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THE 2005 JAPAN FOUNDATION-NATIONAL DIET LIBRARY TRAINING PROGRAM FOR INFORMATION SPECIALISTS OF JAPANESE STUDIES: A REPORT

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Introduction

The 2005 Training Program for Information Specialists of Japanese Studies (17; Heisei Jūshichi-nen Nihon Kenkyū Jōhō Senmonka Kenkyū; JSIST), sponsored by the Japan Foundation (Kokusai Kōryū Kikin; JF) and the National Diet Library (Nihon Kokkai Toshokan; NDL), was held in Tokyo, Nara, and Kyoto from November 28, 2005, to December 16, 2005. The 11 trainees came from 10 countries: Canada, China, Germany, India, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea (2 trainees), Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and the United States.¹

A JSIST program has been held annually since 2002, and its predecessor, a training program for Japanese studies librarians, was held annually from 1997 to 2001.² However, the 2005 participant pool differed from that of previous years in three significant ways. First, in keeping with the sponsors’ stated goal of emphasizing countries whose study of Japan was in its developing stages, participants from Asian countries constituted all but three of the trainees. Second, as reflected in the earlier changing of part of the program’s name from “senior Japanese studies librarians” to “information specialists of Japanese studies,” a smaller number of participants were professional librarians. Finally, although the training is conducted entirely in Japanese, it was the first time that no participant was a native speaker of that language.

Despite these differences from previous years in the makeup of the group, the content of the program was fairly similar to that of past years, consisting of training sessions held at the NDL, lectures from guest speakers, and site visits. Because of the availability of reports on past years’ programs as cited in note 2, this report will focus primarily on aspects of the training that were new or significantly different in 2005.

Training Sessions at the NDL

As in previous years, librarians from various departments of the NDL provided a useful combination of lectures, demonstrations, and hands-on training in various resources, beginning with the use of its online public access catalog (OPAC) and proceeding to coverage of newspapers, reference books, rare books, legal information, statistical information, and government publications. Perhaps in deference to the significant number of non-librarian trainees, who may not have been familiar with it, more time was devoted to the session on the OPAC than in other years. In addition, the fact that information on the library’s holdings in Asian languages other than Japanese is accessed via a separate OPAC, that of the Kansai branch of the NDL, was emphasized. Otherwise, judging from reports by participants from previous years, at least two of the highlights of these sessions remain constant: the tour of the NDL’s conservation department and the daylong lecture on Japanese reference books.

Guest Lecturers

Shōhei Muta of the Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (Kokuritsu Kōbunshokan Ajia Shiryō Sentā; JACAR) gave trainees an overview of the way archiving is practiced in Japan generally and by his organization. For the 2005 program, he demonstrated the center’s most recent online release, Kōbunsho ni Miru Nichi-Bei Kōshō: Kaisen e no Keii (公文書に見る日米交渉：開戦への経緯), a database of digital images of the official documents and correspondence between Japan and the United States from the period immediately before World War II.

As he has in previous years, Yoshiaki Kiyota of the journal Shuppan Nyūsu (公文書に見る日米交渉：開戦への経緯) lectured on the publishing industry in Japan, providing a general overview as well as up-to-date sales figures and other statistics. He also served as moderator of a panel entitled “Obtaining Japanese Scholarly Publications,” which included an NDL librarian, a medical school librarian, and a university press editor.
Professor Masusuke Edamoto of Kyoto Foreign Language University (Kyōto Gaikokugo Daigaku; 京都外国語大学) discussed characteristics and use of the Internet in Japan. He emphasized the need to take extra care when inputting text in Japanese to search the Internet, because results can vary depending on whether hiragana, katakana, or kanji are used for the search terms. Professor Edamoto also noted that the Japanese web in general and English-language sites on it in particular are, at this time, still not as information-rich as their American and European counterparts.

Unfortunately, the 2005 program did not include presentations by electronic resource vendors, as it had the previous year. Presumably, the omission was made because some of the institutions represented by the 2005 trainees were unlikely to have the resources to purchase electronic products and perhaps, because they were mostly not libraries, they were perceived as not having a direct need for such products. Despite such considerations, however, in today’s world a thorough presentation of all major available electronic resources can only be considered essential to a program devoted to training Japan specialists. Electronic resources affect not only how information is provided and accessed but also the way budgets are allocated; discussing all the issues pertaining to the purchase and inclusion of electronic resources—even their unaffordability, which could lead to creative solutions such as of consortial purchasing—would surely have been welcomed by all. Even if not, that part of the program could be designated optional, as some of the training sessions that are not of universal interest currently are.

