

# PROLOGUE

## AUSTRALIA MUST PREPARE

Australia's proximity to Asia has had a profound effect on this country's history. Yet, despite this, much public discussion of Asia remains, even today, relatively uninformed by the past. Politicians, public figures, analysts, scholars and the media frequently discuss Australia's proximity to 'the region' in a language that more often than not celebrates a new-found awareness of our place in the world; they do so in tones of ill-concealed excitement. Meanwhile, as political and economic transformation has swept the region, Asian countries like Japan, Korea, China, Singapore, Indonesia and India have been lauded as 'rising', or 'emergent'. The notion of Australian involvement with these and other nations to the north is constantly evoked, as though Australians need encouragement to go boldly where we think nobody has gone before.

When, in 2011, then-prime minister Julia Gillard announced an upcoming government White Paper, *Australia in the Asian Century*, she spoke of Australia's engagement with a new China that was 'transforming the economic and strategic balance of our world'; with a new India that was 'rising to find its place in the world ... on an ocean whose shores we share'; and, with a new Indonesia, 'the world's third largest democracy ... remarkable and too little remarked-upon'. Twice in the same speech, she declared that Australia 'hasn't been here before'.<sup>1</sup>

However, Australia has been here before. The period covered in this study — the years from the late 1910s up to the early 1950s — was a time of profound critical self-reflection for many scholars, educators and public servants who thought about Asia in ways that both challenged their identity as Australians and as members of the British Commonwealth. They used, often interchangeably, terms such as the Orient, the Pacific and the Far East (or, after 1939, the Near North) to describe the region; they felt trepidation when the situation to the north seemed unstable and threatening to Australian security; they expressed wonder at the potential for Asian economic improvement and participation in international affairs; and they would despair when their own government and people appeared unwilling to accept the reality of their geographic situation.

The Second World War (1939–1945) saw Australians engaged in a large-scale Pacific conflict for the first time in their history. This conflict, as well as memories of the Great Depression of the 1930s, would convince a number of public servants working on post-war reconstruction that the involvement of the Commonwealth Government in national education — a novel idea for the time — was necessary to foster a more educated, creative, self-reliant and cosmopolitan society.

<sup>1</sup> Julia Gillard, 'Speech to the AsiaLink and Asia Society Lunch, Melbourne', 28 September 2011, online at: <http://pmtranscripts.dpmc.gov.au/browse.php?did=18161>. This and other lapses of national memory are discussed by David Walker and Agnieszka Sobocinska in the introduction to their edited volume *Australia's Asia: From Yellow Peril to Asian Century*, Crawley: University of Western Australia, 2012, pp.1-23. For a discussion of the White Paper's garbled understanding of 'Asian' geography, at a time when the Gillard Labor government was implementing policies to exclude the continent of Australia from Australia's migration zone, see David Brophy, 'Australia's Asia', *The China Story*, 31 October 2012, online at: <http://www.thechinastory.org/2012/10/australias-asia/>.

One significant development at this time was the establishment of The Australian National University (ANU) by a Commonwealth Act on 1 August 1946. ANU began as a dedicated research and postgraduate-training institution, with a mandate to pursue work 'in relation to subjects of national importance to Australia'. These subjects were concentrated under the headings of Medical Research, Physical Sciences, Social Sciences and Pacific Studies. These four groupings formed the basis for the first research schools at ANU.<sup>2</sup>

The scope of research to be pursued at the new School of Pacific Studies — today's College of Asia & the Pacific — was one of the many issues to be decided by the ANU Interim Council during the university's establishment phase, from 1946 to 1951. Two Council members, Frederic Eggleston and Douglas Copland, had successively served as Australia's diplomatic representatives to the Republic of China during and shortly after the war. Both were adamant that the study of China should be included in the research programme of Pacific Studies. When addressing a gathering of Chinese officials and foreign diplomats before boarding a train out of Nanking, China's capital city, in March 1948, Copland, who was returning to Canberra as ANU's inaugural vice-chancellor, said:

I regret leaving, but in returning to the academic world, I do not feel that I am deserting the world of China, which I have come to respect and admire. One of the special fields of study to be fostered by the new university at Canberra is Pacific Studies, and this will, of necessity, keep me in active touch with many phases of Chinese life and scholarship. I believe that it is in the promotion of cultural relations that the most abiding understanding between peoples can be fostered, and on this count Australia has much to profit by the closest association with China.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, it was due to the efforts of Eggleston and Copland that work on China became one of ANU's great strengths. This was not, however, the first time that the study of our region was seen to be a matter of national importance. Australia had been there before.

