Welcome Message

Welcome to the fourth April edition of the CJS e-Newsletter. This week we bring you the latest developments in Japan both on the ground and online. In this issue we analyse the escalating COVID19 cases in Japan, accompanied by a new report from Nadine Willems in Tokyo. Following the mandatory Easter ‘staycation’, this week’s edition invites you to explore the world through a Japanese lens with our theme of travel. You can find a message from CJS Director Professor Simon Kaner on the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures website and hear more from our SISJAC colleagues on their monthly e-bulletin.

Eye on Japan: Interpreting the Spike | The Traditional & the Digital

Since our last edition, the situation in Japan has dramatically altered. Infections passed 10,000 on Saturday, with Tokyo being the worst affected area and doctors warning the healthcare system may not be able to take the strain. With ambulances already being turned away from emergency rooms at full capacity, the announcement of a nationwide state of emergency may seem like too little, too late. Its inability to force people to stay at home may seem baffling in comparison with the measures of other nations, but it is based in constitutional protection of civil rights stemming from Meiji-era abuses of power. While the ruling LDP party has proposed revising this for stronger emergency powers, it would be controversial, time-consuming and far too late to address the current crisis. Measures are being brought in, such as drive-through testing facilities which should allow for better tracking, and therefore control, of the virus. One wild policy change has seen the government pledge ¥100,000 to everyone in Japan, replacing an earlier plan to provide ¥300,000 to financially hit households. This covers 127 million people, including foreign nationals with more than three months residency and homeless, although it has to be wondered how
quickly a good chunk of these funds will find themselves funneled through pachinko parlours still operating nationwide.

More traditional methods of fighting the virus are also being rolled out at Todaiji temple in Nara, where ceremonies have been undertaken to usher in the end of the virus and more recently a window has been opened to the face of the Great Buddha statue inside. Resident monk Morimoto Kōjō tweeted that it was not so tourists could see the Buddha, but so that he could watch over us. For those itching to pray before the Great Buddha, a free rimōto sanpai, or ‘remote praying’ livestream has been made available for just that purpose. In other news, the closure of entertainment venues old and new has seen Japan’s traditional performers taking their talents online, with kabuki plays and noh theatre being streamed via YouTube this week. Subtitles will be in Japanese only, but non-Japanese speakers can read an English synopsis and still enjoy the feast for the eyes.

Written by the editor

Source material can be found in the ‘News from Japan’ section

Tokyo Days – Report by Nadine Willems

Keeping Busy in Tokyo

My foolish hopes of a swift and definite containment of the coronavirus have been dealt another blow. On 16 April the government extended the state of emergency from seven specific areas to the entire country. Japan is far from experiencing the kind of explosive growth in infections and deaths seen in most west European countries. But with higher infection rates concentrated in the major cities and the Golden Week holiday scheduled to start next week, the rationale is that a national lockdown will keep people from travelling and spreading the virus geographically.

So here I remain, spending slow days in Tokyo, trying to make sense in my own way of the pandemic’s constraints and paradoxes. The city felt already sluggish last week, but in my neighbourhood at least, activity has slowed down further as more businesses have decided to close altogether until 7 May, the date earmarked for relaxation of the “confinement” measures. Those that remain open take extra precautions. To ensure social distancing, the manager of my local Okinawan cuisine eatery now only allows people to occupy alternate seats at the counter. At lunchtime, I notice that compared to previous days the number of customers has dwindled to a handful, certainly making the new rule easy to follow.

But what is there to do then in this giant city when all cultural and sporting venues are closed? When the local festivals that regularly enchant each neighbourhood are cancelled? When most restaurants, in a country known for its exquisite culinary tradition, are shut? When it is strongly discouraged to use one of the world’s most efficient public transport systems? Prime Minister Abe has not banned walking or jogging – it is after all a soft, less stringent and not legally binding lockdown. When not sitting at my desk, I have thus been setting out on foot, taking hour-long, exploratory walks through the urban maze that is Tokyo.

On one sunny day I reach Gōtokuji in an hour and a half. The temple hosts a large collection of maneki neko, the beckoning cat statues and bearers of good luck, nowadays icons of Japanese folk culture. Legend has it that in the Edo period at this very place the Lord of Hikone was saved from a lightening bolt by a cat luring him just in time away from the tree under which he was standing. When I enter the temple
grounds, all is silent, but also strangely desolate. I realise that motionless cats far outnumber the visitors, and I am left with a childish wish: if only one of these cats could wisk the virus away from us all in one beguiling paw swipe...

