

A case report of information accessibility initiated by the library management in Japan.

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1. Introduction

In response to the adoption by the UN of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in December 2006, Japanese Diet passed the Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities in June 2013, and Japan ratified the Convention in January 2014. The act requires public institutions to provide on request reasonable accommodations for the handicapped. Public libraries are thus obviously obligated to do so. Actually, however, apart from a few exceptions, this has not yet come to the reality.

In the "Survey on Services for the Handicapped in Public Libraries" (2018), National Diet Library tried to discern general tendencies in the results using two indicators: (1) remote availability of recorded materials, and (2) systems for production of recorded materials and for rendering face-to-face reading service as related to sustainment of reading staff. These are far more daring criteria than those in the previous nationwide surveys.

Pioneering examples of such services along with reasonable accommodations can be found in braille libraries as parts of their proper activities, but their detailed features are not publicly known. **This work reports specific cases**, collected by surveys and interviews, of services and reasonable accommodations for visually disabled persons, chiefly related to the braille, provided by braille and public libraries in Japan.

2. Methods

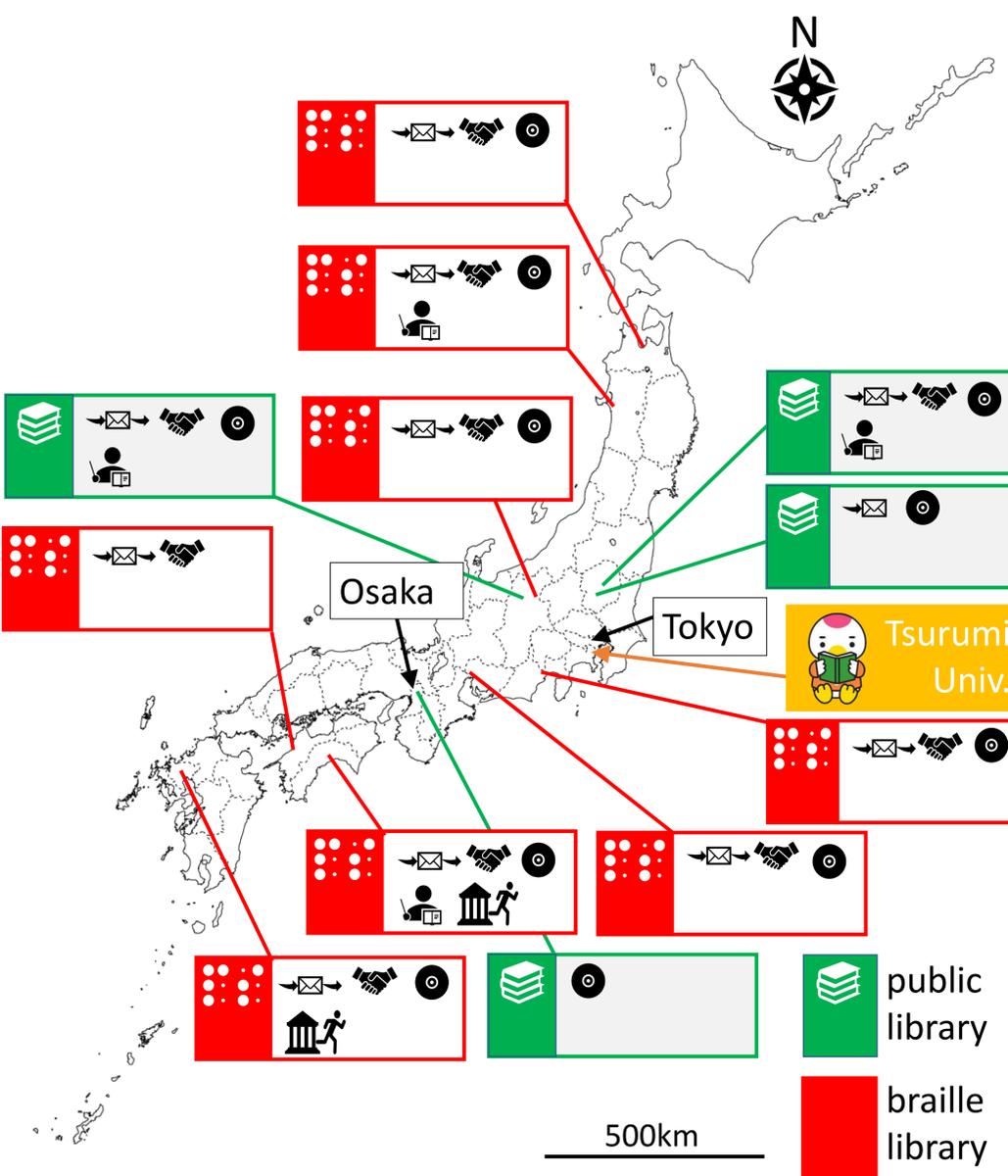
Data analyzed were obtained from **three sources**: **interviews** by the author in the period from August 2015 to February 2019; **a Web questionnaire** survey closed at the end of May 2019; and information on the activities and services of individual libraries disclosed in the **websites accessed** in the period from December 2018 to July 2019.

3. Summary

The present work shows forward-looking examples of services for the disabled practiced by public and braille libraries. Specific features of such services, generally not revealed by bird's-eye surveys, include **exchange of letters** in braille, **title seals in braille attached** to individual documents, and **training of braille transcribers**. In addition, braille libraries emphasize services for the visually handicapped who have problems in mobility and information accessibility, such as **bringing documents and playback equipment to users' homes**. Public libraries, on the other hand, focus on wider public in such activities as **events for youth of experiencing braille**, and **providing braille versions of summer-holiday reading assignments** for blind schools. Further exploration of advanced activities is planned.

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services and information accessibility for blinds using braille	braille libraries (n=8)	public libraries (n=4)	pictgrams
reading braille letters (request and impression etc.)	8	3	✉
training of braille transcribers (volunteers)	8	2	🤝
attaching title seals in braille to cassette tape/CD cases of analog/digital talking books	7	4	📀
writing braille letter replies	7	2	✉
instruction to participants of braille translating trial	2	2	👤
outreach services (lending devices for blinds and explaining how to use them at users' homes)	2	-	🏠
publishing PR magazines and catalogs in braille	1	-	
translation requests into braille from external organizations	1	-	
reading/writing braille memos between blind staffs and sighted	1	-	
translation service into braille / recording service	1	-	
translating braille books of assigned reading books of summer vacation for blind students	-	1	
PR about braille for general users	-	1	
teaching braille to the teachers of schools for blinds	-	1	

