From the Director

O
h, what a difference a year makes. 2020 has been surreal and I’ve attempted to write this message several times, having revisited outgoing Director Professor Kyo Tsutsui’s upbeat greetings from years past with a mix of admiration and dismay: admiration for his generous, adept stewardship, which we’ll miss tremendously; dismay at how disorienting life has become since autumn of 2019. The world feels like an altogether altered place now, and even that seems like an understatement. A year ago CJS had the pleasure of welcoming Toyota Visiting Professor Levi McLaughlin to campus and hosting his “Bridging the Methodological Divide” conference; experiencing kabuki actor Kiyózó Nakamura and artist Mari Katayama as facilitated by UMMA’s Natsumi Oyobe; co-sponsoring the “Art of the Camera” series in partnership with the Michigan Theater; celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Hikone-Ann Arbor relationship; holding an anime screening, with sponsorship support from the Japan Business Society of Detroit Foundation, to kick off our sixth annual Ann Arbor Japanese Week; and, from a slew of imaginative entries, selecting our new CJS mascot, Yumishi, designed by Boki Zhang. All of these events involved the cooperation of many people within and beyond U-M, attesting to the wonderful ways in which we customarily come together to create memorable experiences.

But the global pandemic, economic fallout, and months of protests in the wake of violence against people including Breonna Taylor, Ahmad Aubery, George Floyd, and Dominique Fells, threaten to overshadow these food memories, foregrounding discord and injustice to a spectacular degree. Although the pandemic has for many brought these lethal asymmetries to light for the first time, it has for others merely re-emphasized how precarious everyday life truly is when one cannot expect full rights, respect, safety—or even governmental competence. Throughout this pandemic, lots of lessons emerge about the endurance of xenophobia, fascism, and repressive policing, but too many of these new styles of solidarity arisen in the aftermath of anti-Asian discrimination, anti-Black violence, and various overlapping forms of institutional neglect at local and international scales.

However, on the other hand, “less” doesn’t have to mean worse. Despite a reduced volume of activities or financial outlay we can still find ways to do good work and fulfill CJS’s mission. We will continue to adjust to various cuts, but some key aspects of what we do can continue more or less unscathed: the Undergraduate Advisory Board, Japanese Studies Interdisciplinary Colloquium, Ann Arbor Japanese Week, and financial support for students among them. Moreover, even without chimpanzee receptions, there are upshots to this scenario that buoy my optimism. One of them is a welcome turn more toward local resources for event programming. For example, our sixth annual Ann Arbor Japan Week; and, from a slew of imaginative entries, selecting our new CJS mascot, Yumishi, designed by Boki Zhang. All of these events involved the cooperation of many people within and beyond U-M, attesting to the wonderful ways in which we customarily come together to create memorable experiences.

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This book will interest scholars of Japanese history and culture and, more broadly, of gender, education, and gender and sexual identity studies. Written in accessible and engaging language that avoids jargon, it is also suitable for use in undergraduate courses.

Julia C. Bullock is Associate Professor of Japanese Studies in the Department of Russian and East Asian Languages and Cultures at Emory University.

Playing in the Shadows: Fictions of Race and Blackness in Postwar Japanese Literature

Volume 88
Will Bridges

Playing in the Shadows considers the literature engendered by postwar Japanese authors' robust cultural exchanges with African Americans and African American literature. The Allied Occupation brought an influx of African American soldiers and culture to Japan, which catalyzed the writing of black characters into postwar Japanese literature. This same influx fostered the creation of organizations such as the Kōkū kinenkyō no kai (The Japanese Association for Negro Studies) and literary endeavors such as the Koku bungaku zenshū (The Complete Anthology of Black Literature). This rich milieu sparked Japanese endeavors such as the Kokujin bungaku zenshū (The Complete Anthology of Black Literature). This rich milieu sparked Japanese cultural interest in African American literature, and, ultimately, incorporating the tropes and techniques of African American literature and jazz performance into their own literary works. Such incorporation leads to literary works that are “black” not by virtue of their representations of black characters, but due to their investment in the possibility of transculturally and intertextually black Japanese literature. Will Bridges argues that these “fictions of race” provide visions of the way that postwar Japanese authors reimagine the ascription of race to bodies—be they bodies of literature, the body politic, or the human body itself.

Will Bridges is Assistant Professor of Japanese at the University of Rochester.

News from the University of Michigan Museum of Art

MMA closed its doors in the middle of March 2020 following the university-wide lockdown in response to the pandemic, and as of early August we do not have a clear plan to reopen. During this difficult time we are trying to connect with our audiences through a weekly email newsletter, Art in Your Inbox, that highlights topical artworks from UMMA’s collection and presents virtual exhibitions and educational resources created by UMMA staff. You can sign up for the newsletter via our website.

Last year we had two exhibitions showcasing Japanese art of the past and present: Copies and Invention in East Asia and Mari Katayama (discussed in the 2019–2020 newsletter). In conjunction with these exhibitions, UMMA and CJS partnered to organize two public events: “Mari Katayama: My Body as Material” (October 10, 2019), a lecture by and conversation with the artist Mari Katayama; and “Invitation to Kabuki” (November 19, 2019), a lecture and performance by actor Nakamura. Mari Katayama’s talk was part of the U-M Stamps School of Art and Design’s Speakers Series at the Michigan Theater, which invites internationally prominent art professionals to Ann Arbor. Katayama talked candidly about her life and art practice, which is informed by her disability. The audience, mostly U-M students, was captivated by images of her stark photographs and art installations. Nakamura Kyōzō lectured on the art of onnagata (a female-role actor) and demonstrated on the stage his step-by-step transformation into a female character. The highlight was a dynamic dance performance of Shakkō (“Stone Bridge”), in which the lion, played by Nakamura, vigorously shook his long red mane in the air, to ecstatic applause. A photo of the performance is on the cover of this newsletter.

