FROM CHICAGO TO TOKYO
REFLECTIONS ON JAPANESE
LIBRARIANSHIP

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The twenty-four Rosary students, professors, and their friends who boarded the 747 Northwest Orient jet at O'Hare Airport on January 5, 1975 were anticipating a librarians' pilgrimage and an artists' odyssey. Months of painstaking preparation by Dr. Richard Li, Professor of Library Science, and Sister Milla Derby, Assistant Professor of Art, had produced an itinerary for a study tour of Oriental libraries and art museums. As a member of that tour I intend to comment on the current library scene in Japan in the light of the historical framework from which it has emerged.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Librarianship in Japan today reflects the historical, cultural, and geographical aspects of this island nation whose land area is slightly smaller than that of California. Its separation from mainland Asia allowed it to develop in isolation and to assimilate much of the culture of China while permeating it with uniquely Japanese characteristics. In the last one hundred years Japan has grafted a thick layer of Western thought and technology onto this Oriental civilization.

Although Japan is abundantly rich in its cultural heritage of art and literature, modern concepts of librarianship, as we understand it in the United States, have only recently taken

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root. A prominent Japanese librarian, Miss Naomi Fukuda, Japanese Curator of the Asia Library at the University of Michigan, summarized the library scene in these words:

Our libraries in Japan, some of them of great antiquity, are of many kinds, with widely divergent concepts and practices, more divergent now than they were ten or fifteen years ago. Some are totally resistant to change; others are so revolutionary—revolutionary for Japan, that is—that those they would serve have not yet learned to appreciate or utilize them fully. They all have in common, it is true, the possession of books, but among those who determine and execute their policies there is no single unifying idea of what a library is or ought to be. Instead, we have an assortment of incompatible ideas.¹

Some general background may help explain these incongruities.

For centuries Japan lived under a feudal system governed by an entrenched military class which had reduced the function of the emperor, a unique and lofty figure in Japanese civilization, to that of ceremony. A national policy of seclusion prevailed from the early seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries. The ports of Japan were closed to foreign ships; its people were forbidden to leave the country and few foreigners—among Europeans, the Portuguese and Dutch—were permitted to enter. This self-imposed isolation kept Japan out of the stream of world politics, economy, and culture during the crucial centuries when the West was fashioning the modern world.

By the early eighteenth century, there was widespread inquisitiveness among Japanese scholars about Western culture. As occasional contacts with the West increased during the first half of the nineteenth century, this isolated nation was impressed and apprehensive at the material superiority of the Western world. The momentous political events that led to the revolt of the pro-imperialist factions resulting in the downfall of feudal overlords in 1867 need not be recounted here. Suffice it to say that with the Meiji Restoration in 1868—a date
as significant in Japanese history as that of 1776 in American history—a new era in the history of Japan began. The Meiji Restoration, named after the Emperor Meiji (1852–1912) who ascended the throne in 1867, was a political revolution carried out by a few dedicated young men determined to open up the country to Western influence and to modernize Japan. They were revolutionary only in their desire for foreign culture. During their first decade in power they instituted sweeping reforms which set off a century of continuing change in Japanese thinking and institutions. The emperor was nominally restored to the throne, the political system was revamped, the class system discarded, and a blueprint for universal education was drawn up. Within the span of only a few generations Japan underwent a phenomenal transition from a feudal government to a modern state and became one of the most literate and highly industrialized nations of the modern world.

THE NATIONAL DIET LIBRARY

Our library tour began in earnest on our second day in Tokyo with a visit to the National Diet Library (NDL), the counterpart of our Library of Congress. American consultants played a significant role in laying the groundwork and in shaping the policies of this library. In response to an invitation by the Diet, the sole law-making organ of the nation, the United States Library Commission, consisting of the late Verner W. Clapp, then Chief Assistant Librarian of Congress, and the late Charles H. Brown, then Chairman of the ALA Oriental Committee, visited Japan in 1947 and made recommendations for the founding of a parliamentary library. On the basis of their recommendations there was drafted the National Diet Library Law which authorized the establishment of NDL to function in a dual capacity: as the library of the Diet, and as a national central library.

LIBRARY OF THE DIET

As the library of the Diet, its first priority is service to the Diet, a responsibility fulfilled for the most part by the
Research and Legislative Reference Department. NDL extends its jurisdiction also to thirty special libraries attached to executive and judicial agencies of the government, all of which are administered as branches and whose special collections form important adjuncts to the main library. Close cooperative relations, such as the mutual loan of materials and mutual assistance in research activities, exist between the main library and these branches.

NATIONAL CENTRAL LIBRARY

As the national central library, NDL functions in a capacity similar to, although different in scale of operation from, that of LC in the American library community, with respect to acquisitions, publications, cataloging service, and reference and loan services.

1. Acquisitions. NDL was opened to the public in 1948 with a miscellaneous collection of some 215,000 volumes assembled for the most part from the libraries attached to both houses of the Diet. As the sole depository library of Japan, it has developed a comprehensive collection of domestic publications, both governmental and non-governmental; it receives foreign materials through purchase and international exchange. NDL is also the designated depository of several international organizations.

