



SOAS Japan Research Centre

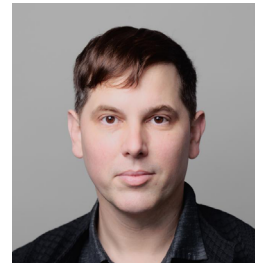
ANNUAL REVIEW

ISSUE 74: September 2024 - December 2025

SOAS
University of London

Welcome

“Without your contributions, the JRC could not fulfil its mission of connecting Japan-related scholars at SOAS with each other and the wider public.”



As autumn sweeps away the last traces of summer, we return—hopefully refreshed—for a new term. I would like to take this opportunity to look back on the past year and to express my gratitude to all JRC members, research associates, visiting scholars, and funding partners. Without your contributions, the JRC could not fulfil its mission of connecting Japan-related scholars at SOAS with each other and the wider public.

I am especially grateful to Xebio Holdings, whose support allows us to continue our summer schools on art and creativity in both Tokyo and London. A highlight remains the intensive weekend at the Morohashi Museum of Modern Art in Fukushima, built by the company’s founder, Teizo Morohashi. With the generous support of the Meiji Jingu Intercultural Research Institute and the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation, we are also able to provide scholarships that empower the next generation of scholars working on Japan. Hosting visiting scholars from Japan and other countries enriches our community and helps us sustain a vibrant, multicultural academic environment in the heart of Bloomsbury. The following pages highlight the range of scholarly and outreach activities we have hosted over the past year.

The autumn term began with an extraordinary one-day Noh theatre masterclass and workshop led by Living National Treasure Akira Matsui (Kita school) and master mask-carver Hideta Kitazawa. Audiences were treated to two contemporary Noh plays: *The Face of a Goddess*, adapted from the classic *Kazuraki*, and *Rockaby*, inspired by Samuel Beckett’s 1980 one-woman play. We also marked the 70th anniversary of Honda Ichirō’s original *Gojira* with a film screening and panel discussion, which drew a large and enthusiastic audience.

The JRC has continued to collaborate with other Japan-oriented societies and organisations in London and beyond. Together with the Japan Society and the Japanese Women’s Association in Great Britain, we organised an “in conversation” with Rebecca Salter, President of the Royal Academy of Arts. With the Circle of Japanese Art London (CJAL), we hosted a bilingual lecture by Dr. Asao Kōzu on the wabi-sabi aesthetics of the tea ceremony.

As chair, my work would be impossible without the support of the JRC Steering Committee: Filippo Cervelli, Alan Cummings, Lucia Dolce, Helen Macnaughtan, Barbara Pizziconi, and Satona Suzuki. I am also indebted to our administrative supremo, Charles Taillandier-Ubsdell, without whose dedication no JRC event would be possible. Finally, I thank all those who continue to support our activities so generously, including through the JRC Fuwaku Fund initiative. Your contributions ensure that we can keep growing.

We look forward to welcoming you back to SOAS this year for a programme of exciting and thought-provoking events. A new initiative this year will be a termly screening of a classic Japanese film, each introduced by JRC members and followed by a panel discussion. Please sign up to our regular e-bulletins to stay connected—you won’t want to miss what’s ahead!

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Chair, SOAS Japan Research Centre

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Dr Filippo CERVELLI
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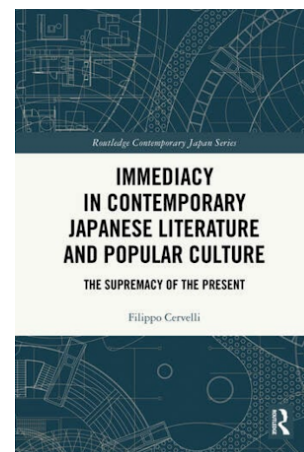
From January to August 2025 Filippo was on research leave, which gave him the possibility to finalise work on his research monograph *Immediacy in Contemporary Japanese Literature and Popular Culture*, published in March by Routledge, and on an article on Ōe Kenzaburō and Dante, including two essay translations, which will appear on the prestigious Italian journal *Studi danteschi*. The leave also enabled him to conduct research trips in Japan in January and February as an invited researcher to Nichibunken in Kyoto, and in Crete in April 2025, as a recipient of a Meiji Jingu Staff Grant.

While at Nichibunken, he participated in the research cluster both as a presenter of his research on otaku, and as the co-editor of the Handbook of Global Japanese Studies. On another note, he shared the findings of his research projects on the novelist Ōe in front of variegated audiences. He was invited to speak on Ōe and Dante at the Research Seminar Series at King's College in June 2025. In August, he presented on Ōe's archival practices at the 19th German Japanologists conference (Japanologentag), held at the University of Frankfurt.

