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University  
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# EAST ASIA @SHEFFIELD



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## World experts select Centre of Excellence on East Asia

*A joint bid by the School of East Asian Studies at the University of Sheffield and the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Leeds to establish an international Centre of Excellence on East Asia has been successful.*

The bid was made in response to the £25 million Language and Area Studies initiative launched jointly by the Higher Education Funding Council, the Economic and Social Research Council, the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Scottish Funding Council. These councils called on leading experts from East Asia and the United States as well as the United Kingdom and other European countries to act as referees to help them to select the best bid to strengthen Britain's research profile and specialization in Japanese and Chinese studies.

Drawing upon the white rose, the historical symbol of Yorkshire where Sheffield and Leeds are both located, the new centre of excellence is called the White Rose East Asia Centre. The National Institute of Japanese Studies and the National Institute of Chinese Studies together constitute the White Rose East Asia Centre.

The new Centre was launched officially on 1 September 2006. Funding of £4 million has been secured for the next five years, with the possibility of further funding to be considered in the future. The key aims of the Centre include developing an international reputation for excellence in research on East Asia; pooling the expertise in the two universities to provide high quality research training for the next generation of scholars in East Asian studies covering the disciplines of the humanities, business and social sciences;

organizing new research initiatives; developing existing research through the appointment of research fellows; providing young scholars with postdoctoral fellowships; organizing conferences and workshops; and building up international networks to support the development of globally recognized research.

One of the first initiatives was the selection of two White Rose Scholarship students through an open competition in the summer of 2006. Philip Shetler-Jones was awarded a four-year scholarship that combines one year studying for an MA in Advanced Japanese Studies (Research Methods) and three years completing his PhD dissertation on Japan's role in peacekeeping. He joins the research cluster on globalization and regionalization. Lisa Nye was also awarded a four-year scholarship to pursue the same MA programme and thereafter a research project on

Japanese imperialism. She joins the cluster on East Asian identities and cultures.

Professor Glenn D. Hook of SEAS, the Director of the National Institute of Japanese Studies and a member of the Executive Board of the White Rose East Asia Centre, stressed the role the Centre will play as a national resource: "the success of the bid is testimony to our track record as a leading trainer of postgraduate research students and as a centre of international research excellence. The pooling of cutting-edge researchers from both Leeds and Sheffield has enabled us to create an unparalleled depth and breadth of research on East Asia. The centre's role as a national resource will mean the whole research community will be able to benefit from this new initiative."

For regularly updated information on the activities of the White Rose East Asia Centre, please visit <http://www.wreac.org>



*Professor Glenn D. Hook (centre), Director of the National Institute of Japanese Studies, with the two new White Rose Scholarship students, Lisa Nye (left) and Philip Shetler-Jones (right).*

## All change in the Distance Learning Centre

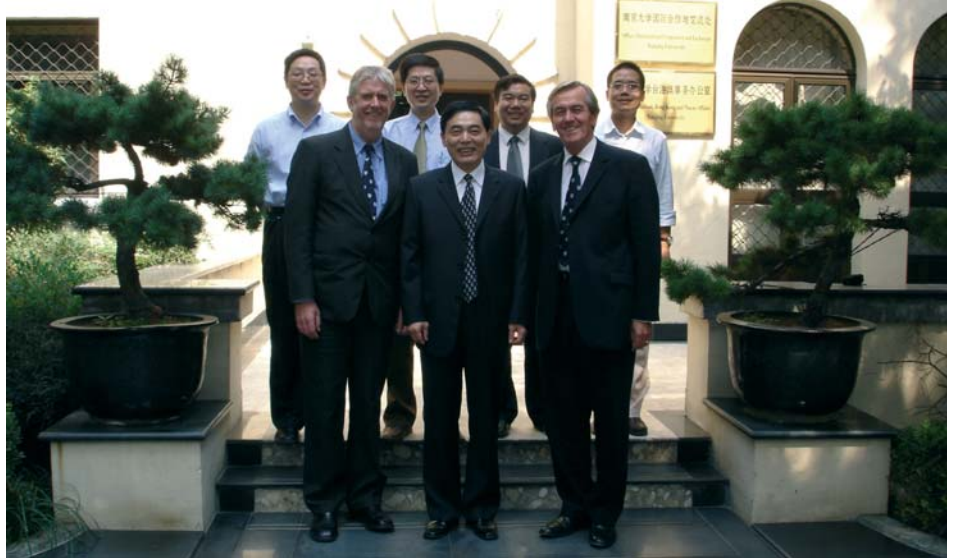
SEAS was sorry to say goodbye recently to Karen Gascoigne and Sali Morris. Karen worked in the Distance Learning Centre since 1996, when distance learning was still very new, and made a major contribution to the success of the programmes. Sali was with us for five years as a senior secretary and was a fount of knowledge on all areas of the centre's activities. We wish them well in their future endeavours.

Sandra Tassie, our new Administrative and Examinations Officer, comes well equipped to take up the challenge. A graduate of the MA in Japanese Language and Society who has worked for the past three years in other university departments, she is familiar with the workings of SEAS as well as the University. Katherine Gallagher, who has been in SEAS for over two years, moves up to take on Sali's role and we are now recruiting to fill Katherine's position.

## Confucius Centre developments

Professor Bob Boucher, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield, and Professor Peter Fleming, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for External Relations, recently visited Nanjing to sign the memorandum of understanding related to the establishment of the Confucius

Institute in Sheffield, as reported in the previous edition of EastAsia@Sheffield. We look forward to bringing you regular updates on the activities of the Confucius Institute in future editions.



Front row from left to right: Professor Peter Fleming, Pro-Vice Chancellor for External Relations, Professor Chen Jun, President of Nanjing University, and Professor Bob Boucher, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield.

