The 8th EU-Japan Young Scholars Workshop on Transnational Japan 'Revisiting' Transnational Relations between Japan and the West 日本と西洋のトランスナショナルな関係[再訪]

Date: November 28 ~ 30, 2025 Place: Hosei University (Tokyo)

Organizing Committee

- ➤ Hosei University Research Center for International Japanese Studies (HIJAS)
- ➤ European Center for Japanese Studies in Alsace (CEEJA)
- ➤ Consortium for Global Japanese Studies (CGJS)

Outline

Needless to say, Japanese modernization, from the political and economic systems as well as culture and identity, has developed through encounters with the Western world. For Japanese scholars and intellectuals, examining the West and the relationship between Japan and the West has been a key topic since the Meiji period. At the same time, the image of the West in Japan and vice versa was co-created by the transnational interactions from both sides. However, from the end of the Showa era to the Heisei and Reiwa periods, discussions about relations between Japan and the West seem to have faded from intellectual discourse, at least within the Japanese public sphere. Meanwhile, the relationship between the two has become much more complex, and the narrative that prevailed until the Showa era does not seem to adequately capture their contemporary relations. Given this situation, it would be fruitful to revisit old questions within the new contexts of the world today. Thus, following the discussions in past workshops in France, this year we will invite papers that explore the transnational relations between Japan and the West, both historically and contemporarily, broadly within the fields of politics, society, and culture. What has been the relationship between Japan and the West in the past? How have they changed? How is it now? Based on the presentation on empirical cases and the following discussion, we would like to explore these questions within our three-day workshop.

言うまでもなく、日本の近代一政治・経済制度から文化・アイデンティティまで一は、西洋との出会いをきっかけに発展してきた。日本の知識人たちにとって、西洋とは何かを問い、日本と西洋の関係を探ることは、中心的な議題であり続けてきた。そして、日本側からの西洋イメージも、またその逆も両者のトランスショナル相互行為を通じて形成されていったと言える。しかしながら、昭和の終わりから平成、令和と移り変わる中で、日本と西洋の関係という主題は、影を潜めていった印象は拭えない。実社会においても、この間、両者の関係はより複雑になり、それまでの枠組みでは捉えきれない状況へと大きく変化している。こうした状況を踏まえて、今一度日本と西洋の関係という古くからの問いを新たな世界情勢に照らして考察し直すことが必要ではないだろか。そこで、今回のワークショップでは、これまでのワークショップでのトランスナショナリズムの議論をさらに発展させ、日本と西洋のトランスナショナルな関係を過去、現在の両面において、政治・社会・文化の様々な領域から分析する報告を募集する。過去の日本と西洋の関係はどのようなものだったのか?それはどのように変わっていったのか?そして現在の関係はどのように捉えられるのか?3日間にわたる実証的な研究報告とディスカッションを通じて、こうした問いへの考察を深めていきたい。

Keynote Speakers

Claire-Akiko Brisset (University of Geneva)

"Cinema as a Transnational Phenomenon: The Case of the Reception of Japanese Cinema in France before 1945"

➤ Thierry Hoquet (Paris Nanterre University)

"Greek Philosophy or Transnational Philosophy?"

Organizers / Chairs / Commentators

- Christophe Thouny (Ritsumeikan University)
- ➤ Erich Pauer (CEEJA)
- Hideto Tsuboi (Waseda University)
- ➤ Josef Kyburz (CNRS)
- ➤ Kei Takata (Hosei University)
- Masashi Oguchi (Hosei University)
- Nozomi Takahashi (Strasbourg University)
- ➤ Regine Mathias (CEEJA)
- > Shin Abiko (Hosei University)
- > Tsutomu Hoshino (Hosei University)
- Yasuko Yokoyama (Hosei University)
- Yusuke Suzumura (Meijo University)







Keynote Speaker - Day 1

Cinema as a Transnational Phenomenon: The Case of the Reception of Japanese Cinema in France before 1945

トランスナショナルな現象としての映画: 1945年前にフランスにおける日本映画の受容をめぐって

Claire-Akiko Brisset

University of Geneva Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres (Paris)

