JAWS

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Cover photo:「Push-Pulling the Danjiri」

Residents of Shirogaki-cho in Kadoma-shi, Osaka push and pull a large wooden cart called a danjiri through the district's streets as a part of the annual Fall Festival (October) and Kadoma-shi 60th Anniversary Culture Festival (November) in 2023. Navigating the danjiri is hard work, because the cart is heavy and awkward to steer through the narrow and winding streets. Shirogaki-cho's danjiri, parts of which were made in the Edo period, is over 7 meters long, 4 meters high at its tallest point and weighs over 3.2 tons. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, participation by neighbors in these events has been decreasing over the years because of demographic changes: Japan's aging society, the falling birthrate, and gentrification as traditional homes are torn down and replaced with apartments making the area into a bed-town of strangers. But a core of diehard and friendly residents take part every year to parade the danjiri with the temporarily installed deity from the local shrine throughout the parish to bestow its blessings to the neighbors, encourage cooperation, and promote continued good community relations. I have been photographing, researching, and pushing in the fall festival for over 15 years.

Calligraphy courtesy of Fukaya.

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FROM THE JAWS OFFICERS

FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Ofra Goldstein-Gidoni

I am pleased to write this letter for the 2023 Edition of the JAWS Newsletter. Three years have passed since the last newsletter, and I am delighted to share a rich and varied newsletter in its refreshed layout as integrated on the JAWS website. I would like to deeply thank Jennifer McGuire and Christopher Tso, the newsletter/website editorial team, who worked hard – with the help of NomadIT - to achieve the results that are now in front of you.

Since our last Newsletter, we have had the chance to meet twice. We had our first exhilarating reunion in-person after the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Sant Cugat del Vallès in July 2022. The conference was fantastically organized by Blai Guarné and his team. We remain very grateful to Blai for his marvelous work. We had three full days of fascinating papers related to the conference theme “Research in Japan in the Covid-19 and post Covid-19 era.” As always, we also had other fascinating general themes to hear about and discuss, including further research related to the aftermath of the 3/11 disaster as well papers on media, technology, history, gender and family and more. The turnover for the meeting was great and we had 14 sessions.

The most recent JAWS meeting (as part of a general EAJS meeting) took place at the University of Ghent. Susanne Klien and Florian Purkarthofer (Sociology and Anthropology) and Jennifer Coates and Jamie Coates (Media Studies) organized a range of most exciting sessions, and we were all very happy to meet for informal meetings including a business meeting and a great dinner.

As informed in our Business meeting in Ghent, the next JAWS Meeting will take place in spring 2025 – more specifically on April 5-7 in Kobe, University of Hyogo.

From the JAWS Officers

From the Secretary-General

The conference organized by Carmen Tamas is centered around the theme: Ritual Practices and Daily Rituals in Japanese Society. We are thrilled to have the chance to bring together JAWS and AJJ members at this Japan meeting. A very good turnout of great papers and panels has arrived and soon we will be able to see the meeting program. Surely, on top of the academic program, we are going to have dinners and fun as well as a JAWS Business Meeting.

This letter will be my last as a Secretary General of JAWS. While my tenure since 2021 has been deeply rewarding, I have decided it is time to step down, due to the unprecedented challenges the region I reside in has experienced in the last fifteen months or so. As you all know since October 2023, we have been experiencing a devastating, bloody conflict resulting in terrible suffering and enormous and unprecedented loss and despair by all sides involved. As I write these lines on January 19, 2025 a long-aspired ceasefire has been declared this morning, as a nerve-racking process of returning hostages begins. I can only hope that this will begin a long process of healing and some new kind of hope for a better future for all involved.

The new SG will be elected at the Business Meeting in the upcoming April Meeting. On the same occasion we will also elect a new treasurer and membership secretary while deeply thanking Giulia De Togni who has been in office since 2021.

On a bright note, we recently updated the JAWS list and proudly report 373 registered members (!). Although since 2014 we no longer pay annual dues, our finances are healthy, which enables us to offer travel grants for early career scholars to attend conferences and provide English-language editing grants. Our excellent conferences have also helped to attract new members. Let's hope that the Japan meeting will attract even more.

Looking forward to meeting you all in Hyogo.

Best Wishes,

Ofra

FROM THE TREASURER

Giulia De Togni

Dear JAWS members,

Like Ofra, after four years, I am also stepping down from my dual roles as JAWS Treasurer and Membership Secretary. I want to take this opportunity to express how honoured and delighted I have been to serve in these positions. During my tenure, I have processed over 80 memberships and 25 travel grants, while also supporting the JAWS conferences in Barcelona (2022), Ghent (2023), and Hyogo (2025).

Since joining JAWS as a PhD student in 2015, I have witnessed this community's continuous growth. Over the past four years in my dual roles, I have seen firsthand the wealth of expertise and diverse research interests that JAWS fosters.

As of March 2025, JAWS has 373 active members worldwide. This community continues to thrive, with numerous PhD students, early-career researchers, and senior colleagues all contributing valuable insights to the field of the Anthropology of Japan.

I look forward to continuing my engagement with this wonderful community of talented scholars.

With best wishes,
Dr. Giulia De Togni
JAWS Treasurer and Membership Secretary (2021–2025)

Financial reports (password protected):
https://japananthropologyworkshop.org/membership/jaws-financial-report/

FROM THE EDITORS

Jennifer McGuire and Christopher Tso

Dear JAWS Members,

After almost three years since the last newsletter was published before the JAWS/EAJS conference in Ghent 2023, we're very pleased to present the 2025 Edition, packed with great contributions detailing the activities of our JAWS community from 2021 to 2023.

Continuing with our refreshed newsletter design and second cover photo by visual anthropologist and JAWS member Steven C. Fedorowicz, we're delighted to present our usual pieces from the Secretary-General, Ofra Goldstein-Gidoni, our Treasurer, Giulia de Togni, and publication news from Joy Hendry. We also have conference and research reports from our bright, upcoming scholars who attended the Ghent conference. We believe the many fascinating research projects from these junior scholars demonstrate a healthy, vibrant future for anthropology in Japan. Members at all stages of their careers are highly encouraged to contribute to the JAWS community by submitting research reports, book reviews, position pieces, announcements, and commentary for publication. Articles are first published on the website and later included in the newsletter. More information about submissions can be found here: https://japananthropologyworkshop.org/publicationsandprojects/newsletter/

A few words of thanks and farewell as two of our JAWS officers step down from their roles. We'd like to offer our deep gratitude to our Secretary-General, Ofra Goldstein-Gidoni for all of her hard work and fantastic leadership for JAWS, particularly coming out of the pandemic period. It was a pleasure working with Ofra to maintain the website and produce the newsletter, and we are grateful for her help and leadership. Thanks also to our Treasurer, Giulia de Togni for a steady hand keeping our finances in check. Giulia has also taken care of our membership

records as we've seen a healthy growth in our numbers over the past several years. Both Ofra and Giulia have written pieces, and we warmly welcome you to read them.

As editors, we'd also like to extend our thanks to Anna Vainio for her hard work during her time as third editor. Anna organised and was chief editor of our past series 'JAWS online series of Reflection on Tōhoku', and dedicated much time to our previous newsletter.

Finally, we hope all our members have been well and productive since our last meeting in Ghent. With our next conference in Hyogo this April 2025, a joint AJJ/JAWS event organized by Carmen Tamas, and the next EAJS/JAWS event in summer 2026 in Poznan, Poland, we're looking forward to a busy and lively two years. We hope to continue our research and discussions with you all soon.

Best wishes,
Jennifer and Chris

JAWS NEWS

JAWS PUBLICATION NEWS

Joy Hendry

January 2025

Welcome to the latest news of our publication series, marking a full period when we can at last travel in and out of Japan, visit friends and gather new research material.

We have a few new books to tell you about, but we are always open to more ideas, so please consider this series if you are wondering about where to publish, anything from sets of JAWS (or other related) conference papers to individual monographs, from long-standing research results to an adaptation of your doctoral thesis. See below for details of how to proceed, and the advantages of choosing this series.

One book that joined our series in 2022 is actually about the Japanese community in Bolivia, an alternative to the recent burgeoning interest in migrants to Japan, and generally to migrants from poor or war-torn countries seeking better lives for themselves. **Japanese Diaspora and Migration Reconsidered** by **Yvonne Siemann** instead focuses on the descendants of Japanese migrants or "Nikkei" in Bolivia, who, after a history of organised migration, have achieved middle-class status in a developing country, while enjoying much symbolic capital among the majority population. Based on extensive original research, the book considers the everyday lives of Nikkei and their identity, discusses how despite their relative success they still remain not fully integrated into Bolivia's imperfect pluricultural society and explores how they think about, and relate to Japan.

