

Chapter 3

Defining Requirements for Australia's Study of Japan: 1970s - 1980s

3.1 Outcome of the First Wave of Expansion

Australia's awareness of its need for knowledge and understanding of Japan, which began in the late 1950s and accelerated through the 1960s and 1970s, resulted in a great expansion in the study of Japan and Japan-related education in Australia. Through the process of this expansion, Japanese studies in Australia went through many changes. For Japan scholars and other Japan specialists in the country, the 1970s and 1980s became a time of great evolution.

The most obvious change brought about was that a greatly increased number of Australians were now provided with an access to Japan-related education across the country. By 1976, with thirteen (13) tertiary institutions offering a Japanese program, every state in the country, with the exception of Tasmania and Northern Territory, was provided with Japanese programs at university level. At pre-tertiary level, over one hundred secondary schools across the country had introduced the teaching of Japanese by 1976 (Embassy of Japan 1979). Increasing numbers of Japanese programs at universities meant that more teachers of Japanese were being trained. This ensured a continuous development of Japanese education in the secondary, and even primary, sectors of school systems.

Interestingly, in the succeeding ten years between 1978 to 1988, no new tertiary institution introduced a Japanese program (Marriott, et. al. 1993:p.26). The ten-year gap, however, did not represent any decline in the study of Japan and Japan-related education. Japanese programs in existing universities steadily grew. More importantly, this period served to consolidate the ideas on what Australia needed in Japan-related education, and to build the curriculum to meet these particular needs. In other words, this period helped to lay the foundation from which further development

in Japanese studies and education in Australia would take place.

Another tangible change brought about by the expansion in the 1960s and 1970s was a significant increase in the number of Japan scholars in Australia. During the expanding period, a number of Japan scholars arrived from overseas to work in Australian universities. They added to the existing Japanese studies academia in Australia, not only in numbers, but in substance and a broader dimension of the discipline.

Japanese academia in Australia, although grown much larger and more significant in this period, was nonetheless scattered across the large continent. It needed a forum to conduct academic interaction and to discuss many rising issues. The Japanese Studies Association of Australia (JSAA), a professional association for Japanese academia and other Japan specialists, was established in 1978.

Morris Low, Japan scholar and one time President of the JSAA, stated twenty years later that the establishment of the JSAA had been the result of a number of factors including:

- the coming of age of Japan scholarship in Australia;
- a manifestation of the first *Tsunami* (the expansion of 1960s and 1970s*) in Japanese studies; and
- a sign of the growing relevance of Japan literacy to Australia's economic needs.

(Low 1997a).

*Note by the author.

The Inaugural Conference of the JSAA was held at the Australian National University in 1980. The leaflet announcing the Inaugural Conference states that 'the JSAA is the national organisation devoted to promoting the study of Japan in Australia at all levels.'

As interaction increased between Japan scholars, a number of common issues facing the still young Japanese discipline surfaced. Together, they discussed the issues, tried to sort them through and explored which directions Australia's study of Japan should take. In this constructive

process, several notable features of Australia's Japanese studies and education emerged. They can be described as indigenous features born of the Australian environment. These features were to have significant consequences in the cultivation of Australia's Japan literacy in the decades to come.

These distinctly 'Australian' features, developed during the growing period of the 1970s and 1980s, include:

- mixed paradigm
- strength in language education
- vocational relevancy

3.2 Shift in Paradigm

Neustupny once described the transition in the study of Japan in Australia in terms of a paradigm. In his 1980 paper titled 'On Paradigms in the Study of Japan', he analysed:

Within the present-day study of Japan I propose to distinguish three such systems (paradigm): Japanology, Japanese Studies, and what, for the lack of a better term, I wish to call the New or Contemporary Paradigm. (Neustupny 1980:21)

Low later took up the theme in 1997 in two papers: one reviewing the historical path taken by Australia's study of Japan; the other analysing the process of the development of the Japanese Studies Association of Australia (Low 1997a; Low 1997b).

No one seems to be able to pinpoint the exact point of time when the 'Japanology' paradigm was superseded by the new 'Japanese Studies' paradigm. Neustupny described the Japanology paradigm as 'developed in response to the environment where socio-cultural variation at the international level remained an irrelevant factor', and that the study in this paradigm had 'hardly any economic, political or military consequences of knowing about Japan' (Neustupny 1980:21).

If we take Neustupny's view of the Japanology paradigm, it seemed to be