

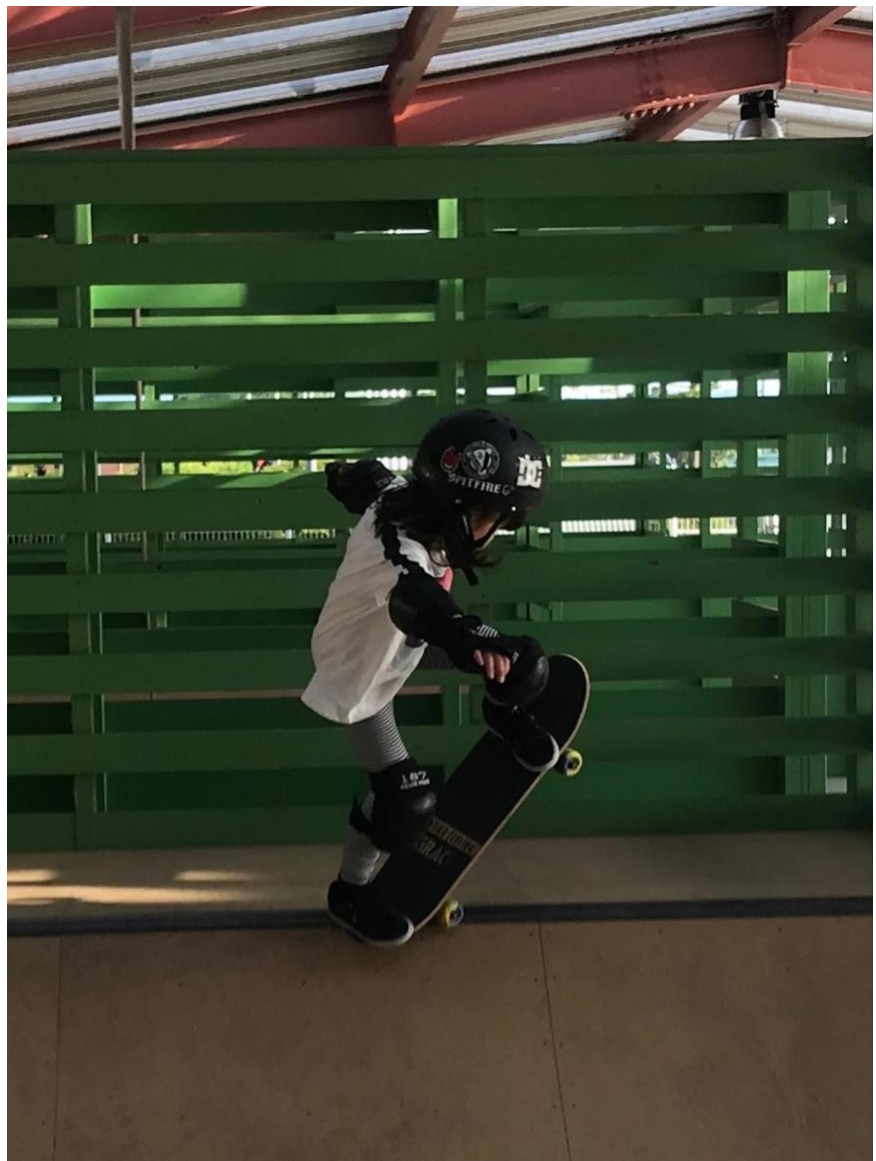
国際日本社会人類学会

# JAWS

Japan Anthropology Workshop

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Cover photo:

「SK8ER の女の子」 Photo by Steven C. Fedorowicz. Copyright 2021.

The photo was taken at the Tawaramoto Skate Park in Nara Prefecture in 2019 and celebrates the glocalization and success of skateboarding in Japan. Skateboard parks and schools are increasing in number for dedicated skaters of all ages, including this 6-year-old girl. Park and Street Skateboarding were Olympic sports for the first time at Tokyo in 2021 and Japanese skaters won five medals (three gold) in the events.

Calligraphy courtesy of Fukaya.

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# FROM THE JAWS OFFICERS

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## FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Brigitte Steger

I am pleased to write this letter for the first *JAWS newsletter* since 2016. Five years seems like a long time, yet a lot has happened and it is fantastic to see this rich and varied newsletter in a new layout.

At the 2017 EAJS/JAWS conference business meeting in Lisbon, a decision was taken to relaunch the website and integrate it with the newsletter. While the website allows us to present articles and reports whenever they are ready, we aim to publish the newsletter once a year, taking the content from the website to secure long-term access to this information and to enable it to be read as a journal rather than having to scroll down the screen. Accomplishing this has been easier said than done, as we faced a number of technical problems with the website, and both technical support and newsletter/website editorial teams have experienced high turnover. Thanks to the efforts of Stephanie Oeben, Urara Satake and especially Barry Plows, these problems have now been solved. We have recently decided to take NomadIT on board to ensure constant updating and maintenance of the site.

Our website can now be read on mobile devices as well as computers, and the new newsletter/website editorial team of Jennifer McGuire, Christopher Tso and Anna Vainio has worked hard to achieve the results that are now in front of you. Melinda Papp and Pia Jolliffe have also been involved in the relaunch.

Nanase Shirota has translated some sections of the website into Japanese and these will be published shortly. At the recent JAWS business meeting, we also decided on a new Japanese name for our organisation. From now on, we will be known as 国際日本社会人類学会 or JAWS 学会 for short, but the acronym JAWS will of course continue to be used.

The JAWS Routledge book series has been thriving, as Joy Hendry writes in her report.

## **From the JAWS Officers**

*From the Secretary-General*

The recent 30<sup>th</sup> JAWS conference (concurrent with section 5 of the EAJS conference) at the University of Ghent took place online and was extremely well organised and presented. Fabio Gygi and Iza Kavedžija (Anthropology and Sociology) and Björn-Ole Kamm and Rachael Hutchinson (Media Studies) organised a range of exciting sessions, and we were also able to meet together at informal and formal online meetings. The upcoming 31st JAWS conference in 2022 will be organised by Blai Guarné and his colleagues at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, where we look forward to hopefully meeting in person again.

I have the sad obligation to report on the passing away of some of our long-standing members. We heard only recently that our honorary representative Yoshida Teigo, who participated in the first JAWS meeting in Oxford in 1984, died on 29 May 2018 at the age of 95. On 6 August 2020, Jane Cobbi, another of our long-term members, passed away. She was emerita professor at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) in Paris and president of the Association Maison de Kiso. Harvard professor Ted Bestor died on 1 July 2021 aged 69 after a long battle with cancer. As Joy writes: 'Ted was one of the first Americans to join JAWS, maybe the first, because he and Vicky attended our second meeting as part of the EAJS in Paris in 1985, and they were very supportive about the venture, even planning to go home and found JAWS II in America — not to be, as it happened, the humour apparently didn't go down well over there — but it was good to have the early support, and I am sure his early work in Tokyo influenced all those old enough to remember those years as well.' Both Jane and Ted were receivers of the Order of the Rising Sun and their obituaries can be found on the JAWS website and newsletter.

This letter will be my last as Secretary General of JAWS. Although I have very much enjoyed my role, having been elected in 2013 I think it is time to let someone else take over the helm. The new SG will be elected shortly and will take over in 2022. Our treasurer, Ruth Martin, has been in office since 2017 and will also hand over to a new treasurer shortly. I will set up an extraordinary JAWS business meeting via Zoom for the election this autumn.

During my time as SG I have been delighted to see JAWS prosper. Membership doubled in the first two years and we now have around 300 members. This has been partly due to our bold decision in 2014 to introduce life membership at a very moderate one-time fee, making it easy to join. Although we no longer pay annual dues, our finances are healthy. We have even managed to increase the money in our bank account while also enabling our early career scholars to attend conferences with travel grants and providing English-language editing grants. Our excellent conferences have also helped to attract new members. Our conference in Istanbul in 2015 was a

## **From the JAWS Officers**

*From the Secretary-General*

particular highlight in the history of JAWS; with its location at the border between Europe and Asia, it brought together and encouraged a growing and exciting community of scholars and students in Japanese Studies and Anthropology from all over Turkey. We also very much enjoyed our conference at Kobe University concurrent with the EAJS conference society section, and the JAWS conference in Aarhus. In addition to the academic sessions, I have always enjoyed the sociability and support of the JAWS community. Who will forget our cruising and dancing on the Bosphorus, our enjoyment of the drag performance at Umeda and going out for dinner in Aarhus? It is my sincere hope that JAWS will continue to be a welcoming community that supports creativity, cordiality and intellectual exchange.

Best wishes,

Brigitte

## FROM THE TREASURER

Ruth Martin

### STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

01 April 2020 - 31 March 2020

<b>INCOME</b>	
Membership subscriptions	202.36
JAWS series royalties (Informa)	234.24
Total INCOME	<b>436.60</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
Student grants	2,127.28
Webhosts (Fasthosts)	145.93
Total EXPENDITURE	<b>2,273.21</b>
SURPLUS/DEFICIT 01 April 2019 - 31 March 2020	<b>-1836.61</b>
ASSETS as of 01 April 2019	15,513.40
ASSETS as of 31 March 2020	13,676.79

## FROM THE EDITORS

Jennifer McGuire, Christopher Tso, Anna Vainio

Many warm greetings to all our fellow JAWS members. This newsletter with its revamped new design has been long in the making and let us first apologise for its belatedness. Since the last newsletter, the JAWS editing team has had a complete personnel change, so let us first introduce ourselves. Jennifer McGuire is an associate professor of anthropology at the Institute for Liberal Arts at Doshisha University in Kyoto and researches on deaf communities and sign language interpretation. Christopher Tso recently completed his PhD on white-collar men's bodily grooming cultures under the supervision of Brigitte Steger at the University of Cambridge and is now a postdoctoral research associate there. Anna Vainio finished her PhD in 2020, comparing the narratives of post-disaster recovery between survivors and decision-makers, now continuing to work at the University of Sheffield where she also completed her degree.

In this edition, we're delighted to include conference reports not only from the 2017 Lisbon conference, but a very detailed overview of the 2019 conference in Aarhus. If you want to relive a real, in-person conference, then this may be as close as you can get! Similarly, we also include the Announcement and Calls for Papers for our upcoming, in-person conference in Barcelona. We also continue our JAWS From the Deep section, this time with Susanne Klienke interviewing Prof Emeritus Josef Kreiner in a fascinating and insightful piece. Our other regulars feature our up-and-coming scholars in Tomorrow's Researchers Today and Research Reports. We're always looking to assist younger scholars in building networks and getting their research known, so we warmly encourage younger members to send in contributions and more senior scholars to invite your students to do the same.

Since the publication of the last newsletter in 2016, JAWS our past and now present editors have been busy in establishing and making the most of our fantastic website. A great many thanks are due to our past editors for their efforts. A special thanks also to Freddie Semple who spearheaded the redesign of the Newsletter. As has been done in the past, not only will we include contributions in the Newsletters, but we will also regularly publish these on the website as they come. But to take full advantage of our website, we're also looking to expand our content. This year, for instance, we have been running a monthly series on Reflections on Tōhoku which centres around our members' experiences doing fieldwork in the aftermath of 3.11. We're also very eager to hear



## **From the JAWS Officers**

*From the Editors*

from anyone who has new ideas about other forms of content they'd like to contribute, be it in the form of a podcast or photo essays! We very much look forward to hearing from many of you soon.

As we (hopefully) emerge from our socially distanced and physically isolated lives, we're all very much looking forward to meeting many of you in person and putting faces to the names in the Newsletter and throughout our community. Bring on Barcelona!

# JAWS NEWS

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## JAWS PUBLICATION NEWS

Joy Hendry

May 2021

We have brought out several new books in the series in the last few years, some even despite lockdown, including a translation from French being supported for open access by Kyoto University.

In 2019, two books based on the wonderful old real-life conferences and workshops, organised by and with JAWS members, came out. One has a title those of us who cannot get to Japan at the moment may slightly regret but it is nevertheless an intriguing collection, **Escaping Japan: Reflections on Estrangement and Exile in the Twenty-first Century**, edited by **Paul Hansen** and **Blai Guarne**. The other addresses a subject which also may have changed somewhat since then, but again a splendid collection edited by Wolfram Manzenreiter and Barbara Holthus, entitled **Happiness and the Good Life in Japan**.

In the same year, we published a single-authored book based on many years of experience of fieldwork in Japan by **David Lewis**, entitled **Religion in Japanese Daily Life**. It adopts a very broad definition of that tricky category that has been discussed in the JAWS newsletter over the years, and examines Japanese activities in all sorts of contexts.

The other books that we have published since then are all monographs and perfectly illustrate the high standard of anthropological research our series has come to be known for. The first was a groundbreaking study of achieving women in Japan by Swee-Lin Ho, based on her long-term fieldwork, entitled **Women Managers in Neoliberal Japan: Gender, Precarious Labour and Everyday Lives**. As the author herself admits in the book's Routledge blurb, the account is disheartening, but it also presents some of the amazing women who continue to challenge the tough system Japan still maintains.

**Global Coffee and Cultural Change in Modern Japan** by **Helena Grinshpun** takes us into a world that has been more successful in its aspirations, and reports on the transformation of the urban Japan that used to charge exorbitant amounts for a measly cup of that beverage, albeit in a beautiful cup, to one where coffee consumption seems to have redefined public space in Japan.

**Caitlin Meagher's** book also discusses change, but at a very domestic level. Based on her doctoral fieldwork, **Inside a Japanese Sharehouse: Dreams and Realities** brings us into very close encounters with ways of life that have been established to offer an alternative to families, with interesting results. Not a new concept for those of us who can remember the sixties, but certainly a very new version.

We have three more excellent volumes under contract. Well, I know that two of them are excellent because I have read the penultimate versions, and the third I am relying on the former excellent work of the author, but until they are in press and available, I will keep you in suspense! The website will I am sure be updated at the appropriate moment.

As always, we are ready to receive your proposals if you would like your own work to be considered to join the illustrious list you will find below. We are very proud of our collection and we would like to encourage all JAWS members to think about contributing their research. The books may seem a little expensive at first sight, but there is a generous offer to all JAWS members to buy up to 15 copies of any book in the series at 30% of the hardback price, and all the books can be ordered in paperback after a maximum of 2 years in hardback. We publish monographs, collections and translations, and we are always open to consider new ideas for the series, so do please get in touch with me ([jhendry@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:jhendry@brookes.ac.uk)) if you have something you would like to offer and I will send you the guidelines for submission of a proposal.

Go to <http://www.routledge.com/books/series/SE0627/> to see the complete list, and to order books, using the discount code as a JAWS member, which is **JAWS1**. If you have had trouble using this code, try again, I have just been in touch with Routledge to renew it as apparently it had expired.

