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D I S

T A N

C E S

Ageing Society in Italy and Japan

A Multidisciplinary Workshop

IN THE COVID-19 ERA

ONLINE EVENT
NOVEMBER 13–14, 2020

Photo by Laura Liverani

STEERING COMMITTEE

Stefania Bandini
University di Milano-Bicocca and RCAST – The University of Tokyo
Paolo Calvetti
Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Tokyo
Silvio Vita
Kyoto University of Foreign Studies and Italian School of East Asian Studies

DISCUSSANTS

Andrea De Antoni
Faculty of International Relations, Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto
Paola Cavaliere
School of Human Sciences, Osaka University

CONCEPT

In the past decade, the crucial issue of the dynamic social and economic impact of an aging society (namely, the increase in longevity versus the fall in fertility in a population) has been the so-called digital divide, or the uneven distribution in the access to, use of, or impact of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) . Most research on this topic has addressed reducing the intergenerational gap, influencing the growth of educational programs for the elderly and the production of dedicated user interfaces. However, the recent global Covid-19 pandemic has shown an acceleration in the reduction of the digital divide, allowing for the mitigation of imposed physical distances through an increase in the use of ICT. Within this scenario, the dynamic interplay between physical and virtual distances has assumed new forms, forcing innovative cross-disciplinary attitudes to develop as well as the design of new perspectives for the future of research. This workshop, which focuses on Japan and Italy, the two countries that top the list of aging populations, combines multidisciplinary research to discuss the notion of *distance* due to the recent experience of the pandemic. The workshop gathers scholars and experts from different disciplines and aims to converge their knowledge on the common discussion platform of how the perception of *distance* is addressing new research trends in scientific and humanistic studies.

TO JOIN

To join on Zoom please check the following web page for the meeting links

https://iseas-kyoto.org/eventi/workshops

You are kindly requested to make sure your name appears in your Zoom account. Please, note that the meeting will be recorded.

For any questions feel free to contact us at the e-mail address below

ISEAS

29 Bettō-chō, Kitashirakawa
Sakyō-ku, Kyoto
JAPAN

https://iseas-kyoto.org
Phone   +81-(0)75-703- 3015
Email   info.iseas@iseas-kyoto.org

PROGRAMME

13 NOV

18:00-18:10 (Japan time)

Giorgio Starace
Ambassador of Italy to Japan

Opening Address

18:10-18:20

Giorgio Amitrano
Università degli Studi di Napoli "L' Orientale", ITALY
Paolo Calvetti
Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Tokyo, JAPAN
Silvio Vita
Kyoto University of Foreign Studies and Italian School of East Asian Studies, JAPAN

Greetings and Opening Remarks

18:20-18:30

Stefania Bandini
Università di Milano-Bicocca, ITALY and RCAST – The University of Tokyo, JAPAN

Introduction

18:30-18:45

Florian Coulmas
Institute for East Asian Studies, University of Duisburg-Essen, GERMANY

Viral

18:45-19:00

Katsuhiro Nishinari
Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology, The University of Tokyo, JAPAN

Crowd Management for Keeping Distance with a Focus on the Elderly

19:00-19:15

Laura Liverani
Documentary Photographer, Milan, ITALY

Distant Proximities: Representations of the Elderly in Photography

18:15-19:30

Yukio Ohsawa
Department of Systems Innovation, The University of Tokyo, JAPAN

Stay with Your Community by Designing Preliminary Encounters

19:30-19:45

Alberto Borghese
Dipartimento di Informatica "Giovanni Degli Antoni", Università degli Studi di Milano, ITALY

Integrating Service Robots and Virtual Communities to Reduce the Distance between Caregivers and Independently Living Seniors

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Discussant **Andrea De Antoni**
Faculty of International Relations
Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto

PROGRAMME

14 NOV

17:00-17:15 (Japan time)

Tomoo Matsuda
Platinum Society Center, Mitsubishi Research Institute, Tokyo, JAPAN

How are Japanese Elderly Lifestyles Changing in the Covid-19 Era?

17:15-17:30

Atsushi Sugano
Kodo Cultural Foundation, Sado, Niigata, JAPAN

The Exadon Project: Blending Taiko with Medical Care to Benefit an Ageing Society

17:30-17:45

Patrick Heinrich
Università degli Studi di Venezia "Ca' Foscari", ITALY

Is There a 'Young Generation' in Japan, and If So, what Sets Them Apart from Others?

