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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses access to Asian serials (i.e., Asian and Western language titles, including publications from Asia, as well as serials about Asia produced elsewhere) in Australian libraries. Background is provided on the development of Asian collections since the 1950s. Results of a 1994 national survey of Asian materials are summarized. Efforts to coordinate Australia's Asian collections are described, including the National Chinese, Japanese, and Korean (CJK) Service and the Indonesian Acquisitions Project. A survey of users of Korean materials is reported, as well as a panel on information needs of Asian studies academics. Other topics include: a collecting agreement for Chinese statistical yearbooks between the National Library and the Australian National University (ANU); World Wide Web sites for major Asian collections in Australia; serial indexing; and backlogs of uncataloged Asian serials. (MES)

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ACCESS TO ASIAN SERIALS IN AUSTRALIAN LIBRARIES

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Paper

Introduction

Recent years have witnessed considerable achievements by Australian libraries in improving access to Asian serials. This has been largely the result of cooperation. However there remain a number of problems and issues for the future.

Much effort has been made during the past decade to improve Asian collections and services nationally. Since the 1989 Ingleson Report which included a major examination of Australia's Asian library resources, there have been a range of meetings, surveys and projects on Asian topics.

During the 1990s the National Library has organised a series of National Roundtables on Libraries and Asia and related meetings bringing together Asian studies academics and librarians to discuss important issues. These have been instrumental in successful funding bids in particular for the development of the National Chinese, Japanese and Korean (CJK) Service; the South Asia : Renovating the National Collection project and for national surveys of Asian collections in 1992 and of users of Korean materials in 1997-98.

This paper does not consider these developments in any detail apart from where serials are concerned. Cooperation on Asian materials in Australia has rarely been focused exclusively on serials. In fact surprisingly little has been written specifically on Asian serial collecting and access in Australia. However serials are at the heart of a number of recent developments.

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The term "Asian serials" is used broadly in this paper to cover Asian and Western language titles and to include publications from Asia as well as serials about Asia produced elsewhere. When only Asian language serials are being discussed this is specified. The paper refers to printed and electronic sources.

Background

The collecting of Asian serials and monographs in Australia is largely the product of post-Second World War interest in the region. Prior to the 1950s, Australian libraries had negligible Asian collections and no Australian library was regularly collecting current publications from the region.

As part of Australia's gradual change of focus towards its own region, Asian studies began to become significant from the 1950s, initially at the Australian National University (ANU), the University of Sydney and the University of Melbourne. At the same time these three universities and the National Library of Australia began to develop Asian collections. Although many other institutions have subsequently also built up Asian holdings, these four research libraries remain the largest Asian resources in the country.

The growth of Asian studies and collections since the 1950s has been uneven. The 1970s and 1980s saw rapid developments. However, this period of growth has been followed by government reductions, which have affected educational institutions and libraries across the country.

The fact that systematic acquisition only began in the 1950s has meant that Australia's Asian serial and monograph collections are strongest in comparatively recent publications. A few Australian libraries have developed extensive holdings particularly on contemporary East and Southeast Asia. They have been supplemented by reprints, microforms of archival and other older materials and the acquisition of formed collections from scholars and bibliophiles. However, Australia cannot match the retrospective collections held in Asia, Europe and North America. Australian scholars still need to travel overseas for older materials.

Australian holdings of Asian serials

The most recent national statistical survey of Asian materials confirmed the strong concentration of resources in Canberra, and to a lesser extent in Melbourne and Sydney. This survey was carried out in December 1994 for the Third National Roundtable on Libraries and Asia organised by the National Library.

It should be stressed that the figures are rather incomplete, especially for serials, and probably underestimate the holdings of smaller libraries. However the statistics are broadly indicative of the overall situation.

The survey found that 40% of the total spent nationally on Asian library collections was expended on serials. In dollar terms this was A\$958,037 out of A\$2,398,470 spent in one year. The National Library and ANU Library accounted for A\$742,500 or 78% of the A\$958,037. The National Library alone spent \$579,000 or 60% of the national total.

According to the survey there were 52,162 Asian serials held by Australian libraries. This included 31,341 Asian and 20,821 Western language titles. 31,769 (61%) were on East Asia; 18,240 (35%) on Southeast Asia; 1,750 (3.3%) on South Asia; 315 (0.6%) on West Asia and 88 (0.1%) on Central Asia.

Since 1994 it is likely that the figures for South Asia have increased following government funding to the South Asia : Renovating the National Collection project and related collecting.

