6-1-1998

Internship at Otani University Library and Conferences/Meetings Related to Libraries in Japan

Toshie Marra

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jeal

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation
Available at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jeal/vol1998/iss115/4

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of East Asian Libraries by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.
INTERNERNSHIP AT OTANI UNIVERSITY LIBRARY AND
CONFERENCES/MEETINGS RELATED TO LIBRARIES IN JAPAN

Toshie Marra

University of California, Los Angeles

About a decade ago the Richard C. Rudolph East Asian Library of the University of California, Los Angeles established a Visiting Librarian Program with several academic libraries in China, Japan, and Korea. Since 1988, the library has hosted a number of three visiting librarians from Japan: three from Keio (1988-1991) and Waseda University Libraries (1991-1994), and two from the Otani University Library (1995-1997). In exchange, from July 1996 to June 1997, I was given the opportunity to work as an intern at the Otani University Library. During my one-year stay in Kyoto I also attended various conferences, workshops, and meetings related to libraries and bibliographical studies, partially supported by UCLA and the Otani University.

particularly in recent years the need for providing continuous education and training to library staff has been discussed vigorously in Japan.1 I have noticed that recently more specialized workshops and seminars have also been organized in East Asian librarianship in the United States. From such a perspective, my experience in Japan can be seen as a year-long training program, and in fact I realize that I learned many things there that I could not have gotten elsewhere. My experience, however, naturally reflects my personal interests, and it might not be well-balanced as a training for general librarianship in Japanese studies. In any case, in what follows I will discuss my internship experience and the library-related meetings in which I took part in Japan. I hope that some of my experiences and observations will be of interest to colleagues in the United States.

I will divide my paper into three sections: 1) Internship at Otani University Library; 2) Conferences/workshops; and 3) Study groups and meetings. Those meetings of a larger scale in which institutions are usually involved will be discussed in the second section. The Otani University Library, as a matter of fact, arranged for me to attend these meetings, with the exception of the conference described at the end, the 50th Anniversary Conference of the Nippon Association for Librarianship. In the last section I introduce small-scale meetings voluntarily organized by groups of individuals.

1. Internship at Otani University Library

The collection of the Otani University Library is of extraordinary quality with special strength in resources related to Buddhism. As of December 1997, the library’s holdings were estimated at approximately 670,000 volumes. This is a relatively large collection for a university that only has a Faculty of Humanities with a student body, both graduate and undergraduate, of less than 5,000. The collection includes about 1,500 rare items that the library has selected and keeps in a special storage area. Among these items, six are designated Important Cultural Properties. The library has received several donations of magnificent quality, such as the collection that formerly belonged to Dr. Kiichiro Kanda, consisting of 10,000 volumes of old Chinese, Japanese, and
Korean materials. The library has recently received another donation of some 30,000 volumes of
books that originally belonged to Dr. Keiji Nishitani.

I worked ten days every month throughout a year-long period during my internship at the library.
Since my original desire was to learn about old and rare Japanese books, I was assigned to the
Old Books Division under the supervision of Mr. Megumi Yokota, a veteran rare book librarian
specializing in Chinese and Japanese Buddhist materials. My assignment was to catalog materials
in the Asano Collection, a donated collection that originally belonged to the priest Choryo Asano,
the former master of Genkoji, a temple of the Shin School of Pure Land Buddhism in Tokyo.
According to Mr. Yokota, the priest Asano was strongly concerned that precious old books not
be scattered and lost and made special efforts to collect such materials, especially those related to
the Shin Sect. The collection of the late Mr. Asano was donated to the library in two lots in 1973
and in 1984. The materials assigned to me were those of the later arrival, which consist of 356
titles in 924 volumes. Most of the materials are wood-block printed or hand-written books
produced in the pre-modern period. My duty was to catalog these materials manually on cards
according to Otani’s cataloging standards for description and their original classification
schedules. The procedure also included the process of checking whether the library already had
the same items or different editions of the same work. Since the holdings of the library are
extremely rich in old and rare materials—and particularly in Japanese, Chinese, and Korean
Buddhist materials—I could compare several different editions of the same work, which enabled
me to learn about the differences in books by publication periods as well as by publication
locations.

