

# Scholar Update

Featuring our current and past scholars



Crown Prince Akihito  
Scholarship Foundation

2024—2023 Compilation Edition

## American Scholar Named for 2025-2026



The CPASF is proud to announce that **Joseph Iseri** has been named as the 2025-2026 American scholar.

Joseph is a PhD student in the East Asian Languages and Literature (EALL) department and an Advanced Graduate Certificate student in Second Language Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

He received his master's degree in EALL and bachelor's degree in Japanese also at UHM. His

dissertation examines literacy socialization in middle-class Japanese families, documenting how the process of learning to read and write are wrapped up in culturally mediated beliefs surrounding child development, morality, and interpersonal relationships.

Joseph hopes to leverage the Crown Prince Akihito scholarship to extend cross-cultural dialogue on educational policy surrounding early childhood literacy and highlight how culture influences literacy socialization.

## Japan Scholar Named for 2024-2026



The CPASF is also proud to announce that **Ken Tanaka** has been named as the 2024-2026 Japan scholar.

Ken is already a Japanese physician. He is excited to pursue his PhD and MPH to elucidate the long-standing mysteries of malaria hemozoin crystal to develop and deliver new antimalarial drugs with less drug resistance to patients.

He was honored with the Quad Fellowship Award as a Representative of Japan by the U.S Government.

Dr. Tanaka obtained his medical license from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan, M.D from Chiba University School of Medicine, and MS from New York University.

## Additional Scholars Not Previously Covered



**2024-2025 Kevin Rickman** received his BAs in English and Philosophy from UW Parkside, MAs in Philosophy and Second Language Studies at UH-Manoa, and he has continued his studies of comparative philosophy, philosophy of language, ontology, and ethics as a PhD candidate in philosophy at UH-Manoa.

His dissertation combines all of these facets by focusing on the nature of the relationship between our language use, the ecosphere we are a part of, and the ethical value we must place on the interdependent and mutually reflexive relationship we have with ourselves, language, each other, and society. By drawing

attention to this complex and foundational relationship,

Kevin hopes to bring about meaningful change in environmentalist efforts. The Crown Prince Akihito Scholarship affords Kevin the opportunity to study at the Kyoto School Philosophy in Japan, and this can help him to both bring Japanese philosophy to the larger community and correct for the anthropocentric perspective so prevalent in the world in our current era.

**2024-2025 and 2022-2023 James "JD" Parker** is a Ph.D. student in the

## In Memoriam—

### Chairman Emeritus

By CPASF President, Reyna Kaneko



It is with a very heavy heart that I deliver sad news. **Howard Hamamoto**, former Chair of the Board of Trustees and board member of CPASF for nearly 40 years passed away peacefully on October 7, 2024.

Howard was also former Chair of the Board and board director for the Japan-America Society of Hawaii for equally as long as he served on the CPASF board.

For those of us who had the privilege of working with Howard, we credit Howard for getting us started with CPASF and mentoring us to work together to support the CPASF scholars and for a stronger U.S.-Japan relationship.

Please take a moment to pray for Howard, may he rest in peace.

A memorial service celebrating Howard's life will be held at Mohala Farms, in Waiialua, on Saturday, February 22, 2025, at 4 pm, with a reception to follow at 5 pm. Gifts in Howard's memory can be made out to the Howard Hamamoto Memorial Fund.

This Fund will continue Howard's dedication to fostering direct contact between people of different cultures and national backgrounds and providing positive educational exchange opportunities between young people in Hawaii, Japan and other parts of the world. For more information about the Memorial Fund, or to RSVP for the service, please contact Mark Hamamoto at [hmemorialfund@gmail.com](mailto:hmemorialfund@gmail.com).

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## Additional Scholar Bios

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Global & International Education track within the Department of Educational Foundations at UH Manoa.

