

## **30 years GJSSS: Retrospective and Prospective: Goals and Activities**

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**and**

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### **Hans-Joachim Kornadt**

#### **Part I: Early precursors of German Japanese Society for Social Sciences (GJSSS)**

The GJSSS would certainly never have been established without a precursor and the support by the German Werner Reimers Foundation. Its founder had been born in Yokohama; later he invented a mechanic device and started a small business in Hamburg and then in Bad Homburg. Based on his “Werner Reimers Stiftung” he wanted to support sciences on cultural development of humans with special focus on East Asia. A small group of Japanese and German scientists were supported for joining in respective discussions, meeting alternatively in Germany and Japan. Since these meetings turned out to successfully integrate perspectives from different disciplines, the participating scholars decided to continue even without external financial support by a foundation. They initiated the foundation of the German Japanese Social Science (GJSSS), consisting of members from Japan and Germany. The official recognition of this new Society met various bureaucratic difficulties which finally could be solved due the support of the German Embassy and legal experts in 1989. The legally established Society could held its first conference in 1989 at Keio-University, Tokyo.

## **Gisela Trommsdorff**

### **Part II: Goals and activities during three decades**

From its early start in the year 1989, the GJSSS has been pursuing the goal to foster and to improve a mutual understanding of the Japanese and the German society and culture. This goal has been pursued by several means: theoretical and empirical research on topics related to social change in both countries (e.g., from comparative perspective); regular scientific exchange among Japanese and German social scientists during bi-annual conferences alternating between Japan and Germany; joint projects including publication of several volumes; support of young scholars from Japan and Germany; and mutual visits on personal basis. These activities have gained importance by contributions of Japanese and German scholars from diverse disciplines interested in social science research (including sociology, psychology, political science, economy, philosophy). The future prospective regarding the scope of the GJSSS`s activities may expand beyond a focus on Japan and Germany, including social science topics on social change East Asia and Europe. In my presentation I will mention some examples of GJSSS`s activities.