

JAPANESE COLLECTION - NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA

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HISTORY AND COLLECTIONS

A separate Orientalia section in the National Library of Australia was formally established in April 1962. However, the collection of Orientalia materials began in the early 1950s when the Library decided to acquire materials relating to Asian countries in all languages. Prior to the early 60s, for reasons of space, the Asian language collection was housed at the Australian National University. At present it is housed chiefly on the third floor of the National Library building where it has been since the building opened in 1968.

The Japanese language collection, at the end of May 1982, numbered some 104,265 volumes of monographs and some 4,000 serial titles, making it one of the largest collections of Japanese language materials outside Japan and the United States. The basis of this collection was formed with the acquisition in the mid-60s of five special collections. These are:

- 1 The Sakakibara Collection of 2,500 volumes, most of them early publications concerning Shintoism, history, geography, and literature, Chinese philosophy, military affairs. There are, for example, manuals and textbooks from the Rikugun Shikan Gakko.
- 2 The Kegan Paul Collection of 1,500 volumes including old maps, Japanese translations of Chinese classics and literary works of the last century.
- 3 A collection of 2,072 volumes of individual biographies of prominent Japanese of all periods purchased from the bookseller, Yushodo of Tokyo.
- 4 A collection of 180 volumes on education also from a Tokyo bookseller.
- 5 Two microfilm collections, namely, Archives of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1868-1945 on 2,116 reels and the Selected Archives of the Japanese Army, Navy and Other Government Agencies, 1868-1949 on 163 reels.

Since then, the Library has acquired other special collections, such as the Nakano Collection of 115 works on economics; the Otley-Beyer Collection in 1977 which includes 604 volumes in Japanese on the Philippines, Southeast Asia, the South Pacific, including Australia, dating from the 1930s and 40s; and the Sargent Collection, acquired in 1978, of 1,066 titles belonging to the late Professor G Sargent of Sydney University. This last

includes many modern Japanese works on literature, social sciences and history.

Additions to the microform collections include the papers of Count Shigenobu Okuma; comprehensive prefectural statistics, 1868-1949; archives of the social and labour movements, 1920-1934; foreign trade statistics, 1866-1935; newspaper clippings on Japanese-Korean relations, Japanese-Australian relations, and Japanese-American relations; Dajo ruiten, 1867-1885; Hoki bunrui daizen, etc. etc.

The Library has continued to acquire regularly current Japanese monographs by blanket order from Maruzen Company, one of its agents in Tokyo. This blanket order was established in 1965 and, with a few modifications, has operated well ever since. Books are selected from the weekly edition of the Japanese National Bibliography by Maruzen, according to the guidelines laid down in the original blanket order agreement. Two copies of the bibliography are despatched by air to the Library and we add or delete titles as we think fit and send one copy back from which they collect the titles required and despatch them by sea. Invoices are sent by air. Formerly, paperback books were bound automatically by Maruzen as part of the blanket order service but this was discontinued last year due to the expense. Maruzen also types up the control slips and despatches them with the books to save time.

The other chief source of material is from the exchange agreement with the National Diet Library. Thus the Library has a very large collection of Japanese government publications, chiefly serials, but also including many monographs. Recently the Diet Library started putting some government publications on microfiche and despatching them to the Library.

Important materials received regularly from the Diet Library include: Japanese diplomatic records from 1865; parliamentary proceedings; the government gazette; collection of laws, statutes, etc. The Library has an almost complete collection of these last three items; Supreme Court decisions from 1895; the population census from 1950, trade statistics, household expenditure surveys, manufacturers, census; consumer price indexes; labour statistics; taxation and budget reports; agricultural and industrial statistics, and so forth.

The Library's collection of commercial and academic periodicals is acquired by subscription through our two agencies in Tokyo: Maruzen Company, and Japan Publications Trading Company. Some government serials not available on exchange are bought on subscription through the Government Publications

Agency in Tokyo. The Library has many complete sets of serials, although subscriptions for most started around 1967 or later. At the time, some backsets were acquired, particularly of scientific and technological serials, but also in history.

As indicated above, the serial collection is strong in science and technology. This was a deliberate attempt to back up the computer data bases offered by the former ANSTEL (Australian National Scientific and Technological Library).

The collection is also strong in economics, law, history, current affairs, and the arts - both fine and performing. In 1977, Japanese Serials in the National Library of Australia was published and is still available. This gives an idea of the scope and nature of the serial collection, although many titles have been added since then.

As the budget allows, the Library buys books second hand to fill gaps indicated to us by academics researching a particular field. In this manner, the Library acquired a good collection of works on noh and is filling gaps in kabuki.

The Library maintains exchange programmes with certain research institutes such as Ajia Keizai Kenkyujo and some universities, but universities often do not want to exchange publications with a national library as library publications are often of no interest to them.