## Local high school students get a taste of life at SEAS

Students from three local schools – Lady Manners School, Wales High School and Hope Valley College – attended the third annual Taster Day in SEAS on 8 November 2006. During their visit, the students took classes in Korean with Dr Judith Cherry and Chinese with Dr Hu Xiao-ling. They also participated in seminars on the topics of “Women in Chinese Cinema” with Dr Sarah Dauncey and “Why Study Japan?” with Dr Rick Siddle. At lunchtime,



they had the chance to meet some first-year students – David Janke (Chinese Studies with Japanese), Charlotte Steels (Japanese) and Peggy Ng (Korean Studies) – to find out what they think of life as a student at SEAS. The visitors also had an additional, impromptu language class when our enthusiastic students took over the whiteboard to explain some Japanese grammar points and vocabulary. Diane Walsh, who accompanied a group of students from Wales High School, told us, “it was a worthwhile event and my students were very positive about the experience. They enjoyed the Chinese film and being able to participate in the guided discussion based upon it. They also particularly enjoyed the Chinese and Korean language taster sessions.”

From left to right: Peggy Ng, David Janke and Charlotte Steels help out at the language taster sessions.

### Note on names

Following East Asian convention, the family name precedes the given name/s in Chinese, Japanese and Korean names, unless the particular person uses the Western name order (given name followed by family name) in his/her publications and/or everyday life.

### Editor's note

The views expressed in the articles in this newsletter are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the School of East Asian Studies and the University of Sheffield.

Certain images used in this newsletter are scaled-down, low-resolution images used to illustrate films or books, or to provide critical analysis of the content or artwork of the image. It is believed that these images qualify as fair use under copyright law.

# Welcome to SEAS!

SEAS is delighted to welcome four new members of staff to Sheffield: Dr Jeremy Taylor as lecturer in Chinese Studies, Ms Mika Ko as lecturer in Japanese Studies, and Ms Mineko Arai and Ms Yumiko Iwashita as Japanese language teaching fellows.



Jeremy Taylor was educated at the University of Sydney and the Australian National University. It was from the latter institution that he was awarded a PhD in 2003 for

a thesis that explored the uses of the built environment and its links to conflicting interpretations of the colonial past in Taiwan. Since then, Jeremy has spent a number of years studying, working and conducting research in Asia. He has also worked in local government, marketing and other industries. From 2003 to 2005, he served as an advisor to Taiwan's Foreign Ministry, where he was responsible for translation, editorial and speechwriting work. He has spent most of 2006 living in Singapore, where he has been a member of the editorial team for *Singapore: The Encyclopedia*.

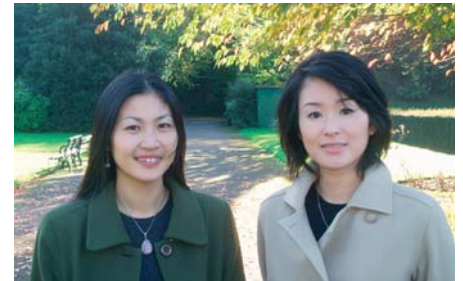
Recently he has developed an interest in Nationalist Chinese and Taiwanese propaganda, with a particular focus on the ways in which Nationalist Chinese leaders have been "deified" throughout the twentieth century. For a long time, he has also been interested in Chinese popular culture, specifically that recorded and performed in *Hokkien* (a dialect originating in China's Fujian province, but spoken widely throughout the Chinese diaspora). His work on these and other issues has been published in journals such as *The China Quarterly*, *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* and *East Asian History*.



Mika Ko completed an MA in International Media Studies at the University of Ulster in Northern Ireland in 1999. She chose Northern Ireland because

she was particularly interested in the way the media reported political conflict. She also developed an enthusiasm for Film Studies and decided to undertake PhD research into contemporary Japanese cinema. This research has focused on representations of minority groups in contemporary Japanese cinema and how these relate to images of Japanese national identity. For example, in the case of a popular filmmaker like Miike Takashi, she has explored the way in which contemporary Japanese multiculturalism has helped to maintain conventional notions of the Japanese nation. In the future, Mika is particularly interested in investigating the development of transnational East Asian cinema and its potential to challenge traditional forms of national cinema.

Before coming to Sheffield, Mika worked at the University of Leeds as a Japanese teaching fellow where she taught the language and contributed to a course on world cinema. At SEAS, she will be teaching Japanese language and contributing to courses focussing on Japan's minorities and East Asian cinema. Mika also hopes to be able to promote the showing and discussion of East Asian films.



Yumiko Iwashita (right) received her undergraduate and postgraduate education in the Department of Foreign Languages of Reitaku University in Japan. After graduation, she worked in Romania as a volunteer Japanese language teacher for the Japan International Cooperation Agency from 2003 to 2005. This was Yumiko's first experience as a language teacher and she learned a great deal about cross-cultural communication. After leaving Romania, she taught Japanese at the University of Limerick in Ireland where she experienced a different teaching approach. Yumiko looks forward to joining and contributing to the high-quality Japanese language teaching team at SEAS.

Mineko Arai (left) originally taught English to Japanese children but became more and more interested in teaching the Japanese language. She came to London in 2003 and studied practical Japanese teaching at the Institute of International Education in London for one year. After acquiring considerable experience of teaching Japanese at public secondary schools, she completed an MA in Applied Japanese Linguistics in 2006 at the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London. Her goals at SEAS are to support and encourage the students and actively influence their future.

## A baboon's adventures

A widely praised new book entitled *Mr Thundermug* by SEAS graduate Cornelius Medvei (MA in Advanced Chinese Studies, 2001-2) was recently published. Cornelius explains his inspiration for the book.



*Mr Thundermug* is the story of someone who arrives in a strange city, squats with his family in a condemned house, learns the language, sends his offspring to the local primary school, is hounded by bureaucrats, and conducts a bizarre relationship with the schoolmistress who has taught him to read. It is, I suppose, the story of an outsider trying to fit in; except that, to complicate matters, *Mr Thundermug* is a baboon. For me the book is associated with the time I spent living in China and studying Chinese, partly because I started writing it in Nanjing, where I was working as an English teacher, and finished it in Sheffield while I was doing an MA in Advanced Chinese Studies. But my Chinese experiences also had an influence on the story itself.

