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### **Australian Perspectives of Japan: enlightening Japanese students visiting Australia**

Each year Japanese university students participate in teaching practicum hosted by the Department of Japanese and Korean Studies at the University of Sydney. Besides practising as language teachers, the students are exposed to an educational environment different from home. (e.g. peer group interaction whereby their teaching skills are constructively assessed by the Australian class). I have been giving them lectures on Australian literature and studies for years. This year I showed them an Australian video called *The Forgotten Force* (1994), about the Australian occupation forces in postwar Japan. The video raised many socio-political issues: the wholesale destruction and starvation that existed in Japan at that time; the breaking down of prejudice as Japanese and Australians worked together at Hiroshima in horrific circumstances; the role of the Emperor in binding the Japanese population together; and the repressive power of governments – the censorship that still exists in Japan relating to the Pacific War and its aftermath, and, on the other hand, the refusal of the Australian government, until recently, to recognise the service of the Australian forces, even though many posted to Hiroshima died subsequently from cancer.

This paper explores ways in which we can contribute to the expansion of knowledge of visiting Japanese students. Language learning alone does not meet the needs of students regardless of nationality. Perhaps in the future we may provide a forum for students to participate in discussing cross-national issues. Activities of this kind should be part of Japanese studies in Australia.