

Teaching Chinese for Overseas Chinese Students¹

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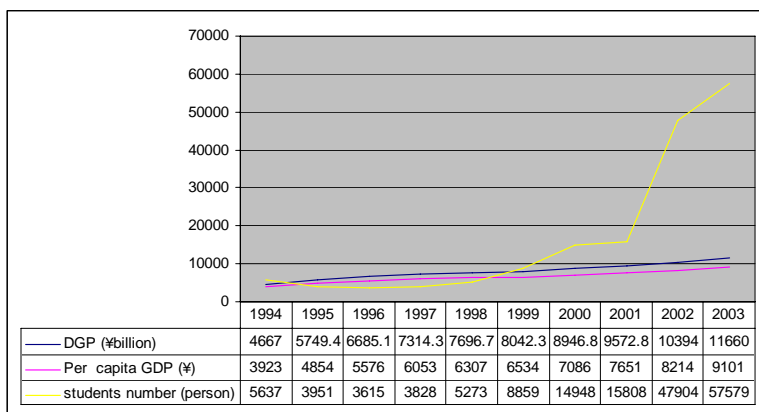
Chinese Abstract

随着大量中国学生出国留学，对外汉语教学的概念有必要重新定义。它不仅应该包括外国学生和海外华人子弟，同时也应该包括那些没有完成一定的中国语言和文化教育大陆出国留学生的汉语教育。

¹. This paper was originally prepared for the World Chinese Conference held in Beijing in July 2005.

While the Australian business community is talking about made-in-China products, Australian university administrators and teaching staff are talking about born-in-China students. Chart 1 below shows that in the past few decades, while Chinese GDP and *per capita* income grew steadily, the number of Chinese students enrolled in Australian universities and schools jumped dramatically.

1. Growth of China's economy and of Chinese students coming to Australia (1994-2003)



Chinese economic data from the website of the Chinese State Statistics Bureau, Figures of Chinese students in Australia from the website of the AEI (Australian Education International) of the DEST.

Rapid economic growth has be regarded as the major force behind this strong growth in student numbers, but there are also other factors that have driven this astonishing increase of Chinese students coming to Australia for education since the

turn of the century. To list a few: improved Australian government services for international students applying for student visas (Yao: 2004); tightened US government policies relating to the issuing of student visas to international students after the September 11 attack (Marginson: 2005, p.10 & Routhwick: 2001); implementation of China's decentralisation policy in the area of education with regard to studying overseas which has lowered, if not eliminated, administrative costs for Chinese students wishing to study abroad (Chinese Ministry of Education: 2003); and China's access to the WTO which has increased the demand for qualified personnel with foreign degrees in almost all areas of economic development (Chen: 2002). It is not the purpose of this paper, however, to give a comprehensive analysis of all factors behind this strong growth of Chinese student enrolments in Australian universities and schools. For academic staff teaching Chinese in Australian tertiary institutions, the greater interest is the impact of this growth on current Chinese language and studies programs in Australian universities.

Traditionally, most Australian universities, Chinese language and studies programs only provide Chinese language and cultural subjects for local non-background students, ABCs (Australian Born Chinese) and, though smaller in number, Chinese background students from other Asian countries.² This paper argues, however, as a result of prolonged high economic growth in China and the Australian government's effort to expand the export of education, Chinese student enrolments in Australian universities have experienced dramatic growth. It is time for Chinese programs in Australian

². I refer here undergraduate programs of Australian universities. For postgraduate programs, situation is different.

universities to restructure their curriculum and provide high level Chinese language and culture programs for international students from the People's Republic of China (PRC).³

At this point, it would be useful to have a brief look at the current state of universities in Australia. It is commonly known that among Australia's higher educational institutions, there are 8 universities, known as the G8,⁴ who receive more than 70% of national competitive research grants and produce over 60% of all Australian university research publications as well as two-thirds of patents.⁵ As one of the G8 universities, Monash University is known for its efforts in the area of internationalisation. The Arts Faculty of Monash University was one of the foundation faculties. According to an international student recruitment organisation – Learning Information Systems, “the Faculty of Arts at Monash University boasts the largest enrolment of higher degree by

³. For the purpose of this paper, the term “non-background students” refers to Australian local students who do not have any Chinese family background and who do not speak Chinese at home.

Wherever the term “Chinese background students” is used, it refers to students with Chinese family background. It mainly includes three types of background students: those from the PRC, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao (or Greater China); those from Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and other countries in the world; and those from Chinese migrant families of Australia. The term “Chinese students” refers exclusively Australia's international students from the PRC.

⁴. Including the University of Adelaide, the Australian National University, the University of Sydney, the University of New South Wales, the University of Melbourne, Monash University, the University of Queensland and the University of Australia.

