Students become TV stars

Adventure series to be shown in China

Four Sheffield Chinese Studies students – James Brodie, Lucy Johnston, Stuart McClelland and Siân Rogers – will become familiar faces in China with the showing of the Challenge UK series on national television.

The four third-year students were chosen, from over seventy applicants nation-wide, as the British participants in an ‘adventure challenge’ that was filmed during May at different locations around the UK. In the bi-lingual (Mandarin and English) challenge, the Blue Team (James, Lucy and their Chinese team-mates Han Yun and Yao Junfeng) competed against the Red Team (Stuart, Siân, Zhou Yi and Wang Ping) to produce a television commercial, build a bridge, do a room makeover, and negotiate a two-day survival course on the Brecon Beacons in Wales.

Challenge UK was produced by the documentary television company Infonation and coordinated by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as part of its 2003 Think UK initiative, designed to promote British technology, education and the arts in China. During the individual challenges the two teams received high-level professional advice and mentoring from advertising agencies Ogilvy and BMPddb, the Inchbald School of Design, and engineering consultants Scott Wilson, Arup and Balfour Beatty.

The contest was very keenly fought with the Blue Team emerging as narrow victors and winning the £20,000 prize.

James, Lucy, Stuart and Siân talk about the filming of Challenge UK on pages 8-9.

The Blue Team and their adviser test the stability of their bridge for the judges.
Prize-winning graduates

This year’s top two first class honours graduates were awarded prizes at a function following the School of East Asian Studies’ graduation ceremony on 24 July.

Stéphanie Durand received the Margaret Daniels Prize for Japanese Studies. Stéphanie had a superb academic record throughout her studies and won the admiration of lecturers and students alike. She intends enrolling for a PhD in the area of Japanese-European comparative philosophy.

The Robert Sloss Prize for Chinese, Korean and East Asian Studies was won by Korean Studies graduate Eoghan Sweeney. Eoghan had returned to Sheffield for his final year of study after extending his ‘language year abroad’ in Korea for a further two years that included covering the 2002 World Cup for The Korea Times. Following graduation he returned to South Korea to pursue a career in journalism.

Eoghan Sweeney and Stéphanie Durand pictured above with Professor Tim Wright, Chair of the School of East Asian Studies, following the presentation of the prizes.

Asian Business & Management

The December 2003 issue of Asian Business & Management (vol. 2, no. 3) will feature the following articles:

- Chris Bramall, ‘Path Dependency and Growth in Rural China since 1978’
- Martin Hemmert, ‘The Institutional Embeddedness of the Balance between Internal and External Technology: A Comparison between Japanese and German Firms’
- Xinjian Li, ‘Control in Japanese-Chinese Joint Ventures: the Antecedent Factors and Effect on Performance from the Japanese Viewpoint’
- Hirokimi Okamoto, ‘Flexibility in Japanese Manufacturing Industries: Synchronisation of Production, Sales and Purchase’

Asian Business & Management is edited by Dr Harukiyo Hasegawa, Director of Sheffield’s Centre for Japanese Studies, and published by Palgrave. In 2004 the number of issues published each year will increase from three to four.

www.palgrave-journals.com/abm/
Almost 80 per cent of teenagers in South Korea have a mobile phone and the number is likely to increase.

What impact is this having on traditional Korean norms of sociality?

Recent studies tend to focus on the individual and liberating aspects of the mobile phone as a symbol of global technologies. As a result, it is claimed, young people are disembedded from social and traditional norms. The South Korean media, for example, warns that mobile phone communication will make young people more individualistic and less likely to maintain local norms of sociality in the family, school and public arena. It has even used terms such as ‘addiction’ and ‘disease’ when referring to young mobile phone users.

According to my ethnographic study of 16 and 17-year-olds in Seoul, however, the majority of young Korean mobile phone users are not disrupting local norms but are using the new technology in very familial and collaborative ways. It has even used terms such as ‘addiction’ and ‘disease’ when referring to young mobile phone users.

Within the family context, young Koreans – like most teenagers – use the mobile phone to avoid parental control and gain greater freedom from familial ties. But parents also exercise control both over and through the mobile. They assert control over the mobile by determining the age at which a child can have a phone and, because they pay the bills, imposing limits on its use. Young people sometimes have their mobile confiscated as a temporary punishment for misbehaviour, such as laziness at school or excessive use of the phone.

Parental control is also exercised through the mobile, effectively extending parenting beyond the home. As one of the teenagers I interviewed expressed it:

“MY MUM USED TO CALL MY MOBILE EVEN AS EARLY AS 7 P.M. COME HOME NOW, SHE’D SAY.”

At the same time, young people tend to experience calls and text messages as expressions of bonding or attachment between family members.

