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JAWS

Japan Anthropology Workshop

Newsletter No. 50

Autumn-Winter 2014



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JAPAN ANTHROPOLOGY WORKSHOP NEWSLETTER NO. 50

Autumn-Winter 2014

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FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Brigitte Steger

I began my term of office as Secretary General of JAWS at our last conference, which was held – as is the case every three years – concurrently with Section 5 of the EAJS conference in Ljubljana in late August 2014.

I would like to thank our outgoing Secretary General, John Traphagan, for his valuable work over the past years. His expertise will not be lost. He is now a member of our Advisory board and continues to manage our mailing list.

We had a fantastic conference, which was very well organised by the Department of East Asian Studies in the charming Slovenian capital. The location showed itself at its best with beautiful weather, street festivals and culinary highlights. I heard many insightful and profound papers and particularly enjoyed the discussions on happiness and on rubbish, among others. Most importantly, the atmosphere at the JAWS sessions and events was how I have always loved our association – inspiring, uplifting and supportive. We celebrated our 30th birthday with a fabulous dinner, organised by our local member, Nataša Visočnik (many thanks, Nataša!) and preceded by a very constructive and engaging General Meeting.

At the GM, we decided on a radical change: JAWS Membership fees no longer have to be paid annually. Instead, we introduced life membership. For a very modest one-time payment of £25, €30, \$40 or ¥4000, everyone who identifies with the aims and objectives of the Japan Anthropology Workshop is welcome to join (see the ‘membership’ link on our website for details).

Membership brings a number of benefits: the right to attend JAWS conferences, the right to purchase hardcover books from the JAWS Routledge series at a 70 (!) percent discount, membership of the mailing list and JAWS newsletters. Most of all, JAWS provides the benefit of belonging to a community of active and very supportive academics interested in Japanese society. We especially welcome younger colleagues who are still working on their degrees and we will attempt to find financial support for graduate students and unaffiliated recent postdocs to attend our conferences.

Andrea De Antoni, Emma Cook and Blai Guarné – supported by a group of new members – are now not only in charge of editing the JAWS newsletter, but are also editors of the website, for which they have many ideas. Our aim is to improve information exchange and social support networks. I hope that this will encourage all of you to make regular active use of the website and the discussion groups.

Joy Hendry continues to be Senior Editor of the very successful JAWS series at Routledge, and we now have an impressive selection of books to offer. JAWS members can submit a proposal and they will find their manuscripts in the hands of professional and supportive editors who will make sure that the book will be scrutinised by strict but helpful reviewers before being published as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Last but not least, members greeted Selcuk Esenbel's offer to host the next JAWS conference in Istanbul at Boğaziçi University in early September 2015 with enthusiasm. I look very much forward to seeing you on the shores of the Bosphorus next year!

FROM THE TREASURER

Anne Mette Fisker-Nielsen

JAWS Coop bank account balance:

20/3/14 to 5/11/14	Cash in	Cash out
Interest	£7.37	
Royalties	£942.78	
Membership	£75.00	
PayPal	£312.04	
Dinner (Japan)		£839.63
Membership	£701.56	
Dinner (Estonia)		1028.95
Correction		£9.13
Total	£2,038.75	£1,877.71
Opening balance	20/03/2014	£11,564.63
Closing balance	05/11/2014	£11,725.67
Membership cheques	£125.00	
Membership PayPal	£417.99	
Balance as of 26/11/14		£12,268.66

We are currently 184 members, an increase of 44 since March 2014. Thank you to everyone who has paid outstanding fees or who has now subscribed to the lifetime membership of £25.

To sign up for membership or to pay via PayPal, go to

www.japananthropologyworkshop.org

and click "subscribe". There will be a onetime payment of £25 or the equivalent in your own currency.

It is also possible to pay directly into the account. From a UK bank account, this will be free. For people outside the UK, this may incur extra cost. Please contact me if you want to subscribe this way.

With best wishes.

FROM THE EDITORS

Andrea De Antoni, Emma Cook, Blai Guarné

This issue of the Newsletter is the first to witness some fundamental changes in the structure of JAWS, as well as the first of an entirely new system of circulating information among Members.

First of all, we welcome Brigitte Steger, who at the JAWS Business Meeting in Ljubljana officially took over from John Traphagan as Secretary General. Brigitte has already enthusiastically started to move towards new directions and open up new possibilities for JAWS, in order to keep Members more involved and up-to-date with Conferences, events and, more generally, with other members' activities. In fact, during the last JAWS Business Meeting, quite a few changes were approved in this direction.

The first fundamental change regards membership fees. From now on, instead of the current annual fee of £15/€20/\$25, Members will receive a Life Membership, set at £25/€30/\$40/¥4000. This will not only probably heal some of the Treasurer's headaches, but will also allow Members to continue to be involved in JAWS activities. Moreover, it will make things much easier for graduate students who, in the present economic situation – that includes shortages of funding and troubles with anthropology in general (e.g. the case of the de facto cancellation of A level anthropology in the UK) – will not need to worry about paying annual fees anymore.

A second big change concerns the Newsletter itself that, from now on, will proceed hand in hand with a more implemented Website and a more active and efficient Mailing List. As it was pointed out during the Business Meeting, the Newsletter has lost part of its earlier function due to internet communication and the fact that it now exists exclusively in a digital format. The NL will keep its main features: the "From the Secretary General", "From the Treasurer" and "From the Editors" reports, as well as the "JAWS Publication News" Sections. In addition, the "Tomorrow's Researchers Today" and "Research Reports" sections will continue to exist and offer opportunities for small publications particularly to younger Members. Moreover the Newsletter will continue to feature the updated JAWS Members List

However, announcements about new publications and conferences will be uploaded on the website and sent to the mailing list, and we are currently working together with Christopher Feldman, the Web Manager, to create and establish a database of Members to be embedded in the website. We are experiencing some technical difficulties but, ideally speaking, we would like each member to be able to update their own profile,

integrating also the 'Tomorrow's Researchers Today' and 'Research Reports' into writers' profiles.

Furthermore, we are considering some ways to enhance the forum. We would like to use it as a platform to discuss theoretical issues, for students to get advice about their research, as well as for starting discussions about and looking for people interested in possible research topics or common projects (e.g. *kakenhi*, Workshops, Conferences etc.).

These new features of the Website will enhance the possibilities to involve younger Members in JAWS activities in the broad sense. Indeed, two young members, Silvia Rivadossi (Ca' Foscari University of Venice) and Aline Henninger (INALCO) have already offered to manage the new features, so we warmly welcome them as Co-Editors of the Website. In Ljubljana other people also showed interest in collaborating with JAWS and the Newsletter, and we will gladly contact them as soon as we define the new tasks. We will definitely need some helping hands, since our academic lives have become increasingly hectic.

A big part of this Issue of the Newsletter, therefore, will be dedicated to clarifying the details about this new wave in JAWS. We publish the minutes of the last JAWS Business Meeting, in order to share more detailed information about the above-mentioned changes. Moreover, this issue also features content-related information about the sections in Anthropology that took place during the Conference in Ljubljana. Different from the previous Newsletters, though, Conference Reports are not limited to the contribution written by participants (this time Aline Henninger and Jens Sejrurp). We have also included reports by the Conveners of two Sections, in order to provide a deeper insight on the organization and conceptualization aspects.

Last but not least, we also start a new section dedicated to interviews with senior Members, who greatly contributed to the history of JAWS, or to the anthropology of Japan in general. The idea was proposed by Laura Dales and we were very enthusiastic in accepting it, for we hope that this new section ("JAWS from the Deep") can be useful to Members to hear from some of those scholars who worked very hard to create this nice and easy-going network of anthropologists of Japan, as well as to establish the anthropology of Japan as a respected academic field.

Quite a lot of news, then. We are looking forward to hearing your opinions and suggestions about them, maybe on the forum, or by email to JAWSnewsletter@gmail.com.

JAWS PUBLICATION NEWS

Joy Hendry

The JAWS book series editorial board is seeking to welcome another one or two people to its number. Members are expected to vet manuscript proposals within a couple of weeks from receiving them and, where suitable, suggest anonymous readers for the finished manuscript. Candidates should be anthropologists of Japan and have publishing experience to include at least one full-length monograph. Please send a CV and a cover letter if you would like to propose yourself, or the name of someone else in case you know a good candidate, to jhendry@brookes.ac.uk as Chair of the Board. In the latter case, please get the person's permission.

The Board will examine the applications and make a recommendation, but the final decision in case there is a competition, will be made at the next JAWS general meeting in Turkey. When the Board was initially founded after Jan van Bremen drew up the original agreement with Curzon, later taken over by Routledge, he asked people from different parts of the world to get some geographical coverage. This idea we have tried to maintain, so this could be one factor in our decision-making process. Another positive factor could be a general enthusiasm for the series, and possible ideas for its future, so please take a look below at what we have produced already if you are interested.

The complete list of books already published in the series may also be viewed, with a little more detail, at <http://www.routledge.com/books/series/SE0627/> and your discount code as a JAWS member is JAWS14 which you will see if you try it out is very generous at 70% of the hardback price! It is also possible to buy multiple copies at the discount price but please let me know if you should find this a problem. I think we agreed that it could be up to 15 so we could order books for our students, and when I tested the website it did allow me to ask for that, but I haven't actually sent the money, as we members of the board get a free copy of each book as it comes out – just a small incentive!

