



6-1-2008

Following the Road Paved by Naomi Fukuda

Izumi Koide

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

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Koide, Izumi (2008) "Following the Road Paved by Naomi Fukuda," *Journal of East Asian Libraries*: Vol. 2008 : No. 145 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jeal/vol2008/iss145/4>

This Article 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.

FOLLOWING THE ROAD PAVED BY NAOMI FUKUDA

Izumi Koide

Director, Resource Center for the History of Entrepreneurship
Shibusawa Ei'ichi Memorial Foundation

One day in early 1980, when I was a graduate student at the School of Library and Information Science and student assistant of the East Asian Library at the Hillman Library of the University of Pittsburgh, I found a thick book on the carrel of the Japanese bibliographer. It was a new reference book, *Nihon no Sankō Toshō Kaisetsu Sōran* ('A guide to reference books.' Tokyo: Japan Library Association, 1980). I opened its navy blue cloth cover and read its preface, which reads as follows: "The original version of this book was published in May 1962; it was in March of previous year when the editorial committee for the original edition was formally set up at Kokusai Bunka Kaikan Toshokan."

The name Kokusai Bunka Kaikan (International House of Japan in English; often called I-House) was familiar to me, as my high school is on the opposite side of the road where the I-House is located, and as my senior friend Yoshiyuki Tsurumi was its program director. I was, however, unaware that it had a library until I read the preface. Hoping that Mr. Tsurumi would introduce me to I-House Library, I wrote a postcard to him that I was looking for a job. Although he found some other post for me at a publisher of an English-language journal, the course of events led me to a library job at I-House in May 1980. Mrs. Tamiyo Togasaki was the chief librarian then.

Soon after, I found Naomi Fukuda visiting I-House library, where she was the chief librarian from 1953 to 1970. She was short, and had a somewhat stern demeanor with cynical humor. In the early 1980s, she was working on a bibliography, which eventually took shape as the publication titled *Japanese History: A Guide to Survey Histories* in two volumes (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1984-1986). I remember she strove to get funding for the publication in addition to editorial work.

Ms. Fukuda seemed to be influential to many big names in Japanese libraries; she often had guests including professors of Keio Library School and other universities, and high-ranking officers of the National Diet Library (NDL). In 1984 when she received the Order of the Precious Crown, Wistaria (*kun yontō hōkanshō*) from Japanese Government for her contribution to international cultural exchange, and these people held a big reception in her honor. In the late 1980s and in 1990s she regularly, most likely once a year, came back from US and visited I-House library. Gradually she started to complain that those people whom she knew in National Diet Library had retired and it was not so pleasant to visit NDL as only few people knew who she was. It took some time for me to understand what she meant and what she expected from NDL. To me, she was a great *senpai*, of course, but that was all. I did not have much chance to talk to her except everyday conversation and occasional recollections she told.

I heard many interesting anecdotes or almost legendary stories regarding Ms. Fukuda from senior male librarians in Japan. She held “Saturday school” for mid-career librarians and there was a strict selection rule if one could attend or not; she was nicknamed “Old Woman of I-House” because she was so knowledgeable as well as strict; young men chatted among themselves as to how to trick her and how to beat her at her own game. Her stories were legends, but they were not her legacy. It took some more time for me to understand what was her legacy and contributions.

I think librarians are known in one way by the collections they have built. If you go to work in a library, you will learn the scope and insights of your predecessors regarding the collection and its mission by looking at bookshelves in the library. I joined I-House library a decade after Ms. Fukuda left. During the years in between, I-House had a major renovation and the library moved to a new location in the building. The library’s space and appearance must have been quite different from the original she worked in. Still I could see how solid her expertise was when I looked for some title in the collection, or when I browsed the shelves in the library. I found all titles frequently referred to stood on the shelves; so did minor but important professional publications. They showed the quality of Ms. Fukuda’s collection development. I-House library and its collection certainly was one of her legacies.

Besides keeping the collection focused and reliable in the field of Japanese studies, it was I-House library’s tradition to publish bibliographies, research guides, etc. Ms. Fukuda took the initiative to compile several bibliographies and guides as listed in Mrs. Makino’s bibliography in this volume. Among such tools it was obvious to me that guides to reference books were the basics in research from which both researchers and librarians can benefit. While I was with I-House library, we published *A Guide to Reference Books for Japanese Studies* twice (in 1987 and revised edition in 1997) in response to the needs of international researchers on Japan. When the Japan Library Association (JLA) organized an editorial committee for “Guide to Reference Books” (Japanese edition), I joined the committee in 1997, remembering that the very first editorial committee was organized at I-House library, as written in the preface of the 1980 edition.

