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Korean Studies experts from across the globe come to Sheffield

The School of East Asian Studies at the University of Sheffield recently hosted the largest Korean Studies conference of its kind in the world.

James Grayson, Professor of Korean Studies, welcomed the Association for Korean Studies in Europe (AKSE) to Sheffield for its biennial meeting in July. AKSE is the largest regular gathering of researchers who meet to discuss the politics, society, culture and history of Korea. Hosting the meeting at the University of Sheffield was especially significant because 2005 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of Korean Studies in the School of East Asian Studies. The scale of the conference was also significant as it was the largest AKSE conference since the association was established in 1977. The conference was funded substantially by the Korea Research Foundation of South Korea and formally opened by the Lord Mayor of Sheffield, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, and the President of the Korea Research Foundation. Over 160 people participated in the five-day conference.

The keynote address was given by Professor Roger Janelli of the University of Indiana who spoke about the use of the internet in the study of contemporary Korean society. Papers were presented on a range of subjects such as medieval, pre-modern and modern history, to modern literature, historical linguistics, modern art and music. Specific panels addressed themes such as "The Korean

diaspora", "North Korea in transition", "Cityscapes, city life", "A question of identity", and "The uses of computer mapping in historical geography." A number of special panels were also organised including one at which rare slides of a Russian expedition to North Korea in the late nineteenth century were shown, and another at which unique historical documents held at the St Petersburg State University were presented.

In addition to the European delegates, participants also came from North America, Japan, Taiwan, and both North and South Korea. Notable amongst these participants were the five delegates from the Academy of Social Sciences in Pyongyang who sparked lively debate.

When it was founded in 1977 in the midst of the Cold War, AKSE acted as a bridge between eastern and western Europe by providing an opportunity and venue for scholars of Korean Studies to meet without hindrance. This year's conference became a different kind of bridge, a bridge which enabled scholars from the two parts of Korea to meet and discuss in a non-political and academic environment. One memorable example of this was the discussions held outside the formal sessions between the director of the South Korean National Institute for Historical Research and historians from the North Korean Academy of Social Sciences.



From left to right: Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Lady Mayoress and Lord Mayor of Sheffield, Vice Chancellor of the University of Sheffield Bob Boucher and Professor James Grayson (Photograph by Ian M Spooner)

Chinese Studies students compete for artistic and linguistic glory



Winners from left to right: Helen Acton (fourth year Chinese Studies), Alin Petratou (third year Chinese & Business Studies), Jodie Gardiner (first year Chinese Studies) and Anne Low (MSc Chinese language, business and international relations)

Two competitions designed to enhance students' knowledge of Chinese language and culture were held in May. With the kind assistance of the Chinese Ministry of Education and the Consulate General of the PRC in Manchester, the "Chinese Translation Bee" and the "China in Photographs" competitions attracted the participation of over fifty students.

For the "Chinese Translation Bee", a knock-out style competition designed to prepare students for the HSK Chinese Proficiency Test, students

were divided into four groups according to their Chinese ability and asked to translate Chinese words of increasing difficulty into English. Judges were particularly impressed by the performances of the final year students in the advanced group who were challenged with terms such as "malnutrition", "political extremism", "redundancy" and "cutting-edge technology".

In contrast, the "China in Photographs" competition encouraged the students to develop their artistic side and

outstanding submissions were received in the five categories: landscape, famous sites, people, customs and studying Chinese. "Mongolian nomad girl" by Noemie Bourdin, an Erasmus student from Bordeaux who was spending a year studying Chinese in Sheffield, was voted unanimously "Best in show" for its photographic quality, stunning composition and reflection of the diversity of the Chinese people.



"Mongolian nomad girl" by Noemie Bourdin

2005 graduates and prize-winners

SEAS was delighted to see thirty-one of its students graduate at a ceremony held on 22 July. In Chinese Studies, Thomas Saunders was awarded both a first-class degree and the Robert Sloss Prize for his performance. Professor Tim Wright, Chair of the School of East Asian Studies, described him as "an absolutely outstanding student of the Chinese language." During his time at SEAS, Thomas won the "Chinese bridge" language proficiency competition.

In Japanese Studies, Ioannis Gaitanidis also gained a first-class honours degree and was awarded the Margaret Daniels Prize. Ioannis had originally come to Sheffield to study medicine but soon changed to Japanese Studies. At the same ceremony, Darren-Jon Ashmore was awarded a PhD degree for his thesis on the revival of non-elite Japanese puppet theatre. SEAS wishes its

graduates every success in their chosen career paths.



Professor Tim Wright, Chair of the School of East Asian Studies, with Thomas Saunders, who graduated with a first-class honours degree in Chinese Studies and was awarded the Robert Sloss Prize

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.

Take a look around SEAS...

Andy Staples, Lecturer in Japanese Studies and Admissions Tutor, is in charge of organizing undergraduate SEAS open days that attract ever-increasing numbers.

Open Days are a key component of the departmental admissions process and provide an opportunity for prospective students and, in many cases, their parents to come and learn more about the courses on offer at SEAS, the University in general and life as a student in Sheffield. All UCAS applicants receiving an offer of a place at SEAS are invited to attend an Open Day at one of our regular events held throughout the year between October and March. A high percentage of those attending go on to make Sheffield their firm choice, suggesting that attendees like what they see when they get here. So what takes place during an Open Day and why should applicants attend?

Given that being a student in Sheffield is not just about studying for a degree, attendees are advised to arrive at the University in the morning to allow for guided tours of a hall of residence and the Students' Union building. The SEAS event usually commences at 2pm and refreshments are available from about 1:30pm, allowing attendees an opportunity to take in our displays, chat with the Admissions Tutor and sample Chinese tea and Japanese snacks. The Admissions Tutor officially welcomes attendees and introduces the Head of Department who offers an introduction to the department, its history, aims and ethos. A twenty-minute DVD drawing on interviews with existing students regarding their experiences at the University follows.