The other book that came out in 2022, and both these books are now available in paperback, is called **Revitalization and Internal Colonialism in Rural Japan** by **Timo Thelen**. Based on

extensive original research in the Noto peninsula, this book explores his case in the general better-known context of a decline of rural and peripheral areas in Japan, resulting from an aging population, outmigration of the younger generations, and the economic decline of the primary sector. Allowing the locals to tell their stories, describe their problems, and come up with possible solutions, Thelen demonstrates the serious impact of rural decline on daily life and work and highlights the struggle to sustain rural living in the globalized age. It argues, however, that some recent innovations in global media, economy, technology, and ideology offer scope for reversing the decline, as some central government initiatives do, but reveals that these are not always noticed, appreciated, or made use of by local people. A focus on the nature of the links between peripheries and centres – regional, national, and global – Thelen describes a form of "internal colonialism."

Following our first onsite JAWS conference after Lockdown, which was organinsed by JAWS series author, Blai Guarne, in Barcelona, we recruited a scholar who presented on the fascinating subject of scandals in Japan. **Igor Prusa**'s training was not specifically in social anthropology, but his book **Scandal in Japan: Transgression, Performance and Ritual**, meets all our expectations of bringing a reader into Japanese ways of thinking, and drawing on appropriate theoretical support. The book is an exploration of media scandals, offering a detailed analysis of three case studies: the drug scandal of the popular Japanese celebrity Sakai Noriko; the donation scandal centering on the heavyweight politician Ozawa Ichirō; and the Olympus accounting fraud revealed by the British CEO Michael Woodford. Media and society are analysed largely in terms of social performances, while the focus is on how Japanese transgressors talk and act when explaining their scandals to the public. This book originally came out in 2023, but is now also available in paperback.

Our most recent book is a classic ethnographic study of a Japanese community, which, like the Timo Thelen study, looks to a revitalising rural situation. **Crafting Rural Japan.**

Traditional Potters and Rural Creativity in Regional Revitalization, itself beautifully crafted by **Shilla Lee** from her doctoral thesis**,** discusses the place of creative village policy in a rejuvenating rural Japan. Based on extensive field research in Tamba Sasayama in Hyogo Prefecture, Lee examines the complex social relations and the intertwining values of different actors in collective initiatives by local government and local traditional potters who are all invested in fostering an aura of creativity in the region.

Below, I offer a list of the books we have published in this series, and as always, we are ready to receive your proposals if you would like your own work to be considered to join the excellent set. We are very proud of our collection and we 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[at]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

https://www.routledge.com/Japan-Anthropology-Workshop-Series/book-series/SE0627 to see further details of the studies,, and to order books, using the discount code as a JAWS member, which is **JAWS1**. If you have any trouble using this code, please let me know as it needs renewing from time to time, but once inserted offers great discounts.

Joy Hendry (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

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: Soka Gakkai Youth and Komeito

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

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

Escaping Japan: Reflections on Estrangement and Exile in the Twenty-First Century

Blai Guarné, Paul Hansen (eds.), 2019

Religion in Japanese Daily Life

David C. Lewis, 2019

Happiness and the Good Life in Japan

Wolfram Manzenreiter, Barbara Holthus (eds.), 2019

Women Managers in Neoliberal Japan: Gender, Precarious Labour and Everyday Lives

Swee-Lin Ho, 2020

Inside a Japanese Sharehouse: Dreams and Realities

Caitlin Meagher, 2022

Mental Health and Social Withdrawal in Contemporary Japan: Beyond the Hikikomori Spectrum

Nicolas Tajan, 2022

Global Coffee and Cultural Change in Modern Japan

Helena Grinshpun, 2022

JAWS BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

See the link below for the minutes (password protected)

https://japananthropologyworkshop.org/membership/jaws-business-meeting-minutes/

CONFERENCES

31st JAWS CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT BARCELONA 2022

On behalf of the Japan Anthropology Workshop (JAWS), we are happy to announce that the 31st JAWS Conference will be held at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Autonomous University of Barcelona) from 6 to 9 July 2022.

This in-person conference will be based around the global theme of 'Research on Japan in the (Post-)COVID-19 Era'. We hope the deliberately broad nature of the topic will allow us to discuss and renew our shared endeavors regarding the anthropology of Japan in our current context. Views will be exchanged on a wide range of subjects, including the difficulties faced in carrying out fieldwork, how the pandemic is currently affecting our ethnographic projects and research interests, and not forgetting the digital possibilities that seem to be emerging for remote research.

As is customary for the JAWS conferences, the submission of any individual paper and panel proposal not directly related to the conference theme, but which is centred on the field of the anthropology of Japan, is also welcome.

We plan to hold the conference as an in-person event, assum\ing the situation with the pandemic does not prevent mobility between countries. We are also planning a couple of panel sessions via TEAMS, which are reserved for PhD candidates and researchers in training.

Conferences

JAWS Conference Announcement, Barcelona 2022

For submitting individual papers (250-word abstract) and panel proposals (250-word panel abstract + 250-word individual abstracts), please send your proposals by February 14, 2022, to jaws2022barcelona@gmail.com

For more information, please see the specific details for the conference on our website: https://japananthropologyworkshop.org/upcoming-31st-jaws-conference/

If you have any queries, please contact us at jaws2022barcelona@gmail.com

We look forward to seeing you in Barcelona!

Conference Programme:
https://japananthropologyworkshop.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Programme-JAWS-Conference-Barcelona-2022.pdf

32nd JAWS CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT GHENT 2023

Navigating the New Normal: Coping with uncertainty, precarity and change in a (dis)connected Japan

Chiharu Shiota, “Uncertain Journey” 2019, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan, photo Sunhi Mang.

(Reproduced with permission of Chiharu Shiota; original source

https://www.chiharu-shiota.com/)

JAWS Conference Announcement, Ghent 2023

Undoubtedly, the term “new normal” has recently become a ubiquitous feature in various media and academia alike. It evokes a notion of novel stability, but it has proven to be the last straw, full of promise of an easy to understand, orderly world, while in fact it is a last-ditch attempt to prolong the modern illusions of normality and masking the prevalent anxiety of (dis)connection.

Just like the red yarn in Chiharu Shiota’s installation, Japan is interconnected and interdependent within the region and the world as it is linked by lines and drawn into webs transmitting communication and information (cf. Haraway 2018, Ingold 2016), and material flows of goods interweaving work and family lives (cf. Tsing 2015, Alexy 2020). While structures and borders seem to dissolve in a globalised market-oriented eudaimonia, humans still try to navigate their lives by coping with static nation state systems and arbitrary mobility constraints (cf. Mau 2021), and frequently these individuals get lacerated in this split – a phenomenon we like to describe as “anxiety of (dis)connection”. Often, normative idea(l)s of family and work are the only yarn that maintain the semblance of an unchanging Japanese society while precarity, pandemics and barriers further dissolve already crumbling foundations (cf. Berlant 2011, Campbell/Laheij 2021, Lukács 2020, Mathews/White 2004, Parla 2019). In other words, the implicit assumption of a stable normality underlies every situation like a thick carpet, but the specific varnish, rather segmented and discrete, resembles a rag rug that we call “illusions of normality”. A focus on social configurations that form such normality and normativity (cf. Link 2003, Horst/Miller 2012, Pine 2019) and the actual practices humans engage in to create ordinary lives in extraordinary circumstances should help to start this discussion.

In short, this section focuses on the diverse individual and social processes of navigating the (new) normal in and beyond Japan, while placing an emphasis on the sobering concepts of “illusions of normality” and “anxiety of (dis)connection”.

Possible questions and topics for panels might be, but are not limited to:

Bubbles, Webs, Boarders, Joints: Researching the anxiety of (dis)connection through rituals, practices and spaces

Internalised illusions of normality: conflicted negotiations of precarity, self-growth and self-government in an uncertain world

Conferences

JAWS Conference Announcement, Ghent 2023

How to live ordinary lives in extraordinary times and how to theorize them? Considering the illusive and normative potential of post-human ideas and anti-human structures

The making of fluid families: Emerging post-familial lifestyles and/or new takes on the family in and beyond Japan

Escaping escapism: Reifying urban norms and productivity ideals in the Japanese countryside.

Please note, however, that proposals of papers and panels that fall outside of the proposed themes are very welcome and will be considered fully and equally. Decisions about acceptance will be based on academic merit after a thorough review process.

Papers should generally be presented in English, but may be presented in Japanese if necessary and must, if so, be accompanied by an abstract in English.

We aim to get a good balance of panels and individual papers in this section, so we welcome both. We look forward to your contributions and to seeing you next year in Ghent.

Please follow this link for more information and to enter your submission: https://eajs.nomadit.co.uk/call-for-panels-and-papers/

General Information

https://eajs.nomadit.co.uk/call-for-panels-and-papers/

Rules for submissions

The European Association for Japanese Studies invites individual paper and pre-organised panel proposals for the forthcoming 17th EAJS International Conference. Please read the rules and instructions below, and then the full call text specific to each thematic section, before you submit your panel or paper.

· Panel and paper proposals should be written in English and submitted no later than 5 December 2022.

· All panels and papers must be proposed online. The proposal links follow, but please first read the rules and instructions.

· All delegates may only present once. Convenors may present a paper in their own panel, or, if they wish, be the chair/discussant in their own panel, and present a paper elsewhere (they cannot do both). All paper-givers may also have an additional role as the discussant in another panel – not the one they are presenting in. One can be a chair in one panel and discussant in another. No other double roles are permitted.

