

**Travel is Life, Travel is Home: Representing Travel and Landscape in Japan  
April 4-6, 2019 at the University of Iowa, Iowa City IA**

Keynote: Meredith McKinney, visiting fellow at the Japan Center, Australian National University

In the introduction to his seventeenth-century travel diary, *The Narrow Road of the Interior*, Matsuo Bashō declares, in Helen McCullough's translation, that "travel is life, travel is home." While the use of travel as a metaphor to express the transience of life was centuries old by Bashō's time, the idea continues to resonate even today. The awareness of one's environment as both the basis for and product of human experience has shaped representations of travel and landscape throughout Japanese cultural production, from Saigyō's twelfth-century travel poetry, to Natsume Sōseki's 1906 *Kusamakura* and beyond.

The interaction between humans and their environments is increasingly conceptualized in terms of mobile bodies, from observations of space as both "a product of interrelations" and a sphere of "contemporaneous plurality" (Doreen Massey 2005); to place as "the surveyor's active involvement with the landscape" (Jeff Malpas 2009); to the paradox of "cosmopolitanisms" that simultaneously resists a stable permanent residence while adopting a plural understanding of places of origin (Robbins and Horta 2017). Instances of travel in all of its forms—for pilgrimage, official duties, tourism, military strategy, emigration, or evacuation, exile, and refuge—posit a body that moves through its environments, rather than existing as a static object. Even in the case of virtual or imagined travel, there is an emphasis on movement across space and through a succession of multiple places. Such instances of travel, represented and explored through literature, art, and performance, allow for an analysis of the ways in which humans not only conceptualize and interact with, but indeed move through their environments.

The University of Iowa Japanese Program, Center for Asian and Pacific Studies, and International Programs, with generous support from the Japan Foundation, seek papers addressing this conference's broad themes, focusing on any period of Japanese cultural production. We are especially interested in papers that explore the themes of landscape, space, place, and travel as they are represented in literature, art, film, performance, religious history, and intellectual history or that engage relevant representations using media beyond the written word.

**Suggested Topics:**

Travel within, through, outside of, or to Japan  
Tourism and famous places  
Pilgrimage, wandering, and reclusion  
Official travel, exile, or statelessness  
Nomadic or migrant patterns  
Landscape and gender, sexuality, or the body  
Virtual, imagined, or simulated travel  
State or religious ideology and landscape  
Authenticity, experience, and representation of landscape  
Relationships between space and time  
Ecological observations and processes