

13th EAJS PhD Workshop
Convento da Arrábida, Portugal
27–30 August 2017

Reports by the Participants of the 13th EAJS PhD Workshop

The 13th EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students took place in the Arrábida convent. Located in the middle of a quiet forest, the venue favoured attention and tranquillity to a level that is hard to find in an urban environment. A significant advantage, considering that the experience was very intense: We carefully followed and discussed 20 dissertation reports in two days. The scheduling was adequate, nonetheless. One day would not have been enough to share time and ideas together and get to know one another well. One day more would have been too exhausting.

I appreciate that the organisers tried to bring together a wide variety of topics and disciplines. Comments were very constructive, respectful, and truly in the spirit of helping to improve each participant's work. For me, the sharing of ideas and comments in the workshop was inspiring and helpful for my work even beyond the time span of my presentation.

In sum, for me the event was an opportune time to discuss ideas in my field, and also to expand my horizon beyond the limits of specialisation. At least for researchers in the incipient field of Japanese Philosophy Studies in Western languages, chances like this are as scarce as valuable.

I am thankful to the EAJS for letting me participate. All participants and invited experts, especially Prof Rein Raud, gave me critical comments, advice, and questions. I was finishing my dissertation, but the feedback I received was useful for assessing my progress. Last but not least, I thank the Fundação Oriente for allowing us to occupy their venue and for all the excellent attention we received there.

Carlos Barbosa Cepeda
Pompeu Fabra University, Italy

When I applied for the 13th EAJS Doctoral Workshop, I was only hoping to gain some feedback from senior scholars and peers involved in Japanese studies, but this workshop gave me much more. Of course, it was useful to highlight both strengths and weaknesses, receiving productive comments that helped me question and rethink many aspects of my research.

Besides, each of us came from different backgrounds, working in different fields, so that maintaining a high level of attention during the presentations was easy, and it pushed and challenged us to explain the very core of our researches using simple terminology and making it accessible to everyone.

As I am currently enrolled in the second year of my PhD course, for me it has also been the perfect opportunity to reorganise my findings and preliminary conclusions summarising them while also focusing on aspects such as the theoretical framework and some problems I am currently facing.

The environment was extremely friendly and supportive, and it allowed us to live this experience without feeling judged or criticized. The chosen location of this year was a monastery far away from

the city of Lisbon, and we were given even more chances to bond, spending plenty of time together, and sharing our comments and academic experiences over dinner and during the evenings.

I would like to thank Prof Raud, Dr Pandey and all the senior scholars for their helpful comments and insights. I would also like to thank the EAJS and the Toshiba International Foundation for having given me this extraordinary chance and I strongly recommend any PhD fellow involved in Japanese studies to apply for participation in the next Workshops.

Corinne D'Antonio
Sapienza University of Rome

I decided to apply for the 13th EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students after I had heard the enthusiastic account of a colleague who had just returned from the past event in Paris.

In my PhD dissertation I intend to prove how the anthropomorphism of foods in premodern Japanese literature was a device used not only to entertain readers, but also to convey different types of knowledge and ideas in a more humorous way. I also aim to highlight how the relationship established by these texts with food itself, but also with contemporaneous literary genres (especially with epic war tales) changed significantly through the centuries. All the scholars who commented on my project (and, in particular, my advisor Dr Rajyashree Pandey and Prof Rein Raud) provided me with invaluable critical feedback on the tentative framework of my dissertation and gave me further suggestions on how to improve it.

Despite the intense and intellectually compelling program, the atmosphere was one of relaxed conviviality, where everyone felt free to share opinions and snippets of knowledge. And as often happens when scholars in different fields dialogue together, the discussions that followed the individual presentations provided us with unusual and challenging insights on our topics. The workshop was not only a good opportunity to take stock on our own ongoing work, to reflect upon it from different perspectives and to practise our presentation skills. It was also a unique chance to meet other students around the world and enlarge our academic (and personal) network in a nicely informal environment. It was an overall great formative experience that I will undoubtedly recommend to my fellow colleagues.

