

Symposium: “English Literature and the Pacific”



William Hodges, *Resolution and Adventure with fishing craft in Matavia Bay* (1776)

Keynote speaker:

Professor Steve Clark (University of Tokyo)

Saturday 21st January, 2023

Organizers: Alex Watson (Meiji University)
Laurence Williams (Sophia University)

Meiji University (Surugadai Campus), 308E Academy Common

Funded by JSPS Kakenhi Grant (No. 19K00446)



Symposium: “English Literature and the Pacific”

This event will discuss Anglophone literature and the Pacific from modern, historical, ethnographic and pedagogical perspectives. Papers will explore the connections between writers and the Pacific, from the 18th century to the present day, including novels, travel writing, drama, poetry, and historical / biographical research. We also welcome contributions reflecting on the challenge that representations of the Pacific offer to narrow definitions of study and the changing status of English literature in Japan.

Our keynote speaker will be Professor Steve Clark, who will retire in April 2023 from the Department of English and American Literature at the University of Tokyo. As part of the symposium, we will explore Professor Clark’s work and legacy.

Date: Saturday January 21, 2023, 10:00 – 18:00

Venue: 308E Academy Common, Meiji University, [Surugadai Campus](#), Tokyo (close to Ochanomizu train station)

We will also live-stream the papers on Zoom, for those unable to attend in person.

Timetable

10:00 - 10:15 **Opening Remarks** (Alex Watson)

10:15 - 11:15 **Session 1** (2 papers)

Tristanne Connolly, "Locating the Poison Tree of Java in Erasmus Darwin and William Blake"

David Chandler, "The Curse of the Colonies: Rewriting 'The Ancient Mariner' in Charles Henry Knox's *Harry Mowbray* (1843)"

11:15 - 11:30 **Coffee break**

11:30 - 12:45 **Session 2** (3 papers)

Yukari Yoshihara, "Robinson Crusoe in Japan"

Masahiko Abe, "Talking about Disgust—How Sickness Works in Japanese Fiction"

Masashi Suzuki, "Reception of Swedenborg: William Blake and D. T. Suzuki"

12:45 - 13:45 **Lunch**

13:45 - 15:00 **Session 3** (2 papers)

Kaz Oishi, "Lafcadio Hearn and the Sea via English Romanticism"

Arisa Nakagoe, "Blue Eyes and Yellow Faces: Issues of Eurasian Children in Alicia Little's *A Marriage in China* (1896)"

Tomoe Kumojima, "Tokyo Penwomen and Anglophone Women's Literary Endeavours in the 1920s Pacific Coast"

15:00 - 15:30 **Coffee break**

15:30 - 16:45 **Session 4** (3 papers)

David Worrall, "Staging The Pacific: W.T. Moncrieff's *Van Dieman's Land; Or, Settlers And Natives* (1830)"

Julia Kuehn, "Opium's Intimacies: Representing the Commodity"

Jason Whitaker, "A Golden String: Weaving Blake's Poems with Music"

17:00 - 18:00 **Plenary** (Steve Clark, introduced by Laurence Williams)

18:30 **Dinner**

10:15 - 11:15 Session 1 (2 papers)

Tristanne Connolly, “Locating the Poison Tree of Java in Erasmus Darwin and William Blake”

Erasmus Darwin is credited, or blamed, for spreading the myth of the Upas or Poison Tree by including J. N. Foersch’s sensational account in full in *The Loves of the Plants* (1789). The location of the tree in Java is essential to the many details Foersch includes for credibility. Yet “Indonesia [as] the easternmost limits of available imaginative territory” (Hannigan 2018) made his assertions about the Upas conveniently unverifiable for most readers.

While Foersch’s account compulsively points to evidence, however dubious, Darwin’s verses compulsively depart into myth and abstraction. His opening depiction of Java is generically Edenic. Then, the far-reaching toxicity of the tree prompts a description of the landscape by what is not there. Then, the Poison Tree of Java becomes “the Hydra-Tree of death”, morphing its identity and sublimating its location. Ultimately Darwin likens the Upas to “Time” in its power to “erase” art, empires, and domestic joys.

