

## **My Japan, My Britain**

In 2013 we marked the 400th anniversary of Anglo-Japanese relations with the Japan400 project. One of the ways in which we celebrated this many-sided and dynamic relationship was with *My Japan, My Britain* – a collection of first-hand accounts celebrating the mutual interest, respect and admiration that the British and Japanese continue to share. We asked people who, in one way or another, have one foot in Japan and one foot in Britain to tell us about what first attracted them to the other culture, and what it means to them today. These are stories of inspiration, humour, creativity, and of challenges overcome.

*My Japan My Britain* was originally hosted on the Japan400 website, and we are very grateful to the original contributors and coordinators for allowing us to transfer the content over to the Japan Society website.

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## Anne Kaneko

Chairman of a manufacturing company in Koriyama, Fukushima



“How did a shy girl from North Yorkshire with a ‘flair for languages’ end up in Fukushima? From country school to the School of Oriental and African Studies; on to Tokyo and several years cocooned in the Embassy; then marriage to Naochika – tall, handsome, charming. But he was an eldest son – the *chōnan*. There should be a sign at Narita: Beware the *Chōnan*! In 1980, finally bowing to pressure from his father, we moved to Koriyama in Fukushima prefecture, a commercial town in a rural backwater no one had heard of. Aside from missionaries, there were few foreigners. I didn’t like being stared at but enjoyed special status giving talks on my assigned topic, ‘A blue-eyed view of Japan’ where a foreigner speaking Japanese was the main draw. Mastering the language, discovering the culture was an adventure. Fukushima was beautiful. In the winter we skied in the mountains. In the summer we swam and sailed on the lake.

“Then in 1989 Naochika died and I became CEO, *shachō*, of the family firm. If your husband died you were expected to step into his shoes with no training and carry the torch for the next generation. I didn’t play by the rules. My three children I brought up in England. And after 23 years I sold the business. But after feeling like an outsider for so many years, the earthquake and nuclear accident made me intensely loyal to this area. Soon after the accident the Embassy rang me twice urging me to evacuate on the bus leaving from Sendai. But how could I abandon 100 staff? And I found myself deeply saddened. That obstinacy, reluctance to change or voice an opinion which I had found

so frustrating suddenly became virtues in the aftermath of the disaster, and it was heartbreaking to see the blight on this area so rich in natural beauty.

“I’m honoured to be part of this community and in the end that cliché about doing business in Japan – the importance of long term relationships – turned out to be true. The fact that I was able to sell the business and can continue making a living here I owe to the people I’ve known for over 30 years. For their friendship and support I’ll always be grateful.

“When I retire to England it will be hard to leave. But it will be the start of a new adventure. My life with Japan may have had its ups and downs. But it’s never been boring.”

Website: [Anne Kaneko's Fukushima Blog](#)

## Dai Fujikura

Musician and Composer (Photo ©Ai Ueda)



Although Dai Fujikura was born in Osaka, he has now spent more than 20 years in the UK where he studied composition and has been the recipient of numerous prizes. He is fast becoming a truly international composer. His music is not only performed in the country of his birth or his adopted home, but is now performed in Caracas and Oslo, Venice and Schleswig-Holstein, Lucerne and Paris.

“I’ve spent more than half my life in the UK. In fact I feel more British than Japanese. The two cultures at first seem worlds apart. The excessive politeness which is common currency in Japan is something I shall never really understand. Having said that, compared with other European cultures, I think Britishness is like a reflection, albeit faint, of Japaneseness; both peoples are self-effacing and apologetic.

“So it wasn’t a big culture shock to come here as a teenager. The only real challenge was the language. It didn’t help that the Japanese academic year is out of sync with the British, which meant I joined the school in April, missing the first two terms of study for

GCSE. The plan was to repeat year 10, giving me an extra term to prepare for my exams as well as learn English, but the headmaster, despite my worst ever exam results, decided to let me progress to year 11.

“The first month wasn’t easy as all the other kids had established friendships and I had no one to help me with my homework. Language was the big problem, especially biology with those Latin names for body parts. I went to the school on a music scholarship and participated in my first concert after 4 weeks. What a transformation: suddenly everybody wanted to be my friend.



2005年ルツェルン音楽祭にて同音楽祭委嘱作品「Stream State」の世界初演に向けて ピエール ブーレーズ氏とリハーサル。The rehearsal with Mr. Pierre Boulez for the world premiere of “Stream State” at Luzern Music Festival 2005 Photo Priska Ketterer, Luzern Festival

“It was a strict boarding school with three roll calls every morning – when you got up, another at breakfast and a third before church. I couldn’t handle this. I missed everything, left the school premises without permission, would take the train up to London when I felt like it. I missed breakfast and would sneak out to a café with a friend.

One day some teachers came in there to have their breakfast. My friend went white as a sheet, but they just gave me a friendly wave as they left.

“So you see I was in a privileged position. Because I was the music scholar, I could break all the rules without punishment. It was music which made my new life in the UK possible. The school even involved me in their fundraising dinners as a sort of musical ambassador. I thought that was cool and I felt very businesslike.



Photo © Tsutomu Ishiai

“Although this is my adopted country, my Japanese friends tell me I haven’t changed a bit. So maybe you can be both Japanese and British at the same time.”

