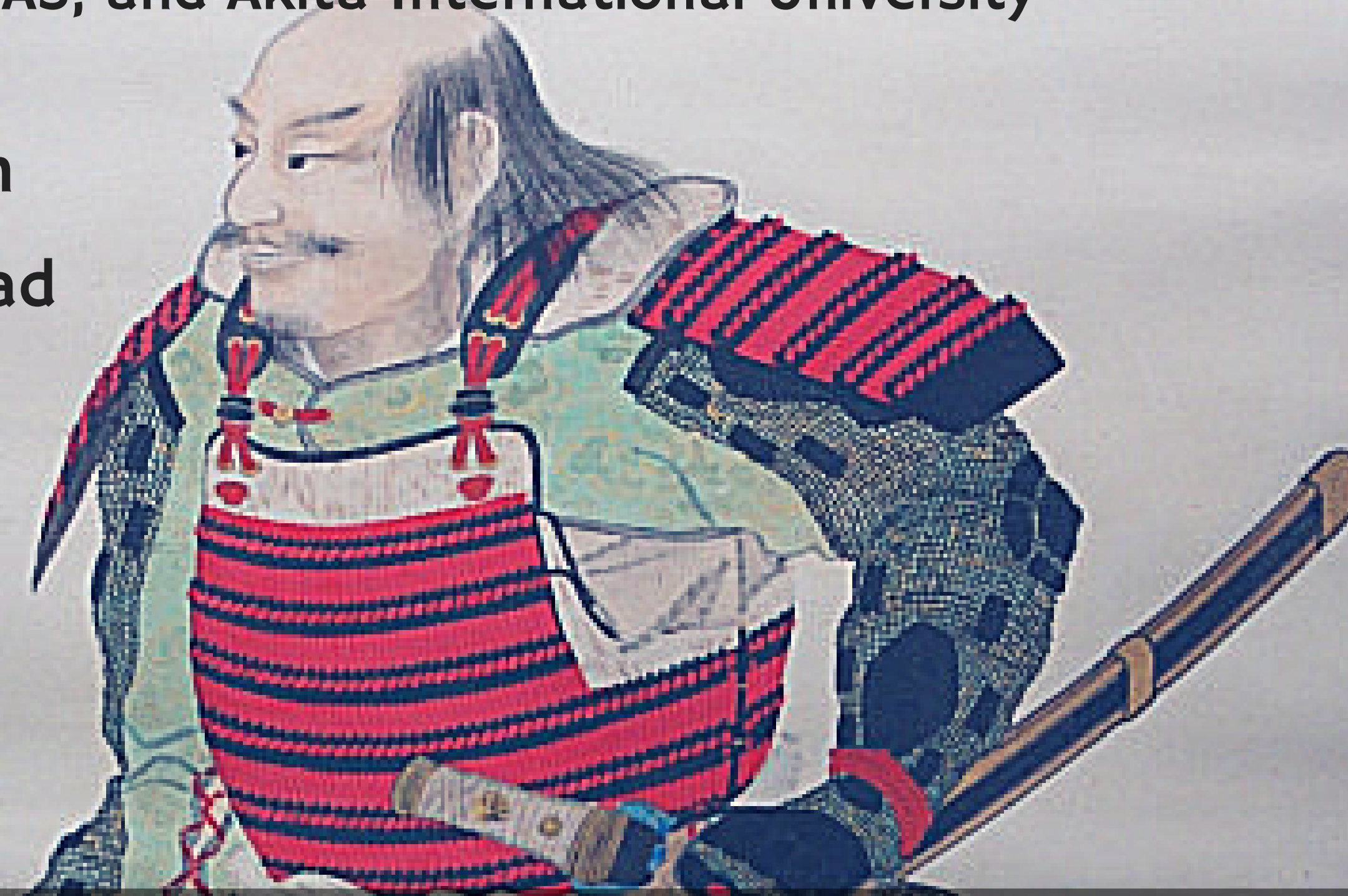


REAL SAMURAI: THE TRUE STORY BEHIND THE MASKS

Stephen Turnbull, Professor of Japanese Studies at
Leeds, SOAS, and Akita International University

Tue. 1/26, 4-6 pm

121 Bay State Road



SAMURAI ARMOUR AND JAPANESE SWORDS ARE AMONG THE BEST KNOWN AND MOST SPECTACULAR ITEMS OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT IN WORLD HISTORY. THEIR USES APPEAR ON NUMEROUS PAINTED SCROLLS, SCREENS AND PRINTS, BUT WHAT WAS THE REALITY THAT LAY BEHIND THIS LAVISH ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION? IN THIS TALK STEPHEN TURNBULL, REMOVES THE GRINNING FACE MASK FROM THE ARMoured WARRIOR TO EXPOSE AN UNKNOWN WORLD OF SAMURAI WARFARE WHERE LOYALTY SEEMED NOT TO EXIST, WHERE BADLY MADE SWORDS BROKE IN BATTLE AND WHERE VICTORIES WERE DETERMINED NOT BY INDIVIDUAL COMBAT BETWEEN HONOURABLE OPPONENTS BUT BY VOLLEYS OF BULLETS FROM SIMPLE FARMERS. IT WAS A TIME WHEN CASTLES WERE NOTHING MORE THAN WOODEN STOCKADES, WHEN THERE WAS NO SUCH THING AS A NINJA AND WHEN SAMURAI SOLD THEIR SERVICES TO FOREIGN KINGS.