Mr. Yokota and other staff members of the library were always very helpful and generously gave
me insights and advice concerning old and rare books. Mr. Yokota and Mr. Masaharu Ozaki, the
two full-time rare book librarians in the Old Books Division, are involved in many activities on
campus besides their regular duties of compiling book catalogs and providing reference services.
They teach some courses for the university’s Library Education Program, organize exhibits for
various occasions, and participate in scholarly meetings that are regularly held on campus on
Buddhist textual studies. It was a valuable experience for me just to observe their daily activities
as rare book librarians.

The book displays in the library are of course great educational opportunities, as I could learn not
only the library’s important holdings but also the kinds of considerations that have to be given to
prepare such events. During my internship, as many as six exhibits, ranging from one day to a
week-long period, were organized on campus. The scholarly quality of works by librarians and
professors at the Otani University regarding the library’s rare book holdings is apparent in the
numerous publications of annotated catalogs, as well as articles in Shoko, the Otani University
Library’s bulletin, which began publication in 1983. It is evident that the library and its rare books
holdings play an extremely important role in academic activities at the university.

2. Conferences/Workshops

Workshops/Meetings Organized by the Japan Association of Private University Libraries, Western
Region Section (Shiritsu Daigaku Toshokan Kyokai Nishi Chiku Bukai)
While the Japan Association of Private University Libraries holds an annual conference for all the member libraries in Japan, subordinate regional sections of the association also prepare smaller-scale workshops and meetings. The Western Region Section covers five regions including Tokai, Kyoto, Hanshin, Chugoku-Shikoku, and Kyushu. Since Otani University is located in Kyoto, I could attend meetings organized for the member libraries of the Kyoto Region Group as well as one for the entire Western Region Section.

10/4/96, Setsunan University, Osaka

The annual meeting of the Western Region Section was held in Osaka with 150 attendees from 102 institutions with the main theme of “Enforcing library functions—to support research and education.” It featured a lecture by Prof. Makoto Nagao of Kyoto University Engineering Department, and four individual presentations by librarians at different member libraries. The lectures summarized the possibility and reality of electronic libraries as well as the position of bibliographical studies. At the site of the meeting, some book dealers and system/facility vendors also were present for business promotion.

11/8/96, Tenri Central Library, Tenri

This was a half-day specialized meeting organized by the Kyoto Region Group in the Western Region Section, attended by 65 library staff members from 40 university libraries in the Kyoto and Hanshin areas. The meeting included two presentations by librarians of the Tenri Central Library on their experience regarding acquisition and system development at the library, followed by a tour to the exhibit entitled “Old Japanese dictionaries.” In the exhibit room, the library displayed a total of 57 titles of dictionaries produced in Japan from late Heian period (794-1192) to Meiji 5 (1872), including Ruiju Myogisho, a national treasure of Japan, and seven items designated as Important Cultural Properties. An exhibit catalog with annotations was distributed as a gift to all participants.

11/25/96, Ryukoku University, Kyoto

The Kyoto Region Group also organized this one-day workshop with 36 participants from 20 university libraries on the theme “How to view cultural properties.” The workshop consisted of two lectures by history professors as well as tours to the Omiya Library of Ryukoku University and to Nishi Honganji Temple. The first lecture was on the problem of preserving cultural properties, particularly with regard to historical documents and old books. The second provided historical accounts on the relationship between Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Honganji Temple, on which a special exhibit was prepared by the Omiya Library. The tours included the observation of several cultural properties, including historical documents and visual art objects. The most memorable part of the tour to Nishi Honganji Temple was the visit inside Hiunkaku Villa, one of the three most notable villas in Kyoto with the Gold and Silver Pavilions. Usually Hiunkaku Villa can be admired only from the outside. All participants received as gifts several publications by Ryukoku University.

