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EAST ASIA @SHEFFIELD



ISSN 1472-6653 June 2006 Number 12

Sheffield to host Confucius Institute

The School of East Asian Studies at the University of Sheffield has been awarded a prestigious Confucius Institute by the Chinese government for the promotion of Chinese language and culture.

The University of Sheffield will establish a Confucius Institute this year. This is a joint initiative in collaboration with the Office of Chinese Language Council International, Beijing Language and Culture University and Nanjing University.

The Chinese government plans to open 100 such institutes, named after the famous philosopher and teacher, around the world by 2010. Their goal is to promote Chinese language and culture to a global audience. Sheffield's Confucius Institute will act as a focal point for China-related activities in Sheffield and the broader region of the Midlands and Northern England. It will be active within the University of Sheffield, in cooperation with other universities, schools and businesses and as part of the local community.

The development of Chinese language learning will provide a particular focus of the Institute's activities. It will support the development of teachers of Chinese by working closely with the University's School of Education and its Postgraduate Certificate of Education programme. It will also provide established teachers of Chinese language and Chinese teachers in UK schools with training programmes in teaching and learning. Within the

wider community, it will encourage innovative and flexible non-degree Chinese language learning courses.

The activities of the Institute extend into research. In particular, it will support research into both the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language in the UK and the development of appropriate methods of assessment. It will also serve as the regional centre for China-related activities by hosting visiting scholars, researchers and language teachers from China.

In addition, the Institute will forge strategic alliances with key stakeholders in business, industry and government by organizing cross-cultural communication seminars and workshops. Ultimately,

it will contribute to a wide range of activities that raise awareness and educate the UK public about China, its culture and its language.

Dr Sarah Dauncey, Lecturer in Chinese Studies, who played a central role in the bidding process for the Institute emphasized that, "the establishment of the Confucius Institute is the result of a substantial and continuing financial investment by both the University of Sheffield and the Chinese government. It demonstrates a strong and lasting commitment to the further development of Chinese language and culture studies at a local, national and international level."

For all enquiries regarding the Institute, please contact:
confucius@sheffield.ac.uk

Dr Lily Chen (left) and Professor Tim Wright (right) of SEAS with Dr Qi Dexiang (centre), President and Editor-in-Chief of Beijing Language and Culture University Press. Dr Chen and Professor Wright visited Beijing in April to confirm the establishment of the Confucius Institute.



Farewell to Sheffield

SEAS bids farewell to Andy Staples, who has taught Japanese business, management and economics for the last two years. Andy will be taking up a position as Associate Professor of Japanese Business and Management at Kansai Gaidai University in Japan.

While at SEAS, Andy organized several successful open days and will be known to many as the face of the department. We all wish him every success in the future.

Postgraduate graduation day

A number of taught postgraduate students graduated from SEAS at a ceremony held on 12 January. Several students from both the in-house and distance learning courses attended and our best wishes for the future go out to all our graduates.



Hong Yu (MSc in Political Economy of East Asia and currently MPhil/PhD candidate in SEAS) celebrates with the School's secretary Susie Tranter.

Investing in Japan

In May, SEAS welcomed Mr Watanabe Yasuo, the representative of the Kanagawa Prefectural Government, who gave a presentation on inward investment in Japan to the School's postgraduate students. Mr Watanabe heads the prefecture's permanent representative office, which seeks to encourage investment in and trade with Kanagawa, at the JETRO offices in London.

Mr Watanabe's presentation was an opportunity for SEAS students to

bring their academic studies to life through a case study of investment promotion in Kanagawa Prefecture, which is second only to Tokyo in terms of hosting foreign affiliated firms in Japan. During the discussions that followed, Mr Watanabe was joined by Mrs Yoshimi McLeod of the University's East Asian Business Services unit who was able to draw on her experience of local efforts to facilitate trade and promotion with Japan at the South Yorkshire International Trade Centre.



Mr Watanabe discusses inward investment in the prefecture of Kanagawa.

Return to Sheffield

The University of Sheffield was delighted to welcome Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bownas back to Sheffield to give the final UK-Japan Business Seminar entitled "Lessons from Fifty Years of Japan-Watching" on 28 February. Professor Bownas's involvement with Japan spans more than sixty years from code-breaking during the Second World War to the promotion of Japanese Studies in the UK after the war. He was responsible for creating the Centre for Japanese Studies in Sheffield in 1963.

Professor Bownas's presentation was based on his latest book *Japanese Journeys: Writings and Recollections*, which covers his long involvement with Japan during the postwar period. The event was part of this year's series of UK-Japan Business Seminars, organized by the South Yorkshire International

Trade Centre, UK-Japan Business Research Centre and the University of Sheffield.



Professor Geoffrey Bownas talks about his journeys in Japan.

Note on names

Following East Asian convention, the family name precedes the given name/s in Chinese, Japanese and Korean names, unless the particular person uses the Western name order (given name followed by family name) in his/her publications and/or everyday life.

Editor's note

The views expressed in the articles in this newsletter are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the School of East Asian Studies and the University of Sheffield.

At the heart of Westminster

Since graduation, Jamie Hodge (BA in Japanese Studies and Politics, 2003) has moved to London and entered the world of politics.

My time spent at Sheffield was the most enjoyable, inspiring and testing period of my life so far. However, all good things must come to an end, and I graduated with an upper second-class honours degree in Japanese Studies and Politics. After graduation, although tempted to follow many of my fellow classmates back to Japan, I decided to head to London to find my fortune (or not as the case may be – I became an intern). I found an internship at the Institute for Citizenship and started work on a programme which aimed to discuss awareness of the European Constitution. In October 2004, I applied for a job at the Fabian Society, a left-of-centre think-tank, and was successful in gaining a position as Events Manager.

In my time at the Fabian Society, I have been responsible for organizing a number of large-scale political events, including seminars, policy events and receptions in Parliament, and have been lucky enough to visit Numbers 10 and 11 Downing Street on a number of occasions. Whilst I have mostly been using the knowledge gained through my joint degree in politics, I have found my knowledge of Japanese extremely useful. For example, I recently organized an event entitled "No More Samurais: Where is Japan Heading?" which was a debate on Japan's future direction involving the Japanese Ambassador and a number of political and academic commentators. It was a fantastic opportunity to see the inner workings of Japanese diplomacy (I was pleasantly surprised to find His Excellency the Ambassador very different from the stereotypical diplomat I had expected!)