“EXCHANGING MESSAGES BETWEEN FRIENDS IS A KIND OF EXPRESSION OF CHEONG, YOU KNOW. IN PARTICULAR, WE EXCHANGE MORE TEXTS DURING EXAM PERIODS TO CHEER EACH OTHER UP.”

The ritual of sharing information is largely maintained through a system of reciprocity, with members of the friendship circle subject to the obligation to accept messages as well as to reciprocate. Ignoring calls or text messages, called ‘chewing out’ (ssibgi), is considered one of the worst etiquettes in the use of the mobile.

“THE MOST UPSETTING THING IN USING THE MOBILE IS TO RECEIVE AN INSINCERE REPLY OR TO BE CHEWED OUT BY THE PERSON TO WHOM I HAVE SENT A MESSAGE.”

While global technologies such as the mobile phone are increasingly influencing young people’s socialization, mobile phone use in South Korea appears to be reinforcing young people’s adherence to social and traditional norms, rather than disembedding them from those norms.
New lecturer in Japanese Studies

Dr Angela Coutts has taken up a lectureship in Japanese Studies.

Dr Coutts has a BA degree from the University of London and MA and PhD degrees, as well as a Diploma of Education, from the University of Sheffield. She was a Monbusho Research Scholar for eighteen months at Ochanomizu Women’s University in Tokyo and has worked as a professional translator and editor in Britain and the United States, as well as lecturing in English for Academic Purposes at the Universities of Birmingham and Sussex.

Dr Coutts’ research interests include modern Japanese female writers and national identity. Her PhD dissertation was entitled ‘Gender and National Identity in the Works of Hayashi Fumiko (1903-1951)’. She has published an article in Japan Forum and has forthcoming publications in National Identities and in Culture, Theory and Critique. At Sheffield Dr Coutts’ teaching will focus on Japanese-English translation and Japanese literature.

The conference, which was held at Shrigley Hall on 24-25 July, was entitled Beyond Globalisation in Japan and Asia: A multilevel approach. Its aim was to move the debate on Japan’s response to globalisation beyond the focus on the economy at the national level, and to investigate how, at different levels (global, regional, national) and in different spheres of activity (security, politics, economics), Japan has been involved in proactive as well as reactive responses to globalisation processes. The conference brought together leading social scientists from Japan and the UK, with the papers being presented by Japanese scholars and commented on by UK scholars.

The conference was followed on 26 July by a symposium at the University of Sheffield on globalisation and education. Professor Takeshi Sasaki, President of the University of Tokyo, spoke on how globalization was impacting on Japan and East Asia, and Sheffield Vice-Chancellor, Professor Bob Boucher, explained how it was impacting on the UK and Europe. The two presentations provided the audience of around eighty with a fascinating insight into the way British and Japanese universities are responding to globalisation in the regional context.

The two events would not have been possible without the generous support of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), which co-sponsored the events, the Japan Foundation and the Toshiba International Foundation. We are immensely grateful to them for their support.
Robert Morini has an MA in Chinese Studies degree (2001), as well as a BA (Law with French) degree (1998), from the University of Sheffield. Early this year he took up the position of International Officer for East and Southeast Asia with the Royal Society in London, where his work includes administering and coordinating scientific exchanges, collaboration and networks with China.

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There is a vivid sense of anticipation when you step into a scientific laboratory in China. The scientists, in that quintessential Chinese manner of welcoming foreign guests with the utmost degree of hospitality, greet you with enthusiasm and eagerly usher you inside. They talk with great passion about their work, the huge amount of investment being pumped into their laboratories directly from the central government, their latest international visit or visitor, and their yearning for more cross-boundary collaboration.

Even as a non-scientist, one cannot fail to capture this atmosphere of excitement. In July this year I accompanied a group of fourteen young UK scientists, including three from the University of Sheffield (Dr Jamil Nasir, Dr Jim Thomas and Dr George Demetriou), on a week-long visit to Shanghai as a delegate from the Royal Society, the UK’s national academy of sciences. The initiative was part of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office’s Think UK campaign and was aimed at bringing together a small number of scientists from each country to explore common research themes and the possibility of working together on collaborative projects.

The Royal Society coordinated the visit with the assistance of the UK’s research councils, the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and the Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC). The programme started with a two-day conference on bioinformatics (the application of information technology to research in the biosciences and the use of computers to process information in major areas such as genomic research) and the intersection between biotechnology and nanotechnology. This was followed by visits to leading centres of scientific research in Shanghai, including Fudan University, the Shanghai Institutes for Biological Sciences (SIBS), Jiaotong University, the Shanghai Bioinformation Centre, and the Institute of Materia Medica in Zhangjiang Hi-Tech Park.