Prior to arriving at UHM, JD received his B.A. in History and M.Ed. in Educational Leadership and Administration from West Texas A&M University. He also earned an M.A. in East Asian Languages and Cultures from the University of Kansas where he researched educational policy

reform in post-war occupied Japan.

Currently, he is a visiting student researcher at Kyoto University where he investigates human rights education (HRE) as a global educational trend in the context of teacher training in Japan.

JD will utilize the Crown Prince Akihito Scholarship to explore how international frameworks and discourses of human rights are integrated or contested in local constructions of human rights in Japan.

## 2024 Travel Award Recipient Named

The CPASF Travel Award Committee is pleased to announce a recipient for the 2024 CPASF Travel Award. **James “JD” Parker** (2024-2025 and 2022-2023) received \$1,000 to travel to the 52nd Annual Conference of Oceania Comparative and International Education Society in Melbourne, Australia. The conference took place from November 26-29, 2024.

We will be including an article from JD about the conference in the next newsletter.

## CPASF Travel Award Recipient—Francesca Pizarro

**Francesca Pizarro** (2019-2020) received a \$1,000 CPASF Travel Award to attend the 2023 Mechademia Asia International Conference in Kyoto, Japan from May 27-29, 2023. There, she presented her paper “Queer Modes and Eccentric Spaces of Higashimura Akiko’s Kurage-hime.”



included in the May 29th panel titled “Fujoshi Frontiers.”

Francesca writes, The conference was hosted by and held at Kyoto Seika University and the Kyoto International Manga Museum. The Mechademia Conference is an annual academic conference that showcases social sciences and humanities research on Japanese popular culture (primarily focusing on manga, anime, video games, and pop idol culture).

My individual paper examined the representation of so-called “fujoshi” (female geeks) in the popular manga series *Kurage-hime* (Princess Jellyfish) created by Higashimura Akiko. The presentation was



included in the May 29th panel titled “Fujoshi Frontiers.”

I presented alongside a paper that explored the rise of the “fujoshi market” (specifically, the presumed female community of manga readers who consume and purchase products and content related to the boys’ love genre) and a paper that explored the female gaze in the consumption of boys’ love TV dramas starring Johnny’s idols.

My own paper provided a productive exploration of the “fujoshi” label, which typically contains derogatory connotations, and is most often applied to the presumed female audience and readership of boy’s love content.

In my examination of Higashimura’s use of “fujoshi” to describe “female geeks,” broadly conceived, I argue that the label serves as a means by which some characters can articulate alternative definitions of what it means to be a “girl,” that is different from and counter to typical notions of femininity. In the eyes of Princess Jellyfish’s manga characters, the label “fujoshi” becomes a tool for expressing a distinct and new gender subjectivity.

The arguments expressed in this paper were received positively by my fellow panelists and by members of the audience, who agree that “fujoshi” is an under explored topic of study and that the term has largely evolved from a derogatory expression to a more positive articulation of alternative gendered subjectivity, desire, and consumption. I am currently developing the paper presented at this conference into an article to be submitted to an academic journal.

## Now Accepting 2025 CPASF Travel Award Applications

The CPASF is happy to be able to offer these grants to current and former CPASF scholars to support their continued academic and professional development. The committee is now accepting applications for the 2025

program year for travel in 2025. In addition to travel in 2025, applicants may also apply for the award retrospectively for travel completed within the current 2024-2025 academic year.

**Deadline to apply is December 1, 2025.** Please contact the CPASF office at:

[myokomichi@jshawaii.org](mailto:myokomichi@jshawaii.org) for an application form or for more information.

## Scholar Updates

**Ryo Dobashi** (2021-2023) writes, I have been participating in a student affiliate program of the East-West center since August 2022. In this program, students from all over the world interact and learn together.