Also in 2019, a pair of Japanese screen paintings from UMMA’s collection was loaned to a major exhibition of Japanese art held at the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. that also traveled to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The Life of Animals in Japanese Art showcased some 300 works borrowed from Japanese and American public and private collections. The screen paintings, which feature the twelve animals of the zodiac, are by Yoshikawa Kōkei, an early twentieth-century painter probably based in Kyoto. His nihonga style is in the lineage of the Edo period’s Maruyama-Shijō school, known for its naturalistic depiction of animals and plants. These screen paintings were on display in UMMA’s Japanese gallery when the exhibition’s co-curator, Dr. Matsumoto Kaori (Director of Osaka City Art Museum) was visiting the museum to research other paintings in the collection. Impressed by the use of a naturalistic painting style to depict imaginary creatures, unique in this period, Dr. Kaori decided to include the screens in the exhibition. Other museums regularly seek to borrow objects in UMMA’s Japanese collection, a testament to its importance and high quality.

Natsuo Oyobe
Curator of Asian Art
The University of Michigan closed on March 13 in compliance with state-wide COVID-19 related restrictions. As all instruction moved online, we immediately began modifying the library service to access to their databases and e-books to make them free for a limited time—not only for the U-M community, but also for the Japanese Studies community in North America.

The library collection has grown to form a firm foundation of scholarship and education. We have added 4,457 monograph titles (4,924 volumes) to a collection now numbering 341,039 monograph volumes including E-books. 762 media titles were added and we have now, with the cooperation of the Askwith Media Library, accumulated nearly 4,800 media titles on Japan. Our Japanese collection is the fourth largest among university libraries in North America.

Digital resources have become crucial for online education under COVID-19 emergency. Added to ours were 242 Japanese e-books, Kojien (広辞苑), 7th edition, and Bungei Shuju (文藝春秋アーカイブス)(1923-1932) along with contemporary Japanese online databases.

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2019 marked the 50th anniversary of the sister-city relationship between Ann Arbor and Hikone, Japan. To celebrate, CJS welcomed two very special guests to our Noon Lecture Series: Ann Arbor’s own Mayor Christopher Taylor, and Hikonyan, the beloved cat mascot of Hikone. Mayor Taylor’s lecture highlighted the history and importance of this sister-city relationship, including his time at the August 2019 Goodwill Mission to Shiga (Michigan’s sister prefecture) and Hikone. Mayor Taylor recounted his stay with Mayor Takashi Okubo of Hikone—who unknowingly lived in the same dorm during their time as U-M students! The mayor even surprised the crowd with a beautiful performance of biwa-ko shuukou no uta (“Lake Biwa Song”).

The Mayor then introduced two Ann Arbor high school students, Tate Zeleznik and Lior Cooper, who participated in the Hikone-AA Exchange Program in 2018. Tate and Lior shared reflections on their time hosting a Hikone student in Ann Arbor and traveling to Hikone themselves. The experience allowed them to see both cities with a fresh perspective, stressing the importance of intercultural exchange. Lior shared that “we all live on one earth, and to learn and appreciate cultures other than our own is to open our minds to peace and happiness.”

As an ambassador of the Hikone delegation, Hikonyan then took center stage to promote the continued relationship between our sister-cities. Attendees learned the origins of Hikonyan, including ties to the anniversary of Hikone castle and the inspiration behind the mascot’s design—all while enjoying Hikonyan cookies and green tea from Shiga. This was followed by a meet-and-greet session where attendees could take pictures with the samurai cat mascot. Hikonyan’s tour of Ann Arbor carried on with appearances at Ann Arbor Public Schools, the Ann Arbor District Library, and the Big House, before joining Mayor Taylor in a tree planting ceremony to commemorate the anniversary and continuation of this sister-city relationship.

Photos by Mark Gjukich.
Professor William P. Malm Receives the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon from the Japanese Government

The Consulate General of Japan in Detroit describes his contributions as follows:

"Dr. William P. Malm earned a Ph.D. in musicology at UCLA in 1959, with dissertation research focused on the music of Japanese theater. This led to the publication of Japanese Music and Musical Instruments, the first English-language study on the subject. Through this book, Dr. Malm introduced to the western world various types of Japanese music (including religious music, folk music, gagaku, nongaku, and kabuki music) and musical instruments (such as the biwa, shakuhachi, koto, and shamisen).

In 1992, he was awarded the Fumio Koizumi Prize for Ethnomusicology, in recognition of his achievements in the ethnomusical study of Japanese music.

Dr. Malm taught music for half a century, including 34 years as a member of the University of Michigan music faculty. Through his teaching, research, performances, publications, and presentations around the world, Dr. Malm has made significant contributions to academic exchange and the strengthening of the relationship between Japan and the United States."

Please join us in congratulating Professor Malm for this wonderful recognition of his accomplishment!

2020 Malm Award Recipients

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 Professor Emeritus William P. Malm, a long-time faculty member of the Center for Japanese Studies, the leading ethnomusicologist of Japan and one of the founders of the field of ethnomusicology in the United States.

Since 2010 the Malm Awards have sought to encourage and recognize exceptional writing on Japan. Two awards are bestowed annually, one for an outstanding paper by an undergraduate, and the other for an outstanding paper by a graduate student. Students are nominated for this award by a CJS Faculty Member or Associate. The CJS Admissions and Fellowships Committee selects award recipients from the nominations.

Graduate Prize: Hannah Muniz (MA in Japanese Studies, Class of 2019)

Yi Yang-Ji’s Yuhi: Translation and Critical Introduction

Nominated by Professor Jennifer Robertson:

“A stellar scholar, Ms. Muniz translated for her MA in Japanese Studies, the novella, yet untranslated into English, of the late Korean-Japanese author, Yi (Lee) Yang-ji (1955-92) titled Yuhi, the Korean name for the androgynous protagonist.... Ms. Muniz’s remarkable sensitivity to sensorial nuance, arguably a marked feature of “Japanese” literature, makes her an ideal translator of the subtle, shape-shifting aspects of Yuhi, especially the tense relationship between both Yuhi’s split Korean and Japanese identities and Yuhi’s sex/gender ambiguous being.... In her critical introduction, Ms. Muniz provides an essential introduction to the Zainichi (“living in Japan”) Korean minority and their (often autobiographically-informed) fiction, which serves “as a vehicle for safely expressing...anxieties, fears, and frustrations.”... Ms. Muniz has a promising future ahead as a translator and talented writer.”

