

The National Diet Library; Problems Involved in Its Development

国立国会図書館—発展途上の諸問題

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要 旨

本文は国立国会図書館設立以来二十数年にわたる発展の歴史を鳥瞰したもので、それぞれの事項について問題点にふれている。まず同図書館設立の経緯の概略を述べ、国立国会図書館法に則して、同図書館の目的、サービス目標を記した後、赤坂離宮に昭和23年6月開館した当時の模様や上野図書館の合併の事情を説明し、さらに新館の建築ならびに増築完成とその後の機構、予算（予算表によると昭和23年度予算のおよそ26倍の予算が昭和46年度には組まれている）、収書、参考業務、書誌サービス等について論じ、最後に電算機による機械化計画の進捗状態と今後の見通しを述べている。

During the Pacific War, some two million Japanese had died, 40 percent of the aggregate area of the cities had been ruined, industry was at a standstill and even agriculture, short of equipment, fertilizer and manpower, had declined. At the moment when the War ended in 1945, any Japanese on the destroyed and devastated land could never dream of Japan's economic recovery which, after twenty years, reveals herself the second highest country in the free world with the Gross National Product. Nor the present prosperity of the Japanese library activities which, although not necessarily number two in the world, is being more accepted and utilized by the people with great popularity. There existed a few libraries with large collections but housed in the obscure buildings before the War, however their activity was poor and heavily oppressed during the war time. Its growth owed partly to the

occupation policy which was carried out chiefly under the influence of the United States and was partly inspired by the longing for the democratic learning which sprouted out among the Japanese people after the long and relentless control enforced by the war-time government. One of the relevant outcomes was the establishment of the National Diet Library.

The birth of a parliamentary library had been sought ever since 1894, when the Secretary General of the House of Peers jointly with colleague of the House of Representatives recommended to the Cabinet the needs of having a library just like the Library of Congress after he came back from the trip to the United States. Several similar attempts and motions had been so far made in vain since then. In the meantime the libraries in both Houses were established respectively but the opportunity to have a single parliamentary library had not matured

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until 1948. On the next day to the promulgation of Japan's New Constitution in 1946, the occupation headquarters delivered to the government some suggestions in connection with enactment of the Diet Law, in which it was stated that the Diet Library should be installed as an auxiliary organ of the Diet. Thus the following year the bill pertaining to the Library passed both Houses. However, it was only simple being composed with seven articles aiming chiefly to help research of the Diet members without any regulation on the service the Library would render.

The Japanese Diet went through a radical transformation to adjust itself to the democratic principles expounded in the new Constitution. Studies had been eagerly made to seek out the effective and efficient organization, management, acquisitions and services of the Library at the Committees of both Houses and finally it was concluded that the Diet Library Law lacked something of perfection and therefore should be replaced by another one carefully prepared after consultation with the experienced librarians in and out of the country.

The U. S. Library Mission consisting of two distinguished librarians, Verner W. Clapp, then Chief Assistant Librarian, Library of Congress, and Charles H. Brown, then Chairman of the Oriental Committee, American Library Association, was in time invited to come to Japan. Just after their arrival, they had energetically tackled the problem for one month and a half in close collaboration with the Committees for Library Management of the Diet and other organs and librarians concerned. Several memorandums thus prepared were the very foundation of the present National Diet Library Law which came to exist in February 1948. Directives and memorandums enforced by the U. S. occupation forces still leaving trails on the administration of Japan are now being examined. Some of them are bitterly criticized but the Mission's merits are still being highly appreciated. This is because, perhaps, its idea was so proficently composed by well-minded librarians that it touched the heart string of the Japanese people who ardently longed for

fresh air and the emergence of something cultural and democratic just after the depressed life in the war time, and accordingly the performance was accepted with applause.

Truth Makes Us Free

"The National Diet Library is hereby established," the preamble of the Law announces, "as a result of the firm conviction that truth makes us free and with object of contributing to international peace and the democratization of Japan as promised in our Constitution." The Library activity should be carried out in response to the requirements of the new Constitution which proclaims that sovereign power resides with the people. In this sense, the Library was a product of post-war Japan, though in its background laid the long history and tradition of the libraries which were later merged into one.

The Law prescribes the purposes of the Library saying, "The National Diet Library shall collect books and other library materials for the purpose of assisting the members of the National Diet in the performance of their duties and also for the purpose of providing certain library services as hereinafter specified for the executive and judicial branches of the national government and for the people of Japan." The Law, with thirty one articles, regulates the functions and services of the Library.

