

ESF RESEARCH CONFERENCES

Rapporteur Report

Partnership:	JSPS
Conference Title:	Contact Zones of Empires in Asia and Europe: Complexity, Contingency, Causality
Dates:	27 February – 04 March 2010
Chair:	Lise Hannestad (absentee) & Tadashi Nishitani
Rapporteur:	Raymond Brulet

General Comments

After introductions, the conference in Fukuoka gave possibility to participate in 60 lectures : 20 giving by seniors and 40 short presentations by young scholars.

General topic was Contact Zones of Empires in Asia and Europe, concerning the frontiers of studies in the emergence and development of social complexity and state-formation on the fringes of the Empires in Europe and East Asia, namely, the Greek and Roman, and successive Chinese empires. The general topic was effectively tackled by dividing it into comparative theme-based subtopics : Empires and their peripheries : interactions, interdependences and transformations (session 1) ; Ethnic identities, language, population movements and social mobility (session 2) ; Environment and food supply (session 3) ; Networks of interaction, production and exchange (session 4), Ritual, symbolism and cosmology (session 5).

Both theoretical, methodological aspects and many important case studies were treated, giving significant contributions to the advancement of the general study of civilisations and Empires.

In session 7 (conclusions), we note: a Tour de table (perspectives for young scholars) and a panel Forward Look session. It is very important to say some words about the general scientific conclusions : new interest for paleoenvironment In Japan (archaeology/Natural Science), Common works about Japan/China, new effort to be carried on : Art History and numismatic).

The targets of this conference were reached. They will note especially:

- to provide the opportunity for leading scientists and young researchers to meet for scientific discussions
- to provide possibility in young European and Japanese researchers to meet
- to present the most recent developments in their fields of research.
- to create new synergistic contacts between researchers through the World.

Quality of Scientific Programme, Presentations and Discussion

It was a good opportunity for young scholars to receive lectures from leading international experts who were chosen well according to their competences. Many of them approached subjects with a critical and innovative aspect. They allow young participants to ask new questions and to have perception of future prospects for advances in the field.

Informal Networking and Exchange; Atmosphere

Long periods were dedicated to general debates and to each of approached topics. Reactions and collaboration of the young researchers on debates were really very numerous and very positive.

Balance of Participants

The presentations of seniors participants being mostly conceived with the intention of provoking debate and of course as views of synthesis. Their particular role was also the key of success. The representation of the national groups and treated topics was logical.

Outlook and Future Developments

As regards the particular objectives of research, I think that links between the persons were accomplished, to initiate new works on it. More in general, there are questions of methodology and theory that have been compared. They can hope that technical collaborations between different projects will be born in future, after the conference.

Follow-up

The modalities of publication of the conference were discussed, not in terms of Acta, but under a collection of articles. A definite suggestion was immediately made in this sense (editor).

Organisation and Infrastructure

Organisation was considered as very successful by everybody.

Summary & Overall Assessment

The aims of this conference are really reached (provide the opportunity for leading scientists and young researchers to meet for scientific discussions –young European and Japanese researchers-, most recent developments in their fields of research, creating new synergistic contacts between researchers through the World).