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Introduction

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Introduction

Abstract

It was during the seasonal change from summer to autumn that I first landed in Tokyo as a naïve 21 year old, ready to embark on a working holiday adventure. I had no Japanese language skills, no knowledge of Japanese history or culture beyond western clichés and stereotypes, and 1000 yen in my pocket. When I think back to this time I am amazed at the courage (or was it denial and ignorance?) I must have had; I am even more surprised to remember the emotion I experienced, for as soon as I set foot in that great cosmopolitan city, I was in love. Somehow, I sensed something familiar and warm in the strange new sights and sounds around me, and gladly immersed myself in this new relationship I had found with Japan.

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Introduction

It was during the seasonal change from summer to autumn that I first landed in Tokyo as a naïve 21 year old, ready to embark on a working holiday adventure. I had no Japanese language skills, no knowledge of Japanese history or culture beyond western clichés and stereotypes, and 1000 yen in my pocket. When I think back to this time I am amazed at the courage (or was it denial and ignorance?) I must have had; I am even more surprised to remember the emotion I experienced, for as soon as I set foot in that great cosmopolitan city, I was in love. Somehow, I sensed something familiar and warm in the strange new sights and sounds around me, and gladly immersed myself in this new relationship I had found with Japan.

Over twenty years on, it gives me great pleasure to be part of the third edition of *New Voices* and to have the opportunity to work with emerging scholars who have been on their own journeys that enticed them into the field of Japanese Studies. Indeed, it is an exciting time to be part of Japanese and Asian Studies in Australia. The sector has been reinvigorated by a government that aims to make Australia more Asia-literate and able to participate more actively in this era of ‘globalisation’. While it will be some time before we see the results, the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP) and its associated funding opportunities offer much hope for Japanese language and studies to develop in Australian schools in terms of both quantity and quality through enhanced language teacher education, student scholarships and infrastructure development. One of the targets, for instance, is to have 12 per cent of Year 12 students fluent in an Asian language by 2020. Japan is one of the four areas targeted by the government, the others being China, Indonesia and Korea.¹ This funding project should eventually flow over to benefit the tertiary education sector in terms of Japanese Studies undergraduate enrolments and higher research.

The language-studies nexus is an important issue within Japanese Studies, and one that dominated the 2009 Japanese Studies Association of Australia (JSAA) conference, held at the University of New South Wales from 13-16 July. For the first time, JSAA was combined with the International Conference on Japanese Language Education (ICJLE).² Out of all the JSAA conferences I have personally attended over the years, it was the 2009 one that gave language research the greatest visibility. This heightened presence has been replicated in this issue of *New Voices*, where we received more submissions on language research than for previous editions. With the increasing emphasis on Asian languages in all education sectors, it is indeed timely

1 For more information: <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/NALSSP/Pages/default.aspx>.

2 See conference website: <http://jsaa-icjle2009.arts.unsw.edu.au/en/index.html>.

that *New Voices* engages with cutting edge research from emerging scholars in Japanese language acquisition and linguistics.

We have included two papers in the linguistic stream of the 2009 journal. The first paper is by Caroline Mahoney, who recently completed her Master of Teaching at the University of Sydney and is currently pursuing a PhD at Waseda. It is a qualitative case study that specifically investigates the implementation of Intercultural Language Learning (IcLL) by non-native speaking (NNS) Japanese language teachers in a New South Wales school. The best way to integrate culture into the language classroom to enhance student language acquisition is a hotly debated topic. While Mahoney's research uses a small data sample, it provides a useful model that could be further developed for a larger scale project, especially in order to understand the subjective experience of the teacher and their impact on cultural and language learning in the classroom.

The second linguistics paper is from Sarah Pasfield-Neofitou, who recently completed Honours in Japanese and Linguistics at Monash University. Pasfield-Neofitou has written a fascinating paper on what happens to language learning *after* the student leaves the classroom. She does this by investigating the way students learning Japanese as a foreign language use internet chat programs, such as MSN, to converse with native language speakers. Internet chat is a form of computer mediated communication (CMC) used in a student-controlled environment that presents both unique opportunities for further learning and complications, the latter including e-turn protocols, opportunities for distraction, and issues of power in the online intercultural environment. Pasfield-Neofitou's research contains many important insights, and these are related to the role of technology in language education, student language acquisition outside of the classroom, and students' abilities to successfully negotiate a cross-cultural environment.