At the weekend, I head off on foot toward Shibuya, keen to see if this shopping mecca and favourite entertainment spot of the Tokyo youth respects the injunctions to self-restraint. I am in for a slight shock. I expected a slowdown, but not that the area would be virtually deserted. In the centre, everything is shut. Clearly, the governor of Tokyo has given unbreachable instructions to businesses. And there she is, appearing on a wide screen on one of the main shopping towers. Koike Yuriko has hardened her tone and hammers her point: the city is on the brink of an explosive growth in infections, and now is the time to act. Stay at home, cook, and play games!

Has even walking become out of the question? Not quite, fortunately. And it is certainly not what news reports convey. In suburban areas of Tokyo, such as Kichijōji, the commercial arcade appears super busy. Footage of the sea front in Kamakura suggests that people are flocking to the resort for a breath of fresh air. By focusing on potentially dense vectors of transmission such as Shibuya, however, the authorities are sending the symbolic message to a less obedient youth that congregating in droves for entertainment is definitely off the menu.

For my part, I sheepishly return home and resume my compulsive exploration of coronavirus-related statistics. A pandemic may be sweeping the world, but paradoxically infection and death rates, together with face masks, are what makes it real for people like me. The Olympics have been postponed, and in its place has emerged the grim competition of countries in their fight with the virus. As I write, and according to the worldometers.info website, Belgium, my native country, arrives first in terms of number of deaths per million people, with a staggering 513 compared to 255 for the UK and ... 2 for Japan. The disparity is big enough to wonder how reliable such comparisons can be! I turn to toyokeizai.net for a more detailed statistical breakdown about Japan. Testing has increased, and in the past three days the number of newly infected people has clearly gone down, standing at 234 on Tuesday, compared to 688 over a week ago. Although this is encouraging, one key question remains. How seriously will the population comply with the recommendation to stay at home during Golden Week?

The famous Shibuya crossing lies virtually deserted – but for how long?
Each week, we will bring to you some fresh recommendations from CJS members to help bring a piece of Japan to you at home through film, books, anime, manga and more. This week we bring a bumper manga starter pack for all of you curious about the genre and eager to get started over the lockdown. If you have any suggestions for themes or other recommendations, send us an email at cjs@uea.ac.uk.

Editor’s note: English e-books and Japanese e-books on Amazon can largely only be purchased on amazon.co.uk and amazon.co.jp respectively, meaning that English and Japanese ebooks cannot be purchased on one account. You can read in both languages on your computer, but it is necessary to have two accounts. Furthermore, if you wish to read on a Kindle you must log in with either an English or Japanese account. Switching accounts on a Kindle will delete any content already stored on the device, so choose wisely!

Books

**Mariko/Mariquita** by Natsuki Ikezawa (2017)

‘Mariko/Mariquita’ is a short story within the *Keshiki* collection by Ikezawa Natsuki (translated by Alfred Birnbaum). The narrator of the story is a cultural anthropologist, Kyojiro, who has been out in the remote Pacific islands conducting fieldwork. During a brief stay in Guam, while he is organising his notes before returning to Japan, he meets the enigmatic Mariko/Mariquita, a Japanese national who has managed to blend seamlessly in to island life. While transporting us to hazy warmer climes, this story asks us to consider to what extent we are able to transform our identities through the act of travelling.

**The Holy Man of Mount Kōya** by Izumi Kyōka (1900)

However, for an absolute classic tale of the potential for metamorphosis through travel, we need to look no further than ‘The Holy Man of Mount Kōya’ (‘Kōya hijiri’) by Izumi Kyōka (translated by Charles Shirō Inouye) in *Japanese Gothic Tales*. In this story, a monk recounts the strange and disturbing events and encounters he experiences during his travel deep into the mountains. It’s use of travel as a metaphor through which the stability of reality itself is called into question has meant that the story has been repeatedly reinterpreted in the years since it was published, and shall doubtless continue to be so.

Available in [English](#) and [Japanese](#).
Recommendations by Tracy Hearn, SISJAC Communications Assistant

As a frequent visitor, but never a resident, my many travels in Tokyo mostly took the form of short frenetic bursts of activity, where as an outsider, I dashed around the metropolis in a simultaneous state of disorientation and delight. The visual explorations of the city I have chosen below, offer much of the same effect, allowing me, and you, to experience Tokyo without leaving the house.

**Tokyo Chroma** (2015) by Hira Rei

I love this photographic journal of the city, powered by anime, graphic design and kawaii. Intensely rich, kaleidoscopic, and consonant with the sensory overload and contradictions of modern Japanese culture; spend a day or two in Tokyo, and you’ll be seeing these images before you sleep. A few of my favourite images are framed and waiting for their spot on the wall.

