

Tohoku Forum for Creativity 2017 Thematic Program

**The 21st Century Hasekura Project: Japanese Studies  
as The Interface of A New Knowledge**

*Sendai, February 13-14 2017*

**Knowledge and Arts on the Move:  
Transformation of the Self-Aware Image  
through East-West Encounters**



**“Con-creativity”:**  
**A new basic concept of East-West and Intercultural Encounters**  
**- Aesthetic-Ethical Interventions and Transformations -**  
Georg Stenger (University of Vienna)

If the concept of the “creativity” aims at the person’s properties structure with which mostly his artistic and creative abilities are appealed, I would like to emphasize in my contribution a related but, nevertheless, a totally differently stored concept. It concerns the comparatively still young concept of the "Concreativity", which seems to me particularly suitable to bring up for discussion the subject of our conference constructively and maybe also forward-looking.

First I will carry out a phenomenological inspired definition of the “creativity” in order to move secondly on to the precedence of the creative *process*. Finally, the third part which forms the main part, will try to outline the basic concept of "concreativity" in terms of its relevance and sustainability for intercultural understanding. It will deal with aspects of intra- and intercultural constellations in order to interpret the principles of dialogical culture, in which the differences, the asymmetries, and conflicts are taken seriously. This means that beyond all too harmonious and universalistic concepts, as well as mutually exclusive and relativistic concepts, the possibilities of mutual discovery, elevation and thus deeper self-clarification can be explored and demonstrated.

## **Beyond identity: promoting the cultural resources**

Marcello Ghilardi (University of Padova)

In this talk I will deal with the issue of “cultural identity”, proposing a deconstruction of it in order to enhance that of “cultural resource”. Going through the examples of linguistic translation and that of artistic experience, and recalling the Japanese buddhist notion of *muga* (無我), I will try to show the advantages of a melting-down of “subjectivity” and “identity” as a substance, or autonomous self. Aiming to lowering or de-power conflicts, we should foster the capability to accept and maintain the positive character of the "tensions" (張力) that are internal to each and every culture.

I will taking into account the notion of “de-coincidence” proposed by François Jullien – according to which de-coincidence is to open a gap or a dribbling (an *écart*) with respect to a congruity that brooks no further initiative. This means to extricate oneself from an order that, in its fulfillment, inhibits its possibles and sterilizes; to coincide is to bog down, whereas to de-coincide is to elevate, valorize, and possible common developments. So, while an identity always risks to fix itself and be unaware of social, political and anthropological changes, when we get accustomed to deal with the plural resources of cultures we can then acknowledged the cultures themselves as processes, and we can promote and improved also on a larger scale some peculiar insights, and share them to deepen a plural self-understanding of mankind.

**Similarities across differences. Resolving methodological conflicts through an investigation of the Political Strategies of two emerging polities: the case of Mycenaean Greece (XIVth-XIIIth cent. B.C.) and of Early Yamato state (Vth - VIth cent. A.D)**

Alessandro Greco (Sapienza University of Rome)

In this paper the Author attempts to trace a comparison between the polities developed in Mycenaean Greece (from **XV to XIII century B.C.E.**) with the Late Kofun Era polities in Japan (**particularly from the III to VI centuries C.E.** that is before the Ritsuryo reform).

The two disciplines share a very similar methodological approach (such as the theories of the secondary states formation, of the peer-polity interaction, and of the interaction spheres etc.), and despite the abyss of time and space that divides the two civilizations, many analogies can be observed.

Both the Mycenaean and Japanese polities can be considered the product of a **secondary state formation process**, arisen at the edge of big empires, the Egypt and Mesopotamia for Greece, and China for Japan, and played their role on the scene of a maritime interaction sphere: the Aegean and the Yellow sea.

Both the systems share the “key indicators for state formation”, and, in the centuries spanned in this paper, also a general geopolitical situation. Even as concerns literacy, some interesting similarities can be noted as both cultures didn't use the powerful instrument of writing in its full functionality, even if they knew its potentiality. As a consequence both the systems can be defined as “proto-historical”.

