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Students give Sheffield the thumbs-up

According to the National Student Survey for 2007, students have placed the School of East Asian Studies (SEAS) top amongst competing UK higher education institutions for overall satisfaction.

The National Student Survey has been conducted since 2005 and was originally commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for England. The survey is conducted by Ipsos MORI, one of the largest survey research companies in the UK, and provides the opportunity for all final-year undergraduates to give feedback on their experience at university. The results are then published on the internet and may be used by any prospective students, employers or funders as a basis for judging the quality of individual institutions and degree programmes.

Students were asked to rate SEAS in seven areas: teaching, assessment and feedback, academic support, organization and management, learning resources, personal development and overall satisfaction. SEAS was ranked top in six of these areas, ahead of its competitors elsewhere in the UK. Importantly, in terms of overall satisfaction, SEAS scored an unsurpassed approval rating of 96 per cent.

Elsewhere in the University of Sheffield, departments such as Dentistry, Electronic and Electrical Engineering, Philosophy and courses in Modern Languages and Modern Languages with Interpreting also topped their respective subject areas. When compared against other universities in the Russell Group – the

UK's twenty top research-intensive universities – students rated Sheffield third overall.

Professor Tim Wright, Chair of the School of East Asian Studies, commented that "we are delighted that the National Student Survey results have publicly recognized the high quality of the teaching in the School and the dedication and hard work shown by all our staff. Well done to everyone concerned."

Madeleine Rodell, a student representative in her final year of study for a BA in East Asian Studies, believes that "this is wonderful news for everyone concerned. It's important that potential students have the opportunity to find out what our current students think of SEAS, and it's great to see that the efforts of all staff in SEAS have been acknowledged in this way."

More information on the National Student Survey is available at: www.unistats.com



SEAS students show their approval.

Farewell to SEAS

Staff and students at SEAS said goodbye to one of their longest serving colleagues when Dr Robert Taylor retired at the end of September. Robert first came to Sheffield in 1993 and since then has been at the forefront of the development of Chinese Studies. In particular, he has contributed to the teaching of Chinese business and international politics and helped to build links with Chinese institutions, including playing a key role in establishing the exchanges by which our students go to China. Although retiring, Robert will still be seen around the School as he plans to continue contributing to the distance learning programme.



Dr Robert Taylor (left) at his farewell party.

2007 graduates and prize-winners

The School of East Asian Studies was delighted to see almost fifty students graduate at a ceremony held on 21 July 2007. At the same ceremony, three PhD students – Youngmi Kim, Andrew Staples and Utpal Vyas – were also awarded their degrees.

In Chinese Studies, Richard Buckley was awarded both a first-class degree and the R. B. Sloss Prize for achievement, whilst in Japanese Studies, Harriet Gray and Fiona Zhang were jointly awarded the Margaret Daniels Prize for their first-class performances. Professor Tim Wright, Chair of SEAS, commented that “this

has been an excellent crop of graduates: Fiona completed a first-class degree in Japanese and Politics, with top marks in both areas. In addition to an outstanding performance in the language and a dissertation way above an undergraduate level, Harriet is also an outstanding singer, having performed in a charity performance of *Bugsy Malone*. Richard scored first-class marks of 72 per cent or more in every single unit he took at Sheffield, producing first-year essays of almost publishable quality. He has also been very active in social and charitable activities both in China and in the UK.”

Since graduation, Fiona has returned to Singapore and is hoping to undertake postgraduate studies in Japan in the future, whereas Richard is currently working at the University of Northumbria and Harriet is now in the middle of an MA degree in London. SEAS wishes all its graduates every success in their chosen careers.



Staff and students of the School of East Asian Studies on graduation day (photograph courtesy of Mark Rodgers).

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 are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the School and the University.

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Life in the fast lane



Kath Sanderson is not only a second-year Japanese Studies student but also one of the very few female motorbike racers in the country competing at circuits nationwide with her own team, MotoKat Racing.

Having been interested in motorbikes (in fact, anything with two wheels) since I was very young, I started riding in earnest at the age of fifteen in car parks and at circuit training schools. At sixteen I began riding on the road and recently passed the full bike test. However, the track is where I feel most at home.

I began racing in 2005 aboard a 400cc Kawasaki (a machine capable of over 120 mph). Despite my lack of experience, I enjoyed the thrill of dicing for position and managed to make up places throughout my first race meetings. I even managed to pull a few wheelies at the start too, which was slightly unnerving for my anxious stepfather-cum-mechanic! Although I've experienced my fair

share of crashes in my racing career, it doesn't put me off. The sport may appear dangerous, but in reality modern tracks have many safety features which mean that most of the time riders can walk away even after very high-speed falls.

I've ridden many different bikes but my favourite is the Aprilia RS250, which I competed on during the 2007 season. There is no separate class for 250cc racing, so I was entered in with the more powerful 400cc bikes. It sounds like a big disadvantage, but although the RS250 is lacking in power, it has the potential to sustain a much higher speed around corners. That's what makes it such fantastic fun to ride – plenty of opportunity for sliding my knees!

