



2-1-2011

## Report on the Demise of a Canada-Japan Library Cooperation Program

Yasunori Ueno

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

### BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Ueno, Yasunori (2011) "Report on the Demise of a Canada-Japan Library Cooperation Program," *Journal of East Asian Libraries*: Vol. 2011 : No. 152 , Article 14.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jeal/vol2011/iss152/14>

This Report 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](mailto:scholarsarchive@byu.edu), [ellen\\_amatangelo@byu.edu](mailto:ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu).

## REPORT ON THE DEMISE OF A CANADA-JAPAN LIBRARY COOPERATION PROGRAM

Yasunori Ueno, visiting librarian of the National Diet Library (NDL) for the Japanese Collection at the Centre for East Asian Studies/Centre d'études de l'Asie de l'Est (CETASE), University of Montreal/Université de Montréal (UdeM).

The purpose of this international cooperation project was to promote the exchange of books as well as academic and library personnel between Canada and Japan, broadly speaking, and, specifically speaking, to help lay the foundation of and build up the Japanese Collection for the East Asian Studies Program at UdeM. Over the past 35 years since 1975, this library program has been successfully functioning for the above purpose, but with great regret the program was terminated September 2010 because of budgetary limitations at UdeM.

Because of limited space in this report, I will try to commemorate the main part of this library project by summarizing the records of eleven librarians in the order they were dispatched from NDL to UdeM.

In total, eleven librarians from NDL came to UdeM between 1975 and 2010. From time to time I would have an inquiry from library users of UdeM such as, "How is Mr. so and so, a former visiting librarian from Japan, doing?" However, after this month, library staff here will not be able to answer this kind of question. Therefore, let me take this opportunity to report to you a brief history of the Japanese Collection and these past librarians from NDL.

The first librarian who arrived in 1975 at UdeM was Mr. Akio Yasue, who was a young and energetic library staff member of NDL with six years' working experience. His main duty was the daily management and systematic development of the Japanese Collection at UdeM. At that time UdeM was preparing to start CETASE by first opening their specialized library based on a private collection from Dr. Robert Garry, Prof. of Geography in East Asian Studies. In these early days, the CETASE library was an independent collection and was not a part of the UdeM Library system. Administratively the collection was struggling to keep afloat due to its financial support depending entirely upon the Federal Government of Canada and the Central Government of Japan (The Japan Foundation). Yet, Mr. Yasue did his best to develop the collection of Japanese materials dealing with this difficult situation while also simultaneously supporting documentation research activities of CETASE. He later returned to Japan in October 1978. After 26 years, he was appointed to the Deputy Director of NDL (No. 2 position) in December 2004 and retired in 2006.

The secondly dispatched librarian, Mr. Norihiro Kato came to UdeM in November 1979. He contributed a short essay on his experience at UdeM to *The Montreal Bulletin* (Sept. 19, 2009). He returned to NDL in February 1982. Three years later, he made his debut as a literature critic in 1985. It seems to me that something he nursed in his mind during his stay in Montreal might have helped change the course of his life. He is now teaching Modern Japanese Literature at the School of International Liberal Studies at Waseda University.

The third visiting librarian from NDL, Mr. Akira Kado, was sent to UdeM in June 1982. Around this time, the University of Montreal financially committed to unilaterally and continually support this international library cooperation program. Until then, the program was taken care of by both the governments of Canada and Japan. Without question, their contributions to UdeM were very much appreciated by many Japanologists in these two countries. Around this time, various lectures and seminars on Japanese Studies were often organized by the Centre for East Asian Studies at UdeM. Therefore, in addition to daily library duties, Mr. Kado had to help assist these academic events by compiling bibliographies of Japanese materials with regard to the main subject of the upcoming lectures and/or seminars, by searching library locations of these books within North America, if necessary, and further making an inter-library loan for these books, if requested by library users of UdeM, and so on. He also had to take care, to a certain extent, of many Japanese scholars invited to these lectures and/or seminars. In November 1986, after successfully fulfilling his cooperation duties at UdeM he returned to NDL in Tokyo. Afterwards, following approximately twenty years' work, he retired from NDL in March 2005.

The fourth librarian, Mr. Keiya Utsumi, came to UdeM in December 1986. According to an agreement concluded between UdeM and NDL at the time when Mr. Kado was serving at UdeM, Mr. Utsumi was invited to UdeM for the first time with financial assistance from UdeM. However, he faced several unexpected procedural troubles incurred by the agreement made in an early stage. After three years he returned to Japan in November 1989. He was my supervisor at NDL, when I left there for Montreal in Summer 2007. He used to sing a French song beautifully at a Karaoke club in Tokyo. He was promoted to be Chief Librarian of the General Affairs Division of NDL (No. 3 position) and retired this past March 2010.

