

Sophia University Presents
MONUMENTA NIPPONICA
80th Anniversary Symposium

Changing Perspectives on Area Studies

Date: 6 October 2018 (Saturday)

Time: 12:00–19:00

Venue: Sophia University, Building 2, Room 1702

NOTES

PROGRAM

12:00– Doors Open (Exhibit)

12:45–13:00 Welcome Address

SAKUMA Tsutomu, Chancellor, Sophia University

13:00–14:30 Roundtable Discussion:

“The Present and Future of Japanese and Area Studies”

Bruce BATTEN

Resident Director, Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies,
Stanford University

Susan L. BURNS

Director, Center for East Asian Studies, University of Chicago

Bettina GRAMLICH-OKA

Chief Editor, *Monumenta Nipponica*, Sophia University

HIRAFUJI Kikuko

Director, Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics, Kokugakuin University

Barbara HOLTHUS

Deputy Director, German Institute for Japanese Studies

Cécile SAKAI

Director, French Research Institute on Japan, Maison franco-japonaise

15:00–17:00 Panel Presentations

“Environment and Ecology in Japan: Approaches and Methodologies”

ZAIKI Masumi (Seikei University)

Reconstruction of Climate in Japan during the Nineteenth Century Based on
Old Instrumental Meteorological Records

HASHIMOTO Yūta (National Museum of Japanese History)

Digital Humanities Approaches to the Study of Historical Earthquakes

Gregory SMITS (Pennsylvania State University)

Earthquakes and History

Aike P. ROTS (University of Oslo)

Approaching “Green Religion”: Wishful Thinking, Skepticism, and Beyond

Hitomi TONOMURA (University of Michigan)

“Ecology” of Leaves and Twigs: Gendering the Economy of Late Medieval
Communities

17:00–19:00 Reception

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

The Present and Future of Japanese and Area Studies

Since its founding in 1938, *Monumenta Nipponica*'s mission has been to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and presentation of recent research on Japan, including translations of Japanese sources and texts. MN's cover was formerly adorned with a Japanese title, *Nihon bunkashi* or *Nihon bunka shisō*, but in fact the journal's purview has always been broader than just culture: it has served the field of Japanese studies as a whole. But is that field—and are related ones such as Asian studies, or more broadly, area studies—still viable amid today's political, economic, and cultural currents? In this roundtable discussion, scholars from different regions—Europe, Japan, and North America—and disciplines—history, literature, and gender studies—confront these and other questions central to *Monumenta Nipponica*'s past, present, and future.

PARTICIPANTS:

Bruce BATTEN

Resident Director, Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies,
Stanford University

Susan L. BURNS

Director, Center for East Asian Studies, University of Chicago

Bettina GRAMLICH-OKA

Chief Editor, *Monumenta Nipponica*, Sophia University

HIRAFUJI Kikuko

Director, Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics, Kokugakuin University

Barbara HOLTHUS

Deputy Director, German Institute for Japanese Studies

Cécile SAKAI

Director, French Research Institute on Japan, Maison franco-japonaise

PRESENTATIONS

Environment and Ecology in Japan: Approaches and Methodologies

In this second part of the symposium, participants—again, from Europe, Japan, and North America—showcase new models for area studies by focusing on an emerging interdisciplinary field: environment and ecology in Japan. Active researchers from both the humanities and the sciences introduce their approaches to and methodologies in the study of historical and contemporary environmental issues within the archipelago, highlighting a range of subjects including climate change, earthquakes, religion, and gender. (Each presentation will be approximately fifteen minutes in length.)

PANEL PRESENTATIONS:

ZAIKI Masumi (Seikei University)

Reconstruction of Climate in Japan during the Nineteenth Century Based on Old Instrumental Meteorological Records

HASHIMOTO Yūta (National Museum of Japanese History)

Digital Humanities Approaches to the Study of Historical Earthquakes

Q&A Session

Gregory SMITS (Pennsylvania State University)

Earthquakes and History

Aike P. ROTS (University of Oslo)

Approaching “Green Religion”: Wishful Thinking, Skepticism, and Beyond

Hitomi TONOMURA (University of Michigan)

“Ecology” of Leaves and Twigs: Gendering the Economy of Late Medieval Communities

Q&A Session

ABSTRACTS

Reconstruction of Climate in Japan during the Nineteenth Century Based on Old Instrumental Meteorological Records

ZAIKI MASUMI
Seikei University

Knowledge of the past climate is one of the keys to interpreting the present climate and making predictions about the future. Imaging and digitization of old, paper-based instrumental meteorological records must be carried out before these records are lost to decay. Such “data rescue” is now taking place all over the world. This talk introduces research involving the recovery of instrumental temperature and pressure data for locations in Japan from the nineteenth century, a period for which no instrumental records were believed to exist. The recovered data were originally collected by Dutch, German, French, British, American, and Russian visitors to Japan working in various capacities and also by Dutch-trained Japanese astronomers involved in calendar making for the Tokugawa shogunate. Whereas previously the instrumental record had gone back only as far as 1872—when the Japan Meteorological Agency was founded—the recovered data extend the beginning of the record back to 1819.

The recovered temperature and pressure data were converted to modern units and digitized into computer-readable form. The pressure data were corrected for temperature, height, and gravity where needed. The temperature data were homogenized to compensate for changes in recording location. Then, both data sets were homogenized to account for varying observation schedules. The corrected and homogenized data were shown to be reasonable after further testing for homogeneity and comparison with modern data, and they also showed good agreement with reconstructed temperatures from old diaries. The recovered data were used for the preliminary calculation of a representative temperature series for Japan. The results support evidence for the existence of a remarkable warm epoch during the 1850s, after a cold spell in the 1820s to 1840s that is assumed to have marked the end of the Little Ice Age in Japan.