Undergraduate Prize: Jiayin Yuan (BA in Psychology, International Studies, and Asian Studies, Minor in Business, Class of 2020)

Named Swords in The Tale of the Heike: Decline, Failure, and Death

Nominated by Professor Erin Brightwell:

"Framed as a study of the “named” swords in the fourteenth-century classic, “The Tale of the Heike,” Jiayin Yuan’s honors thesis is an ambitious inquiry into how authority and legitimacy are symbolized and mobilized in “war tales,” the canonical genre of medieval narrative prose. Taking “named swords” as characters in their own right, all the while attending to historical context, Jiayin’s analysis weaves provocatively between material culture and literary studies. Pursuing this path, Jiayin challenges her readers to think about objects and the stories told both about and through them; in so doing, her creative and consistent reading sheds light on some of the partially buried narratives that lend “logic” to the “Heike.”... Simply put, in terms of maturity, scholarly acumen, and sheer effort, this is one of the finest undergraduate papers I have seen in my five years at Michigan.”
Reflection on my academic year as the TVP
by Levi McLaughlin

First let me express my profound gratitude to the staff at the Center for Japanese Studies. Convivial conversations and unending support from Yuri Fukazawa, Robin Griffin, and Barbara Kinzer made my academic year at CJS entirely enjoyable. All three worked tirelessly to ensure that I had everything I needed to carry out my work. Thanks also to Do-Hee Morsman, whose steady oversight ensured that I never got lost in U-M’s administrative tangle, and to Sally Huang, our redoubtable student helper. How I already miss my little office at CJS!

I am of course especially grateful to CJS Director Kyotaro Tatsuta, who was kind enough to steward my acceptance as the 2019-2020 Toyota Visiting Professor. I feel so lucky to have intersected with Kiyo at Michigan, to have had the chance to participate in one another’s panels, work together on publications and carry out other exciting ventures. It is our hope that the “Bridging” weekend serves as a model for ongoing cross-disciplinary Japan research.

Shortly after “Bridging,” CJS support enabled me to make a short yet crucial research trip to Japan. My work considers interdisciplinary Japan research. This event grew out of frustrations I have felt keenly about how the study of Japan remains siloed. That is, scholars trained in different methodological approaches may share an object of inquiry but never carry out sustained conversations that lead to innovative collaboration. From October 31 to November 2, 2019, Japan specialists from anthropology, business, economics, history, political science, religious studies, sociology, and other disciplines came together at U-M from across North America, Europe, and Japan to work across disciplinary gaps. All of us learned immense amounts from one another, and I hear back regularly from participants who have perpetuated connections made over this fruitful weekend to continue participating in one another’s panels, work together on publications, and carry out other exciting ventures. It is our hope that the “Bridging” weekend serves as a model for ongoing cross-disciplinary Japan research.

In Spring 2020, I was able to make the most of my Toyota sponsorship by visiting several Toyota offices. First, Erin Brightwell and I were welcomed by Greg Laskey, Vice President of Purchasing at Toyota North America. He guided us through the R&D facility at Saline, MI, and discussed the company’s many fascinating initiatives for employee development and community outreach. This meeting led me to a singular chance to visit Toyota’s primary North American headquarters in Plano, Texas. At the Plano HQ, Holly Dietelke, a Vice President of Quality Management facilitated my visit to the company’s Quality Education Center, which is ordinarily out of bounds to all but Toyota employees. I remain grateful to Toyota for these unique opportunities, for the kindness of their staff, and for the generosity that made my academic year at Michigan possible.

Otherwise, spring 2020 seemed to pass in a blur. Like everyone else, my grand plans were compromised by coronavirus shutdown. Until March, life fell into a wonderfully productive rhythm at the CJS office. Support from Keiko Yokota-Carter and Dawn Lawson at U-M’s wonderful library enabled me to make significant progress on a second book as well as a number of articles and chapters. As a result, 2020 will see something of a bumper crop of publications, a welcome dividend that would not have been possible without the time and material support I was so fortunate to receive as last year’s Toyota Visiting Professor.

I am sad to let this opportunity go, but I remain deeply grateful to everyone at CJS for making my stay in Ann Arbor such a precious memory.

From the Toyota Visiting Professor

Conference participants. From left to right: Erin Brightwell, Nicki Kapur, Jim Raymo, Kay Shimizu, Erica Baffelli, Robin LaBianca, John Treat, Celeste Arrington, Dan Smith, Mark Rowe, Levi McLaughlin, Amy Borovoy, Aike Rots, David Ambrose, Kyotaro Tatsuta, Urika Schaefer, Erin Chung, Charles Griswold, Oskar Watanabe, Yusaku Horuchi, Kate McDonai, Phillip Lipsy, Megumi Naoi, Yuri Fukazawa, John Lie, Nate Smith, Hiroki Takeuchi; Allison Aley (not pictured).

Megumi Naoi, Associate Professor of Political Science, University of California, San Diego, presenting at Bridging the Methodological Divide.
A New Face for CJS! Yuru-chara Design Contest

by Robin Griffin

Yuru-chara are popular mascot characters that represent various regions, organizations, and events in Japan. The Center for Japanese Studies recently welcomed two of the most well-known yuru-chara—Kumamon of Kumamoto Prefecture, and Hijorin of Shiga Prefecture—to our lecture series on campus, promoting their respective regions and their ongoing relationship with Ann Arbor and the state of Michigan. The U-M Japanese Language Program, too, had started introducing yuru-chara in the classroom, encouraging students to create their own characters. With local buzz around yuru-chara growing, an important question was raised: Why doesn’t CJS have its own yuru-chara yet?

To find this new face of CJS, we implemented our first-ever “Yuru-chara Design Contest.” Modeled after the success of a similar contest run by the Japan Center for Michigan Universities, we invited U-M students, alumni, affiliates and fans both local and abroad to submit character designs. After a thorough review process, over 70 fantastic submissions were eventually narrowed down to three finalists. The first place prize and title of CJS mascot went to…

Yumishi!