Japanese cinema is often considered in the West to embody "Japaneseness". However, its history showcases the way interrelationships between film industries all over the world have shaped those same industries to a certain extent. Therefore, the transnational approach is of paramount importance when studying the history of Japanese cinema, as well as that of any "national" cinema. In other terms, film history is fundamentally a transnational phenomenon. However, although the key role played by Western movies on the evolution of the Japanese industry until the 1930s has been extensively studied, Japan as an export market has been rather overlooked for the same period so far. In this talk, I would like to focus on the numerous forms of circulation of the Japanese cinematic culture in Europe (mainly in France as a case study) until 1945 and show how they had an impact on the Western industries. Among others, two main topics may be addressed: the distribution of Japanese films in France and their reception, as well as "Japonisme" in the French production—that is, how Japan and its imaginary (including cinematic) world have been integrated (plots, motives, characters, aesthetics, etc.)—before World War II.

Keynote Speaker - Day 3

Greek Philosophy or Transnational Philosophy?

ギリシャ哲学か?もしくはトランスナショナル哲学か?

Thierry Hoquet

Paris Nanterre University

This presentation examines the boundaries of philosophy through two stages. First, it revisits the introduction of the term tetsugaku (哲学) into Japanese by Nishi Amane as a translation of philosophia. The neologism marked the emergence of a new discipline, but it raises the question: can we apply tetsugaku to earlier Japanese thought—such as Buddhist theories—or only to intellectual practices shaped by contact with the Greek and Western traditions? The issue extends more broadly: can we speak of Chinese or Bantu philosophy, or only of Chinese or Bantu thought? Following Paulin Hountondji, we may argue that philosophy everywhere implies a critical engagement with philosophia—a gesture of reinterpretation open to all cultures. Second, we turn to the movement to decolonize philosophy. Western philosophy now confronts its colonial past and reexamines figures like Kant, Hume, and Hegel, while striving to include voices historically excluded—women and people of color. Within this context, Japanese philosophy occupies a unique position, synthesizing Buddhist, Confucian, indigenous and Western traditions. Yet, born amid modernization and nationalism, it too must question its own historical foundations and undertake a form of self-decolonization.

Modernity, Japaneseness, and the Creation of Framed Spaces: (De)Coding Nature in Ozu Yasujiro's The Munekata Sisters

近代性と日本性、そして映画的空間の創造:小津安二郎『宗方姉妹』における自然の記号論

Dingding Wang

Nagoya University
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This paper challenges simplified interpretations of Ozu's *The Munekata Sisters* (1950), which reduce the film to a cliché representation of the binary opposition between tradition and modernity, as well as Japaneseness and "Westernness." Instead, it argues how cinematic spaces are carved and inscribed with culturally specific meanings through the inclusion and manipulation of plants and animals. The way imported plants fill Western-style bars, and culturally "more Japanese" plants alongside the soundscape of birds in washitsu, or Japanese rooms, reveals how the ambient poetics of flora and fauna are embedded parts of the frame that help create cinematic spaces associated with either Japaneseness or Westernness, which are predetermined by their relationship with the framed environment. The nuanced use of flora and fauna tropes and the creation of culturally specific spaces reflect Ozu's awareness of the coded nature of literature and cinema, as well as his contemplative critique of ecology and ambivalent view of modernity and Japaneseness. Although Ozu uses many culturally specific spatial arrangements and natural imagery in this film, made shortly after Late Spring (1949), these elements offer clues to understanding how he navigates and reconciles Japaneseness as a culturally specific construct. This extends beyond arguments that Ozu merely retrieves traditionalism and conservatism; instead, he explores the dynamic and dialectical relationship between the two, as embodied by the characters of the Munekata sisters. Furthermore, this paper offers a close reading of key sequences that depict the differences and the eventual reconciliation between the Munekata sisters and between the seemingly opposing ideals of tradition and modernity through the contrast of spaces with flora and fauna. By portraying Japanese women in various public spaces, the film explores the gendered relationship between women and nature/urban landscapes.

