

Scholar Update

Featuring our current and past scholars



Crown Prince Akihito Scholarship Foundation

Spring 2025 Edition

Incoming Chair's Message



It brings me great joy to share that our CPASF's **65th Anniversary Celebration**, held on Saturday, March 29, 2025 at the Keidanren Kaikan in Tokyo, was a truly memorable and meaningful event.



We welcomed more than 140 guests, including 40 CPASF scholars whose presence helped make the evening even more special.



I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Trustees - Stan Sawai, Glenn Miyataki, Bob Huey, Peter Dames, Merle Okawara and Christine Yano for joining us and representing the CPASF so graciously at this historic occasion.

I am also deeply honored to share that Reyna Kaneko - CPASF President and I had the privilege of visiting with Their Majesties, the Emperor and Empress Emeriti, the day before our event. We spent

nearly an hour at the Akasaka Imperial Residence, and their warmth and gracious hospitality left a lasting impression on both of us.

During our conversation, Their Majesties asked us to convey their sincere appreciation to each of you for your steadfast dedication and ongoing support of the CPASF's mission.

If you have any questions or thoughts to share, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

With warmest regards and deep appreciation,

Steve Sombrero
Chairman



Mahalo to Outgoing Chair, Mr. Allen Uyeda

As Mr. Allen Uyeda concluded his term as CPASF Chairman on December 31, 2024, we extend our deepest gratitude for his steadfast leadership, strategic vision, and unwavering commitment to our organization.



Over the course of 14 years, from December 2010 to December 2024, Mr. Uyeda guided us through challenging times, including the COVID-19 pandemic, with insight and integrity.

His thoughtful stewardship helped strengthen our governance, build our financial resources, and inspired a culture of continued excellence. Mr. Uyeda's ability to lead our organization and simultaneous get to know our scholars at a grass-roots level was nothing short of inspirational.

On behalf of the CPASF, we thank Mr. Uyeda for his dedicated service, wise counsel, and the lasting impression that he has left on our organization, our Trustees, our Staff, and our Scholars.

With Appreciation,

The Board of Trustees and Staff of the CPASF

Japan Scholar Named for 2025-2027



The **CPASF** is also proud to announce that **Shion Sasaki** has been named as the 2025-2027 Japan scholar.

Shion will graduate from Keio University's Faculty of Economics with a Bachelor's degree in 2025 and will enter Keio's Graduate School in the fall 2025. He

is currently an exchange student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa and he will also be enrolling in the Master's program in the Department of History at the University of Hawaii at Manoa this Fall. He is a recipient of the Saitama Scholarship and is engaged in academic and cultural exchange as a Saitama Goodwill Ambassador during his studies abroad.

Shion's research explores the diversity and fluidity of gender and sexuality, focusing on the experiences of māhū (a third gender encompassing individuals who embody a gender beyond the traditional binary of male and female) in Hawaii. By challenging Western-centric gender frameworks, he aims to contribute to theoretical discourse and practical applications in gender inclusion.

New American Scholar Departing for Japan



Joseph Iseri, a PhD student in the East Asian Languages and Literatures department at UH Manoa is the 2025-2026 American CPASF scholarship recipient. He will be departing for Osaka this summer.

During his stay at Osaka University, he will focus on collecting data for his

doctoral research project on literacy in Japanese middle-class homes. Through interviews and recordings of parent-child book readings, Joseph's project will describe the process of becoming literate in Japanese society in the preschool years. As he finishes out this Fall semester, Joseph is excited to begin scheduling interviews and data collection sessions.

CPASF Travel Award Recipient—JD Parker

James "JD" Parker (2022-2023, 2024-2025) received a \$1,000 CPASF Travel Award to attend the Oceania Comparative and International Education Society's annual conference in Melbourne, Australia in November 2024.



JD writes, I had the privilege of traveling to Melbourne, Australia, to attend the Oceania Comparative and International Education Society's annual conference. This international

conference focused specifically on educational issues in the Asia-Pacific region.