A theme that threads through this and a number of the other contributions is that of transnationalism. Pasfield-Neofitou has identified a transnational language learning environment mediated by technology – a long way from the old paper-based 'pen-pal' system. The paper by Jack Nicholls, who completed his Honours year at the University of Melbourne in 2008, has similar themes of the transnational, communication and technology, this time viewed through the discipline of history. His finely researched paper examines the impact of the telegraph on communication between British diplomats in Japan and their government in London. Nicholls focuses on three British diplomats: Sir Rutherford Alcock (1859-1864); Sir Harry Parkes (1865-1883); and Sir Ernest Satow (1895-1900). In particular, Nicholls analyses the impact of technology on the autonomy of these diplomats over time, and within the context of the changing place of Japan in British foreign policy, where it moved from being 'an exotic backwater' to a regional ally, the latter as marked by the 1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

The transnational theme continues in Chikako Nihei's literary research that compares the texts of David Mitchell and Murakami Haruki. Nihei is currently a Masters student at the University of Sydney, and she takes us on a journey through the novels of Mitchell and his attempts, as a westerner, to subvert orientalist western stereotypes and write about Japan 'as it is'. Mitchell has been influenced by the approach of Murakami, who successfully incorporates the many, often seemingly contradictory, faces of Japan into his own fictional works. Nihei's paper suggests a questioning of both *nihonjinron* and orientalism in literature on Japan and, through the comparative choice of Mitchell and Murakami, demonstrates the transnational path along which these questions interrogate, inform and contest each other.

Jared Denman, who completed Honours in 2008 at the University of Queensland where he is currently a PhD candidate, provides *New Voices* with some insights into the experiences of the Japanese diaspora in South East Queensland. Denman focuses on qualitative case studies of international marriages between Australian men and Japanese women. While a small data set is used, his research contributes to studies in migration, diaspora, cultural studies, multiculturalism and identity, and could be used to develop a larger research project in the future. In particular, Denman makes distinctions between the experiences of the so-called 'war brides' – Japanese women who married Australian soldiers during the Allied Occupation of Japan and migrated to Australia in the 1950s – with these contemporary women. The contextual distinctions of their experiences could be summed up as the differences between multiculturalism and assimilation.

The final contribution comes from Matthew Grubits, who completed his Honours in 2008 at the University of Tasmania and is currently pursuing a Masters degree at the same institution. Grubits' historical paper examines the great classical texts of Sei Shōnagon, The Mother of Michitsuna and Murasaki Shikibu to reinterpret the role of the extramarital affair in aristocratic Heian society. This intriguing and convincing study defines sexual behaviour, as linked to other aspects of the Heian 'cult of beauty' such as poetry, emotion and dress, as an aesthetic act. Aestheticism also operated as a 'parameter' for appropriate behaviour – that is, those who had affairs that were not conducted according to aesthetic norms were socially penalised. Grubits' research effectively demonstrates how literary texts can be used as an historical source through which to interpret past society.

The collection in this third volume of *New Voices* may be small, but it nevertheless demonstrates the continuing vibrancy of Japanese Studies in Australia. It celebrates the diversity within Japanese Studies in terms of discipline areas (history, literature, linguistics and cultural studies), reflects the geographical spread of research (Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart and Brisbane) and contains content that traverses time, from Heian

sexuality to contemporary Japanese women in Queensland. Therefore, my first thanks for this volume must go to the students, and to their supervisors, for sharing with us this collection of exciting new Honours and Masters research, and for undertaking the arduous task of taking a large and complex thesis and turning it into a smaller, coherent and polished stand-alone piece of writing.

Aside from the contributors, there are always many people who make a volume like this possible. All submitted papers are read by two or more expert members from the *New Voices* advisory board, and their advice and comments are invaluable to the contributors and for the editing process. Enormous thanks go to Dr Tomoko Aoyama, Professor William Coaldrake, Dr Misuzu Hanihara-Chow, Professor Tessa Morris-Suzuki, Dr Matthew Stavros, Associate Professor Alison Tokita, Dr Jun Ohashi, Professor Nanette Gottlieb, Dr Yuji Sone, Cathy Jonak, Michie Akahane and Mari Nobuoka for giving up time from their busy schedules to support this volume of *New Voices*. Thanks also to the tireless Wakao Koike for his continuing dedication to and support of new research on Japan in Australia, and to the Japan Foundation for supporting the *New Voices* project and giving me this opportunity to be part of the third volume. The final editing of a volume can be difficult and time-consuming, and this task has been competently undertaken by the ever-diligent and enthusiastic Susan Wake. Finally, I would like to thank my predecessors, Yuji Sone and Matthew Stavros, for setting such a fine editing standard for me to (attempt to) follow.

We all hope that you enjoy the third volume of *New Voices* and feel reinvigorated by this selection of new research by emerging scholars in Australia. Indeed, with a changed environment that supports the growth of an Asia literate nation, the future of Japanese Studies in Australia looks brighter than it has for some time. Through an expanded secondary education Japanese language and studies program, hopefully it will not necessarily take a random event, like being clueless, penniless and fascinated in Tokyo, to inspire current and future students to enter the field of Japanese Studies.

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Editor, *New Voices*, vol. 3



On the Journal's Format

All successful submissions to this issue of *New Voices* are published online and are universally accessible at: <http://www.jpj.org.au/newvoices>. Several of the essays, however, were chosen by the editor and advisory board to also be published in a physical journal format, which was distributed to universities and libraries across Australia and to the Japan Foundation's 22 overseas branch offices. The selection of these essays was based not only on quality but on an attempt to provide readers with representative examples of Honours and Masters scholarship in several disciplines at a variety of Australian universities.