Meetings and Conferences

Teruko Kyuma Chin
Report on the Library Panel at the Asian Studies on the Pacific Coast Annual Meeting

"Japanese-American resource materials, especially those on immigrants and immigration, on the Pacific Coast" was the theme of the library panel at the 1987 annual conference of Asian Studies on the Pacific Coast (ASPAC). The conference was held at Willamette University, Salem, Oregon on June 19.

The chairperson of this panel was Teruko Chin, University of Washington. The discussant was Emiko Moffitt of the Hoover Institution, Stanford University and the participants were Eiji Yutani of the University of California at Berkeley and Katsuko Hotelling of the University of Oregon. Several audience members, including Professor Ikuhiko Hata of Takushoku University, Tokyo, actively participated in the discussion.

Eiji Yutani reported on the library collections in the San Francisco Bay Area. They include the Japanese American History Room in San Francisco, the East Asian Collection of the Hoover Institution, and--all located at the University of California at Berkeley--the Asian American Studies Library, the Bancroft Library, the Government Documents Department, the General Library, and the East Asiatic Library. Katsuko Hotelling presented a complete bibliography of the University of Oregon's holdings on the same subject. Teruko Chin described the holdings at the University of Washington, where resources are kept in the East Asia Library, the Special Collections, and the Manuscript and University Archives Division. A brief report on the holdings in the Seattle Public Library and the King County Library was made as well. Emiko Moffitt reported on the finer aspects of the Hoover Institution's holdings and discoursed on the overall picture of the resources on this subject available on the Pacific Coast.

The consensus of the panel was that it appears that there is no systematic collection development policy for Asian American materials, even within a single institution. The resources are unique and vast in quality and quantity and there is no local or regional organization to coordinate the activities of these disparate collections. All those present at the panel agreed that we should be discussing common issues and concerns and exploring cooperation among the collections to deal with these materials.

Present and past library representatives of the ASPAC Standing Committee held an informal meeting with James Nichols of California State University, Hayward, a faculty member of the Committee, to discuss how the activities and services of the librarians could interact more closely with the activities of the academic world. It was agreed to compose and mail out a library service questionnaire to ASPAC members along with the forthcoming ASPAC Newsletter.

(Teruko Kyuma Chin)

Report on the East Coast Regional Japanese Libraries Conference

The East Coast Regional Japanese Libraries Conference, sponsored by the Japan-United States Friendship Commission and organized by the East Asian Libraries of Columbia, Harvard, Princeton, and Yale Universities, was attended by twenty-nine librarians and scholars representing twenty-five institutions. The three-day conference was held on the Princeton campus. It began on Wednesday, June 24, and ended on Friday, June 26, 1987. Participants were housed in no-frills accommodations in a Princeton dormitory and fed gourmet meals at the Prospect House (the Faculty House).
**Wednesday Evening Program**

The conference began with a tour of the Gest Library and East Asian Collections. The tour leaders, Diane Perushek and Soowon Kim, stressed in their talks the issues which became recurrent themes during the conference because they were concerns shared generally among the various libraries. Some of these problems are:

1. **Space problems**: the need for more shelving space for books and display space for current periodicals; plans for installing compact shelving; criteria for selecting materials to move into storage and retrieval mechanisms for stored items;

2. **Endaka** (the rising exchange rate of the yen): how to respond to our severe budget crisis; how the appreciation of the yen vis-a-vis the dollar affects Japanese acquisitions this year and next year;

3. **Staff organization**: how to cope with having only limited staff to perform multiple tasks;

4. **Bibliographical control**: cataloging backlogs, types of public service card catalog and online catalog availability.

The first panel session, on Wednesday evening, was a report on the programs of three libraries with relatively small and specialized Japanese vernacular collections. At the East Coast Regional Japanese Libraries Conference in 1982, each participating library had reported on its own activities. However, it was decided not to repeat the time-consuming individual reports at this year’s conference. Instead, three specialized libraries which had not sent representatives to the 1982 conference reported on their current programs and needs. The librarians who presented the reports were Sung Yoon Cho of the Library of Congress Law Library, Susan Fugate of the National Agricultural Library, and Eileen Hsu of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Library.

Issues of common concern included problems of administration. Among the many administrative problems which cause particular difficulties for small specialized collections within larger institutions are how to cover both acquisitions and cataloging activities for Japanese-language materials with a limited staff, how to balance regular acquisitions patterns with the special needs of curators or researchers, and how to coordinate purchased acquisitions with gifts and exchanges. Another issue of common concern is that of recruiting. Many libraries mentioned the acute shortage of Japanese librarians, the present unfilled vacancies at several libraries, and the need to recruit from new pools.

