

It is with this fear and apprehension towards Japan that the studies of Japan and its language were first introduced in Australia. It was, therefore, no coincidence that the birth of this academic discipline, which was to see in later years the strongest growth in the western world, was instigated, not by academia, but by the Defence Department of Australia.

Although academia did not play a part in introducing the study of Japan in Australia, it is significant to note, that the responsibilities of developing the study of Japan and the teaching of the Japanese language, were given consecutively to two eminent scholars, James Murdoch and Arthur Lindsay Sadler. Each of them, though in a different style, played a vital role in setting Australia's future course in the study of Japan and Japan-related education. It was curious that, despite the major involvement by the Defence Department in their appointment, neither scholar had a disposition sympathetic to the military ideology. In view of future development of Japanese learning in Australia, this was an extremely fortunate turn of events. They were first and foremost conscientious scholars committed to the pursuit of truth, with the added dimension of a genuine affinity for Japan.

### **1.1 James Murdoch**

The appointment of James Murdoch, the first scholar of Japan to teach in Australia, was made by the Defence Department in 1917. Murdoch's initial appointment was to the lectureship in Japanese at the University of Sydney, with the condition to teach concurrently at the Royal Military College Duntroon in Canberra. He was to teach three days a week at Duntroon and two days at the University.

The origin of this appointment was recorded in a document sent from Pearce, the Australian Minister for Defence, to the Chief of General Staff, Brigadier-General Foster, dated 24th April 1916. In this document, Pearce requests 'a suitable person to lecture in Japanese in view of the growing commercial relationship between Australia and Japan' (Sissons 1985). On the account of Murdoch's appointment, the University of Sydney archives also hold a letter from the Australian Commonwealth Department of

Defence, dated 30th June 1916, which is marked confidential. The letter is addressed to The Chancellor of the University of Sydney from T. Trumble, Acting Secretary of Defence. In this letter Trumble writes,

*'it is the intention of the Commonwealth Government to develop the study of the Japanese language in Australia...'*

and

*'The Minister of Defence believes that the University of Sydney might wish to participate in this educational development.'*

(Trumble 1916)

He further states that the Department of Defence will be responsible for the salary of the lecturer. Indeed, the entire costs for Murdoch to teach at the University of Sydney, including the expense of his weekly travel between Canberra and Sydney, were borne by the Department of Defence (Sissons 1985). Although the purpose of Murdoch's appointment, which appear in these documents, is 'to cater for the growing commercial relationship' between the two countries, and 'educational development', it is clear that the intention of the Department went beyond 'commercial' and 'educational' benefits. The conditions of his appointment included that, in addition to his teaching responsibilities, he was 'to be available to translate intercepted Japanese documents and to advise generally about Japanese politics and policies' (Meaney 1996:7).

To further verify the intention of the Department of Defence, Brewster cites the Department of Defence Minutes paper (Brewster 1996:5):

*Great difficulty is experienced in obtaining interpreters of Japanese, either written or spoken. In view of the growing relations between Japan and Australia, the scarcity of interpreters may be a serious embarrassment to the Government, and it is recommended that steps be taken as soon as possible to encourage the study of Japanese in Australia. (AA.a)<sup>3</sup>*

Thus commenced the teaching of Japanese in Australia in 1917. The choice of Murdoch as the first lecturer is a very interesting one. According

to Sissons, Britain suggested J. H. Longford or Captain A. M. Cardew, an army linguist appointed to the Foreign and Political Department of the Indian Government. Australia decided to appoint Murdoch, who had been recommended by its embassy in Tokyo. Longford was sixty seven years old at the time and considered too old. Cardew was unavailable (Sissons 1985).

Considering what we know of Murdoch now, it is easy to imagine the stark contrast Murdoch would have made to the Defence personnel who appointed him. Murdoch had lived in Japan for nearly twenty five years, was married to a Japanese, and had intimate knowledge in wide aspects of Japan, its culture and its people. The Defence Department hired Murdoch in fear of Japan. Murdoch had affection for Japan. It is not difficult to speculate the width of the gap that existed between Murdoch's perception of Japan and that of the Defence Department.

As one sifts through the available documents today, Murdoch emerges as a well travelled intellectual with a liberal disposition. He comes across as a free thinker by nature. In the days when travelling the world was rarely thought of and the concept of 'cross-cultural understanding' unheard of, he was indeed a rare breed. To understand Japan, Murdoch did not have to rely on someone else's accounts or on the limited and often distorted knowledge contained in the books available in his time. Instead, he formed his opinion of Japan by living there, and developed an understanding of Japanese people by interacting with them. He also developed an affinity for Japan through his experience there and through his marriage to a Japanese woman.