In the second part of the paper, on these bases, the respective strategies of territorial control will be compared, through the analysis of the functions and prerogatives of two important officials: the *tomo no miyatsuko* of the Yamato kingdom, and the *qa-si-re-u* of the Mycenaean kingdom of Pylos, and their relations with the respective corporative work-groups, the Japanese *Be*, and the Mycenaean *ka-ke-we*.

**How Japan rescued the Latin poetry: the increasing fortune of Haicua Latina**  
Maurizio Campanelli (Sapienza University of Rome)

Latin is one of the languages that have made a major contribution to haiku poetry in the Western world in the last thirty years. Two questions arise: Can we think about a rebirth of Latin poetry thanks to haiku poetry? What is the contribution that Latin gives to haiku poetry?

## **Remarks on Japan in Italian culture before and after the end of isolation**

Rolando Minuti (University of Florence)

After the end of the “Christian Century” and the beginning of the age of *sakoku*, the original contribution of Italian culture in the general framework of the cultural relationships between Western World and Japan was very weak and not comparable to what in other European intellectual contexts, mainly during the XVIIIth century, was achieved. However, in the same period a significant amount of information arrived to Italian culture through translations, abridgments and popular surveys of world history. All this made possible the shaping of representations and attitudes towards Japanese culture and society for which the attention to manners, customs, natural environment and economic activities gained growing importance - compared to the attention for missionary enterprises and religious persecution -, and it was largely consistent with the European Enlightenment’s approach to the study of non-European history. When the *sakoku* ended, after the imposition of the reopening of Japan to world relationships, Italian culture too began to offer new and original contributions, mainly through travel writings connected to specific economic interests. A new horizon of curiosities, intellectual and artistic interests, images and representations was so opened in the Italian cultural context, but all this grew up on a cultural ground which during the long XVIIIth century - from the end of the XVIIth to the first decades of the XIXth century, following recent historiographical periodizations - was increasingly shaped, forging the cultural premises of a prevailing sympathetic attitude towards Japan fostered by the new and large amount of information which followed the end of isolation.

## **A country the whole family can fight for! Scopic regimes in International Relations and gendered images in manga on constitutional revision in Japan**

B.A. Wakefield (Leiden University)

While few would argue that our perception of politics is shaped by visual representations, the effects of such representations have largely been ignored in mainstream international relations theory. Nevertheless, as Ó Tuathail (1996) and others have long noted, the assumptions that order conventional theories of geopolitics, while “blind to that which makes sight possible, to the codes of signification that designate a field of vision and establish conditions of visibility,” implicitly reinforce choices that establish those codes. An assessment of popular visual culture may be one way of exploring how ordinary consumers “view” questions of international politics in ways that may subvert mainstream approaches. Taking cues from Cynthia Weber (2005), who outlined a “moral grammar” in representations of the family in American movies after 9/11, this presentation shows how visual depictions of gender and family organisation have been used in manga referencing recent debate on revision of the Japanese constitution. It will show that the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), in its manga advocating constitutional revision, has actively attempted to align conservative notions of “correct” family structure with its appeal for change. However, the presentation also argues that while images in private manga critical of the government’s push for constitutional revision still largely reinforce an idea of international relations as a sphere of male dominance, various, and sometimes unorthodox representations of the family are used to signify resistance to government policy, even in issue areas that do not explicitly relate to the family. It will briefly consider audience response to these manga and also reference interviews with authors and LDP members who have taken a position in the constitutional debate through manga, in order to add context to their use of gender tropes in mapping out their political positions.

**The politics of 'mutual understanding' and the Futenma base relocation:  
Different actors, different understandings**  
Glenn D. Hook (University of Sheffield)

