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### GALÁPAGOS OR AN ISOLATED MODEL OF LIS EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT? : A CONSIDERATION ON JAPANESE LIS EDUCATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL SETTING

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#### ABSTRACTS

In Japan we don't have formal professional LIS training programs for university education. The number of new recruitments as full-time employees at university and public libraries in Japan is very few around twenty to thirty each year. We have ever managed libraries with fewer and lower-educated librarians from the international standard. The presenter provides a set of hypothesis to explain this situation. The set consists of highly literate society hypothesis and generalist bureaucracy hypothesis. He thinks that it deeply depends on Japanese culture. He argues that Japanese LIS/LISE scenes will experience some changes slowly to meet the international standards. He also discusses that Japanese experiences will be helpful to consider the situations of other Asian and Pacific countries at 21st century because the new society is called knowledge-based society where everyone might have information literacy and no one might need librarians' assistance.

#### INTRODUCTION

Japanese cellular phone services are sometime called Galápagos phenomena because they have highly evolved in isolation from those of other countries. Holders can use it as TV set, E-money machine and train/airplane ticket as well as digital camera and web browser. It is a consolidated network terminal which provides holders with daily information and remote access services in broadcasting, communication, financial and transportation industries. As these services are given just in the country, many Japanese machines cannot be used even as telephones if they are brought to other countries.

The expression of Galápagos might be adapted to Japanese librarianship and LIS education in the meaning that they are isolated from that of other countries. In Japan librarianship was introduced during its modernization process in the Meiji Period (1868-1912). Japanese government and the people learned it from Western countries and established libraries. But libraries didn't become widespread before the World War 2 because the government could not afford to build such cultural things being busy to arms race.

Japan reintroduced it during the occupation period just after the World War 2. That is why it has been more influenced by the American librarianship. Now many of Japanese librarians think American librarianship has given us the best model. But I think Japanese libraries have ever proceeded on our own way since after the occupation ended and they selected our own model. What was the model? Is it relevant to other countries in Asia and the Pacific Ocean? This is what I would like to discuss.<sup>1</sup>

#### LIS EDUCATION AT JAPANESE UNIVERSITIES

There are five types of LIS education at colleges and universities in Japan.

- (1) *Shisho* (司書) training—about 250 universities and colleges providing it; *Shisho* means public librarian certificate. Students are provided the certificate with at least 20 unit credits of library science (about 600 hours learning at school) almost all at undergraduate level or two-year college level.
- (2) *Shisho-kyoyu* (司書教諭) training—over 100; *Shisho kyoyu* means teacher for librarianship certificate. Students are demanded to get 10 unit credits by learning school librarianship in addition to get teacher certificate.
- (3) Undergraduate education (LIS major)—about 10;
- (4) Graduate education (continuing)—about 5;
- (5) Graduate education (research)—about 5.

Many programs are done in a very small-scale. There are just five universities of more than 5 faculty members which provide a combination of (3) and (4) or (5) programs above-- University of Tsukuba, Keio University, Surugadai University, Aichi-Shukutoku University and Tsurumi University.

Another characteristic is isolation; isolation from other countries, from other academic disciplines and even from the library profession. Librarianship may have been isolated among academic disciplines in foreign countries, too, but it has have been backed up by the library profession. But in Japan there are no accreditation organizations to assure the quality of LIS education.

There are no national educational standards for LIS education except *shisho* and *shisho-kyoyu* curriculums, which are independent and minimum standards for each curriculum. We don't have a national association for LIS education. There are a Library Science Education Division of the Japan Library Association (JLA) and the Japan Society of Library and Information Science (JSLIS). They have a membership system and have ever tried to improve the education. But there are teachers at *shisho* and *shisho-kyoyu* courses who don't belong to these bodies.

#### JAPANESE MODEL?

We call Japanese librarianship Galápagos but it is not the same as that of cellular phones. There are more than 3000 public libraries which are staffed with about 15 thousand regular librarians including 7.5 thousand Shisho staff and more than 1500 university libraries which are staffed with about 6.5 thousand regular staff in Japan. Many readers may wonder why I don't use the term "professional staff". So generally we don't have professional librarian recruitment programs except for National Diet Library (NDL), some local governments' public libraries or some national universities. "Regular staff" means those who are full-time employees working at libraries. Many of them might have ever studied library science or LIS but the others might not.

