

ジョン C. マーハ先生に捧ぐ

A Farewell Essay to Professor John C. Maher

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At the end of the academic year 2020, Professor John C. Maher will retire from ICU. To write this farewell essay, I have had the opportunity of learning about Dr. Maher's academic career over the years he has served as a faculty member of ICU.

Dr. Maher was Professor of Linguistics in the Department of Media, Communication and Culture. He served as Director of the ICU Institute for Educational Research and Service (IERS), Chair of the Graduate School of Education, and Chair of the Division of International Studies. He was Director of the IERS over several years and was instrumental in changing the structure, design and management of *Educational Studies*, the bulletin of the Institute. (He also continued the IERS Christmas tradition after Professor Chiba, organising the annual Christmas party and blessing every member of the institute with its informal warm atmosphere.)

During his teaching career at ICU, he was asked by the British Council to give lectures on teacher training, education and language as part of a course on specialist language in medical communication at De La Salle University in Manila. This continued over several summers. In addition, he was a Senior Academic Member at St. Antony's College, Oxford University from 2008-2009 and 2013-2014.

Born in Leeds, England, he spent his schooldays in Scotland. At university, he began as a student of

philosophy and theology at Heythrop College, University of London (B.A. M.Th.), and then later studied linguistics at University of Michigan (M.A.) and Applied Linguistics (Ph.D) at Edinburgh University, Scotland. He has lived in Tokyo since 1989. (His family also has roots in Ireland, and he was the first ICU faculty member to hold dual citizenship of the Republic of Ireland and the UK.)

Dr. Maher came to ICU from Edinburgh University in 1989 as a visiting professor. His background in education includes a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) at the Institute of Education, University of London. According to him, the important influences on his intellectual development at the time were the lectures by the sociologist of education, Basil Bernstein, the philosopher of religion, Frederick Copleston SJ, and the anthropologist, Mary Douglas. Following his study of Bernstein's sociology of language, Dr. Maher gravitated towards research on language and linguistics, in particular sociolinguistics.

Shortly after his arrival at ICU, Dr. Maher organised a pioneering international conference on minority languages, in 1993, involving speakers on Ainu, Korean and Japanese Sign Language. This conference led to a series of publications dealing with multilingualism, multiculturalism, and language and cultural diversity in Japan, all later to

be understood by him as conceptualisations of ‘identity’, language and politics. These conceptualisations developed into his theory of ‘metroethnicity’ (lifestyle ethnicity, portable identities) in 2005 which has become a subject of scholarly studies around the world.

Dr. Maher is the author or editor of over fifteen books, including *Bilingualism in Japan* (1991 in Japanese), *English as an International Language of Medical Communication* (1992), *Language and Cultural Diversity in Japan* (1994), *Profiles of ‘Japonesia’: Language, Ethnicity and Power* (1994), *Diversity in Japanese Culture and Language* (1995 in Japanese), *Multilingual Japan* (1995), and *Minority Language Revitalization* (Sangensha 2017).

One of his unique publications is the manga-style *Chomsky for Beginners* (Icon Books, 1996), which was translated into Japanese, Arabic, Korean and Spanish and awarded the BBC’s ‘Best Non-Fiction Book of the Year’.

His book *Multilingualism* (Oxford University Press 2018) was his course book at ICU and the biggest selling publication by Oxford University Press in Asia in 2020.

In the year of his retirement, Dr. Maher has published three books: two volumes on the themes of language, society, minorities and identity, as well as a work on the theology of prayer:

- *Metroethnicity, Naming and Mocknolect: New Horizons in Japanese Sociolinguistics* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins), 2021.
- *Language Communities in Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2021.
- *Prayers Before a River* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock), 2021.

He has also written more than one hundred articles on language and society that have appeared in the following publications: *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, *Applied Linguistics*, *Multilingual and Multicultural Development*,

Translation, Review of Applied Linguistics, and *Japanese Journal of Psychoanalysis*. He was editor of *Educational Studies* and *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*. The English-Speaking Union awarded him 1st Prize for ‘Best Academic Paper’ (1986) and Linguapax Asia (an UNESCO-affiliated organization) nominated him for the ‘Linguapax Prize’ for his work on endangered languages (2014).

In addition to his work as an educator and author, Dr. Maher was a commentator on language for ABC, FM Japan and BBC radio, a columnist for the *Daily Yomiuri*, and the subject of a documentary-interview on NHK 3 (1997). He was interpreter for the *Hokkaido Utari Kyokai* (Hokkaido Ainu Association) delegation to the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva. He was a founding member of *Shakai Gengo Kagakukai* (The Japanese Association of Sociolinguistic Science).

Dr. Maher is not only a pioneering sociolinguistic scholar in Japan, he also has been a dedicated educator at ICU. I would like especially to emphasise his educational contribution to the field of Sociolinguistics in Japan. His PhD students have published significant textbooks and taken Sociolinguistics in Japan into a variety of new directions: for example, 『日本のバイリンガル教育 [The Bilingual Education of Japan]』 (2000), 『バイリンガリズム入門 [The Introduction of Bilingualism]』 (2014) by Masayo Yamamoto (山本雅代), 『社会言語学：概説 [Sociolinguistics: General Introduction]』 (2013) by Yuko Iwata (岩田祐子), 『英語落語で世界を笑わす！ [Let the World Laugh by Rakugo in English]』 by Kimie Oshima (大島希巳江) and many others. Together with another ICU Sociolinguist, Professor Junko Hibiya, Dr. Maher created the foundation of Sociolinguists in Japan.

I was also one of his PhD students and have many memories of Dr. Maher as a conscientious supervisor. As his colleague and collaborator in two Kaken

research projects, I have discovered how Dr. Maher has been able to balance being an academic and an educator. A key to this is *ikebana*. He always has pot plants in his office and attends the ICU Ikebana Club every week. He admires the natural environment of the ICU campus and pays close attention to nature and the seasons. Before life was disrupted by Covid-19, he studiously came to his office early every morning and spent a serene hour studying and writing, as if praying at the beginning of the busy day. His many publications are surely the fruit of such hours of contemplation and the inspiration he draws from nature.

Without Dr. Maher's supervision, my 48-minute documentary film with video artist Mr. Katsuyuki Hattori in 2019, 'The Future of Miyakoan Language: Vanishing Voices, Emerging Voices' would not have been completed. Ever since my time as his PhD student, Dr. Maher has always encouraged me to go out into the field and try any method possible to capture the multi-dimensional moments of 'speakers'. In the course of reversing language endangerment and pursuing language revitalisation, I hope I am able to follow his example, and I look forward to our further work together in the field of the multilingualism of the Ryukyus.