The decision to close the US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, located in the city of Ginowan, Okinawa prefecture, and construct a larger, replacement base in Henoko, Nago city, has still to be implemented fully, despite the passage of more than two decades since the US and Japanese governments agreed to close the Futenma air station. The reasons for the delay are complex, running from central government actors with varying degrees of commitment to moving the decision forward, supported by the US government, on the one hand, to high levels of resistance against constructing a new base in Okinawa on the part of local actors, on the other. Opposition to the construction of the Henoko base, a less populated area of the prefecture than Ginowan on the Okinawan coast near Camp Schwab, includes the prefectural government in Naha, the Mayor of Nago, as well as local activists and residents in Henoko and more widely throughout the prefecture. One salient feature of the political differences between the central government and its opponents is the lack of 'mutual understanding' between them on the role of US bases in Okinawa.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the different understandings of the existence and operation of US military outposts in Okinawa as manifest in the discourses of the two sides. It does so through a case study of the proposed closure of Futenma and the construction of the new base in Henoko. The aim is to shed light on the 'base issue' by analyzing empirically the security discourses deployed by the Abe Shinzō administration in Tokyo and the Onaga Takeshi prefectural administration and other actors opposed to the new base in Okinawa. The discourses produced by the central government and these local actors reveal their *dissociated* rather than mutual understandings of the risks and gains associated with the existence and operation of the military garrisons of the American eagle in Okinawa. While earlier work has focused on the tensions between risk and the security of the everyday in Okinawa (Hook et al 2015), this paper elucidates in granular detail how the competing discourses deployed in the dispute over the Henoko installation constrain the potential for 'mutual understanding' between the two sides.

The paper proceeds as follows. First we set the context of the dispute before moving on to an analysis of the security discourse of the Abe administration. The particular focus of this section is the role of US bases as a 'deterrent' in the government's security policy. It then turns to an examination of the discourse of the Onaga administration and other actors in Okinawa, including that of the protesters against the construction of the new base. Here we pay particular attention to how

‘equality’ (byōdō), ‘democracy’ (minshushugi), and ‘identity’ are employed in the Okinawan discourse.

We conclude by arguing that, with no ‘mutual agreement’ on the existence and operation of US bases in Okinawa, the Abe administration will only succeed in constructing a new base in Henoko by denying the aspirations of the minority of the national population living in Okinawa in favour of the majority of the population living in mainland Japan. Herein lies the enduring tension between a security policy premised on the unequal distribution of US military garrisons in Okinawa and the functioning of democracy throughout the Japanese archipelago.

Glenn D. Hook, Ra Mason and Paul O’Shea (2015) *Regional Risk and Security: whither the everyday* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge).

## The Beginning of the Never-ending Struggle

Akihiro OZAKI (Tohoku University)

When the 2011 Great Tōhoku Earthquake hit at 2:46 PM on March 11, I was walking along a corridor in the Literature Department. The shaking subsided and after about an hour I was able to return to my office, but the room was in a wretched state. The bookcases along the walls had collapsed.

The nuclear disaster is a difficulty that this hard work and healing for recovery cannot conquer and is of different dimensions than the disasters we have looked at so far. The nuclear disaster will still not have become history 100 years hence. This is something outside of human control.

In cases like this, what should people who have ignored the problem do? Von Weizsäcker, then-president of Germany, warned that those who close their eyes to the past are blind to the present and went on to say that, while the generation that didn't know the war may not have had any direct war responsibility, as German citizens they are unable to escape from the national responsibility. The significance of the nuclear disaster is, as will be expressed by its connection with 9.11 in my speech, more grave than that of standard wars, and the awakening coming from the subjective act of etching the disaster in the memory is a condition demanded of individuals to be human. There remains the possibility of reconstruction for survivors, but the dead cannot even tell their stories. From this simple truth, the living must have a responsibility to repay the victims.

Mori Ōgai, the Meiji-era literary master, wrote in his final years a short piece with a somewhat mysterious mood entitled *Ka no yō ni* (*As Though It Were*). The main character is the son of a certain viscount. He progresses from Gakushūin University to the faculty of history at a liberal arts college and studies history, but, when it comes to writing papers, he can't do it at all. Complicated questions waited for those who would consider the issues surrounding myth and history, and he senses the difficulties of carrying through with writing in a way that would not give rise to disputes. These difficulties do not fade, even after the man graduates and later returns to Japan after going to Germany on exchange. It is not possible for him to avoid digging into matters concerning the Imperial household, and, naturally, he cannot put brush to paper. This world moves forward by means of all people, who create truths of things known to be lies and investigate them no further, believing that it is simply the way of the world and harboring no doubts. For example, things like duty and morals or the everlasting soul cannot be placed before one's eyes. They do not actually exist, but people behave as if they might. This is the meaning of "*ka no yō ni*." For the main character of the story, this truth is deeply troubling. Ōgai wrote this novel in response to the High Treason Incident of 1910, but the phrase "*ka no yō ni*" resonates with statements heard often today that something

