

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

## **REMAPPING THE JAPANESE EMPIRE: BEYOND THE CLASH OF KNOWLEDGE AND MEMORIES**

Oriental Institute, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague, 5-6 November, 2021

The Oriental Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences is delighted to call for participants for an upcoming workshop to be held on 5-6 November 2021. The workshop is a part of the celebration of the Institute, which was founded in 1922 ([www.orient.cas.cz](http://www.orient.cas.cz)). At the moment, we are considering a hybrid style seminar workshop with participation both online via Zoom and in-person.

Through collaborative exchange, the workshop seeks to engage with an intriguing set of research questions and approaches related to the rise and fall of the Japanese Empire. The historiography of the Japanese Empire continues to grow as represented by recent exciting works such as Jeremy Yellen's *The Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere: When Total Empire Met Total War* (Cornell, 2019) and Benjamin Uchiyama's *Japan's Carnival War: Mass Culture on the Home Front, 1937-1945* (Cambridge, 2019), which offer new directions in research and methodology. In that vein, we are particularly interested in exploring in new ways the broader question of vulnerability at individual and systemic levels as embodied in literary and visual texts. How can we understand the decisions, commitment, and experiences of, for example, the members of the Volunteer Youth Corps for the Colonization of Manchuria and Mongolia (*Manmō kaitaku giyūdan*), by reading combined sources of official papers, newspapers, and popular literature such as *Colonization of Manchuria Literature (Mashū kaitaku bungaku)*? We know the gap between colonial reality and ideological slogans, but by rigorously identifying the ways different kinds of propaganda impacted those who relocated and founded new homes in Manchuria or elsewhere in the Empire, we will examine how one's vulnerable existence or situation translates to the political and social contexts of Japanese imperialism. Going beyond the colonizer vs. colonized binarism, and by humanizing aspects of total war without employing terms and approaches that excuse the excesses of the Japanese Empire, our goal is to explore the question of individual agency in the space where all participants' actions potentially had political implications for total war. This might include instances when boundaries between spaces are imagined, administered, or controlled, as was the case in many aspects of everyday life in the empire.

We welcome work-in-progress papers, particularly concerning the issue of vulnerability, that 1) relate to various aspects and phases in the rise and fall of the Japanese Empire and 2) examine the ambivalent experiences of colonial modernity through rigorous analysis of intersubjective exchange. During the two-day workshop, participants will present and discuss their projects with fellow participants and workshop advisors, Professor Leo Ching (Duke University) and Professor Katō Kiyofumi (National Institute of Japanese Literature). The details of the workshop will be announced later, but we plan to publish the outcome as an edited volume or a journal special issue. We therefore ask for applications from scholars who will offer a paper that has not already been published or committed for future publication. Our expected submission date to a press is Spring 2022. Interested applicants shall send the following by August 1, 2021 to Nobuko Toyosawa:

- 2-page CV (in English)
- 1-page abstract (300-word in English), laying out the innovative aspect of the work with original argument and major sources within the context described above

Accepted participants will be asked to prepare, in advance of the workshop, a short piece of writing in English, not to exceed 15 double-spaced pages with notes, which will be circulated among workshop participants. Please note that participants are expected to attend both days, and the workshop languages will be both English and Japanese.

For questions, please feel free to contact Nobuko Toyosawa [toyosawa@orient.cas.cz](mailto:toyosawa@orient.cas.cz).