

Abstracts by Panel for the Dec 2-3, 2023 AJJ annual meeting

SESSION 1: SATURDAY, 11:00 to 12:30

Panel 1: Newcomers (Room 1357)

A special panel for talented undergraduates and early-stage Master's candidates

Chair: **Ben Grafstrom**, Research Fellow, University of Oslo

Paper 1: *(Non-)Participation in Communities of Practice: An Ethnographic Study of Students' Experiences in a Brazilian High School English Class*

Barbara Tyemi Okazaki Guerios, 4th year undergraduate, Doshisha University

The study of English as a second language in Brazil takes place in two main ways: through mandatory classes in secondary school, and alternatively through private English language schools. The dominant idea among both learners and educators is that middle and high school classes are insufficient for students to learn the language. In the present study, I have investigated the experiences of Brazilian high school students in the English language classroom, with particular attention to student participation. Taking Lave and Wenger's (1991) community of practice as a theoretical framework, I gathered and analyzed data from two weeks of participant observation, and in-depth semi-structured interviews with 9 participants. I found that students negotiate their membership inside the classroom in different ways, largely informed by various factors such as access to economic resources and opportunities to learn English outside the classroom. Moreover, I observed that students adopted different strategies to overcome the difficulties encountered trying to learn English in high school. I drew two major conclusions from the data. First, students largely regard English teaching in high school as ineffective and useless, showing a preference for learning a second language at private language schools. Second, student participation is a complex, dynamic, and situated process that is informed by factors largely stemming from access, or lack thereof, to economic resources. The implication of my research is that access to opportunity strongly influences learning English in Brazil.

Paper 2: *Examining the Gap Between the Ministry of Education's Goals and the Communicative English Ability of Japanese Nationals: Ideology and Practice of English Education in Japan*

Aino Uemura, 4th year undergraduate, Doshisha University

The low proficiency level of communicative English amongst Japanese nationals, and in turn the English education provided by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (hereby referred to as MEXT), is a topic that has been continuously critiqued and discussed. This paper aims to examine the ideology and practice behind the situation through a detailed literature

review and fieldwork. The “ideology” or literature review portion of my paper includes an overview of: communicative English, “ideology and practice” as a social framework, and the various salient issues - the highly exam-oriented curriculum; the limited communicative ability of teachers; the limited opportunities to communicate in English; the approach and image of English. I also cover an analysis of the recent core MEXT policies surrounding the ideal level of English proficiency, the necessity to cultivate such abilities, and specific guidelines for English education in Japan. As for the part of my research that looks at “practice,” I conduct fieldwork by the means of semi-structured interviews with university students who have extensive experience with communicative English in the form of both English education in Japan and substantial time abroad in an English-speaking environment. My aim is to raise the gaps within the framework of *tatema* and *honne*, bringing attention to the topic from the unique perspective of a *kikokushijo* undergraduate student in Japan. Through a careful examination of the various dimensions of the matter, I intend to show the significant gap in detail and the possible causes from multiple points of view.

Paper 3: *Building community in care homes: Shizen Camp’s 10-year mission to empower those in the child welfare system in Japan*

Mark Frisina, 4th year undergraduate, Temple University Japan

While the government is concerned with increasing the birthrate “for a better future,” in reality, there are many children in Japan that do not have their basic needs met. This paper gives ethnographic insights into such marginalized children based on participant-observation fieldwork and interviews conducted since May 2023 at a children’s care home in Chiba via Japanese NPO. The percentage of children under foster care in Japan is the lowest of all OECD countries (Japan Children Support Association 2017). Large orphanages that regularly face condemnation from the UN and low adoption rates have created increasingly precarious situations for marginalized children. “Shizen Camp” is a progressive organization that has provided communal support for a decade, advocating for the children who live in care homes. My focus is on those who live in housing units meant to emulate a “traditional family home,” with care workers acting as proxies for parents.

This paper begins by providing the context of children under institutional care in Japan, and describing the evolution and activities of “Shizen Camp”. The challenges children face on a daily basis, along with the responses and reflections given by the care workers are then highlighted. Attention is paid to how “Shizen Camp” supports children’s developmental needs through providing outdoor learning experiences, helping them develop social skills, and empowering them to succeed in life. By examining “Shizen Camp”’s endeavors to foster community with others, this paper unpacks the notion of the “traditional Japanese family” and envisions a hopeful picture of Japan’s future against the backdrop of systemic challenges surrounding child welfare.

Paper 4: *The Intimate and the Public: The dynamics of a Ghanaian Pentecostal church in Japan*
Taira Yamada, 1st year MA candidate, Meiji Gakuin University

The purpose of my research is to examine the Ghanaian Pentecostal church in Kawaguchi, Japan, from two main perspectives – the intimate and public spheres – and to understand how their characteristics fluctuate.

Three main barriers have been found between Japan and emigrants and made it hard to maintain a stable life for them: (1) restrictions by laws, (2) cultural differences, and (3) race. Particularly, Africans or Black people must face the 3rd barrier more than others. Ghanaians are a small African immigrant community – the number of residents is only about 2,600, though numbers are increasing very gradually every year. Based on this data, my research inquiry is: What is the Ghanaian immigrant community's nodal point, and how does it function to offer them relief? This brings me to Ghanaian Pentecostal Christianity, because it is the most widely practiced religion in Ghana and has branches all over the world. There are five churches in Japan, with the headquarters located in Kawaguchi city, Saitama prefecture.

Regarding the intimate sphere, the church is a tight-knit spiritual assembly, managed by volunteers, though sometimes it becomes more transnational such as in the case of a funeral for a mixed-ethnicity family. At the same time, the church also functions in the public sphere, interacting with other ethnic groups to expand the influence of Christianity.

In conclusion, the research helps explain how the Pentecostal church supports Ghanaians' daily life, and helps them to establish strong immigrant networks.

Panel 2: Japan in Decline? (Room 1358)

Chair: **Hirochika Nakamaki**, Professor Emeritus, National Museum of Ethnology

Paper 1: *From modernization to mediocrity? Really?*

William W. Kelly, Professor, Yale University

These 2023 meetings of AJJ invite us to consider a specific scenario—that Japan is drifting into collective mediocrity and global irrelevance. My presentation is respectfully skeptical of this—not as a particular direction (it's entirely possible) but as a useful and legitimate exercise of anthropological expertise.

For over 150 years, modern social science, including that in and of Japan, has been wrong, often spectacularly wrong, about even the short-term futures of its objects of study. Its enduring fallacy has been the bone-headed insistence on misrecognizing present tendencies as future directions rather than searching for the force of the future in the construction of the present.

Anthropology, the slow but sturdy tortoise among its social science siblings, has a distinctive advantage and special obligation in rejecting the hubris of prediction because the “ethnographic present” remains the temporal space of our ethnographic inquiry. This ethnographic present is much maligned but only because it is widely misunderstood. It is not the suspension of time but the very flux of time. It is not the simple present but the compound present, the conjuncture of the past and the future in the present.

Every farmer, gay activist, corporate warrior, anti-nuclear demonstrator, robot scientist—everyone in the life worlds we Japan ethnographers seek to understand—fashions their present moment with the fabric of their pasts and their projections of a future. To represent and reason with this is the ethnographic imperative. This is especially true for life in places like Japan, which is yet one more way in which Japan anthropology should be in the vanguard, not on the sidelines, of our discipline.

Paper 2: Dystopia, dysfunction, decline? Japanese millennials on the move between resignation and reinvention

Susanne Klien, Professor, Hokkaido University

Japan has increasingly been associated with economic stagnation, demographic decline, gender dysfunction, depression in youth and petty crime of senior citizens. Yet, some make the case of Japan as a sustainable society in the age of limits (Lie 2022). This paper seeks to take an ethnographic look at how Japanese millennial migrants are faring in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Drawing on recent ethnographic fieldwork in Europe and Japan, I will examine the everyday lives of three seemingly disparate groups: urban migrants in rural Japan, individuals who have decided to move overseas and return migrants. I will specifically focus on the impact of post-growth thinking in my informants’ narratives and practices. What future do they envisage for themselves and their families, how do they relate to their communities, how do they approach work and how do they cope with lingering uncertainty and precarity?

Paper 3: Mediocrity in Japan? For whom? DIYBio on body, art, and science

Gil Vicente N. Lourencao, Post-doctoral Researcher, Pontificia Universidade Catolica de Sao Paulo

In this talk-article, I want to examine the DIY practices, particularly DIYbio or do-it-yourself Biology, which is a movement that has been transforming how science and the body are perceived. This movement has been growing in popularity in various parts of the world, including the USA, Europe, Japan, and Brazil. Researchers involved in this movement strive to create new ways of utilizing and sharing technologies through hacking practices. To understand the movement better, I use ethnography practices, which encompasses various elements such as crafts, projects, things, productions, machines, robots, cyborgs, exoskeletons, and DIY practices. My research aims to

understand the connections and interfaces between these elements and humans, the micro-politics involved, and the ways of doing and making things.

In this talk, I intent to highlight the example of Japanese artists and scientists to show that Japan is far from mediocrity, at least in the field of art and biohacking. My objectives are to present a review of my previous writings on the theme of the body and to discuss the conceptual architecture around fabulation, feeling-sensation-emotion, and co-presence.