First Workshop of the Association for Buddhist Libraries (Bukkyo Toshokan Kyokai Kenshukai): 11/14-15/96, Otani University, Kyoto
The Association for Buddhist Libraries is supported by 16 Buddhist university libraries in Kansai and Kanto areas. This two-day workshop was organized by the Otani University Library with the purpose of providing some training for librarians dealing with Buddhist texts. This sort of workshop was the first attempt for the association and it was to be continued every year. I was informed later, in fact, that the second workshop was held at the Koyasan University in 1997. Thirty-three individuals from 14 libraries participated in the first workshop. The first day session included three lectures and a tour to the exhibit prepared by the library, while the second day session consisted of field trips to Higashi Honganji Temple and Hozoin of Manpukuji Temple. The first lecture discussed rather generally the history of Buddhism, whereas the other lectures touched on the structure and types of Buddhist texts, and the history and structure of the Daizokyo (the whole Buddhist canon), respectively. These lectures were a great help in understanding a series of editions of Daizokyo published throughout the long history of Buddhism, many of which were displayed in the exhibit for comparison. The tours to those two temples were also very educational. The Hozoin holds 60,000 pieces of woodblocks of the Daizokyo, originated from Zen Buddhist Tetsugen (1630-1682), which have been designated as Important Cultural Properties. Inside the huge cold storage building several printers were still printing scriptures using those old woodblocks. The contents of the three lectures were reproduced in the proceedings\(^6\) as well as in the bulletin of Otani University Library.\(^5\)

Eighty-second All Japan Library Conference (Zenkoku Toshokan Taikai): 10/23-25/96, Beppu, Oita

The first All Japan Library Conference was held in 1906 and has been held every year since then with the exception of the period between 1940 and 1947. The 82nd annual conference organized by the Japan Library Association (JLA) consisted of three or four days of activities: two half-day plenary meetings and a fellowship dinner with more than 2,000 total participants, one-day concurrent sessions organized by 14 separate sub-sections, and a half-day or a day-and-a-half trip including library visits. The plenary session on the first day included recognition of librarians for their contributions to the field and lectures by the governor of Oita Prefecture, Mr. Morihiko Hiramatsu, and the JLA director, Mr. Hitoshi Kurihara. The individual sessions by sub-sections on the second day were held at different locations in Beppu and Oita cities. Each participant declared the specific session of his/her interest upon registration. The sub-sections of the Japan Library Association are divided by type of library such as public libraries, university libraries, and school libraries; by special services such as services for children/youth and for the handicapped; and by specific issues such as freedom of libraries, resource preservation, and library user education. I attended the panel session concerning issues on library personnel, where discussions were carried out with a special focus on the relationship between library promotion policy and personnel issues. The plenary session on the last day included summary reports by sub-section representatives on discussions held at individual sessions. During the three-day conference, exhibits sponsored by various organizations were concurrently open to be visited at separate locations. Three courses of trips were prepared as post-conference attractions, any one of which participants could choose according to their interests. Each course included a library visit, either to Oita Prefectural Library or to Tsukumi City Library, in addition to other spots for sightseeing. The proceedings\(^6\) of the conference are available in print.

The Fiftieth Anniversary Conference of the Nippon Association for Librarianship (Nihon
This conference was held to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Nippon Association for Librarianship, which is the direct descendent of the League of Young Librarians (Seinen Toshokan’in Renmei). Along with the conference, one issue 7 of Toshokankai, the association’s most significant journal, was dedicated to the 50th anniversary, with the title, “the History of the Nippon Association for Librarianship, 1946-1996.” Since its establishment, the association has been supported by approximately 4,400 individuals from 1,092 institutions. This two-day conference with more than 300 participants featured two lectures by guest speakers from abroad and nine presentations on various topics by individuals as well as representatives from the research groups organized by the association, including School Libraries, Library Science Education, Oral History, Multimedia and Library, and Technical Services Research Groups. The guest speakers were Mr. Michael Gorman, Dean of Library Services at California State University, Fresno, and Mr. Chien-chung Wu, Associate Director of the Shanghai Library and of the Institute of Scientific & Technical Information of Shanghai. Both lecturers discussed libraries and librarianship in the twenty-first century. These lectures and five presentations by the research groups are available in print. 8 The first day session was followed by a reception, and all attendants received a publication 9 as a gift.

