

Japanese Studies at Oxford University

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Early beginnings

Any history of the development of Japanese studies at Oxford needs to start, as with many other subjects, with the history of the Japanese collection at the Bodleian library. The first known accession of Japanese printed material was three volumes of the so-called Saga-bon, books printed with moveable-type in the Saga district of Kyoto in the early seventeenth century, which were presented to the Library in 1629 by Robert Viney, rector of Barnack, who studied at Oxford in 1621-25.¹ The Bodleian also possesses some very rare examples of missionary literature of the Jesuit Mission Press in Japan, collectively known as Kirishitan-ban, that were produced from 1590 until the expulsion of the missionaries from Japan in 1614.

The Japanese manuscript collection, numbering about 100 titles, contains over 20 Nara-e-hon (Nara picture books), decoratively illustrated literature hand-produced in either book or scroll format from the 17th to 18th centuries, including a unique picture scroll of Urashima. The library also has a copy of the *shuinjō* (vermillion seal document) of 1613 that was issued by Shōgun Tokugawa Ieyasu to grant the English East India Company trade privileges in Japan, as well as the log-book of William Adams (1564-1620), the first Englishman known to have visited Japan.

The Bodleian has a rich collection of pre-1850 books in European languages dealing with Japan. This includes examples of the published correspondence of

the Jesuit fathers, accounts of the early travels to Japan in various published records of European voyages overseas, material relating to the East India Companies of England and Holland, and works of European explorers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This material vividly illustrates Europe's contacts with Japan from the sixteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century. All of this material, of course, pre-dates not only the formal study of Japan at Oxford but also indeed the arrival of Japanese students in Oxford, the first of whom appeared in 1873: he was Iwakura Tomotsune, the third son of Iwakura Tomomi, then Minister of the Right in Japan and the man who led the famous Iwakura Mission. The first female student was Tsuda Ume who studied at St Hilda's College in the 1890s and went on to found Japan's first private women's school of higher education.

As Brian Powell said in his survey of 'Oxford and Japan', 'While there was no-one in Oxford giving regular courses of lectures on Japan in the nineteenth century, the facilities for certain types of research were increasing impressively. The Bodleian had books, the Ashmolean various types of Japanese art, and from the mid-1880s these were joined by the ethnographic collections of the Pitt Rivers Museum'.² Basil Hall Chamberlain (1850-1935), who was Professor of Japanese at Tokyo Imperial University, was a particularly important collector of everyday Japanese artefacts for the Pitt Rivers Museum.

The first person who formally taught about Japan at Oxford (as opposed to Japanese visitors who gave the occasional talk) was John Harrington Gubbins (1852-1929). Ian Nish has praised Gubbins for his work, in particular for his role in revising the unequal treaties between Britain and the UK in the mid-1890s.³ In 1909, Lord Curzon, then Chancellor of the University, leant on Oxford to appoint Gubbins as a Lecturer in Japanese. He was attached to Balliol College, but his lectures did not attract enough students and his three-year

appointment was not renewed. The teaching of Japan at Oxford did not pick up again until more than forty years later.

The two figures who should be most credited for the building of a programme for teaching Japanese in Oxford in the post-war period are Richard (Dick) Storry (1913-81) and Geoffrey Bownas (1923-2011).⁴ Bownas was appointed lecturer in Chinese and Japanese Studies in 1954 (the date which has ever since been taken as the foundation of Japanese Studies in Oxford) and Storry was elected to a special fellowship at St Antony's College the following year.

The development of the BA in Japanese

While Bownas and Storry between them can be seen as responsible for the subsequent development of Japanese Studies, their separate involvement explains why the pre-modern and modern trajectories of the discipline often appeared to move in an apparently uncoordinated fashion. Bownas' efforts were focussed in the Faculty of Oriental Studies and the creation of a BA degree in Japanese. This was not easy, not least because his post involved a lot of teaching in Chinese and overall resources were thin on the ground. The fact that he had a dual responsibility, however, proved to be the way forward. Japanese was first made an optional part of the Chinese BA degree in 1957 and grew from there until it was given its own stand-alone degree status in 1964 (first examined in 1965). In relation to the issue of lack of resources, Bownas was one of the early fundraisers in Oxford's history, writing literally hundreds of letters to organisations and companies which he thought might be interested in supporting Japanese Studies. He thereby collected enough money to pay for a language teacher, a secretary and a post-doctoral Junior Research Fellow (JRF), this last funded by the Rank Organisation: the first holder was Brian Powell, an expert on modern Japanese theatre, who succeeded Bownas as the first dedicated Lecturer in Japanese Studies in 1966 when the latter moved to

Sheffield to the foundation professorship in Japanese studies. Powell held the post for the following 38 years and played a key role in all the subsequent developments in Japanese studies at Oxford.