To supplement the morning tour of accommodation facilities, a member of staff from Housing Services is then on hand to offer advice and field questions about applying for accommodation at the



Andy Staples with a visitor to the University at the most recent SEAS open day

University. At around 3pm, attendees then split up into subject groups (Chinese, Japanese, Korean and East Asian Studies) for a presentation by degree tutors. This is a key opportunity to quiz tutors on language acquisition, the range of modules available, the year abroad component of the degree and virtually anything else that springs to mind. Finally, and perhaps one of the most well received aspects of the Open Day, there is a chance to meet with current students who are on hand to answer questions about the courses, learning an East Asian language, living in Sheffield and, for those pursuing courses with the year abroad requirement, the experience of living and studying in an East Asian country.

Regular feedback confirms that attendees depart with a sound knowledge of the department, the degrees and the University but, if

any further questions should arise, applicants are encouraged to contact the Admissions Team directly (contact details below). Open Days, then, are important not only for the department, as they allow us to communicate and interact with prospective students, but also for the applicants themselves. Attending an Open Day gives prospective students a real insight into SEAS degrees and the University and helps students make informed choices about their undergraduate career.

For further information on SEAS Open Days including dates for the current academic year, please contact Lynne Whydle on 0114 222 8400 or visit our webpage at: <http://www.seas.ac.uk/Undergraduate/OpenDays.shtml>

New directions in research – Japanese pottery



Whilst on special study leave in Japan from 2003 to 2005, Dr Peter Matanle, Lecturer in Japanese Studies, has been broadening his research interests.

Since my research has hitherto concerned the so-called Japanese salaryman, I wanted to take the opportunity to research the lives of some people who, despite the normative tendency among Japanese to seek membership of large groups in urban settings, have sought a rather solitary existence as ceramic artists on remote and inhospitable Sado Island, which lies approximately 25 kms off the coast of Niigata in the Japan Sea. Among the artists I have interviewed is Ito Sekisui, who is the fourteenth generation of his family to work the ferrous Mumyoi clay that originates in the Sado gold mountain, and the fifth generation ceramic artist.

Possessing a huge gold ore deposit, Sado was the principal source of wealth for the Tokugawa regime. The first generation of Ito's family was brought from what is now Ishikawa prefecture to manufacture earthen ventilation pipes for the mineworkers out of the mine's clay detritus. When gold production more or less ceased during the Meiji period, Ito's ancestors adapted to their new circumstances and continued to use the clay, this time in the production of roof tiles and bricks for the burgeoning construction industry.

Just as with the gold mine, for a time fortunes were to be made in this industry but, with the advent of industrialized mass production of roof tiles and the outlawing of the use of bricks for construction after the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, the family was once more forced to adapt. This time Ito's great-great-grandfather, the first to use the name Sekisui, which combines the characters for "red" and "water" to evoke the native Mumyoi clay, turned to making ceramic household wares as well as producing work of a more artistic nature. Five generations later the present Ito

Sekisui is becoming a figure of national and international importance in the world of ceramic arts.

Ito has managed to continue in his ancestors' footsteps of combining a favourable inheritance, at least in terms of the skills necessary to continue as a local independent artisan, with a capacity for adaptation to external circumstances and a talent for creative innovation. So successful has he been that in 2003, he was appointed by the Japanese government as a "National Living Treasure", in recognition of his development and refinement of two new techniques for using the Mumyoi clay, neither of which require decorative glazes to achieve their effects.

The first, *yohen*, is a method of directing naked flame at the pots during firing to create a patterned contrast between the bright red Mumyoi bisque and the dark grey and black of the burnt surfaces. Not being able to predict with any certainty how the pot will appear out of the kiln, this process is prone to error except in the most experienced hands.

The second method is *neriage* and, if not handled properly, is prone to cracking during firing. In this technique, the clay is first chemically treated to remove the red ferrous compounds and is layered and then rolled into long sausage-shaped strands that, in their internal composition, resemble sticks of seaside rock. The strands are then sliced and arranged to achieve a variety of different patterns. Most commonly Ito produces large plates and vases with designs of yellow and red roses.

Ito's work can be found in the most famous museums and galleries in Japan as well as internationally, such as at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. He has exhibited all over the world and yet, even as the salons of Tokyo and beyond beckon, he is determined to remain in his home village of Aikawa. In this way he aims to contribute something of himself in trying to stem the tide of life away from Sado towards Niigata City, Tokyo and the Pacific coast. Whether he is successful in this endeavour remains to be seen, but his work is certainly receiving a great deal of attention.



Two examples of Ito's work (*yohen* on the left and *neriage* on the right)

White Rose East Asia Institute

SEAS has joined forces with the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Leeds to create the White Rose East Asia Institute, a new focus for collaboration in East Asian Studies under the umbrella of the White Rose University Consortium. Julian White, the Chief Executive of "White Rose", a consortium of Leeds, Sheffield and York Universities, has given the go-ahead for a development expected to place the partnership, which is supported by the University of York, at the very forefront of research excellence in East Asian studies.

The Institute's mission, which is "to develop a global centre of excellence for research and training on China and Japan", will be achieved through a wide range of collaborative activities, especially research and

postgraduate training. To this end, the Institute aims "to utilise in-house, internet technology and other media as means to achieve a critical mass of research and training activity in both physical and electronic space in order to provide the best possible learning environment for prospective students in East Asian studies."

Professor Bob Boucher, Vice Chancellor of the University of Sheffield and Chair of the White Rose Executive Board, stated: "The White Rose University Consortium – involving Leeds, Sheffield and York – is widely acknowledged to be the most successful of its kind in the UK. Its reputation is built on a series of viable partnerships between centres of excellence in the constituent universities, of which the Institute of East Asia Studies is the latest example. I am sure that the new Institute will further enhance the high standing of the Consortium, both in this country and overseas, and bring great credit to those working in this important area of activity."



