



APSIG Newsletter

ALIA Asia Pacific Special Interest Group

No. 67, July 2008

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APSIG Convenor's report from Gail Parr

2008 has begun with a new look APSIG committee with a membership that reaches from Adelaide across Canberra, to Brisbane.

The new convenor is Gold Coast based teacher librarian Gail Parr. Gail comes to the role of convenor following nine years of working in Hanoi where she developed an understanding of many of the issues particularly confronting academic librarians

across Vietnam and Asia in general. Her work in Vietnam was underpinned by a philosophy that saw her involved in mentoring the development of many young Vietnamese librarians. The mentoring was in the form of direct professional support and encouragement in identifying all possible opportunities for professional development both locally and globally. She sought to encourage the development of strong professional networks across Vietnam and Asia; networks that are continuing to develop and grow. Currently there are five former colleagues studying at Masters and PhD levels in librarianship in Australian Universities and one undertaking a PhD at Brown in the US. Gail's personal vision in joining the APSIG committee was about not just what we as ALIA members can do for the Asia Pacific region but also about what we can learn from their experience.



Gail Parr, APSIG Convenor

Gail writes:

'It is very early days as yet for this new committee. Being busy professionals it has been difficult to get together even via teleconference let alone any face to face meetings. But it is early days yet, so the opportunity to meet up with all members of APSIG at the ALIA Biennial Alice Springs Dreaming Conference in September is going to be very valuable indeed. It will be an opportunity for all APSIG members to share their experiences and aspirations for APSIG, particularly with the IFLA Conference due to be held in Brisbane in 2010.'

Any APSIG members attending the ALIA conference in Alice Springs interested in meeting are asked to email Gail in advance at: Gail.ParrATtss.qld.edu.au

Gail proposes an initial contact at 10.30am on Wednesday 3rd September in the registration area. From there members can make another mutually acceptable time to meet to talk further.

APSIG 20th Anniversary Lunch



**Harem Restaurant
Green Square, Kingston
Wednesday 27 August, 12.00 for 12.15 pm**

Join members, friends, partners and colleagues to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the founding of the ALIA Asia-Pacific Special Interest Group. ALL welcome.

Menu

Six hot and cold entrees with bread
Two main courses, rice and salad
Dessert platter (chocolate crunch, baklava, Turkish delight, helva) Tea / coffee with drinks available for purchase at the bar

Cost \$28 per head. Check the full menu on the website, www.kaniskan.com. Vegetarians are catered for in the menu.

Special Guest Speaker

Professor Kent Anderson, Director, Faculty of Asian Studies, ANU will speak on the current situation of Asian studies in Australia and prospects under the Rudd government in the years ahead. Professor Anderson was a delegate to the 20/20 Summit.

LUCKY DOOR PRIZE, a \$50 book voucher from the Asia Bookroom!

RSVP to George Miller
gmillersATgrapevine.com.au
or phone George on 62951439 by Sunday 24 August.

Hope you can join us!

ASAA Conference - librarians meet in Melbourne

The Asian Studies Association of Australia's Biennial Conference was held this year in Melbourne, from 1-4 July. Australia's premier Asian studies academic conference, it was also an opportunity for library colleagues responsible for library collections on Asia to gather, network and discuss current issues.

In a departure from the usual practice of inhabiting a university campus somewhere, the conference was held in the Sebel Townhouse, Albert Park, a tram ride away from the CBD. A welcome feature of the facilities was a large trade exhibition area, allowing a generous number of stands and plenty of circulation room. Dr Aline Scott-Maxwell, Southeast Asian Studies Librarian at Monash University secured a free table from the conference organisers for a libraries stand, which was staffed throughout the conference by those attending the conference. The libraries stand proved to be a great success. Not only did many

conference delegates stop to collect brochures and chat, the table provided library colleagues with a meeting (and eating) place and greatly enhanced our conference experience.



L to R: Renata Osborne, Amelia McKenzie, Andrew Gosling, Roger Tol, Eiko Sakaguchi, Ayako Hatta (back turned), Michelle Hall (seated), Aline Scott-Maxwell, Bick-Har Yeung (seated), Nancy Li, Belinda Law and Darell Dorrington.

A highlight of the Conference was Professor Geremie Barmé's thought-provoking keynote address on 'Worrying China & the New Sinology'. Professor Barmé spoke of China's diversity and its array of heritages, noting how important it was for educators and commentators to be mindful of these complex realities and their historical dimensions. Various academic disciplinary approaches, those provided, for example, by history, anthropology, economic, cultural and gender studies, sociology and political science, as well as environment studies, were crucial in offering more nuanced ways of teaching about China.