Joy Hendry ([jhendry\[at\]brookes.ac.uk](mailto:jhendry[at]brookes.ac.uk))

**Full list in order of our previous publication in the series:**

*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, 2002

*The Care of the Elderly in Japan*

Yongmei Wu, 2004

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

Edited by Gordon Mathews and Bruce White, 2005

*Community Volunteers in Japan: Everyday Stories of Social Change*

Lynne Nakano, 2005

*Nature, Ritual and Society in Japan's Ryukyu Islands*

Arne Røkkum, 2006

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

Chikako Ozawa-de Silva, 2006

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

Edited by Joy Hendry and Dixon Wong, 2007

*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, 2007

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

Mitchell Sedgwick, 2008

*Japan and the Culture of Copying*

Edited by Rupert Cox, 2009

## **JAWS News**

*JAWS Publication News*

*Primary School in Japan: Self, individuality and learning in elementary education*

Peter Cave, 2009

*Japanese Tourism and the Culture of Travel*

Edited by Sylvie Guichard-Anguis and Okpyo Moon, 2009

*Making Japanese Heritage*

Edited by Christoph Brumann and Rupert Cox, 2011

*Home and Family in Japan: Continuity and Transformation*

Edited by Richard Ronald and Allison Alexy, 2011

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

Yeeshan Chan, 2011

*Japanese Women, Class and the Tea Ceremony: The voices of tea practitioners in northern Japan*

Kaeko Chiba, 2013

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

Christoph Brumann, 2013

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

Anne Mette Fisker-Nielsen, 2013

*Language, Education and Citizenship in Japan*

Genaro Castro-Vazquez, 2013

*Death and Dying in Contemporary Japan*

Edited by Suzuki Hikaru, 2014

## **JAWS News**

*JAWS Publication News*

*Ascetic Practices in Japanese Religion*

Tullio Federico Lobetti, with an introduction by Nakamaki Hirochika, 2014

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

Sebastien Penmellen Boret, 2014

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

Mark Watson, 2014

*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, 2014

*Disability in Japan*

Carolyn Stevens, 2015

*The Japanese Family: Touch, Intimacy and Feeling*

Diana Adis Tahhan, 2017

# OPEN JAWS

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## JAWS business meeting minutes, Lisbon 2017

Members present: Fabio Gygi, Michael Shackleton, Griseldis Kirsch, Andrea de Antoni, Emma Cook, Ruth Martin, Anemone Platz, Ingrid Getreuer-Kargl, Johannes Wilhelm, Christian Göhlert, Ioannis Gaitanidis, Greg Poole, Joy Hendry, Ho Swee-Lin, Sachiko Horiguchi, Reijiro Aoyama, Lola Martinez, Wolfram Manzenreiter, Ronald Saladin, Blai Guarné, Susanne Bruksch, Lynne Nakano, Peter Cave, Gordon Mathews, Laura Dales, Iza Kavedžija, Ofra Goldstein-Gidoni, Hiroko Umegaki-Constantini, Susanne Klien, Xsenia Golovina, Aline Henninger, Ksenia Kurochkina, Shira Taube Dayan, Alina Alexandra Rádeusescu, Nataša Visočnik, Antonio Joao Saraiva, Brigitte Steger (chair, minutes).

### 1) The minutes of the last meeting on 25 September in Kobe

Approved without corrections.

### 2) Matters arising

None

### 3) Financial Report

A financial report was not available because of the change of treasurer and related issues. As of 31 August 2017: JAWS had 272 members (compared to ca. 140 three years ago). As of 30 June 2017: the budget was £15,324.35 (down from £15,689.32 on 18 August 2016); main sources of income were royalties from the JAWS series and new members' fees. Main expenses were the JAWS dinner at the EAJS/JAWS meeting in Kobe and various fees and other related costs for hosting and renewal of the website, which will be due soon.

## **Open Jaws**

*JAWS business meeting Lisbon minutes, 2017*

### **4) JAWS Officers**

#### 4.1 Treasurer

Our previous treasurer, Anne Mette Fisker-Nielson, stepped down in July. The meeting thanked her warmly for her many years of excellent service to JAWS.

The meeting nominated and confirmed Ruth Martin as our new treasurer and thanked her for her availability.

#### 4.2 Internal Auditor

The new office of internal auditor was introduced to follow good practice for charities with a term of three years. The internal auditor will not have access to bank accounts but will receive bank statements annually in August as well as upon request and whenever a financial report needs approval.

Fabio Gygi was elected as internal auditor for three years.

#### 4.3 EAJS-JAWS Liaison Officer

Andrea de Antoni, who has been elected to the EAJS council, was elected as EAJS-JAWS liaison officer.

#### 4.4 Website Administrator

Christopher Feldman has administered the website for many years and expressed a wish to step down. The meeting thanked him for his excellent services over the years.

Stephanie Oeben is in the process of creating a new website with responsive content sites, which will be able to be read on various screens including tablets and smartphones. The website editors will have access to add content and edit pages directly.



## Open Jaws

*JAWS business meeting Lisbon minutes, 2017*

### 5) Website and Newsletter

Members were reminded of the decision to change the frequency of the JAWS newsletter to an annual publication and of the suggestion to rename the newsletter to help raise its profile.

Suggestions from the Kobe meeting were: *Japan Anthropology Journal* (needs referees if it is called a journal); *Japan Anthropology News*; *Japan Anthropology Report*; *J Anthro News*, *Bulletin of the Japan Anthropology Workshop*.

The SG had investigated the issue: As a change of name requires an application for a new ISSN number, she had investigated the option of making the newsletter digital, so that it could be browsed and searched both through Google and University library catalogues. However, such a change would make it necessary to remove some of the content, especially membership lists including e-mails to avoid harvesting of data by bots and spamming.

The following comments/suggestions were made about the name:

JA Report sounds more substantial than JA News.

*JAM – Japan Anthropology Magazine*. Shouldn't JAWS be in the name?

This discussion led to a more fundamental exchange of views about the kind of newsletter/journal we wanted: The editors (Emma Cook, Andrea de Antoni, Blai Guarné) explained that the main problem was the difficulty in motivating young people to write about their research. The concern was raised that the publication of a small article in the newsletter does not count much in terms of career assessment and job search, but it was also pointed out that it was useful as a first experience of publishing and for making one's research known to other members. On the question of whether it should be changed into a peer-reviewed journal, most members felt that there was no need or appetite for this, as it would involve a lot of work.

Joy Hendry explained that some of the sections were meant to allow members, especially graduate students and early career scholars, to publish their ideas before submitting to a peer-reviewed journal in order to allow feedback from members.

## **Open Jaws**

*JAWS business meeting Lisbon minutes, 2017*

Several alternatives were discussed. Should there be a blog? Links to people's personal blogs, photo essays, podcasts? Just move the content to the website? Or should the newsletter be discontinued?

Peter Cave proposed that the JAWS newsletter should be suspended with immediate effect until further notice and the relevant parts transferred to the website.

The proposal initially found a large majority, but one vote against by Tom Gill, who argued that it would be sad to lose the newsletter altogether, rekindled the discussion. JAWS is a brand, but the website/newsletter is not well marketed and graduate students do not know it is possible to publish there. The newsletter could be used as a transition step from being a student to a more serious researcher. If professors introduced a rule that graduate students had to submit a short essay that describes their research project to the public, we would easily receive more contributions.

A call for papers should be sent out periodically through the JAWS mailing list. The next call for papers: 30 September. The information should also be sent out on mailing lists for Japanese anthropology students.

In the end, it was agreed that there would be more frequent calls for submissions to be published on the website (the sections to be defined by the editors), and that senior scholars should encourage their PhD students to contribute. These contributions – which could include not only essays, but also videos, photo-stories, podcasts, etc – were to be linked with the annual newsletter, which would mainly consist of a content page that linked to annual reports by the SG, treasurer and newsletter editors etc. as well as links to the contributions. There should also be links to Facebook, Twitter, etc, so that contributions could be liked and forwarded. Thus, the website would also function as a hosting site for the newsletter.

## **6) JAWS Routledge Series**

Two books are about to be published (Blai et al. and one other).

## Open Jaws

*JAWS business meeting Lisbon minutes, 2017*

Members were informed that Routledge / Taylor & Francis now offer the facility to read books for free (reading only, no downloading) on their website for a couple of months to increase their visibility.

### 7) Future Activities:

#### 7.1 Upcoming conferences:

The next conference will be organised at Aarhus University in Aarhus, Denmark by Anemone Platz.

Suggested dates: 15, 16 April 2019 (Mon/Tues before Easter). The dates were confirmed.

New proposals:

Richard Ronald (Univ of Amsterdam) had shown an interest in hosting a JAWS conference in collaboration with the University of Leiden, but no details were known or discussed.

#### 7.2 Grants and other activities

The meeting confirmed that the following small grant opportunities will be continued:

- English language editing for non-native speakers of English
- grants for conference participation

It was agreed to award up to two prizes of £100 per newsletter (per year) for excellent contributions to the website/newsletter. The selection was to be made by the JAWS newsletter editors.

### 8) AOB/Announcements

It was announced that the Turkish journal *Global Perspectives on Japan* would be launched on 1 September at 1pm. The first issue contains several contributions by JAWS members.

## **Open Jaws**

*JAWS business meeting Lisbon minutes, 2017*

(minute taker: Brigitte Steger)

## JAWS business meeting minutes, Aarhus 2019

### Members present:

Urara Satake, Ruth Martin, Nicolas Sternsdorff Cisterna, Yohko Tsuji, Bill Ghidrse, Alyne Delaney, Mitch Sedgwick, Joy Hendry, Ingrid Getreuer-Kargl, Ofra Goldstein-Gidoni, Zentai Judith Èra, Melinda Papp, Zsófia Hidvégi, David Lewis, Paul Hansen, Andrea De Antoni, Philip Sawkins, Caitlin Meagher, Nanase Shiota, Florian Purkarthofer, Giulia De Togni, Manami Yasui, Anemone Platz, Brigitte Steger (chair, minutes).

### 1) The Minutes of the last meeting on 31 August 2017 in Lisbon

Approved without corrections.

### 2) Matters arising and for report

There were no matters arising.

### 4) SG report (see also individual agenda items)

The latest membership list currently includes 299 names. Older members were asked to make sure that their affiliation, name and e-mail were updated.

2017-18 were years of major awards for JAWS members. No less than three anthropologists have been awarded the Order of the Rising Sun for their contributions to Japanese Studies and for improving relations between Japan and their home country: Joy Hendry (Oxford Brookes), Ted Bestor (Harvard) and Jane Cobbi (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales).

On a very sad note, Romit Dasgupta, University of Western Australia, unexpectedly passed away on 1 July 2018. He will be greatly missed (an obituary can be found on the website).

## **Open JAWS**

*JAWS business meeting Aarhus minutes, 2019*

### **5) Financial report**

Ruth Martin presented the financial report (see separate report). The current balance as of 31 March is £15,513.40

The Internal auditor, Fabio Gygi, has received and checked all the bank statements and confirmed the following: "I have examined the JAWS account and did find no irregularities. I am happy to sign them off as they are." (see e-mail, 14 April 2019)

The financial report was approved without corrections and Ruth Martin was thanked for her excellent and reliable work as Treasurer and Membership Secretary.

The meeting agreed to continue to provide conference travel grants for early-career scholars and to limit them to a maximum of 2 grants per person in a lifetime.

The meeting agreed to continue the English-language editing grant scheme. Each member is eligible for one grant to receive language editing for one article, up to a maximum of 20 hours. Articles need to have been either peer reviewed and accepted for publication or read/commented on by two colleagues.

Members were also reminded that there was a prize for the best contribution to the website/newsletter.

### **6) Confirmation of new interim JAWS Officers**

Web manager: Urara Satake (Keio) was approved.

Website and newsletter editors: Pia Maria Jolliffe (Oxford), Jennifer McGuire (Doshisha) and Melinda Papp (Budapest) were approved and welcomed as new website and newsletter editors. There were no other changes of officers.

## Open JAWS

*JAWS business meeting Aarhus minutes, 2019*

### 5) Website and newsletter

Following the discussion on how to make the newsletter more attractive, we have decided to change the website into a platform that can be used more actively and fulfil a double function as a newsletter. Once a year, the new content of the website (articles on research projects, members' news, conference reports, etc) will be put together as an electronic newsletter.

It was decided that a potential name change of the JAWS newsletter should be considered by the new editorial team and presented at one of the future business meetings.

Access to business meeting minutes, financial reports, pictures etc. will be password secured; this content will no longer be published in the newsletter. The password is: JAWS1984

Unfortunately, although the website has been prepared, there are currently still technical difficulties involved in moving it to the old address. We will keep working to solve the issue.

### 6) JAWS Routledge Series and membership benefits

Routledge has created a new JAWS landing page with information on discounts not only for the JAWS book series (70% discount), but also a 20% discount on all other Routledge books.

[https://www.routledge.com/collections/15250?utm\\_source=Routledge&utm\\_medium=cms&utm\\_campaign=B190406420](https://www.routledge.com/collections/15250?utm_source=Routledge&utm_medium=cms&utm_campaign=B190406420)

There are currently 29 books in the series; new books incl.: David Lewis: Religion in everyday life; Paul Hansen and Blai Guarne (eds): Escape in Japan.

3 new books have been contracted; by Andrea de Antoni; Caitlin Maegher on shared houses; Lola Martinez: *Representation of Nature and Technology in Japan* (some previously contracted papers have been dropped, new contributions welcome); other manuscripts are under review. Joy Hendry's new edition of *Understanding Japanese Society* is available for members at a 30 % discount with the code UJS227.

## Open JAWS

*JAWS business meeting Aarhus minutes, 2019*

### 7) Future activities:

#### 7.1 Next conferences:

3rd EAJS Conference in Japan in Tsukuba, September 15-16.

30th JAWS Conference / concurrent with the 16th EAJS Conference will take place from 26 to 29 August 2020 at the University of Ghent, Belgium

Appointment of conference conveners:

Section 5a: Fabio Gygi (SOAS London) and Iza Kavedzija (Exeter; wellbeing, older age, narrative, anthropology of art, creativity and Japan).

Section 5b: Ronald Saladin and Hiromi Tanaka

Dr. Hiromi Tanaka is an Associate Professor of Information and Communication at Meiji University, Tokyo. Her current research focuses on gender, media and popular culture. She has been conducting critical analyses of media and popular culture, including manga, women's magazines, and social media with a comparative gender perspective. Her current research examines digital media and gender. She participated in the Media Section of the 2017 EAJS International Conference where she organized the panel "Negotiations of hegemonic gender norms in Japanese media spaces: analyses of women's media and female audiences".

Dr. Ronald Saladin is an Assistant Professor of Japanese Studies at the University of Trier, Germany. His research focuses on Japanese culture and society. For his analyses, he draws on his academic background in media studies, social sciences and literary studies. His subjects of investigation are popular culture, audiovisual and print media, as well as contemporary literature. Within these, he examines, among other things, gender construction, lifestyles, youth- and subcultures, as well as social developments in Japan. Ronald was the co-convenor of the Media Section at the 2017 EAJS International Conference.



### 7.2 Proposals for the 31th JAWS Conference in spring 2022.

The meeting received one proposal to host and organise the 31st JAWS Conference in spring 2022 at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Sant Cugat del Vallès.

*We are happy to present the application of Barcelona to the JAWS Conference in 2022 on behalf of the Faculty of Translation, and Interpreting, and the Department of Translation, Interpreting & East Asian Studies at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Autonomous University of Barcelona, UAB). Allow me to briefly explain that the UAB finds itself at the forefront of the field of East Asian Studies in Spain. The Japanese Studies have been present in the research conducted and the degrees on offer at the UAB for over thirty years. We are the only university in Spain that counts with the three levels of higher education on East Asia (undergraduate, postgraduate, and PhD Studies). The UAB East Asian Studies Program is conducted in the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting, a modern three-story building with large classrooms (for 160 people), medium classrooms (for 60 people) and small seminar rooms (for 25 people). All these classrooms are equipped with the latest technologies (computer, internet connection, DVD projector, etc.). Next to the Faculty there are two large restaurants and cafeterias that serve breakfasts, lunches, coffee and snacks, etc. The Faculty was built in 1997 and it merges with the Mediterranean landscape of the campus in its central 'Kokoro garden', that was designed by a Japanese architect resident in Barcelona. The UAB campus is located close to the beautiful city of Sant Cugat del Vallès, in a residential area of high environmental value. Although the UAB is located outside Barcelona (40 minutes by train), the train service is very good: the main station is in Barcelona's downtown (Plaça Catalunya), there are several direct trains to the UAB campus, and the cost of a multi-person travel card (valid for 10 journeys) is about 10 Euros. In addition, we have an agreement with a hotel facility of the Spanish National Research Council located in Barcelona's downtown (10 minutes walking from the train station). The cost of a single room with an en-suite bathroom and breakfast is about 85 Euros. And we also work with several hotels in Barcelona. Actually, the UAB has its own hotel (4 stars) in the campus, but we assume that it is not so exciting to stay there compared with the possibility of staying in Barcelona. Last, but not least, the East Asian Study Program (which I have the honor of coordinating) has 18 faculty members focused on Japan (mainly teaching Japanese) and more than 200 students (undergraduate, master, and PhD) focused on Japanese Studies. We have the support of the dean of the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting, the director of the Department of Translation,*

## Open JAWS

*JAWS business meeting Aarhus minutes, 2019*

*Interpreting & East Asian Studies, and the collaboration and enthusiasm of our faculty team and students to organize the JAWS Conference in 2022!*

*Please, take a look at our Faculty here: <https://www.uab.cat/web/about-the-faculty/photo-gallery-1345749166152.html>*

*My apologies for not being able to be in Aarhus with all of you. Unfortunately, my professional duties (I'm organizing a new master program in Global East Asia Studies) did not allow me to be there. But I didn't want to finish this presentation without wishing you guys a great conference and a happy stay in Denmark! See you in Barcelona?*

*Proposed dates were the 2nd week of June or the latter part of January or first half of February.*

The members agreed that early February was the preferred date; Japanese entrance exams (marking) period should be taken into account.