Murdoch's time of teaching Japanese in Australia was brief, lasting only a little more than four years until his untimely death in 1921. He left, however, a distinct mark in the history of Japanese teaching in Australia. Murdoch as a person and as a scholar continues to be held with respect by today's scholars. He had first hand knowledge of Japan and clear insight into the issues confronting the Japan of the day. Regardless of the Australian political climate of the day, his efforts to disseminate accurate knowledge of Japan to his students and, particularly to those in the

Australian government, continued until his death.

James Murdoch<sup>4</sup> was born in the village of Stone Haven,<sup>5</sup> not far from Aberdeen, Scotland in 1856. There is conflicting information about his father, William Murdoch. One source states he was a labourer, the other a poor grocer. Whichever the case, James Murdoch appears not to have been born to a privileged background in terms of educational opportunities. He seems to have demonstrated, however, his outstanding intellectual ability from an early age. In 1875, at the age of nineteen (19), he won a bursary to Aberdeen University, which was considered in the front rank of Scottish universities at that time. According to Sissons, young Murdoch was interested in student politics and university pranks. (Sissons 1985) He graduated with an M.A. in 1879 with first-class honours in classics.

Murdoch left Scotland on board the ship *Dorund* and arrived in Queensland, Australia in 1881, to take up a position as headmaster of the Maryborough Grammar School. He remained in Queensland until 1888, teaching at secondary schools, including Brisbane Grammar School. During this time, he also started writing as a journalist for a radical magazine *Boomerang*. Murdoch proved to be a prodigious writer. Throughout his life, he would write extensively. His literary activities covered many genres, from journalistic reporting, creative writing, such as short stories and novels, to scholarly work. The best known of his scholarly works is the multiple volume of *A History of Japan*.

He made his first trip to the Far East in 1888. After visiting China, he travelled to Japan. He remained in Ōita Prefecture, Kyushu, for six weeks, teaching English. According to Sissons, Murdoch's attitude towards the Japanese was one of admiration and affection. He recognised the Japanese as individuals, not as a stereotype (Sissons 1985). During his stay in Kyushu, he wrote articles for the *Japan Gazette* on the deplorable labour conditions in the mines in Takashima.

He briefly returned to Brisbane to wind up his affairs in preparation for a longer stay in Japan. According to Sissons, during this brief trip to

Australia, Murdoch made inquiries about Australia's selling wool to Japan, and also brought back a Memorandum from the Japanese government to Australia's Minister of Foreign Affairs.<sup>6</sup>

Murdoch returned to Japan and this time decided to work in Tokyo. He was appointed Lecturer in European History at the prestigious First Higher School (Dai Ichi Kōtō Gakkō) in 1889. He remained at this post for four years until 1893. It is well known that Natsume Sōseki was among his pupils during this period. This period also saw him energetically engaged in literary activities. A lengthy satirical verse, Don Juan's *Grandson in Japan* was published in 1890, followed by *From Australia and Japan*, a volume of short stories, in 1892. He also launched in 1890 a weekly magazine, The Japan Echo, which lasted for six issues. His first novel, *Ayame-san*, a Japanese romance set in the Meiji period, was published by Kelly and Walsh, Yokohama, in 1890.

In 1893, he left the First Higher School and emigrated to Paraguay. This seemingly unexpected move was, according to Sissons, 'very much in keeping with his social attitudes' (ibid.). Socialism was fairly strong in the eighties (1880s) to early nineties in Australia. A man named William Lane, with whom Murdoch was associated through the magazine *Boomerang*, had a vision to create a 'Utopia' on socialist principles. He obtained 25,000 acres of land in Paraguay to realise the dream. A group of Australians had joined him to set up a 'commune' and named it New Australia. Murdoch's purpose in travelling to Paraguay was to be a part of this new adventure. Murdoch arrived there after an extensive delay in Montevideo, due to the war between Chile and the Argentine, and found 'Utopia' already disintegrating. Bitterly disappointed, Murdoch left Paraguay and after a short stay in England, returned to Japan (Murdoch 1926; Nairne & Seale 1986).

Murdoch arrived back in Japan in 1894 and this time remained there until he left for Australia in 1917. He first took up a position as Lecturer in English at the Fourth Higher School (Dai Yon Kōtō Gakkō) in Kanazawa. In 1898, he returned to Tokyo and started teaching Economic History and English at the Higher Commercial College, which was later to become

Hitotsubashi University. The following year in 1899, Murdoch married Okada Takeko.

In 1900, seeking a milder climate due to his health, Murdoch moved to Kagoshima and began teaching at the Seventh Higher School (Dai Nana Kōtō Gakkō). Although his teaching contract ended in 1908, he remained in Kagoshima and regularly contributed to *The Kobe Chronicle*.

