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Sophia University

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Conference language: English

Keynote Address

**Cultivating a Revolutionary Imagination:
Communist Women's Mobilization in
Mid-20th-Century Eastern Bengal and Assam**

Elora Shehabuddin

University of California, Berkeley

President, Association for Asian Studies (2026–27)

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Cover art: Bangladeshi women's embroidered quilt work (*nakshi kantha*)

ASCJ 2026 · Room Assignment Schedule · Sophia University, Building 2

ROOM→	2-401	2-402	2-403	2-404	2-405	2-406	2-407	2-408	2-409	2-410	2-411	2-412	2-413	2-414	2-415
Capacity→	249	60	60	60	60	60	60	80	100	102	28	20	20	161	100
► Sunday, July 5															
Block 5 10:00–11:30	5-G Form and Formation: Reading Japanese Television as Social and Aesthetic Test Site	5-C Rethinking Youth Media in the Sinophone	5-E Under the Radar: Quiet Interventions in East Asian Painting	5-F Alternative Translation Practices Across Media and Cultures: Retranslations, Scanlations, and Simulpubs	5-M Individual Session: Identity, Gender, and Social Negotiation in Transnational Contexts	5-J After Growth: Community Paradigms for Japan's Demographic Transition	5-K Ethnographies of Margins and Moralities	5-L Individual Session: Art, Politics, and Historical Networks in Asia	5-A Demon Hunters and the Transnational Turn in Asian Popular Culture	5-B Evolving Traditions in the History of Japanese Health Care	5-I Tracing the Shifting Role of the <i>bishou</i> in Religious and Intellectual Translation in China: From Buddhist Scribes Through Christian Intermediaries to Modern Translators	—	LOUNGE	5-D End of Empire Migration After the Asia-Pacific War: New Perspectives and Comparative Approaches	5-H Crisis or Continuity: Contemporary Japanese Conservatism Revisited
Block 6 11:45–13:15	6-N Roundtable: Listening to and Writing with Sound: Rethinking Japanese Studies Through Sonic Practices	6-B Materiality of City Landscape in Twentieth Century Korea	6-D Revisiting the Global and the Local in East Asian History: From the Western Pacific Perspectives	6-E Individual Session: Memory, Culture, and Future-Making	6-F Subtle Hands: Translating, Transforming, and Reframing Art and Literature Across Japanese History	6-J (Un)Becoming Asian: Reclaiming the Lives and Memories Beyond Dominant Narratives	6-M Individual Session: Governance, Social Order, and Everyday Life in East Asia	6-C Technologies of the Body and Its Measurement	6-A Reframing Hallyu: Transnational, Digital, and Glocal Futures of K-Culture and K-Identity	6-G Infrastructures of Modern Life: Gender, Technology, and the Spaces of Cold War Asia	6-L Masculinity and Stardom in Postwar Japanese Cinema	6-I Encoded Politics: Private and Public Emotions in Chinese Poetry, From Qin to Qing	LOUNGE	6-K The Emotional City: Memory, Sound, and Belonging in Tokyo's Liminal Spaces	6-H Reimagining Social Movement Theory Through East Asian Feminisms
13:15–14:00	Lunch Room Session with LOUISE INGHAM (Routledge)	LUNCH BREAK													
Block 7 14:00–15:30	7-M Roundtable: Possibilities of "Queer History" in Japan	7-A Reverberations of the Lost Decade in the Style and Theory of Japanese Cinema	7-G Media, Mediation and Identity in Japanese Literature and Art, 1885–2005	7-H Tales: Chinese Narratology Across Disciplines	7-I The Historical Formation of the Notion "Not Wanting to Be a Burden" in Japan: Perspectives From Samurai Instructional Texts and Narratives of "ubasute"	7-J Gender and Social Transformation in Contemporary China: The Practices and Dilemmas of Rural Women Balancing Productive and Reproductive Labor	7-F Cold War East Eurasian Cultural Diplomacy and the Geopolitics of Literature	7-B Positioning Taiwan in the Post-War International Order: Local and Transnational Perspectives	7-C Play and Sexuality in Japanese Popular Culture	7-L Japan's Screen Encounters With the World	7-E Engendering Relevance, Moving Beyond Present State: Critical Perspectives on the Cultural Heritage of Indonesia	—	LOUNGE	7-K Individual Session: War, Empire, and Transnational Lives in Modern East Asia	7-D Mobilities Between Hong Kong and Southeast Asia: Networks, Regulations, and Entanglements in the Twentieth Century
Block 8 15:45–17:15	8-K Individual Session: Religion and Spirituality in the Making of Modern Japan	8-B The Brokered Empires: Go-Betweens and Iberian Networks in East Asia, 1500–1800	8-C Sound and Text Across Borders: The Re-Creation of East Asian Musical and Literary Traditions	8-D Shaping the Empire: Knowledge Production and Translation of Labor, Nature, and Techniques in Imperial Japan	8-F Aesthetics of Crisis: Reimagining Values Through Chinese Literature	8-I Cultural Practices and Structural Transformations in Myanmar Society: A Sociological and Anthropological Exploration	8-L Individual Session: Literary Tradition, Authorship, and Reception	8-E Traumatic Transgressors: Comparing Female Selfhood in Films About Wartime and Neoliberal Japan	8-G Japan-Taiwan Relations in the Changing Geopolitical Landscape of the Indo-Pacific	8-M Ghosts in the Machine: Negotiating Memory, Technology, and Identity in Japanese and South Korean Popular Culture	8-A Sounding Chineseness: Translation, Adaptation, and Hybridity Across the Sinophone World	—	LOUNGE	8-J Homelessness (Re)shaped in Contemporary Japan	8-H Plural Temporalities: Notions of Time in Thought and Practice From the Edo to the Early Meiji Period

