



## ASIA

---

21 February 2014 Last updated at 13:24 GMT

# Anne Frank's Diary vandalised in Japan libraries

**More than 100 copies of Anne Frank's Diary of a Young Girl have been vandalised in public libraries in Japan's capital Tokyo, officials say.**

Pages have been ripped from at least 265 copies of the diary and other related books, they added.

It is not clear who is behind the vandalism. A US Jewish rights group has called for a police investigation.

Anne Frank's diary was written during World War Two, while the teenager hid from the Nazis in occupied Amsterdam.

The book made her a symbol of the suffering of Jews during the war.

### Investigation call

For many Japanese the book forms the basis of their knowledge about the Jewish holocaust, the BBC's Rupert Wingfield-Hayes in Tokyo reports.

But what might have motivated the attacks remains a mystery. Japan has no history of Jewish settlement and no real history of anti-Semitism, our correspondent adds.

Toshihiro Obayashi, a library official in West Tokyo's Suginsami area, said: "Each and every book which comes up under the index of Anne Frank has been damaged at our library."

The Simon Wiesenthal Centre, a global Jewish human rights organisation, [said in a statement](#) that it was shocked and concerned by the incidents, and called for the authorities to investigate.

"The geographic scope of these incidents strongly suggest an organised effort to denigrate the memory of the most famous of the 1.5 million Jewish children murdered by the Nazis in the World War Two Holocaust," associate dean Abraham Cooper said.

"Anne Frank is studied and revered by millions of Japanese," Mr Cooper added. "Only people imbued with bigotry and hatred would seek to destroy Anne's historic words of courage, hope and love in the face of impending doom."

The book was added to the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's [Memory of the World Register](#) in 2009.

Anne Frank's diary was translated into Japanese in December 1952 and topped the bestseller lists in 1953.

### 'Struggle of youth'

Professor Rotem Kowner, an expert in Japanese history and culture at Israel's University of Haifa, told the BBC that the book has been exceptionally popular and successful in Japan.

He says that in terms of absolute numbers of copies of the book sold, Japan is second only to the US, and adds that for Japanese readers the story transcended its Jewish identity to symbolise more powerfully the struggle of youth for survival.

"In the 1950s and the 1960s, there were competitions in which Japanese teenagers had to reflect on the experience of Anne Frank. Thousands of teenagers sent their submissions to such competitions," Professor Kowner says.

"It was a book about a war tragedy and the way youth experienced war... For many Japanese they would view this as a tragic development," he adds.

## [More Asia stories](#)



### [Obama's Dalai Lama chat irks China](#)

[\[news/world-asia-china-26271596\]](#)

US President Barack Obama hosts the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, a move denounced by China as "gross interference".

### [South Korea to develop cyberweapons](#)

[\[news/technology-26287527\]](#)

### [Nepal to deploy security on Everest](#)

[\[news/world-asia-26285028\]](#)



**BBC © 2014** The BBC is not responsible for the content of external sites. [Read more.](#)