Another interesting experience was having the First Secretary from the Embassy join me on the day of the general election so he could observe



Jamie Hodge for Prime Minister?

me as I was out campaigning in two London constituencies. The day was enlivened by his mobile phone constantly ringing with all parts of the Japanese government and media desperate to have the latest news on the election from the coalface, so to speak!

Overall, although I may not use my Japanese language skills in my current day-to-day job as much I would like to, I do feel that they have given me an

advantage when applying for jobs; employers often seem to be impressed that a British student has been able to master what they perceive as an extremely difficult and time-consuming language. I think that through being a student at SEAS, you learn some extremely useful skills: adaptability, reasoning, critical- and quick-thinking, which are useful for any job and definitely give you a boost in the application process when searching for that elusive job.

“Eight men sat around a table” – what role for women in the G8?



Dr Hugo Dobson, Senior Lecturer in Japan's International Relations, will soon be spending a six-month period of study leave in Japan and plans to take his research on the Group of Eight (G8) in a new direction.

In July this year, the leaders of some of the most powerful and influential countries on earth will gather in St Petersburg, Russia to attend the annual G8 summit. However, something will be very different about this year's summit, something that has not happened at the G8 summit for over ten years. There will be a woman participating in the meetings and discussion – German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Throughout its history, the meetings of the G8 have been dominated by men. Since its creation in 1975 only two women have ever participated in the G8 summit: UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, a long-term summit participant who attended twelve summit meetings between 1979 and 1990, and Canadian Prime Minister Kim Campbell, who was in power for less than five months and as a result attended only one summit in 1993. Whether the absence of women and the nature of the G8 as a “private boys’ club” have influenced the topics that reach the summit leaders’ agenda and the subsequent policies they try to implement are questions that I hope to investigate during my period of study leave, which will be spent at Tokyo University.

At the same time, I also hope to explore another related aspect of the G8. If you can remember any of the media coverage of the G8 summit meetings, you may well have noticed women playing a role but one that is very much on the edges of the summit and more often than not overlooked – as the wives of the leaders. The wives of the G8 leaders often accompany their husbands to the G8 summit and the host country always makes every effort to organize a number of media-friendly events for them to attend whilst their husbands are at work.

These can include visits to local schools, charities and arts centres, as well as accompanying their husbands to official dinners and receptions. In a forum like the G8, which depends upon fostering intimacy and informality between the leaders, the contribution of the wives to creating an atmosphere conducive to successful diplomacy has often been overlooked by academics. I hope to shed light upon the role and contribution of these unpaid diplomats. As Hillary Clinton wrote in her autobiography *Living History*, “I [originally] questioned the value of state visits in which the men sequestered themselves for meetings and the wives were treated to stage-managed tours of cultural landmarks. [Then] I realized that forging good relationships with my fellow spouses provided convenient low-key

communication among the heads of states.”

In particular, I am interested in looking at the case of Japan. In Japanese politics, there is no tradition of a “first lady” with the same duties and status as say Hillary Clinton or even Cherie Blair. So, how does the Japanese prime minister’s wife respond when such a role is thrust upon her by having to attend the G8 summit? Has a prime minister like Koizumi Junichiro, who is a divorcé and has no wife to accompany him to the summit, been hampered in his attempts to build good relationships with the other G8 leaders? These are just some of the questions I will put to politicians and bureaucrats involved in preparation for the summit, in addition to former prime ministers and, of course, their wives.

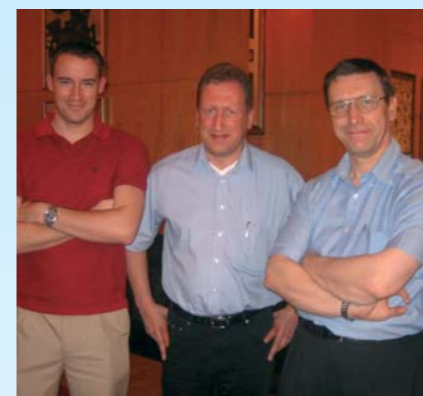


UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was a rare female participant in G8 (photo courtesy of G8 Research Centre, University of Toronto).

Erasmus students study Chinese at Sheffield

The Erasmus programme facilitates student mobility between European universities. UK students are able to spend 3 to 12 months of their degree studying abroad and European students come for corresponding periods to universities in the UK. There is no extra charge for tuition and students receive full credit at their home institution for courses taken abroad.

In recent years, SEAS has welcomed an increasing number of students from Bordeaux, Paris, Aix-en-Provence, Barcelona, Granada and Bremen to take Chinese language courses from beginners to advanced level. Such students contribute greatly to both the academic and social life of the department and many have made lasting personal friendships. Here are some experiences of those who joined the level 2 (third year) Chinese degree classes.



Julien (far left) – at work in Shenzhen with a client and colleague.

Julien Mevel-Papin (2002-2003)

I came to Sheffield from Bordeaux III University where I was studying Applied Foreign Languages and Business Studies (Chinese). A friend of mine had already experienced studying Chinese at SEAS and advised me to apply. So I did, for two reasons basically: the first was to take advantage of a year in the UK to improve my English and the second was to enjoy a year as an exchange student, which would provide me with the opportunity to meet new people from all over the world. Alongside economics, information technology and English, I attended Chinese classes and enjoyed the fact that we were able to work on various types of material (newspapers, book extracts, and so on) and that we were in small groups. I am now a buyer for a large French furniture group – Meubles Demeyère – based at Cal-scan, their subsidiary, in Shenzhen. Basically, I live, breathe and work in Chinese!

Blandine Cantrel (2002-2003)

I had lived for a year in Taiwan and decided on Sheffield as I could combine Chinese language with politics, my major at Sciences Po (Paris). Previously I had studied from textbooks and so enjoyed the challenge of using real texts and not merely materials designed for foreigner learners. Our teachers were very friendly and spending 6 hours per week in classes with my English classmates (plus the long hours together in the library) made it easy to make friends. Learning Chinese turned out to be a great chance to improve my English! Since then, I passed the bar exam and am now working in Hong Kong as a financial lawyer for BNP Paribas, a French bank. I draft and negotiate contracts with counterparts based all over Asia. Although I may not speak much Mandarin at work, I read legal documents in Chinese and have learned some very technical vocabulary.