Website: [www.daifujikura.com](http://www.daifujikura.com)



## Haroon Mirza

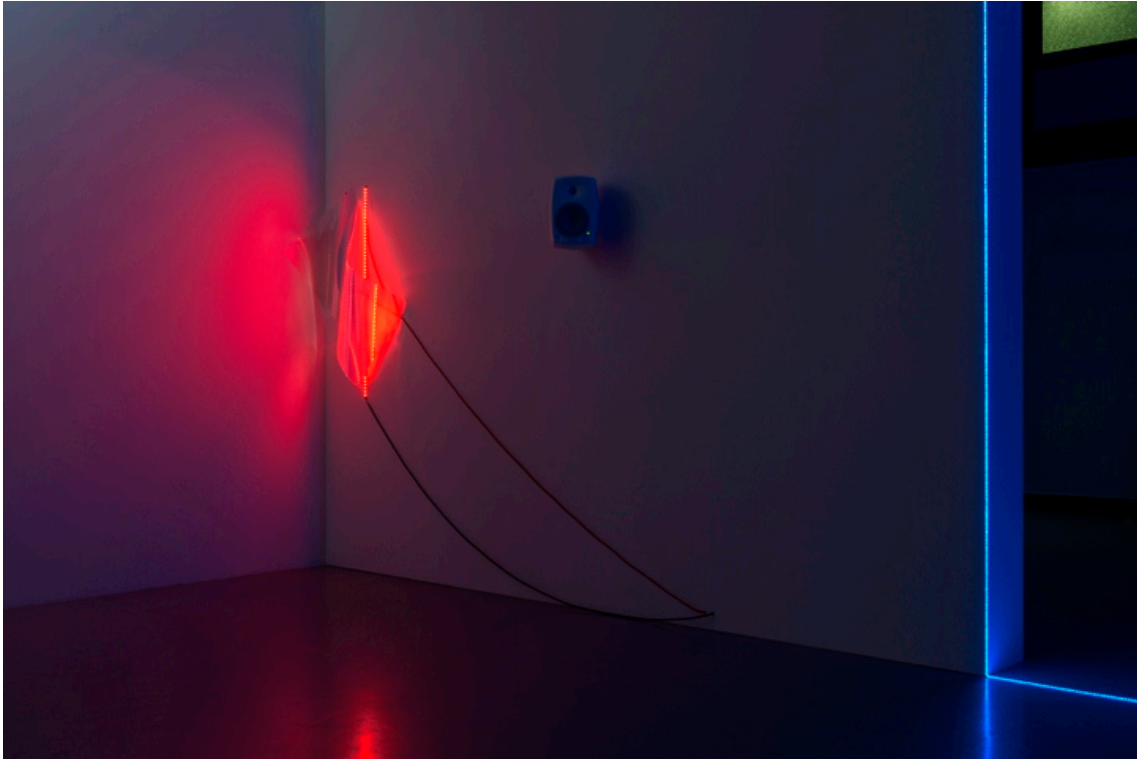
Artist

Haroon Mirza is a British artist, working in London. His site-specific installations use audio compositions and found domestic materials. In 2012 he won the Daiwa Foundation Art Prize and exhibited at SCAI The Bathhouse in Tokyo.



Haroon Mirza, Falling Rope (2013)

“It wasn’t surprising to hear that the most commonly used word for noise in Japan was noise. The word is relatively new anyway, it came about during the industrial revolution to describe the sound of machinery and is etymologically linked with the word nuisance. In Japan though, the imported word has little established relationship with pollution, anxiety and the idea of it being a nuisance, which might account for the aural culture in Japan being so fertile and fruitful. Listening is regarded just as highly as seeing.”



Haroon Mirza, Falling Rope (2013)

Website: [www.clickfolio.com/haroon/](http://www.clickfolio.com/haroon/)

Lisson Gallery: [www.lissongallery.com/artists/haroon-mirza](http://www.lissongallery.com/artists/haroon-mirza)



## **Hisaaki Yamanouchi CBE**

Professor Emeritus of English, Tokyo University



Hisaaki Yamanouchi CBE is Professor Emeritus of English, Tokyo University. (Hon) CBE. He was born in Hiroshima in 1934 and studied at Tokyo, Columbia and Cambridge Universities. He was the first Japanese to receive a PhD in English from Cambridge. He has taught at a number of universities in Japan as well as at Cambridge and the Open University of Japan. His many publications include *The Search for Authenticity in Modern Japanese Literature* (CUP).

“My first encounter with Britain was in my father’s library in Hiroshima. I wondered as a child what was written in those English books gilt-lettered on their spine. Together with the books, their owner, and everything else, the whole city was wiped out instantaneously by the Bomb on 6th August 1945. At the secondary school I entered a couple of years afterwards I made friends with a grandson of the renowned founding father of English Studies in Hiroshima. At his house I saw rows and rows of shelves filled with standard English authors from the medieval to the present, which evoked in me aspirations that one day I should be reading them.

"Years later I decided to read 'British Studies' at Tokyo University. This was a new course of studies inaugurated in 1951 which aimed at cross-disciplinary studies of British culture and society with a view to attaining an understanding of 'a whole way of life' concerning Britain. It has since run along with the traditional 'English Department' which dates from the late nineteenth century and has had during its long history a host of dedicated English scholars/writers like Edmund Blunden (1896-1974). Fortune favoured me with the poet Anthony Thwaite (1930- ), who came with his wife Ann (1930- ) to teach in Tokyo during 1955-57. They represented the living British culture embodied in them. It was an exceedingly fresh and inspiring experience for us to have English literature taught in English by a living poet and without Japanese as a medium. Anthony introduced us to the British Council in Tokyo (established in 1953), the use of its library, and the frequently organised series of lectures given by the resident British writers/scholars.



Anthony Thwaite at Tokyo University Komaba (1957)

"While pursuing my postgraduate studies in English, an opportunity arose for me to spend a year at Columbia University and another at the University of Toronto (with the

rare privilege of being supervised by the great Coleridgean Professor Kathleen Coburn [1905-91]). In 1967 I was among the fortunate dozen of British Council Scholars (the Council 'Representative' then was E. W. F. Tomlin [1913-88]). That was the genesis of my extended years (1967-76) at Peterhouse (doing research in the English Faculty and teaching Japanese as Lector in the Faculty of Oriental Studies), my later revisit (1984-85) as Visiting Fellow-Commoner at Trinity College, Cambridge, and my frequent journeys between Britain and Japan. What I learnt and gained in Britain is too invaluable rich a nourishment for my subsequent career to be summed up in just a few words."



