



# THE CENTER FOR JAPANESE STUDIES

University of Michigan | 2026 Newsletter



2 From the Director

3 Remembering U-M's Incarcerated Nikkei Workers

4 Japanese Studies Today

5 News from the U-M Museum of Art

6 News from the Asia Library Japanese Studies Collection 2024–2025

7 CJS Postdoctoral Fellowship

8 News from the Japanese Language Program

9 Get to know our new and current MIRS students!

10 News from the Publications Program

11 2024-2025 Funding Recipients

12 Beyond Godzilla, Kurosawa, and Ghibli

13 CJS Thursday Noon Lecture Series

14 CJS 2024–2025 Film Programming

16 Faculty Updates

17 2024 Malm Award Recipients

18 CJS Affiliate Updates

19 Alumni Updates

21 Toyota Visiting Professor and Visiting Scholar Updates

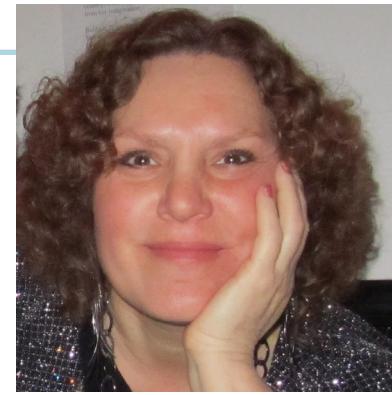
23 Ann Arbor Japan Week 2024

24 Connecting Family and the World

25 Japan Internship Initiative

26 CJS Faculty Research Grant

## From the Director



Welcome to the academic year 2025–2026.

Many of us have felt the weight of recent changes in our field, and we find ourselves standing on shifting sands of uncertainty.

I find myself reflecting on my learnings about how Japanese culture supports managing struggle and uncertainty. One of these is the cultural value of *我慢* (*gaman*), which implies perseverance and dignified patience. While some may see this as a stoic acceptance, we understand that it is an active engagement with those (perhaps passing) forces that cannot be changed at the moment.

This foundation of balancing patient perseverance and active engagement points to another Japanese cultural response to uncertainty, which is the curious combination of both adaptation and innovation. This approach enables us to assess our current situation, identify what is needed, and explore the opportunities that our available resources and ingenuity provide. Rather than waiting for “things to improve,” Japanese culture encourages us to ask, “What can we do in these circumstances to make things better?” We need this spirit of innovation now more than ever.

However, innovation also requires us to rely on our spirit of unity and cohesion within our community. This is a time when our nearly 80-year legacy becomes both evident and reassuring. We can adapt, innovate, and persevere together.

Lastly, Japanese culture values and appreciates a long-term perspective. This value encourages us to embrace the daily-life spirit of *改善* (*kaizen*) by taking small, positive steps, regardless of uncertainty. It also prompts us to reflect on our personal and our center’s existential reason, purpose, or *生きがい* (*ikigai*).

I am reassured by and have faith in our community, which has the capacity, values, and strengths we need in these uncertain times. In the coming year, we will continue to support groundbreaking research, meaningful cultural exchange, and the training of the next generation of Japan scholars.

Denise Saint Arnault, Ph.D., RN, FAAN  
Professor, School of Nursing  
Director, Center for Japanese Studies  
University of Michigan

# Remembering U-M's Incarcerated Nikkei Workers

I first met Mike Yanagita in May 2025 in Los Angeles's Little Tokyo neighborhood. We had been introduced by a mutual friend who knew that I was working on a project memorializing Nikkei who worked at the University of Michigan during World War II. Mike's father, Haruo Yanagita, was hired out of a concentration camp in Minidoka, Idaho, to teach Japanese at Michigan. Mike was born in Tokyo during his father's stint working for the U.S. Occupation but grew up in Ann Arbor during the 1950s and 60s.



Mike Yanagita with his parents Haruo and Mieko near the intersection of Church St and South University in late 1952. (Courtesy: Ann Arbor District Library and Michael Yanagita)

Once we reached a shady corner of the plaza in front of the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center, Mike lugged out a hefty album of family photos. In many, the Yanagitas pose in front of a stylish car parked on an Ann Arbor street. The creaky electric pole and imposing brick buildings behind them immediately caught my eye – they looked so familiar. I wouldn't realize why until a month later, when I visited U-M to develop a database of the university's wartime Nikkei workers for the Center for Japanese Studies

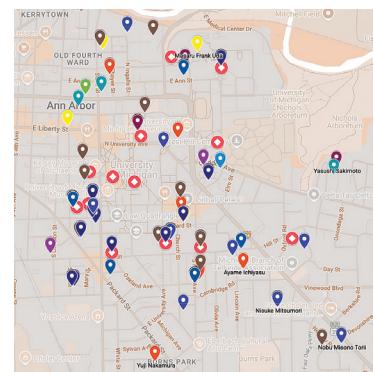


Army Intensive Japanese Language School instructors pose for a photo in the Yanagita family's home at 542 Church Street, sometime between 1943 and 1945. Haruo Yanagita sits front and center with Mike's older brother on his lap. (Courtesy: Ann Arbor District Library and Michael Yanagita)

students have trodden through the site of Mike's family photos. We are where they were.

In 2021, historian Kim Clarke unearthed U-M Housing Office records that dramatically reframed our understanding of U-M's reliance on Nikkei labor during World War II. In her

article "These Young Americans," Clarke revealed that teachers like Haruo Yanagita were far from the only Nikkei workers on campus. In fact, U-M had recruited several hundred formerly-incarcerated people of Japanese ancestry as janitors, dishwashers, cooks, and hospital workers. These workers took varied paths to Ann Arbor; some were recruited directly from the camps, whereas others had been previously released to other work and educational opportunities outside Washington, Oregon, and California. Teachers like Mike's father were, in the words of a War Relocation Agency report, "the backbone of... morale" for the hundreds of Nikkei working in Ann Arbor. Campus authorities, for their part, did little to buoy the prospects of these young workers. Clarke observes that while U-M administrators welcomed Nikkei as laborers, they refused to admit them as students.



A map visualizing workplaces and residences of incarcerated Nikkei workers in Ann Arbor during the WWII era. Available via the U-M CJS website.

website. The electric pole still stands near the intersection of Church Street and South University. The brick buildings are East Hall and the U-M Credit Union (remodeled in 2019). The Yanagita's home stood directly across the street, at 542 Church, which is now the site of a four-story apartment building. CJS, of course, resides just up the road at 500 Church. On countless occasions, CJS staff, faculty, and

In 1992, Yuzuru Takeshita – a professor at the U-M School of Public Health, CJS faculty member, and former incarceree at Tule Lake – recalled this history in an article for the *Ann Arbor News*. A fellow Nikkei professor at U-M had recently revealed to him that, as a young man, he had applied to transfer to U-M in order to avoid incarceration. "To his dismay," Takeshita wrote, "he received a letter...from the dean of the graduate school that he would have to submit a certified statement that he was not a person of Japanese ancestry since, if he was, he would not be admissible!"

In another column for the *Ann Arbor News*, Professor Takeshita wrote: "If a wrong was committed by an earlier generation, it is still our responsibility to recognize that wrong and make amends so that new wrongs are not committed." In that spirit, and with support from a generous gift presented by the Takeshita family upon Yuzuru Takeshita's passing in 2017, I partnered with the Center for Japanese Studies and the U-M Bentley Historical Library to develop a digital database of formerly incarcerated Nikkei workers recruited by the University of Michigan between 1943 and 1945. Inspired by the Irei: National Monument for the WWII Japanese American Incarceration, the database shows that 401 formerly incarcerated Nikkei workers filled jobs at 14 locations across the Ann Arbor campus during World War II. Accompanying the database is a map showing where Nikkei workers worked and lived during the war.

*continued on page 4*

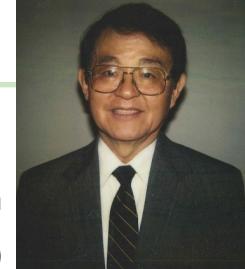
# Remembering U-M's Incarcerated Nikkei Workers

*continued from page 3*

Uprooted from their communities on the West Coast, hundreds of people of Japanese ancestry forged new communities throughout Ann Arbor during World War II. Those communities did not vanish in 1945; rather, as writing by Kim Clarke and Katrina Anbender has shown – and as Mike Yanagita testifies – they shaped the lives of countless Ann Arborites. In my own research, I have seen how Haruo Yanagita's fellow teachers went on to play key roles not only in the U.S. Occupation but also in Japanese corporate expansion into Los Angeles in the early 1960s.

We can trace the legacies of U-M's Incarcerated Nikkei workers from Ann Arbor to Tokyo and Los Angeles. My hope is that this new database helps descendants, educators, and

Professor Yuzuru  
Takeshita (Courtesy:  
Takeshita Family)



researchers understand the local, national, and transnational significance of this understudied community. "Everyone I meet [in Los Angeles] asks me how I ended up in A2 and I explain the whole...language program story," Mike Yanagita wrote to me recently in an email. "No one has ever heard of it. Now I hope this story gets out there."

To see more photos from the Ann Arbor District Library's Yanagita Family collection, please see: [aadl.org/yanagitacollection](http://aadl.org/yanagitacollection)

## Brad Hammond

Ph.D. Student, Van Hunicke History Department,  
University of Southern California  
Center for Japanese Studies M.A., 2015

## Japanese Studies Today

**by Akiko Imamura, Director of the Japanese Language Program**

**4** When I was invited to share my perspectives on the importance of Japanese language study for the CJS newsletter, what immediately came to my mind was the broader and alarming national trend: the declining interest in Languages Other Than English (LOTE) in the United States. At the University of Michigan, enrollments in Japanese have remained relatively stable over the past several years that I know, mirroring national patterns in four-year institutions (Lusin et al., 2023). Yet, when we look more broadly, the outlook for LOTE education appears far more precarious. Overall enrollments in language courses across the U.S. continue to decline, and in the case of Japanese, enrollments at two-year institutions plummeted between 2016 and 2021 (Lusin et al., 2023). Compounding this decline is the growing perception among university leaders that language programs are expendable, resulting in significant reductions and, in some cases, outright eliminations. A striking example is the recent dissolution of the Department of World Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics at West Virginia University – an entire department dismantled within just a few months (Thompson et al., 2025). Adding to these challenges is the rapid advance of artificial intelligence, which has fueled the belief that technology may soon erase language barriers altogether. This further diminishes the perceived need for formal language study. We now find ourselves at a critical juncture for the future of language education.

Despite constant threats to their vitality in higher education, I argue that we must champion the relevance of learning languages other than English (LOTE), such as Japanese. While translation tools now offer an immediate mapping of foreign

scribbles to one's own language, this reliance risks overlooking the many subtle discrepancies, cultural nuances, and emotive layers embedded in authentic communication. True language competence transcends mere memorization of vocabulary and grammar; it demands reflection on the plurality of linguistic systems as well as the rich socio-cultural usage of language. Through the study of languages, people gain the ability to move between different social norms and cultural contexts consciously, fostering cultural openness and a genuine sense of belonging to more than one world. They become adept at understanding the nuanced ways that ideas, perspectives, humor, aesthetics, and emotions are conveyed—insights that we need to be able to feel, instead of reading off translation algorithms. In the end, you're not just adding words to your mind—you're building a whole new system for making meaning, which broadens your horizons and deepens your understanding of others. We must keep language learning at the core of education. By doing so, we prepare individuals not only for global practice but also for meaningful participation in our interconnected and rapidly shifting world.

Lusin, N., Peterson, T., Sulewski, C., & Zafer, R. (2023). *Enrollments in languages other than English in US institutions of higher education, Fall 2021*. Modern Language Association. <https://www.mla.org/content/download/191324/file/Enrollments-in-Languages-Other-Than-English-in-US-Institutions-of-Higher-Education-Fall-2021.pdf>

Thompson, A., S., Chalupa, C., & Stjepanovic, S. (2025). The canary in coal country: Educational policy, politics, and the dissolution of a language department. *The Modern Language Journal*, 109, 431–453.

