

APSIG Newsletter

ALIA Asia Pacific Special Interest Group

No. 94, July 2017

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Melodrama in Meiji Japan: exhibition and breakfast tour at the National Library of Australia



Come and join APSIG members for breakfast on **Thursday 17 August** in the Bookplate restaurant in the NLA Foyer at 8.30 am, followed by a tour of the fascinating exhibition, Melodrama in Meiji Japan, with Mayumi Shinozaki, Senior Librarian, Japanese Unit, NLA. The tour starts at 9.15 am.

Bookings essential by COB Tuesday 15 August with payment on the day for the breakfast. Contact: Alex Philp: aphilp@nla.gov.au

You will step into the tumultuous world of Meiji Japan (1868–1912), through a selection of stunning Japanese woodblock illustrations. Used to illustrate Japanese novels, these beautiful images, known as *kuchi-e* (literally, ‘mouth/opening picture’), accompany stories filled with drama, tragedy and intrigue, reflected the uncertainty of the times.

Curator Dr Gary Hickey draws upon the Library’s substantial collection of *kuchi-e* prints donated by the collector Professor Richard Clough (1921-2014). This collection, along with other works acquired, forms one of the most significant collections of this genre in the world and the largest focused collection of Japanese art in Australia. The exhibition features over twenty artists and a range of subjects, illustrating a fascinating history of a genre profiled for the first time in a major exhibition.

The upheaval accompanying the transition of Japan from a feudal society to an emerging modern western-style state during the Meiji period was reflected in a dramatic change in people’s lives. With society in flux, traditional values and relationships were challenged. Reflecting this shift, the publishing industry began adapting new western mechanical methods for reproducing text and images. They distributed stories in new literary forms illustrated by a younger

generation of artists who drew upon both traditional and modern representation. Prominent in this period of transition were literary frontispieces known as kuchi-e. Using the medium of the traditional multi-colour woodblock print in images, they illustrated stories that stressed the melodramatic, with women overwhelmingly the protagonists and readers of these literary works.

We hope all interested members and friends can join us on 17 August for this special breakfast and exhibition preview.

Pacific Islands monthly digitised

In a breakthrough for access to new and engaging historical information about the Pacific islands region, the National Library of Australia has recently completed the digitisation of the entire run of the *Pacific Islands monthly* magazine. The digitisation was completed after obtaining the appropriate permissions from the current rights holder. All of the issues from 1930 to 2000 can be browsed and fully searched on Trove.

The *Pacific Islands monthly* (PIM) was founded in Sydney by New Zealand born journalist Robert William (Robbie) Robson, who had moved to Australia during World War I. The first issue was published August 1930 and it ran until June 2000. PIM was originally published by Pacific Publications in Sydney and from 1987, it was published in Suva.

PIM is an unrivalled source of information about current affairs, agriculture, transport, communications, local people and their life and customs, commodities, geography, climate, mining, sport and much more. PIM is also a wonderful means of tracking down elusive names, or seeing the emergence of particular people as they became important in island politics, business or society.

<http://www.nla.gov.au/blogs/behind-the-scenes/2017/03/10/pacific-islands-monthly-digitised>

Christine McKenzie new President-elect of IFLA

Congratulations to Christine McKenzie who has been elected as IFLA President-Elect for 2017-2019 and will serve as President for the period 2019-2021.

Christine was awarded an ALIA Fellowship in 2008.



Joining the Brisbane City Council Library Services in 1998 as Manager Library Services, Christine's passion for improving client services and the professional development of staff were key platforms of her leadership.

As CEO of Yarra Plenty Regional Library, Christine continued to show leadership to the library profession and is recognised by her colleagues for her innovative implementation of technology.

Christine's professional network is international. She is amongst the leading public librarians throughout the world and highly regarded for her innovative practices and her willingness to share her learning and ideas. Christine generously opens her international network to the benefit all Australian librarians and libraries and thereby improves the services to clients.

An active ALIA member for over 30 years, Christine has made an outstanding contribution to the objects and work of ALIA, serving as ALIA Vice-president, then President between 2002-2004, where she

demonstrated a strong commitment to her profession and was an enthusiastic and effective advocate for public libraries.

Christine retired from Yarra Plenty Regional Library in January 2016.

She is the Treasurer of IFLA and was elected to the Governing Board in 2015. She was also a Governing Board Member 2011-13, when she worked on the Trend Report and was a member of the Finance Committee. She was a member of the Steering Committee of the Metropolitan Libraries Section 2005-09 and Chair 2009-11.

