

Problems of the Public Libraries in Metropolitan Tokyo

Ten cities, eighteen towns, and ten villages in metropolitan Tokyo, with a total population of 1,260,000 and covering an area of 1,113 square kilometers, are not provided with their own libraries.

With regard to the forty-six public libraries in the wards, cities, and counties, those in Tokyo wards serve an average population of 221,000 people and an average area of 15 square kilometers, while those in cities and counties serve an average of 227,000 persons and 209 square kilometers.

The statistics on book holdings, annual expenditures, and service activities for 1963 are shown in Table 2. It should be pointed out that circulation of books is not shown since that practice is not widely adopted. As can be readily seen from the figures in Table 2, it is impossible for such a small number of public libraries to meet all the needs of ten million people for books and other materials for information, education, and recreation. To make the situation worse, each of the libraries is independent, and no scheme of library cooperation exists.

Immediately after the Meiji Restoration of 1868 the prefecture of Tokyo was created, taking over the administrative area of the Tokugawa Shogunate. In 1889 the city of Tokyo with fifteen wards in the prefecture was established. The city, however, was not given independent rule and the appointee-governor of the prefecture of Tokyo had responsibility for the mayor's duties. It was not until 1898 that the city of Tokyo was given autonomous power and had its own mayor, who, however, was not elected by the citizens but was chosen by the City Council. The city was under double rule, supervised directly by the governor on the one hand, and indirectly by the home minister on the other. In 1943, at the height of World War II, the prefecture of Tokyo and the city of Tokyo were consolidated into the metropolis of Tokyo. Its chief administrator was an appointee-governor charged with the twin duties of municipal administration for the thirty-five wards and of prefectural administration for the counties and the islands.

After the war, the system of local government was reformed in line with the principles of democratic election, and the governorship became elective. The number of wards was reduced from thirty-five to twenty-three. Each ward was given strong self-governing powers equal to those of an ordinary city, and it kept this power until its independence was reduced when the Local Autonomy Law was revised in 1951. Under this new arrangement, the wards became self-governing bodies with limited powers. The ward officials managed many civic functions

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TABLE 2
*Characteristics of Service, by Type of Public Library
in Tokyo-to: 1963*
Ward, City, and Village Libraries

	<i>23 Wards</i>	<i>3 Cities & 1 Town</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Other Metropolitan Libraries</i>	<i>Grand Total</i>
Area	569 sq. km.	341 sq. km.	910 sq. km.	2,023 sq. km.	2,023 sq. km.
Population	8,630,000	330,000	8,960,000	10,220,000	10,222,000
No. of households	2,400,000	90,000	2,490,000	2,800,000	2,800,000
Libraries					
Number	39	4	43	4	47
Area served (per library)	15 sq. km.	85 sq. km.	21 sq. km.	505 sq. km.	43 sq. km.
Population served (per library)	221,000	80,000	208,372	2,550,000	217,446
Number of users served					
For consultation	3,660,000	210,000	3,870,000	820,000	4,690,000
For borrowing	520,000	50,000	570,000	50,000	620,000
In groups	70,000	2,000	72,000	150,000	222,000
By book-mobiles				170,000	170,000
Total	4,250,000	262,000	4,512,000	1,190,000	5,702,000
Number of books	970,000	60,000	1,030,000	560,000	1,590,000
Operating expenditures (In Japanese Yen)	493,090,000	17,440,000	510,530,000	152,900,000	663,430,000

and carried on their work close to the everyday life of their constituents. The central government of Tokyo retains the power of coordination as well as control over some civic activities, so that it maintains administrative supervision over the whole area.

The government of the metropolis of Tokyo is a local public authority, but it differs from any other prefecture or city in Japan in that it enforces, on the one hand, prefectural administration over its cities, towns, and villages, all of which are ordinary local public bodies, and, on the other hand, municipal administration over its wards which are

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special public bodies. Moreover, it has the distinctive features of being both the capital of Japan and a big cosmopolitan city. Hence, the administrative arrangements of Tokyo-to are extensive and complicated.

