

Reports of the 14th EAJS International Conference in Ljubljana,

27-30 August 2014

Conference Report	2
Section 1: Urban, Regional and Environmental Studies.....	6
Section 2: Language and Linguistics	7
Section 3a: Modern Literature	7
Section 3b: Pre-modern Literature.....	9
Section 4a: Visual Arts	10
Section 4b: Performing Arts	10
Section 5a: Anthropology and Sociology.....	12
Section 5b: Media Studies	16
Section 6: Economics, Business, and Political Economy	17
Section 7: History	18
Section 8a: Religion and History of Ideas	19
Section 8b: Intellectual History and Philosophy.....	21
Section 9: Politics and IR	22
Section 10: Japanese Language Education.....	22

Conference Report

1. Conference time

August 27-30, 2014

2. Conference venue

Ljubljana, Slovenia

The conference opening, keynote lecture and welcome dinner were held at Cankarjev dom, Slovenias largest convention, congress and culture center. All the main activities, sections panels and presentations as well as academic events were held at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. The EAJS General Meeting and the closing ceremony were held at the Slovenian Philharmonic, while some pre-conference academic events were held at the University of Ljubljana.

All the mentioned places are in the vicinity of each other and very close to Ljubljana's city center and old town.

3. Participants

3.1 About the participants

There were altogether 898 participants from 36 countries who registered for the conference. One third of the participants came from Japan. Other countries with many representatives were the UK, Germany, USA, Italy, and France.

3.2. Active participants

Altogether there were 562 presentations which were either given in a panel or as individual paper or poster presentations. They were contributed by 612 authors and co-authors. There was a keynote lecture by Karatani Kojin on the opening day. All other presentations and panels were scheduled for the second to fourth day of the conference.

Except for the interdisciplinary panel, each section had two section convenors and one keynote speech.

4. Registration data

Registration opened on March 1, 2014, and altogether 898 people registered for the conference in three different billing periods: early (March 1 – April 30), mid-term (May 1 – July 31), and late period (August 1 – August 30).

Participation fees also varied depending on whether the registering person was a member of the EAJS/AJE, and whether he or she was a regular participant, a student, or an accompanying person.

5. Conference programme

5.1. Social events

5.1.1. Welcome dinner

The welcome dinner was held at Cankarjev dom and open to all conference participants. More than half of all participants attended.

5.1.2. Gala dinner

The gala dinner was held at the Grand Hotel Union in the Ljubljana city center. It was an optional event. More than half of all conference participants attended.

5.2. Conference sections

There were altogether 11 sections. Some section were divided into subsections, and some sections were run in parallel due to a large number of presentations and panels.

The list of sections and subsections is as follows:

- 0: Interdisciplinary section
- 1: Urban, Regional and Environmental Studies
- 2: Language and Linguistics
- 3a: Modern Literature
- 3b: Pre-modern Literature
- 4a: Visual Arts
- 4b: Performing Arts
- 5a: Anthropology and Sociology
- 5b: Media Studies
- 6: Economics, Business, and Political Economy
- 7: History
- 8a: Religion and History of Ideas
- 8b: Intellectual History and Philosophy
- 9: Politics and International Relations
- 10: Japanese Language Education

5.3. Accompanying academic events:

- International Society for Akutagawa Studies 9th annual conference
- JAWS general meeting
- AJE general meeting
- University of Ljubljana and University of Tsukuba Joint Research Forum
- 4th network meeting for Japanese studies and Japanese language education in Central and Eastern Europe
- Japanese database workshop
- Workshop on Japanese »character« in communication and grammar
- AJE forum
- Special invitational lectures
- Japanese crowdsourced translation as language service disruptor

- Introducing new approach: learning Japanese through learning about Japanese culture
- Global Culture Nasu Workshop
- OJAD presentation
- 10th EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students

5.4. Accompanying cultural events:

- The Touch of Life (solo dance performance by Ryūzo Fukuhara)
- From Chaos to Cosmos (painting exhibition by Noriaki Sangawa)
- Fragments of Japan - Portraits, Landscapes (photography exhibition by Matija Brumen)

6. Services at the conference

6.1. Lunch and coffee breaks

There were 3 lunch breaks and 5 coffee breaks. Participants were served lunch boxes and drinks during lunch breaks, and coffee, tea or soft drinks with snacks during coffee breaks.

6.2. Baby sitting

Otroška univerza was the official child-care organizer for the conference. Applications in advance were preferred, but child-care applications on the spot were also accepted.

7. Publishers

The following publishers attended the conference:

- IUDICIUM Verlag
- Kinokuniya Bookstores
- Kurosio Publishers
- NetAdvance
- JPT Europe Ltd.
- Roellin Books
- Nichibunken
- Ask Publishing Co.
- Brill Publishers
- Routledge (JAWS Series)

8. Promotion

Publishers, educational institutions and companies were able to promote themselves on bookstalls, literature table, or through programme advertisements and conference bag flyers.

9. People involved in the organization of the conference

9.1. The local organization board and the teaching staff of Japanese Studies, Department of Asian and African Studies at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana

9.2. Students volunteers, undergraduate and postgraduate students of Japanese Studies, Department of Asian and African Studies at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana

Thirty-five students worked throughout the four days of the conference. Eighteen students were allocated into the classrooms in order to support the section convenors. The other students were either working at the main information desk or circling around the venue, helping with basic logistics.

9.3. The Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana, its offices and support staff

9.4. The conference company Albatros

Albatros was the official conference company in charge of the online registration process. Albatros furthermore organized accommodation, transfer services, and excursions for the conference participants.

Section 1: Urban, Regional and Environmental Studies

Convenors: Maren Godzik (Fukuoka University) and Richard Ronald (University of Amsterdam)

The topic of the Urban, Regional and Environmental Studies section was „Disparities in and between urban and rural spaces“. In our call for papers we specified this topic by referring to the 2011 triple disaster that has drawn particular attention to issues beyond the major cities and the ongoing polarization between conditions in the regions and rural communities, and the metropolitan centers of economic and political activity. Ageing, shrinking and stagnation was a common thread throughout the section.

In his keynote speech „Rebuilding Housing and Communities after the Great East Japan Earthquake“ Hirayama Yōsuke, Kobe University, analyzed the difficulties of reconstruction, also against the backdrop of the 2020 Olympic Games that has serious repercussions on the rebuilding process in Tohoku by slowing the reconstruction process further down.

Eighteen researchers from Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands and Switzerland/ Czech Republic (according to their affiliation) presented twelve individual papers and two panels.

The papers of the first session focused on the topics of energy and transport. Tarek Katramiz examined the acceptance of nuclear power at nuclear power sites, while Nicolas Leprêtre looked into the development of smart communities and transport in various parts of Japan. Christopher Hood presented on recent developments of intercity transport. In the second section on disasters and pollution, the rebuilding policies in the tsunami-stricken Sanriku area were called into question by Remi Scoccimarro. Yoshiko Imaizumi took a historic perspective to analyze practices of dwelling after the Great Kantō Earthquake. Brian Harrison's paper focused on air pollution issues between China and Japan.

The next session dealt with topics concerning recent developments in the city. The session started with a paper by Evelyn Schulz on the slow city discourse. A quantitative paper by Ralph Lützel gave insights into Tokyo's shifting suburbia. Richard Ronald gave a talk about the increasing number of single living people in Japan's urban centres.

