

**NCC Year 2000 Conference in San Diego  
Next Decade Planning Meeting**

**Evaluating the Needs of the Japanese Studies Librarian**

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**Background:**

At the 1991 Hoover Conference, with the field facing upcoming retirements and difficulty in recruiting new librarians, as well as a changing field in librarianship, much attention was given to the combined concerns of the recruitment and mentoring of new professionals, and the training needs of mid-career Japanese Studies librarians.

The Final Report of the National Planning Team for Academic Japanese Libraries included the following paragraph of the Recruitment and Training of Librarians:

Frequently during the conference the problems of attracting qualified and interested personnel with expertise and interest in Japanese library collections were raised. The ninth task force addressed the problems of an increasing need for qualified librarians associated with the establishment of new collections around the country and the growth of others, at the same time as a decreasing supply of qualified personnel.

From Task Force 9's report on the Recruitment and Training of Japanese Studies Librarians:

The task force considered methods of recruitment and possible programs of fellowship supports, internship, mid-career training, group study, individual study, and management training. While all the programs discussed are well thought out and merit serious consideration, three programs received task force priority: the establishment of a Japanese studies librarianship program for library school students to learn information specific to Japanese materials; the establishment of an education, outreach, and publicity program to recruit Japanese studies librarians; and the establishment of an annual summer workshop. A specific proposal to an appropriate agency for money to plan a three-year grant proposal for summer workshops in three regions, was highly recommended.

In its Recommendations and Conclusions, the National Planning Team recommended

"that an annual summer workshop be organized, with an appropriate number of officers to take charge and seek funding for program execution."

**Priorities:**

Three programs were prioritized by the task force concerning the recruitment and mentoring new professionals and mid-career training needs:

"the establishment of a Japanese studies librarianship program for library school students to learn information specific to Japanese materials; the establishment of an education, outreach, and publicity program to recruit Japanese studies librarians; and the establishment of an annual summer workshop"

These have not been accomplished.

### **Accomplishments**

Nonetheless, some changes and improvements in the field and some programs for librarians have taken place.

1. The establishment and availability of eastlib has improved communications among librarians, and it does provide faster recruitment advertisement and reaches wider audiences.
2. In 1993 and 1999 the CEAL Committee on Japanese Studies conducted valuable librarian training workshops coinciding with the AAS annual meetings.
3. Mid-career or Senior Japanese librarians training was established up by the Japan Foundation and the National Diet Library in 1997, to continue for five years. The US and Canada have sent eight librarians so far. However, these sessions are not likely to continue past the five-year mark.
4. Special programs such as the CGP-funded NACSIS training in Tokyo, or Freer's Rare Book workshop (January 2000), although they are infrequent.
5. 5. Mini-seminars on electronic resources, government documents, and image databases were given during annual meeting of the CEAL Committee on Japanese Materials.

## **II. General Setting**

### **A. State of the field:**

Japanese studies has continued to grow nationally, and new small collections have to be established. Library services, which have changed rapidly over the past decade, will continue to change rapidly, and knowledge is required of a variety of new electronic resources, as well as the traditional print resources. However, not only are there fewer library schools in the United States than in the past, none has a program for Japanese Studies librarianship.

### **B. Recruitment:**

Traditional recruitment has been to look for Japanese librarians, often trained in the United States but not exclusively, for their linguistic and cultural expertise. Obstacles to continuing this process include visa problems, salary inequities between Japan and North America, and timing ( having candidates available when jobs are open).

### **C. Current problems:**

In times of economic hardship, Japanese Studies librarian positions have been downgraded, eliminated, or combined with other, unrelated, responsibilities. On the other hand, few additional positions have been created, in spite of the growth of newer collections and the increased usage and responsibilities at more established collections.

### **III. Potential Approaches**

#### **A. Recruitment:**

Expand pool of candidates:

- by recruiting potentially qualified candidates internationally more aggressively (e.g., trained ALA-accredited qualified librarians who have been unable to find positions in the United States and have either returned to Japan or found work in Europe);
- by drawing from current students who contacted Japanese librarians for some reason (such as asking "field placement" and internships by establishing more internships);
- by approaching Japanese Studies programs to encourage students to look into Japanese Studies librarianship as a career;

by establishing joint programs in Japanese studies and librarianship

- by promoting internships in academic/research libraries in Japan for American Japanese Studies librarians;
- by promoting post-master's residency and in-service training in academic/research libraries with a Japanese Studies collection in North America.

#### **B. Mentoring and mid-career training needs:**

Retain and provide on-going education

- by providing regular orientations to the field and mid-career training by the CEAL Committee on Japanese Materials;
- by providing workshops on specific topics such as rare books;
- by create programs (including fundraising?) to assist the Japan Foundation and NDL in continuing their Japanese librarian training
- by utilizing the skills of Japanese studies librarians more creatively.

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