

German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ Tokyo)

DIJ Study Group



September 19, 2024, 6.30 pm (JST) / 11.30 am (CEST)

Secret Agreements, Public Consequences: The 1960s Deportation Crisis of Taiwanese Dissidents

Wolfgang G. Thiele, Free University of Berlin/DIJ Tokyo

This talk explores a series of deportations of Taiwanese dissidents from Japan that occurred between 1967 and 1968. The four individuals in question faced the threat of death penalty in Taiwan for political crimes. The focus is on two instances which the Tokyo District Court later deemed as “at least grossly negligent, if not intentionally unlawful.”

My presentation demonstrates that these deportations, along with the resistance they sparked, had a profound and lasting impact on both Taiwan and Japan. They played a crucial role in the failure of the Japanese government's attempts to toughen immigration laws, led to a series of court rulings that eventually established a *de facto* right to asylum in Japan by 1971, and resulted in the founding of Amnesty International Japan – the first permanent Japanese NGO to advocate for the rights of foreigners irrespective of ethnicity or political affiliation. These events also triggered an ideological shift within the Taiwanese independence movement and led to its ongoing entanglement with the international human rights movement.

The project draws on a wide range of sources in Japanese, Mandarin, and Hokkien, including publications by the Taiwan independence movement, memoirs, face-to-face interviews with key figures, Japanese Diet proceedings and court rulings from Japan and Taiwan. It contributes to the fields of international relations and human rights in Asia, Japanese legal and migration history, and the history of social movements.

Wolfgang G. Thiele is a PhD candidate in the Department of History at the Free University of Berlin (FUB), specializing in global history with a focus on East Asia. He completed his Bachelor's degree in East Asian Area Studies at Humboldt University of Berlin (HUB) and earned his Master's through the joint Global History program at FUB and HUB. Wolfgang's primary research interest lies in the complex post-colonial relationship between Japan and Taiwan. He previously studied at the National Taiwan University, the University of Tokyo, and at the Chinese Culture University in Taipei. Since April 2024, Wolfgang has been a PhD student at the DIJ Tokyo.

About:

The DIJ Study Group is a forum for scholars from all disciplines conducting research on contemporary or modern Japan. The event is open to all.

This session is organized by David M. Malitz.

Hybrid Event:

On-site participation: please register via email to malitz@dijtokyo.org until September 18, 2024.

Online participation: please register via our [webpage](#).

Venue:

Online and DIJ Tokyo: <https://www.dijtokyo.org/access/>