The survey did not reveal the degree of duplication between collections or the balance between current and non-current titles. From anecdotal evidence there does seem to be considerable duplication. However the National Library and ANU Library hold many titles not found elsewhere in Australia. For example the National Library, through long-standing exchanges with national libraries in the region, has unique strengths in Asian government serials. It also has holdings of East Asian scientific, technological and biomedical journals not held elsewhere. ANU Library has developed an outstanding Chinese periodical collection over many years.

Without a further survey it is not possible to provide a complete and up to date national picture. However more details on the Canberra collections may be of interest. In 1994 the National Library held 35,615 Asian serials, 16,695 being in Asian and 16,695 in Western languages. At present its Asian language holdings include 7,567 Chinese, 5,924 Japanese, 5,000 Indonesian, 1,637 Thai and 1,577 Korean serial titles. During 1997/98 14,433 Asian serial items were used in the Asian Collections Reading Room, and 11,752 serial photocopy exposures provided through document supply to other libraries.

According to figures provided in April 1999 the ANU Library housed 5,846 Chinese, 866 Japanese and 88 Korean language serials. Current serial titles held included 59 in Indonesian, 11 in Thai, 44 in other Asian languages and 192 in Western languages.

Coordination of Asian Collections

East Asia

Efforts to develop Australia's East Asian collections in a co-ordinated way began in the 1950s. A number of formal and informal agreements at the state and local level have existed for many years. These have helped libraries concentrate their serial and other resources and avoid unnecessary duplication.

The National Library and ANU Library in Canberra agreed as early as 1955 that to avoid duplication the responsibility for collecting Japanese and Chinese language materials should be divided. In broad terms the Japanese agreement (<http://www.nla.gov.au/dnc/janunla.html>) allocated collecting responsibility for the social sciences and modern history to the National Library, and the humanities and earlier history to the ANU. The agreement for Chinese materials was similar, with the National Library responsible for Chinese history from 1912, and the ANU for Chinese history up to the Revolution of 1911.

The Japanese agreement has been in operation for over forty years and continues to be a useful basis for collection development by the two libraries.

As the research interests of the ANU turned more towards modern China, the 1955 agreement for Chinese materials was revised in September 1973. In effect, the revised agreement led to both libraries collecting on the contemporary period. However there continued to be useful consultation to avoid duplication of expensive items, and some aspects of the agreement continued to operate.

There has also been local co-operation for Asian studies and collections in other parts of Australia. In Brisbane, Griffith University has concentrated more on the social sciences and the University of Queensland on language and literature. In Adelaide, Flinders University has had a Southeast Asian focus while the University of Adelaide has covered East Asia. In Melbourne, for many years the University of Melbourne and Monash University had an informal arrangement on collecting of Chinese and Japanese materials. In the 1990s they issued a statement entitled Library Co-operation on East Asian Resources : Informal Agreement Between the University of Melbourne and Monash University (<http://www.nla.gov.au/dnc/agree/ummu.html>).

National Chinese, Japanese and Korean (CJK) Service

The most important recent national development for East Asian serials has been the National CJK Service. A national system for automated cataloguing of Asian scripts was strongly recommended in the Ingleson Report of 1989 and the First National Roundtable on Libraries and Asia of 1991. Stemming from the latter meeting, Australian Research Council funding was obtained in 1991 for a feasibility study, which was completed the following year. In 1993 more extensive Australian Research Council funding was granted to identify and implement a suitable system. The National CJK Service was implemented in June 1996. MASS software that allows input and display of non-Roman characters is integrated with INNOPAC for the CJK system, which provides cataloguing and an online public access catalogue. A web version has since been developed.

The mission of the National CJK Service is to support Australia's closer relationship with Asia by providing Australian libraries and their clients with improved access to holdings of Chinese, Japanese and Korean library materials. Currently twenty-two Australian academic, research and public libraries have joined the CJK Service. It is also hoped to expand the system to include other Asian scripts, beginning with Thai.

In 1997/98 the National Library provided original or copy cataloguing for 2,099 CJK serial titles, compared with 195 in 1996/97. This increase reflects in particular the high number of Japanese serials upgraded during the year.

The implementation in early 1999 of Kinetica, the National Library's new service to support cooperation and resource sharing within the Australian library community has improved access to East Asian serial data. KineticaWeb provides a gateway to the National CJK Service.

