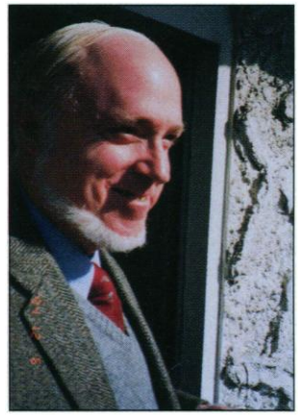
JAPAN

Universities Yank Welcome Mat For Longtime Foreign Faculty

TOKYO—American-born John Freeman thought he had cleared the hurdles that keep most foreigners from finding a permanent niche in Japanese academic life. Freeman (not his real name) had spent 13 years teaching English language and literature at a Japanese national university, his family had settled in the Osaka-Kyoto area, and his two children had been born in Japan and attended a Japanese elementary school. But in 1993 he learned that happiness is fleeting: University officials told him his contract, formally renewed each year, would be extended for only 2 more years, and that the job he thought was secure until retirement would end this year.

Freeman isn't the only foreigner who's no longer wanted on campus. A survey by a Japanese law firm found 16 senior foreign faculty members over the age of 45, some with more than a dozen years of service, whose contracts have been terminated, and more cases have since come to light. The faculty members worry that Japan's Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture (Monbusho) is systematically ridding the national university system of senior foreign lecturers and replacing them with less expensive younger teachers. Monbusho officials deny the charge, saying that they have asked universities to find ways to stretch tight budgets but have not singled out foreign faculty members.

The dismissal of these temporary faculty members comes at a time when the number of foreigners holding permanent faculty positions—slots given Japanese citizens as a matter of course—has more than doubled in the past 2 years. But the numbers are still too small—41 faculty members at 14 universities (see table)—to mark a real change in the country's historical reluctance to open up its universities and government institutes to foreign scholars, including scientists. Indeed, Walter Mondale, the U.S. ambassador to Japan, has said in recent speeches that the tiny band of Americans holding permanent faculty positions, estimated at fewer than 10, remains a significant barrier to understanding between the two countries.



Outsider. Ivan Hall decries "academic apartheid" at Japanese universities.

To be sure, as one U.S. embassy official puts it, "there aren't long lines of Americans pounding on the door for Japanese faculty positions." Such factors as language, cramped housing, and limited funding for academics have also limited the foreign presence. But observers say Japan hasn't exactly welcomed foreign academics. "The basic problem is that foreign scholars are seen as foreigners, not scholars," says Ivan Hall, a former lecturer in international relations at the University of Tsukuba in the early 1980s and later a professor at the private Keio and Gakushuin universities. Hall, a spokesperson for the dismissed senior lecturers, describes the separate tracks for foreigners and Japanese as "academic apartheid."

Until 1982, in fact, faculty positions at Japan's national universities could be held only by Japanese citizens. To get around this law, universities seeking faculty members to teach foreign languages, literature, and culture were permitted to hire *gaikokujin kyoshi* (foreign lecturers such as Freeman) on 1-year renewable contracts. Because of the difficulty of getting foreigners to come to Japan, these *gaijin kyoshi* were paid more and excused from other duties such as attending faculty meetings, serving on university committees, and supervising student theses. In 1982, a new law allowed the universities to create a second category, called *gaikokujin kyoin* (foreign faculty), who would be given the same salaries and terms of employment as Japanese. But each university remained free to decide whether to make the *gaijin kyoin* positions permanent or a series of short-term contracts.

The senior faculty members being dismissed all fall into the first category, the *gaijin kyoshi*, although Freeman says there is little that distinguishes their day-to-day duties from those of the *kyoin* or even their Japanese colleagues. He and others see the dismissal of senior *kyoshi* as part of an effort by Monbusho to downgrade their slots into a slightly elevated version of the native English-speaking teaching assistants now recruited for Japan's high schools—a position much less attractive to senior academics. And Hall warns that the *kyoin* on short-term contracts—90% of the total—"remain as vulnerable to sudden and arbitrary dismissal as the *kyoshi*."