Our latest volume to come out is entitled *The Japanese Family: Touch, Intimacy and Feeling* by Diana Adis Tahhan. With an Introduction by Board member Eyal Ben Ari, this book makes a contribution to his interest in theories on body practices, and to debates on the processes of socialization in Japan. It explores how the relationship between child and parent develops the importance of touch and physical contact for engendering intimacy and feeling, and how intimacy and feeling continue even when

physical contact lessens. It relates the position in Japan to theoretical writing in both Japan and the West on body, mind, intimacy and feeling.

We have some other volumes at various prior stages, including a collection on the same subject of intimacy, and another collection from a recent JAWS meeting, but we are always open to consider new ideas for the series, whether they be monographs, collections, or translations, so do please get in touch with me (jhendry@brookes.ac.uk) if you have something to offer and I will send you the guidelines for submission of a proposal.

Full list in order of publication:

A Japanese View of Nature: The World of Living Things by Kinji Imanishi

Translated by Pamela J. Asquith, Heita Kawakatsu, Shusuke Yagi and Hiroyuki Takasaki; edited and introduced by Pamela J. Asquith

Japan's Changing Generations: Are Japanese Young People Creating A New Society?

Edited by Gordon Mathews and Bruce White

Community Volunteers in Japan: Everyday Stories of Social Change

Lynne Nakano

The Care of the Elderly in Japan

Yongmei Wu

Nature, Ritual and Society in Japan's Ryukyu Islands

Arne Røkkum

Dismantling the East West Dichotomy: Essays in Honour of Jan van Bremen

Edited by Joy Hendry and Dixon Wong

Psychotherapy and Religion in Japan: The Japanese Introspection Practice of Naikan

Chikako Ozawa-de Silva

Pilgrimages and Spiritual Quests in Japan

Edited by Maria Rodriguez del Alisal, Instituto de Japonologia, Madrid, Peter Ackermann, University of Erlangen, and D.P. Martinez, University of London

Japan and the Culture of Copying

Edited by Rupert Cox

Primary School in Japan: Self, Individuality and Learning in Elementary Education

Peter Cave

Globalization and Japanese Organization Culture: An Ethnography of a Japanese Corporation in France

Mitchell Sedgwick

Japanese Tourism and the Culture of Travel

Edited by Sylvie Guichard-Anguis and Okpyo Moon

Making Japanese Heritage

Edited by Christoph Brumann and Rupert Cox

Japanese Women, Class and the Tea Ceremony: The Voices of Tea Practitioners in Northern Japan

Kaeko Chiba

Home and Family in Japan: Continuity and Transformation

Edited by Richard Ronald and Allison Alexy

Abandoned Japanese in Postwar Manchuria: The Lives of War Orphans and Wives in Two Countries

Yeeshan Chan

Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto: Claiming a Right to the Past

Christoph Brumann

Religion and Politics in Contemporary Japan: Sōka Gakkai Youth and Kōmeito

Anne Mette Fisker-Nielson

Language, Education and Citizenship in Japan

Genaro Castro-Vasquez

Disability in Japan

Carolyn Stevens

Death and Dying in Contemporary Japan

Edited by Suzuki Hikaru

Ascetic Practices in Japanese Religion

Tullio Federico Lobetti, with an introduction by Nakamaki Hirochika.

Japanese Tree Burial: Innovation, Ecology and the Culture of Death

Sebastien Penmellen Boret

Japan's Ainu Minority in Tokyo: Urban Indigeneity and Cultural Politics

Mark Watson

The First European Description of Japan, 1585: Striking Contrasts in The Customs of Europe and Japan

Luis Frois, S.J., Translated and annotated by Daniel Reff, Richard Danford and Robin Gill

The Japanese Family: Touch, Intimacy and Feeling

Diana Adis Tahhan

EAJS/JAWS CONFERENCE 2014 REVIEW

CONFERENCE REPORTS

Section 5a: Anthropology and Sociology

Aline HENNINGER

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INALCO University

The *EAJS anthropology section 2014* took place at the University of Ljubljana (Slovenia) from the 28th to 31st July, organized by Barbara Holthus and Wolfram Manzenreiter. Yukiko Uchida (University of Kyoto, Japan) joined the workshop as keynote speaker and significantly contributed to the event with her speech on the concept of the good life and happiness in Japan, where she also raised important methodological questions relating to the main theme of the workshop. Participants mostly gathered from European countries; however a multiplicity of nationalities made this a truly international academic event.

In recent years a number of academics have begun working on happiness in Japan. 2014 saw two major events relating to this research theme. First, the University of Vienna and the German Institute of Japanese Studies (DIJ), held an international conference titled: “Deciphering the Social DNA of Happiness: Life Course Perspectives from Japan” from April 24th to 26th 2014 at the University of Vienna. The themes were then broadened during this years EAJS meeting with participants exploring various aspects of happiness and the good life in Japan, taking into account a multiplicity of cultural aspects and mutual influences. The organizers were happy to see that the topic aroused a wide interest, since the call for papers was followed by many quality paper proposals specific to the theme. Due to the quality and high number of such proposals the organizers decided to organize this year’s session as parallel sections. The choice of parallel sessions, new for this time, allowed the organizers to negotiate more slots to accommodate at least part of the high number of applications. This indicates two positive points: happiness is currently a theme of considerable relevance in contemporary research on Japan, and the number of people working in anthropology and sociology of Japan are increasing.

Each day was characterized by a number of different sessions consisting of three to four speakers. After the greetings of Barbara Holthus & Wolfram Manzenreiter, Yukiko Uchida’s keynote speech opened the first day of the 5a section by questioning the idea of happiness from a psychological and anthropological perspective, comparing data of

both Japan and North America. She compared two series of questionnaires, asking, for example, American people and Japanese people to introduce themselves. The answers' contents were different and shaped two approaches of qualifying self and self-esteem for the two countries. So Uchida pointed out that any research on happiness should first think of the emic definition of happiness. As anthropologists, we must not forget that happiness, as a psychological state with its subjective nature, is subject to a great range of criteria. The following sessions then took place: *Civil Society and Communal Life* and *Happiness and the Family in Modern and Contemporary Japan*. Some of the questions they addressed were: 'how does political participation relate to happiness?' and 'Can family, social, and political institutions affect the happiness of people?' These institutions appear to play a key role in feelings of happiness. For example, when interviewed about their choices, people involved in some community (sports groups, political activism, neighborhood activities etc.) answered that their activities give sense to their existence and tighten the bonds within the group so that they feel happier. However, the image and experience of family life also plays a key role for defining a happy life. The last session, *Happiness and/in Education*, illustrated that the Ministry of Education delivers and nurtures one specific discourse on children's happiness, focusing on the ideal of a "good child" while emphasizing equality and uniformity among all children, especially for avoiding bullying. When experiencing discrimination (biases of gender, ethnicity, disabilities), however, children do not necessarily judge these ideas of equality and uniformity to be relevant, either during school time or after becoming an adult.

At the end of the first day, the JAWS members meeting and welcome event took place. Further discussion and networking continued during the night over dinner in a warm and casual Slovenian restaurant. PhD students got the chance to meet other students and senior researchers as well. This was the perfect occasion to reconnect with colleagues, as well as to celebrate JAWS 30th birthday with a gorgeous birthday cake with 30 candles.

The second day saw the following sessions: *Emotions and Happiness in Familial Relations; Gendered Views and Experiences of Well-being in Contemporary Japan*; and *Re-imagining Masculinities in Contemporary Japan: How Marginalized Men Seek Happiness and Well-being* (2 sessions). Parallel sessions held in the next room were: *Constructions of Happiness; Survey Data on Happiness*; and *Rubbish! The Underworlds of Everyday Life* (2 sessions). The third day saw the following sessions: *Happiness and Sexualities; Phenomenologies of Japanese Happiness* (2 sessions); 'Old Japan' and individual papers.

As it is not possible to sum up all the papers here in detail, I turn now to highlight some trends for the second and the third day's sessions. The house (its space or its members) was at the core of much of the research presented. Most of the presenters explored

family members' status mainly from a gendered perspective. Various panels revolved around questions such as: 'Is family and children the only way to define happiness?' and 'Are work or high revenue a recipe for increasing happiness?' Research presented in *Emotions and Happiness in Familial Relations* and in *Gendered Views and Experiences of Well-Being in Contemporary Japan* suggested that family and couplehood are strongly felt by Japanese people as the model of happiness. Still, Japanese can define themselves happy outside of this model: for instance many couples negotiate their intimacy and perform couplehood differently today – focusing more on companionship and communication, so they acknowledge various models for a happy couple/family. Another example would be the model of masculinity which is associated with having a high profile and an ability to provide a family living. In *Re-imagining Masculinities in Contemporary Japan* it was illustrated how many young males reject this model, by living and working abroad, with lower wages. Still, they assume that they do not represent the “ideal future husband”. Gay men's stories and lives show that the idea of happiness cannot be generalized: gay men living in (or out of) the closet, single, or married to a woman would define themselves happy. They create their own path to happiness, for some referring to the ideal heterosexual family, for others seeking alternative paths outside of this institution. The panel *Happiness and Sexualities* directly echoed these previous panels. So the research presented showed that there is a clear gap between the normative idea of happiness (for example a wealthy family with the father as salary man and mother as housewife) and the reality, which is much more diverse.

The other sessions shed light on the hidden everyday necessities of customs and routine. For example, in *Constructions of Happiness*; and *Survey Data on Happiness* and *Rubbish! The Underworlds of Everyday Life*, papers analyzed the privacy of Japanese homes and introduced reflections on everyday happiness and well-being considering the complex relationships between hygiene, convenience, socio-economic situations and environmental concerns. This anthropology of the routine also raised questions about the relationships between the socio-economic environment and happiness.