In a lecture in 2009, Powell described how, influenced by a visit to the States in 1963, he moved the teaching of Japanese away from the conventional model of Oriental Studies programmes ('full of imposing-sounding texts') towards a more interactive model ('a list of language classes').⁵ The texts that were used were widened to include non-literary subjects such as history and politics. He and subsequent JRFs taught the texts (both classical and modern); the Lectors (the first of whom, Shimizu Shūyū, went on to become a distinguished professor at Keio University) taught all the language classes, and the specialist essay topics would be taught by anyone around the University with the necessary expertise, such as Richard Storry or Oliver Impey (1936-2005), who was based at the Ashmolean Museum and for many years was the only person teaching Japanese art in any university in the country.

James McMullen (an expert on Japanese Confucian thought who did his doctoral work at Cambridge under the supervision of Carmen Blacker) took up a newly-created second lectureship in Oxford in 1972. McMullen organised and taught a year-long survey course on Japanese history and culture, whose aim was to enable undergraduates to make more informed choices among the options open to them later; the course evolved over the years until by the 1990s every lecturer in both the Oriental and the Nissan Institutes was contributing to it. In the 1980s, he was also largely responsible for broadening the survey course to set Japan in an East Asian context by bringing in lectures on China and Korea. This later expanded to include the possibility of doing Japanese together with subsidiary courses in other East Asian languages such as Chinese, Korean and Tibetan.

The lecturers, who had a teaching stint of only seven hours a week, were replaced in the 1970s by instructors, properly qualified language teachers with a teaching load of twenty hours a week, and the teaching of modern Japanese in all its forms was thereby greatly increased. Equally significantly, periods of study in Japan as part of the course were increasingly encouraged. These voluntary ‘year outs’ were largely made possible through the generosity of Japanese universities (including Kanazawa, Keio, Kyodai, Ochanomizu Joshidai, Osaka Gaidai, Waseda), companies and at least one charity which provided the funding for students to spend a year in Japan before they embarked on their final year of study in Oxford.

In 1984, the BA in Japanese was lengthened from three to four years, with students spending their first year concentrated on intensive language training at the Centre of Japanese Studies at the University of Sheffield which had been established by Geoffrey Bownas in the mid-1960s and had gone from strength to strength. Students who took the voluntary ‘year out’ at this time were, therefore, in effect now taking a five-year undergraduate programme.

While there was no doubt about the quality of language teaching which the students received in Sheffield, this programme was not without its critics, especially among those who argued that studying in Oxford was not only about what was studied but the mode of delivery of teaching and the ‘Oxford experience’. There was certainly no other programme in Oxford at the time where students spent a year being trained elsewhere. By this time, though, the Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies had been established (see below), and Arthur Stockwin, its inaugural Director, strongly supported the arrangement with Sheffield, essentially on two grounds: firstly, that it was crucial for Japanese studies in Oxford that the course be extended from three years to four,

but with existing resources it was not possible to do that in Oxford; and secondly, that for a student to spend their undergraduate years in two very different universities was a valuable life experience in its own right (indeed, this was borne out by feedback from many, though not all, the undergraduates who went through the course at that stage). Stockwin, and no doubt other academic staff, had to fight their corner with some vigour in the face of criticism from those of more traditional inclinations within Oxford and beyond.