Professor Yamanouchi with the Thwaites in Tokyo (2005)

## Jill Fanshawe Kato

Potter (Photo © Setsuo Kato)



Jill Fanshawe Kato is a British potter who has exhibited widely internationally. Originally trained as a painter, she was drawn to Japanese ceramics while living in Japan and studied with the potter Yosei Itaka. Her ceramics are inspired by the natural world and travel.

“The most obvious way in which Japan has influenced my life is that I first went there as a painter and came back to England as a potter. As a recent graduate in Painting from Chelsea School of Art, I had scarcely experienced the world of ceramics.

“Living in a 3-tatami room in a student lodging house in the then-downmarket Harajuku, I could only afford the cheapest restaurants. I clearly remember the teishoku meal served on a tray, a long sanna fish served on a sparkling blue and white long

rectangular plate, just right for the fish. Five varied bowls held artistically-arranged pickles, soup and rice, and tea was in a warm orange shino yunomi. The chef in blue and white worked behind the tiny counter, backed by shelves of blue and white ceramics. Having previously mainly encountered the big white round plate in England, I fell in love with ceramics from then on.



Asobi Sake set (Photo © Setsuo Kato)



Rock Bowl (Photo © Setsuo Kato)

“Early evening in Shibuya in the August heat, armies of men in identical white shirts were marching across the bridges as an amazing inflorescence of neon lights began to flower on tops of buildings in every colour, like an electrical garden. I only had 3 words of Japanese at that time and those unreadable kanji advertisements were the most exotic thing I’d ever seen.

“Despite the kindnesses and the wonderful cultural experiences there were positives and negatives, however, the downside for me was the rampant male chauvinism in those days and the experience of being a *gaijin* (foreigner) everywhere I went. Missing liberation and flower power, I came back to England vowing never to return to Japan.

“Life being what it is, however, I had to rethink Japan, as one of the first people I met on my return to London was Japanese photo-journalist Setsuo Kato, studying in London for 3 years but due to return to Tokyo. We were later to marry, in kimonos, in a Shinto ceremony in Tokyo, but the 3 years were a torture for me as to whether to go back to Japan or not. Eventually, Setsuo went back and sent me a return London-Tokyo-London air ticket in case I changed my mind, and he also found me a lovely pottery teacher called Yosei Itaka, so my fate was sealed. I studied with Yosei for four years before we returned to England more or less permanently, but there began my ping-pong life as a potter, with 43 exhibitions in Japan and many in the UK and internationally. I never planned it like that, but Japan has certainly enriched my life.”



Bird Vase (Photo © Setsuo Kato)





Spanish Birds (Photo © Setsuo Kato)



Jugs (Photo © Setsuo Kato)



Curve Pod (Photo © Setsuo Kato)



Peacock Bowl (Photo © Setsuo Kato)



Exotic Plants Dish (Photo © Setsuo Kato)

Scottish Gallery: [www.scottish-gallery.co.uk/artist/jill-fanshawe-kato](http://www.scottish-gallery.co.uk/artist/jill-fanshawe-kato)

## **Kathryn Findlay**

Architect

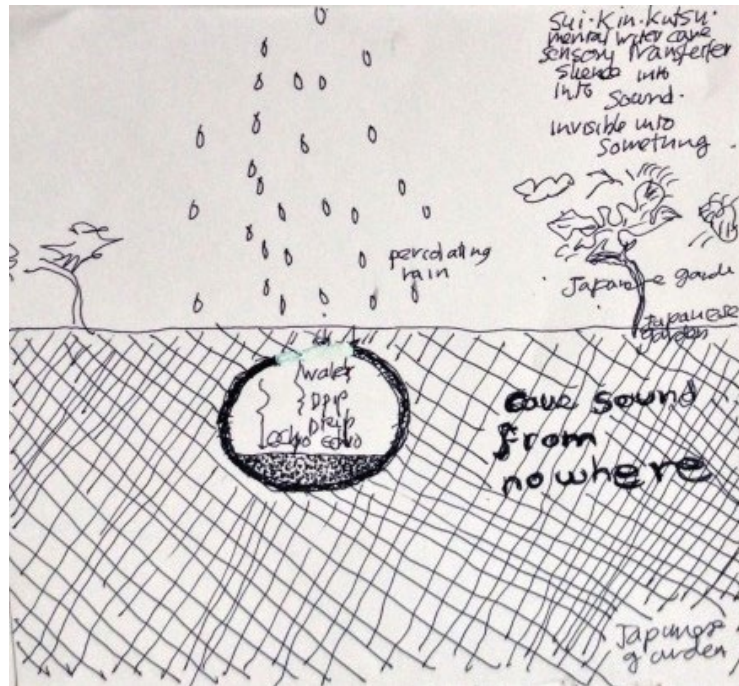


When we first put together 'My Japan, My Britain' for Japan400, we were looking for ways to celebrate the encounter between Britain and Japan. Some encounters are recent, some are long-standing and all express finding something special in each other's culture.

One person who symbolises this encounter was Kathryn Findlay, a brilliant and pioneering architect who, with her husband Ushida Eisaku created a new expressionist genre of architecture in Japan described as both modernist and surreal and typified by the organic 'Soft and Hairy House' built in 1994 in Tsukuba, Japan. Kathryn graduated from the Architecture Association in 1979. She became Associate Professor of Architecture at Tokyo University, Visiting Professor at the Technical University of Vienna and UCLA, and Honorary Professor at the University of Dundee and went on to create a significant and influential body of work in the UK. Sadly, Kathryn passed away early in 2014 but we discussed with her the 'My Japan, My Britain' project and she was an enthusiastic supporter. At the time of her death, on 10 January 2014, Kathryn was announced as winner of the 2014 Jane Drew Prize for her "outstanding contribution to the status of women in architecture".



Therefore, on the occasion of re-launching 'My Japan, My Britain' with the Japan Society, we would like to share with you her magical thoughts about Suikinkutsu (水琴窟). Her daughter Miya says 'I remember my mum doing impressions of the sound that a suikinkutsu makes. It was a sort of 'plop plop' sound and she was so enthusiastic! Even just the memory of this sound would make her feel calm and peaceful'.