was “within expectations” or “outside expectations,” spoken as though what is being said is of great importance, when in reality nothing is being said at all. The “myth of complete safety” as applied to nuclear power is probably the most extreme example of this. Not even experts keep a watch on actual conditions, assuming that a disaster could not possibly happen and knowingly confusing “myth” with dispassionate “reality.” The general public is also subject to this judgement. When there are others who entertain doubts toward their “faith,” they allow a logic that dictates frowning upon these people or ostracizing them. Japan in the present day has not changed at all in the century since *Ka no yō ni*.

In contrast to this hiding of the truth and living in absolute devotion to social etiquette – that is to say the attitude of “*ka no yō ni*” – Ōgai’s approach was the polar opposite. He brought to light the hidden nature of the actual world. In this sense, there lived in Ōgai a “spirit contrary to the times.” There is a tendency to take his approach as one of pessimistic self-solace, but I want to reevaluate it as a way of being for a person who, going against the current, becomes disillusioned but keeps on living.

According to Edward Said, Palestinian-American literary critic and author of *Representations of the Intellectual*, intellectuals have a rebellious, rather than an assimilatory, spirit; lead a peripheral existence; are amateurs; and use their words to speak truth to power.

In the present day, talking about oneself as an intellectual sounds pretentious and is not viewed very positively, but, regardless of their reputation, we can describe intellectuals as bystanders who have intentionally missed the bus. This type of “temporal disjunction” is needed from time to time in universities, as well.

## **Rethinking about TEPCO's liability for nuclear damages**

Hiroshi Kabashima (Tohoku University)

Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami on March 11th, 2011, claimed more than 16,000 victims besides enormous damage to property. A significant part of human and property loss was brought about not just by the natural disaster but combined with the human error. First of all, the meltdown incident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant caused damages in the amount of 22 Trillion of JPY (ca. 200 Billion of USD) in the current estimate, that is more than the annual revenue from the consumption tax in the sum of 17 Trillion of JPY (ca. 150 Billion of USD).

My report on hand will make a legal analysis of the questions what liability the TEPCO, the operator company of Fukushima Daiichi, should cover, and what damages the Japanese society as a whole should pay. A legal analysis here means a theoretical approach from jurisprudence including two aspects, firstly the methodological analysis in view to the legal construction of interests of the parties, and secondly the interest-balancing analysis from a fairness point of view. There are mainly four parties involved into the nuclear incident, the TEPCO, the affected residents living near the broken power station, the central government of Japan, and the Japanese citizens voting and paying taxes. A reasonable solution of the nuclear dispute should, therefore, be a fair distribution of nuclear damages among these four parties according to their own legal liability and moral responsibility.

My report would draw the conclusion in three points. Firstly, TEPCO, facing bankruptcy, should spin-off its divisions, for example, transmission grids and power stations, and sell the stocks of divided daughter companies so as to gain the market liquidity in the form of currency. Secondly, after the parent company TEPCO is bankrupted and dissolved via liquidation, nuclear damages should be covered by the government based on the State Compensation Act (statute 125 of 1947). This means however, thirdly and finally, that the Japanese taxpayers should share the burden of the human failure at TEPCO, so that it would be necessary to clearly distinguish the nuclear compensation from the public policy for recovery, because the former is a mandatory payment while the latter is an optional one.