After the establishment of the Tokyo Municipal Hibiya Library in 1908, public libraries were set up one after another in the city, and by about 1913 there were nineteen of them. In those days, however, they were parts of a single system of which the center was the Hibiya Library.¹ In 1945, toward the end of the war, the Hibiya Library was completely destroyed. Eleven out of twenty-eight library agencies in Tokyo disappeared and more than 400,000 books which had been accumulated from 1908 were reduced to ashes.

After the war, as part of the provision of the new Constitution, the Local Autonomy Law which had as a main objective the decentralizing of government was put in force. As a result of this, the administration and operation of all the public libraries in the wards except the Hibiya Library were entrusted to the boards of education of the wards where they were situated. Only the Hibiya Library and three other libraries remained under the control of the Metropolitan Board of Education. Reconstruction of the libraries damaged by the war was very slow. Local government authorities gave first priority to the construction and reconstruction of school facilities urgently needed as a result of the reformed school education system. It was only in 1957 that the Hibiya Library was rebuilt and began to give the services of a modern public library according to the methods of American librarianship. Since then, the ward and city authorities have begun to pay some attention to the establishment of their community libraries, and there are now sixty-two library agencies in Tokyo-to, although this is still far too small a number for the population to be served.

In addition, it can be seen that poor book supply, poor services, and inadequate facilities are notable features of the public libraries in metropolitan Tokyo. There is as yet no interlibrary cooperative scheme to cover these deficiencies, and many difficulties will have to be overcome before there will be much improvement. The Public Library Law of Japan provides that a metropolitan or prefectural library shall be established as a public library on the same basis as any ward, city, town, or village library and that it give the same kind of services. In addition, there is no way by which to secure cooperation between these two types of libraries. Furthermore, it is very difficult to get sufficient funds for metropolitan-wide service. The idea that public services which are closely connected with the citizens' everyday life

are a proper responsibility of local government has only recently been accepted. The ward and city authorities have no intention of making their new community libraries part of an over-all library system, even if they were to become more useful because of larger book stock and staff. They regard such a step as going against the current of the times; they are very much afraid of central control.

However, librarians as well as users of the public libraries in Tokyo-to know very well that little or no improvement in services can be expected without the cooperation of all the public libraries in the Tokyo area, and ways and means of improving the present situation have been discussed at the meetings of librarians and of the Advisory Council. Some suggestions for better services have been developed and made public.² As a first step, the program requires that more libraries be established and that libraries acquire more books. At present the public libraries in Tokyo-to have a book collection of about 1,590,000 volumes, of which 455,000 books are in the Hibiya Library. Each ward library averages about 25,000 volumes while the city and town libraries average 15,000 volumes. The expenditure for materials is very small: 145,000,000 yen for the Hibiya Library, 2,000,000 yen on the average for each of the ward libraries, and 90,000 yen for the city or town libraries. Of these expenditures, 86 per cent goes to the purchase of books and the remaining 14 per cent for periodicals.

The annual publication of new books for general sale in Japan is about 13,000 titles, and the average price of a book is 700 yen. Accordingly, the annual increase of books in each ward library is about 2,700 volumes, which represents only a fifth of all new publications. In the city or town libraries, the annual acquisition is only 1,300 volumes or 10 per cent of the available publications. The Hibiya Library purchases 13,000 titles, with a few duplicates for use on the premises and 8,000 volumes for circulation to groups of young adults working in small industries. Of the other three metropolitan libraries, each buys only 2,000 volumes annually. The budget for reading materials is so small that the book collection is naturally poor, and this puts a brake on circulation.

Although Japan is a country which has a very high level of literacy, the period of schooling is not as long as that in Western countries. According to the Statistical Division of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, 60 per cent of Tokyo people have had more than eleven years of school. After the war, compulsory education was extended from six to nine years. In 1963, the percentage of boys and girls who

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went to high school in Tokyo after finishing compulsory education was 80 per cent, and 27 per cent of the high school graduates went to universities or colleges. It is no exaggeration to say that the public libraries in Tokyo are almost entirely occupied by students, both high school and college. These come to the library to use its physical facilities more than its books. The severe competitive examination for entrance to high schools and to leading universities, the acute housing shortage, and the inadequacy of school libraries are the main reasons for this. Consequently, the public libraries are always crowded by students, and other people who want to use them often have to wait in line outside for someone to come out. This situation has created a false image of the public library—as a library for students—and adults have given up the idea of using it for their own purposes. This image must be changed.

