

12th International Conference of the European Association for Japanese Studies

Lecce/Italy, September 20-23, 2008

Conference Report

For many of those who attended the 12th International Conference of the EAJS in Lecce, 20-23 September, 2008 the lasting memory might be the wonderful Italian city. It was the first time that we had ventured to Italy, so far south in a city with historical beauty and gastronomic advantages. The conference at Salento University started smoothly in spite of the logistical difficulties in bringing more than 600 people together, resolving their difficulties, organizing the changing sections. Universities are usually not travel agencies, but in this case the organizing team made it possible and so we could enjoy the advantages of the venue, which resulted in a high attendance at the sections.

The opening ceremony for the 12th EAJS conference took place in the conference venue at the Grand Hotel Tiziano. Maria Chiara Migliore, who organized the conference, opened the proceedings by welcoming everyone to Lecce as a new and very active place of Japanese studies. Former president of the EAJS, Adriana Boscaro, reminded everyone of the long history of Japanese studies in Italy. The EAJS was honoured by the Address of the Japanese Ambassador to Italy, Mr Nakamura. The representative of the Japan Foundation, Managing Director Ogawa Tadashi, spoke of Japanese cultural policy and of the efforts of EAJS and encouraged us to continue.

Viktoria Eschbach Szabo, President of EAJS, referred to the new shape and organisational structure of the EAJS. She thanked many institutions and scholars for making the conference possible and gratefully acknowledged the great assistance of the Japan Foundation, which has generously supported our activities and the Tōshiba International Foundation which financed the fifth PhD workshop.

She introduced the keynote speaker Professor Ikegami Yoshihiko, former professor of Tokyo University, now Showa Joshi Daigaku and for a long time active participant at the conferences of the EAJS. Professor Ikegami entitled his lecture „Linguistics and Poetics of ‚Ego as Zero‘: The Japanese Speaker’s Preferential Choice of Subjective rather than Objective Construal”, thus emphasising the enduring importance of language in cultural matters. His model, a semiotic and cognitive one, offers a framework within which both the differences in the ways of communicating and the underlying differences in the cognitive map of thinking can be fruitfully and rigorously explored. This was followed by a Welcoming reception held at Chioistro degli Olivetani, a XV century monastery now hosting some faculties of Salento University.

The remaining days were devoted as usual to the parallel sessions of eight subject sections of the conference with invited speakers from Japan. The Meeting of the Society for the Study of Japanese Cultural History (Nihon bunkashi kenkyūkai) and the fifth EAJS Doctoral Workshop, organized by Harald Fuess, preceded the conference. Well over 300 papers were read at this conference and the convenors reported positively on the activities of their sections (see section reports below). The 12 panel meetings were organized on Monday and in this case the organizers could arrange the contributions around given specific themes as “From Beer to Ramen: Scrutinizing the Legacy of Japanese Colonialism in East Asia” or about “Transcultural Society and New Diversities”.

The conference ended with the General Meeting and a brief closing ceremony. At the General Meeting, the President Viktoria Eschbach-Szabo and the treasurer Cornelia Storz presented the changes and innovations that have taken place in EAJS during the last three years. As we think it is in the interest of all scholars to have modern ways and places of communication, we have recently made efforts to intensify networking. Preparing a conference is also a part of comprehensive improvement and a cultural investment programme. The scientific field of Japanese studies and the future were topics of widespread discussion and consideration as we took into account the changing external environment in which Japanese studies operates in the 21st century.

The minutes of the General Meeting can be found later in this Bulletin. Before the

Reports of the Section Convenors

Section 1: Urban and Environmental Studies

Convenors: Oliver Mayer and Rémi Scoccimarro

The central theme of the Urban and Environmental section in Lecce was “Sustainable planning / durable cities: adapting Japanese territory to current and upcoming environmental and urban issues”. Our section had 16 papers, presented by researchers from Japan, Germany, France, Russia, Sweden and Great Britain.

At the 2005 conference in Vienna, the main subject of our section was “Japan’s ageing society and its problems and implications for future urban development”, and as this is still a very important topic, it was also widely discussed during this year’s meeting.

