At the end of this academic year, a tragic act of violence claimed the lives of six UCSB students, while several others were injured. Our deepest thoughts go to all those who have been affected by this cruel incident. In response to this unimaginable loss, the UCSB community has risen to the occasion and faculty, students, and administration have sought to respond with creative solutions for strengthening the relationship between UCSB and the neighboring Isla Vista community. We only hope that this suffering will not have been in vain, but will instead become an opportunity to find new solutions to the ongoing problems that caused it. I am proud to say that our university and our community, of which the Department of East Asian Language and Cultural Studies is an active member, have shown remarkable strength, compassion, and resilience.

In this past year, we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the establishment of our department, and the 50th anniversary of the beginning of Chinese language and literature classes at UCSB. Very appropriately for such important anniversaries, EALCS has shown remarkable growth. The number of undergraduate EALCS majors are at a historical high, and this year we received nearly 100 graduate applications, a record number. We are very pleased that in September 2014 we are welcoming 3 new MA students and 5 new PhD students (including two central fellowship awardees.)

New people coming, some people going. Our colleague Corey Byrnes (Chinese literature) has left us for the Chicago area. We wish him all the best at his new job. We have also revised and expanded our Asian Studies Major in order to make it an even more inclusive educational hub and stimulating springboard for students to familiarize themselves with a number of matters related to East and South Asia. This new major will already be available for enrollment in Fall 2014.

We are also working on creating a high-proficiency track for our Chinese Studies Major, along the lines of a similar track already existing for our Japanese Studies Major. This new track will make it easier for students already fluent in Chinese to major or double major with us. We plan to have this new track available to students next year. In addition, all of our three majors (Asian Studies, Chinese Studies, and Japanese Studies) have been enriched with new, attractive courses.

Finally, in October 2014, a branch of the Confucius Institute will be established at UCSB and housed in our department. The Confucius Institute will further enrich our Chinese language course offering and will contribute to a better understanding of various aspects of the People’s Republic of China. This event will further enhance the role and reputation of our department as an arena for discussion about East Asian cultures.
By Chikako Shinagawa

The Japanese Language Program is not just a series of language classes. With a dedicated group of lecturers and excellent coursework, the program strives to go beyond the classroom and create a strong learning community.

We kicked off the Fall quarter with the Japanese Program’s orientation, where students got a firsthand look at what our department and the Japanese Language Program was all about. Students not only learned about the program but were also introduced to our interdisciplinary courses including offerings in history, culture, literature, music, and film, through presentations made by various professors. They also found out about various Japan-related organizations on campus such as the Japanese Students Association, the Anime Club, and the Kendo Club.

Tadoku Club reading examples

Japanese Tadoku Club (Extensive Reading Club in Japanese) was launched in Winter 2014 to help the students improve their reading skills with fun and interesting books. The books for the Tadoku activity are graded into levels after the books are finished. Since the books are finished, they are positioned at a vast distance from anything we know intuitively. Even when we have solved the puzzle for ourselves, rendering it in terms that make any sense to foreign readers is an additionally difficult burden.

Two major obstacles confront us: the first is the existence of a canon of Japanese literature in translation, a reflection of the subjective taste of, initially, two zealots, Donald Keene and Edward Seidensticker. The effect of the canon, even today, is to make a kingdom and to produce an analysis, an explanation if you will, of its singularity.

I would argue that evaluating a kingdom challenges the critic in an exceptionally difficult manner when its location, not to mention its architecture and even the language spoken in it, is positioned at a vast distance from anything we know intuitively. Even when we have solved the puzzle for ourselves, rendering it in terms that make any sense to foreign readers is an additionally difficult burden.

This article is based on excerpts from a keynote address delivered at an international symposium on Natsume Sōseki, entitled “Sōseki’s Diversity,” held at the University of Michigan in May, 2014.

...In a recent review of Bernard Malamud, Cynthia Ozick wrote: “Every sovereign imaginative artist is obliged to be the sole heir to a singular kingdom.” I was pleased to read this because it seemed to me to point toward a powerful argument for exceptionalism, a much-maligned notion that I endorse heartily. No one would deny that Natsume Sōseki is a “sovereign imaginative artist,” and it seems equally clear that he is “sole heir to a singular kingdom.” Our task as critics is to render an evocative description of that kingdom and to produce an analysis, an explanation if you will, of its singularity.

I would argue that evaluating a kingdom challenges the critic in an exceptionally difficult manner when its location, not to mention its architecture and even the language spoken in it, is positioned at a vast distance from anything we know intuitively. Even when we have solved the puzzle for ourselves, rendering it in terms that make any sense to foreign readers is an additionally difficult burden.

By Shu-Chuan (Bella) Chen

The Chinese Language Program provided various extra-curricular activities in the academic year 2013-2014 for enriching our language program in addition to our regular classes: Chinese 1-2-3, 4-5-6, 1NH-2NH-3NH, 4NH-5NH and Chinese 122A-122B-122C. We organized a Chinese table for 1st year students to practice their Chinese by having conversations with native Chinese speakers in the fall quarter. For cultural activities, highlights included a New Year’s celebration held at a local Chinese restaurant in February. Students not only had delicious Chinese food, but also conducted different performances, including singing Chinese songs, playing Chinese instruments such as Er Hu and Pipa, tongue twisters, and raffles. Then, in order to expand the students’ interests in Chinese culture, we continued with Mahjong workshops and practiced Chinese etiquette. All of these activities were coached by native Chinese speakers at UCSB. The students not only learned new Chinese characters, but also learned the rules of the game and acquired new skills. In addition, we offered a dumplings workshop in Fall quarter and Chinese onion pancake making and eating party in the Spring quarter for the 1st year Chinese students. We also kicked off the Spring quarter with a Hot Pot dinner. Tasting and making Chinese food was a lot of fun for our students. We hope that these extra-curricular activities on campus have piqued students’ interest in the Chinese Language Program at UCSB.

Congratulations to Rilla Peng, one of our 4th year students, for winning first place in the 39th annual CLTAC Mandarin Speech Competition. We also note that the Chinese Club at UCSB continues to be a lively and active club.

Continued on page 6...
Japanese Language Club Karaoke event

JAPANESE CORNER

and again. Students had a lot of fun learning “repeaters” who take the workshop again is always popular and there are always featured event. We offered sushi workshops and society.

as the place where students meet with each other across their levels of courses and as the place where students communicate in both English and Japanese. In addition to the weekly meetings, they successfully organized various events throughout the year such as a Karaoke party, movie night and cultural exchange workshops. Credit for all this is greatly attributed to the hard work done by JLC student officers, Joseph De Rutte, Eric Lee, Anolin Ta, Hiroumi Jimbo and Leeanne Li. It is a great pleasure for the Japanese Language Program to see JLC functioning as the place where students meet with each other across their levels of courses and become one big family to share the love of learning about Japanese language, culture, and society.