They should be summarized into four categories. The first is naturally to serve the Diet. The service is chiefly attended to by the Research and Legislative Reference Department, where experts and specialists on different subjects work to answer the needs of Diet members. It includes analyzing and appraising measures to be brought before the Diet and supplying information needed by the Diet as a basis for its deliberations. It is further to gather, classify, analyze, translate, index, digest, and compile into bulletins or reports data having bearing upon legislation. The Department also serves the committees and members of both Houses in drafting bills and

prepares and publishes research reports, bulletins and an index of laws and orders. The Detached Library in the Diet building too serves the immediate demands of the Diet members.

In the second place, the National Diet Library renders library service to the executive and judicial agencies of the national government, most libraries of which are organized as branches of the Library. There exists between the Library and the branches close cooperative relations such as interlibrary loan of materials and mutual assistance in research activities. The number of such branches is thirty at present.

The third function is to serve other libraries and the general public. The Library's collections are offered for their free use either directly or indirectly. The reference inquiries are received from every corner of Japan and answered. The Library pays special attention to its function as a national and central library of this country. Its bibliographical services being mentioned later are also important work of national interest.

Fourthly, as the representative library of Japan, the Library maintains active international cooperation with libraries and learned institutions abroad. Its international service as the exchange center of this country is well known. Copies of the government publication legally deposited are partly used for such exchange. The fact that the Library has been designated as the depository library of many international organizations proves its worldwide reputation.

Birth in the Palace

Soon after the Law was enacted, the Library opened its doors in June, 1948, with a staff of 182 persons and a collection of 215,000 volumes, the major part of which had come from the libraries in the Diet. The Library was temporarily housed, until its removal to the present building in 1961, in the former Akasaka Detached Palace, one of the Imperial palaces. The Palace, being established in 1900~1909, was

the only famed European building of neo-baroque style which escaped from the war-fire. It was old but very much decorated. However, the building was not a library after all, but a palace. Rooms were not always efficiently located for library service. For the line of work, even a bath-room and passages, after being poorly remodeled, were used for the offices. Nevertheless, the staff within such aristocratic atmosphere began to work very hard under bad food conditions but with their firm belief that their service would very much contribute to the cultural reconstruction of the country.

In these initial days, Robert B. Downs of University of Illinois Libraries visited Japan as a special consultant of the Supreme Commander of the Occupation Forces and, after three months, submitted a long report on the technical processes, bibliographical services and general organization of the National Diet Library. His report was not a directive of the occupation forces but involved many invaluable and warm-hearted suggestions and advice for the development of the services. It was really a finishing touch to the inauguration of the Library and encouraged very much the Japanese librarians who were then mostly of little confidence to dare to tackle with the greater undertaking.

In his report Downs wrote, "Of the long-range problems which face the National Diet Library, these three are of outstanding importance :

1. *Building.* From a library point of view, the Akasaka Palace has severe limitations, most particularly in its remoteness from the Diet building, its cramped space for books, and its general lack of adaptability for library purpose. The only solution is to construct the proposed Diet Library building near the Diet building as soon as feasible.
2. *Staff.* The shortage of trained staff for a new Library, such as the National Diet Library, is a reflection of the lack of professionally trained librarians throughout Japan. Means must be found for

providing further training for present and future members of the staff, if the high aims set for Library are to be realized.

3. *Book Collection.* In common with other Japanese libraries, the National Diet Library is almost completely lacking in American and European books of the past ten years. Until this gap is filled, research workers using the Library will be greatly handicapped. Current and future publications of the western world will be even more essential. Arrangement for exchanges, solicitation of gifts, and, when financial obstacles are removed, purchase of material should be pushed without delay . . .”

The Library in its beginning was organized by the Administrative Division, Research and Legislative Reference Department, General Reference Division, Branch Libraries Division, Acquisitions Division, Processing Division and Building Construction Division. A few months later, Acquisitions Division and Processing Division were merged into one and International Affairs Division was newly created. In the first year, the general users of the Library were 70,426 (per day average 352) served with meager 305 seats. At the end of the fiscal year, number of staff increased to 362 and its collection up to 337,000 volumes.

In accordance with the provision of the National Diet Library Law, the National Library at Ueno Park was absorbed into the National Diet Library in April, 1949 and hereafter it has been called the Ueno Branch Library. It had a long history of library service. Its predecessor, the Library of the Museum Bureau, was established in 1872. Once it was transferred to Tokyo Metropolitan Government and in 1880 placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. The present building at Ueno Park built in 1906 had been named Imperial Library until 1947, when its title was changed to National Library. The Library with an useful collection having so great a reputation among the students, the name Ueno had been synonymous for a library

of the country.

