

ASIA IN AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION

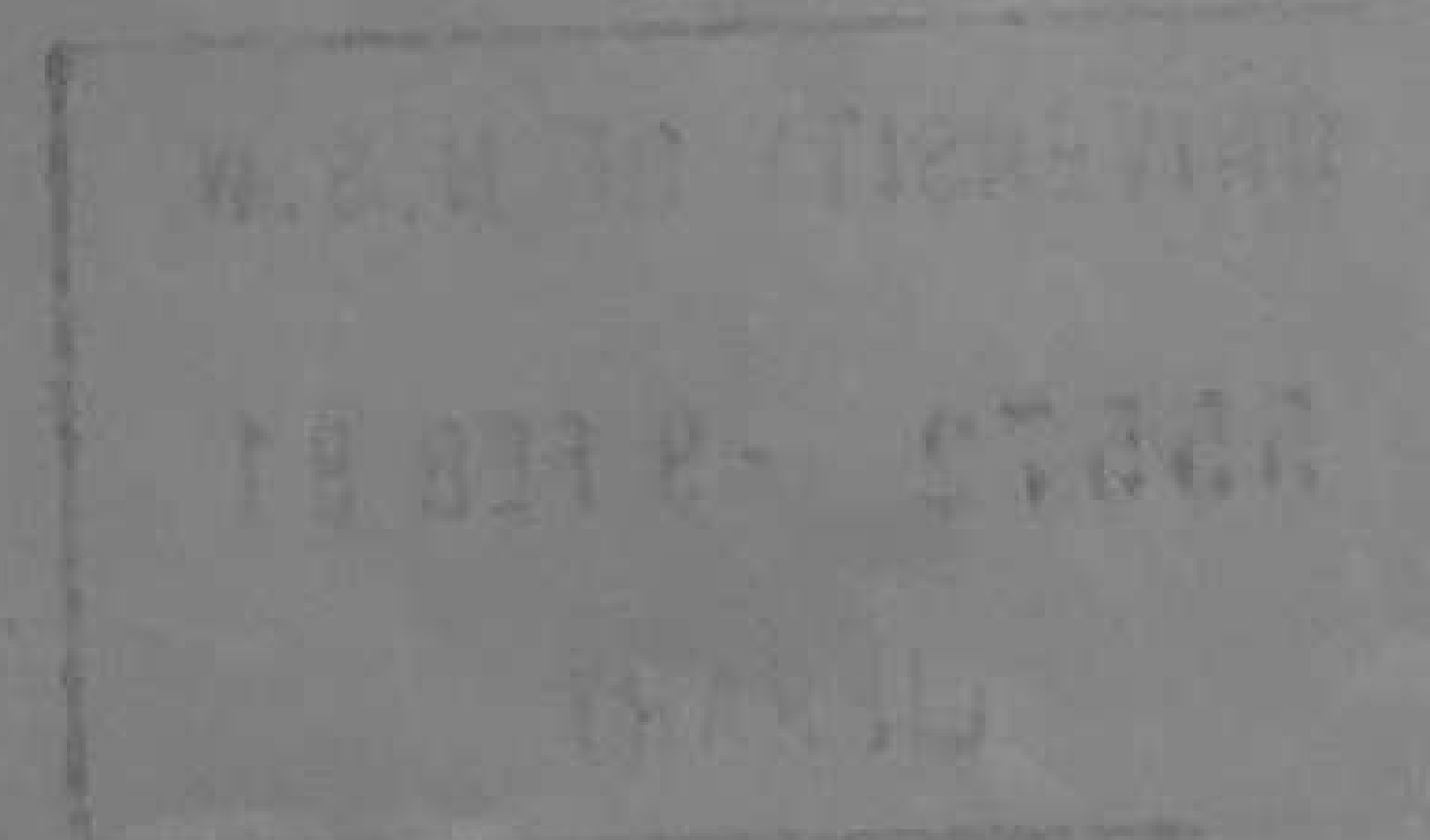
Report  
of the  
Committee on Asian Studies  
to the  
Asian Studies Association of Australia

August 1980

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VOLUME 1

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Professor Wang Gungwu,  
President,  
Asian Studies Association of Australia,  
Research School of Pacific Studies,  
Australian National University,  
P.O. Box 4,  
CANBERRA ACT 2600.

Dear Professor Wang,

I have pleasure in presenting to you the report of the Inquiry into Asian Studies conducted in 1979-80 by the Association's Committee on Asian Studies.

In the course of its work the Committee has considered a wide range of issues and there have been significant differences of opinion among its members. The Committee has also debated the considerable range of views it received from its survey of ASAA members. In discussing these issues over a period of eighteen months the Committee believes that it has been able to develop to greater maturity the ideas with which it started out.

For the prospering of the study of Asia in Australia, and of the ASAA, the members of the Committee agreed that their most important objective was to seek among the diverse and often conflicting views of both the ASAA and the Committee members themselves for common ground. Committee members have in some cases set aside personal commitments to strongly held but potentially divisive views, in the interests of producing a report which all members could commend unanimously to the Association. The final report does represent that common ground. It is unanimously commended. It is the Committee's hope that members of the Association will likewise seek for common ground in considering the Committee's recommendations, so that the report might receive the strong endorsement of the ASAA which is necessary if it is to carry any weight with those outside the Association we must now seek to enlist in the cause of the study of Asia in Australia.

The discussion of the report at the Association's third national conference will be of critical importance. If the result is inconclusive, our time will have been wasted and the objectives of the ASAA will have been set back for another two years. That is why we have allowed time for discussion of the report before the conference and for members to formulate proposed amendments. It is our hope that the General Meeting of the Association will be able to reach agreement on the recommendations and the proposed amendments, which will then become a blueprint for action.

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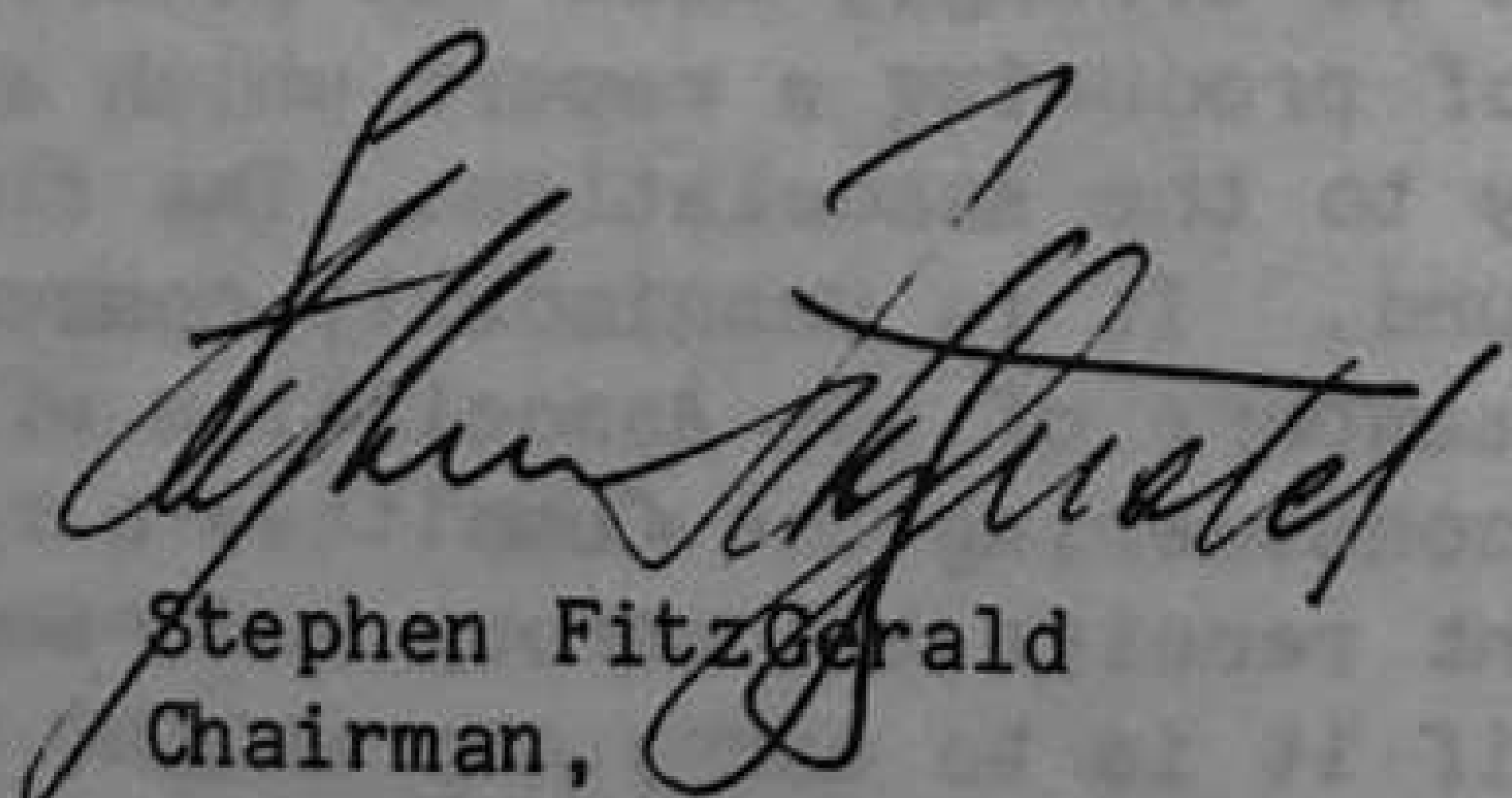
Because of the limited time and resources which the Committee had at its disposal, there are many areas which it has not been able to investigate, many views to which it has not been able to do justice and undoubtedly some significant initiatives in the field of Asian studies which have escaped its notice. The Committee is aware of these limitations and believes that it is of the utmost importance that further investigation be carried out in a number of spheres.

As a result of the inquiry the Committee hopes that the Association will become involved in several new areas of activity, and urges members to give willingly of their time and expertise in helping the Association to implement the recommendations of the report.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the members of the Committee. Each one has contributed both to the discussion and to the writing of the report, which is the work of the Committee and not of the Chairman to whose name that of the Committee has become attached. I also wish to thank Dr Virginia Matheson, who greatly assisted the Committee's work.

Members of the Committee join me in praising the work of Elizabeth Drysdale. Her contribution has far exceeded that of a research assistant. She has done an enormous amount of work in her own time. Her dedication reflects her commitment to the aims of the Association and her wide knowledge and experience in the field. She has made a significant contribution to the constructive and creative work of the Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Stephen FitzGerald  
Chairman,  
Committee on Asian Studies

Members of the Committee

Professor J.I. Ackroyd  
Dr Stephen FitzGerald (Chairman)  
Ms E.M. McKay  
Professor J.A.C. Mackie  
Dr J. Masselos

Research Assistant: Ms E.S. Drysdale

SYNOPSIS

S.1 This report of an Inquiry into Asian Studies in Australia was compiled for the Asian Studies Association of Australia (ASAA), and its recommendations are addressed to that body. The recommendations are contained in Volume 1 and the supporting information in Volume 2.

S.2 The Inquiry into Asian Studies was instituted by the ASAA's Council out of concern for an apparent trend in which interest in studying Asian countries seemed to be levelling out and, in some cases, declining. The Committee collected information on courses and enrolments at all levels of the education system and on the employment of Asian Studies graduates. It also conducted a small survey of student reasons for studying and not studying about Asia, and sent questionnaires to Association members seeking their views on a variety of issues.

S.3 The report addresses the situation and the problems in four main areas of concern:

- (i) career prospects for graduates with an Asian emphasis in their studies;
- (ii) tertiary education in general, with emphasis on universities;
- (iii) schools and teacher education;
- (iv) education beyond formal institutions, through the media, libraries and information services, publishing, Australian relationships with Asian countries, continuing education and the visual and performing arts.

S.4 The Inquiry revealed that there was indeed a levelling out in enrolments in some courses on Asian countries and Asian languages, and a decline in others, but it also revealed that interest in some courses had continued to increase, while in others substantial fluctuations had occurred. Although no consistent pattern could be discerned, the overall picture in both schools and tertiary institutions was one of very slow growth, with the study of Asian countries and languages involving a very small proportion of the student population. The Committee also examined Asian content in courses in the various disciplines and found that while substantial study of Asian countries occurs in certain types of courses, notably in history, there is widespread neglect of the Asian region in many educational programmes. The Committee concluded that both enrolment patterns and course offerings reflect a continuing low level of interest in the Asian region in the education system and in the community, a view that the study of

*Small  
proportion*

*Leading* Asian countries is marginal to the concerns of both. That view is critical in the current climate of reductions in educational spending. The vulnerability of educational programmes about Asian countries is deeply disturbing both in terms of the training of scholars and of specialists to manage our increasingly complex relationships with Asian countries, and in terms of the general education of Australians. The difficulty experienced by many specialists in the field in finding jobs to employ their skills suggests that even those involved in Australia's relations with Asian countries are not convinced of the need for those relations to be conducted on the basis of sound knowledge of the countries concerned. It also suggests that for studies of Asia to have vocational value they need to be combined with training in areas which have a more direct vocational focus, and in most cases to include postgraduate study.

S.5 The report stresses the need for more resources to be made available to education about Asian countries, so that community understanding of this region and specialist education may be brought to a level appropriate both to our geographical location and to the significance of Asian countries in human affairs. However, it also sees those involved in teaching about Asia as having a great responsibility to improve their contribution to this process and to adjust their thinking to changing circumstances. Consequently, the central recommendations fall into two categories - those concerned with the provision of additional resources and those aimed at stimulating activity among members of the Association. There are also recommendations that the Association seek to encourage certain other bodies to further the cause of studying Asia.

S.6 On the question of the allocation of resources, the central recommendation is that the Association request the Federal Government to establish an Asian Studies Council to fund a variety of developments at all levels of the education system. These include the expansion and diversification of postgraduate study of Asian countries, the extension of teaching about Asia in discipline-based courses in schools and tertiary institutions, the provision of teaching materials on the region for primary and secondary schools and of increased opportunities for pre-service and in-service education about Asian countries, support for small and vulnerable Asian studies programmes, the development of facilities for the study of Asian languages not already widely taught in Australia, the provision of scholarships for study of various kinds, including study in Asian countries, the expansion of research on Asian countries, support for educational and scholarly publications on the region and increased provision for Australians to become familiar with the visual and performing arts of Asian countries.

S.7 On the question of the Association's own activities, the key recommendations are for the establishment of a successor committee to the present Committee on Asian Studies, special-purpose committees on school curriculum and resources development and on

media coverage of Asian countries, and programmes aimed at creating more favourable employment prospects for Asia specialists, improving the quality of courses on Asian countries at all levels, determining students' reasons for studying and not studying about Asia, persuading schools to give greater attention to the study of Asian countries, establishing an Association policy on the teaching of Asian languages at tertiary level, supporting and extending the teaching of Asian languages in secondary schools, promoting research and experimentation in teaching Asian languages in primary schools, facilitating travel to Asian countries for study and professional development purposes, encouraging staff exchanges in the field of Asian studies and increasing the exposure of Australians to the visual and performing arts of Asian countries. There are also recommendations on the need for a study of information services and library resources on Asian countries, on developing relationships between Asia specialists and Australians in other fields who work with or in Asian countries, and on the need for more flexible and practical course offerings on Asian countries and languages to supplement conventional degree programmes.

S.8 The Committee sees the report as stimulating further inquiry and activity in a number of areas, as well as suggesting some lines for immediate action. Additional resources, co-ordination and planning are essential if the 1980s are to see anything but a further decline in interest in studying Asian countries. Essential also is vigorous and directed activity by members of the profession, and fresh approaches to the enterprise of making Australians more aware of the countries of the Asian region.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

In the report the Committee makes the following recommendations:

Preamble

- R.1 That the Association should make an offer of Honorary Membership to the Chairman and the Executive Secretary of the Myer Foundation.
- R.2 That the Myer Foundation be invited to nominate a representative to any permanent or ad hoc committee of the Association which may be set up to continue the work of the Committee.
- R.3 That the General Meeting of the Association authorize Council to establish a permanent committee to carry out this work, that membership of the committee should be decided by Council, and that a new committee should be appointed following each General Meeting of the Association. As far as possible the committee should be representative of the various levels of the education system and of specialists in each of the broad regions of Asia (West Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, China and Japan), as well as drawing, over time, members from each State and from a range of disciplines.
- R.4 That Council be asked to explore means of funding the appointment of a Research Officer for the committee on a full-time and continuing basis.

Chapter 3: A National Approach to the Study of Asia

- R.5 That the ASAA authorize its Council to approach the Federal Government with a proposal for the establishment of an Asian Studies Council for these purposes.

Chapter 4: Employment Prospects for Asian Studies Graduates

- R.6 That the next Asian Studies Committee consider ways of establishing consultation between representatives of the various types of courses about Asian countries, on the relationship between vocational and general educational objectives in these courses, and on the appropriateness of the current national pattern of courses.
- R.7 That in preparation for this process the next Committee collect detailed information from university and college departments with an Asian focus, on the employment patterns of their graduates.

- R.8 (i) That the ASAA make a more deliberate effort to promote a continuing exchange of views with employers on the employment of Asia specialists and on the kinds of qualifications employers would wish to utilize in this field;
- (ii) that the Association compile and circulate information obtained from employers about the kinds of qualifications they would consider useful if employing Asia specialists;
- (iii) that the Association advise its members to maintain liaison with the Careers and Appointments offices in their universities and CAEs for the purpose of keeping registers of people with postgraduate qualifications in Asian studies. Such registers would be useful both for observing the employment patterns of these graduates (see R.7 above) and for assisting potential employers to find graduates with the qualifications they are seeking.
- R.9 That further consideration be given by the next Asian Studies Committee to the question of a more diversified and substantial career structure for Asia specialists, and that possible new ways of developing and utilizing the skills of these specialists be considered in discussions between the Association and potential employers (see R.8 above). (Recommendation R.21 (iii) below refers to scholarships to enable Asia specialists to obtain vocational training.)
- R.10 That the ASAA urge Asian language departments to forge close links with State interpreters' and translators' associations where they exist, and with the National Association for the Accreditation of Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) to ensure that their best graduates are both appropriately trained and known to employers seeking people with such skills.

Chapter 5: Tertiary Education

- R.11 (i) That the ASAA press for the provision of funds by the Federal Government for additional teaching about Asian countries in discipline-based departments, for which institutions could apply on a competitive basis, with funds being allocated where the need and potential is greatest. Some priority should be given to increasing the availability of courses on the countries of South and West Asia, since these are generally less well provided for than Southeast and East Asia. Such funds should be administered by the proposed Asian Studies Council if established;

(ii) that the Association give the strongest possible support to initiatives within individual institutions to remedy deficiencies in the provision of courses on Asian countries.

R.12 That the ASAA strongly support proposals for the development of summer vacation and longer intensive courses in Asian languages, to allow for relatively short periods of concentrated language study both as part of undergraduate programmes and by graduate students and others wishing to take up the study of an Asian language outside the framework of an undergraduate degree. Information should be gathered on the American experience in this area, and on existing Australian intensive courses, to assist in planning such programmes.

R.13 That the Association consult with the National Association for the Accreditation of Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) and, on the basis of these consultations and the discussions with employers referred to in Chapter 4, draw up a policy statement on the training and accreditation of interpreters and translators of Asian languages.

R.14 That the Association continue to give strong support to initiatives to introduce tertiary courses in Indonesian, Japanese and Chinese particularly where no other provision exists in the same city for tertiary study of these languages, and where there is a concentration on these countries in one or more departments of the institution concerned.

R.15 That the ASAA develop a language policy based on the following principles:

(i) that courses in Hindi and Arabic be made available in at least one tertiary institution in each State, and that such courses be equivalent at least to a four-year undergraduate Honours major;

(ii) that each of the 'second tier' languages<sup>1</sup> be made available in more than one tertiary institution; that a policy on the most desirable distribution of resources for the teaching of these languages be developed through consultation between specialists in each of the regions concerned (South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia), with

<sup>1</sup> See p. 36. The 'second tier' languages are the other major South Asian languages (i.e. Marathi and Gujarati, the Dravidian languages and Bengali), Thai, Vietnamese, Kampuchean, Tagalog and Korean.

the policy for South Asian languages being that already adopted by the South Asian Studies Association of Australia; and that provision be made for correspondence courses to be offered to students in institutions other than those in which each language is to be offered. Such correspondence courses should involve some face-to-face contact between teacher and student, and advice should be sought from institutions such as the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education and university and college external studies departments with experience in language teaching by correspondence;

(iii) that a set of taped courses be developed for other Asian languages considered likely to be needed, with copies of such courses available for purchase by libraries and language institutes, and that a register be kept by the ASAA of people able to teach courses in these languages. Because it is likely that demand for courses in these 'third tier' languages will be limited and intermittent, it is not proposed that regular programmes should be offered. However, provision should be made to ensure that facilities for private study, correspondence study, personal tuition on a 'fee-for-service' basis and occasional ad hoc group courses can be arranged, possibly in consultation with university language institutes and the RAAF School of Languages at Point Cook. It would be desirable for either the ASAA or the proposed Asian Studies Council to act as a clearing house for information on the availability of taped courses, private tutors and ad hoc courses for such languages, and for a pool of funds to be created for the latter to be offered when sufficient demand arises;

(iv) that supplements be provided for undergraduate and postgraduate scholarships to allow for language study in an Asian country, or for intensive language study in Australia, and that accreditation be given for such study.

R.16 That the ASAA seek the establishment of a small number of fellowships for language study in Asian countries, available for periods of from six months to two years and tenable at overseas institutions.

R.17 That the Association

- (i) explore ways of providing effective support for small departments of Asian studies and Asian languages in their efforts to maintain their programmes and build them up to viable size;
- (ii) urge the proposed Asian Studies Council to make special provision for assistance to such departments.

R.18 That the ASAA support applications for funding for the activities of interdisciplinary committees, centres and boards of Asian studies in tertiary institutions, and urge the proposed Asian Studies Council and other funding bodies to give a high priority to such applications.

R.19 That the ASAA encourage the gathering of information on the effectiveness of agreements to rationalize teaching about Asia between tertiary institutions in the same city, including data on the extent of demand in each institution for courses offered in other local tertiary institutions, and the desirability of seeking additional resources to support the conducting of certain courses on neighbouring campuses.

R.20 That the ASAA seek funds to conduct a survey of the factors involved in tertiary students' decisions to study or not to study Asia. The survey could be based on the study conducted at ANU (see 5.43) and could be carried out by the next Asian Studies Committee, if a Research Officer is appointed to assist that Committee.

R.21 (i) That the Federal Government be urged to provide a number of scholarships each year specifically for tertiary study of Asian countries and that the administration of these be a matter for consultation between the government and tertiary institutions, through the proposed Asian Studies Council (see Chapter 3);

(ii) that the Association also seek funds from foundations, service organizations, business and other appropriate sources, for more scholarships and cadetships for study of an Asian country;

(iii) that some of these scholarships be provided for study at postgraduate level (Graduate Diploma, Masters and Ph.D) to encourage good honours graduates in various disciplines to specialize in the study of an Asian area, to facilitate such specialization by graduates already in employment, and to allow graduates with a strong

Asia specialization to obtain suitable vocational or further academic training;

(iv) that the value of postgraduate scholarships be sufficient to provide for one or two years of language study, including adequate study in the relevant country, in order to allow for easier movement into the Asian studies field at postgraduate level;

(v) that scholarships for undergraduate study of Asia be offered either at tertiary entrance or, preferably, at the end of first year, to be awarded to students of very high standard. The value of such scholarships should be somewhat greater than the Tertiary Education Allowance, should include provision for a period of study in an Asian country, and should be awarded on the basis of a variety of criteria, so as not to disadvantage mature-age students or to rely too heavily on tertiary entrance scores, because of alleged distortions in language scores in some States (see 6.68);

(vi) that the majority of undergraduate scholarships be awarded to students whose proposed degree programme combines a study of an Asian country and its language with a grounding in a discipline;

(vii) that scholarships also be available to students, academic staff, employees of government and business and other individuals for attendance at intensive language courses. Most of the courses currently offered have to be self-supporting, and the fees are high enough to prevent many from attending. These scholarships should provide fares, tuition fees and living expenses.

R.22 That the Association promote the development of self-evaluation amongst its members in tertiary institutions and encourage both a greater attention by members to teaching skills and the practice of regular re-evaluation of courses, with a view to improving the value of offerings and their attractiveness to students. Such evaluation could take the form of seminars on course design and participation in staff development programmes. The Association's role might be to organize seminars on an inter-institution basis or simply to encourage such activities within institutions through existing committees, boards and centres of Asian studies. Some members undoubtedly already engage in this sort of

activity and may be able to advise the Association on the basis of their experience.

- R.23 That the next Asian Studies Committee give urgent attention to the need to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of education about Asia at the tertiary level.
- R.24 (i) That the ASAA continue to encourage the development of schemes for the exchange of Asia specialists between Australian and overseas institutions both in Asian countries and elsewhere, to seek ways of overcoming administrative barriers to such arrangements, and to strengthen relationships with institutions in Asian countries with which exchanges can be made;
- (ii) that the Association support applications to appropriate bodies, including the proposed Asian Studies Council, for funds to support such arrangements where necessary;
- (iii) that the next Asian Studies Committee explore ways of establishing exchanges between scholars working on Asian countries and appropriate government departments and other bodies with an interest in the region.
- R.25 That the Association make representations to the Tertiary Education Commission to ensure that scholars working on the Asian region will be able to spend regular periods of study leave in Asian countries, and that where necessary periods of up to one year's duration will be permitted, in the interests of maintaining the standards of Australian scholarship in a region of vital importance to Australia.
- R.26 That the ASAA
- (i) collect information on the problems of funding and co-ordination of research on Asian countries, and
- (ii) consider what the role of the proposed Asian Studies Council might be in relation to research and how its functions should relate to those of other research funding bodies.
- R.27 That the Association consider what role it might play in fostering co-operative research projects by members of different institutions.

