

Japan and the World

Newsletter



Greetings from the Chair

Dear Alumni, Alumnae, Supporters and Partners of Japanese Studies at Cambridge,

新年あけましておめでとうございます。It is my great pleasure to wish you all a Happy New Year and welcome you to our first newsletter for 2019. Last year was terrific for us with a number of accomplishments and as you will see in the current issue as well, we are continuing to work hard to support our students at all levels, to develop and strengthen our curriculum, and to ensure that we can be financially stable in doing so.

This fall, we welcomed an enthusiastic group of new undergraduates and graduate students and we are delighted to note that they are all making good progress. We are especially glad that our graduate students have now formed their own research group (研究会) to share experiences, support one another's research and perhaps most importantly, encourage productive writing sessions. We have also welcomed visiting students over the past year, and we include in this issue a brief letter of appreciation from Pier Carlo Tommasi from Ca' Foscari, who spent time with us early in 2018.

This month, we will be soliciting applications from our undergraduates for our internship programmes in Japan. We now have several Japanese companies interested in offering short-term (1-3 months) internships for our undergraduates, and we continue to add new partners, now also in the region where my own heart resides: Kansai. We can and will, however, do more. We have superbly talented students who would, for example, be interested in a one-year internship after graduation, which would of course provide valuable insights into working in Japan, and as well, an opportunity for our partners to recruit some of the most brilliant students in the world. We would also welcome internship opportunities with Japanese-focused companies in the UK (or Europe) as well as for our graduate students. For the latter, both our MPhil's, who have already demonstrated how successful they become after graduation, as well as our PhD's, are interested in a range of careers. If you or anyone you know is interested in partnering with us to create internships, please feel free to contact me or Freddie Semple.

In this newsletter, you will note that we are all highly visible in society and academe. First and foremost, we are celebrating Dr Steger's success as a co-PI in securing a UK Research and Innovation grant on plastic waste (or rather on how to eliminate it). Academics are often seen as living in the infamous "ivory tower" removed the real world, but that is far from the truth, as evidenced by Dr Steger's own research. Similarly, Professor Kushner's research on war crimes continues to demonstrate that there is substantial public interest in his work. The same is also true, or perhaps even more so, of our former students, as you will see in this case about Sam Annesley and Hannah Vassallo, whom we wish to congratulate for their contributions.

We also celebrate new partnerships in this letter. In November, faculty members of the Japanese Studies Department from Hanoi University visited us to learn about our programme, and we will begin an exchange of faculty members to further support the development of their curriculum in Hanoi, while at the same time offering us opportunities to broaden our own research horizons. As you will also read in this newsletter, we have been extremely fortunate to receive funding for a graduate scholarship from the Nakagawa Group in Tokyo, support that is absolutely essential to retain the high quality of our graduate programme, and one of our own, Mr Jeremy Silverman, has kindly made a donation to enable us to establish a dissertation prize for our undergraduates. As I have noted earlier, we cannot survive, much less prosper, without this kind of engagement from you, our partners and alumnae/alumni, and we remain forever grateful for your support.

Should you be in the neighbourhood, please feel free to visit us or come to one of our fascinating talks this Lent Term.

Mickey Adolphson
Keidanren Professor and Chair
Japanese Studies
University of Cambridge

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January 2019

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We are delighted to announce a further donation, as well as various media appearances by our former students

5. East Asia Seminar Series

Take a look at the programme for the Lent Term East Asia seminar series

Nakagawa Hiroyuki Graduate Scholarship in Japanese Studies

The Japanese Studies section of Cambridge University is delighted to announce that we will soon be able to offer a brand new Japanese Studies graduate scholarship. Mr. Nakagawa Hiroyuki, CEO and founder of the Japanese NGA Group, will establish a new PhD scholarship in Japanese Studies. Founded in 1951, the NGA Group specialises in vocational colleges, driving schools and real-estate leasing across Japan.

The Nakagawa Hiroyuki Graduate Scholarship in Japanese Studies will provide a new source of funding for top-flight PhD applicants. It will be administered in collaboration with the Cambridge Trust and the Japanese Studies Section of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies to cover tuition fees and maintenance for one international graduate for three years starting in autumn 2019.

The Faculty is deeply grateful to Mr. Nakagawa and the NGA group, and to all of our sponsors for their continued assistance and support. Our Japan and the World graduate programme is going from strength to strength and scholarships such as this allow us to continue to recruit to Cambridge the very best graduate students from around the world. For questions about our graduate programmes and our scholarships, please contact Professor Barak Kushner at bk284@cam.ac.uk.