We started the session with two papers on rural and smaller towns, looking into the problems of depopulation and the impact of the *shinkansen*. The next two days, six presenters were looking at developments in and around Tokyo: stagnation and social marginalisation of neighborhoods, neighborhood associations, creating a sustainable city district in Chiba, Tokyo’s actions against urban warming, urban regeneration in Tokyo’s central business district, and security and surveillance society. Three other papers covered subjects in other areas of Japan: Toyama as a compact city, Kashiwazaki’s recovery project after the 2007 Niigata earthquake, and the problems of shōtengai shopping areas. One paper each dealt with: waste and the material cycle society, housing problems for single-mother families, and perspectives on machizukuri and community planning. The last day saw two papers on architecture, one about the works of contemporary architects, the other on Japanese cultural concepts as applied in new architecture.

As all presenters were given a time slot of 45 minutes, there was ample time for discussions. Many presenters and visitors of our section mentioned that they had enjoyed a lively and successful meeting, so we hope to continue this in the next conference in 2011.

Oliver Mayer

Section 2: Linguistics and Language Teaching

Convenors: Barbara Pizziconi, Arkadiusz Jabłoński, and Noriko Iwasaki

A total of 38 presentations in the two sections of the Linguistics/Language Teaching panel made this year's conference a good showcase of the variety of disciplinary approaches that our field has developed. Together with more traditional work on phonological, syntactic, pragmatic aspects of Japanese language use, the relatively younger fields of gesture and metaphor made a very welcome appearance. As ever, we had a good mix of veterans and newcomers, and I was pleased to note that far from being intimidated by their senior colleagues, young scholars seem very well equipped to challenge received representations and disciplinary traditions.

Our keynote speaker, Prof. Sachiko Ide, with a genuinely original take on the assigned theme of 'Relationality in Linguistic Theory', threw the audience a rather provocative question. She argued that the very nature of the Japanese language's indexical properties (e.g. the fairly explicit and pragmatically obligatory nature of various devices, from evidentials to polite markers) forces users of Japanese to bring contextual factors into awareness more prominently than in other languages. When using Japanese, we are therefore forced to embrace a cognitive space which is more explicitly inclusive of other participants and contextual features, an attitude that she believes constitutes a vantage point, as linguists as well as human beings. A big philosophical question indeed and much food for thought – a good counterpoint to the other, epicurean type of nourishment, in which the whole conference indulged in between working sessions.

Once again, a big thank you to all participants for their efforts, and a special thank you to the assistants on-site, who worked hard at sorting out promptly and efficiently all the inevitable technical hiccups of such big gatherings.

Barbara Pizziconi, Arkadiusz Jabłoński, Noriko Iwasaki

Section 3: Literature
— Modern Literature Subsection —

Convenors: Matthew Königsberg and Diana Donath

Out of the total of more than forty excellent proposals received for the Modern Literature Sub-Section, 5 panels (one in Japanese), and 17 individual presentations were selected, for a total of 36 speakers. The decision was very difficult, and the co-convenors would again like to thank all who submitted proposals. The section attempted to present a broad range of European and international research on modern Japanese literature. Although there was an emphasis on European research in the broadest sense, many scholars from Japan and the United States presented, as well as individuals scholars from Australia and Canada. It is difficult to give an exact statistic, as one cannot be sure how to define – for instance – a Catalonian or Polish scholar working in Japan, or an Italian working in the United States. This at any rate says a great deal about the diversity of the field and accordingly diverse were the subjects tackled, both in the panels and in the individual papers.

The topics ranged – roughly chronologically – from Mori Ōgai and Meiji until the most recent developments such as “keitai shōsetsu” (mobile novels). The presenters treated subjects both well-known and new. Individual papers were compiled into panel-like sessions under comprehensive titles – based either on the topics or on the periods covered – which gave ground for comparison and rounded the contributions. The program had an emphasis on translating, on women’s literature, on overviews over periods of literature as well as genre-shifting and the depiction of Japan in literature over several decades.

Although our section was set in the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, several hundred meters from the main conference site, the Grand Hotel Tiziano, our section was well-visited and met with much response, in the form of stimulating discussions and a productive scientific exchange, which we hope will be continued in Tallinn in 2011. The convenors would like to thank the presenters and most especially the hosts for making the wonderful conference in Lecce such a success.

