

**THE LIBRARY PANEL
AT THE JSAA CONFERENCE, JUNE 2001**

**“How do researchers and librarians view the outlook for
Japanese library resources in Australia ?”**

Michelle Hall, Japanese Studies Librarian
East Asian Collection, The University of Melbourne.

At the biennial Japanese Studies Association of Australia (JSAA) conference, in recent years we have endeavoured to hold the library panel and provided light snacks during the conference lunch hour, as a way of encouraging a large audience. This year, the conference organizers kindly arranged lunch for us (and what great catering it was!) and so the panel was slotted into the usual schedule.

The session was chaired by Andrew Gosling of the National Library of Australia, and papers were given by the following presenters:

Ms Yasuko Uchida, Assistant Director, The Japan Cultural Centre, Sydney.
Ms Eiko Sakaguchi, Japanese Studies Librarian Monash University, currently curator at East Asia Collection & Gordon W. Prange Collection, McKeldin Library, University of Maryland.
Ms Michelle Hall, Japanese Studies Librarian, The University of Melbourne.
Mr Chris Burgess, PhD student, Monash University.
Mr Steve Bullard, Senior Research Officer, Australian War Memorial.
Dr Morris Low, University of Queensland.

The panel was arranged so that we could hear from both library and non-library staff, and from library users.

Ms Yasuko Uchida, Assistant Director, The Japan Cultural Centre, Sydney

First, Yasuko Uchida spoke about her work and the facilities and services offered by the Japan Foundation Sydney Office. Her talk is reproduced in full in this issue.

Ms Michelle Hall, Japanese Studies Librarian, The University of Melbourne

I talked from a librarian's point of view, with the influence of my own students and staff needs.

Previously there were several efforts to examine the question of Japanese library resources in Australia. (I would like to thank Toshio Takagi of ANU for suggesting these sources.) First, in 1995, the Asian Collection Agreements meeting (Canberra) followed on from the 3rd National Roundtable on Libraries and Asia (1994).

(see <<http://www.nla.gov.au/niac/meetings/asiamtg.html>>)

Resolutions included, amongst others, that libraries assess their Asian collections using Conspectus, and place holdings of (particularly) serials and newspaper collections on the National Bibliographic Database (NBD). Melbourne has done this and the results are available on the Japanese Collection website:

(<<http://www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/collections//asian/conspectus.html>>).

Second, in 1998, the ASAA panel on Library and Information Needs of Asian Studies Academics was held

(see <<http://www.nla.gov.au/asian/asaalib1.html>>).

Resolutions included reinstating postgraduate travel scholarships to access collections – particularly those in Canberra (ANU, ANL); also the need for librarians to work together and with academics to get the best results in the quality and breadth of collections in Australia.

And now, in 2001, has anything changed? Has anything been done?

There is greater accessibility to collection via online catalogues using CJK. There is not so great access with Kinetica to which many libraries are not adding holdings. The exhortation to add serials and newspapers to national databases has been heard, but with serious budget cuts the overall holdings of many libraries have been reduced. Melbourne, for example, cancelled almost 50% of its Japanese serials in 1999-2000. Has anything happened to the travelling scholarships? Nothing is widely advertised. Co-operation with other libraries has increased. One example of this is the MARLC arrangement in Victoria.

MARLC (Melbourne Asian Research Libraries Consortium) is an agreement between Melbourne and Monash Universities. (see the website at <<http://marlc.monash.org/index.html>>) As part of this agreement the Asian Studies Library staff meet regularly and notify each other of expensive/rare acquisitions, and plan information sharing events such as the Roadshow to be held in Melbourne later this year and Monash early 2002. We also try not to duplicate materials, but there is some overlap in our collection areas, for example language teaching and linguistics. A new person will be joining Monash from early 2002 as the Indonesian specialist – but this time the person will be at Monash four days per week and at Melbourne one day per week. In this way we become more familiar with each others' collections and can advise students where to go and to whom to speak to get the right information.

In concluding, what has happened, and does anything need to happen? In Melbourne, MARLC takes care of most of our needs, but students still need to access ILL/DocDel in some form. The Internet will not solve all our problems – the entire history of Japanese writings cannot be digitised retrospectively. Budget cuts reduce our collections. Is it not time to restrict Asian Studies/Japanese Studies to institutions which can adequately support them? I think also it must be understood that we cannot replicate Japanese collections here in Australia. There will always be a need to go to Japan to research and study. It seems to be that little has changed since 1995/1998. But is it really necessary?

