The School of East Asian Studies hosted an interdisciplinary East Asian Studies conference on 20 March, designed to give postgraduate students from the UK and abroad the opportunity to present and discuss their research.

The conference was organised by Joanna Elfving-Hwang, who is currently completing a PhD at Sheffield on South Korean women writers. Joanna had previously presented her own research at a postgraduate student conference on Korean Studies at Harvard and at last year’s Association for Korean Studies in Europe (AKSE) Conference, held in Rome.

“The aim of the conference was to encourage young scholars to exchange ideas and to cultivate interdisciplinary connections beyond their own area of expertise, as well as to provide an opportunity for people in the early stages of their research to present their findings. We were delighted that the conference attracted postgraduate students not just from the UK but also from Germany, Singapore and the United States. There was a total attendance of around fifty people, with over twenty papers, as well as a number of posters, being presented. We’re hoping that the conference might become an annual event.”

Conference panels crossed disciplinary borders, with themes including the contesting of imposed identities, nationalisms and sub-nationalisms, labour and economic development, politised identities, domestic politics, and crafting identities. Individual topics ranged widely across East Asian Studies: from Obon dancing in Japan, textual representations of Mongolia in official Chinese publications and contesting ideals of domesticated femininity in South Korean women’s literary fiction, to China’s great power diplomacy, Taiwanese nation-building, the mechanism of governance in Okinawa, and nationalism and archaeology in North Korea.

A number of the conference papers, as well as the abstracts, are being published on the School of East Asian Studies’ Electronic Working Papers website: www.seas.ac.uk/Research/SEWPsh.html
Postdoctoral Fellowship for Japan scholar

Dr Peter Matanle, a lecturer in Japanese studies, has been awarded a Postdoctoral Fellowship for Foreign Researchers by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS). He will spend two years in Japan, from September this year, based in the Faculty of Education and Human Sciences at Niigata University. Peter will be researching the first stage of a comparative longitudinal study of Japanese and British University students’ work values, expectations and careers.

“This will involve following two cohorts of students from their final year at both Niigata and Sheffield Universities into the workplace and through their careers. There is the possibility, if all goes to plan, of widening the study to include more cohorts, more universities, and more countries in the study, but for the moment I plan to focus on Niigata and Sheffield students.”

“Niigata University makes an excellent comparison with Sheffield because it’s a large mid-to high-ranking national university, teaching a wide range of subjects and located in a medium-sized city (population 480,000). The city of Niigata is located approximately 350 kilometres northwest of Tokyo, close to the Sea of Japan. It is very cold in winter, enjoying high snowfalls, and hot and sultry in summer. Niigata is famous throughout Japan for the quality of its rice, seafood and sake.”

Farewell to Dr Hasegawa Harukiyo

The School of East Asian Studies held a farewell function, followed by a dinner, for Dr Hasegawa Harukiyo on 26 February. Dr Hasegawa, who was Director of the Centre for Japanese Studies, is returning to Japan after fourteen years at Sheffield. He will be missed, not just for his teaching and research in the School, but as Chairman of the UK-Japan Business Centre which provides a discussion forum for business and academia in South Yorkshire.

Dr Hasegawa is taking up a professorship in the Business School at Doshisha University in Kyoto. He will maintain links with SEAS through his continued general editorship of the journal Asian Business & Management, published four times a year by Palgrave.

Dr Hasegawa Harukiyo discusses articles for a forthcoming issue of Asian Business & Management with the submissions editor, Susie Tranter.
Hollywood on Japan

Lost in Translation?

Over recent months a number of films set in Japan have been released – *Kill Bill* and *The Last Samurai* being two of the most prominent examples. However, since its release last year *Lost in Translation*, in particular, has been singled out for both praise and criticism. On the one hand, it has been nominated for, and has won, a number of Golden Globes, Baftas and Oscars. On the other hand, some have argued that its use of stereotypes, such as the average height or the sexual proclivities of the Japanese, is offensive and only serves to ridicule (see ‘Totally Lost in Translation’, *The Guardian*, 24 January 2004).

It was only to be expected that SEAS staff and students would have their own opinions about *Lost in Translation* and we decided to sound out a number of people.

**Dr Hyangjin Lee**  
*Lecturer in East Asian cinema*

In my view, *Lost in Translation* beautifully depicts both modern and ancient Japan – like pictures from a tourist’s guidebook, giving a charming local flavour to the Hollywood romantic comedy. The Japan depicted in *Lost in Translation*, however, does not convey a deeper, significant meaning. The artificial unfamiliarity created by the film is enough to create a strong emotional bond between the two Americans, but not between us and Japan or the characters.

**Ms Miyuki Nagai**  
*Teaching Fellow in Japanese*

*Lost in Translation* is not as good as I expected: there is nothing special about it, in spite of those good reviews. It may be because I am Japanese – Japan and the Japanese people described in the film are not as they really are, but what a foreigner, who has never been to Japan, would like to see. Yet, some of the photography and some of the acting were good.

