

How to answer big questions with micro-historical studies

Another plea for a new diplomatic history

The fact that early modern Japanese rulers seemed to adapt easily to Western diplomatic practices and therefore became the first East Asian state to develop *inter pares* relations with foreign nations, while the country itself has been considered an odd player in the Middle Kingdom world order, puzzles historians.

When asking which circumstances led to applied hybrid diplomatic practices, focusing on “big structures, large processes and huge comparisons” proves insufficient;

in order to meaningfully integrate intercultural diplomatic relations into global historical research we have to combine macro-level connections with the diversity on the micro level. An actor-based approach that systematically analyses individual agency within the bigger picture of diplomacy, power relations and foreign trade promises more insights than loosely linked case studies.



A letter of Tokugawa Hidetada to Spanish King, 1611

◆ **Date** : June 13 (Thu), 17:00-18:00

◆ **Speaker:** Birgit Tremml (Research Fellow, JSPS)

◆ **Venue** : Ground floor, Tobunken

◆ **Fee** : Free

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