Kathryn Findlay's sketch of a Suikinkutsu (水琴窟)

Kathryn was always inspired by Japan, and in turn, Kathryn continues to inspire young architects and artists and all of us interested in the creative connections between Britain and Japan.

"My favourite sculpture does not have an author. It is generic and invisible. It is a hollow metal sphere with a hole cut into its top and buried under the earth and when it rains, the rainwater percolates the soil and drips into the hollow sphere and you hear the echo of water dripping into the metal cave. And it gives you an exchange of heat into cool and the sound is calming and there is nothing to see..."

Find out more about Suikinkutsu: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suikinkutsu>

## **Kozo Hiramatsu**

Director of the London Office of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science



Kozo Hiramatsu is Director of the London Office of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. He is Professor Emeritus of Kyoto University and was British Council Fellow at Southampton University, 1981-82. His academic research has been on the sonic environment, initially the engineering of noise control and subsequently in the field study of acoustic ecology.

“When I went to Southampton in October 1981 as a British Council Fellow, I had not expected that the one-year visit would prove so crucial to my future academic career. I was an Assistant Professor in the Environmental Engineering Department of Kyoto University, doing research mainly on the effect of noise.

“The Institute of Sound and Vibration Research of Southampton University was a fabulous institution with a high reputation worldwide. What I really envied was the way the academic staff could focus their energy mostly on research and education thanks to the assistance of many support staff. Besides conducting psychophysics experiments in whole body vibration and regularly going to real ale pubs as a CAMRA member, I frequently visited libraries and encountered a book written by a late prominent Harvard professor of acoustical engineering. It was almost the first book published about the history of acoustics before the emergence of modern science. I was so impressed by the book that I decided to translate it into Japanese and it was later published in Japan. The libraries in the UK were amazingly useful for me in finding the references cited in the book, many of which were classical and even medieval texts dealing with Greek, Roman



and Arabic science and civilisation. In doing so, I found I was reading many books on the history and philosophy of science as a matter of course. That experience was epoch-making and later led me to reconsider the paradigm of my own research in engineering and to get out of the laboratory into the town of Kyoto to do fieldwork on the sonic environment.

“As field studies were not regarded as ‘engineering’, I left the Engineering Department and eventually became a professor of area studies. Would this have happened if I had not left Japan? Not impossible perhaps, but it would have been extremely difficult. Or rather, I should say that had I stayed in Japan, pursued by the miscellaneous demands of day-to-day university business, it would have been unlikely. Without the terrific libraries and the friendly colleagues who answered my questions, I have no doubt I could not have translated the book and discovered those texts on the history and philosophy of science. Putting myself in the British environment was a truly fruitful experience. And I cannot find proper words with which to express my gratitude to the British Council.”

Find out more about the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science:  
[www.jsps.go.jp/english/](http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/)

## Mayumi Hayashi

Post-doctoral Research Fellow in the Institute of Gerontology at King's College London



Mayumi Hayashi is an academic specialising in social care studies, specifically the care of older people in Japan and the UK. She is a post-doctoral Research Fellow in the Institute of Gerontology at King's College London.

"I am originally from Gifu Prefecture in central Japan and now live in London, working as a post-doctoral Research Fellow in the Institute of Gerontology at King's College London. My research focuses on the care of older people in Britain and Japan, from a variety of perspectives. I am currently working on a Leverhulme-funded research project on the role and contribution of the voluntary sector in providing social care for older people in Britain and Japan. I am also an Associate Research Fellow in the Department of Human Services Research at University of Tsukuba, Japan. My interest in the care of older people comes from the experience of looking after my late grandfather, with my family, at various care locations in Japan. In addition to this personal experience, I have long held an academic interest in the foundations of Britain's Welfare State and comparative welfare policy. So I came to England to embark on a PhD in the history of long-term care of older people in England and Japan, completed in 2010. Developing my thesis I have recently published a book *The Care of Older People: England and Japan, A Comparative Study* (Pickering & Chatto).

"Acknowledging that the subject — the care of older people — is of significant importance and relevance to all sections of society, I have expanded my research activity beyond the academic domain. I have been involved in outreach projects and in

public engagement, promoting an enhanced understanding of the subject among a wider audience in both Britain and Japan and facilitating exchanges of information, knowledge and experiences between the two countries. In the process of disseminating the many challenges facing Japan, I have published articles on the care of older people there, in the *Guardian*, the *Health Service Journal*, *Housing LIN* and *History & Policy*. I have also given a presentation to the Cabinet Office regarding Japan's 'time-banking' scheme—a tradition of local mutual help networks based on exchanges of non-monetary units termed 'time credits'. I have advised the UK HM Treasury and Canadian policy-makers on the financing of long term care.



“For a general public audience, I have discussed aspects of Japan’s retirement and ageing in BBC World Service programmes on both of these themes. Meanwhile, I am in the process of explaining Britain’s policy and practice to a wide Japanese audience by, for instance, advising the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation, NHK, on the production of a TV programme examining dementia care in Britain.

“Most recently, I am engaged in several developing projects addressing various aspects of the challenges both Japan and the UK are faced with by the increasing need for dementia care. I will be co-leading an imminent field study trip to Japan to allow the various UK specialists first hand experiences of Japanese care models.”

**Website:** [Dr Mayumi Hayashi page at King’s College London](#)

## Opal Dunn

Co-founder of the first International Children's *Bunko* in Tokyo



Opal Dunn co-founded the first International Children's Bunko in Tokyo in 1977 to support and encourage 'international' children who have a knowledge and understanding of other countries' language and culture.

"I was privileged to stay in Tokyo for nine years in the 1970s. This gave me time to bond with Japanese who understood my passion to help young children reach their, often underestimated, potential to pick-up languages and explore their cultures.