It can be seen that the public libraries in Tokyo are far behind those in Western cities. Tokyo residents do not have easy access to the reading materials they need. Lack of understanding on the part of the government, which has control over public finances, is partly responsible for this. The indifference of the people who have never experienced good library services must be changed by the efforts of librarians. Without the support of the people, the public library will never develop. No one questions the fact that sixty-two small public libraries for more than ten million people are inadequate. The minimum standards for establishing public libraries in Tokyo have been recommended by the Advisory Council as follows:

1. Each library should serve a population of fifty thousand to one hundred thousand persons.
2. Floor space should be 7,200 to 10,800 square feet.
3. There should be an initial collection of 30,000 to 50,000 books plus periodicals.
4. The budget should provide for 5,000 to 7,000 new books a year.
5. Staff should consist of fifteen to twenty trained persons.

Furthermore, it is recommended that such a community library have several branches and sub-branches throughout the territory it serves.

The Metropolitan Hibiya Library is now expected not only to function on a large scale as an ordinary public library but also to expand and to become a library for general reference and to serve as the central library for all the public libraries in the metropolis of Tokyo. The new program holds the Hibiya Library responsible for: (1) en-

riching its book collection to supplement the collections of the community libraries, (2) improving its reference services, (3) acquiring specialized materials, (4) directing the joint preservation of less-used materials, (5) handling the centralized processing of materials, (6) compiling the necessary union catalogs, and (7) carrying out the in-service training of staff members.

Librarians are now determined to persuade the authorities concerned to carry out this program. The national government of Japan is advocating a policy of "high-degree economic growth" or "income-doubling," and of training the youth of Japan in the ways that will best fit them to contribute to national prosperity. Because of the national government's emphasis on measures to combat juvenile delinquency and because of the national social security program for the older generation, non-school education is becoming the object of public attention. This is the opportunity for the public libraries to appeal to the national government to provide better library facilities in order to assist the government in achieving its objectives. The contribution of the public library as an educational institution for all ages is of the utmost importance if the educational, economic, and social level of the nation is to be raised. The public libraries will certainly make every effort to realize this plan in the years ahead.

References

1. Tokyo Metropolitan Hibiya Library. *Hibiya Library, 1958*. Tokyo, Japan.
2. Japan, Ministry of Education, Social Education Bureau. *New Japanese Libraries[1]*. Publ. NEJ 4207, Tokyo, Japan, 1964.

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Appendix 1

The Administrative District of Metropolitan Tokyo

<i>Wards</i>	Adachi-ku	Akita-machi
Chiyoda-ku	Katsushika-ku	Hinode-mura
Chūō-ku	Edogawa-ku	Itsukaichi-machi
Minato-ku		Hibara-mura
Shinjuku-ku	<i>Cities</i>	Ōkutama-machi
Bunkyo-ku	Hachijōji-shi	
	Tachikawa-shi	Minami-tama-gun
Taito-ku	Musashino-shi	Yugi-mura
Sumida-ku	Mitaka-shi	Tama-machi
Kōto-ku	Ōme-shi	Inagi-machi
Shinagawa-ku		
Meguro-ku	Fuchū-shi	Kita-tama-gun
	Akishima-shi	Kunitachi-machi
	Chōfu-shi	Komae-machi
Ota-ku	Machida-shi	Kokubunji-machi
Setagaya-ku	Koganei-shi	Murayama-machi
Shibuya-ku		Yamato-machi
Nakano-ku	Kodaira-shi	Kiyose-machi
Suginami-ku	Hino-shi	Kurume-machi
	Higashimurayama-shi	Hōya-machi
		Tanashi-machi
Toshima-ku	<i>Counties</i>	
Kita-ku	Nishi-tama-gun	<i>Islands</i>
Arakawa-ku	Fuku-machi	Ōshima
Itabashi-ku	Hamura-machi	Miyake
Nerima-ku	Mizuho-machi	Hachijo