And as China's global presence grew, it came into public consciousness in powerful and complex new ways. Professor Barmé noted, 'We are in a particular moment—one which has seen hyper-nationalism on a global scale, followed by national mourning for an enormous tragedy—that has influenced, both negatively and positively, much of what has been said about China this year. In May, with the devastating Wenchuan Earthquake and the surrounding areas in southwest China, the powerful

responses generated by the March rebellions in Tibetan China and the April Olympic Torch Relay were replaced, for a time, by an outpouring of raw and uplifting human sympathy.'

He emphasised the need to engage with China in the context of our own evolving and dynamic world, especially taking into account cross-border and regional issues in an effort to challenge 'the ever-beckoning Sirens of Sino-centrism'.

In conclusion he spoke of China's global presence: its history, its peoples, its trade, languages, ways of thinking, and its further economic and diplomatic reach, while the Beijing Olympics offered unprecedented exposure in the popular media. All of these facts required us to develop more visionary and engaging understandings of how Australia could engage with the peoples, languages, cultures, ideas and countries of Asia and the Pacific.
(Amelia McKenzie)

Law Library Pacific Twinning Program

A team from the Lionel Murphy Library, Information Services Branch, Australian Attorney-General's Department, recently travelled to Tonga and Samoa where they trained legal and justice sector employees in computer and research skills.

In April, more than 150 attendees got hands-on training in basic computer, Internet and legal research skills. Attendees ranged from clerks to magistrates and private law firm staff. Library staff were also given training in cataloguing and collection maintenance practices.

The training sessions highlighted the diverse skill levels of users. Skills ranged from those who were completely new to those who competent, and those just observing.

The Lionel Murphy Library coordinated the training under the Australian Law Librarians' Association Law Library Twinning Program. This program is funded through AusAid's Pacific Governance Support Program (PGSP) which provides legal texts, librarian assistance and training to Pacific law and justice sector agencies.

Karyn Gladwish, Director of Library Services at Attorney-General's Department said 'The inter-country work needs a higher commitment of resources than currently exists under the Twinning Program. The funding through PGSP has allowed for significant improvements across the law and justice sectors and will help to expedite the path toward sustainability. Twinning has given us a greater appreciation of the difficulties sometimes faced by Pacific staff and a better understanding of how we can help them improve sustainability of the law and justice sector in this region'.

'The two most important factors for the future is to encourage new partners to join and the ongoing willingness, support and cooperation of the many Australian and New Zealand law and justice agencies that contribute to the Twinning Program,' she said.

For more information on the program contact the Australian Attorney-General's Department, Information Services Branch, Lionel Murphy Library at pacifictwinning@ag.gov.au



Legal Research Workshop Participants 21 April 2008 Samoa

Henry Chan (1937-2008)



Henry Chan in September 2007 when visiting the National Library with CAHS

It was a great shock when Henry Chan died suddenly at home in the Blue Mountains on 11 April this year aged 70. It is hard to believe, as he always seemed so youthful and energetic. I have known Henry for many years. While his academic studies related largely to the history of science, he will be remembered above all for his tireless efforts to promote the study of the Chinese in Australia and New Zealand as a vital and integral part of the history of both countries. If anything, he became even more energetic in pursuing this aim during the last decade of this life after his formal retirement from academia. Only last year Henry led a large Chinese-Australian Historical Society delegation on a weekend visit to Canberra to explore the riches of institutional collections, including the National Library, on Chinese-Australians.

Henry was born in China but spent most of his life in Australia and New Zealand. He wrote books and articles about the Chinese in Australasia. He also organised seminars and conferences where he brought together scholars, members of the Chinese community including those whose families had been here for generations and recent arrivals as well as librarians, archivists, museum and gallery staff with important collections on the Chinese. He had the ability to inspire others from disparate backgrounds to share his enthusiasm and for example encouraged librarians to collect

more widely on the Chinese in Australia and to make our collections better known. He did all this with a polite but firm persistence. In all this, he was ably supported by his wife, Mary.

A number of tributes to Henry have appeared in print and on the web. They include an excellent piece by the leading Australian China scholar Professor John Fitzgerald and Harriet Veitch in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 July 2008 and one by another expert on the Chinese diaspora, Dr Jacquie Lo, in *Asian Australian Studies News*, 7 May 2008.
(Andrew Gosling)

Yap recovers

On April 9, 2004, Typhoon Sudal hit Yap State, a tiny island in the Pacific Islands. The Yap State Public Library was devastated. What was once a vibrant, well-used public library serving a population of 8,000 people was reduced to a ruin.