The greatest security concern for Australia in the years following Federation in 1901 was the rise of the Empire of Japan and its regional ambitions. Great Britain, which in 1902 signed the Anglo-Japanese Naval Treaty, welcomed this strong regional ally as a counterweight to Russian influence in northeast Asia. Australia's leaders were less sanguine. When Japan became the first Asian power to defeat a colonial European force in modern history — as a result of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905 — and as Britain began to withdraw its Pacific fleets to meet the growing challenge of German sea power closer to home, many were anxious that

<sup>2</sup> See the *Australian National University Act*, 1 August 1946, section six, available online at: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C1946A00022>.

<sup>3</sup> Despatch no.9, 'Professor Copland's Return', 30 March 1948, Annex A, 'Statement by the Australian Minister on leaving Nanking', p.3, NAA A4231, 1948/NANKING PART 3.



James Murdoch, Australia's first Professor of Oriental Studies (1918–1921), c.1910. (From Hirakawa Sukehiro 平川祐弘, *Sōseki's Teacher, Mr Murdoch* 漱石の師マードック先生, Tokyo: Kodansha, 1984)

without the deterrent of the British navy, Japan might invade and overrun the continent. 'As a fact, Japan is the nearest of all the great foreign naval stations to Australia', warned the country's second prime minister, Alfred Deakin, in 1905. 'Japan at her head-quarters is, so to speak, next door, while the Mother Country is many streets away'.<sup>4</sup>

Such anxieties had reached fever pitch by the time of the Great War (1914–1918). Within the context of a 'world crisis' — marked by the unprecedented bloodshed, toppled monarchies, crumbling empires and drastic redistributions of global power that ensued during and after the war — the historian Neville Meaney has demonstrated that Australians, with national strategic interests vastly different from those of the Mother Country, experienced an 'Australian crisis'. Australians engaged in a 'hot war' against Germany and its allies in Europe, fighting 'as a British people [who] saw their own welfare, both cultural and strategical, linked inextricably to that of Britain and the British Empire'. No less important (though often overlooked in discussions of Australia's Great War) was what Meaney calls a 'cold war' against Japan, Australia's nominal ally in the Pacific. Defying Britain's assurances of protection, the wartime governments of Andrew Fisher and William Hughes drastically expanded military training; Japan was also a central concern in Hughes' attempts to introduce conscription; and, fearful that Japan might change sides should Germany gain the upper hand in the war — a distinct possibility until early 1918 — and reach a post-war accommodation with Germany in the Pacific, Australian intelligence services, acting independently of London, began anxiously gathering information on Japan and the views of its leaders.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Neville Meaney, *Fears and Phobias: EL Piessie and the Problem of Japan, 1909-39*, Canberra: National Library of Australia, 1996, pp.3-4.

<sup>5</sup> Neville Meaney, *A History of Australian Defence and Foreign Policy, vol.2: Australia and World Crisis: 1914-1923*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, pp.ix-xiii and 500-514, quotation at p.500.

Australia's first university Department of Oriental Studies was born of these anxieties. On 24 April 1916, the Minister for Defence, George Pearce, asked Brigadier General Hubert Foster, the army's Chief of the General Staff, to explore the possibility of establishing a Japanese language lectureship at the Royal Military College at Duntroon, Canberra. The sixty-one-year-old Foster, who knew Russian and had begun to learn Japanese himself, was enthusiastic about the prospect. As he told a meeting at the Department of Defence: 'Great difficulty is experienced in obtaining interpreters of Japanese, either written or spoken. In view of the growing relations between Japan and Australia, the scarcity of interpreters may be a serious embarrassment to the Government'.<sup>6</sup>

On 2 June 1916, Foster cabled Australia House (the Australian High Commission) in London, seeking the British government's guidance in selecting a suitable Japanese language scholar to invite to Australia. Disguising the security concerns behind the appointment, he wrote that a Japanese lectureship at 'an Australian University' would foster 'growing commercial relations between Japan and Australia'. The university he meant was the University of Sydney, the closest tertiary institution to Duntroon, where the successful candidate was expected to spend most of their time teaching army cadets. While Australian security was the main motivation for the proposed Japanese lectureship, Defence was probably also aware that the University of Sydney's Senate had on its table a proposal from the Newcastle Chamber of Commerce to establish a Chair of Eastern Languages.<sup>7</sup>