17:45-18:00

Paolo Heritier
Università del Piemonte Orientale, ITALY

The Paradox of Distance and Closeness in the Law: Independent Living for Older People and "Thirdness"

18:00-18:15

Daniela Caso, Marcella Bianchi
Università degli Studi di Napoli "Federico II", ITALY

Distance Teaching: The Role of Age on Italian Teachers' Computer Anxiety and Attitudes toward ICT

18:15-18:30

Vincenzo Paolo Senese
Università degli Studi della Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli", ITALY

How Remembrances of Parental Rejection and genetic characteristics weigh on depression: A Cross-Cultural Study

GENERAL DISCUSSION
Discussant **Paola Cavaliere**
School of Human Sciences
Osaka University

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Longevicity
Social Inclusion for the Elderly Through Walkability

ALBERTO BORGHESE

Dipartimento di Informatica "Giovanni Degli Antoni", Università degli Studi di Milano, ITALY

Integrating Service Robots and Virtual Communities to Reduce the Distance Between Caregivers and Independently Living Seniors

A novel platform will be presented that integrates a service robot with an IoT (Internet of Things) network, smart objects, an activity center, and a virtual community, all orchestrated by an intelligent virtual caregiver. In a robust and redundant way, the platform provides monitoring, assistance, and stimulation at the point of need. The system is mainly targeted at seniors who live alone and are at risk of becoming frail. Its key characteristics are that the senior neither has to wear anything, nor is intervention at his/her home required. Monitoring is carried out by combining the data from all components, and it is totally transparent and unobtrusive to the user. Preliminary results from home use will be reported and discussed.

N. Alberto Borghese is full professor and head of the Applied Intelligent Systems Laboratory at the Department of Computer Science, Università degli Studi di Milano. His research is based on designing, developing, and testing real-world problems, methods, and algorithms, based on computational intelligence, paying particular attention to limited processing time. He has developed a novel methodology and technology in the fields of motion capture, unobtrusive tracking, sensor integration, and e-health. He is co-author of more than seventy peer-reviewed journal papers and one hundred conference papers, and he holds sixteen international patents. His research has been financed significantly by industry and by national and European grants and projects such as CNR Robocare, MIUR SI_Robotics, EU-FITREHAB, EU-REWIRE, EU-MOVECARE, and EU-ESSENCE.

INVITED LECTURERS

DANIELA CASO - MARCELLA BIANCHI

Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici, Università degli Studi di Napoli "Federico II", ITALY

Distance Teaching: The Role of Age on Italian Teachers' Computer Anxiety and Attitudes toward ICT

The study of the integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the professional practice of teachers is an important field in the growing diffusion of new digital technologies. While there is much evidence that ICT can represent a useful educational tool, for instance helping students visualize abstract ideas and simplify the collection of reliable information, researchers have found that in practice teachers can often be reluctant to actually integrate ICT. The international emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has proved challenging for teachers from different countries who must now rely only on the use of ICT but without having received any training. Previous research investigating the impact of age on teachers' attitudes toward ICT showed contrasting findings, suggesting the importance of further studies in this field. We examine the attitudes of a group of Italian teachers toward ICT during the period of imposed distance teaching, and consider the impact of age.

Daniela Caso is associate professor in social psychology in the Department of Humanities at the University of Naples Federico II. She is currently Vice President of the Italian Association of Health Psychology (SIPSA). Her academic interests concern the study of socio-cognitive models for changing health, pro-environmental, and purchasing behaviors, mainly through Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (1991); communication studies, with particular reference to the evaluation of the effectiveness of persuasive messages aimed at behavioral change; and the study of personal and social identity, enhancing research in online identity construction. Her main field is social health psychology, mainly applying quantitative methodologies and employing research-intervention in the school, health, and community contexts.

Marcella Bianchi is currently a trainee in social psychology in the Department of Humanities at the University of Naples Federico II, and is aiming to continue her research by pursuing a PhD. Her research interests concern the study of the impact of digital technology on human wellbeing through a psychosocial lens, with particular reference to aspects of risk and opportunity.

INVITED LECTURERS

FLORIAN COULMAS

Institute for East Asian Studies, University of Duisburg-Essen, GERMANY

Viral

Even before the pandemic, we were out of breath and chained to the Internet. COVID-19 has amplified that many times over, forcing us into everyday contradictions. I hate to converse with my friends and colleagues online; yet, I do it, faute de mieux. I know that providers of online conference tools abuse their customers by exploiting the data they cannot but make accessible to them; yet, I take part in online conferences like this one. How do others think about this dilemma? Do they think about it at all? When the pandemic could no longer be played down I decided to ask people around the world to answer some questions—online, of course. The resultant survey is in no way representative, but the answers that participants from all inhabited continents offered are interesting nonetheless. In this paper, I will report on some of the findings.