The issue of urban-rural tensions was the common background of the next three papers. Volker Elis focused on the discourse of socio-spatial inequality, Isabelle Prochaska-Meyer and Pia Kieniger reported their fieldwork results on the strategies of revitalization of ageing communities, and Adrian Favell talked about artistic approaches to rural decline on Inland Sea Islands.

One panel chaired by Yoshihiro Yokote concentrated on the relocation of buildings within the process of changing urban landscapes, with Silvana de Maio looking into tea house relocation, Yoshihiro Yokote taking up an example of a bank that has been relocated a few times, and Mizuko Ugo elaborating on the changing meaning of buildings after their relocation.

The second panel chaired by Kaiko Miyazaki dealt with low-class districts at rivers and *burakumin* by focusing on the *dōwa* areas with a shrinking number of *burakumin* inhabitants (Kaiko Miyazaki), the vulnerability of areas close to rivers (Marie Thomas), and the identities of *burakumin* not living in *burakumin* areas (Martin Sturdik).

Section 2: Language and Linguistics

Convenors: Sven Osterkamp (Ruhr-Universität Bochum) and Tomasz Majtczak (Jagiellonian University)

Section 2, Language and Linguistics, met for two and a half quite busy conference days. It began with a keynote speech, which was followed by regular papers grouped thematically in ten sessions.

Our keynote speaker, Professor Kida Akiyoshi of Kyoto University, gave an outline of the origin and evolution of the Japanese conjugational system in his paper. With respect to the somewhat controversial issue of the chronological ordering of the various inflectional classes of verbs, he argued in favor of the antiquity of the vocalic (chiefly bigrade) verbs, and hence the innovative character of the consonantal (or quadrigrade) ones, thereby drawing upon his well-known earlier work in this field.

The regular part of the section featured thirty presenters in total, forming a group of scholars that was as diverse as it was balanced. In terms of institutional affiliations, we had fifteen presenters from European countries, but also fifteen from non-European countries, thus rendering the section a truly international gathering of scholars. A similar balance could be achieved as regards academic experience, so that both promising PhD students and long-established scholars were equally represented. The section was therefore a place of scholarly exchange across various borders.

In terms of topics, the full range of Japonic linguistics was represented: Besides Japanese as such, several contributions also addressed the Ryukyuan languages or others such as Ainu and Korean. Both modern and pre-modern stages of these languages were taken into consideration – the former covering recent and even currently ongoing developments, the latter spanning virtually all periods from Nara up to Meiji and beyond. In addition there was a good balance between synchronic and diachronic approaches here. All language systems, i.e. phonetics and phonology, prosody, morphology, syntax and semantics, the lexicon, as well as sociological and pragmatic aspects of language were covered to a lesser or greater extent. Special mention should be made of corpus studies, which was the main subject of three papers and constituted the basis for another four. Finally, script usage in both Japanese and Korean and the interface between language and writing was addressed as well.

The quality of the contributions to our section was generally above average, and every presentation concluded with an interesting and stimulating discussion. The meeting in its entirety can be regarded an undoubted success, for which many thanks are due to all contributors as well as to the local organizers.

Section 3a: Modern Literature

Convenors: Ina Hein (University of Vienna) and Simone Müller (University of Zurich)

The Modern Literature Section consisted of five panels, one roundtable discussion, and twelve individual presentations given by scholars from a number of European countries, Japan, as well as from the US, Canada, and Australia.

In selecting the panels and individual papers, we had given priority to contributions relating explicitly to the special theme of this year's modern literature section: reflecting on the benefits and limitations of 'Western' literary currents and theories for the analysis of modern Japanese literature.

We started with a keynote speech for which we could win Brett de Bary (Cornell University), an expert in theoretical questions concerning translation, postcolonialism, and gender issues. The opening panel “The benefits and limitations of using Western gender theory for the analysis of modern Japanese women’s literature” and the roundtable “Literary theories in Japan – between western models and local traditions” on the second conference day focused on our section’s special topic.

We also had panels on “Identity and otherness in ‘zainichi’ literature”; on phantastic elements in otherwise realist literary texts; on “Gender in post-bubble literature” and on “Japanese literature of crisis from postwar to post-Fukushima”.

The individual papers covered a wide range of topics, but we could actually group them together under certain thematic headlines such as:

- “Feminism and Japanese literature” (treating as examples texts by Miyamoto Yuriko, Dazai Osamu, Hiratsuka Raichō and Kanazaki Tsune);
- “Literary movements” (e.g. naturalism, avant-garde, and other concepts of art);
- “Aesthetics” (analyzing the famous literary debate between Akutagawa and Tanizaki about the plotless novel; Taishō discourses of poems; as well as aesthetic ideals of the contemporary *haiku*);
- and “Case studies on Japanese authors” such as Murakami Haruki, Kanai Mieko, and Abe Kazushige.

Despite this variety, many papers touched upon similar politically and / or socially relevant issues such as colonialism and postcolonialism, gender relations, or trans-culturality.

Having called for papers that would take up the problem of the adaptability of Western theories when analyzing Japanese literature, we were particularly happy that over the three conference days we actually discussed questions such as: Can the terms “naturalism” or “avant-garde” be adequately applied to Japanese literary movements? To what extent can we find mutual or unidirectional impacts, similarities, and differences between literary currents in Japan and Western countries? Which Western literary theories have or had a strong impact in Japan and why? To what extent can we analyze Japanese texts with parameters borrowed from Western literary theories such as narratology, gender theories or post-colonialism – and what are their limitations? How would readings of the same literary text differ if Western theories were applied – or if completely different approaches were taken?

The section was well-visited throughout and met with much positive response. We enjoyed lively Q&A sessions following the presentations. We would like to thank the presenters as well as the audience for making the section a success. Last but not least we wish to thank the local organizers in Ljubljana for their efficient and always friendly support.

Section 3b: Pre-modern Literature

Convenors: Michael Watson (Meiji Gakuin University) and Joshua Mostow (University of British Columbia)

The pre-modern literature section consisted of seven organized panels and three sessions of individual papers. The sessions were arranged in roughly chronological order. In total, we heard thirty papers on subjects ranging from early waka and kanshi to Edo-period publishing. Attendance was good throughout, averaging between twenty and thirty participants for most sessions, with many participants attending all three days. More than forty people crowded into our room for the keynote speech by Yamanaka Reiko (Hosei University), who gave a well-received talk on the subject of “Nō: The Study of Literature in Motion.”

Both convenors were pleased to hear several people comment that the first session seemed more like a panel on classical poetry than a sequence of individual papers by three scholars working independently of each other. There was of course no designated discussant for the session, but instead there was a lively series of questions from the floor, which got us off to a very good start.

As there has been at least one session on kanbun literature at most recent EAJIS conferences, it was good to see again a strong panel on the subject, focussing on works “outside the mainstream” of early kanbun literature. The remaining panel on day two dealt with the pictorial reception of *Ise monogatari*, with each of the speakers looking at a different form of illustration. Yamamoto Tokurō was the discussant.