## Chapter 6: Schools and Teacher Education

- R.28 (i) That the ASAA make approaches to the Advanced Education Council, the State advanced education bodies and the Federal and State Departments of Education, urging them to re-examine the priority they give to the study of other countries, particularly those in the Asian region, and to take appropriate steps to ensure that all educational institutions involved in teacher education provide adequately for the study of Asian countries by prospective teachers;
- (ii) that the ASAA monitor developments in teacher training institutions, take steps to support threatened programmes and lobby for the introduction of courses on Asian countries where they do not already exist.
- R.29 That the Association urge the Federal and State Education Departments to make public commitments to the notion of encouraging trainee teachers in both colleges and universities to acquire a knowledge of one or more Asian countries, in the interest both of the personal education of teachers and of ensuring that an understanding of the countries of the Asian region becomes part of the education of all students in both primary and secondary schools.
- R.30 That the ASAA
- (i) urge its members involved in the education of teachers in both colleges and universities to initiate and participate in programmes about Asian countries for the in-service education of teachers;
- (ii) support initiatives for the introduction of college and university courses designed to improve teaching about the Asian region by practising teachers;
- (iii) add its voice to calls for more financial resources to be channelled into the crucial area of in-service education of teachers, including the provision of adequate funds to allow for the temporary replacement of teachers attending in-service programmes, so that such programmes can be undertaken as part of teachers' normal duties.
- R.31 That the ASAA establish a national school curriculum committee consisting of a national curriculum officer, who should be appointed to the proposed successor Committee on Asian Studies, and a representative from each State and



Territory. The responsibility of each State ASAA curriculum officer would be to establish a State sub-committee to consult with subject teacher associations (social science, history, geography, economics, art, music, physical education, craft, home economics) about possible ways of increasing and improving teaching about Asia in each subject area. This would include the formulation of contributions by each State sub-committee to a national proposal by the ASAA to the Curriculum Development Centre for a programme to develop teaching materials and teaching processes aimed at improving the quality and quantity of teaching about Asia across the curriculum. Such a programme should include a co-ordinated scheme to encourage the writing of books and articles suitable for school use on areas for which existing materials are inadequate. It should also include the selection, production and dissemination of suitable materials already developed for private use by practising teachers. A strong emphasis should be given to primary education in this exercise, and funds should be sought from the proposed Asian Studies Council and other appropriate bodies for the development of materials.

R.32 That one of the first tasks of the national curriculum committee of the ASAA be to make contact with State Education Departments and the Curriculum Development Centre to explore ways of evolving a more effective system for national advertising, production and dissemination of appropriate teaching materials on Asian countries developed by State education authorities.

R.33 That the ASAA co-operate with State subject teacher associations in establishing a network of members to assist in regular updating of the resource lists compiled by the former Asian Studies Co-ordinating Committee, and in the transmission of information about Asian resources development between States. This would be a new area of activity for the Association. It would involve obtaining funds from the proposed Asian Studies Council or other appropriate bodies to finance such a project, and seeking assistance from the Curriculum Development Centre in the dissemination of the information collected.

R.34 That the ASAA explore means of ensuring the provision of funds for the acquisition by schools, particularly country schools, of adequate book and non-book resources on Asian countries, and that this be one of the functions of the proposed Asian Studies Council, possibly in consultation with the Disadvantaged Schools Programme of the Schools Commission.

R.35 (i) that the association support and encourage research by teacher educators directed towards the evaluation of existing teaching resources on Asian countries and their use in primary and secondary schools, and (if desirable) towards the development of new material;

(ii) that as an immediate step in this direction the Association seek funds from the Education Research and Development Committee for a project aimed at a critical analysis of teaching materials on Asia, including case studies of their use in teaching-learning situations, to alert teachers to the potential for and possible means of counteracting factual inaccuracies, bias, stereotyping, underlying false assumptions and value judgements. The project should be carried out on a State basis in order to involve as many people as possible. Initially a pilot study should be conducted in one State, and then a national committee should be formed in one centre to co-ordinate the exercise, to ensure the widest possible coverage and to minimize duplication. The Asia Society of America has established a useful precedent for some aspects of such an exercise, and offers helpful guidelines for the evaluation of teaching materials, which, nevertheless, would have to be modified. Interest has already been expressed by two ASAA members in Victoria in the setting up of a pilot study.

R.36 That the curriculum committee referred to in R.31 above consider ways in which the various parts of the curriculum could be modified to increase and improve teaching about Asia, and the kinds of units on Asia that would be needed to assist this process in each State. The committee should then consult with officers of the State Education Departments regarding the implementation of proposed changes and the development of curriculum units.

R.37 That the next Asian Studies Committee draw up a proposal to the Curriculum Development Centre for work to be carried out in association with the Centre's Core Curriculum programme on:

- (i) the role of international education in the core curriculum at both primary and secondary level;
- (ii) the consideration of those aspects of international education which should form part of the core, and those which should be pursued as elective studies;

- (iii) the importance of studies of Asian countries in the core, and their relationship to studies of European, African, North and South American and Pacific countries within the framework of a core curriculum.

As a preparatory step it would be useful to examine discussion papers prepared under the CDC's Core Curriculum programme, and to circulate the Committee's proposal for comment to the members of the proposed ASAA curriculum committee.

R.38 That the Association mount a nationally co-ordinated but locally implemented programme of contact with schools and school councils for the purpose of arousing interest in learning more about Asian countries, persuading schools to increase their commitment to the study of Asia, and offering assistance to schools interested in introducing Asian language courses and courses on Asian countries.

R.39 That the ASAA request the Federal Government to consider the provision of financial assistance for study tours to Asian countries, and the re-introduction of an Asian Studies travel grant scheme for teachers, with the modifications suggested in 6.45 (p. 65). The allocation of funds for these purposes could be one of the functions of the proposed Asian Studies Council.

R.40 That the ASAA encourage institutions not already involved in this kind of activity to investigate the possibility of including study experience in an Asian country as part of the curriculum. Consultation or co-operation with institutions already organizing study tours would be valuable in planning such an exercise. It would be useful if the ASAA could draw up a register of such institutions, giving details of the programmes and an indication of whether inter-institutional co-operation is possible.

R.41 That the Association seek advice on the correct method of presentation of claims for tax deductions made in respect of travel by teachers to Asian countries and on the criteria used in assessing claims of this kind. This advice should be circulated to ASAA members and teacher organizations, as a means of encouraging teachers to travel to Asian countries and to use such travel for professional development purposes.

R.42 That the ASAA contribute to the process of exploring ways to promote effective second language study at primary level, by

- (i) supporting strongly the existing Asian language programmes in primary schools, and pressing for the provision of adequate conditions to make those programmes effective (e.g. suitable class sizes, sufficient class contact hours and adequate preparation time for teachers, particularly in the early stages of a programme);
- (ii) urging the provision of continuing language courses in secondary schools whose feeder primary schools offer Asian languages;
- (iii) supporting the introduction of further primary Asian language programmes on an experimental basis, wherever resources and circumstances are favourable;
- (iv) sponsoring an ongoing review of research into primary level second language teaching both in Australia and overseas, in consultation with bodies such as the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations;
- (v) encouraging long-term research projects to evaluate the success of existing Asian language programmes at primary level, and to determine the resources needed to improve the effectiveness of those programmes.

R.43 That the ASAA monitor closely the situation of Asian language programmes in colleges of advanced education and universities, and where such programmes are threatened make strong representations to the institutions and higher education bodies concerned, for the maintenance of these programmes in the interests of teacher education.

R.44 That the Association encourage and where appropriate support applications for funding for projects to develop and publish materials for teaching Asian languages in Australian primary schools.

R.45 That the ASAA should work together with the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (AFMLTA) and other appropriate bodies, including state Modern Language Teachers Associations, towards the definition and analysis of these problems, and the identification of practical measures for their solution.

R.46 That the Association urge State Education Departments to express publicly a commitment to fostering the teaching of languages, including Asian languages, in schools, and to provide greater assistance and encouragement to schools offering such courses.

R.47 That the ASAA

- (i) contact State Education Departments to ensure that their policies and practice in respect of overseas study and experience for language teachers extend to teachers of all Asian languages taught in schools;
- (ii) circulate information on existing opportunities for teachers of Asian languages to study and work in the countries where these languages are spoken;
- (iii) seek ways of expanding these opportunities.

R.48 That the ASAA urge the Federal and State Governments to give financial support to Australian programmes for the upgrading of teacher language competence, so that more teachers can take advantage of them, and to make adequate leave provisions to facilitate teachers' participation in such programmes.

R.49 That the ASAA urge State and Territory education authorities not already doing so to consider the use of itinerant teachers as an alternative to the abolition of Asian language courses, and to adopt this practice where appropriate.

R.50 That the next Asian Studies Committee investigate the adequacy of provisions for the methodological training of teachers of Asian languages, and if necessary formulate proposals for ASAA action to improve those provisions.

R.51 That the ASAA consult with the Curriculum Development Centre to determine how unfinished projects begun by the Asian Studies Co-ordinating Committee may be brought to completion.

R.52 That the Association adopt as a long-term objective the encouragement of much more widespread study of Asian languages in secondary schools, and of the study of a wider range of languages. In the latter context the introduction and extension of Hindi and the further extension of the teaching of Arabic and Vietnamese should be given highest priority.

#### Chapter 7: Education Beyond Institutions

R.53 (1) that the Association adopt as a major objective the bringing about within a set period of time, say two years, of a significant increase in the quantity and quality of media coverage of Asian countries;

(ii) that in pursuit of this objective the ASAA appoint a media officer and a media committee with representatives in each State;

(iii) that the task of these people be to lobby intensively and regularly the management of newspapers, TV channels, radio stations, popular and news magazines and film making bodies, and to provide them with the names of local 'Asianists' able to write articles or programme scripts, assist with background research or be interviewed on a wide variety of areas and aspects of Asia;

(iv) that the Association write expressing its appreciation of significant contributions (such as those of the ABC and community radio in their current affairs coverage of Asia, Film Australia with its film series on various Asian countries, and local publishers such as the University of Queensland Press for their publishing, for example, of Asian literature in translation) and publicly urge that more of these activities be taken up by commercial television and radio, the State film corporations, and other Australian publishers;

(v) that the ASAA encourage its members to contribute articles not only to scholarly journals but also to news and popular magazines;

(vi) that university libraries which do not already do so be urged to give borrowing privileges to media personnel and freelance writers on Asia, as part of an effort to improve the quality of media coverage of Asian countries;

(vii) that the ASAA media committee (see ii, above) investigate ways in which the Association might promote the production of quality television and film documentaries on historical and contemporary aspects of Asia for both formal and informal educational purposes;

(viii) that the ASAA approach the Federal and State Governments, appropriate foundations and individuals (including its own members) for contributions to a trust fund to provide grants which would assist media personnel to spend extended periods in Asian countries;

(ix) that the ASAA urge its members to ensure that the press are invited to public lectures and

discussions on Asian countries held in their institutions;

- (x) that the next ASAA Conference give serious attention to the question of media coverage of Asian countries.

R.54 That the Association appoint a working group to discuss with the National Library of Australia and with other libraries the formulation of a proposal for a national committee of inquiry into needs for information resources and services on Asian countries in Australia. The working group should include representatives of libraries, academics and other groups represented within the Association, such as government, business and the media.

R.55 That the ASAA should continue its support for BISA (the Bibliographic Information on Southeast Asia Project at Sydney University, see 7.6-7.7), as expressed by Council, and do its utmost to ensure that a project of such national and international significance be funded at a level sufficient to meet its objectives.

R.56 That the ASAA Publications Officer be asked to impress on the Federal Government the need for assistance in the publication of scholarly and educational works dealing with Asian countries. Representations should also be made for government assistance in the dissemination in Asian countries of Australian publications about those countries.

R.57 That the Association impress upon the Federal Government the desirability of establishing bodies along the lines of the Australia-Japan Foundation and the Australia-China Council to further relationships with the countries of Southeast Asia, South Asia and West Asia, including the educational and cultural aspects of those relationships.

R.58 That the Association establish a committee to consider ways of encouraging communication between those involved in teaching and research about Asian countries and people in government, science, technology, aid organizations and business who are involved in aspects of Australia's relationships with Asian countries. Such a committee should also consider ways of increasing the study of Asian countries by people training for or working in these fields.

R.59 That the next Asian Studies Committee investigate the extent of teaching about Asian countries in continuing education programmes, and, in consultation with organizations offering such programmes, consider ways in which the ASAA might contribute to the fulfilment of needs which might be identified in this area.

R.60 (i) That the ASAA publish in its Review a checklist of art repositories throughout Australia with an account of their general areas of concentration in respect of the Asian arts. The repositories to be covered should include galleries, museums, universities and other institutions, and so far as possible, holdings in private collections;

(ii) that the ASAA Review annually list major new acquisitions of Asian art;

(iii) that the ASAA encourage each repository to publish catalogues of the Asian material in its holdings;

(iv) that the ASAA discuss with the Australian Gallery Directors Council the possibility of action to produce region-oriented Australia-wide catalogues of holdings of Asian art.

R.61 (i) That the ASAA encourage the authorities of galleries which do not have curators of Asian art to make such appointments as a matter of urgency;

(ii) that the ASAA urge the Australian Gallery Directors Council to give the strongest support it can to co-operation between the various curators of Asian art, with the aim of building up more comprehensive collections and educating the Australian public about the arts of Asian countries. Interchange between ASAA members with expertise in this field and curators of Asian art is also to be encouraged.

R.62 That the ASAA applaud the past efforts of the Australian Gallery Directors Council to develop interchanges of exhibitions of Asian art between repositories in Australia and encourage them to promote more such exhibitions as a regular feature of the nation's cultural and intellectual life.

R.63 That the Association urge repository directors to give the greatest possible prominence to their Asian holdings and, where necessary, to expand the space made available for them.

R.64 That as a matter of policy the Association should concern itself actively in wider movements relating to the expansion of gallery and museum facilities in general and should co-operate with bodies interested in these

objectives and join in lobbying for their adoption and implementation.

R.65 That the Association encourage further discussion of the desirability of creating separate collections of Asian arts and crafts (see 7.22).

R.66 That the ASAA consult the directors of museums and art galleries in each city and urge that, while a degree of rationalization and specialization in repositories throughout the country is accepted as necessary, there should be a concurrent policy towards the development of representative study collections of Asian art in each major city and that these should cover the major regions of Asia and varieties of objects.

R.67 That the ASAA should endorse and publicize in relation to collections of Asian art, both private and public, the principles embodied in the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.<sup>2</sup> In particular, ASAA members should be alert to violations of these principles by galleries and dealers and should give the fullest support to the directors of all galleries which are endeavouring to uphold the principles embodied in that Convention.

R.68 That the ASAA contact the appropriate bodies and urge

- (i) a continuation and expansion of touring art exhibitions from Asian countries;
- (ii) that no matter what other exhibitions are brought to Australia, initially at least one major Asian exhibition should be included in every annual touring exhibition schedule of the Australian Gallery Directors Council, with a regular rotation among the major Asian culture areas, and that the number of such exhibitions be increased over time;
- (iii) that where there are provisions within cultural agreements with Asian countries for more frequent interchange of exhibitions, greater efforts should be devoted to implementing these, for example, through increased liaison between the Cultural Relations section of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Asian art curators of the galleries.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume 2 for a summary of these principles.

R.69 That the Association approach the relevant Australian bodies and request them to seek appropriate exhibitions in Australia of works from European and American collections of Asian art.

R.70 That the ASAA, in consultation with the Australian Gallery Directors Council, urge the Federal Government to negotiate the interchange of study collections of art objects between Australia and Asian countries.

R.71 That the ASAA should explore with interested bodies, such as libraries, galleries and the Australian Centre for Photography, the possibilities for building up comprehensive photographic collections on Asian countries.

R.72. That the ASAA urge the National Library to acquire archival collections of the cinemas of Asia, and to make them permanently available for loan and use in Australia. It is suggested that such study collections might have three main areas of concentration: first, the acquisition of silent films from each country; second, the acquisition of representative films from the thirties and early forties and third, films made thereafter. The first two groups of films might perhaps be easily acquired by interchange under the auspices of cultural agreements with relevant national repositories in Asia. This would not be such a major task as it might seem: of some 13,000 silent feature films that were made in India before 1930, only about thirteen have survived in whole or part.

R.73 (i) That the ASAA approach individual State governments to request that funds be set aside especially for the purchase of films concerned with Asia (the Committee would wish to see an even balance maintained in any such collection so that all regions of Asia would be adequately represented);

(ii) that the ASAA publish annual checklists of new acquisitions of Asian films by the National and State Film Libraries and other film-lending institutions;

(iii) that steps be taken, perhaps in co-operation with the Australian Film Institute, to prepare a national list of film holdings concerned with Asian countries.

R.74 That the ASAA

- (i) actively promote Asian performing arts. In particular, the Committee would wish to see an extension of what is becoming a tradition at the

biennial conferences, i.e. the mounting of performances during the conferences. In the past, such groups have been drawn from practitioners within Australia. An attempt should be made at future conferences to include in the programme at least one visiting group from Asia;

- (ii) approach Musica Viva and the ABC and urge them to include in their performance programmes Asian groups or musicians expert in idioms that are not European derived;
- (iii) approach the ABC and private FM stations and urge them to include in their radio and TV programmes music, drama, dance and film from Asia. The Committee does not consider that such coverage as already occurs on ethnic or community radio programmes meets the objectives outlined here;
- (iv) approach the Department of Foreign Affairs and other government and semi-government agencies to evolve a scheme of regular visits to Australia by Asian performing groups. The Committee notes that such visits are already possible under existing cultural agreements and that some visits have already occurred under these auspices. What is now suggested is the development of a co-ordinated scheme aimed at achieving as a minimum objective each year a tour by one major, large scale group from one region of Asia and at least one smaller group or performer from each of the other regions of Asia.

R.75 (i) That the ASAA attempt to promote extended lecture tours by scholars and leading performers of Asian art forms. Ideally, the duration of visits should be long enough for them to make an impact upon the institutions or organizations with which they come in contact. The Committee notes that such arrangements are possible under existing cultural agreements, and that in at least one or two instances such visits have already occurred. The Committee now urges an expansion and rationalization of such ad hoc visits so that a consistent upgrading of knowledge and interest in Asian arts may be brought about;

- (ii) that the ASAA urge institutions which have provision for artists-in-residence to ensure adequate representation of Asian artists in their appointments, in order to redress the long neglect of Asian arts in Australia;

- (iii) that the ASAA encourage its members in schools and tertiary institutions (in the latter case through co-ordinating committees for Asian studies where they exist), to seek assistance in obtaining collections of appropriate items of Asian art for study purposes, by applying for funds to their institutions or to other bodies, and by approaching foreign embassies and private individuals for gifts of Asian art objects. This of course imposes responsibilities in respect of the proper care, conservation, recording and classification of items in such collections.

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PREAMBLE

0.1 The Committee on Asian Studies was appointed by the Council of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, at the recommendation of its General Meeting in May 1978. It was directed to inquire into the present state of Asian Studies in Australia and to make recommendations about future development. The immediate impulse behind the establishment of the Committee was a growing awareness of a flattening out in the growth of Asian studies and Asian language teaching in most parts of the Australian educational system, long before Asian studies had become established on an adequate basis. The Committee membership comprised Dr Stephen FitzGerald (Chairman), Professor Joyce Ackroyd, Ms Elaine McKay, Professor Jamie Mackie and Dr Jim Masselos.

0.2 Soon after its formation the Committee sought funds from the Myer Foundation for a part-time Research Assistant. The Foundation readily agreed to the request, and Ms Elizabeth Drysdale was appointed. Her appointment was later made full-time and extended by two months, again with Myer Foundation support. A separate report on these grants, and on Ms Drysdale's work, is included in Volume 2.

0.3 The generous support of the Myer Foundation is acknowledged with gratitude. The Committee feels that the Association should make some expression of appreciation in respect both of this grant and of the work of the Foundation in Asian Studies over the past twenty years.

R.1 It is recommended that the Association should make an offer of Honorary Membership to the Chairman and the Executive Secretary of the Foundation.

R.2 It is further recommended that the Foundation be invited to nominate a representative to any permanent or ad hoc committee of the Association which may be set up to continue the work of the Committee.

0.4 The Committee received substantial assistance from the Department of Political and Social Change and the Research School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University, which administered the project, and from the Faculty of Asian Studies which provided accommodation and other assistance. Financial support was also received from the Australia-China Council, as well as from the ASAA itself. These contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

0.5 The Committee's report is very largely the result of the efforts of Ms Drysdale. The Committee acknowledges her contribution and recommends that the Association record its appreciation in a resolution of the General Meeting. The work of the Committee was also assisted greatly by Dr Virginia Matheson of the Department of Political and Social Change, ANU.

0.6 The inquiry was at all stages supported by the co-operation of many people within the ANU. Special mention should be made of Mrs Jan Bretherton and Mrs Claire Smith of the Department of Political and Social Change, who helped in innumerable ways, Mrs Margaret Tie of the Faculty of Asian Studies, who skilfully typed the final version of this volume, Mr Roger Jones and Mrs Erica Fisher of the Survey Research Centre, who gave much-needed advice on questionnaire design, Mr G.L. Dasvarma who assisted with computer processing and Mr Bruce George and the staff of the Central Printery. The valuable help of all these people, and many others not listed here, is acknowledged with thanks.

0.7 A number of ASAA members in universities and CAEs gave considerable time to ensuring the completion and return of questionnaires in their institutions. The Committee records its special thanks to these people, as well as to other individuals and institutions not connected with the ASAA who gave valuable help to the inquiry. A more complete list of acknowledgements appears in Volume 2.

#### The Committee on Asian Studies

0.8 The Committee has seen itself in part as a successor to the ASAA's Basham Committee on the Teaching of Asian Languages in Australian Universities, although that committee was concerned with only one part of the present inquiry's wider brief. We are much indebted to the Basham Committee for its work. Its report helped us considerably in understanding the issues involved in the teaching of Asian languages and the different viewpoints of members of the Association on these issues. In Chapter 5, in our discussion of the problems of language teaching in tertiary institutions, we have taken account of the work of that Committee.

0.9 As the present Committee's investigations progressed, it became apparent to us that there will be a need for continuing attention by the Association to the problems of Asian studies in Australia. The basic information available on many aspects of this field is still most inadequate. This situation has been rectified to some extent by Ms Drysdale's research, but the information needs to be constantly updated and refined if we are to measure the performance of our profession. There are other tasks, such as the preparation of submissions to government and other inquiries, investigation of specific areas of education or specific problems, the framing of recommendations to education authorities, and so on. The Committee believes that this work must be continued by the Association on a permanent basis.

R.3 The Committee recommends, therefore, that the General Meeting of the Association authorize Council to establish a permanent committee to carry out this work, that membership of the committee should be

decided by Council, and that a new committee should be appointed following each General Meeting of the Association. As far as possible the committee should be representative of the various levels of the education system and of specialists in each of the broad regions of Asia (West Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, China and Japan), as well as drawing, over time, members from each state and from a range of disciplines.

R.4 It is further recommended that Council be asked to explore means of funding the appointment of a Research Officer for the committee on a full-time and continuing basis.



## 1. THE IMPORTANCE OF ASIAN STUDIES

1.1 The importance of the study of Asia may be self-evident to members of the Asian Studies Association. To the community at large, it may not. This is probably the greatest obstacle we face in seeking to extend the study of Asia beyond its present boundaries, in terms of student numbers, countries studied, teaching about Asia in traditional disciplines, and the teaching of Asian languages.

1.2 The attention given to any part of the world in the education system of an enlightened country ought, ideally, not to be determined dogmatically by that region's size or population or role in world affairs. It is a matter of the intellectual worth of studying that country or region. It is for this intellectual worth, for example, that people in remote Europe study Asian societies and civilizations, even small ones. The same is true of the study of Asian countries in Australia. It is important because of the intrinsic value of the subject of study.

1.3 The first point, therefore, which needs to be impressed upon the Australian community, is that the study of Asian societies is warranted simply in intellectual terms, for its own worth. Asian societies are, in general, no more important than European societies. But neither are they less important. To ignore the study of Asian societies and civilizations, as Australia did for so long, was comparable to ignoring major branches of science. To the extent that Australia, now or in the future, neglects the study of Asian countries, this is intellectually impoverishing, and indefensible in terms of the proper education of our people. Indeed it ought to be unthinkable. To quote an eminent member of our Association:

...we in Australia are inheritors of one of the world's great traditions, which believes all too blandly, and all too blindly, that it is the core tradition of humankind, and that those who do not belong to it are somehow 'the outsiders'. One has only to take here some prime examples from the very acme of western scholarship: this century's two great editions of the Cambridge Modern History, for example. Both are lumbered with a eurocentrism that is at once blinkering and saddening. We all know of major studies, moreover, in philosophy, which in fact deal only with western philosophy; and of those who think music is something which is played on pianos, violins and horns, but forget the sitar.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> D.A. Low, 'The Asian Revolutions of the Mid-Twentieth Century: An Australian Perspective', Public Lecture on the Occasion of the First Annual Conference of the ASAA, Melbourne, May 1976, p.2.

1.4 The second point, however, is that we have to be realistic about what can be done. Within any education system, choices have to be made, priorities set. These will normally bear some relation to national need, national interests. It is on this point that we believe there is a gross distortion in our education system where the study of Asian countries is concerned. In intellectual terms, as well as in terms of national need and national interest, we might expect, at minimum, some kind of rough balance between the study of Asia and the study of other parts of the world. This is demonstrably not the case in Australia.

1.5 If we go further, and accept that, despite the intrinsic intellectual interest of all societies in the world, priorities in education must ultimately be determined by national need and national interest, then the distortion in our education system is much more evident. It is in this context that the proximity, size, population and role in world affairs of the countries we study becomes important. Their economic, strategic and political significance to Australia should be determinants in our educational choices. The need for the community to understand, to communicate with, to relate to and to accept those societies which are important to us, should determine where we put our money. In all the logic of our geographical and strategic location, our trade, our political relations, and even the growing trends in the destination of our tourists and the source of our migrants, the Asian region has a clear and growing priority, which is not yet reflected in our education system.

1.6 Within the Australian community, therefore, in government and in education circles, amongst academics, in business and in the media, the basic arguments we must put for the study of Asian societies are both utilitarian and educational. The study of Asia is not a soft option. It is a 'hard' subject, which, like science and mathematics, concerns not only our intellectual development but also our national survival.

1.7 The future of Asian studies in this country will largely depend on how successful we can be in establishing the view that it is of utilitarian as well as intellectual value. We need it for business, for politics, for our academic and cultural exchanges, for the proper handling of crises and human disasters, for technical negotiation, for military preparedness and strategic assessment, for civil aviation and shipping and fishing, for understanding what it is our friends, and our enemies, are up to.

1.8 Besides the utilitarian factor, which is overwhelming, there is one other, which is the enrichment of our lives through the diversity of things Asian. Asian food, Asian arts, music, cinema and literature, travel to Asia, Asian friends; all are becoming more familiar in Australian social patterns. The cultures whose influence Australia positively resisted for so many years are now a small but increasingly significant part of our national life. Many

Australians who have spent substantial periods studying or working in Asian countries have found the experience of involvement in social and political relationships, work, religion and culture profoundly fascinating and enriching. Our education ought to fit us to appreciate and enter more wholeheartedly into these new experiences, to comprehend the cultural background, to communicate with the people who inherit Asian cultures, whether we encounter them here in Australia or in their own countries.

1.9 Our concerns are in the end Australian. Our interest in Asian societies is similar to that of other non-Asian countries in some respects. Our priorities, however, cannot be those of England or the United States. We must recognize this and make adjustments within our education system accordingly.