"I clearly remember my first dialogue in Tokyo about young children in 1972, when Nursery School Education academics, mostly men, invited me to the Celebration of 100 years of Japanese Nursery School Education. There I learned to my surprise that the roots of Nursery Education in Japan came from a German lady, Clara Tittleman, trained at the Froebel Teachers' College in Berlin. She, together with a Japanese German-speaking professor, opened the first (Froebel) Nursery School at Ochanomizu. To these academics' amazement, the roots of British Nursery Education also came from Froebel brought to England in the 1850s by German ladies, who later founded the Froebel Education Institute, where I had been trained initially. From this shared link grew a supportive interest in my passion.

"Living in Kagurazaka, then a Japanese neighbourhood, I soon met International Japanese families, who had lived overseas on assignment and whose *kikokushijo*—(returnee children) spoke native-speaker English. Mothers (children's first language

teachers) told me about their young children's academic and social re-entry problems into Japanese Elementary Schools and asked my advice on how, within Japanese monolingual society, they could keep their young children's English fluency. I easily empathised with them as my young children had lived in three Asian countries with short intervals in London and, as planned, were unconsciously absorbing three languages.

"The future wealth of any nation lies in their children' (UNESCO) and I realised that these *kikokushijo*, like my own, could all grow-up to be valuable mediators between peoples. They had unique potentials and, to achieve them, I had to help them re-enter Japanese society smoothly, whilst finding a place where they could use and 'feel good' about their other bi-language and culture.

"As the numbers of *kikokushijo* were increasing, I knew I had to create something different from formal language schools, as these young children did not need to be taught. They were used to picking-up language themselves by taking part in interesting activities that also included culture. I was also aware that anything I created had to be an easy-to-copy model that could be used with any language, and be sustainable after I left Japan.

"I had visited a friend's small Japanese *Home-Bunko* (mini-Library) and deduced that if I internationalised this Japanese concept, rather than introducing a foreign, unfamiliar idea, *kikokushijo* would be more easily accepted in society. As a lover of picture books, I decided to make my own English *Home-Bunko* with my private collection of 200 books. Thus children could borrow books, join in book activities with me and unconsciously increase their English in the way they had been used to in schools overseas.

"However, on reflection I realised the limitations of my original plan. So I recast my idea and in 1977, together with Japanese friends, opened *Dan Dan Bunko*, the first International Children's *Bunko*, in a Tokyo Community Centre. Dan Dan (slowly slowly), apart from being my name Mrs Dan (Dunn), implied we were not a Juku! News spread fast and within two years the model I had created had been copied not only using English, but also French and German.

"Now, 37 years later, self-help, non-profit, International Children's *Bunko* exist worldwide as do special human bonds made through volunteering in Bunko. Visits to

Tokyo for me consist largely of catch-up meetings with *Bunko* staff and children, Bunko OGs and grown-up *kikokushijo*, whilst in the UK I am involved with the 36 IC Bunko that help very young children enjoy Japanese.

“Most children in International Children’s *Bunko* world-wide today are ‘Double Children’ from mixed marriages where one parent, generally the mother, is Japanese. ‘Double Children’ in UK attend British Nursery or Primary School and unconsciously grow-up with 2 languages and 2 cultures. The school language generally becomes dominant, as more waking hours are spent immersed in English, and children come to Japanese Bunko to absorb Japanese spoken language and make their first steps in reading and writing, preparing them for the more formal education style of Japanese Saturday School. Language is acquired through taking part in cultural activities including celebrating Japanese Festivals and having opportunities to play and talk with other Japanese including other ‘Double Children’ in a family-like atmosphere.

“I believe both *kikokushijo* and ‘Double Children’, if nurtured in their early years to feel proud and positive about their language skills and identities, can, as adults, possess many of the special types of ‘wealth’ needed for successful interaction in the changing Global World.”

**Website:** [www.kodomobunko.org.uk](http://www.kodomobunko.org.uk) (UK) / [www.icba-1979.org](http://www.icba-1979.org) (Japan)



## Phillida Purvis

Director of Links Japan



Phillida Purvis MBE is Director of Links Japan, which she founded in 1998 to promote non-profit and non-governmental sector exchanges between the UK and Japan.

"I did not choose to go to Japan – it was chosen for me. As a result of a language aptitude test the FCO sent me to study Japanese, at SOAS and in Kamakura. After diplomatic postings in Tokyo and Singapore I returned to Japan to experience life as a teacher, of international relations at a private university, and as a student again – at Tokyo University – of Japan's role in the resolution of the Cambodia conflict. For the first time I met the original Japanese NGOs and understood their impact on Japanese aid policy. I also met a wide range of community organisations while trying to find residential placements for young British volunteers. On an informal basis, I started sharing information between these voluntary organisations and counterparts in the UK. Believing in the value of these links, and in the role of the non-governmental sector in addressing the needs of people facing the greatest social challenges both in our own societies and in the least developed countries, I organised more formal exchanges while running programmes at the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation. Finally, finding no other organisation or individual focusing solely on this field, I committed to it full time and set up Links Japan in 1998.

“Over the years Links Japan has partnered with dozens of voluntary and community groups – national and local – all around the UK, the EU and Japan, bringing them together to share ideas and experiences on good practice and good strategy in meeting their charitable objectives, in ways which are beyond the scope or interest of government, businesses and families and, often, to engage in joint projects. It has been a fascinating journey encompassing an extraordinarily diverse range of issues, some in one-off projects, such as the voluntary sector Compact, management, special educational needs teaching in school, bullying, domestic violence, rights-based approaches to development. Others have been taken up over the longer term: governance, accountability, fundraising, community regeneration, building community based partnerships with developing countries, homelessness, citizenship education, volunteering, care of the aged and employment of people with disability. Predominant themes for Links Japan over the last few years have been: the development of social enterprise, social finance required to start such enterprises and, underlying both, social innovation across all sectors. I have had fifteen years of fun with so many inspirational ‘good people’ who are working to make a difference to the lives of the most disadvantaged. To discover if the effort of those people has been worthwhile, ask any Japanese whether they would like to see NPOs or NGOs more involved in the delivery of public services. As for the effort of Links Japan – who can say? For my part, after a thirty year involvement, including ten years’ residence, I can say that I never cease to be surprised by Japan!”