In 1994 first year students were ‘repatriated’ to Oxford, not, as seems to be widely believed, because of traditionalist criticism but because Sheffield went ‘modular’, making it less practical to work with Oxford, which also by now had the resources to teach the first year of its four-year course in-house. Indeed, by the end of the 1990s, the undergraduate programme had grown, as Brian Powell put it, ‘to a level not dreamed of in the 1960s’.⁶ The fact that this was possible was greatly helped by the establishment of a third University Lectureship in Japanese which was established in 1988 as a result of the Parker Report on Oriental Studies and was filled by Phillip Harries who moved from SOAS. In 1988, the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) also permanently endowed a Tutorial Fellowship in Japanese at Pembroke College to which James McMullen moved from St Antony’s. Further funding during this era for Japanese studies in Oxford came from Mitsui, JUSCO, the Industrial Bank of Japan and the Yamamuro-Mitsubishi Memorial Fund. The Sasakawa Foundation also made a very generous endowment which enabled, and still enables, scholars and students from across the University, and not only those in Japanese studies, to travel to and undertake research in Japan.

The growth of the BA in Japanese Studies was, of course, linked with the growing interest in Japan itself in the period. While students who came to study Japan in the 1960s and early 1970s often came for more esoteric interests such

as Zen Buddhism and Japanese martial arts, those who came in the 1980s increasingly saw the study of Japanese and knowledge about Japan as a shrewd career move. While the Japanese economy had grown to become the second largest economy in the world by the late 1980s (and widely predicted to overtake the US as the largest economy in the world by the year 2000), the number of Japan specialists and Westerners able to speak Japanese was still vanishingly small. Natural market forces prevailed meaning that the degree in Japanese could lead to very lucrative job offers particularly when, as we shall see, a candidate could also demonstrate a knowledge of Japanese economy, society or business. That said, while the number of students enrolling in the BA programme grew substantially during the 1980s, they were always modest compared to numbers at many other universities at the time such as Sheffield and SOAS. This was because even if there was greater demand for places, numbers were restricted, in part by the number of places which colleges were able to offer (it is not possible to be a matriculated student in Oxford without having a College place), in part by the capacity of the teaching staff to offer tutorials to students in groups of two or three at least once a week, and in part by agreements with institutions in Japan who looked after students on their year abroad. Currently, twelve students are admitted to read Japanese each year and competition for places is as fierce as it has ever been.

The story of the Nissan Benefaction

If the appointment of Geoffrey Bownas in 1954 can be seen as the origin of the undergraduate programme in Japanese studies at Oxford, then the appointment of Richard Storry in 1955 can be seen as the start of the process that led to the foundation of the Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies in 1981 and the development of the MSc in Modern Japanese Studies which took its first

students in the mid-2000s. The link between his appointment and the subsequent developments, though, is considerably more difficult to trace.

Richard Storry's original appointment at St Antony's College was in the Far East Centre run by Geoffrey Hudson. With the establishment of the Nissan Institute, this was renamed in 1982 the Asian Studies Centre, as it is still called today. Storry was particularly effective in building up a Japanese 'research cluster' in the Centre from the beginning, in particularly inviting major Japanese figures, such as Maruyama Masao, Oka Yoshitake and Ishida Takeshi, to visit. He also built up a fine collection of books on contemporary Japan which subsequently became absorbed into the University's collection when the University (not the College, though somewhat confusingly the Institute has always been housed in buildings owned by the College) established the Nissan Institute.

It is a curious fact that neither Bownas nor Storry could be counted among the early supporters of the plan that a major Japanese industrial conglomerate should support a centre for the study of modern Japan. Some of the evidence for this comes from someone who has, until now, been less recognised than he should have been in the process that led to the founding of the Nissan Institute, namely Roderick MacFarquhar, who was at the time a Member of Parliament, and later became Director of the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies at Harvard University.

In around 1977, MacFarquhar proposed to the Japanese Embassy in London that a new institute of Japanese Studies be established in the south of England at the cost of around £1.5 million. MacFarquhar had been an associate fellow of St Antony's in the 1960s and he clearly thought that the College would be a suitable home for such a new Centre because of its long-standing interests in

area studies. In a long article in the *Financial Times* (17 March 1977), he proposed that this Centre should be named after Sir George Sansom who had done so much ‘to explain Japan past and present to Western audiences’.

In late 1977, the Warden and certain Fellows of the College, including Brian Powell and James McMullen, met with MacFarquhar in London to confirm the College’s interest. As it happened, Storry was in Japan at that time on sabbatical and also, in part, raising funds for Japanese Studies. He was extremely unhappy to discover that MacFarquhar had gone ahead with his proposal for the project without ever consulting him and seemed to think that the proposal might get in the way of his own fundraising efforts. In a letter (3 January 1978) to the whole Governing Body which was to meet to discuss the proposal he wrote:

‘It is not for me to say who is the more effective fund-raiser; but I think I could stake a claim to a rather better understanding of Japan and Japanese psychology...So I must ask those concerned...in any negotiations to keep me well briefed as to their progress....there should be no reluctance...to resort, if necessary, to the international telephone service.’