# News from the University of Michigan Museum of Art

In summer 2025, UMMA presented a new display in the Japanese Art Gallery, part of which focuses on how processes, materials, and techniques intertwine to create meaning. Curated by Róisín Lacey-McCormac, UMMA's graduate student intern and a Ph.D. candidate in history of art, this grouping includes paintings, ceramics, textiles, and prints, and it features three woodblock prints by Saitō Kiyoshi (1907–1997), an internationally known artist of the Sōsaku Hanga ("Creative Print") movement. Historically, the production of woodblock prints was divided into print designers, woodblock carvers, and printers hired by mega publishers like Tsutaya Jūzaburō (1750–1797). Sōsaku Hanga artists challenged the division of labor by putting control of the creative process into the hands of the individual artist. Saitō's *Rain (Ann Arbor, Michigan)* depicts a spring day on the University of Michigan's central campus Diag. It is based on sketches he made during a stay in Ann Arbor in 1956, supported by a traveling grant from the State Department and the Asia Foundation. In this print, Saitō challenges our assumptions of the presumed flatness of his medium, convincingly creating an illusion of spatial depth



Saitō Kiyoshi 斎藤清 (1907–1997), *Rain (Ann Arbor, Michigan)*, 1956, color woodblock print on paper. University of Michigan Museum of Art, Gift of the artist, 1959/2.28

through the intersecting vertical and diagonal lines of tree trunks and footpaths, which suggest distinct planes receding into the distance. In a work depicting Buddhist statues, Saitō incorporates the natural grain of the woodblock to reference the fact that the original statues were carved from wood and to draw the viewer's attention to the medium from which the print was produced. In 1958 and 1959, Saitō donated 68 works to UMMA after his mid-career retrospective

show organized by the Corcoran Gallery toured the country. He selected the University of Michigan as the place to build up a collection of his major works because of its strong Japanese Studies program. With additional donations from local collectors, UMMA now owns 88 prints by Saitō, one of the largest collections of his prints in North America.

In another section of the gallery, the focus is on contemporary sculptural and functional ceramic works by women artists. One is *Double-knotted bundle*, a ceramic sculpture by Kyoto-based ceramicist Tanaka Yū (born 1989) in which the artist cleverly deceives our perception of material texture and weight by representing the softness of cloth using hard clay. Tanaka drew inspiration from traditional Japanese techniques of wrapping a vessel with cloth, which she saw regularly while living and working in Kyoto.



Tanaka Yu 田中悠 (born 1989), *Double-knotted bundle*, 2023, blue matte-glazed stoneware. University of Michigan Museum of Art, Museum purchase made possible by Joseph and Nancy Keithley, 2024/1.351

Also on display is a selection from a new gift of sake bottles (*tokkuri*) and cups (*guinomi*). These whimsical pieces are among 51 objects recently donated to UMMA by U-M alum Richard W. Anderson, who collected more than 800 ceramic and glass vessels, most of which are for drinking sake. In the 1990s, Anderson spent several years in Japan, where he became interested in Japanese pottery and especially the tactile experience of handling smaller ceramic objects. Later in 2025 and into 2026, we will show more works from the Richard Anderson Collection, including *tokkuri* and *guinomi* made by Tanaka Yū. We encourage you to visit the gallery and experience these stunning works in person.

**Natsu Oyobe**  
Curator of Asian Art



News from the

# Asia Library Japanese Studies Collection 2024–2025

The Asia Library is pleased to welcome Ms. Yung-hui Chou as our new Chinese studies librarian. Ms. Chou holds a Master of Science in library and information science from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (2025), where she was a student assistant for East Asian collections, including Japanese materials, at the International and Area Studies Library. She holds a bachelor's degree and master's degree in Chinese literature from National Taiwan University, as well as completed Ph.D. coursework in Asian literature, religion, and culture at Cornell University. Ms. Chou looks forward to working with colleagues in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean studies to strengthen our collections and enrich resources for the Japanese studies community from a global perspective.

Ms. Suparna Hande (LSA graduate '25), Oka Tadoku Room intern, creatively organized Tadoku events and the annual New Year celebration, ensuring a welcoming environment for participants of all language levels. At the library's International Mother Language Day Celebration, she recited a Japanese poem.

6

One of her most popular weekly book clubs focused on poetry writing, drawing on her experience and expertise as a creative writing major. Suparna appreciates how learning Japanese and completing her internship have deepened her connection to her native language, Kannada, and her family. She is excited to pursue a Master's of Fine Arts in creative writing.



Kazuko Anderson

We celebrate Ms. Kazuko Anderson, Japanese information resources specialist in Japanese acquisition, for 30 years of service at the Asia Library, supporting the smooth operation of our collections.

## Japanese Collection Update

As of June 30, 2025, our collection stands at the fourth largest Japanese collection in North American university libraries, with the addition of 12,422 monograph volumes (bringing the total to 388,522) and 702 media titles (for a total of 7,974).

One notable special collection highlight is *Sagoromo Sōshi Emaki* (狭衣草子絵巻, Azuchi-Momoyama period), an invaluable artifact for the study of classical Japanese literature and visual arts.



From Left: Liangyu Fu, Keiko Yokota-Carter, Yung-hui Chou, Yunah Sung

We have new digital archives accessible from your desktop: *Nikkan Bijutsu tsūshin/Bijutsu bunka tsūshin* 美術通信・美術文化通信 [Japanese art news and culture bulletin], *Gaimushō sengo shitsumu hōkoku* 外務省戦後執務報告 [Postwar administrative reports of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs], *Gaikō shiryō Chūgoku hikiagesha* 外交資料中国引揚者 [Diplomatic documents on returnees from China], *Sekai taisen gurafushi shūsei* 世界大戦グラフ誌集成 [World War pictorial magazine collections], *Kōshitsu gaō* 皇室画報 [Imperial family pictorials], and *Eiga to Engei* 映画と演芸 [Film and Performing Arts journal].

Michigan's world-class Japanese collection and dedicated librarian have supported reference inquiries from researchers in Ireland, Italy, Japan, and across North America. Additionally, Asia Library Travel Grant recipients have benefited from our unique materials and specialized expertise that are not readily available elsewhere. These recipients include Ms. Seira Duncan (University of Eastern Finland), Dr. Paul Christensen (Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology), Ms. Saeko Suzuki (Archival Studies, University of British Columbia), and Ms. Mari Shishido (Information School, University of Wisconsin at Madison).

As we look ahead, Michigan remains at the forefront of Japanese studies by cultivating a collection that reflects a broad range of voices, perspectives, regions, and time periods, expanding our reach beyond North America to serve the global community.

**Keiko Yokota-Carter**  
Japanese Studies Librarian

# CJS Postdoctoral Fellowship

## Kirsten Seuffert

In August 2025, as I began winding down my postdoctoral year at CJS, I couldn't help but recall the saying, "You don't know what you've got until it's gone." Of course, I will miss the University of Michigan's archival resources and its amazing cultural events. And I will miss the beautiful campus and its friendly, relaxing vibe. But most of all, I will miss the intellectual curiosity, mutual encouragement, and genuine passion for the study and appreciation of Japanese culture and society that I found at CJS, which inspired me to make the most of my year of research and teaching.

In fall 2024, I taught a newly crafted graduate seminar on "Postwar and Contemporary Visual Culture in Japan." I was thrilled to share my enthusiasm for visual studies as a discipline, and through the students, I caught up on cultural developments in areas such as video games, toys, and social media. In this course, as well as in my winter 2025 seminar on "Affect, Identity, and Connection in Contemporary Japanese Cinema," I was constantly reminded that teaching involves listening, learning, and remaining open and flexible. I was deeply impressed by the inquisitiveness and cultural literacy of CJS's master's students, and I can't wait to see what they do in the future.

During this research year, I worked on shaping my book manuscript, which explores gender and subcultures within cinema and visual culture in 1970s–1980s Japan. I presented one chapter from this manuscript at CJS's Noon Lecture Series, and this work was published as an article in the *Journal of Cinema and Media Studies* in August 2025. In April, I traveled to Chicago for the Society for Cinema and Media Studies annual conference, where I presented on a panel that I organized dedicated to new directions and methodologies for archival research on Japanese film. I thank CJS for supporting me at this conference, as well as funding a short summer research trip to Tokyo, where I braved the heat to conduct research for several projects.

During my fellowship, I received support and advice from many people. I would like to thank Markus Nornes and Reginald Jackson for their mentorship on research, writing, and professionalization. I also thank Denise Saint Arnault for mentorship on research and navigating the challenging world of academic life. Many thanks go to Keiko Yokota-Carter, who is building one of the world's best archives for studying Japanese film, media, photography, and more—including professional wrestling! And boundless thanks go to the patient and capable CJS staff—Yuri Fukazawa, Jillian Locke, Sara Chittenden, and Peggy Rudberg. CJS would not be CJS without its people, who make the study of Japan come alive.

## Maura Stephens-Chu

I have had another amazing year of new classes and research as a postdoctoral fellow at CJS! This past year serendipitously centered around themes of technology and health.

In the fall 2024 semester, I taught a graduate seminar on science and technology in everyday life in Japan, in which we reviewed tech-focused ethnographies and modern history monographs. Copper mining, salmon farming, organ transplantation, and personal care robots were among our discussion topics. In winter 2025, I led a new mini-course on sex, marriage, and parenting in contemporary Japan. We examined the interplay of cultural beliefs and practices, social structures and institutions, and economic and demographic shifts in shaping the concepts of family and gender roles in the twenty-first century. We read and analyzed recent anthropological research on sex education for teenagers, labor laws and sex work, divorce and the *koseki* system, and parents' experiences of non-invasive prenatal testing, among other topics.

My work outside of the classroom this past year also emphasized the complex relationships between health and technology. I was very happy to present some of my latest research – on FemTech and menstrual cycle tracking apps in Japan – as part of the CJS Thursday Noon Lecture Series. I will be presenting further analysis from this new project at the American Anthropological Association annual meeting in New Orleans later this year. My presentation is titled "Scheduling Sex: App-Mediated Intimacy in Japan and the United States" and is part of an organized panel on technology and intimacy.

I am also pleased to announce that my article, "*Shō ga nai yo ne*": Interembodied Experiences of Menstrual Pain among Young Japanese Women," was recently published in *Social Science & Medicine*. The open-access article can be found at: [doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118349](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118349).

While I am sad to leave my position with CJS, I could not be more thankful for the invaluable experiences I have had over the past two years! I would like to express my gratitude to all of my students. I am also deeply appreciative of the mentorship and guidance offered by Professor Denise Saint Arnault, and the support and camaraderie of Jillian Locke, Yuri Fukazawa, Sara Chittenden, and Dr. Kirsten Seuffert, among many others!.