· Proposers MUST refrain from contacting Section convenors directly so as not to jeopardize the anonymous selection process. Convenors have been asked not to respond to inquiries sent directly to them before completion of the selection process. Any queries concerning the submission of proposals, should be sent to eajs(at)nomadit.co.uk.

· The "Japanese Language Teaching" section is held in collaboration with the Association of Japanese Language Teachers in Europe (AJE). Guidelines for proposals may differ slightly from EAJS. For this section, please follow the guidelines here.

Panel proposals

Panels may be proposed with three or four pre-agreed papers within them, and preferably a designated discussant. Panel organisers should ensure that there is sufficient time for discussion. Proposals must consist of:

· A panel title

· Name and email addresses of the panel convenors (the person submitting the proposal does not have to add their name twice – their status as the convenor will be assumed!)

· A short abstract of fewer than 300 characters (including spaces)

· A long abstract of 350 words, explaining the overall focus of the panel.

· A paper proposal (title & abstracts) for each paper within the panel (see below!)

· An indication of which section the panel belongs to

· N.B. the panel abstracts should NOT state the names of any presenters

Those proposing panels are asked to be mindful of the inclusiveness of their membership, including rank, gender, and continental diversity.

The proposal may not include names of any chairs or discussants at this point. If the panel is subsequently accepted and these roles are not being taken by convenors themselves, let the administrators know (after being accepted) whose names need adding there.

After submitting the panel proposal, panel convenors will be sent a panel-specific link to send to their presenters, who must then propose their papers directly into the panel before the deadline.

Paper proposals

Individual papers can be proposed to each thematic section. If accepted these will be organised into sessions with other individual papers. Paper proposals (both individual papers and those being proposed into a pre-organised panel) must consist of:

- The paper title
- Name and email addresses of the authors
- A short abstract of fewer than 300 characters (including spaces)
- A long abstract of fewer than 350 words

Papers should generally be presented in English, but may be presented in Japanese if necessary (all must have an abstract in English). In such cases, speakers should use a clear and accessible style and provide an English summary and, if possible, English slides.

On submission of the proposal, the proposing author (and any co-authors) will receive an email confirming receipt. If you do not receive this email, please log into the conference interface (Cocoa) from the login link on this website (see human head icon in top toolbar) to check that your proposal is in there. If you cannot find this, please email the conference address.

All presenters must be EAJS members by the time of the conference. However, presenters do not have to be members when submitting a proposal, and membership status has no influence on the selection process.

Papers for pre-organised panels must be submitted via the button/link provided in an email from the panel convenors. Individual papers should be proposed using the button below.

Decisions

When the call ends, the section convenors will review the proposals and decide which panels and individual papers to accept. The EAJS Council is not involved in this process. Panels will be accepted in their entirety and individual papers will be grouped into sessions. The convenors can pass proposals to other sections if they believe they would fit better there.

The review process consists of two stages: initially information on the proposers is not visible, ensuring decisions are made on the quality of the abstract. Subsequently, convenors will review their decisions in non-anonymized form (i.e. with information on authors), allowing them to reflect on factors such as diversity and inclusivity and to avoid extremely unbalanced groups of speakers (e.g. in terms of gender, seniority or institutional affiliation).

The Programme Committee (consisting of members of the EAJS Council) will take a final look at the selection, to consider thematic overlaps between the sections.

Applicants will be informed of the selection results by end-March. The section convenors are not required to give any feedback or justification for their decision.

CONFERENCE REPORT GHENT 2023

Reflection on Immigrants in Japan

Stephen Christopher

This reflection brings together two panels analyzing the place of migrants and minorities in Japan. In Panel One, Megha Wadhwa and Ruth Achenbach presented on 'Research interrupted: Conducting ethnographic migration research during a pandemic.' They began with an overview of their research group, QuaMaFa: Qualification and Skill in the Migration Process of Foreign Workers in Asia. Their joint research program interrogates the agency of migrants, especially highly skilled migrant workers. Achenbach focuses on Chinese graduates in Japan and Wadhwa researches the Indian diaspora in Japan. Their project has other partners and stretches across Japan, South Korea and Singapore. It was designed to require a lot of researcher mobility in order to track transnational migration dynamics. When COVID-19 locked down the world, the QuaMaFa team relied on virtual spaces for team sessions. Their outputs and deliverables were pragmatically altered as fieldwork was constrained, especially in locked-down Japan. Research shifted to netnography, online filming, and Zoom interviews; Wadhwa trained some informants to do auto-ethnography filming while Achenbach struggled to stay engaged online with Chinese migrants who returned to China and were constrained by CCP restrictions on internet use. In their presentation, they explored issues of the Digital Divide in technology access and how to protect data and build rapport online. Both scholars pragmatically added Singapore as a research focus because of eased access but faced unequal visa processes because of the differential strength of their respective passports. They continue to meet bi-weekly and aspects of working online are synchronous with the nature of

their fieldwork on transnationalism. To conclude their presentation, they screened the trailer of Wadhwa's film, 'Migration Stories from Asia.' The ensuing discussion raised points of shared experience and questions about COVID-19 has shaped the self-narrativizing of interlocutors.

In the last panel of the conference, Megha Wadhwa presented a 30-minute segment of her film, Finding their Niche. We were introduced to two Indian women who are trailing spouses. The first segment, Jyothi, from Punjabi, described the loneliness of leaving an active social life in India for a more isolating experience in Japan, where she didn't know Japanese. In another case, Mandeep, also from Punjab, accompanied her Punjabi husband after an arranged marriage. Throughout her life, her cultural fantasies had focused on North America, where her extended family settled and would visit her in her childhood with suitcases full of exotic stuff. Japan was not on her cultural radar. She worked different jobs, from a tofu shop to a card company, but the lack of Japanese proficiency made her feel despondent, as did ruminating on how her education in India felt unutilized in Japan. In the factory, she struggled to adjust to the ideologies of efficiency. By switching between their stories of integrating into Japan, interspersed with footage of their everyday life in the domestic sphere, the film powerfully shows the often-obscured narratives of a minority immigrant community in Japan. After, Wadhwa fielded questions about the themes of the film, specifically about feelings among Indian women in Japan of having limited mobility, increased social precarity, and feelings of inadequacy about integrating (or being resistant to cultural integration). Wadhwa responded that Indian trailing spouses in Berlin can integrate more easily than in Tokyo, partly because of the comparative difficulty of the Japanese language. In Berlin, some Indian trailing spouses can also work in English-based IT companies. Wadhwa said that because of the masala nature of Indians, loud and lively, loving public and ceremonial gatherings, they suffer to fit into the customs of Japan compared to Germany or Hong Kong. The robust Q&A that followed raised questions about self-othering as migrant workers' defense mechanisms (Wadhwa responded about the pervasive sense of confusions about belonging among Indians in Japan); if trailing spouses have collective action (Wadhwa answered that Indians in Japan have small groups but overall lack concrete action seen among Indian migrants in Berlin); if women go agentively to Japan not as trailing spouses (Wadhwa answered yes but that the exigencies of film editing required

cutting some stories). The session ended with a long round of applause for Wadhwa's efforts to bring migrant experiences in Japan into the consciousness of the wider public.

Considered together, Wadhwa's work represents an important contribution to our understanding of the experience of ethnic minorities and migrants in Japan. Last year, I reviewed her book on the same theme. As scholars continue to debate how welcoming Japan is to immigration and how much diversity is in Japan overall (and, crucially, how to empirically measure these phenomena and create tight comparison with other national contexts), Wadhwa's book remains a touchstone for understanding one migrant community and their degree of integration and belonging. I am currently writing a monograph on Tibetans in Japan, many of whom come from India although they do not consider themselves part of the South Asian diaspora. Thinking about Tibetans in the Indian context—their sociality, degree of integration, family configurations, work experiences, political alignment and representation in the Japanese popular imagination and specific cultural presentations (manga, anime, ethnic festivals, social and establishment media)—has greatly advanced my own research. I am looking forward to the future outputs of 'QuaMaFa: Qualification and Skill in the Migration Process of Foreign Workers in Asia.'

RESEARCH REPORTS

Plasticity of Desire: Japanese Women's Desire for English and the Rearticulation of Agency

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The past three decades have shown a great interest in researching Japanese women's desire for English, both romantically and professionally (Kelsky 1996; 2001; Bailey 2006; Piller and Takahashi 2006; Takahashi 2013; Nonaka, 2018). These studies mainly discussed the desire through the concept of akogare. According to these interpretations, akogare refers to any expression of desire that can mean 'longing,' 'idealization,' or 'desire.' To have akogare means to long for something that is 'tantalizingly out of reach.'

Even though the studies mentioned above generally focused on Japanese women's discourses of mobility and the possibility of perceiving their identities as multiplicitous and fragmented, they also perpetuated the understanding of Japan as the Other of the West, immanently desiring the West and striving for its lifestyle. So, I would like to assert that my research comes from what I consider a limitation of these studies, both in theory and methodology. Based on the research conducted, it appears that desire in the context of Japanese women needs to be tackled from a more philosophical point of view instead of being solely allocated to the concept of akogare. This trajectory should significantly differ from merely focusing on the binary logic of internationalization; it would be necessary to elaborate on the different ways of conceptualizing desire in the case as such.

