



SCHOOL OF MODERN LANGUAGES

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

JAPANESE@NEWCASTLE

EDITED BY HARUMI CAVANAGH

SUMMER 2016

## Student of SML won the Japanese Speech Contest for University Students

Laura Onciu, stage 3 student of School of Modern Languages won the 11th Japanese Speech Contest for University Students held in London on 27th Feb, 2016. For the past five years our students have successfully been chosen as the finalists for this prestigious national contest, however this is the first time that Newcastle University won the top speech category. Two years ago, Laura came second for the individual presentation category.

Laura's speech title was *'"Norms" that create reverse discrimination - Adverse effects of conventional wisdom in Japan'* and she talked about discrimination against males, which are regarded as "norms" in the Japanese society.



# The End of an Era

Katherine Rewcastle, BA Modern Languages (French and Japanese)

Looking back on my four years at Newcastle University, it is hard to believe how quickly time has passed. I can still remember my very first lesson (with the wonderful Suda-sensei) learning how to read katakana and hiragana. I would like to think my fellow classmates and I have progressed significantly in our command of Japanese since the days of '私はイギリス人です' with Mike Miller.



As a student of Level C Japanese, this year has undoubtedly been the most challenging year of study I have faced. However, at the same time, it has also been my most rewarding year of study. This was the year I finally was able to write a half decent sakubun, and by the end of this year I was able to write a 900-character composition on the relationship between meat consumption and global warming. Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would ever be able to achieve such things! It would of course not be possible without our wonderful teacher; it was thanks solely to the persistent guidance and encouragement of Harumi-sensei.



In fact, it was thanks to the entire Level C staff that I was able to battle through the swamps of kanji and translations. Collectively, my classmates and I feel that the level of support (both academic and emotional!) we have

received during our time as students of Japanese has been incredible. The Japanese language staff have been the most kind, patient and enduring teachers I have had the pleasure of meeting here at Newcastle. I know my entire cohort agree with me when I say they are a credit to Newcastle University. I am really going to miss all of our lessons together, even the dreaded kanji tests (which I secretly quite enjoyed). I will miss teaching Suda-sensei Geordie-isms (remember: shy bairns get nought!) and my FAVOURITE module of all time, Friday feminist book club with Gitte-sensei 1-4. Level C was tough, but we all worked hard and as a result, thanks to the practical skills they have given me, I feel ready to take the next steps and continue my (life-long!) education of Japanese. I hope the next set of Level C Japanese students enjoy themselves as much as we did, and cherish our wonderful senseis as much as we did. To the next lot of Level C students I

がんば

would just like to say; 頑張ってください。



# Anglo-Japanese Society

## End of Year Round Up!

Victoria Coppard, BA Modern Languages (Spanish and Japanese)

The Anglo-Japanese Society has finished 部活 (*bukatsu*, club activities) for another year! This year we really grew as a society, with over 90 official paid members and almost 250 members in our Facebook group, with people even coming to join us from Durham every week!



At the beginning of the week, we attended the International Welcome Fair and Societies Fair to promote our society and get people interested. Our first big welcome party filled up the whole top floor of the Hancock, and lots of new friends were made!

Over the year we did cultural activities showing both British and Japanese culture – getting to taste *nabe* (hot pot), pancakes on Pancake Day, seeing fireworks, and watching one of our very own members doing a traditional sword demonstration at Teikyo Festival in Durham! We used our Japanese cooking skills for a good cause, too – raising over eighty pounds for the Japanese Red Cross by selling *maki sushi* and *onigiri* at this year's Global Village event. It felt great to be able to support the people of Kumamoto!



As with every year, the highlights of the year were our three big parties. We joined with the Anglo-Chinese Society for a Hallow-

een party at St James' Park, with some great costumes! Christmas became a time for many of us to join together, with not only the ACS but also Durham AJS and the Newcastle Hong Kong Society! Finally, our Disney-themed boat party with Durham AJS was a lovely way to end the year.



Every week we held at least one Oshaberikai, some cake-themed at the beginning of the year but mostly our well-loved Pub Oshaberikai. So many people turned out week on week, having some food and practicing both Japanese and English – with Spanish and a few other languages sometimes too!

I'd like to thank everyone who took the time to come to our events over the year, as a member or not. As President for this year I had a fantastic time organizing events for you all, so I hope you all had a great time attending them! I hope you all carry on these fun times in both Newcastle and Japan, and for those who will still be here have a great time at next year's events!