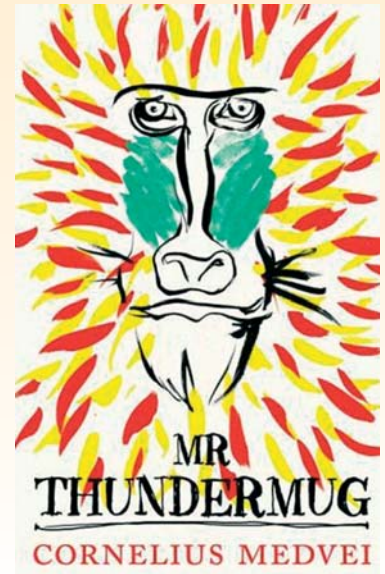
First of all, the setting. Originally, the story was to take place in an East

Anglian market town, but after I had been in China for a few months, I decided to relocate it. This was partly for practical considerations - it was getting more and more difficult to imagine an English town amid the noises, sights and smells of a Chinese city. But also, these new surroundings were far too interesting not to write about. Hence the slightly deranged fictional version of Nanjing in which the baboon's adventures take place. Many of the illustrations, too, are based on photographs I took in China.

Then there was the plot. As I was writing, I kept finding parallels between the situation of *Mr Thundermug* and my own experiences in Nanjing. Of course, his trials were more severe than mine - I had a room in a university guesthouse, not a squat, and I was neither hounded by bureaucrats nor arrested for indecent exposure and cruelty to animals. But I think the stimulating, baffling and occasionally frustrating experience of trying to

adapt to a place where I did not really belong enabled me to get further under the skin of this displaced baboon than I would otherwise have managed.

*Mr Thundermug* by Cornelius Medvei is published by Fourth Estate, price £10.



## Teeing up for success

Congratulations to Emma Brealey (BA in Business Studies and Japanese Studies, 2006) and George Kane (BA in Japanese Studies, 2006) whose exciting new business venture has won a £2,000 runners-up prize in the White Rose Centre for Enterprise (WRCE) Business Plan Competition. The pair plans to operate golf tours in the UK for Japanese tourists, organizing everything from the itinerary to chaperoning them on their tour.

Regular readers of EastAsia@Sheffield will recall that Will Christophers, a former president of Sheffield's award-winning Japan Society, has also been successful in this competition in the past with his

*takoyaki* outlet (see number 11). Previously, the competition has run amongst applicants from the White Rose universities of Sheffield, Leeds and York. However, changes are being implemented so that the competition will run in each university initially before the

individual winners progress to a second competition between the White Rose universities. George and Emma recommend any students interested in applying to get their business brains into gear and start planning now.



Emma Brealey (left) and George Kane (right) with Dr Bob Handscombe (centre), Director of the White Rose Centre for Enterprise and Chair of UK Science and Enterprise Centres.

# In memory of Imamura Shōhei

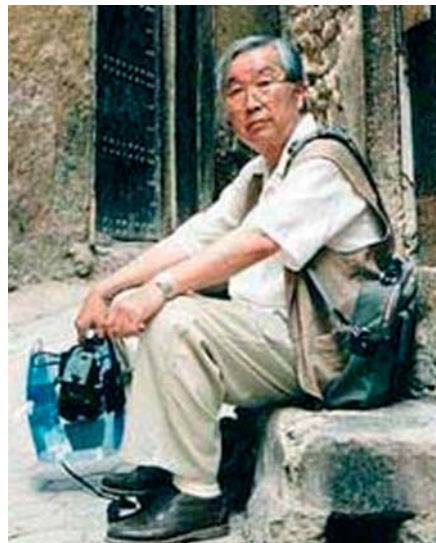


*The world was saddened to hear of the recent death of Imamura Shōhei, one of Japan's most important film directors. Adam Bingham, who is writing a PhD thesis on Japanese cinema in the School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics at the University of Sheffield, looks back on the career of a great filmmaker.*

Imamura Shōhei passed away on 30 May 2006 aged seventy-nine following a battle with liver cancer. He is amongst the most decorated of his country's filmmakers, both domestically and in the West. In Japan he received the country's two most prestigious awards - the Japanese Academy Award for Best Film and the *Kinema Junpō* Best Film Award - on numerous occasions and often, as with *Vengeance is Mine* (1979) and *Black Rain* (1988), for the same film. In the West he is one of only three directors ever to win the *Palme d'Or* at Cannes for two different films: *The Ballad of Narayama* (1983) and *The Eel* (1997). Furthermore, his own film school, now known as The Japan Academy of Visual Arts, has developed talents such as Miike Takashi and has opened up an important and alternative means for young directors to enter the industry.

More importantly, as a filmmaker associated with the Japanese New Wave of the 1960s, he played a central role in revitalizing and redefining Japanese cinema at a significant period in the country's history: the beginning of the drive towards economic expansion that saw sweeping changes throughout Japan. Indeed, the thematic and narrative subjects of his body of work make him, as critics Tom Mes and Jasper Sharp have noted, "one of Japan's most important cinematic figures" in the latter half of the twentieth century. More than any of his fellow countrymen, Imamura sought to explore and elucidate the "real" Japan; in other words, the unofficial underclass that has remained constant and marginalized whilst the country's "official" culture has seemingly forgotten and betrayed its roots along the path to

industrial prosperity. The title of his quasi-documentary *A History of Post-War Japan as told by a Bar Hostess* (1970) is, in this sense, typical of his obsession with what is specifically Japanese in the proletarian images of itinerant actors (*Stolen Desire*, 1958), impoverished coal miners (*My Second Brother*, 1959), prostitutes (*The Insect Woman*, 1963), Tokugawa-era rebels and outcasts (*Eijanaika*, 1981), and, perhaps most tellingly, an isolated community of primitive, incestuous tribes (*The Profound Desire of the Gods*, 1968).



Imamura Shōhei

Imamura began his career as a director with *Stolen Desire* in 1958, after having worked as an assistant to the legendary director Ozu Yasujiro. He first came to international prominence with *Pigs and Battleships* (1961), in which his depiction of social upheaval centres on a young hustler and his prostitute girlfriend trying to raise black market pigs in the shadow of an American battleship. Thereafter, his filmmaking became increasingly idiosyncratic, particularly in his blurring of the lines between fiction

and documentary. Imamura believed the distinction between the two to be arbitrary and often meaningless. He also made several potent documentaries for Japanese television, such as *A Man Vanishes* (1967).



One of Imamura's final films *Warm Water under a Red Bridge* (2001), which dealt with many of his favourite themes.