At school libraries the conditions are more complicated. Almost all of forty thousand public/private schools are equipped with their own school libraries according to the School Library Act (1953). Since 2003 those schools which have more than 12 classrooms have been required to appoint teacher-librarians at school libraries. But before the legal arrangement Shisho had been assigned at many schools formally or informally. So there are some schools which are served with teacher-librarians, some with Shisho, some with both, and some with nobody.

I have explained that we don't have formal and integrated professional librarian training programs for university education. The number of new recruitments as full-time employees at university and public libraries in Japan is very few under fifty each year. That is why we are often asked who are working at libraries and who are making book catalogs. We have ever managed libraries with fewer and lower-educated library staff.

I will provide a set of two hypotheses to explain this situation. The set consists of highly literate society hypothesis, generalist bureaucracy hypothesis. I think that it deeply depends on Japanese culture. I would like to argue that Japanese LIS/LISE scenes will experience some changes slowly to meet the international standards. I also discuss that Japanese experiences will be helpful to consider the situations of other Asian and Pacific countries at 21<sup>st</sup> century because the new society is called knowledge-based

society where everyone might have information literacy and less people might come to libraries and ask librarians to help them.

### HIGHLY LITERATE SOCIETY HYPOTHESIS

Recently the Edo Period (1603-1867) has been evaluated the period to prepare the Japanese modernization process. It was under a feudal regime of Tokugawa Shogunate but arts and literature were rather developed at Edo (now Tokyo), Kyoto and Osaka in the condition that the peace was kept for more than two hundred and fifty years all around Japan.

There are some evidences that Japan was one of the most literate countries in 19<sup>th</sup> century. British sociologist Ronald Dore reported that the school attendance rate was estimated 40% to 50% for boys and 10% to 15% for girls in 1868 when the new Meiji Government started.<sup>2</sup> He wrote afterwards that the estimation was not very precise and insisted that it should be explored more precisely what kind of education had been offered. Richard Rubinger deliberately estimated the illiteracy rate of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and it depended upon whether it was urban or rural area. In larger cities the rate was very low under 10% but in rural areas the rate was higher than 50%.<sup>3</sup>

Andrey Korotayev and others insisted that the level of economic wealth nowadays relates to the literacy rates in early 19<sup>th</sup> century in various regions.<sup>4</sup>  $R^2$  coefficient indicates, they write, that the correlation between the literacy rates in 1800 and GDP per capita in 2000 explains 86% of the entire data dispersion(See Fig1).