He was also active in the field of research knowledge exchange on popular culture. With SOAS colleagues, he organised a film screening and discussion of *Gojira* on 16 October 2024, which was open to the public. More recently, on 3 March 2025, he was invited to speak about the works of anime director Hosoda Mamoru to the students of Matthew Arnold School in Oxford.

BOOKS

- Cervelli, F. 2025. *Immediacy in Contemporary Japanese Literature and Popular Culture: The Supremacy of the Present*. London: Routledge.



Prof Lucia DOLCE
Numata Professor of Japanese
Buddhism

Lucia spent an intense and rewarding year in Japan thanks to a Visiting Research Fellowship at Nichibunken, Kyoto. She was thrilled by the opportunity to peruse usually inaccessible medieval temples archives and to go on field research at temples and shrines of the Kinai area to discover obscure rituals and precious artefacts. And it was a delight to reconnect with the many SOASians living in Kyoto!

Lucia presented her research at different academic and public venues, in English and in Japanese. Notable were a public lecture at Kyoto Pia Hall on the revival of *shinbutsu* rituals in contemporary shrines, a workshop at Aichi gakuin (Nagoya) on images of kami, a Kyoto Lecture at the École française d'Extrême-Orient on medieval rituals of awakening, a panel discussion at the Association of Buddhist History and a keynote at Ryukoku University on the potential of research on Tendai Tantric Buddhism.

In the summer she returned to Japan on the invitation of Tōhō Gakkai to deliver a keynote on rethinking world philosophy through Japanese Buddhism. Another highlight of the summer was an exciting, and exacting, lecture trip to China to present Japanese material at a conference on sacred sites and a summer school on Buddhist pure lands at Tsinghua University & Wutaishan, and at a conference on medical images in medieval manuscripts at Dunhuang Academy, and to deliver two lectures in Xian, at the Northwestern University Centre of Japanese Studies on approaches to medieval Japanese intellectual history and at the Art Academy on Tantric iconography – almost a pilgrimage on the footsteps of early Japanese Buddhist monks!

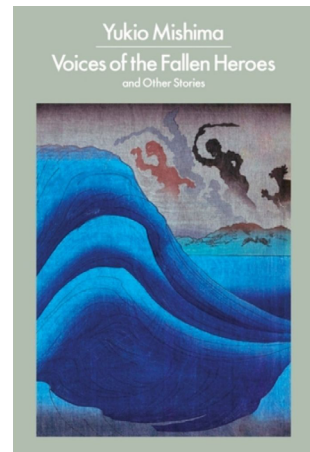
BOOK CHAPTERS

- Dolce, L. 2025. "A Debt to Godai'in Annen: Taimitsu and the Yogin Consecration." In *Tendaigaku to shoshisō* 天台学と諸思想, edited by Ōkubo Ryōshun sensei koki kinen ronbunshū kankōkai 大久保良峻先生古稀記念論集刊行会, 704–756. Kyoto: Hōzōkan.
- Dolce, L. 2025. "Suchness." In *Doing Metaphysics in a Diverse World: How to Make Sense of Things across Cultures*, edited by Stephen Green, 315–340. London: Bloomsbury.



Prof Stephen DODD
Emeritus Research Associate

Based in Kyoto, Stephen continues to translate Mishima Yukio literature, and write articles. In his teaching position at Sugiyama Jogakuen University, Nagoya, he teaches a range of courses. In the most recent term, he taught three courses: on 'Minority Cultures,' 'Survey of Modern Japanese Literature,' and 'Japanese Nonsense Literature.' The 'minority cultures' course touches on the Taiwanese experience of Japanese colonialism. In connection with this, he made a research trip to Taipei in February 2025. In Japan Forum, his paper entitled, 'The Significance of Flying Saucers in the Work of Yukio Mishima,' came out in 2025. In the few months, he gave three presentations on Mishima, who was born in 1925, one hundred years ago, but details of these will be provided in the following year. In January, he edited a book of translation of Mishima's short stories, entitled 'Voices of the Fallen Heroes' (London: Penguin Classics, 2025), which included two of his own translations. Stephen is now working on a new Mishima novel translation that is due to be completed in the next year.



BOOKS

- Mishima, Yukio. 2025. *Voices of the Fallen Heroes: And Other Stories*. Edited and translated by Stephen Dodd; additional translations by Jeffrey Angles, Tomoko Aoyama, Paul McCarthy, John Nathan, Hannah Osborne, Juliet Winters Carpenter, Oliver White, and Sam Bett. London: Penguin Modern Classics.