The Foreign Office suggested two members of the British Consular Service who were soon due to retire: Joseph Henry Longford and JW Robertson Scott. The British Embassy in Tokyo, meanwhile, recommended both Alexander Cardew, a linguist seconded to the Imperial Civil Service in India, and one '[James] Murdoch of Kagoshima Japan with excellent knowledge of Japanese ... a journalist about 60 who has been a teacher in Japanese schools and written on Japanese history'. 'Seldom', writes David Sissons, a scholar of Australian-Japanese relations, 'can an academic appointment have been made by a stranger process or on the basis of greater ignorance concerning the candidates'.<sup>8</sup>

Longford was Hubert Foster's first choice. He surmised that Longford's retirement meant that his transition to Duntroon would be relatively easy to organise and, as he would be receiving his pension, they could offer him a salary at the lower end of the £500-600 per annum that had been set aside for the appointment.

<sup>6</sup> Jennifer Brewster, 'You Can't Have a Failure Rate of 75%: Idealism and Realism in the Teaching of Japanese in Australia, 1917-1950', in Helen Marriott and Morris Low, eds, *Language and Cultural Contact with Japan*, Clayton: Monash Asia Institute, 1996, pp.4-40, quotation at p.5.

<sup>7</sup> David Sissons, 'Australia's First Professor of Japanese: James Murdoch (1856-1921)', unpublished manuscript, 1985, in DCS Sissons Papers, NLA MS3092, Box 2, p.66. See also the published version, 'James Murdoch (1856-1921): Historian, Teacher and Much Else Besides', *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, ser.4, vol.2, 1987. For more on James Murdoch and the origins of Oriental Studies at the University of Sydney, see Meaney, *Australia and World Crisis*, pp.155-157; and, David Walker, *Anxious Nation: Australia and the Rise of Asia, 1850-1939*, St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1999, pp. 211-213.

<sup>8</sup> Sissons, 'Australia's First Professor of Japanese', p.67. For a study of Sissons, see Desmond Ball and Keiko Tamura, eds, *Breaking Japanese Diplomatic Codes: David Sissons and D Special Section during the Second World War*, Asian Studies Series Monograph 4, Canberra: ANU E Press, 2013.

But, on 5 July, Australia House sent a follow-up cable to Canberra apologising for misinformation in its previous telegram: Longford was not fifty-five, as had been originally reported, but sixty-seven — too old, in the view of Defence Minister Pearce, for the job. Foster then tried for Cardew, but he could not be spared from his duties in India. Reluctantly, and admitting that he knew 'nothing of [his] personality', Foster arranged to contact his third choice, James Murdoch, on the proviso that he would be appointed for an initial 'six months on probation, so that if not suitable he can be dispensed with.'<sup>9</sup>

James Murdoch, a graduate of the University of Aberdeen with first class honours in Classics, should certainly have been given greater consideration. He had first come to Australia in 1880, at the age of twenty-five, to take up the post of headmaster of Queensland's new Maryborough Grammar School. He went on to be the second master at Brisbane Grammar and, cashiered for his atheism after only two years in the job, decided to stay in Brisbane to work for the 'radical nationalist' magazine, *Boomerang*. In 1886, Murdoch began travelling in Asia on commission for the magazine until, in 1889, he moved to Japan. Apart from a short stint at 'New Australia', a utopian socialist commune in Paraguay, he had lived in Japan ever since. He taught at a number of high schools there, and was said to be enormously popular with his students. Their number included Natsume Sōseki 夏目漱石, who went on to become one of Japan's most influential novelists. Sōseki later described Murdoch as 'very outgoing and conscientious ... [he] combined the qualities of a thorough gentleman with a marked Bohemianism, we admired and respected him.'<sup>10</sup>

From 1901 until his departure for Australia, James Murdoch lived in Kagoshima, Kyushu, the southernmost large island of Japan. He wrote occasional articles for the *Kobe Chronicle* and cultivated a citrus orchard to supplement his income as he focussed on writing a comprehensive history of Japan. By the time of his appointment to Duntroon he had already published the first two volumes of his *History of Japan*, covering antiquity to the mid-seventeenth century, and had completed the draft of a third volume, covering the period 1640 up to the 1868 Meiji Restoration. This work — which later included a fourth volume, published posthumously in 1926 — remained a standard source on Japanese history for Western students until the 1950s. But oddly, according to Sissons, 'no-one involved in the selection process knew that Murdoch had teaching experience [in Japan] at both secondary and tertiary level and had lived in Australia. They did not know even the titles of his books.'<sup>11</sup>

Murdoch arrived in Canberra in early 1917, and taught his first class at Duntroon on 20 March. His classes consisted of cadets who had shown linguistic promise in the Military College's French and German entrance examinations. He also delivered ad hoc after-hours lectures on Japan to interested members of the Duntroon staff. Beginning in April, he taught in Sydney every Monday and Tuesday, returning to Canberra to spend the rest of the week with the army cadets. The Commonwealth

<sup>9</sup> Sissons, 'Australia's First Professor of Japanese', p.68.

