

## About the Kobe-Oxford Japanese Studies Programme

KOJSP is an educational research programme related to Japanese studies, carried out by Kobe University Faculty of Letters, in partnership with Oxford University Faculty of Oriental Studies, under an academic exchange agreement that was signed in March 2011. Since October 2012, all second-year students (12 in number) from the BA course in Japanese Studies at the Faculty of Oriental Studies, have been accepted by Kobe. The students participate in one-year specialised courses in Japanese language and Japanese studies. The most remarkable feature of this programme, lies in the fact that within the regular four-year curriculum of the Oxford BA course in Japanese Studies, Kobe University is responsible for the one year of education received by all second-year students. Needless to say, Oxford is ranked as one of the best universities in the world. This programme is extremely meaningful as it plays a major role in the education of BA students in the Japanese course at Oxford University.



### Extracurricular activities

Within the programme, the students also participate in various events and extracurricular activities, such as field trips (Nara field trip, Global Active Learning in Hiroshima etc.), presentations in Japanese at the International Students Forum, calligraphy classes, one-week homestay within Hyogo Prefecture, local festivals and farming experience, and depending on the year, students are also able to experience kabuki, bunraku or noh plays. These activities are rich in content so that students can gain a full grasp of Japanese culture, in both the rural areas and city environs, mixing aspects of both traditional and modern culture. These extracurricular activities play an important role in complementing their Japanese language learning in class, and for deepening the students' understanding of Japanese culture and society.

### Academic and cultural interaction with students from the Faculty of Letters

Each participating student is assigned a student assistant from the same academic department as their supervisor. This enables smooth academic interaction between KOJSP students and Japanese students, usually in small study rooms. Moreover, at the Faculty of Letters, students are able to attend the same lectures and seminars as Japanese students, which also provides a valuable opportunity for interaction. As well as this academic interaction focused on learning, an International Hour is organized once a month so that KOJSP students can interact freely with students from different academic fields. All students live in a dormitory with both Japanese and international students, and by joining in sports and cultural activities of university clubs and circles, they can interact with students from other faculties of Kobe University.



### KOJSP Student's Voice

In my first term, I was still finding my feet in Kobe, and the trips organised by the Faculty of Letters provided a worry-free and fun way to explore Japan. Becoming more confident, I have still been grateful for the relaxed atmosphere of the Faculty, not to mention its pun-tolerant teachers. These days, if I look out over Kobe from the International Student Centre (known as 'Nice View' by my friends), I can feel myself becoming nostalgic for what I see. Downtown Sannomiya, with its fake English restaurants; the suave Hankyu Railway; the red lights of the Rokko Island industrial cranes.

### Student Assistant's Voice

In my first year, I visited Oxford through Kobe University's Oxford Summer Programme, and this led to my decision to become a student assistant of a KOJSP student. The main job as a student assistant is to support international students in their everyday life and their study of Japanese. Although it may sound simple, support covers a wide range of activities. Of course, there is support for study, but there is also giving advice in moments of anxiety as this is a one-year long programme in an unfamiliar country. By the time our friendships deepen, I could also learn about British youth culture although I am in Japan. Being of the same age, we have a lot of things in common, but cultural differences exist. Cultural difference is a difficult topic for any country, but I think the charm of this job is that in the end you are able to overcome them and face each other as individuals.

## Kobe-Oxford Japanese Studies Programme Kobe University, Faculty of Letters

1-1, Rokkodai-cho, Nada-ku, Kobe, 657-8501, JAPAN

► For further details and an update on events, please visit the KOJSP website.

Kobe University Faculty of Letters  
KOJSP website

<http://www.lit.kobe-u.ac.jp/graduate/kojsp.html>

KOJSP FACEBOOK

<https://www.facebook.com/KOJSP-315116381939237/>

KOJSP



# KOJSP

Kobe-Oxford Japanese Studies Programme

### From the Faculty of Letters, Kobe University

Since it first started in 2012, the KOJSP has been an extremely important programme for the Faculty of Letters, Kobe University. Every year around 12 students are studying together with Kobe University students on the same campus and they interact in various ways. Through the International Hour and other events that involve international students from other universities, the interest towards international exchange within the Faculty of Letters has increased.

