TITLE:
“Bent out of Shape: Remolding Conceptions of Materiality and the Body in Japan”

CALL FOR PAPERS:

This conference seeks to show how the materiality of objects problematizes conventional understandings of Japan or, conversely, how studies of Japan may reconfigure dominant interpretations of materiality as a category of scholarly discourse. While the immaterial—ideologies, social perceptions, taboos, beliefs, and all manner of cognitive tendencies—tends to guide the formation of worldviews, materiality can reflect, reify, and alter those formations in observable ways. To this end, panelists may conceive of materiality as a cooperatively constructive phenomenon that patterns individual experience. Initial investigative questions may include, but are not limited to: How do material objects either reflect or invert the spectrum of experience? How does material production, use, and exchange alter social parameters such as class or audience, or affiliations such as sectarian or political identity? In what ways do these processes influence ideology or doctrine? How do expressions of materiality complicate historical divisions between premodern and modern eras?

We perceive of materiality as a broad category with a variety of attendant constituents—visual art, the body and its sensorium, objects of literary production, elite regalia, religious paraphernalia, media, material technologies, and so forth. These material constituents implicate their creators, users, and observers as actors in a network of experiences. Likewise, production, replication, consumption, and exchange are only a few of many modes of material interaction populated by these very actors. In this way, we perceive of materiality as part and parcel to the construction of the Japanese experience, both modern and premodern, precisely because of this intimacy shared between objects, actors, and the interactions between them.

In order to present a range of analyses, we encourage a variety of disciplinary approaches including, but not limited to, history, art, literature, linguistics, religious studies, political science, and gender studies. Please e-mail submissions and queries to the conference committee at: uclajapanesegradconference@humnet.ucla.edu. Successful applicants will be notified by August 13th. The organizing committee anticipates providing accommodation for all presenters and travel funding for those traveling from within the U.S.

ABSTRACTS (250 words) DUE BY: Monday, July 23, 2018

NOTIFICATION OF ACCEPTANCE BY: Monday, August 13, 2018

CONFERENCE DATE: Monday, October 29, 2018

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Announcement coming soon