

Introduction

I am happy to introduce to you this year's contributions to the Japan Foundation's *New Voices*. *New Voices* plays an important role in the field of Japanese Studies by offering postgraduate students and early career researchers a venue for presenting their academic work to a broader audience. These essays demonstrate the breadth and depth of Japanese studies being produced by emerging scholars in Australia and New Zealand. They constitute a new wave of perspectives across fields as diverse as international relations, cultural studies, literature, music and linguistics.

Together these essays show the authors' commitment to addressing significant social problems that are highly topical and relevant to contemporary Japan and Australian relations. In seeking to unpack pressing social issues using innovative research questions and designs, these essays demonstrate the authors' creativity and passion for their research. As a result, we gain a new perspective into the dynamism of Japanese cultural traditions, and new insights into the complex social relationships that have constituted Japanese society, past and present. These essays also facilitate greater understanding of the process of learning the Japanese language.

In her investigation, **Claudia Craig** analyses the idea of 'Japaneseness' in Western cultural discourse on Japan by focusing on one area of the nation's art and design: the landscape garden. In particular, she considers the way in which Western observers between the 1870s and 1930s promoted ideas of the Japanese garden as a space of tranquil harmony and pure untamed beauty, disconnected from the modern age. She analyses the notions of Japaneseness promoted through their interpretations and contends that these interpretations contributed to the development of unitary, stereotypical images of Japan in the eyes of Western observers.

Sally Chan analyses the process of 'negative language transfer' among people learning Japanese as a foreign language. How does a learner's knowledge of their first language affect their process of constructing their target language? In particular she investigates differences in the ways that native speakers of Chinese, Korean, English and Japanese recognise the misuse of the Japanese noun modifier *no*. Examining Japanese language learners at the University of New South Wales and the University of Sydney who had completed advanced-level Japanese courses, she finds differences in the ways each first-language group performed on tests of misuse recognition.



Adam Eldridge, in his contribution, analyses the paradox of Sino-Japanese relations: he sees them as interdependent economically but competitive in military-strategic terms. Eldridge provides a fresh perspective on how to understand this conundrum. In his view, economic interdependence theories overestimate the ability of economic cooperation to translate into military-strategic cooperation between Japan and China. He argues further that economic interdependence is only an intervening variable in international relations, because it has failed to shape states' perceptions and responses to security threats. His research contributes important findings to the field of international relations theory.

Catherine Hallett examines the function, social structures and transmission of music in Kamigata *rakugo* performance. In her lively analysis, she argues that more scholarly attention should be given to the musical components that accompany the performances. Then, by carefully examining some of those components heard during a *rakugo* performance, she reveals the multiple ways that this music aids a storyteller's performance, exploring both the personal significance that the music has for the storytellers' feelings and their motivations for their own performance. Hallett shows how the music helps generate excitement and anticipation for both the storyteller and audience, and the role it plays as the storyteller constructs the imaginary world that is integral to the high-spirited atmosphere of the Kamigata *yose* theatre.

Niamh Champ's article examines the impact that a learner's first language (L1) has in determining the course and pace of acquisition of subsequent languages. She writes about the benefits of using *gairaigo* (loanwords) in facilitating language learning, discussing the ways they can help learners acquire vocabulary in a foreign language. She then investigates how Japanese foreign language teachers at the University of Queensland perceive the use and effects of *gairaigo* as such a tool. Champ discovers that these teachers have a range of opinions and views about the benefits of using *gairaigo*, and explores the variables that influence their use of it.

Hiromi Nishioka, in her contribution, analyses language exchange partnership sessions at Monash University to see how they create opportunities for Japanese language learners to use and learn Japanese outside the formal classroom context. She contends that in these one-on-one learning settings, learners receive targeted language assistance from Japanese native speakers within their 'zones of proximal development'. These partnerships enrich the scope of learning opportunities available to such learners on university campuses and give them opportunities to engage in an active process of negotiating levels of assistance and tailoring topics of conversation to suit their language learning needs.

Tets Kimura looks directly at the international relationship between Australia and Japan, and reviews their ongoing dispute over whaling, a significant issue of contention between the two nations. He analyses attitudes toward whaling in the two countries and reviews how it is covered in both Australian and Japanese newspapers. Interestingly, he finds many similarities in the ways the issue is reported in both countries, such as the frequent focus on protest activities. He also offers valuable insights into Japan's *kisha* (reporters') club system which significantly influences how whaling is constructed and reported on in Japan.

Overall, the collection represents both the diversity and academic rigour of Japanese Studies in Australia and New Zealand. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Editorial Advisory Board and the panel of reviewers. I wish to extend special thanks to Dr Olivier Ansart, Professor William Coaldrake, Dr Misuzu Hanihara Chow, Emeritus Professor Hugh Clarke, Professor Nanette Gottlieb, Professor Henry Johnson, Dr Jun Ohashi, Dr Yuji Sone, Dr Rebecca Suter, Honorary Associate Professor Elise Tipton, Dr Yasuhisa Watanabe and Associate Professor Stephen Wearing for giving so generously of their time and expertise. I am grateful to Mr Nao Endo, Director of the Japan Foundation, for enthusiastically supporting *New Voices*. My gratitude also goes to Sayuri Tokuman, Manager of the Japanese Studies and Intellectual Exchange Department, for her care and expert guidance in steering this project and for supporting Japanese studies in Australia. My thanks also to Matthew Todd for editing and arranging the layout of the issue. I would particularly like to thank Elicia O'Reilly, Program Coordinator of the Japanese Studies and Intellectual Exchange Department, for her unflagging enthusiasm for this project. Her strong commitment to leading this project and its authors has been deeply inspiring.

I hope that you enjoy the contributions.

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