Sheffield and Leeds cooperate in video seminar

Professor Glenn Hook of SEAS (left) and Dr Caroline Rose of the Department of East Asian Studies at Leeds University took part in the second WUN Video Seminar on Critical Debates on China in the World by presenting a seminar on Sino-Japanese Relations: Regional Setting and Contemporary Conflicts on 26 October. The seminar was chaired by Dr Flemming Christiansen from Leeds and is part of the two universities' ongoing collaboration in the Worldwide University Network (WUN), an international alliance of leading higher education institutions.

The purpose of the seminar was to promote dialogue between graduate students from the two departments and other alliance partners in WUN with an interest in East Asia. Professor Hook began the seminar by introducing the regional setting for Sino-Japanese conflict, which drew attention to how these relations are the product of the structural constraints and opportunities that shape the way political actors pursue their interests. By tracing the changing structure of the international and regional orders in the postwar era, the first part of the seminar showed how Japanese policymakers have been able to take advantage of the transformation in international structures, as seen in the

strengthening of economic links in the wake of the Cold War's ending, whilst still being constrained by a set of domestic factors that have limited their ability to deal fully with the question of war responsibility.

As Dr Rose made clear in the second part of the seminar, this has exerted a profound influence on the nature of Sino-Japanese relations. Whether in terms of problems relating to history, as with the ongoing conflict over prime ministerial visits to Yasukuni Shrine, where the spirits of Japanese war criminals are enshrined; the periodic eruption of conflict over the content of government-approved school textbooks, which are seen by

Japan's neighbours to whitewash the war and the atrocities committed by the Japanese military; or the escalation of bilateral conflict to embrace compensation claims for former forced labourers and military sex slaves, the bilateral relationship remains constrained by the legacy of the war. In this situation, the two speakers agreed on the need to move forward with reconciliation between the two countries.

The discussion was lively and showed how modern technology can be used to create a stimulating learning environment for students in the WUN alliance learning about East Asia.

Japan Society goes from strength to strength

Sheffield has an active and dynamic Japan Society. Its President, Will Christophers, explains what it gets up to and why it has won a number of awards recently.

The Japan Society in its current form was set up in 2002 for the benefit of Japanese students at Sheffield University and any other students with an interest in Japan. This means that, unlike most international societies, our members come from many different countries rather than being dominated by any one nationality. In our first year, the Society won the Best New Society Award, and in 2004 we won the title of Best Society of the Year. Being such a young society we were very honoured to have achieved this status, and are delighted that 2005 has seen our success continue with a record membership of over 200.

Last year we held many events, such as karaoke nights, tandem learning, club nights, Japanese film showings, an ice skating trip, a summer BBQ, bowling trips, a Japan Day, an Asian ball, and a memorable Christmas party. We also contributed to the Union's international food evening (at which our sushi proved to be a big hit) and the international cultural evening, for which we performed a samurai version of Romeo and Juliet (see photo).



One of our most popular events was tandem learning, where we provide a place for Japanese students to meet English-speaking students who want to learn Japanese.

The Japan Society Football Club was also at the top of the league, winning the Asian cup for the second consecutive year with no goals conceded (see photo). This year the Japan Society hopes to build on last year's experience by

organizing many more events. One event in particular looks to be very exciting. With the support of the Japanese Embassy, we will be bringing all of the UK Japan Societies together in one huge Japan Day on 12 February 2006 entitled "Breaking the Barriers". We hope to further improve Japan's image and bring Japanese culture to the UK, in addition to raising money for both Japanese and English charities.

As the main aim of the Committee and members of the Society is to bring people together to enjoy themselves, it is perhaps for that reason that we won the Society of the Year Award. However, we must constantly be aware of how best to continue so that the momentum lasts for years to come. As long as there are people who love or have an interest in Japan, I believe that the Society can continue. Therefore, if you are reading this and feel you wish to be part of it, come along – we will welcome your input.



The Japan Society's invincible football team (left) and recent performance of Romeo and Juliet (above)

Visiting researchers at SEAS

A number of scholars from across the world come to SEAS to conduct research. In the summer of 2005, SEAS was pleased to welcome Fabiana Coltro and Ma Xiaohua.



Fabiana Coltro

(PhD student at Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

My research focuses upon Japan's role in peacekeeping operations (PKOs). Japan's membership of the United Nations in 1956 was neither the first nor the last step toward its complete adherence to international law, but it was the first of the two most important steps in this direction. This is because the UN Charter is considered the core text of international law that every state

promises to respect upon membership of the organization. The core objective of the Charter is the maintenance of international peace and security, and this aim is embodied by PKOs, never mentioned in the Charter, but today unanimously recognized as customary international law.

Participation in PKOs was the second important step made by Japan in 1992 towards its complete rehabilitation into the international community. The growth of Japan's participation in peacekeeping symbolizes the struggle towards becoming a "normal state" in the international community, and adhering completely to international law without breaking its Constitution.

Japan's difficult path towards participation in PKOs began even before her membership of the UN, but it was never embodied in any

legal reform. Every change was rendered through a different reading of the Constitution, rather than the UN Charter and traditional international law. It was only in 1992 that Japan drafted a law concerning PKOs after much soul-searching. This new law permitted Japanese participation in PKOs, but also narrowed the activities that Japanese blue berets could perform.

This is the core of my research – understanding Japanese participation and growth in PKOs through three legal texts and their historical interpretations: the UN Charter, the Japanese Constitution and the PKO Law. The latter was reformed in 2001, unfreezing many previously restricted core activities, but this is not the end of Japan's evolving participation in PKOs and role in the UN as they are also bound to the revision of the Constitution and Article 9, in addition to reform of the UN Charter.