Dr Fabio GYGI
Chair, Japan Research
Centre / Senior Lecturer in
Anthropology

Fabio started off his academic year with an invited talk at the Hitogata and Ningyō Kenkyūkai in Kyoto entitled "Ningyō no Yukue - Nagashi, Kuyō, Risaikuru". In October, in tandem with the exhibition "Looks Delicious! Exploring Japan's food replica culture", he organised a public symposium at the Japan House under the title "Des(s)ert of the Real: Copies, Replicas, Representations in Japanese Cultures" with Yasuhiro Nose, Rupert Cox, Ryoko Matsuba and Phil Swift. Later in the year he was awarded an CAMHRA Accelerator Grant for a comparative pilot study on hoarding interventions in London, Hamburg, Vienna and Tokyo. With this he undertook intensive short-term fieldwork in Vienna and Hamburg, where he worked together with social services provided by the city to get a handle on hoarding issues. In March he went to Paris to present his research on ritual atmospheres at the EHESS and gave a talk on oshikatsu at the Terrains Japonais event at the INALCO. A workshop on "Insight and Intervention" in June 2025 brought together researchers and practitioners from all over the U.K. and Germany for knowledge exchange and the future coordination of joint research projects. He talked about his research in Japan on the Hoarding Stuff podcast with Heather Matuozzo and David Woods (Episode "Ask the Anthropologist").

He has also reviewed books for the Journal of Japanese Studies, Asian Anthropology and the BBC History Magazine. In August 2025 he taught the Art and Creativity Summer School in Tokyo and at the Morohashi Museum of Modern Art in Fukushima.

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

- Gygi, F. 2025. "The Animation of Nature and the Nature of Animation: The Life of Made Objects from the Record of Tool Specters to the Night Parade of Hundred Demons." *Religions* 16 (10): 1–19.

BOOK CHAPTERS

- Gygi, F. 2025. "Celestial Buddha." In *Off-Earth Atlas*, edited by Perig Pitrou and Victor Buchli. London: Intellect.

ARTICLES

- Gygi, F. 2005. "Oshikatsu, the Fandom Phenomenon Japan Hopes Can Boost Its Flagging Economy." *The Conversation*.



Attendants of the first JRC summer school, September 2024.



Dr Monika HINKEL
Co-convenor, Arts of Japan
and Korea module

From September to November 2024, Monika continued being involved in events for the highly successful special exhibition 'Yoshida: Three Generations of Japanese Printmaking', which she curated at the Dulwich Picture Gallery, London. She was invited to give a talk at Arundells in Salisbury to share insights into their collection of Japanese prints, particularly their Yoshida prints. On 7 October, Monika appeared in the sold-out event 'Picturing Japan: Print and Style' at the *Cheltenham Literature Festival* to introduce the Yoshida exhibition and the catalogue she wrote for the show. In late October, Monika delivered a talk for the *Edgar Wind Society* at Brasenose College, University of Oxford, discussing the Dulwich Yoshida show. Her final public event related to the Yoshida exhibition was a lecture for the Sainsbury Institute's *Third Thursday Lecture* programme on 21 November. The event, titled 'Reflections on Yoshida: Three Generations of Japanese Printmaking', focused on the main narratives of the exhibition, offering reflections on the show.

Monika is continuing her research on the Yoshida family, investigating private and public collections of Yoshida prints in Europe, for a future special exhibition in continental Europe.

On 12 September, Pallant House Gallery invited Monika to present a talk to accompany the special exhibition *Nana Shiomi: Her Own Interpretation*. Her talk was titled 'Traditional Icons and Creative Visions in the Work of Nana Shiomi', highlighting the practice and oeuvre of this remarkable print artist.

In early November, Monika gave the lecture 'Arts of Japan: From Prehistory to Contemporary' for Christie's Education, London, as part of their course *Artistic Treasures: A Collector's Guide to Chinese, Japanese and Korean art in London*.

On 9 November, Monika attended the conference *Looking Forward in Japanese Arts and Cultures* to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures (SISJAC) at the Royal Academy.

From January to March 2025, Monika convened the online module Edo to Tokyo, 19th to 20th century, for the SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma, which explored the city's shift from the Shogunal city of Edo to the Imperial capital of Tokyo.

Monika co-convened the module Arts of Japan and Korea from April to July 2025 as part of the SOAS-Alphawood Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art.