The Sushi Workshop conducted by local chef Fukuo Miyazaki was another featured event. We offered sushi workshops in Fall and Spring quarter. Believe it or not for some students, sushi is the motivating factor for studying Japanese. The workshop is always popular and there are always “repeaters” who take the workshop again and again. Students had a lot of fun learningshadowing and group discussion into our club activities, so the members can improve

Isabel’s rejection of Lord Warburton’s marriage proposal is early evidence of how this perversive determination affects her: the reader observes with mounting dismay as Isabel repeatedly turns away from the prospect of happiness she seems destined for.

There is no evidence that Sōseki read “Portrait.” But there is a striking, uncanny degree of similarity in the circumstances, as well as the temperaments and behaviors, of these two heroines. To begin with, each is vulnerable to a convincing older woman who has the power to thwart the possibility of happiness in their lives, Madam Merle and Madam Yoshikawa. For example, it is Madam Merle who contrives to bring Isabel together with the perniciously destructive Gilbert Osmond; her motive in this, it develops, is that she is secretly the mother of Osmond’s daughter, Pansy, and wants Isabel’s fortune available to her. Madam Yoshikawa is drawn more ambiguously. But in her capacity to exercise a baleful influence on O-Nobu’s life she resembles Madam Merle. Even Tsuda, who is capable of behaving like an emotional dupe, detects something unsettling in Madam Yoshikawa’s assurance that she will make use of her secret meeting with Kiyoko as an object lesson for O-Nobu, training her, as she puts it, “to be more wisely, a better wife to you.” Sōseki declines to elucidate her motive in this, although it seems clear that O-Nobu’s best interests are not her concern…. But there is more to suggest similarity between these two heroines than the presence in their lives of destructive women. Both are bold and courageous, gallant even, and both reveal a fragility beneath the assured exterior they present to the world….

Notwithstanding the obvious similarities, there is at least one important difference between these two heroines: and that is how we are disposed to feel about them based on how they fare at their creators’ hands.

though he has consigned Isabel Archer to a life of misery, it seems clear that Henry James not only pity but even admires and possibly even loves her for the presence of the women he admires and observes in her novel, tormented by the knowledge that there is, or has been, another woman in his life, O-Nobu appeals to Tsuda to allow her to feel secure: “I want to lean on you. I want to feel secure. I want immensely to lean, beyond anything you can imagine… Please say it, ‘feel secure.’” Tsuda considered. “You can. You can feel secure” “Truly?” “Truly. You have no reason to worry.” Observing that O-Nobu’s tension has eased, Tsuda feels relieved and turns to placating her wife, “abundantly employing phrases likely to please her.” His conclusion: that women are easily consoled. The reader is meant to observe that this transparent play has been effective: “For the first time in a long while, O-Nobu beheld the Tsuda she had known before their marriage. Memories from the time of their engagement revived in her heart.

My husband hasn’t changed after all. He’s always been the man I knew from the old days.” We look for a hint from the narrator at this point, and discover that the narrator has slipped out of the room, leaving us to interpret the passage on our own. What are we to think? Are we to pity or condemn O-Nobu? We are left wondering uncomfortably. But in the context of this inquiry I would put this another way: does Sōseki care? Surely if he doesn’t it will be hard for us to. I’ve already touched on the deep vein of misogyny in a more generalized disillusionment with humanity in I am a Cat. Is that distaste being reflected in Sōseki’s treatment of O-Nobu? In releasing his heroine into a gullibility as hopeless as this, as hapless and pathetic, is Sōseki revealing the same fundamental lack of respect, the contempt even, that colors Tsuda’s attitude? Does Sōseki love or even pity his heroine, the only real, fully-fleshed heroine in his entire oeuvre?

In a letter to a certain Mrs. James, Lawrence Sterne declared that he had written Tristram Shandy “to teach us to love the world and our fellow creatures better than we do.” Can we attribute the same motivation to Sōseki?

There may be no clear answer, but the question is nonetheless worth asking, because it serves as a bridge to a consideration, on equal and comparative terms, of two novelists, one an acknowledged master and the other a master who remains, not unnamed as does the Cat, but still unacknowledged in terms that will mean something to those who take Henry James’ mastery for granted. Put another way, the question is: is there a step toward relocating Natsume Sōseki’s singular kingdom on a map shared by other great novelists in the Western firmament and thereby installing him in the position he deserves on an equal footing with his peers around the world.

About the Author:
John Nathan is Takahshima Professor of Japanese cultural studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His published works include Mishima, A Biography, Sony: The Private Life, and a memoir, Living Carelessly in Tokyo and Elsewhere. His translations of 0e Ken’zabur0 are widely credited with helping 0e win the Nobel Prize. In 2013, Nathan completed a new translation of Natsume S0seki’s last novel, Light and Dark (1932). He is currently writing a critical biography of S0seki.

Congratulations to the eight Drew fund and CTS Language Award Recipients: Carolyne Mae Chasse-Dunn, Cindy Thuy Linh Nguyen, Kira Emily Wyckoff, Alexander Kwok Cheang Banos, Aura Grace Gilham, Kelly Lian Noah, Kirsten Jiaxin Frank, and Anja Heppner. These awards have been given to students with excellent academic achievement in Chinese language. The awards are made possible by the generous sponsorship of the Center for Taiwan Studies under the direction of Prof. Tu. Our heartfelt gratitude goes to Prof. Tu for his support of the Chinese Language Program.
The East Asia Center sponsored a series of dynamic academic events during the 2013-14 academic year that brought a wide array of speakers to UCSB, including writers, filmmakers, musicians, politicians and scholars. Organizers noted that the EAC’s longstanding mission of facilitating scholarly dialogue, some of the world’s leading scholars working on East Asia visited campus for a series of lectures and workshops. These events included Jennifer Robertson (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor) on “Robot Caregivers and Robo-therapy in Japan: Treating the ‘Trauma of Aging’,” Peter Carroll (Northwestern) and Jun Yoo (Hawaii) on “Double Visions on Suicide: Symptoms of Modernity in Colonial Korea and Republican China”; Jeff Wasserstrom (UC, Irvine) on “The Chinese Boer Crisis of 1900: Facts, Fictions, and Fantasies”; Martin Huang (M.I.T.) on “The Social Life of Ghosts: Shamanism, Buddhism, & Counter-Memory in Postcolonial Mongolia”, and Andrew Plaks (Princeton/Hebrew University of Jerusalem) on “Flying High: The Fantasy and Reality of Garden Swings in Classic Chinese Fiction.”