In the paper, "Pleasure vs. Desire: Towards the Feminist Road of Catherine Malabou" (Košinaga forthcoming), I extensively write on the theoretical background of desire and pleasure within the scope of Feminist Theory. So, based on the frameworks suggested in the paper and

the context of my research, I offer three understandings of desire. Desire is not seen in the dichotomy between Japan and the West; it is everywhere. Secondly, desire can be active and passive. The active one is pleasure and requires a subject; the passive desire aims for its own proliferation and does not need any subject. And lastly, desire changes; it is plastic.

Therefore, it can be argued that this project deals with rethinking the concept of desire in the context of feminist philosophical thought to argue that it is more complex than the existing theory suggests. Also, by bringing the desire forth to the philosophical discussion, this study will argue that the cultural setting of Japan and the specific cultural group of Japanese women is a significant pointer to how this desire can be understood in an interdisciplinary framework.

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This research is also inspired by my personal experience as an English teacher in an online Eikaiwa (English conversation) school in the period between 2014 and 2017. I taught almost 8000 classes during that time, and the majority of students were from Japan (the others were from China and Korea). This experience is relevant for my project because one of the daily tasks during that time was to ask the people what their purpose in learning English was, hence the inspiration (Košinaga 2021). Moreover, due to this experience and personal involvement, I gained many connections in Japan, most of whom later participated in my fieldwork (digital and on-site).

The original (pre-COVID 19) study was designed as a critical ethnography based on thirty-one semi-structured interviews with Japanese women aged between 24 and 45. I also made two short field trips to Japan in 2018 and 2019, where I met five of my core participants. I organized meetings with these women in the places they often encounter, such as international bars or restaurants, to have a sense of the actual space where they navigate their lives daily.

As the previous studies focused more on akogare, I aimed at countering these by adding more discussion on desire/pleasure. For instance, after analyzing the data, I found that some women wanted to learn English for better professional and academic opportunities. At the same time, the desire of other women was triggered by their mothers, friends' acknowledgment, multiculturalism, and the need to become confident. Some nourished their desire by substituting English classes with dating native English speakers because it was the more economical

solution. And some just felt that during the classes with native speakers, they were not given sufficient time to speak and just wanted to be given a chance to express themselves in English. However, the COVID 19 pandemic happened and put everyone's lives on trial; it interrupted lives, social relations, and even research projects. Hence it was necessary to add that perspective to the research. Doing so, I could assess the impact of the pandemic and the measures imposed by the Japanese government on the very desires of the women of Japan and see how these caused any change/interruption in their plans. In this context, critical ethnography appeared to be an insufficient method because not only was the physical research in Japan impossible for a significant period but, considering the precarity brought by the pandemic, the very researchers' positions also needed to be problematized as well as the larger cultural implications that contribute to this very state.

This part of the research is still ongoing and will hopefully be done after completing the fieldwork scheduled for August and September 2022. However, based on the digital fieldwork that I could do this year (13 semi-structured interviews with Japanese women aged between 24 and 45), the findings are the following:

Per my hypothesis, the pandemic acted as an interrupter of all these women's lives and desires. Still, they managed to cope with it by escaping the precarity and eventually found new desires and pleasures. How I use 'escape' here does not have to imply the literal act of fleeing but can also hint at critical thinking against the collectivization discourse that was prominent in times of emergency. Moreover, I demonstrate that desire does not only occur between Japan and the West, as the previous studies suggested; it is more complex, and that form of desire particularly appears as active in these women's cases. And lastly, desire is not static; it changes.

This summary was a brief overview of my entire doctoral project, presenting the relevant discussions in the field as well as the drawbacks I faced. Any comments, suggestions, and criticism are more than appreciated. Also, I would be delighted to discuss the project more with any JAWS members sharing similar interests.

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Japan Anthropology Workshop 2022, Research Summary

Eiko Soga

Foraging for seaweed with Ms Kane Kumagai in Samani, Hokkaido.

Through my art practice-led PhD research at The Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford, I have questioned how the practice of art can embody and share felt knowledge of the more-than-human world, working with the Ainu communities in Hokkaido, Japan. The traditional Ainu cooking culture is considered to be ecological and community oriented. I learned how to cook traditional Samani Ainu meals by an Ainu elder, Ms Kane Kumagai throughout different seasons, and explored understanding of diverse ecosystems. I looked at cooking as a space to

exchange empathy, care, mutual effort, life sources and lived knowledge to unpack the interrelationships between historical, political, cultural, emotional, and natural landscapes. I used video, photography, and creative writing to think through, document, and share my experiences.

My research also examines how dissonance caused by the capitalist system and patriarchal society prevents both individuals and social groups from being free from historical trauma and allows a neglectful attitude towards the natural world to continue. Despite the recent collaborations between the Ainu, the Japanese, foreign researchers, and friends to work on a revival of the Ainu culture, the dominant work of constructing contemporary Ainu values continues to be done under the Japanese government's top-down system. Japanese systems are significantly influenced by Western social values and are capitalistic and city-centric. The external nature of their social system does not align with the Ainu's traditional values. This all means that the Ainu's spirituality seems to struggle to stay at the core of people unless people actively engage with Ainu elders, practitioners, or the culture.

I sought out a non-hierarchical and collaborative approach, involving a gentle, compassionate process, and listening carefully to what others might need to say. Therefore, I took the approach of learning Ainu culture through spending time cooking with Ms Kumagai. Communication with locals through everyday activities offered the embodiment of skill sets and lived experiences which was crucial to achieve a deeper understanding. It required a resilient physical and mental ability to experience rhizomatic information and worked with non-linear thoughts and emotional processes.

Listening carefully to people, the surrounding environment and my own reactions to external influences all helped towards trying to see things as they were. However, being responsible for my own actions while caring for others was demanding. Trying to achieve a balanced collaboration was also challenging, especially if the collaboration involved people who came from different economic, societal, educational, and generational backgrounds. It was easy to mistakenly frame knowledge learnt from Ainu cooking through existing paradigms and

assumptions. Therefore, I focused on reciprocal empathy as a map to walk unknown paths, and worked with unanticipated events and people, to construct a new way of perceiving knowledge and value systems.

Cooking with Ms Kumagai and Ms Shino Hisano.

Cooking started from foraging in the forest and by the sea, then cooking the food, and finally sharing it with the community. An important part of the process was the idea of being in relationship with non-human species. By 'non-human' I mean all the resources which are specific to the region and to the Samani people: various different types of seaweed; mountain plants; deer; salmon and salmon roe. We also used some rice, sugar, and salt. Ms Kumagai often showed the gesture which addressed appreciation towards things around her; she speaks to objects, animals, objects, and space as if she is speaking to friends in good faith. I observed that such gestures of appreciation and friendship-building taught me about the more-than-human world values that lead to ecological ways of living human life. What I mean by friend is a reciprocal relationship that brings positive experiences into your life but it also brings

a possibility of distraction and difficulties. Slowing down and tuning into our own bodily knowledge and senses are crucial.

Samani, a view of Mt.Apoi and the bay in Samani.

Ms Kumagai insisted that what she is doing when she cooks and participates in other practices of Ainu culture is nothing special. It has only become special because her culture was colonised and a different set of values imposed. Immersing myself in the Samani lifestyle with the Ainu community, embodying Ms Kumagai's world view, and experimenting with the idea of 'felt knowledge', I made 'alternative narratives', 'unspecial' and 'normal' – at least for myself to start with.

Indigenous communities around the globe have been fighting for their human rights and have been at the forefront of attempts to save their natural environments. However, city-centric governance and capitalist systems continue to dominate the world through top-down language using numbers, generalisation and categorisations. Mainstream societies need to change the

type of language that they use to be more empathetic and inclusive, valuing diversity. Re-learning from the past and engaging with indigenous values should be part of the ‘norm’, and also of ‘development’ and ‘globalisation’, including region-specific approaches.

Intertextual Relations in Literary Writing of Alma M. Karlin

Klemen Senica

From November 2019 to October 2021, I was a Japan Society for the Promotion of Science postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Tokyo. One of my side research projects focused on Alma M. Karlin (1889–1950), a Slovenian-German non-conformist, intellectual and (travel) writer from Celje. The city, which is today the third largest in Slovenia, was until the end of the First World War on the geographical and cultural periphery of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. To escape its parochialism and to gather material for her future novels, Karlin set off on a round-the-world journey at the age of 30. During her eight-year voyage in the 1920s, she also visited Japan, where she stayed and worked tirelessly for more than a year to pay off her debts and earn money to continue her journey. The writer's fascination with the country was instant and did not vanish until she died in 1950. After her return to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia at the end of 1927, Karlin described Japan and its people with admiration and respect in her travel accounts and short stories, claiming that it was the only country on her journey where no one had harmed her or wished her ill (Karlin, 2006, p. 269).