Professor Kushner interviewed for Discover documentary

Professor Kushner discusses the events in the Pacific Theatre during the closing days of World War II as part of the Discovery documentary series, **World War II: Witness to War**.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SSqrkOx2Wik>

Japanese Studies staff and students welcome guests from Hanoi University

Japanese Studies staff and students welcomed a delegation of visiting academics from Hanoi University to the faculty on Monday 27th November 2018.

The group, headed by Professor Hai Linh Phan, visited several Cambridge

departments, observed a number of classes and met with Professors Adolphson and Kushner, and Dr Laura Moretti to discuss possible future collaboration between our two institutions.

We would like to say thank you to the staff and students who helped welcome our guests.



Dr Vicky Young gives talk at UEA CJS research seminar

Kawashima Lecturer in Japanese Literature and Culture Dr Vicky Young recently gave a talk at the University of East Anglia's Centre for Japanese Studies. The talk entitled: **"Like bombs": Narrative, memory, and linguistic terrorism in contemporary Okinawan fiction** focused on the 2002 essay of Okinawa writer Sakiyama Tami.

By tracing contexts of imposed linguistic assimilation in Okinawa and right-wing historical revisionism in Japan that inform these works, this paper reads Sakiyama's fiction both as a call to resist those forces that threaten Okinawa's individual voices, and as an attempt at engaging with the unspeakable histories of the region's traumatic wartime past.

From a visiting student: A letter of appreciation from visiting PhD Student Pier Carlo Tommasi

I had the great pleasure to conduct my doctoral research at the University of Cambridge during the 2018 Full Lent Term. This period of study abroad was complementary to the PhD program at my home university and it helped me expand my professional network within the English-speaking academic community. Moreover, I could take advantage of the unique resources Cambridge has to offer and undertake my research in a highly stimulating environment.

In particular, I welcomed the chance to work under the supervision of Professor Mikael Adolphson. My dissertation focuses on personal accounts, family precepts, and historical narratives written by middle-class warriors from the Western provinces of Japan. By taking into consideration both literary and non-literary texts, my aim is to show what kind of tropes and rhetorical devices were employed to create new “warrior identities” during the Sengoku Period, an age of political turmoil and social upheaval between the 15th and 16th century. Professor Adolphson’s expertise offered valuable insights into the issues I am confronting—such as the center/periphery dichotomy or the oscillation between continuity and re-construction in socio-historical phenomena—and I have benefited enormously from his advice. It was a true honor to be able to interact with one of the leading scholars in Premodern Japanese Studies.

Thanks to the helpful staff at both the University and the Faculty Library, I was also able to access a rich collection of books and electronic materials, which allowed me to carry out further bibliographical research. During this term, I was kindly invited to attend the Researcher Development Seminar for graduate students held by Dr John Nilsson-Wright. This class provided a platform to engage in a lively discussion and to share each other’s ideas in a very friendly and constructive atmosphere. In addition, the weekly lectures of the East Asia Seminar Series represented a great opportunity to meet with distinguished international scholars, whose diverse background and knowledge broadened my own perspectives and enriched my understanding about the current trends in the field.

I wish to express once more my heartfelt gratitude to all the Faculty members and to the many colleagues and friends who made this experience of study at Cambridge an unforgettable one.

Pier Carlo Tommasi

Ph.D. Candidate, Ca’ Foscari University of Venice

Graduate Program in East Asian Studies (Premodern Japanese Literature)

Japan Foundation Doctoral Fellow at Keio University

Professor Adolphson delivers Ishibashi Foundation Lecture

Professor Mickey Adolphson recently gave a talk at the 5th annual Ishibashi Foundation Lecture. The title of the lecture series, held this year at Kokugakuin University in Tokyo, was *Blades, Bushi and Benkei: Weapons and Warfare in Premodern Japan*. Professor Adolphson’s talk was titled: 「日本史における寺院の兵乱と僧兵」

Warfare and Warrior Monks in Japanese History.



Dr Laura Moretti to host Japan Day at Emmanuel

On 22nd February Dr Laura Moretti will host ‘Japan Day’ at Emmanuel College.

As part of the department’s outreach strategy the day will give local school students a taster of Japanese Studies at Cambridge.