**Website:** [www.linksjapan.org](http://www.linksjapan.org)

## Rebecca Salter

Artist



Rebecca Salter is a British artist who lived for six years in Japan. In 2011 she had a major survey exhibition of her work at Yale Centre for British Art. She has also written two books about Japanese printmaking.

“As happens with so many people who go to live in Japan, I set off with one set of ideas and came back hugely enriched with another. I had graduated from art school in the UK and after two years of securing funding I arrived at Kyoto City University of the Arts. This was 1979 and prospects in the UK for an artist were pretty dismal. Arriving in Japan I felt as if I had skipped a century. The difference between booming Japan and ‘winter of discontent Britain’ could not have been greater. But amongst all the vitality and excitement of Japan at its peak, it was the largely solitary and quiet experience of finding my voice as an artist in a totally different culture which has stayed with me.

“The art history I had been taught focussed almost exclusively on the Western tradition and it was visually exhilarating and hugely challenging to be immersed in a way of seeing and interpreting the world which was so completely different. Based in Kyoto I was able to become familiar with some of the world’s greatest treasures (both artistic and architectural) and part of the privilege was for them to become part of my everyday life. For five years I lived within walking distance of Katsura Detached Palace! The understanding of space, texture, colour and form that I learned through living in Kyoto has stayed with me. Every day in my studio in London thirty plus years later I find that I am still drawing on inspiration from the time I spent in Japan.



Mixed media on linen 150 x 170 cm by Rebecca Salter

“There is no doubt in my mind that my professional career as an artist is built on Japanese foundations but on a personal level, learning to speak and read Japanese has probably given me the greatest pleasure. I live with the fear that after all the hard work required to learn it, I will lose it one day and my parallel life in Japan will be lost to me. My guilty secret is that every time I fly back to Japan I look forward to turning on the television and catching up on the latest soap operas and game shows while eating coffee jelly and cream and seeing just how many new words I don’t understand.”

Website: [www.rebeccasalter.com](http://www.rebeccasalter.com)

## Ruth Taplin

Author and editor



Ruth Taplin is the author/editor of over 200 articles and eighteen books on the Japanese economy, innovation and intellectual property. She is Director of the Centre for Japanese and East Asian Studies. She is currently Honorary Advisor for the Society of Interdisciplinary Business Research in Hong Kong, a Research Fellow at the University of Leicester and Editor of the [\*Interdisciplinary Journal of Economics and Business Law\*](#).

“Over 20 years ago I was selected as a future leader in the field of Japan studies and was sent on a special course to Durham University to pursue this goal. I established my Centre for Japanese and East Asian Studies with a generous grant from the late Lord Limerick and with the kind assistance of Viscount Trenchard, both formerly of Kleinwort Benson, and this initiated a lifelong relationship encouraging connections between Japan and Britain. This has taken various forms: from holding Kanji writing workshops at the Centre’s offices in the City of London to writing or editing eighteen books (published mainly by Routledge).

“Many of my books and articles (over 200 hundred articles for various publications including The Times) concentrate on the Japanese economy, innovation and intellectual property on which I am now considered a world authority. Additionally, through this emphasis on the economy (PhD London School of Economics) and law (GDL Law) I have had the privilege of working with colleagues, especially at Osaka City University and Tohoku University, on research projects which led to books, lectures and invitations to them to speak at seminars here in London, and which, in turn, has led to

other collaborations, many of which were supported by the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation.

“The collaborations have been numerous, including a Chatham House project concerning the former colony of Malaya and Japanese intervention during the Second World War. The work I have done has often been very positive about Japanese contributions to relationships with Britain but on this occasion the content was critical. The late Ambassador Chiba accepted this with great equanimity in his usual good spirited manner.

“Currently, the crisis in innovation and innovative leadership to be found in present day Japan is affecting its economy adversely, its influence in East Asia and in the Asian region in general and in the quality of life of its population. Thoughts and ideas need to be shared between Japan and the UK more than ever to improve lives in both nations.

“The latest work encouraging acknowledgement of Japan’s contribution to innovation and thought is an article by Prof. Vellupillai, father of computable economics, soon to be published in the journal I edit, *Interdisciplinary Journal of Economics and Business Law*, which argues that Japanese economists, Hirofumi Uzawa and Takashi Negishi should be awarded the Nobel Prize for their outstanding work on equilibrium theory.”



## Sandra Lawman

Mental health specialist



Sandra Lawman is a specialist in mental health. Her book *Mental Health Care in Japan* (co-edited with Ruth Taplin) is published by Routledge.

"I lived in Japan from 1980 to 1983. That started my lifelong love for the country. I have worked for Japanese companies and since 2002 have been making connections over the issue of mental health. In 2002 I gave a lecture in Tokyo on the British system and my Masters dissertation at CASS Business School in 2008 was about foundation funding of health and social care in Japan. I have made several visits over the last decade and last year co-produced a book entitled *Mental Health Care in Japan* (Routledge, June 2012, ed Professor Ruth Taplin and Sandra Lawman).

"I have been privileged to contribute in a unique way to the understanding between Japan and Britain and I feel I still have more work to do. I have an empathy with Japanese people and went there initially because I thought the psyche would suit me, which I think proved true. I'm not sure whether Japanese people would agree with me (but I think quite a number do)! My boss at a Japanese company said I had more understanding of Japan than any of the other 'gaijin'.

“Mental health is a vexed issue everywhere, and no less so in Japan. Great strides have been made in the last 15 years or so but more needs to be done to modernise the system and in particular to address the issue of stigma of mentally ill people (as everywhere else, including Britain). I frequently escort visiting Japanese academics and others around health and social care facilities in London and both sides think they have much to learn.

“I have had moving and touching experiences in the course of this work, not least from a group of service user activists in Osaka who were pleased they could do what they were doing but felt they were then pigeonholed and it prevented them from doing anything else. I am hoping those issues are now being ironed out. I think some of my Japanese colleagues found it amusing when I got confused over the terms for the illnesses in Japanese but I am getting there with the specialist language and have attended a couple of conferences. I am grateful to the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation and also Maudsley International for funding a lot of this work.