Another way the Library acquires books is by direct gift. The Japan Foundation has donated a lot of English-language material and also a large number of Japanese-language works which were selected by the Japanese Section of the Library in the field of fine arts.

Because of the presence of another large Japanese-language collection "across the bridge", namely that of the Australian National University Library, a cooperative acquisition policy between the two was set up. Thus the National Library's Japanese collection has its strengths in history after 1868, particularly the Meiji Restoration and World War 2 - for example, the official Japanese history of the war; fine arts including a particularly good collection of pictorial works on all aspects of Japanese painting, architecture, theatre, cinema, costume, swords, pottery, gardens, flower-arrangement, etc.; sociology where there is strength in works on the labour movement, the burakumin problem, women's studies, Koreans in Japan, etc.; education with a large collection of source material (from the Meiji period); economics; politics; law; and foreign relations; natural sciences;

mathematics; technology; Australiana (that is, works on Australia by Japanese authors as well as Japanese translations of Australian works); biography; library science and bibliographies, and other reference tools. The literature collection is confined, generally speaking, to general collections of the classics and current best-sellers and popular authors as literature is ANU's province.

This agreement, on the whole, has worked quite well in eliminating serious duplication. Nonetheless, duplication does occur, sometimes by accident and sometimes because the books in question fall into those 'grey' areas. For example, both have books on the bakumatsu period because it is rather hard to get a firm cut-off date there. A collection dealing with the Meiji period must necessarily look back at the bakumatsu period for those elements and forces that shaped the Restoration, indeed the whole period. Likewise, the ANU Library can hardly fail to collect books in that period and even early Meiji as a sort of tailpiece to the Tokugawa period. Similarly, the Library might also collect books concerning earlier centuries such as the Heian or Muromachi periods, if it seems that the work has an economic or social approach, while the ANU Library might buy it as part of their history collection. This sort of thing applies to single monographs usually, so the expense is not that great. And as most of these come on the blanket order, there is the time factor that does not permit much prior consultation.

With expensive multi-volume sets of the shiryō, chosakushū, and sosho type, more care is exercised. Where there is some doubt as to who ought to buy a title, there is consultation, usually by telephone. The Asian Studies Division of the ANU Library has also made recommendations to purchase titles which clearly fall in the NLA's field, as have academic staff from the ANU. Sometimes those staff have kindly bought difficult-to-obtain items for us while visiting Japan such as political pamphlets of the Japan Socialist Party. However, in these days of dwindling budgets, sometimes the Library has to ask the ANU Library to buy recommended material, even in those areas traditionally bought by the National Library. Reduced budgets have led to a desire on both sides for even closer cooperation and rationalisation.

The Library does not, nor ever has had, either a liaison officer stationed in Tokyo, nor do we send Australians to work or train in the National Diet Library. It has often been thought a great pity that there was no person on the spot in Tokyo to search out and buy difficult items for the collection, to deal directly with any problems with the agents, and to talk to booksellers, publishers, and exchange partners. However, when even the National Library's long established liaison officers in the UK and USA have been

discontinued it does not seem likely there will be such a person in the foreseeable future.

The Library does have a system whereby a Japanese librarian is seconded from the National Diet Library staff to work in Orientalia for 2 to 3 years. This system has been in operation since the mid-60s and so far there have been 8 such librarians. It has been a good way for the library to have new blood and fresh ideas from Japan and someone who has an intimate knowledge of Japanese books and, of course, the country itself. Sometimes, the librarian might also have some specialist knowledge in a particular field, such as Japanese politics, government, law, or engineering.

In addition to the seconded librarian from the Diet Library, there is a permanent senior specialist librarian for the Japanese collection and 3 support staff, including one operator of a Japanese typewriter.

The tasks performed and the services offered cover the full range of library activities. The Orientalia Section is, in fact, a library within a library. Selection, ordering and processing of invoices is done in the Section though budget allocation and the actual despatching of orders is done by the Overseas Selection Section. The Section does its own cataloguing, mainly using Library of Congress Cards but also original cataloguing, for which Chinese and Japanese script typewriters are used to produce the cards. AACR2 and Library of Congress Subject Headings 9th edition with some modifications are the standards used for cataloguing. The classification scheme is Harvard-Yenching. The Section handles many requests for photocopies of scientific materials, chiefly articles in periodicals, by mail and telex. Quite a few requests for literary works are received but such requests should be directed to ANU Library as this is their field. Locations are provided also from the union catalogue for material not held in the library. The Section also can give locations in Japan for Japanese serials, and handles many local interlibrary loan requests for monographs in all subject areas.