Furthermore, Monika contributed a lecture on the topic 'The Dulwich Yoshida exhibition and Audience Engagement' to the SOAS-*Effat University Postgraduate Diploma in Museum Studies*. As part of the Asian Art in the Museum module of the SOAS PG Diploma, Monika organised a study day on 'Art and Landscape of the Edo Period (1603-1868)', focusing on themes related to the British Museum special exhibition *Hiroshige: artist of the open road*.

Monika was honoured to be invited by the University of Leiden at the end of April 2025 to hold a lecture for their *Japanese Studies Lecture series*. Her contribution was titled 'Tradition and Transformation: Japanese Woodblock Prints from Meiji to 20th Century *mokuhanga*'.

In June 2025, Monika was appointed an Academic Associate of the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures (SISJAC).

Monika recorded two podcasts with the *mokuhanga* printmaker Andre Zadorozny for his podcast *The Unfinished Print*, which is dedicated to exploring the art of Japanese woodblock printing, or *mokuhanga*. One episode featured the Yoshida family, and another focused on the print artist Toyohara Kunichika (1835-1900).

REVIEWS

- Hinkel, M. 2025. "Review of *Meiji Modern: Fifty Years of New Japan* by Chelsea Foxwell and Bradley M. Bailey, Yale University Press, 2023." *Silva Iaponicarum* 73 (Spring): 66–70.
- Hinkel, M. 2025. "Thomas Sturge-Moore and Hokusai's *Great Wave*." In *Japanese Prints: Art of the Woodblock*. Dreweatts, July, 15–17.
- Hinkel, M. 2025. "Exhibition Review of *Hiroshige: Artist of the Open Road*, curated by Alfred Haft, British Museum, London." *Burlington Magazine* 167 (September): 835–838.



Satona Suzuki (left), Monika Hinkel (centre), and Fabio Gygi (right) at "Yoshida: Three Generations of Japanese Printmaking", curated by Monika Hinkel, Dulwich Picture Gallery, London.



Ms Yoshiko JONES
Co-ordinator, The Sir Peter
Parker Awards for Spoken
Business Japanese / Japanese
Language Proficiency Test

The 33rd Sir Peter Parker Awards for Spoken Business Japanese was held on 7 November 2024 in collaboration with JETRO (The Japan External Trade Organisation).

Fortunately, we were supported by regular and new sponsors to be able to run the event continuously.

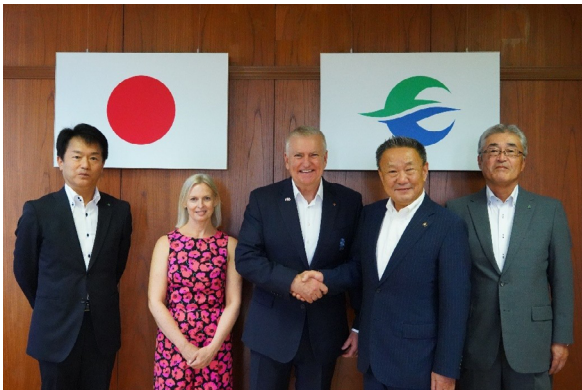
There were 18 applicants, and 8 finalists were selected for the final round. The final round was conducted by former JRC Chair, Dr Helen Macnaughtan, and Dr Satona Suzuki participated as one of the Judges.

The Awards ceremony was co-hosted by Dr Helen Macnaughtan, the representative of SOAS and the Director General of JETRO Mr Hideo Yura.

More than 80 Japan related guests attended the event. All 8 finalists gave excellent speeches.

The first prize winner Ms Vedha Narayanasamy has never lived in Japan though other finalists lived in Japan for 3 to 8 years and her Japanese is almost that of a native Japanese speaker.

Videos of all finalists' speeches can be watched on the [JRC website](#). The 34th SPPA were held on 4 November 2025. Details can be also found on the [JRC website](#).



Helen Macnaughtan's visit to Motomiya City Hall, Summer 2024.



Participants at 33rd Sir Peter Parker Awards on 7 November 2024.



**Dr Helen
MACNAUGHTAN**
Senior Lecturer in International
Business and Management

Helen continues with her research on both women and employment in Japan and sports in Japan. She assisted Yoshiko Jones with the 2024 Sir Peter Parker Awards for Spoken Business Japanese by acting as the SOAS Host for the Awards Ceremony.