Despite Storry’s plea, according to the official account given in the College history by Christine Nicholls:

‘The international telephone service was not resorted to; the Governing Body approved the proposal; St Antony’s and Oxford were signed up to bidding for the new Japanese Studies centre, if and when the funds were raised.’⁷

Despite his unhappiness at the time, later on Dick Storry subsequently changed his view from opposition to the MacFarquhar initiative to support for it ‘overnight’, according to Sir Raymond Carr, at that time Warden of St Antony’s.

The decision of where any new Centre for Japanese Studies should be located was passed by the Japanese Embassy to the Foreign Office and then over to the University Grants Committee, which took soundings widely. Ronald Dore, then at Sussex and widely seen as the doyen of the study of modern Japan in the UK at the time, strongly supported the funds going to Oxford and there can be no doubt that this played a major part in the final decision.

MacFarquhar’s description of his own role in the establishment of the Nissan Institute is recorded in detail in Nicholls’ history of St Antony’s College:

The breakthrough came in the 1979 election campaign, when the Foreign Secretary, David Owen, came up to make a speech in my constituency. I pressed him to raise the Japanese institute issue with his Japanese counterpart when he met him a few days later. This Owen did, and the Japanese were particularly impressed because Owen had raised a matter which was not on the agenda. This meant, the Japanese reasoned, that the matter must be particularly important to the British and therefore should be addressed...I was summoned to the Japanese embassy where the Foreign Minister told me he had told the Ambassador to do something about the matter. The Ambassador got busy, contacted the head of Nissan, who was a classmate of his...The rest is history.⁸

Since MacFarquhar’s original possible donors, Mitsubishi and Mitsui, had both decided against funding the proposal, the link between the then-Ambassador Fujiyama and then then-President of Nissan, Ishihara Takashi was crucial to the

formation of the Institute. The notion that the Nissan Motor Company should support a new institute in Oxford, however, was not without its critics.

First, there were those who were suspicious about the establishment of a new centre for Japanese Studies at Oxford University. Chief among those who expressed this view was Geoffrey Bownas who argued, not without some logic, that it would make more sense to endow and expand the centre which he had established in the mid-1960s at Sheffield and which was already the leading centre for the study of modern Japan in the country. MacFarquhar (*Financial Times*, 5 March 1977) responded to a Bownas's letter to the *Financial Times* on this topic in a feisty manner:

Sir, - I was surprised at the letter from Professor Geoffrey Bownas (February 21) suggesting that I did not know about the centre of Japanese studies at the University of Sheffield...What I found astonishing in the letter and in the others which I have received from a number of Professor Bownas's colleagues (a correspondence almost as large as that which I have received on the Abortion Amendment Bill) was the apparent sense of outrage at the thought of expanding Japanese studies elsewhere. One might have hoped that my suggestion would have been welcomed by everyone in the Japanese field as designed to increase the resources and students entering it; that surely, it must be agreed, if we are to understand Japan better. Instead, the reaction has been parochial and self-protective. This has only confirmed me in my belief that a new centre would be desirable.

Once the Nissan Institute was established, any friction between the Japanese studies establishments in Oxford and Sheffield quickly evaporated and, indeed, with the first year BA students going to Sheffield to study, mutually advantageous arrangements between them were quickly established.

Second, there were those who were suspicious of Japanese intentions in investing in such a project in the UK at all. The UK in the 1970s was going through a particularly tough economic period which saw the collapse of much of its industrial heartlands and record levels of unemployment. The Thatcher government put a lot of effort in attracting foreign direct investment which many in the UK trade union movement thought was a way to circumvent the rights of its members. Nowhere was this sensitivity felt more than in Oxford which had been home to car manufacturing at Cowley since almost the beginning of the industry. When the first holder of the Nissan Chair of Modern Japanese Studies, Arthur Stockwin, was told of his appointment and wrote to his parents in Birmingham about it from Australia, his father wrote back: ‘When you drive your Nissan car through Cowley, be careful they don’t stone the car’. (For a detailed account of the establishment of a Nissan car manufacturing plant in the UK – which was not actually agreed until 1984 after many years of negotiations – see Mountfield, 2007.)⁹

A short piece in the *Oxford Mail* (31 October 1979) under the heading ‘Yen for Learning’ indeed could not avoid making an indirect reference to the Oxford car industry when announcing the Nissan benefaction:

Japanese car giants Datsun have given a massive £1,500,000 gift to Oxford University. In a ceremony that took place just a few miles from British Leyland’s Cowley plant Mr Takashi Ishihara...handed over a symbol of the gift to University Vice Chancellor Sir Rex Richards.