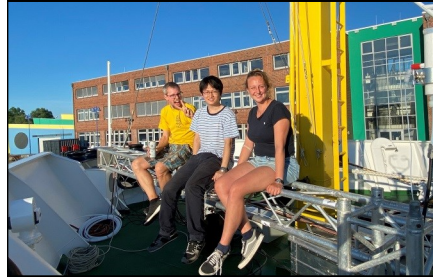
An exchange is held every Monday evening and we can connect with each other by sharing problems, history, knowledge and ideas in the U.S., Asia, and Pacific through presentations and performances guided by specialists.

As one of the activities of the center, I went to Waimea Valley with other East-West center students to do volunteer work. Our job included weeding, garden cleanup, maintenance of cultural sites and invasive-species control. I found and picked up some larvae of bees which could kill native plants.

I took two in-person Oceanography courses in Fall 2022 and I am now taking one Chemical Oceanography course in Spring 2023. On September 16, 2023, the UH Manoa campus ended the requirement of wearing face masks. More and more courses became available in-person from online but some courses are still offered online only.

Students do not have to go to the classrooms and professors easily record their lectures and forward it to students when the students can't attend in person. Now, I feel that lecturers use both online and in-person classes effectively. For example, one professor usually teaches students in-person every time, but he can prepare online material while he is away from the classroom so we can learn in his absence.

From the end of June to the middle of July, I participated in a ship observation to examine the air-sea gas exchange in Baltic Sea. Our group investigated the gas transfer velocity ( $k$ ). Two inert gas tracers,  $\text{SF}_6$  and  $^3\text{He}$ , were injected into the ocean surface and their concentration



Ryo (center) on board with friends at the Baltic Sea.

was measured by water-sampling at 6:00 and 18:00 everyday. Since the only process that changes the  $^3\text{He}/\text{SF}_6$  ratio is air-sea gas exchange, gas transfer velocity can be calculated from the change in the  $^3\text{He}/\text{SF}_6$  ratio with time. My work was to determine the water sampling location, which should be the center of the injected tracer's patch. During my working hours of 0:00–8:00, I continuously used the patch by navigating the ship so that I can locate the ship at the center of the patch at 6:00. I will participate in a similar experiment in Kane'ohe Bay in Hawaii next August.

In 2023, my period as a recipient of the Crown Prince Akihito Scholarship came to an end. Thanks to this generous scholarship, I was able to fully dedicate myself to my studies and research. I am deeply grateful for this support.

Since then, I have continued my graduate studies with a fellowship from the Uehiro Foundation on Ethics and Education. In April of this year, I successfully passed my comprehensive exam and am currently engaged in doctoral research. My doctoral research focuses on examining the air-sea gas exchange in unique environments such as the barrier reef of Kane'ohe Bay and the inland sea of the Baltic Sea. From November to December 2023, I had the opportunity to participate in an experiment in the Labrador Sea, Canada, to investigate the exchange of gases between the air and the sea under high wind speeds.

In September 2023, I was honored to receive the *Young Author Award* from the Oceanographic Society of Japan for a paper I co-authored with my supervisor and colleagues in Japan. In this study, we revealed that ocean mesoscale eddies, with a horizontal scale of 100 to 300 km, significantly impact the interannual variability of the organic carbon sink to the deep sea in the western subarctic North Pacific. These eddies enhance primary production at the sea surface, leading to substantial organic carbon transport to the deep sea.

**Katsuhiko Kitada** (2020-2022) writes, It was truly an honor to spend an invaluable two years as a CPASF scholar at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Thanks to the generous and continuous support from the CPASF staff, friends, and family, I was able to finish my MA program with the



Katsuhiko (left) with friends on graduation day Fall 2022.

Department of Second Language Studies (SLS). I graduated with not only insightful knowledge and experiences related to SLS but also solid relationships with people in Hawaii. Hawaii has become my second home-community.

During the two years, I learned so many things that cannot be described in a limited space. One thing that was always on my mind was my core interest throughout the program which was language education. Namely, I constantly thought about how language education in Japan could be enriched.

