

# Japan and the World

## Newsletter



Dear Alumni, Alumnae, Supporters and Partners of Japanese Studies at Cambridge,  
新年明けましておめでとうございます。

2018 is here and I am very happy to start off by welcoming you to our third newsletter. It provides us with an opportunity to reflect on 2017, which from every perspective was a fantastic year for Japanese Studies at Cambridge. From new and innovative conferences and projects, the launching of a volume that showcases the insights of our researchers to a rare Rakugo performance by master Kyōtarō and the establishment of a unique partnership with Toshiba International Foundation, we are reminded every day that we are reaching both old and new Japan friends. The number of applications to our graduate programme has increased drastically over the past two years, and we hope to continue to increase our intake of what can only be described as extremely talented young scholars. The only thing restricting us in that regard is really resources, and so we will keep working at building partnerships, and would gratefully receive introductions or advice on how to help support our future scholars.

Reflecting further on 2017, I was delighted to be able to connect with many of our alumni and alumnae during the Tsurugi no kai event at the Royal Society in London on 24 November, to hear about their varied careers and to receive feedback on what we can do to continue to promote Japanese Studies. I do know that our students were especially happy to meet their senpai and to learn of the range of possibilities available to them after they graduate. We are looking forward to further strengthening our Tsurugi no kai network, and to hearing from you.

I hope you will enjoy this newsletter, and do feel free to spread the word to other alumni or alumnae who may not be receiving it. Do note our Lent speaker series, which already kicked off on 29 January. Fortunately, there are still many exciting talks, so feel free to stop by.

Mickey Adolphson  
Keidanren Professor and Chair  
Japanese Studies  
University of Cambridge

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**January 2018**

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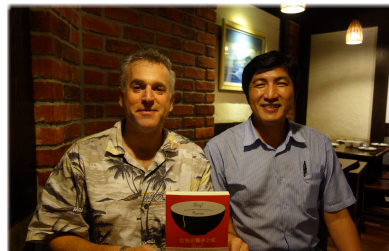
Report and photos from the recent Tsurugi no kai gathering in London



# Academic news

## Dr Barak Kushner interviewed in Japan Times on Ramen and its global success.

Following the success of his 2012 publication *Slurp! A Social and Culinary History of Ramen - Japan's Favorite Noodle Soup* Dr Kushner has been interviewed as part of an article in the Japan Times looking at the international expansion of Japanese ramen restaurant Ippudo.



Ippudo restaurants can be found in locations all over the world, including two locations in London. This article examines the business and culinary acumen which have transformed and translated the humble noodle broth into a worldwide favourite.

[Read the full Japan Times article here](#)

## Dr John Nilsson-Wright welcomes DPRK officials

Dr John Nilsson-Wright, University Senior Lecturer in Modern Japanese Politics and International Relations welcomed to Darwin college two representatives of the DPRK embassy in the UK. Minister KIM Song-gi and the 3rd secretary, RYU Kyong-ju.



The visit was an opportunity to exchange views on the security and political situation in Northeast Asia and an opportunities for furthering academic exchange between FAMES and the DPRK, building on past educational contacts. To keep up to date with John Nilsson-Wright's comment and analysis of the ongoing North Korea Crisis check the News page of the Japan and the World website here: <https://japanandtheworld.org/announcements/>

## Keidanren Chair of Japanese Studies announces new translation project

Professor Mickey Adolphson, Keidanren Chair of Japanese Studies, and visiting academic Dr Jeffery Kurashige (Assistant Professor, Keio University) announced earlier this month that they will be launching an exciting new translation project.

Working internationally with six clusters of researchers the project aims to translate the 13th century Azuma Kagami into English. This project is forecast to take 5 years, and will represent a huge step forward for Japanese pre-modern historians, with plans for the translation and corresponding essays to be made publicly available online through the University of Kyoto.

## International Symposium “Towards the Creation of Reconciliation Studies”



**Dec 16 2017**

Dr Barak Kushner gave a keynote presentation at Waseda University's international symposium "Towards the Creation of Reconciliation Studies", the talk was titled 'Unique Aspects of the East Asian Region Concerning the Historical Background to Reconciliation' 「東アジア地域の固有性ー和解の歴史的背景」

The purpose of the symposium was to bring together academics in the field of East Asian studies to discuss transnational justice theory in the context of reconciliation. "This project, whose purpose is the creation of reconciliation studies, aims to seek the social basis for effectively promoting this process through active dialogue and debate among people who share the desire for reconciliation, on the basis of distinctively East Asian historical context."