2. Publications. The Library plays an important role in the bibliographical activities of Japan: it compiles and publishes numerous bibliographies, catalogs, and indexes. One of the most important is the comprehensive, annual Japanese National Bibliography covering not only books and periodicals but also such materials as maps and music scores. Equally important is the Japanese Periodicals Index, a monthly publication indexing the main articles in approximately three thousand Japanese periodicals. It is divided into two parts: one for humanities and social sciences, the other for science and technology.

In cooperation with forty-nine libraries—university, public, and its own branches—NDL publishes in book form the Union Catalog of Foreign Books compiled from catalog cards sent to
NDL at the end of each year by the participating libraries. In 1971 NDL installed a computer and is now engaged in a ten-year pilot experiment in automation. Plans are being formulated to shift to the use of MARC records in compiling the Union Catalog. Cooperating libraries will be requested to report to NDL the Standard Book Number or the LC card number for newly acquired foreign books. NDL will utilize the MARC data instead of locally produced catalog cards. (One of the major projects under current study at NDL is the development of a communications format for Japanese bibliographic data—a Japanese version of the MARC format.)

3. Cataloging Service. NDL produces and distributes printed catalog cards in an attempt to implement centralized cataloging. The limited (although expanding) use of these cards is but one indication of the undeveloped state of library cooperation in Japan. It is anticipated that developing plans to prepare cards for Western language books from MARC records will promote a wider dissemination of NDL printed cards. The cards follow the Nippon Cataloging Rules (based upon the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules) and the Nippon Decimal Classification. NDL is thus cooperating with the Japan Library Association in its attempt to popularize these codes as the standard cataloging and classification schemes in Japan.

In cooperation with the Japanese Publications Trading Company, NDL has been participating in LC's National Program for Acquisitison and Cataloging since 1968 when the Tokyo Center was opened. The main functions of the Center are the acquisition and cataloging of new books published in Japan and the preparation of master cards for the printing of Library of Congress cards for the LC Card Division. It is hoped that through the cooperation of the Tokyo Center the LC Card Division will be able to supply 80 to 90 percent of the cataloging requirements of libraries participating in LC's National Program—from a low of 10 percent before the opening of the Center.

4. Reference and Loan Service. In addition to its legislative and reference services to the Diet, NDL gives general
reference service to the executive and judicial branches of the
government, as mentioned above. It extends service also to
university and research libraries and to the general public.
Such service is impeded by grave problems, among them the
inadequacy of reference tools and a dearth of trained librarians.
Much of the reference work in NDL is done by specialists
relying on their subject knowledge and familiarity with mate-
rials.

The collections of NDL are available for free use by the
general public but individual readers may use the collections
only on the premises—no loans are made for home use. Through
interlibrary loan arrangement, university, public, and special
libraries have access to the collections with the exception of
newspapers, periodicals, and special materials.

The time and energy of the staff are frequently consumed
by answering questions which should be handled at local levels.
However, one must recognize that even in many university
libraries in Tokyo students do not have ready access to the few
reference tools available, nor do they receive assistance in their
use. Likewise, because of the relatively poor collections in
university and public libraries and the lack of adequate provision
for cooperation and interlibrary loan service—conditions which
will be expanded upon later—many of the burdens which should
be met by local or regional libraries fall upon NDL. Thus, it
is not unusual, especially in the summer, to see a long queue
of Tokyo university students waiting for the opening of the
library, whose public reading room they monopolize. NDL will
be able fully to discharge its responsibilities as the national
library of Japan only when university and public libraries have
improved their service to their clientele.

We enjoyed a tour of the imposing new building which
houses the collections of NDL. A massive square in form with
a central stack core, it was begun in 1956 and completed in
1968 at a cost of 4,880 million yen, the equivalent at that time
of $13,560,000.
JAPANESE INFORMATION CENTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

A visit to the Japanese Information Center of Science and Technology (JICST) in Tokyo proved to be one of the most interesting experiences of our study tour. JICST is a semigovernmental body created by legislative act in 1957 as the central organization in Japan of science information activities. The Center is under the executive control of the Science and Technology Agency of the Prime Minister's office. Aimed at elevating Japanese technology to the level of that of the United States and Western Europe, JICST is more closely associated with industry than with academia and the advancement of pure science. Industrial firms which subscribe to its services account for a large percent of its income.

The primary functions of JICST are the collection and processing of scientific and technical printed materials on a world-wide scale and the rapid dissemination of information to organizations and individuals. To accomplish these ends, JICST engages in the publication of journals of abstracts in the physical sciences and engineering. It provides literature search services, photocopy and translation services. JICST's working collection comprises approximately 8,000 serial publications, domestic and foreign, as well as thousands of technical reports and patent specifications. These journals and reports are used as source documents for abstracts and photoduplication. About 150 staff members with scientific backgrounds and linguistic ability select the articles to be abstracted and send them to some 4,000 cooperating scientists and engineers in university and research laboratories. JICST staff members subject analyze the abstracts and assign classification codes and keywords. (A trial JICST thesaurus of about 30,000 keywords has been compiled.) The abstracts are published in a series of computer-generated journals bearing the general title Current Bibliography on Science and Technology. The number of abstracts processed in 1971 was 356,695; the number cited was 414,326, some abstracts being cited in more than one series. Each abstract
includes its original and translated titles and other bibliographic data.