The Relationship Between Girls as the Relationship Between Japan and the West: A Study of Wasurenagusa by Yoshiya Nobuko

少女たちの関係と日本と西洋の関係: 吉谷信子『わすれなぐさ』の研究

Daniele Durante

Ca' Foscari University of Venice

One of the themes that eclectic novelist, poet, essayist, and reporter Yoshiya Nobuko (1896-1973) explores most often in her extensive literary production is the love between girls and young women. In Wasurenagusa (Forget-Me-Not, 1932), a piece of shōjo shōsetsu, "girl literature," Yoshiya creates the relationship between the two schoolgirl protagonists by using the imaginary of the transnational relations between Japan and the Western world. On the one hand, Yoshiya characterises Masako, the novel's heroine, employing a rich web of associations with Japan. On the other hand, Yoshiya portrays Yōko, the story's love interest-cum-villain, by creating a wide series of references to the West. More specifically, Yoshiya shapes Masako after the Japanese ideal of the modest girl who is preparing to become a "good wife and wise mother" (ryōsai kenbo) as evidenced by the self-less and harmonious connection she shares with her family, especially with her mother. On the opposite, Yoshiya constructs Yōko around the figures of the kōha and the furvō shōjo, the "rough girl" and the "bad girl" who lead a life that is hedonistic, self-centered, and self-fulfilling, which means, according to the work's rhetoric, destructive for those around her, inspired by the individualistic values imported from the West. Through Masako and Yōko, Yoshiya weaves a story of positive and negative influences coming from the West to Japan and back. By closely analysing the novel's original text alongside contemporary materials on the categories of ryōsai kenbo, kōha, and furyō shōjo to frame the work in its historical, cultural, and ideological context, the paper will examine through Masako and Yōko's friendship/love/distrust the multilayered rapport tying Japan and the West that Yoshiya establishes between the lines.

Strategy of Performing Animality: On Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's "Shōnen"

動物性を演じるストラテジー:谷崎潤一郎「少年」再考

Yan Chang

Waseda University Stanford University

This paper attempts a re-evaluation of Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's short story "The Children" (*Shōnen*, 1911). Despite being regarded by Tanizaki himself as "the most flawless and completed" among his early works, Shōnen has not received proportionally extensive discussion. In a memoir form that recalls one's twenty-year-ago experience, the work tells a story of three boys and one girl's bizarre daily life, in which they play a series of make-believe games. While Shonen exhibits typical characteristics of Tanizaki's literature—the tensions between masculinity and femininity, masochism and sadism, and the East and the West—the previous studies leave several prominent features of the work unresolved. Consequently, the arguments regarding the children's sexual awakening do not build a productive conversation with those about the East-West tension. What does the adolescence of the main characters mean to the work? Why is the work in the form of a memoir? Why do the sadomasochistic games practiced by the children contain a big part of the mimesis of animality? And how should we associate the above inquiries with the broader context of the encounter between modern Japan and the West? This paper deems adolescence as an allusion to Meiji Japan and demonstrates Tanizaki's understanding of modernization. Associating with the work's form of a memorial style, the paper illustrates how the children's games of performing animality refer to a specific time period of Meiji Japan. Thereupon, the paper examines three interlocking threads of the story—the escalation of the games, the shift of dominance from the boys to the girl, and the spatial movement from the Japanese room to the pseudo-Western space. By doing so, the paper seeks to reveal Tanizaki's ambivalence regarding Japan's encounters with the West.

Transnational Dolls: From Blue-eyed Dolls to Ball-jointed Fantasies

トランスナショナルな人形――青い目の人形から球体関節人形の幻想へ

Momoe Hamachi

Waseda University

This presentation examines two distinct episodes in the reception of Western dolls in Japan, focusing on how these objects mediated cultural exchange and acquired divergent meanings across historical contexts. The first case concerns the Blue-eyed Dolls sent from the United States to Japan in 1927 through the initiative of Shibusawa Eiichi. Distributed to children nationwide as part of a goodwill campaign, these dolls symbolized innocence, peace, and friendship. Yet with the outbreak of the Pacific War, they were reclassified as "enemy objects" and in many cases destroyed. In the postwar period, their memory resurfaced in local folklore as ghost stories of cursed dolls. This trajectory—from diplomacy to war to haunting—reveals how the dolls embodied the shifting dynamics of Japan–U.S. relations and how their afterlives haunted Japan's cultural imagination. The second case explores the postwar reception of Hans Bellmer's ball-jointed dolls through the writings and translations of Shibusawa Tatsuhiko, a distant relative of Eiichi. In this context, Bellmer's surrealist aesthetics were introduced into Japan, linking dolls with fantasy, eroticism, and the disruption of human-object boundaries. This reception fostered an aesthetics of fantasy, further developed in the works of artists like Yotsuya Simon and later resonating with Gothic Lolita subcultures. For these communities, the doll became not a diplomatic token but an intimate and transgressive figure of desire and identity. By juxtaposing these two cases, the presentation demonstrates how Western dolls were appropriated in radically different ways—first as instruments of diplomacy, later as icons of fantasy and subculture. Taken together, they illuminate the layered, transnational processes by which Japan reinterpreted Western cultural forms, and show how these reinterpretations cast divergent lights on the cultural imagination of girlhood.

