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In Memoriam: Yasuko Makino

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IN MEMORIAM

Yasuko Makino

Yasuko Makino was born in 1937 in Tokyo, Japan. In college, Yasuko majored in psychology but became a high school teacher. She got married to Prof. Seiichi Makino, the famous linguist who later was to precede her to Princeton, and accompanied her husband who came to the United States in 1964. Since the Fulbright scholarship her husband received was not enough for two people, she started to look for jobs the day after she arrived in the United States: first, she worked as a shirt folder in a dry cleaner outfit, then as a baby sitter and a housekeeper. Eventually, she was hired at the East Asian Library of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, as an hourly worker, and this was the beginning of her library career. During this time, she pursued several higher degrees; a Master of Library Science and a Master's degree in Education of English as a Second Language.

Upon graduating from library school, she was hired as a Japanese cataloger at the University of Illinois in 1972. Due to the economic hardship beginning with the Oil Shock, universities tried to save money, and librarians with faculty status, in particular, became easy targets. So Yasuko had to work even harder to get tenure and promotion, and a good list of publications was the only way for survival. One of the very important reference works she wrote was *A Student Guide to Japanese Sources in the Humanities*, which is still used today; another one was a bibliography of Japanese children's literature.

In 1991 she started to work at the East Asian Library of Columbia University, following her husband's previous move to Princeton and stayed there hoping a position would open at Princeton. When that hoped-for opening was advertised, her husband and herself doubted she could get the position due to her advanced age. To look younger, she dyed her hair for the interview, only to reveal that to the members of the Search Committee, which made them laugh. She thought she had therefore messed up, so when the offer came, neither she nor her husband could believe their luck.

As a librarian, she had worked for 19 years at Illinois, 7 years at Columbia and 14 years at Princeton, for a total of 40 years. Although Yasuko worked energetically to help build the foundations of Japanese Studies librarianship through her writing and research (and continued to do so also after her retirement, by working on *The Asian Studies Handbook: A Guide to Research Materials and Collection Building Tool*), she is perhaps best remembered as a mentor and teacher of many young librarians, sharing her extensive knowledge and expertise with everyone with whom she came in contact. When asked in her recent interview what, if anything, she would change about her career, she said: "To have become a librarian earlier."

Submitted by Martin Heijdra, Tara McGowan, and Setsuko Noguchi