

**7th EAJS PhD Workshop,
Tallinn University, Käsnu, Estonia
August 21-24, 2011**

Report by Academic Organizer

As part of its activities to promote young scholars and to build and expand the increasing community of Japan scholars in Europe, the EAJS regularly organises PhD workshops. The goal of the workshops is to facilitate networking and communication among early career scholars (i.e. doctoral students) in Japanese Studies or from humanities or social science disciplines, but with a distinct focus on Japan. For many participants, the workshops are a rare opportunity to discuss their work with senior scholars outside of their home department, as there are many universities where Japanese Studies departments are rather small and where opportunities for students' travel to international conferences are limited.

EAJS PhD workshops are intended to offer an opportunity for open discussions and for interdisciplinary cooperation among doctoral candidates from various European countries. In the course of the workshop and in the context of the related social activities, participants will form networks and establish contacts that often continue beyond the time of the workshop. Workshop alumni often meet again at the EAJS conferences or other conferences and workshops in the field of Japanese Studies. By doing so, EAJS aims to contribute to the creation of a European community of Japan scholars.

Similar to the previous workshops, where the calls for papers were met with an increasing number of applications, the number of applications for participation in the 7th EAJS PhD workshop reached a new record of 73 applications for a total of 16 slots for participants. The high number does not only underline the popularity of EAJS PhD workshops, but also shows how important this opportunity for scholarly discussion and networking has become for young European Japan scholars.

The selection process was therefore a very difficult task that the organiser and the members of the EAJS council took very seriously. In the selection of participants, we ensured that all major areas of European Japanese Studies were represented, from linguistics and language to religion, literature, history, sociology, anthropology and political science. We also tried to get a good balance of participants by countries and institutions as well as gender. Moreover, we took care in ensuring that the participants' projects were such that they could speak to each other and also gain benefit for their own projects by discussing other participants' work.

We were also able to win three supervisors whose research and expertise was such that all participants could benefit from comments and suggestions. Moreover, as the workshop took place right before the EAJS Conference in Tallinn, we managed to ensure that one participant with a research topic related to ghosts and representations of evil in medieval Japan could participate in a specialised workshop organised by Nichibunken prior to the main conference, thus also providing the participant with specialised expertise beyond the workshop.

The program of the workshop was rather intense: all participants were asked to submit a brief abstract of their dissertation project, a longer research paper and a progress report of their dissertations prior to the workshop, and all participants were also asked to read all

other papers before coming to Estonia. It was wonderful to see that all participants clearly came to the workshop very well prepared and that discussions were fruitful and very active from the start.

The workshop was divided into seven sessions that included short presentations of two or three dissertation projects (about 10 minutes) and were then followed by comments from one or two designated discussants. Afterwards, the floor was open for general discussion. In between sections, there was ample room for individual discussions and comments as well. All papers were assigned to one or two senior advisors who actively engaged with issues related to the nature of the projects and the research question, methodology, sources etc. As organiser, I am very grateful to Reiko Abe-Auestadt, Harald Fuess, and Urs Matthias Zachmann for their commitment to invest quite considerable time and work to engage with the projects and to provide comments. Moreover, Rein Raud came to the workshop to provide comments and insights for the papers related to medieval Japan.

All together, we had about 40-45 minutes of discussion time per project. In a final round of discussion at the end of the workshop, we discussed publication strategies and ways to find the right journal to publish one's research. From that discussion, there also rose the wish by participants to have a workshop on strategies not only for doctoral candidates for publishing in peer-reviewed journals.

The workshop took place right before the 2011 EAJS Conference in Tallinn. We decided to locate the workshop not in Tallinn itself, but to have it in the pristine environment of the village of Käsmu on the Baltic Sea, about 2 hours from Tallinn. The choice of location was a wonderful one: we used a conference facility in the Käsmu Maritime Museum, a small art project right by the sea and surrounded by a large garden. The facility had a bright and sunny conference room with all necessary technical equipment, and coffee breaks and meals were served in the garden or in a dining area made of an old fishing boat right on the beach. The environment enabled participants to use time between sessions for a walk by the sea to free up their spirits or to engage into more intense discussions of the projects. It also allowed all participants to enjoy Estonian hospitality which certainly ensured a very open and friendly climate throughout the workshop that also reflected positively on the workshop. All participants stayed in guesthouses in Käsmu, just a short walk to the workshop venue.

As organiser, I leave it to the participants and their reports to give you an impression of the work and discussions during the workshop. For myself as organiser, I have to say that I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to organise the PhD workshop. I received very positive responses from participants after their return.

Therefore, I would like to thank the Japan Foundation, the Toshiba International Foundation, and the EAJS for generously providing funds for travel and accommodation as well as for food during the workshop. I would also like to cordially thank the local organising team from Tallinn university, especially Kerli Kangro and Sirli Peda, as well as the staff from the EAJS office, Birgit Schwotzer and Dietmar Segl, who all devoted considerable time and effort to help us make this workshop a success.

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