In *Songs of Experience* (1794) and *The Book of Ahania* (1795), Blake, too, sublimates the tree’s location: “There grows one in the Human Brain” (“The Human Abstract”). In Ahania, the Upas even pre-exists “Asia”, which “Arose from the pendulous deep” many years after the tree sprouted from Urizen’s tears on a barren rock “which himself / From redounding fancies had petrified”. Blake mentions Java only once in all his writings, in a crossed-out line in a notebook poem referring to the tree sprouting where its branches touch the ground. This is not a property of the Upas but of the Indian Fig, suggested by Darwin’s “Hydra-Tree”. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton insists it was with Indian Fig leaves that Adam and Eve covered their shame. Blake’s Poison Trees are further inaccurate to the Upas in that they bear tempting fruit. Blake mythically condenses the Upas together with other deadly trees, not just those reported by natural historians (as demonstrated by Stauffer 2001) but those of Eden and also of the Crucifixion, into his own Tree of Mystery.

Darwin did not reveal whether he believed Foersch’s account, and his contemporaries had differing opinions as to whether he was gullible or purposely promulgated suspect information. Yet the Poison Tree of Java itself is both fantastical and real, based on an actual tree, *Antiaris toxicaria*. Foersch’s account combines imagination with the discourse and methods of empirical science. Perhaps Darwin’s translation of the Upas into the “Hydra-Tree” signals that it really reproduces through combinations and disseminations of discourse. In *Ahania*, Urizen writes his “book of iron” under his Tree of Mystery, whose spreading branches he barely escapes as his mental creations become all too real. For both Darwin and Blake, the Poison Tree is not of Java but of “the Human Brain”. Through it they examine the relationship between material and imaginative realities, and explore kinds of knowledge beyond the verifiable.

David Chandler, “The Curse of the Colonies: Rewriting ‘The Ancient Mariner’ in Charles Henry Knox’s Harry Mowbray (1843)”

The novels of Charles Henry Knox (died 1864), which attracted many positive reviews in their own time, have been almost entirely neglected by literary critics. The one very slight exception is his third novel, *Harry Mowbray* (1843), with a plot set in the years 1830-31, which has been identified as the first nineteenth-century English novel to include scenes in New Zealand. The New Zealand plotline functions as an elaborate red herring, but it has a macabre fascination,

rewriting “The Ancient Mariner” and linking Coleridge’s story to the trade in preserved Māori heads that flourished in the 1820s. George Eversfield, who engages in the trade, finds himself the only living man on *The Albatross* when his shipmates all die as a consequence of eating poisonous mahi-mahi (the common dolphinfish). Knox plots a route for *The Albatross* which reverses that taken by the Ancient Mariner, especially if the conclusions of Bernard Smith and subsequent scholars, that Coleridge’s poem was strongly influenced by accounts of Cook’s second voyage, are accepted. As such, Harry Mowbray establishes a concrete link between “The Ancient Mariner” and New Zealand and offers a sort of material and anti-colonial expansion and critique of Coleridge’s vision. Although Knox carefully avoids any explicit supernaturalism, it is impossible to miss the imaginative suggestion that *The Albatross* is cursed because of its cargo of heads, especially the head of a man Eversfield murdered. In this rewriting of the poem, there is no hint of redemption: the ship sinks and Eversfield himself is murdered as soon as he reaches England.

11:30 - 11:45 **Coffee break**

11:45 - 13:00 **Session 2** (3 papers)

Yukari Yoshihara, “Robinson Crusoe in Japan”

This presentation examines numerous Robinsonades in Japan for a period of over 160 years, starting from the first translation from the Dutch in 1848. Crusoe stood for Japan’s isolation policy in the Edo Era, its struggle to become a part of the modern economic world system, its colonial expansion to the Pacific, its neo-colonial economic expansion to Asia in its bubble economy days, and its anxiety over its declining economy in the last decade of the 20th century. I shall clarify that Robinsonades in Japan form an integral part of globalization and localization of English Literature in the Pacific.

