Sainsbury Institute & the University of East Anglia

December 2018

Professor David Richardson, Vice Chancellor of the University of East Anglia and Chair of the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures visited Japan for the third time in December 2018. He was accompanied by his wife, Dr Andrea Blanchflower; and Professor Simon Kaner, Executive Director of the Sainsbury Institute and Director of the Centre for Japanese Studies at UEA, and the largest delegation ever sent to Japan by the University, including:

- Professor Sarah Barrow (Pro-Vice Chancellor for Arts and Humanities)
- Dr Eylem Atakev (Associate Dean for Internationalisation, Faculty of Arts and Humanities)
- Dr Nao Kishita (Lecturer in Health Sciences)
- Dr Ra Mason (Sasakawa Lecturer in Japanese International Relations and Foreign Policy)

And from the Sainsbury Institute:

- Professor Nicole Roussancriere (Research Director and Handa IFAC Curator of Japanese Art at the British Museum)
- Professor Toshio Watanabe (Professor of Japanese Arts and Cultural Heritage)
- Dr Jennifer Coates (Senior Lecturer in Japanese Arts and Heritage).

Japan is one of just five countries and regions around the world where the University is focusing its international strategy. The objective of this visit was to meet friends and supporters of UEA and the Sainsbury Institute in Japan, and to attend some key events, two of which were especially notable. Firstly, the 5th Ishibashi Foundation Lecture Series given by Professor Mikhail Adolphson (Keidanren Professor of Japanese at the University of Cambridge) and Professor Karl Friday (Professor of History at Saitama University) at Kokugakuin University in Tokyo, on the theme of weapons and warfare in Medieval Japan. Secondly a special reception was held at the International House of Japan, during which Professor Richardson was able to formally announce the launch of the new MA in Interdisciplinary Japanese Studies at the University of East Anglia. The reception was preceded by the launch of Professor Nicole Roussancriere’s award-winning translation of Professor Nobuo Tsuji’s ‘The History of Art in Japan’ published by the University of Tokyo Press. Professor Richardson also signed a new agreement of collaboration and exchange with Tohoku University in Sendai and met with a number of University Presidents and other senior representatives.

This report includes photos from some of our meetings and details of ongoing collaborations. During the visit we were also able to meet with Paul Madden, the British Ambassador in Japan; Mr Tatsuya Tanami, Special Advisor to the President of the Nippon Foundation; and Ms Haruta Kyoko, of the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation Tokyo Office. We were also able to visit Gakushuin University in Tokyo and were hosted by Mrs Reiko Tsukamoto of the Lumiere Winery, the oldest wine producer in Japan, and an ardent promoter of the Jomon culture of her native Yamanashi prefecture. Topics of conversation at these meetings ranged from the potential impact of Brexit on the University to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and the global significance of Japanese arts and cultures, in particular the inspiration contemporary Japanese popular culture provides for students considering embarking on a course of Japanese studies. Professor Richardson is, in addition to his other roles, President of the AURORA Network of European universities, which was of considerable interest to our Japanese academic colleagues.

Professor Sarah Barrow, Dr Jennifer Coates and Dr Eylem Atakev followed their own programme while doing some planning for a visit in summer 2019 to involve additional Faculty members, under the theme of ‘HUM goes to Japan’. This will in turn contribute to the development of an enhanced programme of Japan-related activities at UEA in summer 2020 marking the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics. The main theme of their visit was film studies, and the party met colleagues (including Professor Yukata Kubo) from the Waseda University’s Tsubouchi Theatre Museum; the Kyoto Toy Film Museum; the Uzumasa Eigamura Film Archive; the National Museum of Ethnology, where Eylem’s film Growing Up Married received its Japanese premiere; and Professors Hideaki Fujita, Shota Ogawa and Ran Ma from the Film Studies Department of Nagoya University. Film Studies will play a part in the new MA in Interdisciplinary Japanese Studies and we are also exploring new research collaborations with the East Anglian Film Archive, which is based in the Interdisciplinary Institute for the Humanities at UEA. There was also time to meet with Professor Natsumi Iikuma (International Christian University) who spent the 2017-18 academic year at the University of East Anglia, and who is advising us on developing Japanese literature studies at UEA. A further visit was made to the Art Research Centre at Ritsumeikan University, a long-standing research partner of the Sainsbury Institute, and Professor Keiji Yano.
Signing a new agreement of collaboration and exchange with President Hideo Ohno of Tohoku University. Relationships with Tohoku University are being built in International Relations, Health Sciences, Pharmacy and Archaeology. In autumn 2018 two UEA PhD student spent time at Tohoku University. We were treated to a campus tour led by International Exchange Officer David Hanley including a special visit to International Research Institute for Disaster Science (IRIDeS) at Tohoku University, led by Professor Natsuko Chubachi. The last visit was of particular interest to the Sainsbury Institute and our project on Cultural Properties Loss.

At the Ise Grand Shrine where we enjoyed a very privileged tour of many areas within the sacred precincts with the Head Priest Otohana xxx, met the Mayor and other representatives from Ise City, Kenichi Suzuki, and colleagues from Kogakkan University, the Shinto university at Ise, led by incoming President Professor Satoshi Kawano.

At Todaiji Temple in Nara, where we were guided around the Great Buddha Hall by the former Head Priest

The Japan Foundation has supported the Sainsbury Institute and UEA in multiple ways over the years, in particular through its Intellectual Exchange, Exhibition Support and Translation programmes, sponsoring conferences and workshops, exhibitions and publications. UEA is one of a small number of UK educational institutions that is a member of the Sakura Network, a global network for the promotion of Japanese language education. The Japan Foundation has also assisted UEA through its Staff Expansion Scheme Programme, helping us build capacity in Japanese studies. The Japan Foundation Budapest Office has been instrumental in promoting our Japan Orientation Summer School, and in 2019 we are working with colleagues in Budapest on a conference on Medieval Palace Cities, mainly sponsored by the Toshiba International Foundation North America programme and co-organised by the Sainsbury Institute and our former Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Fellow Professor Morgan Pitelka of the University of Northern Carolina.

The Norwich delegation at Tokyo Midtown following dinner with Matt Burney, Director of the British Council in Tokyo.

At the Toshiba International Foundation with Chairman Masashi Muromachi and President Keisuke Omori. The Toshiba International Foundation, which celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2019, is a long-term supporter of the Sainsbury Institute. Beginning with the Toshiba Lectures in Japanese Arts which ran for a decade from 2003, and then the Toshiba Lectures in Japanese Arts and Sciences, TIFO is currently supporting a series of annual conferences organised by the Institute. At UEA, since 2014 TIFO supports the Japan Orientation Summer School, with bursaries for students from central and eastern Europe. Applications for the 6th Japan Orientation Summer School are now open here.

The Sainsbury Institute has an agreement with the Faculty of Letters at the University which facilitates the Winter Programme in British Archaeology and Cultural Heritage and the Summer Programme in Japanese Archaeology and Cultural Heritage (see link to recent online reports here).