



## Japanese Studies and Intellectual Exchange

To encourage Japanese studies, the Japan Foundation supports institutions and academics around the world and assists networking. Top academics are introduced to Japan, giving the Japanese people access to world level knowledge and insights into global intellectual trends. This gives the international scholars a deeper understanding of Japan, fosters the development of shared perceptions, and facilitates discussion of shared issues.

# Japanese Studies and Intellectual Exchange

## Promoting Japanese Studies Overseas

Japanese studies overseas is important for deepening the understanding of Japan and maintaining good relations between Japan and other countries. The Japan Foundation supports organizations outside Japan that undertake Japanese studies. It provides fellowships and other opportunities that connect scholars and encourage networking among them.

## Promotion of Intellectual Exchange

The Japan Foundation organizes workshops and international conferences where intellectual leaders can address common issues across national boundaries. It provides scholars and specialists in various fields with opportunities to visit Japan for research, and supports various projects to promote multi-layered and multi-faceted international mutual understanding.

## Strengthening Networks

In order to build close networks among scholars, the Japan Foundation supports international conferences and workshops in various fields of Japanese studies. It also attempts to expand the networks by providing partial support to a wide variety of groups, including academic associations of the Japanese studies, alumni of Japanese studies, as well as international conferences.

## Fellowships

The Japan Foundation supports individuals who are doing outstanding work in Japanese studies and intellectual exchange. The Japanese Studies Fellowship provides supports to scholars, doctoral candidates, and other individuals to conduct research in Japan. The Abe Fellowship supports scholars and journalists to strengthen the Japan-U.S. partnership on a global scale.

## Support for Organizations

The Japan Foundation assists universities and Japan research centers overseas to strengthen their institutional capacity. It supports the expansion of teaching staffs and libraries and promotes visiting professorship depending on the needs of these organizations. Through the comprehensive support, the Japan Foundation helps organizations around the world to build up their research activities on Japan.

## Center for Global Partnership (CGP)

CGP aims to strengthen U.S.-Japan collaboration and global partnership through projects addressing global issues, promoting dialogue and networking, and cultivating next generation leaders. To this end, CGP organizes and provides grant support to international conferences, workshops, and joint researches as well as providing fellowships and dispatching outreach coordinators.





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1.Students who came to Japan at the invitation of the JENESYS Special Invitation Program for Graduate Students / 2.Japan-China-South Korea Cultural Exchange Forum / 3.Public Seminar on Intercultural City was held in Tokyo / 4.A participant speaks at the symposium on "Japan-Europe Cooperation on Social Firms" / 5.Panelists at the "Japan-Argentine Symposium—Globalization, Cultural Identity and Japan-Argentina Exchanges" [Argentina] / 6.Public Symposium on the Middle East and Japan / 7.A JOI program coordinator teaches a lesson about Japan at a U.S. elementary school [U.S.] / 8.Aceh children who participated in the 2nd Drama Workshop interview people on the street [Aceh, Indonesia] / 9.Japan Studies Touring Lecture at Universiti Sains Malaysia [Penang, Malaysia]

## Building Closer Coordination in the Network of Japanese Studies in Asia

### ■ East Asia Japanese Studies Forum

Japanese studies have been actively pursued in many countries in the world. In recent years, however, the “globalization of Japanese studies” has become more pronounced, with scholars, information, and research funds moving across national boundaries. Under these conditions it is important to train personnel, conduct joint research projects, and share information while building cooperative international relations.

