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## The Annual Tsuda Lecture Series
List of lectures and photo gallery  

14-15
Introduction:

A Message from the Japan Research Centre

In 2006, the late Mrs Kayoko Tsuda pledged to support the SOAS Japan Research Centre (JRC) and its PhD students through an annual £10,000 donation for a period of ten years from 2006 to 2015. All at SOAS and the JRC were saddened to learn of Mrs Tsuda’s untimely passing in 2012, but have remained proud to have continued the work that she had committed to fund in her memory.

This generous gift provided a £7,000 bursary each year to a promising PhD candidate in financial need during the final stages of their research, contributing towards programme and university expenses, and ensuring that they could focus entirely on the quality of their final submissions during what was the most critical period of their studies. The remainder of the funding was targeted at supporting the ongoing running costs and academic activities of the JRC, and in particular sponsoring the Tsuda Lecture programme. This annual lecture series bolstered the JRC’s work towards our aim of disseminating knowledge and understanding of the rich culture, history and contemporary practices of Japan to the broader scholarly and academic communities, as well as interested members of the general public.

Our donors have a profound effect on the work of SOAS, none more so than those who support scholarships and bursaries at the School. Through the Kayoko Tsuda Bursaries we are able to ensure that the most promising candidates are able to make the most of the unique educational opportunities SOAS provides, regardless of their income, status or family background. The award has created a valuable educational opportunity for Japan-focussed scholars, while enriching the scholarly and academic community focussed on this diverse and expansive topic for the benefit of all at SOAS, the JRC, and the global academic community working on Japan.

The Kayoko Tsuda Bursaries have made an immeasurable impact on the research of the students who were awarded it. Since 2006, the Kayoko Tsuda Bursary has supported ten exceptional PhD candidates whose collective research efforts have spanned an impressively diverse range of fascinating and weighty topics. It had been with great pride that we have witnessed the progress of the outstanding scholars that have benefited from its funding each year. This report looks retrospectively on the successes of the bursary programme and its recipients. We hope that you will enjoy hearing from these impressive scholars, in their own words, regarding their research and how the bursary positively impacted their studies and lives.

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For my PhD thesis, I decided to focus upon the great kabuki playwright, Kawatake Mokuami and the theory and practice of Japanese playwriting in the 19th century. I was first drawn to the topic of kabuki playwriting while I was working on my MA at Waseda University in Japan. Much of the Western scholarship on kabuki had focussed on the actor, and the contributions of playwrights to the construction of kabuki, but I considered that playwrights had an equally important part to play. My interest in traditional Japanese theatre itself had been sparked by the classes I took with Professor Drew Gerstle in the final year of my undergraduate degree at SOAS in the mid-nineties.

The thesis attempted to examine the different ways that theatrical meaning was created for actors and audiences at a turbulent time in Japanese history, through an interrogation of key terms including author, text, performance, and meaning. I looked at the full breadth of Mokuami’s playwriting over his long career, examining the ways that he approached significant topics including visuality, criminality, history, morality, and authority through history plays, domestic plays, and dance dramas.

The Tsuda bursary came at a key point in my writing-up process, allowing me to focus my time and energy on finalising my ideas, and beginning the writing process. I had been teaching full-time at SOAS since the second-year of my PhD, so the bursary was vitally important in giving me some time away from the grind of full-time teaching. In that sense, it was vitally important to giving me the time and intellectual space essential for completing the dissertation.

Since completing my dissertation, I have continued to teach full-time at SOAS. I am now a Senior Teaching Fellow in the Japan and Korea Department, where my teaching focuses on pre-modern drama, Japanese cultural history, classical language and literature, and translation. Some of the work that the bursary allowed me to focus on during the writing of my dissertation has since been published. For example, I have several new translations of plays by Mokuami in the important Kabuki Plays On Stage four-volume series that was published by the University of Hawai’i Press.

I am very grateful and honoured to have been one of the recipients of the Tsuda Bursary. As well as the practical help in terms of time and mental space that it offered me, the recognition and validation that there was some value in my research project was immensely important to me. The Bursary has been a very important aid to PhD students in Japanese Studies at SOAS, and we are all very appreciative for the support that the Tsuda family offered to us.

