

# THE LIBRARIES UPSTAIRS: A VISIT TO SOME LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION CENTRES IN TOKYO

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## Introduction

As part of a trip to Japan, I visited five libraries in Tokyo on 7 and 8 October 1993. There I met Kaoru Nakajima, who is now a senior librarian in the Serials Department of the National Diet Library (NDL) and who worked in the National Library of Australia (NLA) from 1989 to 1992 as part of our exchange arrangement with the National Diet Library. Kaoru helped me very greatly in organising the visits and in accompanying me on the visits away from the National Diet Library. These visits have provided me with a good overview of a number of libraries and information centres in Tokyo. I believe that it would be beneficial to develop our relationships with these libraries. In the longer term, I expect that we will be able to set up a variety of closer contacts.

Australia's increasing role in the region was understood and the interest of Australian academics and politicians in Japan is known. With the continued development of information technology, we have the opportunity to access information in Japan as never before. There is potential for closer cooperation between the National Library of Australia and Japanese libraries. In particular, NLA should consider closer contacts with the National Centre for Science Information Systems (NACSIS) as there are mutual interests in aspects of database planning and networking.

## Promotional videos

At the National Diet Library, the Japan Information Centre of Science and Technology (JICST) and NACSIS, good quality promotional videos were shown, providing an overview of the aims of the organisations. They were fairly straightforward in content and contained information which would not date. Their length ranged from ten to fifteen minutes. Australian libraries could make use of videos like these, both for staff training and for visitors.

## Use of Internet

Although the National Diet Library makes no use of Internet at present and it appears that academics in Japan use it more than librarians, there is potential for developing contacts and the use of Internet with Japanese librarians and organisations such as NACSIS and JICST.

## National Diet Library

I was greeted by the Librarian, Mr Katogi, the Deputy Librarian, Mr Fujita. Mr Ito, Chief, International Relations Division, Kaoru Nakajima and Mrs M Harano, Chief, International Relations Branch. Mrs Chiyo of the International Relations Division. then showed me around the library building. The points of interests are outlined below.

Stacks in the 1986 Annexe of the NDL building have good passive environmental features, being built down into the ground with a basement eight storeys deep. Concrete has been used a great deal. The air conditioning is turned off at 7.00 pm but the temperature (22° C) and humidity (55 percent) remain constant.

The Siemens book delivery system for integrated horizontal and vertical movement has many good features, being almost silent. The book containers are made of heavy duty plastic with a wide buffer of soft materials surrounding the top of each book bucket (called book trays).

The book trays, which have a similar capacity to the National Library of Australia's, are somewhat squarer on the bottom and hold two piles of A4 materials. The trays are wheeled around the stacks as they are filled with books rather like laundry trolleys. The book trays can be pushed onto rollers on the conveyer belts quite easily. The system is computer controlled. The system is certainly impressive.

Call slips are sent to the many stacks via pneumatic tubes, very similar to those of the NLA. Again their movement was very quiet.

### Registration of readers and printing of call slips with readers' ID numbers

Two types of reader registration are provided: day reader tickets to those aged 20 years plus and long term readers tickets for researchers. Researchers are provided with extra services such as longer hours or access to reference collections. Readers' tickets are like magnetised credit cards. They are inserted into printers to print out blank call slips; the readers' registration numbers are printed out as a bar code on the side of the call slip. The bar codes on the call slips are used for book control within the building. Books are not security-tagged but this is being considered as a means of reducing book loss. One, two or three call slips can be printed out at a time as the reader requests. Readers still fill out call slips by hand but there are plans to automate this. Online catalogue data is available for many of their more modern collections. The Diet Library, like most general reference libraries, finds that demand from in-house users is very great. In over-busy periods, the system is closed down or the number of books readers can request is reduced. Readers are restricted in the number of books they can request.

### Long-term storage

NDL is considering transferring its 'scitech' collection to a new annexe near Osaka in the Kansai district. This could be located in a science park which is to be built there. The move could take place in 10 years' time.

