



NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
ON JAPANESE LANGUAGE
EDUCATION

The 7th NSJLE Symposium Dinner

【Symposium Dinner Guest Speaker】

Alli Parker

Author of “At the Foot of the Cherry Tree”

【Abstract】

Too often, language is merely considered words and grammar. But, as anyone who can speak multiple languages or has learnt another language knows, language is so much more than that. It's connection. It's culture. It's history.

For me, language is even more than that. It's part of who I am. A part that I didn't truly appreciate until I decided to try learning Japanese as an adult, wading through conjugations and vocabulary and levels of politeness and finding small pieces of myself, my grandmother and my ancestors as I went.

My grandmother is the first Japanese war bride to arrive in Australia. She's considered the beginning of the end of the White Australia policy. Through the process of researching and telling her story, learning her language, travelling to her country, I began to understand her far better than just my grandmother, but as a woman who had deepest wells of resilience, endless blind faith, and sometimes crippling hope.

Her story changed Australia forever and I'm honoured to share it with the attendees at NSJLE.