**Thursday Morning Program**

The first session was a presentation by representatives of the four major libraries on their cooperative library projects. Marsha Wagner of Columbia spoke about the advantages of cooperation and the kinds of outreach and public service activities offered by the four major libraries. Besides the convening of conferences like the present one, these activities include interlibrary loan, free xeroxing, reference assistance, reading and stack privileges, and travel grants for on-site research. Soowon Kim of Princeton described the shared collection development activities. He mentioned both the coordination of the purchase of expensive items and the cooperation on the acquisition of local histories along with the current developments by geographical area. Hideo Kaneko, Curator of Yale’s East Asian Collection, then discussed various kinds of cooperation on bibliographic information: the union list of Japanese serials, the Research Libraries Network (RLIN) CJK data base, Yale's participation in the Name Authority Cooperative (NACO) which changed its name but not its acronym to National Coordinated Cataloging Operations, and plans for automation at Yale. Finally, John Lai of Harvard reported on the completion of the Harvard-Yenching Library’s printed catalog, its continued publication of *Occasional Reference Notes* which contains a section on Japanese materials, the Harvard On-Line Library Information System, more familiarly known as HOLLIS, automated serials list at Harvard, and the plans for compact shelving at the Harvard-Yenching Library.
During the discussion which followed, great interest was expressed in the shared collection responsibility for local histories and current developments project. Arrangements were made to distribute lists of local materials purchases to the smaller libraries each year. The 1985 four-library list of current Japanese serials and holdings and the 1987 Harvard list of Japanese serial holdings inspired a suggestion that a union list of Japanese serials subscriptions and holdings be compiled for all East Coast libraries.

After the coffee break the participants divided into two groups. One group attended a workshop led by Toshiyuki Aoki, Japanese Reference Librarian at Harvard, on Japanese reference skills; the other group participated in a workshop led by Hideo Kaneko of Yale on Japanese library management. Mr. Aoki presented some of the questions most often asked of a Japanese reference librarian and outlined some of the basic reference works which even a small collection should acquire. Mr. Kaneko’s workshop focused on responses to the crisis in Japanese acquisitions caused by the sixty percent decrease in the buying power of the United States dollar over the past year. It was felt that due to internal shifts of funds and other “band-aid” strategies, the effects of the budget crisis have been somewhat masked so far but will be seen in their full impact next year. They also covered personnel issues such as the conspicuous absence of native Japanese in the library field, the problems of rapid staff turnover, and the implications of the recent trend either to appoint or promote staff who lack library science degrees into positions formerly reserved for professionals. After forty minutes of discussion, the members of the two groups exchanged places with each other so that each participant was able to attend both workshops.

Thursday Afternoon and Evening Program

The Thursday afternoon session began with presentations of three types of Japanese-language software. Mariko Shimomura, the Assistant Head of Technical Services at Gest Memorial Library, described enhancements on the RLIN CJK system, especially its new search capability. Richard Cleary, a Japanologist who now works in marketing for Fujitsu’s Oasys word processing system, described the input methods and capabilities of this product. Hisako Kotaka, a former librarian and currently Japanese user services specialist at Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), read a paper on the advantages of OCLC’s CJK system. Demonstrations of each system were given in three different rooms and participants were invited to observe and try working on all three systems.

The reception, hosted by Princeton University Librarian, D. W. Koepp, offered the opportunity to view two of Princeton’s major current exhibitions, one of Chinese rare books and the other of Japanese woodblock prints. A high point of the conference was the keynote address after dinner Thursday given by Professor Carol Gluck, a Columbia University specialist in Japanese intellectual history. Professor Gluck’s lecture was impressive in its erudition, vision, and knowledge of the details of library operations. The title of her talk was “Confessions of an East Asian Library User: Seven Modest Precepts, Four Shifts in Research, and a Grand Appreciation.” She identified several trends in recent academic research, such as the shift from text to context, the shift from elite to popular, and the shift from Japanese distinctiveness to comparability. Japan, she continued, has now taken its place in the world historical context, and Japan generates theory rather than being an object to which Western theory is applied. Professor Gluck indicated that libraries should reflect the needs of users; libraries are no longer elite repositories that emphasize the “great books”; instead, they must grow organically in a way that reflects the shifts in research. At the same time, librarians should be cautious in adapting their selection guidelines to new fields such as women’s studies (which Gluck considers now to be an established field) and U.S.-Japan trade friction (which she feels is a media exaggeration which will soon be out of date as a topic). She emphasized collective approaches to collection development and said that librarians, like lexicographers, must select entries with regard to usage. Professor Gluck stated that she has come to view precepts which govern access rather than acquisitions policy as the most important ones. She defined three kinds of users—the novice, the intermediate, and the veteran—and the kinds of reference services, core collections of secondary materials, browsing capability, and access to both stored materials and interlibrary loan materials for each kind of user to prevent “reader failure at the shelf.” She ended with a plea for all Japanese libraries to band together and with an appreciation for the contributions made by librarians.