Joy Hendry suggested that the conference should be organised over three days, as it was a pity to miss so many interesting papers due to parallel sessions. Anemone Platz explained that originally she had planned to arrange three days, but a considerable number of participants had written to her that they had to leave on Wednesday, so there would have been only a handful of papers left for Wednesday – after the JAWS dinner. The meeting agreed that in principle three days should be planned, but with some flexibility.

### 7.3 Other activities

## 8) AOB/Announcements

Anemone Platz was thanked enthusiastically for organising a very successful and well-arranged conference.

## 18.25 End of meeting

# CONFERENCES

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## 28th JAWS CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT, LISBON 2017

Call for Papers and Panels Concurrent with sections 5a and 5b of the 15th International Conference of the EAJIS that will be held at Universidade NOVA in Lisbon, 30 August to 2 September 2017. Abstracts and panel proposals should be submitted no later than 14 December 2016. For more detailed information on the two sections, including contact details of conveners and information on how to submit a panel proposal, please, see: <http://www.nomadit.co.uk/eajs/eajs2017/cfpan.shtml>

*Call for Papers, Social and Cultural Anthropology and Sociology (Section 5a):*

Conveners: Andrea De Antoni and Emma Cook

Feeling (in) Japan: Affective, Sensory and Material Entanglements in the Field In the last decades, anthropological scholarship has recognized corporeity as a condition of human experience and the body as the “existential ground of culture and self” (Csordas 1994). The lived body moving in the world is considered a source of perception, a bearer of practical knowledge and skills, developed through practice, with which we dwell in the world (Ingold 2000). This approach points at the necessity of looking “beyond the body proper” (Lock and Farquhar 2007), by investigating the body from the perspective of its perceptions, which originate in its interaction with the material environment. The so-called “affective turn” in the Humanities and Social Sciences has shed light on the (inter-)subjective intensity and dynamics immanent to bodily perceptions and matter in general (e.g. Massumi 2002). Similarly, research on the senses has stressed their centrality in the shaping of social practice and culture (e.g. Geurts 2002, Howes 2004), calling for a focus on perception in processes of doing ethnography (e.g. Pink 2009). Furthermore, Ingold’s work (2000, 2013) has pointed at the need to highlight the creative processes in social practice and anthropology in the making, as engagements and correspondences with materials and the environment, in which skills of perception and action emerge alongside with ontologies. In

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addition, anthropological works have also emphasized the important role matter plays in developing sensorial skills and in bearing or affording specific affects (e.g. Durham 2011, Navaro-Yashin 2012). A common thread among these studies is that they point at the need to go beyond symbols and representations, meaning making processes, cognition, or belief. In other words, they suggest new research directions to go beyond overly

simplified conceptions of “culture”. On the other hand, however, recent research sheds light on the danger of leaving cultural differences aside, by, for example, excessively focusing on concepts – such as suffering or trauma – which rely on the assumption that they transcend culture, being human universals (e.g. Robbins 2013). While focusing on these debates, this section aims to explore the possibilities for new perspectives that doing fieldwork in Japan can provide. We aim to address such questions as: - In what ways can the anthropology and sociology of Japan contribute to the development of theories on affect, the senses and materiality? - Can a focus on affect and the senses provide new tools for the understanding of communication in a society where it is often argued that people are (allegedly and ideologically) generally socialized as not outspoken and where what is left as implicit is supposed to play a major role? - How can a focus on affect and the senses in Japan shed light on, and complicate, perceptions, understandings, and materialities of “Japanese culture”? - What is the role of body politics and discourse in the learning of bodily skills? - How are affective and sensory skills trained through practice in, for example, sports, leisure activities, (religious) rituals, festivals, education, labour, or through the production and consumption of food? - What is the role of the ethnographer’s bodily and sensorial perceptions in doing fieldwork in Japan?

*Call for Papers, in Media Studies and Popular Culture (Section 5b):*

Conveners: Blai Guarné and Ronald Saladin

We would like to cordially invite researchers working in the field of Japanese media and popular culture to submit any proposal dealing with various media in Japan, stretching from print to audiovisual media and from manga to TV series and movies. We would particularly encourage submission of thematically coordinated panels, but individual submissions will also be considered. Sessions will normally be 90 minutes long, leaving 15 to 20 minutes per paper plus 10 minutes of discussion per paper. There may be up to three individual papers, or if it is a panel, three papers and a discussant’s comment in the 90-minute session.

## 28th JAWS CONFERENCE 2017 REVIEW

30 August - 2 September 2017

Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal

Conference Report | SHIROTA Nanase

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University of Cambridge

The 15th EAJS international conference took place at the Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas of the Universidade NOVA de Lisboa in Lisbon, Portugal from 30 August to 2 September with beautiful blue sky and warm weather. Over 1200 academics and researchers working in the field of Japanese Studies were welcomed by the organisers and the young student volunteers. Throughout four days, participants could attend panels in more than ten different sections and subsections: environmental studies, linguistics, modern literature, pre-modern literature, visual arts, performing arts, anthropology and sociology, media studies, economics, history, religion, philosophy, politics and international relations and Japanese language education. Most were in parallel sessions, and there were also various social and networking events.

As a new member of both JAWS and the EAJS as well as new to conferences of such large scale, I was excited to choose interesting panels as if I was at a kind of festival, although I was very nervous about presenting my research on 'An Ethnography of Listening: Unspoken rules of Japanese listeners' senses, behaviour and material aids. Based on fieldwork in Tokyo and TV drama analysis, I discussed Japanese listeners' behaviour, especially listeners at a cafe controlling their bodies with the help of materials such as smartphones or one's own hair, introducing the ideas of *nagara* listening (a kind of listening as multitasking) and use of auxiliary artefacts (material aids for listeners) to reveal some unspoken rules of listening.

I was inspired in many ways by the conference, not only by the critical but supportive comments on my paper but also by the presentations, panel discussions and talks about diverse themes. The thought-provoking keynote lecture by Prof Nakamura Momoko (Kanto Gakuin University) addressed three myths surrounding the Japanese language: i) that Japanese is constructed by the speech of the Japanese; ii) that Japanese women's language is a tradition of the Japanese

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language; and iii) that young Japanese people do not use honorifics appropriately. She argued that the media, especially works containing translated speech of non-Japanese, construct a certain form of Japanese language. For example, Hermione Granger's conversations in the Harry Potter books were translated into language that women in Japan do not use in reality, such as '*ara...*, *mā...*, *...kashira*, *...da wa*, *...ne*, *or...yo*', consequently teaching people some rules and knowledge regarding Japanese women's language. Relying on several examples, she concluded that the Japanese language is not naturally constructed by the speech of the Japanese and that women's language is an ideological construction. She also explored the historical process by which Japanese women's language became a tradition during WWII in order to oblige people in East Asia to acquire Japanese as a superior language. Moreover, she proposed an antithesis to the third myth related to young people and honorific usage, introducing her observations of conversations among both male and female students, concluding that Japanese young men are fully aware of the usage of honorifics and use a *-su/ssu* form invented by them instead of the *-desu* form.

Her relaxed but stimulating talk and detailed examples from a drama, a film and a TV show resulted in many questions and comments from the audience. Through listening to her talk, I also wondered why Japanese translators still use women's language although they realise that their ways of translation have been restricted and influenced by ideological thoughts and knowledge of women's language? Why did the Japanese government create women's language to legitimise the compulsory use of Japanese language in the colonies of East Asia? Why was using different languages in accordance with gender considered to be sophisticated or superior? Why do women not use the *-su/ssu* form? Who decides which form can be considered as honorific? Although there are still some questions remaining, her research definitely provided insightful perspectives and contributed to many research fields, including linguistics, gender studies and sociology.

A panel that particularly exemplifies the thoughtful discussions at the conference was the session organised under the title 'The aftermaths of the Tohoku Disaster: From the Social Sphere to Individual Life Choices and Psychological Outcomes', chaired by Brigitte Steger. All the presenters focused on the aftermath of the 2011 Tohoku disaster, whereas they have been interacting with people in Tohoku from different perspectives. Julia Gerster (Freie Universität Berlin), based on her fieldwork in the Tohoku area, investigated *kizuna* and the dynamics of social ties in Fukushima and Miyagi prefecture by focusing on cultural aspects such as food. Marie Weishaupt (Freie Universität Berlin) tried to analyse how self-evacuated families from Fukushima

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perceive risk in the aftermath of the Fukushima accident and the meaning of social roles. Shira Taube Dayan (University of Haifa) shed light on the field of Tohoku children's psycho-trauma and the need for methodological considerations.

Since these papers were presented based on their ongoing projects and research, the results were not yet quite clear to summarise here. Nevertheless, a lot of common and provocative themes stemmed from their presentations: What is the role of community? How do/did people in Tohoku perceive and cope with risks resulting from the Tohoku disaster, at different levels such as individuals, families or communities? How do people understand and manage vulnerability in terms of the physical body, memory and society?

The discussion of the word '*kizuna*' in the session is worth noting not only to understand the Tohoku area and the disaster's aftermaths but also to shed light on the role of researchers. In posing the possibility that people in Tohoku acknowledge the word '*kizuna*' as a negative word, one of the audience pointed out that '*kizuna*' was used in the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake too and was constructed by people from outside the disaster area (e.g. the government) and thus the word could contain ideological meanings or aims and various explanations. As academic researchers, we need to be cognisant of the origin of these kinds of abstract, influential words in order not to reproduce the simplified image possessed by words like '*kizuna*'. In my understanding, the case of '*fukkō*' (recovery) would also indicate a similar sensitivity.

Two more presentations close to my own research interest in communication and listening dealt with communication between actors and audiences. Sarah Stark (University of Ghent) well illustrated the actor–audience relationship in Yose stage by focusing on the process through which performers decide how to tell their story. In most of the cases, rakugo performances are improvised by acknowledging the types of audiences and reading their reactions. Alison Tokita (Kyoto City University of Arts) also scrutinised performer–audience interaction in naniwa-bushi, musical story-telling, explaining that audiences know the right place to applaud, call out one's name or shout. There was even a performer who tried to train audiences. Although the two presentations were given in different panels, they provided clear examples of how performances/performers are influenced by and rely on the audience.



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Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to JAWS for its financial support as well as for welcoming me warmly to the JAWS dinner, where I learnt several survival tips for a life in academia and started to build a new network with scholars from all over the world.

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### Conference Report | Christopher Tso

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University of Cambridge

The 15th International JAWS/EAJS 2017 Conference took place from 30 August to 2 September at the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal. In the Anthropology and Sociology section, colleagues from Europe and further afield gathered to discuss themes of affect and sense as well as a range of other topics. I would like to thank JAWS for their generous financial contribution which enabled me to attend this conference, it being the first major conference and the first JAWS event at which I could participate. My thanks also to the conveners, Emma Cook and Andrea de Antoni, for composing a well-balanced and stimulating collection of papers and panels. As a PhD student in the early stages of my research and having only joined JAWS this year, I appreciated the critical but supportive atmosphere and the opportunity to listen to diverse and fascinating research. The conference provided many opportunities for reflection and much encouragement as I move ahead to the next stages of my project.

Although I obtained many insights from many sessions, in this report I will focus on those that left a particularly lasting impression on me. The conference was opened at the Cinema São Jorge and followed by Nakamura Momoko's keynote lecture, a sociolinguistic account of the gendering of the Japanese language. In a lively and entertaining fashion, several myths of the Japanese language were considered in relation to the role of gender. Dialogue in foreign films or television dramas, for instance, is translated to emphasise gendered differences in spoken language. The speech of female characters such as Hermione in the Harry Potter series is translated with many gendered sentence-ending particles such as *no yo* and *wa*. Men's language has similarly seen gendered differences being emphasised when a non-Japanese text is incorporated into the Japanese context. Although these speech forms may not be used proportionately in individuals' everyday spoken language, they nonetheless reproduce notions of gendered difference. By



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analysing television commercials and a recording of a conversation of three male university students, the emerging use of the sentence-ending form –*su*, used in the place of the polite *desu* was also discussed. This form is employed especially by young men in order to show deference to people in higher hierarchical positions and in more limited instances also by women. All in all, the lecture gave a fascinating account of how gender may be linguistically reproduced in a variety of different contexts and ways, and served as an excellent way to kick off the conference.

In the session on transnationality which convened in the morning of the second day a common theme was meaning-making and how national identity is drawn on in transnational interactions. The first paper by Jackie Kim-Wachutka brought into focus the presence of migrants in the Japanese elderly people's care system, exploring the multi-ethnic make-up of some of these institutions. The presence of food, language and other cultural practices from the first-generation migrants' homelands was shown to create comforting, nostalgic settings for them. Emphasising ideas of Japaneseness and Turkishness was highlighted by Romit Dasgupta in his paper on Japan-Turkey interactions where he discussed a number of instances where national identity is played on in often exaggerated ways, for instance in the selling of Japanese cuisine and etiquette in a new cookbook. In the final paper, Aoyama Reijiro explored the experiences of Japanese sushi chefs in Guangzhou who are often motivated to emigrate by greater opportunity and freedom to run their own restaurants, away from the strict, hierarchical work structures in Japan. These chefs draw on the supposed authenticity of their skill-sets in a market where this is highly valued while, when returning to Japan, draw on their foreign experience to appeal to notions of cosmopolitanism.

The papers in the masculinities session dealt with emerging forms of men's behaviour and shifts in understandings of masculinity in Japan, particularly in light of an ageing population. I was given the opportunity to present findings of preliminary fieldwork I conducted earlier in the year and discussed how salaryman participants understand ideal appearance in terms of strength and youthfulness, a rejection of the failed (old man) *oyaji* figure who is particularly prominent in a rapidly ageing workforce. I also examined how the feeling of being watched and watching others (often very critically) compels participants to reproduce ideal appearance. I received a number of insightful questions and comments for which I am very grateful as they will undoubtedly serve me well moving ahead into primary fieldwork. Ofra Goldstein-Gidoni dealt with fathering in Japan and the new buzzword *ikuboss* which should be understood in contrast to *ikumén*. The former term has emerged in light of companies taking increasing initiatives in providing their male employees

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with opportunities to care for their young children. This is in contrast to *ikumen* where the onus is placed on individuals who must often act against employers' wishes and expectations. Moving from childcare to care for elderly parents, Hiroko Umegaki explored the experiences of men who must care for parents as sons and, increasingly, sons in law. The rise of this phenomenon was discussed in the context of an ageing population and a lack of relevant services which have resulted in a breakdown of more orthodox family structures. This care often came in the form of (harder) physical labour such as fixing broken household items, doing the gardening or driving, thus drawing on these men's senses of masculinity. These diverse papers provided timely insights into changing demographic structures and how these must be negotiated with identities of masculinity.

In the morning of the final day, the session on storytelling convened. Although the individual papers seemed to lack a clear common thread, several important insights were able to be gleaned. Deborah Giustini highlighted the relative taken-for-grantedness and instability of female interpreters' positions in addition to the gendered roles they assume during their jobs such as 'easing the atmosphere' during tense exchanges between the two parties. An ethnographic study on 'Japanese' listening behaviour by Shirota Nanase revealed a number of unwritten rules that listeners perform when in conversation. Although the paper only offered a framework of behaviours available to listeners without considering the social component – namely, when, how and by whom they may be employed – it provided timely insights into a mostly overlooked aspect of everyday interaction. Meanwhile, Alina Rădulescu explored storytelling in a small island off Okinawan with particular focus on Akahachi, a Ryūkyūan lord, and how the telling and retelling of his story has become an important part of the community's culture and politics. The first two papers in particular provided interesting insights into notions of sense and affect, for instance how these experiences should be understood with regards to gender in the interpreting industry and how conscious and unconscious behaviours in listening play equally important roles when negotiating social interactions.