My interest in Japan is linked to bikes, although it's hard to say which came first. Being a long-time follower of National and World Championship level racing, it was impossible for me not to notice the importance of the Japanese manufacturers – Honda, Yamaha, Suzuki and Kawasaki. I also follow a number of Japanese riders, in particular Kiyonari Ryūichi, who has just been crowned British Superbike Champion for the second year in a row.

However, this was only one aspect of Japanese culture that influenced my decision to study at Sheffield. I'm also interested in Japan's history, popular culture and the language itself, as it is so different from English. When I discovered that a Japanese Studies course was available at my local university, I decided that I had to try it. It's been tough so far but I definitely made the right choice.

I hope to continue racing and maybe one day race in Japan. For the time being, however, I am focusing my attention on my studies and getting on the track when I can. It's a very demanding sport and would be impossible to undertake without the support of my sponsors, which include several Sheffield businesses.

More information about Kath is available at her website: www.motokat.co.uk



Kath in action on the track.

Chinese teachers update skills in Beijing

Dr Jeremy Taylor and Dr Zhang Mei, both lecturers in Chinese Studies at SEAS, spent a month of their summer in Beijing on a training course for overseas Chinese-language instructors. This is the second time that members of staff from SEAS have been invited to attend such a course, with Dr Sarah Dauncey taking part in the inaugural course in 2005.

The event was organized by the Office of Chinese Language Council International, with classes held at the International College for Chinese Language Studies at Peking University. Chinese language teachers from universities and schools in various parts of the UK, as well as Canada, attended the four-week course. Classes covered various aspects of Chinese language teaching, ranging from Chinese educational theory to the use of multimedia technologies and strategies for overcoming problems that non-native speakers of Chinese often face when learning Mandarin.



From left to right: Dr Zhang Mei, Professor Li Hongyin, Deputy Director of the International College for Chinese Language Studies at Peking University, and Dr Jeremy Taylor.

The classes also provided plenty of opportunities for discussion and exchange on the different approaches that teachers of Chinese adopt in different parts of the world.

Participants were treated to a series of visits to sites of cultural and historical significance in and around Beijing, such as Tiananmen Square and the Great Wall of China,

as well as to a number of educational publishing houses. The attendance of SEAS staff on this course not only helps to strengthen the quality of Chinese language teaching at Sheffield but also enhances the School's already strong relationship with the Office of Chinese Language Council International.

Korea Research Hub launches website

October saw the launch of the Korea Research Hub (KRH) Website, a collaborative project between the Universities of Sheffield and Leeds. The website can be found at: www.leeds.ac.uk/krh

Established in June 2007, the KRH seeks to promote the study of Korea, one of the world's oldest and most fascinating nations. The website contains details of the work of KRH scholars as well as various useful web-based resources to help those interested in Korean studies. The KRH website is also intended to promote and facilitate networking and collaborative research amongst Koreanists. The KRH team have ambitious plans to broaden the scope of the project's work over the coming years.



"Chinese Bridge" competition 2007

Congratulations to Tom Viart, who represented the UK in the finals of the "Chinese Bridge" competition in Beijing in August. Tom, a single honours Chinese Studies student, was overwhelmed by his trip to Beijing, "the competition was truly amazing and I didn't expect it to be such a big event in China! I had the most wonderful time there and met so many other people studying Chinese from all around the world."

Patently clear in translation



Simon Forth completed an MA in Advanced Japanese Studies in 1999 and a PhD in Japanese linguistics in 2006, both in the School of East Asian Studies. Whilst studying, he established a career for himself in the field of patent translation and is now passing on his experience to distance learning students in SEAS.

I first went to Japan in 1988 and lived there for a total of about eleven years. During this time, in 1995, I started work as the only westerner in the overseas office of a firm called Fuji Kikō that specialized in the manufacture of car steering columns and associated parts. As a result of witnessing first hand the day-to-day operations of a typical Japanese company, I realized that translation was my preferred employment and so sent out my CV to a local translation firm. A few days later, I was successfully interviewed for a job as a part-time translator.

The vast majority of the company's business was concerned with patent translations and by having a number of them pass across my desk in the five years I worked there, I gradually became faster and more proficient in translating them. It was fortunate that the head of the department, a translator of many years'

experience, gave me a lot of patient advice about patent translation techniques, techniques that I have passed on to students in my patent translation course taught to distance learning students on the MA in Advanced Japanese Studies.

I do not think that my experience was particularly unusual. More and more, especially in the era of companies advertizing job vacancies on their websites, boldly approaching translation firms where you want to work has become quite acceptable. If the Japanese can get away with it, why can't foreigners! Specializing in Japanese-to-English translation gives you a clear advantage as this is an area in which Japanese employers know that native translators do not have sufficient ability.

One of the advantages of this work is that it is interesting for the technically minded. You are constantly dealing with inventions at the forefront of technology and the original thinking of the inventors can be awe-inspiring at times.

Some translators, after having served a number of years with a translation firm, decide to go freelance, hoping that the contacts and the experience they have gained in the firm will enable them to stand alone. They can then work from home and live virtually anywhere in the world as work is sent by email attachment, post or even courier. This appeals to some people as you can work the hours that suit you. Another advantage is that there is no retirement age; you can keep working as long as you want.

