The Union Catalogue of Early Japanese Books in Europe: History and Progress

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Let me come clean at the outset. Although one of the aims of this article is to inform American and Canadian readers about the Union Catalogue of Early Japanese Books in Europe project, the principal aim is to persuade readers that it is time to think about a Union Catalogue of Early Japanese Books in North America. In the hope that the history and progress of the European project might prove instructive by suggesting not only how to do things but also how not to do things, I give below detailed account of the genesis and management of the project as well as an explanation of the concepts that underlie the database.

In several different respects the Union Catalogue of Early Japanese Books in Europe project grew out of an earlier project which has as its objective the compilation of a catalog of the famous Aston, Satow, and von Siebold collections in Cambridge University Library. When I took up my present post at the University of Cambridge in 1985, there was a crying need for a published catalog of these superb collections and I undertook to prepare one with Professor Hayashi Nozomu, now of Tokyo Gaikokugo Daigaku. It all took much longer than I had originally anticipated. Perhaps this was inevitable, but the bibliographic work was only part of the problem: difficult decisions had to be taken about the format of the entries and even about their language and, although the kinds of Japanese word-processor then available to us were somewhat crude by the standards of today, we did all the inputting and checking ourselves so as to prepare camera-ready copy mostly in Japanese for Cambridge University to publish. It was eventually published by the Press in 1991 under the title *Early Japanese Books in Cambridge University Library: A Catalogue of the Aston, Satow and von Siebold Collections.*

I shall say more below about the problem of the format of the entries, but something should be said here about our decision to publish the main entries in Japanese rather than in *romaji* and English (or another western language) as in the excellent catalogs of the collections in Stockholm, the British Museum, the Institute of Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg, and various libraries in Germany compiled by Edgren, Chibbett, Gardner, Petrova, and Kraft respectively. Our belief that the international language of Japanese bibliography should be Japanese was certainly a factor in that decision, but of greater importance was the difficulty of fitting Japanese bibliographic terminology, evolved to deal with blockprinted books, to the procrustean bed of English. Terms such as "edition" and "published" are too imprecise to convey the required meaning, and we decided to abandon them.
In 1988, when we were in the middle of the inputting process, I had occasion to look for an early nineteenth-century book which had appeared in a publisher's advertisement. I tried first *Kokusho somokuroku* and the other obvious Japanese bibliographic guides and, after a long and fruitless search, was on the point of concluding that either the book had never actually appeared or had not survived when I discovered a copy listed in the second volume of Dr. Eva Kraft's *Japanische Handschriften und Traditionelle Drucke*, which describes the collection of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich. This was enough to persuade me that producing something akin to a European edition of *Kokusho somokuroku* might be a worthwhile enterprise, particularly given the riches of some of the largest and most well-known collections in Europe. Having secured Professor Hayashi's commitment to the new project, I made use of a break at the end of the British Library's Colloquium on Japanese Studies, which was held at the School of Oriental and African Studies in September 1988, to put an outline proposal for such a project to the assembled librarians and scholars from all over Europe as well as from Japan. This met with a favorable response, and the next steps, as I saw them, were to get some hard information about the likely extent of the project; that is, the number of libraries and other institutions and the size of their collections, and, of course, to get some money.

To launch the project some funds were elicited from internal sources at the University of Cambridge; these in turn encouraged some foundations connected either with Japanese studies or with bibliography to make some larger contributions and, on the strength of these, an application was made to the Leverhulme Trust of $120,000 to pay for a research assistant for four years. This was successful and gave the project a firm financial footing, which was further enhanced by a substantial contribution from the late Mr. Shigeo Sorimachi, the doyen of antiquarian booksellers in Japan as the proprietor of the Kōbunsō and a keen supporter of the project from its inception. Accommodation for the project was kindly provided by Cambridge University Library.