⁵. See Group of Eight website:
<http://www.go8.edu.au/about/facts.htm>

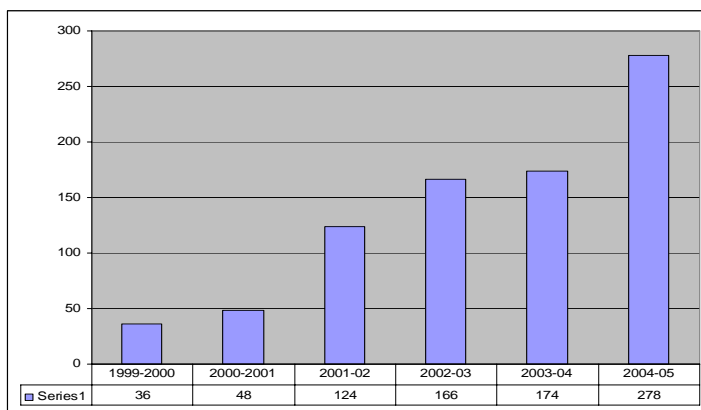
research candidates of any Arts faculty in Australia” (StudyLink International: 2005). In 2003 a national survey conducted by the Department of Education, Science and Training of the Federal Government of Australia (DEST) found that in terms of research publications and research degree enrolments and completions, the School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics of the Monash Faculty of Arts ranked first among similar institutions around the country. Unconfirmed statistics suggest that of all Chinese language programs in Australian universities, the Chinese Studies Program in the Monash Faculty of Arts is arguably the largest in terms of student enrolments in Chinese language studies.⁶ In addition to its Melbourne-based program, the Monash Chinese Studies Program has run a highly successful Chinese Incountry Program since 2001 and has sent a total of more than 700 students to China to study Chinese language, literature, culture, translation and Chinese Internet development studies at our host universities in Beijing and Shanghai in the past four years.

At the Monash Chinese Studies Program, what has attracted our attention in the past few years has been the increased interest in Chinese language and cultural studies, and in particular in our Chinese Incountry Program, among Chinese background students, local and international. For example, in 2004-05, of 606 applications received for the Monash Chinese Incountry Program, student applicants holding Chinese passports accounted for over 55%, added to which a further

⁶. Our statistics suggest that a total of more than 800 students were enrolled in the Monash Chinese Incountry Program and our Melbourne based Chinese Program in the third semester of 2004 and the first semester of 2005.

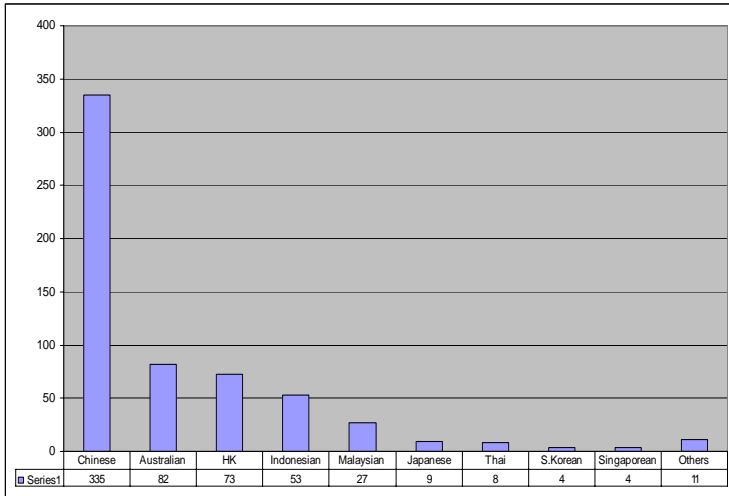
12% of applications were submitted by students from Hong Kong. On top of this, among applications from local Australian students and international students from Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, etc. there were also a considerable number of students who can be identified as Chinese background students from countries other than China.

2. Monash Chinese Incountry Program (2201-2005)



Figures from Monash Chinese Studies Program.

3. Applications received for the Monash Chinese Incountry Program



Figures based on nationality shown on passport of the applicants.

To better understand this phenomenon of large numbers of “Chinese” enrolling in our Chinese program, it would be useful to briefly trace changes in Australian government policy that have affected the Australian educational industry since the late 1980s.