Blandine – in Guilin with Sheffield Chinese student Carl Shieber, who graduated in 2004, and two members of the local ethnic minority.



Marion Wozniezko (2004-2005)

Like most Erasmus students I wanted to come to the UK to improve my English, but as Chinese was a core part of my degree at Bordeaux III University I selected Sheffield. I already knew that it had a very good Chinese department. Although the level of Chinese at Sheffield was higher than my course back in France, it really encouraged me to progress rapidly. Translation classes helped me to deal with texts even though I might not know all the vocabulary. Speaking classes increased my confidence in communication. I would strongly encourage overseas students interested in Chinese to come to Sheffield as they would benefit greatly. Funnily enough, I stayed in Sheffield following the end of my course and now do some interpreting. I also work in a Chinese medicine shop.



To borrow a phrase...

You do not need to hear a native speaker of a language to borrow their words. For Dr Nic Tranter, Lecturer in Japanese Studies, this is an aspect of his current research.

“Loanword” describes words taken from another language, for example *karaoke*, *tamagochi* and *tycoon* from Japanese into English, and these are one of my main research interests. A lot of older loanwords were borrowed because of face-to-face contact with speakers of another language, or because of significant levels of bilingualism. For example, Latin *caseum* (or vulgar Latin *casio*) “cheese” was borrowed by Germanic peoples and, with the natural sound changes that occur over time, gives English *cheese* or German *Käse*. They heard what someone said, and imitated it.

Linguists tend to assume that all loanwords move from *spoken* language to *spoken* language like this, and recent theoretical approaches focus on this. We generally concentrate on spoken rather than written languages, because of the idea of the primacy of the spoken language. This is because for most of human history everyone spoke and nobody wrote; children are programmed to pick up speech, but have to be taught to write.

But think about the first time you encountered a new loanword in English. Did you really hear it from a native speaker of the source language? Or did you read

it? Or did you hear it on the radio or television spoken by someone who is just reading it from a script? The way we pronounce *tagliatelle* (TAG-lear-telly), or *Rösti* (ROSH-ti), or *sushi* (SOO-shi) cannot be explained as words borrowed from spoken language. Otherwise, *sushi* would rhyme with *pushy*, sounding closer to its Japanese original. The same goes for names. We get the current English pronunciation of Gyanendra or Putin from newsreaders, who do not know the original Nepalese or Russian.

We (or, in the case of Gyanendra or Putin, newsreaders) then interpret what we see written when we read it out loud. We see Gy- and we think of my or by, or -ly in quickly, and so Gyanendra becomes GUY-a-nendra or GEAR-nendra. When do you hear a TV chef who does not say TAG-lear-telly and ROSH-ti?

I think the reason such “graphic” or written loanwords are overlooked is partly because of linguists’ adherence to the primacy of the spoken language, but also because the Roman alphabet is phonetic (in an extremely imperfect way). In East Asia we have character script, which writes words. Chinese in origin, it was borrowed centuries ago to write Japanese, Korean

and Vietnamese. In all four languages the words have changed over time, and so the word for “peace” (medieval Chinese *byaeng*) is now *ping* in Chinese, *hei* in Japanese (earlier *pei*), *p’yeong* in Korean, and *binh* in Vietnamese. The same word, but time has taken its toll.

When Deng Xiaoping’s name was borrowed into Japanese, it did not become *Den Shaupin* in Japan. Japanese just *read* each of the characters with their conventional readings: *To Shohei*. Koreans read it as *Teung Sop’yeong*, and Vietnamese as *Dang Tieu Binh*. This is remarkable, as Vietnamese no longer uses character script. A further complication is how Japanese uses character script to write words that are not of Chinese origin, but have a similar meaning. This means that a word can move between languages in character form but be read completely differently. An extreme illustration is Japanese *hikiwatashi* and Chinese *yindu*, both meaning “extradition”. This is ultimately the same process as that which gives us SOO-shi. In a modern literate world, graphic loanwords are increasingly the norm.

Conferences on Japan

Ending the postwar?

Professor Carol Gluck of Columbia University once pointed out that the term “postwar” in Japan is significant as a historical period and that there is something to be represented as the “postwar”. Indeed, when commemorating the 60th anniversary of the end of the Asia-Pacific War, the end of the “postwar” appeared to be the object of debates in Japan, once again, just as happened with the 50th anniversary in 1995. Why is the end of the postwar debated perennially in Japan?

To explore this question, Dr Takeda Hiroko and Professor Glenn Hook of the School of East Asian Studies organized a conference in February with the assistance of the British Academy, the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation, the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation and Chubu Electric Company. Participants included such notable scholars as Nakamura Masanori, Ronald Dore, Arthur Stockwin, Yamaguchi Jiro, and Kariya Takehiko. Their presentations examined issues such as postwar democracy, the Japanese management system and the standard family, which all characterized the “postwar” in the political, economic and social realms. Also, challenges to the mainstream understanding of the postwar (gaps in the educational system, foreign residents and gender equality politics) were discussed. The conclusion after two days of lively discussion was that the postwar has not yet ended – there are plural “postwars” and to declare an end to such “postwars” is a highly political act



Tokyo University workshop

At the end of 2005, a number of staff and students from the School of East Asian Studies got together at the Institute of Social Science, University of Tokyo for a one-day workshop. They were joined by lecturers and doctoral students from a number of other institutions including the Universities of Edinburgh and London in the UK, California and Harvard Universities in the US, and of course staff and students from the University of Tokyo.

The day was divided into two sessions: “Managing Diversity in Japanese Organizations”, which mainly focused on recent management issues in Japanese corporations, and “Whither Japan in the World?”, which discussed international relations and politics in Japan. The workshop was originally the idea of Ishiguro Kuniko, a PhD student in the School, and her supervisor Dr Peter Matanle and was intended to provide doctoral students with an opportunity to present their findings in an informal setting and receive useful feedback. Thanks to their hard work in establishing solid networks amongst researchers, the day was a huge success and also demonstrated the School’s strong relationship with the Japanese academic world.



