



Vortrag im Rahmen des Forschungskolloquiums *Aktuelle Themen der Japanforschung*,
organisiert von Prof. Dr. Evelyn Schulz

Childhood Studies and Children Anthropology in Japan

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In contemporary Japan, research on childhood and children are done within the frame of a research field in Japanese academia called childhood studies (*kodomogaku*). In this presentation I want to show how “childhood” came to be a subject of study not only within medicine through pediatrics but also within various social sciences – especially during the 20th century – namely history, education sciences and sociology, as well as Japanese folklore studies (*minzokugaku*), and social and cultural anthropology (*bunka shakai jinruigaku*).

During the 1970s, Japanese scholars decided on a multidisciplinary and collaborative effort to focus on the topic, what they eventually called *kodomogaku* (childhood science). This led to gather scholars from various fields to focus on childhood and conversely to remove childhood from sociology or history, already solid disciplines. I will try to sketch how Japanese *kodomogaku* research field seems similar to Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian “childhood studies” or German “Kindheitsforschung”, rather than French sociology or anthropology of childhood. All these discussions concerning the epistemology of childhood show how scholars (and people) have changed their mind when considering children for the last decades.

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