“Yumishi”, submitted by Bokai Zhang! Yumishi（ユミシ）is a UMICH wolverine that is fascinated with Japanese culture. He loves to travel in his maize & blue yukata and a wooden backpack. From this backpack he can pull all kinds of tools for any occasion, including a trusty bow (弓, “yumi”) and fude brush-style arrow. He dreams to have one day tasted all the good sashimi plates in every Japanese city—while also inviting speakers to Ann Arbor for Noon Lectures!

Yumishi is already hard at work promoting CJS activities and programming. We’re looking forward to seeing him around the CJS office and on social media!

From the artist

I love to help produce graphics when others are in need, so I thought this contest should be fun. My design started with me thinking “it has to be a Wolverine! And a nice friendly one.” I remembered the various activities that our sensei arranged and also different events held by CJS—they are far beyond the language itself, it’s really a comprehensive Japanese experience. That’s the inspiration for the backpack that Yumishi has, which allows him to pull out anything he wants. My classmates in Japanese also helped out commenting on my design ideas and offering their advice. The naming was one of the bigger uncertainties. I was passing ideas back and forth with CJS. We finally settled on Yumishi since it’s the closest to “Umich”. Yumishi in Japanese could mean a person that operates a bow, so he got a bow. So what he really is, is my reflection of studying Japanese at U-M.

Bokai Zhang is a rising sophomore who studied intensive Japanese II in the LSA Residential College. He is planning on majoring in Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology, but also enjoys practicing art and drawing in a Japanese manga style. He is learning Japanese so that he can communicate with Japanese doctors in his future career in medicine, and also someday publish a manga of his own.

Second place: Abrielle Fretz (U-M alum), “Kuzurine”

Abrielle is a U-M alumnus currently working at the Department of Molecular and Integrative Physiology on the U-M medical campus. While earning her degrees at U-M, she took Japanese courses and participated in many cultural events, which introduced her to CJS.

Abrielle Fretz (U-M alum), “Kuzurine”

Third place: Lisa Cao (U-M rising junior), “Risucchi

Lisa is a U-M sophomore in Computer Science and Art & Design. In her free time she does digital illustration as a hobby and freelance work, specializing in anime-style art. She’s also taking 3rd-year level Japanese classes to connect with Japanese artists on Twitter.

Third place: Lisa Cao (U-M rising junior), “Risucchi

Thank You!

Some of the many wonderful entries we received.
Noon Lecture Series

While many students enter Japanese studies with a specific career goal in mind, many also feel unsure as to how best to approach Japan-related positions and companies in their job search. In light of this, CJS partnered with Ikigai Connections and the Hinokki Foundation to host a “Japanese Jobs 101” workshop—an evening of presentations, advice, and discussion for students interested in applying Japanese language and culture skills to a career. Guest speakers included Kasía of Ikigai Connections, Dr. Anne Hooghart and Andy Gilman of the Hinokki Foundation, and Minae Sawai of the Grassroots Exchange Network of Japan in Michigan (GEN-J Michigan). With beginnings in fields like music and entertainment, language education, and the automotive industry, each speaker shared a "personal story" of their career trajectories to help better inform and inspire future job-seekers.

The talk then moved to tips for those just entering the Japanese job market. Speakers emphasized the importance of flexibility and fluidity, including being open to new opportunities and testing the waters with internships and other related projects. Another key point was that of networking and understanding of business culture, with tips on how to brush up online professional profiles and hold a successful conversation in formal Japanese. Ultimately, the group highlighted the importance of discovering and developing one’s ikigai—a calling or passion—and pursuing it in their career.

To close, students and faculty had the opportunity to chat with the panel in Q&A and breakout sessions. Students not only received personal advice on their career goals, but also an opportunity to further develop their resume and networking skills. Lively conversations carried on after the formal event drew to a close, as students were eager to apply what they learned to their job search.

Student Interns “Abroad” ...via Zoom

Katherine Majeske (Art & Design, Asian Languages & Cultures; Class of 2021)
Kyoto Arts & Crafts University, English Tutor

The transition to an online internship was new for me; I had never conducted English tutoring from the confines of my bedroom. The outbreak of COVID-19 brought a wealth of struggles to us all, but I was pleased to find the students I was working with were still interested in learning. In the beginning we weren’t all a bit shy, but by engaging in conversations focusing on our interests and opinions, it became easy to speak openly. Positive reinforcement and showing interest encouraged students to speak independently, and by the end of the internship students were much more comfortable with questions directed toward them. I enjoyed the experience very much.

Gideon Sochay (History, Education in Global Context; Class of 2021)
Kyoto Arts & Crafts University, English Tutor

This summer, I had the privilege of working with students from Kyoto Arts and Crafts University in a sort of English conversation circle. Before this summer, my experience was limited to physical classrooms, and after the internship was moved online, I was unsure of what to expect. Despite my uncertainty, the experience was an absolute joy. Working with eager learners and peers legitimate questions directed toward them. I enjoyed the experience very much.

Yun Zhai (Statistics & Economics; Class of 2022)
CTexcel, Marketing Intern

I am currently working on the international market team of CTexcel (also known as China Telecom), mainly managing the Japanese Market. My role is reaching out to potential customers online to promote our products and also making plans every week to ensure every group member is working on their KPI to push the project forward. This experience has given me a very good understanding of Japanese culture, including how Japanese students go abroad and how they choose cellular plans if they are given incentives. I am currently contracting with several Japanese YouTubers studying in the US, and I have really enjoyed this internship where I can use my language skills and also learn the field I am interested in.

