

## JAPANESE STUDIES ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE AND SURVEY

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On behalf of the National Library I attended the Fifth National Conference of the Japanese Studies Association of Australia (JSAA) under the title of "War and the Japanese", held at Griffith University from 27th to 30th August, 1987. This is a brief report on the conference and a survey of Japanese library collections and services in Australia, which I undertook on my own responsibility in order to evaluate the usefulness of our reader services.

The Conference programme was as follows:

### Panels

Panel A	Prisoners of war
Panel B	The Japanese occupation of Asia (I)
Panel C	The Japanese occupation of Asia (II)
Panel D	War in Japanese literature
Panel E	War and the Japanese language
Panel F	Japanese defence policy
Panel G	Japan-Australia relations and the war
Panel H	Scientists and war
Panel I	Labour and the war
Panel J	Ideology and war (I)
Panel K	Ideology and war (II)
Panel L	Japanese religion.

### Symposium and discussion

In each panel, after a couple of panelists had read their papers there were questions and discussion. Most panelists were Japanologists resident in Australia, including Japanese, but there were a few scholars from Japan, the United States and West Germany as well.

Every night after dinner, the Symposium and animated discussion continued with a large audience. The schedule set by the convenors was so tight that I found it a little hard; but I was very interested in the subjects of almost all the panels which provided many suggestions about the present situation and level of Japanese studies in Australia.

As the title of each panel shows, this conference, in fact, dealt with comprehensive and interdisciplinary subjects from the global point of view and made it possible to grasp a complete historical image of war; because the conference was planned to have no sectional meetings, all attendants joined in the discussions on the various topics. On the other hand, a number of conferences held in Japan are apt to have an exclusive attitude and seldom include a chance to discuss the war. In this sense this conference has had epoch-making significance, not only for Australians but also for the Japanese, though held in a foreign country.

In each panel, recent investigations have thrown light upon the previously unknown actual conditions during the war, and the meaning of the war is under question anew:

- Why did Japan and the Japanese go to war?
- What did Japan and the Japanese do during the war?
- What has the war brought to Japan and the Japanese?
- What legacies have the war and its aftermath left behind in the course of development pursued by Japan over the past decade or so?
- What should Japan and the Japanese do in order to avoid war in future?

A clear answer, however, I think was not given to these questions. It might be better to say that an opportunity to learn a good lesson from the war, to inherit its legacies was given by advancing various new theories and opinions from many viewpoints.

### Survey

I took this opportunity to gather some information from conference participants through a questionnaire designed in a concentrated way to ascertain the present situation of Japanese studies and Japanese collections in Australia. The questionnaire consists of eleven questions: special interests of the participants, their organisational affiliations, Japanese library holdings, experience in using our section in the National Library, the successes and the problems of Japanese holdings in our section, the demands on our section, the demands on the librarian seconded from the National Diet Library (NDL), etc.

The number of full-time attendants was about 80; 60%, or 50 people, seemed to be Japanologists resident in Australia including Japanese; as I have received 19 returns to date, the response rate to the questionnaire can be seen as 40%.

All the Japanologists in Australia were not represented at the conference, so the survey must lack comprehensiveness. However, it has been a rare experience, for me at any rate, to hear for the first time the voices of the National Library's users from all over the country.

A rough analysis of the results of the survey and user opinion is as follows:

1. Respondents	
Number of respondents	19
Organisational affiliation	
university	17
other tertiary educational institution	2
Employment	
teacher	12
research worker	2
student	5

2.	Rating of the Japanese collection in the library of organisational affiliation	
	excellent	2
	good	2
	fair	9
	poor	6
3.	Experience in using the NLA's Asian Collections Section	
	visits	12
	reference	6
	inter-library loan	15
	never use	2
4.	Rating of the Japanese collection at NLA	
	excellent	5
	good	6
	fair	3
	poor (literature in particular)	1
	some comments	2
	no comment	2
5.	Opinion of library services of Japanese Collection at NLA	
	satisfactory	12
	unsatisfactory	2
6.	Frequency of visiting libraries in Japan	
	at least once a year	6
	every couple of years	9
	never	3
7.	Awareness of secondment of a librarian from NDL to NLA	
	yes	10
	no	9

#### User opinion and comments

##### 1. Holdings of materials in other libraries

Most respondents want their institutions' libraries to acquire materials concerning their specialities to support their studies.

Generally speaking, the collection of every university seems to be poor; it is necessary, therefore, that NLA should investigate user interests and respond to them to some extent in the place of other libraries.

##### 2. Need for improvement

The tyranny of distance becomes the most important problem here too. I would like to achieve the entering of retrospective data into ABN as soon as possible, so that the total NLA Japanese collection can be available through computer terminals everywhere.

There is a reader who wants our section to subscribe to some new titles recently published, such as Boisu and Shokun. It

would be difficult in a period when cancellation is common, but it might be necessary to re-check the subscription of periodicals for new requests like this and cancel others.

I hope every institution will acquire a set of fundamental tools, Japanese periodicals indexes in particular, if possible. At the same time, it goes without saying that I must promote the development of the system of international exchange of publications so that NLA will be able to acquire all government publications, not only national but also local.

For effective co-operation between ANU and NLA in a shared acquisitions policy for Japanese materials, ANU ought also to publish a list of recent acquisitions like the Current Awareness Bulletins (CABs), compiled by the Japanese Collection at NLA. I hope that ANU and NLA will discuss this matter at a senior staff level, and that a combined CAB will be compiled in co-operation between the two libraries.

### 3. Librarian from National Diet Library

I was relieved to hear some words of appreciation for the reference work carried out by the librarian from NDL, but there are quite a few more demands on him/her, for example, current bibliography.

As far as current bibliography is concerned, there is a choice either to ask each library to purchase the Japanese National Bibliography weekly list or Shuppan nenkan, or to promote the development of the international exchange system; in the latter case, we have to seek help from the Ministry of Education and the Japan Foundation.

One respondent wanted the librarian from NDL to assist in setting up a computer-based catalogue, but ABN is already operating, so I have to apply more of my energies to entering bibliographic data. At the same time, I hope that a multi-character data processing system will be realized in NLA at an early stage and then our Japanese database, not only in name but in reality, will be completed. I would be happy if my experience in participating in JAPAN MARC was put to practical use for this purpose.

I expect to complete a paper in the near future based on a finer analysis than in this report. To do so might require a more comprehensive survey on a larger scale and adequate preparation beforehand.

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