

Report on the International Symposium/Workshop in Japanese Literary and Visual Studies
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As a PhD student from Columbia EALAC, it has been a great opportunity for me to present my paper, “Barren Women and Snake Queens: A Woman's Journey in Hell in the Late Medieval Otogizōshi *Daibutsu no go-engi*,” at the International Symposium/Workshop in Japanese Literary and Visual Studies in this February. Before this conference, I had the opportunity to give presentations at some other conferences, but never at such an international conference with so many prominent scholars in my field. Having the privilege of hearing so many stimulating talks and discussions meant a lot to me. I think the two-part Symposium/Workshop structure is very helpful for us graduate students. I learned a lot from the professors’ talks in the symposium sessions, and also get to know other PhD students’ projects in the workshop sessions. In this sense, the conference is a precious opportunity not only for interaction with global scholars but also for feedback on work-in-progress by advanced PhD students.

In addition, this conference provides a very good opportunity for the PhD candidates to practice our presentation skills. The time allocated for each presentation in the workshop sessions is only 15 minutes, which is actually a big challenge for me since I tend to go over time. I learned a lesson that I should pace myself better throughout the presentation. To avoid going over time as a speaker, next time I will rehearse and aim my presentation to be finished several minutes before the allotted time.

The comments from my discussants—Prof. Haruo Shirane (Columbia University), Prof. Kazuaki Komine (Rikkyo University Emeritus), Prof. Satomi Yamamoto (Waseda University), Prof. Akira Takagishi (University of Tokyo), and Prof. Matthew McKelway (Columbia University)—are really inspiring to me. Prof. Shirane’s and Prof. Komine’s questions and comments, showing me the direction of my project in the future, are especially helpful.

With the inspiration and help I received at the conference, I have returned to my work with a new enthusiasm for my work. I also want to express my feeling of gratitude to all the people who made the conference possible. As we know, the coronavirus pandemic has already affected people’s life in both Japan and US. I really appreciate all the hard work that the organizers and staff did to make the conference happen at this time of uncertainty. I feel very honored and fortunate to be part of this conference.