Elena Follador
University of Cambridge, UK

What does it mean to think through “Japanese Studies”? This was one of the significant questions that the participation to the workshop, as a consequence, gave me the chance to reflect on.

I was initially both excited and daunted by the idea of discussing my research with the group of fellow Ph.D. researchers and senior scholars in the field; I neither have a background in Japanese Studies or currently belong to Area Studies at my home institution. However, I quickly became fascinated by how the interdisciplinary nature of the workshop enabled us to have multi-layered discussions through the common intellectual and geographical framework of “Japan.” In other words, the diverse disciplinary perspectives of the participants and discussants shed lights on unexpected commonalities among us, gradually shaping what it might mean to think through “Japanese Studies” today.

Feedbacks from scholars and fellow students of the same discipline to myself, i.e., intellectual history, was also immensely valuable. Given the fact that their methodological and theoretical approaches

to the subject were different from what I had been familiar with, I was able to re-assess my proposal from other perspectives I would have otherwise overlooked.

Apart from these invaluable academic insights, meeting and getting to know an international cohort of Ph.D. researchers and senior scholars of Japan was truly an indispensable experience. The relaxed, intimate, and isolated setting of the workshop at a former convent in the beautiful mountains of Arrábida certainly facilitated the friendly environment for both collaborative learning and pleasure day and night.

Such intellectual perceptions and friendships I have gained through the workshop have already left me with lasting impacts. One is that now I feel I am part of a supportive network of Japan scholars among the cohort of fellow Ph.D. students. Another is the wealth of relevant references I have been advised to look at by the senior scholars; they broadened the contexts in which I can be approaching my research now and in the future. I am deeply grateful to have been part of this precious opportunity.

Eiko Honda
University of Oxford, UK

I had the great pleasure of being selected to participate in the doctoral workshop in Lisbon, at the Arrábida convent 27-30th of August 2017. The program was very tightly packed, but as there were a certain number of papers to be discussed, and only two days for doing that, it could not be helped. The grouping of papers was well balanced to counteract the effects of their sheer number. There was a variety of subjects, but also topics that resonated with each other, so that a certain amount of recurring notions, themes and methodological issues brought about the feeling of a shared set of problems which helped to deal with the wide variety of topics. The structure of the sessions and the amount of time given to a single paper was well thought and allowed enough time to make sense out each topic. A lengthier presentation would risk not sticking to the essentials, and discussions might branch out too far from the feedback most necessary. As the days are as long as they are intense, I do not think one could not take in any more than two full days.

The surroundings, the convent and the staff were all superb. One really did not have to worry about provisions or anything except the papers. The feedback from the supervising senior academics was extremely helpful and the overall aftereffects of the workshop are those of renewed inspiration, insight and determination. I would like to thank all persons involved in making this possible.

Aleksi Järvelä
Helsinki University, Finland

I was delighted to have been selected to take part in the PhD workshop preceding the 15th EASJ Conference in Lisbon this year. It was a positive and enriching moment for my research, as well as a valuable personal experience.

First, I am glad I had the chance to present my project to an audience of Japanese Studies specialists and get their helpful feedback. Especially as I am at an early stage of my research, the comments and suggestions from my advisor, Prof Zachmann, and from the other participants, will surely be beneficial to the development of my ideas. Beyond having the chance to discuss my research with the fellow PhD students, I also could broaden my knowledge of Japanese Studies, enjoying the presentations and the papers of my colleagues. Finally, looking at the work in progress of second

and third year PhD students provided a good occasion to self-evaluate the progress and timing of my own thesis. The informal setting and relaxed atmosphere of the workshop were great for discussing our works, networking and socialising in a constructive and encouraging environment.

I definitely recommend this experience to other PhD students from any area in Japanese Studies, and at any stage of their research. In this spirit, I would like to thank the organisers, the advisors' committee, and the Toshiba International Foundation, which made this event possible. I would also express gratitude to the EAJS Office staff that managed all our applications and inquiries, and the personnel at the Convento da Arrábida that made us feel most welcome in the enchanting location of the Arrábida Natural Park.