Among the Japanese students, there is a large number of students who participate in the Oxford Summer Programme after their encounter with the KOJSP students and through their student assistant activities. For us, it is a great pleasure to find Japanese students who re-examine their own culture and language and start to deepen their understanding after having come into contact with the KOJSP students, who show a deep interest in Japanese language and culture.

Moreover, due to this programme, exchange at the level of research professors from both universities became possible and is currently under way. KOJSP students are beginning to contribute to the wider society, finding jobs in Japan or continuing research on MA courses. This programme would have not been possible to run without the cooperation and support from the administrative office of Kobe University, the Faculty of Letters Alumni Association and local community. We earnestly hope that this programme will continue under this extensive cooperation and support.



Associate Professor  
Kaori Ashizu



# KOJSP

Kobe-Oxford  
Japanese Studies  
Programme

## The four characteristics of the programme



### KOJSP Japanese language course

All the students participating in the programme take the Japanese language course, and can take up special elective courses integrated within the larger curriculum. In order for the students to improve their language proficiency skills, they take two 90 minute classes of Japanese language in the morning, five days a week. The students are split into two classes (I and II) depending on their proficiency, so that we can deliver an applied learning approach with different textbooks suited to their needs and skills. Besides the various class activities, great importance is put on practical learning, such as conducting interviews with Japanese students etc. In February, there is a joint presentation for the Japanese language classes, where both class I and class II form groups and present together. At the end of the programme in August, there is a final presentation where the students present on a research topic they have chosen, in Japanese, to their professors from Oxford University, the president of Kobe University, as well as professors and students at the Faculty of Letters.



### Specialised courses at the Faculty of Letters

Each semester, the KOJSP students can choose two specialised courses, offered by the Faculty of Letters, from a wide variety of courses set up for this programme that match their own academic interests. The courses they can register for cover all academic areas in the faculty, including Philosophy, Japanese Language and Literature, Chinese Literature, British and American Literature, French Literature, German Literature, Japanese History, Asian History, European History, Psychology, Linguistics, Art Theory, Sociology, Art History, and Geography. Besides learning about Japanese history, literature and linguistics, some courses organize study field trips to Nara and Hiroshima, providing valuable fieldwork-based learning opportunities. In the seminars offered for international students, they read introductory texts on Japan in Japanese. Depending on the discipline, there are courses on text readings in English, French and German, which enable the students who have already acquired these languages to practice translating western texts into Japanese.

### From the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Oxford University

The first cohort of Oxford students of Japanese arrived in October 2012 in Kobe University to attend the Kobe-Oxford Japanese Studies Programme, KOJSP. This followed a significant restructuring of the Japanese Studies BA course at Oxford, so that our students now spend all of their second year at Kobe University. This was big change from the previous course structure which did not include a full year in Japan as part of the BA. We were both excited at the prospect, but also conscious that any change brings unknowns with it.

However, any concerns we might have had about unforeseen problems proved to be unfounded. Our students go out to Kobe University after completing a year of intensive study at Oxford, to attend a tailored programme of study at Kobe University. They come back to Oxford with very good language skills which they are able to use to good effect, a good first-hand familiarity with life in contemporary Japan, and a strong appreciation for Kobe University. Our students all enjoy and benefit from their time at Kobe University and in Japan. And we get students very well equipped for two more years of demanding, rigorous and intense academic study here in Oxford.



