

IASIL Japan Newsletter

2025 No. 1

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

April 2025

Message from the President

I am deeply honored to serve as the President of IASIL Japan, an academic association that I both respect and owe so much to. I feel the weight of responsibility all the more, following in the footsteps of our previous President, Andy Fitzsimons, who, together with his highly efficient and dedicated office members, led the society into a new and remarkable phase over the past six years. They handled the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic with exceptional skill, while also making the international conference at Gakushuin University a vivid and unforgettable memory for all of us. Having worked alongside them as a steering committee member, I witnessed firsthand their commitment and excellent teamwork, and I hold their achievements in the highest regard. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all the past Presidents, Offices, and members of IASIL Japan.

I first joined IASAIL Japan in the late 1980s when the late Professor Tetsuro Sano was President. At my very first conference, held at Rakuyu Kaikan in Kyoto University, Sano-sensei asked me to work as a receptionist and photographer. That was my first encounter with distinguished scholars and creative writers, both domestic and international. Since then, IASAIL/IASIL Japan has continuously provided me with rare and invaluable opportunities to engage directly with some of the most acclaimed figures in the field. One particularly memorable moment was witnessing the first international conference held at Otani University in Kyoto in 1990. Under the leadership of President Sano and Secretary Taketoshi Furomoto, I was fortunate to experience various aspects of organizing an international conference — including the unforgettable opportunity to guide Marie and Seamus Heaney around Kyoto.

Serving as Secretary from 2000 to 2005 was another pivotal period in my career. I came to understand that running an international academic association would not be possible without the dedication and efforts of many people working together behind the scenes. I also came to appreciate the crucial and invaluable support of the Embassy of Ireland in Japan. It was during this time that I realized how warmly and respectfully Japan, or IASIL Japan, was acknowledged in the international academic community.

Since stepping down as Secretary, I have not been as actively involved in IASIL Japan, and my work has primarily focused on W.B. Yeats and traditional theatre in Japan. However, attending the Gakushuin Conference was a refreshing and inspiring experience. I was pleasantly surprised to see how many new writers have flourished in Ireland and how many new scholars have emerged to engage with their works. I must admit, I felt a little like *Urashima Taro* returning to his old land after many years. Moving forward, I will do my utmost to catch up with the latest developments in Irish Literary Studies and to contribute to the continued success of IASIL Japan.

I am fortunate to have a strong and dedicated new Office to work with: Miki Iwata as Secretary, Soichiro Onose as Treasurer, and Eri Tanaka as Editor of *JIS*. I am confident they will carry on the excellent work of the previous team led by Yuri Yoshino, Tetsuko Nakamura, and Brian Fox, whose efforts I deeply appreciate. I sincerely hope that the Executive Committee and all members of IASIL Japan will continue to support us as we move forward together.

As we embark on this new chapter, I am pleased to announce that the theme for our 2026 Conference will be “*Relations*”. I believe this theme resonates strongly with the ever-evolving and interconnected nature of our field. I very much look forward to seeing you all at Seikei University in October.

Thank you very much.

Akiko Manabe

1. New Secretary and New Treasurer

The new IASIL Japan secretariat assumed office in January 2025 and will serve for the next three years. Miki Iwata is the new Secretary, and Soichiro Onose is the new Treasurer. The IASIL Japan office is located at the address below. **Please inform the office of any changes in your contact information, including email address or affiliation:**

IASIL Japan c/o Miki Iwata, Department of English and American Literature,
Faculty of Arts, Rikkyo University, 3-34-1 Nishi-Ikebukuro, Toshima-ku, Tokyo 171-8501, Japan
E-mail: secretary@iasil.jp

2. Payment of Annual Fees

Membership of IASIL Japan runs from the beginning of April to the end of March every year. Please find enclosed the 2025 Membership Fee remittance sheet payable to Japan Post Bank. You may choose to pay into the IASIL Japan account at Mitsui Sumitomo Banking Corporation 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 2025 fee.

If you are applying for Student membership fee, please provide the office with a copy of a valid student ID with your payment. Student membership fee has been reduced to 3,000 yen from FY 2025.

