

12th EAJS PhD Workshop

École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, France

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Reports by the Participants of the 12th EAJS PhD Workshop

My research investigates erotic literature (*kōshoku-bon*) in early Japan, primarily Edo period (1600–1868) erotic printed books and manuals. Particularly, in my PhD project I explore the literary rewritings and parody in the realm of *shunpon*. Despite the huge production of *shunpon* during the Edo period, until recently they have seldom, if ever, been the object of academic study.

Even though the presence of some few previous studies on these texts, until now focus has been put mainly on images. Consequently, texts and parody in *shunpon* can be considered as a new project. This can be both an opportunity to develop my own ideas, but also a challenge, due to the lack of secondary sources and to the degree of difficulty in finding the primary sources.

I was really interested in this Workshop because I hoped it would give me the opportunity to discuss my research with other PhD students and senior scholars from all over Europe and with different academic backgrounds. I was also very grateful to have the chance to present and receive feedbacks on my work in such an intellectually stimulating occasion.

As a second year PhD student, this workshop was really useful for my research, because we have been asked to prepare a five-thousand-words report before the beginning of the workshop, stating the relevance of the project, hypotheses, preliminary results and schedule. This really helped me to think again to the aims of my research, but also to understand better the main findings I have achieved in these two years. Moreover, I received not only very interesting feedback from senior scholars, but I also had the chance to meet some very talented PhD students, creating a network that will be certainly beneficial in the future.

Maria Lucia Bugno
Cambridge University, UK

The workshop was an invaluable opportunity for me at least for two reasons. Firstly, for the extensive and in-depth feedback from senior and junior advisors, and secondly for various comments of the participated doctoral students to my research, which were a great input to review my own work in a wider perspective, and to consider how better to represent the research findings to people in different disciplines. Additionally, the workshop was a very stimulating experience to me to explore what kinds of topics about Japan triggered academic interests of foreign young researchers. It gave me a picture of how Japanese society looks from outside. Furthermore, the reasons and motivations why they choose to study these topics were a good clue to know the societies they were living in. Gathering under the umbrella of Japan studies, I could learn not only about Japan but also about the fellow students' countries in the East and West. Last but not least, the opening lecture of Professor Onuki was highly suggestive to re-acknowledge the process how

the meanings of the symbolic flower of Japan has been constructed, manipulated and used by various socio-political powers.

I very much appreciate the efforts of all the staff and the scholars engaged to organise this unique interdisciplinary workshop, which I believe plays a crucial role for the prosperity of Japanese studies.

Henishilja Chang
University of Oxford, UK

Reasons for applying

I applied for the workshop for a number of reasons. Primarily, it was to exchange ideas with fellow students before my fieldwork in order to improve on my research methods, establish contact with other researchers in the field, and receive advice regarding my stay in Japan. Secondly, to present my research approach and its theoretical framework as a possible inspiration or tool for other doctoral students, especially those interested in studies of ethics, mentality, and self-identity.

Project description

My dissertation project is a comparative study of possible factors influencing the decision-making process behind choosing allegiance among warrior clans during the Era of the Northern and Southern Courts (1333–1392). In my research, I attempt to employ a novel, interdisciplinary method that is rooted in psychology, statistics, and linguistic studies.

Workshop – proceedings and impressions

The workshop was divided into thematic blocks with up to three presenters, each followed by a feedback round from chosen specialists in the fields and a question round afterwards. I found it to be a very stimulating environment that assured one had the opportunity to answer to people both familiar and unfamiliar with the topic – an experience invaluable towards adjusting future presentations and papers. Although the time constraints limited room for discussion during panels, the organisers provided a plethora of less formal occasions to discuss at length our respective projects.

I personally received some very insightful feedback, both from my coordinators and colleagues, that made me realise potential shortcomings and pitfalls that I need to address in the next stage of my project. I was also fortunate to meet wonderful people with whom I intend to stay in touch with in the future.

