

Kore-eda and the New Family in 21st-century Japanese Cinema

Dr Alexander Jacoby
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Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1, Flügel Ost
Asien-Afrika-Institut, Raum 122

This lecture explores the representation of the modern Japanese family in the cinema of the Heisei Era, and in the films of Kore-eda Hirokazu in particular. During an age of diminished confidence in established modes of life and family formation, as well as changing patterns of employment, Kore-eda's films exemplify a widespread trend in Heisei-era cinema in which social norms are productively interrogated and challenged. In Kore-eda's case, and in *Shoplifters* (2018) in particular, this interrogation takes the form of exploring potential alternative family formations, reflecting on the question of whether it might in fact be better if family were something that was chosen, rather than born into.

Dr Alexander Jacoby lectures on Japanese film at Oxford Brookes University. He is the author of *A Critical Handbook of Japanese Film Directors* (2008, Stone Bridge Press) and a forthcoming monograph on Kore-eda Hirokazu (British Film Institute / Bloomsbury). His scholarly essays have been published in *Japanese Cinema: Texts and Contexts* (2007, ed. Phillips and Stringer), *The Japanese Cinema Book* (2020, ed. Fujiki and Phillips), *The Companion to Japanese Cinema* (2022, ed. Desser), and *The Cinema of Kinoshita Keisuke: Films of Joy and Sorrow* (2025, ed. Desser and Jackson). He has curated Japanese film programmes at the British Film Institute, Il Cinema Ritrovato, Bologna, Le Giornate del Cinema Muto, Pordenone, and the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

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