question: how does law function when enforcement is weak or absent? It argues that in Qing China, the gap between law and practice transformed prohibition into a hollow symbol, allowing vice to embed itself more deeply in society.

3) (i-274) Hanne Deleu, University of California/The University of Tokyo

Killer Breasts and Poisonous Milk: Wetnurses as the Antithesis of Ideal Mothers in Modern Japan

In this paper, I examine how wetnurses came to be depicted as the antithesis of the ideal wise and selfless mother in modern Japan. With prewar infant mortality far outstripping Western rates, medical experts and educators identified the persistence of various premodern childcare practices as contributors to this “national scandal.” Wet nursing, which was predominantly performed by young women from lower socio-economic classes and rural households, was seen as particularly problematic. By analyzing prewar pediatric literature and popular print media, I explore how social commentators and medical practitioners blended premodern beliefs, Western understandings of hygiene and nutrition, and modern moralities surrounding motherhood to paint wet nursing as outdated and selfish at best, and downright evil at worst. The commercialization of their “natural gift” of lactation and the alleged killing of their wards with diseased or poisonous breastmilk contrasted the ideal of modern motherhood, which was characterized as motivated by unconditional love and rationalized through childcare education. I argue that despite their portrayal as a threat to modern motherhood and the health of the nation, wetnurses served an indispensable role in public discourses on childcare and motherhood. They symbolized premodern childcare practices, which often centered around communal parenting rather than individual motherhood, and as such became archaic archetypes that served as instructional models.

4) (i-343) Megan Hanyu Yao, University of Cambridge

Kitchen Be Her Name: Rural Farming Women’s Food Labor in Imperial Japan 1925–1935

This paper investigates rural farming women’s domestic food labor in Imperial Japan (1925–1935), consisting of all kitchen and para-kitchen work, such as foodstuff procurement, cooking, and kitchen space maintenance, among many others. The kitchen was the main stage of a rural farming woman’s daily work and life, an enclosed space that relied solely on open fires, yet without ventilation and lighting. Laboring over eight hours a day in that space, the women were constantly exposed to smoke, heat, and fire hazards. Yet, literature dedicated to their food labor and kitchen work remains rare. This paper attempts a systematic definition of Japanese farming women’s food labor by examining the components of the laboring process and exploring the women’s relationships with their kitchens and with food. It interrogates how the Imperial state, in the name of hygiene, nutrition, and efficiency, co-opted such food labor for its ultranationalist political agenda. It also discusses how these women adapted and adjusted to their changing relationships with the kitchen and food, rendering food labor a realm for resilience and resistance. Setting the backdrop in Akita Prefecture during the prewar state-directed lifestyle improvement campaigns—Seikatsu Kaizen Undō and Daidokoro Kaizen Undō—the paper recovers rural farming women’s life ways through archival research of newspapers, women’s magazines, girls’ high school textbooks, manuals, and proceedings from organization meetings.

