

# Ghosts Connecting Greece and Japan

-Lucian, Noh, and Lafcadio Hearn -



Even in today's era of scientific and technological prominence, where AI (artificial intelligence) is becoming a part of everyday life due to technological advancements, phenomena such as superpowers and ghosts continue to captivate people's minds. The period of ancient Greece and Rome was also a time when superstitions circulated alongside the progress of science and technology. From the works of Lucian, who was active in Athens during the Roman Empire, we can see that phenomena like "ghosts" were believed in among the intellectuals of the time. On the other hand, in Japan's traditional performing arts known as "Noh," the art has permeated society as a depiction of the boundary between reality and the spiritual world. In modern times, Lafcadio Hearn, who was born in Greece and later moved to Japan, published various works inspired by Japanese ghost legends. In a way, "ghosts" and paranormal phenomena can be said to connect Greece and Japan.

This time, following a performance of Noh by Ujin Sakurama, a Noh actor from the Konparu school and a designated holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property, Professor Angelos Chaniotis from the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton will give a lecture in the first part titled "What is superstition in an age of reason: The modernity of Lucian's 'Liar'." In the second part, a trilogy will be conducted featuring Professor Chaniotis, Ujin Sakurama, and Bon Koizumi, great-grandson of Lafcadio Hearn and director of the Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum, to delve into the relationships between the worldviews of Lucian, Noh, and Lafcadio Hearn. The moderator will be Associate Professor Takashi Fujii from Kyoto University. Please enjoy an autumn evening exploring the world of Greek literature and the mysterious realm.

**Date and Time** Friday, September 19, 2025, 18:15–20:30 (Doors open at 18:00)

**Location** Otsuma Women's University Chiyoda Campus (12 Sanbancho, Chiyoda-ku)  
Building E, Basement Level 1, Lecture Room E055

**Participation Fee:** Free

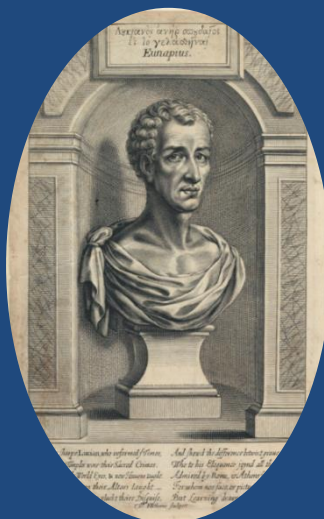
Please register in advance via the Japan-Greece Society website

<https://www.japan-greece-society.jp> (For security reasons, those without prior registration will not be admitted.)

**Language:** Simultaneous interpretation in Japanese and English available



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Bust of Lucian



© Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum



- ◇ Organizer: Japan-Greece Society
- ◇ Supporters: Embassy of Greece in Japan, Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum, Sakurama-kai General Incorporated Association
- ◇ Cooperation: Kyoto University, Otsuma Women's University

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## Brief Biographies of Lecturers, Panelists, and Moderator



### Angelos Chaniotis

Professor at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. Born in Athens in 1959, Angelos Chaniotis studied ancient history and archaeology at the University of Athens (1978-82) and the University of Heidelberg (1982-84), where he obtained his Ph.D. in 1984 and his Habilitation in 1992. He has held positions as Professor of Ancient History at New York University (1994-98), Professor of Ancient History at the University of Heidelberg (1998-2006), Vice Rector at the University of Heidelberg (2001-06), and Senior Research Fellow at All Souls College, Oxford (2006-10). Since 2010, he has been a Professor of Ancient History and Classics at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton.

