IAJS
האגודה הישראלית ללימודי יפן
イスラエル日本学会
الجمعية الإسرائيلية لدراسة اليابان
Israeli Association for Japanese Studies

The Sixth Biennial International Conference of the Israeli Association for Japanese Studies

15-17 November 2022
Haifa, Israel

Hosted by:
University of Haifa and Tikotin Museum of Japanese Art

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Department of Asian Studies

JAPANFOUNDATION

EMBASSY OF JAPAN IN ISRAEL

The Sixth Biennial International Conference of the Israeli Association for Japanese Studies
15-17 November 2022

PROGRAM DAY 1

Tuesday, 15 November
Venue: University of Haifa

8:45-9:30 **Gathering and registration**
University of Haifa, **Eshkol Tower — 29F, Senate Hall**

9:30-10:00 **Greetings, Opening**
- **Michal Daliot-Bul** University of Haifa, IAJS Chair
- **Irit Averbuch** Tel-Aviv University, IAJS President
- **Yoram Evron** University of Haifa, The Department of Asian Studies, Chair

10:00-12:00 **Panel 1**
CRISIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF JAPANESE LAW

Chair: **Wered Ben-Sade** Bar-Ilan University, Israel

- **Béatrice Jaluzot** Lyon Institute for Political Sciences & Lyon Institute for East Asian Studies, France ONLINE
Crisis as an opportunity for development from a historical perspective: The choice of a positivist legal system following the signature of the Unequal Treaties

- **Makoto Messersmith** University of Hawaii at Manoa, USA ONLINE
Insights on the possibility of inclusiveness of women in law studies in Japan

- **Luke Nottage** University of Sydney, Australia, and **Yoneda Ken'ichi** Kagoshima University, Japan ONLINE
Introducing ICT into Japanese Legal Education: The Postgraduate Law School Movement and Covid-19 as Cornerstones

- **Ying-Hsin Tsai** National Taiwan University, Taiwan ONLINE
The Development of Shareholder Activism following the COVID-19 Pandemic

- **Kozuka Soichiro** Gakushuin University, Japan ONLINE
Introducing Sustainability into the Japanese Corporate Governance

12:00-13:00 **Lunch break**

13:00-15:00 **Panel 2**
THEMES IN JAPANESE HISTORY

Chair: **Yona Siderer** The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

- **Eugenia Rozenfeld** University of Haifa & Tel Aviv University, Israel
Whose Heroes? The Great Korean Martial Artists of Japan

- **Dan Sherer** The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel
Prayer for the Devil: The Religious Life of Oda Nobunaga

- **Miyake Yoshimi** Akita University, Japan
Semantic change and manipulation of heiwa 'peace' in current Japanese

- **Yona Siderer** The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel
Kuroda Chika (1884-1968) — Pioneer Woman Chemist In Twentieth Century Japan

15:00-15:30 **Coffee break**

15:30-17:00 **Panel 3A**
ISRAELI-JAPANESE RELATIONS IN A 70-YEAR PERSPECTIVE: MULTIPLE HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY DIMENSIONS — PART 1

Chair: **Rotem Kowner** University of Haifa, Israel

- **Yano Teruhisa** Independent scholar, Tokyo, Japan
The Establishment of Israeli-Japanese Diplomatic Relations in 1952: The Japanese Perspectives

- **Ran Zwigenberg** Pennsylvania State University, USA ONLINE
Other Holocausts: Memory, Ethnicity, and Omnicide between Jerusalem and Hiroshima

- **Rotem Kowner** University of Haifa, Israel
Contemporary Israel-Japan Relations: A Recent Promise that Has Yet to Materialize

17:15-18:45 **Panel 3B**
ISRAELI-JAPANESE RELATIONS IN A 70-YEAR PERSPECTIVE: MULTIPLE HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY DIMENSIONS — PART 2

Chair: **Rotem Kowner** University of Haifa, Israel

- **Sigal Ben-Rafael Galanti** Beit Berl College, Israel
Between Two Democracies: The Divergent Political Path of Japan and Israel in the Postwar Era

- **Elchanan S. Harel** Harel-Hertz Investment House, Israel
The Economic Dimension of the Israeli-Japanese Relations: Are the Recent Japanese Investments in Israel Can Be Considered a Game-Changer?

- **Etty Glass Gissis** Tikotin Museum of Japanese Art, Israel
The Two Opposing Extremes of the Continent: Artistic Ties between Israel and Japan

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PROGRAM DAY 2

Wednesday, 16 November
Venue: University of Haifa

9:00-9:30 **Gathering**
University of Haifa, **Eshkol Tower — 30F, Observatory**

9:30-10:45 **Keynote lecture**
Susan J. Napier Tufts University, MA, USA
Totoro Meets Mickey Mouse: Revisiting Japanese Soft Power in the Age of Ambiguous Loss

Chair & discussant: **Michal Daliot-Bul** University of Haifa, Israel

11:00-12:30 **Panel 4A** **Eshkol Tower — 30F, Observatory**
NATIONAL POLICY MAKING
Chair: **Guy Podoler** University of Haifa, Israel

- **Eyal Ben-Ari** Kinneret College on the Sea of Galilee, Israel
Japan and the War in Ukraine: A Shift in Foreign and Security Policies

- **Alon Levkowitz** Bar-Ilan University, Israel
Adapting our defense policy beyond Article 9.

- **Or Honig** Tokyo International University, Japan
The Response of the Japanese Government to the Covid-19 Epidemic — Was It Much More rational than it seems at first glance?

11:00-12:00 **Panel 4B** **Eshkol Tower — 29F, Senate Hall**
JAPANESE ANIMATION

Chair: **Shira Taube-Dayan** University of Haifa, Israel

- **Raz Greenberg** Tel Aviv University, Israel
Gulliver's Travels in the Land of the Rising Sun

- **Nimrod Chiat** University of Haifa, Israel
The Food of Love: Scoring the Anime Shakespeare

12:30-13:30 **Lunch break**

13:30-14:15 **Awarding of certificates**

Awarding of the **Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation** to the **Israeli Association for Japanese Studies**, acknowledging the ***Promotion of Japan research in Israel***. The ceremony takes place on the occasion of the association's 10th anniversary, and the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and Japan.

Lifetime Achievement Award for Teaching Japanese Language to **Noa Oppenheim**, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

14:30-16:30 **Panel 5**
CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY IN JAPAN

Chair: **Irit Averbuch** Tel-Aviv University, Israel

- **Shira Taube-Dayan** University of Haifa, Israel
Not too Young to tell Unheard Stories of Disasters: Young People from Non-Evacuated Communities in Fukushima Prefecture

- **Shiri Lieber-Milo** Reichman University, Israel
The cultural and psychological aspects of kawaii (cute) culture in Japan

- **Elena Baibikov** Kobe City University of Foreign Studies, Japan
"Good books for children who are responsible for next generation": Japanese children's literary awards as an instrument of cultural politics

- **Aaron Hames** University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
Aging and Loneliness in Contemporary Japan: "I leave my door unlocked at night."