It is widely accepted that “education export” has been one of the most profitable industries for Australia since the 1980s. For the 2003-04 financial year, for example, the total value of Australia’s education exports reached more than \$5.6 billion, making it the third largest service export industry and the

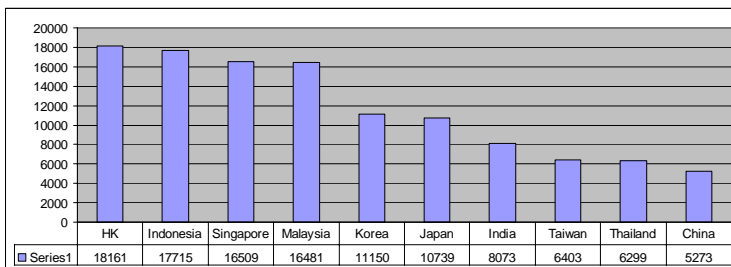
seventh largest individual export for all goods and services (IDP). After the Liberal-National Party Coalition won government in the mid-1990s, a sharp cut in government funding of education has forced Australian tertiary institutions to increase their overseas student recruitment in order to survive.⁷ According to the Monash Institute for the Study of Global Movements, the export of education in Australia “provides universities with 15 per cent of their incomes. International students are now 20 per cent of all enrolled students. This is exceptionally high: the ratio in the UK is 10 per cent, in the USA 4 per cent.” “Between 2001 and 2002 the worldwide number of foreign students grew 15.4 per cent to 1.9 million, while the number in Australian universities rose by 17.7 per cent to 185,000.” “In 2002, Australia was the fourth-largest exporter of education, with 10 per cent of all cross-border students, behind only the USA (30 per cent) and the UK and Germany (12 per cent each).” (Marginson: p.6) A report which recently appeared in an Australian newspaper, the *Age*, said that “Australia's universities have become so financially dependent on foreign students that their viability as major learning and research institutions now hinges entirely on that market” (Jopson & Burke, the *Age*, 7 May, 2005). The *Age* also reported that according to the Federal Education Minister, Australian universities earned about \$1.7 billion of their \$12.4 billion (or 13.7%) revenue from international fee-paying students in 2004 (Jopson & Burke, the *Age*, 7 May, 2005). Another Australian newspaper, the *Australian*, goes even further to claim that “international student numbers in

⁷. It is reported that as of August 2003, Howard Government has cut \$5 billion from Australian universities since 1996. Australian National University, “Education Speaks Out”, <http://www.katelundy.com.au/Higheed.htm>.

Australia could increase more than sevenfold to 850,000 by 2025, providing an export windfall of up to \$56 billion a year” (the *Australian*, 29 October, 2003). And “In the most optimistic scenario, international students will far outnumber domestic students” (Buckell, the *Australian*, 29 October, 2003).

The implications of growing international student enrolments in Australian universities have been a topic of heated debate among academics, educational administrators and government officials and will likely continue to be so. No one can deny, however, that as a result of commercialisation and globalisation of the education industry in Australia, and as prolonged economic growth in China and other Asian countries continues, the number of international students enrolled in Australian educational institutions will most likely remain high. According to Australian government statistics, among all the countries in the world, Asian countries have been a major source of Australia’s international student intake since the later 1990s.

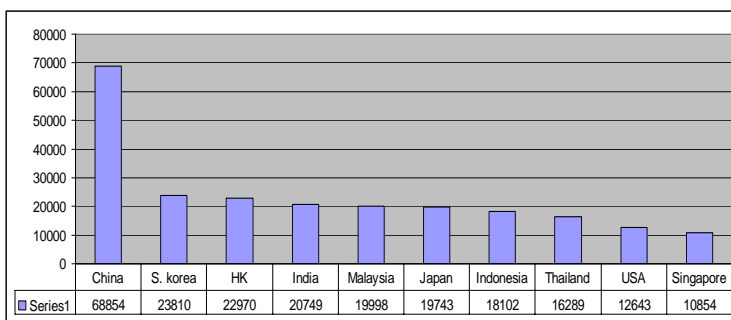
4. Top 10 source countries of Australia’s international students (1998)



Figures from the website of the DEST:
http://aei.dest.gov.au/AEI/MIP/Statistics/StudentEnrolmentAndVisaStatistics/2000/2000_01_pdf.pdf

More importantly, of all major source countries of Australia's international students, students from China registered the fastest growth between 1998 and 2004. International students from Greater China (mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao) accounted for nearly 42% of total international students in 2004. According to DEST, in 1998, China was the last among the top ten source countries. By 2002, the number of international students from China increased by 3 times compared with the previous year and jumped to number one among the top ten source countries. It has remained there ever since. In 2004, the number of international students from China increased to more than ten times that of 1998 and accounted for nearly one third of all international students from all of the top ten sources countries.