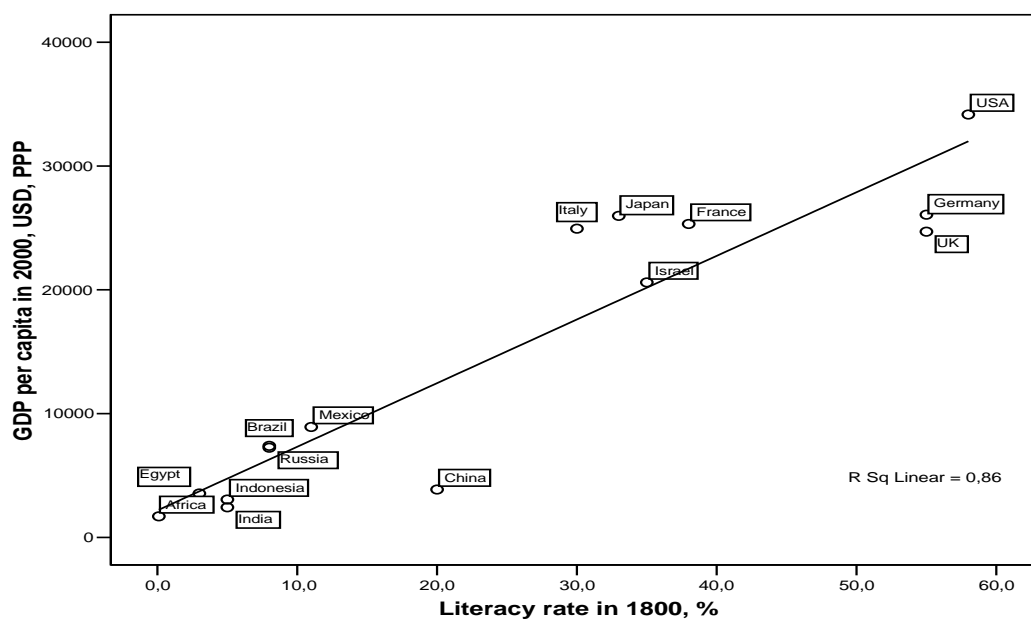


Fig. 1 Relation between literacy and economic development (Korotayev et al. 2006)

Although they combined literacy and economic development, I would like to think literacy as an infrastructure of social development. And literacy was developed not only with reading/writing and calculation training at school-like classrooms (eg. Terakoya or Tenaraijo in Japan) but also with literary and reading infrastructures. In larger cities such as Edo, Kyoto, Osaka and Nagoya there were many publishers and bookshops to deliver books. It means there were writers of stories and many readers who eagerly read them.<sup>5</sup>

I think this is very important for understanding the role of librarianship in Japanese modernization. Libraries have major two roles in history; one is to transfer older cultural resources to the present, the other is to deliver central or higher culture to local or lower-cultured people. Especially the idea of modern public librarianship began from the national enlightenment movement to make the informed citizenship in the Anglo-Saxonian countries. But in Japan the latter role was not needed very much because people living in cities were rather literate and the publishing industry was developed to serve their demands to read. In Edo there were many door-to-door rental peddlers of books who delivered books in cheap cost. Books were not so expensive and were available in cities and in local villages later. Book markets functioned well and people enjoyed reading by buying their books.

This market formed the infrastructures of the modern literate society in Japan. Intellectuals took over their habits of reading books from their ancestors. Or it might be better expression that the habits made out many intellectuals to lead and advance the national development in the Meiji period. They sometimes told young people to read their own books by buying ones. As reading books means having dialogues with the author, readers should draw lines under favorite sentences and write down their memos in the margins in order to read and understand deeply. It is important to possess their own books as the book contents are the same as the author's idea.

Japan had been a literate country which has rich literary and cultural tradition when it entered its modernization process. This is one reason why the Japanese government did not consider establishing libraries as a matter of priority in modernization.

#### GENERALIST BUREAUCRACY HYPETHESIS

Japanese society has been a bureaucratic society where generalist bureaucrats are dominant within governments and companies. The Meiji Government chose Prussia as their administrative model in late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the country high bureaucrats made national policies to advance modernization. This bureaucratic model was imitated in Japan. It was so strong to spread many of modern organizations such as local governments, companies, and even educational organizations like schools and libraries

in the country.

One century ago German sociologist Max Weber argued modern organizations could achieve reasonable and scientific decision making by adopting bureaucracy.<sup>6</sup> One of the characteristics of bureaucratic organizations is that official businesses are conducted with strict accordance to the following rules:

- (1) the duty of each official to do certain types of work is delimited in terms of impersonal criteria
- (2) the official is given the authority necessary to carry out his assigned functions
- (3) the means of coercion at his disposal are strictly limited and conditions of their use strictly defined

He argued also every official's responsibilities and authority are part of a vertical hierarchy of authority, with respective rights of supervision and appeal.

Bureaucracy does not easily stand together with professionalism. The action criteria of professionals are located outside the organization which they belong to. They work in pursuit of general welfare which might be against the organizational goal. But the organizational principle of bureaucracy is to achieve rational goals of the organization itself. The criterion is inside the organization. The administrative departments collect highly capable bureaucrats including specialists in the various areas. They belong to the department as administrative staff not as professional staff.

Japanese governments and companies adopted the bureaucratic model of nineteenth century European Continental countries in the process of modernization in the Meiji Era. That system has been maintained until now. Librarians have tried to adapt the model by locating their professional roles within the bureaucratic system for 50 years but it is not always easy to mix bureaucracy and professionalism. For example professional librarians have a conflict when they face the fact they have kept and made open some kind of material which shows the controversial points of the parent organization. Professionalism does not stand for itself in Japanese Librarianship.