Hongting Zhu (Computer Science & Engineering, Art & Design; Class of 2021)
JLL, Technology, Data, & Information Management Intern

This is a special year for a lot of people, especially those who are entering the job market, with me being one of them. Due to the pandemic, cancellations of internships have caused great distress to the new grads. However, much to my surprise, the program coordinator was quick to respond, and the company decided to offer me a chance to intern remotely. I was mostly working on the technical team, and the mentors, Suzuki-san and Kaneko-san prepared a plan within a week to make sure I could transition into work smoothly. They were forgiving about my lack of language skills and tried to communicate as much as possible despite the difficulty of a huge time difference. Suzuki-san, another member, was also friendly. She offered great advice in terms of programming and professional practices. I was treated as a formal employee where we had weekly meetings and regular check-ins to report progress and reflect on issues. Overall, I am grateful for the collective effort made by the company and our coordinator Robin that ensured a meaningful period of time, and an internship for me that made the fullest of my summer.
New CJS Podcast: “Michigan Talks Japan”  
by Allison Alexy

If you are looking for educational and accessible content, please consider checking out the Center’s new podcast “Michigan Talks Japan.” I genuinely enjoy podcasts about many topics and listen to them throughout the day—while doing housework or at the grocery store. I learn a lot while listening and realized that CJS’s Noon Lecture series offered an incredible opportunity to create a podcast focused on new and exciting work being done in our field. With support from CJS Director Dr. Kyo Tatsutai, and working as a team with CJS’s Robin Griffin and librarian Justin Schell, in winter term 2020 we recorded interviews with five scholars who visited campus to present Noon Lectures. The conversations last from 40 minutes to just over an hour and range over the guests’ publications, research experiences, and reflections on the field of Japanese Studies. Among the first five guests we see a broad range of research disciplines—religious studies, political science, ethnomusicology, ceramics, and history.

Our plan to record interviews with any willing Noon Lecture presenter necessarily changed with the COVID-19 pandemic. Starting in early March, as U-M moved online, the Noon Lectures had to be canceled and our recording space in the Shapiro Design Lab was closed. Since then, we’ve transitioned to recording interviews with willing scholars using online platforms. Although the sound quality isn’t quite as predictable, I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to continue scholarly exchanges and public engagement during this era of social distancing. I am pleased to contribute to CJS’s efforts in representing new research in Japanese Studies both to scholars and the wider public. To those ends, and to make the podcast accessible to more listeners, we are working now to translate episodes into Japanese.

MICHAEL D. FETTERS, MD, MPH, MA, Director, Japanese Family Health Program and Professor of Family Medicine, continued in his service as Chairman, Japan America Society of Michigan and Southwest Ontario. The Japan America Society was established in 1989 to support Japan-American relations by encouraging the development of a common understanding. The Michigan and Southwest Ontario chapter is part of a network of 38 Japan-America Societies across the country. He also continued as lead investigator on the Shizukuoka University of Michigan Advanced Residency Training, Exchange and Research in Family Medicine (SMARTER Family Medicine) Project which is entering the 11th year of collaboration. In partnership with the Shizukuoka Family Medicine Training Program and the Department of Family and Community Medicine, Hnamatsu University School of Medicine, the program is based in the U-M Japanese Family Health Program and promotes culturally adapted family medicine training appropriate for the Japanese medical setting. As family medicine is an emerging field in Japan, the project’s aim is to help train early career physicians with the skills to be a physician for the whole family, revive community healthcare, and provide effective primary care. Additionally, the program supports the growth of primary care research including a current project examining the similarities and differences in the approach to care of dementia in Japan and the United States. Dr. Fetter’s served on the editorial advisory board of the Journal of General and Family Medicine of the Japan Primary Care Association.

CHRISTOPHER HILL, Associate Professor, Asian Languages and Cultures, delivered lectures in 2019-20 based on his current research on postwar Japanese writers’ responses to the decolonization of Asia and Africa. At the Free University of Berlin, Columbia University, and the University of California at Los Angeles he spoke on the Japanese delegation to the Conference of African and Asian Writers held in Taskent in 1958, the first great cultural event of Afro-Asian solidarity. At the University of Chicago and in another talk at Columbia, he spoke on the novelist Oe Kengo’s participation in the Afro-Asian Writers Association and its impact on his fiction.


MARKUS NORNES, Professor, Asian Languages and Cultures, was invited to give lectures at Columbia University, Kanagawa University, and the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival. He organized the CJS Japanese film series on cinematography (see the article in this newsletter), and a program of early experimental films from Taiwan for the Ann Arbor Film Festival (unfortunately, it was canceled because of COVID-19). In the fall of 2019, Nornes organized a major conference, Kinema Club XIX in Ann Arbor. This brought nearly the entire field of Japanese film and television studies to Ann Arbor to discuss the state of the field and the way forward. The event commemorated the 20th year of Kinema Club’s formation, which had the same self-critical theme and also took place at the University of Michigan. This fall, his new book, Brushed in Light, will be released from University of Michigan Press. The subject is calligraphy in East Asian film, and it will be accompanied by a 3,000-image online corpus of frame enlargements. Nornes is now turning to his next book, a critical biography of film-maker Masahisa Adachi.

ENDI POSKOVIC, Professor, Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design. Working in collaboration with Tomomi Kano and Hisashi Kano, Professor Endi Poskovic introduced traditional and experimental methods of paper-making and water-printing to the students in ARTDES 300 Exploring Japanese Paper-making and Water-printing. In addition to building skills for creative output and experimentation in this class, students from across the Stamps School, as well as 10 Stamps faculty, about 25 visitors from the Japanese Business Society of Detroit, and LSA faculty and students participated in the production of paper during Fall 2019 semester. A selection of these works was on display at Stamps School Street Gallery. The visiting artists Tomomi Kano and Hisashi Kano introduced a range of methods of processing organic materials, gampi and washi fibers for use with handmade sukaetsu for traditional and contemporary approaches to Japanese washi. The students responded well with a written paper reflecting on the process, experience of making washi and collaborating with the Kano senses. This experience enabled the students, the Stamps School, and
the University of Michigan community to familiarize themselves with the complex process of organic farming, natural processing of plants for papermaking, and their application in art and design. More at stamps.umich.edu/creative-work/story/mindfulness_from_scratch to the pandemic. Robertson was invited to design studios in Manila, London, Hong Kong and Berlin. A bit different from our other Made in Local partnerships, Ishinomaki Laboratory will not be collecting any design or brand licensing fees from the Brightmoor Maker Space; rather, our focus will be on supporting the training of a new generation of woodworkers as they learn production and business skills through the manufacturing and promotion of our designs. Products will initially be made with pine wood and made available for sale in the Detroit Metropolitan Area. From Ishinomaki Lab: “This project has been over six months in the making, delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic, yet made even more timely/important by the current socio-political upheaval in the U.S. and around the world addressing systemic racism. As a furniture brand, as designers and makers, as fellow human beings, we hope to support long-term change via #MadeInLocalDetroit, because #blacklivesmatter. More from us on this via IGTV at insta.com/tv/CBMa1m7n_ii/.