## 2. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

### Concerns Which Gave Rise to the ASAA Inquiry

2.1 The present inquiry was instituted in response to a growing concern about a number of problems confronting the study of Asia in Australia as it enters the 1980s. It was to these problems, summarized below, that the Committee addressed itself:

- (a) the small growth in numbers of students taking courses on Asia in schools and tertiary institutions;
- (b) a flattening out or decline in enrolments in many courses about Asian countries;
- (c) the continuing low level of exposure of Australian students at all levels of the education system to solid and meaningful study of Asian countries;
- (d) the end of a specific government commitment to school study of Asia with the disbanding in 1978 of the Asian Studies Co-ordinating Committee;
- (e) the failure to achieve some of the specific goals envisaged by the Auchmuty Report on The Teaching of Asian Languages and Cultures in Australia;
- (f) the inadequate emphasis on Asian countries in the pre-service and in-service education of teachers;
- (g) the vulnerability of Asian studies courses in both schools and tertiary institutions, because they are likely to attract small numbers. (The problem is quite widespread in schools, CAEs and newer university Asian studies departments);
- (h) the difficulties of many graduates who have specialized in Asian studies in finding employment appropriate to their qualifications;
- (i) a token attitude towards Asia and Asian studies in Australian society and in the education system at all levels;
- (j) the continuing lack of interest in and understanding of Asian countries in the Australian community;

- (k) the inadequate contribution of the media towards increasing public understanding of and interest in the Asian region, and the need to improve information services on Asian countries;
- (l) the low level of exposure of the Australian public to the visual and performing arts of Asian countries;
- (m) the need for the Asian studies profession to assess and improve its own contribution to the solution of these problems, as well as to seek additional resources;
- (n) the need for the ASAA to develop structures which will allow it to make a more effective and wide-ranging contribution to Asian studies in Australia;
- (o) the need for national co-ordination of initiatives in and funding for Asian studies in Australia.

#### The Context of the Report

2.2 This report is presented at a time when a number of factors seem to be influencing the study of Asia in Australia. These include the 'steady state' or 'no-growth' education policies of government, the current recession and the rise in unemployment and the effects of this on the educational priorities of schools and the community, a decline in the study of foreign languages, and an overall retreat of interest in Asia in the seventies following the end of the Vietnam war. At the same time there are elements in the current national and international scene which suggest a likely upsurge of interest in the region in the 1980s. The problem of oil, developments in the Islamic world, renewed great power competition in Asia, economic development in the region, the growth in Australian trade with and tourist movement to various Asian countries, the increase in Asian migration to Australia and the possible development of some form of Pacific economic co-operation all point to an increasing Australian focus on the region. Some of these factors also suggest the need for an emphasis on parts of Asia hitherto neglected.

#### The Auchmuty Report

2.3 The Committee took as its starting point the 1970 report by the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on the Teaching of Asian Languages and Cultures in Australia<sup>1</sup>, headed by Professor J.J.

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on The Teaching of Asian Languages and Cultures in Australia (the 'Auchmuty Report'), Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1970.

Auchmuty (hereafter referred to as the 'Auchmuty Report'). The Auchmuty Committee was set up in 1969 at the initiative of the then Minister for Education, Mr Malcolm Fraser. Its report resulted in the establishment in 1972 of the Asian Studies Co-ordinating Committee, whose contribution to the development of the study of Asia in schools was considerable. In 1978 the Co-ordinating Committee it was disbanded and its responsibilities assumed by the national Curriculum Development Centre.

2.4 The Auchmuty Report expressed a clear preference for developing Asian studies in Australia 'on a popular rather than a limited foundation' and made a number of recommendations about how this could be done. (See Volume 2 for comments on the extent to which these have been implemented.) The government of the day responded by setting up the Asian Studies Co-ordinating Committee with a budget of \$1,500,000 for the development in particular of Asian studies in schools and in teacher education. Yet despite the excellent work done by that Committee, especially in the development of teaching materials, it cannot be said that anything like adequate progress has been made towards the broadening of courses about Asia in either our schools or our tertiary institutions to reach a large proportion of Australian students on a 'popular foundation'. Systematic study of Asian countries is still confined to a very small proportion of our student population. An adverse consequence of this is that Australia's corps of Asia specialists is far too narrowly based for the political and social health of a country placed in a geographical situation such as ours. The Auchmuty Committee's eloquent recommendation of official support for a policy of making Australia 'a major centre for Asian studies at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels' has not aroused any positive response from our governments. Moreover, the economic climate in which the present report is being presented is vastly different from that of 1970. In today's climate even holding onto the gains already made will be difficult enough; pursuing in practice a vision of where we ought to be will present a far more difficult challenge than it might have done a decade ago.

2.5 In substance, the Committee's inquiry may be regarded as a review and continuation of the Auchmuty Committee's work, although it differs in two major respects. First, the present Committee has had no governmental status and therefore has lacked the access to information and facilities the Auchmuty Committee enjoyed. Nor can it claim the same comprehensiveness. The Committee's report is in some respects impressionistic. It would be impossible to do justice to the range of opinions encountered in the course of this inquiry or to the complexity of the problems confronting the various institutions involved in Asian studies within such a brief compass. Second, this report devotes proportionately more attention than did the Auchmuty Committee to the problems of Asian studies in Australian universities. The reason for that is partly that the Committee was able to obtain much more comprehensive information about the situation in the universities than in schools or other

tertiary institutions, and partly that Asian studies has had a longer history in at least some of our universities, and the problems and limitations accompanying different approaches can now be more clearly discerned there than elsewhere. But it will be clear from the following pages that the Committee is concerned, as was the Auchmuty Committee, with the future development of Asian studies at all levels in the Australian education system and not only at the tertiary level.

### The 'Asian Studies Profession'

2.6 The Auchmuty Report offered a vision. It was a vision of both breadth and excellence, of a popular foundation for the study of Asia and of Australia as a major centre for more advanced Asian studies. It was a vision of what Asian studies might become for all Australians and of what Australians themselves might contribute in Asian studies.

2.7 The study of Asia in Australia owes a great debt to scholars from Britain, the USA and, of course, Asia. Without them, the profession would never have been established in this country. Without them, it would not have developed. Many of our most eminent contributors in this field have been, and still are, colleagues from Britain and the United States, and, although fewer in number, from Asian and European countries. Without a continued infusion of scholars of distinction from abroad, our profession would suffer and decline.

2.8 It is a matter of concern, however, that Australia is still so heavily dependent on scholars from Britain and the United States to provide staff for many of the departments in which teaching and research on Asian countries is carried on. The Committee believes the historical causes of this situation, which will become an unhealthy one if it is not soon rectified, must be recognized and tackled. There were few appropriately qualified Australians available to staff the new Asian studies departments during the initial phase of their expansion. When the output of Australian graduates began to increase in the mid-1970s, fewer jobs were becoming available. The field is still a relatively small one. Paradoxically, although many able students are now reluctant to undertake higher degrees in Asian studies because they see such bleak prospects of employment, Australia is still not producing enough highly qualified scholars to meet its most urgent needs. There are some indications that this country may suffer in a few years from a serious shortage of well-qualified specialists in the study of Asian countries. Too few of those who have undertaken advanced studies in this area have done so in fields in which more recent expansion has taken place (e.g. the social science disciplines and 'contemporary' studies).

2.9 One consequence of the present situation is that we still often have to look overseas for suitably qualified staff to fill

vacancies that do occur. There is no simple solution to this problem, and we are not advocating any departure from the principle of appointing the best-qualified people, regardless of their country of origin. Some of the recommendations made below about the need for improvements in the training of Asia specialists (see Chapter 5) and for a more adequate career structure (see Chapter 4) will contribute towards a solution. It is also important that our policy-makers and paymasters should be aware of this vicious circle.

2.10 From its discussions, the Committee knows its concern on this point to be shared by scholars throughout the profession. The Committee has on many occasions been made aware of the commitment of scholars of whatever national origin or status, to that high principle of scholarship which is the training to the best standards of excellence of people who may join and enlarge the ranks of the profession and who may in time succeed those by whom they are taught. This commitment can only bear fruit if greater resources and greater energy are devoted to the postgraduate training of young scholars, and if there is the continuing expansion of teaching and research about Asian countries which the Committee considers vital to the proper education of Australians and to our national interest.

### Scholarship and Contemporary Needs

2.11 While the general thrust of this report stresses the vocational aspects of Asian studies and the need for attention to contemporary problems of national concern, the Committee recognizes that there are important branches of Asian scholarship which must be guided primarily by the long-term search for knowledge of all aspects of human activity. Much knowledge that appears recondite is an essential foundation for accurate analysis of contemporary problems. Our understanding of Japan's economic capabilities in the 1980s would have been much diminished were it not for the work that has been done by economic, social and political historians on Japan's transformation during the past century, which in turn has depended on prior research on the Meiji restoration and the Tokugawa era. The contemporary political situation in Iran can only be adequately comprehended in the light of research on Shi'ite Islam. Similar examples could be cited for other countries and other disciplines. Work in many of the less contemporary areas of Asian scholarship constitutes the building blocks within the whole edifice that we are jointly constructing.

### The Inquiry

2.12 The Committee has sought in three principal ways to contribute ideas for the further development of the study of Asia in Australia in the eighties and beyond. It has sought

- (i) to propose new and useful ways of approaching the enterprise of studying Asian countries;
- (ii) to identify areas in which the ASAA as a body and its members as individuals can best contribute to the healthy growth of that enterprise, and respond to changing circumstances;
- (iii) to identify areas of need and fruitful new initiatives which will require the provision of additional resources, and to suggest ways in which those resources might best be provided.

2.13 The Committee sees the enterprise as being directed both towards the training of specialists for research, teaching and the management of Australia's relationships with Asian countries, and towards the education of all Australians about Asia for the enrichment which results from the study of other societies and for the more effective functioning of the Australian community in its regional setting.

2.14 It has not been possible for the Committee to gather information on all aspects of Asian studies, and there are many areas which it believes urgently need further investigation. Attention has been focussed on four broad areas, and the Committee's conclusions and recommendations are grouped under these four headings:

1. Employment prospects for Asian studies graduates;
2. Tertiary education - its role in specialist and general education about Asia;
3. Schools and teacher education;
4. Education beyond formal institutions - the media, libraries and information services, publishing, Australian links with Asia, continuing education and the visual and performing arts.

2.15 The recommendations and discussion are contained in Volume 1 and the supporting information in Volume 2.

#### 'Asia' and 'Asian Studies': Problems of Terminology

2.16 The Committee has used the terms 'Asia' and 'Asian Studies' many times in the report, for reasons of convenience and brevity. However, as one scholar has objected:

...just as there is no such thing as an Asian language, there is no such thing as an Asian society, only particular cultural systems in particular areas of Asia.

The dichotomy Asia/Europe is false: both Asia and Europe are too various and too complex to be treated so easily.<sup>2</sup>

The Committee is very conscious of this problem and would have preferred to avoid the word 'Asia', were it not for the fact that some kind of common interest has brought together in this Association people who study societies from the Mediterranean Sea to the Pacific Ocean, and that to refer constantly to the diversity of their specific interests would have made the report unreadable. The countries embraced by the term as used in the report are those of West Asia (including the Middle East region), South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia.

2.17 There is a further problem in the phrase 'Asian studies'. It is a fundamental conviction of members of the Committee that the study of Asia does not belong only in separate 'Asian studies' courses, but should have an important place in all studies of human activities. Indeed, the separation of the study of Asia from that of the rest of humanity may be objected to, as ASAA President, Professor Wang Gungwu, has noted, on the grounds that it encourages the view that

...learning about Asia is for 'Asianists', the few marginal people Australia can afford to have, and should have, to improve Australia's image in Asia and tell Australians a little about Asia.<sup>3</sup>

The study of Asia purely as a separate optional or elective subject encourages students and parents alike both to distinguish this subject from mainstream, 'hard' or employment-oriented subjects and probably also to conclude that Asian societies themselves must in logic be outside the mainstream of human history and society.<sup>4</sup>

2.18 The Committee wishes to emphasize, therefore, that it is concerned not only with the study of Asian languages and societies in courses especially for this purpose, but also with achieving a proper attention to Asian countries throughout the curriculum at all levels of education. The term 'Asian studies' as used in this report is intended to embrace both these meanings.

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- 2 A.H. Johns, 'The Educational Value of Asian Studies in Australia' in Teaching About Asia in Australian Schools, report of a conference held by the Centre for Continuing Education, A.N.U., 1971, p. 5.
  - 3 Wang Gungwu, 'On the South-Eastern Edge of Asia: An Asian View', in Everyman in Australia: The Octagon Lectures 1970, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1972, p. 52.
  - 4 Stephen FitzGerald, 'The Asian Studies Crisis: ASAA, Government and People', ASAA Review, Vol. 2, No. 1, July, 1978, p. 3.

### 3. A NATIONAL APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF ASIA

3.1 On the basis of its investigations the Committee believes there is an urgent need for

- (i) a rethinking of priorities and objectives in education about Asia, in both general and specialist education;
- (ii) additional resources in certain areas;
- (iii) a national body to co-ordinate planning and funding of initiatives in education about Asia, in ways which reflect and encourage fresh approaches to the problems and which will allow flexibility in the allocation of resources for changing circumstances.

3.2 It should be noted that since 1978, when the Australian Education Council's Asian Studies Co-ordinating Committee was disbanded and its functions assumed by the Curriculum Development Centre, there has been no specific Federal Government commitment to the co-ordination and funding of education about Asian countries in Australia. Even during the life of that Committee the problems of tertiary education about Asia received attention only insofar as they concerned teacher education. This has resulted and will continue to result in imbalance, duplication of effort and major gaps in the nation's provision for the education both of specialists on Asian countries and of the community at large.

3.3 Meanwhile, in various parts of Asia new developments which impinge directly on Australia's interests make it increasingly clear that this country must have a co-ordinated and planned strategy for education about Asia. Co-ordination and planning are essential if we are to have specialists who can analyse and anticipate developments in the countries of the region, if we are to be able to meet challenges in our relations with these countries, and if we are to have an informed electorate, able to understand the issues which underlie our increasingly complex relations with them.

3.4 The recent report of the Committee on Australia's Relations with the Third World stressed the need for our policies towards our neighbours to 'be based on very good information on what is happening in the region'.

In a time of significant change in the area, when new issues are emerging.... there is a need to extend the available information base, and to ensure that information is properly disseminated to and registered by both the relevant arms of government... and the community at large.

The Harries Committee further emphasized the importance of

a continuous effort to eliminate outdated and inappropriate attitudes towards the region and Australia's role in it, both in the community at large and in the minds of decision makers.... The corollary to the need to eliminate such attitudes is the need to stimulate an awareness of the challenges and opportunities which the significant changes occurring in the region present to Australia and of the dangers which will face us if we fail to respond to them.

3.5 The Committee believes that these objectives can only be achieved satisfactorily through the creation by the Australian Government of an Asian Studies Council with adequate funds, authority and experience to identify needs and co-ordinate and allocate resources for initiatives aimed at improving the study of Asia at each level of the education system and in each State. This will require the participation of people who know Asian countries, of people acquainted with the workings of the Australian education system, and of people familiar with various aspects of our relations with Asian countries. The membership of such a Council should also be broadly representative of influential and concerned sections of the community, including business, the media and the arts as well as education and government. It should reflect the needs and promote the interests of education about Asia at all levels and in all States.

R.5 It is recommended that the ASAA authorize its Council to approach the Federal Government with a proposal for the establishment of an Asian Studies Council for these purposes.

1 - Australia and the Third World, Report of the Committee on Australia's Relations with the Third World (the 'Harries Report'), Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1979, p. 127.

#### 4. EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS FOR ASIAN STUDIES GRADUATES

##### Introduction

4.1 There can be little ground for optimism about the future of Asian studies in Australia, either in breadth or depth, unless better job opportunities exist than at present for students who have invested substantial time and effort in mastering an Asian language and specializing in the study of an Asian country. At present, the prospects are bleak. The lack of an adequate career structure for Asia specialists (a problem elaborated more fully below, see 4.24-4.26) is a serious deterrent to students. The Committee knows of a disturbing number of young Australians who have devoted years to studying Asian languages and societies, who have lived in Asian countries, and who believe that Australia needs people with a knowledge of the region, but who have been unable to find job opportunities relevant to their experience.

4.2 A survey of university students' reasons for not studying about Asia, conducted by the Committee in 1979, showed that a significant factor influencing students against such study was the low vocational value of qualifications in this area.<sup>1</sup> A survey by the Australia-Japan Foundation of companies thought to have 'substantial' or 'reasonable' contacts with Japan revealed that only 64 of the 172 responding companies employed people speaking or reading Japanese, and of 196 such employees 74% were native-born Japanese.<sup>2</sup> From the very limited statistical data available on the employment of graduates with a major in an Asian language (collected by the Graduate Careers Council of Australia for 1977-1979 only) the Committee found that the percentage of pass and honours graduates in this category who entered full-time employment was well below the corresponding percentage for all graduates, and generally lower than that for humanities graduates. A relatively high proportion continued with full-time study (consistently higher than the proportion for all graduates). The unemployment rate for these graduates was also higher than for graduates generally. Data on people with both a major in an Asian language and a postgraduate qualification, although limited to 1979 and involving very small numbers, showed that none of these graduates found employment in government or business, and only one in a university.<sup>3</sup> In a list of two years' pass and honours graduates from the Faculty of Asian

1 For further details, see Volume 2.

2 Unpublished survey on Japanese language graduates employed in Australia, conducted by the Australia-Japan Foundation in 1979.

3 Figures provided by the Graduate Careers Council of Australia. For further details, see Volume 2.

Studies at ANU, over half of those available for employment were either unemployed or in occupations in which their knowledge of Asia would have had no direct relevance. Only one of the graduates was employed in a field which was explicitly relevant to Asia (a number of other occupations were stated too imprecisely for any conclusion to be drawn as to the relevance of their qualifications).<sup>4</sup> A large proportion of Asian studies graduates in the past has found employment in secondary teaching, a field now rapidly closing up because of a general oversupply of teachers. Thus employment prospects for such graduates may well be even bleaker in the next few years than they have been hitherto.

4.3 Even if the major objective of the Asian studies enterprise in Australia were simply to ensure that the country is adequately provided with a small pool of Asian specialists for purposes of translation, interpreting, diplomacy, international assessment, government and private trade negotiations, news reporting, research and teaching (a notion specifically, and in our view rightly, rejected by the Auchmuty Committee in its emphasis on breadth rather than depth) there would be major difficulties in ensuring that enough young Australians were willing to devote between five and eight years of their lives to becoming specialists of that kind. The employment market for such skills is far too thin. The chances of finding jobs are much greater with graduate qualifications in other fields.

4.4 The Committee is deeply concerned about Australia's need to produce a pool of Asia specialists who will require more advanced training and experience in the relevant countries than is normally provided in a three or four year under-graduate course. It believes the current imbalance between the supply of graduates specializing in the study of Asian countries and the demand for their services is disturbing, and damaging to the country's long-term interests.

4.5 But the purpose of developing Asian studies in Australia in the 1980s must go far beyond creating a handful of Asia specialists. If Australia is to manage its relations with Asian countries successfully, it will need - and employers should be looking for - young Australians with Asia-related skills and experience of a very diverse range and character, some of them undoubtedly 'specialist' in nature, but many of them far less so. The course structures of our tertiary institutions should take account of the heterogeneous nature of the market demand for such graduates, while at the same time reflecting the more general educational arguments for broadening and deepening understanding of our Asian neighbours throughout the Australian community.

4 From information compiled by the Careers and Appointments Office, ANU.

4.6 The problems of managing our relations with Asian countries were reflected in a 1978 speech by the Australian Ambassador to Japan, Mr John Menadue, on the importance of sending people with a working knowledge of the Japanese language to jobs in both private companies and Australian government agencies in Japan:

...expressed in terms of our population, we have more students studying Japanese as a foreign language than any other country. But if this degree of interest is to be sustained there must be goals for these students, and jobs to justify the considerable time required to achieve a level of really competent communication.<sup>5</sup>

4.7 The Australian Embassy in Japan had a number of middle-ranking officers whose language skills were developing rapidly, observed Mr Menadue, 'but we need ten times as many'. New Zealand has a Japanese-speaking Ambassador in Tokyo. The Japanese Embassy in Canberra is staffed almost entirely by fluent English speakers from the Ambassador down, as also are sections of the Japanese Foreign Ministry dealing with Australia.

Nothing has been as limiting and frustrating in my work in Japan as the lack of Japanese fluency. This would have been true of all my predecessors. This lack is an enormous problem and we should stop pretending otherwise. It is the most serious problem in Australia's foreign relations in our region, and I say that advisedly....

What is true of the government sector in Japan is also true of Australian businesses represented in Japan. At present there is a small group of fluent Japanese speakers among Australian residents in Tokyo; and they are invariably the most successful businessmen.

4.8 It is not sufficient, however, simply to increase the number of young Australians with the necessary Asian language skills, unless business firms and government departments appreciate the long-term advantages of employing them productively. Mr Menadue went on:

Unfortunately, even the limited number of Japanese linguists that are being trained are not finding jobs. It shows how shallow our relationship is when Australians who can speak the language of our most important trading partner cannot usefully employ their skills. It is important that governments and companies look urgently at this question. There is

no quick solution. We need a long term commitment to solve this critical issue....

The training of appropriate young people should be carefully directed, with the expectation that they will be spending most of their career specialising in Asia. Regional specialists in North Asia, with skills in Japanese and Chinese for example, must become commonplace and in senior positions. Too often the specialists in these areas must accept a career handicap. Instead, they should be rewarded.

4.9 The often-expressed view that Australia's dealings with Asian countries can be conducted quite satisfactorily in English alone, and by people without any specialist knowledge of the countries concerned, reflects short-sightedness and ignorance of the realities of communication across cultural boundaries. Problems are caused and opportunities lost through linguistic misunderstandings. But more than this, really successful communication is impossible without the subtler perceptions of behaviour and its meanings which can only come from long-term study and experience of another culture. This is evidently appreciated by only a few of the Australian firms dealing with Japan (see 4.2). It is even less widely acknowledged by those dealing with most other Asian countries.

4.10 Effective dealings with the countries of the region should require the employment of Australians with a combination of linguistic skills and other expertise relevant to those dealings. To date, people have not been encouraged to acquire those skills. As a nation we are not equipping ourselves to promote our own interests in the Asia-Pacific region.

4.11 The solution to this problem will require action on several fronts simultaneously.

(i) Employers will have to be persuaded of the benefits to them and to Australia as a whole of giving jobs to graduates who have specialized in the study of Asian countries; many are still shortsighted in their views on this matter, apparently disregarding the long-term imperatives and benefits.

(ii) Better information will need to be gathered and made available to students on the kinds of backgrounds employers would favour in selecting employees with specialist knowledge of Asian countries. This information could also be used in structuring vocationally oriented postgraduate courses of various kinds to meet the needs of the employment market.

5 Speech to the Australian Institute of Management, 3 July 1978.



- (iii) The range of employment opportunities for Asian specialists, and the ways in which employers can use their services, will need to be expanded through the development of a more substantial and diversified career structure, including the development of consultancy and translation services, and through the expansion of opportunities for Asian studies graduates to obtain additional training relevant to the kinds of openings that do exist.
- (iv) Departments teaching about Asia in our tertiary institutions will need to give more attention than they have done hitherto to the vocational usefulness of the courses they offer, and of the course combinations they recommend to their students, recognizing that unless they take some account of the requirements of the employment market they will have no valid grounds for complaint about declining student numbers.
- (v) Those who teach about Asian countries in our tertiary institutions will need to be self-critical and receptive to criticism if they wish their graduates to command the respect of potential employers.

#### Vocational Considerations in Tertiary Study

4.12 One point which has been impressed upon the Committee's attention is that undergraduate courses of three or four years, even those with a heavy emphasis on Asian languages or Asian studies, do not in themselves constitute a very substantial professional qualification. Business firms and government departments looking for 'Asia specialists' usually want people with considerably greater linguistic proficiency, general knowledge and experience of a particular Asian country than the average pass or honours graduate has had the opportunity to acquire. Insofar as we are concerned here with the employment market for 'Asia specialists', it is usually people with additional or postgraduate qualifications and experience for whom intermittent demand exists in Australia. Few vocationally oriented postgraduate courses on Asian countries have yet been offered, though new initiatives in this area are emerging, for example Queensland University's M.Litt. course in Japanese Translator/Interpretership and Griffith University's proposed M.A. in Australian-Asian Relations.

4.13 In the Committee's view, more planning and resources need to be invested by government and tertiary institutions in the recruitment, postgraduate training, field experience and employment of Asia specialists, for they are a scarce and expensive national

resource whose services Australia can ill afford to lose by default or through discouragement.

4.14 The foregoing comments do not imply that undergraduate courses in Asian studies are valueless from a vocational point of view, merely that, like most other undergraduate Arts courses, they are not usually sufficient in themselves to rate as a significant professional qualification. Such courses can be most valuable in arousing and developing a student's interest in a particular Asian country, something which may prove to be, but will not necessarily be, an asset from an employment point of view. In general, the vocational value of these courses is that they constitute a springboard to further study or further experience in the Asian field. They can and should be a useful preparation for work which calls for some deeper knowledge of Asian conditions, but they should in most cases not be thought of as specialist qualifications for particular jobs. They represent the beginning of an apprenticeship, not the end.

4.15 The implications of this consideration for our thinking about the objectives and design of undergraduate Asian studies courses are significant. The rationale underlying undergraduate courses on Asian countries needs to be stated in terms of their contribution both to possible specialist training and to the general educational objectives of undergraduate studies. It is important that undergraduate courses be seen as contributing to a vocationally useful education, and that the basic educational purposes of a course and the vocational aspect be combined and reconciled as effectively as possible. It is equally important, however, to avoid making exaggerated statements about the vocational value of Asian studies courses, at least until such time as job opportunities for Asian studies graduates have substantially increased. The importance of a healthy development of Asian studies in our tertiary institutions can in any case be upheld on other grounds of national interest and Australia's need for cultural and political reorientation towards the region in which it is situated.

4.16 The Committee recognizes the complexity of the issues involved in designing tertiary-level courses so as to take account of both these aims. Each institution must resolve them in its own way. But the Committee believes there is a need for greater awareness within the Asian studies profession of the way the relationship between these objectives has changed over recent decades. It may be much harder in the 1980s than it was twenty years ago to justify a highly specialist pattern of undergraduate Asian studies either on vocational or general educational grounds. At that time it was believed that there were considerable employment prospects for graduates of courses on Asian countries. The general educational (i.e. non-vocational) arguments for Asian studies were, and still often are, used to support the case for a particular kind

of highly specialist scholarship, which might loosely be called the 'Orientalist' tradition. Understandably, the primary aim of that tradition of scholarship in Australia was to equip students with the specialist skills necessary for the hard pioneering work that had to be done in these fields. It could be said that the dominant emphasis of that tradition has been in fact to train students for an academic career in Asian scholarship. That emphasis made good sense in past decades when only a handful of students took such courses and most of them could look forward to careers in the universities or in government for which this focus of training was appropriate, and indeed essential, at the time. But insofar as these conditions no longer apply, there is now a need to reconsider whether the tradition can be maintained at the undergraduate level without substantial modifications. Recent restructuring of the ANU's Asian Studies degree reflects a recognition of these changing circumstances (see Volume 2).