As a researcher of Human Rights Education in Japan, based at the University of Hawaii in Manoa, the conference provided the perfect opportunity to connect with scholars attuned to the unique challenges and perspectives facing educators in this diverse region.

The conference offered invaluable opportunities to align my research on Human Rights Education with broader regional and international perspectives in the field of comparative and international education. Since my study emphasizes understanding the local contexts of globally popular educational programs, observing how other scholars positioned similar research offered critical insights into the global dimensions of this work.

Some of the most prominent scholars in the field were in attendance, providing formal and informal

settings to engage in discussions on the latest debates in comparative education. I also received constructive feedback from colleagues across the Oceania-Pacific region, whose studies were grounded in diverse educational contexts, including Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, the Solomon Islands, the Maldives, and Japan, among others.

The conference opened doors for potential co-authorships and fostered connections that helped spotlight Japan's human rights education within the broader Asia-Pacific region. It also allowed my research to engage in dialogue with other human rights education models worldwide, underscoring the importance of understanding the local contexts, cultures, and traditions in educational frameworks.

Additionally, the event highlighted research in Decolonial and Indigenous Education, which enriched my understanding of these critical fields and provided meaningful connections between my work and the work of others.

Attending this conference would not have been possible without the financial support of the CPASF Travel Award. I am deeply grateful for their assistance in offsetting the costs, enabling me to continue pursuing impactful research in this field.

Now Accepting

2025 CPASF Travel Award

Applications



The CPASF is happy to offer Travel Award Grants to current and former CPASF scholars in support of their continued academic and professional development.

The Travel Award Screening 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@jashawaii.org for an application form or for more information.

Closing Remarks at the 65th Anniversary Celebration

As a current CPASF scholar, JD Parker was asked to provide the Closing Remarks at the CPASF 65th Anniversary Celebration this past March. JD writes, The event was not only a wonderful opportunity to meet new faces, but also deeply moving as we reflected on what the scholarship means to each of us.

Being surrounded by fellow scholars, alumni, diplomats, and others dedicated to strengthening ties between Hawaii and Japan reminded me of the unique spirit of this community, which is built on shared purpose, mutual respect, and enduring connection.

In my speech, I reflected on the concept of interdependence, which

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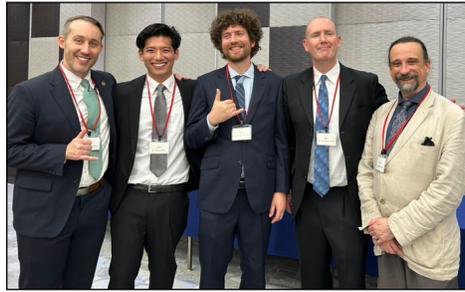
Shared Purpose, Mutual Respect, and Enduring Connection

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has become central to my research and to my understanding of the scholarship's deeper meaning. Just as cherry blossoms rely on rain, sun, and soil to bloom, so too do we rely on each other to grow, to learn, and to face the shared challenges of our time. This scholarship is more than financial support; it is a lived experience of interdependence across borders, generations, and cultures.



This year, I've had the opportunity to organize an international symposium on Japanese education at Kyoto University. I also published a short article in Japanese on education in Hawaii in the *Kyoto University Graduate School of Education Educational Methodology Journal*, and



(L-R): JD Parker and CPASF Alumni: Dr. Robert Oda; Dr. Benjamin Schragger; Dr. Christopher Molina; and Dr. John Chow Seymour

I currently have a couple of book chapters under review. These experiences have allowed me to explore how values like compassion, mutual support, and inclusion, core themes of both my research and this scholarship, are being practiced and reimaged in education today.

Most recently, I attended a University of Hawaii alumni gathering in Tokyo,

where I had the opportunity to meet UH President Wendy Hensel. Along with several other CPASF scholars, we were able to speak in depth about the strengths of the scholarship and how it continues to enrich the UH M a n o a community. It was a meaningful chance to reflect on the broader impact of our work and connections in Japan.



