

**Eleventh EAJS PhD Workshop**

**University of Edinburgh, UK**

**11 – 14 June, 2015**

**Reports by the EAJS PhD Workshop Participants**

I applied to the 11th EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students primarily in order to have a chance to present on my research topic concerning linguistic gender performativity in Japanese to an audience familiar with Japanese society and its specifics. One of the challenges with multidisciplinary research is that the common ground changes with every audience, and as I had yet to present my topic in the context of Japanese Studies I felt it was a valuable opportunity to me.

In the course of the workshop I received many valuable and critical comments that I will bring with me in my ongoing efforts to develop my abilities to make my work understandable to colleagues in different fields, as well as more general audiences. I realize now which parts of my project need more elaborate explanations in these contexts, and I have the EAJS workshop to thank for these insights. It is my hope that I will be able to integrate these experiences for the future.

I very much appreciated the atmosphere of shared learning and the great variety of the presented subjects, making the workshop very broad in scope. It is stimulating to know that Japan ties into these very varied research topics, as well as these many different disciplinary perspectives. As some people were facing similar challenges as myself, the workshop also served a supportive function for me as a PhD candidate at the outset of their project, for which I am thankful.

*Pontus Andersson  
University of Helsinki, Finland*

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I feel very fortunate to have been selected for presenting my PhD project in this fruitful and exciting workshop. The 11th EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students in Edinburgh was a very well-organized and excellent event, bringing students and professors from several countries and different fields together. As I am doing my PhD in Japan, one of the greatest benefits of this workshop for me was the chance to build an international network with other PhD students and of course professors from various universities in Europe.

Listening to presentations about fields and projects different from my own was also a very profitable experience in terms of revealing new approaches and methodologies I had not been familiar with. Thanks to the diversity of the topics, it did not require any particular effort to stay focused until the end of the sessions. The friendly and yet very professional atmosphere is another advantage of this workshop I would like to mark. I enjoyed having small but

meaningful conversations with professors and other participants during lunch breaks or dinner.

Besides the very accurate and well-prepared comments made by the supervisors, I found the discussion with other students following the presentations very important, too. These helped me to reconsider my project from a wider point of view, as well as to realize new possibilities in my project.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude personally to Professor Abe Auestad for giving me very inspiring ideas not just about my PhD project but my future opportunities, too. I also want to extend my heartfelt thanks to Professor Zachmann and the EAJS for having created this excellent opportunity for us to develop and the Toshiba International Foundation and the Japan Foundation for their support and funding.

*Katalin Dalmi*  
*Hiroshima University, Japan*

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I applied for the workshop with my dissertation project *Personification of the Social Monstrous in Postwar Japanese Kaiki Eiga*, in which my aim is to analyze the human-shaped monsters of Japanese strange cinema and try to decipher the various meanings they have. The monstrosity of these beings is often related to the notion of *henshin*, metamorphosis, which is the main focus of my work. I will ultimately argue that there has been a distinctive shift in these films from bodily transformation (変身) of the early postwar period to a psychological one (変心) of the contemporary times.

The feedback I received based on my project report was very thought-provoking. I had spent a lot of time trying to categorize my subject matter, but one of the best advice I received from my advisor Sharon Kinsella was, however, to let go of this. This is indeed what I decided to do and am now finding the project much more satisfying. I also got greatly influenced by another presentation about magical realism, a concept I had not known before. I am now trying to use the concept in my analysis and, as a result, have found myself immersed in the *kaikiness* of the films. In addition, I was able to overcome the anxiety I had previously felt about presenting in English.

Even though my work benefitted greatly from all the feedback, one of the best things was, however, to meet the other students, my future colleagues, and to share thoughts on Japan and research with them. I had always felt very alone with my project, but I have now found myself a larger community into which I belong.