At the time of being absorbed, Ueno Library had an invaluable collection of some 900 thousand volumes, larger than that of its young parent Library, most of which were removed into well air-conditioned stack of the National Diet Library in 1961 when its new building was partly completed. The merger of two Libraries would perhaps depend upon the idea that two national libraries were not compatible with principle of unified service and the success of library development in a nation. In this sense, the merger was reasonable, but the arrangement still leaves a problem to be settled in any way. The Law prescribes, “The National Library at Ueno Park shall be operated as a branch of the National Diet Library, especially for the benefit of the citizens of Tokyo. *As soon as practicable thereafter*, this Library shall be transferred to Tokyo Metropolis to be operated under such laws and regulations as may be enacted prior to the date of transfer.”

A year before the first part of the construction of the new National Diet Library building was completed and the collection of the Ueno Library was removed there, the problem on the transference had been discussed between the National Diet Library and the Tokyo Metropolitan Office. The former insisted that the transference was not necessarily adequate because most of the collection was of national importance which would be preserved in such well-equipped stack the new building had and National Diet Library itself had several ideas of using both collection and building of the Ueno from the point of the national library service. On the contrary, the latter requested to transfer gratis both collection and building which would be used for the public library of the Tokyo Metropolis. In fact, there was a sentimental drive of volunteering group of the Ueno users who were standing, with strong nostalgia, against the removal of the collection to the new building.

However, the collection was actually removed in 1961. Later in 1963, the National Diet Librarian explained at the Standing Committee

of the Library Management of the House of Representatives about the reason for non-transference and it was unanimously approved. The building of the Ueno is of antique and in reality cannot be modernized without a great deal of expenses. Some part of it, it is recognized, is constructed of so fragile bricks that it is undurable against the great earthquake. The Tokyo Metropolis, knowing or regardless of the fact, is now expanding its own public library service and has not requested the transference in these years. But the provision of the Law is still alive.

New Wine in New Bottle

On the same day when the National Diet Library Law enacted in 1948, the National Diet Library Building Commission Law was also promulgated. It was for the purpose, according to the provision, "to prepare initial specifications for the Building, to select a site, to select an architect, to procure preparation of plans and estimates of costs of constructions to the Diet through the Speaker and President of the Houses on the construction of the building, including the recommendation of a budget." The Commission was to be composed of the Librarian of the Library, as chairman of the Commission, Chairmen of the Standing Committees on the Library Management of both Houses, Minister of Construction, and a building specialist appointed by the Speaker and President of Houses.

Soon after the Library was opened at the old palace, at the first meeting of the Commission, it was decided that a new building should be constructed and the ground north of the capitol was selected as its site. A public competition for the design of the building was held at the end of 1953, and the basic design was finished by the winner of the competition in 1955. The first period of the construction, which covered nearly half of the final layout, was started in 1954 and completed in July 1961. The Library moved into this new building in August from Akasaka Palace and also from Ueno Park. The public service was

resumed in November of the same year. This was indeed quite a move of more than 2 million books with 800 trucks mobilized. The building was expanded in the second period of construction, which started in December 1966 and finished in August 1968, just after two decades since the Library was born. The total cost of construction was 4,880 million yen or approximately 13,560,000 U.S. dollars.

The site is about 27,000 square meters. The building is regular square in form with each side 90 meters long and has the total floor area of 73,600 square meters. The stack is in the center of the building and also square with each side 45 meters long. It contains 17 floors and nearly 170 kilometers of bookshelves. The capacity is of 4,500,000 volumes. The stack is surrounded by the office and reading area which consists of 6 floors and one basement.

At the time of examining the designs of the building applied to the competition, it was hotly discussed either the central stack or rear stack system should be adopted and finally the former was accepted with the reason that the office and reading area around the stack could efficiently reach the stack with minimum course in between. Be the fact as it may, the defect of the central stack system is pointed out that the distance between the offices located on the diagonal corners of the square is extremely long and the space of stack expansion is physically limited except going upwards. If the Library should fail to find other space to expand in the future, there will be a fatal problem to come.

