

Editor's Note

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Dear Readers,

Welcome to the first issue of the *GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON JAPAN* (GPJ). I am so glad to be able to come this far. The idea of publishing a journal on Japanese Studies was born about a decade ago, but a wide range of reasons had kept us away from realising it. And finally, here we are. I am honoured to be able to launch the inaugural special issue, at exactly the place it belongs, the 15th EAJS meeting in Lisbon.

Global Perspectives on Japan is a peer-reviewed, multi-disciplinary academic journal on Japan related topics. It will be published on a yearly basis, its language of publication will be English, and both hard-copy and digital versions will be distributed worldwide. It will cover all fields of Japanese Studies from history to sociology, from linguistics to philosophy and from arts to anthropology, with topics focusing on both past and the present. Our aim is to enhance our understanding of the dynamics of the complex Japanese society by providing space for alternative views, and unique opinions. We regard phrases “cross-cultural ties”, “interaction”, “inter-disciplinary approaches” as keywords that may help explain our endeavor. Therefore, the choice of using the words “global” and “perspective” in our title reflects

a deliberate, conscious attempt to emphasize, underline, and highlight the importance of diverse views, fluid stances, as well as alternate perspectives.

That's why, the 26th JAWS meeting held in Istanbul, in 2015 offered us the perfect opportunity to realize our decade-old dream to publish a journal, since it embodied many a diverse views that we were looking for.

26th JAWS Meeting in Istanbul

The annual meeting of JAWS was held between 1-4 Sep., 2015. The venue was Boğaziçi University, the campus of which for some, is arguably the most beautiful campus in the world. Located between two bridges, right on the hills of the European side of Istanbul, the campus dominates the Bosphorus Straits, and a 15th Century fortress. The refreshing atmosphere of the venue was no doubt a factor motivating the participants to engage in vivid discussions and share their diverse points of view. There were 83 scholars from all corners of the world: Turkey, Germany, Japan, USA, England, France, Canada, Australia, Romania, Israel, Switzerland, Poland, Croatia, Korea, Austria, Serbia, and Czech Republic. All had brought their perspectives with them.

The general theme of the meeting was set as "Nature and Technology", a parade of interesting presentations continued for three full days. Topics were ranging from robot technology to healthcare, from food to disasters. As the local organizers, we, with my colleagues at Japanese Studies Association, Boğaziçi University, and Ankara University, were delighted to host an event that exposed us to such a high level of intellectual exchange. Weeks of hardwork was just a small price we had to pay. I truly feel indebted to JAWS team led by Brigitte Steger, and her colleagues with ever-smiling faces, namely Cosima Wagner and Cornelia Reiher, for their warm hearts and kind collaboraton.

That collaboration gave birth to the journal you are holding

in your hands now. When we opened our ideas about a yearly journal which we would dedicate to the 26th JAWS meeting, they encouraged us to do so, and offered all the assistance they had in their power. Thus, we then decided that the first issue of GPJ would consist of selected papers presented at the meeting. It was a difficult task to choose from among a long list of invaluable articles, but we came up with the ones inside this issue. I am sure this inaugural special issue of GPJ will in the near future be a collectible, a highly demanded source for anthropologists working on Japan.

This Issue

In addition to a foreword by Selçuk Esenbel, the president of the Japanese Studies Association, the sponsor of this issue; an aisatsu by Brigitte Steger, the Secretary General of the Japan Anthropology Workshop (JAWS); we have three important essays by the special guests of the meeting, namely Josef Kreiner, Noriya Sumihara, and Masashi Oguchi. Then, four selected articles by Susanne Brucksch, Fabio R. Gygi, William W. Kelly and William H. Kelly follow. The final part is a discussion by Michael Shackleton.

Prof. Kreiner (Em. Bonn University), gives us a detailed account, as well as insight on the evolution of anthropology in Japan. This authoritative text by the doyen of the field, will no doubt be in demand for the years to come. I am thankful to Prof. Kreiner, to let a newly born journal to carry this article to the future. It surely will dramatically increase citations to GPJ.

Prof. Moriya Sumihara (Tenri University, President of the Anthropology of Japan in Japan -AJJ) , offers us a unique view of contemporary Japan through a keyhole, that is the concept of *Monozukuri*. He draws our attention to one of the building blocks of Japanese society: Manufacturing.

Prof. Oguchi (Hosei University, President of the Research

Center for International Japanese Studies), in his essay, introduces Japanese Studies in Japan, and comes up with a newly growing field of research: “International Japanese Studies”. While giving a brief explanation of the activities of the Research Center for International Japanese Studies at Hosei University, he evaluates the potential for the development of this new and promising field of research.

Susanne Brucksch (German Institute of Japanese Studies (DIJ) in Tokyo), pinpoints the notion of “techno-governance” and its impact on the innovation activities in biomedical engineering in Japan. She sheds light on the relationship between Abenomics and the health sector.

Fabio R. Gygi (SOAS, University of London), through the usage of Godzilla and Space Battleship Yamato motifs in post-war Japanese popular culture, aims to provide us with an in-depth understanding of how the Japanese society tackles with the traumas of WWII.

William W. Kelly (Yale University) takes up the 2020 Summer Olympic Games together with the Summer Paralympic Games, both of which will be held in Tokyo, and states that the borderlines that have traditionally separated sexes, as well as the “able-bodied” and “disabled” participants of Olympic and Paralympic Games, are gradually converging towards a vanishing point. He wants us to think about a possible merger of Olympics and Paralympics in the future.

William H. Kelly (University of Oxford) on the other hand, sees a parallelism between *Enka* of Japan, and *Arabesk* of Turkey. For him, popular images accompanying Enka constitute a symbolic discourse mediating modernisation through a series of oppositions – rural and urban, past and present, western and Japanese, and serve as an instrument for identity construction. He finds striking similarities between the two musical traditions of Turkey and Japan, especially when urban migrant populations and their response to processes of industrialisation and

modernisation is considered.

Michael Shackleton (Osaka Gakuin University) focuses on the Great Earthquake Disaster that shook Japan in 2011. He draws the reader's attention to the role of religion and ritual in responding to disasters. He takes The Great Forest Wall project as a case-study and shows how at times, popular movements may be driven to confront governmental policies, even if they have do not intend to do so.

Editorial Policy

GPJ welcomes submissions from all areas of Japanese Studies. It especially encourages inter-disciplinary, innovative approaches and alternative perspectives. Although the inaugural issue of GPJ consists of selected articles from the 26th JAWS meeting, it is an exception, and only peer-reviewed articles will be published from now on. You can find the "Author Guidelines" at the end of this issue.

In general, GPJ will focus on content rather than format. That is to say, submitted manuscripts are expected to follow the principles set by the latest versions of Chicago Manual of Style or MLA Style, as long as they are consistent throughout.

This is 06:42 in the morning of 19 Aug. 2017. I can finally go to bed for a good sleep.

Veritas Invictus!