Transborder Buddhist Responses to Christianity: Sessō Sōsai and the Reception of Chinese Anti-Christian Texts

キリスト教への越境的仏教的応答――雪窓宗崔と中国反キリスト教文献の受容

Qiaoyu Han

University of Tokyo

This presentation examines the transnational dimensions of early modern Japan's intellectual and religious responses to Christianity through the case of the Zen monk Sessō Sōsai (1589–1649). Commissioned by the Tokugawa shogunate to deliver sermons in Nagasaki following the Shimabara Rebellion (1637–1638), Sessō emerged as a key figure in the development of anti-Christian discourse in seventeenth-century Japan. While his critiques have often been read as a local Buddhist reaction to foreign religion, this study situates his writings within a broader East Asian intellectual network by analyzing his engagement with contemporary Chinese Buddhist texts, particularly Feiyin Tongrong's Yuandao pixie shuo (1636) and Miyun Yuanwu's Biantian shuo (1635). Sessō's second anti-Christian treatise, Taiji jashū ron, includes lengthy quotations from Feiyin's work, with selective omissions that reflect a deliberate adaptation of Chinese arguments to the Japanese context. By omitting Confucian elements and foregrounding Buddhist metaphysics, Sessō reconfigures Chinese critiques of Christianity to align with local doctrinal concerns and political objectives. This case thus demonstrates how Japanese Buddhist responses to the West were shaped not only by domestic pressures and doctrinal traditions but also by imported intellectual resources. Rather than viewing Japan's anti-Christian policies in isolation, this presentation argues that Sessō's writings exemplify a transnational Buddhist resistance to Christianity, forged through the circulation of texts, ideas, and personnel across maritime East Asia. In doing so, the study complicates conventional narratives of Japan-West relations by foregrounding the Chinese intermediary in the formation of Japanese perceptions of Christianity. This example of crossborder Buddhist collaboration illustrates the entangled nature of religious and intellectual responses to the West in early modern East Asia, highlighting the need to reconsider the "Japan-West" binary as part of a broader, interconnected regional discourse.

Modern, All Too Modern: Reversing Civilisational Hierarchies in Japan -West Intellectual Exchange through Haga Yaichi and Okakura Yoshisaburō

近代的、余りに近代的——日西知的交流における文明ヒエラルキーの逆転: 芳賀矢一と岡倉由三郎を通じて

Alberto Zizza

University of Munich
DIJ Tokyo

This paper examines a pivotal moment in Japan-West intellectual relations during the late Meiji era, when Japanese thinkers actively inverted the cultural hierarchies imposed by Western modernity. Focusing on Haga Yaichi (1867-1927) and Okakura Yoshisaburō (1868-1936)—respectively Kokuminsei jūron (1907) and The Japanese Spirit (1905)—the study shows how they adopted remarkably similar strategies for repositioning Japan within global discourse, while addressing fundamentally different audiences. Amid the geopolitical tensions of the Russo-Japanese War and the rise of "yellow peril" rhetoric, both intellectuals sought to counter what they viewed as misrepresentations of Japan. In doing so, they directly countered what Clinton Godart has termed the "cultural imbalance of categories" internalised during the Meiji period. Instead of accepting Western frameworks as universal, they reversed them: Japan, they argued, was more modern than the West. Yoshisaburō's lectures at the London School of Economics directly challenged his British audience, while Haga's writings provided domestic readers with intellectual tools to navigate modernity without cultural subordination. Central to their position was a simultaneous acceptance, rejection, and reformulation of Western models of modernity. They embraced modern sciences and methodologies but rejected excessive Westernisation as superficial or destabilising, and reformulated Japan's role in the global order as uniquely capable of harmonising Eastern and Western traditions. In doing so, they asserted not only parity but also discursive superiority in the hierarchy of modernity. Despite their fame and readership at the time, the contributions of Haga and Okakura remain relatively neglected in scholarship. Revisiting their works as transnational cultural productions reveals how Japan-West images were co-created through intellectual exchange, challenging binary narratives and thereby offering new ways to revisit enduring debates on modernity, national identity, and cultural relations.