No on-line services are provided for the general public. They are referred to a private consultancy.

### JAPAN MARC

I spoke to Mr Mikio Wanaka, Assistant Section Head, Books Department and Mr Tokiyuki Sugiyama, Information Processing Division, who said that there was some delay in the contract for the supply of JAPAN MARC to the Library of Congress. The National Diet Library is to receive a licence fee of ¥200,000 per annum from each bibliographic utility that uses JAPAN MARC. The Library of Congress is to start distribution of JAPAN MARC in LC CJK format from September 1993.

### Japan periodical index on CD-ROM

The index will be issued in March 1994. The distribution is not yet settled. I have asked that we receive details as it is highly desirable that the index should be available in Australia.

### **National Centre for Science Information Systems**

Kaoru Nakajima and I spent three hours at NACSIS. We saw their systems demonstrated briefly and heard about their overseas operations at the British Library and JIS in London and the Library of Congress and the National Science Foundation in the United States. Miss Yukio Furata, International Affairs Section, showed us around. Professor Akira Miyazawa then spoke to us as their Director-General, Dr Hiroshi Inoue, was in the US until the end of October. NACSIS performs the role of various bodies in Australia and its cataloguing, interlibrary loan and information retrieval systems are the Japanese equivalent of ABN and OZLINE and its encouragement of networking by universities similar to the Australian Vice Chancellors' Committee, the Committee of Australian University Libraries (CAUL) and the National Library.

### Internet

NACSIS provides e-mail which is used by academics much more than libraries. The NACSIS e-mail system uses a protocol developed before TCP/IP. Professor Miyazawa says that there would be no problem in switching to TCP/IP if they wish to do so.

### East Asian cataloguing

Professor Miyazawa said that he believes that NACSIS will offer Chinese and Korean cataloguing systems in a few years for Japanese libraries. NACSIS has good contacts with Seoul National University, and the National Library of Beijing and would load KOREA MARC and CHINA MARC files. Senior staff within NACSIS are already engaged on projects involving cataloguing systems for East Asia scripts.

### UNICODE

Professor Miyazawa said that he believes that it will become widely accepted in the next five years in spite of any omissions and disagreements by various experts on its application to specific languages. He believes it will become universal in five to ten years because of the high costs associated with maintaining the various separate script systems, including their updating and the present high costs of peripheral equipment for each system. Workstations for RLIN, OCLC, etc., are in the range of US\$10,000 whereas he foresees that PCs, now in the range of \$800 to \$1,000 will have support for library processing with multiscript facilities.

### **Japan Information Centre of Science and Technology**

JICST were very generous with their time and spent several hours showing Kaoru Nakajima and myself their system. They index about 600,000 articles per year with about one-third being from Japanese journals. They employ 100 subject indexers. I was interested to see if NLA could use JICST to meet ILL demand as an alternative, or supplement, to our collection of Japanese serials materials in 'scitech'.

### **Institute for Developing Economies, Tokyo**

I included a visit to this Library with Kaoru Nakajima, since I had often heard of its very good collections. NLA's collecting interests are similar. I met Mr Susumu Uchida, Library Services Division, Mr Shigeru Higashikawa, Chief, the Acquisition Division and Mrs Masuko Sonobe, Chief, Processing Division, who showed us around. The Institute is part of MITI and are well supported, judging by the amount of excellent current material they are acquiring. They will join NACSIS next year which will make their catalogue available on line. They microfilm many newspapers in order to save space and relegate older books for storage.

## Australia-Japan Foundation Library

Kaoru Nakajima and I visited the Library which is located in the Australian Embassy. We meet Terry White, Director of the Cultural Programme in the Embassy, and the Librarian, Miss Akiko Hisamatsu. The new Chancery building was opened in 1990. A feature of the Library is a major display on Australian tertiary institutions including a large amount of take-away material. It is good that they have purchased the AUSTROM and Austlit CDROMs. Miss Hisamatsu said that these are receiving use.

I very much enjoyed my quick visits to these libraries and found much of interest in them.