Thea Karagiolidis
Durham University, UK

The 13th EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students coincided with the scheduled completion of a 12-month period of fieldwork that I was undertaking in Japan. The workshop provided me with an excellent opportunity to reflect on my experience in the field, test my ideas and receive feedback from senior scholars and peers on the preliminary findings and analysis of the data collected during fieldwork. It allowed me to test the provisional structure and emerging argument of my thesis, as well as to identify the strengths and weaknesses of my argument in preparation for the post-fieldwork process of writing.

Furthermore, the event served as an excellent networking opportunity to connect with fellow PhD researchers and gain an insight into the range of methodologies and topics emerging in the field of Japan-related research. Engaging with the peers and senior scholars representing a range of disciplinary perspectives challenged me to consider my research project from alternative angles, whilst their questions and curiosity proved both encouraging and enriching. At the same time, learning about new topics and modes of inquiry used in linguistics, philosophy, literary studies, law and history among others, was both grounding and illuminating.

The friendly and informal atmosphere of the workshop, coupled with beautiful scenery surrounding the monastery where we stayed, allowed for intellectual exchange, not only during the sessions, but also in informal conversations outside of them. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the funders and organisers for this opportunity; and to the supervisors (Prof Verena Blechinger-Talcott, Prof emer. Joy Hendry, Dr Rajyashree Pandey, Prof Rain Raud, and Prof Urs Matthias Zachmann) and to all the participants for this extremely enjoyable and enlightening intellectual gathering. I hope that the friendships and connections made at the workshop will continue in our professional careers and future personal endeavours.

Paulina Kolata
The University of Manchester, UK

I was very happy for having been accepted to participate in the 13th EAJS PhD Workshop. The workshop was very productive for the following two reasons. First, it was a great opportunity for me to interact and network with other Japanese Studies scholars in Europe, and not just in the UK. I was very pleased to meet leading professors in the field and immerse myself in a network of young scholars. Especially because very few PhD students in my department pay attention to Japanese politics, this workshop helped me developing my network within the field of Japanese studies. Second, I appreciated the very productive feedback from the senior advisors on the matter of my

theoretical framework. It was very challenging, but at the same time, a great opportunity to assess my arguments and theoretical framework based on their comments.

The themes of the presentations were, however, a bit too broad for me. It was a great opportunity to listen to other young researchers' work in different subjects such as literature and history, but I wish I could meet more researchers from political science, economics and international relations. As a suggestion for the future workshop, it would be more fruitful if sub-sessions can be set up depending on research field. Such a structure could provide more in-depth conversations among peers who share the similar academic interests.

Kimiko Kuga
University of Oxford, UK

I am happy to report that the EAJS Workshop was a rewarding and inspiring experience, on every possible level. I will highlight what made it so precious to me, and try to add some constructive observations.

Logistics (pickup, transportation, location, food and drinks) were flawless. I would only have wished that for a slightly looser schedule to enjoy the place a little longer, and have more time for freeform conversation with the participants.

I found the feedback from the advisors extremely helpful, and the intellectual and personal bonding with fellow PhD student very meaningful – academically, but also in a personal sense: I dare say that everyone of us came back from the workshop with a renewed enthusiasm and sense of academic community.

Spreading 20 presentations on 2 days, with 40 minutes for each presentation and ensuing discussion, was, however, physically taxing. Everybody was very attentive and engaged to the very end, but also tired. Also, while the discussion of the projects was the core of the experience, and very precious to me, I wonder if by cutting a few minutes of every presentation, or making the projects circulate in written form and be directly discussed, could have left a free afternoon for group activities, focus groups, a round-table-style discussion of common topics. On the same note, given the sheer brilliance of the participants, even some group assignment before or during the workshop would have been a very enriching experience, at least for me personally.