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EAC sponsored several forums, such as a roundtable with UCSC East Asian Studies Visiting Scholars to introduce their research and discuss new academic trends in China, Taiwan, and Japan. This interdisciplinary forum featured

Taiwan Children’s Literature specialist Hiroko Matsuura, (Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for Taiwan Studies), Sociologist Lin Yi, (Xiamen University, Visiting Scholar, East Asia Center) and translation studies scholar Wu Yun, (Shanghai International Studies University, Visiting Scholar, Dept of East Asian Languages & Cultures). EAC also sponsored other forums, such as an informational session for the John Hopkins Naring Center.

In addition to this rich array of scholarly events, by collaborating with a broad array of campus organs (including EALCS, Center for Taiwan Studies, Arts & Lectures, and the UCSB MultiCultural Center), EAC also helped bring more than half a dozen other artists, writers, filmmakers, actors, politicians and other creative figures to campus for a series of rich dialogues, lectures, and performances. Spearheaded by the Center for Taiwan Studies (and co-sponsored by EAC), UCSC Professor Emeritus Pai Hsien-yung, one of the most important stylists of Modern Chinese fiction and a major voice in the Taiwan Modernist Literary movement returned to campus to speak about his father, influential Republican General Bai Chongxi. EAC also co-sponsored the “Master Artists from Japan: Living Traditions,” which featured a series of events on Noh theatre, Kyoto cuisine, Shrine rebuilding, which enriched campus with a week of performances, demonstrations, and exhibits. (See article on page 14.)

An Afternoon with Film Producer/Critic Peggy Chiao: “Taiwan Cinema and Beyond” featured a special campus visit by Peggy Chiao. A powerhouse figure in the Taiwan film industry, Chiao helped reshape New Taiwan Cinema in the 1980s and 1990s as a critic, programmer, festival organizer, and academic. She is also the author of over 20 features, 5 documentaries and 3 television series. One of China’s best living writers Yan Lianke visited campus for a special dialogue on contemporary Chinese Literature at MCC where he spoke about his background, censorship, and gave an overview of his recent work. Finalist for the “Man Booker Prize” and Winner of the Kafka Prize, Yan is the author of such milestone novels as Lenin’s Kisses, Serve the People and Dream of Ding Village.

Before his sold-out concert at Campbell Hall, singer/songwriter Abigail Washburn participated in a roundtable “Chinese Bluegrass and Beyond: Abigail Washburn in Dialogue with Jeff Wasserstrom (UC, Irvine) and Michael Berry (Director, EAC),” where they explored the intersections between politics, music, and activism in China. A critically acclaimed singer, composer and banjo player known for her collaborations with the Sparrow Quartet, the Wu Force, and her duet performances with Bela Fleck, she has performed extensively in China and collaborated with many leading Chinese musicians. The EAC also sponsored a week-long residency with the father of Chinese queer cinema, Cui Zifen. Known as a writer, director, actor, screenwriter, scholar, professor and activist, Cui has been one of the single most important voices in the Chinese queer rights movement for the past two decades. During his residency, Cui screening his documentary film “Queer China, Comrade China” at MCC and also took part in an extended 3.5 hour dialogue on Chinese independent cinema with veteran screenwriter Ning Dai and UCSC students on Chinese independent cinema. Finally, EAC had the honor of hosting former Taiwan Vice-President Lu Hsiu-hsien and her co-author Professor Ashley Esarey for a dynamic dialogue about her new autobiography, My Fight for a New Taiwan: One Woman’s Journey from Prison to Power. In dialogue with Michael Berry, Lu and Esarey discussed her formative years, her instrumental role in Taiwan’s feminist movement, and her time as a political dissident including her experience as Vice-President, with her candidly talking about a highly controversial assassination attempt on her life.

Kanchan Kanji Championship

Kortiushih

Professor Michael Berry answers questions with the “father of Chinese queer cinema” Cui Zifen

As part of its mission to promote research and understanding on Japanese religion and culture, the ISF Shinto Studies Chair co-sponsored various events on campus, particularly the series “Master Artists: Traditional Arts from Japan” (see page 14).

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Michael Berry

Publications


A book-length extended dialogue with award-winning filmmaker Hou Hsiao-hsien, who discusses his childhood, experience breaking into the film industry as well as all of his major works. The book also includes interviews with Hou’s collaborators screenwriter Chu Tien-wen, actor Jack Kao, and writer Huang Chun-ming, and a preface by Liu Zhangke.


Lectures/Presentations


- Hosted numerous public dialogues with Lu Hsiu-ljen, Yan Lianke, Cui Z’ien, Ning Dai. Abigail Washburn, and others.

Other Activities

- Served on the jury for the 2014 Dream of the Red Chamber Prize, Hong Kong Baptist University, 2014.

- Boiling the Sea selected as a Recommended Book of the Month, March 2014 by Unitas Bookstore, Taiwan’s leading bookstore chain.


- Featured in numerous mainstream video, radio, and print media interviews with venues like The Street Journal, NPR's On Point, and China Daily.


- Hosted numerous public dialogues with Lu Hsiu-ljen, Yan Lianke, Cui Z’ien, Ning Dai. Abigail Washburn, and others.
XIAORONG LI
Publications
• “Xu Can (ca. 1610-1677+).” In Women’s Poetry of Traditional China 历代女性诗词鉴赏辞典. Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, forthcoming (August 2014).
Other Activities
• External Examiner for the Honors Program at Swarthmore College, May 2014.

 JOHN NATHAN
Publications
  Soseki’s final novel, his masterpiece though unfinished at the time of his death in December, 1916. A novel of Jamesian precisions, it achieves a degree of interiority that had no precedent in Japanese fiction and hasn’t been equaled since. Hence Japan’s first “modern novel” in the Western sense of that term, and possibly the last. A portrait of conflicting interests inside a haut-bourgeois family on the eve of WWI. The heroine, O-Nobu, emerges as the first three-dimensional female character in Japanese fiction.

Lectures/ Presentations
  3. Invited talk at Yale University. December 10, 2013
  5. Invited talk at University of Indiana. December 16, 2013

Other Activities
• Invited Jury Member; Fresh Wave Film Festival, Hong Kong, 2012.
• Invited Jury Member; Dream of the Red Chamber Award, Hong Kong, 2012.

 HYUNG-IL PAI
Publications

Lectures/ Presentations
• Workshop/seminar on translating Japanese fiction. UC Berkeley. April 18, 19, 2013
• “Contending with Light and Dark: Conveying the author’s voice.”
  3. Invited talk at Yale University. December 10, 2013
  5. Invited talk at University of Indiana. December 16, 2013

Other Activities
• Invited Jury Member; Fresh Wave Film Festival, Hong Kong, 2012.
• Invited Jury Member; Dream of the Red Chamber Award, Hong Kong, 2012.