Invited speaker



At the end of last year, Dr Takeda Hiroko was invited to give one of the plenary addresses at the Japanese History Workshop on State and Society held at the University of

Newcastle in Australia. Her address was entitled “Negotiating intimacy: the collective memories of the postwar” and other participants in the conference included several leading names in the field such as Professors Tessa Morris-Suzuki, Laura Hein, Elise Tipton and Sandra Wilson. This trip also provided an opportunity to investigate what was happening in Japanese Studies in Australia.

Dr Takeda found the results to be very rewarding. “I got to know many experienced and young researchers actively working on different topics of Japanese modern and pre-modern history. Particularly, I was fascinated by the strong interest in marginalized areas of the Japanese state. My paper on the construction of the familial in the early 1950s through ‘home drama’ films met with helpful and positive comments. All in all, I very much enjoyed my hasty trip to Australia although I only managed a glimpse of the Sydney Opera House.”

New BAKS President

Professor James H. Grayson has been appointed President of the British Association of Korean Studies (BAKS) until 2009. In conjunction with the Samsung Foundation and the Korean War Veterans’ Association, BAKS has recently instituted a Year Abroad Bursary Scheme, which can assist with either travel expenses to Korea, or living expenses whilst there. Building on this, Professor Grayson is hoping to introduce an internship scheme with UK companies in Korea which would allow selected students to gain work experience there while they receive intensive language tuition.



Ten years of distance learning

Dr Thomas McAuley reflects upon ten years of providing MA courses for students outside Sheffield and looks to the future.

As I sit in my office looking out over the Sheffield skyline, another email message arrives in my inbox. A glance shows it comes from a student whose translation I am supervising. She has a query that is nothing out of the ordinary for any academic supervisor, except that this mail originated from the shores of Lake Biwa, to the north of Kyoto.

Over 200 students are taking the distance learning (DL) versions of our taught Master's programmes, most of whom live and work thousands of miles away from Sheffield and may never visit the university. That does not mean that they are any less part of our student body: they enjoy frequent email contact with their tutors, have their courses delivered to them via the University's e-learning environment, WebCT, and have full access to all of the library's electronic resources. Thanks to video-conferencing, DL students may soon be able to sit at home in Japan, the US or Singapore and take part in "live" classes. However, ten years ago when SEAS launched DL, things were much more "low tech", with bundles of cassette tapes and batches of students' work being couriered across the globe.

We decided to launch DL after being approached by an external institution. In the early 1990s David Paul, founder of David English House, an "English Education Centre", contacted SEAS because of its pre-eminent reputation for Japanese Studies. He had been struck by the number of people keen to do an MA in Japanese Studies. With a ready-made market, and an agent willing to act for us, we took the decision in 1995 to adapt our existing MA in Japanese Studies for DL. This was done under the academic direction of Graham Healey, who has over thirty years experience in designing Japanese courses, with the assistance of Alison Churchill, now the DL Programme Director.

We took in our first class of students in 1996, offering them a programme combining advanced Japanese language training with Japanese Studies, in order to produce graduates with high level language skills and an extensive critical appreciation of modern Japan. On the administrative side, a great deal of work was required to deal with the inevitable delays that crop up when your students are working full-time whilst taking the course. One memorable message from a student was, "I won't be able to make my essay deadline as I'm on manoeuvres with my unit south of the demilitarized zone in Korea."

The programme has never run entirely at a distance and summer residentials, either in Japan or Sheffield, have been important to allow students to assemble for a week of language classes, seminars, lectures and socializing. I remember at one recent residential, Japan-based students' personal tutor Dennis Murphy, who graduated in 2000, remarked to me, "It never ceases to amaze me how many clever, interesting people take the MA course."

This success led us to launch the MA in Japanese Language and Society, aimed at people with intermediate Japanese language skills, in 1999, and a six-month Japanese Language Course for beginners in 2002. Chinese provision was also added in 2002 with DL versions of the MSc in Chinese Business and International Relations and the MSc in Chinese Language, Business and International Relations. For the latter degree the School benefited from a grant from the University's Teaching Innovation Support Fund for the creation of an interactive CD ROM for Chinese language. Head of Department, Professor Tim Wright, even agreed to play the role of a lost foreigner asking for directions in the video clips accompanying the lessons.

To date, 266 people have graduated from our DL programmes and we can only hope that as the courses continue to develop, incorporating more of the features that advances in technology make possible (funding to develop a Japanese language CD ROM and interactive web tutorials in Japanese-English translation has just been provided by the University) we can continue to recruit interested, committed students and provide them with such life-changing experiences.



A Distance Learning residential.

Bill Gordon (MA in Advanced Japanese Studies, 2000)



The programme gave me confidence to read Japanese books for research and to translate challenging texts from Japanese to English.

Completing it while living in the US turned out to be quite a challenge, but it pushed me to keep improving my language proficiency. The knowledge I gained frequently helps in my position as finance manager, when doing tasks such as determining the accounting effect of Japanese pension system changes on our company. I also use the translation skills learned from Sheffield in activities related to my web site on Kamikaze images: <http://wgordon.web.wesleyan.edu/kamikaze>

It is especially gratifying to see our graduates beginning to produce published literary translations. The most recent is *Inside*, a collection of short stories by modern Japanese women writers

Philip Price (MA in Advanced Japanese Studies, 2003)

After graduating from the course, I began to work as a patent translator, which means I deal with extremely long, convoluted Japanese sentences on a daily basis. I was very excited about the prospect of some professional literary translation, but soon found it to be hugely more complicated and time-consuming than translating technical Japanese. When

Matthew Winkler (MA in Japanese Language and Society, 2003)



I started my studies while living in Oita, Japan, from 1998 to 2001, completing my dissertation in 2002 and being awarded my degree in 2003

after returning to the US. Since graduating, I have taught a course entitled "East Asia in Modern Times" at Colby Sawyer College in New London, New Hampshire. Apart from that, I also work in the building trade, where I am leveraging my education and experience in Asia to market an "Oriental Gazebo" garden structure. Creating and selling this niche product required the combination of my trade skills and my SEAS education.

translating patents, it is vital to remain as close to the original Japanese as possible, and hence I often found it difficult to move away from the text in order to produce smooth, natural English sentences. At the same time, however, I was able to appreciate the brilliance of the authors' writing, something that has yet to occur while working on a patent and I would take on more work in this field in an instant.