I can also stress that the main EAJS conference became much more rewarding through the participation in the prior workshop, since our attendance was already that of a group – so that we could share notes of parallel panels, suggest to each other relevant speakers, and introduce to other people our own academic contacts. There remained an extremely positive spirit.

Lorenzo Marinucci
University of Rome Tor Vergata, Italy

I had the privilege to be chosen as one of the participants of the 13th EAJS PhD Workshop right at the end of my first year of PhD research. The site of the Workshop – the Convento da Arrábida outside of Lisbon, Portugal – was phenomenal, the ambience and the food were excellent, and both the participants and our senior academic supervisors were open and extremely generous with their observations.

My research topic is Edo Period Japanese Confucianism through the lens of comparative philosophy. The workshop allowed me to present my work and receive valuable feedback at the moment when I had just hit a rough patch in my research and was beginning to doubt the direction in which I was headed. The academic supervisors' and other participants' favourable comments helped me to get me out of overthinking things and back on track. I found it of great value to be able to present my work to researchers from different fields and I believe the multi-disciplinary approach is one of the great strengths of the workshop. As intense as the workshop was, I feel it could even have been a day longer.

This workshop was an important experience for me. It provided me with an opportunity to rethink my approach and to find ways to improve my work. It also helped me build new contacts with future colleagues. I would like to express my gratitude to the Toshiba International Foundation, EAJS, our senior academic supervisors, all other participants and anyone else, who made it all possible.

Marko Ogrizek
University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

*“Happy the dwellers in this holy house;
For surely never worldly thoughts intrude
On this retreat, this sacred solitude [...]”¹*

Even though Robert Southey’s words might be over 220 years old, the accuracy of his description still matches my feelings as I attended the 13th EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students at the Convento da Arrábida in Portugal.

Worldly thoughts of the participants were lost on the way to the retreat, just as the bus driver lost his way on unpaved roads in the midst of olive groves. Hence, the workshop was all about carefree academic discussions, vivid exchanges of ideas and open-minded communication, surrounded by mountains, cliffs and wilderness, overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. From the first words at dawn, mumbled over a cup of coffee, throughout rich panels of presentations, to the last spirited argumentations long after midnight, the senior advisors Rain Raud, Verena Blechinger-Talcott, Joy Hendry, Rajashree Pandey and Urs Matthias Zachmann endeavoured to provide feedback, critique and help to us doctoral candidates. Furthermore, the discussions with fellow students were also enlightening and inspiring moments, strengthening ties for future networks and academic collaborations.

Finally, I would like to thank the participants and advisors for four days of intensive cogitation on various aspects of Japanese studies in a friendly, supportive environment, far from the hostile commodified academic institutions of our days. But maybe, even in the former days of Robert Southey, Convento da Arrábida was a rare example of a carefree place:

*“[...] To have no cares that eat the heart,
no wants that to the earth chain the reluctant spirit,
to be freed from forced communion with the selfish tribe who worship Mammon”²*

Florian Purkarthofer

¹ Southey, Robert (1838) “Written after visiting the Convent of Arrabida, near Setubal, March 22. 1796”, *The Poetical Works of Robert Southey: Collected by Himself*, Volume 2. London. p226 – p228.

² *ibid.* p226.

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude for having been selected to present my dissertation as a work in progress at the 13th EAJS PhD workshop in Lisbon. It was an engaging and thoroughly exciting experience, which helped me to develop my research further and to interact with other PhD students in a highly stimulating multidisciplinary environment.

This workshop gave me the opportunity to discuss my research with scholars from different fields and participants at different stages in their career. Before attending the workshop, I spent one year of fieldwork in Japan where I mainly focused on philological and textual analysis of primary sources. Thus, I was hoping to receive feedbacks about the structure of my dissertation and the theoretical framework so to broaden my research focus. For this reason, I really enjoyed presenting my work within an intimate and supportive environment. All the comments and suggestions by the expert scholars and other participants from different research areas helped me to think about my research in a new and fresh perspective. I also found the discussions that followed each presentation very fruitful, since the comments addressed to other presenters helped me to identify similar issues in my own project. I particularly appreciated the multidisciplinary character of the workshop, as it allowed me to get an overview of the current state of research in the Japanese Studies field from the next generation of researchers.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Prof Rein Raud, for the invaluable feedback I received on my PhD project and to all the advisers who shared their experience and knowledge. Lastly, I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to the Toshiba International Foundation and the Japan Foundation for making this workshop possible and fostering intellectual exchange at different academic levels.