Recognizing this importance, the Japan Foundation organized the “World Forum for Scholars in Japanese Studies” in October 2009, designed to build a network of scholars across national and regional borders. In fiscal 2010, the Japan Foundation provided support for the “East Asia Japanese Studies Forum” organized by the Korea Association of Japanology to construct cooperative relations among Japanese scholars in East Asia. Thirty-two scholars participated in this forum held on December 4 and 5 on Cheju Island in South Korea. The forum began with the key note address by Special University Professor Aoki Tamotsu (Aoyama Gakuin University) on “The effectiveness of the holistic approach, the possibility of international Japanese studies,” followed by a special lecture by Professor Uegaki Kenichi (Otemae University) on “The history of cultural exchange and Japanese studies.” Active discussions were held and presentations made in four separate groups which respectively discussed “Japanese Literature (Study of Japanese Literature in East Asia in the 21st Century),” “Japanese Culture (Cultural Exchange in East Asia and Mutual Recognition),” “International Relations (Japanese Diplomacy and East Asia),” and “Japanese Language and Japanese Studies (Japanese Language Study and Japanese Studies in the Future).”

The forum participants confirmed the importance of international cooperation in Japanese studies and construction of an intellectual network in East Asia. They also discussed plans to hold a second forum in Tokyo.



Above: Collection of papers for East Asia Japanese Studies Forum  
Right: Symposium held in October 2010 in Beijing

### ■ Beijing Center for Japanese Studies

An international symposium was held in Beijing in October 2010 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Beijing Center for Japanese Studies, which has produced many Japanese scholars, and also the 30th anniversary of its predecessor, the Training Center for Japanese Language Teachers (commonly known as the Ohira School).

The two-day symposium consisted of a forum on “Trends and Coordination in Japanese Studies in the World” and four sessions devoted to different topics. About 200 Japanese scholars from various countries and regions, including Japan, China, South Korea, the United States, France, and Britain, gathered for the meeting.

Through the keynote address and panel discussions on the first day and presentations by the four panels on the second day, the participants exchanged information and opinions on the present situation and future of Japanese studies and shared the insights of individual scholars.

Also taking place during the symposium were events that included award ceremonies for the “6th Masayoshi Ohira Memorial Prize” and the “3rd Casio Cup for Excellent Master’s Theses in Japanese Studies in China,” and the “1st All-China Forum for PhDs in Japanese Studies.” Many aspiring scholars in Japanese studies presented the results of their research. These prizes and presentations encouraged Chinese scholars to continue their Japanese studies and provided them with a good opportunity to feel the reach and progress of Japanese studies.

After September 2010, some meetings were cancelled in the midst of worsening relations between Japan and China. But the fact that this symposium was held as scheduled demonstrated that the spirit of the “Japan-China joint project” at the Beijing Center for Japanese Studies, established in 1979 on the basis of an agreement between then-Japanese prime minister Ohira Masayoshi and then-China’s Chairman Hua Guofeng, continues unbroken to the present day.





## Providing Research Opportunities for Overseas Specialists in Japanese Studies

Under its Japanese studies fellowship program, the Japan Foundation invites scholars and specialists in Japanese studies from overseas to do research in Japan, in addition to promoting the construction of a network of specialists in Japanese studies in Japan and throughout the rest of the world. Introduced below is a report by Shawn Bender (U.S.), a cultural anthropologist who came to Japan as a fellow in fiscal 2010.

### RESEARCH EXPERIENCE IN JAPAN

SHAWN BENDER

As a cultural anthropologist interested in the interface between technology and society, I was intrigued by Japan's emergence as one of the world leaders in social robots, service robots, and assistive robotics technologies. I wondered: How successfully have these devices made the transition out of the laboratory? In what contexts have they been integrated, and how have people responded to them? With the generous support of a Japan Foundation Research Fellowship during 2010-2011, I began to investigate these questions by conducting ethnographic research among roboticists in Japan.

From early on I had a particularly keen interest in how robots were being used for therapeutic purposes in some elder care facilities. Yet, despite having contacts in the robotics community, I had difficulty finding a suitable site where I could do research. It was in this connection that my relationship with the Japan Foundation happened to have unanticipated benefits. At a party sponsored by the foundation for incoming fellowship recipients, I happened to discuss my project and research interests with one staff member. About a month later I received an email from a roboticist inviting me to observe just the kind of onsite use of robots I was interested in. It turned out that this researcher had recently appeared on a panel at a joint German-Japanese conference held in Germany on robotics in aging societies. The conference was supported in part by the Japan Foundation.