During the third day on August 30th, in the two sessions called *Phenomenologies of Japanese Happiness*, the idea of happiness ran as an object of analysis from a qualitative perspective. By connecting theoretical work on the definition of happiness, and fieldwork consisting of participant-observation and interviews with Japanese people (housewives, Japanese living abroad, gay men), the great heterogeneity that shapes the interpretation of happiness became obvious, even in cases which can be clearly identified as fulfilling (in some way) the normative models of happiness (i.e. couplehood and family life, consumption etc.). These studies highlighted that research on happiness, especially when analyzing it across nations, encounters difficulty with regards to

measuring it, or even translating it. Qualitative and quantitative reflections and research should therefore be taken into consideration in order to measure happiness as a highly variable concept and reality.

Besides these sessions that specifically handled the definition of happiness, parallel sessions also ran on the topic of: *Old Japan*, as well as a number of individual papers on various themes, such as religion, martial arts, Japanese values in Hong Kong, and assorted other papers. To conclude the third day and the workshop, Wolfram Manzenreiter and Barbara Holthus (Vienna University) offered their perspectives on the theme chosen for the EAJS anthropology workshop with their final discussion “What We Came to Know and Still Would Like to Know about Happiness in Japan”.

The anthropology section for EAJS 2014 was an important academic event that started a productive discussion on happiness in Japan. For the first time, the organization of the workshop in parallel sessions was a successful way to organize the multiplicity of themes and disciplinary approaches of the proposals, making the 5a section a successful and fruitful three days.

Conference Report

Section 5b: Media Studies

Jens SEJRUP

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Lund University

The Ljubljana conference was the first time a separate section on Media Studies was organized at an EAJS conference, so in many ways this section was exploratory and groundbreaking. I think it very convincingly managed to carve out a position for Media Studies as a separate EAJS section: it was quite clear from the composition of panels and the topics and discussions covered by the section that a large number of subfields and specializations in Japanese Studies felt at home under this new heading, having perhaps until then experienced a certain amount of “homelessness” in the other sections. For the same reason, the section covered a large range of topics and, overall, seemed to focus broadly and inclusively rather than thematically or in depth. This seemed to be a very

appropriate and fitting approach, and a successful way of launching a whole new EAJS section.

Given the breadth and scope of the different panels and discussions, it makes sense in this brief report to outline the proceedings under two main categories: a) popular culture, and b) media forms and history. "Media Studies" as handled and approached in Ljubljana was in many ways a coming-together of these two rather different types of interests and specializations, united under the common feature of being preoccupied with *mediation* in one form or another.

Iwabuchi Koichi delivered the section keynote address, focusing on the issue of an emerging paradigm in media culture with a special emphasis on representation, mobilization of repressed groups and the possibilities of rethinking the roles and functions of both new and conventional media.

The section's first and third day featured single panels, while the format split into parallel sessions on the second day. Disregarding a number of overlaps, the panels roughly spanned the two overall main categories in the following way:

Popular culture, manga and mass-mediated entertainment:

- a. Usami, Gössmann, and Hayashi on television dramas,
- b. Nagata and Saladin on gender roles in mass media,
- c. Yoshioka & Germer, Hansen, Grace and Thorsen Vilslev on gender normativity in various mediated forms,
- d. Kirsch, Armendariz, Weingärtner and Aira on postcolonial and post-imperialist issues in television, comedy and cinema, and
- e. Figal, Kameda and Wolf on the fantastic in various media

Media history, news coverage and media forms:

- a. Kimura, Monnet, Takagi and Nakagawa on 3.11 documentaries and cinema,
- b. Orbaugh, Havranek and Magyar on propaganda and censorship,
- c. Hall, Sejrup and Istenič on media and politics
- d. Coates, Fedorova, Haukamp and Gonzalez on mid-20th century cinema,
- e. Thornton, Park, Formanek, Bučar, Oikawa, Mikhailova, Linhart and Löffler on the history and various aspects of postcards (2 panels), and
- f. Yasar, Nordström, Şahin and Nozawa on mediated voice.

In addition, a panel of individual papers (Hasegawa, Broinowski and Unser-Schutz) addressed both categories. The split into parallel sessions primarily affected the second category, while most panels in the first category took place without parallel panels in session. This meant that the popular culture-oriented panels enjoyed comparatively more exposure and a larger interface with the average section participant. Given the sheer size of that field, the convenors' choice to design the program this way seemed reasonable enough, albeit arguably preferential of popular-culture aspects of media studies over various others.

The Media Studies section successfully managed to bring together two overall categories of papers that would otherwise likely end up in very different ends of the conference. Very roughly speaking, the first category of papers tended more towards humanities sections like modern literature, visual arts and performing arts, while the second category was more related to the history section on the one hand and the social science sections of politics & international relations and anthropology & sociology on the other. Despite these two different general orientations, however, all panels shared an overarching primary concern with mediation and representation, a fact that gave structure and coherence to the Media Studies section and would probably have made most of the panels seem out of place in other EAJS sections.

The dual-category nature of the section naturally meant that somewhat different types of discussions were pursued in the two different categories. However, this feature did not take away from the pleasure and interest of participating in the section, and it was very enjoyable to experience the spirit of curiosity and mutual interests that generally characterized the sessions and discussions during those three days. Overall, the section was a very stimulating and rewarding initiative, especially as it brought together different types of media and representation specialists at EAJS in this new and innovative section.

CONVENORS CONFERENCE REPORTS

Section 5a: Anthropology and Sociology (Programme [here](#))

Barbara HOLTHUS & Wolfram MANZENREITER

The University of Vienna

From August 28 to 30, 2014, the Anthropology & Sociology section (Section 5A) convened at the 14th conference of the European Association for Japanese Studies. The conference was held at the Department of Asian and African Studies in Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia.

Two of the three day-meetings featured parallel sessions, in order to at least partially accommodate the high number of applicants for presentations. The section was initially granted slots for a total of 30 papers (10 sessions). However, in total, the EAJS received applications for 68 presentations (42 for individual papers and 7 panel applications). Papers and panels were selected based on their innovativeness, methodological soundness and promising quality. Through negotiations with the EAJS head office, the section convenors managed to receive six additional “parallel” sessions, eventually ending up with one keynote and 16 sessions, five of which were pre-formed panels. Among these, 12 sessions (including 3 of these pre-formed panel submissions) were related to this year’s section topic, 4 sessions were considered general sessions. Of these, two sessions were filled with the panel on “Rubbish! The underworlds of everyday life”, organized by Katarzyna Cwiertka (Leiden University) and two sessions consisted of individual papers.

The section’s topic of the 2014 conference was entitled “All for the good life – anthropological and sociological perspectives on happiness in Japan”. We asked what the meaning of happiness for Japanese today and in the past is. What is their take on what makes life worth living? To what degree is the individual’s pursuit of happiness and well-being constrained or facilitated by society and its institutions? We especially invited papers that address the cultural variability of happiness and well-being across Japanese society and among different social groups. The high response to this section topic reflected the viability of this topic for anthropologists and sociologists working on Japan and resulted in a large range of presentations with a diversity of approaches and research questions.

The keynote was delivered by Uchida Yukiko, a cultural psychologist from the Kokoro Research Center at Kyoto University, who spoke on the “Cultural Construal of

'Interdependent Happiness' in Japan – Cultural psychological theories and empirical evidence". By looking at how culture shapes human emotion as well as what happiness constitutes from a Japanese perspective, she made her argument in defense of cultural psychology and for culturally specific levels of desirability or ideals of happiness. Showing a lot of comparative data, Uchida pointed to the fact that most theories on happiness are too global and that most people do not fit under these explanatory "Western" models, as they are not "WEIRD", an acronym standing for "western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic". For the case of Japan, in particular interdependence, balance seeking between one's own desires and the needs of society, and the ideal of collectively achieved well-being are elementary elements. The keynote was a great starting point as people kept referring to her throughout the conference.

The session entitled "Civil society and communal life" indicated the significance of belonging, and that practices and activities, which are conducted in a committed way, also contribute to people's sense of well-being. Patricia Steinhoff demonstrated through her network analysis of political activists how friendships between and within groups and the sharing of knowledge and working together for a common cause has contributed to higher levels of social capital and that political activism may increase participants' levels of happiness. Meanwhile, Martin Lieser who studies organized football fans in Japan argued that football passion provides a social space of exchange and bonding for people that otherwise would never meet. But pleasure is not only derived from the integrating forces of football fandom transcending the social structure, but also from the deviant behavior enabled within the same social framework. A study of community level happiness was the focus of Tolga Oezsen's presentation. Oezsen, one of the few quantitative sociologists at this year's conference, studied administrative approaches to rural community revitalization in Kumamoto prefecture. As communities suffer severely from depopulation, over time the idea of who belongs to the community is changing, so that even the ones that moved away are still considered to be part of the village communities. Yet there is a difference between the administrative views on community well-being and the individual level of well-being.