In 2001, I had a chance to read *Kokusai Bunka Kaikan no Ayumi*, the annual report of I-House, particularly its library section, from its inception to date. This reading revealed Ms. Fukuda’s contributions to Japanese libraries in a new light to me. When I found out the stories behind the original edition of a guide to Japanese reference books and Ms. Fukuda’s extraordinary leadership and efforts for materialization of the publication, I became much more interested in Ms. Fukuda’s accomplishments.

Ms. Fukuda wrote in the 1958 annual report that current problems in Japanese libraries lay in library management, and they were more serious than the problem of quality of documentation work. She raised issues on awareness of importance of exchange of library materials and its practice, on training of professional librarians with broad knowledge and skills, and on spreading understanding of roles and

functions of library by users. She traveled to Kansai, Tohoku and Hokkaido regions to visit libraries asking for cooperation; she attended a conference of directors of national university libraries to discuss these issues. She organized study groups of mid-career librarians by herself, and they regularly met at I-House to study what the library is, and how it should function. Finally an idea of a field trip by mid-career librarians and future leaders to libraries in America surfaced.

In February 1959, a group was organized as U.S. Field Seminar on Library Reference Services for Japanese Librarians. The program was funded by Rockefeller Foundation, and supported by the American Library Association (ALA), which organized a committee for the seminar headed by Frances Neel Cheney and consisted of John M. Cory, Robert L. Gitler, and Everett Moore. The Japanese participants included Haruki Amatsuchi (NDL), Sumio Gotō (Nihon University Library), Masao Hayashi (Osaka Prefectural Library), Toshio Iwazaru (Kyoto University Library), Yasumasa Oda (NDL), Takahisa Sawamoto (Japan Library School, Keiō-Gijuku University), Shōzō Shimizu (Koiwa Public Library), Heihachirō Suzuki (NDL), and Ms. Fukuda as leader. They circumspectly prepared for the trip as written in its report¹ as follows: “We met in seminar sessions in both Tokyo and the Kansai area with ten distinguished consultants and numerous advisors and colleagues to intensify our familiarity with the library situation in Japan, to absorb as much information as possible about what there would be to look for and study in the United States, and prepare ourselves in other ways for the trip so that we might take maximum advantage of it.”² The group left Japan on October 3, 1959 and went to such places as San Francisco, Seattle, Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Cincinnati, Louisville, Nashville, Dallas, Los Angeles, and Honolulu. In total, they visited more than 100 university, public, and special libraries and library schools.³ They participated in nine seminars held in seven places, organized by leading American librarians, and returned to Japan on December 4, 1959.

One of the participants, Sumio Gotō, described the trip as follows: Our schedule was tightly organized. We were awakened early in the morning, and left the hotel and moved to the next place by plane, where people were waiting for us to drive to a library; they showed us the library from top of the building to the basement; we were invited to lunch where the people of another library also joined; in the afternoon we visited the next library. We only came back to hotel at 10 o'clock or so in the evening after a cocktail party. And then, we were called to Ms. Fukuda's room to have a review session on the day in order not to leave questions or misunderstandings over to the next day.⁴

The report of the trip was published as *American Libraries: Report of the U.S. Field Seminar on Library Reference Services for Japanese Librarians*⁵ and in Japanese, *Amerika no toshokan*.⁶ Five meetings in

¹ U.S. Field Seminar on Library Reference Services for Japanese Librarians, *American Libraries: Report of the U.S. Field Seminar on Library Reference Services for Japanese Librarians*. Tokyo: The Seminar (c/o International House of Japan), 1960. 147p.

² *Ibid.*, p.i.

³ This number includes libraries which were visited by only a part of the members.

⁴ “26 nen mae no Amerika toshokan shisatsu dan” in *Raiburarianzu Fōramu* Vol.2, No.2 (1985) p.6.

⁵ See note 1.

Tokyo and one in Osaka were held for reporting on and sharing findings from the two-month trip with Japanese librarians.