Louise Heal (MA in Advanced Japanese Studies, 2003)

In 2004, I give up my 14-year teaching career in Japan and moved to the US. Using my MA I embarked on the career path of a freelance translator. I

Anna Isozaki (MA in Advanced Japanese Studies, 2004)



One of the nice things about the Sheffield programme was that we were encouraged to pursue our own interests. Our final translations were a good chance to try out what we were

aiming for in the future. I had become hooked on Miyabe Miyuki's novel *Crossfire*, so I began working on some excerpts for Sheffield. After graduation, I joined up with a friend and put together a synopsis of the novel for a proposal to publishers. The proposal was accepted, so we put our noses to the grindstone for about a year. The experience of doing the translation was, well... nocturnal as I also teach English (thanks to the Sheffield MA I was able to get the teaching job I had wanted). It was worth it though, and I would do it again in a minute.

became involved in the *Inside* project, tackling Daido Tamaki's *Milk*, the biggest challenge of which was how to find the perfect English equivalent for the voice of its young teen protagonist. As a not-so-young British woman I realized that some study of the contemporary language of the American teenager was required. I put myself on a strict diet of rather too many teen movies and books, and even hung out on occasion with local sixteen-year olds, who offered invaluable advice. I am now hooked on literary translation. To succeed in expressing what an author wants to communicate to her readers is true job satisfaction and I hope to continue on this career path.



The changing shape of the University Library

Gill Goddard, East Asian Studies librarian, explains some exciting changes to the university's library system.

In February 2007, the new Information Commons is scheduled to open in a central location within the new development of the University campus. Born out of completely fresh thinking about learning resources for the 21st century student, it will contain a whole range of study experiences within what will be a single spectacular building.

Students will have integrated access to printed and electronic information sources in the same place at the same time. The ultra-flexible, future-proof interior is designed to accommodate both class and individual study and to cater for everyone's individual study style. Kitted out with the latest ICT resources (including, naturally, full wireless access to the University network and the web), it will feature 1,300 well-equipped spaces for teaching, learning and study, plus 110,000 of the most in-demand books and periodicals. With a spacious café, quiet individual study areas, comfy sofas and informal areas for group study, the Information Commons is thus designed to meet the core academic interests of the student population, while the Main Library will become the Research Library, providing broader collections for use in project, essay and dissertation work.

From the beginning of the academic year 2006-7, students will find that the Information Commons book collection will already be in place in the main Reading Room of the Main Library on the lower floor. The concept is that this collection will then be quickly and easily relocated to the Information Commons when it opens during the weekend between Semester 1 and Semester 2 of the academic year 2006-7, with the minimum of disruption to the work of the University.



An artist's impression of the new Information Commons building (courtesy of RMJM).

The Information Commons printed collections will be held in just one sequence, holding not only books for loan, but also reference copies for use in the Information Commons only, dictionaries, pamphlets, DVDs, and so on. This should prove much less complicated for students in the School of East Asian Studies who are used to visiting many areas of the Main Library to find their material, in other words the individual Chinese, Japanese and Korean collections, in addition to

the Short Loan Collection, Audio-Visual and other Main Library areas.

The Main Library will become the Research Library and SEAS students will be actively encouraged to continue to visit it in order to access the full range of material on East Asia. Extra copies of many titles are being purchased in order to ensure that one copy of every title remains in the Research Library, thus creating a comprehensive collection of

material on East Asia. Eventually it is hoped that the Chinese, Japanese and Korean collections in the Research Library might be brought together in one area, but that must wait for the long-awaited refurbishment of the building.

Martin Lewis, Director of Library Services, believes that "the Information Commons means a shared information

resource for our academic community. By setting a new standard for learning and study environments this exciting new building promises to be a great asset to the University and our future students, and it will help us to maintain our position as a leading UK university."



Life writing in China

Dr Marjorie Dryburgh, Lecturer in Chinese Studies, is organizing an upcoming workshop on the subject of life writing.

Life writing is deeply embedded in traditions of Chinese historical and personal writing. Dynastic histories used biographies to highlight moral standards, and families and communities produced family histories and obituaries to commemorate worthy individuals and garner social capital. Libraries and publishers permitting, we can trace lives through letters, essays and occasional writings. Autobiographies and reportage are central to popular histories of China and the blog allows us to eavesdrop on the everyday lives of many who would in earlier times have remained anonymous.

These life stories add texture and a human face to broader analyses of recent history, yet we should treat them with some caution. We cannot expect any one writer to have perfect knowledge of the context of their own experiences, nor can we expect any one life to be "representative." We have to recognize that the moral overtones of traditional biographies may spill over into contemporary accounts, that biographers may view others' lives through the lens of their own preoccupations and that there are dangers in reducing historical process to the product of a powerful individual or minority. Whilst researching pre-war relations between China and Japan, although I was warned not to rely on eye-witness and memoir accounts, I found that these often had an immediacy lacking in some of the drier official sources. However, although they claimed authenticity and authority ("I was there and this is what I saw"), their use as sources could be limited, inevitably by the anxieties and complexities of politics in the 1930s and the uncertainties of memory, and predictably by the temptation to settle scores and affirm loyalties.

Nonetheless, memoirs showed how people tried to build a coherent and manageable narrative of their lives, and what they tried to salvage from stressful – sometimes traumatic – experience, and we see this at work elsewhere as the work of gathering and publishing recollections of war and occupation continues today. Earlier life writing was concerned with identity building –

whether this related to social or personal identity – as well as with recording events, and the same applies today to blogs and personal websites, whose authors create an online persona as they construct personal and family histories, discuss texts ranging from Shanghai bus graffiti to the writings of statesman Zeng Guofan, and post images of streets, offices and punk rock concerts.