Apart from this matter, the completion of the whole building is to mark the beginning of the second stage of the Library's development. In response to the new facilities of the building, the Library was reorganized in 1959 and 1963. Since then, the Library has been consisted of the Administrative Division, Research and Legislative Department, Acquisitions Division, Processing Division, Circulation Division, Reference and Bibliography Division and Division for Interlibrary Services. Main emphasis of the reorganization was laid on to clarify its function of the national service and

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the cooperation with other libraries in and out of the country, in addition to the essential service to the Diet which had been so far referred to. The Ueno Library remains as a branch.

Besides, the Library has 30 branch libraries in the executive and judicial agencies of the government as mentioned above. This system is a unique experiment in the world in connection with the intergovernmental library scheme. The librarians of these branches are appointed by the National Diet Librarian. However, they themselves are staff of their agencies by nature and the appointment is in any case incidental. Budget of the branches have

been appropriated by the Ministry of Finance independently of the budget of the Main Library. Therefore, the management of the branches are always beyond the power of the Librarian. What is the benefit of the branch system other than inter-governmental library cooperation?—the cynical words come among the staff of the branches.

Budget of the Library, as shown in Table 1, has increased favorably, though there were sporadic ups and downs which mostly were caused by appropriation for construction of the new building. Total budget for the fiscal year 1971, in comparison to that for 1948,

Table 1. Budgetary Appropriation for Fiscal Years 1948-1971

Unit: thousand yen

Fiscal Year	Total Annual Appropriation	Personnel Expenses	Acquisition Expenses	Buliding and equipments	Other Items
1948	81,175	20,473	15,172	33,250	12,280
1949	105,415	58,914	10,047	6,650	29,804
1950	142,648	69,209	16,318	10,000	47,121
1951	214,434	109,350	19,864	34,715	50,505
1952	377,044	141,735	81,712	82,250	71,347
1953	435,521	209,020	97,946	81,581	46,974
1954	351,680	222,814	37,011	43,693	48,162
1955	304,085	222,686	25,866	10,000	45,533
1956	578,620	256,372	37,253	238,000	46,995
1957	774,295	284,643	34,403	400,000	55,249
1958	770,954	301,848	43,662	370,000	55,444
1959	825,708	312,143	52,099	398,845	62,621
1960	1,115,444	362,934	70,617	611,790	70,003
1961	1,105,730	432,884	114,771	384,841	173,234
1962	817,401	492,321	143,866	41,069	140,145
1963	855,772	555,743	151,650	5,000	143,379
1964	943,051	650,646	133,643	0	158,762
1965	1,055,645	723,438	130,473	35,000	166,734
1966	1,730,171	793,213	144,798	614,704	177,456
1967	1,936,042	871,110	147,971	738,034	178,927
1968	2,307,855	935,012	158,166	967,568	247,109
1969	1,571,889	1,148,342	173,895	7,250	242,412
1970	1,952,661	1,381,447	192,654	84,882	293,678
1971	2,172,333	1,535,564	225,059	7,485	404,225

Note: Fiscal year in Japan is from April through March.

Table 2. Some Library Statistics for Fiscal Years 1948-1970

Fiscal Year	Number of Library Staff	Reference Inquiries Answered		Collections ⁽³⁾ (Vols.)
		Legislative ⁽¹⁾	General ⁽²⁾	
1948	362	209	1,234	337,733
1949	491	307	17,755	1,490,428
1950	527	722	18,114	1,565,975
1951	593	1,473	15,967	1,628,816
1952	566	3,050	21,061	1,693,348
1953	566	3,106	28,988	1,770,031
1954	557	2,512	28,502	1,801,586
1955	571	3,634	19,367	1,851,236
1956	585	3,329	15,909	1,921,873
1957	585	2,682	16,326	1,993,315
1958	595	2,628	16,239	2,235,351
1959	629	2,106	21,712	2,320,766
1960	665	2,232	24,239	2,417,372
1961	770	2,119	20,248	1,952,573
1962	790	2,663	34,862	2,021,604
1963	805	4,416	35,458	2,084,184
1964	808	4,075	46,224	2,142,830
1965	808	5,418	51,531	2,214,977
1966	808	3,744	56,242	2,291,623
1967	808	6,132	72,995	2,366,920
1968	831	6,245	54,358	2,447,081
1969	845	6,830	111,129	2,534,473
1970	845	7,340	138,891	2,606,388

Note: (1) Items answered by the Research and Legislative Reference Dept.

(2) Reference service to the general public answered both by Reference and Bibliography Division (formerly General Reference Division) and by Ueno Branch Library.

