

We invite applications for two research positions in the ERC-Advanced Grant Research Project “Time in Medieval Japan” (TIMEJ), University of Zurich

The Department of Japanese Studies, Institute for Asian and Oriental Studies, University of Zurich, Switzerland, seeks one research associate (5 years, non-tenure track) and one doctoral candidate (4 years, non-tenure-track) to participate in the ERC-Advanced Grant Research Project “Time in Medieval Japan” (TIMEJ), September 2017 until August 2022.

Project description

The project explores time in medieval Japan, taking a new approach to historical articulations of the concept of time, based on the theory of symbolic forms. It will examine symbolic representations and social regulations of time in a civilisation that is often juxtaposed to contemporary, globalised modernity. We will investigate into medieval Japan as a dynamic and internally differentiated society, and not as a unified “traditional” culture dominated by a qualitative concept of time. We will focus on its plural ways of registering, measuring, articulating, and regulating time. The aim is to disclose the specific cultural practices operative in the respective ways of negotiating time, and to achieve a more comprehensive and detailed account of human strategies in dealing with this fundamental restriction of our existence. In a closely coordinated set of case studies, we examine representative spheres connected to various symbolic forms and socio-cultural agendas: the Zen monastery, the female court, and the market. An intersectional case study explores the symbolic mediations of the menstrual cycle, connecting these spheres and uniting aspects of the physical, ritual and symbolic regulation of human body time. Each case study explores the symbolic forms prevalent in the respective settings, and the aspects of time that are deemed relevant and selected for symbolic articulation. We will analyse temporal encoding, structure and application in the regulation of affairs, the competence to account and regulate these processes, and the influence on feelings of dismay in the face of the socio-cultural realities of time. Special attention is paid to the conflicts that arise when established regimes of temporal regulation and expression clash with each other and with individual experience. The results will be compared to the history of time in the Western world, and integrated into a theory of the symbolic forms of time.

Position as Research Associate for Research Area 3 (Market)

We are seeking a research associate who will lead Research Area 3 (Time of the Market). This is a 5-year, non-tenure-track position.

Applicants must have a Ph.D. degree in a related field and a substantial track record of research. Preference will be given to applicants who have demonstrated their expertise in the area of premodern economic history, and experience in the study of medieval Japanese sources.

In the course of his/her term of employment with TIMEJ, the research associate is expected to work closely with the research group, to regularly attend its meetings, to engage in discussion with all project members, and to assist in the supervision of the doctoral student working in the research area 3. Furthermore, she/he will participate in activities of the group such as symposia, panels in international conferences, etc. The main expected outcome will be a research monograph on the “time of the markets” and a contribution to an edited volume surveying time in medieval (Kamakura to Muromachi) Japan. No teaching duties are attached to the position, but the research associate will be eligible for paid teaching assignments.

Description of Research Area 3 (Market)

Research Area 3 explores the impact of evolving markets on the temporal perspectives of participants. Markets are generally considered to foster a quantitative and homogeneous concept of time, and also to contribute to the installation, or increased salience, of a ‘week’

- an artificial unit of time between the day and the month. They also connect the aristocratic authorities with the much less documented lives of the commoners. In analysing the temporal organisation of markets and how it affected the activities and temporal perspectives of traders, producers, and buyers of commodities, the proposed research brings a new perspective to this field, and will, at the same time, test assumptions derived from the study of European history. A case study by a PhD student under supervision of research associate 2 and the Principle Investigator (PI) follows the trajectory of incense as a marketed commodity from import of raw materials and semi-finished products through production and circulation to consumption. (For detailed information on the project please contact raji.steineck@uzh.ch).

Employment conditions: 60% research associate position at the University of Zurich. The salary will be determined according to the ERC-regulations for research associates.

Applications should include a cover letter, a CV, a research statement of up to 1,500 words, and a sample of recent work.

They should be submitted electronically in a single PDF-Document by June 15 to the following e-mail address: raji.steineck@uzh.ch.

Review of applicants will begin June 16, 2017 and continue until the position has been filled.

Research Position at the Doctoral level for Research Area 2 (Court)

We seek for a highly promising doctoral candidate to conduct a PhD project on time conceptions and time practices in courtiers' (*kuge*) diaries in comparison to diaries by military governors (*buke*) under the supervision of the research associate of research area 2 and the PI. This is a 4-year, non-tenure-track position.

Candidates will be specializing in Japanese literature and/or intellectual history. Preference shall be given to those with training in male literature of medieval Japan. A good knowledge of *kanbun* is highly desirable.

Description of Research Area 2

Research area 2 (Court) looks into class and gender aspects of time by investigating the literature produced in female courts in contradistinction to that of male courtiers and members of the warrior elite. The female court was established as the primary locus of vernacular literature in late antiquity. It continued to be a place of highly aestheticised and strongly gendered exchanges, evident among others in the genres of vernacular poetry, miscellany, and women's diaries. Due to the gradual decline in the status of the court aristocracy during the medieval period, there is, however, a tendency over time in the diaries to also include consideration of economic and legal matters. This makes the female court an apt place to analyse the impact of social fluctuations and changing constellations of symbolic forms on temporal perspectives. The proposed research will systematically investigate how time is recorded, addressed and reflected in women's diaries, travelogues, and poetry, comparing these to letters and administrative documents. A complementary study (PhD dissertation under supervision of research associate 1 and the PI) will compare courtier diaries (*kuge*) to that of military governors (*buke*). In comparing sources from male and female members of the court and warrior elite, special attention will be paid to the relations of power and the temporal regimes they exhibit, their cognitive basis in technologies of recording and announcing time, and the emotive and evaluative expressions of time. The research will demonstrate the plurality of strategies in negotiating the conflicts between natural, institutional and existential time, moving beyond the image of traditional societies in harmony with natural rhythms. (For detailed information on the project please contact raji.steineck@uzh.ch)

Employment conditions: 60% PhD-position at the University of Zurich. The salary will be in accordance with the ERC-regulations for PhD-students.

Applications should be submitted electronically in a single PDF-Document by June 15 to the following email address: raji.steineck@uzh.ch.

Applications should include a cover letter, a CV, a research statement of up to 1,500 words, and a sample of recent work.

Review of applicants will begin June 16, 2017 and continue until the position has been filled.

Contact: Inquiries may be addressed to Prof. Dr. Raji C. Steineck, Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies, University of Zurich, Zuerichbergstrasse 4, 8032 Zurich, Phone: +41 44 634 40 85, E-mail: raji.steineck@uzh.ch.