

Problems in the Training of Japanese Language Teachers in Malaysia and their Countermeasures

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Problems

The General Conditions of Japanese Language Teaching in 1982

According to my survey, Japanese language education after the war started for the first time at the University of Malaya in May 1956. After that courses in Japanese were also established at the MARA Institute of Technology, the Science University of Malaysia and the National University of Malaysia. These courses offered 2-3 years of Japanese and approximately 90 hours a year. In all cases, the Japanese language was established at language centres or language units with language laboratories, and introduced as an elective among other Asian languages, but at none of these institutions is there a system by which one can major in it.

In addition to this, according to a report in the *New Straits Times* of Malaysia last year, even in the MARA Junior Science Colleges, where the standard is equivalent to that of the Japanese first year of middle school to second year of high school, there are plans to teach Arabic, German, Japanese and other languages. Last year they started Arabic, and I hear that they are looking for teachers to start Japanese, if possible by 1982. Also, I have heard of plans for starting a course in the Japanese language at the Language Institute, Kuala Lumpur, from 1983. Besides that, from the Agriculture University of Malaysia, too, I have had inquiries regarding the syllabus for Japanese and the possibility of getting Japanese language teachers. In addition to these new activities, there has suddenly cropped up a demand for Japanese, within the last 6-8 months, on a scale unforeseen before. At the MARA Institute of Technology now a special intensive course is being planned for 140 technical trainees who will be sent to Japan. The course was launched in February and continued for a period of 6 months, till August 1983, and there will be 20 hours a week of lectures. Also, I hear that the National University of Malaysia is studying the possibility of setting up a university preparatory course for students intending to enter Japanese universities.

At this point of time, which happens to coincide with the tenth anniversary of the University of Malaya Language Centre, we can look back at the history of Japanese language teaching at the institutions of higher learning in Malaysia up to the present, and predict the future trend. The first 10 years, namely 1966 to 1975, can be thought of as the period of Japanese teachers, the next fifteen years or so, from 1976 up to the latter half of 1980, as the period in which the change-over took place from Japanese to Malaysian teachers, and the latter part of 1980 onwards as the period where the focus will be on Malaysian teachers. With this background in mind, I would like to try to outline what I think are the problems encountered in the training of Japanese language teachers in Malaysia today, and suggest some countermeasures for them.

The Period of Japanese Teachers (1966-1975)

In this period considerable difficulty was experienced in acquiring Japanese language teachers as a result of various delays in Japanese language teacher training programmes in Japan.

In the first ten years of Japanese language teaching in Malaysia teachers were sent mainly by the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) or other Japanese governmental bodies for a period of 2-3 years. The status of the teachers sent to the various institutions, their numbers, and the names of the sender organizations are indicated in the chart below

During this period in Japan it was felt that foreigners who could read and speak Japanese were very unusual, and it was unimaginable that they had learned Japanese. Since Malaysia did not have a system of teacher-training for Japanese as a foreign language, naturally it was not clear how to go about inviting applications for the position of Japanese lecturers.

From about the time of Expo 70, foreign countries have become more interested in Japan given the rapid rise of her economic power. Owing to this the need for Japanese language teaching has also increased. Because it was not possible to take any action towards teacher training, the shortage of Japanese language teachers was overcome by employing people who had majored in English and then switched over to becoming Japanese language teachers. However, there were also cases of teachers of Japanese as a first language becoming teachers of Japanese as a foreign language, but these were few in number. In order to meet the demand for Japanese language teachers from overseas, the JOCV office sends out young candidates to all parts of the world for 3-6 months, after they have received various forms of training. Malaysian educational institutions who need Japanese teachers badly depended much on the JOCV.