Panel 3: Subcultures (Room 1359)

Chair: **Hisako Omori**, Associate Professor, Akita International University

Paper 1: *Who gets a “fake tattoo” and why?: A case study in Miyagi Prefecture*

Sae Matsushima, PhD candidate, Tohoku University

This paper explores who are getting “fake tattoos,” or tattoo-like erasable body painting, and why they are doing so in Japan today. For this purpose, I observed and interviewed a fake tattoo artist and her customers at some local events in Sendai city and its surrounding area in Miyagi Prefecture. I would like to discuss three major findings. First, the practitioner started her own fake tattoo business by gathering information through social networking services. She teaches part time at an art prep school on weekdays and practice fake tattooing at various junctures on weekends. Eventually, she hopes to master real tattooing skill and become a tattooist. She already has a real tattoo on her leg, which she says she herself did as an exercise in tattooing. Second, many of her customers at weekend events were children of elementary to junior high school age especially in the surrounding area. Third, she gets more customers outside Sendai city than inside. She told me that the urbanites in Sendai City tend to be more restrained and cautious than rural people, for example, those in the coastal areas. These findings were contrary to my expectation that “fake tattoo” should be more fashionable among sophisticated urban youth. I hardly expected rural children to be the main customers. I shall present several hypotheses as to why this is the case in Miyagi Prefecture.

Paper 2: *Go-Go Dancing in Japan as a Performative Act of Gender*

Christina Xenaki, PhD candidate, Kyoto University

Gender disputes and differences remain under the microscope of the political agendas in Japan, but they are not a priority for change. Female bodies have been at the center of attention and under the male-dominant rules of society for many ages as societal narratives and norms have constructed and reconstructed the image of what appropriate behavior for women should be.

During the bloom of feminist movements in the 20th century, cultural scenes in dance and theatre came to offer spaces where the female body could go against the archetypical male-oriented

ideology of viewing women as objects. This article focuses on the genre of Go-Go dancing in contemporary Japan, in which the female body is displayed in provocative ways.

Nevertheless, being put on display should not be examined as a performance that is made only for the “male gaze”. Following Butler’s theory about performativity as a reconstitution of plural forms of agency in which an individual’s performance intermingles with other people’s performances to engender a collaborative relation, this research attempts to propose how the female body of a Go-Go dancer combined with materials such as costumes and shoes, generates agencies that can be disruptive to gender norms in Japan.

Paper 3: *Burning Spirits, Resurrecting Souls: Death, Memory, and Punk Rock Afterlife*

Robert Dahlberg-Sears, Adjunct Lecturer, Sophia University

“Punk is old music,” as a one-off comment from a brief field visit does not seem to offer the same level of punch as the more well-known “punk is dead” – but does it need to? In Japan, where almost 30% of the population is over the age of 65 and with that statistic set to steadily increase over the next few decades, “old age” and “death” are fellow travelers. Considered alongside the ever more frequent passing of high-profile punk performers in recent years, such as Endoh Michiro (The Stalin) in 2016 or Sakurai Atsushi (BUCK-TICK) just this past month, the question becomes: if punk is old now, how will it be memorialized when it eventually passes? What is bequeathed in that passing? Does punk still live beyond death?

In exploring these questions, this presentation describes the recent 19th annual “Chelsea Night” memorial live show held at Shinjuku LOFT, the seichi “holy ground” of punk in Japan, by members of leading “Burning Spirits” movement band DEATH SIDE. The band reunifies approximately once a year specifically for this event to celebrate their former guitarist, “Chelsea,” calling on punks to discursively resurrect the departed on-stage and through performance. Though bacchanalic in intensity, the site provides keen insight into one possible future for the maintenance of popular musics with small followings in Japan. Through memory and song the participants resurrect and revivify not only the departed, but punk music’s soul – communal belonging.

SESSION 2: SATURDAY, 1:30 to 3:00

Panel 4: Teaching Japan (1) (Room 1357)

(linked with Panel 7 below)

This is the first of two panels introducing the forthcoming book, Teaching Japan: A Handbook (MHM Limited/Amsterdam University Press, forthcoming 2024)

Chair: **Greg Poole**, Professor, Doshisha University

Paper 1: *Introduction to Teaching Japan: Critical Pedagogy as Public, Scholarly Engagement*

Ioannis Gaitanidis (Assistant Professor, Chiba University); **Greg Poole** (Professor, Doshisha University)

The scholarly purpose of the study of “Japan,” its pedagogical value, its political ideologies, and its place in academic institutions has now been debated for nearly three decades. A recent Association for Asian Studies digital roundtable, “The Rebirth of Japanese Studies”, concluded that “just as there is no single answer as to what Japanese Studies is, there is no single answer as to what it can be”. From “Anti-Area Studies” to “Liquid Area Studies”, the hegemonical persistence of socially and ideologically produced “areas” in the twenty-first century, has led scholars like Tessa Morris-Suzuki, to re-appraise the critical potential of studies framed around geo-political space. But we— as academics at Japanese universities where “Japan” forms a significant lens through which undergraduate curricula taught in either/both Japanese and English are framed— feel that despite the rich history of critical discussion around “researching Japan,” there is not yet a comprehensive guide for taking these scholarly debates into the undergraduate, and (often) non-Japanese Studies, classroom. This then was the impetus for this forthcoming interdisciplinary collection of pedagogical case studies titled, *Teaching Japan: A Handbook*. We will be joined by seven of our chapter authors as well as the managing director of the publisher, Mark Gresham.

Paper 2: *On Pedagogy and the Personal: Teaching Media, the Nation, and Globalization about/in Japan*

Stevie Suan, Associate Professor, Hosei University

This chapter details the pedagogical background and class structure of the 300-level class “Media and the Nation,” which interrogates the concept of the nation through the examination of different media in the context of modern Japan. It also provides an overview of another class that developed out of it, “Media and Globalization,” which focuses on one media (anime) and how it is riddled with transnational dynamics, even if it is closely associated with Japan. These classes were

designed to give students some tools to think about the national and how it is inextricable from transnational interconnections and global contexts. The aim was to explore how the national frame operates, specific examples of where it manifests, the fault lines it can reveal, its intersections with different patterns of transnationality and globalization, how these all shift over time and have enduring relevance to their daily lives.

Paper 3: *Disentangling “Japanese Religion” in the Classroom*

Satoko Fujiwara, Professor, University of Tokyo; **Ioannis Gaitanidis**, Assistant Professor, Chiba University

This chapter suggests replacing existing literature that tries to identify key characteristics of “Japanese religion(s)” with seven conceptual dichotomies that reflect recent developments in the critical and scholarly study of contemporary religion in general. Asking students to think about the dichotomies upon which discourses on “Japanese religion” usually rest allows them to understand how binaries do not pre-exist the phenomena that we are studying but are constructed during the process we undertake in interpreting and explaining these phenomena to an audience. By using Japan as a case study and by linking recent research to theoretical concepts such as orientalism, subaltern religion, lived religion, and others, the authors offer therefore a framework for overcoming the outmoded tendency to treat “Japan” and “religion” as sui generis entities.

Panel 5: The New Stuff (Room 1358)

Chair: **Paul Hansen**, Professor, Akita University

Paper 1: *Structural Violence as Experienced by Street-involved Youth. An Intersectional Analysis of Tōyoko Kids in Kabukichō, Tokyo, Japan*

Yoshiko Taniguchi, MA candidate, International Christian University

Located in eastern Shinjuku, Kabukichō is a red-light district known for its adult entertainment services - including bars, host and hostess clubs (kyabakura), love hotels, and other sex-oriented businesses. While Kabukichō has remained a significant cultural and entertainment hotspot for adults since the 1960s, early junior high and high school youths who connected through social media began to gather in Kabukichō around 2018. These youths are referred to as Tōyoko Kids and have gained national attention after media coverage for their at-risk and criminal behavior. While some media sources may portray Tōyoko Kids as reckless, irresponsible youth, in reality, there are structural issues that lead to at-risk behavior. This research investigates Tōyoko Kids using intersectional approaches with a focus on at-risk behaviors and papa katsu as a form of survival sex work experienced by female Tōyoko Kids. This research analyzes narratives as collected on various social media platforms, as social media is a key tool for these youths to find their communities and potential clients of sex work. Moreover, given that the Tokyo Metropolitan Government has addressed new policies regarding Tōyoko Kids, this paper also focuses on to what

extent they are effective, and what “effective” means in this context - who do these policies benefit? Through this research, I aim to shed light on social inequalities faced by young, female Tōyoko Kids who are, structurally, the most vulnerable to various forms of violence in this patriarchal and hierarchical society.

Paper 2: *The Quietness of Mindfulness? Between Sitting Still and Social Activism*

Silke R.G. Hasper, PhD candidate, Heidelberg University

Mindfulness has become a billion dollar industry. In Europe and the US, mindfulness has become a central trope deeply intertwined with the neoliberal narrative of the pursuit of happiness. Dominant elements of this trope are the narrative of a Buddhist origin of mindfulness in Asian countries and the depiction of Japan as a culture based on mindfulness are. However, mindfulness in the contemporary use of the term (maindofurunesu) is a new phenomenon in Japan.

This paper challenges binary views of East/West, tradition/modernity, and science/religion through an examination of discourses on and practices of mindfulness in contemporary Japan. The paper presents data collected through extensive fieldwork in different mindfulness groups in the Greater Tokyo Area.

Critics argue that mindfulness would train practitioners to quieten their emotions and to accept the status quo. Mindfulness teachers on the other hand claim that cultivating mindfulness as a skill makes you more aware of your surroundings, which in turn would lead to social activism. Among the examined groups are groups that combine mindfulness meditation with a vision for a brighter future – a future in which everyday life, businesses, and social activism are improved due to a combination of mindfulness, technology, and community.

The paper asks, what people do when they claim to practice mindfulness, how these practices produce meaning, and how Japanese mindfulness practitioners position their practice within the global mindfulness movement. The paper also discusses how to analyze mindfulness between addressing it as a concept and addressing it as a bodily practice.

