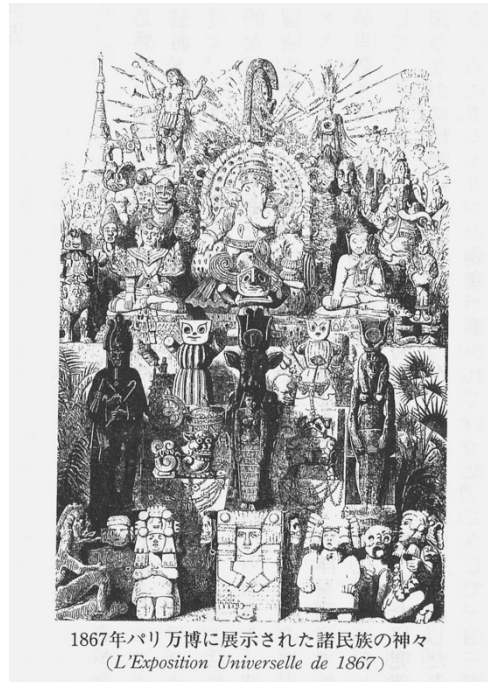


Workshop “Animism Today”

Organized by Kikuko Hirafuji, Fabio Rambelli, and Christine Thomas

University of California, Santa Barbara, Robertson Gym 1005 October 21–22, 2024



In Japan, the term “animism” is used with positive connotations as a way to describe widespread forms of Japanese religiosity and, to an extent, Japanese cultural identity. In this workshop, scholars from Japan explore some contemporary cultural formations defined in Japan as expressions of “animism” also in conversation with UCSB scholars.

PROGRAM

October 21

13:30 Greetings

14:00 **Animism in Japan Today**

Kikuko Hirafuji: The Relationship between Shinto Shrines and Animals: The Japanese and Animism

Chihiro Minato: The Balloon Deities: *Kojiki* and Contemporary Media Art in Japan

Bon Koizumi: Animism Revived in Modern Times: The World of Lafcadio Hearn

Kazuo Matsumura: *Yuru-Kyara: A Possible Modern Manifestation of the Basic Religious Substratum of Japan*

15:30–15:45 Coffee Break

15:45–16:30 Discussion

16:30–17:00 Documentary “The Grand Shrine of Izumo” (US premiere)

17:00 Presentation of new artwork (TBA)

19:00 Dinner

October 22

9:30–12:00 **Roundtable Rethinking “Animism” and Related Phenomena**

(“paganism,” polytheism, idolatry, materiality of religion, etc.)

12:00–1:30 Lunch break

1:30–3:00 General Discussion

19:00 Dinner

PARTICIPANTS

Ranjani Atur

Assistant professor of ancient Greek religion at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. Her research centers on Ancient Greek religious experience, affect, and belief, particularly as mediated by sacred objects (e.g., statues of gods) and sacred spaces.

Rudy Busto

Associate professor of Religious Studies at UCSB. Focuses on religion in North America through forms of alterity; his work on, among other things, U.S. Latinx religion; Asian American religious traditions; constructions of indigeneity; evangelical Christianity; and religion and science fiction.

Thomas Carlson

Professor of Religious Studies and Founding Director, International Center for the Humanities and Social Change, UCSB. His areas of research and teaching include religion and modern philosophy; the history of Christian thought and culture; and religion, modernity, and post-modernity.

William Elison

Associate professor of Religious Studies at UCSB. Urban ethnographer and historian of South Asian religions (contemporary Hinduism by non-elite people), is also interested on the materiality of religion and film studies.

Kikuko Hirafuji

Professor of Mythology and Religious History in the Department of Shinto Studies at Kokugakuin University (Tokyo). Her research interests include the study of Japanese representations of gods and the discourses surrounding the gods and mythology, including animism.

Bon Koizumi

Director of the Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum in Matsue and a professor emeritus at the University of Shimane. His specialty is folklore. He has been involved in practical activities to utilize Koizumi Yakumo (a.k.a. Lafcadio Hearn), Yōkai (ghosts), and ghost stories for regional development, and projects to apply Koizumi Yakumo's philosophy of "Open Mind" to contemporary issues in places associated with him around the world. He is the great-grandson of Koizumi Yakumo.

Kazuo Matsumura

Professor emeritus at Wako University, Tokyo. His research interests include comparative mythology, history of religions, and Japanese mythology.

Chihiro Minato

Professor of Media Art in the Department of Information Design and the Art Anthropology Institute at Tama Art University. His recent works include a photographic survey of Jōmon pottery and an archive project of prehistoric design by northeastern Asian peoples.

Claudia Moser

Associate professor of Art History, UCSB. Studies the material culture and archaeological record of Roman religion in a multidisciplinary conversation with art history, classics, anthropology, religious studies, economics, and cognitive science.

Fabio Rambelli

Distinguished Professor of Japanese religions and cultural history and holder of the International Shinto Foundation chair in Shinto Studies (Religious Studies and East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies, UCSB). He works on the interactions of Buddhism with local cults and the history of Shinto in Japan, at the intersection between doctrinal discourses, rituals, and everyday practices—including music (Gagaku) and the performing arts.

Amit Shilo

Associate professor, Department of Classics (UCSB). He works on ethics and politics in connection to polytheism in ancient Greece.

Christine Thomas

Professor of early Christianity and religions of the Roman Empire and holder of the Cordano Endowed Chair in Catholic Studies (Religious Studies, UCSB) and director of the Ancient Mediterranean Studies Program. Her recent research focuses on theoretical issues surrounding the use of archaeological evidence for the study of religion; material aspects of religion in the Roman Empire (spaces, objects, practices); and the urban context of early Christianity.

SPONSORS

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