The staff of JICST rose from 62 full-time employees in 1957$^9$ to 336 full-time employees and about 130 consultants and part-time employees in 1971, an increase which indicates the tremendous upsurge in technological advancement and vigorous economic growth in Japan in little more than a decade.$^9$

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The first Japanese exposure to the libraries of the Western world came in the second half of the nineteenth century. About the time of the Meiji Restoration what is considered to be the earliest information about contemporary librarianship in Western countries penetrated Japan through the writings of Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901), a scholar and founder of Keio University. In a report on his Western travels entitled Things Western (Seiyo Jijo) published in 1866, Fukuzawa included observations on libraries he had visited. A few years later the new Meiji rulers dispatched government officials, scholars, and students to the United States and other Western countries. Upon their return some of them advocated a free public library service for Japan.

The emergence of public libraries in Japan began with the establishment by the Department of Education of the Tokyo Books Institute (Tokyo Shoseki Kan) in 1872 (later known as the Tokyo Library). The first government-supported public library in Japan, its aim was “to educate men of talent and for cultural advancement,” and to allow the “general public to come and read books they want.”$^{10}$ The collection at first comprised only Japanese and Chinese books but was later augmented by books in foreign languages. The library was free to the public, but books were circulated only to those (mostly recognized scholars) who obtained permission from the Minister of Education. By 1885 the popularity of the library was so great and the reading room capacity so disproportionately small that an admission fee was imposed to restrict the number of patrons. From a daily attendance of about 400 in 1885 the clientele was
reduced to about 200 by 1891.11 This policy of excluding potential readers from browsing unfortunately became a recognized custom in Japanese libraries. In 1897 the library was designated the Imperial Library.12 It became a branch of the National Diet Library in 1949 as a result of the NDL Law.

Outside the city of Tokyo public libraries developed at a slow pace during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The government played no active role in developing local libraries, but it encouraged private organizations to do so. Throughout Japan, local educational associations responded by donating public libraries to their prefectures and cities. Statistics reveal that by the end of the nineteenth century Japan had only 16 libraries of all types containing 3,000 or more volumes; by mid-twentieth century there were 290 public libraries having 3,000 or more volumes. (The total number of all libraries with 3,000 or more volumes in 1949 was 818.)13

Two factors account for the extraordinary growth in the number of public libraries during the first half of the twentieth century: (1) The enactment in 1899 of a library ordinance—the first law established solely for the benefit of libraries—which authorized the establishment of a library by any person or organization in any place. The ordinance stimulated prefectures and municipalities to create popular libraries. Moreover, local governments assumed responsibility for a number of the libraries established by the educational associations mentioned above. A further impetus was given by the Ministry of Education in 1915 when it urged the establishment of local libraries. By 1935 more than 5,000 public libraries had been opened in cities and towns.14 But this period of numerical growth, initiated as it was by the government, did not reflect popular support nor a corresponding increase in library usage among the people. Most libraries restricted their clientele by charging a nominal admission fee and an additional fee for withdrawing a book. The lending of books was almost completely prohibited, the reading room area was small, the seat turnover rate was slow. Patrons were obliged to wait in long lines outside the library for the hour of opening. (2) The democratization mo-
vement imposed by the Allied Occupation government after the surrender of Japan in 1945. Introducing a flood of democratic concepts into Japanese society, the United States played a tremendous role in the postwar cultural as well as political life of the country. Takeo Urata, professor of library science at the University of Tokyo, recently described the Western impact on the library scene:

It would not be overstating the matter to say that the real development of Japanese libraries started shortly after World War II when the Civil Information and Education Section of CHQ [of the Allied Occupation government] opened a library should be. The librarian did not shut himself up in his office but would often receive visitors and users of the library at the front desk. Neither did the staff look at users with a frown. They were competent people who were only too happy to answer questions, to check the card catalogs, and even went so far as to look for books on the shelves.15

Provided with English publications and administered by professional American librarians, the United States information libraries, established in all the major cities of Japan, were patronized by professors, government officials, professional and business men, research workers, and students, all of whom recognized for the first time the educational potential of the public library. The phenomenal popularity of these collections, whose primary goal was the demonstration of the function of a public library in a democratic society, provided an incentive to the Japanese people to take steps to improve their own library services which had been almost totally neglected during the war. The epoch-making enactment in 1950 of a new library law, which emphasized the principle of a free public library for all citizens and professional qualifications for librarians, provided a blueprint.16

Although public library facilities throughout Japan have gradually increased during the past quarter century, the number of libraries, books, and staff today is grossly inadequate to provide effective service to a nation of 110 million people. Public
libraries in the modern sense of the word are regarded by many as attractive luxuries. In 1970 there were throughout Japan 881 public libraries, of which 806 were central libraries and 75 were branches. According to Libraries in Japan, Statistical Survey of 1970, 17, 842 of these purchased about 2 million volumes, less than 0.4 percent of the estimated Japanese book production. The annual circulation per capita was less than 0.2 books. In the metropolis of Tokyo only 67 public libraries were available to serve a population of over 11 million (as of April 1, 1970). 18 A meager 2.5 percent of Tokyoites were registered library borrowers. 19

Service patterns reflect these inadequacies of resources and personnel. The great mass of the people are served by small collections of popular books in mobile libraries. In 1972, 234 bookmobiles delivered books to remote villages. 20 Lending services are a rather recent development. Reading rooms provide accommodations primarily for those who wish to read or study in the library. The overwhelming use by students preparing to take the severe competitive examinations for entrance into high school or college has created a public image of the library as a facility for students who come to the library to use its premises rather than its books.