This fortuitous connection, which depended on coincidence as much as global interest in solving demographic issues, led to one of the most productive research relationships during my time in Japan. The group of roboticists with whom I began working held faculty appointments at universities in the Kanto area. About a decade earlier they had organized themselves as the "robot therapy group" out of a shared interest in utilizing their technical knowledge to help ease the psychological stress of nursing home residents. This group had actually evolved out of another organization that used pets (primarily dogs) for similar therapeutic purposes.

In fact, most of the robots that the group uses look quite similar to animals, and all of them were made in Japan. One of these is a robot named PARO, which was invented by a roboticist currently based at the National Institute of Advanced Industrial

Science and Technology (AIST). PARO is about the same size as a baby seal, and looks and acts like one, too. Sensors located under PARO's white fur are connected to a miniaturized computer inside the robot that processes sensory information, thus enabling the robot to respond to touch, speech, and movement. PARO is programmed to respond and adapt to the person interacting with it, and even understands a limited set of words. One other robot used by the group is AIBO. AIBO, which was developed and sold by Sony until 2006, looks like a small dog. Like PARO, AIBO has a series of sensors on its body that enable it to respond to touch and sound. In contrast to PARO, AIBO has a sleek and machine-like exterior, is user-programmable, and can be controlled wirelessly. Natural tinkerers themselves, the engineers appreciated how easily they could adapt the AIBO system for their own needs and purposes.

Using robots for therapeutic purposes is still so new that people are not entirely sure how best to do so, making the line between research and practice quite thin. What is clear, however, is that many in Japan see these devices as central to the successful future management of Japan's aged. Moreover, as the joint German-Japan conference mentioned above indicates, this interest is not limited to Japan alone. Although AIBO is no longer manufactured, PARO, for example, has recently been approved for use in the United States and also has proven quite popular in several European countries. There are signs that other robotics technologies developed in Japan will make the move abroad as well. In the future, I hope to continue exploring the development and implementation of Japanese robots both in Japan and beyond. I am deeply grateful to the Japan Foundation for giving me a start on what promises to continue to be an exciting intellectual journey.



SHAWN BENDER

## How to Build an Inclusive Community? Specialists Exchange Views on the Common Global Issue

The Japan Foundation organized projects focused on “social inclusion,” where each member of the community, with diverse cultural background and possible disability, can live their lives to the fullest.

### ■ Intercultural City

Foreign nationals account for about 1.7% of Japan’s population and 2.7% in Tokyo. Could the growing foreign population become a “threat” to the local Japanese residents, or does it represent an “opportunity?” When newly arrived foreign nationals meet and actively work with local residents, tension could naturally arise. But these encounters could also open new doors to find new business clients, to create new enterprises or to create new arts, and thus revitalize the community that they live. Like companies that value and manage the diversity of their workforce to achieve innovation, cities that are capable of managing and exploring the potential of their cultural diversity could stimulate creativity, innovation and dynamism of the community. These cities are called “Intercultural Cities.”

Twenty-one European cities join the “Intercultural Cities Programme” of the Council of Europe, where they exchange experience, opinions, and insights. In October 2010, the Japan Foundation sent a delegation of city officials, scholars, and practitioners led by Nishikawa Taichiro, mayor of Arakawa City, Tokyo to Switzerland and Italy. The delegation reported their findings at a public seminar held in Tokyo in January 2011. The mayor of Shinjuku City and deputy mayor of Ota City also joined the panel and discussed the present status and future possibilities of the community with people from diverse cultural background. More than 100 people attended the seminar,



which demonstrated the keen interest in the field by the general public.

### ■ Social Firms

Another project launched in 2010 on the theme of social inclusion was an international symposium on social firms. Social firm is a market-led enterprise set up specifically to create jobs for people disadvantaged in the labor market, such as those with disability. The firm does not “protect” these people, but work together with them. Social firms have been spreading throughout the world and in Japan, Social Firm Japan was established and has promoted this new approach of creating jobs for people with disability.