#### JAPANESE MODEL REVISED

Japanese society has been highly literate. They can easily get their own books in the market. As they are knowledgeable about books there has been less need for professional librarians who can connect between books and people. Generalist bureaucracy has not demanded professional librarians in organizations. But non professional librarians have been so highly educated and literate that they have been good librarians to serve users. And they have devised means of using the computer equipments to improve the library service. There are widely-used library systems and bibliographic utilities developed by ICT [Information, Communication Technology]

companies and the MARC systems born from the cooperation of librarianship and publishing companies. They have given the useful resources to the library.

This combination of things, i.e. literacy, bureaucracy, and ICT, has formed the Japanese model. I would like to regard this model as one of the important alternative models in the LIS of the world. But it is a fact that we have faced something new to make modifications to the model recently especially since we came close to 21<sup>st</sup> century. One is that people especially young people read less books than before. Literate Japanese might be myth now.

For example in the 2006 PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) of the OECD Japan was ranked 12<sup>th</sup> of the reading literacy test among 26 OECD members in contrast of being ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> of science literacy test.(See Fig. 2)<sup>7</sup> There have been vigorous discussions about the results: "reading education lacks methodology of advancing critical thinking in Japan," "young people don't have reading habits," and "there may be western culture bias about definitions and methods of reading literacy test." But I think reading literacy have really dropped down because of the structural changes of media environment, literary culture and learning expectations for this 30 years.