Florian Coulmas is senior professor of Japanese society and sociolinguistics in the Faculty of Social Sciences at Duisburg-Essen University. As Director of the German Institute of Japanese Studies in Tokyo (2004–2014), he conducted research on the aging population and happiness/life satisfaction. He is currently heading a research project about migration, language, and happiness. His recent publications include *Identity: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2019); *An Introduction to Multilingualism: Language in a Changing World* (Oxford University Press, 2017); *Guardians of Language: Twenty Voices Through History* (Oxford University Press, 2016); *Tokio. Vom Glück urbanen Lebens* (C. H. Beck, 2014); and *Writing and Society* (Cambridge University Press, 2013; Chinese translation: 文字与社会导论 外语教学与研究出版, 2019).

PATRICK HEINRICH

Dipartimento di Studi sull'Asia e sull'Africa Mediterranea, Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, ITALY

Is There a 'Young Generation' in Japan, and If So, what Sets Them Apart from Others?

"Generation" or "youth" are concepts that are often discussed, albeit not always in strict academic terms. I will first introduce a sociological definition of "generation" and then apply this concept to a discussion of youth in contemporary Japan. I argue that there is a young generation in Japan that is fundamentally different from previous generations in postwar Japan. The defining event for this young generation in Japan is not Fukushima but the bursting of the economic bubble. The subsequent economic stagnation, and the change in opportunities for young people, caused a dénouement of the contradictions in how Japan has been popularly imagined and the actual lives of young people in the Heisei period. The way in which the young generation makes sense of contemporary Japan does not mean that there is a conflict or opposition with older generations. Young people in Japan today are at pains to make the transition into adulthood. The classic pathway into adulthood, gaining independence and responsibility, is blocked for an increasing number of young Japanese. As a result, a number of ambitions, lifestyles, partnership patterns, and so on, are changing. This is often held against the young generation, but I want to show that many have had no choice. They have been born into this. They were raised in a society that is fundamentally different to that of their parents when they were young.

Patrick Heinrich is associate professor in the Department of Asian and Mediterranean African Studies at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Before joining Ca' Foscari, he taught at universities in Germany (Duisburg-Essen University) and Japan (Dokkyo University). His present research interests focus on sociolinguistics, in particular on language endangerment and on communication in the city. His recent publications (as editor) include *The Routledge Handbook of Japanese Sociolinguistics* (Routledge, 2019), *Being Young in Super-aging Japan* (Taylor & Francis, 2018), *Urban Sociolinguistics: The City as a Linguistic Process and Experience* (Routledge, 2017), and the *Handbook of the Ryukyuan Languages* (De Gruyter Mouton, 2015). He is currently working on a language documentation project on Yonaguni Island in Okinawa and is editing a book on language and happiness.

PAOLO HERITIER

Dipartimento di Giurisprudenza e Scienze Politiche, Economiche e Sociali
Università del Piemonte Orientale, ITALY

The Paradox of Distance and Closeness in the Law: Independent Living for Older People and "Thirdness"

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) aims to remove barriers to promote full inclusion and participation in society for disabled people. That shift could be equally warranted concerning older persons, especially when considering disability and aging. The absence of an international convention on the rights of older persons indicates that countries lack specific guidance and obligations to address older people's human rights: we need a new understanding of "elder law" within a proposed human rights framework. From a legal perspective, the paradoxical and partly fictional feature of the approach of independent living appears familiar to both the situation of disability and aging. Even if the ideal of living independently seems, in fact, impossible in some cases, if taken literally, it appears to be the only approach capable of supporting legal and social practices of inclusion and the promotion of active aging. We need to believe that every disabled and older person can be independent to promote active aging and avoid abuse. The legal notion of "thirdness" could help to solve the paradox between distance and closeness, fiction and reality, moving from Sugimoto Hiroshi's series, "Theaters."

Paolo Heritier is full professor in the Department of Law, Political, Economic and Social Sciences at the University of Eastern Piedmont. His present research interests focus on visual legal studies, intercultural studies and disability, and new technologies law. He is the author of eighty journal papers and several books. His forthcoming publications include "The Reasonable Interpreter: Perspective on Legal and Not-Legal Semiotics" for the *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law*; and "Italian Law and Humanities" for *Law and Literature*. He has also been a visiting professor at the Cardozo Law School of New York, the Institute of Advanced Studies of Nantes, and Kyoto University.