“I am very grateful and honoured to have been one of the recipients of the Tsuda Bursary… the recognition and validation that there was some value in my research project was immensely important to me.”
My research, carried out with the support of the Tsuda Bursary, looked at sexual desire in the fiction of Mishima Yukio. It attempted to put Mishima’s treatment of desire in context, by comparing his fiction to other contemporary discussions of desire in fiction and non-fiction (including journalism and medical writing). It investigated the relationship of Mishima’s fiction to the most influential conceptualisations of sexuality in circulation in Japan during his lifetime - principally sexology and psychoanalysis - as well as its relationship to Japanese and Western literary representations of desire. It differed from previous research in the prominence it gives to Mishima’s treatment of desire and in its attention to his popular fiction, which generally receives little critical attention.

I find Mishima’s ‘popular’ novels, which in number match the ‘serious’ works that are usually the focus of critical writing, enjoyable and fascinating. Many of them were originally published in serial form in mass-circulation women’s magazines. This gives an image of Mishima as a writer of stories for young women about love, romance, sex and desire in the Japan of the 1950s and early 60s – very different to the image of him from the final years of his life.

What surprised and interested me most as I pursued my research was how little work had been done on putting Mishima’s representations of desire into the context of other discussions of sex and desire contemporary with his writing. And there was certainly no shortage of such discussions.

Pursuing this angle – looking, for example, at how the sexual desires described in Confessions of a Mask reflect those that were described to entertain the reading public in magazines of the time – was one of the most fascinating aspects of my research. I enjoyed immersing myself in the cheap and sensational world of the gekitori magazines that were such a vibrant feature of late 1940s popular culture in Japan and I was struck by how vivid and shocking these could be. It became clear that in this context the fantasies of Mishima’s narrator were far less idiosyncratic than they might seem.

This similarity between Mishima’s fiction and the products of popular culture became a theme running through my research. Of course, as Mishima’s fame increased, he increasingly featured in, and influenced, that popular culture. I was very interested in the way that he, no doubt consciously, built his commercial success on that relationship between his fiction and the consumer of magazines and film. A large part of that success was due to the energy that he put into writing popular fiction, the volume of which matched that of his more ‘serious’ novels. Reading and writing about these popular novels, many of which were originally serialised in women’s magazines, was another rewarding aspect of my research. I hope that this research might serve to encourage greater attention to the popular side of Mishima’s literary output and to his very enjoyable ‘entertainment’ novels, almost all of which unfortunately remain untranslated.
The Tsuda Bursary allowed me to complete my PhD thesis within this year. I could devote my time entirely to the last chapter of my research and then to the final writing of the whole thesis. Thanks to the award, I could dedicate my time to the research in the most effective manner, granting me the possibility not to worry about my financial situation.

The topic of this research was the study of the discourse on suicide patterns in post-war Japan. The purpose is to investigate the process of the formation of the image of suicide throughout the post-war period in non-fictional media, and in particular in newspaper coverage, suicide how-to manuals and suicide websites. This thesis covers the whole post-war period, from 1946 to 2008, focusing particularly on the 1990s when there was a rapid growth of Internet associations, suicide pacts, and web suicide groups. At the same time, suicide has become a much-reported topic in the mass media. The result of these new trends has been a striking increase in suicide clusters, in new methods of suicide, as well as the emergence of new dynamics such as group suicide and suicide communities.

Most existing research, despite a variety of theoretical approaches, has analysed suicide largely as an unchanging expression of traditional Japanese values. By contrast, I highlighted the changing relationship between the presentation of suicide, or the act of suicide, and the representation of suicide in the media and other sources, unveiling the conditions under which the historical appearance of suicide is formed, reinterpreted and reinvented. Finally, I explored the recent growth of suicide manuals, websites, and chat rooms, in order to understand the extent to which this contributes both to new patterns and recurrent anxiety.

