

CRAIG MULDREW: SHORT REPORT

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While in Japan I presented a number of lengthy seminars to professors and students at both Ehime University and Tohoku University in Sendi under the direction of Professors Takahashi Mototyasu and Hiroshi Hasebe. In these seminars I focused on the importance of food to work and the cultural meaning of English labourers' consumption, in order to begin a process of looking for ways to make comparisons with the diet of rural people in early modern Japan. I examined how food in this context was especially important, because it not only represents a vital aspect of labourer's material standard of living, but was equally the most essential source of energy for the early modern economy. I also focused on the concept of family budgets, looking at how various forms of family earnings could be used to purchase different foods and other material goods. I explained how households in the early modern period increased their labour market participation in order to buy new consumer goods with the money they earned from their labour. This increase in work could be achieved in a number of different ways; by individuals working more hours, or more intensely over the course of a day, or it could involve more members of the family participating in work, such as the wife and children working in the cloth industry. I also discussed regional food differences in England according to geography such as the prevalence of oats and rye in the north as opposed to wheat in the south.

In these seminars we were together able to discuss the differences between the sources for England such as farmer's account books and records of diets in places where poor families were relieved by the government. Some similar sources exist in the voluminous documentation for the ie village of Kami Shiojiri concerning food production, but more importantly are a series of records of meals served upon the yearly visitation of government officials from?? We especially discussed the different composition of meals such as fish and eels vs beef, and the importance of rice compared to grain. On the subject of budgets we discussed how consumption was balanced against production and trade in the larger structure of the ie, as compared to the much smaller English nuclear households of labouring families.

While in Japan I also presented a paper at Toyo University, Tokyo entitled 'The Social Acceptance Of Paper Credit As Currency In Eighteenth Century England: A Case Study Of Glastonbury c.1720-1742.' This was chaired by prof. Shunsuke Katsuta, and was attended by Professor Kazuhiko Kondo and Dr. Harumi Goto, Dr Toshihiko Iwama, among others including graduate students. In Tokyo I also met with two students, Takao Osanai and Yoko Onodera to discuss their planned research in the UK. I am very pleased with the progress made during my visiting fellowship towards promoting more cooperation and comparative history of England and Japan. I was impressed with the questions at the seminars, and I hope to continue a very fruitful dialogue with Japanese scholars.