

Nineth EAJS PhD Workshop
Frankfurt University, Germany, UK
March 07 - 09, 2013

Reports of the EAJS PhD Workshop Participants

The preparation for the 9th EAJS project was a good opportunity for me to re-think my dissertation as a whole and to find ways to make it palatable for a broader audience. It was also my first time to make a presentation in English, and therefore a chance to evaluate and practise my skills in that regard.

The feedback given after the presentations was always very thorough and helpful, and it was obvious that the supervisors had put a lot of time and thought into their comments. Prof. Reiko Abe-Auestad gave me important advice and new ideas, and also provided contact with other researchers. Since she stayed over the duration of the whole workshop, we had ample opportunity between the sessions, at lunch and in the evening to discuss my dissertation further. Other participants' supervisors had to leave immediately after their session, so unfortunately the time to discuss their projects fell short for some of them.

I was glad to get to know about such diverse and interesting topics, impressed by the high level of the other participants' research and also happy to make new friends. The experiences I had in Frankfurt and the comments of advisors and fellow PhD candidates alike helped me a lot. I want to thank everyone who made this workshop possible.

Nora Bartels

University of Heidelberg, Germany / Osaka University, Japan

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When I applied to the 9th EAJS Doctoral Workshop, I was particularly looking forward to the feedback I would receive on my own PhD project from expert scholars in my field and the other participants. However, the workshop turned out to offer far more than that. First of all, it was a wonderful networking opportunity. Doing a PhD can be an isolating experience so it was especially refreshing to be able to socialize with other doctoral candidates over the two days. Moreover, all the participants' presentations provided me with an update of what is currently going on in the broader field of Japanese Studies. Whereas I tend to attend talks related to my own topic at conferences, this workshop was organised so that everyone listened to and discussed each other's presentations on topics from a wide range of fields, including linguistics, literature, history, business, social sciences, law, international relations and policy making. The feedback given by expert scholars after each of the talks proved to be useful for me in terms of methodology, formulation of research questions and other general

issues related to conducting a research project. This encouraged me to continue to think outside of the box and to engage more with scholars in Japanese Studies from fields beyond my own.

The workshop was a unique platform that enabled me to exchange knowledge and experience and to befriend many young scholars who will, in all likelihood, become my future colleagues in the scholarly community of Japanese Studies in Europe or beyond. I would therefore like to thank the Toshiba International Foundation and the Japan Foundation for making this workshop possible. I would also like to express my gratitude to the organisers at Goethe University in Frankfurt, to Professor Michael Kinski for his feedback on my presentation and to all the senior scholars for their constructive comments and encouraging attitude towards all the participants.

Mick Deneckere

University of Cambridge, UK

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The 9th EAJS PhD Workshop in Frankfurt was an excellent event that allowed me to come in contact with very knowledgeable and accomplished scholars, both experienced academics and fellow PhD researchers.

As the first event for me to attend as a PhD student, the workshop was a great opportunity for me to present my initial thoughts and plans for research, and get useful feedback from my appointed supervisor as well as my peers. I found it extremely useful to attempt to answer questions that people had when I presented my research project, as a way of trying to make sense of what the project is actually about, and what the strong and weak points are.

The multidisciplinary character of the workshop allowed me to engage with many topics related to Japan that I do not usually consider. From this point of view it was a very rewarding experience, though at times it was challenging to follow all the different specialized arguments. Observing the interactions between my fellow PhD researchers and their respective supervisors was, for me, very enlightening in relation to the different styles of supervision and different ways of conducting research specific to different disciplines.

Finally, the workshop was an excellent opportunity for networking, establishing connections with other researchers focusing on Japan, but also joining wider discussions on welfare and capitalisms in Europe.

I am extremely grateful to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Sebastien Lechevalier for his very insightful and thoughtful comments on my research but also for offering me the opportunity to join SASE. I would also like to thank Dr. Cornelia Storz and her team at Goethe University for their excellent organization of the workshop. Not least I would like to thank all the

participants in the workshop for the stimulating atmosphere and the involving discussions both inside and outside the formal sessions, during the two days we spent together.

My final thanks go to the Japan Foundation and the EAJS for sponsoring this event.

Oana Druta

University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

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I want to thank the EAJS, the Toshiba International Foundation and the Japan Foundation for giving me the chance to take part in the 9th EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Candidates in Frankfurt.