Masahiko Abe, “Talking about Disgust—How Sickness Works in Japanese Fiction”

Disgust is a condition that is certainly there but cannot be named easily. It is physical in essence but is also mental. In the modern world we are also used to its metaphorical application, especially in political, ethical, and even spiritual contexts, where the word ‘disgust’ and its derivatives such as ‘disgusting’ are employed as powerful weapons with emotional force. As an expression ‘disgust’ can thus be intense, while, interestingly, its intensity is proportional to the delicacy and sensitiveness of the mind behind.

Attention to disgust helps us understand the mechanism of modern Japanese fiction. Soseki Natsume, for instance, was known for various clinical conditions, both physical and mental; the characters in his novels often share the author’s illness. By examining the nature of their chronic problems represented in the novels, we may be able to shed light on the difficult process of Soseki’s reception of western culture, in which a complex mixture of repugnance, disgust and admiration was at work.

Masashi Suzuki, “Reception of Swedenborg: William Blake and D. T. Suzuki”

Daisets (usually rendered Daisetz) Teitaro Suzuki (1870-1966) is Japan's foremost authority on Zen Buddhism. Suzuki once referred to Blake as "the great mystic in modern England" and quoted the first few lines of *Auguries of Innocence*, saying that the mysticism and symbolism implied here would be Western counterparts to those of Oriental Zen. The present paper aims to show how Blake and Suzuki, via Emanuel Swedenborg, resonated with each other, even though any tangible reciprocal influences between them might not be traced.

Between 1910 and 1915 Suzuki translated Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell* and three other major works into Japanese. In 1912 he was invited to deliver a short address "A Japanese Impression of Swedenborg" at the annual meeting of the Swedenborg Society. In his small book on Swedenborg's life and thought *Swedenborg* (1913), he says that "Now, in Japan, the field of religious thought is finally reaching a state of crisis. Those who wish to cultivate their spirit, those who bemoan the times, must absolutely know of this person [Swedenborg]". There can be no doubt that Swedenborg's writings and doctrines are of unusual importance in relation to Blake's as well. Blake even writes in *A Descriptive Catalogue of Pictures* (1809) that Swedenborg's works are "foundations for grand things" and that "The reason they [Swedenborg's works] have not been more attended to, is, because corporeal demons have gained a predominance."

What attracts us most about the involvement of both Blake and Suzuki with Swedenborgianism is how they are hugely benefiting from one of his major doctrines, "Science of Correspondences", by employing it for their own use. If Blake's primary interest in it is the dynamic conflict and unity of the spiritual and natural worlds, Suzuki's chief concern in his major work *Japanese Spirituality* (1944) is 'spirituality' (reisei 霊性) operating as 'medium' (John Clowes, *On Mediums*) which, the paper argues, Suzuki derived from the doctrine of Correspondence.

13:00 - 14:00 **Lunch**

14:00 - 15:00 **Session 3** (3 papers)

Kaz Oishi, "Lafcadio Hearn and the Sea via English Romanticism"

During the last years of his life, Lafcadio Hearn, a novelist and essayist naturalized as Koizumi Yakumo in Japan, paid annual holiday visits to Yaidzu, a seaside fishing village facing the Pacific in Shizuoka prefecture. A few of the essays based on these holiday experiences suggest his curious view towards the sea. For him, the sea has a life of its own: it can turn mercilessly violent, swallowing ships and drowning human lives, while the sound and image of undulating waters under the bright sunshine brings us peace and happiness in our daily lives. It keeps surging and ebbing on the borderline between life and death. Hearn embraces the supernatural assumption shared by local people that spirits of the dead are hovering over the shifting waves. It is rooted in the depth of our ancient faith, he argues. In the essay 'Yaidzu', he tells us an episode of him swimming in the night to the lanterns floating on the waves which local people sent from the coast to pray for the dead as part of the summer *bon* ritual ceremony. While afloat with them in the waters, he feels that there is no distinction between living souls and spirits of the dead. As we read in another essay, however, when he encountered another ritual ceremony offering food from the shore to the dead who were believed to have been condemned to ghouls, Hearn furiously objected the belief as a perverse superstition contradicting the religious orientation

