

slow recognition may have been the absence of language specialists amongst early leaders of Australia's Japanese academia. For a long time, Japanese language competency was not an essential skill required of Japan scholars in Australia. For example, it was only since the Fourth National Conference of JSAA in 1985 that the Japanese language was recognised, along with English, as an official language of the conference.

The recognition, however, was quickly spreading amongst the younger generation of Japan specialists. The year before the Fourth National Conference, the JSAA in 1984 organised a day-long colloquia for the members of each branch of the JSAA – Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Canberra and Brisbane (ibid.). In three of the sessions, the main focus of the discussion was on language teaching. The Brisbane session focused on 'language teaching and the schools' and aimed at bringing together university academics and school teachers of Japanese. The Melbourne session focused on language in contact situations. This theme was developed further at the JSAA Conference in the following year. Canberra also chose language teaching as one of the major topics for the colloquia.

From the 1980s onward, the importance of language teaching for functional purposes was never in dispute amongst the university academia. The community's demand for graduates with Japanese language competence grew even more rapidly from the late 1980s and on to the 1990s. The universities' need to respond to community demand, as well as academia's recognition of the importance of language competence, spurred on Japanese language specialists in the research and development of more effective Japanese teaching methodologies. This is the background which has brought Australia's Japanese language teaching today to the position of one of the strongest in the world.

3.4 Vocational Relevance

In 1988, a national committee was set up in Australia to inquire into the teaching of Asian Studies and languages in higher education. The Committee, with John Ingleson as the Research Director, produced a report titled *Asia In Australian Higher Education*. The Report, which was

submitted to the Asian Studies Council, is commonly referred to as the *Ingleson Report*. In describing the industry's support for a major expansion of Asian languages and studies in Australia, the Report cited a joint statement issued in 1988 by leading Australian business and industries, together with Qantas, Australia's major airline:

Expanding commercial links with Asia is fundamental to our national interests, but not enough Australians are equipped for the task. Asian language skills and knowledge are urgently required in Australian business, industry and the wider community. Employers need Australians with commercially relevant skills combined with Asian language skills and knowledge, from senior management to front-line staff.
(Ingleson, et. al. 1989:41)

Awareness of Asia's importance to Australia was preceded by the awareness of Japan's importance. The nation's demand for graduates with Japan skills and literacy was gathering momentum in the 1980s.

Australia's requirements for Japan skills and literacy were similar to what was described in the Ingleson Report. The country wanted graduates with functional language skills, as well as knowledge and understanding of Japan relevant to each professional requirement. In other words, the Japan skills and literacy that each graduate is expected to have, are the vocationally relevant skills applicable from 'senior management to front-line staff' of both private and government sectors. Australian universities recognised the specific nature of the demand and responded to it.

Academia in general is not always well prepared for linking the education of students to their vocational skills. Even when the importance of vocational skills is recognised, it is not easily translated into the curriculum. Australia's Japanese studies academia, however, was placed in a unique position. Given the suddenly increased demand placed on Japanese education, it had no alternative but to critically examine the priorities in Japanese education in Australian. Vocational relevance came high in the list.

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

The ever-present tendency in academia, not only in Japanese studies but also across many other disciplines, is that the views of an individual scholar are often confined within the narrow spectrum of his/her own specialised area. In Japanese studies, for example, language specialists may place foremost importance on the acquisition of the language in the pursuit of Japan skills. Economists specialising in Japan, on the other hand, may see language acquisition as of secondary importance to the knowledge of economics.

In Australia, however, academic leaders in Japan-related studies seem to have recognised early that the holistic approach was called for, if the curriculum were to be vocationally relevant and academically sound. The primary responsibility of university education is recognised as the intellectual development of students. The task then for the Japanese academia was to build into the curriculum vocational relevancy without compromising academic quality.

If graduates were to benefit from what they learn at the university, and to be able to contribute effectively to Australia's growing relationship with Japan, a single dimensional study would no longer be sufficient. They would have to have a high level of knowledge in the specialised area of Japan, backed by language competency, and broad-based knowledge of Japanese culture and society. Thus emerged the 'multi-disciplinary' approach to Japanese studies. The terminology was not even familiar at that time to many of Australian academia.

Many of the university programs introduced during the 1960s and 1970s, therefore, had been designed to encourage students to combine language study with other disciplinary studies. The popular disciplinary area to combine with Japanese included economics, political science and law. Introductory knowledge of Japan, such as general history and culture were offered to fulfil the requirements for broadly based knowledge of Japan. Through the 1980s, multi-disciplinary or interdisciplinary features of Japanese programs became increasingly apparent in Australian universities. At Monash, for example, the Japanese program systematically combined language courses with courses in the social science subjects. Specialists in

each social science field, often located outside the Japanese department, taught these subjects. The arrangement enabled students to pursue a degree in law/Japanese and engineering/Japanese. The students in economics and sciences were also allowed to take Japanese units as part of their degree requirements.