The Royal Society has had close links with China’s scientific base since the late 1970s when Deng Xiaoping announced the advancement of science & technology (S&T) as a leading priority in China’s modernisation programme, alongside the development of agriculture, industry and the military. Some twenty-five years later, the result of that policy is apparent. Outside the labs, you cannot fail to notice the link between the development of S&T and the spectacular modernity of Chinese cities. The rising number of cars, the emergence of science parks and hundreds of gleaming new incubator buildings give an indication of the attention being paid to the generation of high-tech industry.

In the UK, a growing number of scientists are collaborating with their Chinese counterparts through the assistance of the Royal Society, which provides funds for exchanges between scientists from the two countries to network and conduct mutually beneficial collaboration. As a result, the Society now boasts an enviable partnership with the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and a number of other partner organisations in China, hosting high profile delegations from Chinese scientists and government officials as well as providing an extensive mechanism of exchanges for short and long term visits.

For more information on the Royal Society’s activities in China and the rest of the Asia-Pacific region, visit www.royalsoc.ac.uk/international

Below: Participants in the two-day conference pictured in their Think UK T-shirts at the Shanghai Qingpu Industrial Zone.
**Social democracy in the age of mega-competition**

**Can Japan’s lifetime employment system survive?**


Email: p.matanle@sheffield.ac.uk

**For some decades now the lifetime employment system that underpins the Japanese firm has excited the interest of scholars and business managers worldwide.**

The issue of employment security in industrial society has been a recurring one. Some people, including myself, might even go so far as to argue that its quality is a key indicator of the state of a country’s civil society and its democratic values. So the fact that Japan has been able to reach the apex of world capitalism while maintaining very long-term employment security for approximately 80 per cent of its workforce is a cause of great satisfaction for many Japanese. It is also a source of envy for others – not least those people in developed countries who have to suffer the indignity of insecurity in their own lives.

Nevertheless some, mostly Western, commentators are now saying that, due to the twin pressures of social changes at home and an intensification of the competitive pressures arising from economic globalisation, Japan can no longer afford to spoil its workers in this way. Many people then go on to deduce that, in order for Japan to break out of its current stagnation, it should become more like some Western countries and abandon the foundations of the Japanese management system in favour of what might euphemistically be termed market-led organisational flexibility.

However, Japan has for a long time tried to forge its own path to and through capitalism and modernity. Although management makes incremental changes to the system’s attributes as circumstances require, lifetime employment continues to function effectively in nearly all of Japan’s large organisations.

At the same time, there has been a change in the discourse about lifetime employment. Company management stresses to employees the need to develop more personal autonomy in their careers, accepts and promotes more mid-career recruits, and develops more explicit early retirement schemes. Many employees, however, read sensationalised press accounts of personnel reductions and wonder when it will be their turn to be ‘restructured’ out of the company.

Unlike those people who worked through the material deprivation of the 1940s and 1950s, today’s younger employees have grown up in a world where there is a surfeit of choice. Many see little need for lifetime employment security in a society where one can take material security for granted, and their concerns centre on more inward-looking objectives such as the problems of achieving personal satisfaction and self-fulfilment.

From this perspective, Japanese capitalism and modernity appear to be converging on Western forms. I think we can say that this is as much due to steady improvements in living standards as it is to any outward globalisation of Western cultural forms. But it also means that Japan is beginning to suffer from many of the psychological and emotional sicknesses that we in the West have come to expect as part of post-industrial life: a steady intensification of the work process, increasing personal anxiety about the future, increases in mental illness, and the consequences of widening gaps between rich and poor.

Perhaps these developments are in the nature of post-industrial society. In these conditions of mega-competition, achieving a real social democracy where we can all live secure, satisfying, and fulfilling lives will continue to be one of the central challenges that our societies face.
Japanese business leader awarded honorary doctorate

Dr Hiroji Ota, Chairman of Japan’s Chubu Electric Power Company, was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws (LLD) at a graduation ceremony on 24 July.

Dr Ota is a distinguished scholar and business leader. His research led to the invention of the world’s first Transient Stability Control (TSC) and Realtime Computer Network (RCN) for large-scale electric circular systems. As well as serving as Chairman of the Chubu Electric Power Company, Japan’s third largest utility, Dr Ota has been Chairman of the Federation of Electric Companies of Japan and has made a significant contribution to the development of science and technology in Japan and internationally.

Dr Ota and the Chubu Electric Power Company have also played an important role in promoting Anglo-Japanese economic relations. This has included long-standing links with the University of Sheffield, including the Centre for Japanese Studies.

On the evening before the graduation ceremony, Dr Ota presented a special seminar, entitled The 21st Century: Energy from a Global Perspective, organised by the UK-Japan Business Research Centre.