Several factors have helped to perpetuate ineffective service: (1) lack of recognition of the public library as an educational institution entitle to support by public funds; (2) ineffectiveness of personnel, many of whom are not professionally educated; and (3) lack of a well-coordinated network of libraries and an effective system of interlibrary cooperation. Happily, a pattern of cooperation and coordination of services has recently begun to emerge in the metropolitan Tokyo area, with the reorganization of the Hibya Library and the establishment of the Tokyo Metropolitan Central Library.

**TOKYO HIBIYA LIBRARY**

The greater Tokyo area now has two major library facilities which provide metropolitan service: the Tokyo Hibya Library and the Tokyo Metropolitan Central Library. Since its
opening in 1908 the Hibiya Library in downtown Tokyo served, until 1973, as the central public library in the Tokyo area. The building was partially damaged by earthquake and fire in 1923. Toward the end of the War, in May 1945, the building was destroyed in air raids and most of the general collection was lost. A reconstruction program was undertaken and the present four-story building was completed in 1961. It is triangular in shape on a triangular site with a triangular stack core; it has a seating capacity of 857 patrons and shelving for approximately 500,000 volumes.\(^{21}\) In 1970 the collection exceeded half a million, with 182,000 volumes constituting the library’s special collections, of which the Tokyo Collection, begun in 1915 with an imperial grant to the city in commemoration of the enthronement of Emperor Taisho, is particularly valuable. The Tokyo Collection of 43,000 volumes, covering approximately the past four hundred years of local history, and other valuable books purchased during the War to ensure their preservation, were evacuated and thus escaped damage.

The attractive one-story circular central children’s library located at one corner of the building and housing (in 1970) over 16,000 Japanese books on open shelves has largely ceased to perform its original function, that of a neighborhood children’s library, due to the hazards of traffic and reconstruction. Today it serves primarily parents and teachers. Included in the collection are award-winning children’s books from foreign countries.

Until the establishment of the Metropolitan Central Library, the Hibiya was the largest and first-ranking library in metropolitan Tokyo. With the opening of the Central Library in 1973 and the transfer of directorship to the latter, the importance and role of Hibiya have been considerably diminished. The new division of functions provides for a sharing of services on a non-overlapping basis: Hibiya retains circulation services to individual borrowers of all ages, emphasizing lending in the central business area. It houses the audio-visual collections and is the center for children’s literature and materials for teachers. In effect, the Metropolitan Hibiya Library has become the
Circulation Department of the Metropolitan Central Library. This transfer of authority and long-standing first-ranking position to a newly established facility has created a sensitive situation and has evoked understandable resistance on the part of the Hibiya Library.

TOKYO METROPOLITAN CENTRAL LIBRARY

A library introducing many unique and controversial features—unique and controversial for a Japanese library—was opened in Arisugawa Memorial Park in January 1973. The new five story concrete building has a seating capacity of 1,200 and can accommodate about 200,000 volumes on open shelves and 1.5 million on closed shelves.

Among the innovations of this forward-looking library are its restriction of usage to adults, its provision of facilities for, and its emphasis on, serving the handicapped, its injunction to aid research and to provide in-depth reference activities, its costly photomicrographic and electro-mechanical equipment, and, especially, the appointment of a woman, Mrs. Haru Sadaka, as its director. (For over fifty years positions of this rank have traditionally been held by men.) Though without library training and experience, Mrs. Sadaka is an experienced and capable administrator.

The chief functions of the Central Library are to serve as a metropolitan reference library for individual patrons, as well as for the numerous municipal libraries within the sprawling Tokyo area, and to act as the metropolitan inter-library loan center, making direct loans to other municipal libraries. For more effective reference service the 600,000 volumes transferred from the Hibiya Library—now the Circulation Department—are subject departmentalized into social science, humanities, and natural science. The newer books are on open shelves; a self-service reference collection is provided, with staff assistance available when needed. There are author, title, and classed catalogs (Nippon Decimal Classification) with separate trays for the Tokyo materials collection, the Chinese language collection, and Western languages collection. The rare books and
special collections (including the Tokyo collection) still housed in the Hibiya Library are also to be transferred to the Central Library where special quarters have been provided. Some librarians are advocating the relocation of the children's library from the busy downtown area to the more attractive Arisugawa Park (with the lifting of age restrictions on use).

The Central Library's most conspicuous feature is its facilities for serving the handicapped. Row upon row of neatly arranged wheel chairs is the first sight that greets the visitor's eye at the oval-shaped entrance with its floor-to-ceiling windows. Soundproof booths where blind patrons may listen to volunteer readers; an Optoscope—a reading apparatus that enlarges print from four to twenty times for the benefit of patrons with poor vision—is available in each reading room.

