

The number of teachers of Japanese is totally insufficient. It is necessary to take immediate measures to recruit new teachers from among recent graduates and from Japan. There is a need to increase radically intake into teacher education courses for Japanese. (Marriott, et. at. 1993:vi)

4.6 New Japanese Programs

The *Tsunami* resulted in a great expansion of the existing Japanese programs in Australian universities. At the same time, the *Tsunami* brought with it the impetus to motivate other universities to introduce Japanese programs. Before the *Tsunami*, in 1984, eighteen (18) tertiary institutions offered Japanese programs in Australia (Embassy of Japan 1984). After the *Tsunami*, in 1991, the number increased to twenty four universities (24) and four (4) other tertiary institutions, including Institutes of Technology and Colleges of Advanced Education, many of which later became universities. (Leal, et. al. 1991). Within seven years between 1984 to 1991, therefore, ten new Japanese programs were introduced into Australia's tertiary institutions. Twenty eight (28) institutions in total represented a remarkable proliferation of Japanese programs, when one considers that Australia's tertiary institutions numbered a little over thirty at the time.

All new Japanese programs, small or large, faced the same set of problems as many of the established programs, including the lack of funding and the shortage of qualified full-time staff members. In addition, new Japanese programs faced different challenges. The largest challenge of them all was, perhaps, the lack of institutional interest in Japan. In retrospect, it is surprising that, given the increased demand on Japanese language and literacy spreading in the community, institutional awareness for Japan-related studies grew very slowly in Australian universities, excluding those which already had Japanese programs. It is even more surprising if one considers the fact that the government push, as well as industry sectors' demand towards Asian literacy, had begun as early as in the 1970s, more than a decade before the major *Tsunami*.

In a university where previously no Japan-related discipline existed, the difficulty to introduce a Japanese program was almost insurmountable. Introducing a new discipline within an established federally funded university structure is not an easy task at any time. Even with the mounting evidence of student demand and increasing community awareness for the importance of Japanese language and literacy, many universities were not easily convinced that there was a pressing need to introduce Japanese within the degree structure. In the case of Macquarie University in Sydney, where the author was directly involved in the introduction of the Japanese program, it took more than five years of continuous effort during the 1980s to have this fact recognised.

The particular difficulty at Macquarie, although similar experiences were repeated elsewhere in Australian universities, was that the author was the only academic member in the whole university who had academic interests in Japan and Japan-related studies. As far as the university executives and administration were concerned, no one had informed knowledge of or significant interest in Japan. Repeated requests to consider the establishment of a Japanese studies program was turned down with such replies as, 'but, we already have Chinese.'

The *Tsunami* of 1988 certainly helped improve the situation. The dramatic increase of students in existing Japanese programs across Australia was, by mid 1988, public knowledge. In the community, a broad range of employers, in the public sector as well as in the private sector, were advocating the advantage of having Japan-literate graduates amongst their employees. Public organisations such as the Asian Studies Council began serious assessment of the situation and made funds available to promote Asian literacy in education. Media attention was also drawn to the community's increased interest in Japan and Japan-related skills, the language in particular.

Japanese language studies are belatedly booming in universities – and strong demand is coming from students studying economics, engineering and other vocational courses. As our Asian connection grows, Japanese has become the fastest-growing

language in universities.

Graham Williams, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 10/1/91

One university after the other, which hitherto had no Japanese program, began to offer Japanese studies programs. The notable characteristics of the new programs were that the academic coordinators were all conscious of Australia's specific need for Japan-related skills and literacy. They endeavoured to design the program in line with the three areas of intellectual development prescribed by Stockwin.

The 1987 major study by AJRC, led by Drysdale, was generally optimistic about the direction Australian universities were taking towards the fulfilment of universities' role in the cultivation of Australia's Japan skills and literacy. (Drysdale, et. al. 1987b)

4.7 Beyond the *Tsunami*

The holistic effects of the *Tsunami* of 1988 were never researched extensively amongst the Japan scholars in Australia. For one reason the effects were so visible and obvious to those involved in Japanese studies, that the need for research did not arise. The other reason seems to be that the Japanese academia all around the country became totally occupied in coping with the effects of the *Tsunami* and were left with little time to objectively study them.

The products of the 1988 tsunami are clear in numerical terms. The number of institutions offering a Japanese program dramatically increased in response to the swelling number of students. Eighteen (18) universities and higher institutions¹⁷ in Australia offered Japanese programs before the *Tsunami* in 1984 (Embassy of Japan 1984). The number jumped to twenty eight (28) in 1988, the year of the *Tsunami* (Leal, et. al. 1991). By 1993, thirty three (33) institutions in the country offered a Japanese program. In other words, all the Australian higher institutions except three had established Japanese programs by that year (Marriott, et. al. 1993).

The following table shows the overall increase of Japanese learners in