The University of Malaya Japanese language course started when two JOCV volunteers were sent out to teach Japanese as a compulsory subject at the Department of Chinese Studies in the Faculty of Arts. In the following year, 1967, according to an agreement with the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, funds were provided for courses in Japanese studies, and one Visiting Professor and two Visiting Lecturers were sent to teach Japanese language, economics, history, sociology and other aspects of Japanese studies. This agreement was to be valid until such time that Malaysia was able to produce its own lecturers in these fields. Thus Japanese language teaching was carried out by two JOCV volunteers and two specialists from the Overseas Technical Cooperation Agency (OTCA). Then, when the Japan Foundation was established, the administrative duties were transferred from OTCA to Japan Foundation. At that time there were very few specialists in Japanese studies and since Japanese language specialists wanting to be sent to developing countries were limited in supply, there were many cases where researchers in other fields, while doing research in their own field at the places where they were posted, taught Japanese on the side. Conditions have improved since the administrative duties were taken over by Japan Foundation, and now more Japanese language specialists are being sent out.

The JOCV volunteers sent to the institutions of higher learning in Malaysia found that except for English, volunteers were not engaged as teachers of

The Status of Japanese Language Teachers at the Institutions of Higher Learning in Malaysia with the Names of Sender Organizations

Name of Organization	University of Malaya	MARA Institute of Technology	Science University of Malaya	National University of Malaysia
Year in which Japanese Course was Established	May 1966	July 1969	September 1970	June 1975
Place of Japanese Course	Chinese Studies Department, Faculty of Arts (compulsory subject): JOCV volunteers Faculty of Arts (elective) ; assigned specialists March 1972 Language Centre.	Course in the School of Business Administration (elective) July 1972. Language Centre.	Language Centre in the Centre for Educational Service (elective): JOCV Volunteers Jun 1975. Language Unit in the Centre for Education Studies.	Language Unit, Arts Faculty (elective) 1982. Plans for converting Centre.
Number of lecturers, their position, and details of sender organizations and their changes	1966. 2 JOCV volunteers as part-time instructors 1967. In addition to the above volunteers, 2 Visiting Lecturers from the Overseas Technical Cooperation Agency, Japan (OTCA). 1973. JOCV volunteers became full-time instructors. 1974. Visiting Lecturers changed affiliation from OTCA to the Japan Foundation. 1976. JOCV volunteers' despatch terminated (A total of 9 JOCV volunteer were sent). 1 Malaysian employed as lecturer. 1978. 1 Dane employed as lecturer. 1980. The number of Visiting Lecturers reduced from 2 to 1.	1969. 1 Malaysian lecturers. 1970. 2 JOCV volunteers sent as lecturers. 1972. Malaysian lecturer referred to above went to Japan on Japanese Government Scholarship for Masters degree after finishing contract with M.I.T., leaving only Japanese volunteers. 1974. 2 part-time lecturers employed: 1 Japanese resident in Malaysia and 1 Malaysian. 1976. 2 Malaysians employed as lecturers 1981. JOCV scheme terminated. In all, 11 JOCV volunteers were sent. Shortage of lecturers. So part-time lecturers employed.	1970. 2 JOCV volunteers as instructors 1974. 1 Japanese employed on contract as instructor 1976. Despatch of JOCV Japanese volunteers terminated (JOCV volunteers in 3 batches, 2 in each, total of 6 were sent) 1981. 1 Malaysian employed.	1975. 1 Japanese permanent resident in Malaysia as instructor. 1976. 1 JOCV volunteer worked part-time temporarily when the incumbent went on maternity leave. 1978. Contract of above expired. Total of 2 language instructors employed: 1 Malaysian and 1 Japanese resident. 1980. 1 Malaysian employed temporarily as full-time instructor. Total of 3.

foreign languages. Outstanding foreigners who had at least a Masters degree and who were highly experienced were employed on contract. Foreigners and Malaysians were in many cases paid a salary equivalent to 3-10 times the living allowance of JOCV volunteers. Thus to associate with these people, Japanese volunteers who were fresh graduates from universities with no experience in teaching Japanese had to take total responsibility for the Japanese course, attend all the meetings, decide on the examination marks, participate in seminars and do various kinds of administrative work. They carried out their duties in all areas, no matter how difficult, with enthusiasm alone. However, volunteers have come to look upon questioning at the way they were being sent out to places for the education of these societies' elites.