**Dr Peter Matanle**  
*Lecturer in Japanese Studies*

I thought *Lost in Translation* was a good film, though I wouldn’t say that it deserves all the praise, or the criticism, that has been lavished upon it. I believe that many criticisms of its supposedly stereotypical and even racist depictions of Japanese people are misplaced. While I have not encountered exact replicas of the scenes and people depicted in the film, I have encountered many similarly absurd situations and clownish behaviour.

**Mr Kei Ichimura**  
*Postgraduate student, MA in Translation Studies*

The film is set in Japan, seen from a ‘Western’ point of view – a poignant love story with plenty of comic moments, or a comedy exploring cultural and linguistic differences. While some elements of Japanese culture may inevitably have been misrepresented, the film avoids falling into the trap of Hollywood stereotyping.

**Dr Hugo Dobson**  
*Lecturer in Japanese Studies*

Believe me, this film is a lot better on second viewing. When I first saw it I thought it was a perfectly average film – neither offensive but equally hardly a cert for the Oscars. I still don’t think it deserves any Oscars (although possibly for the soundtrack, which rocks). The second time I found it to be quite a warm and gentle comedy thanks to some great performances not only from Bill Murray but also the Japanese cast – if you understand Japanese the director of the whiskey ad is hilarious.

**Dr Angela Coutts**  
*Lecturer in Japanese Studies*

Techno, porno and mysterious temples are three enduring stereotypes of Japan. This film used all three. It didn’t seem to be about Japan at all; Tokyo was just a convenient exotic backdrop against which to set the existential angst of two North Americans. However, this concept doesn’t work well for anyone who can understand Japanese or knows anything about Japan. My main feeling when watching this film was boredom: I wanted them to leave that hotel and get a life.
Chinese TV series a hit

Challenge UK, the TV adventure challenge featuring four Sheffield Chinese Studies students – and four Chinese students studying in the UK – was screened in China during December-January. The series of four 45-minute programmes, the first British TV programme made for China to secure a national broadcast with CCTV (China Central Television), was shown as a special edition of a long-running entertainment show. CCTV has advised Infonation, the UK producers, that the viewing figures for the series were 50% up on the numbers who usually watch the show.

Lucy Johnston, a member of the victorious Blue Team, was invited to Beijing in mid-December for the launch and media interviews, along with Ron Blythe and Gill Stribling-Wright of Infonation.

‘Flying to Beijing for just one week, seeing myself on TV at the launch and doing interviews with Chinese magazines and websites – it was all quite surreal … especially as I hadn’t had time to think about it beforehand because I was busy finishing my end-of-semester assignments.’

The selection of four Sheffield students as the UK participants in the programme, from over seventy applicants nationwide, created quite a ‘buzz’ among both students and lecturers in the School’s Chinese Studies programme. Interviews with the Sheffield participants were published in the last issue of EastAsia@Sheffield.

A Masters Degree… Then what?

Sheffield graduate Robert Morini completed a BA degree (Law with French), followed by an MA in Chinese Studies. During the past three years he has lived and worked in New York, Shanghai and London.

‘On completion of my MA in Chinese Studies at Sheffield in 2001, I had a four-month internship in the Department of Political Affairs at the UN Secretariat in New York. I then spent a year teaching English at Shanghai University on the British Council’s Teach-in-China Programme, at the end of which I spent three months travelling around the country.

On my return to the UK, I did a six-month internship in the Asia section of Amnesty International in London. I also volunteered in assisting the cultural programme of Asia House, a charity involved in the promotion of Asian culture in the UK.

My current position, which I took up early last year, is that of International Officer at the Royal Society, the UK’s national academy of sciences. I am responsible for administering the fellowship schemes between the UK and East and Southeast Asia and, more particularly, for scientific collaboration and networks with China. Although I’m no scientist, the job is exciting as it is giving me the opportunity to grasp a completely new aspect of China and explore possibilities of collaboration between the UK and China. My activities over the past couple of months have included involvement with the ‘Think UK’ initiative, accompanying the Director of Kew Gardens, Professor Peter Crane, on a visit to China, and organising a Clean Energy meeting between British and Chinese delegates in London.”
Dr Hugo Dobson, lecturer in Japan’s international relations, spent the academic year 2002-03 at Hosei University in Tokyo where he wrote a book entitled Japan and the G7/8, 1975 to 2002, published by RoutledgeCurzon in March 2004. Email h.dobson@sheffield.ac.uk

From 8-10 June this year a meeting will take place at the Sea Island resort in the US state of Georgia. Although the media’s attention will most likely focus on the demonstrations organised by a small number of anti-globalisation protestors, this meeting could result in a string of important decisions regarding the future direction of a wide range of issues including the ‘war on terrorism’ and debt relief in the developing world.

Or, as is equally possible, the leaders will enjoy the resort’s luxurious facilities, make a few well-meaning declarations and return home without having decided anything of substance. In either case, the thirtieth summit meeting of the Group of Eight (G8) in Georgia will provide the only opportunity in the calendar of international diplomacy for the leaders of the most industrialised states to meet one another face-to-face.

The G8 is important to Japan for a number of reasons. First, unlike many other organisations to which Japan was a latecomer, it has been a recognised member of the G8 since its inception. By inviting Prime Minister Miki Takeo to the 1975 Rambouillet Summit, Japan’s importance to the world’s economy was recognised for the first time through membership of an institution created by the early-starters of the West.

