

## ***Foreword***

Modern Japan and its culture is an ever popular field of interest and academic research in Europe and the world. By far, Japanese studies are the most popular of other Asian countries, while The Land of the Rising Sun remains a perfect concept of a Far Eastern island country to many. It is exotic, idiosyncratic, and full of paradoxes and exceptional, rich culture. It combines traditional centuries old arts, nurtured local traditions with futuristic, state-of-the-art inventions, science fiction like megalopolis and groundbreaking technology. It is a business centre and an attractive touristic destination.

It is not surprising that virtually every aspect of Japanese culture has been and currently is being studied, researched and written about. The chapters presented in this book testify to this notion. They cover a very wide spectrum of topics related to studies on Japanese culture. The authors come from diverse cultural and academic backgrounds and have incorporated different methodologies and themes in their essays.

This book contains articles whose common point is an international approach to various aspects of Japanese culture. The majority of the authors have participated in a Japan Foundation 6-month course for Specialists in Cultural and Academic Fields in Kansai Institute in Japan academic year 2013–2014 or have an otherwise academic link to Japan Foundation. The texts presented here have resulted from research conducted as a part of a doctoral or post-doctoral research work.

Klaudia Adamowicz is a PhD candidate at Centre for Comparative Studies of Civilisations of Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland. Her main research interests include contemporary Japanese culture, transculturality, the theory of subcultures and audience research in cultural institutions. In her text she analyses Wolfgang Welsch's popular theory of transculturality as a research method on the example of *visual kei*

phenomenon. She is a Japan Foundation 6-month scholarship awardee in the year 2014–2015.

Alari Allik a lecturer on Japanese literature, religion, and philosophy at the Tallinn University since 1997. His research is focused on self-narration of medieval Japanese Buddhist writers. He has also done some translation studies including translating Japanese poetry. In his text he analyses the notion of hyper-authorship in the writings of two Medieval Buddhist writers. Marina Kozlova has graduated from State Pedagogical University in Novosibirsk (Russia) majoring in theory and history of arts and Japanese language. Her research interests focus on Japanese modern art and architecture and its comparison with Western traditions. In the chapter she reveals and characterizes the central categories that spatial perception of architecture in Japan is based on referring to works by three major contemporary architects: K. Tange, T. Ando, and T. Ito.

Yunuen Mandujano is a PhD Candidate in Social Sciences at Autonomous University of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. She holds a Master Degree in Studies of Asia and Africa – Specialty Japan from El Colegio de Mexico, Mexico. Her research interests include Japanese media, cultural nationalism, media sports and gender discourses in popular culture. She wrote an chapter about dominant national identity discourses in Japan on the example of two case studies – football players and pop-cultural celebrities.

Dr Marco Pellitteri obtained his PhD in Sociology and Social Research from the University of Trento (Italy). He is a JSPS Research Fellow (2014–2016) at Kōbe University, working with Prof. Kiyomitsu Yui. His book *The Dragon and the Dazzle: Models, Strategies, and Identities of Japanese Imagination – A European Perspective* (2008, Eng. trans. 2010) was published with the support of the Japan Foundation. In his chapter he presents the first findings of the survey on manga readers in Europe conducted by the ‘Manga Network’.

Kamila Sosnowska is a PhD candidate at Centre for Comparative Studies of Civilisations of Jagiellonian University. She holds a MA in Film Studies from Jagiellonian University (2009). Her research interests include Asian cinema and popular culture, especially Japanese contemporary cinema and TV dramas, Japanese education system, gender studies and the role of women in Japanese society and culture. Her chapter analyses the phenomenon of *ijime* (bullying) in Japanese schools and its cinematic image in three chosen films and TV dramas.

Dr. Ceren Aksoy Sugiyama is currently working as a research assistant in the Department of Anthropology at Ankara University, Faculty of Languages, History and Geography in Ankara, Turkey. Her research interest

is Japanese travel culture with a main focus on Onsen and the Elderly Population in the Japanese Mountain Villages in Yamaguchi, Japan. Her text deals with the theme of touristic and everyday life patterns of the Japanese.

Adam Uryniak is a PhD candidate Institute of Audiovisual Artsof Jagiellonian Univeristy and film director. He has a MA in Film Studies and his research interests focus on pre-war Polish cinema, genre cinema and contemporary Japanese gangster films (T. Kitano, T. Miike). His chapters analyses the transcultural motifs in Jim Jarmusch's film *Ghostdog: The Way of the Samurai*.

James White is a doctoral candidate at The School of East Asian Studies (SEAS) at the University of Sheffield. His doctoral work is exploring how gender was understood in the beer and advertising industries via beer advertising. In his chapter he analyses four models of gender which have appeared in Japanese television advertisements during the post-war period and how these four models have evolved and their relation to masculinity and femininity in Japan.

He combined account of these diverse to different elements of Japanese world has created a rich transcultural mosaic. The authors, sociologists, anthropologists, culture and media specialists from around the globe face East in their own individual ways, but all end up looking at Japan and its fascinating culture.

The editor would like to thank The Japan Foundation Kansai Centre teachers and staff, all the contributors and people who made this publication possible. Special thanks to dr Marco Pellitteri for his expertise, advice and ongoing support.

Kamila Sosnowska  
(Kraków, September 2014)