Day three began with three individual papers by younger scholars from Finland, France, and Japan on Heian literature. This was followed by a panel that gave a good overview of the cultural and literary history of the *Sanjūrokkasen-e*. Medieval literature was represented by three energetically argued papers on war chronicles, origin stories, and encyclopedias. The last panel in the afternoon is sometimes a time when attentions are flagging, but in this case the day ended on a high note, with three very lively presentations on aspects of Kōwaka ballad and its influence. Patrick Schwemmer’s paper was of particular interest,

Both panels on day four were devoted to the subject of publishing and the history of the book. Ivo Smits was an effective discussant on three papers in Japanese, each looking at illustrations in different genres of early-printed books. The last panel focussed on *zōhan mokuroku* or “publishers’ blurbs”, a fascinating new source of information for how books were marketed and read in the Edo period.

The section closed with three individual papers. The first speaker was caught out by new passport requirements and unable to travel, but the local organizers kindly helped the convenor to set up a Skype link in advance. This allowed her both to give her paper on biwa recitation and to respond to questions from the audience in Ljubljana. The section ended with two well-researched papers by graduate students in Naples and Paris on Edo narrative and drama, respectively.

From the difficult stage of selection to the end of the conference, I benefitted greatly from the help of my experienced co-convenor Joshua Mostow. I would like to thank our keynote speaker and each one of the participants for what was by all accounts a successful session. I look forward to meeting you again in Lisbon.

Section 4a: Visual Arts

Convenors: Ewa Machotka (Leiden University) and Amaury A. García Rodríguez (El Colegio de México)

The call for papers “Japan’s visual culture – ‘national’, ‘universal’, ‘local’, ‘global’, ‘transcultural’?” invited proposals offering innovative views on the issues revolving around the place of Japan’s visual culture within global art discourse. It aimed to trigger discussion on how Japan’s visual culture has been narrated, interpreted, and presented via academic discourse, writing and curating in the last few decades, as well as how it should be approached in the future.

As a reaction to the call, the subsection convenors received proposals approaching the topic from a variety of perspectives and investigating diverse material from medieval Buddhist sculptures kept in European collections to contemporary manga and their reception abroad. On the basis of the quality of the proposals and their response to the call, the convenors selected 18 individual papers and 2 panels to be presented during the EAJS Conference in Ljubljana. They were especially glad to be able to select papers by scholars in all stages of their academic careers, from a Ph.D. candidate to professors, and from institutions in Europe, Japan, the USA, and Australia, which facilitated versatile networking and exchange. The individual papers were grouped by topic and arranged in chronological order. The convenors invited renowned scholar Prof. Timon Screech (SOAS, University of London) to give the keynote speech. Prof. Screech delivered an insightful presentation on current research issues. In general, the presenters focused on cultural exchanges with the West and only a few referred to Japan’s great neighbour China. The papers discussed early modern exchanges with Europe, the development of modern art and construction of art history vis-à-vis the West, as well as the importation of objects to Europe, the location of Japan’s art in the global context, and the role of manga in contemporary cultural exchanges. The presentations were well attended (for example the keynote speech was attended by ca. 80 people) and triggered lively discussions.

In concluding we’d like to mention that the subsection also ventured outside the conference venues and on Wednesday, August 27, visited the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, which keeps a Japanese art collection. The participants of the subsection as well as a number of scholars from other sections were received by Dr. Ralf Čeplak, the curator. And finally, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the University of Ljubljana, the hosts of the conference, for organizing such a successful event for the Japan Studies specialists.

Section 4b: Performing Arts

Convenors: Andreas Regelsberger (University of Trier) and Peter Eckersall (CUNY)

The performing arts section was co-convened by Profs Peter Eckersall (The Graduate Center, The City University of New York) and Andreas Regelsberger (University of Trier). Our Call for Papers invited scholars to address the theme of ‘Dramaturgy’ in relation to their current research. The theme attracted considerable attention and was a focus of discussion during the conference. We had a good response to the call from the EAJS membership and after some discussion about the location and timing of papers we were able to place more than half of the papers.

Number of presentations

The section had a full program of papers comprising: 12 single presentations, 18 panellists in 6 panels, and one keynote paper from Prof. Dr. Stanca Scholz-Cionca, University of Trier. There were 31 presentations in total. This turned out to be a good and very balanced mix of Japanese, European and American presenters of both, young and upcoming scholars with exciting new ideas and approaches as well as well-established experts in academia.

Attendance

The section was well attended. Not having breakout sessions meant that panellists could attend all sessions and respond to the themes addressed over the days of the conference. Individual sessions had on average an audience of 20-40 people.

Themes

The papers addressed all fields of Japanese performing arts including classical nō drama, kabuki/bunraku and contemporary theatre, performance and music. Almost all of the papers reflected on the panel theme of 'Dramaturgy', a theme that included studies of theatre histories, production, performance analysis and studies of theatre in the wider context of cultural history.

Panel Highlights

The papers were all of a high standard and many drew on scholars' current research in the field. Themed panels were particularly successful in exploring the wider issues of research topics from various interrelating perspectives. Among the highlights were:

- Prof. Dr. Stanca Scholz-Cionca's (University of Trier) keynote lecture on "The Politics of Performance – Dramaturgies of *shinsaku* Nō". Her deeply historicized presentation was informative and cast light on dramaturgy as political complex in the production of nō. Prof. Scholz-Cionca's paper was distinguished by focusing on three *shinsaku* nō pieces in the context of discourses of power, the distribution of new ideologies and trauma processing.
- The panel "Art, Performativity and Urban Space: 1960s to the Post-Tsunami Present" chaired by Michael Molasky (Wadesa) featured wide-ranging informative discussions on cultures of protest from 1960s Japan up to today. This panel was richly informative.
- The panel "The Power of Woman Performer in Noh: Ideas and Perspectives" chaired by Roberta Strippoli (Binghamton University SUNY, USA) and discussed by Susan Matisoff (University of California, Berkeley) combined various approaches to the topic of women in nō and was very informative.
- The first day of the program largely focused on nō. This was a rare opportunity for nō scholars to introduce current research in the field to an expert audience. It gained further inspiration from Prof. Scholz-Cionca's keynote paper.

Overall we were able to enjoy a smooth running and richly discursive program. We thank our hosts for their excellent work and extend a special thanks to the volunteer helpers who worked so hard to make sure that everything went smoothly.

Section 5a: Anthropology and Sociology

Convenors: Barbara Holthus and Wolfram Manzenreiter (both University of Vienna)

From August 28 to 30, 2014, the Anthropology & Sociology section (Section 5a) convened at the 14th conference of the European Association for Japanese Studies. The conference was held at the Department of Asian and African Studies in Ljubljana, capital of Slovenia.

Two of the three day-meeting featured parallel sessions, in order to at least partially accommodate the high number of applicants for presentations. The section was initially granted only slots for a total of 30 papers (10 sessions). In total, the EAJS received applications for 68 presentations (42 for individual papers and 7 panel applications). Papers and panels were selected based on their innovativeness, methodological soundness and promising quality. Through negotiations with the EAJS head office, the section convenors managed to receive six additional “parallel” sessions, eventually ending up with one keynote and 16 sessions, five of which were pre-formed panels. Among these, 12 sessions (including 3 of these pre-formed panel submissions) were related to this year’s section topic, 4 sessions were considered general sessions. Of these, two sessions were filled with the panel on “Rubbish! The underworlds of everyday life”, organized by Katarzyna Cwiertka (Leiden University) and two sessions consisted of individual papers.

