

JAPANESE@NEWCASTLE

EDITED BY FUMIKA CARTLIDGE

SUMMER 2020

The 22nd Annual Conference of the British Association for Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language (BATJ) held at Newcastle University on 5th and 6th Sep 2019

Kumi Casey, Japanese Language Coordinator/
The 22nd BATJ Annual Conference Venue Coordinator



The Japanese language team of the School of Modern Languages hosted the 22nd BATJ Annual Conference. Dr Shinji Sato of Princeton University gave the keynote lecture. Professor Sugata Mitra, 2013 TED prize winner and a former colleague of the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences, was the invited speaker. Both lectures shed light on the importance of the role of teachers to create a learning environment which encourages learner autonomy. In addition to many conference delegates from across the world, special guests included representatives from the Japanese Embassy in London and the Japan Foundation. Etsuko Suda and Fumika Cartlidge from NCL shared their teaching experiences with the participants during the BATJ forum about “Instructing Kanji Learning”.



Etsuko Suda explained to the audience a number of measures which are incorporated into the Level A Japanese teaching to reinforce students' kanji learning.

‘Gender and National Image - Representations of Figure Skating in Japanese Anime’

Dr Michael Tsang, Leverhulme Postdoctoral Fellow

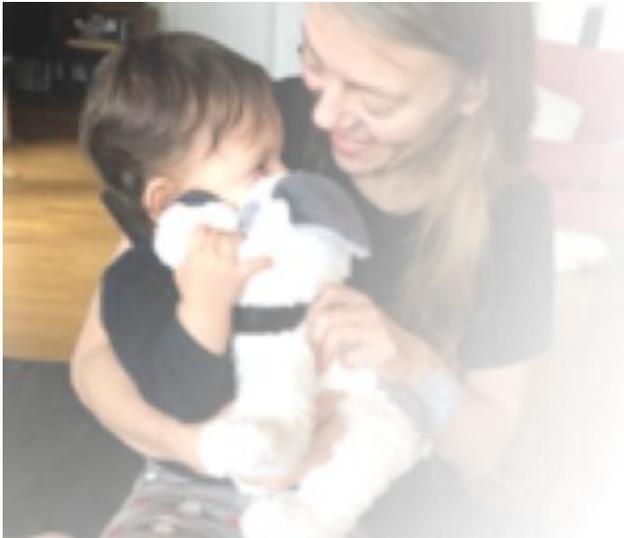


Photo credit: Oliver Moxham, Centre for Japanese Studies at the University of East Anglia

Japanese popular culture, especially anime and manga, has attracted a huge following worldwide and is one of the reasons students are drawn to studying Japanese. However, it is not always clear how one should analyse these popular cultural products critically. On 4 February 2020, Dr Michael Tsang from Newcastle University's Japanese Studies was invited to give a talk at the Centre of Japanese Studies at the University of East Anglia (UEA). The talk was titled 'Gender and National Image - Representations of Figure Skating in Japanese Anime'. Speaking to an impressive turnout of 50+ UEA students, staff and members of the public, Dr Tsang examined popular anime series on figure skating *Ginban Kaleidoscope* (2005) and *Yuri on Ice!!!* (2016), both of which drew on Japan's competitive success in the sport to explore unconventional representations of gender and national glory. Specifically, *Yuri on Ice!!!* explores bromance relationships while *Ginban Kaleidoscope* features a fiery female protagonist that departs from the kind, submissive Japanese female stereotype. In the meantime, both anime highlight an element of 'non-victory' whereby the skater-protagonists fail to snatch the top spot despite demonstrating superb skill. This common element is likened to Japan's national ambition on the global stage to carefully present itself as one of the strongest nations but never as *the* strongest. The seminar ended with a lively Q&A discussion.

My 2019 — Experiencing the natural cycle of life

Dr Gitte Marianne Hansen, Senior Lecturer in Japanese Studies



2019 was the year I gave birth to my son, but also the year my dearest mentor who taught me so much—not only about Japanese literature, but also about life in general—passed away.

