

Possibilities and Challenges of Interdisciplinary Cooperation and Collaboration in Japanese Studies

The case of the Kuzushiji seminar
at the University of Helsinki by Nagoya University

2019 EAJRS, Sofia, Bulgaria



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1. Introduction : Background of this interdisciplinary cooperation

Our encounter at the EAJRS Conference 2018

- Hata and Fuse's encounter in 2018 at the EAJRS Conference in Kaunas
- Through Ms. Naomi Yabe (Oslo University), we started to consider the possibility of a Kuzushiji seminar at the UH.



1. Introduction : Background of this interdisciplinary cooperation

Kuzushiji seminar at the University of Helsinki by Nagoya University

Content:

8.10. Yuki Hata “Introduction to kuzusiji (hentai-gana)” **38 participants**

9.10. Mayumi Tsuda “Japanese books through the collection in the Finnish National Library”

28 participants

10.10. Toru Ishikawa “Picture books and picture scrolls in Japan” **29 participants**

11.11. Takahiro Sasaki “History of books and illustrations in Japan” **56 participants**

<https://courses.helsinki.fi/en/kim-aa306/130602124>



Kuzushiji seminaari

「其由縁部徳」佐々木孝清氏蔵

- kirjoitusmerkit, kirjoitusjärjestelmä ja kirjojen historia

ti 8.10. "Kuzushiji johdanto" klo 16.15-17.45, Topelia B 107

Post-doc tutkija Yuki Hata, Nagoyan yliopisto

ke 9.10. "Suomen kansalliskirjaston japanilainen kokoelma"

klo 16.15-17.45, Topelia F 250 Prof. Mayumi Tsuda, Keiō yliopisto

to 10.10. "Japanilaisen *Muromachi*- ja *Edo*-ajan *emakimono* ja kuvakirja"

klo 16.15-17.45, Topelia B 107 Prof. Tōru Ishikawa, Keiō yliopisto

pe 11.10. "Japanilaisen kirjojen ja kirjojen kuvituksen historia"

klo 16.15-17.45, Topelia F 250 Prof. Takahiro Sasaki, Keiō yliopisto

Kaikki luento japaniksi. Perjantain luento tulkitaan suomeksi.

後援: フォン・フェント国立図書館

日本近世文学会



1. Introduction: theoretical perspective and method

Purpose of this study:

- A literature survey of previous studies on interdisciplinary cooperation in Japanese studies
- Presentation of the process of seminar planning work (the case of Kuzushiji seminar at the UH by NU)
- Discussion of the role of interdisciplinary education in the production of new knowledge, related issues of assessment and institutional capacity

Theoretical perspective of this study:

The **interdisciplinary approach** integrates separate disciplinary data, methods, tools, concepts, and theories in order to create a holistic view or common understanding of a complex issue, question, or problem (Bruun, Hukkinen, Huutoniemi and Klein, 2005, p.28).

2. The project of Nagoya University

- Funding by the JSPS (日本学術振興会)

“Building a network in Europe through cutting-edge research on Japanese picture books from the late Muromachi to the Edo period: the Nara e hon, and the Edo period illustrated manuscripts”

「室町後期から江戸期の絵写本・版本研究を通じた日本学研究と西欧とのネットワーク構築」

- Responsible persons

Nobuhiro Ito (Sugiyama Jogakuen University)

Kensuke Chikamoto (Nagoya University)

- Major bases

Nagoya, Strasbourg, Heidelberg

- Tenure

October 2017 to March 2020



The screenshot shows the official website of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS). The page is titled '国際的な活躍が期待できる研究者の育成事業' (Program for Fostering Globally Talented Researchers). The main content area features a green header with the program name and a sub-header '国際的な活躍が期待できる研究者の育成に資するよう、海外の研究機関との間の研究者の派遣・受入れを行う大学等研究機関を支援するものです。' (To support the international activities of researchers, we will support universities and other research institutions that send and receive researchers from overseas research institutions). A red-bordered box contains the text: 「国際的な活躍が期待できる研究者の育成事業」の平成30年度以降の新規公募は行いません。 (No new public recruitment for the 'Program for Fostering Globally Talented Researchers' will be conducted from Heisei 30 onwards). The page also includes a '最新情報' (Latest Information) section with two entries: '2018年12月05日 採択事業の概要等のページを開設しました。' (We established a page for the overview of the selected projects on December 5, 2018) and '2018年04月02日 国際的な活躍が期待できる研究者の育成事業のページを開設しました。' (We established a page for the 'Program for Fostering Globally Talented Researchers' on April 2, 2018). The footer of the page provides contact information for the JSPS: 独立行政法人 日本学術振興会 人材育成事業部 海外派遣事業課 〒102-0083 東京都千代田区麹町5-3-1.

2. The project of Nagoya University

- Purposes of the project

To establish a network of Japan studies between Japan and Europe while clarifying the universal significance and historical or social functions of Japanese materials.