Ma Xiaohua

(Associate Professor in the Faculty of International Studies, Osaka University of Education, Japan)

How war has been remembered collectively in Japan and the UK is the main concern of my research. Museums in Britain are both diverse in form and well-established as public institutions. War created the British Empire as well as the most important war museum in Europe, the Imperial War Museum, which was

originally constructed in 1917 and emphasizes how global conflicts bring mass death and destruction as well as Britain's role in the world wars. In contrast, the exhibits in the National War Museum of Scotland stress Scotland's role in the building of the Empire, particularly struggle and hardship in World War II in Southeast Asia. It is likely that war museums which have asked visitors to confront not just the nature of war but more complicated questions of responsibility and reparations are established away from the capital.

A similar phenomenon can be seen in Japan as well. Japan was involved in numerous wars in the last century but it is the only country where a "war" museum is absent. Certainly Japan's oldest museum, *Yushukan*, built in 1882 at Yasukuni Shrine as the first public institution to preserve weaponry and soldiers' relics, has strong connections with war. Over one hundred "peace" museums were

constructed throughout Japan in the last five decades, originally starting with the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum in 1955 shortly after the end of the American Occupation.

War museums that see their role as constructing an objective, rather than commemorative, history begin with a different set of assumptions. How Japan's actions in Asia are dealt with is thus an important and closely watched element in any public museum. *Showakan*, the first National memorial museum to commemorate Japanese wartime suffering opened in 1999, has remained in dispute today and is seen as symbolic of Japan's unwillingness to confront its past. How we teach World War II to the younger generation and whether history can be shared or not in an era of economic globalization is certainly a new challenge for historians.

SEAS graduates re

Since graduation, Mark Boyle and Adrian Thomas (MA in Advanced Japanese Studies) have worked for the *Hokkaido Shimbun* as London Bureau Correspondent in March this year, whereas Adrian began his career in journalism. It was they who took them both to Scotland when the G8 summit was held in Gleneagles.

Roving reporter

Mark Boyle

I had never planned to spend my 27th birthday in the Scottish countryside with a middle-aged Japanese man, but the G8 summit was looming and the demands of a newspaper's deadlines are unforgiving. My boss and I had been sent to cover the build-up to the summit, to be held the following month at the showpiece Gleneagles Hotel, for our paper, the *Hokkaido Shimbun*.

The largest daily newspaper in the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido (and, thanks to the voracious appetite of the Japanese for newsprint, the 18th most widely-read newspaper on the planet) the *Hokkaido Shimbun* was particularly interested in Scotland's experience of the summit as the island is one of the candidates for the privilege of hosting the G8 in 2008. Our job was to see how the people of Scotland felt about the G8 landing in their backyard.

In the sleepy town of Auchterarder, which borders the Gleneagles Hotel, it swiftly became clear that enthusiasm for the impending diplomatic circus was thin on the ground. After Genoa and Seattle, G8 summits were synonymous with urban warfare between anti-globalization campaigners and heavily-armoured riot police and the locals viewed the summit with some hostility. We were not given a particularly friendly

welcome, representing as we did the advanced guard of the hordes of media and protestors to come. The owner of the local video shop told us that a lot of the town's businesses were planning to board up their windows for the duration, although the distinct lack of Starbucks and McDonald's on Auchterarder High Street meant that there never seemed to be much danger from anti-globalizers and their missiles.

Next on our tour of duty, we took a look around the Gleneagles Hotel



Mark Boyle in Auchterarder, near the G8 summit venue

itself. As we drove up to the grounds, we were made painfully aware of the pecking order of the Japanese media world as we almost ran our small rental car into the side of Tokyo Television's chauffeured Mercedes. Perhaps I should count myself lucky: my boss tells me he had to cover the 2000 Okinawa summit on a bicycle.

We then headed to the idiosyncratically designed and monstrously expensive Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. MP Patricia Ferguson, the Minister for Tourism and Culture, put on a brave face and

emphasized the potential beneficial effects of the media coverage of the summit. Footage of the rolling hills of Scotland on the world's TV sets would apparently amount to several hundred million pounds worth of free advertising.

Keeping journalists happy being vital to garnering good press, scores of foreign media had already been taken on pre-G8 tours of Scotland, golfing trips and, crucially, received presents of fine Scotch whisky. However, the summit never reached Japanese levels of hospitality – the Okinawa summit is still infamous for the seas of beer that had been freely available to the press.

The Scottish Executive was also hoping to use the G8 to advertise Scotland as a desirable place to live and work, as the country faces problems of an aging population and declining birth-rates to rival those of Japan. The Executive was keen to capitalize on the world's attention to

continue to rebrand Scotland as "the best small country in the world". As Hokkaido faces the most steeply declining population in Japan, these efforts formed the main part of our report.

It is too soon to tell precisely how beneficial hosting the G8 summit has proven to Scotland, but if the people of Hokkaido have picked up some tips on how to make the most of the opportunity to boost tourism and the local economy from our article, it will all have been worth it.

each the summit!

es, 2003-4) have taken different career paths. Mark joined the Hokkaido
n work at the Japanese Embassy in London. However, in July 2005, their jobs

Watching history being made

Adrian Thomas

There are two things that I will always remember about the G8 summit in Gleneagles: one is the sight of the gargantuan BBC reporter John Pienaar leaping for joy amongst a crowd of people gathered around a TV screen after the decision to give London the Olympics was announced; the other is of being sat in a little room watching the live television feed of Tony Blair standing by himself outside the entrance to the Gleneagles hotel formally welcoming world leaders to the summit one by one on the morning of 7 July. I remember that as each leader came forward the formalities appeared to be replaced by a series of "have you heard" conversations in which foreign heads of state informed the British Prime Minister of the terrorist attacks on his capital city. It was fascinating viewing in that it was so different to the normal pre-packaged politics that we are usually fed on television. I also remember how Tony Blair, looking dazed and confused, appeared so obviously grateful to see a friendly face when it was finally President Bush's turn to come forward.