An auditorium equipped with sixteen millemeter and eight millemeter movie projectors provides a facility for film showings and lectures. A complete television studio with the most up-to-date technological equipment, including color TV cameras, video-tape recorders, monitors, and a control room, is available for producing television programs. The library made use of this facility as a public relations medium to advertise its services at the time of the opening of the new building. Staff interest in televising has been aroused by the library's participation in a weekly program on commercial TV sponsored by the metropolitan government.

The innovative and precedent-breaking features of the Tokyo Metropolitan Central Library are convincing evidence of an emerging effort to use every means available for bringing people and library materials together. Because Tokyo sets the pattern for the rest of the nation, the success of this library will augur well for the future of public library service in Japan.

SERVICE TO CHILDREN

One of the most neglected areas of public librarianship in Japan is library services for children. Statistics issued by the Japanese Library Association in 1965 reveal that only two-
fifths of the public libraries provide books and reading space for children. Although one-fourth of the registered library patrons are children and they account for one-fourth of the circulation, yet only one-tenth of the books in public library collections are children's books. In a random sample of average municipal libraries that provide children's rooms and circulate books, the number of children surpassed the number of adults as patrons. It has been estimated that if more public libraries provided space and books for children, children would easily account for more than half the total circulation.

Shigeo Watanabe, professor in the Keio University School of Library and Information Science, attributes this lack of interest in service to children to several causes: (1) failure to understand the importance of library service for children on the part of library directors, most of whom are local government employees who, after a few years of library service, move on to other government positions; (2) the official attitude that library needs of adults should be fully met before providing for children; and (3) the misconception that public library services for children are superfluous since school libraries provide reading materials.

A phenomenon which is becoming popular throughout Japan is the establishment of privately financed collections of children's books. Impatient with the lagging pace at which local libraries extend service to children, several Japanese librarians trained in the United States, have set aside space in their homes and at their own expense have filled shelves with carefully selected books for the use of neighborhood children. These "home libraries" (Katei Bunko) naturally manifest great diversity as well as instability. Collections range from less than one hundred books to more than two thousand. Some limit their service to preschool children, others include high school students among their patrons; some charge a membership fee, others do not. Most home libraries are open once a week on Saturdays. Some are managed by volunteer groups in villages and towns who set up small collections in kindergartens, housing projects, and community centers. These group projects are known as "community libraries" (Chiiki Bunko). Several
hundred such home and community libraries are providing voluntary services to children in their areas. These small collections serve an interim need, but it is obvious they are by no means a substitute for children’s rooms in public libraries. The dedicated librarians hope that their volunteer services will focus attention on this neglected area and stimulate momentum among local authorities to improve library service to children.

READING AND PUBLISHING

One of the paradoxes of Japan is the striking contrast between its library resources and services on the one hand and its book production and reading habits on the other. The post-war educational boom produced a reading nation whose literacy rate approaches 100 per cent. Its book production is among the highest in the world. In 1973 Japan published 20,446 new books, a figure slightly below that for the United States (28,140) where the population is almost twice that of Japan. Frank Gibney, president of Encyclopaedia Britannica’s Tokyo segment, presents a vivid contrast between the Japanese bookstore and its American counterpart:

In America, the combination of a slack reading public, hidebound publishing practices, and overactive direct-mail merchants.....have all but destroyed the bookstore. It is by contrast, an exhilarating experience to walk into almost any bookstore in Japan. Past the crowded piles of magazines, people are standing reading at the shelves, picking up volumes and discarding them, exchanging comments and, inevitably, marching toward the cash registers ringing up their unending sales. In the Shibuya section of Tokyo, one establishment, Taiseido, bills itself as the “book department store.” It houses eight packed floors of books on sale and does business like a prosperous discount house. Given Japan’s reading public, its success is not surprising.

In Kanda, the students’ quarter of Tokyo, bookshops extend for blocks. A tacit privilege permits the patron to buy books,
read them in their entirety on the premises—provided he does not sit down—and then sell them back to the tolerant shopkeeper at a reduced price. Poverty stricken students often take advantage of this privilege.

Calling the circulation of periodicals "rather staggering," Gibney goes on to say: "Statistics on Japan's magazine industry are enough to bring tears to the eyes of the former editors of Colliers, the Saturday Evening Post, Life, and the pre-1966 Show. Out of a total just under 10,000 periodicals—including quarterlies, government publications, etc., there are 1,400 monthlies with a total average monthly circulation of 90 million and 56 weeklies with a total circulation above 20 million per week."

As for newspapers, allowing for population differences, Japan's circulation is almost double that of the United States. An American international banker declared Japan to be "the only country I ever lived in where you can look at a ditch digger relaxing from work at his lunch break with the local version of the New York Times."

Worthy of note also is the fact that not all of the reading materials consumed in Japan are in the mother tongue. According to Herbert R. Lattmon, a contributing editor of Publishers' Weekly, "a department store in Tokyo's Ginza district has a better selection of high-level English-language books than any of New York's largest bookstores..... the racks at Tokyo's Haneda airport offer a better selection of current American periodicals than all the news-stands of J. F. Kennedy International's terminals combined."

