



京都大学

KYOTO UNIVERSITY

Report of KU - UZH Joint Research Project

Section 1

Project title:	Intensive Workshop: “The Political Uses of Myth in Japan”
Project coordinator (KU) Name Position Faculty, department	Fernando Wirtz Assistant Professor Graduate School of Letters, Department of Japanese Philosophy
Project coordinator (UZH) Name Position Faculty, department	Raji Steineck Full Professor Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Period of project	From: June 2023 To: March 2024
Project location	Kyoto University
No. of participants	[KU] Faculty members: Students: Others: [UZH] Faculty members: Students: Others: Others: (See attachment) *A participant list can be attached instead of completing the above section. The list should include the details above.
URL at which project outcomes can be viewed (e.g. workshop notifications/programs/reports, evidence of academic papers published or otherwise made available, etc.)	https://sites.google.com/view/everydaynessresearchgroup/events/myth-in-theory-and-practice
Photographs with captions	Please submit digital files (such as JPEG or GIF files) of the photographs used in your report as attachments. The size of each image should be 4MB, so that it can be used for printed materials. Please ensure that none of the photographs submitted will cause any issues relating to portrait rights.



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Section 2

Summary of the project (approx. 200 words)

The KU-UZH Joint Workshop titled "Myth in Theory and Practice: Philosophical vs. Historical Perspectives," held from January 10-12, 2024, at the University of Kyoto, successfully convened experts from different backgrounds to bridge theoretical and historical analyses of myth in Japan. Organized by Raji Steineck from the University of Zurich and Fernando Wirtz from the University of Kyoto, the event featured a series of discussions that explored the intersections of myth with critical theory, medieval and modern contexts, and its implications in political mythologies.

What are myths? Can myths be used to legitimize a government? Can there be myths about anything? Is there a mythical essence that manifests itself in the so-called "myths of the twentieth century"? Questions like these are what we discussed in our joint workshop.

Notable sessions included examinations of figures such as Miki Kiyoshi, Nishitani Keiji, Kōsaka Masaaki, and Etō Jun alongside presentations on the symbolic forms of myth and its historical locations throughout Japanese history. We were also joined by three researchers from Nichibunken, including the renowned historian Isomae Junichi, enriching the discussions with their deep historical insights.

The workshop not only aimed to refine a theory of political myths relevant to both Japan and Europe, particularly in the era of populism, but also set the groundwork for future collaborative research. In that sense, we are currently working on a double publication in English and Japanese with the contributions of the workshop and we are looking to include some new contributions.