The accessibility of such sources is seductive, yet it raises further questions. The ease with which such material can be posted, the relative difficulty of establishing its origin and a pervasive sense that electronic sources other than those produced by major organizations are disposable, all affect our evaluation of these as sources. Yet we cannot deny that the processes by which older paper-

based sources survive is often haphazard, and that our understanding of historical experience – whether individual or collective – is skewed by the fact that we see it more often than not through the eyes of those who were relatively affluent or powerful.

As we approach Chinese life writing, therefore, the question we should be asking is not "should we use this to help us understand China?" but "how should we use this to help us understand China?" This question applies to contemporary and electronic life stories as it does to paper-based histories from the twentieth century and before. We are aiming to explore these themes in greater depth in a future workshop and anyone interested may contact us at m.e.dryburgh@sheffield.ac.uk or s.dauncey@sheffield.ac.uk

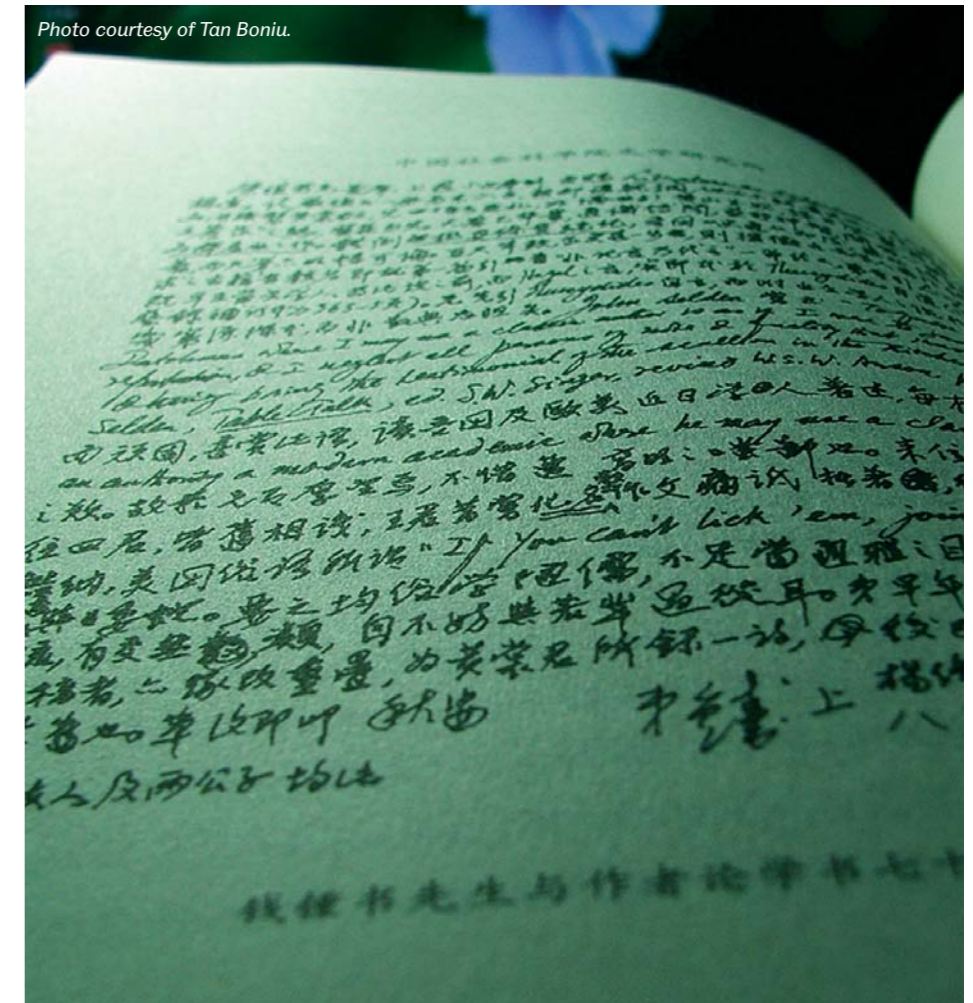


Photo courtesy of Tan Boniu.

Japan Day

Joseph Tame, a single honours Japanese Studies student, celebrates the recent award-winning Japan Day held in Sheffield.

Sunday 12 February saw over 900 people flock through the doors of the University's Octagon Centre to participate in Japan Day, organized by Sheffield University's Japan Society. The theme of the event was "breaking the barriers" and it aimed at bringing elements of Japanese culture to Sheffield. By doing this, we hoped to promote a greater understanding and closer ties between the UK and Japan, whilst raising money for charities based in both countries.

Those attending had come from far and wide. In addition to university staff, students, local residents and school children, members of Japan-related organizations from York, Essex, Brighton and Northern Ireland made the trip to join in the fun. There was even one man there who had come all the way from Australia - just for Japan Day!

The event kicked off (literally!) with a powerful demonstration by a university-based Karate club, which was then followed by a dramatic set by the internationally-renowned Japanese percussionist Hirota Joji and his *taiko* drum band. The sheer power of the drums was quite

staggering, whilst the energy and dexterity of the drummers themselves ensured that it was a performance that would not be forgotten.

The Japan Day Committee then seized upon the energy whipped up by Joji's drumming, giving a fantastic fast-paced rendition of the Soran-Bushi dance, set to the music of a traditional fishing song from Northern Japan.

A break for a typically Japanese lunch of sushi and curry rice was followed by a talk-show with the Japanese entrepreneur Takahashi Ayumu, author of numerous bestselling books and founder of Sanctuary Publishing, who had flown over from Okinawa in order to take part in the events. During the talk-show he spoke of how he had achieved success in life, primarily through "breaking the barriers" of constrictive social norms.

Some of the most popular attractions were the themed stalls that gave visitors the chance to try their hands at various Japanese art forms - including calligraphy, tea ceremony, and how to put a kimono

on. The resident Japan Society origami expert provided lessons in crane making, whilst simultaneously producing a stream of astonishing models that looked impossible to create with anything but a supercomputer.



Having a go at Japanese calligraphy (photo courtesy of Ian Spooner).

Whilst some visitors were already familiar with all things Japanese, there were a considerable number of families with young children who were getting their first taste of the country. The positive feedback received at the end of the day made it all worthwhile - one father commented that his son was now determined to become a professional taiko drummer, whilst another family was heard asking where in Sheffield they could buy a kimono.