*Leena Eerolainen*  
*University of Helsinki, Finland*

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The 11th EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students held in Edinburgh, Scotland, was a unique and stimulating experience for me, and I am very thankful for being given the chance to participate. It has been a unique opportunity to share knowledge and experiences among young and

expert scholars in my field and in the broader field of Japanese studies. I presented my research project and received useful and constructive feedbacks and suggestions from the other PhD students and from the senior scholars. In particular, the individual consultation with Professor Metzler was very fruitful, and he suggested to me some points to focus on that I had never thought of before. I also found the other presentations very inspiring, and all participants worked with enthusiasm. Due to the various disciplines and also the various methodological approaches, the group discussions were a lively and stimulating exchange of opinions and ideas. The participants and supervisors were very likeable and it was a nice and relaxed atmosphere with discussions carrying on even after the workshop had ended, during the delicious dinners we had in Edinburgh. It also provided me with a great opportunity to meet and get to know other PhD students from across Europe, many of whom I am sure I will meet again in the near future. I am sure that the contacts established in this meeting will help me a great deal in my future research.

*Felice Farina*  
*University of Naples L'Orientale, Italy*

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Edinburgh in the middle of June met us with an uncharacteristically warm and sunny weather. “Us” being a group of about twenty PhD students of Japan from a myriad of fields, from history to international relations, through geography, arts and more.

For two intense days we listened, discussed and thought about each other’s research projects, as far from our own study field as they may be. This variation of topics and fields led to an interesting divergence of perceptions. This divergence was evident in the unique comments that participants received from each other, that were often different than ones received when presenting in a group consisting of scholars of the same field. This difference in perception and understanding may be the road to new understandings of one’s own research subject.

I presented my work about the use of network theories in order to navigate the complicated waters of U.S.-Japan security relationship. This work has a general aspect to it – understanding the management of the relationship, as well as a specific case study – the negotiation and power play revolving around the Special Action Committee of Okinawa in 1995-6. I had the privilege of being the last presenter, and received helpful and insightful comments from Professor Gabriele Vogt as well as from other participants.

Above all, the workshop let us, PhD students from different countries, meet and get to know each other, forming connections that will surely continue in future years. This workshop left me with new energies to continue my research and ideas of how to do it.

I look forward to meet the “Edinburgh group” again.

*Yiftach Raphael Govreen*  
*The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel*

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The workshop was flawless and fascinating.

First of all I would like to express my gratitude for having been invited to the 11th EAJS PhD Workshop in Edinburgh and having been given this wonderful chance to present and discuss my research project to a multi-disciplinary audience within a stimulating academic setting.

Academically, I very much appreciated the multi-disciplinary character of the workshop. Whilst it is indeed difficult to come up with even a superficially constructive comment for someone who works in a completely different discipline, I do think that, however, this multi-disciplinary character is precisely what makes this workshop so valuable: for it not only brings together innovative ideas that we may never otherwise think of, but also reminds us of an easily forgotten basic academic principle – the very attitude of being open-minded to others' ideas. As a PhD student working with a multi-disciplinary methodology in the field of politics and international relations, I received massively helpful food for thought, especially from the peer researchers in the fields of literature and historical studies. Multi-disciplinary approaches are a trend in area studies, and I hope that the workshop can keep up with this fantastic tradition, which has made possible such a rich source of exchange.

Apart from the academic aspect, the atmosphere of the workshop stroke me as passionate, open, and friendly, where I have made priceless friendship with people whom I would never have otherwise met. This workshop has enabled not just an exchange of ideas, but also, more importantly, friendship among us, and I feel sure that our paths will cross throughout our career in the future.

I would like to express my deepest thanks to all participants, my supervisors, and the organizers, especially Professor Zachmann, who offered me tremendously helpful comments on my project. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the Toshiba International Foundation a

nd the Japan Foundation for funding the workshop -- it has been a huge success, and I sincerely wish it will continue to be so.

*Hai Guo*  
*University of Leeds, UK*

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The workshop gave me an intensive and challenging time. Fully packed days, but I liked it a lot. Especially the exchange with my fellow students and also with the supervisors were creating a comfortable ambience.

Even though some topics were not easy to follow because far away from one's own field of research or interest, each presentation was very interesting. I learned a lot. Sometimes the feedback of the supervisors was kind of far-reaching, but nevertheless I could retrieve always some good inputs, which I could apply to my own situation or my own work.

It was also a good exercise to set up all the preparatory work like for example the project report and especially to present the individual work in front of the other workshop participants and the supervisors.

