüchter), which was established at the 52<sup>nd</sup> German Geographical Congress in Hamburg on 7 October 1999, affords opportunities for intradisciplinary work.

### **6.2 Interdisciplinary co-operation**

Intradisciplinary co-operation is difficult enough; interdisciplinary co-operation, though frequently extolled, is even more so. Meanwhile Germany has an institutional infrastructure that encourages interdisciplinary co-operation. In 1989 the „*Vereinigung für*

*sozialwissenschaftliche Japanforschung*” (VSJF: Association for Social Science Research on Japan) was founded by representatives from a number of universities. Its executive board includes a geographer (Winfried Flüchter). The VSJF holds regular annual meetings with an interdisciplinary structure on a designated theme. Before and during the annual meeting of the VSJF there are interdisciplinary open workshops and sessions for various groups of specialists. One of the seven specialised groups, „urban and regional studies,” is headed by geographers (Winfried Flüchter and Uta Hohn).

Interdisciplinary and international exchange is made possible by the *European Association of Japanese Studies (EAJS)* through its congresses, which are held every three years in a European country and which also attract a large number of Japanese scholars. The congresses of the EAJS are divided into several sections. The section „Urban and Environmental Studies” was founded in 1990 by geographers (Augustin Berque and Winfried Flüchter), but also addresses urban and regional researchers, sociologists, architects and engineers, experts in traffic and logistics. Two German geographers have served as convenors so far, Winfried Flüchter (1991 in Berlin) and Uta Hohn (1997 in Budapest).

At the university level, there is the already mentioned interdisciplinary *Institute of East Asian Studies (Institut für Ostasienwissenschaften)* of the University of Duisburg. With its range of subjects and the coherence of the subjects – geography, economics, political and social science, language and culture - this institution offers (for Germany) unique potentials for interdisciplinary research on Japan and East Asia. The members of this institute are currently working on a joint application for an interdisciplinary project, „East Asia between structural change and systemic stability.”

### **6.3 International co-operation**

The *Japanese-German Geographical Conferences (Nichi-Doku Chiri Gakkai)* provide opportunities for a regular scientific dialogue between Japanese and German geographers. This institution, founded at the end of the 1960s by Taiji Yazawa and Peter Schöller, has proven its worth meanwhile, having existed for more than 30 years. Alternating between



Japan and Germany, the conferences take place at intervals of a few years.<sup>2</sup> In accordance with the idea of their founders, the participants deal with concrete problems and comparisons, with the objective of gaining new and more profound insights, which will allow them to understand foreign things better, but will also stimulate them to scrutinise familiar things and see them in a new light. The conferences also serve to intensify existing contacts between Japanese and German colleagues on the human as well as the academic level and to form new contacts. The current co-ordinators of these conferences are Kenji Yamamoto (Hôsei University, Tôkyô) for the Japanese side and Winfried Flüchter for the German side.

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<sup>2</sup> The following reports on the previous conferences exist: Schöller 1972, 1977; Flüchter 1986a, 1995b; The Organizing Committee of the 8th Japanese-German Geographical Congress 1998; Feldhoff and Flüchter 1998. Overview of the previous conferences with regard to year, place, and topic:

1. Summer 1969 in Bochum: Problems of Population Geography.
2. Autumn 1971 in Tôkyô and in the Kansai Area: Problems of Urbanisation in Japan.
3. Sommer 1976 in Günne (Möhnesee) und Straelen (Niederrhein): Tradition and Progress in National and Regional Development.
4. Spring 1982 in Kansai, Kantô and Central Japan: Tradition and Progress in National and Regional Development - Survey on Settlement Processes of Both Countries.
5. Summer 1984 in Hannover and Bochum: Persistence of Traditional Values and Structures in the Urban Systems of Japan and Germany.
6. Spring 1988 in Nagoya and Southwest Japan: Current Problems of Geographical Locations and Regional Development in Japan and West Germany - Spatial Relations between Settlement, Economy and Environment.
7. Summer 1992 in Heidelberg and Duisburg: The Extension of Europe and the Development of Japan from the Japanese and Central-European Point of View.
8. Spring 1998 in Tôkyô and West Japan: Sustainability as an Approach for National, Regional and Local Development.

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