



JFLA LECTURE SERIES 27

JFLA Lecture Series 27

Tales Spun from Illustrations of Beautiful Women: Quiet, Unchanging, All to Myself

Lecturer: Robert Campbell, Ph.D.



Date:

Wednesday, May 6 7PM

Venue:

The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles
(5700 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 100 Los Angeles, CA 90036)

Admission: Free

This event is full

Street parking is available near JFLA. [Click here for Parking Info.](#)

(NO PARKING VALIDATIONS PROVIDED)

One important sub-genre of Japanese ukiyoe prints and paintings from the Edo period (1603-1868) is bijinga, or images of beautiful women. Almost none are drawn as portraits, but instead represent women as idealized types, in the role of courtesan, teashop maid or townsman daughter. Some are inscribed with poems or short pieces of prose written or quoted to celebrate the image's beauty.

Reading these inscriptions deepens our understanding of how the images themselves were seen at the time. Beyond that though, they point us to a plexus of tales in which the images of women seem to come alive, becoming protagonists by standing apart, as it were, from the print or silk/paper canvases upon which they were originally drawn.

Professor Campbell will take us through the visual arts and literature of nineteenth century Japan, when the nation first opened its frontiers and struggled to adapt and succeed within the western-led global context of modernization. Professor Campbell hopes that the images he will introduce in this lecture allow us to rethink some of our own stereotypes of this rapidly changing era.

About the lecturer



Dr. Campbell is a professor of Japanese literature in the Department of Comparative Literature and Culture, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the University of Tokyo, Japan (Komaba campus). Born in New York City in 1957, he studied in the Departments of Economics and Oriental Languages, University of California, Berkeley (B.A. 1981), the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Graduate School of Fine Arts, Harvard University (M.A. 1984; Ph.D. 1992). Campbell moved to Japan to study Edo literature as a research student in the Department of Japanese Language and Literature, Kyushu University, Fukuoka City (1985), eventually joining that department as assistant professor (1987), then moved on to the National Institute of Japanese Literature, Tokyo (associate professor, 1995). He relocated to the University of Tokyo in 2000 and has taught there as professor since 2007.

Robert Campbell's research centers on the sinological literature, art, media and intellectual discourses of late Edo and early Meiji period Japan. Besides editing and contributing to numerous volumes on Japanese literature, art and drama, he is active in the Japanese media as television host, news commentator, newspaper columnist, book reviewer and radio personality.

This event is co-organized by:

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