

Of Wallflowers, idols and Role Models:

Haris̄er̄bon and Female Comedians in Japan

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Room 301, 3F, Building 10, Sophia University

Since the so-called “comedy boom” first emerged in Japan at the beginning of the 21st century, comedians throughout the country have attracted significant media interest and coverage. As a result of the nation’s obsession with comedy, both popular television comedians and rakugo storytellers have benefitted from the positive image of comedians that has developed, and they are now often admired as role models. However, despite the growth in popularity of the comedy genre, the number of female comedians remains relatively limited. Why is this? Is it because female comedians take a different approach to comedy than their male colleagues? Or is it because they have different obstacles to overcome? In my talk, I would like to consider the relationship between comedy and gender and take a closer look at one specific example of female Japanese comedy: the duo **Haris̄er̄bon**.



Haris̄er̄bon was first formed in 2004, and they remain one of the most popular comedy duos in Japan. Their material places a heavy emphasis on the outward appearance of the two women who form the duo and accentuates their complex-ridden personas, which have arisen out of their inability to attract members of the opposite sex. While analysing selected examples from **Haris̄er̄bon**’s material and coverage of the two comedians in the mass media, I would like to examine how gender norms are treated and whether or not **Haris̄er̄bon**’s comedy does indeed contain satirical elements and can, thereby, be considered to have subversive potential.

Till Weingärtner has taught at the Freie Univesität Berlin and The University of Manchester. He is currently a visiting researcher at Sophia University’s Institute of Comparative Culture. In August this year, Till will commence a new role as Lecturer in Contemporary East Asian Studies (Japan) at University College Cork, Ireland.

Lecture in English / No prior registration necessary