LAURA LIVERANI
Documentary Photographer, Milano, ITALY

Distant Proximities: Representations of the Elderly in Photography

This paper examines the representation of the elderly in photography in relation to the distance, both physical and virtual, between photographer and subject, as an encounter between who is looking and who is looked at. Inscribed in a relationship of power that is often non-symmetrical, the photographic portrait can be problematic; the photographer's gaze, directed at the subject, can reaffirm stereotypical representations of the Other. Is it possible to reduce or efface the distance between observer and observed, to achieve a collaborative/participatory mode of representation that is able to break stereotypes? Within this framework, two bodies of photographic works portraying the elderly in Japan will be presented: *Japan Pom Pom* (2014), focusing on a team of senior cheerleaders in Tokyo, and *The Sugamo Lookbooks* (2018), focusing on a group of elderly models from Sugamo, the iconic Tokyo neighborhood that caters to the fashion-conscious senior.

Laura Liverani is a documentary photographer and lecturer based in Japan and Italy. Her work focuses on socio-anthropological issues and has been published and exhibited internationally. She has published in the *Guardian*, the *Washington Post*, and *New Scientist*. She has held exhibitions at the Singapore International Photo Festival, the Italian Cultural Institute in Tokyo, and the Japan Foundation in Sydney. She has been commissioned by Benetton, the Whitechapel Gallery, and Iperborea; for an Italian publisher she was assigned the photography for *The Passenger: Japan*, a monograph on Japanese culture and society. She has also lectured on photography at several universities, both in Italy and abroad. She is part of the photojournalism agency Prospekt Photographers.

INVITED LECTURERS

TOMOO MATSUDA

Platinum Society Center, Mitsubishi Research Institute, Tokyo, JAPAN

How are Japanese Elderly Lifestyles Changing in the Covid-19 Era?

Many people worldwide have experienced huge changes in their lifestyles due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This presentation will focus on the changing lifestyles of elderly Japanese, and on how big data and AI will contribute to this change. With the elderly population making up 28 percent of the population in Japan and 23 percent in Italy, both countries are facing a super-aging society, something that has recently posed a serious risk. Social distancing has had a huge impact on the elderly in Japan as they have lost direct and real communication with friends, neighbors, and acquaintances. On the other hand, online communications are rapidly increasing through the newly coined term "IoS," or "Internet of Seniors." New survey data on the elderly in Japan showing lifestyle, behavior, communication, and consumption will be discussed. A comparative analysis will be shown between men and women, physical and psychological, urban and rural, positive and negative. Some best practices of multidisciplinary views of big data and AI will be introduced that could stimulate the future of social living for an aging society and longevity.

Tomoo Matsuda is Research Director at the Mitsubishi Research Institute (MRI) in Tokyo and specializes in the revitalization of communities and an active, aging society. He is also a visiting professor at Kochi University. He founded MRI's new policy project "Platinum Society Association" in 2010 and almost five hundred people from industry, government, and academia across Japan have joined this association. He has conducted many research projects with public and private clients. He has served as a committee member and advisor of the Aging Society Forum Committee of the Cabinet Office; on the Advisory Council of Community Planning for All Generations Cabinet Secretariat; as lead speaker of the roundtable on resilient cities in aging societies in 2014 at the OECD; on the local vitalization promotion council in Kochi Prefecture; and on the niche and top company evaluation committee in Ishikawa Prefecture. He is the author (in Japanese) of *Market Trends in Japan From Interviews With Thirty Thousand People* (2014); *Japan-Style CCRC* (2017); and *Bright Reverse Shift: From Tokyo to Rural Areas* (2020).

KATSUHIRO NISHINARI

Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology, The University of Tokyo, JAPAN

Crowd Management for Keeping Distance with a Focus on the Elderly

The modeling of the dynamic distances of crowds of pedestrians is a crucial issue in a scientific and applied approach for supporting crowd management activities. The global emergency due to COVID-19 requires a renewed focus on dynamic distancing, with further studies and computer-based simulations, and also a consideration of human behavior. When organizing large events, in order to avoid the spread of infection, it is important for individuals to keep their distance in crowded places. This is a new challenge for crowd management in order to successfully hold large events such as the Olympics and expos. Some ideas for this are given in this talk, such as when queuing or the boarding process for public transport, which come from advanced studies in the modeling and simulation of crowds and pedestrians.

