

Report on JSPS Fellowship 27 March – 18 May 2018

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I was very grateful to receive a JSPS Short-Term Fellowship to visit Waseda University, Tokyo for 53 days in the spring of 2018 to conduct research on 'The League of Nations in the Asia-Pacific' and its implications for international organisations today. I have visited Japan several times before and have developed a good working relationship with Waseda, including an exchange programme for PhD students. So this was a great opportunity to deepen the relationship, improve my knowledge of Japan and work towards some concrete research outputs.

My host, Prof Hatsue Shinohara, is a leading expert on the history of international law and works in the Graduate School of Asia Pacific Studies. We had many stimulating discussions about the topic and she also arranged a workshop with academics from other leading universities to discuss how to take the project to its next stage. I also presented a lecture to graduate students who asked good questions and carried on the discussion with me afterwards. I gave advice to PhD students, one of whom should be visiting my own institution next year. I also gave a lecture at the International Christian University in Tokyo.

I spent most of my time in the library and completed the draft of a large section of my book. Waseda has the best library collection for historians because it survived the 1923 Kanto earthquake and the bombing in World War 2. It also took a leading role in developing relations with China from the end of the nineteenth century and educated many of China's political elite. Particularly interesting for me is the collection of journals published by the overseas Chinese students in Japan.

The on-line catalogue has English and Chinese facilities but the shelving system uses katakana characters as well as numbers, so it is good idea to be familiar with that system. The staff do not speak much English, so try to learn some basic phrases (such as 'how do I use this photocopier?').

The campus is in central Tokyo, so has great links to everywhere but is also in a remarkably peaceful neighbourhood. It has excellent accommodation, three of its own museums and plenty of places to eat, both inside and outside. If you read Japanese, there is an amazing group of second-hand bookstores just outside. It is also next to a small river and a slope with some beautiful gardens - a great place to walk/jog and stay strong enough to carry all the books you have bought to the airport!

I am extremely grateful to JSPS and Waseda for making this research trip possible. I had a productive and very enjoyable time and came away with a much deeper understanding of Japan. I now look forward to taking the project forward to the next stage by working with Japanese colleagues on the conference and edited volume. My only regret is that I could not stay longer.