If any readers are interested in pursuing a possible career in patent translation, I would recommend applying for a job as an in-house translator. You will need this to gain experience which will lead to increased accuracy and speed. To this end, put together a good CV (in Japanese and English) along with a covering letter in Japanese (ask a Japanese friend to help you with this) and send it off to translation firms. An internet search in Japanese will reveal many such firms. You can expect to have an interview entirely conducted in Japanese and possibly a test of your translation ability. And finally, best of luck!



The Japan Patent Office in Tokyo (photograph courtesy of Tajima Shigeki).

The “Korean wave” in multicultural Japan



Dr Hyangjin Lee has just returned to SEAS after completing a two-year research visit to Japan during which she witnessed a number of cultural changes in Japan's relations with its East Asian neighbours.

Between February 2005 and June 2007, I lived and worked in Japan whilst on a post-doctoral research fellowship supported by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. My research project was entitled “Transnational Cinema and Media Discourses on Korea in Japan.” It was a unique opportunity for a researcher of cinema and media studies to observe the dynamic changes in the region brought about by rapid globalization and localization. Indeed, emerging transnational Asian identities is a significant theme in the study of world cinema and popular culture at the current time.

I am particularly interested in changes in Japanese popular culture and cinema. For example, in the case of Japanese gangster films, it is interesting to trace the changes in styles and themes that reflect debates in postwar Japan. These films deal with issues such as Korean and Chinese minorities in Japan, anti-Americanism, masculinity and authority, questioning traditional Japanese values of loyalty and honour. In particular, the films of Fukasaku Kinji, who worked within the genre of “true documentary film” (*jitsuroku eiga*), such as *Street Mobster* (1972), *Battle without Honour* (1973) and *Yakuza Graveyard* (1976), provide useful case studies for the study of ambivalent attitudes within Japan towards Asia and the West.

In January 2007, the Japan Broadcasting Corporation conducted a poll asking who would be the more important partner for Japan in the future. The result was that China almost beat the US suggesting that Japan is becoming more in tune with its Asian identity.

Whilst in Japan, I observed a number of radical changes in the way Japan perceives its Asian identity and its Asian ethnic minorities.

Since the late 1980s, Japanese popular culture – animation, pop music and television dramas – has been dominant in the region and this popularity was partly a reaction to the cultural globalization led by Hollywood. At this time, Japan also took the leading role in the financing and distribution of Chinese language films to an international audience. However, Japan itself seemed to be indifferent to Asian cultural tastes as seen in a number of Japanese products, such as Nintendo's *Mario Brothers*, that became less “Asian” in order to appeal to Western consumers.

In contrast, the “Korean wave”, which started in Hong Kong and Taiwan in 2000, hit Japanese shores in 2003. In particular, it was the hit Korean TV

drama series *Winter Sonata* that won over hearts and minds in Japan, particularly amongst women. Bae Yongjun, the hero of the series, is more commonly known as Yon-sama in Japan and his popularity has been described as “Yonfluenza.” The media reported this boom as a social phenomenon, the like of which had never been seen in Japan and as a result attitudes towards Korea began to change. Many Korean residents in Japan suddenly became more highly visible and some famous celebrities “came out” about their Korean ancestry. The demilitarized zone between North and South Korea became a Japanese tourist destination and many ordinary Japanese middle-aged women now visit Korea regularly.

In short, the “Korean wave” has not only stimulated tourism but has also served to alter national identities and promote transnational cultural cooperation.



Fans welcome Yon-sama to Japan.



California dreaming

Whilst studying for a BA degree in East Asian Studies, Ciaran Roberts is also a budding novelist. Her talent was recently recognized by an invitation to attend a writing convention in the US.

Last year, I submitted a short story – a romance between a gangster and his lover set in Japan – to an anthology of fiction based in California. Although it wasn't selected for publication, I did win a free pass to the writing convention that was organizing the anthology. Who was I to resist? So, in October 2007, I made the long and arduous journey over to San Francisco to attend the convention and gained some writing tips that helped me gear myself up for National Novel Writing Month in November, which required me to write 50,000 words in one month!

Before the convention, there was an organized trip to San Francisco's Japantown, an area of the city that hosts all things Japanese. The Japan Centre is the hub of this area and is part social centre for the city's

large Asian population, part tourist attraction, even boasting a scale model of Osaka castle. We spent a good few hours wandering around and rounded the visit off with a Japanese meal.

The convention itself was held at a hotel that was taken over with enthusiastic writers for the weekend. It had a great programme of events to keep everyone happy, including panels on the legitimacy of various subjects, hints and tips for writers and guides on getting published from representative of the publishing industry.

I came back to Sheffield feeling inspired and was ready to embark upon my novel. It is now complete and is set in York and based on English folklore and mythology.



A replica of Osaka castle in San Francisco's Japantown.