4.17 In some Australian universities deliberate encouragement is given to students to take Asian languages or Asian studies courses in combination with other subjects such as economics or law, with a view to enhancing their employment prospects. Perhaps the most striking example of this approach is found in the University of Western Australia where Japanese is taught in the Economics Faculty in a context in which students are given a solid grounding in the working of the Japanese economy, as well as in the language and culture of Japan. There is much to be said for this imaginative approach, but it should be remembered that the employment market even for graduates of this kind is very limited. The number of graduates who have emerged from that course so far has been rather small. They are said to have been quickly snapped up by employers, which is an encouraging sign, but, as the survey referred to above shows, it is to be doubted whether even Australian companies dealing with Japan could in present circumstances absorb dozens of such graduates, let alone hundreds. The Committee is not certain that this model could be widely emulated throughout Australia or that it would be an appropriate national pattern for undergraduate Asian studies courses if it were attempted, although further experiments along these lines are clearly desirable.

4.18 Another enterprising variation of course structure is to be seen in Griffith University's School of Modern Asian Studies, where students combine an area studies specialization, including some language training, with a concentration on a conventional discipline, and a focus on contemporary policy issues. Some academics have reservations about such area studies courses on the grounds that depth and solidarity may be sacrificed for the sake of breadth. However, this approach deserves encouragement, in particular for its attempt to provide both grounding in a discipline and an emphasis on the ways in which the perspectives of various disciplines may be brought to bear on contemporary problems. It is perhaps too early to gauge how successfully Griffith has managed to cope with the problem of balancing breadth and depth, but there is

much to be said on both educational and vocational grounds for this policy-oriented approach to the study of Asia. The Committee understands that at least some graduates from the School, though by no means all, have found jobs in which the Asian content of their training has some relevance.

4.19 In both these instances it is important to stress that there is in any case an educational value in giving an Asian focus to such disciplinary and interdisciplinary courses, which transcends questions of immediate vocational relevance.

4.20 The Committee recognizes that there must be room within the overall structure of the Asian studies profession in Australia for a diversity of courses and approaches, some stressing depth and specialization, some broader and more general in orientation. But it believes that the balance should be shifted in the latter direction and that there should be more consultation and interchange of ideas among the various Australian tertiary institutions involved in Asian studies to ensure an appropriate 'mix' of emphases in the courses available. The Committee believes that the consideration of these issues should be a function of the ASAA.

R.6 It is recommended that the next Asian Studies Committee consider ways of establishing consultation between representatives of the various types of courses about Asian countries, on the relationship between vocational and general educational objectives in these courses, and on the appropriateness of the current national pattern of courses.

R.7 It is further recommended that in preparation for this process the next Committee collect detailed information from university and college departments with an Asian focus, on the employment patterns of their graduates.

4.21 On the basis of the views expressed by graduate careers officers who have had experience with the problems of placement of Asian studies graduates, several broad generalizations can be put forward which ought to be borne in mind by the staff of departments responsible for the design of Asian language and Asian studies courses.

(i) In the present state of the employment market, it is unwise for undergraduates to specialize too narrowly in any field, no matter how strong the vocational orientation might seem. Students are well advised to diversify their studies and avoid becoming locked into only one channel of specialization. In the case of Asian studies, this means that it is wise to combine the study of Asia with majors in other disciplines such as law, economics and the other social sciences.

- (ii) There seem to be clear indications that graduates whose course structure has included a major in subjects like economics, law and administration (even at the pass level) generally find it easier to obtain employment than those who have highly specialist Asian studies degrees.
- (iii) Graduates must be prepared for the possibility that they will not immediately find jobs which directly utilize the specialist skills they acquired in the course of their training. They may initially have to accept employment in other areas, before they can find openings in the sphere they are specifically trained for - but this is not in itself sufficient ground for disregarding the value of that training.
- (iv) Further education or training for specific jobs over and above the BA degree is likely to become the norm in the coming decades. A Bachelor's degree alone can no longer be regarded as a 'meal ticket', either in Asian studies, or most other Arts disciplines. More highly qualified people tend to have the least difficulty finding jobs and tend to have the most job opportunities open to them.

#### Employers and the Career Structure

4.22 Members of the Committee have on various occasions heard the view expressed by spokesmen of large Australian companies with business interests in Asia that if they needed employees with particular Asian language qualifications they preferred to send their own people to an appropriate institution (not necessarily in Australia) for training tailored to the needs of that job, rather than recruit graduates from Asian studies departments who might not be suitable on other counts. Likewise, the Department of Foreign Affairs seems to put greater stress in its selection procedures for new staff on other qualifications than language skills, even though its recruiting advertisements usually mention that a knowledge of certain Asian languages is a desirable asset. That Department sends its own employees for language training either to the RAAF School of Languages or to courses overseas.

4.23 There can be no legitimate objection to this approach, however much we may wish the situation were otherwise. The onus is upon us as members of the Asian studies profession to convince the potential employers of our graduates that it would be in their own

interests to employ people who have undertaken substantial study of an Asian country over several years. We also need to conduct a sustained dialogue with the potential employers about the kinds of qualifications they might wish to utilize. So far, little attempt has been made to do this.

#### R.8 The Committee recommends

- (i) that the ASAA make a more deliberate effort to promote a continuing exchange of views with employers on these problems;
- (ii) that the Association compile and circulate information obtained from employers about the kinds of qualifications they would consider useful if employing Asia specialists;
- (iii) that the Association advise its members to maintain liaison with the Careers and Appointments offices in their universities and CAEs for the purpose of keeping registers of people with postgraduate qualifications in Asian studies. Such registers would be useful both for observing the employment patterns of these graduates (see R.7 above) and for assisting potential employers to find graduates with the qualifications they are seeking.

4.24 The Committee feels there is a need for sustained attention to the problems of creating a more substantial career structure, or network of opportunities for employment, training and field experience, for at least the core group of young Asia specialists with advanced language skills and other expertise. We need to create new mechanisms to ensure that the talents of these people can be retained and more effectively utilized. The employment market is at present too imperfect to perform this function unaided.

4.25 The long-term solution to this problem, as we have suggested above, must lie in encouraging private employers and government departments to appreciate the potential value of these people and to create employment opportunities for them wherever possible. At the same time, it would be in the national interest to have some source of funding available from which such people could obtain grants to enable them to diversify their qualifications or obtain additional training relevant to particular types of

6 The Australia-Japan Foundation held a seminar in 1979 on employment prospects for graduates in Japanese studies, to which representatives of employers were invited. At the time of writing the report of the seminar has not yet been issued.

employment where openings do exist. As a short-term expedient, even an expansion of the opportunities for temporary and part-time jobs utilizing their special skills would be of some value in helping these people to remain actively involved in their field until such time as they can find more secure employment.

4.26 There should also be greater scope for people of this kind to obtain work through consultancy and translator/interpreter services. This will require improvements in training for such work. It seems absurd that Australian companies have to send translation work to Hong Kong, but the Committee understands that Asian language graduates proficient enough for this work are very scarce in Australia. We have referred elsewhere (4.12-4.13, 5.5-5.6, 5.17-5.18) to the need for more attention to the advanced training of Asia specialists. Where specialists of an adequate standard wish to establish translator/interpreter or consultancy services, the Committee believes financial assistance should be made available to such ventures.

R.9 The Committee recommends that further consideration be given by the next Asian Studies Committee to the question of a more diversified and substantial career structure for Asia specialists, and that possible new ways of developing and utilizing the skills of these specialists be considered in discussions between the Association and potential employers (see R.8 above). (Recommendation R.21 (iii) in paragraph 5.44 below refers to scholarships to enable Asia specialists to obtain vocational training.)

R.10 It is further recommended that the ASAA urge Asian language departments to forge close links with State interpreters' and translators' associations where they exist, and with the National Association for the Accreditation of Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) to ensure that their best graduates are both appropriately trained and known to employers seeking people with such skills.

## 5. TERTIARY EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

5.1 The most immediate problem facing the study of Asian countries in Australian tertiary institutions is that student numbers in many courses have begun to level off or decline.<sup>2</sup> In a period of financial contraction in tertiary education some departments or courses are under threat of being cut back. The possibility of appointing additional staff to them has virtually disappeared, long before the programmes concerned have reached an optimum or even a fully viable size. In short, few departments are in a position to do justice to the task of spearheading an assault on Australian apathy towards Asia and remedying the Eurocentric bias that still persists in our tertiary educational institutions.

5.2 It is useful to recall the advice of Dr Henry Rosovsky of Harvard University, who warned Australia against making the same disastrous mistake as America did earlier of building Asian studies up to a point short of self-generation and then crippling the whole enterprise through cuts in educational spending.<sup>3</sup> The consequences of such shortsighted action could be vastly more fateful for Australia than they are for America.

5.3 The Committee received many responses in its survey of ASAA members which stressed that additional funds were essential if the study of Asian countries in tertiary institutions was to be put on a sound footing. There can be little doubt that this is, in general, one of the first priorities to be emphasized in our recommendations for remedial action. But we would stress that it is not the only one, nor is it in all cases the most urgent one. New thinking about the most appropriate patterns and structures for Asian studies is equally important. Students have to be attracted back into Asian studies courses in much larger numbers if in the long run we are to justify any claim for favoured treatment within institutional structures. To achieve that, we need to analyse the

1 It should be noted that while some sections of this chapter are concerned primarily with universities, and the following chapter makes substantial reference to colleges of advanced education, there is inevitable overlap between the two areas. Some sections of the present chapter, notably those on co-operation, students, staff exchanges, study leave, research and staff development, refer to both CAEs and universities.

2 For details see Volume 2.

3 Quoted in FitzGerald, 1978, p. 2.

reasons why student numbers have begun to fall off, which is itself a complex question. In responding to our questionnaire, many members observed that this was our most basic and urgent problem, and not the shortage of staff and funds. The Committee broadly concurs with this view.

5.4 A distinction needs to be drawn between two sets of objectives of courses on Asian countries - the basic or general educational objectives of all tertiary study on the one hand (i.e. intellectual training in rigorous analysis, stimulation of critical inquiry, exposure to the works of great minds and so forth) and the 'Asia specialist' objectives of equipping students with the language skills and cultural background necessary for the understanding of a particular Asian country or civilization. The former tends to predominate in courses on Asian history, politics or anthropology offered in discipline-based departments. However, in Asian studies departments with a specialized focus on particular regions, there is a great deal of basic information and language training which must be covered as an essential starting point, and for which relatively little prior study can be assumed. Hence much time is devoted in these departments to imparting a large body of relatively specialized knowledge and skills. But the two objectives are neither exclusive nor incompatible; they are combined in different proportions in all courses. The Committee believes that if the study of Asia is to attain the place in Australian tertiary education that we believe it should have, more attention will have to be given to its function in achieving general educational objectives, if necessary at the cost of reducing the level of specialist content at the undergraduate level.

5.5 The Committee urges that members of the Asian Studies profession should actively rethink the respective roles of undergraduate and postgraduate education with respect to these two objectives. In general, it seems desirable that the emphasis in Asian studies at the undergraduate level should as far as possible be on general educational objectives rather than narrow specialization. The specialized training of Asian studies 'experts' cannot be crammed into the confines of a three- or four-year B.A. course without unacceptable distortion of academic priorities; new ways need to be found to stretch out the period of such training into the postgraduate phase. Amongst other things, the 'knowledge explosion' of modern times has affected most branches of Asian studies as dramatically as other fields of scholarship, and it is not possible for a student to master the necessary languages, history, politics or cultural background of any Asian country sufficiently to undertake advanced professional work after a mere three or four years of study. This does not imply in any sense a retreat from the highest standards of scholarship in undergraduate education, but rather that the training of specialists should be seen as extending beyond the B.A. Honours level to postgraduate study.

5.6 It would be premature for this Committee to lay down any firm recommendations about the precise character of such post-graduate courses. That will require a good deal of experimentation and innovative thinking. It will also have to reflect the diverse requirements of different areas and different institutions. But in general the Committee believes there should be a greater variety of courses additional to the conventional undergraduate subjects which now constitute the bulk of the teaching provided by most tertiary departments. Postgraduate diploma courses, intensive language courses, and retraining or supplementary short courses for teachers, civil servants and others, could provide a degree of flexibility in further studies of Asia which is at present lacking. Some promising initiatives have already been made in this direction, including the one-year Japanese intensive course at the ANU (see 5.16), the courses mentioned in 4.12 above and some of the diploma courses being introduced by colleges of advanced education. This could well be the most effective way to develop the market-oriented skills which the community is understandably looking to tertiary institutions to provide. Moreover, many of the best students in Asian studies are increasingly being drawn from the mature-age group of undergraduates (or graduates from other fields) often with some field experience in Asia and strong motivation. It is highly desirable that every effort should be made to encourage and facilitate their entry into advanced-level courses. The Asian studies profession should, indeed, be in the vanguard of thinking about new approaches to graduate training and special vocationally-oriented courses along these lines.

#### Asian content in discipline-based courses

5.7 One of the primary objectives of the Asian studies enterprise in Australian tertiary institutions should be to convince our colleagues in the traditional disciplines that there is now as little excuse for an educated Australian to be ignorant of Asian civilizations, history and current affairs as there is for ignorance of our European heritage. We generally take it for granted that an Australian specialist on Asia will also have a reasonable background knowledge of Australian and European history. But the converse is rarely true. Relatively few Australian academics who are not Asian specialists make any serious attempts to take into account the relevance of the various Asian civilizations or the historical experiences of Asian societies in grappling with the problems of the contemporary world.

5.8 It is not sufficient for our tertiary institutions to establish a few struggling departments of Asian languages or Asian studies as a gesture towards recognizing the existence of Asia and then to proceed in their set ways as if there had been no substantial change on their intellectual horizons. That road will condemn Asian studies to perpetual confinement in an intellectual ghetto and reinforce a view of 'Asianists' as being outside the mainstream of academic life. Unless a deliberate attempt is made

from both sides to break down the ghetto walls and to ensure that there is vigorous intellectual interchange between the scholars who specialize on Asian countries and those whose specialties lie elsewhere, little progress can be expected towards remedying the Eurocentric bias of Australia's educational system and cultural life generally.

5.9 In this process, a crucial role is being played by scholars in discipline-based departments of history, political science, economics, geography, anthropology, sociology, art, music and literature, who specialize in and lecture on particular Asian countries and engage with their colleagues in these disciplines on equal terms. In some disciplines and some institutions a greater degree of cross-fertilization appears to have occurred than in others. In general, history departments have been in the vanguard in introducing courses on Asia, whereas disciplines like philosophy, art and comparative literature have been well to the rear. There have been striking differences even within each of these disciplines from one institution to another.

5.10 In some tertiary institutions, a great deal of teaching about Asian countries takes place even though there may be little or no teaching of specific 'Asian studies' or related Asian language courses. For example, the history department in the University of Adelaide at one point had as many staff members teaching Indian history as there were in the entire Department of Indian Studies at the University of Melbourne. It could not be claimed that this is an ideal state of affairs, since such courses ultimately need to be backed up with language and area studies. But this case does illustrate that much can be done within the discipline-based departments alone. By contrast, however, the Committee received a despairing plea from a member of one university who felt utterly isolated and beleaguered by the invincibly Eurocentric orientation of his faculty colleagues, a situation the Committee believes to be not uncommon in our tertiary institutions.

5.11 The recent review of the Faculty of Asian Studies at the ANU recommended strongly that students in that Faculty should be encouraged to combine a major in one of the traditional humanities or social science disciplines with their studies of Asian languages or Asian civilizations. Excessive specialization in the latter at the undergraduate level was deemed undesirable not only because of future employment implications but also on general educational grounds.

5.12 Clearly, each institution must work out its own patterns in this respect. But Association members are urged to give high priority to the further extension of courses on Asian countries

<sup>4</sup> Details of offerings in individual institutions are provided in Volume 2.

in the discipline-based departments, so that students can more easily incorporate some study of Asia into their undergraduate courses. In addition to broadening the cultural range of undergraduate study, such courses will serve a 'recruiting' function by arousing the interest of some students in further studies of an Asian country at the postgraduate level.

#### R.11 The Committee recommends

- (i) that the ASAA press for the provision of funds by the Federal Government for additional teaching about Asian countries in discipline-based departments, for which institutions could apply on a competitive basis, with funds being allocated where the need and potential is greatest. Some priority should be given to increasing the availability of courses on the countries of South and West Asia, since these are generally less well provided for than Southeast and East Asia. Such funds should be administered by the proposed Asian Studies Council if established;
- (ii) that the Association give the strongest possible support to initiatives within individual institutions to remedy deficiencies in the provision of courses on Asian countries.

#### Asian Language Studies in Tertiary Institutions

5.13 The traditional pattern of language study in most undergraduate Asian studies courses in Australia has been based upon the conventional model of the three-year pass or four-year honours major, as in the older European language departments. To some undergraduates that pattern has no doubt proved to be a satisfactory framework for language study. But for many others it seems to have had serious inadequacies, giving rise to boredom or disillusionment with the rate of progress achieved. (This is an impressionistic and somewhat subjective observation, but we believe it is borne out in general terms by the rather small numbers of students taking majors in Asian languages, by high drop-out rates after first year, and by the complaints of former students.) Any discussion of Asian language study should at least broach the question of whether the best way to approach the teaching of these languages is necessarily or always within the conventional three- or four-year undergraduate course framework.

5.14 The view has been put to the Committee that the conventional undergraduate course structure is far less than an ideal framework within which to undertake the learning of a new

language from scratch. It may have been satisfactory in former times for the study of European languages in courses which assumed prior study of the language to matriculation level. Only in about the last thirty years has that assumption been discarded as new language courses have been introduced for which no prior knowledge could be assumed. Some academics have questioned whether it is appropriate at all for institutions to give credit for a B.A. to courses which are in large part devoted to a somewhat mechanical or repetitive learning process.

5.15 There are several serious disadvantages about starting language studies from scratch within the conventional undergraduate course framework. Students are required to divide their time and attention between a number of diverse subjects, whereas effective language study at this stage requires concentrated attention without other distractions. The best students can usually cope with the problems that arise, but others are frequently discouraged by the combination of heavy work loads and the sense that they are making very slow progress. In general, intensive language courses seem to work better as a means of getting students started upon language studies; they take maximum advantage of the students' early enthusiasm and motivation, while giving them a greater sense that they are achieving results.<sup>5</sup> For languages in which the memorization of new scripts is crucial, concentrated attention to the learning process is probably even more advantageous.

5.16 The Committee urges that Asian studies departments should be experimenting with more flexible approaches to language teaching, particularly intensive courses. American universities conduct Asian-language summer schools with apparent success, as do several Australian institutions. The Australian National University has for the past three years offered a one-year intensive course in Japanese. Such courses could well be offered in other Asian languages, and in other places, perhaps on a rotating basis. Their success would naturally depend in part on skilful publicity to ensure adequate enrolments. Since it will be difficult to obtain substantial additional resources for such ventures, departments should seek to modify their existing activities so that courses of this kind can be mounted from time to time with minor additions to regular staffing. In many cases such intensive training would need to be followed by further language study either in Australia or in the relevant country, but the solid foundation provided by intensive study would greatly expedite the language learning process. Follow-up training in the country concerned should be supported financially in appropriate cases, and as mentioned in paragraph 5.44 (vii), scholarships would be needed to cover the cost of intensive language study.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, P. Strevens, New Orientations in the Teaching of English, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1977, p. 29.

R.12 The Committee recommends that the ASAA strongly support proposals for the development of summer vacation and longer intensive courses in Asian languages, to allow for relatively short periods of concentrated language study both as part of undergraduate programmes and by graduate students and others wishing to take up the study of an Asian language outside the framework of an undergraduate degree. Information should be gathered on the American experience in this area, and on existing Australian intensive courses, to assist in planning such programmes.

5.17 The Committee recognizes that short intensive courses may not be equally appropriate for all Asian languages. While they seem to work well for the more readily accessible languages like Indonesian and Malay, there are more serious problems with Japanese and Chinese, for which at least a year of intensive study is needed before any reasonable degree of proficiency in using the language is attained. The Committee has been told that the one-year intensive course in Japanese conducted at the ANU takes students to a standard approximately equivalent to that of a normal three-year university course, which represents a minimum level of proficiency in the oral and written use of the language; but further study is still essential if a satisfactory standard of communication is to be reached. These considerations seem to underline the need to provide more advanced intensive courses as well as introductory ones if Australia is to produce a significant corps of people competent to communicate on a basis of equality with our Asian neighbours. The Committee has been told that at present only a tiny handful of the Australians who have studied Japanese or Chinese could be described as sufficiently competent in those languages to act confidently as medium-level interpreters or top-level translators (see 4.26 above).

5.18 The question of adequate training for and accreditation of interpreters in Asian languages is a subject requiring closer attention. The first Australian tertiary course for interpreters in an Asian language began only in 1980 (see 4.12 above).

R.13 The Committee recommends that the Association consult with the National Association for the Accreditation of Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) and, on the basis of these consultations and the discussions with employers referred to in Chapter 4, draw up a policy statement on the training and accreditation of interpreters and translators of Asian languages. (The question of employment of such specialists is referred to in 4.22-4.26.)

5.19 One advantage that would accrue from a variety of Asian language course patterns would be that alternative avenues of entry to Asian studies would be available to people who are not in a

position to undertake full-time tertiary courses. This is likely to be of particular importance in view of the increasing number of mature-age students of high quality who decide to undertake Asian studies after some years of experience and work in an Asian country. The Committee believes that opportunities should exist for many more Australians to study Asian languages seriously, both in a tertiary context and elsewhere. If tertiary institutions cannot meet the challenge of providing these opportunities, they will have no reason to complain if they are superseded in this role.

5.20 Where alternative types of courses such as those provided by language institutes and further education colleges prove to be successful in attracting students and achieving satisfactory standards of linguistic competence, there is a strong case for urging that language study in such institutions should be given appropriate credit for purposes of degrees, as already occurs in many American universities. Language summer schools are also offered in Indonesia, Japan and China for which it may well be appropriate to give accreditation.

5.21 A further advantage of developments of this kind would be that tertiary Asian language departments would be left free to concentrate their efforts on more advanced studies in language and literature which would entail utilization of those languages, without being required to devote such a substantial effort to the initial teaching of them. This would contribute towards achieving parity of esteem with other language departments which have traditionally been able to offer programmes at a more advanced level.

#### Asian Languages Widely Taught

5.22 The three languages most widely taught in Australian tertiary institutions are Chinese, Japanese and Indonesian. (Languages other than those three are discussed in 5.23-5.28 below.) Since the publication of the Auchmuty report, tertiary courses in Japanese have become available in all States, and Chinese and Indonesian in all States except Tasmania. The Committee sees these developments as most gratifying. However some gaps still exist even in the provision of these languages. Chinese history has been taught for many years at the University of Tasmania, and the politics department there has significant offerings on Indonesia, yet these two languages are not taught at university level in that State (and Indonesian is to be phased out at the Hobart campus of the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education from the end of 1980). Several attempts to have Indonesian introduced at the University of Tasmania have failed. No Asian language is taught at any tertiary institution in Wollongong; despite the existence of courses on island Southeast Asia in the University's history department and of Indonesian courses in secondary schools in the city. At the James Cook University of North Queensland Indonesian is offered only as a

two-year sequence, and there is no native speaker of the language on the full-time staff, despite the existence of substantial courses in Indonesian history, particularly at the postgraduate level. Relatively few colleges of advanced education offer substantial Asian language courses.

- R.14 The Committee recommends that the Association continue to give strong support to initiatives to introduce tertiary courses in Indonesian, Japanese and Chinese particularly where no other provision exists in the same city for tertiary study of these languages, and where there is a concentration on these countries in one or more departments of the institution concerned.<sup>6</sup>

#### Asian Languages Not Widely Taught

5.23 The ASAA's Basham Committee on the Teaching of Asian Languages in Australian Universities made a valuable contribution to the debate on this question, and identified Hindi and Arabic as needing the greatest expansion, on the grounds that each is 'spoken by large communities with whom Australia has important relationships'.<sup>7</sup> The Committee recommended 'that earmarked funds be provided to make these two languages available in every State of Australia'.<sup>8</sup> It then went on to propose alternative views on the most appropriate approach to other Asian languages not widely available in Australian universities. The present Committee has profited from the debate which followed the publication of the Basham Report, and is aware that there are irreconcilable differences of opinion on the desirability of establishing a national centre for the teaching of Asian languages, and on the siting of such a centre.

5.24 The Committee views with concern the Universities Commission's policy enunciated in 1969 and reaffirmed more recently,<sup>9</sup> that it 'regards the ANU as the national centre for the

6 This recommendation is similar in some respects to that of the Basham Committee (see 0.8 above) 'that some teaching to Honours level ought to be provided for each of these languages (i.e. Chinese, Indonesian and Japanese) in at least one of the centres in each State where it is taught'. (Report of the ASAA Sub-Committee on The Teaching of Asian Languages in Australian Tertiary Institutions, 1978, p. 4, Recommendation 2.1.1.)

7 Basham Report, 1978, p. 4, Section 2.1.2.

8 loc. cit.

9 Universities Commission, Report for the 1977-79 Triennium, July 1976, para. 6.58.



Asian languages less in demand. They should not also be introduced in other universities'.<sup>10</sup>

5.25 Only two universities offer formal courses in any modern South Asian language. Major programmes of teaching and research on South Asia exist in several universities in which no South Asian language is taught. No university department outside of Victoria, New South Wales and the ACT offers a course in any West Asian language. South and West Asia are of enormous contemporary and historical significance both in their own right and because of their profound influence on the Asian countries more widely studied in Australia. The languages of Australia's Asian refugee communities are not taught in any regular tertiary programme, nor is the national language of the Philippines, despite the existence of courses on Philippines history, notably at James Cook University.

5.26 A national policy for the teaching of Asian languages is needed which will ensure that courses in certain important Asian languages other than those already widely taught are available to support existing teaching and research in various tertiary institutions, particularly on the countries of South and West Asia.

5.27 The Committee believes that it is a matter of national importance that such a policy be developed by the ASAA. It endorses the Basham Committee's recommendation on Hindi and Arabic, and proposes the following 3-tiered classification as a framework for a policy on this question.

- Tier 1: Hindi<sup>11</sup> and Arabic.
- Tier 2: The other major South Asian languages (e.g. Marathi and Gujarati, the Dravidian languages and Bengali), Thai, Vietnamese, Kampuchean, Tagalog and Korean.
- Tier 3: Other Asian languages, for which demand is likely to be small and irregular. (The Committee acknowledges however, that many of these languages are of great cultural importance and are spoken by large populations.)