 FABIO RAMBELLI
Publications
• “The Buddha Head at Kōfukuji Temple (Nara, Japan)” (co-written

Heritage Management in Korea and Japan: The Politics of Antiquity and Identity by Hyung-il Pai

 Zen Anarchism: The Egalitarian Dharma of Uchiyama Gudō by Fabio Rambelli

continues on page 14

"Buddhist Environmentalism: Limits and Possibilities," Poetica 80 (special issue on "Japan and Ecocriticism"), eds. David Bialock and Ursula Heise), 2013, pp. 21-49.

Invited presenter (paper on Ise Shinto as a Floating Signifier) at the International Symposium on Ise Shrine, Nihon bunka kenkyūjo, the International Symposium on Shinto as a Floating Signifier) at the National Ise Shrine, Nihon bunka kenkyūjo, Tokyo, June-July, 2013.

Invited presenter at the Sixth International Symposium on Language Contact in Chinese History and the Northwest Dialects, UCSB, March 2013.
Master Artists: Traditional Artists from Japan

By Katherine Saltzman-Lo

At the end of January, EALCS, the entire campus, and the Santa Barbara community welcomed three remarkable artists from Japan for a week of performances, demonstrations, and exhibits. Master Artists from Japan: Living Traditions, was organized around the expertise and artistry of a noh actor, a Kyoto home-style cuisine expert, and a photographer. Over the five days of programming, Santa Barbara audiences were privileged to witness the cultural traditions and innovations demonstrated by these three distinguished visitors.

Son and grandson of Living National Treasures (father, noh actor Katayama Kuroemon IX, and grandmother, the late Kyoto Kyomai dance master Inoue Yachiyo IV), Katayama Kuroemon X is one of today’s most prominent actors of noh, Japan’s living national treasure, and features dance-like movement, chanted text, a chorus, and instrumental accompaniment. Multiple award winner, and first noh actor to perform in his own right, audiences were treated to demonstration/workshops and performances in two roles: the primary actor, playwright, and award winner in his own right, and Sugimoto-sensei’s family customs and rituals. With careful management of sacred forests for lumber supply and ends with the ceremony to mark the transition from generation to generation. In addition to the lessons in hospitality and and nutrition, as well as principles of Kyoto-style home cooking. Her teaching, practice, and significance of noh, through her performances, demonstrations, and exhibits. Interpretation for graduate students Emm Simpson (EALCS) and Travis Seifman (History) interpret Noh master artists of such stature was exciting and inspiring for students in classes with linked assignments, as well as for the broader UCSB and Santa Barbara communities. It was a great honor to observe, as Assistant Curator of Asian Art, for her important role in helping arrange this event.

Traditional shrine building techniques have been passed down among specialists for over 1,300 years; Katayama-sensei’s art goes back not just the 400 years of his particular acting line, but over 600 years to the foundations of noh itself. Here we know: and Sugimoto-sensei’s family customs and cooking techniques have a several-hundred year history. The topic of transmission of knowledge and methods in each of these arts, indicated by the subtitle of the program, “Living Traditions,” was frequently addressed in the presentations of these remarkable and eminent artists.

Imperial shrines, photographer Masuura Yukihito shared his latest project through an exhibit of some of his photographs from 2006 to 2016: Rebuilding of the Shrine (major repairing.) The former is followed by a grand reception in the Campus Center. The presentations and photographs document various ceremonies and moments during the multi-year process, which begins with careful management of sacred forests for lumber supply and ends with the ceremony to mark the transition from generation to generation. In addition to the lessons in hospitality and nutrition, as well as principles of Kyoto-style home cooking. Her teaching, practice, and significance of noh, through her performances, demonstrations, and exhibits. Interpretation for graduate students Emm Simpson (EALCS) and Travis Seifman (History) interpret Noh master artists of such stature was exciting and inspiring for students in classes with linked assignments, as well as for the broader UCSB and Santa Barbara communities. It was a great honor to observe, as Assistant Curator of Asian Art, for her important role in helping arrange this event.

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For more on the program and artists, visit the website:
masterartistsfromjapan.weebly.com

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By Naoki Yamamoto (Film and Media, UCSC)

On March 11, 2011, a 9.0-magnitude earthquake struck the Tohoku region of northeastern Japan, followed by massive tsunami attacks that washed away more than twenty thousand people living on the coastline. However devastating or merciless this was, it was just the beginning of a much more severe catastrophe: the power of the tsunami was so strong that it resulted in the meltdown of three reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, which made it the worst nuclear disaster in history since Chernobyl. Just as “Hiroshima” and “Nagasaki” have served as a reminder of the first occasion of the atomic bomb being dropped on human beings in the past century, the term “Fukushima” has now become a watchword for nuclear disasters in the 21st century, whose outcomes we have just begun to recognize.

From April 15 to April 19, 2014, a special film series entitled “Nuclear Japan: Japanese Cinema Before and After Fukushima” was held at the Pollock Theater. Co-sponsored by the Carsey-Wolfe Center, the Department of Film and Media Studies, and the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies, the series brought to UCSC three recent Japanese films dealing with issues related to the ongoing nuclear disaster in Fukushima and beyond. With the growth of digital devices, we now have greater access to a torrent of spectacular images captured directly at the sites of destruction. But news cameras are more often than not dismissive of the actual lives of countless people affected by the disaster and its aftermath, and of the complex reasons behind their suffering. In contrast, the three films in the series depicted Japan’s current situation in a way very different from what major news media have told us, reflexively questioning what roles film can or should play in mediating, commemorating, and reflecting upon the traumatic experience of the disaster.

Here and There—Are We Really Far from Fukushima?

As a specialist of Japanese cinema, I served as the main programmer of this film series. Having said that, I never intended to take on the position of a “narrative voice,” or someone who is more knowledgeable about the current situation in Japan. When the earthquake-tsunami-nuclear triple disaster hit Japan, I was in the United States wrapping up my dissertation. Needless to say, I was physically far away from the actual sites of its aftermath: my parents live in Ibaraki Prefecture, only 100 miles away from the Fukushima Daiichi. At the same time, however, my physical distance from the actual sites of destruction had prevented me from embracing whatever was happening in Japan as my own, making it ethically unacceptable of me to dismissive of the actual lives of countless people affected by the disaster and its aftermath.

