

German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ Tokyo)

## DIJ Study Group



September 30, 2024, 6 pm (JST) / 11 am (CEST)

### **From Providers to Nurturers – Depictions of Male Care Work in Japanese Manga**

Ralf Windhab, University of Vienna/DIJ Tokyo

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Over the past three decades, Japanese media productions, especially manga, have primarily been examined with regard to hegemonic images of 'femininity' and in what sense they might indicate social change. Only very few studies, however, have focused on media constructions of 'masculinity'. In this talk, Ralf Windhab presents preliminary findings of his doctoral dissertation, which analyzes various Japanese manga that depict male characters as protagonists engaging in unpaid household chores. These portrayals contradict the prevailing image of men as the breadwinners of the family and women as the ones responsible for the household. This image was consolidated during the postwar period of strong economic growth. As a result, men were considered "failures" if they could not financially support their families and if their wives had to work. The main aim of this dissertation project is to find out how men provide unpaid labour in the household are portrayed in manga and whether there have been any changes in these portrayals since the early 1950s. Methodologically, a corpus of manga series of around 40 volumes, is coded with software support in order to obtain relevant quantitative data which serves as the basis for a subsequent qualitative study. Figure analysis approaches from film studies are implemented to examine how characters in manga are depicted in aspects such as visual design, gender roles, characterization, relationships to other characters, stereotypes and motives. As a preliminary result, the research presented shows that some male characters are portrayed as weak or partially feminine in accordance with stereotypes and clichés, while others are portrayed as overly masculine. The actual household chores depicted and their frequency, as well as the different motives for the men to participate in household chores, will also be explained.

**Ralf Windhab** is a PhD candidate at the Department of East Asian Studies - Japanese Studies at the University of Vienna, specializing in manga studies, with a focus on gender, everyday life, and food. He completed both his Bachelor's and Master's degree in Japanese Studies at the University of Vienna. Since July 2024, Ralf 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 Nicole M. Mueller.

#### **Hybrid Event:**

**On-site participation:** please register via email to [mueller@dijtokyo.org](mailto:mueller@dijtokyo.org) until September 28, 2024.

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

#### **Venue:**

Online and DIJ Tokyo

<https://www.dijtokyo.org/access/>