



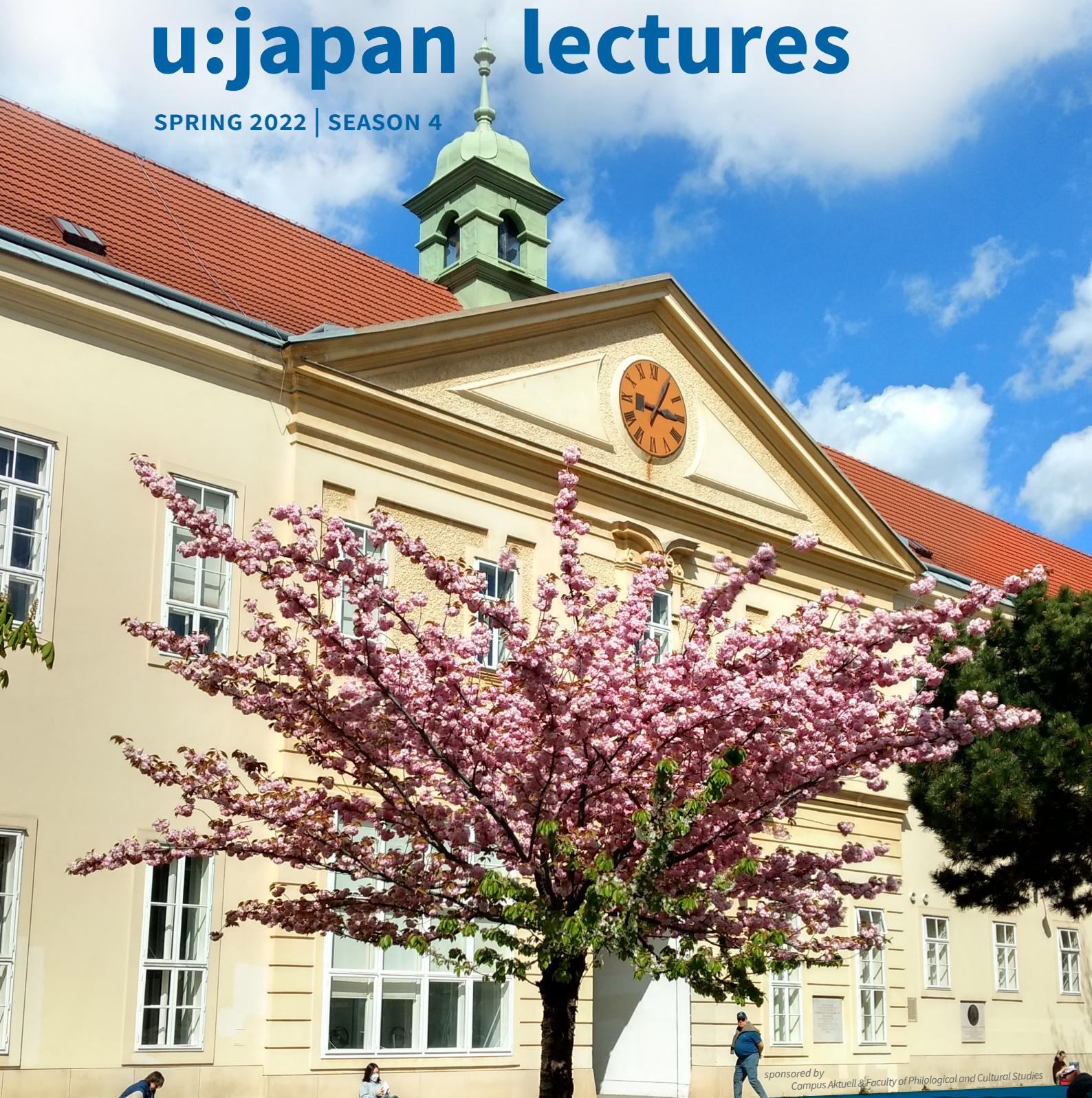
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Spitalgasse 2, Hof 2.4 (Campus)
1090 Vienna, Austria





They Heard it Through the Grapevine

Rumour Spreading, Poisonous Knowledge and the Political Ecology of Hauntings in Contemporary Japan