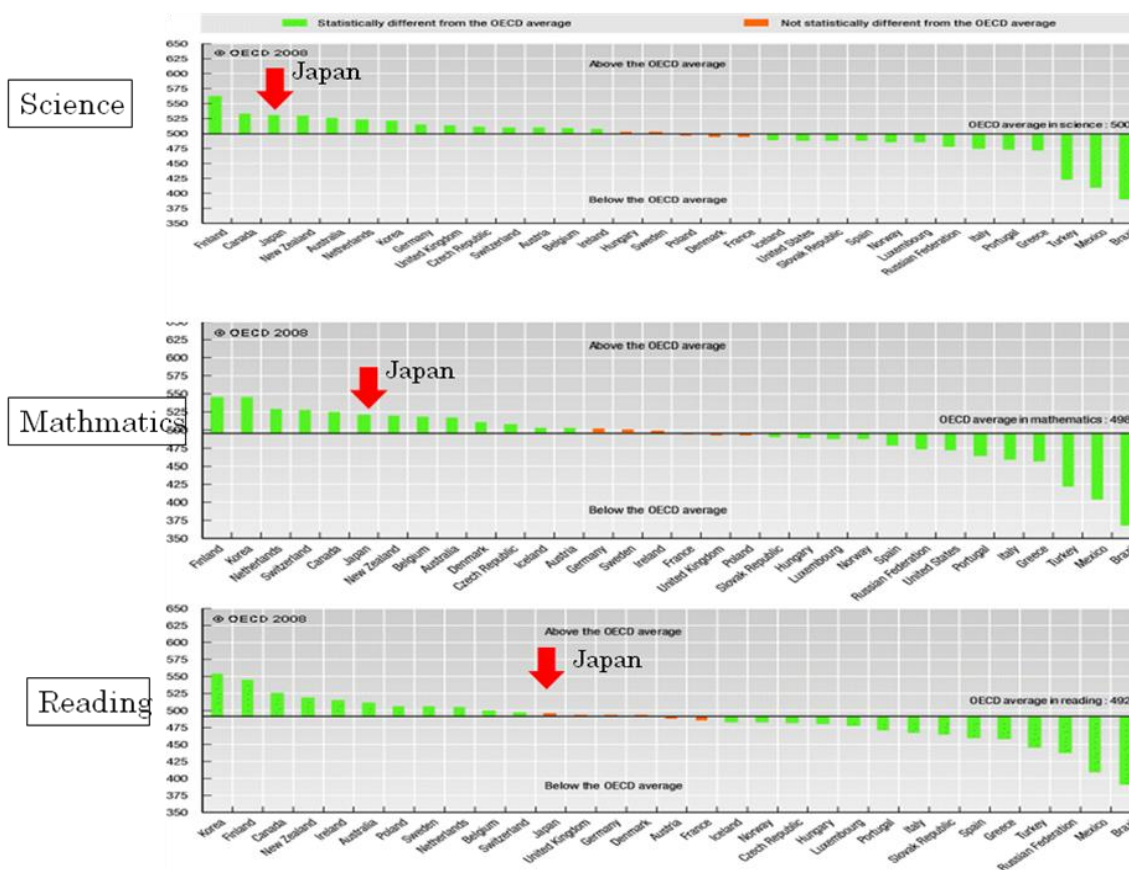


Fig.2 OECD-PISA2006 Scores by Nationalities

Japanese Government enacted some acts to promote reading and to develop print culture for these 10 years. The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (MEXT) has been trying to change curriculum to improve reading literacy by introducing integrated study. School libraries has been regarded more often as learning resources centers than before as reading materials centers. There are indicators that Japanese society requires librarianship, or the that social mechanism which provides people with reflective information resources when they feel necessary to refer.

### LIS EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES

When the Japan Society of Library and Information Science (JSLIS) held 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary ceremony in 2003 it launched a new research project named LIPER (Library and Information Professionals Education Reform) to draw up a blueprint for restructuring of LIS education in Japan. President Shuichi Ueda of the time lead a research group getting some research fund from the JSPS an independent academic funding organization adjunct the MEXT.

They made out a final report. <sup>8</sup> The major findings of it were:

- 1) the structure of Japanese LIS education has remained unchanged for 50 years, and the gap between it and overseas LIS education has been ever increasing
- 2) the curricula and contents of LIS education are not well standardized nor integrated into higher education programs and very few people who obtain a librarian's certificate get employed in librarian markets
- 3) new areas of education including IT skills and user behavior are sought
- 4) many people seek to obtain LIS education for certification as librarians even though employment opportunities for full-time librarians are quite limited.

These findings lead the LIPER project to make the following proposals:

- 1) establish LIS examination for students so that they are able to self-evaluate what they have learned through LIS education and obtain better employment opportunities;
- 2) introduce a new standard curriculum for information professional education to emphasize core areas of information organization, information resources and services, information systems and retrieval, management, IT, and a better understanding of user behavior.

I am afraid that many participants may wonder why examination should be introduced perhaps excluding those who came from the East Asian countries. In the traditional culture there has been a formal recruiting system by doing paper examination in neutral and fair manners beyond the feudal status or modern social class. This has been



related to the generalist bureaucratic system of the society. We think that it is one of the causes why librarians are not so respected that there are few opportunities of evaluation for learners in the LIS education. So we have been preparing the LIS examination, by which examinees and educators could understand what the minimum standard for LIS education is.

Fig. 3 and Fig.4 show the curriculum structure of LIPER proposals. LIS Examination will be held for the core field of LIS curriculum which is expected to adopt by undergraduate *Shisho* training type courses. So we are hoping thousands of students at the courses will take the examination in near future.

Three Information Professional training tracks or an Special Informational training track in the figures are assumed to be located at graduate courses of some universities which also provide the subjects belonging to the core field. These tracks are just examples to put forward the LIS education. We have used the term Information Professional to respond flexibly to the changing information environment. As I mentioned there are more than 5 graduate courses at Japanese universities now. Some universities could undertake to open new graduate programs for professional librarians and information professionals.

