

Report on the 22nd EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students

Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, 24–25 August 2026

The 22nd EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students was held from 24 to 25 August 2026 at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. Two of my colleagues (Marcelina De Zoete-Leśniczak, Monika Lecińska-Ruchniewicz) and I (Przemysław Sztafiej) had the pleasure of serving as its organizers. The workshop attracted 44 applications from doctoral candidates affiliated with universities across Europe and Japan, as well as one application from an American institution. This confirms the trend of increasing interest in this EAJS initiative. Following a selection process involving the EAJS Council and the local organizers, 20 doctoral candidates were invited to participate.

In preparation for the event, all participants submitted written reports outlining their doctoral thesis research projects. These documents were then shared in advance with the senior advisors assigned to comment on each project. At the request of some of the doctoral students, the contents of the reports were not shared with the other participants in order to reduce the risk of leaks of unpublished research material. Participants were, however, free to decide whether to share their reports on their own terms.

The workshop was held over two full working days, with presentations organized into thematic sessions, each comprising two to three participants. The presentations encompassed many fields of study, such as linguistics, social sciences, Japanese literature, visual and new media studies, and Ainu studies, often employing interdisciplinary perspectives. Each participant had 20 minutes for their presentation, followed by comments from one of the senior advisors and an open discussion with the other participants. The schedule was densely packed from the early morning until the afternoon, but the atmosphere of free exchange of ideas enabled the event to become a space for constructive academic discussion. Participants had ample opportunity to reflect on and evaluate their own research through engagement with both their peers and experienced scholars.

As local organizers, we are particularly grateful to the senior advisors: Dr. Paola Cavaliere (University of Milan), Prof. Marcos Centeno Martin (Universitat de València), Prof. Tomasz Majczak (Jagiellonian University in Krakow) and Dr. Satoko Naito (University of Turku, University of Helsinki). Their insightful comments were invaluable, providing guidance not only on the theoretical frameworks of individual

projects but also on practical matters related to conducting research as a doctoral student and pursuing a career in academia.

Coffee breaks, shared lunches, and dinners provided further opportunities for the exchange of views and networking. These informal interactions were equally important as the sessions themselves in helping us create a safe and open space for academic training and community building within the field of research on Japan.

In conclusion, the 22nd EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students successfully achieved its main objective of providing the students with feedback on their doctoral projects and further guidance regarding work in academia. The event contributed to the professional development of doctoral researchers working on Japan-related topics by providing them with an invaluable opportunity to engage in professional interactions with scholars other than the advisors at their home institutions. The high level of interest in applying for the event, as well as the active engagement demonstrated by the selected participants, confirms the workshop initiative as an important forum for exchange, training, and networking for emerging scholars.

My colleagues and I would like to express our sincerest gratitude to the European Association for Japanese Studies for selecting Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń as the venue for the 22nd Workshop for Doctoral Students, as well as to the Toshiba International Foundation (TIFO) for its generous financial support, which made organizing the event possible. Our heartfelt thanks also go to the aforementioned senior advisors, who dedicated their valuable time to travel to Toruń, analyze the participants' reports, and provide insightful feedback. We are also grateful to the doctoral students, who made organizing this event a pleasure by bringing fresh and interesting perspectives to their projects and actively participating in discussions of their peers' research. We look forward to following their development as scholars and hope to have opportunities to meet them in the future as established professionals in their respective fields of study.

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