National Institute of Chinese Studies officially launched

The formal launch of the National Institute of Chinese Studies (NICS) took place at the University of Leeds on 1 December 2007. As reported in previous editions of *EastAsia@Sheffield*, NICS is part of the White Rose East Asia Centre (WREAC), a joint consortium of the Universities of Sheffield and Leeds and centre of excellence for the study of both China and Japan. WREAC is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

Isabel Hilton, editor of *Chinadialogue*, gave a keynote lecture entitled "Creating an Environmental Dialogue Across the Firewall", which explored China's environmental and climate change crisis and examined the obstacles and opportunities for addressing this problem.

The launch was accompanied by a seminar entitled "The Emerging Dragon and the Rising Elephant: The Rise of China, India and Asia", supported by UK Trade and Investment, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, the China-Britain Business Council and the UK-India Business Council. The seminar examined the challenges posed by the rise of China and India to the competitiveness of the UK.

EastAsia@Sheffield will continue to report on future activities in NICS.



Isabel Hilton delivers her keynote lecture.

Researching East Asia

As another cycle of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) comes to a close, and the School of East Asian Studies is independently evaluated, EastAsia@Sheffield looks back, and ahead, to the past and future of the School.

Research in the School of East Asian Studies is closely linked to the rapid political, social, economic and cultural changes in contemporary China, Korea and Japan, which have created important new opportunities for research into the dynamics of the region. To this end, research in SEAS is structured around four core research clusters that address these dynamics: 1) business, political economy and development; 2) globalization and regionalization; 3) social change and mobility in East Asia; and 4) East Asian identities and cultures. The School actively encourages staff members to work across clusters as can be seen in the introductions to two of the four clusters featured on these pages.

As regards the dissemination of research findings, since 2001 members of the School have published almost two hundred books, chapters and articles in leading academic journals. One outlet for this research has been the

Sheffield/Routledge Japanese Studies series of monographs under the editorship of Professor Glenn Hook, as featured in Number 13 of *EastAsia@Sheffield*. In addition, the journal *Asian Business & Management*, which was launched in 2002, is edited through Sheffield by Professor Hasegawa Harukiyo, formerly of Sheffield but now based at Dōshisha University in Japan.

Nearly all research involves extensive international collaboration, formal or informal, with scholars in Europe, North America and East Asia. In addition to hosting visiting scholars from East Asian universities and governments, a number of international conferences and workshops have played an important part in fostering this cooperation on subjects such as science policy, the concept of risk, folklore and even postage stamps!

“Knowledge transfer” is becoming a commonly-heard phrase these days



A selection of books published by SEAS staff over recent years.

Globalization and regionalization cluster

This cluster brings together a number of the School's staff specializing in politics, business and international relations. However, much of the cluster's work cuts across disciplines and is often carried out in cooperation with researchers in East Asia, as well as members of other clusters.



An aerial view of Futenma Air Station (photograph courtesy of Ginowan City).

Illustrative of research with other clusters has been collaboration with the social change and mobility cluster on the subject of risk, as mentioned on the opposite page. As part of a related project sponsored by the British Academy, Professor Glenn Hook, head of this research cluster, recently visited Okinawa in Japan and interviewed Mayor Iha Yōichi of Ginowan City regarding the risks posed by the US Marine Corps Futenma Air Station, which occupies a quarter of the total area of the city (see photograph).

There is also a strong interest in the political, economic and security dimensions of globalization and regionalization. The main task of the cluster has been to analyze how these twin processes have influenced the behaviour of a range of actors in East Asia as well as how these actors have influenced the processes. With this goal in mind, an international workshop will be held early in 2008 to explore what lessons both the UK and Japan can learn from their participation in the Group of Eight summit to be held in Japan next summer.

an end and UK universities prepare to have their research activities
the research that is conducted within the School of East Asian Studies.



and SEAS staff members have actively contributed to the dissemination of research to a variety of interested organizations such as the European Commission, the governments of Korea and Vietnam, Sheffield City Council and the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office. In addition, the BBC and a number of other media outlets regularly call upon the School's research expertise in East Asia on issues such as traditional and modern Chinese culture, North Korea, mining disasters in China and race in Japan.

The School has also been active in training young researchers who go on to find employment in a range of fields both within and outside academia. Since 2001, twenty-five PhD students have graduated, many of whom are now employed in UK, European and East Asian universities. In contrast, Dr Hamanaka Shintarō is now one of Japan's representatives at the World Trade Organization in Geneva.

As a result of the activities of SEAS staff and students, the School has built a reputation as one of the main European centres for research on the economics, politics, cultures and societies of contemporary East Asia. This reputation was consolidated in 2006 when SEAS was awarded, in collaboration with its counterpart at the University of Leeds, £4 million to establish a national centre of excellence – the White Rose East Asia Centre (WREAC). This is the only centre of excellence in the UK dealing with Japan and one of only two covering China.

The future is looking bright with plans to establish a Centre for the Study of Asian Film under the aegis of WREAC to consolidate the consortium's substantial existing expertise and an international workshop in March 2008 on interdisciplinary and comparative approaches to the writing of life histories in China.

Social change and mobility cluster

This cluster embraces a broad range of members with expertise in history, sociology, politics, gender studies and development studies. This offers a fertile ground on which interdisciplinary research projects can be nurtured.