“I am hoping to study this subject further and to try to contribute more to our mutual understanding.”

## Setsuo Kato

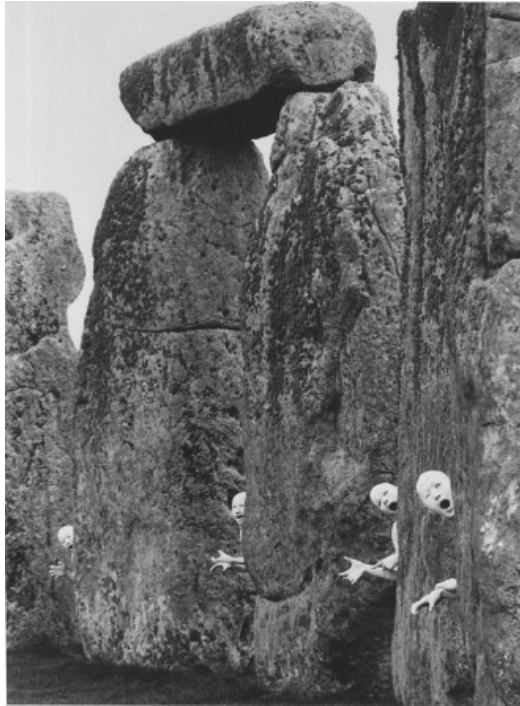
Photo-journalist (Photo © Kazuyo Yasuda)



Setsuo Kato is a Japanese photo-journalist. He has worked for Japanese and British media and published many books and articles about Britain and Europe. For over ten years he published his own newspaper.

“On board the Russian boat “Baikal” at Yokohama in 1970, I said farewell to my family and a few friends who came to see me off to the unknown world. I was a Press photographer working for a British news agency’s Tokyo office. Japan was just beginning to get its confidence back after the success of the Tokyo Olympic Games and Osaka Expo. A radical Japanese author wrote a book called “Nandemo Mite Yaro!” (Be Greedy to See Everything!). I decided to explore the world and the final destination was set to be London. This is probably because I was working for a British company. However, about Britain, I only knew of the Queen, gentlemen and of course the Beatles.

“After travelling through the Soviet Union and a few Eastern European countries for more than two weeks, I arrived in Vienna, then Frankfurt, Paris and the finally London. After the lengthy journey, my hair grew very long and as I did not bother shaving while travelling, I had a fair amount of beard and moustache. I was very nervous at Heathrow Airport. Would the immigration officer of the Gentleman’s Country accept me? To my surprise the officer at the desk had longer hair than mine and I found beards and moustaches everywhere.

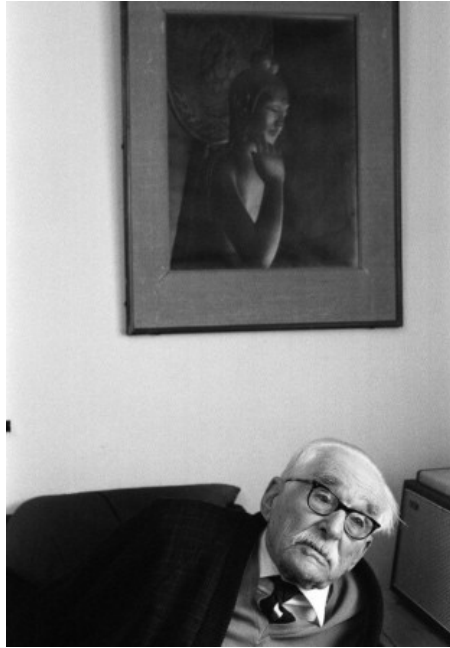


Sankai Juku at Stonehenge by Setsuo Kato

“I lived in the Angel, Islington and used to go to a local pub called the Island Queen. This pub was packed with customers every night. There was rock music coming from speakers on the wall but you could hardly hear it because people were loudly talking, shouting and laughing. The whole atmosphere was electric. Every weekend I was invited from the pub to somebody’s house for a party. I didn’t know who they were or what they were, but it didn’t matter as long as you enjoyed yourself.

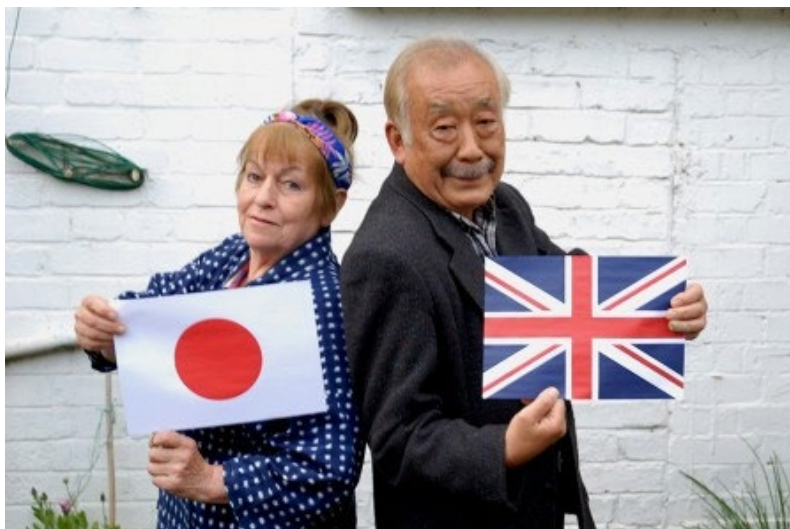
“The Japan I left, compared with this, was very poor and people were more restricted and felt guilty about having a good time. This was neither a religion nor a moral obligation. I think it was purely the result of the war. Japan in the 70’s was still suffering heavily from the war. I realized that I had come to the winners’ country from a defeated country.

“Those people at the pub didn’t seem to have any job but how did they make a living? To my surprise again, they were teachers, doctors, journalists, local government bureaucrats, artists, architects, etc. etc. They seemed to be enjoying themselves very much every night but during the day had responsible jobs to do. They knew very well their freedom and responsibility and I realized that this was the basis of the British life-style.