Paper 3: *Loosely connected: participating to social art practices and art-based research*

Kukiko Nobori, JSPS Research Fellow, Kyoto City University of Arts

This presentation will argue how “art” has been loosely connecting people and realize a new situation. Both social art practices and art-based research are relatively new developments since the 2000s. The former is usually led by an artist collaborating with residents to work on local issues. There have been various discussions concerning social art practices or so called socially-engaged art in the field of art history and art criticism. Those arguments are often focused on its morality and aesthetics. The latter is a research method using various art or creative practices including drawing, painting, theater, music, or more experimental, cross-genre activities. Art-based research has been discussed more widely in such disciplines as sociology, pedagogy as well as art therapy and those are focusing largely on methodologies. Social art practices and art-based

research share similarities in those processes and outcomes. I will consider how participants experience the collaborative practices and what changes they find in working with other people.

The case study I refer to here is an art project in which high school students worked on the theme of mental health. They studied mental health collaboratively with other participants and artists then prepared installations by groups. Artistic/ creative methods helped them to realize their temporary “ibasho” as well as a creative way of conveying their findings. Another example is a workshop to transcribe the notebooks left by a woman who used to live in a public park in Tokyo. I will discuss how these practices are connecting people in art/creative way.

Panel 6: Deep Thought (Room 1359)

Chair: **Ichiro Numazaki**, Professor, Tohoku University

Paper 1: *Silences out of the Past: Fables of Rescue and the Politics of Historical Memory in Multicultural Japan*

Dylan O’Brien, PhD candidate, University of California at San Diego

Since the 1980s, the story of Sugihara Chiune, former vice-consul for the Japanese Empire in Kaunas, Lithuania, has garnered worldwide attention. The only Japanese person to be recognized as ‘Righteous Among the Nations’ by the International Holocaust Memorial, Yad Vashem, Sugihara wrote thousands of transit visas for Jews fleeing persecution in 1940. Recently, claims that Lieutenant General Higuchi Kiichiro of the Imperial Army is ‘another Sugihara’ have been spreading in Japan. From public broadcaster NHK to an endorsement by late former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, narratives that Higuchi saved 4,000 to 20,000 Jewish refugees are increasingly visible. While Jewish groups in Japan helped drive the initial push to recognize Sugihara, they have been silent about Higuchi. This paper asks: what shapes the different ways that Higuchi and Sugihara have been received by Jews in Japan – and what might this tell us about historical memory in an increasingly multicultural Japan? Focusing on how claims about Higuchi’s heroism often try to recast Japan’s wartime legacy, I present that representations of Jews in narratives about Higuchi are impacting Jewish historical memory of Japanese-Jewish relations, with significant implications for the present. Drawing on my ethnographic fieldwork with Jewish communities in Tokyo, I argue that Jewish communities’ public silence and private dismissal of Higuchi challenges prior scholarship’s contentions that Japanese discourses about Jews stand apart from Japanese-Jewish relations. Conversing with anthropological analyses of silence and refusal, I outline foreign residents’ absences from public debates about them as ethnographic sites to study how Japanese discourses about foreigners shapes the perceptions and politics of people beyond such discourses’ intended audience.

Paper 2: *Are People Protected by God? Do People protect God?*

Chika Mitsuyama (Kamigata), Project Researcher, University of Tsukuba

This presentation reveals a part of the relationship between people and God in modern Japan. It is a common practice for people in Japan to go to shrine or temple to pray, buy charms amongst others. Based on the aforementioned practices it is possible to think that God protects people. However, as some previous research has argued, people are not the only ones who receive protection from God. In this presentation, I will discuss a case of a community in Aomori prefecture. Many Gods are worshiped in this community, among them I focus on the god named Sozen. Sozen has been worshiped for a long time and personifies the history of the people of this area. Therefore it is the proper God to reveal a part of the relationship between God and people. Sozen is a guardian of livestock especially horses and cows. For many years, Aomori, including this community, had been famous for horses. People brought horses and sell to earn money. To pray for their horses to grow up healthily so they can get big money, people worship Sozen. Nowadays, there is no person who brings horses, but they continue holding festivals for Sozen once a year. Why do they continue worshipping Sozen? One of the answers to this question, is suggested by the intimate relationship between people and Sozen. People generally affectionately call Sozen “Osozen-san”, speculate about Sozen’s feelings, and sometimes even “protect” it. This kind of thoughtful consideration between people and God builds relationships.

Paper 3: *Dealing with Commuting: Narratives on Train-ride Experiences in Contemporary Tokyo*
Kunisuke Hirano, Senior Assistant Professor, Keio University

Like it or not, for most people in the greater Tokyo area, taking trains is an essential and mundane act of everyday lives. Some say it is a waste of time, others, such as authors of self-help books, advocate to take advantage of it. The experience of riding is diverse depending on how long you are on board, the space is crowded or now, or if you are in male or female body. Density regulates certain activities people can do during on board. Although not being as comfortable as Starbucks, trains could possibly be a third space. Based on ongoing ethnographic research such as interviewing about train-ride experiences among greater Tokyo residents and on-board observation, this project investigates how people take advantage of *sukima jikan*, such as studying English or preparing for the qualification exam. More broadly, this project asks how individuals show their agency of using train time, which is also a time of compromise and forced time/space in an everyday life. Moving beyond approaches that focus on how trains affect mass behaviors or reinforce national identities, this paper contributes to existing literature by pursuing an in-depth, intimate ethnographic focus on how these third places affect individual well-being and projects of self-development. It also contributes a much-needed intersectional perspective by focusing on how gender, race, and sexual orientation affect people’s subjective experiences of commuting.

LUNCH BREAK 12:30 TO 1:30
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING IN ROOM 1254

SESSION 3: SATURDAY, 3:30 to 5:00

Panel 7: Teaching Japan (2) (Room 1357)

(linked with Panel 4 above)

This is the second of two panels introducing the forthcoming book, Teaching Japan: A Handbook (MHM Limited/Amsterdam University Press, forthcoming 2024)

Chair: **Greg Poole**, Professor, Doshisha University

Paper 1: *Out of Site, Out of Mind? Teaching Ethnography Beyond Japan*

Chris McMorrán, Associate Professor, National University of Singapore

Disciplinary shifts in anthropology toward multi-sited studies complicate what used to be a straightforward category of research: an ethnography of a village, urban neighborhood, factory, school, or business in Japan used to be the ultimate case study of Japan intended to speak to issues (developing theory, for instance) beyond the archipelago and Japanese studies. In more recent years we must ask, does an ethnography of/about Japan have to be based on research solely in Japan? Can we imagine an ethnography solely based on research among expat Japanese, for instance, or research done entirely online (never setting foot in Japan)? Where is the boundary that decides whether something is an “ethnography of Japan”, and is that category still relevant?

Paper 2: *Deconstructing “Japan” through the Lens of Border Crossing*

Tomoko Tokunaga, Associate Professor, University of Tsukuba

In my chapter, as a borderland and feminist scholar and educator, I reflect on the course on border crossing and Japan that I have developed and taught since 2015 to a multilingual audience, oftentimes a mix of students from various ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds. Utilizing concepts related to border crossing, displacement, and community building, the course attempts to deconstruct and reimagine “Japaneseness,” “Japanese society,” and “Japan.” The course encourages students to use theories to unpack and learn one’s own and others’ lived experiences, develop comparative perspectives to explore the identities and experiences of border crossers situated in social, historical, and political contexts, and move beyond the classroom to create connections and networks. Through border crossings and encounters in and out of class, we collaboratively deconstruct and reimagine “Japan” as a more diverse and multicultural society while thinking of ways to build bridges across borders.

Paper 3: *From “Japanese” in the U.S. to “Foreigner” in Japan: Racialized Representation across Time, Place, and Contexts*

Satoko Shao-Kobayashi, Associate Professor, Chiba University

This chapter provides a glimpse of a pedagogical approach to the issues of racialization by using “race” representation in media. I focus on my undergraduate liberal arts course with linguistically and culturally diverse students at a Japanese university as a case study. The two main components of the course are lectures on the history of racialized representations of “Japanese” in the United States and a student group project to make a video on “foreigner” representation in Japan. By intentionally shifting the target contents from “Japanese” in the United States to “foreigners” in Japan, students’ positionality from the audience to the creator, and the active class do-er from me to the students, I help students unlearn their beliefs in “race” and embody a critical and contextual approach to the semiotic representations shaping their “realities.”

Paper 4: *The Visual Anthropology of Japan: In and Outside the Classroom*
Steven C. Fedorowicz, Associate Professor, Kansai Gaidai University

This chapter examines teaching “Visual Anthropology of Japan” in the Asian Studies Program at Kansai Gaidai University from 2006 to 2014 through an autoethnographic account in a global educational setting with international students from over 50 countries alongside local students preparing for their study-abroad programs. Topically, the course was about the presentation and representation of culture through film, photography, and other graphic media within the shifting ecologies of multimodal media, methods, and theory. Teaching “Japan” in this context required several balances: 1) between non-specialist students who find the course difficult and more advanced students who feel they are not sufficiently challenged, 2) between etic and emic perspectives in order to create dialogue in class discussions, and 3) between academic rigor and the “Japanese experience” for international students and the “global experience” for the local students.

Panel 8: Living With Disabilities (Room 1358)

Chair: **Kyle Cleveland**, Professor, Temple University Japan

Paper 1: *Disabilities: A Paradigm Shift*

Mary Reisel, Rikkyo University, Stanford Design Thinking

Can a change in the perception of the concept “disability” lead to a paradigm shift in the status of people with disabilities? Can this shift create in turn a chain reaction of positive effects in the world?