16:30-17:00 **Coffee break**

17:00-18:15 **Keynote lecture**
Sharon Kinsella The University of Manchester, UK
Cute Masculinity: investigating the historical context and meanings of virtual shōjo and girl parody by young men in the 2010s

Chair & discussant: **Ofra Goldstein-Gidoni** Tel-Aviv University, Israel

18:30-19:30 **Film screening**
Josō (2020)
Sharon Kinsella The University of Manchester, UK, and **David Panos** Conditions art studio, UK

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PROGRAM DAY 3

Thursday, 17 November
Venue: Tikotin Museum of Japanese Art

9:00-9:30 **Gathering**
Tikotin Museum of Japanese Art — **Auditorium**

9:30-10:45 **Keynote lecture**
Sugeno Kazuo Tokyo University, Japan
The Japanese Employment System Today: How has it changed and how will it change?

Discussant: **Rotem Kowner** University of Haifa, Israel
Chair: **Wered Ben-Sade** Bar-Ilan University, Israel

11:00-12:30 **Panel 6** [in Hebrew]
LOST AND FOUND IN TRANSLATION – FOREIGNNESS IN WRITING AND TRANSLATING JAPAN
Chair: **Jacob Raz** Tel-Aviv University, Israel

- **Eitan Bolokan** Tel Aviv University, Israel
The seed of Poetry is in the Heart: Towards a Hebrew Translation of the Kokin Wakashū Kanajo

- **Irit Weinberg** Tel Aviv University, Israel
Looking for Home in Japanese Multi-Cultural Space: Art and Letters of Recent Immigrants to Japan

- **Erez Joskovich** Ben Gurion University of the Negev and Tel Aviv University, Israel
Going Beyond Translation — Writing Japan in Hebrew

12:45-13:15 **Exhibition Guided Tour**
'Time Tunnel: Japan and the Jews'
Etty Glass Gissis Curator, Tikotin Museum of Japanese Art, Israel

13:15-14:30 **Extended lunch break**

Visit *'Sixteen Tree Stumps: Cryptomeria japonica as Architecture'*, exhibition by students and graduates of Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, **Patio, Tikotin Museum of Japanese Art**

14:30-16:30 **Panel 7**
FORM AND VISION: RETHINKING AESTHETIC FRAMEWORKS IN JAPANESE VISUAL CULTURE
Chair: **David Adika** Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem, Israel

- **Oshrat Dotan** Tel Aviv University, Israel
Challenging the Function of Vision in 1960s Japanese art

- **Ory Bartal** Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem, Israel
Mujirushi Ryohin and Critical Consumerism in 1980's Japan

- **Erez Golani Solomon** Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem, Israel and Waseda University, Japan
Eulogy to Nakagin Capsule Tower

- **Shalmit Bejarano** Tel Aviv University, Israel
Between nostalgia and dystopia: "Nature" semantics in Japanese art

16:30-17:00 **Coffee break**

17:00-18:15 **Keynote lecture**
Barak Kushner The University of Cambridge, UK
A silent country (黙國) perched on the precipice of peace apathy (平和ボケ): Where is Japan heading and what does this mean for Japanese studies?

Chair & discussant: **Dan Sherer** The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

18:15-18:30 **Epilogue, Closing**
Erez Golani Solomon Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem. IAJS Head of Academic Committee

Organized by:
Israeli Association for Japanese Studies

Conference steering committee:
Michal Daliot-Bul, Erez Golani Solomon, Erez Joskovich, Yona Siderer

Generously supported by:
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Faculty of Humanities, University of Haifa
The Department of Asian Studies, University of Haifa

Venues:

University of Haifa, Eshkol Tower
199 Aba Khoushy Ave., Mount Carmel, Haifa

Tikotin Museum of Japanese Art
HaNassi Blvd 89, Haifa

ABSTRACTS

Panel 1 DAY ONE

CRISIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF JAPANESE LAW

Chair: **Wered Ben-Sade**

Crises create new opportunities for development, particularly when traditional perceptions and customs (or habits) are questioned and reexamined. Similarly as "Necessity is the mother of invention" (Plato), crises push us out of our comfort zone while simultaneously lowering the risks of change, thus motivating us to operate differently in order to solve them or improve our response. This is true both at the micro, personal level, and at the macro level of society. Understanding this mechanism at the macro level can facilitate us when we encounter a personal crisis and inspire us to search for the opportunity that is encapsulated within.
Five presentations will examine how crises serve as an opportunity for the development of Japanese law, both in the past (from the second half of the 19th century) and now. Some of the most debated challenges that Japan and the world are currently facing, such as inclusiveness of women, legal education, Covid19 impact and sustainability (in the context of corporate governance), will be discussed.

Béatrice Jaluzot Lyon Institute for Political Sciences & Lyon Institute for East Asian Studies

Crisis as an opportunity for development from a historical perspective: The choice of a positivist legal system following the signature of the Unequal Treaties

In the second half of the 19th century, Japan experienced the collapse of a thousand-year-old culture based on the Chinese model and the emergence of a society inspired by Western models. The disappearance of the old regime, caused by the imperialist movements of the time, gave way to a country that was profoundly renewed in all its fundamental structures. Among them, the country's legal system was one of the essential novelties and one of the main achievements of the new leaders. They were thus able to set up institutions that are still largely those of today. The aim is to present how this legal system is the result of this brutal overthrow of the regime, but also to understand how the accelerated transition from which it emerged took place. This rupture gave rise to the powerful and efficient structures we know today.

Makoto Messersmith University of Hawaii at Manoa, USA

Insights on the possibility of inclusiveness of women in law studies of Japan

When we look at the status quo and history of female law professors in the U.S. and Japan, it shows that unlike the U.S., Japan has not experienced great improvement regarding inclusiveness of women into law studies, yet. Although it seems that Japan has made some efforts to encourage more women to enter the field of law, women in law studies are still facing unique challenges. For instance, in many universities, female law professors are still less than 20%. In my talk, I will explore their challenges and discuss how we can encourage more women to be included in law studies.

Luke R. Nottage University of Sydney, Australia, and
Yoneda Ken'ichi Kagoshima University, Japan

Introducing ICT into Japanese Legal Education: The Postgraduate Law School Movement and Covid-19 as Cornerstones

This report explains the evolution of online legal education in Japan, particularly in its universities. Three phases can be discerned: before and after the introduction from 2004 of a new postgraduate Law School system to improve and expand core legal professionals, as part of a wider justice system reform program, and a more dramatic expansion prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic since 2020. The Law School reforms had trickled down somewhat to undergraduate legal education, building on and linking to wider nationwide and university-sector initiatives in Information and Communications Technology. This fortunately positioned Japanese legal education quite well for pandemic-related challenges, although the transitions have not been easy.

