

Third EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students (*Paragraph of benefits*)

I have to express my pleasure that with the help of the Toshiba International Foundation and the Workshop organizers, I was selected to participate in such a fascinating Workshop, which was my first experience with such an international meeting on Japanese studies.

The benefits are numerous and they accrue in different form. I have been able to understand the situation in Japanese studies on the PhD student level in Europe much better than I knew it earlier. I also have realized the relevance of international and interdisciplinary dialog between students and scholars who are engaged in Japanese studies. This Workshop has to a larger extent enabled me to understand well the magnitude of problems in my own field, improving my skills in terms of investigating and analyzing such problems. Thanks to the format of the Workshop I get very useful critical comments both from doctoral students during discussion and from senior scholars during individual advising sessions. I have corrected some key questions of my dissertation concerning the historiography of origin of the Japanese and will choose precise methodology for further research. In general, the Workshop was inspiring and full of experience sharing.

Finally, I would like to thank Toshiba International Foundation, organizers of the Workshop, senior scholars and doctoral students for enabling me to gain practical knowledge and such exiting experiences.

Olexandr Kovalenko, Kyiv Taras Shevchenko University

The EAJS PhD Workshop at Vienna University (2005) provided me with the opportunity to discuss my research with colleagues within the broad field of Japanese Studies. As such, the feedback I received from the various advisors and participants covered a broad spectrum and allowed me to view my research from different angles. By listening to the presentations of other PhD candidates' work, I became acquainted with research questions and their specific methodology in other fields of Japanese Studies. The workshop also gave the initial impetus to create a network between young European scholars in the field.

Unknown

It was a great pleasure for me to participate in the EAJS doctoral dissertation workshop held in the University of Vienna from 29th August to 1st September. The workshop was very helpful and exciting, and participating in the workshop turned out to be a wonderful opportunity to have better understanding of the

current research in Japanese studies in Europe as well as to reflect on my D.Phil. dissertation. More importantly, it was the first opportunity for me to get to know other students in Europe in a similar stage as myself. It was great fun to share meals and chat in a relaxed manner during the workshop with the professors as well as the fellow students. With my own doctoral project, I could get valuable feedback, in great depth, from the fellow participants and the academic advisor, whom I had met for the first time, outside my home university. Such new perspective will surely help me make my thesis persuasive. The format of the workshop allowed plenty of time to discuss the research, and the fact that we exchanged each others' proposals prior to the workshop let me be familiar with the others' research beforehand. Presenting about someone else's study was something new, and I found this experience worthwhile both for my own research, and for the future, when I may be in the position to teach. The professors also guided us through what it is like to pursue an academic career, including tips for publishing, which was, again, something new. Last of all, I would like to thank the Toshiba International Foundation and the EAJIS for funding and organizing this most valuable workshop. I hope the future PhD students will continue to have the opportunity to experience the same workshop.

Sachiko Horiguchi, University of Oxford

Although the backgrounds of the participants were quite diverse and therefore used the different methods of their own disciplines, I am confident that everybody learned a lot about how to set up the framework and basic methodology of a thesis. Therefore the workshop was a great opportunity to learn about alternative approaches towards solving a research question.

In everyday work, one tends to focus on the details of the dissertation while neglecting the larger framework. Personally, I largely profited from the fact that somebody else presented my research topic, as it allowed me to gain a critical view on the meta-level of the thesis.

The workshop was a great success as it achieved to build a European network of advanced scholars in the field of Japanese studies. Within the three days of the workshop, the participants not only discussed in the classroom, but also exchanged views and opinions in a more informal atmosphere.

I especially would like to thank Prof. Martin Hemmert for the important personal feedback and last but not least the Toshiba Foundation in making that event possible.

Alexander Müller (Marburg University & Kyoto University)

Students who have studied in a Japanese university at graduate level will know there are seminars, *chūkan happyō* and yet more *happyō* towards the end of the academic year. The pattern and format of *chūkan happyō* may vary from university to university, but essentially comprises at least a 1-2 hour session attended by students and their supervisor. This is an interim arrangement whereby students present their dissertations in turn and receive feedback from their peers and the supervisor. The EAJS PhD Workshop held in Vienna last month was for me, in a sense, an extended version of *chūkan happyō*. Whereas in the Japanese setting it is more often for students doing the same subject to get together, for three days and two nights we had a forum opened to students from different disciplines in Japanese Studies. Precisely because of the diversity of knowledge that students could share and bring to the workshop, I would strongly recommend it to those students whose home universities do not run *chūkan happyō* of any kind and who are keen to find out more about what the latest topics that interest their peers in other fields of Japanese Studies. The workshop has been a success for other reasons too: the hard work of the organisers and administrative staff, the positive feedback contributed by academics, and not least the fine weather and feast!