# News from the Japanese Language Program 日本語プログラム

2024-2025年度は、ミシガン大学の日本語学科にとっては、新しい講師を迎える、数年ぶりに全ての講師ポストが埋まった大変嬉しい年になりました。また、通常の学内外のイベントに加え、いくつか新しい試みにも挑戦し、例年通り、忙しい年になりました。以下では、今年度のコースや各イベントの様子について、お伝えいたします。

まず、2023-2024年度に不在だった講師のポジションには、日本から佐々木瑛代さんを迎えるました。佐々木さんはミシガン大学にいらっしゃる直前は日本の大学で日本語の教授に携わっていましたが、ミドルベリー大学でも数年教えたことがあります。アメリカのプログラムでの経験もある方です。非常に熱心に仕事に取り組んでくださる方に来ていただき、大成功のサーチになりました。

8

講師数が揃い、2025年の冬学期には、2020年以来開講されていなかった書道のクラスを再開することができました。このコースは、既習の漢字の知識を深めながら、書道に触れてみる、というコースですが、再開に際して、CJSに書道の道具を部分的に新調していただきました。この書道用品は、大学内で日本文化のイベントが行われる際に貸し出すこともあり、今後も大学内で日本文化に触れる機会を提供するお手伝いが続けていくそうです。

コース以外にも、日本語科では様々な言語・文化学習の機会を提供する努力をしており、そのうちの一つがミシガン日本語弁論大会です。2025年の第30回大会は、ミシガン日本語教師会等の主催で、2月22日(土)にWashtenaw Community Collegeで行われました。6人の学生が出場し、1・2年生の部では、サイシヤ・シュリバトサンさんが「忘れぬ人々」で銀賞、マーセラ・ヒューストンさんが「おりがみのできること」で銅賞を受賞しました。シュリバトサンさんはこれまでの人生

の中で自分に影響を与えてくれた人たちの思い出について、ヒューストンさんは、折り紙で築く人との繋がりについて発表しました。3・4年生の部では、ハオ・ソンさんが「メイちゃんと私」で金賞、シリビア・チェンさんが「留学生生活の孤独と自己成長」で銀賞を受賞しました。ソンさんは、幼少期の友達との関係性の変化と自己の成長について、チェンさんは、孤独と人生におけるその効用について考えを述べました。皆緊張していましたが、大変立派にスピーチができ、講師一同嬉しいイベントとなりました。



学内でも例年と同様、様々な言語・文化学習の機会を設けることができました。毎月一度行っている会話テーブルでは、CJSに関係のある皆様をはじめ、ミシガン大学にいらっしゃる日本語第一言語話者の方や、日本からの留学生など、色々な方々にゲストとしてお手伝いをしていただいており、今年度も平均で毎月30人程度が集まりました。学期末はお寿司を食べながら歓談する寿司テーブルを行っていますが、今年度は冬学期の寿司テーブルをNorth QuadにあるLanguage Resource Center (LRC)で行いました。LRCでは3年生が学期末の俳句コンテストを行っており、コロナ以前はLRCでの寿司テーブルが、3年生の俳句コンテストをより多くの方に見ていただく機会となっていましたが、今年度は再びその形態で寿司テーブルを実施でき、多くの学生や日本語話者の方に俳句を見ていただくことができました。

会話テーブル・寿司テーブル以外にも、前年度に引き続き岡多読ルームにおいて月に一回の多読活動を実施しました。今年度の岡多読ルームのインターンは、スバルナ・ハンデさんが務めてくれました。今後もアジア図書館の司書である横田カーターさんと協力し、教室外で日本語のインプットを提供する機会を模索していきたいと思っています。また、前年度と同様、日本でも行われている「今年の漢字」にならい、2024年を表す漢字1文字を含むデザインを日本語の学生から募集し、投票で選ばれたデザインを日本語学科のTシャツのデザインとして起用しました。さらに、学生達の中・長期的な日本語学習を支援する活動として、学科内での留学フェア、および、留学生向けの日本生活オリエンテーションを行っています。今年度は、実験的な試みとして、1~3年生のコースを受講中の学生と400番台のコースを取った学生との交流を目指したインフォセッションも企画・運営することができました。

最後に、本学科がミシガン大学の枠を超えた地域で行った活動についてご報告します。一つ目は、2024年12月に行われた日本語能力試験 (JLPT)への協力です。アナーバーは米中西部では数少ない会場の一つで、International Instituteの高田先生がお世話をしてくれていますが、本学科の講師も例年同様、準備・運営に関わりました。



# Get to know our new and current MIRS students!

た。2025年3月にはミシガン州日本語クイズボウル(MJQB)の企画・実施をお手伝いしました。アジア言語文化学科や在デトロイト日本国総領事館とともに、CJSにも協賛していただいているイベントで、今回多くのミシガン州の高校生が、日本語や日本文化に関する知識を競い合いました。また、2025年の2月には、オハイオ州のフィンドレー大学とミシガンのGreat Lakes Taiko Centerと共に、バーモント州のBurlington Taikoからスチュワート・ペイトン先生をお迎えし、コンサートとワークショップを行いました。CJSのサポートのお陰で、日本語科の活動に馴染みのない学外や地域の方にも来ていただき、幼児から大人まで楽しい時間を過ごすことができました。

日本語学科では、今年度も、ミシガン大学の日本語・日本文化学習を支援する様々な活動を行うことができました。CJSを初め、アジア図書館、アジア言語文化学部には、多くのサポートをいただきました。ご協力いただきました皆様に、心より感謝申し上げます。来年度も、講師一同、日本語・日本文化の普及促進に尽力していきたいと思います。

**Akiko Imamura 今村 明子**  
日本語科ディレクター



**Dia Camara** graduated from Henry Ford College with an associate's degree and Oakland University with a B.A. in Japanese. He is now continuing his studies in Japanese language and culture at U-M in the Masters in International and Regional Studies program.



**Sophie Chier** graduated from the University of Arkansas in 2023 with a B.A. in psychology with minors in global studies and Japanese language. She studied abroad at Kwansei Gakuin University in Nishinomiya, Japan, for six months and undertook social psychology research for her undergraduate thesis there. She is excited to pivot fully to Japanese studies to focus on honing her language skills while exploring new research opportunities that focus on factors impacting Japan's social climate and population growth.



**Alexander Johnson (Alex)** is pursuing a Masters in International and Regional Studies with a specialization in Japanese studies. He graduated from the University of Michigan with a B.A. in Asian studies in 2024. Alex's research interests include contemporary Japanese media, male-male sexuality, and translation studies.

**Zekkie McCormick**'s undergraduate work focused on philosophical and artistic movements advocating for radical liberalistic idealism, especially non-Western interpretations. Zekkie was a member of the Johns Hopkins Collaboratory in 2023, researching Takahashi Shinkichi's Dadaist and Buddhist poetry. In 2024, they moved to Japan for a year and attended Tottori University for language courses and shamisen training. Zekkie is now researching The Kyoto School of Philosophy and Japanese artistic counter-cultural movements like the Mavoists, Butoh dancers, and the poetry publication *Aka to Kuro*.

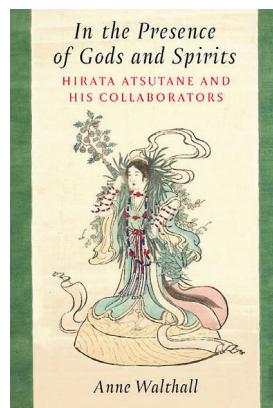
**Michelle Moore** is pursuing a Masters in International and Regional Studies with a specialization in Japanese studies. During her undergraduate studies, she focused her capstone research on soft power in modern Japan. Michelle spent two years abroad in Kyoto, Japan, studying at Ritsumeikan University and then Doshisha University. Her research interests include soft power in Japan, modern Japanese literature, translation, localization, and linguistics.



**Matthias Reed** graduated from Wayne State University with an B.A. in Asian studies and urban studies and a minor in history. His interests include Japanese private railways and their influence on pop culture, which was his undergraduate research, as well as rural railways and how they approach Japan's population decline. He lived in rural Kochi Prefecture, Japan for six months, teaching English to elementary and middle school students as a participant in the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program.

*continued on page 15*

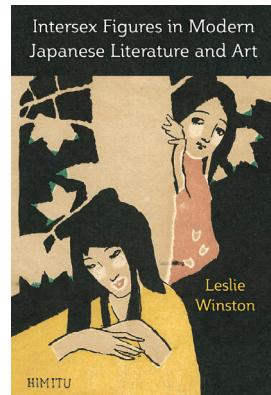
# News from the Publications Program



10

identity centered on gods, spirits, and the emperor. His teachings would later attract thousands of followers and feed the movements that led to the Meiji Restoration. Drawing on the concept of material religion, Walthall demonstrates how Atsutane and his collaborators sought out knowledge of the unseen world and educated others, while seeking to bring themselves closer to the gods and spirits. This work showcases Atsutane and his community's legacy, which has had a profound influence on Japanese society, religious belief, and culture far beyond his lifetime.

**Anne Walthall** is professor emerita of Japanese history at the University of California, Irvine. She previously coedited *Women and Class in Japanese History* (1999) and *Women and Networks in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (2020) with the University of Michigan Press.



“normal” and “pathological,” intersex literary figures garnered attention because the perceived subject was expected to be male or female—any variation was unintelligible. Many of the same century-old tropes and societal attitudes of needing to “cure” intersex persist. At the same time, the 1991 novel *Ringu* by Suzuki Kōji testifies to a denial of *futanari* subjectivity, while the 1998 Japanese horror film (*Ringu*) and its 2002 American remake (*The Ring*) erase intersex altogether.

## In the Presence of Gods and Spirits: Hirata Atsutane and His Collaborators

By Anne Walthall (August 2025)

*In the Presence of Gods and Spirits* brings to life the early nineteenth-century Japanese religious leader and scholar Hirata Atsutane, whose fear of Russian incursion onto Japan's soil led him to redefine what it means to be Japanese. Atsutane advocated the study of the Way of the Gods, commonly known as Shinto, to explain what happens to the soul after death and to cultivate a Japanese identity centered on gods, spirits, and the emperor. His teachings

Winston interrogates how the trope of the *futanari* is deployed for pragmatic or aesthetic purposes, thereby complicating the trajectory of the dominant sexological ideology of the time. Winston reads the figurative *futanari* in the works of Shimizu Shikin, Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, and Takabatake Kashō, and reveals how the artists' different approaches to the *futanari* served their agendas and expressed views that challenged the dominant discourse on intersex.

**Leslie Winston** is adjunct professor at California State University, San Bernardino.

## Modern Japanese Literary Studies

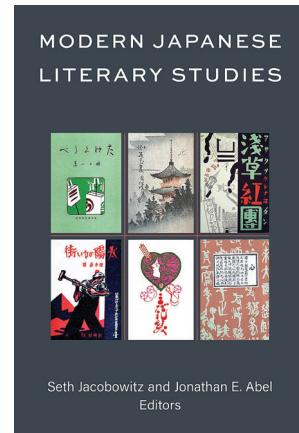
Edited by Seth Jacobowitz & Jonathan Eran Abel (February 2026)

*Modern Japanese Literary Studies* brings together a broad range of interdisciplinary and institutional perspectives on the state of the field and presses for overdue recognition that Japanese literature is not only a national or East Asian literature, but also deserves equitable representation in the humanities. Modern Japanese literature today is read in unison with colonial and postcolonial literature, women's literature, LGBTQ literature, diasporic literatures, Indigenous literatures, visual cultures, and disability studies, and has made innovative contributions across the humanities.

Bringing together 16 scholars from North America, Asia, and Europe, this volume addresses Japan's place in global modernity and world literature; the changing definition of the literary within the national canon and area studies configurations; the increased prominence of manga and visual media studies; heightened sensitivity to issues of race, gender, sexuality, and LGBT studies; and the advent of ecocriticism, among other emerging paradigms. The primary objective of this book is to assess the field's study, teaching, research, and cataloging practices and identify challenges and opportunities for growth that lie ahead for the field amidst the ongoing crises that are reshaping the contemporary academic landscape.

**Seth Jacobowitz** is assistant professor in the Department of World Languages and Literatures at Texas State University.

**Jonathan E. Abel** is professor of Japanese and comparative literature at Pennsylvania State University.



Seth Jacobowitz and Jonathan E. Abel  
Editors



# 2024-2025 Funding Recipients

## Supernatural Japan: Izumi Kyōka and the Global Fantastic

By Pedro Thiago Ramos Bassoe (March 2026)

*Supernatural Japan* examines the role of Japanese writer Izumi Kyōka (1873–1939) in the formation of modern literature of the fantastic in Japan as a global literary genre. Kyōka wrote some of the most famous stories of ghosts, monsters, and the supernatural in modern Japanese literature, including *The Holy Man of Mt. Kōya*, *The Grass Labyrinth*, and *The Castle Tower*. Despite the clearly modernist elements and global influences of Kyōka's fiction, his work has often been characterized as relying on traditional Japanese genres as inspiration for its themes and literary form.

Pedro Bassoe considers how Kyōka's stories have been produced by a meeting of global influences, including Apuleius, *The Arabian Nights*, Hans Christian Andersen, the Brothers Grimm, Prosper Mérimée, Guy de Maupassant, Gerhart Hauptmann, and Jules Verne—combined with traditional Japanese genres. Bassoe develops the notion of “the scholarly fantastic” to describe how a set of realistic epistemologies reinforce the fantastic in Kyōka's writings. *Supernatural Japan* offers an up-to-date introduction to Izumi Kyōka and his writing for students, scholars, or fans of Japanese fantasy literature and media.

**Pedro Thiago Ramos Bassoe** is assistant professor of Japanese at Purdue University.

## Four Years in Izumi: Village Japan in the Early Sixteenth Century

By Lee Butler (May 2026)

*Four Years in Izumi* takes an in-depth and critical approach to understanding Japanese village life through analysis of the diary of Kujō Masamoto, the former chancellor of the imperial court who resided briefly in one of his provincial estates from 1501 to 1504. For a high-ranking courtier to travel to the countryside and manage a family estate was unheard of during the era of *Sengoku*, the “country at war.” The diary Masamoto kept offers a remarkably rich and vivid portrait of village Japan, which has seen no significant study in English-language scholarship.