I was sent to Edinburgh as part of the Japanese press delegation which was an assembly of staff from several

different Japanese embassies. Naturally it was something to which I had been looking forward and, like many others, in the run-up to the summit I was also drawn in by the buzz generated by Live 8 and the Make Poverty History campaign. I was aware that there was no simple solution, but there did seem to be a real sense of Britain taking a lead in guiding the world's richest nations on a path that might actually make a difference to the lives of millions of the world's poorest people. However, the fact that the enormous media centre alone

always going to grab the headlines on day one, and of course the terrorist attacks on London after that sadly meant that making poverty history was always going to be an issue that was put to one side. It was almost as if the world's media had been expensively assembled in a specially constructed fortress in the Scottish countryside only for them all to be sat for three days watching broadcasts of what was taking place elsewhere.

I felt that another unfortunate result of the terrorist attacks was that they

took away from a summit that by all accounts did actually achieve some positive progress on some very meaningful issues. Moreover, it lessened the possibility of there being any significant public scrutiny of where the communiqué actually did fall short of what we had been lead to believe would be possible in the run-up to the summit.

Needless to say, in spite of the fact that countless layers of security meant that I was kept almost as far

away from the summit conference room as the protestors were, the experience of going to the G8 was one that I enjoyed immensely. I suppose that, like many people, I am not quite sure what happened to the campaign to make poverty history and I will always associate the G8 with the dreadful terrorist attacks on London. However, on a personal level, it did feel as though I was playing a small part in something very meaningful for one brief moment.



Adrian Thomas (second from left, back row) with Japanese embassy staff at the G8 summit accompanying Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro (centre, front row) and His Excellency Nogami Yoshiji Ambassador of Japan to the Court of St James's (right, front row)

(which came complete with free meals and complimentary bottles of scotch) must have cost the GDP of a small country did give some sense of perspective to all of the idealism.

Personally it was a strange feeling being in a place that was supposed to be the centre of so much international attention. It was therefore even odder that for almost my entire time there the real focus of attention was actually elsewhere. The Olympic decision was



Shedding darkness

Mao: The Unknown Story by Jung Chang and Jon Halliday was published earlier this year and immediately received an enormous amount of attention. Dr Chris Bramall, Senior Lecturer in Chinese Studies, reviews the book for EastAsia@Sheffield.

Biographies of Mao abound, and this book fills a much-needed hole in that literature. It is not that Chang has nothing to say. She and Halliday have laboured assiduously, identifying new source materials and conducting a large number of interviews with participants in the great drama that is the rise of China. Interviewees include Mao's girlfriends, participants in and witnesses to the Long March, and a wide range of western politicians who encountered Mao.

The problem lies rather with the interpretation of all this evidence. According to Chang, Mao hated his father, was indifferent to his wives, children, and traditional Chinese culture. He loathed the peasantry, had a prodigious sexual appetite and revelled in pictures of torture. None of this is exactly new, but it is a very different picture to that painted in official Party histories, which have all too often sacrificed truth on the altar of nation-building. And perhaps Mao really was the monster claimed by Chang. But one wonders about the plausibility of all this: Deng Xiaoping did survive the Cultural Revolution, and even Reinhard Heydrich, an architect of the Holocaust, adored the music of Schubert.

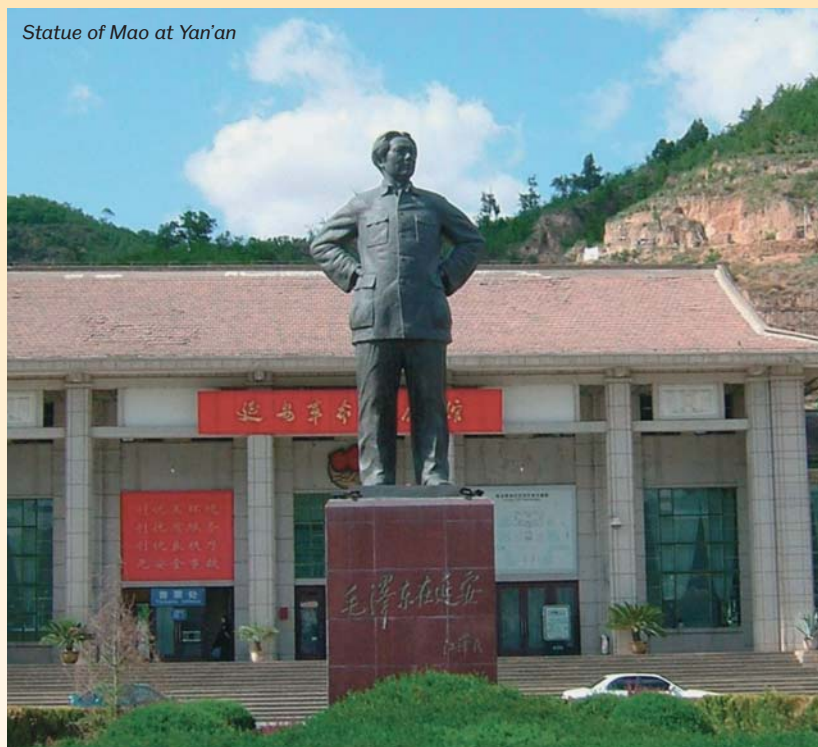
The real issue is the place of Mao on the scales of history. Here too Chang is a harsh critic. She contends that the Great Famine (1957-62) killed 38 million, that land reform, purges and the Cultural Revolution killed countless more, as well as blighting the life of several

generations. But in so contending, Chang ignores the other side of the coin. Here a comparison between China and India is instructive. Both countries achieved *de facto* independence at the same time. Both were victims of imperialism. Both are large countries. And both entered the postwar era with exceptionally low living standards: the 1950 data show that the life expectancy of the average Indian was thirty-two years at birth and that the figure for China was only a little higher at forty years.

