

**The Right to Kill/ The Right to Die:  
The Contemporary Discourse in Japanese and English  
on Abortion, Suicide and Capital Punishment**

Panel General Abstract

Given the universal fact of death in human experience, a comparative study of the conceptual metaphoric patterns can act as a litmus test of how our conceptual patterns shape our cultural values and perspectives. In 2001 a research project was set up to study the conceptual patterns proposed by G. Lakoff et al. (1980, 1987, & 1989) in the contemporary discourses on Death and Dying in English and Japanese. A data base of representative genres was established. Six general conceptual categories were determined necessary to make the conceptual pattern analyses.

This set of papers focuses on three topics: *suicide* related to the “Right to Die” and *abortion and capital punishment* related to the “Right to Kill.” The data sources were targeted from both the public as well as from the private domain of the discourse. The public discourse domain included news reportage, editorials, essays, specialist books, and internet organization homepages. Private and personal reflections were sought in interviews, dyadic discourse, and internet discussion sites.

The significance of the above discourse dichotomy was reflected in cross-cultural differences in the *logos* and *mythos* types of language as propounded by Karen Armstrong (2005), as well as significant variation between the discourses in English and Japanese in these discourse types.