Helen Parker and Rosina Buckland, who were my supervisors, did a good job and I got plenty of helpful input and questions, which are boosting the progress of my work. After the presentation we directly got oral feedback and even written proof of it.

Generally, the workshop was an entirely inspiring and stimulating event for myself and my further research and enriched me personally, not only with the many nice people I met there. I also liked the dinner time we spent all together in a nice and relaxing atmosphere, the tasty food and the good conversations.

*Brigitte Iris Huber*  
*University of Zurich, Switzerland*

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The workshop was held in beautiful Edinburgh and the surrounding surely contributed to the good spirit of the participants and I am very grateful for the possibility to be a part of this.

At first I was somehow skeptical about the huge variety of research topics (e.g. gender performativity or post-war monster movies) and whether I will be able to contribute. But, the interesting presentations led to vivid discussions that were carried on in the coffee breaks and continued at the dinner meetings. Although my own research about early modern agricultural writings seems not easily to be connect to the other fields of my fellows, I received valuable responses from both supervisors and PhD candidates and was even able to contribute. As a key objective of the early modern agricultural writings was to increase agricultural production, I got especially linked to the projects of Felice Farina and Tine Walravens, who are concerned about food security and its impact on society.

I am deeply convinced that the EAJS workshop for doctoral students is not only a good opportunity to introduce your project and get valuable advice, but to make contact with other scholars. Even if their research topic seems to be very different, the feedback will prove to be more valuable for your own.

*Stefan Jeka*  
*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany*

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The project I presented at the 11th EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students was on medicine in ancient Japan. In particular, my project investigated how a tenth-century Japanese medical writer, Tanba no Yasuyori, conceptualized the earliest form of Sino-Japanese textual medicine, *Ishinpō*, through an analysis of how Yasuyori organized his text and the multifaceted sources of the author's knowledge. The workshop was the first opportunity to receive detailed feedback on my work from Japanologists who were not already familiar with my research. Professor Mark Metzler, who served as my advisor for the workshop, and Professor Matthias Zachmann, the organizer of the workshop, provided critical feedback on my project. I also received insightful questions from other participants and engaging remarks from the advisors of other participants. I found the comments of Profs. Metzler and Zachmann especially helpful as Japanologists who with their fields being temporally and thematically distant were able to

provide a broad specialist perspective on my work. Their comments were also constructive in the creation of a coherent larger thesis for my dissertation. Moreover, they helped me think through conceptualizing my dissertation project for a larger audience as a book project after the PhD. Besides my own research, however, I learned many new things both from the presentations of my fellow participants as well as the discussions that ensued following them. As all the participants were at different stages of their doctoral work, it was also an informative exposure to theory from different disciplines, different approaches to research, and, most importantly, the salience and importance of Japan across these different disciplinary and methodological frameworks. Finally, in addition to discussions with senior colleagues, the workshop facilitated communication with fellow students throughout Europe, my future colleagues. We have already created a network, which I hope will support future collaboration.

*Mujeeb Khan*  
*University of Cambridge, UK*

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The 11th EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students in Edinburgh was a most valuable experience. It was a great opportunity to get to know peers as well as influential established scholars on an international level. The organizer Matthias Zachmann from the University of Edinburgh managed to put together a wide array of interesting topics and commenters. The atmosphere throughout the workshop was really nice and at the same time very productive.

The presentation of my doctoral thesis “Laboratory Vienna-Tokyo – On the emergence of a psychiatric thought-style in Austria and Japan” was very well received and through the extensive discussion following the presentation I was able to get a great deal of fruitful input. I am especially deeply grateful for the wonderful remarks by Christopher Harding, who was selected to comment on my presentation. I could not have had a better commenter. His in-depth response was without doubt one of the highlights of the workshop. It was one of these striking moments when you hear a piece of advice and suddenly realize that after years of work and numerous academic talks you never thought about it and nobody ever drew your attention in this specific direction.

Apart from presenting and discussing your research and the projects of your peers at length, the workshop also provided the opportunity to chair a panel. Since I never had the chance to do this before it was a perfect training for future conferences.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Toshiba International Foundation, the EAJS and Matthias Zachmann for organizing this excellent workshop and I would highly recommend every doctoral student of Japanese Studies to participate in it!