The panel on "Social and political institutions as facilitators and constraints to the pursuit of happiness: The family in modern and contemporary Japan" provided an interdisciplinary group of scholars. A historical view on how the discourse on happiness has evolved was presented by Torsten Weber. Already since the 1870s, a politicization of ideas on happiness can be found in Japan. Weber has analyzed the public discourse of Abe Isoo and Hani Motoko in the women's magazine Fujin kōron, finding that happiness in early 20th century discourse was constructed as a goal of individual pursuit and the freedom of the individual rather than the concern for the well-being of

the group. Weber further distinguishes between “smaller”, meaning everyday, happiness and “greater” happiness, such as the pursuit of happiness as envisioned through the Meiji constitution. Chris Winkler also provided a longitudinal study through his analysis of LDP manifestos between 1955 and 2011. The manifestos show three phases in regards to family policies, pointing to a much greater interest by the LDP in welfare politics than family politics. The pursuit of quality of life only began in the second phase, after the urgent quest for material wealth shifted to the LDP having to adapt to the public’s post-materialist policy preferences as well as the harsh fiscal realities of the time. Tim Tiefenbach’s quantitative study on neighborhood associations and the distinction between voluntary versus involuntary participation stresses the significance of free choice in the participation. Phoebe Holdgruen presented preliminary results from a project she conducts with Barbara Holthus on parental well-being in response to Japan’s nuclear radiation crisis. Findings from their participant observation among activist mothers in Chiyoda-ku were summarized as the motherhood dilemma of women who feel they cannot protect their children as traditional gender roles prevent them from rallying against what they perceive as a threat for their children.

In the session on “Happiness and education”, Anne-Lise Mithout asked if Japan’s special education reform has contributed to offering a happier life to disabled youth. Mithout sees the situation rather critically, due to the neoliberal impact on politics, the diversity of impairments and the ability of the teachers who might not be suitably trained to diagnose disability. Besides special support programs and integration, also autonomy and self-esteem are equally important elements to increase happiness. Christopher Bondy’s ethnographic research in junior high schools in Buraku districts focuses on how schools can function as a “protective cocoon” from having to face the possibility of being detected as an outsider of society and thus contribute to the youth’s sense of well-being. The implementation of gender equality guidelines was the focus of Aline Henniger. Through a detailed distinction of all actors on the local school level Henniger paints a critical picture by pointing at the difficulties in the implementation process.

The presentations in session “Emotions and happiness in familial relations” showed how the ideals of a happy marriage can greatly vary. Dalit Bloch determined the importance of social context and the shifting conjugal roles in her in-depth case study of one couple, whereas Laura Dales concentrated on the connection between marriage and friendship. Marriage influences friendships in a myriad of ways. Overall, marriage does not delimit the emotional needs for friendship, yet reduces the time for friendship. Hiroko Umegaki Constantini studied recently retired men searching for happiness and their place within the family. In the case of one grandfather, he chose grandchild-rearing

as the right solution, providing him regular access to his daughter, nurturing emotional bonds and his desire to still be the financial provider of sorts.

“Gendered Views and experiences of well-being in contemporary Japan” saw three papers that focused on youth subculture, youth’s desires, values and elements creating happiness for gyaru and gyaru-o (Arai Yusuke), on the creation of fantasies of happiness for middle-class wives (Ofra Goldstein-Gidoni), and the study of the workplace and its relationship to the happiness of Japanese women (Maya Todeschini). Todeschini points to women choosing a “winding road” approach, distancing themselves from “traditional” corporate Japan, by working on the margins, either in smaller companies, having multiple career switches, or becoming free-lancers working as consultants or advisors, complementing the activities of traditional companies.

The panel on “Re-imagining masculinities in contemporary Japan: How marginalized men seek happiness and well-being” ran over two sessions. Presenters Kato Etsuko, Ono Mayumi, and Suzuki Ayako focused on lifestyle migration of young men to Canada, the US, Ireland and Southeast Asia in the search for *ikigai*. Hikikomori were the focus of Horiguchi Sachiko’s presentation, in which she concentrated on support groups trying to provide jobs, dismantle salaryman ideals, further communication and create intimate relationships with a significant other. The search of young Japanese salarymen for self-fulfillment through physical appearance rounded out this panel with the presentation by Kristina Barancovait-Skindaraviciene. The desire to be accepted is the driving force for young salarymen to understand their bodies as a “project” to be worked on, as part of their self-identity, and as an expression of their individuality.

In the session on “Happiness and sexualities” Erick Laurent argued that there is happiness in the Japanese closet for Japanese homosexual men. Western activism understands “coming out” not just as a rite of passage but as the universal key to freedom and happiness. Through his in-depth ethnographic research however, Laurent has found that happiness cannot be automatically linked to coming out, but that there can be happiness in the closet indeed. Takeda Hiroko and Ishiguro Kuniko in their paper analyzed young non-elite women working in *kira*, meaning sexual or pornographic services jobs. These jobs are advertised as transforming the women into something special. Adrian Ovidiu Tamas and Carmen Tamas in their joint ethnographic research at an Osaka bar described the late night customers as lonely and looking for companionship. The spontaneously created community of customers acts as a surrogate for the basic human need of companionship. Customers develop the habit to going to the bar, even on weekdays, which the researchers analyzed in terms of addiction.

Iza Kavedzija's presentation on old people's attempts to create a meaningful and fulfilling life opened the first Friday morning parallel session on "Constructions of happiness". Happiness of the elderly is searched for in the enjoyment of hobbies, a more contemplative lifestyle, and gratitude for the little things in life. But her account also countered the stereotypical image of dependent seniors. Since her informants were well aware of the difficulties in balancing between their own desires for securing a certain sense of freedom with maintaining warm interpersonal relationships, achieving a sense of happiness turned out to be a practical form of moral judgment. Nataša Visočnik researched the role of machi-zukuri, public housing policy, and community projects on bringing happiness to the socially and spatially marginalized buraku and Korean neighborhoods in Southern Kyoto. Debra Occhi also looked at the spatial dimensions of action and emotions. Her research compared interaction patterns between masked characters and participants of traditional community festivals with the ubiquitous consumption of the more recently designed, regional tourism characters; both are clearly about raising strong emotional responses, such as anxiety or laughter, to chase away evil or simply to bring about instant moments of happiness.

The second parallel section on Friday morning presented "Survey data on happiness" and thus only featured quantitative studies. Economist Sebastian Lechevalier asked if increasing inequality in Japan is correlated with unhappiness and if so, if widespread dissatisfaction will eventually lead to a heightened interest in redistributive policy. His findings indicate that particularly those forces in society that expect the state to level off socio-economic disparities are dissatisfied with their life in general and the result of government interference in particular. Sociologist Carola Hommerich discussed the contribution of social capital to social and subjective well-being. David Green studied regional and work-related issues of happiness and their impact on fertility outcome. Estimation results of regression analyses revealed that marriage age, spouse's education and working hours are negatively associated with the number of children, while spouse's income, the living arrangement with parents and regional satisfaction are positively associated.

The panel entitled "Phenomenologies of Japanese Happiness" concluded the last two sessions of the Anthropology and Sociology section. Gordon Mathews' twenty year-long study of the changing life trajectories of Japanese adults demonstrated great variability of sources of happiness and unhappiness. While work turned out not to have been a calling for most of his informants, in retrospective they regretted putting too much pressure on their own offspring in order to follow in their footsteps, by placing work over family roles. Osawa Makoto who researches urbanites turning farmers discussed the pursuit of happiness in the context of individual motivations, lifestyle patterns and

the institutional framework of regional political economy. Susanne Klien revisited her informants from a previous research project on volunteering in disaster-hit Tohoku to find that post-volunteering activities consist of spatially differentiated and diversified lifestyles that combine economic activities to make a living with contributions to society for making sense out of living. Continuing the panel, Joy Hendry presented first reflections from a recent research stint on what retired life is like. Her Kyoto-based informants revealed that health and grandchildren are as much a source of happiness as are social encounters and “work-like” activities. Finally, Lynne Nakano looked at women’s take on marriage, comparing Japan, Shanghai, and Hong Kong. With universal marriage remaining the ideal, single life is seen as an unconventional life choice, demanding conscious efforts to negotiate between societal expectations and personal desires. Singlehood, considered by family members and others a transitory state, eventually becomes accepted as permanent with women getting older.

Rounding up three days of intense scholarly exchange, the session organizers initiated the final discussion by reflecting on “What we came to know and still would like to know about happiness in Japan”. In sum, the overall impression gained from the presentations was that Japanese seem rather happy through the anthropological lense, with the sociological approach delivering a less happy picture. Since the majority of presenters were from the field of anthropology, with only a small number of sociological analyses, we wonder if this cleavage is partly caused by the disciplinary self-selection bias or related to separate disciplinary conceptualization and research strategies. We have seen throughout the conference that there is a methodological tendency in anthropology for making use of biographies, and it is not unlikely that the human drive of making sense out of one’s life is ultimately conducive to more positive assessments.

The great variety of case studies reminded the audience that happiness is not universal, and it is not the same emotional state of mind to any and all, and that it even cannot be taken as a cultural construal. When asked, people tend to see happiness as a very personal and immediate issue. They give less significance to the weight and impact of socio-structural conditions, which are rather taken for granted, even though they are seen as shifting, whereas the self remains rather stable. The life stages people find themselves in are putting different demands on their lives and thus exert changing influences on their personal desires.

Some questions however have not yet been fully addressed throughout this dense, three-day section, yet which are worthwhile and should be the subject of future, ongoing investigations. Uchida in her keynote speech presented a noticeable gap between the ideal state of happiness between Japan and the U.S. How are other societies faring in

regards to their ideal states of happiness and in comparison to their actual levels of happiness? We further wonder to what degree findings from the case studies can be generalized. What is the interaction between larger data sets and ethnographic data, and what kind of interaction can be beneficial for sociologists and anthropologists working on the topic? We also think that the role of the mass media, whether on the generation of desires and emotions, or on the public discourse about and the perception of happiness deserves further investigation. And finally, what is the connection between the subjective appraisal of institutions and structural conditions and their objective conditioning within the larger framework of happiness and well-being? In other words, more research is needed to come to terms with the conceptualization and the materiality of happiness in Japan.