Then, how did I come up with the idea of showing recent Japanese films on nuclear issues at UCSC? My distance relationship with post-3.11 Japan began to take on new terms of engagement when I moved to Santa Barbara last September. First, like most areas in Japan, Santa Barbara has been under the constant threat of earthquakes, as exemplified by the one that completely destroyed the city’s historic center on June 29, 1925. Second, along with other cities located on the West Coast, Santa Barbara directly faces the Pacific Ocean, where radiation-contaminated water leaking from Fukushima Daiichi could potentially cause serious problems to its ecosystem. Third, and most importantly, Santa Barbara is just 90 miles away from the Diablo Canyon Power Plant in San Luis Obispo County, the only nuclear plant still functional in the state of California.

Taken together, it is these geographical features of Santa Barbara that provided me a unique and opportune juncture to reconnect myself to Japan’s current situation. Given the growing concerns about nuclear problems among Japanese residents, whatever is happening in Fukushima and other areas in Japan reappears before us as an urgent problem that we should take seriously as our own. Consequently, the main objective of “Nuclear Japan: Japanese Cinema Before and After Fukushima” was not limited to providing some insider’s views on Japan’s ongoing disaster; I also envisioned it as an open space for self-reflection, a space in which all participants were encouraged to think and discuss what the films told us in light of our living environment. To this end, I designed this film series to be part of my upper-level undergraduate seminar “Disasters in Japanese Cinema,” so that the students were also able to take part in discussions both inside and outside the classroom.

Fukushima: Memories of the Lost Landscape

The first film of the series, Fukushima: Memories of the Lost Landscape, poignantly told us that the physical and emotional distance I felt about the ongoing disaster was also shared among residents of Japan themselves. The film’s director, Matsubayashi Yojyu, was in his apartment flat in Tokyo when the earthquake hit. In the following weeks, he was already on a trip to Fukushima and other affected areas in the Tohoku region to make a documentary film titled 311 together with the renowned filmmaker Mori Tatsuya and others. Having appeared as one of the “first” documentaries on the issue, 311 succeeded in getting much critical attention. However, Matsubayashi was far from satisfied with the film’s result because he felt it approached disaster victims from the position of an “outsider.” For this reason, he decided to make another documentary on his own, and this time he began by actually “living” with a group of people forced to evacuate from their hometowns that are located within the 20 km exclusion zone around Fukushima Daiichi Power Plant.

This is the back-story of Fukushima: Memories of the Landscape. Shot entirely on the digital video camera Matsubayashi carried with him all the time, the film captures an intimate but always respectful relationship he established with the people sheltered at the evacuation center. Unlike the majority of news reports or TV documentaries that tend to shed light on children as “innocent” victims of the disaster, his attention goes in particular to elderly villagers, including a memorable couple who refused to leave their home because of the sickly wife, all of whom had witnessed their hometown’s long-term commitment to the nuclear industry. Behind this particular attention is perhaps the director’s reluctance to accept an easy and judgmental distinction between victims and victimizers. As clarified near the beginning of the film, the electric power generated at the Fukushima Daiichi was used not in the local community but instead channeled to meet the huge energy demands in the Tokyo area, and as one of many residents of this capital city, Matsubayashi tries to confront his own oppositional identity through his devotion to the lives of those others.

In ways, Fukushima: Memories of the Lost Landscape follows the legacy of postwar Japanese filmmaking, which self-consciously challenged the hierarchical relationship between filmmakers and filmed subjects.1


In December 6th and 7th, UCSB hosted the 2013 International Conference on Taiwan Studies at UCSB, entitled Inter-flow and Trans-border: Ocean, Environment, and Cultural Landscapes of Taiwan. Participants from the U.S., Taiwan, China, Korea, Japan, and Canada came to discuss the geography, history, society, and culture of Taiwan, which since the 17th century has been an important trading outbound between East and West and whose society has been characterized by records of travel, exile, migration and immigration with multiple foreign cultural influences. This subject offers multiple avenues for deep interdisciplinary exploration into social, cultural, historical, environmental, economic, political, colonial and postcolonial aspects of Taiwan.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 20
Matsuyabashi presents his work as a product of collaboration, whose contents are completely contingent upon the experiences he had with the evacuees during the six months of his shooting. As a result, he invites the viewers to learn and understand the actual situation of Fukushima through the unreserved voices of his filmed subjects, rather than imposing his own interpretation of the ongoing disaster. Moreover, he often allows his filmed subjects to take pictures of him making a film about them so as to objectify his privileged position as a filmmaker.

This approach might seem passive and elusive at first glance, but I must emphasize that it also reflects the director’s distrust of major news media and in particular of their overconfidence in the power of the camera. In one scene in the film, Matsuyabashi gets close to the very entrance of the Fukushima Daiichi and captures a group of workers and policemen protected in the protective suits. Despite his physical proximity to the site of destruction, however, his camera shows nothing but the invisibility of radiation and its potential impact. This is the theme of the film, which should be, as a filmmaker, deal with the people’s struggle with the nuclear disaster without being able to give shape to its principal cause? This is the question Matsuyabashi repeatedly asks himself through his filmmaking. But because he also recognized that this is the question that he cannot answer in a short term, he has already decided to go back to the lives of the evacuees and keep making films on and with them.

After the screening, David Novak, associate professor in UCSB’s Music Department, gave a guest talk on his current project “Nuclear Japan.” Originally released in 2010 as the first installment of the film series, Odayaka, the second installment of the film series. Directed by Uchida Nobuteru and released in 2012, Odayaka 

Okuyaka, a feminist critique of post-Fukushima Japan

be translated as “tranquil everyday life,” but the real intention behind this ironic title is to disturb the notion that anyone can resume a normal life in post-3.11 Japan as if nothing has happened in Fukushima and other areas. The film depicts stories of two young Japanese women, Saeko and Yukako, who happen to live next to each other in a suburb of Tokyo but equally have a hard time coping with the harsh reality of post-3.11 Japan. Saeko, left by her husband on the day of the earthquake, becomes a target of bullying by the other mothers at her daughter’s kindergarten who accuse her of stirring up “unnecessary” fear about their children’s exposure to radiation. Yukako, also panicking about possible effects of radiation on food products, becomes a target of ridicule when her husband shows reluctance at her request to move to a much safer area in Western Japan. In this film, too, the characters’ distance from the actual sites of the disaster attains a special meaning. Physically, Tokyo is far from the visual evacuation zone in Fukushima; yet psychologically, it is still close enough to induce paranoia among its residents, especially if they wish to protect their loved ones from the potential danger of nuclear fallout.

Among the strengths of Odayaka is its strategic use of fiction to give shape to the social atmosphere of post-3.11 Japan and its psychological impacts on individuals. Rather than offering an objective or truthful depiction of everyday life, the director Uchida provides an extreme dramatization of it by putting two female protagonists into a deadlocked situation where they go so far as to suffer from mental breakdown due to society’s complete silencing of their voices and ignorance about the dangers of radiation. In reality, they should quite handily find support from the groups, reflecting the director’s strong will that women can resume a normal life in post-Fukushima, and other areas.