The group brought back to Japan a tremendous amount of actual knowledge and direct observations about libraries and their functions. One of their findings was that in the American library there was a tool to support and to facilitate reference work, and in order to strengthen reference service they should have that tool, namely, a guide to reference books. The importance of such a guide was not obvious in Japan in those days. Ms Fukuda decided to publish one for Japanese libraries. It was an influential, practical discovery in the history of Japanese libraries. She soon organized an editorial committee of 9 members, and secured funding (2.5 million yen) for this project from the Rockefeller Foundation. The first edition of *Nihon no Sankō Toshō* was thus published from International House of Japan in May 1962. It took 15 months, and more than 100 people collaborated and contributed to the publication.

From the revised edition of 1965, the copyrights of *Nihon no Sankō Toshō* were given to JLA. Some American scholars suggested publishing it in English. Ms. Fukuda negotiated with National Science Foundation, and it was decided that ALA would be its publisher. The English version was published in June 1966⁷ and for this book, Ms. Fukuda obtained funding from Asia Foundation and Rockefeller Foundation.

Public libraries in Japan were also affected by the result of this field seminar. In the early 1960s, JLA worked to set a standard for small and medium libraries, and a notable report on management of medium and small size public libraries⁸, which played the role of an engine pulling the progress of public libraries, was published in 1963. It proposed two major policies: differentiation of functions between prefectural and smaller public libraries, and promotion of circulation of books. One of the participants in the seminar, Shōzō Shimizu, was a key person to put this report together. Shimizu recollected that he observed reference service in public libraries in America in a structured way: reference service was demanded by patrons on the ground of circulation of books at a certain level, and therefore increase in circulation was crucial in public libraries.⁹ Reflecting this view, the report centered on the circulation issue in public libraries.¹⁰ Sumio Gotō appraised this development in public libraries in Japan as one of achievements of the field seminar.¹¹

In 1950s and 1960s Ms. Fukuda contributed to the international exchange of librarians. She received visiting librarians from America and Asia; she helped Japanese librarians going overseas by giving advice

⁶ Tokyo: Amerika Toshokan Kenkyū Chōsadan (Kokusai Bunka Kaikan nai), 1960. 96p.

⁷ Guide to Japanese Reference Books. Chicago: ALA, 1966.

⁸ *Chūshō toshi ni okeru kōkyō toshokan no un'ei* ('Management of public libraries in small and medium cities'). Tokyo: Japan Library Association, 1963. 217p.

⁹ Op. cit. "26 nen mae no Amerika toshokan shisatsu dan," p.10.

¹⁰ Shimizu found that circulation was the most conspicuous aspect that American and Japanese libraries differed. 'Chūshō toshi ni okeru kōkyō toshokan no un'ei' *no seiritsu to sono jidai*. (Formation of 'Management of public libraries in small and medium cities' and its era). Ōraru hisutorī kenkyūkai, ed. Tokyo: JLA, 1998. p.98.

¹¹ Op. cit. "26 nen mae no Amerika toshokan shisatsu dan," p.10.

and introducing counterparts. Her bibliographical works were in the nature of international exchange as well. For example, *Meiji Taishō Shōwa hon'yaku Amerika bungaku shomoku* (Title in English: *A bibliography of translations, American literary works into Japanese 1868-1967*. Tokyo: Hara Shobō, 1968) was a basic bibliography in American studies in Japan, and *Union catalog of books on Japan in Western languages* (Tokyo: International House Library, 1967) covered Western-language collections on Japan in Japan. She was keenly aware that when looking at studies on Japan in America, books in the Japanese language were the resources for research, and in Japan reference needs resided in books on Japan in the Western languages. These contributions are excellent examples of professional work of a special librarian who had insight in international research.

After Ms. Fukuda moved to Michigan in 1970, she concentrated on Japanese and East Asian libraries in the U.S. while working for Asian Library at the University of Michigan. As a consequence of her absence from Japan, and perhaps because of her quiet attitude regarding her own achievements in developing libraries in Japan, people tended to forget about her contributions. However, whether or not they are aware of it, these librarians in Japan walk along the road paved by her.

As I recall the instance when I read the preface of the reference guide 27 years ago, and reflect on more than two decades that I worked for I-House Library, I cannot help thinking that I was probably destined to follow on the same path of Fukuda-san, although with much smaller steps.

Naomi Fukuda in front of the American library-style periodicals rack in the International House of Japan Library, 1960s. In those days, periodicals were not usually displayed in Japanese libraries.



Photograph courtesy of the International House of Japan Library.