Second, although the Japanese delegation has found the learning curve of summitry a steep one, it has learned how to interact with other participants and has even carved out a unique role for itself as the representative of Asia at this meeting of predominantly Western leaders. To this end, the Japanese prime minister has regularly promoted issues of concern to the region, such as conflict resolution in Cambodia and the utility of the East Asian developmental model.

Finally, the G8 summit and the emphasis it places upon the role of the elected leader has allowed the Japanese prime minister, often regarded as a transient and reticent figure in domestic and international politics, the opportunity to play a more active role. Prime Ministers such as Nakasone Yasuhiro, Hashimoto Ryūtarō and Koizumi Junichirō have all used the summit to secure the support of the international community on a number of issues of immediate concern: security relations with the US, the East Asian economic crisis, and the North Korean abduction of Japanese citizens. What is more, these prime ministers were all sensitive to the fact that a successful summit has often been reflected in opinion polls enhancing their chances of re-election.

These and other issues are explored in more detail in my book Japan and the G7/8, 1975 to 2002, which was researched and written in Japan with the support of Sheffield’s sister university, Hosei University. While writing the book, I was fortunate enough to visit Okinawa, host of the 2000 G8 Summit, and interview a number of leading summit participants.

Promoting the 2000 G8 Summit
In the first week of March, I visited South Korea to investigate electronic resources available in academic, national and government libraries, and to pay visits to the Korea Foundation and Korea Research Foundation, a government-funded electronic information supplier, and our book and audio-visual suppliers in Seoul. The visits were arranged with the co-operation of the Korean Overseas Information Service (KOIS), at the request of the South Korean Embassy in London.

The whole week was enlivened by the start of a new academic year and, in Seoul, its traditional accompaniment – a late flurry of wintry weather known as 'cold weather in the Spring flowering season' – literally 'cold weather in the Spring flowering season' – when Seoul had its heaviest snowfall since records began in 1907. I was expecting a snappy response in a country accustomed to such weather. At first it was somehow reassuring to find that chaos descended on Seoul as quickly as it does on Sheffield when it begins to snow in mid-afternoon.

But this was not England, and very quickly the 'system' – that is, the National Disaster Prevention and Countermeasures HQ – got to work, deploying 47,000 workers, 1,400 trucks, and 100,000 bags of sand and salt. People remained at their workplaces, rather than dashing out in panic. Most drivers seemed to leave their cars in the car park, or else parked out of the traffic flows. The bus drivers stuck to their work, even though timetables became disrupted. "My bus was nearly 20 minutes late!" complained an office worker the following day. On the railways too, there were problems (as least as Koreans saw them): the papers reported that trains arrived 'up to 10 minutes late' for a while. However, the gritters and snow-clearers were out all night, and the next day most companies cleared the pavements in front of their buildings. Apart from the US military bases, where schools were shut down immediately, life went on as normal, if a little damp around the feet in my case. My hectic schedule was not disrupted at all by the weather and I was treated to the beauty of snow-laden trees and buildings at the impressive campus of Yonsei, my host university.
I met my husband, a Chinese primary school teacher, in March 2000 when I went to Quanzhou in Fujian province to teach English for six months during my gap year. After falling in love – and then successfully maintaining a 6,000 km long-distance relationship for three years – we decided to get married.

I was already in China at this point, studying Chinese at Nanjing University for my ‘language year abroad’. In January last year, Bing Bing and I went to the Public Security Bureau in Fuzhou, the capital of Fujian province, to apply for our marriage certificate. It was around the time of Chinese New Year (Spring Festival), a popular time to register marriages in China, and it was two weeks before we received our certificate.

Although we were now officially married, this was only the formal part – in China the wedding banquet still tends to be regarded as the ‘real’ wedding. I was only halfway through my study programme at Nanjing and we decided to wait until summer so that my family could fly out for the festivities.

We held the wedding banquet in Quanzhou on 13 August. In the morning Bing Bing and his ‘best men’ collected me and my sister (my chief bridesmaid), in a wedding car adorned with roses, from the hotel where we’d spent the night (the traditional practice was to collect the bride from her family’s home). We drove to Bing Bing’s family home, which was filled with family and friends, and were greeted with firecrackers and flashing cameras. The front door and the inside of the house were decorated with ‘double happiness’ Chinese characters.

In line with tradition, Bing Bing and I bowed to both his and my parents in front of a huge altar. Then I gave all of Bing Bing’s relatives a cup of special tea and sweets, and in turn they gave me gold jewellery which I wore all day – and all at once! After a luncheon banquet with family and friends at a nearby hotel, I went to a beauty parlour to have my hair and makeup done and to get into my white wedding dress (very popular in China nowadays) for the main evening banquet.

Bing Bing and I, our immediate families and best men and bridesmaids, arrived at the banquet hall before the guests and formed a line-up to greet them. When most of the 250 guests had arrived, the lights were dimmed and Bing Bing and I, followed by the bridesmaids, best men and a trolley holding the wedding cake, walked in procession through the tables. We reached the platform, with its two tables of honour for immediate family, and were welcomed by two comperes who proceeded to tease us. Our parents gave little impromptu speeches and then the banquet finally began.

