

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM STATEMENTS

Japan Library Association

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A Statement on Intellectual Freedom in Libraries

Adopted by the Annual General Conference of the Japan Library Association on May 30, 1979

We recognize that it is our library's responsibility to preserve the fundamental right of intellectual freedom by making our resources and facilities available to the people.

1. The Constitution of Japan is based on the principle that the sovereign power resides with the people. In order to maintain and develop this principle, it is essential to preserve the freedom of people to express and exchange their ideas and opinions.

The right to know and the freedom to express are two aspects of the same principle. The freedom of expression is realized by the preservations of the right to know.

The right to know is related inherently to the freedom of thought and conscience and all other fundamental human rights. Under our Constitution, they shall be maintained by the continuous endeavor of the people.

2. All people are entitled to have free access to any necessary materials and they should be able to use them freely. Moreover libraries are the institutions that must provide these functions.
3. Free from political or social pressure, libraries shall make their materials and facilities available to all people by every means possible, including the inter-library cooperations.
4. We should remember that in Japan libraries once did not fully ensure the people's right to know, but on occasion participation in 'thought guidance' of the people. In view of this, libraries should fulfil their responsibilities to defend and expand the people's right to know.
5. All people have the equal right to use library. There shall be no discrimination because of race, creed, sex, age or any other reason. This right shall be guaranteed also to all foreign nationals who live in this land.
6. These principles of intellectual freedom in libraries shall be fundamentally applied to all types of libraries.

In order to perform this duty, our libraries support the following principles:

1. The freedom of libraries to select their materials.

1. In order to secure the people's right to know, libraries shall respond to every demand of the people who need the library materials.
2. Libraries shall select and collect their materials according to the acquisition policies autonomously set forth.

On that occasion,

1. Libraries shall select a wide range of materials representing all points of view concerning the controversial issues.
2. Libraries shall not exclude materials because they reflect political, religious or other partisan views of the author.
3. Libraries shall not select materials in accordance with a librarian's individual interests or taste.
4. Libraries shall not abandon the freedom of selection under pressures or interference from any individuals, organizations or groups.
5. The above mentioned principles shall also apply to donated materials.

The thoughts and opinions expressed in materials collected for a library do not represent necessarily an endorsement by the library or librarian.

3. Libraries shall make the written acquisition policy open to the general public to encourage their criticism and cooperation.

2. The freedom of libraries to make their materials and facilities available to the people.

1. In order to secure the people's right to know, all library materials shall be freely available to the people.

Libraries shall not alter, remove or discard any materials without an appropriate reason.

The free use of library materials may be restricted in the following cases. However, these restrictions shall be enforced with care and reevaluated in the future.

- When human rights or privacy of another person are violated
 - When a court decision prohibits certain materials as obscene.
 - When a donor has not consented to make his/her donation public for the time being.
2. Libraries shall preserve materials in order to make them available in the future.

Materials kept in libraries shall not be discarded by temporary social interference or pressures from individuals, organizations or groups.

3. Library meeting rooms and other facilities are to be located near the library materials to foster learning and creative activity of patrons.

Libraries shall make their meeting rooms and other facilities available on equal terms to individuals or groups in the community apart from commercial use.

4. Any individuals, organizations or groups have no right to interfere with library-sponsored meeting or programs.

3. The right of libraries to protect the privacy of their patrons.

1. Whatever a person reads is a matter of his/her privacy. Therefore libraries shall not disclose information concerning what patrons read. The only exception is in the case where a warrant is issued in accordance with provisions of Article 35 of the Constitution.
2. They shall never disclose the fact of how a patron uses the library.
3. What a patron reads and how he uses the library are matters which all the library personnel should keep confidential.

4. The right of libraries to oppose all forms of censorship.

1. Censorship has been used to suppress people's freedom of thought and speech, and is contrary to democracy and the people's right to know.

History shows that censorship has influenced the selection of library materials and resulted in the removal or withdrawal of them at home and abroad.

Therefore, libraries shall oppose any form of censorship.

2. Pressure and interference from individuals, organizations or groups bring about the same results as censorship. Libraries shall also oppose these attempts to suppress thought and speech.
3. This suppression may lead to self-restriction on that part of library, but libraries shall get rid of it in order to maintain intellectual freedom.

We are thus united in our determination to defend intellectual freedom.

1. The state of intellectual freedom in libraries is one of the important barometers indicating the progress of democracy in a nation. If intellectual freedom in libraries is threatened, we must act to defend it. In order to do this, it is essential that libraries operate democratically and that the solidarity among librarians be strengthened.

2. The defense of intellectual freedom in libraries is part of the struggle of people who pursue liberty and human rights. We have the responsibility to defend intellectual freedom in libraries together with individuals, organizations and groups which also support intellectual freedom.
3. People's support in defending intellectual freedom in libraries comes only when they have experienced the benefit of this freedom through library service. We will continuously make every endeavor to preserve the intellectual freedom in libraries.
4. In the struggle for intellectual freedom in libraries, any librarian shall receive the efficient support from the Japan Library Association, if he or she would receive an unfair treatment because of his/her activities for intellectual freedom in libraries.

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