The main aim of the cluster is to stimulate lively discussions and collaboration amongst staff in order to develop individual and collaborative projects on such issues as poverty, migration, work and employment, social policy, urban culture, environment, risk, demographic changes and gender.

In July 2007, the cluster organized an international symposium entitled "Mediating Risk in Japan and East Asia" in cooperation with Rikkyō and Dōshisha Universities in Japan and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. Participants came to Sheffield from Japan, the US, Germany and France, and explored different notions of risk in Japan and China in areas such as the environment, education, crime and epidemics such as bird flu.

In a similar vein, Dr Peter Matanle is currently organizing an international symposium entitled "Japan's Shrinking Regions", which will explore depopulation and attempts at regeneration in Japan's rural areas (see photograph). Also, the cluster is planning to hold an international workshop on changing social strata with colleagues in Leeds under WREAC's remit.



A Japanese shanty town in the shadow of a new high-speed rail link (photograph courtesy of Peter Matanle).

Investing in Korea's future

Dr Judith Cherry, Lecturer in Korean Studies, has just published her latest book entitled Foreign Direct Investment in Post-Crisis Korea: European Investors and "Mismatched Globalization."



One of the most dramatic changes that occurred in the wake of the 1997 financial crisis in South Korea was the shift in government policy and attitudes towards inward foreign direct investment (IFDI). Inward investment, which had been regarded as a second-best option for funding development from the 1960s through to the late 1990s, took on a new significance and attraction for policymakers. They recognized the role that foreign investors could play in helping Korea

recover from the crisis and create a solid foundation for sustainable economic growth. However, despite the government's best efforts, IFDI levels were levelling off by the early years of the twenty-first century, prompting a vigorous debate on what action the government could take to make Korea a more attractive location for investment.

In 2006, I carried out a series of in-depth interviews with European investors in Seoul to gain their perspectives on barriers to investment in Korea. The message that came out of these interviews was clear – whilst great progress had been made in reforming the "hardware" relating to inward investment (including the creation of world-class legislation, regulations, systems and institutions), there had been far less change in terms of the "software", as traditional values, mindsets and attitudes remained deeply embedded in certain sectors of Korean business, bureaucracy and society.

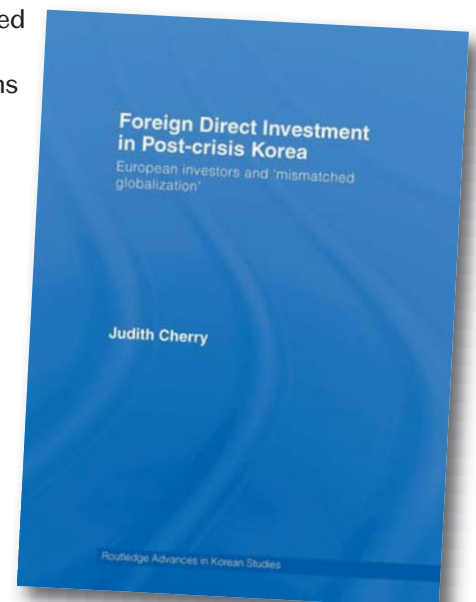
The interviews also revealed a strong consensus that the major problems experienced by Europeans investing in Korea were the result of "mismatched globalization." This "mismatch" occurs when the pace of economic globalization outstrips that of cultural globalization. Examples of "mismatches" given by the interviewees included the lack of transparency in the interpretation and implementation of legislation and regulations. In addition, government policies aimed at promoting IFDI, as well as liberalizing and deregulating the economy, are undermined by forces of resistance

within public institutions. Finally, foreign investors face numerous difficulties in recruiting young people with the skills needed in the global workplace from an education system that is ranked amongst the world's best in terms of the proportion of the population graduating from university.

The changes needed to address these and other problems facing foreign investors relate more to Korean society, education, culture and bureaucracy than they do to business and economics. Even if the social and cultural changes that are crucial for transforming the Korean "software" are

accepted as being necessary and in the national interest, they cannot be legislated for by the government and are likely to take more than one generation to accomplish. The phase of "mismatched globalization" is, therefore, likely to be a lengthy one and the Korean government has a clear and significant contribution to make during this period if it wishes to dismantle the barriers to investment identified by European investors.

Whilst the onus in terms of promoting change and reform clearly lies with the Korean government, foreign investors also have an important role to play in this process. Provided that they have a sense of confidence that dialogue and debate can lead to substantive changes, foreign investors should continue to engage with the Korean government in pursuit of a common goal: the promotion of political, social and cultural change that will benefit Korean corporations and foreign multinationals alike by creating a business and investment environment in which they can all thrive and contribute to Korea's continuing economic growth and success.





Sun, sand and scripts

In his pursuit of a career in television production, Rupert Chesman (BA in Japanese Studies, 2002) now lives and works in Dubai and has recently set up his own company.

What do you dream of when you graduate? I recall putting my pen down after the last exam and heading off to the pub for a night to remember but with no real idea of what I wanted to do next. I knew that I didn't want to do a postgraduate course and I'd already satisfied my desire to travel. With the benefit of hindsight, maybe I should have consulted the University's Careers Service, but that would have been far too organized for me.