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> *	¥ 3,000		

*a copy of a valid student ID should be submitted at the beginning of every fiscal year

If you live abroad, you can use PayPal. Please follow the instruction shown in the email you will receive shortly from Treasurer Soichiro Onose <treasurer@iasil.jp>. Or you can transfer your membership fee to the following account:

Bank Name: Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation

SWIFT Code: SMBCJPJT (in 8 digits); SMBCJPJTXXX (in 11 digits)

Branch Name: Ikebukuro Higashiguchi Branch (Branch No. 671)

Branch Address: 2-27-9, Minami Ikebukuro, Toshima-ku, Tokyo, 171-0022, Japan

Tel: +81(0)3-3971-0166

Account Name: IASIL Japan

Account No: 9233212 (Savings Account)

The membership fee for overseas members does not include the transfer charge, so please make sure that the exact amount reaches us. Please add the overseas postal charge so that we can post you the copy/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>	¥ 850	¥ 1,000	¥ 1,300
<i>JIS</i> & <i>IUR</i>	¥ 1,500	¥ 2,000	¥ 2,600

NB If you wish to be eligible for presenting your paper at the IASIL 2026 Conference (Pázmány Péter Catholic University (PPCU), Budapest), please complete your payment **by the end of November 2025**. IASIL Japan Office is to submit a list of members in good standing to IASIL Headquarters in December.

3. IASIL 2025 Executive Elections

The IASIL Japan Executive Committee has sent the nomination of the following members to represent Japan at the IASIL Executive Committee for 2022-2025. The nominations were accepted.

Vice-chairperson: Akiko Manabe

Representatives: Soichiro Onose, Miki Iwata, Naoko Toraiwa

4. IASIL Conference 2025, “Technology”

IASIL Conference, hosted by our colleagues at the University of Galway in Ireland, will be held as an in-person event from 21 to 25 July, 2025. The applications for research papers are now closed and online registration will close in June. For more details, please go IASIL website: <https://www.iasil.org/>, and the conference website: <https://www.iasil.org/conference-2025-university-of-galway-21-25-july-2025/>.

5. Plans for IASIL Japan 2025 Conference, “Relations”

The following plan was confirmed at and after the Executive Committee Meeting held on 10 March:

Dates: 4th & 5th October, 2025

Venue: Seikei University, Tokyo (<https://www.seikei.ac.jp/university/aboutus/accessmap.html>)

Theme: Relations

Guests: Nick Laird and Charles Ivan Armstrong

Symposium 1: “Environments in Arts and Literatures”

Chair: Naoko Toraiwa (Meiji Univ)

Panellists: Hiroko Mikami

Yoshiaki Inoue (Meiji Univ)

Hiroko Ikeda (Kyoto Univ)

Symposium 2: “Lafcadio Hearn and Ireland” (the tentative title)

Chair: Masaya Shimokusu (Doshisha Univ)

Panellists: Andrew Fitzsimons (Gakushuin Univ)

Eishiro Ito (Iwate Prefectural Univ)

Yoko Kubo (Nihon Univ)

Masaya Shimokusu (Doshisha Univ)

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 number by **31 May 2025**.

Call for Book Launches!

If you would like to launch your book during the conference, please write to the IASIL Japan Office at < secretary@iasil.jp >.

Travel Arrangements

In light of the recent tourism boost in Tokyo, the members are advised to make their hotel bookings for the conference early. Hotels around JR Kichijoji (吉祥寺) station, JR Shinjuku (新宿) station, and JR Shibuya (渋谷) station should be convenient for the venue.

Members will be requested to fill in an online registration form. Further details will be given in the next Newsletter.

6. Reports on IASIL Japan Scholarship

There was no application for the IASIL Japan Scholarship 2025, even though the scholarship amount for this year was increased up to 150,000 yen, depending on the applicant’s area of residence. This special measure will remain valid for the 2026 scholarship, and we would like to encourage more postgraduate students to apply for it at the next opportunity.

7. *Journal of Irish Studies*, Vol. XXXIX

The deadline for submission to *Journal of Irish Studies* Vol. XXXIX is 25 April 2025. Contributors should send articles for consideration together with a short biographical note to Eri Tanaka at < editor@iasil.jp >, as an MS Word attachment. More information can be found on the IASIL Japan website: <http://iasil.jp/journal.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.