Ying Hsin Tsai College of Law, National Taiwan University

The Development of Shareholder Activism following the COVID-19 Pandemic

The development of shareholder activism in Japan, thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, creates new opportunities. The Japanese company law designs assorted ways by which shareholders can participate in shareholders' meeting, even if they cannot attend in person (e.g. proxy, written voting and electronic voting). Due to the pandemic, the shareholders' meeting could not be held in-person, and instead these other ways were gradually put to use. In this presentation I will discuss the practical merits and legal drawbacks surrounding these ways. The overall picture that emerges is that while providing a variety of ways for shareholders to participate in the shareholders' meeting itself can certainly enhance the practice of shareholder activism, how to design these ways in a manner which overcomes the legal issues remains a challenge.

Kozuka Soichiro Faculty of Law, Gakushuin University

Introducing Sustainability into the Japanese Corporate Governance

Japan's corporate governance practice is making rapid developments towards engaging with sustainability. Japan has already the largest number of companies in the world, which have announced support for the TCFD (Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures) framework. The development towards sustainability will probably continue, induced by the external global crisis of the need for sustainability, and by the internal pressure of the institutional investors. In this presentation I will evaluate the current and expected developments. The Japanese nuances in both regulation and practice of corporate governance will also be discussed.

Panel 2 DAY ONE

THEMES IN JAPANESE HISTORY

Chair: **Yona Siderer**

Eugenia Rozenfeld University of Haifa & Tel Aviv University, Israel

Whose Heroes? The Great Korean Martial Artists of Japan

The world of Japanese martial arts is hard to imagine without such iconic figures as creator of the strongest karate Masutatsu Ōyama (1923 (1921)-1994), who was called "God Hand" for his victories over bulls with his bare hands, and the father of *puroresu* (Japanese professional wrestling) Mitsuhiro Momota better known as Rikidōzan (1924 (1920)-1963). The memory of both men could have become (and at some point, became) an undisputed metaphor for Japan's astonishing rise after its humiliating defeat in World War II and the subsequent American occupation if not for one circumstance: they were Korean. While they normally kept their Korean connections away from public exposure and did little to nothing for Korea, Koreans elevate them to the status of their ethnic heroes, even though those who left Korea for Japan back in colonial times (1910-1945) could be easily labeled as pro-Japanese collaborators rather than heroes.

The purpose of this presentation is therefore to look deeper into this complexity of the collective memory of prominent Zainichi Koreans by examining the images of Masutatsu Ōyama and Rikidōzan as represented in their 2004 biopics: *Fighter in the Wind and Rikidōzan: A Hero Extraordinary*. These two biopics represent an attempt to portray ethnic Korean heroes who in fact contributed much more to the construction of post-war Japanese identity. Perhaps, the lack of anti-Japanese spirit at least partially allowed for a more nuanced depiction of the colonial era and its heroes as, unlike many other movies set in this period, these two biopics transcend the nationalist paradigm of Korean freedom-fighters resisting Japanese oppression and show a more human face of Japan and the Japanese. In this sense, such representations have a potential to somehow reconcile traumatic memories of the colonial past and create a less antagonistic collective memory of the period and its legacy.

Dan Sherer The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

Prayer for the Devil: The Religious Life of Oda Nobunaga

Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) is remembered as one of the three unifiers who took Japan from its long era of civil wars and into its peaceful early-modern order. He is remembered as a brutal killer, as a political and economic revolutionary, and as an enemy of Japan's religious institutions. Indeed, he is so remembered as an enemy of Japanese religious institutions that many observers have attested to him either a rational atheism or a near boundless megalomania, culminating in his self-deification shortly before his death.

The purpose of this talk is threefold: First to establish that counter to the image often presented of Nobunaga, he had a religious life. Nobunaga could be not only the enemy of religious institutions but also a friend and a patron. We look both at how Nobunaga included temples and shrines into his political order and at how he personally interacted with them.

I will also discuss the source that has more than any other shaped our view of Nobunaga's religious life: the writings of the Jesuit Luis Frois (1532-1597). However, even his colleagues noted that Frois's reports could be problematic, and there are several claims he makes which cannot be trusted. We will show which of the claims of Frois are suspect and reexamine how best to use his writings in the context of 16th century Japanese religion.

Finally, we will look at Nobunaga's place in the history of Japanese religion. While the destruction of Honganji's military power and the massacre on Mt. Hiei are certainly important, I argue that they are not turning points but progressions of trends which had been moving forward earlier in the sixteenth century and which would not fully culminate until after Nobunaga's death.

Miyake Yoshimi Akita University, Japan

Semantic change and manipulation of heiwa 'peace' in current Japanese

Since the end of the Second World war, the new constitution designates no military, no weapon in the Chapter 9. With the constitution, Japan has redefined itself as a heiwa na kuni, a peaceful nation. This constitution is called Heiwa Kenpo 'Peaceful Constitution', which Japanese should protect and nurture. Parks which commemorate the tragedy of the US atomic bombs and raids during the Second World War are called Heiwa Koens 'Peace Park's, where everybody should pray for peace, without claiming what caused the war and who are responsible for the war. In this way, the term heiwa, which was a translation of an English peace, became a universal, abstract, and ambivalent term for 'peace', which can be maintained by hoping and praying.

This paper argues that the current Russo-Ukraine war has transformed the Japanese general use of the term heiwa 'peace' from an abstract ideal imagery to cease war process which can be obtained through war, by analyzing the term heiwa (and its cognate wahei). This paper also argues that the ambiguity of the term heiwa has farther extended to yield two contrastive terms, that is, sekkyokuteki heiwa 'active peace' and shokyokuteki heiwa 'negative peace'. The term heiwa is now described as a shokyokuteki heiwa, while sekkyokuteki heiwa 'active peace' can be reached by having militaries and weapons. I also argue that right wing politicians and their supporters claim that they are praying for heiwa by glorifying Imperial Japan and its military (cf. Takaichi Sanae), giving revisionist description that the past war criminals had fought for heiwa of the world (cf. August 15 statement, PM Kishida), which current Japanese should follow. By conducting discourse analysis, I will describe how this transformation developed and how those two terms are being manipulated in the Japanese government's current policy making and actions.

Yona Siderer The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

Kuroda Chika (1884-1968) — Pioneer Woman Chemist In Twentieth Century Japan

This articles aims to tell the history of the first chemistry graduate woman, Kuroda Chika, in early twentieth century Japan, in order to make her name known to scholars and others in Japan and abroad. Born in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the history of the education system in Japan is outlined, followed by Kuroda Chika's life history. It includes her chemistry studies in Japan starting at Tohoku University in Sendai in 1913, and chemical research in Oxford, England during 1921-1923. Kuroda Chika's career as a researcher in The Physical and Chemical Research Institute (RIKEN) and a professor at Ochanomizu University in Tokyo is told. Kuroda's organic chemistry studies, specifically the identification of the constitution of plants' dyes is described. The status of female education and female employment in the first half of the twentieth century in Japan are considered. The recognition of Kuroda Chika during her later life, receiving prestigious prizes and decorations are highlighted.