## **How could a monument for Fukushima be possible?**

Enrico Fongaro (Tohoku University)

«How could a monument for Fukushima be possible?» Such a question was posed to me by some pupils of the Art History Course, shortly after I came to Sendai in April 2012. The students were members of the Photography Club. They went to places where the tsunami hit and took a lot of pictures, which they wanted to use to make a "monument" for the victims of the disaster. For those students, the urgency to "not forget" the victims was as clear as the purpose or necessity of people to "forget" them; so they wanted to do something that could remain a sign of the catastrophe. After discussing various possibilities, it seemed to us there was a basic difference between the victims of the tsunami and the victims of the nuclear disaster. This is because what happened on March 2011 were two completely different things. If the sense of a "monument" is to "admonish" for the future and "let remember" the victims (of a war or of a disaster), there was nothing unusual in thinking about a monument for the victims of the tsunami that destroyed the coasts of North-East Japan. But a big problem arose when we tried to think which kind of "monument" should be appropriate for Fukushima's victims. Is such a monument possible at all? What could be the sense of a monument for Fukushima? Who are the victims, which kind of future should such a monument admonish about? Our discussions ended there and the students, as far as I know, gave up the idea of such a monument. Taking advantage of the possibility of giving a speech about this topic on the occasion of the Symposium in Sendai, I will relate some personal reflections about the difficulties I feel when I try to think about Fukushima through traditional concepts (for example the concept of "monument"), with the hope of receiving new ideas and suggestions from the participants.

## **Nature, national character, and unnatural disaster: Problems at the nexus of national recovery and nuclear disaster**

C. Craig (Tohoku University)

Nationalism and conceptions of the Japanese national character were prominent in the ideas surrounding recovery after the 2011 Great Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami. Television advertisements, news stories, and government recovery plans all leaned heavily on such purported national characteristics as stoic fortitude, indomitable will, and above all indefatigable resilience. The exhortation of these definitive virtues accorded conveniently with the aims of cost-conscious officials; however, those affected by the disaster often found them less than satisfactory.

While a cold but practical logic can be seen in the nationalistic inflections in the responses to the earthquake and tsunami, the same is not true when they have been applied to the Fukushima nuclear disaster. As with the more conventional damage, the rhetoric that issued forth concerning matters like the evacuation of the irradiated zones and the various efforts to regain control over the reactor emphasized essentialist conceptions of self-sacrifice and duty. The nature of the nuclear disaster, including its geographic and chronological scales and the role of nationalistic discourse in establishing the conditions that invited catastrophe, demand a response that goes beyond a hollow appeal to intrinsic cultural virtue. Interestingly, the concept of the “black swan event,” used to exonerate official and corporate responsibility for Fukushima, may offer a way towards a more appropriate response when reconfigured to describe the consequences, rather than the causes, of the disaster.

## **The Watchful Gaze of the Dead**

Hiroo Sato (Tohoku University)

Without scientific knowledge, the people of pre-modern societies in Japan, as elsewhere, tried to understand and come to terms with the occurrence of natural disasters through their association with the actions of transcendent beings (kami). In ancient Japan, natural disasters were interpreted as messages, that is, vengeful curses, from the kami. With the establishment of a systematic cosmology which came with the broad reception of Buddhism during the middle ages, the causes of catastrophes came to be explained in terms of the law of cause and effect according to which punishment and salvation were delivered by transcendent beings (hotoke). With the onset of the early modern period, the sense of reality inherent in perceptions of the presence of those fundamental beings declined, and the salvation of the dead could no longer be entrusted to the system provided by the otherworldly god. For this reason, people came to terms with catastrophes as natural disasters that must be faced. Rituals and customs, carried out over long periods, were put in place to raise the unfortunate dead to the status of ancestral spirits as kami.

In addition to a shift from the traditional world in which the living, kami and the dead coexisted toward a shutting out of the latter group, the process of “modernization” brought with it a restructuring of society around the exclusive rights and interests of human beings. The experience of the Great East Japan Earthquake has been an opportunity to reconsider the path ahead, and to reconsider responses to catastrophe which display the modern tendency to focus on the concerns of the living to the exclusion of those of the dead.

**Landscape representation in the Japanese art and its religious meaning**  
Ryūsaku Nagaoka (Tohoku University)

In the lecture, I will consider the religious meaning of the represented landscape based on Chinese and Japanese examples. I will take up mural paintings in the Dunhuang Grottoes as the example of China, and will take up works in Shosoin, Byodoin temple and picture scrolls as the example of Japan. Through the analysis of arts, I'll explain the mentality of the Japanese who kept thinking that a world of Buddha exists behind this world.

