

German-Japanese Joint Lecture

Fiction and Fictionality in Japanese Culture:

- *Shishōsetsu* (I-Novel) and “Otaku” Culture -

Professor Yasusuke OURA,
Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University

Date: February 22, 2017, 18:15-19:45 (Open 18:00)

Venue: Heidelberg University, Karl Jaspers Centre, Room 212

Timetable:

18 :15 **Opening Speech**

Prof. Harald Fuess, Centre for Transcultural Studies, Heidelberg University
(Cluster of Excellence “Asia and Europe in a Global Context”)

18 : 30 **Lecture:** *Fiction and Fictionality in Japanese Culture- Shishōsetsu (I-Novel) and “Otaku” Culture-*
Professor Yasusuke OURA, Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University

19 : 15 **Comments and Discussion**

Prof. Judit Árokay, Institute for Japanese Studies, Heidelberg University

19 : 45 **Reception**

Moderator: Ms. Sabine Schenk (Heidelberg University Kyoto Office)

Mr. Tamaki Suzuki (Kyoto University European Center Heidelberg)

The lecture series “German-Japanese Joint Lecture” is organized in close cooperation of the Heidelberg University Office, Kyoto, and the Kyoto University European Center, Heidelberg Office, the liaison offices of both universities in Japan and Germany. It aims at promoting and strengthening research exchange between Heidelberg University and Kyoto University.

Professor Yasusuke OURA,

Professor at the Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University. BA and MA from Kyoto University, PhD from Université Paris 7. He specializes in French and Japanese literature, literary and cultural theory, especially theory of fiction, sexuality, media and communication. He published numerous books and articles about literary theory and criticism, Japanese modern literature (particularly Sōseki and Tanizaki), etc. (<https://kyouindb.iimc.kyoto-u.ac.jp/e/bB0ul>)

(Abstract)

Fiction and Fictionality in Japanese Culture:

***Shishōsetsu* (I-Novel) and “Otaku” Culture**

by Yasusuke OURAⁱ

Fiction and fictionality—their features and uses—can provide numerous insights into a culture. The issues they raise also offer a fertile ground for comparative studies. In the case of Japanese culture, the *shishōsetsu* (I-novel), often considered the representative genre of modern Japanese literature, uses a special type of fictionality, which is one of its definitory features. Oversimplifying the facts, we could say that it stands at the intersection of the study of Japanese culture and theory of fiction. In Japan, only few thinkers have analysed the *shishōsetsu* from this standpoint. I'll introduce their ideas and attempt to reconsider the theoretical implications of this “Japanese-style fiction” from a present-day perspective.

Another topic I tackle is the so-called “otaku culture”, especially the production and consumption of narratives it involves, often discussed in terms of “narrative consumption”, *nijisōsaku* (derivative work), etc. The phenomenon is not limited to literature, encompassing many subculture genres: manga, anime, video games, etc. The “otaku culture” in this sense seems to contrast strangely with the *shishōsetsu*: while the latter is a quasi-autobiographical genre, recounting the author's everyday experiences, the former is characterised by a sort of panfictionalism, a key concept of “postmodern” culture. Nevertheless, both are presumed to be Japanese. How can we explain this? That is the question I'll address in concluding my talk.

ⁱ Professor of literary theory at the Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University.