

Looking for trends in Asian collections

George Miller comments on a recent report

How do library administrators, responsible for viewing collections of Asian material from a national perspective, know what should be acquired? How can they ensure that the most efficient processing of that material is being employed?

In order to obtain more tangible evidence to answer these questions, a Working Party consisting of Colin Steele (ANU Library) and Eric Wainwright (NLA) was set up by the National Roundtable on Libraries and Asia in May 1991. It obtained funds from DEET to carry out a survey in mid-1992 of the trends in Asian Studies in Australia and the trends in the resourcing and management of Asian collections.

Data was collected from published material of DEET, from the pages of the *Asian Studies Review*, (the journal of the Asian Studies Association of Australia), from the reports of the leading Centres for Asian Studies in Australia and by written communication with many Asian Studies scholars. In addition, personal visits were made by Andrew Gosling (NLA) and myself to more than twenty-five centres and libraries involved with Asian Studies.

It is hoped that the information gleaned will assist in planning strategies for a more cooperative and effective development of Asian Studies collections in Australia. The survey provided information on trends in Asian Studies and ball-park figures on the main collections. It established that since the Ingleson Report into Asian Studies in 1988, over forty centres for teaching and research on Asia had been established. Following the Asian Studies Council's proposals to make Australia more 'Asia literate', enrolments in Asian languages in universities had jumped about 25%. But the survey also found that there had been no commensurate increase in the allocation of resources for libraries with Asian material, with the exception of the National Library. The survey concluded that the expansion in Asian Studies could not continue and the present standards be maintained without real support for libraries in terms of funding and staffing.

Bearing in mind the tight funding environment for research and undergraduate libraries, the Report recommended to the Working Party specific ways in

which a more effective and coordinated development of Asian collections and services might be achieved. These included approaches to and cooperation with other bodies such as the Asian Studies Association of Australia, ACLIS, CAUL and DEET itself. Cooperation could be said to be a theme running through the Report.

One thing the survey did not do. It did not result in a guide to the actual contents of the Asian Studies collections in Australia. That useful tool has still, unfortunately, to see the light of day.

The results of the survey have been published by the Australian National University in 1993 as *Survey of Trends in Asian Studies and Asian Collections in Australia*, and appears as n° 6 in the ANU Library's Occasional Paper series. It can be purchased from: Business Office (Attn. Joan Jensen), Library, ANU, Canberra ACT 2601 (\$12 incl p&tp). ■

Australian nationally shared system for Chinese, Japanese and Korean languages

More than thirty librarians discussed this project in the National Library on the following day, 19 March. The meeting, called by the ANU and NLA, was attended by representatives of Monash and Murdoch Universities and the Universities of Sydney and Melbourne as signatories to the successful funding proposal agreed to by the Australian Research Council. A number of other libraries from Queensland, New South Wales and the ACT also attended. A fuller report of the meeting will be presented later.

 Maindex™

AUSTRALIA'S PREMIER BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The essential link between your library's resources - monograph and journal collections, on-line catalogues, CD-Rom databases, - and your clients - researchers, academic staff, students.

For more details or a demo disk, contact Justin Finighan
Ph: (03) 428 6851 or
FAX: (03) 428 0929

 Jerboa Software Pty Ltd
ACN 006 006 022

 FLIS

LIBRARY PERSONNEL CONSULTANTS

Experienced and qualified library staff available for temporary and permanent positions - all sectors, all levels.

FREELANCE LIBRARY & INFORMATION SERVICES P/L

27 Kasouka Rd, Camberwell
Victoria, 3124

(03) 813 1925 FAX (03) 882 4274