

Workshop: Representations of and in the Japanese diaspora

October 23, 2015

14.00-18.00

Location: Campus of the University of Vienna, Department of East Asian Studies / Japanese Studies, Spitalgasse 2, Hof 2; Entrance 2.4; seminar room JAP 2 (ground floor)

Organization by

Wolfram MANZENREITER



From museum to memorial and other places of remembrance: (Re)Presenting memories of Japanese immigration in Brazil

– Peter BERNARDI

A museum. A pavilion. A memorial. Three different places, three different approaches to Japanese immigration to Brazil.

This talk introduces three places in the city of São Paulo/Brazil as examples of how Japanese immigration and diaspora is presented and represented. The state and the city of São Paulo were one of the centers of Japanese immigration to Brazil since the early 20th century. Today, more than half of the 1.5 million people of Japanese descent (nikkei) in Brazil live here. The city itself has become a focal point for Brazilian Nikkei both as a center of commerce as well as a center of its organized diasporic communities. When Japanese immigration became more permanent since the 1950s, this also meant that a process of establishing places of memory of Japan and Japanese immigration started.

Drawing on field work and interviews in São Paulo, Peter Bernardi will virtually “visit” three places, tracing their historical origins and current state to therefore analyze past and present approaches to representations of Japanese immigration in Brazil.

Peter Bernardi, M.A., is a lecturer at the department of Modern Japanese Studies at the Heinrich Heine University of Duesseldorf/Germany. He holds a Master’s degree in Modern Japanese Studies, History and Media Studies from the Heinrich Heine University of Duesseldorf. Japanese immigration to Brazil and its centennial commemoration are the topics of his PhD-project. He currently works as a research associate for E-learning at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. His research interests are Japanese diaspora, Japanese immigration to Brazil and public diplomacy.

Staying Japanese in multi-ethnic societies. Two stories from Paraguay and Hawai’i

– Wolfram MANZENREITER

Members of diasporic communities are typically torn apart by their sense of belonging to the place of origin or place of settlement. Multi-ethnic societies and their inclusive conceptualization of nationhood and/or citizenship, however, may exert less pressure to assimilate on new immigrant groups. The strong sense of Japaneseness that taints the Japanese migration history on display at the Yokohama Emigration Museum is also to be found at museum exhibitions in Iguazu (Paraguay) and Honolulu (Hawai’i). Reflecting on official museum narratives of Japan’s 19th and 20th emigration and overseas settlement history, this presentation asks why throughout history and over geographical distances narratives of victimhood, sufferance and perseverance dominate the representation of Japanese emigration experiences. I will argue that the positioning of new immigrants between colonizers and colonized is ultimately impacting on the drafts of migrant histories in multi-ethnic societies.

Wolfram Manzenreiter is Professor of Japanese Studies at the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Vienna. His research is mostly concerned with social and anthropological aspects of sports, emotions, and migration in a globalising world. Recent publications include Sport and Body Politics in Japan (Routledge, 2014), the co-edited volume on Migration and Development. New Perspectives (ProMedia 2014, in German), and “Playing by unfair rules? Asia’s positioning within global sports production networks”, Journal of Asian Studies 73/2. (2014/2)

Okinawan-Bolivian identity in Santa Cruz de la Sierra

– Yvonne SIEMANN

Post-WWII migration to Bolivia resulted in the foundation of two agricultural colonies north of the city of Santa Cruz, Colonia Okinawa and San Juan. Whereas Colonia Okinawa is inhabited almost exclusively by Okinawan Nikkei (and non-Nikkei Bolivians), mainland Japanese settled in San Juan. During most of the time, contact between the colonies was limited. Nowadays, many Nikkei from both colonies have moved to the city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra where Okinawan Bolivians are in the majority (at least 65% of the local Nikkei association are of Okinawan descent). This creates a special situation: Whereas in other countries, Okinawan descendants suffered from discrimination by other Nikkei, in Santa Cruz they have been dominating community associations, and for non-Nikkei Bolivians “Okinawan” is synonymous with “Japanese”. What does that mean for Okinawan Bolivian identity and how do Okinawan Bolivians position themselves? And what is the implication for Santa Cruz’ Nikkei community as a whole?

Yvonne Siemann holds a Master’s degree in Ethnology, Spanish and Portuguese language. She currently is a post-graduate student at the University of Luzern. She went on a field trip focusing on the identity of the Nikkei-population and inter-cultural relations in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia.

Nikkei Cuisine: Representation and strategies of Japanese descendants in Peru

– Ayumi TAKENAKA

In this paper I examine how Japanese immigrants and descendants in Peru, known collectively as Nikkei Peruvians, identify themselves, and are accepted and viewed, in Peru, as seen through the emergence of Nikkei cuisine.

Broadly defined as Japanese and Peruvian fusion food, Nikkei cuisine has lately come into vogue, as manifested in the growing number of restaurants in Peru and around the world. Tracing its origins to Japanese immigrants who arrived in Peru (mostly from Okinawa) around the turn of the 20th century, Nikkei cuisine emerged as a new genre of Peruvian food in the context of the country’s gastronomic boom during the past two decades. The food Japanese immigrants and their descendants consumed was originally known as “Okinawan”. Over the course of their immigration and adaptation in Peru, it gradually became known as “Japanese” and then branded as “Nikkei”. Today, the cuisine consists of Okinawan and Japanese elements, often spiced up with Peruvian peppers and other indigenous flavors.

Drawing on her long-term ethnographic research in Peru, as well as visits to various Nikkei restaurants and content analysis of food blogs, magazines, and recipes, Ayumi Takenaka will show not only how Nikkei food emerged, but also how culinary transformation reflects and shapes the integration of the Japanese-Peruvian community and how the community is represented through food both inside and outside Peru.

Ayumi Takenaka is a lecturer in sociology at Aston University and a research officer at the Center of Migration, Community and Society of the University of Oxford, UK. She currently engages in research on global onward migration (who stays, who returns, and who moves on), gastronomy and cultural diplomacy (on Japanese, Peruvian, and Nikkei food), and the relationship between gastronomy and immigrants’ integration and social mobility.

Timetable

14.00-15.30 Introduction by Wolfram MANZENREITER

Peter BERNARDI: "From museum to memorial and other places of remembrance: (Re)Presenting memories of Japanese immigration in Brazil"

Wolfram MANZENREITER: "Staying Japanese in multi-ethnic societies. Two stories from Paraguay and Hawai'i"

15.30-16.00 Coffee break

16.00-17.30 Yvonne SIEMANN: "Okinawan-Bolivian identity in Santa Cruz de la Sierra"

Ayumi TAKENAKA: "Nikkei cuisine: Representation and strategies of Japanese descendants in Peru"

Concluding discussion

Attendance will be free but registration is required. Please register your interest by email to sebastian.polak-rottmann@univie.ac.at until October 20.