## **The logic of happiness: The topology of ‘blessing’ as seen in *Genji Monogatari***

Ikuko Sagiya (University of Florence)

About the concept of the "*saiwai*" (blessing) or the "*saiwaibito*" (blessed person), there are already various previous studies. It has already been pointed out that the "*saiwai*" means fortune rather than happiness. Whether one is fortunate is based on the evaluation of a third party, so it is questionable whether the latter's evaluation is consistent with the reality of the person concerned. The subjects whose fortune is being evaluated are mostly female characters, such as Lady Murasaki, Akashi Lady, Second Daughter of the Eighth Prince of Uji, involved in acquiring the good fortune beyond their family lineage and status. Therefore, with their good fortune being regarded as something contrary to expectation, they are not necessarily received favorably by the public. Moreover, in a polygamous society, women are subject to the instability of their position. The condition of a woman's fortune is marrying a high-ranking man, but it is taken for granted that such a man has many wives. If a higher-ranking rival appears, a woman with lowly birth has to be resigned to standing in her leeward. The inconsistency that embodies the "*saiwai*" of women is being pursued in the story, especially in the so-called second and third part.

**Japanese and European Medieval Theatre and their modern revivals:  
Performing a Cultural Heritage in the Mirror of the Other**  
Estelle Doudet (Grenoble Alpes University)

Medieval French Theatre (mystery plays, farces) and Japanese Theatre (nô, kyogen) are two spectacular arts developed approximately at the same period (XIV-XVII c.) but rooted in specific local cultures, without any connection to each other. However, they present similarities that allowed their first modern spectators in Europe and in Japan to "recognize" something familiar in their performances. This paper aims to shed some light on the aesthetic impact of Medieval European Drama and Traditional Japanese Theatre on the artists and the audience of the XX and XXI centuries. It will in particular investigate how French stage directors recreate and perform their own Past and Cultural Heritage through the Past and Cultural Heritage of the Other, using for example Japanese Theatre to "reenact" European Middle Ages and Early Modern Times.

## **Globalisation of the Japanese tea bowl (*chawan*) – is it possible?**

Eva Kaminski (Jagiellonian University)

Amongst the objects used during the Japanese tea ceremony, the tea bowl (*chawan*) plays a very important role. It is always carefully chosen by the tea master, in a correspondence with the occasion, the season of the year and the interior surroundings. Without doubt, it has been closely connected with the Japanese culture since the introduction of tea culture in Japan and represents many aspects of not only Japanese aesthetics, but also - of the everyday life.

Even if the tea bowl is one of the most appreciated ceramic wares in Japan, it also is one of the most unintelligible objects of art, at least in the Euro-American context. Especially the tea bowls, which reflect the concept of *wabi* aesthetic, seem to be not quite understood outside Japan.

In the second half of the 19th century, the Japanese tea bowls, amongst other ceramic objects used for the tea ceremony, were introduced to the Western world at a few World Expositions, for example the one in Paris (1867) or Vienna (1873). However, little appreciation was shown to the tea utensils; the public at the World Expositions seemed to be more interested in colourfully decorated porcelain vessels (eg. big vases or plates). The only exceptions were the museums, which acquired some earthenware tea utensils, including tea bowls.

Nevertheless, the real boom for the Japanese ceramics (other than porcelain) can be observed in the Euro-American cultures in the second half of the 20th century. There were a few reasons for this sudden popularity: not only the circumstances were favourable, but also the activities of the ceramic artists like Kawai Kanjirô or Bernard Leach, helped to spread the knowledge of the Japanese ceramics throughout the world. The Western ceramic artists started to produce wares, inspired by the aesthetics and technics of the Japanese ones, including the tea bowls. From that time on, the vast number of the tea bowls have been continually produced in the artists' workshops, and the outcome of their work can be seen in many galleries, museums and even teashops, throughout the world.

Does this imply the globalisation of the Japanese tea bowl? Is it possible for the Japanese tea bowl to go global? And also, how is the Japanese tea bowl seen from the Euro-American perspective, has it adopted to the new environments? This presentation will aim to try to find the answers to these questions.