<sup>10</sup> Sissons, 'James Murdoch (1856-1921)', pp.20-21. For an account of Sōseki and Murdoch, see Hirakawa Sukehiro 平川祐弘, *Sōseki's Teacher, Mr Murdoch 漱石の師マードック先生*, Tokyo: Kodansha, 1984.

<sup>11</sup> Sissons, 'Australia's First Professor of Japanese', p.68.

Government paid him an annual salary of £600, and the University of Sydney provided a further allowance of £150 to cover travel expenses.

As he developed a vision for Japanese Studies in Australia, Murdoch invited two native Japanese speakers to help him teach the language, and he persuaded the New South Wales' government to support language teaching at Fort Street and North Sydney Boys' High School, two of Sydney's most prestigious state schools. Over the summer holidays before the start of the 1918 school year, Murdoch travelled to Japan to acquire books for the Sydney library, and to recruit his new teachers. For the high school positions he hired Mineichi Miyata, a former colleague from his teaching days in Japan, and for the university, his former student Mitsuji Koide, a graduate of the Imperial University in Tokyo. He returned to Australia in March 1918 with his Japanese wife, Takeko Okada, and brother-in-law, Rokuo Okada, who started teaching at Duntroon for an annual salary of £250.<sup>12</sup>

With Okada now in charge of teaching Japanese at Duntroon, Murdoch was free to focus his energies on developing a broader curriculum in Oriental Studies, including such subjects as history, economics and sociology. In mid-1918, to entice Murdoch to stay in Australia after he had been invited to take up a professorship at Waseda University in Tokyo, the University of Sydney offered to supplement his Commonwealth salary with an additional £400 — bringing the total to £1000.<sup>13</sup> The university gave Murdoch a professorship and established under his tutelage Australia's first Department of Oriental Studies, located in the Faculty of Arts. Happy with the arrangement, Murdoch turned down the Waseda offer and, with Okada handling teaching at Duntroon, was now free to pursue grand plans for the university's Oriental Studies curriculum.

The historian Marjorie Jacobs, who worked at the University of Sydney from 1938 to 1980 and was an early proponent of what is now called 'Asia literacy', notes that Murdoch was 'keenly alive to the urgent need for Australians to develop a closer understanding of their Asian neighbours both for the immediate purposes of trade and diplomacy and for the cultivation of the broader sympathies which acquaintance with the achievements of Asian civilisations could awaken.'<sup>14</sup>

Murdoch put this plainly in *Australia Must Prepare*, his 1919 Inaugural Lecture as Professor of Oriental Studies. He warned that Australia could not hope to remain 'as delightfully self-centred as she was

<sup>12</sup> Another purpose of Murdoch's 1918 and 1919 visits to Japan was to report to Edmund Piesse, the Australian army's Director of Military Intelligence, on Japanese attitudes in the aftermath of the war. In a series of letters addressed to 'Mr. McRae' — the maiden name of Piesse's wife, Christina, used to avoid arousing the suspicion of Japanese censors — Murdoch discussed trends in the media and political circles in Tokyo, especially concerning disagreements between the Japanese and Australian delegations during the Paris Peace Conference. It was at Paris that Prime Minister William ('Billy') Hughes vehemently opposed Japan's claims to German territories in the Pacific, as well as its proposal to include a racial equality clause in the covenant of the League of Nations. See Meaney, *Fears and Phobias*, pp.14-16; and, Sissons, 'Australia's First Professor of Japanese', pp.73-111.

<sup>13</sup> The amount £1000 is approximately equal to \$85,000 in 2015. Calculations here and throughout this study have been made using the Reserve Bank of Australia Pre-Decimal Inflation Calculator, online at: <http://www.rba.gov.au/calculator/annualPreDecimal.html>.