This research sought to use this analysis to explore a number of characteristics of and hypotheses about post-war Japan, including: the extent to which the fragmentation of post-war society, experienced in contrast to imagined pre-war homogeneity, has led to a search for affiliation with what have been called ‘sub-tribes’; the extent to which the individual does indeed model his or her behaviour on that of the ‘sub-tribe’ as a reference group; and the way in which the lack of legitimised patterns, in the aftermath of defeat, has driven the reinterpretation and reinvention of new suicide ‘rites’.

“Thanks to the award, I could dedicate my time to the research in the most effective manner, granting me the possibility not to worry about my financial situation.”
Thanks to the Tsuda Bursary, I was able to work on two crucial chapters of my thesis and complete the final draft of my research in 2010. The Bursary allowed me to concentrate fully on the writing-up during 2010, relieving me from financial worries. I am thankful to my benefactor for their kind generosity, and to the JRC committee, for giving me the possibility of focusing on concluding my work.

My research analysed the worship of Batō Kannon 馬頭観音 (S. Hayagriva), the horse-headed, wrathful form of the Bodhisattva of Compassion, stressing the interactions and discontinuities of its occurrences within the esoteric and folkloristic tradition. The developments of Batō are discussed against different ritual settings and across a vast and varied body of textual and visual materials, from its introduction to the Japanese pantheon up to the present times. Given the diversity of sources, the research has required a multiplicity of approaches, from textual hermeneutics, to visual and ritual studies, to collection of anthropological and ethnographic data.

This has highlighted aspects Batō Kannon’s worship never addressed by previous scholarship. Initially worshipped as part of the Six Kannon group, Batō Kannon became associated, in the late medieval period, with the valorous horses of important military leaders, as suggested by legends and temples engi. This developed into the practice of erecting a Batō Kannon stela on the ground, where a horse had died, popular throughout the Tokugawa period in the Honshū area. I argue that this practice is aimed at identifying the deceased animal with the horse-headed deity, as part of a memorial ritual.

On a broader level, the research project tackles issues relating to the nature and interpretation of the sources, the complex process of contextualisation of images to ritual texts and ritual practices; the way visual response and interpretation of sacred images have informed the liturgical and religious functions over the so-called textual authorities; and the layered meanings of the ritual performances still carried out today to protect and memorialise animals.

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Thanks to the Tsuda Bursary, I was able to complete my PhD thesis for examination.

My research on the PhD focused on the secret transmissions handed down in late medieval and early modern Japanese Sōtō Zen Buddhism. These traditions are based on two closely related genre of texts known as the kōrōgi and monsan. Kōrōgi are brief records of oral transmission, often involving diagrams and illustrations of various kinds. They mostly deal with matters of ritual and cosmology. Monsan are collection of koan arranged into standardized hierarchies. Both genre are based on an innovative and distinctive use of koan. This use was based on the need of Japanese Zen monks to come to terms with increasingly incomprehensible Chinese koan material. My specific focus in this area was on the conceptual, ontological and cosmological structures that allowed these developments to occur. In the course of this, I argued that any definition of the “esoteric” has to pay attention to the subjectivity of the practitioner generated through its practices.

During the time I was supported by the Bursary, I was able to write two main chapters from the body of my thesis. The first was an extended discussion of Sōtō Zen Dharma transmission rituals. The second presented a historical and textual overview of Sōtō Zen kōan traditions. I also formulated a theoretical approach to the interpretation of kōan. This approach treats them as fully linguistic artefacts and analyses their function in terms of performativistic and metaphorical modes of discourse.

In addition to completing my PhD, I also had the opportunity to present my research at a number of international workshops held at SOAS. In February of 2011, I delivered a paper on the worship of the deity of Mt. Hakusan in the Sōtō school. In March in the same year, I presented part of my PhD research at the Japan Research Centre Seminar under the title “Esoteric Uses of the Yijing in medieval Sōtō Zen”. In May I participated in the “Words, Deities and Icons” workshop, presenting my research on embryology in Sōtō Zen.

I would like to express my gratitude to my benefactor and the award committee for their generosity which enabled me to focus on my work in its final stages and bring it to a successful conclusion.

