

Goals of Japanese Language Education in Pre-war Time: Moshi Inagaki at The University of Melbourne

The teaching of Japanese was first started in Australia at The University of Sydney in 1917. James Murdoch (1856-1921) was appointed as a lecturer in Japanese to teach at the Royal Military College, Duntroon (established in 1911) in ACT and also as a part-time lecturer to teach concurrently at Sydney University. It was an unusual appointment as these two institutions were more than 300 kilometers distant. Murdoch was soon appointed to Professor of Oriental Studies. This appointment was due to the decision to introduce the serious study of Japanese language in the Australian Army that came from the Minister for Defence. Around the same time the teaching of Japanese language began at Melbourne University in 1919 by T. Jollie Smith (1858-1927), Presbyterian minister. He was assisted by Moshi Inagaki (1880-1948?), a native speaker of Japanese. Inagaki becomes solo instructor in Japanese from 1922 and continued his teaching until it ended abruptly when he was arrested and interned several hours after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941. He was deported to Japan in 1947 at his own request. The aim of this paper is to interpret the goals of Japanese language education in pre-war time in Victoria through the experiences of Inagaki as a language instructor based on his teaching material, archival records, newspapers and the work of Ailsa Zainu'ddin. Unlike the teaching of Japanese at Sydney University, the teaching of Japanese never became part of a formal degree course at Melbourne University, and Inagaki held the position of reader attached to a university but received no remuneration except through the fees paid by his students. His position was marginal and insecure at the university. However, his contribution to the teaching of Japanese went beyond the university campus reaching outside students as well. Therefore his life deserves serious consideration as a pioneer instructor of Japanese in Victoria in the pre-war period.