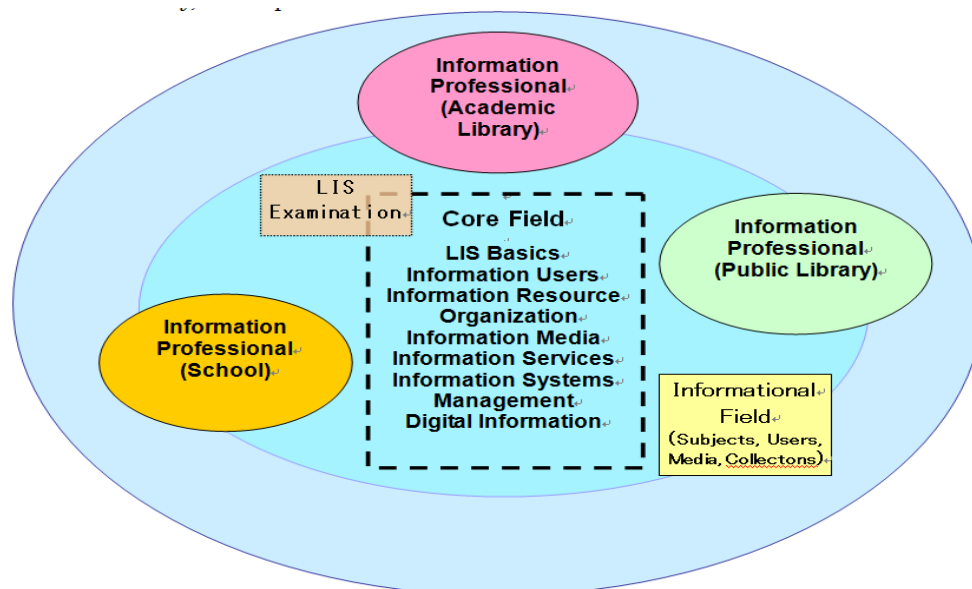


Fig.3 LIPER Proposals

This is just a blueprint now. LIPER has been succeeded to LIPER2 Project by the JSPS research fund from 2006.

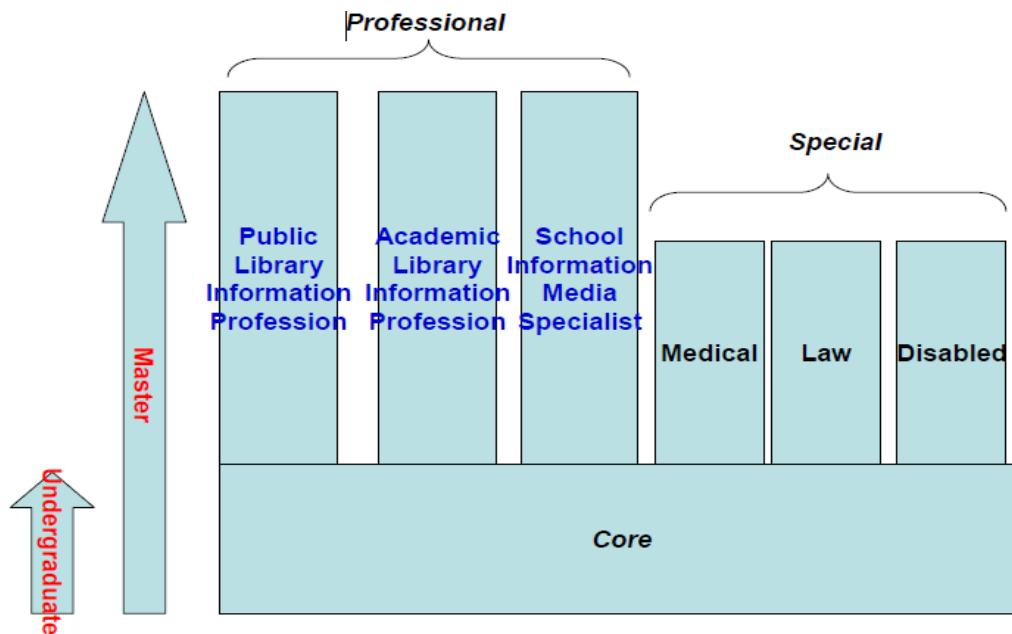


Fig.4 Several tracks proposed

## CONCLUSION

I think LIS education could be also demanded if the library became just a combination of information networks and content management system without physical settings or physical materials. The education program should be based upon the ideas of knowledge information system which LIS have long fostered even if the media were digital, paper-based or these combinations. It is important that the idea and concept of LIS play such roles in our society.