As can perhaps be inferred from some of the above titles, sex and the feminine came to dominate many Imamura pictures. He is often quoted as saying, "I am interested in the relationship of the lower part of the human body and the lower part of the social structure", and this is perhaps where Imamura's true genius can be found. He detailed not only what it means to be Japanese at a particular time in history, but what it means to be human, to be alive. For Imamura, the simple pleasures are the greatest. For his audience, it is precisely those pleasures that will endure the longest.

# Korean Studies conference comes to Sheffield



Margaret Drabble talks about her writing of *The Red Queen*.

The University of Sheffield was proud to host the biennial conference of the British Association for Korean Studies, which was held at Halifax Hall from 6-7 September 2006. The theme of this conference was "Generations in Korea: Past, Present and Future" and one of its many highlights was a talk

given on the evening of the first day by the Sheffield-born author Margaret Drabble. The author of seventeen novels and numerous works of non-fiction, Ms Drabble spoke about how she came to write her novel *The Red Queen*, which was published in 2004. The novel is set in part in the court intrigue of eighteenth century Korea and upon publication it proved to be controversial both in terms of its subject matter and its treatment of the subject. Ms Drabble's description of the writing of the book and its reception struck a chord with the delegates and sparked a lively discussion on a range of subjects related to history, literature, research and literary composition. The momentum generated by the talk continued to the following day's first panel of papers, which explored various themes raised by the book and historical issues relating to the time of *The Red Queen*.

In total, thirty-eighty people attended the conference including

## Award-winning research on Korean folklore

Congratulations to Professor James H. Grayson who was named as the recipient of the 2006 Barwiss Holliday Award by the Royal Asiatic Society. He won this award for an article entitled "They First Saw a Mirror: A Korean Folktale as a Form of Social Criticism", which was published in the autumn edition of *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*. In the past, the award has only been open to UK academics but it is now open to submissions from any English-speaking person and this year there was competition from seven different countries.

delegates from as far afield as Israel and Australia. Although the papers presented at the conference covered a wide range of subjects from cinema and literature to politics and contemporary society, they all grappled with the issues of changing generational attitudes towards ageing, political engagement and lifestyles. Sheffield looks forward to welcoming the conference back in the future.

## New Research Postgraduate Room opened

The refurbished room for research postgraduates in SEAS was formally opened on 4 October in the presence of Professor Bob Boucher, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield. The programme of refurbishment was made possible through a generous gift made to the School of East Asian Studies by Professor Lee Hong Koo, who received an honorary doctorate from the University in 2002. A political scientist and professor emeritus of Seoul National University, Professor Lee was the architect of South Korea's policy of engagement with the then Communist bloc and with North Korea called the "Northern Policy", which became the basis of the later "Sunshine Policy." Professor Lee was formerly Ambassador to both the United Kingdom and United States, and Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea. The refurbishment included the upgrading of computing equipment, new furniture and redecoration of the room to provide a significantly enhanced environment for research postgraduate students.

Kuniko Ishiguro, a PhD student, enjoys the benefits of the newly refurbished Research Postgraduate Room in SEAS



# Power to the people

*Before graduating from Sheffield, Michael Smith (MA in Advanced Japanese Studies, 2005-6) spent the summer in Nagoya as an intern with one of the world's largest power companies.*

Despite its many sights, bars, clubs and restaurants, one should have a pretty good reason to visit Nagoya in July and August and endure the humidity of its rainy season and the midsummer heat. Mine was to undertake an eight week internship with the Chūbu Electric Power Company (CEPCo), Japan's third largest power producer. With Katō Koyuki (who appeared in the film *The Last Samurai*) fronting its TV marketing campaign, CEPCo is a significant regional employer and provides electricity to Japan's manufacturing heartland, including major firms such as Toyota, Sharp and Japan Railways. In addition to lectures, field trips and projects arranged by CEPCo's human resources team, the internship entailed living at a catered company dormitory in a Nagoya suburb. As such, this was close as you could get to the complete Japanese salaryman experience in just two months.

I completed my placement at CEPCo together with an intern from Simon Fraser University in Canada. Our work hours were generally split between two main locations:

CEPCo's head office in Nagoya's central Sakae district and the company's out-of-town Human Resources Development Centre. In addition to meetings and discussions with successive company departments, our work included one-off projects such as presenting a proposed redesign of the company's English language website.

Field trips saw us donning hard hats and visiting thermal power plants and distribution centres, though we sadly lacked the insurance cover to climb an electricity pole using ropes and spiked boots! Other highlights included seeing the robotics research at Toyota's Pavilion, visiting a CEPCo-owned hot spring bathhouse and observing operations at one of the control centres for Japan Railways' famous bullet train. To conclude our internship we independently researched an aspect of CEPCo's operations and presented our ideas before a small audience of the company's staff. I was interested in CEPCo's heavy promotion of "All Electric" houses, and since retirees appeared to be

under-represented in their advertising, I looked into the company's future non-industrial customer base in the context of Japan's ageing population.

Dormitory life also made up a significant part of the placement. Of course, training with a UK firm often entails similar extended periods at a fully-catered training centre, but to stay at one and be greeted regularly by the staff with the phrase *o-kaeri nasai* (welcome home), is probably less common. The dormitory was set within a larger complex of subsidized employee housing, making co-workers neighbours, and creating a small CEPCo village, complete with a playground for children. My room was part-Western and part-Japanese, with a combination of wooden flooring and *tatami* matting, and gave me just enough space to work on my MA translation project in the evenings. Provided six days a week, the dormitory canteen food was consistently good, if at first perilously over-plentiful; negotiations with the cooks eventually resulted in portions more suitable to a desk worker than a rock breaker. Visiting the canteen and the TV area daily meant frequently seeing the same set of residents, and aided in part by the on-site beer vending machines, breaking the ice and settling into dormitory life proved very straightforward.

I left Nagoya in late August, well-fed and knowing a whole lot more about the operations of Japanese utility firms and businesses in the Chūbu region. My internship served as a valuable final phase to my MA studies and I would recommend this opportunity wholeheartedly.



*Michael Smith outside Chūbu Electrical Power Company's Human Resources Development Centre.*

# “China in Photographs”

The School of East Asian Studies held its second annual “China in Photographs” competition in May 2006 attracting over forty outstanding submissions from both undergraduate and postgraduates, all of whom had visited China over the past couple of years.

