



10-1-2008

Book Reviews

Tsuneharu Gonnami

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

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Gonnami, Tsuneharu (2008) "Book Reviews," *Journal of East Asian Libraries*: Vol. 2008 : No. 146 , Article 11.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jeal/vol2008/iss146/11>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the 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.

BOOK REVIEWS

Atsuhiko Wada和田敦彦. *Shomotsu no Nichi-Bei kankei: Riterashi shi ni mukete*和田敦彦著『書物の日米関係：リテラシーに向けて[The Japan-US relationship viewed from book circulation: toward a literacy history] Tokyo: Shinyosha, 東京：新曜社、2007. 406 pages. Indices, Notes, Illustrations.

This is an interesting book on Japanese Collections located in the United States. The author, Prof. Atsuhiko Wada of Waseda University, deals with the Collections in the context of “*the Japan-US relationship viewed from book circulation: toward [the] literary history*” as its English subtitle on a front cover indicates. He was a recipient of the 2007 Award of the Japan Society of Library and Information Science for his work, which cost him many year’s labour to complete. The award-winning book is composed of the following ten chapters: Preface: Books on Japan in America; Seen from Histories of Japanese Collections in the USA, Chapter 1: China vs Japan, Rival Countries and Collections; Origins of Asian Collections, Chapter 2: Memories and Records of Japanese Collections; Histories of the Collections at Columbia University, Chapter 3: Japanese Language Education and Japanese Study during the Pacific War period; Language Officers as Weapons, Chapter 4: The Allied Occupation of Japan and Acquisition of Japanese Books; Book Agents in Occupied Japan, Chapter 5: Occupation Forces and Collecting Materials; the Exploitation of Captured Japanese Records and the Aftermath, Chapter 6: How to deal with Japanese Books; Complications between Classification and Shelving, Chapter 7: Books as Armaments; The National Security Budget and Japanese Books, Chapter 8: Cooperative Collection Developments among Japanese Libraries in the USA; Histories of Inter-Relationships of Japanese Collections, Conclusion: Depositories and Repositories of Japanese Book Collections; Questions for Library Readers raised by Literacy History.

In the postwar era, a great number of Japanese books crossed over the Pacific Ocean to the U.S.A. and many Japanese Collections were built up at various American Institutions and have successfully continued to grow. Who have acquired these Japanese books, how and when have they been delivered, and for what purpose have they been used? Who are the library users of these Japanese Collections? How was the habit of reading Japanese books originally formed in the library environment of the U.S.A.? There is no appropriate single term to cover these issues collectively or synthetically. This is the very reason why the author created a particular term: “Literacy History.” In this book, he has ardously traced the historical path of about a dozen major Japanese Collections built up by US institutions past and present from his viewpoint of “Literacy History.” In this way, Prof. Wada is pioneering a new field in the Japan - US relationship with regard to Japanese Libraries in America and their readers.

When the Pacific War broke out on December 7, 1941, North American time, US high officials at the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of State were shocked to discover that library and information resources on Japan within the US were very few and also there were very few people who were able to read and analyze Japanese written materials. They immediately realized that this was a very serious national security issue in war time. It was essential to develop expertise promptly and they established Japanese Language Schools for both the US Army and Navy in order to quickly produce intelligence officers, recruiting first class university students with a talent for foreign languages. Upon graduation these information officers were all dispatched to the front line of the Pacific Campaign and were engaged in questioning captured Japanese POWs and deciphering captured military information. In the post WW II period many of these military intelligence officers were transferred to the private sector and some became academics engaged in research in various Far Eastern area studies. Rich scholarship funds were provided by the US Government for language study and research in these areas. This strategic funding was spurred by the tense international relationship of the Cold War between the USA and the USSR. This support eventually produced many Japan Study experts in various subject fields. This also resulted in the build-up of the above-mentioned Japanese Collections at major US institutions in order to support Japanese studies and also to foster mutual exchange programs of intellectuals as well as library books between Japan and the U.S.A. in postwar days