A hybrid *u:japan* lecture by Andrea De Antoni

Thursday
2022-03-10
18:30~20:00

Anthropological research on rumours and gossip has pointed out their relation with formations of identity, politics and resistance. Recent studies have argued that a focus on gossip allows an understanding of politics “from below,” especially from the viewpoint of the people whose voices are rarely heard in the public sphere. Rumours are also entangled with the re-creation of social memory, especially in relation to what anthropologist Veena Das (2007) termed “poisonous knowledge”, i.e. knowledge that emerges after ways of being with others have been brutally damaged, and that is not openly talked about. Similarly, anthropological studies of hauntings have focused on rumours as ways of re-creating memories related to perceived injustice. Such studies, however, tend to provide a comparatively “flat” representation of rumours.

While relying on ethnographic data gathered through fieldwork in Kyoto and Mutsu (Aomori Prefecture), in this presentation I will propose a more situated and relational approach for a political ecology of rumours. I will show that, while rumours about ghosts in contemporary Japan share generalized connections with “poisonous knowledge” such as memories of unsettled deaths or discrimination, the “poisonous-ness” of such knowledge varies greatly according to the networks through which rumours spread. I will argue that rumours partake in processes of formation and othering of neighbourhoods and localities, for their agency relies not only on acts of telling, but also on the material aspects of the environment.



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Andrea De Antoni (Ph.D.) is an Italian socio-cultural anthropologist with a main interest in religion and spirituality, and currently associate professor at Kyoto University. His main research area is contemporary Japan, but he has carried out ethnographic research also in Italy and Austria. His fields of inquiry include experiences with spirits and social suffering, especially in relation to the perception of space and place (particularly places related to death and the afterlife, as well as haunted places), rumors and discrimination, construction of social memory and “tradition”, tourism and commodification, spirit/demonic possession, exorcism and religious/spiritual healing. From a theoretical perspective, he focuses on the anthropology of the body, the perception of the environment, affect and emotions. He published extensively on these topics in English and Japanese. He authored *Going to Hell in Contemporary Japan: Feeling Landscapes of the Afterlife, Othering, Memory and Materiality* (Routledge, forthcoming 2022), and co-edited several books and special issues of academic journals. He is also the coordinator of the international networks “Skills of Feeling with the World: Anthropological Research on the Senses, Affect and Materiality,” and of a research group on affect and religious/spiritual healing based at Kyoto University.

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Urban Migrants in Rural Japan

Between Agency and Anomie in a Post-growth Society

A virtual *u:japan* lecture by Susanne Klien



Thursday
2022-03-17
Lunch Lecture
12:30~14:00



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Urban Migrants in Rural Japan

Between Agency and Anomie in a Post-growth Society

A virtual *u:japan* lecture by Susanne Klien

Rural areas have generally been associated with stagnation, depopulation and lack of perspectives. In my book, published by SUNY Press in 2020, I aim to radically rethink the stereotype image of countryside in Japan and beyond. Drawing on nine years of multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork across the country, I argue that the Lehman Shock in 2008, the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011 and increasingly harsh conditions of the job market have set the path for a new role of rural areas as experimental grounds for innovative projects. I will focus on three themes that feature in the book. I will introduce selected narratives by urban newcomers to show the paradox between aspiration to a better work-life-balance and the reality of persistent overwork and (self-)exploitation.

Second, I will discuss changes in the way rural Japan has recently been presented in various media. Third, I will examine entrepreneurial projects and discuss how budding entrepreneurs negotiate their daily lives between self-determination and structural constraints. Last, I will reflect on fieldwork in rural Japan during the pandemic and the insights I have obtained through follow-up interviews with my interlocutors in 2021.