which humans have shared since the primordial times. How unique is this religious stance to the sea in the late nineteenth-century context in which agnosticism permeated literature and society? Hearn's view of the sea can be taken to have anthropological, even ecological implications. This paper examines implications of Lafcadio Hearn's religious view as represented in his discourse on the sea. In doing so, I would like to explore some Romantic representations of the sea as interesting and contrasting cases.

Arisa Nakagoe, "Blue Eyes and Yellow Faces: Issues of Eurasian Children in Alicia Little's *A Marriage in China* (1896)"

The late nineteenth century witnessed a growing number of mixed-race children as a result of interracial marriages or extramarital relationships in colonial territories. Their racially ambiguous appearances often provoked anxiety among some grown-ups, who believed in racial purity and thus saw them as a destabilising factor in social hierarchy. Eurasian children in China, often offspring of a Chinese mother and a Western father, were seen as 'problems' to be solved, especially in terms of their care and education, and in 1870, Shanghai established its first Eurasian School. Alicia Little, famous for her contribution to the anti-footbinding movement, was a rare author who handled the topic of Eurasian children in her fiction about China. Her novel *A Marriage in China* (1896) features two Eurasian children and their unnamed Chinese mother. The father Claude Fortescue is a British sinologue in the Chinese consulate, who treats her as his concubine. He keeps all this a secret from his English love interest Lilian Grey, the protagonist of the novel. This paper critically and contextually reads Little's representation of Eurasian children and issues concerning their schooling, simultaneously referring to relevant articles and reviews from contemporary periodicals. I argue that, although the novel may have its limitations as an imperialistic love story, Little's optimism about Eurasian children acting as cultural intermediaries reflects her relatively optimistic attitude towards the possibility of a better relationship between Britain and China. Though she does not seem to openly encourage interracial romance, she wishes the best for these children and their future.

Tomoe Kumojima, "Tokyo Penwomen and Anglophone Women's Literary Endeavours in the 1920s Pacific Coast"

Comparing contemporary literary scenes in Britain and Japan, Yei Theodora Ozaki (1870–1932), one of the early Anglo-Japanese writers, declared her ambition in her letter to the prominent Meiji statesman Inoue Kaoru (1836–1915) that 'It is the desire of my soul to win some recognition from my fatherland—in England the government often grants its women a pension for literary merit, in France the Academy bestows decorations on men and women of literary attainment.'

This paper explores the fragmentary history of Tokyo Penwomen, the now-forgotten, short-lived literary club of Anglophone female writers who were active in Tokyo in the late 1920s. The research utilises a wide range of materials, from published books and English newspapers issued in Tokyo to unpublished manuscripts and personal correspondence. The paper focuses on Zoë Kincaid (1878–1944) and Muriel Orr-Ewing (1900–1994)—the founder and the inaugural president and the second president of the club, respectively—and examines their

unique literary attempts at the nexus of disparate cultures and traditions—the former through the introduction of ancient dramas to the West, and the latter through the translation of the works of contemporary Japanese writers into English. Their enterprise also led to a rare international gathering with pioneering Japanese female writers. The paper argues for the significant role the club played in enhancing the solidarity of female writers, which allowed them to collaborate to pursue a literary career in a growing international metropolis on the Pacific coast, Tokyo.

