

31th KUASS
(Kyoto University African Studies Seminar)

Challenges in writing a history of Timbuktu

Date: Dec. 9 (Tue), 2014, 16:00 – 18:00

Venue: Middle-sized seminar room, 3F Inamori Bldg.,
Kawabata Campus, Kyoto University

Presenter : Shamil Jeppie

(University of Cape Town/Kyoto University)

Abstract: In this seminar I present what I have been working on during this visit to Kyoto which has primarily been a history of the West African town, Timbuktu or Tombouctou. This town has a long history connected to Islamic scholarship in Sahara and the Niger River Bend regions. I want to reflect on some of the problems I have encountered such as the gaps in our knowledge of the town and the broader region, the dominance of certain types of sources over others, and how to address the long-standing myths of the town that continue into the present. Finally, is there a possibility of look at this town with other locations in Asia, for instance? Could comparative perspectives provide new insights into the history of this town?