I remember thinking of working in television, but it was more of a pipe dream than something that would ever come true. From the outside, television looked like an impenetrable world and also potentially a waste of my degree in Japanese Studies, which I'd worked rather hard to get.

Then, as luck would have it, I found myself playing tennis one afternoon with someone who writes for the BBC soap opera *Eastenders*. He was working on a short film with an actor who had appeared in the comedy *The Office* and asked if I could help. I jumped at the chance.

Inertia is not your friend when bouncing a fat person upside-down on a bungee. I know that now. That was my first, but definitely not my last, surreal experience when working in production. I've carried an eel home on the London Underground, led a goat through Covent Garden and taken a train from Aldwych to Holborn some twenty years after the line closed. And if Benazir Bhutto is ever again Prime Minister of Pakistan and you notice that her glasses look a bit crooked, it was me that sat on her handbag.

This is why I work in production. It's completely full of unexpected experiences that you could never get by just sitting in an office. Even though I've now reached the level of producer, I never know what the client is going to come up with, or what I'm going to suggest to them for their next project.

It's Japanese that got me to Dubai. A company in London was looking for someone with Japanese language skills, production experience, a sense of adventure and willingness to move to Dubai and set up its branch office. The job was made for me. After setting the company up, I departed to set up my own, Clips, which is now a year old and doing well.

Clips generally makes commercials, corporate videos and music videos for various clients

worldwide. So far this year, in addition to various Dubai-based projects including one for Toyota, we've shot several music videos in Cairo for Egyptian and Lebanese artists. We are currently shooting five more music videos in Beirut, as well as various corporate videos for clients who want to target the Middle Eastern market. You can find out more about Clips at: www.clips.com

I can't quite believe that I'm here doing the job I dreamed of years ago, with blue skies and sunshine to boot. Dubai is a great place to live and you can see photos of my time here at: www.rupertchesman.com

And if you ever meet Benazir Bhutto, please don't tell her who sat on her handbag.



Rupert (far right) on set in Dubai.

A forgotten cinema



With all the attention focused on Mandarin Chinese these days, it is easy to overlook the many other forms of Chinese that are spoken throughout Asia. Dr Jeremy Taylor, Lecturer in Chinese Studies at SEAS, has been looking at one form of Chinese – Hokkien – by examining a genre of film that was made in this dialect back in the 1950s and 1960s.

I first became interested in the Hokkien dialect when I started learning it as a student in Taiwan in the mid-1990s. Hokkien – also known as *Minnanyu* or “Amoy dialect” – originated in China’s Fujian province, but is now spoken widely throughout Taiwan and in other ethnic Chinese communities in Southeast Asia. I began conducting research on Hokkien popular music in Taiwan some years ago. But it was only after working in Singapore in 2006 that I began to explore a largely forgotten genre of cinema that was made in Hokkien in the postwar years, and which once enjoyed a huge market throughout Southeast Asia – the so-called “Amoy-dialect films” (*Xiyupian*).

Amoy-dialect films were those produced in Hong Kong for sale to Hokkien-speaking markets in Taiwan, the

Philippines, Singapore and (what was then) Malaya from the mid-1950s until the early 1960s. The industry was created by Southeast Asian Chinese investors and cinema operators but was only possible thanks to a community of Hokkien-speaking performers in Hong Kong itself, including people who had fled the Chinese mainland following the Communist revolution there, or who had become stranded in Hong Kong en route to Southeast Asia.

At the industry’s height in the late 1950s, scores of Amoy-dialect films were produced each year by a host of different companies. Topics ranged from traditional Hokkien opera to modern romantic comedies.

Yet what is most remarkable about the industry is its historical context. Amoy-dialect films peaked at what is generally regarded as a period of substantial political upheaval for Hokkien-speaking communities in Asia, with a Communist insurgency in Malaya and an increasingly repressive Nationalist regime in Taiwan. This was also an era in which Chinese dialects such as Hokkien were beginning to be looked down upon by various governments throughout the region. The success of the industry in spite of such developments raises all kinds of interesting questions.

Today, few Amoy-dialect films actually survive. Probably the best existing collection is that held by the Hong Kong Film Archive, which I visited for the second time earlier this year. Nevertheless, ephemera and information can still be found in other archives and collections throughout the Chinese world. And plenty of people still remember these films, including those who were actually involved in making them. I was even fortunate enough to meet and speak to Chuang Hsueh-fang, one of the original stars of *Xiyupian*, in Singapore last year.

Some of my preliminary work on Amoy-dialect films was presented at the conference “Global Perspectives on Film Cultures, Film Exhibition and Cinema-going” in Belgium in December 2007, and will appear in the journal *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* in March 2008. There is still a great deal more work to be done on this topic and SEAS is the perfect place to be doing it, given the School’s strong grounding in East Asian film studies.



A poster for the film *White Fan* (reproduced with the permission of the National Archives of Singapore).

Welcome to SEAS

The School of East Asian Studies was pleased to welcome Dr Harald Fuess to Sheffield in September 2007. Harald has been appointed as an academic fellow in the National Institute of Japanese Studies, part of the White Rose East Asia Centre created in 2006 as a joint consortium between the Universities of Sheffield and Leeds.