Panel 3A and 3B DAY ONE

ISRAELI-JAPANESE RELATIONS IN A 70-YEAR PERSPECTIVE: MULTIPLE HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY DIMENSIONS, Part 1 and Part 2

Chair: **Rotem Kowner** University of Haifa, Israel

The 70 th anniversary of the establishment of Israeli-Japanese diplomatic relations this year offers us a marvelous opportunity to examine the bilateral ties from different angles and dimensions. Conceived in what seems to be the zenith of the relations ever, the proposed two panels seek to explore their past, present, and future and display their breadth and depth.

PART 1

Yano Teruhisa Independent scholar, Tokyo, Japan

The Establishment of Israeli-Japanese Diplomatic Relations in 1952: The Japanese Perspectives

Based on recently disclosed documents in the archives of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this presentation seeks to discuss and analyze the Japanese perspective. If national interests were considered in 1952, the diplomatic relations with the oil-producing countries in the Middle East should have been resumed first of all as Japan's priority. Nevertheless, there were complex reasons why Japan did establish diplomatic relations with Israel. The reasons that motivated the Japanese side were mainly the feeling of the Japanese people that transcended their interests. It did not arise from a concern for the power of Jewish people in the United States.

Ran Zwigenberg Pennsylvania State University, USA

Other Holocausts: Memory, Ethnicity, and Omnicide between Jerusalem and Hiroshima

In 1982 an international Holocaust conference was held in Israel. The organizers, touting Holocaust's universal message, sought to link studies of the Holocaust with the memory of Hiroshima, as well as that of the Cambodian, Armenian, and other events. The conference was to be followed by a second conference in Hiroshima, organized by Japanese and Jewish activists and scholars. The Jerusalem conference, however, ran into a multitude of intellectual and political difficulties, as it was attacked by the government of Israel, Turkey, the Palestinians and others. The Hiroshima event and the group that organized it, likewise, fell victim to political controversy as it was criticized by Chinese-American, Palestinians, and other activists. All sides in the debate tried to gain moral high ground by referring to the Holocaust and its legacy. Such debates, I argue, expose an early moment in the emergence of the Holocaust as global memory, before it attained hegemony, and when it existed as one of a multitude of competing memories and narratives. The contentious nature of both events was a harbinger of an age of politicization of memory where, in both East Asia, and the Cold War West, war memory was deployed in the service of competing political interests.

Rotem Kowner University of Haifa, Israel

Contemporary Israel-Japan Relations: A Recent Promise that Has Yet to Materialize

Despite the initial enthusiasm, the expansion of Israeli-Japanese relations in the wake of the Gulf War (1990–1) was confined to the economic sphere and came to a halt after several years. It was only during the 2010s that the bilateral relations moved forward again, especially during Abe's tenure, with frequent mutual visits of officials of the highest rank and the conclusion of several bilateral agreements. Moreover, during the last few years, Israel has become a target of numerous Japanese investments of an unprecedented scale. This presentation examines the extent of this recent takeoff and whether it indicates a true watershed in the lukewarm Israeli-Japanese relations.

PART 2

Sigal Ben-Rafael Galanti Beit Berl College, Israel

Between Two Democracies: The Divergent Political Path of Japan and Israel in the Postwar Era

Israel and Japan are both non-Western democracies with a considerable cultural backgrounds outside the Western sphere. Nonetheless, while Japan has developed as a liberal democracy, eager to maintain the rules of its game, Israel has displayed growing uncertainty concerning its political foundations. In this presentation, I argue that the adoption of strict democratic procedures is the main catalyst for successful democratization. In the current age of new nationalist populism, when illiberal tendencies are strengthened, the adoption of strict democratic procedures is essential. It can make the difference between stable democratic and autocratic regimes and thus defend the continuous process of democratization, as seen in Japan but not necessarily in Israel.

Elchanan S. Harel Harel-Hertz Investment House, Israel

The Economic Dimension of the Israeli-Japanese Relations: Can the Recent Japanese Investments in Israel Be Considered a Game-Changer?

Economy and trade have been an inherent aspect of Israeli-Japanese relations since their establishment. Since the late 1980s, bilateral economic ties have evolved and expanded substantially in two major waves. Starting during the tenure of the late Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, the most remarkable feature of the second wave has been a dramatic growth in Japanese investments in Israel. This presentation focuses on these investments, analyze their sources and characteristics, and discusses their future prospects.

Etty Glass Gissis Tikotin Museum of Japanese Art, Israel

The Two Opposing Extremes of the Continent: Artistic Ties between Israel and Japan

This presentation focuses on the artistic ties between Israel and Japan as seen in the works of two artists: Noda Tetsuya and Dani Karavan. Their works display profound affinity to their own culture, which constitutes a major facet of their identity, and, at the same time, also to the other culture: Dani Karavan to Japan and Noda Tetsuya to Israel and Judaism. This presentation discusses the common features that link these two artists and those that are specific to each of them while presenting and analyzing some of their works.

Keynote lecture DAY TWO

Susan J. Napier Tufts University, MA, USA

Totoro Meets Mickey Mouse: Revisiting Japanese Soft Power in the Age of Ambiguous Loss

This lecture explores the contribution that the Japanese animation studio, Studio Ghibli, has made over the last four decades to contemporary global culture. This contribution is not simply the studio's artistry in creating immersive, often fantastic, worlds but also the overall vision that the Studio offers. This is a vision that is cultural, ethical, and spiritual and it stands in contrast to the "American Dream" promoted by Hollywood cinema and by Walt Disney Studios in particular. The lecture examines how Ghibli's animistic creation, the woodland spirit Totoro, offers an alternative approach to interacting with the world in significant contrast to Disney's fundamentally androcentric icon, Mickey Mouse. It also suggests that in recent decades Disney's own world view has evolved, reflecting influences from Ghibli Studios and Japanese anime in general. Ultimately, I argue that the complex and nuanced world of Ghibli films is more appropriate to the culture of "ambiguous loss" that we are increasingly experiencing in the twenty-first century world.

Panel 4A DAY TWO

NATIONAL POLICY MAKING

Chair: **Guy Podoler** University of Haifa, Israel

Eyal Ben-Ari Kinneret College on the Sea of Galilee, Israel

Japan and the War in Ukraine: A Shift in Foreign and Security Policies

Japan's foreign and security policies have seen a significant, at times surprising, shift since Russia invaded Ukraine. In the wake of the war, Japan's leaders have not only come out with strong condemnations of Russia's actions but have joined the advanced democracies in placing sanctions against many of the country's companies and prominent individuals, as well as sending security-related but non-lethal aid to Ukraine. This report will address the reasons for the stiffening of Japan's foreign policy stance and further promotion of a more active security orientation. It will cover the long-lasting dispute with Russia over four islands that the Soviet Union occupied after World War Two, the signals Japan is intent on sending to China and its aggressive actions in the region, and a continuation of cautious cultivation of ties with the US. The war in Ukraine should be seen as accelerating many previous moves..

Alon Levkowitz Bar-Ilan University, Israel

Adapting our defense policy beyond Article 9.