Not that Bing Bing and I had much time to eat! I had to go and change into a traditional Chinese wedding dress made of red silk, and then we visited every table to toast the guests and thank them for coming. Fortunately our rice wine (a colourless liquid) was cunningly replaced with water, another little custom! By the time the meal ended, many guests had already left – it was quite late – but we continued with the celebrations by singing karaoke with family and friends.

When we finally arrived home we were exhausted; my face was aching from smiling so much. But then we had to face another tradition: friends of the bride and groom make them play games to keep them awake and to stop them from entering the wedding chamber. It was very late when we finally went to sleep - but we’d had an absolutely fantastic wedding day.
JAPAN TALES
...from three final-year Japanese Studies students who spent the 20

Brief Encounter in Toyota City
Phil Craig

When going to Japan in 2002, I received a scholarship from Toyota City. In return, I was asked to visit Toyota City, the home of the world-famous car company, to be hosted by the vice-mayor for a day. As I was studying at Nagoya University, I was able to jump on the tube and travel to Toyota in less than an hour.

I was nervous about meeting a Japanese politician – it was embarrassing enough getting my Japanese wrong with the woman in the local shop, let alone with a vice-mayor! But my fears were quashed when I arrived, and the vice-mayor proved to be as welcoming as any other person I had met in Japan.

After a cup of tea, another student and I were shown around Toyota City. We visited a modern art gallery, enjoyed a traditional tea ceremony, and - most fun of all - we were taken to a Noh theatre and given traditional masks to wear so that we could experience Noh, a traditional form of theatre like Kabuki, from the actors’ perspective.

After giving us such a welcoming and fun day, the officials at Toyota City Hall were insistent that we should come back for Expo 2005, which will be held in Aichi-ken, the region of both Nagoya and Toyota City. I hope to be returning to Japan on the JET Programme next year, and I will take every opportunity to go back!

‘Nisha’s on air’
Nisha Virani

In Hokkaido, the northern-most island of Japan, one of the first impressions to hit you is the natural beauty, whether the cherry blossoms in spring or the six-foot carpet of snow in winter. I spent my ‘language year abroad’ in the town of Otaru, a thirty-minute train ride from Sapporo City. Being a small town, community spirit was strong and there were few foreigners - we ended up becoming a kind of a tourist attraction with people stopping us on the street to greet us.

Before long we were invited to go bowling with other locals, to visit junior schools and so on. The centre of the town was filled with sushi shops, restaurants, souvenir shops and, most importantly for me, the radio station.

My experience of being a radio host at ‘Otaru FM’ for a weekly show called ‘Nisha’s on air’ was something I will always remember. It gave me the opportunity to understand Japanese culture on a different level, whilst aiding the intercultural awareness of the local community.

In addition to gaining insights into the lifestyles of Japanese people, I made many new friends. One of these was Aiko, my co-presenter. Having set up the recording equipment, we’d discuss life in Japan for a foreigner and talk about the cultural differences between England and Japan.

After a few weeks of doing the show, I started receiving letters from the listeners. Most of these concerned questions raised in the show and some even told me about new restaurants and shops. It made me feel that I was really a member of the community.
Jamie Hodge

The thing that sticks most in my mind about my year at Meiji University in Tokyo is my 'part-time job' – if that's how one describes my weird and wacky experiences of life as a Japanese TV 'star'! In Japan, foreigners are in demand by advertising companies, and foreign students often turn their hand to the industry as a way of making extra pocket money.

The auditions were like a mini United Nations, with people from Kazakhstan, Liberia and Sweden, for example, and we were often asked to perform strange tasks. One in particular springs to mind – we had to wear white jumpsuits covering us from head to toe and to hang from a bar. Why? We were never told – and on this occasion I wasn’t chosen!

Another time, for a game show on Fuji Television, I was dressed as a 16th century Italian prince, complete with silk knickerbockers and a feathered hat, and asked to sit on a white horse and stare pensively into the distance. My day as an Italian prison guard was also rather interesting, especially as the whole shoot was conducted half in Russian and half in Japanese!

Whilst the main aim of the year abroad is to improve your language skills, there are many options – like teaching English or working in a café – open to students outside of academic life. I’d definitely recommend TV work, though, as it enables you to meet some interesting characters, and to gain an insight into the sometimes bizarre yet fascinating world of the Japanese media.

Chinese language CD-Rom popular with students

The Chinese language CD-Rom produced last year by the School of East Asian Studies has already proved very popular with students taking the distance learning MSc in Chinese Language, Business and International Relations.

Staff involved in creating the CD-Rom, produced in collaboration with the University’s Learning Development and Teaching Unit, were delighted to read the following comment on the interactive Web-CT site soon after this year’s course started:

“Wow!!! This Chinese language software is great! I’ve also had several friends comment on the quality of the videos and the user-friendly interface.”

The CD-Rom, which complements the textbook and supplementary materials, includes video dialogues and interactive exercises. Students doing the part-time degree also have personal contact with their language teachers through telephone interviews and residential courses at Sheffield.