The feedback and suggestions I received from the other participants and, in particular, from my individual supervisor, Prof. Cornelia Storz, were very valuable for the further progress of my research project. Since I am still in an early stage with my dissertation, the advice that I received certainly helped me to direct my focus to important issues, which in a later phase without such advice could have turned out very time consuming.

In general, I was very impressed from the extent at how all supervisors had prepared their thoughtful comments and suggestions for participants of the workshop.

Finally, meeting other doctoral candidates from different places, and following their presentations on topics from a broad scope of interesting and important fields of research, gave me a lot of exciting and inspiring input. Even though some topics were very different from mine, I was able nevertheless to learn a lot, for instance from the methodological approaches.

Summing up, the 9th EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Candidates in Frankfurt was definitely a beneficial experience for me. Again, I want to express my gratitude for the great organization of the EAJS before and during the workshop and for the Toshiba International Foundation and the Japan Foundation for their funding of the workshop.

Jens Eilker,

Ludwig Maximilian University Munich, Germany

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The 9th EAJS PhD Workshop in Frankfurt was a valuable opportunity to meet other doctoral students and experts working on topics within the Japanese Studies field. The campus of Goethe University and the city of Frankfurt provided a nice setting for looking closely at each research project together with the other participants. I got a better understanding of how my own research topic relates to the broader field of Japanese Studies, learned about the subject matter that the other PhD students are working on and built networks with the other students and established researchers in the field.

The workshop gave us students good experiences in presenting our work and discussing the papers. We were also able to talk with each other about our research informally during coffee breaks, lunches and dinners. I was particularly happy to receive guidance from Professor Paul Midford and Professor Cornelia Storz that was based on a deep knowledge of my field within Japanese Studies. I am now entering the intermediate stage of my PhD project, and focusing on the issues that they brought to my attention should help to ensure that my thesis meets the required academic standards. The feedback from the other participants, based on their rich experience from doing research on Japan, was very useful as well.

I hope to be able to meet the workshop participants again and to share information on our research and personal careers with them. I am very grateful to the EAJS, Toshiba International Foundation (TIFO), the Japan Foundation, assistants among the students and staff of Goethe University and each involved scholar for making this workshop possible.

Eivind Lande

Norwegian University of Science and Technology Trondheim, Norway

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The 9th workshop for PhD students of the European Association for Japanese Studies that took place on March 7-9, 2013, in Frankfurt was a refreshingly pleasant and fruitful experience in my PhD studies so far, and I expect it will have a wide-ranging impact on my future academic career.

Beyond the opportunity of being able to reformulate my thoughts on Japanese renewable energy policy in an increasingly structured manner, I particularly welcomed the opportunity to have a dedicated discussant who is an active established researcher in my policy field. Faced with busy supervisors, many non-Japanese PhD candidates at Japanese universities probably equally welcome the chance to be able to discuss at length their topics with experts who can provide constructive input. I would therefore like to thank Paul Midford for playing this role, not only in response to my formal presentation, but also for making himself available for further in-depth commentary and clarification at various times thereafter during the conference.

It was also very pleasant to be able to interact with peers from other fields who also work on Japan-related matters. Having come to political science first and foremost from the field of Japan-specific area studies, this has been a wonderful experience to be able to be at the cutting edge of new research on Japan – to be literally among the first people to be exposed to aspects of Japan that had never before been discussed. I was therefore very glad to be able to make many new friends through intensely cerebral discussions on our individual topics.

The workshop is already paying off for me, not only through the comments on my thesis and the networking opportunities that had presented themselves, but also through concrete

academic work. Paul Midford and I are collaborating currently on a chapter on energy for a handbook on Japanese politics, and he has also volunteered to be on my PhD evaluation committee, which is a proposition I value very much.

Therefore I would like to express my gratitude for the wonderful opportunity of having taken part in this workshop, and I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Toshiba International Foundation and the Japan Foundation for having created this possibility for me and people like myself to grow and develop themselves.

Alexandru P. Luta,

Tokyo Institute of Technology, Japan

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The 9th EAJS workshop hosted by Goethe University has been an engaging and thoroughly exciting experience. I believe one of the main strengths of this workshop is that it brings together PhD students from different disciplines and at different stages of their research, and allows them to interact in a highly stimulating multi-disciplinary environment. Personally, it is this interdisciplinarity that I enjoyed most because it allowed participants not just to confront themselves in terms of difficulties that are being encountered and engage in discussion on various subjects as well as methods, but also to somehow 'test' the communicability of one's research and receive important feedback from peers.