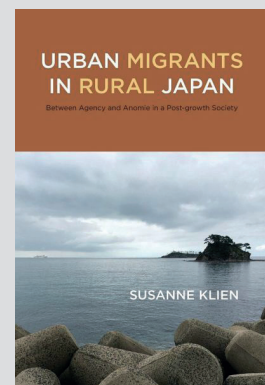
More details about the book:

<http://www.sunypress.edu/p-6846-urban-migrants-in-rural-japan.aspx>

Thursday
2022-03-17
Lunch Lecture
12:30~14:00



Susanne Klien (PhD, University of Vienna) is Associate Professor at the Modern Japanese Studies Program, Hokkaido University. Her main research interests include transnational lifestyle migration, intangible cultural heritage, regional revitalization and emerging forms of tourism, demographic change and alternative forms of living and working in post-growth Japan. Her monograph *Urban Migrants in Rural Japan: Between Agency and Anomie in a Post-growth Society* (State University of New York Press 2020) was awarded the 2020 Choice Outstanding Academic Title. She recently co-edited a special issue on the theme of *Exploring Rural Japan as Heterotopia* with Paul S. Hansen in *Asian Anthropology* (2022).



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Ukrainian Diaspora in Occupied Manchuria

Articulating the Needs for the Independent State (1932-1945)

A hybrid *u:japan lecture* by Olga Khomenko

VIEW OF UKURAINA CHURCH, HARBIN.

院寺ナイラクウ (ンピルハ)



Thursday
2022-03-24
18:30~20:00



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Ukrainian Diaspora in Occupied Manchuria

Articulating the Needs for the Independent State (1932-1945)

A hybrid *u:japan* lecture by Olga Khomenko

Thursday
2022-03-24
18:30~20:00

Since the abolition of serfdom in the Russian Empire and during the Chinese Railway construction and Stolypin reforms, both before and after the Russian Revolution, many Ukrainians moved to and lived in the Far East and China. For Ukrainians, who by their Cossack nature in the pursuit of freedom sought lands far from political centers and historically tended to settle in border areas, the Far East and Manchuria became safe havens from the Russian Empire where they could live and create their “little Ukraine” more freely away from the oppressive power of the capitals of Petersburg and Moscow.

This talk is based on a book called “The Far Eastern Odyssey of Ivan Svit” published in Ukraine last December and telling a story of forgotten 100 000 people Ukrainian diaspora in Manchuria and its leader, Ivan Svit (1897–1989), a forgotten Ukrainian journalist, editor, historian, and social activist. They actively communicated with Japanese authorities under the occupation and advanced the processes of the self-identification of Ukrainians in the Far East and broader North-East Asia. The story of Ivan Svit is a microhistory of the life of Ukrainians in the Far East and Asia. Besides working in Russian Far East as a journalist, in China as a stamp dealer, a journalist and an editor running a couple of Ukrainian printed media publications included the “Manchurian Herald” (1932-1937) and “The Call of the Ukraine”(1941-1942) as well as radio programs, Svit helped to print a Map of Green Ukraine (1937) and to publish the first Ukrainian Japanese dictionary (1944). Thanks to the social, cultural, and political activities of enthu-

siasts like Ivan Svit and print media they ran, from the nationally diverse masses, they created a new social structure - the Ukrainian community, so-called imaginary Ukraine in Asia.

By the end of World War II, Svit worked as a self-proclaimed Ukrainian consul and helped to evacuate large groups of Ukrainians from China. Through his work activity, Svit knew many of the participants in those historical events, which later enabled him to become a historian and write two books called “Short History of the Ukrainian Movement in the Far East/Asia (Harbin, 1938) and «Ukrainian-Japanese Relations (1903-1945). Historical Survey and Observations” (NY,1972).

Active community members, such as Ivan Svit under Japanese occupation in Manchuria, did not give up and continued actively communicating with authorities, emphasizing their need for an independent Ukrainian state. Thanks to his communication skills, Svit became an important figure in the community, a cultural bridge, and a mediator between people of different political and cultural backgrounds in Northeast Asia. The story of Ivan Svit as a representative of the forgotten Ukrainian diaspora in Asia is an excellent example of Ukrainian identity creation through the printed media far away from the mainland, history of an active dialogue between West and East, and Ukrainian public and cultural diplomacy.