She has been a member of the Australian Government's Public Lending Rights Committee; the Library Board of Victoria's Advisory Committee on Public Libraries; the Victorian Government's Ministerial Advisory Council on Public Libraries; the Executive of the Public Libraries Victoria Network, and a juror for the Intelligent Communities Forum.

She is an Executive Committee member of INELI-Oceania which has engaged 34 emerging leaders from Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific and is also a strategic advisor of the Gates Foundation and a mentor for the first international cohort of INELI, interacting with librarians from around the world.

Christine.mackenzie.au@gmail.com

New face at the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau



My name is Kari James and I am delighted to be the new Executive Officer of the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau. As Pambu approaches its 50th anniversary next year, I'm honoured to have the opportunity to continue the Bureau's tradition of preserving the documentary heritage of the Pacific.

I bring to Pambu a diverse professional background, which started 20 years ago in a medical records department under the leaking pipes of a hospital kitchen. I spent eight years at the ABC, where I worked as a cataloguer and archival researcher for TV News, which I loved immensely.

In 2013, increasingly envious of the daily outings of my journalist colleagues, I joined the Australian Volunteers for International Development program as a volunteer archivist at the National Archives of Solomon Islands. I loved the time I spent in Honiara, and I developed a real appreciation for the vulnerability of so many records in the Pacific, where climatic conditions and the real risk of natural disasters put collections at risk every day.

On my return to Australia in 2015, I worked for two years as an archivist with a Native Title Representative Body in Perth, which reinforced my appreciation for the knowledge contained in archival materials and the pressing need to preserve them. I'm currently working my way through a Graduate Diploma in Records Management and Archives to build on my qualifications in information management and media.

I'm enormously thankful to my predecessor, Kylie Moloney, for generously sharing her Pambu knowledge with me, just as she has spent years encouraging, collaborating, learning and sharing knowledge with her colleagues across the Pacific. She leaves big shoes to fill, but it's an honour to succeed her. (Kylie has moved to the special collections area of the National Library of Australia).

kari.james@anu.edu.au or you can connect with her on LinkedIn.

Report back from APSIG lunchtime talk on 29 March: Scandal in Canberra

Andrew Gosling explored how, after considerable difficulties, the Library succeeded in obtaining Sir Edmund Backhouse's real or imagined adventures in late Manchu China.

The National Library of Australia houses a rare typed autobiography, completed shortly before his death in Japanese-occupied China, by the eccentric British Sinologist, Sir Edmund Backhouse (1873-1944). In his final years, Backhouse prepared two volumes of autobiography. The *Dead Past* is an account of his youth, when he claims to have been the lover of Irish writer Oscar Wilde, French poet Paul Verlaine, British Prime Minister Lord Rosebery, an Ottoman princess and other figures of the Naughty Nineties. The much longer *Décadence Mandchoue*, or *Manchu Decadence*, concentrates on his first decade in China. It describes his real or imagined affairs with nobles and commoners, and also with the Empress Dowager Cixi (Tz'u Hsi) at the Summer Palace. Cixi was the last great Manchu ruler of China until her death in 1908.



L to R Andrew Gosling, Prof. Richard Rigby and Frieda Schimmelpennig of ANU

Andrew has written an extensive article on Backhouse which is published in the National Library of Australia's online journal "Unbound" at <https://www.nla.gov.au/unbound/the-wild-chinese-tales-of-sir-edmund-backhouse>

As well, Andrew's talk is available as a podcast as part of the National Library of Australia's Arts and Literature Talks at .
Media files

[apsig_talk_-_andrew_gosling_-_29_march_2017.mp3](#) (audio/mpeg, 33.8 MB)

ANU – Myanmar university library development project

Roxanne Missingham writes: The Australian National University and Myanmar have a long history of collaboration on a range of research areas. The ANU Library is now participating in a project with the University of Yangon Department of Library and Information Science to develop their programs to enable students to develop digital capabilities.

Myanmar University librarians are making a significant contribution to education and have continued to curate their collections and deliver services through difficult times of change. Myat Sann Nyien notes "The years before 2011 were very dark, with all information cut off. Librarians in Myanmar worked in what felt like an enclosed society, and libraries in Myanmar were lacking new and updated materials and facilities in those days."

The librarians are enthusiastic about taking advantage of the digital environment to enable students and academics to access the world's research and to develop competencies in digital literacy now that Myanmar is opening up to engagement with the world.