The study presented was conducted for a commercial business focused on development of hearing devices for different levels of hearing disabilities. The initial goal was a user-centered study intended to test a new product that should be adjusted to various levels of difficulties, from light decrease to complete loss of hearing, as well as to more common problems, such as ringing ears. However, the study encountered an unexpected reaction when facing a group of users with

heavy hearing disability, who define themselves as a unique minority that uses sign language and refuses to adopt any hearing device. Surprisingly, we discovered there is a growing number of people with various disabilities that strive to shift the image of a disabled weak person who needs support to an empowered individual who belongs to the biggest minority in the world.

At first, I was surprised to learn about the testing results. However, thinking about Bhabha's Third Space and the Japanese concept of Ma, the idea of a new space using new language codes and new communication tools might actually prove to be a door for better understanding in a world that currently needs such a paradigm shift. With an estimated number of around a billion disabilities globally, this trend should be studied much deeper.

The presentation will center on the process of the study, the results, and the implications of changing the concept of "disability" into a "minority".

Paper 2: Supporting Individuals with Autism in Japan: A Personal Insight

Esbén Petersen, non-tenured instructor, Ritsumeikan University

Since my arrival in Japan in 2015, I have had the chance to be actively engaged with two distinct organizations dedicated to working with individuals on the autism spectrum. The first, KISWEC (Kyoto International Social Welfare Exchange Center), is a well-established private institution with financial backing from the Kyoto City government. The second, Team Lenny, is a grassroots family initiative led by parents of a child on the autism spectrum, and supported by a team of students, mothers, and company volunteers. These two organizations offer divergent philosophies regarding the provision of services for individuals with autism. In this presentation, I delve into an exploration of the distinctive approaches taken by these organizations in treating and accommodating individuals with autism. The aim of this paper is from an anthropological approach to reflect on each of the valuable experiences I have made from working at each organization and consider their implications for improving support systems for individuals with autism in Japan.

Paper 3: Creating Communities of Care

Benjamin Dorman, Professor, Nanzan University

This paper considers two autoethnographic case studies that concern the creation and maintenance of communities that aim to support children with developmental disabilities (*hattatsu shōgai*). The first case involves "Team Lenny," a group of volunteers that comprised of students, company workers, and homemakers who helped my family support our autistic son Lenny. The second concerns Tokotoko, an NPO in Aichi, which runs facilities that support young children with developmental disabilities. Using our experiences with Team Lenny, my wife and I teach and work with the staff who care for the children while their parents are at work.

While the purpose of these communities is to support children and families with special needs, they also share the challenge of seeking and obtaining local and national government support for

the specific needs of individuals. While this challenge faced by parents and carers is certainly not limited to Japan, Japan does lag behind other countries in key areas, particularly financial support. Although I was told by a medical doctor some years ago that Japan was “primitive” in its approach to autism, with the growth of online communities sharing more information about different modalities of care, I believe the situation is gradually changing for the better.

Ultimately, this paper aims to present a somewhat positive perspective of the future in terms of disability care. This perspective acknowledges challenges faced by carers yet offers stories of hope that can arise when communities bound by a common purpose work together.

Panel 9: Big Theory (Room 1359)

Chair: **David Uva**, Assistant Professor, Doshisha University

Paper 1: *Cultural Relativism 3.0: The Principle of Intrapersonal Relativity*

Ichiro Numazaki, Professor, Tohoku University

This paper argues that cultural relativism is still viable and vital for contemporary life but not as a principle of inter-societal interaction and “cross-cultural” understanding but as a mitigating principle of intrapersonal conflict and contradiction in the age of globalization and transnationalization. The classic cultural relativism or Cultural Relativism 1.0 developed by Franz Boas and his students stipulated that each and every culture as a genuine “way of life” of any particular society with its own set of unique values and standards is equally valid and worthy of respect and therefore cannot be judged or criticized on the basis of a different set of values and standards of other ways of life.

This classic view has been repeatedly criticized since the mid 20th century, but Michal F. Brown in his 2008 article, “Cultural Relativism 2.0,” attempted to reformulate cultural relativism as “a rule of thumb that when used prudently serves the limited but indispensable function of keeping anthropology attentive to perspectives that challenge received truth.” In doing so, Brown argues that especially in today’s world “much of humankind is enmeshed in at least two overlapping cultural systems simultaneously” and therefore Boasian presupposition of “one society, one culture” is no longer tenable. “All societies demonstrate internal diversity with respect to behavior and ideology,” Brown also insists, hence “no society lacks some degree of internal tension,” which fact cautions against Boasian premise of cultural integration and the monolithic view of the way of life a people.

Extending Brown’s review of cultural relativism, this paper argues that those individuals enmeshed in two or more cultural systems simultaneously often face interpersonal conflict and contradiction because they have internalized different sets of values and standards and those sets may demand different cultural interpretations of a given situation and proscribe different courses of action which could yield totally different results that may contradict each other. In other yes,

different cultures may clash inside individuals in their daily life and present dilemma. Such a life threatens the integrity or identity of an individual, yet it is not so easily resolved or dissolved.

By giving personal examples of such intrapersonal conflict and contradiction and by illustrating how cultural relativism may ameliorate such a dilemma, I shall argue that cultural relativism today is more relevant to intrapersonal tensions than to intersocietal ones and that cultural relativism 3.0 as a new personal rule of thumb may guide you to live a rich and diverse life by offering much wider range of interpretation and much greater number of choices, if it also makes your life more complicated and reflexive.

Paper 2: *Japan's theoretical subjugation to America: A comparison of the Nihonjinron with post-colonial theories*

Christian Etzrodt, Associate Professor, Osaka University

The aim of this presentation is to compare core elements of the *Nihonjinron* - a public discourse about the essence of the Japanese culture, which was very popular in Japan from the 1960s to the 80s - with post-colonial theories - which became popular in the late 1980s and is still important today at American universities. Both theoretical traditions share an epistemological critique of Western approaches to analyze the world. Japanese advocates of the *Nihonjinron* claimed that Westerners cannot understand Japan, whereas post-colonial theorists stated that Northerners commit violence by analyzing the South. Both traditions emphasize the importance of subjective experiences and reject the quantifying sciences of the West. Both see the West as morally corrupt and believe that the West lacks humanity. Finally, both are strictly Anti-Marxist and nationalistic. However, despite these strong similarities between these two theoretical traditions, they differ dramatically in their evaluation by American academics. Post-colonial thought is celebrated in US elite universities, whereas the *Nihonjinron* is ridiculed and hated.

Why did American academics evaluate those two traditions so differently? One reason could be that the *Nihonjinron* was cultivated by Japanese elites, which could not be so easily controlled by the Americans. In order to subjugate Japan economically it was important to discredit the Japanese self-perception. Today, we know that the Americans were successful in the destruction of the *Nihonjinron*. And as a result, the Japanese have lost the ability to reflect on themselves.

Paper 3: *Self-Reflection on Facts of Life: An Ethnographic Approach to Human and Organizational Health*

Takeshi Tamaki, Professor, Nara Prefectural University

The purpose of this study is to understand the factors that contribute to individual and organizational health. To achieve this, I will focus on the 're-work program' offered by a welfare facility called BowL (Bridge Okinawa with Life), where I have conducted my fieldwork for the past three years.

According to Yoshio Igarashi, the President of the Japan Depression Re-work Association, the re-work program is a treatment system that was initially introduced in the medical field in response to the rapid increase in the number of depressed patients in the 2000s. Later, it spread to the welfare field. The number of facilities offering re-work programs has gradually increased since 2010 when they were covered by insurance. BowL was founded in 2013, making it the first private company to offer this program in Okinawa.

My time at BowL has taught me that 'self-reflection' is the cornerstone for comprehending and sustaining good health. For service users, this entails thoughtful consideration of their bodies, emotions, thoughts, and actions, similar to the principles of cognitive-behavioral therapy. On the other hand, staff members engage in regular meetings to evaluate their practices, with the primary objective being an understanding of their genuine needs rather than a focus on identifying faults for immediate correction.

The central question of this study is as follows: What role does self-reflection play in promoting human health, and how does this reflective process operate at both the individual and organizational levels?

KEYNOTE ADDRESS (ROOM 1254)

5:15 to 6:30

“Is Japan Doomed? And Anthropology?”

John McCreery

Independent Scholar

On January 1, 1997, the Nikkei started a front-page series with an article titled 2020 からの警鐘：日本が消える (Warning Bell from the Year 2020: Japan disappears). Yet here we are at a conference with a title that suggests a similar fear. What can anthropologists contribute to the conversation surrounding this fear, a debate in which economists, political scientists, management consultants and marketing researchers are already active participants? Stay tuned.

* John McCreery is a long-standing member of AJJ. Born in 1944, he graduated from Michigan State University with a B.A. in Philosophy in 1966 and received his Ph.D. in Anthropology from Cornell University in 1973. But around the start of the 1980s his career took a sharp turn into the business world, where he became an English-language copywriter (later International Creative Director) at Hakuhodo, Japan's second largest advertising agency. In 1984, he and his wife Ruth McCreery founded The Word Works, Ltd., a Japanese-to-English translation company that now specializes in art-related materials. His book, *Japanese Consumer Behavior: From Worker Bees to Wary Shoppers*, was published in March 2000 as part of the ConsumAsiaN Series (Curzon Press, UK; University of Hawaii Press, USA).

SESSION 4: SUNDAY, 10:00 to 11:30

Panel 10: Multicultural Japan (Room 1401)

Chair: **Beverley Yamamoto**, Professor, Osaka University

Paper 1: *Capturing Our Realities: A photobook project with migrant youth in Japan*

Satoko Shao-Kobayashi, associate professor, Chiba University; **Tomoko Tokunaga**, University of Tsukuba; **Ayako Sasaki**, Associate Professor, Chiba University

Over the past decade, a rapid increase in the number of children and youth from overseas in the school system has been observed in Japan. However, there is a shortage of Japanese language learning opportunities and developmentally/culturally/linguistically appropriate materials for them. It is not surprising that they often experience disconnection from their surroundings. How can we collaborate with these children and youth to articulate their voices and feel connected with their surroundings? What can mainstream teachers, students, and community residents learn from these children and youth's situations?