The section’s topic of the 2014 conference was entitled “All for the good life – anthropological and sociological perspectives on happiness in Japan”. We asked what the meaning of happiness for Japanese today and in the past is. What is their take on what makes life worth-living? To what degree is the individual’s pursuit of happiness and well-being constrained or facilitated by society and its institutions? We especially invited papers that address the cultural variability of happiness and well-being across Japanese society and among different social groups.

The high response to this section topic reflected the viability of this topic for anthropologists and sociologists working on Japan and resulted in a large range of presentations on the topic and showed the diversity of approaches and research questions.

The keynote was delivered by Uchida Yukiko, cultural psychologist from the Kokoro Research Center at Kyoto University, who spoke on the “Cultural Construal of ‘Interdependent Happiness’ in Japan – Cultural psychological theories and empirical evidence”. By looking at how culture shapes human emotion as well as what happiness constitutes from a Japanese perspective, she made her argument in defense of cultural psychology and for culturally specific levels of desirability or ideals of happiness.

Showing a lot of comparative data, Uchida pointed to the fact that most theories on happiness are too global and that most people do not fit under these explanatory “Western” models, as they are not “WEIRD”, an acronym standing for “western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic”. For the case of Japan, in particular interdependence, balance seeking between one’s own desires and the needs of society, and the ideal of collectively achieved well-being are elementary elements. The keynote was a great starting point as people kept referring to her throughout the conference.

The session entitled “Civil society and communal life” indicated the significance of belonging, and that practices and activities, which are conducted in a committed way, also contribute to people’s sense of well-being. Patricia Steinhoff demonstrated through her network analysis of political activists how friendships between and within groups and the sharing of knowledge and working together for a common cause has contributed to higher levels of social capital and that political activism may increase participants’ levels of happiness.

Martin Lieser who studies organized football fans in Japan argued that football passion provides a social space of exchange and bonding for people that otherwise would never meet. But pleasure is not only derived from the integrating forces of football fandom transcending the social structure, but also from the deviant behavior enabled within the same social framework. A study of community level happiness was the focus of Tolga Oezsen's presentation. Oezsen, one of the few quantitative sociologists at this year's conference, studied administrative approaches to rural community revitalization in Kumamoto prefecture. As communities suffer severely from depopulation, over time the idea of who belongs to the community is changing, so that even the ones that moved away are still considered to be part of the village communities. Yet there is a difference between the administrative views on community well-being and the individual level of well-being.

The panel on "Social and political institutions as facilitators and constraints to the pursuit of happiness: The family in modern and contemporary Japan" provided an interdisciplinary group of scholars. A historical view on how the discourse on happiness has evolved was presented by Torsten Weber. Already since the 1870s, a politicization of ideas on happiness can be found in Japan. Weber has analyzed the public discourse of Abe Isoo and Hani Motoko in the women's magazine Fujin kōron, finding that happiness in early 20th century discourse was constructed as a goal of individual pursuit and the freedom of the individual rather than the concern for the well-being of the group. Weber further distinguishes between "smaller", meaning everyday, happiness and "greater" happiness, such as the pursuit of happiness as envisioned through the Meiji constitution. Chris Winkler also provided a longitudinal study through his analysis of LDP manifestos between 1955 and 2011. The manifestos show three phases in regards to family policies, pointing to a much greater interest by the LDP in welfare politics than family politics. The pursuit of quality of life only began in the second phase, after the urgent quest for material wealth shifted to the LDP having to adapt to the public's post-materialist policy preferences as well as the harsh fiscal realities of the time. Tim Tiefenbach's quantitative study on neighborhood associations and the distinction between voluntary versus involuntary participation stresses the significance of free choice in the participation. Phoebe Holdgruen presented preliminary results from a project she conducts with Barbara Holthus on parental well-being in response to Japan's nuclear radiation crisis. Findings from their participant observation among activist mothers in Chiyoda-ku were summarized as the motherhood dilemma of women who feel they cannot protect their children as traditional gender roles prevent them from rallying against what they perceive as a threat for their children.

In the session on "Happiness and education", Anne-Lise Mithout asked if Japan's special education reform has contributed to offering a happier life to disabled youth. Mithout sees the situation rather critical, due to the neoliberal impact on politics, the diversity of impairments and the ability of the teachers who might not be suitably trained to diagnose disability. Besides special support programs and integration, also autonomy and self-esteem are equally important elements to increase happiness. Christopher Bondy's ethnographic research in junior high schools in Buraku districts focuses on how schools can function as a "protective cocoon" from having to face the possibility of being detected as outsider of society and thus contribute to the youth's sense of well-being. The implementation of gender equality guidelines was the focus of Aline Henniger. Through a detailed distinction of all actors on the local school level Henniger paints a critical picture by pointing at the difficulties in the implementation process.

The presentations in session "Emotions and happiness in familial relations" showed how the ideals of a happy marriage can greatly vary. Dalit Bloch determined the importance of social context and the shifting conjugal roles in her in-depth case study of one couple, whereas Laura Dales concentrated on the connection between marriage and friendship. Marriage influences friendships in a myriad of ways. Overall, marriage does not delimit the emotional needs for friendship, yet reduces the time for friendship. Hiroko Umegaki Constantini studied recently retired men searching for happiness and their place within the family. In the case of one

grandfather, he chose grandchild-rearing as the right solution, providing him regular access to his own daughter, nurturing emotional bonds and his desire to still be the financial provider of sorts.

“Gendered Views and experiences of well-being in contemporary Japan” saw three papers that focused on the youth subculture, youth’s desires, values and elements creating happiness for gyaru and gyaru-o (Arai Yusuke), on the creation of fantasies of happiness for middle-class wives (Ofra Goldstein-Gidoni), and the study of the workplace and its relationship to the happiness of Japanese women (Maya Todeschini). Todeschini points to women choosing a “winding road” approach, distancing themselves from “traditional” corporate Japan, by working on the margins, either in smaller companies, having multiple career switches, or becoming free-lancers working as consultants or advisors, complementing the activities of traditional companies.

The panel on “Re-imagining masculinities in contemporary Japan: How marginalized men seek happiness and well-being” ran over two sessions. Presenters Kato Etsuko, Ono Mayumi, and Suzuki Ayako focused on lifestyle migration of young men to Canada, the US, Ireland and Southeast Asia in the search for ikigai. Hikikomori were the focus of Horiguchi Sachiko’s presentation, in which she concentrated on support groups trying to provide jobs, dismantle salaryman ideals, further communication and intimate relationships with a significant other. The search of young Japanese salarymen for self-fulfillment through physical appearance rounded out this panel with the presentation by Kristina Barancovait-Skindaraviciene. The desire to be accepted is the driving force for young salarymen to understand their bodies as a “project” to be worked on, as part of their self-identity, and as an expression of their individuality.

In the session on “Happiness and sexualities” Erick Laurent argued that there is happiness in the Japanese closet for Japanese homosexual men. Western activism understands “coming out” not just as a rite of passage but as the universal key to freedom and happiness. Through his in-depth ethnographic research however, Laurent has found that happiness cannot be automatically linked to coming out, but that there can be happiness in the closet indeed. Takeda Hiroko and Ishiguro Kuniko in their paper analyzed young non-elite women working in kira, meaning sexual or pornographic services jobs. These jobs are advertised as transforming the women into something special. Adrian Ovidiu Tamas and Carmen Tamas in their joint ethnographic research at an Osaka bar described the late night customers as lonely and looking for companionship. The spontaneously created community of customers acts as a surrogate for the basic human need of companionship. Customers develop the habit to going to the bar, even on weekdays, which the researchers analyzed in terms of addiction.

