"1985–2025: 40 YEARS OF RESEARCH ON JAPANESE LAW AT THE MPI. TIME TO ADD NEW VOICES"

13–15 November 2025

In 1985, at the height of Japan's economic rise, the Max Planck Institute for Comparative and International Private Law in Hamburg hired its first expert on Japanese law. Over the years, this expert, Prof. Harald Baum, established the MPI as one, if not *the* "Centre of Expertise on Japanese Law" in Europe – living up to the Japan Unit's official name.

Yet, as successful as it has been, the conversation in Hamburg – and more broadly the conversation in German and English – is mostly a dialogue between Japan and the so-called West. Other voices, especially from the neighboring countries across Asia, are still largely absent. This is all the more regrettable as Japan's legal thought and legal system have long been very influential themselves. Missing voices thus also mean the absence of an important angle when looking at Japanese law.

Now, at the 40th anniversary of Japan-related research in Hamburg, it is time to invite hitherto less heard voices to Hamburg in order to turn the dialogue into a multilogue. Speakers from Japan's neighboring countries will shed light on the role and relevance of Japanese law for legal systems in South Korea, China, Taiwan and beyond. The focus will be the Japanese influence as well as the role of Japanese law legal experts in the respective country's academia, legal education and practice. What legal fields are of importance, what themes are studied, who are the experts and what is their standing? The scope will extend from historical interconnectedness to ODA and legal education/research/exchanges in Japan.

In this endeavor, the Centre of Expertise on Japanese Law is partnering with its long-term partners, the Australian Network for Japanese Law (ANJeL) and the German-Japanese Association of Jurists (DJJV). Adding voices to the Australian conversation has been a continuing focus of ANJeL – with the network expanding its contacts well beyond the border of the continent. The anniversary symposium at the MPI in Hamburg will thereby mark the first ANJeL-in-Asia symposium.

Please register using this LINK.

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Program

Day 1 (13 November)

3:00 pm	Welcome remarks
Session 1	**New Perspectives on Japanese Law** Chair: **Lena Foljanty** (University of Vienna, Austria)
3:30 pm	**Yoshiharu Matsuura** (Professor emeritus, Nagoya University, Japan): Japanese ODA and legal technical assistance in Vietnam
4:00 pm	**Taro Morinaga** (Former Prosecutor, former Director of the International Cooperation Department, Research and Training Institute, Ministry of Justice and former Director of the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI), Japan): The Development of Legal Technical Assistance by Japan and Challenges
4:30 pm	**Ralf Michaels** (MPI Hamburg, Germany): The Place of Japan in Decolonial Comparative Law
5:00 pm	Discussion
5:45 pm	Group picture
6:00 pm	**Reception**
6:30 pm	**Keynote** Chair: **Kunihiro Nakata** (Ryukoku University, Japan) **Harald Baum** (MPI Hamburg, Germany) / **Moritz Bälz** (Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany): 40 Years of Research on Japanese Law at the MPI

Day 2 (14 November)

Session 2	**Japanese Law Studies in Asia** (Part I)
	Chair: **Béatrice Jaluzot** (Lyon Institute for East Asian Studies, France)
9:00 am	**Alan Koh** (Nanyang Technological University, Singapore): Singapore
9:30 am	**Hao-Yun Chen** (National Taiwan University): Taiwan
10:00 am	Discussion
10:30 am	Coffee break
11:00 am	**Hongqian Zhou** (East China University of Political Science and Law, PRC): PRC
11:30 am	**Chul Kwon** (Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea): South Korea
12:00 pm	Discussion
12:30 pm	Lunch break
Session 3	**Japanese Law Studies in Asia** (Part II)
	Chair: **Nobumichi Teramura** (Keio University, Japan)
1:30 pm	**Apipong Sarntikasem** (Judge in the Research Division of the Court of Appeal for Specialized Cases (Juvenile and Family Case Division), Thailand): Thailand
2:00 pm	**Rina Shahrullah** (Batam International University, Indonesia): Indonesia
2:30 pm	Discussion
3:00 pm	Coffee break
3:30 pm	**Socheata Sao** (Royal University of Law and Economics (RULE), Cambodia): Cambodia
4:00 pm	**Akhadjon Khakimov** (Tashkent State University of Law, Uzbekistan): Central Asia (and Mongolia)
4:30 pm	Discussion

Day 3 (15 November)

Session 4 **Asian Law(s) in Japan**

Chair: **Mai Ishikawa** (Tohoku University, Japan)

9:00 am	**Souichirou Kozuka** (Gakushuin University, Japan): Commercial Law
9:30 am	**Tatsuya Ota** (Keio University, Japan): Past, Present and Future of Asian Law Studies in Japan
10:00 am	Discussion
10:30 am	Coffee break
11:00 am	**Hiroo Sono** (Hokkaido University, Japan): The Role of Japan at UNCITRAL and AALCO
11:30 am	**Naoko Kano** (Keio University, Japan): Asian Law in Statutory Reform
12:00 pm	Discussion
12:30 pm	Concluding remarks