A number of social events at impressive venues including the welcome reception at the Museu Nacional de Historia Natural e Ciência, the gala dinner at the Pátio da Galé, not to mention the JAWS dinner located right beside the historic bullfighting arena all offered excellent complements to the papers and panels. As a first-time participant at a JAWS event I was very much impressed by the wealth of papers, discussions and supportive atmosphere all of which provide much impetus for the continuation of my research. Once more, I would like to thank the JAWS committee

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for their support in enabling me to attend this conference and I look forward to attending JAWS conferences in the future.

## 29th JAWS CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT, AARHUS 2019

It is high time to let you know that the next JAWS conference will take place at AarhusUniversity in Denmark from 15.-17. April 2019, as announced last year in Lisbon.

Since it will take a little longer to post the proper call for papers, here is some preliminary information. The overall theme will revolve around new developments in networks and networking but, as usual, the workshop will also be open for other themes and proposals within the broader area of anthropology. The deadline for panel proposals will be 1. November and for individual papers 3. December. If you need an earlier acknowledgement in order to apply for traveling expenses, etc. you are welcome to contact me. The same counts for any other question you may have.

Best regards,

Anemone Platz

Global Studies, Aarhus University

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## 29th JAWS CONFERENCE 2019 REVIEW | 15 - 17 April 2019

Aarhus University, Denmark

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**The JAWS conference 2019** took place at Aarhus University in Denmark from 15-17 April 2019. The conference gathered together anthropologists to sunny spring Aarhus to explore the social developments and transformations of Japanese society under the themes of networking and sharing. These themes relating to spaces of sharing, reconfigured ways of interaction and were covered in the context of the Tōhoku Triple



disaster as well as a wide-ranging set of other topics ranging from both developments in rural Japan and urban environment, renegotiation of shared spaces and social relations, perceptions of bodily engagement to reconsideration of anthropological representation. The panels also brought up several controversial socio-political issues in Japanese society, including drug abuse,

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minorities and disability. These presentations were tied together by the exploration of the efforts and experiences of reorienting and finding ways to navigate amidst both transformations and continuities of socio-political setting in Japanese society. Thanks to lively discussions enabled by this common thread, smooth organization and active participants, the conference was a delightful forum to both address topical issues in Japanese society as well as to reflect on anthropology's strengths to capture these lived experiences.

Monday, 15. April | 10:30 – 12:00

### **Giulia de Togni, UCL – University College London**

#### ***Fukushima Kizuna: The Role of Social Bonds between NGOs' Volunteers and Nuclear Victims in Building Resilience to Crisis***

The first speaker was Giulia de Togni, who introduced us to the topic of her dissertation "*Fukushima Kizuna: The Role of Social Bonds between NGOs' Volunteers and Nuclear Victims in Building Resilience to Crisis*". For this project she conducted fieldwork in 2016 and 2017, volunteering with Japanese NGOs and conducting about 200 interviews. She focused on one case study of a woman, who had evacuated to Kyoto with her two children and her relationship with an NGO volunteer who helped her adjust to her new life. She stressed the importance of social bonds (*kizuna*) for evacuated people to adjust to their new living environment and for becoming a source of hope. She concluded that NGOs play an important role for disaster victims' empowerment post-3.11.

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### Pilvi Posio, University of Turku

#### Sharing the secure future: Post-3.11 community resilience as the renegotiation of sociospatial security

In the second presentation of this panel, Pilvi Posio talked about community resilience post-3.11. In her study “Sharing the secure future: Post-3.11 community resilience as the renegotiation of sociospatial security”, she focused on the case of Yamamoto in Miyagi Prefecture, which was heavily hit by the tsunami in 2011. In the process of reconstruction, the town focused on branding locally grown strawberries to attract tourists and permanent new residents. In order to fulfil their vision of a secure future, they tried to activate residents to participate in projects together with actors from outside the town, thus creating shared experiences, spaces and social networks for both.



### Duccio Gasparri, Oxford Brookes University

#### Tōhoku cannot speak?: Looking at the aftermath of 3.11 through Antonio Gramsci

The last speaker of this panel was Duccio Gasparri, who introduced his paper “Tōhoku cannot speak?: Looking at the aftermath of 3.11 through Antonio Gramsci”. In his presentation, he talked

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about the subalternity of Tōhoku and looked at the aftermath of 3.11 in context of history, trying to answer the questions of how the disaster is being perceived outside as well as the economy of the disaster. In a quick tour through Tōhoku's history, he explained its journey from "famine-stricken land" to "Heartland Japan", which allows us to better understand the recent developments in reconstruction policies. He concluded that after 3.11, the image of the area is being drawn

from the outside, that the region is being stigmatised and that local voices are not heard.



Session 1 | 13:00 – 14:30

### Alyne E Delaney, Tohoku University

#### **From 'spaces' to 'places' and back to 'spaces' again: The re-adjustment of lives and lifeways in the new 'seawall era'**

The afternoon session began with an update from Alyne E Delaney on her ongoing research in the coastal community of Shichigama, Miyagi Prefecture, which focuses on ways the notion of 'home' is changing in response to the post-disaster reconstruction efforts. Delaney paid particular attention to how sea walls are impacting the relationship between local people and the sea. She noted that there are many conflicts about the walls as people begin to see the consequences of being cut off from the sea, which has historically played a major role in shaping livelihoods and identities in the area. As a result, it is a sensitive topic that can elicit very different views depending on people's sense of place and their *kizuna*, showing how reconstruction policies are not impacting everyone equally.



### Brigitte Steger, University of Cambridge

#### Urgent anthropology and long-term engagement: The case of 3.11

Brigitte Steger discussed the ethical and practical challenges of conducting fieldwork in Tōhoku immediately after the 3.11 disaster. Reporting on her experiences of staying at a Buddhist temple being used as a shelter during May, June and July 2011, she expressed reservations about using limited resources and concerns about building her career on the suffering of others. However, she found that her position as an interested outsider was often cathartic for people who were trying to keep social structures together while living in close proximity in difficult circumstances. Discussions with shelter residents about mundane topics allowed her to develop an understanding about broader issues at play. This led her to draw the conclusion that there is no 'best time' to conduct research into disaster.

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### Anna Vainio, University of Sheffield/Tohoku University

#### Empowering methodologies: The role of long-term ethnography in improving post-disaster recovery practices

Anna Vainio presented material from her PhD research, which focuses on how ethnography can help in the process of recovery and understanding policy-level changes. She noted that most research into disasters is conducted within a two-year post-disaster window, and asks: what does it mean to do research further down the line? In Tōhoku, she encountered an atmosphere of people excited to look to the future, an empowered sphere of activity driven by visioning and imagination that she calls *the sphere of what can be*. However, she acknowledged that there was also a sense of disillusionment and powerlessness of everyday survival in which many felt there was no past but no future either: *the sphere of what is*. Drawing on Berlant's notion of *cruel optimism* (2011), Vainio suggested that the technical process of reconstruction may be an obstacle to re-establishing normal lives. In such circumstances, ethnography can be an empowering methodology that gives people the opportunity to think about things that they have not previously considered.

#### Citation

Berlant, L., (2011) *Cruel Optimism*. Durham, USA: Duke University Press.

### Andrew Littlejohn, Leiden University

#### Museums of themselves: Becoming heritage in post-3.11 Tōhoku

The last session of the panel “Triple disasters of recovery?: Private memory, selective memorialization and rationalized governance after ‘2011’” reflected the thematic present in all of the 3.11 papers presented on the first conference day: the question of memory, continuity and the realization of a future drawing from these. In his presentation “Museums of themselves: Becoming heritage in post-3.11 Tōhoku”, Andrew Littlejohn illustrated through discussion on heritage-making how disasters as temporal disruption make us contemplate the relation of pre- and post-disaster culture and community. Through an analysis of intangible cultural practices, tangible disaster remains and heritage regimes fueled by disasters, Littlejohn showcased how in the process of “becoming heritage” the practices and objects are removed from their pre-disaster connections, gain new meanings and are transformed into representations of themselves to be promoted as experiences. This, in a sense, creates a new tradition of exhibitions and acts of what had been on the corpse of what has passed away. This utilization of memory in creating new heritage relies also on shared memories of those practices.

### Maja Vodopivec, Leiden University

#### Dialectics of memory in post-3.11 Japan

Maja Vodopivec’s paper *Dialectics of memory in post-3.11 Japan* was read by the panel chair Mitchell W Sedgwick. It analyzed how collective memory emerges at the time of crisis. She illustrated how the politically sensitive issue of Fukushima is presented in different comic books by drawing from ways of remembering historical disasters and hardships. The continuity of representations shows how ways to relate to the present are closely connected to politically and socially sanctioned narrations of the past. Finally, the panel chair summarized the day’s discussion by emphasizing how affect, emotion, temporality and place has become increasingly central to our understanding of disasters. Eight years after the disaster, anthropologists now have

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the opportunity to self-reflect on researchers' roles and responsibilities in the context of disaster and identify the historical continuities beyond the 3.11 disaster that constitute the Tōhoku area.



Session 2 | 13:00 – 14:30

### **Manami Yasui, International Research Center for Japanese Studies**

#### **Transformation of fetal images from pre-modern to contemporary Japan; towards a multicultural understanding of the history of bodily images**

The panel “Body and ritual: a multidisciplinary approach”, chaired by Manami Yasui and Melinda Papp, started after the lunch break on the first day of the conference. Yasui showed in her paper on fetal images how guidebooks in the 18th century provided clear images of fetal development and how these images have been changing. While the depictions of the fetus in the *Tainai totsuki zu* show a strong Buddhist influence, Yasui emphasised that after the Meiji Restoration, the German medical tradition became the new model for Japanese. Depictions of fetuses in the form of *nishiki-e* also became a subject of humoristic, erotic or political parodies. In 20th century female magazines, birth control and explanations on the process of impregnation were discussed. In her comparison, Yasui clearly pointed out the different usages of fetal images during the past three centuries and convincingly identified actors that exhibited influence on this process.

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### **Melinda Papp, Eotvos Lorand University Budapest**

#### **The role and symbolism of the body in Japanese rites of passage**

Melinda Papp focused on adornment and embellishment in rites of passage in Japan. She showed how intensive amounts of time are being invested in Japan to dress up for events such as *shichi-go-san* and *seijinshiki*. Papp briefly talked about the changes of the events and

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elaborated how taking a photo became an essential part of the ceremony. The embellishment procedures in preparation for the *seijinshiki* is not only an important life event for young women, who wear exclusive traditional clothes, but also for young men, some of whom use this occasion to express their own views in an extravagant way. Papp introduced various possible functions of embellishment including an elevation of the societal status, aesthetics, self-worth or the enculturation of gender roles. Together with the audience, she discussed the popularity of these events and how they might reproduce certain values within society.

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### Judit Zentai, Eotvos Lorand University Budapest

#### Rediscovering the human body in the Edo-era

Judit Eva Zentai closed the first part of the panel with her talk on “Rediscovering the human body in the Edo era”. She analysed medical books of the Edo Period and gave strong emphasis on how European medical knowledge influenced Japanese scholars. Even though performing an autopsy was not permitted during that time, more and more European works were translated into Japanese, suggesting that the prohibition of autopsies had gradually loosened. She concluded that even though European influence can be observed during the Edo Period, it became clear that even before that time, a significant amount of medical knowledge had already existed in Japan.

Session 2 | 15:00 – 16:30

### Anna Andreeva, Heidelberg University

#### Childbirth rituals in medieval Japan: Empowering an imperial consort's pregnancy sash

Anna Andreeva presented material from her forthcoming second book, which attempts to reconstruct the lives of women giving birth in medieval Japan. By studying *emaki* (hand-painted

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scrolls) and other manuscripts, she pieced together the social landscape of childbirth in elite households, focusing especially on expert knowledge holders such as Buddhist monks, nuns and other ritual specialists such as *miko* shamans. The final trimester was viewed as a key time in childbirth, when the donning of a pregnancy sash by the pregnant woman initiated an elaborate schedule of Buddhist rituals focused on her physical wellbeing.

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### Zsafia Hidvegi, Eotvos Lorand University Budapest

#### Reclamation of the Ryukyuan culture: Reinventing *hajichi*, a forgotten tradition

Zsafia Hidvegi presented her work on *hajichi*, traditional hand tattoos worn by Ryukyuan women that were documented as early as the 3rd Century CE. She noted that despite various local and international attempts to document and interpret the tattoos in recent decades, knowledge about them is fragmented as a result of a break in tradition during the latter half of the 20th Century, when women voluntarily abandoned *hachiji* in order to be able to choose between their 'Ryukyuan' and 'Japanese' identities. The patterns and symbols used in *hachiji* have recently regained cultural importance and now frequently appear on Okinawan tourist merchandise.



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Tuesday, 16. April | Session 1 | 9:00-10:30

### Ching Wan Fan, Chinese University of Hong Kong

#### Meanings of a school culture—*Ōendan* in Japanese Universities

One common theme for session 1 on Tuesday morning was the presenters' participatory observation, although the topics varied from school culture to listening behaviour. In her presentation "Meanings of a school culture—*Ōendan* in Japanese Universities" Ching Wan Fan discussed in detail the initiation of the leaders of *Ōendan* through dedication and physical hardships. She compared it to transformation of an irresponsible individual into a mature and responsible group member and to enactment of mainstream masculinity through her own experience as a female leader. These gendered roles and expectations were another theme shared by the presentations.



## Nanase Shiota, University of Cambridge

### Who is responsible for *moriagaru* conversations? An ethnographic investigation on hostesses' listening and sharing behavior

Nanase Shiota had worked as a hostess during her fieldwork and introduced her observations of listening practices in her presentation “Who is responsible for *moriagaru* conversations? An ethnographic investigation on hostesses' listening and sharing behavior”. Instead of passively listening, as presumed by the male customers, the female hostesses engage in active construction of the ideal merry and enlivened *moriagaru* discussion. Gender discussion of both presentations also raised interest in the audience inquiring, for example, why students would be willing to commit to the reinforcement of mainstream masculinity through leader practice or how the female researcher experienced acting out the role of a passive listening woman. These platforms of enacting and enforcing gender roles were attracting, for example, those who saw the leader position as a continuity to their masculinity or as a networking opportunity, whereas male customers in hostess club regarded it as a chance to impress their female counterparts or train themselves or junior workers in dominance.

Session 1 | 11:00-12:30

## Caitlin Meagher

### Rethinking Community in Neoliberal Japan: Independence and *kizuna* in sharehouse marketing discourse

The session continued with Caitlin Meagher, who gave a talk about “Rethinking Community in Neoliberal Japan: independence and *kizuna* in sharehouse marketing discourse”. By sharing her fieldwork experiences in sharehouses in Japan with the audience, Meagher introduced several aspects of life in these institutions. She discussed concepts such as *ibasho* (“a place to be”) and *kizuna* (“bond”) as possible reasons for the attractiveness of sharehouses for young people, but critically referred to exclusion as a frequent aspect of life there. It is mostly younger people who



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find their new homes in these houses, while older or elderly people are usually not allowed to rent a room. Even though a certain sense of community is advertised, a closer examination showed that this kind of harmony can only be maintained by securing homogeneity.

### Florian Purkarthofer, University of Vienna

#### **The City behind the Screens: Digitally shared perceptions and networks of imagined taste and smell**

Florian Purkarthofer took a closer look at the “The City behind the Screens: Digitally shared perceptions and networks of imagined taste and smell”. He used participant observation in the form of multisensory perception of life in the two neighbourhood districts in Meidaimae and Shimokitazawa in Tokyo to identify not only visual aspects of the region but also smell and noise. He aims to understand how space is constructed and reconstructed through social construction. While events such as the local curry festival notably change the region for a few days, the constant and widespread usage of smartphones raises the question of whether these districts can be labelled as “cities of isolation”. Purkarthofer concluded that multisensory methods might be a potential way of understanding everyday life practices by combining different ways of participant observation.

