

Report on the International Symposium/Workshop in Japanese Literary and Visual Studies
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Speaking from the point of view of an advanced graduate student, I found that the symposium/workshop presented a unique opportunity to share my own research not only with other students, but also with other professors, both at Columbia and from Japan, and to receive extremely valuable feedback on how to further improve my work. Even though each of us works on a particular area of Japanese Studies, be it Japanese Literature, History, Religion, or Art History, we highly value the new perspective that each individual's research brings to the bigger picture, as this consequently allows our personal approach to be informed by this fuller understanding. I also greatly appreciate the opportunity to attend the presentations given by both respected professors and advanced graduate students from Japan, which provide a stimulating glimpse into the newest areas of research in Japanese Studies in Japan. As a matter of fact, Japanese and English scholarship in Japanese Studies tends to follow different lines of inquiry, so I personally found it very helpful to have a first-hand account of the current state of the field in Japan.

One notable example of these exciting new currents in Japanese Studies is the presentation by Professor Yukari Tanaka of Nihon University, titled: "Apps for Strolling Around Edo/Tokyo: Two Smartphone Apps—'Edo/Tokyo Monogatari' and 'Chiyo-Dash'—Based on the Website 'Edo/Tokyo WebGIS'." In this talk, Professor Tanaka introduced the audience to the two aforementioned apps, which both incorporate topographical information from art, historical, and literary sources, making them fun and accessible to the general public. As someone who was involved in the creation of the English version of the web application "Good Luck ☆ Seimei Utaura," which provides the visitor with divinations in the form of poems from the Edo-period divination book *Seimei utaura*, purportedly written by Abe no Seimei, I was once again struck by Japan's impressive efforts to raise awareness of Japanese literature and culture among the general public, often with the help of the latest technologies.

Another thing that made a deep impression on my mind was the fact that the majority of Japanese presenters gave their presentations in English. As the event was open to the general public, including a lay audience who may have little to no understanding of Japanese, the presentations given in English could be enjoyed by all members of the audience, allowing the information to be shared within a larger community. I appreciate the hard work that went into all of the preparations, especially given that our guests from Japan also had to manage the jet lag that undoubtedly accompanied the long flight from Japan to New York. Thanks to their dedication, the event was able to reach its full potential, and I am deeply grateful to everyone who made it possible. I hope that these exchanges of knowledge will continue to be held for many years to come, and that future generations of scholars will likewise benefit from this constructive experience.