Today, the Yap State Public Library has a beautiful rebuilt facility, but little additional funding exists to restore the collection of books, library materials, computers, shelving, equipment and furniture to serve the community of Yap. In 2007 the National Library of Australia and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) generously provided US\$ 20,000 to help purchase much-needed books, computers, equipment, shelving, furniture and a locally constructed Circulation Counter.

The Yap State Public Library still desperately needs more books, computers, shelving and equipment. Basic Reference books, as well as children's books are seriously lacking. Due to the very high cost of shipping to Yap, locally built shelving and furniture is least expensive to purchase. For example, one bookshelf costs US\$ 475 and at least 10 are still needed. Two filing cabinets are also needed and purchased

locally will cost \$ 780 each. If you are willing to help fund the Yap State Public Library rebuilding project, please contact Peter Lor, IFLA Secretary General at ifla@ifla.org or Arlene Cohen, retired Pacific Islands Librarian at arlenegcohenATgmail.com

Donations of books and library materials suitable for a small public library are welcome and may be sent directly to: Yap State Public Library c/o Isabel Rungrad, Yap State Public Librarian PO Box 550 Colonia, Yap 96943 Federated States of Micronesia.

IFLA responds to China disaster

It is with great sadness that IFLA received the news of the tragic consequences of the severe earthquake that struck the Wenchuan County of southwest China's Sichuan Province, on May 12, 2008. The earthquake with a force measuring 8 on the Richter scale caused major damage to the central infrastructure and many cities and villages in China and subsequently destroyed many library buildings. IFLA has been following the events in Sichuan Province with great concern and deplores the loss of life and property resulting from the terrible disaster that struck our Chinese colleagues.

At IFLAnet, www.ifla.org/earthquake-china/ you'll find the open letter of the Chinese Library Society, that contains more details on the earthquake and its aftermath.

For those of you who want to contribute to the rebuilding and recovery of the Chinese library community the IFLA Fund is now open to deposit donations that will be used for the recuperation of the Chinese library community in due time. Your donations will be earmarked for the provision of assistance to the affected libraries and their staff.

Visit the earthquake fund website at www.ifla.org/earthquake-china/earthquake-china-fund.pdf
Peter Johan Lor
Secretary General, IFLA

East Timor in the news

Anya Dettman, head of the Indonesian and Timorese collections at the National Library gave a lively and informative radio interview with Louise Maher on the local ABC Radio's Drive program on 22 May. Anya gave a brief overview of the NLA's East Timor collections, including election ephemera and a recent acquisition of a television history series on DVD.

During the interview Anya played highlights from a recording of the proclamation of the Constitution of an independent East Timor on 29 November 1975. This was the first public broadcast of this historic recording which was discovered as an uncatalogued cassette tape in the Oral History collection when a group of East Timor researchers were being given an introduction to the Library's Timorese collections in early May. Although it was listed in an internal database it had not been made available to the public since acquiring it 30 years ago. An added poignancy was given by the knowledge that a little over a week after the recording was made, East Timor was invaded by Indonesia and many of those whose voices were on the tape would be dead. Other historical recordings and interviews were also uncovered. The discovery of this previously unknown tape aroused great excitement amongst the visitors and prompted offers to assist with transcription and translation.

For more information on the Timorese collections contact Anya at adettman@nla.gov.au

NLA's oldest book

In early 2008 the National Library sought and received confirmation from several expert sources that an early printed work in its Chinese collections was the oldest book held by the Library. Published in 1162, *Da ban ruo bo luo mi duo jing* [Greater Sutra of the Perfection of Transcendent Wisdom] is a single woodblock printed volume of a Buddhist

sutra, an important and well-known exposition of Mahayana Buddhist doctrine.

This volume came to the Library as part of the Fang Collection. It contains Dr Fang's Chinese seal in red ink. Fang Zhaoying (1908-1985) was a famous historian and bibliographer, contributing to the compilation of monumental biographical works of eminent Chinese.

