

# Rethinking Nature in Post-Fukushima Japan

Facing the Crisis

edited by Marcella Mariotti, M. Roberta Novielli, Bonaventura Ruperti  
and Silvia Vesco

## Foreword

It is a pleasure for us to present this book, with the contributions of the International Symposium *Rethinking Nature in Contemporary Japan: Facing the Crisis* held at Ca' Foscari University of Venice.

This was the Third International Symposium organised in Venice as the last of a wider three years project generously funded by Japan Foundation: in 2013 we hosted the first Symposium *Rethinking Nature in Contemporary Japan: Science, Economics, Politics*, publishing its results through Edizioni Ca' Foscari in 2014, while in the same year we organised the Second International Symposium *Rethinking Nature in Japan: from Tradition to Modernity*, published by Edizioni Ca' Foscari in 2017.

The common aim of the three Symposia was the analysis of Japanese society and the international relationships after the tragic earthquake in Tōhoku in March 2011, including the accident at Fukushima nuclear plant.

Its wide-ranging consequences on everyday life of people living in Japan brought into the limelight issues such as the protection of the environment, the management of natural resources, and food safety, both within the country and abroad, as fundamental challenges to our globalised society.

Since the first Symposium in 2013, the participation of scholars from Europe, Japan and United States helped us to gain a multifaceted perspective, combining several disciplines under a multidisciplinary and comparative approach. We aimed at combining such perspectives under the umbrella of a common denominator, often addressed in Japanese figurative, performing and literary arts: the relation between man and Nature. While in 2014 we centred on the cultural representations of the idea of *Nature* in the transition from tradition to modernity, in Fine Arts, Religion and Thought, Literature, Theatre, in 2015' Symposium - *Rethinking Nature in Japan: Facing the Crisis* - we finally focused on contemporary Japan, with a particular eye on Fukushima accident, similarly approached through Religion and Thought, Fine Arts, Music, Cinema, Animation and Performing Arts (Theatre and Dance).

We had three panel sessions: "Nature and Environment in Japanese Music", "Nature and Environment in Cinema, Animation and Performing Arts" and "Nature and Environment in Visual Art". This edited volume brings to our readers only some of the papers presented in each panel.

Nicolas Fiévé keynote paper offers a historical critical perspective on Japanese Housing architecture as born out of a constant a high consideration of the Human-Nature Relationship.

Nature and Environment in Japanese Music are faced by the paper of Daniele Sestili, who presents insights about how to re-think Euro-American concepts application to Japanese Traditional music; by Andrea Giolai's paper on ecology of Gagaku seen as intertwined connection between Place, Nature and Sound in Japanese Court Music; and by Hosokawa Shūhei's Sketch on the Modernization of Japanese Music.

The contributes from the second panel, about Nature and Environment in Cinema, Animation and Performing Arts are by M. Roberta Novielli, who recalling a Ōshima essay title, presents the cinema of Masumura Yasuzō as "A Breakthrough in the Wall of Japanese Cinema"; by Katja Centonze who brings to the readers the Sound of Radioactivity through Yamakawa Fuyuki Performance Scene and its "Vibrations of March 11". Ewa Machotka closes the section with a paper on Satoyama at the Echigo-Tsumari Art Field as an 'elected' place of exhibition for Nature itself.

The 2015 International Symposium was closed with a presentation and practical drawing performance of the artist & designer Ōishi Akinori, who beautifully threw to the audience a somehow philosophical question: *Is Happiness Something to be Found in 'Nature'?* Since the difficulty in writing a paper about the feelings that his drawings inspired in the audience, he offers to our readers a small bite of it at the end this foreword, quoting the Symposium Pamphlet.

On behalf of Ca' Foscari University and of our colleagues, we would like to thank all students, guests and colleagues for their attendance at the Symposium, and to express gratitude also to our special guests from Japan, from the United States, from Europe and from Italy for their precious contributions.

Considering the enthusiastic response from all participants, we believe that the Symposium was very fruitful and we hope that the present volume will pose the basis for further researches to be developed in this fields, since the very date of its issue

We would like to thank for their support the representatives of our University, the Rector of Ca' Foscari University, prof. Michele Bugliesi and prof. Paolo Calvetti, at that time Director of the Department of Asian and North African Studies.

We are extremely grateful to the Director Matsunaga Fumio and to the Japan Foundation who made this three years research project possible, funding the Japanese Studies Section of our Department, and to prof. Tiziano Vescovi, at that time Director of the School of Asian Studies and Business Management for his generous financial support.

A special thank to the artist Ōishi Akinori, too, who allowed us to use his happy-little-man caring for Nature character as poster and logo of our Symposium.

Lastly a heartfelt thanks to all our speakers for their active and fruitful participation in the Symposium and especially to those who contributed to this long-awaited volume. We are sure that their papers will rise in our readers a stronger awareness and puzzling questions about that very Nature we all are living with/in.

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