Further, during this period, excluding the first three years at the MARA Institute of Technology, the Japanese volunteers that were sent here took full charge of the language course, since there were no local Japanese staff members. Every 2-3 years, with the change of staff, both the aims of Japanese language teaching and the textbooks changed, and thus there was lack of consistency in the educational activities. Teaching materials that had been prepared with much trouble and that were not used by the successors of the writers were wasted.

Owing to the above circumstances, almost all the volunteers had the following viewpoints.

1. At the Malaysian universities economically there is no need for volunteers. They wish to employ specialists with high academic standard on contract.
2. In order to establish a solid foundation for Japanese in Malaysia, it is desirable to have Malaysians who can teach Japanese. This would be better than putting Japanese who are sent here on rotation in charge of language courses.

They made these suggestions to the JOCV office in Kuala Lumpur, who respecting their viewpoints, negotiated with other centres receiving volunteers for Japanese language teaching. Subsequently, the number of volunteers was cut down and more Malaysians and Japanese who are permanently residing in Malaysia began to be employed.

At that time in Malaysia, because of the ease with which teachers could be had from Japan, not much attention was paid to the training of Japanese language teachers in Malaysia. However in 1969 the Malaysian who started the Japanese course at the MARA Institute of Technology, obtained a Japanese Government Scholarship, and left M.I.T. to go to Japan to get her Master's degree in Japanese literature. At that time in Japan, Japanese language education in the form of Japanese as a foreign language was not yet established. Since the teacher training system for that purpose was also not established, she entered the Department of Japanese Literature that is meant for Japanese nationals, spent four years there, from 1972 to 1976, got her well-earned degree and returned to her country. At present she is working as a lecturer at the University of Malaya. She did Japanese as a sub-major in her undergraduate course in Australia and since she had three years of experience as a teacher of Japanese she could endure hardships in Japan and thus succeed. But this is an extremely special case. At the moment, I know of several

people who in the same way studied in Australia and then went to Japan to obtain a Master's degree in Japanese, but they all found it difficult and ended up unsuccessful.

The National University of Malaysia, which started its Japanese course in 1975, in the beginning employed a Japanese who is a permanent resident of Malaysia. At the same time, to be sure of getting a Malaysian trainee, they found a girl who was then working at the library and sent her to Japan to be trained as a Japanese language teacher. She is a Malay and a graduate of the Department of Chinese Studies, Arts Faculty, University of Malaya. On obtaining the Japanese Government Scholarship, she was given study leave by the National University of Malaysia to pursue her studies overseas. However, it is impossible for a student who has not majored in Japanese and who has only had approximately 200 hours of the language, no matter how good a student she is and no matter how hard she works, to enter a Master's course majoring in Japanese or Japanese literature. The National University student therefore ended up being attached to the Graduate School of Commerce in Japan. Even so she persisted, got her Master of Arts (Commerce), returned to her country and is now a Japanese language teacher. These two Malaysians had to strive very hard for many years because they were not able to study Japanese as a foreign language, owing to the late development of adequate training facilities in Japan. Yet as pioneers in their field they are carrying out a very important function during the period of transition from Japanese teachers to Malaysian teachers.

During the last ten years, little thought was given to the training of Malaysians as teachers of Japanese. Since Japanese was thought of only as a single foreign language elective, the need for training these teachers was not considered. This is the source of many of the difficulties that are being faced at the moment.