Building on the theories and practices of participatory action research (PAR) to tackle these challenges by actively reflecting and (re)constructing their voice, place, and belongingness (e.g., Tokunaga, Machado Da Silva & Fu, 2022), we decided to create a read-out-loud photobook aiming to help liberate, visualize, and reconnect the voices of migrant youth, which fell in between countries, languages, cultures, and education systems.

Participants of this project are migrant youth (16 to 20 y/o) enrolled in an NPO-run program, where they study Japanese and prepare for the high school entrance exam in greater Tokyo. The participants collaboratively engaged in making a photobook by learning how to take photos of materials/environments shaping their realities and writing short essays about them in simple Japanese and their primary languages. In this presentation, we share the process and product of our project and how the youth participants (re)view and (re)envision their realities in Japan.

Paper 2: *Digital Realms and Family Bonds: Information Reliance Among International Students in Japan*

Shiyun Zhang, PhD candidate, Osaka University

In today's digital age, international students in Japan have undergone a profound transformation in their information consumption patterns. This paper explores the shifting dynamics of how these students access and engage with news and information, revealing a departure from traditional sources and an increasing reliance on digital platforms and social media.

Through comprehensive data analysis, this paper investigates the catalysts behind this transformation, emphasizing the impact of digitalization, the interconnectedness of the global

media landscape, and the digital skills of this new generation. It delves into the experiences of international students as they navigate life in Japan, shedding light on the multifaceted implications of their internet-driven information reliance.

Notably, the paper also uncovers an intriguing facet of this transition: the influence of international students' parents and families. With the internet bridging geographical divides, families now have greater control and involvement in their children's lives and educational journeys. This feature sets apart today's international students from their predecessors, reshaping the dynamics of studying abroad and family support networks.

As the narratives within this paper unfold, they illustrate the opportunities for cross-cultural connections, content personalization, and the challenges related to source authenticity and information credibility that come with internet reliance. This transformation has far-reaching implications, extending to the role of traditional news outlets and the urgent need for media literacy education tailored to the digital age.

This paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the evolving media landscape and the international student experience in a digital age. It underscores the need for adaptive media literacy education and strategies while highlighting the unique role of the internet in connecting international students with their families and reshaping the study abroad experience.

Paper 3: How Nikkei Food Emerged in Peru: Immigrant Narratives and Culinary Identities

Ayumi Takenaka, Professor of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Hitotsubashi University

This paper examines the emergence of a new cuisine called Nikkei food. Broadly defined as Japanese and Peruvian fusion food, Nikkei food proliferated globally as the food of the Japanese diaspora. Even though the Japanese (or Nikkei) community in Peru is not as numerous or visible as that in Brazil and the United States, why did this cuisine emerge in Peru?

An answer lies in Peru's gastrodiploamacy, as I have argued elsewhere. Through various culinary campaigns, the Peruvian government has actively promoted their food, placing Nikkei food as part and parcel of it. Yet another important reason to be explored is the role of the Japanese-Peruvian community that has capitalized on it by claiming Nikkei food as their own. How do they promote and talk about 'their food,' and to what extent does it reflect what they consume at home? In this paper, I address these questions based on interviews and cookbooks I found in the Japanese-Peruvian community, in addition to participant-observation in a recent Nikkei food festival in Lima, Peru.

Japanese Peruvians promote Nikkei food by constructing a narrative that it is a product of their unique immigration history and arduous effort to adapt in Peru. They also draw on resources from Japan where they claim the roots of their food. The food they promote may be far from what they consume at home or what their immigrant ancestors brought from Japan. But by collectively promoting it to the public, they have been able to cement their community and identities.

Panel 11: Sustaining Rural Life (1) (Room 1402)

Chair: **John Mock**, Adjunct Professor, Temple University Japan

Paper 1: *Bangaku: A Case Study in Rural and Cultural Identity in the Time of Population Decline*
Ben Grafstrom, Research Fellow, University of Oslo

Bangaku is the name of a particular folk performance that is practiced at the base of Akita's Mt. Taihei. Bangaku is thought to have been brought to the region by shugenja mountain ascetics. This is no coincidence: Taihei is believed to be a sacred mountain and the dwelling place of the deity Miyoshi-no-Ōkami, thus making it a shugenja pilgrimage site.

Today, however, local children perform bangaku, as they have for generations. As such, bangaku plays an important role in forming the community's identity and religious beliefs. While pilgrimages to Taihei have stopped, the mountain and bangaku remain. Due to severe depopulation in the area, however, soon it may be only the mountain left. This leads one to wonder how the loss of the centuries-old bangaku tradition will affect local beliefs, individual and collective identity, and the dynamics of everyday life in rural Japan.

Therefore, I attempt to answer questions such as: what is bangaku's connection to personal and community identity; to what extent does bangaku's connection with sacred beliefs motivate the efforts to preserve it; and, what challenges are specific to rural areas and rural-folk culture as populations continue to decline?

To answer these questions, I draw on data produced using conventional methods (interviews with bangaku organizers and performers) as well as slightly unconventional methods (analysis of poetry written by a local poet and bangaku expert). The fieldwork research I present in this paper will be directly incorporated into my doctoral dissertation, which I am writing at present.

Paper 2: *Strength in belief? Veiled faces from a forgotten place, Akita*
Kaeko Chiba, Associate Professor, Akita International University

Akita is known as a place for good rice and for its celebrated *Namahage* demons, but it is also known as the place for the worst depopulation, one of the significant low-income areas, and with the highest rates of hikikomori and suicide in Japan. In downtown Akita city, seniors in their 80s tend to outnumber younger residents. A local elementary school 10 minutes' drive from the Akita station will be closed in 2024. Does my vision match the pessimistic view? Or is there a brighter future? This paper presents how farmers and artisans in Akita perceive their lives based on interviews from the Akita digital archives and inbound tourism research project 2023. It aims to find the relevance of *ikigai* (reason for living) among them and further argues its relevance to strength in belief. The experimental study indicated that ritual and its belief can reduce emotional instability, loss of motivation and insecurity. Ikenobo et al. (2015) further stated that appreciating a sense of seasonal materials, using the five senses by touching or seeing, using hand tools, and interacting with other people are possible contributing factors for maintaining a healthy mental condition. This paper sheds light on how locals utilize their rituals, skills and beliefs to survive in Akita. This research commenced in January 2022; participant observation and interviews have

been conducted as the first phrase. This presentation will also share the methodological challenges relating to shame and honor that have arisen in creating the digital archives.

Paper 3: *Long-term fertility decline: historical, global, and local perspectives*

David S. Sprague, Research Specialist, National Agriculture and Food Research Organization, Tsukuba

Human populations have experienced many waves of growth and decline throughout history. Population in Japan stabilized during the Edo period, grew rapidly from the Meiji, and now faces persistent decline. Fertility decline in modern societies, however, is not new. It started about 150 years ago with growing urbanization and industrial economies. For economists and biologists this trend presents a dilemma: why is fertility declining as wealth grows? Hypotheses abound in the social sciences. For anthropologists digging into the nitty-gritty of everyday life in Japan of the young and their parents through to the elderly, fertility decline is maybe not such a mystery. This paper reviews recent data on fertility decline in Japan at global to local scales, and focuses on a life-course perspective proposing that even as our economies produce apparent wealth we are living in a form of ecological poverty where the trade-offs in life just cannot be resolved.

Panel 12: 21st Century Creativity (Room 1403)

Chair: **Andreas Riessland**, Professor, Nanzan University

Paper 1: *Co-producing nostalgia and the pitfalls of transcultural collaboration between Japanese and Chinese animation studios*

Reijiro Aoyama, Adjunct professor, Chinese University of Hong Kong; **Royce Ng**, PhD candidate, City University of Hong Kong

This paper dissects the use of nostalgia as a narrative convention in a recent Sino-Japanese co-produced animation to understand the problematic approach of the Japanese animation industry to collaboration with Chinese animation studios and engagement with the Chinese market. The nostalgic style of Japanese animation since the 1990s should be understood as a critical mode of cultural production which is indicative of the medium's attempt to productively analyze and critique contemporary Japanese society. However, when this nostalgic style as a mode of critique is applied to the cultural context of mainland China, it results in a visual aesthetic convincingly recognizable as true to the style and conventions of anime, albeit one that appears shallow and clichéd in its aestheticization of China's modernization through Japan. The film's mobilization of nostalgia as an expression of transcultural Sino-Japanese creativity serves to perpetuate developmental hierarchies between Japan and China, while also being symptomatic of Japan's crisis of identity vis-à-vis the competing modernity of China which challenges its hegemonic status in the region. Through a close visual analysis this paper demonstrates how the friction between the nostalgic mode (or style) of Japanese anime the nostalgic mood (or sentiment) embodied in Chinese cultural details undermines not only the films creative quality and commercial potential,

but also the Sino-Japanese filmmakers' attempts to develop a coproduction model which can creatively synthesize each other's respective cultures.

Paper 2: *"Free Companies": Belonging, Intimacy, and Social Drama in a Japanese Virtual World*
Mattias van Ommen, Assistant Professor, Doshisha University

In the era of digital connectivity, online gaming platforms have emerged as vibrant virtual communities, enabling players to forge deep social connections. Meanwhile, individuals navigating "offline" Japanese society face various institutionalized pressures, such as endemic sexism, competitive school examinations, and exhausting work routines. This study draws on long-term ethnographic research in and on a Japanese virtual world to explore how participants establish a sense of belonging, distinct from offline institutions.