This is not how this area actually looks, but is rather consistent with an extremely bleak, almost dreamlike color scheme. Needless to say, this is how the film actually looks, but is rather consistent with the director’s desire to visualize Japanese people’s collective anger about their exposure to invisible radiation.

Besides its status as a fiction film, Odayaka is also one of the rare and prime examples of “woman’s cinema” on nuclear crisis. The key player in this regard is Sugino Kiki, who, on top of her breathtaking acting in the role of Saeko, also served as the producer of this project. When Uchida approached her for the first time, his original script had only the story of Yukako and her husband. So it was her decision that brought Odayaka to follow the parallel stories of two young women, which eventually lead to the formation of a solid and empowering solidarity between the two. Naturally, the film’s particular gender dynamics became the main topic for discussion in a post-screening Q & A session moderated by Professor Margaret Low (UC Riverside, Compl.itt and Foreign Languages) and myself. Long is a specialist of modern Japanese literature, film, and feminist politics and theory, and is currently working on a book manuscript entitled Post-Fukushima Public Intellectuals and the Problem of Eco-Feminism.

Long also admitted that what Odayaka presented us was not always true. But the film, she argued, can also be read as realistic insofar as it addresses on its narrative level three mythologies that constitute the grotesque reality of post-Fukushima Japan. The first myth is that domestic food products, including vegetables and milk, are safe from nuclear contamination. The second myth is that the stress of worrying about radiation is worse than the radiation itself, and this view is often and mistakenly used to attack women’s overreaction, in particular through their roles as caregivers to young children. The third myth is that responsibility for these and other related things should always be left to the government. Because it allowed for personal identification with the characters, Odayaka succeeded in stimulating very positive and passionate reactions from the audience. But with the recognition of these misguided ideas, such an emotional viewing experience also turned into a site of intellectual learning.

Ashes to Honey

Originally released in 2010 as the third installment of the acclaimed female director Kanamana Hitomi’s nuclear trilogy, Ashes to Honey is not a film about post-3.11 Japan. However, the film still deserves to be the last film in our film series because it rightfully encourages us to ask whether it is relevant to set up a clear-cut distinction between before and after Fukushima, especially in light of Japan’s long-term confrontation with nuclear problems. When the triple disaster struck Japan, Ashes to Honey was still being shown at local theaters and community centers, reflecting the director’s strong will to use her film to bring people together and speak with them directly after each screening. The film was then brought to Taiwan and Professor Pei-te Lien from the Institute of Developing Economies, Japan and a visiting scholar of Research on Labor and Employment at the UCSB Labor and Employment Research Center.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

University of California, Santa Barbara, Fall 2014

Department of East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies

engagement with the outside world, while also accounting for the profound impact of democratization and globalization over the last and current centuries. The CTS cosponsored this event with the Graduate Institute of Taiwan Literature, National Taiwan University and the Education Division of the Taipei Economic & Cultural Office in Los Angeles. The proceedings will be published this summer.

On February 13th, CTS cosponsored a talk by Dr. Monica Kawakami from the Institute of Developing Economies, Japan and a visiting scholar of Research on Labor and Employment at the UCSB Labor and Employment Research Center. Dr. Kawakami’s talk explored the underlying mechanisms that made this emergence possible.

On February 26th, CTS cosponsored a talk given by Peggy Chiao, a film producer, professor and enter based in Taiwan. She has 20+ features, documentaries and short films. Currently, “Changing Roles of Taiwanese Firms in Global Innovation Networks: The Case of the Electronics Industry,” explored the emergence of a number of Taiwanese “system on Chip (SoC) firms to platform vendors which outcompeted powerful SoC firms from Silicon Valley. Dr. Kawakami’s talk explored the underlying mechanisms that made this emergence possible.

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In Fall 2014, professors Kate McDonald (History) and Sabine Frühstück (EALCS) are convening the first ever combined IHC-sponsored Research Focus Group on Graduate Seminar (HST 287/JAPAN 287). We come together as an interdisciplinary group of graduate students and faculty members from the departments of History, East Asian Languages & Cultural Studies, Religious Studies, Music, and Film & Media Studies to examine, discuss and analyze a singular topic: the reinvention of Japan.

"Reinvention" and "renewal" have been prominent themes in Japanese religion and philosophy. They repeatedly held public discourse throughout history, ranging from the Edo-period world renewal movement, a complex of carnivalesque religious celebrations and communal activities that were often fashionable as social or political protests, to Japan’s late nineteenth-century dramatic fashion as social or political protests, to world renewal movements, a complex history, ranging from the Edo-period students and faculty members from the departments of History, East Asian Languages & Cultural Studies, Religious Studies, Music, and Film & Media Studies to examine, discuss and analyze a singular topic: the reinvention of Japan.

Our goal is to share our ongoing work with other “Japan” graduate students and faculty on campus in an effort to better understand what kind of research projects we are currently engaged in, better integrate our graduate students into an ongoing conversation about scholarship in the making, and to identify overlapping interests and possible future collaborations.

In Fall 2014, we meet biweekly on Wednesdays, 4–5pm, beginning on October 8. For each meeting, a speaker pre-circulates a draft of her/his ongoing work and we then comment and discuss the work for about an hour. Presenters receive guidance from faculty they would not normally encounter, gain valuable feedback on their own work, and, most important, interact with faculty and other graduate students in an intellectually stimulating yet low stress environment. ABD students are especially welcome. If you are interested, please simply enroll and join us on October 8. (Contact: Kate McDonald at kmcdonald@history.ucsb.edu or Sabine Frühstück at fruehstuck@eastasian.ucsb.edu.)
...My stumbling block with JET was just another example. Without my academic and personal successes to fall back on, I was not sure I would make it through. Success would not have tasted so sweet when I achieved it. As fate would have it, my second year of graduate school brought with it the JET Program. I had been on the JET Program since 2008 and had had a few successes. I had been accepted into the program, but somehow had muddled through, and I was also reminded of this simple fact: I was not accepted into the program until I had gone through a comprehensive and interdisciplinary program and spent a gap year working in the region of how I viewed Japan and myself in relationship to the country.

Following JET, I entered Harvard University’s Regional Studies of East Asia Master’s Program -- but entirely uncertain as to what my focus area would be. Fall semester found me in Professor Spector’s ‘Food, Culture and Society’ class. An entirely new discipline opened up to me, and in due course I gobbled up the readings. When it came time for my term paper, my experiences with the Japanese school lunch system seemed like an excellent jumping-off point for research. Once I delved into the topic, I discovered there was little English-language research on the topic, and we studied the current system in preparation for the full paper. My subject was a unique experience with different scenery and weather. Everyone on campus had a unique experience with different scenery and weather. Everyone on campus had a unique experience with different scenery and weather. Everyone on campus had a unique experience with different scenery and weather.