While in Japan, Murdoch published the first two volumes of *A History of Japan*. Volume one was titled *The Century of Foreign Intercourse* and was published in 1903. This was followed by volume two, *From the Origins to the Arrival of Portuguese in 1542 A.D.*, published in 1910. Although volume one had to be first published by *The Kobe Chronicle* at Murdoch's own expense, it became the standard reading on the subject amongst western scholars for many years to come. It stayed in print until 1967 (Sissons 1985).

It appears that Murdoch had spent some years in preparation towards the writing of these books. It is recorded that Murdoch, on his way back from Paraguay, spent five months at the British Museum in London translating the letters of sixteenth century European missionaries in Japan (Nairn & Seale 1986). His work on volume one seems to have begun while he was in Kagoshima. The sources in European languages - Latin, Spanish, French and Dutch - were translated by Murdoch himself. For source materials in Japanese, however, Murdoch had to rely on two Japanese assistants, Murakawa Kenkō, then a young history graduate from the University of Tokyo and Yamagata Isoo, a journalist. Murakawa selected source materials and Yamagata translated them into English for Murdoch. The following quote is a vivid portrayal of Murdoch by Yamagata, which was quoted by Sissons:

*He [Murdoch] spent all his time on the task. Writing, or studying his sources, or deep in thought, he looked like one obsessed: his face was pale and his eyes bloodshot. I was translating the Japanese source material and he was always blaming me because this was not produced fast enough. (Sissons 1985:59)*

Murdoch began his study of written Japanese after the completion of volume one of *A History of Japan*. He was approaching fifty. According to Sissons, to those who told him that he was too old, Murdoch would reply that Cato was eighty when he started Greek. Yamagata verifies that Murdoch was able to read classical texts such as the *Kojiki* and the *Manyōshū* within two or three years. Murdoch did not seem to rely much on Japanese assistants in the writing of subsequent volumes. The second volume *From the Origins to the Arrival of the Portuguese in 1542 A.D.* was published in 1910. Murdoch had completed the manuscript of the third volume, *The Tokugawa Epoch 1652-1868* in 1915, two years before his departure to Australia. This volume, however, was not published until 1926, five years after Murdoch's death.

Murdoch commenced his teaching in Australia in 1917. The Senate of the University of Sydney reports in 1917:

*A lectureship for the teaching of the Japanese language and literature has been established under a Parliamentary grant to assist in the teaching of languages serviceable to the development of commercial relations between Australia and other countries.*  
(University of Sydney 1917)

The same Senate report describe the university's first appointee:

*Mr. James Murdoch, M.A., a distinguished graduate of the University of Aberdeen, with high linguistic attainment, was appointed to the lectureship,.... Mr. Murdoch has special qualifications for this office, having resided in Japan for a number of years, and being the author of a history of Japan which is generally acknowledged to be a standard work of great merit.* (ibid.)

Murdoch commenced his teaching at the Royal Military College Duntroon on 20th March 1917 and at the University of Sydney on 19th June 1917. The first class at Duntroon consisted of eight students. Sissons reports that those students had been selected within the College on the

grounds of being the brightest in German and French classes. Murdoch had a larger class at the University of Sydney. The report of the Senate records that the class had 'commenced with about eighty students in Michaelmas Term' (ibid.).

Murdoch clearly knew the Defence Department's intention behind his appointment. Other scholars might have found it a conflict with their academic integrity. Murdoch, however, seemed to have translated it as a reason for higher demand on his students' academic achievements. According to Brewster, in his first annual report to the Commandant at the Royal Military College, Murdoch drew the example of Germany and its intensity in encouraging the study of Japanese. He further pointed to the fact that London and Australia were the only places in the British Empire where Japanese was studied, and stressed the need for excellence (Brewster 1996):

*The best brains in Japan are in the Army and Navy, and the best brains in the Army and Navy are often to be found in the Intelligence Service. The Australian Officers sent to Japan would perhaps in the course of years be called upon to grapple with men of great calibre, and in grips with men of such calibre; amateurish work will be of very scant service. (AA.b)*

From the outset, Murdoch insisted that, in order to achieve the higher linguistic standard demanded of his students, a native speaker would be required to assist him in language training. During the long vacation of 1917 and 1918,<sup>7</sup> Murdoch, funded by the Defence Department, travelled to Japan and sought qualified native speakers who would assist him in the capacity of a Reader.<sup>8</sup>

When he returned to Australia, Koide Nanzi and Miyata Mineichi accompanied him; the latter was to teach at Sydney high schools at the request of the State Education Department. At the University of Sydney, the program was now formed so that the responsibilities were shared between Murdoch and the Reader. The Reader undertook the major part of language instruction and Murdoch coordinated and supplemented with



lectures on history, economy, sociology and so forth. In 1918, a similar formula of instruction was established at Duntroon with Okada Rokuo, Murdoch's brother-in-law, taking up a position to assist Murdoch.