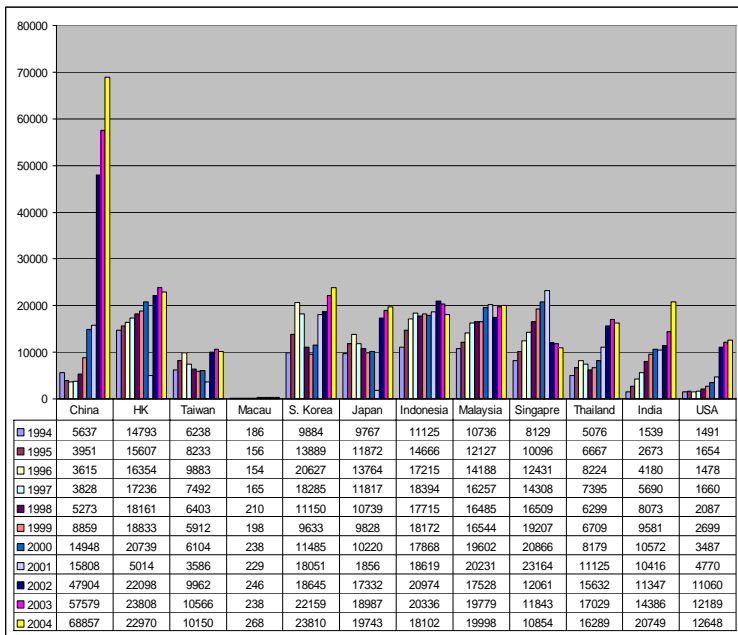
5. Top 10 source countries of Australia's international students (2004)



DEST:

http://aei.dest.gov.au/AEI/MIP/Statistics/StudentEnrolmentAndVisaStatistics/Recent_TableA_pdf.pdf.

6. Growth trend of international student enrolment in Australia (1994-2004)



Data from, DEST:

<http://aei.dest.gov.au/AEI/MIP/Statistics/StudentEnrolmentAndVisaStatistics/default.htm>.

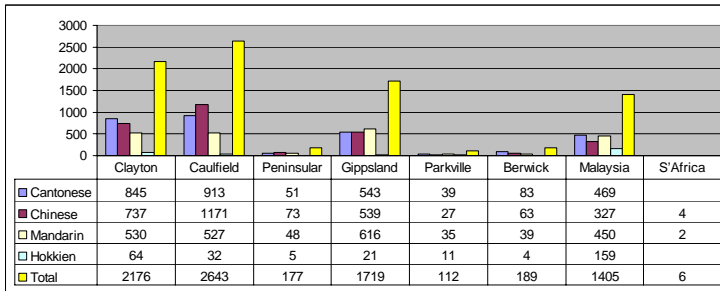
The impact of the large number of Chinese background student enrolments in Australian universities can also be seen

seen from student enrolment data from Monash University. According to Marginson, of 19 Australian universities under investigation, Monash had the largest international student numbers (Marginson: p.7).⁸ As of 31 March 2004, international students accounted for nearly 29% (14,185) of total Monash student enrolments. Among Monash's international students, 56% (8,472) were from families who speak various kinds of Chinese language. Except for Monash University's South Africa campus, Chinese speakers accounted for more than half of the international student population of all campuses.⁹

7. Chinese speakers among international students at Monash

⁸ . Marginson suggests that in 2003, Monash had 15,996 international students, who generated A\$138.3 million revenue to Monash finance and accounted for 17.9% of all university revenue. p. 8.

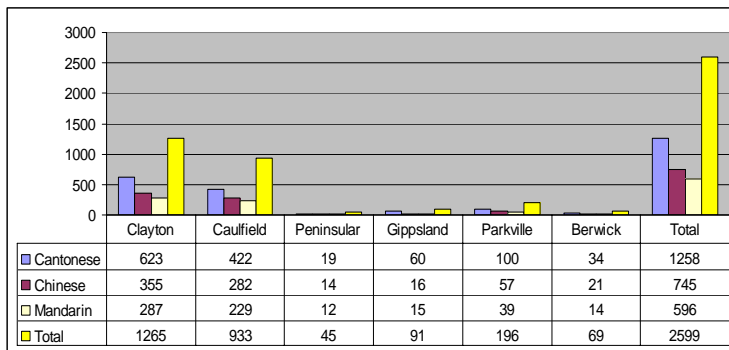
⁹ . Monash Statistics Service, <http://www.planning.monash.edu.au/statistics/enrol/2004/Campus/Al1/enrol-mar31-campus-t1.11.pdf>. Also Monash Statistics Service, <http://www.planning.monash.edu.au/statistics/students/>. As of 31 March 2004, there were 15,032 international students among Monash's 51,926 student total.



All figures from Monash Statistics Service,
www.planning.monash.edu.au/statistics/.

Among local Australian students who enrolled at Monash University as of March 2004, there were 2,599 students or 5% of the total students who have been identified by Monash University as Chinese speakers, namely, those who speak various kinds of Chinese language at home.

8. Chinese speakers among domestic students at Monash



Figures from Monash Statistics Service,
www.planning.monash.edu.au/statistics/.

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, Monash Chinese Studies Program, like many similar programs in other Australian universities, used to offer Chinese language teaching units only for local non-background students or local Chinese background students with limited Chinese language proficiency. In the 1990s, there were only two Chinese language streams, each having three levels (over three years) of Chinese language learning for undergraduate students doing a major or minor in Chinese. The first stream was for students without any prior Chinese language education and the second for students who had completed high school VCE (Victoria Certificate of Education) Chinese. We did not offer any Chinese language unit suitable for international students with strong Chinese language background, especially those from Greater China, on the ground that our teaching units were designed mainly to provide very basic Chinese language

training. Background students from Greater China had a Chinese language proficiency level too high for us to accommodate.