In June 1922, she arrived in Yokohama and, after short sightseeing, took the night train to Tokyo. Except for the last month of her stay, when she travelled to Kyushu and from there to the Korean port of Busan, she lived in the Japanese capital, first in the Yūrakuchō district and later in Hongō. Karlin's interest in Japan goes back a decade when she lived in London, where she made a living translating and teaching English, German, Italian, etc. The first to spark her interest in East Asia was her student Nobuji G, a Japanese who willingly talked about his homeland during English lessons. However, Japan in the early 1920s was a very different political entity from today. It was a colonial empire that first subjugated Hokkaido in 1869,

followed by Okinawa, Taiwan and Korea in the following decades. Nevertheless, rather than focusing on Japan's imperial expansion and its political, social or cultural consequences in the metropole or its colonies, Karlin's travel accounts focused mainly on topics such as Japanese cuisine, the social status of Japanese women, etc.

Since Karlin (2006, p. 201) argued that the perception of a foreign country is "superficial and unrealistic" if the traveller does not prepare for it in advance, she read extensively about the places she intended to visit, both in preparation for the trip and later on her journey around the world. In this respect, however, Karlin was not particularly different from many of her predecessors, contemporaries and descendants, since many travellers today still form their images of foreign countries by reading travelogues of their predecessors long before they set out on their journeys. Hence, as Sara Mills (2005, p. 73) astutely points out, "Most travel writers portray members of the other nation through a conceptual and textual grid constituted by travel books".

Although she never mentions it directly, Karlin's images of Japan seem to have been particularly informed by Isabella Bird's famous travelogue Unbeaten Tracks in Japan, which was first published in 1880. Having lived in London for more than five years in the decade before the outbreak of the First World War, it is almost impossible that Karlin would not have been familiar with Isabella Bird's travelogues. After all, Bird was the first woman to be elected a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. The influence of the Bird is, in my opinion, most evident in the choice of topics Karlin wanted to present to her German readers. For example, both authors paid particular attention to the position of women in Japanese society in general and in Japanese families in particular. Their descriptions of the relationship between mothers-in-law and newlyweds are almost identical, as both highlight the unpleasant situation of young Japanese women who, as a rule, moved into the house of their husband's parents after marriage (Bird 1881, vol. 1, 253; Karlin 1997: 81).

But as if aware that some of her readers might recognize the similarities (or maybe it was the publisher's warning), Karlin did not include such topics in her best-known work, the

travelogue Einsame Weltreise. Die Tragödie einer Frau (1929), later translated into English as The Odyssey of a Lonely Woman. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why the intertextual relation with travel accounts written by (Victorian) female travel writers has so far been neglected in academic narratives of Karlin's oeuvre. My research was thus the first to highlight this aspect of her travel writing.

However, if it is now clear that the image of Japan and the other places she visited was shaped by the travelogues that Alma M. Karlin read, it remains to be explored how her travel writing inspired those who read her travel texts decades after they were first published.

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Finding Home in Rural Japan: Contemporary Urban-rural Migrants in Kyushu

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We are used to thinking of internal migratory flows in contemporary societies as movements of individuals and groups from rural to urban areas. Recently however, a reverse movement pushing educated people out of the metropolis is gaining amplitude in numerous post-industrial capitalist countries (Dolci / Perrin 2017, Gross 2009, Jacob 1997, Wilbur 2014). This is also the case in Japan, which, after having faced a long and profound process of rural deindustrialization and depopulation over decades, is now experiencing a growth in the number of people relocating to rural areas (Klien 2020, Odagiri 2015).

My PhD project investigates the phenomenon of migration flows towards rural areas in contemporary Japan with a focus on the process of home-building. I will focus my attention on two municipalities in northern Kyūshū, Hasami in Nagasaki prefecture and Buzen in Fukuoka prefecture. I will analyze how different conditions in terms of political and economic background influence internal migration and its impact on local communities. Research on the topic has investigated the imbrication of the migratory movement with its political governance at the local and national level. How does the Japanese government facilitate – or not – young people's relocation? What is the bureaucratic scaffolding surrounding this phenomenon? What is the role played by local authorities? The increasing literature on urban-rural migration in Japan has also called attention to the way national metropolitan cores — mainly Tōkyō and Ōsaka — and local peripheral areas relate to each other. In fact, this tension informs and shapes patterns of rural resettlement (Hatayama 2016, Odagiri et al. 2015, Reiher 2020). Scholars also highlight the interdependency between Tōkyō's central government and local administrative realities in the application of urban-rural migration support schemes (Hatayama 2016), while emphasizing the

important agency of both local actors and newcomers (Klien 2020: 90, Reiher 2020). Additionally, the growing literature documenting the phenomenon has put migrants' personal reasons behind the move from the city at the center of their research. Why do they move? What project do they have when they relocate? How do they try to attain their goals? Individual experiences of relocation are widely investigated and discussed by social scientists including anthropologists and sociologists (Klien 2020, 2019, Obikwelu et al 2017, Odagiri et al. 2015, Rosenberger 2014, 2017, Takeda 2020).

My research questions stem from the reflection that internal migration can be as much about finding a new home and settling down as pursuing mobility as a lifestyle. My aim is to analyze the role that the quest for stability and belonging may have in these experiences (Mallet 2004, Ralph / Staheli 2011). Therefore, my project will contribute to the debates around the conceptualization of home in anthropology, sociology and human geography, as well as to the literature discussing changing rural Japan and urban-rural migration. By retracing the journey that brought migrants to the place in which they settle, I will be able to analyze the intersection between the experience of living in rural Japan as a migrant and the struggle of creating a home "away from home". Thus, instead of insisting on the dimension of mobility, my thesis builds on concepts such as stability and settlement.

I will rely on the life histories of migrants to examine how throughout their lives, they leave and make homes multiple times in different places, and eventually end up building an ideal home in rural Japan. Additionally, individuals' narratives will help me identify different personal trajectories and explore how experiences of rural life influence the processes of home building. By retracing the journey that brought migrants into the two municipalities, I will be able to analyze the intersection between the experience of living in rural Japan as a migrant and the struggle of creating a new home. I started my fieldwork with a digital ethnography (Pink et al. 2015, Przybylski 2020) of migrants' social media profiles and blogs, as well as municipal and prefectural authorities' web sites which is allowing me to analyze how contemporary rural life in Japan is produced and consumed digitally. Moreover, online research is helping me to understand the importance of the online dimension for the dissemination of these

representations and to consider the impact that digital transformation of daily life has on the way rural Japan is experienced by residents and perceived by outsiders. Digital ethnography is also an opportunity to experiment with methodological creativity and imagine new possibilities of exchange with the research participants, including receiving pictures and videos, building websites and sharing any possible type of data. Along with the digital research, I will conduct ethnographic fieldwork in the two municipalities mentioned above. Through participant observation, I will be able to share time and space with migrants and follow them throughout their routine and as they move around in the region, thus having access to practices and physical interactions taking place within the rural space.

With a study of these migration experiences, I intend to demonstrate how the place urban-rural migrants choose to live in is not simply their residence but the space where the ideal home becomes possible. What do they see in the “rural”, as opposed to the “urban”, that defines the possibility of home? How do they represent, perform, and narrate urban to rural migration? In conclusion, my contribution to the debates regarding the home-migration nexus (Boccagni 2017) is twofold. First, in terms of individuals, this research will add a new piece to the discussion, by presenting the case of a voluntary migration within the national borders. Second, in terms of space, I will analyze how the “rural” is invested by the migrants with the power to become the place where their experience(s) of home, and more specifically, ideal home, is possible.

After having conducted a few online interviews, I am currently preparing my fieldwork and organizing my arrival in Japan. At this stage of my PhD, any comments or suggestions from JAWS members regarding my research would be very appreciated.

Blog: https://userblogs.fu-berlin.de/urban-rural-migration-japan/

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'Anthropology of Scandal': Approaching Japanese Scandal as Performance and Ritual

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In the past, research on scandals was conducted from various academic perspectives. The fields of study worth mentioning are sociology, history, rhetorical linguistics, comparative law, political science and media studies. In my research, I take a novel approach by connecting the theory of performance and ritual to a broader conception of scandal. 'Anthropology of Scandal' is used here as a means of understanding patterns of behavior and sociocultural norms/values tied to Japanese media scandals in Japan. By analyzing these patterns, I illuminate the ritualized means of public apology and the cultural realities of public shaming in Japan. This is important because most scandal denouements in Japan do not get by without a punitive ritual of emotional confession, temporary exclusion, and eventual reintegration. This practice, as I argue, can be paralleled to the punitive ritual of Japanese 'civil religion' *(shimin shūkyō*) which teaches about the act of becoming impure (*kegare*) and the necessity of the sacred (hare) to purify itself (misogi) from the pollution. My focus is on the main transgressor and his/her public performance, i.e. a complex series of words and actions that produce a valuable result in scandal. I observe how the sociocultural act of confession, apology and exclusion is turned into an orchestrated pseudo-event with a high degree of ritualization. By doing so, I hope to offer an opportunity to see how scandals play out in a liberal democratic system that differs in many respects from the United States and Europe.