In late 2015, the section convenors will publish an edited volume of selected anthropological contributions to the conference.

Convenors Conference Report

Section 5b: Media Studies (Programme [here](#))

Griseldis KIRSCH

SOAS, University of London

Blai GUARNÉ

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

This was the first time that a section on Japanese media studies has been convened at an EAJIS conference. For that reason, we had an open call for papers and welcomed scholars of all levels working on any aspect of Japanese media. As convenors we were very happy to see the interest aroused by the section and, due to the high number of quality proposals received in the call for papers, we were glad to schedule a parallel session on the third day of the conference.

As inaugural keynote speaker we had the honor to have Professor Iwabuchi Koichi (Monash University, Australia) who delivered a lecture titled "Paradigm Shift in the Critical Study of Media Culture? – Some Thoughts from Japanese Cases." In his keynote address, Professor Iwabuchi highlighted the significance of critical media studies in the wake of 3/11, combining both theoretical considerations on media and their role in

society with more practical elements of analysis. His trip to Europe was possible thanks to the co-founding of the Great British Sasakawa Foundation, the University of Vienna, and the Faculty of Languages and Cultures at SOAS, University of London.

After Professor Iwabuchi's keynote speech on the Thursday morning, we had an entire day on media and gender. Three panel-sessions took place: "Interdisciplinary Analysis of TV Dramas: The Example of *Kaseifu no Mita*," chaired by Hilaria Gössmann (University of Trier, Germany); "Culture of Their Own? Questioning Gender Normativity in Japanese Media Cultures," chaired by Elizabeth Grace (University of Cambridge, UK); and individual papers presented under the rubric "Media and Gender," in a session chaired by Blai Guarné (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain). The papers presented in those panels approached the constructions of gender in the media from various angles and through various genres. Two of the panels had been pre-organised, one of which ran entirely in Japanese and was on a television drama that was extremely successful after 3/11, *Kaseifu no Mita*. The other was on gender normativities in various media/genres.

On the Friday, we ran parallel sessions throughout the day. In one of the sessions, we had a panel on Fukushima and film titled "3.11 Cinema – Disaster and the Nuclear Unconscious in Post-Fukushima Films." The panel was chaired by Livia Monnet (University of Montreal, Canada), and Thomas Lamarre (McGill University, Canada) acted as discussant. This panel was followed by various individual papers gathered in three different panels around the topics of "Historical Media," "Media and Memory," and "Media and Politics." Simultaneously, in the parallel sessions, we enjoyed two subsequent panels on historical picture postcards as media focused on the topics of "Imagi(ni)ng History" and "Imagi(ni)ng Modernity," that were respectively chaired by Sepp Linhart (University of Vienna, Austria) and Susanne Formanek (University of Vienna, Austria). These panels were followed by individual papers that addressed the two main topics to which the day was devoted, media and disaster, and media and historical records, as well as another pre-organised session on mediated voices chaired by Kerim Yasar (Ohio State University, USA) under the rubric "The Voice in the Machine – Mediated Voices in Historical and Anthropological Perspectives."

On the Saturday, we started the day with another pre-organised session on "Trans-national Agents and Social Change in Japanese Cinema – 1920s-1960s," that was chaired by Griseldis Kirsch (SOAS, University of London, UK), and we closed the section program with the individual papers presented in the panel session "Media and the Fantastic."

All in all, we ran seven pre-organised panels and nineteen individual papers. The speakers came from various countries, including, but not limited to, Japan, Canada, the US, the UK, Germany and Spain. We had far more submissions than we could accommodate, and it was a very successful first conference for the Media Studies section.

The convenors wish to thank the organising committee in Ljubljana for their efficiency and swift help for whichever problems arose, as well as the EAJS and the funding bodies that made Professor Iwabuchi's trip to Europe possible. We are looking forward to another successful section in Lisbon in 2017.

CALL FOR PAPERS

26th Conference of the Japan Anthropology Workshop (JAWS) 2015

“Technology and Nature”

Venue: Bogaziçi University, Istanbul (Turkey)

Time: 1-4 September 2015

Deadline for paper proposals: 31 March 2015

Please send abstracts of no more than 250 words to Dr Cornelia Reiher
(cornelia.reiher@fuberlin.de)

We invite proposals for papers for the 26 th Conference of the Japan Anthropology Workshop (JAWS) to be held from 1-4 September 2015 in Istanbul. The conference is organised by the Japan Anthropology Workshop (JAWS) in collaboration with the hosting organisations, the Japanese Studies Association in Turkey/Japonya Arastirmalari Dernegi (JAD) and the Asian Studies Centre at Bogaziçi University, Istanbul, represented by the President of JAD, Prof Selcuk Esenbel, Bogaziçi University.

Main conference theme: “Technology and Nature”

Convenors: Dr Cornelia Reiher (FU Berlin) and Dr Cosima Wagner (FU Berlin)

The progress of science and technology, with their potential but also their limits and failures, is the subject of much debate in Japan as in many other industrialised countries. In recent times, Japan became known as a high-tech nation with innovative products such as the Shinkansen, the Sony Walkman, (humanoid) robots, cameras and cars, as well as earthquakeproof structures and tsunami warning systems. Optimism about the ability of technology to offer solutions for challenges faced by society – from environment pollution to demographic change – became a common line of thought. Such optimism has been strongly promoted by the state and discussed, disputed and interpreted in the media as well as in popular culture such as in manga and anime. At the same time, however, there have always been voices critical of the hegemonic industrialised lifestyle with large protest movements by ordinary citizens, as in the case of “Minamata disease” or the siting of nuclear power stations in rural areas.

Recently, the triple disasters of March 2011 undermined people’s faith in the power of technology to master the natural world and drew attention to its impact on people’s

lives and the environment. The safety of nuclear power was particularly called into question. As a result, a growing number of people today are longing for “the natural” that they believe has almost vanished from their lives. The boom in natural food stores, organic cosmetics and sustainable clothing, as well as protests for greater protection of the environment and against “unnatural” technologies such as the genetic modification of plants, can be seen as the flipside of a world dominated by and dependent on technology.

However, the concept of nature and the vision for the development and use of future technologies are socially and culturally embedded. By analyzing agency and the network of actors involved in producing knowledge about science, technology and nature, and by investigating how such knowledge is sold, promoted or possibly discarded in everyday life in Japan, the conference aims to explore the following questions: How are (concepts of) technology and nature constructed, negotiated and translated into practices, and how is the relationship between the two imagined, discussed and challenged in Japan? What can anthropological research on nature and technology contribute to our understanding of Japan?

We invite proposals for papers that address the topics of nature and technology from a wide variety of perspectives and represent Japanese contexts within the broad scope of anthropological research:

- Politics and policies on technology, the environment and environmental risks.
- Technology and demographic change, with visions and concepts for future technology (e.g. a “robot-assisted society”).
- The role of civil society in the prevention of natural disasters; protest movements for environmental protection and against technology in general, and nuclear power plants and GM food in particular.
- Discourses about ethics and technology; best-practice examples of “responsible technology innovation”; questions of ethics in medicine.
- Food studies and culinary anthropology which deal with food as an industrial product; the environmental impact of global food chains and the boom in organic farming and natural food; the challenges of radioactive contaminated food and its monitoring and health effects.
- The impact of science, technology and nature on power structures, gender roles and the organization of society in everyday life.
- Balancing technology and nature.

Methodological discussions of anthropological research on nature and technology, drawing on areas of study such as laboratory studies, science and technology studies, ecological and environmental studies, food studies and medical anthropology.

A selection of conference papers will be submitted to the new English-language Turkish Journal of Japanese and Asian Studies (AJIA). This inaugural issue will send a strong message promoting the study of Japanese Anthropology in Turkey and the wider region.

In addition to individual papers, we also invite papers for the following panels:

Panel: 'Considering Japanese Culture, Communities, and the Interface of Technology and Nature in Post 2011 (3.11) Disasters Japan'

Convenor: Professor Millie Creighton (University of British Columbia)

Many concepts of Japanese culture stem from or are related to communities, often in rural or less densely urbanized areas, in which Japanese either did grow up, or envision as representing something they think of as underlying their culture. There is also often in Japan the idea that Japanese culture is strongly tied to and sensitive of nature, with reiterations of Japan as "natural" and "beautiful". However, technology and technological adaptation of "nature" are highly developed in Japan, and widespread in the way most Japanese live, rendering everyday culture as one where nature is poetically espoused, while technological intrusions to nature abound. This panel deals with these issues focusing on Tohoku areas and communities affected by Japan's 2011 disasters. Papers address such issues as the following. Whether there is a disconnect (and what forms this takes) between urban core based recovery or reconstruction planners and local community dwellers who attach particular meanings and values to the areas they come from as "memoryscapes" rather than simply bureaucratic designations? Do such communities have differential "local knowledge" from which protest against government decisions to do things like raise land levels or further reinforce shore lines (for example with tripods) makes sense? In what ways are local areas, including Fukushima, attempting to deal with or discuss the nuclear disaster issue? What continuing ramifications are there in attempts by some governmental agencies or backed agencies to reintroduce nuclear power plants in less core areas against a background of public or civil society concern over this.

Please submit abstracts for this panel of no more than 250 words to both Dr Cornelia Reiher (cornelia.reiher@fu-berlin.de) and Professor Millie Creighton (Millie.Creighton@ubc.ca)

Panel: 'Trauma/memory/analysis: The anthropology of Japan's Triple Disaster, four years on...'