The Development of Early Japanese Socialism: From the Canon to the (European) Peripheries

初期日本社会主義の展開・正典から(ヨーロッパの)周縁へ

Enrique Mora Roas

Open University of Catalonia

This presentation explores the understudied influence of Southern European socialist theory on Japanese socialism. While the reception and dialogue Japan established in late Meiji and the Taishō eras with the canonical influences of Western socialism, mainly Anglophone countries, Germany, and the USSR, have been largely studied, we aim to uncover the references and guiding principles put forward by Japanese authors by considering Southern European sources and experiences. Italy stands as a relevant case exemplified in the use of texts by Antonio Labriola, systematiser of Marx's thought, among anarchists such as Ōsugi Sakae and Marxists like Yamakawa Hitoshi; and the attention to events such as the Biennio Rosso (1919-20). We argue these texts and events were relevant for Japanese socialists' understanding of Marxist doctrine and praxis, evidenced by citations in Japanese articles and reports on historical moments such as mass-strikes and factory occupations by Italian workers' councils. To do so, we map the influences of early Japanese socialism, showing the limitation of sources, which helps us identify two phenomena: first, the eclectic nature of texts, from Christian socialism to anarchism and communism; and second, the commonality of their origin, the Anglophone context, Germany and Russia. Next, we highlight an inflection point in the availability of sources after the Russian Revolution and contacts with the Comintern, which opened a path for more information on global historical events. This also provided access to peripheral developments of socialist theory and praxis, which paralleled Japan's own peripheral position in global socialism. Finally, we pose that Southern Europe, and Italy in particular, became a region of interest to authors of a broad political spectrum from anarchism to communism. Additionally, we aim to broaden this geographical context to introduce possible references to the developments in Spain, coinciding with the Italian case, through mass-strikes between 1917 and 1919.

Japanese Foreign Correspondents as Transnational Mediators in Berlin, 1933–1945

ベルリンにおける日本人特派員――トランスナショナルな媒介者として(1933-1945年)

Daniel Wollnik

Ruhr-University Bochum

This presentation examines the role of Japanese foreign correspondents based in Berlin between 1933 and 1945 as key mediators in the transnational circulation of information and knowledge. While scholarship has highlighted diplomatic, military, and economic relations between Japan and Germany, the activities of journalists who reported daily from Berlin have remained largely overlooked. Yet these correspondents occupied a strategic position: they observed Germany's radical transformation under National Socialism and translated it for Japanese audiences during a period when the two countries drew politically closer. The analysis pays particular attention to their living and working conditions in Berlin, their institutional affiliations, and the networks they built locally and transnationally. These contexts shaped both the possibilities and the limits of their reporting: professional routines, political constraints, and censorship intersected with personal contacts and cross-cultural exchanges. Case studies on individual journalists, such as Ejiri Susumu, a correspondent for the news agency Dōmei tsūshinsha who spent several years in Berlin during the 1930s and 1940s, illustrate how correspondents selected and framed information and how their narratives offered particular perspectives on Germany for Japanese audiences in a period of global upheaval. By centering on Berlin as a hub of observation and reporting, the presentation underscores the significance of Japanese correspondents as mediators of relations between Japan and Germany and contributes to a more nuanced understanding of global media entanglements in the first half of the twentieth century.