Through extensive examination of the diary and close and critical reading of it and complementary sources, Lee Butler provides a window into the inner workings of late medieval village life that challenges typical portrayals of the period. In *Four Years in Izumi*, we see the complexity of relations between commoners and elites in action. We also see the ways in which an estate functioned in practice at the heart of the medieval economy and local social structure.

**Lee Butler** is an independent scholar of late medieval and early modern Japanese history.

## Endowed and Named Awards and Fellowships Recipients

- **Dr. Hiroyuki and Mrs. Helen Rinehart Uete Fellowship in Japanese Studies**
  - 2025–26: Michelle Moore (MIRS-CJS)
- **Masao and Mayumi Oka Scholarship for Japanese Language Studies**
  - 2025: Sofia Pan Xian (LSA), Feng Yuyang (LSA)
- **Alumni Fellowship**
  - 2025: Julianne Angeli (Ph.D. Romance Languages & Literatures), Zoe Dong (M.F.A.), Ailish Dougherty (M.D.), Itsuki Umeyama (Ph.D. Political Science)

## Summer Fellowship Recipients

- Summer Research Fellowships: Zoe Dong (M.F.A.), Simran Kang (Ph.D. Anthropology), Itsuki Umeyama (Ph.D. Political Science)
- Internship/Practicum Fellowships:
  - Julianne Angeli (Ph.D. Romance Languages & Literatures), Ailish Dougherty (M.D.)

## Academic Year CJS Endowment Fellowship Recipients, 2025–26

- Dia Camara (MIRS-CJS), Sophia Chier (MIRS-CJS), Jon Foissotte (J.D.), Zekkie McCormick (MIRS-CJS), Michelle Moore (MIRS-CJS), Matthias Reed (MIRS-CJS), Yingmo Tu (MIRS-CJS)

## Undergraduate Study Abroad Scholarship Recipients

Unless otherwise noted, students are part of the College of Literature, Sciences, and the Arts.

- Summer 2025: Alicia Aranyi, Elizabeth Bergstrom, Bradley Burns, Isabella Direnzo, Yuyang Feng, Raine Floied (U-M Flint), Lilianna Flores, Kaitlyn Grishaj, Fatima Hadi, Marcella Houston, Dante Jackson (U-M Flint), Tammy Lam (U-M Dearborn), Florian Grace Lamban (U-M Flint), Logan LaPeen (U-M Flint), Yihan Ling (Engineering), Margarita Lupercio, Jenna McIntire (U-M Flint), Bailey Mingus, Nkennayerem Nzerem, Keaton Reese, Caleb Ross, Ari Roth, Connor Skaleski, Ellie Tesler (U-M Flint), Skylar Turner, Caitlin Weingarten (Stamps, School of Information), Payton Williams, Sofia Pan Xian
- Academic Year 2025–26: Masato Austin, Evelyn Han

## Japanese Language Proficiency Test Fee Grant, December 2024

Angelina Burson (Engineering), Suparna Hande (LSA), Jason Harwood (LSA), Adil Kolah (Engineering), Sierra Seidel (Architecture and Urban Planning), Ariel Yang (Ph.D., Psychology & Women's and Gender Studies), Estella Qiming Zhang (M.A. Urban & Regional Planning), Yichi Zhang (LSA)

# Beyond Godzilla, Kurosawa, and Ghibli

## by Kenji Ishizaka (2024–25 TVP)

I am a film researcher and an international film festival director, and I served as the Toyota Visiting Professor at CJS from the summer of 2024 to the spring of 2025. Now, back in Japan, I've returned to my daily life and am reflecting on my fruitful time in Ann Arbor. The year I spent there was, needless to say, the year of the U.S. presidential election. For Japanese people, it's the year that Shohei Ohtani of the Los Angeles Dodgers won the National League home run title and MVP award, and led the team to victory in the World Series. Along with the many memorable images from my time at the University of Michigan, this year will remain in my memory for the rest of my life.

The class I taught in the autumn semester, shortly after I arrived, was "Re-Reading Japanese Film History." There's a reason I added "Re-Reading" to the title. The image of Japanese films, well-known overseas, can be summed up in three katakana characters. Those were *Kurosawa* (period dramas), *Godzilla* (special effects VFX), and *Ghibli* (animation). While that's certainly true, I had a strong desire to shed new light on aspects of film history that are often understood through superficial stereotypes and introduce them to American students.

The class met in a set of three sessions on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, so I decided on a theme for each week.

12 Mondays were a lecture-based introduction, Tuesdays were screenings on the giant screen in the excellent audiovisual room in Angel Hall, and Wednesdays were discussions following the previous day's screening, and I think it all went well. I was impressed by the professionalism of the projectionists at Angel Hall, who not only strived to provide the best possible projections but also had an intimate knowledge of film.

The theme for the first week was the original *Godzilla*, released in 1954. In fact, there are currently over 30 films bearing the name "Godzilla." While most students were familiar with the five Hollywood-made *Godzilla* films, from 1998's *Godzilla* to 2024's *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire*, few had seen the original *Godzilla* film, directed by Ishiro Honda for Toho over 70 years ago. In the discussion the day after the screening, some students commented that they had realized for the first time that the first *Godzilla* film, made just nine years after the war, is a deeply lyrical and tragic story with a strong anti-nuclear message, and that their preconceived notion that *Godzilla* is simply



With my students



At Aikido Dojo, Asian Marshal Arts Studio, downtown Ann Arbor

a monster action spectacle film had been challenged, making for a productive and meaningful session.

During the week focusing on Akira Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai*, the discussion took place after a thorough viewing of the entire three-and-a-half-hour film. We discussed the uniquely Japanese genre of *jidaigeki* (period drama), and we all recognized how, even though the setting is old days, the scars of the recently concluded war are unmistakably etched throughout the story. Some students also noted that *Seven Samurai* and *Godzilla* were both released in 1954, highlighting the richness of subject matter in the golden age of Japanese cinema. I hope this provided a new perspective on *jidaigeki*.

The week of Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away* was an impressive one. Even on Monday, students were constantly asking, "Teacher, can I invite my friends to the screening tomorrow?" The next day, the screening was packed with twice the usual number of people. You guys really love *Ghibli* that much! The students' knowledge of Japanese anime far surpassed mine, so there was no need for me to intervene in the discussion. I was also impressed by the students' insight, including an excellent final paper submitted by one student, which reinterpreted the film from a child psychology perspective.

Speaking of final papers, one student focused on Koji Yakusho, a leading Japanese actor who starred in 1990s films such as *Eel* and *Shall We Dance?*, which we covered in class. The paper explored the transition in his roles from his most recent starring role in Wim Wenders' *Perfect Days*, from portraying an anxious salaryman facing a middle-age crisis to playing a character who has now retired from such scenes of chaos and struggle. The resulting brilliant paper captured the changes in Japanese society as an actor, and I was impressed!

*continued on page 15*

# CJS Thursday Noon Lecture Series

The CJS Thursday Noon Lecture Series experienced significant growth in the 2024–2025 academic year, with attendance numbers returning to pre-pandemic levels. CJS continued to host lectures in a hybrid format, allowing our community to participate both in person and online.

Our lecture series provides an opportunity for faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, and members of the general public to be introduced to the work of scholars and experts in Japanese studies. This series also serves as an interdisciplinary forum for sharing ideas, exchanging perspectives, as well as fostering community and intellectual exchange.

CJS enjoyed welcoming the following speakers.

## Fall 2024

September 12: **Sabine Frühstück**,

University of California at Santa Barbara

“Crafting Immortality: Emotional Capital and Randoseru Victory”

September 19: **Anne Crescini**, University of Kitakyushu

“Japanese English: Weird English or Creative Japanese? How Understanding Language Can Change Your Perspective”

September 26: **Emer O’Dwyer**, Oberlin College

“Democracy on Edge: Japan’s Atsumi Peninsula During the Allied Occupation”

October 3: **Denise Saint Arnault**, University of Michigan

“Examining and Understanding Distress Experiences for Japanese Women: A Retrospective”

October 10: **Masataka Okamoto**,

Fukuoka Prefectural University

“The Hidden Diversity of the Japanese People: Deconstructing Japan’s Nation-Building Process”

November 7: **Kenji Ishizaka**, University of Michigan

“The Uniqueness of Japanese Documentary Films: Focusing on the Minamata Series”

November 14: **Shimpei Cole Ota**, National Museum of Ethnology; Graduate University for Advanced Studies; American Museum of Natural History

“Tyrannical Tigers and Endangered Cats: Why Are the Korean Scholar-Bureaucrats Always So Important in Modern Japan?”

November 21: **Kirsten Seuffert**, University of Michigan

“Other ‘Punks’ in Late 1970s–1980s Cinema and Visual Culture in Japan: Gender, Documentary, Ephemerality”

December 5: **Tara Rodman**, University of California at Irvine

“Fantasies of Ito Michio”

## Winter 2025

January 16: **Marnie S. Anderson**, Smith College

“In Close Association: Politics, Gender, and Reform in Meiji Japan, 1868–1900”

January 23: **David Humphrey**, Michigan State University

“Laughter’s Time, Media’s Time: Contemporary Comedy in Japan”

January 30: **Sachiko Kita**, University of Michigan

“Do Victims and Survivors’ Voices Reach Society? Changes to the Support System for Gender-based Violence in Japan”

February 6: **Mariko Okada**, University of Michigan; Oberlin University in Tokyo

“Dancing in Motion: Untangling the Framing of ‘Geisha’ in Early Cinematic Records”

February 20: **Kenneth Mori McElwain**, University of Tokyo; Columbia University

“What Do Japanese People Want From Their Constitution?”

February 27: **Soda Kazuhiro**,

Peabody Award-winning Filmmaker

“Editing Observation: Filmmaker Soda Kazuhiro Demonstrates His Method”

March 27: **Junko Kato**, The University of Tokyo

“The Politics of Taxation and Redistributive Equality”

April 3: **Maura Stephens-Chu**, University of Michigan

“Techno-Menses: Period Products and FemTech in Japan”

April 10: **Tomoyuki Sasaki**, College of William & Mary

“Uneven Development and Rural Decline: The Other Side of Japan’s Economic Miracle”

April 17: **Julia Alekseyeva**, University of Pennsylvania

“Matsumoto Toshio and the Antifascist Avant-Garde”

CJS extends our deep appreciation to the diverse array of scholars, experts, artists, and attendees who contribute to the success of our Noon Lecture Series.

For details on past lectures and upcoming events, including registration links for webinars, please visit the CJS Events page on our website! You can also watch many of our previous Noon Lectures on our YouTube channel at [myumi.ch/W6DNJ](https://www.youtube.com/@myumi.ch/W6DNJ).



# CJS 2024-2025 Film Programming

The CJS community enjoyed an exciting year of film events and collaborations. Professor Markus Nornes curated both the winter 2025 **CJS Film Series** and **several special events**.

## Benshi Attack! Silent Sword Films with Benshi Narration

CJS collaborated with Professor Nornes and Marquee Arts for an unforgettable event featuring renowned benshi Kataoka Ichiro (片岡一郎). This event took place on December 9, 2024, at the Michigan Theater's Main Auditorium. Mr. Kataoka expertly narrated six silent samurai films, and DJ arwulf arwulf provided music for the soundtracks.



Kataoka Ichiro

## CJS Winter 2025 Film Series

This year's CJS Film Series, titled *Masato Harada: A Life in Cinema*, featured ten films from Director Harada's impressive career. CJS partnered with Marquee Arts and the U-M Department of Film, Television, and Media for this year's series.



The series kicked off in January 2025 with an exciting visit from Director Harada, who traveled from Japan to attend our first screening, *Sekigahara* (2017). He introduced the film to a packed theater and held a Q&A session with Professor Markus Nornes after the screening. Additionally, Director Harada engaged with the CJS community throughout the week, including class visits and a lively student lunch.

Translator Mizuho Toyoda Timmer deftly interpreted Mr. Kataoka's introduction and Q&A session in addition to manually timing the English subtitles with the Japanese audio. Thanks to the hard work of Mr. Kataoka, Professor Nornes, Ms. Timmer, and Marquee Arts, the audience enjoyed a rare opportunity to enjoy these short films with English subtitles and live Japanese narration.