He has authored six monographs, edited over 30 volumes, and published more than 250 articles. His main research interests include the society and culture of the Hellenistic world and the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire. He focuses on the theatricality of public life, historical memory, identity, the social aspects of religion, emotions, war, and the relevance of classical studies in the modern world. Notable publications in English, German, and Greek include the following. His notable publications include "Historical Narrative and Historians in Greek Inscriptions" (1988), "Interstate Treaties in Crete during the Hellenistic Period" (1996), "War in the Hellenistic World: Society and Culture" (2005), "Theatricality and Public Life in the Hellenistic World" (2009), and "After Alexander: The Long Hellenistic Age and the Greek World" (2018). He has received over 3 million euros in research funding from organizations such as the German Research Foundation, the European Research Council, the Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts of Baden-Württemberg, and the Packard Humanities Institute for his studies on emotions, persuasion techniques, religion, ritual, and epigraphy. He has been awarded the Nikos Svoronos Prize (1991), the NYU Golden Dozen Teaching Award (1997), the Baden-Württemberg Research Prize (2001), the Greek Literary Award (Essay Category, 2010), and the Anneliese Maier Research Award from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (2015). He serves as a visiting member of various academies and has received honorary doctorates from institutions such as the International Hellenic University (2012), the University of Liège (2016), and the University of Thessaloniki (2018). In 2013, he was awarded the Order of the Phoenix (Commander) by the President of the Hellenic Republic.

### Bon Koizumi

Director of the Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum and Honorary Director of the Yaizu Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum. He is also Professor Emeritus at the Junior College of the University of Shimane. Born in Tokyo in 1961, Bon Koizumi specialized in folklore at Seijo University and its graduate school before moving to Matsue in 1987. He engages in practical activities to discover cultural resources through the lens of yokai and ghost stories and applies them to tourism and cultural creation. He also develops projects in related areas worldwide to apply Lafcadio Hearn's "open mind" to society. In 2022, he received the Academia Prize from the Japan Academy. His main works include "Folklorist Lafcadio Hearn" (Kobunsha), "A Tale of Four Generations of Ghost Stories: Hearn's Pranks" (Kodansha), and "Lafcadio Hearn and Yokai" (Tamagawa University Press), among others. Bon Koizumi is the great-grandson of Lafcadio Hearn and a member of the Japan PEN Club.



### Takashi Fujii

Associate Professor at the Graduate School of Letters, Kyoto University. Born in Yamaguchi Prefecture in 1978, Takashi Fujii studied Western Ancient History at the Faculty of Letters, Kyoto University (2001), the Master's Program at the Graduate School of Letters, Kyoto University (2003), and the Doctoral Program in Ancient History and Epigraphy at the Faculty of Philosophy, Heidelberg University (2010, Dr. phil.). He has served as a researcher at the University of Zurich's Faculty of History (2009-10), a fellow at Wolfson College, Oxford University (2010-13), a designated assistant professor at the Hakubi Center for Advanced Research, Kyoto University (2013-15), and an associate professor at the Faculty of Letters, Kwansei Gakuin University (2015-21), before assuming his current position in 2021. His areas of specialization include Hellenistic history, Roman history, and Greek epigraphy. His publications include the monograph "Imperial Cult and Representation of Emperors in Roman Cyprus" (2013), and he has translated Angelos Chaniotis's "After Alexander: The Long Hellenistic Age and the Greek World" into Japanese.

## Ujin Sakurama



Noh actor of the Konparu school and representative director of the Sakurama-kai General Incorporated Association. He is a designated holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property. Born in Tokyo in 1961, Ujin Sakurama is the eldest grandson of Michio Sakurama, a Living National Treasure. He studied under Michio to succeed him and, after Michio's sudden passing, continued his training under his uncle, Kintaro Sakurama. He later became the heir to both Kintaro and Michio, becoming the 21st head of the Sakurama family. He began his training at the age of four and made his stage debut shortly thereafter. Ujin Sakurama carries on the tradition of the Sakurama family, which has left a notable mark on the Noh world with figures like Sajin Sakurama and Kyusen Sakurama, and continues to be active in performances. On January 1, 2004, he assumed the name "Ujin," traditionally held by heads of the Sakurama family. Through his main practice and lecture activities at Sakurama-kai, Goyokai, and Kyushu Sakurama-kai, he actively promotes Noh.