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### Ying Huang, Chinese University of Hong Kong

#### **Negotiating the “Japanese Smell”: Consumption and Localization of Shōjo Manga in Contemporary China**

The last talk of this session “Negotiating the ‘Japanese Smell’: Consumption and Localization of Shōjo Manga in Contemporary China” was given by Ying Huang (Chinese University of Hong Kong). She posed the question why Chinese readers like *shōjo manga* and how these comics influence them. She focused on how the interest in Japanese popular culture is related to their identity as Chinese. She identified several factors that are considered important by the readers: romance, nostalgia for one’s own youth, supportive family relations and friendships as well as the stories and the fantasy setting. Readers split their positive image of Japanese popular culture from the general negative image of Japan. Further, Chinese adaptations of Japanese *shōjo*



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*manga* show different protagonists than their Japanese models: women seem to be more ambitious in Chinese comics.

*Session 2 | 9:00-10:30*

### **Andrea De Antoni, Ritsumeikan University**

#### **Everybody Hurts – Feeling “transmission,” Spirit Possession and Religious Healing in Contemporary Japan**

In the first panel of the session, Andrea de Antoni introduced his research on “Everybody Hurts – Feeling ‘transmission,’ Spirit Possession and Religious Healing in Contemporary Japan”, where he focused on the process of possession, the social life that spirits acquire and elicit, and the way they are exercised. However, most importantly, he tried to understand how spirits become agents. During his presentation, he mentioned some examples from his case study, which showed that initially people would come to a shrine not because they thought they were possessed but because they had physical symptoms their doctors could not explain or heal. After experiencing an exorcism, if they would feel better, they would start to think they may have been possessed and come back again and again. He also talked about the importance of sharing one’s own experiences and that the people who were possessed felt part of a community and helped each other.

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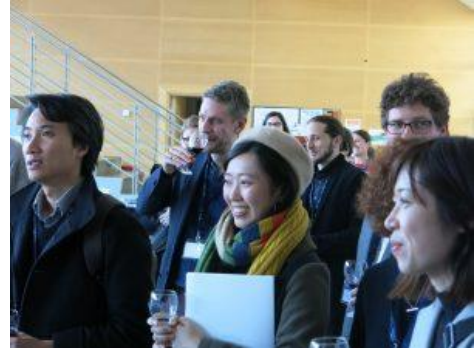
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### **Paul Christensen, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology**

#### **Managing addicted bodies: Narcotics and recovery in Tokyo**

In his talk about “Managing addicted bodies: Narcotics and recovery in Tokyo”, Paul Christensen gave deep insight into Drug Addiction Rehab Centers in Japan. He explained that the Japanese facilities had taken on a lot from their American counterpart, namely the ideology that addiction is a disease, and that one is “powerless” over one’s own addiction and can only overcome it by focusing on god. He criticized how addiction is being viewed, stating that it is not



a disease, but more a symptom of life and the struggles we face in it. This initiates the taking of drugs—which are then continued in order to numb the pain. He sees trauma as a possible starting point for drug addiction.

### **Nicolas Sternsdorff-Cisterna, Southern Methodist University**

#### **Society 5.0 and the body in Japan**

In his presentation on “Society 5.0 and the body in Japan”, Nicolas Sternsdorff-Cisterna introduced us to the “super smart society”, which would be brought about by a revolution in AI technology. He showed a short video clip about the future Japan aided by technological support. This was set in the countryside and showed the AI support of both elderly and younger people, thus enhancing a vision of sustainability in spite of the current demographic situation of Japan. This “super smart society” embodies inclusivity, diversity and sustainable development goals. However, he also talked about the problems related to AI technology in cyberspace versus AI in the physical world, for instance as a health support robot, and also included questions about how to successfully code ethics into a system.

### **Wolfram Manzenreiter, University of Vienna**

#### **Of Revisits and Restudies – Longitudinal Research in the Anthropology of Rural Japan**

*\*The panel on rural amenities was led by Antonia Miserka and Sebastian Polak-Rottmann. Wolfram Manzenreiter sent his apologies.*

Miserka and Polak-Rottman began by introducing the University of Vienna's interdisciplinary research in Aso, Kumamoto Prefecture, before focusing on the specifics of their own projects. Polak-Rottmann noted that there are two dominant discourses of contemporary rural Japan: a dystopian view, centred on regional extinction, economic decline, and hollowing infrastructure, and a utopian view, based on nostalgic notions of *furusato*. Neither approach gives substantial insights into how people living there perceive their lives, suggesting that more nuanced research is needed to understand the factors that lead to happiness in rural areas. Miserka demonstrated how this is being carried out in the University of Vienna's current project in Aso, which is a follow up to earlier research into rural life carried out there in the late 1960s. The original method has been updated in order to gain a better understanding of social relationships, happiness and participation in an area affected by depopulation, ageing and recent natural disasters.

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### **Antonia Miserka, University of Vienna**

#### **Rural Japan's Appeal to Old and New Residents: A Migration Analysis of two Case Studies in the Aso Region (Kumamoto)**

Miserka presented a paper based on her master's thesis, which asked how new residents were being attracted to move to Aso. Through the use of interviews and questionnaires, she found that earthquake-damaged infrastructure, lack of future prospects and the disappearance of children were major negative characteristics associated with living in Aso; however, closeness to nature and the overall quality of life (especially decreased stress and improved connections with the community) were seen as positive characteristics. As a consequence, she discovered that newcomers and returnees to Aso found the area impractical but relaxing, offering opportunities to those with new ideas but also posing difficulties of integration. The latter will be the focus of Miserka's ongoing PhD research.



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### **Sebastian Polak-Rottmann, University of Vienna**

#### **Participating is Fun: Local Political Participation and Subjective Well-being in Rural Japan**

Polak-Rottmann introduced material from his PhD research into local participation, which although sometimes viewed as bothersome, is also considered necessary for well-being. He discovered that community participation to solve local problems is not carried out by people who are generally unhappy, rather by people who are dissatisfied with a particular issue. They operate within complex networks of individuals and associations, which through processes of knowledge sharing and acting together can lead to improved levels of happiness and overall well-being. Nevertheless, there are as many opinions about participation as there are forms of participation.

## **Shiu Hong Simon Tu, Chinese University of Hong Kong**

### **Networked Art, Networked Happiness? Ethnographic Cases from Revitalization-oriented Art Festivals in Rural Japan**

In his presentation on “Networked Art, Networked Happiness? Ethnographic Cases from Revitalization-oriented Art Festivals in Rural Japan”, Shiu Hong Simon Tu talked about several case studies in rural Japan, depicting the exchange of artists and locals during an international art festival. His main question was whether the artistic practices prompted by these art festivals actually initiated new relations or networks with the aged rural population. His studies showed that, in fact, only very few locals actually help in preparing the artwork and that most of the volunteers come from other parts of Japan or outside. His conclusion was that the relational effects by process art making are often being highlighted by festival organizers, artists and the media but the actual connections are largely illusory.

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## **Joseph Hankins, University of California, San Diego**

### **Of Trees and Scarecrows: Global Networks in Local Places**

In his presentation on “Of Trees and Scarecrows: Global Networks in Local Places” Joseph Hankins introduced us to a small hamlet in Tokushima Prefecture, a typical “dying village”, which is home to only 29 people, all of which are elderly, but has a large population of scarecrows. Due to this, the hamlet became famous, even attracting tourists from other countries. He talked about the hamlet’s history, which has slowly started to dwindle away since the 1970s. Now only a handful of people are left, one of them building scarecrows of the deceased to memorialise them. Because of a recent documentary film and subsequent news articles, this hamlet has become a symbol for villages on the edge of extinction.

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### Alastair Lomas, University of Manchester

#### The Sound of Cicadas: Differing Temporal Worlds in the Vanishing Village of Nakanami

In the last presentation of the day, Alastair Lomas showed his film “The Sound of Cicadas: Differing Temporal Worlds in the Vanishing Village of Nakanami”, which depicts the slow life of a small fishing hamlet in Toyama Prefecture. This hamlet is depopulating and its population ageing— only two children remain. This results in little activity within the village. He shows the local fishermen as they leave for their trip in the morning and accompanies them on their daily tasks. The sound



of the boat’s engine and the conversations of the men stand in sharp contrast to the shots filmed within the hamlet itself, which seems abandoned and lies silent and inactive.

Session 2 | 13:30-15:00

### Paul Hansen, Hokkaido University

#### Anthropology as Antidote to Abstraction: Re-Placing Space and Network

The first presentation of this session, “Anthropology as Antidote to Abstraction: Re-Placing Space and Network” by Paul Hansen, was an ode to the ethnography of lived experience. It reminded us not to get lost in abstractions, but to remain attentive to the embodied experiences and characteristics of particular places and social connections and individuals’ understandings of these. In essence, he called for balanced presentations of embodied, affective and particular micro-level and abstract, conceptual and generalized macro-level experiences. Hansen’s presentation reflected the increased interest in affective sides of lived experience and to relations

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between material and social. How to realize Hansen's argument stressing the acknowledgement of both particular *and* general is undoubtedly a question contemplated by most anthropologists.

### **Ofra Goldstein-Gidoni, Tel Aviv University**

#### **“Working Fathers” in Japan: Leading a Change in Gender Relations?**

Conveniently, the second presentation of the session “‘Working Fathers’ in Japan: Leading a Change in Gender Relations?” by Ofra Goldstein-Gidoni, sought to combine both micro and macro levels of analysis. The presentation contrasted conceptualization and promotion of fathers more involved in family life to the experiences and challenges faced when putting these role ideals into practice. Resonating with findings from previous studies, the presentation showed how altering gender roles is not enough, but it is necessary to understand more widely the influence of the corporate economic sector. Goldstein-Gidoni notes that fathering in Japan is more than the relation between father and child and the influence of corporate system structure has resulted only in slow change in gender relations.

*Session 2 | 15:30 - 17:00*

### **Satsuki Kawano, University of Guelph**

#### **The politics of identity among people with dyslexia in contemporary Japan**

The last session started with Satsuki Kawano's paper on “The politics of identity among people with dyslexia in contemporary Japan” in which she examined the 2016 Asia-Pacific Dyslexia Festival in Yokohama. She stressed that this event can be understood as an opportunity for people with dyslexia to transform their own social status. Even though solidarity and identity played a major role during this occasion, other aspects of discrimination or difference could not be overcome. Although dyslexia largely remains invisible – unless one has to write – generating



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awareness seemed to be an important function of the Dyslexia Festival. It thus effectively challenged the notion of Japan as a country where everybody has the ability to write and read.

### **Yoko Demelius, University of Turku**

#### **Multiculturalism as a Political Mobilization in Japan: Perspectives of Oldcomers in the Discourses of Internationalization Process**

The second talk, “Multiculturalism as Political Mobilization in Japan”, by Yoko Demelius, focused on how minority populations use their networks to hook up with a multicultural society of coexistence. She convincingly argued that generational differences exist between different groups of Korean immigrants or descendants regarding their identity. Demelius identified three main channels that these groups use to get connected: committees of multicultural events,



NPO activities, and public events. Today, emphasis is given to the inclusiveness of society and an identity that is part of Japanese society. It became clear that the characteristics of political mobilization have changed over the previous decades.

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### **David C. Lewis, University of Cambridge**

#### **Cultural Filters**

The concluding talk was held by David C. Lewis on “Cultural Filters”. Citing examples of different Western rituals such as Christmas parties or Christmas trees, he argued that these rituals could be adopted in Japan easily, as similar events had already existed. However, cultural filters ultimately determine which aspects can be introduced to Japanese society and which aspects have to be omitted. What is filtered out and what is passed through this process, Lewis stresses,



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is dependent mainly on four different values of Japanese culture: memorialism, respect of seniors, fear of what is “out of place” or “dangerous”, as well as safety and security.

# JAWS FROM THE DEEP

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## Susanne Klien interviews Prof emer. Josef Kreiner

### Josef Kreiner

Josef Kreiner is Professor Emeritus, Bonn University. Born in Vienna, Austria, in 1940, he has conducted numerous fieldwork projects in Southwest Japan and the Ryūkyū Islands. He was professor of Japanology and director of the Institute of Japanese Studies at Bonn University from 1977-1988, founding director of the German Institute of Japanese Studies, Tokyo from 1988-1996, and Specially Appointed Professor and Director of the Research Center for Modern Japan at Hōsei University from 2008-2013. Presently,\* he is a visiting fellow at the Institute for International Japanese Studies at Hōsei University.



*\*Time of interview and initial publication*

### Susanne Klien

Susanne Klien is Associate Professor at the Modern Japanese Studies Program (MJSP) at Hokkaido University. Her research interests include transnational mobility, practice and transmission of intangible cultural property in contemporary rural Japan, subjective well-being and alternative lifestyles and modes of working, regional revitalization, demographic change, post-growth societies and contemporary youth culture in Hokkaido.

### **Q: Could you tell us about your first encounter with Japan?**

Actually, it was quite unexpected for me to end up studying Japan as I was predominantly interested in ethnology and had already started working as a volunteer at the Vienna Museum of Ethnology. There I met a young lecturer called Nebesky-Wojkowitz who was considered as one of the most talented emerging scholars in Vienna ethnology. His book “Oracles and demons of

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Tibet” is still a classic today. His work really impressed me. As I had also taken classes in Sanskrit at secondary school, I was thus very open to studying India. In any case, Nebesky-Wojkowitz left for Sikkim to do fieldwork and told me to start my studies in ethnology. When I went to the university to get information, by chance I ran into [Prof. Alexander] Slawik who would be my supervisor. Slawik was in Japanese studies and had just been to Japan for the first time at the ripe age of 60 and I ended up studying with him.

I hung out with the first Japanese exchange students in Vienna, by chance three of them in anthropology – Obayashi Taro, Sumiya Kazuhiko and Shiratori Yoshiro – who were researching Southwest China. We would be together every day until midnight, Slawik told all these incredible stories about Japan, it was 1958 and there were only three students at this ethnologically oriented institute of Japanese Studies in Vienna. To be precise, there was no official Japanese Studies department in Vienna, it was part of the Institute of Ethnology. So without thinking much about it, I ended up studying Japan with a focus on the contemporary.

Before the war, since 1938 there had been a “Japan-Institut” in Vienna with Oka Masao as Japanese guest professor and Ishida Eiichirō as student. But after the war there was neither money nor interest in Japan, so the department of ethnology served as a resort for those interested in Japan. So for me personally, as I had started out in a museum, I have only been very keen on engaging in museum work, I think that was important for my further work. And I was lucky in the sense that I had a chance to go to Japan quite early in my career as an exchange student in 1961 – I don’t think that would be possible nowadays. I was only twenty and was put into the graduate school (*daigakuin*) as a research student (*kenkyūsei*), although I could barely communicate in Japanese, you can imagine. Today everything is so rigidly regulated, students are affiliated with one university and one *sensei*. I was studying at Tōdai with Ishida Sensei, Izumi Seiichi and Egami Namio, these were my three supervisors, but it was actually Oka Masao who influenced me most. He was at Meiji University at the time in Social Anthropology (*shakai jinruigaku*).

Through Oka and his historic approach to ethnology I started concerning myself with questions such as where the Japanese had come from, where and how Japanese culture had originated. On the other hand, Oka’s assistant Gamō Masao was into Social Anthropology and agricultural village sociology (*nōson shakaigaku*). I also spent time with Ariga Kizaemon. At some point Ishida took me to Yanagita Sensei who recommended to go to Amami and that was the starting point of my Okinawa research, perhaps as the only foreign student at the time. There were perhaps only

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fifty Monbushō financed foreign students back then. We had to come to the Monbushō on the first of every month to collect our scholarship in cash and to provide evidence that we were still alive and around, it was quite different from nowadays. On that occasion I met the other students but there were no other anthropologists, mostly literary studies, archive study or philologists.

Due to my influence by Slawik, I was quite anti-philology to the point that I got the nickname of “Japanology basher” since for me the philologically oriented Japanology was not sufficient. Personally I think that we need to concern ourselves with contemporary Japan. In my times research was focused on agriculture, nowadays it is urban Japanese society. Just as Japanese society is changing, the study of modern Japan needs to change its aims and methods. So that’s how I ended up studying rural villages, preparing museum collections.