Articles in *The Guardian* and *Time Out* both suggested that Nissan’s investment in Oxford was part of what today would be called ‘soft power’ as Japan tried to deflect attention from the massive trade surpluses that it was beginning to build

with the UK at the time and the sense that its own markets were not fully open.¹⁰

A particularly strong visual satirical take on the general level of ignorance about Japan in the UK during this period was captured by the front cover of the magazine *Private Eye* (27 April 1990), showing the then-Chairman of the Conservative Party and Secretary of State for Trade, Norman Tebbit, signing a trade agreement with the President of Nissan, Ishihara Takashi, and playing on his recent proposal for a ‘Cricket test’, also known as the ‘Tebbit Test’, where he argued that whether people from ethnic minorities in Britain supported the England Cricket team (rather than the team from their country of ancestry) should be considered a barometer of whether they were truly British (see Fig. 1). This cover reinforced for colleagues in Oxford the need for a programme on contemporary Japan of exactly the type that the Nissan Institute was designed to develop.



Fig. 1: Front cover of the satirical magazine, *Private Eye*, 27 April 1990.

Another episode from the era indicates the sensitivities of the time (though more on the British side than the Japanese). When a dinner to celebrate the granting of the Nissan benefaction was arranged to be held in London at Leathersellers' Hall, the home of the Worshipful Company of Leathersellers, Dick Storry was

concerned that the Japanese guests might be offended because of possible sensitivities around the *burakumin* minority in Japan, some of whom were descended from tanners of animal hides. He discreetly sounded out the Japanese side on this. It seemed, however, that none had ever made the association, and Storry found they were unconcerned. They were, however, according to Powell, concerned that the date for the opening of the first Nissan Institute building should fall on a *kichijitsu* (a lucky day) according to the Japanese calendar.

The £1.5 million which Nissan gave as a benefaction to the University allowed for the appointment of a statutory professorship (Arthur Stockwin), a lecturer in Modern Japanese History (Ann Waswo), a lecturer in the Social and Economic Development of Japan (Jenny Corbett), a lector (Chihoko Moran), a visiting professorship (the first holder of which was Professor Tsuzuki Chūshichi), a secretary and the refurbishment of a large Victorian building (No. 1 Church Walk), owned by St Antony's College, which became the first home of the Institute. The Institute was officially inaugurated on 23 September 1981.

Once the Nissan Institute was established, it became important to rectify certain confused ideas about what it was supposed to be engaged in. Stockwin, for instance, had to fend off pressure from a persistent journalist from *Motor* magazine insisting that the Nissan Institute, in conformity with its name, ought to concern itself principally with analysis of the economics and history of the motor industry. More amusingly, a few years later when a small annexe to the original building of the Institute was converted into an office (funded, incidentally, by the Tokyo Club from which Storry had been seeking funds in Japan at the time that colleagues in Oxford were negotiating the Nissan benefaction) it was listed in the telephone directory as 'Nissan Garage'. Its first user, Roger Goodman, who had been appointed as a Junior Research Fellow,

received so many calls for spare Nissan car parts that the telephone number had to be changed.

The main objective which the Nissan benefaction imposed on the Institute was the dissemination at an undergraduate level of a wider knowledge of modern Japan, in addition to the reinforcement of studies of Japanese language and literature. The press release which the Nissan Motor Company¹¹ put out on 23 September 1981 in relation to the opening of the Institute gives interesting insights into the company's reasons for supporting the project:

Oxford is planning to put added emphasis on the study of Japanese affairs in all faculties and curricula, especially politics, economics, modern history and literature, and to expand the scope of the examinations to include questions on Japan in relevant areas of the curricula. It is hoped that in this way the Nissan Institute will stimulate students to become interested in Japanese affairs, and so contribute, not only to the future progress of Japanese studies at Oxford, but also better understanding and friendship between the two Countries.