Interestingly, China has a similar view regarding teaching Chinese for non-Chinese students. According to 《中国大百科全书》 (*Chinese Encyclopaedia*), “对外汉语教学是指对外国人的汉语教学” (“对外汉语教学” means teaching “Chinese for foreigners”). In his book, Zhao Jinmin agrees with this definition about teaching Chinese for non-Chinese students, but adds that teaching “Chinese for foreigners” should include the teaching of Chinese for overseas Chinese whose first language is not Chinese (Zhao: 2004).¹⁰ This paper argues that the above definition of the concept “对外汉语教学” may need to be reconsidered as some important changes have occurred in recent years.

In their paper published in the *China Quarterly*, David Zweig and others found that unlike in the 1980s and 1990s, when Chinese students went overseas to pursue “higher standard of living in the West” and “higher levels of remuneration” for what essentially may be the same level of effort and contributions, there appears to be what the authors of this paper have called a “reverse brain drain” in recent years (Zweig: 2004: pp. 736, 741). According to the paper, “changes in the global political economy and in China’s national and local political economy have an enormous impact on the perceived value of returnees and the opportunities available to them, generating new incentives for them to return to China or to participate actively from overseas in China’s economic

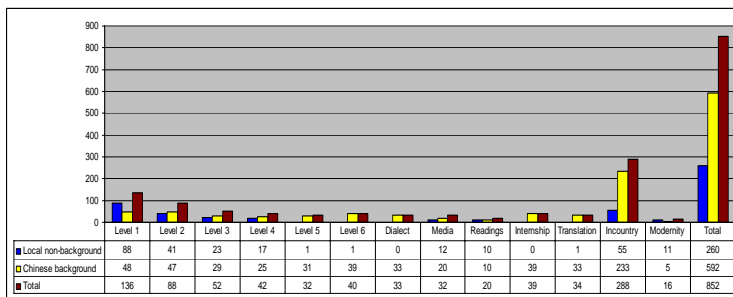
¹⁰. Citation of the Chinese Encyclopaedia is also from Zhao.

development.” The authors believe that “individuals who increase their knowledge overseas and establish global networks, particularly if they have developed skills which are in great demand within their home society or are especially valued by the home government, may find that they can have more rapid mobility, receive greater financial rewards and increase their social status, if they return home. They may also find more fulfilling lives and a greater sense of job satisfaction” (Zweig: 2004: p. 737). For those Chinese parents who have enough savings but who are not confident about their children passing university entrance examination in China, Australia, due to its relatively low cost, security, quality and consistency of standards and, in recent years, changes in immigration regulations (Burke & *et al*: 2005: p. 14), has become one of the best destinations for their children to study abroad.

Indeed, there are more and more Chinese overseas students who still believe that a foreign degree may help them to find a decent job back in China. But returning to China with relatively poor Chinese language skills will certainly not help them to compete in an increasingly competitive domestic job market. According to our statistics, of the 606 students who applied for the 2004-05 Monash Chinese Incountry Program, Chinese students accounted for 55% (335) of the total number. Of 335 Chinese student applicants, 251 of them were required to do a placement test and interview. The results of the tests and interview data indicate that only 40 of them, or 15.9%, had completed their secondary education or had started tertiary education in China before coming to Australia. 210 of them, or 83.8% of the total number, had not finished their secondary education before coming to Australia. In terms of their level of language education in China, these Chinese school kids can

hardly be regarded as adequately qualified students by Chinese standards. Apart from economic reasons, the growing nationalistic sentiment among Chinese students in recent years has also pushed these students to improve their Chinese. It is therefore understandable that as Chinese student enrolments increase, there has been a corresponding increase in demand by these students to continue their Chinese language learning in Australian universities and to bring their language skills up to a level that can match that of a Chinese university graduate in order to compete with their domestic counterparts in China's employment market. In fact, even in our Melbourne based Chinese language program, in advanced Chinese language units like Chinese Translation, Chinese Professional Language Internship and the advanced main stream Chinese language units Chinese 9 to 12, Chinese background students and students from China constitute the majority of enrolments. The higher the Chinese language level is, the larger the Chinese background student group is. It is no exaggeration to say that the demand for Chinese language teaching at Monash University has expanded well beyond our traditional pattern of teaching Chinese for non-background students.

10. Current Monash Chinese Studies Program Enrolment at Clayton Campus (1st Semester, 2005)



Figures from Monash Chinese Studies Program.