The audience viewed the following films:

1. *Viewing Maple Leaves (Momijigari, 1899)* [National Film Archive of Japan]
2. *The Oath of the Sword (1914)* [George Eastman Museum]
3. *The Dull Sword (Namakura gatana, 1917)* [National Film Archive of Japan]
4. *Jiraiya the Hero (Goketsu jiraiya, 1921)* [National Film Archive of Japan]
5. *Blood Spattered Takadanobaba (Chikemuri Takadanobaba, 1928)* [Toy Film Museum]
6. *A Straightforward Boy (Tokkan kozo, 1929)* [Shochiku]



Professor Markus Nornes, Kataoka Ichiro, and arwulf arwulf

The evening started with the first film ever made in Japan, which was a fitting way to begin the evening. The audience also enjoyed early anime, the oldest Japanese-American film, action, and comedy. We thank the museums and archives listed above for sharing such rare films with the CJS community.

The rest of the screenings in the series began with introductions by scholars in the CJS community, including Professor Nornes, Ph.D. candidate Yuki Nakayama, CJS Postdoctoral Fellow Dr. Kirsten Seuffert, and Professor Peter Larson.

Our series concluded with *Kamikaze Taxi*. This brought Professor Nornes' CJS film programming full circle, as he previously facilitated Director Harada's visit to Ann Arbor over 20 years ago for a showing of the same film.

We were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Director Harada in December 2025. We extend our condolences to the countless people affected by this great loss. It was an honor to celebrate his films through this series, and we are incredibly grateful for the time he shared with our community.



Professor Markus Nornes and Director Masato Harada



Professor Markus Nornes and filmmaker Kazuhiro Soda

### Former TVP Kazuhiro Soda's Visit and Screening

Kazuhiro Soda, a Peabody Award-winning filmmaker and former CJS Toyota Visiting Professor (TVP), visited Ann Arbor for a film screening, Thursday Noon Lecture, and other on-campus activities. Mr. Soda also collaborated with U-M professors and students to co-direct a feature documentary about the Michigan Stadium, titled *The Big House* (2018).

CJS held a free on-campus screening of his new film, *The Cats of Gokogu Shrine* (2024), on February 25 at Angell Auditorium A. Following the screening, audience members participated in a thoughtful Q&A session with the director.



Professor Markus Nornes and filmmaker Kazuhiro Soda, CJS Noon Lecture

screening and lecture, Mr. Soda engaged with students, faculty, and community members throughout his visit. CJS greatly enjoyed his return to Ann Arbor!

The 2024–2025 academic year was a banner year for CJS film programming, thanks to Professor Nornes, Marquee Arts, Kataoka Ichiro, Harada Masato, Soda Kazuhiro, and all those who contributed to making these events a success.

The center also congratulates Professor Nornes on his upcoming retirement and impressive tenure as the CJS film series curator.

Please check the CJS events page on our website for upcoming film events.

# Beyond Godzilla, Kurosawa, and Ghibli

*continued from page 12*

I also devoted a week to the *Minamata* series, a landmark in the history of Japanese documentary film and my life's work, and its director, Tsuchimoto Noriaki. I presented a more detailed version of the series at the CJS Noon Lecture Series in November. Like *Godzilla*, the 2020 feature film *Minamata*, in which Johnny Depp plays photographer Eugene Smith, is well known, so I thought it was a good time to use it as a gateway to introduce people to this militant Japanese documentary series from half a century ago and to consider the similarities and differences between the two. In March of this year, I went on a research trip to Yale University Library, which houses a large collection of materials on director Tsuchimoto, who passed away in 2008. I was able to spend days perusing the massive 83 boxes of "Tsuchimoto Papers," which was a great experience.

Looking back, the time flew by. It was particularly unforgettable as it was my first experience of communicating in English in a class in front of students of diverse nationalities and ethnicities, something rarely experienced in Japan. I'd like to thank the talented students who provided me with many academic insights through our discussions. Conversely, I would be delighted if our conversations brought something to them. Finally, I would like to thank Professor Markus Nornes, CJS Director Professor Denise Saint Arnault, the dedicated and wonderful staff, the CJS community, and everyone at U-M.

Viva U-M! Long live CJS! Go Blue!

15

## Get to Know Our New and Current MIRS Students!

*continued from page 9*



**Yingmo Tu, (穎墨)** (Yíngmò if you call her in Chinese, Momo if you call her in English, or えいばく if being called in Japanese) is fluent in both Chinese and Japanese. She grew up in China, and went to college in the U.S. During her master's program, she plans to study the literature of anti-naturalist and aesthetic writers, using ancient Chinese poetry and other works in a comparative literary way, while also incorporating philosophical interpretations (with ancient Chinese Taoist thought while also using modern philosophical ideas), in order to explicate the mental landscape (心象風景) that people experienced against the backdrop of the development of contemporary society.

# Faculty Updates

**Benjamin Peters** (Ph.D. Rutgers University), director of the LSA Global Scholars Program, served as an exhibit content reviewer for the WongAvery Asia Pacific Peace Museum in Toronto, Canada. In July 2024, he became a member of the Board of Directors of ALPHA Education, the educational non-profit that established and operates the museum. ALPHA Education carries a mandate to foster a critical understanding of the history of World War II in Asia, with a commitment to further the values of peace and humanity. ALPHA Education's two-decade-long education work has improved people's knowledge of World War II in Asia and increased youth participation in the pioneering of a peace and reconciliation movement.



**16 Jennifer Robertson** (emerita professor) spent part of the fall of 2024 at the University of Tokyo as a visiting professor at Tokyo College, where she is also an affiliate member. While there, she presented a webinar, "50 Ways to Kill a Robot: Death and Differentiation." You can view the English video at [youtube.com/watch?v=vhu4d8vyh3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhu4d8vyh3s), and the Japanese video at [youtube.com/watch?v=z39Fzy6\\_Z3k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z39Fzy6_Z3k). The article version of this lecture was published in September 2025 in *Second Death: Experiences of Death Across Technologies*, Alger Sans Pinillos and Jori Vallverdú, eds., SAPERE Studies in Applied Philosophy, Epistemology and Rational Ethics, Berlin: Springer-Verlag ([link.springer.com/book/9783031988073](https://link.springer.com/book/9783031988073)).

Robertson gave two other presentations: one for the Japan Society of New York in October 2024, "Can Robots Fix Japan's Demographic Dilemma?" recorded and uploaded to the Japan Society's Video Resources for Educators website ([japansociety.org/teacher-k-12/video-resources-for-educators/](https://japansociety.org/teacher-k-12/video-resources-for-educators/)), and the other, "Folktales, Fertility, Futures: An Overview of Eugenic Ectogenesis in Japan," in March 2025 at a UCSB workshop organized by Sabine Frühstück on "J[apanese] BodyMachines."

She also had two other publications: a special section on "Artificial Intelligence and Scholarly Publishing," titled "Doing Fieldwork in Robotland: Combining *Longue Durée* with Rapid Ethnography," *Historical Studies in the Natural Sciences*, 54(5): 630–635, 2024; and "ANIMALOIDES," in *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique des Animaux*, (Paris: Champ Vallon, 2024) 52–59.

## Publications from **Yuki Shiraito**:

Sonntag, Melanie Sayuri, Michael Strausz, and Yuki Shiraito. "Attitudes on the Entry Ban in Japan during the COVID-19 Pandemic." *Social Science Japan Journal* 28, no. 2 (Summer 2025). DOI: 10.1093/ssjj/jyae035

Sonntag, Melanie Sayuri, Michael Strausz, and Yuki Shiraito. "Gendered Views on Immigration Policy Stances? The Case of Japan." *Japanese Journal of Political Science*. (Forthcoming)

In March 2025, Dr. **Fangfei Miao** toured her new evening-length dance concert No Other in France. The concert is based on her two-year artistic research on how premodern ritual dance in Japan and China offers new insights into the contemporary conceptualizations of womanhood. Through exploring the ambiguity between lesbian sexual desire and female friendship, Dr. Miao obscures the time rift between the ancient and the contemporary, the spatial rift between the East and the West, and the conceptual rift between queer sexual desire and same-gender friendship. Her team included faculty and students from the music, theatre, and dance departments of the School of Music, Theatre & Dance at the University of Michigan.



**Yoshihiro Mochizuki**, teaching professor of Japanese language, continues his leadership role as co-director of the American Association of Teachers of Japanese (AATJ) Annual Spring Conference, a position he has held since 2022. He successfully co-directed the 2025 conference held on Thursday, March 13, in Columbus, Ohio.

Working with the other co-director and AATJ officers, Mochizuki introduced several innovative features to enhance the attendee experience and foster networking opportunities. The conference began with a welcome reception on Wednesday evening, providing a casual environment for colleagues to connect. On Thursday morning, an opening ceremony oriented participants to the day's schedule of events and included a land acknowledgment. A significant innovation this year was the integration of dedicated meeting times for Special Interest Groups (SIGs), which drew a substantial number of participants and generated meaningful discussion.

Mochizuki's tenure as co-director will conclude after the next AATJ Spring Conference in Vancouver in March 2026.

# 2024 Malm Award Recipients

**Markus Nornes** gave lectures in Taiwan, Germany, and England over the summer. This fall, he co-programmed “Unscripted: The Art of American Direct Cinema” with Ikui Eiko for the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival. This was a 32-film retrospective of American documentaries with its own catalog and speakers.

## Shinobu Kitayama writes:

Culture is to humans what water is to fish. We rarely notice it, yet it surrounds us and shapes us—subtly, unconsciously, and powerfully.

Take one example. Our neuroscience study shows that European American students at the University of Michigan display a surge in brain activity linked to self-focused thought (“alpha power”) when they learn they have succeeded on an exam. It feels like human nature, until you look to Japan, where the same effect disappears. There, a culture of modesty eliminates the potential to exhibit this “neural self-enhancement.”

In my new book, 『文化が違えば、心も違う？ 文化心理学の冒険』 (*If Culture Varies, So Might the Mind? – Adventures in Cultural Psychology*, 岩波新書), I explore this and many other findings from studies in Africa, Asia, and the West, many conducted at U-M. Written for a general audience, the book offers both an accessible introduction to cultural psychology and a practical guide to cross-cultural understanding, showing how human universality is revealed through cultural diversity.

I am delighted that the book has already reached #2 in the Amazon Iwanami Shinsho category and entered the top 50 psychology titles in Japan. Seeing our scholarly work on culture and the self resonate beyond academia is deeply rewarding.

My book is available online at [amzn.asia/d/b5ZNkGC](https://amzn.asia/d/b5ZNkGC), and you can learn more about my research at [sites.lsa.umich.edu/kitayama/](http://sites.lsa.umich.edu/kitayama/).



**S**ince 2010, the Malm Awards have sought to encourage and recognize exceptional writing on Japan by undergraduate and graduate students. Funded by a grant from the University of Michigan Office of the Provost, the William P. Malm Awards for Outstanding Student Writing in Japanese Studies honor the late William P. Malm, a long-time faculty member of the Center for Japanese Studies, leading ethnomusicologist of Japan, and one of the founders of the field of ethnomusicology in the United States.

This award originally required a CJS faculty nomination, but students have been able to nominate themselves since the 2023–24 academic year.



From left to right: Róisín Lacey-McCormac, Dr. Natsu Oyobe, and Michael Delphia.

## Graduate Prize: Róisín Lacey-McCormac (Ph.D. Student, History of Art)

The Graduate Prize was awarded to Róisín Lacey-McCormac for her paper “Untangling the Methodological Stakes of ‘International Contemporaneity.’” Róisín completed the paper for 2023–24 Toyota Visiting Professor Eriko Tomizawa-Kay’s class, Interdisciplinary and Decentering Approach to 20th-century Japanese Art, in winter 2024.

## Undergraduate Prize: Michael Delphia (LSA Asian Studies, Economics, and History), Class of 2025

Recent graduate Michael Delphia was awarded the Undergraduate Prize for his paper titled “Baseball in Colonial Korea: Whimoon High School’s 1923 Cinderella Run and Media Identities Under Empire.” Michael wrote this paper for The Nam Center for Korean Studies Undergraduate Fellows Program over the course of the 2024–25 academic year.