Marta Sanvido

Ca'Foscari University of Venice, Italy

I would like to express my gratitude for having been able to attend the 13th EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students 2017 at the wonderful Arrábida Monastery in Portugal. At the time I was in the starting phase of writing my thesis, in which I aim to delineate the formative phase of the New Religion Tenrikyō in the Meiji period until its official recognition in 1908, amidst ongoing negotiation of the concepts 'religion' and 'superstition'.

At that point in time, my life was governed by two big questions: "Can I pull my thesis off well?" and "What's next"? While I have had the opportunities to study in Japan and to reach out to Japanese scholars, this had largely prevented me from attending European forums of scholarly exchange. Being chosen for the workshop in itself gave me a lot of much needed encouragement for my project. Furthermore, the workshop, its organizers and participants receive my full appreciation and gratitude for the following two reasons.

First, it truly is a rare forum, where younger and senior scholars get together for a meaningful exchange. It was not only an opportunity to obtain in-depth comments on one's research by scholars, who had read the full report and had prepared immensely to give each participant useful commentary. It also showed the full potential of (the oftentimes questioned usefulness) of the humanities, proving how a scholar can apply his or her specialised knowledge to many different topics, and how viewpoints differ based on the discipline one is most accustomed to. Even more so, advisors and students alike used all of the time at the marvellous monastery, from breakfast until way after

midnight, to discuss virtually anything and everything. I would like to mention especially Prof Rein Raud for his exceptionally warm and welcoming ways, which played a huge part in creating an open atmosphere of free exchange.

The second unique opportunity the EAJS workshop offered was the possibility to connect with other PhD students over a time of two days, which not only gave room for much needed bickering about the difficulties of being a PhD student and our future prospects, but also broadened my horizon concerning different institutional realities, workshop opportunities, work experiences and personal motivations. I look forward to seeing everybody again sometime somewhere, even though we can hardly hope to get such highly delicious food as we had at Arrábida!

Franziska Steffen

Martin-Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany

I am really grateful for having been accepted as a participant for the 13th EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students. As a DPhil student entering the final writing-up stage of my doctoral degree, I cannot thank the EAJS and the Toshiba International Foundation enough for such a valuable opportunity to receive critical feedback on my work, and to understand specifics of current academic discourse in Japanese Studies in Europe through communication with academics and other postgraduate participants

My research on perception and expression of time and space concepts in modern Japanese is primarily focused on analysis of experimental data, which I obtained through three sets of surveys with Japanese native speaking participants: a free word association experiment and two spontaneous speech experiments: one on spatial description strategies and one on temporal description strategies. The feedback received from the senior academics and discussion of my presentation during the workshop was particularly helpful in identifying problems and gaps of my approach to the language material, analysis and presentation of the research findings. I really appreciated all questions and advice from both senior academics and other doctoral students.

The EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students was also a wonderful chance for me to meet other doctoral students involved in a variety of fields of Japanese Studies. The diversity of the topics presented and discussed during the workshop gave me a unique opportunity to learn about different and unfamiliar approaches and methods in a friendly atmosphere.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the organizers of the workshop for choosing a venue surrounded by the breath-taking views of the Nature Park of Arrábida.

Maria Telegina

University of Oxford, UK

I am very grateful to have been accepted to participate in the 13th EAJS PhD Workshop that was held at the Convento da Arrábida in Portugal. In overall, it was a unique opportunity to reflect on and further develop my research, and to interact with senior scholars and PhD candidates from in and outside of Europe.