Limited copies available on biblio.co.uk

**Tokyo on Foot** (2009) by Florent Chavouet

Whenever I miss my Tokyo adventures, I dip into the Tokyo on Foot, a prize-winning illustrative tour by a ridiculously talented graphic artist. Florent Chavouet’s Tokyo comes to life with clever caricatures, sketches, collage, anecdotes and stunning renderings of the city’s buildings and landscapes. An acute observer of everyday life, his subjects are the salary men and women, policemen, hipsters, students, tourists, and various other urban types, displaying all manner of dress and hairstyles. It’s a warm, humorous and recognisable account of Japanese culture as experienced by an outsider.

Available in English e-book and French paperback on Amazon.

**Manga & Anime** 漫画とアニメのおすすめ

Recommendations by Rayna Denison, Senior Lecturer in Japanese Film at UEA

There are lots of sports manga and anime that travel around Japan and beyond. These can be a great way to see the world through Japanese eyes. For example, *The Prince of Tennis* [EN/JP] even has a feature film set at Wimbledon in London, and *Yuri on Ice!* [EN/JP] features a cast of characters and locations from all over the world.

Similarly, the detective manga and anime, *Cased Closed (Meitantei Konan)* [EN/JP] has been running for so long that its characters have done enormous amounts of travelling between crime-ridden locations all over Japan and in Asia and beyond.

Probably the most famous fantasy-journey in manga and anime though can be found in mega-hit *One Piece* [EN/JP]. In the one a team of pirates led by Monkey D Luffy search a fantastical world for the “one piece” treasure.
**Recommendations by editor**

**Kino’s Journey** (2000 – present) by Shigusawa Keiichi

ちびすけの旅 作者：時雨沢恵一

*Kino’s Journey* follows the journey of traveller Kino and her talking Brough Superior motorcycle Hermes. She moves from town to town, staying for only three days and two nights to learn the customs of each land she passes through before moving on to the next, debating their morals and practices with Hermes. In between towns, she lives a life of self-subsistence, hunting and camping in the beautiful wilds of the world she inhabits, reconciling the challenging behaviours of the people she meets with the philosophy that “the world isn’t beautiful, therefore it is.” Join Kino as she explores the harshness and compassion of her fellow man on her travels.

The manga is available in [English](https://www.amazon.com) and [Japanese](https://www.amazon.co.jp) e-books on Amazon. The anime is also available in [English](https://www.amazon.com) and [Japanese](https://www.amazon.co.jp) on Amazon.

**Film**

**Recommendations by the editor**

**The Good, the Bad, the Weird** (2008) by Kim Jee-woon

良い奴、悪い奴、うら.'/奴 作者：キムジウォン

*Korean with English subtitles*

15+

An unusual East Asian take on the Clint Eastwood epic, *The Good, the Bad, the Weird* sees a cultural crossover the likes of which have never been seen. Set in 1939 on the eve of the Asia-Pacific War, the film takes the tropes of ‘spaghetti westerns’ and applies them to the lawless desert wilderness of Japanese-occupied Manchuria. Three outlaws, the Good, the Bad and the Weird (Song Kang-ho of *Parasite* fame), scramble against each other to find the secret treasure of a legendary map, hounded by Manchurian bandits and the Japanese imperial army who want the treasure for their own designs. A wild, white-knuckle ‘kimchi western’ which manages to thrill in a distinctly Korean style while bringing an often overlooked historical space to the big screen.

Available on [DVD](https://www.amazon.com) on Amazon.

**Recommendations by CJS Director Professor Simon Kaner**

**Thermae Romae** (2012) directed by Hideki Takeuchi

テルマエ・ロマエ 作者：竹内秀樹

If you enjoy ‘Plebs’ and are missing what are for me one of the highlights of any trip to Japan, namely the ‘onsen’, then *Thermae Romae* is the travel (in this case time travel) movie for you. Join Roman architect Lucius Modestus (Hiroshi Abe) as he takes the plunge (if that sets your teeth on edge then you
may need a pun-enjoyment enhancing supplement) into the world of hot springs between ancient Rome and modern Japan. Based on Yamazaki Mari’s manga of the same name.

You may need to prepare quantities of good sake to get you through it, but highlights include encounters with another of Japan’s modern-day wonders, the heated-seat-bidet-included depositories we have all come to know and love (a potential theme for a future CJS seminar), and mistaking that rarest material of our lockdown nightmares, toilet roll, with important historical documents. Well, the renowned letters from Vindolanda on Hadrian’s Wall were found partly in the remains of loos – great preservation conditions, not just here but in Japan too.

Our first Sasakawa Lecturer at UEA, Ulrich Heinze, brought this film to my attention, and wrote on time-travel manga in Japan Forum. For me, it is all good material for my long planned research project on the Archaeology of Hot Springs.

Available to watch on YouTube in Japanese with English subtitles.

