



The 13th Annual Days of Japan  
at the University of Warsaw  
23-25 October 2019

## Unique or Universal? Japan and its Contribution to World Civilization

An International Conference  
to Commemorate 100 Years of Japanese Studies at the University of Warsaw

### Call for Papers

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

In 2019 we celebrate the centenary of Japanese Studies at the University of Warsaw. On this occasion it is our pleasure to invite you on behalf of the Chair of Japanese Studies to participate in the international conference that will be held from the **23<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> of October 2019**.

The first Japanese language classes at our university commenced in 1919 and soon expanded into literature and translation studies. After World War II, Professor Wiesław Kotanski, the undisputed founder of Japanese studies in Poland, an outstanding linguist and a scholar of religion and Japanese culture, educated several generations of students and specialists. It was thanks to him that in 1957 the Department of Japanese Studies was created. Today, Japanese Studies is the most popular BA major at the University of Warsaw with 22 times more candidates than our admission quota.

Where has all this interest in Japan come from? Why is it still so strong? Is Japan interesting enough to spur young people's imagination and devotion towards studying it simply due to its uniqueness? Or perhaps its culture has gradually become universally recognized, thus dissolving it into the global sea of ideas, both enriching it and becoming more familiar to us? Maybe today in the age of globalization and blurred boundaries, Western and Japanese cultures already share the same track? Bruno Latour has pointed out how weak the opposition between culture and nature is. Is this phenomenon, so inherent to the Japanese culture, gradually becoming our own, Western reality? What about borders between image and text?

In his Nobel Lecture in 1968, Yasunari Kawabata described the world of Japanese uniqueness through the prism of inaccessible poetry, zen mysticism and *mono no aware*. On the other hand, in his own speech in 1994, Kenzaburō Ōe viewed Japan differently - as a culture deeply split between the East and the West, yet culturally isolated in Asia. Still, as he stated in Stockholm, he put his literary efforts into 'curing this wound' by promoting European - yet universal - post-war humanism, tolerance and peace in Japan. Has this wound been cured?

Today, Japan is a leading contributor and inspiration to the world's culture and economy - from *ukiyo-e* to manga and 'Superflat' art, from Nobel Prize winners in literature to world-renowned film directors and video games, from candlestick charts to Nikkei 225. What will Japan do with its uniqueness as it becomes more and more universal in the trans-cultural world described by Wolfgang Welsch? Or maybe Norinaga Motoori was right and still only the Japanese people themselves are able to sense *mono no aware*?

We kindly invite you to join the discussion in all fields of Japanese Studies.

Organizing Committee:

Prof. Agnieszka Kozyra

Prof. Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska

Prof. Beata Kubiak Ho-Chi

Prof. Iwona Kordzińska-Nawrocka

Dr. Jędrzej Greń

Yōko Fujii-Karpoluk M.A.

Conference Data:

Language of presentation: English or Japanese

Total time for presentation: 30 minutes (20 minutes presentation + 10 minutes discussion)

Abstract: up to 300 words

Abstract submission deadline: **31 MARCH 2019**

Author notification about acceptance: **6 MAY 2019**

Conference Venue: University of Warsaw

Day 1 & Day 3 - Old Library on the Main Campus (Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28)

Day 2 - University of Warsaw Library (Dobra 56/66)

Conference Fee: 300 PLN (regular), 150 PLN (PhD Candidates)

(fee includes: welcome reception, coffee break refreshments, conference materials, post conference publication - the fee does not cover transportation or accommodation costs)

Contact:

[2019.days.of.japan@gmail.com](mailto:2019.days.of.japan@gmail.com)