15:00 - 15:30 **Coffee break**

15:30 - 16:45 **Session 4** (3 papers)

David Worrall, “Staging The Pacific: W.T. Moncrieff’s *Van Dieman’s Land; Or, Settlers And Natives* (1830)”

By the early 19th-century there were several Pacifics on the stage. The best known is the O’Keefe and de Louthembourg designed, long-running, *Omai; or, A Trip Round the World* (1785), a pantomime for Covent Garden. It has principally been understood as auto-ethnography, an anxious commentary on the challenges of British expansion into the Pacific south-west following the loss of the American colonies. Yet the same theatre’s *The Death of Captain Cook* (1789), a ‘Grand Serious-Pantomimic-Ballet’ (which probably substantially re-used *Omai* scenery) was much more influential, not least because the Americans loved it. The playhouse in Philadelphia staged it sixteen times in the 1790s. Its British hero may seem an unlikely favourite for audiences in a new country with scarcely a naval fleet, yet Cook’s murder was also a handy parable of the treachery of indigenous peoples. As a lesson taught in mime, it was suitable for all America’s immigrants, whatever their native language.

Yet there were also other Pacifics on the stage. In the Pacific north-east, off Vancouver Island in 1789, the seizure of British merchant ships by Spanish officials in Nootka Sound precipitated a belligerent response when news (eventually) reached London. The Grand Fleet was assembled at Spithead. In 1790 there followed a new Covent Garden ‘operatic farce,’ *Nootka Sound; or, Britain Prepar’d* (no doubt re-using already re-used scenery and costume from *Omai* and *The Death of Captain Cook*). With worries about the more proximate French Revolution increasing, the so-called “Nootka Crisis” was eventually resolved diplomatically in November 1790. In *Nootka Sound*, sailors at Portsmouth dress-up as Spaniards for an amateur theatrical; a young woman cross-dresses as a sailor to follow her man to sea; the songs encapsulate the prevailing ideology (‘British Colours ride the vaquish’d Main’). Although the Fleet was stood down, they were ready to go.

Yet by the 1830s, Pacifics of the stage had changed once again. Songs are their primary ideological indicators. William Thomas Moncrieff’s ‘domestic burletta,’ *Van Dieman’s Land* at the Surrey Theatre, London (first night 10th Feb 1830) intersects almost exactly with the Black Line massacres of aboriginal people in Tasmania, Australia, beginning October 1830. By 1835 only 400 aborigines had survived (Madley 2008). With uncanny prescience Moncrieff has Benni-long (based on the aboriginal, Bennelong (?1764-1813), declare there existed a plan to ‘extirpate our race’ (OEDv3a = exterminate). That aboriginals might be ‘extirpated’ was a commonplace of colonial discourse (e.g. *Colonial Times* (Hobart), 29 Jan 1830).

The paper examines the role of music in projecting the ideologies underpinning *Van Dieman’s Land*. Its longest song is about poaching (in ‘Zomerzet shere’). There is a correlation

between the freedom to steal ('I get geame[sic] and venzon cheap') and the occupation of Tasmanian lands shown in a rotating 'Panoramic Tour.' One song ('Softly tread lest white man spy') is set to the tune 'Ackee, oh!' by Mazzinghi and Reeve from James Cobb's play, *Paul and Virginia* (1800), 'Every Negro ... will flash his white teeth ... Ackee-o, Ackee-o.' The ackee plant (*Blighia sapida*) is associated with Jamaican indigenous cuisine and popularized in field workers' songs in variants collected before 1907. *Van Dieman's Land* was performed at least eight times and, because the size of the theatre is known, it was probably seen by c.13,000 people. Ships accommodating 'passengers' had been sailing from London to Tasmania from 1818 with increasing regularity.

The paper examines the complex role of *Van Dieman's Land* in simultaneously exposing racialized ideologies while also validating colonization.