PAULA CURTIS (PhD, History, 2019), presently a Postdoctoral Research Associate and Lecturer in History at Yale, hosted a virtual version of her Association for Asian Studies 2020 roundtable, “The Debility of Japanese Studies.” This digital roundtable showcased statements by diverse early career scholars on their experiences at institutions in different countries, seeking to generate productive discussions about the future of Japanese Studies and how scholars at all levels can support one another while creating a more inclusive and sustainable field. Submissions were received from 41 individuals around the world. To read statements from the virtual event and read more about its goals, see: Virtual Roundtable: “The ‘Debility’ of Japanese Studies” (pcurlits.com/events/AAS2020), “Embracing the Rebirth of Japanese Studies,” AsianNow (asianstudies.org/embracing-the-rebirth-of-japanese-studies).”

MOLLY DES JARDIN (MSI, 2011; PhD, Asian Languages and Cultures, 2012) began a new career in data science in March 2020 and is now working as Data Integration Specialist at the Annenberg Public Policy Center, University of Pennsylvania. She also published a chapter with Michael P. Wilhelm on their collaborative work developing the Penn Libraries’ East Asia Comics Collection, “Building a Japanese Manga Collection for Nontraditional Patrons in an Academic Library” in The Library’s Guide to Graphic Novels (ALA, July 2020).

ANDREW GILLMAN (BA, Asian Studies, 1980), professional translator/interpreter, has been appointed Shiga Prefecture Promotion Coordinator in Michigan, by Governor Taizo Mikazuki of Michigan’s sister-state of Shiga prefecture in Japan (initial appointment term: Feb. 2020 to Feb. 2023). He also became President of the Hinoki Foundation Board of Directors on July 1, 2020, after serving five years as Corporate Secretary.

GEORGE W. GISH, JR. (MA, CJS, 1987) recently completed a 4-year term as the Board of Trustees Chair of Yamanashi Elwa Gakun, Kofu, Japan, which just celebrated the 130th anniversary of its founding as the only girls’ school in Yamanashi Prefecture. It now includes three child-care/kindergartens, a girls’ junior and senior high school, and a coed college and graduate program. During this same period, George also served as interim chancellor and college president.

George has also just completed 15 years as head of the International Community Development program founded by Edogawa City, Tokyo, in 2004. This eastern ward of Tokyo has a population of nearly 700,000, which now includes over 35,000 non-Japanese residents, mostly from other Asian nations. As a result of this program, there has been increased cooperation between Japanese and foreign residents in enhancing the multicultural vitality of Edogawa City, which just elected its first India-born city council member. Without the foundation in Japanese cultural and linguistic skills gained at CJS, George says that he would not have been prepared to make these contributions to Japanese society. His training in Japanese music under William Malm also led to George becoming the founder of the Society to Promote the Heike Elwa Tradition in 1969. At that time, Taeyarn Kojo was the only remaining performer who had mastered the entire oral repertoire. When the Society celebrated its 50th anniversary last year, there were more than 20 performers passing on this tradition to the next generation.

Many of George’s cross-cultural experiences were included in “Wonderful Difference,” the book he authored in Japanese which was published by Gakken Shuppan, Tokyo, in 2004. George continues to live in Tokyo with his wife Yoko, who served as Japanese assistant in the U-M Asia Library during their time in Ann Arbor.

JOHN THOMAS GREGERSEN (MA, CJS, 1977), former Cultural Director of the Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens in Delray Beach, has been honored by the Government of Japan with the Order of the Rising Sun, Silver Rays - one of the highest ranking honors awarded to citizens who have contributed to the strengthening of bilateral relations between Japan and other countries. A resident of Delray Beach, Gregeresen received the honor from Consul General of Japan in Miami Kenji Hirata at a celebration hosted by the Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens. Gregeresen has held several positions at the museum during his tenure, first as Assistant Curator in 1978, and retiring after 35 years of service as Cultural Director in 2013.

“...This is one of the most prestigious honors granted by His Majesty the Emperor of Japan,” said Consul General Hirata. “Thanks to Mr. Gregeresen’s efforts, the museum built up their collection and

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received a multitude of grants for exhibition development and artifact conservation, including numerous grants from the National Endowment of the Arts and the Henri and Tomyo Takahashi Charitable Foundation.*

Since his retirement from the Morikami, Gregersen has continued researching the history of Japanese colonies in Florida, especially the Yamato Colony, and is revising a manuscript on the subject. In addition to this manuscript, he is writing an article on the Middleville Colony, and Florida’s Japanese immigration controversy of 1913. With the assistance of fellow former Morikami employee Reiko Nishioka, Gregersen has recently completed an English translation of a Japanese language book about the Yamato Colony titled Yamato Colony: The Pioneers Who Brought Japan to Florida by author Ryusuke Kawai.

Gregersen previously received the Foreign Minister’s Commendation by the Japanese Foreign Ministry and the Consulate-General of Japan in Miami in March, 2014. The original museum building at Morikami Park was also named in his honor in recognition of his contribution to, and long career at, the Morikami Museum.

A native of Detroit, Gregersen attended Michigan State University and received a bachelor’s degree in anthropology. He later obtained a master’s degree in Japanese Studies from the University of Michigan.

GLENHoETKERE (PhD, Business Administration, 2001) is the inaugural Director of the Centre for Sustainability and Business at Melbourne Business School (mb.edu/centre-for-sustainability-and-business). The goal is to improve the financial and social performance of organizations through environmentally sustainable strategies and operations. It will embed sustainability across research, education and industry partnerships at Melbourne Business School.

ANNE HoOGHART (BA, Asian Studies, 1989; MA, CJS, 1995) was appointed to the Board of Directors, and will continue in her role as Educational Research Coordinator, for the Hinoki Foundation.


YOSHikUNI ONo (PhD, Political Science, 2010) will be joining the Faculty of Political Science and Economics at Waseda University as a professor in September and is looking forward to working with their outstanding faculty and students. Please stop by her office at Waseda when you come to Tokyo.