Dr. **Olga Khomenko** (Ольга Хоменко) is an Associate Professor and Japan Program Director at Kyiv Mohyla Business School (KMBS), The National University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy Ukraine. She holds a PhD in Area Studies, specifically on the history of Japan, from the University of Tokyo (2005), a PhD in world history from the Ukrainian Academy of Science (2013), and an MBA from the Kyiv School of Economics (2017). From 2018 to 2020, she was a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at Harvard University, USA, at the Ukrainian Research Institute and Davis Center. Her research interests include the history of post-war Japan, the history of Japanese business and consumption culture, the history of Ukraine-Japan relations, with a focus on Ukrainians in the Far East and Manchuria under Japanese occupation, as well as the history of the creation of Ukrainian national identity and Ukrainian literature. Her recent book *The Far Eastern Odyssey of Ivan Svit* [original Title *Далекосхідна одісея Івана Світа*] was published in 2021, by Laurus in Kyiv. As well as her recent Japanese book *Ukrainians who crossed the borders* [original Title *国境を超えたウクライナ人*] was published in February of 2022, by Gunzoshia in Tokyo.



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History of Early Bilateral Relations between Japan and Hungary

A virtual *u:japan* lecture by Tóth Gergely

Thursday
2022-03-31
18:30~20:00



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History of Early Bilateral Relations between Japan and Hungary

A virtual *u:japan* lecture by Tóth Gergely

Thursday
2022-03-31
18:30~20:00

2019 marked the 150th Anniversary of bilateral relations between Hungary (as part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy) and Japan. In order to commemorate this occasion, this presentation will walk you through the results of a decade-long interdisciplinary research by giving an overview of the early history (1869-1913) of Hungaro-Japanese relations in 5 specific thematic blocks: I. History of Modernization; II. History of Expeditions and Travel; III. Diplomatic and Economic History; IV. Cultural, Literary and Art History; V. History of Ideologies. Were there any similarities between Hungary and Japan in terms of modernization? Did they keep an eye on each other's progress? How did the Hungarian side of the Monarchy perceive relations

with Japan? How was Hungary represented in Japan? Who were the Hungarian and Japanese actors who shaped this relationship? Why did Japanese travelers come to Hungary? Why did Hungarians travel to Japan? What were the main channels of knowledge exchange between Hungary and Japan? What were the main areas that sparked interests about Japan in Hungary and vice-versa? How did Japan appear in Hungarian literary works? How did Japonism appear in the Hungarian side of the Monarchy? How could an alternative belief of Hungarian-Japanese kinship influence this relationship before the First World War? This presentation will offer answers to these and many other questions.



Tóth Gergely is an independent researcher from Hungary, Budapest. He holds an MA in Japanese Studies from Gaspar Karoli University of the Reformed Church in Budapest, Hungary and has spent 2 years at Waseda University in Tokyo as a MEXT student. His interdisciplinary research is revolving around the history of relations between Hungary in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Meiji + Taisho-era Japan during the 1869-1913 period. He is constantly working on the re-evaluation, demistification, objectivation of the early Hungaro-Japanese relations, by applying a critical approach. Publications: *Japán-Magyar Kapcsolattörténet 1869-1913*, Gondolat, Budapest, 2018

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Let's make it an inconvenient place here

Opposing over-tourism in Kyoto's Gion before and during the pandemic

A hybrid *u:japan* lecture by Miloš Debnár

Thursday
2022-04-07
18:30~20:00



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Let's make it an inconvenient place here

Opposing over-tourism in Kyoto's Gion before and during the pandemic

A hybrid *u:japan lecture* by Miloš Debnár

Gion district in Kyoto is one of the popular symbols of the ancient capital and Japan with its preserved architecture, culture of *geimaiko* and tea houses. As such, the area became a highly popular destination for foreign tourists particularly in the recent years and at the same time, one of the symbols representing adverse effects of over-tourism. Despite being moderately frequent-

This presentation analyzes the main problems related to over-tourism and why and how the international tourism is perceived mainly as a problem rather than an opportunity. Despite being an entertainment district, the representatives of the South district

Thursday
2022-04-07
18:30~20:00

of Gion have been actively opposing increasing tourism as well as looking for and implementing countermeasures in cooperation with the city and universities. Moreover, such activities continue even during the corona virus pandemic which brought tourism to a halt. The sudden disappearance of the tourists from the streets led to expressions of relieve, yet at the same time it continued to be a topic of discussion leading to a de-

velopment of manner promotion online project as a preparation for the expected masses of tourists. Despite and because of the active resistance to over-tourism in recent years, as well as despite the physical absence of tourists during the pandemic, the (foreign) tourist and tourism became integral part of the district.

ed tourist destination in Kyoto for a longer period, the streets of Gion became flooded with tourists in the 2010s and issues related to the manners of the tourists, zero-dollar tourism, and the simple presence of crowds became negatively perceived by local residents and affects their business and everyday life.

velopment of manner promotion online project as a preparation for the expected masses of tourists. Despite and because of the active resistance to over-tourism in recent years, as well as despite the physical absence of tourists during the pandemic, the (foreign) tourist and tourism became integral part of the district.