I first met Katō Norihiro-sensei (加藤典洋先生) as an exchange student at Waseda University many years ago when I decided to take his class on Japanese literature. That decision turned out to be one of those life changing ones. One of those you can look back at when you are much older and confidently say that you wouldn't be where you are had you made a different choice. Had I not met Katō-sensei, I wouldn't have been teaching and researching Japanese literature and culture at Newcastle University because I would probably never have gone down the academic path and study for a PhD. It was his classes and the endless discussions (well, often he would be the one speaking about whatever occupied his mind, and I would just listened) over coffee or wine that opened my eyes and made me realise that literature is not just stories in books

unrelated to life—literature is life itself and we can learn about the most important life lessons from literature.

During his career Katō-sensei wrote fifty books and countless articles and some have called him Japan's last intellectual. At Newcastle University we were very honoured to have him visit and give a keynote lecture in connection with the 'Eyes on Murakami' event series that I hosted in March, 2018 (for further details see: <https://research.ncl.ac.uk/murakami/>) in connection with my AHRC Leadership Fellowship. At the time I didn't know of course, but his trip to Newcastle would turn out to be his final travel abroad.

And so in 2019, for the first time in my life, I experienced the natural circle of life and death as very personal. That year will always stand for me as a year when I strangely felt both tremendous joy and loss. With permission from Katō-sensei shortly before he died, I named my son Neo Cato. While the meaning of the name is 'new wisdom', Cato is also a tribute to Katō (pronounced the same in Danish). Neo Cato, now one and a half years old, has some very big shoes to fill, but he will have to do so in his own way.



Photo : Dr. Hansen with Katō-sensei at 'Cat's Cradle' cafe near Waseda University in Tokyo.

MEMORIES IN THE SUN A LIFE IN JAPAN

Lei Fabula, BA in Linguistics with Japanese

NARA CITY-KOFUKU TEMPLE



As summer approaches, my year abroad in Japan comes closer and closer to an end. I've spent almost a year living and studying in Kyoto University. I think I can speak on behalf of everyone when I say this year was a rollercoaster ride filled with unexpected surprises.

It would be a lie to say I wasn't overwhelmed in the change of atmosphere. Arriving in the port city of Osaka, the bright neon street signs illuminating the city scape, the scent of char siu (a type of roast pork) filled my senses. These things which at first felt unfamiliar are now second nature.

The first term was a time of adjustment. With the help and support of my dorm mates and friends, both Japanese and fellow internationals, I was able to get accustomed to my new life in the historic city. Living in Kyoto I was able to practice my listening and speaking skills. Because of this, I became obtusely aware of how lacking I was and strived to do better in my target language.

The year wasn't just filled with studying; I also had the opportunity to travel, immerse myself in the culture and try tons of new food that was outside of the mainstream. One of the opportunities I was grateful for was the chance to observe a Japanese elementary class. I was able to talk to kids in Japanese and see how they learn and interact in their school environment, an experience not many of those on their year abroad get to have. Other unique experiences such as watching a sumo match and wearing a kimono in the famous Heian Shrine were also highlights of the term.

This year abroad has truly been one of the best moments so far. Although it was cut short for some, it does not mean the end. The sun hasn't set yet for my time in Japan, so for now I'll enjoy it whilst it lasts.

PLACES TRAVELED

- KYOTO
- KOBE
- OSAKA
- LAKE BIWA
- SAPPORO
- NARA
- NAGOYA
- HIROSHIMA

TOP 5 EATS

- Sapporo soup curry-
Speciality in Hokkaido
- Kichi Kichi Omurice-
An Eggselleny Meal
- Fami Chicken-
Your best friend at 3AM
- Ippudo ramen-
One of the top remain chains
- Yakinuku-
Japanese BBQ

TOP 5 PLACES IN KYOTO

- Arashiyama
The famous bamboo forest
- Kamogawa river
A place to relax at the end of a long uni day.
- Ginkakuji
A serene temple garden near Kyoto university
- Higashiyama
A district frozen in time
- Uji
World-famous producer of matcha

My YA experience in Fukuoka university

Akvilė Stankutė, Graduated 2020 Combined Honours BA, Japanese and Film

Most Newcastle

University students who study Japanese usually choose cities such as Tokyo and Kyoto for their year abroad, but I decided to study and improve my language skills at Fukuoka university.