In the beginning, I was particularly struck by the kabuki-like quality of Japanese scandals, where the disgraced celebrities assume their ritualized role, repeat a standard set of phrases, shed a couple of tears, and bow deeply in a shower of camera flashes. My initial impression was that more than pursuing social consensus based on conflict resolution, as much

of the orthodoxy goes, Japanese scandals rather portend outrage, disgrace, and humiliation, with the seemingly insignificant moral disturbances of Japanese celebrities cast as a spectacular degradation of the "sacred signified" (Alexander 2010; Prusa 2012). These initial observations and the seemingly non-intuitive nature of Japanese media scandals serve as the basis for my core research questions: what is the particular logic of constructing media scandals in postwar Japan? My analytical point of departure is expressed by the premise that scandal is a social performance between ritual (motivated expressive behavior) and strategy (conscious strategic action) (Alexander 2006). In my study, the ritual aspect relates to scandals as public rituals that, as I argue, reflect the conventions of Japanese civil religion (*shimin shūkyō*). The aim is to illuminate the ritualized means of scandal resolution and the cultural realities of public shaming. For this purpose, I approach Japanese scandal as social drama and ritual: the focus is on scandals as "degradation ceremonies" (Garfinkel 1956) and "purification rituals" (Prusa 2019). Here, I lean toward the basic understanding of ritual as a collective ceremony which draws upon central sacred codes of civil religion (Durkheim 1915; Bell 1992). I am further interested in some characteristics of Japanese civil religion, which is of importance for understanding how the rituals of purification are conducted in contemporary Japan. I argue that scandals too can be approached as civil rituals that mobilize collective sentiments while maintaining the boundaries between sacred and profane. These rituals serve as instruments of integration (by renewing social trust) as well as tools of disintegration (by excluding the transgressor). In case of the latter, the transgressing celebrities, politicians and corporate heads are degraded to the status of everyman, or even lower.

As mentioned above, I distinguish between three stages of an ideal-type scandal in Japan: confession, exclusion and reintegration. The element of confession *(jihaku*) and the willingness to confess is critical for Japanese justice as such. When confessing, Japanese celebrities typically choose an apologetic strategy (*shazai no senryaku*) in which they fully admit responsibility in a tearful confession (e.g. celebrity scandal of Sakai Noriko) . However, experienced politicians usually opt for a defensive strategy (*mamori no senryaku*) which is based on claiming innocence and denying accusations (e.g. political scandal of Ozawa Ichirō).

Finally, an offensive strategy in Japanese scandal (*seme no senryaku*) lies in counter-attacking the accusation, filing libels or suing publishers (e.g. corporate scandal of Olympus Corp). In most Japanese scandals, confession is followed by exclusion (tsuihō): the transgressor is made to retreat to the background and is not seen on a professional stage for a certain period of time. Here, I argue that the ritual of exclusion shows some affinity with the traditional rituals of Japanese civil religion, namely the practice of village ostracism (*mura hachibu*) which regulates group behavior by cutting community ties with the transgressor. Once transmitted by the media, the ritual of exclusion may appear damning for one's career. However, transgressing elites are prosecuted but are rarely convicted, some are fired but not criminally charged, while others avoid direct punishment via suspended sentence. The punitive ritual of exclusion is a necessary step for a future reintegration (shūfuku) of the transgressor. Many Japanese politicians scheme their comeback once their scandal fades out, while Japanese celebrities return to stage once their "social exile" has been lifted by the talent agency.

Nonetheless, precisely this ritualization of scandal, accompanied by media overexposure, seems to aggravate political apathy and moral skepticism in Japan. Firstly, the elites' confessions became mere sociopolitical tool and rhetorical stratagem, while overall impression is that one is apologizing less for the violation in question and more for the nuisance caused by public exposure. Secondly, once transmitted as a televised performance, the act of confession and apology is turned into an orchestrated media pseudo-event with high degree of spectacularity, but empty content in terms of clarifying the transgression. Finally, Japanese scandals are themselves largely regressive: they represent popular media commodities if and only if they are exposed, but in terms of their sociopolitical impact they are rather non-transformative media rituals that have little power to prevent future transgressions.

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Digital Ethnography and Civil Society in Japan: A Study Case of Litatemura and Fukushima Saisei no Kai through Social Networks in Pandemic Times

Mario Malo

The contexts generated by the third and fourth industrial revolutions have made digital anthropology and ethnography fundamental tools to understand, in all their complexity, the new virtual sociability spaces of the 21st century. These spaces, as we, especially the professors and researchers who carry out part of our work online, know very well, have been strongly affected by COVID-19.

Although painful, the pandemic has served as a catalyst to develop even faster the infrastructure of virtual communities on the Internet, communication through social networks - both in real time and asynchronously - or the even more frequent use of digital forums and e-mail. In this time, face-to-face inductive-iterative research has inevitably lost weight and has become even more mediated by digital sieves. A separation that, as Gabriela Coleman (2010) indicated, has not been only ontological, since real gaps have also been delimited in anthropological inquiry, between the physical and the virtual. Bearing this in mind, but also understanding the articulation of these spaces as an extension of the metaphor that emanates from the Möbius strip, in which there is no total separation, but rather spaces on a continuum, I have made my recent approaches to ethnographic work.

Thus, in the last three years, within the framework of a doctoral thesis entitled “Genesis, development and characteristics of civil society in Japan”, the analysis of the discourses and representations that are produced in digital spaces (Facebook, Note, Instagram, Zoom…) has

been one of the cornerstones in the development of my ethnographic work both in the Tōno area in Iwate, and in the *Iitatemura* and Minamisōma area in Fukushima prefecture. The objective of this research project has been to be able to trace the forms of inter and transgenerational solidarity, cohesion and reorganization, which have occurred in the associative sphere of the aforementioned areas, after a situation as disruptive as the Triple Disaster of 2011. To do so, I developed a qualitative x-ray of both some of the civil society groupings including NPOs such as Fukushima Saisei no Kai, Magokoro-Yamasato Netto, whose long-standing worldviews have remained outside of the highly contextual inertias seen in the first year after the 2011 debacle.

Before 2019, the first approaches to these groups were carried out in person, with participant observation, semi-structured interviews, discourse analysis and life stories being the methodological tools that allowed me to know how NPOs are articulated with the State, as well as the members of the same with the inhabitants of the affected areas. These preliminary semi-structured interviews, highlighted the initial ways in which NPOs began to operate after 2011, beginning with a series of surveys of those affected in order to take into account the expectations of the people and thus be able to detect their real needs (fears, desires, future prospects, etc.). Also in the case of Fukushima Saisei no Kai they would carry out different radioactivity tests on the ground, using the evacuated homes, farmland, forests, flora and fauna of the area. Data whose collection would later revert to the community, making these available to the public for society and the government to decide on lines of joint action in pursuit of regional regeneration after the Triple Disaster of 2011. And finally, they would propose long-term projects for *machizukuri*, which meant the involvement of the locals in any decision-making that involved some kind of modification of the environment in which they lived.

After this time, factors such as the pandemic, distance and financing made digital ethnography the main methodological resource to continue with research. Precisely —despite the difficulty of obtaining solid knowledge in liquid spaces— the analysis of digital space has yielded multi-faceted evidence of the phenomena studied. On the one hand, the importance of

using social networks as facilitating and disseminating platforms of social reality in the affected areas 11 years after the disaster has become clear. On the other hand, I have been able to observe how social networks and e-commerce platforms have served to connect generationally different proponents of the associative sphere in some areas affected by the 2011 events in Tōhoku and understand how these groups are related in cognitive, social and affective terms. Since, in the Japanese consumer's psyche, food produced in these areas retains a stigma associated with initial contamination by cesium 137, the projects of shōhin kaihatsu burandingu (商品開発・ブランディング). "Development of products and brands" oriented to branding, marketing and online sales of local products, serve as a means to recover the image of agricultural and livestock products produced in the area. It is precisely in this area where new forms of cohesion and sociability are born, since the youngest act as digital natives, given that through technological mediations they approach the older producers in the area and thus build their digital literacy. In addition, these network practices make the most experienced producers more aware of glocal realities and connect them with national and global scenarios.

Thus, through the digital plane, networks of solidarity and new learning are built through the encounter between different generations, also linking the rural world with the urban world with these practices, which have traditionally lived back to back. Situation that forces the participants in turn to face and resolve prejudices that arise from disparate and unknown cultural realities respectively.

In conclusion, digital ethnography, once the biases arising from the nature of the environment explored and supported by other anthropological validation techniques have been resolved, has emerged as a fundamental tool for following the work of social scientists in contexts as problematic as the generated by the pandemic that began in 2019.

Loanwords and Japanese Identity

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The main objective of my research is to explore the relationship between language and identity through an analysis of public attitudes towards foreign loanwords in contemporary Japanese society. In particular, I am interested in the process by which language is conceived of as a symbol of national identity by examining an animated controversy over the use of foreign loanwords. Over the course of its history, Japanese has borrowed a large number of words from other languages. Among them, Western and recent loans are called *gairaigo*, and the majority presently in use are English-derived. The increasing use of *gairaigo* is a controversial topic and there have been fierce debates in various media outlets regarding the possible impact loanwords may have on the Japanese language. In two nationwide newspapers alone, there have been more than 2,000 entries discussing the use of *gairaigo* since the 1990s. While some see *gairaigo* as a positive sign of internationalisation, many others consider it a source of linguistic corruption. Why does the *gairaigo* debate attract so much public attention? By criticising or praising the use of loanwords, what values are promoted by participants in this discussion? Grappling with these questions, and employing the framework of media textual analysis, my project scrutinises contemporary Japanese discourse on loanwords. It places a particular focus on recurrent wordings and metaphors found in the news media, including 'inundation by gairaigo' – employed often to criticise the use of loanwords – and 'absorption of gairaigo' – employed typically to praise it.