*Bernhard Leitner*  
*University of Vienna, Austria*

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The participation in the 11th EAJS PhD Workshop has been an exceptional opportunity on different levels: first of all, it was challenging and interesting to introduce my dissertation

project to such a heterogeneous audience. All professors and students had a background in Japanese Studies, but all had very different research topics. This enabled me to get feedback from outside the framework I was until then thinking in, which was very valuable. I received input that I will most certainly include in my work.

The supervisors were extremely kind and engaging. I was surprised by the extensive feedback they gave to each student. One could see that they put a lot of time and effort into it, which is something I am very grateful for. It was also the occasion to meet a few recurring names in the field, and it was great to be able to meet them in person and to discuss with them.

Meeting fellow PhD candidates from over the world and discussing with them about their view of the field of Japanese Studies and how it is being practiced in their respective countries/universities was inspiring. It made me reflect on the way we saw our field in my home university and even slightly changed my view of Japanese Studies in general.

I would like to express my gratitude to the European Association for Japanese Studies, the Toshiba Foundation, the Japan Foundation, and to the supervisors and fellow students from the workshop for this great and enriching experience.

*Tarik Merida*  
*University of Heidelberg, Germany*

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The workshop was an extremely profitable, useful and even a delightful experience for me.

Professor Zachmann's feedback, which he very kindly sent me in written form, and all the other remarks, such as Professor Abe Auestad's, actually echoed with my own questions, or allowed me to reconsider my problematics in a broader view. Some of the objections which were formulated matched objections that I tend to formulate to myself; therefore, it was very positive for me that an exterior point of view confirmed what I was only beginning to grasp. Others remarks helped me see relations between my research and other questions in a very new and simple way, such as drawing a parallel between aesthetics and other problems resulting from the same discrepancy between universal structures and local specificity. More pragmatically, objections about specific historical directions that I could look into corresponded to research I have endeavored, but have not given priority to, such as the (complex) question of the relation between E.F. Fenollosa and avant-gardes in Occidental art. Such study has already been partially covered by Amano Kazuo, but I will make a point of developing the links between my doctorate research and the work of this researcher in my final memoire, or further articles.

The workshop was also a unique chance of getting an outlook upon current works by dynamic young researchers from all over the world. I appreciated very much the participants' attention and attitude at the workshop, very positive and curious. Besides, I made precious contacts for possible later collaboration. Finally, the warm welcome and perfect organization granted by the University of Edinburgh made us feel actually valorized, and thus brought the perfect conditions for such quality of exchange.

I would like to thank the EAJS and the University of Edinburgh for inviting me to the 11th Doctoral Workshop. For three days, the organizers successfully managed to provide us with a collaborative environment for discussing each other's work and articulating our thoughts. The workshop was a most helpful opportunity for me to explore transdisciplinary methodological issues of my work with peers from non-literary Japanese Studies disciplines.

I also appreciated the interactions with the various senior experts, with whom we were given ample opportunity for exchange during the workshop breaks and at the two dinners. I experienced Professor Abe Auestad as a passionately interested and most dedicated advisor; it was truly inspiring to work with her and I recommend her warmly for future workshops.

I have been thinking about suggestions to make, but I feel the 'classic' workshop format, meaning panel presentations with discussions afterwards, really worked for us, even despite the large number of participants. What might be interesting to experiment with in the future could be moderated peer-discussions to selected questions from the respective project reports. Apart from that I sincerely congratulate everyone involved on a most effective event!

*Maria Römer*  
*University of Heidelberg, Germany*

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I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Toshiba International Foundation, the Japan Foundation, and all of the organizers and participants who made this year's EAJS PhD workshop such an engaging and productive experience. As PhD candidates in the field of Japanese Studies we are currently experiencing a dearth of funding opportunities that restrict our ability to conduct research and impede our access to the academic community which surrounds us. As a fully-funded workshop led by discussion and active participation, this EAJS event provides us with the rare possibility to engage with each other's work while conversing face-to-face, and to expand our own ideas about how individual and specialized projects relate to the overarching discipline of Japanese Studies.