NB We have already circulated this information by email, since the delay in publishing this newsletter due to the problems regarding our new bank account means that the 25 April deadline has now passed. The Secretariat apologises for any inconvenience.

8. Seamus Heaney Award, Japan

The Embassy of Ireland announces that the ceremony to present the Seamus Heaney Award, Japan to the 2024 recipient, Sinéad Morrissey, is to be held on 14 July, at Ireland House, Tokyo.

Nominations for the third Award, to be received by 30 November 2025, can be sent by email using the subject line ‘Seamus Heaney Award Japan Nomination’ to: IASIL Japan Office: < secretary@iasil.jp > or Embassy of Ireland, Japan: < TokyoEmbassy@dfa.ie >.

9. Obituary: for Prof. Tetsuro Sano (1931-2024)

There is a reading circle named the Yeats Workshop of Kyoto, which was almost the only place for me 40-odd years ago when I was treated as invalid because of my physical weakness at my university. The circle was a place that gave anyone hope that he or she could be someone. It was Prof. Sano who conducted it as a chair. My story is only part of the many stories of young people who gained energy at the circle and took off on its wings.

In the workshop not only the younger generation, but also Sano’s mentors Prof. Yukio Oura (around whom the workshop began) and Prof. Shoichiro Yasuda (a close friend of Oura’s), as well as other outstanding scholars who stood alongside him, exchanged views on Yeats and his surroundings openly, without any differences in social status or life experience. Sano sat in the middle of such a wonderful world, sometimes smiling, sometimes serious. He was, dare I say it, more pleased to be taught than to teach. Impressed by this attitude, those around him learned much. And, as a matter of course, people gathered around him.

In relation to IASIL, it was owing to Sano’s workshop that in 1990 the international conference on literature, which until then had no precedent in Japan, was successfully held in Kyoto. He was able to take on the conference immediately when circumstances prevented it from being held in Tokyo because he had a good number of efficient people in his workshop like Prof. Minoru Tada or Prof. Taketoshi Furomoto.

Some months before Prof. Tetsuro Sano passed away, he told his wife that he had a good life because he was kept company by a lot of people in his life. Surely many people in Japan and abroad, besides myself, would be happy and proud to have been one of them.

Fuyuji Tanigawa

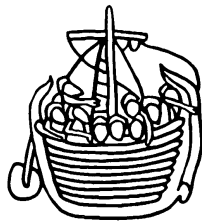
10. Obituary: for Prof. Morris Beja (1935-2025)

My first recollection of ‘Murray’ Beja, as the Joycean scholar was generally known, rather than by the name ‘Morris’ that appears on his books, was of him banging on the window of the door of a train as it pulled out of Yokohama station. His wife, Ellen Carol Jones, had been invited to teach for the autumn semester at Ferris University, and I had gone to the airport to meet them. Now I was standing on the platform with Ellen and some students, not knowing what to do. I wanted to get the group off the narrow platform (it has since been widened), so I sent them on to the school, and then went to enquire. Murray turned out to be eminently sensible, and soon returned on another train, to my relief. Both Ellen and Murray spoke at our conference in 2009, and I could easily see then, from Murray’s presentation, that he was a gifted teacher, who was greatly valued at the Ohio State University.

There were many enjoyable gatherings with Ellen and Murray after this in Tokyo, that Andy Fitzsimons, Joseph O’Leary, and others will still recollect. I travelled down to Kyoto with Ellen and Murray during the

Christmas vacation, for them to see traditional Japan. Murray was a little uncomfortable sleeping on tatami (I stayed in a hotel), but they enjoyed themselves, and Ellen later sent me an album of beautiful photographs that they had taken. They managed to see a Noh play during their stay, and I also took them to Kabuki. When I found a book one day in the Ferris library that had a piece by Murray in it, I urged him to sign it though he was reluctant to do so until I pressed him. It must be still there. Ellen has told me how glad they were to have made the trip, and it is with great sadness that we now learn of Murray's passing. Undoubtedly Ellen will continue to be engaged in Joycean scholarship, and contribute to his legacy with her own work. We offer our condolences to her.

David Burleigh



IASIL Japan

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IASIL Japan Newsletter 2025 No.2 will be distributed digitally in September.