Under Slawik and together with Erich Pauer (who later moved to Marburg) and Sepp Linhart I did a collaborative research project in the Aso region in 1968/9. One aim of this project was to start a collection of Japanese agricultural tools for the ethnological museum in Vienna. This project had a huge influence on Pauer’s later research as he wrote his doctoral thesis on agricultural technology before moving on to the issue of modernization and history of technology in Japan. The reason we chose agricultural tools as a topic was that in the 1960s Japan saw a strong movement towards mechanization. We collected hoes, spades, ploughs, harrows, sickles, all these agricultural tools had hardly changed since the Yayoi period and then all of a sudden there was this wave of mechanization, from one day to the next there were these special tractors. There was this enormous change happening so what we did was urgent research in the sense that this was one of the last chances to collect such tools, especially if one wishes to start from the assumption that Japanese culture was strongly shaped by wet culture rice cultivation (although I would not subscribe to that). But of course, wet rice cultivation is a strong feature (just think of Yanagita and Ishida). So this is why we collected these tools and why Vienna now has an excellent collection of agricultural tools.

### **Q: Could you talk about the changes of doing fieldwork then and now?**

I don’t think that fieldwork is really different now. What was easy back then was that we had access to the first Meiji period *koseki* from the 1870s. The only obstacle were the officials in the municipal offices who were quite reluctant to look for these dusty ancient materials stored away but today all of these cannot be accessed any longer for privacy reasons. So we could access these materials and gain insight into family structures and households back to the early 19<sup>th</sup>

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century. In the first *koseki* we can still find the names of the grandparents of the head of the household who were born around 1800, which offered excellent insights. The village structure was more or less intact in the 1960s.

Nowadays most villages have a high rate of aged citizens, the productive generations left for the cities. This depopulation trend started just back then. The issues we face today are completely different as compared to back then. I think nowadays we would not get the results through fieldwork in village communities we got before with these issues such as *dōzoku*, *daikazoku*, *kachōken* etc. How can we get these insights through interview or participant observation nowadays, I think we need other ways of framing these issues. This is why it is so interesting for me to see that the East Asian Institute in Vienna is planning to restart the Aso Project. It is the re-study of the same region after an enormous change in society. There is no point any longer to study family structures in traditional societies; nowadays we need to examine issues of elderly care or the impact of settlers from Osaka or other places who have moved to Aso in order to establish their second home (*bessō*) on the landscape, and the question how these newcomers integrate into the community. So the problems we are faced with as researchers have changed but I find it very positive that there is still a common line through this Aso project with former times.

### **Q: What about the challenges of researching Japan then and now?**

When we started our research (Linhart, Pauer and I) we discussed what kind of Japanese studies we would like to train people in, we wanted to create a focus on social sciences in the Japanese studies, that was the biggest challenge. I think we managed to do this through a broad education in the first two years of study and then more intensive education in *shakai kagaku* under Linhart... *rōdō to kyūka* (work and leisure), I think that's what it was called in Linhart's institute, plus the theme of play.

Pauer moved into economic history, modernization, contemporary technology, and I having moved to Bonn, was pretty soon drawn into the issue of setting up the German Institute of Japanese Studies in Tokyo (DIJ Tokyo), an institute of the German Federal Government which in contrast to other such German research institutes in various foreign countries was not focused on history but working on contemporary Japan. That was the time of the bubbly economy. Our first and most important project I think was the project on value change, and later back in Bonn, ethics in medicine. We always had a comparative perspective as well, analyzing Japan and Germany.

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1968 was the year when Japan exceeded the gross national product of West Germany. That was a big shock for the German government. At the same time, there were student protests taking place in both countries... The German government made efforts to learn more about Japan, how have the Japanese managed to achieve this? German Japanologists like Horst Hammitzsch always rejected introducing this focus on the contemporary into their philologically orientated Japanology.

So the project of establishing the German Institute for Japanese Studies was delayed, but then Minister Heinz Riesenhuber, who had a direct link with Japan as his brother was teaching at Sophia University and was thus familiar with everyday life in Japan, made the point that getting to know Japan is not only about the economy but also about society and science. When we had a meeting in Bonn, Prof Roland Schneider from Hamburg, Prof Wolfgang Schamoni from Heidelberg and two other colleagues. We were all in favour of the proposal of establishing the institute but called for two posts to have a focus on history and cultural studies, too. All the other German research institutes maintained across the world have a focus on history with a comparative emphasis. Despite all the opposition, the decision to establish the institute in Tokyo was finally asserted and I was asked to be its first director.

Since having moved to Bonn, I was considered the white raven who did something that my philologically oriented colleagues could not do. In that sense, I was like a member of a minority since I worked on contemporary issues. This relates very much to the sense of isolation Joy Hendry mentioned in her interview. The sense of isolation we felt in Vienna was outstanding. We felt marginalized by our colleagues in Germany; we thought that they did not want to have anything to do with us as we had a contemporary focus. And we German speakers doing research into Japan were also isolated from our French colleagues, and it is still difficult today as they mostly do not speak English and keep to themselves in their research. And we were also isolated from our English speaking colleagues. When I read the interview with Joy Hendry, she says that there were only four English speaking colleagues in anthropology researching Japan at the time, mostly in the US.

In Vienna, research had in fact been carried out on Japan since the late 1950s. But this is not really known elsewhere as we were not connected across countries at the time. The situation improved with the foundation of the European Association of Japanese Studies (EAJS). This was an attempt to break out from this isolation on the part of us Europeans and to obtain financial support from Japan as well. At the Pen Club Congress in Kyoto in 1972 hundreds of Japan

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*Susanne Klien interviews Prof emer. Josef Kreiner*

researchers from all over the world were invited and the establishment of the Japan Foundation was announced plus an American Committee working together with the Japan Foundation.

We were only few Europeans present at the time, Richard Storry from Oxford, me and a few others. As the Americans were already well connected with Japan through that committee and the US was clearly an important partner for Japan, it was very clear to us Europeans that Europe only came second or even third, after Japan's Asian neighbours. At night in the hotel lobby we talked about the idea of getting together among Europeans and starting some kind of organization. Storry said that he would welcome us in Oxford the year after, so in 1973 the EAJS was officially founded. Patrick O'Neill (SOAS) was the first elected president and I was the first secretary in Vienna, Vienna being a place where it was easy to talk with our colleagues from East Europe on neutral territory. Since then, EAJS membership has grown rapidly, there were more than 1000 colleagues attending the conferences in Tallinn and Ljubljana.

And now we have JAWS [founded in 1984]. I was hoping that those colleagues working in or with museums would also get together, but this does not seem to be happening, which is a pity. One of the reasons is that most curators are not only in charge of Japan but the whole of Asia, with many of them having only basic Japanese language skills. Personally, as an anthropologist I consider collaboration with museums as very important, collections of Japan for display in Europe often say much more about us than Japan, how do we perceive Japan? If you keep in mind that an exhibition at the National Federal Art Hall in Bonn in 2005 with objects from the Tokyo National Museum had more than 100.000 visitors. It is impossible to have so many readers as the author of an academic article or book. With a visually appealing exhibition you can reach more people and get your ideas on Japan across to a much bigger number than through written texts.

### **Q: How do you perceive the recent closure of a number of Japan studies institutes?**

I am rather an optimist on this issue, I don't think that the situation is so bad in fact. We have had a great number of new institutes that were established in the 1970s and 80s in Germany, the UK and Italy. Of course, universities generally need to cut expenses and Japan studies certainly belongs to those disciplines that are at risk of being eliminated, but so are others. There have been fusions with other Asia sections, I think it is important to support one another. In Bonn, for example, Japanese Studies was quite strong, with robust number of students and through fusing with Indian and Southeast Asian Studies we could save Indian Studies from being closed. In other universities, perhaps Indian Studies can help to save Japanese Studies.

## Jaws from the Deep

*Susanne Klien interviews Prof emer. Josef Kreiner*

I also believe that a close cooperation with the method-oriented disciplines such as history, social sciences etc. is really important. People considered me mad when after the closure of folklore studies, sociology and anthropology in Bonn I made a remark that it would have been better to close down Japanese Studies as we did not have a partner to talk to afterwards...it is very important for us to have a network with the methodological disciplines. But going back to the topic of the position of Japanese studies, we still have a great number of students interested in studying with us rather than a decrease.

### **Q: Which scholars have influenced you most?**

Well, Slawik – I will not elaborate here, but he was like a father to me. Then Oka Masao with his theory of different cultural complexes that entered and shaped Japan at different times. Oka was definitely a strong influence, and with regard to research on Okinawa, Hokama Shuzen, who was later at Hōsei and founded the Research Institute for Okinawan Culture there. It was he who showed me (more than Yanagita) that in Japanese culture two cultural systems coexist, the Okinawa tradition (*uchinanchū*) and the mainland tradition (*yamatonchū*). I was very impressed with that. As a personal friend, Sumiya Kazuhiko was very important, with whom I conducted comparative fieldwork in villages in Okinawa and in the Eifel area in Germany. I thought doing this kind of research, with one colleague being from within the culture and one from outside was very insightful and I learned this approach from Sumiya.

### **Q: What advice do you have for younger colleagues thinking about starting an academic career?**

Difficult question. I think mastering many European languages is very important and you also need this outside of academia. Otherwise there is no way of knowing what colleagues in France, Russia and other countries are working on. Jürgen Berndt and Bruno Lewin in Germany were the only ones who could speak Russian. In Russia we have hundreds of colleagues in Japanese Studies from Saint Petersburg to Moscow and Vladivostok. European languages should get more attention than previously in my opinion. For the native speakers of the English language the strong focus on English is actually a disadvantage in my view as they think that they know already everything; the French publish very much in their own language, and we have quite a lot of research output in the respective European languages as well. So we should be learning more languages both in Europe, but also in the United States so that they do not end up gazing at themselves too much.



## **Jaws from the Deep**

*Susanne Klien interviews Prof emer. Josef Kreiner*

**Thank you!**

*(The interview with Prof Kreiner was conducted by Susanne Klien at the JAWS conference 2015 in Istanbul.  
Pictures: Brigitte Steger, Istanbul)*

# TOMORROW'S RESEARCHERS TODAY

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## An Anthropological Study of Revitalization-Oriented Art Festivals in Rural Japan

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Since the 2000s, the problem of aging and depopulation in rural Japan has been met with a new measure: contemporary art festivals (*geijiyutusai*). While the notion of contemporary art (*gendai āto*) and *geijiyutusai* had taken root in urban Japan in much earlier times, the emergence of large-scale art festivals for regional revitalization in rural Japan, pioneered by Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale in 2000, could arguably be seen as an innovative breakthrough



Locals and volunteers harvesting bamboo poles in preparation for Wang's new artwork in 2019

from both the perspective of Japanese art history and social policies. Although there is no official figure available on how many of these art festivals exist in Japan nowadays, it is commonly estimated that there are approximately one hundred to three hundred cases across the country, many of them funded by prefectural and/or municipal governments – very often making them some of the most visible revitalization projects on the local level.

Amidst the current discussions among art historians and cultural policy scholars on the context and effects of art festivals in Japan, this anthropological research aims to provide a comprehensive ethnographic account on the social and artistic processes behind, as well as the

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meanings to and agency of, individuals. For this research project, the geographical area hosting the Setouchi Triennale – twelve islands and two port cities in Kagawa and Okayama prefecture – was my primary field site, while the vast region intervened by Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale in Niigata Prefecture was my secondary field site for supplementary data. I conducted preliminary fieldwork over the summers of 2017 and 2018; the formal fieldwork year began in September 2018 and continued through August 2019, allowing me to follow the preparation and development of the Setouchi Triennale 2019.



Light of Shodoshima (2016) on  
Shodoshima  
Artist: Wen-chih Wang

Does revitalization take place because of art festivals? If so, how does it relate to art? The research was first conceptualized by asking two sets of questions. To investigate the social process, I ask: How do different parties, including the bureaucrats of different levels, private sectors, universities, non-governmental organizations, and local inhabitants come into play behind the making of Japanese art festivals? How do art festivals as socioeconomic policies influence the everyday lives of local inhabitants on the one hand, and correspond to new trends of domestic and international tourism on the other? Meanwhile, to scrutinize the particular role of art in relation to the larger social sphere, I also ask: How does the agency of local residents, artists, physical objects, and environmental factors interact, resulting in particular artistic manifestations? How does the agency of artworks affect local residents and communities?

At this point, whereas my fieldwork has concluded, my on-going analysis suggests that the effects of large-scale art festivals in rural Japan are not even. The official narratives of success, usually based on the stories of incoming migrants prompted by the art festivals in several highlighted locales, very often overshadow the actual reality of other locales where neither significant economic gains nor demographic gains have been observed. Similarly, the claim of artworks being able to regenerate social relations often overlooks the exploitative nature of, if any, such relations. However, echoing many of my key informants on the local level, I would point out that the potentials and affective nature of art, which can hardly be calculated quantitatively, do arguably shed a positive light on what art festivals mean to individual participants, and to revitalization in intangible and contentious ways.

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I would appreciate any comments or suggestions via email. Thank you.



Sora-Ami: Knitting the Sky (2016) on Shamijima  
Artist: Yasuaki Igarashi



Locals and volunteers knitting for Igarashi's Sora-Ami in 2019

# RESEARCH REPORTS

## A Pragmatic and Cultural Semiotic Approach to Japanese Advertising Discourse

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My research project is concerned with the pragmatics and cultural semiotics of Japanese advertising discourse constructed around the concept *kawaii*. Understanding cultural keywords grants permission to cultural insights of society and moreover, the results of discourse analysis with a focus on affect words provide the necessity to discover existing patterns in discourse construction and thus, to achieve a more comprehensive approach to language and cultural differences. In the case of Japan, *kawaii*, an adjective standing for “cute”, “adorable”, “vulnerable”, “innocent” has rapidly extended its reach by becoming overwhelmingly present in various shapes and forms in everyday life. The evolution of *kawaii* as a social and cultural artefact has contributed greatly to the changes in discourse construction, therefore a thorough analysis of this concept is of significant importance especially in the context of globalization. I have chosen this concept because I believe it has a significant place in Japanese culture and world view and by analyzing its manifestations in advertisements, cultural specifics can be easily understood. If advertisements can be perceived as cultural artefacts through which norms and values reflect, an analysis of Japanese advertisements will reveal the fundamental structures of the society.

My first goal is to define and to analyze the particularities of this concept and its impact on Japanese culture and society from a diachronic perspective in order to reveal its evolution and implications. I have started by going through all relevant sources at hand – Kinsella (1995), Avella



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(2004), Koma (2013), Yano (2013), Marcus et.al (2017) and I am in continuous search for new bibliography because my aim is to present a detailed report on kawaii from various perspectives. I think the study of advertising is an interdisciplinary one, thus it implies an approach from different angles. Advertising discourse has the capacity to enhance stereotypes by being a vehicle for transmitting ideologies, thus in the case of Japanese advertising discourse construction, we believe that kawaii works as an indispensable tool for delivering powerful messages by appealing to emotions, especially in the globalized world, highly alienated. The quality of being “cute”, “adorable”, “lovable” is culturally determined and strongly related to human primary emotions, therefore advertising discourse construction operates with symbols that have the capacity to trigger emotions with minimum effort.



After exploring some historical and sociocultural aspects, I analyzed this concept from a pragmatic and semiotic perspective using a corpus of commercial and non-commercial Japanese advertisements. My first case study is related to Shiseidō beauty product print advertisements and the second to public service print advertisements. Even though the target audience differs

considerably, considering that the main purpose of an advertisement is to persuade the receiver (Cook, 1992, 2001) these two types can be analyzed by comparing the functions and role of kawaii in discourse construction. My research is based on a corpus of contemporary advertisements collected

on-line and it follows the analysis model proposed by Cook (1992, 2001) based on Peirce's (1931-58) triadic model of signs. The need for better explaining and exemplifying the general cultural specific tendencies in a society led me to Hofstede's (1980, 2003, 2010) national culture dimensions. Because of their practical use the six dimensions: power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity vs. femininity, long-term orientation vs. short-term orientation, indulgence vs. restraint are very important considering the interdisciplinary nature of my research which focuses not only on discourse analysis (including context) but on the cultural background too.

In other words, applying Hofstede's theory along with Peirce's semiotics to Japanese advertisements helps in conducting a more complex and detailed analysis of the phenomenon.



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Wilson and Sperber's Relevance Theory (1986, 1995) is useful in revealing how language works in persuading the receiver. My analysis is focused on Japanese advertising discourse construction by focusing on the factors that contribute to the creation of global meaning and also that; explain the mechanism through which specific symbols trigger certain ideas in concordance with context, timeframe and culture.