The fifth librarian invited to UdeM was Ms. Akemi Asaka, who arrived at Montreal in November 1989. She was the first female librarian from NDL to UdeM. Fortunately, she faced no troubles of the sort that Mr. Utsumi once experienced and successfully finished her duties at UdeM. The Japan Study seminars, which started when the CETASE at UdeM was established in 1975, with the cooperation of many Japanese librarians from NDL, unfortunately came to a close around the end of 1992. Ms. Asaka left Montreal to return to Tokyo in November 1992. After that she was involved in preparing to open the Kansai Branch of NDL and is presently working for the newly built Kansai Branch in Kyoto.

The sixth librarian was Mr. Yasushi Yamaji, who was dispatched to UdeM in October 1992. The mechanization of the Japanese Collection at UdeM had gradually started at that time. Looking back from today it was an early stage of merely collecting cataloguing data in a PC. Mr. Yamaji returned to NDL in October 1995. From that time on, the mission period for a visiting librarian from NDL to UdeM became exactly three years. After returning to Tokyo, Mr. Yamaji was widely active in serving the International Children's Library located at Ueno, Tokyo, a branch of NDL, and engaged in maintenance of facilities of NDL, as well.

The seventh visiting librarian from NDL, Ms. Yoriko Sato, came to UdeM in November 1995. Before the computerization period of our current library system, the traditional library used to have a card catalogue system with bibliographic information of a book described on a card. A computerized cataloguing system requires transferring bibliographic information from each

card into the new mechanized system, i.e. a retrospective conversion process. This was a main focus during her stay at UdeM. She took part in this conversion project most of the time during her stay at UdeM. She returned to Japan in October 1998. At NDL she was assigned to the Department of Foreign Materials as well as the International Children's Library and was very active in these positions.

The eighth librarian who came to UdeM in September 1998 was Ms. Asa Takanobu. A photograph of her can be seen on one of the posters of the CETASE, which is hanging on a wall along a corridor of it. Therefore, unless this poster is taken down, her portrait is evidence of the international library cooperation program of visiting librarians from NDL to UdeM. After she returned to Tokyo in October 2001, at NDL she dealt with foreign materials as well as Japanese materials on political history.

The ninth visiting librarian, Ms. Yuko Nagano, arrived in September 2001. According to her, her wish was to come to UdeM at some time. Before she began working for NDL, she dreamed of going to UdeM. During her stay here she took full advantage of studying in the Library Science Program as well as taking French courses. Her three years in Canada were spent having very happy experiences of studying and working at UdeM. She returned to NDL in October 2004 and since then she has been engaged in corresponding with foreign libraries located overseas.

The tenth librarian was Mr. Tadahiko Oshiba, who was sent over to UdeM in September 2004. It was during this time that the East Asian Collections merged with the entire library system at UdeM, and searching for East Asian books could also be carried out through the UdeM internet. Since that time previously used materials in the East Asian Collections were used more often than before and the number of reference queries increased as well. These have reflected a big change of library users for East Asian Collections. Mr. Oshiba was released from his visiting duties at UdeM in September 2007. After returning to NDL he has been in charge of collection development and has presently been sitting next to Mr. Yamaji, the sixth librarian mentioned above.

The eleventh and final visitor from NDL is myself, Yasunori Ueno. I arrived at UdeM in September 2007 and will leave in mid-September 2010.

These eleven librarians from NDL have been glad to have fulfilled each of their assignments at UdeM to his or her best capacity. Their professional and cultural experiences at UdeM and the Japanese-Canadian community in Montreal have enriched each of their lives invaluable and immeasurably and have become a great asset to his or her public and private life after returning to Japan. We hope that the Japanese Collection successfully built up at the Centre for Japanese Studies at UdeM will continue to be useful not only for students and faculty members at UdeM but also for members of the Japanese-Canadian community in Montreal. The international library cooperation program for the past 35 years between Canada and Japan since 1975 ended September 2010 with everybody's regret, but a fruitful product of this program has now grown up as an important component of the various UdeM Library collections. Therefore, many visitors are anticipated to come and use this Japanese Collection\* at the CETASE at UdeM. Lastly, we, the visiting librarians from NDL, would like to express our

appreciation from the bottom of our hearts to all of you involved in this two nations' library project on the Canadian side for your kind cooperation and support extended to us over so many years.

\*Approx. total 17,000 volumes: 7,000 vols. in Japanese and 10,000 vols. in English and French as of 2009.

(Originally written in Japanese by Yasunori Ueno, NDL, under the title of "Hitotsu no bunka koryu no owari," and published in *The Montreal Bulletin (MB)*, September 2010, p. 2. Translated into English for *JEAL* by Tsuneharu Gonnami, formerly of the Asian Library at UBC (Retired in 2003) with permission obtained from the author as well as the editor of *MB*.)