R.15 The Committee recommends that the ASAA develop a language policy based on the following principles:

- (i) that courses in Hindi and Arabic be made available in at least one tertiary institution in each State, and that such courses be equivalent at least to a 4-year undergraduate Honours major;

<sup>10</sup> Australian Universities Commission, Fourth Report, May 1969, p. 37, para. 5.7.

<sup>11</sup> In some institutions Urdu may be preferred as an alternative to Hindi.

(ii) that each of the 'second tier' languages be made available in more than one tertiary institution; that a policy on the most desirable distribution of resources for the teaching of these languages be developed through consultation between specialists in each of the regions concerned (South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia), with the policy for South Asian languages being that already adopted by the South Asian Studies Association of Australia; and that provision be made for correspondence courses to be offered to students in institutions other than those in which each language is to be offered. Such correspondence courses should involve some face-to-face contact between teacher and student, and advice should be sought from institutions such as the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education and university and college external studies departments with experience in language teaching by correspondence;

(iii) that a set of taped courses be developed for other Asian languages considered likely to be needed, with copies of such courses available for purchase by libraries and language institutes, and that a register be kept by the ASAA of people able to teach courses in these languages. Because it is likely that demand for courses in these 'third tier' languages will be limited and intermittent, it is not proposed that regular programmes should be offered. However, provision should be made to ensure that facilities for private study, correspondence study, personal tuition on a 'fee-for-service' basis and occasional ad hoc group courses can be arranged, possibly in consultation with university language institutes and the RAAF School of Languages at Point Cook. It would be desirable for either the ASAA or the proposed Asian Studies Council to act as a clearing house for information on the availability of taped courses, private tutors and ad hoc courses for such languages, and for a pool of funds to be created for the latter to be offered when sufficient demand arises;

(iv) that supplements be provided for undergraduate and postgraduate scholarships to allow for language study in an Asian country, or for intensive language study in Australia, and that accreditation be given for such study.

5.28 While attempts are being made to achieve an increase in the number of Asian languages being taught in tertiary institutions, the Committee considers that effective interim measures should be introduced immediately to enable postgraduate students and other researchers to learn languages presently unavailable in this country.

R.16 It therefore recommends the establishment of a small number of fellowships for language study in Asian countries, available for periods of from six months to two years and tenable at overseas institutions.

#### The Problems of Small Departments

5.29 In several Australian tertiary institutions, the greatest impediment to any serious pursuit of Asian studies is that the staffing provisions made for language teaching and related studies are still too small to be viable on a long-term basis. A department staffed by only two or three lecturers and tutors simply cannot sustain the range and diversity of courses required for an effective programme. In some departments the solution to this problem has been to offer only a two-year course, or to organize a three-year sequence on a 'rolling' basis, with each level of the course being available in only two years in three.

5.30 Enrolments in these departments generally fall far short of what might be considered the 'critical mass' required to assure their continued viability. The attractiveness of their courses to students is diminished by the very solutions to the problem of staff size, and in some cases also by students' perceptions of the programme as having an uncertain status and future. Since Asian language courses in general do not attract high enrolments because of their time-consuming nature, the possibility of such departments growing to a more viable size is remote. Yet the abolition of these programmes would in some cases mean an end to tertiary teaching of the languages concerned not only in these institutions, but in their State as a whole, and would seriously diminish the effectiveness of teaching about Asian countries in these institutions.

R.17 The Committee recommends that the Association

- (i) explore ways of providing effective support for small departments of Asian studies and Asian languages in their efforts to maintain their programmes and build them up to viable size;
- (ii) urge the proposed Asian Studies Council to make special provision for assistance to such departments.

#### Interdisciplinary Committees

5.30 One solution to the problem of making do with limited resources in the sphere of Asian studies has been the growth in some institutions of interdisciplinary committees, boards or centres which co-ordinate work on Asian countries in various departments, promote a more systematic array of course offerings on the region and bring together staff members who might otherwise have no institutional contacts with each other. Bodies of this kind have proved to be valuable in several situations, in large part because scholars in the Asian studies field have, in general, demonstrated a stronger than usual motivation towards such co-operative activities, for the sake of encouraging more effective teaching and research on the countries of their interest.

5.31 Such bodies can also assist students to include some specialization on an Asian country within the framework of a discipline-based degree programme. They represent a frugal use of manpower resources and provide a useful mechanism for maintaining high standards of teaching and research on Asian countries. Where they are working successfully, they should be given such supplementary support as they need to make an area studies programme viable and to promote Asian studies in their institution and in the community.

R.18 The Committee recommends that the ASAA support applications for funding for the activities of interdisciplinary committees, centres and boards of Asian studies, and urge the proposed Asian Studies Council and other funding bodies to give a high priority to such applications.

#### The Secondary-tertiary Nexus in Asian Studies

5.32 With a few exceptions, little adequate provision has yet been made to ensure that there is meaningful continuity between tertiary level studies of Asian countries and a student's earlier school-level studies. Already one encounters reports that teachers and students of Asian languages and Asian studies courses in some school systems feel a sense of frustration that so little account is taken in tertiary institutions of work done in schools. This reduces the incentive for secondary students to take courses on Asia and for teachers to exert themselves to extend the scope of Asian studies in the schools.

5.33 The problem arises most acutely (though not exclusively) in respect to language studies. Twenty years ago it was quite commonly assumed that as Asian language teaching became established in the schools the same pattern of continuity between secondary and tertiary level language studies would emerge as existed earlier in the case of the European languages most commonly taught in Australia. It was also commonly assumed that the extension of Asian

language teaching in the schools would generate an increasing flow of students of Asian languages into tertiary institutions. Today it is clear that both these assumptions were quite unrealistic.

5.34 The postwar trend towards beginning language study at the tertiary level must be expected to continue. The pattern of Asian language teaching in our tertiary institutions will continue to be based on the assumption that a large proportion of the students taking Asian language courses there have had little or no prior exposure to them. However, provision will also have to be made for an increasing trickle of students who have studied these languages to matriculation level (some of them likely to be native speakers).

5.35 In four universities, Sydney, Melbourne, Monash and Adelaide, special provision is made for such students to enter a different first-year stream from that provided for beginning students. In some courses the 'beginning' streams remain separate for the duration of a three-year major. In others there is a gradual merging of the two groups until a common standard is reached by a given point. This point varies from the end of the first year to some time during the third year.

5.36 In a larger number of departments students may be admitted to second year on successful completion of a placement test. However there are clear disadvantages for a first year student in joining a class of students already well adjusted to the demands of tertiary study. An alternative is for such students to postpone continuation of language study until the second year. This is likely to result in considerable loss of language competence during the 'waiting' year. Other departments make small adjustments in the first year course, but regard the task of teaching students who have studied the language at school as to a large extent a remedial one. Apart from courses in Hebrew, only one Asian language course assumes matriculation study by all students of the language taught. This is the Japanese programme at the University of Western Australia, which provides an intensive course in the university vacation for intending students with no prior knowledge of Japanese.

5.37 The Committee recognizes the difficulties of bringing several separate streams to a common standard in a cumulative subject such as a language. It also recognizes the difficulties of small departments of two or three staff in making special provision for students who have prior knowledge of the language taught. However it believes that failure by some tertiary departments to give satisfactory recognition of school study of languages adds to the already serious difficulties of language study in schools (see Chapter 6).

5.38 Some tertiary teachers are critical of the standards of language teaching in schools, yet do not acknowledge their own responsibility in this regard as the educators of school language teachers. This responsibility can be seen in terms of both pre-

service and in-service education of teachers. If the standard of language teaching in the schools is deemed unsatisfactory, the tertiary institutions should be (and in some cases are) seeking to remedy the situation by providing opportunities, wherever practicable, for school-teachers to upgrade their linguistic proficiency through in-service training courses.

5.39 Similar problems exist in the case of courses in Asian history and Asian civilizations, and these are likely to become more widespread with the recent development of new matriculation courses in Asian history in New South Wales and Queensland. The Committee believes the question of how to take account of students' prior knowledge in these areas should be an important one for tertiary teachers of Asian history and Asian civilizations.

#### Co-operation Between Institutions

5.40 Agreements exist among tertiary institutions in certain capital cities not to duplicate language and certain other types of courses in neighbouring institutions. The Asian language offerings at Sydney University are not to be duplicated elsewhere (apart from Chinese, which is offered at Macquarie University). Adelaide and Flinders Universities have agreed to divide the Asian language courses between them, with Adelaide offering Chinese and Japanese, and Flinders offering Indonesian. In the latter case the agreement involves both portability of courses and some teaching by staff of one university on the campus of the other. In the Sydney case only portability of courses is involved.

5.41 In both cases the assumption has been made that these arrangements will satisfy any need for these courses in other tertiary institutions in the city. In the Adelaide case no additional resources were provided to support the teaching on the other campus, and this led to the discontinuation of some cross-teaching when demands on staff became too heavy. In Sydney it appears that the problems of distance and timetabling make it very unlikely that students from the other two campuses will enrol in Sydney University's Asian language courses, so the agreement has very little meaning. The Adelaide experience does suggest however that if first year classes are taught at their own campus, students will be willing to travel to another campus to continue the course in their second and third years, when there is more scope for flexibility in contact time and timetabling.

5.42 The implications of this may be that such arrangements could be made meaningful by the provision of an extra staff member in each of the 'portable' courses, to allow for classes to be conducted at first year level on neighbouring campuses.

R.19 The Committee recommends that the ASAA encourage the gathering of information on the effectiveness of

agreements to rationalize teaching about Asia between institutions in the same city, including data on the extent of demand in each institution for courses offered in other local tertiary institutions, and the desirability of seeking additional resources to support the conducting of certain courses on neighbouring campuses.

#### Survey of Students

5.43 During 1979 the Committee conducted a small survey of students at the Australian National University to try to determine the factors influencing students in favour of or against studying about Asian countries. While certain results of the survey seemed to have some significance, such a small study cannot alone provide reliable information on this issue. The Committee was unable in the time available to conduct a full-scale survey, but the questionnaire designed for the ANU survey could be modified for use in a larger study.

R.20 The Committee recommends that the ASAA seek funds to conduct a survey of the factors involved in tertiary students' decisions to study or not to study Asia. The survey could be based on the study conducted at ANU and could be carried out by the next Asian Studies Committee, if a Research Officer is appointed to assist that Committee.

#### Scholarships

5.44 The Committee believes the provision of special scholarships for the study of Asian countries can have a valuable function in encouraging able students to give an Asian focus to their studies, particularly if close attention is given to the most appropriate ways of utilizing such grants. The objectives of an effective scholarship programme for Asian studies might be stated as follows:

- (a) to encourage undergraduates of outstanding ability to focus on the study of Asia within the framework of a degree programme which includes training in a discipline, in the interests of both vocational flexibility and of obtaining a strong methodological foundation;
- (b) to facilitate entry into courses on Asia by mature-age students who wish to begin a second degree because of an interest in the region, and who may be ineligible for normal tertiary allowances because of previous study;

- (c) to encourage postgraduate study of Asian countries by people from a variety of undergraduate backgrounds, and to facilitate the acquisition by these people of whatever language or discipline training may be needed to prepare them for further postgraduate study of an Asian country;
- (d) to assist graduates who have specialized in the study of Asian countries to obtain appropriate vocational training;
- (e) to ensure that scholarship recipients can undertake some study in the relevant Asian country.

#### R.21 The Committee recommends:

- (i) that the Federal Government be urged to provide a number of scholarships each year specifically for the study of Asian countries and that the administration of these be a matter for consultation between the government and tertiary institutions, through the proposed Asian Studies Council (see Chapter 3);
- (ii) that the Association also seek funds from foundations, service organizations, business and other appropriate sources, for more scholarships and cadetships for study of an Asian country;
- (iii) that some of these scholarships be provided for study at postgraduate level (Graduate Diploma, Masters and Ph.D) to encourage good honours graduates in various disciplines to specialize in the study of an Asian area, to facilitate such specialization by graduates already in employment, and to allow graduates with a strong Asia specialization to obtain suitable vocational or further academic training;
- (iv) that the value of postgraduate scholarships be sufficient to provide for one or two years of language study, including adequate study in the relevant country, in order to allow for easier movement into the Asian studies field at postgraduate level;
- (v) that scholarships for undergraduate study of Asia be offered either at tertiary entrance or, preferably, at the end of first year, to be awarded to students of very high standard. The

value of such scholarships should be somewhat greater than the Tertiary Education Allowance, should include provision for a period of study in an Asian country, and should be awarded on the basis of a variety of criteria, so as not to disadvantage mature age students or to rely too heavily on tertiary entrance scores, because of alleged distortions in language scores in some States (see 6.68 below);

- (vi) that the majority of undergraduate scholarships be awarded to students whose proposed degree programme combines a study of an Asian country and its language with a grounding in a discipline;
- (vii) that scholarships also be available to students, academic staff, employees of government and business and other individuals for attendance at intensive language courses. Most of the courses currently offered have to be self-supporting, and the fees are high enough to prevent many from attending. These scholarships should provide fares, tuition fees and living expenses.

#### The Asian Studies Profession

5.45 We have indicated above the need to analyse the reasons for levelling out or decline in enrolments in some courses, and to seek ways of encouraging more students to study about Asian countries. While the causes of low enrolments are complex and varied, and need to be confronted in a number of ways, the Committee believes that any attempt to increase student interest in the study of Asian countries must involve critical evaluation of our performance as a profession, and attempts to improve that performance. Participation in staff development programmes may provide a useful opportunity for self-evaluation and improvement of skills in teaching and course design. In this context the consideration of staff development needs currently being undertaken by a working party of the Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee is most welcome.

- R.22 The Committee recommends that the Association promote the development of self-evaluation amongst its members and encourage both a greater attention by members to teaching skills and the practice of regular re-evaluation of courses, with a view to improving the value of offerings and their attractiveness to students. Such evaluation could take the form of seminars on course design and participation in staff development programmes. The Association's role might be to

organize seminars on an inter-institution basis or simply to encourage such activities within institutions through existing committees, boards and centres of Asian studies. Some members undoubtedly already engage in this sort of activity and may be able to advise the Association on the basis of their experience.

5.46 Central to any evaluation of our performance as a profession is the question of the quality of our products. We have already suggested that our language courses are not producing graduates of sufficient standard for medium-level interpreting and high-level translation. There may well be other areas in which our products do not satisfy existing requirements for Asia specialists, let alone the demand we hope to stimulate by the measures suggested in Chapter 4. To some extent these problems must be solved by the provision of additional training. But we must also examine the effectiveness of existing courses in achieving their objectives.

- R.23 The Committee recommends that the next Asian Studies Committee give urgent attention to the need to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of education about Asia at the tertiary level.

#### Staff Exchanges and Secondments

5.47 Both the Report of the Williams Committee of Inquiry into Education and Training and the Harries Report on Australia and the Third World referred to the value of staff exchanges and visits to Australian tertiary institutions by scholars from overseas. The Harries Committee saw this as an important means of furthering Australia's relationships with Asian countries, as well as maintaining standards of scholarship in this field.<sup>12</sup> The Williams Committee also recommended increased provision for exchanges and secondments of staff between universities within Australia and between universities and the civil service, CSIRO and industry. That Committee viewed these arrangements as a means of maintaining 'innovation and freshness' in a period of low staff turnover, and as a way of improving 'the number and quality of economic and social policy studies'.<sup>13</sup> The present Committee considers that exchanges of the types referred to above, and also those with Asia specialists in, for example, Europe, Britain and North America have a crucial role in furthering Australian scholarship in the field of Asian studies and the contribution of tertiary institutions to Australia's expanding relationships with

<sup>12</sup> Harries, 1979, p. 162-3.

<sup>13</sup> Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Education and Training (the 'Williams Report'), Vol. 1, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1979, p. 210, R. 5.41.

the region. Valuable work has already been done under schemes initiated by individual institutions and organizations, and the ASAA has begun to investigate the question of staff exchanges with Asian institutions. The Committee understands that administrative problems continue to hamper the wider development of exchange programmes.

R.24 It is recommended

- (i) that the ASAA continue to encourage the development of schemes for the exchange of Asia specialists between Australian and overseas institutions both in Asian countries and elsewhere, to seek ways of overcoming administrative barriers to such arrangements, and to strengthen relationships with institutions in Asian countries with which exchanges can be made;
- (ii) that the Association support applications to appropriate bodies, including the proposed Asian Studies Council, for funds to support such arrangements where necessary;
- (iii) that the next Asian Studies Committee explore ways of establishing exchanges between scholars working on Asian countries and appropriate government departments and other bodies with an interest in the region.

Study Leave

5.48 The Committee is most concerned at the implications of certain aspects of the Tertiary Education Commission's report on Study Leave in Universities and Colleges of Advanced Education, in particular the reduced emphasis on overseas study leave and the proposal to restrict study leave to periods of six months. While it welcomes proposals designed to ensure the most effective use of periods of study leave, the Committee believes that if restrictions on overseas study leave are applied to specialists on Asian countries, this will seriously hamper Australian research on the region and effectively prevent Australia from becoming the major centre of Asian studies envisaged by both the Auchmuty and the Harries Reports.<sup>14</sup> The importance of frequent periods of fieldwork for research on Asian countries can hardly be disputed. Perhaps less obvious to those not working in this area is the need for researchers in some disciplines to spend quite long periods in the field. Many research projects require considerable time to be

<sup>14</sup> Auchmuty, 1970, p. 92; Harries, 1979, p. 162.

spent in establishing effective communication between the researcher and the people with whom the project is concerned. In some cases a language must be learned or field assistants trained, and in certain countries a great deal of research time is spent in seeking permission from government agencies before the project can actually begin. The restriction of study leave to six month periods will prevent many important research projects from being undertaken at all, even if overseas study leave is approved. In the long term Australia's standing as a centre of scholarship in the field of Asian studies will be irreparably damaged by these policies.

- R.25 The Committee recommends that the Association make representations to the Tertiary Education Commission to ensure that scholars working on the Asian region will be able to spend regular periods of study leave in Asian countries, and that where necessary periods of up to one year's duration will be permitted, in the interests of maintaining the standards of Australian scholarship in a region of vital importance to Australia.

Research Funding

5.49 There has been much discussion recently of the reduction in the real value of funding of Australian research through bodies such as the Australian Research Grants Committee, and of the damaging effect of this on the standards of scholarship in this country and the likelihood of a 'brain drain' to overseas institutions. The Williams Report expressed concern at this and recommended increases in the funds allocated to national research grants bodies, and a restoration of the numbers of Commonwealth Postgraduate Awards to the 1975 and 1976 levels.<sup>15</sup>

5.50 The present Committee sees adequate research on Asian countries as vital to the development both of Australian scholarship on the region and good relationships between Australia and Asian countries. It endorses the Williams Committee's recommendations on research funding.

R.26 It is recommended that the ASAA

- (i) collect information on the problems of funding and co-ordination of research on Asian countries, and
- (ii) consider what the role of the proposed Asian Studies Council might be in relation to research and how its functions should relate to those of other research funding bodies.

<sup>15</sup> Williams, 1979, p. 206-7.

The Committee urges the co-operation of members in ASAA endeavours to gather information for this purpose.

5.51 The Williams Committee also supported proposals to build up postgraduate research centres (p. 206), the granting of research funds to 'interdisciplinary research projects with a limited life' (p. 208) and research on 'topics of national importance and... related policy studies' (p. 208). We have already referred to the need for a greater investment of resources in the postgraduate training of Asia specialists, and this Committee endorses the notion of postgraduate centres. The Committee also considers that the Williams Report's recommendations for the funding of interdisciplinary research projects and research on topics of national importance are of particular relevance to some aspects of research on Asian countries, and supports the development of research projects of this kind. Such projects need not be concentrated in one institution. The Committee believes that nationally co-ordinated research programmes on particular areas, involving members of several institutions, can constitute an extremely valuable way of maximizing the effectiveness of research efforts and minimizing unnecessary duplication.

R.27 The Committee recommends that the Association consider what role it might play in fostering co-operative research projects by members of different institutions.

5.52 At the same time it is important to maintain a longer view of scholarship which gives due weight to the significance of research on subjects which may not seem to have immediate relevance to contemporary problems, but which are essential building blocks upon which must be founded the whole structure of our understanding of modern Asia. While the Committee believes there is a need for more contemporary and policy-oriented research on Asian countries and our relations with them, it is crucial that the wider objectives of scholarship should continue to be pursued.

#### Conclusion

5.53 The problems facing the study of Asian countries in tertiary institutions during the coming decade will be formidable. There is a real danger that this vital aspect of education will suffer far more than most others from cuts in educational spending, because in many institutions it developed too late to become established before those cuts began. The Committee views this prospect with alarm. Special priority will need to be given to maintaining and developing studies of Asian countries if the small gains so far made are not to be lost. The establishment of an Asian Studies Council, as proposed in Chapter 3, would go a long way towards ensuring that Australian tertiary institutions can provide the general education and specialist training necessary to a country in this region, and can make decisions based on adequate information about national needs and the experience of other institutions.

## 6. SCHOOLS AND TEACHER EDUCATION

### Introduction

6.1 In 1970 the Auchmuty Committee said 'it seems that more than half the population can go through secondary school without any systematic study of Asian affairs'.<sup>1</sup> Neither that Committee nor the present one was in fact able to calculate the proportion of Australian students whose education included a 'systematic study of Asian affairs'. To do this would require a complex survey of individual teachers of all subjects in all States, because the responsibility for determining the content of courses belongs increasingly to teachers and less and less to central education department curriculum designers.

6.2 For a number of reasons the present Committee believes, however, that although opportunities to study about Asia have undoubtedly increased in the last decade, it is still likely that large numbers of students pass through both primary and secondary school with only minimal exposure to any systematic study of Asian countries.<sup>2</sup>

6.3 By 'systematic' this Committee means 'providing organized and sequenced learning experiences for students over the period of their schooling which:

- (a) give attention to the study of Asia commensurate with the significance of Asian societies and civilizations in the history of mankind;
- (b) allow for the study of Asia not only in separate optional "Asian" courses, but also in all courses dealing with human activities, e.g., with history, politics, geography, sociology, anthropology, art, music and literature;
- (c) derive concepts and themes from "Asian" as well as "western" experience.'

The question of a framework for determining the kinds of learning about Asian countries which are most important is one to which little attention has yet been given by the ASAA, although it has occupied the minds of curriculum planners. Discussion of such a framework should revolve not so much around questions of specific content, but rather around criteria for determining choices of and

<sup>1</sup> Auchmuty, 1970, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> Information collected by the Committee on the the study of Asia in language courses, courses on Asian cultures and courses in other parts of the curriculum is contained in Volume 2.

emphasis in content and learning experiences. Such criteria would of course throw up a variety of options whose appropriateness would be determined by local conditions and interests. The question of such a framework deserves consideration by those who will be involved in the activities proposed in the following pages.

6.4 A consideration of the study of Asia in Australian schools needs to take place against the background of recent changes in Australian educational thinking. Two important developments are the emphasis on education for a multicultural Australian society and the trend towards school-based curriculum development.

6.5 The emphasis on the multicultural nature of our own society is a welcome development. However, it is important in terms of both educational objectives and our national interest (see Chapter 1) that Australian education should not become inward-looking. The focus on Australian society must be balanced by and must complement an emphasis on education for international understanding, on the development of global as well as national perspectives and on the study of other civilizations and peoples for the greater understanding that this brings of the nature of human beings.

6.6 In this context, and leaving aside any questions of national interest or geographical proximity, the study of the Asian region has a vital place, since it is the home not only of a vast proportion of the world's people, but also of several of the world's most significant cultural traditions, the civilization and thought systems of China and the great philosophical and cultural traditions of Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Christianity, which have so profoundly influenced human development far beyond the limits of their countries of origin.

6.7 Within the ambit of multicultural education, Asian cultures and peoples are becoming an important subject of study as the proportion of migrants coming from this region increases. However the importance of studying about Asian countries in Australian schools rests not so much upon this development as upon the broader educational benefits of learning about other peoples.

6.8 The trend towards school-based curriculum development has involved teachers to a much greater degree in selecting course content, and hence the interests and educational background of teachers have become crucial factors in determining what students learn. Other important factors include teacher development through, for example, in-service courses and travel, the teaching resource materials available, the curriculum guidelines provided by education authorities, and the interests and priorities of students, parents and school administrators. Consequently any attempt either to measure or to alter what is taught in schools must focus on all these areas.

6.9 Many factors influence the priorities of educators and the community. Domestic economic and social conditions play an important role, and major crises in our foreign relations, such as the Vietnam war, have also exercised an influence on educational priorities from time to time. Whatever the economic and political climate, the media is assumed to have an enormous influence on people's thinking about what is important, as well as on their understanding of issues. The role of the media is therefore dealt with separately in the report (see Chapter 7). The Committee sees this area as having an important bearing on the future of school education about Asian countries.

6.10 Within the education system, however, there is much that can be done to improve both the quantity and quality of teaching about Asia. Information is more readily available about the former than the latter, and the two do not always go hand in hand. While high quality teaching and materials development has certainly occurred in the past decade, the expansion in the quantity of teaching which took place during this time needs to be followed by a period of consolidation in which a strong focus is placed on, for example, improving the sensitivity, accuracy and subtlety of teaching and learning about Asian countries. While some of the following discussion is concerned largely with questions of quantity, the issue of quality is addressed particularly in the discussion of teacher development and of the evaluation of resource materials and their use.

6.11 What follows is concerned with various aspects of teaching about Asia - the inclusion of Asian content in general disciplinary and interdisciplinary courses throughout the school curriculum and also the teaching of special courses on Asian societies and Asian languages. However, as the latter requires some separate treatment, a special section on languages follows the general discussion.

#### The Study of Asian Countries in Primary Schools

6.12 The Committee believes that more effective teaching about Asian countries at primary level can contribute a great deal towards developing and enriching the child's imaginative life and social perceptions. In this regard the myths, legends and folk stories of Asia, and the reconstruction of life in Asian communities, have much to offer children's educational development. The stories of the Ramayana and Mahabharata, for example, could have as much significance for Australian school children of the 1980s as the folk tales of Europe and the legend of King Arthur.

6.13 It is also particularly important that the images of Asian countries that children develop in their most formative years are not misleading, inaccurate or distorted. Stereotypes and prejudices can easily be formed at this stage which in later life can be extremely difficult to alter.