(3) Number of materials registered (excluding pamphlets, unbound periodicals, maps, microfilms, music records, etc.)

increased by some twenty six times. During these years, of course, the price has been greatly inflated. However, the rise of the consumer price index in Tokyo for 1948-1970 is some three times, according to the Statistics Bureau.

Some remarks are herein given in connection with the acquisition of the library materials. The budget of acquisition for the fiscal year 1971 is 225,059 thousand yen, 14.8 times bigger than that for 1948. It is to be noticed

particularly that in 1961 and thereafter the budget for materials in the fields of science and technology has been greatly enhanced.

The Library acquires materials generally through legal deposit, purchase, exchange and donation. Acquisition policy is in principle that the current Japanese publications, both governmental and non-governmental, should be collected comprehensively through the deposit system which is prescribed in the Law, and that, in acquiring foreign publications, emphasis

should be given to the basic books of current value in various fields, reference books, books on Japan, as well as serials on science and technology.

The legal deposit system has nothing to do directly with the copyright registration and although the government publications, national and local, are to be sent to the Library free of charge, the Library pays for non-government ones a compensation equivalent to the net cost of their production (in most cases one half of the retail price). The punishment clause is provided if the publisher fails to furnish but it has never been imposed.

The legislative reference service has been well established. Urgent inquiries which come from the Diet members are efficiently handled by the specialists of the Library. At the beginning in 1948, the Library had 49 staff members of this kind and answered 209 legislative questions, however, in 1970 answered 7,340 questions with 155 staff members. The noteworthy trend currently carried out in this service is to have interdisciplinary surveys of political importance such as on excessively and sparsely populated areas, on megalopolis problems and environmental pollution in certain areas. The legislative inquiries have been so far arranged by the sections respectively limited to certain subjects, but the inquiries in the informational complexity of the present days require larger and more intensive structure of research activity. Interdisciplinary approach is herein strongly needed in response to such conditions.

The Library takes an important role in the bibliographical activities in Japan. It compiles and publishes, for example, the *Japanese National Bibliography*, *Catalogs of the Library*, *the Union Catalog of Foreign Books*, *Accession List*, *the Japanese Periodicals Indexes*, the printed catalog cards and numerous bibliographies of special subjects including science and technology. They are printed by the commercial printers except for a few done by the Government Printing Office, and are distributed to libraries and related institutions mostly free of charge. The headache is that

monetary limitation always regulates the activity. Only solution would be to take a drastic measure on the gratis distribution in some way or other.

Towards Computerization

Soon after the Library was removed to the newly completed building in 1961, a small team began to preliminarily study the mechanization of library services. In 1965, Research Committee on the Mechanization of Library Services, consisting of principal staff members of the Library, was established with the aim to study the basic principles of automation, its applicability and consequence and to reanalyze the library services as well in order to cope with the present informational explosion and to provide more efficient services. In these days some pilot experiments with the electronic computer had been undertaken, and in 1969, Preparation Office for Mechanization, which has been so far responsible for automation projects, was set up.

After such careful examination, the electronic data processing system was finally installed in the Library in January 1971. This is a Japan-made computer system, HITAC 8400, consisting of a 65 KB central processing unit, six magnetic tape units, four magnetic disk drives and the input/output devices. It is combined with a Chinese character printer, JEM-3800B. This system is capable of extending its memory up to 262 KB with additional central processing units.

The computerization in the National Diet Library, as is same in the national library services in the Western countries, has two objects; one is the national bibliographic control or rationalization and the other is the information retrieval.

As above mentioned, the Library compiles numerous bibliographies on national bases, but they are not always, for many reasons, perfect in a strict sense and nevertheless they are expected to do so. Introduction of the MARC II (Machine Readable Cataloging) tapes produced by the Library of Congress is now