# Japanese teaching experience at a local school

**Kaho Taguchi, Japanese exchange student 2015 /2016**

I am an exchange student from Japan and I am volunteering at Gosforth East Middle School every week. This volunteer work is one of the greatest experiences for me during my year abroad.



As a volunteer, my role is to help a teacher who runs a Japanese club after school. The club members are 13 children who are between 9 and 13 years old. All of them are keen to learn Japanese language and Japanese cultures. Some kids really like Pocket Monster (Japanese anime) and reading Japanese comic books.



In the previous club, the children have learned calligraphy, a few katakana, the phrases related to siblings, how to write numbers in kanji, how to say days of the week, and the names of school subjects. Currently, they can write their name in katakana by calligraphy, introduce themselves, and tell their weekly timetables to others. Although it may be difficult for them to understand these things, they tried hard to memorize it and inspired me. When one of the boys showed his handwriting katakana to me, I was very surprised because he wrote all 46 characters. It was amazing.

We have learned not only Japanese language, but also Japanese seasonal events such as New Year's event and Setsubun (bean-throwing festival). We enjoyed throwing beans saying 'Oni wa soto, fuku wa uchi' and

eating the same number of beans with our age. One of the biggest events for the club members was an assembly. Each kid chose one topic related to Japanese and talked about it in front of the all of school children. Some girls did a dance performance wearing kimono, a boy showed how to play with Kendama (Japanese toy), and another boy explained the meaning of Japanese flag. They had limited time, but they searched about Japan and practiced the performance a few weeks before the assembly. During the assembly, they did their best and the audience seemed enjoyed watching their various performances.



By volunteering, I realised teaching Japanese was difficult, but at the same time, I found that it was fun. When children try to use Japanese as much as possible and ask me about Japanese culture, I feel very happy. Thanks to this precious experience, I became interested in teaching Japanese as a future job. I have a few month left before going back to Japan, so I will try to do my best in this volunteer.



# OIKAWA KOHJI IN NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

Ashleigh Joyce, BA Linguistics with Japanese



On Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October, Newcastle University had the honour of hosting the charismatic teacher Kohji Oikawa. Oikawa Sensei has had a decade-long career in China, teaching Japanese to the students of Peking and Tsinghua Universities. In this time, Oikawa Sensei developed his own methods for correcting the common mistakes that his students made with intonation and pronunciation of Japanese. Since 2011, he has travelled across China and further afield guest lecturing on “Japanese Language Learning Techniques”.

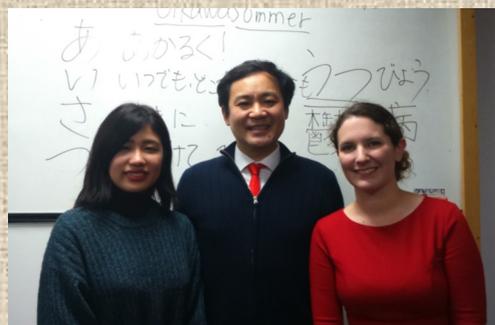
The 2 hour talk, held in the Old Library building, was given entirely in Japanese and live-translated into English by 4<sup>th</sup> year student Vicky Coppard and exchange student Akiho Tokin. Part comedy routine and part lecture, Oikawa Sensei shared his experiences in the teaching field and gave insight on his methods, with the room of language students and teachers alike becoming thoroughly drawn into the performance. Rather than leaving the audience to play a passive role,



Sensei frequently interacted with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year Japanese students. The 1<sup>st</sup> part of the talk was spent addressing the frequent problems students faced when learning Japanese, from kanji to intonation. Starting with the most frequent problem that students face, kanji, Sensei reassured the students that even Japanese adults struggle with kanji at times, and the issue is not unique to foreign learners. The difference between Western learners and Chinese learners, he said, was the confidence that the Chinese students had in their learning approach. Even if a Chinese student has no idea what a kanji's meaning is, because of their experience of learning Chinese characters they do not attach the same worry to it that a Western student might.



For pronunciation, Sensei asked the students to read from a script projected onto the screen. After a light-hearted scolding of the students for the poor effort given, Sensei gave a hilariously exaggerated imitation of his Chinese students' efforts to pronounce Japanese. However, this wasn't just for comedic value; his point was to highlight the importance of imitating a native speakers mouth positioning, in order to produce native-like pronunciation. He hammered this point home by noting that elderly Japanese people hardly open their mouth at all when they speak! Following a few tips on intonation, the audience read out the script once more with enough improvement to impress Oikawa Sensei. Subarashii!