Szymon Andrzej Czerkawski
University of Bonn, Germany

The Ph.D. thesis suggests critic analysis about the literary responses to Fukushima disaster occurred in Japan in March 2011: the attempt is to investigate the relation between catastrophe, trauma and literary works, underlining the role of oblivion in the process of healing and mourning. The memory-oblivion dichotomy described in the post-Fukushima literary works connects Fukushima to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, digging up Japanese *genbaku* experience comparing to the 2011 nuclear fallout.

The participation at the EAJS Workshop in Paris represented to me the great chance to get in touch with other doctoral students whose interests are focused on Japanese studies. I was also

looking forward suggestions and advice for my research and the workshop provided me the best advisors I could have in my field of study: Professor Cécile Sakai, well-known translator of post-Fukushima literary works into French and professor Reiko Abe Auestad. As a result, I got new ideas to develop further in my research, such as the inclusion of other women writers among the authors or the redefinition of the memory/oblivion keyword.

The workshop also played a role in my training as a Ph.D. candidate in terms of professionally presenting my topic of research and being able to defend my thesis in an academic environment. The possibility to learn more about different research fields and discuss a huge variety of topics (from politics to geography, religion, history and so on) with other scholars also was a plus point of the workshop.

Veronica De Pieri

Ca Foscari University of Venice, Italy / INALCO in Paris, France

My main research interest lies in the social dimension of Japanese new religious movements. In particular, my project focuses on the social care activities performed by the lay Buddhist movement Risshō Kōseikai. I intend to investigate the role that these activities play in shaping the interaction between the religious organisation and the surrounding society, as well as the inner dynamics among members.

For this purpose, I will conduct fieldwork in Japan for the duration of 12 months starting from September 2016. I decided to apply for the EAJS Doctoral workshop in order to receive feedback on the project before going in the field. In particular, I was hoping for comments and suggestions that could help me refine my theoretical and methodological approach. In this sense, the commentary provided by the two advisers, Dr. Sebastien Lechevalier and Dr. Mary Picone, were extremely helpful. I greatly appreciated the possibility to receive detailed comments from scholars coming from such different disciplinary backgrounds, and whose observations complemented each other very well. That provided me with comprehensive feedback on the entire scope of the research project, which attempts to bridge religious studies and research on social welfare. Moreover, the workshop provided me with the opportunity to engage with fellow PhD students conducting research on Japan from a variety of perspectives, often crossing the boundaries of several disciplines. Hearing so many fascinating presentations and insightful observations encouraged me to rethink Japan and my own research project from a fresh perspective. Finally, the event was also a valuable networking opportunity, since it brought together PGR students, early-career researchers and established scholars, encouraging knowledge exchange and possibilities of future collaboration.

For all these reasons, I regard my participation in the EAJS Doctoral workshop an enriching experience which I would recommend to all PhD students. I would like to thank EAJS, the Toshiba Foundation, the Japan Foundation, EHESS and the organisers for the splendid opportunity.

Aura Di Febo

University of Manchester, UK

I am very grateful for having had the chance to present my dissertation project about the dynamics of social ties in communities that have been affected by the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and its aftermath at the EAJS workshop in Paris. My primary reason for applying for the workshop was

to gain feedback from experts in the area as well as to gain new perspectives by receiving comments from other Ph.D candidates.

The workshop itself as well as the rest of the programme were well-organized, interesting and even exceeded my expectations. I even met other Ph.D candidates from various disciplines, who work on a similar topic and I was happy to engage in fruitful discussions with them. It was challenging to introduce my project to an audience with such an interdisciplinary background, but it is this very experience that will definitely help me a lot in the future whenever I will have to explain or defend my dissertation. Furthermore, I received a lot of very valuable feedback from my advisors, which helped me to look at my own research from a new angle. This positively influenced my presentation skills on the one hand and the dissertation itself on the other hand, as I already adjusted some parts of my research outline according to these comments.

