

Japanology

The Mega-Megacity

by Martin Thurau

Metropolitan Tokyo is the largest built-up area in the world. How does such an urban machine work? How does it deal with its own inevitable decay? Japanologist Evelyn Schulz has been studying how residents use its urban spaces and cope with the attendant risks.

For the complete article, see www.en.lmu.de/news/insightlmu/2011/04_01.pdf



Piled up: Motorways in Tokyo

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A tangible link with the old home

by Clemens Grosse

The White Rose Foundation was set up by survivors and friends of the eponymous resistance group to acquaint young people everywhere with the legacy of Hans and Sophie Scholl and their comrades, who bravely defied the Nazi regime. The Foundation will celebrate 25 years of activity in 2012.

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An elephant ride in Hannibal's manner

by Simon Kirner

In December 2011 the exchange program for archaeology students at LMU and Cambridge University celebrates its first full decade. LMU is the only institution with which the Faculty of Classics in Cambridge has such a partnership. – But that is not the only hallmark that makes the exchange so special.

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Maths for life

by Kathrin Bilgeri

What does mathematics have to do with the work of an environmental organization? How does a Russian "maths circle" operate? Not only does Mikhail Khotyakov know the answers, he uses his specialized knowledge for the benefit of society at large. He is also the recipient of the DAAD Prize 2011.

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A tangible link with the old home

by Clemens Grosse

The White Rose Foundation was created by survivors, relatives and friends of the resistance group of the same name, which actively opposed the Nazi regime. The Foundation's goal is to make the actions of the White Rose better known both in Germany and abroad, and to carry on the group's legacy. In 2012 the *Weißer Rose Stiftung e.V.* can itself look back on 25 years of highly successful activity.

College gowns worn at academic ceremonies used to hang here. Today, there are photographs of young people who found the courage to oppose the criminal Nazi regime that had penetrated nearly every element of their lives. Since 1997, this space, once the professors' cloakroom at LMU, has housed the *Denkstätte Weiße Rose*, the central, permanent exhibition mounted by the *Weißer Rose Stiftung e.V.* The location is a true "*Denkstätte*," a site apt to stimulate reflection. It is but a stone's throw from the central atrium of LMU's Main Building where, in 1943, Sophie Scholl and her brother Hans, who were students at the University, carried out the final action in their protest campaign, leaving leaflets for their fellow-students to find and read. They were observed and reported, and were executed together with their friend Christoph Probst within days of their arrest.

Giving young people examples of bravery and moral courage to draw on

The Foundation was established in Washington DC on 22 February 1987, exactly 44 years after they were put to death. Why the US? Two years before, in 1985, US President Ronald Reagan and Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl had laid wreaths at a military cemetery near the town of Bitburg. Kohl called this an act of "reconciliation over the graves of the fallen," although not only regular soldiers of the German Army, but 43 members of

the *Waffen-SS*, lie buried there. The all-too casual approach to the symbolism of commemoration provoked massive criticism in Germany and abroad. German media referred to it as the "Bitburg Issue"; for newspapers in the US it was the "Bitburg Fiasco."

When the plan to visit Bitburg was announced, three former members of the Ulm branch of the White Rose wrote an open letter to Kohl and Reagan inviting them to visit the graves of Sophie and Hans Scholl in Munich, to honor the memory of those who had died fighting not for, but against, the regime.

Kohl and Reagan did not come to Munich. But more than 300 people from both Germany and the US did – including many Jews who had emigrated during the Nazi period and saw the commemoration of the White Rose as forging a tangible link with their old home. This circle created the White Rose Foundation in the US. In June 1987, the *Weißer Rose Stiftung e.V.* was set up in Munich. It organizes exhibitions, conversations with surviving witnesses and other events. In recent years it has also helped teachers and their pupils to undertake historical projects.

One focus of the Foundation's activities is the *Denkstätte*, which traces the history of the *Weißer Rose*, and tells of the



In memory of the White Rose – the plaque set in the pavement at the main entrance to LMU Munich

lives, actions and fates of its members. The permanent exhibition is also loaned to institutions elsewhere, in Germany, the US, Russia, France and Spain, for example. "Some countries have a rather constricted image of Germany during the Nazi period," says Dr. Hildegard Kronawitter, who has chaired the Foundation for the past three years. "The exhibitions help to broaden this view and strengthen the perception that there were also young people who resisted the regime."