The day was rounded off by student rock band AXIA getting everyone jumping up and down to a selection of well-known Japanese songs - a great end to what was, all-in-all, great fun for both the organizers and visitors on the day.

With the continued support of the Embassy of Japan in the UK, it is hoped that Japan Day will become a regular event, bringing together Japan-related societies across the UK for an annual festival of all things Japanese.

More information on Sheffield University's Japan Society can be found at:
<http://japansoc.union.shef.ac.uk>



Hirota Joji's taiko drum band (photo courtesy of Ian Spooner).

Students' success in speech contests



Mark Boyle

(MA in Advanced Japanese Studies, 2004) was the winner of the 16th Sir Peter Parker Awards for Spoken Business Japanese held in London at the end of last year. His speech was entitled "Life as a UK Correspondent for a Japanese Newspaper: Challenges, Rewards and the Media's Role in UK-Japan Relations", and drew on his experiences of working for the *Hokkaido Shimbun* in London. Mark commented that "having never taken part in any sort of speech contest before, winning this award was a huge surprise. It was really gratifying to see the level of interest people had in the role the media play in creating the images people in Britain and Japan have about the other country. There is nothing like the prospect of speaking in front of several hundred people to focus the mind, and participating in the contest boosted both my presentational skills and my Japanese ability. I would strongly recommend any interested SEAS students to give it a go this year."

Richard Buckley

a single honours Chinese Studies student was awarded the prize for the most eloquent Chinese at the Chinese Bridge Chinese Proficiency Competition in London on 18 March 2006. The competition is run by the Chinese Ministry of Education through the Education Section of the Chinese Embassy in London and now, in its fifth year, it has become a firm fixture in the Chinese language learning calendar.

Ten students representing Cambridge, Leeds, the School of Oriental and African Studies, Nottingham, Sheffield and Westminster Universities took part in the competition and each candidate had to complete four tasks: a speech on a self-selected topic, an impromptu speech on a topic given, a Chinese artistic performance and response to questions related to this year's topic - the nationalities of China. The artistic performance section elicited the greatest response this year as judges and audience alike were

entertained by artistic skills ranging from martial arts to fan dances, Peking opera to contemporary rock music. Most impressive, however, were two students who had composed and performed their own songs in Chinese.

Sheffield student Richard performed extremely well across all four skills and was awarded a second grade certificate overall. He particularly impressed the judges with his level of Chinese proficiency and fluency. Dr Sarah Dauncey, who co-ordinates the Chinese language programmes, remarked "every year the standard of the entrants increases and this year has certainly been the most competitive yet. So this is a wonderful achievement for a third year student who still has another year of study to go before graduation." This is the fourth consecutive year that a Sheffield student has won a major prize in the competition.



Richard with his certificates.

Korean Ambassador visits Sheffield

The University of Sheffield was honoured to be visited by Dr Cho Yoon-Je, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, on 17 March. Dr Cho met with senior members of SEAS, including Professor James H. Grayson, Director of the Centre for Korean Studies, to discuss the future development of Korean Studies at Sheffield. The Ambassador also paid a visit to the Department of Engineering Materials where one of the professorships was established by the South Korean Pohang Iron and Steel Corporation, and to the University's new research centre for the social sciences, the Informatics Collaboratory for the Social Sciences (ICOSS).

In the afternoon, Dr Cho gave a talk on recent economic and political developments on the Korean peninsula. Dr Cho, who is an economist rather than a career diplomat, served with the World Bank and was Chief Economist to the President of the Republic of Korea before being appointed ambassador. The Ambassador is no stranger to Sheffield, having visited last summer to attend the opening of the 2005 Biennial Conference of the Association for Korean Studies in Europe.

Dr Cho Yoon-Je, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea with Professor James H. Grayson.



Anglo-Japanese Academy

A number of staff members and students from the School of East Asian Studies took part in the second meeting of the Anglo-Japanese Academy (AJA) from 7-11 January 2006. The AJA was originally conceived of as a "virtual" academy with the aim of bringing together leading scholars in Japan and the UK from a range of disciplines with younger scholars who will be the next generation of academic leaders. By doing so, the AJA's goal is to bridge generational and disciplinary divides and to foster communication and the development of networks, both horizontally and vertically, amongst participants. The first meeting of the AJA was held in September 2001 and consisted of a workshop in Sheffield and a conference at Shrigley Hall, Cheshire (see Number 3 of EastAsia@Sheffield).

The second meeting of the AJA took place at Warwick University and was organized by a committee consisting of representatives from the Universities of Sheffield and

Warwick in the UK, and Tokyo and Kobe Universities in Japan. A five-day programme was planned and supported by the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Academy.

The event began with keynote addresses on contrasting aspects of Anglo-Japanese relations given by Emeritus Professor Ishii Shiro of Tokyo University and Emeritus Professor Ian Nish of the London School of Economics. These speeches were followed by two symposia exploring the impact of regionalism in Europe and East Asia on the one hand, and the political role of the media on the other hand. The symposia involved a number of UK- and Japan-based journalists and academics, including Professor Glenn Hook and Dr Hugo Dobson of SEAS and Professor Andrew Gamble of the Politics Department at the University of Sheffield.

The focus shifted on the third day of the meeting to the participating PhD students who came from a number of UK and Japanese

universities. Several training sessions were organized covering topics such as the ethical dimensions of research, presentation skills and how to get published. The final two days of the programme allowed the PhD students to put into practice what they had learned by giving them the opportunity to present their current research. Bhubhindar Singh, a SEAS PhD student, represented Sheffield and spoke on the subject of his current doctoral research – the recent transformation of Japan's security identity.



Bhubhindar Singh and Professor Glenn Hook participating in an AJA seminar.



Pulling strings

Dr Darren Ashmore talks about his research on the fascinating world of Japanese puppet theatre.

I came to university education rather late in life. Indeed, I did not even begin my undergraduate degree in Japanese Studies at Sheffield until I was twenty-five. However, the concerns I had at that time regarding the value of mature study were quickly dismissed by the staff and I found myself soon getting to grips with the language and culture of Japan in a way which really opened up the country to me in a way I had not considered before. The impact of the School's teaching on me was such that, after a year in Japan after graduation, I found that several of the questions which had come up in my final year dissertation still troubled me and I thus resolved to return to Sheffield to answer them in the form of a doctorate.

