

FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this special issue of the *VUWLR*, which will also appear as the 1996 Yearbook of the New Zealand Association for Comparative Law. It has a special focus on Japanese law and contains a wealth of careful comparative law scholarship ranging from international and constitutional law to contract law and civil dispute resolution and includes a unique Annotated Select Bibliography of Japanese Law in Western Languages.

The Law Faculty of the Victoria University of Wellington has the longest tradition of study of Japanese law in New Zealand. From the beginning of that study with Professor Angelo in 1968 to the present, the interest in the study of Japanese law has been continued and strengthened. Professor Angelo, who maintains close connections with my alma mater, the Faculty of Law of the University of Tokyo, was joined in early 1994 in the Faculty by Luke Nottage who returned from post-graduate study in the Law Faculty of the University of Kyoto to teach Japanese Law in Wellington.

In 1996, the year celebrated by this publication, a succession of law professors from Japan were resident in the Faculty of Law of Victoria University of Wellington: Professors Wakamizu Tsutsui (Hitotsubashi University), Paul Ch'en (Tokyo University), Yoshitaka Wada (Kyushu University), Kichimoto Asaka (Tokyo University) and Makoto Kondo (Gifu University). There have also been visits from delegations from local Bar Associations in Japan and, of particular historical note, the first visit by a Japanese Supreme Court Justice, Justice Onishi, took place in 1996. The succession of visitors in 1996 reflected in part Japan's interest in New Zealand and its programme of socio-economic experimentation. It is heartening to see that interest extending to matters of law.

Further, 1996 was the year the Law School moved into the beautifully restored Old Government Buildings, and the year of the arrival of many books and periodicals on Japanese Law donated by the Japan World Exposition Commemorative Fund. The VUW Law Library now has the foremost collection of Japanese law materials in New Zealand.

The future augurs well. In December 1996, a framework agreement between Victoria University of Wellington and Ritsumeikan University was concluded; in 1997, Professor Makitaro Hotta from Ritsumeikan will spend his sabbatical leave at VUW; in January 1997, collaborative agreements between the Law Faculty and its counterpart at Kyushu University were signed; and already, by the date of this Foreword, Professor Masako Kamiya (Gakushuin University) and Professor Makoto Okuyama (Otemon Gakuin University) have participated in activities of the Faculty.

As Ambassador, and as Patron of the New Zealand Monbusho Scholarship Alumni Association, I welcome this publication and its role in deepening cultural understanding and in fostering closer relations between lawyers in New Zealand and Japan.

Tetsuya Endo
Ambassador of Japan

