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# Grieving One-Self: Mortuary Care for Social Singles in Japan

A hybrid *u:japan* lecture by Anne Allison

Thursday  
2023-12-07  
18<sup>00</sup>~19<sup>30</sup>



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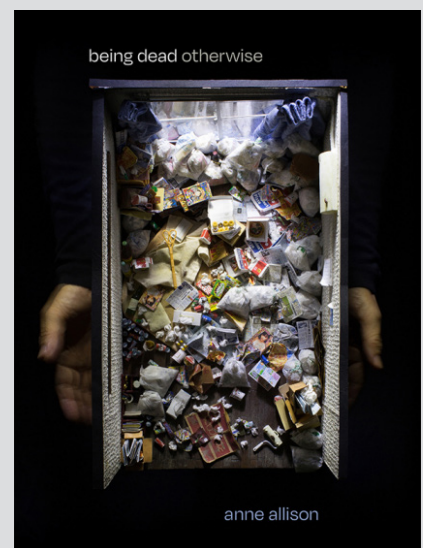
In the face of socio-economic shifts—a high aging/low childbirth population, decline in marriage and co-residence, irregularization of labor—the family model of mortuary care that once prevailed in Japan is coming undone. As more and more Japanese live and die alone, they face the prospect of becoming “disconnected dead:” stranded without a grave nor social others to be tended by once there. Given the specter of such a bad death, new designs and trends are emerging for both necro-habitation and care-giving the dead.

Prominent here is making mortuary arrangements for and by oneself while still alive (*seizen seiri*). Such anticipatory death-planning is the issue taken up in this talk. Based on fieldwork with new initiatives and services catering to a clientele of aging singles in Japanese, it is asked: What kind of grievability is this when the sociality of being cared for by others is handled by the self in anticipation of death? Mortuary presentism; a new ontology of the dead?



## Anne Allison

is a Professor of Cultural Anthropology at Duke University, United States. A specialist in contemporary Japan, she studies the interface between material conditions and desire/fantasy/imagination across various domains including corporate capitalism, global popular culture, and precarity. Her books include *Nightwork: Sexuality, Pleasure, and Corporate Masculinity in a Tokyo Hostess Club* (1994), *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination* (2006), and *Precarious Japan* (2013). Published this year is *Being Dead Otherwise* on new Japanese practices regarding the dead, and the relations between self and other in caregiving them.



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