Although there is no clear-cut answer for it, I believe that knowledge,

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theories, practices, and information that I learned about in my program will be useful resources to confront the issue in the future. With further deepened understanding, I am going to dedicate myself to enhancing language education in Japan throughout my life.

**Christopher Molina** (2021-2022) was delayed departing for Tokyo due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Chris finally arrived in Japan in July 2023.



(Last row; far left) Chris on shakuhachi in December 2023

Chris writes, my return to Tokyo was a wild ride! Cramming onto rush-hour trains, and re-orienting to the inflated cost of living but with a weak yen, I rented an apartment friendly to musical instruments and got to work on three goals: To test out portions of my thesis on composer Toru Takemitsu with Japanese scholars; To reassemble a band of “intercultural” musicians in Tokyo to perform and conduct workshops; and To revise my own concerto-in-progress for shakuhachi & orchestra.

The concerto is progressing well, thanks to the advice of Professor Matsuo Masataka at Senzoku Gakuen College of Music — who pointed out how averse shakuhachi players are to complicated rhythms! I have some revising to do. Matsuo also invited me to join the school’s Japanese ensemble as a guest, and we performed together for an audience of 150 on December 9th.

Renowned scholars Mitsuko Ono and Seiji Choki agreed to critique my thesis, which first requires the translation of those sections into Japanese. Meanwhile, as a periodic escape from the dictionary, I continue to visit my shakuhachi teacher in Yokohama for weekly lessons and

school presentations, and started up rehearsals for a handful of new compositions. It’s energizing to be back!

July 2024

I put on two recitals this spring, and performed in concerts with my shakuhachi guild and with the Senzoku Gakuen Japanese orchestra. Most exciting has been the chance to meet Takemitsu scholars Dr’s Mitsuko Ono and Peter Burt, who gave me their feedback on my dissertation and have become friendly correspondents.

Their advice contributed to a paper which I gave online at the *Analytical Approaches to World Music* conference in Bologna in June, and which I’ll present in person in Osaka at the International Council of Traditions of Music and Dance in August. I plan to continue my stay in Tokyo for the coming year, and will contribute original compositions to events hosted by Senzoku Gakuen and the Hōgaku 2010 composers’ association.

Many thanks to you and the CPASF Board, I look forward to staying in touch!

**Taiki Sano** (2022-2024) writes, (December 2023) in academic as well as personal terms, this semester was characterized by my own agonizing over “kuleana” on this island.



(Center with red/white long sleeve shirt) Taiki at a tea ceremony.

Although the issues of Asian-settler colonialism have always been on my mind ever since I moved here, I had yet to consider their implications in a more personal way. As such, I decided to take a class in indigenous

anthropology and to rigorously rethink my own positionality as a Japanese migrant/settler on this land.

The results have been quite eye-opening, sometimes depressing, and yet rewarding. I learned, although not perfectly, how to connect to the land and how to think of indigeneity today in Hawai‘i and beyond. I am really indebted to this class for making me aspire to become a better settler aloha ‘āina. On another note, I also had the opportunity to connect with my “Japanese roots” as well, as I also took a class in *chado* (tea ceremony).

Although it did require much mental memorization and bodily training, I indeed found the class to be quite inspiring and enjoyable. It allowed my mind and body to function in a way that was very different from the ones I, as an academic, had been used to. I learned many different aspects of Japan that I had not known before. In fact, I got so enamored with *chado* that I decided to join the tea ceremony club at UH, too. I am, therefore, looking forward now to learning more about how to become a good tea practitioner next year!

**Leah Wasil** (2021-2022) writes, after several years of waiting and hoping to begin my research in earnest, the Spring of 2023 finally saw my departure to Japan.

It’s been nearly seven months since I moved to Okinawa to start my year as a CPASF scholar. During this time, I established a productive routine that has allowed me to make significant strides in my work. My daily visits to Shuri Castle have provided a unique opportunity to engage with and interview various individuals—tourists, community members working at Shuri Castle, and even some individuals working directly with the reconstruction process.