Detailed analysis of these recurrent expressions suggests that there is one perspective in common: the contrast between foreign loanwords, as expressed in the word *gairaigo* (literally 'language that comes from outside'), and the allegedly pure Japanese language conveyed in the word nihongo ('the language of Japan'). For example, both 'inundation' and 'absorption' refer to

an action that requires two mutually exclusive entities: 'inundation (of B) by A (=gairaigo)' and 'absorption of A (=gairaigo) (by B)'. In both cases, *gairaigo* (A) is implicitly contrasted to nihongo as its counterpart. I thus argue that, whether giving praise or criticism, the debate over the use of *gairaigo* is grounded on the premise that *gairaigo* and nihongo, or loanwords and the Japanese language, are mutually exclusive. This point is supported by the fact that, in discussing the role of *gairaigo*, the Japanese language is almost always described as nihongo, the relative term used when comparing Japanese to foreign languages, rather than *kokugo* (national language), the absolute term that views Japanese as a native language from a domestic perspective. Thus, while lexicographically categorised as one of the three major vocabulary groups in Japanese, *gairaigo* is discursively excluded from the perceptual framework of the Japanese language, thereby playing the role of Other to the Japanese linguistic identity.
Consequently, the fierce debate over the use of loanwords can be understood as a particular manifestation of the ongoing (re-)negotiation of Japanese national identity. Herein, both sides of the debate are rooted in a desire to establish specific understandings of Japaneseness in reference to the otherness loanwords symbolise. Proponents and opponents of *gairaigo* alike are highly reliant upon an imagined national consciousness in their discussion of language. Loanwords represent a foreignness, or otherness, felt within Japanese society. The discursive role of *gairaigo* as an 'internal Other' is similar to the notion of the 'outsider within' Nanette Gottlieb (2006) proposes in her discussion of the role of minority populations in Japanese society. Marginalised as 'Other', the outsider within is defined in contrast to a
Japanese 'Self', the definition of which is neither autonomous nor clearly delineated. The debate over the use of loanwords can be similarly understood as part of the wider question of national identity and the construction of the 'Other'.

This research is expected to make a unique contribution to the understanding of the relationship between language and identity, as well as contemporary Japanese society. It does this in three distinct ways:

Firstly, due to its focus on popular discourse, the research reveals the public perception of loanwords in contemporary Japan. The impact of *gairaigo* on the Japanese language continues to attract a substantial amount of interest among specialist and non-specialist linguistics communities. Shedding light on the opinions of lay people, this research offers a metalinguistic analysis of this popular topic and a vital and accessible study in folk linguistics.

Secondly, it provides a thorough and original analysis of a large volume of empirical data. Over 2,000 extracts from articles, editorials, and readers' letters discussing the use of *gairaigo* have been sourced from two major national newspapers, translated into English, and qualitatively analysed using the methodology of media textual analysis. This allows me to unearth the implicit contrast between 'national' and 'foreign' languages.

Finally, this examination of the loanwords controversy goes beyond mapping differences in opinions, to explore the ways in which loanwords are framed as foreign to the Japanese language. The loanword debate is typically framed in the dichotomous terms of opponents and proponents – a schism often attributed to social and cultural factors such as age, gender, educational background, occupation, and social status.

In order to enrich understanding of the debate, I reframe existing analysis by focusing on the normative boundary between 'national' and 'foreign' employed on both sides. This perceptual distinction between 'national' and 'foreign' can also be used to understand other issues related to Japanese identity, including attitudes toward immigration, emigration and growing domestic diversity. Thus, in taking this approach, this study scrutinises the question of how identities evolve in Japanese society.

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Hybrid Landscapes: Space, Identity, and the Natural World in the Context of Miyakojima I-Turn Migration

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The Miyako Islands (Miyako-rettō) consist of 8 small islands located approximately 300 km. southwest of Okinawa Main Island. The total population is a little over 55.000, of which the largest part lives in the Hirara-district on Miyako Island.[1] From 2015 onwards, the islands experience a noticeable increase in the number of Japanese and overseas visitors, a trend that is referred to by the term 'Miyako Bubble.' Besides tourists who visit the remote islands for a short period of time, a growing number of relatively young Japanese decide to stay permanently on the islands to find alternative ways of living and working outside of the urban centers of Japan. In 2015, 2169 migrants relocated to Miyako from other prefectures, this number rose to 3555 in 2019. With this, Miyako became the prefecture's most popular destination to emigrate to after cities on Okinawa Main Island.[2]

The Miyako Islands are known in Japan for their emerald-blue sea with healing (*iyashi*) properties and carries the official label of Eco Island. Perhaps not surprisingly, one of the main characteristics of migrants on Miyako is a shared love for the natural world. Yet, over the course of my research, it has become clear that within the community, different discourses exist about what nature is, how human beings (should) relate to it, what part of nature is worth being protected and what not, and more. My project aims to provide insights into how different narratives of nature feed into migration trajectories. More specifically, I explore how emigrants on Miyako perceive the islands as a place and how they form communities based upon narratives and activities that include the islands' natural environment.

My project is based on data derived via hybrid ethnographic methodologies. The largest part consists of online sources, including weblogs, vlogs, media productions, social media excerpts, and online interviews. This dataset is complemented by archive material, offline interviews, and participant observation that I conducted during a 2-month fieldwork stay in August and September 2022. My research participants include men and women between 20 and 62 years old who were born and raised in Japan and relocated to one of the Miyako Islands. Most of them moved after 2015, a few already many years ago. In addition, I had formal and informal conversations with the local population and individuals originally coming from other islands in Okinawa Prefecture.

Japanese migrants on Miyako initiate projects that evolve around three main environmental issues: marine debris, stray cats and dogs, and the use of agricultural pesticides. What should be noted is that the environmental projects carried out include both social and economic practices. On the one hand, volunteering activities are widespread and serve as important platforms where migrants can build social relationships with each other. On the other hand, environmental issues are taken as an opportunity to start small-scale businesses that offer consumer products and services. As such, Miyako's environment is not just part of individual migration motivations but continues to be a shaping factor in migrants' everyday lives.

Amongst the three environmental focus points, marine debris is perhaps the issue that is most visible. Whenever visiting less popular beaches, all kinds of plastic objects pile up on the sand. Pet bottles, fishing gear, slippers, and a variety of packages are the most frequent among them. During conversations about this issue, it often gets emphasized that the packages have Chinese and Korean characters on them. In other words, there is the understanding that while Japan keeps its environment clean, neighboring countries have different environmental attitudes.

Especially in more rural areas, you can sporadically see stray cats and dogs walking around. Before 2017, approximately 400 animals were caught by the municipality and culled on

Okinawa Main Island annually. This situation changed with the opening of three migrant-led animal shelters that take over the animals from the municipality. The cats and dogs are sterilized, and foster parents are sought via social media. Most of the animals find a new home in other Japanese prefectures and are brought by airplane to their new families. The youngest organization puts effort to find families closer to home; by organizing special events it hopes to spark empathy amongst the local population for the stray cats and dogs.

Within Okinawa Prefecture, Miyakojima is the largest producer of sugarcane. Before tourism took over about a decade ago, agriculture was the islands' most important industry. Sugarcane is relatively strong; the stems are resistant to the typhoons the area experiences in the summer months. Also, the municipality provides subsidies to sugarcane farmers, which makes it the most profitable crop to grow. Yet, 80% of the sugarcane farmers are over 60 years of age and use large amounts of chemical pesticides to have a better yield. Because Miyako's soil consists of corals and limestone, agricultural chemicals end up in groundwater that residents depend on for their drinking water.

What interests me about these three points of environmental concern is that they are specifically tied to migrants' status as outsiders of the island group. More concretely, the projects that are initiated by emigrants contrast the relationships the local population has with the natural world. For example, migrants feel that the local population does not view the ocean as something special (*jimoto ni umi ha atarimae*) and therefore does not bother to clean up the beaches. In a similar vein, the local population is said to see cats and dogs not as pets but to keep them against mice and other unwanted visitors. Hence, stray animals are rather killed than taken into a home. Furthermore, sugarcane farmers do not have an interest in organic agriculture, as it would decrease yields and raise production costs. In sum, Japanese migrants are concerned with precisely those environmental issues that they feel are neglected by local residents. Consequently, environmental protection activities become to function as pillars for identity and reinforce the boundary between in- and outsiders.