Specifically, I focus upon the popular "Final Fantasy XIV", where players form sub-communities called "Free Companies" that feature as centers of belonging: "ibasho". Unlike offline communities like workplaces, schools, or families, these communities can be easily created, modified, or disbanded. However, this autonomy necessitates leaders to invest considerable effort dealing with various conflicts, sometimes resulting in communities falling apart. Analyzing these conflicts as a type of "social drama" (Victor Turner), I investigate how participants feel deeply involved with their Free Companies, prioritizing their sustenance above all else.

Responding to the Call for Papers, then, I consider specific avenues in which advanced technologies may help tech-savvy Japanese create meaningful spaces of belonging, even when this means settling for "mediocrity" in engagement with offline institutions like family, work, and school. While headlines might be dominated by quantitatively driven stories about how much time young people spend online, a qualitative focus on the social worlds people are actually building there will reveal much about what people increasingly fail to find offline.

Paper 3: *Can Japan contribute to global, open science?*
Rebecca Carlson, Associate Professor, Toyo University

"Open science" defines efforts to make science accessible, particularly globally. Its aim is to overcome a pervasive inequality of access to scientific information, practices, techniques, resources and materials. Indeed, most scientific practice remains channeled by, or within, national investments, infrastructures and borders. With the rise of computational practices in the natural sciences, such as for the study of human genetics, access to large global data sets and transnational collaborations is becoming essential to advance research. In Japan, despite government promotion for globalization in areas such as scientific research, bioscientists describe a different story from the laboratory. At national institutes, scientists are discouraged from sourcing laboratory materials from outside Japan while transnational collaborations are made more difficult by structural and bureaucratic hurdles. Globalizing science has become equated with metrics for speaking and publishing in English; metrics that remain behind other non-native English speaking countries.

The promotion of openness seen in recent Olympic advertisements for Japanese-style *omotenashi*, coupled to a simultaneous closing down of cross-border flows, is an inverting of globalization ideals. Drawing on over two years of ethnographic data collection in a small bioscience laboratory near Tokyo, this presentation focuses on the structural barriers which limit Japan's contribution to open science and the ad hoc practices that scientists themselves are creating to facilitate bureaucratic and logistical work arounds.

SESSION 5: SUNDAY, 12:00 to 1:30

Panel 13: China in Japan (Room 1401)

Chair: **Etsuko Kato**, Professor, International Christian University

Paper 1: *Digital Transformation, Skilled Migration, and Mediocre Optimism: Work and Life of Chinese IT Young Professionals in Urban Japan*

Jinjin Zhang, Ph.D candidate, Chinese University of Hong Kong

This paper argues that Japan's digital transformation and population shrinkage provide Chinese IT workers with transnational mobility and 'mediocre optimism'. Digital transformation, referring to the integration of digital technologies into everyday life, has recently gained prominence in Japanese corporate and political discourses as Japan strives to overcome its perceived digital lag. The economic promise behind this discursive shift is increasingly luring migrants, especially those from a hyper-competitive labour market like China, to plunge into the pursuit of alternative mobility and good life.

However, only scant attention has been paid to Japan's digital transformation and its consequences (e.g., Lukács 2020). Drawing on ongoing fieldwork with Chinese IT professionals (predominantly men, aged 25-35, residing in Tokyo, Kanagawa, and Osaka), this study illuminates their nuanced perception of Japan's digital transformation and its influence on their work and life.

The research found that these IT specialists perceive Japan as a digitally mediocre society compared to their home country where data convenience, capitalist efficiency, and centralized management are exchanged for privacy and security. Furthermore, their narratives demonstrate what I term 'mediocre optimism' – contentment with urban infrastructure, confidence in personal competitiveness, and a positive outlook on financial security. However, this optimism is imbued with tension between individual mobility, a sense of belongingness, and concern over family responsibility. Mediocre optimism mirrors Japan's technological prospect, workforce reality, and global competitiveness for which skilled migrants such as Chinese young workers are drawn to for a compromised version of good life.

Paper 2: *"We're not here for jail." Young Chinese Immigrants' Perspectives on Life in Japan*

Meilun Yan, MA candidate, University of Tokyo

It is widely recognized that crossing national borders often leads to people experiencing downward social mobility due to the economic gap between sending and receiving countries, language barriers, and the limited recognition of their educational and work experiences. Mobility usually requires sufficient finances and social connections, which are frequently accessible primarily to those in high societal positions. Recent years have witnessed a notable influx of Chinese immigrants to Japan. Unlike their predecessors who concentrated in Chinatown enclaves, these newcomers, arriving post-2000, have chosen to reside throughout various Japanese cities. They differ from the "hardworking students" of the 1980s, who sought part-time employment primarily for financial gain, as they are motivated by the pursuit of a distinct lifestyle. An analysis based on three years of participant observation and semistructured interviews reveals that young Chinese immigrants can effectively integrate into Japanese society without a significant decline in their social status. A crucial factor contributing to this phenomenon is the narrowing economic gap between China and Japan, alongside increasing levels of transnational economic and cultural exchange. Young Chinese immigrants are utilizing their resources effectively to maintain a comparable quality of life as before. It is generally believed that "we are not here for jail, and we won't give up a quality life while accepting new challenges". This research provides deep insights into the evolving immigrant experience, highlighting the dynamic strategies employed by young Chinese immigrants to establish fulfilling lives in Japan.

Paper 3: *"Call me by my name": Investigating the relationship between Chinese students' name written in Japanese language and their identity construction.*

Yuxi Guo, PhD candidate, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

Names are at the very center of identity construction and crucial to mediate the communication between us and the rest of the world. When we travel to a foreign country as sojourners, our names become the business cards which carry the cultural elements representing where do we come from. However, the spelling, so does the pronunciation, and the meanings change in accordance with the destination we arrive. In Chinese culture, naming is highly personal and has its profound cultural connotation: it should harmonize the time, the place, and the gender, indicate the origin of the family, and inherit auspicious wishes from other family members like health, luck, and good fortune etc. Extant literature has done a thorough discussion on Chinese students' name practicing and their identity construction in Western context where Chinese names are written into English alphabetical letters, which loses its cultural meanings conveyed in Chinese kanji. In this case, students may adopt Western nicknames to avoid mispronunciation or for the easy memory. However, the discussion of this topic in the global south context is still in scarce. Although Chinese students could have their names written in Japanese kanji which is close to how it is written in Chinese, however, the way it is pronounced is largely different from of which in Chinese. The primary goal of this research is to investigate the relationship between name practicing in Japanese language and the identity construction of Chinese students in local context, and to probe their reasons and motivations behind.

Panel 14: Sustaining Rural Life (2) (Room 1402)

Chair: **Kaeko Chiba**, Associate Professor, Akita International University

Paper 1: *Toward Sustainable Terraced Paddy Field Conservation through Urban-rural Exchange: Rice Terrace Communities Wavering between Images and Realities*

Asuka Koizumi, MA candidate, International Christian University

Terraced paddy fields have multiple functions to sustain society, including natural disaster prevention, and have been conserved over the generations. However, the low agricultural productivity of rice terraces imposes a burden on farmers to continue cultivation, and the shortage of successors in the aging and depopulated rural areas has led to an increasing number of abandoned terraced paddy fields. To solve the issue, “tanada owner seido” (Terraced Paddy Field Owner System), the activity to conserve rice terraces through urban-rural exchanges, was started in 1992. Although the owner system initially aimed to promote interaction between urban and rural residents and expand the rice consumer base, previous studies pointed out that it increased farmers’ burden to entertain urban supporters and caused the “commodification” of rice terraces. Therefore, this study examines how the owner system can be an effective way to achieve sustainable conservation of the field. To answer the question, this study conducted unstructured interviews and participant observation in four cases in Niigata prefecture. The research results show the diversified practices of the owner system. Some owner systems reinforce traditional images of “rurality” and “commodification.” However, some utilize the workforce of participants to support farming work, which results in the conversion between subjects and objects of consumption. In conclusion, this study argues the importance of hard-core involvement in farming work and the formation of an urban supporters’ community, proposing new ways for people outside the region to get involved in the conservation more directly.

Paper 2: *Liminal liminality and the problem of belonging in rural Hokkaido*

Paul Hansen, Professor, Akita University

This paper focuses on the problem of belonging; the elusiveness of finding a social, political, or economic foothold for many people, native and newcomer, in rural central Hokkaido today. As the paper call for this AJJ highlights, Japan as a whole is facing a number of now well known, oft discussed, yet seldom positively acted upon social and political issues. There is an aging population, a dwindling taxable working population and rural depopulation. The obvious answer to this was international migration. Was because the response has been a defacto resolute reluctance to immigration by the central government for decades opting instead, for example, to continue programs such as TITP that have widely been equated with human trafficking schemes. If that were not bad enough, other hindrances to migration now include a reputation for conservatism bordering on xenophobia, stagnant wages, inflation, a drop in education funding, and the worst exchange rate in decades. The government is slowly learning that Japan is now being passed up by would be migrants and students. Anne Allison’s *Precarious Japan* (2013) was critiqued as overly dystopian a decade ago, it now seems too optimistic. Japan, as we have known it, is over. But while Japan from a macro level seems resigned, even resolute, towards its

multivalent decline, there are glimmers of hope on the periphery. This paper is an ethnographic look at the problem young Japanese and non-Japanese face in making a life for themselves in Tokachi, Hokkaido and how some individuals construct rewarding lives amidst broader national problems.