Iza Kavedzija’s presentation on old people’s attempts to create a meaningful and fulfilling life opened the first Friday morning parallel session on “Constructions of happiness”. Happiness of the elderly is searched for in the enjoyment of hobbies, a more contemplative lifestyle, and gratitude for the little things in life. But her account also countered the stereotypical image of the dependent seniors. Since her informants were well aware of the difficulties in balancing between their own desires for securing a certain sense of freedom with maintaining warm interpersonal relationships, achieving a sense of happiness turned out to be a practical form of moral judgment. Nataša Visočnik researched the role of machi-zukuri, public housing policy, and community projects on bringing happiness to the socially and spatially marginalized buraku and Korean neighborhoods in Southern Kyoto. Debra Occhi also looked at the spatial dimensions of action and emotions. Her research compared interaction patterns between masked characters and participants of traditional community festivals with the ubiquitous consumption of the more recently designed, regional tourism characters; both are clearly about raising strong emotional responses, such as anxiety or laughter, to chase away evil or simply to bring about instant moments of happiness.

The second parallel section on Friday morning presented “Survey data on happiness” and thus only featured quantitative studies. Economist Sebastian Lechevalier asked if increasing inequality in Japan is correlated with unhappiness and if so, if widespread dissatisfaction will eventually lead to a heightened interest in redistributive policy. His findings indicate that particularly those forces in society that expect the state to level off socio-economic disparities are dissatisfied with their life in general and the result of government interference in particular. Sociologist Carola Hommerich discussed the contribution of social capital to social and subjective well-being. David Green studied regional and work-related issues of happiness and their impact on fertility outcome. Estimation results of regression analyses revealed that marriage age, spouse’s education and working hours are negatively associated with the number of children, while spouse’s income, the living arrangement with parents and regional satisfaction are positively associated.

The panel entitled “Phenomenologies of Japanese Happiness” concluded the last two sessions of the Anthropology and Sociology section. Gordon Mathews’ twenty year-long study of the changing life trajectories of Japanese adults demonstrated great variability of sources of happiness and unhappiness. While work turned out not to have been a calling for most of his informants, in retrospect they regretted putting too much pressure on their own offspring in order to follow in their footsteps, by placing work over family roles. Osawa Makoto who researches urbanites turning farmers discussed the pursuit of happiness in the context of individual motivations, lifestyle patterns and the institutional framework of regional political economy. Susanne Klien revisited her informants from a previous research project on volunteering in disaster-hit Tohoku to find that post-volunteering activities consist of spatially differentiated and diversified lifestyles that combine economic activities to make a living with contributions to society for making sense out of living. Continuing the panel, Joy Hendry presented first reflections from a recent research stint on what is retired life like. Her Kyoto-based informants revealed that health and grandchildren are as much a source of happiness as are social encounters and “work-like” activities. Finally, Lynne Nakano looked at women’s take on marriage, comparing Japan, Shanghai, and Hong Kong. With universal marriage remaining the ideal, single life is seen as an unconventional life choice, demanding conscious efforts to negotiate between societal expectations and personal desires. Singlehood, considered by family members and others a transitory state, eventually becomes accepted as permanent with women getting older.

Rounding up three days of intense scholarly exchange, the session organizers initiated the final discussion by reflecting on “What we came to know and still would like to know about happiness in Japan”. In sum, the overall impression gained from the presentations was that Japanese seem rather happy through the anthropological lens, with the sociological approach delivering a less happy picture. Since the majority of presenters were from the field of anthropology, with only a small number of sociological analyses, we wonder if this cleavage is partly caused by the disciplinary self-selection bias or related to separate disciplinary conceptualization and research strategies. We have seen throughout the conference that there is a methodological tendency in anthropology for making use of biographies, and it is not unlikely that the human drive of making sense out of one’s life is ultimately conducive to more positive assessments.

The great variety of case studies reminded the audience that happiness is not universal, and it is not the same emotional state of mind to any and all, and that it even cannot be taken as a cultural construct. When asked, people tend to see happiness as a very personal and immediate issue. They give less significance to the weight and impact of socio-structural conditions, which are rather taken for granted, even though they are seen as shifting, whereas the self remains rather stable. The life stages people find themselves in are putting different demands on their lives and thus exert changing influences on their personal desires.

Some questions however have not yet been fully addressed throughout this dense, three-day section, yet which are worthwhile and should be the subject of future, ongoing investigations. Uchida in her keynote speech presented a noticeable gap between the ideal state of happiness between Japan and the U.S. How

are other societies faring in regards to their ideal states of happiness and in comparison to their actual levels of happiness? We further wonder to what degree findings from the case studies can be generalized. What is the interaction between larger data sets and ethnographic data, and what kind of interaction can be beneficial for sociologists and anthropologists working on the topic? We also think that the role of the mass media, whether on the generation of desires and emotions, or on the public discourse about and the perception of happiness deserves further investigation. And finally, what is the connection between the subjective appraisal of institutions and structural conditions and their objective conditioning within the larger framework of happiness and well-being? In other words, more research is needed to come to terms with the conceptualization and the materiality of happiness in Japan.

In late 2015, the section convenors will publish an edited volume of selected anthropological contributions to the conference.

Section 5b: Media Studies

Convenors: Griseldis Kirsch (SOAS, University of London) and Blai Guarné (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)

This was the first time that a section on Japanese media studies has been convened at an EAJS conference. For that reason, we had an open call for papers and welcomed scholars of all levels working on any aspect of Japanese media. As convenors we were very happy to see the interest aroused by the section and, due to the high number of quality proposals received in the call for papers, we were glad to schedule a parallel session on the third day of the conference.

As inaugural keynote speaker we had the honor to have Professor Iwabuchi Koichi (Monash University, Australia) who delivered a lecture titled "Paradigm Shift in the Critical Study of Media Culture? – Some Thoughts from Japanese Cases." In his keynote address, Professor Iwabuchi highlighted the significance of critical media studies in the wake of 3/11, combining both theoretical considerations on media and their role in society with more practical elements of analysis. His trip to Europe was possible thanks to the co-founding of the Great British Sasakawa Foundation, the University of Vienna, and the Faculty of Languages and Cultures at SOAS, University of London.

After Professor Iwabuchi's keynote speech on Thursday morning, we had an entire day on media and gender. Three panel-sessions took place: "Interdisciplinary Analysis of TV Dramas: The Example of *Kaseifu no Mita*," chaired by Hilaria Gössmann (University of Trier, Germany); "Culture of Their Own? Questioning Gender Normativity in Japanese Media Cultures," chaired by Elizabeth Grace (University of Cambridge, UK); and the individual papers presented under the rubric "Media and Gender," in a session chaired by Blai Guarné (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain). The papers presented in those panels approached the constructions of gender in the media from various angles and through various genres. Two of the panels had been pre-organised, one of which ran entirely in Japanese and was on a television drama that was extremely successful after 3/11, *Kaseifu no Mita*, and the other one on gender normativities in various media/genres.

