



JAPAN IX. CENTERS FOR PERSIAN STUDIES IN JAPAN

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University courses. Formal undergraduate and graduate programs of Persian studies in Japan are offered at Osaka University School of Foreign Studies (Ōsaka Daigaku Gaikokugo Gakubū) and Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (Tōkyō Gaikokugo Daigaku).

Osaka University School of Foreign Studies continues the former Osaka School of Foreign Studies, which was founded in 1921 and became a faculty of Osaka University in 2007. It offers, as it has since being reorganized in the 1990s, specialization in 25 foreign languages, as well as minor fields in other languages. The department of Persian studies, the oldest program of its kind in Japan, was founded in 1961, and typically has accepted 15 to 22 new students for undergraduate courses each academic year (which is 1 April to 31 March of the next year, in the Japanese educational system). In the 1990s the separate departments of Persian, Arabic, and Turkish studies were joined to form the new group of Middle Eastern Studies. Around the same time, graduate and doctoral courses were established; as of the spring of 2007 more than a dozen students had obtained their M.A. degree from the department, and one Ph.D. candidate had graduated. In the mid-1990s a School of International Studies



was established at the university, and 5 new students of the school were assigned each year to attend Persian classes for two years as their secondary major. This practice increased the number of annual new students to over 20, for a total undergraduate enrollment of 80 students. By the spring of 2007, about 600 students (men and women in almost equal numbers) had completed the courses. Students are required to write and submit a graduation paper on a topic related to Iranian studies.

In April 2007, faculty members of the department consisted of three Japanese, Shigeo Mori (professor, Iranian languages), Yuko Fujimoto (assistant professor, contemporary Persian literature), and Shin Takehara (associate professor, Iranian folklore), as well as an Iranian visiting professor (Dr. Ḥasan Reżā'i Bāgbidi, Old and Middle Iranian languages). A number of part-time lecturers also teach in the department's regular class schedule, as well as in summer and winter intensive classes.

Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, one of the oldest centers of higher education in Japan, founded its department of Persian Studies in 1980. The department accepts about 15 new students for its undergraduate course each academic year; and up to 31 March 2007, 381 students had completed this course. Seventeen M.A. degrees and one Ph.D. have been awarded from the department. The general features of teaching methodology, curriculum, and course content are almost the same as in Osaka.

Besides formal courses leading to degrees, the department offers night courses of Persian open to the general public, with focus especially on members of the local community. The program, called "Open Academy," is designed to provide specialized education to business people, housewives, and others residing in the neighborhood as a community service and with the aim of enhancing the image of the university and maintaining good community relations. By the end of March 2007, 61 applicants had attended the "open academy" classes.

As of 1 April 2007, faculty members of the department consisted of 4 Japanese, namely Makoto Hachioshi (professor, modern history of Iran), Morio Fujii (professor, Persian literature with special interest in mysticism), Dr Ayano Sasaki (assistant professor, Persian classical literature with special interest in Hafez), and Yoshie Satoko (associate professor, linguistics and Iranian languages), as well as one Iranian visiting professor, Dr. Zahrā Tāheri (Persian literature).



The department has also participated in the program of the university's Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa (Aja Afrika Gengo-bunka-kenkyūjo). The latter sponsored intensive five-week Persian courses during the summer school holidays of 1976, 1978, 1988, 1990, and 2000—the first three in Tokyo, the last two in Osaka and with the collaboration of Osaka University of Foreign Studies. The courses were open to students and faculty members of all universities and research institutes in the country, and were completed by 51 students (10, 13, 10, 14, and 4 in the respective years).

Some other major Japanese universities have a long history of Persian studies but lack a Persian department; they include Tokyo, Kyoto, Nagoya, Hokkaido, and Sendai universities; these provide Persian courses to occasional applicants among their students. At Keiō, Waseda, and Tōkai universities, as well as at some other institutions of higher education and high schools affiliated with them, Persian classes are held in most academic years. Ryūkoku University, originally a Buddhist institution going back to the 17th century, is housed in three campuses in Kyoto and Shiga Prefectures, When a Persian course was offered in its graduate school in April 2007 more than 70 students applied, indicating the persisting attraction of Iran and Persian studies in Japan.

Other activities. The Japan-Iran Society (Nippon-Iran Kyōkai) was established in the 1950s by Idemitsu Oil Company (see above, ii) and supported by the Iranian embassy and relevant government departments in Tokyo. One of its activities was to organize elementary Persian courses, mainly for business people. These ended with the Society's closure in the 1990s. Although a new Japan-Iran Friendship Society was established in Tokyo by enthusiasts of Iranian studies, the former courses have not been replaced.

The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs sponsors special intensive Persian courses in its training program for staff, mainly in diplomatic and consular categories, who are scheduled to be assigned to Japanese diplomatic posts in Persian-speaking countries. The courses are given in collaboration with the Persian Department of the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.

Faculty members of Persian departments have compiled and published a number of textbooks and reference books, especially Persian-Japanese and Japanese-Persian dictionaries, for students of Persian. Notable are those compiled by Y. Fujimoto, Y. Furushima, R. Gamō, T. Kuroyanagi, E. Okada, Sh. Okazaki, H. Rajabzadeh, and F. Satō (see Bibliography). The work of Japanese translators of Persian texts are also used in coursework as supplementary



materials.

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