Tribute to Mr. Hideo Kaneko

Sachie Noguchi
TRIBUTE TO MR. HIDEO KANEKO

Mr. Hideo Kaneko retired August 31, 2000, after thirty-four years of service at the Yale University Library, thirty-one years as Curator of the East Asian Collection, a year as Associate Curator, and two years as Cataloger.

Mr. Kaneko began his career at the Yale University Library where he served first as cataloger in 1961. In 1963, he moved to the University of Maryland and worked five years as the first Head Librarian of the East Asian Collection. At Maryland, he provided the first professional care to the massive collection of Japanese materials published during the Allied Occupation of Japan that is now known as the Gordon W. Prange Collection. He also established an internship program whereby recent graduates of Japanese library schools could catalog for the Collection while attending the University of Maryland Library School on a part-time basis.

After his sojourn at Maryland, Mr. Kaneko returned to Yale in 1968. He earnestly built Yale’s highly claimed East Asian collection, which is the fifth largest in North America. In addition to his primary responsibilities at Yale, he was also active in various academic and professional organizations and associations.

As a member of the Association for Asian Studies, Mr. Kaneko held a number of offices on the Council (then Committee) on East Asian Libraries. He was elected as President (then Chair) of CEAL from 1979-82 and also as a member of the Executive Committee (then Group) from 1970-73, 1978-79; he chaired Committee (then Subcommittee) on Japanese Materials from 1975-79. He was also involved AAS/CEAL activities in presenting papers, organizing and chairing panels, and serving as a discussant.

Mr. Kaneko played an important role in the development of the Research Libraries Group (RLG) Information Network (RLIN) CJK (Chinese, Japanese, and Korean) system. In 1977 he joined the Advisory Committee to the East Asian Library Program of the American Council of Learned Societies. The recommendation of this Committee led directly to RLG’s CJK project, which changed the course of history for East Asian Collections in North America. Besides other activities in this Committee, he organized the trip to Japan in 1978, when the members of the Committee were able to see some of the early systems for managing Chinese characters (Kanji), which convinced the Committee that CJK support in library systems really was possible.

Beginning in 1979, Mr. Kaneko served as Yale’s representative to RLG’s East Asian Program Committee, and as a member of RLG’s CJK Task Force. He was a key person in reviewing the design of the RLG CJK system, and in organizing many of RLG’s East Asian projects. Part of the East Asian Conspectus was done at Yale under his guidance.

Mr. Kaneko also served as a member of the Informal Committee on Library Policy of the Japan-United States Friendship Commission for 1977-78.

More recently, Mr. Kaneko chaired the National Planning Team (NPT) after the monumental National Planning for the Japanese Library Conference that took place at Hoover Institution in September 1991. This Hoover conference was the foundation for the establishment of NCC, which was then called the National Coordinating Committee on Japanese Library Resources. He was one of the twelve charter members of NCC as Chair of the NPT; he was also appointed as the first Treasurer of NCC.

In addition to East Asian library community, Mr. Kaneko was also active in the American Library Association. His special interest was with the activities of the ad hoc Advisory Committee on Liaison with Japanese Libraries within the International Relations Committee, which organized five Japan-United States Conferences on Library and Information Service in Higher Education between 1972 and 1992. He served on the Advisory Committee from 1976 to 1993 and attended the second (Kyoto, 1975) through the fifth (Tokyo, 1992) conferences as a delegate. All the while working toward increasing a broader representation in ALA of fellow Japan specialist librarians, he focused his attention to discussions on the issues faced by the Japanese Studies collections in the United States at these conferences.

Apart from these activities, Mr. Kaneko devoted much time to his research on Dr. Kan’ichi Asakawa, the Yale history scholar who provided forty-two years’ service to the Yale University Library. Mr. Kaneko has been involved in compiling and editing the writings of Dr. Asakawa and continues this research after his retirement.

In addition to numerous publications on Dr. Asakawa, Mr. Kaneko also published on other topics, such as RLIN CJK, access to scholarly information, and East Asian Studies collections in the United States. He also edited books and appeared on TV programs.

Through his devotion to, and leadership in, our profession, Mr. Hideo Kaneko has made great and noteworthy contributions, not only to the Yale University Library but also to the development of Japanese studies and East Asian librarianship in this country and beyond, and he has influenced for the good a whole generation of librarians.

Note: This is revised version of the original, which was presented at the CEAL Plenary Session on March 22, 2001, during the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies in Chicago.

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