Diana Donath, Matthew Königsberg

— Pre-modern Literature Subsection —

Convenor: Robert Omar Khan

The Pre-modern Literature section at EAJIS 2008 at Lecce began most auspiciously with a Keynote Speaker who addressed a topic that skillfully combined the interests of both Modern and Premodern literature scholars. The Keynote Speech by Dr. Machiko Midorikawa, with the title 'Talking to Oneself: Internal Monologue in Japanese Literature from Monogatari to Shōsetsu', adroitly surveyed the characteristics of this aspect of narrativity from the *Tale of Genji* through to novels by contemporary authors, and was attended by a numerous and appreciative audience.

The remaining presentations, given by scholars from most countries of the European Union, and from as far afield as Japan, China, Korea, and North America, covered a similarly wide chronological range, from very early imperial-family associated poetry collected in the eighth-century *Man'yōshū*, to the late Edo Period literature, and even to the relationship between pre-modern literary practices and modern and contemporary ones.

Of particular note were the large number of presentations which incorporated an interdisciplinary dimension, some of which found a home in the Interdisciplinary Section, but many of which were presented under the auspices of the Pre-modern Literature Section. These addressed topics as diverse as developments in text production technologies, the interaction of poetry and painting (in several presentation panels), the religious dimensions of literary texts, gendered aspects of literary production and consumption, biographical and historical backgrounds to literary works, cultural borrowings, and even music-related texts.

Altogether there were thirty-five presentations given in the course of the ten panels, and the number of proposals received was nearly double that number, so that although it was necessary to decline a large number of worthy proposals owing to the constraints of time and space, this fact in itself was encouraging evidence of the vibrantly healthy state of pre-modern literary studies in Europe and beyond. Further reinforcing this impression was the fact that the spacious room put at our disposal by Salento University, our host institution, was gratifyingly well-filled for most of the

panel presentations, despite the attraction of related disciplines in other sections, and we frequently enjoyed lively questions and discussions following the presentations.

For that hospitality, and the efficient operation of the local staff, all those involved in the Pre-Modern Literature sub-section are sincerely grateful, and we owe particular thanks to Maria Chiara Migliore, who was not only the adept principal local organiser of the conference as a whole, but remains a distinguished pre-modern literature scholar, even finding time to take time out of her busy conference schedule to visit and participate in some of our panels.

Robert Khan

Section 4: Visual and Performing Arts

— Visual Arts Subsection —

Convenors: Donatella Failla and Joshua Mostow

The Subsection included six panels with 27 speakers and 14 individual papers with the same number of speakers, i.e. 42 speakers in all. Among the individual papers, only three last-minute withdrawals have been counted.

Three panels dealt with different aspects of *Ukiyo-e* culture, namely, the popularization of the Classics in Literature and Performing Arts, sexuality and eroticism in *shunga*, and Kabuki actor prints as forms of production and re-construction of theatrical plays. The theme of female itinerancy and storytelling in Japanese culture was also explored, as well as the trends in the contemporary art scene in Japan and its border crossing from traditional expertise and technical standards to new interpretations and expressions, with special regard to art education, photography, ikebana, and the China-Japan market interplay. Last, but not least, the new entry group of Spanish scholars from Saragoza University gave an extensive report on the on-going Spanish research in Japanese Visual and Performing Arts.

Several of the individual papers also dealt with *Ukiyo-e* culture (*mitate-e*, *shunga* of 19th century), the interplay between traditional, contemporary and popular arts, the influence of Japan on European Art Nouveau and Déco movements, female images in Meiji period photography, the new perspectives in the research of Zen painting, and the contribution of F. Perzynsky to the classification of Noh masks. Also, a paper was given on a new Japanese Opera describing the true story of a Japanese diplomat who worked intensely to rescue many Jewish people during World War II.

All of the panels and papers were illustrated by slides, some of them also by videos, others by extensive statistical data. The equipment provided by the Organizers always worked well. The attendance was remarkably constant; moreover, all the speakers, except maybe one, managed to start on time and be finished on time, so that there was always time for questions, answers, and discussion.

