



BAJS
British Association
for Japanese Studies

英国日本
研究協会

BAJS 2025

50th Anniversary Conference

Postgraduate Teaching Centre, Cardiff University

3-5 September 2025

Welcome to the BAJS 2025, 50th Anniversary Conference

The BAJS conference is the largest and most important UK event for the presentation and discussion of new research on Japanese Studies. BAJS conferences attract participants from institutions, not only in the UK, but also from elsewhere in Europe, Japan, the United States and further afield. They provide an invaluable opportunity to share and interrogate cutting-edge research, and stimulate new collaborations and networks, thereby sowing and fertilising the seeds of future research. This conference is therefore essential to the research infrastructure of Japanese Studies in the UK.

A PhD workshop in Japanese Studies (2-3 September) is being held alongside the BAJS 2025, 50th Anniversary Conference. In this workshop 20 PhD candidates present their work to and gain discipline-specific feedback on their projects from senior scholars in Japanese studies, through presentations, in-depth one-on-one mentoring meetings, and other networking opportunities.

The organisers would like to express our sincere gratitude to The Japan Foundation and to the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation for their generous support of the BAJS 2025 Conference and the PhD Workshop in Japanese Studies.

The BAJS 2025 Conference Organising Committee

Ruselle Meade
Ian Rapley
Yutaka Yoshida
Miho Inaba
Lauren Constance



Wednesday 3 September 5:30-7:00 PM

Drinks reception

- Professor David Clarke (School of Modern Languages, Cardiff University)
- Mr Yasumaro Haruta (Embassy of Japan in the UK)
- Professor Peter Kornicki (British Association for Japanese Studies)
- Mr Kaoru Miyamoto (The Japan Foundation)

Thursday 4 September - 9:00-10:30 AM

C1: A Critical Disaster Studies Approach to Japan: Research Directions

Organiser: Paola Cavaliere (University of Milan)

Chair: Paola Cavaliere (University of Milan)

- “Toward a Critical Disaster Studies in Japan and Beyond: Issues in Theory and Research (**Paola Cavaliere**, University of Milan)
- Older People and Disasters in Ageing society of Japan (**Junko Otani**, University of Osaka / University of Melbourne)
- Lessons from Japan to manage the disaster in Valencia: How gender-focused disaster research helped to understand the floods in Spain and impacted the media (**Carmen Grau Vila**, Waseda University)
- Ecocritical Analyses of Japanese Disaster Narratives (**Emily Bush**, Cardiff University)

C2: Education under Challenge in Contemporary Japan: Inequality, Migration, History and Identity

Organiser: Peter Cave (University of Manchester)

Chair: Peter Cave (University of Manchester)

- How do the financial disadvantages experienced by single-mother households in Japan impact upon their children’s educational outcomes? An exploratory qualitative study (**Hitomi Imamura**, University of West London)
- Minority teacher educators in Japan: A decolonial perspective (**Yuka Kitayama**, University of Osaka/ University of Leicester)
- De-Whitening Japanese ‘Global Education’: Lessons Inside International Baccalaureate Teacher Training at Universities (**Akira Shah**, Keio University/University of Oxford)
- Controversial History and National Identity in Japan’s School Textbooks, 2006-2025 (**Peter Cave**, University of Manchester)

identifying factors that heighten their risks; and lessons from gender-focused post-2011 disaster research, whose insights could inform gender-inclusive reconstruction practices following the 2024 flood disaster in Valencia, Spain. Finally, we will examine ecocriticism as a tool for analyzing Japanese disaster narratives in literature, film, and media, illustrating how disasters can disrupt yet also inspire new possibilities. This panel seeks to deepen our critical understanding of disasters and develop integrated, context-sensitive strategies for risk management and resilience in Japan and beyond.

Toward a Critical Disaster Studies in Japan and Beyond: Issues in Theory and Research

Paola Cavaliere, *University of Milan*

At the heart of Japan's disaster prevention and management, which serves as a model for global initiatives, lies a focus on policies and practices grounded in technological and structured systems to address disasters across all phases through government-led institutional frameworks. However, over the past two decades, this approach has faced increasing challenges due to the growing scale, multi-hazard nature, and cascading impacts of disaster events. Moreover, the impact of the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear incident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant during the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011, signalled a tipping point and the end of the distinction between disastrous events caused by natural hazards and those anthropogenic. Drawing upon such epistemological evolution and related recent sociological studies of disaster in Japan, this paper lays the theoretical framework for the presentations in the session. It offers an outline of the evolution in the sociological study of disaster in Japan and the shift toward interdisciplinary, critical, context-based approaches to disaster, risk, vulnerability, and resilience that explore how pre-existing power relations in government, policy, and community stakeholders before disasters shape the event and the post-disaster outcomes in the short and long terms. This approach aims to enhance our understanding of disasters and foster more integrated and context-sensitive strategies for managing risk and building resilience in Japan and beyond, by examining enduring questions concerning the long-term availability of resources and power that shape their social construction.

Older People and Disasters in Ageing society of Japan

Junko Otani, *University of Osaka/University of Melbourne*

Japan's ageing society faces a series of disasters that put older individuals at greater risk for poor mental health and diminished cognitive function. Despite this vulnerability, older adults play crucial roles in disaster response and management, serving as valuable knowledge holders and leaders in resilience and recovery practices. As of May 8, 2024, Japan's Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare reports that 12.3% of people aged 65 and over have dementia, while 15.5% experience mild cognitive impairment (MCI). The number of dementia patients, which stood at 9.64 million in 2020, is projected to rise to 28.28 million by 2070. Over the next 50 years, dementia cases are expected to triple for both genders. Examining cases such as the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, the 2024 New Year Noto Peninsula Earthquake, and the COVID-19 pandemic will provide insights into the experiences of older people during disasters. This analysis aims to identify factors that increase risks for