

THE TRAINING PROGRAM FOR JAPANESE STUDIES LIBRARIANS, 2000

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I participated in the training program for three weeks from 17th of February 2000, thanks to the Japan Foundation. I would like to report on what was there and how I thought of the course.

Fourth year this year

The three-week training course was held in Tokyo. This is the fourth year and has been funded and organised by Japan Foundation and the program itself was organised and coordinated mainly by Japan Foundation in collaboration with National Diet Library of Tokyo (NDL) and National Center for Science Information Systems (NACSIS)¹.

Thirteen Japanese studies librarians were there from all over the world: USA, Britain (2), Canada, China, Korea, France, Germany (2), Belgium, Austria, Egypt, and from Australia. The type and size of the libraries were all varied, from national libraries, university libraries and research libraries, etc.

Training in NDL and NACSIS

We had several training sessions per day (mainly lectures) for nine days in the National Diet Library. The sessions were on:

- reference tools, on important statistic materials, on government publications,
- newspapers, on new digital library system of NDL, on cataloguing Japanese classic books,
- the new library system of NDL, etc.

At NACSIS, we had two-day training on their electronic resources: WebCat, IR-cat, IR-O. They have just moved the shared catalogue of university libraries onto the web ("WebCat"), and the interface has become far more user-friendly. They were in the middle of preparing moving into a bigger building and were very busy. So we were the last group of the trainees fortunate enough to have the chance to squeeze into their tight schedule.

¹ Additional Note (25/09/00)

NACSIS moved and changed its name to Kokuritsu Joho Kenkyujo (= National Institute of Informatics) at the beginning of this new fiscal year.

Also, NCC= National Coordinating Committee on Japanese Library Resources

Visiting libraries and other institutions related to my job

Some visits were already planned in the program and in accordance with that, we visited Statistic Department Library, Japan Foundation Library (in Akasaka, and in Kyoto), Kyoto University library, Osaka Municipal Library, Nichibunken, Kokubungaku Shiryokan.

I paid visits to the following institutions on other occasions: Library of Waseda University, Art Gallery Library, Jetro Business Library, Australian Library (in the Australian Embassy), Nichifutsu Kaikan Toshokan Library, JTP, Maruzen, and Kinokuniya.

It was very useful to go to the libraries, see collections and meet the librarians who work there and make contacts for the future. I had to realise how big a handicap we have when dealing with overseas libraries in daily work, because we did get far more information directly and easily when talking with those librarians face to face. It was very useful to see the book suppliers who we had only contacted previously through written communications, and to see how the books are processed to come to our library through them.

Contacts among training participants

Although the size and the types of the libraries were very varied among the participants on the training course, the desperation for knowledge on Japanese Studies resources and services was one we all did share. So it was tremendously useful when I had the chance to be there to exchange ideas with the other participants. I seldom get the chance to talk about the Japanese Studies resources and services while I am working, firstly because there are not that many Japanese studies librarians around, and secondly I am normally very occupied with the daily routine at work.

And among the participants there were two librarians who have important roles each in Japanese studies area in USA and in Europe. Ms Sachie Noguchi is from Pittsburgh University and she also has been chair of Council of Eastern Asian Libraries (CEAL) for the last three years and is in the chair of CNN from this year.

Ms Mariko Matsue is from Leuven Catholic University library (Belgium) and has been secretary of European Association of Japanese Resource Specialists (EAJRS) up to now.

Those two major Japanese studies librarians and researchers groups in two continents have been widely recognised by Japanese libraries and institutions related to library world. Quite a many times NDL, NACSIS, and major libraries sent their staff to give some papers in those conferences and the book providers like JTP, Maruzen, Yushodo, have been to the EAJRS conference and some of them went to CEAL meeting as well to set up their booths for presentation. There has been a sort of tradition of those people

going overseas participating in library-related conferences here and there. Some CEAL members go to EAJRS and EAJRS members go to CEAL meetings too. People try to get the chance to go to other continents to participate the conferences, see the people, and see the other libraries to know what is going on there. It was an eye opener to me that the people think it very important to actually go somewhere to learn what is going on there.

In Australia, as readers might already know, after Ms Eiko Sakaguchi from Monash University went to the first training program in 1997, she appealed to set up a Japanese studies librarians' group in Australia and so we have JALRGA now. And thanks to all the JALRGA member librarians' efforts, lunchtime sessions were held in Japanese Studies conferences in 1997 and 1999. I believe it is quite important to continue this kind of activities of JALRGA regularly to promote our services. In the near future we might be able to negotiate with NDL, NACSIS or libraries in Japan as Australian libraries, as a kind of lobby group (as CEAL and EAJRS do now). And it will be helpful to show our presence too if we send our member librarians to CEAL and EAJRS meetings occasionally.

The result of the training for me

The practical knowledge gained from the training sessions were all very precious. We don't usually have much chance to actually see the really good materials at hand all together. And the professional comments for each material from NDL librarians were mostly appreciated too. The human contacts we have made with Japanese Librarians in Japan were priceless.

The human contacts among the trainee were also priceless. It was a good chance to understand the importance of global network of contacts. It might be impossible to make those contacts in a short period, such as when staying for a conference.

It was a great opportunity to realise how important it is to do "Joho Hasshin" to the users and to other libraries (on the globe) from our end. After the web appeared the world became so small and we can release some messages to people on a large scale even while sitting at the desk.

The future of the training course

Next year the fifth training program will be sponsored by Japan Foundation and it will be the final program of this series. It seems as though the Japan Foundation still doesn't know what it can and will offer after 2002. And at the same time, NDL is going to open their Western Library in Kyoto in 2002. So NDL may be quite busy in preparation.

But, on the other hand, the training program for Japanese studies librarians with non-native level Japanese language is still being offered by the Japan

Foundation. So the chance is still there for Australian libraries' Japanese studies' librarians to get training experience in Japan.

For further information

Please contact me (e-mail: mshinoza@nla.gov.au) if you: -

- would like to get the copies of the list of reference materials (recommended in the class)
- would like to get the copies of the list of statistic materials (recommended in the class)
- would like to know about the training program of Japanese studies librarians (for librarians with non-native standard Japanese language skills)
- have some comments or inquiries on my report.

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The human contacts among the trainees were also priceless. It was a good chance to understand the importance of global network of contacts. It might be impossible to make those contacts in a short period, such as when staying for a conference.

It was a great opportunity to realize how important it is to be "Johns" to the team and to other libraries for the global team out and. After the web appeared the world became so small and we can release some messages to people on a large scale even while sitting at the desk.

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