

# Lighter Shades of Fellowship

champion new ways to think, act and be, in response to the challenges of our times

## Connecting the Dots

Tania Coke, RSA Ambassador

I came across a quote I liked the other day, by the American poet Robert Frost:

*"Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence."*

We'll be testing out this skill at our 7<sup>th</sup> February event, when we'll be airing topics that are normally taboo in Japan. Anger has its time and its place - which is presumably why Frost is careful to include the word "almost" in his quote.

But it seems to me that our ability to listen to and inquire into opinions we dislike is one of the skills we most desperately need to hone. I wonder how the Brexit debate might have played out if its spokespeople had mastered this skill.

Here in Japan, as the cultural mix intensifies, we could be in for a very bumpy ride if we don't start sharpening our listening skills à la Frost.

For more on the topic of social divides, check out the recent RSA podcast "[Polarised](#)".



Event Report: December 6, 2018

## Japanese Returnees: Agents of Change

In December, to close the 2018 year, the RSA Japan Fellows Network ran the second of what poses to be an ongoing examination of Japanese returnees from overseas, both as students and workers abroad.



Event Flier, created by Rab Paterson FRSA

Globalisation is routinely cited as a top priority for Japan. But many communities and workplaces in Japan struggle to integrate non-Japanese people and ideas. There is one group of people which would seem perfectly placed to help bring about change: Japanese who have studied or worked abroad and returned to live in Japan.

**"I learned a lot last night about how to listen to and respect differences."  
Yukiharu Kiho FRSA**

But it is not always easy for returnees to share their new perspectives once back at home. At our last RSA JFN event we resolved to shed new light on the issue with the help of organisational coach Jonathan Joo-Thomson FRSA. 25 participants were guided through a series of immersive exercises, engaging 'head, heart and hands' to unlock new insights into this burning issue. Many of the comments shared at the end of the evening expressed a sense of greater understanding and empowerment.

**"By allowing change in ourselves we can help others be change agents too."  
Event Participant (via Post-It comment)**

We are now planning a follow-up event to explore specific actions we can take in the light of these new insights.

We think that the sentiments of the entire RSA JFN are summarized well by the comment by Matt Burney, British Council Director, Japan.

*"This event has made me think about the sense of isolation you can feel when returning from overseas, and the dissonance with those who have never lived abroad."*



## The Japan Connection: Interview with 入江靖子 (イリエヤスコ) Yasuko Irie (who has been serving the RSA JFN in Operations and Treasurer in addition to her life and work activities)

### Tell us a little about yourself

欧州系企業でコントローラーの仕事をしています。仕事以外では茶道と鎌倉彫に勤んでいます。人類の信仰の歴史に深い興味があり、時間があれば山や洞窟、神社仏閣、教会などを散策します。



### Why did you join the RSA?

勘違いから偶然にも RSAJFN のミーティングに参加することになり、そこで個性的な人たちが頑張っていることに刺激を受けました。その場でお手伝いを名乗り出て裏方の業務を担当することになりました。

### What does "international" mean to you?

仕事柄、国際的な環境には馴染みがあります。国際的である

ことのメリットは、文化や行動様式の違いに気づき、受容することで革新的なアイデアが生まれることだと思います。しかし現実はその簡単ではありません。お互いが意見を発信し合えるような気遣いを意識的にし続けることが重要だと思っています。

RSA JFN's mission is "championing new ways to think, act and be in response to the challenges of our times". What "new ways to think, act and be" would you like to see in the world?

RSA が掲げるこのミッションが、個人そして社会をより進歩的にする一助になればよいと思っています。人は様々な困難や壁に直面したときに、選択肢に頼る意思決定だけでなく、自ら答えを導き出すこともできると、私は信じています。社会においては極端な世論の振揺から脱却し、ゴールに向かう新しい考え方を他者と共有し話し合うことが出来れば、より進歩的な社会にできると思っています。イギリスにはスピーカーズコーナーというものがありますね。RSA が日本における概念上のそれになれば、と考えます。

### What do you hope for from RSA JFN?

RSAJFN は、個人が意見を発信することをサポートしています。私はそのような団体を陰で支えることを誇りに思っています。また、いつか自分の興味のある分野で思想がまとまった時には、スピーカーとして登壇したいと思っています。

## 2019 Programs

RSA JFN events are usually scheduled on the first Thursdays of each month. Please check our website for details and changes.