The National CJK Service home page is at <http://www.nla.gov.au/1/asian/ncjk/cjkhome.html>

Southeast Asia

Indonesian Acquisitions Project

While there were no formal agreements for Southeast Asian resources until recently, a considerable degree of co-ordination has been achieved for Indonesian publications, through the Indonesian Acquisitions Project (IAP). This was officially established in 1971 by the National Library with the aim of acquiring a broad range of government and non-government publications for the National Library and participating university libraries. Research level materials are sought in most subject areas and from all areas of Indonesia. This includes monographs, serials and newspapers which are regularly air freighted to Australia. The libraries currently participating in the IAP are Flinders University of South Australia, Monash University, Murdoch University, the National Library of Singapore and the Northern Territory University.

The Indonesian Acquisitions Project has played a major role nationally. It has created a world-class research collection on contemporary Indonesia at the National Library, and has provided other Australian libraries with important Indonesian monographs and serials otherwise difficult to obtain. During the last four years the National Library has been acquiring about 100 new Indonesian serials titles per annum.

Each issue of the quarterly Indonesian Acquisitions List (IAL) details all items included in the most recent consignment from Jakarta. There are separate listings of new serial titles acquired for the National Library, serials regularly supplied to participants, and those serials and newspapers dispatched to the Library twice weekly for prompt access by readers. IAL has been accessible on the Internet since the March 1996 issue at <http://www.nla.gov.au/asian/pub/ial/>

Survey of Users of Korean Materials

The Survey of Users of Korean Materials has been the most detailed examination of an Asian collecting area ever undertaken in Australia. It was intended to help improve Korean library collections and services in Australia on a national basis. It aimed to identify research and business needs of users in order to plan a national strategy for the future. While its focus is not exclusively on serials, they are central to the survey. The following discussion will highlight aspects which relate to serials.

Unlike most previous investigations of Asian collections in Australia, this was a survey of end users and potential users rather than of libraries and librarians. During 1997 some 156 academics, government officials and business people with a known interest in Korea responded to a questionnaire or were interviewed in person or by telephone. Their responses were frank and revealing not only about Korean collections and services but more generally about Asian and other library resources in Australia.

The survey revealed a wide range of views, which may not be surprising as the respondents varied from Korea specialists who make heavy use of libraries to some in government and business who rarely or never visit a library.

One major finding was that a number of academic respondents were concerned at the small number of Korean language periodicals and Western language journals on Korea held in particular libraries. It was felt that cuts in library funding meant that journal subscriptions had been cancelled in many libraries. Users also appeared to be unclear on which libraries had maintained subscriptions to particular titles. The importance of obtaining recent issues with up to date information was stressed. One concern was that there was an over reliance on free titles from the Korea Foundation, leading to libraries having a limited and duplicated range of titles.

Business respondents tended to make little or no use of libraries. They relied on their offices in Korea and on consultants. However a number did want greater access to newspapers and periodicals in their own specific area of business interest.

Respondents referred to areas where they perceived gaps in periodical holdings. These included titles from universities and economic institutes, government departments and banks. They wanted more trade and other statistics, census data, political, legal and business journals. The survey report noted that to some extent the "gaps" may be more a product of ignorance of existing holdings than actual lack of materials at the national level. However the Korean Library Materials Survey of February 1996 did show serial holdings are weak apart from at one or two libraries. This survey looked at the eight main Australian libraries with Korean holdings. It found that a total of 1,801 Korean language serial titles were held in these libraries of which 1,500 were at the National Library, 176 at Monash University and about 95 at ANU. The other five libraries between them held only 30 titles.

The report recommended that gaps in collecting such as the lack of current periodicals and newspapers in a number of libraries be considered together with possible funding sources.

Some respondents indicated that the Internet might affect the role of libraries and their acquisition of newspapers and journals. However a number also stressed the continuing importance of paper-based information and raised doubts about the quality of much of the information on the web.

Panel on Information Needs of Asian Studies Academics

A panel on the information needs of Asian studies academics held in September 1998 provided valuable user perceptions on Asian serials. The panel was part of the Asian Studies Association of Australia Conference and included academic and librarian participants.

It is noteworthy that all three academics on the panel stressed the need for funds to be made available for scholars especially postgraduate students to travel to Canberra to use the major research collections of Asian monographs and serials there. In fact following the panel a resolution was passed unanimously by the Asian Studies Association of Australia that the Association lobby the Federal Government for the reinstatement of scholarships for Asian studies students to visit the major collections.

Vera Mackie's paper on the library needs of Japanese studies academics noted that the National Library and ANU have the best Japanese periodical collections in the country. The University of Sydney, University of Melbourne and Monash University also had reasonable collections. Researchers from outside the southeast corner of the country needed to use their limited research funds to travel to the east coast collections.