# CJS Affiliate Updates

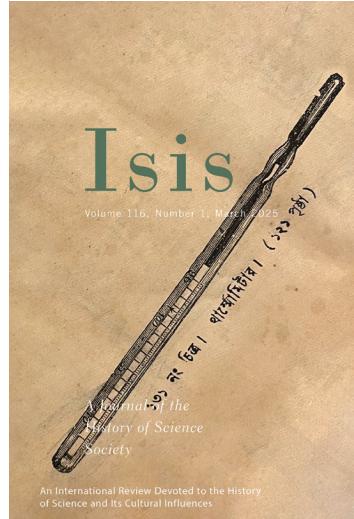
**Keisuke Yamada** has received an honorable mention for the Kenneth B. Pyle Prize for Best Article from the Society for Japanese Studies, in recognition of the article, co-authored with Dr. Andrew Niess, titled “The Emergence of Sō-on: Factory Music, Noise, and An/aesthetic Strategies for Industrial Management” (*The Journal of Japanese Studies*, summer 2024).

He has also published an essay in the March 2025 issue of *Isis*, the flagship journal of the history of science. Titled “Between Hearing and Touch: The Global Discovery of the Vibratory Sense through a ‘Deaf Ability,’” this essay examines the historical relationship between the global spread of oralism and the local formulation of knowledge about the vibratory sense in early-twentieth-century Japanese psychoacoustics.

18

**Anna Woźny** (Ph.D. sociology '23, currently a joint post-doctoral research associate at Princeton University and the University of Tokyo) published a new article entitled “Domesticating the Salaryman: Marriage Promotion, Hybrid Masculinity, and the Resignification of Reproduction in Japan” in the special issue of the journal *Men and Masculinities*, “Re-imaging East Asian Masculinities in the Regime of Global Capital.” You can access it at: [journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1097184X251328018](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1097184X251328018)

**Dustin London**, professor at Eastern Michigan University’s School of Art & Design, has continued a series of colored pencil drawings on washi based on the temples and gardens of Kyoto. One significant influence on his recent work is a method of garden design known as *miegakure* (見え隠れ), or “hide and reveal,” which uses overlapping elements to obstruct one’s view, such that objects or spaces are only partially visible from any given point. The result is an atmosphere of suggestion and implication that prompts a visitor to imagine what is unseen and charges the space with mystery and potentiality. His work was recently included in the exhibition *Piecing Landscape: Experience in Layers* at gallery Unfold in Kyoto, and he will hold a two-person exhibition with painter Harumi Abe in November at Broward College’s Rosemary Duffy Larson Gallery in Fort Lauderdale. London will be continuing his work and research in Kyoto this fall semester as part of a Faculty Research Fellowship through EMU.



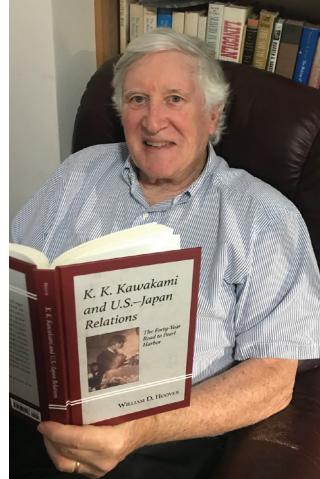
**Yugo Ashida**, founder and president of JOINLU International Inc., is also serving as the senior research specialist of the Nuclear Engineering and Radiological Science Department in the College of Engineering, and Manager of MI Hydrogen Initiative. Dr. Ashida celebrated his 10th year of service with [ISO Technical Committee 156](#) and has served as the convener of Working Group 2 since 2024. With the support of the NERS department, he organized an [inaugural summer program](#) at the University of Michigan to host 13 students and four faculty members from Tohoku University in July 2025. The group visited CJS, met with CJS staff members, and enjoyed the introduction by Assistant Director of Programs and Initiatives Yuri Fukazawa during their time on Central Campus.



*Upper Shelf*  
colored pencil on washi  
36x24.5 inches  
2025

# Alumni Updates

**William D. Hoover**, professor emeritus at the University of Toledo, recently published his book on the prolific journalist, K.K. Kawakami. Kawakami interpreted Japan to America and shared his understanding of the U.S. with Japan through his nearly 25 books, 270 journal articles, and approximately 1,000 newspaper accounts. For 40 years, he was the leading journalist writing about relations between the two countries. Hoover earned his M.A. in Japanese studies (1965) and his Ph.D. in history (1973) at the University of Michigan.



**Anne M. Hooghart**, Ph.D. (B.A. in Asian studies 1989, M.A. in Japanese studies 1995), spent 10 days in Japan this June as part of the Ohio State University East Asian Studies Center's "Japan Project 2025," a curriculum-building effort focused on the Tokaido, Origami, Temples & Shrines (or "TOTS" for short). Hooghart was one of fourteen K-14 educators from six different states collaborating to build visually-rich, shareable lesson plans and a digital archive to be published later this year on the OSU EASC website.

In May 2025, Dr. Hooghart was elected Board President of Hinoki Foundation, a Michigan-based 501c3 non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the development of Japanese-English bilingualism and multiculturalism among children, with a focus on the U.S.-Japan cultural pair. This fall, in her sixth year of teaching Japanese for Mott Community College in Flint, Dr. Hooghart will also begin her first semester of teaching Japanese for Washtenaw Community College in Ann Arbor.

**Sara Chittenden** (CJS MIRS, '24) celebrated her 11th year of volunteer work organizing the Grand Rapids Zine Fest, welcoming approximately 500 attendees and over 50 exhibitors at this year's event. She also participated in the Behind the Zines event at UMMA in March 2025. At both events, she distributed a free mini-zine inspired by her CJS master's research on Japanese self-publishing.



**Kunisuke Hirano** writes: "I was promoted to an associate professor at Keio University, where I teach anthropology in the department of Economics. In March, I published a journal article titled “性的指向とエイジングのインターフェクショナリティー—中高年ゲイ男性を対象とした互助組織の事例から” in 日本の科学者, 60(4). I also started a new project on the intersectionality of aging and sexual orientation in Japan. In July, I chaired a panel, An Elephant in the Room: Positionalities around Anthropology of Japan and East Asia, at “Shaping Futures: East Asia as Practice” (SEAA-SNU Anthropology 2025 Conference). My presentation title was “Writing Japanese Education: Enumeration in the Process of Dissertation Writing.”



19

**Kate Shanahan** (M.A. in Asian studies, Japan specialization 1986–1991, CJS work-study 1986–1988) recently received the 2025 Gold Award for Folklore/Mythology from the Florida Authors and Publishers Association for her novel *The Iron Palace*, published in February 2025. *The Iron Palace* is the second book in the *Tangled Spirits* trilogy and is based on the folktale *Shuten Dōji* as well as elements of Japanese history. This book features a dual-timeline story set in 2019 and 1002 in Kyoto (Heian-kyō), Japan.



# In Memoriam

## Obituary for David W. Hughes, 1945–2025

### Ph.D. Musicology and Anthropology, 1985

David came from a musical family in Grosse Pointe, Michigan, all of whom enjoyed making music at home and within the local community. After studying for a degree in linguistics and Japanese language at Yale University, he was hired at the University of Michigan to teach Japanese linguistics and language. There, he met his future wife, Gina Barnes (Ph.D. Anthropology, 1983). He also switched to pursue a Ph.D. in ethnomusicology, studying with the leading Japanese music expert, William Malm, and gamelan with Judith Becker. Both David and Gina were members of the U-M Center for Japanese Studies between 1972 and 1977, during which time David convened a Japanese folk song group that gave performances and toured universities from Ohio to Virginia.

Between 1977 and 1980, both David and Gina conducted their Ph.D. research in Japan. David became the weird *gaijin* who could sing and play Japanese folk songs, being invited to appear on stage, radio, and television over 50 times, often accompanied by Gina singing or playing the bamboo flute. They relocated to the UK in 1981 when Gina was hired by the University of Cambridge to teach Far Eastern Prehistory. David completed his Ph.D. while holding a research post at Clare College, Cambridge.

In 1987, David was hired to teach Southeast Asian and Japanese music in the Centre of Music Studies at The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). With a small group of colleagues, David worked to transform the Centre into a fully-fledged Department of Music in the early 1990s. He served as head of music for eight years, helping to develop the ethnomusicology programs. Up until 2024, he remained an active founding member of the SOAS Min'yo and Okinawan Music groups.



David, playing Tsugaru-jamisen at his teacher Tanaka Yoshio's studio in Osaka.

David's lectures were memorialised by generations of students for the humour he injected into topics ranging from the tempo of Japanese gagaku court music to "acoustic-iconic mnemonic systems." He served as a role model and mentor, encouraging many SOAS students to pursue postgraduate studies and eventual careers in ethnomusicology. He brought a huge amount of energy to the department, forging a vibrant community through the many extraordinary concerts he organised and the legendary parties he compered, where students shared their diverse musical skills.

David also made important contributions to the growth of the discipline of ethnomusicology in the UK. In 1995, he worked with a small group of colleagues to establish the British Forum for Ethnomusicology (BFE), which is today a large and thriving organisation, and its associated academic journal, which has evolved into the internationally respected journal *Ethnomusicology Forum*. He was the life and soul of the music nights at BFE conferences, and nobody will forget David's Japanese Cow Song or the comic brilliance of his original bluegrass lyrics.

David's two major publications, among many important research articles, are *Traditional Folksong in Modern Japan* and *The Ashgate Research Companion to Japanese Music*. Towards the end of his career, he also earned several awards: the Japan Society Award for outstanding contributions to Anglo-Japanese relations and understanding in 2011; Honorary Life Member, British Forum for Ethnomusicology in 2016; Decoration from the Japanese Government and Emperor of Japan: Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette in 2017; and the Fumio Koizumi Prize for Ethnomusicology in 2018.

*This obituary was submitted by Gina L. Barnes, Professor Emeritus, Durham University; Professorial Research Associate, SOAS University of London.*



David and Gina performing the Okinawan song "Tanchame" at the award ceremony for the Order of the Rising Sun at the Japan Embassy, London, 2017.

# Toyota Visiting Professor and Visiting Scholar Updates



**Eriko Tomizawa-Kay**, Toyota Visiting Professor 2023-24, writes:

I have recently been appointed as the Sainsbury Associate Professor in Japanese Art History in the Department of History (Art History) at the University of East Anglia (UEA), where I also serve as director of the Centre for Japanese Studies.

My recent article, "Contested Bodies: Female Imagery in Pre-War Okinawa," which I initially presented during my time as a Toyota Visiting Professor in 2023-24 as part of the CJS Lecture Series, has now been published in *Japan Forum*. The piece examines visual representations of women in pre-war Okinawa, considering how gendered bodies were constructed within a colonial context. It appeared in a special issue of *Japan Forum* in September 2025, and you can read the article at [doi.org/10.1080/09555803.2025.2494757](https://doi.org/10.1080/09555803.2025.2494757). This autumn, I am curating a Contemporary Okinawan Craft Exhibition in Norwich, taking place from October 29 to November 3. The exhibition will feature works by both emerging and established Okinawan artists and include public workshops on November 1 and a lecture exploring the history and evolving practice of Okinawan crafts on November 3. The event aims to increase visibility for underrepresented regional voices in Japanese visual culture.

**Mariko Anno** (CJS Toyota Visiting Professor, 2018-19), associate professor at the Institute of Science Tokyo, is preparing her English-language *Noh Visas for Life* for its U.S. premiere, followed by a fall 2026 tour of the Midwest. Created in collaboration with Theatre Nohgaku (TN), an international troupe specializing in English-language Noh, this Noh focuses on Sugihara Chiune, the Japanese Vice Consul in Kaunas who issued transit visas to Jewish refugees during World War II. Anno has presented work-in-progress showings of *Visas for Life* with TN and colleagues at the Institute of Science Tokyo.



Mask from *Visas for Life*. Photograph by Sohta Kitazawa

These performances are part of a research project, *Developing an Evidence-Based Design Method for English-Language Noh Drama, Based on Psychophysiological Analysis of Audience Response*, which uses physiological data from live and VR performances to study audience engagement. Anno has also published the articles "Learning Noh Overseas" and "The Last Natori" in *POLYPHONIA* and has presented on linguistic and creative translation in English-language Noh at the International Council

for Traditions of Music and Dance in New Zealand. Her current work builds on research begun during her time as a Toyota Visiting Professor and contributes to the evolving international practice of Noh.