Katsuhiro Nishinari is a professor at the Research Center of Advanced Science and Technology (RCAST), the University of Tokyo. His research elucidates the emergent behavior of complex systems in terms of mathematical physics, and considers real applications of emergent systems. He is especially interested in the interdisciplinary study of the collective dynamics of self-driven particles and its jamming phenomena, which we call "jamology," including vehicles, pedestrians, ants, packets in logistics and the internet, and proteins in organisms. The jamming phenomenon in this study is considered as a kind of dynamical phase transition from a free to a congested state due to instability of flow. Our research is based on mathematical and physical analysis, followed by computer simulations and experiments in order to create better models that show emergent properties. The research includes the reduction of traffic jams on highways, the smooth evacuation of pedestrians, social animals and their emergent behaviors, and supply chain networks and granular flow.

YUKIO OHSAWA

Department of Systems Innovation, The University of Tokyo, JAPAN

Stay with Your Community with Designing Preliminary Encounters

According to the speaker's recent simulations with a modified scale-free network, it has been shown that the risk of an infection spreading is amplified via the bridges between communities defined by clusters of people who meet each other by choice. This means intercommunity face-to-face collaborations may potentially bring substantial risk. In this talk, the concept of preliminary encounters is introduced as an approach toward innovation under these circumstances in which we live with COVID-19. As a method for data-interactive innovation, the speaker introduces data jackets (DJs) as metadata representing the subjective or potential interests of the participants in the data market. By visualizing the connectivity between DJs and deepening communication, people can co-create knowledge and plans in business and the sciences by combining data and externalized tacit knowledge in their daily activities.

Yukio Ohsawa is a professor and the department chair of Systems Innovation in the School of Engineering at the University of Tokyo. He received BE, ME, and Ph.D. from the The University of Tokyo (1995). Then worked for the School of Engineering Science at Osaka University (research associate, 1995-1999), Graduate School of Business Sciences at University of Tsukuba (research associate, 1999-2005), and moved back to The University of Tokyo in 2005. In the year 2000, he created a new domain, chance discovery, meaning to discover events that have a significant impact on decision making. He has given keynote talks at conferences and published books on the extensions of chance discovery, including the innovator's marketplace on data jackets.

VINCENZO PAOLO SENESE

Dipartimento di Psicologia, Università degli Studi della Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli", ITALY

How Remembrances of Parental Rejection and Genetic Characteristics Weigh on Depression: A Cross-Cultural Study

The perception of interpersonal rejection, that is of physically and psychologically hurtful behaviors and emotions, has consistently been empirically implicated in a wide array of developmental, behavioral, and psychological problems worldwide. However, the relationship between perceived rejection and genetic characteristics has yet to be investigated. The present study investigates gene-environment interactions between parental rejection (maternal and paternal) and oxytocin receptor (OXTR) gene polymorphisms on depressive symptoms in adults across two different cultural contexts: Italy and Japan. The results confirmed the importance of the quality of parental relationships (of both parents) on depression and, for the first time, showed that the effect of primary interpersonal relations is also regulated by genetic characteristics. Lastly, it has been observed that this latter effect also depends on the population considered. These findings align with expected relations between perceived interpersonal rejection and an individual's mental health, as proposed by the interpersonal acceptance-rejection theory, and indicate the need for future studies adopting a multivariate and epigenetic perspective to better understand how the effects of interpersonal rejection extend into adulthood and old age.

Vincenzo Paolo Senese is associate professor in psychometrics at the University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli and head of the Psychometric Laboratory. He is a member of the PhD program "Science of the Mind" at the University of Campania, of the scientific committee of the Italian School of East Asian Studies (ISEAS), an International Affiliate of the Rohner Center for the Study of Interpersonal Acceptance and Rejection, and serves as Regional Representative for Europe for the International Society for Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection. His main research interests are on the application of measurement models in the development of tests and questionnaires, and on the evaluation of the role of genetic, implicit, and automatic process on caregiving propensity.

ATSUSHI SUGANO
Kodo Cultural Foundation, Sado, Niigata, JAPAN

The Exadon Project: Blending Taiko with Medical Care to Benefit an Ageing Society

Exadon is an innovative fitness program with two main purposes: health promotion and preventive healthcare. Launched in 2014, the initiative is centered around enjoying taiko (traditional Japanese drums), performing arts, and physical activity. The name Exadon combines three words: "exercise," "Sado," an island in the Sea of Japan, and the sound of beating a taiko drum, "don." Taiko is an instrument that can be enjoyed by young and old, and people of all abilities. Exadon aims to cultivate a new taiko culture that brings inner peace to people from all walks of life, connecting traditionally distant generations and communities. In the talk, the project will be illustrated, and videos describing the Exadon method to combat physical and mental impairment in the elderly will be shown.