# How language study can be useful in Job hunting

Lewis Leung, Graduate 2015, BA Linguistics with Japanese

It has just been four months since I graduated from Newcastle University (Linguistics and Japanese), but everything I experienced in the UK seems so long ago to me (Probably because I have been continuously exposed to new things in the past few months). After graduating, I went straight back to my home town of Hong Kong and started applying for jobs. I was very confused about my career path at first, because I really had no idea about what particular work I would enjoy doing, in terms of a life-long career. Actually, working in the Japanese creative industry has been my dream since I was a secondary school student. But unfortunately due to various reasons, I had to give up this plan. Having no clear direction, I started to ask myself what kind of job I would be both interested in and capable of doing. In common with many of our fellow graduates who have majored in linguistics or foreign languages, our career paths to a certain extent seem to be restricted to a number of positions, for example translator, interpreter, teacher, etc. I have been studying Japanese language for nearly 10 years, so naturally “by default”, I decided to search for jobs that required the ability of Japanese. I approached several Japanese employment agencies, this is because finding language-specific jobs is relatively not so affective to do by yourself (at least in Hong Kong). They will first arrange a casual interview with you in order to know your education background, assess your language abilities, and find out your preferences for jobs such as position and industry. Embarrassingly, I did not know what particular job I wanted and I simply just accepted every interview offer with a wide range of job functions (as long as they required Japanese language), including translator, merchandiser, sales, customer service officer, executive assistant, etc.

After a few weeks attending interviews day after day, I did receive some offers; the two I was most interested in were of the same position, financial analyst. One was from a Japanese securities company and the other was from an international research institution. As I really wanted to experience Japanese business culture, I finally decided to work for a Japanese company.



During my job searching, I realised one thing which I did not expect and I think will be good news to you all. I found most employers value language ability and personality more than your prior knowledge of the job or what subject you specialised in for your degree programme, especially for Japanese companies. It made me realise that language studies not only provide you with paths to traditional language-related jobs, but also open up your choice to any other industries or job functions (A simple logic I didn't understand :D). As I had literally zero knowledge about the financial field, what made me qualified for the job was solely because of my language skills. Besides, the longer I work in a Japanese company, the more I find how useful is the knowledge and experiences I gained in Newcastle. Translation, interpreting, reading, essays writing...Literally everything I learnt last year is applicable to my current job. I still remember how surprised I was when I found several news articles we read in class appeared in the research report of my company! So I really recommend that you pay extra attention in class (which I did not always do :p), because I am sure you will be surprised how applicable and how directly these skills will link into your future career. My last advice, which I found super important in learning Japanese (or other languages), is to start some hobbies related to Japanese and keep on doing it every day. Karaoke, novels, games, drama, anime or any other things you can think of will work. In my case, my level of Japanese improved dramatically a few months after I started reading novels. It enables you to learn Japanese 99 times faster and is more enjoyable than simply just reading text books or memorizing vocabulary list. I Wish you all the best ... and have fun with Japanese!



The central business district of Hong Kong is the area where many multinational financial services corporations have their headquarters.

# Graduate Meal Out Photos

June 2016



# I graduated!

**Oliver Smith, Graduate 2015, BA Linguistics with Japanese**

I graduated in June 2015 with a BA (Hons) in Linguistics with Japanese which is great, but what could I do with such a niche degree especially in Newcastle where I wanted to stay? The answer is quite a lot of things really!

Firstly, I saw a posting for a part time Japanese translator at a company called Ebiquity in Newcastle. Needless to say, I applied there and then, after around two weeks of waiting and an interview later, the company called back. Nervously I picked up the phone, turns out that they had given the position to someone internally (boo!) but offered me a full time position instead. (yay!)

In my new position, my role is to check submitted adverts and websites to see if they meet our client's wishes. Although I can't say who I work for and what companies submit things to us, they're big household names. I was not expecting to work with such big companies after graduation! There's quite a lot of Japanese ones, especially when Japanese companies decide to submit 200 things in one day!

Anyway, I'm quite happy with what

happened to me, so it goes to show you never know what will happen unless you try, so apply and see what happens!

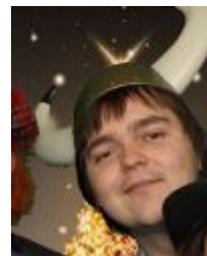
## ebiquity

Advertising Monitoring :

Ebiquity is one of the leading marketing analysis companies in the North-East



Titan the Robot visits Quorum Business Park's Greggs



Me at the Christmas party taking a photo!

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