She saw this reliance on these resources continuing. She pointed out that most libraries were facing financial constraints. Periodicals were the first items to be cancelled as libraries were reluctant to commit funds on a continuing basis. While some relief was available through Japan Foundation library acquisition grants these were limited to monographs and did not extend to serials, microforms or audio-visual materials.

She believed electronic sources would become increasingly important, though they were not without problems. CDROMs and online databases were often expensive and could involve complicated and restrictive licensing agreements which made resource sharing difficult. On the positive side there was increasing Internet access to catalogues such as the National CJK Service and databases of books and journal articles such as those produced by the National Diet Library.

Dr Ken Wells, a leading Korean studies academic, emphasised the importance of maintaining the National Library's collection as the major Korean resource nationally. He saw the housing in one location of the collection as part of its appeal, usefulness and reputation. He stressed the continuing importance of the physical collection as he saw the state of the Korean serials system and infrastructure making electronic retrieval or access extremely limited.

He believed that if Australia's Korean research resources remain concentrated in Canberra, it will be important to streamline inter-library loan systems and provide travel funds for scholars outside the capital.

Agreement on Chinese Statistical Yearbooks

The National Library and ANU have now signed a collecting agreement for an increasingly significant area of Chinese publishing. The agreement covers statistical yearbooks for three levels of administration in the People's Republic of China. These are provinces, provincial level cities (such as Beijing and Shanghai) and provincial capital cities. Subject to availability, the two libraries intend that between them they will collect all statistical yearbooks falling into these categories.

The collecting responsibility has been divided geographically, as indicated on the attached map. The University will collect from northern and western China, while the National Library will acquire provincial statistical yearbooks from central and southern provinces. The division broadly follows the Yangzi River.

Under the agreement each library will create or amend records on the National Chinese, Japanese and Korean (CJK) Service for its holdings of these yearbooks, and will provide access to the materials.

The full text of the agreement is to be found on the Library's server at <http://www.nla.gov.au/niac/libs/chinaanunla.html>

Statistical yearbooks were chosen for this agreement because the number being published is growing, they are increasingly expensive and there has clearly been duplication of holdings between the two libraries. The agreement appears to be operating smoothly and it is hoped that it may lead to wider cooperation on Chinese serials.

Home pages

The major Asian collections in Australia have developed Internet sites providing details on their own serial and other collections and links to national and international resources. The pages for the National Library's Asian Collections (<http://www.nla.gov.au/asian/>); the Australian National University Library's Asia-Pacific Cluster (<http://anulib.anu.edu.au/clusters/ap/>); the University of Melbourne's East Asian Collection (<http://www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/collections/asian/asian.html>); and Monash University Library's Asian Studies Research Library (<http://www.lib.monash.edu/hss/asrl/>) all provide considerable information on Asian serials and newspapers. The National Library, for example, has paid particular attention to Indonesian resources and has also made accessible a wide range of documents relating to Asian library cooperation in Australia. Apart from the sites of actual libraries it is important to mention the Asian Studies WWW Virtual Library (<http://coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWV-AsianStudies.html>) provided by the Coombs Computing Unit at the Australian National University. This global collaborative project for access to networked scholarly resources includes for example the Register of Asian and Pacific Studies Electronic Journals, maintained by the University of Cologne, Germany.

Serial indexing

A few Australian libraries have been active in providing Internet access to serial articles on Southeast Asia and China. This has been in response to the weakness of existing services, particularly for Asian language titles.

ANU's Southeast Asian Serials Index) (<http://anulib.anu.edu.au/clusters/ap/digilib/sea.html>), which is part of the Southeast Asia Digital Data Project, provides access to information on Southeast Asia through the indexing of major academic and current affairs journals from Indonesia and Malaysia as well as several Western countries. It was originally pioneered as an Indonesian Serials Database at ANU in 1995, and is now a joint project with the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (KITLV) in the Netherlands. With KITLV cooperation the number of journals indexed has increased from 38 Indonesian language publications to 95 Southeast Asia-related titles.

The Chinese Serials Database (<http://www.anu.edu.au/Asia/Chin/ChiSer.html>) began in March 1995 as the result of a cooperative agreement between the ANU Library and the National Library of China. Under this agreement the National Library of China undertook to provide romanised versions and English translations of tables of contents of some 100 titles from their collection which were not held in Australian libraries or covered by commercial databases.

Although no longer operating in this form, this was a pioneering effort in placing tables of contents of Chinese serials on the Internet. Since then the University of Minnesota has developed a current table of contents database of 45 Chinese serials (<http://ealib.lib.umn.edu/>) while the University of Pittsburgh Gateway Service Centre of Chinese Academic Journal Publications (<http://www.library.pitt.edu/gateway>) facilitates document delivery of articles from Chinese serials not held in North American libraries.