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Friday Morning Program

The first Friday morning session was a presentation by three faculty members from three institutions with relatively small Japanese studies programs and small Japanese-language library collections: Miles Fletcher from the University of North Carolina, Thomas Havens from Connecticut College, and Senko Maynard from Rutgers University. These Japanologists explained how they do research under their local circumstances. They all stressed the importance of knowing about the Japanese holdings of neighboring and East Asian Studies Centers' libraries and the central role of archival research in Japan. They described the kinds of preparations they must make at their own local libraries before spending precious—and, increasingly, expensive—time at the major libraries in the United States and in Japan.

Professor Fletcher, for example, identified four stages in his research: (1) fishing, i.e., testing out and refining a research topic in the local collection; (2) exploring, i.e., browsing, checking the basic bibliography, collecting relevant materials from local and regional libraries, and preparing for the pilgrimage; (3) pilgrimage, i.e., using the archival sources, generally available only in Japan; (4) writing and tidying up, i.e., returning to the local library and using interlibrary loan to check facts and figures, to fill in the background, etc.

Professor Havens also emphasized the importance of small libraries’ collecting basic bibliographic sources for sketching out a project and materials to help locate the actual research materials. Senko Maynard, who teaches Japanese linguistics, pointed out the importance of interlibrary loan and of opportunities to browse in major collections. All the panelists agreed on the importance of shared resources and of having information available locally. While it is not possible for small libraries to collect intensively in specialized areas, they must be able to help faculty gain access to the information in more specialized collections. Professor Fletcher pointed out that this is increasingly pressing these days; he identified two trends which make the researcher rely even more heavily on materials available in the United States. One trend is toward having one or two isolated Japanologists added to faculties where Japanese studies were not previously included in the curriculum. The other trend is against making extended research trips to Japan, this for pragmatic reasons that include prohibitive costs and dual-career families.

It was generally agreed that this was one of the best sessions. Both librarians and faculty members referred to it as a consciousness-raising experience. Librarians commented on how useful it was to hear from the researchers’ point of view how they actually conduct the stages of their research. There was unanimous agreement on the need for more opportunities such as this for faculty and librarians to communicate with each other; a “take a librarian/professor to lunch” campaign was proposed. It was also suggested that more faculty should become regular readers of the AAS Committee on East Asian Libraries Bulletin and that the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies should include more cooperative library developments. Some announcements could also be published in the AAS Newsletter.

The final wrap-up session provided an opportunity to thank Diane Perushek and Soowon Kim for the extremely well organized program and local arrangements for the conference. The participants’ evaluation of the conference was generally very positive. An optional walking tour of the Princeton campus followed the final lunch.

The accomplishments of the conference which were cited at the wrap-up session included:

The opportunity for significant interaction among librarians and the sharing of information about common concerns. Several people said, “Now I feel I can just pick up the phone and call someone from this conference for assistance or information.”

The lessons learned from each others’ experiences including what not to do as well as what to do. For example, there was the debate on the issues of putting parts of a collection into storage or contracting for compact shelving.
The contacts made with librarians from a wide variety of libraries. Everyone appreciated the representation of specialized libraries in medicine, art, agriculture, and law.

The clearer sense gained by the librarians of faculty research procedures and of academic trends.

The information about new automated serial check-in systems like those at the Library of Congress and Harvard University.

It was suggested that the next conference be held in three years' time. Various suggestions were made for the 1990 program. One suggestion was to hold the gathering at a conference center or an inn for better accommodations and to relieve the host library staff of time-consuming planning of menus, room schedules, audio-visual set-ups, etc. Another was that the content of the discussions could be broadened from the humanities and the social sciences to include medicine, art, agriculture, and law. It was also suggested that more time be provided to develop strategies to deal with the crisis of recruitment and the professional development of Japanese librarians. More time should also be provided for in-depth coverage of management and administrative issues, perhaps with the help of outside specialists. It was suggested that the conference include some of the libraries which have major Western-language collections to support significant Japanese studies curricula but which do not have Japanese-language collections. Such institutions, which might be invited to send a representative librarian, include: Smith, Amherst, the University of Massachusetts, Wellesley, Wesleyan, the University of Rochester, Lehigh, Swarthmore, Bucknell, George Washington University, and the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins among others. A few people thought that the concerns of such libraries were so different that a separate conference should be organized for them. Others suggested faculty representation might suffice if representation by librarians was not possible. Still another suggestion was that a library school student or two should attend the next conference. If Rutgers has established an East Asian librarianship program by 1990, there should be a strong liaison between the conference and that program. Workshops should be offered for in-depth faculty orientation or to provide librarians with material to disseminate to faculty giving an orientation to Japanese-language library resources on the East Coast. Finally, the suggestion was made that more Japanese librarians should join the Committee on East Asian Libraries of the AAS and attend the annual meeting to supplement these coastal conferences.