Convenor: Dr Mitchell Sedgwick (London School of Economics)

Collecting together anthropologists working on Japan's 'Triple Disaster', this panel concerns itself with the passage of time upon our interlocutors', and our own experiences of 11 March 2011, unpacking the force of memory on our current analyses. What, if anything, constitutes relief after disaster relief is finished? What is hidden, and what of the Triple Disaster continues to be made visible? What are our friends in Japan, and what are we doing with this traumatic material? The disaster is variously commemorated. Publicly marked at '11 March' sites, ritualised in speeches, made into an object of political discourse, it continues to attract funds for new university think-tanks and reconstruction projects seeking to appease nature through technological intervention. It is privately made visible, meanwhile, in the reconstruction of gravesites, the re-restart of production lines in damaged factories, etc. Is '11 March' slipping away as it is gradually intermeshed into normal cycles that mark time and social relations in Japan: obon, etc.? The disaster is, of course, only partially-remembered, if not forgotten or repressed. What do these processes suggest about personal/psychological mechanisms of survival among the Japanese and/or as articulations of Tohoku's famed gaman? What are the effects, positive and negative, of talking about, or hiding from trauma? Who is asking that it be discussed: Family members? Anthropologists? How do communities locate themselves after trauma? While, four years on, Fukushima still attracts media attention – and rightly so, as the Dai-Ichi Nuclear Power plant continues to 'melt down', and Japan's 'nuclear village' reconstructs itself – to what extent, and to what effect, have other communities – that were 'only' devastated by the tsunami – been forgotten by the rest of Japan and the world, and to what effect? What does the Triple Disaster mean to other Japanese, affected indirectly by the disaster? Are they 'next'? How are we, anthropologists, reading the Triple Disaster?

Please submit abstracts for this panel of no more than 250 words to both Dr Cornelia Reiher (cornelia.reiher@fu-berlin.de) and Dr Mitchell Sedgwick (m.sedgwick@lse.ac.uk)

Panel: 'Technologies of Gender/Sexuality and Problematization of Human Ontology in Japan'

Convenor: Professor Satoshi Tanahashi and Dr. Yoko Kumada (Ochanomizu University)

Technology and nature are not distinctive oppositional entities in dichotomy any more, and they create confluences ubiquitously. One of the stages where these confluences have merged is human body. Medical, genetic, biomechanical and even aesthetic fields made technology and nature mutually permeable. Technology is not something "unnatural" or external to human body. Both technology and nature complementarily create not only human body but also human "naturalness." In addition to the personal, the social and the political bodies, we have the fourth dimension of the body "technologized." Such relatedness of technology and nature poses us the following questions: what is "naturalness" to us? ; What does being human-beings mean to us? These questions will lead us ultimately to ontological turns. The panel is attempting to challenge these questions of technologized body by probing into recent technologies of gender/sexuality (TG/S) in Japan as the focal cases. Frequent cases of TG/S in Japan would be Gender Reassignment Surgery, Assisted Reproductive Technology and aesthetic technologies, but the cases could spread variously over a range of medical, reproductive, surgical, genetic and biomechanical technologies, and even cultural technology of metamorphosis such as kosupure. The issue of TG/S also needs to be discussed from the socio-cultural perspectives of ethics, law, and social welfare. We welcome proposals that discuss cases or interfaces where gender/sexuality, bodies and technologies merge in Japan. And in the final discussion, the issue of human ontology will be speculated on the basis of each presentation.

Please submit abstracts for this panel of no more than 250 words to both Dr Cornelia Reiher (cornelia.reiher@fu-berlin.de) and Professor Satoshi Tanahashi (tanahashi.satoshi@ocha.ac.jp).

Panel: 'The 'unnatural' in life and death'

Convenor: Dr Jason Danely (Oxford Brookes University)

Technologies, and the legal, moral, and political infrastructures that in various ways enable, contain, and make them legible, set the stage for thick negotiations on the nature (or the unnaturalness) of life, death, personhood, and relationship. The insertion of a feeding tube or performance of autopsies, for instance, reveal cultural norms, and institutional ethics, spiritual meanings, and social sanctions that extend the locus of

moral agency beyond individual decision makers. While nature and technology are often considered to exist in opposition to one another, this panel explores the idea that both might be considered categories that are more productively distinguished in contraposition to the “unnatural.” Each paper considers cases where technological solutions to life and death problems fulfil what might be considered natural needs, desires, or social functions, as well as cases where the natural may be less comforting or lovable than the technological. In each case, we will examine how Japanese cultural imaginations of nature and technology are dependent on notions of the unnatural and what this might say about the possibility of relating to life, death, and the material world in ways that moral and meaningful.

Please submit abstracts for this panel of no more than 250 words to both Dr Cornelia Reiher (cornelia.reiher@fu-berlin.de) and Dr Jason Danelly (jdanelly@brookes.ac.uk).

Panel ‘On the naturalness of our surrounding world’

Convenors: Professor Yasushi Uchiyama and Professor Shuhei Kimura (University of Tsukuba)

The panel explores the ways in which the naturalness of our surrounding world in general, and the “familiar path” (in the subject-centered surrounding world), in particular, are relationally inter-mediated. Various actors, be they human or non-human, living thing or nonliving thing, organism or molecule, radioactive material or cell, machine or tool transact ceaselessly with each other with their own tempo, scale and topology in the world. Yet, in our natural attitude, we accentuate certain transactions while downplay others so as to maintain the naturalness of our surrounding world. Such naturalness, however, is shaken up by catastrophes. What is re-constructed after a particular catastrophe? Infrastructures? Socialfabrics? How are they re-constructed? Is it the naturalness of our surrounding world that is reconstructed in the process? Or does the construction of the naturalness of our surrounding world change accordingly? We present ethnographic cases of catastrophes and re-construction processes that affect the topography of our “familiar path” in order to shed light on the ways in which the construction of the naturalness of our surrounding world is inter-mediated.

Please submit abstracts for this panel of no more than 250 words to both Dr Cornelia Reiher (cornelia.reiher@fu-berlin.de) and Professor Shuhei Kimura (shuhei.kimura@gmail.com).

Panel: 'Medicine & Technology in Japan: Legal, Ethical and Governance Perspectives'

Convenor: Dr Susanne Brucksch (Freie Universität Berlin)

Medical technologies are an integral part of daily practices in hospitals. They are able to manipulate the human body, ranging from general devices with extremely low risk to highly invasive to patients. Their manipulative nature shaping the edges between (new) life and death explains the resulting controversies (e.g. reproductive technology, stem cells, intensive care and dying with dignity). The high pace of technological progress in the field of biomedical engineering contributes additionally to a growing uncertainty in daily clinical practices in hospital, while the practitioners and lawmakers have difficulties to institutionalize appropriate rules, procedures and legal standards to reduce the risks of (fatal) medical errors. Thus, the development and employment of medical technologies can be understood as an ongoing process of negotiation among different players involved. More precisely, medical technologies and clinical practices can be defined as societal phenomena, shaped and embedded in multiple ways in their institutional, cultural, discursive and political-economic context in Japan. To approach medical technologies and clinical practices from their discursive angle, the panel focuses on legal, political and bioethical perspectives. Particularly, the panel addresses features regarding the socio-cultural consequences of medical technologies and clinical practices in contemporary Japan. Finally and more generally, the panel aims at encouraging academic exchange and research on biomedicine in Japan regarding its socio-cultural implications.

Please submit additional abstracts for this panel of no more than 250 words to both Dr Cornelia Reiher (cornelia.reiher@fu-berlin.de) and Dr Susanne Brucksch (susanne.brucksch@fu-berlin.de).

Panel: 'Representing nature and technology in Japan'

Convenor: Dolores Martinez (SOAS, Oxford)

This panel looks at the various ways in which nature and technology are represented in Japanese society. Anthropology has long maintained that 'nature' is mediated, constructed and represented by culture and, alternatively, that our ideas about culture, society and modern technologies are mediated through concepts of what is 'natural' (cf. Lévi-Strauss, Sahlins, Strathern, Haraway). Of interest to us is how changes (potential and actual) in our conceptualisations of nature and technology are also mediated through their representations. Taking as given the fact that nature and technology as

forming a mutual and culturally constructed relationship, the proposed papers will consider how life imitates art (given that art always builds on what we already imagine) in films that imagine natural disasters and the role that technology might play in creating and averting catastrophe (Kirsch). Other papers consider how the ruins of modernity and its technology can become the sites of nostalgia for young Japanese (Katsuno); the ways in which anime representations symbolically portray the tension between the natural and the technological (Lozano-Méndez); how the animation of objects in and of itself is a technology even if one that requires belief (Gygi); and the manner in which the tensions between traditional ways of life, rooted in nature, are imagined in opposition to the technologies of modernity, which make us into zombies (Martinez). In brief, this panel is about the anthropology of the imagination.

Please submit abstracts for this panel of no more than 250 words to both Dr Cornelia Reiher (cornelia.reiher@fu-berlin.de) and Dr Dolores Martinez (dm6@soas.ac.uk).