<sup>14</sup> Marjorie Jacobs, 'Oriental Studies In the University of Sydney', *The Australian Quarterly*, vol.25, no.2 (June 1953): 82-90. For an obituary of Jacobs, see Pam Spies, Diana Gower and Richard Barnett, 'Academic looked to the Asian Century', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 October 2013, online at: <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/obituaries/academic-looked-to-the-asian-century-20131004-2uzna.html>.

a generation ago' and, while conceding that concerns for the country's defence and trade might have been the reasons behind his appointment, that there was much more to be gained from the study of the region than mere 'materialistic' considerations. Murdoch looked forward to expanding Oriental Studies to include Chinese, Sanskrit and Semitic languages. About one third of his lecture was devoted to China:

So far we have been considering the position [of China] not so much on utilitarian, as on brutally materialistic grounds. But on the higher utilitarian grounds, there is also a great deal to be said. Anything which can satisfy a human want or desire is not devoid of utility; and to some few select souls the most imperious of all desires is the craving of knowledge merely for its own sake. If we are to accept Matthew Arnold's rather odd definition of criticism — a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world — we shall find ourselves constrained to admit that there are several things in the vast and voluminous literature of China which we cannot afford to ignore.<sup>15</sup>

Murdoch died at his home in Baulkam Hills on 30 October 1921. He was sixty-five. Mungo William MacCallum, Dean of the university's Faculty of Arts, mourned the passing of 'one of the most remarkable men in the Empire' who 'saw what is so very obvious, but what many refuse to admit, that Australia is primarily a Pacific, and therefore an Eastern Power'.<sup>16</sup> Murdoch's colleague Mineichi Miyata wrote that: 'Australia and Japan have lost one of their most celebrated authorities on both countries at a time in their history when he could least be spared.'<sup>17</sup> Although Miyata himself only stayed at Fort Street High School for another two years, on the occasion of the ninetieth anniversary of the longest-running Japanese programme at any Australian school in 2008, the Japan Foundation honoured his crucial early contribution to the teaching of the language in this country.<sup>18</sup>

Murdoch's plea in *Australia Must Prepare* for a 'disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world' fell on deaf ears. The Department of Defence soon lost interest in Japanese teaching at Duntroon, their reasoning reflecting changed circumstances in the world at large. Apparently, Australia did not need Japanese Studies anymore.

In the first place, at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference that followed the hostilities of the Great War, the League of Nations had been established; it was formally inaugurated in January the following year. A forerunner of the United Nations, the League was the first intergovernmental organisation devoted specifically to world peace, which it intended to maintain through collective security, military disarmament and the settlement of international disputes through negotiation.

<sup>15</sup> James Murdoch, *Australia Must Prepare*, Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1919, p.13.

<sup>16</sup> MW MacCallum, 'Professor James Murdoch: A Wise Man of the East', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1921, p.14.

<sup>17</sup> M Miyata, 'Professor James Murdoch: An Appreciation', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 November 1921, p.7.

<sup>18</sup> Collin Jones, '90th Anniversary of the Introduction of Japanese Language into the Australian School System', online at: [http://www.jpff.org.au/onlinearticles/profile/issue7\\_2.html](http://www.jpff.org.au/onlinearticles/profile/issue7_2.html).

The Empire of Japan was a member of the League, and notionally bound to the principles of its Covenant.

Secondly, at the Washington Naval Conference in 1921–1922 the four Pacific powers — the United States, Britain, Japan and France — signed a ‘Four Power Treaty’, known also as the ‘Washington Treaty’. This replaced the 1902 Anglo-Japanese Naval Treaty mentioned above (and the principal source of the ‘Australian crisis’ that had unsettled the Commonwealth since Federation) with a more reassuring strategic regional structure. The four powers agreed to respect existing territorial boundaries in the Pacific, and to limit the expansion of fortifications and naval bases in the areas under their control. The Washington Treaty was unrelated to the League of Nations: Japan was not required to sign.

However, as Defence Minister George Pearce and his adviser Edmund Piesse observed, not only did Japan sign the treaty willingly, it also agreed to limit the size of its armies in China’s Shantung province where, as a result of the Paris Peace Conference, it had gained control of territories previously leased to Germany, and in the territory of Siberia that it had occupied following the earlier defeat of Russia. In Parliament, Pearce declared that Australia was entering a new age in its relations with the ‘Far North’. He confessed to having ‘suspected Japan and her intentions in regard to the Pacific’ in the past, but Japan was now ‘peaceful’ and determined to avoid ‘isolation from the rest of the world’, as had been Germany’s fate. In the eyes of the Australian government, it also seemed as if America would now begin to play a more active role in the region.<sup>19</sup> On 13 April 1922, the Prime Minister’s Department informed Pearce in Defence that:

The Washington Conference has now brought about a great change in our position relatively to Japan. Whatever the ultimate outcome of the treaties made at the Conference, there can, I think, be no doubt that the detailed study of Japanese affairs which we contemplated in 1920 is, for the next few years at least, quite unnecessary.<sup>20</sup>

This saw the end of the Commonwealth’s interest in supporting Japanese and Oriental Studies. Soon after Murdoch’s death, Takeko Okada, Murdoch’s widow, and his brother-in-law, Rokuo Okada, returned to Japan. Duntroon made no effort to replace Rokuo with another native-speaking tutor and, although Japanese language instruction remained part of the Duntroon curriculum until 1938, it was taught by senior officers trained by the programme: it was hardly surprising then that the standard of teaching slipped and, with it, interest in the Japanese language overall. A 1935 survey by the Directorate of Military Operations revealed that there were only seven people affiliated with the Australian Army who were familiar with Japanese. Six of these were ‘able to read and write imperfectly’. The seventh, Arthur Lindsay Sadler, was an Oxford graduate in Far Eastern Languages and Murdoch’s successor at the University of Sydney.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Meaney, *Fears and Phobias*, pp.33-34.

<sup>20</sup> Sissons, ‘Australia’s First Professor of Japanese’, p.108.

<sup>21</sup> Sissons, ‘James Murdoch (1856-1921)’, p.56.



Arthur Lindsay Sadler, 1922. (Courtesy University of Sydney Archives)

If it were not for the enthusiasm of Arthur Sadler, who started teaching at Sydney in 1922, it is unlikely that the Department of Oriental Studies would have survived. The department was threatened with closure in 1928 when Defence, disillusioned with its original scheme of collaborating with the university, attempted to cut its funding only to discover that they were contractually obliged to pay the incumbent until he chose to retire.<sup>22</sup> Despite continuing difficulties — consisting of a ‘ridiculously inadequate’ endowment of ‘about £30 per annum’, Sadler wrote in 1927, which made it nearly impossible to establish a working Oriental library — and with the university unable to afford to employ more than one full-time lecturer in the department, Sadler nonetheless remained at Sydney until 1947.<sup>23</sup>

Arthur Sadler was ‘already a legend when I first entered Sydney University in 1936’, writes Joyce Ackroyd, who was appointed ANU’s first Japanese Studies research fellow in 1952 after completing doctoral studies at The University of Cambridge. A ‘universal scholar of the “pre-specialist” era ... [who] explored whatever facet of Japanese culture that attracted his discriminating attention’, Sadler was widely admired by his colleagues and students.<sup>24</sup>

Ackroyd studied and later tutored under Sadler and she recalls her eclectic group of classmates, including:

<sup>22</sup> Jennifer Brewster, ‘You Can’t Have a Failure Rate of 75%’, p.13.

<sup>23</sup> See AL Sadler, ‘University of Sydney: Oriental Studies: Lack of Equipment’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 August 1927, p.16; and, ‘Oriental Studies’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 June 1937, p.10. The sum of £30 was equivalent to \$2,300 in 2015.

<sup>24</sup> Joyce Ackroyd, ‘Pioneers in Asian Studies: Professor AL Sadler’, *Asian Studies Association of Australia Review*, no.10, no.1 (July 1986): 49-53, at p.53. Ackroyd later served as Associate Professor of Japanese at ANU (1959–1965) before moving to the University of Queensland, where she established the Department of Japanese Language and Literature. A tireless advocate of Japanese in the Queensland education system, Ackroyd received an OBE in 1981 for her services to education. See ‘40 Years of Promoting Australian and Japanese Ties’, *University of Queensland Alumni News*, vol.16, no.1 (May 1984): 6–7.