He is a member of the Noh Association and the Japan Noh Society, having held positions such as director of the Noh Association and executive committee member of the Tokyo branch.

### **\*\*Domestic Performances:\*\***

- Organizer of "Sakurama Ujin no Kai" and "Sakurama Kai Regular Meetings."
- Annual presentation of "The World of The Tale of the Heike" featuring Noh, Kyogen, and Heikyoku at the National Noh Theatre.
- Performs as the shite in Shomyoji Takigi Noh (Kanazawa Ward, Yokohama) and Hatonomori Takigi Noh (Sendagaya, Shibuya Ward).
- Performer at the Omiwa Shrine Post-Banquet Noh (held annually on April 10).
- Performs as the shite in Kasukabe Takigi Noh (Kasukabe City, biennially).
- Participates in regular performances at the National Noh Theatre.
- Performs at the Hatonomori Hachiman Shrine Autumn Festival Dedication Shinjin Noh and New Year's Dedication Ceremony.

### **\*\*International Performances:\*\***

Performed in countries such as the United States, Switzerland, France, Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, China, Germany, Portugal, Mongolia, Taiwan, Egypt, Italy, Russia, Hungary, Austria, Monaco, Denmark, Israel, Korea, Iceland, Sweden, and Finland.

### **\*\*Cooperation with TV Drama Performances:\*\***

- "Takasago" in NHK Taiga Drama "Toshiie and Matsu."
- "Yashima" and other scenes in "Nobunaga: King of Japan."
- "Futari Shizuka" in "Takeda Shingen" (performed twice).
- "Araki Mataemon."

### **\*\*Appearances on TV and Radio Programs:\*\***

- January 3, 2004: NHK "New Year's Noh and Kyogen" featuring Noh "Tamura Shiroshiki."
- November 24, 2013: NHK "Invitation to Classical Performing Arts" featuring Noh "Fujisan" (program commemorating Mount Fuji's registration as a World Cultural Heritage site).
- Appeared on NHK-FM radio broadcasts (latest appearance on October 17, 2024).

### **\*\*Training and Promotion Activities:\*\***

- Conducts training activities in Tokyo, Kanagawa, Saitama, Shizuoka, Niigata, Osaka, and various parts of Kyushu.
- Lecturer for "Outreach Noh Lecture" organized by Kanazawa Ward, Yokohama City.
- External lecturer at the Literary Theatre Research Institute.
- Lecturer at the Noh Club of Dokkyo University.

## Program

Opening Act	
18 : 15~18 : 40	Noh Performance "Tsunemasa" by Ujin Sakurama, Shite Actor of the Konparu School, Representative Director of Sakurama-kai General Incorporated Association Opening Remarks by Yasuyoshi Karasawa, President of the Japan-Greece Society Greetings by His Excellency Nikolaos Argyros, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Greece to Japan, Hiroshi Ichikawa, President of Otsuma Women's University
Part 1	
18 : 40~19 : 30	Keynote Lecture by Angelos Chaniotis, Professor at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton Superstition in a Time of Reason. The Modernity of Lucian's "Lover of Lies"
19 : 30~19 : 40	Break
Part 2	
19 : 40~20 : 30	Panel Discussion Ghosts Connecting Greece and Japan -Lucian, Noh, and Lafcadio Hearn -
	Panelists: - Angelos Chaniotis, Professor at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton - Ujin Sakurama, Shite Actor of the Konparu School, Representative Director of Sakurama-kai General Incorporated Association - Bon Koizumi, Director of the Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum Moderator: - Takashi Fujii, Associate Professor at Kyoto University
20 : 30	Closing