As a first year PhD student, I never had the opportunity to present my research outside of my home university. Although my progress is limited, I was optimistic to partake in this interdisciplinary workshop. When listening to other PhD students present their research that already had a definite form and advanced progress, at first I sort of lost confidence in my project. However, the informal

context of the workshop, which promoted a friendly atmosphere, and the comments that resulted from it, restored my confidence and prompted me to look at my project from a different perspective and to think outside of the box.

This informal atmosphere resulted in comments and discussions that did not criticize one's project, but helped you realize which parts you can still improve. This alongside the pleasant and inspiring talks during breakfast, lunch, dinner and coffee breaks, this workshop was the perfect opportunity for reflection and intellectual exchange. The location of the workshop was breath taking and provided the ideal scenery to network and interact with professors and fellow graduate students. Listening to their experiences as PhD students – the ups and downs – also encouraged me not to lose faith in my ongoing research project.

I want to extend my deepest gratitude to the EAJS and to Prof Zachmann, for the instructive feedback that I received on my PhD project. Finally, my gratitude also goes to the Toshiba International Foundation, the Japan Foundation and to the participating members who introduced me to new perspectives and research fields that I was previously unfamiliar with. Therefore, I strongly recommend the EAJS PhD workshop to all PhD students in Japanese Studies, no matter in which field or year they are.

Freya Terryn
KU Leuven, Belgium

Even though I have received feedback for my project from my supervisor and other assessors during the last two years, this was the first time I had the chance to present my work to a group of people working specifically in the field of Japanese Studies. It was extremely stimulating to be able to discuss my dissertation with scholars at such varied levels in their academic careers and with such varied interests and backgrounds. I feel like I got valuable criticisms and encouragement on equal measure, both after my presentation and, more informally, during the lunches and dinners we all shared.

The other sessions were equally informative; having the opportunity to learn about projects so different from my own in their stages of inception, and seeing the way in which they were commented upon and judged, allowed me to derive practical insights on academic production. At the same time, it was particularly pleasant for me to be able to meet with other Ph.D. students working in some capacity on medieval Japan, which is not a widely popular subject in my home institution. I trust this workshop will prove not only useful for the development of my thesis throughout the next year, but also in the long run, as it has opened possibilities of academic collaboration, and widened my intellectual and personal network.

I would like to thank both the organisers and the participants for a very enriching experience, as well as the staff at the Convento da Arrábida, who made sure our stay was memorable in the best possible way.

Iris Tomé Valencia
University of Oxford, UK

Thanks to the European Association for Japanese Studies and its generous sponsors, I was able to participate in the 13th EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students. I feel extremely grateful to the organisers of this event, the committee who selected my paper and to the other participants for their enthusiasm, friendship, and support. My dissertation will benefit greatly from the thoughtful comments and the lively debates we had during these three memorable days.

This workshop was the first opportunity to present the current state of my research in English and it put me in the position to rethink my Ph.D. project as a whole by giving it a systematic and palatable structure. I spent my second year as a visiting student in Japan, where I focused on very specific case studies from a more 'textual' point of view. In the meantime, the interdisciplinary character of this event forced me to balance such a narrow philological approach with broader methodological issues in order to render my work intelligible to a wider audience. In this sense, I believe it constituted an invaluable chance not only to improve form and contents of my on-going research but also to enhance my self-confidence in public speaking.

I would like to express here my deepest gratitude to Dr Rein Raud and Dr Rajyashree Pandey for their wise advice and encouragement. Other supervisors had to leave the venue right before my session, but we enjoyed informal interaction and fruitful discussion during the coffee breaks, at lunch and in the evenings. Finally yet importantly, I was delighted to meet brilliant colleagues from all over the world and enjoy together the amazing atmosphere, food, and location of Arrábida monastery. I truly hope that our paths will cross again someday in the future.

Pier Carlo Tommasi
Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy

The 13th EAJS PhD Workshop was a pleasant yet intense four days of presentations and discussions, meeting fascinating people and enjoying the peace and quiet of a remote convent overlooking the beautiful Portuguese mountains and ocean.

