

Contributors

RABIA DEVECI

...is an undergraduate student at the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Vienna. Her bachelor's thesis focuses on the territorial conflict between Japan and Russia. She participated in the analysis of data gathered at the Aso Winter Field School 2022 by the group working on migration.

WILHELM DONKO

...is a graduate student at the University of Vienna studying Japanese studies. He is currently an exchange student at Waseda University in Tōkyō, Japan. During the Aso Winter Field School in 2022, he was part of a group studying tourism in the Aso region in Kumamoto Prefecture.

HANNAH PILAR EGGER

...is a graduate student at the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Vienna, researching discourses of disability and identity politics concerning socio-structural dynamics in the Japanese deaf community. She participated in the analysis of data gathered at the Aso Winter Field School 2022 by the social welfare project group.

MAXIMILIAN FORTIN

...participated as an undergraduate student at the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Vienna in the Aso Winter Field School. Being interested in Japanese culture and history, as well as in what ways that culture has been changing, he joined the tourism group. The group focused on natural catastrophes including the COVID-19 pandemic and how they affected the region.

KALOYAN IVANOV

...is an undergraduate student of both Japanese studies as well as English and American studies. Their main research focus is in the field of media and film studies. They were part of the Aso Winter Field School 2022, working on migration.

HANNO JENTZSCH

...is a political scientist and lecturer at the Leiden Institute for Area Studies. After receiving his PhD from the University of Duisburg-Essen in March 2016, he worked as senior research fellow at the German Institute for Japanese Studies in Tōkyō and as assistant professor at the University of Vienna. His research interests include decentralisation, the political economy of “rural revitalisation” in Japan, the Japanese welfare state, and the relationship between civil society and the local state. His first monograph *Harvesting State Support* (University of Toronto Press, 2021) analyzed institutional change in Japan’s aging agricultural sector.

CECILIA LUZI

...obtained her B.A. in ethnology and social anthropology at the University of Siena, Italy. Later, she completed her M.A. in social anthropology at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris, France. She also holds a B.A. and an M1 in Japanese studies from the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO). She is currently a PhD candidate at Freie Universität Berlin, and research assistant at the Institute of Japanese Studies in the DFG project “Urban-rural migration and rural revitalization in Japan”. Her PhD research focuses on the experience of urban-to-rural migrants in two municipalities in northern Kyūshū, and in particular on the practices and discourses of home-making.

MEGUMI FAITH MALLARI

...is a fourth-year undergraduate student of political science and anthropology at Sophia University, Tōkyō. She is a research assistant for the Refugee Voices Japan project and is one of the leaders of the Sophia Refugee Support Group, a student-led volunteer group conducting practical support for asylum seekers in Japan. Motivated by her research and experience of support, she plans to pursue a Masters Degree to specialize in forced displacement and refugee response next year.

WOLFRAM MANZENREITER

...is professor of Japanese studies at the Department of East Asian Studies, University of Vienna, since 2013. He is author of several books and numerous articles and book chapters on social and anthro-

pological aspects of sports, emotions, work and migration in contemporary Japan. His current research interests include happiness, mobilities and the diversity of lifeways in the peripheries of a globalised world. He recently published the co-edited volumes on Japan's New Ruralities *Coping with Decline in the Periphery* (Routledge 2020), and *Japan through the Lens of the Tokyo Olympics* (Routledge 2020).

JOHANNA MAYR

...is a graduate student at the University of Vienna (Japanese studies and the master's program "German as a Foreign and Second Language"). She participated in the Aso Winter Field School 2022, focusing on social organisation and the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the community of the Aso region.

ANTONIA MISERKA

...is a PhD student at the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Vienna. Her research focusses on rural regions in contemporary Japan, specifically the every-day lives of locals and newcomers within the Aso region in Kumamoto, Japan. In her PhD thesis she analyses the connection between social relationships, regional landscape and well-being of residents of the Aso region.

LENKA MIYANOHARA

...is a graduate student at the Department of East Asia Studies at the University of Vienna. For her master's thesis, she focuses on the well-being of elderly women in rural Japan—Sakurajima. She was a part of the Aso Winter Field School 2022, working on social organisation.

JULIANA NEUNINGER

...is a graduate student at the University of Vienna (Japanese studies and translation studies). Her research focuses on revitalisation initiatives in rural Japan, which she plans to take up as the topic of her master's thesis. She was part of the Aso Winter Field School 2022, working on migration.

TU THANH NGO

...joined the Freie Universität Berlin in 2020, as part of the project "Urban-rural migration and rural revitalisation in Japan" led by Prof.

Dr. Cornelia Reiher. He works as a research assistant (PhD candidate) in the sub-project “The periphery and the center: Support schemes for urban-rural migration and their local appropriation”, which investigates Japan’s revitalisation policies at the national, prefectural, and municipal levels. Between May and October 2022, he conducted field-work in five field sites, namely Tōkyō, Fukuoka, Nagasaki, Buzen, and Hasami. He holds an M.A. in political science (public policy) from the Central European University and a B.A. in Japanese politics and global studies from Doshisha University.