I am more than thankful for having had the chance to not only enhance my network with young and senior scholars who have attended the workshop, but also to broaden my knowledge on Japan and engage in current discussions stimulated by young scholars on Japanese history, economics, culture and society.

*Julia Gerster
Freie Universitaet Berlin, Germany*

The EAJS workshop held in Paris was a stimulating and inspiring experience. It was also a fantastic chance to meet other Phd students from all around Europe, and discuss my thesis with other scholars from different fields.

The workshop was for me a fruitful opportunity to reflect on my dissertation project. It took place at a tipping point of my Phd program. After a challenging year reflecting on my topic (i.e. history of media in post-war Japan: the bashing of Konoe Fumimaro) from a biographical standpoint, I came to the workshop looking for a way to reacquaint myself with my thesis through a fresh perspective.

I was pleasantly surprised by the value of the workshop to students at varying levels of progress. This experience helped me build more confidence and enthusiasm; thanks to the advice and support I received from senior advisors. I was made aware of the strength of my research, as well as how to clarify and explore new perspectives, I had not yet considered. I would particularly like to thank Dr. Ohnuki-Tierney and Dr. Hosokawa for their positive and supportive remarks.

The format of the workshop, emphasizing discussion, even though challenging and rigorous, allowed the atmosphere to remain friendly and supportive. Seeing established scholars and fellow Phd students, in different fields, apprehending the same kind of difficulties, and taking part in theoretical or methodological discussions helped me to critically reflect upon my own research.

Once again, I would like to thank our hosts in Paris for their excellent organization, and all participants for their kindness and interest in my work. I sincerely hope I will be able participate in future EAJS events and meet again the participants growing into promising researchers.

*Elsa Gonay
University of Geneva, Switzerland*

When I first applied for the EAJS workshop, I simply thought of it as a channel to present my preliminary results of my first year of research and to get into contact with fellow researchers. Retrospectively speaking however, it is far from an exaggeration when I argue that the EAJS in Paris turned out to be the personal highlight of my semester and consider myself proud to have been selected to present. The panels were well-tuned and enabled the participants to engage in discussions on topics of the same or similar nature, deepening my knowledge in my specific field while simultaneously getting interesting insights from other directions.

The committee has done an excellent job during the selection process, as the overall quality of the presentations can be considered high, many of which broadened my horizon in fields that are not directly linked to my own research. What overwhelmed me the most was the amount of preparation, which the commentators put into preparing this workshop. The plentiful comments in a friendly and benevolent atmosphere were the results of thorough reading of the paper in question as well as the chosen commentators being experts in their respective fields. As a result, I was provided with fresh perspectives concerning my research, which will definitely shape my future approaches.

Considering the effort that must have been put into organizing the 12th EAJS workshop, ultimately, I can recommend it to any young academic researcher engaged in Japanese studies.

Michael Grieser
Ludwig Maximilians University of Munich, Germany

The 2016 EAJS PhD workshop was so well organized and provided such a stimulating atmosphere as well as opportunities to network with scholars and fellow students, that the workshop easily ranks among the most helpful and memorable experiences that I have had in graduate school so far. Director Lechevalier and his team organized the workshop with every important detail in mind and deserve credit for creating something that everyone can agree was an exceptionally productive event where everyone involved benefitted and came away with something to think over and include in their own work. In fact, if given the opportunity, I would jump at the chance to do it again next year. I personally received feedback and constructive criticism from my two advisors and my peers which will guide a lot of revision in my research going forward and I hope that it will be the start of continued dialogue with these two professors who are experts in my field. Thanks again for all the hard work and preparation. The workshop is a great asset for aspiring scholars of Japan.

