

*Nissan
Institute
of Japanese
Studies*



Background to the study of Japan at Oxford University

The Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies presently comprises seven fellows whose research is focused on the social science of modern Japan. We are housed in the Nissan Institute building which is located in the grounds of St Antony's College and which also houses the university's collection of books in Japanese and about Japan – the Bodleian Japanese Library. It is an integral part of the University of Oxford and as such promotes the study of modern Japan through teaching and research.



The Bodleian library purchased its first Japanese book – a *sagabon* – in 1629 and a number of other rare and valuable books were collected in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Meanwhile John Tradescant's collection of objects gathered in the early seventeenth century contained items from Japan including a pair of *zori* ('sandals made of twigs'). When he died the collection passed to Elias Ashmole and subsequently this became the core of the Ashmolean museum.

Oxford graduates were not prominent among the many Britons who visited Japan in the second half of the nineteenth century as it opened to the west. The famous mission led by Iwakura Tomomi spent several weeks in Britain in 1871 without visiting Oxford. However his son, Tomotsune, registered as a student in 1873 at Balliol College, the first of a series of young men from Japan's ruling class to study in Oxford. And not just men. Tsuda Umeko, later founder of Tsuda-juku, the first institute of higher education for women in Japan, studied at St Hilda's in the late 1890s and gave what is possibly the first formal talk about Japan at this university.



Tsuda Umeko

Meanwhile the collection of 18,000 objects donated to the university by General Pitt-Rivers in 1884 included a variety of artefacts from everyday Japanese life plus a collection of 82 Noh masks, the most important such collection in Europe. Some of these are now on permanent display. Later curators of the Pitt Rivers museum have added to the collection of Japanese objects.

Thus at the start of the twentieth century, well before Japan or Japanese was thought of as suitable for academic study, there were Japanese books in the Bodleian library, Japanese artefacts in the Ashmolean and Pitt Rivers museums and Japanese students studying in the colleges of Oxford university.

The first formal teaching of Japanese language began in 1909 when John Gubbins, formerly of the diplomatic service, was given a three year contract and offered tutorials in Balliol College. However the language was not sufficiently popular among students and his contract was not renewed.

Nevertheless there continued to be a steady flow of Japanese studying in Oxford, several of whom later went on to serve in the diplomatic service but there were others, such as the poet Nishiwaki Junzaburo who studied Middle and Old English in New College between 1923–5.

After WW2 to the late 1970s



The key event in the post war development of Japanese studies in Oxford University after 1945 was the foundation of St Antony's college in 1948. This was the college that took a lead in the development of area studies within the university.

Until the 1980s all the initiatives that supported the development of the study of Japan were driven by individuals from this college. Geoffrey Hudson and Richard Storry, both distinguished historians, served as heads of its Far East Centre which was the focus for Japanese studies until 1981. Meanwhile Geoffrey Bownas, who initially learned Japanese as a soldier in

1943–4, returned to Oxford and was appointed in 1953 initially to a post in Chinese. He introduced Japanese as an option in the BA in Oriental Studies in 1957. From his base in St. Antony's College he promoted the subject such that in 1963 it became possible to do a single subject degree in Japanese.

Brian Powell, also at St Antony's, began teaching Japanese at Oxford in 1962, following a first degree in Chinese and a doctorate on Japanese theatre. He was joined by James McMullen a specialist in pre-modern Japanese history, who became a fellow at that same college in 1972. These two, supported by a series of Japanese language instructors, were the core faculty who taught the Japanese programme, with Richard Storry continuing to contribute a course in Japanese history. During the 1960s there were no more than ten undergraduates at any one time on the Japanese language degree.

Foundation of the Nissan Institute for Japanese Studies

During the 1970s interest in the study of Japan grew within the UK. The number of undergraduates at the four 'main centres' – Oxford, Cambridge, SOAS and Sheffield – steadily increased and other universities began to include the study of Japan or Japanese into their programmes. Meanwhile several major Japanese corporations were seeking to locate factories in the UK and some of these expressed an interest in supporting the study of Japan here too.

The process that led to the decision by the Nissan Motor Company to support the creation of an institute of Japanese studies was long, complex and is open to rival interpretations. Suffice it to say that as a result of conversations held between 1979–80 Nissan made a substantial donation to the university to establish a benefaction that was to be used to support the creation of an institute that focused on the study of modern Japan. Its first, acting, director was Brian Powell but in January 1982 Professor JAA (Arthur) Stockwin took up his post as the first Nissan Professor of Modern Japanese Studies on his arrival from the Australian National University. Over the course of the next few months Dr Ann Waswo arrived to



His Imperial Highness, Prince Naruhito, Crown Prince of Japan, breaking the ground for the new Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies building, 18 September 1991

become the lecturer in modern Japanese history and Dr Jenny Corbett was appointed lecturer in the economic and social development of Japan. During its first decade the institute was located in 1 Church Walk, a short distance from St Antony's College.