HANNA Peterson (MA, CJS, 2020) has been pursuing freelance writing for the past few months and is currently finishing an internship with IGNITE Digital Marketing Solutions (an Osaka-based company). She is presently working on an e-book guide for foreigners living in Japan that should be published this fall.


MICHio UMEDA (PhD, Political Science, 2011), currently an associate professor at Faculty of Global Media Studies of Komazawa University, is very happy to announce that his article “The Politics of Aging: Age Difference in Welfare Issue Salience in Japan 1972-2016,” is now published from Political Behavior in July 2020.

It was an atypical summer to hold the sixth annual Ann Arbor Japan Week, from the uncertainty surrounding the global COVID-19 pandemic, to rising protests across the country against systemic racial discrimination. With the former came restrictions on in-person gatherings and events, and with the latter came the desire to elevate protesters’ voices over that of celebration. While challenging circumstances, we felt that now more than ever, families would be looking for accessible activities that promote intercultural awareness and appreciation. We then began working on the first ever “Virtual” Ann Arbor Japan Week—a week-long series of online content, activities, and resources surrounding Japanese culture from June 14-20. Not unlike A2JWs of the past, the series kicked off with a free film screening with Michigan Theater. This year’s choice was Okko’s Inn, a somber yet heartwarming story that nearly 100 households were able to stream directly from their own computers. From there the week took off into a series of five-streamed events, including lessons on bon- odori song and dance with partners at GEN-J Michigan and the Ann Arbor Summer Festival (AASF), origami classes with GEN-J Chicago and the University of Michigan Museum of Art (UMMA), and Japanese storytelling with Momo and the Ann Arbor District Library (AADL). Families also had access to online resources that included koto performances, calligraphy demonstrations, and even a lesson on how to draw Totoro from Studio Ghibli producer, Toshio Suzuki!

While we missed celebrating with you all in person this year, this new take on A2JW was a refreshing reminder that the spirit of cultural engagement knows no boundaries. With these new online offerings now in our repertoire, we’re looking forward to seeing what future Japan Weeks have in store.
Allison Alexy, assistant professor in the departments of Asian Languages & Cultures and Women's & Gender Studies, published a new book, *Intimate Disconnections: Divorce and the Romance of Independence in Contemporary Japan* (University of Chicago Press). The book examines divorce as a moment of personal and familial transition, situated within a broader context in which previous norms, social contracts, and implicit guarantees are no longer secure but might nonetheless remain attractive to some people. It traces how people are trying to figure out what they want—in a marriage, in family relationships, in life—at the same time that they struggle with manifesting those needs and desires in relationships with other people. *Intimate Disconnections* argues that when considering divorce, Japanese men and women often struggle to reconcile tensions they perceive between intimacy, connection, and dependence. As people try to decide what reasons justify ending a marriage, connection and dependence become defining yet unstable measures by which to judge the quality, security, and success of intimate relationships. These framing terms reflect the intersection of ideologies surrounding romantic love, Japanese cultural models for relationality, and the increasing popularity of neoliberal ethics privileging individuality and personal responsibility. Based on ethnographic work with men and women, and told through deeply personal narratives, *Intimate Disconnections* describes both the legal process and social transitions surrounding divorce, providing a complex portrait of people balancing the risks and possibilities of intimate relationships in an era when divorce is ever more common. The book is available for sale and also, thanks to the TOCE program, as a free digital downloadable (open access) version from the University of Chicago Press site: bibliopen.org/p/bopen/9780226701004.

Christopher Hill, Associate Professor, Asian Languages and Cultures, published a book on naturalist fiction, *Figures of the World: The Naturalist Novel and Transnational Form*. The book was published by Northwestern University Press in July 2020. It traces the history of this kind of realistic fiction from its origins in France in the 1860s to its adoption in many parts of the world by the early twentieth century, including an important school in Japan that gave rise to the “novel” and influenced writers in Korea and China.

Esperanza Ramirez-Christensen, Professor Emerita of Japanese Literature, collaborated on a book of haiku with Ann Arbor children’s book author and illustrator, Tracy Gallup. Ms. Gallup, who happens to be her neighbor, had been keenly struck by how closely some haiku evoked paintings she had done earlier without knowing that the kindred Japanese poems existed. She showed Ramirez-Christensen the painting/ poem pairings that had struck her and, indeed, the mutual resonance between them was striking. Subsequently, she asked the professor if she would do new translations of the poems in place of the old ones by R. H. Blythe. The result of their collaboration was published last year as *My First Book of Haiku Poems: A Picture, a Poem, and a Dream* (Tokyo, Vermont, and Singapore: Tuttle Publishing, 2019). It includes twenty mostly Edo-period haiku, half by Issa, the others by Bashō, Onitsura, Buson, and others. Each haiku is featured on its own page in Japanese kanji/kanji, Romanized transcription, and in the new English translation. On the opposing page, the corresponding painting appears, occupying the whole page. Also included are brief comments and questions meant as guides to understanding the correlation between poem and painting. At the back are the translator’s description of the link between poem and picture, a helpful introduction to the contextual history of haiku, and biographical entries for the poets. Intended for the K-12 schools, the book is also of great interest for adult readers due to its unprecedented, highly poetic juxtaposition of a modern painting with classical Japanese haiku, and its collectible quality. With good reviews and sales, it has gone into a second printing.

Film Series Update

The Center for Japanese Studies at the University of Michigan has the oldest Japanese film series in the world, having started back in the 1960s. This year, we once again teamed with our local art house, the Michigan Theater, for a series celebrating the stunning work of Japan’s great cinematographers.

Starting in January, our cinematographers included Kazuo Miyazawa (Rashomon [1950] and Ugetsu [1953]), Yuharu Atsuta (An Autumn Afternoon [1960]), Yoshio Miyajima (Harakiri [1962]), Shigeo Miki (The Downfall of Osen [1935]), Shigeyoshi Mine (Tokyo Drifter [1960]), Masaki Tamura (Lady Snowblood [1973] and Tanpopo [1985]). This was an amazing tour of Japanese cinematographic history. Our oldest film, Mizoguchi’s Donnaike, was one of the last silent films in Japan. To be precise, it was a “sound version,” or sound-ribbon. This was a silent/sound hybrid, as the filmmakers recorded a benshi and used that as the soundtrack. Actually, CJS planned to show the film with a live performance by the great benshi Ichiro Kataoka; unfortunately—in what now feels like an omen for what was to come—he was unable to join us in February, just weeks before the Michigan lockdown.