Student from Cambridge

The EAJS Doctoral Student Workshop at Vienna, Aug 29-31, was a unique opportunity for me to get critical feedback by other doctoral students as well as by scholars from other European Countries. The participants and advisors came from a wide range of different fields of research, stretching from humanities like literature, anthropology, and history to economics, sociology, and political science. While I had several opportunities before the workshop to present on my dissertation project, the composition and format of the workshop offered a far further reaching scope of feedback. On the one hand, I had presented my project in front of Japanese historians before, but the different specializations of participants led to new criticisms I had not encountered before, thus enabling me to identify and eliminate remaining weak spots in my project. On the other hand, because everybody was well prepared and most projects were not presented by the students working on the projects but by other students, critical feedback started right from the start of each session. In addition, the positive atmosphere of interest in every single topic were motivating and showed, that one is not only writing for a very small number of specialists, but for a wider academic audience as well.

Besides the session itself, in the individual advisory session Prof. Kersten gave me even more valuable advice for enhancing my project. She gave me advice as to which criticisms my dissertation could possibly face, and how to limit it beforehand; in addition she made valuable suggestions about what resource material I could rely on to respond to possible criticisms beforehand.

Beyond the academic programme of the workshop, meeting with graduate students from different countries, all of whom are engaged in a different field of research, and meeting scholars from all over Europe, was a unique experience. In the evenings there was plenty of opportunity to talk to famous scholars and young academics not just on the projects but on practical issues of research, the job situation in different countries, and many other topics, and an extensive exchange of ideas took place.

Thomas Büttner, Heidelberg University

I am currently finishing my second year of doctorate research at the University of Oxford. I came back from the field research in Japan in May 2005 and I spent this summer writing preliminary drafts of my PhD dissertation. The PhD workshop in Vienna in the end of August turned out to be extremely useful at this stage of my research.

The first key component of the workshop, individual presentations and discussions provided an essential and informal opportunity to test my developing ideas and I received a lot of useful feedback from both students and professors. The 40 minute discussion after the presentation offered me a good opportunity to see how my research is seen by other specialist in the field of Japanese studies from different disciplinary perspectives.

The second component, individual session with assigned supervisor gave me a chance to discuss my ideas and plans with a senior academic whose research is rather close to mine. My advisor made several useful suggestions about point to expand and to stress in my developing dissertation for which I am very grateful.

Finally, the intense informal program during the whole three days of the workshop allowed me to get to know all the other participants quite well and hopefully establish a network of contacts in Japanese studies across European universities.

I would like to express here my deepest gratitude to Japan Foundation for funding this workshop and to Prof. Fuess for organizing it.

Ekaterina Korobtseva, University of Oxford

I am very glad and thankful for having been offered the chance to take a part on an event such prestigious as EAJS workshop is. This being my first experience on academic workshops, I found it really inspiring in many different ways.

First of all, both the workshop and also the following EAJS conference became a great opportunity to meet many graduate students of Japanese studies, who often came from countries very removed from my own, thus I could get really good idea of what are the trends in Japanese studies in both European and world context, and also, what are the problems Japanese studies in those countries are dealing with.

What I appreciated really very much during the workshop, was the system of individual project presentations, which was really effective at telling me, where the weak points of my own project are. Having the project presented by a close-field-of-study colleague, then discussed by a group of another Japanese studies students and specialists, and even consulted with a professional tutor was a great profit, and another one was in the experience of making presentation of a colleague's project – this was the first time I have ever had a possibility to do such a presentation.

The only thing I was surprised at a bit, was the fact, that, despite EAJS Workshop being a workshop of Japanese Studies graduate students, really little or almost none Japanese was spoken during it, all communication being done just in English language. I can see there were reasons to make English the main language for the conference, but I still found it a bit strange, and, maybe, even limiting in a way, when even Japanese native speakers.

Last, but not least, I have to appreciate the perfect accommodation and all the other services during the time of the workshop, which made it even more pleasant event. Thank you very much

Tomas Jurkovic, Charles Universtity, Prague

The 3rd EAJS Workshop for doctoral students that was held at Vienna University from the 29th to the 31st of August 2005 has been a very instructive academic experience for me. I should add that the beauty of Vienna was a perfect motivation.