The first practical steps were then made to discover the locations of all target collections, by mailing a large number of university, public, municipal and private libraries, museums, art galleries, and other institutions throughout Europe. This brought to light a number of hitherto unknown collections, even the smallest of which frequently contained treasures. The list is being constantly added to as even now, six years after the inception of the project, new collections are coming to light. Each of these collections has been or will need to be examined by the compilers and for this it goes without saying that the support and cooperation of numerous librarians and curators is essential. It is a pleasure to report that they have been unstinting in lending their assistance and cooperation, and in order to keep them informed of the progress of the project, as well as to alert the wider scholarly community to new finds, an occasional newsletter is published in Cambridge and distributed to an ever increasing list of people throughout the world.

What, then, constitutes an "early Japanese book" for the purposes of this project? Each of these three words can cause problems, so some explanation is needed here. First, "early" has been taken to mean "pre-1868" but, although all pre-1868 items encountered have been
included, the cutoff year has not been applied rigidly and some post-1868 items have been included. These fall into one or other of the following categories: continuations of serial books of which the first volumes appeared before 1868, the works of authors active both before and after the Restoration, and other blockprinted books dating from before 1880. Second, "Japanese" also poses a problem but we have chosen to be eclectic and to include items that do not come within the definition of kokusho in Japan, particularly Chinese works printed in Japan which are excluded from the pages of Kokusho somokuroku. Our reason for doing this is largely because these works have often been edited or at least punctuated by a Japanese scholar for publication in Japan, but also because they are an important part of the cultural production of premodern Japan. Third, "book" has also been interpreted to include maps which were in the Tokugawa period published and presented (i.e., folded and given covers) in a manner similar to books. Purists may object but the eclecticism has the advantage of including items we have come across that might otherwise continue to lie unrecognized, and I make no apologies for it.

A fundamental part of the work has consisted of visits to the various institutions we have targeted. A detailed record has been made for each book, at first on cards in order to provide a sizable body of raw data on the basis of which a computer database could be constructed. It was decided from the outset that we would not be bound by cataloging rules established for books in the United Kingdom, for the bibliography of early Japanese books presents problems that cannot be accommodated in systems set up to deal with modern western books. The database has now been set up and is rapidly growing, and it will eventually be made available as a CD-ROM. Figure 2 below on page 25 shows an example of a typical individual entry, but some explanation is necessary of the various fields. The order of the fields is subject to possible revision, but in descending order as they appear in Figure 2, they are as follows. For much fuller definitions and discussion of these points, please see the introduction to Early Japanese Books in Cambridge University Library.

1. (See Figure 2.) Title as it appears in the book; unless otherwise stated here, this will be the naidai, or internal title at the beginning of the text.

2. Title in hiragana; this serves to give the pronunciation, based where possible on furigana glosses in the work itself, otherwise on the accepted pronunciation appearing in Kokusho somokuroku. It is this title that is used for ordering the entries in the usual gojuon Japanese order.

3. Title in romaji; this, together with some other romaji details, is included for the benefit of users with an uncertain command of Japanese.

4. This is only used for cross-referencing in cases where a work is known by several titles; the naidai is used as the main title, as explained above, but alternative titles are given their own entries with a cross-reference, as in Figure 1.

Figure 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Gishi zuihitsu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>見よSee</td>
<td>赤穂義士随筆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>書名</td>
<td>義士随筆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>平仮名書名</td>
<td>ぎしずいひつ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2

書名 商人軍配記（目録題）
平仮名書名 あきんどぐんばいき
Title Akindo gunbaiki
見よ See
所蔵機関・登録番号 F/BAM Y262
巻数 5 巻
大きさ・冊数 大5冊
著者・編者・画者 [江島其碩]著，川島信清画

Author, editor, illustrator Ejima Kiseki; Kawashima Nobukiyo (illustrator)

種類 整版
刊修印写年 [正徳2＜1712＞]刊・文化15＜1818＞增修・[幕末]印

蔵版者
版元・発行者 大坂、秋田屋太右衛門等
外題等 外題「出世早合点商人軍配記」

蔵版目録等

蔵書印

識語

参考 『国書総目録』1.29.1; 『古典籍総合目録』1.6.4.