We are planning for six themed events for 2019 and would welcome any feedback from you about topics you are interested in.

Briefly, some of the topics we are considering are:

### · Japanese Returnees: Agents of Change

We plan to make this an ongoing theme for future events. Some events will examine specific topics, including how schools, companies, and other organizations are taking advantage of the special opportunities made available to them by the influx of internationally experienced people.

### · Sports and Society (with Rugby and 2020 Just Around the Bend)

With the Rugby World Cup and Olympics/Paralympics 2020 coming soon, can sports help to improve society?

### · Getting Animated About Anime

So many people come to Japan from an interest in anime/manga/games and pop culture. Is there something good to be learned from this and are there things we can do to leverage this for social good?

*We also would like to consider other possibilities, led by other fellows, so please send your comments, suggestions, requests, questions, and other program ideas and possible navigators for our events to:*

[mikekato@japanesegreats.net](mailto:mikekato@japanesegreats.net)

## Future of Food with Venture Cafe

RSA JFN is now planning a series of meetings on the Future of Food to be held at the Thursday Gathering of Venture Cafe.

<http://venturecafetokyo.org>

The first meeting will be held on March 7 (TH). The meeting format will be a moderated panel discussion.

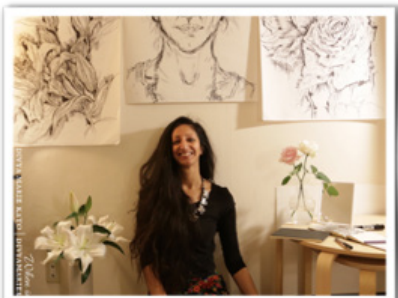
The inaugural edition will feature panelists with experiences in creating edible schoolyards and hotels in Tokyo, the reduction of food waste, and establishing SDGs in a large mid-town hospitality enterprise and their efforts to build toward a sustainable food future.

## Focus on RSA

The Japan Association for Language Teaching's (JALT) Business Communication Special Interest Group (BizComSIG) held their 3rd annual international conference entitled, "The Spark: Igniting Innovations in Communications For Global Business", at Toyo University's Hakusan Campus on September 8-9.

Four RSA Fellows gave a range of presentations and/or workshops at the conference along with over 40 other presenters from around the world, with presenters coming to Toyo University from Argentina, Germany, India, South Korea, and Thailand as well as many locally based international and Japanese attendee's and presenters.

In terms of connecting people and sharing ideas the conference was a great success and will hopefully be the first of many collaborations between the RSA JFN and JALT / BizCom.



Recently, Divya Marie Kato worked on a visual that came out of our December meet up and here's a link to our web page introducing 'Japanimates': <https://www.thersajapan.org/japanimates>

### The Power Of Visuals

Inspired by the *RSA Animates series*, we're inspired to bring our visions and ideas to life here in Japan too!

Beginning with this first draft, sketched during our final RSA JFN meet up of 2018, we worked towards visually capturing our collective ideas about moving forward in 2019.

These visuals will be used to:  
refresh our memories  
capture main ideas  
spread our work  
and...

serve as a starting point for **Japanimates!** Stay tuned!



### Future of Food with The Venture Cafe

On March 7, RSA JFN will start a 3-part series on Future of Food with the Venture Cafe Tokyo: <http://venturecafetokyo.org>

Future of Food is planned as a series of roundtable-style discussions. Around three invited guests will engage in a moderated discussion. Audience participation is encouraged.

Future of Food will explore food innovations from many angles, from production technologies to architecture and urban planning to ideas from space flight. Our purpose is to create a vibrant environment for innovators, investors, and foodies to collaborate and design a brighter and sustainable food future for Tokyo and the world.

### Tokyo's Food Future: Rainbows Follow a Downpour

The first edition of Future of Food will explore broadly some of the most darkest issues and bright innovations concerning food in greater Tokyo and Japan. The discussion will serve to introduce the series as a whole, but also to give some concrete examples of how some people are successfully engaged in solutions around food education and urban farming, food waste, farm-to-table initiatives, and SDGs.