I embarrassed myself culturally, made an impact, and found the true global vision of connecting the United States with Asia is admirable. My current role provides me an excellent opportunity to maintain an active role in the department, and to have a bird’s eye view of many of the goings-on of the institution and our external constituents. As for what my next adventure will be, only the future can say. However, for the time being, I consider myself extremely grateful for this opportunity thus far. Please keep an eye on my articles and art at my website: alexisaglianosanborn.squarespace.com
Mae Chase-Dunn, who has just completed her first year of graduate studies in the EALCS Department, is spending the summer immersed in Chinese language and culture at the Princeton in Beijing Intensive Chinese Language Program. Emm Simpson, a third year student in the EALCS PhD program, chatted with Mae about her initial impressions of UCSB and the EALCS department via Skype.

M: Thanks Emm! I took a bit of a detour in my route to graduate school. After graduating from UCSB in 2008 I explored a career as a corporate librarian, then taught English in Japan, reconnecting with my interests, away from academia and some time in the workforce, going back to being a student feels a bit strange. What about you?

E: This certainly rings a bell: I took a few years off after undergrad and first worked as a corporate librarian, then taught English in Japan, reconnecting with my interests, away from academia and some time in the workforce, going back to being a student feels a bit strange. What about you?

E: It was four years for me, too, actually! I was really excited to become a student again, but I certainly struggled with time management. It's easy to get wrapped up in assignments, taking classes, and juggling our obligations as best we can. Now it gets trickier, but I think we all learn how to improve on any papers and presentations in the works: again, our grad student colloquium and the Reinventing Japan colloquium are notable. Which ones have you taken so far, Mae?

M: I've gotten a lot of encouragement and opportunities to present through my advisors. There have been a number of conferences and symposiums right at UCSB organized or supported by EALCS; I was able to present at the New Perspectives in Buddhist Studies conference this past March and meet a lot of important people in my field, right here in California. I'm also on a panel with my main advisor, Professor Fabio Rambelli, at the European Association for Japanese Studies this summer. We get a lot of notifications about upcoming conferences from professors and from groups like the East Asia Center: we're well-informed! And our advisors have helped prepare me to enter Princeton in the fall, so that was extremely helpful. This also had the opportunity to TA, which has been so generous with their time and advice! I think the most challenging thing for me has been readjusting to being a student. After four years in the workforce, going back to being a student feels a bit strange. What about you?

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M: That's so funny! We've had many conversations but I didn't realize how much we had in common until a, yest I think when I first visited, I was most pleasantly surprised by how welcoming and helpful the EALCS department is. This really allows students to find professors and students that have similar interests. Even professors and graduate students whose interests are quite different from mine have been so generous with their time and advice! I think the most challenging thing for me has been readjusting to being a student. After four years in the workforce, going back to being a student feels a bit strange. What about you?

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M: So far I've taken the Modern Cultural Studies and Translation Theory seminars, both of which, while not directly related to my research topic, have given me new perspectives to consider and some very useful general knowledge background. When I first came to UCSB I knew I was interested in modern Chinese society and current issues, but beyond that I have so many different interests that I had a hard time figuring out what I wanted my thesis topic to be. Thanks to the help of several professors in our department I've decided to study human animal relationships in modern China. For example, I want to explore changing attitudes and definitions of animal subjectivity. EALCS also encouraged me to enroll in Chinese language classes, since one of my priorities is developing my language skills. I've found our Chinese language program here very effective and welcoming to graduate students, which helped prepare me to enter Princeton in Beijing, an intensive summer language course. I've also had the opportunity to audit several additional classes and TA a course, helping me develop my general knowledge and broadening the range of courses I'm able to teach and learn from. But the people involved in the program are by far the best resource we've got, and the number of social events we're participating in, including touring a PhD in Anthropology, this has been incredibly useful for me. While I haven't had a chance to take advantage of the EALCS department via Skype, I have definitely had a chance to take advantage of such opportunities. I've found there are a lot more opportunities to meet grad students from outside the department than I expected, especially if you live in some form of university housing. For example I'm living in a student housing complex, and I've been in a graduate student choir for almost three years now. Also, there are a lot of perks just to living in Santa Barbara; we all complain about the rent and cost of living, but there's so much to do outside and year round that makes it worth it for me. How have you enjoyed living in SB, Mae?

M: To be honest, my family is nearby so I frequently go home on the weekends, but when I don't go home I am an outdoorsy kind of person so I like to go to the cliffs and go for hikes. I also recently joined a local Crossfit gym and have been to downtown Santa Barbara a few times to go out with friends. Isla Vista and downtown Santa Barbara both have some great eateries and our beaches here are fantastic! For me, being able to walk out my door and have the beach and beautiful scenery just a 10 minute walk away is great when I need a study break! I know some people can study on the beach, but I also prefer it as a little getaway. It's certainly one of our greatest perks about living in your town, Mae. We're so glad you've joined us!

M: I'm so happy to have had the opportunity to be a part of the EALCS department. I am looking forward to an awesome second year and meeting all of our new incoming graduate students! Growth in the number of classes requiring TAs in the department, which offers graduate students both funding and experience. I've been really pleased with the range of courses I've been able to take and learn from. But the people involved in the program are by far the best resource we've got, and the number of social events we're participating in, including touring a PhD in Anthropology, this has been incredibly useful for me. While I haven't had a chance to take advantage of the EALCS department via Skype, I have definitely had a chance to take advantage of such opportunities. I've found there are a lot more opportunities to meet grad students from outside the department than I expected, especially if you live in some form of university housing. For example I'm living in a student housing complex, and I've been in a graduate student choir for almost three years now. Also, there are a lot of perks just to living in Santa Barbara; we all complain about the rent and cost of living, but there's so much to do outside and year round that makes it worth it for me. How have you enjoyed living in SB, Mae?