The second strength lies, of course, in the presence of senior and experienced supervisors who provided useful feedback to their individual 'supervisees' but also insightful comments during the discussions as well as giving practical advice on how to 'get on' with our research. But what I found particularly enriching was the fact that the interaction was not unidirectional but always an open and challenging exchange.

I also enjoyed and appreciated the many occasions offered for more informal kinds of discussions, which made it possible to get to know each other better and exchange views not directly related to our research.

For these reasons, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to take part in the 9th EAJS workshop and wish to thank the organizers, in particular Prof. Cornelia Storz for being a great host, and the Toshiba International Foundation and the Japan Foundation for making this possible. I sincerely hope many repetitions will follow because this workshop is a great opportunity for PhD students to grow as researchers and for the community of Japanese Studies to continue to develop and expand.

Fabiana Marinaro

University of Manchester, UK

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First of all, I want to thank everybody who made the 9th EAJS PhD-Workshop in Frankfurt, Germany, possible: the Japan Foundation and the Toshiba International Foundation for their generous financial support, Prof. Cornelia Storz, Susanne Brucksch and Elsy Kiradjieva for their hard work, organising this workshop and, last but not least, the student assistants who saved us from getting lost in Frankfurt.

Since the signifier 'Japan' is basically the singular common point of reference of all our research, it was hardly a surprise that the range of different PhD topics was immensely diverse. Therefore I really want to thank my colleagues for the hard work they put into their presentations to make it possible for us to learn about their research, even though they came from completely different fields. Equally impressive were the comments given by the supervisors, which, both in quantity and quality, by far exceeded my expectations.

It may sound strange, but I experienced the town of Frankfurt itself as a metaphor for the workshop: in our short walk from the hostel to the university, we walked through the seedy red-light district, remnants of classical high culture, the glass and steel towers of high finance and the gardens of middle-class suburbia. Just like that, the diverse topics discussed in the workshop showed me once again how many aspects there are to Japanese culture and society. I believe that the differentiation in the modern scientific system sometimes obfuscates our views and therefore I hope that the EAJS PhD-Workshop will continue to bring young and experienced scholars from so many different fields and disciplines together and show them that there is more to Japan than their research projects and disciplines often allow them to see.

Peter Mühleder,

University of Vienna, Austria

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First of all I would like to express my gratitude for having been invited to 9th EAJS PhD Workshop in Frankfurt and having been given a unique opportunity to present and discuss my research project to a multi-disciplinary audience within an academic setting.

This interdisciplinary workshop brought together participants, PhD students and senior researchers alike, from all over Europe and from such diverse fields of research as history, political science, economics, literature and linguistics amongst others. It goes without saying that it's always nice to gain insight into fascinating research beyond one's own discipline. Moreover, this wide range of different fields of academic research offers the additional advantage that feedback and comments on the presentations feature a broad array of different views, too.

Being at the early stages of my dissertation project the plethora of approaches and methodologies displayed in the comments and the discussions enabled me to better understand the strong and the weak points of my own work.

Another nice feature of the workshop was the common lunches and dinners that offered the opportunity to converse about the presentations in more detail than was sometimes possible during the panel discussion. Despite the tight time schedule and the fairly short duration of the workshop good group dynamics developed.

To sum things up: this workshop was a delightful experience. I am therefore very grateful to the Toshiba International Foundation and the Japan Foundation that made this workshop possible through their funding. I would also like to thank the organizers and commentators, Prof. Cornelia Storz, Prof. Michael Kinski, Prof. Moritz Bältz, Prof. Sebastien Lechevalier, Prof. Paul Midford, Prof. Karen Shire, Prof. Reiko Abe Auerstad and Prof. Sven Osterkamp.

Dolf Alexander Neuhaus

Freie Universität Berlin, Germany

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First of all, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the EAJS for organizing a constructive and stimulating forum of discussions. I am also very grateful to the Toshiba International Foundation and the Japan Foundation for sponsoring the Workshop in general, together with generous financial assistance with each participant's travel and accommodation expenses.

One valuable feature of the Workshop is its interdisciplinary nature. Participants delivered presentations on a wide range of topics from diverse viewpoints, which broadened my academic perspective and helped me to reflect on my research by locating it in a panorama of humanities and social sciences. Another distinctive feature of the Workshop is that it provides each participant with effective opportunities to become acquainted with the others. Each presenter stayed in the same place, and all participants had exchanges during coffee break, lunch, dinner, and so on. After the Workshop, a facebook page was created, and it will enhance discussions among participants even after the Workshop ended.