A much more detailed account of both the guiding philosophy and the content of the activities of the Nissan Institute were laid out in Arthur Stockwin's inaugural lecture, appropriately entitled *Why Japan matters* (1983).¹² Undergraduate options were quickly and for the first time introduced into the undergraduate degrees in history and PPE (Politics, Philosophy and Economics). A group of students doing doctoral work on contemporary Japan began to quickly grow and within 25 years from its founding around 50 doctoral theses had been completed on modern Japanese society with most of those who earned doctoral degrees going on to teaching positions in universities across the world. The number of non-language options available for students doing the

undergraduate BA degree in Japanese increased substantially exposing students to the disciplines of the social sciences which added intellectual depth and authority to a programme which, while very hard work, had, according to McMullen, previously had more in common with the generalist approach of the Greats degree in Classics. The teaching of these options was helped, of course, by the huge growth in English-language scholarship on pre-modern and modern Japan from the 1980s onwards.

Interest in Japan indeed grew so rapidly at both undergraduate and graduate level that soon the new building at 1 Church Walk was clearly unable to contain it, and in June 1990 (timed in part to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the first gift) the Nissan Motor Company made a second generous donation, of £3.2 million, to build a new institute, this time on the main campus of St Antony's College, to house staff, an extended library and a lecture theatre and seminar rooms. Negotiations between the University and St Antony's College were at times difficult, but were settled with an arrangement that gave the College access to the 150-seat lecture theatre included in the new building, and on the other hand allowed the Institute to incorporate what became the Bodleian Japanese Library within the Institute building. The first ceremonial turf for the new building was turned by Prince Naruhito, the Crown Prince who had been a graduate student in Oxford, in 1991 (see Fig. 2). Showing that the best oiled arrangements, even in Oxford, can be all too easily disrupted by contingent events, the ground-breaking ceremony was delayed for some time by a delivery lorry that blocked much of the visiting party from leaving a lunch at another college. The building was completed in 1993, and this further benefaction allowed for the appointment of two new permanent members of staff, Roger Goodman in social anthropology and Mark Rebeck in economics, who took up their posts in 1993 and 1994 respectively.



Fig. 2: His Imperial Highness, Prince Naruhito, Crown Prince of Japan, breaking the ground for the new Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies building, 18 September 1991, in the presence, from, left to right, Professor Arthur Stockwin, Lord (Roy) Jenkins, Chancellor of the University, Mr Ishihara Takashi (President of Nissan) and Professor Theodore Zeldin (Sub-Warden of St Antony's College).

Japanese Studies in Oxford today

The activities of the Nissan Institute expanded considerably during the 1990s. By the end of the decade, there were up to thirty doctoral students at any one time writing dissertations on Japan; Master's courses in subjects such as anthropology, economics, politics and history as well as undergraduate programmes had options on Japan; the Nissan Institute/Routledge Japanese Studies Series which had published its first book under the Croom Helm imprint in 1986 had become the largest series in the world dealing with contemporary Japan (and will publish its 100th volume in 2016); the Institute was hosting five

or six Japan-specialist academic visitors on sabbatical from universities outside Oxford every year; the Bodleian Japanese Library had built one of the finest collections of materials on Japan in Europe; and the Institute Friday evening seminar had become a fixture not only on the Oxford but indeed the national scene and had been addressed by many of the best known scholars of Japan from across the world. Many of these early seminars were published as Occasional Papers and can still be accessed from the Institute's website today.

From the mid-2000s there were major changes in the personnel teaching about Japan in Oxford. Many of those who had dominated the scene for the past quarter-century retired: Andrea Boltho, Phillip Harries, the late Oliver Impey, James McMullen, Brian Powell, the late Marcus Rebick, Arthur Stockwin, Ann Waswo. Jenny Corbett moved to a position at the Australian National University. They were over time replaced by new colleagues: Jenny Guest, Linda Flores, Bjarke Frellesvig, Sho Konishi, Ian Neary, Clare Pollard and Hugh Whittaker.