As a Crown Prince Akihito Scholar, I remain committed to working toward goals that are not mine alone, but that reflect the broader mission we share: To Foster understanding, build stronger relationships, and carry forward the legacy of this scholarship with compassion and care; not only for one another, but for the world that sustains us all.

Scholar Updates



Ken Tanaka (2023-2025) writes, My first-author publication, entitled "*Comparative Analysis of ChatGPT-based Diabetes Self-Management Support System: Effectiveness and Patient Adaptability*," was accepted by *Diabetes Technology & Obesity Medicine*, a peer-reviewed diabetes journal in the United States, in early April 2025.

This work also serves as my Master of Public Health Capstone project at the University of Hawaii. Additionally, I had the opportunity to attend and present this project at the International Diabetes Federation World Congress 2025, held in Bangkok, Thailand, from April 7–10. I was able to attend and present my MPH Capstone project thanks to the tremendous support



from CPASF. I am sincerely grateful for all your support.



Kevin Rickman (2024-2025) writes, Since arriving in Japan for the 2024-25 academic year, I have been attending courses in the Department of Philosophy at Kyoto University to further my research about Japanese philosophy broadly and in relation to the Kyoto School philosophers in particular.

Under the general guidance of Professor Deguchi Yasuo, I have worked with Professor Uehara of Kyoto University and Professor

Fujinuki in order to deepen my philosophical understanding.

Additionally, the library at Kyoto University has been an essential asset to my progress as it has documents, books, and other literature in the original Japanese that I did not have access to at the University of Hawaii at Manoa or through the internet.

With great thanks to the resources made available to me at Kyoto University through the Crown Prince Akihito Scholarship Foundation, I have made great strides in my dissertation and expect to finish the first draft in May of 2025.

As for scholarly endeavors outside of the University itself, I have been involved in the sharing of my material learned at Kyoto University and researched for my dissertation with other scholars within and outside of

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Alumni Updates

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the philosophy department. One example of this is my upcoming presentation of work derived from my dissertation at the 2025 International Association of Japanese Philosophy to be held at the Tokyo University campus, and this conference is on the topic of Nishida Kitarō and his work in honor of the anniversary of his death.

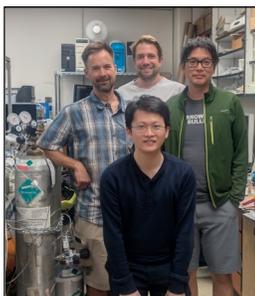
By focusing on an uncommon linguistic and semiotic approach that is rather new and quite different from historical trends found in the philosophy of language and analytic philosophy generally, I am lifting the works of Japanese philosophers out of history and firmly placing their projects into modern discussions and debates regarding ontology, axiology, philosophy of language, philosophy of education, and semiotics.



Kevin at Hachidai Jinja Shrine in Kyoto

Ryo Dobashi (2021-2023) writes, After two years of generous support from the Crown Prince Akihito Scholarship, I am now supported by a fellowship from the Uehiro Foundation on Ethics and Education and continuing my pursuit of a Ph.D.

Through this fellowship, I work as a member of the team—including three new faculty members and ten graduate student fellows. We conduct research aimed at contributing to the United Nations



Ryo, front-center, with colleagues in their lab

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through Oceanography.

This February, the *Breakthroughs: Uehiro-Oceanography Yearly Symposium* was held at the UH Manoa Department of Oceanography, where I presented our research findings from an experiment conducted in Kaneohe Bay.

Christopher Molina (2021-2022) writes, It was an immense pleasure to reunite with CPASF members, scholars and alumni this March in Tokyo! With many happy introductions, it gave me good reason to sum up last year's project.

The first outcome was valuable connections: With three authors of books on Toru Takemitsu who are now friends, one of whom is my partner in translating; With the daughter of Takemitsu, who gifted me concert tickets and surprising stories about her father; With fellow academics from the ICTMD conference in Osaka and the AAWM conference in Bologna where I presented papers; and With musicians, professors, conductors and concert producers with whom I have developed collaborations.

