

Perilous Wagers:

Gambling, Dignity,
and Day Laborers
in Twenty-First Century Tokyo

Klaus K. Y. Hammering

Wednesday, January 15th, 2025

6:00-7:30 PM

Room 301, Building 10, Sophia University

In person only / No registration required

ABSTRACT: This book talk introduces *Perilous Wagers*, a recently published ethnography that examines the lives of construction workers in Tokyo's old day-laborer district, San'ya. *Perilous Wagers* explores how one group of day laborers embodied a transgressive masculinity intimately intertwined with honorable mobster values of old, and how they created dignity and sociality under abject conditions of life. While engaging with classic ethnographic themes like labor, exchange, value, honor, shame, temporality, desire, gender, and personhood, *Perilous Wagers* tracks these underdog values across construction sites, non-profit organizations, hospitals, bunkhouses, and illegal gambling dens, giving imaginative life to a stigmatized, forgotten social world.

BIO: Klaus K. Y. Hammering is an independent scholar who writes on issues of cultural politics, ideology, fascism, labor, and transgression in Japan. He received his doctorate in the Department of Anthropology at Columbia University and is currently working on a second manuscript that tracks the leftist legacies of World War II and fascism in Japan today, titled *Theaters of Persecution: Disobedience, Revolution, and Nationalism in Twenty-First Century Japan*.

This talk is organized by David Slater (Professor of Anthropology, FLA, Sophia University).

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