In 2006, Carlos Ghosn who was the President of both Nissan and Renault (which had taken over Nissan in the mid-1990s) visited the Institute for the first time on its twenty-fifth anniversary. During a speech to a packed lecture theatre, he announced a third benefaction to the Institute of £1.5 million which completed the endowment of all the existing posts in perpetuity. New posts were created in the sociology of Japan thanks to financial help from the GB Sasakawa Foundation and were filled by Ekaterina Hertog and Takehiko Kariya (who moved from a professorship at the University of Tokyo). Complementing an already existing MSt course in Japanese studies in the Faculty of Oriental Studies, the Nissan Institute (now formally part of a new School of Interdisciplinary Area Studies) launched a new programme in 2007/8 in Modern Japanese Studies which had at its core an intensive language programme, a

compulsory course in research methods and options in Japanese politics, economics, anthropology, sociology, linguistics, history, literature, law and the history of art. The course was limited to taking only fifteen students a year and could be taken either as a one-year MSc or a two-year MPhil. Around twenty per cent of each cohort went on to do doctoral work on Japan.

Now in 2016 Japanese studies at the University of Oxford has been in existence for 62 years and the Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies can boast a 35-year history. Like Japanese studies elsewhere, the field has been affected by fluctuations in the fortunes of Japan itself. During the Japanese economic boom of the 1980s, demand for instruction in things Japanese boomed accordingly, but during the later ‘lost decades’ of the economy, Japanese demographic decline and the rival attractions of a resurgent China, interest tended to wane and ‘Japan passing’ became common. Despite this, demand for Japanese studies at Oxford has stayed at respectable levels, and the offering in teaching, supervision and related facilities and activities has operated at a high level. The total number of faculty listed as teaching about Japan and doing research on Japan in the most recent Oxford University Japanese Studies Newsletter has reached thirty (including emeriti).¹³ Most significantly, the distinction between pre-modern (centred on the Oriental Institute) and modern Japanese Studies (based at the Nissan Institute) has become increasingly blurred. Most academics who worked on Japan in the two institutes had their research jointly submitted to Area Studies REF panel in 2014. Academics in both institutes teach on the undergraduate BA course in Japanese. Perhaps most symbolically, from 2017 the separate MSt in Japanese Studies offered by the Oriental Institute (which has focussed on pre-modern, philological and literary research training) and the MSc in Japanese Studies offered by the Nissan Institute (which has focussed on contemporary Japanese studies training) will be amalgamated into a single programme. This will finally and completely link together the legacies of

Geoffrey Bownas and Dick Storry who each brought so much to the development of the study of Japan at Oxford in the 1950s.

¹ Nipponica 131-133.

² Brian Powell, 'Oxford and Japan', unpublished seminar paper presented at the Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies, 13 November 2009, p. 5.

³ Ian Nish, ed., *Britain and Japan: biographical portraits*, volume II (Japan Library 1997).

⁴ See the biographical portrait of Storry by Ian Nish in Hugh Cortazzi, ed., *Britain and Japan: biographical portraits*, volume v (Global Oriental, 2004).

⁵ Powell, 'Oxford and Japan', p. 10.

⁶ Powell, 'Oxford and Japan', p. 11.

⁷ C. S. Nicholls, *The history of St Antony's College Oxford, 1950-2000*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000), p. 89.

⁸ Nicholls, *The history of St Antony's College Oxford, 1950-2000*, p. 92.

⁹ Robin Mountfield, 'Course of the Nissan Negotiation 1980-84', in Hugh Cortazzi, ed., *Britain and Japan: biographical portraits*, volume vi (Global Oriental, 2007).

¹⁰ John Cunningham, 'Art or Craft? Suspensions about efforts to interest us in all things Japanese', *The Guardian*, 24 October 1981; David Rose and John May, 'The soft edge of the hard sell?', *Time Out*, 16-22 October 1981.

¹¹ The Nissan Motor Company was actually still trading in the UK at this time under the name Datsun, a name concocted from 'son of D. A. T.', the initial letters of the surnames of the three investors in the first of the company's cars, Den, Aoyama and Takeuchi; since *son* in Japanese means 'damage' the spelling was changed to the more cheerful *sun*.

¹² J. A. A. Stockwin, *Why Japan matters: an Inaugural Lecture delivered before the University of Oxford on 27 January 1983* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

¹³ See <http://www.nissan.ox.ac.uk/japanese-studies-oxford>