My specialized area of study is linguistics, and to present my work for non-linguists was a challenge; I had to deliver core ideas of my research without resorting to theoretical notions or assumptions. This challenge, however, served as a good training to explain my research to non-specialists. Further, it clarified essential points of my work. My advisor at the Workshop, Prof. Sven Osterkamp, gave me valuable comments on my presentation and also sent me follow-ups by e-mail after the Workshop. I have greatly benefitted from encouraging exchanges with my academic advisor and the audience of my talk. The EAJS PhD Workshop this year was run very successfully. This Workshop series, I believe, will continue to be a fruitful basis for Japanese studies in Europe.

Tohru Seraku

St. Catherine's College, Oxford, UK

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The 9th EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students, hosted by Goethe University, Frankfurt, provided a wonderful opportunity for interaction between different branches of Japanese Studies. Linguistics, although often included among the social sciences, might seem removed from some of its sister disciplines in terms of methodology and subject matter. However, this need not be so. The study of Japanese is relevant for all scholars within Japanese Studies, language being a crucial part of culture and society in a larger context. I would imagine that almost all scholars working on Japan have an interest in the Japanese language. Drawing attention to our role within the field is thus the responsibility of Japanese linguists, and I believe that the linguistics session held at this workshop, while brief, did achieve this goal.

Linguistics can in turn benefit greatly from interaction with other fields. The interesting presentations and discussions held at the workshop brought to my attention many issues relating to Japanese culture and society of which I was not previously aware.

In closing I would like to thank Prof. Sven Osterkamp for his helpful and detailed comments and suggestions. I was fortunate enough to benefit from Sven's help as an undergraduate student years ago, and truly could not have asked for a better supervisor on this occasion.

My thanks also go to Prof. Cornelia Storz and the organizers for their efforts, as well as to the other participants. In closing, I would like to acknowledge the funding generously provided by the Toshiba International Foundation (TIFO) and Japan Foundation, and thank them for making this workshop possible.

Axel Svahn

Lund University, Sweden

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The 9th EAJS PhD Workshop in Frankfurt was an excellent and challenging opportunity to present my research to a public familiar (sometimes much more familiar than myself) with Japan. I was absolutely delighted to be selected for this. Thanks to this common experience base related to Japan and the presence of senior scholars advising us the workshop became a truly enriching forum.

I feel that in general it is rather difficult to evaluate and comment an academic work from a completely different discipline (i.e. somebody with a business background commenting the work of a colleague doing literature and vice-versa) but it happened that even so, interesting comments popped up.

I am grateful for all the comments I was given and the whole program which made possible such a rich source of exchange.

My deepest thanks to Japan Foundation and Toshiba International Foundation for the funding, to Prof. Cornelia Storz and to Prof. Sebastien Lechevalier for their personal support,

Susanne Brucksch and Elssy Kiradjeva for the organization, and to every participant for the helpful and supportive environment the whole group just created.

Balazs Vaszkun

Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary

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The 9th EAJS PhD Workshop at Frankfurt University brought together outstanding scholars and young researchers from around the world in a multidisciplinary environment. I am very grateful for the opportunity to participate in this unique workshop. The working atmosphere was most inspiring and the discussion rounds following the presentations were highly supportive and provided me with detailed and professional advice for the ongoing research process.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor, Prof. Sebastien Lechevalier, for the invaluable feedback I received on the methodological framework of my PhD project. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Prof. Cornelia Storz and to all other supervisors and fellow participants. I benefited a lot from the instructive comments following my presentation on the foodbank movement as well as from the fruitful and inspiring discussions during coffee breaks and joint meals.

I highly recommend the EAJS PhD Workshop to doctoral students researching on Japan. It is a great opportunity to make contact with other researchers, to share individual research, to rethink open questions and to discuss different approaches and methodologies.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my sincere gratitude to the EAJS, the Toshiba International Foundation and the Japan Foundation for sponsoring this outstanding, challenging and excellent programme.

Nadine Melanie Vogel

Freie Universität Berlin, Germany

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I feel very fortunate to have been selected to present my dissertation as a work in progress at the 9th EAJS Ph.D. workshop at Frankfurt University. Although I was only able to attend for one day, I greatly benefitted from this experience.