注記 『商人軍配図』(正徳2刊)の改題本。文化15江陵山人序増修。

分類 浮世草子
その他

25
5. This field identifies the particular copy by location and shelf mark. The location code is divided into a country abbreviation (the standard country abbreviations used by motoring organizations) and, after the slash, a code for the library or other institution concerned. What then follows is the institution's own shelf mark. In the case of the book described in Figure 1, the F stands for France and BAM for Bibliothèque Asiatique des Missions Étrangères.

6. Number of parts and volumes, with an indication, if necessary, that the work is incomplete.

7. Number of volumes and their size according to the standard book sizes of premodern Japan.

8. The author/editor/illustrator information in characters.

9. The same as 8 above but in romaji.

10. This field indicates whether the book is a blockprint, a manuscript, or a movable-type book.

11. Here the dates of publication (and of printing, if different) are given, with equivalents in the western calendar. The terms used for "publication", "printing", and so on are those used in the catalogs of the Cabinet Library in Tokyo. In the case of manuscripts, a period in which the copy is thought to have been produced is given if there is no clear internal date.

12. This field gives the name of the owner of the blocks in the case of privately-published books.

13. The place and name of the publisher; if more than one is listed in the book, the last one is named in this field and the full details are given in field 15.

14. In this field titles other than the defined main title are listed.

15. If the book contains a list of several publishers, the details are supplied here.

16. This field gives details of any attached publishers lists or other advertising material.

17. Here the text of any ex libris seals is given.

18. This is the field for recording any inscriptions or annotations in the books.
19. This field gives references to *Kokusho sōmokuroku* and other standard reference tools, including, where appropriate, published catalogs of the collections examined.

20. This field provides further information about the editions, particularly the basis for any inferences made.

21. Here the category assigned to the book by *Kokusho sōmokuroku* is given.

22. This field is used to give any further information.

The number of fields will undoubtedly strike many as being on the large side. However, in no case is every field filled, and this amount of fields has been found necessary to convey the information required to establish the individual identity of each book.

In Cambridge the management of the database has been the most time-consuming task. The database itself has been created on the Japanese version of Claris's Filemaker Pro on a Macintosh Quadra equipped with the Macintosh Japanese Operating System. For work away from Cambridge, the whole database is loaded into an external hard drive where it can be accessed easily from a Macintosh Powerbook. Direct inputting is not always easy, particularly in the case of libraries without any of the standard Japanese reference books available; the final decisions are usually made in Cambridge, where the University Library has built up a superb collection of bibliographic reference tools, but sometimes it has been necessary to correspond with Japanese libraries and to compare photocopies to come to a decision about the bibliographical status of a work, particularly in the case of often reprinted and reissued works such as *Heike monogatari*.

So far all collections in Scandinavia and Poland have been covered and most collections in Russia, Italy, and Belgium too and, although we are clearly more than halfway through, there remain a number of important collections still to cover. The completion of the project and the publication of the CD-ROM catalog are still a few years away, and I freely admit that my original estimate of how long the project would take has proved to have been wildly optimistic. I hope, nevertheless, that it will be apparent already to readers of the *CEAL Bulletin* that the database will constitute a useful research tool as well as furnishing much-needed information about the contents of European collections of early Japanese books, and, more importantly, I hope it will be obvious that the rich collections of North America would be a worthy subject for a companion project. I should be happy to discuss any of the issues raised here with any readers interested in setting up such a project and to cooperate in any way I can. Further, if any readers wish to receive the newsletter of the project, or to find out more about it, they should contact me by e-mail (pk104@cam.ac.uk) or by mail addressed to me at the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge CB3 9DA, UK.