Miloš Debnár is a lecturer at the Faculty of International Studies, Ryukoku University in Kyoto. He received his Ph.D. in sociology from Kyoto University in 2014 and his main research interests are sociology of European migration to Japan and the issue of over-tourism in Kyoto. His main publications on these two topics include a monograph *Migration, Whiteness, and Cosmopolitanism: Europeans in Japan* (Palgrave, 2016) and *Coping with the inbound tourism in Gion – resisting the touristic gaze* (Intercultural Studies, 2019).

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Oshi-katsu, Supporting activity

Recognition and Intimacy as Commodities from the Anthropological Study of Japanese *josei-muke* Adult Video Fan Communities

A virtual *u:japan lunch lecture* by Maiko Kodaka

Thursday
2022-05-05
12:30~14:00



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Oshi-katsu, Supporting activity

Recognition and Intimacy as Commodities from the Anthropological Study of Japanese *josei-muke* Adult Video Fan Communities

A virtual *u: japan lunch lecture* by Maiko Kodaka

Thursday
2022-05-05
12:30~14:00

Oshi-katsu 押し活 (*oshi* signifies an object of support while *katsu* is an activity), or supporting activity is a popular Japanese term to signify an act of support or to cherish on someone or something that one really likes. *Oshi-katsu* is often viewed positively because it provides mental welfare for those who engage (NHK news January 18th 2022); however, such activities heavily depend on the financial capacities of those who do the supporting.

sites and captures heterosexual women who had been neglected as audiences as a new market. Despite the media attention that the new genre has garnered as a female sexual emancipation, the phenomenon is supported by “fans” of *Eromen* and *Lovemen*.

Based on fieldwork at a series of *Eromen* and *Lovemen* fan events and interviews with those self-identified fans, it has become apparent that

female fans look for intimate interactions with male actors at these events in order to be recognized as feminine and have their confidence restored. Axel Honneth’s theory of recognition (1995) argues that recognition has to be mutual in order to work socially; however, in this case, the monetary



Maiko Kodaka is a PhD candidate in Anthropology and Sociology at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Before joining SOAS, she was awarded a BA in Art from Tokyo University of Foreign Studies in 2014. Born and raised in Tokyo, her main academic interest is gender, sexuality, and power dynamics in Japanese mass media. Her doctoral research is an anthropological study of the fan culture of pornography aimed at women in Japan, which is funded by the Sasakawa Studentship Programme and a JRC Fuwaku Scholarship. She also works as a freelance writer for Japanese web magazines.

My research exploratory looks at female fans of male porn actors in *josei-muke* Adult Videos (AV) in Japan, as a form of *oshi-katsu* in order to explore its gendered dynamics. The genre of *josei-muke* is a form of pornography aimed at heterosexual women that features good-looking male porn actors; *Eromen* and *Lovemen*. This new genre has emerged in reaction to the decline of mainstream porn studios due to the popularity of porn streaming web-

transaction changes the intentions of each actor (female fans / *Eromen* and *Lovemen*). For *Eromen* and *Lovemen*, it is about money and fame. On the other hand, female fans gain recognition even though they have to pay for it. The research draws on conversations with female fans to elucidate the expectations fans have regarding their interactions with *Eromen* and *Lovemen*, and how this fan community influences their everyday lives.