Even for those Chinese students who wish to remain in Australia permanently, in addition to favourable factors such as greater recognition of qualifications acquired in Australia, removal of the requirement for work experience, permission for international students to seek to migrate without returning home, and additional points for higher-level qualifications (Burke & *et al*: p13), the Australian government also stipulates that being fluent in another language (i.e. Chinese) as well as in English may be an advantage. According to government information on General Skilled Migration, international students may be awarded bonus points if they are fluent in one of Australia's community languages (other than English) with "professional level language skills (written or oral) as evidenced by a qualification (of equivalent standard to an Australian degree) gained from a university where the instruction language was in one of the listed languages (including Chinese) or by accreditation with the National Accreditation Authorities for Translation and Interpretation (NAATI) at the professional level (translation/interpretation

level)”¹¹ This explains why Chinese Translation has become popular among Chinese students.

For the Chinese government, offering continuing Chinese language and cultural teaching for overseas Chinese students is also strategically important for its modernisation process. This is a task that the Chinese government cannot afford to ignore. According to the Ministry of Education of the PRC, between 1978 and 2003, about 702,000 Chinese students went overseas to study (Chinese Ministry of Education: 2004).¹² In 2003 alone, 71,562 Chinese students went overseas (Chinese Ministry of Education: 2004). Between 1978 and 2003, about 172,800 students returned to China. As of February 2003, there were about 356,600 Chinese students studying overseas (Chinese Ministry of Education: 2003). It is interesting to note that during a press conference, the spokesperson for the Chinese Ministry of Education revealed that as of 2003, 81% of the academicians and 91% of the project coordinators of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, 54% of the academicians of the Chinese Engineering Academy, 58% of PhD supervisors (45 years old or older), and over 50% of the presidents of the Chinese universities directly administered by the Ministry were Chinese scholars who had returned from studying overseas (Chinese Ministry of Education: 2004). In the article mentioned above, Zweig and others suggest that, based on their survey, in almost all crucial areas of Chinese economic globalisation, such as attracting foreign investment, importing

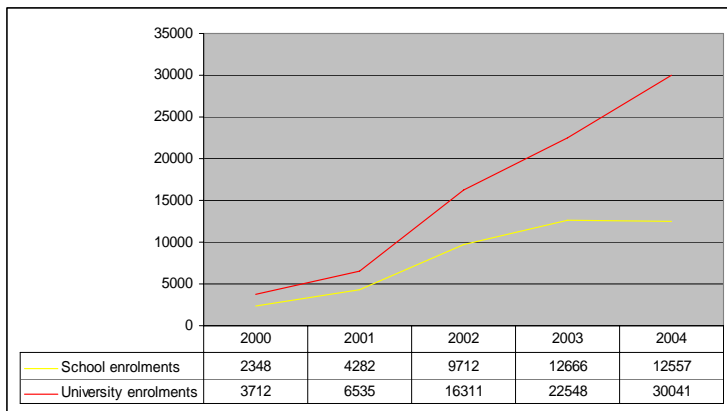
¹¹ . Information from Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, *General Skilled Migration*, p. 47, as of July 2005, <http://www.immi.gov.au/allforms/booklets/1119.pdf>.

¹² . Latest statistics show that by February 2005, a total of 814,884 Chinese students went 109 countries in the world between 1978 and 2004. <http://www.jsj.edu.cn/dongtai/035.html>

advanced technologies, establishing international networks, exporting goods and services, etc., Chinese students who had returned from overseas usually performed better than domestically trained scholars (Zweig: pp. 751, 753).

The above mentioned Chinese returnees were largely Chinese students who had completed at least secondary education before going overseas. We should not ignore the fact that in recent years, there have also been a large number of Chinese students who have not completed their secondary education before coming to Australia. Statistics suggest that although there has been a decline in Chinese student enrolments in Australian schools compared with university enrolments, the total number of Chinese students enrolled in Australian schools between 2000 and 2004 was still very high, a total of 41,565 over five years.

9. Chinese students enrolled in Australian universities and schools (2000-2004)



Figures from DEST,
<http://aei.dest.gov.au/AEI/MIP/Statistics/StudentEnrolmentAndVisaStatistics/Recent.htm>. Total number is my calculation.

It is self-evident that as China becomes increasingly involved in the globalisation process, competition for qualified personnel will inevitably become a decisive factor for China's ambitious strategic goal of modernisation. For cultural, linguistic and other reasons, overseas Chinese students shall continue to be one of the most important sources of human capital for China in the foreseeable future. Apart from Chinese students enrolled in Australian universities, we should also pay adequate attention to students enrolled in Australian schools. In fact, these school students usually stay longer than Chinese students enrolled directly in Australian universities. Their understanding of Australian society, culture and the education system sometimes is also better than those who come directly into Australian tertiary system. Without adequate Chinese language programs at university level it is hard to image how these Chinese school kids can improve their Chinese proficiency level enough to be able to communicate effectively when they return to China.