**NDL Digital Initiatives**

The last week of the program took place at the Kansai Branch of the National Diet Library. We were given demonstrations of all digital collections created and maintained by the library. As in the previous year, important compilations such as the Rare Books of the National Library (Kichōsho Database) and Digital Library from the Meiji Era (Kindai Digital Library) were presented. New digital collections, including Natural History of the Edo Period; Egakuretadōbutsu, Shokubutsu; Edo Jidai no Hakubutsukan) and Modern Japan in Archives: 100-year History from the Opening to the Country to the San Francisco Peace Treaty (Shirō ni Miru Nihon no Kindai: Kaisoku kara Köwa made 100-nen no Kiseki), were also introduced. The speakers stressed the availability of the English versions of the resources in addition to the Japanese because a number of participants represented countries where Japanese studies is in its developing stages and/or where computers able to display Japanese characters are in limited supply. Finally, there was a separate presentation on WARP, the National Diet Library’s Web Archiving Project.

**Site Visits**

In addition to the lectures and guest speaker sessions that were held at the both branches of the National Diet Library, there were a number of site visits. The sites visited were nearly the same as in previous years, with occasional differences in the venues or in what trainees saw there. For instance, in our visit to the National Institute of Japanese Literature (Kokubungaku Kenkyū Shōryōkan), we were given not only a glimpse of their regular workflow but also of their project of packing up the collection in preparation for transporting it to a new facility. The 2005 participants also visited the Japan Science and Technology Agency (Kagaku Gijutsu Shinkō Kōgō Shōryōkan), where we were given an introduction to the many science databases developed there, followed by a tour and demonstration of the processing of journal article requests. The staff takes great pride in the efficiency of the workflow as well as in the quality of the photocopying service and fast delivery time.

In our visit to the National Institute of Informatics (Kokuritsu Jōhōgaku Kenkyūjo; NII), a series of presentations was given following a networking buffet lunch. Highlights of the afternoon included demonstrations of the various features of GeNii (NII Academic Contents Portal), an aggregation of CiNii, Webcat Plus, Kaken, and NII DBR. We received hands-on training in the use of the Webcat Plus associative search feature, and it was emphasized that Webcat Plus would soon replace classic NACSIS Webcat. However, as of August 2006, the latter is still available, due to popular request.
As for the optional tours, unfortunately the 2005 group was not taken to Jinbochō and Kanda Book Town, headquarters for many used book dealers. Instead, we were given the choice to explore the areas on our own during the allotted free time ( ). The visit to the International Library of Children’s Literature ( ; Kokusai Kodomo Toshukan) that was optional in the previous year was a required site visit for 2005 trainees.

The last week of the training took place in the Kansai region. Instead of the central branch of Kyoto University Library, the site visited was the university’s Center for Southeast Asian Studies ( ; Kyōto Daigaku Tōnan Ajia Kenkyūjo). There are not enough professional full-time staff members to catalogue the materials in the collection, so the institute relies on the assistance of graduate students and visiting scholars to process the items. The visit to the site, although interesting, focused on resources about other Asian countries held in Japan rather than on those relevant to Japanese studies.

One afternoon was spent at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies ( ; Kokusai Nihon Bunka Kenkyū Sentā; Nichibunken), where we were given a tour of the library and a demonstration of their numerous databases, which are subdivided into two categories: Rare Books and Research Materials and Japanese Studies Research Materials. Most of the databases are available free of charge without registration, but there are a few—particularly image databases—that require registration in order to obtain full access.

Discussion of the Survey and Outcome of the Discussion Period
Before the last day of the program at the Kansai Branch of the National Diet Library, all participants were requested to hand in a completed survey that addressed questions on every segment of the program. Some of the questions encompassed the content of the lectures and the lecturers’ teaching skills. We were also asked whether any programs that had been optional should be made mandatory and vice versa.

Each participant completed the questionnaire and provided in-depth comments regarding issues of particular interest. The results were compiled and summarized by NDL staff members and distributed to all (with the names omitted—we had been required to include our names on the submitted questionnaires) for discussion among participants and organizers. This provided an important opportunity for all trainees to analyze the program, and its results should benefit future participants as well as the program organizers. The consensus among participants was that the program was well-organized and informative. It provided extremely useful information on the availability of resources in numerous subject areas as well as on the organizations responsible for their compilation, production, and publication. The opportunity to view items unique to Japanese libraries was also highly valuable.

Despite the overall excellence of the program, we came up with the following list of suggestions that we felt might improve it for future participants.

- **Electronic compilation of resources:** a massive pile of handouts, pamphlets, and informational packages was distributed to the trainees over the three-week period. This made an unwelcome and significant addition to the luggage they had to transport while in Japan and on their return home. Alternatively, a CD or other digital media containing the information or its collection onto an NDL server from which it could be downloaded would be far more convenient.
- **Interactive style of presentation:** anxiety and custom prevented many of the presenters from being able to establish eye contact and/or engage the listeners; many presenters simply read their PowerPoint presentations or lectures. A more interactive style of presentation would enhance the learning experience considerably.
- **More visits to academic libraries in Japan** such as the University of Tokyo, which we were not able to visit, would be very beneficial in providing the opportunity for observation of the actual daily operations, services, and approaches that Japanese librarians apply to their collections and services.
- **Shadowing opportunities** for future participants would not only allow close observation of a specific position in the library but would also give participants a chance to ask questions in a more direct and in-depth manner.
Global Community
Thanks to the interaction with participants from a variety of Asian countries, the program also made us realize that in North America and Europe we tend to take for granted the abundance of resources we have at our disposal. To a certain extent, we are all aware of the many difficulties librarians in less privileged parts of the world face as they attempt to carry out their mandates of making information available and accessible. Participants from some of the Southeast Asian countries mentioned that the only materials they had available at the moment were books—about 70 titles—that were donated by the Japan Foundation. Even though there is a lot of information published online, many of those universities do not have enough computers capable of displaying Japanese scripts. The uneven distribution of resources and the digital divide are difficult realities to accept; this direct exposure to them gave us a sense of powerlessness but at the same time some stimulus to think about how the issues could be addressed in an era in which resource sharing, collaboration, and globalization are so increasingly part of all of our lives.