The ANU is currently involved in a collective project under the auspices of the Pacific Rim Digital Alliance. Under this new agreement ANU will index 46 Chinese serials titles it holds in the fields of the environment, population, law, economics, business and management. Other members of the Alliance in Hong Kong and Singapore are to index further Chinese serials

titles. It is hoped also to involve other libraries in China, including the National Library of China, the previous partner in the ANU Chinese Serials Database.

The Northern Territory Library's INTAN MAS is a computerised database accessible on the Internet containing references to the literature on eastern Indonesia, on Australia's relations with Southeast Asia, and with ASEAN and its member nations. It comprises bibliographic references to books, periodical articles and dissertations. Eastern Indonesia consists of Irian Jaya, Nusa Tenggara, Maluku and Sulawesi, which are areas of collection strength at the Northern Territory University Library. INTAN MAS concentrates on the social sciences and covers materials in Indonesian and Western languages.

Backlogs of uncatalogued Asian serials

There remain considerable backlogs of Asian serials for which there are no records or only minimal records on the National Bibliographic Database (NBD).

The Third National Roundtable on Libraries and Asia organised by the National Library in 1995 identified the most significant titles which should be loaded to the NBD as East Asian serials (including newspapers), East Asian monographs and Asian serials in general. Backlogs at the larger ANU, National Library, University of Melbourne and University of Sydney collections were seen as requiring the most urgent action. The Roundtable recommended that special government funding or support from Asian foundations might be needed to overcome these backlogs.

To date there has been no major breakthrough on this problem. However individual libraries have made good progress. For example between July 1997 and January 1999 the National Library reduced the number of its Thai, Indonesian, Chinese, Japanese and Korean language serials awaiting full cataloguing from 6368 to 3702 titles. The implementation of the National CJK Service and the access it has provided to the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN) and other serial records has greatly helped this process. During 1999 ANU will be undertaking a major project to improve bibliographic control of its Chinese serials.

The future

Australian libraries have shown considerable willingness to discuss cooperation on Asian serials and monographs. This has led to a number of important national meetings, surveys and reports and some funding of projects.

There have been considerable successes such as the cooperative National CJK Service implemented in 1996. However this took considerable effort over a number of years and several approaches to gain funding before it became a reality. Given this experience it is not surprising that results in some other areas such as cooperative collecting agreements have been modest so far. Cooperation takes time. In future cooperative agreements between libraries may be more about access than divisions of collecting responsibility. The 1996 National Library and ANU Library Korean agreement is an example. Under its terms the ANU Library has left the collecting of Korean language research level monographs and serials to the National Library in return for more liberal access arrangements.

On electronic sources, Australian libraries need to avoid the extremes of technophobia and technomania. The Internet has been enthusiastically embraced by many Australians and is already an important tool for accessing Asian serial items. It has great potential for helping to link Australia's population centres which are scattered across a large continent. However as user surveys have emphasised paper-based serials will remain the dominant research resource for some time to come, albeit increasingly supplemented by electronic information.

As a new century begins it seems likely that the current concentration of Asian serial and

monograph resources in the southeast of the country will continue. While some other libraries will have particular strengths, the Canberra collections especially at the National Library will remain the leading resources overall. This appears to be largely accepted by users according to recent surveys and discussions. However calls for improved access to these collections through the Internet, inter-library loan and periodical article photocopying services, and personal visits will need to be heeded.

Specialised staffing to build and provide services on Asian serial collections will remain a critical issue into the new century. Since the 1989 Ingleson Report the various national meetings and surveys have drawn attention to the small number of staff with language, area and library skills working in Asian collections, apart from in Canberra. For example the National Library and ANU are the only Australian libraries with specialist positions for Thai language collections. There have been some improvements such as Monash University Library's creation of Asian resource librarian positions for Chinese, Japanese and Korean as well as Southeast Asian collections. However a number of universities are relying on only one or two full-time or part-time staff who may have to deal with materials in several Asian languages..

This paper has concentrated on the National Library and larger universities housing most of Australia's research collections of Asian serials. However state and public libraries may become increasingly important as collectors of more popular-level Asian serials and monographs to serve the reading needs of an increasingly multicultural society. Several larger public libraries have already joined the National CJK Service, because of their Chinese and other East Asian collections.

In the twenty-first century there is likely to be increasing library cooperation regionally and internationally in the supply of Asian periodical articles. The Survey of Users of Korean Materials for example recommended stronger contacts between Australian and Korean libraries to include reciprocal provision of serial photocopies and loans.

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