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International students and their organisations in Japan during the pandemic and beyond

A virtual *u:japan lunch lecture* by Polina Ivanova

Thursday
2022-05-12
12:30~14:00



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International students and their organisations in Japan during the pandemic and beyond

A virtual *u:japan* lunch lecture by Polina Ivanova

Thursday
2022-05-12
12:30~14:00

This research examines the impact of changing times of the COVID-19 pandemic on international students enrolled at Japanese universities and on their support organisations. The crisis has significantly affected studies, health, social life, finances and career plans, both of those students staying inside the country and those stranded overseas and unable to enter their study destination. This study views international student mobility through the lens of human security and sees students as transnational agents instead of passive service recipients or guests in a conventional “guest-host” paradigm. The study increasingly relies upon digital methods of data collection: online interviews and observation of online events for international students organised by Japanese universities and alternative support providers, such as nonprofits, peer support groups, university clubs and informal hobby

groups. Forced by the pandemic, international student support organisations (ISSOs) had to adapt to the “new normal”; however, elderly volunteers often failed to catch up with time and technology changes. In the absence of adequate support, especially during the first year of the pandemic, international students proactively searched for solutions and solidarity outside their universities and pre-pandemic support providers.

As a result, transnational political activism emerged as an outcome of modern times, technologies and challenges of the pandemic. The study also follows more recent developments after the vaccine rollout, the spread of the Omicron wave and highlights fluidity of the immigration status of international students sometimes leading to their precarity.



Polina Ivanova is a visiting researcher at Ritsumeikan University and a lecturer at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies. She holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from Ritsumeikan University. Her research interests lie in the areas of civil society, migration, and international education. Her doctoral research examined thirty civil society organisations supporting international students in the Kansai area of Japan and their contribution to creation of social capital in local communities. In addition, she participated in three collaborative projects in Japan, Australia, and the United States. Based on this work, Polina published five peer-reviewed articles and presented her findings at academic conferences, workshops and lecture series in the United Kingdom, Germany, Mexico, the United States, and Japan.

Her recent projects focus on international students’ loneliness and social engagement in the United States and Japan, and civil society response to the pandemic in Japan, Australia, and the United States in the context of international student support.

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East Asian Reactions to Russia's War in Ukraine

Governmental and Civil Society Responses

A hybrid *u:eastasia* lecture by Gerstl, Denney, Mandl & Khomenko

Thursday
2022-05-19
17⁰⁰~19⁰⁰



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East Asian Reactions to Russia's War in Ukraine

Governmental and Civil Society Responses

A hybrid *u:eastasia* lecture by Gerstl, Denney, Mandl & Khomenko

While the European Union and its member states strongly condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February and have since provided humanitarian or even military support to Ukraine, the responses of the governments in North-east and Southeast Asia are less unified. Japan, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan joined the Western countries in sanctioning Russia, clearly emphasizing Russia's responsibility for launching the war. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida drew a parallel to China's perceived assertiveness in the South and East China Sea. Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen emphasized the unity of the Ukrainian citizens "to fight against the invasion by a powerful country". Other nations, including Indonesia and Vietnam, but also the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), do neither make comparison to China's policies nor openly criticize Russia. Rather, they demand to end the war, find a peaceful resolution and refer to rather abstract principles of international law.

This panel discussion will analyze the various strategic, economic and domestic motives of the governments to either unequivocally condemn Russia or to avoid naming and shaming Moscow. Moreover, the panelists will also (discuss the) point to different reactions of civil societies in East Asia which are not necessarily in line with the positions taken by the respective national governments. The spectrum is (also very) quite broad (and not necessarily in line with the positions taken by the respective national governments), ranging from strong support for Ukraine to some sympathies for "strongman" Vladimir Putin allegedly fighting against a US-dominated international order. By bringing together the perspectives of the national governments and the civil societies, this panel aims to initiate a multi-faceted (and comprehensive) discussion of East Asian reactions to Russia's war against Ukraine.



Agnes S. Schick-Chen is Associate Professor of Chinese Studies and Vice-Director of Studies at the Department of East Asian Studies, University of Vienna. Her main fields of research and teaching are the developments of legal and political culture in the PRC, Taiwan and Hong Kong. She has published books and papers on related topics, e.g. the discourse on Chinese legal culture and processes of coming to terms with the past in China and Taiwan.

Alfred Gerstl is Associate Professor at the Department of Asian Studies at Palacký University Olomouc (Czech Republic) and President of the Central European Institute of Asian Studies (CEIAS), a transnational think tank (Bratislava, Olomouc and Vienna). In addition, he is sessional lecturer at East Asian Economy and Society (EcoS) and University of Continuing Education Krems. He is a specialist in International Relations, notably on Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific region. His recent research focuses on the economic and strategic impacts of China's Belt and Road Initiative on Southeast Asia and the South China Sea dispute.