Donatella Failla, Joshua Mostow

— **Performing Arts Subsection** —

Convenor: Peter Eckersall

Executive Summary

I am pleased to report that the performing arts subsection held a successful meeting at EAJS 2008. A total of thirty-six papers were delivered covering a range of topics and relating to canonical and contemporary performance cultures. Highlights of the section included specialist panels focusing on aspects of Nō and Kabuki as well as panels focused on aspects of contemporary drama, performance art, cultural performances, visual art displays and film. Research drawing on diverse critical, historical and aesthetic perspectives was featured in many of the presentations. Key panels addressed topical issues in fields of canonical performance studies, while others were interdisciplinary and contemporary in their approaches. The section was well attended and feedback from delegates was positive and complimentary.

Report Details

Section four of the EAJS conference was co-convened by Donatella Failla and Peter Eckersall with additional assistance from Gunhild Borggreen. Our early plan was to develop an interdisciplinary focus and strategically downplay the distinctions between visual and performing arts research. This was partially successful, more in relation to the contemporary arts that have become increasingly interconnected in various ways. At the same time, many delegates offered papers in more traditional categories of visual and performing arts and the need remained to ensure that this research was well accommodated. In the end, we tended to split the visual and performing arts sections. This was partly administrative, partly to ensure that the full span of research was accommodated, and partly due to the specialised nature of some of the research.

Call for papers

The following call for papers was sent by the convenors:

Research in the visual and performing arts of Japan in the perspective of the 21st century Japanese society and culture has undergone dramatic transformations in the new century yet no single perspective seems to account for recent trends in the arts. At the end of what one group of scholars has called “the long postwar” era (Harootunian and Yoda 2006) Japan is set to enter a new wave of globalisation. The arts are proliferating and artists are crossing between practices, genres communities and cultures: “everyone is doing everything now” is how one critic described the diversity of current practices. At the same time as the arts proliferate, there is a revived interest in traditional forms of visual culture and performance; Japanese arts in all fields of production are regularly revived, reappraised, renewed and reinvented. There are many such “neo-moments” in Japan at present where Japanese art is being rediscovered, reassessed and also paradoxically disappearing into the slip-stream of cultural globalisation. The 2008 EAJS Visual and Performing Arts section therefore calls for panels and papers on these and related themes. We especially invite interdisciplinary panels of researchers reporting on work between visual and performing, traditional and contemporary art forms. With this interdisciplinary approach to research we can consider the important questions about visual and performing arts from complementary and contrasting perspectives of the 21st century.

Suggestions for panels and papers are sought on the following themes and questions of Japanese visual and performing arts more widely:

- “Japanese-ness” within art and culture: ideology and policies.
- Recent research, study trends and developments in traditional, pre-modern and modern arts and performance.
- Relationships between art and popular culture.
- Exporting Japanese artists and arts.
- New modernities in the age of globalization.
- Cultural expectations and Japanese experiences of the arts.
- New aesthetic and political trends in arts and culture.
- What are the new arts, new trends, new forms of expression in Japan since 2000.

Paper selection

Forty-two papers were selected for presentation in the performing arts section from a total of forty nine applications. The decisions were made by the convenors in response to each abstract. Preference was given to papers that contributed to a diversity of research in the field and those that best responded to the call. Delegates were invited to propose panels as a way of developing a field of research. This was a particularly strong aspect of the responses to the call and resulted in a number of focused and productive panels at the conference.

Performing Arts section presentations

As noted in the executive summary above, a total of thirty-six papers were delivered covering a range of topics and relating to canonical and contemporary performance cultures. Highlights of the section were:

- Specialist panels focusing on aspects of Nō and Kabuki.
- Panels focused on aspects of contemporary drama, performance art, cultural performances, visual art displays and film.
- New research in the field of aesthetic inquiry and interpretation of forms of theatre.
- New research examining the performing arts in historical, social and cultural contexts.
- 'Cutting edge' research exploring contemporary dance, new media and music as well as new research perspectives drawing on gender theory, globalisation theory and cyber cultures.
- A new and emerging scholars panel to open the section.
- A complementary and balanced mix of papers covering the full scope of performing arts research from across the eras and styles of Japanese performance.
- Papers delivered in English and Japanese.