The Period of Transition from Japanese Teachers to Malaysian Teachers (1976-1980's)

This is the most difficult period of all. Complying with the views of Japanese volunteers, from around 1975, when Japanese volunteers finished their tenure of service and returned to Japan, no volunteers were sent out to replace them. So one by one their numbers decreased. Finally in 1981 there was not even one left. Instead, Malaysian students who had returned after studying in Japan, or Japanese residing permanently in Malaysia, began to be employed. Thus, Malaysian teachers teaching Japanese came into existence. Being still young at the present stage, and with little experience, they face many difficulties in starting research and preparing teaching materials, unassisted. Nevertheless, these people have become indispensable. Those teachers who are currently being sent to Malaysia from Japan are not now given full responsibility for running the course. They have now come to have a new function — the function of seeing how the Malaysian teachers will continue in their training in order to lay a solid foundation for the teaching of Japanese in Malaysia. With the training of Japanese teachers of Malaysian origin, the pooling together of efforts will be possible, and gradually a more complete and enriched

Japanese language education will be realized. In future the core of the staff will be Malaysian and it would be good if eventually the Japanese would play the role of consultant or just give assistance.

According to an advertisement inviting applications for foreign language teachers at the University of Malaya Language Centre,¹ anyone wishing to become a Japanese language teacher in Malaysia today should.

- (i) possess at least a Master's degree in Japanese Studies from a University recognized by the Malaysian government,
- (ii) possess experience in teaching Japanese;
- (iii) pass the appropriate government examinations,
- (iv) possess a Pass in Bahasa Malaysia at the Malaysia Certificate of Education (M.C.E.) level (including a Pass in the Oral) or a certificate that is recognized as being equivalent to it.

These are the requirements for the position of Japanese lecturer at the University of Malaya, but the requirements are the same for the other local universities, too. At the moment the University of Malaya is the only place employing Japanese teachers who have fulfilled requirements (i) and (ii), which are directly necessary for Japanese language teaching. There is also another requirement to be considered. From 1983 the teaching at all institutions of higher learning will be carried out in Bahasa Malaysia and Japanese lecturers, too, would have to comply with this ruling. However, there are at the moment only two Japanese language teachers who have fulfilled conditions (iii) and (iv), and only one who has fulfilled all conditions (i) — (iv), and she is at the University of Malaya. And yet she too, since she has received her education in English and Japanese, cannot write research papers and teaching materials in Bahasa Malaysia with ease.

Following are the particulars of the Japanese language staff who are presently employed or who will be employed in the near future:

Nationality. Malaysia. 11 Permanent Japanese Residents: 3; Japanese posted here: 1, Danish. 1 Total. 16

Mother tongue. Bahasa Malaysia. 4; Japanese: 4; English or Chinese: 7, Danish. 1

Language in which education was received Bahasa Malaysia. 1, Japanese: 4, English or Chinese: 10; Danish: 1

Highest qualification.

- M.A. in field related to Japanese: 4;
- M.A. in field not related to Japanese: 4,
- B. Ed. in field related to Japanese: 2,
- B.A. in field not related to Japanese: 4,
- Other: 2.

¹This advertisement appeared in the *New Straits Times*, 4 February, 1980.

Holders of Teacher's Certificate 5 (including holders of the certificate of education related to Japanese 4).

From this it can be seen clearly how different the present period is from the last. With the increased number of Malaysian teachers, important new tasks have arisen. They are as follows: (i) the training of staff in their present jobs, (ii) improving the qualification of staff. And if it is really necessary for Malaysia to have so many Japanese language staff members, (iii) developing teacher training programmes for new staff members, and (iv) establishing research or academic bodies for the future.

Because of the small number of specialists who are Japanese and a shortage of people who know both Japanese and bahasa Malaysia equally well, there is not enough manpower for writing research papers or teaching materials. Thus, the most difficult period lies ahead. Depending on how these problems are tackled now, the transitional period will either continue or pass quickly.