Japan's defense policy has changed over the last three decades. For many years it was constrained by Article 9, local "pacifist" sentiments, and regional objections to any drastic changes in Japan's defense policy. The rise of the North Korean missile and nuclear threat since the 1990s, the rise of the Chinese military and economic threat, and doubts about the credibility of the military alliance with the United States, despite official declarations by leaders of both sides that the alliance is as solid as a rock, forced Tokyo to reevaluate its defense policy. In the beginning, the changes were incremental and partly "under the radar", in order to prevent severe criticism from the local public, South and North Korea, and China, that Japan is aspiring to become again the imperialist Japan of the Second World War.
Prime Minister Shinzo Abe promised that he will change Article 9 during his term in office, in order to "Normalize" Japan's defense policy (as some of the IR realists wrote about Japan). He intended to change Japan's defense policy without being constrained by article 9. Although he failed to do so, he was able to change Japan's defense policy. The changes included expanding missile defense systems and long-range attack capabilities, which will allow Japan to respond against imminent military threats (North Korea) and to project military power beyond the vicinity of Japan. Prime Minister Abe was able to change the public discourse as well on security issues. The change in the defense policy continued even after Prime Minister Abe resignation. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida continues to further change Japan's defense policy. This paper will analyze the changes in Japan's defense policy during the last three decades. The paper will mainly focus on the changes during the Abe and the current administrations.

Or Honig Tokyo International University, Japan

The Response of the Japanese Government to the Covid-19 Epidemic — Was It Much More rational than it seems at first glance?

Those who were observing Japan closely during the Covid-19 period were surprised by many things – the inefficient rollout of the vaccine, the decision to keep the economy open and running (with the exception of pubs which were closing down at 8pm), the decision to hold the Olympics during the pandemic (instead of delaying it further) even though the number of Japanese people infected with COVID prior to the summer of 2020 was increasing there were not enough hospital beds in the COVID departments, the decision to have a low number of tests (which made Japan the country with the lowest number of tests relative to population size in the OECD), and many other interesting phenomena. One of the most puzzling phenomena has been the decision by two different Prime Ministers – Shinzo Abe and his successor Yoshihide Suga – to prioritize economic growth over public health considerations. And then when the numbers of Covid patients was high to resign in order to save the LDP party. Some have argued that this response was due to cultural factors: the conservative cautious nature of decision- making by the old politicians, the fear of suicides like in the late 1980s if unemployment grew etc. This study argues however that much of the response was logical given the unique conditions of Japan: a more obedient population, an insulated country and one whose cities are so densely populated that allowing them to go to the office will not matter much since they will meet each other very much in their residential areas too.

Panel 4B DAY TWO

JAPANESE ANIMATION

Chair: **Shira Taube-Dayan** University of Haifa, Israel

Raz Greenberg Tel Aviv University, Israel

Gulliver's Travels in the Land of the Rising Sun

In 1939, the American animation studio owned by brothers Max (1883-1972) and David (1894-1979) Fleischer released its first feature-length animated film, an adaptation of the famous literary satire "Gulliver's Travels". The film was a modest success in the American box-office, but was largely dismissed by critics as a pale imitation of Walt Disney Studio's "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs", released two years earlier, and to this day it is considered a minor footnote in the history of American animation. While the Fleischer brothers' short films were extremely popular in Japan from the early to the mid-1930s, and in fact had a strong influence on local military propaganda animated films during the war, these films – along with "Gulliver's Travels" – were banned in Japan during the late 1930s and throughout the pacific war. In the post-war period, however, long after the Fleischer brothers were removed from their own studio (and the studio itself lost most if not all of its prominence in the American animation industry), "Gulliver's Travels" had the unexpected honor of becoming the first-ever American feature-length animated film released in Japanese theatres. Its impact was immediate, as evident by "Gulliver funtôki" – a short, public-service announcement film directed by Tokio Kuroda and Shigeyuki Ozawa, "Garibaa no uchû ryokô" – a family animated film directed by Yoshio Kuroda in 1965 and "Tenkû no shiro Rapyuta" – the 1986 masterpiece adventure film directed by Hayao Miyazaki. Each of these films drew heavy stylistic and narrative influence from the Fleischer brothers' films, and in each case, this influence reflects the sensibilities of another period in Japan's post-war history. The presentation examines these cases, and connects them to their historical context and their place in the development of Japan's post-war animation.

Nimrod Chiat University of Haifa, Israel

The Food of Love: Scoring the Anime Shakespeare

The soundtracks of anime adaptations of Shakespeare are an additional aspect of what is a very high-order adaptation of their source material (which is, by and large, an *œuvre* of adaptations in and of itself – but that is a paper in and of itself, and not in the field of Japanese studies). Passing through so many layers of adaptation means ending up with what is by necessity a 'meme pastiche,' and it is this 'meme pastiche' that the soundtrack composer is required to work with when she or he is commissioned to score a particular adaptation. In this respect, my presentation will compare three such 'meme pastiches' and examine the manner in which each composer (or composers in one case) approached her or his scoring project once commissioned by the studio and production committee. Specifically, our three (very different, musically speaking) examples shall be the soundtrack to *Zetsuen no Tenpesuto*, which primarily incorporates elements from *Hamlet and The Tempest*, and which was composed by Ōshima Michiru (b. 1961); the soundtrack to *Romio to Jurietto*, which primarily incorporates elements from its namesake, and which was composed by Sakimoto Hitoshi (b. 1969); and the soundtrack to *Nisekoi*, which primarily incorporates elements from *Romeo and Juliet*, and which was composed by Ishihama Kakeru (b. 1987), Chiba Naoki (b. 1988), and Kikuya Tomoki (b. 1968).

Panel 5 DAY TWO

CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY IN JAPAN

Chair: **Irit Averbuch** Tel-Aviv University, Israel

Shira Taube-Dayan University of Haifa, Israel

Not too Young to tell Unheard Stories of Disasters: Young People from Non-Evacuated Communities in Fukushima Prefecture

Young people worldwide are becoming more aware of environmental hazards such as climate change and technological threats and ask how our world should handle these challenges for the sake of their future. However, until recently, disaster research has rarely focused directly on children and young people as important sources of knowledge, bringing out their points of view to learn from their experiences of disasters. The term *epistemic justice* refers to people's rights to be respected in their capacities as knowers. The present paper argues for the right of epistemic justice for young people with childhood disaster experiences, so that they should be regarded as knowers regarding the implications of the disaster on their lives and on the lives of their communities.

More specifically, this paper brings out a study of the life stories of young women and man who grew up in Fukushima Prefecture in the years following the Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident. The paper points out how childhood impressions of the disaster can reveal new aspects of mental, social, and political coping with the nuclear accident among non-evacuated communities. The findings of this study reveal that the young people of Fukushima could tell the stories of coping with the crisis and its aftermath, and moreover, had the power to make a change within their communities. The conclusions of the paper address the implications of disasters in Japan through a contextual lens and refer to various aspects of environmental justice relating to children and young people after disasters.

