

NAJS 2005 – The Second NAJS Conference on the Study of  
Contemporary Japanese Society, 28–30 April 2005,  
Copenhagen, Denmark

[www.najs.jp](http://www.najs.jp)

Dear participants,

You are all very welcome to the Second NAJS Conference. The Conference will take place at NIAS. Coffee breaks and lunches will be provided at NIAS. On Thursday evening there will be a welcome dinner at Restaurant Spiseloppen, at the entrance of Christiania, Prinsessegade. On Friday evening we will have dinner together at Restaurant Ankara, Vesterbrogade 35.

There is no conference fee, and thanks to NIAS and Toshiba International Foundation we are happy to announce that coffee breaks, lunches and dinners are all free of charge. (At Spiseloppen on Thursday evening a main course, dessert and one beverage is included; on Friday at restaurant Ankara the buffé and one beverage is included).

In this booklet you will find a schedule, list of participants and abstracts.

We are looking forward to three intensive days!

NAJS Steering Committee  
Pia Moberg, Martin Nordeborg,  
Staffan Appelgren & Linus Hagström

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**Sponsors:**

Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS)  
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## NAJS 2005 Copenhagen 28-30 April, 2005 – Schedule

### Thursday 28 April 2005

- 13.00-13.45 *Registration* (Presentation of NIAS Library for those interested)
- 13.45-14.00 *Opening of the conference*: A word from the NAJS Steering Committee and welcome address by NIAS Director Jørgen Delman
- 14.00-15.30 *Workshop on publishing* Gerald Jackson, NIAS Press
- 15.30-16.00 *Coffee break*
- 16.00-17.30 *Workshop on publishing* Chris Hughes, University of Warwick
- 17.30-17.40 *Short break*
- 17.40-19.10 *Session 1* Chair: Linus Hagström
- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Presentations:    | Discussants:      |
| Marie Söderberg   | Kosuke Shimizu    |
| Gunhild Borggreen | Staffan Appelgren |
- 20.00 *Dinner at Restaurant Spiseloppen, at the entrance of Christiania, Princessegade*

### Friday 29 April 2005

- 9.00-10.30 *Session 2* Chair Lars-Martin Sørensen
- |                                   |                |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Presentations:                    | Discussants:   |
| Elena Atanassova-Cornelis         | Linus Hagström |
| Martin Nordeborg (formerly Flyxe) | Mikkel Felter  |
- 10.30-11.00 *Coffee break*
- 11.00-12.30 *Group Discussion 1*
- |                         |                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Chair: Toshio Ohsako    | Chair: Chris Hughes         |
| Els-Marie Anbäcken      | Annette Skovsted-Hansen     |
| Susanne Kreitz-Sandberg | Elzbieta Kostowska-Watanabe |
- 12.30-13.30 *Lunch (at NIAS)*
- 13.30-15.00 *Session 3* Chair: Machiko Osawa
- |                |                    |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Presentations: | Discussants:       |
| Kosuke Shimizu | Jeffrey Kingston   |
| Anders Moe     | Els-Marie Anbäcken |
- 15.00-15.30 *Coffee break*
- 15.30-17.00 *Session 4* Chair: Anemone Platz
- |                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| Presentations: | Discussants:     |
| Machiko Osawa  | Marie Söderberg  |
| Päivi Poukka   | Martin Nordeborg |
- 19.30 *Dinner at Restaurant Ankara, Vesterbrogade 35*

### Saturday 30 April 2005

- 9.00-10.30 *Group Discussion 2*
- |                      |                          |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Chair: Pia Moberg    | Chair: Gunhild Borggreen |
| Lars-Martin Sørensen | Carl Cassegård           |
| Anemone Platz        | Mikkel Felter            |
- 10.30-11.00 *Coffee break*
- 11.00-12.30 *Session 5* Chair: Martin Nordeborg
- |                  |                             |
|------------------|-----------------------------|
| Presentations:   | Discussants:                |
| Jeffrey Kingston | Carl Cassegård              |
| Linus Hagström   | Elzbieta Kostowska-Watanabe |
- 12.30-13.30 *NAJS in the future & lunch*

**Conference venue:**

NIAS (Nordic Institute of Asian Studies)

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**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS** (will be included in the paper version)

**ABSTRACTS**

**Els-Marie Anbäcken** (Linköping University) and **Susanne Kreitz-Sandberg** (TREE East)

Whose normality? Education and children's social learning in Japan, Germany and Sweden