Session Code: 6-N

Room: 2-401

Roundtable 2: Listening to and Writing with Sound: Rethinking Japanese Studies through Sonic Practices

Panelists:

Iris Haukamp, Tohoku University (Organizer)

Irina Holca, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

Jeremy Corral, Bordeaux Montaigne University

Masayuki Iwase, Independent Scholar

How can listening to and writing with sound deepen our understanding of Japan and Japanese Studies? This roundtable brings together contributors to *Listening to Japan* (Haukamp & Smith, Routledge), which explores how sound mediates culture, identity, and everyday life across historical and contemporary contexts. Rather than treating sound as peripheral, the participants position it as central to Japan’s histories and practices, asking how sonic approaches can reveal dynamics “invisible” within dominant paradigms of text and image in area studies. Taking listening as both sensory and analytical, the discussion asks whether sound—understood as a form of writing—might act as a shared language that redefines cultural and political boundaries and offers new ways of researching and representing Japan. Irina Holca examines post-3.11

Tōhoku translation and performance projects where poetic recitation and vernacular voicework become acts of care and community, highlighting ethical and gendered dimensions of listening. Jeremy Corral discusses Japan's postwar years, when electronic sound entered homes and cities, shaping everyday sensibilities and subjectivities. Masayuki Iwase presents sound art adopting "sonic materialism" to sense the force of locally specific "minor noise" amid encroaching "major signals" of a global mnemotechnical system. Together, the discussants consider how listening to and writing with sound can expand Japanese Studies, attentive to the auditory dimensions of cultural life and to the many ways people make sense of the world through sound.

[Block 7] 14:00–15:30

Session Code: 7-A

Room: 2-402

Panel Code: p-032

Title: Reverberations of the *Lost Decade* in the Style and Theory of Japanese Cinema

Abstract:

Our panel examines the stylistic and thematic trajectories of Japanese cinema from Japan's "lost decade." We focus on the style and themes of filmmakers associated with what Aaron Gerow has described as "detached style": eschewing familiar patterns of editing and narration in favor of an ambiguous, demanding style within familiar genre frameworks like horror and crime. These films articulate anxieties of social alienation, media attachment, and industrial decay in the wake of Japan's economic downturn, transforming social interactions in the wake of new media, and the trauma of the Aum Shinrikyo subway attack. First, Adam Silverman works through testimonies of contemporary independent filmmakers to argue that Sōmai Shinji's long-take style is a key origin point for the "detached style" of the 1990s. Next, William Carroll uses his interviews with filmmakers from Rikkyō University's 8mm film collective to examine their stylistic and thematic transformation in 1990s Japan. Finally, Lindsay Jolivet examines ecocritical themes in Kurosawa Kiyoshi's films from the 1990s to the present to argue that they express concerns about nonhuman life alongside the degradation of human society. Finally, discussant Takuya Tsunoda generates a conversation between these papers about the stylistic and thematic transformation in independent Japanese cinema in response to the sociocultural realities of the "lost decade."

Organizer: William Carroll, University of Alberta

Chair: William Carroll, University of Alberta

Discussant: Takuya Tsunoda, Columbia University

1) Adam Silverman, Yale University

Sōmai Shinji and the Genealogy of the "Detached Style"

Independent and arthouse Japanese cinema of the 1990s is frequently characterized by what has been termed the "detached style": aesthetic strategies marked by long shots and long takes, narrative obscurity that rejects the Classical Hollywood axiom of clarity, and resistance to the postmodern stylistic indulgences of the 1980s. While this sensibility is often associated with the filmmakers who emerged from Rikkyō University—such as Aoyama Shinji, Kurosawa Kiyoshi, and Shiota Akihiko—this paper traces key antecedents in the films of Sōmai Shinji, whose work in the preceding decade already demonstrates the hallmarks of oblique narration, formal distance, and affective restraint that come to define the later "detached style." This paper surveys the landscape of cinematic detachment in Sōmai's oeuvre and considers how his aesthetic strategies—particularly the extreme articulation of his one scene, one shot style—anticipate and inform, but also differ from, those of the Rikkyō Nouvelle Vague. In addition, it situates Sōmai alongside other contemporary directors who similarly contribute to the formation of the detached style, including Kitano Takeshi, Kawase Naomi, and Hashiguchi Ryōsuke. Through comparative close-analysis and testimony from contemporaneous filmmakers and crew, this study reconsiders detachment genealogically as a broader aesthetic tendency within late-20th-century Japanese cinema both across the height of the bubble and the ensuing malaise of its eventual burst.

