

## Scholars from Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, and the United States Gather for Japanese Humanities Conference, Showcasing Interdisciplinary Research Strengths

Campus focus

The Department of Japanese at Tamkang University held the “2026 International Conference on Japanese Humanities Studies” on April 25 on the Tamsui Campus. Centered on the theme of “Japanese Humanities,” the conference brought together scholars from Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, and the United States to engage in in-depth discussions on Japanese literature, language, education, society, culture, AI, and other Japan-related interdisciplinary research through keynote speeches, academic paper presentations, and poster sessions. More than one hundred researchers gathered for an extensive scholarly exchange.

The conference opened with remarks by Department Chair Pei-Ching Tsai. She noted that this was the fourth edition of the “International Conference on Japanese Humanities Studies” organized by the department. Although still relatively new compared to longer-established conferences, its interdisciplinary nature has attracted scholars from diverse fields related to Japanese studies, gradually building a stable academic network and generating meaningful research results. Continuing this foundation, the conference aims to expand Tamkang University’s visibility in Japanese humanities research while providing an important platform for international and intergenerational academic dialogue.

As a distinguished guest, Naoki Sato, Japanese Language Advisor of the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association, read a congratulatory message on behalf of Director General Naoya Araki of the News and Culture Department, who was unable to attend due to official duties. The message praised the Department of Japanese for its longstanding dedication to Japanese humanities research and its active promotion of Taiwan-Japan academic exchange. It also emphasized the important role of academic exchange in deepening mutual understanding and cooperation between Taiwan and Japan, expressing hope

that international conferences of this kind would continue to strengthen dialogue and connections among scholars in Japan, Taiwan, and across Asia. Two keynote speeches were arranged during the morning session. One was delivered by Professor Yoshiyuki Iikura of Kokugakuin University, who explored how Japanese folkloric imagination has been shaped within historical contexts through studies of yōkai (supernatural creatures) and traditional narrative culture. He also discussed how these traditions continue to influence contemporary cultural expressions, particularly novels and anime. The lecture offered an in-depth analysis of the relationship between folklore and cultural memory, encouraging participants to reconsider the intertwining of tradition and modernity in Japanese humanities studies.

The second keynote speaker was Professor Jung Hyeseon of Hokkaido University, whose presentation focused on comparative Korean - Japanese linguistics through the concept of “role language.” By examining differences and similarities in vocabulary, structure, and usage between the two languages, she highlighted the inseparable relationship between language and culture. Her comparative analysis proposed new perspectives for the study of “role language” and explained its academic significance in deepening regional cultural understanding, encouraging participants to further appreciate the internationalization and comparative possibilities of Japanese language studies.

During the midday session, eight research posters were presented, followed in the afternoon by 23 academic paper presentations held across three parallel venues. Presenters from domestic and international academic institutions covered a wide range of topics, and the lively discussions fully demonstrated the dynamic development of Japanese humanities research in contemporary academia.

Following the closing ceremony, the organizers arranged a networking reception to allow participants to continue academic discussions in a more relaxed atmosphere and further strengthen scholarly exchange. Professor Shinji Sato of Princeton University commented that within the U.S. higher education system, Japanese language education and Japanese studies are

often institutionally separated, leaving few opportunities for interaction. He noted that the conference's interdisciplinary format not only promoted mutual understanding among different research fields but also provided highly inspiring academic exchanges for participants.