Other requests range from biographical information on businessmen, politicians and the like to statistical material or material on education, whaling, agriculture, Ainu, burakumin, various periods of history, etc. to back up research papers by academic staff from all over the country. In addition, members of the general public want swords, paintings and other artefacts identified which usually can be done with various special reference tools held in the Section. Others want art books to help them with their own designs. Clientele is both wide and diverse.

The Section operates its own interlibrary loan service to anyone who wishes to borrow a book through their university or public library. There are no loans to individuals. Enquiries should be directed to Orientalia and not to the National Lending Service. Loans are for 4 week periods and can be renewed. The Library does not lend serials, reference works or "coffee table" art books. Neither does the Library offer a translation service. There is a Translation Unit at the Australian National University and the Department of Immigration. Requests for translations are directed to those services as appropriate.

PROBLEMS

Many of the problems faced today are common to other large institutional libraries while others are the result, basically, of being part of the Public Service. Like all libraries these days, there is a constantly shrinking budget and rapidly increasing prices for books and serials. Japanese books have always been expensive.

So for the past few years, the Library has virtually been able to buy only current monographs and serials while the intake of those lovely big sets so typically Japanese has gradually decreased until a point has been reached this year where the Library has not been able to place any new orders for such sets.

A similar story may be told with serials, which is a problem that faces the Library as a whole. A large proportion (some 70%) of the Library's total material budget goes on serials and this was deemed too much. Thus all sections of the Library were instructed to drastically reduce their serial expenditure by cancelling titles. The Japanese Collection bore the brunt of the cancellations in Orientalia because of the high cost of Japanese serials. The Section had to cancel quite a few titles many of which were the only copies in the country but these cancellations were confined to little used items. The Section also cancelled many newspapers but not Asahi Shimbun received by air, Yomiuri, Mainichi, and Nihon Keizai Shimbun.

What this means to the user is that the Library may not be able to provide the kind of service to which the user is accustomed. There will be incomplete runs of serials and gaps in the monograph collection and our holdings of the expensive and valuable multivolume sets, which academic libraries used to rely on us to buy, will likewise be less complete and current.

Other problems arise from being a Government agency rather than a university or private institution. The Library is just one rather small department fighting for a piece of the fiscal pie.

Staff ceilings have been imposed for many years now and are regularly reduced further. Ten years ago in Orientalia there were 3 librarians Class 1 for Japanese, and 3 for Chinese, one Class 3 in charge of the Section, 3 support staff for the Japanese collection, and 2 for the Chinese. The Section now comprises one Librarian Class 1 each for Chinese and Japanese, one Class 2 and one Class 3, the support staff numbers remaining the same. The collection, however, keeps growing. This means that the cataloguing backlog gets larger (to offset this, temporary control cards are filed by title in the catalogue) which means a less efficient service as there is no subject approach. Some projects have also had to be abandoned altogether.

One other problem until recently was that in a government institution all recruitment had to be done through the Public Service Board with resulting delays in appointment.

Another problem is space. Part of the collection is housed in the compactus on LG2, more on the 4th floor and some in the 3rd floor general stacks. Many books are stacked on the floor and window ledges. Compactus storage is extremely inconvenient but necessary as a stop gap.

Despite the pressing space problems of the Library as a whole, the Review of Commonwealth Functions recommended the delay of the building of the Library extension for 2 years. To try to solve this space problem, premises have been leased outside the Library, namely warehouses in Fyshwick and Mitchell. These are almost full and in the case of Mitchell not entirely satisfactory.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Since May 1981, the Japanese Section has been issuing a current awareness bulletin at irregular intervals as part of the Area Studies Series. It is a selective list of materials in Japanese received recently in the National Library and is free on request. The items are listed under broad subject headings in order of the Japanese syllabary for easy reference. It can be used to make interlibrary loan requests and is widely distributed. It contains much more than the old Acquisitions Newsletter formerly issued by the Selection Section covering acquisitions in all Sections of the Library, and is one way of alerting the general public to growth in the Japanese Collection.

Work was also carried out in 1981 on the Union Catalogue of East Asian Monographs (UCEAM), which is kept in card form in the Orientalia reading room. The new edition just filmed has a cut off date of June 1981 and includes Korean entries as well as Chinese and Japanese in one alphabetical sequence. Pinyin

entries appear as a separate run at the end. The union catalogue was begun in 1956 and now 19 libraries in Australia and New Zealand contribute both author and title entries.

It is hoped to put the Union List of East Asian Serials on to computer-output microfiche, using the SALSSAH programme. The loss of the characters would be acceptable in view of the efficiency of this method of getting the thing available to other libraries. However, lack of staff has meant the project has had to be shelved for the time being.

Automation of the East Asian catalogues is being studied at present but is still very much in the feasibility stage.

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