

## FIRST TRAINING PROGRAM FOR SENIOR JAPANESE LIBRARIANS, 1997

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The first Training Program for Senior Japanese Librarians (TPSLA) was held from February 17 to March 7, 1997. It was jointly sponsored by the Japan Foundation (JF), the National Diet Library (NDL), the National Center for Science Information Systems (NACSIS) and the International House of Japan (IHJ). Eleven Japanese Studies librarians were invited from eight countries, two each from England, United States and Australia and one each from Brazil, China, France, Germany and Italy. Detailed reports of the training were written from the organiser's side by Ms. Koide of IHJ in the July issue of the *EALRGA Newsletter* and by Britt and Makino from the participants' side in the June 1997 issue of the *Journal of East Asian Libraries*. This is my personal account of the training.

### **Before training**

I was informed that I had been selected to participate in the TPSLA by a telephone call from the Japan Foundation's Sydney Office on Christmas Eve last year, 1996. It was a wonderful surprise and I felt honoured. I had thought that there was a slim chance of being selected, as only one librarian was initially going from Australia, and a Canberra person was already participating. Therefore I decided to take full advantage of this opportunity to be in Tokyo for three weeks, by visiting libraries, collecting information on computer for Australian environment, and building up personal networks in addition to attending the training itself.

### **NDL and NACSIS training**

The training consisted of morning and afternoon sessions five days a week for three weeks, which was intensive. I had no doubt about the quality of the training - it was obvious even from the brief training schedule. In fact, NDL and NACSIS training turned out to exceed expectations. Lectures and hands-on training were provided by experts in the area which included: understanding of the current status of the publishing industry, critical evaluation of, and hands-on practice with reference materials in print format according to the levels and needs of the clients; awareness of available electronic databases and digital information accessible from overseas. I felt like a university student again! The lectures provided me with general understanding as well as an assurance and clear recognition of the limitations of my current practices. They also gave me some vision of future possibilities and current restrictions to overseas users in the area of electronic resources.

## **Visiting libraries and meeting people**

The training was tightly scheduled. We had the last Wednesday and a part of the last Friday free, and I used weekends, evenings and sometimes lunch times to visit people and libraries. Besides official visits, I visited Tokyo Metropolitan Central Library, Aoyama-Gakuin University, the Economics Library of Nihon University, the Australia-Japan Foundation Library, JPT, Maruzen, and the Library Association of Japan.

I would just note here some of the visits. Ms Yanagi, the participant from Brazil, and I visited the Tokyo Metropolitan Central Library (TMCL). My former college Ms Horii briefed and took us to the newly renovated library on Saturday morning. I learnt that TMCL and the University of Saõ Paulo had had a donation project of duplicate materials in the past. I also paid visits to Professor Madoko Kon of Chuo University and Professor Setsuko Koga of Aoyama Gakuin University, who were the lecturers with new ideas when I was taking the librarianship course in my student days. Professor Koga has now been appointed University Librarian of her university, the first female to take such a position in university libraries.

It was an overwhelming experience visiting so many places and meeting so many people. Some of them, like Ms Hisamatsu of the Australia-Japan Foundation Library and a staff member of Japan Trading Publishing, we had known over a period of years by correspondence, but we had never met until this time. It was also delightful to see one's former colleagues at TMCL after a long time now holding higher positions with high expertise. However we still had one thing in common: we were still in the library area. Needless to say, visiting university libraries and other specialised libraries contributed to my knowledge on resource organisation, space utilisation, services and staffing issues.

## **Computer for Australia**

Visiting Link Media in Tokyo was at the top of my agenda. Link Media publishes a periodical called *Computing Japan*. The periodical fills information needs on the computer environment which we are interested in, such as reading and writing in Japanese, surfing the Internet, and using Japanese software on computers made outside Japan. The visit satisfied my needs and I had expert advice on our new Windows '95 environment, translation software, and so on. I also visited several computer outlets and bookshops to check available software, prices and trends. Early last year I had difficulty purchasing software packages for Windows 3.1, but I found one year later that Windows '95 software was in the shopfront.

## **Personal Network**

There are Japanese library networks in the United States (US) and Europe, and librarians meet more regularly and cooperate more systematically than is the case in Australia or the Oceania region. This has inspired in me the need to establish a network in Australia or Oceania for cooperating and sharing

resources and ideas. It will enable libraries in this region to gain more assistance from available support bodies from Japan or other regions, as is the case with our (US) and European counterparts. Everyone shared and was trying to overcome the same problem, which is an ever shrinking budget. We exchanged experiences and expertise, and formed a network to support each other in future. I felt meeting people and forming the networks was the most valuable experience this training provided. In addition, Ms Yumiko Tsuji from National Library of Australia and I met for the first time there, and it was another precious network that could be established.

### **After training**

Overall, the quality of the information provided was of the highest standard and the quantity was enormous. I have been trying to implement what I have learnt during the three weeks in practice. One of the outcomes was the Lunch-time Forum at the conference of the Japanese Studies Association of Australia (JSAA) in July with a joint effort by other Japanese studies librarians in Australia. The Forum attracted an audience of nearly sixty and it was an encouraging sign of definite needs in this area. We also formed a Japanese Library Resources Group of Australia (JALRGA) as a sub-group of the East Asian Library Resources Group of Australia (EALRGA). Through forming JALRGA, I became acquainted with Mrs Takagaki, the Japanese Studies Librarian in Auckland University.

Before finishing this report, I would like to thank for the staff members of ND, JF, NACSIS and IH as well as the management of Monash University Library who granted me leave to take this wonderful opportunity. I am also very grateful to my colleagues in the Humanities and Social Science library and Asian Studies Research Library of Monash University who enabled me to attend the training, even though it was the library's busiest time of the year.

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### **References**

- Koide, I. (1997). "Training program for senior Japanese studies librarians". *EALRGA newsletter*, no. 34, pp. 22-24.
- Britt, R. & Y. Makino (1997). "The training program for senior librarians of Japanese studies libraries". *Journal of East Asian Libraries*, no. 112, pp. 51-59.

Eiko Sakaguchi's report on the Training Program for Senior Japanese Studies Librarians is available on the Internet with links to the searchable databases and institutions sites she visited at URL:

<http://www.lib.monash.edu.au/hss/asrl/japtrain.htm>