I believe that these three main perspectives provide the necessary to conduct a thorough analysis of Japanese advertising discourse construction considering culture, context and persuasion, the primary goal of any advertisement. The results obtained until now show the major influence of kawaii in both commercial and non-commercial print advertisements starting from word use and aesthetics to creating a global message based on overwhelming cuteness which perpetuates the stereotype of contemporary Japanese culture labeled as kawaii. Also, the use of kawaii signs in both types of advertisements appears to be an indispensable persuasion tool in the construction of Japanese advertising discourse.

I would be very grateful if this report would be regarded as an opportunity of getting in touch with researchers who share the same interest or similar ones, therefore please feel free to contact me for a fruitful collaboration.

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# The Social Invisibility of Radiation after Fukushima

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In 2016-2017, I carried out fifteen months of ethnographic fieldwork in Japan with the populations displaced by the Fukushima disaster. In particular, I collaborated as a volunteer with NGOs that have organized recreative activities and health screenings for the nuclear evacuees living in temporary housing facilities in western Japan.<sup>[1]</sup> I worked mainly with vulnerable groups, namely single mothers with young children, the elderly, and the disabled. For this project, I investigated how the Fukushima evacuees were coping with different kinds of risk. These included not only the risk of radiation, but also economic risk, job insecurity, loss of homeland, identity crisis, state abandonment, and discrimination due to widespread radiation stigma. Consequently, I scrutinized how my collaborators made their choices amongst the many risks they were facing, in response to the “toxic anxiety” (Gusterson, 2011, p.4) that was released by Fukushima. I carried out more than two hundred structured and semi-structured interviews with the nuclear evacuees, and I attended for a year the Fukushima trials<sup>[2]</sup> held in a city of western Japan.



I wrote my doctoral thesis as an ethnographic study on the modes of governance and administration of the politics of risk in the post-Fukushima context, with a particular focus on the survivors' intimate narratives of fear and affection as opposed to the official discourses on safety and risk containment. I investigated how people conceive and manage risk in a post-nuclear disaster environment, where risks are invisible and hazards may not even take effect within the lifespans of those affected, but instead

during those of their children (Beck, 1992, p. 27). In fact, in the case of manufactured risk such as nuclear disasters, it remains unclear what the long-term consequences are (Giddens, 2000, p.46). The real impact of the Fukushima disaster on public health will take decades to unfold and will be difficult to measure due to uncertainty about the extent of the contamination, and to challenges of mapping its bio-accumulation. As a result, in post-nuclear disaster Japan, risk management shifted *away from* the Japanese state and the nuclear industry *to* the affected populations who had to self-determine where to draw the line between safe and unsafe.

In Japan, the disaster has induced grassroots citizen science and activism among local residents, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Such responses have included radiation monitoring, independent laboratories, self-made radiation maps, and participation in demonstrations and public trials. The forms of resistance which emerged from these movements might not look like revolutions, and yet have the potential to collectively gain public attention and move towards concessions and recognitions from the authorities. Such forms of actions have been defined with different terms as “infrapolitics” (Scott, 1990), “hidden resistance” (Scott 2008), “social non-movements” (Bayat, 2013), and “informal life politics” (Morris-Suzuki, 2014). In particular Kimura (2016, p.156), referring to such processes in post-nuclear disaster Japan, uses the terms “invisible politics” to define the actions of citizen scientists which have the potential of improving people’s livelihood although they may not seem explicitly political. My monograph added to this literature and attested how the efforts of the displaced survivors to gain state protection have collided with bureaucratic discourses invested in technical strategies to limit intervention.



In relation to the Chernobyl disaster, Kuchinskaya (2014, p.161) points out that public knowledge about risks and protection standards cannot constantly improve if the public visibility of risk depends “on whose voices can be heard and which groups have what kinds of institutional and infrastructural support”. The unequal politics of risk that have emerged also after Fukushima have shown how geopolitical, economic, and local interests were prioritized over the collection of extensive empirical data and scientific analysis. Both Chernobyl and Fukushima have shown the intensely political nature of science, and the social implications of the political and economic containments of a large-scale technological disaster. Chernobyl has demonstrated that absent lifetime studies of victims of nuclear catastrophes leave the public incapable to handle future crisis (Petryna, 2013, p. xxi). Likewise, nowadays also the victims of 3.11 risk to remain in a state of permanent vulnerability.

In my thesis, I documented the resilience of the survivors in their struggles for being heard. My dissertation provides an ethnographic account of how some of the survivors have engendered a reconfiguration of their relationship to state authority and have become food activists, anti-nuclear protesters, and plaintiffs in the Fukushima public trials. I highlight how and why protesting women have often been targeted as ‘emotional subjects’ whose actions were due to a ‘deficient scientific knowledge’, and why such statement has not been contested in the public discourse, as women’s political opinions are still seen as a “private luxury” in Japan (LeBlanc, 1999, p.70). Throughout my monograph, I explain that protesting women – in an attempt to achieve a form of citizenship which does not deny their embodied experiences – presented themselves as ‘angry mothers from Fukushima’ and yet, by doing so, they involuntarily contributed to reinforce pre-existing gendered hierarchies.



Most importantly, through the ethnographic material that I analyze in my thesis, I highlight the insidious nature of the safety discourse promulgated by the authorities, which has minimized public concerns over contamination and produced the social invisibility of radiation. Notably, such discourse has worked not always from above, but very often from within civil society in Japan – as concerns about radiation were avoided and silenced particularly by local communities in Fukushima. Nevertheless, despite being denied access to the public sphere and being often silenced by their own communities, concerned individuals have decided to endure in their survival strategies for themselves and future generations. In particular, the survivors who have engaged in the

Fukushima trials have resisted such discourses, as rational agents willing to challenge the authorities. The narratives that I collected in my thesis ultimately suggest that what is most needed in post-nuclear disaster Japan is a dialogue between the survivors and the authorities, and joint policy-making to protect the Fukushima evacuees, and future victims of natural and techno-scientific disasters.

*This article is based on my doctoral research project. I completed my PhD in Social/Legal Anthropology at University College London in March 2019. I am indebted to the British Arts and Humanities Research Council's (AHRC) scheme 'London Arts and Humanities Partnership' (LAHP), which has fully funded my research. Since May 2019, I have been working as a full-time postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Edinburgh Medical School || USHER Institute || Centre for Biomedicine, Self and Society. Here I am involved in a new research project funded by Wellcome Trust, for which I investigate the possibilities and challenges of using AI technologies and robotics in health and social care. This study melds my interests in risk, technology, ethics, health, and human rights. Finally, I am currently turning my doctoral dissertation into a book for*

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*publication, and I would be delighted to receive your comments, critics or suggestions. Please, get in touch also if you are interested in collaborating with me on research projects/panels on risk, technology, ethics, humanitarian assistance, AI and health. Thanks.*

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<sup>[1]</sup> However, my experience of collaborating with Japanese NGOs and volunteering for the victims of 3.11 predates my doctoral fieldwork. Since April 2011 I have worked as an interpreter, translator and museum guide in charity events held in Italy and France for the 3.11 victims. Moreover, since 2013 I have joined as a volunteer three Japanese NGOs which have organized regenerative spring/summer camps for children (aged seven to twelve) living in the most contaminated areas of Fukushima. I spent six months over the past six years volunteering in these camps for Fukushima children. I would suggest that my identity as a volunteer who has engaged in activities for the survivors of 3.11 in the past has helped me to access my doctoral project's participants from the early stages of my fieldwork in Japan.

<sup>[2]</sup> These cases have revolved around whether the government and TEPCO, both of whom are responsible for disaster prevention measures, could have foreseen the scale of the tsunami and subsequent triple meltdown in Fukushima. Since 2011, over 12,000 Fukushima survivors have filed 30 cases in different regions against the government and TEPCO. The plaintiffs in this court cases are requesting: the right to evacuate from the contaminated areas where radiation levels are above 1mSv/year; to clarify both TEPCO and the Japanese government's liability for not preventing the nuclear disaster; adequate compensation for losses, and physical and psychological damages; medical security for pregnant women, young children, the elderly and the disabled; regular check-ups of absorbed radiation dose in the population; housing support and employment measures to help the survivors rebuild their livelihoods after the triple disaster.

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In fact, only a relatively small percentage of those who experienced significant loss from the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear catastrophe in northeastern Japan have received compensation (Feldman, 2015, p.134).

# The Analyzation of the Language Revitalisation Techniques on the Ryūkyū Islands from a Multidisciplinary Perspective

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I started my research in 2011, during a yearlong scholarship at Josai Kokusai University (Tōgane, Chiba). I was examining the language use and code switch of university students of Okinawan origin, and the language shift of the younger generations toward standard Japanese, especially if they were settled outside the Ryūkyū Islands. I found that the scale of the language shift is drastic and almost completed among young adults, making the Ryūkyū languages vulnerable to slip into language death. During the following years I gradually switched my focus to the endangerment of the Ryūkyūan languages and their revitalisation, and currently I am working on an analytic framework to evaluate the ongoing language revitalisation activities on the Ryūkyūan islands.

There are several indigenous language varieties on the Ryūkyū Island, however none of them have been acknowledged by the Japanese government, even though they are not intelligible for Japanese speakers, and most of the language community (active and passive speakers) considers them as languages. There are different classifications for the language varieties, but there is a general agreement that the local languages together with the Japanese language make up the Japonic language family. They have two sub-branches of Northern and Southern Ryūkyūan languages. I follow the UNESCO (2017) classification of six independent languages in use on the islands and these are: Amamai, Kunigami, Okinawan, Miyakō Yaeyaman and Yonaguni languages.

UNESCO (2017) declared all the Ryūkyūan languages endangered on different levels. According to the GIDS<sup>[1]</sup> scale of Fishman (1991, pp. 87-109) they reach up to level 7: language owners are socially integrated and ethnolinguistically active, but beyond child-bearing age. Although we do not have any statistics about the number of the active speakers, passive language owners or



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the level of the language use, we can estimate the altogether number of the language owners does not reach 1,5 million (Pellard and Shimoji, 2010, p.10).

Language death is a natural phenomenon; however, it is not inevitable. If the community decides to save their language, the language shift can be reserved even if there are no language owners left, as long as the language variety in question has been documented. We call this conscious reverse language shift *language revitalisation* or *language revival* (Gál, 2009). There are several successful examples of reverse language shift of endangered languages, such as modern Hebrew, Maori or Gaeilge (Irish Gaelic). In all cases the language community itself decided to save their languages as part of a wider cultural reclamation movement where the language was one of the key elements of the cultural identity of the communities in question.

There is an ongoing cultural awakening or reclamation on the Ryūkyū Island as well, which also created a need to the revival of the local languages. Heinrich (2005, 2011, 2012, 2015) was among the first to describe the language endangerment, documentation and revival activities on the islands. Following his work, and based on my own research, I tried to collect and monitor the language revitalisation activities on the Ryūkyū Islands from 2011. I conducted a self-founded fieldwork in 2016 to observe the different revitalisation programs in action and the language use and attitude of the participants and of the passive speakers. I interviewed activists, teachers and language owners about the role of the indigenous languages in the Ryūkyūan cultural community and the attitude towards the different varieties.

In my doctoral thesis, I try to create a frame for the analyses of the language revitalisation activities, based on the success of the language transmission and the incorporation of language use in to the daily life of the linguistic community following methods and approaches of sociolinguistics, anthropological linguistics, and linguistic anthropology. In my dissertation I focus only on the language transmission techniques, since I already introduced the revitalisation movement on a macro level according to Zuckermann's Diamond model in my master thesis. I intend to categorise the ongoing language transmission programs following Tsunoda (2006), who described the techniques of different language revival programs. Although, there will be some differences, since the techniques – whether they are conscious choice of the activists or spontaneous language transmissions – have to be shaped to the socio-political environment of the language community.

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Generally speaking, my goal is to give a detailed and (as much as possible) neutral picture of the language reclamation process on the islands, keeping in mind and respect the fact, that the language revitalisation is the choice of the community, and it depends entirely on the decision and will of the upcoming generations.

Your comments or suggestions regarding my research would be more than appreciated. I also hope that this report can be a good opportunity to get in touch with JAWS members with similar interests as well as to discuss possible future projects.

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[1] Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale: 0 =no trace of vulnerability, 8= the only language owners are isolated old speakers (language deat

# Inside a Japanese Sharehouse: Dreams and Realities

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At this year's annual meeting, I presented a paper entitled 'Rethinking community?: alternative housing as a response to alienation in contemporary Japan' adapted from the final chapter of my doctoral thesis. The paper emerged out of the apparent gap between the rhetorical uses of 'community' in contemporary sharehouse marketing discourses and the exclusivity I observed during fieldwork, specifically with regard to renting rooms to older Japanese. In the paper I presented (and at greater length and detail in the chapter from which it is excerpted), I discussed the way 'community' and related tropes like



Facade of the sharehouse, "Cheznew"

*kizuna* (human bonds) and *mura shakai* (village society) become marketing slogans aimed at an audience of young consumers suffering the anxiety of literal and physical displacement.

Initially, I was struck by the way marketing literature re-worked these evocative metaphors for rootedness and stability into a discursive medium that emphasizes individual freedom, mobility, and – perhaps above all – emancipation from traditional social roles, in a bid to attract young unmarried residents. Among the most frequently appearing tropes is *kizuna* which, as Anne Allison tidily puts it, 'became the new buzzword [following the 3/11 disaster]: belonging to one another, to Japan, to a homeland transformed by mud and radiation. References to connectedness (*tsunagari*) and bonds (*kizuna*) gushed everywhere...' (2013, p.198). (Indeed, Pilvi

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Posio and Giulia Cavicchioli De Togni also presented papers, both of which I thoroughly enjoyed, on the topic at this year's meeting).

I discussed the way that the *kizuna* invoked in sharehouse marketing literature is conspicuously limited in its meaning: *kizuna* implies the benefits of being supported, without the obligation of supporting others. In a similar way, the references to *mura shakai* are metaphorical, and reference 20<sup>th</sup> century economic stability and widespread middle-classness, rather than the pre-modern agrarian village. References to the sharehouse as a return to village-like social belonging are qualified as '*neo-mura shakai*' or '*21 seiki mura shakai*', to indicate its compatibility with contemporary social and economic conditions – as temporary, provisional, and elective.



Living room, one of the shared spaces in the house

Thus, although sharehouse marketers often advance the idea that wide-scale adoption of sharehouse living will reap social benefits for a changing Japan (Kubota 2009; Miura 2011, 2014), in practice, membership is limited to the young and, in many cases (as when landlords enforce an age limit) only while they remain young. The largest and fastest-growing group of single-person households is older women (MHLW 2018), a vulnerable population who, in theory, would benefit most from participating in shared housing (though, as our gracious host has demonstrated in her work [Platz 2011], older Japanese remain ambivalent about shared housing). In any case, due to its inbuilt exclusivity, the sharehouse's promise of 'social benefits for Japan's future' is, at best, overstated.<sup>[1]</sup> The 'community' promised by the sharehouse is characterised by the same exclusionary logic as earlier forms based on employment and/or local residence, merely with different criteria for membership and anticipated length of tenure. It reinforces the anthropological truism that there can be no 'us' without 'not-us'.

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'Community' is one among the themes of continuity and change in my doctoral research, which will join the Routledge JAWS series in 2020. The book will focus on the sharehouse as a site of conflict and negotiation between housemates, but also between independence and a need for social belonging; cosmopolitanism and 'Japaneseness'; innovation and embedded cultural habits; aspirations and realities.

The book is based on intensive fieldwork in a mixed-sex sharehouse in Osaka Prefecture. As it happened, I was one of the first tenants to move into the 28-room house. By virtue of this unexpected circumstance, I was able to observe housemates' initial resistance to, and eventual demand for, clear protocols and social roles within the house. Throughout data collection and analysis, I compared my housemates' practices against their own life narratives and against popular and scholarly discourses about sharehouses. The discrepancies between these discourses and observed practices are at the core of this research.