Physically the item has undergone repairs and is generally in fair condition with parts of some pages missing. To view it online, see <http://nla.gov.au/nla.gen-vn934588>

NLA Japan Study Grants – call for applications

The National Library invites applications for the 2008-09 Japan Study Grants program. Japan Study Grants are open to postgraduates, honours students, academic staff or independent researchers in Australia who wish to use the Japanese or Japan-related collections of the National Library for their research. The Grants are intended to make the NLA's Japanese collections better known outside Canberra and be a source of practical support for researchers requiring access to a large and accessible library collection on Japan. For more details on the NLA's Japanese collections visit <http://www.nla.gov.au/asian/lang/jap.html>

What is offered

Grants are offered for periods of up to four weeks and support travel to Canberra and living costs. At least four grants are awarded each year. For full details visit the website at <http://www.nla.gov.au/grants/jsg/>

The Japan Study Grants program commenced in early 2008. Feedback from grant holders in the first year has been overwhelmingly positive, with one scholar commenting 'I had an exceptionally productive and enjoyable experience researching in the Asian collections of the National Library of Australia'.

Closing date

The closing date for applications is 30 September 2008 and applicants will be notified by the end of November. The awards may be taken up at any time following notification from 1 December onwards, and before 30 September the following year.

Contact

For further information on the Japan Study Grants program, contact Amelia McKenzie at amckenzie@nla.gov.au

New MoU between NLA and Perpustakaan Nasional Indonesia

In May 2008 the Library signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Library of Indonesia reaffirming and strengthening its longstanding cooperative relationship. The Memorandum covers activities such as information sharing, inter-library loans, staff visits, consultations and exchange of expertise.



L to R Mr Dady Rachmananta, Director, NLI, Ms Amelia McKenzie, Director Asian Collections, NLA, His Excellency Bill Farmer, Ambassador to Indonesia

As part of its program of ongoing activities under the MoU, the Library provided a five-day training program for four senior National Library of Indonesia staff in March. The visiting librarians undertook specially created programs in their areas of interest, which included preservation of digital materials, paper conservation, microfilming and management of these areas.

NLA Asian Collections on Youtube

To view a video about the NLA's Asian Collections, visit Youtube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=OANDw_STVvE

Discover Asian Collections at the NLA was made by Sophie Viraving and Anya Dettman of the Asian Collections staff. Lasting 12 minutes, the video is an introduction to Asian collections and services at the Library. Staff, readers and Harold White Fellows appear in the video.

Gates Foundation: Access to Learning Award (ATLA) 2009

Libraries and organisations with a mandate to provide public access to information can apply for the Access to Learning Award (ATLA) 2009. The award recognizes excellence and innovation in public libraries and similar institutions in providing access to information through the use of computers and the Internet, at no cost to the user. The recipient will receive a prize of US\$1 million. The 2009 brochures (in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish) are now available from www.gatesfoundation.org

The closing date for the 2009 award is 31 October 2008. Contact ATLA at atla@gatesfoundation.org

Elsevier Award: Foundation Program for Innovative Libraries in Developing Countries

The Elsevier Foundation supports the efforts of libraries to enhance the quality of life in developing countries by advancing knowledge in science (including the social sciences), technology and medicine. The Foundation provides one, two and three year grants to libraries in the developing countries and supporting organizations in the following areas: ** Programs to enhance library infrastructure, technology or information services in ways that significantly enhance their ability to make

STM (scientific/social sciences, technical and medical) information available to those who need it -- researchers, clinicians, students, policymakers and the wider public.

** Programs that enhance or expand library information resources in the developing world through digitization or preservation of information that advances science, health, the environment, and indigenous knowledge.

** Training and education programs, for library staff, students or researchers, contributing to sustainable improvements in the library's capacity to provide STM information in the developing world.

** Partnerships between libraries in the developing countries and institutions in the developed countries to provide technical assistance or training. Developed country partner organizations include libraries, learned societies, universities, intergovernmental organizations and other non-profit organizations.

Grant proposals are being invited for this award and must be submitted by 15 September 2008. Proposals should be sent to: The Elsevier Foundation 360 Park Avenue South New York, NY 10010-1710, USA telephone: (1) 212-229-4970 facsimile: (1) 212-633-3965 www.elsevierfoundation.org e-mail: foundation@elsevier.com.

Forthcoming APSIG events

Wednesday 27 August
APSIG Anniversary lunch at the Harem Restaurant, Kingston – see page 2 for details.

Wednesday 3 September
APSIG members meeting at the ALIA conference –see page 2 for details]

APSIG Newsletter

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Issues are mounted on the APSIG homepage at www.alia.org.au/groups/apsig/

Copies of the APSIG newsletter are sent electronically to members with email addresses.