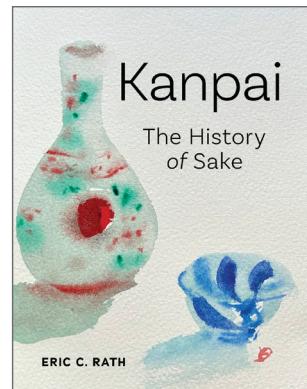
**Mariko Kunimi**, CJS Former Visiting Scholar and CJS Affiliate, writes:

I presented my research on the management challenges faced by Japanese nonprofit organizations at the International Society for Third-Sector Research (ISTR)'s international conferences in Antwerp (July 2024) and Cebu (April 2025). These presentations led to the publication of my paper in June 2025, titled "*Can Collaboration between Nonprofit Organizations Save the Sustainability Crisis? — An Analysis of Collaboration in the Japanese Social Services Sector*," ISTR Working Paper Series, No. 3, 1-24.

In Japan, I also delivered several related presentations. At the Annual Conference of the Japan NPO Research Association in June 2025, I presented "A Study on the Sustainability of Nonprofit Organizations: Focusing on Organizational Restructuring in the Field of Social Welfare" (非営利組織の持続可能性に関する検討: 社会福祉分野における組織再編を中心に). In March 2025, at the Annual Conference of the Japan Society for Social Relations, I presented "Sustainability and Nonprofit Nature of the Japanese Red Cross Society's Services: Focusing on the Blood Service" (日本赤十字社の事業の持続可能性と非営利性: 血液事業を中心に).

As principal investigator, I also presented the final report "Sustainability and Collaboration of Nonprofit Organizations: A Multidimensional Study on the Potential for Promoting Collaboration in Social Services" (非営利組織の持続可能性と連携: ソーシャル・サービスの連携推進の発展可能性をめぐる多角的検討) at the Annual Conference of the Academic Society for the Study of Nonprofit Corporations in October 2024, followed by the publication of a corresponding report.

**Eric C. Rath**'s latest book *Kanpai: The History of Sake* (Reaktion Books, October 2025) is the first history of sake in English. It explores its evolution from homebrew to flavored varieties and its cultural significance and global rise, including its growing popularity and production in North America and Europe. Sake's story includes homebrewers like clan matriarchs, ancient princes, and modern political activists who defied laws to keep homebrewing

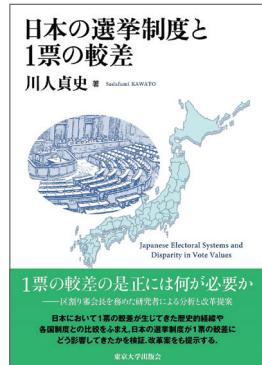


*continued on page 22*

# Toyota Visiting Professor and Visiting Scholar Updates

continued from page 21

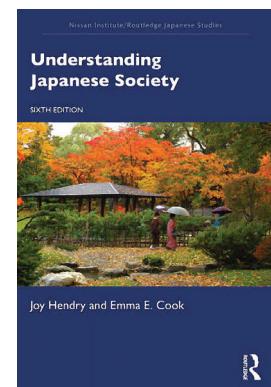
alive. Temples refined sake-making techniques, laying the foundation for a thriving industry that became a major economic force for shoguns and the modern state. Eric is also a member of the editorial collective of *Gastronomica: The Journal for Food Studies* and a member of the editorial board of the *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Food Studies*.



**Sadafumi Kawato**, member of the Japan Academy, professor emeritus of the University of Tokyo, professor emeritus of Tohoku University, and CJS Toyota Visiting Professor 2006–07, writes:

I published *Japanese Electoral Systems and Disparity in Vote Values* with the University of Tokyo Press in September 2024. Although democracy rests on the premise of equal representation, Japan's House of Representatives still falls short of this standard due to its existing constituency rules. In this book, I provide a comprehensive analysis of why Japan has not fully achieved the “one person, one vote” principle and propose specific reforms to address this problem. A brief introduction to the book is available on UTokyo Biblio Plaza: [u-tokyo.ac.jp/biblioplaza/en/K\\_00193.html](http://u-tokyo.ac.jp/biblioplaza/en/K_00193.html).

22



**Emma Cook** writes:

I am happy to share that I was promoted to full professor in August 2023 after returning to Japan after being a TVP at CJS. This year (2024–25), I have updated and published the 6th edition of Joy Hendry's *Understanding Japanese Society*, and an edited volume with Daniel White and Andrea De Antoni titled *Affect as Cultural Critique: Methods for Anthropological Uncovering* is due to be on sale in March 2026, both of which I hope will be of interest to the CJS community.

**Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney** writes:

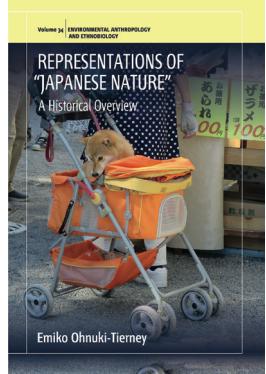
My book, *Representations of “Japanese Nature,”* came out in February of 2025. It is about the way we think of *Nihon no Shizen* (日本の自然) or *Nihon no shiki* (日本の四季), as we directly observe it, is often filtered through their representations in visual and performing arts, literature, and so on. The cover photo is about the way contemporary Japanese take care of their pets, “walking” their dogs without their paws touching the defiled ground, since pets do not obey the no-shoes-allowed (土足厳

禁) cardinal Japanese rule.

On November 25, 2024, I gave the keynote address at a symposium on the Ainu (“Voix et voies de l’autochtonie au Japan: Autour du patrimoine matériel et immatériel des femmes aïnoues”) at Inalco in Paris. The address was on the symbolic structures of the bear ceremonialism and shamanism of the Sakhalin Ainu in reference to the interplay between authority and power.

On November 28, 2024, I gave a presentation on the “Importance of Historicization of Contemporary Ethnographic Research” at the seminar Doing Fieldwork in Japan by Professors Alice Doublier and C. Castellvi.

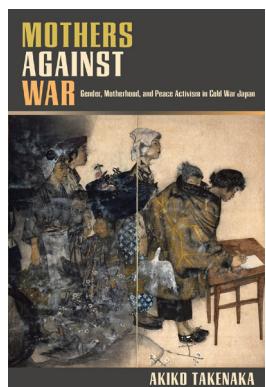
**Akiko Takenaka** (Michigan Society of Fellows, 2005–08) has been promoted to full professor at the Department of History at the University of Kentucky. Her second monograph, *Mothers Against War: Gender, Motherhood, and Peace Activism in Cold War Japan*, was published by the University of Hawai'i Press in February 2025. Her first book, *Yasukuni Shrine: History, Memory, and Japan's Unending Postwar*, will be published in Japanese later this year by Akashi Shoten.



**Mariko Okada** writes:

I returned to the Center for Japanese Studies for a sabbatical year (2024–25) from J. F. Oberlin University. I was warmly received once again by Professor Tonomura, who had also welcomed me during my earlier stay at CJS from 2012 to 2014. My research this year centered on the dancers in Edison's kinetoscope film *Imperial Japanese Dance*. Thanks to the increased digitization of archival resources since my last stay, I was able to trace the troupe that had performed the “Miyako Dance” at the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition and was probably filmed in 1894 at Edison's New Jersey studio.

I first presented my findings in February at a CJS Noon Lecture, and later at UCLA's symposium “Performance, Media, and Place-Making in East Asia,” and at the conference of the Association for Asian Performance. Following my return to Japan this September, I will present further at the EAJS conference. I am now working toward developing this project into a monograph. This year has been deeply rewarding, thanks to the kindness of the CJS community. I am sincerely grateful to my colleagues and friends at CJS for their friendship and constant encouragement.



# Ann Arbor Japan Week 2024

We celebrated our 11th annual Ann Arbor Japan Week from June 15–21, 2025. As always, all programs were free and family-friendly! Hundreds of attendees of all ages joined the festivities, including many repeat attendees. The week was rich in visual arts, film, and performances, offering community members of all ages opportunities to learn about, engage in, and celebrate Japanese culture.

## Sunday, June 15

- *Lu Over the Wall* Film Screening (Michigan Theater)

## Monday, June 16

- Great Lakes Taiko Drumming Performance (AADL Downtown Library)

## Tuesday, June 17

- Koinobori Carp Streamers Craft (AADL Downtown Library)
- Screening and Director Q&A, *Carving the Divine: Buddhist Sculptors of Japan* (AADL Downtown Library)

## Wednesday, June 18

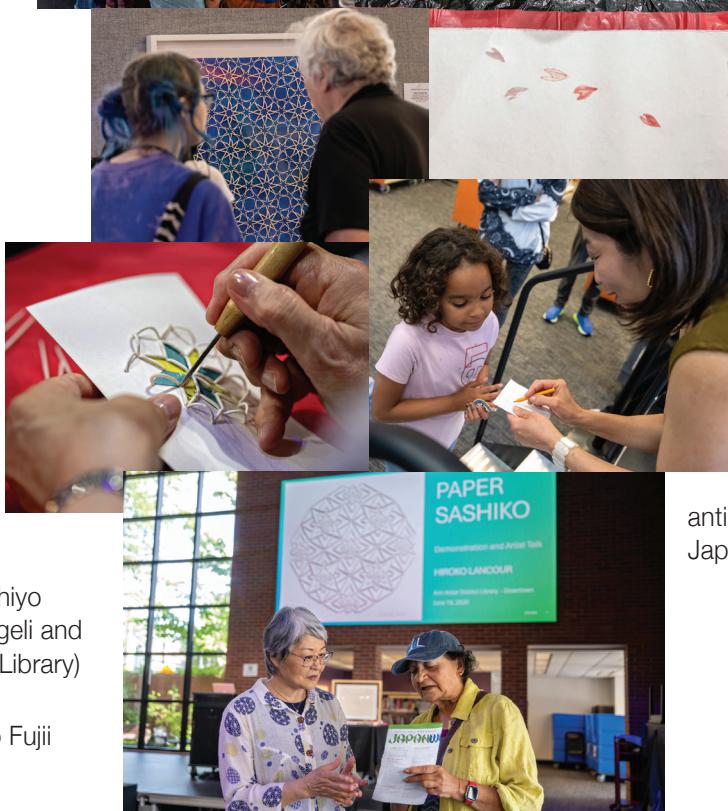
- Kintsugi Demonstration with Aki Motoyama (AADL Downtown Library)

## Thursday, June 19

- Paper Sashiko Demonstration & Artist Talk with Hiroko Lancour (AADL Downtown Library)

## Friday, June 20

- Ikebana Flower Arranging Demonstration & Talk with Ichijo Associate Masters Terre Voegeli and Liz Larwa (AADL Downtown Library)
- Shodo Japanese Calligraphy Performance with Ms. Kyoko Fujii (AADL Downtown Library)



## Saturday, June 21

- Japanese Storytime with Momo Kajiwara (AADL Downtown Library)

We are grateful to our community partnerships, including the Ann Arbor District Library (AADL) and Marquee Arts. Additionally, we thank the Japan Business Society of Detroit Foundation for its generous support of our film screening of *Lu Over the Wall*.

Attendees expressed their appreciation for Japan Week's free, accessible, and culturally rich offerings. Families shared that attending the events has fostered an interest in Japanese culture at home, and many attendees expressed that they look forward to Japan Week every year! The guest speakers, performers, and artists also shared their gratitude for the chance to share their passion and culture with the local community.

Japan Week is an incredible week of connection and learning, and the center hopes the all-ages activities inspire interest in Japanese culture among K-12 students. CJS eagerly anticipates the next Ann Arbor Japan Week in June 2026!

# Connecting Family and the World: Using East Asian Children's Literature in the Classroom

**O**n May 4, 2025, the University of Michigan's East Asia National Resource Center (NRC) — comprising the Lieberthal-Rogel Center for Chinese Studies (LRCCS), the Nam Center for Korean Studies (NCKS), and the Center for Japanese Studies (CJS) — hosted an all-day workshop for educators at Weiser Hall. Outreach coordinators Carol Stepanchuk (LRCCS), Minyoung Song (NCKS), and Sara Chittenden (CJS) led the event, with support from graduate students Sophie Chier and Jinny Kim.