Dr. Olga Khomenko is an Associate Professor and Japan Program Director at Kyiv Mohyla Business School (KMBS), The National University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy Ukraine. She holds a PhD in Area Studies, specifically on the history of Japan, from the University of Tokyo (2005), a PhD in world history from the Ukrainian Academy of Science (2013), and an MBA from the Kyiv School of Economics (2017). From 2018 to 2020, she was a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at Harvard University, USA, at the Ukrainian Research Institute and Davis Center. Her research interests include the history of postwar Japan, consumption culture, Ukraine-Japan relations.



Dr. Steven Denney is a lecturer of East Asian Economy and Society in the Department of East Asia Studies at the University of Vienna. He is a comparativist that specializes in East Asian affairs with a focus on the Koreans. His core research interests lie at the intersection of migration, citizenship, and entrepreneurship studies. He also reads and contributes to studies in democracy and authoritarianism. Steven holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Toronto, an M.A. in Global Affairs and Policy from Yonsei University, and a B.A. in Political Science from Harding University.



Martin Mandl is a Junior Researcher at CEIAS and an Editorial Member of "ASIEN - The German Journal of Contemporary Asia". He teaches on the political systems and international relations of East Asia and offers intercultural training on the region. As a passionate cook and former hospitality manager, Martin's research is focused on the use of food in Taiwan's public diplomacy.



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Japanesia (Yaponesia), the Arc of Ryūkyū, and Shimao Toshio's Cultural Resistance against the Colonial Politics of the Past

A virtual *u: japan lunch lecture* by Shinnosuke Takahashi

Thursday
2022-06-02
12:30~14:00



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Japanesia (Yaponesia), the Arc of Ryūkyū, and Shimao Toshio's Cultural Resistance against the Colonial Politics of the Past

A virtual *u:japan lunch lecture* by Shinnosuke Takahashi

Thursday
2022-06-02
12:30~14:00

Shimao Toshio (1917-1986) is probably one of the most celebrated authors in the history of post-war Japanese literature. Shimao's literary works were highly praised by his contemporaries, for example the literary critic Okuno Takeo, who called Shimao a 'master' of surrealist literature. Yet, Shimao's works have also been seen as controversial, especially those related to his concept of *Japanesia*. First appearing in 1961, *Japanesia* is Shimao's re-

Asia and the West. In contrast, Shimao insists on the significance of the Pacific Ocean and island communities as a forgotten bedrock of Japan's cultural life both in the past and present. While this concept is often seen as Shimao's critical intervention in the discourses about Japan's cultural homogeneity through his foregrounding of its deep geo-cultural diversity,

some critics have disapproved, warning us of Shimao's uncritical stance towards Japan's colonial legacies in the Pacific. One of the key issues that have rarely been addressed in this regard is the historical context in which Shimao conceived his concept.

Therefore, this presentation probes Shimao's

cultural politics in light of his community activities and trans-oceanic journeys as well as the content of his texts, especially during his first decade living in Amami-Ōshima. Historical analysis of *Japanesia* will allow us to have a clearer understanding of the criticality and the limit of the concept, which, I argue, is still of some great value to reflect upon today.



Shinnosuke Takahashi is a lecturer in Asian Languages and Cultural Programme at Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand. Prior to his appointment at Victoria University, he taught at Kumamoto University, Kobe University, and the Australian National University where he obtained his doctoral degree.

His publications include *Transnational Japan as History: Empire, Migrants, and Social Movements* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); and *Transpacific Visions: Connected Histories Across North and South* (Lexington, 2021). He is currently writing up his first monograph, *The Translocal Islands: The Okinawan Struggle and Grassroots Regionalism*.

presentative concept for revisiting the meaning of Japanese nationhood in the course of its historical development, not from the perspective of the centres of power, but from marginalised regions such as the southern islands and north-eastern region. The concept of *Japanesia* also questions Japan's elite cultural orientations which he argues have been centred around the continental worlds, i.e.,

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Millennials' Senses of Inequality Class, Gender, and Legitimation of Differences in Tokyo