Julia Kuehn, "Opium's Intimacies: Representing the Commodity"

This paper is interested in the question when an object becomes a commodity in literature. In this Pacific-oriented conference, I want to return to opium and the First (1839-42) and Second (1856-60) Opium Wars, though my literary corpus will stretch from de Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821) to Ghosh's *Ibis* Trilogy (2008-15), mentioning, along the way, common favourites by Collins, Dickens, Conan Doyle, Wilde, Thomas Burke and Sax Rohmer. My focus, however, will always be the same: as J. Hillis Miller asked, albeit in a different context: when does an object remain silent, inert and a background detail and when does it 'start into life'?

The principle I will develop as one that 'starts opium into life' is derived from Lisa Lowe's 2015 study of multidirectional empire-wide interactions, or 'intimacies', across several continents: I will suggest that opium comes alive in a literary text when authors see, and do something with, the wider network of geopolitical connections and also with opium's connectedness to other commodities. Obviously, opium has an intimate relationship with tea but also with silk, and the Anglo-Chinese Opium Question must be understood in relation to other geopolitical players, including India but also (especially in the Second Opium War) France, Russia and the US.

Jason Whitaker, "A Golden String: Weaving Blake's Poems with Music"

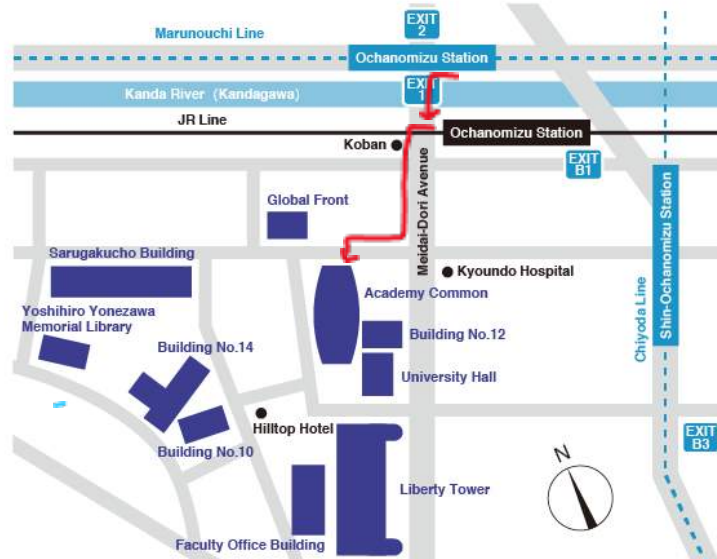
Over the past hundred years, William Blake has become one of the most popular poets in terms of musical settings of his works, ranging across both classical and pop genres. One of the reasons for this is the intense musicality of his lyrical poetry in particular, but also that the visionary quality of his works has also particularly appealed to many artists. In most instances, adaptations of Blake tend to be restricted to one or two of his shorter pieces, most notably "The Tyger" and the stanzas from *Milton a Poem*, most famously arranged by Parry as the hymn "Jerusalem". There is, however, a longstanding tradition of sustained engagement with a larger body of Blake's work, whether Ralph Vaughan Williams's *Job a Masque for Dancing* or Ulver's metal-influenced album based on *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

This talk will consider a new project I am involved in with the artists Susheela Raman and Sam Mills, which takes a number of Blake's lyrical and prophetic pieces to create an intricate narrative combining music and spoken word. In contrast to many other extended projects, which focus on a particular body or publication of Blake's works, such as *The Marriage or Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, this collection of works - "A Golden String" - is deliberately eclectic, taking its inspiration as much from the cut ups of William Burroughs to reassemble Blake. The talk will provide some examples of the music from this new album, as well as discussions of the process of weaving together a narrative in which Blake is deliberately broken apart to allow new interpretations to emerge that place him alongside Shakespeare, *Jabberwocky* and David Bowie.

17:00 - 18:00 **Plenary** (Steve Clark, introduced by Laurence Williams)

18:30 - **Dinner**

Directions to the venue from Ochanomizu Station



If you are coming via the **Marunouchi Line** please cross the river to the JR Ochanomizu Station.