My research revolved around the revival of non-elite Japanese puppet theatre (and, more broadly, the state of traditional folk-art in general) in the South-central Kinki region of Japan. I had come to know this region well – both on my undergraduate study tour and on the JET programme – and was able to compare a number of different theatrical styles with each other, as well as with the formal Bunraku Puppet Theatre of Osaka which dominates the puppet arts in Japan. The issue boiled down to the control of cultural properties and the way in which different groups negotiate access to the "social realities" which they represent.

There is a current surge of interest in the revival of traditional culture across the globe and there are many different ways in which this process is viewed by those within and without it. Some see such revivals as exercises in nostalgia; others see an academic attempt at "living" social history; yet others simply view them as a good excuse for a party. The truth, at least as far as I see it, lies somewhere in the

middle, and focuses on the role of the participants actually creating – or negotiating – what their own little branch of the "folk memory" means to them. Academics, government officials, actors and patrons may all have very different ideas about the value of a given piece of cultural "property", but the key to the process of revival is how these very different people actually compromise with each other in order to see the revival succeed. This may seem to defeat the object of preservation, but the fact is that most of the cultural trappings which we hold dear have, at one time or other, been treated to this same process of negotiated preservation.

In this particular case I examined the survival and revival of a number of important traditional puppet theatres in Japan and the way in which they managed their status as "important cultural properties" amid the whirl and rush of modern life. Focussing on the people of the theatres as much as on the arts themselves I was able to get a very acute sense of the concrete value of these properties to the communities they served.

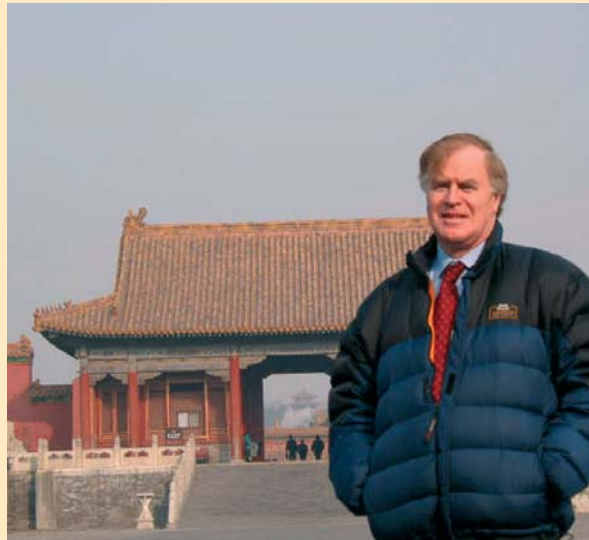
Plus it was a great deal of fun to sit in theatres day after day talking to fascinating people and soaking up dozens of fine plays.



Living national treasure Kiritake Masako, leader of the Osaka Otomo Bunraku troupe.

Welcome to Sheffield

The School of East Asian Studies is delighted to announce the appointment of Professor Christopher Howe. Professor Howe moves from the School of Oriental and African Studies where he has spent most of his academic career. He has served on the UK and Hong Kong Undergraduate Grants Committees and has taken up several visiting positions in China and Japan. His expertise lies in the economics of China and Japan and he is the author of numerous books and articles in these areas.



Professor Howe on a recent visit to China.

East Asian Studies degrees

The School of East Asian Studies offers a wide range of single and dual honours degrees, as well as postgraduate taught and research degrees. For further information, contact seas@sheffield.ac.uk, or see the School's webpages: <http://www.shef.ac.uk/seas>

BA degrees

Most degrees involve four years of study. Those marked with an asterisk take three years

Single honours

Chinese Studies
Japanese Studies
Korean Studies
East Asian Studies*

Dual honours

Chinese Studies and /Business Studies, History, Music
Chinese Studies with /Japanese, French, German, Spanish, Russian
Japanese Studies and /Business Studies, Politics, Sociology, Linguistics, History
Japanese Studies with /Korean, German, Spanish, Russian
French/Germanic/Hispanic/Russian Studies with Japanese
Korean Studies and /Business Studies, Linguistics, Music
East Asian Studies and /Business Studies, Russian Studies, Music*
International Politics and East Asian Studies*

Postgraduate taught degrees

In-house

MA/Diploma/Certificate in Chinese Studies
MSc/Diploma/Certificate in Chinese Business and International Relations
MSc/Diploma/Certificate in Chinese Language, Business and International Relations
MA/Diploma/Certificate in Japanese Studies
MA/Diploma/Certificate in Modern Korean Studies
MSc/Diploma/Certificate in East Asian Political Economy
MSc/Diploma/Certificate in East Asian Business

Distance learning

MA/Diploma in Japanese Language and Society
MA in Advanced Japanese Studies
MSc in Chinese Business and International Relations
MSc/Diploma in Chinese Language, Business and International Relations

Postgraduate research degrees

PhD supervision in a wide range of subject areas on China, Japan, Korea and intra-regional studies

Students' Union awards

Congratulations to Will Christophers, who received one of only five Union Centenary Achievement Awards given by the President of Sheffield Students' Union. During his time here, Will has acted as president of Sheffield's Japan Society and has also been a regular feature on campus every Tuesday selling *takoyaki* (see Number 11 of *EastAsia@Sheffield*). The impact he has had was made clear in his nomination: "It can be said, without a doubt, that Will Christophers has contributed more to the improvement of the student body than any other individual within the Student's Union."

In another Students' Union award ceremony – the annual Golden Gnomes – Will was also the recipient of the award for the best individual contribution towards student life. Sheffield's Japan Society won two awards: the most successful student group at the University of Sheffield and the best organized event by a national society for Japan Day, which was held on 12 February (see page 12). Congratulations to everyone involved for all their success and the hard effort that went into achieving it.



Members of Sheffield's Japan Society celebrate with their certificates and Golden Gnomes.

EASTASIA@SHEFFIELD

is published by the School of East Asian Studies at the University of Sheffield.

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Design and Print: Northend Creative Print Solutions, Sheffield