Ichita Itabashi, director of planning for Monbusho's Higher Education Bureau, denies that Monbusho is systematically purging senior foreign *kyoshi*. However, he notes that the overall budget for *kyoshi* is fixed and that the higher salaries paid to more experienced faculty members have squeezed the ministry's budget. As a result, Itabashi says, in late 1992 the ministry contacted every university to urge them to economize. "And we requested that, as much as possible, younger people be employed if the educational or research objectives could be fulfilled," he says.

At the same time, Itabashi says Monbusho is committed to making national universities more accessible to foreign faculty, a stance also taken by a committee of academics that advises the ministry and by several recent international panels reviewing academic departments (*Science*, 18 No-

FEW PERMANENT POSITIONS FOR FOREIGNERS

Institution	Prof.	Assoc. Prof.	Lecturer	Total
Tokyo University	2	8	1	11
Tohoku University		8		8
Shizuoka University		4		4
University of Electro-Communications, Tokyo		2	1	3
Hirosaki University	2			2
Kanazawa University		2		2
KEK (National Laboratory for High-Energy Physics)		2		2
Kyushu Univ., Fukuoka	1	1		2
Tsukuba University	1	1		2
Fukui Medical School			1	1
Fukushima University		1		1
Kobe University	1			1
Muroran Institute of Technology		1		1
Shiga University of Medical Science, Otsu			1	1
TOTALS	7	30	4	41

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND CULTURE, 1994

vember 1994, p. 1178). Some universities have picked up on that cue. Last year, for example, the University of Tsukuba widely advertised for senior-level researchers for its new Tsukuba Advanced Research Alliance (TARA), an ambitious plan to promote interdisciplinary research in selected fields in cooperation with the private sector. A majority of the 200 applicants were from overseas, says Hiroshi Saito, a TARA administrative official, and the program ended up filling two of the seven vacancies for permanent positions with foreigners. (One is a Japanese scientist now working in Canada, however.)

Charles Rhodes, a professor of physics at the University of Illinois, Chicago, who will move to TARA next spring, says that so far his career move has been smooth. "The supportive role of Monbusho has been exceptionally positive and helpful," he says.

But Rhodes is still an exception in Japanese academia. Monbusho's Itabashi says that universities prefer to use the *kyoin* system rather than the *kyoshi* system when hiring foreigners for long-term or permanent positions. Indeed, the number of *kyoin* has risen from 201 to 389 in the past 2 years. And each university exercises considerable autonomy in deciding whether to offer foreigners a permanent position. For example, the prestigious University of Tokyo has the largest number of *gaijin kyoin*, 31, including 11 with permanent positions, the most in Japan. Tokyo's Shun-Ichi Kobayashi, professor of physics and former science dean, says appointments to permanent positions on the faculty of science are made regardless of nationality, and that the physics department, for one, advertises all openings in international journals. In contrast, the equally prominent Kyoto University has only eight *kyoin* on its faculty, and none hold permanent positions. A spokesperson for Kyoto says the absence of "permanent" foreigners reflects an internal regulation limiting *kyoin* to 3-year renewable appointments.

Indeed, foreigners who don't get permanent positions in Japan are increasingly facing explicit time limits on their stay there. Newly hired *kyoshi* must now deal with a new policy among universities which states that their 1-year contracts will be renewed a maximum of three or four times. Although Hall says universities are within their rights to adopt such a rule, he believes it will make foreigners even more of a token presence on most Japanese campuses. As for Freeman, he's scraping by on the income from several part-time teaching positions. "At age 58, I have found it impossible to find an alternative full-time position," he says.

–Dennis Normile

RUSSIA

Anthropology Institute Accused of Racism

At the first national congress of the Association of Russian Ethnologists and Anthropologists in Ryazan last month, delegates unanimously adopted a resolution condemning the growth of racial intolerance and xenophobia. The resolution called on their colleagues "resolutely to oppose in their daily academic, practical, and teaching work any attempt to sow ethnic and racial hatred."