Countermeasures

Organizing Seminars for Staff Members

Very few Japanese language teachers in Malaysia, whether Malaysians or Japanese permanent residents in Malaysia, have participated in seminars since they started teaching Japanese. Almost all of them are from other fields but became Japanese teachers in order to meet the demand. People possessing a teacher's certificate are also few in number. Therefore it is difficult to say that the majority of the teachers have the necessary knowledge or skill in teaching Japanese. As a result there are various problems. People holding a lecturer's position are, besides teaching, required to engage in research. It seems that at present, there is little incentive to write working papers or seminar papers. And again, even if these papers are written there is no opportunity to publish them anywhere, as most of the teachers have little to do with academic societies. Seminars facilitate the exchange of information and discussion of the various problems regarding Japanese language teaching (and, if possible, the solutions to these problems, too). In addition, seminars are useful in helping staff in the preparation of their lectures, and even more, in giving them the chance to present their own research.

In Japan every year the Japan Foundation holds a 7-week seminar for Japanese language lecturers overseas. One or two applicants from Malaysia, too, are invited to participate in this seminar. Again, in the University of Malaya, where sponsored courses on Japanese are held, there is also available a research training programme called "Fellowship for Junior Faculty members and Future University Instructors", lasting from 4 months to 1 year. However, last year, owing to circumstances at the University or for personal reasons, a chance though given was not utilized. Although there are opportunities, because the educational environment in Japan is different from that in Malaysia, it is somehow difficult to use these opportunities effectively. In this respect, too, it is extremely important to have seminars held in Malaysia for Malaysian teachers of Japanese.

In the last 5-6 years, the teachers in the vicinity of Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, with the Visiting Lecturer from Japan Foundation taking the lead, participated in study groups once or twice a month. The meetings of this study group resulted in the compilation of a textbook called *Japanese for Malaysians*, which is presently being used at the University of Malaya and the National University of Malaysia, and now work on the compilation of a Japanese-Bahasa Malaysia dictionary is in progress. Through these activities, some training does take place, but this is limited. In Penang also a Malaysian has been employed since 1981. Some training opportunities are needed there, too. But there is no one who can be contacted for the purpose of exchanging information.

With Japanese being a foreign language, and as such not spoken daily, seminars are necessary in order that the standard already acquired does not fall. The more localized Japanese education becomes the greater will be the need to carry out effective training throughout the year and to set up training plans according to the needs of the individual. Owing to limited human resources, group work is essential in order to effectively carry out the Malaysianization of Japanese language teaching, and the preparation of new teaching materials. Since Malaysia is geographically far from Japanese educational institutions, what is necessary is people who can organize effective seminars that will form a link between Malaysian and Japanese educational institutions.

Improving the Qualifications of the Staff

In order to improve the quality of Japanese language teaching and to fulfil the conditions required by the Malaysian universities, steps must be taken towards upgrading the qualifications of the existing staff. In Malaysian society, where there is a marked difference in conditions of service depending on one's qualifications, whoever is able to wishes to acquire a Master's degree.

At present the University of Malaya is the only university complying with the general requirements for employing staff at Malaysian universities. The other universities have not reached this level. In Malaysia, unlike Japan, when one becomes a permanent staff member one can comparatively easily obtain study leave. Since it is also easy to obtain no-pay-leave, opportunities for studying abroad are various. But unfortunately of the Malaysian staff members teaching Japanese there are only two people who have been made permanent in their jobs. Of these two, one already has a Master's in Japanese Literature; the other foresees the possibility of going to America or Japan on a scholarship from her own university, or on a Japanese government scholarship, to pursue her postgraduate studies in the Japanese language. As for the others, they have various problems such as citizenship, race, and having to pass the Bahasa Malaysia examination which is difficult. It is difficult to secure the position of permanent staff member. Even if a staff member receives a scholarship, he will need great determination in order to resign from his job and go abroad to study as most staff members already have their own families.

The Japanese permanent resident in Malaysia who was in charge of the Japanese language course at the National University of Malaysia when the course first started there, went to Japan after she finished her 3-year contract

with the university. In Japan she entered a Japanese language Master's course and on acquiring her degree returned to Malaysia. There is a possibility of her being employed at the University of Malaya soon, but she wasted a whole year after returning from Japan before she was promised a job.