It is inspiring to see the eLibrary Myanmar project (<http://www.eifl.net/eifl-in-action/elibrary-myanmar-project>), funded by the Open Society Foundation initiated in

December 2013, providing information literacy training to librarians in 10 academic and research institutions and access to a great range of high quality international journals, databases and e-books.



At University of Yangon Library with Dr Hlaing Hlaing Gyi, Librarian, University of Yangon Library on my right and Professor Dr. Ni Win Zaw, Head, Department of Library and Information Science, University of Yangon and Dr Ohn Mar Oo, Lecturer, Department of Library and Information Studies, University of Yangon.

Dr Ni Win Zaw, head of the University of Yangon Department of Library and Information Science hosted my visit late last year – it was a wonderful opportunity to see the university libraries and understand their needs for new skills. The students were delightful to talk to and work with. They are passionate and ready to take up every opportunity to increase their digital information skills.



Postgraduate Students and lecturers at the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Yangon



Ms Ni Ni Naing, Librarian, Universities Central Library, University of Yangon Campus, with colleague

This year our collaboration is increasing in different ways. I was very fortunate to visit again and to participate in the Myanmar-Australian Strategic Dialogue and the University of Yangon/Australian National University research conference. The Strategic Dialogue commenced with speeches from Ministers including the Australian Minister for International Development and the Pacific, Senator the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells (below).



Dr Zaw visited Australia in April to further her understanding of library education in Australia and digital skills. She very much

appreciated the time and support from those she visited including a detailed meeting with Charles Sturt University lecturers and Professor Sally Burford at the University of Canberra.



Professor Philip Hider, Head of School, School of Information Studies and Dr Zaw during her visit to Charles Sturt University

Our next steps will be to arrange a visit from Australian educators to the University of Yangon, and work with the three Myanmar university who teach library and information studies.

If you are interested in the project or volunteering in any capacity please do not hesitate to contact me.

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Memory of the World update

The MOW programme's latest newsletter is available at <http://www.mowcapunesco.org/wp-content/uploads/Newsletter-June-2017.pdf> and covers activities for January - June 2017.

Asia-Pacific Library and Information Conference 2018

ALIA, Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA), and Library Association of Singapore (LAS) are delighted to announce their first joint conference between the three associations. The event will take place 30 July to 2 August 2018 at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre, Queensland. The 2018 conference will be the fourth in a series which began more than 30 years ago. The first joint Australia-New Zealand conference was held in Christchurch in 1981; the second in Brisbane in 1984, and the third in Wellington in 1994. This will be the first time that ALIA and LIANZA are joined by LAS. A further joint conference is proposed for November 2021 in New Zealand.

Website to be released in July!

<https://www.alia.org.au/events/13403/asia-pacific-library-and-information-conference-2018>

New book on Fiji

Soso Village, Naviti Island by Geraldine Triffitt and Onesimo Nayato. Canberra, Naviti Documentation, 2017. xvi, 97pp, 16 coloured plates, 4 maps, 8 tables, 21 cm. Includes a glossary and index. ISBN: 9780648057109 (paperback)

The everyday story of Soso is recorded, a remote village of about 450 people on Naviti Island, one of the islands of the Yasawa Archipelago in Fiji.

The Canberra author Geraldine Triffitt has been associated with the village of Soso for over 40 years, since the family first visited in 1977. Onesimo Nayato is a resident of Soso, who has shared his culture with his good friend, Geraldine.

The book tells a lively and colourful story of the social life, environment, flora and fauna of a culture that has had little contact with Europeans over the years. Geraldine describes the changes to the village from her

first visit (which required a guarantor and a permit to visit) to the present day when tourists at the nearby island resorts or cruise boats, include a visit to Soso in their itinerary.

The object of the book is to record the culture of a traditional and remote Fijian village for the people of the village. But it is also for interested general readers, tourists staying at resorts in the area, and academics studying language, anthropology, natural history and life in the Pacific.

The book is available from Naviti Documentation, PO Box 537, Mawson ACT 2607. Email navitidoc@gmail.com Price \$30 + \$7.50 P&H

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Published three times a year : March, July and November. Address : PO Box 5051, Lyneham, A.C.T. 2602, Australia. ISSN 1327 1024

Copy deadline for the November 2017 issue is Friday 27 October. Contributions very welcome especially from the Asia/Pacific region.

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Issues mounted on the APSIG homepage at :
<https://www.alia.org.au/groups/alia-asia-pacific-special-interest-group>