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2015 KYOTO LECTURES

Tuesday, May 28th, 18:00h

Nissim Otmazgin Stories for the Nation Rewriting History in Manga

SPEAKER

In recent decades, Japan's manga market has become an alternative stage for historical and political debate. While in the past, manga has typically dealt with Japan's wartime traumas in an implicit and indirect manner, recently there have been a few conscious attempts to utilize the manga industry as a medium to convey political messages which are not represented in the mainstream media. Two highly publicized examples are Yamano Sharin's *Manga Kenkanryū* (Hating the Korean Wave) and Kobayashi Yoshinori's popular *Sensōron* (Theory of War) series, which portray Chinese and Koreans as enemies to the state and urge their readers to refute the conventional "masochist" version of Japan's modern history.

This talk will examine the way in which the past is being evoked—not in the traditional form of textbooks, museums, monuments, and state rituals but rather as a past which is insinuated in the surroundings through the experience of manga. The investigation focuses on Japan's manga industry as a medium for political and historical expression and debate, and its role in propagating new perceptions of Japan's wartime history. As part of this investigation, the talk will introduce the concept of "banal memory" to analyze the way in which everyday popular culture—such as reading manga—becomes part of the construction of national memory.

Nissim Otmazgin is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of East Asian Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and Chair of the Israeli Association for Japanese Studies (IAJS). His PhD dissertation (Kyoto University, 2007), which deals with the export of Japan's popular culture to Asia, won the Lue Asia Pacific Research Prize in October 2007 for outstanding dissertation on society and culture in Asia. He is the author of *Regionalizing Culture: the Political Economy of Japanese Popular Culture in Asia* (forthcoming, University of Hawai'i Press) and co-editor (together with Eyal Ben-Ari) of *Popular Culture and the State in East and Southeast Asia* (Routledge, 2012) and *Popular Culture Co-production and Collaboration in East and Southeast Asia* (NUS Press and Kyoto University Press, 2013). Currently, he is a visiting research scholar at the Faculty of Policy Studies, Dōshisha University.

This lecture will be held at the Institute for Research in Humanities (IRH), Kyoto University (seminar room 1, 1st floor).

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