People currently enrolled in the degree programme include:

- an Israeli businessman based in Thailand
- a Professor of Finance at the University of Exeter
- an Italian businesswoman based in Germany
- an American working in Shanghai
- a British Managing Director of a company in Qingdao (China)
- an Australian based in York.

Further information about the degree is available at www.seas.ac.uk/PostgradTaught/DLChineseLanguage.shtml.
During my last study leave, in 2001, I worked on two separate projects. The first, in collaboration with Professor Glenn Hook, was to organize and run a workshop on contemporary Okinawa, with participants from the UK, the US, Australia, Okinawa and Japan. The meeting was a great success, both academically and socially. I then embarked on editing the conference papers, in collaboration with Glenn, which were eventually published in our book Japan and Okinawa: Structure and Subjectivity (RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

Taking a break from editing, I headed off to Japan to spend July and August as a visiting researcher at the Otaru University of Commerce in Hokkaido. There I renewed my contacts with Japanese and Ainu colleagues, and did research in various libraries and institutes. The results of these activities were incorporated into an article on the 1996 Ainu Cultural Promotion Act and its impact on Ainu politics, culture and identity, which was published in Japan Forum in November 2002.

It all seems a long time ago and I’m now planning my next study leave – and another burst of sustained research – in 2005!

My study leave plans for the first half of 2003 were disrupted by the SARS virus. Instead of going to Taiwan to do a contrastive study of English-language newspapers in Taiwan and mainland China, I found myself writing research papers in the UK.

First, I revised a paper entitled ‘Evaluation in media texts: A cross-cultural linguistic investigation’, which is being published in the US journal Language in Society (Cambridge University Press). I also researched and wrote a paper called ‘Transitivity in media texts: Negative verbal process sub-functions and narrator bias’, which has been accepted by the International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching (IRAL). And I prepared a further draft paper, on the teaching of Chinese writing as a foreign language, for presentation to a British/Chinese Language Teaching Seminar (BCLTS) at Oxford.

It wasn’t all enforced studiousness though. Before SARS, I was invited to participate in a recruiting drive in China as part of a Northern Consortium of Universities delegation, as a result of which we recruited nearly eighty students for Sheffield. They’ve invited me to go again this year!

I’m spending my study leave, from mid-February to mid-August this year, in Seoul, based at the Institute for Korean Studies at Yonsei University. I have a six-month research fellowship from the Korea Foundation to conduct a project entitled Ancestral Rites, State Rites and Idolatry: How Korean Christians Responded to the Challenge of Tradition and State Cults.

Focussing on the theological issues of idolatry, I’m examining two case examples. One is the history and development of Christian rituals called ch’udo yebae which are substitutes for the Confucian ancestral rituals. The second is an examination of the reasons for Protestant Christian rejection of Japanese Shinto rites during the Colonial Period (1910-1945) and the subsequent martyrdom of many of those persons who refused to participate in Shinto rites.

In March I interrupted my research in Seoul to present a paper entitled ‘Digging Up Buddhism: Folktales Affirming the Antiquity of Buddhism in Korea’, at the Conference of the Association for Asian Studies in San Diego. I’m also giving seminars at Yonsei and other institutions during my sojourn here.
Japanese women writers ... in need of translation

Dr Angela Coutts lectures on Japanese literature and Japanese-English translation. Email a.m.coutts@sheffield.ac.uk

"Women Writers in the Limelight" declared the cover of Japanese Book News for Fall 2002, highlighting the increasing number of women winning top literary prizes in Japan. In the same issue, literary critic Saito– Minako made the case that writing by women was finally becoming part of the literary mainstream rather than being classified as joryū bungaku (women’s literature), and was being read by equal numbers of men and women.

Indeed, female author Shōnō Yoriko is the leader of the so-called ‘J Literature generation’ taking Japanese literature into the 21st century. Shōnō is known for works such as Tokyo Yoku! Fuyū! (Tokyo Floating Monsters) and has been described by critic Kawamura Minato as ‘the inventor of the word-processor style’ with works that are ‘written, or rather constructed, in a mechanical or strange style in which the typed words convey an impression of “breeding” on the word-processor screen’. Saitō also notes that the rise of contemporary Japanese women writers is due partly to inspiration that has been described by critic Kawamura Minato as ‘the invention of the word-processor style’ with works that are ‘written, or rather constructed, in a mechanical or strange style in which the typed words convey an impression of “breeding” on the word-processor screen’. Saitō also notes that the rise of contemporary Japanese women writers is due partly to inspiration that they have found in translations of fiction by women from Britain and North America.

Despite their importance in the Japanese literary world, women writers had to wait until the 1980s to see any significant translation of their works into English. During that decade, four excellent anthologies of contemporary writing were published. Since then, however, there has been a general neglect of contemporary Japanese literature, with the most recent anthologies Monkey Brain Surik and Unmapped Territories being published as long ago as 1991. Readers interested in Shōnō Yoriko would be lucky to track down her one story in English translation, ‘Timewarp Complex’ (‘Taimu Surippu Kombinato’), to the specialist publication Japanese Literature Today.