Shiri Lieber-Milo Reichman University, Israel

The cultural and psychological aspects of kawaii (cute) culture in Japan

The cute world of *kawaii* subculture has been part of Japanese culture for more than forty years, having become one of the most influential phenomena, and having established a strong presence that significantly impacts almost every segment of Japanese society.

Recognizing that *kawaii* images stimulate positively affirming and caring awareness and feelings, many Japanese corporations have invested in the creation of commercially successful cute merchandise based on the *kawaii* aesthetic characteristics of smallness, bright colors, and softness.

Recently, thanks to globalization, this world of cuteness has extended beyond Japan to other Asian and Western countries. This proliferation of *kawaii* brands and products that Yano (2013) coined "pink globalization" is manifest in the export of cute icons, images and merchandise from Japan to other parts of the industrial world.

For more than two decades, there has been a widespread growth of interest from Asian and Western countries, where increasing numbers of youngsters are embracing the Japanese culture, hence establishing the cornerstones of the impressive growth in consumption of Japanese- and *kawaii*-related merchandise. As the world of *kawaii* cuteness becomes more internationally accessible and affordable for non-Japanese young and mature consumers, the *kawaii*-cute merchandise aesthetic continues to spread globally from Japan to other countries, with numerous international corporations such as Victoria's Secret, MINI, Motorola, Volkswagen, and others that embrace and use *kawaii*-cute as a fundamental element of their design aesthetic.

From Hello kitty and Pokémon to Tamagotchi and fun-*kawaii* products for the office, in this presentation, an introduction will take place upon contemporary *kawaii* aesthetic, its vast usage in Japan and global industries and its psychological characteristics. With a display of both the visual and behavioral aspects of the trend, an acknowledgement will be made on the *kawaii*'s vast impact in Japan and its positive behavior attributes.

Elena Baibikov Kobe City University of Foreign Studies, Japan

"Good books for children who are responsible for next generation": Japanese children's literary awards as an instrument of cultural politics

The practice of literary prizing emerged, accompanying the shift to the new capitalist mode of literary production in late-Meiji Japan. Nowadays, contributing effectively to the reinforcement of the economy of literary value literary prizes have significant impact on the dissemination, reception, and preservation of literary texts (Mack 2010). The economically reinforced and disseminated values, however, are not limited to the literary ones. In the case of children's literary awards, the discourses of literary value frequently mask the transmission of societal ones (Hateley 2019). These awards, thus, can be said to serve as a powerful tool of cultural politics, being instrumental in highlighting and promoting culture's norms and expectations, that winning titles are aligned with. This presentation opens with a brief overview of major existing children's literary awards in Japan, and continues with a juxtaposition of the winning titles of selected prizes in different years to invite a discussion on children's literary awards as an instrument of exercising cultural power and on agendas informing those exercises.

Aaron Hames University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Aging and Loneliness in Contemporary Japan: "I leave my door unlocked at night."

This paper explores how elderly in Japan experience loneliness and seek its remedy. Cultural ideals couch the latter years of life in relation to the family and the role of the grandparent. In this frame, the presence of kin suggests social integration, while its absence may signal isolation and lead to loneliness. "Lonely death" (*kodokushi*) looms as a potential conclusion. However, demographic shifts have undermined the family's place in elderly life: households are increasingly nuclear and kin networks have shrunk. A growing proportion of the elderly reside in solitude or with an aged spouse. The emergence of precarious working conditions adds further strain on diminished families that must balance elderly support with the need for income. Drawing on two years of research in the Tokyo Metropolitan Area, this paper considers

the relationship between aging and loneliness under these social conditions. In a series of ethnographic portraits, I examine the plights and social relationships of a variety of elderly individuals with different household arrangements, caregiving burdens, socioeconomic statuses, and degrees of physical mobility. Whereas demographic shifts and economic downturns broadly structure elderly life, I argue that loneliness occurs in diverse contexts and the condition is not reducible to a weakened household. For some elderly—often women—solitary residence is preferred and allows for vibrant social life. In addition, a major factor shaping loneliness is the extraordinary longevity of Japan's populace. Amidst slow declines, some elderly effectively outlive the social role of grandparent as well as their accustomed neighborhoods. To assuage loneliness, many elderly seek social connection with elderly peers, professional caregivers, and strangers. Even when family is present and engaged, I contend that social fulfillment for the elderly frequently stems from cultivating non-kin relationships.

Keynote lecture DAY TWO

Sharon Kinsella The University of Manchester, UK

Cute Masculinity: investigating the historical context and meanings of virtual shōjo and girl parody by young men in the 2010s

Around 2010, cute male characters, drawn visually identical to *bishōjo* (beautiful girl) characters, moved beyond erotic computer games (eroge-) and into cosplay and cute cross-dress fashion subculture, on campuses and online. By the middle of the 2010s, M2F cute and girlish boys were also a tangible theme in advertising and major media production. The well-trained bodies and willing faces of young girls lining screens and interfaces in the city, became infiltrated by male talents and pop idols in cute cross-dress. This period of time corresponds with the long recessionary drift and dissociation of the universalized twentieth-century heterosexual family and production focus.
This lecture provides visual and historical information describing the germination of *otoko no ko* and rise to prominence of other forms of M2F cross-dress in the 2000s and explores how far elements of this show a continuity with and a response to, the figure of the sexualized *gyaru* and later schoolgirl demanding autonomy, which dominated news, culture, and gender politics, in the 1980s and 1990s. Images and reported activities of biologically-female schoolgirls and *gyaru* became progressively more censored and actively policed through anti-porn law and youth protection law from the end nineties, while the 2000s saw a gradual increase in cross-dress cute male characters and avatars emerging in adult male subculture.

Film screening DAY TWO

Sharon Kinsella The University of Manchester, UK, and
David Panos Conditions art studio, UK

Josō (2020)

Joso is a film collaboration combining ethnographic documentation and art film to explore the nature of male reaction and sentiment on the cusp of change in Japan. Filmic flow through Tokyo, Saitama and Fukushima captures signs and context of the hyperbolic and yet ambiguously gendered presence within the contemporary urban environment. Urban Japan in the mid-2010s is seen in its own style of motion under the enthusiastic and benign gazes of enormous teenage girl faces screened and posted throughout the city.
As the film unfolds deeper layers begin to emerge. There are signs that the girl is the new model commuter and employee: flexible, disciplined and cute. Under the implicit directions of the gendered city young men are witnessed engaged in complex active reactions: cross-dressing, de-masculinizing, idolizing and parodying.
Close interaction and conversation with young men involved with specific recent male subcultures - otoko no ko and himote - appear, and through their gestures and words the audience is drawn into the language and emotion of young men in the contemporary period. Light usage of archival material and cultural references, such as Yamaguchi Momoe's final song to love preceding her bridal retirement in 1980; Ultraman; and shoreline re-building and stagnant waters in Fukushima; all hint at a the peculiar devastation and exhaustion of the 2010s, which forms the emotional context of self-invention.

Keynote lecture DAY THREE

Sugeno Kazuo The University of Tokyo

The Japanese Employment System Today: How has it changed and how will it change?