The photographs were placed into five different categories – Chinese landscapes, famous sites in China, the Chinese people, Chinese customs, and artistic images of China – and the displays brightened

up the corridors of the department for many weeks whilst judging took place.

For the second consecutive year the prize for “Best in Show” came from “The Chinese People” category, this time a beautifully evocative black and white image of an old Tibetan pilgrim. The photographer, Kester Newill, a student on the MSc in Chinese Business and International Relations course, had spent several years as a teacher in China prior to coming to Sheffield and had built up

an impressive collection of photographs during his time there. Of his winning photograph, Kes said, “I was just walking through the grounds of a Tibetan temple in Shiqu (Shersul, in Tibetan), northwest Sichuan, when I came across the pilgrim inside one of the shrines. As we were leaving she stopped and asked me to take her photo. It was the perfect spot, really, as the sunlight was spilling through the doorway into the dark room, giving the photo great contrast.”



Left: “Tibetan pilgrim” by Kester Newill (MSc in Chinese Business and International Relations).

Top: “Cherry blossoms” by Alyn Watkins (MSc in Chinese Business and International Relations).

Centre: “Mineral terraces” by Duncan Levesley (MSc in Chinese Language, Business and International Relations).

Bottom: “Everest” by Eleanor Thomas (3rd year Chinese Studies).

# s" Competition 2006

All five of the photographs submitted by Kes for this year's competition were praised highly by the judging panel for their content, composition and artistry. He will be returning soon to China to take more photographs with his prize – a digital camera – when he takes up his new post as education advisor to Qingyang County Education Bureau, in Gansu Province.

The winners of the other categories – Duncan Levesley (landscape), Eleanor Thomas (famous sites),

Vanessa Varvas (people), Timothy Bentham (customs), and Gabriel Chew (artistic images) – were each awarded a stunning book of photographs of China. As can be seen here, all of their photographs demonstrate the highly photogenic nature of the Chinese landscape, its buildings and its people and further underline China's cultural appeal to the outside world.

The competition organizers would like to thank the Chinese Ministry of Education for its generous support,

and particularly Zhang Yihua, Education Consul at the Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in Manchester, for her unstinting efforts to support the development of China-related activities at Sheffield.

See number 11 of [EastAsia@Sheffield](mailto:EastAsia@Sheffield) for some of the winners of the first "China in Photographs" competition held in 2005.



Above: "Train attendant" by Gabriel Chew (3rd year Chinese Studies and Business Studies).

Above right: "Child begging" by Vanessa Varvas (MSc in Chinese Language, Business and International Relations).

Right top: "Harvest time" by Timothy Bentham (3rd year Chinese Studies with Japanese).

Right bottom: "Red panda" by Victoria Cleeve (3rd year Chinese Studies and Business Studies).

## Recent collections of photographs from China

*Burtynsky, China: The Photographs of Edward Burtynsky* (published by Steidl Verlag, 2005) – images of the industrial and urban transformation of China, exploring in particular the intricate link between industry and nature.

*China* (published by Harry N. Abrams, 2003) – part of Yann Layma's extensive and stunning collection, covering every aspect of China as a country and a people, and complemented by a series of related essays.

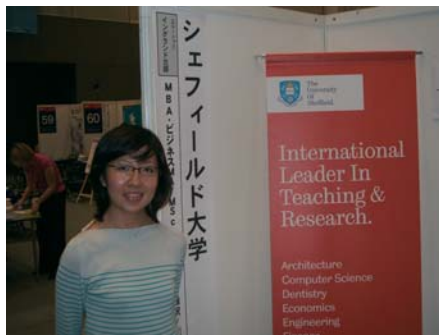
*China: In the Kingdom of the Dragon* (published by White Star, 2005) – a mix of the ancient and the futuristic, the ethereal and the everyday, the natural and the architectural, with photographs supported by writings on the subjects.

*Liu Zheng: The Chinese* (published by Steidl Verlag, 2004) – a dark vision of China with images ranging from coal miners to homeless children, transvestite performers to Buddhist monks, prison inmates to the dead and dying.

*Spectacular China* (published by Hugh Lauter Levin Associates, 1997) – 180 colour plates, some folding out to nearly four feet wide, give an idea of the scale and magnificence of China's landscape, and historical and cultural treasures.

# Promoting Sheffield in Japan

*After graduation, Satsuki Fujii (BA in Chinese Studies, 2001) returned to Japan and now provides guidance and advice to students considering studying in the UK.*



*Satsuki Fujii in front of the University of Sheffield's booth at a recent British Council education fair in Tokyo.*

Doing a degree at Sheffield had a massive impact on my life and I am sure that my career would not have followed the path it has if I had not chosen Chinese Studies at SEAS. I decided to study Chinese based on the School's good reputation and was attracted by the flexibility offered on the course as well as the friendly and international surroundings. The course itself was very demanding throughout the four years. However, the consistent support of teachers and classmates and the well-structured and practical teaching methods enabled me to meet these challenges and I

graduated feeling confident in my own abilities and knowledge.

After being awarded my bachelor's degree, I returned to Tokyo and began work at a company manufacturing valves used in a wide range of industries including the semiconductor sector. I had to deal with customers mainly from Taiwan and mainland China and made frequent business trips there. Thanks to my studies at Sheffield, I was the first employee to possess fluency in Chinese as well as Japanese and English, and so I was given several opportunities to accompany the company's president on trips to Shanghai and work as an interpreter at top executive meetings in Taipei. I would never have been given these opportunities without my speaking ability in Chinese.

After acquiring three years of work experience, I made a career move and joined the British Education Office (BEO, more information can be found at <http://www.beo.jp>). We work in collaboration with the

international offices of each UK academic institution and I am responsible for developing and supporting academic links and exchanges between Japanese and UK institutions. The University of Sheffield is one of the most popular destinations for Japanese students and my degree course experience has given me an obvious advantage in this area. I have been working at the BEO for about two years now and I thoroughly enjoy all aspects of the job, especially the environment and the variety of people I encounter. You really need to be dedicated to succeed at this job and currently I could not be happier doing what I do now.