Starting with this lovely sequence shot photography by Miki, we enjoyed the luminous images of Miyagawa, the colorful play of Atsuta’s rigorous work for Ozu, the experimental interventions of Miyajima, Mine and Tamura. It was a stunning ride through the history of Japanese cinema.

Understandably, when COVID-19 hit our state, we had to cut the series short. We were ultimately unable to show Yuzaka Yamazaki’s Nobody Knows (2004) and Aiko Ashizawa’s To the Ends of the Earth (2019). Yamazaki even recorded an introduction to his work for our screening. However, the series was a great success, so we are exploring ways of finishing it off this fall, whether in-person or virtually. 

Faculty Publications

Erin Brightwell, Assistant Professor, Asian Languages and Cultures, published *Reflecting the Past: Place, Language and the Romance of Independence in Contemporary Japan*. The book examines divorce as a moment of personal and familial transition, situated within a broader context in which previous norms, social contracts, and implicit guarantees are no longer secure but might nonetheless remain attractive to some people. It traces how people are trying to figure out what they want—in a marriage, in family relationships, in life—at the same time that they struggle with manifesting those needs and desires in relation

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Toyota Visiting Professor and Visiting Scholar Updates

MARIKO ANNO (TVP, 2018-19) (Tokyo Institute of Technology) has a forthcoming book entitled Piercing the Structure of Tradition: Flute Performance, Continuity, and Freedom in the Music of Noh Drama (Cornell University Press, 2020). This first English-language monograph on the nohkan (Noh flute) investigates flute performance in Noh as a space for exploring the relationship between tradition and innovation. She performed the nohkan in two English-language Noh with Theatre Nohgaku: Emily in London (text by Ashley Thorpe; music by Richard Emmerit); and Phoenix Fire in Tokyo (text/music by Kevin Saffert), a production that had to postpone its US-Japan tour due to COVID-19.

TAKESHI HAMANO (Visiting Scholar, 2017-18) Currently Associate Professor in Sociology at the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Kitakyushu, Japan with a major research interest in the transformation of the perceptions of the family in contemporary Japan. The year at CJS led to the successful 2019 publication of his book titled Marriage Migrants of Japanese Women in Australia from Springer. Next up for him is a book translation of Intimate Disconnections, recently published by CJS faculty member Allison Alexy.


His lifetime project on music history from Perry’s Black Ship to 1945 will be published this fall, titled Kinokai Nissan no Ongaku Hyakunen (A Hundred Years of Music in Modern Japan) by Iwanami Shoten (4 vols.).

FUMIKO MIYAZAKI (IUMEZAWA) (TVP, 2000-01) recently published (together with Kate Wildman Nakai and Mark Teuwen) Christian Sorcerers on Trial: Records of the 1827 Osaka Incident, from Columbia University Press. The volume translates the dossier of a dramatic case in which three women and three men were investigated and executed as Christian. In addition to the testimonies of the principals and many of their associates, the volume also includes accounts of rumors about the incident that circulated at the time and later retellings.

EMIKO OHNUKI-TIERNEY (TVP, 1995-96). Her recent publications include the following:

2020 「人殺しの花」岩波書店.


She also helped organize three sessions on the Ainu for the November, 2019 American Anthropological Association meeting in Vancouver, and was a discussant for the panel “Toward the Establishment of a Network for Ainu and Indigenous Studies in North America.”

KAZUHIRO SODA (2016-17 TVP). His latest film Zero (original title: 精神0, 2020, 128 minutes, Observational Film #9) received the Ecumenical Jury Award at the Berlin International Film Festival. Because of the pandemic, the film was released online first and then in cinemas in Japan.


MELANIE TREDÉ (TVP, 2011-12) Heidelberg University, Germany is co-curator of the exhibition “Love, Fight, Feast: The Dynamics of Japanese narrative art” (working title) set to open on September 10, 2021 at the Museum Rietberg in Zurich (Switzerland). The exhibition features roughly one-hundred Japanese paintings, prints and printed books, textiles, lacquer, ceramics, and metal works from the thirteenth to the twentieth century from European public and private collections. A special feature is a number of new discoveries including a set of six handscrolls rendering the Shuten Doji story on silk with exquisite pigment; the multi-mediality is another feature, including a linear digital navigator (to experience illuminated handscrolls “hands-on”), as well as a multi-faceted movie program. This will be the first show in Europe to focus on this significant aspect of Japanese Art in a holistic way. A richly illustrated exhibition catalog in English and in German is currently “in the making” with co-curators Dr. Kharin Tirth (Museum Rietberg, Zürich), and Professor Estelle Bauer (INALCO, Paris).

John Ogawa (Herbert Jones) and Mariko Anno (nohkan) performing in Emily. Courtesy of Margaret Odorin.

Supporting CJS – Give Online

The University of Michigan’s Center for Japanese Studies (CJS) is one of the nation’s foremost institutes for interdisciplinary research and training on Japan. Founded in 1947, CJS is the oldest interdisciplinary center in the United States devoted exclusively to Japanese Studies. CJS’s outstanding faculty of more than 60 area specialists come from varying humanities departments, social science departments, and professional schools. Together with the University of Michigan’s Kenneth G. Lieberthal and Richard H. Rogel Center for Chinese Studies and the Nam Center for Korean Studies, CJS is part of the East Asia National Resource Center supported by the Department of Education’s Title VI grant program, and serves the community through public events and outreach.

For years, CJS has been supplementing federal and university funding with gifts and endowments. Because federal appropriations to support area studies centers are always at risk, CJS must find ways to assure its financial security independent of federal support.

Your gift will help the Center with this effort and ensure the high quality of its programs.

To give online, please visit: ii.umich.edu/cjs/donate