A virtual *u:japan* lunch lecture by Yuki Asahina

Thursday
2022-06-23
12:30~14:00



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Millennials' Senses of Inequality Class, Gender, and Legitimation of Differences in Tokyo

A virtual *u:japan lunch lecture* by Yuki Asahina

Thursday
2022-06-23
12:30~14:00

Today's young adults face a labor market where precarity is the norm rather than the exception. They also confront the widening crevasse between the rich and the rest and persistent gender disparities. Scholars argue that this generation's shared experience of hardship shaped acute sensitivity to injustice, making them a 'new political generation.' In Japan, however, despite two decades of economic stagnation and a widening gap between the haves and have-nots, various surveys report that young citizens are surprisingly content with their situation; a sociologist called them 'the happy youth of a desperate country.' This talk examines how Japanese young adults experience inequality as something 'natural' with a particular

focus on their experience of work. Drawing on longitudinal interview data and through a lens of comparison with the case of Seoul, South Korea, where young citizens maintain a strong sense of injustice, I show the persistent tendency among Japanese millennials to interpret inequality as a matter of individual efforts and talents. Then, I will examine differences in the ideas that various groups of young adults use to justify the inequalities they observe. Finally, I will ask when and how inequality and insecurity are experienced as 'unjust' to the extent that young adults can no longer tolerate them by focusing on the experience of precariously employed young men and women.



Yuki Asahina is Assistant Professor in the Graduate School of International and Area Studies at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Seoul, South Korea, where he teaches about Japanese society, inequality, and qualitative research methods. He received his PhD in sociology from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and was previously a postdoctoral fellow at the Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies and an affiliate of the Weatherhead Research Cluster on Comparative Inequality and Inclusion at Harvard University. His research has appeared or is forthcoming in *Sociology*, *Politics & Society*, *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, and *Contemporary Japan*, among other journals.

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Neighborhood Tokyo

Creative Urban Milieus as Places of Innovation and Polarization

A virtual *u:japan lunch lecture* by Heide Imai

Thursday
2022-06-30
12:30~14:00



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Against the background of the new attractiveness of urban centers, creative people are gaining more and more importance as potential initiators for various urban development processes. On the one hand, the activation and participation of these creative people is important in order to integrate innovative potential into various development processes, on the other hand, creative people are showing increasing interest in the development of their city and are demanding their participation.

In Tokyo, creatives represent a relatively hidden but important part of the larger creative ecosystem, made up of many different influential stakeholders (e.g. state, city authorities, big companies and foreign investors), all of which actively contribute to its functioning. As such, creative actors occupy a unique meta-position between the two worlds of creativity, as they are both part

of everyday neighborhood life and part of the larger economic system in which they (want) to thrive. Therefore, they also can also be described as ‚facilitators‘, bridging the two dimensions of Tokyo’s creative ecosystem, as their hybrid, bi-directional role enables the important exchange between systematic/economic and neighborhood creativity.

This lecture aims to illuminate and better understand the role of existing creative urban milieus in the urban development of Tokyo. Various neighborhoods of Tokyo are introduced and ‚walked through‘ (Bakurochō, Hikifune, Kyōjima, Ichigaya, Kiyosumi Shirakawa, Kōenji, Kuramae) to capture how milieu-bound creativity as a collective network resource has and is affecting Tokyo’s urban development, especially during and after the Covid -19 Pandemic.



Dr. **Heide Imai**, Architect and since 2020 Associate Professor at Senshu University, Faculty of Intercultural Communication, and Research Associate at Keio University, studied architecture, cultural studies and urban sociology in Leipzig, Rotterdam, Oxford and Manchester. Author of *Tokyo Roji: The Diversity and Versatility of Alleyways in a City in Transition* (Routledge, 2017), *Asian Alleyways: An Urban Vernacular in Times of Globalization* (with M. Gibert-Flutre, Amsterdam University Press, 2020), *Creativity in Tokyo : Revitalizing a Mature City* (with M. Ursic, Palgrave Macmillan, 2020). She is primarily concerned with urban places, through which we can understand urban development processes between revitalization and decay, creativity and sustainability. A new publication on the subject entitled *Everyday Yokohama – Neighborhoods between Decline and Revival* will be published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2022.

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