

Symposium | Medical Anthropology : [Symposium 6] Remodelling Religious Remedies: An Anthropology of Healing Through "Feeling with the World"

📅 Thu. Sep 25, 2025 1:05 PM - 2:35 PM JST | Thu. Sep 25, 2025 4:05 AM - 5:35 AM UTC 🏢 Session Room 7 (Conference Room C)

[Symposium 6] Remodelling Religious Remedies: An Anthropology of Healing Through "Feeling with the World"

Moderator: Laurence J. Kirmayer (McGill University)

[SY-6-01] The Becoming: Affective Technologies of Healing and Enskilment in Contemporary Okinawa.

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Keywords : Religious/Spiritual Healing、Socio-Cultural Anthropology、Affect/Feeling、Environment、Comparative Phenomenology

This presentation analyzes healing as a dynamic process of attunement and enskilment through the ethnographic lens of traditional spirit mediums and healers (*kaminchu*) in Okinawa, Japan. It focuses on healing from *kamidaari*—an often-distressing emergence of spiritual sensitivity—as a situated process that transforms troubling perceptions into enskilled capacities for perceiving and communicating with spirits. Rather than pathologizing spirit communication, I conceptualize the practices surrounding *kamidaari* as affective technologies: embodied and ecological forms of engagement—including prayer, visits to sacred sites, and ritual interactions—that generate correspondences with nonhuman presences in the environment. Through these practices, sufferers cultivate new modalities of feeling and perceiving, which reconfigure the phenomenological sphere of everyday life. These attunements enable those called to become *kaminchu* to “feel with the world” in socially meaningful and empowering ways. Drawing on conversations with local psychiatrists—some of whom selectively allow traditional healing practices—this presentation also aims at reframing psychiatric literature on *kamidaari* by foregrounding affective and sensory practices over pathology. Healing, in this view, is not the normalization of perception but its transformation through affective technologies that elicit enskilment via situated, embodied engagements. By tracing how *kaminchu* come to inhabit new modalities of feeling, the presentation contributes to a phenomenology of healing that emphasizes processual affective transformation and ecological enskilment. It invites a reconsideration of how healing may emerge not in spite of altered perception, but through its cultivation within relational ecologies and contingent ritual and affective practices.