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Future Prospects: How to Meet Research and Information Needs

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There has been an increasing number of interdisciplinary scholarly researches, and Japanese studies is no exception. A shift in interest from traditional Japanology topics toward interdisciplinary and comparative studies in various fields of traditionally non-Japanese studies is noticeable. A tremendous increase of interdisciplinary research as well as the broadening of users seeking diverse Japan-related information necessitates that libraries with Japanese collections think very hard how to meet with the new demands and survive this difficult time of financial restraint. Traditional Japanese studies collections certainly will not be enough and current and future Japanese collections have to serve a much wider range of users besides those of traditional Japanese studies.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Three major areas of particular concern for future Japanese collections were identified as the result of the Hoover Conference. They are collection development, improved access, and training of librarians. To build our future in a most effective way with limited resources, personnel included, the National Coordinating Committee on Japanese Library Resources (abbreviated hereafter as NCC), established by the Japan Foundation in 1991, should be the central coordinating organization for effective cooperation and collaboration among Japanese collections. The dissolution of the National Planning Team of the Hoover Conference was meant to be for the betterment of Japanese collections and we are "to work though the NCC to finish what we have started with the Hoover Conference and the National Planning Team and go beyond as far as our vision will take us," according to Hideo Kaneko's concluding words of the National Planning Team's final report. As Mihoko Miki has pointed out, currently the NCC is not functioning effectively nor moving toward the direction we anticipated after the Hoover Conference. The major reason why it is not functioning to its full capacity, nor meeting the high expectation of Japanese librarians, is the lack of understanding and clear vision and long-range plan. Projects of its subcommittees seem to be selected and operated almost haphazardly, and are not being followed through.

If the NCC is going to be the core organization for the cooperation and collaboration of Japanese collections, it is urgent for the NCC to set up the goals where Japanese collections should be heading. Then the NCC should scrutinize and reevaluate its work, prioritize the