



Scuola Italiana di Studi  
sull'Asia Orientale  
ISEAS



École Française  
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# KYOTO LECTURES

Tuesday, November 22th, 18:00h

Nissim Otmazgin SPEAKER

## Japan's Cultural Diplomacy in Asia in Historical Perspective

During most of the post-war period, the Japanese government did very little to support the export of its culture to the rest of Asia and at times even objected to it. This was due to fears that such an export might resurrect old grievances from the time Japan occupied large parts of this region and attempted to impose its own culture on the local population, but also due to the lack of government interest in "culture" being a profitable export commodity. However, following the success of Japan's popular culture abroad since the mid-1980s and its enthusiastic acceptance by youth throughout Asia, the Japanese government has become increasingly interested in the economic advantages of popular culture as a way of upgrading the economy, as well as its diplomatic advantages of boosting the country's image abroad and attaining "soft power."

This talk will examine the Japanese government's policy toward the dissemination of its culture in Asia over three main periods: before and during the Pacific War, in the post-war period, and since the mid-1980s. Looking at the fluctuations in Japan's cultural policy over these periods allows us to understand how Japan has used cultural policy and cultural diplomacy to further its geopolitical goals and more basically how it has viewed the role of "culture" in the context of its relations with Asian neighbors.

**Nissim Otmazgin** is currently a visiting professor at the Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University. He is also the Chair of the Department of Asian Studies at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and Associate Director of the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace. His research interests include Japan-Southeast Asian relations, manga and history, and popular culture and cultural diplomacy in Northeast Asia. He is the author of *Regionalizing Culture: the Political Economy of Japanese Popular Culture in Asia* (University of Hawaii Press, 2013), and (together with Miki Dalot-Bul) *The Anime Boom in the US: Lessons for Global Creative Industries* (Harvard Asia Center, forthcoming).

**This lecture will be held at the Institute for Research in Humanities (IRH), Kyoto University (seminar room 1, 1st floor).**

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