Bernard Leach by Setsuo Kato

“Today you don’t often feel the electric atmosphere of the pub. However, that essence of freedom and responsibility goes on and it was my job, through the media, to tell Japanese audiences about this British life-style. I have been doing this for the last forty years through Japanese newspapers, magazines, television, radio and books.”



Jill & Setsuo Kato (Photo © Kazuyo Yasuda)

## Sioned Huws

Choreographer

Sioned Huws is a Welsh choreographer and project director interested in memory and the influence of environment. Her work challenges and integrates different art-forms.

“My introduction to Japan was through Aomori in 2008, on a dance research residency, made possible by Aomori Contemporary Arts Centre, the independent artists collective ARTizan also in Aomori and Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff.



Photo © Sioned Huws

“I travelled directly north without stopping in Tokyo. With no preconceived ideas about my destination, or what I might do there, I simply wanted to meet this place, to see what it would suggest to me. Arriving into an Arctic winter environment, unrelenting snowstorms and vast mountainous landscapes, I was faced with my own insignificance; my perception became more acute to small detail, those little things that make up a place. I was soon welcomed by the warmth and humour of Aomori people, and I found a similarity to my own Welsh cultural background and upbringing; I grew up on a farm



in the mountains of Snowdonia North Wales. The larger frame for my dance work has always been the natural world; nature has no sympathy and is continually at work.



Photo © Kei Shii

“Meeting this region of Japan, and the arts centres’ concept of local and international exchange, enhanced my choreographic research, my interest in the relation of dance to environment and the everyday. This has led to my long-lasting collaboration with and commitment to an ongoing working process developed from the Tsugaru music and dance of north Japan, with a core of Japanese artists including Tsugaru Teodori, dancer Yoshiya Ishikawa, Tsugaru shamisen music group Hasegawa Sangen-kai led by Yuji Hasegawa, Tsugaru minyo song of Kiyoko Goto, and contemporary dancer Reina Kimura. This year Agnese Lanza Elena Jacinta and Taz Burns, three UK based dancers, joined the core company for the new collaboration Aomori, Aomori, a love story that has no ending, believing in wishes, hopes dreams and desires.

“Since 2008 the project and my relationship with Japan has developed, with visits, developments, tours and performances in Wales, London (Greenwich Dance), Singapore, Italy and across Japan, involving different groups of local participants and

artists, continuing a local and international dance dialogue, remaining sensitive to the particularities of a place.”

**Website:** [www.sionedhuws.net](http://www.sionedhuws.net)

## Takashi Sano

Hair stylist

Takashi Sano came to Britain in 2000. After assisting some of the hairstyling industry's biggest names, he now divides his time between working on fashion shoots and running his own hair salon.

"What really attracted me to Britain was Punk music. I was a big Clash fan. I wanted to go to an English speaking country and the combination of music and culture was a big attraction. I had qualified as a hair stylist in Japan and really liked Vidal Sassoon. I wanted to come to Britain to find out just how good he really was. I really admired his precise skills and how he taught that hairdressing could be fun, not just work. It was a real wake-up call for me.



Takashi Sano creation for Volt Magazine

“When I first came to Britain in 2000, what really got to me was the weather. I’m used to it now, but one thing I still find a challenge is people here are very honest. Sometimes too honest and their bluntness is hard to take sometimes.



Takashi Sano creation (Photo © Ram Shergill)

“I started at the Vidal Sassoon Academy and worked as a hairstylist part time, slowly building up my portfolio—and my English skills. Then I began to be contacted by hair and make-up agencies and started doing fashion shoots which is something I do regularly. This gave me confidence to open my own salon Sano Professional Hair Salon I worked out there are two types of people in Britain; those who are lazy and those who work very hard and respond to every business opportunity. I modelled myself on the latter. Now my salon is going really well and I have plans to open a second salon and launch my own products. My dream is to open my salons in Asia.”

Website: [www.sanohair.com/](http://www.sanohair.com/)

## Yuri Suzuki

Sound artist and electronic musician



Yuri Suzuki is a sound artist, designer and electronic musician from Japan who lives and works in London. He explores the realms of sound through exquisitely designed pieces.

“For me, working in London is very important for my creative process. I am always bumping into interesting and innovative people. I have lived in Tokyo, Berlin and Stockholm and visited many other cities, however London with its mix of many cultures and people, making new cultures, is still the best for creativity and for living. It is also quite important for me not to feel as if I’m a foreigner. In London, people see me as a Londoner, not as Japanese or Asian.

“My primary interest is always related to music. When I moved to London in 2005, “Grime”, an urban music genre was big; based on Jamaican rhythm; translated into black music; and then layered with Middle East influenced melody; and Asian MCs dropping rhymes onto the music. How complicated! But a nice collaboration that makes for great music.



The Sound of the Earth: an audio artwork by Yuri Suzuki

"I always find the character of people via humour. I can clearly see English and Japanese share a sense of humour, from great TV programmes such as Monty Python, The Office, Fawlty Towers and Father Ted. These comedies are quite cynical and painful, however quite funny. I couldn't share this sense of humour when I lived in other countries.

"Studying at the Royal College of Art was the most exciting moment of my life. I met many talented classmates from all over the world and inspiring artists, designers or musicians for whom I have great respect. When I studied for a degree in Japan, the only way to be designer was working for big company as in-house designer, but here, many of my design heroes gave me advice on how to be an artist or designer and taught me the only thing is to believe my creativity and chose best way to work. This meant I could start my own practice straight after graduation.

"As a Japanese and Asian, communication is a challenge, more so because of my dyslexia. However Britain is very inclusive and I received support at the RCA for my study during my master degree. People still here try to understand what I am trying to say despite my dyslexia and my Japanese accented English.



“I am very grateful to the UK for giving me so many possibilities and still allow me to live here and I feel honoured to be involved in cultural relation projects between UK and Japan.”

**Website:** <https://yurisuzuki.com/>