In the beginning, I was a bit worried because none of my classmates were going to Fukuoka and there have not been any students from Newcastle University who went to Fukuoka university for their YA, so I did not have much information about what it is like to be studying there. Even though I went to Fukuoka alone, it ended up being the best university experience.

Fukuoka university has a lot of society and sport clubs that any student can join. I decided to join the dance societies and it was one of my favourite parts about my YA. Even though we would have to practice 3 times a week for 3 hours and a full day on Sundays, it was fun and I made lots of friends that I still talk to now. Since there were only Japanese students in the society, I would have to talk to everyone in Japanese all the time and that is what helped me improve my Japanese the most. The society would host events like trips to cities around Fukuoka, karaoke nights and sport days.

I'm very happy I decided to go to Fukuoka and I would definitely recommend choosing Fukuoka university for a full Japanese university experience.



I lived in an international dormitory which consisted of 70% Japanese students and 30% exchange students. I had a lot of opportunities to practice my Japanese, communicate with Japanese people and make friends. The dormitory hosted events like welcome party, sports day, movie nights and trips which made my YA even more memorable.



End Of Year Round Up!

Sophie Harrison, BA in Modern Languages, French and Japanese



This year the Anglo-Japanese Society was very proud to reach 100 members, consisting of students from our university, Northumbria University and lots of exchange students too.

We teamed up with the Anglo-Chinese, Taiwanese and Korean societies for a great Halloween party with some excellent costumes.

Our combined Christmas Ball with Durham University's Anglo-Japanese society was a massive success and gave our members the chance to expand their social circles with other likeminded students in Durham.

We also held multiple smaller events throughout the year such as holding a talent show in the Students' Union, singing our hearts out in a local Karaoke bar, hiring out lanes at a local bowling alley and booking out a lecture theatre for an anime film night (with lots of snacks and refreshments provided by the society!)

Of course, we have also been continuing the tradition of 'Oshaberikai' or weekly meet-ups in the Crows Nest pub where members come to relax, socialise and share their interest of Japanese language and culture. These weekly socials also provide a great opportunity to practise our Japanese with native speakers and for first year students to talk to students at other stages of their degree. We even started a tandem partner system to cater for members wanting to get some more one on one language practise outside of the pub.

Though they were only here for a month, we also had the pleasure of welcoming some lovely exchange students from Chuo University, Japan (some of whom I'm hoping to see again when I get to Japan).

It's been an incredible year for our society, and I can't wait to see what the society will achieve next year.



Expectation vs Reality



Oliver Ruiz Butterworth,
BA in Modern Languages, Translating and Interpreting

Our minds always make us think about what lies ahead. Whether we think of something going positively, like having a great holiday, or of something going sour, like failing an exam, we tend to jump to conclusions before reality kicks in.

This means that very often our heightened expectations can really put reality into perspective. That was definitely the case for me when I moved to Japan just over a year ago to work full-time as a new graduate employee at the car parts manufacturer NGK Spark Plugs in Nagoya city.

I did not expect to be living in the middle of nowhere with 80 other new graduates in a dorm with no Wi-Fi for two months. I did not expect to have to participate in a three-day business exercise where a paid actor would scold us to pretend we were in a “business setting”. I did not expect to be put into the data management division of the HR department, which had no previous experience with non-Japanese staff – or any other language than Japanese for that matter. Of course, I also did not expect to be stuck in Japan during the biggest pandemic in recent history.



However, I also did not expect to become so close with so many of the other graduates thanks to living in the same dorm. I did not expect to grow (somewhat) thicker skin by undergoing training sessions and some tough months at work. I did not expect for my business Japanese skills to improve at such a high speed. Of course, I also did not expect to appreciate simple things such as going to my local department store after not leaving my district for over two months.