In addition to on-site observations, I have diligently conducted archival research at various libraries and archives in Naha and the University

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of the Ryukyus. I have had the privilege of engaging with the academic community here, attending weekly conferences and various workshops and events at the Okinawa Prefectural Museum & Art Museum. Through these events, I have made many contacts, and these interactions have enriched my perspective and provided valuable insight for my research.

I am also pleased to share that I have contacted several local archaeologists and am applying to be part of the central excavation crew for an upcoming archaeological dig at Nakagusuku.



Leah lending a helping hand and above masked.

This hands-on involvement is pivotal to my research on Shuri Castle's reconstruction. It offers insights into how Okinawan archaeologists and scholars navigate a complex history—notably marked by a significant loss of knowledge and artifacts due to war—and reclaim their history and heritage. Participation in this excavation will also contribute significantly to the broader discourse on heritage preservation and community engagement. As I eagerly anticipate the changing seasons in Okinawa, I look forward to the unfolding chapters of my research journey.

**James “JD” Parker** (2024-2025 and 2022-2023) was delayed departing for Kyoto due to the COVID-19 pandemic. JD finally arrived in Japan in September 2023. JD writes as a Crown Prince Akihito Foundation Scholar, I have been engaged in the following academic and fieldwork.



JD with Kinkakuji in the background.

- Submitting a paper to the *Human Rights Education in Asia-Pacific* journal. Hopefully this will be published in 2025.
- Conducting research at school sites from Nagasaki to Osaka.
- Presenting at the Comparative Education Society of Hong Kong's (CESHK) conference and the Oceania Comparative and International Education Society (OCIES) conference in Melbourne, Australia.
- Attending oral arguments in the same-sex marriage case at the Osaka District Court, meeting with lawyers and supporters of the defendants.
- Developing several chapter projects: one in Japanese focusing on local revitalization in a rural high school, one in English focusing on interdependence in Japan's human rights education (HRE), and another on global citizenship education (GCE) through a virtual study abroad program for undocumented students in the USA.
- Presented as part of the Bentō Box lecture series at the Center for Japanese Studies on scholarship and funding opportunities for graduate students at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, with a focus on Japan.

**Jason Alexander** (2023-2024) writes, I arrived in Tokyo's winter season on December 11, 2023 to start my dissertation research period, one year after I gratefully received the CPASF award.

These past few months in the Department Sociology, I have prepared by writing and submitting my research proposal to my dissertation committee and submitting my methodological plan as Human Subjects research protocol

to the UH Institutional Review Board. Both of these have cleared the review process (with massive support from my chair Dr. Aya Kimura, pictured here) so I am now All-But-



Dissertation status for my program. I also was busy working as Conference Secretary for the 2023 Society for Social Studies of Science conference in Honolulu, which brought together almost 3,000 engaged researchers to dialogue across Hawai'i, the U.S, Japan, Aotearoa, and more regions.

Now, I am just starting my position as a Visiting Research Fellow at the invitation of Waseda University's Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, where I will participate in weekly research presentation meetings with PhD students in the School.

My dissertation, currently titled "Burmese-Japanese Relationality in Diaspora Social Movements: Longevity in Repertoires for Justice since the 2021 Military Coup," will investigate through five chapters how people and institutions in Japan have been organizing social ties since the Myanmar democracy movement was struck by military overthrow in Feb. 2021.

Currently, while I acclimate to my new living environment and meet social clusters, I am investigating documents (newspapers, magazines, NGO reports) that describe the historical foundations of Japan-Myanmar-U.S. relationships since the 1930s imperialization phase, and how these relations are represented in current popular media. I look forward to checking through archives in Waseda, the National Diet Library, and elsewhere over the next couple of months before starting my

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participant observation and interviews with civil society group members who advocate for democracy, peace, and justice.

