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## Facilitating Multilingual Library Services in Japan

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**Simultaneous** No

**Interpretation:**

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### *Abstracts:*

#### Forward

In the field of multilingual library services Japan is rather latecomer than front runner. 18 % of the public libraries didn't have any foreign children's books in 2003.

#### 1. History of Multilingual Library Services in Japan

After the 1986 IFLA Conference multilingual library services in Japan has advanced but not yet popular even now.

#### 2. Roles and partnership

2.1. National Diet Library, The International Library of Children's Literature (ILCL) has large number of children's books and reference materials. It has conducted many exhibitions, events and symposiums and the like. It assists public libraries, school libraries and volunteer groups. But it cannot be said that the services is well-known.

#### 2-2. Yokohama City Libraries (YCL)

YCL has advanced in the new stage of the multilingual services. All the YCL have multilingual materials but the collections are not sufficient.

#### 2-3. Other Organizations

### 2-3-1 Yokohama Library Friends (YLF)

There are many international exchange groups in Yokohama. YLF has put into practices of the guided tours for multilingual citizens and trainees with the help of the YCL.

### 2-3 2 Kanagawa Children's Plaza (KCP)

KCP has practiced the book-talk and exhibition entitled " Understanding the world through picture books". KCP borrowed many books from ILCL, YCL and the like to make the project more substantial.

### 3. Future

To facilitate the multilingual library services in Japan it is important to build up networks among the related organizations.

## **Full Text:**

### Forward

In 1990 the Japanese Immigration Control Law was revised and as a result immigrants from Brazil and Peru increased drastically in number. The number of Registered Aliens was over 1,000,000 in the same year. According to data collected in 2005 the number increased to over 2,000,000 (1.57 % of the total population) from various countries.

In the field of multilingual library services it cannot be said that Japan is a front runner. 18 % of the public libraries in Japan didn't have any foreign children's books in 2003. It is very difficult to provide many kinds of foreign books in one public library especially in a small library. Networks and partnerships are necessary. I will provide some examples of the collaboration between libraries and other organizations.

### 1. History of Multilingual Library Services in Japan:

In the 1970's several private libraries started services to lend materials to Korean people who lived in the Kansai area. These libraries were managed by voluntary activities and didn't have any strong financial or organizational foundations.

On the other hand The Tokyo Metropolitan Library started putting together a collection of Chinese and Korean books from the early 1970's. According to the latest data (31/03/2006) it had 55,967 modern Chinese materials and 15,235 Korean materials. As to children's books the totals amount to 19,754 including 2,952 Chinese and 1,048 Korean books.

The 1986 IFLA Conference was held in Tokyo and the lack of the multilingual library services was widely recognized by Japanese librarians. In 1988 the investigation of the

actual conditions of the multicultural services was held by the Japan Library Association and since then the word of “multicultural services” has spread in the library world in Japan.

1988 was an epoch making year. The Osaka Municipal Ikuno Library started a section for Korean materials and Atsugi City Central Library set up an international information section. Since then similar activities have spread to many public libraries throughout Japan.

According to the latest survey (carried out in 2003) 1,528 public libraries (60%) had multilingual children’s materials and the average number of overseas books per library was 353 volumes. Only 2 libraries had over 10,000 children’s books and many of the collections were English materials.

In some cities where special ethnic groups lived, public libraries had special collections written in Chinese, Hangul, Portuguese and so on. But there is only a scattering of multilingual services and these have not become popular in Japan even now.

## 2. Roles and partnership

### 2-1. National Diet Library, The International Library of Children’s Literature (ILCL)

The ILCL was founded in 2000. It provides internationally linked library services for children’s literature and related materials published in Japan and in other countries. Its principle is “Children’s books link the world and open up the future”. I believe the main roles of the ILCL are putting together large collections, reference searches, putting on exhibitions & events and acting in partnership with related organizations.

#### 2-1-1 Collection and Information Resources

The ILCL collects a wide range of literature and related research materials from overseas. According to available data overseas children’s books amounted to 49,718 volumes and serials; 59 titles as of Sep.2006.

#### 2-1-2 Exhibitions and Events of multilingual services

During 2006 there were 2 exhibitions with symposiums in relation to multi-culture. One was “Struwwelpeter and other German children’s books” and the other was “Northern gifts---Children’s books from the Nordic countries”

There were also Lectures Series on Children’s Literature---Utilizing the ILCL collection--- “ Pleasure of picture books : learning from the tradition of British picture books”.

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### 2-1-3 Lending books

The ILCL lends selected thematic sets of books and provides reference services to school libraries all over Japan. The sets consist of about 50 books from and about foreign countries or regions mostly as Japanese translations but also some in the mother tongue. The kinds of sets are Korean, Nordic Countries, Canada & USA, Asian Countries (China and Southeast Asia) and Understanding of the World. Each of the sets has two types. One is for higher grades of elementary school children and the other is for junior high school students. A school may borrow a set for 1 month. During 2006 186 schools borrowed 9,503 vols.