Thanks

As convenor of the performing arts section I would like to thank the members of the EAJIS committee and the organisers of the 2008 conference in Lecce. Special thanks to Professor Dr Stanca Scholz-Cionca the former convenor of the performing arts section for her tireless work and support for scholarship in the field. I am grateful for her contribution as discussant in the new scholars panel and for her advice. I would like to extend my thanks to Gunhild Borggreen for her early work on the panel. I also extend special thanks to Donatella Failla for her work on coordinating the visual arts section. Thanks to the EAJIS secretariat and the tireless efforts of Per Larsen. Special thanks need to go to room volunteers for their excellent technical support. Finally, I thank all the delegates for making our section such an exciting hothouse of new research.

Peter Eckersall

Section 5: Anthropology and Sociology

Convenors: Anemone Platz and Ingrid Getreuer-Kargl

Section 5, organized by the Japan Anthropology Workshop (JAWS), had called for papers touching on “Fragmentation, continuity and change: Japan in times of changing population structure”. The section was opened by a most inspiring as well as amusing key-note speech by Genda Yuji from the Institute of Social Science, Tokyo University. Genda Yuji talked about “Hope and society in Japan”, introducing his innovative concept of ‘hopology’ (*kibō-gaku*). Sunday morning began unexpectedly leisurely as the registered speaker, Irina Tikhotskaya, failed to make an appearance. After the coffee break, however, the section took off with Hidaka Tomoko analysing salaryman masculinity in terms of the ideology of *daikokubashira* across three generations, followed by Richard Ronald’s paper on “Making the Japanese Home: Transformation in Houses and Households, Spaces and Senses”. The afternoon was devoted to the elderly. Maren Godzik talked about housing for elderly people, Wolfram Manzenreiter about health and body politics of the aged society and Isabelle Prochaska portrayed the Okinawan *obaa*. All three made quite clear that older people’s needs and lifestyles are diverse and that they constitute a vital element in Japanese society. Monday morning was devoted to the Panel: “New Lifestyles or Old Hats? Social Change in Media and Film in Japan”, chaired by Griseldis Kirsch. The media taken into consideration by panelists Dolores Martinez, Marissa Maurer, Michael Prieler and Florian Kohlbacher, Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt and Hilaria Gössmann, ranged from magazine and TV advertising to TV dramas and fiction, the social change depicted related to changing life-patterns of Japanese women, gender roles and family as well as to the younger generation and to the Tokyo Olympics. In the afternoon, David Plath demonstrated ethnographic long engagements through a video showing the aging of an ethnographer together with the aging of his “field”. Ogawa Akihiro’s concern was the importance of lifelong learning for the construction of citizenship. Tuesday morning saw two papers on Burakumin from entirely different perspectives that proved to be very stimulating. Andrea De Antoni devoted his paper to the popular perception of what areas constituted a *buraku*, while Joseph Hankins introduced his long-standing field-work

with Burakumin focussing on 'the generational divide' between parents' knowledge of their *buraku* status and children's not being told and sometimes finding out painfully. The session was rounded off by Sylvie Guichard-Anguis' talk on "Nagano and the Zenkoji: an old pilgrimage for a brand new image" and Karsten Helmholtz' research into the little known art of *suijutsu*, fighting in the water.

Throughout the session, discussion on papers was lively, fostered by an atmosphere of congeniality characteristic of JAWS conferences. The small but beautiful town of Lecce and the friendly and untiring organisers of the conference added to the general feeling of intellectual and physical well-being.

The abstracts will be published in the upcoming JAWS newsletter.

Ingrid Getreuer-Kargl

Section 6: Economics, Economic and Social History

Convenors: Iris Wieczorek and Parissa Haghirian

The overall topic of the Economic and Economic History Section of the EAJS conference was “Beyond Structural Changes: Shaping the Future of Japanese Economy and Business”. The outstanding expert Professor Haruo Hagiwara Horaguchi gave the opening section keynote speech on the topic of “Collective Knowledge and Collective Strategy: Quest for a Genetic Theory of Innovation”.

The section programme included nine sessions (three of them organized panels) and approximately 32 individual paper presentations (from senior scholars, practitioners and graduate students) addressing the overall topic from structural, institutional and managerial perspectives. There was a lively discussion in all sessions and the room was most of the time fully packed.