3. Study Groups and Meetings

Technical Services Research Group (Seiri Gijutsu Kenkyu Gurupu)

The Technical Services Research Group is one of the major sub-organizations of the Nippon Association for Librarianship. The association originally had sub-organizations based on geographical regions such as Osaka, Wakayama, and Nara Region Groups. These geographical regional groups were later replaced by sub-organizations based on subject areas. The Filing Rules Study Group (Hairetsuho Kenkyu Gurupu) established in 1955 was one of these sub-organizations, which in 1957 was eventually turned into the Technical Services Research Group. 10 As the name of the group implies, the interest of the group has historically focused on issues related to cataloging. The recent activities of the group can be seen in publications such as Seiri Gijutsu Kenkyu 11 and TP&D Forum Series. 12 The members, mainly university professors and librarians, meet monthly. I attended the group’s study meetings in August 1996 as an auditor and in April 1997 as a speaker. 13 At the former meeting, with about ten participants, Prof. Yasuo Iwashita of Nagasaki Junshin University presented a paper 14 on principle ideas suggested by Michael Gorman regarding cataloging rules.

Study Group on Western Rare Books/Bibliographical Study Group (Seiyo Kotenseki Kenkyukai/Shoshigaku Kenkyukai)

The Bibliographical Study Group is a sub-organization of the Hanshin Region Group of the Japan Association of Private University Libraries. Since its establishment in 1976, the group has accomplished a series of important researches related to bibliographical studies, some of which are included in its publication, Shoshiken no Ayumi, 1976-1992. 15 The very scholarly quality of the group’s research activities can be also seen in the recent publication, Keicho 2-nen Chokuhan...
"Shinkan Kinshudan" Inshutsuji Chosa, which investigates the wooden types used in Kinshudan, an early movable type edition, printed in 1597 by Emperor Goyozei. Being a sub-organization of the association, the group is comprised of 21 librarians from member libraries in the Hanshin Region Group.

Many of the members of the Bibliographical Study Group, in addition to other individuals, have established another gathering, the Study Group on Western Rare Books, seeking learning opportunities free from institutional constraints. Although the name of the group suggests that the focus is on Western rare books, this is not really the case. The interest of the group seems rather to cover all aspects of bibliographical studies both East and West. The members include professors, librarians, and also antiquarian book sellers. They welcome the participation of non-members to their gatherings. Fortunately I was able to attend three of these gatherings, which turned out to be very rewarding learning experiences.

In October 1996, the group organized a one-day trip to the Sugihara Paper Research Institute, Kami-cho, Hyogo, where staff members demonstrated the old technique of paper making passed on from generation to generation through the centuries. The paper making in Kami-cho is believed to have originated as early as the seventh century and Harima paper, the predecessor of Sugihara paper, was known as the most popular paper in the capital during the Tenpyo period (729-757) according to the documents held at the Shosoin. All the participants on the trip also joined in a hands-on demonstration of paper making.

In January and June 1997, lectures were organized at the Kinki University Central Library. At the former meeting, Prof. Kiyoshi Matsuda of Kyoto University discussed several manuscripts of Kaikoku Heidan by Hayashi Shihiei (1738-1793) and investigated the historical background behind the production of the work. At the latter gathering, Prof. Yasuhiko Araki of Kinki University demonstrated his comparative study on Jesuit publications from the late sixteenth to the early seventeenth centuries in Japan, particularly with regard to printing techniques. The highlight of these lectures was the chance for the audience to see and examine the original manuscripts and printed books of extreme rarity.

University Library Research Group (Daigaku Toshokan Kenkyukai)

About half of this study group's membership consists of university professors in the area of library and information science, and the other half is librarians. Although four meetings were organized during my year-long stay in Kyoto, I was able to participate only in two of them. I assume that the focus of the group is in the area of library operation and technology. The format of the meetings was usually one lecture of about three hours by group members.

The meeting on February 8, 1997, was a visit to the Osaka City University Media Center, which was newly opened in October, 1996. The center, a large 13-story (10 floors above ground) building with a heliport on the roof, comprises a "library complex, a computer center and a general information processing education center." Most of the facilities in the building are new and highly computerized. One example is the robot-like automatic guided vehicles for delivery of materials between floors. On the other hand, the center also maintains traditional space—such as a room with tatami mats—particularly for public users (the center is open also to the residents of
Osaka City for registration fee of ¥2,000 for two years). Unfortunately, however, the University Library Research Group seems to have had difficulty continuing these gatherings because of a lack of participation. While only about 20 participants gathered for the meeting in February 1997, the actual members are more numerous. At this meeting a voice to discontinue the meetings was raised. After that time, no meeting was held before my departure from Japan in June 1997.