Conclusion
The 2005 program was in essence very similar to previous years’ programs, with a few modifications intended to accommodate the increasing number of non-librarian participants who also need knowledge of Japanese resources in order to carry out various activities at their home institutions. We would like to acknowledge and thank the Japan Foundation and the National Diet Library for the tremendous efforts they put into organizing and delivering the 2005 program. We also thank the North American Coordinating Council on Japanese Library Resources for its work in screening U.S. applicants and the Japan Foundation Toronto for screening Canada’s applicants to the program. We felt extremely fortunate that the execution of the program was possible and hope that in the years ahead the opportunity will be given to other participants to become more acquainted with valuable Japan-related resources and new developments, who in turn will be able to share their knowledge with the worldwide library and academic communities.

Appendix 1: List of Participants
- Ms. Kwon, Jung-Im (Korea), Library Policy, The National Library of Korea
- Ms. Shin, Kyung-min (Korea), Librarian, Japan Foundation, Seoul Information & Library
- Ms. Liu, Shuping (China), Research Department of Japan - The Northeast Normal University
- Mr. Sugihartono (Indonesia), Japanese Language Lecturer, Language Centre Secretary, Japanese Language Education Program, Univeristas
- Mr. Rattanasombat, Praphan (Thailand), Japanese Language Specialist, Technology Promotion Association Language School
- Ms. Saclot, Dimaculangan Maureen-Joy, (Philippines), College Secretary / Faculty, University of the Philippines in Mindanao
- Ms. Azrina Husin (Malaysia), School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia
- Ms. Yardi, Praksah Mugdha (India), Teaching Associate, Dept. of Foreign Language, University of Pune
- Mr. Rocha, Fabiano Takashi (Canada), Japan Specialist, Cataloguing and Services, University of Toronto Libraries
- Ms. Lawson, Dawn Elizabeth (United States), East Asian Studies Librarian, New York University Libraries
- Ms. Barckow, Barbara Anne (Germany) Coordinator, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Pressischer Kulturvesitz, East Asia Department

Appendix 2: List of Site Visits
Tokyo Area
- Japan Foundation Library
- Japan Foundation Japanese Language Institute, Urawa
- National Institute of Japanese Literature (Kokubungaku Kenkyū Shiryokan)
- Japan Science and Technology Agency (Kagaku Gijutsu Shinkō Kikō Jōhō Shiryokan)
- National Institute of Informatics (Kokuritsu Jōhōgaku Kenkyūjo; NII)
Appendix 3: Lectures and Workshops

- NDL-OPAC
- Zasshi Kiji Sakuin and Asian Resources Section OPAC
- Statistics on Japan in English (optional)
- Japanese Newspapers
- Japanese Reference Books
- Japanese Rare Books (optional)
- Cultural Heritage Information--Cooperation between Japanese Libraries and Archives: Japan Center for Asian Historical Records, National Archives of Japan
- Distribution of Government Information
- Japanese Laws and Regulations (optional)
- Japanese Government Publications (optional)
- NDL’s Document Delivery Service
- Japanese Publishing Industry
- Obtaining Japanese Scholarly Publications
- Japanese Studies Resources on the Web

1 See Appendix 1 for a list of participants.
2 For previous training program reports published in JEAL, see Ito and Marra, no. 136 (June 2005), pp. 47-58; Katzoff and Suzuki (June 2004), no. 133, pp. 70-82; Morimoto, no. 130 (June 2003), pp. 49-54; Kotake, Howard, and Hammond, no. 126 (February 2002), pp. 18-24; Kutsukake and Noguchi, no. 121 (January 2000), pp. 38-40; Okuizimi, no. 115 (June 1998), pp. 22-31; and Britt and Makino, no. 112 (June 1997), pp. 51-59. Additional training program reports have appeared in issues 103, 113, 118, 131, 135, and 147, of the National Diet Library Newsletter, which can be accessed online from http://www.ndl.go.jp/en/publication/ndl_newsletter/.
3 Katzoff and Suzuki (June 2004), no. 133, pp. 70-82.
4 Ibid.
5 See Appendix 2 for a complete list of site visits.