In 1918, the University of Sydney proposed to the Royal Military College Duntroon that, if they would assist in funding, a Chair of Oriental Studies would be created at the University and Murdoch would be appointed to the Chair. The Department of Defence agreed. The 1918 Report of the Senate of the University of Sydney records the following entry:

*Mr. James Murdoch, M.A. of Aberdeen, has been appointed for a period of seven years to the newly created Chair of Oriental Studies. (University of Sydney 1918)*

Duntroon supplied six hundred (600) pounds towards the cost of the Chair and the University of Sydney carried the rest to make up for a thousand (1,000) pounds per annum. The University of Sydney also agreed with the Federal Government that Murdoch be at the Government's disposal to visit the Far East annually. According to Sissons, the Commonwealth Government inserted two clauses to the agreement between the University and Duntroon:

- (1) Murdoch to be given opportunity to visit Japan annually during the long vacation and such part of first term as necessary,
- (2) Murdoch's services to be made available to assist other state governments to introduce the study of the Japanese language.

Sissons interprets that the principal purpose of (1) was to provide regular supervision for a succession of trainee interpreters, whom the Department of Defence would maintain in Japan, and also for Murdoch to provide the Department with his observations and predictions regarding Japan's aspirations (Sissons 1985).

In accordance with the requirements by the Defence Department, Murdoch was also involved in giving special training to those members selected by the Department. At that time, E. L. Piesse, then the Director of Military Intelligence was strongly advocating the need to train young personnel to be literate in Far East and Pacific affairs. The area he was referring to was not only Defence, but also included Trade and Customs, the Institute of Science and Industry, the Bureau of Commerce and Industry, a possible Australian Commissioner in Tokyo, State Education Departments and others. Piesse recommended that the best way of training linguists for such offices, would be to build on the course currently being taught at Duntroon, and to send selected graduates to Japan for further study (Brewster 1996).

The officer whose name was put forward by Piesse was Captain J. R. Broadbent, a graduate of Duntroon, and now a member of the Prime Minister's Department. He had studied under Murdoch and was guided by him in his reading on foreign affairs, particularly on matters concerning the Far East. Broadbent was to be accompanied by Captain G. H. Capes, who was to be sent by the Defence Department as a military officer. Murdoch was personally involved in the training of these two officers. During the long vacation of 1919 to 1920, Murdoch set up a summer intensive course for Broadbent and Capes. The purpose was to have them ready for their stay in Japan, where they were expected to further advance their study under native instructors. In September 1920, in what turned out to be his last trip to Japan, Murdoch initiated both Broadbent and Capes in Japan for their two years' study in the country. Murdoch was not to see the results achieved by his two proteges. James Murdoch died of liver cancer in Sydney on 30th October 1921.

Thus ended the initial era of Japanese teaching created by Murdoch. Today, Murdoch is referred to as the first scholar of Japanese in Australia and the one who laid the foundation for the academic discipline. In the course of this study, however, it became clear that Murdoch's contributions went much beyond the spheres of academia. His endeavour to make Australian leaders understand Japan in the context of international politics of the time, should not be overlooked. We now look

at what the author believes are the unique contributions Murdoch made in Australia at this crucial period of the Japan-Australia relationship.

## 1.2 Murdoch's Contributions

In the history of any nation, there is a rare moment when the knowledge of a scholar is called upon to assist its leaders in determining the nation's direction. Murdoch's knowledge of Japan was called upon, though indirectly, at the critical moment in the Australia-Japan relationship. Murdoch responded to it in earnest. Aware of being the one who had most immediate knowledge of Japan, Murdoch attempted desperately to alert Australian leaders to their errors in interpreting Japan's intentions and to the imminent danger their errors could cause. Although his advice fell short of changing the mainstream thinking of Australian leaders, a number of documents remain today as evidence of his conscientious effort.

In the course of investigating Murdoch's life, guided by Meaney's excellent work, *Fears and Phobias* (Meaney 1996), the author came upon a number of letters and documents, which vividly describe Murdoch's efforts in this sphere. They also give a glimpse into that crucial moment in Australia's history relative to Japan.

In order to discuss Murdoch's contributions in this sphere, it is necessary to introduce Edmund L. Piesse, the Director of Military Intelligence between 1916-19, head of the Pacific Branch and Foreign Affairs Section of the Prime Minister's Department between 1919-23. Murdoch's major contributions took the form of being a personal friend and adviser to Piesse.

As previously mentioned, after Japan's defeat of Russia in 1905, Australia's attention was keenly turned to Japan. The policy-makers, their official advisers, and those intellectuals, who had an interest in foreign affairs, began serious assessment of both Japan's intentions and British policy in the Pacific. Piesse was among those who drew little comfort from the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. He did not hold much faith in the willingness and capability of Britain to protect Australia from the threat of Japan in