Harald spent his childhood in France and Germany before moving to the US to study for a BA in History and East Asian Studies at Princeton University. He then entered the PhD programme at Harvard University and spent three years researching his thesis on marriage and divorce in Japanese history at the University of Tokyo.

Harald's first position was as a research associate at the German

National Institute for Japanese Studies in Tokyo, followed by a period as a management consultant at the Boston Consulting Group in Frankfurt. He returned to the academic world as an associate professor teaching Japanese history at Sophia University in Tokyo. However, after a total of fifteen years in Japan, he decided to return to Europe and brings with him his accumulated expertise in the study of Japan.

Harald has published in English, German and Japanese in the fields of society, law and business of modern Japan, usually from a historical perspective. His best known book is *Divorce in Japan*, published by Stanford University Press in 2004. Related publications have covered subjects such as fatherhood, the crisis of masculinity in contemporary



Japan and the criminalization of adultery in Meiji Japan. He is currently planning to write a book on the role of Christian missionaries in the development of education in modern Japan and the history of capitalism and consumption as reflected in the spread of beer to East Asia. Let's drink to that!

Obituary – Ying Lu

SEAS is saddened to announce that Ying Lu, our Chinese cataloguer and library assistant, died at home in Sheffield on 6 August 2007 after a short battle with cancer. Gill Goddard, East Asian Studies librarian, pays tribute to Ying.

Born in early January 1966 and brought up in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, few people here were aware that Ying's first degree was in pharmaceutical science, taken at West China University of Medical Science in Chengdu. This was also where she first met her husband Li Ran. Li's career in engineering brought them to the UK, and whilst living in Edinburgh Ying took an MSc degree in Information Technology. Her first library work was as a Chinese Project Officer in the University Library at Durham. Her



Ying Lu (far right) with her family.

then boss, Mamtimyn Sunuodula, charged her with the job of retrospectively cataloguing the Chinese collection and describes her as having "more or less single-handedly completed this task well within the target time."

That was typical of Ying – self-motivated, meticulous, hard-working and always keen to broaden her skills. When she came for interview to join the team in Sheffield in 2002, she outshone the other candidates with her enthusiasm and eager anticipation of the opportunity to work directly with students and researchers. She was also keen to learn more about Japan and Korea. So, for three years she studied the Korean language and had just recently embarked on a Japanese language course. The fact that each Japanese character seemed to have lots of different pronunciations was the cause of much indignation!

Her outgoing and pleasant personality will be remembered by everyone who met her and that broad smile will never be forgotten. I know I speak for many when I say that she leaves us with a great sadness that her life was ended so early.

Ying leaves a family, husband Li Ran, and two young children, Siaolu and Jason, who have moved back to Durham where Li works for the university.

Rising China and its regions

Hong Yu, a PhD candidate in the School of East Asian Studies, discusses his research into economic inequality in China's regions.

In mid-August 2007, I attended an international conference entitled "Rising China in the Age of Globalization" at University College Dublin (UCD). This conference was co-organized by UCD and China's Renmin University and attracted scholars, experts and government officials from across the world.

With its rapid economic development during the past two decades, China has become an increasingly influential power in the world and this conference provided an opportunity to discuss recent developments in Chinese political, economic, cultural and legal fields. I gave a poster presentation based on my PhD research entitled "Widening Regional Economic Inequality within Guangdong and its Geographical Cause."

My research demonstrates the extent to which regional income

inequality within Guangdong Province has intensified since 1980. Guangdong has made remarkable achievements in economic growth during the "reform and open-door" period since the late 1970s. In fact, it has been one of the fastest growing provinces in China. However, although the policies implemented

regions has been much slower than the Pearl River Delta Area (PRDA) and a sharp difference in incomes between the PRDA and periphery is particularly evident.

My research points to two causes: on the one hand, the geographical advantage of coastal and market proximity has played an important role; whilst on the other hand, the benefits of the clustering together of economic activity have also been crucial in contributing to the core-periphery pattern of regional income inequality.

Not only did this conference provide an opportunity for me to present my ongoing research, I was also lucky enough

to meet a hero of mine, Professor Robert Mundell of Columbia University, a Nobel Prize winner and widely acknowledged as the "father of the Euro."

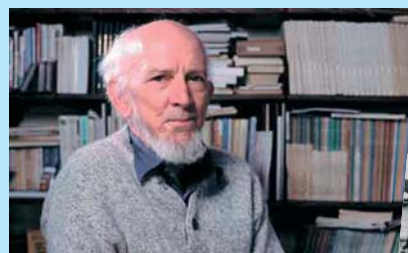


Hong Yu (right) with Professor Robert Mundell, 1999 Nobel Prize Laureate in Economics.

by the Chinese government have significantly contributed to the rapid economic development of Guangdong, the benefits of this fast economic growth have not been distributed equally amongst the areas within Guangdong. Economic growth in the peripheral and hill

Japan in the American embrace

SEAS was delighted to welcome Professor Gavan McCormack back to Yorkshire in October to give a special lecture for the National Institute of Japanese Studies. Professor McCormack is an emeritus professor at the Australian National University and one of the world's leading scholars of contemporary Japan and the East Asia region. He was visiting the UK to promote his new book *Client State: Japan in the American Embrace*, which provided the focus of a typically thought-provoking lecture.



