

Report on the International Symposium/Workshop in Japanese Literary and Visual Studies
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The Columbia University Symposium and Workshop was a wonderful opportunity to present my research, meet my peers in the field, learn about the changing trends in Japanese literature and art history, and explore the museums and restaurants of New York City.

In presenting my research on modern Japanese literature, I both received valuable feedback on my work and I also got a sense of the expectations other scholars have when encountering new scholarship. Presentations are, in other words, not only an opportunity to receive comments and questions that can push and prod one's research in different directions, but they are also and rather a chance to gain insight into how one should position his or her work vis-à-vis existing scholarship and scholastic trends. Columbia University has long been at the vanguard of Japanese literature in the United States, so there was perhaps no better place to get a sense of these trends.

In addition to feedback on my own work, strengthening my bonds with my peers at other universities was invaluable. The relationships that you develop now at conferences, symposiums, and other academic events will sustain you throughout your career, and they often result in conference panels and collaborative projects in the future. Furthermore, it is particularly rare to have large numbers of scholars from both Japan and the United States presenting at the same conference, so the Columbia Symposium also offers the possibility of future international collaboration—an all too uncommon occurrence.

Finally, the symposium and workshop is a chance to visit New York City, the home of so many museums and exhibitions relating to East Asia. If you're on the fence about presenting your work, the reward of the city itself should be enough to push you over.