The *Weißer Rose Stiftung* places particular emphasis on education. For the school project "The Forgotten Resistance", for example, pupils of the Franz Marc Gymnasium in Markt Schwaben researched instances of resistance in and around the town, and presented their results in an exhibition. "It is vital that young people especially have examples of bravery and moral courage to draw on," says Hildegard Kronawitter. Resisting repressive regimes is a live issue. In many countries young people are fighting to create societies in which no one is subject to oppression – just as Hans and Sophie Scholl, Alexander Schmorell, Christoph Probst, Willi Graf, Professor Kurt Huber or Hans Leipelt did nearly 70 years ago.

www.weiße-rose-stiftung.de



An elephant ride in Hannibal's manner

by Simon Kirner

In December you may find archaeology students riding elephants "à la Hannibal" along the banks of the Isar – a clear sign that the student exchange organized jointly by the Faculty of Classics at Cambridge University and the Institute of Classical Archaeology at LMU Munich is in full swing. A unique collaboration, the program celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2011. Students from Munich will visit their partner students in Cambridge next March.

"Cambridge has left a deep imprint in me." This is how Rolf Schneider, Professor at the Institute of Classical Archaeology at LMU, begins the tale of how the exchange program came into being. His office, with its darkly polished writing desk and its pictures in lacquered frames, has the air of a comfortable study in an English country house. Here, he speaks of the time he spent teaching at Cambridge from 1998 until he moved to Munich to take up his present position in 2001. Reluctant to leave Cambridge without some kind of keepsake, he set up the exchange program together with Professor Paul Cartledge and other former colleagues. The fact that this is the only such partnership that the Cambridge Faculty of Classics has entered into, underlines its special significance.

More than just a trial run

The participants, who include both freshmen and postgraduates, spend a week at the partner university. The program offers insights into the academic structures and scholastic styles of the host institution. It also provides a colorful program of social events, giving everyone in each group an opportunity to form contacts and make friends. These features make the exchange program special, but the week aims at being more than just a trial run for a complete semester abroad, says Professor Schneider: "I hope that the experience has a long-term effect on each

participant, enabling the students to see themselves and their concept of their subject in a wider context. They learn that archaeology is not monolithic." By taking an active part in everyday student life, they broaden their intellectual horizons, and can call the conventions of national academic traditions into question, thus stimulating a taste for international cooperation and communication.

Archaeologists at play

Archaeology student Julian Hollaender, who has now been in Cambridge twice, is familiar with the differences in academic life. These lie, first of all, in the details of everyday routine. "In Cambridge, students concentrate on their courses, whereas students here have part-time jobs and greater freedom to organize their academic schedules," he says. Approaches to the subject itself also differ. In England discourse and debate play a large role, whereas in Germany archaeology has traditionally been focused more on results.

Every year 12-18 students take part in the exchange program. Each of the Munich students in the program must agree to provide accommodation for one visitor from Cambridge. Julian Hollaender knows exactly what the English guests can look forward to: "Doing the rounds between the library and the *Hofbräuhaus*." The students put the program with social events to-

gether themselves. On offer is everything from a guest student giving a paper and visits to museums, perhaps combined with a stop-off at a Christmas Market, to an excursion to Salzburg. The highlight is always the elephant ride "à la Hannibal," for which Professor Schneider regularly books the services of two circus elephants.

The budding archaeologists from Munich who visit Cambridge in March are accommodated in rooms in different colleges, allowing them to experience student life at first hand. The schedule of social events there includes punting on the Cam and a day-trip to London – and the visitors are admitted onto the roof of King's College Chapel, a privilege normally reserved for Fellows of King's College only.

Looking back over its development, Professor Schneider is obviously pleased with the overwhelming success of the exchange program. He hopes that in the future "it will retain its liveliness and capacity to surprise all concerned."

www.klass-archaeologie.uni-muenchen.de/international/austausch_cambridge

www.classics.cam.ac.uk/faculty/seminars_conferences/munich_exchange/



Highpoints and highlights: The 60-m climb to the roof of King's College Chapel (left) and the elephant ride along the Isar „in Hannibal's manner" (right)



Anthropology



Waste, want and other urban woes

by Susanne Wedlich

Anthropologist Eveline Dürr studies the culture of the slums, life in the shadow of waste dumps – and how terms referring to dirt take on xenophobic connotations.