Masters graduates …what now?

The 2002-2003 cohort of Masters students finished their degrees in August. We asked some of them what they’re doing now.

Elizabeth Duggan
(MA in Chinese Studies)
“I have a scholarship from the Ministry of Education in Taipei to study in the International Chinese Language Program at National Taiwan University for the next twelve months. At present I plan to remain in East Asia after 2004 and I hope to secure a job using my language skills.”

John Harney
(MA in Chinese Studies)
“I’ve got a job in Taipei, working for an engineering firm.”

Maja Kriegelsteiner
(MSc in East Asian Business)
“The day after I came back to Germany I had an interview at DaimlerChrysler AG and was offered a place on their international trainee programme (only two out of twelve people were successful this time round!). I’m working on four projects over the next year: two in Germany and two abroad. I’m sure to choose Japan for one of the projects.”

Franziska Gloeckner
(MSc in East Asian Business)
“I came to China in September to study Chinese at the Beijing Language University. Later I’ll apply to companies in China and also to international companies in London – to give them an opportunity to use my highly valued skills and knowledge about East Asia!”

Mark Pearson
(MA in Advanced Japanese Studies)
“I’m teaching Japanese and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) at Southampton City College.”

David Orr
(MA in Advanced Japanese Studies)
“I’m working as a Japanese-English translator in the Japanese Equity Sales section of Daiwa Securities SMBC Europe, based in London. Essentially we translate materials about Japanese companies and stocks for European and US investors. The early starts to catch the end of trading in Tokyo are the hardest!”

EastAsia@Sheffield 7
What was it like appearing in front of the TV cameras, especially having to speak Chinese?

Siân During the first challenge I kept forgetting that I was supposed to be speaking Chinese but as the time wore on it became more natural and my confidence increased. The hardest part was the one-to-one interviews with Jane, the presenter, who spoke very quickly. When the advisers were with us we spoke English.

You participated in four different challenges. Were you told much about them beforehand?

James No, the producers kept us in the dark about what and where the next challenge would be. This definitely added to the excitement of the show for us as we didn’t know what was coming next!

Which challenge did you enjoy the most?

Lucy The bridge building and survival challenges were the most fun (nothing to do with the fact that our team won those two!). Of course I’m ignoring the memory of the freezing cold and getting soaked climbing mountains. Despite the physical challenges of these two, we just had more fun as a team, and worked really well at getting each other through them.

Stuart I found the TV commercial that we did in London the most enjoyable by far. The company we worked with (Ogilvy) were incredibly well organised and professional. They helped us produce a commercial that actually looked quite good in only two days.

Siân Yes, my favourite challenge was the TV commercial. I really enjoyed the whole thing, especially winning! The final challenge (the survival course in Wales) was the most challenging physically but it was also enjoyable as we’d grown to be a really close team and had fun even though it was so hard.

James Apart from the TV commercial, the other enjoyable one for me was the survival challenge. It really suited me as I like hill-walking and being out in the wild weather. I really enjoyed being up against the clock, and having to navigate across barren land.

Which challenge was the most difficult or stressful?

Stuart The survival challenge in Wales was quite gruelling, particularly as the weather was just appalling. Fortunately we all found a way to see the funny side of it as we were slipping down mountains and abseiling over slippery cliff faces.

Siân Abseiling was the most terrifying experience – in the end I just couldn’t go off the cliff - and completing the bridge challenge proved the most difficult. But for me the room makeover challenge definitely produced the most stress. Wang Ping (one of my Chinese team-mates) and I went to B&Q and after a few hours of arguing he announced that he could never marry me as we disagreed on so many things!

James Yes, the room makeover challenge. There were a lot of arguments about the
aesthetic/artistic aspects. This was a point of contention in our team because three of us were fairly artistic and thought our own way was best.

Lucy The room makeover and TV commercial challenges were the most difficult for me because they involved a lot more design and personal opinions. It was really hard because our team members all had different views. But the survival challenge was definitely the most scary. Discovering a fear of heights when trying to abseil was terrifying in a real ‘fear for my life’ way, and it was really disappointing to have to give up.

Apart from abseiling, were there any other particularly tense moments?

James When our bridge building expert tested our bridge for the first time it almost snapped in two. Luckily we still had about five minutes to add on a support that saved it from breaking. This was a pretty tense moment but it was also funny because we had so little confidence in our bridge, and then won!

Lucy There were lots of tense moments. Every challenge had a time limit and it was a competition, so it could be very tense, especially in the last couple of hours of each challenge.

What about your professional advisers? What sort of help did they give you?

