

## **JAWS/AJJ CONFERENCE 2025 HYOGO**

The **Japan Anthropology Workshop/ Anthropology of Japan in Japan** joint Conference will be held in Kobe, from April 4 (Friday) to April 6 (Sunday), 2025.

The conference will be onsite only, centered around the theme: **Ritual Practices and Daily Rituals in Japanese Society**.

The organization of the conference and its program will be managed by Carmen Tamas (University of Hyogo): [tamas@em.u-hyogo.ac.jp](mailto:tamas@em.u-hyogo.ac.jp)

**Venue:** University of Hyogo, Kobe Campus for Commerce, Kobe, Japan

**More organizational details coming up soon.**

### **Call for Panels & Papers**

#### **Ritual Practices and Daily Rituals in Japanese Society**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century began as one of the best periods in the history of humanity, only to be affected two decades in by a pandemic and several wars which deeply impact society as a whole. As anthropologists, our role is to document, interpret, and maybe offer solutions for a better future, and no small part in understanding human patterns of behavior is played by the analysis of ritual and ritual behavior.

During this iteration of the JAWS/ AJJ Conference, we would like to explore the role of ritual and ritual practices in Japanese society from a variety of perspectives. Ritual can be sacred or social, “a form of cultural communication that transmits the cognitive categories and dispositions that provide people with important aspects of their sense of reality.” (Bell 2009) In other words, by analyzing the underlying mechanisms of ritual, one can acquire a better understanding of human society, as well as the universal and culture specific aspects that define our communities. As suggested by Joy Hendry, “in many anthropological studies, ritual and religion are closely related, although in complex societies there is often no particular connection between them, and the term ‘ritual’ may also refer to behaviour, like etiquette, that is decided by society and where individuals have little choice about its execution.”

Ritual has always been a key focus for anthropologists, both worldwide and in Japan. Not so difficult to identify, but open to hundreds of alternative explanations and approaches, it likewise fascinates social psychologists, folklorists, scholars of religion, communication and

the performative arts, and many more. We do not attempt to choose any particular definition, not only because this would be controversial, but also because we want the focus to be on Change. How would you define 'ritual' for the sake of your research, how has it been changing? This is the big debate we want to encourage that can take us towards a deeper and richer understanding of modern Japan and help inspire a wider debate within world anthropology.

With this fairly wide scope in mind, we are looking for papers and panels that explore the various dimensions of ritual (religious practices, societal rules and ceremonies, individual acts that are part of a larger community practice, social acts that acquire ritual value through repetition and formalization, etc.) in Japan.

We also invite presentations from the many other academic disciplines focused upon 'Ritual' if they would appreciate feedback (and empathy) from the truly remarkable body of knowledge shared by JAWS & AJJ, knowing that what we achieve together is what matters most.

Proposals should be sent to [carmen.s.tamas@gmail.com](mailto:carmen.s.tamas@gmail.com) by **December 15**.