



6-1-2008

Remembering Naomi Fukuda

Azusa Tanaka

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

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Tanaka, Azusa (2008) "Remembering Naomi Fukuda," *Journal of East Asian Libraries*: Vol. 2008 : No. 145 , Article 5.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jeal/vol2008/iss145/5>

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.

REMEMBERING NAOMI FUKUDA

Azusa Tanaka

Retired, National Diet Library

As I recall Naomi Fukuda, three occasions come to mind where I had association with her concerning library matters. The first occasion was in 1948 when Robert B. Downs came to Japan as special consultant and Ms. Fukuda was his translator and secretary. The second occasion was in 1950 when I was to go to the United States for study, and the third was in 1957 when the National Diet Library (NDL) of which I was a staff member, held a seminar on the International Exchange of Publications in the Indo-Pacific Area at the International House of Japan.

NDL opened in June 1948 and a month later in July, Mr. Downs, the Librarian of University of Illinois, arrived at NDL as special consultant on library management, particularly on operations for organization and technical processing of library materials. He worked energetically for the following two months, gathering information on history and current status of technical processing of materials in Japanese libraries, and wrote and submitted a report in September. This report, so-called Downs Report¹, has for years had significant influences on the NDL and its administration, especially as guidelines to technical and bibliographic services. The report was in English with more than fifteen thousand words, and I suppose that Ms. Fukuda must have provided substantial support and cooperation to Mr. Downs in writing and translating this long report. Just out of college and newly employed by NDL, I was not in a position to be able to talk directly to either Mr. Downs or Ms. Fukuda. I had, however, chances to attend meetings and parties surrounding Mr. Downs, and I was amazed at her exceptional ability in interpreting and translating at these occasions. I had no personal contact with Ms. Fukuda, and probably she did not know me then.

The next occasion was entirely personal in nature. In 1949, Rockefeller Foundation provided a scholarship for the study of library science in an American university and asked NDL to select one young staff member and I was chosen. I learned from Rockefeller Foundation that there had been two recipients before me who had studied library science in America with the same scholarship. One was Mr. Hiroshi Kawai, administrative librarian of Tokyo Imperial University Library, and the other was Ms. Fukuda.

I visited them to listen to their experiences. Ms. Fukuda especially gave me kind advice which

¹ National Diet Library. *Report on Technical Processes, Bibliographical Services and General Organization* by Robert B. Downs, Special Consultant, Civil Information and Education Section, General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers.

Tokyo: Kokuritsu Kokkai Tosyokan (National Diet Library), 1948. 31p.

sometimes included severe words, as to how to behave as a foreign student and on everything in daily life based on her own experience as a foreign student at University of Michigan. I am still grateful to Ms. Fukuda because I believe her advice was of great help to me in successful completion of my degree after one year of study at Columbia University School of Library Service in 1951.

The third occasion of crossing paths with Ms. Fukuda was November 1957 when NDL held a Seminar on the International Exchange of Publications in the Indo-Pacific Area at the International House of Japan (I-House). Taijiro Ichikawa, Director, Division for International Affairs, NDL, was in charge of this event. At his suggestion, my colleague and I visited Ms. Fukuda, then a chief librarian of I-House, the main venue of the conference. Ms. Fukuda gave us conscientious and practical advice not only on the facilities and layout of rooms, but also on what should be prepared when convening an international conference. The seminar concluded with great success, and I believe it was the attentiveness of Ms. Fukuda and I-House that contributed to this success. This seminar was the first international conference of its kind, and its successful results profoundly helped to develop international exchange of library materials, and to enhance the fame of the Japanese national library in Asia and in the world. Again NDL was indebted to Ms. Fukuda. Although my crossing paths with Ms. Fukuda that time was not necessarily personal, those several months were memorable in remembering her.

After Ms. Fukuda retired from I-House and moved to America, there were no more occasions to interact with Ms. Fukuda in official or personal levels. Years later, as I often went to a restaurant located in the basement of I-House, I would occasionally see Ms. Fukuda visiting Japan. At one such occasion, I remember she was dining with Mr. Shigeharu Matsumoto, Managing Director, and founder of the International House. After moving to the U.S., Ms. Fukuda worked at the University of Michigan, her alma mater, and I heard that she lived her retirement years in Hawaii.

Reflecting on her career, I believe Ms. Fukuda built a bridge between libraries in Japan and in the United States. Ms. Fukuda was a rather tough senior librarian, *sempai*, to me. However, I somehow felt an affinity with her. I wonder why this was so. One reason may be the fact we shared similar experiences as foreign students of library science in America supported by the same foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation. Another may be on a personal level: she was a graduate from Joshi Gakuin High School and Tokyo Women's Christian College, where my wife and some women in our families also studied. So it may be Ms. Fukuda and I found something in common in our way of thinking.