On the other hand, developing and improving high level Chinese teaching programs in Australian tertiary institutions is also in the interest of Australia. There is little doubt that China is one of the key players in maintaining regional peace and stability. Australia cannot afford to ignore a waking giant in its neighborhood. In trade and economic terms, China is now Australia's third largest trading partner and Australia ranks as China's 13th largest trading partner. In a media release published immediately after Australia and China signed the Australia-China Trade and Economic Framework in October

2003, Australia's Minister for Trade, Mark Vaile said that China "has made tremendous progress toward establishing a fully fledged market-based economy and has emerged as an important regional and global economic player. Our commercial relationship with China is expanding more rapidly than with any other major trading partner. Australia-China two-way merchandise trade has almost trebled since 1996-97 to be worth in excess of \$22 billion in 2002-03."¹³ By June 2003, China had invested a total of \$2.2 billion in Australia while Australia had invested \$1.2 billion in China. As economic and other relations between the two countries expand rapidly, an increase in the demand for more professionally trained personnel with high levels of language communication skills in both Chinese and English will be inevitable. In addition to our local non-background students, Chinese students who have been trained in Australian universities to develop advanced level language skills should also play a significant bridging role between the two countries. It is not too hard to image that in addition to local Australians with high levels of language proficiency, today's Chinese students in Australian universities may become our most important link with China in the future.

Unfortunately, however, the importance of teaching high level Chinese for overseas Chinese students seems not to have been adequately addressed by either Australia or China.¹⁴ At least

¹³ . Media Release of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, 24 October 2003, "Australia-China Trade and Economic Framework", www.trademinister.gov.au/releases/2003/mvt085_03.html.

¹⁴ . During his press conference, an official from Chinese Ministry of Education said that "according to the regulations of the Department of Culture and Education of the State Council, formulated in 1950

not all universities in Australia are aware of this new and growing market and its implications for our future relationship with one of the most important political, economic and military powers in the Asia-Pacific region, if not in the world. Not all Chinese language programs in Australian universities are adequately equipped, academically, culturally or administratively, to deal with this new situation. There are two main problems that need our immediate attention.

First, as mentioned above, many existing Chinese language teaching curricula in Australian universities were designed for local non-background Chinese students or local background students with limited Chinese language proficiency and limited knowledge of Chinese culture. The course outlines, teaching materials, methods of assessment, etc. are not suitable for the teaching of Chinese students.

Second, it is also important to note that due to language and cultural differences, communication problems between teaching and administrative staff in Australian universities and international students, misunderstandings and even tensions between the two sides may cause some serious problems for both Chinese background students and university authorities.

and implemented up to 1990, the definition of self-funded overseas students should refer to those who have completed high school education and who go overseas for undergraduate or higher degrees. The so called young overseas students of 18 years of age or younger shall not be referred to as overseas students”, The Fourth Press Conference of the Ministry of Education, “A situation report on study abroad in 2004”, February 16, 2004, <http://www.moe.edu.cn/>. I would think it inappropriate to not regard Chinese students attending high school overseas as Chinese overseas students as many of them will eventually enrol in universities.

International students from China and other Asian countries are usually targets of media reports about the decline of teaching quality of some Australian universities.

In the past few years, the Monash Chinese Studies Program has been watching this changing market very closely and we have tried to re-position ourselves to meet the challenges of this new market situation. It is our strong belief that while continuing to provide quality Chinese language teaching for our traditional non-background students, we also need to target the new market presented by the Chinese students and to provide high level Chinese language teaching courses which will bring our Chinese language teaching to a level that should be equivalent to the level of language teaching at a Chinese university. This is, of course, a very challenging task for both university academic and administrative staff. Since the late-1990s the Monash Chinese Studies Program has carried out a number of changes. We have established some new Chinese language teaching units, such as the advanced main stream Chinese language and literature units (Chinese 9-12), the Chinese Professional Language Internship, and Chinese Translation (undergraduate) and are preparing to establish a Masters of Translation Studies (Chinese Stream). At the same time, we have re-programmed some existing Chinese teaching units, such as Chinese Media Studies and the Chinese Incountry Program to accommodate an increasing demand for high level Chinese language learning by Chinese students.

Secondly, we have introduced some new methods and new modes of teaching. In addition to our highly successful Chinese Incountry Program where we send students of all levels to Chinese host universities in Beijing and Shanghai to undertake highly intensive Chinese language, cultural and

translation programs, we have introduced Internet-based Chinese language units, such as Chinese Media Studies and Chinese Internship, where students are required to use their language skills in combination with Internet technology to search, translate and analyze news reports by major Chinese and western online media; we have worked with Melbourne based Chinese language newspapers and a local Chinese community radio station to publish and live-broadcast in Chinese, on weekly basis, student analytical pieces on western media reports on China, Australia and other parts of the world; we also organize students participating in the Chinese Internship to interview local figures, such as Australian politicians, and then publish their reports in local Chinese language newspapers.