Within such a small publishing market, Japanese authors often have to rely on a strong relationship with a dedicated translator. One particularly fruitful partnership has been that between noted author Tsushima Yuko and prize-winning translator Geraldine Harcourt. This has resulted in the translation of two novels and a book of eight short stories, making Tsushima the only contemporary female novelist with a range of both long and short works available to an English-speaking readership.

Tsushima has commented on the translation process, noting that lack of funding and the absence of close cooperation between author and translator have often led to poor translations, resulting in Japanese authors opposing the translation of their works. For her, however, the process has been a positive one and she feels that “despite the risks, some kind of translation is better than none. I believe this because there is something about a literary work that is transmitted from one human being to another and will be successful even if some of the words are not quite right or the grammar slightly odd.”

Writing about her own work as a translator, Geraldine Harcourt regrets the tendency for Japanese fiction to be read in a “sociological, only-in-Japan kind of way”, when she, like Tsushima, believes in universal themes. She states: “I do not think of the Japanese fiction I have translated as being about something called ‘the Japanese psyche’, or even as being about Japan at all.” Tsushima’s writing focuses on important contemporary themes: single mothers, absent fathers, the parent-child relationship and personal fulfilment for women outside the role of motherhood. She works with dream, metaphor and imagery to create compelling narratives that deserve to be read more widely.

Anthologies of Japanese Women’s Literature


Tanaka, Yukiko and Elizabeth Hanson, eds. (1982) This Kind of Woman, Stanford: Stanford University Press.


Works by Tsushima Yuko


In April 2001, I embarked on the challenging task of translating 2001 *waka* (traditional Japanese poems) into English as part of the University of Sheffield’s contribution to the Japan 2001 Festival in the UK. The project was undertaken with the financial assistance of the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation.

I selected the poems as works which were particularly representative in terms of the themes and images covered, or were written by poets who are recognised as being masters of their craft, or – in the final analysis – simply appealed to my own personal taste. Throughout the project, the poems, in vernacular, romanised and translated form, were published on a website (www.shef.ac.uk/japan2001). People registering on the site received the poems by email as they were translated.

The project was designed as a chronological survey of the development of Japanese verse:

- **primitive songs from the *Kojiki* (‘The Records of Ancient Matters’), a seventh century collection of myths and histories**
- **long poems (noyauta) and short poems (tanka), from the eighth century *Man'yō-shū* (‘The Collection of a Myriad Leaves’) poetry anthology**
- **tanka from the first eight *chokusenshū*, or imperially commissioned anthologies, concentrating on the two most famous, the tenth century *Kokinwakashū* (‘The Collection of Japanese Verse Ancient and Modern’) anthology and the twelfth century *Shinkokoinwakashū* (‘The New Collection of Japanese Verse Ancient and Modern’) anthology**
- **a sample of the works of Japan’s three best known *haiku* poets, Matsuo Bashō, Yosa Buson and Kobayashi Issa, dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries**
- **a selection of *senryū*, short, anonymous comic poems, generally written by townsfolk in the eighteenth century**

On Friday, 21 June 2002, some fourteen months after I’d started the translations, *waka* No. 2001 was completed and sent out.

The website aims to provide a comprehensive resource on Japanese poetry, and also includes a commentary section with information on famous poets, the anthologies and the techniques used, and a background section on the society and culture in which the poets lived. The site gets an average of 340 hits a day.

I also get lots of requests to use my translations in various projects, for information about particular poems or poets, and for help in tracking down poems. And I recently gave a public lecture, ‘Waka: A Brief History’, in York as part of Japan Day organised by York St John College and the Embassy of Japan.

We’ll leave the final words to Emperor Gotoba: *waka* No. 2211

Shinokoro nui kuyuru mukai no mori no kayaribi ni omoi moe soi yuku hotaru kana

Smouldering beneath Yonder forest,
The smudge pots
draw the embers of my passion
Like floating fireflies.

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Waka No. 2211... and still going
Translating traditional Japanese poems

Dr Thomas McAuley lectures in the Japanese Studies programme. Email t.mcauley@sheffield.ac.uk

In April 2001, I embarked on the challenging task of translating 2001 *waka* (traditional Japanese poems) into English as part of the University of Sheffield’s contribution to the Japan 2001 Festival in the UK. The project was undertaken with the financial assistance of the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation.

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- **primitive songs from the *Kojiki* (‘The Records of Ancient Matters’), a seventh century collection of myths and histories**
- **long poems (noyauta) and short poems (tanka), from the eighth century *Man’yō-shū* (‘The Collection of a Myriad Leaves’) poetry anthology**
- **tanka from the first eight *chokusenshū*, or imperially commissioned anthologies, concentrating on the two most famous, the tenth century *Kokinwakashū* (‘The Collection of Japanese Verse Ancient and Modern’) anthology and the twelfth century *Shinkokoinwakashū* (‘The New Collection of Japanese Verse Ancient and Modern’) anthology**
- **a sample of the works of Japan’s three best known *haiku* poets, Matsuo Bashō, Yosa Buson and Kobayashi Issa, dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries**
- **a selection of *senryū*, short, anonymous comic poems, generally written by townsfolk in the eighteenth century**

On Friday, 21 June 2002, some fourteen months after I’d started the translations, *waka* No. 2001 was completed and sent out.

utaddishu
arudahanashi ni ketsumanuki
“There’s a single verse apt for this,” He says, bringing conversation to An awkward halt.