Bruce Grover
University of Heidelberg, Germany

I'm very grateful to have been invited to the 12th EAJS PhD Workshop in Paris at the EHESS. My original motivation for the application was to have an opportunity to present my PhD project "Nation-building and Whaling in Northeast Japan" to an academic audience for the first time outside of Switzerland and Germany. Even though I knew beforehand that experts would give some comments on my project, I was completely taken by surprise how thought provoking and on the spot the comments of my advisors were. In the discussion afterwards I received again very interesting input. Without a doubt, my own project profited tremendously from the workshop.

As I was the first presenter, I had afterwards the luxury to listen to all the other excellent presentations without being distracted. This gave me a very good understanding on the current

issues discussed and researched on and helped me further to put my own project into perspective. The organizers of the workshop really picked only top-notch projects and all PhD students had been very committed in presenting their first results. The breaks and the time during the dinner encouraged us in getting each other better to know and I was able to meet some very interesting PhD students on which I intend to work with together in the future. It goes without saying that the organization of the workshop was very professional and we all felt very welcome in Paris.

Fynn Holm
University of Zurich, Switzerland

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the full workshop due to a personal event that required me to return home on the evening of the first day. Nevertheless, I can say without any reservations that the workshop was an extremely intense and fruitful experience that helped me a great deal with my project. As someone who is conducting a qualitative study on job satisfaction in a Japan-based company (a topic which is usually investigated with quantitative methods), I applied to the workshop because it was difficult for me to find people who were doing the same type of research that and that specialized in similar topics, and I wanted to meet researchers who could give me input that I could not get within my existing academic network. With this in mind, the workshop turned out to be exactly what I had hoped for. I received input from fellow PhD researchers as well as from the commentators, and this input will be crucial in completing my dissertation research. I especially enjoyed the conversation with the commentators, who gave me literature references and ideas that will be absolutely essential for me to integrate my work into the existing body of research. Additionally, listening to the presentations of so many other young, passionate researchers, all of whom were on a high academic level, gave me a new perspective on the scope of Japanese studies and was inspiring to say the least. All in all, I am amazed by how productive the workshop turned out for me, despite my interrupted attendance.

Matthias Huber
University of Vienna, Austria

This year's EAJS Workshop for doctoral candidates in Paris was the first workshop of its kind that I participated in. I have had several opportunities to present parts of my dissertational research in other formats such as conferences and public presentations in the past. PhD Workshops, however, allow for a more concentrated atmosphere and are concerned primarily with young scholars' research projects.

Accordingly, before my arrival I had hoped for lively discussions, promising networking opportunities, constructive feedback and numerous interesting presentations. In this, my expectations were more than exceeded: My fellow PhD candidates were highly motivated, well-prepared, followed presentations carefully and gave valuable advice as I was trying to do the same.

I was even more impressed by the amount of work that the advisors, who had been especially assigned to each candidate, put into preparing their feedback. The organising team had selected established researchers to comment on our PhD projects and give advice. For me, who has specialised in the comparably small field of pre-modern masculinity studies, this proved to be extraordinarily helpful. For the first time scholars other than my adviser had taken time to thoroughly deal with my current state of research.

Besides the workshop's dense program, several breaks made room for additional individual discussions and conversations related to experiences with our PhD projects and academic life. Since the candidates came from different Universities in and outside of Europe, we had the opportunity to establish ties that extended our existing network.

I am glad for the opportunity given to me by participating in this workshop, the work that has been put into organising, preparing and conducting, and the generosity of the sponsors without whom many of us would not have been able to attend. Thank you very much.

Thorsten Kerp
University of Bonn, Germany

In my PhD project, I am exploring political rituals (especially marching events) in Japanese and German schools (1870-1945). In the political rituals, the abstract concept of 'nation-state' was performed and experienced by students. As I am in the field of Education, History and Cultural Studies, unfortunately I have had less opportunity to discuss with young scholars in the field of Japan studies. Although scholars in and outside of Japan engage in complementary research, there isn't enough exchange between Japanese and non-Japanese researchers, at least in my field. Therefore, I was very happy to get to know young and senior researchers, who are located in Europe and doing research on Japan.

