

Tenth EAJS PhD Workshop

University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia

August 23-26, 2014

Report by Academic Organizer

In 2014, the EAJS PhD workshop could celebrate its tenth anniversary. Like earlier EAJS PhD workshops, it was a unique opportunity for PhD students to reflect on their own research project, to receive feedback and new input from specialists in their field and to discuss their projects with fellow students and senior scholars. It was also an event of European integration that allowed academics from all over Europe with different academic traditions and systems to meet, to network and to exchange ideas. All participating PhD students and senior scholars agreed that the workshop had been highly successful and that the workshop gave us all not only new ideas in our research, but enlarged also our academic horizon about Japanese studies in Europe.

From August 23 to August 26, the tenth EAJS PhD workshop took place at the Davcen Tourist Farm in the mountains near Ljubljana in Slovenia. It preceded the 14th International EAJS Conference that was held from August 27 to August 30 at the University of Ljubljana. In total 55 PhD students applied for the EAJS PhD workshop. The senior scholars participating at the workshop and the board of the EAJS selected among these submissions twenty promising projects for the workshop. The main criteria for the selection was the quality of the project, but a balance between disciplines, the PhD students' countries of origin, and their institutional affiliations were also taken into consideration in the selection process. The final selection included four PhD students from East Europe, three PhD students from South Europe, five Japanese PhD students, two PhD students from the United States, one PhD student from Northern Europe, and four PhD students from continental Western Europe. All accepted PhD students were enrolled at European or Japanese universities. Two PhD students represented a university from Southern Europe, six PhD students were affiliated to a university in continental Western Europe, ten PhD students studied at a northern European university, and two PhD students came all the way to Slovenia from a Japanese university. According to research field, social sciences were represented by four PhD students in social anthropology, three in political sciences, and one in sociology. Two PhD students were writing their thesis on Japanese history. Art and art history was the research field of five accepted PhD students. Finally, Japanese literature and linguistics were each the field of specialization of two PhD students.

As advisors of the PhD students, we had at the workshop a team of six senior scholars: Dr Erica Baffelli (East Asian Studies Department, University of Manchester), Prof Andrej Bekeš (Department of Asian and African Studies, University of Ljubljana), Prof David Chiavacci (Institute of Asian and

Oriental Studies, University of Zurich), Dr Helen Macnaughtan (School of Asian and Oriental Studies, University of London), Dr Jordi Mas Lòpez (Department of Translation and Interpretation, Autonomous University of Barcelona), and Prof Fabian Schäfer (Department of Middle Eastern and Far Eastern Languages and Cultures, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg). This team of senior scholars covered a wide range of research interests: religion and media studies (Erica Baffelli), linguistic and second language acquisition (Andrej Bekeš), sociology and political sciences (David Chiavacci), economics, economic history and gender studies (Helen Macnaughtan), literature and translation (Jordi Mas Lòpez), and philosophy and cultural studies (Fabian Schäfer).

The program of the PhD workshop consisted of eight sessions with two or three projects. For each project about 40 minutes were reserved. PhD students first presented their project (about 15-20 minutes) and received constructive comments and feedbacks from a senior scholar working in their field of research (about 10 minutes). Then the floor was open for a discussion of the project with all PhD students and senior scholars (about 10-15 minutes). In order to prepare discussions and feedback, each PhD student had submitted a project report of about 5.000 words in early July that had been read before the workshop by all participants. In these project reports the PhD students discussed the current state of research in their field, their concrete research question, the theoretical framework and methodological approach of their project, hypotheses and/or preliminary results as well as (possible) difficulties in realizing their research project. This comprehensive preparation of the workshop allowed a very lively and qualitatively good discussion of the PhD projects. As the workshop took place in a quite remote location, the whole group stayed over the time of the workshop together and developed into a real academic community. During the free time at Davcen Tourist Farm, we had many bilateral and multilateral discussions and exchanges about the research projects, research on Japan in general, and the differences between academic systems in European countries. In the final discussion all the participants agreed that the workshop had been a very intensive, but scholarly rewarding and also enjoyable time with a lasting impact. Not only the PhD students benefited from the advice and comments of the senior scholars and discussions among themselves, but the workshop gave also the senior scholars the opportunity to meet a young, innovative and enthusiastic generation of upcoming scholars working on Japan.

It is my pleasure to thank in the name of all participating PhD students and senior scholars the people and organizations that made the realization of the workshop possible. We are grateful to the Toshiba International Foundation for their generous financial support of the workshop. We thankfully acknowledge the kind and time-consuming support by the local organization board of the 14th EAJS International Conference in Ljubljana and in particular Dr Nataša Visočnik who took care of all our transportation and accommodation. A special thank goes also to Prof Andrej Bekeš. Although he was very busy as the leader of the local organization board of the 14th EAJS International Conference, he still managed to join part of the EAJS PhD workshop as senior scholar. Finally, organizational support by the EAJS office and especially Ronja Meising was also of crucial

importance for the success of the workshop. We hope that this year's workshop was not the last anniversary and that many PhD students and senior scholars will be able to profit from the workshop in the future.

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