Comparative analysis of welfare state theories and practices gains increasing relevance in the context of globalization. The effects of globalization on the welfare state are mediated through institutional structures and policy responses. Welfare culture influences the performance in these institutions and communication processes contribute to a diverse social reality. Approaching Japan, Sweden and Germany from a comparative perspective demands not only to take national specifics into account but also to include certain existing differences among institutions and subcultures into the analysis. The establishment of normality and deviation in school and social institutions for children and adolescents can be seen in close connection to these theoretical questions concerning comparative welfare cultures. These questions are asking for a complex research design. We would like to use the occasion to discuss basic research questions with other experts:

- If we want to compare, do we need to do similar research in each of the countries? (If yes, who is doing which part of the work where?)

- Which institutions are of special interest for us? Is it the school or/and other institutions for children? One might want to be explicit about this and explain why. If we talk about school and youth services - in which relation are they towards each other? (How) Can we compare the relation towards each other?

- Is there a method which is appropriate for all three country or do we need to find different approaches in every country? If yes, can we accept that from a methodological point of view?

Some research hypothesis:

Combining an international comparison with a "intra-national" provides new perspectives on the research in the foreign as well as in our own countries. In this sense it is very interesting to look at the positioning of school vs. out-of school institution for children and youth. In Germany we might expect that there is no strong consensus and that the different institutions follow quite different concepts of education. School is still closely connected to intellectual learning while social learning is rather delegated to other places. That is definitely different in Sweden, but to which extend and according to whose ideas? Have ideas of schools been introduced to social education institutions or is rather the opposite situation the case? What are the effects to learning? And finally, which reality do we find in Japan? The school system is strongly oriented towards intellectual learning but within what has been characterized with a "school of living" (Toyama-Bialke) we find also a strong dedication to social integration

and learning. We would like to focus on mobilization from the viewpoint of social pedagogics as we approach our empirical as well as theoretical domains.

Obviously it might not be possible to find valid answers for whole countries, but with case studies we might be able to address specific situations and connections and reflect over the social reality of children in the countries involved into the study. Broader information through questionnaires shall be combined with participant observation and expert interviews.

The definite methodological approach shall be decided on according to theoretical grounding and further studies of the educational literature.

To contrast our experience and thereby also to reflect our own reality (cf Hannerz) is one of the most important functions!

**Elena Atanassova-Cornelis** (Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium)

### Towards a 'major power' role: Japan's foreign policy after the Cold War mirrored through the US-Japan alliance and Japan-Europe relations

This paper examines the redefinition of Japan's foreign policy after the end of the Cold War, by way of analysing the changes that have taken place in the country's relations with both the United States and Europe. In so doing, the presenter will argue that the strengthened US-Japan alliance serves Japan to become more independent in its foreign policy behaviour and more active with regard to security issues, while the 'non-military' partnership with Europe facilitates this process.

The altered international system after 1989 has become the momentum for Japan to reconsider its Cold War 'reactive' foreign policy approach and the one-sided focus on projecting economic power, and to start actively contributing to the maintenance of the new world order commensurate with its status of a 'major power'. Yet, adapting foreign policy to the post-1989 international order implied two important changes for Japan. Firstly, its status in the US-Japan alliance needed to be modified from that of a protected subordinate to a fully-fledged ally. This has meant a greater engagement on the part of Japan in a burden-sharing role within the alliance, in particular in the area of security and defence. Secondly, the country's basic foreign policy orientation of exclusive bilateralism had to be redefined so that Japan's foreign policy could encompass other forms of international diplomacy. A co-operation with a political actor with whom Japan did not have any military-security ties, such as the EC/EU, could therefore become a good opportunity for Japan to achieve the second objective.

While the first post-Cold War decade did not see any substantial commitment on the side of Japan to its US ally with regard to greater defence responsibilities, the 1990s were characterised by a deepening of Japan's relationship with the EC/EU, which has come to encompass strictly humanitarian and civil agendas. Although the partnership with Europe has not matched the one with the US, it has become an opportunity for Japan to start developing its distinctive non-military and human-centred diplomatic posture. The alliance with the US has, however, remained top priority for Tokyo policy-makers in the area of security and defence. This was confirmed with the arrival of Koizumi administration, which has marked the development of a closer strategic alignment, distinguishing itself from the 1990s with Tokyo's unprecedented support of Washington's foreign policy initiatives. With its non-military contributions in the war against terrorism and reconstruction of both Afghanistan and Iraq, Japan is now recognised as a strong and valuable ally to the United States. Yet, a deeper commitment to the alliance has served Japan to become a bigger player in security affairs and has facilitated the transformation of its security policy, thereby making it more self-reliant. Then, is not the strengthened alliance a road towards Tokyo's greater independence from

Washington? Could the role of Europe in Japan's foreign policy be a furthering factor in the country's process of 're-gaining' its status of a global power?