Panel: ‘Robot technology and elderly care in Japan’

Convenor: Cosima Wagner (Freie Universität Berlin)

The promotion of service robots for the automation of everyday life in Japan, especially on the field of elderly care is often justified by referring to the demographic change and an allegedly high acceptance of robots as technical tools. However, while governmental strategy papers for the development of a robot assisted society of the future strongly promote R&D of robots for elderly care and have high expectations regarding a prospering robot technology market of the future, market-ready and safe products are still rare, expensive and not easily accepted by users. The panel addresses agency and networks of actors involved in promoting robot technology for elderly care in Japan from a cultural anthropology perspective. Technology development is viewed not as a “neutral” or “rational” process, but as a process in which different social actors with different visions and ethical values investigate concepts of mechanization as a premise. During this process, models of use are inscribed into the design of the new technological products (service robots) and communicated through government strategy papers, advertising, instruction manuals a.s.o. The planned papers will present findings from recent fieldwork trips, laboratory studies and sources analysis. Furthermore gender aspects as well as activities to establish a new interdisciplinary scientific field of „roboethics“ in Japan will be introduced.

Please submit abstracts for this panel of no more than 250 words to both Dr Cornelia Reiher (cornelia.reiher@fu-berlin.de) and Dr Cosima Wagner (cosima.wagner@fu-berlin.de).

Panel: 'Food, Science and Nature'

Convenor: Dr Cornelia Reiher, (Freie Universität Berlin)

Japan's food system is changing: Agriculture is in a free falling decline, food imports are increasing and food itself becomes more and more an industrial commodity. Science and technology are rather ambiguously discussed with regard to this development. While for example genetically modified organisms (GMO) cause concerns amongst policy makers and consumers in Japan, other scientific achievements and technologies that improve the efficiency of Japanese agriculture are more positively discussed against the backdrop of Japan's low food self-sufficiency ratio. At the same time, food has to be transported far distances employing various technologies and drawing on various scientific insights to ensure freshness, quality and safety of food products. But these global food chains also cause several problems to the environment and nature. The boom in organic farming, the promotion of local food consumption and natural food might just be the other side of the coin. Science and technology can change and endanger the naturalness of food, but can also enable people to deal with the challenges of radioactive contaminated food and its monitoring and health effects. The main question of this panel is: How is food produced, distributed and consumed and how is naturalness constructed, referred to and staged through discourse, marketing and everyday practices in contemporary Japan? The focus of this panel lies on the actors, technologies and discourses dealing with food and agriculture.

Please submit abstracts for this panel of no more than 250 words to Dr Cornelia Reiher (cornelia.reiher@fu-berlin.de).

Panel: 'Facing Crisis and Rapid Social Change in Turkey and Japan'

Convenors: Dr Tolga Özsen, Çanakkale and University and Professor Selçuk Esenbel (Bogaziçi University)

The panel organisers would like to invite anthropologists to submit abstracts on the topic of facing crisis and rapid social change in Turkey and Japan. The panel will provide the opportunity for anthropologists working on Turkey and/or Japan to share current research agendas in their field and compare research environments.

Notwithstanding many differences, the two countries Japan and Turkey share a lot. Both have interesting geopolitical positions between “East” and “West”. They are at the “beginning” and “end” of the silk road and both countries have an impressive historical heritage. Both have had to deal with rapid urban growth, the enmeshing of political and environmental crises, and problems of identity, nationalism and difference. These issues are conducive for original comparative perspectives on facing crisis and rapid social change in Japan and Turkey in recent years.

Please submit abstracts for this panel of no more than 250 words to both Dr Cornelia Reiher (cornelia.reiher@fu-berlin.de) and Prof Selçuk Esenbel (esenbel@boun.edu.tr)

JAD Roundtable: ‘Japanese Studies in Turkey’

Convenor: Prof Ayse Nur Tekmen, Ankara University and Asst Prof. Oguz Baykara, (Bogazici University)

JAD members will introduce Japanese Studies in Turkey to the JAWS audience during a round table discussion to explore possible research and teaching collaborations.

We hope that the conference topics will be inspiring to all JAWS members. However, Japan anthropologists working in areas outside the conference theme are also welcome to submit papers in their own area of expertise. All participants must be members of JAWS.

JAWS FROM THE DEEP

Laura DALES Interviews Joy HENDRY

Joy Hendry

Joy Hendry is Professor Emerita at Oxford Brookes University, a senior member of St Antony's College, University of Oxford, and was one of the founders of the JAWS network. Her publications include *Wrapping Culture: Politeness, Presentation and Power in Japan and Other Societies*, Oxford University Press, 1993; *The Orient Strikes Back: A Global View of Cultural Display* Oxford: Berg, 2000; *Reclaiming Culture: Indigenous People and Self-Representation*, New York: Palgrave, 2005; and *Science and Sustainability: Learning from Indigenous Wisdom*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Laura Dales

Laura Dales is Assistant Professor in Asian Studies at the University of Western Australia. She is the author of the monograph *Feminist Movements in Contemporary Japan*, London: Routledge, 2009; and co-editor of *Configurations of Family in Contemporary Japan*, London: Routledge, 2014. She is currently working on an Australia Research Council project examining intimacy beyond the family in contemporary Japan.

This is the first of a series of interviews we offer to JAWS members. The idea for this series originated at the JAWS dinner at the recent European Association of Japanese Studies in Ljubljana. We envisage this series as a dialogue between junior and senior scholars in the field, a way to address questions of generational difference and changes in the theories and practice of the anthropology of Japan.

Joy and I communicated before and after our interview via email, and the discussion itself was conducted via Skype. This process offers some illustration of the ways that technology has introduced new elements, both enabling and challenging, to scholarship and academic enquiry.

LD: As one of the founders and drivers of JAWS, now 30yrs old, can you tell us about its birth: how did it happen, who was there? And what moved you to create the network?

It's actually all written on the (JAWS) website, in the history, but I was sitting here in Oxford doing anthropology with nobody who worked on Japan, or anywhere nearby,

though there was someone who worked on China. And I was also going to Japanese classes where no one knew what anthropology was about. So I thought it would be good to find some like-minded souls, and at a meeting of the European Association for Japanese Studies, in The Hague, while drinking Dutch gin with Brian Moeran and two anthropologists from Norway: Arne Kalland, who sadly died last year, and Arne Rokkum who later organized a conference in Oslo, we had the idea of holding a workshop to see who we could find. Arthur Stockwin, who had just come to Oxford as head of the Far East Centre, later to become the Nissan Institute, was also in The Hague, and he offered to host the workshop, and even to put some money in. So we then set about trying to find all the anthropologists who had worked on Japan in Europe, thinking there might be a dozen or so, and ended up with about 30 people keen to come. So we had a meeting in Oxford in 1984, and we all decided that it would be a great idea to set up an association, and that was the founding date that we're celebrating.

The name JAWS by the way, well the idea of having a Japan Anthropology Workshop meant that there would be the acronym "JAWS". And I had thought it was Brian Moeran's idea, so I credited him for it, but Arthur said "Oh no, it was my idea, and Brian just said 'Jōzu desu ne!'"

LD: It sounds as if starting JAWS in the European context was a sense of isolation. Do you think that there is still this isolation among anthropologists of Japan?

No, and you were going to ask about change and one of the big changes is that when I went to do fieldwork there were only four outside anthropologists who had been there, all Americans: Robert Smith, John Cornell, George De Vos and Harumi Befu and I wrote to them all. Of course, there had also been John Embree, but he had died before that, and Ron Dore, a sociologist from Britain, but otherwise, there were literally four and I wrote to them all.

They were the only outside anthropologists who'd gone to do fieldwork in Japan and I went through all their work before I went to do mine. And now, as you know, there are hundreds, possibly even more than a thousand people. So I don't feel so isolated anymore!

LD: JAWS is quite a varied group, from the Conferences I've attended – the disciplinary background and also the interests, they're quite diverse.

Yes well early on we used to discuss the possibility of having a publication, of a journal. And one of the reasons we didn't was because of the diversity of interests, we tried to

encourage people to go and present in other sessions and publish in other journals. So in all these (EAJS) Conferences you find JAWS members in all the different sessions. I was there at almost the beginning of EAJS and anthropology wasn't there, we put it in after Paris, where they welcomed JAWS as an adjunct.

LD: What are the major changes that you see beyond JAWS, in the general context of the anthropology of Japan?

Even to this day, and I don't know about Australia, but in the UK, we are regarded as rather odd for working in Japan. And I got together the other day with a group of people, for a conference called "Out of Oxford", and they're all people who finished in the 1980s, who decided that that was a time when there was a sea-change in anthropology, so they got together and at the follow-up meeting they invited me along. I'd finished there in 1979 but I knew them all really well because we'd been together as students, and they were still regarding Japan as an odd place to work! In America, there are loads of them, but Takami Kuwayama complains that the Japanese get lumped together with Native Americans, so it is a weird situation.

A major change in anthropology, for which I've used Japan as an example, is that people have had to take more account of the people they work with because they can all read anthropology and they have websites where they can put their own information up. So – you know – you can type in the name of any people and you can get stuff they've written about themselves, as well as the anthropology.

And that for me has been a very big change in anthropology, which I've been trying to cover in terms of going off and working with Indigenous people, and it is something which happened in Japan so long ago. In Makuhari (meeting of JAWS) I ran a session called Mutual Anthropology. The idea with Mutual Anthropology is that we get someone from Japan who has worked in the UK, and I'm doing it with Yuko Shioji, she works in the Cotswolds, near Oxford, and someone who's from here who's worked in Japan. You have an equality about your work which people don't have if they go to study someone who's never done anthropology at all, or worked anywhere in your own place, when it is hard to avoid that hierarchical difference.

LD: Do you think that the anthropology of Japan is sufficiently outward-looking? Do you think we are perhaps a little inwardly-focused?