After my presentation, I was able to receive many constructive comments from other participants and from my senior and junior advisors. These comments inspired and motivated me to develop my research projects further. I will keep in touch with the scholars whom I met during the workshop and would like to organize small meetings in Japan or in Europe so that we can further exchange our research. After taking part in the workshop, I realized that Japan studies, a discipline which does not exist in Japan, is actually a very interdisciplinary and rich study field. I am very happy that I attended the workshop and from now on, I would also like to be active in the field of the Japan Studies. I'm already looking forward to the next EAJS conference in Lisbon and seeing my colleagues again.

Ami Kobayashi
Humboldt University Berlin, Germany

I am a first-year PhD student in the Department of History at the University of Birmingham. Since November 2015, I have been taking part in a collaborative project, "Children Born of War- Past, Present and Future" supported by the European Commission. (www.chibow.org) "Children born of war" is defined as offspring of local women and members of an enemy, occupational or peacekeeping force or prisoners of war, and there is a growing body of academic works on these children in various locales and historical contexts. My research project focuses on life experiences of children born of Chinese mothers and Japanese fathers during and after the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). Currently, I am the only PhD student working on Japan and China in my department, and I applied to the EAJS workshop, as it is essential for me to receive feedback from experts and doctoral students in Japanese Studies at an early stage of my research.

In the workshop, I presented my topic, methodology, initial findings from my fieldwork and challenges for my research project. The atmosphere of the workshop was very friendly, and it was

a great experience for me to receive detailed feedback from experts and many thought-provoking questions from fellow doctoral students. The feedback I received has significantly helped develop my thinking and writing. Also, I found presentations by other doctoral students of all stages very inspiring. Interestingly, even though some topics seemed remote from my topic, I could find similarities in our approaches and challenges. I do hope to stay in touch with the participants of the workshop, and I would like to thank everyone who was involved in organizing this workshop.

Kanako Kuramitsu
University of Birmingham, UK

The EAJS workshop is a unique experience for PhD students in Japanese studies in Europe. The workshop showcased some of the current research trends and the body of research used in developing them. It gave me the chance to present my research to a large audience of students in a similar position to me, understanding what they find relevant and interesting about my topic.

As someone working in linguistics, it was a great exercise to understand how to frame my work and make it into a potential tool for Japanologists working on Classical literature. The workshop was a rare opportunity for people working with sources in Classical Japanese to discuss the role these have in their PhD, and how to deal with them, particularly when they are written in less familiar scripts. I was happy to see other students were keen to learn more about manuscripts and hentaigana from each other.

I am also grateful for the feedback I received on my project by the two supervisors. I do not often have the occasion to discuss my research with specialists outside of my university. Especially useful were comments on the need to highlight quantitative evidence and to contrast my project with other works on the similar topics.

The workshop was a useful, enriching and inclusive experience. I would encourage any PhD student in Japanese studies to apply.

Frederico Manglavite
University of Oxford, UK

The 12th EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Candidates that took place in Paris this year was an intensive and intellectually stimulating experience, and I feel very fortunate to have been invited. It was well organised and provided many opportunities for interaction and conversations not only with the fellow participants but also the advisors. What I enjoyed most about the workshop were its atmosphere and its multidisciplinary approach, and that it brought together so many people from all over Europe who are working on projects relating to Japan – Especially since one can feel quite isolated in this field of study, which is all the more true for the area my project relates to which focuses on meta-physical beliefs in the Heian period, and it is nice to get a sense of the broader community.

I have benefitted from the workshop in many respects and believe that it will be a valuable source of inspiration for the further development of my project. The workshop presented an occasion to introduce one's project to a wider audience and receive feedback from diverse angles. It has helped me determine which parts of my project need to be articulated more clearly in order to become more accessible, although I would have appreciated some more constructive criticism that would

have helped me tackle the more specific problems I have with my project. It was also encouraging to see that many other participants were facing similar problems and confronted with the same struggles, and to realise that it is just part of the process. I was very impressed by how hard everyone is working on their projects and their enthusiasm, and it has motivated me even more to do the best I possibly can. I also found the general discussion on publishing strategies, conferences and career development among the advisors at the end of the day particularly interesting and enjoyed hearing their different opinions.