For a full list of speakers at the symposium and to read more on the project visit the Organisation for Regional and Inter-regional Studies section of the Waseda University website here:

<https://www.waseda.jp/inst/oris/news-en/2017/11/30/2342/>

# At the Roots of Visual Japan

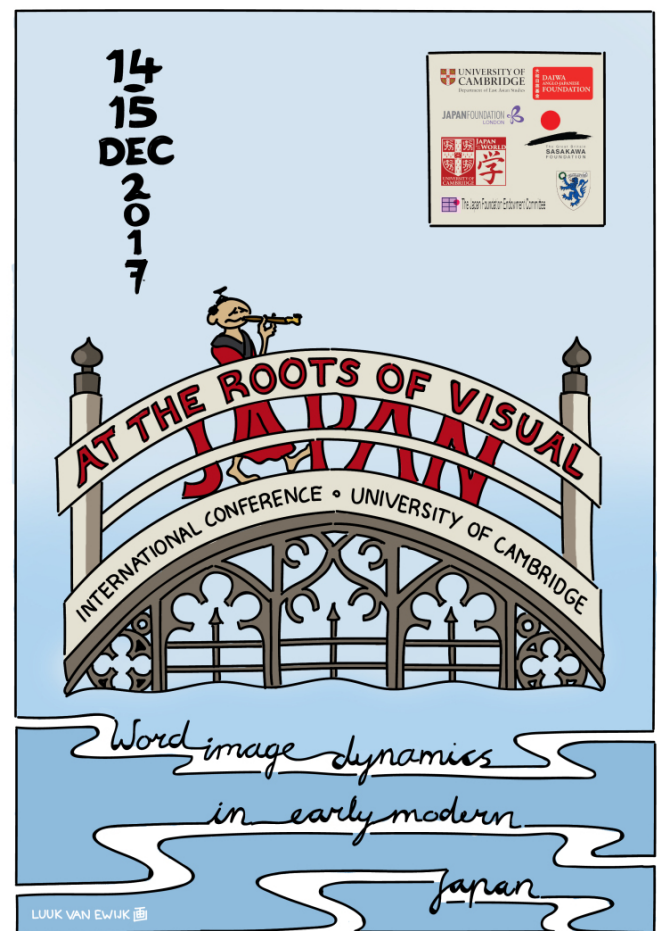
## Word-image dynamics in early-modern Japan

14, 15 December 2017

Hosted by Dr Laura Moretti, Senior Lecturer in Pre-Modern Japanese Studies, this two-day conference brought together renowned scholars in the field of Japanese early-modern literature to examine the interaction of text(s) and image(s) in a systematic manner across the main genres of early-modern popular prose and poetry in print. While focusing on the Edo period, the conference also initiated a dialogue with scholars who work on comics, graphic prose and manga. This was done in order to achieve two goals. First to challenge the received view of straightforward continuity between early-modern forms of graphic prose and contemporary manga, and to place Japan at the heart of the disciplinary discourse on graphic prose and multimodality.

The conference was a great success with high attendance at the talks on both days and lively discussion throughout. 'Inspiring', 'one of the most memorable conferences I have attended', 'amazing' are some of the comments we received in the feedback from participants.

Dr Moretti acknowledges with deep gratitude the generous financial support of The Japan Foundation London, The Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation, The Japan Foundation Endowment Committee, The Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, and the Japanese Studies Group. Without their wonderful support these two days of exciting intellectual guests would not have been possible.





# Cool Japanese Men

Following the successful publication four years ago of *Manga Girl Seeks Herbivore Boy: Studying Japanese Gender at Cambridge*, we are delighted to announce a second book by our recent Japanese Studies graduates. *Cool Japanese Men: Studying New Masculinities at Cambridge*, edited by Brigitte Steger and Angelika Koch, is a collection of well researched and thoroughly up-to-date essays which explore what it means to be a 'cool' man in Japan today. Normative ideas of masculinity are currently being negotiated and revised in many societies and these studies make for fascinating reading, both for those with little knowledge of Japan and Gender Studies and those with long-standing interest in these areas. We have every confidence that this book will replicate the success of its predecessor, which is held in many UK school libraries and included on the reading list of university courses on Japanese society around the world. Our hope is that *Cool Japanese Men* will help inspire many more young people to begin their own exploration of Japanese culture.