The sessions included the following topics: “Japan and the Monetary Unification in East Asia”, “Changes in Business Culture and Political Economy”, “Structural Reform as a Recurring Process”, “Financial Reforms, their Effects and Role on/for Japanese Companies”, “New Forms of Economic Cooperation and Integration in the Era of Globalization”, “Structural Changes in the Japanese Labour Market”, “Changing Innovation Policies and Systems”, “Money and Trust”, “Changing Marketing and Management Strategies”.

Two sessions had a clear historical focus. One of them discussed an earlier set of structural reforms (in the period economic historians are calling the “first” (modern) globalization; 1870s to 1914) in order to show that the structural reforms of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries resonate in some unexpected ways with those of a century earlier. The other “historical” session drew attention to debates on coinage and its role in the economic and social life of the Edo period.

The other sessions discussed contemporary changes in the Japanese Economy and Businesses, nevertheless drawing attention to historical path dependencies. Two broad questions were raised in all sessions, individual presentations and (very vital and inspiring) discussions: Do we really see big structural and institutional changes in the Japanese economy and policy at the moment? Can we expect markable

structural changes of the Japanese economic and innovation system in the future? To answer these questions, different methodological approaches were chosen and a wide variety of qualitative and quantitative data (collected through case studies and own surveys or aggregated from OECD data, etc.) were presented. The answers themselves differed: One group of participants saw – mostly on the macro level – only slow and limited changes. Those participants who focused on the micro level and presented case studies, mostly saw quite radical changes. For example, according to their analysis new forms of coordination evolve; working relations, workers' values and norms and the organisational culture are reconstructed. Moreover the impact of globalization on Japanese institutions through foreign direct investment was discussed.

Warm thanks go to everybody who contributed to the programme of the economic section! And last but not least, many thanks and appreciation to the local organizing committee, the EAJS Council, all visible and invisible helping hands for organizing this lively and (scientifically and socially) enjoyable conference!

Iris Wieczorek

Section 7: History, Politics and International Relations

Convenors: Sven Saaler and Dick Stegewerns

The section *History, Politics and International Relations* consisted of 60 presentations, equally divided over two subsections with different topics. Two panels originally submitted to this section were incorporated into the category of interdisciplinary panels. We also appreciate the support of the convenors of the Economics, Economic and Social History section, who were able to accommodate another two panels.

The subsection “A Matter of Trust“ addressed the concept of *trust*, research on which has become a major trend in political science and history. It originally appeared in economic research, particularly in investigations of credit relations (credit comes from the Latin *credere*, meaning to believe or to trust). However, it is evident that trust (and mistrust) has also been shaping political and social relationships throughout history and therefore this subsection was aimed at conceptualizing the concept of trust in the framework of Japanese history and politics. The presentations were very diverse, ranging from trust in the writings of Yamaga Sokō to trust in Japan’s present day international relations, and the discussions were lively and most fruitful. In all, the subsection clearly demonstrated the usefulness of the application of the concept of trust to research on Japanese history and political science.

The subsection “Every Picture Tells a Story: The Visualisation of Japanese History” focused on the increasing role and influence of modern media in telling, or rather visualizing, history. Where once the interpretation of modern Japanese history by the historical novel writer Shiba Ryōtarō, ‘the people’s historian’, was extremely influential, nowadays the visual media of *manga*, animation, television and film seem to be the main players. Are we as professional historians at ease with the fact that the voice of non-professionals overshadows and maybe even distorts our careful and painstaking labour in retracing, structuring, analysing and conveying history to a present day audience? As history writers, can we approve of those who rather ‘make history’, i.e. convey ‘history’ on a completely different basis than that of ‘historical accuracy’? Can we be sure that the various artists and directors are autonomous and do not have to adjust their product to the agendas and mores of the state and

commercial institutions? And if we cannot, what should we do? All these and many other questions were discussed on the basis of very stimulating presentations, which ranged from the depiction of the ancient capital of Asuka to the near future, and analysed media as diverse as *hanga*, postcards, preserved townscapes, national parks, tv, film, *manga*, *anime* and the Internet.