In 1990 the Nissan Motor Company agreed to make a second major donation. This enabled the institute to develop in two ways. First and most importantly, it funded the construction of a purpose built structure in the grounds of St Antony's College. The ground-breaking ceremony was carried out by the Crown Prince on 18 September 1991.

Foundation of the Nissan Institute for Japanese Studies

► Mr Carlos Ghosn, President and CEO of the Nissan Motor Company giving his lecture 'Innovative Management Across Cultures' on 17 March 2006



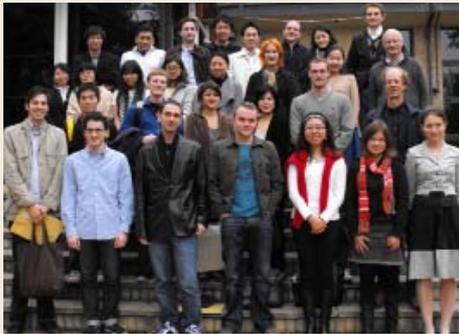
The building was completed by the start of 1993 and provided rooms for five permanent fellows, offices for visiting fellows, a seminar room, a 150 seat lecture theatre and premises for the Bodleian Japanese Library (BJL). Secondly, it provided funding that allowed the institute to increase the number of its full time fellows to include another economist, Mark Rebick, and a social anthropologist, Roger Goodman.

Arthur Stockwin retired in 2003 and Ann Waswo in 2007 although both of them remain actively involved in the life of the institute. Roger Goodman was appointed to replace Arthur as Nissan Professor and Ian Neary moved from Essex University in 2004 to teach political science within the institute. He succeeded Ann as director in 2006.

The institute celebrated its 25th anniversary during academic year 2005/6 with a special series of lectures and a two-day conference to which all the doctoral students who had studied in the institute were invited. The central anniversary event was a presentation given in our lecture theatre by Carlos Ghosn, then chief executive of Nissan Motor Company, in which he discussed his experiences working as head of Nissan in Japan. He also announced his decision to provide a third substantial donation to the Benefaction in order to establish a secure financial base and enable us to develop in new directions.

There have been three recent appointments. In September 2007 Dr Sho Konishi arrived from Urbana-Champaign to replace Ann Waswo as lecturer in modern history. Later that academic year, thanks to a grant generously provided by the Sasakawa and Nippon Foundations, we were able to appoint two sociologists: Professor Takehiko Kariya from the Department of Education, Tokyo University and Dr Ekaterina Hertog a graduate of Oxford university (and before that Moscow State University) who works on the sociology of the Japanese family. Thus at the start of 2010 the institute has seven fellows.

Over its thirty years fellows at the institute have produced important research about Japan across the spectrum of the social sciences published in books and articles but it has never seen itself as simply a research institute. At the time of its foundation a decision was made that fellows would contribute to the teaching of undergraduates both in the Oriental Institute and in the relevant departments (at first politics, economics and history, later anthropology and sociology) in addition to supervising doctoral students. In 2007 a master's programme was launched which provides students with advanced and intense language training alongside courses about modern Japan and research methods training. This has established itself as the programme of choice for students seeking advanced training in Japanese studies.



The class of 2009

The pioneers of Japanese studies at St Antony's College had always encouraged eminent Japanese scholars to spend time in Oxford. Maruyama Masao was a visitor on two occasions in the 1960s. The Nissan

Institute has inherited this tradition and provides workspace for visiting fellows who want to develop their research on Japan. We continue to welcome up to four visiting researchers each year from Japan, Europe and the United States. They not only use their time to conduct their own research but they also attend and present papers at our seminar series and also on occasion contribute to teaching.

When the Bodleian Japanese Library was established in the new building the university's holdings about Japan and in Japanese were consolidated for the first time. In addition to the funding from the main library a substantial annual grant from the Nissan Benefaction has enabled the library to build up a collection of over 120,000 volumes in Japanese, English and other languages plus a broad range of journals in Japanese and English. The B JL also benefits from the support of the Friends of the Bodleian Library in Japan. The librarian, Mrs Izumi Tytler, is the custodian of one of the best research collections in Europe.

The institute not only collected books it has also published them. In 1986 we began publication of the Nissan Institute/Routledge Japanese Studies series. Our list has developed so that we have now published over 70 titles making it the most extensive Japanese studies publication series in the world.

Japanese Studies in Oxford University in 2010 and beyond

From relatively small beginnings but thanks to the continued support of the Nissan Motor Company, among others, the institute has developed in a number of ways over the last thirty years. The Benefaction provided in 1980 and supplemented on two occasions generates the income that has supported this wide range of activity. How the money is spent and therefore the directions in which the institute has moved over these three decades is decided by the director of the institute in consultation with a management committee composed entirely of academic members of the university.