ABSTRACTS

Digital Humanities Approaches to the Study of Historical Earthquakes

HASHIMOTO YŪTA
National Museum of Japanese History

Written historical documents can reveal the scale, location, and damage of past earthquakes. Since instrumental observation of earthquakes in Japan began only after the end of the nineteenth century, Japanese seismologists collaborate with historians and archivists in order to more accurately study earthquakes that occurred prior to the use of seismology. Most important works in the field, such as *Dai Nihon jishin shiryō* and *Shinshū Nihon jishin shiryō*, are the results of this long-term collaboration.

Studies of these historical earthquakes also rely on the traditional method used in most historical research: close reading of documents by experts. In this talk, I explore several alternative methods for studying historical earthquakes that make use of technologies developed by the digital humanities movement since the mid-2000s.

The first method I examine is crowdsourced transcription via Minna de Honkoku (<https://honkoku.org/>), a project focused on historical earthquake records that was developed by the Historical Earthquake Study Group at Kyoto University in January 2017. As of April 2018, more than four million characters had been transcribed on Minna de Honkoku by approximately 4,000 registered users.

The second method I examine is one that integrates the tools and methods of geographic information science (GIS) into historical research. In particular, I discuss how historical GIS technologies can be used in the analysis of the large amounts of textual data created on Minna de Honkoku.

ABSTRACTS

Earthquakes and History

GREGORY SMITS
Pennsylvania State University

Earthquakes occur when part of the earth's crust moves or shakes rapidly, typically by slippage along faults (discontinuities). Seismicity is the local distribution of earthquakes with respect to time and magnitude, and it constitutes a natural hazard vis-à-vis human societies. When society and seismicity interact destructively on a large scale, the result is natural disaster. Societies are complex systems whose future trajectory is often difficult or impossible to predict. Likewise, earthquakes are complex phenomena whose occurrence and effects are difficult to predict. When they result in natural disaster, earthquakes often function as stress tests for societies. The lens of seismicity therefore provides a useful perspective on the study of social life, both at the time an earthquake disaster arises and over time as the effects of the disaster play out. The intersection of seismicity and society also functions as the intersection of two kinds of time: human historical time and geological time. Taking Japan as its focus, this talk outlines some of the key challenges and topics in writing histories of earthquakes and in writing about the impact of earthquakes on history.

ABSTRACTS

Approaching “Green Religion”: Wishful Thinking, Skepticism, and Beyond

AIKE P. ROTS
University of Oslo

In the past decades, religious actors worldwide have expressed a concern for the natural environment. Sacred texts have been reinterpreted in the light of environmental problems, places of worship have been subject to nature-conservation initiatives, and ritual traditions have been reconceptualized as “ancient sustainable practices.” In many cases, environmental issues have provided religious organizations and leaders with new legitimacy and served to justify various ideological agendas. As I show in this presentation, scholars of religion have played an ambivalent role in this process, not least in Japan. Some of them have been actively involved with the “greening” of religion by providing readings of foundational texts that justify such creative reinterpretation—no doubt motivated by an optimistic belief that religions contain ethical and spiritual resources that may help us to overcome present-day problems. Others have criticized and deconstructed such ideas, arguing that these interpretations are anachronistic, and have accused religious organizations of greenwashing. In this presentation, I argue for a third approach that evades the pitfalls of both wishful thinking and skepticism. Religions may not be able to tell us how to solve environmental problems; for this, a combination of political, economic, and technological change is needed, and it remains to be seen to what extent this can be realized. However, as the Anthropocene casts its shadow upon us, the study of religious practices may well gain new importance—not because it can offer solutions, but because it may help us understand how people adapt, survive, and create meaning, even in life-threatening conditions.

ABSTRACTS

“Ecology” of Leaves and Twigs: Gendering the Economy of Late Medieval Communities

HITOMI TONOMURA
University of Michigan

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, residents of Imabori Village, in Ōmi Province, were concerned about the environmental degradation and sustainability of natural resources. At that time, the term “ecology” had not yet been invented in the West and, likewise, the word *ekorojī* was unknown on the Japanese archipelago. But economic reality prompted the residents to take proactive measures to manage their resources, down to leaves and twigs. In locally produced written sources, which include rules and regulations, land-transfer documents, and records of communal land management and conflicts with neighboring communities, residents displayed an acute awareness and an increasing anxiety concerning the transformative relationship between material realities and livelihoods. The writings suggest the ecological implications of the social and political authority that characterized the hierarchy of human relations in the community.

I revisit my earlier research on this community—published in 1992—but this time from an environmental perspective. In this endeavor, the historical sources, most of which were written by men, still pose serious interpretive problems caused by gender imbalance. While I still look furtively for any mention of females and their activities, I give more serious consideration to the assigned or expected roles of men as men and assess their privileges, their responsibility, and the opportunities that shaped their manhood in the operations of the community. Until recently, Western academic discussions of ecology have often omitted a consideration of gender or have been heavily invested in aligning pristine nature with women, including their bodies. In this talk, I take a material approach and consider the politico-religious system that actively promoted economic sustainability.

NOTES



7-1 Kioi-chō, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-8554
TEL: 81-3-3238-3543; FAX: 81-3-3238-3835
E-mail: mnooffice@sophia.ac.jp
PRINTED IN JAPAN
KOMIYAMA PRINTING Co., TOKYO



上智大学
SOPHIA UNIVERSITY