

In Memory of Professor Wolfgang J. Mommsen

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It was not so long after Professor Wolfgang J. Mommsen's sudden death in the Baltic Sea on 11 August, that the tragic news was delivered to Japan. We, scholars in Japan, were looking forward to his further academic achievements, and are shocked and sorry for this sudden loss.

In Japan, he is known foremost as a scholar of Max Weber studies. In particular his masterpiece, *Max Weber and German Politics, 1890-1920*, brought the authoritarian aspects of Max Weber into daylight, and provided a major sensation to Weber studies. Its impact shocked not only German scholars, but scholars worldwide, obviously including Japanese. Since it was published in 1959, his name has been frequently referred to in Japanese Weberian studies, and it has provoked further studies and criticism (recently such as the study of Yukitaka Sasabe). However, without question, it is still a basic crucial text for the study of the political thinking of Max Weber (a Japanese translation of the second expanded edition was published in 1993-1994). In this magnum opus, Professor Mommsen thoroughly followed the footsteps of Weber's political thinking from his school years to his death. Professor Mommsen not only vigorously gathered unknown or unopened pieces of material on this subject, but also analyzed those pieces in accordance with Weber's multifaceted academic achievements, and provided a synthesized view. It is an essential nautical chart for the next generation who launch into the exploration of the vast ocean of Weber's political thinking.

Needless to say, Professor Mommsen's achievements in this field are not limited to this masterpiece. So far, three of his books on Weber have been translated into Japanese: the first of them appeared in 1977, the translation of his Suhrkamp Taschenbuch on *Max Weber* (1974). Moreover, his effort to bridge Weber studies, both international and interdisciplinary, is also well known; most notably, the work by him and his colleagues to hold the 1984 London conference and the publication of the book *Max Weber and his Contemporaries* (an abridged Japanese translation appeared in 1994).