Professor Gavan McCormack and his new book (photograph courtesy of Bob Cooper, Coombs Photography, the Australian National University).



East Asian music at Sheffield



Professor Jonathan Stock of the Department of Music at Sheffield introduces the postgraduate work that is currently being undertaken in the Department.

The Department of Music at Sheffield has had an established interest in the music of China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan for ten years now, with two members of staff teaching and conducting research in this area – Dr Andrew Killick, a specialist in Korean music, and myself with an interest in Chinese music.

There are currently twenty-five or so research projects currently underway in the department. Many of these doctoral students employ ethnographic approaches, alongside historical study and specialist music analysis, to a very wide range of topics. For example, Benedikt Bayer is studying improvisation on the *qin* (a Chinese seven-stringed zither), Jiang Shu is looking at Beijing's alternative rock scene, Takahashi Michiko is analysing the impact of European folk music in Japan, Celia Lee is assessing contemporary orchestral scores by the Paris-based composer Chen Qigang, Samuel Wong is focusing on the Singapore Chinese Orchestra and Kwon Hyunseok is undertaking an ethnographic study of local arts in Gyeongsangnam Province in South Korea.

Musical performance has always figured prominently as a research technique. Not only is learning to perform an excellent means of gaining primary access to musicians and forging a personal basis of experience within the tradition or style in question, it is also a strong medium to use for the dissemination of research results.

A case in point is Lu Chin-Shih, who recently gave a recital as a formal part of her PhD examinations. She is a performer of the four-stringed lute known as the *pipa* and has previously studied at the Central Conservatory in Beijing as well as in her native Taiwan. Her research topic is the transformation of *pipa* performance style following the opening of Taiwan to mainland Chinese musical influence over the last two decades. An earlier, lyrical and restrained performance aesthetic has been losing ground to a more elaborate and emotive mainland style that is display-oriented and technically brilliant. This leads to revisions to the traditional repertory, the updating of old pieces to suit the new style and the creation of new pieces to further exploit and develop the possibilities of virtuosic

performers and instruments redesigned for maximum technical display.

Chin-Shih's study here has been marked not only by the production of a PhD thesis and a major recital comparing older and more contemporary performance styles across a range of solos, but also by the birth of two children. She even admits to having spent her honeymoon in Sheffield, visiting here to see whether it would be a suitable place to study. Chin-Shih's sister, Lu Pan-Ling is also enrolled at the Department of Music as a doctoral student, her topic being the *dizi*, a bamboo flute, and its repertory.

East Asian music, whether by students, staff or visiting professionals, features outside the curriculum too. Amongst other examples, we have staged performances of the Chinese two-stringed fiddle (*erhu*), Taiwanese ballads, Beijing opera and contemporary compositions for the Chinese zither (*zheng*) and its Korean and Japanese counterparts (*kayagŭm* and *koto*). Everyone is welcome to attend these performances.



Lu Chin-Shih and her pipa.

International Varsity Debate



The Sheffield team: (from left to right) Lance Pursey, Tom Viart, Jodie Gardiner and Richard Duffy (photograph courtesy of Ian M. Spooner).

A group of SEAS students participated in a public debate against a team of Chinese students from Zhejiang University on 12 October 2007 at the University of Sheffield. The event was part of the International Varsity Debate, which is run by, and will be broadcast on, China's main television station, China Central Television.

In front of a Chinese audience, made up of students from both the University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University, the Sheffield team debated the topic of whether family or society should take the major role in looking after the ageing population. They argued for society to take the role, whereas the Chinese students put the case across for family to take the role.

Dr Lily Chen, Director of Sheffield's Confucius Institute and Lecturer in Chinese Studies, coached the Sheffield team and believes that "this was a wonderful chance for our students to step out of the classroom and experience a real-life event that tests their ability to use Chinese effectively. It also demonstrated to the outside world the dedication of our students."

Richard Duffy, Captain of the Sheffield team, commented that "this competition was a great opportunity for me and my fellow team mates to improve our Chinese skills in both speaking and listening. Our preparation with Chinese students studying locally has given us a real insight into what it is like to debate with native speakers of Chinese and has given us the chance to make new friends."

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/History, Management, Music
Chinese Studies with/French, German, Japanese, Russian, Spanish
Japanese Studies and/History, Linguistics, Management, Politics, Sociology
Japanese Studies with/German, Russian, Spanish
French/Germanic/Hispanic/Russian Studies with Japanese
Korean Studies and/Linguistics, Management, Music
Korean Studies with Japanese
East Asian Studies and/Management, Music, Russian Studies*
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 Advanced Japanese Studies
MA/Diploma/Certificate in Advanced Japanese Studies (Research Methods)
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 is available in a wide range of subject areas on China, Japan, Korea and intra-regional studies.

In addition, a number of scholarships are available through the White Rose East Asia Centre.

EASTASIA@SHEFFIELD

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