In order to be able to study without being away from one's family for long and without having to resign from one's job, it would be a good idea to introduce an intensive Master's course, which could be held during the holidays, stretching over some years.

Training Staff for Future Employment

It is of course desirable that the lectures for Japanese language teaching, even if it is in Malaysia, be conducted in Japanese. However, the aims of foreign language education have to be accomplished within a limited number of hours. Within this period teachers should guide the students efficiently until they have acquired a basic knowledge of and ability in the language so that the ones who want to continue with it after graduation, may persevere on their own. If these students have a good foundation in the language when they come across something they do not understand they will be able to seek the aid of dictionaries or reference books.

To accomplish all these aims, the grammatical explanations and clarification of the important items should be given in words they already know. There is a substantial amount of Japanese language teaching materials available in English, but none at all available in bahasa Malaysia yet. As it is expected that students knowing bahasa Malaysia better than English will increase in number from now on teaching materials in bahasa Malaysia are urgently needed.

However, in this respect the present Japanese teaching staff is limited in ability. As mentioned above, there is almost no one who has received his education in bahasa Malaysia. There is not a single person who has acquired both a mastery of bahasa Malaysia and a high standard of Japanese. The Japanese know only a little Malay, while the Malaysians know Japanese and bahasa Malaysia only to a certain extent. This being the state of affairs, both sides are pooling their efforts together in preparing teaching materials. New young people who know both Japanese and bahasa Malaysia equally well are absolutely necessary. Thus, two things are of utmost importance: first, to train people who have bahasa Malaysia as their mother tongue or to train those who have already passed their bahasa Malaysia (M.C.E.) examination, and secondly, to develop new teaching materials for the future.

At the MARA Institute of Technology, because of an intensive six-month course (February to August each year), about six new Japanese language teachers are urgently needed. In addition to this, at the moment there is also the possibility that the National University of Malaysia, the Agriculture University of Malaysia, the MARA Junior Science Colleges and the Language Institute and other such institutions will also need lecturers in Japanese. The recruitment of English teachers, who are available on a wide scale, is based on a long tradition in Malaysia. However, the recruitment of Japanese language staff is based on very different conditions. Retired English language specialists or housewives with previous teaching experience can do as much

teaching as they want to temporarily or on a part-time basis, but the same can hardly be said for Japanese. It is a great mistake to think that being able to speak the language also means being able to teach it. To become a teacher it is necessary to get training as a teacher, and in teaching Japanese it is essential to have competence and a specialized knowledge of the language. If one is not a proper teacher one can only conduct a haphazard Japanese course. If steps are not taken now to get teachers, and to keep them, the prospects for the future will be gloomy. This will take time, but the surest way to achieve these goals would be to train the teachers first.

Establishing Training Organizations and Academic Societies

As mentioned earlier, the organization of seminars for the present working staff if carried out well can develop into meetings of academic societies. It is desirable that a close connection be established between local academic societies and Japanese language educational bodies in Japan so that a smooth exchange of information might be possible between the two. When such links are developed, Japanese language education in Malaysia will be on the right track and the Malaysianization of Japanese language teaching will have reached its goal. Now, before anything else, the setting up of training seminars for the present working staff is the problem, but activities should be planned in such a way that they are linked up with future development.

Some Other Countermeasures

The problems that are being faced at present, and which have been outlined above, can be solved in various ways. With the present conditions being what they are, the following steps are necessary if the problems faced are to be solved in a realistic manner