Helen continues her role as a Trustee of the Japan Society (UK) as well as her work with the Embassy of Japan in the UK to promote the Japanese Government (MEXT) Scholarships. In summer 2024 Helen was a guest of the Japan Rugby Football Union for the Japan vs England men's rugby test match and also visited Motomiya First Junior Highschool and the English Garden in the city at the invitation of Mayor Takamatsu of Miyamoto City, a visit which promoted UK-Japan sport and culture relations.

Helen continues to work with Verity Postlethwaite (Loughborough University) with whom she co-edited the Handbook of Sport and Japan, as they work toward organising a summit on The Business of Women's Health, to be held (during England's hosting of the 2025 Women's Rugby World Cup) at Loughborough University in partnership with the Rugby Football Union (RFU), the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), and the Department for Business and Trade (DBT).

EDITED VOLUMES

- Macnaughtan, H., and V. Postlethwaite, eds. 2024. *Handbook of Sport and Japan*. Tokyo: Japan Documents, MHM Limited.



Dr Satona SUZUKI
Senior Lecturer in Japanese
and Modern Japanese History

Satona has been active in presenting papers on history, politics, and social issues, as well as contributing to media outlets, particularly through historical documentary series. She presented on the *Assassin's Creed Shadows* controversy from the perspective of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) and DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) at both the Ochanomizu Consortium and the Cambridge East Asia Seminar Series.

Satona also delivered a lecture at the Cambridge Japan Forum titled *Old Media, Social Media, and Democracy in Japan: The Re-election of Saito Makoto, Governor of Hyogo Prefecture*. Additionally, she gave a talk for the Historical Association's short course *Britain and the Second World War – A Global Conflict for a Global Audience*, where she discussed Economic Intelligence and Japan's road to the Pacific War.

Satona's most recent media appearance was in the documentary series *From the Ashes of World War II*, which focuses on the rebuilding of nations after the devastating effects of WWII. She has also served as a consultant for several major media outlets, with programmes due to air soon.

Lastly, together with Dr Fabio Gygi, Chair of the JRC, Satona established an internship programme for BA Japanese (single and joint honours) students with Xebio Holdings, one of Japan's leading sports enterprises. The programme is designed to enhance students' professional skills, deepen their understanding of Japan, and strengthen ties between SOAS, Japan, and our valued partner Xebio, to whom we are deeply grateful for making this opportunity possible.

PUBLICATIONS

- Suzuki, S. 2025. 「アサクリ問題」（いわゆる「弥助問題」）—CLIL と DEI の観点から見えるもの・隠されているもの— 『比較日本学教育研究部門研究年報』 21.



Prof Ulrich VOLZ
Professor in Economics

The SOAS Department of Economics hosted the Seventh Annual Conference of the Japan Economy Network on 28-29 August 2025. The conference programme comprised eight sessions with 18 papers selected through an open call for papers. It also featured a special panel discussion on monetary policy challenges. Professor Jenny Corbett, a renowned scholar based at the University of Oxford and Australian National University, provided a thought-provoking keynote speech by on "Japan's Economy: Success or Failure?". The conference received financial support from the SOAS Japan Research Centre.

This year's conference marked the tenth anniversary of the JEN and a return to London a decade after the network was established during a workshop on "Economic Stagnation and Deflation: Challenges for Japan in Comparative Perspective" hosted by the SOAS Department of Economics in July 2015.

The goal of JEN is to promote research on the Japanese economy and foster exchange between researchers with an active research interest in the Japanese economy. The JEN is an informal network open to researchers from academia, think tanks, international organisations, central banks, governments, NGOs and the private sector.

Previous annual JEN conferences were hosted by Hitotsubashi University, Columbia Business School, the Bank of Japan, the University of Zurich, the Asian Development Bank Institute, and the Japanese-German Center Berlin. Esteemed keynote speakers included Masaaki Shirakawa, Nobuko Nagase, Takatoshi Ito, Naoyuki Yoshino, Janet Hunter, Sayuri Shirai and Norihiro Takahashi.

The JEN is hosted by the SOAS Department of Economics. For further information on the JEN or to become a member, please visit the [JEN website](#).



Seventh Annual Conference of the Japan Economy Network Group
Photo on 28-29 August 2025.



CONNECT WITH THE JRC

The SOAS Japan Research Centre is the forum for Japan-related activities at SOAS University of London.

JRC Annual Review

Current and past editions of the JRC Annual Review are available to download from:

www.soas.ac.uk/jrc

We produce a News and Updates eBulletin which provides information about the activities of the SOAS Japan Research Centre.

The eBulletin highlights the latest events, funding and knowledge being shared and other topical opportunities that we think will be of interest to you.

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- 'Noh master Hideta Kitazawa during a demonstration at SOAS' - p. 9