

## LIBRARIANS AT JAPANESE AND CHINESE STUDIES CONFERENCES

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Librarians were active at the Japanese Studies Association of Australia Conference held at the University of New South Wales from 27 to 30 June, and jointly organized by the University of Sydney. A panel discussion at JSAA on "How do researchers and librarians view the outlook for Japanese library resources in Australia?" attracted considerable interest. Prior to the session Mayumi Shinozaki, Japanese Librarian at the National Library, had prepared a draft survey report on the current state of Japanese collections in Australia. The session was chaired by Andrew Gosling, Chief Librarian, Asian Collections, National Library, who is also President of the East Asian Library Resources Group of Australia.

Michelle Hall, Japanese Studies Librarian at the University of Melbourne and convener of the Japanese Library Resources Group of Australia, described the increasing cooperation between the University of Melbourne and Monash University under the Melbourne Asian Research Libraries Consortium (MARLC) which was formed in 1993 to enhance access to both collections. For example following the recent retirement of Monash's distinguished and long-serving Southeast Asian Studies Librarian, Helen Soemardjo, this position has been advertised as a joint appointment for the two libraries. There is to be an Asian studies "road show" at both institutions for the opening of the new Sidney Myer Asian Centre at the University of Melbourne. On the other hand Japanese collections in Australian university libraries are being hit by budget cuts leading to reductions in serial subscriptions. At the national level there also remains the often-mentioned need to reinstate travel scholarships to bring researchers to the major Asian collections in the Canberra-Sydney-Melbourne triangle where resources are largely concentrated.

Yasuko Uchida, Assistant Director of the Japan Foundation in Sydney described how the economic downturn in Japan has meant Japan Foundation grants to Australian universities have been substantially reduced. The Foundation is now concentrating on improving its own library in Sydney. This is seen as a way of supporting Asian researchers nationally. The Japan Foundation Library has recently become a member of the National CJK Service, will have its library catalogue available through its website soon, and also plans to join Kinetica and provide interlibrary loans. The Foundation has recently appointed a qualified librarian, Mr Yada, to run the library.

Eiko Sakaguchi, Japanese Studies Librarian at Monash, who is currently at the University of Maryland Libraries, compared the situation for Japanese library resources in the United States and Australia. She said the big difference is that North American libraries enjoy much greater funding and staff numbers. However Australian libraries have high quality staff and advanced technology such as the National CJK Service. She also outlined the Gordon

W. Prange Collection at the University of Maryland, the most comprehensive collection of publications issued in Japan in the immediate post war period from 1945-1949. It is described at [www.lib.umd.edu/UMCP/PRC/splash.html](http://www.lib.umd.edu/UMCP/PRC/splash.html)

Christopher Burgess, a doctoral student at Monash was very positive in his assessment of the Japanese print and electronic resources in Victoria. There is good interlibrary cooperation, document delivery works smoothly and the specialist librarians at his own and other libraries he used are most helpful.

Steve Bullard described the Australia-Japan Research Project (AJRP) at the Australian War Memorial where he is a Senior Research Officer. The AJRP had its origins in a Japanese initiative in 1994 to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Pacific War. The Project is compiling a database of historical resources, concentrating mainly on Japanese language materials at the AWM including a series of rare captured Japanese military documents which the AWM holds more fully than US institutions. The AJRP website launched in 1998 is at [www.awm.gov.au/ajrp/](http://www.awm.gov.au/ajrp/). Steve said that while not strictly a library project it faced similar issues, such as who its target audience was, whether researchers with Japanese language skills, amateur historians or school students; whether documents should be full text on the database or as a synopsis and how much should be digitized given the high cost in human resources.

Dr Morris Low, a senior Japanese studies scholar at the University of Queensland, said that libraries have moved from being custodians of books to playing an important role as intermediaries for access to the Internet. He suggested that while good collections of Japanese research materials have been developed in Australia for scholars it is also important to cover Japanese popular culture as reflected in film, magazines and ephemera particularly to meet the needs and interests of undergraduates.

The week after JSAA the Chinese Studies Association of Australia held its 7<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference at The Australian National University in Canberra from 5 to 8 July. The conference included a library panel, a joint exhibition of National Library and ANU Chinese holdings and special tours of the National Library for conference participants.

The joint exhibition at the Menzies Library of the ANU entitled "Chinese Treasures in Canberra" showcased some of the riches in the National Library and the ANU Library, such as rare imprints, Cultural Revolution materials, periodicals and Chinese Australiana. The display was organized by Renata Osborne, Asia Pacific Cluster at the ANU Library and Wan Wong, Chinese Librarian at the National Library with assistance from other staff. In opening the exhibition, Professor Mark Elvin of the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, ANU referred to the combined holdings of the two libraries constituting one of the world's strongest resources for Chinese studies.

In all about 70 participants from Australia and overseas took part in the special tours of the National Library. Some of the highlights were old and rare Chinese items from the London Missionary Society Collection and other formed collections, the original Verbiest map produced in China in 1674 and

other early maps and atlases of China, as well as a tour of the Oral History area. One scholar from Germany commented that the National Library's Chinese collection was stronger than any she had seen in Europe.

The "Chinese Language Library Collections" panel was chaired by Renata Osborne of the ANU Library. Bick-har Yeung, East Asian Librarian at the University of Melbourne spoke on and demonstrated "Web-based access to Chinese language electronic resources at the University of Melbourne Library". This introduced the East Asian Collection Buddy, an in-house web-based gateway of the University of Melbourne Library providing access to selected online and networked Chinese language electronic resources, including CD-ROMs, electronic journals, electronic and Internet databases, exam papers, library catalogues and websites.

Andrew Gosling presented a paper entitled "Not just a stack of old books : retrospective Chinese collections at the National Library of Australia", which appears elsewhere in this Newsletter. It was about recent efforts to improve awareness of and access to the Library's older Chinese materials through major cataloguing projects and the production of articles, lists and guides. The paper covered the general Chinese holdings and a number of important formed collections such as the London Missionary Society Collection and the Walter Simon Collection.

Sally-Anne Leigh, Manager, Asia-Pacific at ANU Library, spoke about the ANU's membership of the Pacific Rim Digital Library Alliance, which links it with a number of academic and research libraries in Asia, North and Central America. Alliance members are involved in a number of digitization projects. She described and demonstrated ANU's own Asia-Pacific Digital Database, which includes the Southeast Asian Serial Index and the Digital Collection of scanned images and texts such as the Giles Pickford Photographic Collection on China.

During both the Japanese and Chinese conferences librarians met to discuss areas for greater cooperation. One area of particular interest to be pursued further is the possibility of a consortium approach to expensive East Asian electronic resources.

For more details on any of these conferences and their library component please contact Andrew Gosling on (02) 6262 1286 or email [agosling@nla.gov.au](mailto:agosling@nla.gov.au)