

SOAS Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions

The CSJR Newsletter

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The SOAS Centre for the study of Japanese religions was founded in 1999 by a generous donation from the International Shinto Foundation. The Centre exists to promote the academic study of Japanese religions past and present in all their rich diversity and dynamism. To this end, the Centre hosts a regular seminar series and a post-graduate discussion group, the Japanese Religions Forum, as well as occasional workshops and conferences. The Centre also welcomes applications from outstanding students of Japanese religion for its first post-graduate studentship, tenable at SOAS from September 2000.

Please address inquiries to

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CSJR web page:

<http://www.soas.ac.uk/Centres/JapaneseReligions/seminars>

CENTRE ACTIVITIES

CSJR Seminars

Thursdays, 5:00 -6:30 pm

Room 379

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|--------------|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| March | 2 | Richard Bowring
(Cambridge University)
<i>Religion and the state in pre-Heian Japan</i> |
| March | 16 | Brian Bocking
(SOAS)
<i>Shinto Approaches</i> |
| April | 27 | Daniel Stevenson
Kansas University
<i>The Ritual Culture of 'Feeding Hungry Ghosts'</i> |
| May | 11 | Ian Reader
(Lancaster University)
<i>Permanent Pilgrims. Pilgrimage as a Way of Life in Japan</i> |
| May | 18 | Bernard Faure
(Stanford University)
<i>The Dark Side of Japanese Buddhism</i> |

Enquiries to the convenor: 020-7898 4217 or ld16@soas.ac.uk

CENTRE ACTIVITIES

Japanese Religions Forum

The *Forum* is convened on the 1st Thursday of the month in term time unless otherwise announced. The *Forum* brings together post-graduate students, MA and PhD, working on Japanese religions from all academic departments at SOAS and aims to encourage a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of Japanese religions. *Forum* activities include PhD student presentations; videos/films related to Japanese religions; presentations by representatives of Japanese religions in the UK; visits to the British Museum's collection of art and artefacts related to Japanese religions

Time: 5:00 -6:30 pm **Place:** Room 379(3rd floor, SOAS main building)

February	3	<i>Tenrikyo</i> Video followed by a presentation by N. Takeuchi, Tenrikyo UK
March	9	<i>Mandalas of the Hiei-san Cult</i> Men Arichi (Ph.D. candidate, SOAS)
May	4	<i>To be announced</i>

For updates on the monthly programme please check the CSJR notice board on the East Asia floor of the SOAS main building or contact Lucia Dolce directly (1d16@soas.ac.uk)

CENTRE ACTIVITIES

Workshop

Rethinking Religious Practice in the Medieval Period

21-22 September 2000

Guest speaker Professor Matsuo Kenji, Yamagata University

Prof. Matsuo, a well-known historian of Japanese religions, will deliver two lectures to the workshop. The first will focus on the difference between official monks and reclusive monks, and argues for the establishment of new categories for analysing the role of religious specialists in the early medieval period. The second addresses the issue of the salvation of women.

Enquires to the convenor: 020- 7898 4217 or 1d16@soas.ac.uk

MA Japanese Religion

In September 1999 SOAS launched a new MA Programme in Japanese Religion, the first European taught graduate programme to be devoted to the study of Japanese religions. The degree, which has already attracted interest from Britain, Europe and Asia, provides an overview of Japanese religion, both past and present, and supplies the tools of analysis for further research in the field. The degree comprises four components: three taught courses and a dissertation and may be completed in one calendar year (full time), or in two or three calendar years (part-time).

The programme centres around the course “Religious Practice in Japan: Texts, Rituals and Believers,” which presents religious phenomena in Japan in their historical context and devotes attention to specific themes relevant for the understanding of the social aspects of Japanese religion and the influence of religion upon Japanese culture. Students have the opportunity to select other courses, depending on their specific interests and previous knowledge, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of Japanese religion. Options include the study of Asian context, contemporary developments outside Japan, and methodologies for the analysis of religious phenomena.

A previous knowledge of the Japanese language is not required for entry. However, students with a sufficient knowledge of Japanese and an interest in approaching primary sources will be able to take “Readings in Japanese Religions.” In addition, the degree offers language courses in modern Japanese.

The programme is under the supervision of the Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions and students will also benefit from seminars, discussion groups, guest lectures, and international workshops organised by the Centre.

Application forms available from the Registrar.

For further information, contact the convenor of the programme:

Lucia Dolce, Dept. East Asia/Study of Religions

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Enquires to the convenor: 020- 7898 4217 or 1d16@soas.ac.uk

CSJR Postgraduate studentship

Three year studentships for training leading to a PhD in Japanese religions at SOAS.

The studentships will consist of a remittance of fees and a bursary of £7060 per year, renewable for up to a further two years.

Application forms and further particulars are available from:
The Registrar, School of Oriental and African Studies, Thornough Street, Russell Square, London, WC1H 0XG.

Closing date for applications is 28 April 2000.

CSJR studentships may be awarded to candidates who are proposing to register full-time for a research degree (MPhil/PhD) at SOAS in September 2000 and to those who enrolled in September 1999 or after for a research degree at SOAS.

Candidates must have applied for a research degree at SOAS by April 28 2000 in order to be considered for a CSJR Research Studentship.

CSJR Postdoctoral fellowship

Applications are invited for a one-year CSJR Postdoctoral fellowship in Japanese religions (any area) to be held at SOAS from September 2000.

The main purpose of the fellowship is to enable the holder to bring his/her PhD thesis, which will have been completed no earlier than 1997, or research project to publication during the year at SOAS.

Whilst at SOAS the Fellow will be expected to contribute up to five hours of teaching per week. In addition, s/he will be expected to organise a workshop/symposium in his/her speciality. Financial and administrative support will be available for this event.

The fellow's annual stipend will be GBP18,185 plus London weighting.

The fellow will have access to appropriate study facilities and will be a member of the Senior Common room and a full member of SOAS library.

Applications consist of a curriculum vitae (including list of publications) an abstract/summary of the applicant's doctoral thesis or research project, a clear statement of the candidate's academic plans for the postdoctoral year and the names of three referees. Five copies of these documents together with a covering note should be sent to the Personnel Department, SOAS, Russell Square, London, WC1H 0XG.

The closing date for applications is Friday April 28th, 2000. A decision is expected to be announced at the end of May 2000.

For informal enquiries about this fellowship, please contact Dr. John Breen on jb8@soas.ac.uk