In January 2011, the Japan Foundation organized an international symposium “Japan-Europe Cooperation on Social Firms.” Specialists from Europe, mainly from northern European countries, and their Japanese counterparts exchanged ideas and opinions, including those on specific strategies to develop social firms. Prior to the symposium, experts from Europe visited Kansai and Shikoku regions where they visited social firms, non-profit organizations and social enterprises and had discussion with their managers and workers.

There indeed are many differences between Japan and Europe, and even within European countries regarding employment of peoples with disability, employment conditions, legal and support systems for them, as well as how the community and social firms are organized.

Despite these differences, we are hoping to enhance the networking of social firms within Japan and across continents, to learn from and to inspire the citizens in different cities.



Above: Lars Rene Petersen, Managing Director at the Danish Center for Social Economy, a panelist at a symposium on social firms  
Left: Nakayama Hiroko, Mayor of Shinjuku City, Tokyo at a public seminar on intercultural city

## Spreading the Circle of Support for Japan through Grassroots Exchange Activities

Even as Japanese food and anime have taken root in the United States, opportunities for interchange remain limited in the country's Midwest and South. The Japan Foundation for Global Partnership (CGP) has set the Japanese Outreach Initiative (JOI) in motion as a program designed to promote understanding and awareness of Japan among people in these U.S. regions. Coordinators were sent to the U.S. to engage in the activities to introduce Japanese culture and broaden the circle of interchange with local people.

These coordinators who were placed to universities and non-profits such as Japan America Societies visited educational institutions ranging from kindergartens to universities as well as libraries and community centers to talk about a broad range of topics on Japanese culture, including the lives of Japanese people and their traditional performing arts.

Through these activities CGP also aims to train personnel who could promote grassroots interchanges in the future. During fiscal 2010, one coordinator each was sent to Valparaiso University (Indiana), University of Iowa (Iowa), the Japan America Society of Minnesota (Minnesota), and International Institute of Wisconsin (Wisconsin).

The coordinators themselves believe the number of people who feel friendly toward Japan, or became interested in the country, has steadily grown through their activities following the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11. They say people who passed by on the streets, one after another called out to them, feeling concerned for the disaster victims in a country so far away, asking, "Is your family all right?" or "Is there anything we can do for Japan?" The coordinators, who gradually expanded their network and became known to the local people, began receiving interview requests from the

media and started talking about natural disasters and disaster prevention education in Japan, and about the grim situation that confronted the Japanese people after the latest tragedy.

As they deepened their relations with the local people, events to support the reconstruction efforts in Japan and to launch campaigns to collect donations for the quake and tsunami victims sprang up in various places in the United States. At Webster University (Missouri), Japanese Student Association hosted a support event called "Hope for Japan," holding a flea market, a concert with traditional Japanese drums, and a symposium to reflect on the disaster. With the cooperation of coordinators, the student association collected 1.5 million yen in donations in about a month. At Western Michigan University, meanwhile, \$2,257 was collected through an event in which students watched a film about the disaster while enjoying sushi rolls together.

At the University of Arkansas – Fort Smith, a scholarship fund was established for Japanese students in the disaster area. Students who have recently lost their parents and relatives are often not inclined to return to school soon after. Therefore, university authorities, local business people, and community leaders in the United States wanted to create an environment and opportunities for those students to continue their studies. Their campaigns led to the decision to invite two students from disaster-ravaged Miyagi Prefecture for eight months. Cooperation between the coordinators and local U.S. citizens spawned a sense of caring for the victims and resulted in support for Japan by the entire community.

CGP believes these JOI projects will not only leave the U.S. participants with memories of shared experiences, but will also motivate the coordinators who participated in them to pursue their activities in the future.



Above: Folding paper cranes for disaster victims [University of Findlay, Ohio]  
Left: JOI coordinator teaches Japanese greetings in an elementary school