“...I would like to express my gratitude to my benefactor and the award committee for their generosity which enabled me to focus on my work in its final stages and bring it to a successful conclusion.”
My PhD research focussed on the illustrated books (eihon) of the eighteenth century Kyoto artist Nishikawa Sukenobu. Between 1710 and 1722, Sukenobu published some fifty erotic works; following the Kyōhō reforms of 1722 outlawing erotica, he began producing works generally categorized as fūzoku-eihon versions of canonical texts, poems and riddles, all executed in a contemporary idiom.

My study contended that these works were an expression of political disaffection; that Sukenobu used first the medium of the erotic, then the image-lore-text format of the children’s book to articulate anti-bakufu and pro-imperialist sentiment. This radical re-reading of Sukenobu’s work is supported by close reference to the literary output of his numerous collaborators, to contemporary diary and pamphlet literature, and to the corpus of Edo and Kyoto machibure eds. The study will hopefully shed new light on the role of popular art in the eighteenth century, and its profound political engagement.

The bulk of the research for my thesis on the Kyoto artist Nishikawa Sukenobu had been completed by the time I received the Kayoko Tsuda Bursary, but much of the drafting and the final positioning remained to be done. The bursary provided a massive incentive to take the work over the finishing line, and an important and welcome opportunity - the Kayoko Tsuda Bursary lecture - to share some of the more radical aspects of the research with the SOAS community, an experience from which I benefited greatly. It also gave me the latitude to draw the various strands of the thesis into a cogent whole, to chase down difficult readings and obscure references in the images that had been parked and could so easily have been left to drift. This proved a huge asset in the final positioning of the argument. The thesis was submitted 8th May 2011. During this period, Mrs Kayoko Tsuda sadly passed away. While I never had the opportunity to meet Mrs Tsuda, I have thought of her generosity countless times over the last few months. Together with other Tsuda bursary holders, I owe her an enormous amount.

“The bursary provided a massive incentive to take the work over the finishing line, and an important and welcome opportunity - the Kayoko Tsuda Bursary lecture - to share some of the more radical aspects of the research with the SOAS community, an experience from which I benefited greatly.”
Alessia Costa  
2012-2013

During the final year of my PhD, thanks to the precious support of the Tsuda Bursary, I was able to complete the research for my PhD thesis on organ donation and transplants in Japan. My thesis - Bodily Assemblages: the Moral, Political, and Informal Economy of Japanese Organ Transplants - addressed anthropological relevant questions concerning the use of the human body in medical technology by looking at the case of organ transplants in Japan.

From September 2011 to October 2012 I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Tokyo as exchange researcher at Waseda University. I took part in numerous activities related to transplants, while also conducting interviews with a range of different research participants. I interviewed the transplant patients and activists who guided the movement for the law reform, with the aim of collecting first-hand information about a unique case of political lobby on medical issues. I also met with several families of young patients who either applied for or received a transplant in a foreign country. The life stories they generously shared with me are the point of entry to analyse one of the more severe problems concerning transplantation in Japan—the scarcity of organs from paediatric donors. Through my work I aimed to provide ethnographic knowledge on how issues regarding the implications of medical technologies are dealt with in contemporary Japan.

Having returned from my fieldwork in Tokyo in November 2012, the bursary enabled me to focus on the final process of the writing up and to submit a first draft of the work in September 2013.

The Tsuda Bursary proved a great incentive to the completion of my work in view of the final viva. The fund was an important asset that greatly helped me in the process of analysing the bulk of findings and data collected in Japan, and in drawing the various theoretical strands of the thesis into an original approach to the topic of organ donation and transplants.

In presenting and discussing the findings of my research, I have greatly benefited of the contribution of the Tsuda bursary. The scholarship provided me a welcomed opportunity to present my work at the annual Kyoko Tsuda bursary lecture, held in May at SOAS Japan Research Centre, while also helping me to attend and give papers to various international conferences on both anthropology and Japanese studies.