6.14 The Committee has not been able to survey primary teachers to discover the extent of their teaching about Asia, but a number of primary social studies syllabuses and curriculum guideline documents have been examined. Much of the thinking underlying the design of social education curricula for primary schools is based on the belief that the stages in a child's psychological development favour a pattern of learning proceeding from the self outwards to the family, then the local community and finally to the study of societies removed from the child's immediate experience. This has resulted in a common pattern of curriculum design in which substantial study of other cultures is left until the last year or so of primary education, or even seen as more appropriately treated at secondary level. However, the rationale for this approach to social education is challenged in research examined by a member of the present Committee, which suggests that children of primary school age are capable of developing 'an understanding and spatial awareness of another country, ... are interested in differences between people and are unlikely to have a negative predisposition towards them'. This research indicates that 'educators would do well to focus their attention on this age group if they are concerned to promote ideals of multiculturalism or internationalism'.<sup>3</sup>

6.15 A recent study by Kieran Egan, which exemplifies the challenge to current theories of curriculum design, suggests that a child's intellectual development can be seen as proceeding through four main stages, which are characterized as mythic, romantic, philosophic and ironic.<sup>4</sup> The first stage occurs from the ages of four or five to nine or ten years, the second from eight or nine to fourteen or fifteen years. The study challenges the concentration of current practice on content and claims that attention should be focussed on the characteristics of children's thinking and the kinds of meanings they seek. Egan suggests these differ with different stages of development and that we should therefore organize knowledge so that it is most accessible, meaningful and engaging to students at each stage. He goes on to describe the characteristic developmental features of each of the stages.

6.16 Egan claims that in both the mythic and romantic stage children have:

a means of direct access to almost anything in the universe, and need not be led outwards, as it were, along content associations. Indeed ... children most naturally explore the real world completely

<sup>3</sup> E.M. McKay, Intercultural Studies and Primary Teacher Education, unpublished M.Ed. thesis, Monash University, 1979.

<sup>4</sup> Kieran Egan, Educational Development, Oxford University Press, New York, 1979.

the other way about; they begin at the outside limits and work in.<sup>5</sup>

In the romantic stage (eight or nine to fourteen or fifteen years) one of the characteristics required for knowledge to be engaging is that it be

... different from everything mundane and conventional, different from everything that students have known and experienced.<sup>6</sup>

He suggests that few content restrictions affect what can be taught successfully during the romantic stage; providing it has the characteristics described above, it will be relevant and engaging to children at this stage. To quote Egan again:

Their concern is to feel different forms of life, to try them on, as it were. Realistic detail becomes important, and the more different from the student's experience, the better. ... It is not the development of the students' own society that will be most engaging, but that of the most exotic and bizarre societies. Having established a sense of the limits of possible societies, they will have a framework to begin making sense of their own. Before developing such a framework, details of their own society will remain largely meaningless in any educational sense.<sup>7</sup>

From his observations, Egan also believes that children at this stage want to learn something exhaustively, as an attempt to find the limits of one thing, and thereby achieve a sense of the scale of everything.

6.17 McKay says that the guiding principles for education to be extracted from Egan's work are that it should involve at this stage 'an exploration of reality in detail, concepts of otherness, access through something as different as possible from students' everyday experience and connection to the different elements by means of association with some transcendent human quality'.<sup>8</sup>

6.18 The Committee's examination of primary social studies syllabuses confirms the prevalence of the 'self outwards' model

<sup>5</sup> Egan, 1979, p. 30.

<sup>6</sup> Egan, 1979, p. 32.

<sup>7</sup> Egan, 1979, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup> This summary of Egan's research is based on McKay, 1979, p. 213, and pp. 215-17.

referred to above, with the most substantial discussion of other cultures occurring in the later years of primary education. There is also a tendency in the philosophy, if not the practice, to stress what is common among cultures rather than differences. Egan's work represents a challenge to that model, and to the assumptions and methodology underlying it. The full scope of this debate cannot be discussed here, but the Committee believes that there is need for a reappraisal of current approaches to curriculum development in this area and for a consideration of the significance of Egan's challenge to these approaches. While the Committee does not feel competent to make specific recommendations on this issue, it urges ASAA members involved in the education of primary school children and of primary school teachers to participate in debate on curriculum design for primary social education. It would strongly support further research on these issues under the auspices of the national Curriculum Development Centre or other appropriate bodies, perhaps in the form of both a critical evaluation of Egan's ideas and an attempt to put those ideas into practice and evaluate the results.

6.19 The Committee also noted that in most syllabus documents for primary social studies the actual examples to be used in studies of other cultures are generally a matter for teacher decision, and some syllabuses are almost completely content-free, not even suggesting possible case studies. Consequently the extent to which Asian countries are referred to in primary school courses will depend greatly on factors such as teacher interest and knowledge, and available resources. While abundant material suitable for illustrating the themes of such courses can be drawn from neighbouring countries, it is our impression that relatively few teachers would have adequate background knowledge of or experience in Asian countries to utilize the material freely and bring it to life for their pupils. This problem can only be remedied through teacher development and the production of resource materials designed for use in Australian schools.

#### The Study of Asian Countries in Secondary Schools

6.20 In secondary schools Asian content may be found in a wide variety of subjects, including history, geography, social science, economics, art and music, as well as in special 'Asian Studies' courses. Although the Committee could not conduct a survey of secondary schools or teachers to determine the extent of actual teaching about Asia, it was able to examine appropriate curriculum documents from various States. The extent to which centrally produced syllabuses are used and the level of content prescription in them varies from State to State. In some courses sections on Asian countries are prescribed, while in others case studies from Asia are suggested. In still others no suggestions are made as to appropriate case studies. In some States it is only at Year 12 that teachers are obliged to follow centrally set syllabuses, and there is considerable freedom of syllabus design in earlier years.

6.21 Consequently at the secondary level as well as at the primary level the extent of study about Asia is very much dependent on teacher interest and knowledge, hence on the character and content of teacher education, and on available resource materials. Curriculum design will nevertheless continue to influence the extent to which Asian countries are studied, and a significant factor in the future will be the role that international education is seen to have in the current debate about what constitutes the 'core curriculum' (see 6.42 below).

6.22 In this context the challenge to current theory and practice posed by Egan's conclusions about the characteristics of children's intellectual development (see 6.15-6.18 above) is relevant to discussions of secondary as well as primary education. In Egan's analysis the romantic stage continues well into the secondary school. This stage, with its absorption with distant and very different societies and its compulsion to study subjects in depth, gradually merges with (or sometimes suddenly changes into) the philosophic stage. This development is characterized by a perception of the world as a unit and a consciousness of complex natural, social and historical processes. Teachers of senior secondary courses will be conscious of their students' anxiety to find the answers about human psychology, the laws of historical development and the truth about how societies function.<sup>9</sup> According to Egan they are seeking some general scheme and abstract tools by which they can make meaningful all the details of the vast range of particulars they have already learned but which are no longer, of themselves, intellectually satisfying. Our children's education at this stage should not be impoverished by denying them access to the complex natural, social and historical processes of the Asian, as much as the European, part of the world.

6.23 Egan says teachers should not ignore the characteristics of any particular stage, but see each as a necessary step in a growth towards intellectual maturity. Students should be encouraged to pursue their particular interests until their limits are reached. Only then will progression to the next stage proceed on a firm foundation.

6.24 As with primary education, the Committee urges ASAA members concerned with the education of secondary school children and of secondary school teachers to participate in debate on appropriate curriculum design for children at different stages of development. It would welcome further research on these issues as part of the Curriculum Development Centre's Core Curriculum programme.

6.25 In some States, optional courses wholly about Asia exist, such as the Asian Social Studies course for junior secondary schools in New South Wales, and Asian history courses in several States.

<sup>9</sup> Egan, 1979, Chapter 3.

Teachers of these courses have been responsible for much of the development that has taken place in teaching about Asia and in the production of resource materials for this purpose. However, the introduction of such courses into a school, as with the introduction of Asian language courses, often raises the question of employing a specialist teacher, or of diverting a teacher from other activities. Where they are introduced these courses are most often options rather than core subjects, and so students must choose between an 'Asian' course and another subject. In this context the priorities of school administrators, parents and students become determining factors in the extent of study about Asia that occurs in a school. Courses wholly about Asian countries do not always enjoy parity of esteem with other subjects in the curriculum. For example, in New South Wales the Asian Social Studies course does not extend beyond Year 10, and this, it has been put to the Committee, deters many students from opting to study the subject. The Committee also understands that the status and accessibility of Asian language and Asian studies courses in many schools is adversely affected by their place in the school timetable. Further investigation is needed here, as the Committee was not able to gather information on this problem.

#### Teacher Education

6.26 For the reasons mentioned above the Committee believes that teacher education has an especially important influence on the content and emphases of courses in schools. There are four broad issues which need to be confronted in order to improve knowledge about Asian countries among Australian teachers. These are:

- (i) the adequacy of Asian content in the courses offered by the tertiary institutions (both colleges of advanced education and universities) which train teachers;
- (ii) the question of how to ensure that prospective teachers are encouraged to include the study of Asian countries in their pre-service training, both for their personal education and to prevent the possibility of Eurocentric bias in their teaching;
- (iii) the provision of in-service and continuing education about Asian countries, aimed at redressing the Eurocentric bias in the education of the majority of teachers already trained, both through courses within Australia and through teacher development programmes of travel to Asian countries;
- (iv) the provision of courses for teachers aimed at developing an adequate understanding of the issues involved in curriculum design in the field of intercultural studies.

6.27 The Committee is concerned that many prospective teachers pass through their university or college education without undertaking any serious study of Asian countries, in some cases because provision for such study either is not made or is very limited in their institution, and in many more cases because they are not encouraged by education authorities to view the study of Asian countries as an important part of their education.

6.28 Universities are more concerned with secondary teacher education (though some universities also train primary teachers) while the majority of primary teachers, and some secondary teachers, are trained in colleges of advanced education. The Committee's investigations have shown that despite a welcome expansion of teaching about Asia in certain areas of university education, courses in some disciplines still give scant attention to the potential Asian content of their fields. The provisions made for studying Asian countries in universities are discussed in Chapter 5, and further details of courses on Asia in both universities and colleges of advanced education are provided in Volume 2.

6.29 In 1979 the Committee conducted a survey of 56 colleges of advanced education offering teacher education and liberal arts courses. This showed that in a small number of institutions quite substantial Asian studies programmes exist and some of these attract relatively high enrolments, though not all such programmes are primarily designed for trainee teachers. However in many colleges course offerings wholly or substantially on Asia are very limited, and are generally taken by only a small proportion of the student body, while in some colleges no courses with substantial Asian content are offered at all. Another disturbing finding of the survey was that Asian courses in a number of colleges are being curtailed or discontinued. These subjects appear to have been early victims of reductions in the student intake for teacher education courses - a reflection of the extent to which the study of the countries of Asia is seen as marginal to the education of teachers. Moreover, the future of some of the colleges which do offer substantial courses on Asia is in doubt because of current efforts to rationalize teacher education.

6.30 The Committee believes that the education of prospective teachers is of fundamental importance to the development in the Australian community of an understanding of the variety of world views, cultural traditions, and ways of responding to change, that constitute human experience. Such an understanding can greatly enrich the development not only of teachers who will be teaching about other cultures, but of all teachers (and indeed of people generally) by extending the bounds of their cultural universe and broadening the range of models available to them in responding to the demands of a rapidly changing world. For the reasons indicated in Chapter 1 and in 6.6 above, learning about Asian countries is an essential part of such an educational process.

R.28 The Committee therefore recommends

- (i) that the ASAA make approaches to the Advanced Education Council, the State advanced education bodies and the Federal and State Departments of Education, urging them to re-examine the priority they give to the study of other countries, particularly those in the Asian region, and to take appropriate steps to ensure that all educational institutions involved in teacher education provide adequately for the study of Asian countries by prospective teachers;
- (ii) that the ASAA monitor developments in teacher training institutions, take steps to support threatened programmes and lobby for the introduction of courses on Asian countries where they do not already exist.

6.31 Even if the provisions for teaching about Asia in universities and colleges were in all cases adequate, this would not in itself be sufficient to correct the Eurocentric bias in the education of most teachers. To date it has been no-one's particular responsibility to ensure that prospective teachers do include an adequate study of Asian countries in their course programmes. Given the increasing concern of trainee teachers with their employment prospects, they are unlikely to take courses on Asian countries unless they believe that the education authorities prefer to employ teachers who have done so.

R.29 The Committee recommends that the Association urge the Federal and State Education Departments to make public commitments to the notion of encouraging trainee teachers in both colleges and universities to acquire a knowledge of one or more Asian countries, in the interest both of the personal education of teachers and of ensuring that an understanding of the countries of the Asian region becomes part of the education of all students in both primary and secondary schools.

6.32 However the teachers of today and many of tomorrow's teachers have already passed through their pre-service education, and the number of new teachers undertaking pre-service education is to be considerably reduced in the next few years. Many teachers who have not taken Asian courses in their pre-service education are

already involved in teaching about Asian countries.<sup>10</sup> Although government funds for in-service education have been considerably reduced in the last few years, it is to be hoped that the National Inquiry into Teacher Education currently being conducted will recommend a reversal of this trend. Given the enormous need for teacher flexibility in the current climate of financial stringency and rapid social and technological change, and the increased resources for in-service education of teachers that will become available in teacher education institutions as a result of reductions in their pre-service education activities, governments should be pressed to ensure that teacher educators will have increased opportunities for participating in the in-service and continuing education of teachers. The Committee believes that this would offer unique circumstances favourable to improving the quality of teaching about Asia (see 6.11 above) and to the injection of Asian topics into school curricula.

R.30 It is recommended that the ASAA

- (i) urge its members involved in the education of teachers in both colleges and universities to initiate and participate in programmes about Asian countries for the in-service education of teachers;
- (ii) support initiatives for the introduction of college and university courses designed to improve teaching about the Asian region by practising teachers;
- (iii) add its voice to calls for more financial resources to be channelled into the crucial area of in-service education of teachers, including the provision of adequate funds to allow for the temporary replacement of teachers attending in-

<sup>10</sup> A survey conducted in New South Wales secondary schools in 1976 showed that a significant percentage of teachers of Asian Social Studies had not studied about Asia in their pre-service training. 23% had studied some aspect of Asia at teachers college, and 42% had done so at university. (There may be some double counting in these figures, as some university-trained teachers would have taken the Diploma of Education in a teachers college.) Thus at least 35% of teachers had undertaken no tertiary study of Asia. Only 15% stated that they were trained to teach Asian Social Studies (it is assumed that the phrase 'trained' refers to curriculum or method courses rather than to the general education of the teachers). (Vernon Turner, 'The Teaching of Asian Social Studies in Schools', unpublished survey, Armidale College of Advanced Education, 1976, pp. 1 and 3.)

service programmes, so that such programmes can be undertaken as part of teachers' normal duties.

6.33 Our recommendations are adding to many existing pressures on teachers to change their classroom practices and the content of their curriculum. We recognize that there can be no curriculum development without concurrent teacher development. By this we mean a process of growth which involves an increase in a teacher's knowledge and understanding both of the subject area and of the issues involved in curriculum design and implementation. The process of growth is one which is on-going, develops over time and involves interaction with colleagues and others with expertise. Integral to this is time for reflection upon the processes and experiences of classroom activities. We see this process as a continuum beginning with teachers' pre-service education and going on through their professional life.

6.34 Unless such teacher development takes place the following recommendations about resource materials and their evaluation, curriculum design and study tours will not be fruitful. Teacher education and development should bring together considerations of epistemology, philosophy, child development and learning theories, methodology, values and ethics, as well as of content in the study of Asian countries.

#### Resource Materials

6.35 In view of the trend towards content-free curriculum guidelines and school-based curriculum development, the Auchmuty Committee gave perhaps too much importance to the potential role of syllabuses in prescribing Asian content. However, it rightly stressed the inadequacy of teaching resource materials on Asian countries for all levels. In implementing the report, the Asian Studies Co-ordinating Committee has produced some very fine materials, and has funded the development of materials by teachers in various parts of Australia. Still other materials have been produced by State Education Departments and by other bodies such as Film Australia, QANTAS Airways and commercial publishers. However, the need for resource materials has by no means been satisfied. In discussions with teachers it has emerged that although the range of materials on Asia suitable for primary level has increased in the past decade, there are still unmet needs, particularly for materials for the lower primary years. In some areas of the secondary curriculum, too, a serious shortage of suitable materials persists.

R.31 The Committee recommends the establishment by the ASAA of a national curriculum committee consisting of a national curriculum officer, who should be appointed to the proposed successor Committee on Asian Studies, and

a representative from each State and Territory. The responsibility of each State ASAA curriculum officer would be to establish a State sub-committee to consult with subject teacher associations (social science, history, geography, economics, art, music, physical education, craft, home economics) about possible ways of increasing and improving teaching about Asia in each subject area. This would include the formulation of contributions by each State sub-committee to a national proposal by the ASAA to the Curriculum Development Centre for a programme to develop teaching materials and teaching processes aimed at improving the quality and quantity of teaching about Asia across the curriculum. Such a programme should include a co-ordinated scheme to encourage the writing of books and articles suitable for school use on areas for which existing materials are inadequate. It should also include the selection, production and dissemination of suitable materials already developed for private use by practising teachers. A strong emphasis should be given to primary education in this exercise, and funds should be sought from the proposed Asian Studies Council and other appropriate bodies for the development of materials.

6.36 A number of excellent materials on Asian countries have been produced by State Education Departments, but the Committee has found that these are rarely used or even available for purchase by teachers in other States. It appears that sufficiently effective mechanisms do not exist for alerting teachers to the existence and nature of materials produced in other States, or for the production of such materials on a national scale if sufficient demand can be established. The Committee recognizes that there are complex issues involved here, and that attempts have already been made by the Curriculum Development Centre to investigate the problem. It has particular significance for teaching about Asian countries, because of the relatively small range of materials available and the special resources needed to develop such materials.

R.32 The Committee recommends that one of the first tasks of the national curriculum committee of the ASAA be to make contact with State Education Departments and the Curriculum Development Centre to explore ways of evolving a more effective system for national advertising, production and dissemination of appropriate teaching materials on Asian countries developed by State education authorities.

6.37 A related aspect of the resources question concerns the availability of information about suitable resources generally. The Committee has found that teachers frequently do not have adequate up-to-date information on available resource materials about Asian countries.

R.33 It recommends that the ASAA co-operate with State subject teacher associations in establishing a network of members to assist in regular updating of the resource lists compiled by the former Asian Studies Co-ordinating Committee, and in the transmission of information about Asian resources development between States. This would be a new area of activity for the Association. It would involve obtaining funds from the proposed Asian Studies Council or other appropriate bodies to finance such a project, and seeking assistance from the Curriculum Development Centre in the dissemination of the information collected.

6.38 It has been suggested to the Committee that in many schools teaching about Asia is hampered by lack of resources within the school. The problem appears to be particularly acute in country schools, where teachers and students do not have direct access to the resources available in cities, e.g. educational resource centres, public libraries and tertiary institution libraries.

R.34 The Committee recommends that the ASAA explore means of ensuring the provision of funds for the acquisition by schools, particularly country schools, of adequate book and non-book resources on Asian countries, and that this be one of the functions of the proposed Asian Studies Council, possibly in consultation with the Disadvantaged Schools Programme of the Schools Commission.

#### Evaluation of Teaching Resources on Asian Countries

6.39 In all areas of the curriculum, the problem of resources is not only one of availability but also of quality and suitability. The Asian Studies Co-ordinating Committee produced valuable annotated bibliographies on the various areas of Asia. However this project was completed several years ago, and the evaluation of each item was necessarily brief.

6.40 There is need for a much more intensive and detailed evaluation of resources on Asia being used in schools now, and on the ways in which they are used. This is necessary because the study of Asian countries is still a relatively new field in schools, there are large numbers of teachers who are teaching about Asia with little or no pre-service training in the area, and resources not originally intended for use in schools (and many out-of-date materials) have had to be adapted to school use because of lack of suitable books and other resource materials.

#### R.35 The Committee recommends

- (i) that the Association support and encourage research by teacher educators directed towards the evaluation of existing teaching resources on Asian countries and their use in primary and secondary schools, and (if desirable) towards the development of new materials.
- (ii) that as an immediate step in this direction the Association seek funds from the Education Research and Development Committee for a project aimed at a critical analysis of teaching materials on Asia, including case studies of their use in teaching-learning situations, to alert teachers to the potential for and possible means of counteracting factual inaccuracies, bias, stereotyping, underlying false assumptions and value judgements. The project should be carried out on a State basis in order to involve as many people as possible. Initially a pilot study should be conducted in one State, and then a national committee should be formed in one centre to co-ordinate the exercise, to ensure the widest possible coverage and to minimize duplication. The Asia Society of America has established a useful precedent for some aspects of such an exercise, and offers helpful guidelines for the evaluation of teaching materials, which, nevertheless, would have to be modified. Interest has already been expressed by two ASAA members in Victoria in the setting up of a pilot study.

#### Curriculum Design

6.41 Where centrally produced syllabuses are no longer used or where these give only broad guidelines, curriculum design activities have increasingly centred on schools. Apart from whole school curriculum design, teachers are involved in producing individual units of work, often by means of workshops involving curriculum officers, teachers and teacher educators. The Committee believes that ASAA members have an important contribution to make by offering to assist curriculum workshops in planning units focussing on their areas of interest, and by having a greater input into curriculum design generally in their respective disciplines.

R.36 It recommends that the curriculum committee referred to in 6.35 above consider ways in which the various parts of the curriculum could be modified to increase and improve teaching about Asia, and the kinds of units on Asia that would be needed to assist this process in each State. The committee

should then consult with officers of the State Education Departments regarding the implementation of proposed changes and the development of curriculum units.

6.42 The question of what should constitute the core curriculum for all students has become the subject of educational debate and of a major programme of the Curriculum Development Centre. It will be of the utmost importance to international education, including education about Asia, to ensure that adequate discussion takes place of their role in the core curriculum.

R.37 The Committee recommends that the next Asian Studies Committee draw up a proposal to the Curriculum Development Centre for work to be carried out in association with the Centre's Core Curriculum programme on:

- (i) the role of international education in the core curriculum at both primary and secondary level;
- (ii) the consideration of those aspects of international education which should form part of the core, and those which should be pursued as elective studies;
- (iii) the importance of studies of Asian countries in the core, and their relationship to studies of European, African, North and South American and Pacific countries within the framework of a core curriculum.

As a preparatory step it would be useful to examine discussion papers prepared under the CDC's Core Curriculum programme, and to circulate the Committee's proposal for comment to the members of the proposed ASAA curriculum committee.

#### School Decision Makers

6.43 The above measures are directed largely towards ensuring that teachers of subjects throughout the school curriculum are able to include appropriate Asian content in their teaching. There is a further question concerning the teaching of specialist courses in for example Asian languages, Asian studies or Asian history. In order to introduce such courses it may be necessary for schools to appoint specialist teachers, so the courses are unlikely to be offered unless the school administration has made a positive decision to introduce them. Factors such as continuity of teacher supply and availability of suitable resources within the school are

often said to affect such decisions. However, the Committee believes that where there is sufficient interest in and knowledge of Asian countries these problems can generally be overcome. It therefore sees an important role for Association members in stimulating an interest in the study of Asia in schools and local communities.

R.38 The Committee recommends that the Association mount a nationally co-ordinated but locally implemented programme of contact with schools and school councils for the purpose of arousing interest in learning more about Asian countries, persuading schools to increase their commitment to the study of Asia, and offering assistance to schools interested in introducing Asian language courses and courses on Asian countries.

#### Study Tours to Asian Countries

6.44 The Committee believes that first-hand experience in an Asian country is a vital aid to successful learning, particularly when specific study objectives for such experience are established and prepared for in advance. Some colleges of advanced education, schools and university departments regularly arrange for their students to undertake study tours to Asian countries. In certain cases the tour constitutes a unit of study for which credit is given in the student's course. Some colleges of advanced education arrange for student teachers to undertake practice teaching in an Asian country.

6.45 Travel grants and study tours for practising teachers have also done much to improve teaching about Asia. One such scheme is operated by the Japan Foundation. Under the former Asian Studies Co-ordinating Committee, travel grants to Asian countries were provided for teachers, some of whom on their return made valuable contributions to curriculum and resource materials development. While there was some misuse of this scheme by teachers who did not intend to return to Australia, the Committee believes that such a scheme, particularly if linked with a study or work programme, is of immense value to the professional development of the majority of participants, and to teaching about Asia in Australian schools. It considers that every effort should be made to re-establish a travel grant scheme, and to devise measures to ensure that the grants are used for the purposes intended, by building into the scheme both a preparatory study phase and an obligation to contribute to some aspect of curriculum development upon return.

R.39 The Committee recommends that the ASAA request the Federal Government to consider the provision of financial assistance for study tours to Asian countries, and the re-introduction of an Asian

Studies travel grant scheme for teachers, with the modifications suggested above. The allocation of funds for these purposes could be one of the functions of the proposed Asian Studies Council.

- R.40 It is further recommended that the ASAA encourage institutions not already involved in this kind of activity to investigate the possibility of including study experience in an Asian country as part of the curriculum. Consultation or co-operation with institutions already organizing study tours would be valuable in planning such an exercise. It would be useful if the ASAA could draw up a register of such institutions, giving details of the programmes and an indication of whether inter-institutional co-operation is possible.

6.46 One way of assisting teachers to travel to Asian countries for professional development purposes is through tax deductions for travel expenses. Some teachers claim such deductions, but the Committee understands that these claims are often unsuccessful. The Committee believes that claims of this kind are justified in cases where teachers pursue some educational purpose during their travel. The disallowance of some claims may be due to teachers' ignorance of the extent of information required to support them.

- R.41 The Committee recommends that the Association seek advice on the correct method of presentation of claims for tax deductions made in respect of travel by teachers to Asian countries and on the criteria used in assessing claims of this kind. This advice should be circulated to ASAA members and teacher organizations, as a means of encouraging teachers to travel to Asian countries and to use such travel for professional development purposes.

6.47 As the above paragraphs indicate, improvements in the study of Asia in recent years have been in large measure due to the work of the former Asian Studies Co-ordinating Committee, whose staff has now been absorbed by the Curriculum Development Centre. The Committee is concerned that the disbanding of the Co-ordinating Committee has meant an end to specific Federal Government funding of Asian studies. It believes that an enormous amount of work is still urgently needed if all Australian school students and teachers are to be exposed to systematic study of Asian countries. The establishment of a body such as the proposed Asian Studies Council would meet many of the continuing needs in this area. In the Committee's view it is also crucial that the Curriculum Development Centre maintain a strong commitment to further work in the field of Asian Studies, beyond the completion of Asian Studies Co-ordinating Committee projects.

### Study of Asian Languages in Schools

6.48 There has been a marked decline in the study of languages in Australian secondary schools since the early 1960s, despite an increase in the range of languages studied. For example, in 1963 some 45% of New South Wales students in the last years of secondary schools studied languages, while in 1979 only 17% did so. In Tasmania the percentage declined from 54% to 7%<sup>12</sup> in the same period. This has in part been due to the abolition of foreign language requirements for matriculation, and in part to broader changes in educational and community priorities (see 6.57 ff).