**Gunhild Borggreen** (University of Copenhagen)

#### Performing National Culture: Mori Mariko in Malmö

This paper is a chapter from a book project on how Japanese art and culture is being presented to contemporary Scandinavian (mainly Danish) audiences. In a historical light, Japanese cultural export on a national scale can be seen as a countermeasure to the Orientalist representation of Japan in Europe during the 19th century, as a way of Japanese cultural institutions to gain control in the promotion of Japanese art abroad. An image of something uniquely "Japanese" has become an essentialist cultural marker and is set in play in a complex dialogue between sender and recipient.

In my analyses of contemporary Japanese art exhibitions and other cultural events in Scandinavia I focus on the questions of how this concept of nation is staged as an important element in cultural promotion. How and why is such a close connection established between Japan as nation and its cultural products? How are the actual art works received and interpreted in Scandinavia in the light of this national framing, and how does it effect the status of the art works and the artists, in Scandinavian as well as in Japanese art circles? What does this performance of a special "Japanese national culture" mean for Japan's role on the international art scene?

In order to analyse the aspect of staging national culture in an international context, I apply the concept of "performance" in various theoretical perspectives. One aspect is that of "cultural performance" as it appeared in anthropology in the 1950's and have been used in theatre studies as well. I also draw from aspects of performative speech act theory, as well as philosophical theories of gender performativity.

In this paper I analyse a specific art exhibition by the Japanese contemporary artist Mori Mariko which took place at Rooseum Center for Contemporary Art in Malmö, Sweden, in March 2000. I analyse the exhibition in relation to the concept of performance, which can have a variety of meanings in this case: Mori Mariko stages herself in several of the works displayed, and she made a short performance at the opening event of the exhibition. Furthermore, audiences are invited to participate in a performative act by following a suggested route through the exhibition, and by entering the main installation work on the exhibition, a large architectural structure entitled *Dream Temple*.

It is also possible, as I will argue, to view the artists' own subject role as performative. Mori Mariko stages a number of cultural symbols and historical myths in her work *Dream Temple*, and thus actively engages in strategic negotiations in order to position herself in a broader national art historical canon in Japan. The artist enacts "Japaneseness" in double sense: by personification in the art work, as well as by challenging the conventional historical framework and placing herself as heir and promoter of Japanese culture.

**Carl Cassegård** (Göteborg University)

#### Notes on two meanings of "recovery" in contemporary Japanese culture

An indication of the cultural effects of the recession and the end of the Cold War in Japan during the 90's is the development of the thought of the philosopher and critic Karatani Kôjin (1941-), which will be the main topic of this paper. In this paper I will trace the development of his thought, focusing in particular on the shift from an emphasis on a "lack of exteriority"

in the 70's and 80's to the idea of "transcritique" in his recent works. Using clues from his own texts I will argue that his philosophical development helps us to elucidate at least two ways in which the concept of "recovery" is used in the context of contemporary Japanese culture. On the one hand, there are calls for a recovery of national self-esteem and economic and political might that bolster an officially endorsed and increasingly unconstrained neo-nationalism. On the other hand, we see a competing idea of cultural recovery centering on the increasing strength of "civil society" and social movements. In my paper I suggest that these two competing ideas of recovery and their trajectories must be understood not only as a result of the economic recession and the ensuing sense of deadlock (*heisoku*), but also against the backdrop of the defeat of radical protest movements in the late 60's and during

**Mikkel Felter** (University of Copenhagen)

#### Official Postcards – A Showcase for Meiji-Taishō Ideology

This paper explores the ways in which official postcards (*kansei ehagaki*), mainly those issued by the former Teishinshō, can be seen as powerful visual representations of what can be termed Meiji-Taishō ideology, cf. Gluck (1985). Through an analysis of the occasions on which such cards were issued and of the symbolism they employ, interesting new light can be shed on the complex ways in which the essentially modern ideology of the times managed to gain legitimacy not only from beliefs ostensibly harking back to Chinese and indigenous Japanese myths, but also from key markers of modernity. As such, besides providing new material for the understanding of the ideological underpinnings of pre-War Japan, the colourful and at the time widely popular postcards also serve as a useful reference for an understanding of present-day debates in Japan on how to deal with the Japanese past.