The workshop allowed me to establish contacts with other Ph.D. students from several universities in and outside of Europe and get an idea of ongoing research in the field of Japanese studies. The wide variety of topics presented created a rather interdisciplinary platform and thus fostered discussions and feedback that are difficult to find elsewhere. I feel like I benefitted a lot not just from comments directed at my own work but also those addressed to other presenters since they helped me identify similar issues in my own project. I also found it positive to meet students at various points in their research thus benefitting

from the experience of more advanced candidates while being able to give some advice to workshop participants who are just entering the field. I found the atmosphere very friendly, fear-free and encouraging and enjoyed discussions with other students and advisers within and outside the single sessions.

I want to express my deepest thanks and appreciation to the EAJS, especially Dr. Susanne Brucksch, for organizing this workshop as well as for her flexibility to take individual issues into account. I further want to express my gratitude to the Toshiba International Foundation (TIFO) and the Japan Foundation for making this workshop possible and fostering intellectual exchange at different academic levels. Lastly, of course, I want to thank all the advisers and experts who shared their knowledge, especially Prof. Cornelia Storz who opened her department for this occasion as well as all the other people involved in the flawless organization of this event.

Silke Werth

University of California, Santa Barbara, US

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I work on the history of border formation around Japan in the late nineteenth century, and I was fortunate enough to be admitted to participate in the 9th EAJS PhD Workshop in Frankfurt on 7-9 March 2013. I found this to be a particularly fruitful experience in the following three respects. First and foremost this was a great opportunity to discuss my research out of the usual crowd of international historians at my home institution, who do not necessarily possess much background context in Japanese history. It was a stimulating experience to have discussions with fellow doctoral students on similarities and different angles we take in our research while working on a similar period (i.e. late nineteenth century).

Secondly the comments from Professor Michael Kinski of Goethe University Frankfurt, who is an expert on Meiji Japan, as well as from other participants proved to be of immense help to my project, as it clarified several standing issues that I need to address in the coming few years. I would also like to thank Professor Paul Midford of Norwegian University of Science and Technology for his encouraging comments. Thirdly it allowed me to get to know fellow doctoral students who are conducting intriguing research in various fields of Japanese studies all across Europe and beyond. Such interaction is not the easiest to find in my home institution where the experts in East Asia, let alone Japan, do not constitute a sizable cluster. I therefore appreciate this rare opportunity to be exposed to a wide range of research methods and approaches, which provided me with a chance to revisit some of the ways of research that I take for granted as a historian. I hope that we - the participants - will be able to stay in touch in the future and see each other at other conferences and so forth. Last but not least, I would like to show my sincere gratitude for the organizers and the sponsors, the

Toshiba International Foundation (TIFO) and Japan Foundation, whose generous support made this very meaningful event possible.

Takahiro Yamamoto

London School of Economics, UK

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The 2013 EAJS PG workshop in Frankfurt took place at the midway point of the second year of my Ph.D. programme. After a productive first year, I have found this second year much more challenging, in terms of setting and reaching milestones and furthering my research. This workshop therefore provided a timely opportunity for me to reacquaint with my thesis. Overall, the experience definitely reinvigorated my enthusiasm and motivation towards my work.

On balance, the other participants were from fields that appeared quite distant from my own. Before attending, I was therefore unsure what common threads might link us all, and how we may be able to relate to one another across such diverse fields of research. Unavoidably, there were occasions when it became difficult to fully understand more specialist terminology or concepts in other presentations. However, I also found great value in this exposure to other topics, not only because it allowed me to see the wealth of research currently being carried out in other academic fields, but also because it enabled us as a group to come together and discover common points of concern among us as Ph.D researchers, irrespective of our disciplines. In Frankfurt, I met people with whom I may never have otherwise had occasion to meet. I am sure that many of us will remain friends throughout our careers, and I look forward to the next occasion when our paths might cross again.

I would like to express my sincerest thanks to the participants, students, supervisors, and organisers, all of whom provided a supportive and stimulating environment in which I was able to learn a great many things. I am particularly grateful to Professor Reiko Abe Auestad, who showed such interest in my project and was so generous with her time during session breaks and dinners to discuss my ideas further. Now that I have returned home, I am excited to begin implementing those comments and other ideas generated by the workshop into my ongoing research framework. Finally, I wish to extend my gratitude to the Japan Foundation and Toshiba International Foundation for continuing to fund this rare yet valuable venue for postgraduate students with a shared interest in Japan to come together.

Victoria Young

Leeds University, UK