

THINKTANK: AJJ's 2026 Fall Workshop

We hope you have been enjoying the annual AJJ conferences. With about 100 to 150 participants and 50 or more presentations in recent years, they have developed into a brilliant opportunity to hear some of the latest and best anthropology research going on here in Japan. And yet, there is a limit to the conference format of 20-minute presentations with 10 minutes for Q&A. Sometimes we are left wishing there were time for harder questions and deeper discussion.

Hence the revived AJJ fall workshop. We've held these events intermittently in the past, with various formats. Now we are reviving it with the specific goal of serious debate on important research. We seek to select FIVE anthropologists currently or recently engaged in fieldwork in Japan, to hear their findings and the challenges they face, and help them develop and publish their ideas.

Here's how it works.

Eight weeks before the workshop, we issue a call for papers. People hoping to present will be asked to supply the following three short documents:

1. A one-page CV detailing their current institutional affiliation and academic background.
2. A 300-word research outline detailing their theoretical framework, primary research questions, and specific fieldwork sites.
3. A dedicated 'Challenges Statement' (200 words) describing the analytical roadblocks, theoretical issues, or writing difficulties with which they need help. The deadline will be set two weeks after the announcement.

Eligibility: Current PhD candidates, post-doctoral researchers, and early-career scholars (within five years of PhD completion) actively conducting qualitative or ethnographic research in Japan. Applications will be evaluated by the AJJ Executive based on the original contribution of the fieldwork, the clarity of the research questions, and the potential benefit of the workshop for the applicant's publication goals.

Two weeks later, so six weeks before the workshop, the five successful applicants are notified, and the AJJ Executive recruits five established scholars (not necessarily members of the executive committee), to also participate in the workshop. The workshop is advertised on the AJJ homepage and relevant mail lists etc.

Four weeks later, so two weeks before the workshop, the five presenters submit papers of 3,000 to 6,000 words to the organizers, and those papers are circulated to the five established scholars and the other presenters.

Each of the five papers will be read by all the other nine participants. Each of the ten participants will be allocated one paper for which they will be one of the two main commentators. Participants are expected to read the paper allocated to them carefully and prepare comments and questions. They are also expected to at least speed-read the other four papers.

The workshop will be held over a weekend. Each paper will be allocated 90 minutes for discussion. The first 15 minutes will be a brief presentation by the author of the key points, after which the two main commentators will each have 15 minutes to critique the paper, for a total of 45 minutes. The remaining 45 minutes will be for free discussion by all participants.

Each session will have a chair, whose job it is to make sure that time is shared appropriately between presenters, commentators, invited participants and general participants.

Beyond the ten invited members of the workshop, others are welcome to participate at their own expense, but must notify the organisers in advance of their intention to attend.

The schedule:

SATURDAY

12:30 Lunch and introductions

13:30 Paper 1

15:00 Tea break

15:15 Paper 2

16:45 Tea break

17:00 Paper 3

18:30 END OF DAY 1

19:00 Workshop dinner

SUNDAY

9:00 Breakfast

10:00 Paper 4

11:30 Coffee break

11:45 Paper 5

13:15 Lunch

14:15 General discussion

15:30 (or whenever members feel comfortable) END OF WORKSHOP

Whether non-invited participants get to see the papers in advance is a matter for discussion among the ten invited participants. The chair will allow comments and questions by non-invited participants at his/her discretion.

Whether or not to publish the proceedings of the workshop in some form is a topic for inclusion in the final General Discussion.

COSTS

Participation is free for all, invited or non-invited. There is no workshop fee.

Accommodation on Saturday night is free for all ten main participants.

Meals are free for all ten main participants.

Travel expenses will be paid up to a maximum of ¥10,000 for the five presenters only.

2026

The first in this new series of workshops will be held at Meiji Gakuin University's Yokohama campus, on the weekend of November 7-8, 2026. Accommodation will be at

the university's guest house, the Brown House. The Brown House has four single rooms and one large room for up to six people. Women will be given priority for the single rooms and will not be expected to share a room with men.

The sessions will be held in a large seminar room with all necessary equipment for slide shows, audio-visual presentations etc.

There will be no online streaming of the workshop and attendance must be in person.

The deadline for proposals is 11:55pm JST on Tuesday, September 22, 2026.

Proposals should be submitted by e-mail to: ajj.inquiries2025@gmail.com