Thirdly, in order to provide high level Chinese teaching for background students, the Monash Chinese Studies Program has compiled purpose-designed teaching materials for its advanced level Chinese language teaching units. For Chinese 9 and 10, master pieces of great modern Chinese writers, such as Lu Xun, Lao Shen Chongwen, Mao Dun, etc. have been adapted and compiled into course materials. For Chinese 11 and 12, novels published by well-known post-Mao writers, such as Su Tong, Yu Hua, Mo Yan, etc. have been selected. The course outlines of these two main stream Chinese language units require students not only to understand the literary merits of these modern and contemporary master pieces of Chinese literature, but more importantly, through the study of Chinese literature, they are required to learn to adopt a critical approach to the social, political and cultural issues of contemporary China reflected in these literature works. This is not a mere process of studying Chinese language. It is also a

process of looking at Chinese issues from different perspectives.

By providing such high level Chinese language teaching units, the Monash Chinese Studies Program is able to attract a considerable number of Chinese students in addition to our traditional local students. Statistics suggest that compared with last year, total student enrolments have increased by 23%. When students come to the Monash Chinese Studies Program, we not only pay attention to the improvement of their language skills and their knowledge of China, we also teach Chinese in the way that is required by western scholarship. A survey conducted by Marginson shows that when asked whether English creates difficulties for you in your academic work, 65 students from China answered “yes”; when asked whether you have experienced periods of loneliness or isolation in Australia, only 55% international students from China said “yes”, which is lower than students from Indonesia (80%) and Malaysia (75), and even lower than English-speaking Indian students (60%) (Simon Marginson: p. 10). This may suggest that despite their language difficulties, international students from China seem to adapt themselves to Australian environment better than those from other Asian countries. It is therefore understandable that when put in an environment where language is no longer a barrier for these students, they will quickly understand university’s requirements for academic progress and will improve their study methodology more effectively. This may in turn help them to improve their studies in their home faculties and help them to communicate more effectively with their home faculty teaching staff.

Conclusion

Our brief investigation above suggests that as a result of a large number of Chinese students coming to Australia in recent decades, the demand for high level Chinese language learning by these students has also increased. Tertiary institutions in Australia should take this trend seriously and enhance current Chinese language teaching programs in order to accommodate this newly emerging market demand. The Australian government should also encourage Chinese students who come to Australia before completing their secondary education in China to continue their Chinese language and culture studies in Australia. Governments and universities should help these students to improve and develop their Chinese language skills to the extent that these students will be competitive in the Chinese job market should they return to China after completing their degrees at Australian universities. These Australian educated Chinese students, with their professional knowledge acquired in Australia, their understanding of Australian society, its people and culture, should help Australia to improve its relationship with China and consequently to expand Australia's influence on a fast growing superpower and to develop Australia's friendly relations with China in all areas. For those Chinese students who want to stay in Australia permanently after completing their tertiary education in Australia, their professional language skills in Chinese, their understanding of contemporary China can be very beneficial for the Australian government and business community when dealing with China.

On the other hand, it is also very important for the Chinese government to understand that continuous Chinese language teaching for Chinese overseas students is of great significance

in terms of China attracting qualified and talented people for its modernisation process in the 21st century. The Chinese government should pay adequate attention to the teaching of Chinese for its young overseas students (*xiao liuxuesheng*) who have not completed their secondary education before going overseas. It may be inappropriate to not regard these young overseas students as part of the government's officially recognised category of overseas Chinese students. Many of them will eventually enrol in tertiary institutions after completing their secondary education overseas and become officially recognised overseas Chinese students. The concept of 对外汉语教学 should therefore be redefined as the teaching of Chinese for foreigners, overseas Chinese whose first language is not Chinese and Chinese students studying abroad who have not completed secondary education before going overseas.

Secondly, the teaching of Chinese in overseas countries and foreign universities is different in many ways to the teaching of Chinese in a Chinese university. Even among foreign universities, Chinese programs vary significantly from country to country and from university to university. A careful investigation into the characteristics of Chinese teaching programs in foreign countries should be carried out before any concrete plans or cooperation with foreign institutions with regard to the teaching of Chinese abroad can be worked out. It is also important to note that apart from issues relating to the teaching of Chinese to foreigners and to Chinese overseas students, there are also non-language, non-teaching issues that should be factored into any consideration related to the strategic planning of teaching Chinese overseas. The strategy to promote Chinese in order to enhance mutual understanding between China and foreign countries, between Chinese and

foreign peoples, between Chinese and foreign cultures should be a long term one. As Confucius warned, “The desire for quick results may lead to no results; A focus on the minor may be at the expense of the major” Those who are building institutes in the name of Confucius should remember the warning of their master.

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