

IASIL Japan Newsletter

2020 No. 1

The Japan Branch of the International Association for the Study of Irish Literatures

April 2020

1. Plans for the IASIL Japan 2020 Conference, “Revolutions/Resolutions”

The following plan was confirmed at the Executive Committee E-meeting held from 8 to 15 March.

Date: 10-11 October, 2020.

Venue: Meiji University, Surugadai Campus

<https://www.meiji.ac.jp/cip/english/about/campus/index.html>

Guest Speakers 1) Matthew Campbell (The University of York) and 2) Leontia Flynn

Symposium 1: “Illness in Irish Writing: mental, physical, social” (tentative title)

Chair: John Maher

Panellists: Naoko Toraiwa, Nao Igarashi, Beverley Curran

Symposium 2: “Revolutions/Resolutions: Conflict and Art” (tentative title)

Chair: Andrew Fitzsimons

Panellists: Akiko Manabe, Naomi Miki and David Taylor

Call for Papers!

Applicants for a 20-minute paper reading are requested to send a synopsis of 250–300 words as a Word attachment to the IASIL Japan office at secretary@iasil.jp. Besides the synopsis itself, please send details of affiliation, full postal and e-mail addresses, and telephone and fax numbers by **31st May**.

There are many accommodation options in Tokyo convenient for Meiji University. We ask members to research and arrange their own accommodation.

Please also note that in 2017, we introduced online registration system for IASIL Japan conference and that the members will be notified of the conference details digitally.

*NOTE: Though the coronavirus situation is still unfolding, we hope to hold our conference as scheduled.

2. IASIL Conference 2020 “Creative Borders”

IASIL Conference will be held at University of Lodz in Poland, from 20 to 24 July, 2020. For details and registration, please go to the IASIL Conference website: <http://iasil.uni.lodz.pl/> . For the Conference organisers’ notice regarding the situation surrounding COVID-19, go to: <http://iasil.uni.lodz.pl/covid-19/>

3. IASIL Japan Scholarship

There was no application to IASIL Japan Scholarship. We ardently encourage more postgraduate students to apply for the scholarship next year.

4. Payment of Annual Fees

Please find enclosed the 2020 Membership Fee remittance sheet payable to Japan Post Bank. You may choose to pay to the IASIL Japan account at the Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi below. If you have not paid the membership fee below for any of the past three years, a separate sheet indicating the unpaid year is enclosed, so we ask you to add that amount to the 2020 fee.

If you are applying for Student membership fee, please provide the office with a copy of valid student ID with your payment.

Membership with <i>JIS</i>	¥ 7,000	Couple membership with <i>JIS</i>	¥ 10,000
Membership with <i>JIS</i> & <i>IUR</i>	¥ 10,000	Couple membership with <i>JIS</i> & <i>IUR</i>	¥ 13,000
Student with <i>JIS</i> *	¥ 5,000		

*a copy of valid student ID should be provided annually

If you live abroad, please transfer your membership fee to the following account:

Bank Name: Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ, LTD.

SWIFT CODE: BOTKJPJT

Branch Name: Kawagoe Branch (Branch No. 382)

Branch Address: 1-2-7 Shintomi-cho, Kawagoe City, Saitama Prefecture, 350-0043, Japan

Tel: Tel: +81 (0)49-222-2351

Account Name: IASIL Japan Treasurer Hironao Kobayashi

Account No: 0343056

The membership fee does not include the transfer charge, so please make sure that the exact amount reaches us. Please add the overseas postal charge to mail you the copies of *Journal of Irish Studies* and *Irish University Review* for which you have paid, according to the table below.