On Friday, we ran parallel sessions throughout the day. In one of the sessions, we had a panel on Fukushima and film titled "3.11 Cinema – Disaster and the Nuclear Unconscious in Post-Fukushima Films." The panel was chaired by Livia Monnet (University of Montreal, Canada), and Thomas Lamarre (McGill University, Canada) acted as discussant. This panel was followed by various individual papers gathered in three different

panels around the topics of “Historical Media,” “Media and Memory,” and “Media and Politics.” Simultaneously, in the parallel sessions, we enjoyed two subsequent panels on historical picture postcards as media focused on the topics of “Imagi(ni)ng History” and “Imagi(ni)ng Modernity,” that were respectively chaired by Sepp Linhart (University of Vienna, Austria) and Susanne Formanek (University of Vienna, Austria). These panels were followed by individual papers that addressed the two main topics to which the day was devoted, media and disaster, and media and historical records, as well as another pre-organised session on mediated voices chaired by Kerim Yasar (Ohio State University, USA) under the rubric “The Voice in the Machine – Mediated Voices in Historical and Anthropological Perspectives.”

On Saturday, we started the day with another pre-organised session on “Trans-national Agents and Social Change in Japanese Cinema – 1920s-1960s,” that was chaired by Griseldis Kirsch (SOAS, University of London, UK), and we closed the section program with the individual papers presented in the panel session “Media and the Fantastic.”

All in all, we ran seven pre-organised panels and nineteen individual papers. The speakers came from various countries, including, but not limited to, Japan, Canada, the US, the UK, Germany and Spain. We had far more submissions than we could accommodate, and it was a very successful first conference for the Media Studies section.

The convenors wish to thank the organising committee in Ljubljana for their efficiency and swift help for whichever problems arose, as well as the EAJS and the funding bodies that made Professor Iwabuchi’s trip to Europe possible. We are looking forward to another successful section in Lisbon in 2017.

Section 6: Economics, Business, and Political Economy

Convenors: David Chiavacci (University of Zurich) and Sébastien Lechevalier (EHESS)

Diversity and institutional change in the Japanese economy were proposed as topics in the call for papers of the section of economics, business, and political economy. Still, as at earlier EAJS conferences, we also accepted good papers on other topics related to the section. Our keynote speaker was Prof. Mari Sako of Oxford University, who had kindly accepted our invitation. Her presentation “Whither the Japanese Model?” was a stimulating introduction into the section topic. It gave an overview of the localization and theorization of Japan as economic model in political economy research and raised the question if the Japanese economy could still today be regarded as a model of its own in view of economic and structural reforms and increasing diversity since the burst of the bubble economy in the early 1990s.

The section included a total of 29 papers and an invited round-table. We had in the section two organized panels. One contained three papers on the persistence of life-time employment in Japan under the pressure of economic stagnation. The other was devoted to Japan’s economic history. Its four papers focused on economic development and global finance in inter-war Japan. The other seven sessions consisted of 21 individual papers in total, which covered a wide range of economic topics on Japan like homelessness, history of whaling, or entrepreneurship and innovation. Some papers analysed aspects of certain markets and industries in Japan by focusing on cosmetic industry, digital product market, medical engineering, or tourism industry. Furthermore, inter- and transnational topics of Japan’s economy were also discussed like trade agreements, female foreign workers, or foreign-owned firms. The theme of the round-table was “Board Diversity and Leadership in Japanese Corporations”, which included as participants external board members

of Japanese companies. It was a welcome opportunity to bring academics and practitioners together, which led to new insights into changing practices of boards in Japanese corporations.

We thank again our keynote speaker Prof. Sako and all participants for joining us in Ljubljana and for their efforts! The local organizers made a perfect job, and the section of economics, business, and political economy had very interesting and intensive days of scholarly exchange.

Section 7: History

Convenors: Hans Martin Krämer (University of Heidelberg) and Ellen van Goethem (Kyushu University)

The History Section was convened by Hans Martin Krämer (University of Heidelberg, Germany) and Ellen van Goethem (Kyushu University, Japan). We decided to issue a call for papers for two subsections, which would allow for openness in terms of both historical period as well as methodological approach. In other words, subsection 1, "Japan in World History," aimed more at modern and political history, while subsection 2, "Reorientation: Alternative Sources for Japanese History", was designed to draw more proposals from the perspectives of premodern and cultural history. Overall, we received 13 proposals for panels and 51 individual paper proposals. Although we had the privilege of being able to fill slots for two parallel sessions throughout all three conference days, we could only accommodate two thirds of the applications we received.

Thankfully, the applications were divided nicely between the two subsections, so we were able to select papers for strong three-day programs for both topics. Much like in previous years, the early modern period and the early twentieth century figured most prominently in the papers eventually selected. In contrast, the history of the ancient, medieval, and post-World-War-II periods were grossly underrepresented. In terms of speakers, the anonymous selection of papers did little to change the geographic pattern also visible in the past. Almost half of all speakers in the section came from either German or English speaking countries, while contributors from Southern Europe, including France, were far or few between. A positive development is that there were more representatives of Eastern Europe than usual.

In fact, one of the highlights of the subsection "Japan in World History" was that two whole slots were devoted to Russia and Japan, one being a grouped panel on Soviet Russia. This session also sparked a lively debate due to the presence of many Russian specialists in the audience. Another highlight was the section's keynote speech by Yamashita Norihisa (Ritsumeikan University, Japan) on "The 'Long Twentieth Century' and Japan as a Non-Axial Civilization". Professor Yamashita's broad placement of Japan within world history fit in very well with the first subsection's theme and also, somewhat surprisingly, with the conference key note by Karatani Kōjin held one day earlier.

Thanks not in the least to the local organizers, everything went very smoothly. There were no last-minute cancelations; turnout was high throughout, averaging between 30 and 50 per subsection; and the quality of the papers was also generally perceived to be very high. Some topical clusters other than "Russia and Japan" were the role of non-state actors in foreign relations of Japan during the second half of the nineteenth century and new approaches to fascism in Japan. In both cases, controversial discussions ensued from the audience concerning the feasibility of new approaches to the subject matter at hand, and this is perhaps the most that one can hope from a large and interdisciplinary meetings such as the EAJIS International Conference.

Section 8a: Religion and History of Ideas

Conveners: Erica Baffelli (University of Manchester) and Anna Andreeva (University of Heidelberg)

The meeting of the section 8a “Religion and History of Ideas” opened with the keynote lecture by Professor Paul L. Swanson (Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, Nanzan University, Nagoya). He noted that several trends gained prominence in the scholarly publications on Japanese religions over recent years: the discussion of the very term “religion” and the applicability of its Japanese counterpart “shūkyō”; the investigation of Japan’s religiosity in the Meiji to early Shōwa periods; the scholarly attempts to elucidate the history of “Shinto”; and the study of Japanese religions in the aftermath of the “Aum affair” in 1995. In addition to other important topics, Professor Swanson also drew attention to the state of academic publishing and raised the issue of “open access” and “business model”, regarding the future and challenges the scholars are facing in the twenty-first century.