I would like to thank everyone for making this workshop an unforgettable experience and I look forward to seeing you again, whether at other workshops, conferences, or maybe even in Japan.

Nathalie Phillips
University of Edinburgh, UK

My doctoral thesis is entitled: Women in the Maze—Gender, Crime, and Space in Kirino Natsuo's writings. This thesis studies space and how it underscores the issues of gender and crime in Kirino Natsuo's writings. The study focus on female characters' urban/ spatial experience, particularly how women face threats and challenges as they make the transition from the private sphere (i.e., feminine domain) to the public sphere (i.e., patriarchal/ masculine domain).

This is my second year as a doctoral student. I am at the intermediate phase of writing. With five chapters of draft, I wanted to take a break and review the work in order to improve. EAJS workshop offered an opportunity for me to present my work and receive feedbacks from advisers and fellow students.

At the workshop, Prof. Dr. Reiko Abe-Auestad and Prof. Dr. Cecile Sakai were my advisers and Dr. Sophie Buhnik as junior adviser. As scholars of the literature discipline, the two professors commented on my project and answered to my confusions. The suggestions were response to the difficulties I encountered so far (written in the project report for application). Dr. Buhnik specializes in urban studies. She gave me advices on the urban/ spatial aspect of my writing. These were constructive and valuable comments.

Since the workshop, I have been incorporated the advices into my writing. The advices at the workshop consolidated the theoretical framework, which was also the greatest benefit for me. The network was a very close second.

Therefore I would also like to express my gratitude to the program organizers, all participants—advisers and my fellow students, and organizations which fund this workshop.

I am going to Tokyo, Japan for field trip next year, and I will take these experiences with me to conduct further research.

Mina Qiao
Ludwig Maximilians University of Munich, Germany

My PhD project examines the applicability, implementation and impact of Japanese management systems, such as knowledge transfer, spill-over and adaptive capacity to the host-country context. This studies the work, employment and organisational practices adopted by Japanese multinational corporations (JMNCs) in Indonesia. It is based on three Japanese-Indonesian joint-venture

automotive firms operating in Indonesia: Toyota Motor Manufacturing Indonesia (TMMIN), a car manufacturer; Astra Honda Motor (AHM), a motorcycle manufacturer; and Astra Auto Part (AOP), an auto parts firm.

Most Japanese research studies have focused on mainstream advanced and emerging market economy countries, namely the USA, the EU, China and India, while a research gap remains regarding newly emerging market economies, in particular in the Southeast Asian region. This is particularly prominent in the case of Indonesia, which has been the largest Japanese FDI recipient since the 1950s and is the largest Japanese automotive market in ASEAN.

JMNCs' management systems in automotive firms appear to differ according to their level of investment, length of presence and involvement in management operations in Indonesia. While much of the existing literature has focused on Toyota and other car manufacturers, this study offers a more dynamic and comprehensive picture of Japanese automotive practices and their outcomes in the automotive industry in Indonesia by covering a cross-section of automotive manufacturers: TMMIN (cars), AHM (motorcycles) and AOP (auto parts).

Warwick University has reached premium quality in research in UK higher education and is internationally reputable. The University is located on the outskirts of Coventry and Warwickshire. While the university has provided very supportive research assistance yielding fertile ground to develop my studies, unfortunately, the university does not have centre of Asian/Japanese studies and the library is lacking with a limited collection of Japanese materials and academic activities. EAJS academic activities, in particular workshop for doctoral student is important to develop my research and academic career.

