

Special Lecture on Japanese Politics

20 December 2023 (WED), 18:00 – 20:00 c.t.

Geschwister-Scholl-Platz 1, 80539 Munich, Lecture Hall M 105

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All Quiet on the Eastern Front: Why is Japan's Democratic Backsliding Invisible to the West?

Concerns over “democratic backsliding” – the destruction of democratic institutions and constitutional safeguards by populist “outsiders” – have been spreading in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and the United States. In political science, the phenomenon has spawned a growing literature on “competitive authoritarianism” and a popular discussion on the crisis, even death, of democracy. Oddly, Japan – a country known for its perpetual conservative one-party rule of the Liberal Democratic Party (that is often said to be neither liberal nor democratic) – has been largely missing from the picture. If anything, Japan has been receiving praises for standing up for the defense of the liberal democratic order in recent years. Why is this? Is there really no democratic backsliding in Japan today, or is it just invisible to the West?

Prof. Koichi NAKANO, Ph.D., is Professor of Political Science, and former Dean (2017-2021), at the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Sophia University. He specializes in the comparative politics of advanced industrial democracies, particularly Japan and Europe, and in political theory. He has a B.A. in philosophy from the University of Tokyo; B.A. in philosophy and politics from the University of Oxford; and an M.A. and a Ph.D. in politics from Princeton University.