If you are coming via **JR Ochanomizu station** on the **JR Chuo or Sobu lines**, take the Ochanomizubushi Exit.



From the Ochanomizubushi exit, cross over the road and take a left down Meidai-dori. Continue for two blocks. You will come to a crossing and Academy Common will be on your right.

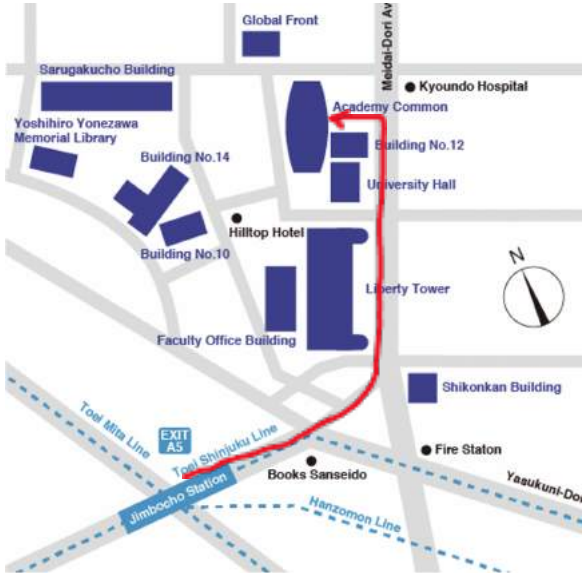


Cross the road and then take a right towards Academy Common, walking up the steps.



Go inside the doors and walk straight forward, with the escalator to your left and the café to your right. Take an elevator to floor 8. The room is 308e on this floor.

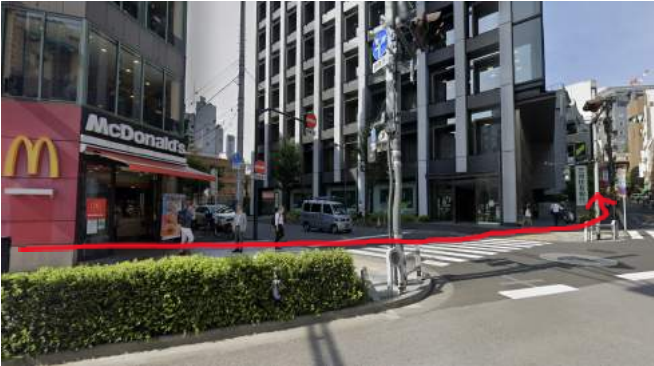
Directions to the venue from Jimbocho Station



If you are coming from Jimbocho station take exit A5. When you exit please turn left, passing Taco-Bell on your left.



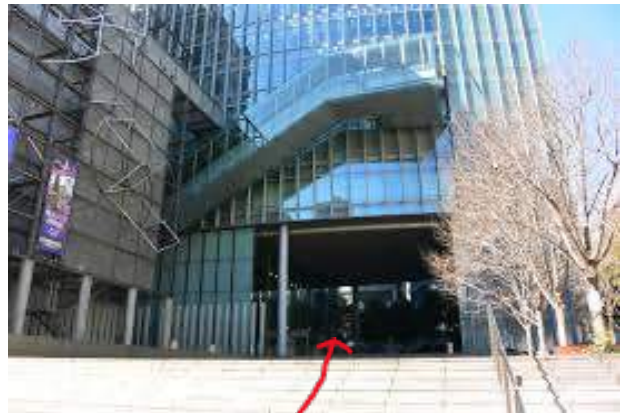
When you come to a crossing after McDonalds continue straight across the crossing, passing SMBC bank on your left and walk up the road.



At the top of the road turn left and continue straightpast Meiji University's main buildings



Continue until you see academy common on your left then walk up the steps.



Go inside the doors. Once inside walk straight forward, with the escalator to your left and the café to your right and take an elevator to floor eight. The room is 308 e on this floor.