Recently Japanese society has begun to reconsider the importance of libraries and archival resources. For example NDL Director Makoto Nagao was appointed two years ago out of bureaucratic rule. The position had been as high as ministers in the administrative hierarchy until the NDL Act was amended recently. Former director-generals of the House of Representatives and the House of Councilors had been appointed as NDL directors interchangeably before him for more than 50 years. Dr. Nagao has experienced the directorship of Kyoto University Library. He was a pioneering researcher of knowledge engineering who developed procedures to analyze Japanese textural information. So he was not a librarian but has been very understanding of LIS.

Another example is that Public Document Management Act is being legislated at the National Diet now. National Archives of Japan (NAJ) was established in 1971. But as precise legal procedures has not been decided to take over public documents from administrative units to NAJ, it cannot have adequately collected public documents and

managed them as the national archives. When this act is enforced, it will empower NAJ to achieve the goals of modern national archives and to enhance the nation's administrative and bureaucratic transparency.

Our society has been so steeped in a standard narrative that important information was exchanged among administrative elite who are highly literate and educated. Literacy was high but inequitably distributed. Libraries and archives are the social device to fill in the literacy and information literacy gap among people and to achieve social welfare in general. In 21<sup>st</sup> century we have begun to realize the idea of modern librarianship and LIS education.

These experiences in Japan will give some suggestion to international scenes of LIS and Asian and Pacific countries. At first there are historical reasons that either of the American model or British model of LIS education is pervasive in these countries. But we have to think it again and to examine possibilities of alternative ways. Secondly we have to be skeptical about the dominance of digital technology and digital culture. National economic development has been broadly realized on educational development of people. Information literacy is needed off course in every countries but it should have been based on literacy. We cannot think information literacy without literacy. We won't forget a balanced development of technology and culture.

#### AUTHOR

Akira Nemoto is a professor at Graduate School of Education, University of Tokyo. He is now President of the Japan Society of Library and Information Science. After he graduated from the same school 1984, he taught LIS at the University of Library and Information Science (now merged into Tsukuba University) for 10 years. He moved to the University of Tokyo in 1994. He is interested in the theoretical and historical aspects of LIS and librarianship. He was the author of some books including *The Structure of the Literary Universe: an Introduction of Bibliographic Control* (Japanese ed. 1998, Korean ed. 2003), *The Library as an Information Infrastructure* (Japanese ed. Vol. 1, 2002, Vol.2, 2004). He sent out Japanese translations of English books; W. F. Birdsall, *The Myth of Electronic Library* (1996) and Alistair Black and Dave Muddiman, *Understanding Community Librarianship* (2004).

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Notes

<sup>1</sup>This is a fully revised version of my paper presented at Research Center for Knowledge Communities, University of Tsukuba, in 2006. Akira Nemoto, "Library and information science education in Japan: some observations from the LIPER Project" Proceedings of 2006 Annual Symposium of Research Center for Knowledge Communities, University of Tsukuba, 2006. p42-47.

<sup>2</sup> Ronald P. Dore, *Education in Tokugawa Japan*, Routledge & Keagan Paul Ltd., 1965.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Rubinger, *Popular Literacy in Early Modern Japan*, University of Hawaii Press, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Andrey Korotayev, Artemy Malkov, and Daria Khaltourina. *Introduction to Social Macrodynamics. Compact Macromodels of the World System Growth*. Editorial URSS, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> In Japanese modern history there have been growing interests in Edo period publishing industry. There are many research papers and books in Japanese about the theme, which are omitted because of eliminating the detailed discussions.

<sup>6</sup> Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft : Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie*, Mohr, 1990, c1972.

<sup>7</sup> Taken from OECD Factbook 2008: Economic, Environmental and Social Statistics- Outcomes-Education-International student assessment, <http://oberon.sourceoecd.org/v1=2779698/cl=36/nw=1/rpsv/factbook/090101.htm>

<sup>8</sup> Makiko Miwa, Shuichi Ueda, Akira Nemoto, Mitsuhiro Oda, Haruki Nagata, Teruyo Horikawa, "Final Results of the LIPER Project in Japan," World Library and Information Congress: 72nd IFLA General Conference and Council:" Libraries: Dynamic Engines for the Knowledge and Information Society," 2006, Seoul, Korea. <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla72/papers/107-Miwa-en.pdf>