Stuart There’s no way we could have built a bridge in Newcastle without the civil engineers who helped us. And all the other challenges were the same. I think they wanted us to mainly come up with the ideas and our views of how we were going to achieve them, and they vetoed any ideas that were impractical.

Lucy Yes, the advisers mostly helped us plan and prepare on the first day of the challenges. They all put a lot into the challenges and really seemed to care about the outcomes. Sometimes they seemed more competitive than the teams!

And the overall experience?

Siân For me Challenge UK was an emotional roller coaster! The challenges provided lots of entertainment and there was a feeling of real satisfaction when we had completed a challenge. I found it difficult to lose a challenge when we’d all worked so hard.

James I was a little unsure of how well we would represent the UK as a technologically advanced nation (the image that the Foreign Office wanted to promote), especially me with my big hair and beard! But I think the most important thing that was shown was the cooperation between people from China and the UK. This was especially true for the survival challenge. It had none of the cutting edge images of the first three challenges, but it showed a lot more of the team spirit that had developed throughout the programme.
Steve Tingay, a third year Chinese Studies student, won the performance section in the British heats of the Second Chinese Bridge Competition held in London in June. Steve played the guitar and sang ‘I’m a little bird’ (wo shi yizhi xiao xiao niao), a well-known Chinese popular song.

Steve is the first to admit that he went into this section of the competition with something of an advantage – before coming to Sheffield he was a professional guitarist. In 1996-97 he spent six months in Beijing, playing in the JJ Clarke Band at the China World Hotel.

The Chinese Bridge Chinese Language Proficiency Competition for Foreign University Students is organised by the Chinese Ministry of Education to promote the study of Chinese around the world and the top two students from each country win the chance to participate in the finals in Beijing. The competition comprised four demanding elements: a prepared speech on a topic of the student’s own choice, a question and answer session on Chinese history and culture, an improvised speech on a given topic, and the demonstration of a performance skill.

Sally Powell, the other Sheffield participant, came equal second in the overall competition but just missed out on the opportunity to compete in the finals in Beijing. Students from Cambridge, Edinburgh, the School of Oriental and African Studies, Leeds and Westminster also competed. On 19 June, the overseas edition of the People’s Daily, China’s major national newspaper, featured an article on the competition which included a photo of Steve, Sally and the other seven contestants.

Dr Kyongwon Yoon has taken up a one-year ESRC postdoctoral fellowship in the School of East Asian Studies. He is a graduate of Korea University and completed his PhD earlier this year at the University of Birmingham on young Koreans’ sociality in the process of globalisation, with particular reference to their use of mobile phone technology. (See article on page 3.)

At Sheffield, Dr Yoon will be extending his PhD research on a comparative basis, examining the cultural practices of young people in Korea and Japan. Under the ESRC’s postdoctoral mentoring scheme, he will be working with Professor Beverley Hooper as well as undertaking advanced methodology studies and contributing to the School’s seminar series.

Dr David Prendergast has joined the Department of Sociological Studies as a research associate on a two year ESRC project on changing rituals of mourning. His primary research to date has concentrated on the relationship between elderly parents and their children in a climate of rapid demographic and socio-economic change in South Korea. He is currently completing a book entitled Hyo: Old Age, Death and Inheritance in South Korea.

Dr Prendergast holds degrees in sociology from Leeds and anthropology from Cambridge. During the past few years he has been involved in the establishment of Korean studies at the University of Cambridge, chairing an occasional Korean studies seminar series for Cambridge’s East Asia Institute (EAI) and being the joint organiser of a four-day international conference entitled ‘Korea as a 21st Century Power’ in April 2002. Dr Prendergast is on the Council of the British Association of Korean Studies.
Japanese newspapers regularly carry articles voicing concern about the ‘rampant promiscuity’ of Japanese young people, the ‘record high’ in teenage abortion, the ‘inadequacy of contraceptive and STI (sexually transmitted infection) education’, and the huge gap in sexual attitudes between parents and children – and teachers and students.

This is in stark contrast to the picture painted in most English-language reports of young people in Japan, which note that rates of teenage pregnancy and abortion are very low.

Panic over teenage sexuality is not limited to Japan’s popular media. In the late 1970s, doctors, midwives, public health nurses and sex education advocates first began discussing the ‘looming crisis’ in the sexuality of youth. The panic surrounding adolescent sexual attitudes and behaviour has grown steadily over the past 25 years and along with it a body of research on the subject. With infection rates of between 50 and 80 per cent found in sexually active teenage girls tested for STIs, and pregnancy and abortion rates at ‘record highs’ for this age group, there is a consensus that the ‘crisis’ has arrived.

