

KYOTO LECTURES 2024



Reading the Air and Creating Trouble Food Allergy Disclosures in Japan

Monday, October 21st, 18:00

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SPEAKER



'Reading the air' (*kūki wo yomu*) is a highly valued communicative skill in Japan. It has been argued to shape expectations, motivations, and actions within social settings and to facilitate relationships. Not being able to do it is understood as damaging to social settings and the management of relations. In this talk I discuss this concept and explore the ways in which people with food allergies in Japan imaginatively read the air and try to avoid creating trouble (*meiwaku*) when they disclose their allergies. I trace how reading the air, and the concept of *meiwaku*, can also be understood as a practice of the imagination, which is indeterminate, intersubjective and emergent, whilst also building from prior experience to direct the actions they take.

Emma Cook is a Professor of Modern Japanese Studies at Hokkaido University. Her research currently focuses on feeling, affect and emotion in food allergy experiences in Japan. She is particularly interested in exploring how the individual and social intersect, interact, and are embodied, and how cultural conceptions of food, food sharing, health, illness, and the body affect experiences of food allergies.



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This hybrid lecture will be held on site (email required in advance) and via Zoom (meeting ID: 833 2325 8931).