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and economics from Japan. It offers Japanese and English articles in full text and statistics, as well as corporate information from numerous sources, including the following:

Nihon keizai shinbun
The Nikkei: Oct. 1981-present
Nikkei sangyo shinbun
Nikkei ryûsatsu shinbun
= Nikkei MF: Oct. 1985-present
Nikkei kinyû shinbun
Nikkei Magazine
Mar. 2005-present
Nikkei Phs 1 Apr. 2000-present
Nikkei Company Profile: 30,000 company profiles
Corporate Financial Summary: latest 3 fiscal years of 1,700 listed companies except banks, securities, insurance
Nikkei Who’s Who: 20,000 corporate executive profiles
Nikkei English News: last 7 days
Major Articles (English).
From the Nikkei: Nov. 11, 1986-present
From the Nikkei VERITAS: May 16, 1988-present
From the Nikkei Business Daily: May 16, 1988-present
From the Nikkei MF: Feb. 1, 1991-present
The Nikkei Weekly: July 5, 1983-present

CHINESE STUDIES:
Oxbridge Old Journals: Full-text Database (Late 19th century to 1949)
Chinese Population Census 2010 Database
Dacheng Old Journals Full-text Database

The screening of Ashes to Honey at the Pollock Theater became memorable to everyone. Kamanaka herself joined us via Skype for the post-screening discussion and Q & A session. In response to questions prepared by Professor ann-elise lewallen of the University of California, Santa Barbara, Kamanaka explained how she came to work on the issues of nuclear power and move to more eco-friendly sustainable energy. Kamanaka finds a practicable answer for this through her visit to Sweden, where she encounters people and communities that have successfully converted to the systematic use of renewables. Besides several innovative technologies that can generate power from natural sources such as wind and biomass, one significant lesson she learns there is the need to change the highly monopolistic structure of the electric power industry in Japan itself. That is to say, if one aims to bring an end to the use of nuclear power, it is not enough to stress the danger of radiation and its harmful effects on the ecosystem; on a more practical level, we also need to set out the deregulation of the electricity market so as to affirm our basic rights as customers to purchase and live with clean energy from a reliable supplier.

Consequently, the US and shown in April 2011 at the Japanese film festival in Los Angeles, “Nuclear Japan” comes to recognize American people’s growing concerns about Fukushima and nuclear fallout. It is rather ironic that the majority of people come to recognize this film somewhat retrospectively, as itpreemptively exposed the lies behind myths about the safety of nuclear power plants. But, as long as we wish to avoid making the same mistake again, it is never too late to think and discuss, along this film, how we might envision a sustainable future by making a shift from nuclear power to renewable energy sources.

Ashes to honey is a document on the people of Iwaishima island in the Inland Sea of Japan, who for 28 years have actively opposed the construction of a nuclear plant across the bay. While those protesters are composed mostly of elderly fishermen, the film foregrounds the story of Yatomo Takashi, the youngest on the island. Takashi has recently returned to the island not only to join the struggle led by his father, but also to establish a sustainable living based on the abundance of natural resources available there. On its narrative level, the film’s climax comes when the Chugoku Electric Power Company tries to fill in the bay to inaugurate groundwork for the planned nuclear plant. The people of the island, together with a number of green activists from across the country, set sail to the bay with their fishing boats to stop the construction. The film captures this dramatic confrontation solely from the side of the protesters, collectively accusing the company of irreversible environmental destruction.

Like Fukushima: Memories of the Lost Landscape, Ashes to Honey presents itself as the work of the mutual collaboration between the filmmaker and her filmed subjects. And yet the director Kamanaka takes a step further to insert her own reflection and findings, regarding the question of how can we use destructive nuclear power and move to more eco-friendly sustainable energy. Kamanaka finds a practicable answer for this through her visit to Sweden, where she encounters people and communities that have successfully converted to the systematic use of renewables. Besides several innovative technologies that can generate power from natural sources such as wind and biomass, one significant lesson she learns there is the need to change the highly monopolistic structure of the electric power industry in Japan itself. That is to say, if one aims to bring an end to the use of nuclear power, it is not enough to stress the danger of radiation and its harmful effects on the ecosystem; on a more practical level, we also need to set out the deregulation of the electricity market so as to affirm our basic rights as customers to purchase and live with clean energy from a reliable supplier.

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CONT.
since been making it clear through her filmmaking that as long as the nuclear industry is premised on the exploitative logic of capitalism, there is no ethical or political difference between the use of nuclear weapons and that of nuclear power.

As a way of conclusion, Kamanaka advised us to read and discuss her work in relation to our own local context. She is currently working on her forthcoming film, _A Canon of Little Voices_, in an attempt to raise public awareness on the health effects of radiation on children in Fukushima and other affected areas. By the same token, Kamanaka urged us to take collective action to shut down the Diablo Canyon Power Plant, for this is what we could—or should—do as residents of the nearby area to prevent any more possible nuclear disasters. “You need to have knowledge,” said Kamanaka to the audience, “Radiation is invisible. If you learn and study what it is, then you can understand how you should act when accidents happen.” Obviously, there is no better statement than this to conclude our film series for its promotion of self-reflection as a pedagogical tool.

The Aftermath Across the Ocean

As I mentioned earlier, the Pollock Theater film series “Nuclear Japan” ran concurrently with my undergraduate seminar “Disasters in Japanese Cinema.” So I want to conclude this report with some of my students’ responses to the series. The majority of my students were film and media studies majors who had little knowledge about either Japan or nuclear issues before taking the seminar. Reflecting that common background, quite a few students found this film series “eye-opening,” an intellectually rewarding experience to gain knowledge about what is happening across the sea. “Before the film series,” one student wrote, “the earthquake, tsunami and the following nuclear meltdown were not something that I paid much attention to. Now, after watching these films and gathering further information on the disaster and its victims, a new awareness has been created. The impact of the film series has been overwhelmingly positive, so say the least.” Furthermore, it is noticeable that my students also attempted to reflect on what they learned from the series as something closely connected to their own living environment. As another student stated, “Fukushima calls on not only the Japanese, but all of humanity, to come together and find safer alternative power sources in order to save our planet.” Explicit in these engaging comments, I contend, should be a lesson instructive to anyone working on global issues. Whether it be Fukushima or Santa Barbara, their mode of thinking is still based on the local context; but in the meantime, they have already began addressing issues related to nuclear disasters on the global level, adequately surpassing the alleged distance between here and there.

About the Author:

Naoki Yamamoto is an assistant professor in the Department of Film and Media Studies at UCSB, where he teaches film theory, Japanese cinema, and political and documentary films. He has published in both English and Japanese on a variety of topics, including the reception of early Hollywood cinema in 1910s Japan, wartime German-Japanese co-productions, and early works of the Japanese New Wave film maker Yoshiuda Kijū. He is currently completing a book manuscript entitled _Realities That Matter: The Development of Realist Film Theory and Practice in Japan_.

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The Department of East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies is committed to providing students with the opportunity to understand the many facets of East Asian cultures, including (but not limited to) languages, literature, history, society, politics, economics, religiosities, media, and art. In a world of increasing international cooperation and globalization, students will be prepared to face a society in which Asia is now a significant factor in the foreign relations of the United States, and the rest of the world.

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