But thereafter, the development trajectories of India and China diverged dramatically. By the time of Mao's death, Chinese life expectancy

we allow for the excess mortality experienced during the Great Famine, China still comes out far ahead of India in this rather grisly "net lives" calculus because of its lower mortality rates in all other years. Chang argues that Mao was responsible for the death of 70 million people (p. 651). However, even accepting Mao's responsibility for the cataclysm, one could much more plausibly argue that he saved between 200 and 300 million from an early death. India's democratic government can make no such claim.

To be sure, Maoist China was no socialist utopia. Some of those "sent down" to the countryside assuredly ended up in the swamps of the Great Northern Wilderness. But Chang's account of Maoism is a history of the victors, the urban cadres, intellectuals and students who survived the Cultural Revolution. This elite undoubtedly suffered. However, Chang exaggerates. Many of those sent-down from Shanghai went no further than the islands of Chongming and Hengsha in the mouth of the Yangzi river. Chang herself was exiled to Deyang, only a stone's throw from Chengdu, the provincial capital, and one of the richest counties in Sichuan.



Statue of Mao at Yan'an

at birth stood at sixty-two years, compared with only forty-seven years in India. This fifteen year gap reflected China's enormous strides in improving rural health care and reducing income inequality, issues largely ignored by successive Indian governments. Even if

In focusing on the privations of the urban population, the death toll during the Leap and the seamier detail of Mao's private life, Chang fails to do justice to the long-run improvements in rural living standards that were the most enduring legacy of Maoism.



Changing families, changing food

Dr Takeda Hiroko, Lecturer in Japanese Studies, is part of a cross-departmental research team from Sheffield University led by Professor Peter Jackson of the Department of Geography who successfully obtained a £1.2 million research grant provided by the Leverhulme Trust.

This research programme aims at examining changing families by looking at food consumption, and in so doing, seeks “a new perspective on family life, transcending disciplinary boundaries between the social sciences, humanities and health research”. There are three strands in the programme, namely, Pregnancy and Motherhood led by Professor Paula Nicholson (School of Health and Related Research when the bid was submitted, presently Health and Social Care at Royal Holloway, University of London), Childhood and Family Life led by Professor Allison James

(Sociological Studies) and Family and Community led by Dr Graham Smith (School of Health and Related Research). Researchers from six departments (Clinical Sciences, Geography, Nursing and Midwifery, School of Health and Related Research, Reproductive and Developmental Medicine, Sociological Studies and the School of East Asian Studies) are working on different projects in the programme.

Dr Takeda’s role is to add the “Japan aspect” to the programme. “Japanese families presently show many signs of undergoing a period

of structural transition, and this is indeed reflected in the organization of family meals at home, in particular, the outsourcing of family meals. One example is that a well-known Japanese TV chef has actively been making public comments on the pedagogical implications of family meals, coinciding with the quest of the British TV chef, Jamie Oliver, for better school dinners.” By introducing such Japanese experience into the programme, she hopes to enrich research in each strand as well as add to the ongoing and abundant research on the family in Japan.

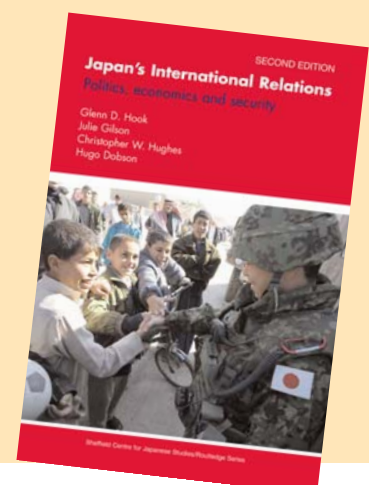
New edition of successful textbook

A second edition of the highly successful textbook *Japan’s International Relations: Politics, Economics and Security* co-authored by four scholars including Professor Glenn Hook and Dr Hugo Dobson of SEAS was published by RoutledgeCurzon in August. The first edition was originally published in 2001 and has proved to be popular with both students and teachers of Japan’s international politics. The second edition builds upon the first by including up-to-date information on Japan’s reaction to the “war on terror”, developments on the Korean

peninsula, competition and cooperation with China, and the Asian tsunami.

The book was the result of an ongoing project with the other co-authors, Dr Julie Gilson of Birmingham University and Dr Christopher Hughes of Warwick University, both of whom completed their PhD studies at SEAS. Dr Caroline Rose, Senior Lecturer and Head of the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Leeds, believes that “*Japan’s International Relations* is the most comprehensive textbook

currently available on the topic of Japan’s foreign policy. The new edition is warmly welcomed, and will once again be set as essential reading for my students.”



Japanese language staff receive University Centenary Awards

As part of Sheffield University's 100th birthday celebrations, one hundred Centenary medals and commemorative certificates were presented to members of staff, students and local residents in the areas of community, culture, environment, scholarship and sport. SEAS's Japanese language instructors were amongst these "unsung heroes" whose contribution to the success of the University was recognized. Nagai Miyuki was taken aback by the news. "None of us was expecting to be recognized in this way and we would like to thank whoever it was out there who appreciates us and chose to nominate us for this award."

Japanese language staff from left to right: Kittaka Yuki, Nagai Miyuki and Tanaka Kenji. Ando Yumiko is not pictured but was also a recipient



Iceman bridges the cultural gap

Peter McSweeney, a third year Chinese Studies student, represented the UK in the "Chinese Bridge" language proficiency competition held in Beijing.

