

CULTURE AND COSMOS

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Guest Editor for this issue Lucia Dolce

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Editorial

The French sociologist Bruno Latour argued that ‘No one has ever heard of a collective that did not mobilize heaven and earth in its composition, along with bodies and souls, property and law, gods and ancestors, powers and beliefs, beast and fictional beings... Such is the ancient anthropological matrix, the one we have never abandoned’.¹ The study of Cultural Astronomy highlights the extent to which the sky has played – and continues to play – a significant role in inspiring and formulating ideas in the arts, politics, science and religion. The discipline’s presiding assumption is that the influence of celestial ideas on culture is pervasive but tends to be ignored by historians, anthropologist and sociologists. This special issue of *Culture and Cosmos* is a significant extension of the literature in the subject area and is the first major collection of essays to focus on Japanese astrology, astral religion and cultural astronomy.

The papers included in this special double volume were originally presented at the conference on the ‘Worship of Stars in Japanese Religious Practice’ held at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London, in September 2004. The conference was organised by the SOAS Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions and coordinated by Meri Arichi, 2003-04 Postdoctoral Fellow at the Centre. The volume has been edited by Dr Lucia Dolce, Senior Lecturer in Japanese Religions and Chair of the Centre.

¹ Latour, Bruno, *We Have Never Been Modern*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2006 [1991], p.107

Editorial note

Japanese Names: Japanese personal names are given in the traditional order, with the personal name first.

Capitalisation: the conversion of Japanese astronomical terms into English raises questions concerning capitalization. We have tried to be consistent in this volume but, depending on context, for example, Twenty-eight constellations is sometimes rendered as twenty-eight constellations, or Star Mandala as star mandala. This reflects the uncertainty in standard English usage between, for example, Zodiac and zodiac, or Sun and sun.

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Acknowledgments

I would like to take this occasion to thank the people who made possible the CSJR workshop. First of all my thanks go Meri Arichi, 2003-04 Postdoctoral Fellow at the Centre, who took care of much of the organization of the workshop, helped translate the Japanese papers and, most importantly, first suggested the topic.

I would also like to express my deep gratitude to the Daiwa Foundation, the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation and the Japan Foundation, who have always generously supported the activities of the Centre, and on this occasion graciously provided financial help to bring the Japanese scholars to London.

Finally, my thanks go to the authors who have agreed to revise the papers for publication, and to the editor of *Cosmos and Culture* for offering to publish the proceedings in this special issue of the journal, giving us an occasion to make material on Japanese astrological culture available to the broader public.

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