The second session of day one started with three individual papers. Janine Tasca Sawada’s (Brown University, USA) paper focused on the historiography of what she calls “people’s religion”, drawing on the example of the Fuji-kō in early Tokugawa Japan. Mick Deneckere (University of Cambridge, UK) discussed the periodical press and Buddhism in early Meiji Japan, while Tinka Delakorda Kawashima (University of Tsukuba, Japan) presented a paper reappraising the history of “kakure kirishitan” through the World Heritage Site nomination process.

The afternoon was busy with two panel sessions. One, chaired by Ian Reader (Lancaster University, UK), was entitled “Mediated Religion and Charismatic Imagery in Contemporary Japan.” John Schultz’s (Kansai Gaidai University, Japan) presentation zoomed in on the rising popularity of mascots used by Buddhist temples and organizations, while Isaac Gagné’s (Waseda University Institute for Asia-Pacific Studies, Japan) paper approached the issue of charisma and sociality of religious groups online. Erica Baffelli (University of Manchester, UK) discussed the shifting patterns of authority in Japanese ‘New Religions.’

The second afternoon panel, chaired by Fabio Rambelli (University of California, Santa Barbara, USA) was dedicated to a new research angle in the study of Japanese religion: the maritime themes and links with the sea. The exploration of new perspectives for the study of maritime religiosity was the focus of the first paper (Fabio Rambelli). Gaynor Sekimori (SOAS, UK) investigated the status of maritime deities throughout the period of critical reassignment of religious roles and purposes during the Meiji Restoration. Emily Simpson’s (University of California, Santa Barbara) presentation focused on the image of Empress Jingū and maritime religiosity in medieval Japan. Max D. Moerman (Barnard College, Columbia University) responded with comments on the panel’s introduction and presentations and suggested further research questions for this new field of inquiry.

Day two started with the roundtable entitled “The Sensorial Construction of the Body in Medieval Religion: Voice, Taste, Form, Performance,” and was presided over by Lucia Dolce (SOAS, University of London, UK). The presenters, including Abe Yasurō (Nagoya University, Japan), Itō Satoshi (Ibaraki University, Japan), Shiba Kayono (Chiba University, Japan), Yoneda Mariko (Kobe Gakuin University, Japan) and the panel chair, Lucia Dolce, introduced the new sources recently discovered in Japanese temple archives and proposed new approaches to the study of medieval Japanese Buddhism. The topics discussed ranged from enacting of the “living body of the Buddha” (Abe), voice as a part of religious body (Shiba), drinking tea and the thought of the medieval monk Yōsai’s (Yoneda), to the impact of Tantric notions on the medieval Shinto discourses on sexual desire (Itō), and conceptualizations of colour and form in Tantric visualization practices (Dolce).

The late morning session, chaired by Anna Andreeva (University of Heidelberg, Germany) was dedicated to individual papers. Steven Trensou (Hiroshima University, Japan) continued the theme of esoteric Buddhism with the paper on the cult of 'Tripartite Wish-Fulfilling Jewel' in medieval Shingon. Peiying Lin (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel) presented her analysis of the *tathāgatagarbha* theory in a text known as Shōtoku Taishi's Commentary to the Śrīmālā Sūtra, from a comparative perspective. Fumi Ouchi (Miyagi Gakuin Women's University, Japan) questioned the dynamics of ritual performance, focusing on its aspects as ritual and entertainment.

The afternoon of day two was busy with two stimulating panels. One, entitled "From temple archive to public performance" presented a range of case studies focusing on ritual texts and preaching the Buddhist doctrines. The panel's chair and first presenter, Chikamoto Kensuke (University of Tsukuba, Japan) elucidated the role of religious preaching through the texts penned by the Kōfukuji monk Jōkei found at the Tōdaiji temple library. Unno Keisuke's (National Institute of Japanese Literature, Japan) paper focused on the ritual procedures of *waka kanjō* involving the image of Kakinomoto Hitomaro. Michael Jamentz (Kyoto University, Japan)'s paper continued the theme of poetry and Buddhist liturgy by discussing the twelfth-century *Fugen kōshiki* lectures.

The last session of the day, chaired by Michael Conway (Otani University, Japan) was dedicated to the images of the Kamakura-period Buddhist thinker Shinran (1173-1262) in twentieth-century Japan, and offered perspectives from inside and outside the Shin denomination. Through the case of Kurata Hyakuzō's (1891-1943) play, *The Priest and His Disciples (Shukke to sono desh)*, Ama Michihiro (University of Alaska, USA) analyzed the literary representations of Shinran and the burgeoning production of the Buddhist literature in the Taishō period (1912-1926). The panel was closed by the response by Robert Rhodes (Otani University, Japan). Inoue Takami (Otani University, Japan) investigated the revival of Shinran's ideas in Japan's contemporary thought, through the writings of Japan's leading intellectuals: Yoshimoto Takaaki (1924-2012), Karatani Kōjin (1941-), and others. Michael Conway offered an analysis of significant shifts in the Otani-ha doctrinal studies regarding Shinran during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

The last day of the conference started with the morning session chaired by Erica Baffelli (University of Manchester, UK). The session consisted of two individual papers. Elizabeth Kenney (Kansai Gaidai University, Japan) cast light on the daily life of the Yoshida Shinto shrine priests, Yoshida Kanemi (1535-1610) and his younger half-brother, Bonshun (1553-1632). Jane Alaszewska (SOAS, UK) re-examined the ritual performances of kagura on the Southern Izu islands.

The second morning panel, chaired by Carina Roth (University of Geneva, Switzerland), was dedicated to the creation of sacred sites and focused on the relationship between the histories of temples and shrines (*jisha engi*) and religious space. Heather Blair (Indiana University, USA) questioned the nature of medieval *engi* as a genre, arguing that such texts have been 'in flux from their very inception' and could better be understood as 'representations of constantly re-negotiated institutional identity'. Kawasaki Tsuyoshi (Shūjitsu University, Japan) traced the evolution of mountain ascetic practices (Shugendō) and the perceptions of sacred mountains during the Insei period via the literary representations of En no Gyōja. Carina Roth followed this theme with an analysis of the tales of En no Gyōja's travels to the Kumano region, and the competing claims laid by different lineages over the Ōmine mountains.

The last panel of the conference, chaired by Fabio Rambelli, was entitled "The Faces of Shinto in Modern and Contemporary Japan". Its first presenter, Michael Wachutka (Tübingen University, Germany) surveyed the process of canonization of the Shinto scriptures by the Ōkura Institute for Research of Japan's Spiritual Culture (Ōkura seishinbunka kenkyūjo) in the early twentieth century. Elisabetta Porcu (International Research Center for Japanese Studies, Kyoto, and Leipzig University, Germany) offered an ethnographic account of the neighbourhood and 'preservation' associations (*chōnaikai* and *honzonkai*, respectively) and

their activities during the Gion festival in contemporary Japan. Paul B. Watt's (Waseda University, Japan) paper focused on the representations of Shinto as seen through the case of Ōmiwa shrine in nowadays Nara prefecture.

During the several busy and stimulating days in Ljubljana, the participants of Section 8a brought forth a wealth of new ideas and lively discussions on a multiplicity of topics, ranging from 'New Religions', religious preaching, and esoteric Buddhism to the studies of engi texts, Shinran, maritime religions, and much more. Thanks to the support of the Japan Foundation, the 2014 keynote lecture was very well attended and was a great success. These fruitful discussions, lectures, and events amply demonstrate that the studies of Japanese Religions, set in both pre-modern and contemporary contexts, continue to be a vital area of scientific inquiry in the studies of Japan in the twenty-first century. Thank you, Ljubljana, and see you next time in Lisbon!