At the Australian National University (ANU), undergraduate students in the Faculty of Asian Studies were required to take a major study outside the Faculty, such as economics, political science or history. At the University of Western Australia, as mentioned previously, Japanese studies was located within the Faculty of Economics, and students essentially combined language studies with economics.

In 1985, the Consultative Committee on Relations with Japan took the initiative to establish a working group to examine, (1) the employment experience of Japanese studies graduates and (2) the availability of Japanese studies programs suited to the needs of employment in business and the management of Australia's relations with Japan. Peter Drysdale of the Australia-Japan Research Centre (AJRC) at ANU chaired the working group. Members included Japan specialists in academia such as Alan Rix of the University of Queensland, Helen Marriott of the Swinburne Institute of Technology and William Purcell of the University of New South Wales. The group's report was published in 1987 by the AJRC as *Japanese Studies in Australia and the training of Australians to do business with Japan* (Drysdale, et. al. 1987b).

In terms of how Japanese studies programs related to career destinations, the study found that, in business-related employment, graduates in Japanese studies with 'non-Arts' specialisations are more likely to have found their Japan-related qualifications useful in gaining employment. In other words, in order to keep the Japanese studies program responsive to the community's demand for graduates with Japan skills and literacy, and also relevant to the career aspirations of students, the multi-disciplinary approach appeared to bear out its importance. Language study combined with a wide range of specialisations would serve the employment purpose better than the language alone or language with arts subjects such as

literature, the traditional partner with language learning. The field of specialisation options should be open to all areas from social sciences to technology-related fields.

The survey results reflected the changes that Australia has gone through in its relationship with Japan. Drysdale describes that the growth of the commodity trade in the 1950s and 1960s had transformed the relationship between Australia and Japan into a much broader and more diversified economic and political relationship in the 1970s and 1980s. The changes in relationship required a larger number of graduates with professional training in multiple disciplines relating to Japan.

Now that Japan is a regional and global economic power, the bilateral relationship [between Australia and Japan] involves large financial flows, a more diversified commodity trade requiring detailed market knowledge and information, a growing trade in services such as tourism, investment on a large scale, and increasing technology trade flows. This kind of relationship with Japan requires more professional and skilled people to manage and develop it. (ibid.:4)

The second part of the study undertaken by Drysdale's working committee took the form of a comprehensive survey of existing Japanese and Japan-related programs in Australia's tertiary education in the 1980s. The survey aimed to identify the strengths of these programs and to evaluate the relevancy of the programs in training young Australians for the new dimension of the Australia-Japan relationship.

The study found that Australia had already developed relatively rich resources in Japanese studies and Japanese language training programs. The study also found evidence that Japanese programs in tertiary institutions have begun to develop a multi-disciplinary approach. Many programs surveyed had been designed to allow students to combine language and other basic Japanese studies courses with a specialisation relevant to business and public management employment.

The report pointed out, however, that this had been a recent development and that some older established Japanese studies programs do not allow this flexibility in degree structure. Even in major centres of commercial and business dealings, such as Sydney and Melbourne, there is inadequate opportunity for students to combine a specialisation relevant to business and public management employment. In order to ensure wider opportunities for students in many parts of Australia, the study suggested more activities in the direction of intra-institutional and inter-institutional cooperation.

..while there is a desirable trend towards intra-institutional and inter-institutional cooperation aimed at providing skills useful in securing Japan-related employment, there is much scope for inter-institutional cooperation to provide special courses in Japanese business and management studies. (ibid.:1)

Australia's developing relations with Japan in the 1980s was increasingly multi-dimensional. In order to contribute towards national interests, as well as enhancing their career opportunities, graduates of Japanese studies have to be multi-skilled. The specialisations required of graduates ranged wide, from economics, finance and law to a variety of technology fields. It would be impossible for any single university to develop a program to cater for all these needs. Intra-institutional and inter-institutional cooperation, therefore, would be the rational answer. In this aspect, the study concluded that, in the 1980s, there remained much scope for improvement.

The general findings of the study, however, portrayed a picture that by the mid 1980s, the majority of Japanese programs in Australia's tertiary institutions were progressing well. Evidence was presented that a number of universities, particularly those in and around major cities, had begun designing Japanese programs with clear consideration of vocational relevancy.

3.5 Defining Academia's Contribution

The 1970s through to 1980s was the time for Australia's Japanese Studies