Yes I do, I do think we are. I've been working out of Japan for about fifteen years now. I started doing it when I was working on theme parks, going around the world and

looking at other forms of what I called cultural display. Actually I started it with “Wrapping”. I started doing my wrapping work, which came out in 1993, putting Japan in the context of other societies. And now I think it’s another change, because it’s not just me doing it, now there is the EASI-ANTH list and there are loads of people, putting Japan as only one of the possible places to discuss in that list.

There’s also been quite a few people studying Japanese and Chinese, making comparisons. So I think that’s one big change actually. I think we used to be more focused on the study of Japan, forgetting that we should put it in a broader context.

In the beginning, in Oxford – and I don’t know if this was the same in other parts of the world, but when I was an anthropology student, you didn’t get much training in research – actually you got **no** training – you just got told to go and do it. But one thing that was very important was that we had to learn the language. And we were also expected by our tutors to be able to read French, and to read anthropology in other languages. It was part of what you did as an anthropologist, to learn languages.

LD: With all the pressure placed on students doing their PhD, the capacity to cover everything – research methodology, as well as language – is limited. Do you think language skills have declined among anthropologists?

No if anything I think the opposite, I think they’ve improved. I think its partly because there are so many things they can study in Japan. I’ve met so many anthropologists whose language is really, really good. Don’t you think?

LD: Oh I agree. I think part of it is being exposed to Japanese at a young age. In Australia particularly, we have a lot of people studying at university who have already studied Japanese at high school. It doesn’t necessarily make for excellent skills, it just makes for familiarity and comfort I think.

Well actually I should mention three people I met before I went to Japan, who were Aoki Tamotsu, who’s now quite famous, Nagashima Nobuhiro, who writes about horseracing and he’s in his 70s now, and the late Yamaguchi Masao, the semiotician. They were really amazing and I just happened to know them when they were studying in Oxford. They were the people I went to see when I arrived in Japan, so I immediately got thrown in at the deep end of a Japanese situation, in a Japanese university, and I’ve always said to all my students, you can’t go and work there without getting a Japanese supervisor while you’re there.

LD: What have been your significant influences? Either the theoretical and academic ones or personal ones?

Well I've mentioned those three Japanese anthropologists, and they were quite influential. Aoki met me when I first went to do fieldwork and introduced me to my supervisor, who was Yoshida Teigo, and he's been someone fantastic, who has stuck with me all the way through, and he's now approaching 90. He couldn't make it to Makuhari, but he used to come to all the meetings and was in fact the first honorary member of JAWS. He was my supervisor and my mentor.

And what he said at the Jerusalem meeting I think was really important. He said: "The best anthropology is done when you have an outsider working with an insider together", because they have a different perspective - if you're just an outsider you might only see what's different between you and other people, and if you're an insider you might miss things that seem normal and that you therefore take for granted. I have tried to work with insiders, apart from him. He introduced me to an anthropologist who had worked in another village close to where I worked in Kyushu- a man called Matsunaga Kazuto. He was amazing, took me around and introduced me to all the people I'd need to know. It wasn't his theoretical work that was influential so much as his practical help, which was absolutely invaluable.

In my theoretical background there's been Rodney Needham in Oxford, and there was my supervisor Peter Rivière; they were influential in their approach, and I'm still probably a structuralist at heart so of course there's Levi-Strauss, who was the main structuralist behind what they were doing - but also Edmund Leach and Mary Douglas, Nakane Chie for Japan, and more recently Marshall Sahlins.

LD: Has there been anything that has shifted your trajectory, taken you on a different research course?

Well mostly if you look back at my work you see it follows my life course. I looked at marriage and then I got married, child-rearing as I was rearing my own children. And then I got into education and housewives, because my children were at nursery and school there, so it made sense. But also, a very good friend when I first went to Japan, said that my language was not polite enough, so she was the influence for me in looking at politeness. Then, going into politeness and speech levels, one day I got this parcel that was wrapped seven times and each layer seemed to have a meaning, so I began to think about the concept of wrapping as way to describe language and many other things. That

was one of those moments when I was doing one thing and I realized there was something bigger I could do.

And that to me was probably the most important one, because that wrapping book is still in print and people still use it!

LD: Another related question, have you felt any difference or changes as a female anthropologist, as a female academic?

I was in Oxford when they set up a women's seminar group, which I called The Ovular, which later became the (well-known) International Centre for Cross-cultural Research on Gender. That was in the 80s, and I didn't get that much involved in it because it seemed like a cop-out. There was kind of a bandwagon, a feminist bandwagon, which I purposely didn't jump on because I thought I'd get siphoned off into the feminist place. But I do think there have been a lot of changes.

In my lifetime, so much has changed. I couldn't join the Air Squadron as a student because I was a woman, I couldn't work for Reuters because I was a woman. And I've never actually made much of it, but my idea has always been "I'm jolly well going to show them I could do a job as well if not better than men can". It probably came from being brought up with brothers!

I haven't made a big deal out of it but I have also tried to use the fact that I'm a woman to do research that men couldn't do. There have always been women in anthropology from way, way back, and there are people who have written influential things like how they could get information men couldn't get.

LD: What do you see as the most important topics in the field at present that should be addressed, or are being addressed in the anthropology of Japan?

Well in anthropology in general I think that because people are getting more worried about the importance of consultation with the people they're working with, Japan actually has a lead on that, because we've been working with each other for a long time.

And putting Japan in a broader context: one of the things I've done in the last few years is some work in China and a little bit in India, and I've discovered loads of things that I thought were very Japanese actually came from China or India!

LD: Thinking about the institutions that we work in, what do you think are the greatest challenges?

It's just got more and more difficult. When I was a young academic in the university, it didn't particularly value research and we didn't have sabbatical leave. There were six anthropologists in our department, and we had terms rather than semesters, so we took it in turns to have a term off so that we could all do fieldwork. And we played the system that way for a few years, and it worked. There has now been so much bureaucracy imposed on people trying to do research since then that informal arrangements like that probably wouldn't succeed. I'm not sure that it helps.

LD: Are you optimistic about anthropology in academia broadly, and the anthropology of Japan?

I'm positive about anthropology, but I'm not so positive about the way that some anthropologists are so theoretically involved that they're only talking to each other. My view is that this is really a subject that ought to be shared with as many people as possible.

Yes, I am optimistic, but I'm more optimistic for people who study anthropology to use it to help people to understand each other. What I've been working on with passion recently is getting anthropology into the secondary school system. I think it will solve the problem of the perceived inequality, because kids in secondary schools often come from different backgrounds, and they are able to share knowledge about their own backgrounds with each other on an equal level, with neither being the superior person who came to study the other. A huge number of our colleagues are now working in other areas – for example, the editor of *The Financial Times* is a trained anthropologist and she's been doing great work in pointing out the importance of anthropology to understanding financial systems. Roll on more like her!

RESEARCH REPORTS

Narratives of Shamans in Contemporary Japan

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Recent studies of shamanism in contemporary Japan have mainly focused on “traditional” shamans – especially *itako* and *yuta* – who are located in peripheral areas of the country (see, for example, Chilson and Knecht 2003, Hirayama 2005, Ivy 1995, Kawamura 1994, Knecht 2004 and Shiotsuki 2012). Hence, the situation in its very center (i.e. the urban center, especially Tōkyō) has been left almost unexplored. Here, together with new shamanistic practitioners and spiritual therapists, a number of new narratives and imageries of shamans are now emerging through several media and different languages, thus calling for further research. My Ph.D. research aims at shedding light on the new forms that Japanese shamanism is assuming in such narratives. In doing this, I would like to find the answers to questions such as: “Why are there so many new narratives of shamans?”, “How is the shamanic figure being reshaped and represented?”, and, “How do these narratives contribute to changing the perception of and the knowledge about shamans?”

The research approach I am adopting is a multidisciplinary one, due to the very nature of my project, which requires connecting anthropology, religious studies and media studies. During my one-year fieldwork I conducted semi-structured interviews with key informants, while I used a more relaxed and seemingly casual conversational style with many other informants. In some cases dialogues and interviews, as well as participant observation, are still continuing over email, and through Internet forums and social networks. My starting point is the analysis of the use of the words “shaman” and “shamanism”, in regard to their history and meaning. This has brought me to draw the following (still preliminary and partial) conclusions.

Firstly, I would like to abandon the word “shamanism”, since it could implicitly recall a phenomenon that is firmly established and has rules and an organized structure. On the contrary, in Japan there seems to be no such thing as *shamanism*. There are, instead, different shamans who are offering their help to whoever asks for it. Moreover, I would suggest that the word *shāman* (in katakana), widely used in the academic world, is not simply a mere translation of the English term brought to Japan by Horii Ichirō after his

meeting with Mircea Eliade in the USA. On the contrary, I think that it is becoming an emic term used to refer to new practitioners and that, for this reason, it will need a revised framework to be properly understood.

As for the main part of my research, I am working on multiple case studies coming from both different media and the “actual” world in the last decade. I am considering, in fact, narratives of shamans from literature, contemporary art, manga, anime, TV series and TV documentaries as well as testimonies from the “material” world, with the specific case of an urban shaman I met and interviewed in Tōkyō. I plan to focus mainly on him because of the relevance of his activities and the amount of data collected, but I am considering also other cases, even though I still need to decide whether to include them or not in my final dissertation.

My research project is based on the acknowledgment of the fact that all these narratives concern figures and experiences perceived as being real by the actors involved in them. They should, therefore, be viewed in such a light and included in the broader field of the studies of shamans.

I would truly appreciate comments and suggestions, so please feel free to contact me via email.

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