I enjoyed presenting my work within an intimate and supportive environment, and the feedback I received from Professor Vogt and Dr. Kinsella, as well as the other academics and students, helped me to think about my research in constructive new ways. Furthermore, conversations I had with participants between and after sessions over the weekend proved to be equally rewarding. On such occasions I had opportunities to discuss points in greater depth, to make new friends and to create networks which I hope will last well into all of our academic careers. Professor Zachmann, as project director of this year's workshop, did a wonderful job of ensuring that we all had equal access to discussions and feedback, as well as offering germane advice to each one of us and encouraging a lively, inclusive atmosphere during our time in Edinburgh.



The 11th EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students allowed me to discuss some excellent research topics concerning Japanese Studies and to meet some wonderful people from all around the world. I am very grateful to the EAJS and its sponsors to give me the chance to discuss my research with outstanding scholars and peers, and of course the University of Edinburgh for providing us with a venue that made it possible for us to have fruitful discussions.

When I attended the Workshop, I was just about to leave for fieldwork in Japan and wished to get some feedback on my method and general theoretical framework before going to Tokyo. The feedback I received from the advisors was very insightful and gave me new ideas on how to approach my informants and how to cope when I would encounter unforeseen problems. They addressed both issues that I had thought about and needed some extra feedback for and issues that I had not thought about at all, which I am now working on to implement in my research.

Meeting other students that are working on their PhD at various stages was also extremely useful and supportive to me. Since I am still in an early stage of research, it was good to see how other projects had developed over time and how other students had dealt with the problems they encountered. Being surrounded by so many skillful PhD students from so many diverse backgrounds and fields really broadened my view of Japanese Studies as a whole. It was great to meet these people and to exchange ideas, experiences, and fun stories.

Therefore, I would really like to thank the attending advisors and my peers for the wonderful discussions and talks we had during our time at Edinburgh University. I can really recommend this workshop for anyone who is doing a PhD related to Japanese Studies!

*Deirdre Aranka Lucia Sneep*

*University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany*

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The 11th EAJS PhD Workshop in Edinburgh was a wonderful and fruitful event when considering its merit for our scholarly growth, and a very pleasant experience in general. It was a great opportunity to meet other young scholars and learn about their own research, and, very importantly, about their theoretical approach.

The wide scope of the topics discussed at the workshop is, in my opinion, one of its main selling points. Very often when doing research we get bogged down in the specifics of our own narrow field, and we do not confront ourselves with approaches of other scholars researching in other fields that can be totally different from our own. The EAJS workshop is an ideal platform for discussing various research ideas and concepts. Such an exchange of ideas gives us a wider perspective, and hopefully that will help us publish a much better thesis, and much better research. Thanks to this workshop I have also realized that I have to problematize every part of my research, from the used theoretical apparatus, through the sources, to the whole

framework. I hope such workshops will continue for many years to come and I would like to wholeheartedly recommend it to any PhD student dealing with the topic of Japanese Studies. I would also like to thank the EAJS, the Toshiba International Foundation and the Japan Foundation for organizing and financing the workshop.

*Vít Ulman*  
*Charles University, Czech Republic*

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I was very happy to be able to secure a spot at the workshop as I thought it would give me a great opportunity to interact and network with other Japanese Studies scholars in Europe, and not just in the UK. This was a great personal success for me and I was happy to meet other people in the field, immerse myself in the network of young scholars and get feedback from senior advisers. The workshop was organized well and we more or less managed to stay on schedule. The University of Edinburgh were also great hosts and I felt very welcome.

The format of the presentation sessions was a little tiring for me, as the sessions were very long and there was not much time for constructive discussions among the post-graduate students themselves. There may have been benefit in grouping students based on their research themes into panels, and providing more room for individual sessions between students and their senior advisers for one-to-one support. However, while the feedback and discussion part was slightly sacrificed, the format allowed for more time for students to introduce their research in more detail and gave them an opportunity to gain experience in presenting conference style individual papers.

All in all, I was satisfied with the workshop and find that the links and networks created will be useful for my future career and research objectives.