Studying at Sheffield gave me the exposure I needed and the chance to learn in a multicultural environment. It made a deep and lasting impression on me and equipped me with the experience and knowledge upon which I have been able to draw readily throughout my working life here in Tokyo.

## Return to Nagoya

George Kane (BA in Japanese Studies, 2006) recently returned to Nagoya University in Japan where he spent a year studying on the Nagoya University Programme for Academic Exchange (NUPACE) as part of his undergraduate degree at SEAS. George was invited to attend a reunion to celebrate the tenth anniversary of NUPACE.

However it was not just a reunion, but also an opportunity to review foreign exchange programmes as a whole and evaluate what students had gained out of participating in NUPACE. George participated in

his capacity as a NUPACE fellow to relate his own experience of being on the programme and assess what value it had added to his time in Japan.

George spoke specifically about how the experience had shaped his perceptions of Japan and what he had learned about how people from other countries perceive the UK. George believes that, "my year abroad has definitely changed my life and I am very grateful to all the staff at SEAS who encouraged me to go. I managed to build wonderful relationships with both students and staff there

and made contacts that will help in my future career."

*George Kane talks about his experience of studying in Japan.*





# Screening disability in China

*Dr Sarah Dauncey, lecturer in Chinese society and Chinese-English translation, has opened up a new field of research into the portrayal of disability in Chinese film.*

Hollywood's fascination with disability goes back to its very earliest days. From *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1923), through *My Left Foot* (1989), to the controversial Special Olympics comedy *The Ringer* (2005), images of impairment, positive and negative, have regularly appeared in its films. But what of Chinese film? With a disabled population currently estimated at 60 million (5 per cent of the population) one might assume that China, too, would have a similar tradition.

Yet, my recent research has revealed a cinematic history punctuated by distinct periods of disinterest and interest in disability. Although the early part of the last century in China saw the appearance of a handful of films featuring disability, following the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 there was an absence of any substantial reference to people with impairments. This apparent disinterest lasted right up to the end of the Cultural Revolution when films once more began to focus on this topic at an ever increasing rate.

The near absence of disability portrayal during the Mao era can be explained by the increasing politicization of film that narrowed the possibilities for filmmakers. The primacy of collective goals over individual concerns combined with an unswerving focus on strong revolutionary heroes reduced the need for portrayals of disability in any way, shape or form. All visual images

had to remain paradigms of socialist ideals of the healthy body – heroic characters literally had to look good, physically and mentally – and so impairment was rarely seen in film.

By contrast, the death of Mao in 1976 saw new directions in political thinking actively promote the inclusion of disability. The vanguard of this new trend was Xie Jin who, with a deaf-mute teenager as the lead in his film *Youth* (1977), shifted attention from the able-bodied revolutionary of old to a new type of heroine. As the father of two learning-impaired children himself, his cinematic and private interests coincide more closely in *Venus* (1991), in which an eight-year-old child with learning difficulties finds inspiration at a special school.

By this time, a decade of international disability activism had encouraged the government to consider disability seriously. In an attempt to enhance perceptions of China's level of civilization, films such as *Venus* were promoted for their positive treatments of disability. Wang Xingdong's *Probation within the Village* (1994), in which a disgraced official redeems himself through service in a mute community, and Chen Guoxing's *Colours of the Blind* (1997), a film that highlights disabled sporting achievement, were among those singled out for awards.

Whilst some directors benefited domestically from enhanced publicity, other directors found

that disability could increase success internationally. Two films – *Happy Times* (Zhang Yimou) and *Breaking the Silence* (Sun Zhou) – both released in 2000 made substantial reference to disability, although this was not the original intention in either case. Both directors admit that the disabled leads (a visually-impaired girl and a hearing-impaired boy respectively) were added to provide “extra interest” and proved to be successful.

Over thirty films featuring disability have been produced by Chinese filmmakers since 1977. And whilst many of them might incur the wrath of disability activists for their sometimes stereotypical portraits of people with impairments, the fact that these films are being produced at all indicates a shift in attitudes. Like Hollywood, it will take time for more nuanced portrayals to appear and, who knows, perhaps China too will reach the stage where disabled people can have the last laugh with their very own *The Ringer*.

*Sun Liying (played by Gong Li) attempts in vain to get her hearing-impaired son accepted into a mainstream school in Breaking the Silence.*



# Fifteen years of collaboration between Sheffield and Routledge



*The series of books published by Routledge in association with the Centre for Japanese Studies in SEAS now stands at over thirty volumes. Professor Glenn D. Hook, editor of the series, reflects on the fifteen-year history of the series and looks ahead to its future.*

The history of the Sheffield Centre for Japanese Studies/Routledge series goes back to the late 1980s and to discussions I had at the time with Peter Sowden, a Routledge publisher, shortly after I took up my post at Sheffield. The series was launched with the aim of enhancing the research profile of Japanese studies in the UK in the context of a lack of scholarly works on Japan in the English-speaking world. Although Japanese Studies is in a much healthier state today, the purpose of the series remains the same as when it was launched: to make available original research on a wide range of subjects dealing with Japan and provide introductory overviews of key topics in Japanese Studies.

The first book, *The Internationalization of Japan*, appeared in 1992 and a total of thirty-four volumes have been published in the meantime, with two more planned for publication early in 2007. The editorial policy has been based upon publishing upcoming, as well as established, scholars and the emphasis has overwhelmingly been placed on books that present original research in the social sciences, although the recently published *Representing the Other in Modern Japanese Literature* provides a volume where all the chapters are written by specialists in the humanities. In addition, *Japan's International Relations: Politics, Economics and Security* is a unique example of considerable original research presented in the form of an introductory textbook. It has

proved very popular and is now in its second edition.

The series is highly responsive to the needs of its readers. Recently a meeting was held between UK and Japanese research funding bodies, the British Association for Japanese Studies (BAJS), and other interested parties to identify important gaps in the literature on Japanese Studies. It was felt that these three subjects were the "other" in Japanese literature, modern and contemporary nationalism, and governance in Japan. With the support of a number of generous sponsors, the following books were published in the series: *Representing the Other in Modern Japanese Literature: a critical approach*, edited by Rachael Hutchinson and Mark Williams; *Nationalisms in Japan*, edited by Naoko Shimazu; and *Contested Governance in Japan: sites and issues*, edited by myself. A joint book launch at the Daiwa Anglo-

Japanese Foundation was held on 26 September 2006 and provided the editors with an opportunity to thank the sponsors and contributors as well as to introduce the three works to a wide audience.