**Linus Hagström** (Swedish Institute of International Affairs)

#### Japan and power relationships in East Asia: The case of coordinating North Korea policy

The image of Japanese insignificance – reactivity, passivity, or even non-existence – in international affairs is reproduced in many different literatures, one of which is that on the formation of policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) in the 1990s and 2000s, in particular in regard to the recurring nuclear crisis. Standard works in English on the topic exclude Japanese foreign policy nearly altogether, and when they do not they at least emphasize the predominant role, or power, of the United States. Japanese foreign policy, it is implied, is under U.S. control.

The aim of this paper is to question that dominant view, (1) by demonstrating that there are undercurrents in the same literature, which could well be interpreted as implying South Korean exertion of power over both Japan and the U.S.A., and, more importantly, Japanese exertion power over the U.S.A.; (2) by clarifying the conceptual bias upon which the predominant view rests; and (3) by suggesting how another understanding of power is more coherent with the first two critiques, but at the same time renders the question of power in North Korea policy coordination a virtual quagmire. The more uniform understanding of power in that discourse is thus deconstructed in the paper into a patchwork of inconsistencies, differences and questions. Still, mostly based on the secondary literature, which it critically engages, the paper indicates how aspects of power in Japan's foreign policy coordination over North Korea have transformed during the decade since the starting point in the early 1990s.

**Jeff Kingston** (Temple University Japan)

Reinventing Japan: Laying the Foundations for a more robust Civil Society

The ongoing reinvention of Japan driven by creative responses to its immense problems reveals a far more dynamic polity than is generally acknowledged. Japanese people, organizations and policy makers are responding to the myriad challenges generated by the Lost Decade of the 1990s in a variety of thoughtful, significant and diverse ways. I argue that prevailing images of stagnation overlook sweeping social change that has followed in the wake of Japan, Inc.'s collapse. Japan's quiet transformation is above all about the gradual and incremental reinvigoration of civil society. Since the mid-1990s a series of interlocking and mutually reinforcing reforms involving information disclosure, NPOs and the judiciary are laying the foundations for this revamping of civil society. Relations between people and the state are in flux and such legislative and institutional developments are promoting greater accountability and transparency.

**Elzbieta Kostowska-Watanabe** (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland)

Japan's 150 years of globalization

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> C. globalization became an issue with worldwide repercussions. Anti-globalists fighting in the streets, the 21<sup>st</sup> C. heralded as a century of globalization, the perils and advantages of going global hotly discussed – we are in need here of some objective analysis of already known examples of globalization and their outcomes.

My point of departure is a concept of Goran Therborn of six historical waves of globalization (1). I understand globalization as a historical process of interaction of cultures and nation-states. Such moments of cultural interaction were numerous in human history. A closer look at some of them, at the historical circumstances and at outcomes may provide us with a better understanding of what globalization really brings to the involved peoples, what are the dangers and what are the gains.

My aim is to show the complexity of the real process of globalization and its possible effects by analyzing Japanese attempts to join “the world” in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, and at the same time not succumbing to the siren song of cultures it considered in some ways superior to its own. Looking carefully at Japanese social history of the last 150 years I hope to show that Japan is a case of successful globalization.

**Anders Moe** (University of Oslo)

Japanese Comics: The reasons for their popularity and place in the popular culture

Japan has a much larger comics industry than does any western country. Fifty years ago, Japan only produced a few children's comics, while the American comics industry had several million-selling comic books, a large proportion of whose readers were adults. Today, the American comics industry has largely faded away, while an estimated 40% of Japanese publications are comics.

There are several factors behind this development, for instance the format of the publications; Japanese comics are up to 1000 pages, give new artists space to try out ideas and provide many artists with stable income. The standard contract in the Japanese comics industry allows the artists to retain the rights to their characters and to receive royalties from licensing. There is also a good synergy with animated film, with popular new comics being animated as a matter of course, something that hasn't been the case in the American industry.

And there is the matter of censorship: the Japanese industry has not been regulated any more strictly than the film industry, and has thus been better able to compete in the youth and adult market.