I then took a break from *waka* – but I did miss doing some translations every week. So in September 2002 I resumed my weekly postings on the website. At first I just translated some more *tanka* from the *Kokinwakashū* and *Shinkokoinwakashū*. More recently, though, I’ve translated fifty poems from the private collection of Lady Ise, the most accomplished tenth century woman poet, and I am currently working on the *Eihō On-hyakushū* (*One Hundred Poems from a Distant Island*), a sequence written by Emperor Gozoku (1180-1239) after his exile by the Shogunate to the island of Oki in 1221.

There has been more to the project than just the translation and circulation of *waka*. The website aims to provide a comprehensive resource on Japanese poetry, and also includes a commentary section with information on famous poets, the anthologies and the techniques used, and a background section on the society and culture in which the poets lived. The site gets an average of 340 hits a day.

I also get lots of requests to use my translations in various projects, for information about particular poems or poets, and for help in tracking down poems. And I recently gave a public lecture, ‘Waka: A Brief History’, in York as part of Japan Day organised by York St John College and the Embassy of Japan.

We’ll leave the final words to Emperor Gotoba: *waka* No. 2211

Shinokoro nui kuyuru mukai no mori no kayaribi ni omoi moe soi yuku hotaru kana

Smouldering beneath Yonder forest,
The smudge pots
draw the embers of my passion
Like floating fireflies.
It is well known that China has the world's fastest developing economy. In 2003 it experienced a 9.3% growth rate and achieved a GDP per capita of $US1,090. During the five years to 2002, Chinese exports surged more than 50%, reaching $US325 billion per annum. Foreign investors have rushed into China, in the hope of tapping the nation's potentially huge consumer market as well as its cheap labour force; mostly immigrant labour from the countryside. While China has been transformed, in the space of twenty-five years, from a poor agricultural economy into a global manufacturing base, it faces a number of challenges in dealing with what the Government describes as the *sannong* (three agriculture) problem: agriculture, villages and farmers.

Although there was significant growth in agriculture and in farmers' incomes during the early years of the post-Mao reform era, with the dissolution of the communes and the exercise of private initiative, that growth did not continue. China's agricultural sector currently faces many problems, despite the fact that some experts argue that grain production per capita in China has reached the level of developed countries. Between 1990 and 2000 agriculture's share of China's GDP declined from 27% to 16%, and it is difficult to stimulate farmers' enthusiasm for food production, given that many of them still struggle with primitive tools, harsh conditions, heavy tax burdens, local corruption, and low prices for their products. China's accession to the WTO (World Trade Organisation) has brought both challenges and opportunities to the agricultural sector with improvements in its competitiveness being vital.

The slow growth in farmers' incomes has contributed to an ever-widening wealth gap: between rural and urban incomes, particularly those in major cities like Beijing and Shanghai, and also between the troubled inland regions and the richer coastal areas. According to China's National Bureau of Statistics, in 2003 incomes of urban residents grew by 9% per capita, while rural residents' net incomes rose by only 4.3%. Rural incomes have been relatively stagnant in recent years and currently stand at $US316 per capita, less than one-third of the annual per capita income of urban residents. However, taking into account the fact that farmers have to pay their own health care and education costs, the actual incomes of farmers might be no more than about one-sixth of urban residents.

The rapidly growing wealth gap, together with the rise in surplus labour in the countryside, has led to massive rural-urban migration over the past twenty years, with an estimated 200 million people leaving their villages. However, the migrants have continued to be officially regarded as rural residents, under the longstanding household registration (hukou) system, and have not shared the social security benefits - including medical, disability and retirement entitlements – of their urban counterparts. The Government has acknowledged that China's economic growth is not sustainable under such conditions and the State Development Planning Commission has announced its intention to implement a unified national social security system so that workers can claim benefits wherever they live.

Solving China's rural problems has become one of the Government's top priorities and it is introducing policies and measures to strengthen, support and protect agriculture and to increase rural incomes. Premier Wen Jiabao recently pledged to make life better for farmers by scrapping agricultural tax within five years and by better monitoring and controlling the prices of agricultural products. China's agricultural sector is thus in a crucial stage of development, with implications both for the economy and for society.

* *sannong*: 农业 (agriculture), 乡村 (village), 农民 (farmer)
The Study of East Asia in the UK
An Australian perspective

Beverley Hooper

Before coming to the UK four years ago, Beverley Hooper was Professor of Asian Studies at the University of Western Australia. In 1995-96 she was President of the Asian Studies Association of Australia.

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Since I arrived in Britain, people have often asked me how East Asian Studies in the UK compares with Australia.

The first thing that struck me was the relative marginalisation of East Asia from what one might call mainstream British academic life. Only seven universities (two of these also have Korean Studies degrees) and a few others teach some Chinese or Japanese. In Australia, virtually all the major universities in the state capitals and Canberra - as well as some of the newer institutions - have for several years provided full programmes in Chinese and Japanese Studies.