The future of the series seems secure, despite the up and downs of the publishing trade. The volumes in the series have been well received and as Professor T. J. Pempel, the Director of the Institute of East Asian Studies at the University of California (Berkeley), says, "the partnership between Sheffield and Routledge has given the field of Japanese Studies an ongoing stream of excellent publications on contemporary Japan. Scholars worldwide have benefited greatly."

Anyone interested in submitting a proposal for consideration should, in the first instance, contact Ms Stephanie Rogers at Routledge: Stephanie.Rogers@tandf.co.uk.



*The Sheffield Centre for Japanese Studies/Routledge series stands at almost forty volumes.*

# Beijing arts scene



*After graduation, Claudia Albertini (MA in Advanced Chinese Studies, 2003-4) headed to Beijing and began work at 798 Space, the leading venue for the contemporary arts in China.*

At the end of the 1980s, the Dashanzi district in the north-east suburbs of Beijing was nothing more spectacular than a vast expanse of flatland covered by semi-modern buildings. It appeared to be just one more victim of the rapid processes of urbanization that went hand in hand with China's incredible economic growth. Only the so-called "Factory 798", a massive and derelict industrial complex, appeared to stand out in relief. It was the biggest high-technology plant in China, 620 square metres of factory built in the Bauhaus-style in the 1950s with the support of the East German government. The immediate vicinity was empty except for the open countryside and the tree-lined motorways that led to the airport.

This hardly seemed a likely site for the development of an artistic community. But in the early 1990s some of Beijing's avant-garde artists started moving to the factory, in their search for cheap accommodation, after they were evicted from the north-western

outskirts of the city where they had settled a decade or so earlier.

Since that time, 798 Space has become a vibrant cradle for contemporary Chinese artistic expression. It provides a central meeting point for contemporary artists where their ideas can grow and be put into form. Galleries have steadily emerged within the space provided and created a new market in contemporary Chinese art. Cafés and restaurants have also been opened to provide alternative venues to what is on offer elsewhere in the city. Today, 798 Space represents a new factory of sorts. It is here that original ideas can be realized in a variety of forms: electronically, on canvas or in a dark room. These works have commanded considerable attention and elicited various emotions. Visitors look around with extreme curiosity, collectors take the opportunity to buy up pieces from this new period in the history of the Chinese art scene, and artists can get their faces on the cover of international art magazines.

Once grey and oppressive, Dashanzi has now become colourful. The feeling of abandonment and the derelict buildings are now things of the past and the current atmosphere seems to embrace the audience in a shared space where they can interact freely. In a sense, 798 Space is a machine producing something that until now had been considered pointless in China's rapidly developing market economy but whose importance is beginning to be recognized. From exhibitions to art festivals, performances to press conferences – the factory is on everybody's lips, creating a vibrant and new artistic environment and fostering discussion of what Beijing tells us about its shapes and forms, its spaces and its people. It is here at 798 Space that the old, present and future Beijing meet.

For more information on 798 Space, please visit <http://www.798space.com>

*The Exhibition Hall at 798 Space (photographs courtesy of 798 Space).*



# Office angels

*To many students and visitors they are the face of the School. To the staff they provide the support without which they could not do their jobs. Susie Tranter introduces the School's secretaries.*

Let me introduce you to the SEAS Office team. We are, in alphabetical order and without reference to sensitive details such as age and rank, Jenny, Lisa, Lynne and myself, Susie. We can usually be found hard at work in our reasonably spacious and busy office on floor five of the Arts Tower – the local landmark and eighteen-storey example of 1960s architecture that, it is said, boasts one of the largest cyclic elevators, otherwise known as a “paternoster”, in Europe.

We like to think that we are the “heart” of the department although, in reality, we are all at the mercy of the networked printer/copier – a highly sensitive piece of technology with an uncanny ability to break down at the most inappropriate of moments. Apart from the usual secretarial matters, we deal with all manner of inquiries during the working day and are the first port of call for students, visitors and

academics alike. In fact, try as you might, you would be hard-pushed to avoid coming into contact with us at some point. If and when you do, I can assure you that we will try our best to offer assistance - or even a shoulder to cry on, should the need arise!

A lot of what we do revolves around our students and their courses and there are quite a variety of degree combinations to choose from, especially at undergraduate level. It is wonderful to be able to follow a student's progress from the time they become a member of the department to his/her graduation. We process hundreds of undergraduate and taught postgraduate application forms during the year and organize Open Days and visits, refreshments and so on. Our office is the place where the all-important preparation of examination papers is coordinated, students submit their essays, module marks are collated, student

records are maintained and the timetable is prepared and adjusted (then re-adjusted). The departmental finances and individual budgets are kept in check by Lisa's watchful and efficient eye. And if you ever find the reception desk covered in cakes and other goodies, it is not our lunch just one of our occasional efforts to raise funds for some deserving charity.

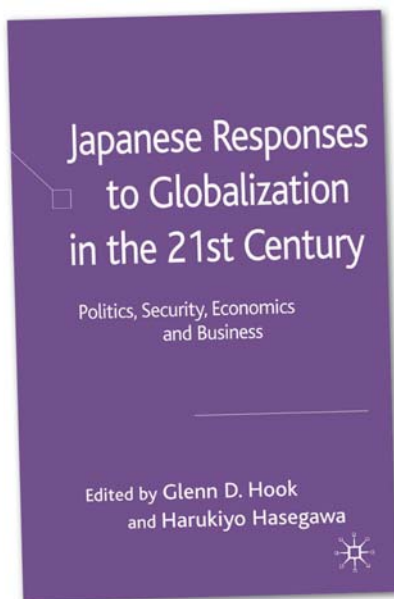
We also deal with the outside world in a variety of ways. Whenever somewhere in East Asia crops up in the news (for example it was recently North Korea's nuclear tests), we receive calls from all the major media outlets requesting a comment from an academic. And then there are the more unusual requests from the public. I remember a telephone call from an elderly gentleman who was stuck on two particular crossword clues: a Japanese sliding paper screen, five letters... *shōji*; and an oblong Japanese coin with a hole in the centre, four letters... *ōban*. And then there was the lady whose cat called “Susie” (a complete coincidence, I assure you) had made a mess of her favourite Japanese textile and she was desperate for a translation of the washing instructions! Talking of textiles, when you next come into the main office do not miss the kimono of the month decorating the office wall.