**Martin Nordeborg** (formerly Flyxe) (Göteborg University)

#### How was God explained in early Meiji schools?

In the strive to become a modern nation in the early Meiji period the eagerness to learn from the West is well-known. Nevertheless, the cries for civilization and enlightenment were accompanied with a policy uniting state and religion. In 1872, the same year that Western-inspired national education system was established a decree promoting Shintoist ideology was issued, including an appeal for “love of the nation”, a reminder of current efforts to include such terminology in the revision of the Education Law of 1947.

The American Protestants that dominated the missionary activities in early Meiji Japan realized that their mission had to be accompanied by education. Christianization could not be separated from Westernization. Guido Verbeck, American missionary and adviser to the government, recommended school material to be used in the new schools. Among these were *Willson Reader*, which was translated and became the first Japanese primary school reader. As *Willson Reader* includes many stories about the Bible, God and Christianity in general one might wonder how the text was adapted to Japanese circumstances. The aim of this paper is to compare the government’s religious policy with the content of the first school texts.

**Machiko Osawa** (Japan Women’s University)

#### Women Workers in the Japanese Economy: Trends and Issues in the 21st Century

We have seen some progress by Japanese women in the work force and a rapid increase in educational attainment of young women. However, this progress is diluted by the growth of part-time employment opportunities. In Japan, part-time employment does not mean working less hours than full-time workers. It means workers who do not enjoy the same *nenko* wage system and benefits that full-time regular workers receive. In addition, they have far less job security. As long as these differential remains and these are further reinforced by the public policies, it is difficult to fully tap women’s talents. In addition, corporate employment systems that make it very difficult to continue working after marriage and giving birth need to be reconsidered. It is clear that women who work as civil servants and teachers do return to their jobs in large numbers after giving birth because they enjoy strong job protections and supportive policies. Their education and experience are not being squandered as is the case in the private sector. Other advanced industrialized nations have crafted policies that are more family friendly and as a result women have been better able to balance the demands of work and home, meaning that they can pursue fulfilling careers while raising families. This is Japan’s challenge. The nexus of demographic forces involving the rapid aging of society, impending labor shortages and pension insolvency make it imperative that Japan get more women more fully engaged in the labor force and develop policies that will make this viable and rewarding for them and their families.

**Anemone Platz** (University of Aarhus)

How do elderly Japanese imagine their living spaces when old?

Because of the well known problem of rapid aging of Japanese society, the country is facing a hard time in establishing suitable housing and care institutions for the generations of senior citizens to come in the near future. This project aims at exploring the concrete images and wishes Japanese now in their 50es and early 60es have concerning the physical conditions of their housing when old (i.e. Japanese/Western style elements, flexibility, location, etc.).

It is work in progress based on interviews, of which I would like to put up some points to discussion.

**Päivi Poukka** (University of Helsinki)

Moral education in Japanese curriculum

My paper deals with Japanese primary school moral education in the context of the latest curriculum revision taking place in 2002. The purpose of the study is to approach this so-called third educational reform from the viewpoint of values education, the aspect that is less utilized. My argument is that moral education played an important role in the curriculum revision in question—contrary to general expectations and to the fact that Japanese school education is internationally well-known and valued particularly for its high academic achievement level. In fact, since 1980s, the Ministry of Education has been striving to make moral education to the foundation to all education.

The three main research questions are: What is the position of moral education in curriculum? What are the goals of moral education? What is the purpose of moral education? On the basis on these questions I will speculate the function of moral education in relation to the general educational objectives and its relevance to such students' problems as, for example, bullying and school refusal, for students' stress and misbehavior, among others, were pronounced as important causes to reform curriculum. - I restrict my study to primary school, and use the national curriculum guidelines and some other documents published in the reform process as research material.

**Kosuke Shimizu** (Ryukoku University)

Japan's Colonialism and Social Scientific Development: Philosophy, Economics, Colonial Studies and Sex Slaves

There have been numerous researches which have discussed the way in which the rapid economic growth and unprecedented pace of modernisation of Japan is attributed to the intensive government intervention into the market activities. This is a typical political economic comprehension of the modernisation process of Japan, which has been accepted by a wide variety of international relations audience. However, there have been only a handful works which manifestly indicate the substantiality of the similarities between the West and Japan in achieving modernisation, especially in terms of the political economic contribution of the colonisation process to it. As a result, we frequently find ourselves getting destined to write Japanese political economy as deviation or being dominated by local irregular trading and commercial customs. However, when we make a good effort to push aside this intellectual restraint, we gradually find striking similarity between West and Japan in their construction of political economic hegemony. What I am going to focus upon in this presentation is the way in which Japan made an extensive effort to obtain an equal position to

the West by colonising the territory of “Others” before the WWII. My main argument is that the colonising process of Japanese Imperialism was supported by a numerous number of scientific writings, especially in the subjects of philosophy, economics and colonial studies, and resulted in causing unprecedented tragic incident of the “Comfort Women” issue.