The small number of East Asian Studies (or Oriental Studies) departments in the UK is compounded by the relative or even complete lack of attention to East Asia in most social sciences and humanities departments, which tend to have a far narrower (overwhelmingly British and European) focus than their Australian and North American counterparts. Thousands of students in the UK still complete a history, politics or sociology degree, for example, without doing a single course on East Asia, despite all the talk about globalisation, the growing importance of the East Asian region on the world’s political and economic stages, and the need to understand different cultures.

In a recent programme on University Challenge, three Oxford students were able to answer the usual esoteric questions on European history and literature, but not one of three fairly simple questions concerning China - perhaps reflecting the relative lack of attention to East Asia not just in British universities but also in schools, the media and society in general.

“When our teacher asked us in class what we wanted to study at university, I said Chinese’. By the next day it seemed that nearly everyone in the school knew I was ‘that odd person who’s going to study Chinese’ - not French or History or Accounting or Engineering.” Comment from an A-level student at a SEAS Open Day for prospective students.

The ‘obvious’ explanation for the contrast between the UK and Australia is the two countries’ different geopolitical situations. If the UK’s backyard is continental Europe, then Australia’s is East and Southeast Asia. Yet this ignores the growing importance of East Asia to the UK, already recognised by business and government. The UK is now the largest European investor in China, the world’s fastest growing economy; and Japan is the UK’s largest export market after the EU and the US.

The level of public interest in East Asia that one finds in Australia is actually fairly recent; for almost two centuries after the EU and the US.


The Australian

The rhetoric was backed up by wide-ranging funding programmes to expand the study of East and Southeast Asia in both schools and universities.

Recent years, though, have seen new political and educational agendas in Australia. For all the continuing media and business attention to East and Southeast Asia, a number of Asian Studies departments are now struggling to maintain themselves in an economic rationalist university environment. While teaching and research on East Asia continue to be more widespread in Australia than in the UK, perhaps the balance will start to be corrected as growing numbers of academics reverse the conventional flow of migrants from the UK to Australia.

*Cambridge, Durham, Edinburgh, Oxford, Leeds, Sheffield, SOAS (School of Oriental and Asian Studies). In June last year The University of Durham announced plans to close its Department of East Asian Studies.
Chinese portraits: Young and old

Tom Saunders
3rd year, Chinese Studies

My ‘language year abroad’ in China for the academic year 2002-2003, and a subsequent return visit, gave me a great opportunity to indulge in my second favourite hobby, photography. (My favourite is the martial arts, which I’ve studied since I was eight years old.)

These photos were all taken in Taiyuan, the capital of Shaanxi Province in northwest China, in August-September last year. My month-long visit to friends there, which included a wedding and a birthday party, gave me the chance to photograph a wide range of Chinese people – young and old, male and female – in close-up.

I used a Canon SLR camera and two lenses: a 28/80mm and a 100/300mm.
Two new professorships advertised

The University recently advertised two new professorships in the School of East Asian Studies: a Chair of East Asian Business/Economics and a Chair of East Asian Studies (in the field of language/linguistics, communications and/or cultural studies). The appointees will join the four current professors in the School (Glenn D Hook in Japanese Studies, Tim Wright and Beverley Hooper in Chinese Studies, and James H Grayson in Korean Studies) and twenty-two other academics, making Sheffield’s School of East Asian Studies one of the largest departments of its type in Europe.

According to Professor Tim Wright, Chair of SEAS: “The two new professorships are an outcome of the recent Review of our School. I was delighted to be at the University’s Senate meeting on 17 March when the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Professor Tony Crook, stated that the Review had been completed with excellent results, and that both the internal and the external reviewers had reported that we have a first-class department. As the advertisement for the two professorships states, the newly established Chairs are part of a major investment being made by the University to ensure the School’s successful future as the major European centre for research on contemporary East Asia from a social science perspective.”

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

BA degrees
Most degrees involve four years of study
Those marked* take three years.

Single honours
Chinese Studies
Japanese Studies
Korean Studies
East Asian Studies*

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

Postgraduate taught degrees

In-business
MA/Diploma/Certificate in Chinese Studies
MA in Advanced 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 Language and Society
MA in Advanced Japanese Studies
MA/Diploma/Certificate in Modern Korean Studies
MSc/Diploma/Certificate in East Asian Business

Distance learning
MA/Diploma in Japanese Language and Society
MA in Advanced Japanese Studies
MSc/Diploma 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 inter-regional studies.

Forthcoming symposium

The School of East Asian Studies will host a one-and-a-half-day symposium entitled ‘A-political? East Asian Postage Stamps as Socio-political Artefacts’ on 13-14 August. The symposium is sponsored by the Korea Foundation and the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation.

Scholars and philatelists from the UK, Ireland, Sweden, Finland, the United States, Japan and South Korea will discuss in illustrated lectures how nationalism, cultural identity and government policies are reflected in the postage stamp designs of China, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, and Taiwan. For more information, contact Dr Hugo Dobson (email h.dobson@sheffield.ac.uk or tel. 0114 222 8437).

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