One might wonder, from where in Japan did these books come to postwar America? At the beginning of the Occupation days, the Washington Documentation Center, a government agency, vigorously collected Japanese materials through purchase and also by exploitation of captured records under the supervision of General Headquarters/Supreme Commander for Allied Powers (GHQ-SCAP). Every week, materials supposed to be necessary for US national security purposes were sent back by military cargo planes and ships from Tokyo to the Center's headquarters in Washington D.C. At the Library of Congress, the Center's staff checked these acquired materials against holdings of existing Japanese Collections and further distributed any duplicate materials they found, mainly to other US academic institutions. The Hoover Institution at Stanford University, a prominent private academic institution, also intensively collected social science materials on their main concern, war and peace, by purchase and donations from Japanese book agencies, private companies and cultural organizations.

In the later days of the Occupation, Dr. Gordon Prange, a history professor from the University of Maryland, and then head of the Civil Censorship Detachment (CCD) at SCAP, recognized the historical significance of CCD materials collected and accumulated between 1945 and 1949 and made an arrangement between his University and GHQ-SCAP to preserve the whole collection of censorship materials. It is now well preserved as "The Gordon W. Prange Collection" at the University of Maryland (State academic institution) in memory of his distinguished contributions to the administration of the Allied Occupation Forces in Japan. The University of California at Berkeley (another State institution) was also building up its Japanese Collection by acquiring the former Mitsui Library's Japanese Old Maps printed by wood-block in the Edo period (1600-1868) and texts of classical Japanese literature published before 1868 by a purchase arrangement with Mitsui & Co., a major business and industrial conglomerate in Japan.

These are a few examples of how, when, and from whom some major US institutions in the public and/or private sectors acquired and built up their Japanese Collections in the postwar period. However, to our regret, any library collection cannot be permanent. Some are going to disappear because of natural disasters caused by rain and storm and/or human error such as fire. In fact, the Main Library of the University of Hawaii at Manoa Campus was damaged by flood and lost many valuable Japanese library resources, as did the Gordon W. Prange Collection of Japanese materials at the University of Maryland. Prof. Wada has patiently surveyed about a dozen major Japanese Collections in the USA to find what materials have been lost and what have survived, creating an historical record of each collection. He found that even with copies of the same book by the same author kept by two different libraries in America, each had its own historical dimension insofar as it was surrounded by different physical and reading environments.

As for growth of Japanese Collections in the States, Prof. Wada also encountered a big donation from a Japanese private company to an American public university. About 65,000 volumes of books mainly on Japanese banking, finance and economy in the 20th Century, originally collected and preserved by the former Mitsui Bank's Institute of Banking and Financial Research (est. in 1928), were donated in 2003 by the present Sumitomo-Mitsui Bank to the East Asian Library of the University of Pittsburgh. This former Mitsui collection played an important role in enhancing national collections on Japanese Studies in the US, in particular works of pre-WW II materials in the Social Sciences. In the development of the Japanese Collection at Pittsburgh, these specialized materials on monetary, financial and economic issues have contributed to achieving a balance between their Humanities and Social Sciences collections. This donation can be evaluated as a high point in the "Literacy History" of the Japanese collections in the US. In Japanese Collections in the US Libraries, we usually find that the number of Japanese books in the Humanities is greater than books in the Social Sciences. Therefore, most collection development librarians have been struggling to correct this imbalance in their library stacks. The Japanese Studies Librarian at Pittsburgh, Dr. Sachie Noguchi (presently at Columbia Univ.), made arduous efforts to realize the Mitsui Collection donation, which was significant in terms of value not only to the Japanese Collections at Pittsburgh but also to the USA on a national level. Thus Dr. Noguchi stabilized the imbalance in her Japanese Collection with the good will of Mitsui Bank. Generally speaking, the steady growth of each of the Japanese Collections kept by US institutions was made possible through the efforts of Japanese librarians making painstaking book selection within a limited annual budget over the decades since 1945.