3) (i-256) Alina Ivanova, University of Cambridge

Creation of Diasporic Practices Amongst Koryo-saram and Joseonjok as a Method of Survival

This paper will examine the emergence of diasporic practices among Koryo-saram (ethnic Koreans in the former Soviet Union) and Joseonjok (ethnic Koreans in China) as strategies of cultural survival within shifting political and social environments. Beginning with their historical migrations, Korean settlement in the Russian Far East in the mid-19th century followed by forced deportation to Central Asia in 1937, and Korean migration to Northeast China from the late 19th century amid Japanese colonial expansion, the paper will delve into how these two communities developed distinctive modes of ethnic continuity under foreign rule. The study will focus on two central diasporic practices: traditional celebrations and language preservation. Festive rituals such as Chuseok and Seollal persisted as communal anchor points, reinforcing ethnic solidarity despite state attempts at assimilation in both Soviet Central Asia and the People's Republic of China. Simultaneously, efforts to preserve the Korean language, whether through clandestine family transmission among Koryo-saram after the closure of Korean schools in the USSR or state-supported bilingual education among Joseonjok in Yanbian served as mechanisms of cultural resilience. By comparing these practices, the paper will argue that diasporic cultural production functioned not as passive tradition but as an active method of survival, adaptation, and identity negotiation with authorities.

4) (i-446) Satomi Mizoguchi, Doshisha University

In-Between Worlds: Life Stories of Children Fathered by Men from Korea in the Japan-Occupied Netherlands East Indies

This paper examines the life stories of children born to “local women” and men from the Empire of Japan, including those from its colonies, Korea and Taiwan, during the Japan-occupied former Netherlands East Indies (current Republic of Indonesia). Most mothers were Eurasians who repatriated to the Netherlands after Indonesian independence, and many children grew up without knowing their paternal roots until middle age. This study focuses on children whose fathers were Korean civilian personnel attached to the Imperial Japanese Armed Forces. Often marginalized in colonial and postcolonial histories, these individuals later “discovered” their origins and negotiated their roots in postwar society. Rather than situating them within a single nation, the paper traces their lives across multiple empires and postwar nation-states, highlighting how growing up in the Netherlands shaped their experiences. Based on oral histories from second- and third-generation descendants and archival sources, the study adopts a transimperial perspective to explore their position “in-between” empires and nation-states. Focusing on their voices, it shows how they navigated multiple forms of marginalization and social negotiation, and demonstrates the value of personal narratives in understanding layered imperialisms and the complexities of postwar life. This study aims to contribute to rethinking the boundaries of colonial and postcolonial memory.

Session Code: 7-L

Room: 2-410

Panel Code: p-086

Title: Japan's Screen Encounters with the World

Abstract:

This panel explores how transnational filmmaking operates through infrastructures of mediation: technological, linguistic, industrial, and affective. From the perspectives of industrial and infrastructural international co-production and issues of representation and linguistic mediation, the papers trace continuities in the material and discursive processes that enable Japanese cinema to move across borders. The first part examines how production infrastructures emerge and evolve across time. Haukamp reconsiders 1930s Japan–Germany co-productions as formative experiments that tested new ways of working across linguistic and industrial boundaries, establishing templates later echoed in formal frameworks. Holtzman analyses how French funding programs support contemporary Japanese auteurs, revealing the institutional and linguistic negotiations embedded in transnational production systems. The third paper turns to the linguistic mediation of power/cultural dynamics as Lee tackles representation in code-switching in recent teleseries featuring plurilingual American protagonists. Investigating cinema and television as rich sites of cultural production, both address cross-cultural negotiation over visibility and cultural hierarchies. Taken together, the papers show how infrastructures—material, institutional, and linguistic—shape and sustain Japan's screen encounters with the world.