The day will involve a Japanese language session including using a real-world text in Japanese and a chance for the participants to meet some of our current students and learn more about studying at Cambridge.

Finally there will be a chance for a taste of a traditional Japanese pastime with a calligraphy session.

For more information please contact:
lm571@cam.ac.uk

New Interdisciplinary project



Circular Economy Approaches to Eliminate Plastic Waste

In collaboration with scientists and economists at the University of Cambridge, **Dr Brigitte Steger** and her colleagues have been awarded a £1m grant by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) to study 'Circular Economy Approaches to Eliminate Plastic Waste'. Commencing in January 2019, the project aims to contribute towards the development of a sustainable plastics economy by examining the local and global distributions of plastics, providing innovative alternatives to plastics and developing novel technologies for the utilisation of waste plastics. The 18-month award will also help to establish a 'Cambridge Centre for Creative Circular Economy Approaches to Eliminate Plastic Waste'. The project is led by Professor Erwin Reisner (Chemistry) with Dr Steger heading one of the four Work Packages: 'Waste and Management: The Circular Economy, Consumers' Agency and Incentivising Behavioural Change'. Dr Steger will also act as the Social and Policy Impact Leader of the project.

Cleanliness, Convenience and Comfort: Plastic in Consumer Societies

Principle Investigator: Dr Brigitte Steger, Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (Japanese Studies)

Postdoctoral researcher: TBC

This project investigates how the use and disposal of plastic are embedded in the everyday lives of consumers. It asks how people's plastic use and recycling habits are influenced by the legal and procedural systems of waste collection/recycling and their own personal values, lifestyles and understanding of natural and social environments. Plastic is an extremely useful and hygienic material for storing food, domestic cleaning products and many other household items; at the same time, there is growing awareness and concern about the tons of plastic waste that are dumped into the environment and often enter the food chain. Consequently, the use of plastic creates conflicting notions of cleanliness, convenience and comfort for consumers.

Using ethnographic methods, this anthropological project examines how waste disposal and recycling rules (with a focus on plastic) influence people's behaviour and views on cleanliness and the environment; it also examines people's agency in this matter and how they negotiate social relationships through plastic waste-related activities. Three cases with different social and cultural background as well as different approaches to plastic use and recycling will be investigated: Japan, Uruguay and the UK.

Japan is a country with an elaborate packaging culture and abundant use of plastic in everyday consumer life; equally, the waste-sorting and recycling systems are highly sophisticated and demand a high degree of involvement from consumers and (private) neighbourhood associations. Through the study of waste-related activities, Steger is keen to study how people's personal philosophies affect their approach and behaviour with regard to consumer goods (*mono*), their environment and their fellow citizens; she will pay particular attention to ideas of cleanliness, convenience, propriety and the concept of *mottainai* (a sense of regret associated with wasting time, money and physical objects).

Following fieldwork in various regions of Japan in autumn 2018, she plans a second trip during the academic year 2019/20.

Uruguay, in contrast, is a country with relatively high levels of recycling due to the activity of waste-pickers in the informal sector but low levels of household separation of waste and formal-sector recycling. Since 2014, however, four recycling plants have been built in the capital, Montevideo, partly financed by a packaging law (Ley de Envases) that relies on voluntary contributions to the Chamber of Commerce by importers and producers of packaging materials. These plants have brought with them an infrastructure that includes kerb-side containers for recyclables, thus partly shifting the onus for separation from the waste-picker to the consumer. O'Hare, whose doctoral research (University of Cambridge, 2017) focused on waste-picking in Montevideo, will turn his attention to household separation in Montevideo in order to understand how new recycling infrastructures are changing household waste disposal practices.

The focus of our study within the UK will be on Cambridgeshire and will be carried out in collaboration with the RECAP network (Recycle for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough). A programme of mixed-method qualitative research will examine the factors influencing citizen participation in household plastic separation, including questions of time, costs, hygiene and recycling options. The aim of this project is to shed light on the use of plastic from the perspective of the consumer: by understanding people's cleanliness practices, how packaging affects their shopping habits and what meaning people ascribe to their behaviour, we aim to draw practical conclusions about how consumers can be educated to reduce and recycle plastic waste.





Michaelmas term proved to be academically stimulating and productive for the postgraduate students as we initiated the official start of the Japanese-Korean Studies Kenkyukai.