### \*\*About Lafcadio Hearn (Koizumi Yakumo)\*\*

Patrick Lafcadio Hearn, known in Japan as Koizumi Yakumo, was born on June 27, 1850, on the island of Lefkada in western Greece. His father, Charles, was an Irish military surgeon, and his mother, Rosa, was from the Greek island of Kythira. Since Ireland was not an independent country at the time, Hearn held British nationality. At the age of two, he moved to Ireland and later received a Catholic education in England and France, which he eventually questioned. At 16, he lost sight in his left eye during a game. At 19, due to the bankruptcy of his great-aunt, who had raised him in place of his parents, he immigrated alone to America. After experiencing a life of poverty, he began to gain recognition as a journalist in Cincinnati. He later moved to New Orleans, Louisiana, and then to the island of Martinique in the Caribbean, where he continued his vigorous research and writing activities, captivated by cultural diversity.



© Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum

During his time in New Orleans, Hearn was influenced by the Japanese culture he encountered at the World's Fair and the English translation of "Kojiki" he read in New York, which led him to decide to come to Japan. He set foot in Japan in April 1890. By August of the same year, he was appointed as an English teacher at the Shimane Prefectural Common Middle School in Matsue. He later held positions at Kumamoto Fifth High School and the Kobe Chronicle, and from September 1896, he taught English literature as a lecturer at the Faculty of Letters at the Imperial University. In 1903, he was dismissed from the university, handing over his position to Natsume Soseki, and subsequently taught at Waseda University.

During this period, in 1896, Hearn married Setsu Koizumi, the daughter of a samurai family from Matsue, and became a naturalized Japanese citizen. They were blessed with three sons and one daughter. As an author, Hearn left behind around 30 works over his lifetime, focusing on genres such as translation, travel writing, and retold literature. He passed away from a heart attack on September 26, 1904, at the age of 54.

## **\*\*Noh Performance "Tsunemasa"\*\***

In this performance, you will see a segment of the Noh play "Tsunemasa" presented in a shimai format. This format involves a simplified expression of part of a Noh performance through chanting and dance in formal attire (montsuki hakama). For this special occasion, the performance will be presented with costumes.

Tsunemasa is named after a person, Taira no Tsunemasa, also known as Tajima no Kami Tsunemasa, a young warrior who perished in the Genpei War during the late Heian period. He was a nobleman of the Taira clan. During his lifetime, Tsunemasa served at the Omuro Palace of Ninna-ji Temple (a residence associated with an emperor who had taken religious vows) and was favored by the emperor to the extent that he was given a treasured biwa (lute) named Aoyama. Fearing that the instrument might be damaged in battle, Tsunemasa returned the biwa to the Omuro before heading to war. His close friend, the monk Dainagon Gyōkei, saw him off at the Katsura River, praying for his fortune in battle and lamenting their separation. However, the sad news of Tsunemasa's death reaches the Omuro. Upon hearing this, the emperor is deeply saddened and holds continuous memorial services involving musical offerings for Tsunemasa. The events unfold when Gyōkei, Tsunemasa's dear friend, takes his turn for the musical offering.

This forms the background of the story.

In the Noh play "Tsunemasa," the monk Gyōkei explains the favor that Tsunemasa received and the musical offerings being held, noting that today is his turn to perform. This segment is omitted in the shimai format.

The part you will see is as follows:

A shadow appears, singing "Ah, the delightful sound of the biwa," upon hearing the musical offering. When questioned by Gyōkei, the shadow reveals itself as Tsunemasa. As night deepens and Gyōkei plays the biwa for the offering, the sky clouds over, and the sound of rain is heard. Tsunemasa points out the moon visible at the edge of the clouds, explaining that the sound of the biwa has reflected in his heart, creating an illusion. Reminiscing about the past, he plays the biwa himself and dances joyfully. The sorrow of having fallen into the realm of Ashura torments and cuts through him. Tsunemasa, ashamed of showing his wretched state, blows out the memorial lights and disappears into the darkness.