*Anna Vainio*  
*University of Sheffield, UK*

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By applying to the 11th EAJS Doctoral Workshop, I was hoping to receive feedback on my PhD project from expert scholars in my field and from the other participants. However, the workshop soon turned out to be far more than what I had expected in advance. The wonderful surroundings of Edinburgh University set for a very pleasant and enjoyable networking opportunity. Socializing with the other PhD candidates proved to be reassuring and constructive; most of us face similar problems but deal with them differently. Those days in Edinburgh were a very nice way out of the every-day isolated doctoral life, while exchanging academic as well as personal experiences with fellow PhD candidates whom I most likely will soon see again at conferences or workshops in the near future.

As the workshop was organized as such that all participants listened to and commented on each other's projects, encompassing a wide range of research fields such as history, linguistics, literature, politics, business, medicine or agriculture, it was a very useful update on the current state of research in many areas of Japanese Studies.

The feedback I received by the expert scholars after my talk, as well as after the other talks, was very useful as matters such as methodology, research questions, and feasibility of the projects were discussed. The personal comments I received from Professor Mark Metzler, who was assigned to read my project proposal, were particularly constructive and will definitely prove to be very helpful in the near future.

In conclusion, the workshop was a unique opportunity that enabled me to share experiences and knowledge with fellow PhD candidates, and as such build connections for future cooperation in the academic community of Japanese Studies. Therefore, I would like to thank Professor Zachmann and his team at University of Edinburgh for the wonderful organization, and the Toshiba International Foundation and the Japan Foundation for making this workshop possible. Last but not least, I would also like to express my gratitude to Professor Metzler for his feedback on my presentation and to all the senior scholars for their constructive attitude and encouraging words to the participants during the entire workshop.

*Tine Walravens*  
*Ghent University, Belgium*

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On the whole, the EAJS PhD workshop was a very pleasant and highly intriguing academic event. It has very well demonstrated the breadth of Japanese Studies, which was particularly surprising but also inspiring for me as a non-Japanologist. Although - at first sight - comments and discussions on projects of completely different fields appeared to be less relevant for one's own research, they turned out to be strategically and argumentatively fairly useful for many respects at closer look. For my own research, which is on the effects of the highly skilled migration of transnational financial professionals and their socio-spatial patterns on the urban transformation in the Global City Tokyo (urban/migration geography), the comments were very enlightening with regard to the perspective of Japanese Studies scholars. The workshop provided a valuable occasion to present my work to a very different and diversified audience than usual, adding a new perspective to the debate. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organizers for the excellent organization of this workshop, and also the Toshiba International Foundation and the Japan Foundation for their funding.

As a suggestion for future workshops: It could be even more fruitful if sub-sessions according to the research fields were organized, e.g. literature & linguistics, history & politics, modern culture & society. Taking the breadth of Japanese Studies into consideration, in-depth discussions may be better conducted in smaller specialty groups, whereas shorter presentations of all projects could complement them as an overview. Such a structure could allow further positive ancillary effects amongst peers and also contribute to more intensive one-to-one supervisions, which were sufficiently available in the course of the discussion times and coffee breaks, yet were also 'limited' by the abundance and variety of intriguing conversations with other peers and scholars.

The EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students in Edinburgh was a very important, helpful and at the same time pleasant experience for me. Firstly, I finally had the chance to meet Japan researchers from different European countries (which I have been wanting to do for a long time). Moreover, with students of close academic interests we have been discussing joint projects (conferences for example) which I hope we will proceed to convey. Secondly, the workshop format was much more fruitful than the usual conference style because we were able not only to ask questions but to freely express any thoughts on the subject. This way every one of us got great feedback on his project. Then, the advisors' comments were the best part. I was surprised that every presenter had his paper so thoroughly examined and reviewed. This detailed critical judgment from a specialist in the field is probably the best present a research student can expect. I personally got many new thoughts and ideas from the comments of Professor Reiko Abe Auestad and am very grateful. My project deals with the ideology of a group of Japanese intellectuals. Because I tried to squeeze an aesthetical problem I wanted to discuss as well in the short presentation, it turned out very brief and poorly comprehensible (my own judgment), but it was great practice and encouraged me to make further improvements. I must add that having the opportunity to present my paper in the historical building of Edinburgh University Old College (surrounded by the portraits of great professors) was a great honor and delight.

*Olga Zaberezhnaia*

*Moscow State University, Russia*

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