Joyce Ackroyd, 1984. (From *University of Queensland Alumni News*, vol.16, no.1 [May 1984])

business-men, school-teachers, missionaries, a radio-announcer (later the editor of the now defunct *Hemisphere*), a churchman (later an Archbishop), a fortunate young man of independent means who became an academic, practising journalists, and housewives hooked on the Far East. We all revelled in what we recognised was an unusually valuable learning experience.<sup>25</sup>

With broad-ranging interests in Japanese architecture, tea culture and martial arts, Sadler published sixteen books and translations during his life. In Sydney his work appeared with the iconic Australian publishing house Angus & Robertson. Notable among

<sup>25</sup> Joyce Ackroyd, 'Pioneers in Asian Studies: Professor AL Sadler', p.53. The radio announcer and editor of *Hemisphere* magazine mentioned here may have been Selwyn 'Dan' Speight. While there appears to be no record of Speight attending the University of Sydney in its annual calendars, he might have been among the many students who took casual or night classes, before leaving to cover the war in China for the *The Sydney Morning Herald* in December 1942. In 1957, Speight was awarded the Walkley Award for his reporting on Australia's postwar immigration scheme. In that year, he became the founding editor of *Hemisphere* and stayed with the magazine until he moved to ABC radio in 1961, where he established the highly successful programmes 'AM' and 'PM'. *Hemisphere* was established under the auspices of the Colombo Plan, a Commonwealth government programme sponsoring students from Asian countries to study in Australia. Renowned for its high quality of production and varied content covering Australian and Asian culture and history, *Hemisphere* aimed to strengthen cultural ties between Australia and the region, particularly among Colombo Plan students, until the Labor government of Bob Hawke cut its funding in 1984. Those who criticised the government's decision included ANU professors John Mulvaney, Oscar Spate and Arthur Basham, as well as Alastair Morrison, the son of the celebrated Australian China correspondent for the London *Times*, George Morrison, who will be discussed later in this study. See Jack Waterford, 'Complaints aplenty as *Hemisphere* gets the chop', *The Canberra Times*, 18 August 1984, p.2. See also the oral history recording 'Selwyn Speight interviewed by Mel Pratt', Mel Pratt Collection, Canberra: National Library of Australia, 1974; and, Claire Roberts, 'Alastair Morrison (1915–2009)', *China Heritage Quarterly*, no.19 (September 2009), online at: [http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/features.php?searchterm=019\\_vale\\_morrison.inc&issue=019](http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/features.php?searchterm=019_vale_morrison.inc&issue=019).



A caricature of AL Sadler showing a Japanese print to the Australian artist Thea Proctor at an exhibition in Sydney. (From *The Home*, vol.7, no.7 [1 July 1926]: 40)

these were: *The Book of Tea: A Japanese Harmony of Art, Culture and the Simple Life* (1937), a translation of and commentary on Okakura Kakuzō's 岡倉覚三 1906 classic treatise on the tea ceremony; *A Short History of Japanese Architecture* (1941); and, *A Short History of Japan* (1946). Outside of university life, Sadler was a highly regarded proponent of Japanese art, and he organised a number of exhibitions in Sydney during the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>26</sup>

In November 1948, John Kennedy Rideout, a graduate in Far Eastern languages from the University of London, arrived to take the chair of the Department of Oriental Studies. He was a specialist in classical Chinese and his arrival was greeted enthusiastically as it provided an opportunity to expand the department to include more China-related subjects, and to introduce Chinese language instruction. However, the new incumbent soon found that the university's library holdings were not equal to the task. Fortunately, an opportunity to remedy the situation soon presented itself. The same month that Rideout arrived in Sydney, the Chinese Ambassador to Australia, Kan Nai-kuang 甘乃光, donated to the new Australian National University in Canberra a 2000-volume reprint edition of *Selected Publications from the Four Categories* 四部叢刊, a collection of classical texts compiled under the auspices of the Chien-

<sup>26</sup> Misuzu Hanihara Chow, *The Study of Japan in Australia: A Unique Development Over Eighty Years*, Kyoto: International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 2003, pp.34-40. In 2011, The University of Sydney hosted an exhibition celebrating Sadler's contributions to artistic life in the city. See Ajioka Chiaki and Maria Tornatore-Loong, 'Japan in Sydney: Professor Sadler & Modernism, 1920s-30s', online at: <http://sydney.edu.au/museums/exhibitions-events/japan-in-sydney.shtml>.

lung 乾隆 emperor (r.1735-1796) of the Ch'ing dynasty.