A vivid account of the ice festival in the northern Chinese city of Harbin enabled Peter McSweeney to win first prize in the British leg of the 2005 "Chinese Bridge" contest. Peter, whose first-hand account of the ice festival was based on a visit he made to Harbin in January 2003, shared first place with a Dutch student from the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies. Peter follows in the footsteps of Thomas Saunders, who graduated from SEAS in July and won the same competition in 2004.

As a result, Peter travelled to Beijing and represented the UK in the international grand final in July. Although he did not win, he proved an enormous hit with the Chinese audience. His humorous description of the behaviour of the crowds at the ice festival, and the contrast he drew with the way an English crowd would have behaved, proved particularly popular.

He recalled the way the Chinese had played among the ice sculptures including a beautiful pirate ship. "The Chinese crowd, regardless of whether they were old or young, men or women, all tried to climb to the top of the statues," he said in his speech. "When they got to the top they scrambled and slipped to the accompaniment of screams of laughter from the watching crowds." He admitted how he desperately wanted to climb and play on the sculptures himself, but his English reserve held him back. "I couldn't help thinking what would happen if such an ice festival was held in the UK. I could imagine 'do not touch' signs everywhere, and people joining orderly queues, and occasionally stopping to take a photo." Peter promised he would go to the ice festival again. "Next time, I will climb on the pirate ship myself!"

This speech, plus an accomplished rendition of a popular Zhou Jielun song, won him high praise from the Chinese judges. The chief judge described Peter's performance as "a new phenomenon that shows how quickly different countries' cultural characteristics can be spread." As the only English student at the finals in Beijing, Peter was a real hit with the Chinese media in Beijing. He was interviewed by several national newspapers and was invited onto a popular Chinese TV programme called *Shi Hua Shi Shuo* (Telling the Truth).

"This was a great opportunity for me to meet people who are also learning Chinese and are interested in Chinese culture," he said afterwards. "I have had a great time, both at the three day competition itself, and on my ten-day all-expenses-paid visit to China."

Back to Japan

A number of students come to Sheffield University each year from its numerous sister universities in Japan. Upon their return home, these students find that their experiences in Sheffield soon come in useful.



Keiko (second from left) back in Japan with friends made whilst in Sheffield

Oda Keiko

(Okayama University)

As soon as I came back to Japan I started job-hunting. Since the job hunting season in Japan is, in most cases, from March to June, almost all companies had already stopped hiring new employees by the time I got back. Although I just missed the season, there are some career forums held in Tokyo, and many companies gather there to target students who have studied abroad. Moreover, some companies start hiring people from around August, a practice that is called Autumn Adoption. I used all these opportunities in order to explore my future options and find a suitable job. Ultimately I was able to find a job in a company and I will start work from April 2006.

Four months have passed since I returned to Japan. Sometimes I think of my life in Sheffield as if it were a dream. However, I can relive these memories by contacting my friends both in Sheffield and in Japan. I have been strongly influenced by my experiences in Sheffield. For example, I have joined a volunteer club in Japan to help international students and have started acting as a tutor. I had been a member of this society before going to Sheffield but after being helped by so many people in the UK, I came to think that I would like to help international students after my return

to Japan. Also, thanks to the classes that I took in the School of East Asian Studies, I became much more interested in Japan than I used to be. I am able to analyze a number of events which are happening in Japan from different perspectives because I now understand that there are various different interpretations depending on the country, its people, education system and historical experience.

Now, I am busy writing my graduation thesis. I am majoring in English Literature at my university in Japan, so my life in Sheffield was helpful because I could practice speaking, reading, writing and listening in English. All of these experiences are really precious but the most irreplaceable thing is the opportunity to have made such good friends in Sheffield – thank you very much!

Iizuka Maiko

(Hosei University)

I really miss my time in Sheffield. Although I had to study hard in order to complete essays, participate in seminars and take exams, I was lucky to have been supported by both the friendly and approachable staff and my friends. My lecturers advised me on how to organize my essays and study plans, and my friends helped me with my presentations as they understood how difficult it can be for an international student operating in English. I could not have managed everything without their help, so I really would like to express my appreciation to them. Sheffield is both a city and a university populated by genuinely tolerant and friendly people.

It was only natural to experience some problems as an international student. Everything was different from Japan so I needed a couple of months to settle down in Sheffield. I often felt cultural differences with both English students and other international students. I got homesick and used to miss my home and friends. However, my flatmates and friends helped me and we eventually became good friends. Beginning a new life in a different culture and new environment is very difficult, but I can now recognize how important my experience in Sheffield was.

I am now in Tokyo and I really miss my friends in Sheffield and wonder when I can return there again. At the moment I am writing my dissertation, which is based on my studies in Sheffield, and am regularly in touch with some of my English friends with whom I studied in Sheffield and are now visiting my university as exchange students. I try to help international students as I was helped in Sheffield. So, my experiences in Sheffield have given me lots of opportunities such as the chance to study, make friends and realize a dream. My future dream is to return to and possibly live in the UK.



Maiko (centre) in Tokyo with Erin Ross (left, third year Linguistics and Japanese Studies) and Harriet Gray (right, third year Japanese Studies) who are both currently spending their year abroad at Hosei University

Seoulites enamoured by rebirth of old stream



Dr Son Key-young, Lecturer in Korean Studies, noticed an interesting phenomenon whilst visiting Seoul on a recent research trip.

The rapid postwar economic reconstruction of West Germany was called the Miracle of the River Rhine. In the case of South Korea it was dubbed the Miracle of the Han River. The long-held status of the Han River as a hallmark of South Korea's economic modernization was put under challenge on 1 October when a new symbol of a post-industrial South Korea emerged at the traditional centre of Seoul.

It took more than two years and 370 billion won to restore the Cheonggye Stream that had been covered with concrete for about half a century. It was an ambitious project in the heart of the city that attracted the attention of a number of diverse interest groups. In particular, the project involved the demolition of an elevated highway used by 170,000 vehicles a day. Another headache for the city government was how to relocate street vendors and other shop owners whose businesses were directly hit. Before the start of the restoration project, there were about 210,000 people working in 62,700 shops in the area. The merchants had organized protest rallies to demand that the city compensate their losses.

