

On Retiring from Surugadai University



Martin A. Foulds

My life in Japan began when I arrived by ship in Yokohama on a cold February morning in 1967. After a two-year Japanese study course, I entered Sophia University and graduated in 1974. While studying for my master's degree in Japanese art history, I was approached by Sundai Yobiko in Ochanomizu to conduct English-language sessions with teachers working there. These continued regularly for almost ten years until the foundation of Surugadai University in 1987, when I was offered a tenured position in the Faculty of Law to teach English-language courses.

This was an exciting time, with professors and students alike determined in their new environment to concentrate their abilities towards a successful outcome. I shall always be extremely grateful for the wonderful kindness and support from all the professors especially in the Faculty of Law, something that I shall always remember. Indeed, it is thanks to this encouragement, the positive attitude of everyone concerned and the well-equipped facilities of the university that I chose to remain here.

My years at Surugadai University have taught me the value of working alongside positive and enthusiastic colleagues. I have witnessed colleagues giving tirelessly of their time to enhance the image and productivity of Surugadai University. I want to acknowledge that you have all played your part in making Surugadai University a happier and more productive place, and by extension, in helping to make my own life so varied and stimulating. I have also determined that this is the role that I will strive to emulate in the years ahead.

I miss Professors Vardaman, Steinberg, McCarthy and Finch, all long since retired, but fondly remembered for their wisdom, wonderful humour and outstanding teaching skills. I shall miss all those presently serving in the English Department, especially Professors Amano, Fukuda, Ebisawa, Takenaka, Tsukamoto, Kiyomi, Masuda Kumiko, Masuda Tamako, Yui, and Assistant Professors Shimahara, Nagahashi and Takiguchi, who are each in their own way fundamental to the success of the English language programme. The administrative staff in the Foreign Language Center, particularly Tagami-san and Iizuka-san continue to play an indispensable role in helping teachers and students to interact in countless ways. Together, we have had a myriad of experiences, too many to mention, that have impacted our lives in a very memorable and meaningful way.

On a more personal note, my most rewarding experience throughout these 28 years, besides the regular teaching of classes of course, has been the opportunity to prepare students for study abroad, specifically at Monash University in Australia. Numbers have dropped in recent years, but those (long-term students in particular) with the motivation to improve their English skills have been a pleasure to work with. Their experiences abroad have lead not only to an improvement in their English, but to an understanding of a Japanese person's place in the world today. There is no more satisfaction than to see them return to Japan with more self-confidence, in a more positive frame of mind and with renewed hope for the future.

After my retirement at the end of March, I shall remain in Japan, excited at the prospect of a little more time on my hands. I am looking forward to continuing my research into early 19th century Japanese painting, and am now putting the final touches to an analysis of works by Suzuki Nanrei, a Maruyama-Shijo school artist who was born in Edo in 1775. To examine as many of his paintings as possible and to make stylistic comparisons against examples by other artists of the same period, I shall continue to seek out his

works in provincial museums, private collections, and dealers shops throughout Japan; in fact, wherever I can find information that will help to reconfirm what I have already managed to learn.

In closing, I would like to thank all of you for your kind words already expressed over these last few weeks. I know that no matter how much I may enjoy being retired, I will always miss Surugadai University and the kindness of so many people.

Thank you all once again.