The four essays explore how recent expressions of manhood diverge from the gendered division of social roles of the traditional post-war family system and the hegemonic model of masculinity typified by the hard-working, dark-suited but otherwise colourless 'salaryman'. They also raise the question of how far these so-called 'new' masculinities are still influenced by more traditional ideas of how men and women should act. Hannah Vassallo discusses recent government campaigns promoting the image of *ikumen* (child-raising fathers) and the 'cool' men who manage to juggle successful careers with proactive fatherhood. Christopher Tso and Shiota Nanase examine a range of self-help literature that encourages businessmen to adopt the proto-typically female gendered skills of personal grooming and listening. 'Rebellious cool' is showcased in an ethnography by Sakari Mesimäki of a student hip hop dance circle at a Japanese university and, by way of contrast, the final chapter by Rosie Dent-Spargo examines a group of decidedly 'uncool' *otaku* men — the nerdy fans of the pop idol group AKB48.

The book is available from Lit publisher and well sorted book stores. <http://bit.ly/CoolJapaneseMen>

## Contributors:

**Amy Clifton** graduated from Cambridge with a BA in Japanese Studies in 2017. Amy is responsible for the graphic design of *Cool Japanese Men*.

**Rosie Dent-Spargo** graduated from SOAS (University of London) with a degree in Japanese Studies in 2014 after studying abroad for a year at Waseda University in Tokyo. She then went on to do an MPhil in Multi-Disciplinary Gender Studies at Cambridge.

**Angelika Koch** specialises in the culture of early modern Japan, with a particular focus on genders and sexuality. She earned her PhD at Cambridge in 2014 and is in the process of completing her first monograph *Sexual Healing. Sexuality, Health and the Male Body in Early Modern Japan (1600-1868)*, a cultural history tracing medical views of sex as a health and disease concept in the Edo period.

**Sakari Mesimäki** graduated in Japanese studies from Cambridge in 2015. He currently lives in Tokyo and works as a consultant in communications and government relations.

**Sven Palys** graduate in Japanese studies from Cambridge in 2010. After a short stint working in Berlin he moved to Tokyo to study Media at Tokyo University on the MEXT program. Sven has since established a brand consultancy in Tokyo.

**Shiota Nanase** holds a BA from Keio University, an MA from Glasgow University and is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at Cambridge. Her main research interests focus on listening, listening behaviour, interactive communication and oral history.

**Brigitte Steger** is Senior Lecturer in Modern Japanese Studies at Cambridge, specialising in the anthropology of daily life.

**Christopher Tso** is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at Cambridge. His dissertation project is a sociological study of men's grooming practices in contemporary Japan with a focus on masculinities in corporate spaces.

**Hannah Vassallo** graduated with a BA in Japanese Studies in 2014. After working for the Japanese Government in Tokyo and the Japanese Embassy in London, she is now pursuing her true passion working as a localisation associate for the Pokémon Company International.

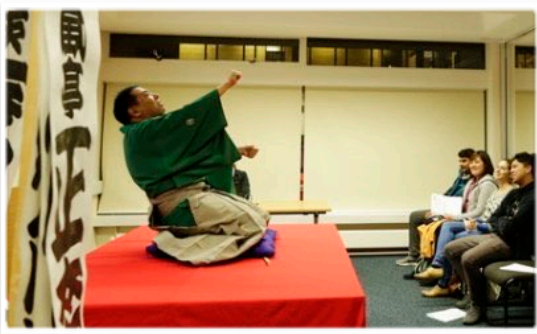


Illustration by  
Amy Clifton

# Cambridge welcomes Master Kyōtarō

The Japanese Studies Subject group was delighted to welcome Master Yanagiya Kyōtarō and his troupe to the faculty on Monday, 20 November 2017 for a very special performance as part of the East Asia Seminar Series.

The group have recently finished an exciting European tour bringing rakugo to an international audience. The show consists of the traditional stand-up (or rather, sit-down) story telling style comedy of rakugo, combined with live English subtitling to



Shunputei Shotaro telling the rickshaw story spread the laughter across language barriers and international borders. The evening of the performance saw a full house as an excited audience of students, staff and members of the public squeezed in to rooms 8/9 in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

Rakugo encompasses elements of mime, story telling, jokes and slapstick comedy to wonderful effect. The audience, consisting of Japanese speakers and non-Japanese speakers alike erupted with laughter as Master Kyotaro conveyed such simple actions as eating ramen, or transformed himself into, among other things, a dog, an old lady, and a child; and this was only his introduction! Thanks to the hard work and innovation of the group the subtitled performance was met with peels of laughter from start to finish. Master Kyotaro and Shotaro san performed three traditional stories: 寝床 (nedoko), 反対俵 (hantaiguruma), and うどん屋 (udonya).