Paper 3: *Shinkyō: the trajectory of a Japanese commune over 100 years*

Michael Shackleton, associate professor (retired), Osaka Gakuin University

Shinkyō (心境) is a community founded in the mid 1930's in a village just outside Haibara, Nara Prefecture. It is regularly described as a 'commune' (kyoudoutai) but lacks most of the political radicalism associated with the term. It was founded by four families at odds with the head of the leading family and the local branch of Tenri-kyō. This led to ostracism/murahachibu). Just how Shinkyō managed to survive & thrive against all the odds, is the subject of a fascinating book by David Plath, 'Sensei and his People', 'sensei' being Ozaki sensei, the key leader until his death 30 years ago. However Plath only covers the story until about 1975. Shinkyō has continued to develop and surprise observers over the subsequent 50 Years.

This paper tries to summarise Shinkyō's remarkable trajectory against the backdrop of how Japan has also been changing. It found respect & widespread interest from the 1950's, when it founded the first school in Nara Prefecture for mentally handicapped children. In due course it also became a home for mentally handicapped adults, and set up workshops to provide them with jobs. More recently, it has also become a home for the elderly, meeting not only the needs of ageing members but also the surrounding community.

However, making Shinkyō useful and giving it a future has also inevitably led to 'institutionalisation'. Communal life is no longer as central to Shinkyō as before. Although Shinkyō legally remains the shared property of the original four family collective, very few members of the four families remain attached to Shinkyō. It now employs many outsiders and many Shinkyō members no longer live in Shinkyō itself, but in nearby villages and commute. Staff can seem more focused on the growing corpus of legislation for care homes rather than the intense memory and motivations of the founding families....

I will try to suggest that the reality is a bit more nuanced. Shinkyō remains special, if compared with other homes for the handicapped or elderly. The general expectation is that it risks losing all this when the current Director retires, and thus 'fade into black' like so many other family-based institutions.

I hope to leave time for plenty of Q&A. In particular, I will welcome examples & insights on this broader question of family-run institutions, which may burn brightly for two or three generations, and then either fade away or need to be re-invented.

Panel 15: It's Hard to Be a Woman (Room 1403)

Chair: **Sachiko Horiguchi**, Professor, Temple University Japan

Paper 1: *Life of Marginalized and Stigmatized Women in Past and Present Japan: Struggling for Survival Amidst Turbulent Waters*

Agnese Dionisio, PhD candidate, Waseda University

Sexism and misogyny continue to afflict Japanese society. Contemporary manifestations of sexism have deep historical roots, tracing back to the Meiji Constitution and Japan's ambivalent attitudes toward prostitution and the roles and worth of women. The belief that women are inherently inferior to men and should cater to their every need has taken shape in seemingly opposing yet fundamentally similar ways: the ideal of the “good wife, wise mother” and the promotion of prostitution businesses that are more accurately defined as systems of civilian slavery. These eventually transformed into the well-known system of military sexual slavery during and after the Asia-Pacific War. Throughout history, blame has consistently been attributed to the victim rather than the perpetrator. In contemporary discussions surrounding the long-standing issues related to the so-called “comfort station” system, misogynistic sentiments are glaringly evident, as evidenced by statements from influential figures in Japan. Even within activist circles, formerly prostituted women tend to face stigmatization, disregarding the decades of abuse and violence these women endured. What is even more disheartening is that this mindset persists today and is reflected in the harsh judgments imposed on prostituted women compelled to work in various establishments, from hostess clubs to the adult video industry. In this presentation, I aim to amplify the voices of marginalized women, granting them the recognition they rightfully deserve, while addressing past and present misconceptions that have hindered the development of strong support systems in Japanese society.

Paper 2: *Suffering and Conflicts of Women Priests in Jinja Shinto*

Koure Makita, PhD candidate, Keio University

The number of women priests in Jinja Shinto has continually increased since women became eligible for the priesthood in 1946. As of 2020, about 17% of the priesthood was female; yet, Shinto society remains androcentric, as evidenced by the distribution of booklets promoting LGBT discrimination in 2022 by the Shinto Political League, which also opposed to husbands and wives using different surnames. Some previous works have highlighted the male domination of Jinja Shinto centering on Jinja-Honcho, the association of Shinto shrines.

In this context, women priests often confront various difficulties. The purpose of this research is to describe the challenges that they encounter on a daily basis and how they cope with them. The study is based on fieldwork I conducted mainly in the Saga prefecture since December 2022.

In the 21st century, discussions of morality and ethics in anthropology have focused on the “goodness” of individual decisions and choices. This research adopts this perspective to

analyze how the women priests contend with problems due to gender inequalities in Jinja Shinto society, including sexual harassment and a lack of recognition of their fully fledged priesthood, particularly through conflicts with Shinto norms. Furthermore, the paper explores how the suffering of women priests is addressed or not in Shinto contexts.

Paper 3: *Marriage-hunting: intimacy at the nexus of state and market forces*

Anna Wozny, postdoctoral fellow at Tokyo College at the University of Tokyo

This paper explores the entanglements of economic and political forces in the formation of intimate relationships by drawing on the case of Japanese “marriage-hunting” industry. Marriage-hunting (*konkatsu*), a term originally coined by sociologist Yamada Masahiro, encompasses myriad private and public sector services that facilitate heterosexual romantic relationships for a fee. Against the backdrop of rapid population decline and aging, marriage-hunting has additionally been defined as an arena with the potential to boost Japan’s marriage—and, by extension, childbirth—rates. Drawing on nine months of multi-site ethnographic fieldwork in Japan, including participant observation in marriage-hunting events and interviews with industry professionals as well as men and women who use these dating services, I demonstrate how the marriage-hunting market implicates individual desires in state reproduction. Specifically, I show how marriage-hunting professionals 1) mobilize population science to link individual experiences to state goals, and 2) rely on discourses of quantification and economization to portray marriage-hunting as a competitive marketplace. I then show how this conceptualization of marriage-hunting as a *market* influences individual perceptions of status and desirability. Ultimately, I argue that the marriage-hunting market contributes to uneven social valuation of men and women depending on a mixture of ascribed and achieved characteristics.

LUNCH AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IN ROOM 1405

SESSION 6: SUNDAY, 2:30 to 4:00

Panel 16: Education at Home and Abroad (Room 1401)

Chair: **Roger Goodman**, Professor, Oxford University

Paper 1: *Reimagining futures of higher education in Japan: a case study of “global university campuses under-one-roof”*

Sachiko Horiguchi, Professor, Temple University Japan, **Choon Kiat Sim** (Professor, Showa Women’s University)

Amongst the prevalent discourses surrounding Japan’s decline have been concerns surrounding the futures of Japanese higher education faced with the demographic crisis and calls for “globalization” of universities in Japan. Key actors pushing “globalization” of higher education across Asia in recent decades have included international branch campuses (IBC) typically established by American, Australian, or British universities. And yet, in the Japanese case, the peak of IBC expansion was back in the 1980s’ “bubble period” which was followed by a series of relatively quick closures, making limited impacts on Japanese higher education landscapes. Against this background, this paper examines the state, challenges, and opportunities of contemporary IBCs located within the grounds of local universities- which we shall call “global university campuses under-one-roof” —in the context of globalization of higher education in Asia. This study is based upon ongoing collaborative fieldwork and interviews we have conducted since 2022, and aims at making sense of the impacts that IBCs “under-one-roof” have made on local host universities in comparison to other patterns of IBCs established across Asia, while highlighting the conflicts, and challenges, and opportunities experienced by the IBCs and local host universities. Through this examination, the paper will unpack the varying meanings, agendas, and possibilities behind “globalization,”—from American imperialism to inward-looking imaginations of “global human resources” in Japan— and will illustrate how they are negotiated at the local level.

Paper 2: *Cosmopolitan language ideology in a state language initiative: Language and population representation in the Japan Foundation’s international promotion of the Japanese language*

Kyoko Motobayashi, Associate Professor, University of Tokyo

A state’s efforts to promote its national language outside its territory constitute an important part of its cultural diplomacy and exercise of soft power. This paper examines the representation of Japanese as an international language and its speakers as ‘Japanese-language-people’ in documents relating to the development of the ‘Japan Foundation Standard for Japanese-Language Education’ (JF standard) since 2005 as a practical guideline for Japanese language education worldwide. The documents were analyzed by discourse analysis while the debate between linguistic cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism is used as an analytical heuristic. The result shows a dual

framing of linguistic space, which rationalizes the international promotion of Japanese language using the two different discourses eclectically. On one hand, the space mediated by the Japanese language beyond the territorial boundaries of the Japanese state is represented as an apolitical cosmopolitan space in which participants, called ‘Japanese language people,’ communicate to obtain ‘mutual understanding’ regardless of their nationality, ethnicity or linguistic proficiency. On the other hand, the ‘global diversity’ that surrounds the Japanese language space is portrayed as a more politicized space, where distinct communities of language and culture coexist in tension, and to which the promotion of Japanese can contribute. These findings will be discussed drawing on the theories of language ideologies in linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics.

Paper 3: *The Role of Cultural Anthropological Study Tours in Intercultural Education at Japanese Universities: The Case of a Study Tour to Papua New Guinea*

Kiyoshi Tadokoro, Professor, Toyo University

Today's Japanese society, with its shrinking population, more people working abroad, and more immigrants, requires more social tolerance for diverse values than ever before. Now, universities are developing their education to respond to such social changes. The undergraduate program to which the presenter belongs offers intercultural education whose goal is to understand the concept of intercultural cohesion. Within this framework, the presenter, as an anthropologist, led a study tour to Papua New Guinea for second year undergraduate students in October 2023. Although Papua New Guinea has close ties with Japan in terms of World War II history and contemporary political and economic relations, study tours have not been conducted very often. The main purpose of this presentation is to report on the activities of the study tour, and also to mention a little about some of the possible roles of overseas study tours in Japanese university education, taking into account the changing nature of contemporary Japanese society.