The ILCL also lends their collections for exhibitions managed by the related organizations. An organization is able to select books from the shelves in the ICLC by themselves and bring them back.

\* If you would like further information, please access the home page of the ILCL. (<http://www.kodomo.go.jp/>) Some information is available in English.

### 2-2. Yokohama City Libraries

Yokohama City Central Library started a new multilingual section on February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007 to facilitate services for multicultural citizens. Until then multilingual collections of 10,000 books, 142 magazines and 28 newspapers were dispersed on several floors. These collections were gathered together on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. Including the collections in stock rooms it amounts to 69,000 materials (including 14,879 vols. of children's books). Most of the picture books are arranged according to country on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor at the children's section.

Some branch libraries in Yokohama have started special collections for special ethnic groups who have lived near the libraries. Naka Library started its multilingual service from its opening in 1989. Most of the collections were Chinese, Korean and English. Izumi Library is situated at the northern border of Yokohama City. In Izumi ward many Chinese, Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian people are living there. It started the services for those people around 1999. All the libraries in Yokohama have multilingual materials but in most cases the collections are not sufficient.

### 2-3. Other Organizations

I have lived in Yokohama for almost 30 years. I have been doing voluntary activities such as bunko, library friends and story hours for children, and such. The Library is an indispensable resource in carrying out these activities. I will provide some examples of

networks or partnerships.

#### 2-3-1 Yokohama Library Friends (YLF)

YLF was founded in 1995. From the beginning we aimed to facilitate multilingual services. International activities were popular in Yokohama and there were many international exchange groups. YLF has put into practice guided library tours for ethnic groups or trainees from overseas. Librarians explain about library and YLF provide translators in several languages (Spanish, Chinese, English and Thai and so on) for the convenience of the tour participants from several countries.

#### 2-3 2 Kanagawa Children's Plaza

"Kanagawa Children's Plaza" began its history at "Earth Plaza" which is managed by Kanagawa International Foundation (KIF) in 1998. I am the representative of the group. We have a story hour once a week and have been trying to select picture books or storytelling from overseas for our program. We sometime collaborate with people from abroad in reading picture books. We have also been putting into practice The Book-Talk and Exhibition named "Understanding the world through picture books" with the help of KIA once a year from 2000. We divided the world into several regions and made a plan. We started from Asia and then the Nordic Countries, Canada/Australia/New Zealand, Western Europe, East Europe/Russia/Middle East, Africa/South America, Great Britain/Ireland and North America this year and at last we have made an around-the-world trip. We have been reading and discussing the related books and reference books once a month for almost a year. We have borrowed hundreds of books from Yokohama City Libraries to enhance the project. Obtaining books for the Middle East section of the project within Japan proved difficult. To that end we consulted the ILCL and Asia/Pacific Cultural Center for UNESCO (ACCU) library to borrow many picture books from them for exhibition. Without the help of these libraries we would not be able to do our projects. We make book lists of translated materials from the related countries each year. They amount to 8 volumes and I believe they are useful for understanding another cultures.

### 3. Future

As I mentioned at the beginning multilingual library services are not so popular in Japan but there are very many overseas children's books which have been translated into Japanese. Many children are familiar with these books from their early age without being aware of it. We can facilitate multilingual library services by using a large

amount of children's books. They help to give chances for Japanese to understand overseas countries and cultures. Furthermore, as a matter of government policy the population of ethnic groups will increase year by year. From now on we should "only connect" with the related organizations such as ILCL, public libraries, schools and many small NGO groups and so on. I hope public libraries play a central role in networking with a help of Japan Library Association.

## References

- Book

A Guide to Multicultural Librarianship / Japan Library Association(JLA)'s Research Committee of Multicultural Service Section / JLA / 2004

- Booklet

Report on the Actual Conditions of the Children's Services at Public Libraries, 2003 / JLA / 2004

- Organizations

\* International Library of Children's Literature <http://www.kodomo.go.jp/>

\* Tokyo Metropolitan Library <http://www.library.metro.tokyo.jp/>

\* Osaka Municipal Library <http://www.oml.city.osaka.jp/>

\* Yokohama City Libraries <http://www.city.yokohama.jp/me/kyoiku/library/>

\* Earth Plaza <http://www.k-i-a.or.jp/plaza/>

\* Asia/Pacific Cultural Center for UNESCO <http://www.accu.or.jp/>

\* LINCS: Librarian' Network for Culturally diverse Society <http://www.musubime.net/>

\* Asian Center Asian Library <http://www.asian-library-osaka.org/>