Born in Tokyo in 1956, Atsushi Sugano joined Kodo in 1982 after receiving his masters in economics at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He has spearheaded and organized projects both domestic and foreign, and has traveled with Kodo to over thirty-five nations around the world. In 1988, he was instrumental in the formation of the first "Earth Celebration," Kodo's international arts festival on Sado Island, now in its thirty-third year. Currently he is the Managing Director of Kodo Cultural Foundation and on the board of Kodo's American nonprofit company, Kodo Arts Sphere America (KASA).

ANDREA DE ANTONI
Faculty of International Relations Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, JAPAN

Andrea De Antoni is associate professor of anthropology and religious studies at Ritsumeikan University. He specializes in the anthropology of Japan and, more recently, has carried out ethnographic research in Italy. His fields of research include the anthropology of space and place, death, experiences with spirits, spirit possession, and religious healing, with a focus on perception and affect. He has published extensively on these topics, in English and Japanese. He is the author of *Going to Hell in Contemporary Japan: Feeling Landscapes of the Afterlife, Othering, Memory and Materiality* (Routledge, forthcoming 2021), and the editor of several books and special issues of academic journals. He is also the coordinator of the international research network "Skills of Feeling with the World: Anthropological Research on the Senses, Affect and Materiality," based at Ritsumeikan University.

PAOLA CAVALIERE
School of Human Sciences, Osaka University, JAPAN

Paola Cavaliere is an associate professor of Japanese studies at the School of Human Sciences, Osaka University, and the Associate Director of the Human Sciences International Undergraduate Program. Her research interests are in the areas of gender in the context of disasters, religion, and civil society in Japan. She is currently investigating gender and religious dimensions of vulnerability and resilience through an analysis of women's roles in faith-based volunteer groups contributing to post-disaster activities. She holds a PhD in East Asian Studies from the University of Sheffield, and a PhD in Law from Tohoku University. She has published several works on a gendered approach to Japanese faith-based volunteering and is currently editing the *Handbook of Disaster Studies in Japan* (forthcoming 2022).

DISCUSSANTS

STEFANIA BANDINI
Università di Milano-Bicocca, ITALY and RCAST – The University of Tokyo, JAPAN

Stefania Bandini is a full professor of computer science at the University of Milano-Bicocca and Fellow at the Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology (RCAST) at the University of Tokyo. She is Director of the Complex Systems & Artificial Intelligence Research Center and of the Artificial Intelligence Lab of the Department of Informatics, Systems and Communication. She is also Director of the Milano-Bicocca Cini Node "Artificial Intelligence & Intelligent Systems." Her research focuses on artificial intelligence and complex discrete dynamical systems. Since 2004 her research has focused on the field of crowds and pedestrians, in particular modeling and simulation to support crowd management. From 2009 she extended her research in the field of mobility in an ageing society. She co-chairs the working group "Ageing Society" for the Italian Association for Artificial Intelligence.

PAOLO CALVETTI
Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Tokyo, JAPAN

Paolo Calvetti is currently Director of the Italian Cultural Institute in Tokyo. He has taught widely in Italy and abroad. In 2009 he became professor of Japanese language and linguistics at Ca' Foscari University in Venice, and has held many institutional roles since then: directing the former School of Asian Studies and Business Administration, a member of the Academic Senate, and then director of the Department of Asian and North African Studies. From 2003 to 2007 he was cultural counsellor for the Embassy of Italy in Tokyo. His main research interests are the history of the Japanese language, Japanese sociolinguistics, and Japanese lexicography.

SILVIO VITA
Kyoto University of Foreign Studies and the Italian School of East Asian Studies, JAPAN

Silvio Vita is a professor at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, teaching courses on comparative cultural history, Japanese history, and Italian studies. Prior to 2012 he taught East Asian Religions and Intellectual History at the Università di Napoli "L' Orientale" and the Sapienza Università di Roma. He was appointed Director of the Italian School of East Asian Studies in Kyoto for two terms (2001–2005; 2008–2012). He has worked on Chinese and Japanese Buddhism, and edited volumes I and II of *Buddhist Asia*, before turning to the cultural history of modern and early modern Japan. He has recently been researching the Marega collection in the Vatican Library within the frame of a project by the National Institutes for the Humanities of Japan.