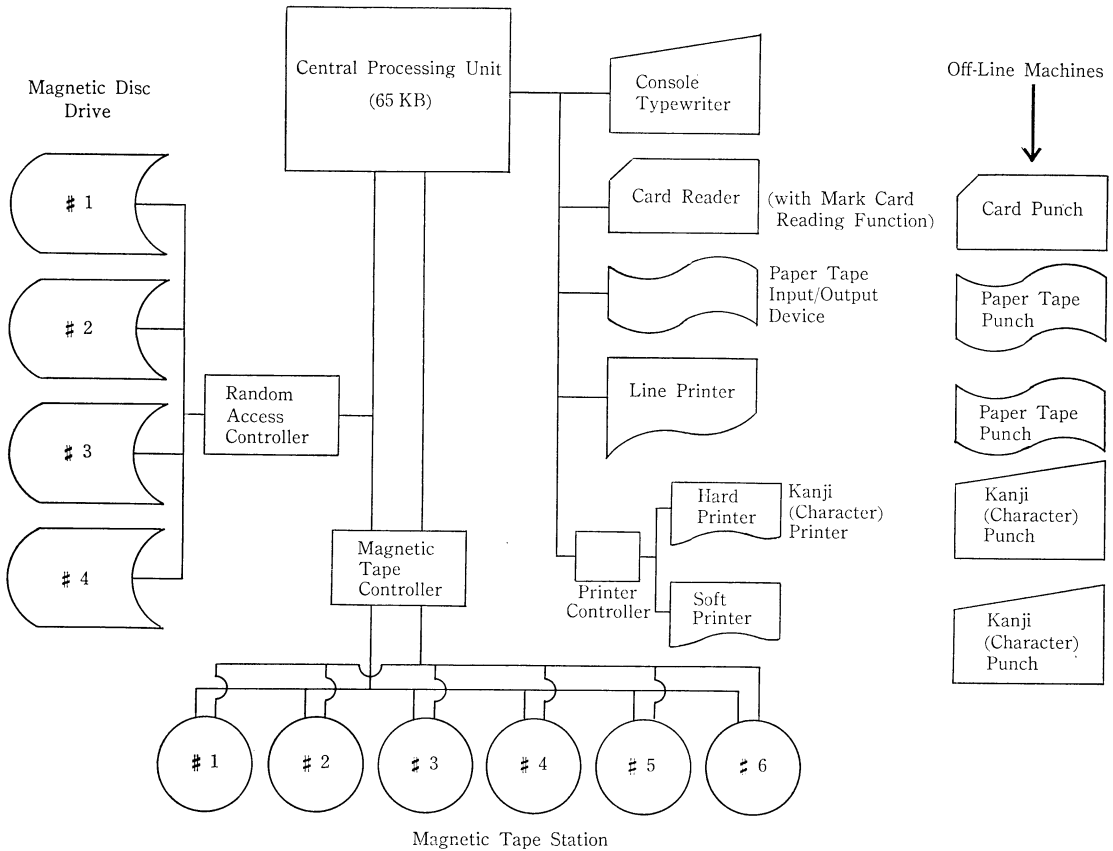


Fig. 1. Electronic Data Processing System in the National Diet Library

considered to be a remedy for rationalization of bibliographic service of the Western materials. There seems to be no difficulty.

In thus computerizing, however, it is keenly requested to develop the processing system of the Japanese language in addition to Western alphabet. The Japanese language is rather complicated in its composition. It is usually mixed with Chinese characters (although fairly Japanized) and phonetic letters or *kana*, which have two different types numbering 50 respectively. The phonetic letters can be changeable to mechanic signs and easily adapted to computer processing. The problem on Chinese characters is more serious. Number of characters, it is said, is some 50,000 or

more, including historic and little used ones. A device has been already developed in an institution to process 1,850 characters by the Chinese character teletype and printer, but it is not enough for the service of the National Diet Library.

Being a computer system primarily for Western alphabet and figures, it was almost impossible to arrange so many Chinese characters on a keyboard. After intensive study, the computer maker with cooperation of the Library has had success in developing the pattern input systems. Chinese characters are analysed into 45 patterns by their structural elements. The elements are punched by order of the pattern of the required character so as to

process a character in question. Thus, the newly developed device can process nearly 4,000 different characters, which, according to the frequency survey, cover not only those currently used but some 2,000 characters of classical use. The result is almost satisfactory for the Library. The device is really a challenge to transplant our own language into imported mechanism of the computer. A pilot automated project of processing Chinese characters has been studied in compiling *General Index to the Debates at the National Diet*, which can be consulted both from speakers and subjects in Japanese. A program of about 35,000 steps for the project has been already developed and the Index thus compiled is expected to be printed in the coming spring. The monthly *Japanese Periodical Index*, cumulation of which has been so long expected without being realized, is hoped to be compiled also in this way. Further, the Library is now studying to develop Japan's own MARC and to make it a communication format of Japanese bibliographic data.

It is scheduled that the first few years of computerization in the Library will be devoted to the bibliographic control and thereafter electronic information retrieval will be promot-

ed. However, so important as it is, such retrieval service is now partly studied and adopted to the interdisciplinary surveys in the legislative field.

The library technique of the National Diet Library, which was once instructed by the foreign wisdom and has been so far developed, now seems to come onto the assimilation stage of our own.

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