July 2024

I have now completed seven months of research in Tokyo for my dissertation in Sociology, and am on track with my investigation and writing timelines. After reviewing most of the archival materials on the historical relations between Japan and Burma/Myanmar, I have started mapping out social and political relationships between institutions, political leaders, and ideologies that are influencing responses to the military coup of 2021.

My time is split between reading and analyzing documents, observing as a participant of advocacy events, sharing research feedback with students at my Waseda University host professor's seminar, and studying Burmese language through classes taught in Japanese.

Most recently, in June, I supported an event series in Naha for an online platform that boosts the work of Burmese documentary journalists, and am finishing a report article on this type of transnational anti-authoritarian media that will be released soon. This summer, I will start comprehensively arranging interview sessions with representatives of advocacy organizations and organize a more solid framework for my dissertation chapter layouts.

**Sharon Fukuyama** (2010-2011) writes, in 2022, I got married and now I'm a mom to 9 month old boy — girl twins. I'm taking a break from teaching to care for the twins as it didn't make sense to put them in



daycare because my paycheck would go straight to daycare. The nice thing is that the

Japanese English Dual Language Instruction (DLI) program that I started at Hahaione Elementary School continues and I serve as a coordinator for that program.

Currently there are 20 students in the first grade DLI class and 22 students in the kindergarten DLI class. I'm so happy to have so many students learning Japanese and English at a public school here in Hawaii.

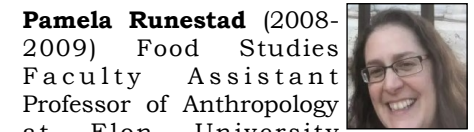
Congratulations to Sharon on her marriage and birth of her twins! Congratulations also go out to Robert Oda who married his wife, Elizabeth in 2022.

**Robert Oda** (2018-2019 and 2019-2020) will be running a new division at Chordia focused on translational research for clinical trials. Translational research is more focused on targeting who would benefit from Chordia's medicine.

Using patient samples and real world data, Chordia creates strategies for their medicines on target diseases (so for cancer, which type of cancer) or to look for specific biomarkers in patients that respond well to certain medicine.



**Junichi Yagi** (2016-2018) accepted a position as an Assistant Professor at Waseda University in Tokyo in 2024.



**Pamela Runestad** (2008-2009) Food Studies Faculty Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Elon University presented at the Umbra Institute's biennial food conference in Perugia, Italy, in June 2024. Runestad's presentation, "Feeding Mothers, Making Citizens: Japanese Clinic Meals as Treatment, Care and Identity," was based on her peer-reviewed article published in *Verge: Studies in Global Asias* fall 2023 special issue on food and foodways. <https://www.elon.edu/u/news/2024/09/09/pamela-runestad-and-nina-namastes-present-at-umbra-institutes-biennial-food-conference-in-perugia-italy/>



**Laura Specker Sullivan** (2013-2015) was recently awarded a \$400,00 grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for her research project in AI/Neurotechnology. <https://thefordhamram.com/news/fordham-professor-receives-national-science-foundation-grant/>

The CPASF *Scholar Update* is published on a quarterly basis. Please email updates and photos to: [myokomichi@jashawaii.org](mailto:myokomichi@jashawaii.org) for possible inclusion in a future edition.

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## In Memoriam

**Mark Holstein** (1997-1999), 58, beloved husband, father, brother, uncle, and revered professor and scholar passed away Jan. 31, 2023 of a heart attack in his home city of Osaka, Japan.

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/deseretnews/name/mark-hollstein-obituary?id=40331918>

**Dennis Esaki**, Longtime CPASF Trustee from Wailua, Kauai passed away in Honolulu on Jul. 25, 2023. Mr. Esaki was a strong financial supporter of the CPASF and we greatly appreciated his generous support over the years. Private services held.