We would like to thank our keynote speaker Professor Yomota Inuhiko of Meiji Gakuin University for enlightening us on the representation in film of Manchuria in wartime and postwar Japan and enlivening our discussion with his wide knowledge and inspiring contributions. We are also most grateful to our overall discussant Professor Carol Gluck of Columbia University, who very loyally attended all our sessions and gave all presenters constructive food for thought during the concluding discussion. And, last but not least, we want to thank the local organisation for their smooth cooperation and the student assistants who were most helpful in solving the high-tech problems in our media subsection.

Finally, we are glad to make known that part of the results of our section at the Vienna Conference have recently been published as *The Power of Memory in Modern Japan* by Global Oriental. We also plan to publish a selection of the contributions to the subsection on the visualisation of Japanese history. There are still a few topics we would like to cover, so those of you working on this theme are invited to send their proposals to history@eajs.de.

Sven Saaler, Dick Stegewerns

Section 8: Religion and History of Ideas

Religion as Discourse: Performance and Performativity in Establishing and Contesting Authority

Convenors: Susanne Formanek and Galen Amstutz

For the 2008 EAJS Lecce conference, the convenors issued a call for papers in the Religion and History of Ideas section which suggested taking a methodological rather than a thematic approach. Thus under the title “Religion as Discourse: Performance and Performativity in Establishing and Contesting Authority”, they invited papers investigating Japanese religious phenomena and philosophical ideas not from the viewpoint of sets of firm beliefs, inner states of mind or overall world views, but instead from the perspective of enactment by social agents who seek either to maintain or attain positions of power and security and therefore engage in various kinds of discourse intended to convince. Against the backdrop of the “performative turn” in cultural studies in general, the call solicited an approach to religious/philosophical discourses attentive to both their functional and their structural performativity, that is, to uncovering their social contexts, the dominant scripts according to which their actors, as members of groups or classes, perform(ed) them and for what audiences, and meanwhile at the same time exploring the linguistic or other devices by which novel interpretations of existing scripts achieve “doing by saying” and create (new) realities of their own.

This call for papers resulted in an unprecedented number of proposals, so that for the first time the section’s convenors had to reject even promising papers (or hope for later cancellations, of which there occurred three) in order to keep within the ten 3x30 minutes schedule of time slots allotted to the section. The convenors were happy to have one most interesting panel on “(Re)presentation: Religious Discourse and New Media in Japan” welcomed into the newly established “Interdisciplinary Panel Section”. With more than half of the presenters being Europeans (by origin if not always by current affiliation), from a wide range of countries including France, Germany, Great Britain, Israel, Italy, Rumania, Russia and Spain, and with in addition a near third of presenters from Japan and five from the United States as well as a smooth blend of senior and junior scholars, the section revealed that religion and

history of ideas studies are alive and well in Europe and that they are well-linked internationally. (The qualified exception was the fact that papers addressing philosophy were somewhat underrepresented, as one participant remarked). Limits in space preclude outlining the content of all thirty papers that were given either individually or within panels, so that the following overview is only meant to give the reader an idea of the range of the topics treated.

The section opened with the keynote address by the renowned specialist in medieval Japanese religions Satō Hiroo (Tōhoku Daigaku), who, presuming the background of a dominant medieval script within which the other-world was paramount, provocatively questioned the prevalent idea of the Tennō system having survived its medieval political decline by virtue of the Tennō's religious authority remaining intact. Not surprisingly, the discourse/performativity approach resulted in many papers dealing with religious phenomena which were obviously important features of the religious practice of their times but had remained understudied hitherto because of either their obsolescence in modern understandings of religious experience, their seemingly wild syncretism, or even their "inventedness". They thereby followed a recent trend, conspicuous in religious studies in Japan as well, away from a focus on the "great thinkers" and towards a concern for the wider practice that constitutes the stage on which the former act. A number of papers thus focussed on the proliferating genre of medieval *engi* or "temple founding records" related to holy mountains such as Kumano, Kinpusen, Ōmine and Miwa, uncovering the sites' struggles for autonomy, in which *engi* "performed" as legally admissible evidence in addition to bolstering the cohesion of devotional groups through their ritual readings and (secret) transmissions. A similar approach attentive to the often intricate interweaving of esoteric as well as exoteric scripts was applied to a number of rituals such as the medieval *shūnie* of Yakushiji and Tōdaiji, the Amidaji-based *etoki* or "picture explanation" concerning Antoku Tennō and his Taira clansmen's life and death and the *etoki*'s function as a soteriopolitical requiem, the Zen Sō tō school's *rakan kō shiki*, present-day *aragyō* ascetic practices within the Nichiren denomination, and finally rituals performed to cure children from irritability by combining ancient folk-medicine beliefs with modern psychosomatics as well as reliance on the performative qualities of ritual itself. Discourses enacted *within* performances in the more literal sense of the word were addressed for the case of Kagura and its own *mise-en-scène* of ritual

