

Project Title: Workshop on “Exploring *Waka* Culture Across Genres, Media, and Periods”

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Project Statement

Waka (classical Japanese poetry) was by far the most influential and highly-regarded literary genre in Japan for most of its history up to the modern period. Yet, it somehow struggles to receive the attention it deserves outside Japan partly because scholarship to date has failed to show just how diverse and rich in cross-media interactions the *waka* tradition truly was. While the textual output associated with *waka* (poetry collections, poetic diaries, etc.) may be relatively well known, very little has been written in English about its intersections with painting, calligraphy, material culture, religious practice, to name but a few. The goal of the workshop is to spotlight the cross-media and interdisciplinary nature of the *waka* tradition by exploring the notion of “*Waka* Culture.” For two days, leading scholars from North America, Europe, and Japan will gather at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign to explore *waka*’s interactions with other practices, media, and genres, spanning art and religion, scholarship and bookmaking, court ritual and material culture.

From the outset, the workshop will be geared toward producing a new *waka* textbook. The last English-language book to attempt to give a comprehensive overview of *waka* was published over fifty years ago (Brower and Miner, *Japanese Court Poetry*, 1961) and, in addition to not reflecting current (2017) scholarly thought on *waka*, it does not touch, even tangentially, on *waka*’s sustained interactions with other media and genres. With the event’s co-organizer, Christina Laffin of the University of British Columbia, we have identified a list of 25 topics such as “*Waka* and Buddhism,” “*Waka* and the Visual Arts,” “*Waka* and Calligraphy Handbooks,” “*Waka* and Sinitic Poetry,” each of which will be assigned to a different contributor according to their area of expertise. Drafts of the contributions will be circulated among the participants ahead of the workshop. At the workshop, which is to be held in the summer of 2018, the team of researchers will review the contributions together and suggest changes and improvements. Following the workshop, the editorial process will continue under the supervision of the two organizers until successful completion of the project.

Some of the leading figures in the field of pre-modern Japanese literature and art history have already agreed to attend and write contributions, including Steven Carter (Stanford), Edward Kamens (Yale), Susan Klein (Irvine), Joshua Mostow (British Columbia), among others (the full list of participants can be found below). A portion of the workshop will be devoted to research presentation by advanced PhD students and junior scholars, thus offering young researchers the opportunity to present their work in front of an audience of experts in the field and of forming valuable professional connections. We believe this event will propel the study of premodern Japanese literature by facilitating discussion and collaboration between senior and junior colleagues while resulting in a publication useful in the classroom. It will also help

solidify the Japanese Studies program at the University of Illinois and encourage further institutional support.

The AAS Northeast Asia Council grant will enable a group of experts on *waka* to come together on the UIUC campus and make significant progress with a project that might otherwise take considerably longer to bring to fruition. The format of the workshop will provide us with hard deadlines and the opportunity to group peer-review the contributions, thus significantly shortening the time that it would take to complete a project of this scope and magnitude. We are confident that the book produced by this collaborative effort will make a welcome addition to the teaching of Japanese literature while ensuring that the rich tradition of *waka* across media and genres is better understood.

Tentative timeline of the project:

- October 2017: topics assigned to contributors
- April 15, 2018: first draft due to organizers/editors
- June 15, 2018: drafts returned to contributors
- July 15, 2018: second revised draft due to editors
- August 2018 (Two weeks before the workshop): drafts circulated to participants
- August 17-18: Workshop
- August 2018-July 2019: editorial revisions
- Late 2019 or Early 2020 submission to publisher

List of confirmed speakers/contributors (including the organizers):

Paul Atkins, University of Washington

Roselee Bundy, Kalamazoo College

Gustav Heldt, University of Virginia,

Robert Huey, University of Hawai'i at Manoa

Edward Kamens, Yale University

Christina Laffin, University of British Columbia

Thomas McAuley, University of Sheffield
Joshua Mostow, University of British Columbia
Susan Klein, UC Irvine
Jeffrey Knott, Stanford University
Gian Piero Persiani, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
Noel Pinnington, University of Arizona
Tomoko Sakomura, Swarthmore College
Joseph Sorensen, UC Davis
Jack Stoneman, Brigham Young University
Kendra Strand, University of Iowa
Robert Tierney, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
Kei Umeda, Independent Scholar

Approximately 15 more speakers have yet to confirm their participation. Approximately 5 advanced PhD students will be selected to give research presentations on topics of their choice depending on time availability. The total number of participants is expected to be approximately 30 to 35.

Budget

Item	Breakdown	Cost
Accommodation	15 rooms at Illini Union Hotel @ \$120 per night x 2 = \$3,600 15 rooms @ \$110 per night x 2 = \$3,300	\$6,900*
Facilities		\$0 (in-kind support)
Travel	Funds used to offset travel costs of PhD students, scholars without independent funding, and scholars from Japan	\$5,500
Work study assistance	two assistants x \$15 x 8 hours x 2 days	\$480
Meals	Breakfast for 30 @300x 2 = \$600 Coffee breaks for 40 @\$225 x 3=\$675 Lunch for 40 @\$850 x 1 = \$850 Dinner for at Rainbow Garden @ \$50 x 35 = \$1,750)	\$3,625
TOTAL		\$16,505

*The NEAC conference award will be used to offset most of the accommodation costs. Further funding has been/will be sought from the following sources:

School of Literature, Cultures, and Linguistics (SLCL) at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign	\$5,000 (pending)
Japan Foundation	\$2,000 (applications due up to 3 months before the event)
Toshiba International Foundation	\$2,500 (applications for fiscal year open Oct 2017)
Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies, University of Illinois	\$1,000 (secured)
Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures, University of Illinois	\$1,005 (secured)
Total funds sought from all sources including NEAC	\$16,505