So we are told that there has been a near ten-fold increase in births among the under fifteen since 1960, yet even at current levels less than fifty girls in this age group give birth each year. Likewise, it is acknowledged that Japan’s teenage pregnancy rate is low compared with the United States and Britain. At the same time, however, it is stressed that other countries are coming to grips with the problem, whereas adults in Japan are still burying their heads in the sand and intoning the mantra ‘don’t wake sleeping children’ (neta ko okosuna). Parents, teachers, media commentators and politicians alike are more than a little uneasy about pioneering efforts to offer young people sex education or contraceptive counselling, fearing that it may further provoke the ‘sexualisation’ of Japanese youth.

My book The Sexual Behaviour of Japanese Youth traces the debate surrounding teenage sexuality from the late 1970s through to the early 21st century. It considers the strategies used by key commentators in the debate, their objectives and achievements. It also makes clear the limitations of both the debate and the research that has sustained it, including the tendency to ignore issues of power based on gender, age, ethnicity, and socio-economic background.

Nearly a quarter of a century of emotive discussion and expensive research concerned with teenage sexuality has done little to stop the upward trend in adolescent pregnancy and STIs in Japan. It has produced little in the form of practical measures to empower young people in relationships, sexual or otherwise, and there have been few attempts to evaluate those programs that have been introduced. In my book I discuss and attempt to explain this dearth of practical action, despite the high level of interest and concern about teenage sexuality.

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Birth and abortion rates for the under 20s in Japan (per thousand)


Abortion rate
Birth rate

A pioneering peer-led sex education class at Onga High School, Fukuoka, Japan.
Boost to East Asian Studies library collections

Gill Goddard
East Asian Studies Librarian

Sheffield’s East Asian Studies library collections have been boosted by four recent donations. The books and other materials will provide additional teaching and research resources for both students and staff. The Library and the School of East Asian Studies are very grateful to the donors.

Donation from Professor Kazuo Ishida
Professor Kazuo Ishida, who has made several visits to Sheffield as a Visiting Professor, has donated 150 books to the Library. A specialist on labour and management in Japan, Professor Ishida is an emeritus professor of Kwansei Gakuin University. The books focus on the economy and business of contemporary Japan.

The Kerr donation
A donation of approximately 1,000 books in English and Japanese has been made by Mrs Teri Kerr from her late husband’s books, principally on Japanese diplomatic and foreign relations during the first half of the twentieth century, but also including a valuable archive of personal narratives of the war years. John Kerr was an avid book collector, particularly of material on 1930s and 1940s Japan. His collection has been shared with other Japanese Studies libraries in the UK, as part of Japan Library Group’s efforts towards collaborative collection development.

The Great Britain-China Centre/Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding
The Great Britain-China Centre’s change of focus has provided an unexpected bonanza for the China collection. The GBCC Library has long provided a home for the SACU collection, but changing circumstances led them to look for an alternative location, and we were quick to offer it a new home. The collection of some 3,000 items provides a comprehensive coverage of works in English on modern Chinese history and politics, deepening the range of the existing collection while also providing much needed duplication of titles in heavy demand.

China’s National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language
The Library has received a donation of over 400 books on Chinese language and society, as well as up-to-date dictionaries and language teaching materials. As always, this donation from NOCFL via the Chinese Consulate in Manchester will be shared with Sheffield’s Chinese language teaching staff.

PhD Scholarship winner

Kerstin Lebr has been awarded the Sheffield UCCL (Universities China Committee, London) Scholarship for PhD research. The scholarship, which pays tuition fees and a living allowance, is rotated amongst British universities with Chinese Studies programmes.

Kerstin has a BA in Development Studies & Economics and an MA in Chinese Studies, both from SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies) in London. Before commencing her undergraduate degree, she studied Mandarin Chinese at the University of Hong Kong. At Sheffield she will be researching the impact of the post-Mao economic reforms on social welfare and education in the Chinese countryside.
In August 2001 South Korea repaid 19.5 billion dollars ‘bailout funds’ to the International Monetary Fund, three years ahead of the promised repayment schedule.

A further striking example of South Korea's recovery from the financial crisis of 1997 was the country’s average annual growth rate of 7.3 per cent during the years 1999-2002. This compared with a negative growth rate of 6.7 per cent in 1998. From the early 1960s, South Korea had developed rapidly as one of the ‘East Asian tigers’, along with Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan. Its growth was engineered by the government’s economic policy and the expansion of the chaebol (large Korean companies) that dominated the Korean economy through huge loans from domestic companies) that dominated the Korean economy.

