

# Façade Truths in Tokugawa Japan and Beyond

## Schedule

Conference Venue:  
Evans Hall, Farr Room 4420  
165 Whitney Avenue, New Haven CT 06520

*Façade Truths in Tokugawa Japan and Beyond* is inspired by a 2012 book by Luke Roberts. In *Performing the Great Peace: Political Space and Open Secrets in Tokugawa Japan*, Roberts argues that the politics of early modern Japan turned on an interplay of two socially agreed versions of reality: *omote* (literally: face, façade, surface, also used in the sense of ritual and decorum) and *uchi* (the inside of a delegated political space, also used in the sense of confidential versions of reality), connected through *naishō* interactions (confidential understandings and agreements). *Omote* and *naishō* found arresting expressions in the political life of early modern Japan, such as high officials assembling around a lord's deathbed to solemnly witness him adopt an heir—when in fact, as everyone present knew but did not outwardly acknowledge, the lord had died weeks earlier.

The workshop brings together Tokugawa historians with experts in other times, places, and disciplines. It has two goals:

(1) To take stock of how the concepts of *omote*, *uchi*, and *naishō* have helped historians of Japan understand phenomena they would otherwise have overlooked or misunderstood.

(2) To put *omote* and *naishō* in conversation with analogues, close or distant, in other societies: theater states, performative governance, consensūs, decorum, systemic lying, legal fictions, embodied fictions, honestas, hypocrisy, Heuchelei, politique, constructive misunderstandings, studied ignorance, cognitive dualism, and lies mutually agreed upon, among others. In so doing, we will think about what their taxonomy should be, and explore what conceptual language is most productive of insights into such politically or socially inflected versions of reality.

### FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25

- 16:30            Light, informal reception (coffee, pastry, fruit) outside the conference room for those able to arrive a little early
- 17:00            Keynote lecture by LUKE ROBERTS (UC Santa Barbara):  
                    Decorum as Politics: Observations from Early Modern Japan
- 18:30            Dinner at the Union League Café, 1032 Chapel St, New Haven.

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26

- 8:30 Breakfast available outside the conference room
- 9:00 Welcome (FABIAN DRIXLER)
- 9:15 **Panel 1: Tokugawa Lightning Round** (7 minutes each)  
ANNE WALTHALL (UC Irvine): Women between inner and outer, public and private  
MAREN EHLERS (UNC Charlotte), Façade Truths and Town Government:  
Accommodating Assertive Subjects in Tokugawa Japan  
FLORIS VAN SWET (Yale), Keeping it in the family:  
Navigating rōnin status in the Tokugawa period  
ROBERT HELLYER (Wake Forest), Perspectives from the ‘border’:  
*Omote* and *naishō* in the Tsushima domain  
LAURA NENZI (University of Tennessee), How deep does the rabbit hole go?  
*Omote-naibun* language and microhistory
- 10:15 Coffee break
- 10:30 **Panel 2** (20 minutes each)  
LAUREN BENTON (Vanderbilt), Studied ignorance  
JULIA SIMON-KERR (University of Connecticut), Systemic lying  
REO MATSUZAKI (Trinity), *Omote*, *naishō*, and the study of performance in social theory
- 11:45 Lunch, catered on site.
- 12:45 **Panel 3** (20 minutes each)  
PHIL WITHINGTON (Sheffield), Embodied Fictions  
MARKKU PELTONEN (Helsinki), Hypocrisy and dissimulation  
in early modern English culture
- 13:35 Short break
- 13:45 **Panel 4**  
TIM NEU (Ruhr-Universität Bochum), Performing the Holy Roman Empire:  
Truths, ambiguity and façades of consensus (20 minutes)  
VIKTOR SHMAGIN (Colby), *Omote* and *naishō* in foreign relations:  
Lessons from the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union” (15 minutes)  
ADAM CLULOW (UT Austin), The shogun’s new vassals:  
Performance and farce in Tokugawa Japan (10 minutes)
- 14:45 Coffee break

- 15:00        **Panel 5** (20 minutes each)  
 IZA DING (Pittsburgh), The performative state:  
                  Public opinion, political pageantry, and environmental governance in China  
 ANDREW JOHNSTON (Yale), Rex et res publica  
 CLIFFORD ANDO (Chicago), The image of civil government:  
                  Form and power in the Roman monarchy
- 16:15        Coffee break
- 16:30        Break-out groups, in Rooms 4420 (main venue), 4461, 4463, and 4465.
- 17:15-18:00   Plenary discussion
- 18:30        Dinner at the Penthouse, above the Study at Yale, 1157 Chapel St, New Haven.

## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27

- 8:30        Breakfast available outside the conference room
- 9:00        **Panel 6** (20 minutes each)  
 DIANA KIM (Georgetown), The strength of weak actors:  
                  Opium and symbolic state power in colonial Southeast Asia  
 JOSEPH MANNING (Yale), Performing central authority in Ptolemaic Egypt
- 9:50        Short break
- 10:00        **Panel 7**  
 MICHAEL WERT (Marquette), The breakdown of *omote/naishō* during the Bakumatsu era:  
                  Toward theorizing a concept (10 minutes)  
 JOOYEON HAHM (Yale), Dividing the family, evading the military:  
                  *Naishō* negotiations over conscription in the early Meiji Period (7 minutes)  
 FABIAN DRIXLER (Yale), A modern afterlife of *omote*:  
                  Statistics as a site of negotiation in Imperial Japan (7 minutes)
- 10:45        Coffee break
- 11:00        Plenary discussion
- 12:00        Boxed lunches that can be consumed either gregariously on site or taken on the return journey

### **Roving discussants:**

JISOO KIM (George Washington University)  
 HIROSHI MITANI (University of Tokyo / Atomi University)  
 FRANCES ROSENBLUTH (Yale)  
 SIXIANG WANG (UCLA)  
 KEITH WRIGHTSON (Yale)