Mr Chris Burgess, PhD student, Monash University

Christopher Burgess was very complimentary about the services and assistance he had received at libraries he uses. There is a deal of co-operation between institutions and the sharing of resources made it easy for him to complete his research. He was keen to see if there was assistance available to help students to spend time in Canberra, it being a hub of research activity and resources.

Mr Steve Bullard, Senior Research Officer, Australian War Memorial

Steve Bullard spoke of his involvement in the Australia-Japan Research Project at the Australian War Memorial. The Australia-Japan Research Project (AJRP) is a new program at the Australian War Memorial (AWM), funded by the Japanese government from 1996 as part of the Peace, Friendship and Exchange Initiative (1994) of the former Japanese Prime Minister, Murayama Tomiichi.

After some preparatory work, a team of two to three senior research officers and a manager commenced working on the project from February 1997. To facilitate planning of the database, a symposium was held in late March 1997, drawing on experts from both Australia and Japan. The project is housed in the Historical Research Section (HRS) at the AWM and its virtual site can be found on the World Wide Web via the AWM homepage.

The primary activity of the AJRP has been the establishment of a database of historical materials concerning the Australia-Japan relationship from 1901 to 1957, especially those that focus on the wartime relationship. The database is accessible via the Internet. Information on archival materials is gradually being added to the database as discrete subsets (modules). The modules currently being developed are private records held at the AWM, and captured Japanese documents (AWM 82). The latter collection of documents constitutes the only original Japanese documents requisitioned by ATIS (Allied Translator and Interpreter Section) known to be remaining in the world. The documents can be divided into two categories: ATIS documents, and documents from Japanese soldiers who surrendered to the Australian Forces at Rabaul after the war. Please see the website for the project at <http://www.awm.gov.au:8000/ajrp/ajrp2.nsf/>

Dr Morris Low, University of Queensland

Dr Morris Low spoke from the standpoint of a teacher/researcher. He teaches mainly about Japan (including 'Japanese Popular Culture' and 'Japanese Visual Culture') and coordinates Asian Studies courses at the University of Queensland (UQ), and furthermore represents the Faculty of Arts on the Library Committee of the UQ Academic Board. The UQ Library, like many others, has been reviewing serials recently. The School of Languages and Comparative Cultural Studies was successful in obtaining a UQ \$80,000 Research Infrastructure Fund grant to acquire feature films in languages in other than English.

He reminded us that libraries are more than books. They are increasingly a gateway to the Internet and multimedia. In fact, the UQ Asian Studies Liaison Librarian Ms Wai Wai Lui also doubles as the Multimedia Librarian.

In response to Chris Burgess's talk, Morris advised that there are a limited number of ANU short-term, vacation scholarships in RSPAS help student access to national collections on Japan at ANU and NLA. The ASAA surveys recent PhDs and awards annual prize on best dissertation in Asian Studies. Information on dissertations is available via the electronic newsletter (see <http://www.gu.edu.au/school/ais/asaa/austdistertations.html>).

Morris said that, after having studied or taught at Griffith, Sydney, Monash, ANU and now at UQ, he considers Japanese language collections are under-used, and that in contrast books on Japan in English are heavily used. Students like the ease of accessing sources on Japan on the Internet, and libraries need to be increasingly pro-active about mediating access to Internet resources, online journals and databases in Japanese studies. In the Department of Asian Languages and Studies at UQ, all Japan staff have Japanese version of Windows on their computers and can access Japanese websites easily. More people will be able to do so in future and input Japanese characters to conduct searches. He acknowledged that there was the problem of lack of back issues of Japanese newspapers on the Internet.

Ms Eiko Sakaguchi, Japanese Studies Librarian Monash University, currently curator at East Asia Collection & Gordon W. Prange Collection, McKeldin Library, University of Maryland

We were delighted to see Eiko Sakaguchi back in Australia again. She reported on her experiences in the USA and told us of a forthcoming international exhibition of the Prange Collection. Her full talk also appears in this issue. More information on the Prange Collection can be seen at <http://www.lib.umd.edu/PRC/splash.html>

At the Panel we were pleased to receive handouts from **Ms Mayumi Shinozaki** at the National Library. Mayumi created a list of contacts for all Japanese Studies library staff in Australia and New Zealand, and a list of holdings and other relevant information for each institution. Thank you Mayumi!

JALRGA Website!

Although still in the most humble of beginnings, the new JALRGA website has been established at:

<http://www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/collections/asian/jalrgaindex.html>

Do have a look and if you have anything you'd like to include on the pages (reports, notes, links to other sites) please let me know at hall@unimelb.edu.au. It really is a work in progress so more will be added as I have the time and input.

Michelle Hall