## **Mechanisms of Display: Continuities and Discontinuities in European and Japanese Cabinets**

Dagmar Eichberger (Heidelberg University)

In the discourse on global exchange and the on-going contact between the East and the West, lacquer ware plays a prominent role. Much research has gone into the ways in which lacquer cabinets were produced, commissioned, traded and copied. Dating such objects, establishing their authenticity, identifying western artists such as Gérard Dagly and discussing technical matters, are often the first issues to be addressed by scholarship.

Leaving those well-established questions aside, it is of particular interest to me how these objects functioned as pieces of furniture, and how those cabinets developed from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. In my view, it could be worthwhile to compare lacquer cabinets made in Japan with western cabinets decorated with either marquetry or paintings.

A cabinet has many 'faces', as it has one or two moveable doors and is thus subject to a performative act. The opening and closing of the cabinet requires a specific mechanism such as a fall front door or two wings with hinges if opening to the side. These structural differences determine the way in which the decoration was distributed across the various surfaces: the front, the top, the sides and the back. Is there a sequence in which to read the various 'faces' of the cabinet? What is the relationship between the outer and the inner appearance of the cabinet?

Equally important are aesthetic considerations, such as the use of symmetrical or asymmetrical compositions. What is the significance of the ornamental frame in the various pieces of furniture? Which role is played by the decorative brass mounts that occasionally compete for attention with the painted surfaces. How do elaborate stands and crests - mostly western style - affect the lacquer cabinet? It is the aim of this paper, to approach the cabinet with different sensibilities in mind, the eye trained in western traditions and the perception of the Japanese craftsman, who produces pieces of furniture for western clients.

## **An aesthetic of containment? The portrait as a travelling concept in early modern South Asia.**

Monica Juneja (Heidelberg University)

The notion of a “portrait” – as art historical writing in European languages terms it – took on many different forms in the universal empires of Asia during early modern times. Though abundantly produced – painted or drawn – portraits in court cultures of South Asia said are said to be marked by a degree of circumspection stemming from anxieties about representing the human image, even as being open to possibilities offered by naturalist forms that came with European portraits. While descriptions of Mughal portraits use terms such as “likeness” or argue in favor of an increasing “veristic” or “mimetic” aspect of the rendering of human forms, I examine the ostensible refusals of physiognomic expressivity, the domestication of bodily passion and containment of emotion that were resorted to while representing universal rulers – at a time when Western naturalism made these visual modes available and even attractive to the patrons, artists and viewers of court paintings. My paper seeks to recuperate those aesthetic modes – signs, objects, literary references and compositional devices – privileged in pictorial portrayals to imagine and render manly heroism that formed the underpinning of universal rulership in early modern court societies of South Asia. Where can we locate the dynamics of this aesthetics of containment – born as it was out of a constant negotiation of contrary pulls? Unravelling the dynamics of appropriation, domestication and refusal in relation to circulating aesthetic genres remains a methodological challenge to the conceptual apparatus of an art history that investigates circulation, while striving for a lingua franca that would plausibly accommodate plurality and difference.

**Dutch reflections in Chinese mirrors: interpreting China in the Netherlands through encounters with inscribed Chinese artefacts**  
Willemijn van Noord (University of Amsterdam)

This paper examines how European encounters with two inscribed Chinese artefacts exposed and transformed images of both Self and Other by examining the discussion of these objects in the Republic of Letters at the end of the seventeenth century. The first concerns an inscribed lacquer screen which Princess Mary Stuart (1662-1694) had planned to dismantle and rearrange to create a cabinet. Her adviser Constantijn Huygens (1596-1687) wrote a letter in the voice of the Chinese emperor lamenting her plans. The format of the letter sheds light on how the Dutch thought the Chinese viewed them, and by extension how the Dutch perceived the Chinese and themselves. Huygens' letter suggests the Dutch were demeaning the superior Chinese arts for mere adornment as they failed to understand the excellent Chinese language and the wisdom it communicated.