**Annette Skovsted-Hansen** (University of Aarhus)

#### Developing Communication Venues: Japanese Development Assistance as Dialogue

Within the context of Japanese Development Assistance, a dialogue between individuals from Japan and from so-called developing countries has a 40-year-long history. Since the 1950s, the Overseas Technical Cooperation Agency (OTCA), established in 1962 and absorbed into the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in 1974, has invited well-educated individuals from developing countries to Japan as part of technical cooperation efforts. As opposed to other donors, OTCA and, subsequently, JICA have supported a number of alumni related activities to encourage continued communication of ideas to and from Japan. With an aim to map the conditions for communication, the present article is an exploration of a dialogue, which has taken place through various venues, such as evaluation forms, training material, newsletters, and websites.

**Marie Söderberg** (European Institute of Japanese Studies)

#### Is Foreign Aid, or Expectation of Such Aid, an Effective Tool to Influence North Korea?

Peace building and peace preservation are new key concepts in Japanese foreign aid policy. According to the revision of the ODA charter in 2003, the objective of Japan’s foreign aid is to contribute to the peace and development of the international community, and thereby to help ensure Japan’s own security and prosperity--“Japan aspires for world peace. Actively promoting the aforementioned effort with ODA” that Japan will carry out “even more strategically” in the future. Asia and especially East Asia is pointed out as a priority region. North Korea, with whom Japan has not yet normalised its relations, is one of Japan’s closest neighbours and would, from a logical point of view, then seem like an important starting point. However, when main Japanese aid agencies such as JICA (Japan International Co-operation Agency) and JBIC (Japan Bank of International Co-operation) are asked, no one works officially with aid to North Korea. The standard answer is that there is no aid to that country, besides some smaller amounts of Japanese humanitarian aid that are channelled through multilateral organisations.

If Japan regards aid as one of its main tools for creating peace, why isn’t aid provided to North Korea? Aid is a very complex issue and not giving is often regarded as effective as giving, when it comes to getting concessions and changes in the recipients’ policy behaviour. It is used both as a carrot and a stick. Aid is always envisioned as something quite plausible, if North Korean policy behaviour is changed for the better according to Japanese judgement (so called positive aid sanction); but aid is never paid out and remains an illusion as long as it does not change (negative sanction). But the question for Japan is more complex than this. There are various domestic opinions and interest groups that have to be taken into consideration. The kidnapping issue (explained below) has led to a considerable amount of anti-North Korean sentiment that makes it difficult for the Japanese government to disperse aid to North Korea. There is also foreign pressure at work; the US, Japan’s military ally, and other western countries as well have imposed economic sanctions on North Korea due to its

withdrawal from the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. This also affects the Japanese position on the aid question.

Keeping all these factors in mind, this paper questions if Japanese foreign aid is an effective tool to influence North Korean policy behaviour. Has it ever led to a change of behaviour? Has it contributed to peace and stability in the area in any way?

**Lars-Martin Sørensen** (University of Copenhagen))

Trains, Tea, Tatami and Tradition Against Occupation Reforms – Yasujiro Ozu's *Late Spring* (1949)

Western film historical writings on Yasujiro Ozu's film, *Banshun* (*Late Spring*/1949), offer little or no insight into how this film was appropriated by contemporary Japanese audiences. Generally speaking Ozu and his works are either categorized as apolitical, traditionalist or as experimental (parametric) modernist art-films. These claims are – in my view – misguided. Taking Ozu's *Banshun* as my point of departure and I shall aim to outline an approach which can yield insights to the meanings constructed by the contemporary audience, thereby exposing the weaknesses of mainstream western film historical critiques of Ozu and his works specifically, and at a general level point to the shortcomings of part of the existing western literature on Japanese cultural history.

Common sense, cognitivism and close historical contextualization. These three elements constitute the theoretical framework upon which this paper is based. And I shall argue that this framework is useful when trying to stay clear of the pitfalls of orientalism, essentialism and the inherent antihumanism of radical poststructuralist relativism and postmodern history philosophy.