

Introduction

First of all I wish to thank all the contributors in this volume for their patience and cooperation during the editing process. The Evening Seminar talks at Nichibunken, held every month, are intended for the speaker to freely express his or her ideas in English. They are informal but stimulating occasions that often continue in discussions for some time after the event.

The presentations included in this volume are the result of a series of talks Prof. Kimura and Prof. Baxter planned around the theme of Japanese Studies in the World. At Nichibunken we have many opportunities to meet and talk to scholars from around the world. The Office of Research Exchange tries to collect information about Japanese studies in the countries from where these people have come. However, it was felt that there was a need to allow for people to inform a larger audience and offer opportunity for comparison between countries. The series lasted for eight months and we thought it appropriate to print some of the things said.

As stated above the presentations take on various formats. We have tried to arrange the texts in the chronological order. Some presentations were given by a single speaker who introduced us to the recent trends in his or her country. On other occasions we took the *zadankai* format and had two or three people talking together, and answering questions and topics introduced.

We hope you will find these informative and enjoyable.

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