Oh, and finally, who are the people responsible for sending out this newsletter when it is issued? You guessed it!



*The SEAS Office team (from left to right):  
Lisa Knowles, Susie Tranter, Lynne Whydle and  
Jenny Leech.*

# Three new books by SEAS staff



## *Japanese Responses to Globalization: politics, security, economics and business*

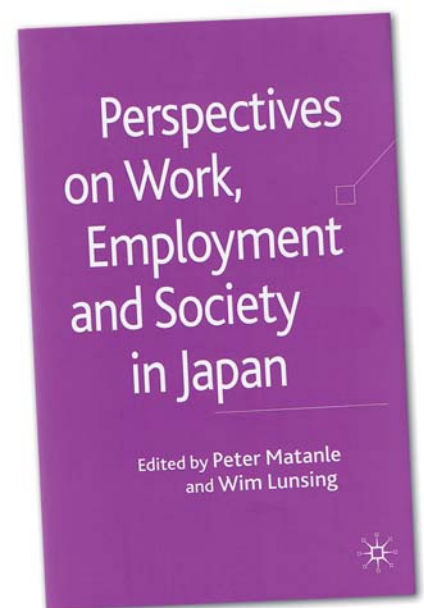
Edited by Glenn D. Hook and Harukiyo Hasegawa  
Palgrave Macmillan, 2006

This edited book finds its origins in papers first presented at the fortieth anniversary conference of the Centre for Japanese Studies at the University of Sheffield in 2002 (see number 7 of EastAsia@Sheffield). It presents the current thinking of leading Japanese researchers on Japan's responses to globalization in the fields of politics, security, economics and business. The first part on politics and security examines topics such as the impact of globalization on domestic politics, the response to the post-9/11 order, and the creation of security communities in East Asia. The second part on economics and business takes up the corporate response to globalization, the rise of China and the government's response to institutions like the World Bank. In all, Professor Glenn D. Hook believes that "*Japanese Responses to Globalization* offers up-to-date and comprehensive analysis of how the Japanese government, corporations and people are taking up the challenge of globalization."

## *The Group of 7/8*

Hugo Dobson  
Routledge, 2007

Part of Routledge's leading "Global Institutions Series" and written in the aftermath of the Gleneagles Summit of 2005, this book is a highly accessible, up-to-date introduction to the history, present and future of the Group of 7/8. Dr Hugo Dobson examines this unique forum and the role it plays in global governance by emphasizing its relationship to the more formal and truly institutionalized mechanisms of global governance: the United Nations, World Bank and so on. Divided into six informative chapters, this volume provides the reader with a single and concise point-of-entry to this often overlooked subject. *The Group of 7/8* is a core introductory guide and an essential purchase for students in the field of international relations. Subjects of interest to students of East Asian politics in particular include Japan's role as a core member of the G8 and China's possible inclusion in the future.



## *Perspectives on Work, Employment and Society in Japan*

Edited by Peter Matanle and Wim Lunsing  
Palgrave Macmillan, 2006

This edited book presents a range of different perspectives on how work and employment are developing in a rapidly changing contemporary Japan. The contributing authors show both how the Japanese employment system is evolving as well as how the meanings that individual Japanese attach to their work and employment are developing. It is essential reading for anyone with an interest in work and employment in Japan, from scholars and specialists in human resource management, to economists, sociologists and anthropologists. Dr Peter Matanle hopes that "this book will help scholars and students in the sociology of work to understand more deeply the multi-layered complexity of working in Japan today."

# 2006 graduates and prize-winners



Professor Tim Wright (centre), Chair of the School of East Asian Studies, with Lisa Nye (right), who graduated with a first-class honours degree in East Asian Studies and was awarded the R. B. Sloss Prize, and Lars Layfield (left), who also gained a first-class honours degree in Japanese Studies and was awarded the Margaret Daniels prize.

SEAS was delighted to see twenty-seven of its students graduate at a ceremony held on 21 July 2006.

In East Asian Studies, Lisa Nye was awarded both a first-class honours degree and the R. B. Sloss Prize for her performance. Professor Tim Wright, Chair of the School of East Asian Studies, commented that, "Lisa is an outstanding winner of the R. B. Sloss Prize, with excellent marks in a wide range of modules. As a marker of her undergraduate dissertation I can say it was the best and most theoretically sophisticated I have seen at Sheffield." Lisa has been selected as one of the first White Rose Scholarship students (see front page).

In Japanese Studies, Lars Layfield also gained a first-class honours degree and was awarded the Margaret Daniels Prize. Professor Wright noted that, "Lars Layfield joins a long list of top-ranking winners of the Margaret Daniels Prize. He had excellent marks especially in the language modules. On top of all that he is a national champion in ice dancing!" SEAS wishes its graduates every success in their chosen careers.

## 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](mailto:seas@sheffield.ac.uk), or see the School's webpages: <http://www.shef.ac.uk/seas>

### BA degrees

Most degrees involve four years of study. Those marked with an asterisk take three years

#### Single honours

Chinese Studies  
Japanese Studies  
Korean Studies  
East Asian Studies\*

#### Dual honours

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

### Postgraduate taught degrees

#### In-house

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MSc/Diploma/Certificate in Chinese Business and International Relations  
MSc/Diploma/Certificate in Chinese Language, Business and International Relations  
MA/Diploma/Certificate in Japanese Studies  
MA/Diploma/Certificate in Advanced Japanese Studies  
MA/Diploma/Certificate in Modern Korean Studies  
MSc/Diploma/Certificate in East Asian Political Economy  
MSc/Diploma/Certificate in East Asian Business

#### Distance learning

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MA in Advanced Japanese Studies  
MSc in Chinese Business and International Relations  
MSc/Diploma in Chinese Language, Business and International Relations

### Postgraduate research degrees

PhD supervision in a wide range of subject areas on China, Japan, Korea and intra-regional studies

## EASTASIA@SHEFFIELD

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