A diverse group of 16 educators from across Michigan, representing various grade levels and subject areas, attended the event. Participants received free books and resources and were eligible for State Continuing Education Clock Hours (SCECH) credits. The NRC team organized the day around three content blocks from their respective centers, finishing the day with an author talk and closing discussion.

Sara presented: "Japanese [Re]Connections: Family, Heritage, and Language." In this block, she focused on the young adult books *Soul Lanterns* and *While I Was Away*, using the lenses of family, heritage, and language to connect the books to students' lived experiences.

Using these texts, the group discussed how to teach challenging aspects of history, especially to younger students. After this discussion, Sara led the group through hands-on classroom activities that combined language and visual arts. The group created origami daruma, practiced writing kanji, and made tanabata decorations.

Educators shared their feedback on the workshop. As one attendee noted, "Engaged teachers asked thoughtful questions on how to empower students. The speakers did a great job fielding questions and presenting materials." Another shared, "Sessions were on time and well prepared. I loved the materials to take home." Others highlighted "lots of resources and open discussion."

Participants valued the range of topics covered, practical classroom activities (such as art projects and zines), U-M's educational resources, and the space to brainstorm ideas across grade levels, all while connecting with an accomplished and compassionate community of educators.



Sara Chittenden, CJS



Kyunghée Kim, local children's author

# Japan Internship Initiative

## Partner with the Japan Internship Initiative Next Summer!

**S**ince 2015, the Center for Japanese Studies Japan Internship Initiative (JII) has connected local and international employers, alumni, and affiliates with career-oriented students hoping to apply their Japanese language and cultural skills. Dozens of students have participated in the program, and several employers have welcomed interns back as full-time employees after graduation!

Student interest in Japan-related internships has remained strong, even through the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent travel restrictions, and we're pleased that JII has continued to offer positions without pause every year since its inception. Still, the pandemic was undoubtedly a challenge for the program, and we continue to strengthen old partnerships and seek new opportunities for students.

If your company or organization is interested in hosting student interns during the summer, we would love to hear from you! A few of the many benefits of hosting a U-M student are:

- Recruit and work with highly motivated, skilled students
- Find Japanese-speaking students from a variety of academic backgrounds
- Build mentoring relationships with current Wolverines

Internships typically last six to eight weeks during the university's summer break (May to August) with interns working 25 to 40 hours per week. However, dates, hours, and other details are flexible to meet partners' individual needs.

To learn more about the Japan Internship Initiative and view our employer interest form, please visit our website using the QR code below or following URL:

<https://ii.umich.edu/cjs/japan-internship-initiative.html>

Program manager: [cjs.internships@umich.edu](mailto:cjs.internships@umich.edu).

**JAPAN  
INTERNSHIP  
INITIATIVE**

**M** CENTER FOR JAPANESE STUDIES

## CJS Japan Internship Program Reflections *by Anges Chiu*

As a University of Michigan student with a strong interest in Japan, I took the opportunity to participate in the Center for Japanese Studies Japan Internship Program. Through the internship, I was able to immerse myself in both life and work in Japan—an experience that became unexpectedly impactful in shaping my path forward.

Experiencing firsthand the values of collaboration, precision, and mutual respect that define professional environments in Japan was both eye-opening and inspiring. Beyond developing professional skills, the internship provided me with valuable insights into cultural norms and helped me navigate the day-to-day challenges of living abroad.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the experience was the chance to build connections both within and outside the company. Those initial professional relationships gradually grew into lasting friendships. I also met several U-M alumni based in Japan, whose advice and encouragement made a meaningful difference in helping me adjust to life here.

Ultimately, the internship led to more than just a job offer—it opened the door to a fulfilling career and a new chapter of life for me in Japan. For any student considering international work, internships like this offer a rare and valuable opportunity to explore, grow, and take real steps toward the future you envision.

**Interested in participating in the Japan Internship Initiative?  
Learn more here!**



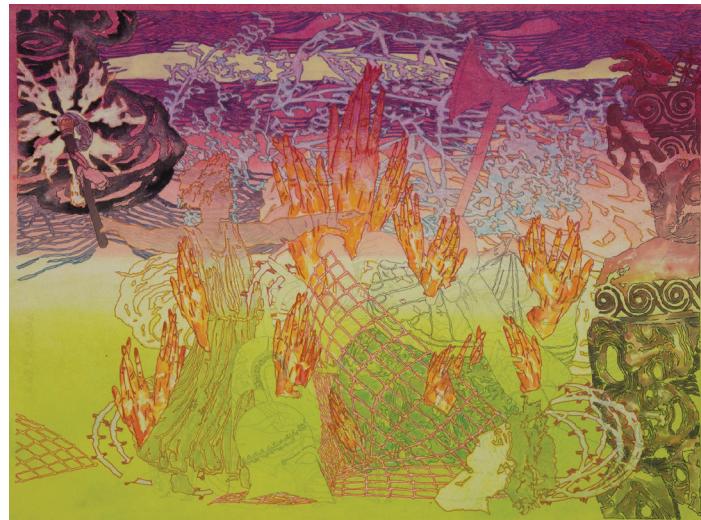
# CJS Faculty Research Grant

## Jim Cogswell

Arthur F. Thurnau Professor and Professor of Art & Design  
Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design  
University of Michigan

I have received CJS funding for two extended trips to Japan in preparation for a project titled *Flames of War*. In fall 2025, I will do research for installations of mixed media works on paper and adhesive vinyl at Kyushu Sangyo University in Fukuoka and at Shiga Museum of Art in Otsu, as well as other potential locations in Shiga Prefecture. In 2027, I will return for their installation. My research requires site studies, interviews with scholars and arts practitioners, and immersion in contemporary and historical Japanese visual culture at museums and cultural sites. Potential exhibition and installation sites in Shiga have been arranged through close collaboration with the Michigan-

Shiga Sister State Program and its present Visiting Official, Keiko Nakajima. Through CJS Affiliate Robert Platt, I have been invited by Kyushu Sangyo University to be associated with their Faculty of Art during my stays. My project will visually interpret and adapt for Japanese audiences three tragedies by Euripides, dealing with the Trojan War and its aftermath. *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *Trojan Women*, and *Electra* have been performed as commentary on the futility of war and the autocratic abuse of power by a succession of modern generations, constantly readapted for different cultural traditions and historical circumstances. My project in Japan is to visually reimagine these tragedies through new drawings and public installations, as I believe their prevailing theme addressing the horror and futility of war would resonate with Japanese audiences.



Cassandra, 2025, micron pens, sumi ink, watercolor, acrylic ink, gouache, color pencil, pastel on paper, 12" x 16" (30.5 cm x 40.6 cm)



Hecuba and Furies, 2025, micron pens, sumi ink, watercolor, acrylic ink, gouache, color pencil, pastel on paper, 12" x 16" (30.5 cm x 40.6 cm)

## Christopher Hill

Professor of Comparative Literature and  
Modern Japanese Studies  
University of Michigan

My Faculty Research Grant supports research for two chapters of a book in progress, *Facing South: Japanese Writers in the Bandung Moment*. The book begins in the 1950s, in the climate of anticolonial internationalism epitomized by the Conference of African and Asian States held in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955, and reaches into the early 1970s, when the Japanese Left faltered and the tenor of internationalism in the Global South had shifted toward anti-imperialist, anticapitalist revolution. My research shows that Japanese writers saw literary relations with the Global South as a way to create a position for Japan in the world not mediated by the United States and

the Soviet Union or the publishing capitals of London, Paris, and New York. The book has chapters on the novelists Endō Shūsaku and Ōe Kenzaburō, the Afro-Asian Writers Association, translations of African and Asian fiction, and the public intellectual Suzuki Michihiko. The CJS grant will allow me to complete research on the translation activities of the literary journal *Shin Nihon bungaku*, which published translations from its founding in 1947. Initially focusing on socialist writers, in the late 1950s it began translating writers from the decolonizing world. With CJS support, I also will complete research on Suzuki's activism for Algerian independence and the rights of Resident Koreans. A scholar and translator of French literature, Suzuki saw parallels between the French colonization of Algeria and the Japanese colonization of Korea, and the discrimination Algerians faced in France and Koreans faced in Japan.



## Yihe Huang

Associate Professor in Geophysics  
Associate Chair for Graduate Studies  
Earth and Environmental Sciences,  
University of Michigan

As the most seismically active country, Japan has hosted about 20% of earthquakes with a magnitude of eight or higher on Earth. These so-called megathrust earthquakes have caused enormous damage, but our ability to predict their occurrence is still limited by the lack of understanding of their physical processes. On the other hand, Japan is well known to host abundant repeating earthquakes, i.e., small to moderate earthquakes that recur at roughly the same location and scale. For example, nearly 40,000 M>1.5 repeating earthquakes occurred throughout the Japanese Islands between 2001 and 2019. Such repeating earthquakes occur frequently near the rupture areas of past megathrust earthquakes, generating rich datasets of earthquakes that are recorded by the dense seismic networks in Japan.

In this study, we collaborate with our Japanese colleagues on a systematic study of the spatial and temporal patterns of repeating earthquakes in Japan. A better understanding of the spatial distribution and recurrence intervals of repeating earthquakes has the potential to greatly enhance the predictability of the size and timing of megathrust earthquakes. Our initial results demonstrate that these repeating earthquakes occur in localized regions of the Japan subduction zone (Figure 1). We also observe a spatial correlation between repeating events and fault zones with distinct material properties compared to the surrounding region, with larger earthquakes concentrating in regions with anomalous rock properties. Our study will shed light on why earthquakes tend to occur in certain regions and advance our understanding of the limits and possibilities of predicting earthquake hazards in Japan.

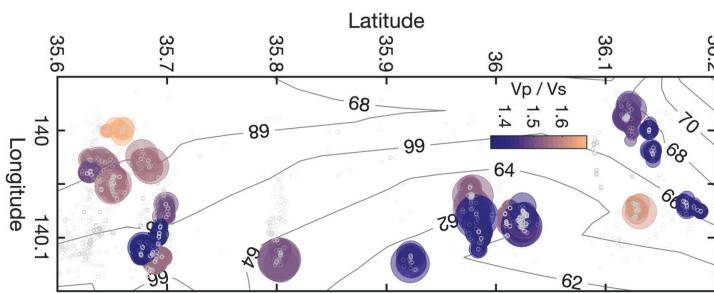


Figure 1. The localized regions of repeating earthquakes (gray dots) in the Kanto region and the associated anomalous  $V_p/V_s$  ratios.



## Center for Japanese Studies

International Institute  
University of Michigan

Weiser Hall

500 Church Street, Suite 400  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109  
TEL: 734.764.6307  
FAX: 734.936.2948  
EMAIL: [umcjs@umich.edu](mailto:umcjs@umich.edu)  
WEB: [ii.umich.edu/cjs/](http://ii.umich.edu/cjs/)

Director: Denise Saint Arnault

Assistant Director of Programs and Initiatives:  
Yuri Fukazawa

Project Coordinator: Jillian Locke

Outreach Coordinator: Sara Chittenden

Asia Centers Business Manager: Tina Griffith

Operations Coordinator: Margaret Rudberg

Communications Editor: Linda Hanes Miller

CJS Executive Committee:

Denise Saint Arnault (*ex officio*)

Kevin Carr (*ex officio*)

Gregory Laurence (*ex officio*)

Joshua Hausman

Christopher Hill

Tomoko Okuno

Regents of The University of Michigan:

Jordan B. Acker, Michael J. Behm,  
Mark J. Bernstein, Paul W. Brown,  
Sarah Hubbard, Denise Ilitch, Carl J. Meyers, and  
Katherine E. White, Domenico Grasso (*ex officio*)

The University of Michigan, as an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination and affirmative action. The University of Michigan is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities, and admissions.

Densho Editors: Sara Chittenden, Linda Miller

Densho Design: Seiko Semones (S2 Design)

Densho Production: Dollar Bill Printing

Cover image credits:

Leisa Thompson, U-M Photography

© 2026 The Regents of the University of Michigan



Weiser Hall  
500 Church Street, Suite 400  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109



## Center for Japanese Studies

International Institute  
University of Michigan  
Newsletter 2026