For the complete article, see www.en.lmu.de/news/insightlmu/2011/04_02.pdf

Film History



Babylonian complications

Maximilian G. Burkhart

“Behind every window lurks a story.” Modern urban films deal not with cities but the people who live in them. Isolation, lack of communication and the world of work are their major concerns, says film scholar Fabienne Liptay.

For the complete article, see www.en.lmu.de/news/insightlmu/2011/04_03.pdf

Ancient History



Pergamon the prototypical

by Hubert Filser

A blueprint for a civil society. Martin Zimmermann’s work brings the Greek polis of Antiquity to life, and illuminates the enormous impact that cities had on the civilization of the Ancient World.

For the complete article, see www.en.lmu.de/news/insightlmu/2011/04_04.pdf



Geophysics

On the brink

by Hubert Filser

Waiting for the Big One. Many of the world’s megacities are located on the boundaries between two tectonic plates. Using computer simulations, seismologist Heiner Igel and his team are trying to estimate the shaking of future earthquakes in these urbanized areas.

For the complete article, see www.en.lmu.de/news/insightlmu/2011/04_05.pdf



Maths for life

by Kathrin Bilgeri

Michail Khotyakov is one of the best students in his class, but in addition to his mathematical studies, he also finds time to devote himself to social issues. For example, he has organized a special “maths circle” for trainee teachers, and he is actively involved in an environmental project in Moscow. In recognition of his “outstanding academic achievements and his special contributions to intercultural exchange” he was selected to receive this year’s German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Prize.

“Maths is a tool for solving problems,” says Mikhail Khotyakov. “With maths you can’t say: ‘I did that,’ if you haven’t actually done it. Mathematical rigor is a hard taskmaster.” When the 24-year-old Khotyakov talks of his passion for his subject, it is difficult to get him to stop.

Having studied economics in St. Petersburg, his hometown, he came to LMU Munich two years ago to pursue further studies in mathematics. He finds the challenge of solving highly complex problems fascinating. It’s a perfect way to nurture one’s capacity for creative thinking, he says.

Stimulating discussion of the teaching methods used in Germany and Russia

He himself was infected by the maths virus at an early age, when his father began to confront him with mathematical teasers and puzzles. Later the young Mikhail regularly attended the after-school meetings of one of the “mathematical circles” which have a long tradition in Russia. “The best thing about the system is that one is left to one’s own devices. One must use the knowledge one has and try to think one’s way through.”

Mikhail Khotyakov is now acquainting his fellow-students with the system. Together with Professor Rudolf Fritsch of the Mathematics Institute at LMU Munich, he has designed an undergraduate

seminar for budding schoolteachers, which he also supervises. The

basic framework for the seminar is a set of 200 problems which Khotyakov selected from various Russian textbooks. Mikhail Khotyakov hopes that the seminar will stimulate discussion of the relative strengths of the teaching methods used in Germany and Russia.

He points out that several of the lecturers in mathematics at LMU are fellow-countrymen of his. Indeed, as he mentions with a smile, many of his German classmates find it hard to adapt to “intuitive structure” of many of the course materials they encounter: “Russian lecture notes can be rather messy, and often appear complicated and perplexing to students here. German students expect Proposition 2.19 to follow immediately on Definition 2.18, so that they can readily compare them.”

Mikhail Khotyakov is keen to show how mathematics can be applied to practical problems in everyday life. This explains his interest in the “holistic approach” to education used in Waldorf schools, which he has studied for two years. He is now applying this principle in the context of a maths circle he set up for primary schoolchildren in Mir, a Russian cultural center in Munich. He is not yet sure whether he wants to take up teaching as



Mikhail Khotyakov playing bongos – a tribute to Richard Feynman, the highly inspiring and charismatic physicist

a profession. Project management for an NGO would also appeal to him. He is involved in an initiative to save a wooded area which is threatened by plans for a new motorway link between Moscow and St. Petersburg, helping to research and formulate logically compelling legal arguments. “The mathematical thing again,” he muses. “It’s no use protesting if you can’t prove your point.”