Some may argue that the easy accessibility of bookstores has impeded the development of public libraries in Japan. Others any conclude that the low priority given to public libraries has contributed to the proliferation and prosperity of book stores. In either case, an avid reading public exists. It is pleasant to imagine what the library scene in Japan would be if this tremendous potential were fully realized.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Although universal elementary education was made com-
pursory early in the Meiji era, the system was rigidly structured by the Ministry of Education through a series of uniform national textbooks, control of teacher training, and a corps of policing inspectors. In such an authoritarian regime a school library is an anomaly. Except for a few isolated examples, school libraries in Japan are a product of the post-World War II reorganization of the educational system.

The reforms recommended by the United States Education Mission, which visited Japan in 1946, restricted the authority of the Ministry of Education. A pupil-centered curriculum was introduced; the entire body of textbooks was rewritten; teachers were given the freedom to choose and develop materials suitable to the needs of the individual student. Although many of the American sponsored directives did violence to the traditional Japanese penchant for hierarchy, democracy penetrated the classroom and with it a new need for the school library.

The legal foundation for school libraries was laid in 1947 with the promulgation of the school Education Law drawn up in accordance with suggestions made by the United States Education Mission. The regulations called for the provision of a library in each school along with other facilities. In 1948 standards for school libraries were drawn up; courses of study in library science began to appear in the curricula of colleges and universities. The school library movement spread rapidly. Japanese teachers and librarians enthusiastically supported the School Library Law enacted in 1953 by the Diet. According to the Law, each school was legally obligated to establish a library and hire a school librarian. Some 40,000 public schools were subsidized by the Ministry of Education to enable them to provide library facilities and resources. The Japanese School Library Association, established in 1950, provided leadership and momentum through workshops, institutes, and national conventions. Publishing houses, responding to the new demand for children’s books, improved the standards of their publications with the result that the quality and quantity of materials available to school and public libraries greatly improved over the years.
Unfortunately, the majority of school administrators interpreted the term "school librarian" (shosoku kyoju, the technical term used in the law) as "teacher-librarian" who devotes part-time to the library and part-time to teaching. The Ministry of Education has accepted this interpretation and today requires, in addition to a teacher's certificate, only eight credit hours of specified courses in library science for the certification of a teacher-librarian. Those who helped draft the School Library Law are unhappy with this interpretation which they consider a compromise of the Law.

Unfortunate also in the developmental period of school librarianship was an amendment to the School Library Law which exempted schools "for the time being" from hiring school librarians. This provision has continued to prevail in spite of arduous effort for improvement on the part of leaders in the school library field. Many school administrators who are not interested in libraries have taken advantage of this compromise and have assigned teachers to serve concurrently as librarians. In reality, at the present time, most elementary and junior high schools in Japan are staffed by rotating teachers (the majority of whom are not qualified librarians and whose teaching load is not reduced), student assistants, and PTA voluntary helpers. There are very few full-time school librarians in Japan with the exception of about one hundred in the Tokyo metropolitan senior high schools. Thus, the School Library Law which initiated such a promising surge of activity became a stumbling block to development.

About 1960, when the first fundamental requirements of school libraries seemed to have been met, government subsidies for school libraries were merged into subsidies for other school expenditures, thus leaving it to the discretion of the administrator whether he would allocate the funds to the library. In spite of these handicaps, some zealous school librarians, with the support of sympathetic administrators, have given outstanding service. Nonetheless, teaching is still heavily textbook oriented. The original enthusiasm for school libraries seems to have waned. Paradoxically, the prevailing examination system
is an impediment to making the library an effective instructional center in the school. As Yoshiko Tsutsui, former Acting head of the School Library Section of the Japan Library Association, makes this terse comment: "Today in Japan the 'raison d'être' for the student is to get into the college of his choice. His life force is put into passing the college entrance exams. Teachers teach for it and students study for it and the library becomes of secondary importance in this type of system."

However, emerging demands of students themselves for improved library service to meet their varied intellectual needs is an encouraging signal. The enactment and enforcement by the Ministry of Education of more stringent standards for the training of school librarians is of paramount importance in realizing Japan's potential for improved school librarianship.

ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

To understand current conditions in academic libraries in Japan one must be familiar with the intellectual climate of the contemporary Japanese university and its forerunners, the imperial universities established in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Meiji leaders, recognizing that education was a key factor in achieving their ambition of "catching up with the West," spent large sums of money to reach this goal. Professors from Western countries were invited to Japan to teach new subjects and to organize modern institutions. Students were selected and dispatched for foreign study. During the period 1875 to 1908, approximately 430 students studied abroad. The cost of importing Western teachers and the expenses involved in foreign study amounted to 32 percent of the total educational budget—all for the purpose of assimilating foreign culture. Under the supervision of the progressive and courageous Mori Arinori, Japan's first minister of education, the Imperial University Ordinance, which established the foundations of the imperial universities, was promulgated in 1886. It is significant that this Ordinance, a blueprint of Mori's philosophy, gave the national government a controlling hand in higher education when it defined the ultimate goal of a univer-
sity: "to provide instruction in the arts and sciences and to inquire into the mysteries of learning in accordance with the needs of the state"—in other words, the new schools of higher learning were to be the servants of the nation—not institutions where truth was pursued for its own sake. Although university education was for the intellectual and social elite, Mori provided that its major thrust be in the direction of application and utility. These two characteristics—the subordination of the university to the state, and the training of profession oriented graduates—set the pattern for higher education in Japan.