One central theme, or cluster of themes, concerns the changing role of young women in late Heisei Japan. I was surprised that the majority of housemates were young women, most working in the culture industries; on further analysis, as I argue in the book, sharehouse marketing targets these young women on the basis that the sharehouse, unlike the traditional workplace or family home, provides a testing ground for interpersonal skills and independence. As a result, women are overrepresented in sharehouse residence nationwide by approximately two to one (Hitsuji, 2013). Several chapters consider the various implications of this fact, especially with regard to the way male and female housemates retain, reject, or revise traditional gender and domestic norms. In broad terms, I found while that popular discourses surrounding the sharehouse tend to emphasize themes of individual emancipation and social experimentation, in practice, housemates inevitably imported familiar conventions into this space. Change is improvised, contested, and incremental.



Kitchen, another shared space

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<sup>[1]</sup> In fact, the choice of the katakanised 'sharehouse' was intentional, to differentiate the sharehouse from the more intensive sharing and age-inclusivity of *kōkyō jūtaku* or 'collective housing', based on Scandinavian models for social housing, advocated by architects like Koyabe Ikuko since the late 1990s [Koyabe 1997, 2012; Koyabe et. al. (eds.), 1997].



# The Narrow Streets behind the Doors of Perception: Everyday Urban Spaces Studied through Multisensory Perception and Fragmented Discourses

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The lingering scent of food served in small restaurants, the clattering sounds of commuter trains running along the tracks accompanied by a slight shaking of the uneven road – these and many more sensations are transmitted via streets and public spaces, as mode of mediation (Galloway, 2012, p. 54). The undetermined shared spaces enable movement in all directions and serve as canvas on which the everyday urban life is painted. Even though this might sound idyllic, the local public sphere created by streets is not limited to harmony and sympathy but it is also open to conflict, disturbance and unintended contact.



My project aims to shed light on the perception and construction of urban spaces and on how this process is enacted in Japan. The following questions stand at the centre: How does public space as mode of mediation frame perception and communication? And how do perception and communication construct public space in return?

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These questions are answered by applying a mixed methodology employing multisensory participant observation (Pink, 2009), interviews, sense walks (Henshaw, 2014) and discourse analysis of two urban Tokyo neighbourhoods (Kitazawa and Matsubara, Setagaya-ward). In both areas, city planning projects as well as the modification of private railway tracks triggered discussions about how existing and new public spaces should be used, and who is entitled to advocate for them. Inhabitants, shopkeepers, activists and consumers share the streets, but perceive the space from different angles and participate in divergent but overlapping discourses.

Recent studies regarding urban localities in Japan helped to firmly situate my own research and narrow it down. Zukin, Kasinitz and Chen (2016) analysed shopping streets around the globe in a comparative study to better understand the mechanism of local shopping streets and their effects. The authors elaborated systematic connections between macroeconomics, micro level society, and communities. Disciplinary connected, but entirely focused on Japan, Miura (2016) demonstrated the micro dynamics of urban communities in contemporary Tokyo. In his empirical study he attempts to capture what (symbiotically) 'living together' means in a post-industrial society. In the same vein, but from an urban planner's perspective, Aiba examined community participation in urban planning and urban change affecting communities (Fukazawa et al., 2000; Aiba and Satoh, 2003). Broadly based on these publications and the state of research, I attempt to connect spatial and social phenomena within an urban setting that has developed into an open concept of perception and communication. But, as warned by colleagues with good intentions, such an open approach also manifests itself in a multifaceted set of data that evades simple analyses. The urban mess, the disorderly situation in the streets, where concurrent events, constant flux and rich subtext dependency are the ordinary, emerges therefore as an important part of my dissertation.

My preliminary findings provide clear empiric evidence for the complexity of human interaction and information exchange on a micro level. The findings also urge me to not only describe these multifaceted phenomena, but also to discuss the different implications of information sharing through 'space as mode of mediation' – information perceived at location – and 'spatial media' – georeferenced information (digital or print) about a specific location (cf. Leszczynski, 2015) .

Overall, the modern (Japanese) city has been subject to academic inquiry for decades (Galloway et al., 2017; Tsukamoto and Almazán, 2006; Lützel, 2008), but questions pertaining to its

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complex systems of culture, society and space still prevail. To obtain a better understanding of these complex urban systems, multiple perspectives and a variety of methods from the social sciences are necessary. In this vein, my project approaches urban spaces from different disciplines (urban studies, city planning, anthropology), methods and angles, but through the common denominator of everyday street life in western Tokyo in order to discuss urban spaces in Japan outside (or in between) the established boxes of academic traditions.

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# The Japanese Art of Listening: An Ethnographic Investigation into the Role of the Listener

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What makes a good listener? What does it mean to be a good listener in contemporary Japanese society? My current ethnographic project investigates the art of listening in hostesses (escorts or contemporary *geisha*) and listening volunteers in Japan, in addition to analysing self-help literature on listening.

In order to answer those research questions, I became a hostess and listening volunteer. Hostesses are famous for being good listeners and listening volunteers are trained to acquire the skill called 'active listening'. I carried out participant observation in these two very different groups in Tokyo for four months (from January to April 2018). I also had formal/informal interviews with other occupational listeners, including hosts, bartenders, café owners, priests, fortune-tellers, hairdressers, nail artists, hotline volunteers and a teacher. Furthermore, I analysed self-help literature and training courses on listening to compare these teachings and how listeners behave in reality.



Ginza club area at night

At night clubs in Ginza, Tokyo, hostesses use listening as a survival skill. This enables them to stay in subordinate positions and helps male customers to dominate a conversation as speakers. For example, one type of successful interaction is known as '*moriagaru*' (merry, jolly and enlivened) conversation. In order to have this type of conversation, hostesses tend to perform as

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a listener, skilfully deploying various reactions and witty, short comments. From the hostesses' perspective, listening is a means to contribute to a *moriagaru* conversation. In the broad sense, hostesses' listening is a 'weapon of the weak' (Scott 1985), gaining customers' favour. However, customers also sometimes say that they are themselves responsible for *moriagaru* conversations by speaking and criticise hostesses for just listening. Customers and hostesses have different understandings of their roles in the conversation.

Their recognitions and behaviour intensify the gendered division of labour in interactions (Zimmerman and West 1975; Fishman 1980). Alison's (1994) research on hostess clubs reveals that customers enjoy flirting, being flirted with, and experiencing group male-bonding, all of which reinforces their gender identities. From the perspective of micro-conversations, even a small, everyday conversation is structured to strengthen masculinity and femininity in a hostess club.



Inside Club Mizuno where I worked (2018)

On the other hand, listening volunteers, who converse with elderly people, use listening as a tool for reaching out, contributing to healthy and less lonely lives. However, they sometimes fall short in conversation, not realising that their listening tends to force interlocutors to stay in a helper (authority) – helpee (subordinate) dynamic. Their dedicated listening is a 'gift' with authoritative helper power. As Marcel Mauss (2002; first published in 1925) argues, a given gift obligates the receiver to reciprocate. If the receiver fails, it causes her/him to be placed in a subordinate position. In addition to a helper-helpee relation and the issue of 'gift', a junior (volunteer) – senior (client) power balance exists too. Clients are often elderly people with dignity while volunteers have pride in being skilful listeners. Under these complex power circumstances, volunteers and clients negotiate their relationships in subtle ways. For instance, some volunteers



Bookstore in Tokyo. Upper image: self-help literature on speaking. Lower image: self-help books on listening. Self-help guides on speaking are three to five times



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attempt to reduce their helper power by using polite language, showing a learner attitude, having humble posture, performing like a friend or clumsy person, receiving kindness from clients and enjoying the interaction. Therefore, their type of listening can be a mask for maintaining silent authority, as ultimately they are helpers. The clients' behaviour in return also influences the balance of power; actions such as entertaining volunteers, preparing topics or materials to talk about, lecturing volunteers or keeping up a conversation. Although an asymmetric listener-speaker structure is maintained, reciprocal behaviour can lead to a comfortable balance between them.

Turning now to self-help literature and training courses on listening, authors and coaches teach that in non-specific contexts, the ideal listener is one who is attentive, expressive and empathetic. In other words, someone attentively listens to a speaker by showing bodily and verbal expressions. He/she also accepts and understands what is said as a fact for the speaker, which is called empathetic listening. Whereas, in detailed examples, such as in a senior-junior worker relationship or a parent-child relationship, the ideal listener seems to be advised to use two different types of listening: therapeutic and zealous. Therapeutic listening has the characteristics of being caring and of supporting a speaker's issue. The other type of listening, which I name 'zealous listening', is characterised by actively asking questions, strategically articulating responses and entertaining replies, and performing as an aspiring learner. These two listening styles tend to be recommended for distinct groups of people: therapeutic listening for people in authoritative positions and zealous listening for subordinates. The different target groups reveal the importance of sensing a hierarchy in interactions. I found that experienced hostesses and competent listening volunteers flexibly use both therapeutic and zealous listening.

The other significant point of self-help guides is that authors praise women as being good listeners as well as referring to the fact that subordinate people tended to be responsible for the role of listening in Japan. The authors recognise the feminine and inferior image of listening. But they promote listening as a proactive, functional and even masculine skill nowadays, recommending it not only for subordinate members but also for people in power. Listening is now recognised as a passive power. So does this mean that women, who are said to be good listeners, eventually get power these days by employing their listening skills? As we saw in the cases of hostesses and listening volunteers, it seems that listening tends to intensify listeners' original positions.

Our society neglects listening. People wish to be competent speakers but not listeners. Reflecting on this reality, little attention has been paid to listeners in research, despite their crucial role. In

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my work, listeners' perspectives reveal subtle mechanisms of human interaction and how – 'power' such as hierarchy and gender – influences communication. My research also aims to contribute to the study of emotional labour in contemporary Japan.

I would appreciate comments or advice via e-mail. Thank you.

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# “Kimochi ga wakaranai” Recovery Standing in the Way of Recovery in Tohoku

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Between 2015 and 2016, I spent 13-months traveling up and down the coastline of Miyagi, talking to people in multiple locations to gauge their experiences of the recovery following the Triple Disaster of 3/11 and the imaginations and ideas they held for the future. I was carrying out the ethnography for my doctoral dissertation that focuses on the long-term post-disaster community development. While the diversity of experiences was great and people presented both enthusiasm and frustration toward the recovery, there was one utterance that I heard more than any other: *kimochi ga wakaranai*, ‘they don’t understand how we feel’, referring to the authorities involved in the recovery on multiple levels of government. Why were so many peoples across the Sanriku Coast, living in multiple communities and under multiple municipal authorities, articulating their experiences of the recovery in the same way? This question eventually rose as the central puzzle of my thesis.

To deal with the diversity of the recovering region, the Japanese Government opted for a “community-focused” recovery by placing the affected municipalities as “the main administrative actors” of the recovery process (Reconstruction Headquarters 2011, pp.1-10). The decision is in line with the global ‘best practice’ for post-disaster recovery, with ‘community-based approaches’ today embraced and promoted by international organizations, national governments and NGOs alike. According to the principles of community-based recovery, the closer to the community the recovery takes place, the better it will suit the local context and enable participation of the affected populations, thus leading to more resilient outcomes at a faster recovery (Shaw and Goda, 2004; Aldrich, 2012). The Government and municipalities in Japan have echoed this message (Town of Onagawa 2011, Town of Minamisanriku 2011). In efforts to “listen to the people” municipalities have recruited affected populations to sit in *machizukuri* councils, attend meetings, fill surveys

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and participate in community planning workshops. In addition to this, thousands of grassroots businesses and projects have been set up by the residents themselves, creating for a generally excited and buzzing atmosphere in these communities. However, despite these efforts to induce a community-based recovery, I remained puzzled; what made people participate in the recovery while at the same time so strongly identifying with the narrative of disempowerment and voicelessness of *kimochi ga wakaranai*?

This question began to unravel after a meeting I had with a long-term collaborator in Tohoku, who one day during the course of our conversation said: “*once this recovery is over, we can finally start to rebuild our communities*”. He presented me with a view of a sequential recovery that I had already noticed in the characterizations of other people I had spoken with, and further reflected in my field diary before. The utterance indicated that people were building two stories about the recovery that were operating simultaneously. In my thesis I argue that this apparent duality of the recovery can be explored through Berlant’s (2011) concept of ‘cruel optimism’, where the desired goal becomes an obstacle to the achievement of that goal. For Tohoku’s affected populations, recovery was standing in the way of recovery, where ‘rebuilding our communities’ could not take place before the ‘recovery’ was over.

As humans we like to imagine our lives as having a clear trajectory, like a plot of a story, and once we recognize the arc of that story, we can identify our authorship within (Berlant, 2011). The sense of voicelessness, articulated through *kimochi ga wakaranai*, emerged when people stood at the intersection of the two stories and recognized their two differing trajectories: one built upon the communal experience of the disaster and the prolonged recovery and their imagination of the future that emerged as a direct consequence of those experiences and desires (what can be), and the other, where they could not go back, nor move forward, that emerged from the visions for revitalization, budgetary constraints, legal boundaries and slowness of the recovery, that set limits to what was possible (what is).

By shifting my analysis into the narrative framework, I was able to understand how people were constructing and re-enforcing these plot lines in their interactions with me. In the “what can be” - narrative, the present condition, past experiences and visions of the future interconnected into a practical trajectory, seamlessly weaving the disaster as part of their communal history. For the affected populations, ‘recovery’ was an intimate and pervasive experience of *life* itself, where the disaster and the recovery had become part of the arc of their personal and communal histories, upon which the future would be built. In the “what is” -narrative however, people existed in a

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liminal state where the past no longer existed and the future was not yet. This narrative was driven by perseverance (*gaman*), so that the “what can be” storyline could be realized afterwards. The recovery in this frame was perceived as an abnormal phase that needed to be overcome, a crinkle in the personal and communal history, and a technical *process* driven by expertise, fiscal regulations, and the government; and one that the communities had little access to, despite the “community-focused” recovery.

When the disaster struck the region in 2011, the Government saw recovery as the solution to the long-term woes of rural Tohoku. The region has for a long-time existed in an extractive relationship with urban metropolitan Japan that has led to long-term social, economic, and demographic decline that Japanese Studies scholars have explored for decades (Matanle and Rausch, 2011; Kelly, 2012). Japan’s rural regions have been subjected to national policies of municipal mergers and fiscal devolution, countless localized revitalization initiatives, designed to breathe life into the regions and counter the decline and increase their self-determination and self-responsibility (Jacobs, 2011; Oguma, 2013). However, often they have left cash-strapped rural municipalities with few options but to go through with the reforms in exchange for immediate monetary returns (Oguma, 2013; Hirano, 2013). The official recovery in Tohoku has become couched in this familiar language and counter-narrative for decline, speaking of growth, prosperity, and revitalization, against the long-term anxieties of the decline in the region, offering hope for the residents that they could finally be a turning a corner in their persistent condition of slow death.

Post-disaster recovery and reconstruction needs to be seen as part of this longer historical trend of national socio-political engineering and self-responsibilization that Japan’s rural regions have been subjected to through the numerous nationally driven policies for decades (Love, 2013). The community-based approach in this context provides a powerful road map for advancing the message of self-responsibilization and local decision-making power. In my thesis I conclude that the “community-focused” approach to recovery has been instrumental in developing the dual structure of people’s experiences of the recovery, resulting in ‘cruel optimism’, by placing local residents and municipalities as the authors of their own destinies (and importantly, responsible for the failures), without providing them the power to produce those destinies. It was the community-based *process* of recovery that was standing in the way of the re-establishment of *life* and ‘rebuilding our communities’, leading to a sequential understanding of the recovery, and the overall sense of voicelessness among the affected populations.

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Through my research it became clear that community-based approaches are falling short from their promoted and projected goals, leaving people feeling dissatisfied and voiceless in a process that is supposed to elevate and empower them. Community-based approaches been integrated as the core approach to post-disaster recovery and disaster mitigation (UNDRR, 2015), but despite their widespread utilization, outcomes of community-based programs remain consistently inconsistent (Davidson et. al., 2007). The contribution my research aims to make in the field of post-disaster recovery is to show that it is not the implementation of the ‘best practice’ but the ‘best practice’ itself that was the source of people’s disempowerment. Given the wide-spread utilisation of community-based approaches in a number of fields, such as education, well-being and mental health to social interventions, it is vital that we approach these processes critically in order to understand their full impact.

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