Before the show the group were welcomed to Cambridge by some of our undergraduate Japanese Studies students, who impressed them with their Japanese language abilities, and knowledge of Cambridge.

Following the performances Master Kyotaro and Shotaro-san answered a number of questions from the audience and conducted a raffle for some Japanese goodies and some very special European tour tenugui.

## The road to becoming a *rakugo-ka*...

During the early years of their apprenticeship students are forbidden from drinking, smoking or dating. After up to 15 years of apprenticeship the aspiring rakugo-ka becomes shin-uchi 'Master', in most cases one of the elders decides when the timing is right, in some cases there is also a test to become shin-uchi.

After graduating from University, and before beginning his journey towards becoming a rakugo-ka Master Kyotaro worked in a book shop but the life of a company employee was not for him as he dreamed of becoming rakugo-ka. Today he is THE most popular rakugo-ka in Japan, has his own column in Bungei Shunjun and runs a TV show.

We can only hope that this recent European tour (Master Yanagiya's first performances outside Japan) heralds a new international phase of his illustrious career, and that we can welcome Master Kyōtarō and Shintaro-san back in the near future!

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# **Lent 2018**

## **At the University of Cambridge**

**MON 29  
JAN**

**Dr Jeff Kurashige, *Keio University***

The "Salaryman" Samurai: Japan's Medieval Warrior and the "Birth" of the Early Modern World

**MON 5  
FEB**

**Dr Jungeun Lee, *Sainsbury Institute***

Collecting China, Displaying Authority: Formal display during the Imperial visits to Ashikaga Shogun

**MON 12  
FEB**

**Dr Angelika Koch, *Ghent University***

Sexual Healing, Sexuality, Health and the Male Body in Early Modern Japan

**MON 26  
FEB**

**Dr Rosina Buckland, *National Museum of Scotland***

Many Meanings between Two Covers: A *shoga* album from the 1850s

**MON 5  
MAR**

**Prof Eric Rath, *University of Kansas***

The Arts of the State in High Medieval Japan

**MON 12  
MAR**

**TBC Prof Arthur Stockwin, *University of Oxford***

Talk title TBC

Unless otherwise stated all talks take place 5 - 7pm

Rooms 8/9

Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge CB3 9DA

For further information contact: [fs468@cam.ac.uk](mailto:fs468@cam.ac.uk)

The Japanese Studies Group gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation towards this seminar series





# Alumni news

## 剣の会

### Japanese Studies Alumni Event 2017

The Royal  
Society  
24 November  
2017

On November 24 2017 the Japanese Studies subject group hosted a gathering for Tsurugi no Kai members at the Royal society in London.

Alumni from several generations of Japanese studies at Cambridge were present for the event (the first such gathering since 2013) as well staff, external supporters, and current students. A friendly atmosphere filled the Wolfson Library suite as alumni caught up with old friends and teachers, and our eager undergrads used the opportunity to network.

Professor Mickey Adolphson opened the evening by thanking those present, and bringing the attendees up to date with what's happening in Japanese Studies at Cambridge today; including the Japan and the World campaign and the exciting new internship opportunities soon to be available to undergraduate students in the department. Prof Adolphson closed with a round of congratulations to our growing list of alumni who have been awarded Japanese national decorations. The floor was then given over in turn to Dr Brigitte Steger, who launched her exciting new book *Cool Japanese Men*, and to Mary-Grace Browning, one of our distinguished alumni.

MG's speech took the crowd on a whistle-stop tour of high school Japanese education in the UK which is inextricably linked with her own exciting career, finally delivering a message to our current undergraduates, extolling them not to fret too much over what the future will hold. As MG says, her own association with Japanese Studies started and progressed into a lifetime' largely by chance and coincidence "I was ill the day they were handing out pen-friends at school, and I was left with the Japanese student...".

After the speeches the buffet was opened and the gathering began in earnest.

The Japanese Studies group would like to say a huge thanks to all those who were able to attend for making the evening so special, and we hope to see you all for our next alumni event!

We are currently updating the alumni pages on the faculty website. Check back soon for uploaded photos.