However, this growth strategy hit a snag when the Asian economies fell into a chain of bankruptcies during 1997. Many chaebol such as Hanbo, Daewoo, Kia, Halla, Jinro and Dainong went bankrupt and 651 financial institutions, including the Daedong Bank, closed down. South Korea overcame this crisis through the restructuring of corporate strategies and the introduction of improved management practices. The chaebol gave up their strategy of revenue maximisation for one of profit maximisation. This change brought about the closure of less profitable businesses and focused on the strengthening of lucrative enterprises. In the process of restructuring, memory chips, mobile phones, TFT-LCD (thin film transistor-liquid crystal displays), air conditioners, refrigerators and electronic ranges became bestsellers on the world market. A well-educated and highly skilled workforce and the efficient management of companies also significantly improved labour productivity.

Is it possible, then, for the South Korean economy to continue its growth? While this question provokes lively debate, there is a general consensus that the steady growth of the economy depends on whether it can continue to follow the path of restructuring and reform, maintain the flexibility of the labour market, and work out a peaceful resolution to the North Korean nuclear weapons problem. In particular, the government will need to exercise strong leadership in the privatisation of state-owned banks and railways, as well as in inter-Korean reconciliation.

Also burdening the South Korean economy are factors including the troubled Hynix company (South Korea’s second largest semiconductor producer) and mounting household debt, mainly in the form of individuals’ credit card debts. The chaebol also need to improve their transparency in accounting and management. South Korean state prosecutors have already taken action by arresting and sentencing the Chairman of the SK Group, the third largest company in Korea, for failing to keep his company’s accounting transparent.

A further factor affecting South Korea’s future economic growth is inter-Korean tension and the subsequent national credit risk. If there is an escalation of problems relating to North Korea (including nuclear weapons, economic difficulties and refugees), then South Korea might see the value of its currency fall rapidly and foreign investors leaving the country. In this situation, South Korean companies would have no option but to reduce or cancel investment plans, bringing about massive unemployment.

The ‘era of Northeast Asia’, announced by the new South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun, therefore needs to begin with the peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear problem. Furthermore, South Korea has to prepare for unification. Bearing in mind the challenges and problems surrounding Germany’s unification in 1990 (see comparative table), South Korea should try to persuade North Korea to begin moving towards a market economy. South Korea also needs to set aside unification funds through achieving a large current account surplus. If the government neglects preparations for unification, the South Korean economy might well face another disaster.

### POTENTIAL REUNIFICATION: COMPARING THE SITUATION OF WEST-EAST GERMANY AND SOUTH-NORTH KOREA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W. Germany (A)</td>
<td>S. Korea (A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Germany (B)</td>
<td>N. Korea (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/B</td>
<td>A/B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area (1000km²)</td>
<td>294.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (million)</td>
<td>61.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominal GNP ($ billion)</td>
<td>1317.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNP growth rate (%)</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita GNP ($ 1000)</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade ($ billion)</td>
<td>611.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Debt ($ billion)</td>
<td>106.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bank of Korea, 2003
Why am I studying Chinese .. Japanese .. Korean?

Despite the growing economic, political and cultural importance of East Asia, studying Chinese, Japanese or Korean – rather than a European language – still tends to be regarded as rather ‘unusual’ or ‘exotic’. So what prompted our students to study one of these three languages, as well as becoming specialists on the particular country?

Kathryn Lydon
2nd year Japanese Studies
(Reprinted from article ‘Life’s first journey’ in Guardian Education, 16 August 2003.)

“The first time I went to Japan was in January last year [during my gap year], but I enjoyed it so much I decided to extend it for three months. I had thought about travelling, but was not sure I wanted to just head out alone, so going with CESA [a language study abroad scheme] was ideal. I was based at the Yamasa school in Okasaki, near Nagoya, and learnt the language from scratch … I was due to study linguistics the following year at Reading University. I’m now just about to start my second year of a degree in Japanese Studies at Sheffield. I would never have got into that if I’d not gone to Japan. It changed my life.”

Hannah Lilley
3rd year Chinese Studies

“Having spent six months of my gap year teaching in a school in Sichuan province in China – and not being able to speak a word of Chinese – I decided to take a first year Chinese language module alongside my initial attempt at a Psychology degree. It didn’t take me long to realise that Chinese was far more interesting than anything we were covering in Psychology. So I took the plunge, dropped Psychology and transferred to Chinese Studies the following year. It was without a doubt the best decision I’ve ever made.”

Ben Jackson
4th year Korean Studies with Japanese

“I suppose I should have an interesting reason for having chosen to study Korean, but I don’t. I just like languages and, having done A-levels in German and Politics, found myself interested in another country – Korea – that was sliced in half by rival powers and ideologies.