International postal rates for <i>JIS</i> & <i>IUR</i>	Asia	Oceania, North America, Central America, Europe, Middle East	South America, Africa
<i>JIS</i>	¥ 750	¥ 1,000	¥ 1,300
<i>JIS</i> & <i>IUR</i>	¥ 1,500	¥ 2,000	¥ 2,600

5. *Journal of Irish Studies*

The deadline for submission to *Journal of Irish Studies* Vol. XXXV is **25 April 2020**. Contributors should send articles for consideration together with a short biographical note to Jane O'Halloran at editor@iasil.jp. Please send articles and biographical information as MS Word files attached to the e-mail. The biographical information should include the author's affiliation, full postal and e-mail addresses, and telephone and fax numbers. More information can be found on the IASIL Japan website: <<http://iasil.jp/guidelines.html>>.

The editor suggests that those whose mother tongue is not English should have their articles checked by native speakers of English prior to submission.

6. The Seamus Heaney Award, Japan

The Embassy of Ireland, Japan is proud to announce that the distinguished poet, Mutsuo Takahashi has become the inaugural recipient of the Seamus Heaney Award, Japan.

The award recognises distinguished contribution to literary relations between Ireland and Japan. A poet, playwright and essayist, Mutsuo Takahashi's work has made him one of the most eminent writers in contemporary Japan and, through translation into many languages, one of the most well-known Japanese writers in the world.

Born in 1937 into a family of day labourers in northern Kyushu, he attended the Fukuoka University of Education, before moving to Tokyo in 1962, where he pursued a successful career as a copywriter before becoming a full-time writer. He is the author of more than twenty collections of poetry, eight collections of haiku and tanka, numerous works of prose and collections of essays, and has adapted, among others, Homer, Euripides and Sophocles. Among the many awards he has received, in 2017 he was designated a Bunkakorosha (Person of Cultural Merit) and became a member of the Nihon Geijutsuin (The Japan Arts Academy) the most distinguished arts organization in Japan.

In *Twelve Views from the Distance* he writes of how as a young man his 'soul felt a strong affinity for what was outside my world in the realm of the other.' One of the most significant of these other places has been Ireland.

He has adapted Yeats's *At the Hawk's Well* as a Noh play, which was performed at the Kanze Noh Theatre in Tokyo in 1990. His abiding interest in Yeats has led him to travel to Ireland three times. On his first trip to Ireland in 1999, he toured Kerry, Sligo and Donegal, and held readings in Dublin and Belfast, meeting Irish poets, including Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, Cathal Ó Searcaigh, Peter Sirt, Paula Meehan and Theo Dorgan. His memorable Belfast reading, with Michael Longley and Ciaran Carson, is celebrated in the poem 'The Process'. As the critic Nobuaki Tochigi has written, 'the weeks spent in Ireland were decisive for Takahashi in regaining his faith in poetry,' and many of the poems in the poet's volume, *Saku no Mukou* ('Beyond the Hedge'), published in 2000, were inspired by this first visit to Ireland. In the poem 'In Ireland, I', he writes 'The air that struck my cheeks, the sand and soil under my feet, / all of it was wide awake. I sensed it in every pore.'

The publication of *On Two Shores: New and Selected Poems* by Dedalus Press in 2006, which included translations of these 'Irish' poems, among other recent work, marked the first time a Japanese poet had been published by an Irish press. The book was launched in Dublin on the occasion of his third

visit to Ireland, where Takahashi held a bilingual reading with his Irish translator, Frank Sewell.

It is entirely fitting that the inaugural recipient of an award named for Seamus Heaney should go to a poet. In his elegy for Heaney, 'Talisman', whom he admired greatly and met in person in Dublin, Takahashi writes: 'The bog of death has embraced you alive to the lips, to the eyelids and then the forehead / and alive still you become our perfected memory, our talisman.'

Unfortunately, given the fast-changing events worldwide due to COVID-19, and the impact on travel, the award ceremony for the inaugural Seamus Heaney Award, Japan, which was to have taken place on April 14, has been postponed. The Embassy of Ireland remain committed to supporting this initiative, and alternative dates and arrangements will be proposed soon. One possibility is to hold the award ceremony to coincide with the IASIL Japan Conference in October.



IASIL Japan

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IASIL Japan Newsletter 2020 No.2 will be distributed digitally in September.