Tokyo Imperial University (renamed Tokyo University after World War II), created in 1886 under Mori's direction, Kyoto Imperial University (1897) and Tohoku Imperial University (1907) became models for other imperial (national) universities, as well as for public and private institutions of higher education. Tokyo Imperial University included schools of law, medicine, literature, science and engineering. Its library, assembled in 1893 from schools of the pre-Meiji era comprised about 700,000 volumes.

The promulgation in 1918 of the University Ordinance set in motion a period of expansion. This act gave formal university status to several private institutions and to new universities which had been created by national and local governments. (During the initial period of development from 1886 to 1918 only the imperial universities received formal recognition.) By the end of World War II, Japan had eight imperial and forty public and private universities with an enrollment of approximately 110,000 male students. In the relatively small, elite student body education and research walked hand in hand.

Following the War the entire Japanese educational system was radically reorganized under the direction of the Allied Occupation, whose dominant theme was democratization. The United States Educational Mission recommended equal educational opportunities for all. The so-called "new-system" universities which were established under the supervision of the American Occupation revolutionized higher education.
sities were thrown open to the masses; coeducation was made mandatory; university autonomy, as opposed to governmental control, was augmented. As a result, campuses were inundated with an influx of students which, unfortunately, the institutions were not equipped to handle. Adequate funding and long-range planning had not been provided; both facilities and faculty were inadequate.  

The prewar educational system included a large number of preparatory and technical schools whose primary function was the training of personnel for industry. The reorganization elevated these schools to the status of colleges or universities, sometimes by combining schools on different campuses for the purpose of meeting accrediting standards. The inevitable confusion attendant upon such drastic restructuring had lasting repercussions on the development of the “new-system” universities. Another far-reaching innovation in the reorganized structure was emphasis upon liberal education in the university curriculum—a concept without precedent in the history of higher education in Japan. Every student was (and nominally is) required to earn forty-eight credits in liberal arts during the first two years of his undergraduate program. The implementation of this regulation called for academic libraries which gave priority to student use, a phenomenon which had not hitherto existed.  

Progress in the creation and development of such libraries has progressed at a snail’s pace during the past quarter century. The sluggish development of undergraduate libraries is but one of the many problems which Japanese university librarians are grappling with today in the expanding complexity of higher education. Four of the major stumbling blocks to efficient library administration are briefly considered here.
scholars in specialized studies, while paying only minimal attention to undergraduates who today constitute the mass of the student population. Many of the professors still rely upon the traditional techniques of lectures and textbooks, thereby rendering familiarity with a wide range of materials dispensable. Today all too frequently the reading room in the central library is literally a room in which books are read. In general, a reserve book system does not prevail, few reference books are accessible; the quality of reference service is inferior, the space per student is inadequate, and the hours of opening are restricted. Only in recent years has the concept of an undergraduate library as a service oriented facility for the benefit of the undergraduate begun to permeate the university campus. This change has been accelerated by the younger and more progressive instructors who have studied abroad and have experienced the benefits of library resources in the process of higher education.

2. Methods of budget allocation. The budgeting system of the national universities for libraries is unique. Funds for operating expenditures come from the Ministry of Education and the parent institution. In 1971 the central libraries received approximately 20 percent of their funds from the Ministry of Education; the remaining 80 percent were disbursed from the budget of the parent institutions.43

One of the most urgent budgetary problems is that of personnel. The staff in national university libraries is in two categories: authorized employees with regular duties, and special employees with non-regular duties. The former, whose number depends upon such factors as the prestige of the library in the university community, the concern of the president for the library, and the influence of the librarian, are paid directly by the government and present no financial problem for the library. The salaries of the special employees, recruited as staff members to keep abreast of the increasing workloads, are paid from the library operational costs disbursed from the general institutional budget. With the rapid rise in salary levels in recent years, many national university libraries spend an
increasingly large percentage of their appropriations on personnel, thus reducing funds available for library materials. Consequently, most libraries are dependent upon the reallocation of research funds from the various departments, whose budgets come directly from the Ministry of Education through the president of the university. In the jealously guarded milieu of faculty autonomy there is a strong tendency for a department to develop a proprietary attitude toward materials purchased from its research funds. Not infrequently such accessions are kept in professors’ offices or lecture rooms where they are inaccessible except to faculty members and students in the department involved. Furthermore, uneconomical duplication of library materials is scarcely avoidable. Dr. Kenneth W. Humphreys, Librarian of the University of Birmingham, who visited Japanese university libraries at the invitation of the Ministry of Education in 1973, reported finding twelve copies of *Chemical Abstracts* in the library of Kyoto University.44

Such budgetary methods circumscribe the authority of the director, inevitably weaken the financial structure of the central library, and cripple any long-range program of systematic development of library resources necessary to support research and instruction.