You might take those words as a pro forma nod to one of the social problems of today's Russia, where extreme nationalists have gained considerable strength in parliament. In fact, the problem is much closer to home for Russia's anthropologists: The "extremists" the resolution condemns include members of their own discipline, and over the past year its premier establishment—the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology in Moscow—has been accused of protecting them. A group of Russian anthropologists who first alerted colleagues in the West about the affair called it "the current disgrace and shame" of Russian anthropology. And the institute's clumsy response provides a window on Russian intellectuals' current disarray.

The academic at the center of the affair, Viktor Kozlov of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, seems an unlikely apologist for neo-Nazis. A World War II veteran in his 70s, Kozlov was left with a permanent speech impediment from injuries sustained fighting Nazi Germany. He has been a leading figure in Russian ethnology, and last year he and a colleague were asked to give expert testimony in a trial of Viktor Bezverkhy, a former professor of Marxism-Leninism who has become notorious for his far-right and racist publications.

Bezverkhy was being tried for a second time under Russia's law against promotion of interethnic hatred. His recent writings argued, in a pseudoscientific style, the inferiority of Jews, gypsies, and people of mixed race who, he wrote, had no place in a "socially organized society." Kozlov and a colleague, Nadezhda Lebedeva, were asked to report on the writings. The report, which was mostly Kozlov's work and was submitted in the name of the institute, stated that there was nothing in Bezverkhy's writings that was contrary to the law and that they contained only a few passages that were "rude" or "baseless." Bezverkhy was duly acquitted.

Kozlov's role in Bezverkhy's acquittal sparked an outcry in the democratic press and drew a response from Valery Tishkov, director of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology. "Such a report [as Kozlov's] should never have been forwarded in the name of the institute," he told *Science*. Tishkov says he wrote to the St. Petersburg court, where the case was still open on appeal, offering a "collective evaluation" of Bezverkhy's writings approved by the whole institute. But the offer was ignored. Tishkov did not, however, take any disciplinary action against Kozlov, and when the institute's academic council came up for re-election in January, Kozlov kept his seat.

This sparked fresh controversy in leading Russian newspapers, notably *Izvestiya* and *Moscow News*, which interpreted Kozlov's re-election as an endorsement of his support for Bezverkhy. Some academics see the re-election of Kozlov differently. "I think that in the postcommunist climate, the intellectual community is still trying to find its feet along the principle that personal or political views should not affect one's position at work, simply to break with the past," says British anthropologist Tamara Dragadze of London's Centre for Caucasian and Central Asian Studies, adding, "In Russian society there is still a certain amount of respect for the old."

The situation took a new turn in April when a group of Russian anthropologists circulated an "open letter" to colleagues in the West, condemning the institute's position and calling on westerners to "save the honor of Russian anthropology." Many recipients of the letter wrote to Tishkov voicing their concern. "Next time I am invited to [collaborate with the institute] I will think very carefully," one recipient, Sergey Kan of Dartmouth College, told *Science*, adding, "I don't think Tishkov has done enough." Jonathan Benthall of London's Royal Anthropological Institute agrees: "In a British or American department or institution, any anthropologist who made remarks like those attributed to Kozlov would be severely disciplined."

Kozlov stands by his statements. Meanwhile, Tishkov is trying hard to contain the damage to his institute. He has launched a program of "urgent studies" on the sources, nature, and implications of pro-fascist and anti-Semitic trends in Russia. He co-authored the anti-racist resolution at last month's congress and has issued another statement condemning Kozlov's "expert testimony." But many of the writers and supporters of the letter fear that the Kozlov affair is just the tip of the iceberg. "Support for Kozlov is not very great [among Russian anthropologists]," says Sergey Khazanov of the University of Wisconsin. "But readiness to confront his views is not very large either."

–Vera Rich

Vera Rich is a writer based in London.