Why did the Seoul metropolitan government start this risky project? Behind the project is Seoul Mayor Lee Myung-bak, who is one of the presidential hopefuls in the 2007 presidential election. This restoration is one of Mayor Lee's pet projects to transform Seoul and in turn boost his chances of winning the election. Without doubt, Lee's approval ratings rose remarkably in opinion polls conducted after the stream opened to the public.

The restored stream flows through a 5.8-km waterway across the Chongno and Songdong districts in central



Seoulites enjoying the Cheonggye Stream

Seoul. The stream, which is provided with 120,000 tons of clean water through a motor-powered system every day, has twenty-two bridges that are decorated with stonewalls along the bank, as well as walking trails sandwiched by the high-rising modern buildings. It was more than welcoming news for 12 million Seoulites who crave open spaces away from the choking concrete jungle. The stream and its vicinity have already emerged as a new tourist magnet with hundreds of thousands of visitors every day.

Rather than a natural wonder, however, the waterway evokes the image of an overly decorated, artificial water path – a collage of tradition and modernity. Some bloggers and naysayers claim that the new project is just a costly publicity drive without consideration for making the stream eco-friendly. The Korean Federation for Environmental Movement declared that the city government should try to restore the ecosystem along the

stream. In particular, the stream requires costs of about 7 billion won to maintain every year and there is no habitat for animals and plants because the walking trails are paved with cement.

Despite the media hype over the restoration project and its connection with the forthcoming presidential election, the presidential race itself is still in its infancy. Mayor Lee and his advisors succeeded in giving a facelift to the city's unfriendly facade but his fate still hangs in the balance. Buoyed by the success of the restoration project, Lee, who is also a former executive of the Hyundai Group, a business conglomerate famous for its construction projects worldwide, announced a new project of constructing a canal linking Seoul and Pusan, the southernmost port city, as one of his campaign pledges. It is to be seen whether the new project will become an artery of the rapidly transforming country or a white elephant.

A taste of Japan comes to the campus

Will Christophers (President of Sheffield's Japan Society) is the founder of Willyaki, the first takoyaki (a batter-ball containing octopus) outlet in Europe. His future goal is to establish a Japanese fast food franchise selling this popular Japanese dish from a traditional mobile stall.

It all began in 2002 on a typical humid summer's day in Kobe, Japan. I was sitting in a bar talking to the owner and I have never forgotten what he said. He had opened a *takoyaki* stall in California that had become so popular it even featured in the local newspaper. The only problem was that he had started it illegally without a licence.

Something in my head clicked – why not Japanese fast food in England? Why not bring healthier food to the UK and, whilst helping improve people's health, provide students with opportunities to run and work for *Willyaki* (the eponymous name of my company)? It is incredibly hard for Japanese students to get a part-time job in England so I thought this would be the perfect answer. However, whenever I brought this up, people either just laughed or thought I was a fool. Nevertheless, I knew there was a big opportunity. *Takoyaki* is one of my favourite foods and originates from the Kansai area of Japan, as I do. These factors motivated me even more but for two years it remained just a pipe-dream.

Then, in December 2004, a University-funded initiative called the White Rose Centre Business Competition was launched whereby the winners could receive £10,000. Being part of the Business Simulation Society, we all entered our own ideas and I entered what was then called

Tako, a Japanese movable fast food van. A van selling *takoyaki* moving from place to place does not require large capital and allows flexibility, which normal businesses with fixed premises do not allow. There were about 250 entries from three universities and thirty-five were chosen. From our Society, just *Tako* went on to the next stage. The second stage was the presentation of a thirty-page business plan to nine judges. We eventually came 2nd, receiving £500. During the competition, to show our determination, we sold *takoyaki* on several occasions with the help of a great team of students.

Willyaki has already had so much

help from so many people that I cannot begin to thank everyone enough. Our first *Willyaki* unit is currently being created by the team at the University Workshop. We have also gained backing from the Students' Union and Sheffield University to allow *Willyaki* to start trading once a week on the concourse. *Takoyaki* and also *veggieyaki* (mushroom and cheese flavour) will be served from 11am to 5pm each Tuesday from the end of November. A percentage of the profits will go to Sheffield Children's Hospital as part of our policy is always to return something back to the community. For further information, please visit www.willyaki.co.uk



Takoyaki, on sale on the University campus, has proved to be enormously successful

Farewell to SEAS...

SEAS was sorry to say goodbye to two colleagues when both Professor Beverley Hooper and Dr Miriam Jelinek retired at the end of September 2005. Dr Jelinek first came to Sheffield in 1969 and was responsible for the introduction of the successful MA in Advanced Japanese Studies. During her time at SEAS, Professor Hooper edited EastAsia@Sheffield and has now been appointed Emeritus Professor. All their colleagues and students at SEAS will miss them and wish them well in the future.



Professor Beverley Hooper celebrates her retirement

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in Brief...

Faculty prize for outstanding performance

Congratulations to Jodie Gardiner who was awarded the Sir Basil Blackwell prize by for the best overall performance in the Faculty of Social Sciences during the first year of her Chinese Studies degree programme. Jodie follows in the footsteps of Richard Buckley (third year Chinese Studies), who was awarded the same prize last year. Dr Sarah Dauncey, Chinese Studies Degree Tutor, said "this surely demonstrates the consistently high standards achieved by our students in a challenging subject."

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Enquiries to:
Dr Hugo Dobson
Editor

EASTASIA@SHEFFIELD

School of East Asian Studies
The University of Sheffield
Western Bank, Sheffield
S10 2TN, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 114 222 8437
Email: H.Dobson@sheffield.ac.uk

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