Benjamin Charlton
2003 graduate, Japanese Studies

“Like many others I entered university without any real idea of what I wanted to do. After a depressing first year I decided Biological Sciences wasn’t for me, and furthermore that the less like it a course was, the more suitable it would probably be. Somehow that led me to Japanese! I had no previous connection with Japan and no language experience past GCSE. Everybody told me I was mad. Now, after four tough but fruitful years, my life has changed beyond all recognition. It’s no exaggeration to say that choosing Japanese may have been the best decision I ever made.”

Richard Buckley
1st year Chinese Studies

“I chose Chinese Studies because China’s a society about which the Western media doesn’t tell us much – the contradiction of a marketing boom coupled with the rise of sweatshops in a ‘communist’ nation, the question of Tibet, human rights... Many Chinese issues not only affect us economically but also trigger emotional responses, despite how little we really know about the cultural and philosophical ideas of one fifth of the world’s population. Studying the language and background of China enables us to understand – and appreciate – Chinese society and gives us new perspectives on our own.”

Dr Hugo Dobson, taught postgraduate tutor, chats with Masters students at a welcome party.

A first year Korean language class.

At the opening of the Sir Sze-yuen Chung Research Centre, 3 April 2003. Jyoti Butel, an MSc in East Asian Political Economy student, speaks on behalf of the taught postgraduate students. He is watched by Sheffield Vice-Chancellor, Professor Bob Boucher, and Dr Chris Bramall, Senior Lecturer in Chinese Studies.

Sheffield distance learning students (Diploma/MA in Japanese Language & Society) attend a summer residential course in Hiroshima. Alison Churchill, Director of Sheffield's Distance Learning Centre, is on the left (standing) in the second row. The students - from the UK, Europe, North America and Australia - live and work in Japan.

Dr Harukiyo Hasegawa (general editor) and Susie Tranter (submissions editor) discuss articles for a forthcoming issue of Asian Business & Management.
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 webpage www.seas.ac.uk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BA degrees</th>
<th>Postgraduate taught degrees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single honours</td>
<td>In-house</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japanese Studies</td>
<td>MA in Advanced Chinese Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Korean Studies</td>
<td>MSc/Diploma/Certificate in Chinese Business and International Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asian Studies*</td>
<td>MSc/Diploma/Certificate in Chinese Language, Business and International Relations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>Dual honours</th>
<th>MA/Diploma/Certificate in Japanese Language and Society</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Studies and/Business Studies, History, Music</td>
<td>MA in Advanced Japanese Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese Studies and/Business Studies, Politics, Sociology, Linguistics, History</td>
<td>MA/Diploma/Certificate in Modern Korean Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japanese Studies with/Korean, French, German, Spanish, Russian</td>
<td>MSc/Diploma/Certificate in East Asian Political Economy</td>
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<tr>
<td>French/Germanic/Hispanic/Russian Studies with Japanese</td>
<td>MSc/Diploma in East Asian Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean Studies and/Business Studies, Linguistics, Music</td>
<td>Distance learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Korean Studies with/Japanese</td>
<td>MA/Diploma in Japanese Language and Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asian Studies and/Business Studies, Russian Studies, Music*</td>
<td>MA in Advanced Japanese Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Politics and East Asian Studies*</td>
<td>MSc/Diploma in Chinese Business and International Relations</td>
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Note: Some of the above combinations are still subject to formal approval.

In brief...

Congratulations to James H. Grayson who has been promoted to a professorship. Professor Grayson is Director of the Centre for Korean Studies and served as Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences from February 2000 to August 2003.

Despite some media reports of declining interest in languages and East Asian Studies, the School of East Asian Studies has experienced a substantial increase in enrolments this year. First year undergraduate enrolments and the number of taught postgraduate students have both increased by over 30 per cent.

East Asia Trivia Quiz

Have you ever wondered what it’s like to learn Chinese, Japanese or Korean? This interactive site has ‘language tasters’ to give school students and others a taste of these three languages. It also has an East Asia Trivia Quiz to test your knowledge of China, Japan and Korea.

Weblinks about East Asia

www.seas.ac.uk/InfoEastAsia/index.shtml

Do you want to know more about China, Japan or Korea? This website categorises hundreds of useful websites on China, Japan and Korea, ranging from the social sciences and humanities to photobanks and newspapers. The section on each country is divided into two parts. One is designed mainly for academics, university students and people working in government, media and other organisations; one focuses on learning and teaching resources for school students and teachers.

Language taster and quiz

www.seas.ac.uk/Undergraduate/Taster.shtml

Special websites at www.seas.ac.uk

www.seas.ac.uk/Undergraduate/Taster.shtml

Have you ever wondered what it’s like to learn Chinese, Japanese or Korean? This interactive site has ‘language tasters’ to give school students and others a taste of these three languages. It also has an East Asia Trivia Quiz to test your knowledge of China, Japan and Korea.

EastAsia@Sheffield

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