The workshop was well-organised, very friendly and interactive. Expert panels committed to give comprehensive feedback and guidance. The workshop also enables participants to learn from each other. I was empowered to hear that Professor Lechevalier in making a recommendation for the participants to read the section of my paper "the art of negotiating access". My discussion was able to offer some practical insights for those participants who have experienced some difficulties to obtain access.

The diversity of the participants and panels truly make the workshop intellectually motivated. Intellectual exchanges prepare me for my second phase data collection in Japan in September 2016. Moreover, academic networks make it possible for me to explore other Japanese/Asian studies activities within the EU. All in all, the workshop has deepened my commitment to make a substantial contribution to the body of knowledge from two perspectives: to synthesise Japanese business management studies from a more international perspective (e.g. ASEAN), and to produce new knowledge on the host country through public scholarly public engagements and publications. EAJS provides a network of high-calibre international Japanese scholars dedicated to promoting Japanese studies in the EU and beyond.

Joey Soehardjojo
Warwick Business School, UK

I was very happy to be able to attend the 12th EAJS doctoral workshop at the EHESS in Paris in July 2016 for several reasons. First of all I was able to present not only my current PhD research project on Japanese foreign politics, but also to get valuable feedback from two senior researchers

specializing in my field. What makes this workshop particularly helpful is the fact that we do not necessarily present final research findings, quite difficult at the beginning of a PhD, but rather our methods and also challenges that we are facing as PhD candidates. It was very useful to see that other PhD students from all over Europe are in similar situations, having similar questions and experiences. I also appreciated very much the opportunities to exchange among us in an informal way; I believe it is important to be in contact with other young researchers so that we can hopefully collaborate in future research for which we laid the foundations during this workshop. At the same time, I was also impressed and very happy about the presence of a number of well-known professors from various fields working on Japan. I learned a lot on several subjects and appreciated their accessibility especially during coffee breaks. I applied for this workshop mainly in order to exchange with and receive feedback from senior and younger scholars specializing on Japan, since my university is rather focused on political science; and this was definitely the case at the workshop. All in all I am very grateful to the EAJS, Toshiba International Foundation, Japan Foundation and the team at EHESS for organizing this very inspiring and helpful doctoral workshop and can only encourage other PhD students to apply for the following one next year.

Sarah Tanke
Sciences Po Paris

I am a first year doctoral student and a trained psychologist, conducting a research of "Childhood Narratives of Mass Disasters survivors in Asia: A Psycho-Cultural Study of the Great East Japan Earthquake (GEJE)." In one of the most natural disaster prone countries in the world, my research asks to holistically explore psychological implications of disasters during childhood. Childhood narratives, which stand in the heart of my research, represent an encounter between individuals' identities and their socio-cultural context. Thus, these narratives create an integration of a personal and collective memory of historical events, such as the GEJE, which in turn, is a seminal event in nowadays Japanese society.

My research is inter-disciplinary, leaning on psychological literature while integrating varied bodies of knowledge (such as cultural, religious and disaster studies). Hence, I was delighted to be accepted to the EAJS workshop, regarding it as a unique learning opportunity.

The workshop indeed offered a multi-disciplinary meeting with both advanced students and leading scholars of Japan. Together with a serious academic, yet friendly, atmosphere, it allowed an enriching experience. I found students' presentations to offer updated, innovative and critical perspectives of research, and thus, I could also reflect on my research and learn from them. Presentation my own research contributed greatly both to the research itself and to my academic experience. Others' comments were a source of reflection and some were even integrated to my dissertation. Above all, formal and informal discussions, in my opinion, enabled to learn of nowadays most updated research topics, trends and 'vocabulary' regarding Japan, the importance of balancing between one's own disciplinary field and Japanese Studies and how to take part in an international academic discourse. All in all, sharing my interest and passion for Japanese Studies with other doctoral students, the new generation of researchers, was a valuable experience, one to cherish and hopefully to continue in the future.

Shira Taube Dayan
The University of Haifa, Israel

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