KATJA PALASZEWSKI

...is an undergraduate student of Japanese studies at the University of Vienna, Department of East Asian Studies. She acted as team leader for the social welfare research group in the Aso Winter Field School 2022, which focused on loneliness in the region. Her main research interests include Japan as a welfare state and Japanese foreign policy. In her bachelor’s she focuses on Japan’s strategic interests in the Pacific Island countries.

SEBASTIAN POLAK-ROTTMANN

...is senior research fellow at the German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ). He received his PhD from the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Vienna in 2022, working on well-being in rural Japan funded by a DOC-team grant of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. His current research focuses on resilience in rural Japan, including community integrated care and political participation. Together with Hanno Jentzsch, he organised the Aso Winter Field School 2022, an online field school for undergraduate and graduate students on the impacts of the pandemic in rural Japan.

STEFAN PÖLLITZER

...is an undergraduate student at the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Vienna. He primarily researches popular culture and gender dynamics, but is interested in developments in rural Japan. He participated in the Aso Winter Field School 2022, where he worked on social welfare.

CORNELIA REIHER

...is professor of Japanese studies at Freie Universität Berlin, vice director of the Graduate School of East Asian Studies and PI of the DFG research project “Urban-rural migration and rural revitalization in Japan”. Her main research interests include rural Japan, globalisation, food studies and science and technology studies. Recent publications include the co-edited methods handbook (with Nora Kottmann) *Studying Japan: Handbook of research designs, fieldwork and methods* (2020) as well as book chapters and journal articles on urbanites relocating to rural Japan (2020, 2022), transnational food activism (2022) and Berlin’s Japanese foodscapes (2022).

BENEDIKT SCHULTZ

...participated as undergraduate student at the Department of East Asia Studies at the University of Vienna in the Aso Winter Field School. With an interest in local community life and its changes, he joined the team looking at social organisation and structure of the Aso region in Japan, community life and activities and how these have been affected by the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

TOBIAS SIMEK

...is a Japanese studies bachelor’s degree and a law studies master’s degree holder. His research focused on Japanese history of law and organisational structures of governmental entities and other public authorities. He assisted the social welfare project group of the Aso Winter Field School 2022 in the analysis of the gathered data.

DAVID H. SLATER

...is a professor of cultural anthropology and Japanese studies at Sophia University, Tōkyō. He has worked on youth labour, urban space and place, disaster and recovery, social movements, and migrant and refugee displacement.

AYANO SOMA

...is a graduate of the Faculty of Liberal Arts at Sophia University, Tōkyō. After carrying out an oral narrative project with a Syrian refugee as part of Refugee Voices Japan, she returned to the project as a *senpai* (senior) student with mentoring responsibility. She is currently

pursuing a master's degree in international social and public policy at the London School of Economics and Political Science where she is researching the policy context in the relation between the issuance of work permits for asylum seekers and the spread of the term "fake refugee" in Japan.

MELANIE STEINBRUGGER


...is a graduate student at the University of Vienna studying Japanese studies with a focus on social sciences. She is currently doing an exchange year at Meiji University in Tōkyō, Japan. During the Aso Winter Field School in 2022, she was part of a group studying tourism in the Aso region in Kumamoto Prefecture. She currently examines the role of health care workers in rural areas using the Aso region as a case study for her Master's thesis.

THAW TAR

...is a graduate from the Faculty of Liberal Arts at Sophia University, where he majored in anthropology and political science. As an international student coming from Myanmar, he is interested in studying the relationship between developed and developing countries. He plans on becoming an academic researcher one day to promote knowledge sharing and contribute to policy making in the context of international development.

JOHN W. TRAPHAGAN

... is an anthropologist and Visiting Research Scholar in the Interplanetary Initiative at Arizona State University. He is Professor Emeritus in the Program in Human Dimensions of Organizations at the University of Texas at Austin and a Visiting Professor in the Center for International Education at Waseda University in Tōkyō. His research has appeared in numerous scientific journals. His most recent books on Japan include *Cosmopolitan Rurality, Depopulation, and Entrepreneurial Ecosystems in 21st Century Japan* (2020) and *The Blood of Gutoku: A Jack Riddle Mystery in Japan* (2021).



This volume collects three group projects from Sophia University, University of Vienna and FU Berlin that involve students as researchers at different stages in their academic lives. In all three cases, students actively participated in gathering data for a group project and reflected on their experiences. We emphasise that students, rather than being mere receivers of knowledge, may also actively contribute to academic research and be part of the collaborative production of knowledge. Further, we show how research as a team has to be adjusted, but nevertheless can be conducted despite the troubling circumstances of the pandemic.

Antonia Miserka is a PhD student at the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Vienna. Her research focusses on rural regions in contemporary Japan, specifically the every-day lives of locals and newcomers within the Aso region in Kumamoto, Japan. In her PhD thesis she analyses the connection between social relationships, regional landscape and well-being of residents of the Aso region.

Sebastian Polak-Rottmann is senior research fellow at the German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ). He received his PhD from the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Vienna in 2022, working on well-being in rural Japan funded by a DOC-team grant of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. His current research focuses on resilience in rural Japan, including community integrated care and political participation. Together with Hanno Jentzsch, he organised the Aso Winter Field School 2022, an online field school for undergraduate and graduate students on the impacts of the pandemic in rural Japan.