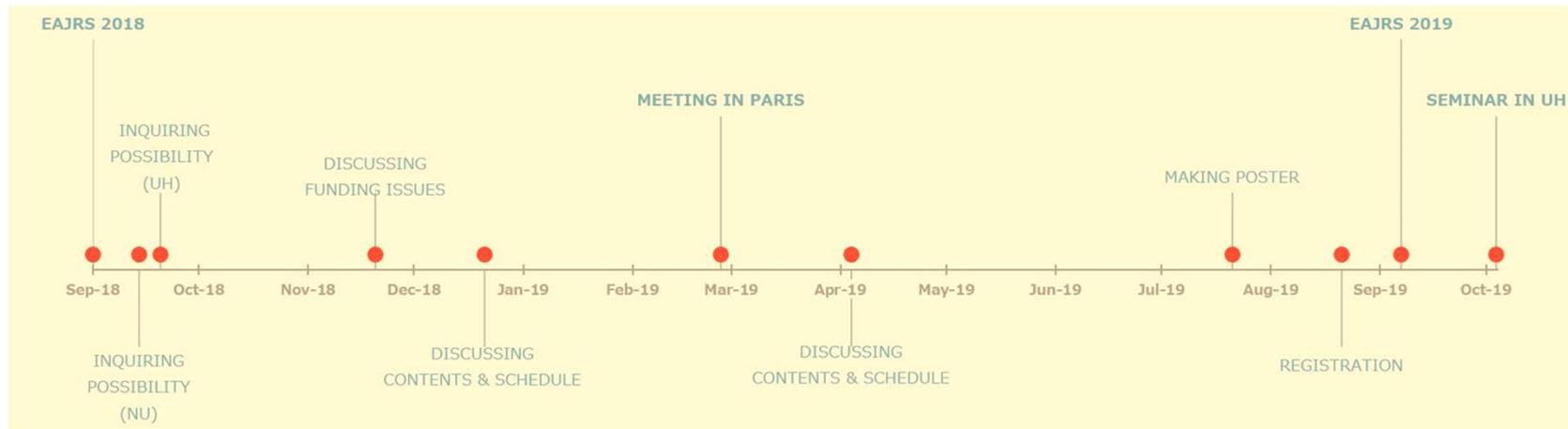
- The *Kuzushiji* seminar

Four Japanese postdocs will be dispatched to Europe to hold the seminar.

To help students, researchers, librarians and other local people involved in Japanese studies learn how to decipher *kuzushiji*.

→ We use Japanese materials in the local collection as teaching materials.

3. Planning process



In the NU project, the activities in the UH were not included in the original plan.

→ Holding a Kuzushiji seminar in Northern Europe is considered to be the result of the exchange with those interested in Japan studies.

- Through the Kuzushiji seminar in France and Germany
- At the EAJRS Conference

3. Planning process

9. 2018 Encounter at the EAJRS Conference

Hata asked Profs. Ito and Chikamoto about the possibility of holding the seminar in Finland.

10. 2018 Fuse asked her colleague at the UH about this possibility.

Hata and Fuse started to discuss the details of the possibility.

Lecturers were selected from those involved in the NU project.



3. Planning process

11. 2018 Hata and Fuse discussed funding for the seminar.

- The travelling and living expenses of the lecturers would be paid by NU.
- The fee for the venue and printing materials would be covered by the UH.

Fuse explored the possibility of holding a meeting with Hata, who was in Strasbourg, to hold a seminar at the EFEO.

12. 2018 Hata and Fuse continued to discuss the content and schedule.

It was decided that the seminar would be held in the fall for one week in Helsinki, followed by a one-day seminar in Oslo and Bergen.

3. Planning process

01. 2019 Hata returned to Japan.

03. 2019 Hata and Fuse convened their meeting in Paris.

- We discussed the seminar content, exchanging information about students or lecturers regarding the seminar.
- We visited the Kuzushiji seminar at the EFEO by Misaki Suematsu (NU).

The date for the seminar at the UH was decided for the second week of October.

04. 2019 Hata and Fuse continued to discuss the content and schedule.

A salary for the interpreter was arranged by Tero Salomaa, who curated the catalogue of the Japonica collection at the Finnish National Library.

3. Planning process

08. 2019 The poster informing about the seminar was made.

09. 2019 Registration for participants of the seminar started.

10. 2019 The *Kuzushiji* seminar will be held.

The seminar will be held at the UH (8-11.Oct. 2019)

the University of Oslo (14. Oct. 19)

the University of Bergen (16. Oct. 19)

4. Opportunities

- **To use Japanese Studies materials in the pre-modern period**, not only as resources for learning Japanese history and culture, but also **for learning the contemporary Japanese language**
- To provide **more attention to and interest in materials from the local archives of the seminar location**
- **To contribute to research** at the Japanese universities on the current situation of European universities
- **To participate in the collaborative assessment of students**
- **To cooperate with the local communities** related to Japanese studies
- **To open up new networks**
- **To collaborate in research** (as in the case of Hata and Fuse)

4. Problems

- Negotiating the time schedule
- Differences in university culture between Japan and Finland
- Division of the coordinators' workload
- The coordinators' lack of knowledge of each field
- Lack of previous studies and materials

4. Tasks for the future

- More financial resources
- A lack of previous studies and materials on cases of interdisciplinary cooperation between different disciplines within Japanese studies
- Theoretical question: What does “a discipline” mean for Japanese studies?

Thank you for listening to our presentation! Yuki & Rie

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