Siberia as a Shared Memory:

Transnational Commemoration of the Siberian Internment and Stalinist Repressions

シベリアを共有記憶として: シベリア抑留とスターリン主義弾圧のトランスナショナルな記念

Gunde Dauksyte

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In 2004, the European Union expanded eastward by accepting ten new member states, seven of which were part of the Eastern bloc during the Cold War, thus (at least technically) broadening what we might think of as "the West." Consequently, the commemoration of Stalinist repressions became a matter of all Europe rather than just its eastern flank, as evidenced by the establishment of the Black Ribbon Day by the European Parliament in 2008. One of the main actors pushing for this commemoration was the state of Lithuania and its efforts have curiously reached Japan, too, through the Lithuanian diplomatic mission and non-governmental cultural exchanges. In Japan, Stalinist repressions are interpreted through the lens of the Siberian internment—the internment of more than half a million Japanese in the Soviet Union between 1945 and 1956—thus providing a common framework for transnational cultural memory with the states in Central and Eastern Europe. This paper traces the cultural representation and joint commemorative efforts between Japan and Lithuania that frame the Siberian internment and Stalinist repressions as commensurable historical events. Through an analysis of a range of cultural products, from memoirs and children's literature to theater plays and museum exhibitions, this contribution aims to reveal how a range of governmental and non-governmental actors have tried to establish a shared cultural memory between Japan and Lithuania. To the extent possible, the paper also questions the success of these efforts. By focusing on one of the Baltic states, peripheral to the common understanding of what constitutes the West, this paper invites us to question what is the West today and in relation to contemporary Japan, which events belong in the history of the West, and how different nation-states negotiate these changes.

The 1968 Deportation of Taiwanese Exiles from Japan in Global Context

グローバル人権運動背景下における 1968 年在日台湾人亡命者強制送還事件

Wolfgang Gerhard Thiele

Free University of Berlin

Between December 1967 and March 1968, Japan deported over 60 Taiwanese to then dictatorial-ruled Taiwan, including three dissidents - Guo Xilin, Chen Yuxi, and Liu Wenqing. These deportations were part of a secret agreement in which Japan prepared to forcibly repatriate over forty enemies of the Taiwanese regime living in Japan in exchange for Taiwan facilitating the deportation of Taiwanese and Chinese criminal offenders (mostly drug offenses) detained in Japan, despite warnings by Japanese diplomats that the deportees could face the death penalty. To avoid public criticism and court intervention, the deportations were carried out secretly and processed overnight during court closing hours. After a violent altercation on the Haneda airport tarmac during Liu's deportation and ensuing media attention, an odd coalition of lawyers, intellectuals, right- and left-wing parliamentarians, anti-Vietnam War, Maoist, and anti-Maoist activists formed and successfully halted further deportations and amendments to immigration law that would have granted bureaucrats unchecked power to forcibly repatriate political undesirables. In defending exiles' rights, these activists founded Amnesty International (AI) Japan, AI's first Asian chapter, and by appealing to customary international law (unsuccessfully) tried to use the judiciary to force the Japanese government to recognize asylum rights. This incident was not only crucial for the history of human rights in Japan and Asia, but also illustrates how marginalized foreigners and anti-Western activists used Western institutions and ideas (AI, international law, universal human rights) to pursue their interests. I would like to introduce this fascinating example of how Western institutions spread to Japan during the second era of globalization and how even anti-Western political activists came to embrace Western institutions, as well as shortly show why and how students and human rights activists in the USA and West Germany protested these deportations and what this international pressure achieved.

Walking to America:

Distance in Japanese-American relations Depicted by Kojima Nobuo and Murakami Ryū

アメリカへの歩み:小島信夫と村上龍が描く日米関係における距離感

Mariia Kravets

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Kojima Nobuo (1915-2006) and Murakami Ryū (1952) are both famous for their works in which they depict difficulties in Japanese-American relations unfolding around American naval bases established in Japan following World War II. This paper focuses of the dynamics of shortening distance, both – physical and mental – between Japanese natives and American military personnel and their families, etc., in Kojima's *American School* (1954) and Murakami's *69 sixty nine* (1987). Despite the fact that in both novels the distance motif can be outlined, the approaches, the main characters use to overcome the cultural and worldview gap with American settlers, are different. Our research aims to analyze and explain this difference, and also to acknowledge colonial discourserepresented in two authors' fiction through the language, cultural, educational, and economical expansion.