I have stayed on in Tokyo with the goal of expanding my network here to include relationships in Seoul, Ho Chi Minh, and soon Bali. *Shakuhachi* is proving an excellent bridge between cultures! The President of Senzoku Gakuen College of Music himself welcomed me to stay on as a researcher, and with musicians from the Institute of Contemporary Japanese Music I will present a concert of my works, "All Hallow's Eve" at Nippori Sunny Hall on October 31, 2025.

For anyone in the Tokyo area, please feel free to contact me for tickets! (Please contact Marsha at the CPASF Office (myokomichi@jshawaii.org) and she will put you in touch with Chris.)



Our All-American trio presenting a moon-viewing program at Tokuzo-in Temple in Chiba



Chris (L) as part of the same trio presenting a panel of papers at the National Museum of Ethnology moderated by the esteemed musicologist Dr. Yoshihiko Tokumaru



Chris in the Green Room of the Kyoto International Community House, filled with 50 kimono'ed *shakuhachi* players of the Kokusai Shakuhachi Kenshūkan preparing to take the stage



The "Tokyo Rush" quartet, introducing upbeat new music for Japanese instruments to the undergraduates of Bunkyo University

Alumni Updates



Leah Wasil (2020-1021) writes, I was able to attend the CPASF 65th Anniversary Celebration in Tokyo, and it was wonderful.

(L-R): CPASF Chair Steve Sombbrero and Leah Wasil at

Being surrounded by so many passionate and brilliant people in one place was both amazing and a little overwhelming but in a good way.

I got to meet and chat with several other CPASF alumni—I was finally able to meet Robert Oda face-to-face, and it was great to be able to put a face to the name since we've been emailing each other for years. I feel so lucky that I was able to attend the celebration.

As for my update, over the past six months, I've had the opportunity to participate in multiple archaeological excavations across Okinawa, including an excavation within the grounds of Shuri Castle. These projects have been instrumental in shaping my research, especially as I transition from the data-gathering phase to the next significant milestone: Writing my dissertation.



Leah at an excavation site

With my fieldwork and archival research now complete, I'm excited to begin synthesizing everything into a cohesive narrative that I hope will contribute meaningfully to the scholarship on the topic of Okinawa.

In addition to wrapping up my research, I'm thrilled to share that I've been offered a lead role in a forthcoming inter-island archaeology project that will bridge work between



Leah at Cape Hedo, the northernmost point of Okinawa

Guam and Okinawa. This initiative presents a unique opportunity to explore broader patterns of military infrastructure, island networks, and cultural resilience across the Pacific. I'm incredibly honored to be part of this collaborative effort and look forward to the new discoveries and the community-building this partnership will bring.

Hiroko Saito (2019-2021) writes In Spring 2024, I passed my comprehensive exam and became ABD (All but dissertation). It has been a long journey, and I could not have reached this stage without the support from my family and friends.

My dissertation is about Japanese women writers' English autobiographies and their impact on the U.S.-Japan relationship. Even though the main theme has not changed since I entered the program, what I have learned in the coursework and exam preparation has enabled me to develop the dissertation theme into a much better and meaningful one.

I visited Sapporo and Tokyo for archival research last summer. I also presented a part of my dissertation at the annual conference of the Association for Asian American Studies in Boston this April and will also present at the American Studies Association in Puerto Rico in November 2025. I am so excited to have the opportunity to share my ideas and get to know scholars in the same field.

Besides my dissertation, I have engaged in Okinawan Studies. In

2024, I published an online article about the representation of Okinawa in the music video of Yonetsu Genshi's "Sayonara Mata Itsuka." I also published a newspaper article about the relationship between Okinawa and the East-West Center in the Okinawa Times.

Since last fall, I started a project that aims to enhance the visibility and accessibility of Okinawan Studies at UH Manoa and also organized a colloquium where my project co-member and I shared our findings and the website that we created. These experiences have taught me the value of working with colleagues and engaging with the local community.



(Second from L) Hiroko and her colleagues



Hiroko and her friend participated in the 2025 Great Aloha Run

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

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