The author states that his research and study of “Literacy History” is concerned not only with the physical gathering of each Japanese Collection but also its reading environment, i.e. how users came to use the library and what purposes the Japanese materials served. He deals with the issues of “Japanese Language Schools” and “Information Officers” during war time as well as Far Eastern area studies by academics transferred from military services in the postwar period when the Cold War was in full swing.

In this book the author has used “the Japanese Collections in the USA” as a case study of his research on “Literacy History.” According to Prof. Wada’s explanation, which this reviewer personally heard when he came to visit UBC Libraries for his research in February 2008 (see his Literacy History Association’s website: <http://www.f.waseda.jp/a-wada/literacy>), the definition of the term “Literacy History” concerns simply the way of reading a book. How to read a book is entirely up to a reader in peacetime, and 100% comprehension is usually neither sought nor necessary. Moreover, there is no standard way of reading a book. However, during wartime, officers of the US Navy and Army who were trained as language specialists at their Japanese Language Schools were required to be able to read captured information materials written in Japanese completely (100 %). Hence there is a big difference in terms of “Literacy History” between wartime and peaceful days. However, even in peacetime, there are distinguishable differences between the “professional reading” of a librarian and the “pleasure reading” of a library user. At the present time, the relationship between a Japanese book and its foreign readers is, thanks to the development of communication technology, borderless, just as the new technology obscures the borders between nations in this age of globalization. Prof. Wada suggests a theory of an international relationship from the point of view of book circulation, a case study in “Literacy History.” This perspective has been missed in World discourse on issues concerning the global importance of books and reading.

However, the author has not limited his research to matters of circulation in libraries and the extent of archives, but is now trying to expand his field of research and study on “Literacy History” to more diverse subjects such as literature, culture, bibliology (the study of books) and so on.

In Prof. Wada’s laborious task of writing this book, he has well chronicled the histories of the major Japanese Collections in America and also thoroughly analyzed the Japan-US relationship in terms of the Japanese Collections in US libraries and the circulation of books to library users, employing his new concept of “Literacy History.” From this perspective, this book is well worth reading for any librarian on both sides of the Pacific Ocean.

Furthermore, the reviewer would like to confirm this book’s finding that the significance of the “Japanese Collections” located abroad lies with their representing Japan as a country and in communicating Japanese culture and science to foreign countries. As one who has had a professional career as a Japanese Librarian for 40 years, I sincerely hope that the author, Prof. Atsuhiko Wada, will continue to successfully conduct his research on Japanese Collections abroad and will also make additional contributions to the friendly ambience of the foreign language reading environment, promoting a spirit of mutual respect and good will between neighbouring countries and helping to eventually establish a peaceful multi-cultural community in the world through his research theme, “Literacy History.”

This reviewer’s only regret is that many minor typographical errors can be found in this book, and one can only hope that it will be revised one day in the future. Despite this fault, this book should be recommended reading for every librarian dealing with Japanese books.

For details of the author’s project, please refer to “The Japanese Book Collection Diachronic Research Project in the US: JBC Project,” <http://www.f.waseda.jp/a-wada/jbcp>
Reading through the pages describing the project, one can acquire a historical understanding of the developments of the Japanese Collections kept by mainly university libraries in the US. The project also focuses on gathering, analyzing, preserving, and publishing the information about the archives of these histories of the Japanese Book Collections.

In conclusion, the author has done a good job of examining Japanese Collections in the US, built up in most cases by librarians originally from Japan after WWII, and of providing a description of the dedication and

commitment of the Japanese librarians in giving top quality reference services to these libraries' users. In the course of his research he interviewed many of these "old timers" in order to record the history of each of their collections and consulted with many library patrons who were old Japan hands or those converted in the postwar era from former US Army and Navy intelligence officers, as well as contemporary faculty members teaching Japanese studies and baby boomers and even younger generations. All the stages of this Project with its many aspects have culminated in the creation of a "Literacy History" of postwar Japan-US relationship seen from the overview of book circulation.

Tsuneharu Gonnami, East Asian Librarian Emeritus
University of British Columbia