In the 1970s and the 1980s the Japanese employment system has become known for the following four elements: (1) Long-term employment, (2) An internal labor market, (3) A seniority-based wage system, and (4) Union management relations under enterprise unionism. In this presentation I will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of this system and the government attempts to improve it during the 1980s. Next, I will analyze if and how has it changed due to the difficulties and reforms in the recent three decades. Finally, I will attempt to estimate how the practice of Japanese employment may change in the coming few decades, in light of (1) the increasing calls for a total reform of the system, (2) the example of the western external-labor-market based employment system, and (3) the demographical, industrial and technological changes that Japan is going through.

Panel 6 DAY THREE

LOST AND FOUND IN TRANSLATION – FOREIGNNESS IN WRITING AND TRANSLATING JAPAN

Chair: **Jacob Raz** Tel-Aviv University, Israel

In the age of machine translation, there is a growing emphasis on accurate mediation from the "source" to the "target text." However, different aspects of the translator's personal and cultural identity are often overlooked. This panel aims to shift the focus from mediation to mediator and explore the liminal place of the translator, who stands on the borderline of two different codes. Specifically, we seek to examine interpretive difficulties and possibilities that arise from encountering cultural otherness in translating from and to Japanese. Among the questions to be discussed are: Should the translation be subordinate to the source? How is cultural foreignness reflected in translation? Is it possible to transcend it, and should this even be the goal?
Thus, the paperes in this panel offer different perspectives on translation and cultural identity. Eitan Bolokan's paper introduces vital challenges and dilemmas in translating the Kokin Wakashū – a ten-century poetry anthology – into Hebrew. Irit Weinberg discusses the works and essays of two immigrant artists who chose Japan and the Japanese language as their home—exploring their struggle to forge their identity against labels imposed on them by society. Erez Joskovich's paper explores the option of going beyond translation by writing Haibun (Haiku dairy) in Hebrew. Arguing this practice can mediate the experience of cultural alienation both to oneself and the target readers. With the help of our respectable discussant Jacob Raz, we hope to engage in a dialogue that will shed new light on different aspects of foreignness in writing and translating Japan.

Eitan Bolokan Tel Aviv University, Israel

The seed of Poetry is in the Heart: Towards a Hebrew Translation of the Kokin Wakashū Kanajo

The Kokin Wakashū (古今和歌集, "Collection of Japanese Poems of Ancient and Modern Times") was published by imperial decree at the beginning of the tenth century. It contains thousands of thematically classified thirty-one-syllable Japanese poems (*tanka*, 短歌). The collection contributed profoundly and long-lastingly to the formation and aesthetics of Japanese poetry up to the modern period.
In this lecture, I shall examine the "Japanese introduction" (*kanajo*, 仮名序) to the collection, which was written by the nobleman, poet, and editor of the collection Ki no Tsuryuki. The *kanajo* is known as one of the most profound bases of the theory of Japanese poetics (*karon*, 歌論), and became a pivotal treatise that poets and writers have memorized, interpreted, and quoted from throughout the generations.
In this talk, I shall present a draft of the Hebrew translation of the *kanajo*, concentrating on its opening paragraphs. I shall discuss key challenges and dilemmas and will offer my interpretation of the importance of the text's opening statements to the theory of Japanese Poetry.

Irit Weinberg Tel Aviv University, Israel

Looking for Home in Japanese Multi-Cultural Space: Art and Letters of Recent Immigrants to Japan

When talking about literature and art created by exophonic or multilingual writers and artists, there is a tendency to use words such as "border-crossing," "fluidity," "movement," and "hybridity." However, the celebration of such writers – when they are not ethnically Japanese – is often predicated on their very foreignness. Once perceived as outside the "normal" (futsū), these artists are burdened with either representation of their ethnic group or with the expectation to subvert (or uphold) the cultural and/or literary canon. Because of their minority status, they are both centered as representatives of their group, and by the same token, they are also marginalized. Being expected to traverse borders reinforces one's position at the boundary rather than at the center. This paper will discuss the works and essays of Korea-born hip-hop artist Moment Joon and Taiwan-born Akutagawa Prize winner Li Kotomi, who chose Japan and the Japanese language as their home and strive to forge their identity on their own terms, struggling against labels imposed on them by society. Though their approaches and mediums differ, both embed themselves within Japan, populated by multi-ethnic, multilingual, and otherwise diverse people. Li and Moment Joon insist on self-identification, rejection of imposed definitions, and self-fashioning within a network that includes various minorities, refashioning the Japanese landscape to place them firmly within its borders. This wide web that goes beyond any particular ethnic group is challenging the perceived "normal" Japanese (person and language) as well as the links between nationality, language and culture. Rather than being "in-between" or uncomfortably "in the middle," they place themselves as unique human beings within a network of overlapping positionalities.

Erez Joskovich Ben Gurion University of the Negev and Tel Aviv University, Israel

Going Beyond Translation — Writing Japan in Hebrew

In this paper, I will share some of my experiences and insights from engaging with Japan and the Japanese language. Mainly, the article will reflect on the possibility of translation and the translato's place. In the first part, I examine my engagement with texts of various genres, from Buddhist texts written in Sino-Japanese (*kanbun*) to modern Japanese literature viz-a-viz multiple translation theories from Jacques Derrida to Roland Barthes. I will argue against the attempt to eliminate the translator, which is futile and eventually impairs the translation quality. In the second part of the paper, I explore the option of going beyond translation by discussing my recently published book *Denshijisho* (2022). Here, I will examine the difficulties and possibility of writing Haibun (Haiku dairy) in Hebrew, demonstrating inter ilia how it can mediate the experience of cultural alienation both to oneself and the target readers.

Panel 7 DAY THREE

FORM AND VISION: RETHINKING AESTHETIC FRAMEWORKS IN JAPANESE VISUAL CULTURE

Chair: **David Adika** Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem, Israel

This panel offers four original interpretations of documented visual phenomena produced in Japan from the postwar period to the post-Fukushima era. All papers focus on visual objects as their main field of investigation, and connect them to a broader social and political discourse.

Dotan's research focuses on challenges made by postwar artists to conventions of seeing and viewing art. It takes as its central axis the work of Takamatsu Jirō, the art group Genshoku, and artists associated with the Mono-ha phenomenon, whose explorations of vision reveal critical stances toward art and society, and the artists' own attempts to relate to the changing postwar realities. Her paper offers a reading of writings by artists and renowned art critics of the time as both responding and inspiring the work.

In the second paper, Bartal's study offers an interpretation of the theoretical and social aspects behind visual phenomena that may seem merely minimalist at first gaze. His paper focuses on the simply-designed products of Mujirushi (no-signature) brand in relation to the 1980's rising discourse on anti-consumerism. Bartal explains the theory of "super normal" coined by designer Fukasawa Naoto through the analysis of products and advertising campaigns, and links it to new global awareness of late capitalism.