6.49 In this context the study of Asian languages has continued to increase in most States, a notable exception being Indonesian in NSW and the ACT. However the numbers have remained very small as a percentage of the total student population, and students undertaking more than one or two years of language study are very few.<sup>13</sup> Indonesian and Japanese are the most widely taught Asian languages in the school system, and may be taken for the Higher School Certificate or equivalent in all States. Chinese is less widespread, but is offered as a Higher School Certificate subject in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and South Australia. Arabic has recently been introduced in New South Wales as a Higher School Certificate subject, but is not offered in any other State. Some other West Asian languages are taken by relatively small numbers of students from the various Middle Eastern communities. No South Asian language is offered at Higher School Certificate level in any State.

6.50 Quite large numbers of Australian students undertake some study of foreign languages including Asian languages in the first year of secondary school, often in the form of a series of consecutive or parallel 'exposure' courses to two or three languages in one year. The rationale for and effectiveness of this widespread practice needs further investigation, but it does not appear to result in large numbers of students electing to continue the study of languages when other choices are available.

6.51 There has been some expansion of language teaching, including some teaching of Asian languages, in primary schools in the last decade. The Committee has not been able to obtain detailed information on this area, but understands that in many cases exposure

12 Based on Wykes, O., Survey of Foreign Language Teaching in the Australian Universities. Australian Humanities Research Council, Melbourne 1966, p. 8, and statistics supplied by State public examinations authorities.

13 For example, in 1978 in New South Wales 66% of Asian language students in government secondary schools were in years 7 and 8, and only 9% were in years 11 and 12.



to the language is relatively slight. Some programmes of a more intensive nature have been undertaken, however, and at least two education authorities have made a commitment to providing resources to maintain these programmes. However, the Committee understands that in some schools at both primary and secondary levels pressure to reduce staff has led to the termination of Asian language programmes.

#### Why Study Asian Languages at School?

6.52 There are compelling reasons of national interest for the study of Asian languages in Australia, because of our geographical location and the consequent need to counteract Eurocentric bias and monolingualism in our cultural outlook. More importantly, in the Committee's view, studying languages in general, and Asian languages in particular, has a powerful educational value. Second language learning exposes students in a very immediate way to another culture and to the relativity of cultural values and perceptions. It is a valuable means of developing an openness and sensitivity to people of other cultures, an awareness of the complexity of another culture and an ability to appreciate the commonality as well as the differences between one's own and other cultures. It is true that significant understandings of this kind can be gained in a number of ways, e.g. through the study of a society's history or culture in one's first language. Learning a second language is one way, and a very powerful way, to gain cultural understandings and perceptions which should be seen as central to education.

6.53 The Committee therefore believes that second language study has an important place in general education at both school and tertiary level. It further believes that the study of an Asian language has special potential for broadening and deepening cultural understanding, because students are brought into direct contact with ways of looking at the world which derive from cultural traditions very different from their own. These cultural traditions are of great significance in the history of humanity. They are also the traditions of our nearest neighbours.

#### Asian Languages at Primary Level

6.54 It is widely thought that language learning can be most effective in the pre-adolescent years. The Committee is aware that some experiments in second-language teaching at the primary level have been less than successful.<sup>14</sup> Others, including some Australian programmes, appear to have achieved encouraging results, particularly in schools where adequate resources and appropriate

<sup>14</sup> See for example Claire Burstall and others, Primary French in the Balance, NFER Publishing Co., Windsor, Berks., 1974.

learning conditions have been provided. It would seem that certain factors need to be present for effective second-language learning to take place at any level. The two most important of these are (i) a fairly intensive language learning process,<sup>15</sup> and (ii) continuity of study, since interruption of the language learning process can lead to rapid loss of competence. These optimal conditions cannot be provided overnight on a wide scale, particularly in the current climate of financial stringency. However, the Committee believes that on both educational and utilitarian grounds it is important to continue to explore ways of promoting effective second language study at primary level. Initiatives in this area are currently being undertaken particularly in relation to the teaching of the languages of the various ethnic communities for the purpose of first language maintenance. However, the Committee views such programmes as having a wider educational purpose as well, and as being properly directed at children of all ethnic backgrounds.

R.42 It is recommended that the ASAA contribute to this process by

- (i) supporting strongly the existing Asian language programmes in primary schools, and pressing for the provision of adequate conditions to make those programmes effective (e.g. suitable class sizes, sufficient class contact hours and adequate preparation time for teachers, particularly in the early stages of a programme);
- (ii) urging the provision of continuing language courses in secondary schools whose feeder primary schools offer Asian languages;
- (iii) supporting the introduction of further primary Asian language programmes on an experimental basis, wherever resources and circumstances are favourable;
- (iv) sponsoring an ongoing review of research into primary level second language teaching both in Australia and overseas, in consultation with bodies such as the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers' Associations;
- (v) encouraging long-term research projects to evaluate the success of existing Asian language programmes at primary level, and to determine the resources needed to improve the effectiveness of those programmes.

<sup>15</sup> See Strevens, 1977, Chapter 2.

### Asian Languages in Primary Teacher Education

6.55 In order for this process to proceed successfully it will of course be important to ensure an adequate supply of primary teachers able to teach Asian languages. A survey of teachers in all New South Wales government primary schools, conducted in 1976, yielded 593 responses from teachers who felt qualified to teach a language other than English at primary level.<sup>16</sup> Of these, 8% (48) felt qualified to teach an Asian language while 72% (425) felt qualified to teach one of the 'traditional' school languages, French, German or Latin, and 15% (90) a Southern or Eastern European language. In 1976 there were over 1,700 government primary schools in New South Wales. This suggests that the existing national supply of primary teachers able to teach Asian languages is likely to be small. Meanwhile Asian languages are offered in only about one third of teacher training CAEs, and a number of CAE Asian language programmes are to be or have been curtailed or discontinued. The Committee is concerned at this situation from the point of view of both teacher supply for primary Asian language programmes and the general education of teachers.

- R.43 The Committee recommends that the ASAA monitor closely the situation of Asian language programmes in colleges of advanced education and universities, and where such programmes are threatened make strong representations to the institutions and higher education bodies concerned, for the maintenance of these programmes in the interests of teacher education.

### Primary Language Teaching Materials

6.56 A valuable set of teaching materials has been produced for teaching Indonesian in South Australia. The Committee does not know of any other published materials designed for teaching any Asian language in Australian primary schools. Materials suitable for Australian conditions are urgently needed if effective Asian language study at primary level is to expand at all. The Committee is aware of at least one set of materials produced in Australia for the teaching of an Asian language, which it is thought may not find a publisher because of the small market for the materials.

- R.44 The Committee recommends that the Association encourage and where appropriate support applications for funding for projects to develop and publish materials for teaching Asian languages in Australian primary schools.

<sup>16</sup> Gail L. Robinson, Resources for Teaching Languages Other Than English in the Primary School, N.S.W. Department of Education, Sydney, 1977, Appendix 1, p. iv.

### Asian Languages at Secondary Level

6.57 While the Committee is encouraged by the evidence that Asian language study has continued to grow, it is disturbed at the small proportion of students involved, particularly in substantial study over several years of secondary school. The overall decline in foreign language study and the current restrictions on educational spending suggest that the future of Asian languages in secondary schools can only be secured by a careful analysis of and a determined assault on the fundamental problems affecting language study in general, as well as on the specific problems affecting the study of Asian languages.

- R.45 The Committee recommends that the ASAA should work together with the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (AFMLTA) and other appropriate bodies, including State Modern Language Teachers Associations, towards the definition and analysis of these problems, and the identification of practical measures for their solution.

6.58 There can be little doubt that the abolition of the foreign language requirement for matriculation has been a major factor in the decline in foreign language study. Other changes, however, have also been important. Some of these are specific to particular education systems, e.g. the changes to NSW education under the Wyndham scheme in the 1960s, which reduced the emphasis on foreign language study, and the recent introduction of secondary colleges in the ACT, which, accompanied by an enormous expansion in the range of subject options, has made the employment of language teachers for small numbers of students increasingly uneconomic.

6.59 The broadening of the range of options for study in the upper years of secondary school has had an effect on language study in other parts of Australia as well. It is accompanied by a trend towards allowing students to embark upon the study of new subjects at various stages in their secondary schooling. A cumulative subject such as a language may not compete well with subjects in which a beginning can be made at a later stage. In some States new language courses commencing in senior high school have been introduced to meet this problem. Even in these cases, however, the wide array of subject choices available in some States after the first or second year of high school has certainly contributed to the decline in language study in general, and to the small numbers of students studying Asian languages after year 8.

6.60 A problem said to inhibit the introduction of languages, and in particular Asian languages, in schools is the unreliability of teacher supply. In a nationwide survey of primary and secondary

schools conducted in 1975,<sup>17</sup> those schools not offering a modern language, or not offering languages other than French and German, were asked to state the reasons for this. The most frequent responses concerned the lack of suitably qualified staff, or of assured continuity of staffing for such subjects. Meanwhile the Committee has been told of the difficulty experienced by Asian language teachers in obtaining employment. This problem remains a difficult and circular one, because as long as this view of the teacher supply for languages, combined with other factors, continues to inhibit the introduction of language courses, there will be little incentive for would-be teachers to study languages, because of uncertain employment prospects. The problem can only be solved by governments making explicit public commitments to encourage and facilitate the teaching of foreign languages in schools.

R.46 The Committee recommends that the Association urge State Education Departments to express publicly a commitment to fostering the teaching of languages, including Asian languages, in schools, and to provide greater assistance and encouragement to schools offering such courses.

6.61 However, other factors too were reported as influencing school choices in this matter. In the same survey many schools indicated that lack of student demand or community interest, and alternative priorities (in particular the teaching of English to children from non-English speaking backgrounds) were important reasons for not introducing foreign language courses. Many schools reported a diminishing interest in language courses already being offered.

6.62 A recent study of student, parent and teacher expectations of secondary schooling showed that all three groups of respondents ranked ability to read a foreign language either last or second-to-last in a series of 47 possible objectives for secondary education.<sup>18</sup>

6.63 The reasons for lack of student and community interest in the study of Asian and other languages are many. Some are related to Australia's position as an English-speaking country having no land borders with other countries, and hence to a lack of any immediate

<sup>17</sup> The Teaching of Modern Languages in Australian Schools, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1977, Chapter 9.

<sup>18</sup> C.W. Collins and P.W. Hughes, Expectations of Secondary Schools: A Study of the Views of Students, Teachers and Parents, School of Teacher Education, Canberra College of Advanced Education, February, 1978, (commissioned by the Committee of Inquiry into Education and Training).

practical need for people to know another language. The Committee's recommendation for an ASAA programme of contact with schools and school councils (see 6.43) is an attempt to foster an interest in the study of Asia and Asian languages in students, parents, teachers and school principals.

6.64 A related factor is the low employment value of knowledge of a foreign language. The current level of youth unemployment, and consequent concern with the vocationally related aspects of education and with the acquisition of basic skills, are likely to shift the educational priorities of parents and students further away from the kinds of objectives which second language study seeks to fulfil. Recommendations relating to this problem are contained in Chapter 4.

6.65 There are other problems affecting language study whose solutions are more in our own hands. One of these is the effectiveness of the language teaching that does occur. The Committee believes that further study is needed of the factors which lead to or inhibit effective second language learning in schools. It is understood that plans for such a study are being drawn up in the Queensland Department of Education's Research Branch, and the Committee strongly supports this initiative.

6.66 Meanwhile there are certain obvious factors to which our efforts can be addressed. One such is the language competence of teachers. The Committee believes that a three-year tertiary course in a foreign language is not sufficient on its own to ensure effective language competence. Teachers of some languages have good opportunities for extended study and experience in the country where the language is spoken. For example, many Japanese teachers have studied in Japan under a variety of scholarship schemes. An overseas study scheme has been in operation for the last two years in New South Wales for teachers of community languages. Teachers of some languages in various States participate in schemes providing teaching experience in the relevant countries on an exchange basis. The Committee supports the concept of improving the competence of language teachers by the provision of scholarships or paid leave to enable them to live for periods of up to a year in the country in which the language they teach is spoken. It believes increased opportunities of this kind for Asian language teachers should be an important priority in attempts to improve the teaching of Asian languages in Australia.

R.47 It is recommended that the ASAA

- (i) contact State Education Departments to ensure that their policies and practice in respect of overseas study and experience for language teachers extend to teachers of all Asian languages taught in schools;

(ii) circulate information on existing opportunities for teachers of Asian languages to study and work in the countries where these languages are spoken;

(iii) seek ways of expanding these opportunities.

6.67 However, if improvements on a wider scale are to be achieved, increased opportunities are necessary for in-service education within Australia for Asian language teachers, aimed at improving language competence. This could take a variety of forms, e.g. intensive courses, or part-time evening courses. Whatever the form, it is clear that tertiary teachers of Asian languages have an important role to play in this process. Indeed, it can also be said that tertiary teachers who are not native speakers of the languages they teach may need assistance to ensure that their own language competence is maintained at a high level. Intensive courses such as that conducted at Salatiga in Indonesia by the University of Sydney and Satya Wacana University provide a valuable opportunity for language upgrading and experience in the target country for teachers unable to give up longer periods to study overseas.

R.48 The Committee recommends that the ASAA urge the Federal and State Governments to give financial support to Australian programmes for the upgrading of teacher language competence, so that more teachers can take advantage of them, and to make adequate leave provisions to facilitate teachers' participation in such programmes.

6.68 Other factors discouraging students from studying languages have also been brought to the Committee's attention. One of these is the belief that procedures used to moderate and scale marks for tertiary entrance scores and school certification disadvantage students of languages, because such factors as small classes and high proportions of native speakers in the candidature are not adequately taken account of in the procedures of some States. The Committee is aware that this problem is being examined by the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers' Associations. It also notes that in some States the procedures are modified in various ways to take account of special characteristics of language classes. The Committee supports the AFMLTA's attempts to investigate where this problem exists and to seek solutions to it.

6.69 A further discouragement to Asian language study in schools is the lack of a continuing language stream in some tertiary Asian language courses. Students see little profit in studying a language for several years at school when their knowledge proves to be more of a problem than an advantage at the tertiary level. This question is discussed in Chapter 5 above.

6.70 This combination of factors, and perhaps others which have not come to the Committee's notice, have led to the disappearance of language courses in some schools, to the absence of Asian language courses in many more, and to relatively low student numbers in the courses which do exist. This latter state of affairs has serious implications in times of financial stringency such as the present, when government schools are asked to cut staff numbers to comply with departmental staffing formulae. Such rationalization inevitably involves a cost-benefit review of school priorities, and subjects with low student numbers naturally come under scrutiny. In the absence of any school or government commitment to maintaining language courses, these courses become especially vulnerable. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that very few language teachers, and even fewer teachers of Asian languages, hold senior positions. This is seen by many teachers as an important reason for the low level of official support for language programmes in most schools.

6.71 While it is not surprising that quantitative considerations loom large in the thinking of those responsible for implementing reductions in educational spending, and while recognizing that there are many priorities competing for diminishing resources, the Committee believes that the educational benefits of foreign language study for those who do undertake it, and the value to the Australian community of the presence of people educated in this way, are such that considerations other than numbers of students taking language courses should predominate in discussion about their retention or abolition.

6.72 In seeking solutions to the staffing problems of language study, some schools have co-operated in the sharing of a teacher. While there are some disadvantages in such schemes, they are certainly preferable to the abolition or non-introduction of language courses, and as such should be considered a desirable short-term means of supporting the study of languages in times of financial stringency.

R.49 The Committee recommends that the ASAA urge State and Territory education authorities not already doing so to consider the use of itinerant teachers as an alternative to the abolition of Asian language courses, and to adopt this practice where appropriate.

#### Training in the Methodology of Teaching Asian Languages

6.73 The training of Asian language teachers in the methodology of language teaching was initially conducted within the existing courses for teachers of European languages. In recent years a number of courses have been developed specifically for training people to teach Asian languages. In other institutions Asian language teachers have been employed to contribute to general

language teaching methodology courses. The Committee believes that Asian languages present particular methodological problems, and that special courses are needed to train teachers of these languages adequately. Teachers of Asian languages also have a greater need to develop their own teaching materials than do teachers of traditional European language subjects, because fewer materials are produced commercially. Special courses are needed to assist teachers to develop the necessary skills for this purpose.

- R.50 The Committee recommends that the next Asian Studies Committee investigate the adequacy of provisions for the methodological training of teachers of Asian languages, and if necessary formulate proposals for ASAA action to improve those provisions.

#### Teaching Materials for Secondary Asian Languages

6.74 A number of projects were begun under the auspices of the Asian Studies Co-ordinating Committee for the preparation of Asian language teaching materials for secondary schools. The largest project, the preparation of a Japanese language course, is being completed as part of the Curriculum Development Centre's international education programme. However, a number of other projects, including the preparation of excellent supplementary audio-visual materials for the teaching of Indonesian, have not yet been completed and made available to teachers. Some projects have been continued under other auspices, but there is a danger that considerable investments of time and expertise may be wasted through lack of financial support for the completion and dissemination of some of these materials.

- R.51 The Committee recommends that the ASAA consult with the Curriculum Development Centre to determine how these projects may be brought to completion.

#### Future Developments

6.75 The Committee acknowledges that for the reasons outlined above any major expansion of Asian language study in secondary schools is unlikely in the short term. However it believes that the value of Asian language study and of language study in general is such that the Association should work towards the long-term objective of encouraging much more widespread study of Asian languages in secondary schools. Moreover, in the Committee's view, it is likely that changes in the composition of Australian society and in our relations with neighbouring countries will in the long term lead to a much greater and more widespread need for Australians to be fluent in languages other than English - in short, to conditions in Australia much closer to those in countries where foreign languages are universally studied. The Committee sees the

future growth of Asian language study as an important part of this development.

6.76 The question then arises: which Asian languages? The Asian language most widely taught in Australia is Indonesian, although in Queensland Japanese is more widely taught than any other Asian language. Chinese is taught in most States, but on a much more limited scale. It is possible that the teaching of Vietnamese and some South and West Asian languages will develop to some extent under the umbrella of 'ethnic languages'. The main purpose of the latter is the maintenance of the first language of children from non-English-speaking backgrounds. As mentioned above (6.49), Arabic is being introduced as a Higher School Certificate subject in New South Wales.

6.77 The most notable gap in these offerings is the lack of any teaching of South Asian languages. The educational arguments for the teaching of a South Asian language in schools are as compelling as those for any other Asian language, and the Committee believes that the Association should regard the introduction of Hindi in schools as a desirable long-term aim. The introduction of new languages in present circumstances may be difficult to achieve, given the difficulties being faced by existing language programmes. However, the Committee would support any attempt to introduce a South Asian language where conditions were favourable. It is probable that such conditions are most likely to occur in Western Australia, Victoria and New South Wales, where the concentration of people from South Asia is greatest, and in private schools, which have greater continuity of staffing and generally a stronger commitment to language teaching than government schools.

- R.52 The Committee recommends that the Association adopt as a long-term objective the encouragement of much more widespread study of Asian languages in secondary schools, and of the study of a wider range of languages. In the latter context the introduction and extension of Hindi and the further extension of the teaching of Arabic and Vietnamese should be given highest priority.

#### Conclusion

6.78 There are indications that 'Asian Studies' has passed through cycles of popularity in our education system, only to be superseded by other preoccupations, such as 'basic skills' and 'education for a multicultural Australia'. The Committee believes that each of these aspects of education is too important to be left to the mercy of educational 'fads'. If Australian education is ever to grow beyond its Eurocentric origins and adjust to the significance of the Asian region in human affairs, there must be a steady long-term commitment to learning about Asian countries on the

part of educators and government, whatever the fluctuations in student demand. Until this happens, education in this country will continue to be guided by attitudes and priorities inappropriate to the realities of today's world, not to mention Australia's place in it.

## 7. EDUCATION BEYOND INSTITUTIONS

### THE MEDIA

7.1 The Committee believes that any attempt to create a greater awareness and understanding of the Asian region in the Australian community must involve much more and better media coverage of Asian countries.

7.2 While the media have at certain times given substantial attention to the region, the level of such coverage has generally been determined by the direct effect on Australia, or the sensation value, of the events reported. In the words of one analyst of news from the Asian region, 'foreign correspondence has a degree of inbuilt superficiality, covering large and complex areas with small bureaux for an audience with limited knowledge and interest'.<sup>1</sup> Too little media coverage has been directed specifically towards increasing Australian understanding of Asian countries. There are exceptions such as ABC radio's 'Report from Asia' and 'Broadband', and programmes of the community radio network such as 'Asia Behind the News'. Some newspapers, most notably the Age and The Sydney Morning Herald, have attempted more consistently than others to provide some coverage of Asia. What is disturbing, however, is that most of these reports are heard or read by only a relatively small proportion of the population. News of considerable significance from Asian countries is given little or no coverage in most daily newspapers and in the news background programmes seen or heard by the majority of Australians.

7.3 The current level and type of coverage is unlikely to make any significant impression on widespread community ignorance and stereotypes of Asian peoples. The Committee believes its recommendations concerning education within our institutions must be complemented by a concerted effort on the part of the media to increase community awareness and understanding of Asian societies and cultures. This is only likely to occur, however, if bodies such as the ASAA are prepared to take the initiative.

#### R.53 The Committee recommends

- (i) that the Association adopt as a major objective the bringing about within a set period of time, say two years, of a significant increase in the quantity and quality of media coverage of Asian countries;

<sup>1</sup> R. Tiffen, The News from Southeast Asia: The Sociology of Newsmaking, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 1978, p. 191.

- (ii) that in pursuit of this objective the ASAA appoint a media officer and a media committee with representatives in each State;
- (iii) that the task of these people be to lobby intensively and regularly the management of newspapers, TV channels, radio stations, popular and news magazines and film making bodies, and to provide them with the names of local 'Asianists' able to write articles or programme scripts, assist with background research or be interviewed on a wide variety of areas and aspects of Asia;
- (iv) that the Association write expressing its appreciation of significant contributions (such as those of the ABC and community radio in their current affairs coverage of Asia, Film Australia with its film series on various Asian countries, and local publishers such as the University of Queensland Press for their publishing, for example, of Asian literature in translation) and publicly urge that more of these activities be taken up by commercial television and radio, the State film corporations, and other Australian publishers;
- (v) that the ASAA encourage its members to contribute articles not only to scholarly journals but also to news and popular magazines;
- (vi) that university libraries which do not already do so be urged to give borrowing privileges to media personnel and freelance writers on Asia, as part of an effort to improve the quality of media coverage of Asian countries;
- (vii) that the ASAA media committee (see ii, above) investigate ways in which the Association might promote the production of quality television and film documentaries on historical and contemporary aspects of Asia for both formal and informal educational purposes;
- (viii) that the ASAA approach the Federal and State Governments, appropriate foundations and individuals (including its own members) for contributions to a trust fund to provide grants which would assist media personnel to spend extended periods in Asian countries;
- (ix) that the ASAA urge its members to ensure that the press are invited to public lectures and

discussions on Asian countries held in their institutions;

- (x) that the next ASAA Conference give serious attention to the question of media coverage of Asian countries.

## INFORMATION SERVICES AND LIBRARIES

### A National Inquiry

7.4 The information on which Australian teaching, research and government policies about Asian countries is based should be derived from original data and primary sources which Australians have been able to examine critically. There are many areas of Asian affairs in which this is currently not possible, because of inadequacies in the holdings of our libraries and in other information services.

7.5 The Committee believes that a national study is needed of the state of information resources on Asian countries in Australia for teaching, research and other purposes. Such a study might be carried out by a national committee of inquiry, and would need the services of a secretariat. A proposal for such a committee of inquiry has been made in a personal submission to the present Committee by the Asian Studies Librarian of the Australian National University Library. This submission appears in full in Volume 2. It discusses the provision of library resources on Asia for tertiary teaching and research and recounts the major steps taken in the development of facilities. The Committee believes that an inquiry into information services on Asia should embrace not only library requirements for tertiary teaching and research but also needs for other information services such as holdings of Asian news agency material and statistical data, which might be held in places other than libraries, and the library needs of members of the community other than tertiary teachers and researchers.

R.54 The Committee recommends that the Association appoint a working group to discuss with the National Library of Australia and with other libraries the formulation of a proposal for a national committee of inquiry into needs for information resources and services on Asian countries in Australia. The working group should include representatives of libraries, academics and other groups represented within the Association, such as government, business and the media.

The BISA (Bibliographic Information on Southeast Asia) Project

7.6 BISA is a joint project of the Library and the Department of Indonesian and Malayan Studies of the University of Sydney,

building a computerized data base of Australian library holdings on Southeast Asia. To date the project includes monograph holdings of four major Australian libraries (the National Library of Australia, the Australian National University Library, the Monash University Library and the University of Sydney Library); material in any language and on any subject is included provided it is from or about Southeast Asia in general or Indonesia, Malaysia or Singapore in particular. While the project was commenced to meet Australian research needs it has become apparent that it is of equal significance to librarians and researchers within Southeast Asia. Further information on the BISA project is provided in Volume 2.

7.7 Funding for BISA has been provided exclusively by the University of Sydney, although the other three participating libraries have assisted in provision of records free of charge. The University of Sydney ceased its funding of the project on 31 December 1979, although the Director has been retained on emergency funding to continue the search for outside funds to carry on the project. The Council of the ASAA has already expressed its support for the continuation of this valuable project.

R.55 The Committee recommends that the ASAA should continue its support for BISA, as expressed by Council, and do its utmost to ensure that a project of such national and international significance be funded at a level sufficient to meet its objectives.

#### PUBLISHING

##### Publication of Scholarly and Educational Works on Asian Countries

7.8 Despite the importance of research and teaching about Asia in Australia, many works of scholarship on Asian subjects, and even teaching materials on Asian countries and their languages, still have a relatively small market. For this reason, publishers are often reluctant to accept such works for publication. Government assistance is therefore crucial to the development of Australian scholarship and education about the Asian region.

7.9 A recent report by the Industries Assistance Commission on publishing in Australia<sup>2</sup> recommended the cessation of government subsidies for scholarly and scientific publication. A government decision on this recommendation has been deferred, pending an inquiry by the Department of Science and the Environment into the need for subsidies for these purposes. By the time the present Committee's report is issued publicly, that inquiry should be almost completed. It is to be hoped that the inquiry will recommend the

<sup>2</sup> Industries Assistance Commission, The Publishing Industry, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra 1979.

continuation of subsidies to scholarly and scientific publications. The present Committee believes that a need also exists for government assistance in the dissemination of Australian scholarly publications in Asian countries and in the publication of teaching materials on Asian countries and Asian languages for use in Australian schools.

R.56 The Committee recommends that the ASAA Publications Officer be asked to impress on the government the need for assistance in the publication of scholarly and educational works dealing with Asian countries. Representations should also be made for government assistance in the dissemination in Asian countries of Australian publications about those countries.