We kicked off the Michaelmas term with a film screening event, *Warai no daigaku* ("University of Laughter"), a film produced by Mamoru Hoshi in 2004, a comical political satire on prewar Japanese government censorship. While the start of the term was with a comical film, we also held a weekly "Scriptorium," a writing bootcamp in the FAMES library every Friday, where all the postgraduates could get together to read and write, following a 90-minute work 10-minute tea break cycle from 9 am to 4pm with a brief lunch break in between. The turnout for the scriptorium was hugely successful. In fact, we were also very happy to see other familiar faces from Chinese studies and Hebrew Studies writing with us. On the research front, we convened a bi-weekly Kenkyukai, where we each presented our research projects, followed by an intensive Q&A and discussion. While a Cambridge PhD or MPhil can often be a solitary journey, the Kenkyukai meetings helped the postgraduates become more familiar with each other's disciplines and respective topics, facilitating discussion concerning the sources, arguments and the writing itself, better preparing us for future conferences, collaborative work and exchanges of ideas.

In the following terms, apart from presenting our papers-in-progress, the Kenkyukai will also convene a reading group where we will explore or revisit many of the classical texts within and outside the field, and also organise a debate on interesting topics pertaining to Japan and the World. In particular, the team arguing for and against will be randomly chosen, where regardless of our personal views, we will endeavour to thoroughly examine the strongest argument within the given scope and also present it as a well-substantiated piece of argument. We are open to different suggestions concerning the texts or the debate and are very grateful for the support from the faculty.

*Ria Roy,
PhD candidate*



While a Cambridge PhD or MPhil can often be a solitary journey, the Kenkyukai meetings helped the postgraduates become more familiar with each other's disciplines and respective topics





Alumni/nae in the media

Several former students of Japanese at Cambridge have recently been featured in stories by the BBC:

Sam Annesley, Greenpeace Japan's executive director and former Japanese Studies student at Cambridge is featured in the following BBC article about the recent decision by the Japanese government to withdraw from the International Whaling Commission and resume commercial whaling activities in Japanese territorial waters. Read more here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-46682976>

We were also very excited to see the work of one of our alumnae, **Hannah Vassallo** used in this BBC Futures article on Ikumen. Hannah's work is published, along with several other fascinating essays by former pupils, in *Cool Japanese Men*, edited by Brigitte Steger and Angelika Koch (pub. LIT Verlag 2017: http://bit.ly/LIT_Verlag).

<https://bbc.in/2H9z3bY>

If you are a former student of Japanese Studies at Cambridge, and would like to share any news we would be delighted to hear from you. Contact: fs468@cam.ac.uk

Jeremy Silverman donation

The Japanese Studies group would like to say thank you to alumnus Mr Jeremy Silverman for his ongoing support of Japanese Studies at Cambridge.

Mr Silverman's recent generous donation will be used to create a fund for graduate resources, which any graduate student of Japanese Studies may be eligible to apply for.

In an increasingly uncertain world the generous support of alumnae and alumni help us to safeguard our future and ensure our ability to educate the next generation of Japan experts. Japanese Studies at Cambridge is now in its 71st year and the programme has expanded greatly from humble beginnings. In the last two years alone we have established a number of new internships and funding opportunities for undergraduate and post graduate students. Progress like this would not have been possible without the kind generosity, advice and support of our former students.

East Asia Seminar Series

Lent 2019

At the University of Cambridge

**MON 28
JAN**

Dr Fabio Gygi, SOAS University of London
Against Techno-Animism: Androids, Dolls and Animate Objects in Contemporary Japan

**MON 4
FEB**

Professor Simon Kaner, SISJAC, University of East Anglia
Sainsbury Institute Art Lecture
Jealous goddesses and serene buddhas:
the 'arrival of belief' at the eastern extremity of the silk roads

**MON 18
FEB**

Professor Annmaria Shimabuku, New York University
Alegal: Biopolitics and the Unintelligibility of Okinawan Life

**TUE 19
FEB**

Professor Araragi Shinzo, Sophia University
ERC Talk
Repatriation, Settlement, 'Left-behinds' and 'Smuggling'; the racial migrations after WWII in East-Asia.
引揚、定住、残留、「密航」－第二次世界大戦後東アジアにおける人の移動

**MON 25
FEB**

Dr Daniel Schley, University of Bonn
Royal Abdications and the Quest for Power in Early Japanese History

**FRI 8
MAR**

Professor David Ambaras, NC State University
Japan's Imperial Underworlds: Intimate Encounters at the Borders of Empire

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



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