Upcoming Events & Opportunities

Before & Beyond Typography
April 24/25
www.bbtypo.com

Eugenia Bogdanova-Kummer, Lecturer in Japanese Arts, Culture, and Heritage at the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures, will be presenting at Stanford University’s Before & Beyond Typography conference which has moved online due to recent events. She will be presenting on “Japanese Printed Calligraphy and Postwar Avant-Garde”. The event is free and open to all.

Conference Overview

What becomes of our understanding of “-graphics” when we dislodge the prefix “typo-” from its long-dominant position and place it alongside those of “chiro-,” “xylo-,” “litho-,” “mimeo-,” “xero-,” “seri-,” and other methods and technologies that have shaped the early modern and modern eras in profound ways? This conference will track the dynamic interplay between technological change and non-typographic printing in those parts of the world where typographic printing was considered ill-suited to local writing systems and script cultures, including South Asia, East Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa. Conference speakers will examine the vitality of non-typographic publishing networks from the early modern era to the present.

REGISTER HERE

The conference is free, open to the public, and does not require registration. However, we highly recommend pre-registration. Benefits of pre-registration are:
- early access to full conference schedule
- early access to potential hands-on workshops
- additional information about the speakers and event
JSPS London Pre/Postdoctoral Fellowship for Foreign Researchers (Short Term)

Application Deadline: Monday 8th June, 2020
Fellowships must start between: 1st November 2020 to 31st March 2021.

Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) is the leading research funding agency in Japan, established by the Japanese Government for the purpose of contributing to the advancement of science. Our Pre/Postdoctoral Fellowship for Foreign Researchers (Short Term) provides the opportunity for researchers based outside of Japan to conduct collaborative research activities with leading research groups at Japanese Universities and Research Institutions for visits of between 1 to 12 months. Eligible applicants need to be either within 2 years of finishing their PhD at the time of applying to start their fellowship in Japan or have obtained their PhD at a university outside of Japan within the last 6 years (on or after 2nd April 2014). Eligible research fields are not limited.

Please visit the JSPS London website here for further information.

Fellow's experiences from former JSPS Fellows who have taken part in this programme can be found here.

News from Japan

For a running number of reported COVID19 infections, victims and recoveries in Japan, see the Asahi Shimbun homepage (Japanese only): https://www.asahi.com/

BBC: Japan doctors warn of health system ‘break down’ as cases surge

Reuters explains here the constitutional ramifications on Japan’s state of emergency:
‘Lockdown’, Japan-style: Pressure to conform, not penalties for non-compliance

For information on the new government pledge of ¥100,000 to all:
How to get the ¥100,000 coronavirus payout from the Japanese government

The Asahi Shimbun reports on ceremonies at Tōdaiji:
Monks to pray for end of deadly coronavirus at Nara ceremony

For some livestream praying before the Great Buddha at Tōdaiji, see this live (if not somewhat inanimate) broadcast on Niconico Livestream (Japanese only)

For a guide by Japan Times to online traditional Japanese theatre:
Traditional Japanese entertainment joins the digital age

For a Japanese government public service video on coronavirus (Japanese only):
3つの密を避けよう！

For Japanese speakers, here are two articles in English from the Japan Times laying out vocabulary coming out of the crisis:
The Japanese words used to encourage self-restraint
Cancellations, postponements, suspensions — words that define the times

Click here for a comprehensive online document on Japanese universities adopting distance learning.

For more information on Japanese universities see this twitter thread by Rochelle Kopp, professor at Kitakyushu University, for resources.

General Links

Embassy of Japan: http://www.uk.emb-japan.go.jp/
Japan Foundation: http://www.jpf.org.uk/
JSPS: http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/
British Association for Japanese Studies: http://www.bajs.org.uk/
Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation: http://www.dajf.org.uk/
Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation: http://www.gbsf.org.uk/
Japan Society: http://www.japansociety.org.uk/
EU-Japan Centre: http://www.eu-japan.eu/
Canon Foundation: www.canonfoundation.org
Applications for JET Programme: http://www.jetprogramme.org/
Japanese Language Proficiency Exam: http://www.jlpt.jp/e/index.html
UEA Japan Society: ueajapansociety@gmail.com
Taiko Centre East: http://www.taikocentre.org.uk/
Career Forums: http://www.careerforum.net/event/?lang=E

Contact Us

If you have any contributions for the next issue of the e-newsletter, please send them to us by Wednesday to make the next issue.

The CJS office is located in the Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts (the mezzanine floor), although the office is temporarily closed as per university guidelines. You can always email us at cjs@uea.ac.uk.

To keep up with goings-on at CJS, follow us on social media:

www.facebook.com/CJSUea/
www.twitter.com/CJS_Uea

Or visit our website: www.uea.ac.uk/cjs
Left: CJS Director Professor Simon Kaner
Right: Editor and CJS Project Coordinator Oliver Moxham

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