Except two common sessions, all dissertation projects were introduced and discussed not by their authors but by discussants. Thus, the author of the dissertation project was somewhat deprived of an active introductory position; he/she was rather encouraged to take a defensive attitude. As a consequence, a dynamic atmosphere of discussion based on active critical feedbacks by both the discussant and the audience has been provided. It goes without saying that such

an organization required the thorough cooperation between the author of the dissertation project and the discussant. An exchange of information of preliminary results and other data beforehand also proved to be crucial. All the presentations I had the opportunity to attend gave me the impression that such cooperative efforts had been made perfectly.

Common and parallel sessions with discussants appeared to develop in a more organized manner, since it was mostly the discussants that led and controlled the discussions. On the other hand, common sessions without discussant, including mine, seemed to occur in a more natural, relaxed way. The speaker had obviously more time to receive the feedbacks and answer the questions. I think that these three different styles increased the fluidity and dynamism of the workshop, and kept the attention of the participants.

Moreover, my individual advising session with Professor Mark Williams was very constructive as far as both my presentation and my academic carrier are concerned.

I think that the EAJS Workshop for doctoral students is a great opportunity for the creation and development of an international network which connects graduate students of Japanese Studies from all over the world.

Devrim Çetin GÜVEN, University of Tokyo

The EAJS workshop in Vienna was an exciting and stimulating experience that, I believe, greatly benefited every participant.

I would like to thank all EAJS Council members for the impeccable planning of this event, with particular reference to Prof. Linhart, responsible for the local organization, and to Prof. Fuess, who took charge of the academic programme.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the Toshiba International Foundation, whose very generous support made possible our stay in Vienna.

The workshop resulted beneficial in many respects. First of all, it represented a precious opportunity to meet fellow students from all across Europe and engage in constructive discussion on each other's research projects. I received valuable feedback not only from persons close to my field of studies, but also from students with quite different background. Their often unexpected suggestions helped me to realize the importance of looking beyond the narrow borders of one's own specialization, encouraging me to broaden my perspective in the spirit of true interdisciplinary cooperation.

Another strong point of the workshop was undoubtedly the presence of several senior scholars, who kindly dedicated us so much time and attention throughout those three days. I really had the heart-warming feeling that our

advisors trust us as a new generation of young researchers and are striving to ensure the expansion of an international network of European scholars.

Finally, I would like to say that I especially enjoyed the informal setting chosen for the workshop. It created an atmosphere of conviviality that proved ideal for fruitful discussion. I came back to my home country with renewed enthusiasm and an increased determination to contribute to the further development of Japanese studies in Europe.

Unknown

I took part in this year's PhD workshop of the EAJS which was generously funded by the Toshiba International Foundation. Due to their support it was possible to invite a diverse group of European PhD students even travelling as far as from Japan, to have everybody stay at the same hotel, to invite several senior researchers who are experts in their field and to get to know colleagues and supervisors during the common meals.

The three days of the workshop took place in an intense working atmosphere starting off with 2 presentations at the day of arrival, and 6 presentations the following days. As has been made the point from the beginning on, every participant was supposed to have read the papers of the other PhD students in order to make suggestions, ask questions and in order to get inside knowledge of how Japanese Studies is understood in the country and university of origin of the author. Accordingly the following discussions were lively and everybody would benefit from them.

Having the group of 16 students divided by projects which are more humanities orientated and those which are more social science orientated was a very fruitful thing to do, I thought. There must be a certain amount of pre-knowledge by the commentators and audience in order to have a good discussion. The discussions usually lasted 40-50 minutes and gave the PhD student a good chance to defend his or her paper in a kind and supporting atmosphere. Especially for people starting fieldwork soon there was also a good amount of practical hints on how to approach it.

I personally considered the individual session the highlight of the workshop, because here one really had the chance to go into the details of the dissertation. The supervisors put a lot of effort in advising on the project and also on the student's future career.

Silke Riemann, Düsseldorf University

The EAJS Dissertation Workshop, generously sponsored by the Toshiba International Foundation, offered the chance to present one's preliminary research results in an informal yet constructive setting. The colloquial atmosphere allowed for valuable criticism as well as helpful suggestions. The fact that we had to work in pairs with partners who research different topics, analyzing their theoretical framework and later open the discussion by constructive comments, was both challenging and at the same time beneficial in broadening our scope of understanding of the variety of themes.

The setting was small and casual enough where discussions could be exchanged in a casual and yet effective manner. Throughout the three days, I was happy to have met other doctoral candidates who shared a similarity in interest and experience.