Besides the meetings discussed above, I also attended some other special gatherings. The fall lecture organized by the Osaka Prefectural Nakanoshima Library was one of these occasions. Admission to this lecture was open to the public, and anyone who was interested in attending the lecture had to apply by mail. Prof. Yukio Fujimoto of Toyama University, the lecturer for this event, spoke on the publishing culture in the Edo period and the influence from Korean books. The audience was given an opportunity to examine several old books from the library’s Korean rare book collection of approximately 5,000 volumes.

Conclusion

“To know books” should be one of the most basic goals that a conventional library staff should pursue in any time period. However, it takes a great deal of time and experience, particularly when one handles old and rare books. It is even harder for anyone in the United States to obtain such expertise, especially in the area of old Japanese books, as no good training can be attained under ordinary circumstances. As a result, the situation arises in which old and rare books are known to exist but reasonable access to them is never provided to users. For decades, the old Japanese materials at the UCLA East Asian Library have been very difficult for patrons to access. With the enormous help of Prof. Jun Suzuki of the National Institute of Japanese Literature, as well as several other visiting librarians, these rare sources are now all accessible online and stored in a specialized area under adequate climate controls. However, I think that some of these materials still deserve further attention.

During my year-long stay in Japan I was able to learn a great deal about books and their surrounding environments, particularly concerning old and rare Japanese materials. To list a few of these aspects of my experience, I will start with the fact that I met many people with whom I could share common interests and concerns about these materials. Besides the people I met at the intern site and through attending the meetings described above, I had opportunities to get to know more professionals by personally visiting libraries and other institutions, including Keio University Mita Media Center, Waseda University Library, National Institute of Japanese Literature, Historiographical Institute of Tokyo University, and Kyoto National Museum. The rare book specialists of these institutions were extremely helpful and kindly shared their experience and knowledge with me.

Another positive aspect of my experience in Japan was that I was able to learn about some useful resources that I would not normally encounter in the United States. One of these resources is Bunken shirizu, a monographic series published by the Rare Book Division of the Keio University Mita Media Center. I am especially grateful to Mr. Tsutomu Shiraishi, the compiler of this series, who generously gave me several volumes of the series. One title of these volumes, as a matter of fact, helped to identify the edition of several holdings of old Buddhist texts from the fourteenth century at UCLA. Other resources that I have found useful are some catalogs compiled by
antiquarian book dealers. As the Otani University Library actively collects certain types of rare materials, some antiquarian book dealers constantly visit the Old Books Division, bringing their catalogs and sometimes actual books from their new acquisitions for sale to the library. It was in one of these catalogs that I found an item that greatly resembled a scroll I had seen in the Department of Special Collections of UCLA just before my departure to Japan. This manuscript scroll contains a part of Myoho rengekyo (the Lotus Sutra) and is of great artistic value, being decorated by a beautifully illustrated frontispiece in gold and silver. From this catalog I have learned that the text of this item, held in the department at UCLA since the 1960s, was actually transcribed by Hino Hirosuke (1617-1687) for the occasion of the seventeenth anniversary (1667) of the death of Tokugawa Iemitsu (1604-1651).

To organize an occasion for learning abroad for a substantial period of time is not an easy task for anyone working in East Asian libraries in the United States. I found, however, that it was very rewarding in my case. I am confident that my experience has resulted in a deeper understanding of Japanese libraries and librarians, and I hope such understanding in individuals will eventually lead to more active, mutual cooperation between libraries in the two countries in a variety of manners. In closing this paper, I would like to convey my great appreciation to the UCLA Library as well as to two directors of the Otani University Library, Prof. Seiki Miyashita and Prof. Sensho Kimura, who kindly supported my internship. Many words of thanks are also due to all the staff members of the Otani University Library, in addition to Prof. Jun Suzuki, Mr. Osamu Morigami of Kinki University Library, and Mr. Akinobu Watanabe of Otani University, who have been supportive of my efforts for many years.

NOTES


14. This paper was further revised and was later presented under the title of “Maikeru Goman ni Okeru Mokurokuho no Teigen o Megutte” at the 50th Anniversary Conference of the Nippon Association for Librarianship on November 18, 1996.