#### AUSTRALIAN RELATIONS WITH ASIAN COUNTRIES

7.10 A recent development that has done much for the study of certain Asian countries is the establishment by the Federal Government of the Australia-Japan Foundation (1976) and the Australia-China Council (1978) to initiate and provide financial assistance to activities designed to further Australian relationships with the countries concerned. These two bodies make a significant contribution to those relationships, not least in the field of education. The Committee believes that Australia's relations with other Asian countries would be strengthened by the establishment of similar bodies for the regions of Southeast Asia, South Asia and West Asia. The countries of these regions have been and will become increasingly important to Australia, and the Committee believes that a development of this kind will ensure that relationships with those countries are established on a basis of mutual goodwill and sound understanding.

R.57 The Committee recommends that the Association impress upon the Federal Government the desirability of establishing bodies along the lines of the Australia-Japan Foundation and the Australia-China Council to further relationships with the countries of Southeast Asia, South Asia and West Asia, including the educational and cultural aspects of those relationships.

#### THE 'ASIAN STUDIES PROFESSION' AND OTHER AUSTRALIAN LINKS WITH ASIA

7.11 There are many Australians directly involved in aspects of our relationships with Asian countries with whom the 'Asian studies profession' has little contact. These include scientists, technical experts, economists, employees of governments, semi-government authorities, aid organizations and business. The Committee believes that interaction between 'Asianists' and other Australians involved



in the region would greatly benefit both groups, and indeed is essential if academic study of Asian countries is to have any impact on our relationships with those countries. A few people from these groups are members of the ASAA, and the Association's conferences have included panels on science and technology. There is, however, a broader problem of the educational separation of the humanities and social sciences from science and technology, which cannot be confronted by isolated contacts. The Committee believes that this issue is crucial to the Association's interests, in that many of Australia's most important relationships with Asian countries involve branches of knowledge totally unfamiliar to the majority of those who teach and study about Asian countries. To the extent that we fail to understand the realities of these relationships, and to the extent that those directly involved in the relationships are unfamiliar with the understanding of the region developed by 'Asianists', both our scholarship and Australia's relationships with Asian countries will be the poorer.

- R.58 The Committee recommends that the Association establish a committee to consider ways of encouraging communication between those involved in teaching and research about Asian countries and people in government, science, technology, aid organizations and business who are involved in aspects of Australia's relationships with Asian countries. Such a committee should also consider ways of increasing the study of Asian countries by people training for or working in these fields.

#### ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

7.12 The Committee regards adult and continuing education as an important vehicle for public education about Asia. Although it has not been able to undertake a survey of the wide variety of organizations offering continuing education courses, it notes that courses in Asian languages are offered by many such organizations, while some offer courses on other aspects of Asia. It urges ASAA members not already contributing to such courses, but who specialize in areas likely to be of interest to the public, to offer their services either as teachers of such courses or as co-ordinators of 'panel' courses on their area of expertise. Investigation is needed of current provision for studying Asian languages and other aspects of Asian countries in continuing education programmes and of the need for further provision.

- R.59 The Committee recommends that the next Asian Studies Committee investigate the extent of teaching about Asian countries in continuing education programmes, and, in consultation with organizations offering such programmes, consider ways in which the ASAA might contribute to the fulfilment of needs which might be identified in this area.

## THE PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS

### Introduction

7.13 The visual and performing arts are major expressions of the life of a society, as much for the countries of Asia as elsewhere. They are significant areas of study in their own right. They provide additional insights into a diverse range of apparently unrelated topics in the social sciences and humanities. They constitute a significant body of evidence relating to the past and the present, and can be used in a wide variety of ways according to the discipline and approach of scholars who choose to rely on them.

7.14 Of course the arts also have an importance other than the scholastic. The promotion of Asian arts in Australia is a major means of widening cultural horizons and spreading interest in things Asian. As one of the crucial elements in furthering Asian studies they cannot be ignored by the Association.

7.15 It is surprising how little attention has been paid to this question in the past. The Auchmuty Report referred to Asian arts in only three pages.<sup>3</sup> There are relatively few Asianists who have either undertaken major studies or teach tertiary courses concerned with any branch of the arts. By and large little time has been given to them in school syllabuses. There are few major, or indeed minor, collections of art objects in our galleries, while tours of Asian performers occur all too infrequently.

7.16 The Committee considers that the furthering of interest in Asian arts in Australia is a subject to which the Association should devote immediate and urgent attention. It therefore makes the following suggestions towards developing an ASAA policy on this question.

### Existing Holdings of Asian Art in Galleries and Museums

7.17 There are few large collections of Asian art in Australia, and none is at all comprehensive. Those that do exist concentrate on particular regions of Asia, on specific periods or certain kinds of objects. The most significant collection is that in the National Gallery of Victoria; other galleries have strengths in certain areas, for example, the Art Gallery of South Australia's collection of Thai and Vietnamese ceramics and the holdings of Balinese paintings in the Australian Museum in Sydney. The overall pattern, however, remains unclear. For teaching purposes alone it would be useful to have more comprehensive and

<sup>3</sup> Auchmuty, 1970, pp. 86-7, 97.

and systematic information about the resources available in Australia.

R.60 The Committee recommends

- (i) that the ASAA publish in its Review a checklist of repositories throughout Australia with an account of their general areas of concentration. The repositories to be covered should include galleries, museums, universities and other institutions, and so far as possible, holdings in private collections;
- (ii) that the ASAA Review annually list major new acquisitions;
- (iii) that the ASAA encourage each repository to publish catalogues of the Asian material in its holdings;
- (iv) that the ASAA discuss with the Australian Gallery Directors Council the possibility of action to produce region-oriented Australia-wide catalogues of holdings of Asian art.

7.18 The appointment of curators of Asian art in galleries and museums is essential both for the care and preservation of existing collections and for the promotion of future holdings. While several Australian galleries have already made such appointments, others have not done so, and none has yet developed curatorial strength on all the main culture areas. At present, moreover, there is nowhere in Australia where such curators could receive the necessary training with an Asian emphasis.

R.61 The Committee recommends

- (i) that the ASAA encourage the authorities of galleries which do not have curators of Asian art to make such appointments as a matter of urgency;
- (ii) that the ASAA urge the Australian Gallery Directors Council to give the strongest support it can to co-operation between the various curators of Asian art, with the aim of building up more comprehensive collections and educating the Australian public about the arts of Asian countries. Interchange between ASAA members with expertise in this field and curators of Asian art is also to be encouraged.

Access to Existing Collections

7.19 The problems involved in gaining access to the collections of Asian materials that do exist around Australia are different from those posed by library collections, and are more akin to the situation that exists with regard to archival holdings. While repositories willingly give scholars access to their collections, they cannot easily permit items to be loaned for study purposes because of the fragility, rarity and cost of the materials involved. A photographic loan service only partly meets the needs of scholars in this respect. Occasionally interchange of Asian materials between the various Australian repositories has occurred, but has so far been limited by the sheer poverty of the collections available.

R.62 The Committee recommends that the ASAA applaud the past efforts of the Australian Gallery Directors Council to develop interchanges of exhibitions of Asian art between repositories in Australia and encourage them to promote more such exhibitions as a regular feature of the nation's cultural and intellectual life.

7.20 Such exhibitions will further the needs and interests of a wider public apart from the purely scholarly. In some cases, however, general access to collections even in the city of location is limited by the amount of public display space available. It is rare indeed for anything like the bulk of a collection to be on view in any gallery or museum. This is, of course, a problem that bedevils all aspects of a repository's holdings, not merely the Asian. But if Asian holdings are to enjoy anything like 'parity of esteem' in the eyes of the general public, it is essential that they be displayed to the best advantage.

R.63 The Committee recommends that the Association urge repository directors to give the greatest possible prominence to their Asian holdings and, where necessary, to expand the space made available for them.

7.21 The Committee realises that these suggestions are only temporary palliatives, yet even their adoption can only be achieved if there are significant changes in the attitudes to museums and galleries of both governmental authorities and the general public. The educational significance of such institutions needs to be more widely appreciated.

R.64 The Committee therefore recommends that as a matter of policy the Association should concern itself actively in wider movements relating to the expansion of gallery and museum facilities in general and should co-operate with bodies interested in these objectives and join in lobbying for their adoption and implementation.

7.22 The Committee has considered the question of the establishment of separate Asian wings and even separate Asian institutions. In Melbourne the National Gallery already has a large Asian collection housed in a separate wing. In Sydney, a case can be made for bringing together in one location the Asian holdings in the Australian Museum, the Museum of Technology and the Art Gallery, and thus establishing a collection which would cover not only the so-called fine arts but also the crafts and technologies of the region. The concentration of Asian holdings in special institutions would create more comprehensive collections. On the other hand, it would remove Asian material from general collections where it would be viewed by the majority of visitors, to institutions which would be visited only by those with a specific wish to see Asian art. This may be counter-productive if our aim is to stimulate or widen interest in Asian arts and cultures in the community.

R.65 The Committee recommends that the Association encourage further discussion of the desirability of creating separate Asian collections.

#### Development and Expansion of Holdings

7.23 Irrespective of whether separate locations for Asian holdings are established, funding is needed to expand existing collections and to develop collections where they do not already exist. In urging a considerable and continuing expansion of Asian collections the Committee realizes that there are numerous constraints, both practical and in principle, which will hamper development. The practical constraints derive from

- (i) the geographic dispersion of population and academic resources throughout the country,
- (ii) the rarity and cost of items to be collected, and
- (iii) the limited funding and resources that will be available.

7.24 In principle, the Committee favours:

- (i) a policy of decentralization rather than of centralization of collections in any one institution;
- (ii) the development of collections covering all the major Asian regions in at least each State capital. Clearly however the principles need to be modified by the strengths and specializations that have already been developed in certain locations and the resources that are already

available. The Committee accepts, therefore, that a degree of specialization has already taken place and that such concentration is likely to continue in any developments that may occur in the future. However, while the principle of specialization is logical and desirable, it should not preclude the development elsewhere of sample study collections representative of all Asian culture areas.

R.66 The Committee recommends that the ASAA consult the directors of museums and art galleries in each city on this issue and urge that, while a degree of rationalization and specialization in repositories throughout the country is accepted as necessary, there should be a concurrent policy towards the development of representative study collections in each major city and that these should cover the major regions of Asia and varieties of objects.

7.25 Equally important are the constraints of principle involved in building collections. These derive from the nature of the countries and the sources, such as temples, tombs, etc., from which many works of Asian art originate. The building up of public and private collections in foreign centres often entails considerable loss to the country of origin; there is a general draining of the country's cultural and historical resources, the destruction of temples and other buildings and the ruin of archaeological sites so that any worthwhile study of them is inhibited, if not completely prevented. The acquisition of such items may involve participation in a widespread network of corruption and smuggling and is usually contrary to local laws prohibiting the export of antiques and other items of national significance.

R.67 The Committee recommends that the ASAA should endorse and publicize in relation to collections of Asian art, both private and public, the principles embodied in the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.<sup>4</sup> In particular, ASAA members should be alert to violations of these principles by galleries and dealers and should give the fullest support to the directors of all galleries which are endeavouring to uphold the principles embodied in that Convention.

<sup>4</sup> See Volume 2 for a summary of these principles.

7.26 If such a policy is implemented then the range of materials available for collection in Australia is necessarily limited to what is of impeccable origin. To compensate for limitations in what may be collected and to reduce the permanent deprivation that Australians would otherwise face in seeing and studying Asian objects, certain measures can be taken.

R.68 The Committee recommends that the ASAA contact the appropriate bodies and urge

- (i) a continuation and expansion of touring exhibitions from Asian countries;
- (ii) that no matter what other exhibitions are brought to Australia, initially at least one major Asian exhibition should be included in every annual touring exhibition schedule of the Australian Gallery Directors Council, with a regular rotation among the major Asian culture areas and that the number of such exhibitions be increased over time;
- (iii) that where there are provisions within cultural agreements with Asian countries for more frequent interchange of exhibitions, greater efforts should be devoted to implementing these, for example, through increased liaison between the Cultural Relations section of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Asian art curators of the galleries.

7.27 The Committee notes that there has been an increase in the number of touring exhibitions from European and American sources and that these have tended to concentrate on European and American art, although many European and American galleries have major holdings of Asian art.

R.69 The Committee recommends that the Association approach the relevant Australian bodies and request them to seek appropriate exhibitions in Australia of works from European and American collections of Asian art.

7.28 The Committee favours the adoption of a policy of interchange of study collections between Australia and Asian countries. Such interchange would need to be conducted at national government level, and would presumably require incorporation in cultural agreements (if enabling clauses are not already there) and a desire to implement them. The collections so acquired should be located in cities of major population concentration in each State.

R.70 The Committee recommends that the ASAA, in consultation with the Australian Gallery Directors Council, urge the Federal Government to negotiate the interchange of study collections of art objects between Australia and Asian countries.

7.29 Given limitations of availability and cost in acquiring Asian items of an 'antique' nature, one area in which Asian collections in Australia could develop considerable strength is that of the traditional and folk arts and crafts, including traditional toys. These are not usually subject to export restrictions (under 100 years rules) in the country of origin, are considerable in their extent, variety and quantity, are often replenishable and hence do not lead to the destruction of rare and unrepeatable resources. Their importance as tools for the study of societies and cultures is considerable, while their interest to a wider craft-oriented Australian public is equally great. The Committee considers that this range of objects could well form the basis of major collections in this country. The development of such holdings along with other types of art in the one collection would blur the classic Australian distinction between museums and art galleries. What would be achieved is the kind of multiplicity present in the range of holdings at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

#### Photography

7.30 Were such multi-faceted Asian collections to be established in major repositories, there are other functions they might also be able to assume. Consolidated collections of photographs of Asian subjects are needed for their value as source materials, as well as for their artistic merit or importance in their own right, e.g. in the nineteenth century development of the medium.

R.71 The Committee recommends that the ASAA should explore with interested bodies, such as libraries, galleries and the Australian Centre for Photography, the possibilities for building up comprehensive photographic collections on Asian countries.

#### Music

7.31 Collections of Asian music are held in various university and CAE departments, certain libraries, conservatoria, and the Australian Music Centre. Each in its own way works to preserve Asian music and make it more widely accessible. The Committee considers that holdings of Asian music could also be included in the multi-faceted Asian art collections suggested above. In addition to recordings and tapes, holdings might include displays of musical instruments, and place music and instrument in a context

relating them back to other material from the country of their origin.

#### Film

7.32 The Committee would like to see such projected Asian collections equipped to show films, although it does not consider that the collection of films should be primarily their responsibility. It applauds the work undertaken by private exhibitors such as Quality Films in purchasing and distributing Asian films, and the role adopted by the National Film Theatre of Australia, the Australia Film Institute and the various film festivals in importing and screening Asian films for limited touring periods. The Committee would wish to see such varied activity continued. It would also like to see a concerted policy of Asian film acquisition adopted by the National Library.

R.72 It is recommended that the ASAA urge the National Library to acquire archival collections of the cinemas of Asia, and to make them permanently available for loan and use in Australia. It is suggested that such study collections might have three main areas of concentration: first, the acquisition of silent films from each country; second, the acquisition of representative films from the thirties and early forties and third, films made thereafter. The first two groups of films might perhaps be easily acquired by interchange under the auspices of cultural agreements with relevant national repositories in Asia. This would not be such a major task as it might seem: of some 13,000 silent feature films that were made in India before 1930, only about thirteen have survived in whole or part.

7.33 The National Library has also been involved in the collection of short and documentary film from Asian countries. The Committee applauds its initiatives in this field, and also the contribution of Asian embassies in making films from their countries available for public use.

7.34 In addition, the Committee welcomes the role that State Film Libraries have taken in building up short and documentary film collections which have some Asian content. By and large, however, the extent of holdings related to Asia is limited, so much so that their range and quantity have been categorized by one State Film Librarian as 'minimal' and 'abysmal'. Even within such holdings as do exist, it is clear that certain regions of Asia are better represented than others. The Committee appreciates that other community needs served by State Film Libraries limit the quantity of Asian films which can be purchased, but it does consider that Asian films also serve current and projected needs within the community.

#### R.73 It is recommended

- (i) that the ASAA approach individual State governments to request that funds be set aside especially for the purchase of films concerned with Asia (the Committee would wish to see an even balance maintained in any such collection so that all regions of Asia would be adequately represented);
- (ii) that the ASAA publish annual checklists of new acquisitions of Asian films by the National and State Film Libraries and other film-lending institutions;
- (iii) that steps be taken, perhaps in co-operation with the Australian Film Institute, to prepare a national list of film holdings concerned with Asian countries.

#### Tours and Performances

7.35 The Auchmuty Report recorded occasional visits of performers, dancers, musicians and orchestral groups from Asia in the years up to 1970. Visits have continued in the subsequent decade but, apart from a brief spate in the mid-seventies, their frequency has been limited. Some of the tours and performances that have taken place include:

- (i) Musica Viva's sponsorship of the Iwamoto String Quartet, the Nipponia Ensemble and the Tokyo String Quartet;
- (ii) the tour for the ABC of a Western classical violinist from China;
- (iii) the handful of visits by musicians from Asian countries, including M.T. Krishnan and Ustad Asad Ali from India;
- (iv) the visits of a Japanese Kabuki Company, the national theatre company and a drama troupe from Indonesia, an occasional Indian dancer, the Bauls of Bengal, the Fujian puppet troupe from China and a Tibetan dance-drama group;
- (v) the inclusion of Asian films in the programmes of the major film festivals and the National Film Theatre of Australia, the Asian Film Festival hosted by Australia and a recent Chinese film festival.

7.36 However, the Committee notes that:

- (i) ABC Radio and TV programming has given little attention to Asian music, dance and drama;
- (ii) though in their initial programming private FM stations paid some attention to Asian music, they have in recent years tended to reduce their coverage and the time allocated;
- (iii) there have been few tours of theatre or major dance groups from Asia in the past decade;
- (iv) the Adelaide Festival, in the past a significant promotor of Asian performing arts, in its 1980 programme moved away from a policy of giving Asian arts a prominent place.

7.37 On the other hand, the Committee considers that there has been some increase in grass roots interest in Asian performing arts and welcomes the establishment of programmes concerned with training Australians in these arts and providing opportunities for their performance. Though the movement is still be no means extensive it is heartening to note amongst other developments:

- (i) the establishment of gamelan groups by a number of tertiary institutions, some of which have toured interstate and performed in schools;
- (ii) the establishment of an Indian music association in Sydney where there is also a private Indian dance school and some private tuition in Indian classical music;
- (iii) the establishment of a small number of societies to promote the arts of various Asian countries;
- (iv) the performance of an occasional Asian play in English translation (notable here is the National Institute of Dramatic Art's second year student production of an Indian play produced by the visiting director of the National Drama School in New Delhi) and the reading and discussion by the Nimrod Theatre of a play by an Indonesian playwright;
- (v) the development of a small commercial Asian film circuit throughout Australia (for example, there is a Sydney cinema that screens only Chinese films and there are also regular weekly screenings of Indian films to Indian audiences in Sydney).

7.38 Nevertheless, heartening though such developments may be, the Committee considers that little opportunity is available to Australian audiences to gain any first-hand extended contact with the main performing Asian traditions, much less develop informed interest by exposure to a range of artists in any one idiom.

7.39 The major government, private and autonomous entrepreneurs such as the ABC and Musica Viva seem essentially to be concerned with promoting the European tradition and have shown no consistent interest in Asian performing arts. The ABC has made little effort to educate its audiences to appreciate the musical traditions of Asia, except through occasional late night programmes.

7.40 It is only in fields where mechanical means of dissemination are available that neglect is less apparent. Knowledge of Asian music through tapes and recordings has been possible, so that those who are already 'converts' have been able to sustain their interest. However the wider appreciation and wider audience to be gained through frequent live performances has not been achieved. On the other hand, the work of small music groups, music conferences, and music departments has given Asian music a constant presence in a small elite musical scene. Its influence has been quite profound upon Australian contemporary classical composers who have drawn on Asia as one source of inspiration. In so doing, they have partially developed among their small audience some acceptance of Asian musical idioms. Nevertheless, Asian music has not become part of the accepted vocabulary of those interested in classical music; its landmarks are not familiar, understood or in most cases even enjoyed in the way that those of Western classical music are.

7.41 Some knowledge of Asian cinema has been gained through the small handful of Asian films that are screened in Australia. The number is minute in terms of the total product and is limited in terms even of what might be considered quality cinema. In most cases, such films come to Australia for extremely limited periods and are screened under stringent customs regulations to limited audiences. Unless bought by commercial distributors they are not available for re-viewing or study, nor is any chance available for an audience greater than the two or three thousand at a festival or National Film Theatre screening to see them.

7.42 While welcoming such developments as have taken place, the Committee considers that they go only a very small way towards developing an informed audience with regard to the performing arts of Asian countries.

R.74 It is therefore recommended that the ASAA

- (i) actively promote Asian performing arts. In particular, the Committee would wish to see an extension of what is becoming a tradition at the

biennial conferences, i.e. the mounting of performances during the conferences. In the past, such groups have been drawn from practitioners within Australia. An attempt should be made at future conferences to include in the programme at least one visiting group from Asia;

- (ii) approach Musica Viva and the ABC and urge them to include in their performance programmes Asian groups or musicians expert in idioms that are not European derived;
- (iii) approach the ABC and private FM stations and urge them to include in their radio and TV programmes music, drama, dance and film from Asia. The Committee does not consider that such coverage as already occurs on ethnic or community radio programmes meets the objectives outlined here;
- (iv) approach the Department of Foreign Affairs and other government and semi-government agencies to evolve a scheme of regular visits to Australia by Asian performing groups. The Committee notes that such visits are already possible under existing cultural agreements and that some visits have already occurred under these auspices. What is now suggested is the development of a co-ordinated scheme aimed at achieving as a minimum objective each year a tour by one major, large scale group from one region of Asia and at least one smaller group or performer from each of the other regions of Asia.

#### Art Education

7.43 Although the Committee has not closely investigated the extent of teaching about the performing and visual arts it has ascertained that they do not figure prominently in the education system. At the school level some attention is focussed on the fine arts, though not in all States. Music seems to be less well served in school courses, while Asian drama barely gains any notice. Courses in Asian studies and Asian languages sometimes include segments on the arts. There have been occasional notable initiatives by individual schools, such as the establishment of an Asian Cultural Centre at a private school in Tasmania. Tertiary institutions such as Monash University and the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education (see 7.47) give performances of Indonesian music in schools.

7.44 In many cases and particularly in art courses in secondary schools, Asian art is one of a number of electives which a teacher

may select if desired. When this happens there may be considerable exposure to the arts of Asian countries. On the other hand, in what is probably a far more common pattern, Asian arts may be entirely neglected if the teacher lacks interest, knowledge or previous educational exposure to the subject. Clearly in most such cases it is only by increasing educational exposure to the subject at the tertiary training level that teachers may be subsequently in a position to make a real choice as to whether they wish to include Asian arts in their teaching.

7.45 In essence, the problems faced by the teaching of Asian arts in the schools are similar to those posed by Asian subjects in general and the solutions suggested therefore are essentially the same (see Chapter 6). However, the very limited attention given to most branches of Asian arts in teacher training institutions (both universities and CAEs) represents a serious obstacle to the development of school courses based on sound knowledge of the principles and values underlying the arts of Asian countries. Any attempt to introduce more teaching about this field into school courses will require much more substantial attention to teacher preparation by tertiary institutions and in-service education programmes than will be necessary in other areas of the curriculum.

7.46 At the tertiary level there are few courses that deal adequately with Asian arts. Probably music is best served, with courses at several universities including Queensland, Sydney, New England, Monash, Deakin, Adelaide and Western Australia, at some CAEs, notably the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education in Toowoomba, and at some Conservatoria of Music. Performing groups have been established by some of these institutions (see 7.38).

7.47 In the fine arts the gaps are greater. Some art schools offer segments on the arts of Asian countries, and there is a substantial course on Asian art at the Melbourne State College. There are few such courses in university fine art departments. Some tertiary Asian language and area studies departments, e.g. the Japanese Department at the University of Queensland, and some departments of anthropology and history cover aspects of the visual arts of particular Asian countries. A small number of courses in architecture and town planning include Asian segments. There are, however, hardly any trained Asian art scholars in Australia.

7.48 The Committee is aware of only a very small number of tertiary courses in performing arts other than music which include more than a token component of Asian content. A few anthropology courses cover aspects of the performing arts. In some Asian language departments plays from Asian countries are studied and performed. Courses in certain drama departments and at the National Institute of Dramatic Art devote a limited amount of attention to Asian drama. Leisure courses in some forms of Asian dance are offered by community groups or individuals, but very rarely in educational institutions. A small number of institutions have

employed experts in the performing arts from Asian countries. In Victoria one such specialist, from Indonesia, has conducted courses in several secondary and tertiary institutions, and has performed in many schools.

7.49 The Committee considers that there should be a greater emphasis at all levels of education upon the teaching of Asian arts. The Asian visual arts, dance and theatre in particular deserve more attention, as does Asian music in some institutions. Ideally, any expansion should begin with the appointment of professionally qualified scholars at the tertiary level in positions where they can exert an influence on the education of teachers. Failing a major input of government funding at the tertiary level and expansion or re-allocation of resources within these institutions, it is difficult to see how an adequate coverage of these fields can be achieved.

R.75 The Committee recommends

- (i) that the ASAA attempt to promote extended lecture tours by scholars and leading performers. Ideally, the duration of visits should be long enough for them to make an impact upon the institutions or organizations with which they come in contact. The Committee notes that such arrangements are possible under existing cultural agreements, and that in at least one or two instances such visits have already occurred. The Committee now urges an expansion and rationalization of such ad hoc visits so that a consistent upgrading of knowledge and interest in Asian arts may be brought about;
- (ii) that the ASAA urge institutions which have provision for artists-in-residence to ensure adequate representation of Asian artists in their appointments, in order to redress the long neglect of Asian arts in Australia;
- (iii) that the ASAA encourage its members in schools and tertiary institutions (in the latter case through co-ordinating committees for Asian studies where they exist), to seek assistance in obtaining collections of appropriate items of Asian art for study purposes, by applying for funds to their institutions or to other bodies, and by approaching foreign embassies and private individuals for gifts of Asian art objects. This of course imposes responsibilities in respect of the proper care, conservation,

recording and classification of items in such collections.

CONCLUSION

7.50 The Committee believes that any genuine development of Australian interest in and understanding of the Asian region must be founded in community education in the widest sense. There is of course a two-way flow of influences between the community and the formal education system. The community both responds and contributes to the priorities of education, just as it does to those of the media, publishers, and the theatre and art worlds. If we aspire to change the orientation of community thinking towards a greater awareness of the countries of the Asian region and their significance in human affairs, then we can only hope to do so through strenuous efforts not only in the field of formal education but in all areas which inform the attitudes and priorities of the Australian community.