The most beneficial aspect of the workshop however was the meeting with a senior advisor, hearing invaluable comments on my research and discussing the improvements that need to be made in order to have a more fluid and concise dissertation. After the fruitful talk, I became much more aware of the important points that need to be made and the direction in which I would like to take in my writing.

Michael Wachutka, Tübingen University

The three-day workshop which consisted of group sessions and individual sessions was very beneficial to me. In the group sessions, we worked in pairs and a student had to present the project of his or her fellow student's dissertation program instead of talking about his or her own project. This experience of presenting somebody else's research, as well as being presented by someone was very valuable as it generated some insightful questions, comments and feedback from the students as well as the academic advisors. During the one-hour individual session, my advisor, Prof. Mark Williams, gave me precious advice and warm encouragement for my dissertation project. To get in-depth counsel from a scholar other than my own dissertation supervisor was a highly useful experience.

Quite intensive and serious though the discussions were, they were held in a relaxed and informal environment; in the evening, the convivial atmosphere prevailed. I think that everyone had a very pleasant moment during the workshop and that we were able to create a European network of graduate students and scholars in Japan studies.

I would like to thank the Japan Foundation and the Toshiba International Foundation which made this workshop possible and also the organizers, the

senior scholars, the participants and the EAJS, who made this event very successful.

Tomomi Parren-Ota, University of Paris 7

I would like to thank everyone involved in creating this PhD workshop, which I found not only immensely beneficial but also thoroughly enjoyable. I feel very lucky that, as a pre-fieldwork doctoral student, I was allowed to participate and gained invaluable tips about life in the field, even though I didn't have so much original research to present yet!

The format of the parallel sessions was excellent and I think should be maintained for the next time. It was necessary to learn how to summarize effectively, both in presenting another student's work and in responding to questions raised about your own research in a concise manner. I found it very daunting having never presented in front of strangers before, but it has given me a lot of confidence and is an excellent stepping stone to presenting at conferences. There was also ample room for more general discussion. The interdisciplinary nature of the participants also resulted in some new angles on the research projects.

It was also very helpful and encouraging to have a supervisory session with an academic from your own discipline. It is a privilege to have such academic attention from someone other than your regular supervisors.

Apart from the academic side, it was a real pleasure to meet such a diverse bunch of people studying aspects of Japan. Our hosts showed us immense hospitality at lunch at after we finished each day, taking us for Austrian and Japanese food and allowing us all to relax and get to know each other and each other's research better.

As a result of this workshop, I feel encouraged and enthused about my own research and have even reconsidered my resolve not to remain in academia after I have finished the PhD. Once again, many thanks to everyone involved for this great opportunity.

Philomena Keet, SOAS London and Kyoto University

My participation in the EAJS PhD workshop was an invaluable and stimulating experience, which would serve as the basis for my doctoral research in Japan's civil society. On the one hand, the feedback I received from other participants regarding my topic helped me redefine my research question and consider the weaknesses of my present work. In addition to discussing the methodological challenges I face regarding my dissertation, the individual session with an expert

in my discipline provided me with an opportunity to clarify my academic goals. On the other hand, through the presentations of the other participants I was able to gain insight into a wide range of topics on Japan, of which I had hitherto no knowledge. These presentations not only broadened my horizon, but also made me aware of the methodological differences between research in the Humanities and one in the Social Sciences. Finally, the workshop allowed me to enlarge my network of friends as well as to create contacts that might become useful in the future. I am very grateful to The Japan Foundation as well as the organizers of this year's workshop for providing me with the opportunity to become a part of this unique event.

Silvia Ranguelova, Oxford University

I found the PhD workshop enlightening and a good opportunity to meet with peers who are working in Japan in Europe. It was particularly helpful to see how we faced common problems in our research, even though we were working in different areas. I felt that powerpoint presentations worked best, and that students were receptive to presentations that were tailored to a general academic audience. Given its interdisciplinary nature, I think the workshop enabled us to "see" our work in a larger perspective -- both its strengths and shortcomings. I sometimes felt that the presentations could be done by the author him/herself, because often, students had progressed and changed after submitting their outlines, and thus could illuminate those changes as well as emphasising their arguments or concerns. The presentations might be slightly longer, as often presenters fell short of time and answers did not last to end of the given time. I very much enjoyed receiving feedback from peers and the academic advisor; it allowed me to freshly critique my thesis. I also was happy of the opportunity to converse with various academic advisors at meals and to attend the larger conference. These opportunities gave me invaluable insight into Japanese academia in Europe.

Maki Umemura, London School of Economics