Section 8b: Intellectual History and Philosophy

Convenors: Raji Steineck (University of Zurich) and Wim Boot (Leiden University)

At this year's EAJS conference, section 8b "Intellectual History and Philosophy" was initiated as a new branch of what was formerly section 8 "Religion and the History of Ideas." The motive behind this decision had been to allow for more room for papers dedicated to non-religious aspects of the intellectual history of Japan, and for papers with a distinct focus on ideas (religious or otherwise) as opposed to religious practices, rituals, and so forth. The number of proposals the convenors received proved that there was ample demand for this new subsection from the side of potential participants. The scholarly quality of the presentations and the ensuing discussions, as well as the size of the audience, which even necessitated a change of venue to a larger room, further substantiates this evaluation.

The convenors decided to place, for this initial running of the sub-section, an open call for papers, which was met with a large number of incoming proposals (53 papers, among which were 23 individual papers and 8 panels with a total of 30 papers). In spite of initial misgivings on the side of the convenors about accepting panels, a close review of each proposal with respect to their subject, originality, and scholarly quality led to the decision to accept 8 individual papers and 7 panels (with a total of 22 papers). Speakers came from all regions of Europe, as well as from Japan, North America, and New Zealand.

As keynote speaker, we invited Prof. Sueki Fumihiko, renowned for his works on the intellectual history of Japanese Buddhism. Prof. Sueki gave a tour d'horizon of current issues in the field, focussing on the conceptualization of, and taxonomical distinction between, intellectual history and philosophy. He combined this with a forceful call for a new approach in Japanese philosophy, one that would be characterized by a "critical continuation" of older traditions, as opposed to apologetical hermeneutics, historicist positivism, or an all-out rejection of these traditions.

The program of the subsection covered all periods of Japanese intellectual history, from ancient Japan to the contemporary era, and a wide range of approaches, from close philosophical-hermeneutical readings to institutional history. A recurring theme was the relation between the spheres of the religious and the secular, and the different conceptualizations of both over time.

As was to be expected, we received some complaints that the creation of this subsection forced difficult choices on members of the audience between the subsection on religion and that on intellectual history and

philosophy. All things considered, we still believe, however, that this is a good problem to have, because it points to the high level of interest generated by both sub-sections.

Section 9: Politics and IR

Convenors: Ian Neary (University of Oxford) and Paul O'Shea (Aarhus University)

Coming back to this job after 20 years – I was section convenor for Politics twice in the early 1990s – I was pleasantly surprised by how much easier it is now that the EAJS office is much better staffed and the local organisers play a more positive supportive role. This plus the assistance of my co-convenor Paul O'Shea made the whole process relatively painless.

There is a trend within US political science to undervalue and move away from anything that might be considered 'area studies' such that there is a declining number of political scientists there who have the language and regional skills. Happily I can report that this has not happened (yet?) in Europe if we are to judge from the evidence of the number and quality of papers presented in our session.

We began with a keynote presentation from Professor Takayuki Hirose from Fukuoka University. His comments on the corporate dominated society recurred at various points in our discussion over the three days.

Altogether we had 28 papers with eight of them firmly in the area of IR with the rest mainly focused on domestic politics, although there were several on the boundary of the two. On topics we heard about a broad range – energy, gender equality, agriculture protection, the new growth strategy. But predictably there were a number of papers about developments in the relationship with China and which commented on some way on the record of and prospects for PM Abe Shinzo.

There has been some criticism recently that political science writing about Japan has been 'theory taking' rather than 'theory making' but in this area too I can report that a healthy number of the papers in our session sought not merely to report but also to contribute to the development of political science method and theory. On the evidence of the papers presented in our session we can conclude the political science studies of Japan are able to contribute to the broader knowledge about Japan but also to the development of the twin disciplines of Politics and IR.

Section 10: Japanese Language Education

Convenors: Noriko Iwasaki (SOAS, University of London) and Anca Focseneanu (University of Bucharest)

Section 10 was convened by the Association of Japanese Language Teachers in Europe e.V. (AJE). AJE has held an annual symposium on Japanese language education in different parts of Europe since 1996, in collaboration with other organizations keen to promote Japanese language education in Europe. (For example, the 2013 symposium was co-organised by AJE and Asociación de Profesores de Japonés en España; it was held in Madrid.)

Reports of the 14th EAJS International Conference in Ljubljana, 27-30 August 2014

It was the second time for the AJE to take part in the EAJS conference to hold its annual symposium as an EAJS section, following the 2011 conference in Tallinn, Estonia. Because the participation in the EAJS conference was very successful and rewarding, we took part in the EAJS conference in Ljubljana as well. We are truly grateful that we were given the opportunity to do so again.

Our theme was “Mediating between languages and cultures”, which represents one of the important capacities that we aim to promote among learners of Japanese as a second language. This is closely related to “plurilingualism” and “pluriculturalism”, the key concepts embedded in CEFR, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (Council of Europe 2001). Though this framework was originally developed for language learners and educators in Europe, recently it is increasingly used in other countries, including Japan. Plurilingual and pluricultural individuals are not just familiar with more than one language and culture. By using multiple linguistic and cultural repertoires, they could also play an important role in mediating between languages and cultures.

The programme consisted of a keynote speech, a special guest speaker’s lecture, and an invited panel, in addition to panels, oral and poster presentations selected from the submissions. We received over 120 proposals in total, from which we accepted 4 panels, 33 oral presentations and 30 poster presentations. The presenters came from 16 countries altogether. (The programme was also preceded by a pre-symposium joint event on Japanese language education and networking, co-organised by AJE and the University of Ljubljana. This event featuring Professor Jae-ho Lee’s (University of Tsukuba) report on remote language learning system was very well attended.)

The keynote speaker, Professor Noriyuki Nishiyama (Kyoto University), specializes in language policy, foreign language education, and French language education. He gave a talk about the objectives of (foreign) language education. Prof. Nishiyama maintains that the goal of foreign language education is not just to meet students’ needs by helping them to improve their language skills. Learning another language helps learners develop their capacity for mutual understanding and respect, which are fundamental in democratic citizenship.

The guest speaker was Mr Saburo Shimada, who is the stage director of a theatre group called Lasenkan, based in Berlin, Germany. He shared his stories about how he became interested in theatres performed in multiple languages (Japanese language varieties, German and Spanish). His lecture was accompanied by powerful performances by two actors, Ms Kei Ichikawa and Ms Kana Torino.

The invited panel, chaired by Dr Nana Sato-Rossberg, discussed the potential of translation work and insights from translation studies for language education. Three talks were given by Dr Sato-Rossberg, Professor Jeffrey Angles (Western Michigan University) and Professor Kikuko Tanabe (Kobe College).

Both the EAJS office and the organising committee at the Ljubljana University were extremely helpful and accommodated a number of requests we made in order to meet the needs of the large number of participants and special arrangements required (e.g. for poster presentations). We are wholeheartedly grateful for the efficient and friendly support we received from EAJS staff, colleagues from the University of Ljubljana and their students. We thank them all again!