

## **Cultural Exchanges and Perceptions of the Other**

### The Habsburg Monarchy and its Perceptions of Japan (->U. Tanzer)

The World Exhibition of 1873 was the only great exhibition of the 19th century taking place in Vienna. Its main goal was to present the Habsburg Monarchy in a new light after the defeat of 1866, as assuming the role of a mediator between East and West. The exhibition brought new ideas and products from the Middle and Far East to Europe. Especially Japan became a land of desire and inspiration. In 1868, when the Meiji-government started to open Japan up to Europe, the Habsburg Monarchy tried to establish diplomatic and commercial connections. The presentation of Japan at the Viennese World Exhibition was a great success. The products from Japan functioned as cultural mediators and as a starting point for the intercultural exchange between the two empires. The press coverage, especially the feuilleton, were important generators for the image of Japan in Austria-Hungary. Many aspects of the social and cultural life were influenced by Japonism, especially the culture of the fin-de-siècle. The state visit of crown prince Franz Ferdinand to Japan in 1893 not only strengthened the political connections between the two empires, but also the cultural transfer in form of a collection of Japanese culture products, given to the Museum of Ethnology (now World Museum) in Vienna. This project will shed new light on perceptions of East Asia as reflected in contemporary reports and literary texts. It will also contextualise them in other diplomatic relations and cultural encounters with Eastern Europe and Asia in the period, for instance, with Russia and Persia.