Training of Staff Abroad

First, this will take time, but it is the most reliable method of securing teachers and improving their quality. In Malaysia since it is not possible to major in Japanese, it is not possible to train teachers within the country. Therefore, students wishing to be Japanese language teachers in future, have no other way than to go to Japan to study. After graduating from universities in Malaysia, these students should do a Master's course or a doctorate in Japanese language and literature in Japan. However, it is impossible for a student who has had only 200 hours of Japanese, no matter how bright he may be, to enter a Master's course in Japanese. Therefore, although I am not very hopeful, it appears that the only way left is for students to be admitted into an undergraduate course in Japan. However, according to the policy of the present Malaysian government, preference is given to applicants in fields related to science and technology, but few opportunities are given to applicants in the field of arts. When thinking about the future of Japanese language education in Malaysia, I feel that people wishing to be Japanese language teachers should be given an opportunity to study in Japan. In future when a system which allows a student to major in Japanese at Malaysian universities is established, students will not need to enter an undergraduate course in Japan. They could directly enter a Master's course there. People who

graduate from universities abroad have little understanding of the circumstances prevailing within Malaysia. They are insensitive to the Malaysian academic world and this attitude seems to restrict their activities in it

These days in Japan, too, the importance of Japanese as a foreign language is being recognized. At several universities there are already various programmes in Japanese as a Foreign Language, and research on Japanese at postgraduate level. Teacher training programmes are also available. There are also various training plans both at the government and private research centres, such as those run by Japan Foundation, and other academic societies. Thus, vigorous training activities are in progress and one can say that the training of Japanese language staff has improved considerably.

Meeting the Demand by Using Staff Sent Out from Japan

Since the demand for Japanese language teachers had suddenly increased unexpectedly, and since there is no time for training teachers to meet this demand, the local institutions are compelled to request the Japanese Government to send teachers to them for the time being, until those that have been sent to Japan for training return (for 2-4 years at the least, and 6-7 years at the most). The process of getting teachers from Japan is time-consuming since the official formalities, however smooth, take more than half a year.

Advertising in English Language Papers in Japan

If job advertisements are placed in the English Language papers in Japan, there should be applicants, as people who have just undergone training in Japanese as a Foreign Language and are about to graduate from the universities in Japan would be looking for jobs.

In Malaysia I hear that they publish advertisements for lecturers' jobs in the newspapers of the Commonwealth countries. This means that people who have studied Japanese in England, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and other Commonwealth countries would apply, but it would be very unusual for Japanese nationals to apply. If Japanese language teachers of Japanese nationality are required, advertisements should also be placed in the English language papers in Japan.

Appointing a Coordinator of Japanese Studies and Training

At present it can be said that there is no one in Malaysia who is in a position to obtain various kinds of information related to Japanese language teaching in an efficient manner. The Japan Information Centre, which is attached to the Japanese Embassy, is at present carrying out work in this area in accordance with the agreement between the two governments. But while there were many JOCV volunteers and other specialists posted abroad 10 years ago, the situation is very different now since only one Japanese language teacher is sent out each year. Thus with the cutting down of volunteers, the system which made various kinds of information of Japanese language teaching readily available in Malaysia is now crumbling away.

Also, since Japanese language teachers are busy conducting their daily lectures, there being many more students in proportion to the number of teachers available, it is difficult for them to cope with the various problems confronting them.

For example, as stated earlier, it is very important to organize seminars for staff members, but there is nobody to take steps in that direction. Since Japanese language teachers are separated by distance from one another, and are not able to get through easily on the telephone, much time and effort is required in order to maintain links with one another.

As a quick and effective strategy for solving the problems facing Japanese language teaching in Malaysia at present, I would like to propose that the post of Co-ordinator of Japanese Studies and Training be set up to improve the standard of Japanese language teaching, and that this person be sent by the Japanese Government. Such a person will be able to organize and carry out seminars and perform the role of an information bureau. Under the existing conditions, since the holiday periods of the different institutions do not coincide the Japanese language teachers have little opportunity to meet altogether. Nevertheless, during the vacation of each institution the co-ordinator mentioned above can visit the institution in order to impart information regarding seminars, or vary out suitable training programmes according to the requirements of that institution.

If there is someone who will take the responsibility for initiating the establishment of academic societies and training organizations and getting them to function, the problems existing at present can be promptly solved in a desirable way.