## About the RSA Japan Fellows Network

The mission of RSA JFN is to champion new ways to think, act and be, in response to the challenges of our times. We do this through the following:

**FELLOWSHIP NETWORK** – building and nurturing a network of Fellows in Japan, who are each enriching society through creative ideas and actions.

**EVENT PROGRAMME** – running a vibrant programme of events that challenge and inspire participants, build community and spread the work of the RSA.

The RSA JFN can be found on on the internet through:

Website:

<http://www.thersajapan.org>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/thersajapan/>

Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/thersajapan>

Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/thersajapan/>

Join the RSA JFN via any one of our online profiles and ask to be added to our mailing list for updates regarding our events.

You can find out more about the RSA at:

<https://www.thersa.org>

The Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) is a London-based, British organisation committed to finding practical solutions to social challenges. Founded in 1754 by William Shipley as the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce, it was granted a Royal Charter in 1847, and the right to use the term Royal in its name by King Edward VII in 1908. The shorter version, The Royal Society of Arts and the related RSA acronym, are used more frequently than the full name.

Notable past fellows include Charles Dickens, Benjamin Franklin, Stephen Hawking, Karl Marx, Adam Smith, Nelson Mandela, David Attenborough, William Hogarth, John Diefenbaker, and Tim Berners-Lee.

News

Some projects from Coaching Reflections for 2019 Cohorts:

Jane Best, Executive Director of Refugees International Japan

Building a Future for Refugees

The kanji for nanmin 難民 reads "difficult people". As a message to the wider public this implies that refugees are difficult people, when in reality, they are fleeing difficulty (hi-nanmin). Labels are so important in defining the identities of people. We encourage you to spread the word that displaced people are not 難民 (nanmin) but 避難民 (hinan-min).

Adam Fulford  
About NowHow

Since 2014 I have worked with a village of 280 people in Yamagata Prefecture. Our aim is to increase tourist income by boosting foreign visitor numbers. For this, we use a corporate training initiative called NowHow. Japanese trainees show foreign tourists around in English. Then trainees and visitors brainstorm local challenges, such as how to cover the travel costs of students supporting the annual snow festival. I myself use NowHow to gather elderly residents' invaluable memories of life "before convenience".

Phillipe Valdois

As 2018 was coming to a close I was asked as an assignment for an art history class if I thought visual arts were still as useful to convey messages to the public as they were in the 18th and 19th centuries. Without a doubt, infographics are an important part of today's communication landscape and the RSA Animate series constitutes an appealing animated form of knowledge visualisation.

The RSA Animate "Left Brain, Right Brain" shows that "brain and behaviour research is increasingly being incorporated into political and policy debate." It is arguable that infographics are also based on such research. I started 2019 watching a few Animates including my favorite one, Andrew Park's "What is the RSA?" and thought about the confluence of ideas emanating from RSA and RSA-Japan.

Both in form and contents, Animates share similarities with our Fellow Divya Marie Kato's Japanimates evolving project. Her previous RSA-sponsored initiative, here in Japan in 2018, the discussion introduced us to visual arts as a tool to reflect, communicate and plan for action. 2019 should be a great year to go further in that direction.



RSA JFN Jigsaw, by Takéfumi Kamio

JFN Core Members

- Adam Fulford
- Divya Marie Kato
- Jane Best
- Masahiro Kato
- Mike Kato
- Noriko Tada (Student Engagement)
- Philippe Valdois
- Rab Paterson (IT & Tech)
- Sanae Okazaki
- Yukiko Okubo
- Takefumi Kamio
- Tania Coke (RSA Ambassador, Japan)
- Yasuko Irie (Finance and Operations)
- Yukiharu Kiho

Tentative Program Schedule (2019)

RSA JFN events are generally scheduled on the first Thursdays of every month (January and May are usually exceptions). Please check our website for details and changes.

- February 7
- March 7
- April 4
- May 14
- June 6
- July 4
- August 8
- September 5
- October 3
- November 7
- December 5

About the RSA

The RSA (Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) is a 260 year old British organisation with a mission of enriching society through ideas and actions. There are 29,000 Fellows worldwide, whose annual Fellowship fees help to make this possible. If you support the RSA's mission of a 21<sup>st</sup> century enlightenment, visit [www.thersa.org](http://www.thersa.org) or email [tania.coke@thersajapan.org](mailto:tania.coke@thersajapan.org) to find out about becoming a Fellow.