To start, I very much appreciated the friendly atmosphere between students and professors, which allowed for stress-free and honest conversations. In different places, the customs regulating student-professor relationships demand different attitudes. The care and effort to integrate PhD students in academia by EAJS and this workshop is most remarkable and I cannot stress enough how valuable it has been to me. The thorough feedback after the presentations, the sharing of personal experiences, insights and tips, the informal chats all made it possible to gather a wealth of information otherwise hard to get by.

Since I am based at a Japanese university, the workshop was a great opportunity to find out what Japan-related research is currently being done in Europe. I was surprised to see a large number of projects focusing on pre-modern literature, religion and philosophy. It was stimulating and most insightful to learn about the various methodologies and sources employed by colleagues in different fields from my own. In addition, I was encouraged to place my own research in a larger, international context, which has provided me with a new impetus to develop my study.

Attending the workshop, in combination with presenting at the 15th EAJS International Conference itself, resulted in an intense week that offered me the critical feedback, intellectual stimuli and a new network that I needed to improve and expand my research. I would like to extend my thanks to all workshop participants, the EAJS and the Toshiba International Foundation for making this unique event possible.

Pieter Van Lommel
Tsukuba University, Japan

From the 27th to the 30th of August, I had the privilege and pleasure of participating in the EAJS Ph.D. workshop in Portugal. It was held at the Arrábida Monastery, about a two-hour drive by bus from Lisbon, and it was a truly inspiring setting for me on a personal level, as my own research project is centred on religion and cultural heritage.

The workshop itself was incredibly useful to me in a number of ways. It was humbling to receive such insightful and constructive feedback from the fellow participants and Joy Hendry, my discussant for the workshop. Joy, who was incredibly kind and engaging, took the time to talk to me about my project at length even outside of the workshop hours. My fellow participants and I also had plenty of chances over meals and in the evenings to discuss our research with one another in more detail. It was a truly enlightening experience overall and an invaluable opportunity to meet other young scholars in the field of Japanese Studies. This last point was of particular importance to me, as I am currently the only Ph.D. in Japanese Studies at my department; a fact that occasionally makes my work a relatively lonely endeavour. The most precious part of the EAJS workshop experience for myself, therefore, was the ability to make friends and useful contacts among my fellow peers.

The two full days on the 28th and 29th were, in truth, very long with a lot of information to absorb in such a short amount of time. However, it was well worth the long days and the beautiful meals we were served certainly helped us cope! My only regret is that we did not have more time to enjoy the beautiful surroundings.

Morgaine Theresa Wood
University of Oslo, Norway

This year's EAJS PhD Workshop was a melting pot of different people with a common affection for studying aspects of Japan. We were located in the most amazing surroundings, up in the mountains outside of Lisbon, and the short few days helped to form bonds between us that allowed us to discuss everyone's topics more frankly and constructively.

The opportunity to present my work to other scholars of different fields was both a daunting process and a positive one. It allowed me to think about my project and how I wanted to convey the ideas contained in it to other people. Receiving feedback from senior academics was also a great factor. Their experience allowed them to offer feedback from alternative angles. In my case, I felt that this was helpful in really focusing me on what was important to my project, as well as reassuring me that I was confident enough in my knowledge to explain my rationale and findings.

In some ways, though, the most rewarding aspect of the time in Lisbon was outside of the presentation room. Although we all had our chances to speak there, time was often limited because of the number of people participating. In many cases the most productive and interesting discussions transpired naturally between people in the breaks, especially at lunchtime and over dinner. Several of these conversations revealed common themes and ideas between diverse fields that maybe I would not have thought about before. It also inspired those of us who study pre-Edo Japan to think about how to better approach representing this area of study in the wider European picture. I would like to thank the EAJS for offering me the opportunity to participate in this great experience.

Elesabeth Woolley
School of Oriental and African Studies, UK

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