Taking the above into consideration, the contribution that my research aims to make is two-folded. First, it adds to debates on urban-to-rural migration in Japan and beyond by scrutinizing how discourses regarding the natural world shape migrants' trajectories and daily lives. Second, my project draws attention to the social aspect of environmentalism. Rather than understanding environmental degradation in a purely technocratic manner, I emphasize the socio-cultural fabric in which environmental initiatives are embedded.

Your comments and suggestions regarding my research are more than appreciated.

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[1] As per December 2020. Data derived via https://www.city.miyakojima.lg.jp/gyosei/toukei/files/R3_2.pdf (accessed on 30 August 2022).

[2] Data derived via https://graphtochart.com/japan/miyakojima-shi-number-of-in-migrants-japanese.php#latestnumber-of-in-migrants-japanese (accessed on 30 August 2022).

Network of Kinship across Japan, Republic of Korea and Democratic People's Republic of Korea

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Since 2018, I have tackled the issue of the kinship network of Zainichi Koreans, whose siblings originated from the Korean Peninsula during the former Japanese colonised era. Before the Japanese colonization, there was a one country called *Daehan-jegug* (大韓帝国: *Daikan-teikoku* in Japanese) in Korean Peninsula. However, in 1948, two nations were established: Republic of Korea (ROK) in the south part and Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in the north. More than 90 percent of Zainichi Koreans are originate from the south part of Korean Peninsula, which means nowadays ROK territory, but from 1959 to 1984, about 100,000 people who were Zainichi Koreans or their families emigrated to the DPRK from Japan, which knows as a project of returnee (帰国事業: Kikoku-jigyo in Japanese). Due to that project, Zainichi Koreans' siblings were separated in three nations; ROK where the most of Zainichi Koreans' originate from, JAPAN, and DPRK. ROK and DPRK did not recognise each other as a state until recently, and are still at war today, making travel between them essentially impossible. In addition, Japan does not recognise DPRK as a state, although relatives living in

Japan may travel to DPRK. Furthermore, even after the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and ROK, people who have Choson nationalities living in Japan have not been able to travel from Japan to ROK for many years. In these circumstances, people whose relatives are separated in the three countries of Japan, ROK and DPRK have been living in a situation where it is sometimes difficult for them to travel across the border from the area where they live.

But they all live in 3 countries and are family members, so they tried to contact each other for many years. Takeda (2021) found that a V-shaped network has been established with Japan as its base, and via Japan, the siblings of Zainichi Koreans living in ROK and DPRK are able to contact or know the current situations of each other over 30 years. Not only just calling each other, but also sending money or goods with their siblings who live in other countries, and sometimes visit from Japan to meet their siblings directly so they could contact each other.

However, the impact of COVID 19 has made it difficult to maintain kinship networks between these three countries. Due to COVID 19, it is impossible to visit other countries for more than 2 years (still goes on especially the time trying to go to DPRK), and the worst problem is people could not send goods to the other countries because each countries' post office did not accept international mails and parcels. During the time when the cold war was still going on, or after finishing the cold war in 1991, Zainichi Koreans did visit for their siblings live in other countries, including DPRK, but it was a really first time to completely stop the visitation after the winter of 2019, the year the impact of COVID 19 started.

Network of Kinship across Japan, Republic of Korea and Democratic People's Republic of Korea

In the JAWS 2022 conference, I presented the paper about the change of the shape of kinship which spread in these 3 nations; ROK, Japan, and DPRK. (Title was 'Network of Kinship across Japan, Republic of Korea and Democratic People's Republic of Korea :the difficulties and conflicts under COVID situations'). The purpose of the paper is to examine the ways in which Korean residents in Japan, who have relatives living across the border in both of ROK and DPRK, especially those who are connected to their relatives across the border, and what conflicts they face in their connections with their relatives in this COVID 19 situations. The paper was trying to consider changing the shape of kinship under the COVID 19 context.

Before COVID 19, I planned to go to the Korean Peninsula to do a fieldwork of my Ph.D. research, but due to the COVID 19, I also could not go to the Korean Peninsula. From August of 2022, I can go to ROK for my fieldwork at last. Under the COVID situation, the only things I could do was a hear of the voice of Zainichi Koreans who has their siblings both of Korea, ROK and DPRK, so from now, I will hear voices of the siblings live in Korean Peninsula, and want to write a thesis that considers about network of kinship spreading in Japan and Korean Peninsula.

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An Ethnography of Resilience and Quiet Subversion: Mixing Digital and In-person Methods to Study the World of Rakugo in the Time of Covid-19

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For many so-called "traditional" performing arts in Japan, Covid-19 presented a further challenge in an already precarious situation (Geidankyō 2008). However, before the pandemic, one storytelling art had been experiencing a significant revival of popularity: rakugo, whose number of professional performers (*rakugoka*) has seen a three-fold increase in the last thirty years and it is now the highest ever recorded since the art's heydays in the late Edo period (Yamamoto 2006; Tokyo Kawaraban 1989, 2019). In 2019, I set out to investigate the puzzle of rakugo's resilience and recent renaissance, hoping to collect some valuable lessons on how to save a cultural world. The pandemic complicated my plans but made this task even more urgent.

Entering Japan was the first, obvious challenge. After nine months of delay, in December 2020 I was lucky enough to reach my field in Tokyo, but Japan's "new normal" meant that problems of access did not end with my arrival in the country. While cancelling a show had long been a taboo for performers in Japan, fluctuating official policies resulted in endless cases of cancellations and postponements. Even when a show did take place, informal activities – often more eye-opening for the anthropologist than the event itself – were heavily limited. Moreover, following the steps of Lorie Brau (2008), I had intended to become the disciple of a rakugo master, but I had to scratch this plan due to covid-induced practical and ethical concerns.

One way in which I dealt with problems of access, like many researchers, was through digital ethnography. A silver lining to the pandemic was that the rakugo world too had to embrace digitalisation, creating great opportunities for online research, and even allowing me to observe situations otherwise very difficult to witness during a "normal" fieldwork. Moreover, while

at the beginning of the pandemic in the rakugo world the "digital" was mostly just a partial recording of the "physical", soon the two realms reached a more equal relationship: as so many in the field consumed the digital content (for example backstage interactions posted on YouTube), more and more performers on the physical stage referred to such content, and so did the fans when having conversations. Therefore, to fully capture the experience of rakugo fans and performers, one had to join both the digital and the physical field. I suspect this will continue to be the case in the future not only for me, but also for anthropologists in many other fields.

While embracing digital ethnography and the new opportunities it created, I also knew that I was one of the few privileged anthropologists who managed to reach their field during the pandemic, and I was determined to make the most out of the situation. I wanted to fulfil my ethical and civic obligations and avoid spreading the virus, but I also knew that a great deal of meaningful activities was going on in-person, and that people were carrying on meeting no matter what I did or what the official discourses proclaimed. How could I observe this reality while minimising my impact on it?

The solution came out of the pandemic situation itself. Through various contacts, I started working as an "anti-covid" member of the staff at several venues around Tokyo: I took temperatures, sprayed hand sanitiser, and wrote down names and contact addresses of everyone in the audience in case someone was to test positive, besides helping out with all the "normal" activities required to run a theatre. Working to prevent infections in the field and helping small-scale productions by providing the needed extra labour in a time of crisis seemed to me the most ethical and practical way to fulfil the anthropologist's greatest desire – being there.

Being in the field in-person allowed me to observe how, in Tokyo, a façade of obedience to official discourses was hiding a great deal of quiet subversion. The more time passed (and discontent towards the management of the pandemic increased), the less people were inclined to abide by the self-restraining ethos, making instead use of any technicality to get away with the rules. Meanwhile on the stage, online shows had created a tendency among performers to avoid problematic topics and satire. Rakugoka have long used a system of self-censorship to protect themselves, but this was based on knowing, through the help of the theatre staff and by keeping the lights on, who was in the audience. The anonymity and invisibility of the virtual

audience compromised this solution: a performer who risked making personal jokes online ended up involved in a case of defamation; most, opted for toning down their satire.

However, in turn, this situation created an atmosphere of humorous subversion at in-person, non-streamed shows. Both fans and performers seemed eager to indulge in risky topics, from satire at the expense of then Prime Minister Suga Yoshihide, to gossip regarding other rakugoka's personal lives. At many small, non-advertised shows, performers and audiences laughed at the funniness of this very atmosphere of "rebelling" complicity, for the content of their subversive activity, which put them at risk of public shaming, was mostly just the telling of silly jokes.

Conducting research in covid-times with a mix of digital and in-person ethnography highlighted certain other issues that I will discuss in my doctoral dissertation, such as the persistence of a moral hierarchy of jobs in Japan (what makes an "unnecessary" job?), or the way the Japanese government dealt with this crisis, and what that means for endangered cultural industries. However, one final point I want to mention here is that of resilience. The pandemic allowed me to observe how the rakugo world, which had shown great resilience through the centuries, fared under such an unprecedented crisis. Contributing to the recent literature on covid-times resilience in Japan (Slater 2020), I individuated in the rakugo community three levels of resilience which helped it face this crisis: a symbolic resilience (no one ceasing to "be" a rakugoka regardless of long periods without performing), a psychological resilience (based on the rakugo apprenticeship and aesthetic), and a social resilience (based on the support of fans and other performers).

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