Professor  
Bjarke Frellesvig

## 4 years spent as an Oxford University student



### One year schedule at Kobe University (an example of 2016-2017)



### KOJSP final presentation

During the spring semester, starting in April, as well as the KOJSP Japanese language course and the specialised courses, students have to attend the KOJSP seminar, a topic-based seminar, where students conduct research on a topic related to Japanese studies (Japanese culture, society, history, literature and so on), which they choose themselves. They work closely with their supervisors, a professor who advises all the students in their research, and their student assistants, and make a final presentation in Japanese of their research results at the programme closing ceremony in early August. There are cases when the research topic was further developed into a dissertation paper required by Oxford University in the fourth year. Since 2016, the Collection of KOJSP Research Papers was created, so that the research results, which are the fruits of the students' one-year study, take not only the form of an oral presentation but also a concrete written form.



#### Some examples of research topics chosen for the KOJSP seminar

- "Changes in the way of thinking towards Bushido" (KOJSP student from the second cohort)
- "The problems regarding translation" (KOJSP student from the third cohort)
- "The relationship between chicken and the Japanese" (KOJSP student from the fourth cohort)

## Taking part in various events



### Oct Global Active Learning in Hiroshima

After the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and Museum visits we held a discussion, in which we split into groups and discussed with local Hiroshima residents about issues raised by Obama's speech, before presenting our ideas. The level of discussion was very high, and I came across some interesting ideas, as well as polishing my own through the discussions. It was definitely fruitful to pick apart the implications and assumptions of Obama speech and to what extent Obama was truly criticising the current order of nuclear weapon ownership.



### Dec International Students' Forum

The environment speech which I presented in the first academic term, not only developed my understanding of global environmental issues, but also enhanced my confidence in speaking Japanese. What I especially liked about this experience is that after the speech we had discussion time with the audience and the teachers, who provided us with extra information and more food for thought. The presentations instigated me to deeply think about how we can cooperate mutually with nature, as a human being living on this planet earth. I think that it is very important for each one of us to live a lifestyle that exerts minimal damage to nature.



### Dec Homestay

Initially I was a bit nervous going into the homestay; the prospect of moving out of my room to live with people I didn't know was a bit nerve-wracking for me. However, I was quickly proven wrong. My hosts were a lovely family, who lived in Rokko Island, very close to the university. They had a long tradition of hosting international students, so I was definitely reassured by that. The great thing about staying with a host family was that it allowed you to experience real Japanese life; I was able to do many activities that I wouldn't have known to do as an exchange student or tourist, and I was able to finally eat proper Japanese food! Overall I really enjoyed my Homestay, and am still in contact with my host family.



### Apr Awajishima Farm Experience and Homestay

This year in April we got to do a homestay in Awajishima, and it was lots of fun. Firstly, we got to look around a local farm and to help them pick and clean carrots, which was surprisingly addictive. Then, after eating a home-made bento, we were collected by our host families. My host family was very kind and curious about England, and the 4 year old daughter was hilarious. They organised a BBQ and fireworks on the first night, and the next day we went to a theme park and to the Izanagi shrine. I really recommend doing this homestay.



### Jun Kobe University Secondary School Visit

On the 14th of June, we went to Kobe University secondary school, and gave a presentation to the high school students about environmental issues, in Japanese. I think all of the KOJSP students were nervous, but the presentations went very well. After our presentations, the KUSS students also gave presentations about environmental issues, but in English. We were incredibly impressed by everyone's English skills. Afterwards, we joined the KUSS high school students' class, and we talked to them in English and Japanese about environmental issues. Everyone had very interesting ideas, and I learned a lot from them.



### every month International Hour

International Hour was always a good chance to gather with our student assistants and teachers and chat, once over delicious roasted sweet potatoes. Other highlights were when we went to see the koinobori (carp streamers) on a sunny day and when we were shown some old art scrolls. But the opportunity to talk was the best part. Without them, we may never have found the time to do so. Which would have been a shame so I'm glad International Hour existed for us, and long may it continue. And thank you to the teachers and students who organised them for us to enjoy.