3. Low priority assigned to cooperative activities. Cooperation among Japanese university libraries, with a few notable exceptions, is deficient. Although university libraries are handicapped by an acute shortage of basic titles, a well-coordinated policy of acquisitions and interlibrary loans, which would ameliorate the situation, does not exist. Instead, each library has aimed at self-sufficiency in its holdings. Libraries are slowly moving toward acceptance of the concept of the mutual use of materials through the establishment of an interlibrary loan system. According to statistics compiled by the Japanese Library Association, the number of interlibrary loans increased from some 18,000 items in 1966 to almost 58,000 in 1970—loans in medicine, engineering, and agriculture far out-numbering those in the humanities and social sciences.45

Union catalogs, fundamental to cooperative activity, are
inadequately developed. In some of the long-established libraries, there is no uniformity in cataloging systems and classification schemes among the departmental libraries on a single campus, with the result that no functioning union catalog can be compiled. The union catalog of special significance to university libraries today is the *Union Catalog of Foreign Books* published by NDL, mentioned above. To generate interest in centralized cataloging, the Ministry of Education allocates funds to national university libraries specifically for the purchase of NDL printed cards. The number of university libraries (national, public, and private) subscribing to these cards increased from 72 in 1968 to 121 in 1971; the number of junior colleges subscribing increased from 10 to 15 in the same period. In addition to this encouraging expansion in centralized cataloging, a movement toward cooperative acquisitions, cooperative storage of materials, and the relaxation of restrictions is now gaining momentum. Despite problems of implementation, many university librarians in Japan today are courageously striving to develop viable programs of cooperative action.

4. Low image of librarians. In Japan librarianship is not recognized as a profession. Because of the low qualifications required for professional librarians as stipulated by the National Library Law, the scholarly community does not accept the concept of a librarian as a faculty member entitled to academic rank. Inevitably, a large part of the personnel engaged in university library functions is inferior academically to university professors.

Unlike our American practice whereby a professional librarian ordinarily fills the post of university library director, in Japan non-librarian professors are commonly chosen for this position. According to statistics for 1970 issued by the Ministry of Education, slightly less than 10 percent of directors of all university libraries qualify under the national Library Law as professional librarians. Although professor-directors may lack professional competence, they wield more influence in the university community than a certified librarian of lesser educational stature. The 1970 statistics also reveal that in only 22
per cent of all university libraries is the director automatically a member of the academic senate—an indication that many university administrators fail to recognize the importance of the library in academic affairs.\textsuperscript{49}

Further complicating the problem is the part-time nature of the director's position and the relative brevity of his term of office. Less than 10 percent of all Japanese university libraries have full-time directors, the majority being reluctant to relinquish completely their teaching and research obligations; in most universities the average term of office is two or three years, with tenure restricted to two terms.\textsuperscript{50} It seems obvious that a non-professional, part-time director with divided interests cannot hope, in the space of two or three years, to initiate and execute a vigorous, innovative library program.

A radical renovation of the system of education for librarianship is indicated if a significant improvement not only academic librarianship but in the total library picture in Japan is to be effected.\textsuperscript{51}

**CONCLUSION**

A foreigner brings to another country preconceptions based upon his or her own history, traditions, and social values; it is important to guard against succumbing to the illusion that what is good in one environment is necessarily good in another cultural milieu. As with most nations saturated in traditions and proud of their heritage, Japan is slowly receptive to innovations. Social forces such as a class-conscious society, an ivory tower attitude among the intelligentia, deference to age and authority, the priority of the needs of the state over free intellectual pursuit—characteristics which dominated Japanese society until a few years ago—are still leaving trails in the present library situation.

From an American perspective, Japanese libraries are seriously deficient in many respects. But when one contrasts the current library scene with that which existed a few decades ago one cannot fail to recognize the immense improvements that have taken place. The energetic efforts which a number
of dedicated and enlightened librarians are exerting today to find solutions to their problems inspire considerable optimism concerning continued progress in the future. The contribution of American librarians should be to recognize the social forces and political subtleties that have been influential in shaping the Japanese mentality and to promote in every manner possible the concept of service and the priority of the patron over the book that are fundamental to American library philosophy.

References

4. Ibid., p. 19.
12. It was renamed the National Library in 1947.
16. The articles of the Library Law may be found in Chandler, op. cit., pp. 133-37.
24. Ibid., p. 206.
25. Ibid., pp. 204-5.
30. Ibid., pp. 222-23.
31. Ibid., p. 225.
32. Lottman, op. cit., p. 34.
35. Ibid., p. 118.
37. Ibid., p. 21.
38. In Japan there are three types of universities: national, under the jurisdiction of the national government; public, maintained by local jurisdictions such as municipalities and prefectures; and private, established and financed by private organizations.
39. Tung, op. cit., p. 201. About 550,000 of the 800,000 volumes accumulated by 1923 were destroyed by the earthquake and fire that leveled
much of Tokyo on September 1 of that year.


41. Today over 1.5 million students are enrolled in 379 four-year institutions and 473 two-year junior colleges. Approximately 70 percent are men; 30 percent, women. (Nagai, *op. cit.*, pp. 246, 249).


47. University-graduates (including graduates of junior colleges) who earn 19 credit hours of library science may be certified as professional librarians.