For these reasons, I would like to express my gratitude to my benefactor and the award committee for their generosity, which proved indispensable to the completion of my PhD thesis.
The Kayoko Tsuda bursary supported the final six months of writing my PhD, allowing me to focus on clearly presenting my research findings. This was a particularly crucial stage of the PhD process as I had collected a large quantity of materials during my research, having travelled to Japan, Australia and the United States to use the resources of high-profile institutions including the Library of Congress, the Gordon Prange Collection at the University of Maryland, and the Waseda Tsubouchi Theatre Museum.

My research - National Crisis and the Female Image: Expressions of Trauma in Japanese Film 1945-1964 - aimed to address film's effect on the viewer during periods of national crisis. I suggested that recurrent trends within the presentation of the female image are often coded to reflect viewer concerns and allay popular fears through cathartic expression. My analysis of the construction of such affective imagery addresses concerns expressed in academia and in popular media as to the effect of filmic imagery on the viewer. The interdisciplinary approach of my thesis aimed to contribute to methodological questions within film studies as a discipline, suggesting a hybrid method derived from film studies and art historical methodologies as a way to overcome the research issues recently identified within audience studies.

My ambitious blend of trauma and affect theory combined with a large corpus of film and archival materials required careful presentation; I analysed selected film texts from a corpus of almost 600 films using an art-historically informed iconographic method, contextualized by critical and fan commentary published in the popular print media of the period 1945-1964. As you can imagine, presenting this complex project on paper took time and careful editing! Without the assistance of the Tsuda bursary this would not have been possible.

The generosity of the Tsuda bursary also allowed me to visit many universities around the UK and present my research at workshops and conferences for young scholars. In January 2014 I co-organised a workshop at the University of Leeds, presenting my research and participating in round table discussions on theory in Japanese studies. Such experiences encouraged me to situate my research productively in the wider field of Japanese studies, and allowed me to meet many researchers who gave invaluable advice and created further opportunities for me.

“The Kayoko Tsuda bursary supported the final six months of writing my PhD, allowing me to focus on clearly presenting my research findings. This was a particularly crucial stage of the PhD process.”
I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the JRC and to the late Mrs Kayako Tsuda for her generosity. The Tsuda bursary 2014/2015 has supported the final months of writing my thesis and enabled me to bring the project to an end that I am very happy with.

My thesis, A Foreigner’s Dream of Japan: The struggle over power and authenticity in a German-Japanese coproduction, has re-evaluated the bi-national film project The Samurai’s Daughter (Die Tochter des Samurai, 1937, Fanck) and New Earth (Akarmabiki tsubi, 1937, Itami). I have argued against previous, predominantly political readings of the project as a piece of political propaganda, with a focus on Fanck’s German-Japanese edition, and their lasting impact on interpretations of the participants.

Such approaches, relying on seemingly straightforward causal relations, neglect to take into consideration the films themselves as well as Japanese interests in the costly undertaking. In interplay with political currents, the project became the locus of a power struggle over representational authority, and the notion of authenticity of the national image of Japan on international cinema screens emerged as a critical key to understanding the project’s discursive level and as the main factor in the two directors’ failed interactions, eventually resulting in two versions of the film. An overdue comparative textual analysis suggested the necessity to reconsider the films as creative products of a representational and aesthetic power struggle, and hence as cultural, rather than purely political artefacts.

The interdisciplinary study of these two competing versions of one film demonstrated the epistemological potential and validity of differentiated, discursive approaches to cultural artefacts. However, thoroughly approaching even one film from various viewpoints and within an interdisciplinary framework brings its own challenges, and dealing with two versions and two nationally distinct backgrounds of production and contexts of exhibition could at times be overwhelming. At the same time, to finally bring the material together was an extremely satisfying process.

