

On the death of Prof. Dr. Soichi Ichimura

(January 27, 1939 – January 15, 2026)

Our long-standing fellow at the Willibald Gebhardt Institute, Soichi Ichimura (Japan), has left us forever. The WGI, and Roland Naul in particular, enjoyed a decades-long friendship and connection with Soichi Ichimura. After completing his studies in psychology at the University of Illinois, USA, he became a university professor of sport psychology at the Institute of Sports Science at the internationally renowned University of Tsukuba in the 1970s. He worked at the University of Tsukuba until 2001. After his retirement in Tsukuba, he worked for another decade at the Department of Clinical Psychology at Seitoku University in Tokyo, starting in 2003.

I met him for the first time at the international ISCPES Congress in Hong Kong in 1988. Early on, Prof. Ichimura, with his excellent knowledge of German culture and language, visited Germany, became a member of the “Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Sportpsychologie (asp)” (Working Group for Sport Psychology) and engaged in lively exchanges with colleagues at the University of Trier (Prof. Dr. Peter Schwenkmezger) and the German Sport University Cologne (Prof. Dr. Jürgen R. Nitsch). This was followed by numerous joint visits and sports science work in Germany at the WGI in Essen in the 1990s and, after 2010, also in Münster.

Since the beginning of the German-Japanese symposia on sports science in January 1995 in Berlin, Soichi Ichimura has been a prolific supporter of these symposia and has actively co-organized almost all of them in Japan and Germany over the past 30 years, regularly contributing his own scientific papers in cooperation with Japanese and German colleagues (Roland Naul, Dieter Teipel, Bernd Strauß, Maike Tietjens). One focus of Soichi Ichimura's studies was comparative cultural studies between Japanese and German athletes, with a focus on coping with stress and emotions such as anger and fear, which he also presented at conferences as a member of the International Society of Comparative Physical Education and Sport.

As a promoter of German-Japanese sport science, he was able to invite Dieter Teipel to the Institute of Sport Science in Tsukuba as a ‘foreign professor’. This enabled several joint international projects to be carried out and publications in German and Japanese to be produced. Soichi Ichimura's scientific work also included translations of German-language textbooks on sport psychology and sport education into Japanese and reviews of German publications in Japanese journals. In these fields, he was one of the foremost experts on German sport science in Japan.

In terms of sports, he devoted many years to his beloved golf. He often visited the famous St. Andrews Golf Club in Scotland. He also visited and reviewed German golf courses, about which he wrote travel reports in Japanese journals.

One of Sochi Ichimura's particular passions was German classical music, including the works of Mozart and Beethoven. With Goethe's "Italian Journey" in his luggage, he himself went on a tour of northern Italy, following in Goethe's footsteps.

With the passing of Soichi Ichimura, not only has the WGI lost an outstanding Japanese sport scientist as a "fellow," but we have all lost a friend and promoter of German-Japanese cultural and scientific exchange. Soichi, we thank you for being with us for so many years and for bringing Japan and Japanese sport science closer to us interculturally. Thank you for everything. You will always be remembered fondly by me and the WGI.

Roland Naul

Translated works by Soichi Ichimura:

- Schwenkmezger, P., Steffgen, G. & Dusi, D. (1999). *Umgang mit Ärger. Ärger- und Konfliktbewältigungstraining auf kognitiv-verhaltenstherapeutischer Grundlage*. Göttingen: Hogrefe. (Übersetzung in die japanische Sprache, 2004).
- Naul, R. (2010). *Olympic Education*. Maidenhead: Meyer & Meyer. (Übersetzung in die japanische Sprache, 2016).

Selected Publications by Soichi Ichimura:

- Ichimura, S. & Naul, R. (1990). Cross-cultural assessments and attributions to female soccer: Japan and West Germany. In J. Standeven, K. Hardman, & D. Fischer (Eds.), *Sport for all into the 90s. Comparative physical education and sport* (pp. 212-220). Aachen: Meyer & Meyer.
- Ichimura, S. & Teipel, D. (1993). *Psychology for Top Athletes*. Tokyo: Dohbunsha (In japanischer Sprache).
- Teipel, D., Ichimura, S., Kondo, A., Uemukai, K., Matsumoto, M. & Sugiyama, Y. (1998). Beurteilung von Stressbedingungen auf unterschiedlichen Spielpositionen durch weibliche und japanische Fußballspieler. In D. Teipel, R. Kemper & D. Heinemann (Hrsg.), *Sportpsychologische Diagnostik, Prognostik, Intervention* (S.141-143). Köln: bps-Verlag.
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- Teipel, D. & Ichimura, S. (2002). Emotionskontrolle von deutschen und japanischen Judoka. In R. Naul, Y. Okade & R. te Uhle (Hrsg.), *4. Deutsch-Japanisches Symposium. Dokumentation* (S. 106-114). Velen: Europäische Akademie des Sports Velen.
- Ichimura, S. & Kondo, A. (2004). A comparative discussion on the traditions of walking in Britain, Germany and Japan. In S. Tazuke, Y. Okade & R. Naul (Eds.), *Globalisierung des Sports: Zur Rolle der japanischen und deutschen Sportwissenschaft* (5. Deutsch-Japanisches Symposium, Kyoto) (S. 11-21). Kyoto: Tadas.

- Ichimura, S., Karasawa, Y., & Izumo, T. (2007). The effects of participation in physical education programs on the psychological state of university students. In D. Teipel, R. Kemper & Y. Okade (Eds.), *Topics of Social and Behavioral Science in Sport* (6th German-Japanese Symposium of Sport Science, Jena) (S. 139-144). Köln: Sportverlag Strauss.
- Ichimura, S., Kawakita, H., & Hatori, K. (2010). Relationships among values, goals and morality in basketball players. In T. Ichiba (Hrsg.), *Japan und Deutschland in der Globalisierung des Sports und in der Sportwissenschaft* (7th Symposium of Japanese and German Sport Scientists, Chio University, Tokyo) (S. 1-8). Tokyo: Hilltop Press.
- Ichimura, S., Kawakita, H. & Kondo, A. (2012). Do values and achievement orientation of university basketball players predict their sporting attitudes? In B. Halberschmidt, B. Strauß, M. Tietjens & J. Kellermann (Hrsg.), *Development through Sport and Renewing its Cultural Value (Presentation 13, 1)*. (8th Symposium of Japanese and German Sport scientists, Münster). Münster: Abstractband.
- Kawakita, H. & Ichimura, S. (2012). Correlational analyses between athlete engagement and burnout. In B. Halberschmidt, B. Strauß, M. Tietjens & J. Kellermann (Hrsg.), *Development through Sport and Renewing its Cultural Value (Presentation 13, 2)*. (8th Symposium of Japanese and German Sport scientists, Münster). Münster: Abstractband.
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- Teipel, D., Ichimura, S., Kemper, R. & Okade, Y. (2018). Spezifische Ärgerbewältigung bei deutschen und japanischen Judoka im Training und Wettkampf. In B. Strauß (Hrsg.), *10th Symposium of Japanese and German Sport Scientists*. Münster: Abstractband.
- Ichimura, S. (2023). Toward the sustainability of youth sport. Learning Hermann Hesse's idea of servant leadership. In Y. Okade (Ed.), *Rethinking Sustainability Issues and Values in Sport* (11th Japanese-German Symposium, Nittaidai University, Tokyo). Nittaidai University: Abstractband.