

WORKSHOP SERIES

JAPANESE PHILOSOPHY



Enrico Fongaro

Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture

The following essay is a summary of workshops on Japanese philosophy hosted at the Nanzan Institute during the 2025–2026 academic year. It was possible to organize many international workshops and talks thanks in large part to the presence of outstanding scholars at the Institute. In addition to the workshops noted below, we continued monthly seminars on the philosophy of Nishida. We are currently preparing publications stemming from the presentations and discussions among participants in the workshops.

AS THE GLOBAL center for intercultural research on Japanese philosophy, the NIRC offers workshops and seminars designed to bring together scholars, both domestically and from abroad, to share their work and discuss philosophical issues. Since 2022, we have hosted monthly seminars on the thought of Nishida Kitarō. We have also held workshops on the work and thought of Nishitani Keiji and other Japanese philosophers. This year, we continued the Nishitani workshops, with additional workshops on Tanabe Hajime, Kant, and Neo-Kantianism in twentieth-century Japan.

The basis of the Japanese Philosophy Workshop schedule are sessions on the philosophy of Nishitani Keiji. We again hosted one session of the Nishitani Keiji Workshop in 2025. The fifth session, “Time and Eternity in Nishitani Keiji” was held 6 December. The main reference for the workshop was a Nishitani interview entitled “This Eternal Thing” この永遠なるもの, along with the chapters “Emptiness and Time” and “Emptiness and History” from *Religion and Nothingness*. The workshop proved to be an excellent opportunity to reflect on the concept of time in Nishitani’s philosophy.

Two other workshops provided wonderful opportunities to meet numerous Japanese and non-Japanese specialists and discuss Japanese philosophy. One workshop, organized by the Roche Chair Fellow Steve Lofts, was titled “Kant,

Neo-Kantianism, and Japanese Philosophy.” It was held 5 July with the goal of exploring the importance of Kant and Neo-Kantianism in Japanese philosophy in the early twentieth century. The other workshop, held on 23 January, was entitled “Tanabe Hajime and his Relation to Nishida Kitarō.” It was organized in collaboration with Liao Chin-Ping and aimed to investigate the meaning and significance of the encounter between these two great Japanese philosophers, starting from Tanabe's essay “Seeking instruction from Professor Nishida” 西田先生の教えを仰ぐ.

This year, we were once again visited by Professor Bendik Manum and some of his colleagues for an event on the architecture of Antonin Raymond organized 16–17 May by the three Nanzan Institutes. Another major event was the celebration of the Institute's Fiftieth Anniversary, which featured presentations by renowned scholars of Japanese philosophy, Ōhashi Ryōsuke and Bret Davis.

Finally, this year we were able to publish the first multilingual volume in our new book series, the Nanzan Library for Japanese Philosophy, titled *Zettai mujunteki jikodōitsu*. The book contains seven translations of Nishida's text of the same name and is unique among publications on Japanese philosophy. The book was presented at an event during the ENOJP meeting in Edinburgh on 5 September and can be downloaded for free from our website (<https://nirc.nanzan-u.ac.jp/books/13>), while print copies can be purchased print-on-demand. Recordings of presentations and discussions of this year's workshops, as well as the Nishida seminar, can be viewed on the NIRC YouTube channel (@NIRC-nanzan).

KANT, NEO-KANTIANISM, AND JAPANESE PHILOSOPHY

5 July 2025

The emphasis on phenomenology and Heidegger has often overshadowed the importance of Kant and Neo-Kantian philosophy for Japanese philosophy at the beginning of the twentieth century. The conference aimed to explore the importance of Kant and Neo-Kantianism in Japanese philosophy in the early twentieth century.

Itabashi Yūjin 板橋勇仁, *Rissho University*

Sova Cerda, *Kyoto University*

Morten E. Jelby, *Kyoto University*

Ochiai Kaichi 落合開智, *Rissho University*

Steve Lofts, *King's University College at Western University*

**NISHITANI KEIJI WORKSHOP ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION:
FIFTH SESSION, TIME AND ETERNITY IN NISHITANI**

6 December 2025

The purpose of this workshop was to explore Nishitani's theory of time in relation to the texts "Religion and Nothingness" and "This Eternal Thing."

Steve Lofts, *King's University College at Western University*

Francisco Figueroa Medina, *Kyoto University*

Enrico Fongaro, *NIRC*

Katō Chika 加藤千佳, *Kansai University*

Michiel Herman, *University of Antwerp*

Taruta Yūki 樽田勇樹, *Kyoto University*

Emma Lavinia Bon, *Padua University*

TANABE HAJIME AND HIS RELATION TO NISHIDA KITARŌ

23–24 January 2026

In this workshop, based (but not exclusively) on Tanabe's essay "Seeking Instruction from Professor Nishida," the participants investigated the meaning and significance of the encounter between Tanabe's and Nishida's conceptual worlds, which were so close and yet so far apart.

Morten E. Jelby, *Kyoto University*

Richard Stone, *Tokyo City University*

Sova Cerda, *Kyoto University*

Liao Chin-Ping 廖欽彬, *Sun Yat-Sen University*

Wang Xiao-Liang 王晓亮, *Sun Yat-Sen University*

Tajima Jurina 田島樹里奈, *Tokyo College of Transport Studies*

Kondō Kazunori 近藤和敬, *Osaka University*

Taguchi Shigeru 田口茂, *Hokkaido University*