Panel 17: Sustaining Rural Life (3) (Room 1402)

Chair: **Michael Shackleton**, Associate Professor (retired), Osaka Gakuin University

Paper 1: *New farmers from non-farming families: Analysis of their “lifestyle migration” from the ontological perspectives*

Makoto Osawa, adjunct lecturer, Okayama University

This paper examines why and how new farmers from non-farming families (hereafter, newcomers) in the outskirts of Tokyo, Japan, migrated from urban to rural areas and entered and maintained their farm businesses. In Japan, farming is a family business that is mainly inherited by one family member; however, about 3,000 newcomers enter farming annually. Based on participant observation and semi-structured interviews with 24 newcomers from 2008 to 2014, this paper argues that their involvement in agriculture is part of "lifestyle migration" (Benson & O'Reilly 2009) and the way to achieve their desired lifestyle, which is to live quietly in a peaceful land and

work with a less stressful work style and pace. In addition, their lifestyle migration is possible through the transformation of shared values about labor, food, and agricultural policies. After the bubble economy burst in Japan in the early 1990s, values about food and work were diversified, and preferences for enjoyable work styles and local, organic food emerged. In addition, the Japanese government changed its agricultural policy to encourage the influx of labor from non-farming families by establishing subsidies and training facilities because of the scarcity of labor to maintain domestic agriculture from the conventional resources of labor in agriculture from farming families. This presentation discusses that their "lines of becoming" a newcomer are enabled by the "meshwork" of the transformation of cultural, political, and economic backgrounds (Ingold 2011).

Benson, Michaela and Karen O'Reilly. 2009. 'Migration and the search for a better way of life: a critical exploration of lifestyle migration.' *The Sociological Review* 57(4).

Ingold, Tim. 2011. *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. London: and New York: Routledge.

Paper 2: *The role of international and urban-to-rural migrants in a Japanese rural revitalization project*

Yuki Negi, PhD candidate, University of Tokyo

Although Japan is generally considered to be closed to "foreigners", small rural communities in Japan that are engaged in rural revitalization often see them to work in their revitalization. Also, in one of the most prominent examples of successful rural revitalization in Japan, Ama-cho, Shimane Prefecture, the remote island, where I conducted fieldwork, some international and urban-to-rural immigrants were involved in the rural revitalization as their livelihood.

The purpose of this study is to clarify the role of these immigrants in the rural revitalization, describing and explaining their role as part of the ethnography of the project of rural revitalization. Most of them came to Ama-cho for work as school English teachers or because their partners (whom they met outside the island) decided to migrate to it. The former speak Japanese, but the latter often can't speak Japanese. How do they overcome this and contribute to rural revitalization?

One important actor in Ama-cho is the Japanese urban-to-rural migrants. Due to the revitalization, many migrants are who are highly educated so they can serve as interpreters between local residents and international migrants.

Based on this interaction, the local government offers them jobs in which they are good at, that can connect and contribute to the revitalization of the region. Through their work, international and local migrants are able to participate in the revitalization and become a part of the community. Most of them can balance their own self-realization and playing some social role in rural revitalization.

Paper 3: *To Repopulate or not to Repopulate: That is the Question*
John Mock, Adjunct Professor, Temple University Japan

Many countries in the world have areas, often very substantial ones, that are facing a demographic crisis, often with concomitant economic decline and loss of status on the national stage. In Japan, where the overall population is declining, geographically most of the country is losing population. I have done several decades of research on various areas of Akita, all of which are losing population. Given this base, I will form a comparative framework for Japan, looking primarily at European (mainly in Eastern Europe as well as the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, Central Spain, and several sections of Italy and France) and North America (notably, the Great Plains of the US). Some of these countries are losing population but others, like the United States, are actually still growing

I will address several questions: sustainability; stability (two concepts that apply everywhere), and the very notion of revitalization (as in *machitsukuri*), which assumes regrowth or at least arresting demographic and economic decline is necessarily a good thing. I think this assumption may not always be correct.

I conclude with alternatives and what they might look like in the context of Akita, Japan. I suggest that “repopulation” may, in fact, not be possible everywhere. or even a good thing in many cases. In the case of Akita, I argue that whole areas, particularly in vulnerable mountain areas, should be gradually phased into some sort of national parks both for flora and fauna protection and to help deal with issues such as flooding.

Panel 18: Uses and Abuses of Sex (Room 1403)

Chair: **Mary Reisel**, Special Lecturer, Rikkyo University

Paper 1: *Women’s Consumption of Sex: The Question of Sex Positivism*

Maiko Kodaka, Adjunct lecturer, Sophia University/ Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

This paper investigates the consumption of female-oriented sexual products by female fans of Josei-muke AV, a pornographic genre for women. It explores these fans’ experiences and perspectives on the reception and impact of such products in the adult market, highlighting the challenges Japanese women face when discussing sexual topics and how this affects their ability to explore their interests.

Based on my doctoral research on female fans of male porn stars in Josei-muke AV, it is evident that these fans do not align with the sex-positive discourse in the current landscape of gender and sexuality politics. Instead, they express hesitance toward the idea of “women enjoying sex themselves”, a concept often promoted in advertisements for self-pleasure products aimed at women. Many of my interviewees believe that sexual pleasure should be led by a male partner, echoing Wong and Yau’s analysis (2018) of Japanese AV as “salvage ideology”—the notion that

men are the saviors of female sexual pleasure. This idea has been further amplified by the business collaboration between Josei-muke AV and Josei-muke fūzoku shops, which offer male escort services. This also raises questions about bodily identification in the consumption of pornography.

Through ethnographic research with female fans and women working in the adult industry, this paper provides insights into the complexities surrounding female fans' consumption of sexual content and their pursuit of sexual positivity. It sheds light on the challenges faced by Japanese women in discussing sexual subjects and underscores the importance of addressing pre-existing gender issues.

Paper 2: Dispatches from a Fandom in Crisis: Ethnographic Reflections on Female Fans of Male Idols in the Wake of the Johnny Kitagawa Sexual Abuse Scandal

Thomas Baudinette, Senior Lecturer, Macquarie University, Australia

For seven decades, the idol management agency Johnny and Associates and its male talents have been supposedly “bringing smiles and sensations to [fans’] world[s].” My emerging research on female fans of Johnnys idols – known as *janiwota* – initially focused on theorizing how male idol fandom represents a space replete with empowering, feminist potential within a society which often denies women the right to be the masters of their desires. With the revelation in early 2023 of the widespread sexual abuse of young boys and men training at Johnny and Associates by founder Johnny Kitagawa, however, any feminist theorization of fandom for Johnnys idols must now account for how the smiles brought to its predominantly female fandom were predicated on the alleged suffering of countless vulnerable idol trainees. Within this presentation, I draw upon digital ethnographic observations of fan discourse on social media in the wake of the sexual abuse scandal and participant observations of idol fan events to explore why *janiwota* appear unwilling to distance themselves from the company. While recognizing that most fans condemn the culture of sexual abuse at Johnny and Associates, I reveal that many continue to invest into Johnnys fandom as it represents one of the only outlets where female fans can exercise their agency – sexual, romantic, or otherwise – in Japanese society. Reflecting on the conference theme, I connect the Johnny Kitagawa Sexual Abuse Scandal to the precarious future facing contemporary Japan, particularly as outrage over sexual abuse by powerful men continues to grow around the world.

Paper 3: Silence on sexual offences in Japan

Sayako Ono, Adjunct Lecturer, University of Tokyo

Japan's compliance with global human rights standards, particularly in relation to sexual offences, has been updated, but higher education institutions have been cautious in addressing sexual offences. In 2017, Japan made notable changes to its penal code on sexual offences in the first

revision in over a century, including male victims. In 2023, there was a further revision that introduced the term 'non-consensual sexual intercourse' and raised the age of sexual consent to 16. After Ms. Ito Shiori, an icon of Japan's #MeToo movement, many people came forward, including a former member of the Self-Defence Force and male teen idols. However, they often faced criticism from both the perpetrators and the public. This reaction is rooted in inadequate sex education in educational institutions, including universities.

Although the government mandated sexual violence prevention in schools in 2023, higher education institutions have largely been slow to act. Most offer only harassment counselling, with comprehensive sexual assault prevention efforts largely absent (Miura 2022). This paper argues that a considerable number of students have experienced sexual harassment and assault on/off campus, and what students expect universities to do about it, based on surveys and interviews conducted by universities and myself. I will also mention how student activists and NPOs have called on universities to implement sexual violence prevention programs, but without success. Finally, I discuss how universities are dealing with online harassment, which is becoming more prevalent in the age of social media.

CLOSING PLENARY SESSION, ROOM 1405, 4:15

THE LIVING BUDDHA OF YOKOHAMA

A field tale told by Rey Ventura, journalist, film-maker and adjunct professor, Wako University

The author reflects on his encounter with Nakagami-san, a Yokohama homeless lady that he had known for over thirty years. He introduces his wife Mayumi, whom he had met in the same year and in the same place, to Nakagami-san. The meeting between the two triggers a deeper musing on elderly people's situation in Japan, in general, and the current state of Mrs. Mori (Mayumi's mother). The author compares Mrs. Mori's situation to Nakagami-san's. Drawing on his personal childhood experience, the author dives into a deeper reflection on home, childhood memories, and being homeless.

** While Rey Ventura tells his story, the judges for the Befu and Bookman Prizes will adjourn to room 1401 to try and pick the winners.*

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE WINNERS OF THE BEFU AND BOOKMAN PRIZES

We hope to make this announcement around 4:45, although the results may be delayed and announced on-line up to two weeks later if the judges are unable to reach a decision.

CONFERENCE ENDS

About 5pm