The study of Japan continues to develop. In December 2009 the Ashmolean museum re-opened after a major re-organisation with two new Japan rooms and items from Japan that were in Tradescant's original collection on display. The undergraduate programme in Japanese is being re-structured to incorporate a full year of study at a Japanese university.

There are so many connections now between Japan and the various parts of Oxford University that it would

be impossible to list them all. There are sixteen full time scholars currently working within the university with a central research and teaching interest in Japan of whom seven are members of the Nissan Institute, and the others are associate members. In addition there are four recently retired emeritus fellows who continue to play an active role in our affairs.

Research and teaching are our core activities but we also organise the weekly Nissan seminar across the university terms plus the occasional workshop, such as the one on bicycles and sewing machines held in July 2009. While maintaining our identity by continuing to focus on the study of modern Japan through the prisms of our social science disciplines the Nissan Institute is committed to continue to contribute to the overall development of Japanese studies in Oxford University.

Ian Neary



Fellows of the Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies



Dr Jenny Corbett is Reader in the Economy of Japan and a Fellow of St Antony's College. She is also Executive Director of the Australia-Japan Research Centre at the Australian National University. She works on financial integration and barriers to trade in the Asian region.



Professor Roger Goodman is Nissan Professor of Modern Japanese Studies and a Fellow of St Antony's College. He is Head of the Social Sciences Division. His research interests include the anthropology and sociology of Japan, comparative education and social policy and the anthropology of children. His current research project is on higher education reform in Japan.



Dr Ekaterina Hertog is the Sasakawa Career Development Fellow in the Sociology of Japanese Society. Her research interests lie in the field of Sociology of the Family. Her book on Japanese unwed mothers 'Tough Choices: Bearing an Illegitimate Child in Contemporary Japan' was published by Stanford University Press, 2009).



Professor Takehiko Kariya is Professor in the Sociology of Japanese Society. He has conducted sociological studies of education, social stratification and social mobility, school-to-work transition, and social influences of education policies in Japan. Before coming to Oxford, he was a professor of sociology of education at the Graduate School of Education, University of Tokyo, for a decade.



Dr Sho Konishi is the University Lecturer in the History of Modern Japan and Faculty Fellow of St Antony's College and the Nissan Institute. He studies cultural, intellectual and trans-national history from 1700.



Professor Ian Neary is Professor of the Politics of Japan and a Fellow of St Antony's College. He is Director of Graduate Studies of the master's programmes in Modern Japanese Studies and Director of the Nissan Institute. His research interests include contemporary Japanese politics, minority groups in Japan and human rights in East Asian societies. He has recently completed a biography of Matsumoto Jiichiro.



Dr Mark Rebeck is Nissan Lecturer in the Japanese Economy and a Fellow of St Antony's College. His research interests are in the Japanese labour market, population ageing and income distribution. His current research project is an investigation of poverty in Japan.

Colleagues from the Oriental Institute who contribute to our Master's teaching programme



Ms Kaori Nishizawa is an instructor in Japanese in the Oriental Institute. She is the instructor with special responsibility for the Japanese language courses on the master's programmes taught within the Nissan Institute.



Mrs Keiko Harada is a Faculty Tutor at the Oriental Institute and a core language instructor on the master's courses in Japanese.



Ms Junko Hagiwara is a senior instructor in Japanese at the Oriental Institute. Her main responsibility is for the Japanese language courses on the undergraduate's programmes taught at the Oriental Institute but she also contributes to the master's programme.



Dr Linda Flores is the University Lecturer in Japanese Literature and Tutorial Fellow at Pembroke College. Her research interests include Proletarian Literature, Women's Writing, Gender Theory, Comparative Literature, and Atomic Bomb Writing. She organised the 2008 Kobayashi Takiji Symposium in Oxford at Keble College.



Professor Bjarke Frellesvig is Professor of Japanese Linguistics, and a Fellow of Hertford College. His research interests include the history of the Japanese language, Japanese-Korean comparative linguistics, and general historical linguistics. He is the Director of the University's Research Centre for Japanese Language and Linguistics (see www.orinstox.ac.uk/research/jap-ling) and also directs a large research project funded by the AHRC on Pre-modern Japanese syntax.



Mr Gian-Piero Persiani's research interests are in the sociology of literary production and consumption and, more specifically, in the nature and structure of the literary field, the making of writers' reputations, the role of audiences, and the circulation of literary styles and forms. His most recent project is a study of the waka boom of the mid-10th century.

Emeritus fellows of the institute:

Professor Arthur Stockwin

Dr Ann Waswo

Dr James McMullen

Dr Brian Powell

Associate members of the institute:

Dr Phillip Harries (The Oriental Institute)

Ms Hiroe Kaji (The Oriental Institute)

Dr James Lewis (The Oriental Institute)

Dr Clare Pollard (The Ashmolean Museum)

Dr Inge Daniels (Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology)

Professor Mari Sako (Saïd Business School)



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iStockphoto/ooyoo; p5, top: iStockphoto/Hiroshi_ichikawa

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