The JRC’s support and the feeling of obligation towards Mrs Tsuda’s generosity gave me a strong motivation in the rather difficult final months to finish the project. Moreover, the Tsuda lecture provided the precious possibility to present my research to the JRC and to receive valuable feedback. I have now successfully defended my thesis, and am certain that the positive result was also due to the relative peace of mind with which I could approach the crucial final stages of writing and editing thanks to the Tsuda bursary.
Eiko Gyogi
2014-2015

My thesis examines the use of translation activities in beginner and intermediate Japanese language classes for intercultural purposes. My interest in this topic grew out of my experience as a Japanese teacher and a professional translator. After I started to teach Japanese to undergraduate students at SOAS, I noticed that translation used in the language classroom had largely been focused on lexical and grammatical structures. Needless to say, the importance of lexical and grammatical structures cannot be overstressed. However, my experience in translation has led me to consider that translation can also be approached from various angles.

My Ph.D. studies have been made possible through financial support from scholarships. Tsuda Kayoko Bursary enabled me to focus on my research throughout this writing-up year without being troubled by financial concerns. Thanks to the Bursary, I was able to cover the tuition fee, living costs, and travel costs for attending and presenting my work at some conferences.

My Ph.D. studies have been a very fruitful experience up until now. After designing the research in the first year with help of my supervisors, I implemented five translation classes to beginner and intermediate students majoring in Japanese at SOAS for data collection in my second year. In the first two years, I was also given an opportunity to teach Japanese to undergraduate students as a graduate teaching assistant, where I was inspired by wonderful colleagues and students that I worked with. I spent my third year in organizing the data and writing the first draft of my thesis. I am now in the final stage of my Ph.D. and have been revising the thesis under the guidance of my supervisors. During these four years, I was also able to present my work at 12 conferences in and outside the U.K. and publish three peer-reviewed academic papers, two book chapters, four conference proceedings, and one book review.

The bursary helped me to pursue my interests and passions that otherwise would not have been possible. I am very honoured to be the recipient of the bursary and feel very fortunate to be able to continue my studies at Ph.D. level. I would deeply like to thank the funders of the Tsuda Kayoko Bursary for generous support.

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The JRC Annual Tsuda Lecture Series

25 February 2015
‘Give me Some Skin’: The Cult of Datsueba in Medieval Japan
Bernard R Faure (Kao Professor of Japanese Religion, Columbia University)

21 February 2014
Making Sense of Japan’s Lost Decades
Andrew Gordon (Harvard)

13 March 2013
Prewar revolutionary culture and the Fukushima Catastrophe
Norma Field (University of Chicago, Robert S. Ingerson Distinguished Service Professor Emerita)

22 February 2012
Guns in Japan, 1543-1786: Myths, Secret Traditions, and the Royal Hunt
Anne Walthall (Professor of History, University of California, Irvine)

26 April 2011
The Afterlife of a Material Object: The Gold Seal (金印) of 57 C.E.
Professor Joshua Fogel (York University, Toronto)

24 February 2010
Tokyo Modern: Some Reflections on the Significance of the Middle Class in Twentieth-Century Japan
Professor James McClain (Brown University)

18 February 2009
From Folklore to Märchen: Fashion, Fashion Media, and Proto-Cute Culture in Japan
Professor Tomiko Yoda (Duke University)

20 February 2008
Carriers of Culture: Samurai and Alternate Attendance in Early Modern Japan
Professor Constantine Vaporis (Associate Professor, University of Maryland, Baltimore County)

21 February 2007
On the Ground in 18th Century Kyoto: Ethnohistory, Material Culture, and the Imagination of Everyday Life
John Nelson (University of San Francisco, USA)

15 March 2006
Tamino’s Japanese Hunting Coat or, What Mozart might have know about Japan
Joseph Kreiner (Professor of Japanese Studies, University of Bonn. Retired 2008)

24 February 2005
The Aynu Twist in Japan’s Barbarian Studies: Reflections on the work of Chiri Mashiho
James Ketelaar (The University of Chicago)

25 February 2004
Revisionism and Historical Consciousness in Postwar Japan
Professor Rikki Kersten (University of Leiden)
Photos, top to bottom:
The audience in attendance of the 2007 lecture delivered by John Nelson of San Francisco University.
Then-JRC Chair Professor Steven Dodd with 2012 Tsuda Lecturer Anne Walthall of the University of California.
JRC member Professor Timon Screech with Professor Constantine Vaporis of the University of Maryland at his 2008 Tsuda Lecture.