Organizer: Hannah Holtzman, Sophia University

Chair: Hannah Holtzman, Sophia University

Discussant: Megha Wadhwa, Sophia University

1) Iris Haukamp, Tohoku University

Transnational Filmmaking as Infrastructural Continuity: Japan–Germany Co-Production Networks in the 1930s

This paper reconsiders the short-lived collaboration between Japan and Germany in the 1930s as a formative experiment in transnational film production. Rather than approaching co-productions such as *Atarashiki tsuchi* (Die Tochter des Samurai, 1937) and related projects through the familiar lenses of propaganda or cultural diplomacy, I examine them as sites where distinct infrastructures of filmmaking—technical, linguistic, industrial, and personal—were built, tested, and repurposed. Drawing on archival sources, production documents, and the autobiography of a German cinematographer who worked repeatedly with Japanese studios, I trace how experience gained on one project created procedural and communicative templates for subsequent collaborations and shaped new routines of working across languages and media systems. These informal infrastructures of translation, production practice, and circulating know-how often mattered more than official frameworks, creating practical pathways for cross-border work long before “co-production” existed as a formal model. Viewing these films through the lens of infrastructural continuity highlights the everyday negotiations—linguistic, professional, and creative—that sustained transnational collaboration and anticipated the institutional and aesthetic forms that continue to structure global filmmaking today.

2) Hannah Holtzman, Sophia University

Subsidizing Auteurs: French Production Support for Contemporary Japanese Filmmakers

This paper examines how a range of recent funding schemes from the French Centre national du cinéma et de l’image animée (CNC) support transnational filmmaking with a focus on engagements with Japanese auteur filmmakers such as Kore-eda Hirokazu, Kurosawa Kiyoshi, and Kawase Naomi, among others in recent years. The CNC funding schemes also reveal the soft power aims of such support with language referencing the *rayonnement* (influence) of France abroad. While industrial studies of cinematic co-productions often focus on policy, economics, and reception using quantitative approaches, this paper examines the films themselves as case studies with inquiry into stylistics and discussion of challenges of working across linguistic and cultural borders. I argue that Japan’s unique role in cinematic exchange with France, as neither a neighboring EU state nor one with postcolonial ties but one with a significant history of past exchanges across the arts, grants it a distinctive status allowing for flexibility and creativity in co-production, even if the range of opportunities for support is more limited. In the absence of a bilateral co-production agreement between Japan and France, filmmakers in Japan may benefit from French support for their projects and thus indirectly contribute to contemporary efforts to promote Japanese cinema abroad while also complicating understandings of Japanese and French cinemas in an increasingly transnational production and exhibition context.

3) Heidi Ka-Sin Lee, Sophia University

Negotiating Ethnocentrism Through the (Asian-)American Outsider: The Plurilingual Structure of Power in “Pachinko,” “Tokyo Vice,” and “Expats”

With a focus on the interanimating effects of code-switching and power negotiation, this paper addresses the cultural implications of characterizing (Asian-)Americans as inferior outsiders in Asian countries in three recent teleseries that feature plurilingual protagonists, namely *Tokyo Vice* (2022–2024), *Pachinko* (2022), and *Expats* (2024). Whereas *Expats* unwittingly reenacts the “confused American tourists on exotic continents” trope in *The Sheltering Sky* and *Lost in Translation*, *Tokyo Vice*, and *Pachinko* place their savvy American protagonists in Asian workplaces that constantly throw linguistic and cultural challenges at them. All these series actively engage Asian urban spaces and supporting characters in questioning the protagonists’ American points of view and modulating their superiority complex. Despite the immensity of these narrative and linguistic obstacles, the series’ neoliberal perspectives foreground individual identities through narrativizing the protagonists’ delicate balance of two or more cultures and emotional struggles, underscoring the centrality of American individualism in representation. This paper will examine how the (Asian-)American outsider in contemporary transnational television series functions as a strategic representational tool in the streaming era to manage screen diversity and negotiate ethnocentrism and more specifically, how the frequent code-switching of American protagonists and local supporting characters reflect unequal power structures.