The respect the letter demanded for the Chinese inscription echoes the contemporary admiration for Chinese script in general. Most early modern European books on China – often published in the Dutch Republic – emphasised the importance of its ancient and complex script. Could Chinese be the Primitive language that preceded the Babylonian Confusion of Tongues? Or could it provide the key to the construction of a Universal language that would restore the linguistic unity that was lost at the Tower of Babel? These debates are expressed in the interpretations of another inscribed Chinese artefact; an ancient bronze mirror from the collection of Amsterdam mayor and VOC director Nicolaes Witsen (1641-1717). Letters regarding the mirror were sent all over Europe and even Asia dealing mainly with the issue of how to salvage European chronology. If the recent suggestion that Chinese civilisation predated the Biblical Flood were true, this would substantially modify the Eurocentric self-image. The mirror figured as a significant piece of the puzzle of the history and geography of a world that was stretching, and exceeding, the limits of the Western imagination.

## **Mori Ōgai as an educator: creativity and syncretism in the cultural transmission to his children**

Matilde Mastrangelo (Sapienza University of Rome)

The famous writer Mori Ōgai (1862-1922) was also a doctor, teacher, father, and one of the most prominent intellectuals in the modernization of Japan. Consequently, he was responsible for knowledge transmission in several fields. I would like to analyze the kind of cultural transmission he engaged in with his children, teaching them openness towards others, interest in cultural differences, and the love for learning and the transmission of knowledge. The investigation starts from Ōgai's observations on this theme, which can be taken from his literary works, in particular from the German Trilogy (*Doitsu sanbusaku*). Then the analysis focuses on Ōgai's children's comments about their father: what he represented for them, and what remains of his cultural transmission. Also influenced by modern educational theories in vogue in Germany at that time, Ōgai always found suitable ways to stimulate his children's curiosity and love of culture, and not just knowledge. Starting from their names, that sounds like German ones, Ōgai's sons experienced Europe first through their father, and then directly, through their constant cultural curiosity as a means of knowing others and themselves.

**“Judo is moral education”: Kanō Jigorō's concept of *seiryoku zenyō jita kyōei* as applied ethics**

Andreas Niehaus (Ghent University)

Kanō Jigorō (1860-1838) is well known as founder of judo as well as first Japanese member of the IOC. But as teacher, founder of several *juku* and head of the Tokyo Higher Normal School he was also a dedicated educator. Based on his studies of Confucian classics as well as the works of Bentham, Mill, Dewey and de Coubertin he developed the moral guidelines of “most effective use of energy” (精力善用 *seiryoku zenyō*) and “mutual welfare and benefit” (自他共榮 *jita kyōei*), which had to permeate every aspect of daily life. Kanō saw these moral guidelines as a means to educate the Japanese youth. Yet, the aim was not to educate and better the individual for the individual’s sake, but to better Japanese society and ultimately mankind. But what actually is a “better” society? Is “better” defined as relational or in terms of a Kantian categorical imperative? How then is a “better” society to be realized in everyday conduct?

In my presentation I will answer these questions, by analysing Kanō Jigorō's ethical project of the development of society and mankind within the context of the modernization process as well as nationalism and internationalism of the late Meiji- and early Shōwa-period. The approach will focus on 1) the formulation and practice of these two principles within the context of (also reverse) knowledge transfer, 2) on the relation of “Self” and “Other” within society and 3) on the implementation of ethical values based on self-discipline and moderation in everyday life practice.

## **40 Years of concrete, bricks and stone: The work of Japanese architects in Italy**

Silvana De Maio (The Orientale University of Naples)

Japanese architects are active in Italy since the Seventies but literature on the subject has focused almost exclusively on descriptive accounts of single projects without tracing the evolution of Japanese works in the country. This study outlines the activity of some of them and examines projects in Italian cities of famous architects who dealt with building materials not representative of Japanese classical architecture.

The presentation will indeed focus on the places where the buildings have been built in different cities and on the renovation, exemplary renewals projects of some old buildings and districts so to advance not only our acceptance and understanding of Japanese architecture abroad but also of Japanese culture in Italy with a move which started from periphery of the cities to reach their centers.