将来について何が起こるか分からない時、いつも想像してしまう。予想通りに物事が進まなかったら、がっかりするのは当たり前だ。だが、がっかりしたからといって、自分のやりたいことをあきらめてはいけないと思う。なぜかという、時には実際に起こったことが、予想していたことより素晴らしいこともあるからだ。

There are definitely many reasons why you should not do something, but after coming to Japan, I believe that there are also a million reasons why you should. It is definitely not going to be an easy experience if you decide to embark on a journey abroad, but why should it be? Whether you are doing it to achieve a dream, or try something new, you will get to experience a reality you would never have the chance to experience back home.

Memories at Newcastle University



Harumi Cavanagh, Japanese Teacher

When I was just 16 years old, I wanted to become a teacher and teach Japanese Language and Literature at Japanese high schools and junior high schools. When I entered university, my desire to be a teacher remained unchanged; at that time, I never imagined that one day I would teach Japanese in England. When I decided to come to the UK in 1996, I realised that Japanese grammar taught to Japanese students in Japan was different to the Japanese grammar taught as a foreign language. I had to relearn Japanese from a different perspective; I felt the mystery of the language. Grammar are not rules decided from the beginning of a language but are rules which were “found” by linguists. There can be no absolute rules and any rules could be changed according to the situation by the people using that language. I received so many questions from students in seminars or by email. In every question, I found feelings of curiosity, confusion, mystery, and the hopes of the students; these were exactly the same feelings that I had towards the Japanese language.

I feel that I was so fortunate and blessed to have had the experience of teaching at Newcastle University where I was able to teach students from many countries. From each student, I was able to feel their uniqueness. A student who would always ask many grammar questions; a student who always sat very quietly in the classroom but always had a lot of things on her mind. A student who hardly ever came to class but when he did show up, he would show great ability! A student who always showed me her notebook after the reading seminars in which she would write about her deep feelings for the reading materials, her feelings had always inspired and amused me. A student who had such strong confidence in himself and some students who were struggling.

Now I will go back to Japan with all these wonderful memories, and I know that I will remember those happy days with these Newcastle University’s students.



New Special Journal Issue on Acclaimed Author Murakami Haruki

Dr Gitte Marianne Hansen, Senior Lecturer in Japanese Studies
Dr Michael Tsang, Leverhulme Postdoctoral Fellow

As a follow-up to the 'Eyes on Murakami' event series held at Newcastle University in 2018 on the Japanese writer Murakami Haruki (for details see <http://research.ncl.ac.uk/murakami>), Dr Gitte Hansen and Dr Michael Tsang co-curated a special issue on the author in *Japan Forum*, the UK's leading journal on Japanese Studies, showcasing up-to-date academic research by keynote speakers of the event series. The special issue is available online and will be available in print later in 2020. The articles include:

Gitte Marianne Hansen & Michael: Issue introduction: '40 years with Murakami Haruki' <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09555803.2019.1691631>

Gitte Marianne Hansen & Michael Tsang: Obituary: 'Katō Norihiro: introduction and tribute' <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09555803.2019.1691039>

Katō Norihiro, translated by Michael Tsang: 'The problem of tatemashi in Murakami Haruki's work: comparing *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* and *1Q84*' <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09555803.2019.1679225>

Anna Zielinska-Elliott: 'No translator is an island: the changing dynamics of Murakami Haruki translations around the world' <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09555803.2019.1691629>

Matthew C. Strecher: 'Out of the (B)earth canal: the mythic journey in Murakami Haruki' <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09555803.2019.1691628>

Rebecca Suter: 'The artist as a medium and the artwork as metaphor in Murakami Haruki's fiction' <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09555803.2019.1691630>

Gitte Marianne Hansen & Michael Tsang: 'Politics in/of transmediality in Murakami Haruki's bakery attack stories' <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09555803.2019.1691632>

For Information about admissions

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