“Maths has a great deal to do with imagination and creativity.”

In the course of the annual meeting of DAAD Fellows, LMU Vice-President Professor Ulrich Pohl presented Mikhail Khotyakov with the DAAD Prize 2011 for his academic accomplishments and his dedication to social causes.

His many activities prompt the question: Can someone who displays such enthusiasm for mathematics and devotes much of his spare time to working with others find time for a hobby? Yes, he can! “I play the saxophone,” he says, but only for relaxation, as he quickly adds. He also enjoys juggling. “It helps one to sharpen one’s mathematical intuition,” he remarks, “maths has a great deal to do with imagination and creativity.” Quod erat demonstrandum!



Application lists for LMU's Summer University 2012 are now open

LMU Munich once again invites students from all over the world to take part in one of its dedicated academic summer programs. Courses on offer in 2012 will cover a broad range of subjects including European politics and law, medicine, biology and nanosciences, as well as electronic media and environmental sciences. In 2012, international law will be the focus of a newly launched academy. MISU's Summer Academies encompass schemes tailored to students at all stages of their career – demanding undergraduate courses, practical research programs and PhD seminars. MISU also provides German courses for all learning levels, including specialized classes for advanced learners. Participants not only have the opportunity to expand their academic horizons and to gain extra credits, but to experience German and European culture through travel and program excursions.

www.lmu.de/international/misu

THE Ranking 2011: LMU is the best of the German contenders

In the latest Times Higher Education World University Ranking, LMU Munich tops the list of German contenders, and is placed 45th overall. This represents an improvement of 16 places relative to last year's listing. Among European universities LMU now occupies the 8th slot. "We are very pleased with this very fine showing," said LMU President Professor Bernd Huber. "This ranking confirms our position among the top European universities. The fact that we have once again been able to take a large step forward demonstrates that the continuing implementation of our strategic concepts for steadily sharpening LMU's

profile as a university of the first rank is having the desired effect." In the latest editions of the three most prestigious world rankings, LMU is consistently rated among the leaders (Academic Ranking of World Universities: 54th place, QS ranking: 62th place).

www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings

Foundation stone for the Biomedical Center now in place

A new chapter in the ongoing story of LMU's HighTechCampus in Großhadern/Martinsried began on 30 September 2011, when the foundation stone for the new Biomedical Center (BMC) was laid. Some 125 million euros have been allocated to cover the cost of construction of the BMC, which incorporates the Center for Applied Cell Research. A further 19 million euros will be spent on equipping the new facilities. With its 18,000 m² of floor space, the BMC and the in-house Cell Center will afford excellent working conditions for research and education in the biomedical sciences. The BMC will slot easily into the outstanding research infrastructure already available onsite. Among its immediate neighbors are the Faculty of Chemistry and Pharmacy with the Gene Center, the Faculty of Biology, the University Medical Center (Großhadern), the Max-Planck-Institutes for Biochemistry and Neurobiology, and the Innovation and Start-up Center for Biotechnology.

Official inauguration of new German-Polish doctoral program

A new German-Polish doctoral program on "Poland and Germany in Modern Europe" was officially inaugurated in Wrocław on 4 December. This is the first such international graduate program

devoted to themes drawn from the humanities, cultural and social studies to be established jointly between German and Polish universities. The program is based on a collaborative research venture involving the Center for Eastern European Studies (ZfO) at LMU Munich and the Willy Brandt Center for German and European Studies (WBZ) at Wrocław University. The doctoral program will provide support for five Polish and five German doctoral candidates who wish to carry out thesis research on historical, literary, linguistic or political questions bearing on the interrelationships between "Poland und Germany in Modern Europe." The idea is that all students should attend a set course of lectures and together take part in seminars, so enabling them to become familiar with divergent perspectives on issues of common concern. The doctoral program was formally instituted on 17 June 2011 to mark the 20th anniversary of the signing of the German-Polish Treaty on Good Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation.

www.pdme.geschichte.uni-muenchen.de/index.html

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