In Canberra a formal ceremony had been organised to celebrate the donation which was attended by Herbert Cole 'Nugget' Coombs, a senior government economist who actively promoted the role of the Commonwealth in higher education. As the Director-General of the Department of Post-War Reconstruction Coombs had been heavily involved in planning ANU, and he is widely regarded as the university's unofficial 'father' — or in the words of one account, as the 'midwife' most responsible, among a number of other planners, for its birth.<sup>27</sup>

Also present at the ceremony was the thrice-knighted former Solicitor-General, Robert Garran, and Charles Daley who, as chairman of the Capital Territory Advisory Council, was Canberra's unofficial mayor. Garran, a man who regarded it as 'unthinkable' that the territory would not have its own university, once declared that he saw 'no reason why Canberra should not become the centre and the focus of the artistic life of Australia.'<sup>28</sup> Also at the ceremony were the two former diplomats mentioned earlier who played a key role in establishing the ANU as the new Australian centre for the study of Asia: Frederic Eggleston and Douglas Copland. All were members of ANU's Interim Council. Eggleston accepted the Chinese books on behalf of the Council and declared that the seminal collection 'would furnish the start of a great library for the university in the study of Chinese culture.'<sup>29</sup>

In February 1949, Rideout wrote to Douglas Copland, now ANU's first vice-chancellor, to ask if the books might be loaned to Sydney:

Three weeks ago I arrived here to take up the Chair of Oriental Studies and with the object of introducing the academic study of Chinese. My first task was to survey and classify the oriental books in the Fisher Library, and I found there only a very scrappy collection of Japanese texts, and one Chinese text, which had presumably got in by mistake. In fact, had I not possessed with me the nucleus of a working library of Chinese texts it would be impossible for me to start teaching at all. ... I was, however, informed by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, that the National University had recently received a collection of some two thousand Chinese books, which were believed to be classical texts. I should be very grateful if you could obtain some more detailed information about this collection, and if you could let me know whether anyone at the National University is working, or proposing to work upon it. If not, rather than have the books lie idle, would the National University be prepared, purely as an interim measure, to lend this collection to the Fisher Library?<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> See Rosemary Mayne-Wilson, 'Coombs: Midwife to the University, Advisor to the Nation', *The Australian National University News*, vol.9, no.2 (August 1974): 1-6. This edition of the *News*, in celebrating Coombs' contributions to ANU, also carried reminiscences by two of his colleagues: JG Crawford, 'Post-war planning: some reflections on the results'; and, Roy Douglas Wright, 'Nugget and the National University'.

<sup>28</sup> RS Parker, 'Sir Robert Randolph Garran (1867-1957)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol.8, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1981, online at: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/garran-sir-robert-randolph-410>.

<sup>29</sup> 'Chinese Books for National University', *The Canberra Times*, 16 November 1948, p.2.

<sup>30</sup> Letter, Rideout to Copland, 5 February 1949, ANUA 122, Box 1.



Members of the ANU Interim Council receiving a gift of Chinese books from Kan Nai-kuang, Chinese Ambassador to Australia, November 1948. From the left: Robert Garran, Charles Daley, Kan Nai-kuang, Leslie Martin, Frederic Eggleston, Roy Douglas Wright (behind Eggleston), Herbert Cole 'Nugget' Coombs and Douglas Copland. (Courtesy National Library of Australia)

Copland readily acquiesced as he told Rideout it would be some time 'before active work is commenced in the School of Pacific Studies and the books are likely to be in use by members of our University staff.'<sup>31</sup> There was nobody yet at ANU who could read, let alone catalogue the texts and the first research students would not arrive for another two years. ANU did not really have a library to call its own: the majority of the books it was slowly accumulating were in safekeeping at the University of Melbourne; others were held in what were called the 'Old Hospital Buildings', a series of temporary shed-like structures on the Acton Peninsula, previously part of Canberra's first public hospital.

During his brief time in Australian academic life, JK Rideout had a further encounter with the new national university. In late October 1949, he travelled to Canberra to present a lecture titled *Politics in Medieval China*. It was the Twelfth George E Morrison Lecture in Ethnology, a series of orations about China discussed at length below that had recently been revived and moved to the university.

By the end of the year, Rideout had decided that he was unable to work with the limited resources available at Sydney and left to take up a professorship at the University of Hong Kong. In February 1950,

<sup>31</sup> Letter, Copland to Rideout, 16 February 1949, ANUA 122, Box 1.



a fisherman found his body floating some ten miles from Hong Kong Island. During the war, Rideout had worked for the British secret service and there was speculation that he had been killed by underground Chinese communist agents. In May that year, however, a coroner and jury returned a verdict of 'death by misadventure by drowning'.<sup>32</sup> John Rideout was only thirty-six.

<sup>32</sup> 'No Trace of Missing Professor', *The Canberra Times*, 21 February 1950, p.1; 'Sydney Recluse Revealed as Secret Agent', *The Sunday Herald* (Sydney), 9 April 1950, p.2; and, 'Prof. Rideout Inquest', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 May 1950, p.3.

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