In the third paper, Golani Solomon farewells the currently most famous building in Japan - Nakagin Capsule Tower. He revisits Nakagin, revisits the site, the people and the ideas, and examines a wave of renewed interest in the building that rose along with it's recent choreographed, careful destruction. He offers a critique to a building that carried, for half a century, traces of an idealized Modernist ethos, question the durability of that ethos, and the ethos that seems to be offered currently as an alternative.

In the closing paper, Bejarano is also trying to rethink terms and designs that may be wrongly associated with "going back to local essence and materials" but in fact stem from contemporary discourse about social ideals in times of grim reality changes. In her paper, she applies techniques of semantic-fields analysis in order to reread exhibition blurbs and look at artworks' display at the Tokyo area. Consequently, she also suggests that objects that might be superficially described in terms such as "natural" or unrefined (that in the orientalist gaze might have been termed "wabi") are in fact the result of the art discourse's deeper sense of societal and political changes. Her argument joins the conclusion of this panel that postwar visual phenomena in Japan should be interpreted in close relation to aesthetic and social discourses that are taking place in the Japanese media.

Oshrat Dotan Tel Aviv University, Israel

Challenging the Function of Vision in 1960s Japanese art

Towards the mid-1960s, many Japanese artists challenged the function of vision and questioned the supposedly objective and uninvolved conventions of viewing art that underlay modern art. Some artists made use of technology and objects such as mirrors to heighten change and illusion and mesmerize the viewers, others used simple objects to evoke optical illusions and visual tricks to show the gap between vision and existence. This paper examines the latter tendency through the work of Takamatsu Jirō, the Shizuoka-based group Genshoku (幻触), and artists associated with the Mono-ha (もの派) phenomenon. Not merely concerning the definitions of art alone, the works mark the artists' attempts to relate to the concrete world around them—the actual reality that exists beyond the abstractness of images, objects and words. The works will also be discussed in relation to a discourse of "seeing" that developed among artists and art critics such as Ishiko Junzō and Nakahara Yūsuke.

Ory Bartal Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem, Israel

Mujirushi Ryohin and Critical Consumerism in 1980's Japan

Mujirushi Ryohin is a lifestyle brand entrenched in Japanese consumer culture, which in 2012 was dubbed by the Japanese lifestyle magazine Brutus Casa a "lifestyle operating system." However, the company's first incarnation was as a very modest yet critical food and household product line in Seiyu Stores supermarkets. Wishing to offer consumers inexpensive yet quality products, the company adopted a new initiative based on ecological values. The basic, plain, and timeless products, which do not change with the seasons or from year to year, stress the 'use value' and functionality as an alternative to the logic of changing fashion – one of the pillars of late consumer culture, in which products are made with a built-in obsolescence and use identified style and branding to create a consumer identity. In contrast, Mujirushi Ryohin's product were designed in an anonymous and simple aesthetics that was originated in a critical theory called "Super Normal". Super Normal theory creates by Mujirushi Ryohin's product designer – Fukasawa

Naoto, challenges the contemporary consumer culture where design has become a sales promoter and is therefore often flashy or ostentatious. Super Normal products, on the other hand, show the essence of things. They lack specific style, identity or originality. Therefore, although Mujirushi Ryohin product line was part of the consumption culture, their simple style products can be seen as part of the Anti-Branding, No-Logo and anti-consumerism political movements that emerged in Europe and the U.S. in the 1980s in response to "the society of spectacle" of late capitalism. The lecture will present the new simple style that emerged in the 1980's in Japan via Mujirushi Ryohin's products and advertising campaigns, the way this new simple style was different from Japanese traditional minimalism, and how this new simple style was imbued with ideological and protest consciousness.

Erez Golani Solomon Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem, Israel and Waseda University, Japan

Eulogy to Nakagin Capsule Tower

Nakagin Capsule Tower was an unusual apartment building. Nakagin, as the building is commonly referred to, was designed at the beginning of the 1970s by the then young and persuasive Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa [1934-2007] and built at the southern tip of Ginza.
It was then and still is today an important construction project that carries considerable cultural and historical value. The building was the defining spirit of Japanese post-Second World War architectural avant-garde, and the clearest built manifestation of its thoughts. It embodied a precise and audacious reaction, in architectural terms, to a multilayered and charged context. The construction of Nakagin was completed on April 5, 1972.
The destruction of Nakagin begun earlier this year, in April, exactly 50 years after its completion. Although this was expected, the destruction attracted much media, public, professional, and academic attention and encouraged a wave of new attempts to understand the building, to apply meaning to it. Nakagin, obviously, continues to fascinate. The conference paper will reassess the value of Nakagin in the light of this renewed attention. It will not add a position to an argument about whether we are better off with or without Nakagin, not console nor celebrate, but rather examine the complex dynamics that constructed it in 1972 and destructed it in 2022.

Shalmit Bejarano Tel Aviv University, Israel

Between nostalgia and dystopia: "Nature" semantics in Japanese art

Nature (自然) is a commonly-used term in traditional-arts discourse. It arches from seasonal terms in poetry, extends to the verdant fields of rural Yamato, and into the usage of unrefined materials. In the modern era these usages were reconstructed to evoke sweet nostalgia towards imagined harmony of times immemorial and pure Japaneseness. In the 21st century, however, these images of Nature are harnessed to discuss consumer experiences of invented traditions such as organic foods and eco-tourism.

Yet when analyzing semantic fields associated with "Nature" that are used by the Japanese art world as it is reflected in the comprehensive website tokyoartbeat.com, I find that in the last decade the nostalgic gaze has turned into a more globalized perspective. At the same time Nature is no longer perceived as a pure essence devoid of human society and political intervention. I suggest that the trauma caused by the March '11 disasters and the global climatic changes reshape the perception of Nature in Japan, and consequently the production of arts and their display.

Keynote lecture DAY THREE

Barak Kushner The University of Cambridge, UK

A silent country (黙國) perched on the precipice of peace apathy (平和ボケ): where is Japan heading and what does this mean for Japanese studies?

In early July 2022 Japan's longest serving prime minister was gunned down in broad daylight. Japanese media services rushed to announce the murder but hesitated in using the term "assassination" and avoided naming the religious organization implicated in the event. Mirroring perhaps a recent national tendency toward silence, news organizations were relatively muted in their analyses of this tragedy. At the same time, a variety of opinion polls suggest that while Abe's death is mourned, the majority of the public do not support a "national funeral" although there was never a debate about this in the parliament. In and around Japan this summer signs implored consumers and travelers alike to "refrain from conversation," ostensibly to avoid spreading Covid but the impact is much larger.
What is the significance of all of this silence? Is it a way to avoid digging into the larger issues at stake for Japan – and there are many. Japanese conservatives are pushing to alter the constitution with no real public appeal to do so. Many in Japan's leading political party want to maintain a standing military, but can it be staffed with a rapidly dwindling population? Is an aging population attempting to hold on to some glorious national past, or is Japan trying to forge a new way forward? This talk will weave a narrative to touch on current and historical points that investigate the various crises Japan faces and how this affects the state of the field and our engagement as scholars and students of East Asia.