itself, for the ethics involved in *shakuhachi* flute playing, and for the modern revamping of Buddhist hells in multimedia environments. Jikigyō Miroku's early 18th century suicide on Mt. Fuji was interpreted as following earlier scripts of religious seclusion and suicide while at the same time articulating a novel message to both his Fuji-kō followers and the shogunal authorities. The utterly implausible but nonetheless in its own time very popular cult of a humble maidservant by the name of O-Take who during the 18th and 19th centuries came to be revered as an incarnation of Dainichi nyorai at Mt. Hagurosan (at a time when its ascension was forbidden to women) was explained as a product of several influences including the discourses of a local *bettō* and his Edo-based sponsor network as well as the contemporary fashion for the highly performative stagings of *dekaichō* or "exposition of temple treasures". The importance of place was highlighted, with religious sites attaining performativity in that they were perceived not only to represent, but through ritual action and their being mapped according to acknowledged scripts, to "become" transcendental worlds within this world. A Buddhist world map dating back to the 14th century was shown to have been able not only to resist but even to incorporate modern geographical knowledge because it did not pretend to be a realistic representation of the world, but rather constituted the mental performance of a pilgrimage. The medieval idea of Japan as a sacred land and its corollary concepts – such as the mature *honji suijaku* doctrine or its *kami*-centred reversal – were analyzed as stemming at least in part from the performative effects of Buddhist discourses that tried to cope with the extinction of Buddhism in India, rather than from any simple Japanisation or popularisation of Buddhism. Merely discursive places such as the "world of negligence" (*kemanga*) were shown to have gained reality by their being involved in discourses that strongly positioned their existence in order to play down the possibility of reaching others (the Pure Land, for instance), thus again triggering discourses on how to avoid them. How discourses take architectural shape was studied for the important case of the building and rebuilding of the Meiji shrine in the Taishō and post-WWII periods. Also discussed were the vicissitudes True Pure Land discourses underwent when their scripts were being forced either into the new stagings of modernity and its claims to universal truth or, lately, with the upcoming memorial anniversaries of Shin founders, even further into stagings of post-modernity and its claims to self-realization. Finally introduced were the analytical possibilities of

a combination of the performativity paradigm with other new approaches such as network analysis of the history of the Way of Tea.

Discussion was lively throughout, although never unfriendly. In general, the mood was very enthusiastic, with participants welcoming the methodological approach that they felt to owe much to the “Invented Traditions” paradigm. The approach successfully broadened our understanding of the discursive mechanisms involved when religion is being put into worldly practice. Since many of the papers were of high quality, being based on involved scholarship as well as mutually referring to each other, the convenors are presently seeking for possibilities to publish at least a selection of them jointly.

The convenors would like to take this opportunity to thank Maria Chiara Migliore as well as the whole local organizing committee for its magnificent organization of the conference that greatly contributed to the smooth running of the section. Our special thanks also go to the Salento University students who assisted us during the conference and were always ready to give a helping hand whenever an unsuspected technical problem arose, allowing presentations to make full use of all the audiovisual devices available nowadays.

During the round-up discussion of the section, “Illness, Curing and Healing in Japanese Religions and History of Thought” was suggested as a possible theme for the next 2011 conference section and was welcomed by those present. The convenors would like to ask all those interested to communicate their view on this, and other issues concerning the section, to them via the religion@eajs.eu e-mail address.

Susanne Formanek, Galen Amstutz